

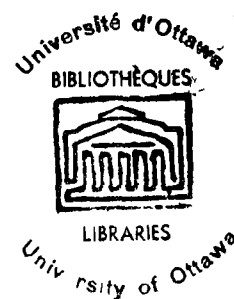
THE CITIZEN-SOLDIER,
A FACTOR IN THE MAKING
OF THE DECISIVE BATTLE;
FROM THE LIMITED WAR OF
FREDERICK THE GREAT
TO THE UNLIMITED WARFARE OF
NAPOLEON THE FIRST

By

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SUMMARY

Warfare at the close of the eighteenth century underwent a tremendous and exceedingly rapid revolution which only now is beginning to fade. Before that date, war was epitomized by the military structure and means adopted and perfected by Frederick the Great. Warfare was extremely limited in every facet because the decisive battle proved beyond the measure of the Frederickian armies. One factor, perhaps the most important in making the decisive battle impossible was the soldier of the day. He was impressed, or more commonly, mercenary.

In 1789, however, the French Revolution overturned the army of Louis XVI by destroying its very foundation. The mercenary, or impressed soldier was replaced by a new type of warrior - the citizen-soldier. This new sword-bearer would mark the eclipse of the mercenary and limited warfare alike. Possessing the virtues of loyalty and motivation, which the mercenary lacked, the citizen-soldier could be exploited in new ways by his commander. The age of the decisive battle and total war was thus opened.

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FOREWORD

.....the very nature of warfare changed. The purpose of war (after 1789) came to be the complete overthrow of the enemy instead of, as in the dynastic and commercial struggles of the eighteenth century, the gaining of a limited advantage The warfare of the eighteenth century, limited both in manner of operations and in objectives, thus gave way to war (after 1789) in which military action and objectives alike were "total". 1

The purpose of this thesis is to explore how the citizen-soldier, championed by the French revolution, contributed to this drastic change in the nature of warfare. I do not argue that the citizen-soldier represents the sole reason for the appearance of the new and "total" style of war. But I hope that I have shown that he represents a factor deserving much closer study.

Closer study must begin with a careful examination of the means used to insure that the pre 1789 soldier would be responsive and reliable on the battlefield. A study of the post 1789 period will show how many of these controls could be, and were, modified. This double comparison reveals the relation between command and control and battlefield deployment. It is by the comparison of these parallel changes that an insight into the nature of the "decisive battle" is gained.

The introduction acknowledges several other theories explaining this revolution in warfare. Chapter 1 begins the comparison with a discussion of the command and control problems inherent in the mercenary army. Because the Prussian army represented the highest standard of mercenary force development

1. R. Preston and S. Wise. Men in Arms (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1956), p. 194.

and the one which all others strove to emulate, it rather than the French army, forms the basis of this part of the study. Chapter II completes the first section with a case study to illustrate the characteristics of the mercenary and the resulting style of warfare.

Chapter III and IV represent the transitional period. The efforts of the reformers to implement their ideals, the later cornerstones of Napoleonic warfare, are given particular attention because they were foiled by the presence of the mercenary. Chapter IV explains the early inconsistencies of the citizen-soldier armies. The last section, Chapters V and VI, represents the second half of the comparison. The battle characteristics of the citizen-soldier and their effect on warfare are examined. Finally, Chapter VI resolves the comparison with a study in which the mercenaries of Prussia meet the citizen-soldiers of France.

The limitations in researching were chiefly due to the lack of primary sources. The Department of Defense and the Royal Military College libraries, although containing more works from the period than the university and national libraries, were still inadequate. Sufficient primary source material only became available with the use of the Thomas Fisher Rare Books library in Toronto, particularly helpful for the study of tactical doctrine. But even this excellent library provided only a few sources on what now appears to be a crucial problem - desertion. A search of the British Museum Catalogue, the U.S. Library of Congress Union Catalogue and Dissertation Abstracts, among others, has likewise provided very few works on desertion. Given an opportunity, I would like to direct my doctoral research in this area. But I hope that this thesis has succeeded in demonstrating the significant role that problems of

command and control have played in the evolution of tactics and its part in producing that often observable connection between the citizen-soldier and the decisive victory.

INTRODUCTION

Military history tends to draw the scorn of most outside of that seemingly narrow field. Many feel that warfare simply reflects other social and political developments which are more "fundamental" and which alone deserve intensive study. And yet, wars are not insignificant determinants of history. Many battles throughout history have marked the furthest advances of revolutions, or have sealed their doom. Often successful warfare alone gives revolutionary movements the necessary time to develop and solidify in the face of foreign counter-revolutionary forces. The French Revolution is a case in point. Because France was not decisively defeated until more than two decades after 1789, the revolutionaries were provided the time to implement many of their ideals. The twenty year period of French military victories was the shield behind which many of these ideals became so firmly established that, even after the Restoration, they continued to grow and spread. France's martial domination during these years played a leading role in her social and political successes.

But how did France stand up to a Europe armed against her? How did the revolutionary and Napoleonic armies win? Surely these questions rank high. Surely the strategical and tactical innovations, which so greatly contributed to the alteration of history and whose repercussions we still feel, should be examined carefully.

The old style of warfare, before 1789, that of the eighteenth century, was extremely limited in both means and methods, and, consequently, objectives. Battles were deferred or avoided altogether. Instead, armies spun intricate webs of manoeuvre intended to oblige the enemy to surrender according to established rules. War, for the most part, was a game; a chess-like affair epitomized by the infamous "potato war". It remained virtually irrelevant, touching only the very fringe of civilian society.

This limited style of warfare, whose lineage could be traced from the medieval knight and which reached its peak with the "blue boys" of Frederick the Great, shattered completely before the turn of that century. For then, a new system rose and destroyed the restrictive warfare and established on its ruins a system of war which only now is declining. With the main objective a bloody decisive battle, and the conclusive victory it alone could provide, the new system of total war severed the entangling knots of manoeuvre and forced the conflict to a quick if harsh judgement. Such a battle was meant to leave the vanquished defenceless and totally at the mercy of the victor. France, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, successively taught this grim method to Europe at the point of her victorious bayonets. Because the decisive battle spelled utter subordination for the defeated state, all countries eventually worked to mirror and surpass the French formula for success. Warfare, therefore, became increasingly more total as each state, determined to

achieve the decisive battle, tapped an ever escalating proportion of its potential.

Few historians would disagree with the premise that eighteenth century warfare was relatively limited in means and objectives. There is also harmony among historians as to the more total and bloody nature of war practiced after the French Revolution. Most, likewise, hold the conviction that a fundamental revolution occurred which explains so great a change in warfare. There is, however, a variety of theories attempting to explain the causes of this Revolution. Each has merit, and each adds something to our understanding. But each seems incomplete; even taken altogether one tends to feel that the explanations are lacking. A short review of the major explanations will indicate the problem.

Peter Paret, for example, in his book Yorck and the Era of Prussian Reform 1807-1815, points to a natural and gradual evolution of military thought and practice.¹ He cites the American War of Independence as a forerunner of Napoleonic warfare, and stresses the open-order or skirmishing tactics of the colonists. This skirmishing philosophy returned to France with men such as Lafayette and was slowly developed within the French army. Finally the skirmisher or "tirailleur" matured and became numerous enough to overthrow the old system of closed-order combat. In many ways this is a convincing explanation, but Paret fails to realize that skirmishers, even after the return of Lafayette, were still regarded, in pre-revolutionary France, as merely nuisance value.

1. P. Paret, Yorck and the Era of Prussian Reform, 1807-1815. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966).

Their numbers remained minimal in the monarchist armies and they were segregated from the "line" units, despite their proven value in earlier wars. Only with the French revolution did the "tirailleur" finally and very quickly prevail. This can hardly be called a natural and gradual evolution.

A second school of thought, first established by the French writer Pierron and followed by such notables as Spencer Wilkinson and Liddell Hart, speculates that Napoleon owed his victories, and ideas on total war, to the pre-revolutionary French military reformers.² Men such as Du Teil, Broglie and especially Guibert and Bourcet worked to improve the French military system following the disastrous and humiliating Seven Years' War. These reformers attempted to solve the problems which plagued the French, and, in fact, all armies of their day. Concentrating on the questions of speed and mobility they formulated sweeping theories based on the divisional system and the "tirailleur" which eventually became cornerstones of Napoleonic warfare. This school is correct, as far as it goes, but it must be noted that here again, these innovations were not fully realized until after 1789, despite their acknowledged effectiveness in military manoeuvres and colonial wars. Until then the reformers' theories remained only that, theories and not practice, a distinction which this school fails to recognize adequately. It is the adoption of the theories which requires explanation.

2. S. Wilkinson, The French Army Before Napoleon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915) and also in Liddell Hart's excellent book on the indirect approach, Strategy (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1954), and E. Pierron, Comment S'est Formé le Genie Militaire de Napoléon Ier (Paris: L. Boudoin, 1895).

Another group of historians regards the improvements made in the realms of science and technology at the close of the eighteenth century as the decisive element. Commandant J. Colin, in the early twentieth century, first proposed this thesis and later received the support of such historians as T. Ropp in his War in the Modern World, and R. Holtman in The Napoleonic Revolution.³ These three emphasize science and technology as the fundamental source of the change from limited to unlimited warfare. During the last half of the century better roads and more canals facilitated transportation and communication. Vast improvements in the artillery field gave the "big guns" mobility and speed. The arrival of the Industrial Revolution, which was capable of producing great quantities of war goods, also increased military potential. Colin asserts that these progressive steps and others, such as the introduction to Europe of the potato, formed the foundation on which the decisive battle and total war were built. Why then, while the early Napoleonic armies victoriously spread the new doctrine of bloody warfare, did the allied armies continue to wallow in the limitations of eighteenth century war? Surely the scientific improvements were open to both belligerents, and to think that France took advantage of the potato while Prussia abstained is ridiculous. A second

3. J. Colin, A highly esteemed military writer, wrote of science and technology in warfare in Les Transformations De La Guerre (Paris: Flammarion, 1911). T. Ropp's War in the Modern World (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 1959) looks exclusively to the technological side of warfare while R. Holtman's The Napoleonic Revolution (New York: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1962) is in the same vein.

question arises before leaving Colin. Why were Scipio and Attila, who were not favoured with these improvements, able to deliver the decisive battle? The technological advancements were beneficial, but they were obviously not the basic prerequisites to the development of total war.

J.F.C. Fuller, S.T. Ross, R. Preston and S.F. Wise find the vast growth of post-revolutionary armies as the deciding element which produced total war.⁴ The armies of the Napoleonic era did, in fact, dwarf those of the ancien régime. Fuller and his followers believe that the great influx of soldiers proportionately reduced the cost of the individual soldier. Because the French soldier was less expensive and far easier to replace than the mercenary, Napoleon was permitted the liberty of vigorously seeking battle. An offensive doctrine therefore developed in the French army which replaced the defensive and restrictive philosophy of the ancien régime. Ross contends that the increase in numbers also enabled the French to do away with their excess baggage and to implement fully the divisional system; thus giving teeth to the new offensive doctrine.⁵ The numbers did foster an offensive mind

4. J.F.C. Fuller, The Conduct of War 1789-1961 (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1957), S.T. Ross, Quest for Victory (New Jersey: A.S. Barnes and Co., Inc., 1973), R.A. Preston and S.F. Wise, Men In Arms (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1956).

5. The vast increase of numbers reduced the value of the individual soldier, and therefore French Generals did not have to "pamper" the troops. Because of this tents were not supplied, fewer travelling kitchens were employed and the soldiers themselves were expected to carry more. The baggage trains naturally diminished in size, proportionate to the numbers involved.

but they were only partially responsible for the reduction of the supply train and the introduction of the divisional system. Frederick the Great, during his reign, more than doubled the size of the Prussian army. The Prussian baggage train was not reduced however, but, in fact, surpassed the growth rate of the army. Simple numbers did not bring about the change to total war.

A final school of thought has developed around such historians as H. Delbrück and Alfred Vagts.⁶ The former penned his thesis at the turn of the last century, while Vagts wrote A History of Militarism in 1937 supporting the theory. They regard the French revolution of 1789 as the turning point in warfare. In that year the dynastic regime in Paris fell to a republican government and France became a nation. A new constitution for the military was devised which radically altered the foundation of the army. The soldier himself changed. Before 1789 the vast majority were mercenary or impressed; after the Revolution he was a citizen of the French nation. Here Delbrück suggested, lay the determining factor which dictated the new system of the decisive battle and total war. The citizen-soldier was and is a soldier who, although fighting for the same reasons as a mercenary also possesses an important, added motivation. This extra incentive is in theory an obligation, either

6. H. Delbrück, the great German military historian, wrote Geschichte Der Kriegskunst, Vol 4. (Berlin: Verlag Von George Stilke, 1920). Much of his writing unfortunately and surprisingly, has not been translated, including the above work, although its importance is recognised by most military historians. A.Vagts' A History of Militarism. (New York: The Free Press, 1937) is an excellent, well written book which support Delbrück's thesis.

perceived or imposed, to a nationalistic cause or ideal. Thus, according to Delbrück, the citizen-soldier sustained additional hardships and privations and fought with a ruthless passion which the mercenary was simply incapable of equalling. The national soldier, fighting with the utmost intensity, could gain and therefore pursue greater objectives. It was the enthusiasm and desire of the citizen-soldier, Delbrück insists, which more than all else heralded the decisive battle and therefore a new and total war.

The opposing theories stressing the relevance of the pre-revolutionary reformers, the improvements in technology and science, and the vast increase in numbers are all useful in explaining the revolution in warfare. They all contribute, in some degree, to the decisive battle; and their effect on warfare has been amply documented by the authors cited above. But what of the final thesis -- the emergence of the citizen-soldier? This last school, though least developed of all (Delbrück devoted less than forty pages of his massive four volume study to it) is perhaps the most fertile of all; for it is a truism of military science that the most far reaching consequences in warfare flow from changes in the character and quality of the combattants. A decisive change in the nature of the soldier is bound to decisively effect other aspects of warfare. Thus, the suggestion that Delbrück and Vagts made, that intangible but real changes in the soldier's morale had much to do with the appearance of the decisive battle, will be investigated. But does this insight exhaust all the possible connections between changes in the character of combattants and the nature of war? This thesis will argue that there were other important consequences of the appearance of the citizen-soldier, particularly in the area of command and control. It will . . .

argue that the complex and fluid strategical/tactical manoeuvres which French theoreticians of the eighteenth century could only dream of were finally realized after 1789 because the appearance of the citizen-soldier made simpler a general's problem of command and control. This thesis will not attempt to prove the different social origins of the citizen-soldier (as opposed to the mercenary). For this aspect the work of other scholars such as Corvisier and Leonard is relied upon.⁷ Nor will this thesis attempt to describe and exemplify in any great detail the character of the new strategy and tactics. This has been well done by Chandler and Quimby.⁸ Nor will the theories pertaining to other causes of the revolution in warfare be examined, as these have already been thoroughly explored in other works. This thesis will focus on one aspect of an historical question in an effort to add to the other explanations of Napoleonic warfare. What this thesis will attempt to do is show the

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7. A. Corvisier, L'Armée Française de la Fin du XVIII Siècle au Ministère de Choiseul, 2 Vols. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964) is by far the best social study of the French army. His description of the wretched life the soldiers led is excellent. However, this work ends just as the French army undergoes a dramatic change following the Seven Years' War and is therefore just off the time period of this thesis. E.G. Leonard's L'Armée et Ses Problèmes au XVIII Siècle (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1958) is also good but again is essentially before the considered time period. M. Baldet's La Vie Quotidienne Dans Les Armées de Napoléon (Paris: Huchette, 1964), a social work on Napoleon's soldier, is not nearly as thorough as the former two works mentioned, but does offer some insights into the Emperor's army.
 8. D. Chandler. The Campaigns of Napoleon (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967) R.S. Quimby. The Background of Napoleonic Warfare (New York: Ams Press, Inc., 1957).

nexus between the two; between the appearance of the citizen-soldier and the new tactics. This thesis is about the way in which changes in command and control made possible the realization of earlier theoreticians' dreams in the form of the decisive battle.

This inquiry will begin with an overview of Frederickian warfare, to demonstrate the dominant role played by the mercenary. A short analysis of a major eighteenth century battle will follow to illustrate the mercenary's limiting effect on warfare in actual combat. The thesis will then proceed to an examination of the innovations of the pre-revolutionary French reformers and their failure to implement these in the Royalist army. This thesis will follow the development of the revolutionary army and show how the citizen-soldier finally reached his potential and, in important ways, made possible the application of earlier theories to initiate the decisive battle and total war.

CHAPTER 1

FREDERICK THE GREAT AND THE LIMITATIONS OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY WARFARE

Before commenting on the mercenary and the virtual non-existence of the decisive battle, some definition of terms is essential. The distinguishing criteria of the decisive battle are threefold. Firstly, it is an engagement involving the major forces of the two warring states. Secondly, the defeated army is routed so thoroughly that it can no longer offer any organized resistance, while the victor is left strong enough to exert pressure. Finally, and most importantly, the collapse of organized resistance leaves the vanquished state at the mercy of the conqueror and thus it must relinquish its freedom of action, unless there is recourse to partisan warfare. The decisive battle is conclusive not only in the military but also, in the political realm.¹ The greatest eighteenth century battles, such as Bleinheim (1704), Malpalquet (1709), Fontenoy (1745) and Rossbach (1757) produced no such results and the respective wars dragged

1. F. Pratt. The Battles that Changed History (New York: Hanover House, Garden City, 1956) p.12.

on for years. In comparison, the battles of Marengo (1800), Austerlitz (1805), Jena-Auerstadt (1806) and Waterloo (1815) prescribed immediate and fruitful peace negotiations.² The ability to gain the decisive battle requires one or both of two elements - tactical or strategical surprise, and/or pursuit. Why did eighteenth century warfare lack both prerequisites?

