

## The Napoleon Series Reviews

### Waterloo 1815

Franklin, John. *Waterloo 1815 (1): Quatre Bras*. Oxford, UK: Osprey, 2014. 96 pages. ISBN# 9781472803634. Paperback. \$21.95

Franklin, John. *Waterloo 1815 (2): Ligny*. Oxford, UK: Osprey, 2015. 96 pages. ISBN# 9781472803665. Paperback. \$21.95

Franklin, John. *Waterloo 1815 (3): Mont St. Jean and Wavre*. Oxford, UK: Osprey, 2015. 96 pages. ISBN# 9781472804129. Paperback. \$21.95



Full disclosure: I published Napoleon magazine (which became Napoleon Journal) from 1996 through 2000 and have been a supporter of new research on this era, especially translation of previously unknown foreign language documents into English. I have known John Franklin since 2010 when I first learned of his effort to locate, translate, and publish non-English sources on the 1815 campaign in Belgium, such as letters and reports written by Dutch and German participants in the battles of that summer, including Waterloo. The books I received from John in 2010 were titled *Waterloo: Netherlands Correspondence* and *Waterloo: Hanoverian Correspondence*. These books are truly ground-breaking investigations into this famous campaign. I am an avid supporter of John Franklin's initial work and am delighted with his three recent books published by Osprey.

This review covers the three books written by John Franklin that have been published in the *Waterloo 1815* series by Osprey Publishing. As they all share the same format for Osprey's *Campaign* series books, as well as John's original research into non-English archives and manuscripts, I consider them as three very similar parts of one overall study on the 1815 campaign.

The three *Waterloo 1815* books cover Quatre Bras (vol.1), Ligny (vol. 2), and, Mont St, Jean and Wavre (vol. 3). Each volume shares the following elements:

Introduction—Despite sometimes covering the same information, all three intros are slightly different.

Chronology—A nicely done abbreviated summary of each battle.

Opposing Commanders—Some men are repeated since they fought at more than one battle, but each book introduces additional key officers and excellent color portraits.

Opposing Forces—More color portraits, illustrations, and a text presentation of the orders-of-battle with exact strengths for divisions and Prussian brigades (equivalent to divisions) listed in volumes 1 and 2, but only general overall numbers of men and guns for French, Allied and Prussian forces in volume 3.

Opposing Plans— Another nice overview.

The Battle/Campaign—Succinct narrative with 8-9 color maps and many mostly color historical images or paintings from various collections. The tactical maps have good detail, but it was a bit frustrating to look up the letters and numbers next to the unit symbols on the map in order to identify that unit on the map legend. I can understand this system for very long unit titles, but a “2” next to a French cavalry division symbol might actually mean the 3rd Cavalry Division, while on that same map a “3” next to a French cavalry corps symbol actually is the IV Cavalry Corps. This was a minor annoyance and I still feel these books are worth 5 stars each.

Aftermath— sometimes dealing with the horrific conditions of the battlefield, and sometimes an analysis of how each side was trying to sort out its army.

The Battlefields Today—Interesting photographs and sightseeing tips.

Further Reading—Short bibliography.

Index—Essential to using these books as reference.

Each 96-page book includes 59 to 67 color paintings, illustrations, and portraits plus three recent photos of the battlefields. These books are intended to be concise overviews. However, the information incorporated from John Franklin’s English translations of Prussian, German, and Dutch sources, and the large number of detailed color maps, portraits and other illustrations raises them to the level of important new works that I strongly recommend.

Reviewed by [Dana Lombardy](#)

Placed on the Napoleon Series: June 2015