

The Battle of Waterloo – June 18, 1815

The Emperor Napoleon versus The Duke of Wellington and Prince Blucher

Allied Historical Perspective:

Portion of Wellington's Dispatch to Earl Bathurst, 'Waterloo, 19th June' 1815



My Lord

“... The position, which I took up in front of Waterloo, crossed the high roads from Charleroi and Nivelles, and had its right thrown back to a ravine near Merke Braine, which was occupied, and its left extended to a height above the hamlet Ter la Haye, which was likewise occupied. In front of the right centre, and near the Nivelles road, we occupied the house and gardens of Hougoumont, which covered the return of that flank; and in front of the left centre we occupied the farm of La Haye Sainte. By our left we communicated with Marshal Prince Blücher at Wavre, through Ohain; and the Marshal had promised me that, in case we should be attacked, he would support me with one or more corps, as might be necessary.

I should not do justice to my own feelings, or to Marshal Blücher and the Prussian army, if I did not attribute the successful result of this arduous day to the cordial and timely assistance I received from them. The operation of General Bülow upon the enemy's flank was a most decisive one; and, even if I had not found myself in a situation to make the attack which produced the final result, it would have forced the enemy to retire if his attacks should have failed, and would have prevented him from taking advantage of them if they should unfortunately have succeeded...”



Waterloo – Anglo-Netherland Special scenario conditions:

Tactical Formations:

Maneuver on road – March Column
Maneuver over open terrain – Company column
Engagement – Line
Defense against cavalry – Square
Open order formation is restricted to Light troops only.

Tactical Doctrine:

Battalions would typically adopt either a waiting stance in column, or a defensive or offensive stance in line.

The British defensive and offensive, tactic was to fire one or two volleys' at close range, cry huzzah three times and charge through the smoke with bayonets fixed. The sight and sound of the charging redcoats was normally quite enough to reduce the resolve of any opponent, who had already been disordered by the volley fire, and the result would be a precipitous retreat on their part.

The British Foot regiments were by General Orders, required to detach their integral light companies and concentrate them at the brigade level. This combined light battalion would operate as the protective screen for the parent brigade and, on occasions, deploy within buildings or disruptive terrain, such as woods, orchards and restrictive terrain, which would have been unsuitable for close order formations. The British therefore did not have an integral skirmish screen that would operate in direct concert with the parent battalion, as was the case with the French.

Artillery was typically used defensively, in enfilade, where two batteries on either end of a line of troops would sweep the ground in the immediate front of the infantry formations. It was rarely, if ever, massed in large grand batteries. The British artillery was equipped with Shrapnel, which was similar to canister, but with greater range.

On the field of battle, the light cavalry [Light Dragoons and Hussars] would typically be reserved for a pursuit role, whilst the heavier battle cavalry [Dragoons or Carabiniers] would be used at brigade strength to break an opponent's resistance, engaging against either foot or mounted opponents. When battle cavalry was deficient light cavalry could also be thrown into the offense.

The British often would resort to the use of four-rank or double line. This was used defensively, particularly against cavalry, and offensively. It was a more resilient formation, due to its increased depth, but reduced the available firepower of the battalion when compared to the two-rank formation, more commonly associated with the British battalions.

The Threat from Hal:

Before the game the Anglo-Netherland players on the Hougoumont table will throw one D6. A throw of 5 or 6 will indicate the illusion, to the French, of an approach of Anglo-Netherland forces from the direction of Hal towards the exposed French left flank. This will lead to a counter reaction from the French, and reduce the potential force directly engaged on the Hougoumont table.

Waterloo – Prussian Special scenario conditions:

Tactical Formations:

Maneuver on road – March Column
Maneuver over open terrain – Company column
Engagement – Company Column or Line
Defense against cavalry – Battalion Masse or Square
Open order formation is restricted to Light troops only.

