

# 'Napoleon's Austerlitz'

**'The Bogeyman's finest day'**

A battlefield tour 9<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> September 2017

*"Calm yourself, young man. One may be beaten by my army without dishonour!"*

Napoleon, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1805 at Austerlitz to a captured young Russian officer who was demanding to be shot for having lost his artillery.



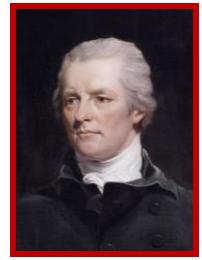
*Napoleon at the Battle of Austerlitz,*  
by Francois Gerard



*The view from Napoleon's command post on 'The Zuran'.*  
*The horizon was vacated by Napoleon to bluff the enemy into battle*

During the summer of 1805 with threats emerging from Russia and Austria, Napoleon abandoned his ambitions to invade England, and turned to deal with these new adversaries. Moving with speed and efficiency, 200,000 French troops departed their camps near Boulogne and began crossing the Rhine along a 160-mile front on 25<sup>th</sup> September. Responding to the threat, Austrian General Karl Mack concentrated his army at Ulm in Bavaria. Conducting a brilliant campaign of manoeuvre, Napoleon swung north and descended on the Austrian rear. On the 20<sup>th</sup> October 1805 after three quick French victories at Wertigen, Haslach and Elchingen the Austrian army humiliatingly surrendered to the Emperor Bonaparte. Six days later Napoleon's army then moved towards Vienna in pursuit of the Russians led by Kutuzov. This path to war lead to the most crushing of Napoleonic victories in a frozen Moravian countryside on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1805.

The recent news of Nelson's destruction of the Franco Spanish fleet at Trafalgar was the cause of great rejoicing. On 9<sup>th</sup> November, London's Mayor acclaimed William Pitt, the British Prime Minister and sworn enemy of Napoleonic France as '*the saviour of Europe*'. In response, Pitt realistically declared '*Europe is not to be saved by any single man, England has saved herself by her exertions and will as I trust save Europe by her example*'. Within 12 weeks Pitt was dead and the armies of the two great powers of Austria and Russia lay defeated. Napoleon now stood pre-eminent across Europe.



*William Pitt*



*Centre: Napoleon's Imperial Garde at the Austerlitz 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Recognised by their white cross belts*



Graeme & Ali Cooper

**Tour Overview** - This 6-day tour visits the battlefields of Napoleon's greatest victory, his first defeat and the battle that ended the 1809 campaign. We visit the battlefield of **Austerlitz** in the Moravian hills where the Emperor achieved his greatest victory. We take in the sights of **Vienna**, including its famous **Arsenal** and the beauty and fascination of the world renowned **Schönbrunn Palace** where Napoleon stayed in the May of 1809. We stroll the **Lobau Island** on the Danube at **Aspern-Essling** and the Napoleonic largest battle up to that time involving 300,000 troops at **Wagram**. We enjoy an end of Tour dinner in Napoleon's breakfast room at the Schlossrestaurant Thürlhof in **Kaiserebersdorf**.

## The Itinerary

### **Day 1: Rendezvous at the Grandezza Hotel, Brno at 1900 Hrs** (Hotel is 15-20 minutes by Taxi from Brno Airport)

- ‘**1805 & 1809**’ – Pre-Dinner Pictorial Presentation

### **Day 2: Battle of Austerlitz – 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1805**

- **The Zuran:** We start the tour at the location where Napoleon observed the Russian army descending from the Pratzen Heights. The battlefield was snowbound and it is from the Zuran that we learn the story, examine how Napoleon’s massive bluff unfolded and the consequences it had for Europe.

From his battlefield headquarters on the Zuran Hill Napoleon had peered blindly ahead into the thick fog that had descended like a shroud over the Pratzen. Then around 8am the Sun rose like a golden orb according to those who saw it. The Emperor’s strategy then unfolded.



