

Dispatches

from First Empire

Readers



The Danube Legion and Bavarian National Guards.

Dear Dave,

Further to Dave Lycett's letter in No9, the Danube Legion mentioned in the order of battle included in the article on Hanau was actually just another National Guard battalion like any other, as will, I hope, become clear.

The National Guard had existed in Bavaria for several years although mobilisation of the National Guard 2nd Class, the units under discussion, for the period in which we are interested was only authorised in February 1813. There were actually 3 classes. 1st Class which formed the reserve battalions of the standing army, 2nd Class, intended originally as a militia for home defence and 3rd Class which seems to have been similar to the Prussian Landsturm and which was not intended to serve in the field and, indeed, was not uniformed at this stage.

Each of the 9 Kreise (districts) in the Kingdom of Bavaria were instructed to raise up to four battalions of National Guard, known as the Mobile Legion of the Kreis in question, each battalion to consist of 4 companies of 165 officers and soldiers each.

Each Kreis had 4 battalion areas from which it recruited men aged 21 to 40 years. Some Kreise were more successful than others but by mid 1813 20 battalions had been raised each being known by its battalion number within the Kreis hierarchy and, later, an individual Feld Bataillon number. These are shown below.

Mobilien Legion des Isar-Kreises

1. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (5. Feld Btl)
2. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (7. Feld Btl)
3. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (8. Feld Btl)
4. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (18. Feld Btl)

Mobilien Legion des Inn-Kreises

1. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (13. Feld Btl)

Mobilien Legion des Salzach-Kreises

2. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (4. Feld Btl)

Mobilien Legion des Iller-Kreises

1. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (16. Feld Btl)
2. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (6. Feld Btl)

Mobilien Legion des Retzat-Kreises

1. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (14. Feld Btl)
3. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (2. Feld Btl)
4. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (17. Feld Btl)

Mobilien Legion des Ober-Donau-Kreises

1. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (10. Feld Btl)

2. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (11. Feld Btl)
3. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (1. Feld Btl) *

* This is the unit shown as "Danube Legion (1 battalion)" under 3rd Division (Lamotte), Brigade Stockh in Colin Allen's article on Hanau, Ober-Donau being Upper-Danube.

Mobilien Legion des Unter-Donau-Kreises

4. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (19. Feld Btl)

Mobilien Legion des Main-Kreises

1. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (15. Feld Btl)

Mobilien Legion des Regen-Kreises

1. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (9. Feld Btl)
2. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (3. Feld Btl)
3. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (20. Feld Btl)
4. Bataillon der Mobilien Legion (12. Feld Btl)

The uniform and equipment of the National Guard was like that of the regular infantry except that a shako was worn instead of the Raupenhelm. The single breasted light blue jacket was distinguished with poppy-red collar, cuffs and piping to the turnbacks, shoulder straps, cuffs and front. Buttons were brass. Trousers were also blue and worn over black gaiters. Belting was white and a bayonet carried at the left hip in a black leather scabbard. The shako was rather more bell topped than the French variety with a front peak only and reinforcing leather bands to the top and bottom. The chin scales, lozenge plate and band with unit title over the peak, were all brass. Above the blue and white cockade a small pom-pom was worn in battalion colours.

1st Bn - Red, 2nd Bn - White,
3rd Bn - Blue and 4th Bn - Yellow.

Wurst batteries were as you describe, a separate wagon, rather like the French artillery caisson, with a length wise padded seat on which the gunners could sit astride as they might a horse. Uniform was normal Bavarian artillery dress.

May I also, in the context of Ralph Henderson's letter, add my two penneth on the question of what subject matter First Empire should encompass. If it is to be confined to the Napoleonic period only, then articles concerned with matters post 1815 could, with some justification, be excluded. My personal view, however, is that a little digression, from time to time, is no bad thing and, indeed, there is much to be learned about Napoleonic practise from what followed the wars of Napoleon.

On the other hand, material on 18th Century subjects, particularly tactical and grand tactical matters, have a direct bearing on the period in which we are interest. Napoleonic warfare was not an aberration that suddenly appeared on the scene and its roots lie in the military evolution of the previous century, in exactly the same way as the wars of the mid and late 19th Century have their roots in the Napoleonic period. To ignore the 18th Century misses a significant trick.

On the subject of tactics, I really welcomed George Nafziger's article on the Decree of 18 February 1808; the Reglement of 1791 can hardly be called Napoleonic per se, to emphasise my point above. George did a superb series

comparing the various nationalities regulations in Empires Eagles & Lions some years ago, a time and motion study like that on the French in his article in No9.

Persuade him to repeat it if you can, it contained information absolutely vital to the understanding of the manoeuvres.

