

The Napoleon Series

British General Officer Casualties in Wellington's Army: 1808 – 1815

By [Robert Burnham](#) and [Ron McGuigan](#)

General officer leadership style during the Napoleonic Wars varied by country. Some were aloof and led from a distant, while others led from the front. One way of determining which style was prevalent was the number of general officer casualties during a battle. In general, the French generals were known for inspiring their soldiers by setting an example and being where the fighting was hottest. The number of casualties among their generals reflected this. Of the 26 marshals, 3 had been killed or died from their wounds, and fourteen others had been wounded. Several had been wounded multiple times. Among the division commanders, 42 were killed or died from their wounds and 208 had been wounded. The total for brigade commanders was even worse, with 119 killed or died from wounds and 481 wounded.¹

So how does the casualties among general officers in the British Army under Wellington compare to the French? This paper examines the 99 British and German generals who commanded brigades or divisions while serving under Wellington in the Peninsular War and in the Waterloo Campaign. It does not include British officers who were serving in the Portuguese Army or Dutch and German officers who commanded troops in the Anglo-Allied Army at Waterloo, who were not part of the British Army.

About the data.

This study only includes data on those generals who became casualties while serving in Wellington's Army. This would include those who served under him in August 1808, April 1809 to April 1814, and the Waterloo Campaign. It does not include data on those who became casualties under General John Moore in the Corunna Campaign of 1808 – 1809, casualties taken in eastern Spain in 1813, in the Netherlands under General Thomas Graham in 1814, or in the War of 1812. The data also included those who died from non-combat causes, such as disease, accident, or suicide, and those whose health was broken due to the rigors of campaigning and had to go home. James Kempt is listed in the data for both brigade and division commanders, because he was the only officer who was a wounded as a both a brigade and a division commander.

Casualties among Division and Corps Commanders

Thirty generals had permanent division command or higher under Wellington. Many generals took temporary command of a division, when its commander became a casualty or took a leave of absence. They are not in this table. Those listed below had their appointments as a division commander confirmed in General Orders.

¹ Further information on French general officer casualties can be found at [Statistical Abstract of the Napoleonic Wars French Army Casualties](#)

British Division and Corps Commander Casualties under Wellington

Name	# of Times Wounded	Killed	Died Non-combat Causes	Went Home Due to Bad Health	Notes
Alten, Carl	1	0	0	0	Waterloo
Beresford, William	1	0	0	0	Salamanca
Campbell, Alexander	1	0	0	0	Talavera
Clinton, Henry	0	0	0	0	
Cole, Galbraith	2	0	0	0	Albuera, Salamanca
Colville, Charles	2	0	0	0	Badajoz, Vitoria
Cooke, George	1	0	0	0	Waterloo
Cotton, Stapleton	1	0	0	0	Salamanca
Craufurd, Robert	0	1	0	0	DoW Ciudad Rodrigo
Dalhousie, Lord George	0	0	0	0	
Erskine, William	0	0	1	0	Committed Suicide
Graham, Thomas	0	0	0	1	Eyes
Hill, Rowland	1	0	0	0	Talavera
Hope, John	1	0	0	0	Bayonne
Hope, John	0	0	0	1	Ill health
Houston, William	1	0	0	1	Ill health
Howard, Kenneth	0	0	0	0	
Kempt, James	1	0	0	0	Waterloo
Leith, James	2	0	0	0	Salamanca San Sebastian
Murray, John	0	0	0	0	
Oswald, John	1	0	0	0	San Sebastian
Paget, Edward	1	0	0	0	Oporto
Pakenham, Edward	0	0	0	0	
Payne, William	0	0	0	0	
Picton, Thomas	1	1	0	0	WIA Quatre Bras, KIA Waterloo
Sherbrooke, John	0	0	0	1	Poor health
Spencer, Brent ²	0	0	0	0	
Stewart, William	2	0	0	0	Albuera, Pyrenees
Tilson, Christopher	0	0	0	0	
Uxbridge, Henry Lord	1	0	0	0	Waterloo
Totals	16 (53%)	2 (7%)	1 (4%)	4 (13%)	22 (73%) were casualties

Casualties among Brigade Commanders

Sixty-nine general officers permanently commanded brigades under Wellington. This list does not include the numerous colonels who also commanded brigades, since most of them only commanded temporarily and did not have their appointment confirmed in General Orders.

