

'EASING INTO NAPOLEON'S BATTLES

'Meeting Your Waterloo' Made Simple

By S. Craig Taylor, Jr.

NAPOLEON'S BATTLES will be a new game to many of our readers, so Mr. Taylor's comments attempt to cover the basics of the game system to permit even those totally unfamiliar with the mechanics of wargaming in miniature to put on their cocked hat, stick a hand inside their jacket, and follow the action in Mr. Owen's article.

NAPOLEON'S BATTLES provides a grand tactical miniatures wargaming system for simulating the larger actions fought from 1792 through 1815. Ground scale (in 15mm) is one inch equals 100 yards. At this scale, players serve as corps, wing or army commanders.

Luck can play a role in the game (that's what reserves are for), and all die rolls make use of ten-sided dice. Casualties are determined by comparing opposing die rolls made by the players, so the game lacks a conventional CRT for reference which speeds both learning the game and actual play. To keep the effects of luck to a minimum, there is a "vanity roll" optional rule that allows players to trade in a free-roll marker and so roll again.

Board and miniatures wargamers have been borrowing (stealing?) elements from each other for many years, so wargaming with miniatures may not be as alien as some hardcore boardgamers might think; a few comments on the mechanical differences (appearance is, in reality, probably the most profound one between board and miniatures wargaming) should allow an understanding of what goes so terribly wrong on the French right flank in this Waterloo game. Although primarily intended for games using 15mm scale figures and equipment (allowing most historical battles to be resolved on battlefields the size of ping-pong tables), other scales can also be used with *NAPOLEON'S BATTLES*. Alternately, die-cut counters and full-color terrain pieces are provided with the game to permit introductory actions on card-table size battlefields with "miniatureless" forces of about a corps on each side.

Since the game was designed for fighting larger actions, players move masses of troops. The individual figures represent either 120 actual infantrymen or 80 actual cavalrymen; but these figures do not have to be individual-being mounted four to a base-saving those of us with stubby fingers from bouts of clumsiness and perpetual embarrassment. A number (three-to-five cavalry or four-to-seven infantry bases-roughly 1000-3400 soldiers) of these bases operate together as "brigade" combat units. Similar to step-reduction in boardgames, the number of bases/figures in a brigade unit provides an easy evaluation of its strength as losses accumulate. Casualties are marked figure-by-figure, and a base is removed for every four losses.

A model gun and two (for horse artillery) or three (for heavy foot artillery) gunner figures on a base represents a reserve artillery battery combat unit of, usually, six to eight guns. Because light and medium foot artillery was invariably divided up and attached directly to the infantry, the effects of these guns are factored into the infantry tire and combat values, and they are not represented by separate battery units on the tabletop.

"General" units are used to control the infantry, cavalry and artillery combat units and are represented by single bases with one figure (divisional commander), two figures (corps commander), three figures (wing commanders), or four figures (army commanders). In addition to the extra figures, general bases also get larger (from 1" x 1" for divi-

sional commanders to 2" square for army commanders) while moving up the chain of command.

Labels (which are provided for the Avalon Hill scenarios) are taped to each combat and general unit to identify and provide reference information about each specifically, in the same way that printed designations and "factors" present this information on boardgame counters. All units are organized into larger formations, as for example the French I Corps at Waterloo (shown in Illustration #1).

In board wargames, it is common to show changes in unit formations by using markers or by flipping the counters. In most miniatures wargames, and in *NAPOLEON'S BATTLES*, formations are shown by varying arrangements of the unit's bases (as shown in Illustration #2). There is no grid on a miniatures tabletop, so the units' movements and firing ranges are handled using rulers or tape measures and templates instead of hexagons.

Most of the information about a type of unit is found on the game's *Information Cards*. For a specific scenario, only the units needed are copied onto an "Information Chart". The information for all the unit types mentioned in Mr. Owen's article are shown in Table 1, and briefly explained below:

The "Unit Type" column identifies the type of unit. For example, **FrLN** Line Infantry is in this column, at the left of the line showing the information relating to all French line infantry units.