John Cook
Warminster

Thanks For The Info.....

Dear Sir,

I am writing to say how much I enjoy your magazine.

I first purchased copies at this years World Championships at Derby. Having gone there with the intention of purchasing models in order to create a Russo-German element to my Allied forces. At the time I was a little dubious as the only information I had found at that time were oblique references and the Osprey series colour charts. Imagine my relief and pleasure at finding issue No7 on one of the stands!

Like many other readers of this magazine (I suspect) I tend as a subscriber to the so called mainstream magazines available to our hobby, to leave large portions of W.I. and M.W. largely unread. I too have little interest in the exploits of the 1st Light Washerwomans company in the 3rd Domestic Service unit's Anatolian revolt.

The quality and depth of research apparent in some of the articles in your magazine leaves me humbled. (Thank you James Field for your timely article.)

May the First Empire prosper. I shall certainly be strongly recommending your magazine to my friends.

M.K. Madin
Ashbourne.

Brunswick Information Needed...

Dear Sir

I am writing to you as an avid reader of your magazine "First Empire". I am now on the second subscription and have been happily surprised with your publication. Thanks to you I heard about the series of books "French Generals of the 1815 Campaign" by Tony Linck.

I have been studying the Waterloo Campaign for the past 10 years and was glad to see a detailed French Order of Battle for a change.

I have a problem I hope some of your readers could possibly help me with; it concerns the Brunswick command structure and its uniforms. I have full details of unit structure and have many books on uniforms of the era, but the Osprey Men at Arms title does not cover their uniforms or structure.

I have come across a painting of the death of the Duke of Brunswick and this shows his mounted staff in bicorne, but no colours are given (including Colonel Olgermann) or types of coats worn.

I hope to hear from any reader who can help me with this problem as I am a keen wargamer and need to find figures that can be used to represent these officers. If there are any other readers who need questions on this campaign answered I would be only too happy to help.

Thank you again for you Napoleonic magazine.
Colin Fortune, Leeds

Tirailleurs Corses..

Dear Sir,

Well you asked for it! So, here goes! The Tirailleurs Corses were formed from one of the five battalions of the similarly named Chasseurs Corses (who were later transferred to the Neapolitan Army). The Tirailleurs Corses appear to have the same organisation as the rest of the French Light Infantry (9 companies then 6), of which they were indeed part of. They were (for administrative purposes) the third battalion of first the 3ème Légère, the of the 8ème Légère.

Their uniform seems to be a vexed subject: there being two widely differing types. Plate C2 in the Osprey M.A.A. 146 "Napoleon's Light Infantry" appears to be a misinterpretation of scarce and confusing contemporary sources, yet, it is possible that Messrs Fosten and Haythornthwaite have seen something that the rest of us have not. The reasonable assumption is that their early uniform reflected their parent units. The Chasseurs Corses initially sported a quasi-native rig which is unlikely considering that by 1803 they were ordered to wear a dark sky blue coat with yellow facings. There was no dark sky blue cloth available so the naked were clothed in normal French light infantry uniforms, probably with cuff flaps. And as both the 3rd and the 8th seem to have worn nothing particularly remarkable in their uniforms, it is therefore, likely that prior to 1808 they resembled the vast majority of the French light infantry. It should be remembered that they had an eagle, and in 1805, their Corps Commander (Soult) gave the Carabinier company bearskins. In 1808 we enter their 'Brown Period'. In that year they were fitted out in a brown light infantry coat with 'Polish' cuffs. The facing colour was found on the collar, cuffs and turnbacks. The initial facing colour may have been red, but by 1809 was green. Voltigeurs had yellow epaulets (with green crescents), yellow upper shako band, cords and plume; Tirailleurs had green epaulets (possibly with a yellow crescent), green upper shako band, cords and plume; the Carabinier distinctions were presumably in red. For at least part of the time they had buff leather work, including a waist belt, in lieu of the cartridge pouch belt, which went under the coat with (appropriately enough) a 'giberne à la Corse'. The sources for the above were "Swords Around The Throne" by Colonel John R. Elting U.S.A. and the book in the Bucquoy series "Gardes d'Honneur et Troupes Étrangères".

The latter type would be a real challenge for the figure manufacturer.

Magnus Guild
Edinburgh

Gridded Playing Surfaces Anyone?

Dear Sir,

From the outset I was impressed by the overall appearance of the magazine and the format works well even without colour plates (it seems that some people not only have their cake, but want to eat it as well!).

It's nice to see a wargaming magazine that does as its title suggests - caters for wargamers rather than those folk who would much prefer to shepherd sheep or pursue a boar around the countryside! (I kid you not my current subscription to a very well known wargaming magazine which will remain

nameless, is under serious threat unless they fill their pages, as you do, with pertinent facts and information).

