

The Saxon Army in 1809

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The following has been compiled by Keith McNelly.

With a significant part of the French army involved in the struggle in Spain, Napoleon's German Allies were required to provide extensive formations for the 1809 Campaign in Bavaria, Italy, Austria and Poland. This article outlines how to model the Saxons in Volley & Bayonet. Frank Chadwick's excellent scenario book "Austria Stands Alone" provides plenty of information on these allies including the Saxons. However, what I present here differs in some points and adds a little more background and detail. It also provides information on using the Saxon's in the "Road to Glory scenario system. I trust it is of use.

COMPOSITION & TRAINING

The Saxon army in 1809 could field some 12 line infantry regiments, a Guard Grenadier regiment (900 on paper, but only 584 at the start of the campaign), a Swiss Guard company, a garrison company and three 'half-invalid' companies, used for fortress and prison defence. Average field strength of a line regiment was 1,100 plus grenadiers. A converged grenadier battalion strength averaged 560 men. It would seem that even these numbers were obtained by drafts of inexperienced troops. As with the uniforms, much of the army clung to the tactics of the Seven Years War with the infantry manoeuvring in line with manoeuvre in column not practised. Skirmishing was limited to the handful of schutzen in each battalion which Bernadotte would merge into combined detachments. They may not be used to reinforce infantry stands refer 13.7.6.

Artillery batteries were designated as heavy and light but all consisted of four 8-pounder guns and two 8-pounder howitzers. At the start of the campaign there were 4 batteries each of six guns and two additional reserve pieces. Many gun carriages were extremely heavy and insufficient horses were available. Unpractised in peacetime drill hasty training was employed on the march with poor results. Bernadotte attempted to add a horse artillery battery. Eventually this ad-hoc horse artillery battalion using 4 guns and what mounts could be found. Gill describes the outcome: "The result was a small battery whose performance 'remained far behind expectations' and which, encumbered by horses the men hardly knew how to handle, 'could not be employed other than as a foot battery'." Given their poor quality, and despite their designation, consider them foot artillery.

One source indicates the Saxons had issued orders for infantry battalions to be equipped with 3 or 4 pounder battalion guns, perhaps as many as 46 pieces. However, the guns do not appear to have reinforced the regiments.

Despite the poor quality of the infantry and artillery the cavalry were excellent, arguably the finest in Europe, despite their antiquated uniforms. In 1809 they consisted of four heavy regiments and five light regiments. On paper some 40 squadrons, but only 20 could be mounted for the 1809 campaign as many horses had been supplied to the French following Jena. The cuirassiers, carabinieri and chevauxlegers regiments had on paper 724 men organised into four squadrons, while the Garde du Corps just 428 men. The hussars had, again on paper, 1,065 men in eight squadrons.

HISTORIC ORDERS OF BATTLE

The main army was mobilised on the 25th February 1809. By April it comprised 12,600 bayonets, 2,800 cavalry and 24 cannon and was denoted as IX Corps organised in two divisions under command of Marshal Bernadotte. By early May it marched south and Dupas' French Division being added on the 11th of May. Several reorganisations followed. Elsewhere Saxon troops were also deployed in Silesia and Poland. Of these the largest contingent was von Dyherrn's combined arms contingent near Warsaw. These were engaged at the Battle of Rszyn on the 19th of April before returning.

Infantry regiments rated as linear infantry, as are one strength point cavalry stands.

IX CORPS - 8th APRIL 1809

Corps Commander Marshal Bernadotte (CC)

Corps Artillery:

- Heavy Artillery M4 [] [] Fld, PT
- Light Artillery M4 [] [] Fld, PT

1st Division GL von Zezschwitz (DC), Exhaustion = 7

- Saxon Grenadier Brigade M5 [] [] [] (Comprising 2nd & 3rd Grenadier, Leib Grenadier Garde)
- Regiment Koenig & I/von Dyherrn M4 [] [] [] NE
- Regiment Prinz Maximilian M4 [] [] NE
- Regiment Prinz Fredrich August M4 [] [] NE
- Regiment Prinz Anton M4 [] [] NE
- Schutzen von Metzsch M5 [s] NE
- Gutshmind Cavalry Brigade (Heavy) M6 [] Hy. (Comprising Garde du Corps (2 sqdns), Karabiniers (2 sqdns))
- Gutshmind Cavalry (Light) M5 [s] [s] Lt (Comprising Clemens & Albrecht Chevauxlegers, Hussars)

2nd Division GL von Polenz (DC), Exhaustion = 6

- Regiment Prinz Clemens M4 [] [] NE
- Regiment von Low M4 [] [] NE
- Regiment von Cerrini M4 [] [] NE
- Regiment von Niesemeuschel M4 [] [] [] NE (Includes 2nd Battalion von Oebchelwitz)
- Converged Grenadiers M5 [] [] (Consisting of 1st & 4th Battalions)
- Schutzen von Egidy M5 [s]
- Lieb Garde Kurassier (4 sqdns) M6 []
- Prinz Johann Chevauxlegers M5 [s] Lt.

