A PRE-PROFESSIONAL INSTITUTION: NAPOLEON’S MARSHALATE
AND THE DEFEAT OF 1813

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Napoleon’s defeat in 1813 generates a number of explanations from historians regarding why he lost this epic campaign which ultimately resulted in France losing control over the German states. Scholars discussing the French marshalate of the Napoleonic era frequently assert that these generals could not win battles without the emperor present. Accustomed to assuming a subordinate role under Bonaparte’s direct supervision, these commanders faltered when deprived of the strong hand of the master. This thesis contributes to this historiographical argument by positing that the pre-professional nature of Napoleon’s marshalate precluded them from adapting to the evolving nature of warfare during the First French Empire. Emerging from non-military backgrounds and deriving their capabilities solely from practical experience, the marshals failed to succeed at endeavors outside of their capacity. An examination of the military administration of the Old Regime, the effects of the French Revolution on the French generalate, and the circumstances under which Bonaparte labored when creating the imperial marshalate demonstrates that issues systemic to the French high command contributed to French defeat in 1813. This thesis also provides evidence that Napoleon understood this problem and attempted to better prepare his marshals for independent command by instructing them in his way of war during the 1813 campaign.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................... iii

LIST OF FIGURES ....................................................................................................................... vi

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................... 1

2. EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MILITARY THEORY AND ADMINISTRATION ........9

3. THE REVOLUTION AND THE CREATION OF A NEW FRENCH GENERALATE .....................................................................................................37

4. NAPOLEON AND THE SELECTION OF THE IMPERIAL MARSHALATE.......64

5. THE 1813 CAMPAIGN: A CASE STUDY IN NAPOLEON’S PEDAGOGY ........89

6. CONCLUSION ............................................................................................................128

Appendices

APPENDIX A: PROMOTION TIMELINES OF 1794 ARMY COMMANDERS VERSUS 1799 ARMY COMMANDERS ..........................................................136

APPENDIX B: FRENCH ARMY COMMANDERS, 1792-1802 .................................138

APPENDIX C: CAREERS OF THE 1804 MARSHALATE, 1792-1804 ..................142

APPENDIX D: CAREERS OF THE LATER MARSHALATE ........................................146

APPENDIX E: CAREERS OF THE 1799 SAMPLE, 1792-1804 ..............................149

APPENDIX F: CAREERS AND ARMY COMMANDS OF THE MARSHALATE, 1804-1812 ............................................................................................................152

APPENDIX G: THE 32ND MILITARY DIVISION .....................................................155

APPENDIX H: HAVELBERG .......................................................................................157

APPENDIX I: POSITIONS FORWARD OF MAGDEBURG .......................................159

APPENDIX J: PURSUIT AFTER LÜTZEN AND THE ARMISTICE ..........................161
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Days Between Promotion to General of Brigade and General of Division, 1804 Marshals.............................................................................................................................77

Figure 3.2: Days Between Promotion to General of Brigade and General of Division, Later Marshals................................................................................................................................78

Figure 3.3: Days Between Promotion to General of Brigade and General of Division, 1799 Sample................................................................................................................................78

Figure 3.4: Number of Army Commands Greater than a Single Division, 1792-1805, Future Marshals..................................................................................................................................79

Figure 3.5: Number of Corps Commands, 1805-1812, All Marshals..............................................80

Figure 3.6: Number of Army Commands, 1792-1805, Future Marshals..............................................81

Figure 3.7: Number of Army Commands, 1805-1812, All Marshals..............................................81

Figure 3.8: Army Commands, 1799 Sample, 1792-1804 ..............................................................82
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Historians attribute the unending tide of French victories between 1805 and 1809 to the military brilliance of Napoleon. His genius on the battlefield struck fear into Europe for almost a decade. Unfortunately, this strength also proved to be his foremost weakness. Without him, the system of warfare dependent on his personal presence collapsed. The incapacity of many of Napoleon’s marshals at independent command evidences this point. Napoleon employed these men as his tools, most famously appointing them to command French corps on campaign. As the empire expanded in size, they stepped outside of the emperor’s oversight and commanded armies of their own. With a few key exceptions, many of these men failed at this particular endeavor. France’s marshals could not replicate Napoleon’s success without his intellect to guide them. The failures of the imperial marshalate highlight the role that Napoleon’s genius played in the triumphs of the First French Empire.

The inability of the marshalate to command without the emperor’s supervision contributed to French defeat in the 1813 campaign. In August 1813, Napoleon spread his forces between North Germany, Silesia, and Bohemia. He entrusted Marshal Nicolas Charles Oudinot with the task of seizing Berlin, which he hoped would remove Prussia from the war and shatter the alliance opposing him. Though he did not initially intend it, events forced Napoleon to further split the Grande Armée between the marshals available to him. He assigned the defense of Dresden to Laurent de Gouvion Saint Cyr and eventually handed responsibility for the

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1 A number of other elements also hampered the French war effort. Aside from the severe damage incurred to French forces during the Russian campaign and the strength of Allied strategy, scholars argue that Napoleon’s faulty strategic vision led to the defeat of the French. Recent scholarship continues to examine Napoleon’s poor strategy during the 1813 campaign. See John G. Gallaher, "Political Considerations and Strategy: The Dresden Phase of the Leipzig Campaign," *Military Affairs* 49 (1985): 67; Michael V. Leggiere, *Napoleon and Berlin* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 287.
Silesian front to Étienne-Jacques-Joseph-Alexandre Macdonald. Unfortunately for Napoleon, events in Silesia and North Germany did not proceed according to plan. Oudinot failed to seize Berlin after suffering a defeat at Groß Beeren on 23 August while Macdonald’s setback at the Katzbach River on 26 August forced the French to withdraw west into Saxony. Napoleon responded by appointing Marshal Michel Ney to command in the North German theater and appearing in person to push the Prussians back into Silesia. However, the French emperor could not be everywhere at once. Ney’s defeat at Dennewitz on 6 September marked the second loss for the French in their endeavor to seize Berlin. Meanwhile, the Allies continued to pressure French forces wherever Napoleon could not be present. The failures of the marshalate on the periphery continued to cost Napoleon time and troops he could not afford. The events of the 1813 campaign support the prevailing historical argument that Napoleon’s personal genius powered the juggernaut of the Grande Armée.

Explaining the marshals’ poor performance generates debate in the historical community. A small group of scholars blame Napoleon directly for failing to prepare his marshals for independent command. One contemporary who served on the emperor’s staff in 1813, baron Ernst von Odeleben, contends that Napoleon’s generals did not operate well under the vague and open-ended orders he typically dictated through his chief of staff, Louis-Alexandre Berthier. He also claims that Napoleon’s low regard for the enemy caused him to overestimate the capabilities of his marshals.2 Other scholars posit that the emperor’s personality or political jealousy stifled the abilities of his commanders. F. L. Petre maintains that Napoleon likely understood the need for a more educated staff system or army, but that such an institution possessed the potential to generate rivals who could threaten his regime. He further posits that the emperor likely regretted

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this decision in the later empire, when the marshals needed to operate independent of his supervision but still needed his guidance to succeed. David Chandler also contends that Napoleon withheld his knowledge from his marshals because he could not tolerate the existence of rivals. Should another marshal perform as well as he did on the battlefield, it would endanger his position as savior of France and generate potential rivals. A round-table discussion recorded at the Consortium of the Revolutionary Era reveals that this idea influenced other prominent Napoleonic scholars. Donald D. Horward posited that jealousy colored Napoleon’s judgment, especially in light of André Masséna’s considerable talents as an army commander. John G. Gallaher supported his colleague’s argument, stating that Bonaparte remained jealous of his glory. Finding Napoleon culpable for the shortcomings of his marshalate continues to offer answers to historians explaining their incapacity at independent command. Kyle Eidahl held Napoleon accountable for the defeat at Groß Beeren, stating that “Napoleon had never trained his marshals to operate as independent commanders, nor did he establish any schools to train staff

3 F. L. Petre, Napoleon’s Conquest of Prussia, 1806 (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1914), 40-41. In his text on the 1813 campaign, Petre does not reiterate this assertion. He argues only that Oudinot, Ney, and Macdonald never possessed the capacity for independent command. See Petre, Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany, 1813 (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1912), 258; 264; 276-77.

4 Chandler reaches this conclusion by citing Jean-Antoine Chaptal’s Mes Souvenirs de Napoléon. A servitor in the Bonaparte administration, Chaptal claims that Napoleon never praised his generals, often criticizing them for their bad behavior and lack of talent. From this observation, Chandler concludes that Napoleon’s autocratic style of command aggrandized his own talents while stifling the initiative of the marshals. He admits that Robert Epstein’s arguments regarding Prince Eugène de Beauharnais in 1809 counter this assertion; however, Chandler contends that “as an imperial stepson, Eugène Beauharnais was probably a special case; in any case, the gulf between theory and practice was immense.” See David G. Chandler, The Campaigns of Napoleon (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), xli-xlill; Chandler, ed., Napoleon’s Marshals (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1987), xlvii, lx; Jean-Antoine Chaptal, Mes Souvenirs de Napoléon (Paris: E. Plon, 1893), 248-249; Robert Epstein, Napoleon’s Last Victory and the Emergence of Modern War (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994).

officers.”⁶ Depicting the emperor very darkly in “Napoleon and Frederick the Great,” Owen Connelly accuses Napoleon of being an abusive man who treated his subordinate commanders as wild horses who required breaking. He states that the “marshals obeyed in ‘knee jerk’ fashion with violent abuse for any mistakes . . . balanced off by generous gifts . . . ”⁷ These authors emphasize the methods and personality of Napoleon as a defining influence on the capabilities of the marshalate.

A variety of other arguments explain the inability of the marshals to perform. Some identify a lack of confidence in the marshals. Yorck von Wartenburg maintains that senior officers knew only “how to obey, they no longer knew how to lead,” and that French failures in Spain shook the marshalate’s confidence in itself.⁸ Gabriel Fabry identifies a lack of self-confidence in Oudinot as he commanded the Army of Berlin in August 1813.⁹ Others highlight the political origins of the imperial marshalate. Louis Chardigny emphasizes that Napoleon perceived the marshals as soldiers chosen for their political value over their military merit. He argues that the emperor punished dishonesty or political disobedience much more severely than he did battlefield failure.¹⁰ John Elting also attributes their military incapacities to the political nature of the imperial marshalate, stating that Napoleon first chose his marshals for their political

¹⁰ Louis M. Chardigny, Les maréchaux de Napoléon (Paris : Librairie Jules Tallandier, 1977), 91, 133. Chardigny agrees with Horward’s assessment concerning Napoleon’s jealousy of Masséna, claiming that this feeling dated back to their rivalry as generals during the Revolution.
rather than military worth.\textsuperscript{11} F. N. Maude argues that the French corps system required a level of senior competence to succeed but that the French marshals remained so dependent on Napoleon that they could not win without him.\textsuperscript{12} Despite such assessments, these scholars leave more questions than answers regarding the poor performance of the marshals in their independent commands.

Georges Six conducted a deeper and more deliberate examination of the entirety of the French generalate. Rather than focus on the person of Napoleon, Six examined the changes to the organization of the French army from the \textit{ancien régime} through the empire. He analyzed the personal backgrounds of French generals, as well as the methods for selecting them. Six concludes that the Revolution made a considerable impact on the French generalate that echoed throughout the empire. The Revolution removed social requirements for commissioning and ended the practice of purchasing commissions. In place of this, the revolutionary governments shifted their promotion standards to meet the new demands of a revolutionary army. The regulations they enacted generated an officer corps of excellent leaders and trainers designed to offset the enthusiasm of the patriotic volunteers with the experience of the Old Regime’s professional soldiers. However, Six maintains that only a few men who emerged from this environment qualified as good strategists. Thus, the events of the Revolution fundamentally shaped the military that Napoleon inherited in 1799. Six’s organizational study reveals that circumstances outside of Napoleon’s control shaped the military he commanded from 1800 to 1815.\textsuperscript{13}

Six’s ideas regarding the evolution of the French military from the Old Regime to the empire mesh with Samuel Huntington’s concept of a “pre-professional” institution. Huntington describes eighteenth century militaries as pre-professional, arguing that they changed into professional institutions in the mid-1800s. Professionalized militaries presented a sophisticated approach toward admission requirements for entry into the officer corps, promotion standards, military education, the state of the military staff, and the *esprit* and competence of the officer corps.¹⁴ Equitable standards for admission into the officer corps and education requirements for commissioning characterized a professionalized military. Institutions devoted to educating the officer corps also emerged, such as those established in France and Prussia during the nineteenth century. Staff systems designed to assist the commander also appeared. Huntington also argues that officers possessed a much more heightened sense of duty. In contrast, pre-professional militaries present a more undeveloped appearance. Politics, personal connections, wealth, and social background defined the officer corps of European militaries during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. An officer’s membership in the noble class made him eligible for a commission. Although they likely received educations in their youth, this never functioned as a pre-requisite for their commissioning. Purchase and seniority functioned as the promotions processes of the eighteenth century. Staff systems remained significantly underdeveloped. As Huntington describes it, eighteenth century militaries functioned as much as social institutions as they did warfighting organizations.¹⁵

In tandem with the organizational changes of the French army, warfare evolved as well. Robert Epstein identifies the “distributed maneuver” of divisions and corps as a new trend in

¹⁵ Ibid., 19-28.
warfare. Units now operated in a separate but linked fashion across a theater, which Epstein labels the operational level of warfare. He further contends that this new form of war challenged Napoleon’s ability to personally influence all events on the battlefield. With a series of smaller battles now contributing toward the outcome of an entire campaign, subordinate commanders needed to function independently. This required Napoleon to reach a common understanding of war with his subordinates.  

Epstein supports this argument with an in-depth examination of Napoleon’s instructions regarding the defense of Italy to Eugène de Beauharnais in 1809. The evolving nature of warfare posed a significant obstacle to the personal genius of Napoleon, which depended on his personal leadership on the battlefield.

This thesis explains the incompetence of the 1813 marshalate by merging the concepts of a pre-professional military institution with the evolving nature of warfare. The pre-professional nature of the imperial marshalate precluded it from being ready to prosecute operational level warfare outside of Napoleon’s supervision. The imperial marshalate remained an essentially pre-professional institution, lacking the standards that characterized professional institutions. This background meant that the systems from which the marshals emerged left them unprepared to execute advanced levels of warfare. Huntington’s professionalization criteria provides a metric that the author used to evaluate the French officer corps of the ancien régime and the Revolution. An analysis of why Napoleon selected the particular men he did to populate the marshalate offers further evidence regarding the pre-professional nature of the marshalate. Finally, a case study of the 1813 campaign demonstrates that these pre-professional generals struggled when the demands of warfare proved beyond their capacity. Napoleon’s reaction to this shortcoming also

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16 Epstein, *Napoleon’s Last Victory*, 5. At the time, the term ‘operations’ did not exist. Instead, contemporaries used the term ‘grand tactics’ to refer to the maneuver of army corps and divisions on the battlefield. See ibid., 185-186.
receives analysis. From this perspective, the fault of the marshalate lay not in Napoleon or the personal inabilities of the marshals, but rather in the system itself. This thesis argues that the incapacity of the marshals emerged from the issue of executing warfare at a more advanced level with a pre-professional military system.
CHAPTER 2

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY MILITARY THEORY AND ADMINISTRATION

Advancements in military theory play a critical role in the concept of modern military professionalization. Its evolution represents a concerted effort on the part of soldiers dedicated to understanding the art of war. With the exceptions of contributions by Henry E. H. Lloyd and Jacques-Antoine-Hippolyte, the Comte de Guibert, Samuel Huntington downplays the quality of military theory in eighteenth century Europe, arguing that it lacked coherence. He argues that “works on war discussed a miscellaneous hodgepodge of topics bearing little or no logical relation to one another . . . . The typical eighteenth century military work . . . was a catalog rather than a treatise.”¹ In particular, he contends that the eighteenth century notion of generalship emphasized the role of natural genius in generals. For the most part, Europe denied the concept that “objective social institutions” such as military academies and staff colleges could generate officers or generals.² Huntington regards this rejection of a studied approach to warfare as “antiprofessional.”³ Corelli Barnett agrees with Huntington: “The . . . case against higher technical and professional qualifications rested on belief in 'character' as opposed to intellect.”⁴

Carl von Clausewitz classified eighteenth century definitions of the art or science of war as:

the total body of knowledge and skill that was concerned with material factors. The design, production, and use of weapons, the construction of fortifications and entrenchments, the internal organization of the army, and the mechanism of its movements constituted the substance of this knowledge and skill. All contributed to the establishment of an effective fighting force.⁵

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¹ Huntington, The Soldier and the State, 28-30.
² Ibid., 30.
³ Ibid.
Not until the publication of *On War* did any theorist draw a distinct line between the levels of war and present an overarching framework of military theory devoted to the higher level of strategy. As a result, European militaries of the eighteenth century remained firmly rooted in pre-professional practices.

In tandem with a rejection of a studied approach to war, the administrative practices of Europe’s militaries also reveals them as pre-professional. An examination of the militaries of the great powers of Europe using Huntington’s criteria demonstrates that they remained firmly pre-professional. The commissioning and promotions process, the appointment of generals, and the practical training of officers reflects this concept. Social caste and tradition exerted a great influence on the administration and composition of the European officer corps. Nobles whose families possessed a tradition of service to the state typically comprised the majority of the officer caste. Army commanders became general officers not due to the years of experience they earned at the regimental level, but instead for their high social standing and loyalty to the monarch. Efforts to implement more professional approaches to the military profession failed to make significant impacts. Although a few military academies existed in an embryonic form, they failed to meet their full potential. Military reforms often reflected a return to traditional practices rather than implementing innovative ideas. Such characteristics expose the pre-professional nature of eighteenth century military institutions, which precluded a more complete adaptation of contemporary practice to the demands of military theory.

This chapter discusses developments in military theory alongside the administration of Europe’s leading military establishments. It argues that an officer’s military competence often

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6 Corelli Barnett also contends that European society and institutional norms prevented a more professionalized officer corps from emerging during the eighteenth century. See Barnett, “The Education of Military Elites,” 18-19.
played a secondary role to other factors when determining the course of his career. Pre-professional tradition dominated the militaries of the great powers of Europe because militaries functioned as both social institutions and warfighting organizations. Incorporating a more professionalized officer corps in accordance with the demands of military theory challenged the established practices of the time. Reforms and innovation threatened to change not only the military itself, but also European society itself. Until these social barriers disappeared, Europe could not professionalize its militaries.

The impetus for attempting to articulate a general military theory must be attributed to the influence of the Enlightenment. Proponents of enlightened ideals believed that reason could reduce to human understanding previously unknowable and inexplicable conditions. Eighteenth century military theory possessed two themes regarding the art of war: the role of a general’s genius and the principle-based study of war. The quest for identifying principles that could be universally applied to the theory of war continued throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The minor successes of military theorists at this endeavor demanded a more educated officer corps capable of intellectual endeavors, which aligns with Huntington’s concept of professionalization. The growing body of work dedicated to the ‘military science’ required a more professionalized officer corps capable of understanding and applying it.7

Raimondo Montecuccoli’s writings in the late seventeenth century influenced military theorists of the eighteenth century. His three-volume work, Memoirs, was translated into French

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7 See Azar Gat, A History of Military Thought: From the Enlightenment to the Cold War (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 28-29. Gat’s text offers an excellent survey of the prominent military theorists of the eighteenth century. In the pre-Napoleonic era, he divides military theorists into the schools of the French Enlightenment and the German Aufklärung. With the exception of Henry E. H. Lloyd, the scholars that will be examined in the following paragraphs will be split between French and German theorists. A number of ancient and medieval theorists such as Vegetus and Machiavelli certainly made an impact on military intellectuals; however, the purpose of this survey is to present a general state of eighteenth century military theory.
and is mentioned by Maurice de Saxe in his _Rêveries_.

The first volume presents a general exposition on warfare and offers a number of prescriptive guidelines regarding training, administration, strategy, operations, and fortifications. Montecuccoli wrote three other works specifically devoted to military theory — _On Battle, On the Art of War, and A Treatise on War_. In these works, he discusses ancient generals such as Julius Caesar as well as more recent leaders such as Maurice of Nassau and Gustavus Adolphus. He advocated the organization and operational practices of Gustavus in his text on warring against the Turks, arguing for a strong reserve, an army small enough to be supported logistically, and the Swedish deployment of combat arms. With regards to generalship, Montecuccoli posited that generals required an artistic flair for the military art as well as a working knowledge of its science. The duality of innate genius and the principles of war would continue to echo as a concept in military theory throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

A new generation of military theorists emerged in France during the Enlightenment. Marshal Maurice de Saxe published _Mes Rêveries_ in 1756. He never intended for the book to be taken seriously, claiming that he wrote it as a personal exposition of his thoughts on war. Yet the European community received his treatise favorably, with the manuscript going through several reprints and translations. Saxe does not present a formal introduction on the practice of warfare, assuming that the reader would possess a background in the military art. He comments on everything from fortifications to more practical uniforms in a haphazard assembly of chapters. Saxe also makes several solid points about contemporary generalship. He stresses that general

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8 Maurice de Saxe, _Mes Rêveries_, ed. L’Abbé Pérau (Paris: Chez Desaint et Saillant; Chez Durand, 1757), 1:120.
9 Raimondo Montecuccoli, _Memoires de Montecuccoli, Generalissime des Troupes de l’Empereur_ (Paris: Chez Nyon, 1760). The first book of Montecuccoli’s _Memoirs_ presents a great number of prescriptive guidelines regarding the art of war. The other two books discuss specifics on fighting the Turks.
officers needed to understand more than simply drill by the time they assumed command of armies. He poses the question of why generals who engaged in battle became overly concerned with maneuver. His response states:

> It is that very few people occupy themselves with the bigger portions of war. They pass their lives maneuvering troops and believing that the military art consists solely of this. When they come to a command, they do so ignorant and lacking the knowledge of what to do, they do only what they know.\(^\text{11}\)

Saxe further states that generals could not be ordinary men and that they must possess a special talent for command. He emphasizes the need for practical experience by comparing a general with school training but no experience to an architect lacking the practical knowledge of a stonemason. He notes: “It is the same of a general who does not know the principles of the art nor how to organize his troops, this must serve as the base of all those who practice war.”\(^\text{12}\)

These statements suggest that Saxe believed a general needed to possess both a scientific understanding of war as well as an artist’s creativity in its implementation. Saxe’s statement about generals possessing more than an understanding of drill indicates a key concept in the field of military theory. Towards the latter half of the eighteenth century, theorists differentiated between tactics and the general’s role in the war. Saxe’s ideas regarding genius and principled warfare influenced other French military theorists later in the eighteenth century.

Jacques-François de Chastenet, the Marquis de Puységur, also contributed to military theory. Puységur attempted to further develop the general’s role in warfare as discussed by Saxe earlier in the century. He sought to make warfare a more precise endeavor by identifying the constants that governed it.\(^\text{13}\) Believing that the campaigns of the great captains of military

\(^{11}\) Saxe, \textit{Mes Rêveries}, 2:145.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 1:5.

history held the secrets of war, he used a historical approach to articulate military theory in *The Art of War by Rules and Principles*. Ancient commanders such as Caesar and Alexander receive treatment alongside Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, the Vicomte de Turenne. Puységur then expounds on the correct organization and maneuver of units on the battlefield, followed by a mock campaign between the Seine and the Loire that he analyzes in detail. Puységur’s history-based approach to military theory led him to express his own theories on how to most effectively arrange and move units on the battlefield.

Lancelot Turpin, the Comte de Crissé, argues that the principles of war remained difficult to identify because of the different circumstances that changed their application. In his *Essay on the Art of War*, he posited that great generals possessed a sense of genius, which he believed consisted of *sang froid* and the *coup d’oeil*. However, genius could be overcome through a deliberate study of the art of war. After delving into significant detail regarding how to march an army in different types of terrain, he conceded that these dispositions depended on the situation. Nevertheless, a commander had to ensure that his separate columns could support one another while ensuring that they remained able to enter camp at the same time and without confusion. Crissé’s ideas portended the ideas of later theorists who would fully develop his concepts on organizing and arranging troops while on the march.

Prussian monarch Frederick II articulated his ideas on the art of war in his *Instructions to his Generals*, which he wrote in 1747 as an instructional document for senior officers serving in the Prussian army. The work underwent revision in 1748, when it was re-titled *General Principles of War*, before being circulated to the king’s heir, Crown Prince Frederick William. In 1753, Frederick sent fifty copies of it to the best officers of his army. Fearing its capture, the

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15 Ibid., 1:81-82.
king forced recipients to swear they would not take it into the field and would return it to him in a sealed condition. Despite this, the Austrians found a copy on a captured Prussian general in 1760 and published a version of the manuscript in 1761. Based on the strict secrecy Frederick dictated, he clearly valued the document for the theories it contained.16

Frederick’s Instructions buttressed earlier concepts regarding the division of military theory into art and science. Frederick supported the concept that a unique talent for war existed. He defined this ability as the coup d’oeil, or master’s glance, which could only be gained through experience rather than instruction. Frederick also articulated that certain principles existed in war. He instructed his commanders in ‘grand tactics’ and the higher levels of war throughout the book, espousing specifics and opinions on many types of operations. Despite the gems presented in his text, the vaunted discipline and tactics of his army served as his legacy to Europe. The emphasis on the Prussian army’s bi-annual maneuvers contributed to this tactical fixation. A Prussian officer could make or break his career during these exercises, which required an absolute mastery of drill. Officers who failed at these tasks ran the risk of immediate dismissal by the king. The stern and unforgiving nature of these maneuvers instilled a rigid and myopic focus on the intricacies of regimental drill into the Prussian officer corps. The German state’s obsession with tactical superiority heavily influenced later military theorists who struggled to find a means of ending Prussian military dominance.17

To the French, finding an answer to the Prussian problem involved developing a form of tactics that challenged their system’s firepower while facilitating the naturally energetic French constitution. Similar to works published by Puységur and Crissé, Maizeroy’s Theory of War and

Tactical courses, theoretical, historical and practice, primarily focused on the correct organization of armies and the doctrines used in their employment. However, he expanded beyond tactics and divided the art of war into three levels – the tactical, the grand tactical, and the dialectic, or strategic. He describes the dialectic as the highest level of war, defining it as a combination of time, place, means, different interests, a consideration of the other two levels of war, and a consideration of the current circumstances. At the end of Theory of War, he attempted to identify the timeless principles of the dialectic in a set of analyses examining the campaigns of Henri IV, Claude Louis Hector de Villars, and Turenne. Maizeroy’s identification of a principled approach to the general’s role in war marked him as different from the earlier theorists who emphasized the importance of military genius in a commanding general.

Despite Maizeroy’s unique insights, the debate over tactical principles continued to dominate the conversation in France during the late eighteenth century. The outcome of this debate can be perceived in the successful career of Jacques-Antoine-Hippolyte, the Comte de Guibert. His ideas regarding the mixed order of battle provided an answer to the deep versus thin tactical debate. Proponents of the deep order advocated that columns should compose the primary tactical formation. Using speed, these formations would close with the enemy and depend on their bayonets and shock action to defeat the enemy. In contrast, promoters of the thin order maintained the superiority of linear formations that maximized firepower. Guibert struck a middle ground between the two, advocating that both techniques possessed advantages. He proposed a mixed order, which would use both formations at the battalion level. This idea formed the basis of his General Essay of Tactics. Guibert served on a conseil de guerre in 1787 that Louis XVI called for the purposes of revisiting French tactics. His Essay informed the

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18 Paul Gideon Joly de Maizeroy, Theory of War (Lausanne: Depéns de la Societé, 1777), lxxxv-lxxxvii, c-cii.
19 Ibid., 301-304.
provisional manual of tactics in 1788, which eventually became the Manual of 1791. Guibert’s contributions to the tactical debate cannot be understated.

Yet Guibert’s ideas on tactics informed his concept of ‘grand tactics,’ which took advantage of the new mobility afforded by his synthesis of the deep or thin orders. He quoted Saxe, who wrote that the secret of war existed in a soldier’s legs. The bulk of the second volume of the *General Essay* discusses specifics on maneuvering and fighting on the battlefield. Guibert advocated use of the division, which consisted of no less than twelve but no more than twenty-four battalions of infantry. This size enabled an officer to remain in control of the unit while ensuring that an army maintained mobility. He further argued that an army’s artillery should be divided between a large artillery reserve and an attachment of guns to each division, making them more formidable on the battlefield. This organization enabled a force to march in any direction, establish a camp, or transition into battle. In battle, Guibert proposed the oblique order, which engaged the enemy in certain places along the front while maintaining a reserve to eventually break a weak point in the line. To train soldiers in tactics and maneuvers, Guibert demonstrated incredible foresight by recommending the creation of training camps where soldiers and officers trained together. In tandem with his theme of mobility, Guibert advocated living off the land and forcing war to pay for itself. Guibert’s ideas represented the culmination of military theory at the end of the eighteenth century. The creation of the division, the importance of artillery, and the role of mobility became the hallmarks that characterized the French style of campaigning throughout the Napoleonic era.

