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SPECIAL ISSUE: WATERLOO 200

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Tentative Pub. Date: 30 September 2015
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WARGAME DESIGN •C•O•N•T•E•N•T•S•

EDITORIAL
NLB, Forty Years Young

Napoleon's Last Battles is probably the most popular, most widely-played Napoleonic wargame. Across all editions—including in Dutch, Spanish and French, boxed editions with mounted maps, from publishers SPI, TSR and DG—more than 100,000 units have been sold.[1] Many of these have been played upwards of 100 times. Players have reported wearing all the ink off the Napoleon counter, their maps in tatters. What can account for the immense popularity of this game? It is a game of many firsts:

• First game where leaders did more than add a strength bonus to combat.
• First game with step-reduction, back-printed counters.
• First game combining four separate battles into one long campaign.

However, the full explanation for the game's popularity cannot be ascribed to any one of these features. When we discuss game design it is usually in terms of nuts and bolts. What is harder to talk about properly is the real crux of the matter—how it all comes together in play.

In a good Sequence of Play there is a natural flow, a connection between events, so that one action leads logically to the next. A bad sequence can make a game tiresome, with much flipping through the rules. For one example, it took us several iterations to set the right times to reveal hidden forces.

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[1] Avalon Hill's *Waterloo* may have sold more units.

A Personal View
The Historiography of Waterloo
Andrew Hobley

Are there more books about *any* other three days in history (other than Good Friday to Easter)? To read all those published in English in the last few years would take longer than the Emperor spent on Elba—but it would be more fun. My experience of this avalanche of books has been riveting.

I was 11 or 12 when my parents gave me David Howarth's 1968 book, *A Near Run Thing,* in a Book Club edition. Based mostly on British sources, it retails a battle fought by brave British, cowardly Dutch and a walk-on part for the Prussians. Airfix models led me to their plastic soldier range, into wargaming and military history.

My interest in Napoleonic history developed later, around my time at University. Wellington's war in Spain was sparked by a very cheap copy of a good book on the campaign; thanks to Osprey I got a better understanding of the battles, and also the other Napoleonic campaigns. What I knew about Waterloo: French column against British line, some cavalry charges, Guard repulsed. Chandler's *Campaigns of Napoleon* told a similar story to Howarth. I looked at the map more carefully and understood the Prussian role better. Why buy another book that told more of the same? Some things puzzled me—why was repulse of a couple of thousand Guard a cataclysm for the whole French army?

Hamilton-William's 1993 book *Waterloo - New Perspectives* opened my eyes to the inadequacy of British accounts, the role of the Dutch-Belgian troops, in particular the contribution of the Prussians. The map of the battle at 7:30 PM, with Zeithen's cavalry breaking onto the French rear as the Guard were driven back, suddenly made the French rout clear. Hamilton-William had an axe to grind, being very pro-Napoleon, and his assertions were hotly contested among historians. Hofschröer's two-volume Waterloo campaign (1998-99) quickly arrived on my shelves. Now the impact of the German troops under Wellington was clearer; Waterloo was a multi-national affair. The Prussian battles of Ligny and Wavre got proper coverage. Other authors raised my interest, such

as Nosworthy in *Battle Tactics of Napoleon* stating the II Corps attack was in fact *French* line vs. a *British* column and mentions of the Imperial Guard attacking in square.

In the last few years more accounts of the battle. The volume by Glover of the unpublished Siborne letters was a revelation; I have not read them all but suddenly many primary sources are available from all sides. With the bicentenary new books seemingly appear every five minutes. On the Internet, anyone with an interest should visit http://www.waterloo-campaign.nl/ which not only seems to use every source going and quotes them in the original language, but seems reasonably unbiased – or at least provides sources for every statement.

Waterloo is still very contested ground with national and regimental honour all tangled up with 'the truth'. Who defeated the Imperial Guard – the 52nd, the 1st Foot Guards, Detmer's Dutch? What did Wellington know? Was it all Ney and Grouchy's fault? Were the Dutch really committed to the fight?

I don't have an answer to any of these and it seems that even with all sources and an unbiased view some matters, 200 years later, will remain obscure. As wargames try to replicate history, if we cannot agree on the perfect history we will never agree on the perfect wargame. Having said that, in my book TLNB comes close!

The Problem of 17th June, 1815

For many years the reasons for the behaviour of the French High Command on the 17th June 1815 were puzzling. Ney did nothing, Grouchy waited for orders and Napoleon pottered around on the Ligny battlefield until mid-afternoon, when he finally organized a pursuit of the Anglo-Allied and Prussian armies.

Ney had been held on the 16th by an increasingly strong enemy. He was waiting for news of what had happened on his right and to be told when the rest of the army would be coming to join his attack. Any lack of information can be laid at the door of Napoleon.

Grouchy was with Napoleon, awaiting orders, so who would expect him to act independently? What of Napoleon? Piles, indigestion, exhaustion (physical and mental) have all been suggested for his lack of action.

It seems clear that none of these causes explains Napoleon's inaction, but a lack of information. The Emperor had taken the central position, attacked and driven back one enemy army and now had the crucial decision of the campaign to make – pursue the Prussians or strike the Anglo-Allies? What were the Prussians doing? If falling back on their communications towards Namur they would be out of the fight for the next few days, even if reinforced by Bülow's IV Corps. But if they were falling back towards Brussels there was a chance they would be able to join with the Anglo–Allied army, negating the whole point of Napoleon's initial strategic moves.

What did his cavalry scouts tell him? The answer was not much. Ligny had ended after nightfall, hardly conducive conditions for effective scouting and for some reason there was no pursuit. The next day Pajol's cavalry were sent by Grouchy (possibly after verbal orders from Napoleon) towards Namur, Exelman's cavalry were sent towards Gembloux. Both were not in pursuit; they were on reconnaissance. Exelmans moved cautiously as he had no infantry support and allowed the Prussian III Corps to slip away. Pajol's men sighted columns of troops and baggage heading towards Namur, and this information was finally passed back to Napoleon. At the same time he found out that Wellington held Quatre-Bras in strength.

Napoleon thought he had routed the Prussians, that they would be out of action for several days, and would be retreating on their supply base at Namur or further toward Liege. A hard pursuit was not needed as there was another Allied Army to attack. He assumed the Anglo-Allied army would be retiring from Quatre-Bras; as far as he knew, Ney had the forces needed to defeat Wellington and should have done so. But he lacked clarification before deciding what to do next.

Once he heard of the Prussian movement towards Namur, it confirmed his hunce and he sent Grouchy with two infantry and two cavalry corps northeast after the Prussians; to encourage their retreat and to fall, if necessary, on the Anglo-Allied flank nearer Brussels. The rest of the army could now strike the Anglo-Allies at Quatre-Bras on the front and left flank. Unfortunately for Napoleon, the Duke also heard of the Prussian retreat. Wellington had already decided to retire. Moreover the Prussians were falling back on Wavre (the troops Pajol saw were mostly stragglers and supply units), and so, in a position to join Wellington on the 18th. This key intelligence did not reach Napoleon until the morning of 18 June, by which time he was preparing the attack on Wellington's troops.

In a game of the campaign, starting on 16 June, that will run fairly historically – a big battle at Ligny and a scrap at Quatre-Bras, the key French decision is what to do on the 17th.[1] In a wargame with the scale of *Napoleon's Last Gamble* it seems almost impossible to replicate this strategic problem. Even in a three-player game with hidden movement, where the Prussians could win by saving their army at the expense of the Anglo-Allied army and Brussels (a very ahistorical action for Blücher), it will be clear to the French where the Prussian counters are moving – off map to the east or north-west to Waterloo.

Victory conditions and supply rules will help push the Prussians east and the Anglo-Allies west. *NLB* had the Prussian supply sources on the eastern map, so marching west risked being cut off from supply. But the victory points were all about losses and the French marching to Brussels – nothing to encourage a Prussian player to save his army and march off east. TLNB 'General Retreat' rule could allow the Prussians to win by saving their army after a battle. But whatever the victory conditions say the French player's godlike view will tell them where the Prussian counters are heading – even if it is not clear which units are where.

I have only played *NLB* and *Victory Point* games *Waterloo 20* so other games may have resolved the problem. Playing with hidden units you could have a 'double up' rule – on the 4 AM turn of 17 June every Prussian unit out of the line of sight of the French has a dummy placed, so the French player does not discover too soon which stream of troops is the real one. The 'Commanders Sleep' card may replicate this delay and dilemma – but if the conditions on 17 June are very different from history – say a Prussian army plus Bülow still at Ligny, having held the French off while Wellington retires after his defeat at the crossroads – it seems wrong to tie the French down with their historical inertia. I have no obvious answer for this problem, but I think it is important. What to do on 17 June is *the* big game-winning decision the French player has to make.

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[1] Starting on the 15th gives more options.

Corsican Ogres[1]
John W. Kisner

The following review was published 19 years ago, in John Kisner's Zone of Control *Magazine.*

Ty Bomba did not invent the "mini-monster" when he designed *Proud Monster* a few years back; rather, he rediscovered a format that SPI popularized twenty years ago. Games like *Battles for the Ardennes* and *Napoleon's Last Battles* were among the first attempts to give simple games a broader appeal by allowing the bigger-is-better crowd to stitch together the four parts of a conventional quad into a game that, both literally and figuratively, was larger than the sum of its parts. It comes as no surprise, then, that the rekindled popularity of the genre has led Decision Games to reprint the two SPI classics, and that Clash of Arms has done so with a game of the same vintage, OSG's *Napoleon at Leipzig*.

This summer I played both of the aforementioned Napoleonic reprints. The pair offer an interesting study in contrasts in terms of system and situation. Waterloo's a rigid linear campaign that seems all-too familiar; Leipzig is circular and surprising.

As for system, I can almost see your collective eyebrows flutter at the mere

suggestion of contrast! By appearances, they are, after all, fraternal twins, right down to the CRT. But the line I draw isn't at the core; rather I'm comparing what Kevin Zucker has done to nurture his OSG design (which came second) around the peripheral edges of simulation.

The strongest distinction can be drawn between Zucker's evolutionary handling of cavalry charges. In *Napoleon's Last Battles*, they are abstractly represented by a column shift granted the attacked who has "combined arms" (artillery, infantry, cavalry present). At its most advanced level, *Napoleon at Leipzig* replaces this simplistic approach with a separate mechanism by which cavalry attempts to overrun a defender's hex. If successful, the charge will make it impossible for the defender to retreat after subsequent "normal" combat—a huge tactical advantage under a CRT that emphasizes retreat results. The attendant risks are commensurately large: failure of the charge itself or of the follow-up regular attack, eliminates the cavalry unit. If you enjoy taking calculated risks, like I do, you will find this approach to cavalry charges infinitely more interesting.

I'm compelled to report that my first brush with *Napoleon at Leipzig's* refinements was decidedly unpleasant. We were playing the full battle, and I was in charge of the French to the north of Leipzig. Truth be known, I was feeling pretty cocky. I am, after all, a big-shot game reviewer and magazine publisher, and there seemed little about *Napoleon at Leipzig* that I hadn't seen before. And so, without a care in the world, I deployed my troops rather haphazardly along the crest near Möckern (see review's map sample). Craig, my opponent, took the affair much more seriously and he crashed into my line with an unexpected fury.

The first thing he did was send what was, by all appearances, a crummy cavalry brigade charging into the center of my line. Risking little—just a 1-spoint unit—he succeeded in his attempt to overrun one of my stacks. I'd hardly the chance to pour myself a cola and my line was already cracked!

Next he spotted a poorly-positioned artillery unit—and it was gone before I'd opened our first bag of chips. You see, in this game you really don't want to deploy your guns, as I had based on the logic of most other designs, behind a crest: they can't shoot from those hexes and defend with just a strength of "1" if surprised by an attack that comes over the rise.[2] My error was

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[1] Reprinted from *Zone of Control*, p. 26, Autumn 1996

[2] This would not have been true of TLNB today—guns would be able to fire if adjacent to the crest.

compounded by not stacking infantry with the guns. Yikes, three good units already in the dead-pile; the game was more subtle than I thought.

I won't bore you with a blow-by-blow recap, but a final episode in the bloody fight between Ney and Blücher merits attention. Embarrassed by my initial losses, the system gave me the freedom to make the classic mistake of trying to win it all back in one blow. You can better appreciate my gamble after a runthrough of the game's treatment of command and control.

Napoleon at Leipzig has its roots firmly grounded in the "panic" models that were all the rage at Zucker's first employer, SPI, during the mid-1970s. In his variation on the theme, only a limited number of units are guaranteed to activate for movement. On my corner of the field, command emanates from Marshal Ney, who can put one corps in command per turn. Two French infantry corps are in the area, Marmont's and Bertrand's. One of them has to fend for itself by rolling initiative, with failure means no movement at all is possible.

