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The Military Career of General Francois-Etienne Kellermann: Cavalryman of the Empire From 1813 Through 1815

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THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

THE MILITARY CAREER OF
GENERAL FRANÇOIS-ÉTIENNE KELLERMANN:
CAVALRYMAN OF THE EMPIRE FROM 1813 THROUGH 1815

By
MICHAEL A. BONURA

A Thesis submitted to the
Department of History
In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

The way in which Napoleon used cavalry to shape the battlefield and to support his infantry attacks made cavalry operations play a unique role in Napoleonic warfare. Studying the cavalry operations during the decline of the Empire from 1813 through 1815 enabled an analysis not only of the capabilities of the soldiers and leadership of the French cavalry, but also a better understanding of the changes that occurred in Napoleon's operational and strategic art of warfare. This study required an analysis of cavalry operations in all of the major campaigns in the period. The operations of General François-Étienne Kellermann from 1813 through 1815 provided an excellent case study of cavalry operations to analyze the changes in Napoleonic warfare. This detailed analysis presented different conclusions than many historians and questions much of the traditional interpretation of the capabilities and operations of Napoleon and his armies.

INTRODUCTION

In the history of warfare, few personalities have made as pervasive an imprint on war as Napoleon. As both general and emperor, he instituted a variety of reforms, programs, and changes that influenced law, finance, education, administration, and military operations at the tactical, operational, and strategic level. It is difficult to study any facet of warfare without discovering the influence of Napoleon. Many historians have shown that Napoleon drew on a wide variety of military theorists, thinkers, and professionals to create the largest and most professional army in Europe for well into the nineteenth century. However, it was his ability to synthesize and combine the work of his predecessors that created his unique system of warfare. This method incorporated all three of the traditional combat arms, infantry, cavalry, and artillery, to overpower his opponents with speed, mass, and firepower. At its best, Napoleonic warfare was a symphony of the three arms, each worked in harmony on the battlefield with devastating results on the enemy. While each one of the combat arms played a unique role on the battlefield, Napoleon's use of cavalry operations differed from previous centuries and played a critical role that helped to give his system of warfare its decisive nature.

It was in cavalry operations that Napoleon made his most significant and revolutionary impact. The French artillery underwent reform after the Seven Years' War and adopted the Gribeauval system that Napoleon used to dominate Europe before the French Revolution. The infantry benefited the most from the seventeenth century theorists Jacques Antoine Hypolite Guibert and the Duc de Broglie, and it was not a far stretch for Lazare Carnot to use the *levée en masse* and the *amalgames* to create an army strong and effective to carry the Revolution into the lands of the enemy. But Napoleon had a tremendous impact on the cavalry. He increased the size of cavalry formations, created several different kinds of cavalry units, organized his cavalry into corps, and kept the control of those corps at the army level. He required his cavalry to work closely with the other two arms. He used them to conduct reconnaissance both in direct support of his infantry corps as well as strategic reconnaissance. He employed his cavalry corps to increase the tempo of his operations, to deceive his enemy, and to pursue the enemy immediately after victory on the battlefield to create truly decisive battles. While the other combat arms could conduct operations without cavalry support, cavalry was critical to conduct the kinds of decisive operations that were synonymous with Napoleonic warfare.

Due to the important role that cavalry played in Napoleonic warfare, focusing on the cavalry operations of a given battle becomes an effective way to analyze those operations and determine Napoleon's purposes and objectives. Studying Napoleon's cavalry operations provided an excellent way to understand how Napoleonic warfare changed from his days as a revolutionary general to his last battle at Waterloo. Because of their special position, changes in his operational and strategic planning affected the cavalry operations more than those of the artillery or the infantry. There is a tremendous historiographical debate concerning this change in Napoleonic warfare that focused on everything from problems in leadership, manpower, equipment, training, economics, domestic politics, old age, exhaustion and the physical condition of the Emperor himself. An analysis of Napoleon's operations during the decline of the Empire, with a special focus on cavalry operations, could produce new insight into this ongoing debate.

Much of the military history of the Napoleonic era focused on the generalship of Napoleon or his marshals. The histories of Napoleonic generalship, while important and exciting, limited an analysis of the operations of the different combat arms and they also remained too focused on the big picture. Histories of famous generals and marshals presented problems for to develop a detailed study of a single type of operations over a period of time since these studies followed the career of an individual who did not conduct the same types of operations over a long enough period to demonstrate changes in Napoleonic warfare. Because cavalry operations were exciting, many historians focused purely on them and the leadership of cavalry generals. These studies were generally too broad to have the specificity required for this type of analysis, or detailed and focused on a general or an organization that was not involved in enough cavalry operations long enough to act as an effective representative case study. A study of the cavalry operations required for a detailed analysis of both the capabilities of the French cavalry and the types of operations they executed would have to focus on either a general or a unit that served in a significant number of campaigns and battles from 1813 through 1815. Although there are probably many generals and units that could provide the focus for such an analysis, the operations of General Kellermann from 1813 through 1815 presented an experience that was representative of the cavalry operations during the decline of the Empire and facilitated a detailed analysis of the changes in Napoleon's system of warfare.

Following Kellermann's career throughout the decline of the Empire presented a representative picture of cavalry operations in a variety of ways. Kellermann was no longer on

the active roles of the French Army when Napoleon rebuilt his *Grande Armée* and recalled retired officers back to active service. Due to the lack of cavalry available in 1813, he commanded organizations from brigade through corps level. During this period, Kellermann commanded both French and foreign troops, in both light and heavy cavalry formations. He fought in every campaign and conducted operations during every major battle from 1813 through 1815. He commanded primarily organizations with improvised tables of organization, brought together from a variety of sources and formed into a cavalry brigades, divisions, or corps on the battlefield. These units were not elite, veteran, or established units. Taken as a whole, his operations provided the breadth of experience to enable a detailed analysis of the cavalry operations of the decline of the Empire.

There exists no comprehensive study of the military career of Kellermann, only sections of works focused on different aspects of Napoleonic history. He received mention in essentially two ways; works studying French cavalry leaders, and small citations in larger more general histories. Neither of these studies provided the specifics of Kellermann's career, especially during the decline of the Empire that would make his life worth investigation. The primary resource of Napoleonic biography, Georges Six's *Les Généraux de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, provided the best and most accurate sketch of his military career. Created after research in the personnel dossiers of Napoleon's generals, his encyclopedic entry gave a basic account of Kellermann's career.¹ Unfortunately, all of the other attempts to provide a concise biography of Kellermann are merely an expanded version of Six's work.

French authors wrote the two best chapter biographies of Kellermann. The best work by far was the chapter on Kellermann in Charles-Antoine Thoumas' *Les Grands Cavaliers du Premier Empire; Notices Biographiques*.² It followed Six's skeletal outline and provided more specific details on the important moments of Kellermann's life. Well documented, Thoumas' work effectively combined vignettes and personal interactions into a brief sketch of a military career. Another good concise biography is the Kellermann chapter in Pierre Bachelard's *Trois Grands Cavaliers Lorrains: Lasalle, Curély, Kellermann*.³ Less academic, this chapter covered all

¹Georges Six, *Les Généraux de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, (Paris, 1947), II, 2-4.

²Charles Antoine Thoumas, *Les Grands Cavaliers du Premier Empire; Notices Biographiques*, (Paris, 1890), I, 76-115.

³Pierre Bachelard, *Trois Grands Cavaliers Lorrains: Lasalle, Curély, Kellermann*, (Metz, 1949), 233-80.

of the highlights of Kellermann's career in a more captivating way than Thoumas. Bachelard created a vignette driven biography, with vividly depicted scenes of Kellermann interacting with Napoleon, his peers and his subordinates. Although he barely focused on Kellermann's actions in 1813 and 1814, Bachelard presented an excellent picture of his operations in 1815 and the epic charge at Waterloo. Although he covered Kellermann's entire career, Bachelard also used the opportunity to discuss in detail the exploits of his father, Marshal François-Christophe Kellermann. While Bachelard made a clear distinction between father and son, this was not always the case in the wider Kellermann historiography. For a basic narrative biography of Kellermann, Thoumas and Bachelard provided excellent chapters covering the highlights of his military career.

The English authors who included small biographical sketches of important cavalry generals in the Napoleonic era did not cover the material as well as their French counterparts. In his book, *Napoleon's Cavalry and Its Leaders*, David Johnson included an entire chapter that described the majority of Kellermann's career.⁴ Characteristically, this chapter focused most of its attention on two parts of his military career, his rapacity and corruption as military governor in Spain and his command of the 3rd Cavalry Corps at Quatre Bras and Waterloo. It was not the military history of Kellermann's part of the Waterloo Campaign that made the chapter suspect, but the author's portrayal of Kellermann's personal relationships. He referenced the alleged bad blood between Kellermann and Napoleon stemming from comments made following the French victory at Marengo. To believe Johnson, Napoleon nursed his dislike and mistrust of Kellermann into the Waterloo campaign. There were very few citations that corroborated this interpretation of the relationship between Napoleon and Kellermann, and overall Johnson's portrayal of Kellermann does not correspond to any serious research into his career and disagrees with Six.

Another, more recent study of Napoleonic cavalry was Digby Smith's *Charge! Great Cavalry Charges of The Napoleonic Wars*. In this study, Smith analyzed what he considered the fourteen greatest moments during the Napoleonic wars in which cavalry had its most decisive impacts. His chapter on Marengo focused on Kellermann's contribution to the battle and the last several pages of the chapter provided a synopsis of the rest of his military career.⁵ While the

⁴David Johnson, *Napoleon's Cavalry and Its Leaders*, (London, 1978), 131-45.

⁵Digby George Smith, *Charge!: Great Cavalry Charges of the Napoleonic Wars*, (Mechanicsburg: PA, 2003), 24-45.

section on Marengo was acceptable, the biographical sketch of Kellermann's career was even more brief than the entry in Six. Smith did not mention Kellermann in his section on Waterloo. While the two English authors produced less accurate biographical sketches of Kellermann and his career, none of the proceeding studies presented enough of the details of Kellermann's career to analyze cavalry operations during the decline of the Empire. Part of the reason for this concerned the nature of the works; in a broad survey of Napoleonic cavalry generals, space is limited to only the highlights of their careers and the cavalry operations are mentioned. However, there are other reasons that make the details of Kellermann's military career difficult to discover.

A deliberate inquiry into Kellermann's military operations, especially during the decline of the Empire, placed him in command of cavalry units that influenced the tactical, operational, and sometimes the strategic level of warfare. However, most of the military surveys of Napoleonic history, and even works focused on Napoleonic cavalry, only acknowledged the highlights of Kellermann's operations. Although, for the most part, his operations were not exceptional there were other factors that contributed to the difficulty of conducting research into the details of those operations. There were two primary reasons for history's silence. The first was a function of his name. His father François Christophe Kellermann (Kellermann the Elder) became one of the first honorary marshals of France in 1804 for his service during the Revolution as the hero of the Battle of Valmy in September 1792. With almost identical first names and connected through Napoleon's new nobility as the *Duc de Valmy* and *Comte de Valmy* respectively, it was easy to mistake Kellermann the Elder, Marshal of the Empire, from François-Étienne Kellermann (Kellermann the Younger), General of Division. The second factor for the historian to overcome was the nature of Kellermann the Younger's operations throughout the decline of the Empire. In 1813, he commanded several units at the same time whose tables of organization constantly changed. In 1814, he commanded more stable formations, but commanded them for little over a month before hostilities came to an end. The lack of documents concerning this kind of control, such as orders, reports, or unit records, it made Kellermann's activities difficult to follow. Both of these reasons made Kellermann a difficult research subject, but a rewarding one nonetheless.

Due to the similarities in first and last name, Napoleonic historiography abounded with mistakes when referencing either Kellermann the Younger or his father Marshal Kellermann. Incorrect citations pervaded the historical accounts of the careers of both father and son,

especially in the period from 1813 to 1815. Several instances of mistakes both in the indexes of major historical works and throughout the text misrepresented the actions of Kellermann the Elder for that of the Younger. In the index of his book, *Napoleon as a General*, Yorck von Wartenburg had only Kellermann heading for the *Duc de Valmy*. Under this single heading were references to both Kellermann the Elder and the Younger, making no distinction between the two.⁶ In his definitive work on the period *Victoires, Conquêtes, Désastres, Revers et Guerres Civiles des Français, de 1792 à 1815*, Charles Beauvais de Préau made the mistake of using the *Duc de Valmy* when referring to Kellermann the Younger's operations during the Battle of Wachau.⁷ Charles Beauvais de Préau made the exact opposite mistake in his volume concerning the campaign of 1814, when he labeled a citation in his index under the *Duc de Valmy* that clearly referred to the *Comte de Valmy*.⁸ In Gougoud's *Talks of Napoleon at St. Helena with General Baron Gourgaud, Together with the Journal Kept by Gourgaud on Their Journey from Waterloo to St. Helena* there was only one index citation for Kellermann with two references; one referred to the *Duc de Valmy*, and the other to his son.⁹ In the translation of his *The Political and Military History of the Campaign of Waterloo*, Jomini listed a citation concerning Kellermann's support of the second assault on La Haye Sainte under the *Duc de Valmy*, his father.¹⁰ François Bas made the same mistake in his exhaustive study of the Waterloo campaign

⁶This mistake is quite common throughout the histories of 1813.

Maximilian Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, (London, 1897), II, 464.

Robert Wilson, *General Wilson's Journal, 1812-1814*, ed. Antony Brett-James, (London, 1964), 193 and 195. George F. Nafziger, *Napoleon at Leipzig: The Battle of Nations 1813*, (Chicago, 1996) 252 and 255. Jonathan Riley, *Napoleon and The World War of 1813: Lessons in Coalition Warfighting*, (London, 1999), 199.

F. Loraine Petre, *Napoleon's Last Campaign in Germany, 1813*, (London, 1912), 113 and 123.

David G. Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, (New York, 1966), 158.

⁷Charles Théodore Beauvais de Préau, *Victoires, Conquêtes, Désastres, Revers et Guerres Civiles des Français, de 1792 à 1815*, (Paris, 1818-1821), XXVI, 161.

⁸Ibid, XXVI, 82.

⁹Gaspard Gourgaud and Elizabeth Wormeley Latimer, *Talks of Napoleon at St. Helena with General Baron Gourgaud, together with the journal kept by Gourgaud on their journey from Waterloo to St. Helena*, (Chicago, 1903), 42, 79.

¹⁰Antoine Henri Jomini, *The Political and Military History of The Campaign of Waterloo*, (New York, 1853), 164.

La Campagne De 1815 Aux Pays-Bas.¹¹ These consisted of only a few of the many instances where the author confused one Kellermann for the other.

Even more recent publications were susceptible to this type of confusion. In the new compilation of Napoleon's correspondence, the *Fondation Napoléon* made several mistakes listing citations under Kellermann the Younger that referred to his father the *Duc de Valmy*.¹² Research into Kellermann's military career presented examples like these in almost every secondary and edited primary source. For the Kellermann family, the period from 1813 to 1815 was a confusing time. While François-Étienne commanded cavalry from Saxony to the edges of Paris, his father Marshal Kellermann, organized and trained reinforcements for the *Grande Armée*. As there was battlefield correspondence and orders going to the *Comte de Valmy*, Napoleon and Berthier simultaneously communicated with the *Duc de Valmy* as he organized new formations in the Army of the Reserve. The similarities in name created a confusing environment to do research on Kellermann's cavalry operations, but it was not the only research obstacle to complete a detailed study of the decline of the Empire.

Another major obstacle to a precise analysis of Kellermann's activities from 1813 to 1815 dealt with the composition of his commands. Traditional or veteran units from the regiment through the corps level generated a tremendous amount of paperwork and left a large number of documents to their posterity. Units created rapidly on the battlefield to reinforce existing formations tended to have less formal organizations and consequently left almost no documentation to certify their existence. Throughout the decline of the Empire, Kellermann commanded just such organizations. Often given commands that existed only on paper until the eve of battle, Kellermann made a reputation by successfully commanding such impromptu formations. The lack of orders and documents made it extremely difficult to follow the operations of Kellermann's different commands. For example, when he took command of Ney's advanced guard after the Battle of Lützen, it consisted of the 10th Hussars and a regiment of *Dragons Badois*.¹³ At the Battle of Bautzen, he commanded not only his cavalry, but also a

¹¹François de Bas and Jacques Augustin Joseph Alphonse Regnier Laurent Ghislain T'Serclaes de Wommersom, *La Campagne de 1815 aux Pays-Bas d'après les Rapports Officiels Néerlandais*, (Bruxelles, 1908), 516.

¹²Napoleon, *Correspondance Générale*, ed. Gaspard Gourgaud, (Paris, 2004), 1327, 1454.

¹³Thoumas, *Les Grands Cavaliers du Premier Empire*, I, 89.

brigade from General Joseph Souham's 8th Division.¹⁴ Because this advanced guard was not a standard organization in the Corps system, it had no muster rolls, no unit history, and very little in the way of written records. Consequently, it was very difficult even to determine what those organizations did on the battlefield, not to mention the actions of its leader, the *Comte de Valmy*.

At the corps level, it became much more difficult to obtain precise information concerning Kellermann, and such primary source documentation contrasted significantly with many of the more general studies of Napoleonic cavalry. In the fall campaigns of 1813, he commanded the only Polish Cavalry Corps in the *Grande Armée*, but he was often placed in command of other divisions and even other corps. However, due to the foreign nature of the 4th Polish Cavalry Corps, and the even more obscure and small number of primary source documents of their operations, historians often attributed actions personally led by Kellermann to other generals. His most significant charge in 1813 during the Battle of Leipzig occurred on 16 October when he led two cavalry corps against General Johann Klenau's Austrian Corps. Several historians attributed this charge to General Dubois Letort, while some put General Michel Sokolnicki in command of the 4th Cavalry Corps as well as the entire right wing of the cavalry charge and removed Kellermann from the field of battle entirely.¹⁵ The historiographical debates concerning Kellermann's operations continued on into the Campaigns of 1814 and 1815.

Kellermann commanded cavalry corps in both 1814 and 1815 that resembled his command of the Polish Cavalry Corps in 1813 in several ways. All three were hastily organized, fought for only a few months, and were demobilized or scattered following a major battle. They had no real unit history or great store of orders, creating problems in the accuracies of several accounts that mentioned Kellermann's operations. In 1814, most histories were accurate concerning the operations of the 4th Cavalry Corps until after the Battle of Bar sur Aube in their descriptions of the withdrawal and flank movement of Marshal Étienne-Jacques McDonald's

¹⁴Agathon Jean François Fain, *Manuscrit de Mil Huit Cent Treize: Contenant le Précis des événemens de Cette Année: Pour Servir à l'Histoire de l'Empereur Napoléon* (Paris: 1824.), II, 343.

¹⁵General Letort, who led a division of the Young Guard cavalry in Kellermann's charge, attributed with leading the entire charge in Picard, *La Cavalerie dans les Guerres de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, 187. Several historians make the same statement that Kellermann was sick during the Battle of Leipzig and that General Sokolnicki, commander of one of Kellermann's divisions, was actually in command on 16 October, Petre, *Napoleon's Last Campaign*, 330; Picard, *La Cavalerie dans les Guerres de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, 185.

army. Following the link-up between Napoleon's army and the units under McDonald's command, Napoleon ordered an attack on St Dizier in an attempt to draw the Allies away from Paris. During this period, Berthier ordered Kellermann to go to his Father Marshal Kellermann to lead any reinforcements the Marshal was able to organize in a last reinforcement of Napoleon's Army prior to an attack on the Allies near Paris. However, several accounts placed Kellermann on the battlefield at St. Dizier, and referred to his replacement by General Anne- François Trelliard in command of the 6th Cavalry Corps.¹⁶ Although the number of inaccuracies by good historians was limited, Kellermann's operations were often omitted. The reasons for these omissions vary, but the majority of Napoleonic military history focused on large-scale operations. Kellermann's operations were overlooked because they occurred too far away from Napoleon's direct control, or because they did not produce a decisive effect on the outcome of the major battles from 1813 through 1815.

Returning to the original thesis, this was precisely why a study of Kellermann's cavalry operations provided the basis for an analysis of several aspects of Napoleonic warfare that can be examined in no other way. Following Kellermann from 1813 through 1815 facilitated an analysis of both the capabilities of French cavalry, their leadership, and the different types of operations they executed on the battlefield. A traditional understanding of the capabilities of the leadership and soldiers of the *Grande Armée* dominated the study of Napoleonic military history in this period. The traditional interpretation of the army that fought for Napoleon in 1813 and onward was one that was in every category worse than that of 1805. York Von Wartenburg called the army not up to the standards of the earlier period, insufficient in cavalry, led by officers not qualified and generals who were lazy and exhausted.¹⁷ Gunther Rothenberg stated that three-quarters had no military training; the leadership was bad, the officer's poor, and the cavalry mounts abysmal.¹⁸ David Chandler referred to these new conscripts as an organized mob comprised of youths, invalids, and old veterans. The cavalry suffered from shortages of men and horses, the officers were incompetent, Berthier's staff was untrained, and the marshals were war

¹⁶Frédéric François Guillaume Vaudoncourt, *Histoire des Campagnes de 1814 et 1815, en France*, (Paris, 1826), V, 255; Frédéric Koch, *Mémoires Pour Servir a l'Histoire de La Campagne de 1814; Accompagnés de Plans, d'Ordres de Bataille et de Situations*, (Paris, 1819), II, 553.

¹⁷Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, , II, 245-51.

¹⁸Gunther Erich Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare In The Age of Napoleon*, (Bloomington, 1978), 133-143.

weary.¹⁹ Owen Connelly considered the infantry green and untrained, the cavalry poorly mounted and inferior, and the whole commanded by uninspired marshals and generals.²⁰ Without much deviation, most of the military history of this period erroneously agreed with this understanding of the capabilities and leadership of the *Grande Armée*.

A detailed study of Kellermann's operations produced different results than from a more general military history, or even from a focused history of a particular campaign. Analyzing Kellermann's operations created a representative study of the French cavalry throughout the decline of the Empire. This study presented a different picture of the capabilities of the French cavalry from the traditional interpretation of the capabilities of Napoleon's armies. Reaching a different conclusion about the capabilities, leadership and operations of the French cavalry during the decline of the Empire has the potential of altering the understanding of the changes that occurred in Napoleon's system of warfare. An analysis of Napoleon's operational and strategic method of warfare combined with a change in the traditional understanding of the *Grande Armée* has the potential of changing our understanding of the Napoleonic legacy on the warfare of the nineteenth century.

¹⁹Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, , 867-869.

²⁰Owen Connelly, *Blundering to Glory: Napoleon's Military Campaigns*, (Wilmington, 1987), 183-184.

