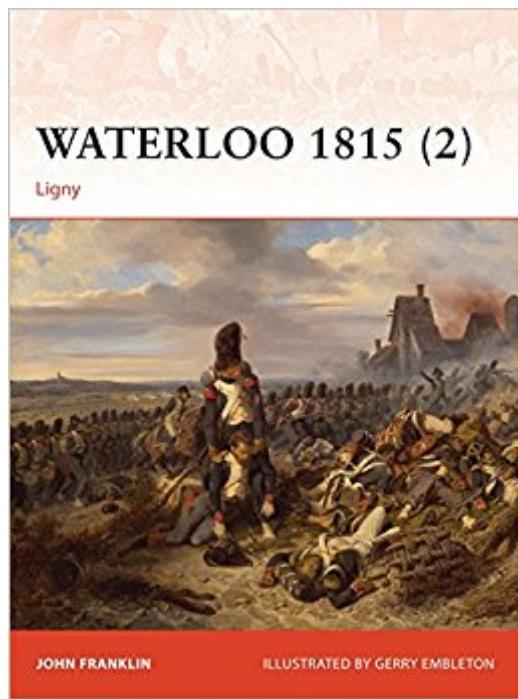


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# Waterloo 1815 (2): Ligny (Campaign)



## **Synopsis**

Waterloo 1815 is a captivating study of the battle of Waterloo, one of the defining campaigns in European history. In particular it focuses on the desperate struggle for Ligny, which saw the Prussians pushed back after heavy fighting by the French Army in what was to be Napoleon's last battlefield victory. With Wellington unable to assist his Prussian allies in time, the Prussian centre was overwhelmed as night began to fall, although the flanks were able to retreat in some semblance of order. Stunning illustrations augment the drama of the fighting in this area while considerable new research drawn from unpublished first-hand accounts provide a detailed and engaging resource for all aspects of the battle.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

The bicentennial of the Battle of Waterloo has prompted another batch of books to add to the mountain that already exists on the topic, while stirring the lingering controversies over the details of the battle. It would be a brave historian that produces yet another book, and author John Franklin wades into the fray with the third book of his trilogy on the Waterloo Campaign for the Osprey Campaign Series. "Waterloo 1815" picks up the campaign narrative with the retreats of the Anglo-Dutch and Prussian armies from the battle of Quatre Bras and Ligny, respectively. The Duke of Wellington chose to make a stand at Mont St Jean, based on reassurances of support by his Prussian counterpart. The narrative quickly sketches the opposing commanders and their forces and plans. The heart of the narrative is the actual Battle of Waterloo, a savage collision of three

armies finally decided in the twilight hours of 18 June 1815. To the author's credit, the supporting battle of Wavre is also addressed. This book is a decent introduction to the Battle of Waterloo, covering the basic movements of the battle with a readable amount of detail, supported by a good to excellent collection of illustrations, maps, and battle diagrams. The three volumes of the trilogy provide concise but worthwhile coverage of the campaign. The author has in some cases been unable to resist making some declarative statements that inevitably draw fire from reviewers while not adding much that is essential to the story. This reviewer wishes also that some of the many fine illustrations from the Anne SK Brown collection at Brown University has been rendered in larger than postage stamp size, but that is a small thing. Overall, recommended to the general reader as a suitable introduction to one of history's great battles.

The bicentennial of the Battle of Waterloo has brought renewed interest in the preliminary battles of Quatre Bras and Ligny. "Waterloo 1815 (2)" is an Osprey Campaign Series book, the second of three on the Waterloo Campaign. The author of the trilogy is historian John Franklin; illustrations are by Gerry Embleton. Franklin quickly recaps the preliminaries of Napoleon's return from Elba and the Allied strategy against him. The narrative addresses the opposing commanders and their forces and plans before getting to the battle at Ligny. As in the previous book, Franklin avoids still lingering controversies about the campaign in favor of a straightforward and fascinating narrative of the ferocious slugging match that was the battle of Ligny. The text is accompanied by an excellent selection of maps and diagrams explaining the battle, along with some choice period and modern illustrations. It was of interest to this reviewer that Napoleon apparently did not initially realize he was confronting the bulk of the Prussian Army at Ligny. It was also of interest that Blucher offered battle knowing he would have only three of four corps available. The failure by Napoleon to bring his I Corps to bear on the fight at Ligny cost him his best chance at his desired victory. Instead, at the end of this book, the stage is set for the movement of the Prussian Army, battered but still full of fight, to the decisive fight at Mont St. Jean, to be addressed in the final volume of the series. Well recommended as a solid introduction to the Battle of Ligny and the Campaign of Waterloo.

The approach of the bicentennial of the Battle of Waterloo has increased interest in the preliminary battles of Quatre Bras and Ligny. Napoleon's plan to separate the Allied armies of Wellington and Blucher, and to defeat them in detail, hung in the balance on the morning of 16 June 1815. Marshall Ney, newly appointed commander of the Left Wing of the French Armee du Nord, moved toward the vital crossroads of Quatre Bras. Napoleon himself accompanied the Right Wing toward the Prussian

position around the village of Ligny."Waterloo 1815 (1)" is an Osprey Campaign Series book, the first of three on the Waterloo Campaign. The author of the trilogy is historian John Franklin; illustrations are by Gerry Embleton. Franklin methodically walks the reader up through the preliminaries of Napoleon's return from Elba and the Allied strategy against him. The narrative addresses the opposing commanders and their forces and plans before diving into the Battle of Quatre Bras itself. Franklin avoids the still lingering controversies in favor of a straightforward dissection of the battle. The text is accompanied by an excellent selection of maps and diagrams explaining the battle, along with some choice period and modern illustrations. At the end, the stage is set for the movement of Wellington's forces from Quatre Bras to Mont St. Jean. Ligny is addressed only in a limited way; that story for the next volume. The author does discuss the wanderings of D'Erlon's Corps on the afternoon of the 16th, and its failure to weigh in effectively on either battle. Well recommended as a solid introduction to the Battle of Quatre Bras and the Campaign of Waterloo.

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