

The Waterloo Project

William Monins 1792-1857



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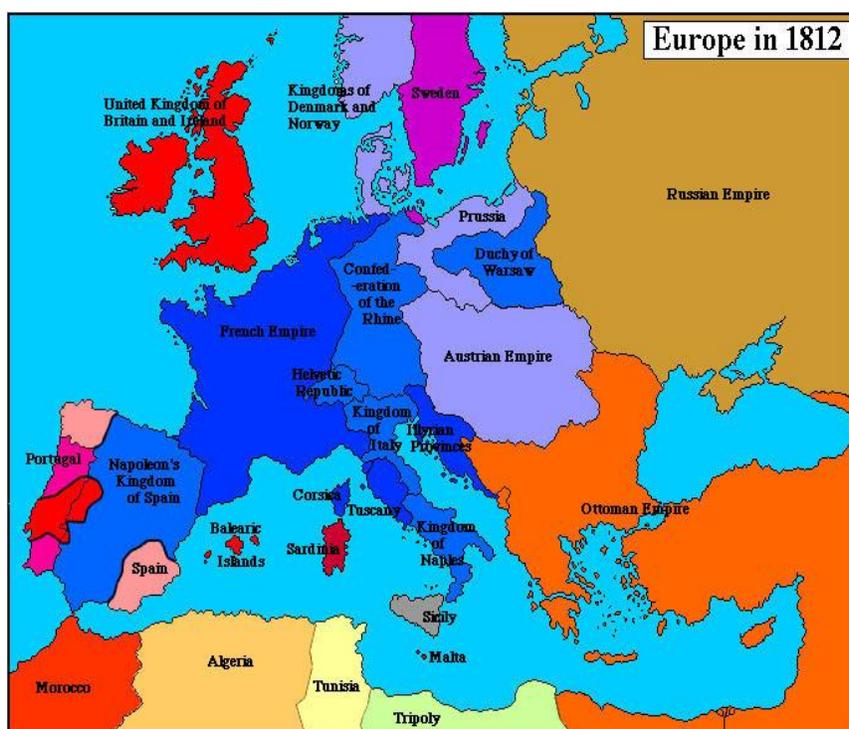
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Napoleonic Europe

Europe in the early 1800's was French, to an even greater extent than it was during the Enlightenment. Napoleon, having conquered Prussia and Austria, had taken almost all of Western Europe and the greater part of Central Europe into the Empire or into the French sphere of influence either as allies or as subject kingdoms.



The Napoleonic period was an extremely complicated time. Moral right and wrong were difficult to distinguish: Napoleon was a dictator, but not a particularly evil one. He

encouraged many developments we today consider quite positive. The Napoleonic Wars were instigated by France, but each nation fought to protect and expand its own national interest. The wars were punctuated by constantly shifting alliances. Sometimes Prussia fought France, and sometimes it was neutral. Austria, led by the crafty Metternich, tried to improve relations with France towards the end of the Napoleonic era. Russia initially opposed Napoleon, then sided with him, and then turned against him

again. The only constant through the fifteen years of Napoleon's rule was the continued enmity between England and France. Instead of a war between irreconcilable values, the Napoleonic Wars were fought with essentially the same motivation driving all sides: greed. The period was typified by "Realism" in diplomacy and war, for all sides were simply trying to win whatever advantages they could.

Napoleon's rise to Power

Since 1792, France's revolutionary government had been engaged in military conflicts with various European nations. In 1796, Napoleon commanded a French army that defeated the larger armies of Austria, one of his country's primary rivals, in a series of battles in Italy. In 1797, France and Austria signed the Treaty of Campo Formio, resulting in territorial gains for the French.



The following year, the Directory, the five-person group that had governed France since 1795, offered to let Napoleon lead an invasion of England. Napoleon determined that France's naval forces were not yet ready to go up against the superior British Royal Navy. Instead, he proposed an invasion of Egypt in an effort to wipe out British trade routes with India. Napoleon's troops scored a victory against Egypt's military rulers, the Mamluks, at the Battle of the Pyramids in July 1798; soon, however, his forces were stranded after his naval fleet was nearly decimated by the British at the

Battle of the Nile in August 1798. In early 1799, Napoleon's army launched an invasion of Ottoman-ruled Syria, which ended with the failed siege of Acre, located in modern-day Israel. That summer, with the political situation in France marked by uncertainty, the ever-ambitious and cunning Napoleon opted to abandon his army in Egypt and return to France.

The Battle

The battle of Waterloo began on Sunday, 18 June 1815, 8 miles from the town of Waterloo in Belgium. In this muddy field in Belgium, stood two of history's military giants, Napoleon with his French imperial guard and Wellington with his British and allied army. One decisive battle could end twenty years of bloody conflict on the continent.

Both Napoleon and Wellington were exactly the same age and they were also both formidable military strategists. They had a string of victories coming into the battle, so they both would have been feeling pretty confident for the victory. The stakes very high though, as the winner would decide the fate of Europe.