Eighteenth century land warfare can best be discussed by dealing with the Prussian army under Frederick II (1740-1786). This army represented the pinnacle of military development during the century and through the deeds it performed during the two Silesian Wars (1740-1742 and 1744-1745) and the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), won the highest praise from all realms of Europe. Both the major and minor European countries strove to mirror the Prussian model.³ Frederick the Great, as a military commander of proven ability and perception, was likewise exalted by his contemporaries. His name alone, during the age, rose to stand beside those of Alexander and Caesar. Therefore, it is not only acceptable but fundamental to base any discussion of eighteenth century warfare on Frederick the Great and his army.

The European armies of the century were not composed of national citizen-soldiers. They were, to a significant extent, foreign. Even in 1740, when Frederick II inherited the Prussian crown, his army numbered

2. E.M. Earle, ed., Makers of Modern Strategy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. 52.

3. Dumas, Mathieu, Comte, An Epitome of Military Events or Historical Essay upon the Present War. 2 Vols. (London: T. Egerton, Military Library, 1800-02) 1;123.

84,000 but fully a third, 26,000, of these were foreign mercenaries.⁴ Within a year, however, the strength of the army increased to 100,000; and after that year Frederick continuously contended that half of his troops were foreigners.⁵ He began his Instruction for His Generals (1747) by stating, "Our regiments are composed half of citizens and half of mercenaries".⁶ In all probability, however, Frederick exaggerated and, in reality, "every company was composed of two thirds foreigners and but one third Prussians."⁷ The other European armies maintained this trend.⁸ Prior to 1789, for instance, fully one third of the French army was German alone.⁹ These soldiers, who marched only for gold, possessed little national loyalty.

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4. Frederick the Great, Instructions for His Generals, Translated Brig. Gen. T.R. Phillips (Harrisburg, Military Service Publishing Company, 1944), p. 10. This work was first published in secret by Frederick and intended solely for his officers. It therefore gives a very vivid and extremely accurate account of the problems faced by eighteenth century commanders.
 5. Frederick the Great, On the Art of War, Translated J. Luvaas (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 73.
 6. Frederick, Instructions, p. 21.
 7. Regulations for the Prussian Infantry, Translated W. Faucitt (London: Printed for Paul Vaillany, 1754), p. 373.
 8. A. Corvisier, L'Armée Francaise, 1: 65, 81.
 9. R.A. Preston and S.F. Wise, Men In Arms, p. 139

The few "national" soldiers who did serve in the armies were of inferior quality. Prussia's famous "Canton System", the most effective peace-time conscription of the period, allowed ample pretexts to enable the working population to escape military service.¹⁰ In fact, only the unproductive segment bore the brunt of the levy, and they were usually conscripted by impressment, bribes, or through the use of alcohol. These men represented the "rabble" of the country. They were the "poor, the enslaved, the vagabonds and the deserters" — the outcasts of society.¹¹ Their conduct generally matched that of the foreign soldiers, but they did, on occasion, display some loyalty. However, more than most armies, those of the eighteenth century were poorly motivated "rabble". These soldiers are best described as mercenaries.

Such soldiers limited the freedom of commanders, not only in the tactical sense but also in the crucial sphere of grand strategy. The limitations imposed by the mercenary can best be dealt with by examining the effect on warfare of the one tendency which most vividly revealed his characteristics — desertion. That desertion was the commander's central problem is reflected in Frederick's Instruction for His Generals in which he discussed it before all else.¹²

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10. G. Ritter, The Sword and the Scepter, Vol 1. (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1964), p. 27
 11. Joly De Maizeroy, Paul, Gedeon, Mémoires Sur Les Opinions Qui Partagent Les Militaires, (A. Paris: Chez Claude-Antoine Jombert, 1773), p. 11.
 12. Frederick, Instructions, p. 21. Although the majority of footnotes concerning desertion are taken from Frederick's writings, due to his importance, the problem of desertion appears in the majority of other sources of the period. French works by such authors as C.L.A. Bilistein, Instruction Militaires Pour La France (A Amsterdam: Chez E. Van Harreuel, 1762) and Joly de Maizeroy Cours de Tactique Theoreque, Pratique et Historique, Imprimeur-Librairie, 1766) discuss desertion. J. Wolfe mentions the problem extensively in Instructions to Young Officers (London: J. Millan, 1768) just to name a few.

In a later work he displayed his great concern for this problem by stating, "one of the most essential duties of generals commanding armies or detachments is to prevent desertion."¹³ He compiled a list of ways to impede deserters, stressing the dangers of night marches, camping near woods and detachments.¹⁴ Although his precautions made it difficult for deserters, they drastically restricted a general, especially strategically. His strategical manoeuvres, therefore, were dictated, for the most part, by the limiting command and control problems of his own troops. Of equal consequence, was the basic tactical restriction. The infantry "line" which so confined tactics and eliminated surprise, developed partially because of the inaccuracy of the musket, but mainly to curb desertion. The "line" was specifically designed to enable the officers to maintain strict command and control over all the troopers. The officers and sergeants marched on the flanks and at the rear of the "line". If any soldier deviated from the march, the officer at his back ran him through with his sword.¹⁵ Frederick stressed "the regularity of formation" because it held all the men together under the ever present officers.¹⁶ Vigorous pursuit was impossible without breaking up the rigid battle formation and thus relinquishing the tight control. Frederick chose simply to win and hold the battle-field because he believed individual soldiers would pillage and desert.¹⁷

13. Frederick, Art of War, p. 121

14. Frederick, Instructions, p. 21

15. Wolfe, Instructions, pp. 47-48

16. Frederick, Instructions, p. 22

17. Frederick, Art of War, p. 15

The cumbersome supply system, the basic strategical restriction, originated precisely because of desertion. Frederick held his forces together as much as possible, authorising few detachments and therefore making command and control tighter. This stopped desertion. However, because the soldiers were not allowed to forage and feed themselves, the eighteenth century general was compelled to maintain magazines and huge supply trains. Feeding the army was imperative because a hungry mercenary was even more apt to desert. Frederick wrote, ".....understand that the foundation of an army is the belly".¹⁸ Later he added that the troopers should have no ready money, or they will desert, but plenty of free food.¹⁹

The limitations imposed on Frederick by the supply system and the tactical formation originated directly from the mercenary. Frederick wrote:

Our regiments are composed half of citizens and half of mercenaries. The latter, not attached to the state by any bonds of interest, become deserters at the first occasion. 20

The root of the limitations was the mercenary soldier. Generals had not only to contend with the enemy but their own armies as well. Frederick saw the problem and believed that national or citizen troops would remove the limitations. In his book, On the Art of War (1768), he wrote, "If possible he (the king) should depend upon none (soldiers) but his own."²¹ He also stated that the national troops of a state are always the most

18. Frederick, Instructions, p. 34.

19. Frederick, Instructions, p. 102.

20. Frederick, Instructions, p. 21.

21. Frederick, Art of War, p. 72.

serviceable.²² Certainly the lack of loyalty and motivation would be less pronounced in a national army, and if so, the individual soldier could be relied upon, and the generals would be then freed from the restrictive command and control procedures.

Despite the many limitations which the mercenary imposed on warfare, Frederick sought to gain the decisive battle. Contemplating the decisive battle and the benefits it would produce he wrote:

.....our wars must be short and active.....Those who lead the Prussian armies must be clever and careful, but must try to bring the issue to a decision. 23

He understood the position of Prussia, of her precarious central location, surrounded on all sides by powerful enemies. At the same time he realized her resources were decidedly inferior, for, in an age when population was used as the yardstick for greatness, Prussia, by this measure, ranked an insignificant twelfth. He also was aware of the fact that in a long war the lead Prussia maintained in discipline and precision would slowly be eroded. Frederick, therefore, desired only short wars, and he perceived the only way to achieve this by writing in 1747, "War is decided only by battles, and it is not finished except by them."²⁴

22. Frederick, Art of War, p. 71.

23. P. Paret, ed., Frederick the Great (New York: Hill & Wang, 1972), p. 113.

24. Frederick, Instructions, p. 95.

These words, along with the preceding quotation, ring of Frederick's genius as a theorist of war. For in a century which saw the God of War snared in the intricate and endless webs of manoeuvre without combat, Frederick, almost alone, deduced the true essence of war - violent conflict epitomized by battle! He, on the abstract level, understood the nature of war, and, in fact, desired to implement the decisive battle in the real world. He employed every device the eighteenth century offered and developed them to the utmost. His soldier marched faster and with greater precision than any other troops. They also loaded and discharged their weapons at a much quicker rate. In these, the essentials of eighteenth century warfare, his army earned the admiration of all, including his enemies. At the battle of Mollwitz (1741), for example, an Austrian officer remarked of his victorious adversaries:

I never saw anything more beautiful.....They (Frederick's soldiers) marched with utmost composure, arrow-straight, their front like a plumb-line, absolutely level, as if they had been on parade. 25

Because of the high degree of training and discipline Frederick developed complicated manoeuvres aimed at bringing about the decisive battle. The famous Battle of Rossbach (1757) was a testimony to Frederick and his army. But even this great victory ranked far from decisive. Although Frederick gained the field and shattered the French

25. W.H. Nelson, The Soldier Kings (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1970), p. 163.

formations, he was unable to push a vigorous pursuit.²⁶ Within a few weeks the enemy army rallied and still, in fact, outnumbered Frederick's forces. France had not been rendered defenseless and, therefore, was not compelled to sue for peace. Why was Frederick unable to achieve the decisive battle he sought? A succinct analysis of the eighteenth century problem of surprise and pursuit reveals the answer. Both elements (the key ingredients of the decisive battle) were lost to Frederick because of the tactical formation of the day, and the logistical system employed, and both these were the direct consequence of the mercenary soldier.

In 1747 Frederick wrote:

.....our modern (tactical) formations for combat, for the most part, are defective because they are all cast in the same mold: the infantry in the centre and the cavalry on the wings. 27

The infantry always deployed into the "line" to maintain the strict command and control so necessary with the mercenary army. This formation consisted of three ranks of soldiers, elbow to elbow, with only one pace between each rank.²⁸ Occasionally, if the terrain was restrictive, the infantry deployed into two "lines" usually 200 to 300 feet apart. The entire infantry formed into the "line" and therefore usually covered a front extending three or four miles long. The "line" depended upon strict

26. L. Montross, War Through the Ages (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1944), p. 396.

27. Frederick, Instructions, p. 50.

28. Le Roy De Bosroger, The Elementary Principles of Tactics, Trans. by British Officer (London: S. Hooper, 1771), pp. 11-28.

precision and timing, because if it became disjointed it proved easily assailable. To attain this perfect form, severe discipline was used to destroy the individual soldier's ego and to make him merely part of the machine. The soul of this formation was its rigid precision, but, it was precisely this which made it ineffective for decisive battles. The "line" deployed only with difficulty and manoeuvred with awkward slowness. Therefore surprise, on the tactical level, was lost. As for vigorous pursuit, this also proved impossible because of the strict rigidity of the formation. Frederick contemplated pursuit but he wrote that it should only be attempted in an orderly fashion, thus ruling out a strenuous pursuit.²⁹ He persistently held his entire army together, forcing the cavalry to wait on the slower infantry. The Prussian cavalry, in any case, had developed into a strictly "shock" force relying on density and acceleration, and was therefore useless for energetic pursuits.

On the strategical level the element of surprise remained equally ~~thwarted~~. As has been shown, eighteenth century armies were fettered to cumbersome supply trains, as a consequence of the need to feed the mercenary who could not be trusted to forage alone. These supply trains slowed the march immensely. Magazines, or supply depots, also hindered the mobility of armies, restricting them to certain established routes. Opposing commanders thus were awarded ample time to evade a battle if the conditions seemed anything but perfect. Frederick, in his Instructions for His Generals

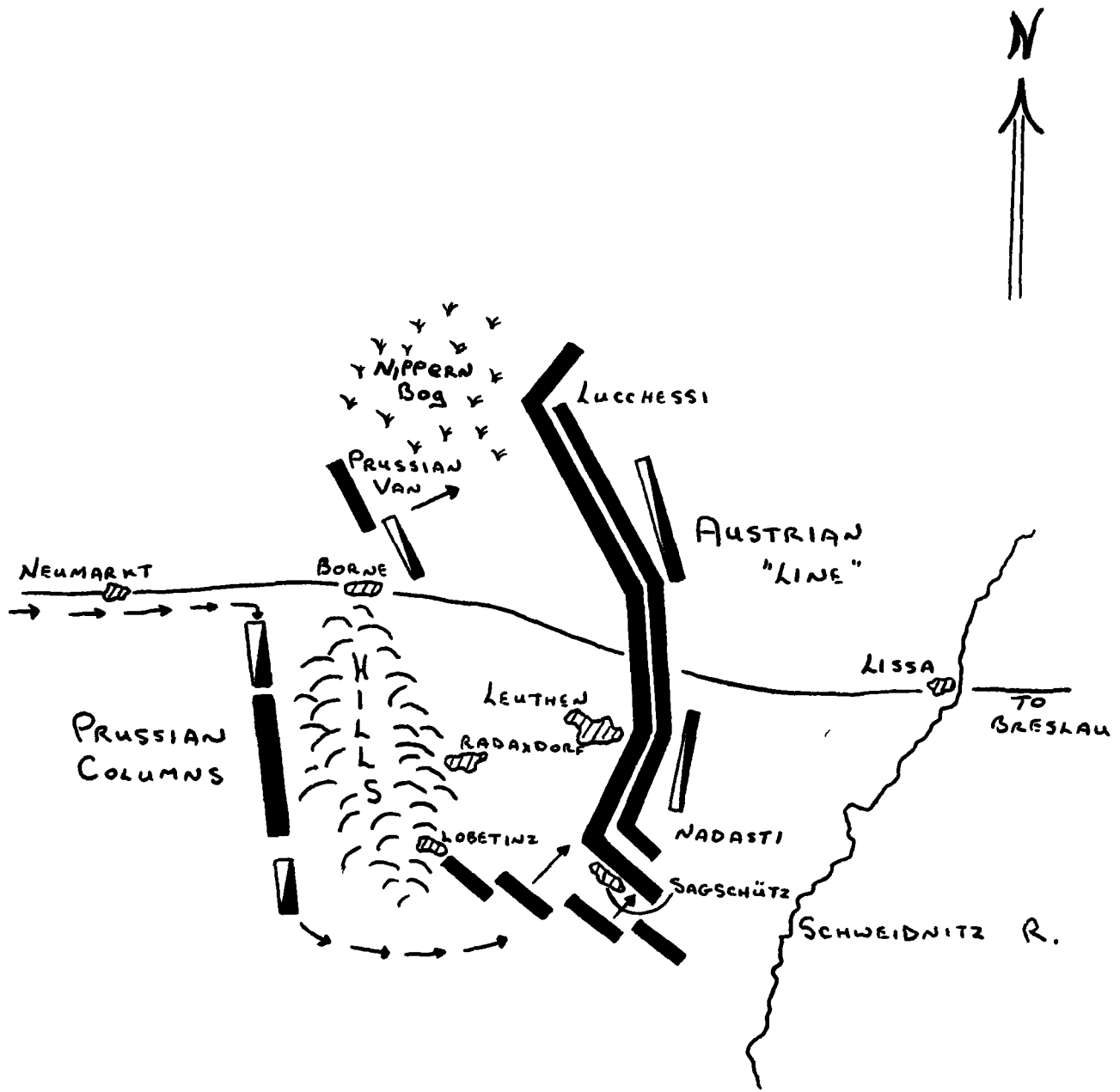
29. Le Roy De Bosroger, The Elementary Principles of Tactics, Trans. by British Officer (London: S. Hooper, 1771) p. 93.

summed up the situation with these words, "In our times it is no longer possible to draw entire armies into ambushes"³⁰ He also wrote, "surprise, then, can happen only rarely"³¹ Without the element of surprise decisive battles were possible only with pursuit, and this too escaped eighteenth century soldiers.

Although Frederick wielded the most precise and disciplined army of the period, the decisive battle eluded him entirely. The failure to reach this summit cannot be attributed to Frederick's lack of genius. He assuredly understood the properties of the decisive battle, but the technical limitation of the rigid "line" formation, and the restraining logistical system made command and control problems insurmountable. These basic restrictions, however, all stemmed from the paramount problem of eighteenth century warfare -- the mercenary soldier. A concise analysis of the Battle of Leuthen will follow to clearly reveal the limitations imposed by the mercenary and which prevented Frederick from achieving the decisive battle.

