

# Marching Eagles - Tips for Beginners

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## Part 1 -

### 1 - Defending a Building -> Keep Defenders in the Buildings!

See screenshot (Figure 1) below. When you only have a small force defending a building / chateau - do not let them attack in the Combat Phase - this is bad news - they are effectively leaving the building and moving into the open to face superior enemy numbers. Place the "Hold" command on the unit. Click the unit information box and then go to menu - Units - Unit Hold.



Figure 1

### 2 - Combined Arms tactics -> Use Combined Arms to your Advantage

Using appropriate Napoleonic combined arms tactics can provide significant results. Specifically, attacking with one component can cause the enemy to react in a certain way, which can then be exploited by other unit types.

Here is an example of how it can work, referring to the situation in Figure 2 below. In this case a combined arms French force is attacking Allied infantry in open ground.

- 1) As the French player, use your cavalry to attack first. As long as the Allied defenders in the area are all infantry, it will force them to form square for protection. While this formation provides immediate relief from the cavalry, it makes the defenders vulnerable to other forms of attack.
- 2) If you have artillery available, use them now to soften up the defenders and cause them to lose unit order. This makes them more likely to rout when hit with the upcoming infantry assault. And, if they do, the cavalry is there to cut them to pieces.

3) Finally, attack the units now in square with your infantry using the "Attack Column" formation. The defenders being in square from the previous cavalry wave can only fire a quarter of their muskets at your attackers. This makes them significantly less formidable and maximises the effects of your infantry attack.



Figure 2

**Part 2.** There are a number of points to be aware of in this example -

**1 - Cavalry Attacks -> Break Down Large Cavalry Units for Maximum Attack Effect**

A Napoleonic unit used to move as a group of battalions (for infantry) and squadrons (for cavalry). If the cavalry unit contained a large number of squadrons it was difficult to move in a coordinated manner. In fact most Napoleonic armies only had 3 or 4 cavalry squadrons in a Regiment and 2 Regiments in a Brigade. On the battlefield, cavalry would move as Regiments. Only 3 or 4 squadrons would be involved in a single attack. So if your unit has a strength of 9 squadrons, half of them are held back and combat will only allow a maximum of 4 squadrons to combat in one round.

This tells the player he is best to split a Cavalry Brigade into 2 units (Regiments) and use them to create 2 rounds of combat in one turn. In fact, a typical tactic used in Napoleonic times was to throw in cavalry in attack waves recognising that it will often take more than one wave to cause the collapse of an enemy cavalry unit. This was performed by the French in the example below - two units went in, one after the

other. The second charge disrupted the British cavalry Brigade and at the Combat Phase (once all movement / charging is complete), the French Heavy Cavalry routed the British Cavalry Brigade. A routed unit is shown by the red coloured Health bar on the left side of the unit.

The procedure to split a unit into two or more units is covered in **Part 3**



Figure 3

## 2 - Cavalry Scouting -> Keep a Reserve when Scouting

When moving a cavalry unit forward (scouting / probing) to see the enemy position, always have a group of cavalry units to the rear in case the forward cavalry unit is hit by enemy cavalry. A player can then charge in his own units and drive off the enemy cavalry, hopefully in the process protecting the forward unit.

## 3 - Isolated Units -> Try to Connect with Friendly Units in Adjacent Areas

Napoleonic forces moved in coordination with other friendly brigades and regiments. If you move a unit such that there are no friendly units in adjacent areas, that unit is considered isolated and its combat effectiveness is significantly reduced leaving it open to enemy attack (ambush / flanking attack etc).

## 4 - Moving routed units -> Get Routed Units to Safety

Once a unit is routed, the game allows the player one or two action points to get the routed unit out of the front line and towards safety. Do not move a routed unit into an area containing enemy units as it is the routed unit that will take the losses in the Combat Phase (even when there are other friendly non-routing units in the same area). Routed units always lose two Strength points when attacked, reducing a strong unit to nothing in a matter of one or two turns.

## Part 3

### 1 - How to split a cavalry brigade into two regiments

-> Only 4 Squadrons can Attack at One Time

Only one unit - the one you want to split can be in the area at the time the unit is split. This rule reflects the fact that once you detach a formation to operate independently it needs more space, no longer can a large mass of horsemen be squeezed together, a clear and distinct gap is needed to ensure the different groups do not collide.



