NAPOLEON’S LAST BATTLES

Napoleon at Waterloo [Again]

by Christopher Perleberg

SCENARIOS AND VARIANTS:

NLB is my candidate for the definitive game on the Waterloo campaign. Not only is it comprehensive and accurate to the point of heated argument, but it is also playable. I mean, Wellington’s Victory is a fine simulation of the Waterloo battle, but I usually don’t have forty consecutive hours to devote to a game. We here present a few modifications for those whose tastes lean towards a little more complexity.

Waterloo. The very word carries with it connotations of far-reaching ambition and final defeat. No battle in history is more famous than this encounter between the finest Generals of the day. Waterloo is on everybody’s list of Decisive Battles, and few battles have been as extensively studied. Waterloo, more than any other battle, has fascinated wargamers from the beginning. From the myriad of miniatures rules, through AH’s Waterloo and SPI’s Napoleon at Waterloo, every serious gamer has, at least once, satisfied the urge to recreate this classic encounter. And that brings us to one of SPI’s latest return to the field of the Waterloo Campaign, Napoleon’s Last Battles.

One of SPI’s Quadrigames, NLB covers the four battles of the Waterloo Campaign—Quatre Bras, Ligny, Wavre, and La Belle Alliance (the name Waterloo would probably have taken if Napoleon had won) on four individual maps. While each battle is a separate game in itself, the maps can be trimmed and butted together to form one large map for the Campaign game. The scale of the game (480 meters to a hex) means that the Campaign map covers a smaller area than AH’s Waterloo by representing a narrower field that does not extend as far south as Charleroi, but NLB’s map contains much more terrain detail. There are woods, marshes, chateaux, two kinds of roads, and, best of all, crests. Gamers who wonder why Wellington made his stand where he did in NAW now have their questions answered. The effects of crests are subtle: they do nothing except block artillery bombardment. In this game system, artillery units are the offensive “movers,” and Wellington’s reverse slope tactics are accurately recreated, making La Belle Alliance a much closer contest than the old NAW. (I thought the French were the heavy favorites in the old game, regardless of the results of Moves #30).

The mechanics of all four games are familiar to most gamers: locking, active ZOC’s, artillery units with a bombardment range of two hexes, army demoralization, hourly turns, and the standard Ar-Ae-Dr-Ex-De range of combat results. The CRT is relatively “bloody”. At 6-1 odds, you can roll an exchange 33% of the time. The units are brigades for the French and Anglo-Allies and regiments for the Prussians, and stacking is allowed, which allows the introduction of an optional “Combined Arms” rule that provides an attack bonus when using all three combat arms in a single attack. The effect of demoralization is more subdued than in past games: an army that is demoralized is simply prohibited from advance after combat. Without leading to the wholesale destruction of the demoralized force, these rules still give the attacker a major advantage, allowing him to be a bit more reckless without running the risk of having his units pinned in large numbers. There is an optional morale rule covering the French Imperial Guard and demoralization. Players may use the Old or Middle Guard for indiscriminate attacks, but if these units suffer an Ae, Ar or Ex combat result without demoralizing their opponents, the French demoralization level drops by twenty points. The Guard, with its large attack strength, can be used safely only at the moment of decision.

While the four folio games are fast—Quatre Bras averages about twenty minutes—and exciting—La Belle Alliance has all the potential of a classic—it is the Campaign game that really sets Napoleon’s Last Battles apart. Starting with the battles of Ligny and Quatre Bras, the Campaign runs through to the night of June 18th. Additional Campaign rules cover night turns, rain, reorganization at reduced strength of destroyed units, a deadly supply rule, demoralization by corps or nationality, and, most importantly, the problems of Command Control. The Command Control rules simulate the problems involved in maneuvering 100,000 men and allow the higher echelon leadership capabilities of each army to be worked into the game. These rules, in fact, “control” the Campaign game, as each player discovers that he really has only three offensive units to maneuver—Napoleon, Ney, and Grouchy for the French, and Wellington, Orange, and Blucher for the Allies. All combat must originate from one of these Commander units, who may, depending on their command capacity and range limitations, provide command control to various corps and division Officers. These officers can, in turn, provide for the units under their respective commands. Units without command control may not attack and must always retreat out of enemy ZOC’s.