30. Le Roy De Bosroger, The Elementary Principles of Tactics, Trans. by British Officer (London: S. Hooper, 1771) p. 59

31 Bosroger, Principles, p. 75.



THE BATTLE MAP OF LEUTHEN

Taken From

J. Fuller, The Decisive Battles of the Western World, 3 vols. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1957), 2:211

CHAPTER II

THE BATTLE OF LEUTHEN

The battle of Leuthen, December 5, 1757 ranks as Frederick's greatest military conquest. In this engagement Frederick demonstrated the bold tactical genius which not only enabled him to gain the victory but also indelibly etched his name beside those of Alexander, Hannibal, and Caesar. On that day the Prussian infantry also proved itself to be the finest in Europe. But despite the generalship of Frederick and his amazing "blue boys", Leuthen was not a decisive battle. A short analysis of the engagement is therefore important; first as an example of the style of warfare then practiced, and second to illustrate, in an actual battle, the limiting properties of the mercenary which prohibited the decisive battle.

Following Frederick's defeat of Soubise and the French army at Rossbach (November 5, 1757), he counter-marched his army 170 miles in

fifteen days.¹ This march, which averaged 11 miles per day, and ended in Leipzig was lauded as an amazing feat of speed and endurance.² When Frederick departed from Leipzig and advanced to Neumarkt (December 3), via the Breslau road, his army numbered 36,000, of which 24,000 were infantry. The force was accompanied by 167 "big guns", and the usual extensive supply train. The cumbersome baggage train was, of course, essential for the maintenance of the mercenary. Since he could not be trusted to forage for himself the supply train was his sole source of food. It also contained his tents and enabled the generals to exercise strict control which was so essential in the mercenary army.

The Austrian commander, Prince Charles, on receiving information concerning Frederick's advance, broke his camp at Breslau and marched toward his adversary. He was unaccustomably offering battle but only with the confidence stemming from greatly superior numbers. The Austrian Prince commanded an army of over 80,000 mercenaries accompanied by 210 cannons. After hearing of the defeat of his vanguard, however, and the capture of his field bakery at Neumarkt, Charles reverted to the eighteenth century standard and quickly drew up, deploying his men in a defensive position. His centre rested on Leuthen, while his right, led by the Italian

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1. J.F.C. Fuller, *The Decisive Battles of the Western World*, 3 vols. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1957), 2:207
 2. Eleven miles per day was remarkable for a mercenary army, which was so heavily bogged down. Later, we shall see that this rate of march was considered less than standard for a French citizen-soldier army.

Lucchessi, was covered by the bogs of Nippern. Nadasti held the left behind the village of Sagschutz.³ The Austrians were deployed in the usual two "lines", one behind the other, and covering an extended front of five and one half miles. The position lay directly across Frederick's line of advance.

At 5:00 A.M. on December 5, Frederick broke his camp and began to march forward in four columns.⁴ At Borne he surrounded a surprised General Nostitz and five regiments of the Austrian van. Nostitz, obeying the tight command and control procedures, had not sent out detachments, and thus sacrificed reconnaissance. Eight hundred "white coats" were captured and the Prussian cavalry pursued the remnant toward the Austrian right flank. Lucchessi, when he saw the terrified Austrians fleeing before the sabre-wielding hussars, believed the intended attack was to fall on his wing. He immediately sent urgent appeals for aid. Daun, the second in command, at first rejected the requests, but as the appeals became more frequent and emotional he ordered the cavalry and part of the reserve to support Lucchessi. These supporting elements required nearly two hours to move into a position which was much less than two miles distant.⁵ Here the unwieldy nature of the mercenary's battle and marching formations is abundantly evident.

3. Joly De Maizeroy, Cours De, 1:262

4. Joly De Maizeroy, Cours De, 1:262

5. T. Dodge, Great Captains (Washington: Kennikat Press, Inc., 1889), p. 156.

After the encounter at Borne, Frederick halted the columns and climbed a knoll to survey the Austrian "line". He quickly formulated his plan of operations. He ordered six battalions plus "horse" to engage Lucchessi's attention while two Prussian columns swung south.⁶ The army moved with the exactness that could only be Prussian. Tempelhoff, an eye-witness, wrote:

It was impossible to witness a more beautiful sight; all the heads of the columns were parallel to each other and in exact distances to form line, and the division marched with such precision that they seemed to be at a review...⁷

A long line of low hills shielded the Prussian march. The Austrian commanders, after seeing the columns disappear behind the hills, relaxed, believing the enemy to be retreating. At noon the leading Prussian formations suddenly debouched from the hills just south of Lobetinz. Nadasti, caught completely unaware, sent riders galloping for support, as he watched the "blue coats" miraculously issuing forth from the hills and forming-up before him. Frederick had gained a complete tactical surprise. In a later day, so important an advantage would have led immediately to a decisive victory.

Despite the precision of the Prussians, an entire hour elapsed while the columns deployed into echelon formation.⁸ This cumbersome tactical manoeuvring was, as was cited above, the direct result of the

6. Joly De Maizeroy, Cours De, 1:262

7. Fuller, Decisive Battles, 2:210

8. Dodge, Great Captains, p. 159

mercenary's style of warfare. Frederick's entire operation was placed in jeopardy as his opponent was given time to redress his position. Each battalion was arranged in "line" and 50 paces behind and to the left of the preceding unit. Finally, at 1:00 P.M. General Wedel with the advance guard struck at Sagschutz. A Prussian corporal remarked of the attack:

Our army advanced with sounding music, as if on parade.
Its order was as magnificent as at any review at Berlin...⁹

Frederick supported the advancing "lines" with a bombardment of heavy artillery, the largest battle-field artillery concentration to date. At the same time Ziethen, the famous Prussian cavalry General, after receiving an initial slight setback, routed the Austrian cavalry on the left and fell on the exposed Austrian flank.¹⁰ At 1:30 P.M., facing such a preponderance of infantry, artillery and cavalry, the Austrian left broke and fled toward Leuthen. The Prussians, complying to the strict command and control procedures, advanced slowly, the two "lines" reaching Leuthen only at 2:30 P.M. Prince Charles, viewing the disorganized flight of his left and the steady advance of the blue lines, rushed all available men into that town in an attempt to stem the Prussian tide. Although the Austrians became mixed and confused, a stiff fight ensued. Only with the heavy artillery and the Prussian bayonet was Leuthen cleared. Charles rallied his men, however, and deployed them in "line". Frederick once again advanced and a murderous standing fire-fight, the bloody consequence of the rigid "line" tactics, developed just north of the town. At 4:00 P.M.

9. C. Duffy, The Army of Frederick the Great, (London: David & Charles, 1974), p. 177

10. Joly De Maizeroy, Cours De, 1:263

Lucchessi, leading the Austrian cuirassiers, attempted to fall on the Prussian flank. He, in turn, however, was met by Driesen's 40 squadrons which had been hidden behind Radaxdorf by Frederick.¹¹ The Austrian "horse" was defeated and routed and the unfortunate Italian killed in the fight. The Prussian cavalry then turned on the enemy infantry and in short time the "white coats" were in full flight toward Breslau. Frederick, at the head of a few battalions, pressed forward as far as Lissa to secure that bridge-head. At 8:00 P.M. operations came to a halt.

During the battle the Prussians sustained 6,200 casualties or one sixth of the entire force. The Austrians lost 10,000 dead or wounded plus a further 12,000 taken prisoner, or 25 percent of the army.¹² Frederick definitely had gained a great victory, but it fell far short of being a decisive battle. The Austrian army was allowed to escape as Frederick ordered a day of rest on the sixth and then followed the beaten foe with only a restricted pursuit. This half-hearted pursuit was again the result of Frederick's desire to maintain firm control over his own mercenaries, who he could not trust alone. Even after the fall of Breslau on December 19 and the capture of an extra 20,000 Austrians, the enemy army still outnumbered the Prussians.¹³ Frederick had won a battle and

11. C. Duffy, The Army of Frederick, p. 178.

12. Dodge, Great Captains, p. 159.

13. Napoleon I, Memoirs of the History of France during the Reign of Napoleon, Dictated by the Emperor at Saint Helena, 7 vols. (London: Henry Colburn & Co. and Martin Bossanger & Co., 1823), 7:198.

with the victory possession of Silesia. But this was only a province and a small gain as Austria's army remained intact and the war continued for five more years.

Frederick failed to win a decisive victory because the slow tactical manoeuvring prevented his exploiting the element of surprise and because he was unable to push a vigorous pursuit. Although he initially surprised Prince Charles on the tactical level, deploying into "line" required an entire hour and then the Prussians advanced only slowly. The effect, therefore, was partial as the Austrians were able to form three successive lines of defense. Although the "white coats" were expelled from each position, the Prussians in no way pressed their advantage. After the battle, Frederick followed his beaten foe with a mere three battalions and in an orderly fashion. On the next day he felt compelled to rest his troops and the Austrians escaped. Surprise and pursuit were therefore relinquished because of the rigid style of warfare which, in turn, was the direct result of the mercenary soldier.

CHAPTER III

FRENCH MILITARY REFORMERS

1763-1791

The year 1763 heralded a period spanning almost thirty years, during which time continental Europe enjoyed a relatively peaceful existence. Only minor disturbances, such as the inglorious and bloodless "Potato War" (1778-1779), broke the mainland's prevailing calm. Yet this era was not devoid of military activity. On the contrary, both military theorists and soldiers worked fervently to solve the problems which plagued the armies of their day. Their objective remained the decisive battle and their attack centered on the two inter-related questions of command and control; speed and manoeuvrability. French military men played, by far, the predominant role in this movement; and soon, French military thought surpassed that of the Prussian themselves. This shift occurred because in the Seven Years' War the armies of Louis XV had proven themselves desperately inadequate and ineffective. The French, therefore, in an effort to improve their army, became the champions

of military reform and change.¹ While countries such as Prussia and Austria held tenaciously to the old system, France surged ahead and began experimenting with a new style of warfare. Men like Broglie, Bourcet and Guibert laboured over the questions of "ordre mince" as opposed to "ordre profond", over the divisional system and the role of the "tirailleur". Theoretically, they solved these, the technical problems of control and mobility, but in practice their reforms were only partially realized. Although they had laid the foundation for total war, their ideas remained unfulfilled due to the limitations inherent in the "ancien régime". They themselves understood the reason for their failure as is evident in these words of Guibert concerning his ideals; "a military theory, well reasoned and magnificent in the speculative field, is but impossible in the real world."² Theory could become practice only with the fall of the mercenary and the emergence of the citizen-soldier.

The French military reformers emphasized two methods of solving the problems of mobility (and therefore surprise) and command. The first, which sparked a lengthy debate, involved the application of "ordre mince" as opposed to, or in concert with "ordre profond". The second was the divisional system.

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1. Herouville De Claye, Traité Des Legions, ou Mémoires Sur L'Infanterie, (A La Hâye: Aux Depens De La Compagnie, 1753), p. 64.
 2. Joly DeMaizeroy, Mémoires Sur Les Opinions, pp 5-6. All footnotes will be translated from French to English.

"Ordre mince" was the three rank "line" formation, which has been discussed above. "Ordre profond" represented the deep battle array, exemplified by the attack and heavy columns. This formation, which was reminiscent of the Spanish tercio of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the Greek pike phalanx of the classical period, was a modern French rediscovery.³ A typical attack column consisted of a compact rectangular formation of soldiers with a front rank of forty men and twelve ranks deep.⁴ An "ordre mince" formation, with an equivalent number of men, but having only three ranks, showed a front four times as long as the attack column. The heavy column was even deeper than the attack column with a front or attacking face shorter than the sides. The "ordre profond" relied entirely on shock and speed. The men were trained to maintain the tight formation and to run at the enemy. They did not fire but depended on the bayonet and the weight of the column. On hitting and breaking through the enemy "line", the formation was to split into two smaller columns and push back the enemy.⁵

3. Le Roy De Bosroger, The Elementary Principles of Tactics, p. 51.

4. P. Paret, Yorck and the Era of Prussian Reform 1807-1815 (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 66. This book while portraying the rise of a great soldier, vividly depicts the Prussian army of Frederick the Great. Especially relevant are the sections dealing with the development of the "Jäger" units.

5. Le Roy De Bosroger, The Elementary Principles of Tactics, pp. 66-63

While both "ordres" were attempted during the Seven Years' War, the "ordre mince", with its high fire-power, proved itself more effective in actual combat. In 1773 Joly De Maizeroy stated, "All battles are decided by fire superiority", and many others echoed his words.⁶ But the line also embodied two serious flaws which many military figures thought outweighed its virtues. An army of 40,000 arranged in the "line" covered a distance of five miles, and this cumbersome formation was extremely difficult to command and control.⁷ It lacked mobility and therefore sacrificed any chance of surprise. The "ordre profond", on the other hand, displayed a shorter front and therefore was easy to command and manoeuvre. Surprise also proved well within reach as an army arranged in columns moved at a faster pace and manoeuvred with greater ease. The "ordre profond", however, contained one major defect. There was no fire-power. Two schools of thought developed, and the dispute concerning fire-power versus mobility and control remained unresolved for decades.

The debate began, in fact, much earlier than 1763 and although the most relevant contributions appeared between that year and 1791, an understanding of the earliest stages of the debate is essential. The Chevalier de Folard (1669-1752) vigorously advocated a return to the Spanish tercio system, complete with pikes, as early as the 1720's.⁸ He stressed the importance of shock, which his heavy columns developed, over fire-power. His calculations, however, were based entirely on the writing of the ancient Romans and his own personal experiences in the War of the

6. Joly De Maizeroy, Mémoires Sur Les Opinions, pp. 135-136.

7. S. Wilkinson, The French Army Before Napoleon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915), p. 29

8. J. Guibert, Essai Général De Tactique, 2 vols., (A Londres: Chez Les Libraires Affocies, 1773), 1:xxvii.

Spanish Succession (1701-1714), and with Charles XII of Sweden.⁹ He refused to acknowledge the tremendous changes which gunpowder had inaugurated and which had antiquated completely the maxims of the Romans. When dealing with wars of his own time he looked only at the final stage of the battle - the charge. He completely ignored the preparatory fire-fight which alone had made the successful charge possible. Maurice de Saxe (1696-1750), perhaps the greatest French general of the century, also shunned fire-power, writing "Powder is not as terrible as one believes"¹⁰ Even after the battle of Fontenoy (1745), which he won after a furious fire-fight, Saxe called for the return of the plug-bayonet. With the support of these two distinguished soldiers, the first French drill books (appearing in the late 1740's) favoured the "ordre profond".

During the Seven Years' War the column suffered greatly before the "ordre mince". Following the battle of Rossbach (1757), where French columns recoiled and fled after encountering the Prussian "line", the French began to reappraise both "ordres". But by the end of the war the controversy waxed even hotter. The advocates of the "ordre mince" pointed to the Prussian success while those who adhered to the column insisted that it better suited the French character and that it was more mobile.¹¹

The debate reached a climax in the 1770's. From 1771 to 1776 the "ordre mince" gained prominence under the influence of the renegade Prussian

9 . Joly De Maizeroy, Cours De, 11:173-174

10. M. Saxe, Memoires Sur L'art De La Guerre (A Dresden: Chez George Conrad Walther, Libraire Du Roi, 1757), p. 46.

11. Joly De Maizeroy, Memoires Dur Les Opinions, pp. 173-176.

officer Baron de Pirch.¹² But in 1776 the reactivation of the influential Baron de Mesnil-Durand, with the aid of Marshal Broglie (1718-1804), the only French general to win acclaim in the Seven Years' War, brought a revision of the system of heavy massed columns. In 1778 they demonstrated their "ordre profond" in the manoeuvres at Vaussieux.¹³ The majority of the French officers rejected the heavy columns as too complicated, but Broglie and Mesnil-Durand remained adamant. The debate loomed deadlocked but for the arrival of a young officer.

The Comte de Guibert (1743-1790), by far the youngest of the French reformers, quickly became the most respected and admired. Although only 29 years of age when he penned his first and greatest work, Essai General de Tactique, (1772), he drew his inspiration and knowledge from an intense and rather modern military education. From an early age Guibert studied under his father. Guibert, the elder, enjoyed a long and distinguished career in the French army, finally rising to the eighteenth century's equivalent of a chief of staff to Marshal Broglie. His military experience coupled with his dedicated and excellent teaching abilities produced a brilliant tactician in his son.

Guibert, the younger, fully understood that fire-power ruled the battle-fields of Europe.¹⁴ He realized, however, that the charge was also

12. Colin, Next War. p. 9

13. R.S. Quimby, The Background of Napoleonic Warfare (New York: Ams Press, Inc., 1957), p. 44. This well written book is extremely helpful when dealing with the complicated tactical formational developments of the period.

14. Guibert, Essai General, 1:18.

a necessary part of all battles. But the charge, for Guibert, was not the climax of the battle, as Folard and Mesnil-Durand contended, rather it merely represented the denouement. The fire-fight decided the battle, the charge simply signified the drawing of the curtain.

Guibert next turned to the problem of mobility, command and control. Although he stressed the fire-fight he perceived the "ordre-mince" to be awkward and unmanageable. To solve the quandry he suggested a combination of the two "ordres". The column, being manoeuveable and easily led, was to be used for approaching the enemy. Once the column was close to the enemy it would deploy into the "line" for the fire-fight. Guibert wrote:

.....one will form one's battle array as late and as near the enemy as possible because columns are much easier to move about than are lines. 15

With this method the point of attack was guarded until the last instant. Thus tactical surprise became possible. Guibert also simplified the methods of deploying from column to "line". He based these calculations on the Prussian system of Frederick the Great.¹⁶ But, whereas the Prussians marched in one column, or two columns, the French divided the army into several columns. Frederick also deployed his "line" much earlier than Guibert had planned to.

