Wargame

Design

Vol IV, Nr. 7

Defending a Chateau
Arcis-sur-Aube, 1814
Artillery Supply
Napoleon at the Crossroads
Supply in the Peninsular War
Importance of the Line of Communications

Wargame Design, *Summer 2019*

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WORK IN PROGRESS

Publication Date: 14 February 2020
NAPOLEON'S WHEEL, 1805 *and*
NAPOLEON AT BAY EXPANSION KIT

HOW TO DO YOUR OWN RESEARCH
1. Find corroboration. Do not rely upon a single source. If you see the exact text copied in several places that still only counts as one source. 2. Look for bad spelling and bad grammar. 3. Know your sources. Seek out reliable websites. Stay away from books that have an agenda. 4. Tips for spotting an agenda: use of hyperbole, superlatives, many adjectives. 5. Look for arguments bolstered by plenty of factual information that can be confirmed. For more on this subject: *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices* see Chapt. 3, "The Research Process."

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WARGAME DESIGN
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EDITORIAL

Campaigns of Napoleon Developments

With ten years of publications in the TLNB series, we decided it was time to touch on the *Campaigns of Napoleon*, that still has a large and dedicated audience.

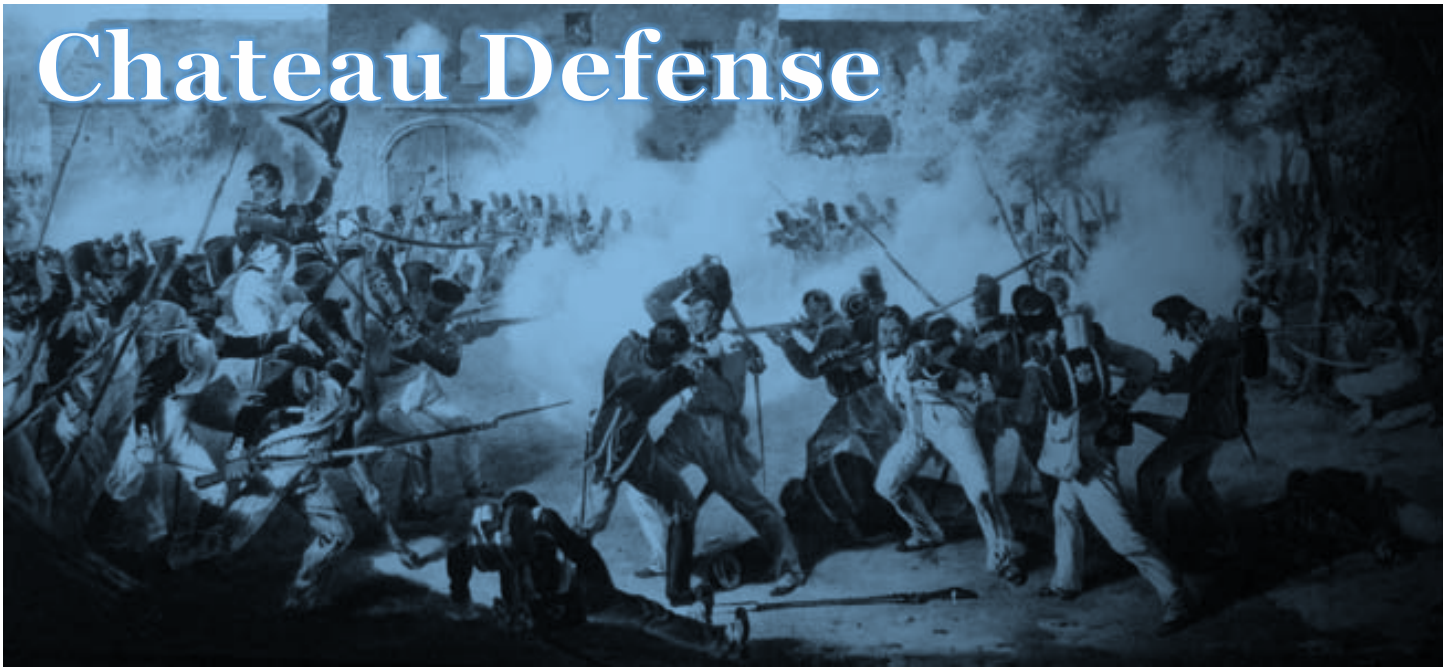
Sample counters from the Napoleon at Bay Expansion Kit

Napoleon at Bay Update
We have finished the counters and the set up charts for this project. The kit, which is intended for use with any edition of the game, is now available for pre-order. Playtesting will continue through December.