CHAPTER 1: THE SPRING CAMPAIGN OF 1813

Despite problems in the domestic politics of the Empire, in the administration of the Continental System, and the continuing war in Spain, the decline of the First Empire was intensified on the frozen expanses of Russia. The attack into Russia in 1812 and the subsequent retreat not only broke the morale of the French army, but also wrecked veteran units of the *Grande Armée*. Following the retreat, Napoleon returned to Paris with the intention of rebuilding the army by recruiting more men and collecting new arms to form a new *Grande Armée* to re-establish control of Eastern Europe. He ordered Eugene de Beauharnais to delay the Russians and Prussians in Poland for as long as possible with the remnants from the Russian Campaign to gain time for this reorganization in France. Napoleon started with 85,000 conscripts left behind from the 1812 campaign and by April 1813 he managed to have 200,000 men under arms and moving east into Saxony, while several hundred thousand more men began moving towards depots and training sites. In the spring campaign of 1813, Napoleon faced only the Russians and the Prussians, supported by England. While the Allies had several hundred thousand men in their armies, they could muster only 90,000 troops for offensive operations in Saxony by April 1813.¹ The rapid reconstruction of the *Grande Armée* allowed Napoleon to achieve a parity of manpower with the Allies only five months after his retreat from Russia and this new army enabled him to take the offensive in Saxony.

Napoleon stunned the great powers of Europe by winning a series of victories in the spring campaign of 1813. These victories were not decisive, but were often attributed to the courage of the young and inexperienced conscripts that formed part of the *Grande Armée*. The infantry had to fight with very little cavalry support since the best of the French cavalry died on the plains of Russia. Most of the cavalry divisions assigned to the various infantry corps often were only brigade-sized elements. Although small, these units played an important role in gaining the French victories in the spring of 1813. Studying these cavalry units and how they acted on the battlefield allows a better understanding of the capabilities of the *Grande Armée* and how Napoleon waged war in the spring of 1813.

Following the operations of General Kellermann throughout the period presented an effective way to examine the capabilities and operations of the cavalry units in Saxony. They

¹Petre, *Napoleon's Last Campaign in Germany, 1813*, , 65.

provide an excellent example of both the experience of an officer recalled to active duty to support Napoleon's rebuilt *Grande Armée* as well as French cavalry operations until the Armistice suspended offensive operations in the beginning of June. Following Kellermann's experience provides an example of the different ways Napoleon reconstituted his army so quickly after the retreat from Russia. Kellermann's operations also demonstrate his unit's support of an infantry corps. He executed cavalry raids to secure key terrain and to disrupt enemy formations, conducted reconnaissance missions, maintained lateral lines of communications between the different corps, combined infantry-cavalry attacks and conducted limited pursuit operations. A detailed analysis of Kellermann's cavalry operations in the spring of 1813 produces a much more detailed account of the capabilities of the French cavalry in 1813.

As a military organization, the reorganized *Grande Armée* was lacking in several key areas. Adequate training in many of the conscripts was almost non-existent; Napoleon called classes to the colors earlier than anticipated, placed younger men into the army, and also called on older classes of 1807 through 1812 to provide additional conscripts.² Despite recalling veteran formations from Spain and using these veterans to form cadres to bolster the young conscripts, the level of discipline and ability of junior officers and non-commissioned officers remained far below that of the French army of previous years.³ The weakest part of the *Grande Armée* of 1813 was both heavy and light cavalry. Superiority in cavalry was one of the factors that made the *Grande Armée* faster and more decisive than any other army in Europe. The losses in horses and trained cavalymen in the Russian campaign of 1812 left Napoleon little cavalry for the campaigns of 1813.⁴ Napoleon made several comments on how his lack of cavalry would make decisive operations in Saxony difficult.⁵ He turned his massive administrative abilities to rebuilding his cavalry by every means available. He recalled every available cavalry officer to active service who could still perform combat duties. In March, Napoleon recalled Kellermann to active duty.

In combing the disabled and retired lists for experienced cavalry leaders, Kellermann was exactly what the Emperor needed. He was a cavalry leader with a proven record of successes on the battlefield and a high reputation among his peers. He led the charge that helped break the

²Ibid., 10.

³Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, II, 250.

⁴Y. Shelah, *Napoleon in 1813*, (London, 2000), 90.

⁵Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, II, 245.

Austrian columns at the Battle of Marengo in 1800 and charged with Murat's cavalry as a divisional commander during the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805. He commanded the Cavalry division in Junot's Army during the 1807 invasion of Portugal and negotiated the Convention of Cintra that brought that army back to France after its defeat at the hands of the British. In 1809, Kellermann exercised independent command of a mixed corps of dragoons and infantry that destroyed the Spanish Army of the Duke of El Parque at the Battle of Alba de Tormes.⁶ Having served with Kellermann for several years, General Foy recalled:

Kellermann bore a name which was known throughout Europe...Because he himself, leading the cavalry at Marengo, had decided, by a brilliant charge, the fortunes of that Immortal day. In him, the boldness of the warrior was united with the observant subtlety of the diplomatist.⁷

General Foy served with Kellermann in Junot's Army of Portugal in the Peninsula as well as under Ney at the Battle of Quatre Bras in 1815 and was well acquainted with his professional abilities. Marshal Marmont also had a high opinion of Kellermann's abilities as a cavalry leader. Marmont wrote of Kellermann at Marengo that "never had fortune intervened in such a way; never had a general had such *coup d'oeil*, and great vigor of purpose than Kellermann in this circumstance."⁸ Marmont's high opinion of Kellermann's cavalry abilities was indicative of the general reputation that he had throughout the Empire. Napoleon needed officers like Kellermann to provide experienced leadership to the French cavalry in 1813.

Kellermann spent the years from 1811 to 1813 in various stages of retirement. Following his recall to France on 20 May 1811 from the position of commander of the 6th Military District in Spain, Kellermann remained unemployed and convalescent. Although medical records remain limited throughout the Napoleonic wars, the symptoms he described were similar to a form of neuralgia.⁹ Kellermann remained convalescent until he received command of the 3rd Light Cavalry Division of General Emmanuel Grouchy's 3rd Corps on 5 Jan 1812 as Napoleon

⁶Six, *Les Généraux de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, II, 2-4.

⁷Maximilien Foy, *History of the War in the Peninsula, Under Napoleon; to Which is Prefixed a View of the Political and Military State of the Four Belligerent Powers*, ed. Elisabeth Augustine Daniels Foy, (London, 1827), 528.

⁸Auguste Frédéric Louis Viesse de Marmont, *Mémoires du Duc de Raguse de 1792 à 1832, Imprimés sur le Manuscrit Original de l'Auteur*, (Paris, 1857), V, 134.

⁹Johnson, *Napoleon's Cavalry and Its Leaders*, 133.

organized his army for the invasion of Russia. In view of the physical hardships the Russian Campaign promised, Kellermann requested dismissal from active service due to the ailments and injuries received during his two years of service in Spain. On 26 April 1812, Kellermann's name was deleted from the active list and appeared on the disabled list of the French Army. After an additional period of convalescence, he accepted duties as the inspector of cavalry for the 5th Military District of France on 21 October 1812. However, after five months he retired from even this limited duty and from military service for reasons of poor health.¹⁰ He was officially retired when he received the call from Marshal Michel Ney to return to active duty in the spring of 1813.

In the middle of April, Kellermann was ordered to assume command of the cavalry of the 3rd Corps on the request of Marshal Ney.¹¹ Ney knew Kellermann's ability as a cavalry leader from their service together in the Peninsula. He conducted coordinated operations with Ney and other elements of the 6th Corps during the invasion of the Asturias in May 1809.¹² Ney made several favorable reports concerning Kellermann's performance in 1809, and it was Ney's 6th Corps that Kellermann temporarily commanded during his victory over the Spanish at Alba des Tormes.¹³ Based on the personal request from Ney, the Ministry of War assigned the *Comte de Valmy* to the 3rd Corps on 26 April 1813.¹⁴ He spent the next several days racing to join his command as the 3rd Corps advanced towards Saxony. Kellermann arrived at Ney's headquarters sometime on 29 or 30 April as it entered Saxony and began to make contact with the Allied army under the command of the Russian General Ludwigsberg Wittgenstein west of Lützen.¹⁵ Napoleon's offensive into Eastern Europe began as many of his earlier campaigns had, much quicker than his opponents expected.

Upon joining the 3rd Corps, Kellermann immediately took command of Ney's cavalry. His first duty as the commander of cavalry was to deploy the brigade of light cavalry in screening missions for the advance of the corps. General Laboissière commanded the dragoon brigade and responded immediately to Kellermann's orders. Thus Kellermann took command of

¹⁰Six, *Les Généraux de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, II, 3.

¹¹Thoumas, *Les Grands Cavaliers du Premier Empire*, I, 89.

¹²Six, *Les Généraux de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, II, 3.

¹³Thoumas, *Les Grands Cavaliers du Premier Empire*, I, 90.

¹⁴Clarke to Ney, 12 April 1813, France, Archive Nationales, AF IV, 137 AP 13.

¹⁵Ernst Otto Innocenz Odeleben, *Relation Circonstanciée de La Campagne de 1813, en Saxe*, trans. F. J. P. Aubert de Vitry, (Paris, 1817), I, 45

Ney's cavalry less than twenty-four hours before the beginning phases of the Battle of Lützen. Throughout his operations of 1813, 1814, and 1815, Kellermann would time and time again take command of hastily formed units on the eve of battle, and lead them to victory. It was a reflection of the discipline and competence of the French cavalry to function under such circumstances.¹⁶



Figure 1: Rippach and Lützen

LÜTZEN

As the 3rd Corps moved east, Napoleon ordered Ney to secure the strategically important defile at Rippach. This defile led into the open plain around the town of Lützen and controlled the intersection of several major roads that run deeper into Saxony. Due to its central location and access to road networks, Napoleon considered Lützen a piece of key terrain and important for offensive operations. Control of Lützen allowed Napoleon to protect his strategic flank as he advanced onto what he thought was the main Allied concentration at Leipzig.¹⁷ The defile at

¹⁶Koch, *Journal des Opérations du IIIe et Ve Corps en 1813*, ed. Gabriel Joseph Fabry, (Paris, 1999), 10.

¹⁷Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 881.

Rippach was thus strategically important because it facilitated the *Grande Armée*'s advance onto the strategic flank of the enemy.¹⁸ An enemy detachment at Rippach could slow down the French movement and give time for the Allies to consolidate more of their armies to face him. A quick seizure of Rippach was essential to control Lützen and bring the Allies to battle.

Ney decided to use his cavalry to seize the defile. Kellermann received the order to take a cavalry detachment to seize control of Rippach on the morning of 1 May. He quickly took command of Laboissière's two regiments of cavalry and moved towards the defile. Southwest of Rippach, Kellermann engaged the first pickets of the enemy's cavalry. He lost no time in ordering his cavalry forward at a gallop towards the defile. As soon as the French cavalry reached a position several hundred yards away from the defile, Kellermann ordered his regiments to charge.¹⁹ His rapid advance caught the Prussians by surprise, and before the enemy could deploy, the French cavalry charged through the defile and into the town of Rippach.²⁰ The disorganized Prussian cavalry retreated in the direction of Lützen leaving the important defile in Kellermann's hands.²¹ Before the Prussians could organize a counterattack, the main body of the 3rd Corps began to pass through the defile towards Lützen later in the day on 1 May.²² This rapid movement of the French main body threatened the Prussians with battle in the Lützen area. Kellermann's aggressive cavalry raid with his small cavalry detachment against the Prussian outposts at Rippach enabled the 3rd Corps to maintain the strategic mobility needed to maneuver on the isolated Prussians. This mobility set the stage for the Battle of Lützen.

The Battle of Lützen took place on 2 May between Marshal Gebhard Lebrecht Blücher's Prussian Army and the main body of the *Grande Armée*. For most of the engagement, Ney's Corps maintained its position along the ridgeline south of Lützen while Marshal MacDonald's 11th Corps enveloped the Prussian right flank and Marshal Marmont's 6th Corps attacked the Prussian left flank from the south.²³ The French won this battle through the strength of their infantry divisions, their surprising courage and ability of the newly integrated conscripts, and their ability to stand against repeated Prussian attacks. General Mathieu Dumas, the Intendant

¹⁸Odeleben, *Relation Circonstanciée de La Campagne de 1813, en Saxe*, I, 46.

¹⁹Beauvais de Préau, *Victoires, Conquêtes, Désastres, Revers et Guerres*, XXII, 31.

²⁰*Ibid.*, XXII, 32.

²¹Odeleben, *Relation Circonstanciée de La Campagne de 1813, en Saxe*, I, 45.

²²Bulletin de la Grande Armée, 2 May 1813, *Correspondence de Napoleon I^{er}*, No. 19951, XXV, 299-304.

²³Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, , 879-87.

General of the *Grande Armée*, recorded a conversation with Marshal Ney concerning the new conscripts. When asked to describe the Battle of Lützen, Ney replied that:

I had only battalions of conscripts, and I have reason to congratulate myself on it; I doubt whether I could have done the same thing with the old grenadiers of the guard. I had before me the best of the enemy's troops, the whole of the Prussian guards; our bravest grenadiers, after having twice failed, would perhaps not have carried the village, but I led these brave children five times to the charge, and their docility, perhaps too their inexperience, served me better than veteran courage: the French infantry is never too young!²⁴

Although this demonstrated the capabilities and the importance of the infantry to the French victory, the small cavalry force of the 3rd Corps distinguished itself early in the battle by conducting a cavalry raid against the numerically superior Prussian cavalry and artillery that enabled the infantry to establish itself on the ridgeline south of Lützen.

After the combat for the defile at Rippach, Kellermann rallied all of the 3rd Corps' cavalry, some 1,000 troopers, in front of the main body of the Corps. Ney ordered Kellermann's cavalry and the Infantry Divisions of Generals Souham and Girard to occupy the series of small villages on the southern edge of the Lützen plain.²⁵ The cavalry began to advance south of Lützen in the early morning of 2 May followed by the infantry divisions in support. As the 3rd Corps began to advance through Lützen, the cavalry interacted with enemy pickets. The Prussians had cavalry detachments screening the terrain south and east of Lützen. They also established an advanced artillery park near the village of Kaja, which stood on a small hilltop and formed part of a ridge that dominated the plain in and around Lützen.²⁶ The artillery on this hilltop could bring the advancing French troops under fire as soon as they advanced east and south of the city. Ney ordered the lead infantry divisions to attack to the north and south of Kaja to avoid suffering casualties from this artillery battery.²⁷ Kellermann recognized the importance of the Prussian artillery position on this dominant terrain.

²⁴Mathieu Dumas, *Memoirs of His Own Time; Including the Revolution, the Empire, and the Restoration*, (Philadelphia, 1839), 272.

²⁵Koch, *Journal des Opérations du IIIe et Ve Corps en 1813*, 8.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 8.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 8-9.

Kellermann identified the presence of the relatively undefended enemy guns at Kaja and immediately ordered his cavalry to form lines and charge.²⁸ He led them through the artillery park at Kaja and disabled many caissons, horses, artillerymen, ammunition, powder, and transport.²⁹ It was not long before the Prussians counterattacked the French cavalry and Kellermann fought off several of these charges before disengaging from the Prussians and falling back on the advancing French infantry regiments of Souham's Division for protection.³⁰ The lead divisions of the 3rd Corps occupied the ridgeline from Gross Görschen to Tauchau and awaited the Prussian attack. Blücher launched several attacks supported by massive artillery barrages that inflicted severe casualties on the French infantry squares, but the young French conscripts held firm.³¹ The 3rd Corps maintained its position on the Kaja Ridge throughout the day suffering casualties from the Prussian artillery fire and cavalry charges while awaiting the flanking maneuvers of the other French Corps. It was not until Marshal Macdonald's 11th Corps arrived on the battlefield on the enemy's right flank in the late evening of 2 May that the Allied Army began to retreat from Lützen.³² The courage and ability of the infantry and the cavalry of Ney's 3rd Corps facilitated the important French victory.

Kellermann's cavalry raid at Kaja in the beginning phase of the battle performed two functions on the Battle of Lützen. First, the raid forced the Prussian pickets and outposts off of the Kaja ridge and gave the 3rd Corps time and opportunity to reach the ridge quickly and unopposed. An early and effective Prussian defense of the ridge could have denied possession of the ridgeline to the French thus giving the Prussians a decided advantage throughout the rest of the battle. Second, Kellermann's raid disrupted the Prussian artillery park at Kaja and enabled the infantry of Souham's Division to occupy the ridge protected from enemy artillery fire. Although the French cavalry did not completely destroy or spike the Prussian cannon, they did disable them for the duration of the battle, preventing the Prussians from using 40-45 guns at Lützen.³³ As a result, Kellermann's charge enabled the 3rd Corps to occupy Kaja and the entire

²⁸Louis-Auguste Picard, *La Cavalerie Dans les Guerres de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, (Saumur, 1895), II, 144.

²⁹Koch, *Journal des Opérations du IIIe et Ve Corps en 1813*, 13.

³⁰Picard, *La Cavalerie Dans les Guerres de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, II, 144.

³¹Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 882.

³²Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, II, 254.

³³Koch, *Journal des Opérations du IIIe et Ve Corps en 1813*, 13.

ridgeline south of Lützen so the French infantry could hold the Prussians off until Macdonald's flank attack forced them to retreat.

Napoleon's victory at Lützen was not his most decisive victory, but in many ways it was one of his most important. General Ernst Odeleben, a member of Napoleon's staff, wrote that upon this combat, "as they struggled against the enemy, giving their lives in Saxony, he (Napoleon) combined the courage of the army, the opinion of the nation, and the conservation of his reputation (only a small distance from the location of the defeat of 1812) all depended on this battle."³⁴ While the lack of an adequate cavalry force to initiate the pursuit kept the French from destroying the Prussian army, it did show all of Europe that Napoleon could still defeat the armies of Europe.

Coming only months after the retreat from Russia, the victory at Lützen maintained and perhaps re-established Napoleon as a legitimate power throughout most of 1813. General Dumas observed, "He astonished Europe by suddenly reappearing in the theater of war. He undermined the presumptuous confidence of the enemy; he recovered the honor of French arms and repaired disasters which could not but be deemed irreparable."³⁵ It also allowed Napoleon to press the Allies in the east where he hoped to defeat another coalition and maintain his mastery of Europe. Following the victory at Lützen, Ney ordered Kellermann to take command of the advanced guard of the 3rd Corps. Kellermann replaced General Souham and his 8th Infantry Division for reconnaissance and screening missions. This advanced guard, organized from smaller units, never had an official designation, staff, chain-of-command, or unit records. The roster changed as the missions Ney assigned to it changed based on the enemy and on the terrain in which it operated. The initial roster included the 10th Hussar Brigade, one regiment of *Dragon Badois* and several horse artillery batteries. Although it was initially an almost completely cavalry organization, Kellermann would often command several infantry regiments.

³⁴Odeleben, *Relation Circonstanciée de La Campagne de 1813, en Saxe*, I, 53.

³⁵Dumas, *Memoirs of His Own Time*, 269-70.

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Kellermann led the army rapidly from Lützen east to Leipzig where the 3rd Corps split into two units. The first took the road north to Wittenburg to relieve the stress of marching the entire Corps along one road and to increase the speed of the eastward movement. Kellermann continued to conduct reconnaissance operations in front of the main body of the 3rd Corps with the advanced guard moving eastward toward the Elbe River.³⁶

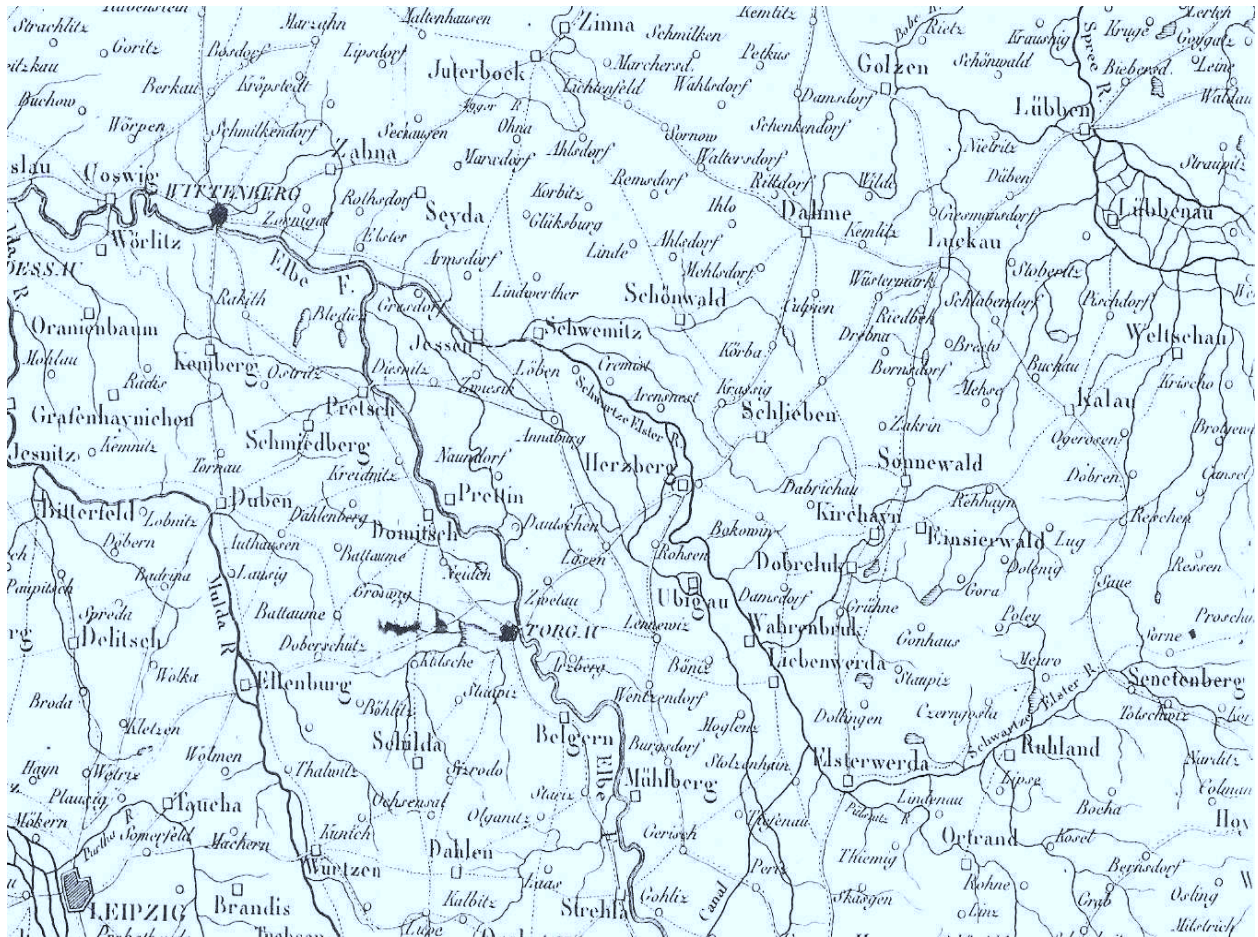


Figure 2: Torgau, Herzberg, and Kalau

The main body of the Ney's Corps crossed the Elbe River at Torgau on 11 May and three days later, passed through Herzberg. On 16 May, the entire 3rd Corps reunited at Lubben where Kellermann was again out in front of the rest of the Corps with orders to clear the enemy pickets

³⁶Koch, *Journal des Opérations du IIIe et Ve Corps en 1813*, 19.

off of the road to Kalau.³⁷ A day later, the advanced guard forced the pickets of Barclay de Tolly's Russian Army south of Kalau toward the Spree River. By 18 May, the 3rd Corps occupied Senttenberg while Kellermann's Advanced Guard engaged the Russian pickets observing the bridge over the Elster River in the town of Hoyerswerda.³⁸ Napoleon concentrated his entire army at Bautzen as he finally received reliable intelligence that the Allies were preparing for battle. Following their defeat at Lützen, the Allies had marched in the direction of Dresden and Bautzen while the Russian engineers began surveying the position by 10 May.³⁹ Thus based on Napoleon's design and the defensive preparations of the Allies, Bautzen began to look like the site of a large and important battle.