One further problem, in fact the basic question, still remained unresolved. As the columns advanced before deploying they suffered greatly under the volley-fire from the enemy "line". Here was the root of the dilemma! Natural obstacles such as mountains or wooded areas could protect

15. Colin, Next War, p. 91.

16. Goodwin, Modern History, p. 196.

the columns until the moment of impact. In these cases Guibert sanctioned the use of the column.¹⁷ But these occasions were extremely rare especially since the armies of Prussia, Austria and Russia tended to avoid these areas which made desertion easier. To solve the problem Guibert turned to a relatively new concept - the irregular soldier.

Irregular soldiers or skirmishers represented a revolutionary principle in the eighteenth century. Unlike the vast majority of European soldiers, they fought as individuals; they were not merely a cog in a larger machine, but worked in two's or in small groups. They relied on natural obstacles, taking advantage of that protection on their own initiative. Contrary to the established practice, their fire was aimed. They also operated under far less discipline than the ordinary "line" soldiers. However, their numbers were restricted, and they were assigned to a minor role in battle tactics. Why was the same savage discipline which the regular troops suffered not required in these units? Why did these skirmishers not desert in large numbers as so many of the regular troops did? A close examination of the irregular units will furnish the answers and will show that these first irregulars were in reality the forerunners of the national soldiers.

The first irregular troops appeared in the service of Austria during the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748).¹⁸ They were recruited exclusively from the bellicose Croat and Pandour tribes. Training

17. Wilkinson, French Army, pp. 54-55.

18. Grandmaison, La Petite Guerre, (Paris: 1756) p. 2.

was minimal, for these men had been reared from early life with hilt in hand. Discipline also proved impossible with these wild horse-men and they remained segregated in their own units.¹⁹ Although their effectiveness was doubted, they were, more or less, set loose on the Prussians. These horse-men, however, accomplished much and enjoyed the only successes against Frederick. These native troops were employed in operations which called for individual initiative and where regular soldiers could not be trusted. Patrols and reconnaissance raids, along with screening the movements of the army became the responsibility of these men. Raids behind enemy lines fell exclusively to the irregulars and it was these daring expeditions which so embarrassed Frederick, but, at the same time, won his admiration.²⁰ The Croats and Pandours were not, however, co-ordinated to act with regular troops in actual combat and therefore were relegated to a secondary role.

With the beginning of the Seven Years' War, Frederick raised his own irregular or "Jäger" units to counter the Austrian threat. Frederick's irregulars, like those of Austria, could be trusted because the vast majority consisted of the relatively few volunteers from the reliable and productive elements of society.²¹ The volunteers were, of course, in complete contrast to the regular "line" mercenaries who had been impressed or bribed and therefore were hardly loyal to the state cause.²² The

19. Grandmaison, La Petite Guerre, (Paris 1756), p. 7.

20. Grandmaison, Petite Guerre, p. 66.

21. Paret, Prussian Reform, pp. 29-31.

22. See above discussion, pp. 13-14.

Prussian light troops performed the same tasks as did their Austrian counterparts but, true to Frederick's beliefs, they also guarded against desertion. The "Jäger " were far more disciplined and regimented than the Pandours and Croats and therefore lost some of their intended value. They likewise remained segregated and therefore played a distinctly minor role in actual battle. Frederick disliked the style of warfare fought by the irregulars and at the close of the war all the "Jäger" units were disbanded. Not until the 1780's did the Prussians raise permanent light troops.

The French followed suit. The "tirailleurs" of France were also native volunteers and therefore desertion did not hamper their effectiveness.²³ The French, however, better understood the concept of irregular warfare and therefore the "tirailleurs" were developed to a greater degree. Lafayette, with valuable experience from the American War of Independence, worked with Guibert to co-ordinate the irregulars with "line" troops. Although retaining their individuality and fluidity of motion, which the regimented "Jäger " sacrificed, the "tirailleurs" were trained to act in concert with the "line" or column. They were not relegated to a secondary role as in Prussia and Austria but became an integral part of the French attack.²⁴ Here lay the solution to the question of "ordre profond" versus "ordre mince", or mobility and control as opposed to fire-power.

The "tirailleurs" advanced a few hundred yards in front of the manoeuvring columns in groups of two or more. The groups fired independently

23. Grandmaison, La Petite Guerre, p. 7.

24. Paret, Prussian Reform, p. 97.

with half the section loading while the remainder protected the unit. They utilized whatever cover was available and advanced or retreated at their own discretion. Their primary task was to screen the manoeuvring but vulnerable columns.²⁵ They accomplished this by forcing the enemy to remain stationary and goading him into wasteful fire against targets which proved difficult to hit with unaimed volleys. They also inflicted considerable damage with their own aimed fire. Behind this screen the column or columns remained relatively undamaged while they manoeuvred and approached the enemy "line". Once close enough and at the last possible moment the French deployed and commenced the fire-fight or charged with bayonets. Guibert's system, which combined the mobility and surprise of the "ordre profond" along with the fire-power of the "ordre mince" was extremely flexible, and greatly alleviated the problems of command and control. The decision of which "ordre" to use was left up to the individual commander, for now both worked well because of the "tirailleurs". Guibert, however, continuously stressed the need to soften the enemy with the fire-fight. Guibert's system was adopted officially in the ordinance of August 1, 1791, and remained in force until 1831, four times longer than any previous ordinance.²⁶ It can hardly be coincidence that this system, which relied so heavily upon the "tirailleur", was not officially accepted until after the fall of the "ancien régime".

25. Herouville De Claye, Traité Des Legions, p. 108.

26. Quimby, Naponeonic Warfare, p. 306.

Although the first irregular appeared well before the French revolution, it was not until after 1789 that this style of fighting truly effected and revolutionized warfare. Certainly the wild Hungarian horsemen, the "Jäger" of Prussia, and the "tirailleurs" of France all possessed the essential quality of being native volunteers whose loyalty was, therefore, unquestioned. But they remained a distinct minority and, for the most part, segregated from the regular troops. Even in the 1780's, when the numbers of irregulars increased, this represented more of a vogue than a permanent movement.²⁷ The Austrian Pandours and Croats, although loyal, were undisciplined. In absolutist Prussia the "Jäger" became regimented almost to the same degree as the regulars, while royalist officers in both France and Prussia saw the light troops as the first step toward anarchy and revolution.²⁸ In France, the number of "tirailleurs" despite Guibert, was heavily restricted by the traditional-minded high command. Sufficient numbers of "tirailleurs" did not appear until the implementation of Guibert's system in 1791, after the fall of the ancien régime.

Many of the French reformers, while struggling with the problems of mobility and command, pointed to the oppressive governments as the deterrent to the "tirailleur" and military progress. Guibert, in his initial work, wrote:

.....that warfare remains in infancy, this is the fault of the Governments. ²⁹

Later, Joly De Maizeroy supported Guibert by stressing that the adoption of new orders of battle depended not only on the character of the nation but also on "the constitution of the Government"³⁰. Although the "tirailleur" was born in the ancien régime, he was severely restricted and did . . .

27. Goodwin, Modern History, p. 194.

28. Paret, Prussian Reform, p. 89.

29. J. Guibert, Essaie Général, 1:xxxvi.

30. Joly de Maizeroy, Mémoires Sur Les Opinions, pp. 24-25.

not achieve permanence until a later age.

The "tirailleur" played a leading role in the inauguration of a second military innovation. Marshal Broglie and Pierre de Bourcet were the guiding force behind the development of the divisional system. But this system, like Guibert's tactical compromise, also remained only in its budding stages and fully flowered only after 1789 and the revolution. In 1760 Marshal Broglie divided the French army in Germany into what he called divisions. He hoped, by this device, to compensate for the slowness of the French in deploying, and to alleviate command and control problems.³¹ Command and control would become easier because the officers worked with smaller groups of men, and therefore were closer to the soldiers. He subdivided the army into four infantry divisions, each commanded by a lieutenant-general, and two cavalry divisions each accompanied by a brigade of infantry. The army remained concentrated, however, marching on one route only in the conventional manner with the four infantry divisions in the centre flanked by the cavalry. The divisions remained within musket range of each other and close enough to deploy into the "line".³² Groups of irregulars were required to screen the army and to partially close the spaces between the divisions. Broglie intended only to quicken the time of deployment, which he accomplished. Never did he intend to separate the divisions more than seeing distance and his army continued to march as a single unit. Far flung detachments remained undesirable due to the mercenary's lowly characteristics, notably disloyalty.

31 Quimby, Napoleonic Warfare, p. 94.

32. Wilkinson, French Army, p. 45.

Thus the ability to manoeuvre widely to gain surprise was lost. However, Broglie's divisions, although primitive, constituted the first modern efforts at breaking up the traditional battle order.

During the 1760's and 1770's other reformers expanded Broglie's divisional theories. Men like Guibert, Le Roy De Bosroger, Mauvillon and Bourcet pointed to the advantages of separating the divisions to outflank or surround the enemy. Their calculations were restricted to the battlefield itself however, and for rare occasions only.³³ The superiority of divisions containing all three arms; infantry, cavalry and artillery, was also advised.³⁴

Pierre de Bourcet (1700-1780) was the foremost proponent of the divisional system. He had gained his military experience while serving in the capacity of a present day chief of staff. His writings were based on long years of soldiering. Like Guibert, he greatly influenced his contemporaries and later Napoleon. In his most famous work, Principles De La Guerre Des Montagnes (1764), and also in later books he continuously recommended that the French armies be divided into three divisions, each containing all three arms.³⁵ The divisions were to manoeuvre within supporting distance of each other and not more than one normal day's march apart. From these theories, many historians, such as Theodore Ropp, have concluded that Bourcet greatly advanced Broglie's ideals and advocated the

33. J. Colin, The Transformations of War, trans. L.H.R. Pope-Hennessy (London: Hugh Rees Ltd., 1912), p. 112.

34. Herouville De Claye, Traité Des Legions, pp. 65-70.

35. M. De Bourcet, Mémoires Militaire Sur Les Frontières De La France Du Piédmont Et De La Savoie (A Berlin: Imprime Chez George Decker, 1801), p. 185 and p. 253.

strategic divisional concept. Although Bourcet did exhort the advantages of a more dispersed divisional system, he believed it possible only in exceptional cases, such as mountain warfare. He went on to state that detachments in non-mountainous regions were extremely hazardous.³⁶ Guibert echoed Bourcet, praising the theory of the divisional system but warned that the separate detachments should remain concentrated, in the style of Broglie. Widely separated divisions were condemned by both men for two main reasons; the limiting supply system and the lack of "tirailleurs".

Guibert saw the cumbersome supply system as the major obstacle to a more dispersed divisional system.³⁷ Armies of the day were fettered to the magazines and supply depots and forced to maintain long baggage trains, and the all-important, but highly restrictive, travelling bakeries.³⁸ An army divided into three would be hard pressed to find three separate approach routes with suitable magazine centres. Finding enough competent staff officers to devise the supply plans would also prove difficult in armies where the noble officers believed logistics below his rank. But of far greater importance than these obstacles, a far flung divisional system depended entirely upon the ability of the separate detachments to quickly concentrate, and this proved impossible. Speed was unattainable because of the slow supply trains. Only with the removal of the restrictive supply system would armies gain the speed and mobility to expand on Broglie's divisional system, but this proved impossible with the mercenary army.

36. Wilkinson, French Army, p. 40.

37. Wilkinson, French Army, p. 75.

38. Feuquières, Mémoires Sur La Guerre, (Amsterdam: Chez Jean Frederic Bernard, 1734), p. 75.

The second problem which restricted the further development of the divisional concept was the scarcity of irregular troops. Widely separated divisions were more vulnerable to attack and defeat than a concentrated army. Skirmishers in great numbers were therefore required for more extensive reconnaissance work to locate the enemy and to act as couriers between the detachments. Conversely, the necessity of screening each division from the enemy was also as crucial. The more powerful enemy army had to be kept in the dark as to the strength and whereabouts of the division and this task could only be accomplished by irregulars. Even Broglie's divisional system, which remained very compact, was surrounded by skirmishers. Thus, the divisional system, although accepted officially as early as 1775, remained distinctly limited.³⁹ Its theoretical implications in the areas of command and control and surprise were praised by the reformers, but its full application was impossible. The system was destined to remain restricted only as long as the supply system hindered military operations and the irregular troops represented but an insignificant portion of the army.

From 1763 to 1791 French military reformers attempted to rectify the problems which plagued the armies of their day. Their main concern lay with the questions of mobility, command, control and surprise - necessary ingredients of the decisive battle. Led by such men as Broglie, Bourcet and Guibert, they wrestled with the problems of the "ordre mince" versus the "ordre profond", the "tirailleur" and the divisional system. Although their ideas were only partially realized in their own day, they laid the

39. Wilkinson, The French Army, p. 90.

foundation for total war. By 1789 the French enjoyed a vast lead in the academies of warfare. By 1792 and the first year of war the French army stood theoretically prepared to launch a new style of warfare. All that remained wanting was a new type of soldier to give the dormant theories life.

CHAPTER IV

PROBLEMS WITHIN

THE FRENCH ARMY

1789-1795

The French revolution heralded a new epoch, establishing principles which drastically altered the progression of mankind. Warfare, perhaps more than all else experienced a profound transformation. Only the advent of gun-powder before 1789 and the splitting of the atom in the twentieth century have determined military development to so decisive a degree. The revolution returned to warfare the concept of the armed horde, but in place of the Hunnish barbarian of the fifth century, the patriotic citizen-soldier of France marched forward. This new warrior represented one of the keys to unlocking the limiting fetters which had shackled warfare. It was he who was destined to convert the theories of Guibert and Bourcet into the reality which became total war. The full impact of the citizen-soldier, however, was not felt immediately. Although the

French revolution gave birth to the citizen-soldier, it also threw the army into a state of disorder and confusion. This chapter will examine the chaos within the military structure directly following 1789 which retarded the development of the citizen-soldier. The years from 1790 to 1795 will be studied to show the steady reorganization and expansion of the army with the reforms of Dubois-Crancé and Carnot, together with the rise of a young fresh officer corps finally exploiting the military virtues of the citizen-soldier to revolutionize warfare.

The French monarchical army of 1789 was well disciplined and highly trained. It possessed the best artillery in Europe and contained a particularly fine corps of non-commissioned officers. The revolution, however, greatly disrupted the army, and by 1792 the effectiveness of the force was highly questionable. Internal discipline suffered first. With the initial enthusiasm of the revolution soldiers were regarded simply as citizens and therefore the regimental martial discipline was relaxed.¹ The soldiers, being mercenaries, took full advantage of the situation and mutiny and desertion became pronounced. Approximately 30,000 troops had left the colours by October of 1790.² Desertion, however, was most flagrant among the officers. The majority of the officers were nobles and therefore remained, on the whole, monarchists. The high command especially detested the revolution and left the country in large numbers. The officers who stayed worked under a heavy aura of suspicion and the Convention itself

1. Auber (ed) Collection Complète Des Tableaux Historiques De La Revolution Française, 3 vols. (A Paris: Chez Auber, 1804), 1:165.

2. Lachouque, Aux Armes Citoyens! (Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin, 1969), P. 65.

urged the soldiers to distrust the remaining few.³ Disorder and lack of discipline naturally increased.

The confusion was augmented in the years 1791 and 1792 by the tremendous influx of volunteers. A great many, in fact, concentrated on political goals, forming clubs and petitioning rather than pursuing the martial arts. These troops remained segregated from the old regulars, wore different uniforms and enlisted for only one year. Each successive muster received less training and was therefore proportionately less disciplined and organized.⁴ Unity within the army deteriorated rapidly.

The dual problems of the great influx of recruits and the mass exodus of officers initially threw the army into disorder and retarded the development of the new soldier. From 1789 to 1795, however, the two problems were rectified and, in fact, proved to be a tremendous boon toward the realization of the decisive battle. Both will be dealt with in turn.

In 1789 revolutionary France inherited an army of approximately 160,000 men.⁵ This force was then one of the largest European military

3. Léonard, L'Armée, p. 308.

4. R.W. Phipps, The Armies of the First French Republic, 5 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 1:19.

5. All figures concerning the size of the French army are taken from L. Dussieux, L'Armée En France, 3 vols. (Versailles: L. Bernard, Libraire-Editeur, 1884) and S. Wilkinson, The French Army Before Napoleon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1915), and refer to the fighting strength of the army on the borders. These two works, although rather dated, contain the only extensive lists of figures on the overall growth rate of the French army. Since this thesis is interested in the proportional size of the army, Dussieux's and Wilkinson's works are invaluable.

organizations but within a mere handful of years it was completely dwarfed by the new French army. At first, the problem of maintaining the strength of the army was almost ignored by the revolutionary government, despite some very good advice to be vigilant. In late 1789, for example, Dubois-Crancé, a long term soldier of bourgeois background and then a member of the military committee of twelve stated:

It is necessary to establish a truly national conscription, which should include everyone from the second man in the empire in rank down to the last citizen..... I now declare it to be an axiom that in France every citizen ought to be a soldier and every soldier a citizen, or else we shall never have a constitution. 6

His warning was ignored however, and the proposition was defeated as the representatives, flushed with the ideals of Liberté, Egalité et Fraternité, argued only for complete individual freedom. Under this committee, not to be confused with the later Committee of Public Safety, thousands left the colours and disorder within the ranks spread.

