

Napoleonic Game Primer

For those players with a real interest in tactical-level Napoleonic warfare and particularly for gamers who want an accurate and richly-textured treatment of the Napoleonic battlefield, Its various game subroutines are intuitively logical, and, more importantly, all combine to produce historically satisfying outcomes on the game tabletop.

Design Characteristics:

- **Time Scale:** 20 minutes per game turn
- **Tabletop Ground Scale:** 50 yards per inch
- **Miniature Scale: 100:1.** Can be adjusted down to 80:1 for historical battles
- **Unit Size:** Company/battalion (infantry), regiment (cavalry), and battery (artillery)
- **Unit Types:** Command, infantry, cavalry, artillery, train and information markers
- **Number of Players:** Two or more (team games recommended)
- **Complexity:** Average / medium once Sequence of play is mastered
- **Solitaire Suitability:** Medium (if pushing figures for both sides doesn't bother you)
- **Average Playing Time:** Depending on size / scale of game and set up time. Brigade level games are 1.5 hour or less. Large multiple Corps games can go a full day (depending on scenario and number of skilled players present).
- **Turn Sequence of play:** First half of game turn consists of the following step phases....

Side 1:	Side 2:
1. Mutual MFP Phase	1. Mutual MFP Phase
2. Declare Cavalry Charges Phase	2. Receive Cavalry Charges (Morale check)
3. Rally Phase	3. No actions performed
4. See notes **	4. Movement Phase w/ <i>Facing and Formation changes</i> before movement of units
5. Command Phase *	5. Command Phase *
6. Shock Phase **	6. Shock Phase ** (Counter charging cavalry only)
7. Mutual Artillery Fire Phase	7. Mutual Artillery Fire Phase
8. Mutual Small Arms Fire Phase	8. Mutual Small Arms Fire Phase

The second half of the turn is a side-to-side inverse ([blue text](#)) of the first half turn....

Side 2:	Side 1:
1. Mutual MFP Phase	1. Mutual MFP Phase
2. Declare Cavalry Charges	2. Receive Cavalry Charges (Morale check)
3. Rally Phase	3. No actions performed
4. See notes **	4. Movement Phase w/ Facing and Formation changes before movement of units
5. Command Phase *	5. Command Phase *
6. Shock Phase **	6. Shock Phase ** (Counter charging cavalry only)
7. Mutual Artillery Fire Phase	7. Mutual Artillery Fire Phase
8. Mutual Small Arms Fire Phase	8. Mutual Small Arms Fire Phase

Notes:

* Command Phase includes weather determination effect, Officer movement (attachment etc.), and terrain fires.

** Reaction to enemy frontal zonal movement for opportunity fire, pass-by fire or declaring cavalry counter charges. No infantry or artillery movement performed in Shock Phase, except for retirement, routing or victorious unit occupying terrain.

A game turn is two (2) complete cycles of the above steps. Note that there are *common phases performed by both sides during the sequence of play*.

The interwoven sequence of play structure gives players a real sense of simultaneity of action and reaction; and the rules governing the use of cavalry, unit formations, and morale, almost always a problem in tactical games, are both logical and surprisingly realistic.

However, once you are 'into' the game, the somewhat asynchronous nature of the sequence grows on you. It worked well with the detailed formation change restrictions, and it is one of the few large-scale games that truly approach at least one aspect of the proper use of cavalry - the charge. This allows the player to get a different look at the realities of historic warfare when games approach this level of tactical integration.

Everything you expect in a tactical level Napoleonic game is here. Infantry can be in column, line or square formation and may detach actual figure skirmishers. Artillery is either limbered or unlimbered and ready to bombard. Cavalry has column, linear or skirmisher formations. Every unit has a CMR (Combat Morale Rating - troop quality and morale) and all combat units may become disordered and rout due to morale checks. Losses are reflected by the removal of unit figures while disorder just a simple reversal of a figure.

A quick look at the turn sequence shows that a player *must plan ahead*. For example, if one side declares a cavalry charge, the opposite side can attempt to move away or attempt to form square, set up cavalry counter-charges and prepare the infantry or artillery to receive the forthcoming shock combat. Both sides are allowed the opportunity to react to what the other side is doing before the impending shock combat action. Cavalry vs. cavalry actions have a back and forth movement (charging or counter charging) feel and action. Players are rewarded to be in the correct formation prior to shock, and penalized if forced to change formation and react in face of pending immediate enemy direct action.

Firepower and shock combat results are quick and easy to calculate to results. There is no carryover loss tracking for future phases or turns. Infantry may fire up to four inches (4") with common muskets or six inches (6") with rifles. Artillery ranges out to fifteen inches (15") for normal ranged firepower, 24" for long range. The unit's nationality, target classification and CMR determine its firepower percentage rating. Firepower effect is a simple, adjusted percentage die roll. with a basic hit or miss outcome. Except for several defined firepower situations, fire combat is simultaneous during the Mutual Artillery fire Phase followed by a separate Mutual Infantry fire phase. Any unit suffering a hit and figure loss performs a morale check during the respective fire phase.

The Shock Phase combat results table uses a ratio differential between attacker and defender. It is not all about who has the largest numbers. The CMR ratings are compared plus the formation of the attacker and defender and the type of terrain the shock combat occupies. The cavalry charge is probably the most exciting aspect of the game. When announced, a

cavalry unit(s) performs a morale check and if it passes, sets up a fan-shaped charge zone. Defending units within the zone check morale and their upcoming movement rate is halved during their movement phase (to reflect the fact that cavalry is moving faster). Once Movement phase is done, the Shock Phase commences...with back and forth action, with units winning melees, and repulsed or fleeing units for the losing side.

Light cavalry regiments and Infantry battalions designated as 'light', legere, jaegers etc, may breakdown totally into individual skirmishers. Ordinary line battalions can deploy single skirmishers in the zone between the grappling armies.

You must learn to use combined arms effectively. Disjointed, ill-coordinated attacks will only earn you excessive casualties and possible no result. Learning how to coordinate a proper combined arms attack is where the fun lies. Infantry in line moves slower but its firepower is more deadly but it is weaker in shock attack. In column, it moves quicker and is better in shock combat but has less firepower and is more vulnerable to both infantry and artillery fire. Cavalry can be deadly against infantry not in square formation when a charge is declared, especially against skirmishers but is vulnerable after the charge as it is automatically morale disordered. Cavalry can take ground but it cannot hold it, infantry must follow closely to secure the gains. Artillery is lethal, especially at close range but must have support of close order infantry in square formation against cavalry.

Best of all.... The need to paint large sized 25mm/28mm unit formations (infantry especially... of 20 or more figure per unit) isn't required. This game uses a typical battalion of infantry of 5-9 figures; cavalry regiment of 4-8 figures; and single artillery cannon and artillerymen crew for a battery. The Napoleonic uniform variety is fully displayed, even the uncommon or unique regiments, can be fielded with just a few painted figures and low cost. From The French Old Guard to a lowly cossack...all have a place on the Napoleonic battlefield.