- **Sokolnitz and Telnitz Battles:** We drive the Goldbach river line south to the French southern flank via **Jirzikowitz** where we visit a memorial with a Waterloo connection. We see where Marchal Soult’s Divisions commanded by Vandamme and St Hilaire were ready to go under the fog around **Puntowitz** and **Kobelnitz**. We visit the site of the desperate fighting along the pheasantry wall at **Sokolnitz** inside its castle’s grounds and the granary where over 400 prisoners were held. We view **Telnitz** and the area where the frozen ponds played a significant part in the end game.





*The pheasantry wall at Sokolnitz*



*Sokolnitz Castle*



*Mohyla Miru*

- **Pratzen Heights and Staré Vinohrady:** We stroll the **Pratzen Heights** to appreciate the Allied view and enjoy a cuppa at the **Mohyla Miru** (*Peace Memorial*) before visiting its museum.

*"Gentlemen the dispositions for tomorrow or rather for today since midnight has gone cannot be altered. You have heard them read out. We shall do our duty but before a battle there is nothing more important than to sleep well. Gentleman let us take some rest."* Field Marshal Prince Kutuzov – 1<sup>st</sup> December 1805

- **Staré Vinohrady:** Following Lunch at the **Stara Posta**, the Old Post Office where Napoleon slept on 2<sup>nd</sup> December we locate the **Staré Vinohrady** and ponder how Vandamme's pioneers cut their way diagonally through the vineyards to allow 14 battalions to take on the 13 Russian and Austrian battalions. The Russian Imperial Guard Jager and Hussars attack across the same ground and 17½ cavalry squadrons struggle to gain the upper hand.

**Krenowitz:** We stop there to visit battlefield graves.



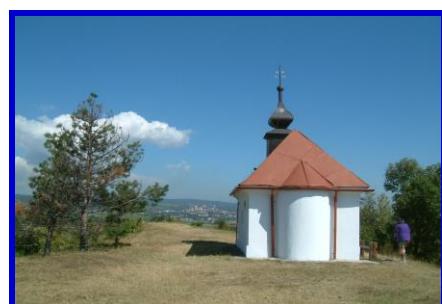
*The Stare Vinohrady seen from the south*

(Above) The Stare Vinohrady, an unimposing rise, then covered with vineyards, was Tsar Alexander's headquarters, whence the Imperial staff viewed with alarm the advance of Vandamme's division straight at themselves. The six battalions of the Austrian Salzburg Infantry Regiment deployed here were crushed by Vandamme's converging attack. The hill then became the epicenter of the furious counterattack by the Russian Imperial Guard.



*Looking east over Bosenitz  
from the Santon*

➤ **Northern Battles:** We climb the **Santon** Hill to gain a spectacular view of the ground where Lannes and Murat secured the northern sector of the battlefield. We tell of the jumping peasant woman, the cavalry battle that went wrong and Murat's location.



*The rebuilt chapel  
atop the Santon Hill*

## Day 3: Battle of Austerlitz – 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1805

- **Slavkov Castle:** We visit Slavkov castle where following the victory Napoleon made his renowned speech from its balcony. We stand there and consider trapped sheep and an Imperial Garde failure. We enjoy a tour of the castle.



*Slavkov castle*

- **Aftermath:** To complete the victory, Napoleon turned south where fighting was still raging around Telnitz and Sokolnitz. He directed St. Hilaire's division to launch a two-pronged attack on Sokolnitz. Enveloping the Allied position, the assault crushed the defenders and forced them to retreat. As their lines began to collapse all along the front, Allied troops started to flee the field. Austerlitz effectively ended the War of the Third Coalition. Two days later, with their territory overrun and their armies destroyed, Austria made peace through the Treaty of Pressburg. In addition to territorial concessions, the Austrians paid a war indemnity of 40 million francs. The remains of the Russian army withdrew east, while Napoleon's forces went into camp in southern Germany. Having taken much of Germany, Napoleon abolished the Holy Roman Empire and established the Confederation of the Rhine as a buffer state between France and Prussia. French casualties 1,305 killed, 6,940 wounded, and 573 captured. Allied casualties -15,000 killed and wounded and 12,000 captured.



*We find this big one!*

- We drive to Vienna and book into our Hotel for 3 nights.