In 1790 the first step toward revolutionizing the army was attempted with the publication of a new military constitution on February 28. Designed to promote enrollment in the army, this document opened every rank to every citizen. It also established the principle of promotion through merit, abolished the practice of purchasing commissions and made officer examinations compulsory. Finally, every officer was required to take an oath of fidelity to the nation, the law and the king and also

6. H.M. Stephens, A History of the French Revolution, 2 vols.
(London: Longhams, Green & Co., 1892), 1:383.

to uphold the constitution.⁷ In June of the same year the old militia of the ancien régime was abolished and replaced by the national guard. An estimated two and one half million joined the guard and took the oath.⁸ Although the national guard received full support, few, if any, enrolled in the regular army, and with the desertion of both officers and men, the army was soon well under strength.

By early 1791 the strength of the army stood at 115,000; and with the threat of war growing, especially from Prussia and Austria, the Assembly decided to enlarge the military.⁹ Volunteers were called for on June 21, and on August 17 the total number to be raised was established at 169 battalions or 101,000 troops.¹⁰ The vast majority of men came from the national guard. They elected their own officers, but a stipulation required that they have experience in either the old army or militia. These national volunteers received higher pay than the regulars and enlisted for only one year. Their uniforms were blue as opposed to the traditional white which the regulars continued to wear. They also formed their own battalions and remained as separate units

7. Wilkinson, French Army, pp. 107-108.

8. Leonard, L'Armée, p. 322.

9. M. Dumas, An Epitome of Military Events or Historical Essay Upon the Present War, 2 vols., (London: T. Egerton, Military Library, 1800-1802), 1:196.

10. Phipps, First French Republic, 1:15.

within the army. In only three months fully one half of the volunteers were seeing duty on the frontiers, and the remainder waited only on weapons and uniforms.¹¹ They trained under the famous drill book of 1791 which was based on the work of Guibert. By early 1792 the army had almost doubled, growing to approximately 200,000 men.

With this army revolutionary France plunged into armed hostilities on April 20, 1792, declaring war on Austria and consequently Prussia. The inhabitants of the eastern departments displayed great enthusiasm and thousands flocked to the colours.¹² The majority of the army was now patriotic, but, although displaying an abundance of spirit, lacked order and discipline.¹³ Two weak invasions of the Austrian-Netherlands broke before the well drilled Austrian regulars. The Prussians and Austrians, however, true to the eighteenth century mode of warfare, procrastinated.¹⁴ Their first offensive move was, in fact, the Brunswick Manifesto (July 26). Paris exploded in patriotic fervour against this threat.¹⁵ The country

11. Wilkinson, French Army, p. 126.

12. Lachouque, Aux Armes, pp. 75-77.

13. Dumouriez, Memoirs, 2 vols. (Perth: R. Morison Junion, 1794), 2: 32-40.

14. MacDonald, Recollections, Trans. by S.L. Simson, Ed. by C. Rousset, (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1893), p. 19.

15. Decaen, Mémoires et Journaux, Vol 1, (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, Imprimeurs-Etiteurs, 1910), p. 3.

was declared in danger and a quota of 63,000 men was called for.¹⁶

Every department quickly met its allotment with some, like the 4th Battalion of Calvados, marching in only ten days.¹⁷ By August 19 and the long awaited for Prussian invasion, the French army stood at 250,000 troops. With the usual slow advance of the allies, the Battle of Valmy was only fought on September 20. Although this has been called the first battle of the revolutionary wars, it does not represent the first encounter between the eighteenth century mercenary and the new breed of citizen-soldier. Valmy was strictly an artillery duel with no significant contact between the actual fighting men. One month after this battle the Assembly proclaimed France no longer in danger. On November 6 the victory at Jamappes and the subsequent conquest of Belgium confirmed the proclamation. With the country free, thousands left the army and marched home. Some simply deserted but the 101,000 volunteers of 1791 had enlisted for only one year and therefore, after submitting their notices, legally returned to their families.¹⁸ By the end of the year the army had shrunk to less than 150,000 men and many continued to leave.

The year 1793 witnessed the true beginning of the nation in arms. Both 1791 and 1792 were years of enthusiasm and patriotic zeal but were essentially transitory. It was only in 1793 that a planned and lasting development of the military strength of the nation was inaugurated. After the early declaration of war on England and Holland in that year, France found herself pushed to the defensive and this, coupled with the rising threat of the First Coalition, finally awoke the Republic to the danger and it threw itself completely into the war effort.

16. Auber, Collection Complète, pp. 257-259.

17. Decaen, Mémoires, p. 4.

18. Wilkinson, French Army, p. 135.

On February 24, 1793 the Convention called for 300,000 citizen-soldiers.¹⁹ The men were to be between the ages of 18 and 25 and unmarried. Other exemptions were also permitted, such as those working in essential industries, elected officials, and the physically unfit. This first draft was not entirely compulsory, however, as the rich could offer a bonus of 500 livre for a substitute.²⁰ Each department was responsible for raising a specified contingent of men by first calling for volunteers or by ballot. The date chosen for the ballot was March 10. The proclamation of February 24 proved a success and hundreds of thousands joined the army.²¹ By May the strength of the army had risen from the 150,000 of January to slightly under 400,000. The draft worked so well that there were not enough muskets and several of the rear units were issued the antiquated pike.²² In July of 1793, 483,000 citizen-soldiers stood waiting to fight.

On August 23 the Convention supplemented the February 24 law with the levée en masse. Monarchist Europe immediately ridiculed the concept of an entire nation rising in arms, but France then instituted the first modern compulsory universal conscription.²³ Unlike the February law, substitutes were no longer permitted and, therefore, all men, rich and poor, marched together.²⁴ The first article of the declaration stated:

19. Lacouque, Aux Armes, p. 172.

20. A. Vagts, A History of Militarism (New York: The Free Press, 1937), p. 108.

21. A. Preston and S. Wise, Men In Arms, p. 184.

22. Danton, Discours De Danton, Ed. A. Fribourg, (Paris: La Librairie Edouard Cornely & Co., 1910), pp. 172-173.

23. F. Baines, History of the Wars of the French Revolution, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Deme & Brown, 1817), 1:95.

24. Wilkinson, French Army, p. 137.

From this moment until that which our enemies shall have been driven from the territory of the Republic, all Frenchmen are permanently requisitioned for service in the armies.

The young men shall fight, the married men shall forage weapons and transport supplies; the women shall make tents and clothes and will serve in the hospitals; the children will make up old linen into lint; the old men will have themselves carried into the public squares to rouse the courage of the fighting men, to preach unity of the Republic and hatred against kings. 25

This proclamation was one of the first in modern history which directly appealed to the people. It would not only have been unthinkable but impossible during the ancien régime. The declaration was published on an extremely dark day in the history of the Republic. The combined armies of the formidable First Coalition, whose members included Great Britain, Prussia, Austria, Spain, Holland, Portugal, Tuscany, Naples and the Empire, had invaded French soil and threatened to destroy the new government. Yet within one year, France, by the sheer size of her army, moved from the defensive to the offensive and began a reign of expansion and conquest.

By the end of 1793 the French army numbered 554,000. In January of 1794 500,000 citizen-soldiers were in actual contact with the foreign enemies of the Republic; and theoretically the Committee had 1,200,000 men at its disposal.²⁶ By September of 1794 the frontier

25. Lachouque, Aux Armes, p. 232.

26. Baines, History of the Wars, 1:96.

forces stood at 749,545 and the army continued to grow. The growth of the French army is outlined in the following list.

1789	-	160,000	
early 1791	-	115,000	
early 1792	-	200,000	
mid 1792	-	250,000	
late 1792	-	150,000	
early 1793	-	150,000	
mid 1793	-	400,000	
late 1793	-	500,000	
mid 1794	-	749,000	27

The incredible growth rate of the army is important because these numbers represent not mercenaries but citizen-soldiers. Obviously the majority of the French populace was both willing and fully capable of supporting a huge national army. The numbers were also essential to compensate for the early inexperience of the new soldier. It was the vast size of the army which gave the national soldier an initial reprieve and the time needed to develop fully. During these first years of the war the French army continually outnumbered the combined armies of the powerful First Coalition. Every French victory was realized with a preponderant advantage of numbers. At Jamappes (November 6, 1792), for example, 40,000 French overpowered 14,000 Austrians, while at Hondshooten (September 8, 1793) and at Wattingnies (October 15-16, 1793) 50,000 and 45,000 French

27. Figures again taken from Dussieux, L'Armée En France and Wilkinson, French Army.

respectively defeated 15,000 and 18,000 enemy forces.²⁸ In comparison, only thirty years earlier, Frederick the Great, facing a much weaker coalition, was only rarely able to meet the enemy on equal terms. Every French victory was due to superior numbers. The revolution had destroyed the limitations which the ancien régime had imposed upon the size of the army. With the approach of danger revolutionary France was not capable of raising the entire populace to resistance and the new sword-bearer became the citizen-soldier. The French army doubled, tripled and quadrupled to meet the monarchist threat; as hundred of thousands marched forward to preserve the newly won freedom. However, this unprecedented growth in the size of the army initially threw the military into a state of confusion. At first, the undisciplined volunteer units were segregated from the regulars of the old army in order to maintain their patriotic distinction. But this only increased the chaotic administrative and command problems and it was only with the amalgamation of 1793 and the rise of the Committee of Public Safety that order and discipline were restored.

Dubois-Crancé first proposed the amalgamation of the old and new troops in mid-1793. He argued that this step would greatly facilitate the administration and the command of the army.²⁹ It would also stop the desertion of regular troops who then joined the higher paid volunteers.

28. Vagts, History of Militarism, p. 111.

29. Hugo, Mémoires, (Paris: Éditions Excelsior, Quai De La Tournelle, 1934), p. 71.

The new system would also combine the patriotic enthusiasm of the recruits with the disciplined stability of the old "line" troops. The amalgamation began in late 1793 and was officially adopted in February, 1794; thus making the infantry homogeneous.³⁰ All now received the same pay and also adopted the blue uniform of the revolution. A further amalgamation in 1796 was implemented to complete the move.

To facilitate the amalgamation, the basic military structure was reorganized. The old regimental system was abolished, and in its place Carnot instituted the brigade system. One "line" battalion from the old army was amalgamated with four volunteer battalions to form a demi-brigade of approximately 3,200 men.³¹ Two demi-brigades equalled a brigade and two or three brigades combined to produce a division of between 12,800 and 19,200 soldiers and officers. Each demi-brigade was treated as an independent unit. The amalgamation and the new system displaced much of the initial confusion and also acted as a disciplinary factor.³²

Discipline and order was installed in the army by the Government itself. Following the lengthening string of defeats suffered in 1793 a more rational and serious approach to the war was adopted. A new hard-line policy was planned and in early April the creation of the Committee of Public Safety epitomized this trend. With the war effort as one of its responsibilities, the Committee quickly set to work and by the end of the

30. Léonard, L'Armée, p. 327.

31. MacDonald, Recollections, p. 33.

32. Hugo, Mémoires, p. 71.

month it had sent out four deputies to each army to supervise the troops in the field.³³ The deputies held full power, even over life and death.³⁴ With the introduction of the guillotine to the army discipline returned to the ranks. By 1794 the chaos had been swept away and an army of unequalled size and supported by the entire populace confronted an alarmed Europe. But the revolution had not solely returned to warfare the armed horde, it had also replaced the mercenary with the citizen-soldier. This second bequest of 1789 contributed far more than the numbers to the revolution of warfare.

The citizen-soldier was animated not by gold but by ideals. He was motivated from within and he fought for a concept which he believed in and was a part of himself. French citizen-soldiers, for example, rallied to the colours singing the highly moving "Marseillaise" and in answer to the dual calls of, "The revolution is in danger!" and "The country is in danger!".³⁵ When the volunteers charged the enemy their battle-cry was, "Long live the Republic!" or "Amour sacré de la patrie."³⁶ General Dumouriez was continually able to rally his starving troops with, "which are the citizens who are so cowardly as not to sustain hunger? Let them be stripped of their arms and uniform and chased away."³⁷ The citizen-soldiers responded with, "Liberty forever!" In direct contrast, the Duke of Brunswick was compelled to halt every six days to bake enough bread

33. Lachouque, Aux Armes, p. 315.

34. MacDonald, Recollections, pp. 25-30.

35. Thiébault, The Memoirs (Trans. by A.J. Butler) Vol 1. (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1896), p. 210.

36. Auber, Collection Complète, p. 294.

37. Baines, History of the Wars, 1:41.

to keep his mercenaries fed so they would not desert. The citizen-soldier was, therefore, a more ruthless warrior, willing to risk more and suffer more for a goal which meant more than money. After the battle of Jamappes (November 6, 1792), while the Austrians and Prussians retreated, the French, with empty bellies and, in fact, deprived of much more, such as adequate footwear, invaded Belgium.³⁸ Every French victory during the first years of the war saw heavy French casualties, especially at Jamappes, Hondshooten, Wattingines and Fleurus. Yet they attacked again and again until the Prussians and Austrians were driven from the field cursing the "furious fools".³⁹ The armies, although lacking many vital supplies, continued to attack day after day.⁴⁰ As General Thiébault recounted:

Our soldiers, on the other hand, surmounted all fatigues, difficulties, and privations with genuine enthusiasm; what would have checked other troops was an electric stimulus to ours. ⁴¹

Here lay a fundamental difference between the citizen-soldier and the mercenary. The soldiers of France were motivated and loyal to a cause; the mercenary was selfish and untrustworthy. Although these different characteristics might be equalized during the heat of battle their effect on strategical and tactical planning is definitely disparate. The mercenary's traits resulted in a variety of restraints, as listed

38. Thiébault, The Memoires, p. 156.

39. Vagts, History of Militarism, p. 111.

40. Dumouriez, Memoirs, II:25.

41. Thiébault, The Memoires, p. 251.

above, which severely limited generals to rigid command and control procedures. The loyalty and enthusiasm of the citizen-soldier, in contrast, liberated commanders from these restraints and allowed a new found freedom of action by permitting individual foraging, far-flung detachments, more forced marches, camping near woods, and night marches to name but a few. In the tactical sense, the "line" was no longer the only option and a new system of open order tactics, based on the "tir-ailleur" could be developed. These important tactical and strategical consequences of the citizen-soldier greatly relieved a general's command and control problems.

The civilian authorities also contributed to the new patriotic warfare and its destruction of the old mercenary style of war. Decrees in September of 1792 and May of 1793 prohibited the ransoming of prisoners.⁴² The first extensive propaganda campaign was inaugurated and leaflets proclaiming the virtues of Liberté, Egalité, et Fraternité were distributed in France and abroad. Carnot, in 1794, wrote:

..... to act in mass formation and take the offensive.
Join action with the bayonet on every occasion. Give
battle on a large scale and pursue the enemy until he
is utterly defeated. 43

Some of the civilians, the Jacobins in particular, became over-enthusiastic. Robespierre, shortly before his demise, passed a decree which demanded no leniency to be given to the English and the Hanoverians. This was generally ignored, however, but the concept of terror-in-war remained.

42. Vagts, History of Militarism, p. 113.

43. L. Carnot, Correspondance Générale, 4 vols., (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1907), 1:283.

The new citizen-soldier was an energetic and ruthless warrior who was animated from within. He therefore could suffer much but would continue to press forward. He represented the nation and marched to preserve his freedom and his home. The war he fought was his war. The French revolution had returned the sword to the masses and thus greatly altered the foundation of the military. Now the French citizen-soldier waited only for the rise of the new national officer corps to lead him in revolutionizing warfare.

In 1789 the vast majority of officers were from the aristocratic second estate. They represented 70 percent of the entire officer corps and held all the highest commissions.⁴⁴ Because they were nobles the majority opposed the revolution. At first, passive resistance was offered, but as the revolution gained momentum more and more officers deserted and joined in active rebellion. Some departed with the Prince de Condé after July 14 and swore to return the monarchy to its former position of power. Others followed, particularly after the proclamation of each successive oath of allegiance. The new oath published in June 1791, for example, with the king's name omitted, caused 1,500 officers to immediately desert and join Condé.⁴⁵ Even with the declaration of war, noble officers continued to leave and from April to July of that year 598 officers deserted.⁴⁶ By the end of 1794, 73 percent of the original officers had left the service.⁴⁷

The nobility who

44. Wilkinson, French Army, p. 120.
45. Lachouque, Aux Armes, p. 72.
46. Wilkinson, French Army, p. 117.
47. Wilkinson, French Army, p. 120.

remained were highly suspected and many, especially those in command position, were replaced by republicans. In 1793, under the Jacobin terror others, such as Luckner, Custine and Houchard died on the guillotine.⁴⁸ By 1794 the army had been purged completely of suspected officers.

The mass desertion and the following purge of officers opened the way for a young and revolutionary group of officers. In 1791 Lannes and Saint Cyr, for example, were civilians; while Ney, Murat, and Soult wore no more than the three stripes of a sergeant.⁴⁹ Others, such as Grouchy, Macdonald, Marmont, and Napoleon held lowly commissions. All these men of little renown in 1791 were shortly to write their names forever across the pages of history. These men, although serving in the old army, belonged to the school of the reformers. Napoleon, for instance, studied directly under Du Teil and always carried Bourcet's book on mountain warfare with him. They were all young men, with an average age of approximately 23.⁵⁰ These citizen-officers adopted the revolutionary principles of the reformers and only waited for the opportunity to put the new concepts into practice. Some have suggested, Quimby for example, that these officers were products of the ancien régime and therefore credit should go to the monarchist period. He fails

48. Baines, History of the Wars, 1:94.

49. Phipps, First French Republic, 1:42.

50. Phipps, First French Republic, 1:61.

to consider, however, that none would have risen to command rank in the old system. Masséna, for instance, resigned from the army in early 1789 because he realized he would never be promoted above the rank of sergeant. But after the revolution he rose rapidly and by 1792 was a chief-de-bataillon. The others, likewise, owed their meteor-like rise solely to the revolution and the opportunities it opened.

