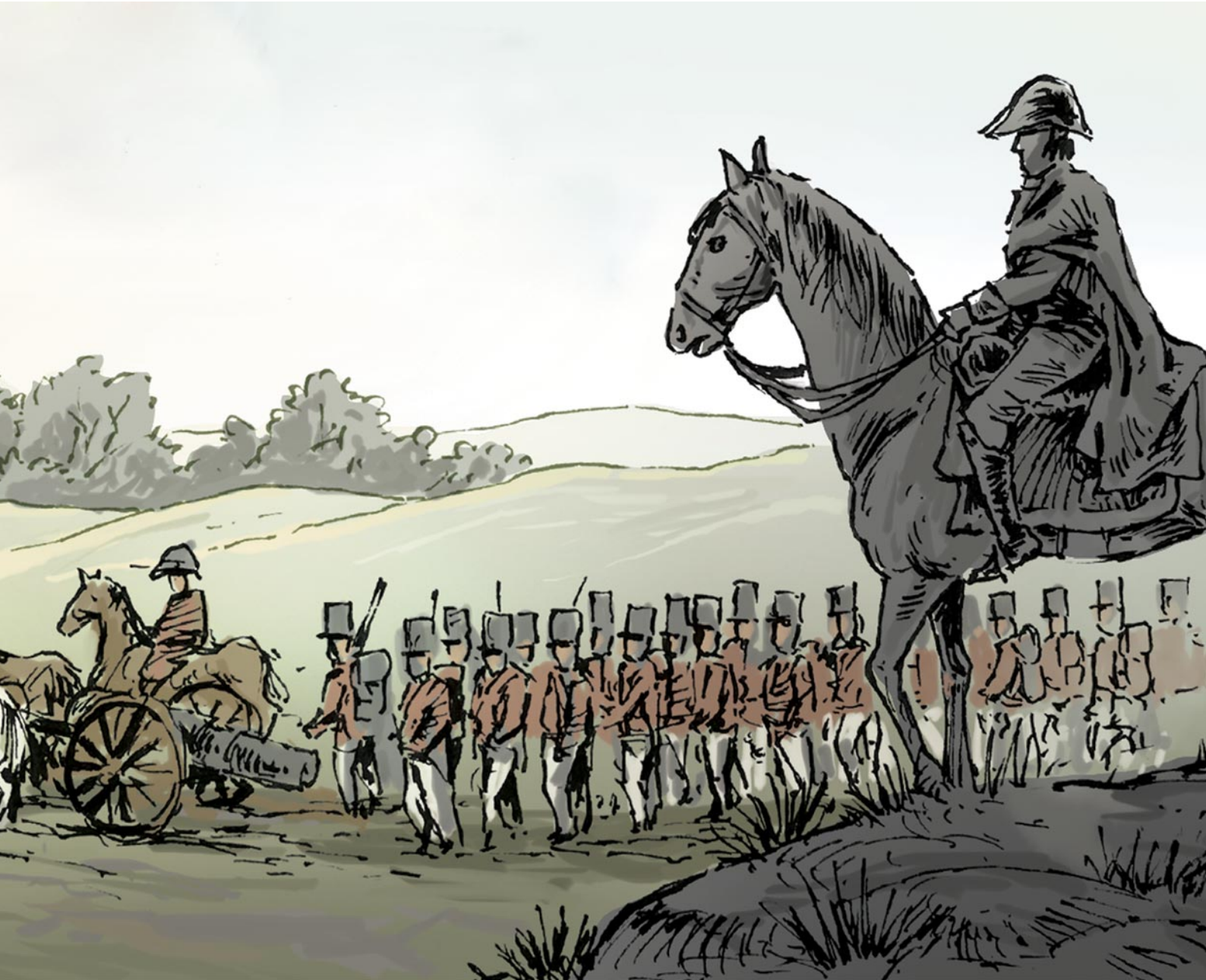


# THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

---

*Need a history refresher? This play by play takes you through the dramatic events of the battle...*



**About the author:**

*This comic has been illustrated by Dr Juan Hiriart. He is a senior lecturer in Interactive Media Art and Design at the University of Salford, and has worked in a range of creative industries. Juan and his students have been working with us across different projects to help visualise and tell the story of our data. He is interested in storytelling as a means to convey historical knowledge and archaeological research.*









