



# Thunder on the Danube: Napoleon's Defeat of the Habsburg, Vol I: 1

*John H. Gill*

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## **Thunder on the Danube: Napoleon's Defeat of the Habsburg, Vol I: 1** John H. Gill

The Franco-Austrian War of 1809 was Napoleon's last victorious war. He would win many battles in his future campaigns, but never again would one of Europe's great powers lie broken at his feet. In this respect 1809 represents a high point of the First Empire yet at the same time Napoleon's armies were declining in quality and he was beginning to display the corrosive flaws that contributed to his downfall five years later. In this volume Gill tackles the political background to the war and the opening battles of Abensberg, Eggmühl and Regensburg. He explores the motivations that prompted Austria to launch an offensive against France while Napoleon and many of his veterans were distracted in Spain. Though surprised by the timing of the Austrian attack on the 10th April, the French Emperor completely reversed a dire strategic situation with stunning blows that he called his most brilliant and most skillful maneuvers. Following a breathless pursuit down the Danube valley, Napoleon occupied the palaces of the Habsburgs for the second time in four years. Basing his work on years of primary research and battlefield visits, Gill provides a thorough analysis replete with spectacular combat, diplomatic intrigue and the illustrious cast of characters that populated this extraordinary age. The concluding volumes will take the war to its conclusion, including Napoleon's first unequivocal repulse at the Battle of Espers-Essling, the titanic Battle of Wagram and the neglected struggle at Znaim that led to armistice."

## **Thunder on the Danube: Napoleon's Defeat of the Habsburg, Vol I: 1 Details**

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## **From Reader Review Thunder on the Danube: Napoleon's Defeat of the Habsburg, Vol I: 1 for online ebook**

### **Matt says**

Completed the first of this three volume series. Gill does an excellent contrasting Austrian command and control with the French allies.

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### **John Vandike says**

Solid little work on the politics and diplomacy that lead up to the Austrian Empire's decision to attack Napoleonic France and the initial stages of the war. The coverage of the conflict in this volume is from 09-April-1809 when the Austrian army first crossed the frontier until shortly after the battles around Abensburg-Eckmuhl (Eggmuhl) 20-22 April 1809.

Some decent writing, not entirely sure why the author elected to split this book into three volumes as the first book is probably only 200 pages long in physical form. The Kindle version reads fast. I would have two complaints: one, there is no overarching campaign map for the volume, which would be handy because many of the places, other than perhaps Regensburg and Munich, are small villages. Second, in the Kindle version the available maps are tiny and difficult to read (more a complaint about the Kindle's ability to render map than a complaint about the book).

Plan on reading the following two volumes when I get some other volumes of my plate.

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### **Windsor says**

Great book. Looking forward to 2

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### **Betsy says**

Parts of this book are excellent and quite informative. I learned a great deal about the reasons behind the 1809 Campaign, especially the mistakes made by the Austrians. Their foreign minister, Stadion, was gung-ho on war and he got it. Napoleon, because of his desire to defeat Britain in the Peninsula, really did not seem to want a war with Austria then, but was not about to back down when the Austrians attacked.

Of primary interest to me was the Battle of Eggmuhl, which resulted in a victory for part of Marshal Davout's Third Corps. At the end of the first book in the trilogy, the Austrians are dispirited as the Archduke Charles hopes to find an answer to his many problems. This is a good book, but it helps to know something about the subject because the names and actions, particularly of the Austrians can be confusing.

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