Although the revolution occurred in 1789, the citizen-soldier did not immediately affect warfare. His potential was at first dulled by the confusion and chaos in the French army. The rank and file was enthusiastic and numerous but disorderly and inexperienced. The officers of the old army deserted, thus furthering the confusion, while the republican replacements were untried. Numbers and the high morale alone saved the new nation from the first Monarchist onslaught and gained the necessary breathing space to reorganize and to develop the fledgling citizen-soldier. The citizen-officers, during those years also accumulated the experience to lead the new army. By 1796 the French Army stood ready to inaugurate a new system of total war based on the decisive battle and founded on the citizen-soldier.

CHAPTER V

THE CITIZEN-SOLDIER, NAPOLEON AND UNLIMITED WARFARE

In 1796 French citizen-soldiers under Napoleon inaugurated a new age of total war. From 1792 to 1795 the mercenary armies of the ancien régime had barely held the citizen armies of France in check. These years were, however, an incubation period which saw merely the early growth and development of the new warrior. By 1796 the citizen-soldier had finally matured and was now capable of reaching his full potential. During the next few years he helped make possible a complete revolution in warfare. Because of his innate characteristics, he freed generals from the most restrictive eighteenth century limitations of command and control, and thus returned to war the elements of mobility and speed which were and are the necessary components for surprise. Pursuit also became possible because of his qualities. The emergence of surprise and pursuit made possible the decisive battle, whose conspicuous absence had been the greatest limitation of eighteenth century warfare. With the establishment of the decisive battle warfare itself

became increasingly total and became limited only by the technological factor.

Before dealing directly with this unlimited system of warfare and how it was initiated by the citizen-soldier, a discussion concerning Napoleon Bonaparte, and the role he played in this military revolution, is essential. Napoleon first achieved notice at the Siege of Toulon (1793). Here the young artillery officer directed his batteries with such skill and resolution that the port fell, primarily due to his efforts. He was an excellent artilleryman and later, as supreme commander, he continued to devote much time to the artillery corps. Napoleon, like Frederick, preferred to concentrate his batteries firing at points in the enemy columns or squadrons. In his final years, he increased the proportion of artillery and tended to rely more and more on his "big guns". Napoleon was only twenty-six years of age and scarcely tried in actual combat when he took command of the army of Italy on March 2, 1796.¹ Yet, within two years, that army had defeated the numerically superior Austro-Piedmontese forces and conquered all of Italy. To explain this astonishing success military historians have concentrated on Napoleon's background. Commandant J. Colin, for instance, and later Spencer Wilkinson and Liddell Hart, placed great emphasis on the fact that Napoleon was a voracious devourer of military books.² Particular attention was placed on the pre-revolutionary reformers such as Broglie, Du Teil, Bourcet and Guibert. The campaign plan of 1796-1797, for instance, which is a model of Napoleonic warfare, could have easily been drawn from Bourcet's work, Principles de la Guerre de Montagnes, written between 1764 and 1771.³ These military historians assert that Napoleon

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1. Thiebault, General, Baron De, Mémoires (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1962), p. 50
 2. The History of the Campaign of 1796 in Germany and Italy (London: Sold by T. Cadell, Jun. and W. Davies, Strand, 1797), p. 382.
 3. B.H. Liddell Hart, Strategy (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1954), p. 114.

was not an innovator but a perfecter of the ideas of others and that the key to unlocking the mystery of his success lies with the pre-revolutionary reformers.⁴ There can be little doubt that the theoretical foundation of Napoleonic warfare drew its first modern breath from these reformers. But is this the crucial factor in the Napoleonic formula for success? Although the theories of the military reformers were important to Napoleon, they in fact hold no higher consequence than the improvement in roads at the end of the century or the appearance of the potato in continental Europe.⁵ The theories, along with the better roads and potato were also available to generals of the ancien régime. No less a military figure than Frederick the Great had most of these tools at his disposal but they all remained relatively sterile. The determining factor was not so much the pre-revolutionary philosophies as the arrival and maturation of the citizen-soldier. His qualities were responsible for transforming theory into practice by freeing Napoleon from most of the restrictive command and control procedures and thus giving him an army which was finally capable of quick, mobile action.

Military authors have devoted far too much ink to the pre-revolutionary theorists as the vital cog of Napoleonic warfare. It is forgotten that the young Napoleon read extensively, not only the works of Guibert and Bourcet, but also military writings from all periods of history. He

4. D.G. Chandler, The Campaigns of Napoleon, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967), p. 136.

5. Better roads made for quicker communication and faster march times. The potato provided an ample food source for the foraging troops.

was as familiar with the great captains of antiquity as he was with those of his own time. Bourcet and his colleagues, in fact, simply restated the maxims of warfare as applicable to their own generation, but which had been taught by all great captains. Was not Alexander the Great's victory at Arbela in 331 BC the prototype for Napoleon's original battle plan at Castiglione? Also, Hannibal at Cannae in 216 BC conquered exactly as did Napoleon at Austerlitz 2,000 years later. The Corsican was well acquainted with both these men and therefore was fully aware of the value of surprise and pursuit and the importance of the decisive battle.

The pre-revolutionary writers also perceived these, the maxims of warfare, but they were unable to implement them in the French army. Some, such as Guibert, realized the source of their failure, that of the mercenary composition of the army.⁶ But with the French revolution and the rise of the citizen-soldier this fundamental limitation of eighteenth century warfare disappeared, as we have seen. By 1796 the army was stable and the raw citizen-soldier of the first years had hardened into experienced warriors. The new officer corps, based on national conscription, had matured also by that time. Thus, the citizen-soldier finally stood ready to fully achieve his potential. Napoleon, well studied in the intricacies of warfare and clearly comprehending the maxims and goals of his art, exploited the citizen-soldier to his maximum capacity. His primary aim was the decisive battle and the means he employed were speed, mobility and pursuit. All had been championed by

6. See discussion above concerning Guibert and the mercenary, pp 41-42.

the reformers but not until the citizen-soldier had matured were these ideals made available to the general.

The citizen-soldier also revolutionized warfare because he embodied two essential elements which the mercenary lacked. They were numbers and enthusiasm. The first was important because it vastly reduced the cost of the individual soldier. The citizen-soldier was recruited by the levée en masse and required no special lodging and very little training. Napoleon, through conscription, had the entire French nation at his disposal. By 1807 almost 100 percent of the desired number of recruits reached the army and in all his years in power approximately 2.1 million citizens, were recruited from within the 1789 French borders.⁷ Napoleon was freed, therefore, from the limitation of numbers which was imposed on all commanders of mercenary forces. He was able to vigorously seek out the enemy and force him to battle fully confident that replacements were readily available. He once boasted to Prince Metternick, "You cannot stop me; I spend thirty thousand men a month."⁸ Thus the citizen-soldier was directly responsible for the return of offensive warfare aimed at the decisive battle.

Of greater importance than numbers, the citizen-soldier was a warrior who was far more motivated than the mercenary. Although some authorities do not place much emphasis on the morale factor in warfare, Napoleon certainly did. In a note penned on August 27, 1808, he stated:

7. R.B. Holtman, The Napoleonic Revolution (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1967), p. 46.

8. A. Vagts, Militarism (New York: Free Press, 1937), p. 125.

In war, three-quarters is morale, the balance of actual forces is not more than another quarter. 9

Napoleon also wrote, "Moral force more so than numbers decides victory."¹⁰ The moral strength was the "forte" of the citizen-soldier and they, therefore, were expected and did suffer great difficulties and privation which the mercenary was sheltered from for fear of desertion. Masséna, during the Italian campaign of 1796, wrote:

The division, during the expedition in the mountains of Tyrol, suffers not only from lack of food and sleepless nights, but also, two-thirds of the soldiers are without cloaks and literally bare-foot." 11

The soldiers also marched great distances during the night and then were delivered into battle at dawn and without rest. Augereau's division, for instance, once during the first Italian campaign, marched 70 miles in only 48 hours.¹² Mercenaries were shielded from these hardships because they proved very costly in men and because the mercenary would desert. Napoleon understood this and during a dictation on St. Helena he stated:

The troops of Frederick the Great, mostly foreigners were not enthusiastic in his cause.... It is true, however, that fanaticism, love of fatherland and national glory can inspire fresh troops to good advantage. 13

Speaking to his own troops in 1796 he declared:

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9. Napoleon 1^{er}, Correspondance (Paris: Henri Plon, Editeur Des Oeuvres De L'Empereur, 1858), 17:472.
 10. J.F.C. Fuller, The Conduct of War, (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1961), p. 46.
 11. D' A Masséna, Mémoires (Paris: Chez Jean De Bonnot, 1966), p. 169.
 12. F.M.H. Markham, Napoleon and The Awakening of Europe, (London: The English Universities Press Ltd., 1954), p. 27.
 13. Napoleon, The Mind of Napoleon, ed. and translated J.C. Herold (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. 219.

All men who love life more than the glory of the nation
and the esteem of their comrades cannot be part of the
French Army. 14

This statement could never have been spoken by Frederick the Great to his mercenary troops, but Napoleon confidently and successfully demanded it of the citizen-soldiers he commanded. Following the invasion of the Po valley, Napoleon rightly laid the victor's laurels on the head of the citizen-soldier with these words:

...for no-one is more convinced that I am that the victories
are due to the courage and audacity of the army. 15

If the citizen-soldier proved more enthusiastic and dedicated than the mercenary he was also infinitely more loyal. Although the French soldiers suffered many privations, and although they marched and fought almost to the point of exhaustion, desertion did not hamper Napoleon. The distinctive absence of desertion in the French armies is clearly reflected in the first-hand accounts from all the revolutionary wars. Of special relevance are those works by such men as Dumouriez, Hugo, Thiebault, Marbot, Davout, and Masséna. These were all officers who had commanded French troops in the most adverse conditions and therefore possessed a thorough knowledge of the French soldier. In these and other memoirs reflections and accounts, deserters are not mentioned at all, or are referred to in only the rarest of occasions. Instead, contemporary writers spent much ink in lauding the extremely high enthusiasm, honour,

14. Napoléon, *Écrits De Napoléon* (Présentés Par Octave Aubry. Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1969), p. 234.

15. Napoléon 1^{er}, *Correspondance*, 1:279.

patriotic dedication, and self-sacrifice of the French soldiers. These admirable qualities of the citizen-soldier were hardly conducive to desertion, and the decisive lack of reference to deserters in the primary sources furnishes an unwritten but valuable proof that desertion was almost non-existent. A proof, which is yet stronger when one recalls the more than numerous accounts of desertion in the contemporary works concerning the pre-1789 mercenary armies. Desertion played such an insignificant role in the citizen-soldier army that the French were never compelled to adopt the severe measures used by Frederick to stop this problem. For example, J. Vidalenc in one of the few studies on desertion has pointed out that in Calvados in 1808, of the mere 170 deserters brought before the councils of war only 17 were condemned to death. Thirty were freed and the remainder were sentenced to between three and twelve years hard labour.¹⁶ Although this might seem harsh, in Prussia all would have been hung immediately. Frederick, in an effort to stop the high desertion rate of his mercenaries, was also forced to other extreme measures, such as posting large rewards and the "hue-and-cry", where the entire populace of an area was called out to look for a deserter. France, in comparison, imposed few restraints and only light sentences against deserters.¹⁷ France was not required to use these rigorous measures because the vast majority of French citizen-soldiers did not desert. In fact, from the beginning of the Empire to the Peace of Vienna, a register of deserters from Calvados enumerated only 1234.¹⁸ Obviously more such studies are needed but this is clearly an amazingly small proportion.

16. J. Vidalenc, "Désertion Dans Le Calvados Sous Le Premier Empire" Revue D' Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine, Jan, 1959, P. 63

17. J. Morvan, Le Soldat: Impérial (1800-1814) 2 vols. (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1904) II:494

18. J. Vidalenc, "Désertion", pp. 61-62.

Napoleon did not have to worry about desertion. Thus, while commanders of opposing mercenary armies continued to be limited by command and control procedures aimed at curbing desertion, the citizen-soldier enabled Napoleon to sweep away those restrictions. The French soldiers could be trusted and they returned this confidence with eager initiative and drive. Napoleon, labouring under none of the limitations stemming from the disloyal and selfish mercenary, stood ready to inaugurate a new system of unlimited warfare based on the virtues of the citizen-soldier.

The citizen-soldier, possessing the inherent characteristics of loyalty, zeal and initiative, returned to warfare the key ingredients of surprise and pursuit. It will be shown that these two elements reappeared with the perfection of the foraging system of supply, the divisional system, and a new strategical-tactical system. The first two systems depended directly upon the citizen-soldier and the freedom of command he gave to the general. The third followed naturally. Both the foraging and divisional system were part of the French army from almost the initial appearance of the national soldier. Only the strategical-tactical system saw first light under Napoleon and therefore can be attributed partly to him. All three provided the basic formula for the Napoleonic style of warfare and were, in fact, the fundamental differences between the limited war of eighteenth century and modern unlimited warfare. The three will be dealt with in turn.

The most important bequest of the citizen-soldier was the foraging

system of supply. Unlike the mercenaries, who were not trusted to gather their own food, the French soldiers foraged for themselves. Thus, the long and cumbersome supply trains, which were essential to the armies of Frederick, largely disappeared from the French military system. In 1796, while the Austrian army was followed by a huge supply train carrying nine days ration for every soldier, the French army of Italy carried only three days supply plus ammunition in knapsacks and lived off the countryside.¹⁹ As soon as the Austrians exhausted their supply, the entire army halted while a further nine days ration was prepared. In 1806 a Prussian infantry regiment of 2,200 men was accompanied by 2,400 non-combatants and 1,200 draft horses. An equivalent number of French troops possessed a baggage train of ammunition and tools manned by only 240 personnel.²⁰ Berthier wrote to Marbot:

The armies of Napoleon, once on the campaign, only receive rations at rare intervals, each living on the country as best he could..... it allowed us to push forward constantly, without being hampered by provision wagons, and stores. This gave us a great superiority over our enemies, whose movements depended on the baking or the arrival of bread, on the pace of herds and the like. 21

The armies of the ancien régime depended upon large supply trains not only to solve the food problem, but also to carry the tents required to house the expensive mercenaries. The aristocratic officers too demanded many luxuries to maintain their exalted status and thus the baggage trains grew in length. The soldiers of France, however, were not pampered in

19. The History of the Campaign, p. 387.

20. T. Ropp, War in the Modern World (New York: Collier Books, 1959), p. 101.

21. Marbot, Mémoires, 3 vols. (Paris: E. Plon Nourrit, et C^{ie}, Imprimeurs-Editeurs, 1892), 1:289.

such a fashion and therefore lost their tents, while the officers, of course, made no luxury demands. An observer of the Italian campaign of 1796 wrote of the French army, "They have neither tents nor baggage."²²

The virtual elimination of the old system of magazine centers also gave to the French commanders a freedom of mobility which was lacking in mercenary armies. The armies under Napoleon were no longer restricted to certain established invasion routes based on the acceptability of cities to act as supply depots. Napoleon also was not chained to a limited retreat route based on a series of magazines stretching back to his home country. The citizen-soldier did not require the mammoth supply system of the ancien régime and Napoleon, accordingly, gave it low priority. In fact, the supply and logistics corps remained the worst organized and least efficient in the army and simply could not keep pace with the citizen-soldier.

To compliment the mobility gained, the foraging system also enabled the French armies to move with greater speed. French citizen-soldiers advanced at 120 paces per minute while their mercenary opponents marched only 70 paces during the same time.²³ The Prussians considered a march of twelve miles in a single day as very long. The French soldiers were expected to march that distance in a normal day.²⁴ The armies under

22. Chandler, Campaigns, p. 88.

23. Liddell Hart, Strategy. p. 113.

24. Chandler, Campaigns, p. 454.

Napoleon continually bewildered their opponents with the rapidity of their marches.²⁵ During the night of May 6-7, 1796, for example, six battalions of grenadiers marched 55 miles to take the Austrian commander Beaulieu in the flank.²⁶ In 1805 the Emperor countermarched the entire Grand Armée of 196,000 men from Boulogne to Ulm in slightly over a month. This incredible march so disconcerted General Mack that he was unable to move but waited stupefied within Ulm.

With the return of speed and mobility Napoleon was constantly able to surprise his opponents who continued to labour under the limitations imposed by mercenary armies. This strategical surprise had been impossible under the Frederickian style of warfare but the citizen-soldier made surprise the first step toward unlimited warfare.

