

# Napoleon At Waterloo Revisited

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I was greatly pleased to read M.Booth's comments in Phoenix No.8 on "my" suggestions for improving the basic Napoleon at Waterloo simulation. In truth, like most tried and tested "improvements", they are the work of a number of people all playing the game and testing ideas — all I did was to join in and write it up.

The reasoning behind the La Haye Sainte revision is simple — the position was held by infantry (Major Baring's detachment of KGL riflemen) — the artillery were located up the hill to the rear. So we have recreated the historical placing, in a sense. The trebling of the defensive position was a change made some time later. Although the French could have and should have taken the position earlier, the change of counters made it too easy. Over a run of ten games in play-testing, the number of times the position was taken at the first attempt was too high (eight out of ten) to be acceptable; therefore the value of the position was trebled, giving the odds of which Mr Booth complained.

Having settled the point that we were not playing the "numbers game" i.e. seeking better odds at La Haye Sainte, consider the value of the 3-3 artillery piece unhampered by fortifications. Moved in a mobile defensive role, it can help to stiffen Anglo-Dutch counter attacks at decisive points.

Personally, simulations for me are a means of exploring the alternatives open to the commanders. The Anglo-Dutch line is more susceptible to attack at its extremes — use of the French unit superiority, especially in cavalry/infantry attacks at these points has often forced the Anglo-Dutch player to redeploy his forces from the centre opening the way for a crushing attack all along the line. This is especially effective in the advanced game.

Re Hougomont, I am impressed with Mr Booth's thinking on this but at this level I feel it would be better to 'mask' Hougomont i.e. prevent it gaining reinforcements who can build on its flanking strength as a fortification — this is nearly always where the Anglo-Dutch counter stroke comes from.

The poor old Prussians are a bit limited in deployment; the woods tend to channel them on to the French right wing anyway — it takes too long to get anywhere else. God knows how they managed to reach Plancenoit in time to do anything practical — it ain't on in this simulation unless the resident Napoleon is as erratically inclined as his historical counterpart — part lethargic, part dynamic. Perhaps we could give some thought to building in an 1815 Napoleon factor into the game e.g. "continue frontal attacks unless a six is thrown" or some such contrivance.

The fact is, the French could and should have done better on the day and thousands of latter-day Napoleons are proving it so on various simulations, Mr Booth and my self amongst them. Vive l'Empereur!

P.S. I haven't forgotten Grouchy, Mr Booth. I'm working on it. More later in detail.