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22 Ibid., 2:25-27, 33. Guibert also argued that armies should consist of three infantry divisions.
23 Ibid., 2:51.
24 Ibid., 2: 70-76.
25 Ibid., 2:184.
Pierre de Bourcet offered a complementary military theory to Guibert’s that also influenced the French style of war. He wrote his *Principles of Mountain Warfare* while teaching at a staff school in Grenoble. Bourcet argued that units should advance along separate axes while remaining within supporting distance of one another. By keeping them apart, an army commander could conceal his intentions from the enemy while keeping these detachments within supporting distance of each other. This technique also served to mass as many troops as possible at one point at the exact same time. Such a distribution of forces became known as the *bataillon carré* during the Napoleonic era, a diamond-shaped formation that enabled the French to concentrate and maneuver quickly. Bourcet also presented some ideas in waging both offensive and defensive methods of warfare. In the offense, he argued that deception served as an attacker’s best gambit. A general could mask the true direction of the attack by maintaining magazines at certain points and conducting false troop movements. All this served to fool a defending opponent from successfully blocking an attacker’s advance. In the defense, Bourcet believed that a determined enemy would inevitably penetrate a defender’s line. An active opposition characterized by a mobile detachment of troops made a defense line more flexible and offered it more depth. Bourcet’s ideas strongly influenced Napoleon and his style of warfare.

Henry E. H. Lloyd represented one of the few English-speaking military theorists of the eighteenth century. In the Preface to his *History of the Late War in Germany*, he affirmed the division between the art and science of war. Similar to other theorists of his time, he believed that the principles of war remained constant while their application required an adaptation to circumstance. Commanding generals possessed the responsibility for adapting these rules to

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varying conditions, which required both an educated mind and an innate sense of genius. He resembles Guibert in his emphasis on the quick and organized march, advocating rapid maneuver as the means of achieving victory.\textsuperscript{28} Lloyd also coined the term line of operation, a phrase that described the tether that tied an army to its logistical and communications base. Lloyd’s concept of military strategy centered on protecting or attacking this line.\textsuperscript{29} Lloyd’s idea regarding the line of operation reveals an advance in military theory toward the end of the eighteenth century.

A survey of eighteenth century military theory indicates several trends. First, the tactical debate on arranging and maneuvering troops dominated the field. Tactical innovation received the most attention in the dialogue of eighteenth century military theory. The field of ‘grand tactics,’ or the maneuver of divisions, naturally emerged from the discussions on small unit tactics. Guibert and Bourcet’s ideas represented the most advanced state of tactical theory at the end of the eighteenth century. Second, theorists differed in their perceptions of war beyond ‘grand tactics,’ or the general’s role in warfare. The importance of a general’s genius and experience served as a easy answer for many theorists. Others synthesized the concept of ‘military science’ with genius by claiming that universal principles required a certain level of talent to apply them. Maizeroy suggested otherwise, identifying the exclusive domain of generalship as the dialectic, a yet unidentified body of knowledge. However, agreement on a general’s responsibilities and characteristics remained undeveloped. Though imperfect, these works on military theory represented a means for officers to learn more about their profession beyond the limited scope of their own experiences.

Despite this critical shortcoming, the ever expanding number of treatises and texts on military theory demonstrated an understanding of the increasingly technical aspect of war, at least by the authors. The weight of theoretical works should have impressed on Europe the need for a better educated officer corps more dedicated to its vocation. Yet the social norms and established practices that governed European society remained opposed to this concept. A discussion of the sad state of eighteenth century military education demonstrates that the demands posed by military theory made no significant impact on the preparation and training of officers.

Upon entry into the military, practical training characterized the bulk of a regimental officer’s initiation into the military lifestyle. In good units, freshly commissioned officers spent the majority of their time mastering the intricacies of drill. Different countries conducted this according to their own customs. In Prussia, all young officers spent time as enlisted soldiers before being advanced into the officer ranks. Once promoted, they continued to educate themselves by living a military lifestyle and reading regulations.30 In Great Britain, the regimental commander held the responsibility for instructing his junior officers in their duties, which consisted chiefly of drill.31 Those states that still remained closely tied to the regimental proprietor system typically focused on tactical instruction but often lacked a means of enforcing a consistent standard that applied to units as a whole. In Austria, senior officers sometimes did not ensure that their junior officers knew the commands necessary to drill their troops. Even after Empress Maria Theresa made serious efforts to instill technical proficiency into her army,

31 Richard Glover, Peninsular Preparation: The Reform of the British Army, 1795-1809 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 194-197. Glover discounts the English treatises on the higher military theory of war, claiming that British officers frequently travelled to the Continent to study other militaries on their way of war.
the culture of the officer class remained decidedly against it. Unfortunately for Russia, Tsar Peter III’s Charter of Liberties ended the practice of forcing young officers to appear before their regiments. He enacted this as a conciliatory measure toward the nobility, entrusting families to personally oversee the education of their sons so as to prepare them for their future military responsibilities. As a result, many young men entered their regiments without having spent a day in its ranks. This method seriously damaged the competency of the Russian officer corps. Such practices demonstrate that a European officer’s preparation typically consisted of hands-on experience with a focus on small unit maneuver.

In addition to certifying tactical competence, some militaries ensured that junior officers also possessed a working knowledge of garrison and administrative duties. General James Peter Wolfe’s Instructions to Young Officers established a number of responsibilities beyond the practice of drill. Wolfe advocated that new leaders be present at roll call to become familiar with their men. He states that this practice would assist young officers in knowing those soldiers “whom it will be necessary to keep a strict hand over.” He also advocates giving these young officers other responsibilities, including barracks inspection, observing the disbursement of pay, supervising meal preparation, and inspecting uniforms and equipment. Making a young officer responsible for his soldiers trained him in the mundane duties that ensured readiness in the enlisted ranks.

33 Christopher Duffy, Russia’s Military Way to the West (London: Routledge, 1981), 140; Alexander Mikaberidze, The Russian Officer Corps in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1792-1815 (New York: Savas Beatie, 2005), xvi-xx. Tsar Peter I implemented the practice of pulling young noblemen away from their families at a young age for service in the army, which proved unpopular in the long term.
Although hands-on experience continued to function as the primary means of preparing officers for war, many states recognized that the technical nature of war necessitated new methods in preparing officers for service. The appearance of military academies in Europe in the second half of the eighteenth century indicates that many states made serious efforts to prepare officers for entry into the military vocation. At first, the highly technical aspects of military engineering and artillery required national institutions designed to prepare officers for these fields. However, the growing consensus within the field of military theory demanded that all officers receive some form of education. Yet for various reasons, these organizations did not reach their full potential during the period. Their curriculums remained lackluster, with most providing a secondary level of education at best. In addition, most of Europe refused to accept these institutions as a prerequisite for an officer’s commission. Static social conditions and pedagogical shortcomings precluded military academies from making a greater impact on the European officer corps.

The French founded the École Militaire in 1750 with the purpose of developing an elite class of officers. In concert with the military theory of the period, the École placed mathematics at the center of its curriculum. David Bien has posited that the focus on math functioned as a means to counter the liberalizing influence of humanities-based instruction that ruined a cadet’s suitability for a military career. Unfortunately, the school’s efforts to mold an officer corps bred from youth for military service fell short. The École inculcated its student body with a very strict sense of internal discipline. Two volumes of regulations governed the daily life of cadets, dictating how and when to dress themselves, items to share with fellow cadets, and how to eat. Moreover, the regulations forbade the use of nicknames and even forced the cadets to ask

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36 Other subjects included language, fencing, horsemanship, history, drawing, etiquette, and geography.
permission to relieve themselves. Upon graduation, this discipline made them unable to relate to their peers or subordinates. Complaints from the army characterized the school’s products as unpersonable and unable to easily integrate into their regiments. In 1776, the state disbanded the École and delegated responsibility for educating officers to small provincial schools spread across the country.\(^{37}\)

The Austrians formally established the Theresan military academy at Wiener Neustadt in 1751. Through her instrument, Count Leopold von Daun, Empress Maria-Theresa sought to build a more professional officer corps loyal to her and more knowledgeable about its profession. However, the military academy encountered resistance from Austria’s aristocratic class. The reluctance of the high Austrian nobility to send their offspring to Wiener Neustadt for formal indoctrination derived from feudal bias. Accepting the monarch’s efforts to assert control over her officer corps via education implied that the right to command derived from merit and talent. Accustomed to the privilege being derived from their aristocratic origins, the nobility perceived this as a dangerous precedent that threatened the social stability of the Hapsburg Empire. Instead of serving as a gateway for all officers into the military, the Wiener Neustadt academy functioned as a commissioning agent for poorer nobles and bourgeois candidates. Only thirty percent of the cadets attending the military academy descended from the Austrian high and middling nobility.\(^{38}\) Additionally, between 1757 and 1897, the sixty most reputable families of Austria sent only seventy-seven pupils to the academy. Of those seventy-seven, only seven achieved the rank of general officer.\(^{39}\) Although the academy produced graduates of quality,


their low social status and small numbers precluded a complete professionalization of the Austrian military. The reticence of the Austrian aristocracy to commit to the new military ideal demonstrates the power of social tradition over reform-based initiatives.40

In contrast to the French and Austrian academies, Prussian institutions succeeded in one aspect but failed in others. Between 1763 and 1806, four independent cadet institutions and the Military Orphans’ Home at Potsdam offered schooling to officer candidates in Prussia. The Prussians managed to utilize their several academies more fully than their Austrian peers. During the eighteenth century, one-third of Prussian officers received an education at the Berlin Cadet Corps. However, the schools did not coordinate their curriculums and the instruction remained poor. Prussian cadets spent a significant amount of time performing drill-related tasks rather than engaging in classroom activities. Although these institutions demonstrated improvement in the 1790s, the reforms failed to qualitatively change the Prussian officer corps. Inadequate instruction precluded the positive effects of an education from fully permeating the Prussian military.41

Peter the Great established the first Russian military academies in the early eighteenth century. In 1731, he founded the Russian Noble Cadet Corps to serve as a general commissioning institution for the Russian army. However, this institution proved inadequate in ensuring a solid education. By 1811, thirty-four percent of Noble Cadet Corps graduates could only read and write. Additionally, military subjects such as engineering, topography, and tactics

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appeared as the least studied topics among officers at the outset of the French invasion of Russia in 1812. Imperfect curriculums precluded a more educated officer corps from emerging in both Prussia and Russia during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Eighteenth century Europe proved unready to accept concepts regarding military theory and formal education into its military establishments. Despite the demand for a reassessment of the skills necessary to be a military officer, no meaningful shift occurred in the practices of the period. Huntington’s concept of a pre-professional institution defines European militaries of the 1700s. The armies not only functioned as war fighting organizations, but also as bastions of aristocratic privilege and social standing. Although the weight of military theory demanded a more professionalized officer corps, societal and institutional resistance of ancien régime Europe simply rejected any advancement in formal learning. This explains why many attempts at implementing educational requirements for military leaders failed.

The promotions processes of the great powers of Europe illustrate the pre-professional identity of eighteenth century militaries. The path to an officer’s commission in eighteenth century Europe depended on a candidate’s social background. Young gentlemen entered the upper castes of military society due to their noble lineage and a familial tradition of military service. In Great Britain, a heritage of military vocation usually determined whether a young gentleman would seek a military career. Consequently, the British officer corps consisted chiefly of men emerging from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. By the end of the eighteenth century, a candidate applying for a commission in the British army required a recommendation from a field rank officer who could vouch for the candidate’s suitability. British regiments typically developed an informal mentorship program, where an older officer would usually care

42 Mikaberidze, *The Russian Officer Corps in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*, xxiii-xxxi.
for a tyro subaltern. These mentors often knew the young man’s parents or had served with other members of his family. The French championed similar values regarding the proper upbringing for an officer. As demonstrated by the Ségur ordinance of 1781, the military valued a noble background for its officer candidates. In the eyes of conservatives, the French army stood only to gain if every officer possessed the values and education afforded to young noblemen raised into the military service as opposed to wealthy bourgeois roturiers who entered the service without this grounding. The socioeconomic statuses of French and British officers reflected an aristocratic tradition buttressed by a strong family record of martial service.

Other nations created an outright military caste by fiat. Frederick William of Prussia engineered a society where the nobility had two options: either administer their lands or serve in the army. During his reign (1640-1688), Frederick intended to control the Junker nobility through mandatory military service. He conducted a census of noble youths eligible for service and forced their attendance at the Noble Cadet Corps in Berlin. The Junker class eventually relented and came to dominate the Prussian officer corps in the eighteenth century. Though non-noble officers did manage to receive commissions during the Seven Years War, pre and post war censuses of the Prussian officer corps reveal an anti-bourgeois bias. In May 1739, only 11 of 211 field officers in the Prussian army came from non-noble origins. After the Seven Years War, the Prussian Army underwent a purge that removed these officers from service altogether.

Peter the Great attempted to create a devoted Russian officer caste consisting of landed aristocrats. During his reign, he mandated that all nobles serve in the army. The Charter of Liberties diluted the power of this law in 1762, but the aristocracy still perceived an officer’s career as a proper pursuit for their social class. Non-nobles could seek an appointment but regiments overwhelmingly comprised of aristocratic officers held the power to refuse them admission. Those bourgeois who did manage to receive a commission often fell prey to politics that dead-ended their careers. They frequently waited much longer for promotion, and the noble patents bestowed on them for their service did not pass to their offspring.\textsuperscript{47} For Russia as well as Prussia, the military remained a feudal institution reserved for the hereditary nobility.

Similar to other European militaries, the nobility remained the dominant social caste inside Austria. Regimental proprietors possessed the right to command by virtue of their wealth and aristocratic background. These conditions can be traced to the \textit{Inhaber} system, where the regimental commander effectively owned his unit. Empress Maria Theresa made it possible for non-noble officers to advance into the noble social class after thirty years of service but this policy did not end upper class dominance of the Austrian officer corps. Of those officers applying for nobility after their thirty years of service, 15.5\% served as senior staff officers at the rank of lieutenant colonel and colonel. Of the remainder, over 50\% held the rank of captain in the infantry or cavalry. Despite the promise of social mobility, Austrian non-nobles clearly encountered a glass ceiling during their service.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{47} Mikaberidze, \textit{The Russian Officer Corps in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars}, xxxvii.
Huntington’s concept of pre-professionalism characterizes not only the commissioning process, but also the internal promotions of Europe’s eighteenth century militaries. Several nations in Europe employed the purchase system as a means for promotion. This practice originated out of the military entrepreneur system, where an officer’s personal wealth assisted in equipping, training, and feeding his unit. In Great Britain, the purchase system functioned as a pension that ensured an officer’s retirement plan. When an officer no longer desired to serve for one reason or another, he could easily sell the commission to another. This created a voluntary officer corps fuelled by personal ambition. The process also served as a safeguard against monarchical usurpation of power. Since the Glorious Revolution, the British feared a standing army loyal only to the king.49 A British officer owned his commission, which ensured that the monarch could not exert an undue amount of influence over the military without fear of inciting unrest in the army’s leadership. In this way, the British army functioned as a weight in the balance of power between the British nobility and their monarch. The purchase system in Britain emerged as much from practicality as it did from the island nation’s cultural aversion to standing armies.50

Contrasting the British system, the French employed the purchase system as a means to ensure an officer’s loyalty to the king. For centuries, the French monarch lacked the financial means to support his army singlehandedly. In response, he co-opted his nobility into assuming some of the fiscal burden of war. Commanders became not only accountable for their unit’s readiness, but also responsible for furnishing uniforms and other necessities to their troops. A

49 See John Childs, *The Army, James II, and the Glorious Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980). Childs discusses James II’s (1633-1688) efforts to build a professional English army. James’s efforts triggered England’s phobia of standing armies, which led to his removal from the throne and replacement by William III. This incident demonstrates the power of the English system of government over the agency of the British monarch.
price on a commission ensured that an officer possessed the funds necessary to support his unit out of his own pocket. It also guaranteed an officer’s loyalty to the monarch. As all officers bought their commissions from the king, they owed their office and their loyalty to him. Should that aristocrat prove disloyal, his investment would be forfeit to the crown. This concept helps explain why French officers perceived loyalty to the king as the most important aspect of their career. Thus, personal service to the king helped define an officer’s worth to his peers and superiors.  

Yet the purchase system clearly had its flaws, as demonstrated by the reform efforts in both France and Britain. Reform sought to end the worst abuses of the process in order to ensure an equal chance at promotion and a requisite level of experience before advancement. In Britain, Kings George I and II passed royal writs that prohibited the purchase of the next rank without first possessing the previous rank. This meant that a lieutenant could not leapfrog to major without serving as a captain. The writs also prevented a top-heavy rank structure by forcing officers to await an opening at the next rank. In the long term, these laws granted George III an officer corps that possessed a relatively level amount of experience across the respective ranks.  

In contrast, France proved unsuccessful in reforming its promotions process. The conseil de la guerre reviewed a reform project in 1787 which noted that officers needed to display no real

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competence to be promoted in the French army. The financial weakness of the state meant that the king could neither afford to buy back these commissions nor fund his own army. French officers continued to jump through the ranks without the experience necessary to ensure adequate performance at the next grade. Abuses of patronage and purchase further weakened the officer corps, as demonstrated by the existence of child company commanders. French military reform eventually came but at a serious price. The fires of the Revolution swept the purchase system away altogether but also caused a mass exodus of qualified officers. Rather than entirely restructure their systems, France and Britain strove to amend the worst issues plaguing their respective promotions processes.

The seniority system functioned as the other dominant promotions process in eighteenth century Europe. In Prussia, advancement worked almost exclusively through seniority. During Frederick the Great’s reign (1740-1786), an officer who served loyally could hope to see a promotion at some point in his career. Although the system ensured experience, it did not guarantee competency. The practice of dismissing an officer for incompetence existed but it served to remove the worst performers rather than reward the best. In addition, the seniority system possessed the significant drawback of aging the high command. By 1806, 166 of the 244 senior officers in service were over the age of sixty. Only thirteen of these men were under the age of fifty. In theory, the seniority system offered an effective counterpoint to the purchase system by guaranteeing an equitable chance at promotion while ensuring experience. Yet

53 Despite this finding, the conseil remained devoted to choosing senior officers based on the decision of the king. After some deliberation, the council chose to continue selecting these officers based on the monarch’s favor versus seniority or peer review. The council reported: “An army may be compared to a circle which the Prince occupies in the center. All corps, and each individuals in these corps, placed along the points of the circumference, are connected to him by rays of hope for advancement.” See Smith, “Normalization: Professionalizing the Army in Old Regime France," 391.
54 Lynn, Giant of the Grand Siècle : The French Army, 1610-1715, 276.
55 Clemente, For King and Kaiser, 4. Clemente notes that the Prussian officer corps functioned as more of a social security system for elderly officers than an institution designed to fight.
seniority-based promotions systems did not ensure competence unless a means of removing substandard officers existed alongside them.56

Austria struggled to instill loyalty to the dynasty in the officer corps through reforms in its promotion system. Under the *Inhaber* system, the regimental commander wielded unilateral power over his regiment, including the authority to singlehandedly promote an officer independent of central authority. The Austrian monarchy made several efforts in the eighteenth century to end this. Its reforms can be characterized as an effort to pull promotions out of the *Inhaber*’s hands and regulate them through a centralized process. Prince Eugene of Savoy, General George Browne, Charles VI, and Maria Theresa all sought to limit the practice of commission purchases, which they viewed as detrimental to professionalism. In 1766, the *Inhaber* lost the ability to appoint an officer above the rank of captain. Their recommendations for junior officer promotions would henceforth be sent to the *Hofkriegsrat*, which oversaw a systematized purchase system and held authority over senior staff officer appointments. Retiring officers could still sell their promotions but only through sanction by the monarch. Ideally, officers should have been promoted for seniority or merit based on a regimental commander’s recommendation, with a strict financial transaction occurring between the *Hofkriegsrat* and that officer. Yet some commanders circumvented this system by recommending officers who bribed them with gifts, preventing an officer corps loyal to the monarch and the state from taking root in the eighteenth century.57 The Austrian military attempted to implement a more impartial promotions process but failed due to the inability of the monarchy to substantively change the culture of the *Inhaber* system.

Russia’s promotion system proved the least efficient in all of Europe. Reforms attempted but failed to reduce corruption within the army. In 1742, Empress Elisabeth decreed that all promotions be conducted based on seniority and merit, with an examination system determining an officer’s qualification for advancement. Unfortunately, the culture of the Inhaber system precluded this new policy from taking effect. Regimental commanders retained their power over promotions to the rank of captain. The practice of commissioning infants continued and some children advanced through the ranks without ever spending a day with their regiment. A serious flaw in the system can be perceived in the practice of transferring regiments to achieve seniority. Although advancement occurred at the regimental level, an officer’s seniority remained transferrable throughout his career in the army. A junior captain in one regiment could transfer to another regiment and place himself above other captains in line for the next promotion to major. This practice resulted in officers frequently moving during their career, damaging the cohesiveness of Russian regiments. Thus, the Russian promotion system rewarded quick paperwork and currying favor rather than experienced and competent officers.58

Selection for high command in European armies operated under a set of parameters completely different from the regimental promotion process. Ancientmonarchical phobias of Caesarism plagued the minds of eighteenth century rulers. Ensuring loyalty and close ties to the sovereign remained an important consideration when choosing a military commander. These fears led monarchs to choose men with distinguished family lines who would both command respect and remain loyal to the crown. Thus, social rank qualified an officer for the distinction of high command during the eighteenth century. This practice can be observed by conducting a brief census of several commanders of eighteenth century armies. Frederick II’s successor,

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58 Duffy, Russia’s Military Way to the West, 148; Mikaberidze, The Russian Officer Corps in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, xvii-xxiii.
Frederick William II, abdicated his responsibility as *Feldherr* to two members of the high nobility: Charles William Ferdinand, the Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg, and General Wichard Joachim Heinrich von Möllendorf. Both descended from the high nobility and ran the army through the institution of the *Oberkriegs-Collegium*. Indeed, the Duke of Brunswick continued to serve and commanded the Prussian forces at Valmy in 1792 and then again at Jena-Auerstedt in 1806. The practice of appointing and promoting high nobles to administer and lead the Prussian military continued well into the nineteenth century.\(^{59}\)

The Austrian and French militaries also turned to the high nobility to lead their respective forces. During Maria Theresa’s reign, the higher generals included five princes of Esterhazy, four princes of Lobkowitz, and six counts of Colloredo while a member of the Harrach family occupied the Chancellor’s position of the *Hofkriegsrat*. Of the eighty-eight *feldmarschall-leutnants* at the turn of the nineteenth century, only fifteen officers came from the ‘service nobility.’\(^{60}\) In France, a specific set of families served the French king in the highest positions of the army. From 1700 to 1715, 65.7% of officers holding the rank of lieutenant general descended from titled nobility. Additionally, 127 families that provided one general for the royal army would send at least one more to serve in high office. During Louis XIV’s reign (1643-1715), 128 new families joined this list. Yet this trend of social mobility slowed during the eighteenth century. Between 1715 and 1789, only twenty-one new families sent their sons to

\(^{59}\) Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army*, 29-32; Duffy, *The Army of Frederick the Great*, 143-44.  
\(^{60}\) Duffy, *The Army of Maria Theresa*, 24, 33-34; Rothenberg, "Nobility and Military Careers: The Habsburg Officer Corps, 1740-1914," 182-83. The rank of *feldmarschall-leutnant* equated to roughly a lieutenant general who usually commanded a division.
lead troops at the highest levels. Consequently, the appointment of the high nobility to senior commands appears as a common theme across many of the states of Europe.

In selecting field commanders, Great Britain possessed a tradition that differed from the rest of Europe. The political tradition of Great Britain can be characterized as a power sharing arrangement between the monarch and Parliament. Consequently, the ability of an army officer to garner political support from the legislature played a strong role in his chances for high office. This reflects the experience of John Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough, during his command of British forces during the War of the Spanish Succession. His connections with Parliament granted him the capability to draw funds to support his army and maintain discipline over his officer corps. The reduced power of the British monarchy created an environment in which political connections to the national legislature played a greater role in a selection for high command than loyalty to the sovereign.

An examination of European promotions processes demonstrates that merit and proficiency ranked below an officer’s wealth and seniority in their selection for advancement. The weak authority of the sovereign in many states prohibited any type of change. This allowed local practices and corruption to remain relatively untouched throughout most of the eighteenth century. Those reforms that achieved success should not be characterized as radical movements championing more modern characteristics such as merit or competence. Rather, they reflected a conservative, gradualist movement that aimed at improving the existing systems. Senior officer selections possessed a set of parameters altogether different from regiment-level promotions.

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62 Mikaberidze, *The Russian Officer Corps in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars*, xxxvii-xliv. The Russians possessed practices similar to Prussia and Austria but the court’s decision to admit non-Russian officers without qualification damaged the reputation and morale of the Russian officer corps.
Although many senior commanders took their duties quite seriously, their commitment or competence did not function as the primary concern when a monarch or council selected them. Instead, their loyalty and political palatability made them eligible for high command. Despite efforts at reform, promotion and selection for command clearly demonstrate pre-professional characteristics.

European militaries functioned as both social establishments and combat organizations. Commissioning standards demanded that an officer candidate possess a noble background and at least a familial heritage of service. Promotions processes placed competence as a virtue secondary to either wealth or seniority. Complete reforms of purchase systems failed due to the financial weakness of the state, which could not afford to support its regiments or its officers’ pensions. Seniority-based promotions removed the relative unfairness of purchase by assuring officers that they would be advanced based on their years of service and not their pocketbook, yet even this process did not ensure that the best and brightest rose to the top. Appointments to general operated under parameters separate from the rest of the military. Social rank and loyalty to the central political authority proved at least as important as experience and merit in selecting a commanding general. Combined with the inertia of tradition and the weakness of sovereign authority, these circumstances precluded an officer corps dedicated to technical and tactical competence from emerging during this period. Failed efforts at establishing fully accepted military academies in response to the more technical nature of war provides further support for this argument. Historical data supports Huntington’s concept of a preprofessional European military.

France took the first full step forward toward a more professionalized officer corps during the French Revolution. The Revolution overturned all the social requirements that
blocked the emergence of a professionalized officer corps. Officers no longer required a distinguished social background to enjoy a successful military career. Yet this event did not result in a completely professionalized French officer corps, especially within the high command. As this chapter demonstrates, no existing systems in France regularly produced quality officers grounded in military theory. Bereft of this system and blinded by the revolutionary fervor of their time, revolutionary governments destroyed the collective experience and knowledge of the *ancien régime* officer corps without having a solid concept of how to replace it. Generals proceeded to receive appointments based on new social and political standards, as well as their success at preceding levels of responsibility. A professionalized military inside Europe remained on the distant horizon.
CHAPTER 3
THE REVOLUTION AND THE CREATION OF A NEW FRENCH GENERALATE

The social and political upheaval of the French Revolution made a tremendous impact on the French officer corps. Previously limited to aristocrats and wealthy bourgeois, the Revolution manhandled the institution into conformance with the revolutionary ideals of liberté, égalité, and fraternité. The purchase of commissions ended, removing a fiscal restriction that limited the promotion of poorer officers. Additionally, the elimination of social requirements for entry into the officer corps generated the possibility that a soldier’s career would be checked only by their personal abilities. These new regulations offered fresh opportunities to experienced non-commissioned officers and poor nobles after many experienced noble officers emigrated following the king’s flight to Varennes in 1791. This opportunistic and heretofore disadvantaged group injected vigor and enthusiasm into the army at a critical point during the Revolution, when Europe turned against France. The Revolution transformed the officer corps from an institution of noble entitlement into an organization that melded together different social groups under the banner of La Patrie.

Although the changes to the social criteria in officer promotion and recruitment dramatically transformed the ranks of the French army during the Revolution, it came at a serious price. The French high nobility provided experienced commanders during the ancien régime, and the new revolutionary governments continued to depend on them. The defection of Charles François Dumouriez in April 1793 changed this, triggering a purge of aristocratic officers that climaxed in September 1793. Between 1793 and 1794, overturn in the army’s high command reached an all-time high. The single-minded determination of sans-culotte and radical Jacobins to remove aristocrats from the army deprived the officer corps of decades of
experience. To replace these commanders, many generals received appointments with little consideration given to their qualifications. By the coup of thermidor in 1794, conditions reasserted themselves for a more deliberate approach to the appointment of commanders. Seniority, experience, and a reduction in anti-noble rhetoric enabled a more competent and politically tenable cadre of generals to emerge by 1798 and 1799. This chapter discusses the Revolution and its effect on the French high command by examining the backgrounds of the commanders appointed between 1793 and 1799, as well as the administrative processes that resulted in their appointment. It reveals that the Terror seriously damaged the experience present in the high command but that time healed these wounds and gave birth to an experienced officer corps that continued to serve France through the Consulate and the Empire.

