

Tactical systems, dispositions and battle array:

Austrian dispositions and tactical formations:

1792-1805:

Armies could, according to circumstances, be arranged and commanded in a number of ways:

With a “centre”, right and left “wings” with a reserve (as at Jemmapes, 6th November, 1792) in two “Treffen” (lines).

Sometimes with a reserve (as at Neerwinden 18th March 1793), or in “columns” (as at Fleurus in 26th June 1794).

At Jemmapes two Treffen were formed prior to the battle.

All of the bodies of troops above mentioned were mixed arms formations.

The Austrians then operated a linear system and when resources were sufficient, they would form in two Treffen and possibly with a smaller reserve.

Austrian infantry regiments were supported by light artillery pieces; these would provide longer range fire than the command’s musketry and move to the flanks or gaps between units once the battalions became engaged.

From 1793 a skirmish line could be formed by the detaching the third ranks of battalions. Normally, Austrian infantry battalions in this period had either two 6lb or 3lb guns.

In 1796 the “Corps of the Friaul” operated as an all-arms body, but with only 12,000 men in up to 20 battalions and a small cavalry contingent, this was rather more a large division.

1807-1809:

Lines are still used frequently but masses; the *division-masse* and *battalion-masse* were used increasingly from 1809. The second line of battle could be formed in masses to allow it to move to support the first line or to extend it and closed columns would be used to negotiate obstacles.

The deployed order was still considered the best formation against enemy infantry: the 1807 Regulations stated that, “The line is proper formation for infantry permitting the best use of its weapons.”

Two lines of battle continue to be the norm for battle array; at Abensberg and Aspern-Essling two Treffen were formed and at Raab there was in addition to this a large central reserve. But now these Treffen are formed by single commands; brigades or divisions.

A division-masse was a 6-deep formation of two companies either one behind the other, or formed on two half-company frontages.

Divisions-masse was used as a possible defence against cavalry. According to the Exercier-Reglement 1807, it was to be used: “When the circumstances or the time do not permit a battalion to form square, a defence from enemy cavalry is found in the divisions-masse”

The division-masses would often form in a “chequer-board” with two divisions up and one division back with its supporting light artillery positioned between the masses.

Tactical systems, dispositions and battle array:

Austrian dispositions and tactical formations (continued):

A “battalions-mass” was a closed column of companies (the term appears in the 1769 regulations).

Battalions-masse was used to:-

1. To counter cavalry.
2. To facilitate deployment into line.
3. To facilitate manoeuvre, being the best formations for poorly trained troops.

1813-1814:

The use of masses (in particular the battalions-masse) increases due to the increasing numbers of new conscripts. Until 1814 line could also be used, but it would very likely have taken inexperienced troops longer to form and manoeuvre in without falling into disorder.

Notes on “passage of lines”:

In performing a “passage of lines” up to 1807, Austrian infantry will use method “1” described on page 85. After this time battalion columns may be used and method “2” on page 86.

Tactical systems, dispositions and battle array:

French infantry divisional systems 1791-1817:

1791:

The French regulations of 1791 were linear in nature and prescribed a deployed order of battle. Columns were only to be used in assembling, waiting or rallying.

The first line would be deployed with the second line of battle in columns of companies.

The “column of attack” was only intended for combat by individual units if assaulting positions of defences.

The skirmish line was to be made by detached grenadiers, light battalions, or the third rank.

1792-1800:

The system of 1792, described by de Vernon has the infantry in two lines, with battalion pieces posted in the interval of the first line. Cavalry covered the flanks and the battalions of the second line however faced the intervals in the first, in an order called the “Quinquax”, this was not generally used and the regulations needed to be shelved to adapt to the new circumstances that French commanders faced. Simply one line with a reserve was favoured, along with columns (for their manoeuvrability) preceded by skirmishers.

As armies` experience increased more, mixed tactical methods were employed and these were to become formalised in the theories leading up to the next phase in the organisation of French divisional systems. So, for a time a variable number of systems were employed in different theatres.

Lines of “columns of attack” or “columns of companies” may have been used in the entire battle arrays in two lines of battle with skirmishers from the first line deployed.

The columns in either line could subsequently be deployed for fire or for shock action.

Royal Line Infantry battalions (“the Whites”) may have been deployed in the first line of battle, preceded by their own skirmishers, with the new battalions in a second line of columns at deployment intervals. Or the new battalions in advance; “a la debandade” could be used to soften and prepare the attack. “Grand bandes”, defined by having separate missions and comprising of whole commands, otherwise referred to as “flanquers de droite” or “de gauche” were commonly employed on the flanks of the army; an example of which is the French order of battle at Neerwinden in March 1793.

