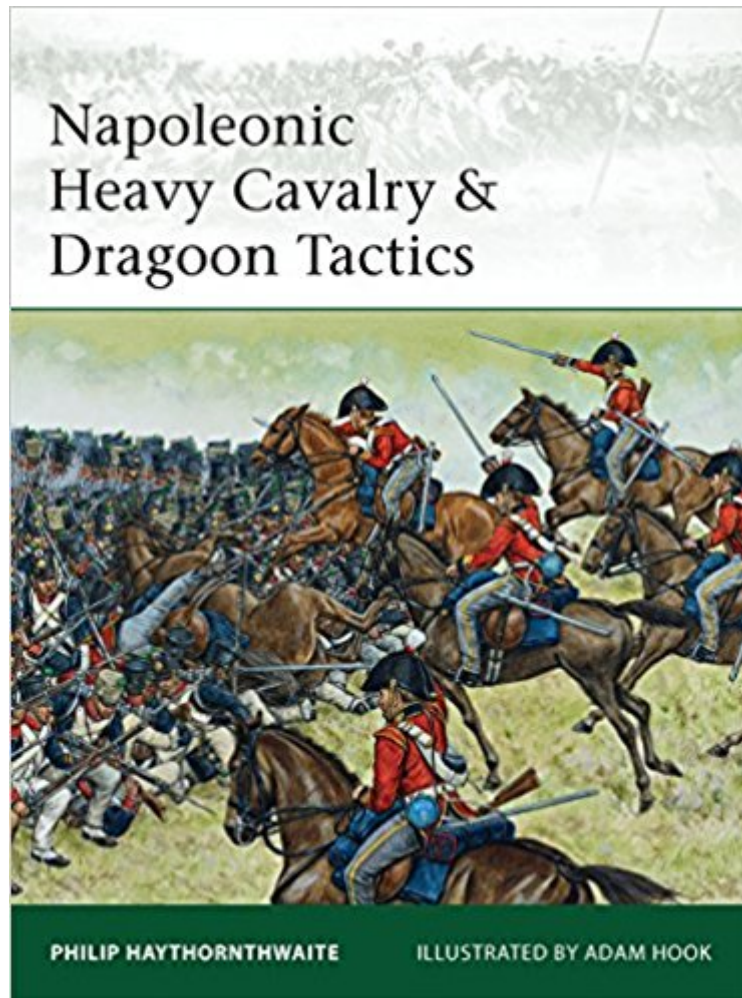




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# Napoleonic Heavy Cavalry & Dragoon Tactics (Elite)



## Synopsis

During the Napoleonic Wars the supreme battlefield shock weapon was the heavy cavalry - the French cuirassiers, and their British, Austrian, Prussian and Russian counterparts. Big men mounted on big horses, the heavy cavalry were armed with swords nearly a metre long, used for slashing or thrusting at their opponents; many wore steel armour, a practice revived by Napoleon. They were tasked with smashing a hole in the enemy's line of battle, with exploiting a weakness, or with turning a flank. Their classic manoeuvre was the charge; arrayed in close-order lines or columns, the heavy cavalry would begin their attack at the walk, building up to a gallop for the final 50 metres before impact. Illustrated with diagrams, relevant paintings and prints and specially prepared colour plates, this is the first volume of a two-part study of the cavalry tactics of the armies of Napoleon and those of his allies and opponents. Written by a leading authority on the period, it draws upon drill manuals and later writings to offer a vivid assessment of how heavy cavalry actually fought on the Napoleonic battlefield.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Diagrams, paintings, prints and vivid color plates specially prepared by Adam Hook appear throughout this informative paperback.”  
• Toy Soldier & Model Figure

Adam Hook studied graphic design, and began his work as an illustrator in 1983. He specializes in detailed historical reconstructions, and has illustrated Osprey titles on subjects as diverse as the

Aztecs, the Ancient Greeks, Roman battle tactics, several 19th-century American subjects, the modern Chinese Army, and a number of books in the Fortress series. His work features in exhibitions and publications throughout the world.

Though this book contains great information on Napoleons Cavalry and Dragoons, that's exactly what it is. I was looking for a book on the Napoleonic era cavalry and dragoons, not just French with a touch on other nations. To me, "Napoleonic" means an era, or battle style, i.e. Napoleonic box formation," not just that little fellows horsemen.

This is an interesting little book on the basics of cavalry tactics during the Napoleonic wars. Readers who are very familiar with Napoleonic warfare might not find much new here, but for the newcomer it is a very good primer on the nuts and bolts of cavalry operations. The book generally has two types of graphics: a few artist renditions of cavalry formations, and pictures of various heavy cavalry topics from period paintings, drawings, etc. For me the illustrations were helpful but not great. Most of the book consists of crisply-written text describing heavy cavalry tactics, relying on a mix of quotes from various memoirs, Napoleonic-era cavalry manuals, examples drawn from various Napoleonic battles, etc. I found the text to be very interesting and informative and would definitely recommend it to anyone new to the topic.

Veteran Napoleonic historian Philip Haythornwaite takes on the task of explaining to a modern audience just how heavy cavalry did their business. This Osprey Elite Series book describes the role of cavalry on the Napoleonic-era battlefield, the differences between heavy and light cavalry, and the tactics used by heavy cavalry such as the cuirassiers and dragoons. "Napoleonic Heavy Cavalry & Dragoon Tactics" begins with a discussion, in plain language, of the different types of cavalry. The narrative moves on to describe training, basic formations, and the timing of movements. Successive chapters details the actions of larger formations and the execution of outpost work, skirmishing, and the all-important charge. The narrative is nicely supported by diagrams, illustrations, and period artwork. Haythornwaite draws on a number of historical examples including the Peninsular War and Waterloo, involving the French, British and Prussian armies, to demonstrate how tactics worked in actual battles. This discussion includes the use of various weapons such as carbines and the advantages of weight of numbers and horses. Adam Hood's illustrations suggest what the various cavalry formations may have looked like on the battlefield. "Napoleonic Heavy Cavalry & Dragoon Tactics" is highly recommended to the general

reader and the student of Napoleonic warfare.

I scarcely know anything about cavalry tactics in the Napoleonic era. But I would like to know more. Hence, my interest in this volume. The concept of heavy cavalry had been evolving, with heavy armor for mounted "heavies" beginning to decline, because of the problems for both horse and trooper. But in the Napoleonic era, a variation on heavies still existed. This book examines the role of heavy versus light versus dragoons (mounted units that tended to fight on foot; dragoons were often infantry who used horses to be mobile [page 5]). A number of interesting issues are discussed: the use of "squares" by infantry against cavalry; varying cavalry formations--from the squadron to higher level formations; the nature of the "charge

As with all Osprey books this is a Cliff Notes to the subject matter. However, as with almost all Osprey Books, it is a great reference for understanding and visualizing tactics while reading a book on the Napoleonic Wars. The illustrations of how a regiment would deploy, etc. is helpful when you try to understand what the author is trying to convey.

Reading this book it paints a clear picture of the two different types of cavalry units. After reading I was able to understand the mission conducted as well as the composition of the units. This book also shows how in different battles the European armies who employed them to great success.

This is a very good book for all Napoleonic War fans.

Only wish there could have been more examples of history where and how these tactics and formations were used in combat

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