The four "Combat Mods" columns give a unit's combat modifiers, depending on the unit's current formation and/or situation. For example, French line infantry in a column ("COL or LIM") formation has a -1 modifier. In line ("LIN or ULM") formation, the modifier is +2. A unit's current formation always determines the modifier unless there is a "Versus Other" ("VS OT") situation. The modifier in the "VS OT" column applies (for cavalry, when favorable) only if it is the modifying (largest) unit attacking infantry that is in any formation but square, or (for infantry, when it is unfavorable) if in combat with any infantry (even if not the modifying unit) while in square formation or if in combat with any attacking cavalry (even if not the modifying unit) while not in square. If more than one combat unit is involved in an individual combat from the same side, the modifiers that apply to the largest unit (the one with the most bases) are the ones used.

The "DRD/RT" (Disorder/Rout) column shows the number of figures that a unit must lose in a single Fire Phase or individual combat (regardless of the number of combat rounds) in order to be disordered or routed. For example, British line infantry has a "2/5" factor. This means that if a British line infantry unit suffers one hit (i.e., up to the disorder number), there is normally no effect other than adding another casualty. For two, three or four (i.e., up to the rout number) losses during a Fire Phase or combat, the unit is "disordered". If it takes five losses, it is "routed". A disordered unit is unable to fire, may not move to cause combat, moves at half-speed, and a -3 modifier applies in combat. A disordered unit recovers if it is not moved during its Maneuver Phase. A routed unit, as one might expect, is worse than worthless until rallied by a general.

The "RSP/DSP" (Response/Dispersal) column indicates a unit's response and dispersal numbers. The "response" number shows how well a unit is commanded and/or drilled, and is used for a variety of purposes. A routed combat unit can be rallied by rolling its response number or less. Infantry

attacked by cavalry attempts to form an "emergency" square by rolling their response number (usually favorably modified if the unit is in column formation) or less (such formation change is impossible, however, if another enemy combat unit is already touching or within one inch distance). Cavalry that wins a combat may continue moving and/or attacking if its response number (modified unfavorably) or less can be rolled (this is called a "recall attempt"); failure sends a cavalry unit forward out of control. French and KGL cavalry (with only a -2 modifier for recall rolls) are generally easier to keep in hand. The "dispersal" letter is used for infantry and cavalry brigades before a battle starts; cross-gridded with the number of figures in the combat unit in the "Dispersal Chart" (on the Game Card), this gives a unit's dispersal number, which for easy reference is printed on the unit's label. When the number of surviving figures in a unit equals that unit's dispersal number, the unit is considered to no longer be "combat effective" and is immediately removed from play.

The "Fire/Mods" (Fire Range/Fire Modifier) column shows a unit's maximum tire range in inches and its fire modifiers. Since mounted cavalry may not fire, this entry is left blank for cavalry units.

The three "Movement" columns give that unit's maximum movement in inches, depending on the unit's current formation. Note: the "LIN or ULM" (Line or Unlimbered) factors are the ones used if any formation changes are made.

The three "Move Mods" columns show the movement costs used by a unit in various situations. For example, British light cavalry moving backwards (use the column headed "BCK or SID") uses the rate 2/1 subtract two inches from the unit's movement factor for each inch moved backwards. The "CG FM" (Change Formation) column simply shows a value in inches; if a unit changes formation, the given number is subtracted from the unit's movement in inches.

NAPOLEON'S BATTLES is a "scenario" game; that is, it provides a game system that can be used in a great variety of different situations. A point system is provided to allow players to design their own scenarios and/or to balance historical scenarios. In addition, there is a reference list with the command ratings for over 800 of the era's generals. The original game also includes eight scenarios: two hypothetical and six historical (Marengo, Auerstadt, Eylau, Talavera, Borodino and Waterloo [used as the basis for Owen's piece]). We've also published a module with nine more scenarios: one hypothetical and eight historical-Valmy, Friedland, Corunna, Aspern-Essling, Ocana, Salamanca, Leipzig (a real monster game) and Craonne. With the printing of this issue of scenarios for Quatre-Bras and Ligny, there are now 19 published scenarios (16 of them historical) available from Avalon Hill.