1805:

The French infantry divisional system of 1805 was the product of the experience of the previous wars and an attempt to return to the intentions of the 1791 regulations: It consisted of the following recommendations: Firstly, a skirmisher chain, a “Ligne d`approche” which might be; one or two divisional batteries, the division`s skirmishers with the artillery`s howitzers on the flanks. Secondly, the first line of battle proper, the “Ligne de feu”; with the first and third regiments of the division both deployed in line formation. Thirdly, the second line of battle, the “Ligne de choc” would be formed with the second and fourth regiments in “columns of companies”, columns of divisions or in “columns of attack” if a passage of lines was intended. And fourthly, a reserve, which may have consisted of a regiment of light cavalry or a fifth regiment of infantry.

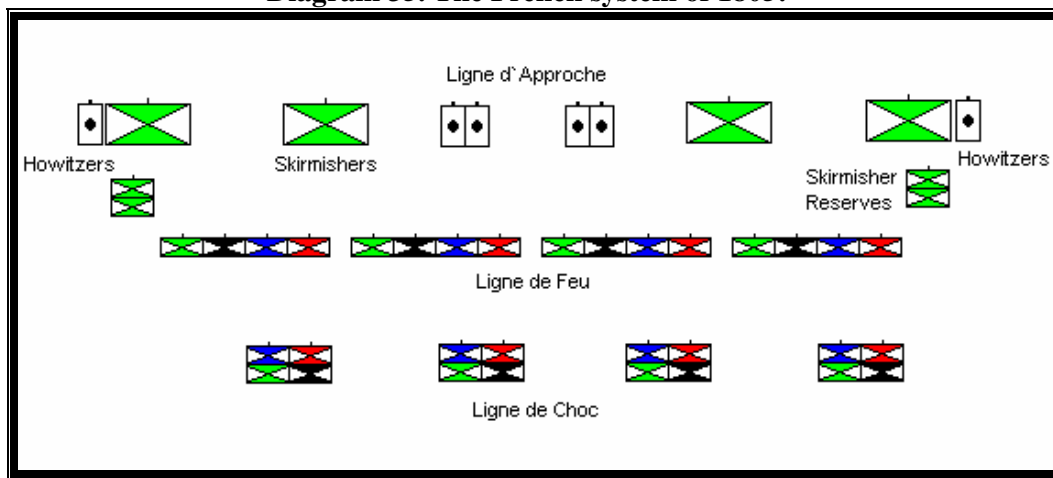
Variants of this battle array were used at Austerlitz; St.Hillaire`s division was formed in three lines of columns, the 10th Legere in the first line with its skirmishers deployed and the divisions guns in the centre. It would appear that Napoleon had instructed Soult, one of his corps commanders to form in “lignes deployees et colonne serrees”, what we now understand as “mixed order”, but divisional commanders would choose to do things differently. On the other hand, the directions given could be very simple; Napoleon`s instructions for the 1st

Tactical systems, dispositions and battle array:

French infantry divisional systems 1791-1817:

December 1805 just inform Suchet and Caffarelli to form in two lines of battle, a brigade forming each line.

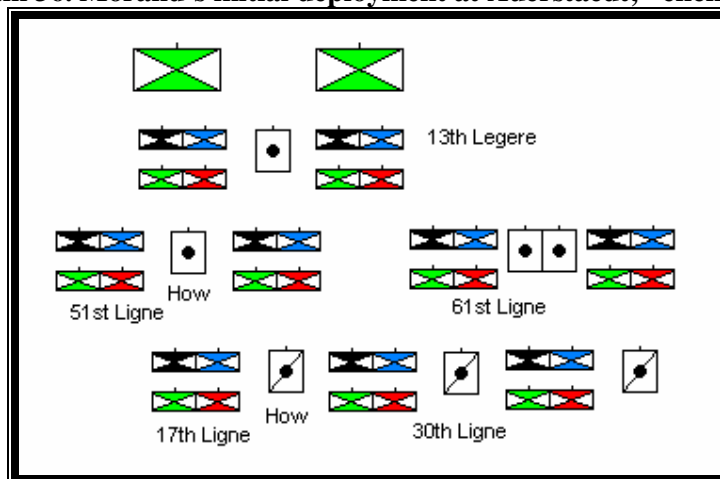
Diagram 35. The French system of 1805:



1806:

By this time the skirmisher chain, the “ligne d’approche” was considered the first line of battle proper a “ligne de combat”, being supported by its small, reserve columns. Later however this was battle order was dropped because it was found to be difficult to control and was too fragile; perhaps due to a drop in experience and capability of the new recruits that had been drafted in after the losses in the battles of 1805-7.