Includes: • 2 rule books • 1 counter sheet (280) • 13 player aid cards • Charts & Tables Folder • 4-page interface folder. This Expansion Kit requires Organization Displays and maps from any edition of the game. We have learned a lot researching the TLNB games, uncovering OrBat information to fine-tune the scenarios. In addition to creating a new slimmed-down set of rules for NAB (Standard and Exclusive folders), we will have a 4-page folder with optional rules on how to interface between *NAB La Patrie en Danger* and *Napoleon Retreats*.

Bonaparte in Italy
There are plans afoot to revisit this gem in the rough, one or two years hence. We have decided to re-do the whole three-map boxed game.

—Kevin Zucker



How Much Help does a Chateau Really Give to Poor Quality Troops?

Kevin Zucker

It was asked whether a poor-quality unit might actually be better off defending in clear terrain. We drew-up three sample attacks by a [4] initiative against a [2] initiative in a Chateau…

EXAMPLE ONE:
A 3 [4] 4 attacks a 3 [2] 4 in a chateau (doubled). Odds 1:2

The defender has a 50% chance of throwing back the attacking unit, and a 50% chance of a Shock Combat.

In the Shock combat the defender has only a 1/9 chance of holding on (11.1%)

Altogether a 55.5% chance of holding the hex.

Now let's say that same combat is resolved **in clear terrain. Odds 1:1.**

The defender has a 33% chance of throwing back the attack, a 33% chance of retreating, and a 33% chance of Shock.

Once again the chance of holding on in Shock Combat is 11.1%

Altogether a 36.7% chance of holding the hex.

Finding: The Chateau improves your chances by 18.8%

EXAMPLE TWO:
A 3 [4] 4 attacks a 1 [2] 4 in a chateau (doubled). Odds 1.5:1

16% chance of an Ar

Altogether a 26% chance of holding on.

The same combat is resolved **in clear terrain. Odds 3:1.**

The defender has a zero chance of throwing back the attack, an 83.4% chance of retreating, and a 16.6% chance of Shock.

Once again the chance of holding on in Shock Combat is 11.1%

Altogether a 1.8% chance of holding the hex.

Finding: The Chateau improves your chances by 24%

EXAMPLE THREE:
A 2 [4] 4 attacks a 3 [2] 4 in a chateau (doubled). Odds 1:3

83.4% chance of holding the hex, and a 16.6% chance of Shock.

Altogether an 85% chance of holding the hex.

The same combat is resolved **in clear terrain. Odds 1:1.5**

The defender has a 50% chance of throwing back the attacking unit, and a 50% chance of a Shock Combat.

In the Shock combat the defender has only a 1/9 chance of holding on (11.1%)

Altogether a 55.5% chance of holding the hex.

Finding: The Chateau improves your chances by 29.5%

NOTE: The recent addition of three Dr* to the CRT does not affect the results as ALL Dr's convert to Shock automatically.

Background to Arcis-sur-Aube, 18 March 1814

Maurice Weil

At six in the evening, the Emperor of Russia, arriving from Troyes, entered the room of the Generalissimo (Schwarzenberg), confined to his bed by a violent attack of gout. Eaten up by impatience, irritated for a long time against the Generalissimo, preyed upon already for some days by feverish concern that conflicting reports—and especially the latest events—had only increased; the Emperor of Russia had summoned the Generalissimo to be with him. He, too ill to undertake, on the 17th, travel to Troyes, had instructed the Prussian General Haake to excuse him and to provide the sovereign the explanations that seemed desired.

Troubled by the extreme events of the 18th, the Emperor waiting no longer, had left Troyes with Volkonsky, and jumping in a carriage, had driven to headquarters. Seeing Toll, he called out in a dry and irritated tone: "What's happening? Did we lose the entire army?" The latter, dissatisfied himself and disturbed by the news sent by Kaisarov, replied: "Your Majesty can make for himself an accounting of the indecision of these gentlemen, although I have done everything to represent the dangers of the situation to them. This is a great happiness that Your Majesty has deigned to come in person, because it is still possible to repair our mistakes."