## Day 4: Battles of Aspern - Essling & Wagram 1809

- **The Road to War in 1809:** After the victories in the campaigns of 1805, 1806 and 1807 Napoleon was at the height of his power. All continental Europe had witnessed the strength of his sword; now the only thorn in his side was Britain, who continued to finance and encourage the aggressive intentions of his enemies. To reduce British influence and destroy its economy Napoleon introduced his 'Continental System', a European wide trade ban on British goods. Portugal, an old ally of Britain, had declared herself neutral during Europe's disturbances but was only too happy to open the port of Lisbon to British shipping. But by late November 1807 the loophole had been closed, Portugal even been occupied by Napoleon with Spanish support. The French went on to occupy Spain and soon the Peninsula was in revolt. The threatening situation in Spain and rumours that Austria was



rearming cause Napoleon much concern. In September 1808, he persuaded the Russian Tsar Alexander to support him should Austria declared war on France. Satisfied with this Napoleon orders the transfer of 200,000 men from Germany to Spain where he himself proceeded to deal with increasing vexing situation in the west. Austria decided that the time was right to gain revenge for the losses of 1805. Support was promised by Britain and Prussia and there was the prospect of France being weakened by the escalating conflict in Spain so decision was taken to prepare for new war to begin in the spring of 1809.



*Schlossrestaurant Thirnlhof – Where Napoleon would take breakfast when he visited his sappers at work on the Danube*

## ➤ Battle of Aspern – Essling 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1809:

Napoleon attempted a forced crossing of the Danube near Vienna, but the French and their allies were driven back by the Austrians under Archduke Charles. The battle for Aspern and Essling was the Emperor's first defeat. However, Archduke Charles failed to secure a decisive victory as Napoleon was able to successfully withdraw most of his forces. We visit the chapel museum, the Aspern Lion and try to image the carnage and street fighting that destroyed two villages.



*One of several memorials that still exist on the Island. We walk there.*

➤ **Lobau Island:** We walk the island to the sight of Napoleon's Headquarters, and visit the Essling granary that saw the Austrians attack over open ground throughout the battle. Napoleon relied on Lannes's leadership to rebuff the Austrian assault to enable Napoleon time to withdraw his army back across the Danube.



*The Granary in Essling*



*Napoleon visits Lannes on his deathbed. Larrey looks on*



*Fd Maréchal Jean Lannes  
We visit the house where Baron Larrey the French Surgeon-General tried to save Lannes who dies of gangrene nine days after the battle. A cannon ball had severed his right leg above his kneecap.*



*A triumphant Archduke Charles at the Battle of Aspern-Essling*

## ➤ Battle of Wagram 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> July 1809:

➤ It took Napoleon six weeks to prepare his next offensive, for which he amassed a 165,000-man French, German and Italian army in the vicinity of Vienna. The Battle of Wagram began after Napoleon crossed the Danube with the bulk of these forces during the night of 4<sup>th</sup> July and attacked the 145,000-man strong Austrian army. Having successfully crossed the river, Napoleon attempted an early breakthrough and launched a series of evening attacks against the Austrian army. The Austrians were thinly spread in a wide semicircle, but held a naturally strong position. After the attackers enjoyed some initial success, the defenders regained the upper hand and the attacks failed. Bolstered by his success, the next day at dawn Archduke Charles launched a series of attacks along the entire battle line, seeking to take the opposing army in a double envelopment. The offensive failed against the French right but nearly broke Napoleon's left.



*Napoleon crosses the Danube to Lobau Island*

- The Emperor countered by launching a cavalry charge, which temporarily halted the Austrian advance. He then redeployed IV Corps to stabilise his left, while setting up a grand battery, which pounded the Austrian right and centre. The tide of battle turned and the Emperor launched an offensive along the entire line, while *Maréchal Louis-Nicolas Davout* drove an offensive, which turned the Austrian left, and rendered Charles's position untenable. We cross to the **Island of Lobau** and visit the site of Napoleon's Headquarters. We view from **Raasdorf** the battlefield and overview the story of this monumental clash of arms.



