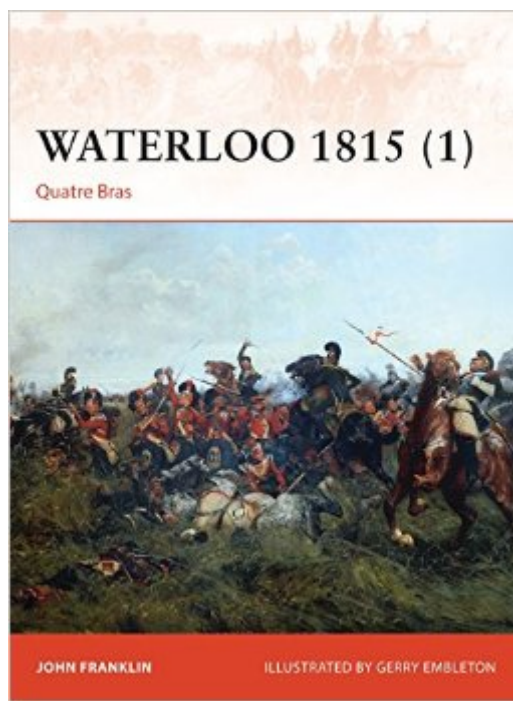


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# Waterloo 1815 (1): Quatre Bras



## Synopsis

To coincide with the 2015 bicentennial of the Battle of Waterloo, Osprey publishes *Waterloo 1815*, a definitive three volume history of the historic battle. Based on new research drawn from unpublished first-hand accounts and illustrations, *Waterloo 1815* provides a detailed resource for all aspects of the famous battle. This first volume of the trilogy, *Quatre Bras*, focuses on the lead-up to Waterloo itself. Two days before the main battle, an initial 8,000 Allied troops faced the 48,000 men of the French Armée du Nord under Marshal Ney at the strategically vital crossroads of Quatre Bras. Having been tricked by Napoleon who was trying to drive a wedge between the Prussians and the Anglo-allied army, Wellington concentrated his troops at Quatre Bras, hoping to link up with the Prussians. There Wellington just managed to hold off Ney's attacks. The battle ended in a tactical stalemate but, because he was unable to join with Blücher's Prussians, Wellington retreated back along the road to Brussels to new positions at a small Belgian village called Waterloo, and thus set the stage for one of the greatest battles of all time. With detailed maps, illustrations and battlefield dispositions, *Quatre Bras* will lay the groundwork for any student of the Battle of Waterloo.

## Book Information

Paperback: 96 pages

Publisher: Osprey Publishing (November 18, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1472803639

ISBN-13: 978-1472803634

Product Dimensions: 7.3 x 0.3 x 9.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (47 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #696,361 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #49 in [Books > History > Europe > Belgium](#) #161 in [Books > History > Military > Napoleonic Wars](#) #26072 in [Books > History > World](#)

## 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.

Despite poor reviews elsewhere, this book gives the casual reader exactly what they want. This book offers a short overview of the Battle of Waterloo and Wavre. I have seen other reviews taking the author to task for leaving out numbers such as the number of guns in a battery or the strength of a battalion at the time of battle or editorializing about Napoleon's ambition, but none of that is necessary in this book. The book gives us what we need, graphic maps of the battlefield, great original artwork of the action itself, and paintings of the battle from years past. I use the maps and 3D maps as a companion to other books I read about the battle. I also have Andrew Field's book on the French Perspective of Waterloo and Mark Atkins Waterloo Companion book. If the reader wishes to delve deeper into the battle those books, especially Mr. Atkins book, are what you need next. I still found this book very enjoyable. There were only two reasons I did not give the book five stars. First, the 3D maps aren't. Much has been made that the position at Mont St. Jean being chosen for its topography; however, the 3D maps do not help the reader visualize what it actually looked like in 1815. The second was that once again Wavre gets shorted in the story of the battle.

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