NAPOLEON’S LAST BATTLES

The Waterloo Campaign, 16-18 June 1815

LA BATAILLE DE WATERLOO

June 1815

A Simulations Publishing Quadrigame

Four-Game Set of Historical Simulations

LIGNY

Quatre Bras

Wavre

La Belle Alliance
The implications of these rules are soon apparent. Battles are now restricted as to space. A large army such as that of the Prussians cannot spread itself too thinly or break itself up into two groups, for only Blucher can provide command control, and then to only two corps at a time. Individual corps or divisions must operate as a single unit within three hexes of their Officer if they are to achieve the optimum command control effects. Long flanking maneuvers by individual units are virtually eliminated. In addition, due to the command effectiveness idea, the appearance of the wandering I Corp at Quatre Bras is rendered less than decisive by the fact that Ney can only control one corp at a time. It is also possible, with the Command rules, for an army to attempt a retreat by refusing certain units command control, forcing them to leave normally locking ZOC's without an advance by opposing units, a maneuver especially useful to the Allies on the last daylight turn, when they can avoid having their units pinned.

The whole Campaign game is simple, relatively fast moving, and tense. The opening turns proceed historically, with the Prussians losing at Ligny and the Anglo-Allies winning at Quatre Bras. The Prussians stream northward in retreat, falling back on Wavre, attempting to regroup while pursued by the French. Napoleon’s army must shift to face Wellington’s, for the Anglo-Allies stand astride the road to Napoleon’s objective: Brussels. The French player must decide how much of his force he should commit to pursuit of the Prussians, and how that pursuit—the critical aspect of the game—should be handled. Should he pursue with his cavalry corps, hoping to catch the road-bound Prussians as they mass at the bridges of Gentinnes, Wiltzou, and Couilly? Or should he save the cavalry and send a small infantry force, using the cavalry later to seize the Dyle bridges from the west, splitting the Allies in two and preventing Prussian relief of the Anglo-Allies? But remember! The French have only three leaders, and at least two are necessary to defeat Wellington. Of course, one must also consider how long it will take to regroup one’s own losses. One cannot regroup and pursue at the same time.

And the Allied player, too, must make decisions. Will he stand and fight to the death at Ligny, or fall back after slight losses? Where will he reconcentrate to prevent French seizure of the vital Dyle bridges? Where will the Anglo-Allies make their stand? At Mont St. Jean (the historical site) or the strong defensive line around Maison du Roi? How can both allied armies set themselves up to best insure their eventual cooperation?

These are the “mutually supporting interrelated decisions” that the Campaign notes speak of. The game is one of maneuver, of the central position, of deciding how much force to commit where, and of calculating movement points from place to place. And, generally, the game comes down to a final, dramatic, all-or-nothing confrontation (with Wellington) somewhere on the Brussels road.

While it may be true, to quote the Campaign notes again, “that it is important that the simulation of an event take a relatively limited point of view,” the simplicity of the NLB’s game system (“simplicity” here is not derogative, by any means) practically begs for little modifications that can be made without substantially affecting the “cleanliness” of the basic rules. What follows is, in modular form (i.e. use what rules you like and ignore the rest) are some of my own changes in the game, as well as two new scenarios, all presented in the same format as the game rules.

[10.0] CHATEAUX

The rules regarding chateaux appear to be in error. If units defending in chateaux are both tripled (as in [5.6]) and receive the benefits of the [10.3] it, would take, for instance, half the French army to have a 33% chance of taking Hougomont. The Anglo-Allies in La Belle Alliance will present a nearly impregnable line. While it is true, as some Waterloo aficionados will point out, that Hougomont never fell, half the Grand Army is a little out of line. I suggest you use the rules outlined in [10.3] and ignore the terrain effects chart (although I suspect most of you do already).

[While Hougomont may be a severe impediment to the French advance—which, of course, it was—a few judicious holding attacks against the chateaux and an early effort to demoralize the British can ease the problem. Not easy, but it isn't supposed to be. The rule is right. Ed.]

Also, I have to ignore the cryptic reference to units losing these benefits if out of command control. Since [20.3] specifically states that command effects are only present in the Friendly player turn, the only time a unit can be out of command is during that turn, in which case the unit can’t attack anyway.

[12.3] ADDITIONAL COMBAT MODIFICATIONS

While the Combined Arms rule explores the benefits of the supported attack, it is both simple and interesting to include additional “tactical” rules, modified from the NAW Expansion Game, covering the defensive power of artillery and infantry squares.

[12.31] Whenever infantry or cavalry units attack a stack or stacks containing one or more artillery units, add one to the die roll. The presence of attacking artillery does not affect this modification. Treat a modified roll of greater than 6 as a 6. In effect, [12.31] increases the probabilities of Ar’s and Ex’s.


