

Thunderstorm Effects



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Not everybody is interested in delving in to weather effects. They just want a good sensible rule that is not burdensome.

Battle during a Thunderstorm was a rare occurrence. But there was one day in 1813 where a storm front opened up on two battlefields at once: Katzbach and Dresden. In fact it was the storm of the century. At Dresden, Murat's massed cavalry had an oversized impact, capturing several Austrian divisions—the infantry couldn't shoot. So that was a pretty major reduction in strength. At Katzbach it was another story, and the French cavalry was unable to deploy on the narrow sunken road. A meeting engagement opened with the Prussians on the hilltop, and the French trying to get up, you see what happened. The French threw away their muskets.

“Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing more to take away.”
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

For 3,000 years battles were not fought during the rain if they could avoid it. Both sides would typically stand down. The commencement of Bonaparte's first campaign was delayed because of rain in the Apennine passes. There are numerous examples: Napoleon delayed the attack at Borodino because of rain. With forces depending upon dry powder, a fight in thunderstorm must involve a reduction in firepower, regardless whether the troops are standing in a town or on a hill. Your inability to fire when the attacker is most vulnerable means you have to let the enemy close for hand to hand fighting.

The town benefit is voided by wet powder. If men are taking shelter from the elements, they are not, at that point, part of an effective fighting force. Some players think that a force on a hilltop should receive the

defensive benefit of the hill even during a Thunderstorm, so the units would be reduced for the storm after being increased 50% because of the slope. They disagree with the note on page 22 of the rules states:

Weather Conditions (WX) vary from game to game, and are not cumulative with Terrain Effects; use the worst that applies.

There will always be good ideas that are not in the rules. A good designer is shaping the

material. It is not designing if you just kitchen sink a bunch of ideas into print.

If there is one overriding factor that I pay close attention to, it is player heuristics—cutting away the dead wood to leave the core concept. The game has to be playable for a large audience and they are not looking through super fine-grained microscopes. They want the big picture. That is what I try to do. I crop away what doesn't serve the player. I don't crop away the *core*, just as much of the dead wood as I can.