Figure 4

This highlights the next part of playing Marching Eagles - this game is not just about getting the troops into combat but it includes the need to manage the movement of units. In this case, so that a cavalry brigade can be in the area alone and allow the brigade to split into two regiments. The optimum number of squadrons in a unit is 4; if you want to allow for loss of one Strength Point in the early rounds of a combat then maybe 5. If you have a Strength of 6 look to break the unit into two.

Go to the menu - Units - Detach Formation and a pop-up dialog box will appear allowing the player to choose the size (Strength) of the detachment within the limits seen during the Napoleonic period.

### 2 - Impulsive cavalry.

Reference Figure 5. Many gamers will remember the Scots Greys' charge into the French infantry columns at Waterloo. As the French infantry routed and ran back to the Grand Battery, the Scots Greys

continued the charge down the ridge after them and lost many men in the French cavalry counter attack. In the picture below we see the same happen to 4 squadrons of Cuirassiers. The French moved into an area containing a routed enemy infantry unit - those men immediately ran to the adjacent rear area and the Cuirassiers followed. Nothing the player (commander) could do to stop them. As the French cavalry chased these men the Cuirassiers went straight into an area containing 2 brigades of British cavalry. The result was a loss of 1 Strength Point and loss of unit order. The Cuirassiers will not get out of that area without further loss.

