ARTILLERY AND AMMUNITION

NAPO (or from 18th century till 1870+) period

For 10-12 years I played (80s-early 90s !!) the Empire rules. One day we got Empire IV or V, and there was that little thing saying artillery shooting a small % would put your guns out of ammunition.
Prior to that, every gun, every turn (impulse!!) that could, would fire on something. It was free, 3% to hit a skirmishing figure of the 95th rifles at 1000m so what? Why not try…
Then suddenly in many cases you would have just as many chances to be in trouble than causing some.
Then suddenly scores of near useless die rolling disappeared, our game gained in history, and certainly gained in time saved.
We also had this with Fire and Fury or maybe it was Johnny reB. I vividly remember preparing and artillery "charge", attack with short ranged confederate guns (12lb/6 lb etc…) to find out that arrived on top of the hill I rolled the dice and hop out of ammunition. One player rightly said this was near idiotic as the artillery guys (as Alexander talking to Longstreet in the film?) would warn you, that it started the run with not enough. One turn being say 15-20minutes and everyone knows they never ever shoot full speed that long (for once would see nothing in the smoke).
Most players hate book keeping with good reasons. On the other end we want a game that gets you into the troubles, the thinking of those commanders of the time.

On The Miniature page here http://theminiaturespage.com/boards/msg.mv?id=101247

And there http://theminiaturespage.com/boards/msg.mv?id=381677

You have interesting discussions about this.
In Napoleonic times we often know roughly how much ammunition they had and sometimes how many they shot in a day. Let's say they had between 200 and 400 round per gun available with the guns and in reserve. Of course you lose a bit of it with caissons that get hit (but most would be staggered backwards out of danger) and you lose guns on the other side that have not shot much.
The French at Borodino fired 91,000 artillery rounds and had 587 guns, (a theoretical 155 rounds fired per gun). We can be assured that not all batteries went in line and that many did not much.
We can conclude that those guns both fire quite slowly and not at all much of the time. But we also know gamers, given half a chance will shoot any time, anything.
We seldom get much news in books about any one running into serious ammunition trouble (but I did get it repeatedly for Prussians in 1806!- and the famous Leipzig-but the reserve train of the French was taken).
Many a gamer/ rules writer, concludes that no need to keep track of ammunition as it was not a problem.
I think it takes the donkey by the wrong end: they did not tell of ammo problems because they saved ammo, never to reach that critical level.

You have then 3 schools of thoughts (at least)
One that puts very low chances at long ranges, or simply forgets shooting at long ranges as "they would not to save ammo".
Then the ones who puts you with some dies results shutting down your battery.
Then those who do not care.
I think they are wrong. The first one (as with WW2 anti tank) will give the opposition a nice cosy security at ranges where it is known artillery could and sometimes would fire with effects. Look at (in doubt- the bible The Kriegspiel 1828) sources. It brings bad games results. Sure they might not shoot to save ammo but you the guy static in column at 1200m, you cannot be sure of it. No doubt a troubling feeling.
So "we don't care it is just a game with toys", you lazy guys, go play fantasy…
Or the "we want all", let's put numbers of shots per battery. Then boys we go in trouble as not two countries has the same amount, we only have very partial ideas about the reserves, and then to be

accurate you would have to get some sort of slow deliberate shooting (distant- wait for fall, estimate results, clear smoke etc.) and fast close shooting. Hell…

What do we want?
Gamers to have a choice, not to either make the guns ineffective (hey they save!) or short ranged, nor all powerful, 24 turns…
We want gamers to be aware of that problem but not to waste time bean counting which anyway would be wrong (how many rounds is one game shot hey?).
It looks like most armies at one point had this system where caissons would go to the reserves and get filled while others kept the guns supplied (which does not mean firing!). And yes they don't all do it, not all the time etc. then do specific scenario variations ;)

My favourite compromise comes this way:
Each type of guns (so you don't store your 3lb to shoot more with the 12lbs!!) in an army (and I do it by batteries- compromise with numbers and organisation) has a general number of reserve rounds. Some cards events/ shooting dice, gets you to go low on ammo, then run out (hey to avoid my old shock with the ACw charge) OR take out one round from the reserve, if your guns are linked to whichever place is your artillery park, normally off table. It also gives you a strong incentive to keep that road open. It has then a limited occasional, randomised bookeeping, with enough rounds and guns, it shields you from most freak results, and it pushes you to shoot when it is best.
Overall it save a lot of shooting rolls, gets you to think ahead and at times get into trouble. The guns can keep their efficiency and be the killers they should be.
Of course if you have a short game, few hours of "real time" forget it, shoot and do not bother unless the scenario says it could be a problem..
I fondly remember games for 1815 where I run out before serious attack, wasting too much on bombardment; another in 1870 when my Germans finally succeeding in getting all these pesky French batteries out of the way, found out they had not enough to shoot the infantry. Bad decisions; realistic stuff.