The Revolution oversaw a paradigm shift in the relationship between governmental authority and the military high command. At the calling of the Estates General in 1789, authority over the army still resided in the hands of Louis XVI. Ancien régime officers typically possessed an unquestioning loyalty to the king, which defined their commission and functioned as a key point of their self-worth. The flight to Varennes in June 1791 caused officers to question their allegiance to the revolutionary government. In the aftermath of this, the new oath forced on the officer corps made no mention of loyalty to the king. Many officers consequently viewed their obligation of service as rescinded. The abolition of the monarchy on 10 August 1792 broke the king’s authority, removing whatever lingering sense of duty remained in many officers. With their first and only obligation to service removed, many opted to leave France. Their emigration gutted the military of vital experience. In the meantime, authority over the army transitioned to the national legislature. As early as October 1791, the Legislative Assembly

1 See Bien, “The Army in the French Enlightenment: Reform, Reaction and Revolution.”
allowed its committees to inspect paperwork in the War Ministry. After war finally came in April 1792, the Assembly went further and granted the minister of war authority to replace generals who emigrated from France. By October 1792, generals received express instructions to forward their correspondence to the National Convention rather than the executive authority. In addition, the Executive Provisory Council affirmed that generals did not possess the authority to unilaterally appoint officers without consulting Paris. These new policies marked an increasingly authoritative role of the civil government over the military.

Concurrent with the power of the national legislature, anti-noble sentiment colored the government’s vision for its military. Given the high density of noblemen who still served in the army, some believed that battlefield setbacks occurred because of the aristocrats in charge. Radicals in the National Convention possessed an unyielding bias against the aristocratic class, perceiving them as dangerous and secretly conspiring against the revolutionary government. As early as 1791, Maximilien Robespierre perceived generals as counter-revolutionaries concealing malign intentions. In late January 1793, Jean Paul Marat proclaimed that no victory could be obtained without a true sans-culotte at the head of the armies. Despite the rantings of the left, the moderate Girondin party managed to maintain control over the National Convention. Their balanced approach allowed noble officers to continue to serve, providing France with badly needed experience during the early years of the War of the First Coalition.

Before its downfall, the moderate politics of the Legislative Assembly can be perceived in its selections for minister of war, who initially possessed the authority to administer the army.

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5 Ibid., 143.
Minister of War Joseph Marie Servan de Gerbey (August-October 1792) possessed a level of sympathy for the nobility which enabled *ci-devant* nobles to remain in command of France’s armies. His successor, Jean-Nicolas Pache (October 1792 – February 1793) presents the one exception to this trend. Although appointed by the Girdondin moderates who controlled the new National Convention, Pache possessed *Hébertiste* sympathies which transformed the War Ministry into an administration populated by radicals.\(^6\) Pache’s replacement, Pierre Riel de Beurnonville (February - April 1793), represented a moderate voice that offered a temporary reprieve to noble generals suffering from attacks by the radical left.\(^7\) However, the delicate balance maintained by the administration of the army depended greatly on the continued loyalty of aristocratic generals. The saga of Dumouriez and his betrayal of the French Republic illustrates the tenuous relationship between aristocrats and the revolutionary government.

The defection of *Armée du Nord* commander Dumouriez to the Austrians shocked the radical left into rejecting the concept of *ci-devant* officers serving in the French military. Prior to his defection, Dumouriez’s loyalty to the Revolution functioned as the shining example that enabled the radical left to continue supporting noblemen leading French troops. Robespierre supported both Dumouriez and Adam Philippe, the Count of Custine, in a speech to the Jacobin Club on 12 December 1792. Although he acknowledged a denunciation of these two generals, he defended them by claiming that they were not traitors and that they despised the moderate Girondists. He claimed that their love of glory served the needs of *La Patrie*.\(^8\) Robespierre’s approval gave Dumouriez enough political capital to remain untouched by Jacobin fury.

\(^6\) Ibid., 82-84.
However, this changed in April 1793. After a failed attempt to persuade his troops to support his endeavor to reinstall a Bourbon monarch onto the throne, Dumouriez and several like-minded officers fled across enemy lines. Dumouriez’s decision severed the tie between the Jacobin club and *ci-devant* officers. Previously suppressed anti-noble rhetoric exploded. The Convention demanded that Dumouriez be brought back to Paris, dead or alive. It also decreed that the new Minister of War, Jean Baptiste Noël Bouchotte, replace all officers appointed by Dumouriez. Legislators required that these new officers possess certificates of *civisme* and an adequate level of competence. Yet the radical left demanded more than a simple removal of those officers suspected of being loyal to Dumouriez. On 26 April, the Commune of Paris asked that Bouchotte continue to purge the entire army of all nobles. Noted radical Jacobin Jacques Hébert made a small speech that blamed *ci-devant* generals for defeats in the north and in the Vendée. Demanding their exclusion, he dramatically claimed that “the nobles are killing us!”

The temporary peace between the nobility and revolutionary politicians shattered.

Minister of War Bouchotte (April 1793-April 1794) and the Convention’s representatives on mission functioned as the instruments for reforming the army in accordance with revolutionary ideals. Adhering to the belief that a true republican at the head of an army would bring victory, Bouchotte attempted to strike a balance between meeting the demands for a purge of the officer corps and the need for competent officers. He recognized that replacing lower ranking officers would be relatively easy but finding suitable substitutes for generals and staff officers posed a much more difficult problem. Fortunately, Bouchotte received the authority

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from the National Convention to reinstate officers previously stripped of their rank.\textsuperscript{12} He typically chose experienced lieutenant colonels and other high ranking subordinates as replacements for generals in the field.\textsuperscript{13} Nevertheless, the radical faction in the National Convention, the Mountain, rejected what it perceived as the Minister’s half-measures. The campaign against \textit{ci-devants} in command continued throughout the months of June and July 1793. The expulsion of several notable Girondins from the National Convention on the \textit{journées} of 31 May to 2 June 1793 served to bolster the power of the Mountain within the legislature. On the night of 2 June 1793, the general council of the Department of Paris ordered that “no former noble or refractory priest shall discharge the functions of an officer or public official.”\textsuperscript{14} The rising tide of anti-noble political rhetoric continued to gain momentum in 1793.

 Concurrently, the Cordelier Club, another radical faction in the National Convention, demanded a purge of the staffs of the armies of the Republic. Supported by the Jacobins, this measure passed. Noble officers soon fell prey to ‘destitution,’ an arbitrary decree where the ministry stripped an officer of his rank and expelled him from the army. Administrative power over the military transitioned to the newly empowered Committee of Public Safety, which assumed more oversight of the army by demanding officer service records from the War Ministry.\textsuperscript{15} By July 1793, the Committee of Public Safety reached the height of its power with the ascension of Robespierre to its leadership. Although Bouchotte nominally possessed the authority to enact the Jacobin agenda, the Committee of Public Safety exercised more influence over the army.

\textsuperscript{12} Gournay, \textit{Journal Militaire, Quatrième Année, Première Partie}, 338.
\textsuperscript{13} Général Herlaut, "La Républicanisation des États-Majors et des Cadres de l'Armée Pendant la Révolution " \textit{Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française} 14 (Sept-Oct 1937): 386, 408-409.
\textsuperscript{14} Bertaud, \textit{The Army of the French Revolution}, 144.
\textsuperscript{15} Herlaut, " La Républicanisation des États-Majors et des Cadres de l'Armée Pendant la Révolution," 391-393.
September 1793 marked a turning point for the administration of the French military. The Committee of Public Safety ordered the removal of all ci-devant nobles from the army on 16 September. Relatively inexperienced appointees rapidly replaced experienced and professional generals. At first glance, the newly passed appointment standards for general officers appeared straightforward. On 28 July, the Convention affirmed the minister of war’s authority by passing a law authorizing him to provisionally replace any officer of any grade without restraint. The National Convention clarified the process for appointing generals on 24 September, stating that officers considered for promotion to general would be nominated by the minister of war for approval by the Convention. Any nominations would include information regarding the individual’s residence and “any other information that will assist the Convention in the choices presented before them.” The September 1793 laws passed by the National Convention thus reflected a reasonable and simple approach to appointing generals to command.

Unfortunately, the reality of selecting generals for command often lacked both transparency and good judgment. The appointment of representatives on mission served to fully cement the Convention’s control over the army but greatly contributed to the complexity of the promotions process. Following the Dumouriez debacle, the Convention ordered an inspection by representatives on mission and their designated appointees to ensure the readiness of the armies. Although the decree stipulated only an inspection of personnel rosters and the status of equipment, their power grew rapidly. In May 1793, the Executive Provisory Council sent the
representatives on mission very specific instructions regarding their power to dictate orders to
the military:

If they find among general officers, officers, and non-commissioned officers of all ranks, 
men unworthy of the title of Frenchmen, who are not unreservedly devoted to supporting 
equality and the Republic, they will suspend them, they will also replace them 
immediately according to the method prescribed in the law of 24 February, and if 
circumstances do not permit them to replace them according to this method, they will 
assign those military duties to a good, patriotic subordinate for no more than fifteen 
days.\textsuperscript{21}

At the end of 1793, the Committee of Public Safety eventually granted them the authority to 
unilaterally appoint one-third of all officer vacancies.\textsuperscript{22} This decree also granted the 
representatives on mission the power to appoint army commanders. The officials in these 
positions often made appointments without consulting with the War Ministry or the Committee. 
Representatives frequently placed more emphasis on political and personal consideration than 
competence when promoting officers. Their executive power continued to influence the army 
until new laws reduced their authority in 1796.

In December 1793, the Committee of Public Safety firmly usurped the power to appoint 
general officers. The execution of Hébert and the decree of 14 frimaire, Year II (4 December 
1793) enabled the Committee to take control of military administration.\textsuperscript{23} An article of the 4 
December law stated that the minister of war could not put before the National Convention any

\textsuperscript{21} Aulard, ed., Recueil des Actes du Comité de Salut Public, 4:26.
\textsuperscript{22} Bertaud, The Army of the French Revolution, 180.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 158. As a journalist and political activist, Hébert wielded significant influence over the army through his 
newspaper Père Duchesne. In this journal he declared the Committee as a group of ‘sleepwalkers’ and called for a 
change in government in early 1794. Soon after this, Hébert’s supporters incited revolt within the sans-culotte 
population of Paris over food shortages. The Committee of Public Safety arrested Hébert with other malcontents 
and presented them before a revolutionary tribunal under trumped up charges of conspiring with foreign powers 
against the government. Hébert was guillotined on 24 March 1794. His exit from the political scene also removed 
the Père Duchesne journal and its sans-culotte agenda from circulation among the troops. This allowed the 
Committee to re-establish its political dominance over the military. See Bertaud, The Army of the French 
Revolution, 136; Georges Lefebvre, The French Revolution: From 1793 to 1799, trans. by John Hall Stewart and 
nominations for général-en-chef without first submitting the names to the Committee of Public Safety for approval. Furthermore, the Ministry could not revoke the appointments of military agents serving with the armies without placing a written request before the Committee explaining its reasoning. 24 This law placed the minister in a position where questioning the Committee or by extension the representatives on mission placed him in danger of being accused of incivisme. Effectively emasculated, the selection of commanders now resided in the hands of political appointees lacking military experience.

Lazare Carnot represented the single exception to the trend of uninformed military opinion. His appointment to the Committee of Public Safety in August 1793 allowed him to use his knowledge and advice to shape Bouchotte’s nomination of commanders who would earn the approval of the Committee of Public Safety. Carnot possessed his own ideas regarding who should be selected to lead. Rather than subscribe to a strictly royalist or revolutionary agenda, Carnot subscribed to an enlightened ideal that men of intelligence should receive appointments to high command. Thus, Carnot supported the appointments of both ci-devants and bourgeois officers. 25 However, neither Carnot nor Bouchotte could influence the appointment of field commanders by the representatives on mission. By June 1794, events came to a head when he wrote a lengthy note to the representatives on mission, scolding them for their rampant abuse of power. On examining the rosters of officers, Carnot expressed his “surprise” when he found that the table of generals appointed to the armies indicated that twice as many existed as prescribed by law. Labelling the excess of officers as detrimental to the Republic, Carnot stated that it would be better if a single body possessed the authority to move and nominate generals. In the

meantime, he instructed the representatives to stop promoting officers and suggested that they forward information to the Committee about notable officers whose “republicanism” and “talent” made them worthy of high military office. He further set the conditions for remedying the problem by asking representatives to identify officers for demotion or involuntary separation. Despite these measures, the independent and unilateral authority of the representatives on mission continued to challenge Carnot in his efforts to better administer the army.

Not surprisingly, the army suffered greatly from this instability. For example, the Army of the North underwent nine changes in command after Dumouriez’s defection while the Army of the Ardennes did not fare much better, with seven generals receiving an appointment to command. A few specific examples of those generals purged during the Terror further illustrates the damage done to the military institution by politics during the tumult of that period. In May 1793, the National Convention decreed that François-Etienne Kellermann, the duke of Valmy, receive command over both the Army of the Alps and the Army of Italy, confirming Gaspard-Jean-Baptiste Brunet as commander of the Italian force under Kellermann’s supervision. These officers possessed a tremendous amount of experience dating back to the ancien régime. Kellermann served during the Seven Years War in Germany, rising to the rank of captain of dragoons. Before the outbreak of the Revolution, he achieved the rank of maréchal de camp. After the 1792 battle of Valmy, Kellermann’s sterling reputation appeared beyond reproach. In 1794, he wrote a text on how to command and lead an army titled Instructions pour

26 Aulard, ed., Recueil des Actes du Comité de Salut Public, 14:402-03. Carnot continued to request information in order to cull the officer corps of excess generals through September. See ibid., 16:497-498.
28 Gournay, Journal Militaire, Quatrième Année, Première Partie, 338.
29 The ancien régime rank of maréchal de camp transitioned to general of brigade by decree of 21 February 1793. Reference Six, Les Généraux de la Révolution et de l'Empire, 94, 104.
les troupes de la République. The work included a chapter discussing how a corps commander should conduct himself in the field.30 Brunet served during the Seven Years War as well, achieving the rank of lieutenant colonel before the calling of the Estates-General. Before receiving command of the Army of Italy, he held provisory command over the Army of the Var.31 Both men’s credentials made them obvious choices when choosing commanders during the early stages of the revolutionary wars.

Representatives-on-mission Paul Barras and Louis-Marie Stanislas Fréron ordered Brunet to send one division to support operations around British-occupied Toulon, which he refused to obey. Worse, Brunet opted to correspond with the rebels inside Toulon. The representatives subsequently ordered his arrest in August for failing to follow their directives, followed by a summary execution in November 1793. At the same time, Kellerman received word of his destitution in October 1793. Representative-on-mission Edmond Louis Alexis Dubois-Crancé successfully defended Kellermann for a brief period but could not prevent his arrest later that month. Imprisoned for one year, Kellermann finally returned to command in 1795.32 The removal of these two generals demonstrates that professional knowledge and experience mattered much less than ensuring a non-aristocratic outlook within the revolutionary officer corps.

A refusal to obey instructions affected the careers of other aristocratic military commanders. The removal and execution of Adame Phillippe, the Count of Custine, represented

30 François-Étienne-Christophe Kellermann, Instruction sur les Troupes de la République, Relativement au Service de Campagne (Nice: Chez Bouillog et Comp., 1794-1795), 60-63. The text reflects a number of contemporary opinions regarding generalship. He argues that coup d’oeil functioned as an officer’s greatest asset, giving him the ability to assess terrain accurately. Although he admits that the different situations of war cannot all be accounted for in a set of rules, he argues that general principles did exist in the conduct of war.
32 Ibid., 1:168, 2:2.
a rejection of military insubordination on the part of French civil authority. Custine’s adversarial relationship with civil authority strained the relationship between himself and the government. He once described Bouchotte as a traitor who deserved death, declaring him both stupid and incompetent. He also said that when he received a message from the Convention that he did not like, he threw it into the fire. Losing several fortified positions in the northern theater did not serve his reputation well either. Recalled to Paris in July 1793 to discuss an unrelated issue with the Committee, Custine’s trip coincided with the enemy’s capture of the fortress of Mainz. A forged document appeared authorizing the defenders to surrender the garrison, placing Custine in a very awkward position. Although the evidence surrounding him lacked true substance, his antagonistic relationship with the government placed him in a position where the Committee viewed him as expendable. The loss of his head sent a strong message to French commanders that insubordination would no longer be tolerated.

Although new commanders appointed during the Terror aligned with revolutionary rhetoric regarding a non-aristocratic background and obedience to political authority, the majority of commanders did not retain their posts beyond 1794. The price of political palatability came at the expense of competence. This can be perceived in the frequent turnover of commanders, which marks the majority of généralships selected during the period as unfit for duty. Jean-Paul Bertaud identifies these commanders as emerging from backgrounds that emphasized long experience at the regimental level. Of the generals who served in the Year II (September 1793 – September 1794), eighty-seven percent of them served in the army prior to 1789. Almost seventy percent possessed over thirteen years of experience, with almost forty-two percent having served as officers before 1789. Almost twenty-three percent served as non-commissioned officers during the ancien régime. Presumably, the remaining thirty-five percent joined the army after the outbreak of the Revolution. However, Bertaud does not discuss the issue of ensuring that non-commissioned officers and regimental officers possessed a requisite level of experience commanding large formations before their appointment. See Bertaud, The Army of the French Revolution, 178.
brigade and division commanders. On average, generals appointed in 1794 possessed only five months of experience at brigade level command. At the division level, they had only nine months of experience. A brief examination of the fortunate few who continued to serve after 1794 reveals that valuable experience mattered much less than political reliability during the Terror.

Jean-Baptiste Jourdan represented the epitome of a republican general. Catapulted from relative obscurity to command the Army of the North, he originally served as an enlisted soldier until 1788, when he received a commission as a captain of the volunteers at Limoges. Reaching the rank of lieutenant colonel in 1791, he quickly rose from general of brigade to general of division between March and May of 1793. After a tactical victory at the battle of Hondschoote, he received command of the Army of the Ardennes and eventually the Army of the North. Jourdan’s rapid rise from lieutenant colonel to army commander in two years illustrates that a lack of command experience did not preclude an officer from achieving the loftiest ranks in the armies of the Republic.

Louis-Lazare Hoche rose to command due to his political connections. Like Jourdan, he originally served as an enlisted soldier prior to the Revolution. In January 1792, Hoche received a commission as an adjutant second lieutenant in the 104th Infantry Regiment. A patriotic missive he wrote to the Committee of Public Safety enabled Committee member Georges Couthon to publically support him and earned him a position as an aide-de-camp in 1793. His

36 Reference Appendix A.
37 Six, Dictionnaire Biographique 1:608-09.
38 The following is an excerpt of Hoche’s plea, which he wrote after an order decreed that he appear before the revolutionary tribunal of Douai for defending a subordinate and allegedly having stated that the British ruled France: “Whatever my lot, may La Patrie be saved, and I will be content. But every moment the danger increases. Your generals have no plans: there is no longer a man among them capable of saving the frontier. So I ask you that I be heard, be it by the Committee or the representatives on mission. Allow me to work in a room with irons on my feet until our enemies are outside of France. I am sure to find a means of pursuing them in six weeks. Then, you may do
excellent conduct in the siege of Dunkirk endeared him to the Committee and allowed him to advance in six weeks from battalion command to army command. By December, he commanded the Army of the Moselle and Rhine due to his amicable relations with representatives on mission Marc-Antoine Baudot and Jean-Baptiste Lacoste in 1793. Although arrested in 1794, he eventually returned to command against internal revolt and died fighting in Germany in 1797. A competent commander in his own right, Hoche owed his rapid promotion to his political connections and the goodwill of the representatives-on-mission.

Jean-Charles Pichegru also emerged from the chaos of the Terror to command. A man of intelligence, he attended secondary school in his hometown of Arbois and continued his education with the Minime monks, studying philosophy. Demonstrating a talent for mathematics, he later attended the military school at Brienne-le-Château to continue his studies. He also served as an enlisted artilleryman and rose to the rank of sergeant-major by 1789. He received a commission in 1792 and a posting as lieutenant colonel of volunteers shortly thereafter. Favored by Bouchotte and representative-on-mission Louis-Antoine-Léon de Saint-Just, Pichegru received temporary command of the Army of the North when an order for

with me as you see fit.” Cited in Édouard Bergounioux, Essai sur la Vie de Lazare Hoche (Paris: Julien, Lanier et Co., 1852), 16-17.
40 Six, Dictionnaire Biographique 1:575.
41 Hoche possessed progressive ideals regarding the education of officers. Though he never received any formal education, he firmly believed in it. Prior to the Revolution, he spent a great deal of his own money buying books to educate himself on historical and theoretical topics. In 1795, he created his own system of examinations which he used to determine whether an officer deserved promotion. He expressed the importance of such in his memoir discussing the reorganization of the armies during the second amalgame in 1796. He recommended a more complete education of the officer corps in the theory and art of war. He recommended the retention of those generals without wealth while pensioning older generals. He also argued for the retention of staff officers after the purge, commenting that they gained their utility after years of experience and could not easily be replaced. See Lazare Hoche, Un Mémoire de Hoche sur la Réorganisation de Nos Armées en l’An V (Paris: R. Chapelot, 1910), 7-9; Jean-Paul Bertaud, "Le Recrutement et l'Avancement des Officiers de la Révolution," Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française 44 (1972): 524; Émile de Bonnechose, Lazare Hoche, Général En Chef Des Armées (Paris: L. Hachette, 1867), 5-6.
Jourdan’s arrest arrived. In September 1793, he received command of the Army of the Rhine. Although he served with distinction while commanding the armies of the Republic, he voluntarily left the service in 1796. After the Fructidor coup of 1797, the Directory proscribed and exiled him from France. He died under mysterious circumstances in 1804 after involving himself with the Cadoudal conspiracy, which led to his sudden death in a Parisian prison cell.

The brief biographical sketches and the compiled data of aggregate command time of 1794 army commanders reveals that the Terror removed decades of experience from the army. The creation of mass conscript armies, the emigration of a vast number of noblemen, and the rapid expansion of the war created a desperate need for experienced officers. Despite this, the National Convention, the Committee of Public Safety, and the representatives on mission opted to sacrifice experienced and trained leadership on the altar of republican virtue. As demonstrated by the fates of Custine and Brunet, martial disobedience would no longer be tolerated. Despite Kellermann’s obvious talent for command, the Committee of Public Safety removed him based on the September 1793 directive to cashier all nobles from high military office. With the expulsion of ancien régime commanders, a new type of général-en-chef appeared. Jourdan, Hoche, and Pichegru each emerged from non-noble backgrounds, serving in the army as enlisted men before receiving commissions. Although they each possessed a certain level of command experience at the regimental level, they learned the art of high level command on the job. Instead of owing their advancement to seniority or professional knowledge, they received promotions from representatives on mission due to their winning records and some form of

45 The Cadoudal plot involved the Chouan conspirator Georges Cadoudal, who re-appeared in France with the goal of assassinating First Consul Napoleon Bonaparte. The conspiracy failed, but not before implicating Pichegru and Jean-Victor Moreau as accomplices. This event led to Pichegru’s untimely death and the deportation of Moreau from France.
loyalty to the Revolution. The Terror created a new cohort of French generals tempered by the chaotic politics of the Revolution.

The coup of 9 thermidor (27 July 1794) set the conditions for a more concerted approach toward the appointment of commanders.46 Between July 1794 and the implementation of the Directory in October 1795, the army enjoyed a small respite from political interference. Jourdan, Pichegru, and Hoche continued to serve the army as commanders.47 In May 1795, Kellermann returned to active duty after being imprisoned for over a year. In addition, a few new army commanders rose from divisional level responsibilities during the last days of the National Convention. Jean-Victor-Marie Moreau, Catherine-Dominique de Pérignon, Barthélemy Louis Joseph Schérer, and Bon-Adrien Jeannot de Moncey all received their first commands after July 1794. A quick examination of these new généraux-en-chef reveals that the selection processes of the post-Terror period did not discriminate between ci-devants and non-nobles.

Moncey arose from bourgeois origins and entered the army in 1769 as an enlisted soldier. He received a commission in 1779 as a sous-lieutenant but his non-noble birth precluded a more illustrious career during the ancien régime. However, the Revolution improved his chances for greater glory. His excellent performance in the Pyrenees caught the attention of the representatives on mission, marking him as a man on the rise. In February 1794, they promoted him to general of brigade. Although he lacked seniority for such a position, the representatives elevated him to command of the Army of the Western Pyrenees in August 1794.48 He fell from

46 The following paragraphs discuss those officers appointed after the execution of Robespierre and the diminution of the Committee of Public Safety in July 1794 and 1795. Generals commanding in the Vendée will not receive treatment – most generals appointed to those commands perceived it as punishment. With the exception of a few, most officers did not rise very high after receiving the unenviable task of spilling French blood. Future Marshal of the Empire Louis Gabriel Suchet represents an exception to this rule. In addition, many commanders served in a provisory capacity and often for less than one month. Those officers also will not receive treatment. Reference Appendix A, 1793, for a spreadsheet outlining the généraux-en-chef by army.
47 Clerget, Tableaux des Armées Françaises Pendant les Guerres de la Révolution, 39.
grace in the aftermath of the coup of Fructidor (September 4, 1797), condemned for his association with royalists Pichegu, Carnot, and Amédée Willot. Later reinstated in 1799, Moncey supported the overthrow of the Directory and the Brumaire coup that placed Napoleon in power. 49 Although a competent commander in his own right, representatives on mission played a seminal role in his advancement to army command.

Pérignon possessed a background that differentiated him from his peers. Born into the country gentry in 1754, he received an education and a strong grounding in military studies. He served as an officer during the ancien régime from 1780 to 1782 but subsequently resigned his commission and returned to civilian life. At the outbreak of the Revolution, Pérignon received a commission as a lieutenant colonel in the National Guard but quickly transitioned to a political career in his hometown. Breaking from this path, he enlisted in the Legion of the Pyrenees and quickly rose to lieutenant colonel in 1792. On 18 September, representatives of the people granted him a provisional promotion to general of brigade, followed by advancement to general of division in December 1793. His opportunity for advancement came suddenly in August 1794 after an enemy shell killed army commander Jacques Coquille Dugommier. Pérignon’s capture of the citadel of San Fernando enabled him to feed his starving army and vastly improved the flagging morale of his troops. 50 His story demonstrates how a ci-devant successfully continued a career in the army during the Revolution.

Born in the Brittany region of France, Jean-Victor Moreau possessed roots in France’s middle class. For most of his young life, Moreau’s father envisioned a lawyer’s profession for him. Although capable and intelligent, Moreau never enjoyed the prospect of following in his father’s footsteps and practicing law. To the shock of his family, Moreau rejected his future

50 Chandler, ed., Napoleon’s Marshals, 404-416; Six, Dictionnaire Biographique 2:300-301.
career to fight in the Revolution. A battalion of volunteers that formed in 1789 elected Moreau as their commander; he continued to lead it during campaigns on the Belgian frontier. Due to his competence and bearing, Dumouriez granted him command of a regiment. On 20 December 1793, he received a provisory appointment to general of brigade by representatives of the people Nicolas Hentz and Florent Guiot. Impressing yet another commander, Pichegru designated him a general of division in April 1794. After the Committee of Public Safety moved Pichegru to the Army of the Rhine, he asked for Moreau to command the Army of the North in his stead. In March 1795, Moreau received confirmation as commander of the Army of the North. This marked the beginning of Moreau’s prestigious career as a général-en-chef. He continued to lead armies during the Consulate until he joined with Pichegru during the Cadoudal conspiracy of 1804. In this case, Moreau’s selection for command depended on the good graces of the representatives on mission but also foreshadowed the increasing power of serving generals to affect the careers of officers within the French army.

Schérer possessed a prestigious background as an officer in the ancien régime. He served during the Seven Years War and in foreign service prior to the Revolution. Resigning his commission, he returned to France after 1789 and accepted a commission as a captain in January 1792. He served as a staff officer until September 1793 when he received an appointment as general of brigade in the Army of the Rhine. Within four months he received another promotion to general of division as well as a transfer to the Army of the North. Recalled to Paris in October 1794, he subsequently received command of the Army of Italy on 3 November 1794 and then the Army of the Eastern Pyrenees on 3 March 1795. On 31 August, he received permanent

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51 Six, Dictionnaire Biographique 2:227.  
command of the Army of Italy. After Napoleon assumed command of the Army of Italy in 1796, Schérer took a long hiatus from the army.\textsuperscript{54} Schérer’s vast experience during the \textit{ancien régime} markedly differed from other \textit{généraux-en-chef} whose service mostly occurred during the revolutionary period.

