

A wit once commented that Prussia was not a state with an army, but rather an army supported by a state. This relatively poor, sparsely populated, and virtually indefensible splash of north-German provinces had somehow created a military juggernaut.

In truth, however, the Prussian army had been in relative decline even before the death of Frederick the Great. The traditional picture of antiquarianism has been somewhat exaggerated; military reforms and new thinking did in fact continue throughout the revolutionary period, but changes were slow and incremental. After all, the army had no reason to expect that it *needed* to make significant changes; the Prussian state continued to expand at the expense of the unfortunate Poles, and no serious strategic threat had emerged to challenge the north-German *status quo*.

Prussia came close to being wiped off the map of Europe in 1806. That campaign was arguably Napoleon's greatest and most spectacular triumph. In roughly two weeks his *Grande Armée* outmaneuvered the confused and disordered Prussians, striking astride their line of communications. On 14 October the French and Prussians fought the twin battles of Jena and Auerstädt, about ten miles apart. This was not simply a defeat, in which a beaten army retreats off the field after a fierce struggle. The Prussian army was literally torn apart. By mid-afternoon it was shattered and disintegrating, fleeing in half a dozen directions with all order having collapsed. The king made a narrow escape. Prussia, which for a century had been an army supported by a state, was now a state without an army.

Although nobody at the time would dare admit it, Napoleon had done the Prussians a favor. Handing them a defeat so massive, so catastrophic, ensured that real thorough-going reform was the only option. The Prussians were forced to re-invent everything, of course particularly their army.

Severely limited by the peace terms of Tilsit, the Prussians improvised. The new army was a low-budget operation, small by necessity, with a sharp distinction between the professional establishment, and the cadres of local militia (*Landwehr*) that could be raised by provincial officials in cooperation with regional commanders. Having lost almost all their non-German lands, the civil and military authorities now pursued national-identity politics, emphasizing German nationality and playing upon the deep resentment felt by common people against the exploitations of French occupation. This was particularly acute for the officer class: a younger, more ambitious, and highly motivated group of men who felt a profound shame for the events of 1806 and desired vengeance.

When war came in 1813, the Prussians advocated what became the Coalition's winning formula: all allied forces were intermixed, so that Prussian and Russian, and later Austrian divisions and corps served together in regional armies, as a way of locking the allies into the joint war effort and not permitting Napoleon to pick them off individually, as he had in the past. In fact, a uniquely "Prussian" army did not re-appear until the very last campaign of the Napoleonic Wars, when Blücher's Army of the Lower Rhine delivered the killing blow to the French at Waterloo.



Prussian Army Lists

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The
Army
Builder

	Conquest (1805-07)	Liberation (1813-14)	Hundred Days (1815)
Infantry Brigade Attack +1	6 Musketeer 2 Grenadier 1 Fusilier 2 SK bases 1 Heavy BTY 1 <i>Musketeer</i> 1 <i>Grenadier</i>	2 Infantry 2 Reserve 2 Landwehr 1 Landwehr Cav	2 SK bases 1 Foot BTY 1 <i>Reserve</i> 1 <i>Landwehr</i>
	Organic Brigades		
Infantry Brigade	Cuirassier (1806)	Light Cavalry Abteilung	
	Infantry (1806)	Infantry Abteilung	
	Reserve Brigades		
Infantry Brigade	Light Brigade (1806)	Cuirassier Abteilung	
	Cavalry (1806)	Elite Infantry Abteilung	
	Allied Brigades		
	Saxon	(none)	

Prussian Compositions

Cavalry Brigade (1806)

2 Cuirassier
2 Dragoon
1 Lt. Horse BTY

Light Brigade (1806) ^①

2 Hussar (+)
1 Jäger
1 Horse BTY

Infantry Brigade (1806)