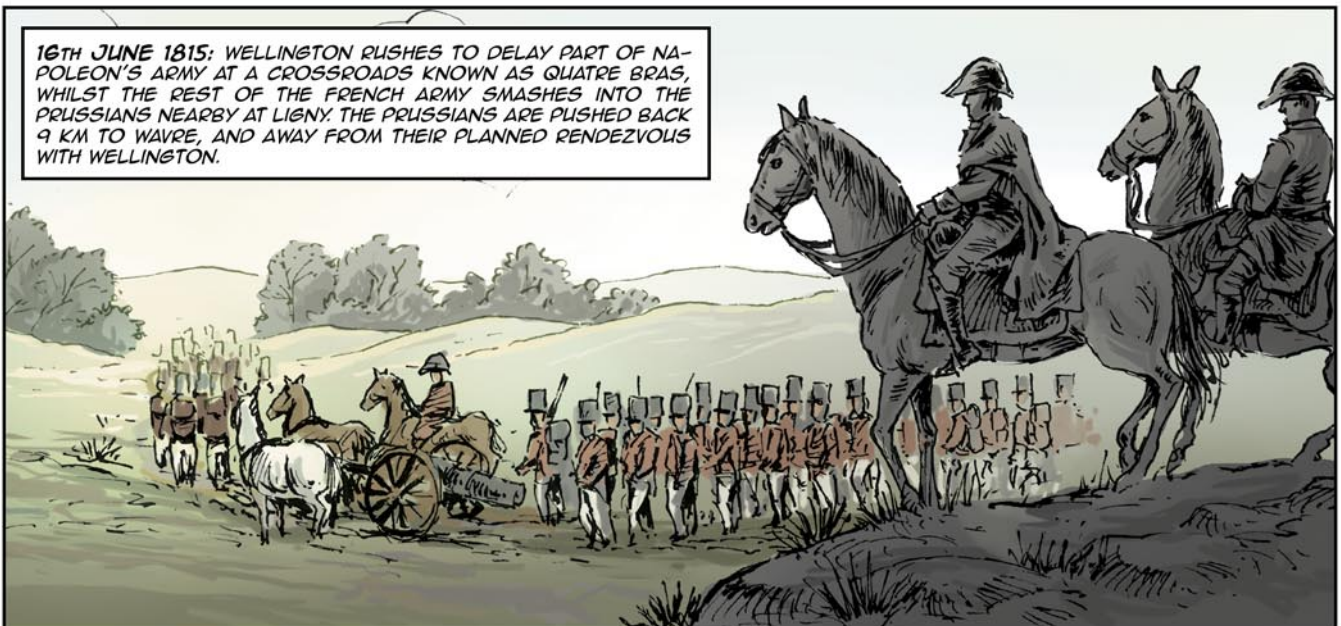
THE ALLIED ARMIES GATHERING IN BELGIUM AWAITED NAPOLEON'S ATTACK. WELLINGTON'S ALLIED ARMY WERE 73,000 STRONG, BLÜCHER'S PRUSSIAN ARMY, 84,000. NAPOLEON LED 107,500 MEN, AND PLANNED TO OUT-MARCH AND DEFEAT HIS OPPONENTS BEFORE THEY COULD COMBINE.



15TH JUNE 1815: WELLINGTON, ATTENDING A BALL IN BRUSSELS, RECEIVES THE SHOCK NEWS THAT NAPOLEON HAS CAPTURED CHARLEROI (32KM SOUTH OF WATERLOO).



16TH JUNE 1815: WELLINGTON RUSHES TO DELAY PART OF NAPOLEON'S ARMY AT A CROSSROADS KNOWN AS QUATRE BRAS, WHILST THE REST OF THE FRENCH ARMY SMASHES INTO THE PRUSSIANS NEARBY AT LIGNY. THE PRUSSIANS ARE PUSHED BACK 9 KM TO WAVRE, AND AWAY FROM THEIR PLANNED RENDEZVOUS WITH WELLINGTON.