By 19 May, Napoleon ordered the *Grande Armée* to concentrate in the area just west of the Spree River. Barclay de Tolly's Russian Army established units west of the river in an attempt to delay the French crossing of the Spree and to gather intelligence. In order to maintain lateral lines of communication between the 3rd and 4th Corps, Napoleon ordered General Henri Bertrand to station a division at the town of Königswartha, while at the same time he ordered Ney to establish a link-up with this division with elements of the 3rd Corps.⁴⁰ Ney ordered Kellermann to meet this division with the cavalry of the advanced guard.⁴¹ As Ney gave Kellermann marching orders, Barclay de Tolly decided to attack at Königswartha to split the 3rd and 4th French Corps' and to delay their crossing of their Spree River.⁴² This attack would enable the Allies to mass more forces in the Bautzen area to confront Napoleon.

³⁷Ibid., 20.

³⁸Ibid., 21.

³⁹Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 888.

⁴⁰Jacques Marquet de Norvins, *Portefeuille de Mil Huit Cent Treize, ou Tableau Politique et Militaire, Renfermant, Avec Le Récit de Evénemens de Cette Epoque, Un Choix de La Correspondance Inédite de l'Empereur Napoléon, et de Celle de Plusieurs Personnages Distingués*, (Paris, 1825), 417.

⁴¹Koch, *Journal des Opérations du IIIe et Ve Corps en 1813*, 21.

⁴²Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, 257-258.

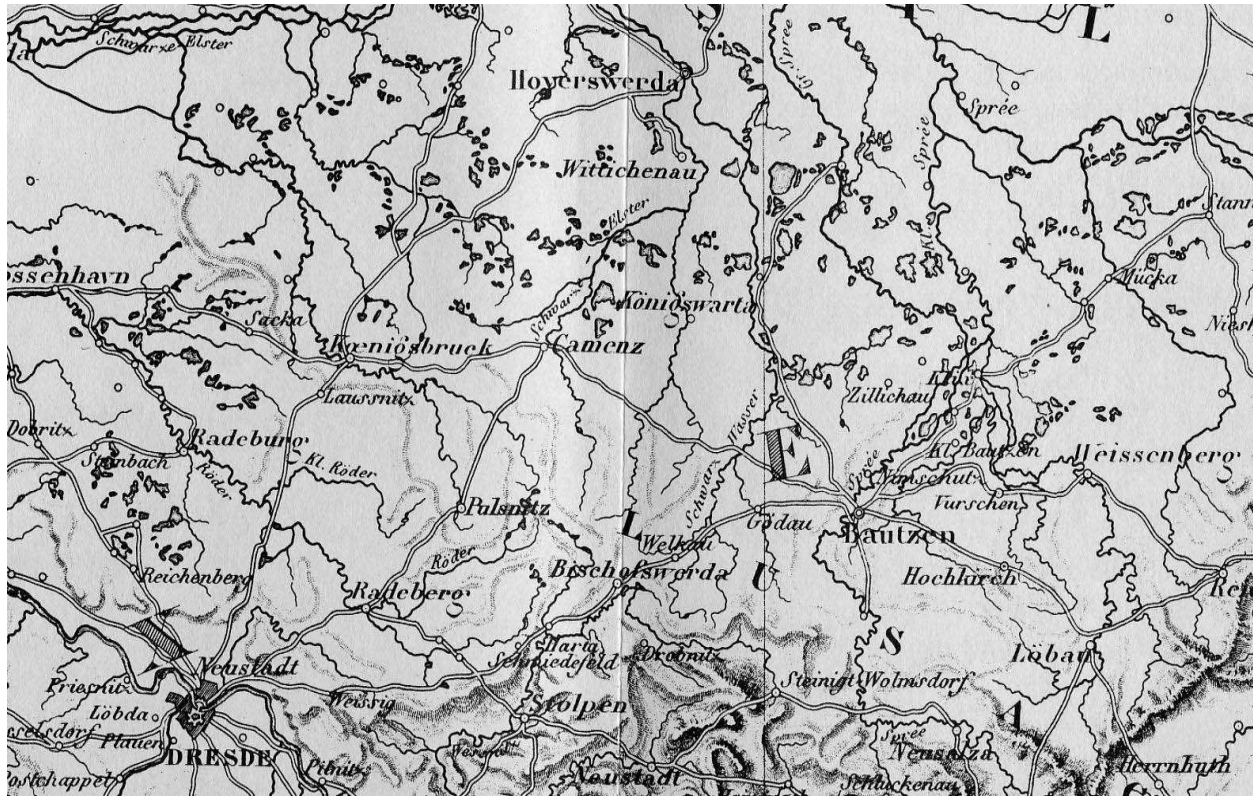


Figure 3: Königswartha

Bertrand ordered the Italian Division under General Louis-Gaspard Peyri to Königswartha to act as the liaison between the 3rd and 4th Corps. This division was a newly formed infantry unit sent to Saxony from the garrisons of Italy and was not a disciplined or experienced unit.⁴³ The Italian Division negligently set out its pickets and the majority of the infantry spread out in the town to have their mid-day meal with little concern for security.⁴⁴ The first contact with the Russians in the afternoon of 19 May took Peyri's Division by surprise. By early evening, the fighting was so intense that the outnumbered Italian Division broke under the pressure from Barclay de Tolly's Russians and began to withdraw from the town in disorder.⁴⁵ It

⁴³Frédéric François Guillaume Vaudoncourt, *Histoire de La Guerre Soutenue Par les Français en Allemagne en 1813*, (Paris, 1819), 91.

⁴⁴Odeleben, *Relation Circonstanciée de La Campagne de 1813, en Saxe*, 88.

⁴⁵Thoumas, *Les Grands Cavaliers du Premier Empire*, I, 90.

was at this time that Kellermann arrived at Königswartha with his cavalry.⁴⁶ The unexpected arrival of Ney's advanced guard undermined the secrecy and concentration of the Russian attack.

Expecting only to conduct an administrative link up with Peryi's Division, Kellermann arrived at Königswartha in the middle of a pitched infantry battle. He wasted no time and immediately ordered his regiments to charge into the town to gain time so the scattered Italian Division could reform.⁴⁷ After the charge, he dismounted and personally reformed the remnants of the infantry for a column attack. When Kellerman re-established control of the Italian Division, he ordered Laboissière to maneuver the cavalry regiments to the east side of the town and then charge into the flank of the enemy while he led the Italian infantry attack back into the center of Königswartha.⁴⁸ This combined arms attack threw the Russians into disorder and they retreated from the town.⁴⁹ For his courage and capability, Kellermann received an honorable mention in the Imperial Bulletin describing the battle of Bautzen:

He (General Peyri) lost 600 men, among whom was General Balathier of the Italian brigade, wounded, two cannon and three caissons; but the division having taken up their arms, stayed in the woods, and faced towards the enemy. The *Comte de Valmy*, having arrived with the cavalry, put himself at the head of the Italian Division and re-captured the village of Koenigswartha.⁵⁰

Praise in an Imperial Bulletin was important as it was often the only way in which an officer's personal leadership became known throughout the French army and the Empire. What started as a link-up operation ended as an important victory for the French at Königswartha. Kellermann's charge and command of the Italian Division was the major factor in the defeat of the Russian attack at Königswartha.

This victory had several important effects on the dispositions of the Allied forces. The Russian attack on Königswartha aimed at splitting the French corps and delaying their advance upon the Spree River, was thwarted. After this defeat, Barclay de Tolly withdrew Russian troops

⁴⁶Ney to Napoleon, 19 May 1813, Paul Jean Foucart, *Bautzen: Une bataille de Deux Jours 20-21 Mai 1813*, (Paris, 1897), 274.

⁴⁷Picard, *La Cavalerie Dans les Guerres de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, II, 148.

⁴⁸Vaudoncourt, *Histoire de La Guerre Soutenue Par les Français en Allemagne en 1813*, I, 92.

⁴⁹Robert Wilson, *Private Diary of Travels, Personal Services and Public Events, During Mission and Employment With the European Armies in The Campaigns of 1812, 1813, 1814. From the Invasion of Russia to The Capture of Paris*, ed. Herbert Randolph, (London, 1861), 15.

⁵⁰Bulletin de la Grande Armée, 24 May 1813, *Correspondence de Napoleon I^{er}*, No. 20042, XXVII, 367-76.

eastward across the river without delaying the French advance. Kellermann's victory denied the Russians the freedom of maneuver on the west side of the river and forced them to defend the river from the town of Klix. This Allied decision to defend the line of the Spree River set the stage for the decisive battle of the Spring Campaign of 1813.

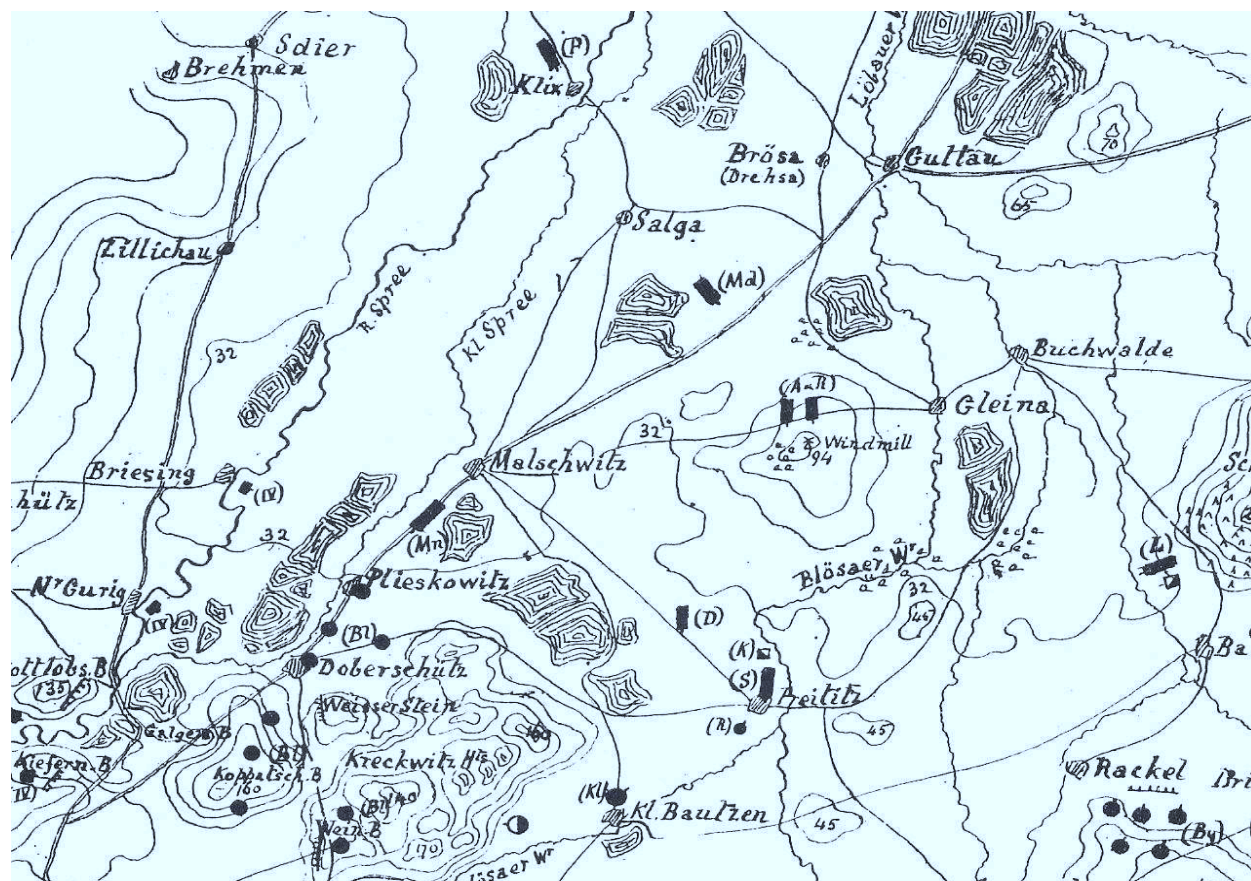


Figure 4: Bautzen

Soon after their defeat at Lützen in the beginning of May, the Grande Armée overtook the Allies in the vicinity of the town of Bautzen. They sent engineers to prepare defensive fortifications along the Spree River. The Allied battle plan was to exhaust Napoleon's infantry on the Spree, while waiting for the right moment to unleash a counterattack on the French right flank. Napoleon planned to engage the enemy along the line of the Spree River while Marshals Ney and Lauriston's Corps threatened the Allied right flank and Oudinot's Corps attacked the enemy left flank. These envelopments would draw the Allied reserve to the flanks of their position. Once the Allied reserve entered the battle along one or both of the endangered flanks, Bertrand's veteran corps of three divisions of the Guard infantry and all of the Guard cavalry

would crush the Allied center. Penetrating the center while pressuring the flanks would give Napoleon the decisive victory that would force the Allies to come to the negotiating table.

After his victory at Königswartha on 19 May, the *Comte de Valmy* spread his cavalry in a screen between the 3rd Corps and the Spree River. That evening, Ney ordered Kellermann to move the advanced guard southwest along the river cross before dawn on 20 May. Once across the river, Kellermann would await the signal from General Souham to conduct a simultaneous attack with the 8th Division on the enemy's position in the Klix area.⁵¹ This town commanded the best fording and bridge sites across the Spree River. The Russian position at Klix was the last enemy defense against a French advance onto Bautzen and the Allied right flank. The Russians had infantry and artillery formations in defensive positions observing the river crossing sites.⁵² However, the terrain made it possible to isolate these defensive positions allowing the French a significant advantage. Klix was described by the Prussian staff officer Baron von Müffling as the "weak spot in the Allied flank at Bautzen."⁵³ An attack by Kellermann would disrupt the enemy enough to allow the 8th Division to proceed with a river crossing and allowed the rest of the 3rd Corps to pass rapidly to the west side of the Spree River and onto the Allied right flank.

Kellermann spent the rest of the night preparing the advanced guard for the attack across the Spree. In the early morning hours of 20 May, he ordered the advanced guard across the river. When reconnaissance identified a suitable fording, the advanced guard moved across the river and then north toward the enemy position at Klix without alerting the Russians of their advance.⁵⁴ Kellermann kept the advanced guard hidden until he observed the signal from the 8th Division. Then he led the advanced guard into the town and surprised the enemy.⁵⁵ The Russians, when faced with the frontal river crossing of the 8th Division and the flank attack of French cavalry, withdrew quickly to the outskirts of the town.⁵⁶ Kellermann ordered the bayonet, and the infantry of the advanced guard charged through the remaining defenders and seized the entire

⁵¹Koch, *Journal des Opérations du IIIe et Ve Corps en 1813*, 23.

⁵²Carl von Clausewitz, *La Campagne de 1813 et La Campagne de 1814*, (Paris, 1900), 42-43.

⁵³Friedrich Karl Ferdinand Müffling and John Sinclair, *History of The Campaign of The British, Dutch, Hanoverian, and Brunswick armies, Under The Command of The Duke of Wellington; And of The Prussians, Under That of Prince Blucher of Wahlstadt, in The Year 1815*, (London, 1983), 37.

⁵⁴Koch, *Journal des Opérations du IIIe et Ve Corps en 1813*, 23.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 24.

⁵⁶Norvins, *Portefeuille de Mil Huit Cent Treize*, 417.

town. This bayonet charge destroyed a significant part of the Russian defenders and control of the river crossing passed to the French.⁵⁷ The French lost 600 killed and wounded while the Russian losses numbered several thousand men.⁵⁸ This aggressive and rapid operation broke the Russian defense of the river and allowed the rest of the 3rd Corps to advance against the Allied army at Bautzen.

The French victory at Klix accelerated the 3rd Corps' river crossing and enabled Ney to rapidly maneuver on the exposed Allied flank. The Battle at Klix was also an example of a successful combined cavalry/infantry attack. The simultaneous attacks from the infantry and cavalry of the advanced guard and Souham's infantry regiments demonstrated the power and effectiveness of such attacks. It also showed Kellerman at his tactical best leading a detachment of cavalry against superior numbers of enemy infantry and artillery to demonstrate the courage and ability of the French infantry and cavalry in the *Grande Armée* of 1813. Due to the aggressive attack of the advanced guard, the Russians retreated from the Klix area and allowed the 3rd Corps to cross the river Spree unopposed.⁵⁹ This rapid and unopposed crossing for the main body of 3rd Corps allowed Napoleon to execute his operational battle plan to bring the Allies to a decisive battle.

During the first day of the Battle of Bautzen on 20 May, Kellermann's action at Klix allowed Ney to concentrate his Corps on the east side of the Spree while the center of the French line engaged the Allied Army in a battle of attrition. On the second day at Bautzen on 21 May, Ney executed his orders to envelope the right flank of the Allied Army. For this phase of the battle, Kellermann's advanced guard consisted of only his cavalry.⁶⁰ He formed the cavalry up on the left flank of Souham's 8th Division during the battle.⁶¹ Following the Russian defeat at Klix, Barclay withdrew his infantry to the hilltop just north of the Village of Glein. This position allowed the Russians to maintain contact with the Prussian's on their left thus forming a continuous line along the River Spree.

⁵⁷Koch, *Journal des Opérations du IIIe et Ve Corps en 1813*, 24.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 25.

⁵⁹Wilson, *Private Diary of Travels*, , 28.

⁶⁰Koch, *Journal des Opérations du IIIe et Ve Corps en 1813*, 25.

⁶¹Antoine-Henri Jomini, *Précis Politique et Militaire des Campagnes de 1812 à 1814* (Geneve, 1975), 271.

Ney began operations on 21 May with the intention of penetrating the enemy line to create a separation between the Prussian and Russian armies. At 5:00 a.m., Ney ordered the lead elements of Kellermann's advanced guard with the rest of the corps in support to reconnoiter in the direction of Baruth to locate the positions of the enemy.⁶² Kellermann's Cavalry rapidly located the enemy positions at Glein and by 9:00, the Corps was in position to attack.⁶³ Ney ordered the divisions under Generals Antoine-Guillaume Delmas, Souham, and Kellermann's advanced guard to attack the center of this position with the remaining two divisions of the 3rd Corps in reserve.⁶⁴ The advanced guard and the infantry of Souham's Division stormed the enemy position at Glein capturing between 15 and 20 cannon and forced the remaining Russian infantry from Glein. The retreating infantry of de Tolly's Corps retreated towards the town of Preititz. Thus before noon, Ney's envelopment began to create a gap between the Prussian position and the retreating Russians. This gap isolated the Prussian units in the center of the Allied position and weakened them prior to the attack of Bertrand's Corps. Victory depended on Ney's success in driving the Russians farther away from the center of the Allied position.

Ney's envelopment of the Allied right continued to pressure the retreating Russians. They retreated to the town of Preititz and prepared to stand against the continuing pressure from the advancing French. Kellermann and Souham quickly reformed their units and attacked the Russian position at Preititz at 11:00 a.m., overrunning the town.⁶⁵ At this point, Ney had replaced Kellermann's advanced guard and the 8th Division at the head of the Corps. He ordered Generals Delmas and Joseph-Jean Albert to lead their divisions against enemy resistance in Klein Bautzen.⁶⁶ Both Kellermann's advanced guard and Souham's 8th Division required time for reorganization and consolidation before they could continue to fight. So with Kellermann's small cavalry force, he had conducted reconnaissance operations that enabled Ney's envelopment. He also participated in the first two major combats against the Allied right flank working in close cooperation with the infantry regiments of Souham's Division.

These two combats started the retreat of the Russian's that increased the chances of success of Bertrand's attack in the Prussian center. Before Bertrand launched his attack in the

⁶²Ney to Napoleon, 21 May 1813, Foucart, *Bautzen: Une bataille de Deux Jours*, 328.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 328.

⁶⁴Jomini, *Précis Politique et Militaire*, 320.

⁶⁵Foucart, *Bautzen: Une bataille de Deux Jours*, 329.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 329.

Allied center, the 3rd Corps fought a series of small combats around Preitz. Barclay had sent to Blücher for reinforcements to prevent a French penetration of their right flank.⁶⁷ These Prussian troops attacked Ney's fatigued divisions at Preitz until Bertrand's attack caused the Prussians to retreat. When the Prussians began to retreat, Ney ordered an attack up the Kreckwitz heights on what he considered the decisive point in the Allied position.⁶⁸ Thus, while Kellermann's Cavalry ceased to play a role in the fighting of 21 May, the French continued to drive the Allies from the field.

Although Napoleon defeated the Allied armies at Bautzen, it was not as decisive as he expected. Due to the exhausting nature of the fighting over the two-day battle of Bautzen, Napoleon ordered as vigorous a pursuit as possible on 22 May. With only the newly formed 1st Cavalry Corps under General Charles Lefèvre-Desnoëttes available, Napoleon gave the mission of pursuing the Allies to Ney's 3rd Corps. Early on 22 May, Ney ordered Kellermann's advanced guard to regain contact and pursue the enemy while causing as much damage to the fleeing columns as possible.⁶⁹ He pursued the enemy throughout 22-23 May, following them to the town of Reichenbach where Ney halted them.⁷⁰ On 24 May, Napoleon recalled Kellermann to his headquarters removing him from command of the 3rd Corps cavalry.⁷¹ While Ney ordered the 3rd Corps and the 1st Cavalry Corps to pursue the Allies farther east, Napoleon gave Kellermann the command of a newly formed Polish cavalry corps.

