

Creating your Army

Historical organisation of Napoleonic units

Infantry

The paper strength of the largest Napoleonic infantry units was around 1,000 all ranks but this number was exceptional. A more typical full strength unit would be between 600 and 800 all ranks with many battalions on campaign barely mustering 400 all ranks. Between the major protagonists Austria, Great Britain, France, Prussia and Russia there existed a wide variety of battalion organisational structures. The ten companies per battalion of the British contrasts starkly with six (earlier nine) of the French and the four larger companies favoured by the Prussians and Russians. To recommend a definitive basing layout which accommodates all of the diverse organisational permutations would require a lot of explaining for little gain in gaming terms. The tactical infantry unit in the rules is a battalion. The main criteria for organisation are therefore the number of men in a battalion and for shooting and close combat purposes: *Combat Groups**

**Combat Groups* may in part match with the approximate size of companies within your chosen army but if so it is merely coincidence of arithmetic. The company or troop is irrelevant as a tactical unit in *Republic to Empire* so has largely been ignored.

Company sizes

Anyone who has read even a little on the organisation and strengths of Napoleonic formations will recognise that there is the theory and there is the reality. Some armies attempted to stick more or less with regulations, others continued to renew regulations and have some units adhering to the old and some to the new. Some armies wrote great theoretical works on organisation but had insufficient men, equipment and money to make them a reality. It is important to point out that there were a huge number of exceptions to the standards laid down by Ministers of War and Army High Commands. The entire continent of Europe was at war almost continuously for a period of over 20 years during which time much changed. The following table gives an indicative number of companies per battalion for the main protagonists and should be taken as a guideline. If this number is divided into the number of figures in your battalions it will give a 'models per company' indication for those who consider this important to note. Refer to the section on *Combat Groups* to place the company size in context of the game. I must emphasise that this information whilst interesting has no bearing on the rules or unit performance when playing games with *Republic to Empire*

| Country | Number of companies per battalion | Number of men per company(theoretical) |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Austria pre 1805 | 6 | 230 (grenadiers 140) |
| Austria 1805-1807 | 4 | 160 |
| Austria post 1807 | 6 | 180 (German) 200 (Hungarian) |
| Bavaria | 4 (6 for some after 1809) | 150-168 |
| Confederation of the Rhine | 6 | 120 |
| Great Britain | 10 | 100 (60-80 typically) |
| France pre 1808 | 9 | |
| France from 1808 Ligne & Legere | 6 | 120 |
| France Garde Imperiale | 4 | |
| Portugal | 5 (7 for Line and 5 for Lights after 1809) | 114 (110 Line and 135 Lights after 1809) |
| Prussia up till 1806 | 4 or 5 | 155 other ranks |
| Prussia after 1806 | 4 | 200 |
| Russia | 3 or 4 | 150 other ranks approx |
| Spain | 4 | 180 |

Cavalry

As with the infantry, Napoleonic cavalry varied widely from country to country in terms of unit size and organisation. Cavalry was hugely expensive to recruit and maintain therefore proportionately it made up perhaps one quarter to one tenth of a Napoleonic army depending on the stage of the war, the protagonists and theatre of operations. Regiments of cavalry could number anywhere between 200 and 1,000 and were subdivided into a number of squadrons. Although squadrons were themselves made up of companies and troops the rules do not require players to model that level of sub unit. The tactical operating cavalry unit is the regiment. Squadrons varied in size and often operated severely under strength.

Artillery

Battlefield Napoleonic artillery was broken down into two distinct branches; Foot and Horse. The purpose of the former was to provide the main bombardment of the enemy's force from a relatively static position. The latter was developed to support aggressive cavalry manoeuvres. Horse artillery guns tended therefore to be lighter in weight, smaller in calibre and pulled by more horses than those of the foot batteries. Their batteries tended to have fewer pieces but not always. The Austrians persisted with 3pdr artillery for some uses throughout the conflict but most armies used a combination of 4pdr, 6pdr, 8pdr, 9pdr or 12pdr guns. This weight indicates that of the solid iron ball fired by the gun. The problem is that the weight measure was not standard across all countries therefore a French eight pound shot was much the same weight as a British nine pound shot! Some countries included one or two howitzers in batteries of certain calibres whilst other countries created distinct howitzer batteries. A howitzer was a special gun firing rather like a mortar on a high parabolic trajectory. It was often used to fire fused air bursting shells, or hit targets hidden from view by intervening terrain. The subject of artillery organisation is an extremely complex one and for those interested in understanding precisely how armies managed their artillery it is best to consult one of the many reference books available on the subject. Although in many armies artillery were organised into battalions and regiments these were normally broken up into batteries or companies and distributed throughout the army. The tactical unit for artillery in the rules is a battery which some armies including the French called a company. These had between six and twelve guns.

