DAY TRIP TO BERLIN
An 1813 Rearguard Action

After doing a couple battles from the Peninsular War, the Gentlemen Wargamers found their thoughts returning to the 1813 campaign in Germany, the beginning of what is known to the Prussians as Die Befreiungskriege. A scenario was selected from Oudinot's advance on Berlin in August of 1813, beginning with Bülow's rearguard of two brigades and cavalry reserve withdrawing to a defensible position in the vicinity of Baruth-Mark. Bülow was moving in three columns on parallel roads, Krafft's 6th Brigade on the left, Borstell's 5th Brigade on the right, and Treskow's cavalry in the center with a portion of the Corps artillery reserve.

The table is oriented with the top in a northeasterly direction. Berlin is to the north, and the main road to Berlin is just off the top of the table. The town of Baruth-Mark sits in the upper left corner, and to the west of it along the opposite table edge lies the village of Klein Zeisch. The scenario design and terrain are by Elliott James. The figures are 10mm, mostly AIM and Old Glory with a few Pendraken, painted and provided by Yours Truly. Rules are Napoleonic Command, 2nd Edition.

Oudinot is hard on Bülow's heels with the three divisions of XII Corps, so the Prussian commander finds it necessary to make the best use of the terrain available to him at the moment. He orders Treskow to occupy the heights in the middle of the table (2), deploys Borstell along the line of a stream on the Prussian left (3), and instructs Krafft to turn back and occupy the defiles between the woods on the right (1). Almost before these dispositions are complete, the leading elements of Oudinot's force are upon him.
Oudinot's XII Corps approaches the Prussian positions.

Immediately upon arriving, General de Division Raglowich is confronted by Krafft and diverts his lead brigade to the northwest to buy a little space for deployment (A). Meanwhile, GdD Pacthod's division makes a beeline across a small valley, headed for the central heights (B). A brigade of Guillemont's division, supported by a regiment of chasseurs a cheval from Beaumont's cavalry division covers the right flank of the advance, moving up to the village of Klein Zeisch (C).

Treskow's cavalry, supported by the Corps artillery, deploys on the central heights. In the left distance is Borstell's brigade, and Pacthod's division appears crossing a ridge on the far right.

Treskow is becoming aware that the heaviest blow will fall in the center, and that his dragoons and uhlans are not the best troops for holding ground, but at least he has the support of two batteries of twelve pounders, and he determines to put up an active defense.
On the Prussian right, Krafft is hurrying his troops into the forward positions chosen by Bülow, though he would have preferred to defend farther to the rear. His misgivings aside, he sends his veteran line regiment to the right of the woods (it is this force that causes Raglowich to divert one of his brigades) and sends his other two to the left.

Raglowich's leading brigade, led by a regiment of Swiss, moves around to the right of the woods.

Borstell's 5th Brigade lines up to defend the bridge and the line of the stream. Facing only a regiment of chasseurs a cheval and some voltigeurs, his force is sufficient to bring the French advance on the Prussian left to a halt.
Beaumont's chasseurs a cheval move up past Klein Zeisch.

A regiment of West Prussian landwehr advances along a stream at the foot of the heights.
Squadrons of dragoons escort Oudinot's XII Corps artillery into position.

Beverage break. Generals Pacthod, Raglowich and Guillemont listen as Bülow expounds. The drinks are mostly invisible, on the ledge next to the stairs, since clutter (drinks, charts, etc.) are not permitted on the table. Several excellent craft brews and a half dozen single malts were shared.
In the French center, General Pacthod has determined to push the Prussian cavalry off the heights, so he sends forward his infantry column across the bridge, the stream being too swollen by recent rains to admit of easy fording. They are supported by a regiment each of dragoons and hussars.

The overall situation is now becoming clear. On the French left, Raglowich (A) has deployed his entire division to deal with the threat of Krafft's advance (1). His righthand brigade pushes into the defile between the woods while the other seeks to eject a battalion of Prussian fusiliers who have occupied the woods in his immediate front.

In the center, Pachtod's division, and part of Guillemont's (B) are advancing on the heights. Oudinot has split his corps artillery out to the left, in the open ground below the heights. Treskow has launched a spoiling attack with his dragoon regiment (2) in hopes of slowing them down.

