

# The Defense of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Northern Italy, 1813-1814

*George F. Nafziger, Marco Gioannini*  
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**George F. Nafziger, Marco Gioannini : The Defense of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Northern Italy, 1813-1814**  
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Defense of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Northern Italy, 1813-1814:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Nafziger's Napoleonic defense of Northern Italy - a review By Peter Rixon When you buy any product produced by the legendary George F. Nafziger, you expect quality. With his book 'The Defense of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Northern Italy, 1813-1814', perhaps it's the teaming with Marco Gioannini that catapulted this work to a category of must have; whatever the reason, this is a good read for any student of the period, but for Napoleonic wargamers, it is a source you cannot seriously live without. I'm a wargamer, and sources listing both orders of battle and the employment of those orders of battle are very important to me. This book is on the top shelf of recommended orders of battle books to own. I bought the Gioannini/Nafziger book because I was hoping to gain insight into the French Army of Italy's structure in the 1813-1814 campaign. What I was never anticipating was that not only would I gain a narrative, and therefore explanation of the why's and when's of the major events that underpinned the campaign; what also came with the book were over sixty detailed orders of battle of not just the French Army of Italy, but their Austrian opponents, and the structures also of the post 1812 Russian campaign forces of Naples and the Balkan minor states to boot. Has the book any shortcomings? Of course. The most notable is lack of a decent strategic map giving you insight into the whole area of operations in northern Italy from France to the eastern Balkans. The whole work is also in black white; no colour photo's or maps anywhere. The lack of the strategic map is especially frustrating when trying to follow the opening moves of the campaign in the text. I resorted to using an atlas as I read. But if you can live with what are truly minor short-comings, what you get in compensation is a wealth of information. Not only are the composition of corps, divisions, brigades and regiments listed, but so too are their deployments and the reasons behind what they were doing. Countless hours of trawling through internet sites will not unearth the detail placed at your fingertips by these two researchers. To my door on the other side of the world from America the delivery price on this baby set me back \$150. I winced at the purchase price. But one surprise that I hadn't anticipated was that at that price it came in hardback, so the book as a source will last for ages. And it is as a source this book excels. There are 41 appendices at the end of the book listing forces in a broader battalion/squadron/battery format from Aug 1813 to May 1814. Throughout the additional 235 pages of text are force details no wargamer or student of the campaign can do without. It is in those pages that the strength of units and formations is discussed, often in significant detail. Especially useful to any wargamer are details regarding force structures affecting Italian assignments to Germany, Spain and the raising of new forces in Italy following the end of the disastrous 1812 Russian campaign. Nafziger and Gioannini then go one step further and add in the details regarding Austrian dispositions, their strengths and weaknesses, as well as detailing the gradual desertion by unit of Italian allied Balkan forces. Invaluable material if you are planning to develop scenarios within the campaign. The short and the long of it; if you can afford it, buy this book. If you are a wargamer and interested in the Napoleonic period, 'The Defense of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Northern Italy, 1813-1814' is one purchase you will never regret. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent information on an inexpensive print By Michael Theberge The subject was well researched and documented. The information was presented chronologically and easy to follow. The detractor is the printed book is cheap. The book is a print on demand and not a quality product. If you want the book I would recommend you get the electronic version 8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Superbly researched and ably presented By Scott Bowden Napoleonic enthusiasts are very fortunate that George Nafziger and Marco Gioannini have presented this little-known subject matter so thoroughly. The book is superbly researched. And the material, along with the maps and extensively detailed appendices, combine for not only an able presentation which forms an understandable and enjoyable reading experience, but also a valuable reference book as well. Anyone interested in the Napoleonic wars needs this book in their library. Do not flinch at the price; specialty books such as this one, with the wealth of information contained therein, are rare. As such, it is a bargain at twice the price. Scott Bowden (...)

Little has been written about the defense of the Kingdom of Northern Italy, and this is the first study in English to detail the two-year conflict (1813-1814) within the larger context of the Napoleonic Wars. The French commander responsible for the defense was Eugene Beauharnais, stepson of Napoleon and son-in-law of the King of Bavaria. Outnumbered three to one, Beauharnais fought an outstanding defensive campaign, covering all of Napoleon's southern front while Napoleon faced off against the main allied armies as they invaded France. This was only Beauharnais's third command, and as a result of his less than stellar performance in his two earlier posts, he had acquired a poor reputation as a leader. Nafziger and Gioannini explain, however, that in this instance Beauharnais proved himself once and for all as the commander of an independent army, defending one of the most important parts of the French Napoleonic Empire. He made full use of geography, keeping his army in being, rather than risking it to seek a decision in the field. Because his stepson held the plains of Italy, Napoleon was able to concentrate his energies upon the evacuation of Germany and to demonstrate his military prowess in France.

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About the Author  
GEORGE F. NAFZIGER, USNR-Ret., has authored numerous books and articles on the subject of military history. Nafziger is a former Director of the Napoleonic Society of America and the Napoleonic Alliance . He is also owner of The Nafziger Collection, a publishing house specializing in the Napoleonic Wars and World War II history.  
MARCO GIOANNINI is the Public Relations Manager of the Giovanni Agnelli Foundation, one of Italy's leading research institutions in the social sciences. He has a long-standing interest in the military history of the Napoleonic era and has published several articles in Napoleonic journals. The military history advisor of the Marengo Bicentennial, he is also the author of a book on the Battle of Marengo.