The commanders appointed after July 1794 matched Carnot’s enlightened ideas regarding public service while remaining tied to the political realities of the period. Men of intelligence and ability received appointments to army command regardless of their social background or formal qualifications. Socially, the group represented a mix of origins. Kellermann possessed a distinctly noble background while Pérignon and Schérer originated from the poorer nobility. Moreau and Moncey both came from bourgeois or non-noble families. Collectively, a variety of military experience characterized this group. Schérer, Moncey, and Kellermann all possessed significant experience in the army during the \textit{ancien régime} but not at the levels that they commanded during the revolutionary period. Politics played a crucial role in the success of many of their careers. Each gained the attention of the representatives on mission or a higher level commander by demonstrating their prowess on the battlefield. Despite Carnot’s emphasis on careers open to talent, political necessity continued to influence the selection of general officers in the later years of the Revolution.

The Dubois-Crancé reforms of 1795 demonstrate that politics continued to affect officer appointments after the Terror. On 10 March 1795, the Commission for Armies and Dubois-Crancé received the authority to reduce the number of generals in the French army.Aligning with Carnot’s ideas regarding the appointment of commanders, Dubois-Crancé attempted reduce these numbers by employing a set of criteria aimed at making the officer corps less political and

\textsuperscript{54} Six, \textit{Dictionnaire Biographique}, 2:433-434.
more professional. The list he presented to the Convention employed a different set of words to
describe his proposed roster of generals. He avoided words like patriotism and republicanism,
instead using terms such as expertise, bravery, energy, and intelligence. Despite this attempt, the
Convention rejected Dubois-Crancé’s list for not considering enough of the generals who lost
their positions during the Terror. At this point, the issue of reforming the officer corps
degenerated into a political arm-wrestling match. Despite the initial goal of reducing officers,
the list actually increased from 310 to 450 officers by May 1795. The list then underwent further
changes that catered to political favorites. By July 1795, the reforms appointed 352 active
generals. Eighty of those on Dubois-Crancé’s ‘professional’ list did not surface on the final list
of approved appointments. The difficulty in establishing a list of generals in 1795 reveals that
politics continued to play a role in deciding command appointments.55 This can be readily
perceived in the manner in which Napoleon Bonaparte received command of the Army of Italy
in 1796.

Napoleon Buonaparte emerged from the Corsican minor nobility and possessed a
background in the royal army.56 He attended military school at Brienne before receiving
admission to the École Militaire in Paris. Commissioned into the artillery, he served under Jean
du Teil in the La Fère artillery regiment in Auxonne, France. Under the tutelage of du Teil’s
brother, Jean-Pierre, Napoleon studied military theory, mathematics, and gunnery at the École
d’Artillerie in Auxonne.57 His rise to prominence began during the siege of Toulon in September
1793, when he leapt into the position of artillery commander of the besieging force due to the

55 Howard G. Brown, "Politics, Professionalism, and the Fate of Army Generals after Thermidor," *French Historical
56 Napoleon changed his name from the Corsican ‘Buonaparte’ to the more French version of ‘Bonaparte’ at the
outset of the First Italian Campaign in 1796. He sought to make his image and reputation appear more French.
brothers subscribed to the new military theories propounded by Jacques-Antoine-Hippolyte, the Comte de Guibert,
and Phillipe de Bourcet. Their teachings made a significant impact on young Buonaparte.
influence of Antoine Christophe Saliceti, a representative on mission assigned to the Army of Italy. For the valor demonstrated in seizing Fort Mulgrave during the siege, Bonaparte received a provisory appointment as general of brigade in December 1793. By March 1794, he commanded the artillery in the Army of Italy. After he refused to serve in the Army of the West and fight in the Vendée, the Committee of Public Safety stripped him of his rank. After a period of relative unemployment, he came under the political patronage of Paul Barras. The crucial opportunity for Bonaparte to demonstrate his loyalty to the government appeared when the city of Paris rose up against the government on 13-14 Vendémiaire (5-6 October 1795).58 For his efforts in suppressing the uprising, he received orders to replace Schérer as commander of the Army of Italy. Napoleon’s story demonstrates that politics continued to play a role in determining high commanders even after the Terror.

The Constitution of the Year III (22 August 1795) shifted administrative power over the army from the National Convention and the Committee of Public Safety to the Directory. Article 288 of the new constitution decreed that power over appointments inside the military resided solely with the Directory: “The commanders in chief of the army and navy are not named except in case of war: they shall receive commissions that are revocable at the will of the executive Directory. The duration of these commissions will last for one campaign but can be extended.”59

On 1 November 1795, a set of decrees stated that vacancies for general of brigade, general of division, adjutant-generals, and chefs de brigade could only be chosen from those twenty officers

58 The passage of the Constitution of the Year III triggered an insurrection in Paris that threatened a peaceful transition of power from the Convention to the Directory. The National Guard inside the Le Peletier district defected to General Auguste Danican, who desired to march on the Tuileries palace and overthrow the Directory. The Directory entrusted Paul Barras with the responsibility of dispersing the mob, who subsequently pinned responsibility on Bonaparte. Napoleon’s employment of artillery and cavalry on the streets of Paris cleared the mob and endeared him to his political masters.

59 Quoted in Amédée de Vertrie, Le Cri Suprême, Ou Le Bleu, Le Blanc Et Le Rouge (Paris: Chez M. Lepault, 1848), 59.
Several months later, a decree passed on 13 March 1796 stated that “no promotion, advancement, or nomination of officers, war commissars, temporary commandants, or other military offices . . . shall be made without the approval of the executive Directory.” These two laws placed the authority for promotions firmly into the hands of the Directory. Indeed, the Directory managed every officer promotion during a period when French ground forces numbered from 350,000 to 400,000 men. The *Recueil des actes du Directoire exécutif* possesses a number of instances where a dizzying amount of promotions and transfers from the lowliest lieutenant to generals of division were all reviewed and approved by the Directors. For instance, on the session of 5 August 1796, the Directory oversaw the promotion, destitution, or transfer of twenty-seven separate officers at one sitting. Given that the Directory also held authority over all other aspects of governing the French Republic, the attention paid to officer promotions begs the question of how effectively the government oversaw the army when deciding the fates of its military leaders.

The Directory’s legal authority to administer the army did not translate into a better administered force. The Vendémiaire uprising weakened the Directory by delegitimizing it in the eyes of the military. In addition, the inability of the central government to maintain records of over 30,000 officers serving the French Republic necessitated that secondary and tertiary sources of information be consulted regarding promotions. In this way, considerations for political loyalty affected a nominally non-political process. The conduct of the second

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amalgame in 1796 illustrates this fact. The Directory’s Executive Council relied on the new *commissaires du pouvoir exécutif aux armées* to inform them about the politics of their generals. Special ‘morality and talent’ reports written in the field provided the Directory with some information regarding commanders. The Directory also looked to *généraux-en-chef* when considering promotions. Army commanders influenced the Directory to promote officers they desired to serve as brigade and division commanders. Hoche, Moreau, and Bonaparte each managed to persuade the Directory to support some of their suggestions for appointment. The execution of the second *amalgame* reveals that although the Directory nominally held control over the appointment of officers, the shortcomings in the bureaucratic structure necessitated a reliance on politically vulnerable sources.

The coup of Fructidor on 4 September 1797 and the conclusion of the War of the First Coalition resulted in more changes to the high command. After the intervention of the army in suppressing royalists in Paris, the Directory recast the high command between 1798 and 1799 due to the fear that the military might continue to intervene in politics. Interior armies suffered the most, losing forty of the eighty-two generals by the coup of Floréal (11 May 1798).

Pichegru’s betrayal of the Republic resulted in his deportation from France in 1797. Kellermann lost his position as commander of the Army of the Alps at the conclusion of the war. He received a new appointment as a commander of the Seventh Military Division at Lyons but

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67 Ibid., 223. For instance, the Directory approved the destitution of two officers and the promotion of two other officers based on the word of Moreau. See Debidour, ed., *Recueil Des Actes Du Directoire Exécutif*, 3:707n.
68 The legal election of royalist and right wing candidates to office caused left wing politicians to conspire against them. The coup of Fructidor resulted in the quashing of these elections. Troops led by Charles Pierre François Augereau arrested opposition members inside Paris, including Pichegru. The executive power of the Directory increased at the expense of France’s legislative body.
69 Brown, *War, Revolution, and the Bureaucratic State*, 224. The Floréal coup crushed political opposition to the Directory by barring 106 political opponents from taking office after winning a legal election in 1798. This event reduced the faith of the legislature in the executive power.
received word of his final dismissal in October 1797. The effect of the February 1796 law becomes apparent when comparing the service records of freshly promoted army commanders who served between 1798 and 1799 with those elevated in 1794.

The lineup of generals serving the Republic in 1798 and 1799 presents a number of interesting statistics. Unlike the commanders who arose in the aftermath of the Terror, many of these men possessed much more experience at the divisional level of command. Of the eleven commanders who received their first commands between 1798 and 1799, the average time spent between general of brigade and general of division was eleven months. However, the average promotion time between general of division and général-en-chef was two years, five months. If this is compared to the généraux-en-chef promoted in 1794, the average time spent rising from general of brigade to general of division was five months. Rising to command from division to army took an average of nine months. This data reveals that despite the amount of turmoil the interior armies underwent during the Directory, generals promoted to army command still possessed more experience than did their peers in 1794.

The majority of those officers in 1798 reflected the concept of ‘careers open to talent.’ All but one officer possessed either no military background during the ancien régime or a decidedly suppressed career, characterized by low rank and no real hope for advancement. Seniority-based promotions meant that political connections played less of a role between 1798 and 1799. Although the specific reasons for each officer’s selection to command an army in

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70 Six, Dictionnaire Biographique, 2:2.
72 Charles-Pierre-François Augereau received command of the Army of Germany for his role in the coup of Fructidor while some historians argue that Jean-Baptiste-Jules Bernadotte’s assignment to the Army of Mainz arose
1798 and 1799 remain unclear, it appears that the government’s struggle to develop a high command both politically tenable and experientially sound ended by 1798. These officers served France well during the days of the Consulate and the Empire.\textsuperscript{73}

Ten years of revolution resulted in significant changes to the French high command. These personality changes at the top reflected a transformation in the characteristics most valued in a French general between 1793 and 1799. Initially a bastion of aristocratic privilege, the mass emigration of nobles set the conditions for a revolutionary officer corps to emerge. Although a number of high ranking officers removed themselves from the army during the emigrations of 1791 and 1792, a number remained behind and perceived their duty to country as more important than loyalty to the king. The inertia of the status quo and the dearth of collective institutional experience in waging war above the regimental level necessitated that they continue in their role as army commanders. However, the Revolution reached a turning point with the defection of Dumouriez in April 1793.

Dumouriez’s decision to betray France functioned as a singular event that led the revolutionary government to reevaluate the characteristics that it most valued in a general. Concurrently, the process for appointing a commander underwent a number of different changes. No single institution possessed unilateral authority over officer promotions or appointments to general. Although the Minister of War and the Committee of Public Safety nominally presided over all high level appointments, representatives on mission also received executive authority and frequently intervened in deciding who commanded Republican armies. A confusing and

\textsuperscript{73} The 1798-99 crop of commanders possessed more future marshals of the Empire than that of 1794. Of the \textit{généraux-en-chef} who served in 1794, only two received their batons in 1804. In 1798-99, seven of those commanders would go on to receive their batons. See Chandler, ed., \textit{Napoleon's Marshals}, for a full listing of all the marshals appointed during the Empire.
rapid turnover of generals ensued. A few common characteristics unite those generals appointed
during the Terror whose careers remained intact after July 1794. A background free of noble
heritage became important for political reasons. In addition, a winning record assisted a
candidate for general officer in receiving approval. Hoche, Jourdan, and Pichegru all
demonstrated their battlefield prowess and originated from non-noble backgrounds. Yet none of
these commanders possessed an amount of experience that resembled anything like an *ancien
régime* commander. Repeated decapitation of the high command eliminated the decades of
collective experience that previously resided in the French army. Even with Carnot’s politically
moderate and enlightened approach to government appointments, this institutional deficit could
not be readily filled. A return to a more conventional approach to appointments took place in the
post-Terror period of 1794 to 1795.

The trend in the post-Terror administration of the army can be characterized as a
struggle to replace the experience lost in the purges by suppressing anti-noble rhetoric and
reverting to seniority-based promotions by 1796. Social background no longer played a large
role in determining an army commander, and previously repressed *ci-devants* could now
command armies. Stability in the French high command existed between July 1794 and
September 1797. Only the passage of time would enable the French military to recover from the
excesses of the Terror.

Although generally perceived as incompetent, the limited administrative abilities of the
Directory enabled the army to more fully recover from the Terror. Limiting the selection of
commanders to the twenty most senior officers in the preceding rank naturally resulted in a more
experienced generalate. It also indicated a return to typical eighteenth century practices in
ensuring an officer’s preparedness for future command. Army commanders selected between
1798 and 1799 possessed triple the amount of experience at divisional level command than their predecessors in 1794. Yet politics continued to exert a role, as demonstrated by the conduct of the second *amalgame* of 1796 and the elevation of such generals as Bonaparte, Augereau, and Bernadotte. The personal weaknesses of the Directory resulted in an over-reliance on military power to ensure rule of law. Leaving their armies to starve on the periphery did not contribute to their legitimacy as the sovereign authority of France, setting the conditions for a military coup in 1799.

The Revolution did not function as an event that led to a fully professionalized officer corps. Although social restrictions and purchase of commissions disappeared, the preparation of officers for high command remained rooted in experience and seniority. Training in the ‘science’ of war, or an understanding of the principles or rules, never emerged as a means to alleviate the dearth of experience in the post-Terror army. Toward the closing years of the Revolution, victory on the battlefield and years in the saddle determined who would receive a nomination for command. This reflected an acceptance that an individual’s experience or natural talent made them the best choice for army command. To be certain, many generals possessed an appreciation if not an understanding of the art of war. Kellermann and Bonaparte both articulated an understanding of the principles and guidelines of war. However, no evidence in the selection process of generals indicates that revolutionary governments integrated formal education or preparation into the selection of generals to command armies. The ascendance of Bonaparte to political eminence would not fundamentally change this trend. Pre-professional qualities characterized the generalate that emerged from the French Revolution and continued to serve during the Consulate and the Empire.
CHAPTER 4
NAPOLEON AND THE SELECTION OF THE IMPERIAL MARSHALATE

General Bonaparte seized power during the coup of 18 Brumaire (9 November 1799), emerging as First Consul of France. Out of the chaos of the Revolution, Napoleon offered strength and security to a French nation weary of political turmoil and war. However, these benefits came at a price. Bonaparte eventually drew more power to himself which led to a plebiscite that declared him consul for life in 1802. His ambitions culminated two years later with his coronation as Emperor of the French in December 1804. Despite the stability offered by Napoleon’s new imperial order, the freshly crowned emperor understood that his political position remained precarious. Solving France’s domestic and foreign problems became an immediate priority and required the allegiance of France’s military. As a survivor of the Revolution, Napoleon fully comprehended the consequences of allowing political dissidence to exist within the army. The overthrow of the French monarchy in 1792, the suppression of the Vendémiaire uprising in 1795, the coup of Fructidor in 1797, and even his own rise to power in 1799 provided examples of the army exerting decisive influence on domestic politics. To secure his throne, Napoleon needed to secure the loyalty of France’s armed forces.1

Napoleon revived the institution of the French marshalate in 1804 as a means of ensuring the loyalty of key personalities serving in the army. Scholars discussing the creation of the Empire place the appointment of the marshals alongside the creation of the Grand Dignitaries and Officers of the Empire with the passage of the Constitution of the Year XII.2 Among other

nominations, Napoleon named Joseph Bonaparte as Grand Elector, Jean-Jacques-Régis de Cambacérès as Arch-Chancellor of the Empire, Eugène de Beauharnais as Arch-Chancellor of the State, Charles-François Lebrun as Treasurer, and Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand as Grand Chamberlain. In this context, the political nature of the institution becomes immediately apparent. Historians who specifically examine the marshals discuss the political nature of Napoleon’s selections in their interpretations. Louis Chardigny argues that Napoleon created the marshalate for the purposes of appeasing recalcitrant members of the French generalate and rewarding his friends. This enabled him to bring the army under his power and reduced the chance of another military coup. David Chandler also claims that Napoleon chose his marshals for political reasons. In order to better secure his throne, he selected prominent members of each of the revolutionary armies in order to secure their loyalty. John Elting contends that the variety of backgrounds from which the marshals came assisted Napoleon in gaining the loyalty of the entirety of the French army. Thus, the influence of politics on the creation of the marshalate becomes very obvious when examining the historical context of its creation.

A connection appears regarding the inability of the marshalate to perform on the battlefield and the political context in which Napoleon selected them. Previous chapters have demonstrated that the legacy of the eighteenth century continued to influence military affairs in the nineteenth century. The nascent and underdeveloped theory of war, the antiquated nature of promotions processes within European armies, and the non-existent formal military education of the Old Regime and the Revolution meant that Napoleon inherited a military of pre-professional
origins. Furthermore, the swirl of intrigue at Paris continued to pose a threat to the emperor’s control over the country. These factors limited Napoleon’s freedom to select the absolute best and brightest for his marshalate. An examination of the marshalate’s personal and professional backgrounds and the historical context within which Napoleon recreated the marshalate reveals that circumstances and political realities forced the emperor’s hand.

Not every Frenchman accepted Napoleon as a savior who would protect France from both internal and external enemies while preserving the gains of the Revolution. Ideologues committed to the ideals of the Revolution believed that Napoleon would eventually destroy personal freedoms in his lust for power. As a result, both violent and non-violent conspiracies surrounded the First Consul. Ousted by the Constitution of the Year VIII, Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès drew to himself others disaffected by Napoleon’s new order. Concurrent with this non-violent political opposition, extremists took more direct action to remove Napoleon from power. The Rue Saint-Nicaise plotters attempted to assassinate Napoleon with a carriage loaded with explosives when he and his family went to the theater in December 1800. These activities challenged Napoleon as First Consul and demonstrate the insecure nature of his position.\(^7\)

The discontent of certain high ranking French officers also posed a significant obstacle to stabilizing the Consular regime. The atmosphere of the Revolution had politicized the officer corps to a substantial degree, filling its ranks with both crypto-royalists and sans-culotte terrorists. Foremost among the unabashed Jacobins stood Jean-Baptiste Jules Bernadotte. Prior to Napoleon’s triumphant return from Egypt, Bernadotte’s popularity as Minister of War made him a likely contender for political greatness. Fearing that the tide of popular opinion would give him the impetus to mount a military coup, the Directory named him ambassador to Vienna.

This motion removed him from the French capital but his adversarial relations with the Austrians landed him back in Paris by 1799. After Napoleon’s abandonment of the army in Egypt, Bernadotte attempted to have the famous general arrested for desertion. Failing at this, he refused to support him during the Brumaire coup. His traitorous behavior during the Consulate demonstrated his disapproval of Napoleon. The Jacobin conspiracy of 7 Germinal, Year VIII (28 March 1800) and the revolt of the army at Rennes in May 1802 implicated Bernadotte, yet he managed to avoid the firing squad for his involvement in these affairs.8 His marriage to Désirée Clary, the sister of Joseph Bonaparte’s wife, likely protected him from the wrath of Napoleon. Regardless, Bernadotte never fully reconciled with Bonaparte even after he received a marshal’s baton, and he eventually became a member of the Swedish royal family, fighting against France in 1813.9

Jourdan also looked askance at Napoleon’s rise to power. A member of the Counsel of Five Hundred, Napoleon dined with the victor of Fleurus on 16 Brumaire (7 November), two days prior to the coup. In their discussion on the future of France, neither of these men could come to an agreement regarding whether to reform the government or overthrow it. Looking to safeguard his future, Jourdan neither helped nor hindered Napoleon. This ambivalence raised Napoleon’s suspicions. Jourdan’s acquaintance with other leaders opposed to Bonaparte such as Bernadotte, Guillaume Brune, Saint Cyr, and Moreau made him appear more suspect. After an

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8 The conspiracy of 7 Germinal, Year VIII involved certain Jacobin radicals who viewed Bonaparte as a criminal for usurping power in the Brumaire coup and desired to save the Republic from Napoleon the tyrant. Bernadotte’s name as the prime conspirator came to the attention of Napoleon, but the government managed to snuff this plot out before it came to pass. The revolt of the army involved the distribution of libelous pamphlets around the city of Rennes to the army camped there. The government charged Bernadotte’s chief of staff, Edouard François Simon, with the crime of creating these leaflets. Napoleon’s Minister of Police, Joseph Fouché, traced the publications back to Bernadotte’s circle and muzzled the conspiracy. See Édouard Guillon, Les complots militaires sous le Consulat et l’Empire (Paris : E. Plon, Nourrit, 1894), 26-43; Antoine Claire Thibadeau, Mémoires de A. C. Thibadeau, 1799-1815 (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1913), 22, 62.

unsuccessful attempt to have Jourdan deported to Guiana, Bonaparte nominated him for an ambassadorship to Piedmont to remove him from Paris. When he returned in 1803, his election to the senate gained the First Consul’s attention. After a contentious speech before the electoral college, Napoleon attempted to deny his appointment to the Senate without success. Jourdan’s fame as the victor of Fleurus and his lack of support marked him as a potential rival and threat to Napoleon’s new regime.¹⁰

Discontent with the new regime can also be perceived in the reaction of certain officers to the reintroduction of the Catholic Church into France with the Concordat of 1801. Napoleon correctly envisioned that the policy would reconcile the religious countryside with the secular city. However, Jacobin officers typically embraced an anti-religious philosophy and perceived the Church as an enemy of the Revolution. Napoleon ordered several prominent military officers to attend the ceremony at the Cathedral of Notre Dame. Fellow Italian veteran Charles Pierre François Augereau attempted to persuade Napoleon that he and his friends need not attend the ceremony but Napoleon refused. Upon arriving at Notre Dame, the officers discovered that the Church apparently had failed to reserve seats for them. Forced to stand, the crowd of officers became increasingly disgruntled. After an aide told André Masséna that he was not sure how to proceed, the outraged general rudely pulled a chair out from under a seated priest for his own use. Other military officers at the ceremony quickly followed suit, nearly triggering a riot. General Antoine Guillaume Delmas proclaimed that “the 100,000 men who died to put an end to

¹⁰ Frédéric Hulot, Le Maréchal Jourdan (Paris: Pygmalion, 2010), 159. Jourdan stated in his speech that: “The maintenance of the Republic is the first of all our wishes.” Some perceived this as a left-handed swipe at Napoleon’s increasingly dictatorial nature.
all this should have been there.” This event demonstrated that certain factions within the military resented Napoleon’s vision for France.11

The Cadoudal plot of 1803 provided Napoleon with enough justification to strike against opposition within the military. After the arrest of a group of insurrectionists in Paris, a man named Querelle revealed to the authorities that the Chouan leader Georges Cadoudal had entered Paris with the purpose of assassinating Napoleon. The later confession of Bouvet de Lozier implicated Generals Moreau and Pichegru in the plot. Bouvet also revealed that the goals of the plot included placing a Bourbon prince back on the throne through a military coup supported by Moreau and the French military. The capture of the previously exiled Cadoudal and Pichegru inside France granted substance to Bouvet’s claims. This event justified the kidnapping of Louis de Bourbon-Condé, the Duke of Enghien, from a town across the German border. Targeted as the person most likely to head the coup, Napoleon horrified Europe by ordering the execution of Louis in March 1804. The French government subsequently exiled Moreau and executed Cadoudal. Pichegru conveniently died in his cell, strangled to death. The disclosure of a Bourbon plot not only allowed Bonaparte to depict himself as the protector of France, but also served as a reminder to Napoleon that the possibility of a military coup still existed as a real threat to the Consular regime.12

The recurring issues of military disloyalty and political intrigue validated Napoleon’s suggestion for a shift to monarchical government. To him, the creation of a hereditary monarchy would enable him to safeguard France from extremists on both the left and the right. A new

12 Philip G. Dwyer, Citizen Emperor, 138-40; Tulard, Napoleon: The Myth of the Savior, 125-27; Georges Lefebvre, Napoleon: From 18 Brumaire to Tilsit, 1799-1807, 180-82.
nobility fashioned in keeping with the revolutionary ideals of merit and talent would stabilize the foundation for a new regime. After some debate, a proposal forwarded by the Tribunate passed in the Senate, resulting in the creation of the Constitution of the Year XII (1804). The document named Napoleon as Emperor of the French and granted him the right to pass the throne to an heir of his choosing. In addition to this, the Constitution named the first level of Grand Officers as Marshals of the Empire, a semantic change from the ancien régime title of Marshal of France. This institution would serve Napoleon as a means to placate the more restless members of the French officer corps while rewarding those officers most loyal to him.\footnote{Lefebvre, \textit{Napoleon: From 18 Brumaire to Tilsit, 1799-1807}, 183-84; Senatus Consultum, \textit{Le Moniteur Universel}, 20 May 1804.}

The awarding of a marshal’s baton signified more than a simple military promotion. To be certain, the marshals typically served as corps commanders and even as army commanders as the Empire expanded. However, the position functioned as a unique distinction that socially elevated a renowned general of division above his peers. Napoleon once told his marshals that they were only military figures when with the army: “The title of Marshal is a purely civil dignity that grants you at court the honorable rank which is due to you but does not entail any additional authority. You may be generals on the battlefield but you are only grandes seigneurs when you are about me at court.”\footnote{Claire de Rémusat, \textit{Mémoires de Madame de Rémusat}, ed. Paul de Rémusat (Paris: Librairie Nouvelle, 1880), 2:281.} According to the Constitution of the Year XII, they presided over an electoral college consisting of officers of the Legion of Honor. The high imperial court reserved judgment and control over their offices, making them strictly answerable to Napoleon himself. In addition, these men received the right to hold more than military offices, which granted them the unique privilege of drawing additional pay for them. Their wives received the
title of *La Maréchale* and appeared at court alongside their husbands. In these respects, the title of Marshal of the Empire possessed significant social and political overtones.¹⁵

An examination of the personal backgrounds of the 1804 marshals divides them into a handful of categories. First, Napoleon rewarded those officers who served faithfully. Berthier performed as chief of staff for nearly all of Napoleon’s military career. A talented administrator, he also functioned as a critical cog in the war machine of the French Empire. Jean Lannes remained a close friend of Bonaparte after saving his life at the bridge of Arcole, where he prevented Austrian cavalry from capturing him. He continued to address Napoleon by the informal *tu* even after Napoleon decided to use the more formal *vous* when talking and he numbered among the few who stole away to France with Napoleon when he abandoned the Army of the Orient in Egypt.¹⁶ Jean Baptiste Bessières also made his career in Italy. His performance and loyalty earned him command of Napoleon’s elite Imperial Guard, which he maintained for much of his career. Though Masséna and Augereau each opposed Napoleon’s rise for their own reasons, each had served under him during the First Italian Campaign. Adolphe-Édouard-Casimir-Joseph Mortier offers a unique example of a general who demonstrated his loyalty through effective administration. As the ranking officer in Paris, Napoleon trusted him to ensure stability in the capital. Napoleon had great confidence in Mortier’s abilities, writing to him during the Second Italian Campaign that “I am not worried about Paris, you are there.”¹⁷ His successful venture in seizing Hanover in 1803 cemented his

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reputation as a competent officer and likely earned him his baton. Nicolas Jean-de-Dieu Soult fought for several years in German theaters before serving under Masséna in Italy, where he received an independent corps command. Masséna recommended him to Bonaparte with the statement: “I give to you a man of both head and heart, I am unaware of forces stronger than his.” This endorsement gained Soult an appointment as colonel-general of the Light Infantry of the Consular Guard. Napoleon’s decision to elevate fellow Italian and Egyptian veterans to the marshalate demonstrated that he required a degree of personal loyalty in his new imperial order.

In a typically ancien régime fashion, Napoleon bound some of his generals to him through the institution of marriage. Joachim Murat married Caroline Bonaparte, Napoleon’s sister. After demonstrating his utility in the Orient and in Italy, Murat numbered among the lucky few who escaped from Egypt with Napoleon in 1799. Although Bonaparte originally planned for Caroline to marry Moreau, he turned down the offer after seeing the news prematurely announced in Le Moniteur. Following this debacle, both Caroline and Napoleon’s wife, Josephine, chose Murat as the better match. Louis-Nicolas Davout’s relationship with the late Louis Charles Antoine Desaix had facilitated his introduction to Napoleon. Davout subsequently served under Napoleon in the Army of the Orient and the Army of the Reserve during the Second Italian Campaign. Davout married Aimée Leclerc, making him the brother-in-law of both Pauline Bonaparte and Victor-Emmanuel Leclerc. The hand of the Bonapartes

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18 Léon Moreel, Le Maréchal Mortier, Duc de Trévise (Paris: Les Éditions Inter-Nationales, 1957), 73. Napoleon commended Mortier for his quick maneuver into Hanover: “I congratulate you on the swiftness of your march and the good dispositions you have made . . . . The rapidity of your march has caused you to encounter some difficulties but spared some blood and much diplomatic irritation. I greet you affectionately.” See Napoleon to Mortier, 9 June 1803, CN, No. 6809, 8:350-351.