Unit sizes in the game

Infantry

Infantry battalions should be organised in any of the following sizes 20, 24, 28, 30, 32, 36, 40, 42, 48, 50, 52 or 56 models. It must be stated that strengths of greater than 42 models for a single battalion were extremely rare although units of this size did occasionally take the field. A 'combined' unit as described later in this section can be fielded with of up to 48 models but this is a maximum size for such a formation. They should consist in the majority of ordinary fighting soldiers with a few sergeants, drummers, musicians and officers at the player's discretion. One, two or no colour bearers may be included at the player's discretion. Many battalions did not take their colours into action.

In an attempt to offer the widest options possible to gamers it is useful to take some examples from history and illustrate what this means in gaming terms using *Republic to Empire*.

At Waterloo the average French battalion contained 520 men of all ranks. This translates into gaming battalions of 26 models. The largest French battalion at the battle almost attained the theoretical strength of 720 men or 36 models. The smallest had just over 250 men or 13 models. These smaller sized units will be extremely brittle and largely ineffectual in a typical game. In comparison, the strongest Allied battalion at the battle was 1,130 all ranks equating to 56 models. The smallest was 338 strong or 17 models and the average size of battalion was 640 or 32 models.

Battalions would rarely operate in complete isolation and often brigades and divisions would engage the enemy with combined formations involving more than one battalion. Margonet's 3rd Division advanced against Wellington's left centre in a divisional column of eight battalions at Waterloo and although this is an extreme example it does serve to illustrate the point.

In most armies apart from the British, a brigade could be made up from several battalions of the same regiment. Returning to Waterloo, Marcognet's 1st Brigade contained the 1/21 and 2/21 de Ligne together with the 1/46 and 2/46 de Ligne. His 2nd Brigade contained 1/25 and 2/25 de Ligne together with the 1/45 and 2/45 de Ligne. The 1/46 had 461 all ranks whilst the 2/46 had 427 all ranks. In *Republic to Empire* this would translate as 23 and 21 models respectively. The rules allow smaller sized battalions of the same regiment which are brigaded together to be amalgamated for the game. As an example the 1/46 and 2/46 would have a combined strength of

888 all ranks which could be fielded as the 46 de Ligne (combined) at 44 or 45 models. No individual battalion of more than 24 models can be combined with another to form a larger regimental sized infantry unit.

There are both advantages and disadvantages for doing this. On the positive side the units become far more robust and able to absorb casualties. On the negative side the brigade becomes more brittle as its component elements reduce from four battalions to three (one regiment combined plus two separate battalions) or even two large combined regiments. This reduction could affect the brigade's overall durability as a fighting formation and reduce tactical options during the battle. The pluses and minuses provide a good balance and historical evidence legitimises the concept. If two smallish battalions of a regiment are fielded in combination as described at the outset of the game they must remain so for the duration. Combining battalions of the same or different regiments from the same brigade temporarily is mentioned in *Formations and Movement* later in the rules. Although possible, this is cumbersome and it is recommended that combinations be undertaken before the game begins and not during it.

Combat Groups

Unit sizes vary primarily because this reflects the reality of the era. An additional more practical reason is that gamers collect and base their miniatures in different ways. To avoid unnecessary re-basing most configurations are accommodated in the rules. All basing combinations can be catered for within the 'Combat Groups' mechanism.

A Combat Group is used when an infantry unit is shooting or involved in close combat or when a cavalry unit is involved in close combat. Four model figures constitute a combat group regardless of how a unit is based. Of the permissible infantry unit strengths only three are not divisible by four; 30 and 42 and 50 the latter pair being unlikely unit sizes in most battles. The extra two figures in each case are counted as an under strength Combat Group giving these units eight, eleven and thirteen Combat Groups respectively at the start of the game.