So, you have the battlefield laid out and the troops are formed up in their starting positions. Now what? A game plays depending on how such information above is used in the "Sequence of Play". The Sequence of Play in *NAPOLEON'S BATTLES* is the old, familiar "move/countermove system", but this is what best reflects the grand tactics of the period (with some interesting bells-'n-whistles). Proceeding through the sequence in a short and simplified (some less-important steps are left out) manner, a turn starts with the "First Side" Phases. In the Battle of Waterloo scenario, the French are the "First Side". Once the First Side Phases are completed, an identical "Second Side" Phases sequence is

ILLUSTRATION 1: THE FRENCH I CORPS AT WATERLOO

CORPS COMMANDER



I (D'Erlon)

*I Corps Commander
(2 figures)*

FIRST DIVISION



1/I (Alix)



1B/1/I



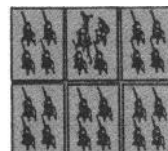
2B/1/I

*1st Division of the
I Corps Commander
(1 figure)*

SECOND DIVISION



2/I (Donzelot)



1B/2/I



2B/2/I

*2nd Brigade of the
3rd Division of the
I Corps (4 bases=
16 figures)*

THIRD DIVISION



3/I (Marcognet)



1B/3/I



2B/3/I

FOURTH DIVISION



4/I (Durutte)



1B/4/I

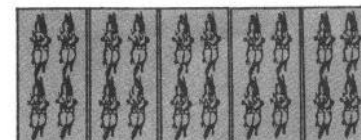


2B/4/I

CORPS CAVALRY DIVISION



C/I (Jacquinot)



1 B/C/I

CORPS ARTILLERY



1 (12# heavy foot)



1 (6# Horse)

formed by the Second Side (in this case, the Anglo-Allies).

A side begins with its **Control** Phase. During a Control Phase, a side brings any arriving units onto the battlefield and attempts to rally routed combat units that have a commanding general touching them; but checking "command control" is usually the most important part of this phase. Every general has a "command span" expressed in inches, and can exercise control over units below it in its chain-of-command that are located within the command span. A divisional general can control subordinate combat units within his span, but higher echelon generals may only control subordinate **general** units within their span; a corps, wing or army commander must **touch** a combat unit to control it directly. But a general unit that touches any combat unit or units (such attachments are necessary to rally routed troops or to add a general's combat modifier or quality level to a unit) controls only the units in actual contact (i.e., the command span drops to zero inches). Combat units that are not in the command span of a **divisional** general or touched by a higher echelon commander may not be moved. Basically, subordinate general units that are not in control of

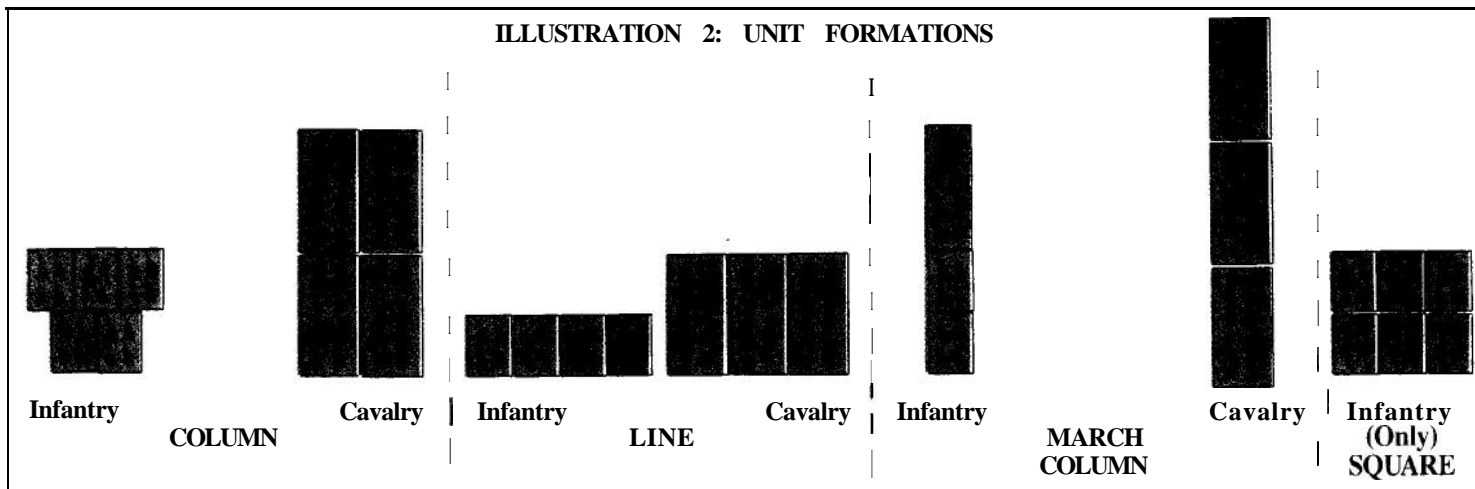
a higher ranking general must make a "response roll". If the general's response number (printed on the label on each base) or less is rolled with a die, the general's subordinate units may be moved normally (a reduced move in some cases); or, if the roll exceeds the response number, the general's combat units have their movement reduced (in some cases, they may not be moved at all).