Napoleon put 12 bridges across this water on the eastern side of Lobau.

- We view the open ground of **The Marchfeld** towards **Sussenbrunn** and **Aderklaa** where McDonald advanced 'In Square' and Napoleon's crisis developed. We take lunch in **Deutsch-Wagram** and then visit its museum. We visit the Austrian memorial and site of the '**Sachsenklemme**' friendly fire incident.



*The Wagram bank behind which the Austrians fought off attack after attack*

- Towards mid-afternoon on 6 July, Charles admitted defeat and whilst still in command of a cohesive force decided to retreat to Bohemia frustrating enemy attempts to pursue. We view the **Russbach Stream** and '**the Wagram**' (Name for an earth bank).



*The Austrian Memorial*

- Along the Wagram we view the villages of **Baumersdorf** which was attacked by Oudinot's men, and **Markgrafneusiedl** where Davout yet again turned a battle for his Emperor. It was in and around here that the key decisions to the battle endgame were played out. We visit the Napoleonic cemetery at **Ober Siebenbrunn**.

- The French went further east and initially formed a line with their left on **Gross Enzerdorf** and their right on **Kummerleinsdorf** (to the north east of Sachsgang). Until Davout could get there, Oudinot formed the right wing and bumped into the two Austrian jäger battalions in Sachsgang (there were two battalion garrisons in many of the villages most of which staged fighting retreats). The Jagers put up a hell of a fight, resisting Oudinots infantry all morning and only surrendering when Oudinot deployed howitzers and literally blew them out of the castle.



*The Sachsgang*

- The Grande Armée eventually defeated the Austrians at **Znaim**. With the battle still raging, Charles decided to ask for an armistice, effectively ending the war. The battle of Wagram was particularly bloody, mainly due to the use of artillery on a flat battlefield packed with some 300,000 men. Although Napoleon's victory was incomplete, nonetheless, the defeat shattered the morale of the Austrians who could not muster the will to continue. The resulting Treaty of Schönbrunn meant the loss of one sixth of the Austrian Empire's subjects, along with some territories.



*The tower above Markgrafneusiedl.  
We go there*



*The Napoleonic graves*



## Day 5: The Schönbrunn Palace

- **The Schönbrunn Palace:** We spend the morning at this seventeenth century marvel. Emperor Leopold I commissioned the Baroque architect Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, to design an imperial hunting lodge for his son, Crown Prince Joseph, later to become Emperor Joseph I. Replacing the château de plaisance built on this site for the dowager empress Eleonora of Gonzaga in 1642, it was to grow into a palatial imperial residence over the course of the eighteenth century.



- When **Napoleon** occupied Vienna in 1805 and 1809, he chose Schönbrunn as his headquarters. During this time, he probably used this room as his bedroom. His marriage to Marie Louise, the daughter of Emperor Franz II (I) in 1810 was intended to seal the peace between the two rulers. A son was born of this union. Napoléon François Charles Joseph Bonaparte, Prince Imperial, King of Rome, known in the Austrian court as Franz from 1814 onward. After the defeat and abdication of Napoleon, Marie Louise brought her two-year-old son to Vienna, where he grew up at his Austrian grandfather's court.



*Napoleon's Room*

- On most mornings in the early summer of 1809 Napoleon, would take the 8-mile carriage ride from here to the Danube to overview his sapper's preparations for the river crossing of his army which would subsequently fight the battle of Wagram.



*The Schönbrunn Palace*



*Palace Gardens*

- An especial favourite of his grandfather, he shared the latter's interest in botany. A portrait of him as a child shows him gardening in the park at Laxenburg Palace. The young duke suffered from tuberculosis and died in 1832 at the age of only twenty-one. His death-mask and his beloved pet, a crested lark, today remain as mementos of Napoleon's only legitimate son.

- **Free Afternoon to explore Vienna.** Some locations to visit: Belvedere Palaces, Ring Boulevard, Imperial Palace, St. Stephen's Cathedral, Spanish Riding School, Prater and Imperial Vault.



*2005 Remembered!*

- **Schlossrestaurant Thürlhof.** We enjoy dinner in Napoleon's breakfast room in Kaiser-Ebersdorf. We dine at his table!