The study of Kellermann's cavalry operations provided a representative sample of the types of operations used to support the infantry corps throughout the Spring Campaign of 1813. An analysis of these operations showed the important contribution the cavalry made to the French victories of Lützen and Bautzen. They are reminiscent of the cavalry operations that supported Napoleon's operations during the 1790's before the creation of cavalry corps. The advanced guard of the 3rd Corps conducted cavalry raids that facilitated the deployment of the rest of the corps. The disruption of the Prussian artillery park at Rippach and the routing of the Allied outposts at Kaja and the ridgeline south of Lützen allowed the rest of the 3rd Corps to

⁶⁷Petre, *Napoleon's Last Campaign in Germany, 1813*, 132.

⁶⁸Foucart, *Bautzen: Une bataille de Deux Jours*, 330.

⁶⁹Paul Jean Foucart, *Bautzen; La Poursuite Jusqu'à l'Armistice, 22 Mai-4 Juin 1813*, (Paris, 1901), 2-3.

⁷⁰Koch, *Journal des Opérations du IIIe et Ve Corps en 1813*, 27.

⁷¹*Ibid*, 29.

deploy for battle unmolested by both cavalry and artillery fire. Kellermann's Cavalry also conducted reconnaissance operations to both guide the corps along road networks and locate enemy positions to attack. They conducted route reconnaissance for the 3rd Corps as it moved from to Bautzen allowing the corps to advance on two different routes simultaneously without losing time or cohesion. Following the seizure of Klix, Kellermann's cavalry determined the Russian positions at Glein and Preitz and enabled a rapid transition from the march to combat. These cavalry operations allowed the 3rd Corps to accomplish their missions on the battlefields of Lützen and Bautzen, but the cavalry also conducted combat operations that contributed to the destruction of elements of the Allied forces.

To assist the 3rd Corps in destroying the enemy, the advanced guard conducted several combined infantry-cavalry operations. Kellermann's leadership at Königswartha utilized both the infantry of the Italian Division along with Laboissière's cavalry to defeat Barclay de Tolly's attempt to split the French attack and delay the 3rd Corps crossing of the Spree River. The cavalry and infantry of the advanced guard, with the lead infantry regiments of Souham's 8th Division, destroyed the Russian position at Klix and removed the last obstacle for crossing the river to envelope the Allied right flank. The cavalry of the advanced guard also acted in direct support of infantry column attacks against Allied infantry. During the attacks of both Glein and Preitz, Kellermann's cavalry charged in direct support of Souham's Division to destroy defending Russian infantry and force the enemy to retreat in disorder. The rapid advance of Ney's corps into the Allied right flank was a testament to the cooperation between Souham's Division and Kellermann's cavalry. While there were no cavalry corps to envelop the enemy's strategic flank or continue an aggressive and rapid pursuit of the enemy after either Lützen or Bautzen, it is hard to imagine either victory without the courageous efforts of the small cavalry units leading the infantry corps.

Although the 3rd Corps and the *Grande Armée* continued to advance eastward during the last two weeks of May, no other major battles occurred between the Allied Armies and the French in Saxony.⁷² On 4 Jun, Napoleon signed an armistice at Plaswitz with the Allied powers that ended the spring campaigns of 1813. Napoleon wanted this armistice following his two victories because he thought it would re-establish his mastery of Eastern Europe and make up for the losses in prestige that resulted from his retreat from Russia. This armistice allowed both sides

⁷²Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, II, 263-65.

to reorganize and incorporate new units into their armies and to prepare for future operations. The results of this armistice cause constant debate among historians as to whether it was a good or bad idea for Napoleon.⁷³ Although Napoleon was able to incorporate additional units in the *Grande Armée*, the failure of his diplomacy multiplied his enemies. In the beginning of the Spring Campaign, Napoleon faced only the Russians and Prussians, but following the negotiations of the summer, Napoleon would face a coalition of all of the major powers of Europe by the end of August. To face this new coalition on the battlefield, Napoleon would lead a reorganized army that included several new cavalry corps. One of these newly formed corps was the 4th Polish Cavalry Corps under the command of Kellermann.

⁷³Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 866. Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, , 267-68, J. Christopher Herold, *The Age of Napoleon*, (New York, 1963), 377-79.

CHAPTER 2: THE LEIPZIG CAMPAIGN

Napoleon signed the armistice in June 1813 in an attempt to consolidate the political gains of his victories at Lützen and Bautzen. He anticipated a peace with Russia and Prussia that would at the very least re-establish the status quo ante bellum in Eastern Europe. However, the diplomatic situation rapidly deteriorated and by the end of August, the coalition against Napoleon had gained two new Allies: Sweden and Austria. While Napoleon conducted his failing diplomatic effort in Eastern Europe, he continued building and consolidating new units into his *Grande Armée*. The lack of cavalry so greatly constrained his operations in the spring that during the Armistice period Napoleon focused on building a larger cavalry corps. This cavalry would support the increasing possibility of operations in the fall campaign.

During the spring campaign, cavalry operations rarely took place at the divisional level and most often occurred at the brigade level. The operations of Kellermann in support of the 3rd Corps consisted of brigade level cavalry missions as he commanded Marshal Ney's advanced guard. The introduction of cavalry corps into the *Grande Armée* allowed Napoleon to incorporate larger cavalry operations that would have a strategic impact on the battlefield. One of these new formations was Kellermann's 4th Polish Cavalry Corps. A study of Kellermann's operations in the fall campaign of 1813 demonstrates a better understanding of the way in which Napoleon employed his cavalry. While Napoleon ordered Kellermann's cavalry to screen the French withdrawal to Leipzig in September, he ineffectively ordered them to secure his strategic flank of the French Army throughout August. He then ordered the attack that became a series of unsupported cavalry charges that failed to crush the Allied Army at the Battle of Wachau on 16 October. These unsupported attacks resulted not only in Napoleon's retreat from Leipzig, but also the destruction of a large part of the French Army.

Unfortunately, the operations and contributions of the 4th Polish Cavalry Corps have been ignored, making it one of the least studied organizations in the *Grande Armée* of 1813. In some ways, this made the study of the 4th Cavalry Corps and its commander ideal in illustrating elements of Napoleon's transformation of warfare. Napoleon formed the 4th Cavalry Corps from the large number of cavalymen that Prince Josef Poniatowski brought with him from Galicia as well as some Polish cavalry squadrons already serving with the French Army. This produced an organization with very little established history or reputation leaving few documents behind thus

making it difficult for historians conduct research. With Kellermann in command of this organization, it becomes even more difficult to trace their operations and accomplishments. While one of the most successful cavalry commanders of his time, Kellermann's operations were often confused with those of his father, or simply ignored.¹

The fact that the 4th Cavalry Corps was a Polish force under the command of a French officer also contributed to the lack of interest. The *Moniteur* would not focus attention on a unit with few Frenchmen, since French public interest was directed on French troops that were often family members. It was also more politically wise for Napoleon to mention only Prince Poniatowski's name in connection with Polish victories in order to increase Polish support for the *Grande Armée* and France in general. All of these reasons help to explain the lack of attention on this cavalry corps that was formed during the armistice of 1813.

Following the defeats of Lützen and Bautzen, the Allies agreed to an Armistice on 4 June. This armistice provided Napoleon time to accomplish several things. During the negotiations, he consolidated his gains in Saxony, reorganized his army, incorporated different units into the *Grande Armée*, and prepared for the fall campaigning season. One of the re-integrated units was the 8th Corps under Prince Josef Poniatowski. Following the retreat from Russia in 1812, he took the 8th Corps back to the Grand Duchy of Warsaw to recover from the rigors of the Russian Campaign.² A predominantly Polish force, Poniatowski and the 8th Corps found considerable support from his people. In April, when Napoleon sent orders for him to move his Corps to Galicia and conduct guerilla like activities against the Russians, he proved himself a loyal supporter of Napoleon.³ When the armistice provided the opportunity for the 8th Corps to reunite with the rest of the army, Napoleon ordered Poniatowski to move into Saxony to rejoin the *Grande Armée*. When he arrived in the Zittau area, he brought with him a large number of cavalrymen organized into provisional units. Some of this cavalry stayed with the 8th Corps, but the remainder formed a new reserve cavalry corps.

¹His father, Marshall Kellermann, commanded the Army of the Reserve during the Leipzig Campaign and generated a tremendous amount of correspondence with Napoleon and Berthier dealing with the training and organization of new conscripts and soldiers. This volumn of correspondence made it difficult to distinguish between one Kellermann and the other.

²Norvins, *Portefeuille de Mil Huit Cent Treize*, I, 159.

³Ibid., I, 246.

OPERATIONS AT ZITTAU

On 7 June, Napoleon authorized the creation of the 4th Cavalry Corps consisting of two cavalry divisions, one provided from units of the cavalry reserve, and the other formed from Polish cavalry squadrons at Zittau.⁴ Napoleon assigned four batteries of horse artillery to each division -- two Polish batteries and two French batteries. Napoleon named Kellermann to command the new Corps at the military camps at Koenigsheim and Reichau, in the Zittau area.⁵ This marked Kellermann's first Corps level command in the *Grande Armée* and it was a Corps composed primarily of foreign troops.

In many ways, Kellermann was extremely qualified to command a corps of foreign cavalymen. The Kellermann family had a long history of working with the Polish cavalry. François-Étienne's father, Marshal Kellermann reorganized the Polish cavalry from 1765-66, served in the Franco-German expeditionary force in 1771, and commanded the retreat from Cracow in 1772. François-Étienne started his military career as the aide of a French diplomat to America and was the negotiator with the British in the Convention of Cintra.⁶ This gave him experience in dealing with different cultures and negotiating with foreign officers. In 1805, he worked directly with the Bavarians in Marshal Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte's 1st Corps as it advanced to the battles of Ulm and Austerlitz and was familiar with multinational forces.⁷ The service with General Wrede's Bavarians in 1805 provided a wealth of experience in working with foreign troops.

In June, Napoleon decided upon the Zittau area as the site for the Polish military camp; it would serve several purposes during the reorganization and refitting of the *Grande Armée* during the armistice period. It allowed the 8th Corps and the 4th Cavalry Corps to benefit from new French equipment and provided an opportunity for them to become a standard corps in the French army.⁸ It would also allow these corps to train as an individual corps and as a two corps formation. At Zittau, Kellermann organized and trained his new corps. This was a longer process for the 4th Cavalry Corps than the experienced 8th Corps. Kellermann's new Corps consisted of

⁴Napoleon to Berthier, 7 June 1813, Napoleon, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier; Publiée par Ordre de l'Empereur Napoléon III*, (Paris, 1858-1869), No. 20098, XXVI, 429.

⁵Michel Sokolnicki, *Journal Historique des Operations Militaires de la 7^e Division de Cavalerie Légère Polonaise*, (Paris, 1814), 2.

⁶Six, *Les Généraux de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, II, 2.

⁷Thoumas, *Les Grands Cavaliers du Premier Empire*, I, 75.

⁸*Le Moniteur*, 27 June 1813.

two Polish Cavalry Divisions. The 7th Light Cavalry Division under General Michel Sokolnicki that included a brigade from General Jan Henryk Dombrowski's Division which fought at the Battle of Lützen and other provisional Polish units.⁹ The 8th Light Division under Prince Antoni Pawel Sulkowski represented a newly formed division entirely organized with units from the Polish cavalry Poniatowski brought from Zittau.¹⁰ These two divisions made up the 4th Cavalry Corps until its dissolution in October.

During the Armistice of Plasswitz, Poniatowski and Kellermann commanded together at the military camps around Zittau. Although the 8th and 4th Cavalry were separate units, they had a special relationship since they represented part of the Polish army.¹¹ The orders from both Napoleon and Berthier to the camp at Zittau went primarily to Prince Josef with references to both the 8th and 4th Cavalry Corps, and orders addressed to Kellermann.¹² The 8th Corps included a light cavalry division under the command of General Ulinski. For the majority of the time spent in the Zittau area, Kellermann exercised operational command of Ulinski's division. This command arrangement was not dictated by Imperial Headquarters, but was an arrangement between the commanders of the 4th Cavalry and the 8th Corps. The two Corps worked effectively both together and while conducting separate operations throughout the Leipzig Campaign.

The Polish military camp at Zittau also had a strategic objective because it allowed Napoleon to control movement through the Zittau defile from Saxony into Bohemia.¹³ The mountains that formed the northern border of Bohemia posed a significant barrier for the rapid movement of a large body of men. The Zittau area was one of these areas that formed a defile through which armies could move north to south. This movement was not important until after Austria defected from France. General Dumas, the Intendant General of the French Army in 1813, described the situation:

It seems that he (Napoleon) had no doubt of the neutrality of Austria, and that

⁹Eugene Labaume. *Histoire de la Chute de L'Empire de Napoleon Ornee de huit Plans ou Cartes, pour servir ai recit des Principales Batailles Livrees en 1813 et 1814* (Paris, 1820), 156.

¹⁰Agathon Jean François Fain, *Manuscrit de Mil Huit Cent Treize: Contenant Le Précis des Evénemens de Cette Année: Pour Servir à l'Histoire de l'Empereur Napoléon*, (Paris, 1824), 239.

¹¹Napoleon to Berthier, 20 August 1813, Napoleon, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, No. 20419, XXVI, 119.

¹²Berthier to Poniatowski, 31 August, Louis-Alexandre Berthier, *Registre d'ordres du Maréchal Berthier Pendant la Campagne de 1813*, (Paris, 1909), 119.

¹³Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, II, 284-85.

he hoped that his two victories at Lützen and Bautzen would give him such an advantage in the negotiations for peace, so that he could dictate the conditions. The event proved to be very different; Austria came forward in the character of an armed mediator...Napoleon considered this intervention, this armed neutrality as decidedly hostile.¹⁴

The defection of Austria made the Zittau defile strategically important as a means way to control the region and keep the Prussians and Russians separated from the Austrian army in Bohemia. Napoleon wanted to control the Zittau defile to enable him to concentrate the *Grande Armée* against one part of the Coalition armies at a time. The geographical importance of the Zittau defile was one of the reasons that Napoleon kept the 4th Polish Cavalry Corps dispersed along his strategic flank instead of concentrated with the rest of the French Army on the decisive battlefields of 1813.

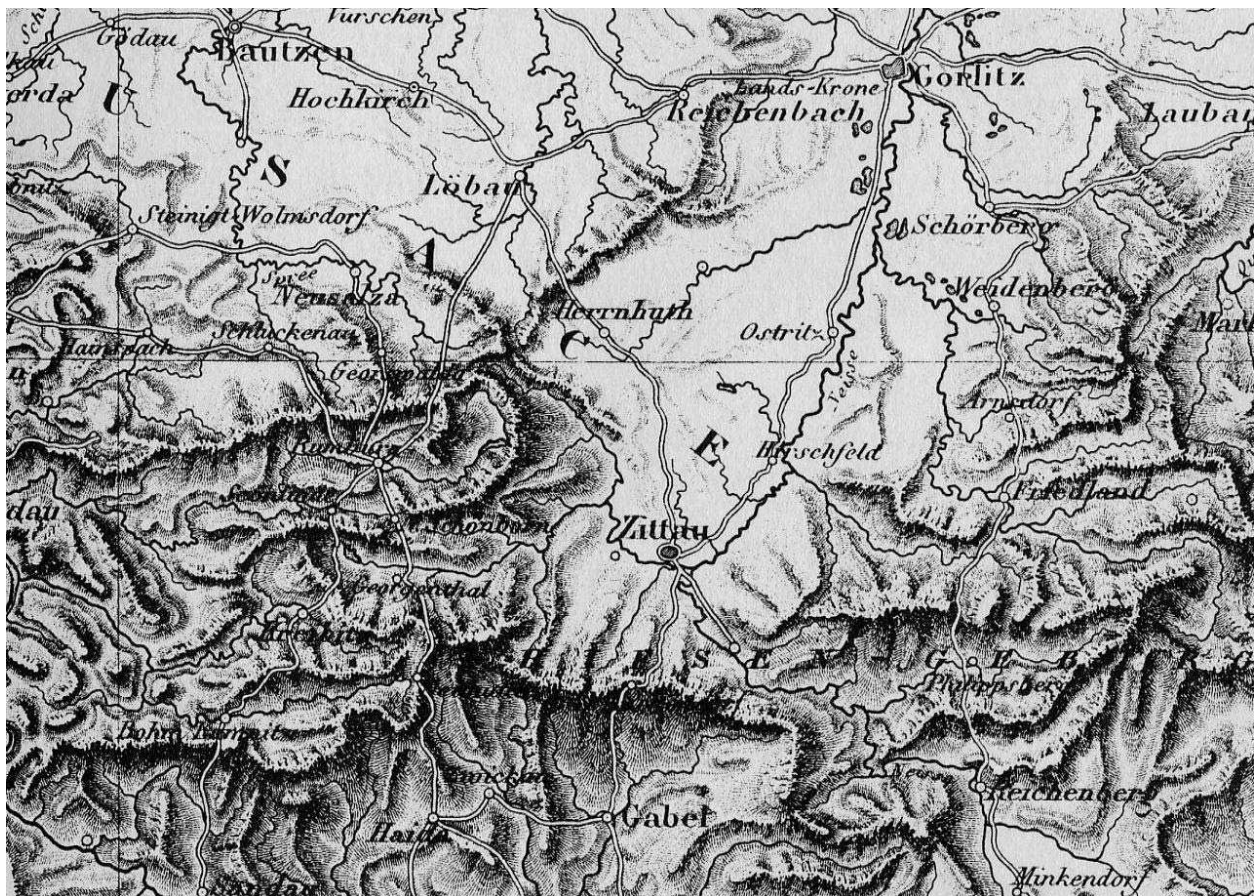


Figure 5: Zittau

¹⁴Dumas, *Memoirs of His Own Time*, 277.

When the armistice expired on 14 August, Kellermann remained in the camp at Zittau prepared for war. Napoleon ordered both the 8th Corps and the 4th Cavalry Corps to conduct reconnaissance and screening missions in the Zittau defile to detect Allied movement in that direction.¹⁵ While Poniatowski occupied the town of Gabel in Bohemia, Kellermann established cavalry detachments both north of the Zittau defile at Friedland, and south of the defile at Reichenboch.¹⁶ Napoleon proved vigilant as ever about the possibility of a Russian descent into Bohemia. The Allies knew of the strategic potential of the defile as well. General Sir Robert Wilson attempted to convince the Russians and the Austrians of the importance in establishing a link-up through the Zittau defile. He advised the Russians that the “best thing we could do would be to detach more aid to Blücher, or threaten a descent by the pass of Zittau on the other side of the Elbe while we struck a blow in Bavaria with the Corps now on that frontier.”¹⁷ In fact, he received confirmation from General Karl Philipp Schwarzenberg that 60,000 Austrians would move into the vicinity of Zittau to unite with a Russian army.¹⁸ It was only the Battle of Dresden that prevented such an operation in the Zittau area.

By 20 August, Napoleon saw no danger of an immediate Austrians and Russians descent into Bohemia or an Allied link-up through Zittau. Aside from cavalry skirmishes between the patrols of Sokolnicki’s Division and Austrian cavalry, there were no major troop movements along that portion of the Bohemian frontier.¹⁹ Napoleon quickly took advantage of the exposed position of Schwarzenberg’s Army of Bohemia and consolidated the *Grande Armée* at Dresden. This concentration at Dresden included the 2nd Corps under Marshal Claude Victor and a division of the Imperial Guard under General Lefèbvre-Desnoëttes, stationed by Napoleon within supporting distance of the Zittau defile. Napoleon also ordered a division from Kellermann’s 4th Cavalry Corps to concentrate at Dresden, which moved west with Victor’s II Corps.²⁰

¹⁵Berthier to Poniatowski, 4 September 1813, Berthier, *Registre d'Ordres du Maréchal Berthier*, 152.

¹⁶Dimitri i Petrovich Buturlin, *Tableau de La Campagne d'Automne de 1813, en Allemagne, depuis la rupture de l'armistice jusqu'au passage du Rhin par l'armée française*, (Paris, 1817), 10.

¹⁷Wilson, *Private Diary of Travels*, 108.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁹Sokolnicki, *Journal Historique des Operations Militaires de la 7^e Division*, 5.

²⁰Norvins, *Portefeuille de Mil Huit Cent Treize*, II, 303.

Kellermann left Sokolnicki's Division to patrol the Zittau area while leading the rest of the corps to Dresden.²¹ When he arrived at Dresden, Kellermann's Cavalry formed part of Ney's cavalry reserve.²² On 26 August, the Allies outnumbered Napoleon nearly two to one on the battlefield at Dresden. The French infantry conducted limited attacks against the Allied line, engaging as much of the Allied army as possible. It was not until 27 August that Napoleon achieved a numerical superiority with the arrival during the afternoon and evening of the 1st Cavalry Corps under the Command of General Marie-Victor Latour-Maubourg.²³ Murat's cavalry charges on the enemies left flank ensured the defeat of the Allies and forced Schwarzenberg to retreat back into Bohemia. The 4th Cavalry Corps did not take part in the cavalry attack that broke the Allied left flank and was not engaged in the pursuit of the defeated Allies. Vandamme's 1st Corps undertook the pursuit of the Austrians and advanced into an ambush that resulted in an Allied victory at Kulm on 30 August.²⁴

Napoleon used the 4th Polish Cavalry Corps to secure his strategic flank throughout the month of August and when he decided to concentrate at Dresden to deal a decisive blow against Schwarzenberg, he ordered Kellermann to bring elements of the 4th Polish Cavalry Corps to Dresden. But then he kept his forces dispersed, not employing Kellermann either in the great cavalry attack on the enemies left flank, or in the pursuit of the enemy after the battle. While the terrain south of Dresden was too mountainous for the effective deployment of cavalry, one of the factors that led to Vandamme's defeat at the Battle of Kulm was a lack of cavalry. Instead of supporting the pursuit of Schwarzenberg's Army, Napoleon ordered the 4th Cavalry Corps back to Zittau to resume its support of the 8th Corps to protect his strategic flank.

Simultaneously with the French victory at Dresden, the Battle on the Katzback took place on 26 August between the French under Marshal Macdonald and the Prussians under General Blücher. While Napoleon defeated the Allies at Dresden, Blücher defeated the French at Katzback and forced Macdonald westward.²⁵ This defeat made the Zittau defile more important than ever because the Allied army under Blücher began pushing west toward Dresden. Napoleon

²¹François-Étienne Kellermann, *Journal des Operations des 4th Cavalrie Corps*, France, Archives de la Guerre, Service historique de l'armée de la terre, Château de Vincennes, MSS, [hereafter Service historique], 1M687.

²²Buturlin, *Tableau de La Campagne d'Automne de 1813*, 32.

²³Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, II, 296-97.

²⁴Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 914.

²⁵Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, II, 303.

still feared an Allied descent into Bohemia and kept Kellermann at Zittau to protect against this Allied link-up, while at the same time he ordered Poniatowski to move north to support the right wing of Macdonald's retreating army.²⁶ Moving Poniatowski's Corps north created a French line from the Katzback to Zittau and prevented a possible Prussian penetration.