BATTLE OF WAGRAM – 5th JULY 1809

The Saxons were reorganised on the 10th of June and three battalions allocated to Dupas mid June. By the 5th of July their organisation was as follows:

Corps Commander Marshal Bernadotte (CC)

Corps Troops:

- Saxon reserve artillery M4 [] Fld, PT

1st Saxon Division GL von Zezschwitz (DC), Exhaustion = 6

- 1st Artillery M4 [] [] Fld, PT
- Saxon Grenadier Brigade M5 [] [] [] (2nd & 3rd Grenadier, Leib Grenadier Garde)¹
- Regiment Koenig M4 [] [] NE
- Regiment Niesemeuscel M4 [] [] NE
- Converged Regiment Klengal M4 [] [] NE (Comprising I/von Dyherrn & II/Oebchelwitz)
- 2nd Schutzen von Egidy M5 [s] NE
- Gutshmind's Advance Guard M5 [s] [s] Lt (Comprising Clemens & Albrecht Chevauxlegers, Hussars)

2nd Saxon Division von Polenz (DC), Exhaustion = 7

- 2nd Artillery M4 [] [] Fld, PT
- Regiment Prinz Clemens M4 [] [] NE
- Regiment von Low M4 [] [] NE
- Regiment von Cerrini M4 [] [] NE
- Regiment Prinz Maximilian M4 [] [] NE
- Regiment Prinz Fredrich August M4 [] [] NE
- Regiment Prinz Anton M4 [] [] NE
- Cavalry Brigade Feilitzsch M6 [] [] Hv. (Comprising Garde du Corps (2 sqdns), Karabiniers (2 sqdns), Lieb Garde Kurassier (4 sqdns))
- Prinz Johann Chevauxlegers M5 [s] Lt

French Reserve Division - Dupas (DC), Exhaustion = 6

- Saxon Reserve Grenadiers M5 [] []
- Saxon 1st Schutzen Battalion M5 [s] NE
- French 5th Legere M5 [] [] []
- French 19th Ligne M5 [] [] [] []
- French Divisional Artillery M5 [] [] Fld ²

¹ 1st & 4th Grenadier Battalions detached to Dupas' French Reserve division from mid June. However, at Wagram the 3rd and 4th Grenadiers were actually detached to Lobau under Reynier. Leaving only the 1st with Dupas! For simplicity I have left the 1st and 4th Battalions with Dupas and the 3rd with the Saxon 1st Division.

² Dupas' division had 12 French artillery pieces with it when it joined IX Corps. This accounts for some sources saying IX Corps having 36 guns, twelve being French. However, at Wagram the French artillery were detached from the division.

ADDITIONAL SAXON FORMATIONS

While the IX Corps was the main field army other formations were deployed as garrisons or in support.

Grand Dutchy of Warsaw, GM von Dyherrn, (DC), Exhaustion = 3³

- Converged Regiment M5 [] [] []⁴ (Comprising I/von Oebchelwitz & von Einsiedel Grenadier Battalion total strength 1,619)
- Hussars M5 [s] Lt (Two squadrons total strength of 178 to 300)
- Saxon Artillery - 14 guns M4 [] [] Fld, PT

Danzig Garrison:

- Regiment Von Rechten (785 men) M4 [] [] DG⁵
- Zastrow Kurassier (630 men) M6 [] Hv.⁶

Glogau Garrison:

- Regiment von Burnsdorf M4 [] [] DG⁷
- (Comprising of Regiment von Bursdorff (935), Prinz Max. Grenadiers (202))

Other formations:

- Stettin II/von Dyhern (342 men)

³ These formations were engaged at Raszyn before returning to Dresden area by the 20th May.

⁴ Rated M5 due to their action at Raszyn and the high number of grenadiers present.

⁵ Elites are present. A detachment of artillery was available and counts as dedicated guns

⁶ Bowden and Tarbox show the Zastrow at Wagram. Gill details them in Danzig.

⁷ Elites are present. A detachment of artillery was available and counts as dedicated guns.

SAXON ARMY IN 'ROAD TO GLORY'

The following provides a generic Saxon Army in 1809 for use with the "Road to Glory" scenario system. It is based around IX Corps under command of Marshal Bernadotte. By the use of selected options IX Corps can be represented before and at Wagram. If all three divisions and options are used the Saxon IX Corps comprises some 1,200 points.

1st Saxon Infantry Division (one only) [335]

[Exhaustion = 6]

1 division commander

3 Saxon infantry regiments (2-4, NE) [25 each]

1 Saxon grenadier brigade (3-5) [65]

1 Saxon chevauxleger brigade (2-5, light cavalry, may skirmish) [100]

1 artillery battalion (2-4, field, PT) [95]

Options

Add 1 Saxon infantry regiment (2-4, NE) [+1 exhaustion] [+25 each]

Add 1 schutzen detachment (1-5, NE, skirmisher) [+30]

2nd Saxon Infantry Division (one only) [330]

[Exhaustion = 6]

1 division commander

4 Saxon infantry regiments (2-4, NE) [25 each]

1 Saxon heavy cavalry brigade (2-6, heavy cavalry) [135]

1 artillery battalion (2-4, field, PT) [95]

Options

Add 1 or 2 Saxon infantry regiments (2-4, NE) [+1 exhaustion each][+25 each]

Add 1 Saxon grenadier brigade (2-5) [+1 exhaustion][+50]

Add 1 Saxon schutzen detachment (1-5, NE, skirmisher) [+0.5 exhaustion] [+30]

Add 1 chevauxlegers (1-5, light cavalry, may skirmish) [+0.5 exhaustion] [+50]

French Infantry Division (one only) [335]

[Exhaustion = 4]

1 division commander

1 French legere regiment (3-5, may skirmish) [115]

1 French line infantry regiment (4-5) [100]

Options

Add 1 Saxon grenadier brigade (2-5) [+1 exhaustion] [+50]⁸

Add 1 Saxon schutzen detachment (1-5, NE, skirmisher) [+0.5 exhaustion] [+30]⁹

Add 1 French divisional artillery (2-5, field) [+1 exhaustion] [+120]

Corps Commander (1 at no cost)

1 corps commander

Options

Add 1 Saxon artillery battery (1-4, field, PT) [+40]

⁸ Only if not used in Saxon 2nd Division.

⁹ Only if not used in Saxon 2nd Division

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