Diagram 36. Morand’s initial deployment at Auerstaedt; “enchequier”.



Tactical systems, dispositions and battle array:

1808:

With the Imperial Decree of 18 February 1808; there were major changes in the French Ordnance; the infantry battalion organisation changed from nine, to six companies. The “columns of attack” was slowly being replaced by the colonne de division in the second line of battle.

The Tableaux Synotiques des Manoeuvres d’Infanterie (an update for the 1791 regulations) in accordance with the Imperial Decree of 18 February 1808, stated, that the column of attack must operate on its own, and not in any formation.

The French Peninsular armies did not convert to the Imperial Decree of 18 February 1808 until the summer of 1811 and the Army of the Rhine did not convert to the Imperial Decree until at least 1810

1812:

The French infantry divisional system of 1812 consisted of the following recommendations: Firstly, a skirmisher chain, a “Ligne d’approche” which might be; five companies of skirmishers. Secondly, the first line of battle proper, the “Ligne de feu”; with the first and third regiments of the division both deployed in line formation. And thirdly, the second line of battle, the “Ligne de choc” would be formed with the second and fourth regiments in “columns of divisions”, or in “columns of companies”.

According to the French System for 1812, there was no reserve, as found in the French System of 1805.

1813:

This system lasted up until 1817 with the French Army re-vamping their Army into Legions.

The French infantry divisional system of 1813 consisted of the following recommendations:

Firstly, a skirmisher chain, a “Ligne d’approche” which might be; five companies of skirmishers with 3 companies in reserve and formed in columns.

Secondly, the first line of battle proper. the “Ligne de feu”; had its left wing two battalions in square with a supporting battery and the right wing had a battery supporting its two battalions in square as well. The “Ligne de feu” was comprised of the first brigade of the division.

And thirdly, the second line of battle, the “Ligne de choc” would be formed with the second brigade and its battalions would be formed in columns of divisions.

It was quite common for the French to form their regiments, each with two battalions in a double battalion (in six ranks) for the 1st battalion, and in closed column for the 2nd battalion when the division was short of cavalry support and under possible threat from enemy cavalry. Should a regiment have more than two battalions, it would adjust the above recommendations according to particular circumstances.

Battalions in the second line were only formed in columns of companies, or columns of attack to allow the execution of a passage of lines.

It should be noted that the dispositions of all these organisations would depend upon the composition of the division; that is the numbers of battalions in each regiment would help “shape” the divisions array and it may be possible to form more lines of battle if the numbers of battalions were increased.

Notes on “Passage of lines”:

The French may perform a passage of lines by using an “enchequier” battle array or by Method “2” on page 86.

Tactical systems, dispositions and battle array:

British infantry battle array:

Throughout the whole period the British battle array was a linear one.

With each brigade's battalion skirmishers (British and allied Portuguese) there was the addition of attached skirmisher companies. These often came from the 60th or 95th regiments or from the light infantry of the Portuguese Cazadores.

These were formed into "a separate corps" (body) and placed under the command of a field-officer. This would be the skirmish line and when the main body of the first line of battle was engaged it was intended that these composite light corps would be drawn back to the flanks of the line.

If necessary, columns would be employed to secure the flanks of infantry lines, or advances would be made by brigades in echelon (as at Albuera by Cole's 4th division).

Often brigades and divisions were formed in a single line of battle, but sometimes in two lines; such as at Albuera (1811) in the initial battle array before the re-deployment was necessary, or at Talavera (1809). Both of these had brigades in single line of battle with one division behind supporting the one in front.

Sometimes, three lines were formed as with Beresford's attack at Toulouse 1814, in which the battalions in the 4th and 6th divisions were drawn up in three lines of battle. Packenham's division at Salamanca was also arrayed in three lines of battle.

Diagram 37. Stewart's division at Albuera 1811 (simplified):



Notes on "Passage of lines":

In performing a "passage of lines" British infantry may use either method "1" or "2" as described on pages 85-86.

Tactical systems, dispositions and battle array:

Prussian systems:

To 1807:

Approach marches were made in column.