19 Cited in Anacharsis Combes, Histoire Anecdotique de Jean-de-Dieu Soult, Maréchal-Général, Duc de Dalmatie (Chartres: Chez Hug and Chez Bertrand, 1870), 59.

can be clearly seen in the Davout marriage, as demonstrated by the signature of Napoleon on the marriage certificate. This union and his military service resulted in his appointment to Napoleon’s Consular Guard. Michel Ney’s appointment likely came due to the glittering reputation he earned while serving on the German frontier. A political non-entity without civil ambition, he embedded himself in the Bonaparte clan by marrying Aglaée Louise Auguiée. Aglaée had befriended Josephine’s daughter Hortense while at school, and after graduating joined Josephine’s social circle. Josephine supported Ney’s marriage to Aglaée by personally endorsing the match to the father of the bride-to-be. Thus, it is apparent that Napoleon sought to bind his professional and personal circles together through the institution of marriage, strengthening his grip over both the military and his own family.

The emperor also perceived the office of Marshal of the Empire as a method to engender loyalty in those officers who remained neutral or opposed him outright. Brune’s successful defense of the Batavian Republic at the battle of Castricum in October 1799 likely made him a candidate for a baton. In addition, he proved an adept administrator. His success in suppressing the Vendée with the Army of the West earned him glowing praise from the First Consul. Yet Brune remained a political wildcard. His political heritage as a radical Jacobin and association with known anti-Bonapartists made his loyalty questionable. As noted, Bernadotte and Jourdan both opposed Napoleon during the coup and the Consulate. Jourdan’s reputation as a

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23 Louis Bourgoin, *Esquisse Historique sur le Maréchal Brune, publiée d’après la correspondance et les manuscrits originaux conservés dans sa famille* (Paris: Rousseau, 1840), 1:177, 203-204; Chandler, ed., *Napoleon's Marshals*, 89-90. Napoleon commended him on his handling of the Vendée: “Of all missions, that which you have accomplished for the last three months is the most difficult . . . . You have, by the wisdom, moderation, and energy you have displayed, rendered the greatest service to the Republic.” See Napoleon to Brune, 18 April 1800, CN, No. 4719, 6:221.
general and Bernadotte’s political ties made them each a force with which Napoleon needed to reckon. After retiring to his chateau at Rueil in 1801, Masséna openly stated his opposition to the new regime in public by labelling Napoleon with epithets like “new Caesar,” “assassin of liberty,” and “traitor who regressed the Revolution.” As a vehement Jacobin who despised the Church, he employed more choice words to describe the First Consul after he orchestrated the Concordat of 1801.24 Napoleon sought to gain the allegiance of these men by adding their names to the list of 1804 marshals, indicating that he opted to keep his political enemies close during his reign.

Not all of Napoleon’s rivals merited the receipt of a baton in 1804. Étienne-Jacques Macdonald served with distinction during the Revolution but aroused the ire of Napoleon for several reasons. His complaints against his colleague Brune over who had priority for reinforcements and supplies during his campaign in the Grisons region irritated Napoleon, who subsequently replaced him with Brune. Macdonald received an assignment as a diplomat to the court in Denmark with the mission of preparing the area for a defense against British attack. Unfortunately for Macdonald, the British Navy crushed the Danish fleet before he arrived. On a personal note, his illicit affair with Pauline Bonaparte and his decision to support Moreau after his implication in the Cadoudal affair further blackened his image with the emperor.25 The combination of these events likely led to Macdonald’s seven year hiatus from the French military. He only received his baton in 1809 after the death of Lannes at the battle of Aspern-Essling. Claude Victor Perrin presents another example of how an officer could displease Napoleon. Although an excellent soldier, he possessed the misfortune of performing well at

Marengo. Despite suffering massive casualties, Victor’s two divisions of infantry and two brigades of cavalry held the French left against an Austrian onslaught for six hours before conducting an orderly retreat. Napoleon displayed no desire to share any of the glory that he won on this battlefield, discounting his contribution by only awarding him a sabre of honor and not mentioning his name in the bulletin announcing the victory at Marengo. Victor only received his baton in 1807 after the battle of Friedland. These two examples demonstrate that openly challenging either Napoleon’s glory or his authority eliminated their consideration for a baton in 1804.

The last classification of those men named to the marshalate in 1804 included inactive generals who deserved recognition for their service to France. François Christophe Kellermann, François Joseph Lefebvre, Dominique-Catherine Pérignon, and Philibert Sérurier received batons. With the exception of Lefebvre, each had seen extensive service during the *ancien régime* and possessed very respectable records as professional soldiers. Kellermann’s victory at Valmy granted him unending fame as a savior of the Revolution. Sérurier gained Napoleon’s attention as a competent commander at the siege of Mantua during the First Italian campaign. After supporting Napoleon during the Brumaire coup, Sérurier received the position of head administrator of *Les Invalides*. As Sérurier represented a group of old soldiers who had fought for France before Napoleon, his baton likely assisted in persuading veterans to support the new regime. Lefebvre demonstrated his bravery as a soldier while serving on the Rhine under Lazare Hoche. He later proved a loyal supporter during the Brumaire coup, facilitating

Napoleon’s ascension to power while in command of the Paris military division. Pérignon’s aristocratic roots and success in the Pyrenees marked him as another prominent figure. Their distinguished reputations granted Napoleon political clout and likely rendered legitimacy to his new order.

The feuding between the different armies of the Republic presented Napoleon with a political gap that required closing. The armies of the French Republic had become societies unto themselves by the end of the Revolution, physically and spiritually divided from the civilian population of France. Soldiers based near the Rhine earned the reputation of being “gentlemen” due to their strong discipline and neat uniforms while French soldiers in Italy bypassed the niceties of soldiering, declaring themselves as “citizens.” This political division emerged from the enlisted ranks and generated quarrels between officers. In his selection of marshals, an equitable division appears between those officers assigned to armies serving in the German states, the Pyrenees, and in Italy. When split between officers who served between the northern and eastern versus the southern frontiers, seven marshals had served in the former while ten fought in the latter. This practice continued even in Napoleon’s selections for the later marshalate. Four of the later marshals fought in northern and eastern theaters while three fought in the south. Appeasing the ‘camps of nations’ that both protected and threatened the political stability of France remained a priority for Napoleon even during the later years of the Empire.

Although political necessity served as Napoleon’s most important consideration in selecting a general for a marshal’s baton, he did consider tactical competence and experience when choosing the marshalate. In a period of nearly unending conflict between 1792 and 1802,

the French army became one of the most combat experienced militaries of Europe. The first graphs presented below measure the number of days between an officer’s promotion to general of brigade and general of division.\textsuperscript{31} In order to account for the varying levels of political influence on the promotions process, the groups are subdivided by the year of their promotion to general of division.\textsuperscript{32}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure3.1.png}
\caption{Days Between Promotion to General of Brigade and General of Division, 1804 Marshals}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{31} The following graphs were built using George Six’s \textit{Dictionnaire Biographique}, Charles Clerget’s \textit{Tableaux des Armées Françaises pendant les Guerres de la Révolution}, and Digby Smith’s \textit{The Greenhill Napoleonic Wars Data Book} - see Appendices C through E for a tabulation of all necessary data. The control group graphed below consists of generals of division who experienced combat action in 1799. This sample was selected due to its place in time with regards to the Revolution – it is the furthest removed from the Terror but just prior to the elevation of Napoleon to First Consul. Józef Antoni Poniatowski is not included in this assessment. The Grand Duchy of Warsaw did not exist until 1807 and Poniatowski was a foreign officer. This makes him a less useful comparison to the other marshals.

\textsuperscript{32} The term year group refers to the officers promoted to general of division within a certain year. For example, the 1799 year group refers to all officers promoted to general of division in 1799.
The trend between the three samples reveals an increase in experience over time. Generals of brigade who received a promotion later in the Revolution possessed more experience than their peers promoted early in the Revolution. Although this data supports the previous chapter’s finding that seniority re-emerged as an important criteria in the selection of French generals during the Directory, it also shows that the marshalate possessed significant experience at the brigade level. When comparing the 1799 year groups of the 1804 marshalate with the sample of 1799 combat commanders, the 1799 sample spent an average of only seven more months at the
rank of general of brigade than their more renowned 1804 peers.\textsuperscript{33} This difference demonstrates that the marshalate belonged to the revolutionary class of officers who earned their promotions through combat experience.

The marshals’ experiences at levels of responsibility above division reveals much about how Napoleon envisioned their role in the French high command. The following graph depicts the total corps commands held by the entire marshalate.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure34.png}
\caption{Number of Commands Greater than a Single Division, 1792-1805}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{33} Reference Appendices C and E. Of the 1799 combat commanders of promoted in year group 1799, the average amount of time spent between general of brigade and general of division was 1395 days. In contrast, year group 1799 of the 1804 marshalate spent 1178 days between general of brigade and general of division.
These graphs reveal that the marshalate possessed a tremendous amount of experience operating at the corps level, where they received direct supervision from either Napoleon or a commander above them. The two graphs further reveal that corps level responsibility skyrocketed after 1805, demonstrating that Napoleon favored using his marshals as corps commanders. However, army command proved to be a more prestigious appointment between the Revolution and Empire. The next set of graphs depicts the number of army commands held by the marshalate.34

34 Army commands interior to France did not receive consideration. Interior commands typically involved much less skill and presented less of a challenge than commands outside of France which pitted their generals against professional armed forces.
Figure 3.6: Number of Army Commands, 1792-1805, All Marshals

Figure 3.7: Number of Army Commands, 1805-1812, All Marshals
Taken together, the data demonstrates several points. First, independent command remained a rare honor during the Revolution, limiting the number of officers from which Napoleon could draw to form his military aristocracy. Indeed, forty percent of the 1804 marshalate and eighty percent of the 1799 sample possessed no experience at independent command by the time they received their baton. This indicates that general officers who held an army command were a very exclusive group.\textsuperscript{35} The data also demonstrates that Napoleon only selected a few marshals to lead armies during the Empire. The only non-marshal to receive independent commands of particular significance was Eugène de Beauharnais, who commanded French forces in Italy in 1809 and in both North Germany and Italy in 1813. Masséna commanded the Armies of Italy and Naples after the 1805 campaign, while Davout commanded the Army of the Rhine in 1808 and the Army of Germany between 1809 and 1810.\textsuperscript{36} The commands assigned to Macdonald and Victor in the years of the Consulate represented supporting actions for the decisive efforts in

\textsuperscript{35} Reference Appendix C and E.
\textsuperscript{36} Reference Appendix F.
the German states and Italy. This trend can also be ascertained in the commands assigned to the marshals after 1805. Although the Iberian Peninsula bled France dry of men and materiel for many years, it never posed the strategic threat that Prussia, Austria, and Russia did. Given this, Napoleon could afford to place commanders of untried or lesser ability there to gain experience. A number of marshals received duty in Spain during the later days of the Empire. Soult, Louis-Gabriel Suchet, Auguste de Marmont, Masséna, Murat, and Jean-Andoche Junot each received independent commands in either Portugal or Spain. Joseph Bonaparte also proved himself a less than apt commander in Spain. Lefebvre received the grim task of suppressing the Tyrolean revolt in Austria in 1809. With these facts in mind, these graphs support the concept that Napoleon perceived his marshals as being tactically superior but unprepared for higher levels of responsibility. Napoleon even articulated this concept as early as 1804. He commented on the marshals to his Council of State: “France owed much to these twenty generals of division, they had bravely fought in the ranks where they were placed, but none had the makings of a general in chief, much less a chief of government. Europe has not seen a general in chief since Frederick or Prince Eugene.”

He maintained this position in exile at Saint Helena, claiming that: “A great general is not an ordinary thing; of all the generals of the Revolution, I only know that Desaix and Hoche would have gone far.” Napoleon envisaged a French war machine that consisted of tactically experienced officers who would depend on his own genius to succeed at the operational and strategic levels.

The incapacity of the marshals at independent military responsibilities begs the question of what Napoleon perceived as the best preparation for high command. He articulated his thoughts in letters and public statements, emphasizing his belief in the importance of personal leadership and the need for officers to be selected based on their ability to perform in high-stakes situations. This perspective is reflected in his approach to military strategy and the selection of his commanders.

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position in 1807, stating that the Great Captains of war only succeeded by conforming to the
“natural principles of the art of war . . . They have not ceased to make war into a veritable
science. For this reason alone they provide our great models, and only by emulating them should
we hope to approach them.”39 In exile, Napoleon commented on how principles governed the art
of war:

My greatest deeds have been attributed to luck, and people will not fail to charge my
reverses to my shortcomings, but if I were to write of my campaigns people would indeed
be astonished to see that in both instances my judgment and abilities were always
exercised only in conformity with principles.40

These quotes indicate that Napoleon firmly believed that the art of war not only possessed
principles, but also required serious study to learn them.

Despite Napoleon’s emphasis on the superior intellectual capacity of general officers,
France lacked institutions capable of educating officers in the military art. Staff colleges did not
exist in France until later in the nineteenth century.41 Furthermore, the Revolution removed a
great many officers of a professional, ancien régime stamp from the army. The overwhelmingly
bourgeois marshalate had mostly been educated for civil professions. In examining the original
eighteen marshals, almost all possessed some form of basic education. Exceptions to this include
men derived from peasant backgrounds, who typically lacked either the inclination or the
opportunity for education early in life. Augereau, who came from extremely humble origins,
served as a soldier of fortune for many years before receiving a commission during the early
years of the Revolution. Lefebvre also emerged from an enlisted background, being taught to
read by his wife. Upon enlistment, Masséna could neither read nor write.42 However, the

39 Napoleon to Eugène, 25 March 1807, CN, No. 12174, 14:532-535.
40 Emmanuel-Auguste-Dieudonné Las Cases, Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène, ou, Journal où se trouve consigné, jour
majority of the marshals emerged from either the bourgeoisie or minor nobility. Never
dreaming that their sons would receive a commission in a military dominated by the nobility,
their families educated them so they could pursue a variety of civil careers that would earn them
a decent wage later in life. Destined to become notaries in their youth, Bernadotte, Victor, Soult,
and Ney turned away from this quiet life at home to enlist in the army.43 The Murats foresaw a
career in the priesthood for their son Joachim and sent him to the seminary, which he left in
order to embark on a less than holy career in the French cavalry.44 Brune and Moncey both
started their careers as lawyers but parted with the justice system to pursue a military vocation.45
Mortier attended the college at Douai to prepare himself for a civil career in his youth. Bessières
and Jourdan each spent some time at the College in Saint-Michel.46 Suchet’s family went to
great expense to educate him so that he could run his family’s business but instead he joined the
army at the outbreak of the Revolution.47 Given the haphazard career paths of many of the
marshals, it becomes evident that several of them did not join the army out of an ancien régime
tradition of familial and professional heritage. Rather, almost all of them joined for adventure
during the patriotic fervor of the Revolution. Consequently, the majority of the marshals’
education should be classified as limited and vocational in scope.

Only a handful of marshals possessed a background that qualified them as officers more
devoted to the military profession. The inactive duty roster of marshals served as a bastion of
ancien régime professionalism. Kellermann, Pérignon, Berthier, and Sérurier began their
military careers before the Revolution. A few young officers bridged the gap between the Old

43 Atteridge, Marshal Ney, 8-9; Barton, The Amazing Career of Bernadotte, 5-7; Bonnal, Ney, 1:2; Chardigny, Les
maréchaux de Napoléon, 69-73; Combes, Histoire Anecdotique de Jean-de-Dieu Soult, 6-12; Victor-François Perrin,
44 Atteridge, Joachim Murat, 3-4.
Regime and the Revolution. Although Davout emerged from an aristocratic background and attended the École Militaire during his youth, he rejected his status as a minor noble and wholeheartedly devoted himself to the ideals of the Revolution. Marmont’s family originally intended for him to be a magistrate, but instead he attended the artillery school at Châlons-sur-Marne before being commissioned an artillery officer. These more professionally dedicated officers formed a distinct minority within the marshalate.

Self-study functioned as the most prominent form of advanced education for military officers during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. After examining the marshals in detail, Louis Chardigny contends that the marshalate should not be qualified as an intellectual group of men, claiming that the camp produced men of a physical nature with rough habits. Memoirs, publications, and biographies provide scanty and underdeveloped evidence regarding the personal study habits of the marshals. After a conversation with Napoleon on the topic of military art during the Consulate, Bernadotte reportedly developed a personal study of the art of war. Marmont and Saint-Cyr both possessed reputations as intellectuals, and each wrote works on the military art during their lifetimes. Kellermann wrote a treatise on generalship during his command of the Army of the Alps. Berthier presents one of the few marshals who had a distinguished background in staff work. Before the Revolution, he received an assignment to accompany Adame-Philippe de Custine to Prussia. While there, he wrote a report on the strengths and weaknesses of the Prussian military. In 1787, he received an appointment to the

49 Chardigny, Les maréchaux de Napoléon, 52.
50 Ibid., 78.
51 Barton, The Amazing Career of Bernadotte, 66.
53 François-Étienne-Christophe Kellermann, Instruction sur les Troupes de la République.
Camp of St. Omer, where he studied Guibert’s *General Essay on Tactics*. Yet these five names represent a distinct minority of the marshalate. The majority of the marshals should not be considered intellectuals who regularly devoted themselves to the study of the military art.

Napoleon’s decision to not select the best and brightest for the upper tier of his military aristocracy can be attributed to the pre-professional nature of military infrastructure and the political instability of the French state. Although the marshals represented a tactically proficient group of generals, the Revolution did little to reform the process of promoting and preparing for high command. Indeed, few of the Old Regime officers dedicated from childhood to the military profession remained in the army. The officers who replaced them certainly possessed valor and experience but their mostly vocational educations did not prepare them for more challenging endeavors. Concurrently, political necessities forced Bonaparte’s hand. Like many other eighteenth and nineteenth century monarchs, Napoleon needed to ensure the loyalty of the military to secure his throne. The Cadoudal incident represents just one of the plots that Napoleon faced during his reign. These issues recurred periodically, as demonstrated by the Malet conspiracy of 1812. Indeed, Napoleon only abdicated his throne in 1814 because certain marshals betrayed him by refusing to continue fighting. Furthermore, Napoleon lacked both the opportunity and the need to create a professionalized military. The rousing military successes enjoyed by France in the early years of the Empire negated any need for Napoleon to correct the lingering weaknesses of the French military system. Moreover, the almost unending period of warfare between 1805 and 1814 did not offer him any chance to enact the sort of reforms


55 General Claude François de Malet attempted to oust Napoleon from power by spreading the rumor that the Emperor had died during the retreat of the Grande Armée from Russia. Using forged paperwork and some significant bluffing, Malet sought to mobilize military forces inside the capital against the standing government. He failed in this endeavor and was executed by firing squad on 29 October 1812.
necessary to professionalize the Grande Armée. These circumstances perfectly illustrate the limitations that the eighteenth century, the Revolution, and the Empire imposed on Napoleon. In this context, Napoleon’s selection of generals for the marshalate appears to be the group that circumstances allowed.

Napoleon’s reliance on his own military genius functioned as a solution to the inherent shortcomings of his marshals. Given that they did not perform well independently, the emperor chose to manage military operations to the utmost of his substantial abilities. Yet as the latter years of the Empire demonstrate, Napoleon’s genius clearly possessed limitations. A campaign where Napoleon could not physically influence the course of battle might have pressured the French Emperor to make an attempt at rectifying a deficiency which he must have recognized long before it became an issue. The 1813 campaign provides an intriguing example, as it allows the historian to observe a situation where Napoleon depended on his marshals to perform without his direct supervision but within his reach. These circumstances beg the question of whether Napoleon ever made a significant effort to instruct his marshals in the art of war during his tenure as emperor and supreme commander of French forces.
CHAPTER 5

THE 1813 CAMPAIGN: A CASE STUDY IN NAPOLEON’S PEDAGOGY

The War of the Sixth Coalition in 1813 marked a low point for France during the Napoleonic era. Although the French won respectable victories at Lützen and Bautzen, the tide turned after the Austrians entered the war following the Armistice of Pläswitz. A number of factors contributed to the subpar performance of the French. Both the horrific losses suffered by the French during the retreat from Russia and the improved capabilities of their adversaries led to an Allied victory in 1813. Additionally, the decision by the Allies to disperse their armies challenged Napoleon’s ability to personally influence the outcome of every engagement. To counter this, Napoleon arranged his armies in an operationally flexible manner that allowed him to shift forces wherever the enemy appeared.\(^1\) However, his commanders proved so inept at grand tactics that they could not win without the emperor present.\(^2\) The reasons for their incompetence at army-level command remains an underexamined question in the historiography of the Napoleonic era. Previous chapters have revealed how military theory and administration of the eighteenth century, the events of the Revolution, and the political concerns of Napoleon all shaped the marshalate of the Grande Armée. Although experienced and capable at corps level command, many of his marshals remained unprepared for greater levels of responsibility. This chapter examines the 1813 campaign as a case study for Napoleon’s pedagogical methods. It reveals that Napoleon attempted to remedy the issue of unpreparedness in his commanders through the use of practical instruction and mentorship.

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\(^1\) Operations refers to the planning and execution of campaigns designed to achieve strategic objectives. See Epstein, *Napoleon's Last Victory*, 185-86.

\(^2\) Grand tactics refers to the maneuver of army corps and divisions on the battlefield. See ibid.
Before delving into the evidence supporting this thesis, it must first be established that Napoleon subscribed to the concept that principles of war existed. Historical evidence dating from the 1813 campaign directly supports this notion. Marshal Saint Cyr recounts how Bonaparte reacted to Marshal Ney’s defeat at Dennewitz in September. Rather than bursting into rage over the incapacity of ‘the bravest of the brave,’ Napoleon responded calmly and conceded the difficulties of independent command:

without the least emotion . . . he placed all on the difficulties of the art, which . . . were far from being known. He added that, if one day he had the time, he would make a book in which he would show the principles in a manner so precise, that they would be within reach of all soldiers, and that we could learn war like we learn any science. 3

Saint Cyr agreed with this, adding that “it seemed to me that experience or long practice were not the best means to acquire this science . . . in all of the long wars that the Revolution had caused, none seemed to me to have learned much by experience . . . .”4 Napoleon concurred with Saint Cyr’s assertion, contending that “he had known himself of only a single general who had learned through experience, which was [Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, the Viscount of] Turenne, of whom the great talent was the fruit of profound study . . . .”5 This conversation confirms that Napoleon believed that established principles governed the conduct of warfare.

The opening phase of the 1813 campaign offered a situation where Napoleon needed to depend on his subordinates to perform without his supervision. Napoleon’s absence from the Grande Armée immediately following the Russian retreat presents a period where the French army depended on effective leadership from persons other than the emperor. Initially, King Joachim Murat assumed responsibility for French forces while Napoleon worked to gather

4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
support for the coming war in the German states. However, Marshals Davout, Saint Cyr, Macdonald, and Prince Eugène each resented Murat’s appointment to the position. They believed that the King of Naples lacked the capacity for such a large amount of responsibility. Regardless, Murat decided to leave the army and return to his kingdom of Naples at the end of January 1813. He informally handed authority over the remainder of French forces to Napoleon’s step-son, Eugène de Beauharnais, the Viceroy of Italy. Meanwhile, the nominally friendly Austrian corps commanded by Prince Karl Philipp zu Schwarzenberg retreated through Warsaw toward Krakow after signing a secret agreement with the Russians on 30 January 1813. Concurrently, Prussian King Frederick William III commenced secret negotiations with the Russians. Although signing a treaty of alliance with Tsar Alexander I on 28 February, the cautious Prussian king hesitated to declare war on Napoleon. Nevertheless, these events forced the French to abandon their defense line along the Vistula River and withdraw to the Elbe River in early March 1813. Knowing full well the costs of failure, Eugène assumed blame and endured his step-father’s wrath.

The rapidly deteriorating situation suddenly demanded the emperor’s attention, as demonstrated by the correspondence between him and his step-son during March and April 1813. By 9 March, Napoleon had learned of Eugène’s retreat from the Oder River to the Elbe, which uncovered French-occupied Berlin to Russian forces. Napoleon’s letters to Eugène resemble the correspondence he sent his step-son in 1809, when he mentored the viceroy’s command of French forces in Italy. In 1813, Napoleon launched into long and detailed explanations of the

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7 Napoleon to Eugene, 22 January 1813, CN, No. 19474, 24:417.
8 Napoleon to Eugene, 9 March 1813, CN, No. 19688, 25:46-51.
9 Epstein argues that Napoleon taught Eugene the art of war during his tenure as commander of French forces in Italy during the 1809 campaign. See Epstein, Napoleon's Last Victory and Prince Eugene at War, 1809: A Study of
local terrain, offering Eugène both offensive and defensive courses of action. With regards to
taking the offensive, Napoleon argued that the French army should liberate the besieged fortress
of Danzig on the Baltic Sea not far from the mouth of the Vistula. To accomplish this operation,
Napoleon posited that if the viceroy united the army in the vicinity of Leipzig, Erfurt, and
Würzburg, he could easily move the bulk of French forces across the Oder River via the fortress
of Stettin before the enemy could turn to confront them. On the defensive, Napoleon maintained
that Eugene would need to cover the 32nd Military Division and especially its capital of Hamburg
and Jerome Bonaparte’s kingdom of Westphalia. To do this, Napoleon argued that the town of
Havelberg’s position between the Elbe and the Havel Rivers offered excellent defense lines
while still allowing for rapid movement. Yet Napoleon understood that maintaining control
over the German states would eventually require an offensive. He correctly asserted that the
French could establish a bridgehead on the Elbe near the city of Werben. This action would
threaten enemy forces near Berlin and set the conditions to relieve Danzig. The emperor later
recommended that Eugène maintain a reserve ready to contest any crossing of the Elbe south of
Havelberg. Concurrently, he advocated a vigorous defense of Hamburg. Napoleon’s guidance
provided his step-son an example of using terrain analysis to formulate a defensive course of action.

Yet Eugène did not initially heed his mentor’s advice. On 17 March, Napoleon sent another letter in which he exploded over the loss of the 32\textsuperscript{nd} Military Division to 200 Cossacks. He blamed his step-son for the loss, attributing it to his decision to place his troops on the left bank of the Elbe River. “As I have repeated it, and as I have been told in such detail by General Flahault, that I hope you will finally have the sense to occupy a camp in front of Magdeburg, and to threaten to cut all the enemy units that break out toward Hamburg, at eighty leagues from the majority of their army.”\textsuperscript{15} Napoleon hypothesized that if the enemy seized the lower Elbe and managed to send an enemy in force to Dresden, Eugène would be without a line of operation. Keeping his cavalry deployed on the right bank of the Elbe east of Magdeburg would force the enemy to deploy troops to contain them. Napoleon offered more precise guidance on this concept the next day, in the form of two more letters to his step-son. Napoleon emphasized the importance of establishing an offensive posture by orienting his line of operation from Magdeburg west toward Wesel and placing troops east of the fortress of Magdeburg.\textsuperscript{16} Placing two cavalry corps and several infantry divisions in front of Magdeburg would keep the enemy fearful of a French advance on Berlin. In turn, this position would force the enemy to remain at Berlin because advancing toward Hamburg would expose their line of operations to a flanking movement. From here, Napoleon advised sending strong detachments toward Spandau and Stettin. He also directed that Jean Louis Ebénézer Reynier command at Dresden while Davout command the entirety of forces committed in the 32\textsuperscript{nd} Military Division. Napoleon perceived both of these positions as important; however, Hamburg possessed millions of francs and at least

\textsuperscript{15} Napoleon to Eugene, 17 March 1813, \textit{CN}, No. 19728, 25:100-101.

\textsuperscript{16} Reference Map 3. Wesel is located roughly 258 miles west of Magdeburg, on the Waal River.
100 cannon that Napoleon desired. To ensure its retention, the emperor repeatedly iterated that Eugene should send Marshal Davout to control the area. The Prince of Eckmühl not only knew the region, but would re-establish order through “severe examples.” On the 19\textsuperscript{th}, Napoleon told Eugène that losing Dresden should not change his disposition forward of Magdeburg; instead, he should direct Reynier to hold at Halle and await reinforcements from Marshal Victor. These letters articulate a defense line on the Elbe defended by troops taking advantage of the significant water obstacles in the area.

At the end of March, Napoleon added further nuance to his vision for defending the Elbe line. Reiterating the importance of Magdeburg, he informed his step-son that he could form a defense line between Dessau and the canal at Plauen. By constructing bridges and emplacing troops at both of these locations, Eugène could create a flexible “come and go” defense, where he could shift troops from the left to right bank of the river quite easily. Fortified outposts on the right bank would enable him to maintain control of the bridgeheads at Dessau and Plauen. He further iterated that Eugène should occupy a camp three to four leagues east of Magdeburg protected by minor fortifications from where he could threaten Berlin. The corps located at other locations along the Elbe could also march to his assistance if necessary. This letter marked the last significant instructions that Napoleon sent to his step-son as commander of French forces along the Elbe River.