The second element which the citizen soldier made possible was the divisional system. A division was the largest unit below that of an army. It consisted of between 5,000 and 20,000 men and was entrusted to the most able generals under the commander-in-chief. In the first Italian campaign, for instance, Napoleon's army was divided into three divisions with 19,000 under Masséna, 12,000 under Augereau, and 10,000 commanded by Sérurier.²⁷ Later during the Empire, the divisional system was replaced by the corps system. The corps were merely a larger version of the divisions to accommodate the huge armies France was then placing in the field. In 1805 the Grand Armée before Ulm was divided into eight corps. The Seventh, under Augereau, was the smallest, numbering 14,000; while Soult's 40,000 man Fourth was the largest.²⁸

25. The History of Campaign, pp. 296-297.

26. J. Marshall-Cornwall, Napoleon as Military Commander (London: B.T. Botsford Ltd. 1967), p. 59.

27. Marshall-Cornwall, Napoleon, p. 50.

28. Chandler, Campaigns, p. 1103.

Although the divisional system was first contemplated during the ancien régime, and, in fact, attempted by Marshal Broglie, it was not then successful. The system failed for two main reasons. The logistics system, which depended upon magazine oriented invasion routes, demanded that the army remain together. Also, the slow supply trains did not permit rapid concentration if one of the divisions encountered the numerically superior enemy army. With the arrival of the citizen-soldier that restrictive supply system disappeared, as the national soldier could be trusted to forage for himself. A further consideration caused the failure of the divisional concept during the ancien régime. Frederick was hampered by the disloyal nature of the mercenary. He therefore tended to hold his army together to better watch the soldiers. Disloyalty also prevented the full implementation of a cavalry screen which acted as the vital eyes of the system, and prevented enemy observation. During the march Frederick's cavalry spent the majority of its time watching the Prussian mercenaries. The citizen-soldier, with his intense loyalty and patriotism, also removed this restriction. Thus simplification of control led to greater flexibility in the use of soldiers.

In 1796, as the citizen-soldier reached his potential, the divisional system stood ready and only awaited the commanders to give it full expression. Up to that year there did not exist enough capable generals to command the individual divisions. Producing the required number of skilled leaders was also a direct result of the citizen-soldier concept. Only a nation which tapped its total resources, and not simply

the minute fraction at the top, could accomplish this feat. In 1796, for instance, the Army of Italy possessed three fine divisional commanders in Masséna, Augereau and Sérurier, who on more than one occasion demonstrated individual military greatness.²⁹ Napoleon, throughout his entire career, was afforded invaluable assistance from divisional and corps commanders, who were in reality, the arms and legs of the Emperor.

In the Italian campaign of 1796-1797 the divisional system proved its superiority over the concentrated mercenary system. Three or four divisions marched in either an arrow or diamond formation. The individual divisions were one or two days march apart. As each division was able to hold ground against much superior forces for at least one day, the majority of the divisions could converge on the battle-field to envelop the enemy before the engaged division was defeated. The entire approach route was masked by a dense cavalry screen to hide the movements of the divisions and provide reconnaissance concerning the enemy. Whichever division found the enemy first immediately engaged him and held him while the remaining divisions executed forced marches to bring the entire army onto the battle-field. Napoleon rarely placed his whole army on the field of battle on the eve of the confrontation. Usually one or two divisions faced the numerically superior and therefore confident enemy army. But as the battle progressed, French divisions arrived from different directions to reinforce their own beleaguered

29. Thiébauld, Mémoires, p. 50.

divisions and to turn the enemy's flank.³⁰

The divisional system also made possible the alternative plan concept which Bourcet had so strongly advocated. Although Napoleon planned well in advance of each campaign and attempted to foresee every enemy move, he also devised several alternative plans based on his dispersed divisions. On October 8, 1806 he wrote to the king of Naples:

The art of disposing of troops is the art of war.
Distribute your troops in such a way that what-
ever the enemy does you will be able to unite
your forces within a few days. 31

The divisional system gave to the French commanders an almost unlimited base for strategical operations, especially against an army which remained concentrated and limited to a few alternatives.

The divisional system also made tactical surprise possible. While Frederickian armies practiced massed concentration on the field of battle, Napoleon was able to use divorced divisions to halt enemy thrusts, as Rey's division did at Rivoli (January 14-15, 1797), or, more frequently to turn the enemy's flank, as Fiorella did commanding the division of the sick Sérurier at Castiglione (August 5, 1796).³² This represented a major improvement because if any single part of Frederick's army suffered a set-back, all was lost, but with the divisional system one part could be defeated yet the battle might end victoriously. The battle of Marengo (June 14, 1800) vividly demonstrated

30. The History of the Campaign, pp. 287-290.

31. Fuller, The Conduct, p. 51.

32. Thiébault, Mémoires, pp. 60-64.

this resilient characteristic of the divisional system.³³ In this battle the first French divisions engaged were beaten back by superior numbers. They did not break, however, but gave ground with an "elastic" withdrawal. Finally, the two divisions of Desaix and Boudet made the field and immediately entered the battle. The French quickly moved to the offensive and soon the Austrians were in full retreat.

The divisional system enabled the French armies to march faster than their mercenary opponents and also provided a greater degree of mobility. While the mercenary armies were restricted to one congested road, the French armies advanced over several roads. Added to the speed and mobility was the advantage of a diversified campaign plan with a host of alternatives. With these elements, which became possible only with the maturation of the citizen-soldier, surprise became a fundamental part of Napoleonic warfare.

The final consequence of the citizen-soldier was the development, under Napoleon, of a revolutionary strategical-tactical system. The Frederickian style of warfare separated entirely the movement of the army before the battle (strategy) and the actual engagement (tactics). Pursuit, of course, proved totally impossible. Warfare was not fluid because the mercenary armies manoeuvred very slowly in columns while they fought only in the "line" formation. So much time was required to deploy that the two segments, strategy and tactics, were completely divorced. The French tactical system, however, which relied heavily upon "tirailleurs" and attack columns or the "ordre mixte", deployed far quicker. French divisions, on making contact with the enemy, therefore could commence the action immediately. The citizen-soldiers literally marched into battle . . .

33. Napoléon I Memoires of the History of France During the Reign of Napoleon, Dictated by the Emperor at St. Helena, 7 vols. (London: Henry Colburn & Co., and Martin Bossange & Co., 1823), pp.299-300.

with little time wasted between manoeuvring and the attack.³⁴ The enemy army, therefore, was afforded no chance of declining battle, and could not retreat if caught at a disadvantage.

With the fast moving divisions, which required no time to enter battle, Napoleon was able to devise the strategical-tactical system. The tactical plan for battle derived directly from the strategical plan of operations. The order in which the individual divisions marched was the order in which they were to enter battle. Napoleon began his advance with the divisions seemingly scattered over a very wide front. At the beginning of the first Italian campaign the army covered 120 kilometers.³⁵ But as the French advanced and the enemy drew nearer, the divisions converged to within supporting distance and formed an arrow or diamond array. Next, two or three forced marches brought Napoleon within striking distance well before the enemy expected an encounter. Finally, the advanced division or corps made contact with the enemy and held him on the field. At the same time one flank division marched to reinforce the holding division while the second moved to "out flank" the enemy who was caught in a progressively expanding battle. A reserve, usually the Guard and heavy cavalry, was purposely hoarded by Napoleon until the guns of the flanking division were heard on the field and then it was released to clinch the victory. Thus, with the divisional system Napoleon was able to fuse manoeuvre and battle into one continuous process which entangled his enemy in a continuously escalating battle.

34. Thiébault, Mémoires, pp. 63-64.

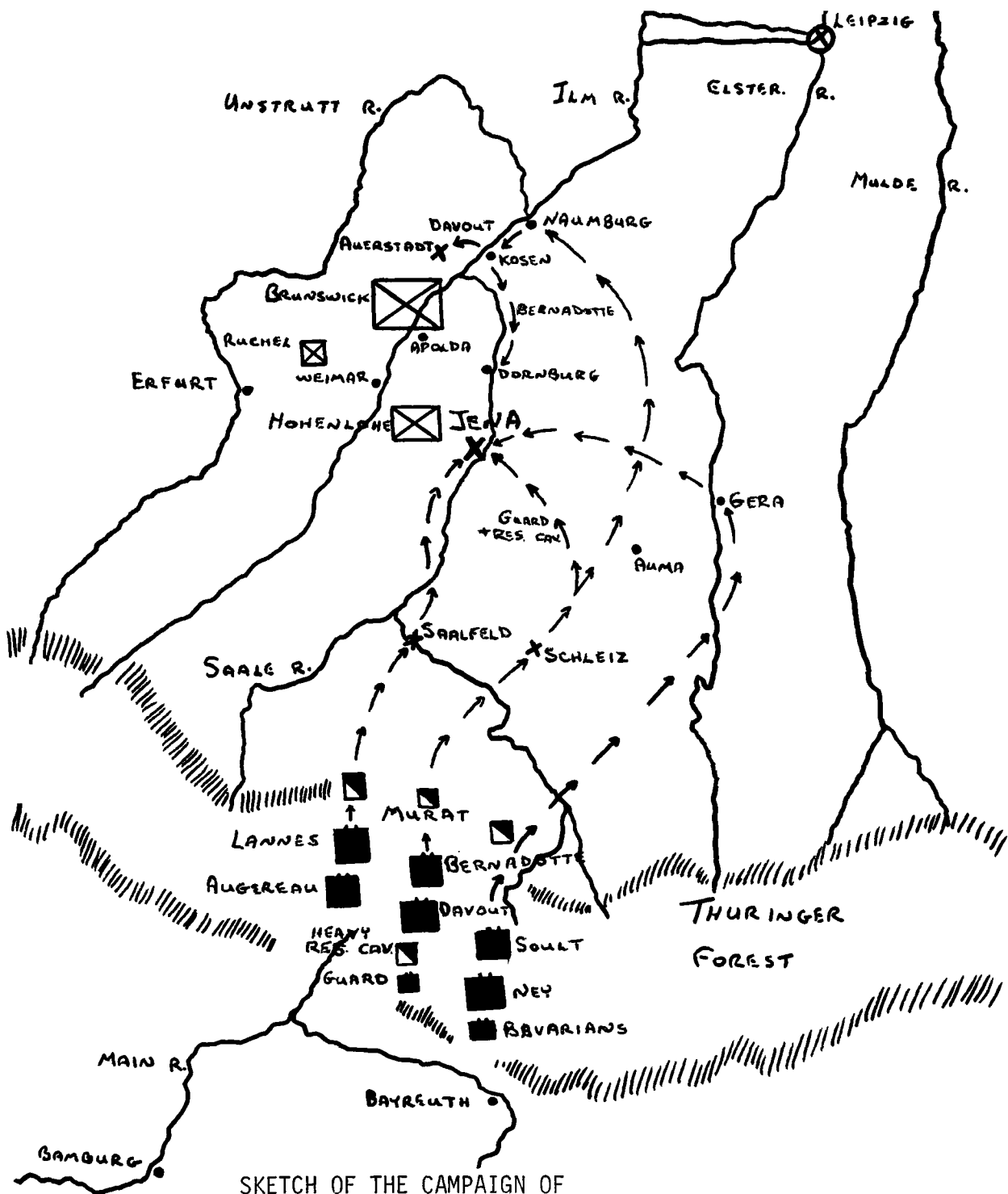
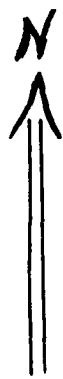
35. Chandler, Campaigns, p. 151.

The final chapter of the strategical-tactical system was the pursuit. This, the conclusion of the battle, owed its revival directly to the citizen-soldier. The successful pursuit takes on two phases. Directly following the battle, portions of the victorious army immediately begin a vigorous "mopping up" action. This is accomplished by small detachments which maintain close contact with the enemy contingents. Because the enemy has been routed its forces are in chaos and either stand or flee in small groups. A multitude of confrontations occur over a large area and in these extremely confused conditions the victorious high command loses much of its control over its soldiers. The men in the field must therefore display the enthusiasm, loyalty and individual effort required to sustain pressure on the defeated enemy. The second phase of the pursuit begins on the day following the battle. Fast moving, widely scattered "flying" columns are ordered to pursue the larger remnants of the beaten enemy and also to secure enemy installations. Although this stage is not as hectic as the first phase of the pursuit, it likewise involves some confusion and loss of direct control from the supreme commander. Therefore, individual effort and loyalty must once again be displayed by the soldiers in the field. As was discussed in Chapter I, this type of pursuit proved impossible for the Frederickian army because of the mercenary.³⁶ Frederick believed that during the confusion the mercenary would display individual effort only in pillaging and then he would desert. Frederick also condemned the use of detachments for the same reasons. Therefore, pursuit was not part of the mercenary battles. The citizen-soldier, however, was loyal and therefore could be trusted not to desert under the confused conditions of a vigorous

36. See above, p. 15.

pursuit. The national soldier also displayed the enthusiasm and individual effort which was required for a successful pursuit, but which was lacking in the mercenary. Pursuit became the natural conclusion of the strategical-tactical system and was the final ingredient needed for the decisive battle.

The citizen-soldier cocked his musket not for gold but for a personal cause. He thus was characterized by two new virtues which had hitherto been absent in the common soldier. He was loyal and he was resolute. These dual considerations freed the generals from the command and control problems and enabled the French to do away with the highly restrictive supply system, to develop completely the divisional system, and to establish new tactical concepts. As a further consequence pursuit became possible. The first three results returned to warfare mobility and speed and therefore the element of surprise, both strategical and tactical. Surprise coupled with the re-emergence of pursuit heralded the arrival of the decisive battle -- the cornerstone of total war. Although Napoleon's name has become synonymous with this unlimited style of war, he was not its author. He, like Alexander the Great, inherited a new military system which stood ready but was untried. Alexander's debt was to his father Philip, who developed the heavy cavalry and the famed Macedonian phalanx. Napoleon's inheritance of the "tirailleur", the foraging system of supply, the divisional system and pursuit came directly from the citizen-soldier. Napoleon's long string of victories lies squarely on the shoulders of the national soldier and the style of warfare he made possible.



SKETCH OF THE CAMPAIGN OF
JENA-AUERSTADT

Taken from D. Chandler, The Campaigns of Napoleon
(London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967), p. 469.

CHAPTER VI

THE CAMPAIGN OF JENA-AUERSTADT

In order to fully appreciate the decisive battle and the significant role played by the citizen-soldier in its attainment, the campaign culminating in Jena-Auerstadt will be discussed briefly. This famous French victory vividly exemplifies the dual components of surprise and pursuit which derived directly from the reduced command and control problem made possible by the national soldier. The battle is of even greater interest as it represents the only encounter between the mercenary army of Frederick the Great and the mature citizen-soldier army of France.

The Prussian army of 1806 was so confident that Napoleon was contemptuously regarded as the "Corsican Upstart" and the French army was considered merely a rag-tag horde. While the Royal Guard arrogantly sharpened their swords on the steps of the French Embassy, the generals relived the glories of Rossbach and Frederick the Great.¹ Their blusterings, however,

1. Marbot, Mémoires, 1:283.

were entirely founded on an era long past. They had totally disregarded the changing European scene, and had doggedly adhered to the system and principles of the ancien régime. The field army of 171,000 effectives, still, in fact, contained a large portion of mercenaries and consequently suffered under heavy command and control restrictions.² With this basis the rest of the Frederickian system followed naturally. The tactics of the rigid infantry "line", flanked by cavalry or a natural obstacle and relying on volley fire, remained unchanged. Enormous supply trains also continued to encumber every Prussian army while the magazine depot system further restricted mobility. If the composition and methods of the army were Frederickian, the commanding officers also bore his stamp. The Duke of Brunswick, aged 71, won first distinction in the Seven Years' War. He commanded the combined Prussian armies in 1806. Von Mollendorf, the advisor to Frederick William III, had celebrated 82 birthdays, and had also received his training under Frederick II. Hohenlohe too, looked only to Frederick. At the age of sixty he was the youngest field commander. In every way the Prussian army of 1806 mirrored the armies of Frederick the Great.

The French army of 1806 was composed entirely of national conscripts and volunteers. Of the 160,000 troops or six corps stationed in southern Germany the majority were veterans. Although their uniforms were in tatters they were fully confident in their abilities as citizen-

2. Marbot, Mémoires, !;285-287.

soldiers. They represented the mature product of the military revolution. Although lacking in fire drill, or volley fire and range practices, they displayed the qualities of speed and flexibility, motivation and intelligence. With this soldier, the "tirailleur" tactics, the foraging system of supply, the divisional system and the tactical-strategical systems were welded into a great weapon and honed razor sharp.

Frederick William III finally acquiesced to the War Party in early August and the army was ordered to prepare for war against the French. Although the soldiers had been demanding war for some time, almost two months were required before Brunswick and his officers formulated a plan of operation. The army was divided into three sections. Brunswick commanded 70,000, Hohenlohe led 50,000 Prussians reinforced by 20,000 Saxon allies, while Blucker and Ruchel split a command of 30,000. On the 27th of September the army was ordered to mass near the town of Erfurt with the proposed next destination being Würzburg and the French left flank.³ Although the army was stationed close to their destination (Brunswick's command was between Leipzig and Naumburg), Erfurt was only reached on October 9. The long supply train which so hampered command and control were principally responsible for this incredibly slow advance.