Surveying the mid-morning situation, I decided to have Ney activate the corps with the lower initiative rating, and trust Marmont—who was actually in the more critical position—to get initiative with his 50% chance. It goes without saying that I blew the dieroll. My plan involved an elaborate envelopment of the open Prussian flank, one that surely would have routed them from the field, with Marmont maneuvering to the right, and Bertrand holding the front. With the command breakdown, I was left scrambling to redraw a straight line by rolling for individual unit initiative (a chance of just 1-in-6) one at a time right before moving (no not moving) each brigade.

The asymmetry of the situation produces the lion's share of the game's appeal. On, the system is good enough. It won't win any prizes for innovation, but neither does it get in the way of a good time. But the two subplots, to the north and south of Leipzig, create marvelous tension. On each of the separated fields you find a dynamic attacker taking on a back-peddling foe who's happy to trade space for time—heck, there are moments when you're happy just to live through the next turn!

Best of all, the roles are reversed in each of the fights, so that each army has the chance to attack and defend throughout the first day. Furthermore, even though the twin actions are geographically isolated, the effect of one upon the other is quite direct. Should Blücher blast through Ney's line quickly, the enormity of the threat to Leipzig [between the two opening battles, but nearer to Ney's sector] will force the French to siphon units away from Napoleon's effort near Wachau. The obvious historical parallel is the Central powers' position in WWI. The scales are vastly different, but if you just turn the compass rose 90° clockwise and think in terms of that war's east and west fronts, you'll have a pretty good idea of how to approach *Napoleon at Leipzig*.

I'm not much of a wine drinker, but know that by many people questions of color and vintage are taken as seriously as I take utility and innovation. If it came in a bottle instead of a box, *Napoleon at Leipzig* would be a wine that's beautifully aged. When I first played the game almost twenty years ago, it seemed good but far from great. This summer, the same design seemed almost perfect. Like the first time, we had two or three players on a side; unlike the old days, most players had no time to do prep-work. Now trying to teach Guderian's blitzkrieg to a group of guys a few years back was a nightmare; teaching this system was a dream come true. Most of us had played *Napoleon's Last Battles* to help Monte with his review, and the rest had played it years ago, so it was great to be able to introduce the system with "it}s just like the other game, except..." And, while the exceptions are important and numerous, the foundation of past experience was strong enough to get us into the action quickly.

As close readers of ZOC well know, I have a low regard for reprints and second editions. It's a view that has lately been shaken. *Napoleon at Leipzig* may have a few bugs, but overall the package shows me there is a purpose to be served. This one serves it well.

Napoleon's Last Battles: Lost and Found

Nicola Contardi

I recently played Napoleon's Last Battles, first original edition, at a Con in Piacenza: what an emotion, after so many years! This is still a fascinating game. Rules are simpler, counters are neat and clear. Historical flavour is guaranteed. What did we add to the games in the following years? More chrome, more complexity, more realism. But I think we have lost something in this process ...

Between *Napoleon Last Battles* (NLB, 1976) and *Napoleon Against Russia* (2015), last child of the Library of Napoleonic Battles, show forty years of continuous refinement of the design, improved by the feedback of hundreds of players. The original system has evolved into something quite different. What was lost and what was gained in this process?

Lost

Most of the considerations in this section lead back to a simple concept: immediacy. The "sit down and play" effect, typical of many good games of the golden age, is clearly evident in *NLB*. The importance of this effect cannot be overestimated for it makes it simpler to attract newcomers to the table and, in my opinion, it can let a game "future-proof" as is the case for *NLB*. The first thing which attracts your eyes is the SPI style **map**. We cannot fully compare a 1976 map with computer graphics generated in 2015, but NLB's map has its own strengths. Terrain features are clearly observable from more than one meter away and this gives immediate comprehension of the position of the armies and their possibilities of movement. Setup for all units is printed on the map, common in the old says, but seldom happens nowadays. **Counters** are old-fashioned, one colour per nationality, but are simple and neat, text on them tiny but readable. Colours are just right to "detach" units from the map, which gives you an immediate perception of all your (and opponent's) units on the battlefield. A reduced unit is promptly identified by that white, evident strip on the back of the unit counter.

But of course the **rules** are where the biggest differences lie between *NLB* and the TLNB system used in *NAR*. The old game comes with 7 pages of basic rules plus 3 pages for the Campaign. Ten pages of rules in all, which are rarely accessed even during the first play and essentially without exceptions. Compare this with *NAR*, at 22 pages of basic rules plus some pages of Scenario rules and optional Card rules.

Now open *NLB*'s box and search for the tables. Where are they? There is just one combat table that is simply accommodated on a corner of the map for easy reference. And what about the terrain key? Here it is, on the back of the rules booklet occupying one third of a page. *NAR* has four combat tables now and a terrain key which spreads over two pages. Of course length of the rules and number of game supports is not the unique indicator of game complexity, but in this case it is.

With these rules, a single battle game in *NLB* may last an hour, while a campaign game is a two-three evenings affair.

Found

Hold the *NAR* box in your hands, and you will immediately see an exceptionally finished and professional package. Every component in there is top-notch: **maps** are gorgeously illustrated and accurate, even if "reading" them is sometimes more difficult. **Counters** are pretty, colorful, rich of information. Formations can now be easily distinguished by the colored horizontal band. **Markers** are superb (beauty of markers grants beauty of the whole game).

The **game system** has undergone a long process of stepwise refinement during the last forty years. Historical considerations, search for more realism and more harmony (among the modules of the system) have guided Kevin and his partners in consolidating a system which now brings all the knowledge of the authors about warfare in the Napoleonic era at a grand-tactical level. I have recently read sort of criticisms about the current system, based on the alleged inaccuracy the combat system and the controversial "rigid" ZoCs. I honestly think these considerations are totally out of context: just look at the outcome of the game, and at the components which allow that outcome.

In my opinion, there are four key factors introduced in the new game system. First, the **command rules** are now improved and inserted in the basic sequence of play. Let us say that these are "the" rules all of us learnt and some of

us got inspiration for new designs. **Vedettes** introduce the possibility to mask part of an army to enemy sight and so became a key tactical element on the battlefield (screening an entire maneuver at a more strategic level is not possible with Vedettes, but this is probably out of scope for these units). **Cavalry charges**: while I seldom make a charge during play, they are there for popular demand I presume, and I think it was wise a decision. They add chances to players and they add chrome; that sort of chrome enlightens a game. **Cards** were one of the last additions to the system. And while the system has fortunately not become card-driven, I love cards: they are ergonomic to the whole design, add uncertainty and exponentially increase re-playability, which is of great value.

"The Song remains the same" ...
Much changed, but something even more important did not. It's what I call "immersion." Notwithstanding the different learning curves of the two games and the look of the physical components—which was greatly elaborated—the historical feeling and the emotional experience remains the same. The emotional experience is to me more relevant when deciding to playing a game. You command your troops on the battlefield as your historical counterpart did. You cannot see with your eyes what he saw, you must use the eyes of your imagination. But you can act on the same leverages he used and feel the same sentiment as he did. The best games are able to magically realize that, and both *NLB* and *NAR* do.

So is *NLB*, dated back to 1976, still a good gaming experience worth your time? Definitely Yes. And what about *NAR*? Even more. If you are ready for a more demanding learning phase, you will be rewarded with an even deeper and profound experience, with unique historical insights.

There are many lessons here for everyone interested in wargame design. To my mind design is an evolutionary, never-ending process of improvement, and *NLB*, one of Kevin's masterpieces, is here to prove that.

Thanks, Kevin, for the countless hours of pure entertainment you gave to me and to thousands of other friends during time spent with your games.

Editorial *(continued from page 2)*

The Turn Track shows the forward flow of time. The sequence of play details sub-divisions of time. Everything takes place in the context of the governing weather, so that is determined first. Command is resolved before Command Movement. Initiative Movement follows after—inevitable mis-steps will occur.

The Combat Phase begins with LOS, and cavalry retreats before bombardment, then cavalry charges and then Combat—three steps for each Combat Result. But all of this structure has to hang together so that the player can find his way through—it quickly becomes second nature. The order of events builds in excitement; only at the end of the turn will we find out if our plans succeeded. Then, either way, we have to consolidate and rest, having exhausted our initiative, and the opponent now has a chance to counter our moves.

The design intent was to start with a basic move-and-fight model, leaving room for innovations in Leadership and Command. This balanced design approach is one reason for the enjoyment level. As a result the rules are quick and fairly self-evident. There aren't a lot of gray areas. The overall narrative is compelling, without fatiguing the players in a welter of detail.

The city of Smolensk under siege, from Napoleon Against Russia.

NLB's Design Revolution
John Prados

The very first edition of *Napoleon's Last Battles* was put out by Simulations Publications. I'll never forget that because its designer, Kevin Zucker, and I were moving in the same direction at the time, though we did not know it, and he reached print first. I felt it was a weakness in many game systems of that early era that our mechanics took care of basic situational properties (movement, combat, supply) but left out the higher-level functions—like command and control—that make the other things possible.

At the time I was laboring over a new game, *Von Manstein,* that did command but approached from a different direction. Headquarters dispense Reserves and funnel supply to the front line troops and Leaders contribute their command capacity. That was an important development and worth further exploration—in later games I added army boundaries, radio control and other features that are widely included in designs today.

I was active in The Morningside Game Project that furnished its designs to a company called Rand Games Associates, and RGA had a tenuous relationship with its New Jersey printer. Simulations Publications had troubles with its printer too (where the printer had essentially decided to make an investment with the company) yet was having no problems releasing regular product.

Kevin was including command too and he was offering an integrated picture different from mine and in some respects even more advanced. Kevin's game system presented a hierarchy of command with its Commanders and Leaders, while separating and distinguishing the supply function through his Trains. The ensemble created an Initiative Movement system.

I didn't think Initiative Movement so appropriate for a World War II or modern subject, but for Napoleonic warfare it was perfect. And the hierarchy of command was good for all eras. It's fair to say, forty years on, that that set of basic mechanics has stood the test of time. Kevin has tinkered with it, elaborated portions of it, moved up and down the scale chart, but underneath the bells and whistles Initiative Movement is still there.

Equally important, in my opinion *NLB* (and *Von Manstein*) marked the advent of a new era in game design, one in which there was a drive for simulation. The idea that we could make little pieces of cardboard on a game map function in ways that mimicked and replicated the physical properties and evolutionary forces of history made a lot of sense to us gamers and we took to it like ducks to water. The rest is boardgaming history.

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE: NEW TITLES
Next games in the TLNB Series: 206-*Napoleon's Last Gamble, 1815*—Quatre-Bras, Ligny, Wavre, Waterloo, Le Souffel (Fall '15)
207-*Peninsular War II*, 1811-13—Fuentes de Oñoro, Sagunto, Salamanca, Vittoria (Summer '16)
208-*War of Liberation I, 1813*—Lützen, Bautzen, Luckau (Spring 2017)
209-*War of 3rd Coalition,* 1805—Ulm, Dürenstein, Schöngrabern, Austerlitz (Winter 2017)
210-*Peninsular War I,* 1808-09—Gamonal, Espinosa de los Monteros, Tudela, La Corunna (Fall 2018)
211-*War of 1st Coalition,* 1796-97—Lodi, Castiglione, Arcole, Rivoli (Summer 2019)

SPANISH BATTLES REORGANIZED
In *Peninsular War II* we have substituted Fuentes de Oñoro and Sagunto for the originally-scheduled Albuera. *Peninsular War I* is now completely different, reproducing the campaign of November 1808–January 1809, Napoleon commanding in person. The result will be four quad games covering 15 Spanish battles in all:

Peninsular War I—Gamonal 10 November 1808, Espinosa de los Monteros 10-11 November, Tudela 23 November, La Corunna 16 January 1809
Peninsular War II—Fuentes de Oñoro 3–5 May 1811, Sagunto 25 October 1811, Salamanca 22 July 1812, Vittoria 21 June 1813
Peninsular War III—Medellín 28 March 1809, Oporto 12 May, Talavera 27–28 July, Ocana 19 November 1809
Peninsular War IV—Chiclana (Barrosa) 5 March 1811, Sabugal 3 April, La Albuera 16 May 1811

Napoleon's Last Gamble: **Updating a Classic**

Derek Lang

"Wellington has thrown the dice and they are in our favour."
–Napoleon

When the original *Napoleon's Last Battles* was published in 1975, I was nine years old and had scarcely even heard of Napoleon Bonaparte, let alone Kevin Zucker. Back then I could never have imagined that forty years later I would be the developer of *Napoleon's Last Gamble*, which will mark both the 200th Anniversary of the 1815 Campaign and the 40th Anniversary of the original game.