Cavalry

Cavalry squadrons should consist mainly of ordinary fighting troopers with musicians and officers at the player's discretion. A guidon or standard bearer may be included. Many regiments did not take their standards into action and often only the first squadron of a multi squadron unit would carry a standard. Players may have more than one squadron in a regiment and between two and four would be typical for many cavalry regiments. Some Russian regiments had up to ten squadrons but these were often subdivided into two groups each operating as a regiment. Players may field squadrons of between five and ten figures equating to 100-200 men per squadron.

Artillery

In the rules the basic tactical gaming unit is a battery or company. The common term used throughout the rules is battery. A battery is a number of guns grouped together usually four, six, eight or in the case of the Russians twelve. As one gun model represents two actual guns, batteries in the game will contain two, three, four or six gun models. The number of guns in a battery is largely dependent on the nationality of the battery. Typically the French foot batteries had eight guns (4 models) of the same calibre or six plus two howitzers (3 gun plus 1 howitzer model). Their Horse batteries had six guns (3 models). British batteries had six guns normally. Occasionally the French and other countries split a battery into two 'half batteries' of four guns (2 gun models) or in the case of the Russians, six guns (3 gun models). This is allowed. If the 1:20 figure to man ratio was used even a model of a 12pdr representing two actual guns, crew and infantry handlers would have only two or three model crew figures. For the purposes of aesthetics I have slightly extended the frontage per gun model and allowed players to crew their pieces with a number of figures of their choosing in order to make the batteries look right. My own convention is for three crew figures on a 3pdr or 4pdr, four on a 6pdr, 8pdr and 9pdr and five or six on a 12pdr. The number of actual models will not affect the performance of the gun as casualties are managed in a particular way detailed under the *Artillery* section in the rules. Consult the artillery organisation chart in the *Army Builder* section later in the book to assist your choice of appropriate number of models for your army's batteries.

Unit Quality

Units are categorised by the level of experience and prestige they have within their respective armies. These classifications are also relative to their performance and image when compared with troops in other armies. This means that troops may for example carry the word Guard in their title but be assigned a unit classification of a lower order. A unit such as the 1st battalion of the Grenadiers à Pied of the Imperial Guard will clearly carry the Guards classification whereas the 3rd battalion of the same regiment may only carry the Veteran/Elite or Drilled/Elite classification. This process is somewhat subjective and will undoubtedly provoke heated debate on occasion. I suggest if players can produce tangible evidence then reasonable upgrades or downgrades should be seriously considered under certain circumstances. The following are my own recommendations and should act as a considered if not forensic appraisal of the various units participating in the conflict. Undoubtedly somebody's pet unit will be missing from my list so don't worry just add it in with your opponent's consent.

Guards

This classification applies only to the most senior and experienced units of selected armies. These units represent troops of exceptional quality who are carefully selected, often combat veterans, well led, well equipped and held in esteem by friends and foe alike.

French

1st & 2nd battalions of Grenadiers & Chasseurs à pied, Grenadiers à Cheval, Chasseurs à Cheval, Dragon Imperatrice, Lanciers Polonais, Lanciers Rouge and Gendarmes de Elite

British

1st & 2nd battalions of the 1st & 2nd Foot Guards, 1st battalion 3rd Foot Guards

1st & 2nd Life Guards, Royal Horse Guards

Russian

1st & 2nd battalions of the Preobrazhenski, Semenovski and Ismailovski Lifeguards, Chevalier Guards, Cossacks of the Guard.

Prussian

No Prussian units of the army post 1813 should carry Guard status even those with guard in their titles. Pre Jena, units with Guard in the title may be classified as Guards.

German Allies of Napoleon and the Coalition

Certain bodyguards units of the better performing German states such as the Saxon Guards du Corps

Veterans

Battle hardened units and senior line formations with an impressive combat pedigree. This is by no means an exhaustive list but should provide a clear picture of the principle.

Austria

Some infantry grenadier battalions, senior line regiments of both infantry and cavalry or those with a known pedigree for battlefield performance.

French

3rd battalions of Grenadiers & Chasseurs à pied, 1st & 2nd battalions of the Middle Guard foot regiments, Marines of the Guard, senior cavalry and infantry regiments of the line or those with a known pedigree for battlefield performance such as 13^{ème} Legere.