On the right, light troops are still holding the woods and village in front of Borstell (C).

Bülow is now realizing that he is outnumbered in all three arms, that the bulk of Oudinot's effort is falling on the weakest part of his defensive position, and that Borstell is masked by the terrain from realizing that he is on the flank of the French advance with only light troops in his front.
Raglowich engages Krafft with his entire division.
Bülow and Guillemont discuss the developing situation over a nice Don Tomas.

Treskow's dragoons crash into the French cavalry. They push them back and gain some time, but fail to break them completely.
Oudinot's juggernaut rolls forward. In the far distance, one of Borstell's regiments is moving to the south, where the heaviest blow seems to be falling.

In the face of overwhelming numbers, Treskow's cavalry clings grimly to the heights.
The divisions of Krafft and Raglowich continue to blaze away at each other. Mounting disorder means that soon one or the other will break. In the woods, the fusiliers are beginning to lose ground to the French voltigeurs.

On the French left, it is becoming apparent that Raglowich (A) is gaining the upper hand. Krafft (1) has a regiment of landwehr and Treskow's uhlans in reserve, but there is no good position to which he can fall back, so a retreat may well turn into a rout.

In the center, Treskow's dragoons are blown and fall back to rally (2). Pacthod (B) is beginning another push up the heights, although without his own dragoons, which are also rallying in the rear. Guillemont has detached his rear brigade (C) to go break the apparent stalemate on the right, and to support the corps artillery which is setting up a grand battery in the open ground below the heights.

Guillemont's right flank (D) can find no good way to advance on Borstell's strong position, so Borstell finally realizes that the greatest threat to him is the possibility that the heights may fall to the French, and he dispatches a regiment in that direction (3).
French voltigeurs make their way through the woods.
Oudinot's Corps artillery forms a grand battery.

Beaumont's battered dragoons rally to the rear as the corps continues to advance past them.
Cumulative fatigue has finally broken two of Krafft's regiments (1) and one of Raglowich's brigades (A) launches into pursuit mode. Simultaneously, Guillemont's detachment (B) arrives on the scene, turning the retreat, just as Krafft feared, into a rout. The other of Krafft's defeated regiments (2) is given a bit of a reprieve by a suicidal and only partially effective charge by the West Prussian landwehr, which brings the pursuit by the Swiss to a halt (C). In the meantime, Oudinot's grand battery (D) has made the center of the field pretty much untenable for the Prussians. That, and Pacthod's renewed attack (E) is finally forcing Treskow (3) to yield the heights to the enemy, in spite of the too-little-too-late assistance from Borstell's Silesian landwehr (4). Also in the too-little-too-late category, Borstell's advance on the French right (5) pushes back the French light troops (G) that had occupied his attention all afternoon. Meanwhile, Beaumont's dragoons (F) continue to rally and reform.

The Prussian will clearly have to leave the field in Oudinot's hands, with the gamemaster declaring a French marginal victory. Bülow, on the other hand, has given Oudinot a bit of a bloody nose, and cost him a day's march while keeping most of his Corps still fresh (two brigades not present, and Borstell's barely engaged.)
Beaumont's hussars accompany Pacthod's second assault on the heights.

The West Prussian landwehr launch their charge on the exhausted Swiss.
As the Prussian fusiliers abandon the woods, Raglowich's troops pursue Krafft's broken regiments.

A portion of Borstell's brigade chases off the French chasseurs.
The chasseurs fall back to the ridge above Klein Zeisch.

As the Prussians abandon the field, French infantry continue to pour across the bridge.
ORDER OF BATTLE

French XII Corps - Oudinot

13th Division - Pacthod
   8 Battalions
   1 Battery

14th Division - Guillemont
   8 Battalions
   1 Battery

29th Division - Raglowich
   8 Battalions
   1 Battery

Cavalry - Beaumont
   12 Squadrons

Corps artillery
   2 Batteries

Prussian III Corps - Bülow

5th Brigade - Borstell
   9 Battalions
   1 Battery
   2 Squadrons

6th Brigade - Krafft
   9 Battalions
   1 Battery
   2 Squadrons

Cavalry - Treskow
   6 Squadrons

Corps artillery
   2 Batteries