## Day 6: The Arsenal

- **The Arsenal:** We spend the morning at Vienna's world renowned Austrian Herresgeschtliches Museum, 'The Arsenal' Here there is something for everyone who shares an interest in European history.

*Right: The car that Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated in is just one of the exhibits. Bullet holes as well!*



- Depart for Vienna Airport

Tour Price sharing: £1425   Single Supplement: £185   Deposit: £250

*Tour Starts at Hotel Grandezza, Brno at 1800 Hrs 9<sup>th</sup> September  
and Ends at Vienna Airport at 1500 Hrs 14<sup>th</sup> September*

### Included in the price of the Tour will be:

- 3/4 Star Hotel Accommodation
- 5 Dinners 3 Course with wine
- Participant Folder with Maps
- Access to Museums
- Tour Manager
- Guild of Battlefield Guides - Accredited Guide
- Luxury Coach

### Excluded from the price of the Tour will be:

- Flights
- Lunches
- Hotel extra services, telephone, bar and business facilities
- Personal Insurance

### Flight Options

#### OUT: 9<sup>th</sup> September

London Stansted to Brno Flt Ryanair FR 8403

Dep 13.50Hrs - Arr 1700 Hrs

#### BACK: 14<sup>th</sup> September

Vienna to London Stansted Flt Germanwings 4U 5832

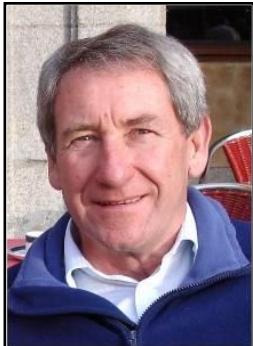
Dep 1740 Hrs - Arr Stansted 1900 Hrs

**Please note Flights are not included in the tour price. The above option is what Graeme and Ali have booked.  
British Airways and other carriers also offer flights that meet the Rendezvous time in Brno.**



*The Battle of Austerlitz 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Re-Enactment 2005*

## *Guide – Graeme Cooper*



Graeme Cooper has been battlefield guiding since 1995 and owns *Cooper's Waterloo Tours*, a family run business specialising in tailored tours of the Napoleonic Campaign battlefields of the Peninsular War and Waterloo for adults, and leadership training for the military.

A Fellow of the International Napoleonic Society (FINS), Graeme qualified as a Waterloo Campaign Guide with Les Guides 1815 in 1998.

Graeme's interest in the Napoleonic Campaigns was sparked during his time as a cadet at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst by his tutors, the late and renowned military historians and authors, Professor Richard Holmes and Dr David Chandler.

This intrigue, kept alive by a military career, has maintained his fascination for Napoleonic campaigns and a strong concern for the preservation of the Waterloo battlefield, which he first visited in 1973.

In November 2002, Graeme founded *The International Guild of Battlefield Guides* and was the Secretary until November 2009 when he became the first member to be elected to the Roll of Honour for his services to the Guild.

His belief in the correlation between battlefield actualities and the business environment led him in May 2006 to form *Corporate Battlefields Ltd*, a leadership training company for corporate management.

*Corporate Battlefields* has since then delivered to senior management teams from eBay, Boeing UK, BAE Systems, Lilly, Brother UK, Martinair (KLM), UPS, HSBC and NATO's Secretary General on battlefields including Waterloo, Isandlwana, Ypres, The Somme, the Normandy D-Day Beaches and Naseby. The Company have recently established a team in SE Asia.

Graeme is married and lives in Essex with his family. He enjoys golf, photography, chess and telemark skiing.

### **Cooper's Waterloo Tours**

Cooper's Court

Moreton

Ongar

Essex

CM5 0LE

T: 0044 (0)1277 890470

M: 07968 984347

E-mail:

[info@corporatebattlefields.com](mailto:info@corporatebattlefields.com)

Website:

[www.corporatebattlefields.com](http://www.corporatebattlefields.com)



*Graeme Cooper-Qualified Guide  
Guild of Battlefield Guides  
Badge No 007*