At Waterloo, the command situation greatly favors the French, as all of their corps have commanders (with 6" to 9" command spans) and both Napoleon (the army commander with a 22" command span) and Ney (a wing commander with a 10" command span) are available in the upper reaches of the chain. Wellington's army has no wing commander and, of three corps and a cavalry reserve, only one corps and the cavalry reserve commanders are available (with 8" and 7" command spans). Wellington himself has only a 17" command span to control a horde of otherwise uncommanded divisions (the command spans of his divisional generals vary from 3" to 5") although use of the optional rule that allows Wellington to react and move to a crisis area after the French move **does** help.

Next, we come to the Maneuver Phase. This is when the bulk of the movement takes place, and it is divided into three important steps. First (and not shown in the Waterloo replay here) is the "All-Out Attack Step". A sort of "send in the Guard" rule, this allows some special elite Infantry units (only the French Old Guard infantry is eligible in this scenario) to attack and keep attacking (although each combat round expends movement) until they are beaten or their movement allowance is exhausted. Firing and/or combats occur each time a unit moves (handled as during the Fire and Combat phases explained below), but only with or against the units that have just moved. Using this step can be a powerful ploy in itself, but the attacking units can **also** be moved during the next step just don't get too cocky! The guardsmen are as easy to hit with firepower as militia, and when they are routed or eliminated they count as multiple units lost (a French Old Guard Infantry brigade counts the same as live normal brigades for army morale).

The "Movement Step" follows, when all of a side's eligible units can be moved. If desired, any cavalry unit that is not moved or already marked with another status marker may have a React marker

ILLUSTRATION 2: UNIT FORMATIONS



placed with it, reserving its movement for later (see below). Disordered units that are not moved may have their Disorder markers removed.

Last, but certainly not least, comes the "Reaction Step". During the Reaction Step, any of the non-phasing side's cavalry units with a React marker may be moved as desired followed by the moving, if wished, of any of the phasing side's reacting cavalry that can be maneuvered into combat contact with the enemy cavalry that was just moved. Since stacking is not allowed (at least not with my miniatures), there must be room to actually place any reacting cavalry unit].

The Fire Phase is next. The non-phasing side fires first: then the phasing side fires. One unit takes a shot by firing at one target unit that lies to its unblocked front within its firing range. A Fire Phase simulates long-to-medium range artillery fire, skirmisher fire, and possibly long-range musket volleys. Losses from the non-phasing fire can affect the phasing fire. (For example, a phasing unit that is disordered by non-phasing fire cannot be fired, as disordered units may never fire.) A "shot" is resolved by both players rolling one decimal die. Each firing unit has its own modifiers (e.g., +1 for British line infantry), and other generic modifiers may apply for cover (-2), the number of Infantry bases firing (+1 for six bases, -1 for three), and so forth. All firing modifiers always apply to the firing side. Any modifiers are applied and the numbers then compared. If the firing sides modified

roll exceeds the enemy's roll by two times or more, two hits are marked on the target unit (only one hit on an artillery unit). If the modified roll simply exceeds the enemy's roll, one hit is marked on the target unit (no hits on an artillery unit). Otherwise, the shot misses.

Following the Fire Phase is the *Combat* Phase. A Combat Phase simulates close range musket and artillery fire and possible hand-to-hand combats. Individual combats involve opposing units that are actually touching. Combats should be divided up so that each individual combat contains only one combat unit (attached artillery units are *not* treated as separate units for this purpose) on one or both sides. An individual combat may require a number of "combat rounds" to resolve, as combat continues until somebody routs or drives off all opposing units (an advanced rule allows units to attempt to withdraw). Since artillery and general units may be "attached" to a friendly cavalry or infantry unit that they touch, touching an attached artillery or general unit is considered to be the same as contacting the infantry or cavalry unit to which they are attached.