The above letters demonstrate that Napoleon discussed much regarding the art of war with his step-son. He articulated a plan for defending the Elbe River between Dresden and

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17 Napoleon to Eugene, 18 March 1813, \textit{CN}, Nos. 19734 and 19735, 25:103-106.
19 The Plauen canal is located near Schönebeck, seventeen miles southeast of Magdeburg on the Elbe River.
Hamburg with a minimum number of troops. Eugène absolutely needed to hold the terrain east of Magdeburg on the right bank of the Elbe. Occupying this area forced the enemy to remain concentrated in order to prevent a French advance on Berlin. By manning outposts on the right bank of the Elbe, Eugène would be able to shift forces from the left bank of the river wherever and whenever necessary. With regards to the flanks, Napoleon correctly assessed the route between Berlin and Hamburg as the most dangerous because it offered the path of least resistance between the Oder and the Elbe. Bonaparte mitigated this risk by placing one of his best commanders at Hamburg to control the 32nd Military Division. The position at Dresden needed to be retained if at all possible; however, a new position could be taken at Halle if the French needed to abandon it. Thus, Napoleon provided Eugène with an excellent strategy for maximizing the effectiveness of his limited strength.

More important, the evidence above demonstrates the methodology Napoleon employed to educate his subordinate in the art of war. Napoleon attempted to explain both ‘how’ Eugène should defend the Elbe and ‘why’ he should undertake the particular course of action he advocated. Detailed terrain analysis, a suggestion in arraying troops, and a possible set of courses of action rooted in the principles of war also describe the letters Napoleon sent to his step-son. These characteristics differentiate the preceding letters as more than a directive concerning ‘what’ to do and reappears in the letters Napoleon wrote to some of his marshals during the Fall Campaign of 1813.

The Spring Campaign of 1813 offered few opportunities for the marshalate to act independent of the emperor. Between April and mid-May 1813, Napoleon maintained tight control over his subordinates and their units. After the French victory at Lützen on 2 May, the
French pursued the Allies east of the Elbe River. The emperor slowly granted Ney responsibility for the French left wing. On 4 May, he wrote to the Prince of the Moscowa that Victor’s II Corps and Reynier’s VII Corps would fall under his orders. On arriving at Wittenberg, he would assume control of General Horace François Sébastiani’s troops there. That same day, he dictated that Reynier march to Torgau to rally the Saxons while Victor advance on Wittenberg to secure the fortress. Napoleon’s habit of dictating the disposition of Ney’s troops continued throughout May. On 9 May, he instructed Army Chief of Staff Berthier to inform Ney that: “it is important that he march rapidly on Wittenberg; that he unite [Victor and Sébastiani’s] corps, . . . ; that he leave Reynier where he placed him, and [know] that I have ordered General [Jacques Alexander de] Lauriston to leave a division at Meißen and to locate himself between Torgau and Meißen to support [Reynier].” Thus, a directive tone articulating a ‘what’ rather than a ‘how’ characterizes the first orders sent to Ney.

Napoleon’s micromanagement of the French left wing changed in mid-May after the French army successfully regained control of the fortress cities of Wittenberg, Torgau, and Dresden on the Elbe. The Grande Armée passed through Dresden on 10 May and followed the enemy toward Bautzen. In the meantime, Reynier’s VII Corps, Victor’s II Corps, Lauriston’s V Corps, and Sébastiani’s corps now officially fell under Ney’s supervision and secured the fortress cities of Wittenberg and Torgau. Despite this decision, the emperor continued to micromanage the units under Ney’s command. On 13 May, Napoleon informed Ney via Berthier that Victor’s II Corps and Reynier’s VII Corps would cover the Prussian force commanded by

21 Reference Map 4.
22 Napoleon to Ney, 4 May 1813, CN, No. 19956, 25:264-265.
23 Napoleon to Ney, 4 May 1813, CN, No. 19958, 25:265-266.
24 Napoleon to Berthier, 9 May 1813, CN, No. 19986, 25:280.
25 Napoleon to Ney, 10 May 1813, CN, No. 19988, 25:282-283; Napoleon to Berthier, 12 May 1813, CN, No. 19996, 25:286.
General Friedrich Wilhelm von Bülow, which defended Berlin by taking a position at Luckau.\textsuperscript{26}

Later that day, Napoleon sent Ney a personal letter detailing the object of this mission. He offered the prince some insight of his overall strategy:

\begin{quote}
You sense with the considerable forces you command that it is not the time to rest. Free Glogau, occupy Berlin, allow [Davout] to reoccupy Hamburg and move forward with his five divisions in Pomerania, seize Breslau, here are the three important goals that I propose and that I would like to accomplish . . . this month. By the position that I have made you take, we will still be united, we can maneuver on the right or on the left and with the most mass possible, according to intelligence.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

Unlike his earlier instructions that simply dictate ‘what,’ this letter revealed to Ney the emperor’s strategic vision to defeat the Allies. Aside from his other goals, Ney served as the instrument with which Napoleon would eventually seize Berlin. The emperor did more than direct his marshal to occupy Luckau, he informed him why he needed to position his forces there. This particular letter indicates that Napoleon needed Ney to function independent of his supervision in the near future.

Despite the clear strategic picture articulated to Ney on the 13\textsuperscript{th}, the ‘bravest of the brave’ failed to grasp the importance of maintaining a force near Berlin. After Napoleon learned that the enemy intended to make a stand along the Spree River at Bautzen, his attention shifted from Ney’s forces toward the Allies. Suddenly, the orders sent to Ney lacked the specificity of early May. On 18 May, Ney received instructions: “His Majesty desires that with Lauriston and all your forces combined you march on Dres[h]a, beyond the Spree, near Gottamelde, and having passed the Spree, you will find that you turned the enemy’s position . . . you can be in position

\textsuperscript{26}Napoleon to Berthier, 13 May 1813, \textit{CN}, No. 20001, 25:289.

\textsuperscript{27}Napoleon to Ney, 13 May 1813, \textit{CN}, No. 20006, 25:292-293. The stronghold of Glogau is located on the Oder River, and Luckau is located fifty-eight miles south of Berlin. Reference Map 4 for the locations of Glogau and Luckau and Map 6 for an overall depiction of Central Europe in 1812.
on the 21st.”\textsuperscript{28} Completely misunderstanding the strategic purpose of occupying Luckau, Ney misinterpreted these instructions as license to remove Victor’s and Reynier’s troops from their mission to take Berlin.\textsuperscript{29} This left the Prussian capital temporarily uncovered, demonstrating that Ney did not respond to the strategic guidance offered by Napoleon.

Ney’s conduct when given less detailed orders reveals that he could not be trusted to perform well without supervision. Napoleon intended for Ney to serve as the flanking force for a \textit{manœuvre sur les derrières}. If Ney reached Dresha east of the Allied position at Bautzen, he would successfully cut off their retreat and set the conditions for Napoleon to fight a decisive battle.\textsuperscript{30} Yet the prince of the Moscowa appeared to misunderstand his role as demonstrated by his reply to Napoleon’s orders of 18 May. Believing that the enemy would attack him from the south, Ney stated that he intended to hold his position at Buchwalde rather than support the main effort of the French at Bautzen.\textsuperscript{31} Napoleon corrected this error, sending an order on the 20\textsuperscript{th} that reiterated the instructions for Ney to march southeast to Dresha before turning east toward Weißenberg.\textsuperscript{32} Understanding the vital role Ney played in the emperor’s plan, Berthier attempted to coordinate between Ney’s and Napoleon’s headquarters before the battle.\textsuperscript{33} This linkup served to improve Ney’s understanding of his purpose and the terrain on the battlefield.

\textsuperscript{29} Charles Lanrezac, \textit{La Manoeuvre de Lutzen, 1813} (Paris: Institut de Strategie Comparee, 1904; repr., 2000), 207-209.
\textsuperscript{30} Reference Map 5. Dresha is a small town located east of Bautzen and just south of the main road leading from Bautzen to the city of Weißenberg.
\textsuperscript{31} Lanrezac, \textit{La Manoeuvre de Lutzen}, 220, 226. Buchwalde is a town fifteen miles northwest of Hoyerswerda and roughly thirty-eight miles northeast of Bautzen. Reference Map 4.
\textsuperscript{32} Reference Map 5.
\textsuperscript{33} Berthier to Ney, 20 May 1813, \textit{Registre}, 1:125.
Unfortunately, the staff officers assigned to coordinate between headquarters took far too long to return due to the extended route they needed to take to avoid Allied cavalry.\textsuperscript{34}

Lacking more refined guidance from headquarters, Ney decided to act. Around 8 a.m. on the 21\textsuperscript{st}, he menaced the enemy’s right by crossing the Spree at Klix while Napoleon’s forces fixed the Allies between Binnewitz and Pließkowitz.\textsuperscript{35} A handwritten order from Napoleon early on 21 May directed Ney to reach Preititz in the rear of the Allied right by 11 a.m. that day.\textsuperscript{36} Ney followed this order to the letter, which resulted in him holding at Preititz rather than advancing on Dresha. Antoine-Henri Jomini, Ney’s chief of staff, unsuccessfully pled with Ney to redirect his advance further south toward Hochkirch.\textsuperscript{37} Had he done so, at least three Allied corps likely would have been destroyed. A victory of this magnitude could have forced the Russians and Prussians to the peace table and dissuaded Austria from joining the Sixth Coalition two months later.\textsuperscript{38} Instead, the enemy army retreated further east to Silesia, remaining a potent force with which Napoleon still needed to contend. This failure allowed the War of the Sixth Coalition to continue.

Two key incidents demonstrate that Ney lacked the ability to operate independently. First, Ney decided to abandon Luckau on the 18\textsuperscript{th} despite knowing Napoleon’s strategic vision for capturing Berlin. This uncovered the Prussian capital and contradicted the emperor’s campaign strategy. Second, Ney’s decision to halt at Preititz during the battle reveals that he failed to understand his role as the flanking force tasked with cutting the enemy’s line of retreat. These events disclose that Ney required closer supervision and a firm hand to ensure that he

\textsuperscript{34} Antoine Henri Jomini, \textit{Précis Politique et Militaire} (Lausanne: B. Benda, 1886), 1:268. Jomini does not specify what route they took exactly, only that it took them longer than usual due to enemy activity.

\textsuperscript{35} Reference Map 5.

\textsuperscript{36} Berthier to Ney, 21 May 1813, \textit{Registre}, 1:125-126.


\textsuperscript{38} Petre, \textit{Napoleon's Last Campaign in Germany, 1813}, 136-38.
succeeded. To be certain, Napoleon worded his orders of 18 and 21 May very poorly. Yet the experience of a commander like Ney who had served Napoleon for nearly a decade should have enabled him to understand and execute the emperor’s intent. Instead, he blindly followed the orders as he received them without considering the consequences. Ney did little to burnish his reputation as an independent commander during the Spring Campaign of 1813.

The battle of Bautzen marked the end of unified combat action by French forces under Napoleon until October. The combatants entered a cease-fire in June that lasted until 10 August. Unfortunately for the French, the Austrians decided to support the Allies during the armistice and entered the war on 12 August. In light of his multiplying number of enemies, Napoleon devised a new strategy that he articulated in a set of instructions he sent to Oudinot, Ney, Saint Cyr, and Marmont. Oudinot, the duke of Reggio, received command of the newly formed Army of Berlin, consisting of VII, IV, and XII Corps, and III Cavalry Corps. This force would advance against the former French Marshal and current Swedish Crown Prince, Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte, and his Army of North Germany at Berlin. Davout’s 40,000 troops based at Hamburg and General Jean-Baptiste Girard’s 12,000 men at Magdeburg would each support Oudinot’s advance. In total, Napoleon committed 120,000 men to seize the Prussian capital.

Concurrently, Napoleon planned to conduct a shaping operation further south. As Napoleon understood it, the main force of the enemy remained in Silesia under Michael Andreas Barclay de Tolly. Although he assumed this consolidated force to be the main Allied army, Napoleon estimated it to number less than 200,000 men. He assessed the Austrian force under

39 Reference Map 7 for a geographical depiction of the disposition of French and Allied forces in mid-August 1813.
40 Barclay de Tolly represented the Allies first choice for command. However, Tsar Alexander selected General Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher to command the Army of Silesia. Napoleon did not know that Blücher commanded the Army of Silesia, he believed the Prussian general only commanded four divisions of it. See Napoleon to Maret, 22 August 1813, CN, No. 20437, 26:111-113; Michael Leggiere, Blücher: Scourge of Napoleon (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014), 258-259.
Schwarzenberg in Bohemia as much weaker, consisting of no more than 100,000 men. \(^{41}\) With this in mind, he arranged his troops in a loose fashion between the Elbe River to the west, the Katzbach River to the east, and the Riesengebirge Mountains to the south. To support them, Napoleon designated Dresden as the logistical hub of operations through which his line of operations would flow. Saint Cyr’s XIV Corps would occupy the city with a variety of infantry and cavalry divisions covering its approaches. Napoleon articulated to his marshals three contingencies based on the enemy’s action for the campaign, asking them to respond with their own thoughts should they have any. If Schwarzenberg chose to advance on Dresden through the Erzgebirge via Peterswalde, Saint Cyr would counter with the troops available to him while Napoleon arrived with Victor’s II Corps and the Imperial Guard. Should the Austrians choose to cross the Riesengebirge at Zittau, Prince Józef Antoni Poniatowski’s VIII Corps would hold them and wait for the crushing weight of the emperor’s 150,000 men to concentrate on the enemy to destroy him. Napoleon also mused that Prussian General Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher could attempt to unite with Schwarzenberg’s Austrian forces at Josephstadt, in which case the French would assemble at Bunzlau. In the event that the Austrians opted to unite with the Russians and Prussians in Silesia, Ney’s III Corps would occupy the heights near Leignitz while Macdonald fought a reconnaissance action to remain informed of the enemy’s dispositions as he fell back on Bunzlau. Marmont would choose the position for the battle himself. \(^{42}\) This supporting operation would offer Oudinot enough time to capture Berlin and hopefully remove the Prussians from the war.

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\(^{41}\) Napoleon based his plans on the assumption that the majority of Allied forces remained in Silesia. However, he remained unaware until 16 August that the Allies had shifted the balance of their force from Silesia into Bohemia. This false assumption influenced the operational plans that Napoleon distributed to his marshals on the 13th. See Petre, *Napoleon’s Last Campaign*, 168-170, 174-185.

\(^{42}\) “Instructions pour les Maréchaux Ney, Gouvion Saint Cyr, Macdonald, et Marmont,” 13 August 1813, CN, No. 20373, 26:45-47.
Napoleon allowed the recipients of his 13 March instructions to reply with their own ideas. Marmont responded negatively to the plan. The duke of Ragusa perceived that the plan created three armies: one in Dresden, another in Silesia, and a third oriented on Berlin. He critiqued this concept, claiming that “nobody in the army had the authority necessary to command several army corps . . . only Napoleon could lead such elements.” He closed his dissension with the prophecy that when Napoleon won one battle, he would simultaneously lose two others. Saint Cyr agreed with Marmont, declaring that the emperor had underestimated the capability of Bernadotte’s troops and proffering his own ideas on how to undertake the campaign. Regardless of their misgivings, Napoleon chose to execute a plan that depended on his marshals to function independent of his supervision.

The dispositions of the Grande Armée in August 1813 required the marshals to demonstrate proficiency in distributed maneuver: the movement of army corps and divisions. Napoleon’s instructions to his marshals granted them significant leeway and demonstrated a sense of dependence on their operational abilities. The sheer size of the theater, which measured 222 miles between Magdeburg and Leignitz, made this necessary. Although Napoleon planned to expertly center himself at Görlitz in order to react to any contingency, he could not respond personally to the enemy’s first moves when he was separated from all fronts by forty miles. Supervising operations around Berlin remained absolutely out of the question, with forty-five miles between him and the rearmost corps of the Army of Berlin. An examination of Napoleon’s direction of Oudinot, Saint Cyr, and Macdonald confirms that he used a variety of

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44 Gouvier-Saint-Cyr, Mémoires Pour Servir à l'Histoire Militaire, 4:58-63. Napoleon replied to Saint Cyr that he had spent much time arranging his troops in this manner, and that no time remained to reposition them.
45 Distance between Görlitz and Liegnitz, as well as Görlitz and Dresden.
46 Distance between Görlitz and Kalau, where Reynier’s VII corps stood on 16 August.
pedagogical techniques to prepare his subordinates for independent command and compensate for his absence.

Oudinot’s command of the Army of Berlin serves as an excellent example of Napoleon’s attempt to prepare a tyro army commander for independent operations. In a letter dictated by Napoleon to Berthier on 13 August 1813, the emperor discussed with Oudinot the manner in which he should proceed. While the remainder of the *Grand Armée* fought further south to contain the Allied forces posted in Bohemia and Silesia, Oudinot would conduct what Napoleon perceived as a vital operation to remove the Prussians from the war. He advised that IV Corps advance on Lüben while General Jean-Toussaint Arrighi de Casanova’s III Cavalry Corps proceeded toward Baruth. General Armand Charles Guilleminot, the newly appointed commander of XII Corps, would unite with Arrighi’s cavalry and place itself in a position to proceed toward Berlin no later than 18 August. Napoleon advocated for a vigorous offensive: “His Majesty hopes that with such an army, you [Oudinot] will press rapidly on the enemy, that you will seize Berlin, disarm the population, disperse all the *Landwehr* [militia] and this mob of bad troops.” The emperor also offered Oudinot some guidance regarding his line of operations. Napoleon recommended that he arrange his line through Luckau, where he would install a garrison to protect his supply depot. After taking Berlin, he could transition from Luckau to Magdeburg and Wittenberg. Shifting his line of operation in this manner would threaten any enemy advance across the Elbe between Hamburg and Berlin, placing the enemy in danger of having his own line of operations cut by Oudinot’s forces. Napoleon also advised him on the support he would receive from the French occupied fortresses along the Elbe. Davout’s XIII

47 Reference Map 7.
48 Berthier to Oudinot, 13 August 1813, *Lettres de l’Empereur Napoléon, du 1er Aout au 18 Octobre 1813, Non-Insérées Dans La Correspondance* (hereafter cited as *LNI*), No. 137, 60.
Corps would emerge from Hamburg on 18 August and block the retreat of Bernadotte’s Army of North Germany. Oudinot would subsequently link with Davout and relieve the French garrison at Stettin. Generals Jan Henryk Dąbrowski and Girard would secure Oudinot’s line of operations from Wittenberg and Magdeburg respectively, thus facilitating subsequent operations in North Germany. These orders emphasize the importance that Napoleon placed on capturing the Prussian capital.49

The preceding evidence also demonstrates that Napoleon discussed key concepts of the art of war with Oudinot. In particular, he provided tremendous detail regarding transitioning a line of operations. The emperor regarded this endeavor as particularly difficult. In his earlier analysis of the wars of Frederick the Great, he had commended the Prussian monarch for his skill at shifting his line of operations during his second campaign of 1757.50 Oudinot’s orders of 13 August not only discussed establishing a line of operations, but the correct moment at which he should transition. An enemy off balance after suffering a defeat at Berlin would likely be unable to contest him during this difficult operation. Shifting it further west would also shorten his line, making it less vulnerable to the enemy. In a separate but related vein, this new line of operations would place Oudinot in a position similar to Eugène in March. Controlling the area between Berlin and Magdeburg allowed the duke of Reggio to seriously threaten any advance on Hamburg. The strong emphasis on shifting a line of operations and the advantages afforded by shortening it indicates that Napoleon attempted to teach Oudinot a key concept in the art of war.

In addition, Napoleon ensured that correct information regarding the status of the Army of Berlin continued to flow between Oudinot and himself. On 14 August, he assigned officier d’ordonnance Anne-Charles Lebrun to accompany the Army of Berlin. Likely, the emperor sent

49 Berthier to Oudinot, 13 August 1813, LNI, No. 137, 58-61.
50 “Précis des Guerres de Frederic II,” CN, 32:184-185.
Lebrun to relay accurate information between Oudinot and Napoleon devoid of inaccuracy and tailored to inform Napoleon’s decisions. The emperor also ordered Arrighi and General Henri-Gatien Bertrand, the commander of IV Corps, to inform him “when something new occurs, and to always tell me the truth, in detail and on everything. At the moment you receive this letter, write me what you think of the outcome of the operation on Berlin. I do not need to tell you that your letters are confidential.” Napoleon likely recruited these officers as a means to ensure a constant flow of information between himself and Oudinot without the inaccuracies that often appeared in official correspondence. The unfiltered information they could provide afforded the emperor better situational awareness regarding the challenges that his marshal faced. With this, Bonaparte could better advise his marshal in his first endeavor at army command.

Although Napoleon presented sound advice regarding establishing and changing line of operations, he offered little in terms of tactical guidance. In this instance, the duke of Reggio’s dispositions failed to align with the emperor’s concept of the bataillon carré. Prussian

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51 Fabry, Étude sur les Opérations du Maréchal Oudinot, 7-8; Napoleon to Lebrun, 14 August 1813, LNI, No. 182, 76. Son of Third Consul Charles-François Lebrun, Anne-Charles entered the military after the Brumaire coup and served throughout the Empire. He fought in 1805 as a colonel of hussars. By 1807, Napoleon promoted him to general of brigade. In February 1812 he received advancement to general of division. His service record demonstrates that by 1813 he possessed a tremendous amount of experience on the battlefield. The directives that Napoleon sent to Lebrun remain lost to the historical record, because the entry in the Lettres indicates that it is illegible. Given this, it remains impossible to be certain as to Lebrun’s role with Oudinot. However, other orderly officers functioned as advisors to commanders in the field. In one particular instance, orderly officer Gaspard Gourgaud rode ahead of Napoleon prior to the battle of Dresden to assess the situation facing Saint Cyr. Fain recounts a conversation between Gourgaud and the emperor that indicates Napoleon depended on their assessments to inform his decisions. See Baron Agathon Jean-François Fain, Manuscrit de 1813 Contenant Le Précis des Événement De Cette Année, Pour Servir à l'Histoire de l'Empereur Napoléon (Paris: Delaunay Libraire, 1824), 2:256 and Charles Mullié, Biographie des célébrité militaires des armées de terre et de mer de 1789 à 1850 (Paris : Poignavant, 1851), 2:199.

52 Napoleon to Bertrand, 13 August 1813, LNI, No. 136, 57-58; Napoleon to Arrighi, 13 August 1813, LNI, No. 138, 61. Despite Napoleon’s endeavor to receive unbiased evaluations of Oudinot’s performance, Arrighi and Bertrand both passed all correspondence to the emperor to Oudinot before sending it to the rear.

53 The bataillon carré involved arranging corps in a diamond shaped formation that offered operational flexibility. It facilitated speed because different corps marched on separate axes of advance toward a common objective. It also possessed flexibility, because each corps in the diamond could hold for at least twenty-four hours before receiving support from its neighbors. With this formation, Napoleon could mass troops quickly at a specific time and place while remaining able to react in any direction.

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defenses consisting of flooded countryside and entrenchments between the Nuthe and Notte Rivers led Oudinot to believe that only one route could possibly be open.\textsuperscript{54} This led him to split his forces into three separate columns.\textsuperscript{55} On 18 August, the Army of Berlin concentrated at Baruth, where Oudinot ordered it to march on Berlin the next day. The XII Corps and Arrighi’s cavalry proceeded seventeen miles west to Luckenwalde; VII Corps trailed behind the Army of Berlin and marched on Schöneweide. On the 21\textsuperscript{st}, Oudinot ordered Bertrand’s IV Corps to depart Baruth and advance twelve miles northwest toward Sperenberg. The distances between these corps nominally placed them within easy reach of one another; however, the roughly twenty miles of heavily wooded and flooded terrain divided the Army of Berlin at several intervals along the march route. The Prussians continued to resist the French as they pressed forward along these three axes but the French proved too strong and continued to push them back.

By the 22\textsuperscript{nd}, the French crossed the line of defenses erected on the Nuthe-Notte line. Although Oudinot recognized the danger inherent in advancing separately through this terrain, this observation came far too late.\textsuperscript{56} As the French crossed the Nuthe-Notte line, Bernadotte moved his Swedish troops into position at Ruhlsdorf while the Prussians occupied Blankenfelde and Birckholz. Their arrangement allowed them to bottleneck the various French corps and prevent them from marching to support one another. The dispersal of the French through this rough terrain proved fatal to their effort to seize the Prussian capital.

\textsuperscript{54} Reference Map 8 for a depiction of Oudinot’s advance to Groß Beeren. The Nuthe-Notte line consisted of fortifications erected along the bridges that traversed a twenty-mile-wide swamp between Trebbin and Mittenwalde that united the waters of the Nuthe and Notte Rivers. The Prussians artificially enhanced this swamp through flooding, making off-road marching impossible. See Leggiere, \textit{Napoleon and Berlin}, 108-111.
\textsuperscript{55} Oudinot to Berthier, 17 August 1813, in “Documents,” \textit{Étude sur les Opérations du Maréchal Oudinot}, 22.
\textsuperscript{56} Oudinot to Bertrand, 22 August 1813, in ibid., 42; Oudinot to Reynier, 22 August 1813, in ibid., 42-43.
The battle on 23 August developed into a series of engagements between the Allied forces and isolated French corps. Bertrand’s IV Corps successfully repulsed the enemy at Blankenfelde, but VII Corps encountered much more difficulty. After Reynier’s troops advanced into Groß Beeren and began establishing camp, the Prussians descended on them. Caught by surprise, VII Corps fought a stubborn retreat under relentless enemy pressure. As Reynier’s men began to fold, only the last minute intervention of elements of XII Corps and Arrighi’s III Cavalry Corps prevented the destruction of VII Corps. Ferocious Prussian resistance and the collapse of Reynier’s forces caused Oudinot to lose heart and retreat toward Wittenberg. Supporting operations mounted by Davout and Girard to support Oudinot fell back on their bases at Hamburg and Magdeburg respectively.\textsuperscript{57} Oudinot’s defeat represented a significant setback to Napoleon’s master plan of capturing Berlin.

Napoleon’s efforts to assist the duke of Reggio in his first command came to naught. The emperor clearly endeavored to explain how Oudinot could manage his line of operations during his advance on Berlin. His guidance on establishing a shorter line of operation represents a valid example of Napoleon’s principles of war and his educational efforts. In addition, his identification of the terrain between Magdeburg and Wittenberg as essential to subsequent operations echoes the same advice he provided Eugène in March. However, Oudinot failed at properly maneuvering his army. The arrangement of his corps violated the fundamental principal of the \textit{bataillon carré}, which required that corps remain within supporting distance of one another. Napoleon perceived this as a stupid mistake, as evidenced by his letter of 2 September. The emperor criticized Oudinot for attacking with his corps separately, blasting him

for his poor judgment: “It is really difficult to have less brains than the duke of Reggio.”

Likely, Napoleon viewed the concept of the *bataillon carré* as so obvious that it did not require explanation. Yet this does not detract from the fact that Napoleon still made an effort to train his marshal in the principles of war necessary to succeed in the campaign after capturing Berlin. He continued to do so in the guidance he offered to other commanders during the fall of 1813.

While Oudinot faltered at Groß Beeren, Saint Cyr assumed responsibility for occupying the hub of operations at Dresden. The importance of holding this city can be ascertained in the numerous letters that Napoleon forwarded to Saint Cyr regarding its defense. On 13 August, Napoleon sent via Berthier a letter outlining how to position XIV Corps. Saint Cyr needed to screen a massive amount of terrain against the enemy. He would deploy his troops over an expanse of 110 miles between Neustadt and Hof, from the right bank of the Elbe River near Dresden to where the Thuringian Forest and Erzgebirge Mountains met. Two battalions of 42nd Division would cover the bridge at Lilienstein, with another battalion protecting the crossing at Neustadt. The 43rd and 44th Divisions would occupy Berggießhübel, twenty miles southeast of Dresden. An advance guard could cover these two divisions two miles south of the town at Hellendorf. The 45th Division would be divided to observe the other passes through the Erzgebirge Mountains. The emperor also recommended that General Claude Pierre Pajol take a flying corps of infantry, cavalry, and artillery west to clear the road to Leipzig. In addition, the fortress at Stolpen and the bridge at Königstein required garrisons. Berthier simplified Saint Cyr’s task into a single sentence:

> All this, my marshal, must not be considered as a general instruction – your goals are to cover Dresden on the two banks [of the Elbe] – to assure the communications between

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58 Napoleon to Berthier, 2 September 1813, *CN*, No. 20502, 26:162-163; Berthier to Ney, 2 September 1813, *Registre*, 2:143-144.
59 Reference Map 10 for the terrain south of Dresden.
60 Reference Map 7 to see the breadth of terrain that the XIV Corps covered from Dresden.
the Königstein bridge and Bautzen and to remain vigilant for partisans attempting to penetrate along the Neustadt-Bautzen road.61

Berthier also granted Saint Cyr permission to cross over the mountains to attack the enemy in Bohemia. In short, Saint Cyr received the tasks of securing Dresden, covering the region around the city, and preventing the enemy from affecting the Grande Armée’s lines of communication with France.62

The emperor provided specific instructions regarding the defense of the area around Dresden. Napoleon ordered Saint Cyr to occupy Pirna, Berggießhübel, Stolpen, Schandau, and Hohnstein.63 These positions enabled Saint Cyr to control both the left and right banks of the Elbe southeast of Dresden. With these locations secured, Napoleon remained capable of shifting forces to either side of the river. Should the enemy attempt to cross the mountains at Zittau, Napoleon would shift General Dominique Vandamme’s I Corps from its defensive position on the right bank of the Elbe to support Poniatowski’s VIII Corps and General François-Etienne Kellermann’s IV Cavalry Corps. If the enemy attempted to attack Dresden along the left bank of the Elbe, Napoleon intended to mass between 160,000 and 180,000 men at Dresden. With these contingencies in place, Napoleon remained confident that he could counter whatever action the enemy took. He closed the letter by emphasizing that Saint Cyr retain control of the city, the bridges across the Elbe, and his lines of communication.64 Napoleon’s description of the terrain around Dresden and the manner in which he directed Saint Cyr to position his troops offers a great example of conducting a mobile defense.