Napoleon's Last Gamble is not a reprint of *Napoleon's Last Battles*. The new game is Volume VI in The Library of Napoleonic Battles (TLNB). The series has covered twenty battles so far, and will eventually cover another fifty (hopefully).

Napoleon's Last Gamble has all the elements familiar to TLNB players which were absent from the 1975 original: hidden movement, vedettes, baggage trains, and of course cards. The forces and geography have been revised,

Those familiar with the original will notice some subtle changes. The most important difference is that, whereas units in *Napoleon's Last Battles* had only two ratings (strength points and movement allowance), units in TLNB also have an initiative rating.

Let's take a look at the three armies in detail.

The French Army

The strength of some units differs from the original version, mainly because there is more readily available information than in 1975. We consulted a wide variety of sources to arrive at the best assessment of unit strengths. The original lumped the artillery of each Corps into one amalgamated unit. We have allocated the individual artillery units (normally one battery each) to their appropriate divisions. Initiative ratings are relatively straightforward: [4] for the Guard and reserve cavalry, [3] for almost everyone else. Kevin was questioning whether we might reduce some of the YG to [3], but I thought they all performed quite well at Plancenoit.

Despite the fact that morale in the *Armee du Nord* was generally high, it was paradoxically rather fragile. We came across several units which had suffered desertions, mainly Royalist sympathizers going over to the enemy. Although the number of deserters was small, suspicion and fear of treachery were present throughout the army and we felt that there could well have been a detrimental effect on the morale of the units involved. As a consequence, we decided to give an initiative of [2] to units which had desertions.

For fans of alternate reinforcements we have included some extra Commanders – Davout, Soult and Suchet – giving players a chance to find out what might have happened if Napoleon had employed more capable Marshals in frontline roles.

The Anglo-Dutch Army

Despite the fact that the Army was organised into Corps, the manoeuvre element was actually the Division. Although each Corps will have its own Commander, in game terms the Corps is mainly an administrative structure for Supply and Demoralization purposes, and each Division will be a distinct formation with its own Officer.

Some of the British infantry units have [4] initiative while others have [3]. We decided to differentiate between units which had seen service in the Peninsular War and those which had not, so we assigned an initiative of [4] to the Peninsular veterans and [3] to the others. As for the cavalry, British dragoons are rated the same as French cuirassiers; primarily due to the quality of their horses, which were the finest in Europe at the time.

It is also worth mentioning the absence of Sir Lowry Cole. Although he is listed in many books and orders-of-battle as being in command of 6th British Division, he was not present with the army at all. He was, in fact, in England on leave of absence to get married and only rejoined his Division after Waterloo. The 6th Division was actually under the command of Sir John Lambert at Waterloo.

Players of *Napoleon's Last Battles* will notice that the Netherlands units are slightly stronger than in the original game. Modern scholarship recognizes that the Dutch/Belgian troops were more capable than they have hitherto been given credit for, and we have evaluated them accordingly.

For alternate history fans we have included the forces which were posted to the west of the main area of operations (at Hal and elsewhere). These forces can potentially appear as alternate reinforcements by play of the appropriate cards. We also included the French Royalist forces of the Duc de Berry among these alternate reinforcements, although Wellington would probably not have approved – he is quoted as having said "I wish to have no association with those people."

The Prussian Army

The Prussian Army had a unique and unusual organization, quite unlike the other protagonists. Although Regiments were grouped together into Brigades, there was no Division structure within each Corps. The four Prussian Corps each contained four Brigades of infantry, plus a variable amount of cavalry. In reality, the Prussian infantry Brigades were about equivalent (in manpower terms) to a French infantry Division, and so we have treated them as Divisions for game purposes.

The Landwehr are also interesting. Many Landwehr personnel had seen service throughout 1813-1814, so there were a lot of seasoned campaigners in their ranks by 1815. For that reason we have rated the Landwehr a bit better than would probably be expected, and several units have come out stronger than in the original game.

Like the French, the original Prussian artillery were amalgamated into one unit per Corps. *Napoleon's Last Gamble* has them allocated to each Brigade and the Corps Reserve.

Final Thoughts

The Campaign holds fascination which I have never fully understood. Waterloo was just one of a long series of battles. Why should it be more noteworthy or interesting than any of the others?

The battle sealed Napoleon's fate, but there *has* to be more to it than that. In researching *Napoleon's Last Gamble* I have studied the Campaign for several months, gaining a lot of knowledge along the way, and I now begin to understand the fascination.

The political situation made this campaign far more critical than any other that Napoleon fought. The stakes were the highest: the Emperor needed a quick victory but could not afford to suffer a defeat. He may have suspected that he was facing *Napoleon's Last Gamble.*

TLNB:
The GWN House Rules
Barrie Pollock

I would like to think our house rules follow Kevin Zucker's design intent but add more grit and detail to the game with a little loss of playing time and a few more counters. We read the CRT differently and have disorder and rout among the possible outcomes. Our disruption and rout markers are actually a bunch of "D" counters in various colours, likely left over from the old Prestags games.

Leaders and Command Control
If involved in a combat they may become casualties if the combat die roll result is 3.

Roll another die for each involved leader. A second result of 3 means they become a casualty.

Units of a single division, if stacked or adjacent (including road march) make only one initiative roll for the whole division.

Units stacked with a leader at the beginning of a turn may be considered an ad hoc command but the leader may not use his normal command functions that turn.

All units of a formation within range of their officer are bound by the results of the officer's initiative roll unless previously put under the direct command of a commander. (I think some people don't play it this way.)

Combat
Roll two different coloured dice to resolve combat. One is the CRT result; the second is the loser's morale roll.
Both sides announce their morale unit before the dice are rolled.

Artillery on hilltop are not halved at range of 3.

Before combat units may announce the intention to withdraw. This changes any result affecting the opposing unit (eg. a DR2 result when the attacker had chosen to withdraw) to a retreat to the withdrawing unit(s), either AR or DR as appropriate.

If both sides wish to withdraw, the result is AR/DR with both retreating.

We would like to see an AE changed to AR4 at 1-4 odds and an AR3 and an AR4 to be added

to the 1-5 column but we follow the CRT as printed.

Combat Results
DR, AR   Rules as written, except loser may change result to DR2 or AR2 but must accept the morale result. This election must be made before the die roll.
DR2, AR2   Loser retreats two, disrupted if failing morale check. If already disrupted, rout if morale check fails.
DR3, AR3   Loser retreats three and is disrupted, rout if failing morale check, disrupted units automatically rout
DR4, AR4   Loser retreats four hexes and routs
EX   Defender loses largest step, attacker must lose at least half as many SPs. Surviving defenders DR2, apply morale roll.
DE   All defending units lose a step. Surviving units retreat four hexes and are routed.
AE   All attacking units lose a step. Surviving units retreat four hexes and are routed.
SK-EX   Both sides lose a step from their morale unit, no retreats
SK-W   Both sides lose a step from their morale unit, smaller side in sp's retreats

Bombardments
Roll two dice as per regular combat. All results affecting the defender include disruption if the unit fails the morale check.

Cavalry Charges
Nothing to offer here because none us has the guts to try it. Do you have any idea how expensive cavalry are? The Cavalry Charge Table has been revised recently to add some no effect results.

Retreat After Combat
All retreats into or through an EZOC are changed to D3 or A3.

Units forced to retreat into or through an EZOC rout and lose a step if they fail the morale roll. If they pass they are disrupted.

Add one to the die roll if enemy units or EZOC's surrounded the unit at the beginning of the movement phase. Subtract one from the die roll if the EZOC retreated through is occupied by a friendly unit. Subtract one if the surround

situation was only created during the combat phase.

Advance After Combat
The attacker may advance into the defender's hex as per the rules as written. Once that hex is occupied they may also advance into any vacant hex adjacent to the defender's position with any in-command cavalry units or as the second infantry unit if a leader also advances into one of the two hexes.

Leaders may advance one hex if forces under their command do even if not directly involved in the combat (only once per combat phase).

Disruption and Recovery
Disrupted units are half strength when attacking, defend normally.

Will recover automatically if two hexes from nearest enemy and do not move during the movement phase

If three or more hexes from enemy at all times during the turn, they may move half their normal allowance and recover.

Routing and Recovery
Routing units may only move closer to a supply source and never into an EZOC. They may make such moves without requiring command control.

Are half strength in defense and rout automatically if in EZOC during own combat phase

Routed units count against the morale level of their formation

Routed units at least four hexes from enemy units (three if not in line of sight) will recover if they pass a morale roll or are stacked or adjacent to their office or a commander and that leader provides no other command functions that turn.

If successful, remove rout marker and replace with disrupted. If five or more hexes from an enemy unit they subtract one from the die roll. A routed unit may not move on the turn it attempts to recover.

Limited Command Control
Officers who fail their initiative roll and the units under their command and in range may move one hex.

This one hex move may not be into an EZOC unless the hex is occupied by the officer or adjacent to the officer.

Eliminated Units
One-step units, which have lost a step or two-step units, which have lost both steps, are placed in the UAR box.

Units are moved from the UAR to the Recovered box as per official rules.

Units of Demoralized formations go to the PEU box if they fail their morale check

Units in the Recovered box can return to the map at the conclusion of a Rest and Refit day.

Rest and Refit
We played a somewhat modified version of this rule in our first *Shevardino-Borodino* mini-campaign, but can't really say more except that this an excellent addition to the game rules. However defined, at the conclusion of an R & R period, both sides gain replacements at the ratios given in the official rules. The replacement strength points may come from one-board reduced units or units in the Recovered box.

It was a real back home feeling as my friend Pat Butler and I sat down to a mini-campaign of *Shevardino* recently. Long ago and far away we had played our first S&T game, *Borodino*, ordered by mail after I had seen an advertisement in a comic book. I was already a Napoleonic buff and was delighted to have one of the era's classic battles represented in game form. Pat and I loved the hammer and tongs situation and became fans of the system as it evolved over the years and introduced it to other gaming friends.

Eventually we started to develop some house rules. They took their present shape about 2010 after borrowing a couple of the best ideas from Chris Perello's interesting but flawed *Musket & Sabre* series. My remaining opponents all live hundreds of miles from me so the only face-to-face games have been the *4LB* (several times), *Wagram, Jena-Auerstadt*, *La Patrie* mini-campaign and *Shevardino*. I have played all the games solitaire a few times and am presently enjoying a great game of *Borodino* (a continuation of the FTF *Shevardino* after my opponent left town).

ARTILLERY HOUSE RULES

TRAINS: In all cases, Artillery units are treated like Trains.

TERRAIN: During movement or retreat, any Artillery unit may attempt to cross prohibited terrain (slope, marsh, stream) by rolling on this table. On a roll of 4+, the unit moves successfully. On a roll of 1-3, the unit is lost as indicated.

ARTILLERY LOSS due to TERRAIN

Die Roll	Result	UAR Section	
1	elim	PEU	
2	elim	Unrecovered	
3	elim	Recovered	
4-6	•	stays on map	
KEY:	elim	Unit is eliminated and transferred to the specified location	

BOMBARDMENT TABLE

Bombardment Strength:

Die Roll	8+	6-7	4-5	2-3	1
-1, 0	•	•	•	•	•
1	[-1]	•	•	•	•
2	Dr	[-1]	•	•	•
3	Dr	Dr	[-1]	•	•
4	Dr	Dr	Dr	[-1]	•
5	1R	Dr	Dr	Dr	[-1]
6	1R	1R	Dr	Dr	Dr
7, 8	1R	1R	1R	Dr	Dr

KEY: 1R = Reduce one Combat unit (attacker's choice); may retreat.
r • = no effect
[-1] = Defending units' Initiative -1 until end of Combat Phase
MODIFIERS: (See the Notes to Combat Tables.)

BOMBARDMENT: The table has been adjusted. Objects of a bombardment may now suffer a temporary reduction of initiative for the duration of the Combat Phase.

The Route to Waterloo

Luca Franceschetti

*My attraction to the Napoleonic period had a literary genesis: War and Peace, by Lev Tolstoy, was one of the first books I read in full. These premise explains my first purchase in the field of boardgaming: **War and Peace** (1980, AH).*

In the 80s, with no internet or other forms of support to consolidate and improve of the rules, the success of any boardgame was dependant on the quality of the manuals boxed with the game components. A premature debut, with inaccurate manuals, dictated the misfortune of many boardgames, even when they were offering a great playability and historical depth.