Then turning to Radetzky and to the officers present in the room: "Hey! Well, gentlemen," the Emperor said, "What do you make of this critical situation?" Surprised by such a direct question, fearing perhaps not to issue a personal opinion, they said that there was every reason to expect news from frontline troops that had been reinforced and supported. Toll, impatient and irritated at a response so inadequate and so evasive, then spoke, addressing the Tsar, saying that as minutes were precious, it was important to immediately give to all corps of the Grand Army the order to concentrate between Troyes and Pougy; and to recross Wrede forthwith on to the left bank of the Aube and charge him to defend the city and the bridge of Arcis unto the last extremity.

The Emperor of Russia immediately approved this concentration to the rear, the first retrograde movement he had demanded for some time. He accepted even more willingly the ideas of Toll as he was in fact coming to headquarters with no well-thought-out plan. Penetrating with him into the chamber that Schwarzenberg had dared not bar to him, he called Radetzky, and instructed him to proceed to the establishment of the new disposition. In the conference that took place in which Schwarzenberg was not present, Radetzky nevertheless managed to slightly modify the ideas which had just been expressed. Representing to the Emperor of Russia the inability of Rayevsky to achieve the same evening the banks of the Aube; showing him that the French could be at Plancy before the Allies; seeing that Alexander feared above all a forced march of Napoleon on Bar-sur-Aube and Chaumont; the Chief of Staff led the Czar to consent to a general concentration, not between Troyes and Pougy, but on the position of Trannes, that the various corps could achieve in two marches.

Before returning to Troyes, Emperor Alexander had given direct orders to Rayevsky. For two days he had not ceased to harbor serious fears for the VI Corps, which he found too much in the air and too isolated. Also knowing it would take some time to draft orders and translate them into usable French—as Rayevsky did not speak German—he had, at 8 O'Clock, sent Lieutenant Choinoutoff to Rayevsky's headquarters, with a letter written by Toll. On the order of the Tsar, Toll began by making Rayevsky aware of the day's events and the movement on Arcis that Wrede was executing. He then enjoined him to withdraw to Méry to wait for Pahlen, then go on the 19th to take a position at Troyes, to cover the retreat of the III and IV Corps; and eventually that of Wrede, should he be driven from Arcis. In the event of failure, the Bavarian Field Marshal would take the direction of Lesmont and Brienne where he was to join the guards and reserve. He prescribed to him (Rayevsky), in addition, to recross his vanguard immediately on to the left bank of the Seine and destroy all the crossings.

Artillery Supply During Lull Days in Multi-Day Napoleonic Battles

Kevin Zucker

Regarding multi-day battles in 1863 vs 1813 — the thing about armies seeming to need a day off before resuming action. Earlier in your talk, you mentioned armies had 2 days of ammo with them, so I had this in my head when I wanted you to comment on this. I had sort of assumed the answer might be something like this: Yes, and army had the ammo for a second day of battle right away, but the possible battle days were so limited before RRs that armies wanted to reorganize a bit beforehand (no reason to rush things). Another possibility: you never wanted to use that 2nd day of ammo until another load had been brought up (because enemy might have a 3rd load)?

Anyway, I understand the importance of RRs, but wonder what was the critical element that could be taken care of in one intervening day (reorganization, resupply, foraging, etc.). —John Kisner

I never heard of a battle that was not fought due to a lack of artillery ammunition. (However, since we don't know the names of these unfought battles, we cannot discount the possibility.) There were numerous cases when the guns ran out of ammo during the fight and had to be withdrawn. When there was no resupply of cannonballs available, half of the batteries would be kept in reserve and replace the other half as they exhausted their supply. The Coalition at Lützen, and even the British at Waterloo, had recourse to this expedient.

What were the organizational activities undertaken on the "Lull" day between battle days? These included taking care of the wounded (the troops want to see Napoleon out there supervising this task); bringing up food and ammo; promoting new officers to take the place of those wounded or killed; reorganizing the units and moving men up to the front ranks (where you put your best troops usually).

The armies just couldn't handle fighting two days in a row. In TLNB terms, all your units are in the dead pile. As I often explain, "dead" units do not consist of so many dead men; the men are there, they just are not organized in a way that they can have an effect on the battlefield. After a day of fighting, there is total chaos.

