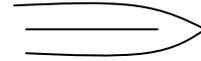




SOLDIERS AND STRATEGIES

The Napoleonic Wars

◉Military History/Mr.Smith



CONTENTS

- ▶ I. Types of Soldiers
- ▶ II. Basic Formations
- ▶ III. Basic Napoleonic Tactic

Introduction

The Napoleonic Soldier took pride in nation, unit and individual person. The various uniforms and duties of particular military forces evoked both a sense of camaraderie and superiority. Though the Napoleonic soldier, as in most wars, was more likely from the lower classes, in the fancy garb of the 19th century soldier he could attain the status of hero and patriot.

I. Types of Soldiers

INFANTRY



Line Infantry

The standard infantryman, trained to stand up to, and deliver, massed fire. The “rank-and-file” average soldier. They carried smoothbore muskets and bayonets.



Light Infantry

Outfitted as the line infantryman...but serving as scouts and skirmishers. They fought in loose order and used cover, not in standard ranks.

Grenadiers

Elite infantrymen...equipped as line infantry but of higher quality, either in terms of proven skill or experience. Only veteran soldiers qualified for the grenadiers. Identified by the tall, fur hat.

Sharpshooters/Jägers

Specially-trained marksmen used for laying ambush to enemy scouting patrols or cavalrymen. Sometimes used as skirmishers. “Jägers” is German for hunters: Austrian and Prussian skirmishers were referred to with this title. Armed with rifles not smoothbores. The “snipers” of their day.



Chasseurs

The true dragoons of the Napoleonic era: expert horsemen but also skilled infantry. Used carbines: short rifles that were easy to operate from horseback. They also had sabers. They usually used their horses to speedily deploy to a position and then they fought on foot.



Examples of Elite Infantry:



The Imperial Guard Grenadiers: Napoleon's finest infantrymen joined the distinguished ranks of his personal guard. More than a bodyguard unit, the guards were a large force of thousands of extremely loyal, brave and talented soldiers. Members were split into three groups...the old guard, the middle guard and the young guard: distinctions based on years of experience. Napoleon rarely committed his Imperial Guard to battle, feeling it to be too precious to waste.

King's German Legion: The British Army included many different special units because the British realm consisted of so many different regions. For example, the royal family of Britain at the time traced its roots to Hanover, a province in northern Germany. German troops serving in the British army were especially loyal and ferocious fighters. Thus, they were dubbed "The King's German Legion"... or K.G.L. for short.



CAVALRY

Unlike in the Renaissance up to the Revolution, cavalry once again became the shock troops of the battlefield in the wars of Napoleon. Increased as a percentage of the overall army, soldiers on horseback were no longer limited to skirmishing, flank attacks, scouting and pursuit duties...but to main assaults, launched at the center and front of the enemy line. **Heavy cavalry** units attacked enemy infantry directly in massed charges while **light cavalry** serves as reconnaissance and harassing forces.

Lancers/Uhlans(Heavy Cavalry)

Lancers, as the name suggests, were cavalrymen equipped with long, sharp lances. Appearing as if a throwback to the knight of medieval times, the lancer carried a weapon with which he could strike infantrymen beyond their reach of the bayonet, or strike cavalrymen beyond the reach of their swords. The Prussian, Austrian and Russian term for lancer was "uhlan".

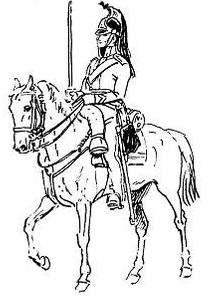
Cuirassiers(Heavy Cavalry)

The Cuirassiers were the backbone of Napoleon's cavalry force, and the piercing sword of his overall army. Wearing light armor, including a steel helmet and breastplate(cuirass), the Cuirassier carried a saber as his main weapon, galloping with it pointed at the enemy.



Dragoons(Heavy Cavalry)

Dragoons were actually misnamed in the wars of Napoleon. Actually restricted strictly to fighting on horseback, the dragoon was another heavy cavalymen armed with saber, and used to strike main blows at enemy lines. Dragoons were not designed as heavy cavalry as they lacked the armor of cuirassiers and the powerful weapon of the lancers...they were used as heavy cavalry due to a shortage of units used in these roles.



Hussars(Light Cavalry)

Flashy, stylish cavaliers of the Napoleonic battlefield. Used for reconnaissance, skirmishing and flank attacks, the hussars were adorned in vibrant uniforms of all colors and embroidered patterns. The position of hussar was a privileged one. Armed with sabers, the hussars were the speediest units on the battlefield.



Chasseurs(Light Cavalry)

See Chasseurs under infantry.

Examples of Elite Cavalry:



The Polish Lancers: Many of Napoleon's elite cavalry forces were drawn from provinces throughout the empire. For example, Napoleon's closest guards were his Mameluke cavalymen, defeated Egyptian horsemen who had taken oaths to serve at his side. Another example were the Polish lancers. The Poles, thankful for Napoleon's recreation of their country from Russian, Prussian and Austrian territory, contributed tens of thousand of men to the French Army...the most elite and feared of such divisions were the Polish Lancers.

The British Lifeguards: The King's personal bodyguard in England consisted of the so-called "Lifeguard" cavalry. The most skilled cavalymen of the British Empire, earning a spot in this regiment was the highest military honor available. The Lifeguard did not stay in London with the king, but fought often in major battles.