[25.5] SPECIAL NAPOLEON COMMAND EFFECTIVENESS

Napoleon’s command rating (3) varies depending on the day and the roll of the die, according to the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Die Roll</th>
<th>June 16</th>
<th>June 17</th>
<th>June 18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The die is rolled at the start of the French Command Segment. The resulting number is the Command Effectiveness Value of Napoleon for that turn. This rule effectively simulates Napoleon’s deteriorating physical and mental condition during the campaign.

[25.6] VARIABLE WEATHER

Ignore the turns marked “Rain” on the reinforcement chart. Treat each “Rain” turn as two regular turns (flip the game turn marker over without advancing it to indicate this).

Use the weather table to determine weather conditions, rolling the die at the start of each Game turn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Die Roll</th>
<th>Weather</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>cloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>rain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If weather was “clear” last turn, subtract “2” from die roll. If weather was “cloudy” last turn, add “1” to die roll. If weather was “rain” last turn, add “2” to die roll. Rain affects play as in [5.5] and [7.9]. In addition, all movement allowances are halved (rounded downward), and one movement point is added to the cost of entering marsh hexes and crossing stream hexides. Movement effects last one full turn after rain stops. A leader may reorganize only one unit during a rain turn.

Note that players will have advance warning as to rain turns. Players may opt to ignore this rule after 0900/June 18th. A rain storm could ruin your day.

[25.7] VARIABLE REINFORCEMENTS

[25.71] Variable Anglo-Allied Reinforcements

Starting on turn 1100/June 18, the Allied Player may roll a die. On a roll of “1”, the Allied Player receives the following units on hex B0114:

- British 4th Division:
  - Colville
  - 1 Br. 4-4 (Johnston)
  - 1 Han. 3-4 (Lyon)
  - 1 Br. 2-4 Artillery
- Dutch/Belgian “Indian”
Brigade: (Consider part of 1st Neth. Div.)
1 Neth. 4-4 (Antehing)

1st Netherlands Division:
(Stedman)
1 Neth. 3-4 (Eeren)
1 Neth. 3-4 (Wynands)
1 Neth. 1-4 Artillery

Note that when using this variant, (Colville) does not enter 0600/June 17. The appearance of Bde. Mitchell is unaffected. This variant may also be used in the standard La Belle Alliance folio game and in Scenario [27.0]. Extra counters should be made from spares (Lord knows you have enough).

[25.72] Variable French Reinforcements
Starting turn 1400/June 16, the French player may roll a die. On a roll of “1”, he may bring on the VIth Corp, hex L0334. The VIth Corp enters automatically on 0300/June 17.

[25.73] Variable Prussian Reinforcements
Starting turn 1400/June 16, the Allied Player may roll a die. If he rolls a “1”, he may roll again. On a roll of “1”, “2”, or “3”, he may bring on the three cavalry units of the IVth Corp and (Bilow), anywhere on the eastern edge of the map north of hexrow 0023 (inclusive). On the next turn, he may bring on the 15th and 16th brigades, on the same entry hex. On the next turn, he may bring on the remaining units of IVth Corp. The IVth Corp automatically begins to enter on 2100/June 17.

Notes: The Anglo-Allied units represent the force Wellington left in Hal to protect his flank. These units did not participate in Waterloo, but they could have. (It's interesting to note that all these units are present in N4W Expansion Game, and, what's more, the Hannoverian brigade is shown defending Hougoumont!) The French VIth Corp was purposely left out of the first day’s fighting. The Prussian IVth Corp was delayed through the politeness of Bluchers Chief-of-Staff: Bulow out-ranked him, and the order to concentrate at Sommefre read more like a request.

[25.8] BULOW'S COMMAND
Bulow was the only Allied leader who had ever had an independent command; in 1813 he had even beaten Ney at Dennewitz. To simulate this, treat Bulow as a quasi-Commander, allowing him to provide Command Control only for units of the IVth Corp, and only at a range of three hexes.

[27.0] GRAND WATERLOO VARIANT

[27.1] La Belle Alliance and Wavre maps only. Begin 1200/June 18.

[27.2] SET-UP:
Allied Player: As printed on mapsheet plus Prussian IVth Corps as follows: Cavalry (W0112, W0211), 16th Brigade (W0210, W0310), 15th Brigade (W0310, W0309), 13th Brigade (W0409, W0509), 14th Brigade (W0609, W0709), IVth Corp Artillery (W0409).

French Player: As printed on mapsheet.

[27.21] Leader Set-up [if desired]
Wellington (B0915), Blucher (W1406), Orange (B1114), Napoleon (B0922), Ney (B1118), Grouchy (W2121). All other leaders may be placed as desired. French Player must place the IIIrd, IVth, Ic, and Ile Officers on Wavre map. (Brunswick) is not deployed.

