

Vive la France!

Rising to power in 1799, Napoleon would later start a series of wars causing the deaths of 3 to 6 million people. As one of the bloodiest conflicts in the past couple of centuries, the Napoleonic Wars intrigue many, myself included. Even though it is impossible to be in battle with Napoleon's soldiers, we can get pretty close, and that's where the video game Holdfast: Nations at War comes in.

[Holdfast](#) is an early access game developed by Anvil Game Studios. Although it is not yet complete, you can buy it for \$20 on Steam. The game gets updates and its last update included two new roles to play as and improvements to the melee combat system, among other things. The game will be finished sometime later in 2018 for a full release.

The game is set in the Napoleonic Wars, with the British and French being the two sides to choose from. However, the developers have talked about adding Prussia as a playable faction in the future. Each match starts out with the option to choose one side or the other.

Each side gives you the same basic options of Riflemen, Officers, Musicians and more. Different classes have different perks. For example, the Riflemen have rifles and swords as opposed to someone like the Flag Bearer, who carries a flag, a pistol and a sword. Some classes have special bonuses, too. A surgeon, while not the best attacker, can heal his teammates while a drummer can play music to give his fellow soldiers a reload bonus. Every class has a role, and if played right, each one can greatly benefit the team.

There are two major ways to play Holdfast: with historical accuracy or like everyone is Rambo, but with muskets. The first way is accessible through joining either a regiment or a match that is set up by a regiment. The second is accessible

through any public server.

Different regiments have their own websites where you can sign up. A regiment is just an organized group of people that play the game together. The regiment I signed up for was the 51st Regiment. Once signed up, I was told when events were held. So, Saturday at 1pm., I joined their server for an event they were holding and joined the British. The 51st was comprised of about 70 men in the match, and the regiment we were facing off against had about 60. The officers organized us and assigned officers to groups of people, then we were off to face the enemy: France.

I was just a simple Line Infantry soldier, but our line of about 20 consisted of a couple Riflemen, a Flag Bearer, a Musician and an Officer, the rest being Line Infantry. It was my first time, so I didn't know much of what was going on, but our Officer led the way over some hills toward the opposition.

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– Johnson

We followed the Officer's every command, even when he told us to fire. We fired at the French, and they fired back at us in volleys. Every now and then, a volley would reach us, and a guy to my left or right would drop, but we were able to push them back. However, just before they left, they got one more volley off, and I was killed. Not having another life, I watched my teammates for the next five minutes until our victory.

Playing with a regiment is fun and intense, and it feels like you're actually in history. Down to every musket shot fired, I

felt immersed in the Napoleonic Wars. For those who love this time period, like myself, this is the way you want to play. However, there is another way to play for those who want a more relaxed experience.

By joining a random public server, what you see and hear will vary greatly from match to match. In the first match I joined, everyone was running around firing at their own will. It was chaotic. There was no organization, but that's what made it fun. Two guys and I crouched waiting wideout in an open field, just talking as inaccurate musket shots were fired at us.

One of the guys was finally shot, cutting him off mid sentence, so the other guy and I did the proper thing and both gave eulogies for him, trying not to laugh at the ridiculousness of it all. However, I couldn't finish my sentence about the amazing deeds of a man I had just met because I was shot. We later met up, and with the help of some others, organized an assault on an enemy-occupied house. Once inside, while everyone was fighting for their lives, there was an enemy soldier calmly playing the piano in the midst of the chaos. Once he died, I honored the memory of "Piano Guy" by playing the piano as my teammates fought to protect the house.

In another match, there was no cover except for a few small hills, so there was a lot of gunfire. Once I was hit, I knew I wouldn't survive much longer. Luckily for me, a Surgeon saw me and headed my way. As he got closer, I could hear him better, and so I heard my savior playing music through his microphone. I was healed to the sounds of "Barbie Girl" by Aqua. It was quite the interesting sight.

Playing with this chaos is not only fun – it's hilarious. It's even funnier when every French soldier confidently speaks in terrible imitations of French accents. That, along with the constant barrage of "Vive la France" from my comrades during battle, probably made me laugh harder than any other game. So, if you want to laugh, this is the way to go.

However, there is one major problem with the game: it's still incomplete. It has crashed on me multiple times, and I've been unable to join matches on multiple occasions. Also, there aren't that many players populating the lobbies. For the most part, you can only find one or two public lobbies that have enough players to play the game. Fortunately, both of these problems should be resolved in the future as a result of constant improvements and a rising player count as the game gains more recognition.

Even with its problems, the game is still fun. Whether you're part of a serious regiment or some guy with a drum trying to take on a whole army at once, you will definitely enjoy yourself. Since the game isn't complete and you may not be interested yet, I recommend waiting for a discount, waiting until the problems are fixed or waiting until the release of new content that you know you'll enjoy. For a game that's not quite finished, it is genuine fun, and it's only getting better.