Napoleon ordered Kellermann to maintain cavalry patrols from Zittau to the right of Poniatowski's 8th Corps in the vicinity of Reichenbach. Kellermann ordered General Uminski to resume direct support of the 8th Corps.²⁷ The rest of the 4th Cavalry Corps remained in position conducting patrols from Zittau to Friedland with the remaining two divisions.²⁸ Kellermann had limited contact with the enemy throughout this period. The contact was comprised mainly of cavalry skirmishes in the area around Gabel in northern Bohemia. It was not until Ney's defeat by the Allied army under Bulow and Bernadotte at Dennewitz on 6 September that the position at Zittau became an exposed flank of the *Grande Armée*. After Dennewitz, Blücher advanced his Army of Silesia directly west towards Dresden while Schwarzenberg began to cross the mountain frontier of Bohemia, threatening Dresden from the south. On 4 September, Kellermann ordered Sokolnicki to withdraw the last of his cavalry patrols around Gabel and concentrate with the rest of the corps at Zittau.²⁹ By 7 September, both the 8th Corps and the 4th Cavalry Corps had concentrated around Zittau and began to move north to link up with Macdonald's retreating army.³⁰ This movement northward signaled the beginning of a retreat that would end in the Leipzig area.

²⁶ Napoleon to Berthier, 3 September 1813, Napoleon, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, No. 20510, XXVI, 194-96, Berthier to Poniatowski, 31 August 1813, Berthier, *Registre d'Ordres du Maréchal Berthier*, 129.

²⁷ Berthier to Margaron, 18 August 1813, Berthier, *Registre d'Ordres du Maréchal Berthier*, 47.

²⁸ Berthier to Macdonald, 5 September 1813, *Ibid.*, 153.

²⁹ Sokolnicki, *Journal Historique des Operations Militaires de la 7^e Division*, 11.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.



Figure 6: Stolpen to Dresden

The continued Allied advance from the east and south made the advanced position at Zittau strategically untenable. On 10 September, Napoleon ordered Poniatowski and Kellermann to move toward the town of Stolpen, halfway between Dresden and Bautzen.³¹ Napoleon concentrated the main body of the army around Dresden while Ney maintained a position at Wittenberg, north of Leipzig. On 13 September, Sokolnicki's Division occupied the town of Stolpen while the remainder of the 4th Cavalry Corps occupied Colditz.³² During this movement, Kellermann's Corps provided security and reconnaissance for Poniatowski's Corps. From 19 through 23 September, both corps remained stationary in the area surrounding Stolpen. They skirmished with Allied cavalry units and maintained the lines of communication toward the rest

³¹Buturlin, *Tableau de La Campagne d'Automne de 1813*, 76.

³²Kellermann, *Journal des Operations des 4th Cavalrie Corps*, Service historique, 1M687.

of the army.³³ By 24 September, Napoleon began to concentrate the *Grande Armée* around Leipzig. At this time, the 4th Cavalry Corps and the 8th Corps became part of Murat's army with orders to maintain contact with Schwarzenberg's Army in Bohemia and to delay his march on Leipzig. Napoleon reinforced Ney to resist the attack from the armies of Blücher and Bernadotte. Thus the Battle of Leipzig began to take shape with a strong Allied attack from both the north and south.

A study of the operations of Kellermann and the 4th Polish Cavalry Corps from August through the middle of September showed that they did very little to influence any of the decisive battles fought during that period. While their operations to secure the strategic flank of the French Army were important in shaping Napoleon's strategic battlefield, these operations kept almost 25% of the cavalry available detached from making a direct impact in any battle. Even when they were in a position to assist at Dresden, they were kept in reserve until after the battle and then immediately sent back to Zittau to continue conducting patrols. One of the hallmarks of Napoleon's early battlefield victories was his ability to concentrate his forces with speed and precision to create numerical superiority on the battlefield while he operated at a numerical disadvantage in the campaign. Napoleon was always very careful to screen his strategic flanks, but he managed to bring those troops to the battlefield at the right time. His inability to achieve concentration with the 4th Cavalry Corps demonstrates a deliberate pattern of dispersion throughout the operations of 1813.

Between the withdrawals from the Zittau defile through the Battle of Wachau on 16 October, Kellermann conducted more traditional cavalry operations. He effectively transitioned from patrolling Napoleon's strategic flank to maintaining a position between Schwarzenberg's Army of Bohemia and the concentrating French Army at Leipzig. The operations of the 4th Cavalry Corps not only maintained contact with the enemy, but also delayed their advance on Leipzig from the south and gained Napoleon more time to complete his concentration. This period constituted the most effective use of Kellermann's Cavalry during the entire Leipzig Campaign.

³³Sokolnicki, *Journal Historique des Operations Militaires de la 7^e Division*, 22.

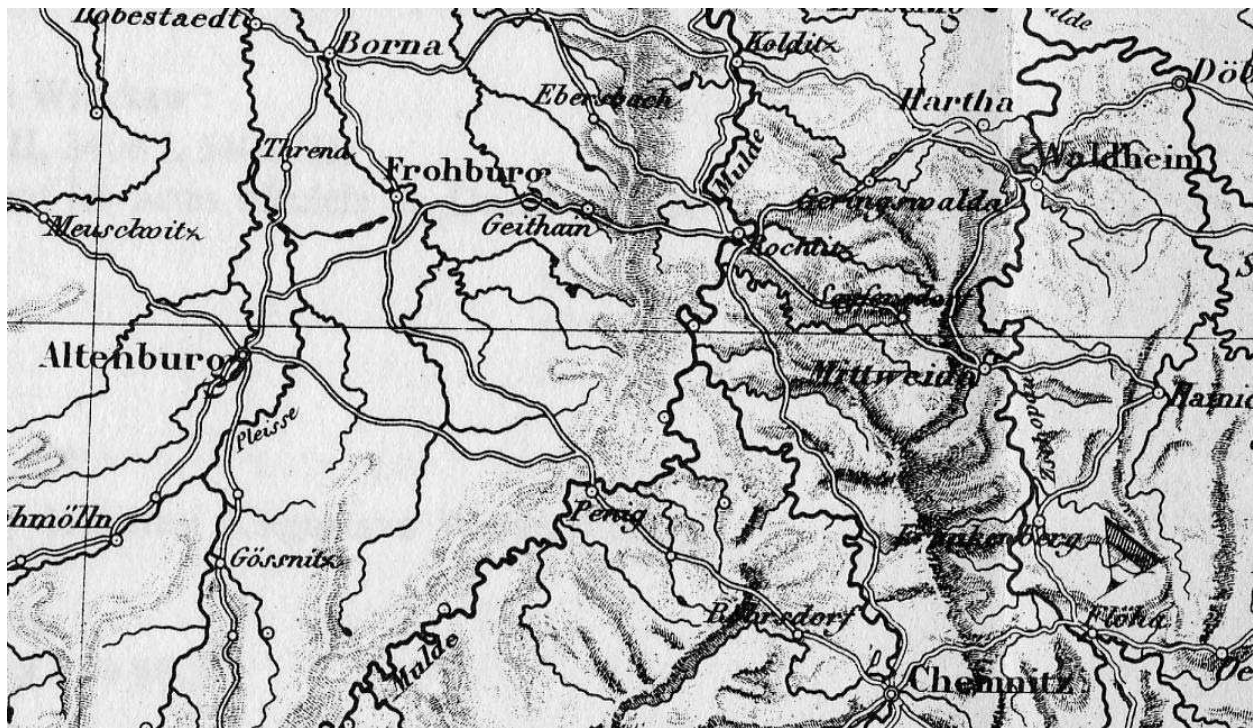


Figure 7: Chemnitz and Altenburg

By 4 October, Kellermann and Poniatowski passed through the Chemnitz area in route to join Murat's command and screened the Allied army to the south. The next day, the two corps arrived in the Altenburg area south of Leipzig between Schwarzenberg's Allied Army and the rest of the *Grande Armée*.³⁴ Poniatowski's 8th Corps stayed around Altenburg while Kellermann's 4th Cavalry Corps continued to screen the enemy. Sokolnicki's Division occupied the town of Penig and prepared to screen along the Mulde River.³⁵ Kellermann retained the rest of the Corps north of the river to respond quickly to any attempt by the Allied army to ford the river and advance toward Leipzig. The Allied Army advanced north from Bohemia in several columns, each taking a different pass through the difficult mountains that separate Bohemia from Saxony.³⁶ On 6 October, Kellermann and the light cavalry of the 2nd Corps conducted an attack across the Floh river to the east of Chemnitz to drive the advanced guard of an Allied Column back south across the river.³⁷ The purpose of this attack was to disrupt the reconnaissance and

³⁴Buturlin, *Tableau de La Campagne d'Automne de 1813*, 100-02.

³⁵Vaudoncourt, *Histoire de La Guerre Soutenue Par les Français en Allemagne en 1813*, II, 198.

³⁶Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, II, 325.

³⁷Norvins, *Portefeuille de Mil Huit Cent Treize*, II, 376.

forward movement of the Allied Army. Attacking during a river crossing operations was especially effective and Kellermann drove the enemy advanced guard back across the river.

At the same time that Kellermann attacked at the Floh River, another Allied column approached Sokolnicki at Penig. He stopped the Allies from crossing the river throughout the day, but sent to Kellermann for reinforcements to continue to hold Penig.³⁸ Kellermann immediately marched the rest of the Corps back to Penig to delay Schwarzenberg's crossing of the Mulde throughout 7 and 8 October.³⁹ In response to this pressure, Schwarzenberg began advancing units on both the right and left flank of the 4th Cavalry Corps. On 9 October, Murat ordered the 4th Cavalry Corps to withdraw towards Leipzig to avoid becoming enveloped.⁴⁰ Kellermann deployed the 4th Cavalry Corps effectively against the advanced guard elements of Schwarzenberg's main body and delayed the Allied crossing for three days. Despite the delay, the Allies continued to advance to the north and by 14 October, the French formed a defensive line around the south of Leipzig.

From the beginning of October, Kellermann's health began to fail. The stress of the campaigning of 1813 began to show on a man retired or semi retired for the better part of three years. On 10 October, Kellermann's ailments began to affect his ability to continue to command. He complained of "being tormented with violent pain and anguish resulting from a chronic malignancy."⁴¹ Later that day he turned command over to General Sokolnicki and reported to Imperial Headquarters at Leipzig to convalesce. On 11 October, both Poniatowski and Murat confirmed the appointment and the 4th Cavalry Corps prepared for operations for the upcoming battle.⁴² Although no longer in command, Kellermann would have one more role to play in the Battle of Leipzig.

BATTLE OF LEIPZIG

The Battle of Leipzig constituted the first time in 1813 that Napoleon gathered a large concentration of cavalry units for use at the operational and tactical level. These units could perform a number of different functions to support the battlefield, and Napoleon decided to

³⁸Sokolnicki, *Journal Historique des Operations Militaires de la 7^e Division*, 36-7.

³⁹Vaudoncourt, *Histoire de La Guerre Soutenue Par les Français en Allemagne en 1813*, II, 198.

⁴⁰Buturlin, *Tableau de La Campagne d'Automne de 1813*, 102

⁴¹Kellermann, *Journal des Operations des 4th Cavalrie Corps*, Service historique, 1M687.

⁴²Sokolnicki, *Journal Historique des Operations Militaires de la 7^e Division*, 53.

employ his cavalry corps in the decisive attack of the Battle of Leipzig. The manner in which he ordered this attack against the Allied forces approaching Leipzig from the south demonstrated a fundamentally different way of utilizing the different combat arms of his armies: the infantry, cavalry and artillery. Napoleon ordered Murat's Army to be the main effort of his attack. On 15 October, Blücher occupied a position to the northwest of Leipzig with 64,000 troops while two Allied armies threatened Leipzig from the south, one under Schwarzenberg with 30,000 troops and one under Barclay de Tolly with 84,000.⁴³ Although Napoleon had only 120,000 men at Leipzig capable of offensive operations, he occupied the central position. From his position at Leipzig, he could concentrate his army against an attack from one direction and defeat it in detail. After destroying the first Allied army, Napoleon could change directions and destroy the second Allied army.⁴⁴ Napoleon used this strategy throughout his career to destroy Coalitions that outnumbered him in total manpower; he would concentrate his entire army against a portion of the enemy thus creating numerical superiority on the battlefield against a numerically superior coalition.⁴⁵ Napoleon issued orders and made preparations that would create numerical superiority against the Allied units in contact with the main French defensive line.

During the night of 15 October, Napoleon was in contact with two of the three Allied armies, the one under Blücher with 64,000 troops to the North and the army under Barclay with 84,000 troops to the south. Napoleon had no knowledge of the rest of Schwarzenberg's army, 30,000 troops to the south of Barclay de Tolly or the additional Allied reinforcements approaching from the east. Aware of only two enemy armies, Napoleon decided to concentrate his attack against Barclay de Tolly in the south. He planned to engage the entire enemy army with his infantry while massing his cavalry reserves opposite the enemy's left flank. Unable to reinforce his flanks, the enemy line would crumble under the weight of the cavalry attack and the French reserves would advance to achieve decisive victory against the Allied army to the south. Napoleon made Murat's predominantly cavalry army the main effort in this battle.⁴⁶ This was a change from the way Napoleon had employed combined cavalry and infantry attacks to disrupt the enemy in past operations. This difference had a detrimental effect on the battlefield at Wachau the following day.

⁴³Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, 347-48.

⁴⁴Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare In The Age of Napoleon*, 149-50.

⁴⁵Robert B. Holtman, *The Napoleonic Revolution*, (Philadelphia, 1967), 41-43.

⁴⁶Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, II, 335.

On 16 October, the French occupied a line from the town of Markleeberg to Wachau to Liebertwolkwitz. Throughout the morning, the Allied army advanced against the French line, by noon the Allied army deployed in a line in front of the French with no reserve visible to reinforce their lines. This was exactly the situation Napoleon anticipated in his plan. He ordered Murat to lead the entire cavalry reserve of the *Grande Armée*, a total of almost 10,000 cavalymen, in an attack aimed at destroying the Allied left flank at the town of Wachau.⁴⁷ Marshal Pierre Augereau's 9th Corps constituted the infantry support for Murat's attack. His infantry would follow the cavalry charges forcing the Allied lines to shatter and give the French a chance to achieve a decisive victory at Leipzig.

Murat decided to split his cavalry into two wings and to charge with one wing on either side of Wachau. He would lead the charge to the left of Wachau with Latour-Mauberg's Cavalry Corps and a part of the Guard Cavalry.⁴⁸ Although he was in Leipzig to recuperate, Kellermann was the only high ranking cavalry general to command the other wing of Murat's charge. Murat placed Kellermann in command of the charge on the right side of Wachau, which consisted of the 4th Cavalry Corps, the 5th Cavalry Corps under General Claude-Pierre Pajol, and a division of the Young Guard Cavalry under General Louis-Michel Letort.⁴⁹ This two pronged cavalry attack constituted Napoleon's primary attempt to destroy Barclay de Tolly's Army.

When Murat launched the attack, the initial charge was a complete success. Kellermann's wing of cavalry routed the Russian infantry division under General Lewachauw.⁵⁰ He charged along the Pliessee River through the towns of Croswitz and Grosbern and gained a position to continue the attack on Wachau from the rear.⁵¹ The terrain to the south of Wachau consisted of a slight incline creating a ridgeline running just to the south of Liebertwolkwitz. As Kellermann prepared to charge up this ridge, he attacked the Russian cavalry division of General Nositz, which halted the fatigued cavalymen of the 4th Polish Cavalry Corps on their way up the ridgeline.⁵² At this point, Kellermann had achieved his objective and was only waiting for Augereau's Corps to complete the penetration of the enemies' lines. Meanwhile, he continued to

⁴⁷ Beauvais de Préau, *Victoires, Conquêtes, Désastres, Revers et Guerres*, XXII, 152.

⁴⁸ Norvins, *Portefeuille de Mil Huit Cent Treize*, II, 391.

⁴⁹ Buturlin, *Tableau de La Campagne d'Automne de 1813*, 116.

⁵⁰ Beauvais de Préau, *Victoires, Conquêtes, Désastres, Revers et Guerres*, XXII, 132.

⁵¹ Buturlin, *Tableau de La Campagne d'Automne de 1813*, 116.

⁵² G. R. Gleig, *The Leipsic Campaign*, (London, 1852), 216.

consolidate both the 4th and the 5th Cavalry Corps for another attempt to capture the ridgeline. It was during this pause in the battle that the Allied reserves made their presence felt on the battlefield.

The French cavalry attack broke the Allied lines between Lieberwolkwitz and Wachau, but the timely arrival of Schwarzenberg's reserves prevented Augereau's Corps from following up the cavalry attack and completing the route of the enemy. The lead elements under the command of the Prince Phillip von Hesse-Homberg attacked the 4th Cavalry Corps cavalry in the flank and forced them to retreat from the heights of Wachau along with the rest of Kellermann's cavalry wing.⁵³ This effectively ended Kellermann's service in 1813. Following the charge, his health relapsed so he was sent back to Paris not only for rest and recuperation, but also to prepare for active service again in the following spring. Murat's charge met with a similar fate and Augereau's Corps had to stop the Austrian counterattack. After a hard day of fighting, the French returned to almost the exact positions they occupied on the morning of 16 October with the exception that now the French Army was significantly weaker and the Allied Army significantly stronger.

Strategically, Napoleon's plan on 16 October was one that had brought victory to the French on countless battlefields. Following the operations of the 4th Polish Cavalry Corps helps explain the reasons for the French failure to defeat the Allied Armies. Kellermann exercised operational control of two cavalry corps that accomplished their tactical mission. He broke through the Allied line, charged to the rear of the enemy position, attacked the enemy at Wachau and created the conditions for Augereau's Corps to complete the destruction of the Allied line. The failure of the French Army to destroy the Allied army at the Battle of Wachau was a result of the way in which Napoleon employed his cavalry forces. Throughout his early career, Napoleon continually launched coordinated attacks that combined cavalry flank attacks with the pressure of infantry column attacks as well as direct artillery support. It was the combination of all three arms that provided Napoleon with victory on so many battlefields. The Battle of Wachau relied on the cavalry charge to penetrate the line by itself with the infantry following along and providing no support during the actual attack. This allowed Schwartzenberg to

⁵³Beauvais de Préau, *Victoires, Conquêtes, Désastres, Revers et Guerres*, XXII, 135.

effectively use his reserve to prevent the defeat of the Allied line, ending Napoleon's last opportunity to achieve victory in 1813.⁵⁴

On the surface, it would appear as though Kellermann and the 4th Polish Cavalry Corps did nothing to influence the battles of 1813. They failed to make a decisive impact on any battlefield, and in fact only reached one battle in the entirety of their existence. This could call into question the value of a study of the 4th Cavalry Corps except for the fact that their operations provided a deeper insight into the way Napoleon's warfare changed during the decline of the Empire. Kellermann and the 4th Cavalry Corps accomplished every mission they received in 1813. They successfully patrolled the Zittau defile that constituted Napoleon's strategic flank, concentrated at Dresden, and returned to Zittau. Kellermann effectively changed from patrolling the strategic flank to maintaining a cavalry screen between Schwarzenberg's Army and Leipzig and leading a major cavalry attack at Wachau. And yet with all of these successful missions, Leipzig was one of Napoleon's most decisive defeats. The types of orders Kellermann received throughout 1813 played a critical role in his defeat. Napoleon kept his cavalry, which constituted almost a quarter of the cavalry of the *Grande Armée*, dispersed throughout the majority of the fall campaign and when it was concentrated with the rest of the French Army, he ordered it to execute an unsupported cavalry attack that was extremely susceptible to counterattack by the Allied reserve. Napoleon made his reputation through rapid concentration on the battlefield as well as masterful use of coordinated attacks against enemies who consistently dispersed their forces and utilized very rigid and linear formations. Napoleon's defeat at Leipzig in 1813 was the culmination of a change in the way he conducted warfare. Suddenly in 1813, it was Napoleon who consistently dispersed his forces and executed very rigid uncoordinated attacks while the Allies concentrated their forces and coordinated the various Allied armies into a single attack.

⁵⁴Petre, *Napoleon's Last Campaign in Germany, 1813*, 338.

CHAPTER 3: THE 1814 CAMPAIGN

Following their defeat at Leipzig, the *Grand Armée* retreated west towards France until they crossed the Rhine in November 1813. The armies of the Sixth Coalition remained in close pursuit of the fleeing French Army while they gathered their forces for an invasion of France. There was no doubt by 1814 that Napoleon's star and the First Empire was in decline. There are many reasons for this decline that focused on the composition of his armies, the growing capabilities of his enemies, the fatigue of the French Marshals and generals, and even Napoleon's lack of energy or failing genius.¹ While events in 1814 were arguably inevitable, it was bitterly contested at the operational and tactical level. A study of the *Grand Armée* at this revealed an army capable of executing difficult maneuvers that defeated elements of the Allied Armies on numerous occasions.

Although the remaining units of the *Grand Armée* struggled to maintain their cohesion and discipline, the French cavalry had an especially difficult time. The two years of defeat in 1812 and 1813 devastated cavalry units of both men and horses. Yet despite these difficulties, the French cavalry performed extremely well against the advancing Allied Armies. A study of cavalry operations at the corps level provides an analysis of both their capabilities. The operations of Kellermann's 6th Cavalry Corps in the 1814 campaign demonstrated two very important facts: that the French cavalry still maintained a high level of effectiveness and that they were capable of the decentralized operations that were typical of the French Army of the early Napoleonic period. This reappraisal of the capabilities of the cavalry contradicted many of the assertions of the traditional interpretation of Napoleon's forces throughout the decline of the empire.

¹There are many historians with widely differing opinions as to the reasons for Napoleon's defeat; here is a short list of the best works on the subject. Chandler considers the Campaign of 1814 a foregone conclusion due to the ruin of the French economy, manpower pool, and the weakening of the will to victory see Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 945-46. Rothenburg agrees with Chandler as far as the physical condition of France but places a large part of the Allied victory with the increased leadership and abilities of the Allied armies see Rothenburg, *The Art of Warfare In The Age of Napoleon*, 58. Yorck von Wartenburg points to a weakness in France's institutions and Napoleon's genius deteriorated by sickness and self-conceit see Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, 374.

There existed many detailed histories of units, both divisions and corps, and their operations in 1814, but none focus on Kellermann's 6th Cavalry Corps. In many ways, this corps demonstrated both the capabilities of the French cavalry as well as the types of operations they executed in 1814. The 6th Cavalry Corps was a new unit composed of existing cavalry units, from troops transferred from the Army of Spain and from the Army of Reserve. Napoleon ordered the creation of the corps after what is often described as the "Six Days' Campaign of 1814" or the operations of 9-14 February 1814 that retained the Napoleonic genius.² This corps had no long tradition, was not part of the victorious French Army of early February, and was not designed to be an elite organization. In some ways this makes the 6th Cavalry Corps typifies the whole French Army.