² General Spencer, while in General Moore's Army, went home in the autumn of 1808 due to poor health.

British Brigade Commander Casualties under Wellington

Name	# of Times Wounded	Killed	Died Non-combat Causes	Went Home Due to Bad Health	Notes
Acland, Wroth ³	0	0	0	0	
Adam, Frederick ⁴	1	0	0	0	Waterloo
Alten, Victor	1	0	0	0	Salamanca
Anson, George	0	0	0	0	
Anson, William	0	0	0	0	
Anstruther, Robert ⁵	0	0	0	0	
Aylmer, Matthew ⁶	0	0	0	0	
Barnes, Edward ⁷	2	0	0	0	St. Pierre, Aire
Bayly, Henry	0	0	0	0	
Bernewitz, John	0	0	0	0	
Bock, George ⁸	0	0	0	0	
Bowes, Barnard	1	1	0	0	WIA Badajoz KIA Salamanca Forts
Bradford, Thomas ⁹	0	0	0	0	Bayonne
Brisbane, Thomas	1	0	0	0	Toulouse
Burne, Robert	0	0	0	0	
Byng, John	1	0	0	0	Nive
Cameron, Alan	0	0	0	1	Poor health
Campbell, Henry	2	0	0	0	Talavera, Salamanca
Craufurd, James	0	0	1	0	Malaria in Portugal
de Grey, George	0	0	0	1	Bad shoulder
Dornberg, William	1	0	0	0	Waterloo
Driberg, George	0	0	0	1	Poor health
Drummond, George	0	0	1	0	Trench mouth
Dunlop, James	0	0	0	0	
Erskine, James	0	0	0	1	Severe disposition ¹⁰
Fane, Henry	0	0	0	1	Liver ailment
Ferguson, Ronald	0	0	0	1	Liver ailment
Grant, Colquhoun	1	0	0	1	WIA Waterloo Liver ailment
Halkett, Colin	4	0	0	0	All at Waterloo
Hay, Andrew	1	1	0	0	Vitoria, Bayonne
Hinuber, Henry	1	0	0	0	St. Etienne
Hoghton, Daniel	0	1	0	0	Albuera
Hulse, Richard	0	0	1	0	Typhus 1812
Inglis, William	2	0	0	0	Albuera, Nivelle

³ General Acland was sent home in the autumn of 1808 due to illness.

⁴ General Adam was wounded three times while serving as a brigade commander on the east coast of Spain in 1813.

⁵ General Anstruther died of pneumonia during the Corunna Campaign.

⁶ In 1811, Matthew Aylmer was a colonel on the staff in Wellington's Army. He went on home leave because of poor health and did not return for 15 months.

⁷ General Barnes was also wounded at Waterloo while serving as the Adjutant General of the Army.

⁸ General Bock died in a shipwreck while returning to Hanover in January 1814.

⁹ General Bradford was wounded at Bayonne in 1814 when he commanded a Portuguese brigade.

¹⁰ A severe indisposition was a catchall phrase to describe a variety of ailments that were incapacitating but usually not life threatening.