In the early 90s I had already collected many boardgames including masterpieces as **Panzer Armee Afrika** (1973 AH), **Advanced Squad Leader** (1985 AH), **Civilization** (1980 AH), **Flat Top** (1977 AH), **Hitler's War** (1981 AH), **Imperium Romanum II** (1985, West End Games), **PanzerBlitz** (1970 AH), **The Republic of Rome** (1990 AH) , **Rise and Decline of the Third Reich** (1974 AH), **World War II: ETO** (1985 SPI), **World War II: PTO** (1991 SPI).

As regards the Napoleonic age I had collected publications of the series **Les Batailles Dans L'Age L'Empereur Napoleon Premier** (CoA), including some volumes of the 100 Days Campaign, opened by **La Bataille des Quatre Bras** (1991). These grand-tactical titles published by Clash of Arms offered a stunning graphic but were supported by almost unreadable rulebooks. At an operational level, **La Grande Armee** (1987 SPI) provided a great level of historical detail, immense playability but an unhappy rulesbook.

When I decided to add to my collection **The Emperor Returns** (1986 CoA) I was expecting to take home yet another graphic masterpiece, as a game that would soon ended up gathering dust on a shelf because of a poor rulesbook.

I was rather surprised by the well-written manual and very exhaustive and clear the rules. The game system dealt with organization and management of forces, recreated the operational and logistical issues of Napoleonic warfare without heavy and annoying rules.

With very few counters spawned over a medium-size map, *The Emperor Returns* fed huge doubts and uncertainties at strategic level, offered a wide choice of options, forcing the players to weigh every move, having to choose between prudence and audacity.

Playing *The Emperor Returns* players get soon the feeling that time is a decisive factor and wasting only a game-turn can lead to a major defeat. Players must go after many turns moving around their forces in preparation for a decisive clash; at most, a couple of battles, that will be resolved with two or three die-rolls, will decide the fate of France.

The Emperor Return is one of those games that players must return over, perhaps under the pressure of the disappointment for another title dealing with the Hundred Days, may be because of the emotions aroused by a movie over Waterloo Battle or the reading of historical publications.

In 1999 BUR published in Italian the book **Waterloo**, by David Chandler. I had already read some of Chandler's essays. I like Chandler's brilliant writing because you do not realize to face a historical essay, but you feel like you are reading a compelling novel. In Waterloo, Chandler carefully examines the opposing forces, enlists strengths and weaknesses of armies and commanders, analyzes options offered to contenders at the opening of the campaign. Although I was pleased with my reading I felt like something was wrong: the magic of surprise I was used to find in Chandler's books was missing. Anyway I keep reading with the rising feeling of being dealing with something I already known, I already experienced. The déjà vu, I realized then, was fed by the many hours spent, in the past, on The Emperor Return. Those decisions, sometimes enforced, sometimes inspired by the courage or desperation, the plans

and options to choose from, and many others... Now, I know I already lived all that—while in the boots of Napoleon, Wellington or Blucher—during long nights spent over *The Emperor Returns*.

The legacy of *The Emperor Returns*, after 20 years of development, leaded to **The Library of Napoleonic Battles**.

TLBN introduces players to individual historical battles of the Napoleonic age. The scale of this new series is different when compared to *The Emperor Returns*, but the two game systems share many routines.

TLNB neglects the tactical aspects of Napoleonic warfare and devotes space to operational decisions, control and command of units, logistic issues, grand-tactical manouvering of forces. TLBN uses the same principles as *The Emperor Returns* on a different scale, with many more counters spawned on the map, but the doubts, the uncertainties and tensions of command remain and they are rather amplified by a new card-driven system that influences leadership options and operational capabilities of the forces on the field.

Napoleon's Last Gamble (NLG), the next volume of TLNB dedicated to Waterloo Campaign, is called to shadow the footsteps of *The Emperor Returns* because the maps of individual battles could be connected to form the plains of Southern Belgium—by Ligny, Quatre Bras, Wavre, Mont Saint Jean—where the fate of the Second Empire was decided. Then, the announced NLG extension package will provide an area even broader, almost comparable to the map of *The Emperor Returns* to score a full return of TLNB game system to a wide operational campaign.

***The Emperor Returns* vs. Napoleon's Last Gamble**

Game Scale comparison

In *The Emperor Returns* one hex represents an area 3.2 kilometers across. A game turn represents one or two days of real time. Combat Units are at level of Division.

Napoleon's Last Gamble- TLBN will be played over a map where a hex represents an area 480 meters across; a game turn corresponds to an hour of real time. Brigades are the core combat units used in TLBN Series.

In both games, different kinds of terrains influence units' Movement Allowance and their effectiveness in combat, while natural obstacle or the destruction of bridges can concurr to cut the Line of Communication and Supply (LOC) of armies.

The game scale of *The Emperor Returns* allows the wide manouvers of troops proper of an operational games, while engament and major battles are resolved during a single game turn. The hour turn scale of TLBN Series allows grand tactical planning, with forces manouvering, engaging and reacting to the enemy with a continuous acting.

With TLBN Series, as with *The Emperor Returns,* but the scale differences, tactical factors as artillery fire, cavalry superiority, combined forces, commitment of the Guard, marching to the sound of the guns play their part in the events, as we can expect from an accurate Napoleonic Age boardgame.

Counter Density

The number of counters spawned on the maps are quite different in the two games.

With *The Emperor Returns* all combat unit counters are placed over the Organizational Display, in the field belonging to the force units are assigned to by the OOB. Organizational Displays are also used to track changes in the strength of combat units as an effect of casualties or replacement points available to an army.

Leader Counters are the only counters placed on the game map as they represent forces assigned to Officers and Commanders. As a result, *The*

Emperor Returns is plyed over a clean map, where a bunch of counters representing large forces are deployed and move.

With the TLBN Series all Combat Unit Counters, Supporting Unit Counters, Leader Counters and Status Marker Counters are stacked on the map. Although that leads to an overcrowded map, players get the feeling of the armies deployed on the battlefield under the flags and the colors of a typical Napoleonic Age battle.

Fog of War

Both *The Emperor Returns* as TLBN volumes manage the problem of the Fog of War, even by different tools.

With *The Emperor Returns* Leader Counters are placed on the map with their rear side up, so to conceal the real leader's identity. Then, the composition and strength of the forces, tracked into the Organizational Display, are kept hidden to the opponent till the time the force has been reconed or engaged in combat by the enemy. Also, players are supplied with Dummy Leader Counters that are deployed and moved around the map as regular forces till the time they are unmasked by the enemy. The uncertainty about enemy positions, movements and plans is high till the time opposing forces clash to fight a decisive battle.

With TLBN the identity and composition of stacks, units and leaders are masked by Status Markers that are removed when an enemy force has been reconed by Vedettes (light cavalry patrols) or when enemy forces are each other in sight.

The LOC Nightmare

At operational level, securing the Lines of Communication of an army can be a real commander's nightmare. This aspect is very well ruled and simulated in *The Emperor Returns.* Having the own LOC unsecured or broken will prevent the regular arrival of reinforcements and supplies; as a consequence the army will soon disintegrate because of starvation and increasing attrition losses.

With *The Emperor Returns*, manoeuvres and plans can look to cut the enemy's LOC, defeating the opponent long before the first battery was unlimbered on the battlefield. Combined with uncertainty sustained by FOW players must keep constant care of the own LOC and must redraw the own plans as soon as their LOC is threatened.

With TLBN, because of the smaller time scale, LOC integrity is not such a drama as with *The Emperor Returns*. Anyway players must grant regular supply to forces so to keep their full effectiveness on the battlefield. Then, getting in control of enemy Supply Sourced will provide the player extra Victory Points that can change the balance of the battle when VPs are scored.

Commanded Forces vs Initiative

The Emperor Returns and TLBN volumes share a common attention to Leaders activation.

Commanders must allocate Command Points to activate subordinate leaders. Unfortunately Command Points available to a Commander, each turn, are few. Then, the Command Range of leaders is quite short. As a result players must plan ahead, so to concentrate within the own Commander's Command Range subordinate forces at the right time and at the right place. That's the essence of Napoleonic warfare, indeed!

Anyway, non-commanded forces can till try to activate by rolling against the own leader's initiative.

But all that, TLBN rulesbook admits the possibility of activation by March Orders. Although limited, March Orders represent a quite useful but risky opportunity. In fact, March Orders work like written instructions that must be followed by the receiver even when the tatical situation was changed to the point going after the order dictates is a clear mistake.

Playability & Study Sessions

TER and TLBN offer an enormous playability and are a good playground for scholars of The Hundred Days Campaign. The last chance remarks the great suitability of both game systems in solitaire gaming sessions too.

With TER, playability is granted by the large area represented on the game-map, with the result that players can go after alternative plans than those followed by Napoleon, Wellington and Blucher.

But that, special rules and optional counters can engage the choice of commanders and troops available to players opening the doors of the "What if" options.

With TLBN playability is granted by the carddriven system that dictate, turn after turn, the Movement Allowance of forces, availability of optional reinforcement, entry times of scheduled reinforcement and many more. But an accurate Battle Day Scenario, the Approach to Battle Scenario allows players to experiment with personal plans and own deployment of forces for any historical battle.

Napoleon's Last Gamble enlights great expectations in the field of Napoleonic Age boardgaming because of the consolidated game system and the historical accuracy granted by TLBN volumes.

The announced NLG extension package promises to go over previous titles in this series because of the game maps area matches the core of *The Emperor Returns* map. With this premise gamers could decide to play the Operational Level Campaign on TER (by a dedicated set up and some special rules to limit the area of the map where deploying and moving forces) and move to NLG as soon as an engagement is to be fought.

TLNB Rules Update
Rules v. 6.7   27 April 2015

(20.23) Forces Removed from March Orders: A unit is removed from the March Order at the moment:
- it reaches its objective hex (or as near as possible).
- it becomes adjacent to an Enemy unit.
- at the Player's option, the force is placed in Command by a Leader during any friendly Command Phase.

NOTE: If a Commander places an individual unit in command, it does not remove the March Order for the rest of the Formation.

The M.O. endures until the last unit reaches the destination or is removed. When a unit comes out of a March Order it is Demoralized for the rest of the Player Turn.

Units that reach a March Order destination are removed from the M.O. Other units under the March Order can either continue to use the M.O. or they can be removed. The units removed from a March Order can freely use their remaining MA that turn, without being constrained by the former M.O.

COMMENT: An officer who makes his initiative **may** opt out of a march order.

This covers a frequent case when an officer has orders, but, as the man on the spot, has to make a judgment call and act according to circumstances. Officers in the Austrian army (to pick one example) were less likely to act on their own initiative, knowing that they would be safer in their career if they could show they were following orders. In all armies, the officer was taking a risk. If things turned out well, and the judgment call proved to lead to success, they would be o.k.

THE OPPOSING ARMIES
The Anglo-Allied Army of the Low Countries

Wellington's Army comprised troops of many nationalities, speaking four principle languages—Englishmen, Dutch, Germans and French-speaking Belgians. The Germans were troops of Brunswick and Hanover. The King's German Legion—also raised in Hanover—had served in the Peninsular War in the service of King George III (who ruled as Duke of Hanover).

Belgium had just been forcibly united with the Netherlands in March, upon word of Napoleon's return to France. The unification forged between Dutch and Belgian units—many of which had fought under Napoleon the year before, and still wore their French-style uniforms—was necessarily fragile.

Two Nassau units came from the German principality lying along the east bank of the Rhine opposite Koblenz. The line troops had been in the Netherlands service for a long time, and were commanded by a German Prince, Bernard of Saxe-Weimar. The two Landwehr battalions under Kruse had just joined the army at the beginning of June.

Among the English Troops, 15 understrength battalions remained in Holland after the 1814 campaign; in the Spring of 1815, these were shifted into Belgium and filled up with young conscripts. Three regiments had just returned from America upon the conclusion of the War of 1812-1814 (two of these were in Adam's brigade of Clinton's division). The cadre of these 26 battalions were veterans of the Spanish campaign, and they were the best troops available to Wellington. Veterans accounted for only about 60% of British troops; whereas all the KGL troops were veterans, most of the other contingents were green troops.

Wellington welded this diverse force into a unified command by attaching one brigade of KGL and one of Hanoverian troops to each brigade of British regulars. These divisions were dispersed in their cantonments and needed half a day from receipt of their march orders to get underway. It would take three days to assemble the entire army. The town of Quatre Bras was selected as the central concentration point, just five miles west of the Prussian Army.

The Prussian Army of the Lower Rhine

Blücher's Army included many troops from the minor German states who had fought on the other side in years past. About 57% of the Army were regular troops and the remainder militia or Landwehr. Some of these were solid veterans while those raised from territories recently-acquired by Prussia were of questionable reliability.