The 6th Cavalry Corps' commander added to the representative nature of the corps. Kellermann commanded the 4th Polish Cavalry Corps until 10 October 1813 when failing health forced him to give up his command. The Battle of Leipzig and the subsequent retreat of the French Army destroyed the 4th Cavalry Corps as a unit and thus Kellermann found himself back in Paris in December 1813.³ His career was similar to many who commanded troops during the Battle of Leipzig and who prepared for the expected Allied invasion of France in 1814. Following the Six Days Campaign of early February, Napoleon gave Kellermann command of a cavalry corps consisting of General Samuel-François L'Hertier's Division and the newly arrived division under General Anne-François Trelliard from the Army of Spain. Kellermann's Corps became part of Victor's command on the night before he issued orders for the seizure of the Allied advanced guard at Mormant in a secondary operation.

The 6th Cavalry Corps achieved a surprising amount of success in 1814 given the ad-hoc nature of the Corps and the numerical superiority of the Allied armies. Kellermann took command just one day before the successful combined infantry-cavalry attack on the advanced guard of General Peter Wittgenstein's Corps at the town of Mormant on 18 February. Kellermann's Corps then led the immediate pursuit of Schwarzenberg's Army culminating in the destruction of the enemy's rear guard on 24 February. When Schwarzenberg began the Allied attack at Bar-sur-Aube on 27 Feb, Kellermann launched an attack across the river eastward that

²Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, II, 393, Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 975-76.

³Six, *Les Généraux de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, II, 2-4.

not only to allowed Marshal Nicolas Charles Oudinot's Army to conduct a disciplined retreat, but also disrupted the Allied crossing, resulting in a loss of three days. Kellermann's cavalry operations enabled Marshal Jacques Étienne Macdonald's Army to maintain a position between the Allies and Paris from 28 February through 13 March allowing Napoleon to attempt to destroy Blücher's Army of Silesia. The operations from 13-24 March facilitated Macdonald's strategic envelopment of the enemy's flank in order to threaten Schwarzenberg's lines of communication. These successful operations demonstrated the capability of the French Army to conduct complicated and difficult operations despite the lack of resources and manpower, that were as effective against the Allies of 1814 as they were against those of earlier Coalitions.

THE ATTACK AT MORMANT



Figure 8: Mormant, Coulommiers, and Nangis

An analysis of the capabilities of the Kellermann's Corps begins with an understanding of its composition and the units in its table of organization. The way in which Napoleon had created the corps reflected the way in which he created and reorganized the majority of the French Army in 1814. The 6th Cavalry Corps formed on the march towards Napoleon's concentration at Guignes prior to the Battle of Mormant. From the beginning of February, Kellermann commanded only General L'Heritiers' Division, conducting screening operations around Cummeriers.⁴ Kellermann supported General Guillaume Philibert Duhesme as he attempted to screen the Ste Marguerite area from Allied reconnaissance.⁵ In the early morning hours of 15 Feb, Napoleon ordered a concentration at Guignes for an attack on Schwarzenberg's Army.⁶ Kellermann ordered L'Heritier to march to Guignes where he incorporated General Trelliard's Division, comprised of troops from the Army of Spain, into the 6th Cavalry Corps.⁷ This concentration was an impressive accomplishment as both divisions marched for most of 16 February to unite at Guignes in time for operations with the rest of the French Army. L'Heritiers Division fought two small combats and marched 45 kilometers over a 17-hour period and Trelliard's Division marched 44 kilometers in 15 hours.⁸ It demonstrated several things about Kellermann's Corps. First, as a corps level organization, they had very little time to become a cohesive unit. There was no time to train, or do more than meet with the division commanders and issue orders for the next day. He, like so many of the units of the French Army in 1814, would have to build an effective unit on the battlefield. Second, the troops of the newly formed 6th Cavalry Corps appeared capable of enduring the rigors of Napoleonic maneuver to insure victory. Marching almost fifty kilometers in roughly fifteen hours was a difficult and exhausting task for both men and horses. These troops were not only capable of marching those great distances, but also of being able to conduct offensive operations against the Schwarzenberg's Army the next day.

⁴Napoleon to Marmont, 7 February 1814, *Correspondence de Napoleon I^{er}*, No. 21203, XXVII, 147.

⁵John Fane Westmorland, *Memoir of The Operations of The Allied Armies Under Prince Schwarzenberg, and Marshal Blucher, During the Latter End of 1813, and The Year 1814*, (London, 1822), 85.

⁶Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, II, 394

⁷Koch, *Mémoires Pour Servir a l'Histoire de La Campagne de 1814*, I, 306.

⁸Picard, *La Cavalerie Dans les Guerres de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, II, 234.

In order to protect Paris and gain time to reinforce his field army, Napoleon decided on offensive operations against Schwarzenberg's Army of Bohemia on 17 February. As this army advanced into France, it pursued the Corps of Marshal's Oudinot and Claude Victor as they retreated west towards Paris. To meet this threat, Napoleon concentrated the entire available strength of the French Army, some 60,000 men, to stop the Allied advance on Paris.⁹ His victories against Blücher's Army of Silesia at Champaubert, Montmirail and Étoges left only two corps in front of Schwarzenberg's Army. Schwarzenberg ordered his three corps into a line with Eugene of Wurtemberg's Austrians at Montereau, General Karl Phillip Wrede's Bavarians at Donne-Marie, and Wittgenstein's Russians at Provins.¹⁰ Instead of moving to Provins, Wittgenstein advanced to Nagis and ordered his advanced guard under Count Pavel Pahalen to occupy Mormant. Wittgenstein misunderstood Schwarzenberg's orders to withdraw and occupied Mormant in an attempt to maintain contact with the French.¹¹ Schwarzenberg realized this situation on the night of the 16 February and ordered Wittgenstein to draw closer to the rest of the Army on the next day.¹² Pahalen executed the retreat in good order for several hours in the early morning when Victor's combined arms enveloped the Wittgenstein's advanced guard.

Napoleon ordered Victor to take command of the troops in the Guignes area to destroy the Allied troops positioned at Mormant. This attack was a perfect example of a coordinated attack using both infantry and cavalry to envelop and destroy an enemy force. At 6:30 a.m. of 17 February, Victor marched against Mormant with General Édouard Jean Milhaud's 5th Cavalry Corps on the left and Kellermann's 6th Cavalry Corps on the right.¹³ The plan was for Victor's 2nd Corps to conduct a frontal infantry attack through the town of Marmont while the two cavalry corps enveloped both flanks of the enemy.¹⁴ Kellermann maneuvered his corps around the enemy flank passing through the town of Villeneuve.¹⁵ He penetrated the enemy cavalry screen of Cossacks and Uhlans protecting the advanced guard and fell on the ill formed squares of the

⁹Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 978.

¹⁰Aleksandr Ivanovich Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, *History of The Campaign in France in The Year 1814*, (Cambridge, 1992), 149.

¹¹Westmorland, *Memoir of The Operations of The Allied Armies*, 140.

¹²Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, *History of The Campaign in France in The Year 1814*, 150.

¹³Henry Lachouque, *Napoléon en 1814 : "Des victoires sans soldats"*, (S.I., 1955), 227.

¹⁴Vaudoncourt, *Histoire des Campagnes de 1814 et 1815, en France*, I, 371.

¹⁵Picard, *La Cavalerie Dans les Guerres de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, II, 233.

Russian infantry.¹⁶ This envelopment, combined with the pressure of Victor's frontal attack, forced Pahlen's advanced guard to flee to the east with the loss of approximately 2,000 men and 10 guns.¹⁷ The Allied advanced guard was unable to withstand the power of a frontal infantry attack combined with flanking cavalry charges.

This engagement demonstrated two things about the forces fighting in 1814. First, the French could still conduct coordinated cavalry-infantry attacks and complicated maneuvers in the presence of the enemy. The double envelopment was a difficult maneuver, not normally executed by inexperienced or incapable troops. Second, the Allied troops were just as susceptible to defeat from coordinated attacks and flank assaults in 1814 than they had been throughout the Napoleonic wars. They were no better prepared to withstand Kellermann's attack at Marmont than the Austrians at Marengo in 1800. The French squadrons continued to prove their capabilities as they adjusted rapidly from victory over Pahlen's advanced guard directly to a pursuit of Schwarzenberg's army.

¹⁶Koch, *Mémoires Pour Servir a l'Histoire de La Campagne de 1814*, I, 312.

¹⁷Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, *History of The Campaign in France in The Year 1814*, 152.

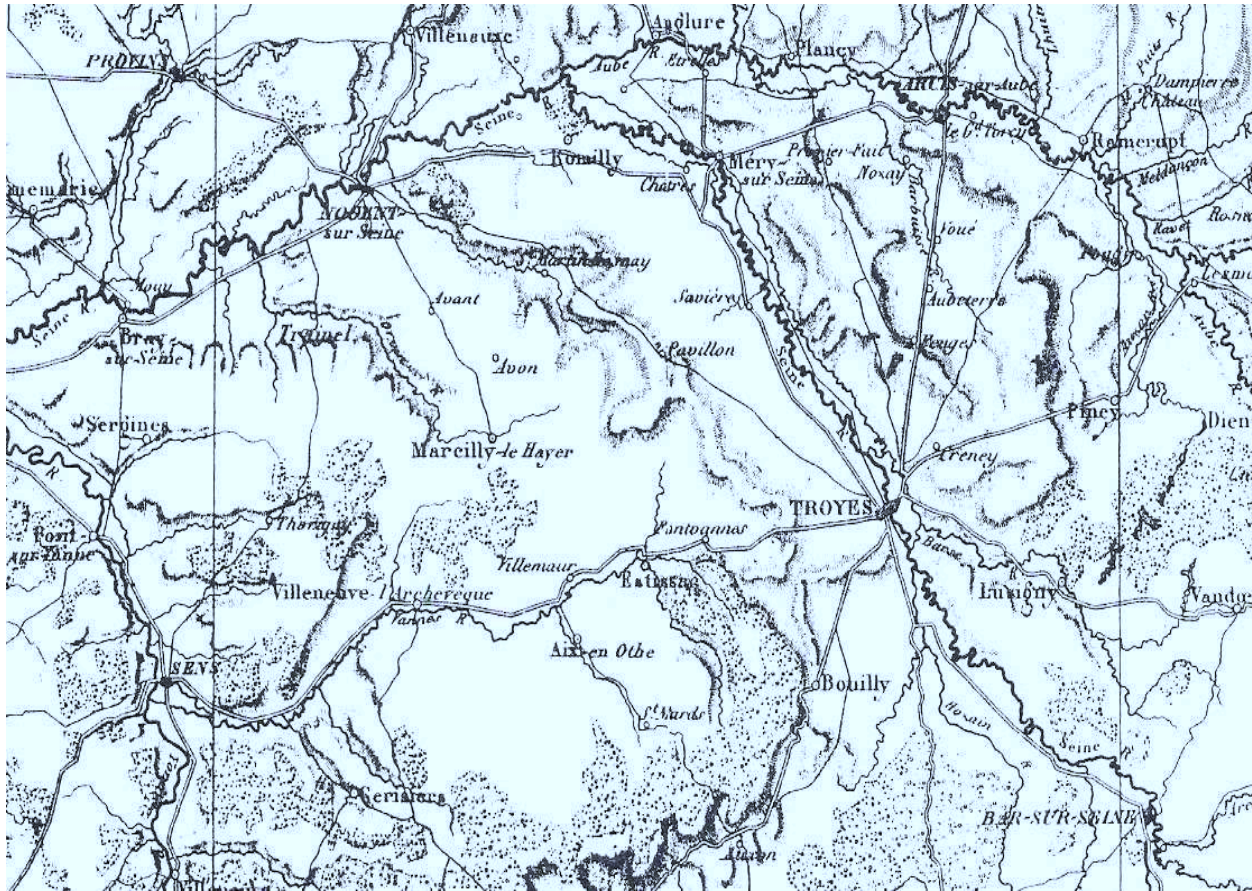


Figure 9: Nogent, Troyes, and Bar-sur-Seine

PURSUIT TO BAR-SUR-SEINE

Pursuit was an important part of any battle, and Napoleon launched the pursuit following the defeat of the Allies at Mormant. This pursuit had maintained pressure on Schwarzenberg's retreat as it continued eastward culminating with Kellermann's defeat of the Allied rear guard on 24 February. Napoleon arrived on the battlefield at 1:00 p.m. and immediately ordered Kellermann's cavalry to continue the pursuit of the Army of Bohemia.¹⁸ The 6th Cavalry Corps pursued the enemy to Provins and entered the city on 18 February.¹⁹ Kellermann then received orders to move south to Bray in order to maintain pressure on the retreating enemy on 19 February.²⁰ The next morning, Kellermann received orders from Berthier placing Oudinot in

¹⁸Berthier to Kellermann, 17 February 1814, Service historique, C¹⁷ 184.

¹⁹*Le Moniteur*, 21 February 1814.

²⁰Berthier to Kellermann 19 February 1814, Service historique C¹⁷ 184.

command of the continuing pursuit²¹. Kellermann wanted to initiate a much more aggressive pursuit than even Napoleon envisioned. He complained after the operation that only a lack of support prevented the 6th Cavalry Corps from destroying Wittgenstien's Corps as it retreated to Nangis.²² This demonstrated that Kellermann understood both the importance of a vigorous pursuit and had confidence in his Corps to exceed the extent of his orders.

As Kellermann pursued the enemy in the direction of Nangis, Napoleon began to reorganize the French cavalry.²³ When Napoleon ordered the pursuit he ordered L'Heritier's division to support Victor's operations, leaving only Trelliard's division in the 6th Cavalry Corps.²⁴ On 19 February, Napoleon officially reorganized the cavalry and the organization of the 6th Cavalry Corps. The reorganization placed General Jean-Baptiste Jaquinot's Light Cavalry Division made up of 1,200 troopers from the 3rd Cavalry Corps and a recently formed dragoon division made up of troopers from the Army of Spain under the command of General Roussel to reinforce Trelliard's division in Kellermann's corps.²⁵ Roussel's Division never joined the rest of Kellermann's Corps because on that day, Napoleon attached it to the command of General Maurice-Étienne Gérard, leaving the 6th Cavalry Corps with two divisions to conduct the pursuit.²⁶

Despite these organizational changes, Kellermann remained in close pursuit of the enemy. On 20 February, the 6th Cavalry Corps seized control of the bridge at Bray, a major crossing point on the Seine.²⁷ For the next several days, the Allies continued to retreat with Kellermann in pursuit. On 21 February, Kellermann followed the Allies to Nogent; on the next day he reached the town of Pavillion, and on 23 February, he liberated the city of Troyes from Allied control.²⁸ It was at Troyes that Jaquinot's Division linked up with Kellermann and the 6th Cavalry Corps.²⁹ However, Kellermann had very little time to assimilate Jaquinot's Division into

²¹Berthier to Kellermann, 20 February 1814, Ibid.

²²Westmorland, *Memoir of The Operations of The Allied Armies*, 147.

²³Agathon Jean François Fain, *Souvenirs de la Campagne de France: Manuscrit de 1814*, ed. G. Lenotre, (Paris, 1914) 104.

²⁴Vaudoncourt, *Histoire des Campagnes de 1814 et 1815, en France*, I, 378

²⁵Napoleon to Berthier, 19 February 1814, *Correspondence de Napoleon I^{er}*, No. 21306, XXVII, 234-35.

²⁶Lachouque, *Napoléon en 1814*, 254.

²⁷Berthier to Kellermann, 20 February 1814, Service historique, C¹⁷ 184.

²⁸Berthier to Kellermann, 23 February 1814, Ibid.

²⁹Vaudoncourt, *Histoire des Campagnes de 1814 et 1815, en France*, I, 404

the 6th Cavalry Corps on the afternoon and evening of 23 February to continue the close pursuit of the enemy.

Marshal Berthier ordered the 6th Corps to advance to Bar-sur-Seine to support Macdonald's Corps.³⁰ When the lead elements of the 6th Cavalry Corps began to engage elements of General Klenau Giulay's Corps, Kellermann ordered the pursuit of the enemy to resume.³¹ He led charges that lasted many hours and employed his divisions to overwhelm the enemy, killing many, capturing 500, and the artillery parc of Giulay's corps.³² Following this action, Schwarzenberg passed to the east of the Aube River and maintained his center at Bar sur Aube. This action on 24 February culminated in an extremely vigorous pursuit of the Allied army from Mormant to Bar-sur-Aube.

The pursuit continued while Napoleon reorganized his cavalry and continued to augment his forces through the incorporation of units from Spain and new units from the Army of Reserve. Prior to the French victory on 17 February, Schwarzenberg decided to concentrate at Troyes, and to withdraw east to reorganize and consolidate the Allied forces for the invasion of France.³³ While the victory at Mormant and the following pursuit were not the primary reasons for the Allied withdrawal, they allowed the French to gain badly needed victories for unit and national moral and reduced the numerically superior Allied forces. The pursuit also allowed Napoleon to consolidate his army into two separate units with the intention of employing his central position to defeat a part of the enemy in detail while maintaining pressure on the other part of the enemy's forces. On 26 February, Napoleon ordered Oudinot to hold Schwarzenberg's Army in place at Bar-sur-Aube while he went north in an attempt to destroy Blücher's Army.³⁴

DEFENSE AT BAR-SUR-AUBE

Napoleon had to contain Schwarzenberg's Army at Bar-sur-Aube to destroy Blücher's Army of Silesia. He anticipated that once Schwarzenberg discovered his absence at Bar-sur-

³⁰Berthier to Kellermann, 24 February 1814, Service historique, C¹⁷ 184.

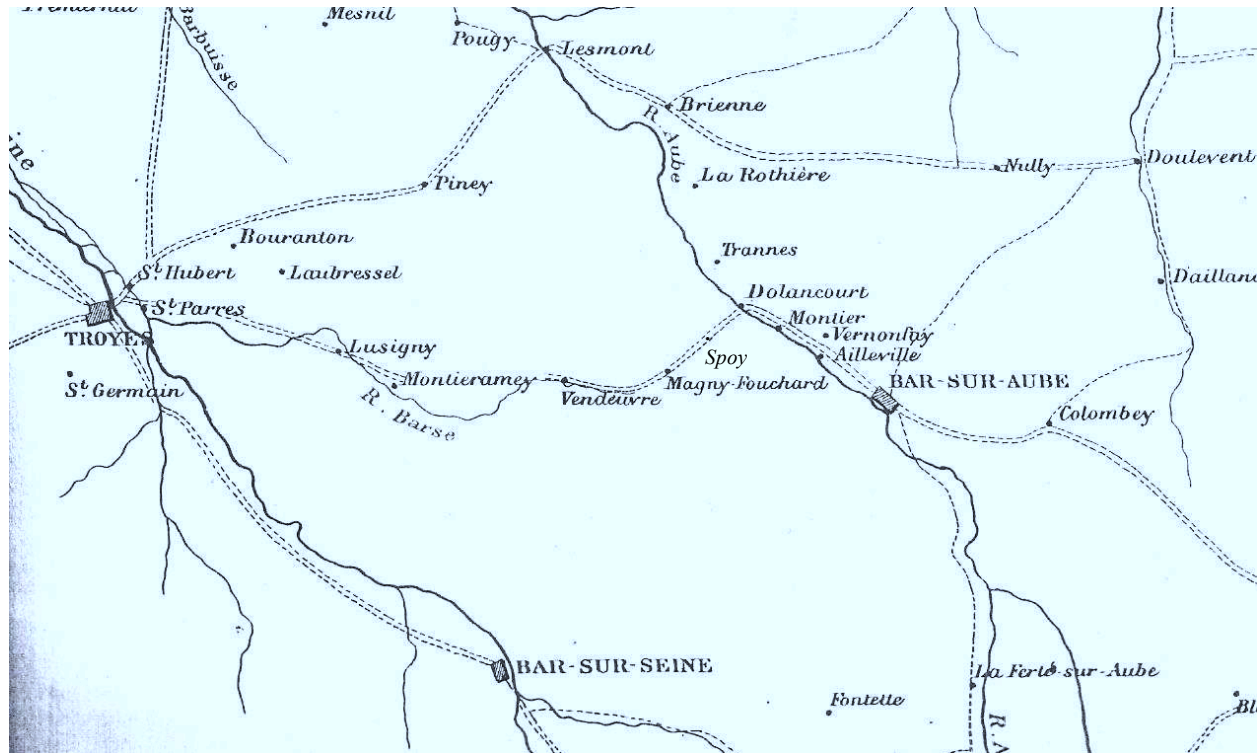
³¹Alph de Beauchamp, *Histoire de la Campagne de 1814, et de la Restauration de la Monarchie Française*, (Paris, 1815) , I, 32

³²*Le Moniteur*, 27 February 1814.

³³Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, *History of The Campaign in France in The Year 1814*, 156-64.

³⁴Berthier to Oudinot, 26 February 1814, Service historique, C¹⁷ 184.

Aube, that he would order an Allied attack across the river.³⁵ Napoleon left detailed instructions to Oudinot on the morning of his departure from Troyes on 27 February, as he concentrated his forces against the Army of Silesia. At 9:00 a.m., he placed Macdonald in command of his own Corps as well as the forces under Oudinot.³⁶ He also issued instructions to both Macdonald and Oudinot to attempt to keep his departure secret by encouraging the units to cry “*Vive l’Empereur*”, and to make defensive preparations in case the Allies attacked on 27 February.³⁷



In this same set of orders Napoleon stipulated that in the absence of General Emmanuel Grouchy, Kellermann was to assume overall command of the cavalry, including his own 6th Cavalry Corps and Milhaud’s 5th Cavalry Corps.³⁸ While it was unclear if Kellermann exercised direct control over Milhaud’s Corps, these two Corps worked closely together throughout the

³⁵ Beauvais de Préau, *Victoires, Conquêtes, Désastres, Revers et Guerres*, XXIII, 127-28.

³⁶ There is no consensus concerning the change of command from Oudinot to Macdonald. Chandler placed Macdonald in command on 26 February, Von Wartenburg has Macdonald in command on 27 February. Vaudoncourt has Oudinot in command until 3 March and Koch has Macdonald taking command on 2 March. Berthier’s orders to both Macdonald and Oudinot on the morning of 27 February show that while Macdonald exercised little overall command and control over the battle, he was in command during the withdrawal east.

³⁷ Berthier to Oudinot, 27 February 1814, Service historique, C¹⁷ 184.

³⁸ Berthier to Macdonald, 27 February 1814, Service historique, C¹⁷ 181.

Campaign of 1814. These orders issued from Troyes early in the morning on 27 February had little impact on the course of the Battle of Bar-sur-Aube later that day.