British

The 95th Rifles, senior line regiments of both infantry and cavalry or those with a known pedigree for battlefield performance. I am not of the opinion that highland regiments and fusiliers should automatically carry this classification unless there is evidence of battlefield performance such as with the 42nd (Black Watch).

Russian

All other Russian units with the title Guard, senior infantry and cavalry regiments of the line, Pavlovski Grenadiers, some grenadier battalions or other units with a known pedigree for battlefield performance.

Prussian

All units with Guard in their title, senior infantry and cavalry regiments of the line or those with a known pedigree for battlefield performance including reserve and landwehr units.

German Allies of Napoleon and troops of the Coalition against France

Certain units of the better performing German states such as the Saxon Zastrow Cuirassiers, Lancers de Berg, Polish Vistula Legion, King's German Legion and some Portuguese Cacadores battalions.

Drilled

The majority of units in most armies who were trained to fight but were perhaps untested in battle.

Recruits

4th, 5th or 6th battalions of French line regiments, newly raised units, garrison battalions, conscripts, levied, pressed and militia units. This category should include units from nations with dubious loyalty to their cause or who have perhaps recently changed sides (unless solid evidence can be provided to the contrary or if a specific scenario requires them to be categorised otherwise).

Elite

This designation is an adjunct to one of the above classifications (except Guard). Such units consider themselves to be a cut above their contemporaries whether that be true or not. It offers a morale bonus only.

An example would be Drilled-Elite. Units with Guard in their title but without the classification of Guard as a measure of quality may be designated Elite. An example would be Middle Guard Fusiliers-Grenadiers classified as Veteran-Elite. Another example could be some Austrian grenadier battalions.

Army sizes in the game

Army is rather a wargamey word as most battles fought of an afternoon or evening use forces of a significantly smaller size. The smallest but not necessarily shortest game of *Republic to Empire* is likely to involve the equivalent of a division per side. What this means is between six and twelve battalions and a battery of guns within which range most armies divisions would fall.

Players could also include one or two regiments of cavalry equating to a brigade. This may have a horse artillery battery attached. Such a game would occupy two players for three to four busy hours. A game with two divisions per side would not necessarily take twice as long to play but may benefit from an extra player on each side. This is approaching corps level in size. An additional heavier battery of guns may be included as a reserve in such a game and the cavalry may extend to a division with both heavy and light types present. Such a game would last four to five hours with two players per side or maybe even six to seven hours with only one player per side. Games of larger size move into a different category. If they are to be played by only two players a large and permanent set up will probably be required as the game may run over two or more sessions of gaming. The alternative is to pool together collections, invite your friends and have a really big bash perhaps over a weekend!

In the *Army Builder* section later in the rules some example armies are listed which allow players to create their own forces within the bounds of what was credible in various theatres. For those who do not like scenario games or historical re-fights the *Army Builder* section may be of much value.

Basing your models

Infantry

When these rules were originally written, the purpose was to accommodate several collections (all based differently) in a large multi player game setting. The strong desire then was for a set of rules which required no rebasing of figures and principles which allowed player's collections to be used 'as is' without disadvantage. In the section on *Scales*, full explanation is given about the recommendation to base 28mm figures on a 15mm frontage per infantry model and 20mm

frontage per cavalry model. Depth will never be proportionately accurate which is also placed in context. In spite of those detailed explanations base sizes are largely irrelevant as long as they fall into the generally accepted categories for 28mm miniatures such as 15-20mm frontage for an infantryman and 20-30mm frontage for a cavalryman. Single or multiple bases are at the discretion of the collector as is the choice of mounting them in single rank bases or double ranked bases (for infantry). I prefer infantry to be based on a tight frontage of 15mm as this best represents the close order ranks used on Napoleonic battlefields. This may present some problems because of a trend towards manufacturers creating larger 28mm figures. It is therefore often not possible to fit the required number of figures into the allocated frontage. One way round this is to stagger the figures in each rank creating much more sense of movement and a slightly unordered effect. This can be very attractive as can be seen from some of the photographs contained in the rules. A further option is to allow a slightly wider frontage per figure, say 17-18mm. In the big scheme of things this makes little difference and has no impact on game mechanics. With regard to depth per figure the standard I recommend is 20mm for infantry. This will suit gamers who prefer definition, order and consistency in their collections. I have immediately broken with this convention in my own basing for several reasons. I enjoy adding scenic groundwork to all of my gaming models and like to make each base of models tell a story in the form of a vignette. To do this you require some extra space. I usually place such frippery at the front edge of the base. After much experimentation I chose bases 60mm square which may be way too much for some tastes. With this space I tend to place two ranks of figures often four wide with an officer or sergeant in addition to the front or rear.

