

The Vistula Legion

The Polish Vistula Legion is one of best known of the many allied contingents which fought alongside the French during the Napoleonic Wars. Formed from several ad-hoc Polish volunteer units which variously served the French, Neapolitan, and Westphalians, the legion was finally consolidated under French command in 1808. Originally comprising three infantry regiments and a regiment of lancers, the Legion's structure saw many changes throughout its existence. The infantry mirrored the French organization, with a battalions made up of fusiliers, voltigeurs, and grenadiers. Similarly, and the Lancers followed the organization of a French Chasseurs a Cheval regiment, with one elite company for each regiment.

Right from the get go, the Legion was not to serve as an independent unit, instead regiments were parceled out to serve with French and allied line forces.

The Polish troops were considered by the French to be well led, capable, and aggressive troops. They served with distinction from the arid plains of Iberia to the frozen wastes of Russia. The combat record of the Legion is impressive, so much so that in 1812 the legion was brigaded together with Napoleon's Imperial Guard. Included in its battle honours is the infantry's exceptional performance during the siege of Saragossa, the defense of Fuengirola by 400 men of the 4th Regiment under Captain Mokosiewicz which saw a 2,500 man Anglo-Spanish force routed and its commander captured, and finally the legendary charge by the Vistula Lancers at Albuera which decimated three battalions of Colborne's brigade.

Below are three forces, an infantry force, a mixed Franco-Polish column, and a force representing the rebuilt legion which fought in 1813-14. First, a force representing troops from the well regarded Vistula Legion infantry regiments which fought in Spain and in the Russian campaign.

Vistula Legion Infantry (1808-1812)
Leader Status III
Leader Status I
Three Groups of 8 Fusiliers, Muskets
Leader, Status II
Two Groups of 8 Grenadiers, Muskets
Leader, Status II
Two Groups of 6 Voltigeur Skirmishers, Muskets
Points: 96

The Lancers never served together with the Vistula infantry, and in May 1811 the Vistula Lancers became the 7^{eme} and 8^{eme} Cheveaulégers Lanciers of the French Army. This force represents Vistula lancers working in concert with French line or Light infantry. Use the French Peninsular list for the French forces.

Franco Polish Force (1808-1811)
Leader Status III (French)
Three Groups of 8 Line or Light Infantry, Muskets (French)
Leader, Status I (French)
Two Groups of 6 Line or Light Voltigeur Skirmishers, Muskets (French)
Leader, Status III
One Group of 8 Lancers or Elite Company Lancers, Lances, Carbines, & Sabers
Point Value: 64 (68 with elite company)

Finally, we have a force representing the Vistula Regiments which were rebuilt following the catastrophic losses during the Russian retreat. While these troops were not as well trained as those lost in Russia, they were still formidable troops. During the battle of Arcis-sur-Aube in 1814, a square of Vistula legion troops gave Napoleon shelter from the enemy '*in safety among my faithful Poles*'.

Vistula Legion Infantry (1813-1814)
Leader Status III Four Groups of 8 Fusiliers, Muskets
Leader, Status II Two Groups of 8 Grenadiers, Muskets
Leader, Status I One Group of 6 Voltigeur Skirmishers, Muskets
Points: 96

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References

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Fusiliers, 1808-1812					Type	Regulars
Points Value	10	Weapon	Musket		Size	8
Formation	First Fire	Controlled Volley	Crashing Volley	Step Out	Drill	Characteristics
Always	Yes	First Only	2	2	2	Pas de Charge, Aggressive
Fusiliers, 1813-1814					Type	Conscripts & Volunteers
Points Value	7	Weapon	Musket		Size	8
Formation	First Fire	Controlled Volley	Crashing Volley	Step Out	Drill	Characteristics
Always	No	First Only	-	2	2	Pas de Charge
Grenadiers, 1808-1812					Type	Elite
Points Value	13	Weapon	Musket		Size	8
Formation	First Fire	Controlled Volley	Crashing Volley	Step Out	Drill	Characteristics
Always	Yes	First Only	2	1	1	Pas de Charge, Aggressive
Grenadiers, 1813-1814					Type	Regulars
Points Value	8	Weapon	Musket		Size	8
Formation	First Fire	Controlled Volley	Crashing Volley	Step Out	Drill	Characteristics
Always	Yes	First Only	-	2	3	Aggressive, Pas de Charge
Voltigeurs, 1808-1812					Type	Regulars
Points Value	10	Weapon	Musket		Size	8
Formation	First Fire	Controlled Volley	Crashing Volley	Step Out	Drill	Characteristics
Always	Yes	First Only	2	1	2	Pas de Charge, Aggressive

Voltigeurs, 1813-1814					Type	Regulars
Points Value	8	Weapon	Musket		Size	8
Formation	First Fire	Controlled Volley	Crashing Volley	Step Out	Drill	Characteristics
Always	Yes	First Only	-	2	3	Pas de Charge, Sharp Practice
Voltigeur Skirmishers, 1808-1812					Type	Light Infantry
Points Value	8	Weapon	Musket		Size	6
Formation	First Fire	Controlled Volley	Crashing Volley	Step Out	Drill	Characteristics
Always	Yes	-	-	2	-	Sharp Practice, Aggressive
Voltigeur Skirmishers, 1813-1814					Type	Skirmishers
Points Value	5	Weapon	Musket		Size	6
Formation	First Fire	Controlled Volley	Crashing Volley	Step Out	Drill	Characteristics
Always	No	-	-	2	-	Sharp Practice
Lancers, 1808-1811					Type	Scouting Cavalry
Points Value	8	Weapon	Lance, Carbine, & Saber		Size	8
Formation	First Fire	Controlled Volley	Crashing Volley	Step Out	Drill	Characteristics
Always	No	No	-	1	2	Tally Ho, In Hand
Elite Company Lancers, 1808-1811					Type	Scouting Cavalry
Points Value	10	Weapon	Lance, Carbine, & Saber		Size	8
Formation	First Fire	Controlled Volley	Crashing Volley	Step Out	Drill	Characteristics
Always	No	No	-	1	1	Tally Ho, Aggressive, In Hand