ARTILLERY

Cannons continued to play a larger and larger role on the battlefield as the 1700's gave way to the 1800's. They were also used in the greatest number on battlefields since their introduction in the late Middle Ages. Rather than a handful of cannons in a battle, each side would typically field dozens of field pieces. Ammunition consisted of explosive shells, solid shot and grapeshot.

Line Artillery

Basic cannons of large calibers used on the battlefield. Usually organized in batteries(groups) of three. They were heavy and difficult to move but superior in firepower and range.



Mounted Artillery(Horse Artillery)

Lighter field cannons that could more easily be moved around on the battlefield. Transport consisted of four pairs of horses rather than the double pair allotted to line artillery cannons. They lacked the range and firepower of line artillery but made up for this in versatility.

Howitzers

Howitzers were a new type of artillery that began to appear near the end of the Napoleonic Wars. These cannons were designed to deliver firepower over an arcing trajectory to hit enemy forces beyond terrain obstacles or friendly units. They were used to disrupt French attacks at the Battle of Waterloo for example. Though they could reach over obstacles to hit enemy units, they were not as accurate as line and horse artillery direct fire units.

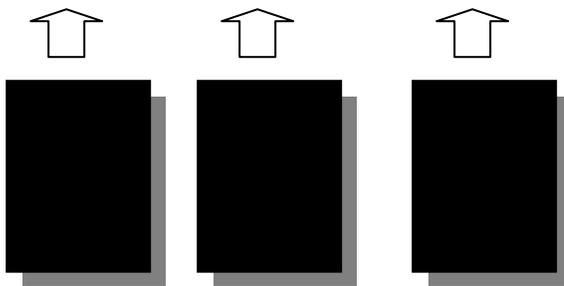
II. Basic Formations

Line:



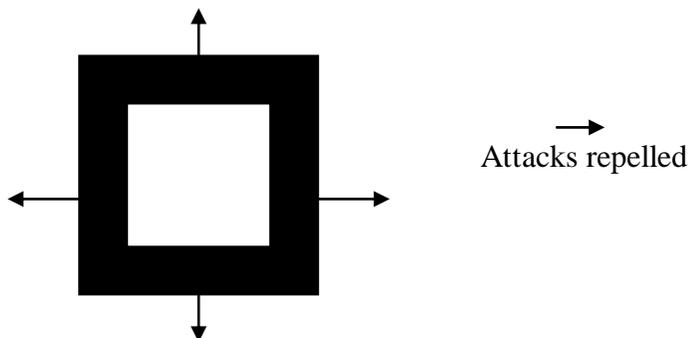
Soldiers array themselves in very exact lines to amass firepower. Usually consisting of three ranks, one fired as the other two loaded.

Column:



A formation used for marching from one place to another on the battlefield (or on campaign). Once deployed in the right place, columns would spread out into line formation.

Square:



Used by to repel cavalry attacks. The front rank of infantry kneels and places their bayonet-armed muskets like a wall of pikes. Soldiers behind fire at attacking or passing cavalry. In the hollow center of the square, officers or artillery crews take refuge. Though effective against cavalry, squares were very vulnerable to artillery attacks or attacks by other infantry.

III. Basic Napoleonic Tactic



Napoleon's preferred battlefield tactic was using a combination of unit types and formations to achieve success. His basic doctrine was as follows:

1. *deploy infantry in line and soften up the enemy with cavalry and artillery assaults (use these attacks as diversions or to probe for weakness for step 2 below)*
2. *mass artillery against a particular portion of the enemy army to disrupt it there*
3. *used infantry reserves in fast-moving "assault columns" to quickly exploit the gap in the "**coup de grace**"(final attack)**

**if the battlefield terrain/conditions allowed, Napoleon tried to keep these infantry reserves out of sight from the enemy until they were unleashed at the decisive moment*

SOLDIERS AND STRATEGIES/The Napoleonic Wars

Identify the role of each of the following as well as the weapon(s) that they used and any other quality that identifies/distinguishes them.

INFANTRY

⊛Grenadiers

Role:

Weapon:

Other Quality/Aspect:

⊛Light Infantry

Role:

Weapon:

Other Quality/Aspect:

⊛Line Infantry

Role:

Weapon:

Other Quality/Aspect:

⊛Sharpshooters/Jägers

Role:

Weapon:

Other Quality/Aspect:

⊛Chasseurs

Role:

Weapon:

Other Quality/Aspect:

Cavalry

☛Lancers

Role(heavy or light cavalry)?

Weapon:

Other Quality/Aspect:

☛Cuirassiers

Role(heavy or light cavalry)?

Weapon:

Other Quality/Aspect:

☛Dragoons

Role(heavy or light cavalry)?

Weapon:

Other Quality/Aspect:

☛Hussars

Role(heavy or light cavalry)?

Weapon:

Other Quality/Aspect:

☛Chasseurs

Role(heavy or light cavalry)?

Weapon:

Other Quality/Aspect:

Assignment Continues onto Next Page...

Artillery

☛ Line Artillery

Role:

Strengths/Weaknesses:

☛ Horse/Mounted Artillery

Role:

Strengths/Weaknesses:

☛ Howitzers:

Role:

Strengths/Weaknesses:

Describe and identify the purpose of each of the following...

Line

Description:

Purpose:

Column

Description:

Purpose:

Square

Description:

Purpose:

Basic Napoleonic Tactics

Define the following:

"Coup de Grace":