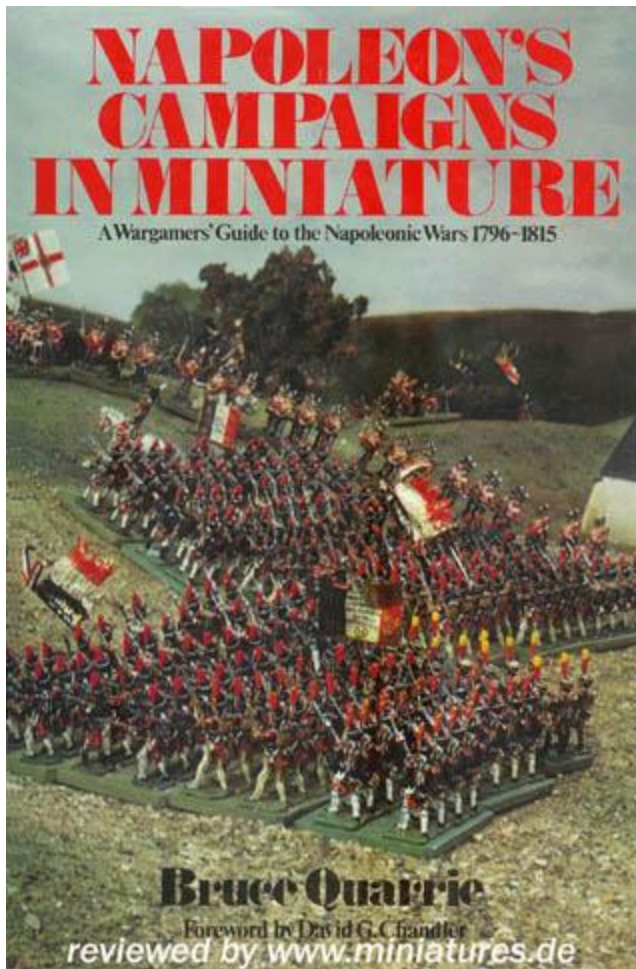


'Napoleon's Campaigns in Miniature'

By Bruce Quarrie

Review by Paul Le Long

Let me explain first what is being reviewed here ó this book was first published in 1977. I own the 2nd edition (1982) but have read the 4th edition (which is what I will review here). A quick look on Amazon reveals plenty of 1st edition volumes for sale but not much of anything else. It is not clear to me what is different between the various editions though the 4th edition has two extra chapters ó naval combat and the War of 1812.



Ok, on with the review. We start with a forward by David Chandler and an introduction by the author, then move on to Essential Ingredients of a Napoleonic Wargame, which discusses scales, unit frontages, ground and time scales and so on ó all of this feels quite old-school and dense. Then we have a chapter with advice on choosing figures, painting and basing ó all basic stuff.

The book really gets into its stride with chapter 3 ó a chronology of the wars. There is a fairly brief overview ó brief but good ó interlaced with some very lovely battle-plans, each accompanied by notes on forces engaged, course of the battle and casualties. This is a really excellent chapter.

Then we have a chapter on recruiting an army ó I found this a little complicated and dense but it does contain a lot of detailed information for the campaign gamer. The next

chapter ó organisation ó is another very good one. This covers all the main armies and also a lot of the minor ones, explaining how each army was organised ó how many battalions in a brigade and so on. There are some illustrations of soldiers too which are quite nice.

Then we have chapters on lines of communication & supply, medical services and attrition & desertion. All of these are too complex for my taste and are aimed at campaign games. Nevertheless, there is a lot of data here if you are interested in this sort of thing.

The chapter on generals and generalship is an excellent one ó biographies of all the main generals of all the main armies together with wargames ratings that refer to the author's rules but which could be easily adapted and used as a guide in your own rules if desired. This is in my view a great resource. This is followed by two very interesting chapters ó weapons, which is largely based on the well-known book "Firepower" by BP Hughes, and strategy and tactic, which covers all the usual infantry and cavalry formations and strategic ploys like the central position and march to the rear. All interesting and useful material.

We move to a chapter on sieges, again aimed at the campaign gamer. This is followed by Warfare at Sea which covers things like the cost of shipbuilding and naval strategy and tactics. There are some rules for sailing and gunnery. I was not that keen on these rules but the chapter is a good addition to the book (introduced for the 4th edition). Another newcomer to the 4th edition is North America 1812-1815, which provides a very brief overview of that conflict together with an assessment of the US army. This chapter is fine but far too brief.

We then turn to Setting up a Campaign, which in truth is a chapter that the whole book has been leading up to. The advice is standard and the chapter itself is short ó it doesn't have to be longer because there is so much campaign information in earlier chapters that the reader simply needs to put it all together at this stage.

The book ends with appendices, the longest of which is playing rules. These are not to my taste but they are comprehensive ó write orders for all units, ground & time scales, loads of tables, fire factors, lots of modifiers and so on ó I'm sure you get the idea. If that style of rule-set appeals to you then this is a solid and comprehensive set that you will probably like.

This is an excellent book overall. In places, the subject matter is a little esoteric and dry and it is presented in an over-complicated way very typical of "serious" wargaming in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of information here if you want it. If a Napoleonic ambulance service interests you, then you'll find it here ó sure, you can skip it if you want but it's there if you fancy it. And some of the chapters really are good ó the biographies of generals appealed to me for instance as did the battle-maps in the chronology chapter. These maps are so evocative.

I would heartily recommend this book if you are starting out in Napoleonics as it provides all the basic information that you need. Use it as a springboard. It also has value for the veteran because of the in-depth way it tackles peripheral topics. For campaign games, I would say that this book is a must.

Details:

- ☐ **Hardcover:** 192 pages
- ☐ **Publisher:** P. Stephens (17 Oct 1977)
- ☐ **Language:** English
- ☐ **ISBN-10:** 0850592836
- ☐ **ISBN-13:** 978-0850592832

This is the first edition (there have been four to date). The book is out of print but the current price on Amazon for used copies is £5.