There was no question about the leadership of the army however, beginning with the fire-breathing Hussar Blücher and his chief of staff, Gneisenau, (part of the commission that re-built the Prussian Army after Eylau). Had Blücher not

eluded capture at Ligny. Gneisenau—who disliked the British—might have delayed the march on the 18th.[1]

The Prussian Army occupied a wedge-shaped cantonment area along the Sambre and Meuse Rivers, with two brigades at its westernmost point extending to Charleroi and Fontaine l'Eveque, to cover the hinge with the Anglo-Allied cantonments. The objective of this deployment was to delay any advance through Charleroi long enough for the two armies to concentrate on Quatre Bras and Sombreffe, which lie just nine miles apart. If allowed to unite their forces, the Anglo-Prussians would be able to oppose the French in a single body of 220,000 men. The zone between Charleroi, Sombreffe, and Quatre Bras was the critical wedge that the French would have to seize.

The French Armée du Nord

Napoleon's 128,165 men of *L'Armée du Nord,* most of them veterans of at least one or two campaigns, represented less than one-quarter of the total manpower available. About 66,000 men of the line were held back in the depots of the regiments, and up to 69,000 line soldiers were serving in other field armies, along with 50,000 mobilized National Guards. In the numerous fortresses on the frontiers, 85,500 National Guards were placed in garrison alongside 108,000 second and third line troops. A further 12,000 veterans, 46,000 conscripts, and 32,000 newly-mobilized National Guards stood in reserve or were still in formation in the depots.

The quality and devotion of the rank and file of *L'Armée du Nord* was not matched by the skill and dedication of their commanders. The years of constant warfare had taken their toll, and many great leaders did not rally to Napoleon in 1815. The leaders of I and II Corps, d'Erlon and Reille, had never before officered a corps. Vandamme and Gérard were very experienced and capable. At Imperial Headquarters, among the 73 officers, only 12 (17%) had as much as 8 years experience on the General Staff.[2] The others were working together for the first time.[3] Most notably absent was Marshal Berthier, who had taken care of the details for Napoleon since 1796. It is arguable that the critical errors committed by the inexperienced staff, and their inept Chief cost Napoleon the campaign.[4]

The Emperor himself was not at his best in these warm early days of summer. His physical condition was deteriorating, leaving him without the stamina for long hours in the saddle and nights spent dictating orders. Aside from making a poor choice of Marshals to lead the Army's two wings, he compounded this by directing Marshal Grouchy

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[1] Sources agree that Wavre was chosen as their rallying point only because it was the one town all present could find on their maps.

[2] These were Colonel Gourgaud, *premier officier d'ordonnance,* Bailly de Monthion, Chief of the general staff (directly under Soult, in a position to repair some of the damage); Baron Dentzel, in charge of prisoners of war; two Adjudants-commandants, Barons Michal and Petiet; Lefebvre and Bernard, attached to the general staff; Baron Gressot, one of the *marechaux de camp* of the *Grand etat-major;* Lt. Col. Neigre, director-general of the Grand Park, and Col. Renaud of his staff; the inspector of the Gendarmerie, Lambert; and the Intendant general, Daru, in charge of keeping the army supplied.

[3] Weller, Jac, *Wellington at Waterloo.*

[4] The imputation of false motives to Soult isn't supported by the documentary evidence.

beyond supporting distance after Ligny, detaching more than one third of his army in the wrong direction, and then failing to provide further orders to that Marshal during the 17th.[5] Having chosen Marshal Ney—whose great tactical skill was only for defensive fights—to lead his offensive battle at Waterloo, he retired for a nap at a crucial moment. Ney conducted the mid-phase of the battle like a rear-guard action in the Peninsular Campaign, failing to provide infantry support for his spectacular cavalry charges.

Wellington's achievements in Spain loomed darkly over the heads of all Frenchmen who had fought against him. With such respect for the Allied generalissimo, each man feared a British trap over the next rise. In the end that fear was prescient.

MARCHES OF CONCENTRATION, JUNE 9—14

Napoleon ordered a general concentration of the army around Beaumont on June 9th. The initial concentration area given to the left wing—I at Valenciennes and II Corps at Avenes—lies west of Charleroi, between 34 and 44 miles away. This deployment was designed to portend an attack near Mons, threatening Wellington's communications, which ran toward the North Sea coast at Ostend.

On the right wing, III Corps moved up to Rocroi, 40 miles south of Charleroi, and IV Corps approached from Metz. The VI Corps bivouacked in the center, while the cavalry made forced marches to catch up. Rapp's V Corps remained on the Rhine to face the oncoming Austrians.

Napoleon with his Imperial Guard remained in Paris as long as possible, finally departing en route to the army at 03.30 on June 12, 1815. His departure would announce to the whole world the commencement of the campaign. Passing through Soissons, depot for the *Armée du Nord,* the Emperor arrived in Laon, another important stage on the line of communications, at Noon the same day.[6] He spent the 13th at Avesnes, the Army's Center of Operations, looking to the administrative arrangements for his army's supply.

Napoleon arrived with the Guard at Beaumont on the 14th, the concentration point of his army. The formation adopted by Napoleon for this campaign comprised two wings and a reserve—the left, under Ney, with two corps and the Guard light cavalry; the right, under Grouchy, also with two corps and an extra division of cavalry; and the reserve, comprising the Guard, the Cavalry Reserve, and the understrength VI Corps. In comparison to the formation of prior years,[7] this one lacked a critical element, namely, an advanced guard of two corps at the point.

JUNE 15th, 1815

Set-up the Extension scenario and move the units as they are mentioned.

In the morning the French advanced along four northerly routes, crossing the Sambre onto the map. First we find the II

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[5] Unsuitable as a wing commander, Grouchy had however commanded large cavalry forces in many battles, notably tying-up the Russians at Friedland in 1807.

[6] 84 miles/10 mph.

[7] termed "*La bataillon carrée*"

Corps under Reille. He can try and Road March, though he's going to run into Steinmetz at Fontaine, attacking at a tremendous disadvantage, there's no way he can reach any of the Prussians to attack them on the first turn with much more than a cavalry probe.

The Prussians have Steinmetz as mentioned at Fontaine, the westernmost brigade of all the Prussian army, quite far to the west of Charleroi, six or seven miles, where Zeiten himself, the commander of the II Corps, had his HQ along with his second brigade under Pirch. Seven miles by road waits the 3rd brigade at Fleurus, under Jagow. In turn it's another 6 miles to the cavalry reserve under Roeder, with two brigades sitting at Sombreffe. Another 5 miles back is the artillery reserve of the Corps at Gembloux. The artillery is sitting in safety in the very rear. The army is going to concentrate on the guns instead of dragging the guns forward too much. Finally, the fourth brigade of the corps is at Moustier sur Sambre, at the same longitude as Gembloux but further forward along the river. These dispositions by the Prussian army are all fairly evenly-spaced, four of them within five or six miles of Sombreffe. Even the two rearmost infantry brigades can concentrate at that central point, once they get on the road, in under three hours.

This deployment of the Prussian I Corps extends from the cantonment area of the rest of the army, very much pointing like an arrow toward Steinmetz at Fontaine.

Bernhard's Nassau brigade held the important crossroads Quatre Bras. Maybe he was still on his way, arriving before 15.00. The other brigade of Perponcher stood at Nivelles, with van Opstal's battery. So we have only a few hexes occupied by Anglo-Allied units at the start of the Extension game.

Most of the opposing forces remain on the reinforcement tracks—Anglo-Allied units moving from the north and west, French on the south, Prussians waiting to come in on the east—three more Prussian corps, practically the whole of the Anglo-Allied army, and the entirety of the French Army waiting to come on. The French are deployed to enter at those four roads leading toward Charleroi and the other crossings of the Sambre.

The first to cross will be Reille's stacks moving up through Lobbes to within a few hexes of Steinmetz with four divisions of infantry and some guns and cavalry.

Pajol with I Cav Corps moves up to Marcinelle, just across the river from Charleroi. His units were deployed as Vedettes, so they're able to move the seven miles to Marcinelle and then scout up and down the riverbank. His artillery followed further back one mile out of Marcinelle. The III Corps cavalry of Dommanget is up front with Pajol.

Following behind the artillery is Napoleon with the Young Guard, Duhesme's division. They have to be in road march to use that bridge.

Next to enter is Drouot, with the Guard cavalry and Duchand.

The next divisions to arrive are Friant and Morand, who served in Davout's old III Corps, with their Guard Divisions. They'll move up behind the guns, and that is all the French will be able to do this morning ...

02.30 Beaumont

The strains of reveille resounded in bivouacs across the

northern tier of France. With the clatter of arms and equipment, men began to fall-in to road march columns facing the Belgian frontier.

03.30 Marcinelle
Pajol's cavalry screen advanced through the darkness to scour the countryside, and crossed onto Belgian soil. Pajol moved up to Marcinelle, his twelve regiments deployed as Vedettes screening the French advance.

04.00 Lobbes.
Reille's II Corps attacked the bridges at Lobbes. Reille's II Corps was the only formation to reach its deadline exactly at the prescribed time, but the Prussian force defending **Marchienne** put up such a staunch defence that it was only firmly in French possession by midday, and further tough fighting took place around **Gosselies** as General Steinmetz fell back. He was cleared of this place by late afternoon. [3]

Napoleon with the Young Guard crossed the stream near Jamioulx en route to Marcinelle. Behind them marched the the Imperial Guard. Their commander, Marshal Mortier, took sick and was now replaced by Drouot.

Vandamme's III and Mouton's VI Corps became entangled in a five-hour traffic jam. March confusion spread in Gérard's IV Corps when the lead division's general, Bourmont, defected to the allies.

08.00 Lobbes
After four hours, Reille gained a foothold across the Sambre and moved up through Lobbes toward Fontaine in one long column. Jêrome's single division detoured through Montigny and Marchienne.

Thuin
Count D'Erlon's I Corps crossed the Sambre at **Thuin**, and encountered the first Prussian resistance at **Binche**.

10.00 Charleroi

> Charleroi is located on both sides of the Sambre River. On the south side of the river between the lower part of the town was the suburb of Marcinelle. Between this suburb and the town proper there ran a dyke about 400 meters long. The bridge connected the lower and upper parts of the town and measured eight meters wide, barricaded at both ends. The Brussels road ran through the uper part of the town just beyond the *Place du Centre*.
>
> On the morning of June 15th the 9th Prussians held the village of Marcinelle. Two Battalions of the 6th Prussians (Pirch II) held the town of Charleroi. Vandamme's III Corps was supposed to be in the outskirts of Charleroi by 10 AM, but in the event his leading units only made an appearance at 3 PM. This meant that for most of the morning the only troops fighting the Prussians were Pajol's cavalry of the forward screen. [8]

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[8] David G. Chandler, *Waterloo: The Hundred Days*.

10.30 Braine-le-Comte
The Prince of Orange's Chief of Staff de Rebecque ordered the Dutch/Belgian troops in Nivelles forward to Quatre-Bras.

12.30 Charleroi

> The French sappers of the Guard attacked at 12:30 PM and threw the barricades into the river. Pajol's cavalry again tried to storm the bridge, but were again repulsed. The sappers and the Young Guard renewed the attack, pushing the Prussians out of both the lower and upper parts of the town.
>
> After encouraging the drivers on the difficult slopes beyond the bridges, Napoleon set up his headquarters in the lower part of the town in an inn owned by a local ironmaster (M. Puissant—Bellevue Tavern), and ate the lunch that had been prepared for Ziethen. Intermittently napping, Napoleon was sitting in his chair outside the Bellevue Inn reviewing the III Corps as it filed past. [9]

Both of the advanced Prussian brigades drew-off in a north-easterly direction, Steinmetz from Fontaine l'Eveque toward Gosselies, and Pirch II from Charleroi toward Gilly. Now the pace of operations accelerated hour by hour.

13.00 Gilly
Pajol's I Cavalry Corps reached Gilly in pursuit of Pirch II, who withdrew to the wood of Soleilmont (1813), where he met Jagow's brigade coming up the road from Fleurus.

15.00 Gilly
Grouchy and Exelmans' II Cavalry Corps joined Pajol at Gilly.

Brussels
Wellington, informed of the attack on the Prussians, ordered his troops to break camp and move to their divisional concentration points.

Quatre-Bras
Prince Bernhard of Saxe Weimar with 4,000 infantry and only 8 guns occupied Quatre-Bras. [10]

15.15 Charleroi
Soult dispatched orders to General Gerard, to move across the Sambre at Chatêlet, but his IV Corps did not appear in time to help drive the Prussians from the Soleilment woods.