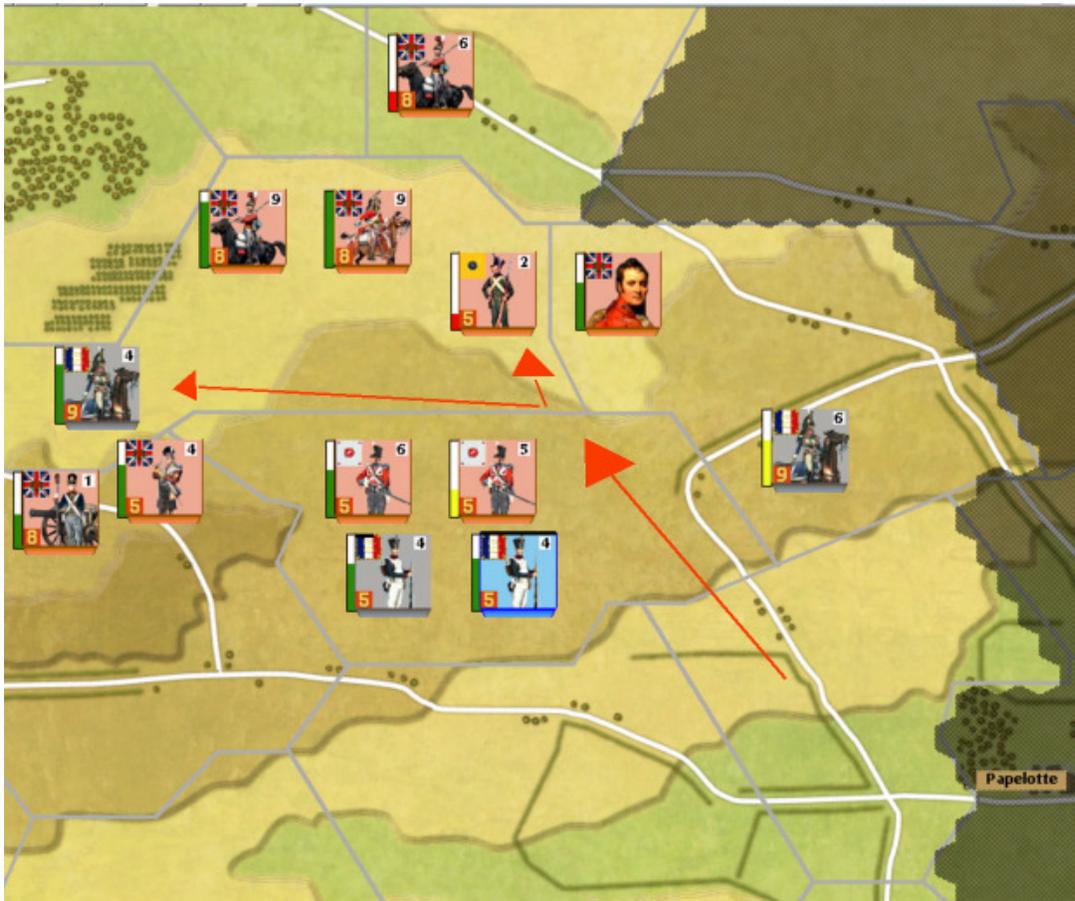


Figure 5

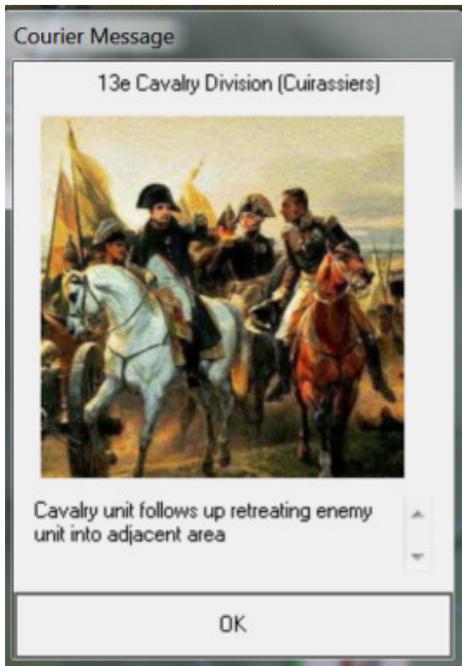


Figure 6

## Part 4 -

### 1 - Formations -> Correct Use of Formations is critical for Success

Historically infantry battalions would move around the battlefield in Column formation. This would typically be one or two companies wide. A unit of more than one battalion would have a much deeper column. Such a formation had little to recommend it other than rapid movement of the unit, particularly when confined to a path or roadway. In Marching Eagles, this formation is referred to as 'March Column' and can vary from 4 men wide on a path to 2 companies wide in an open field. When in a company-wide formation the unit would have large gaps between one company and the next company following, enabling the second company to swing out and deploy into line or square. This is referred to as Open columns. Not to be confused with Closed columns used for an assault.

Open columns are not suitable for close combat, having none of the compactness and cohesion of a Closed column nor the fire power of a line. Therefore, a player needs to change a unit in 'March Column' to Line or Attack Column before the unit reaches the front line. In Figure 7 below, we can see the Scottish infantry (middle of picture) is caught in March Column (yellow icon on green square) by French cavalry (highlighted in white box) and could be ripped to pieces. The French cavalry seen in the Unit Information Box on the right is in Line formation.

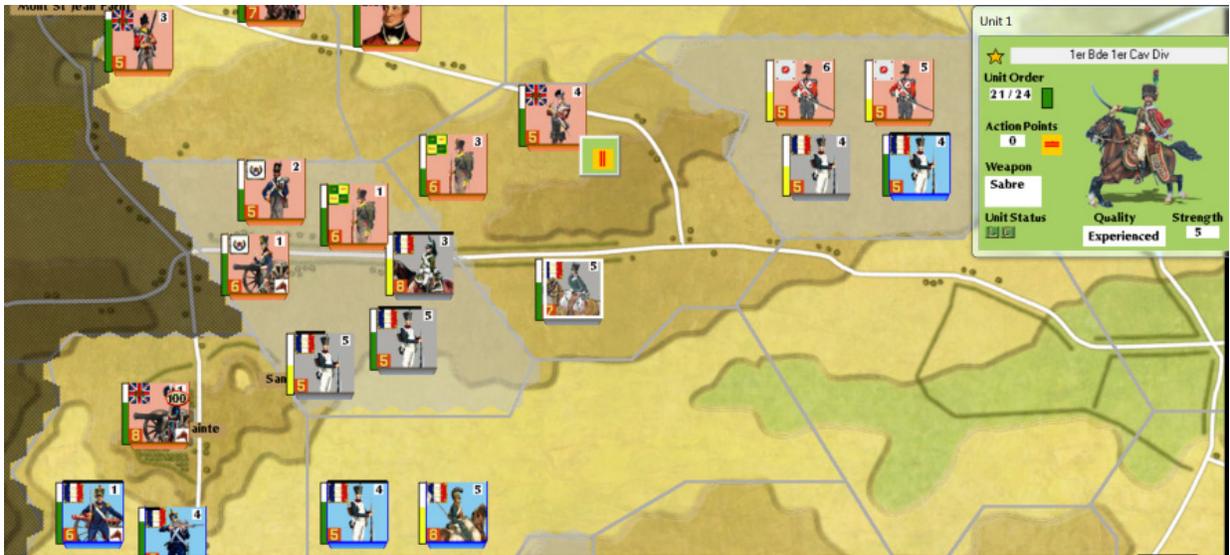


Figure 7

## 2 - Use of Artillery -> Use Artillery to Soften Up Targets

When combat occurs in an area containing more than 1 friendly unit and the friendly units are not low on ammunition and their unit order is not shaken or routed (orange or red health bar), a Tactical Play Box will appear. The Tactical Play box will give the player multiple options on how to attack the enemy in the area. If you have an artillery unit in the area, it is best to use the artillery 'bombardment' as they can fire canister and reap havoc among the enemy units. If the artillery are not committed or run out of ammo, your infantry may find it a much more difficult task when involved in a fire fight with the enemy. See Figure 8.