Whilst I'm on the subject of information, my gaming interests have recently swung towards utilising a gridded playing surface. I was wondering if any of your readers who perhaps use a similar set-up could give me any helpful hints, guidelines or mechanisms.

J. Fidler

RAF Bruggen

Editor: Thanks for the praise, always welcome! Gridded playing surfaces eh! There's a blast from the past. I remember seeing a photograph in some ancient wargame publication, a Featherstone if I'm not mistaken, showing a square gridded system in use. It would be interesting to see if anyone out there is using/has used such a system.

The Unanswered Question of British Attack Columns.

Dear Sir,

I would like to ask if anyone can give me an answer to a simple, but unanswered question, which has often led to arguments. This is: "Did the British Infantry ever attack in a formation resembling a French/Continental Attack Column, and how?". There would seem to be some scope for use of the 'double' (i.e. 4 deep) Line or other formations in these circumstances. I have a British Army which I would like to field in situations other than the classic one of hiding behind a ridge, waiting for the comparatively mobile Grogards to ascend to the summit before blowing them away with a last minute volley, bayonet charge and a British 'Hurrah!'. Some gamers seem to forget that the British used to attack too, and I have been bogged down by opponents who insist that **my** infantry may attack only in line, which of course makes them move more slowly than **their** Columns; alternatively, I can only advance in column of March, with a single company frontage. Both of these formations are, of course, vulnerable to my opponents' cavalry and the March column lacks firepower and cannot charge; a charge in line also lacks the impetus of a columnar attack. In addition an advance in Line prevents an effective pursuit of a broken or retreating enemy. Clearly, the overall ability of the British to attack or maintain contact with a retreating enemy appears to be seriously impeded by many rules (though I am tempted to ask whether I am suffering the effects of gamesmanship - perhaps I should change my opponents!). Surely, even the worst of the British were not completely ignorant of the advantages offered by Attack Columns, or of the vulnerability of March Columns on the battlefield. The British did attack successfully, and with speed, such attacks were not limited only to those of the Peninsular Light Brigade! There must be good examples of relatively mobile, attacking British forces which could maintain contact with its enemy whilst advancing in battle formation. I would appreciate any advice.

G.R.A. Palmer

East Dereham, Norfolk

Editor: Miniature British armies are victim of their real life counterparts publicity machine. The greatest victories were those involving line and ridge, thus very little is ever put forward for the

British in attack. Mind you most of the time, the strategic situation forced a defensive posture, and many notable British disasters involved a British offensive!

The Dundas regulations of 1792, clearly make provision for columns of divisions etc. But beware, a BRITISH division is not two companies, but two half companies! There being 10 divisions to a battalion!

What About Some Naval?

Being new to First Empire (since issue 9) and wargaming in general, I would just like to congratulate you on such a great magazine.

Like Ralph Henderson in the said issue, though, I would like to see you cover the whole Horse and Musket era in detail as I'm sure this could interest a wider audience of gamers.

Secondly, how about running some articles and/or scenarios for Napoleonic Naval Wargaming? This is one branch of the genre which I would like to try and there are certainly many clashes, (the Nile and Trafalgar etc.), to choose from.

Anyway, please keep up the good work on First Empire and best of luck for 1993!

Stuart Hardy,

Sheffield

Editor: Here is probably a good place to sneak in a little announcement. Future issues of First Empire will concentrate on Napoleonic History, but it will also feature articles on periods that have a direct bearing on the Napoleonic Wars and those periods that were directly influenced by Napoleon. So stand by for Seven Years War, Crimea, Franco-Prussian and may be the odd one or two where the connection is there, but at first glance may not be so obvious! Panic not the magazine will be increasing in size to accommodate this additional material. I must stress the term additional. I have no intention of reducing the current quantity of Napoleonic material published.

On the second point, the popular Fever Islands series has reached its climax, and to date is the closest we've come to wet wargaming. If anyone fancies having a go at a Naval article please feel free to contribute.

Anglo-Russian Invasion in London!

Dear Sir,

Readers with a spare half hour in London, may be interested to know that there is currently an exhibition of caricatures from the Napoleonic period, at the British Museum (Room 90).

Those who have been avidly following the serialised account of the Anglo-Russian landings of 1799 should see the section on Holland. These cartoons stress the failure of the Dutch to rise up in support of the Prince of Orange.

In fact most of the cartoons are disparaging about foreigners, friend and foe alike. It appears that the 'Euroscetics' were in the ascendant, at least in England. Of course a certain diminutive Frenchman was keen to unify Europe. Plus ça change.

Rohan Saravanamuttu,

London