15.30 Charleroi (Bellevue Chateau).
Marshal Ney arrived and sent the two cavalry divisions of Piré and Desnouettes (Imperial Guard light cavalry) north along the Charleroi-Brussels road.

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[9] Chandler, *Waterloo*. This scene is depicted on the box cover.

[10] Duke Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar (1792-1862). The second son of Grand-Duke Karl August, friend and patron of Johann von Goethe. After the Congress of Vienna, Bernhard received a comission as Colonel of the Orange-Nassau regiment (in the Netherlands service) and assumed command of the brigade when its general took sick leave. Distinguished himself as commander of the Dutch troops in the Belgian campaign of 1830.

17.00 Gilly
Napoleon and Vandamme arrived with the III Corps at Gilly, ranged in battle formation facing the Prussian-occupied woods. Zeithen, outnumbered, wisely withdrew toward the supporting elements of his Corps still approaching. Grouchy and Exelmans pushed on toward Fleurus.

Gosselies
Ney's cavalry skirmished with Steinmetz's brigade, which formed square and marched slowly eastward.

17.30 Gosselies
Ney reached Gosselies as Steinmetz finished evacuating the town. The Prussians drew off to the north-east along the Brussels road, turning right at the stream toward St. Amand. Ney sent Girard's division in pursuit of Steinmetz and halted to await d'Erlon's I Corps, merely sending his advanced guard, Lefebvre-Desnoëttes, north to Frasnes.

Fleurus
Grouchy cleared the village of the retiring Prussians.

18.00 Sombreffe.
Blücher reached Sombreffe.

18.30 Frasnes-le-Gosselies
Ney's advance guard engaged the 2nd Nassau infantry of Bernhard, just south of the village of Frasnes. The Nassauers fell back to the edge of the Bossu Wood (2709).

20.00 Frasnes-le-Gosselies
Fearing the wood might conceal more of Wellington's army, Ney decided to bivouac rather than make an attempt on Quatre-Bras. A few kilometers south of Frasnes a mill standing on the west side of the road housed Marshal Ney's quarters for the night.

Fleurus
As Napoleon departed for his quarters in Charleroi, Grouchy's men of the right wing also went into bivouac along the road from Chatêlet.

21.00 Charleroi
Napoleon arrived to spend the night. Nearly half his army was still south of the Sambre, but he had attained the central position and would be able to strike either of the two opposing armies.

22.00 Wellington's HQ, Brussels
A messanger from Gneisenau reported the Prussian Army's concentration on Sombreffe. He replied that he expected the main enemy advance toward Mons (14 miles west of Seneffe), and sent orders to I Corps to move on Nivelles and Braine-le-Comte; II Corps (2 divs) and Uxbridge to Enghien. Others to Sotteghem, Granmont, Alost. Reserve to prepare to march. A dispatch from Dornberg in Mons confirmed that the French movement on Charleroi was not a feint.

01.00 The Duke of Richmond's residence, Brussels
Wellington received a despatch from Constant-Rebecque, containing details of Bernhard's situation at Quatre-Bras; Wellington ordered the Reserve Corps to march south; and the remainder of the army to Nivelles.

03.00 Quatre-Bras
Perponcher arrived at Quatre Bras with Bylant's Bde.

16 JUNE 1815
04.00 Charleroi
The Imperial Guard broke its bivouac and moved toward Fleurus.

Brussels
Wellington's Reserve troops marched south for Mt. St. Jean.

07.30: Brussels
Wellington followed the reserve.
08.00 Charleroi
As orders for the French marches were being dispatched, word arrived from Grouchy of Prussian forces concentrating on Sombreffe. Napoleon departed toward Fleurus, while his army awaited orders: IV Corps on either side of the Sambre near Chatêlet, and VI Corps still further back. He did send orders, belatedly to Ney at 08.30, but these orders were delayed and as a result the 45,000 men of the left wing remained inactive throughout the morning.

10.00 Quatre-Bras
Wellington arrived on the battlefield.

11.00 Fleurus
Napoleon arrived at Fleurus, to find the Prussians concentrating at Ligny.

12.00 Frasnes
Ney finally received his written orders from Napoleon.

Sombreffe
Pirch's Corps arrived, passing through Sombreffe toward Brye.

13.00 Ligny
Pecheux's division arrived and attacked Ligny.
Girard's division (attached to III Corps) attacked St. Amand, Vandamme and Gérard reaching Fleurus.

At **Brye**, to the south of Ligny stood the windmill of Bussy, Blücher's headquarters, where he and Wellington conferred. "I will come—provided I am not attacked." Slightly to the east is a country lane that passes over the railway line to a steep-banked cutting. From this point a good over-view of the battlefield of Ligny can be obtained. The tower of the windmill used by Napoleon as his observation post can just be picked out through binoculars on the eastern side of Fleurus. Returning into **Ligny** itself, the course of the slow-moving stream can be traced as it meanders through the village, and the restored church, whose graveyard was the scene of much fighting on the 16th, which began at 2:30 PM. Continuing down the road, the N21 to **Fleurus** was scene of fighting on the 15th, as the French III Corps pressed into the town, with Napoleon in person supervising the fight against Ziethen's Prussians, who retired by 10:00 PM. Napoleon's windmill northeast of the town, *le Moulin de Maveau,* bears a plaque, as does *la Ferme d'En Haut* in the centre of the town, where Napoleon spent an uneasy night after the battle. On the outskirts of the town is a modern memorial that recalls the three battles fought around the town in 1690, 1794 and 1815. In **Sombreffe** is the rectory where Blücher established his headquarters on the 15th.[3]

Mt. St. Jean
The Reserve Corps continued marching toward Quatre-Bras.

13.30 Brye
Wellington & Blücher met at Moulin de Bussy. Wellington expressed reservations about the deployment, noting the numbers of Prussians exposed along forward slopes to enemy artillery.

14.00 Quatre-Bras
Ney attacks at Quatre-Bras. Allied strength—8,000.

Ligny Battlefield
Napoleon issued orders for the battle to I Cav and II Cav Corps, III and IV Corps, with the Guard and IV Cav Corps in reserve. VI Corps awaited orders near Charleroi. Ney at Frasnes was ordered to drive the English out of Quatre Bras and then to descend on Brye by about 18.00.

14.30 Ligny Battlefield
Vandamme attacked St. Amand while Gérard undertook a personal reconnaissance of the Prussian lines at Ligny, and deployed Vichery and Pecheux against the village while placing Hulot's division on the right to support the cavalry facing Boignee.

15.00 Sombreffe
Thielemann's III Corps arrived between Sombreffe & Mazy.

Quatre Bras
Wellington returned from his meeting with Blücher, calling him "a damned fine old fellow." Perponcher's division was under pressure. In rapid succession the Duke of Brunswick arrived at the head of his corps, Merlen's cavalry arrived from

Nivelles, and then Picton's division came in behind the last of Brunswick's men.

15.15 Quatre Bras
Ney was just receiving his orders of 14.00, which he not unreasonably interpreted to mean that he had to clear Quatre-Bras before attempting his turning movement against the Prussians. Without neutralizing the British first, his outflanking force would be exposed between two fires.

Fleurus
Marshal Soult issued further instruction to Marshal Ney, which in its vagueness seemed to confirm the hotheaded Gascon's fixation on the capture of Quatre Bras, and did not suggest the importance of his moving at least d'Erlon's corps to support the Emperor.

15.45 Frasnes
The Emperor's aide-de-camp count de la Bedoyere arrived on the Brussels road from IHQ with a pencilled note from the Emperor, and ordered the lead division of d'Erlon's division to change direction and march for St. Amand. The remainder of the corps followed.

16.00 Quatre-Bras.
Alten's newly-arrived division attacks.
Kruse's Nassau contingent (Landwehr) arrived.

St. Amand
Lefol's division finally captured St. Amand le Chateau from Steinmetz's brigade. But Girard's division was unable to eject Pirch II's brigade from La Haye, Blücher himself leading Tippelskirchen's brigade which finally drove the French out with 50% casualties.

Ligny
Gérard's attack against Ligny met fierce resistance from Jagow's brigade, and some regiments took over 50% casualties before the Prussians finally pulled back across the creek.

16.10 Gemioncourt
Ney received word from d'Erlon of his change of direction. Within minutes, Colonel Forbin de Janson arrived from IHQ, but he failed to deliver the orders in the face of the Marshal's rage. Throwing caution to the wind, Ney ordered Kellermann to attack Halkett's newly-arrived brigade with the single cavalry brigade he had to hand. This charge was lucky.

The large farmstead of Gemioncourt stands 200 yards to the east of the Charleroi high road. West of the road at this point is the sunken meadow where the 69th Regiment was scattered by the French cavalry. Wellington was nearly captured in the SE corner of Quatre-Bras on the Brussels Road by the French Cavalry charge. He only escaped by jumping into the square of the 92nd Highlanders.[11]

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[11] David G. Chandler, *Waterloo: The Hundred Days*.

18.00 Quatre Bras
Cooke's division arrived at Quatre-Bras along with Best's Brigade. A lull spread over the battlefield as Wellington, who now had numerical superiority, sent Brunswick and Kielmansegge to attack Bachelu on his left, while Cooke's Guardsmen drove Jerome's men back through the Bossu Wood.

Fleurus
Napoleon was about to send the Guard into battle when a mysterious force appeared in the rear of Vandamme's Corps. A lull in the battle ensued while staff officers galloped off to identify the approaching troops.

18.30 Fleurus
Staff officers reported that the approaching column turned out to be d'Erlon's I Corps. Napoleon recommenced his attack.

Quatre-Bras
Ney finally received the dispatch, which Forbin de Janson failed to deliver earlier, containing Soult's further instructions of 15.15.

19.30 Ligny
The Guard went into action, one brigade on either flank of Gerard's IV Corps, supported by the Guard artillery and Heavy Cavalry. Within half an hour they had driven the Prussians back from the Ligny brook. They then hit Krafft's brigade, pushing it back toward Brye. As the French approached his command post, Blücher took 32 squadrons of cavalry and swept down upon the Guard, only to be beaten back by Milhaud's IV Cavalry Corps. Blücher himself was wounded and separated for the next several hours from headquarters.

19.30 Wellington's HQ
Wellington informed that Blücher had retreated to Wavre.

21.00 Ligny
The battle was at an end and the Prussians began to withdraw.

Gembloux
From **St. Amand** the Roman Road runs towards **Gembloux**., overlooking the general line of the Prussian retreat after Ligny, through Marbais, Tilly, Mellery and Mont-St. Guibert to Ottignies. It was to Mellery where Blücher, bruised and tired, was taken by his aide Nostitz. The French pursuit went rather more to the east, having started off towards Namur before swinging north through Gembloux to Sart-le-Walhain.[3]

Quatre Bras
As darkness descended, Ney broke contact and drew his forces off to the south. Wellington chose not to pursue.

22.00 Genappe
Wellington reached his quarters at *l'auberge du Roi d'Espagne* in Genappe, where he received word of the Prussian debacle. He despatched an officer toward the east

who returned about midnight to report French Vedettes near Sombreffe.

23.00 Ligny
The French followed the retiring enemy but did not pursue. Discovering a fugitive horde of 10,000 making its way toward Liege, the French assumed this was the line of retreat. Napoleon ordered one hard-hit division to remain at St. Amand while Grouchy would take 33,000 men to pursue the broken remnants of Blücher's army eastward. Napoleon would take the balance of the forces toward Quatre-Bras in the morning, to deal Wellington a decisive blow. Careless staff work again struck, as no one at IHQ apparently thought to dispatch an officer to ascertain the true state of affairs before Quatre Bras. Furthermore, they failed to order Grouchy to conduct any overnight reconnaissance of the fleeing Prussians. The Emperor retired to bed at Fleurus.

01.00 Tilly
Gneisenau gave the order to retreat on Tilly and Wavre. He then rode over to his headquarters in Mellery, where he found Blücher, somewhat dazed, recovering from his fall during the charge.

03.00 Genappe
Wellington arose and immediately sent the bearer of the last dispatches toward Ligny to confirm the Prussian retreat and its direction.

17 JUNE 1815
04.00 Fleurus
Napoleon awoke about dawn and remembered to order Pajol's I Cavalry Corps to follow the Prussians, and then went back to sleep.

06.00 Quatre Bras
Wellington returned to the cross-roads and sat by a fire on the damp morning.

Fleurus
Napoleon arose and proceeded to a leisurely morning routine. He received a report from Pajol that the Prussians were moving toward Namur. In fact, Grouchy's cavalry had lost contact with the organized troops of the Prussians, and rain during the day complicated their work. Napoleon shortly received word of the fiasco at Quatre Bras.