How long would it take to bring up the 2nd load reserve ammo? The artillery only took one day's supply with them. (The numbers are in *Wargame Design*, Vol. IV, Nr. 4 page 17.) "Napoleon habitually wanted a double standard load of ammunition with each gun." That required 2 caissons for each 4-pounder, 3 caissons for a 6- or 8-pounder, and 5 caissons for a 12-pounder. The Caisson for a single 8-pounder cannon carried 92 projectiles. The first caisson was never far from the gun; the others were kept at the main wagon park in the rear of the army. At this point also, several miles behind the firing line, were collected the baggage and the hospitals. The 2nd load caissons were kept at the Grand Parc (see below) farther back. The 2nd load could be brought up gradually, even as the 1st load wagons were being emptied and returning to the park. That way if a 2nd day of battle was deemed necessary, the ammo would already be up forward.

Elting says: "Behind the combat troops the train d'artillerie also hauled the conglomeration of materiel that made up the artillery parks. A corps park would have its artillery's spare caissons, field forges, and supply wagons, and spare cannon to replace those destroyed or disabled in action. (p. 255) The army artillery park (Grand Parc) was normally divided into two parts: a mobile park, kept just at the rear of the army with a resupply of ammunition and spare parts in wagons, and, farther to the rear, the fixed park, which set up temporary arsenals and maintenance shops in one or more fortified depots along the army's line of communications. Ammunition was shuttled forward through this system, with the object of keeping the artillery's caissons and the infantrymen's cartridge boxes continuously filled and refilled."

None of our authorities talks about the fact of the second day lull in every battle. I only noticed this fact because I'm a game designer. In some cases, there was an unspoken truce between the two sides and they cooperated in helping the wounded from the field. During these lulls opposing troops would even share a smoke and a drink and would quietly draw water from the same sources.

Napoléon at the Crossroads:
Hesitations in a New Operational Landscape

Per-Arne Karlsson

The campaign in Saxony autumn 1813 is a mystery. Napoléon is in different sources described as indifferent or hesitating. Marmont says: "One no longer recognises Napoleon again in this campaign." Instead of the tireless worker of former times, Marmont now sees the Emperor taking it easy, like he doesn't care.

His worst strategy was to contiually cancel his plans against Bernadotte, for example, in order to react to an offensive by Blücher. But by the time he can cross the theater, it is always too late. So the allies controlled the tempo of operations.

Petre (page 313) has him "in doubt and uncertainty," and writes, "all accounts represent him as a very different person from the ceaseless worker of former times." He had several strategic problems that remained unsolved in the Autumn. First of all, he was tied to Dresden. Always a bad idea. In 1796 he could maneuver after giving up the siege of Mantova. Second, his LOC was also the strategic barrier (the Elbe) - front line -and that goes against his own maxims. Third: distances are too great for communications by horseback. His C3 keeps losing him the race against time.

The campaign has the general character of a protracted retreat of the French armies. OSG´s *Napoléon at the Crossroads* is a tool for deeper understanding. After playing the game the following perspectives came to mind.

It seems to me fruitful and interesting to compare the art of operational warfare during the Napoléon-period with earlier and later periods. *The* nature of "the decisive battle" changed. Even when Hindenburg writes about the battle of Tannenberg 1914 he makes the remark: "nowdays battles are not decided in one day but during several...". The idea that a big battle should be decided in one day still lived into the 20th century.

The origins of this idea stretched back to ancient times. And during the 17th and 18th centuries ”the great Captains”—Gustavus Adolphus, Marlbourough, Fredrick the Great—all strove to decide a campaign with a decisive stroke in a one-day battle. This strategy was still very much alive when Napoléon began his career. He became the greatest master of it.

At Austerlitz the Austrian plan was like an exercise from the Seven Years War: "turning the enemy with long flanking marches". The Austrians, Russians and the Prussians were organized and fought as they did in the previous war…But Napoléon hit hard with decisive strokes from the centre and won battle after battle, afterwards following the same pattern at Jena, Friedland, and Wagram.