A combat round is resolved by both players rolling one decimal die, but the comparison is handled differently than for firing. Any modifiers (each unit has its own combat modifiers depending on formation and situation, and other generic modifiers may apply for holding cover, the number of bases involved, etc.) are applied and the modified numbers compared. If one side's modified combat roll

exceeds the enemy's roll, a number of hits equal to the difference are marked on the unit with the lower roll. This is tempered by the fact that no unit can lose more figures in an individual combat (regardless of the number of rounds) than its rout number. If no enemy unit is routed, dispersed, or eliminated in a combat round, any cavalry involved will be disordered and "bounce" out of the combat. If opposing units are still in contact, another combat round (where the combat modifiers may be different) is resolved, etc., until all contact between opposing units end. A winning unit always takes one loss for routing or eliminating one or more enemy units in an individual combat.

A Pursuit Phase round out a side's turn. At this time, the phasing side may, as desired, move any of its cavalry units with a React marker, and the non-phasing side may then attack any of these with any of their reacting cavalry. Firing and/or Combats occur as during the Fire and Combat phases but only with or against the units that were just moved.

The Second Side then repeats all of the above. When this is done, the passage of one "Turn" (30 minutes) is recorded, and the next turn begins. If a battle goes the full number of turns, victory points for terrain objectives and casualties are counted to determine a winner actually a form of "marginal victory". For a side to claim an immediate or

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TABLE 1: INFORMATION CHART

UNIT TYPE		COMBAT MODS				DRD RT NO.	RSP DSP	FIRE MODS	MOVEMENT			MOVE MODS		
		COL or LIM	LIN or ULM	SQ VS CV	VS OT				COL or LIM	LIN or ULM	MCH COL	RGH or SQ	BCK or SID	C G FM
FRENCH	General Officer	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	36"	36"	36"	2/1	1/1	—
	FrGLC Guard Light Cav.	+1	+2	—	+4	2/4	8/B	—	14"	13"	24"	3/1	2/1	6"
	FrHC Heavy Cavalry	+1	+2	—	+5	2/4	7/B	—	13"	12"	21"	4/1	3/1	6"
	FrLC Light Cavalry	-2	0	—	+4	2/3	6/D	—	15"	14"	22"	3/1	2/1	7"
	FrLN Line Infantry	-1	+2	+7	-4	2/4	6/D	4"/0	10"	3"	18"	2/1	2/1	2"
ALLIES	FrLI Light Infantry	-1	+2	+7	-4	2/4	6/D	5"/+1	12"	3"	18"	3/2	3/2	1"
	BrLC Light Cavalry	-1	+1	—	+5	2/3	6/B	—	14"	13"	23"	3/1	2/1	6"
	BrLN Line Infantry	-1	+3	+8	-3	2/5	6/B	4"/+1	12"	4"	15"	2/1	2/1	2"
	Br9# 9# Horse Arty.	-5	-3	f	f	k	6/-	10"/+2	11"	3"	18"	5/1	1/1	3"
	Br6# 6# Horse Arty.	-4	-3	f	f	k	6/-	9"/+2	12"	4"	21"	4/1	1/1	3"
	DbLN Line Infantry	-2	+1	+6	-5	2/3	4/D	3"/-1	9"	2"	16"	3/1	3/1	2"
	DbMI Militia Inf. *	-4	-2	+4	-7	1/3	3/E	2"/-3	6"	1"	15"	4/1	3/1	1"
	Db6# 6# Horse Arty.	-5	-3	f	f	k	5/-	9"/0	11"	4"	21"	4/1	1/1	3"
	HnLW Landwehr Inf.	-3	-1	+5	-6	1/3	3/E	2"/-2	8"	1"	15"	4/1	3/1	1"
	NsLN Line Infantry	-1	+2	+7	-4	2/3	5/C	4"/0	10"	2"	16"	2/1	2/1	2"

NOTES: f, Use the current formation modifier. k, 2 fire hits from one shot or 1 combat hit are required to eliminate an artillery crew figure (also disorders the unit). Any artillery unit is eliminated with 2 eliminated crew. * Yes, these are the world famous "Guard Militia" immortalized in Seth Owens' Waterloo article!

ABBREVIATIONS: B = British; DB = Dutch-Belgian; Fr = French; Hn = Hanoverian; NS = Nassau.



Easing Into . . . continued from page 8

“decisive victory” (which is required for the French at Waterloo in the “short” scenario played), it is necessary to disperse (eliminate) and/or have routed a number of enemy infantry and cavalry brigades equal to the enemy’s army morale number (printed on the label for the army commander general unit-2 I for Wellington’s army at Waterloo). If this is done, the enemy is considered to have been driven from the field in red ruin. Hurrah!!