61 Berthier to Saint Cyr, 13 August 1813, Registre, 2:21-24.
62 See also Berthier to Saint Cyr, 16 August 1813, Registre, 2:29-30; Berthier to Saint Cyr, 18 August 1813, Registre, 2:51.
63 Reference Map 7 and 10.
64 Napoleon to Saint Cyr, 17 August 1813, CN, No. 20398, 26:77-78.
The emperor also discussed the means to withstand a siege in significant detail. An entrenched camp around Dresden functioned as the city’s first line of defense. To augment this, he emphasized the importance of artillery in the defense. He wrote: “we must place eight to ten pieces of cannon in every redoubt, independent of three mobile batteries of twenty pieces which the garrison or corps can emplace wherever it would be necessary.”  

Should the enemy overcome the redoubts, moat, and walls of the city, Napoleon recommended that Saint Cyr erect barricades and prepare fighting positions within the city. “It is not on the *palanques* that the defense depends, but on the lines of houses behind them. I have ordered that the houses be occupied . . . and that the streets be barricaded . . . .”  

Combined with the fire of the artillery, these obstacles made Dresden a formidable obstacle. According to his estimates, a stubborn defense could hold out for as long as fifteen to twenty days. Should the city fall, Napoleon argued that the French could continue to resist by occupying fortifications on the right bank of the Elbe.  

When combined with his instructions of early August, the orders of 25 August indicate that Napoleon perceived Dresden as the key to operations in Prussia, Bohemia, and Silesia. Without this piece of the operational puzzle, the tenuous plan implemented by Napoleon on 13 August would certainly collapse.

Napoleon’s specific instructions to Saint Cyr reflect many of the emperor’s principles of war. His concept of the central position appears in two ways. First, he clearly articulated several schemes to concentrate wherever the enemy appeared. Saint Cyr’s task of keeping the lines of operation open between the left and right banks of the Elbe proved essential to Napoleon’s ability to reinforce Dresden. With control of the bridgeheads established, the emperor could

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66 Ibid. A palanque is a loop-holed stockade of round timbers, or a stockade fort.  
67 Napoleon to Saint Cyr, 25 August 1813, *CN*, No. 20461, 26:129-130.
march a large body of troops to support XIV Corps. Second, Saint Cyr himself possessed enough forces to implement his own central position. Napoleon recommended that he employ Pajol’s cavalry, 42nd Division, and 45th Division as covering forces that would warn of enemy movements toward the city while securing key points of terrain. Keeping 43rd and 44th Divisions at Berggießhübel granted Saint Cyr a striking force that could support his outlying security perimeter.68

In a separate vein, the emperor also discussed the use of fortifications within the city as a secondary means of defense. Napoleon had argued that this technique needed to be revived in a letter he wrote in 1809, where he claimed that entrenchments could allow the defense of a city to continue long after the enemy achieved a breach in its walls.69 Napoleon also highlighted the need for guns in siege warfare. He remarked about the plan for deploying artillery in the defense of Dresden later in his career:

it was to have large caliber samples pushed forward of the main line of defense defended by a large amount of small mobile artillery. By this the enemy would be stopped short in his approach . . . these small pieces functioned as skirmishers, following the movements of the enemy by their easy mobility.70

With smaller, lighter guns, Napoleon claimed that the rapid concentration of firepower at a weak point in the defense allowed a defender to better defend his walls. The correspondence to Saint Cyr demonstrates not only what the marshal needed to do, but also how and why he should adopt the methods recommended. This characteristic marks the correspondence between Napoleon and

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68 An excellent diagram of the strategy of central position can be found in David Chandler’s Campaigns of Napoleon. See Chandler, The Campaigns of Napoleon, 172-173.
69 Napoleon to Clarke, 1 October 1809, CN, No. 15889, 19:540-543. In this letter, Napoleon complained to Clarke that engineer officers believed a breach in a fortress’s walls as the end of its defense. Napoleon decreed that this idea needed to be eliminated, claiming that barricades inside the city allowed a garrison to resist longer than engineers previously calculated.
70 Fain, Manuscrit De 1813, 2:267n-268n.
Saint Cyr as an obvious attempt by the emperor to share his knowledge on the art of war with his marshal.

Meanwhile, events continued to unfold further east in Silesia. Blücher’s offensive across the Katzbach River prior to the official commencement of hostilities drove imperial forces west and across the Bober River on 15 August.\(^{71}\) An angry Napoleon rode east to take the reins and hopefully destroy Blücher’s army. On the 21\(^{st}\), the emperor arrived at Löwenberg and launched an immediate offensive. In compliance with Trachenberg-Reichenbach plan, Blücher retreated in the face of new-found French zeal for the offensive.\(^{72}\) Satisfied with these results, Napoleon returned to Dresden to destroy Schwarzenberg’s main army as it advanced from Bohemia.\(^{73}\) Before he left, the emperor placed Marshal Macdonald, the duke of Tarentum, in command of III, V, and XI Corps, and II Cavalry Corps. Christening this command the Army of the Bober, Napoleon returned to Dresden with Marshals Ney, Marmont, and Murat in tow.\(^{74}\)

Napoleon sent Macdonald a set of instructions dictating his mission and the arrangement of his forces. Preventing Blücher’s movement, either on Zittau to threaten Dresden or against the rear of the Army of Berlin, would be Macdonald’s principle goal. Thus, holding the enemy army in Silesia served as his principle goal. He received further guidance to press the enemy as far back as the village of Jauer before taking a defensive position on the Bober River.\(^{75}\) Only if the enemy decided to take the offensive and did not receive reinforcements should Macdonald

\(^{71}\) Reference Map 11.

\(^{72}\) The Trachenberg-Reichenbach Plan’s primary principle dictated that any Allied army that encountered Napoleon on the field should retreat. For more details on the particular principles that comprised this strategy, see Petre, *Napoleon’s Last Campaign*, 181-184.

\(^{73}\) Napoleon to Maret, 22 August 1813, *CN*, No. 20437, 26:111-113.


\(^{75}\) Attacks on the 23\(^{rd}\) drove Blücher back to Jauer, precluding any need by the French to launch another assault by the 25\(^{th}\). See Petre, *Napoleon's Last Campaign*, 257.
leave his defensive position on the Bober to engage him. Napoleon proceeded to articulate how to arrange his forces to defend the river:

it seemed suitable that he form two large bodies of cavalry, one to the right and one to the left, who, with infantry and artillery, will flank the army and observe any enemy who would like to turn it . . . I think the same that . . . if the enemy tries to turn the left, Macdonald should link his cavalry on the left with a division of infantry and detach it to a flying corps to observe the enemy’s movements – because it is of import that the enemy not pass between him and the Oder to march on Berlin.76

These instructions clearly dictate a supporting operation using mobile forces to observe the enemy if he attempted to cross the Bober River. Napoleon refined his guidance to Macdonald with a lengthy letter dictated through Berthier. Napoleon believed that the enemy would split his elements to attack the French on the left bank of the Bober. Should that happen, Macdonald needed to concentrate his forces and defeat the enemy in detail as he crossed. If pushed back, Macdonald should fall back to the Queis River, where he needed to “hold . . . and retreat on Zittau where we will unite and form a new plan.”77 Based on these instructions, it is clear that Macdonald’s mission consisted of a delaying action designed to support French operations occurring further west.

Macdonald’s ability to delay the enemy depended on both the flexibility and depth apparent in the orders Napoleon dictated. First, the instructions articulated a flexible deployment of troops that enabled him to react to whatever actions the enemy took. Rather than tying his men to a single piece of terrain, the emperor discussed the employment of ‘flying corps’ in a reconnaissance role. This arrangement enabled the duke to quickly identify the enemy’s weak points, where he could march his remaining forces to defeat him in detail. With the enemy in flight before him, he could exploit his success and launch a counterattack across the river.

76 Napoleon to Berthier, 23 August 1813, CN, No. 20442, 26:115-116.
77 Napoleon to Berthier, 23 August 1813, CN, No. 20443, 26:116-118.
Second, the orders explained how Napoleon believed in a defense-in-depth by discussing the other defensible terrain available to Macdonald. The environment itself offered ready-made obstacles that the duke could withdraw behind as circumstances required. The Queis River served as a supplementary defensive position from which he could continue to resist Blücher’s advance. In this respect, Macdonald’s defense acquired depth. These concepts reveal how Macdonald could delay the enemy through superior mobility and the advantages afforded by terrain. With these concepts in hand, he could easily prevent the enemy from interfering with French operations in the vicinity of Dresden and Berlin.

In a separate vein, Napoleon instructed Macdonald to secure his lines of communication in hostile territory. Napoleon perceived this as key to the success of any military campaign. To secure his line of operation against marauding Cossacks, Napoleon suggested that Macdonald construct blockhouses large enough to hold twenty to thirty men every two leagues. In addition, he should create a column of troops dedicated to maintaining rear-area security. This solution echoed how the emperor had responded to the problem of Russian light and irregular cavalry, which first emerged in the Russian campaign of 1812. To counter their threat, Napoleon ordered Berthier to secure lines of communication through the use of blockhouses. These small outposts consisted of platoons of twenty-five men spread between small towns along the French line of operation. The solution for Cossacks in 1812 bears a striking resemblance to the methods Napoleon shared with Macdonald in 1813. The importance of securing lines of communication and the techniques that Napoleon shared with the duke demonstrate that he attempted to share his knowledge on the art of war with his marshals.

78 “Précis des Guerres de Frédéric II,” CN, 32:184-185. Napoleon states that the second principle of war is never to abandon one’s line of operation.
79 Napoleon to Berthier, 23 and 24 August 1813, CN, Nos. 20442 and 20453, 26:115-116,124.
80 Napoleon to Berthier, 2 July 1812, CN, No. 18812, 23:504-505.
Macdonald’s decisions as commander of the Army of the Bober contrasted sharply with his written orders. The duke of Tarentum opted to launch an offensive rather than remain on the left or western bank of the Katzbach River. On 25 August, Macdonald issued a poorly worded order to the army. He instructed XI Corps to form the center while V Corps would serve as the left in an advance from Goldberg to Jauer. Concurrently, III Corps received the confusing guidance to “follow the enemy . . . where he would fall back on Jauer, but in the case where the enemy divides his forces . . . [III Corps] will demonstrate with a portion of its army and threaten Jauer by marching . . . via Liegnitz.” Sébastiani’s II Cavalry Corps received orders to march on Jauer via Kroitsch. Ironically, Macdonald stated that “in the event the enemy is found in force and united, it would be suitable that we not engage in isolated affairs.” This statement appears completely incongruous given the terrain over which the Army of the Bober advanced.

The duke split his army into two groups separated by the Wütende Neiße and Katzbach Rivers. This division of the Army of the Bober doomed Macdonald’s offensive.

The resulting battle of the Katzbach squandered valuable French forces in an unnecessary attack and forced them into a headlong retreat. On the 26th, heavy rains brought the Wütende Neiße and Katzbach rivers to flood stage and severely complicated French reconnaissance.

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81 Napoleon pressed the Army of Silesia behind the Katzbach with attacks on the 23rd, driving Blücher back to Jauer. Barring any other changes to his orders, Macdonald possessed no need to advance further and could assume the defensive. Thus his decision to attack remains puzzling. Macdonald’s memoirs mention a meeting with the emperor on the 24th, where he claims that Napoleon wanted him to immediately take the offensive: “The Emperor spoke to me of the immediate necessity of a diversion . . . he ordered me to rapidly advance with them to menace Breslau and the passes from Bohemia and Silesia.” However, the substance of this private conversation between Napoleon and Macdonald remains lost, and no written orders substantiate his claims. If Macdonald’s statement is true, this explains why he chose to advance. See Gabriel Joseph Fabry, *Étude sur les Opérations du Maréchal Macdonald du 22 Août au 4 Septembre, 1813: La Katzbach* (Paris: R. Chapelot., 1910), 26; Petre, *Napoleon's Last Campaign*, 257; and Étienne-Jacques Macdonald, *Souvenirs du Maréchal Macdonald, Duc de Tarente* (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit, 1892), 203.

82 Reference Map 12.


84 Ibid.

85 The Wütende Neiße will subsequently be referred to as the Neiße.
This prevented the duke of Tarentum from identifying the size and dispositions of Blücher’s troops, which were concentrating for their own offensive at nearly the same time. The II Cavalry and elements of XI Corps crossed the Neiße and Katzbach Rivers around 1 p.m, arriving on a plateau near Jänowitz. After its initial success against advance units, this portion of Macdonald’s army fell victim to a massive Russo-Prussian assault. Around 6:30 p.m., II Cavalry finally broke and fell back toward the bridges. Unfortunately for the French, recent storms turned these rivers into a torrent, drowning hundreds as they tried to ford the river. Two divisions of III Corps crossed the Katzbach north of Jänowitz but arrived too late to save their beleaguered comrades. Meanwhile, XI and V Corps fought relatively well, pushing back the Russians near Hennersdorf. However, they remained too far away to alleviate the disaster unfolding in the French center. With III Corps in retreat and the cavalry unable to make further contributions, Macdonald broke off the offensive. The Allied pursuit began in earnest the next day, and the Army of the Bober reeled westward all the way to Bautzen, losing 30,000 men in the process.86

True to Marmont’s prophetic words, Napoleon won a great victory at Dresden while Oudinot and Macdonald lost battles on the periphery. The main Allied army—the Army of Bohemia—concentrated at Dresden expecting to seize the Saxon capital in late August. Meanwhile, Napoleon had marched the Imperial Guard, II and VI Corps, and I Cavalry Corps to Dresden by the 26th. The battle on the 27th cost the Allies some 38,000 casualties and forced them to withdraw from Dresden and across the Erzgebirge Mountains to Bohemia.87 On 28 August, the French commenced their pursuit of the enemy. As it unfolded, the Allies managed to isolate and defeat Vandamme’s I Corps at the battle of Kulm on 29 and 30 August. Three

86 Fabry, Étude sur les Opérations du Maréchal Macdonald, 67-105; Leggiere, Blücher, 276-81; Petre, Napoleon's Last Campaign, 252-56.
87 Reference Map 10.
days later, Napoleon learned of the twin defeats at Groß Beeren and the Katzbach. This forced him to intervene to reverse these setbacks but he could not appear everywhere. He decided to personally resuscitate Macdonald’s shattered forces and delegated the task of seizing Berlin to the prince of the Moscowa.

Given the performance of Ney during the battle of Bautzen, it would seem that he required more specific instruction or supervision to succeed. However, the orders sent from Napoleon bear little resemblance to the detailed instructions sent to Oudinot and Macdonald. On 2 September, Napoleon informed Ney of his new command. He assured the prince of the Moscowa that the enemy consisted of nothing but poor militia and advised him to attack rapidly and with vigor. Given the amount of effort expended in writing the first set of instructions to Oudinot and Macdonald and the importance of seizing Berlin, this sudden lack of detail appears puzzling. No hard evidence exists to explain Napoleon’s decision to tell Ney to simply attack without much further guidance. Likely, his low estimate of the enemy led him to conclude that an aggressive commander like Ney could easily crush the militia defending the city. The next day Napoleon sent another note informing Ney that he intended to personally lead the Army of Berlin after settling affairs in Silesia. Perhaps this decision eliminated the need for the emperor to send a follow-up letter offering more detailed guidance. In any case, Ney rode to take command of the Army of Berlin expecting the emperor to follow him.

From Wittenberg, Ney led the Army of Berlin east in anticipation of linking with Napoleon. On 5 September, Ney ordered Oudinot’s XII Corps to lead Bertrand’s IV Corps

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88 Napoleon to Berthier, 2 September 1813, CN, No. 20502, 26:162-163; Berthier to Ney, 2 September 1813, Registre, 2:143-144.
89 Napoleon to Berthier, 3 September 1813, CN, No. 20508, 26:165; Berthier to Ney, 3 September 1813, Registre, 2:152. Napoleon would have assumed command of the Army of Berlin had the Allies not attempted to attack Dresden again, causing Saint Cyr to panic and call for the emperor’s aid. See Pelet, Des Principales Opérations de la Campagne de 1813, 83-85.
toward Zahna and Jüterbog. Reynier’s VII Corps covered the right flank by marching in the direction of Baruth. That day, XII Corps defeated the vanguard of Bogislaw Friedrich von Tauntzien’s Prussian IV Corps at Zahna, which shortly after fell back toward Jüterbog. On 6 September, Ney directed the Army of Berlin to pass east of Jüterbog. As VII Corps marched on Rohrbeck, XII Corps would support its movement by advancing on Dahme; Bertrand’s IV Corps would pass south of Jüterbog and cover the French left.90 However, Bertrand’s IV Corps encountered Tauntzien’s IV Corps between Dennewitz and Rohrbeck around 11 a.m. on the 6th.91 The number of Prussians engaging the French IV Corps multiplied after Bülow’s corps arrived at noon, placing heavy pressure on Bertrand’s men. Not until 2:30 p.m. did the bulk of Reynier’s VII Corps arrive to support Bertrand’s left, offering some relief to his battered troops by anchoring their left at the village of Gölsdorf. Yet the Prussians still forced IV Corps back to Rohrbeck around 3:30 p.m. Oudinot’s XII Corps arrived around 4 p.m. and took position in and around Gölsdorf, securing the French left. Ney now shifted his attention to the flagging French right. With the line in danger of folding, he made the fatal error of ordering Oudinot’s corps to abandon the left and support Bertrand on the right. Unknown to him, Bülow had ordered an advance through Oudinot’s previously held position. Reynier could not hold the left without XII Corps’ support, and VII Corps fell back from its position at Gölsdorf by 5 p.m. After this occurred, Bernadotte released the Russian cavalry and infantry under his command to exploit the hard-won Prussian success. This cavalry descended on Oudinot’s columns and Reynier’s troops, hindering their efforts to retreat in good order. Meanwhile, Bertrand’s corps disintegrated after the Prussians launched another assault across the Ahebach Stream. Following this, Ney lost control of his army during the ensuing retreat. Reynier’s VII and Oudinot’s XII Corps fell back

90 Pelet, Des Principales Opérations de la Campagne de 1813, 85-87; Petre, Napoleon’s Last Campaign, 271-272.  
91 Reference Map 13.
on Torgau while Bertrand’s IV Corps retreated toward Dahme. The Army of Berlin lost one-third of its combat strength in this final push on the Prussian capital.92

Ney’s performance at Dennewitz and Bautzen demonstrates his critical weakness as a commander. In both cases, he lost perspective on the situation. At Bautzen, he forgot his role as the decisive flanking element and held his troops at Preititz. Ney repeated this mistake at Dennewitz, when he lost sight of the battle in his desire to buoy IV Corps. This mistake reveals that he lacked coup d’oeil, an innate talent that allowed a commander to instinctively assess the battlefield. According to Napoleon, not all generals possessed this gift. Napoleon once stated:

There are men who, because of their physical and moral makeup, distort a picture of everything. No matter how much knowledge, intellect, courage, and other good qualities they might have, nature has not called upon them to command armies or to direct the great operations of war.93

He later noted about Ney: “Always the first under fire, he forgot about troops who were not under his immediate command.”94 He further stated: “Admirable for his bravery . . . he was good when it came to leading 10,000 men, but with a larger force he was a real fool.”95

Unfortunately for the emperor, these observations came far too late in his career. Ney’s inability to remain objective marked him as an officer suited strictly for subordinate roles. In this aspect, the prince of the Moscowa never possessed the capacity for independent command. Likely, instruction and education would not have repaired this flaw in Ney’s character.

Following this flurry of defeats on the periphery, Napoleon descended into a period of indecision uncharacteristic of his nature.96 Efforts to force either Schwarzenberg or Blücher into

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96 Reference Map 14.
battle on either side of the Elbe failed due to the effectiveness of the Trachenberg-Reichenbach plan. Between 6 and 21 September Napoleon did little but press Schwarzenberg’s army back through the Erzgebirge Mountains without significant gains. On the 23rd, he advanced against Blücher again, but without result. On 24 September, the emperor opted to abandon the right bank of the Elbe. The next day, Blücher marched the majority of his Silesian Army northwest from eastern Saxony to unite with Bernadotte’s army in the vicinity of Wittenberg. Ney remained in command of the remnants of the Army of Berlin and assumed responsibility for preventing the passage of Bernadotte’s Army of the North across the Elbe. On 2 October, Napoleon placed II, V, and VIII Corps into Murat’s hands along with V Cavalry Corps and one division of I Cavalry Corps. The King of Naples received the task of masking Schwarzenberg’s army to the south.

Meanwhile, the Allies continued to tighten their noose around Napoleon. On 4 October, Blücher’s Army of Silesia crossed the Elbe at Wartenburg and threatened to advance on Leipzig. On the 7th, Napoleon advanced toward Düben and pressed the Allies back. That same day, he opted to evacuate Dresden but left Saint Cyr’s XIV Corps to defend the Saxon capital. Yet Napoleon remained unsure on how to proceed and lapsed into another period of indecision at Bad Düben, spanning from 9 to 14 October. The Allies did not wait for Napoleon to make up his mind. Blücher marched west to cross the Saale River on the 9th and reached Halle on the

97 Fain, *Manuscrit De 1813* 2:335. Fain indicates that Napoleon knew the enemy would not allow him to close with them. The emperor opted to change his strategy, stating that “I no longer go out, I wait.”
101 An excellent summary of Napoleon’s shifting campaign plans in early October can be found in Petre’s text. See Petre, *Napoleon's Last Campaign*, 309-315.
12th. Bernadotte maneuvered his army behind the Saale as well. Schwarzenberg continued to force Murat’s army back toward Leipzig until he reached the city’s outskirts on the 11th. On 14 October, Napoleon acted. He sent an order to withdraw French troops north of the Mulde River and to concentrate around Leipzig. The emperor desired to risk everything in one last battle, hoping that he could fight a battle of central position and defeat the Allied armies in detail. The emperor’s preparations for this epic battle resulted in a few more examples of Napoleon trying to educate his marshals on the art of war.

Marshal Marmont received orders to defend the northern side of Leipzig. Considering that the enemy could rapidly outnumber Marmont, Napoleon recommended a much less aggressive defense than he did to Macdonald in August. He recommended that Marmont keep the three bridges across the Parthe River open but that he not endanger his troops by entrenching on the left bank, where they could be cut off if the enemy appeared from an unexpected direction. He recommended that Marmont anchor his position between the Parthe and the Elster Rivers: “you must reconnoiter the position of Breitenfeld and the line of the Parthe [River] as far as Taucha, and have advance guards at Schkenditz . . . by this means you will deploy yourself promptly.”

Napoleon suggested that he orient his cavalry forward of his position, not only west toward Halle, but also northeast to Düben in order to keep open his lines of communication. He also instructed Marmont to deploy his troops in two rather than three lines. This technique would make his corps appear larger and might persuade the enemy not to attack him. Finally, the emperor closed by explaining Marmont’s overarching mission: “It is important that the Army of Silesia not get closer than two leagues from Leipzig. Your three divisions can be spread out

102 Napoleon to Berthier, 14 October 1813, CN, No. 20799, 26:356-357.
103 Reference Map 15.
104 Breitenfeld is located just over one mile north of Lindenthal.
105 Napoleon to Marmont, 13 October 1813, CN, No. 20791, 26:350.
with the good troops you have. The time necessary to reconnoiter the position . . . will give you the time necessary to place yourself in a position to cover all attacks.”

This letter reiterates the same points that Napoleon made to Eugène in his defensive positions on the Elbe in March. Marmont needed to keep himself west of the river while deploying his cavalry forward. This would enable him not only to maintain his lines of communication, but such a deployment also would serve as an early warning system. Maintaining control of the river crossings once again appeared as a key aspect of a river line defense. Once again, Napoleon used his correspondence as a means to instruct a subordinate commander in the art of war.

On 14 October, Napoleon sent his officier d’ordonnance Victor de Caraman to inspect Marmont’s position near Breitenfeld. Satisfied with Caraman’s report, Napoleon wrote: “I send you an account of the battle of Gustavus Adolphus, who dealt with the positions that you occupy.”

King of Sweden Gustavus Adolphus fought the battle of Breitenfeld in 1631, defeating Johan Isaclaes, Count von Tilly’s Catholic troops. Napoleon emphasized the importance of history, stating that studying the campaigns of the Great Captains served as the only means of learning the art of war. The emperor’s decision to send Marmont this account marks him as a unique case. Unlike the other marshals who received instruction via detailed orders articulating the principles of war, Bonaparte approached the duke of Ragusa in a more academic manner. This begs the question regarding what made Marmont different from Oudinot, Macdonald, and Ney. Perhaps Napoleon saw something different in this officer. Marmont’s memoirs indicate that he often spoke with Napoleon regarding his thoughts on the

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106 Ibid.
107 Napoleon to Marmont, 14 October 1813, CN, No. 20805, 26:359-360.
108 For an account of the battle, see William P. Guthrie, Battles of the Thirty Years War: From White Mountain to Nordlingen, 1618-1635 (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 23-34.
109 “Extraits de récits de la captivités,” CN, 32:379.
military art. After Ney’s defeat at Dennewitz, Napoleon chatted with Marmont for several hours regarding the incapacity of his lieutenants and his thoughts on the campaign thus far. At Düben, Marmont disagreed with Napoleon’s plan to invite a large battle at Leipzig.\textsuperscript{110} In this context, Napoleon’s efforts at instructing Marmont reveal that he discriminated between his commanders. He understood their mental capacities, distinguishing between those with an intellectual nature and those without.

In contrast to Marmont, the marshals occupying the southern perimeter of Leipzig received a unique opportunity for personal mentorship by the emperor. Murat’s men had been fighting a rearguard action and slowly falling back on Leipzig for most of October. On the 15\textsuperscript{th}, Murat finally arrived at Napoleon’s quarters near Leipzig to inform him of the previous day’s events. By noon, the two mounted their horses and proceeded to the Galgenberg hilltop near Liebertwolkwitz, seven miles southeast of Leipzig. There, Napoleon gave orders for the battle directly to Berthier, Murat, and other marshals for the oncoming battle. He then rode four miles west and visited VIII Corps’ position on the right bank of the Pleiße River, between Doelitz and Markleeberg. There, Napoleon conversed with Poniatowski over defending the crossings of the Pleiße at Connewitz, Doelitz, and Lossnig, as well as the nuances in the terrain there. Napoleon then rode east and inspected Victor’s II Corps at Wachau before returning to Liebertwolkwitz to check the positions of Lauriston’s V Corps. Napoleon entrusted these two corps to Murat, with whom he had discussed his plans for the battle throughout the afternoon. The emperor also ordered Macdonald’s XI Corps to occupy the French left at the villages of Zuckelhausen and Holzhausen, three miles north of Liebertwolkwitz.\textsuperscript{111} This tour of the southern battlefield represents a very personal effort on the part of the emperor to impart his knowledge to his

\textsuperscript{110} Marmont, Mémoires 5:255-256, 272-273.
\textsuperscript{111} Fain, Manuscrit De 1813 2:383-84; Ernst von Odeleben, A Circumstantial Narrative, 2:13-14.
marshals on the eve of one of the greatest battles in history. The concentration of French forces, Napoleon’s selection of the battlefield, and the decision to fight a pitched battle allowed him to forgo his usual technique of using correspondence as a means to convey his ideas. Instead, he shared his thoughts in a direct and personal manner. The preparation for the defense of Leipzig demonstrates that personal interactions with Napoleon also served to educate the marshals in the art of war.