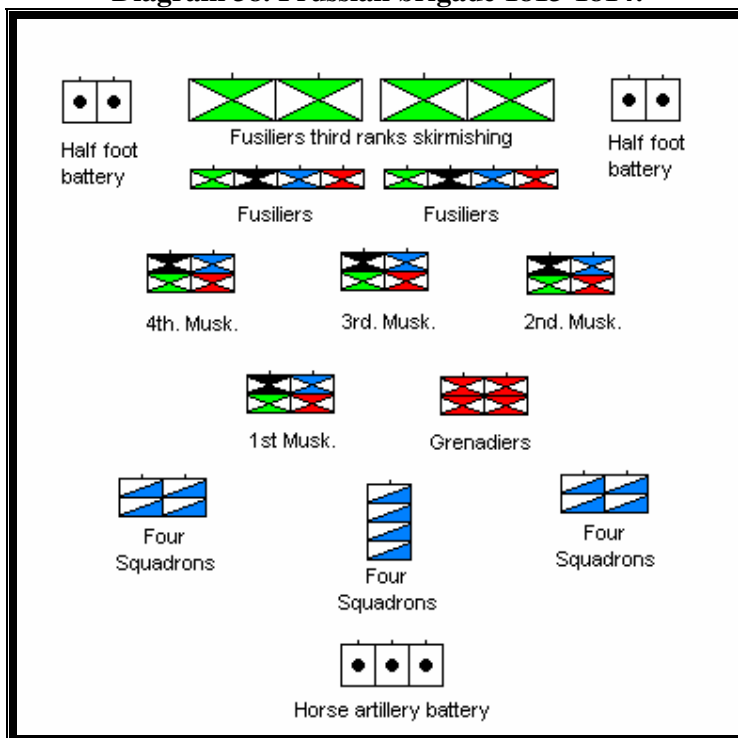
Prussian infantry tactics to 1807 were linear and employed either single battalion lines, or doubled with battalions within regiments behind one another. Attacks or counter-attacks were quite often made in echelon. Each infantry battalion had two 3lb guns and were placed according to circumstances, the intention being to defeat the enemy with superior firepower. Although, in the 1806 campaign, the third ranks of line battalions were used as skirmishers, whole companies and the practice of calling for volunteers from the line was also adopted, French divisions in battle array, had by comparison, more strength in their depth and experience in the organisation of their skirmishers. Prussian infantry divisions' flanks therefore could be vulnerable to French skirmishers and cavalry.

1812-15:

From 1812 the Prussian army establishment was based on mixed brigades of all arms and it formed the basis for the tactical formation on the field of battle. Fusiliers (light infantry) were integrated into these new "bodies" and there was the introduction of the attack column (a column formed on the centre) as the main battlefield formation.

In 1813-14 a typical Prussian brigade might consist of seven infantry battalions (2 fusilier, four musketeer from two regiments and one composite Grenadier) three cavalry regiments and two artillery batteries (one foot and one horse artillery battery).

Diagram 38. Prussian brigade 1813-1814:



Tactical systems, dispositions and battle array:

Prussian systems:

Instructions required the brigade to be arrayed in three lines and in the initial stages of combat with skirmishers from the fusiliers in the first line:

In the second line of battle would be three musketeer battalions and in the reserve would be the 1st musketeer battalion of the most senior regiment in the Brigade and the composite grenadiers.

Foot artillery in half batteries would be stationed on the flanks of the second line of battle and the cavalry and horse artillery would be in the reserve and moved forward if used in the attack.

In the game, in addition to the brigade general, two mounted officer figures are required to command and direct the brigade; "Treffen Kommandierte"; one for the first line or "treffen" and another for the reserve.

Prussian brigades were regulated on the first line proper (the Musketeers) and as per the general rules by the leading, centre, or by flanks as circumstances would have dictated.

From 1812, Prussian Fusilier battalions (the Avant-Garde) were not considered a Treffen but were primarily employed as the brigade's skirmishers, their supports and reserves.

In 1815 brigades would be arrayed in much the same fashion, but now consisted of nine battalions in three regiments, of which typically comprised of; one line, one reserve and one landwehr regiment. According to instructions of the 8th of June 1815; the two line fusilier battalions would be in the first line covered by their skirmishers. In the second line of battle would be four musketeer battalions and in the reserve would be two line battalions and one fusilier (this very likely being the Landwehr regiment in the "reserve". The Brigade's 6pdr battery and 2 cavalry squadrons deployed according to circumstances.

Examples and variants of this were used by almost all the brigades present at Ligny and at Waterloo in the attacks on Plancenoit by the 15th and 16th brigades.