Oudinot made poor dispositions to meet a prospective attack across the Aube from 24 through 26 Feb.³⁹ He maintained a screen along the banks of the Aube river including both cavalry corps and Macdonald's Infantry Corps. He delayed deploying forces west of the river on the strategically important heights of Vernonfait until early in the morning of 27 February when he ordered Gérard to establish an infantry division west of the river.⁴⁰ The Vernonfait heights commanded the entire French position at Bar-sur-Aube. Oudinot failed to prepare defensive positions or move his units from under the commanding terrain east of the river. Oudinot kept Kellermann and the 6th Cavalry Corps out of direct supporting distance for the French main body. Kellermann remained on the heights north of Bar-sur-Aube on the road to Spoy on the night of 26 February and did not receive orders to rejoin the rest of the army until the next morning.⁴¹ Schwarzenberg ordered the Allied attack to commence at 2:00 p.m. on 27 February and Wittgenstein's corps began to push Gérard's lead division under General Jean-François Leval from the heights of Vernonfait.⁴² It was at this time that Kellermann arrived on the battlefield with the 6th Cavalry Corps.

Kellermann arrived at Bar-sur-Aube as Leval's division came under heavy fire and cavalry pressure from Wittgenstein's Corps. Oudinot ordered no reinforcements to support Leval's forward division on the Heights of Vernonfait.⁴³ Without waiting for Oudinot's approval, Kellermann crossed the Aube at the ford of St Esprit and ordered his Corps to charge the advancing Allied infantry and cavalry.⁴⁴ The 6th Cavalry Corps, with Jaquinot's Dragoons in the lead, surprised Eugene of Wurtemberg's infantry and Count Pahlen's cavalry and routed the lead Allied units.⁴⁵ This attack allowed Leval to consolidate his division. In reaction to Kellermann's charges, Wittgenstein directed his corps artillery parc of 48 guns to concentrate on the lead

³⁹Vaudoncourt, *Histoire des Campagnes de 1814 et 1815, en France*, II, 73.

⁴⁰Oudinot to Berthier, 27 February 1814, Service historique, C² 181.

⁴¹Kellermann to Oudinot, 27 February 1814, Service historique, C² 181.

⁴²Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, *History of The Campaign in France in The Year 1814*, 179.

⁴³Henry Houssaye, *Napoleon and The Campaign of 1814*, trans. Robert Lyle McClintock, (London, 1914), 101.

⁴⁴Henry Houssaye, *1814*, (Paris, 1888), 118.

⁴⁵Westmorland, *Memoir of The Operations of The Allied Armies*, 166.

elements of the French cavalry.⁴⁶ General of Brigade Pierre Ismert, commanding one of the brigades of Trelliard's Division, led his three cavalry regiments against this battery three times taking heavy losses.⁴⁷ They failed to destroy the Russian artillery, but forced Wittgenstien to withdraw his guns from their elevated positions. This withdrawal provided the cover necessary for an orderly retreat from the heights of Vernonfait and the entire Bar-sur-Aube area. Oudinot ordered the army to retreat toward Troyes, but the decisiveness of Kellermann's orders and the bravery of his men saved the French Army at Bar-sur-Aube.

Kellermann's actions during the Battle of Bar-sur-Aube enabled the French to withdraw from the river in good order and forced Schwarzenberg to delay crossing the Aube for three days. These attacks demonstrated the capabilities of both the generals and men of the French cavalry when Napoleon was not directly in command of the battlefield. Since Oudinot's organized the defense of the Aube River in the valley underneath the heights of Vernonfait, the Allied occupation of the heights would have enabled them to cross the river easily, and disrupt the French withdrawal. Kellermann's attack gave Oudinot the opportunity to withdraw the French Army in good order to continue to operate against Schwarzenberg's Army. The attack of the 6th Corps also forced Schwarzenberg to reinforce his attack on Vernonfait, disrupting his river crossing operations. The damage was severe enough to require three days to reorganize his Army before continuing his movement west across the Aube River.⁴⁸ While not in the way he anticipated, Kellermann's attack achieved Napoleon's mission for Oudinot by delaying Schwarzenberg at Bar-sur-Aube.

Kellermann's operations continued to prove that the French Army was extremely effective in 1814. His decision to "march to the sounds of the guns" saved the French Army at Bar-sur-Aube. He was still quite capable of making important battlefield decisions at the age of forty-four, without the need of orders from Napoleon or Oudinot. Ismert's charges also provided a prime example of the dedication, discipline, and capability of the French cavalry and its leadership. These attacks caused Schwarzenberg to reinforce Vernonfait and Wittgenstien to withdraw the artillery off the heights. It was also an indication of the quality of cavalrymen in the 6th Cavalry Corps; they recovered quickly from the fighting on 27 February, formed part of the

⁴⁶Koch, *Mémoires Pour Servir a l'Histoire de La Campagne de 1814*, II, 8.

⁴⁷Picard, *La Cavalerie Dans les Guerres de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, II, 247.

⁴⁸Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, *History of The Campaign in France in The Year 1814*, 187.

cavalry screen so the French Army could consolidate, and reorganized under the leadership of Marshall Macdonald.

Macdonald assumed command of the French Army on 28 February after the Battle of Bar-sur-Aube and began consolidating and reorganizing his forces to maintain a position between Schwarzenberg and Paris.⁴⁹ The 6th Corps played a key role in confronting the enemy and enabling Macdonald to maintain a position between the Allies and Paris from 28 February through 13 March. He ordered the army to concentrate around Troyes with Milhaud's and Kellermann's cavalry forming a screen to resist the Allied advanced guards. Following the retreat from Bar-sur-Aube, Kellermann returned to Spoy to begin screening operations.⁵⁰ On 2 March, Macdonald withdrew to Nogent and gave Oudinot command of the rearguard, which consisted of his own 7th Corps and both the 5th and 6th Cavalry Corps to delay the Allied advance on Troyes.⁵¹ Kellermann was on this screening mission when the Allied main force crossed the river and began its advance towards Paris.

Once the Allied Army reorganized, Schwarzenberg ordered the second attack across the Aube River on 3 March and Pahlen's cavalry quickly engaged Kellermann's Corps.⁵² After several hours of fighting in the outskirts of St. Jacques, Kellermann withdrew his men toward St. Marten.⁵³ Schwarzenberg advanced toward Troyes with three corps abreast; Wittgenstien on the left, Wrede in the center, and Eugene of Wurtemberg and Guilay on the Allied right.⁵⁴ To delay the enemy advance, Macdonald ordered Oudinot to defend St. Parres on the morning of 4 March.⁵⁵ As the Allied advanced guard drove west on the next day, Oudinot failed to withdraw the 5th and 6th Cavalry Corps' before the French cavalry became decisively engaged. At one point, the Allied cavalry isolated the 6th Cavalry Corps from the rest of the French Army. Kellermann ordered Jaquinot and Trelliard's divisions to attack through the Allied position and rejoin Oudinot's retreating 7th Corps and they succeeded with little loss of life or time.⁵⁶ On 6 March, Macdonald ordered Kellermann's Corps to occupy positions along the heights of

⁴⁹Oudinot to Macdonald, 28 February 1814, Service historique, C² 181.

⁵⁰Jean Thiry, *La Campagne de France de 1814*, (Paris, 1946), 250.

⁵¹Oudinot to Kellermann, 2 March 1814, Service historique, C² 182.

⁵²Koch, *Mémoires Pour Servir a l'Histoire de La Campagne de 1814*, II, 26.

⁵³Gressor to Kellermann, 3 March 1814, Service historique, C² 182.

⁵⁴Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, *History of The Campaign in France in The Year 1814*, 187.

⁵⁵Macdonald to Reggio, 4 March 1814, Service historique, C² 182.

⁵⁶Macdonald to Berthier, 5 Mar 1814, C² 182.

Pavillon and created a cavalry screen with Millhaud's Corps to protect the great route to Paris.⁵⁷ The 6th Cavalry Corps spent the next five days conducting patrols and fighting Allied cavalry and advanced units as Schwarzenberg reorganized his forces west of the Seine. Occupying a position around Provins, Macdonald maintained contact with the Allies until he received orders to begin advancing on Schwarzenberg's right flank.

Throughout the two weeks between the Battle of Bar-sur-Aube and the French offensive operations on 13 March, Macdonald concentrated his Army and maintained a position between Schwarzenberg and Paris. He used cavalry screening operations as his main strategy to delay Schwarzenberg's Army. The 6th Cavalry Corps played a major part in slowing the Allied advance and allowing the French to withdraw towards Paris. Kellermann's Corps along with Milhaud's Corps bore the brunt of the fighting on the retreat from Bar-sur-Aube. It also played a critical role in Macdonald's counterattacks.

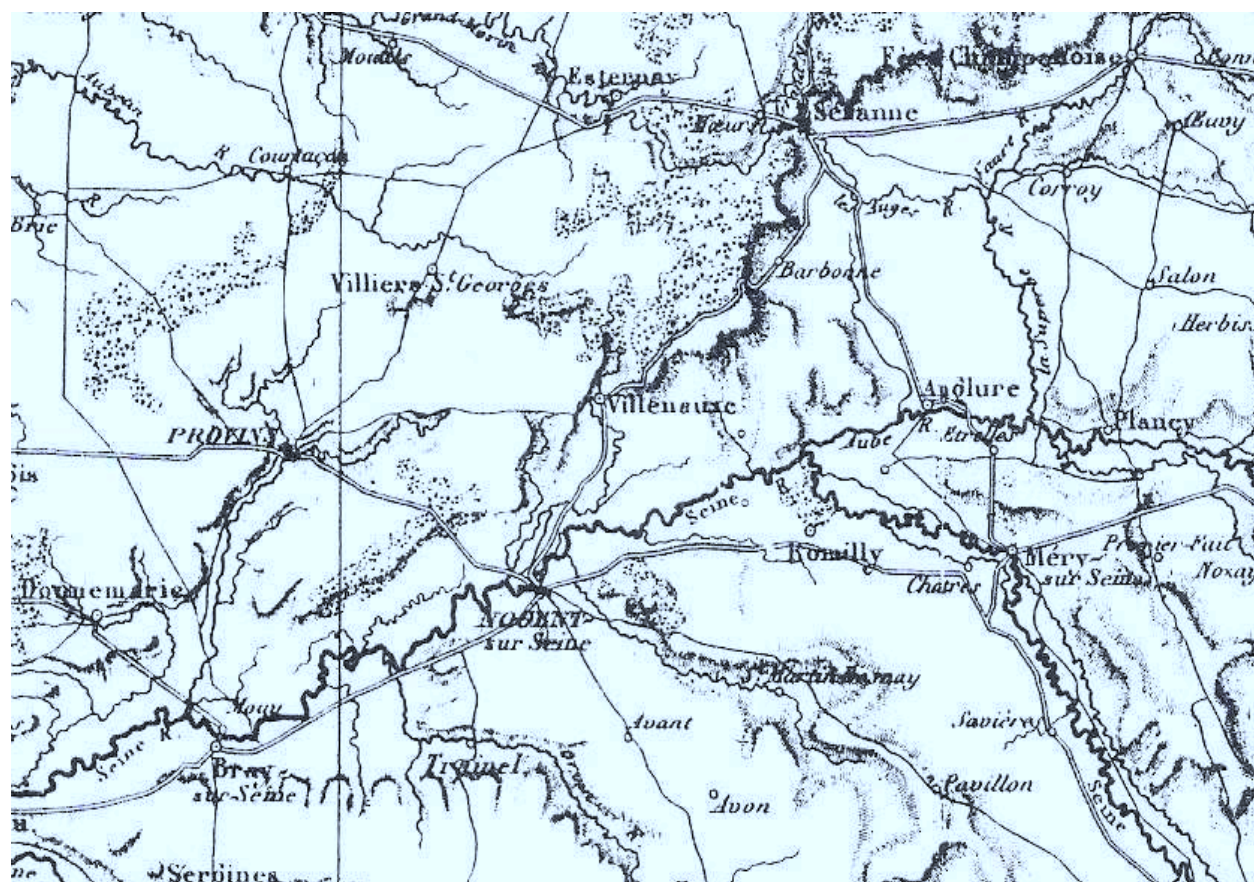


Figure 11: Provins and Sezanne

⁵⁷Koch, *Mémoires Pour Servir à l'Histoire de La Campagne de 1814*, , 30.

NAPOLEON'S OFFENSIVE

The orders to begin offensive movement were the outcome of Napoleon's operations against Blücher's Army of Silesia in the north. The Allies defeated Napoleon at the Battles of Laon and Craonne 7-10 March and forced him to withdraw southward to remain in a central position between the two main Allied forces.⁵⁸ It was this movement toward Esternay that caused Macdonald to send cavalry towards Arcis in the direction of Napoleon's forces. Kellermann's cavalry conducted reconnaissance missions that enabled Macdonald to link up with the rest of the Napoleon's Army. On 14 March, Macdonald ordered Kellermann to conduct reconnaissance operations to Marceaux, Esternay and Sezanne. Kellermann ordered Trelliard's Division to conduct these operations, which encountered enemy cavalry reconnaissance patrols on the enemy's right flank.⁵⁹ Throughout 15 and 16 March, Schwarzenberg ordered attacks toward Provins, which forced Macdonald to move the 11th Corps north from Bray to reinforce Provins.⁶⁰ Kellermann's Corps conducted screen operations in conjunction with Oudinot's 7th Corps in front of Provins as Macdonald moved his main body northwest to Nangis.⁶¹ The 6th Cavalry Corps withdrew to a position to cover the French left at Rouilly until 20 March. Kellermann conducted these screening operations as Macdonald launched offensive operations.

⁵⁸Vaudoncourt, *Histoire des Campagnes de 1814 et 1815, en France*, II, 215.

⁵⁹Koch, *Mémoires Pour Servir à l'Histoire de La Campagne de 1814*, II, 44.

⁶⁰Vaudoncourt, *Histoire des Campagnes de 1814 et 1815, en France*, II, 126.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, II, 124.

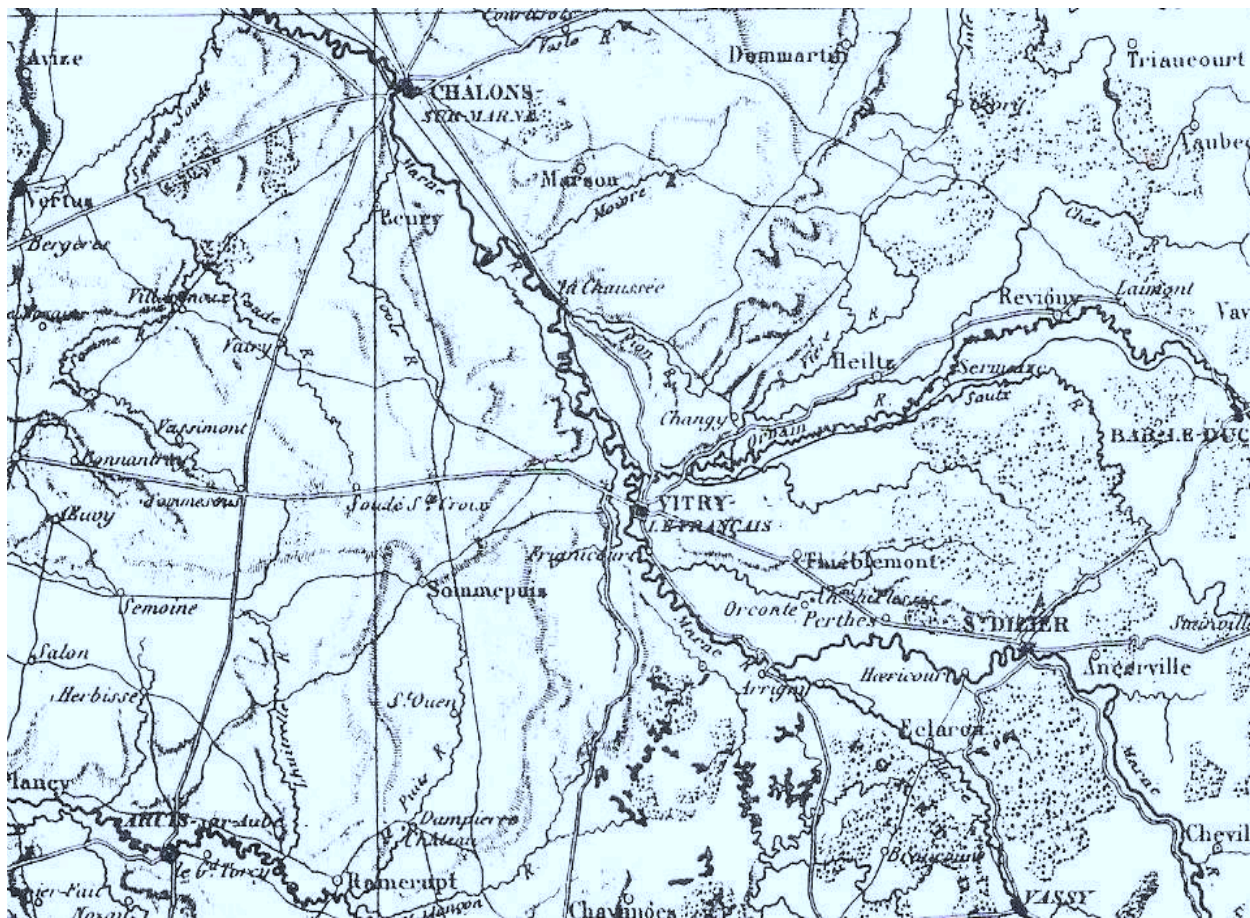


Figure 12: St. Dizier

On 20 March, Napoleon ordered Macdonald to concentrate with the rest of the French Army at Arcis-sur-Aube.⁶² This movement began an envelopment of the Allies' flank as Napoleon's best chance of protecting Paris.⁶³ He hoped that by threatening the Allied flank and rear, that they would turn from Paris to engage the French Army. The 6th Cavalry Corps maintained contact with Schwarzenberg's main army south of the Aube while Macdonald marched towards the rest of Napoleon's Army.⁶⁴ At the same time, Napoleon maneuvered his forces on Schwarzenberg's flank and fought the Battle of Arcis on 20-21 March. This battle not only crushed Wrede's Bavarian Corps on Schwarzenberg's exposed and unsupported right flank,

⁶²Ibid., II, 223.

⁶³Westmorland, *Memoir of The Operations of The Allied Armies*, 260.

⁶⁴Houssaye, *Napoleon and The Campaign of 1814*, 272.

but it also allowed Macdonald to unite with the rest of the French Army near Ormes.⁶⁵ On 23 March, Napoleon ordered the consolidated French Army to march on St. Dizier and on the next day he ordered Kellermann and Milhaud's Corps to raid Schwarzenberg's lines of communications near the town of Vitry.⁶⁶ These raids demonstrated to the Allies that Napoleon was still able to attack their lines of communication and logistical support. It only remained to see it would alter their decision to continue towards Paris.

At this point, Napoleon's only chance for success required the Allies to break off their attack on Paris once French forces attacked their lines of communication. Once the Allies decided to continue the attack on Paris instead of turning to face Napoleon, they made the subsequent actions of the French Army inconsequential. On 24 March, Napoleon left the army under the command of Macdonald and went to Fontainebleau hoping to strengthen the resolve of Paris.⁶⁷ From that point on, the forces under Macdonald ceased to have an impact on the Campaign of 1814.

From 13-24 March, Macdonald's Army conducted a war of maneuver against Schwarzenberg's forces. Kellermann's cavalry operations enabled Macdonald's army to continue screening and reconnoitering. These missions allowed the French to maintain contact with the Allied right flank prior to attacking them on 14 March. Kellermann's screen in front of Provins allowed Macdonald to hold Schwarzenberg until the exposed 11th Corps at Bray joined the rest of the French Army.⁶⁸ While Napoleon's strategy of threatening the Allied lines of communication protected Paris, at least temporarily, Kellermann and Milhaud executed cavalry raids on Schwarzenberg's rear to demonstrate the vulnerability of those areas.⁶⁹ It was only after 24 March when the Allies decided to march on Paris, regardless of the threat to those rear areas that Kellermann's cavalry operations ceased to have an impact on the battlefield.⁷⁰ As a result, he becomes less personally involved with the operations of the 6th Cavalry Corps. On 22 March, Berthier ordered Kellermann to proceed to the Army of the Reserve under his father Marshal Kellermann, to bring replacements to the French Army under Macdonald. Thus that day, both

⁶⁵Vaudoncourt, *Histoire des Campagnes de 1814 et 1815, en France*, II, 232.

⁶⁶Houssaye, *Napoleon and The Campaign of 1814*, 275.

⁶⁷Berthier to Ney, 24 March 1814, Service historique, C¹⁷ 185.

⁶⁸Koch, *Mémoires Pour Servir a l'Histoire de La Campagne de 1814*, II, 44.

⁶⁹Vaudoncourt, *Histoire des Campagnes de 1814 et 1815, en France*, II, 223.

⁷⁰Mikhailovskii-Danilevskii, *History of The Campaign in France in The Year 1814*, 263-64.

Kellermann and the Macdonald's Army cease to have any impact on the operations of the Allied Armies or the defense of Paris.

Although the Allies advanced on Paris, the French Army continued to execute Napoleon's strategic plan. On 24 March, Napoleon ordered the concentrated French Army to attack exposed Allied units at St Dizier.⁷¹ The French army descended on the small town, destroyed several regiments of the enemy, and gained control of this vital link in the Allied communications.⁷² This small French victory constituted the last tactical success achieved during the 1814 Campaign. Following the Battle of St. Dizier, Macdonald occupied positions around Brienne on 28 March.⁷³ The 6th Cavalry Corps, temporarily under the command of General Trelliard, continued to conduct operations against the Allied lines of communications⁷⁴. Once Macdonald reached Brienne, Napoleon concentrated the remaining French forces at Fontainebleu.⁷⁵ This force would include newly formed units from a variety of depots and collection points. They also included the troops Kellermann organized after leaving the 6th Cavalry Corps.

Kellermann left the 6th Cavalry Corps on 23 March and proceeded to the dépôt at Orleans to assess the state of reinforcements there. Although no documentation or correspondence existed to verify Berthier's reason for choosing Kellermann for this reinforcement mission, the fact that his father was responsible for the organization of new units in the Army of the Reserve probably influenced Berthier. Kellermann remained in contact with Berthier from 23 March to 4 April, however it is also unclear as to the number or quality of the reinforcements he brought to Fontainebleu on 4 April.⁷⁶ Once he reached Fontainebleu, Kellermann took command of the corps back from Trelliard. It was as the Commander of the 6th Cavalry Corps that Kellermann ended the Campaign of 1814.

Macdonald's Army conducted only limited operations after 4 April prior to Napoleon's abdication. When Kellermann rejoined the 6th Cavalry Corps on 4 April, he continued to send out cavalry patrols to maintain contact with the enemy forces south of Paris. He personally led

⁷¹Koch, *Mémoires Pour Servir a l'Histoire de La Campagne de 1814*, II, 547.