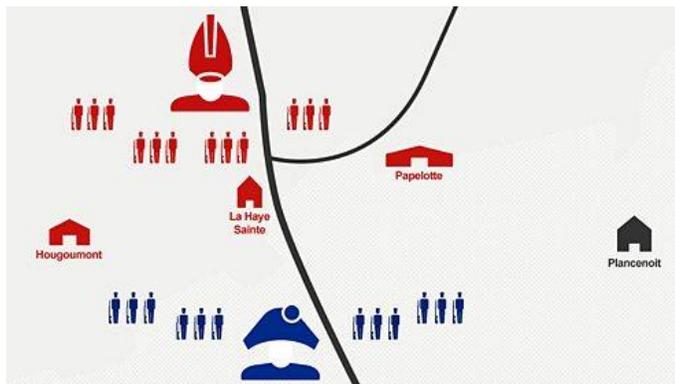


Before the battle

At 00:00 on June 18 the two armies took their positions. Wellington had slept at the Waterloo Inn, and Napoleon was three miles south. Their men however slept in the rain all night. Wellington knew that it was absolutely imperative that General Blucher and his Prussian reinforcements were to arrive if they wanted victory the next day. However General Blucher and his reinforcements were recuperating in Wavre 18 miles east of Waterloo. Napoleon was confident he could defeat Wellington and get to Brussels if the two allied armies were separated.

Nice quote from Wellington on Napoleon: "His presence on the field made the difference of 40,000 men"

The first tactical move



Wellington established a strong defensive position, blocking the road to Brussels in order to stop Napoleon's advance to the capital. Wellington knew that he was outnumbered approximately 68,000 to 72,000, so he put his troops

in different tactically advantageous positions.

Quote from Napoleon on Wellington: "He is a bad general and the English are breakfast!"

Napoleon was also thinking about the sodden terrain and he realised that it would be difficult to move his men and guns into position, so he delayed his first attack until the ground had dried. This was a dangerous strategy though, because it allowed time for Blucher to get to Wellington on the ridge. Napoleon then devised a diversionary attack



on Hougoumont farm. Although the British were outnumbered 5,000 to 1,000 they had a strong position inside the stone walls and could fire out on the French. Although Napoleon kept sending attacks the British held Hougoumont.

Quote from Wellington: "No troops but the British could have held Hougoumont and only the best of them at that."

Then at 13:00 Napoleon sent 18,000 troops to strike a decisive blow on the road to Brussels. It looked like Napoleon was on the verge of victory, but then he spotted the Prussians to the East, but they were still quite far



away. Although Blucher was still quite far away from Wellington, he was still making a difference, as he was splitting the French resources. Napoleon won La Haye Sainte and Wellington lost his prize garrison. All Wellington could do was wait for the arrival of Blucher. When the Prussians finally arrived, they have the chance to kill Napoleon, but they got told to hold their fire. The French were defeated and Britain would not fight in Europe for another 99 years until World War One.

William Monins

William Monins, born on 20th February 1792, was the first son of John Monins of Canterbury. He attended King's school in canterbury from August 1800 - June 1801 and he then attended charterhouse from July 1801 to August 1807. He was part of the 52nd Ft. in 1808 and the 3rd Dragoon in 1811.

At Charterhouse he was at a house called Stewart's, but this was before Charterhouse



moved to Godalming, so it was in London. The school was much smaller back then and out of the houses still there today, only Gownboys, Saunderites and Verites would have been there.

The 18th Hussars

Monins was in the 18th Royal Hussars (Queen Mary's Own) which was a cavalry regiment of the British Army, first formed in 1759. It saw service for two centuries, before being amalgamated into the 13th/18th Hussars in 1922.



The regiment was first raised as the 19th Regiment of (Light) Dragoons in 1759, renumbered the 18th Regiment of (Light) Dragoons in 1763, and briefly the 4th Regiment of Light Dragoons in 1766 before settling on the 18th in 1769. In 1805 it took the title of the 18th (King's Irish) Regiment of (Light) Dragoons, named for George III, and re-designated as hussars in 1807, becoming the 18th (King's Irish) Regiment of (Light) Dragoons (Hussars). It was informally known as the "Drogheda Light Horse" and it was humorously referred to as the "Drogheda Cossacks". It was disbanded in Ireland in 1821.

The Monins Family

John of Canterbury married Sarah Trice, more than 20 years younger



than him, and the couple had six sons and two daughters. All but the two last born sons survived into adulthood, and three sons Richard, William and Eaton, followed in their father's footsteps into the army, Richard joined the Royal Navy and after four years transferred to the Army, serving under Wellington in the Peninsula War when, after the retreat from Corunna, he was compelled to quit the service due to ill health. Eaton in the 52nd Regiment, and William with the 18th Hussars were present at the battle of Waterloo. William became the first member of the family to reside in Jersey, retiring there on half-pay after the battle. The eldest son John, however, had followed the other family tradition and joined the Church. John of Canterbury died in 1806 and he was buried at Ringwould.

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