By 1815, the cavalry in Prussian brigades was often reduced to two squadrons and the artillery limited to one 6-pounder foot battery.

However, attaching heavy batteries could augment these or cavalry regiments from the corps or army reserve formations.

Attached Jaeger companies would be deployed to strengthen the skirmish line of the brigade formation.

Notes on "passage of lines":

In performing a "passage of lines" up to 1807, Prussian infantry will use method "1" described on page 85.

From 1812, Prussian infantry are generally found in enchequier battle array and so therefore this will be their method of performing a "passage of lines". They may manoeuvre in this array without movement deduction.

Tactical systems, dispositions and battle array:

Russian battle array 1796-1814:

1796-1805:

A linear battle order was used. All troops formed two large columns of platoons for the march to the battlefield. These columns were to be covered by jagers and cavalry, which respectively would move to the flanks and rear of the deployed lines.

Each infantry battalion in the line of battle would have 2 light artillery pieces attached on the right flank of the battalion.

The distance between infantry lines of battle were to be 300 paces (9 centimetres in game scale).

1799:

At 1,000 paces troops were to form lines by quarter-wheeling from columns of platoons and the distance between lines was 200-300 paces (6-9 centimetres in game scale).

The battle order was in lines and columns were used to manoeuvre around obstacles, in rough terrain or to attack fortifications and for pursuits. Company columns were used in the battlefield area, but engagements were carried out in line.

Cavalry were placed behind infantry, or on the flanks of the second line of battle.

A checkerboard square array was used at the Trebbia River.

1805:

The battle array was still in two lines of battle, sometimes with a small reserve and the second line of battle was often smaller than the first.

The distance between the first and second lines of battle was 300 paces (9 centimetres in game scale) and the reserves were at 600 paces from the second line of battle (18 centimetres in game scale).

1806-1807:

At Pultusk in 1806, there were two lines of battle and a reserve the advance guard a mix of jagers and musketeers were positioned on the flanks. The first line had 21 battalions, the second 18, and the reserve 5 battalions.

At Eylau there was even more depth to the battle array.

The first line of battle consisted of the 1st and 2nd battalions deployed in line with each regiment's 3rd battalion also deployed to line behind them.

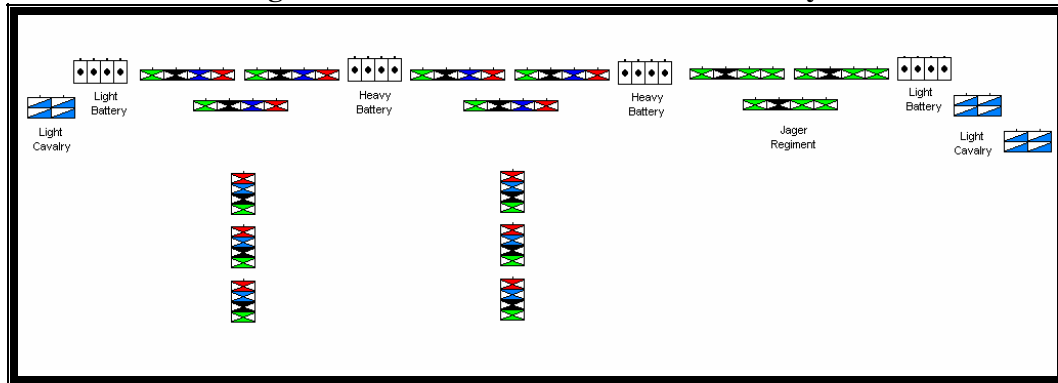
The second line of battle was formed by regimental columns of battalions and these were probably columns formed on the centre companies.

Organisation:

The basic blueprint for a Russian all-arms division of 1806-1807 was; three light cavalry regiments, one jager regiment, four-six musketeer regiments, and one artillery brigade of two heavy and two-three light companies.

Tactical systems, dispositions and battle array:

Diagram 39. A Russian division in battle array:



1812-1814:

Russian Corps were organised with two divisions.

The infantry within the divisions was usually formed into battalion columns and line formation was only used in the first line of battle if on the defensive. Examples of which were Ostranov in 1812 and by the 6th and 7th Corps at Borodino. Lines were also used in response to the effects enemy artillery fire. Reserves were formed into open battalion columns. In general however, battalion columns were used with deployed skirmishers preceding them.

Divisions were arrayed either side by side or in direct support one behind the other. Respectively, examples for these battle arrays were again at Ostranov by the 11th and 23rd divisions and at Borodino by the converged grenadiers and the 27th division.