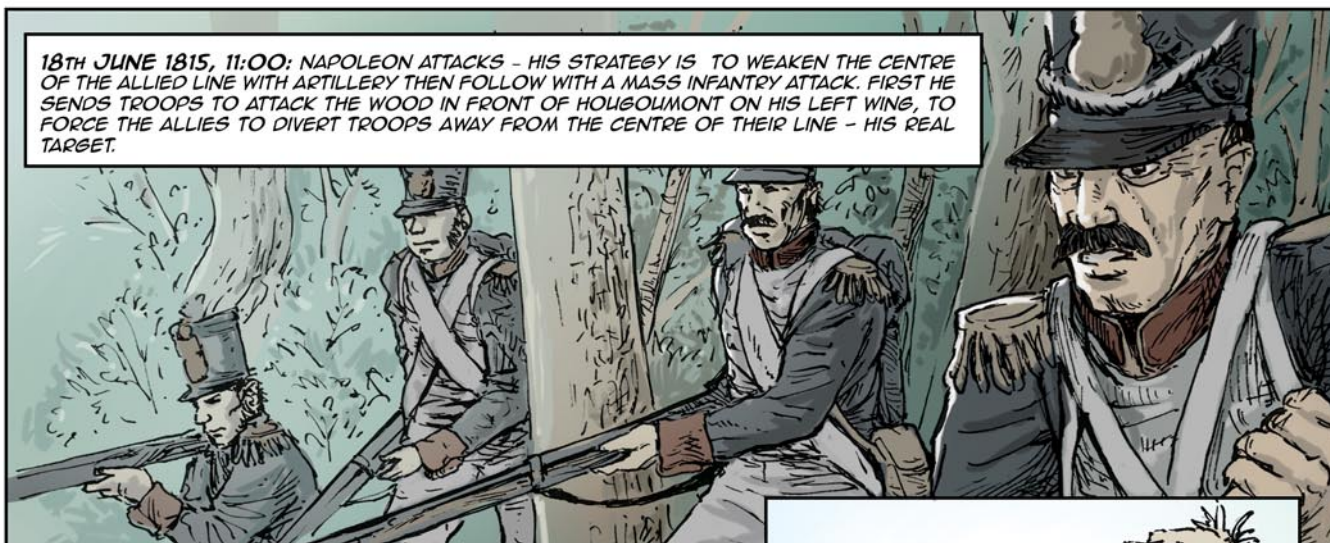




17TH JUNE 1815: A STORM HOLDS OFF THE BATTLE LONG ENOUGH FOR WELLINGTON TO BED INTO HIS POSITION ON A RIDGE SOUTH OF BRUSSEL NEAR WATERLOO, A 2KM WIDE LINE WITH THREE FARMHOUSE STRONGHOLDS - HOUSSOLMONT, LA HAYE SAINTE, AND PAPELOTTE. BLÜCHER PROMISES TO COME TO HIS AID WITH 50,000 TROOPS.



18TH JUNE 1815, 11:00: NAPOLEON ATTACKS - HIS STRATEGY IS TO WEAKEN THE CENTRE OF THE ALLIED LINE WITH ARTILLERY THEN FOLLOW WITH A MASS INFANTRY ATTACK. FIRST HE SENDS TROOPS TO ATTACK THE WOOD IN FRONT OF HOUSSOLMONT ON HIS LEFT WING, TO FORCE THE ALLIES TO DIVERT TROOPS AWAY FROM THE CENTRE OF THEIR LINE - HIS REAL TARGET.



LITTLE DID THE THE FRENCH KNOW THAT BEHIND THESE WOODS WERE 1,200 MEN WAITING ALONG THE WALLS AT HOUSSOLMONT, READY TO PICK THEM OFF AS THEY ATTEMPTED TO CROSS THE OPEN GROUND...



... WHICH BECAME KNOWN AS THE 'KILLING GROUND'.



11:30-13:00: FRENCH GUNS ARE DRAWN UP IN A 'GRAND BATTERIE' TO BOMBARD THE ALLIED RIDGE IN THE CENTRE. AT 13:00 NAPOLEON FINALLY ORDERS AN INFANTRY ATTACK. IT NEARLY SUCCEEDS UNTIL ROUTED BY A CHARGE OF BRITISH CAVALRY. BLOODY LOSSES ARE SUFFERED ON BOTH SIDES. THE BATTLE BECOMES A DESPERATE SLOGGING MATCH.



16:00: BELIEVING THE BRITISH TO BE RETREATING, MARSHAL NEY LEADS AN ATTACK OF 8,000 CAVALRYMEN. IN FACT, THE ALLIES HAD WITHDRAWN TO DEFENSIVE SQUARES HIDDEN JUST BEHIND THE RIDGE; THE HORSES WERE MET WITH DEADLY HEDGES OF BAYONETS, MUSKET, AND CANNISTER FIRE FROM CANNON AT CLOSE RANGE. MEANWHILE SOUNDS OF FIERCE BATTLE IN THE REAR AND FLANK OF NAPOLEON'S ARMY SIGNAL THE ARRIVAL OF THE PRUSSIAN, COMING TO KEEP THEIR RENDEZVOUS WITH WELLINGTON.



18:00: WITH MANY MEN COMMITTED TO A FRUITLESS ASSAULT ON HOUSSAUMONT AND HIS CAVALRY FAILING TO BREAK THE ALLIED SQUARES, NAPOLEON PLAYS HIS FINAL CARD, HIS ELITE RESERVES -THE IMPERIAL GUARD.

THEIR DEFEAT BY WELLINGTON'S INFANTRY AND THE ARRIVAL OF MORE PRUSSIAN REINFORCEMENTS TURN FRENCH FAILURE INTO A ROUT. NAPOLEON'S ARMY DISINTEGRATES AND HE FLEES THE BATTLEFIELD.



WATERLOO LEFT 45,000 MEN DEAD AND WOUNDED, IN EQUAL PARTS ON EACH SIDE. THE WAKE OF THE BATTLE WAS A DEVASTATING SIGHT; WITH MANY OF THE WOUNDED MEN AND HORSES NOT ABLE TO LEAVE THE FIELD, DYING SLOWLY AND ENDURING THE PITILESS ATTENTION OF LOOTERS.



"NEXT TO A BATTLE LOST, THE GREATEST MISERY IS A BATTLE GAINED" - WELLINGTON

15TH JULY 1815: AFTER FAILING TO RAISE NEW ARMIES, NAPOLEON IS DEPOSED AS EMPEROR. FEARING DEATH IF HE FALLS INTO THE HANDS OF THE VENGEFUL PRUSSIAN, HE HANDS HIMSELF OVER TO THE BRITISH ROYAL NAVY CAPTAIN OF THE HMS BELLEROPHON. HE IS EXILED TO ST HELENA, A REMOTE ISLAND IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC, WHERE HE DIES IN 1821.

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO ESTABLISHES BRITAIN AS A MAJOR POWER ON THE WORLD STAGE.