[27.3] DEMORALIZATION LEVELS
French
Demoralization 75
Prussian
Demoralization 35 Disintegration 45
Anglo-Allied
Demoralization 45 Disintegration 55

[27.31] Additional Morale Effects
French: +10 if either the Prussians or Anglo-Allies are demoralized. +10 if any unit under Grouchy (i.e. receives command control from Grouchy at time of attack or begins game on Wavre map) attacks any Anglo-Allied unit.
-20 if Enemy units enter Maison du Roi

Prussian: -10 if Anglo-Allies are demoralized.

Anglo-Allies: +10 if Prussians attack any unit of Western force. +6 if optional [25.71] reinforcements enter.
-10 if Prussians are demoralized.
-20 if enemy units enter Waterloo

[27.33] Note that when using Leaders, these morale effects are ignored, and rule [22.0] is in effect. In addition, the Prussian Ist Corps has lost 5 strength points, and the Prussian IInd Corps as lost 8 toward demoralization. No French Corps are charged with any losses (the French 7th division is considered reorganized). Losses do not count for victory points.

[27.4] SPECIAL RULES

[27.41] Allow the French eastern force (all those units which begin the game on the Wavre map) to double their movement allowance on Game-Turn One only.

[27.42] Units may exit the map at any time. French units may exit anywhere on the south edge. Anglo-Allied units may exit from B0605. Prussian units may exit anywhere on the west edge. Once exited, units may never re-enter.

[27.5] VICTORY CONDITIONS

[27.51] Without Leaders: As in [17.3]

[27.52] With Leaders:
Both Players receive:
1 VP for every enemy strength point destroyed
3 VP's for every Officer eliminated
5 VP's for every Command point eliminated (e.g., Wellington-20 VP)
5 VP's for Mont. St. Jean (B0812)
5 VP's for Maison du Roi (B1320)
3 VP's for each Infantry Corps demoralized
French Player receives:
10 VP's for demoralizing British Nationality
4 VP's for each strength point exited from B0605 (ignore condition 2, [26.0])

The Allied Player automatically wins if Napoleon is eliminated. The player with the most VP's is the winner. Levels of victory are given by finding the ratio of winner's VP's to loser's VP's.
1 to 1.49: 1 Marginal Victory
1.5 to 1.99: 1 Substantive Victory
2: 1 Decisive Victory

Notes: Both games tend to be tightly fought contests. The high French demoralization level in [27.3] is offset by the losses they must take in trying to prevent the Prussians from intervening. They can, of course, refuse combat, but to do so will allow the Prussians to interfere with Napoleon en masse. When the Leader rules are used, the French position is a little better, but any advantage can be offset by using the Napoleon Command rule [25.5]. In both games, the French must watch the western flank at Waterloo. Maison du Roi is good for VP's, but more importantly, it is practically the only line of retreat. The Anglo-Allies should attempt to retreat off the map after demoralization, as exited units can never be destroyed.

[28.0] EXTENDED CAMPAIGN GAME

[28.1] Use all maps, full Campaign rules. Game begins, however, 0900/June 16, (i.e. 5 full turns earlier). Players must make up their own track to indicate time.

[28.2] SET-UP

Allied Player: Bijlandt, Weimar, van Opstal, (Perponcher), (Orange) as printed on Quatre Bras map sheet. Prussian Ist Corps (minus 2nd brigade) in or adjacent to Fleurus (L1319), 2nd brigade in St. Amand (L0624, L0524). Note that 1/12th Line and 2/1st Line start with re-organized side up. (Blucher) in L1319.

French Player: Husson, Campl (5/II), Pire, Lef-Dessy, (Ney), in and adjacent to Frasne (Q1517), I1c Corps, (Milhaud), in Libercehes (Q0922), Baudin, Soye (6/II), Gauthier, Janin (9/II), Pelletier, II Corps Officer, in (Q1232), Q1334, 1133), De Villiers, Piat (7/II), in Heppignies (Q2430).

[28.3] REINFORCEMENTS


French: Ic, IVth Corps, respective Corps officers, (Grouchy), L0334.

Anglo-Allied: Brunswick, 5th Br. Divisions, (Picton), (Brunswick), B0605.

1100: French: IIIrd, IVc Corps, respective Officers, Napoleon, L0334.

Anglo-Allied: Wellington, B0605.

1200: French: Guard Corps, (Drouot), L0334.

1300: French: 1/1, 2/1, 3/1, (D’Erolon), Q1134.

Anglo-Allied: Merelen, Q1035.