The distance between lines of battle was 200 paces.

Artillery was often employed in half-batteries and so the in the artillery rules the -1 modifier would apply for 2 gun sections firing.

Notes on “passage of lines”:

“Enchequier” or checkerboard order was recommended for passage of lines by infantry especially in rearguard actions if retreating, but lengthy manoeuvres in this order were not practicable. Duke Eugene von Wurtemberg said that checkerboard order was infrequently used because it was difficult to maintain proper intervals between battalions during an advance in this formation.

It is possible from the 1807 campaign for “D” - “F” class troops to use this battle array, but at a -2 centimetre movement deduction.

If not in enchequier array then Russian infantry will perform a “passage of lines” using method “1” described on page 85.

In major engagements, Russian cavalry was usually formed in two battle lines in regimental columns of squadrons, only forming line if under pressure from enemy artillery fire, or if they were about to engage the enemy. Light cavalry formed in columns of divisions (two squadrons wide). Checkerboard array was used by cavalry in advance or retreat.

At Borodino, Russian cavalry was distributed along the whole line of battle at 300-400 paces behind the second line of battle and instructed to support the infantry.

Cavalry dispositions in General:

Battle array:

In general, until the end of the eighteenth century, traditional battle tactics dictated that the cavalry were arrayed on both flanks of the main infantry battle lines, protecting the flanks of a linear army.

That was cavalry's defensive role. In an offensive role, the cavalry would attempt to defeat and drive off enemy cavalry, leaving the enemy's infantry flank exposed.

Typical dispositions for cavalry would be at the wings of the army and in two lines.

The first line would have the heavy cavalry, or cuirassiers and the second line would comprise of the dragoons. These were flanked by the light cavalry; the hussars.

Reserves:

A corps of reserve was formed in the centre, and ideally, if numbers permitted, a cavalry reserve would be held on the flanks too, but usually it was held centrally behind the infantry second line of battle and this would protect them from the worst effects of enemy artillery fire. This corps of reserve was usually formed of hussars, but sometimes dragoons were added.

The Austrians and Prussians often mixed their dragoon and cuirassier regiments in detachments. Prussian Hussars were often used in the line.

Flanks:

Echelon formations by units and unit formations were used to refuse a flank of an army's lines of battle and the forward movement by each flank-protecting body would prevent the army as a whole being flanked.

Methods employed in gaining a flank were either; by extending the front until it outflanks the enemy, detaching flank squadrons and rapidly attacking the enemy's flank, or by forming a column of light cavalry and wheeling it to left or right to attack the enemy's flanks.

A Russian army would often have the added bonus of Cossacks. Although they were not battlefield cavalry they could (and did on the right wing at the battle of Borodino) cause the enemy problems if employed in large numbers on the extreme flanks of the army and appeared in the rear of the enemy's lines.

Enchequier:

Enchequier arrays were used by cavalry in two lines as they were less affected by the first line being forced back and also allowed for the forward movement of reserves to replace the first line of battle.

Cavalry in the battle array:

As it was the infantry, rather than cavalry who were best suited to hold and defend ground, in his "Remarks on Cavalry" (1798), Warnery was critical of the convention of placing cavalry on the wings in the first line of battle as a defensive measure, as it was unable to defend itself without making a counter-move, or a charge.

He said; "it is doubtful whether the cavalry ought ever to be formed in the order of battle abovementioned, or even in the first line at all."

In "The Anatomy of Victory: Battle Tactics 1689-1793" Brent Nosworthy points to this as being one of the major changes in the eighteenth century and indicative as to how warfare would be conducted in the future:

Cavalry dispositions in General (continued):

“Cavalry instead of being allocated solely to the wings, would be placed intermittently behind the first line to provide local support.”

Writing in 1812, Clausewitz in his “Principles of War” recommended that cavalry should be held back behind the infantry in both Prussian brigade and corps formations. The Prussian regulations of 1812 also held the cavalry in reserve at the rear of the newly reorganised Prussian brigades.

As a larger scale example of these new methods, the Russian cavalry at Borodino was distributed along the whole line of battle at 300-400 paces behind the second line of battle and instructed to support the infantry. And so cavalry were sheltered from the worst effects of enemy fire, behind the first line of battle; held in support of the infantry and as a reserve for any counter-attack.

Even though the new methods were to combine the arms, threats to flanks could still be made and countered by rapidly moving forces and so cavalry still had a role on the flanks of armies.