

St. Privat: Attack of the Guards

A Scenario for *La Guerre à Outrance*



Background

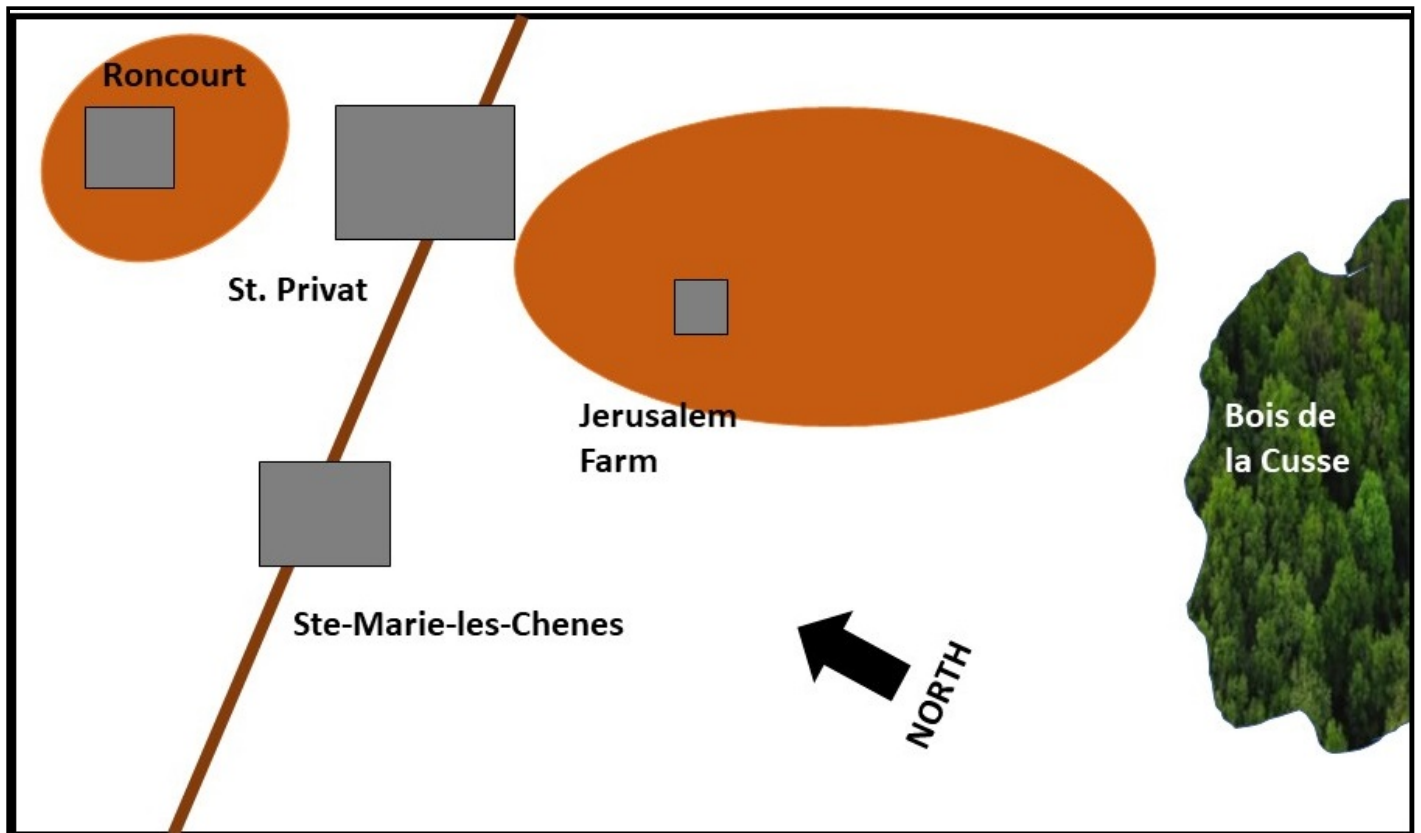
The battle of Gravelotte-St. Privat is often described as a single battle, marking as it did the final defeat of the Second Empire. It was really two battles, fought side-by-side on a single day. To the south, Bazaine faced off against Steinmetz around Gravelotte and across the Mance Ravine. To the north - a sector largely ignored by the overall French commander - the Prussian Guards and the Saxon XII Corps assaulted the village of St. Privat, held by the French VI Corps under Canrobert. St. Privat has become a watch-word for bravery and unnecessary slaughter - the chassepot proving devastating against men advancing in the open, fully aware of the fate awaiting them.

Ultimately, it was on the northern end of the line that the French lost the battle, despite having the entire French Imperial Guard in position to counter-attack and likely win the conflict. Committed too late, the advancing guard - seeing the defeated troops they were supposed to support - was literally ordered to withdraw.

This scenario depicts the action starting in mid-afternoon of 18 August, 1870, as the Prussian Guards are ordered forward against the French holding St. Privat and the surrounding towns and villages. The fighting will continue until 8 PM, when darkness falls and the French, historically, withdrew.

The Battlefield

The map below depicts the battlefield. The hills are not rough, and do not impede movement or provide cover. The buildings are stone, and will give hard cover - no more than a single unit may occupy them. The woods are rough and provide soft cover.



The French will deploy anywhere on or to the east of the hills, and in Roncourt, St. Privat, Jerusalem Farm, and may deploy a single unit forward in Ste-Marie-les-Chenes. The Prussian forces will move onto the lower table edge, starting on the first turn, in Maneuver formations. Any French deployed in Ste-Marie-les-Chenes may be assaulted on the first turn by Prussian units within range if desired.

Orders of Battle

Prussians

Frederick Charles, Commander, 2nd Army

Guards Corps:

2 Divisions, each:

Divisional Commander

2 Guards Brigades: Prussian Guard infantry (each 4 bases)

1 Regiment Guards Cavalry: Prussian Guard Cavalry (2 bases)

Guards Divisional Artillery: Each 2 bases Prussian Artillery

XII (Royal Saxon) Corps:

Commander, 23rd Division

2 Brigades: Prussian Line Infantry (each 4 bases)

1 Saxon Cavalry: Prussian Line Cavalry (2 bases)

Divisional Artillery: 2 bases Prussian Artillery

French

General Canrobert, XI Corps

2 Divisions, each:

Divisional Commander

2 Infantry Brigades: French Line Infantry (each 4 bases)

Divisional Artillery: Each 1 base French Artillery

One division has an extra brigade of infantry attached.

Cavalry Division:

Division Commander

2 Cavalry Brigades: Each 4 bases French Line Cavalry

Game Length and Victory Conditions

The battle begins at 3 PM, and lasts for 5 turns. (Each turn is an hour.) The Prussians must have troops in Roncourt and St. Privat by the end of the game, otherwise it is declared a French victory.