Johnstone, George	0	0	0	0	
Keane, John ¹¹	0	0	0	0	
Kemmis, James	0	0	0	0	
Kempt, James ¹²	2	0	0	0	Badajoz, Nivelles
Lambert, John	1	0	0	0	Waterloo
Langwerth, Ernest	0	1	0	0	Talavera
Le Marchant, John	0	1	0	0	Salamanca
Lightburne, Stafford	0	0	0	0	
Long, Robert	0	0	0	0	
Low, Sigismund	0	0	0	1	Poor health
Lumley, William	0	0	0	1	Poor health
Mackenzie, John	0	1	0	0	Talavera
Mackenzie, Kenneth	0	0	0	0	
Mackinnon, Henry ¹³	0	1	0	0	Ciudad Rodrigo
Maitland, Peregrine	0	0	0	0	
Nightingall, Miles	1	0	0	0	Fuentes de Onoro
O'Loghlin, Terence	0	0	0	0	
Pack, Denis	3	0	0	0	1 st Sorauren, Toulouse, Waterloo
Peacocke, Warren	0	0	0	0	
Ponsonby, William	0	1	0	0	Waterloo
Power, Manley	0	0	0	0	
Pringle, William	1	0	0	0	Garris
Rebow, Francis	0	0	0	0	
Robinson, Frederick	3	0	0	0	Vitoria, San Sebastian, Nive
Ross, Robert ¹⁴	1	0	0	0	Orthes
Skerrett, John ¹⁵	0	0	0	0	
Slade, John	0	0	0	0	
Somerset, Edward	0	0	0	0	
Sontag, John	0	0	0	1	Possibly Guadiana Fever
Stewart, Richard	0	0	1	0	Fall from a balcony
Stopford, Edward	1	0	0	0	Bayonne
Vandeleur, John	2	0	0	0	Ciudad Rodrigo, Waterloo
Vivian, Richard	1	0	0	0	Croix d'Orade
Walker, George	2	0	0	0	Badajoz, Orthes
Wheatley, William	0	0	1	0	Typhus
Totals	24 (35%)	8 (12%)	5 (7%)	10 (14%)	44 or 64% were casualties ¹⁶

¹¹ General Keane was wounded at New Orleans in 1815.

¹² General Kempt was also wounded at Waterloo, after he took command of the 5th Division.

¹³ General Mackinnon went home in 1811 due to bad health. However he was gone less than three months when he returned.

¹⁴ General Ross was killed at North Point, Maryland in the United States in September 1814.

¹⁵ General Skerrett was mortally wounded and captured at Bergen-op-Zoom on 9 March 1814. He died from his wounds the next day.

¹⁶ This reflects the total number of individuals who were casualties and not the total casualties. Three of the generals fell into two different categories.

Analysis of the Data

General Officer Casualties in Wellington's Army

Name	#	Wounded	Killed	Died Non-combat Causes	Went Home Due to Bad Health	Total Casualties
Division Commanders	30	16 (53%)	2 (7%)	1 (4%)	4 (13%)	22 (73%)
Brigade Commanders	69	24 (35%)	8 (12%)	5 (7%)	10 (14%)	44 (65%)
Total for All Generals	99	40 (40%)	10 (10%)	6 (6%)	14 (14%)	65 (66%)

A general in Wellington's Army had a 66% chance of becoming a casualty. Although a brigade commander had a greater chance of being killed than a division commander – although not significantly at only 5% -- he had a 18% less chance of being wounded. Despite this smaller chance there were 37 times that Wellington had one of his brigade commanders wounded. Although only 24 of the 69 were wounded overall, nine of them were wounded more than once. One in five of the generals would die due to disease or accidents or went home due to bad health is also indicative of the impact campaigning had on them.

There is some data available on the chances of anyone, regardless of rank, becoming a casualty in Wellington's Army. It is interesting to compare these figures to those of a general officer:

Chance of Becoming a Casualty in Wellington's Army 1811 – 1814¹⁷

	General Officer	Officer	Other Ranks
Wounded	40%	29%	18%
Killed or Died of Wounds	10%	6.5%	5.2%
Disease or Accident	6%	3.6%	11.3%

Conclusions:

A general in Wellington's Army had 2 in 3 chances of becoming a casualty and a 52% chance of becoming a combat casualty! Their mortality rate was high, with one in six (16%) killed in action or dying from non-combat causes. When compared with the likelihood of an officer or other ranks becoming a casualty, the numbers are staggering. In every category the general was risking his life more than anyone else, except for his chances of dying from non-combat causes. An enlisted soldier had almost double the chance of dying from disease or accident than a general did. This was probably due to the generals having access to better food and when wounded, better health care.

¹⁷ Data for the officers and other ranks is from: Burnham, Robert and Ron McGuigan. *The British Army against Napoleon*. Barnsley: Frontline, 2010. Page 213

Perhaps this was balanced by the fact that the general had twice the chance of being killed or wounded than an enlisted soldier did.

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