4 Musketeer
1 Grenadier
1 Heavy BTY

Light Cavalry Abteilung

2 Landwehr Cavalry
1 Hussar
1 Dragoon
1 Horse BTY

Infantry Abteilung

3 Infantry
3 Landwehr
1 Heavy BTY

Cuirassier Brigade (1806)

2 Cuirassier (+)
1 Lt. Horse BTY

Cuirassier Abteilung ^①

2 Cuirassier (+)
1 Horse BTY

Elite Infantry Abteilung ^①

4 Guard or Grenadier
1 Foot BTY

	Conquest	Liberation	Hundred Days
Musketeer	Reliable/Exp/SK0		
Grenadier	Valiant/Exp/SK0	Valiant/Exp/SK2	
Fusilier	Valiant/Exp/SK2		
Jäger	Valiant/Exp/SK3		
Infantry		Reliable/Experienced/SK2	
Reserve		Reliable/Ama/SK2	Reliable/Exp/SK2
Landwehr		Unpredictable/Amateur/SK1	
Guard		Valiant/Exp/SK0	Valiant/Experienced/SK2
Hussar	Valiant/Experienced/Pursuit		
Uhlan	Reliable/Experienced/Pursuit/Lance		
Dragoon	Val/Exp/Shock/Purst.	Reliable/Experienced/Pursuit	
Cuirassier or Gd. Cavalry	Valiant/Experienced/Shock		
Landwehr Cavalry		Shaky/Amateur	

Prussian Artillery Values

Artillery	Type	Cannon	Weight	+ How.
Heavy BTY	Foot	3	Hvy	1
Foot BTY	Foot	3	Med	1
Horse BTY	Horse	3	Med	1
Lt. Horse BTY	Horse	3	Lt	1

Prussian Subcommanders

Vigor

Roll

1-2	-1
3-5	-
6+	+1

+1	Liberation Hundred Days
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Tactics

Roll

1-2	¶
3-5	-
6+	*

+1	Liberation Hundred Days
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Advanced Rules in Play

Prussian Landwehr units have **Unpredictable** esprit.

The Prussian army in the Conquest theatre uses **Linear Tactics**.

A Prussian player in the Liberation or Hundred Days theatres may exchange one of his artillery units for a **Howitzer battery**.

A Prussian Jäger unit in the Conquest theatre may fire **Rifle Volleys** if it is deployed as a regular infantry unit.

Notes on the Prussian Army

The Prussians present us with some unique organizational challenges. Their early-war army was a traditional affair, with brigades not organized until the start of a campaign, serving neither as administrative nor tactical entities in their own right. The compositions of these brigades varied widely, often owing more to the seniority of their commanders than to any doctrinal principles, and there was no corps structure at all.

The reorganization after 1808 created a basically triangular “brigade” theoretically comprising three large regiments, but in practice often more than a dozen battalions. This structure, with its own organic light infantry, light cavalry, and artillery support, more resembled the divisions of other nations. Confusingly, the Prussians then sub-divided the larger brigades into “divisions” (*Abteilungen*), but again on a largely ad-hoc basis. Like its French counterpart, a Prussian army corps had a reserve of cavalry and artillery. This is what an Organic support choice represents.

Prussian elite units after 1808 were so few in number that they were usually massed in a special brigade, which in the Liberation period usually found itself under Austrian and/or Russian command, although some “line” brigades did indeed have grenadier battalions. During the Hundred Days the best Prussian formations remained in reserve in the V Korps and never got anywhere near the action in Belgium.

Perhaps no army list exemplifies the “moment in battle” concept of *Lasalle* better than this one. Your Prussian army list is based upon a brigade, but could include any number of variations.

Prussian Infantry:

The word “infantry” is used for the Liberation and Hundred Days to designate both the musketeer and fusilier battalions of the “regular” (traditionally the first twelve) regiments. Despite the alleged status of the Fusiliers as light infantry, there appears to have been no practical difference in their capabilities.

I have used the later word “Uhlán” to refer to all Prussian lancers, even in the earlier period.



28mm Prussian officers from the War of Liberation