In the French camp, Napoleon only became aware of Prussia's bellicose activity on September 5. The French were therefore an entire

3. D.G. Chandler, The Campaigns, p. 459.

month behind their opponent, and surprise and the initiative lay with the enemy. Napoleon, however, was quick to act. His first orders placed all the corps on the ready and also sent engineers into southern Germany to gather information pertaining to river crossings, roads, towns, etc.⁴ Maps were collected and spies attempted to locate the Prussian army. As the whereabouts and intentions of the enemy remained in a fog, it was not until September 15 that Bamberg was designated as the concentration area. From that day on the speed and mobility of the French citizen-soldier enabled Napoleon to regain the lost month and take the initiative. The Imperial Guard, for instance, covered 550 kilometers in slightly over a week.⁵ Napoleon, finishing his plan of operation, did not leave Paris until September 25 but when he took active command of the army on reaching Würzburg on October 2 the army was almost ready.⁶ Clearly Napoleon suffered under none of the command and control problems which restricted the mercenary generals.

Napoleon devised his campaign almost as quickly as the citizen-soldier marched. On September 30 he wrote to his brother Louis, the King of Holland:

My first marches menace the heart of the Prussian monarchy, and the deployment of my forces are so imposing and rapid, that it is probable that the entire Prussian army of Westphalia will retire to Magdeburg. 7

4. J. Marshall-Cornwall, Napoleon (London: B.T. Botsford Ltd., 1967), p. 149.

5. Chandler, Campaigns, p. 462.

6. Davout, Maréchal, Duc D'Auerstaedt, Opérations Du 3^e Corps, 1806-1807, (Paris: Calman Lévy Éditeur, 1896), pp. 6-7.

7. Napoléon 1^{er}, Correspondance, 13:293.

Thus, at that early date, while the Prussians crawled to their destination, the Emperor's strategy was ready. The plan was based on the corps system. The army was arranged in a tremendous "bataillon carré" of 180,000 men.⁸ Soult's IV corps headed the right flank and preceded Ney's VI corps by one day; while 10,000 Bavarians followed in the rear. This column numbered 50,000 troops. In the centre marched the I corps of Bernadotte followed by Davout's III and finally the heavy reserve cavalry and the guard. The centre combined to account for 70,000 men. The left flank was protected by the 30,000 of Lannes' V followed by Augereau's VII.⁹ Murat, commanding approximately 25,000 light cavalry, formed a dense screen in front of the entire army. Each corps, although independent and separated by a normal twenty-four hours march from the adjacent commands, was self-sufficient and able to stand against superior numbers for at least a day. Here was the superior form of command and control which, although impossible with the mercenary soldier, was now practiced with the citizen-soldier. This was

8. A normal "bataillon carré" was a formation of battalion strength designed to protect the infantry from cavalry. The troopers were arranged in a square formation with muskets pointing out on all four sides. Therefore, whichever side the cavalry attacked was defended and could be reinforced from the sides not pressured. The enormous "bataillon carré" of the Jena-Auerstadt campaign was similar to its diminutive predecessor in its shape and its resilient characteristics. Eight corps were arranged in a gigantic square formation. Although separated, they were within supporting distance of each other. Thus, whichever corps met the enemy army would hold him, while the others moved to reinforce or to outflank. Only in size was this strategical array different from the tactical battalion square.

9. Davout, Opération, p. 12.

the strategical-tactical system which gave Napoleon defensive and offensive versatility by utilizing the speed and mobility of the corps and the citizen-soldiers.

The army concentrated and formed the "battalion carré" behind the protection of the Thuringer Forest. Napoleon's intention was to march on the line Bayreuth-Leipzig-Berlin. This approach would threaten the enemy capital and also jeopardize Brunswick's jugular vein - his line of communication. On October 8, immediately after receiving Frederick William's belated ultimatum, Murat's light cavalry crossed the Thuringer Forest and entered Saxon territory. The French citizen-soldiers, unlike the mercenaries, carried only four days rations and thus were able to follow close behind the dashing Gascon.¹⁰

The Prussians were entirely surprised by this strategical move and the initiative swung to the French. The 8th saw little action, with only slight encounters between Murat and the Prussian light cavalry. On the following day, Bernadotte in conjunction with Murat encountered a Prussian advance guard of 9,000 men at Schleiz. The Prussians, under Tauenzein, were easily defeated and fell back in some disarray toward Auma and Jena. On the 10th, Prince Louis Ferdinand, commanding 8,300, was caught by Lannes and his 14,000 man V corps at Saalfeld. The Prussians were severely mauled as the "tirailleurs" made excellent use of this wooded area and almost entirely destroyed the

10. Marbot, Mémoires, 1:289.

enemy division. Prince Louis, perhaps the ablest Prussian commander, was killed in the stiff hand-to-hand fighting.¹¹

Brunswick and his staff were surprised and disconcerted by the paired defeats and the unexpectedly rapid French advance on their left. At a council of war on the 12th of October, they decided to retreat from Weimar toward Leipzig to save their threatened line of communications. On the same day, Napoleon, convinced that the Prussians were still centred around Erfurt, ordered a left wheel and demonstrated the mobility of the corps system, which was possible only because of the superior command and control furnished by the citizen-soldier. Lannes and Augereau became the van and were ordered to Jena to find and fix the enemy. Davout and Bernadotte received orders to make for Naumburg and Kosen respectively and they became the enveloping wing.¹² Soult was to remain in Gera, thus acting as a central reserve, while Ney was ordered to within three leagues of Lannes. The fast moving French, Augereau's VII for example, marching 24 miles per day for nine consecutive days, were quickly enveloping the surprised and bewildered Prussians.¹³ The superior speed and mobility of the citizen-soldier over the mercenary was abundantly in evidence.

The 13th saw the Prussians desperately attempting to extricate themselves from their tenuous strategical position. Hohenlohe, with 35,000 troops, stood slightly north of Jena and was responsible for protecting the retreat of the main body. Ruchel, with 15,000, held a position in support of Hohenlohe. Brunswick, with the king and queen and 60,000

11. Marbot, Mémoires, 1:290, 291.

12. Davout, Opération, p. 16.

13.. Marshall-Cornwall, Napoleon, p. 157.

men, slowly retreated toward Leipzig and by evening encamped in the vicinity of Auerstadt.¹⁴

While the Prussians retreated on the 13th, the French pressed forward to close the net. Napoleon ordered Ney, Augereau, Soult, the Imperial Guard and the heavy reserve cavalry to march to Jena and support Lannes. Davout was to move from Naumburg to Apolda while Murat and Bernadotte headed for Dornburg. These latter three formed the flanking or rear attack if Brunswick fought at Jena. If the Prussians retreated the three were to engage and hold him until the remainder of the army reached the new field.¹⁵ This was the alternative plan concept at its height. A concept which depended on the simplified command and control procedures of the French citizen army.

Napoleon arrived at Jena at 4:00 P.M. on the 13th. In the fading light, after surveying the numerous Prussian campfires, he believed he faced the entire Prussian army. At that time he was heavily outnumbered as only 25,000 citizen-soldiers stood ready. But with the corps system the entire French army would soon arrive to make the battle an escalating affair. He calculated that by 10:00 A.M. of the 14th the 16,500 men of the VII would arrive plus St. Hilaire's division of 9,000, thus bringing his total up to 50,500. By noon Soult's and Ney's corps plus the heavy reserve cavalry were expected and this would give Napoleon an extra 40,000 troops. By 4:00 P.M. the enveloping wing of the I and III

14. Davout, Opérations, pp. 25-27.

15. Davout, Opérations, p. 29.

corps and Murat would reach the field and Napoleon would then command 145,000 men. Therefore, within twenty-four hours, the French would concentrate the entire army on the field and gain surprise on the tactical level. This highly intricate and exacting manoeuvring could not have been contemplated with a mercenary army. Napoleon, however, positive in his control and the abilities of the citizen-soldier, stood confident.

In the early morning mist of the 14th, Hohenlohe, after studying the field, decided he was facing merely the flank of the French army and resolved to hold his position. Napoleon, as was his custom, visited as many forward units as possible to inspire enthusiasm and confidence.¹⁶ While the French citizen-soldiers displayed tremendous motivation and élan, some of the advanced Prussian regiments were as much as 50 percent below strength due to desertion and stragglers.¹⁷

The actual battle commenced at 6:00 A.M. The French relied on great swarms of "tirailleurs" employed in conjunction with the column and the "line". The Prussian generals were restricted exclusively to the "line" and their men marched into battle "as if on parade", seeking no cover and using volley fire. At one point during the engagement 20,000 Prussian infantry stood stationary and fully exposed for two consecutive hours.¹⁸ Their repeated volleys proved useless against the swarms of French skirmishers who used an orchard and houses for cover. The "line" suffered heavily and was forced to retreat before the victorious "tirailleurs". The French generals, no longer having to fear desertion, continuously ordered their troops into the wooded areas which spotted the countryside to turn the enemy flanks. Each time the Prussians

16. J.F.C. Fuller, The Decisive Battles of the Western World, 3 vols. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1957), 2:431.

17. Chandler, Campaigns, p. 480.

18. Fuller, Decisive Battles, 2:483.

formed the "line" French "tirailleurs" suddenly appeared on their flanks emerging from the supposedly safe natural obstacle of the woods. The Prussians fell back repeatedly. The "tirailleur" was quickly destroying the mercenary's rules of war. By noon Hohenlohe faced the inevitable and ordered a full retreat. The withdrawal quickly disintegrated into a rout, however, as the French pressed forward and the Prussian generals were unable to control their men.¹⁹

Ruchel, who was to support Hohenlohe, epitomized the defeat of the Prussian system. Although he received urgent and numerous requests for aid in the morning, he was unable to reach the field until 2:30 P.M. During his slow advance, necessitated by control and command restrictions, he required a full two hours to cover one short three mile stretch of road.²⁰ Upon arriving on the French left flank, he deployed his men in "line" only to have it break before the masses of French infantry who suddenly appeared and rushed forward with great fire. By 3:00 P.M. his troops too were fleeing in disorder before the citizen-soldiers and the battle was over. The French sustained 5,000 casualties but the Prussians suffered 10,000 dead or wounded plus an additional 15,000 taken prisoner.²¹

As Napoleon was defeating the Prussians at Jena, a simultaneous battle occurred thirteen miles to the north at Auerstadt. On this field Davout, commanding 26,000 citizen-soldiers of the III corps, defeated Brunswick's 56,000 mercenaries. Here again the rigid and cumbersome Prussian system proved no match for the quick and mobile French. Davout,

19. Marbot, Mémoires, 1:300.

20. Chandler, Campaigns, p. 485.

21. Chandler, Campaigns, p. 487.

although fully aware of the odds, opened the battle at 7:00 A.M. catching the Prussians, who believed him still east of the Saale, by surprise. This French commander proved that Napoleon was not the sole reason for French military domination as he employed the strategical-tactical system himself and gained a great victory. Instead of deploying corps at the crucial point, however, he manoeuvred his three divisions.

General Gudin's division repulsed the initial Prussian attacks which although numerous were badly co-ordinated by the shaken Prussian general. In the open fields the French quickly formed battalion squares to beat off Blücher's cavalry attacks and then deployed in "line" protected by the "tirailleurs" to hold off the Prussian infantry.²² By 8:30 A.M., General Friant's division arrived in time to save the threatened right flank. While the French made the field quickly and in good order, with no control problems, the more numerous Prussians reached the field only slowly as their rear elements became entangled in the huge supply train which clogged the road.²³ On gaining the field more time was wasted as the Prussians deployed slowly and thus their superior numbers were negated. Both the huge baggage train and the slow tactical manoeuvring of the Prussians were, as was stated above, directly attributed to the command and control problems inherent in dealing with the mercenary. At approximately 10:00 A.M. Brunswick received a mortal wound and was

22. Davout, Opérations, p. 36.

23. Fuller, Decisive Battles, 2:438.

carried from the battle. Frederick William did not appoint a successor and the Prussian attack became even more disjointed.

At 11:00 A.M. the division of General Morand appeared suddenly and, despite heavy casualties, pushed back the Prussian right.²⁴ Frederick William then ordered the retreat hoping to link up with Hohenlohe whom he believed to be still intact. The French citizen-soldiers, however, although sustaining fearful losses, rushed to the attack and the Prussians were soon in full uncontrolled retreat. At Auerstadt, while the Prussians lost 13,000 in casualties and prisoners, the French victory cost the corps one-quarter killed or wounded. Gudin's division fared the worst, sustaining an incredibly high 41 percent loss.

At 5:00 A.M. on the fifteenth Napoleon ordered the final stage of the decisive battle and a vigorous pursuit began.²⁵ The pursuit, like the "bataillon carré" system, was only possible because of the citizen-soldier. Murat, Soult, Ney and Bernadotte were charged with completing the destruction of the Prussian military. Only on November 10, with the collapse of the last organized resistance, did the French relax. During the 34 days from and including the battle, the Prussians lost 25,000 killed or wounded plus a staggering 140,000 taken prisoner.²⁶ The Prussian army was totally destroyed and the country was defenceless and entirely at the mercy of the French. Although the peace was not signed until the defeat of the Russians six months later, Prussia contributed

24. Davout, Opérations, p. 41.

25. Marbot, Mémoires, 1:305.

26. Chandler, Campaigns, p. 502.

nothing to the struggle. She was devoid of power and significance and her destiny was dictated by Napoleon. Jena-Auerstadt ranks as one of the most decisive battles of history and stands as a tribute to the citizen-soldier and the total system of warfare that he ushered in.

CONCLUSION

Warfare in the eighteenth century was both limited and restrained. Armies were small yet manoeuvred with only slow awkwardness. Tactics stagnated into a single restrictive formation. A defensive philosophy prevailed which severely retarded offensive action. But the greatest limitation, the one to which all others were but secondary, was the total absence of the decisive battle. With the elimination of the decisive battle warfare degenerated into little more than a game, a sham of inconsequential manoeuvres which resulted in achievements of insignificant value. Great states became shackled by this style of warfare and their objectives in war became confined and small. The Seven Years' War and the battle of Leuthen clearly exemplified this kind of warfare.

The Napoleonic wars, with battles such as Jena-Auerstadt, heralded a new era of warfare. Armies grew immensely, but manoeuvred with a fluid speed unmatched in the previous century. Tactics evolved toward an open-order which permitted mobility and quickness on the battle-field. Generals pursued an offensive strategy aimed at catching and destroying

the enemy army. The object of warfare became the decisive battle and during this period it was finally realized. With the decisive battle warfare itself became increasingly more total as each state strained to achieve this, the ultimate in statescraft.

This tremendous revolution in warfare is matched only by the great changes which occurred after 1453 and 1945.¹ These latter dates are explained quickly and easily by the scientific developments which bore fruit during those years. But the Napoleonic revolution in warfare, which has so influenced European and world history, is infinitely more complicated. Determining the cause of this transformation is thus a problem which has produced a number of varied solutions.

Some historians, such as Commandant J. Colin, have stressed the technological and scientific improvements as the fundamental cause of the revolution. Others, like Spencer Wilkinson and Liddell Hart, point to the pre-revolutionary French military reformers. They believe that the theories of these reformers played the major role in the realization of the decisive battle and total war; while another school of thought contends that the vast growth of the armies alone account for Napoleon's success. These theories, all have their merit. All acknowledge the incredible change which left one system of warfare in ruins and prostrate before the new, but they all are not equally valid. Most look more to the symptoms of the change rather than the causes. Hans Delbrück was the first to see beyond these incidentals and to grasp one of the fundamental reasons for the revolution in warfare. It was not Napoleon nor the divisional

1. The Siege of Constantinople (1453) marked the first prominent use of gunpowder in western military affairs, while 1945 witnessed the splitting of the atom.

system, but a far more basic solution. It was the soldier himself. Delbrück's suggestive insight, ignored by English scholars, has been explored and developed in this thesis, specifically in relation to the question of the decisive battle.

Soldiers of the armies of the ancien régime were mercenaries and "rabble". From this base grew the limited style of eighteenth century warfare. After 1789, however, a new soldier arose in France. He was the citizen-soldier who, by representing at least in theory, the entire nation, destroyed the concepts of rational and defensive war. Soldiers were no longer expensive and therefore warfare became offensive as commanders actively sought out the enemy. The citizen-soldier also possessed the two virtues which were lacking in the mercenary soldier. He was motivated and he was loyal. Because he was motivated and enthusiastic in war, he was expected, and did, sustain added hardships and privations. Because he was loyal, he did not desert and therefore could be trusted. Thus, the fundamental problem of command and control, which had so restricted mercenary commanders, were greatly reduced. This was the key effect of his appearance. The French generals were relieved of these limitations and were permitted an unrivaled freedom of action based on the citizen-soldier's revolutionary style of warfare. A whole host of secondary developments ensued. With this enthusiastic and loyal soldier the French army gained speed and mobility as the cumbersome supply system of the mercenary was replaced by the new foraging system. The divisional system was also fully realized. The "tirailleur", because of the citizen-soldier, became the rule

rather than the exception, and executed the principle role in a new, quick and highly manoeuvrable tactical system. Finally, a revolutionary strategical-tactical system combined all these elements into a fluid style of warfare. With the establishment of these ingredients of speed and mobility, surprise became an integral part of war. The citizen-soldier, with his inherent motivation and loyalty also returned the element of pursuit to the battlefield.

The dual components of surprise and pursuit made the decisive battle a reality. The decisive battle was, of course, exclusive to the citizen-soldier armies of France. The armies of Napoleon, with this advantage, shattered completely the playground style of war of the mercenaries. The national soldiers of France dominated the continent using the decisive battle to gain their victories. Only when France was challenged with this same reality of war did she experience defeat. Only when the monarchist countries buried the mercenary was France defeated, and then only by her own invention, the new warrior - the citizen-soldier.

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