All other reinforcements as per game track.

[28.4] SPECIAL RULES

[28.41] French must use Late Start rule [25.2]. Note that on June 16 this affects Ney only. On June 16, units of IInd Corps that start in Gosselies may not move until Ney is activated. On all days, French commanders automatically activate at 1200.

[28.42] The Allies may not enter, nor may they attack into, the 0032, 0033 or 0034 hexrows of [continued on page 16]
Napoleon's Last Battles

continued from page 14

the Ligny or Quatre Bras maps until 1400/June 16.

[28.43] Optional British Variable Entry. For any number of reasons, the Anglo-Allied concentration could have been faster or slower. Wellington himself had only vague ideas of where all his forces were on June 16. The following rule simulates this effect.

Before the game starts, the Allied Player places his units (except Wellington) on their appropriate slots on the reinforcement track. Note that in all cases except Merlen, Kruse, Oompted, and Best, each group of units should be represented by its Officer. Ignore the entry of Officers marked on the track—Officers must enter with the largest group of units under their command. For each single unit or Officer, two die must be rolled, and the arrival time of the given unit(s) are advanced or put back on the turn record chart.

**DIE ROLL**

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
-6 -5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4

Example: The Brunswick Division is slated to enter 100/June 16. Two die are rolled, resulting in a "3." The Brunswick division (4 units and a Leader) is moved five turns earlier on the reinforcement track, in effect starting on the map 16 movement points from B065S (28 movement points for the cavalry unit). If a "12" had been rolled, the division would have entered on turn 1400/June 16.) Treat night and rain turns as single turns unless using rule [25.6]. Dispositions should be kept secret from the French Player; the Allied Player should use scratch paper or dummies to keep record of the location of his units. Dummies deployed need not represent real units; in addition, the Allied player need only reveal units on the Ligny and Quatre Bras maps until the French enter the Belle Alliance or Ligny maps, or until turn 1400/June 16, at which time all dummies must be removed and the real location of units revealed. All units enter on the hexes given on the reinforcement tracks, except that the 3rd and 1st British divisions may enter at hex B0120, if desired.

[28.44] French Optional entry. Before the game begins, the French Player may decide which hex (L0334 or Q1134) his reinforcements will enter. All reinforcements enter on the turn indicated. The entry hexes must be written and cannot be changed after the game starts. When using this variant, the French Player does not receive the 50 point handicap of [28.5], and the game cannot end before 1400/June 17.

[28.5] VICTORY CONDITIONS

As printed in [26.0], except that the French Player starts out with a 50 point handicap, representing the fact that he'll have to maneuver to destroy the Prussians.

Notes: In many respects, a better game than the Campaign game, as the Battle of Ligny is not a sure thing. In effect the Allied Player can decide where to make his stands. He may decide, for instance, to fall back on Wavre, but in one game played this resulted in moderate losses as the Prussians attempted to cross the bridges in the east, because they had neglected to put sufficient blocking forces on the road. In another game, the Prussians attempted to shift west with two corps, leaving one corp to protect their supply lines. This resulted in their getting chopped up on the road to Quatre Bras, although the Allies later went on to win. The game is definitely not a walk-over for the French. The Victory Conditions are extremely tough to satisfy, almost impossible if the French Player fails to exit units. It's almost impossible, for instance, to win scenario [27.0] using the Campaign Game Victory Conditions. I consider the French to have won a moral victory if they achieve one hundred points at the end of the game. If the French optional entry is used, a slight possibility exists that the French may be able to shoot right up the Brussels road, but since they can't win before 1400/June 17, they must keep the Prussians away from the southern half of the Brussels road. The variable Anglo-Allied reinforcements tend to keep the French Player guessing as to what he will face.

[29.0] ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL SCENARIO

[29.1] All maps, all Campaign rules.

[29.2] Game begins 1400/June 16 and ends 2100/June 19 (i.e., one day later).

[29.3] DEPLOYMENT: As in regular Game rules.

[29.4] SPECIAL RULES: On turn 0300/June 19, the Allied Player receives 200 Austrian 4-4 inf., 45 Austrian 3-6 cav., and 6 Austrian 6-4 art. units.

[29.5] VICTORY CONDITIONS: As in [26.0].

Notes: Good luck! Represents the next Army waiting to take on Napoleon. Does not include the 170,000 Russians, who would require still another scenario. For all its apparent drama, a French victory in the Waterloo Campaign would have been far more decisive. It was the longest of long shots, which the French could ill afford to lose. But as a game, as represented in Napoleon's Last Battles, it remains a classic.