Why was Wagram 1809 ”the last success?” After Wagram, there wasn't another campaign decided by a decisive stroke and a one-day victory. A victory that made such impression that the will to resist cease. Borodino was a disappointing lesson which showed the futile results of attacking in the centre. The decisive battles thereafter have a new character–and Napoléon was not prepared! He wrote that he had not learnt anything new from all his campaigns…maybe that is true. And maybe he should have learnt something: now he fought the big battles like in the previous wars, hitting hard, trying to reach a decision in a one day-stroke…

Increased firepower and larger armies with new flexible organisation created a new operational landscape stressing the tactical defensive combined with strategic encircling movements. The decisive battles became movements of encirclements with troops basically on the defensive: Leipzig 1813, Waterloo 1815, Königgrätz 1866, Metz 1870, Sedan 1870, Tannenberg 1914 – and almost – Marne 1914…

Encircling movements with tactically defensive troops was the opposite of the way Napoléon was used to approaching big battles. That may be why he acts with hesitation ”at the crossroads”?

Napoléon at the Crossroads is an excellent tool for understanding and thinking about a complex historical situation. I hope OSG will produce more simulations in the 2X-series!

Per-Arne Karlsson is Associate Professor History at Stockholm University, Sweden

Supply in the Peninsular War

Stephen Groves

No troops can serve to any good purpose unless they are regularly fed. —Wellington

Wellington's Anglo-Portugese Army contained 53,000 British, 3,000 Hanoverian and 35,000 Portugese regular troops. Feeding this host was the duty of the commissariat, and by mid-1813 this amounted to 100,000 lbs of biscuit, 300 head of cattle and 200,000 lbs of forage corn *per day* for Wellington's army.

Wellington and his Commissaries General gave supply a great deal of attention in the summer of 1811 as they replaced the ad hoc arrangements of 1810 with a more efficient system that was to serve the army well for the rest of the war. There was no shortage of supplies that could be obtained from Britain or from North Africa, the Baltic or even North America. Over 800,000 barrels of flour were exported from America to the Peninsula in 1811, and the trade continued undiminished in 1812 and 1813 despite the outbreak of war between America and Britain. Similarly almost half the forage corn consumed by the horses and mules of Wellington's army was imported, and no fewer than ninety-eight convoys of merchantmen, six of them containing a hundred vessels, sailed to the Peninsula in 1811 alone, mostly from British ports. This vital logistical lifeline depended on the Royal Navy's command of the sea which was never seriously threatened.

The real difficulty lay in getting supplies from the coast to the army. The first stage was obvious: supplies should be taken by water as far as possible, and the Tagus, the Mondego and the Douro were all employed, with important commissariat stations established at the upper navigable limit of each. The final stage was also well established: most supplies would be carried to the division on the frontier by mule trains, while the meat the soldiers ate would generally arrive on its own hooves.

See Map- Supply Depots and Cantonments, January 1812, showing the principal arrangements for Wellington's army at this time.

This left an important middle stage between the river heads and the forward magazines. In the past the army had relied on conscripting local bullock carts, along with their bullocks and owners, but this was both unpopular and inefficient, and there were insufficient carts to meet the demand. Wellington and his Commissary General, Kennedy, decided to create a special force of 800 bullocks carts specifically designated for the task, with bullocks and drivers permanently employed to operate them.

They were organized into brigades of twenty-five carts, each brigade to have fifty-four bullocks, eleven men and fourteen boys who would receive regular pay and rations. Two brigades would form a division and be supervised by a commissariat clerk, while an officer of the commissariat would be responsible for 400 carts (8 divisions). Quarters were to be established at each stage along the road, between 14 to 17 miles apart. Once the magazine was reached, supplies would be transferred to mules for the final leg of the journey.

The depots or magazines were ideally situated within three or four days mule march of the army, supplies being taken to the depots by bullock carts and river boats. Ideally troops should be no more than three marches (42-51 miles) from the magazine, so that the mule train could make the return journey in six days.

As each mule carried 200 lbs of supplies plus its own feed for the round trip (in other words, six days biscuit for thirty three men, rum for one hundred or rice for two hundred men or corn for three horses, with a little to spare) enormous mule trains were required. The army needed more than 9000 mules for the commissariat, and could not find enough to meet the demand, especially for the Portuguese units, which Spanish muleteers would not deign to serve.