Despite these efforts, the Allies proved too strong for Napoleon. Although the French successfully fended off the Allies at Wachau and the bridge at Lindenau on the 16th, they failed to destroy Schwarzenberg’s Army of Bohemia. Meanwhile, the appearance of Blücher’s forces on the northwest side of Leipzig surprised Napoleon. Although he had assured Marmont that no enemy could possibly be coming from that direction, VI Corps engaged in a bloody struggle at Möckern that the duke of Ragusa described as furious.\textsuperscript{112} Little action occurred on the 17th, with both sides resting from the combat of the previous day. Napoleon constricted his front under cover of darkness at 2 a.m. on the 18th, creating a defense line that anchored his left at Pfaffendorf on the Elster River and the right at the town of Connewitz on the Pleiße River. On the 18th, the fighting began again in earnest. Schwarzenberg pushed steadily against the French right during the morning. Meanwhile, Blücher and Bernadotte pressed on Napoleon’s left between Pfaffendorf and Paunsdorf. This plan of attack lacked concentration at any single point, which enabled Napoleon to mount an organized retreat that evening. The emperor ordered Marmont, Macdonald, and Poniatowski to hold the city while the majority of French forces withdrew from Leipzig at Lindenau, where one lone bridge across the Elster provided the only line of retreat. On the 19th, the Allies assaulted the city in force. Allied troops drove the French

\textsuperscript{112} Napoleon to Marmont, 16 October 1813, CN, No. 20814, 26: 364-365; Marmont, \textit{Mémoires}, 5:283-85.
from the suburbs of Leipzig into the inner city by 11:30 a.m. Vicious street fighting broke out as French troops fought a rearguard action while attempting to reach Lindenau before the Allies cut their line of retreat. Unfortunately for these troops, a lone French corporal manning the mines wired on the bridge triggered it too early when he misidentified a rogue group of Cossacks approaching the bridge as the vanguard of the Allied advance. The explosion stranded between 10,000 and 15,000 men in Leipzig and created a ghoulish shower of body parts and equipment that rained from the sky. By 1 p.m. most of the remaining French troops had surrendered to the Allies. Of the marshals, Macdonald and Marmont managed to make it across. Poniatowski, who had just received his marshal’s baton a few days earlier, drowned in the Elster.113 Napoleon’s Grande Armée retreated out of the German states and back to France, and the Allies began their pursuit.

The 1813 campaign provides a unique opportunity to observe how the expanded scale of warfare challenged Napoleon’s pre-professional military. His marshals had emerged from a system that remained rooted in practical experience and personal genius rather than deliberate study, corporate intellect, and the staff system. Responsibilities beyond their experience often proved too difficult for them. Yet because the marshals usually commanded under Napoleon’s watchful eye, this problem did not become serious until much later. The conditions of the 1813 campaign exacerbated this issue. With Napoleon no longer able to personally influence every action, efforts outside of his control faltered. Although not the only factor that led to French defeat in 1813, tactical failures by the marshals certainly contributed to the Allied victory.

Napoleon understood the dangers inherent in appointing his marshals to independent command. In the above examination, three definite pedagogical methods become apparent.

113 Petre, Napoleon’s Last Campaign, 300.
First, Napoleon sent detailed orders to his commanders that iterated his principles of warfare as well as some proven techniques. Concepts such as securing lines of operation, implementing a strategy of central position, taking advantage of interior lines, contesting river crossings, and defending fortresses can be found in his orders to Oudinot, Macdonald, and Marmont between August and October 1813. Napoleon even invited the opinions of his marshals regarding his post-armistice campaign strategy. Personal mentorship also appears as a method. The tour of the engagement area around the southern half of Leipzig and his conversations with Marmont and Saint Cyr demonstrate that he also utilized personal interaction as a teaching technique to instruct his marshals. Napoleon also regarded military history as an educational tool, as evidenced by the note he sent to Marmont in October. The evidence supporting the argument that Napoleon trained his marshals in his methods of war becomes apparent when examining the correspondence and memoirs detailing the events of the 1813 campaign.

Ney represents a key exception to this trend. The limited instructions given to him at the battle of Bautzen proved ineffective. During his tenure as commander of the Army of Berlin, the emperor did not bother to write the same detailed orders he offered to Ney’s peers. The reason behind this lack of guidance remains puzzling. Perhaps Napoleon understood that Ney functioned best as a human projectile, and could not be expected to grasp the more esoteric concepts on the art of war. The comments Napoleon made in his later career indicate that he had little faith in Ney as an army commander. Or perhaps Napoleon expected Ney to easily trounce whatever enemy opposed him, eliminating the need for a more talented officer. Regardless of the possible reasons why Napoleon treated Ney differently, the ‘bravest of the brave’s’ reputation as a man best suited for a desperate cavalry charge remains intact after this examination.
The evidence presented above refutes the argument that Napoleon withheld his knowledge from his marshals due to personal jealousy. First, his decision to share his ideas and converse with his marshals on the art of war demonstrates that envy did not characterize Napoleon’s emotions. Moreover, the operational plan did not allow for it. In 1813, Napoleon depended on the success of the marshals to maintain control over the German states at a critical time. Offering them assistance in their independent commands increased their chances for tactical success, which furthered Napoleon’s own goals of winning the war. In this respect, the relationship between Napoleon and his marshals appears less like master and slave and more like that of boss and trusted employee. Some of these employees functioned well without supervision while others did not. Regardless of their skills as generals, at heart the marshals remained brave soldiers. Their role in building Napoleon’s empire must not be understated.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The imperial marshalate possessed a pre-professional military heritage. Eighteenth century officer accessions, promotions, and selection for high command should be characterized as such. Wealth, social origins, personal relationships, and political factors defined an officer’s career in the eighteenth century. Although the increasingly technical nature of war demanded more of their officers, the great powers of Europe did not embrace the concept of the military-intellectual until much later. The French Revolution marked a dramatic departure from accepted practice by opening the officer corps to all social classes, thus eliminating the need for an officer to possess an aristocratic background. However, the administrative processes implemented during the Revolution and the First French Empire did not introduce new methods that reflected the increased amount of technical proficiency required by the ever expanding field of military theory. Napoleon fully subscribed to the concepts of military theory; however, the administration of the Grande Armée should not be characterized as being in alignment with its demands. This context reveals that the imperial marshalate emerged as a product of these pre-professional institutions.

The ideals of the Enlightenment inspired soldier-intellectuals to undertake an academic study of the art of war. Inspired by the power of enlightened ideals, they rejected the premise that an ungovernable series of violent actions characterized warfare. These soldier-intellectuals sought to identify unifying principles which could reduce the chaotic endeavor of warfare to man’s understanding. Themes regarding tactics, grand tactics, and even nascent ideas regarding strategy appeared in contemporary literature. Although haphazard and non-standardized, the weight of informed opinion indicated a shift in the nature of warfare. It implied a growing
consensus that officers needed to function as more than blunt instruments. The increasingly
technical nature of military theory required thinking men capable of applying the principles of
war according to individual circumstances. The European officer corps needed to be
professionalized and brought into accordance with these new ideas.

Yet the promotions and accessions processes of European militaries did not reflect these
new demands. Attempts to incorporate standards that would have fully professionalized the
officer corps floundered. The eighteenth century lacked a formal methodology for military
education during this period. Military academies first emerged in the mid-1700s; however, these
promising new institutions failed to meet their potential. They did not function as the sole
gateway to an officer’s commission, which diluted the effects of education on the entirety of the
officer corps. Most of the curriculums at these institutions remained substandard and required
significant adjustment to be qualified as rigorous. In addition, no European state successfully
implemented competency or merit-based promotion systems. This leads to the conclusion that
efforts at military professionalization fell short during the eighteenth century.

The administration of European militaries in the late eighteenth century reflected pre-
professional standards and practices. The general requirement that an officer possess an
aristocratic background removed capable members of society from lending their talents to the
state. After commissioning, an officer’s training consisted of hands-on experience with little
formal schooling. Promotions processes did not ensure the best officer received advancement to
the next rank. Although seniority-based promotions ensured both experience and equity within
the officer corps, this process still possessed its own issues. Upward mobility stagnated and
officers aged. The purchase of commissions served as the other promotions process of the
period. This practice served two functions. First, it assisted monarchs in procuring funds to
maintain their militaries. Second, a monarch held this money as an investment of that officer in the well-being of the sovereign. Obviously, this process contained inherent problems. Unless regulated, officers could advance quickly without the minimum experience necessary to succeed at other levels. Though imperfect, these systems managed to generate officers loyal to their respective sovereign and knowledgeable in the practical aspects of war.

The French Revolution marked a dramatic departure from the established practices of the eighteenth century. It eliminated the aristocratic strictures of the officer corps, which marked a step toward military professionalization. This policy served to improve accessions by expanding the available pool of officer candidates to experienced non-commissioned officers and soldiers. These veterans infused the French officer corps with a number of capable individuals. Yet the Revolution did little to ensure the intellectual growth of its military leaders. This becomes immediately apparent when examining how the government appointed general officers. The policies of the Terror removed many experienced aristocratic officers from service, thus eliminating from the army the professional expertise that they possessed. Underqualified representatives on mission played a significant role in populating the upper tiers of the officer corps with political favorites who often proved incompetent. Lazare Carnot and the Committee of Public Safety recognized the consequences of allowing these practices to continue and implemented new regulations that established seniority as a pre-requisite for promotion. The effects of this law proved fruitful, as demonstrated by the increased amount of overall experience in army commanders of 1799 compared to those of 1794. The experience of the Revolution created a French generalate experienced and battle hardened, but not necessarily intellectual or formally indoctrinated in the art of war.
The men who would populate the imperial marshalate arose in this environment of careers open to talent. The iconoclastic destruction of the Terror shredded the collective experience and knowledge of the Old Regime’s officer corps. Its haphazard system for filling the new vacancies within the French generalate often proved ineffective and dangerous. The options available for rehabilitating the officer corps after the excesses of 1793 and 1794 proved limited. Given that further instability would seriously hinder ongoing operations in the field, the adoption of a seniority-based promotions system proved the only option acceptable to both the officer corps and the administration. Thus, the experiences of the Revolution defined the men who populated the imperial marshalate. They possessed a tremendous amount of tactical experience while remaining aware of the political pitfalls of revolutionary politics. Napoleon drew his marshals from this group of hardened veterans who joined in the fervor of the Revolution, survived the Terror, and learned their trade on the battlefield.

Bonaparte revived the imperial marshalate as a social and political institution reserved for military officers of high reputations. As newly crowned emperor, he needed to secure his dynasty by cementing the loyalty of the military. Thus, political necessity drove Napoleon to choose these officers for a variety of reasons. Splitting the batons between generals who served on the Rhine and in Italy served to reduce the antagonism between these two groups. He also used the office of marshal as a means to tie both friends and enemies to himself. Although veterans like Murat, Berthier, and Lannes should be classified as friendly to the emperor, Bernadotte, Masséna, Augereau, and Jourdan demonstrated either grudging neutrality or outright opposition to Napoleon’s rise to power. With this political context in mind, it becomes more obvious why military value functioned as a secondary concern when naming the marshals. Most of these men possessed reputations as brave soldiers, but only a few could be qualified as great
generals in May 1804. For instance, Davout, Bessières, and Lannes possessed no other military qualifications other than having served with Napoleon. The political origins of the marshalate must be remembered when evaluating their later military performances.

An in-depth analysis of the personal backgrounds of the marshals demonstrates their revolutionary origins and their selection for political reasons. Unlike their predecessors of the Old Regime who began their preparation for an officer’s career at a young age, the majority of these men either enlisted at the outset of the Revolution or served as low ranking soldiers just prior. This experience offered them a strong appreciation for the tactical level of war and the life of the enlisted soldier. Indeed, Napoleon continued to employ the majority of his marshals in tactical roles for most of their careers. When comparing the number of armies commanded by French generals between 1792 and 1805 to the number commanded by the marshals between 1805 and 1812, Napoleon significantly reduced the number of men responsible for commanding armies in the field. With regards to their educational backgrounds, a significant portion of the future marshals received vocational training preparing them for bourgeois careers as priests, lawyers, notaries, or merchants. Only a handful of marshals should be perceived as intellectuals. Marmont, Saint Cyr, and Berthier number among these special few. A more academic approach to the practice of warfare likely did not appeal to the rest. Very little evidence exists supporting the concept that the majority of the marshals made personal efforts to study the art of war. The combined evidence of the personal backgrounds and collective experience of the marshals reveals a group of men who earned their batons through the graces of Napoleon and the opportunities afforded by the Revolution rather than for their potential as generals.

Considering the context of the Old Regime, the effects of the Revolution, and the socio-political role of the marshalate, the inability of the marshals to perform at the grand tactical or
operational level of war becomes apparent. During the *ancien régime*, army commanders received their positions due to their proximity to the royal family. The Revolution made promotions fairer but equated potential for future success with competence at lesser responsibilities. Napoleon revived the marshalate as a means of securing his throne rather than as a repository of capable senior commanders. Aside from experience, little in the careers of these men prepared them to serve as independent commanders. Napoleon understood this and frequently reserved the role of army commander to himself. However, this solution proved shortsighted. Warfare began to rapidly expand outside the influence of a single man. As Robert Epstein argues, the expanded scale of warfare in 1809 required a level of competence in subordinates previously unnecessary. These new conditions posed a significant challenge to Napoleon’s way of war because it required subordinates to assume greater amounts of responsibility without any of the requisite preparation necessary to succeed.

The conditions of the 1813 campaign required more of Napoleon’s marshals than most of the earlier campaigns. First, extended lines of communication challenged the ability of a single man to personally drive the direction of a campaign. Second, the efficiency of French conscription created bodies of troops larger than ever before seen on the battlefield. These two circumstances created conditions in the 1813 campaign that required officers to be capable of more than just the tactical level of war. Larger bodies of troops required a more advanced understanding of warfare because commanders could no longer personally observe events unfolding on the battlefield. In addition, the marshals now needed to be prepared to assume responsibilities that shifted into the operational realm without the emperor on hand to immediately correct their mistakes. The expanding scale of warfare demanded more of marshals than before, which posed a significant challenge given that little prepared them for this event.
Yet Napoleon recognized these issues and attempted to mitigate them by sharing his knowledge on the art of war. Given the urgent nature of the situation and the inclination of his marshals towards learning through experience, Napoleon conveyed his ideas on the art of warfare through practical instruction in the form of detailed orders. The emperor also personally mentored his marshals, conversing with some of them regarding campaign strategy and inviting their opinions on the matter. Finally, Napoleon also employed military history as a more advanced means of explaining the art of war to his subordinates. Regardless, these efforts proved to be too little and far too late. The marshals entrusted to win on the periphery repeatedly disappointed Napoleon, costing him time and troops he could not afford. Combined with the exhausted nature of the Grande Armée, the highly effective Trachenberg-Reichenbach plan, and the resilience of the Allies, these defeats caused France to lose the war for the German states in 1813.

Although the evidence presented demonstrates that Napoleon recognized the challenges posed by the expanding scale of war, a question arises as to why the emperor failed to prepare his marshals for independent command before 1813. Likely, the tenuous nature of his regime precluded Napoleon from creating an officer corps of a more professional nature. Sovereigns of the eighteenth century viewed their militaries with suspicion. They perceived them as dangerous institutions that always possessed the potential to singlehandedly end a monarch’s reign with a few cannon and some well-placed troops. Indeed, the French military played a decisive role in determining the course of domestic politics at several points during the Revolution. In this context, the emperor likely feared he himself would be ousted by military coup. His creation of the imperial marshalate served to engender loyalty within the military by creating a cadre of respected senior officers who owed their fortunes to him. This system worked well for many
years. Napoleon’s genius continued to drive the engine of French warfare and the marshals
served as adequate if not always brilliant subordinates. Their role in supporting Napoleon’s
regime becomes apparent when considering that Napoleon only abdicated his throne when they
refused to continue fighting in April 1814. In this context, Napoleon needed loyalty more than
competence within his officer corps. The historical instability of French government precluded a
more professionalized military from emerging during Napoleon’s reign.

The evidence presented counters a historiographical argument regarding whether
Napoleon reserved his knowledge of warfare to himself due to a sense of personal jealousy.
Although Napoleon clearly remained aware of the political dangers posed by military coup, this
did not necessarily make him jealous of his genius. The decision by Napoleon to send his
marshals to the periphery in 1813 created a dependent relationship between the emperor and his
subordinates. Defeating the Allies required the marshals to coat themselves in glory by winning
without the emperor present. Napoleon assisted them in their endeavors, as demonstrated by the
detailed orders containing practical applications of the principles of war. In addition, a number
of incidents recounted in the memoirs of his closest aides and officers indicate that he conversed
with his marshals on topics related to the art of war. Although discerning Bonaparte’s personal
feelings cannot be done with the evidence available, the majority of evidence suggests that
Napoleon could not afford to be jealous in 1813.
APPENDIX A

PROMOTION TIMELINES OF 1794 ARMY COMMANDERS VERSUS 1799 ARMY COMMANDERS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Apptmt Date to BDE</th>
<th>Apptmt Date to DIV</th>
<th>Apptmt Date to ARMY</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Apptmt Date to BDE</th>
<th>Apptmt Date to DIV</th>
<th>Apptmt Date to ARMY</th>
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</thead>
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<td>7 December 1796</td>
<td>13 January 1798</td>
<td>Moreau</td>
<td>20 December 1793</td>
<td>14 April 1794</td>
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<td>Augereau</td>
<td>22 August 1793</td>
<td>29 August 1794</td>
<td>20 February 1798</td>
<td>Moreaux</td>
<td>22 September 1793</td>
<td>25 June 1794</td>
<td>7 July 1794</td>
</tr>
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<td>23 November 1791</td>
<td>7 March 1795</td>
<td>28 March 1798</td>
<td>Dumas</td>
<td>30 July 1793</td>
<td>August 1793</td>
<td>September 1793</td>
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<td>17 April 1797</td>
<td>27 January 1798</td>
<td>Petit-Guillaume</td>
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<td>13 June 1795</td>
<td>7 July 1794</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berthier</td>
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<td>13 June 1795</td>
<td>1 January 1798</td>
<td>Moulin</td>
<td>11 September 1793</td>
<td>28 November 1793</td>
<td>8 October 1794</td>
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<td>Saint Cyr</td>
<td>5 June 1794</td>
<td>10 June 1794</td>
<td>28 March 1798</td>
<td>Schérer</td>
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<td>28 January 1794</td>
<td>3 November 1794</td>
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<td>Macdonald</td>
<td>26 August 1793</td>
<td>28 November 1794</td>
<td>26 July 1798</td>
<td>Perignon</td>
<td>7 December 1793</td>
<td>13 January 1794</td>
<td>18 November 1794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernadotte</td>
<td>29 June 1794</td>
<td>22 October 1794</td>
<td>24 February 1799</td>
<td>Hatry</td>
<td>26 November 1793</td>
<td>28 January 1794</td>
<td>21 December 1794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecourbe</td>
<td>12 June 1794</td>
<td>5 February 1799</td>
<td>24 October 1799</td>
<td>Moncey</td>
<td>18 February 1794</td>
<td>9 June 1794</td>
<td>9 August 1794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedouville</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>~11 months</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 years, 9 months</td>
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Average Time for BDE to DIV appointment: ~11 months
Average Time for DIV to ARMY appointment: 8 years, 9 months

*These officers received reinstatement at some point in their careers. The date for their reappointment is listed.
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<td>Moreau</td>
<td>Michaud</td>
<td>A. Dumas</td>
<td>Kellermann</td>
<td>Dugommier, Dumberion</td>
<td>Schérer</td>
<td>Dumberion</td>
<td>Menou</td>
<td>Turreau</td>
<td>Servan</td>
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<td>Armée des Pyrénées-Orientales</td>
<td>Perignon</td>
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Previously Commanded
First Appointment as Army Commander
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<td>Armée de Sambre et Meuse</td>
<td>Jourdan</td>
<td>Armée de Sambre et Meuse Hoche Championnet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Armée de la Rhin et Moselle</td>
<td>Pichegru</td>
<td>Armée de la Rhin et Moselle Moreau desaix</td>
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<td>Armée des Cotes de l'Ocean</td>
<td>Hoche</td>
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Previously Commanded
First Appointment as Army Commander
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<td>Brune</td>
<td>Bernadotte</td>
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**Previously Commanded**

**First Appointment as Army Commander**
APPENDIX C

CAREERS OF THE 1804 MARSHALATE, 1792-1804
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>First date of brigade command</th>
<th>Promotion to GdB</th>
<th>First date of division command</th>
<th>Promotion to GdD</th>
<th>First date of corps command</th>
<th>First date of army command</th>
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<td>13 June 1795</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Chief of Staff to Bonaparte</td>
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<td>1 April 1800</td>
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<td>27 November 1800 - 31 December 1801</td>
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<td>Army of the Orient</td>
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<td>~9 June 1794</td>
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<td>22 December 1793</td>
<td>2-15 January 1794</td>
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<td>Army of Italy</td>
<td>Commandant of Toulon</td>
<td>Right Wing Army of Italy</td>
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<td>15 June 1795</td>
<td>23 September 1797</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Army of Western Pyrenees</td>
<td>Right Wing, battle of Fluvia</td>
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<td>Bernadotte</td>
<td>4 April 1794</td>
<td>29 June 1794</td>
<td>25 December 1794</td>
<td>22 October 1794</td>
<td>28 March 1799</td>
<td>24 February - 8 April 1799</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Army of the Rhine</td>
<td>Army of the Rhine</td>
<td>Army of Sambre-Meuse</td>
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<td>Left Wing, Army of Danube</td>
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<td>Army of the Orient</td>
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<td>Army of the Rhine (provisory)</td>
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<td>Army of the Moselle</td>
<td>Army of the Moselle</td>
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<td>Army of the Sambre-Meuse (provisory)</td>
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<td>Kellerman</td>
<td>1788 - Maréchal de Camp</td>
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<td>20 March 1792 - Lieutenant General</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>February 1791</td>
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<td>Ancien Régime</td>
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<td>Pérignon</td>
<td>28 July 1793</td>
<td>18 September 1793</td>
<td>13 January 1794</td>
<td>7 December 1793</td>
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<td>18 November 1794</td>
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<td>Pyrenees</td>
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<td>Left corps, Army of Italy</td>
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<td>Sérurier</td>
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<td>25 June 1793</td>
<td>~22 December 1794</td>
<td>22 December 1794</td>
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APPENDIX D

CAREERS OF THE LATER MARSHALATE
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<th>Name/Date Baton Given</th>
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<th>Promotion to GdB</th>
<th>First date of division command</th>
<th>Promotion to GdD</th>
<th>First date of army command</th>
<th>Army Commands upon Receipt of Baton</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victor</td>
<td>1 January 1794</td>
<td></td>
<td>20 December 1793</td>
<td>1 December 1793; 10 March 1797</td>
<td>18 January 1797</td>
<td>11-19 April 1800 (temporary); 5 August 1800 - 28 April 1801; 18 January 1797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 July 1807</td>
<td>Reserve, Army of the Eastern Pyrenees</td>
<td>Siege of Toulon</td>
<td>Army of the Midi, Toulon (temporary); Army of Italy</td>
<td>Army of Italy (by Bonaparte)</td>
<td>Army of the Reserve; Army of Batavia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suchet</td>
<td>28 October 1797</td>
<td></td>
<td>23 March 1798</td>
<td>None - staff work, then onto corps command</td>
<td>10 July 1799</td>
<td>31 December 1799-5 January 1800 (interim); 17-24 June 1800 (temporary); 5 April 1809</td>
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<td>8 July 1811</td>
<td>Army of Italy</td>
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<td>Army of Italy</td>
<td>Army of Italy</td>
<td>Army of Italy; Army of Italy; Army of Albeufuera</td>
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<td>Oudinot</td>
<td>5 November 1793</td>
<td>14 June 1794</td>
<td>30 April 1799</td>
<td>12 April 1799</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 July 1809</td>
<td>Army of the Rhine and Moselle</td>
<td>Army of the Moselle</td>
<td>Army of Danube and Helvetia</td>
<td>Army of Danube and Helvetia</td>
<td>Army of Italy</td>
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<td>Marmont</td>
<td>13 October 1796</td>
<td>10 June 1798</td>
<td>15 April 1800</td>
<td>9 September 1800</td>
<td>7 July 1806</td>
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<td>12 July 1809</td>
<td>Army of Italy</td>
<td>Army of Orient - Bonaparte</td>
<td>Artillery commands, Army of the Reserve</td>
<td>Army of Italy</td>
<td>Army of Dalmatia</td>
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147
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<th>Name</th>
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<th>Promotion to GdB</th>
<th>First date of division command</th>
<th>Promotion to GdD</th>
<th>First date of corps command</th>
<th>First date of army command</th>
<th>Army Commands Upon Receipt of Baton</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grouchy</td>
<td>15 May 1793</td>
<td>7 September 1792 - Marechal de Camp/29 November 1794</td>
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<td>23 April 1795</td>
<td>28 January 1812</td>
<td>7-10 September 1795 (temporary); 26 November 1795; 1 January 1796</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 April 1815</td>
<td>Army of the Brest Coasts</td>
<td>Army of the Alps; Army of the West</td>
<td>Division on the Left, Army of Italy, battle of Novi</td>
<td>4 military divisions of the West; 3rd Corps of the Army of the Reserve's Cavalry, Grande Armée</td>
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<td>Army of the West (temporary); Army of the Brest Coasts; Army of the Oceans (sub. To Hoche)</td>
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<td>Saint Cyr</td>
<td>6 December 1793</td>
<td>5 June 1794</td>
<td>14 June 1794</td>
<td>10 June 1794</td>
<td>9 October 1795</td>
<td>10 Sept-6 October 1797 (temporary); 28 March 1798 - 25 July 1798</td>
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<td>27 August 1812</td>
<td>Army of the Rhine</td>
<td>Army of the Rhine</td>
<td>Army of the Rhine</td>
<td>Army of the Rhine</td>
<td>4 Divisions, Army of the Rhine, Siege of Mainz</td>
<td>Army of Rhine and Moselle; Army of Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Macdonald</td>
<td>~26 August 1793</td>
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<td>26 July 1798 - 19 November 1798;</td>
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<td>12 July 1809</td>
<td>Army of the North</td>
<td>Army of the North</td>
<td>Army of the North</td>
<td>Army of the North</td>
<td>3 Divisions, covers the left wing of the Army of the Sambre-Meuse</td>
<td>Army of Rome</td>
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APPENDIX E

CAREERS OF THE 1799 SAMPLE, 1792-1804
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<td>Ferino</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hatry</td>
<td>26 November 1793</td>
<td>26 November 1793 (same day)</td>
<td>21 December 1794</td>
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<td>Kléber</td>
<td>17 August 1793</td>
<td>17 October 1793</td>
<td>25 August 1799</td>
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<td>Delaborde</td>
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<td>13 October 1793</td>
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<td>Muller, Jacques Leonard</td>
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<td>30 September 1793</td>
<td>5 October 1793</td>
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<td>Souham</td>
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<td>Championnet</td>
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<td>Grenier, Paul</td>
<td>29 April 1794</td>
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<td>Baraguey d'Hilliers</td>
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APPENDIX F

CORPS AND ARMY COMMANDS OF THE MARSHALATE, 1804-1812
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Grande Armée, 1805</th>
<th>Army of Italy, 1805</th>
<th>Army of Naples</th>
<th>Jena-Auerstadt</th>
<th>Eylau-Friedland</th>
<th>Army of Silesia, 1807</th>
<th>Army of the Reserve, 1808</th>
<th>Army of the Rhine, 1808</th>
<th>Army of Spain - 1808</th>
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C – Corps Command  
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APPENDIX G
THE 32nd MILITARY DIVISON
The 32nd Military Division
APPENDIX I

POSITIONS FORWARD OF MAGDEBERG
The Elbe north of Havelberg near Hamburg is unsuited, making it the easiest route for an advance from the Oder to the Elbe.

Napoleon advocates defending in this area because the Havel and Elbe Rivers offer natural lines of defense. A position forward of Magdeburg threatens Berlin, thereby preventing the enemy from advancing via Hamburg or Dresden.

An advance through this portion of the German states would take more time due to the numerous river crossings it would entail.
APPENDIX J

PURSUIT AFTER LÜTZEN AND THE ARMISTICE
APPENDIX K

THE BATTLEFIELD OF BAUTZEN
APPENDIX M

THE END OF THE ARMISTICE
APPENDIX N

OUDINOT’S AXES OF ADVANCE AND THE BATTLE OF GROß BEEREN
These are the three routes that Oudinot’s Army of Berlin advanced on. Note that the distance between the corps was not great; however, the wooded terrain and swamps isolated them from one another.
APPENDIX O
DRESDEN
APPENDIX P

THE AREA SOUTH OF DRESDEN
APPENDIX Q

SITUATION, LATE AUGUST 1813
APPENDIX R

THE BATTLE OF THE KATZBACH
The Army of the Bober advanced on three axes, and the rivers highlighted in blue that divide them.
Lage gegen 3. Nachm.

[Map showing military positions and movements around Dennewitz on September 6, 1813.]

180
APPENDIX T

SITUATION, SEPTEMBER TO OCTOBER 1813
APPENDIX U

THE BATTLE OF LEIPZIG, 16 OCTOBER 1813
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