Tactical Doctrine:

The Prussian brigade, in reality comparable to a division, was an all arms formation, which had a prescribed formation both in defense and offense. Typically the formation was in three lines. The first line would have two battalions of Fusilier [Light Infantry], forming the firing line. This would engage the enemy formations with skirmish fire, from third rank skirmishers, directly supported by artillery fire from the attached foot battery. Four battalions deployed in column for shock action, at full intervals, would form the second line. Three battalions deployed in column, at full intervals in a checkerboard formation to those in the second line, would form the reserve. The attached cavalry would be on the flanks either in column of squadrons or deployed in line. This formation could easily shift from the offense to the defense, with little to no change in deployment. In defense, the first line, if it failed to stop an attack, could fall back behind the second, which would, or could, deploy to line for defensive fire. The third line would then form a counter-attacking force that could exploit any overthrow of the enemy attacking force. The cavalry would support the third rank by waiting to exploit any disruption in the enemy attacking force.

The Prussian cavalry reserves were rarely engaged above regiment or brigade level. During the Waterloo campaign, a majority of the Prussian cavalry and particularly those present at Waterloo were light cavalry.

A typical Prussian corps was well served by artillery, and an artillery reserve, equipped with twelve pounders or a Horse Company, was available at corps level. However, the reserve was rarely employed en masse. The individual companies would tend to be fed into the action in support of the brigade artillery, or to replace a company that had exhausted its available ammunition. Clausewitz observed that companies would tend to fire as rapidly as possible in an attempt to exhaust their ammunition. Once out of ammunition the batteries would remove themselves from the front line and return to the corps park to replenish ammunition or to rest. Clausewitz was not impressed by this practice.

The Threat from Grouchy:

During turns four through nine Blucher will receive reports of possible French forces advancing from the direction of Wavre towards Smohain. On a random dice roll the Prussians will detach forces to confirm the information and counter the threat. Accordingly, the Prussian's may be asked to throw one D6 with the following results:

6 = Units [917], [918], [923]; [924] and [925] fail to arrive on table on turn 10
4 or 5 = Units [918], [923]; [924] and [925] fail to arrive on table on turn 10
2 or 3 = Units [923]; [924] and [925] fail to arrive on table on turn 10
1 = Unit [918] fails to arrive on table on turn 10

Example: Turn 5 the Prussians are asked to roll one D6 and roll 2, so units [923], [924] and [925] will return towards Wavre to intercept the possible movement of French troops. Turn 8 the Prussians are asked to roll a second D6 and roll 4, accordingly, in addition to those units already delayed, unit [918] will also be detached to intercept the French.

Carnage&GloryII Napoleonic Battle Scenario

Anglo-Netherlands/Prussian Tactical Victory Conditions:

Hougoumont Table:

- Inflict losses on the French force [one point for every one point of army morale loss to the French].
- Hold defensive line along Ohain road [20 points]
- Hold Hougoumont BUA [10 points]
- Hold orchard to the northeast of Hougoumont [5 points]
- Hold woods to the south and southeast of Hougoumont [5 points]

La Haye Sainte/Papelotte Table:

- Inflict losses on the French force [one point for every one point of army morale loss to the French].
- Hold defensive line along Ohain road [20 points]
- Hold La Haye Sainte [10 points]
- Hold Papelotte [5 points]
- Hold La Haye Sainte orchard [5 points]
- Hold La Haye [5 points]

Plancenoit Table:

- Inflict losses on the French force [one point for every one point of army morale loss to the French].
- Break defensive line north of Plancenoit [20 points]
- Secure and hold Plancenoit Church [15 points]

Victory Status:

The victory status will be provisionally assessed by C&GII, as inconclusive, pyrrhic, minor or major.

If the Anglo-Netherland/Prussian force achieves 50 points towards their tactical objectives and the French force record a major victory, this will be reduced to a minor victory. If the French force records a minor victory, this will be reduced to an inconclusive action.

If the Anglo-Netherland/Prussian force achieve more than 50 points towards their tactical objectives and they record a minor victory, this will be increased to a major victory. If the result is an inconclusive action, this will be increased to a minor victory.

Note:

Territorial victory points for BUA's, woods or orchards can only be claimed if more than fifty percent of the disputed territory is controlled by one side or the other.