As long as it is made clear how many figures are in each unit from the start and that Combat Groups are counted as described this should present no problems. Another very practical and selfish reason for the larger base size is to protect the models from damage. Brittle bayonets and pole weapons can be easily bent or snapped off and although lead alloy models allow some opportunity to straighten the damage this will not be possible if the current trend toward hard plastics continues. Protect you hard work gamers!

Examples of various basing methods are shown in the accompanying photographs.

Skirmishers

The skirmisher was a distinctive figure during the Napoleonic wars. His job was to harass larger bodies of enemy troops by more accurate aimed fire often targeting officers and NCOs in order to disrupt command and control. Skirmishers were detached from the main body of their unit and usually operated in pairs often crouching, lying or kneeling to aim their shots. They have various titles in different armies such as voltigeur, jaeger, cacadore, sharpshooter or rifleman. More can be found out about how they operate in the game in the section on *Skirmishers* later in the book. For basing purposes base them singly or in pairs on any shape of base that suits. Examples of various basing styles are shown in the accompanying photographs

Cavalry

The same logic follows in terms of cavalry frontage. I prefer the aesthetic of a close order formation to looser based models. I recommend a 20mm frontage per figure where possible. Again, with larger models, staggering them is helpful and creates a real impression of a unit charging. Cavalry will these days rarely fit comfortably on a 40mm deep base, such a size leaving overhanging heads and tails ripe for damage. 50mm allows for protection and imaginative basing. 60mm square standardises with infantry base depths in my own collection accommodating three figures if the frontage of 3 x 20mm is used in combination. Cavalry may also be based singly and it may in some cases be helpful to have one or two singly based figures in each squadron.

Examples of various basing methods are shown in the accompanying photographs

Artillery

Users of the rules may well find this the most controversial element of the basing section. I have looked into the matter of artillery deployment in some detail and consulted with serving and retired soldiers from modern armies. The gaming convention of cramming a gun model served by three to five crewmen on a base of 40-50mm wide and 50mm deep must be challenged. An artillery battery carried with it a huge quantity of limbers, horses, caissons, forges, wagons and associated equipment. As a consequence its area of deployment was largely off limits and impassable to close order infantry and cavalry. I have chosen to make this larger area of

deployment a key factor in the rules. Guns should be based on a frontage of 60mm with depth of 80mm-100mm. This frontage is slightly generous. As a rule battery commanders were likely to have spaced their guns at approximately 10 metre (11 yard) intervals. This would make the space between gun models just under 50mm using our ground scale of 2.25mm to 1 yard. I have added an extra 10mm or 4.4 yards to the frontage. Guns therefore are occupying just over 6 extra feet of frontage each if converted back to real life as each gun model represents two actual pieces. Not a huge deviation from reality in the cause of protecting your models. Behind this space a further 200mm minimum should be filled with limbers, caissons or similar. If players do not wish to paint up these extra models then suitable markers should be used to indicate the area containing the battery's support functions. This is not voluntarily accessible to close order troops under any circumstances during the game. This total of 200mm depth represents slightly less than 90 yards which is actually rather inadequate to contain the associated equipment but from the practical point of not eating into valuable playing space too much, it is an acceptable compromise. Examples of battery basing and deployment can be seen in the accompanying photographs.

Field & General Officers

The Army Commander can be represented by either a single figure or a vignette of two to four mounted and/or dismounted figures. Base size is at the discretion of the player but should not exceed 100mm square or 100mm diameter.

Corps commanders can be represented by either a single figure or a vignette of two to three mounted and/or dismounted figures. Base size is at the discretion of the player but should not exceed 80mm square or 80mm diameter.

Divisional commanders can be represented by either a single figure or a vignette of two mounted and/or dismounted figures. Base size is at the discretion of the player but should not exceed 60mm square or 60mm diameter.

Brigadiers can be represented by either a single figure or a vignette of one or two mounted and/or dismounted figures. Base size is at the discretion of the player but should not exceed 60mm square or 60mm diameter.