07.30 Quatre Bras
Wellington received confirmation of Blücher's retreat on Wavre.

09.00 Quatre Bras
Wellington received his first dispatch from Blücher, since the retreat and enquiring of his own intentions.

10.00 Quatre Bras
Wellington opined that "as they are gone back, we must go to." He ordered his troops to withdraw toward Brussels. The retreat from Quatre-Bras began at 10:00 AM on the 17th,

covered by cavalry, horse artillery and one Congreve rocket battery.

11.25 Walhain
Marshal Grouchy was breakfasting with his staff when, at 11:25 AM, they heard the first salvos of the French guns at Waterloo. At once General Gérard, commander of the IV Corps, demanded they march forthwith on the sound of the guns. Despite this plea, Grouchy headed for Wavre by way of **Corbaix**.[3]

13.00 Marbais
Napoleon arrived from Ligny on his way to Quatre Bras. Ney's forces were inactive.

14.00 Quatre-Bras
The last of Wellington's infantry, the Guards division, pulled out just ahead of Napoleon's belated pursuit. The pursuit by the French lancers through Quatre-Bras did not begin until 2:00 PM. They overtook the British rear guard in Genappe.

In 1815 the main Brussels road passed through Genappe. In **Genappe**, in the narrow streets of the town are the *Auberge du Roi d'Espagne*, where Wellington took his supper and some sleep after Quatre Bras, The lancers's attack through the town was countered by the English horse. In the confines of the narrow streets the lances were difficult to use and they received a check. The British lost 93 dead and wounded in the retreat. Before Genappe the retreat was all blunder and confusion; after Genappe it was a walk.

To the east of the main road, a side-road to Baisy-Thy leads past a very tall, distinctively shaped tree beside the small stone shrine of Saint Anne. From beneath its branches Napoleon paused to encourage his rain-sodden troops to hurry forward during the afternoon of the 17th in his thwarted bid to catch the Allied rearguard.

Prince Jérome Bonaparte reported what the waiter at the *Roi d'Espagne* told him. When he was serving Wellington on the 17th, he overheard the general speak of the juncture of the two allied armies at Weterloo. Napoleon replied: "Nonsense—not for two more days [would the Prussians be ready to fight.]"

18.00 Mt. St. Jean
Napoleon sent his IV Cav Corps toward Wellington's position. A volley from 60 guns revealed that this was indeed Wellington's chosen position: with cavalry only guarding the flank, and light forces thrown forward into Plancenoit and Hougoumont.

20.00 Gembloux
Grouchy gave up on the pursuit for the day, and sent Napoleon word of "part" of the Prussian Army's retreat toward Wavre.

23.00 Waterloo
Quartier-Général de Wellington, the Hôtel Boderglieu, where the Duke spent the nights of 17 and 18 June. "I made my campaigns with ropes. If anything went wrong I tied a knot and went on." Wellington went to bed without hearing from Blücher. At almost the same time, Müffling confirmed to Blücher that Wellington had taken up a position at Mont-St.-

Jean and had asked for assistance. Blücher, over Gneisenau's objections, stated "We are going to join the Duke." Gneisenau was concerned that the perfidious British might be using the Prussians as a rear guard.

18 JUNE 1815
04.00 Maison du Roi
After spending the early twilight hours inspecting the front, Napoleon received Grouchy's 20.00 hrs. despatch. He made no immediate reply and retired for a few hours of sleep.

08.00 Maison du Roi
The Emperor drafted his plan for the battle, and belatedly dictated a response to Grouchy's message of 20.00, confirming Wavre as the Marshal's next objective.

09.30 Wavre
Exelman's cavalry ran into the Prussian rear-guard south of Wavre. Prisoners revealed Blücher's march in support of Wellington at Waterloo, and this was put into a message for Grouchy.

10.00 Maison du Roi
Napoleon received another message from Grouchy, sent at 06.00, stating that the Prusians seemed intent on joining Wellington.

11.30 Walhain St. Paul
Grouchy's Army heard the sound of the guns opening up at Waterloo, 15 miles away. His subordinates, General Gerard and Vandamme, insisted they march to support the Emperor. Grouchy, however, deliberately obeyed his orders.

12.30 Walhain St. Paul
Grouchy received word from Exelmans that the Prussians were marching against Napoleon. Grouchy immediately ordered his troops across the Dyle.

17.00 Wavre
The fighting along the Dyle continued from Wavre to Limale as Grouchy attempted to find a weakness in Thielemann's III Prussian Corps, but was able to make no headway. During this fight, the other three corps made good their arrival on the battlefield of Waterloo. The town of **Wavre** itself stood mainly on the north bank of the river Dyle in 1815, with two stone bridges linking it with its southern suburb. Two long but low heights line the valley, both being covered in places by thick woodland, the spur on the right bank being slightly the higher, that on the left bank somewhat steeper - and thus more suited for the defence of the river and its crossing places. It was the scene of a staunch action by part of the Prussian III Corps, covering the march of the remaining Corps towards Waterloo.

Along the banks of the Dyle stands **Limale**, scene of much hard fighting on the evening of the 18th.—to the north and east of the town, the scene of the successful French outflanking attack and final efforts on the morning of the 19th. The steep wooded ridges give a good idea of the terrain that

obstructed the French deployment both in this area and nearer to Wavre.

The small winding roads north and west of Limale lead towards **Chapelle-St. Lambert**, the route of Blücher's march at the head of three corps (one in fact kept to a more northerly but parallel route via Rixensart and **Genval**) towards the distant battlefield of Waterloo. Moving on through the Wood of Paris, one reaches the point beyond **Lasne** where the leading formations of Bülow's IV Corps began to emerge from the trees shortly before 2 PM on 18 June. A monument to the Prussian General Schwerin, set amidst the fields west of Lasne church, marks the place where he was killed in command of a brigade of IV Corps cavalry.[3]

What became of Grouchy, meanwhile? He first learned of the disaster at Waterloo at 10:00 AM on the 19th. Grouchy was south of Rosieren on the Wavre-Brussels Road when he received Soult's order to retreat over the Sambre and move on Philippeville. Thielemann, in accordance with his earlier instructions, withdrew to Louvain. Grouchy began his retreat at 11:30 AM on Namur in two columns, the III Corps and the IV Corps, with Pajol's cavalry acting as rear guard. His advanced guard (12th Dragoons) retreated through Temploux and arrived at Gembloux on 2:00 PM on the 19th, heading for Namur. They reached Namur by the Brussels gate one hour later, with instructions to hold the bridge over the Sambre and the Meuse Rivers. Exelmans's Cavalry Corps arrived at Namur at 7:00 PM, and continued on to Givet. At this time the main body with the trains was six miles from Temploux. The last of the IV Corps (Teste's Division acting as the rear guard) arrived at Temploux at midnight. Vandamme's III Corps moved through Temploux and arrived in Gembloux at 5:00 AM on the 20th. Grouchy decided to continue the IV Corps's march onto Namur.

Grouchy crossed the Sambre at Namur moving to Givet. That morning he gought off Pirch I with the IV Corps, while the II Corps halted Thielmann near Falize. By 4:00 PM on the 20th Grouchy arrived at Namur. At about 5:30 PM the Prussian pursuit attempted to storm the Brussels gate at Namur, losing 1300 men to the French 60. The French barricaded the gate and retreated via the Porta de France at 8:00 PM, heading for Dinant. On the 21st Grouchy with 28,000 men and 96 guns arrived at Cherlemont.

19.40 Waterloo
The attack of the Guard collapsed, and the French Army slowly disintegrated under a general Anglo-Prussian assault.

Plancenoit
Plancenoit was the scene of the frantic final stage of the fighting, which began at 4:30 PM on the 18th. The fluctuating struggle for the place raged on until after dusk before the Prussians emerged victorious. The farm of **Le Caillou**, site of Napoleon's quarters on the night of the 17th, was where Napoleon breakfasted prior to the battle (8:00 AM), remarking, "This affair is nothing more than eating breakfast. We have 90 chances in our favor and not ten against. " It was to prove a singularly indigestible breakfast. Nearby on that fateful day, at 8:15 PM the remnants of the six battalions of the Guard streamed back in chaos. Napoleon attempted to stem the rout by ordering these battalions of the Old Guard to

form square just to the west of the Brussels Road, about 200 meters south of La Belle Alliance, where a side road crosses the main road. Then, escorted by Soult, d'Erlon, Drouot and the duty squadrons, Napoleon rode back to La Belle Alliance.

La Belle Alliance

Between La Belle Alliance and Rosomme farm is the site where Wellington and Blücher met at 9:00 PM, after the victory. To the east, the ground rises slightly—the site of the Great Battery; behind this, on a slight eminence, Napoleon's second command post, his first being the heights near Rossomme Farm, to the east of the farmhouse. Wellington had originally selected the La Belle Alliance position on which to resist the French.. His Quartermaster General, de Lancey, rejected that line as too big for an army of Wellington's size. Only then did he move north to the crossroads at Mont-St.-Jean. The French later occupied the Alliance position.

In Plancenoit, on a bank 100 metres from the main road is *'Observatoire de Napoleon* . From its summit a good view of the battlefield area - as seen by Napoleon and his staff at various moments on the 18th - can be obtained ranging from Plancenoit in its hollow to the right-rear, past Papelotte and the remains of the Wood of Paris (to the right-fore, now much thinned) and then westwards past La Haie Sainte in the centre towards Hougoumont to the north-west, although the Chateau is not visible from this point.[3]

Some 200 metres to the west where the attack of the Middle Guard's westernmost column was met and repulsed by Maitland's Guards. The sweep of ground between La Haie Sainte to the left and the Chateau of Hougoumont to the right can be well appreciated.[3]

After the battle, Wellington arrived back at the inn at 11:00 PM, ate and slept on a pallet, as one of his aides-de-camp was dying in his bed in the next room. [3]

Hougoumont
The right of the road the reverse slopes Wellington employed to conceal his men . The Chateau de Goumont **(Hougoumont)** is one of the most famous sites, the nine-hour struggle which Wellington considered the most vital feature of the whole battle of Waterloo.

Wellington began his inspection of his whole line by 6:00 AM on the 18th, beginning west of Hougoumont and moving to the east "as if riding for pleasure." The duke spent the day of the battle "in his comfortable civilian dress." About 10:00 AM he had returned to the west of Hougoumont, and after spending the better part of the day elsewhere on the battlefield, returned by 7:30 PM to the east of Hougoumont, from whence he would ride along the entire line ordering his troops forward in pursuit of the demoralized French.[3]

Brussels
The Hôtel de Richmond, which was the site of the celebrated ball on the eve of the campaign. Wellington left the ball and returned to his Headquarers at 3:00 AM on the 16th, sleeping until 5:00 AM. Overseeing the issue of his orders, at 7:30 AM Wellington and his staff followed the Reserve (Picton), which had departed via the Chaussée Waterloo, at 4:00 AM.

Wellington arrived at Nivelles at 6:00 AM and at Quatre-Bras by 10:00 AM on the 16th.

Through the **Forêt de Soignes**, the intervals between the centuries-old trees would have made possible the evacuation of Wellington's army, including gun-teams, had this proved necessary.[3]

Mont-St. Jean

Near the intersection of the Chemin d'Ohain at the crest of the ridge of **Mont-St. Jean**, the road ran through steep banks. Just beside the cross-roads in its south-west angle originally stood the single elm tree under which Wellington established his command post at various times in the battle, in particular from about 1:30 to about 3:00 PM. Again at about 4:00 PM he had taken refuge in the squares of the 33rd and 69th regiments nearby.[3]

La Haie Sainte

La Haie Sainte lies in a hollow, past the site of the sandpit east of the road defended by the 95th Rifles. Here the stout defence conducted by Major Baring and his battalion of the King's German Legion. Wellington spent much of the battle in this vicinity. At about 11:30 AM he was at the center of the line, and after stationing himself at his elm tree he arrived at the sandpit about 3:00 PM. Again at 6:30 PM he was near the farmhouse of La Haie Sainte. There is a fine view from the exterior barn door towards the area traversed by Ney's massed squadrons and later by the Imperial Guard.[3]

Papelotte

The exposed forward slope which saw the decimation of Bylant's Brigade and of the line held by Picton's 5th Division. The original roadway had a thick hedgerow on its southern side, through which embrasures were cut for the cannon, Down the Chemin d'Ohain to the east lies the farm of **Papelotte** - forming, with La Haie hamlet and the Chateau de Frischermont the extreme left of Wellington's position. Papelotte is open to visitors from 8:30 AM to 7:30 PM. The massive walls of the original set of buildings show how formidable these farmsteads must have been to attack. On 18 June the position was held by Saxe-Weimar's Nassauers, lost to the French at 2:30 PM, but subsequently retaken in the early evening.