Only if the 'Tactical Play' Option is ticked at the start of the game is the Tactical Play Box in use.

The one exception to this use of artillery is if the enemy unit is in skirmish formation making the enemy a difficult target to hit.



Figure 8

## Part 5 -

### 1 - Leaders -> Protect Them Especially from Cavalry

Leaders (commanders) are critical to the game only if the 'Command Control' option is ticked at the start of the game. With Command Control in play then the leader's location will determine which units are within command range. This is the distance that the Leader's messengers (couriers) can reach with orders for the units; units beyond this range can not be given orders and have no action points.

For small scenarios there are often only a few leaders, therefore when using 'Command Control' a player needs to protect them. If a player loses one or more leaders, very quickly the player's units become immobile due to a lack of command orders. This severely restricts a player's ability to control the battle. In the case shown in Figure 9, Lt-Gen Picton is caught in the front line and killed.

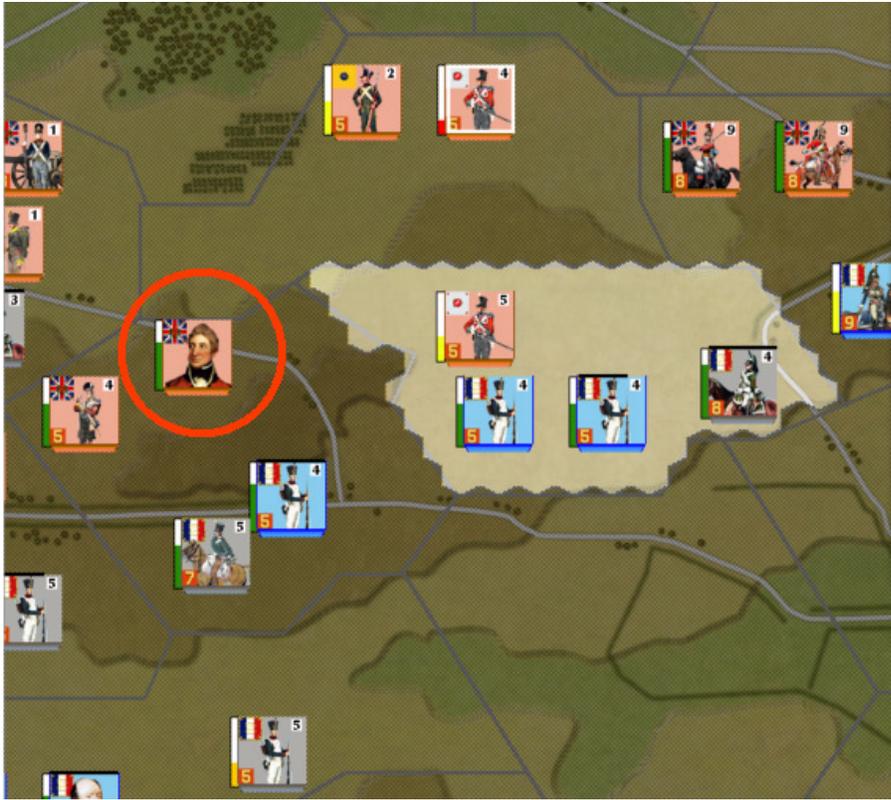


Figure 9

A player can easily lose a leader if there is enemy cavalry in the area or an enemy cavalry charge into the area. A player should also remember to keep a leader out of 'Unit 1' position as this is the front line unit in an area and takes most of the losses.

In the case of Napoleon and Wellington for the big scenarios, if one of them is killed, the controlling player loses the game. That is how critical these leaders were to the command and morale of their army.

## 2 - Isolated leaders and artillery -> Keep Leaders and Artillery Protected

When an area containing only a leader and/or artillery unit is attacked, i.e. no friendly infantry or cavalry in the same area, they will be quickly overrun. Therefore players must take steps to keep these units safe. This can be achieved using friendly forces to block the enemy approaching. Placing friendly combat units one area ahead (in the direction of the enemy), especially units capable of intercepting enemy cavalry charges, affords good protection.