Even more than food, forage for horses was vital to keep an army mobile. On service a horse could carry three days' food, corn in a sack behind the saddle and hay slung in nets wherever possible. Frequently the forage was provided by regimental parties detached for the purpose. The correct ration of forage for all the mules and horses with the army was fourteen pounds of hay or straw, twelve pounds

of oats, or ten pounds of barley or indian corn. When the commissary was able to issue English hay, the ration was ten pounds, but when he issued straw of local forage it was fourteen pounds. When necessity required green forage to be issued, the ration weight increased to twenty eight pounds. The difficulty in bringing up feed for horses was obvious, and the commissariat regarded maintaining a single regiment of cavalry as comparable to maintaining a whole division of infantry.

Supply trains were enormous, even excluding the many camp followers. For example, each British brigade and cavalry regiment in the Peninsula required about 150 mules, whilst a horse artillery troop is recoded with seventy-one mules for bread, twenty four for rum, twelve for rice, sixty nine for forage and twenty nine spares for a total of 205 mules! In addition to commissariat animals, each unit had animals to carry camp kettles, medical stores, ammunition etc., plus officer's baggage according to rank: lieutenant colonel being allocated ten mules major seven, captain five, subaltern one, etc. Even so British trains never approached the enormity of those that trailed behind other armies, the Spanish for example.

Despite the number of regulation patterns of vehicle, many baggage wagons were impressed from the local populations or privately purchased civilian vehicles. The British in the Peninsula were equipped with wagons sent from Britain (unsuitable for local conditions), and a few spring wagons, for the transportation of the wounded, but depended almost entirely on great numbers of Portuguese ox carts. These primitive vehicles with wickerwork sides, solid wheels and turning axles which made an excruciating noise, were painfully slow- two miles an hour was a fair speed – and too small, but were used because they were suitable for local terrain and could be driven and repaired by any peasant. Regimental baggage trains marched in the following order: oxen for the day's meat; then vehicles drawn by horses or mules; carts drawn by oxen; mules bearing ammunition; baggage of the staff; mules carrying camp kettles or tents; and finally baggage of regimental officers.

Excessive transport impeded an army's progress, particularly over poor roads in bad weather. Wellington eventually forbade the use of bullock carts for transporting reserve ammunition because of the blockages caused as a result of troops being having endured long hold-ups in narrow roads when faced with a convoy of a hundred such carts.

In most regions the roads were bad. Although the approach roads to small towns and villages were paved for a mile or two on either side, they had usually not been repaired since they were first made and most were in a terrible state by 1811 being described as broken up and nearly impassable.

If the state of the roads was hard on the forage carts, it was also tough on horseshoes. These were often so scarce that parties of me were sent to scour the battlefield and knock them off the dead horses for reuse by the farriers.

Even with all this working smoothly, many supplies were obtained locally or brought in by private contractors. When the army began moving forward it frequently outmarched the mule trains following in its wake and had to rely on what the commissariat could find near its route; but this was only in fresh country where supplies could be requisitioned.

Wellington's logistical arrangements were neither simple nor one dimensional; it took a complicated supply chain to transform the grain grown in America or Sweden or Algiers, to the biscuit that was issued to British and Portuguese soldiers. In the end it only worked because Britain could pay each step of the way: not with ready money, but with credit.

The French

The terrain in the Peninsula was very much against the French: impassable mountains with ideal ambush points, 'roads' of dust in summer and mud in winter, freezing nights and burning days; snowbound passes and land so poor that the peasants were at subsistence level, meant that the French had to drag their lines of communications over the Pyrenees and use thousands of troops to keep them open. These difficulties led to a shortage or often a complete lack of supplies. Hence, the troops used the classic method of living off the land by foraging. This process increased an army's mobility and manoeuvrability, and was closely tied to Napoleonic theories of warfare. It worked reasonably well until barren country was encountered, though even fertile terrain required a wide dispersal of forces to avoid the total exhaustion of any one area.