Genappe

By following the line of the Dyle on foot, the original bridge can also be discovered—its narrowness explaining much of the panic and overcrowding that affected the fleeing French *Armée du Nord* late on the 18th. At this bottleneck over the River Dyle Napoleon's hopes of rallying the army were dashed. It was also near here that Napoleon almost fell into Prussian hands, abandoning his travelling-coach, which could barely move through the throng, for horseback.[3]

19 JUNE
Gossieles

Blücher stayed at the Dumont mansion here on the night of June 19th.

05.00 Waterloo
Wellington left for Brussels.

05.00 Charleroi
Exhausted from his journey through the rabble of his army, Napoleon arrived on horseback at Charleroi. He departed in a carriage to Philippeville, via Leuverval and Somzée.

09.00 Philippeville
Here was the IV Corps staging area prior to the campaign. Napoleon still believed that "All is not lost. ... There is still time to retrieve the situation." Soult soon arrived. The Emperor stayed at the Golden Lion Inn, Room 4, departing at Noon on the 19th—in Soult's traveling carriage—and headed south for Laon where he intends to reorganize the army—infantry rallying on the butte of Laon, artillery at Le Fére, and cavalry at Soissons.

Rocroi
The long ribbon of the dusty road unwound beneath jolting carriages, as the Emperor drove south. A few bewildered watchers cheered the familiar profile at **Rocroi.**[4] In the three carriages were the Duke of Bassano, Bertrand, Drouot, Gourgaud, Flahaut and Labédoyere.[8] Arriving at the posting station of Maubert-Fontaine (near Rocroi) there were no horses available and the postmaster had to scour the nearby villages, while the Emperor and his aides de camp refreshed themselves at the Grand Turk Hotel.[7]

20 JUNE

04.00 Paris
Fouché learned of the outcome of the battle. He leaked the information to selected deputies of the Chambers, and put his plan in motion.

06.00: Laon
The imperial convoy again had to wait for teams to be produced at **Mézieres**. As they approached Laon from the east, the first remnants of the army began arriving from the north, without weapons, ragged and bleeding. The Guard was mustering at Chivy, and would assemble 3,000 men by the 26th. The Emperor arrived at the posting station where the Reims and Marle roads crossed. On the evening of June 20th, Napoleon's suite was still in Laon at the Hotel des Postes, delayed by a lingering hope of reuniting with the vestiges of the retreating army.[7] At ten or eleven PM they continued their journey traveling through the night.[8]

Soissons
From Laon Napoleon's coach took the route via Mons en Laonnois, Montbavin, Merlieux and Chavignon, reaching the posting station at Vaurain at the crossroads to Craonne. Then with a change of horses, the party continued to Soissons, Vertes-Feuille and Villers Cotterêts.

Grouchy reached Reims on the 25th, continuing to Fismes and finally Soissons on the 26th. He was ejected from the place on the same day by the Prussians, withdrawing to Villers Cotterêts where they skirmished with the Prussians before retreating on Claye and Paris.

Villers Cotterêts
From Villers the coaches made their way to Levignen, Nanteuil, Dammartin, Le Mesnil-Amelot and Le Bourget.

Le Bourget
The final leg of Napoleon's retreat led through La Villette, where he arrived at daybreak on the 21st. Here he turned via the outer fortifications through the Barriere du Roule to the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré.

21 JUNE
06.00: Paris
Down the "Avenue de la grande armée" and through the Arc de triomphe to the Élysée Palace came the sound of horses hoofs on Wednesday morning, June 21st. The carriage stopped; and a dull-eyed man got out. His face was ghastly, and he breathed with difficulty. He disappeared into a bath, then breakfasted and met the Council of State somewhat after 10 AM.[4]

22 JUNE
Le Cateau
During the pursuit of the defeated French army, Wellington reached Le Cateau on June 22nd.

Napoleon signed his abdication at 1:00 PM. The next day the Tricolor replaced the Emperor's standard on the Tuilieries.

Grouchy was ordered to Laon via Meziéres to take command of the army.

23 JUNE
Malmaison
Where he had once enjoyed happier times with Josephine and daughter Hortense, Napoleon waited for permission from the new government to board a frigate for America.[2]

Catillon
Wellington met Blücher and it was decided to move down the Oise River for Paris, masking Laon. The Prussians traveled by way of St. Quentin—Chaunay—Noyon—Compiegne, while the English followed the line Le Cateau—Vermand—Peronne—Nesle—Creil, crossing the Oise at Compiegne. On June 27th they overcame a French force at Compiegne, continuing on to Saint-Maxence.

END NOTES
1. *Encyclopaedia Brittanica*
2. F.L. Petre, *Napoleon at Bay.*
3. David G. Chandler, *Waterloo: The Hundred Days.*
4. Philip Guedalla, *The Hundred Days.*
5. Fodor's *Belgium & Luxembourg.*
6. Ed Wimble, Design Notes, *La Bataille de Ligny.*
7. Henry Lachouque, *The Last Days of Napoleon's Empire.*

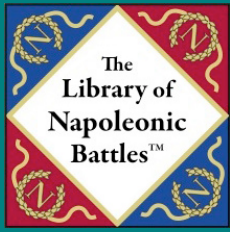8. Edith Saunders, *The Hundred Days.*

What is different and what is the same, in this return to home ground?

The essential core of play—movement and combat—remains, with a few more facets. The design focus is on understanding the interface between operational maneuvers and setting up the battle. Unavoidably we have to add military accessories such as Pontoons and Baggage Trains. We have also added Bombardment (13.0), Improved Positions (15.3), and have redesigned all the combat tables. (After 40 years there are no new terrain types.) Vedettes (16.0), and March Orders (20.0), are necessary in a game where forces converge over a wide area. The Ligny and Waterloo Approach to Battle scenarios allow the players to re-think their set-up at these battlefields. All these additions have been pared to their essentials and tucked into the action logically.

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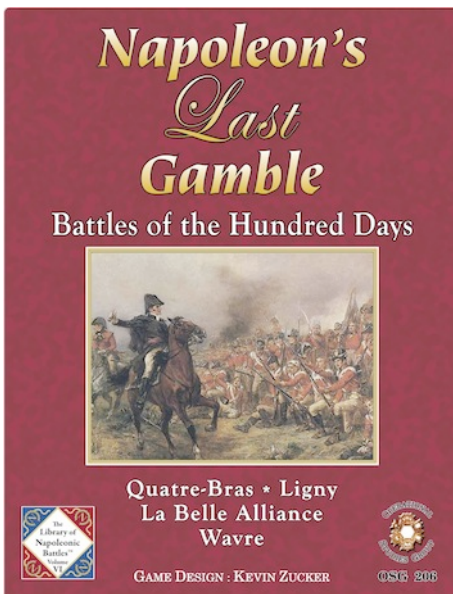
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Napoleon's Last Gamble contains five battles from the Waterloo Campaign, which Napoleon began by seizing the central position between the Prussian and British Armies. On June 12th, Napoleon left Paris and moved to his Center of Operations at Avesnes. On the 15th the *Grande Armée* was unleashed across the Sambre River. Allied screening forces sent out the warning to headquarters. The Allies executed a forward concentration behind the cover of their screens. As the 16th dawned, troops of both sides still converged on the battlefields.

DESCRIPTION

Library of Napoleonic Battles Series: 480 meters per hex, 1 hour per turn, 400-800 men per strength point. Each Approach to Battle game lasts about 22 turns. The Full campaign links the individual battles.

BATTLES SIMULATED
Quatre-Bras *Ney at the Crossroads, 16 June*
The French attacked on two fronts simultaneously. The tenacious defense of Quatre Bras by the Anglo-Allied troops saved the Prussians from receiving the full weight of the *Armée du Nord*.

Ligny, *The Last Victory, 16 June*
Finally unleashed, the Guard pushed the Prussians back from the Ligny brook. Blücher himself was wounded and separated from headquarters. But Napoleon's hoped-for knock-out blow remained undelivered.

Wavre, *Grouchy's Blunder, 18 June*
Napoleon separated the two wings of his army, ordering Marshal Grouchy on the track of the Prussians while he pursued Wellington. Grouchy's prescribed route was wide of the mark, and took him to the outer flank, allowing the Prussians to interpose themselves between the two French wings—Blücher achieved a strategic reversal of the opening.

Waterloo, *A Near Run Thing, 18 June*
While Grouchy frittered away time engaging the Prussian rear-guard at Wavre, Ney conducted the mid-phase of the battle like a rear-guard action in the Peninsular Campaign, failing to provide infantry support for his spectacular cavalry charges. Wellington fought a successful defensive battle, managing to cling to his ridge until the arrival of three Prussian corps. The broken French army retreated toward Charleroi; Grouchy's intact wing moved south-east toward Namur.

La Souffel, *Rapp's Last Stand, 28 June*
Three days after Waterloo, Rapp woke up and began a slow withdrawal from the Rhine, pursued by the vanguard of Schwarzenberg's Army. On June 26 the heavily-outnumbered Rapp skirmished with the Austrian III Corps. Two days later he made a stand along the Souffel River, and the Austrians attacked.

Smolensk Historical AAR
From French Army Archives
Kevin Zucker

Next time someone remarks that battle in TLNB *is "not Napoleonic," find out whether they are basing this on their experience playing other wargames. If a lot of other wargames use the meat-grinder model of combat, can they all be wrong? I have seen some particularly primitive examples, where the concept of deployment is just to fill the battlefield with men standing shoulder to shoulder. When I designed the first game in this series, I had just read S.L.A. Marshal's* Men Against Fire*, showing that "75% never fired at the enemy for the purpose of killing, even though they were engaged in combat and under direct threat." This led me to conclude that in a given regiment, the veteran troops and officers lead from the front, with a herd following behind them who are much less actively engaged. This is a far cry from the assumption of the average wargame, that each and every man is fully occupied in firing for the duration of the battle.*

Let's check the historical documentation.[1] How about a real AAR written in 1812? In preparing the Order of Appearance for Napoleon Against Russia, I had to consult Emile Fabry's Histoire de la Campagne de Russie pendant l'Annee 1812. This book contains every extant letter and report written by any of the main commanders and their subordinates on both sides. Here is an excerpt from page 496:

To their left marched Division Gudin led by Marshal Davout himself. In the afternoon, the 3rd brigade (Gérard) relieved the advanced posts of the 2nd, with the IV and VI battalions of the 21st and the I bn. of the 127th. For the attack, the division adopted the following formation: the 12th Regiment in battle formation, with a battalion in advance, as skirmishers (especially the VI/21st); on the height the tirailleurs on the right of the IV/21st; to the left the I battalion of the 127th and behind them the II battalion of the 21st in battle formation with their two artillery pieces, the battalion supporting the left of the 12th; the other battalions of the 21st Line and of the 7th Light in echelon by battalion; the battalions of the 21st in column of divisions.

They marched in this order toward the first houses of the suburbs. Noticing that the division did not occupy the same length of front as the enemy line and that it was possible the Russians might envelop their left, General Gerard sent the 127th in that direction, and the two battalions of the 21st replaced them in the space created by this movement. The light artillery of the division supported the movement.

The above formation has light troops in front, followed by a checkerboard formation of battalions in echelon formation. The number of troops in the front is small and constantly being relieved by fresh formations, as General Gudin details in his AAR on the Battle of Smolensk (upon which the above narrative was based):

At the break of day, the 7th Light, the 12th, 21st and 127th Line furnished successively battalions de service which fired all afternoon on the enemy. This fusillade was very brisk, and with our left covered by the 7th Light, General Leclerc was obliged to engage one part of his brigade. He repulsed several tentative attacks by the enemy. At noon, the attack on the suburbs became resolute, and the division received orders to support the offensive movement of General Morand; all the positions were captured in an instant. General Dessailly with the 12th Line marched in battle formation to the right of the suburb, with one battalion detached in skirmishers to his front; one battalion of the 127th supported the left of the 12th; the 21st Line and the 7th Leger followed in echelons by battalion...

[1] http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5768412d/f304.image.r =Desaix.langEN

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207-***Peninsular War II,*** 1811-13 - Fuentes de Oñoro, Sagunto, Salamanca, Vittoria (Summer '16)
208-***War of Liberation I,*** 1813 - Lützen, Bautzen, Luckau (Spring 2017)
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210-***Peninsular War I,*** 1808-09 - Gamonal, Espinosa de los Monteros, Tudela, La Corunna (Fall 2018)
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Vittoria 21 June 1813
Peninsular III - Medellín 28 March 1809, Oporto 12 May 1809, Talavera 27–28 July 1809, Ocana 19
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