Leaders do make a contribution to combat in an area but this is a small bonus compared to the risk of losing a leader.

## Part 6 -

### 1 - Local Initiative -> Attack Without Spending a Command Point!

When a friendly unit occupies an area with one or more enemy units and the friendly unit has Action Points remaining, that unit can attack the enemy during the Movement Phase. This is known as 'Local Initiative'.

To initiate the attack, activate the friendly unit. Click the unit's information box if there is no yellow star in the top left of the box. Now click the toolbar 'crossed swords' button. This activates the 'Local Initiative'. Finally, left click the enemy unit to attack. Combat will occur immediately.

'Local Initiative' represents the actions of the unit commander and does not require the army command to issue an order therefore this action does not cost the player any Command Points. However the unit must have Action Points. Furthermore, 'Local Initiative' only occurs if the unit leadership rating is 5 or more. To see the leadership rating of a unit, go to the unit information box and right click on it.

In Figure 10, the French cavalry was able to make a 'Local Initiative' attack. The benefit of this is the French cavalry are now able to make 2 attacks in one turn without conducting a Charge. The first attack is by local initiative in the Movement Phase and the second attack is in the Combat Phase.

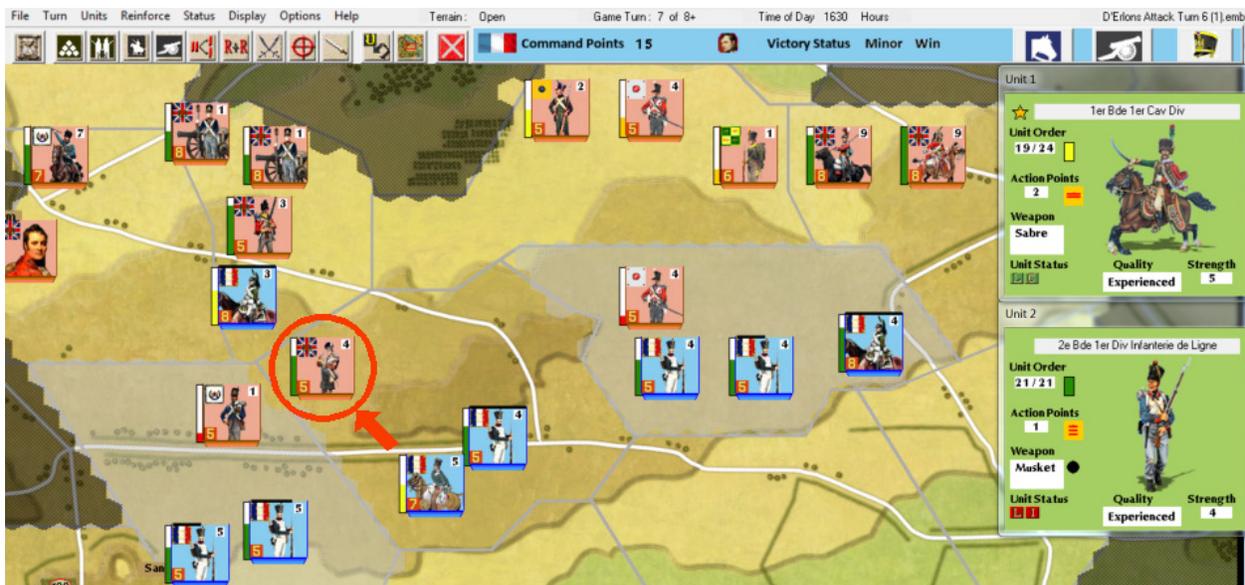


Figure 10

### 2 - Infantry Bayonet Attack -> Attack in the Movement Phase with Infantry

When a friendly unit occupies an area that also contains one or more enemy units, and the friendly unit has Action Points remaining, that unit can attack the enemy during the Movement Phase. To do this the 'Bayonet Charge' is used.

To perform a 'Bayonet Charge', first select the friendly unit to make the attack. Click the unit's information box if there is no yellow star in the top left of the box. Next click menu - Units. In the pop-down box click 'Bayonet Charge' then right click the enemy unit to attack.

Note, that unlike the 'Local Initiative' option, the 'Bayonet Charge' does cost the force one Command Point. Otherwise they are similar and both allow the unit to make two attacks against the same enemy unit in the same turn.

The overall effects of this tactic can not be stressed enough. A player should look to do as many attacks in a single critical area as he can, as fast as he can, to have the best chance of routing the enemy quickly and creating a hole in his defensive line.

Paul Bruffell