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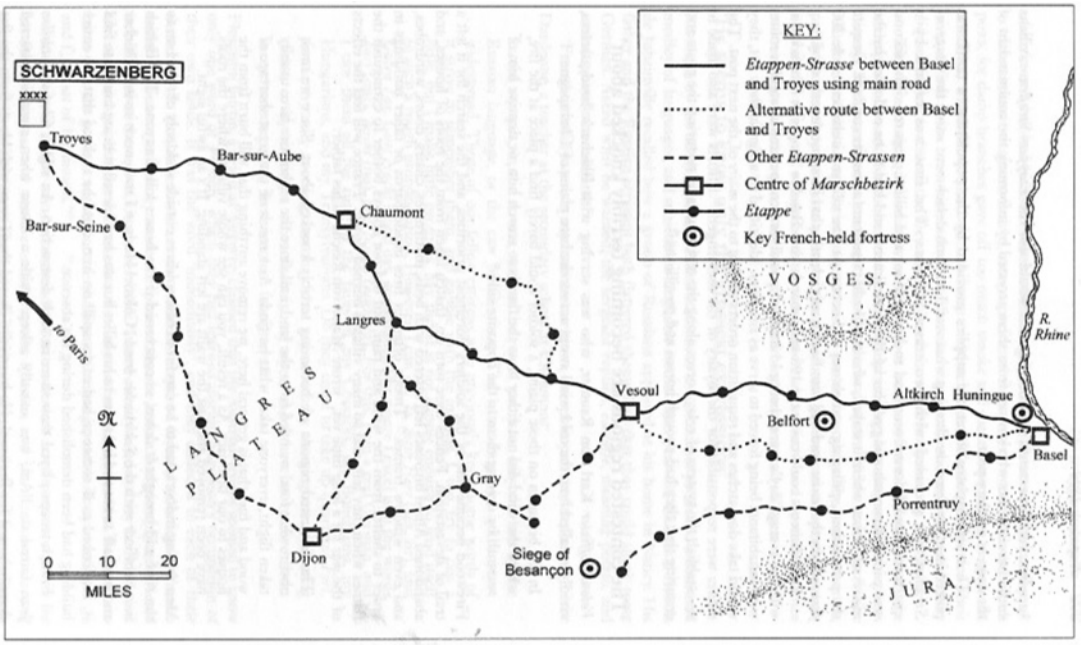
Why the Line of Communication was Critical in Napoleonic Warfare

Kevin Zucker

"Line of Communications" includes the routes over which messages, supplies, and reinforcements can travel.

The line of communication consisted of a major supply base outside of the theater of operations, equipped with warehouses and other facilities to serve a constant stream of horse-drawn wagons or, preferably, river-bound barges. Supplies moved to forward depots, from which militarized transport battalions delivered them to the troops. During battle, the baggage wagons were kept well to the rear, near the field hospitals and vehicle parks.

Unlike the armies of the 20th century, Napoleonic armies operated without the security afforded by a continuous front. In World Wars I and II, the numerous armies each had their own line of communication. In the Napoleonic Wars, except for 1813 and 1814, there was but one army on each side operating at a given time, upon a single line. Maxim XII: "An army ought to have only one line of Communication. This should be preserved with care, and never abandoned but in the last extremity;" and in Maxim XX, Napoleon discusses changing the line of Communication. "The line of communication should not be abandoned; but it is one of the most skillful maneuvers in war, to know how to change it, when circumstances authorize or render this necessary. An army which skillfully changes its line of communication deceives the enemy, who becomes ignorant where to look for its rear, or upon what weak points it is assailable."



Schwarzenberg's main lines of communication: early February 1814.

The advent of the railroad and industrial production changed the nature of supply in war. In World War II, there were several instances where armies lost their line of communications. On 19 November 1942, for example, the Red Army launched a two-pronged attack upon Romanian and Hungarian troops on the flanks of the 6th Army, cutting-off and surrounding the Stalingrad pocket. Hitler banned all attempts to break out; but supplying the army by air and attacks from the outside proved fruitless. After less than 12 weeks, Axis forces in Stalingrad had no more ammunition and food.

Napoleon's Army carried enough supply for only 10-14 days. Unlike their predecessors and enemies, Napoleon's troops were able to subsist by foraging—but only as long as the army kept on moving to unspoiled territory. A brigade would exhaust the resources of its neighborhood within 3 days or less.

The loss of the LOC was a morale disaster. Once the troops realized that their retreat route home had been lost, their will to fight suffered. As they continued to operate without an LOC, the lack of food, forage and firewood further abated their health and ability to resist. As the wars dragged on, generals discovered that they could continue to operate without a line of communications—as long as the countryside through which they marched was not exhausted, and a knock-out blow could still be delivered. In 1805, at Ulm, General Mack surrendered when his communications were cut; but in 1814, when Napoleon cut the line of communications of both enemy armies, neither fell back, to Napoleon's surprise.