⁷²Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, II, 415.

⁷³Berthier to Trelliard, 28 March 1814, Service historique, C¹⁷ 185.

⁷⁴Berthier to Trelliard, 22 March 1814, Ibid.

⁷⁵Berthier to Kellermann, 1 April 1814, Ibid.

⁷⁶Berthier to Trelliard, 4 April 1814, Service historique, C¹⁷ 185.

several cavalry charges against detachments of enemy cavalry on 6 April before official word of Napoleon's abdication reached the army the following day.⁷⁷ After the abdication, an informal truce developed as both the Allied rulers and the French Army waited for news from the French government. It was not until 9 April that Macdonald signed a convention that established an armistice and began the demobilization of Napoleon's armies.⁷⁸ Kellermann immediately stopped all operations, as did the rest of the French Army. Along with a large number of senior officers, Kellermann was quick in pledging his support for the returning Bourbon government. On 10 April, an excerpt of Kellermann's letter expressing support for the new government appeared in the *Moniteur* along with dozens of similar letters written by other officers.⁷⁹ For Kellermann, the 1814 Campaign effectively ended and the Bourbon restoration had begun.

Macdonald's convention contributed to a smooth transition between the Napoleonic administration and the returning Bourbon monarchy concerning the affairs and activities of the army. He signed the convention with Schwarzenberg and Blücher that ended the conflict.⁸⁰ It established lines of demarcation between both armies. It ordered all units in the French Army to go into cantonment and to stop all military operations. The convention specifically called on unit commanders to maintain discipline and keep incidences of desertion to as low as possible.⁸¹ Roussel's Division rejoined the 6th Cavalry Corps from Gérard's Corps as it went into cantonment in the department of Livre. The divisions of the corps occupied small towns near each other as the army prepared to begin the process of demobilization⁸². Kellermann remained with the corps throughout the month of April as the 6th Cavalry Corps ceased to exist.

Kellermann's 6th Cavalry Corps provided an excellent example to understand the French Army in 1814 and their operational capabilities. The 6th Corps was no elite formation, formed on the battlefield from elements of other cavalry units, recruits, and elements of the Army of Spain. It had a short existence as a corps with no real tradition of success or cohesion. In spite of these conditions, it achieved a number of tactical successes against the Schwarzenberg's Army of Bohemia consisting of Austrians, Russians, and Bavarians. Kellermann's Corps used a variety of

⁷⁷Koch, *Mémoires Pour Servir a l'Histoire de La Campagne de 1814*, II, 594

⁷⁸Ordre en Consequence de la Convention, 9 April 1814, Service historique, C¹⁷ 185.

⁷⁹*Le Moniteur*, 10 April 1814.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*

⁸¹Berthier to Oudinot, 9 April 1814, Service historique, C¹⁷ 185.

⁸²Berthier to Kellermann, 9 April 1814, *Ibid.*

cavalry operations such as the cavalry screen, coordinated attacks, strategic concentration, and delaying operations to resist the enemy. These were the same types of operations that had brought victory to the French Army during the Consulate and early Empire period. Indeed these Cavalry units were still capable of long marches, screening operations, and coordinated flanking attacks. Their leaders were capable of tactical flexibility and able to “march to the sound of the guns”. Yet not a year later, Napoleon, with a more experienced decided to return to operations that characterized the decline of the Empire.

CHAPTER 4: QUATRE BRAS

Napoleon's return from Elba to France in March 1815 caught the allies unprepared at the negotiating table of the Congress of Vienna. As they vowed to once again take up arms against Napoleon, he focused on forging new political alliances and re-unifying France. He made promises of peaceful intentions to the French people and offered concessions to the Allies. However, he quickly realized he would have to fight. He recalled classes to the colors, incorporated men and horses from the *Gendarme*, the National Guard, the Navy, conscripts, retired soldiers, and regular soldiers to organize them into a new army.¹ Napoleon instituted most of these measures to create an army large enough to defend France from the massive armies of the Allies before they could invade France. However, the regular army and retired soldiers of France provided him with a valuable weapon to prepare and to legitimize his authority. Although the return of Napoleon brought together men who supported the Bourbons and those who remained loyal to the Emperor, the 120,000 men that Napoleon marched into Belgium were veterans and experienced soldiers.² His fate rested on how he employed that army against the numerically superior enemies of France.

The initial attack against the British and Prussian forces in Belgium showed Napoleon at his best. It took only a few days to concentrate the French Army on the Belgium border. He ordered his army to advance north through Charleroi. This rapid concentration and advance culminated in the battles of 16 June 1815. Napoleon engaged the Prussian Army with his main effort under the command of Marshal Emanuel Grouchy at Ligny. In a supporting effort, Ney attacked the British to gain control of the crossroads at Quatre Bras and to stop the British from marching to the aid of the Prussians. While Napoleon defeated the Prussians at Ligny, Ney failed to defeat the British at Quatre Bras. Ney owed his defeat at Quatre Bras to many factors, not the least of which was the misuse of his cavalry. Studying the cavalry operations of the Battle of Quatre Bras provided an effective way of analyzing Ney's failure. *Lieutenant Général* Kellermann and the 3rd Cavalry Corps comprised the majority of Ney's cavalry from the attack

¹Archibald Frank Becke, *Napoleon and Waterloo, the emperor's campaign with the Armée du Nord, 1815; a strategical and tactical study*, (Freeport, 1971), I, 20.

²Peter Hofschröer, *1815: The Waterloo Campaign*, (London, 1998), I, 168-9.

into Charleroi on 15 Jun through the retreat from Quatre Bras on the evening of 16 June.³ These operations demonstrated the failure of Ney's cavalry operations and how those failures decided the outcome of the Battle of Quatre Bras.

Unlike in the campaigns of 1813 and 1814, Napoleon collected a large trained cavalry corps made up predominantly of veterans. He created four cavalry corps in the main French army, the Army of the North, and appointed François Étienne Kellermann to command the 3rd Cavalry Corps. Although originally under the command of Marshal Emanuel Grouchy as part of the cavalry reserve, Napoleon transferred Kellermann's corps to Ney and the left wing of the French army.⁴ Following the attack north into Belgium at Charleroi, Ney kept the majority of Kellermann's Corps on the left flank of the French Army. When Ney ordered a single cavalry brigade forward to support the fighting at Quatre Bras, Kellermann's charges constituted the only legitimate opportunity for the penetration and destruction of the enemy. Ney's failure to support the success of the cavalry led directly to the retreat of the French from Quatre Bras. Thus what began with concentration and speed ended with dispersion and an uncoordinated attack that resulted in a tactical defeat for Kellermann's 3rd Cavalry Corps as well as Ney's left wing of the Army of the North, and the survival of Wellington's Army.

When Kellermann answered Napoleon's call to arms in March of 1815, he turned his back on an extremely supportive government as well as a command in the principle cavalry formation of the Bourbon Army. On 1 June 1814, Kellermann became the Inspector General for the Lunéville and Nancy districts. Shortly after becoming Inspector General, Louis the XVIII made Kellermann a Cavalier of the Order of Saint Louis. In August, he received the Grand Cordon of the Legion of Honor.⁵ He took command of a cavalry division under the *Duc de Berry* on 16 March 1815, the most prestigious cavalry unit in the Bourbon Army.⁶ These honors and positions demonstrated the high value that the restored monarchy placed on the service and reputation of the *Comte de Valmy*. However, upon Napoleon's return from Elba, Kellermann

³During the Bourbon Restoration, the French Army returned to the general ranks of the Ancient Regime. *Lieutenant Général* replaced *Général de Division* and *Maréchal de Camp* replaced *Général de Brigade*. When Napoleon returned from Elba in 1815, he kept the ranks of the Ancient Regime.

⁴Becke, *Napoleon and Waterloo*, I, 86.

⁵Six, *Les Généraux de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, 2-4.

⁶The *Duc de Berry* was a nephew of Louis XVIII. He commanded all of the independent cavalry units in the French Army of the restoration.

quickly declared his support for the Emperor, even though his father Marshal Kellermann refused to break his new oath to Louis XVIII. When Napoleon offered François-Étienne command of the 3rd Cavalry Corps, he was quick to turn return to the Imperial colors.

The 3rd Cavalry corps formed in the area around Walcourt on 1 June 1815, consisting of two cavalry divisions. *Lieutenant Général* Samuel François L'Heritier commanded the 11th Cavalry Division with the 1st Brigade under *Maréchal de Camp* Cyrille Simon Picquet consisting of the 2nd and 7th Dragoons; the 2nd Brigade under *Maréchal de Camp* Adrien François Marie Guiton consisted of the 8th and 11th Cuirassiers. The total manpower of the 11th Cavalry Division was 133 officers and 1,743 troopers. *Lieutenant Général* Nicolas François Roussel d'Hurbal commanded the 12th Cavalry Division with the 1st Brigade under *Maréchal de Camp* Amable Guy Blanchard consisting of the 1st and 2nd Carabineers, and the 2nd Brigade under *Maréchal de Camp* Frederic Guillaume Donop consisting of the 2nd and 3rd Cuirassiers. The 12th Cavalry Division included 117 officers and 1,502 troopers. The 3rd Cavalry Corps consisted of a total of 3,814 men including two batteries of the 2nd artillery *à Cheval* with 12 guns, 6 guns for each of the divisions, and 2nd *esquadron du train* was split in half between the divisions.⁷ On 7 June in a letter to Marshal Louis Davout, the new Minister of War, Napoleon gave Kellermann command of the 3rd Cavalry Corps of the Army of the North.⁸ He was an obvious choice to command this corps with his long history of effective cavalry leadership despite his age and previous infirmities.

Although Kellermann had an excellent reputation as a commander of cavalry, there were other qualifications that made him an excellent choice to command the 3rd Cavalry Corps in 1815. His prior service with Roussel and L'Heritier and his history of commanding newly formed cavalry organizations made him uniquely qualified to lead that corps. Kellermann commanded both L'Heritier and Roussel at different stages of the 1814 Campaign. The familiarity of the division commanders with Kellermann was only one part of his unique qualifications.

Although considered an excellent cavalry commander by his peers, it was not until after the retreat from Russia that Kellermann earned a reputation for commanding large cavalry

⁷Hyacinthe-Hippolyte de Mauduit, *Les Derniers Jours de la Grande Armée, ou, Souvenirs, Documens et Correspondance Inédite de Napoléon en 1814 et 1815*, (Paris, 1847), 484.

⁸Napoleon to Davout, 7 June 1815, Napoleon, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, No. 22025, XXVIII, 303.

organizations. Beginning with the campaigns of 1813, he attained a reputation for successfully commanding newly formed cavalry corps. He commanded the 4th Polish Cavalry Corps during the Leipzig Campaign turning provisional Polish units into an effective cavalry organization. Kellermann also commanded the 6th Cavalry Corps during the Campaign of 1814. This corps was the last cavalry force formed in 1814; it included elements from the Army of Spain as well as detached squadrons from other cavalry corps. It seemed that whenever Napoleon needed a cavalry corps formed on the eve of battle, he gave the command to Kellermann. The Hundred Days proved to be no exception.

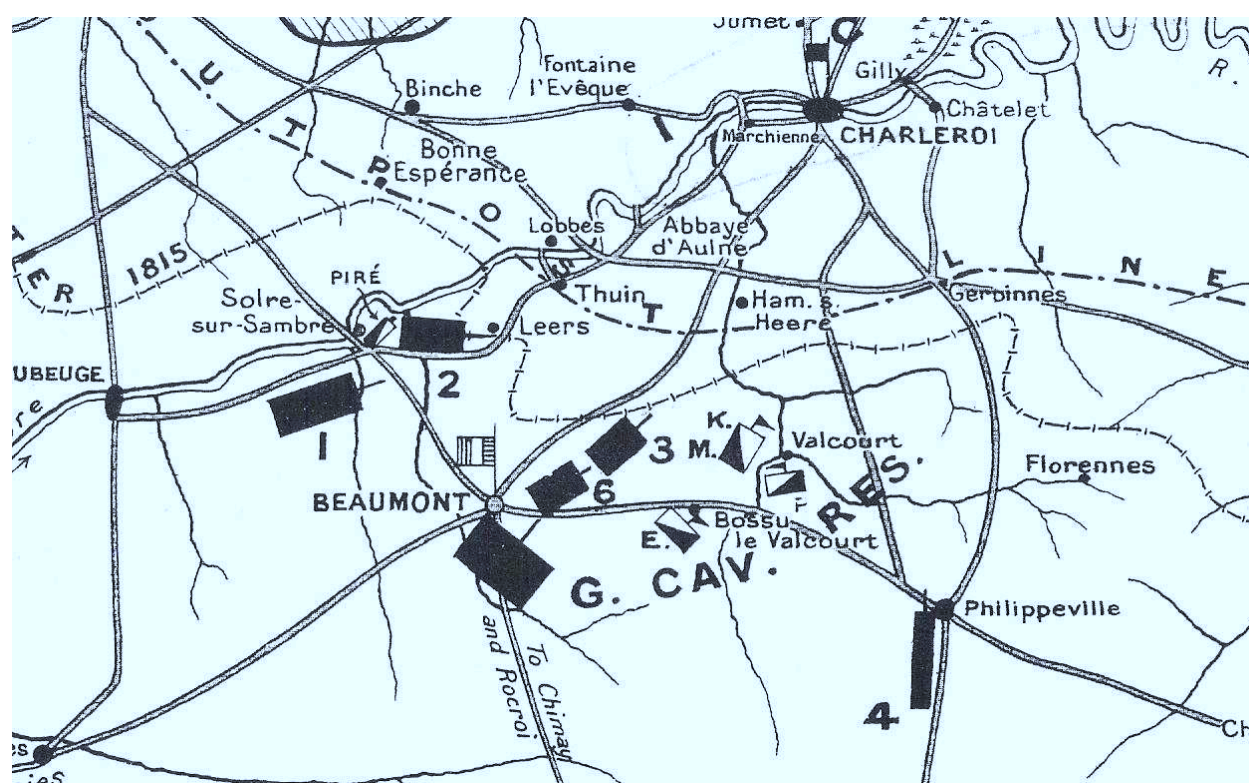


Figure 13: Charleroi

In the beginning of June, all of the cavalry corps in the Army of the North fell under the command of Marshal Emmanuel Grouchy. He commanded the cavalry corps during the reorganization of the army in preparation for offensive operations on the Belgium frontier.⁹ Originally, Napoleon planned to concentrate his forces and wait for the Allies to attack the

⁹Becke, *Napoleon and Waterloo*, I, 86.

frontiers of France. He estimated that the Allies would be ready to attack by mid-August.¹⁰ However, during the month of May, Napoleon decided to take advantage of the mobilization and logistical difficulties of the Allies to attack into the Low Countries catch the British and Prussians unprepared and dispersed.¹¹ He began to collect his corps over 13-14 June along the Belgium border just south of Charleroi. The concentration of the French Army occupied approximately 100 square miles. The 2nd and 3rd Corps formed closest to the Belgium frontier, only ten miles away from Charleroi. Kellermann's 3rd and the 4th Cavalry Corps occupied camps farthest from the frontier, approximately twenty-five miles from Charleroi. This dispersion allowed Napoleon to position his corps within striking distance of Belgium while maintaining the element of surprise.

In the early morning of 15 June, the French swept rapidly across the frontier driving the surprised Prussian outposts north and forced them back to the main army. Throughout June, the Prussians maintained posts at Thuin, Marcimelle and Ham-Sur Heure on the French frontier to the south of Charleroi.¹² At 3:00 a.m. on 15 Jun, *Lieutenant Général* Honore Charles Reille's 2nd Corps attacked the Prussians at Marchienne au Pont, and advanced into the town of Charleroi.¹³ On the morning and afternoon of 15 Jun, the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Corps under *Lieutenant Général*s Claude-Pierre Pajol and Remy-Joseph Excellmann drove the outposts and cavalry pickets of the Prussian army north through Charleroi towards the town of Ligny. The rapid French attack transformed Napoleon's strategic concentration into the complete surprise of the Allied outposts as well as the main Prussian and British armies.

¹⁰Hofschröer, *1815: The Waterloo Campaign*, I, 158-61.

¹¹Campagne de 1815, Napoleon, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, XXXI, 187-90.

¹²Maximilian Yorck von Wartenburg, *Atlas to Accompany Napoleon As a General*, (West Point, 1942), 118.

¹³Napoleon's Bulletin to the Army, 15 June 1815, Napoleon, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, No. 22056, XXVIII, 331.

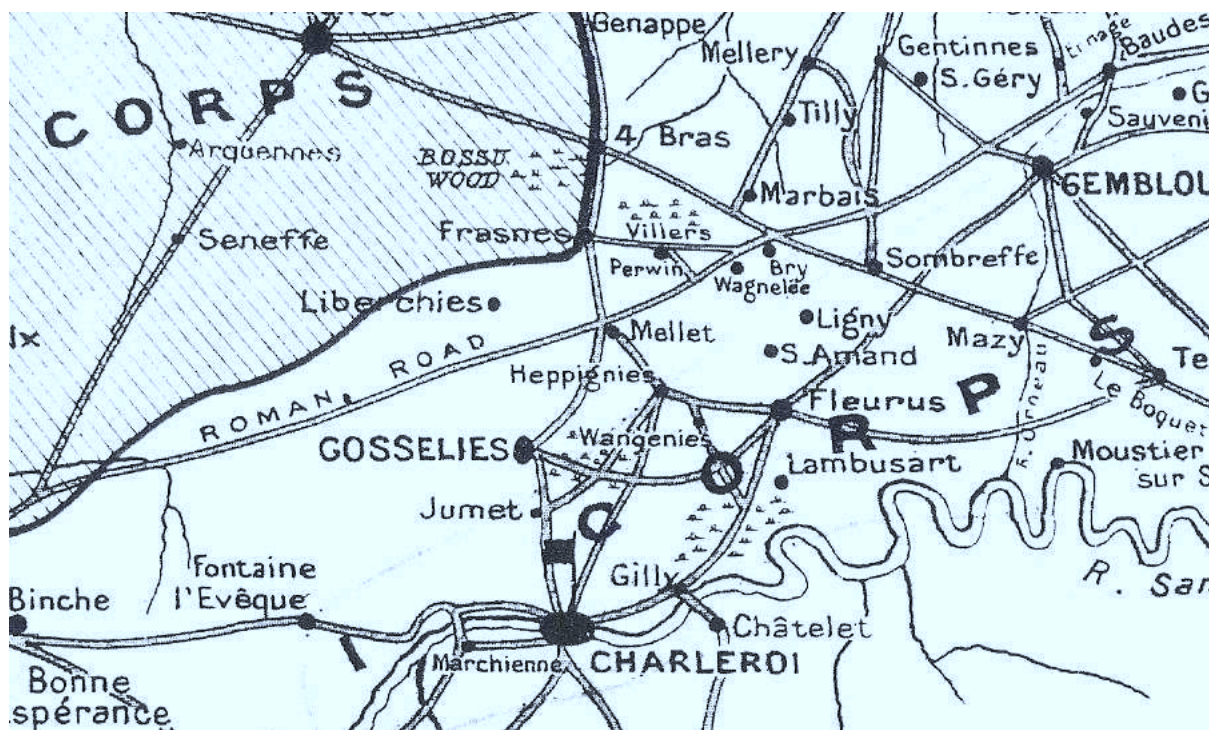


Figure 14: Charleroi to Ligny and Quatre Bras

THE ADVANCE NORTH FROM CHARLEROI

Napoleon ordered the army to move out of Charleroi to attack the Allies in two columns, one under the command of Ney on the left with the 1st and 2nd Corps on the road towards Brussels, while the main body of the army on the right under Grouchy marched on the road to Sombrefe.¹⁴ By nightfall of 15 June, the French cavalry pickets stretched out in a line running from Frasnes going southeast to Fleurus.¹⁵ Only half of the French Army was north of the Sambre River consisting of two infantry Corps and two cavalry corps. An additional two infantry and two cavalry corps remained south of the river and Charleroi until the following day. As Napoleon concentrated the French army north of Charleroi, the leading elements of the British Army marched for Quatre Bras while the Prussians marched towards Sombrefe. The British and Prussian Armies responded rapidly to block Napoleon's attack into Belgium.

Ney arrived at Charleroi on 15 June and took command of the left wing of the army, already marching north. In a letter from Napoleon issued just after midnight on 16 June, Ney

¹⁴Ordre de mouvement pour la journée du 15, 14 June 1815, Ibid., No. 22053, XXVIII, 331.

¹⁵Yorck von Wartenburg, *Napoleon As a General*, II, 118.

received command of the 1st Corps under *Lieutenant Général* Jean Baptiste D'Erlon and the 2nd Corps under Reille as well as nominal control of the light cavalry of the Imperial Guard under *Lieutenant Général* Charles Lefèbvre-Desnoëttes.¹⁶ It was this order that started what was to become a problem in the command and control of the French army. In his letter of 16 June, Napoleon also gave control of Kellermann's 3rd Cavalry Corps to Ney. In fact, Ney began to issue orders to the 3rd Cavalry Corps on the early morning of 16 June.¹⁷ Unfortunately, Napoleon failed to give Grouchy the order to release Kellermann from his command until later in the morning of 16 June.¹⁸ This was one of several orders that gave Ney the impression that he would have command of 45,000 men for the advance north on the road to Brussels. These orders adversely affected his ability to concentrate the left wing of the army in a timely manner.

The forward positions of the French army demonstrated what good discipline and high morale could accomplish with experienced leadership. The rapid movement north of Charleroi gave Napoleon the advantage of speed and central position when facing the armies of the English and the Prussians.¹⁹ However, the rapid advance also created several logistical problems forcing the French to postpone any further attacks until early on 16 June. For Ney on the left, the advanced cavalry pickets at Frasnes were only two to three miles away from the important road intersection at Quatre-Bras. However, the rest of his command stretched fourteen miles back towards Charleroi with the 1st Corps at Goselings and the 2nd Corps with half of its strength north of the river and the other half miles south of Charleroi.²⁰ Kellermann's Corps occupied a position south of the Sambre River and east of Charleroi at the town of Chatlet.²¹ At 3:00 a.m. on 16 June, Ney ordered Kellermann to move his corps north along the road to Brussels, thus consolidating the left wing of the army into a position to seize control of the crossroads at Quatre-Bras.²² Kellermann did not receive the order releasing him from Grouchy's command and the order

¹⁶Napoleon to Ney, 16 June 1815, Napoleon, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, No. 22058, XXVIII, 331.

¹⁷Ordre de mouvement, Bas and T'Serclaes de Wommersom, *La Campagne de 1815*, V, 262.

¹⁸Soult to Grouchy, 16 June 1815, *Ibid.*, V, 257-258.

¹⁹Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 1021.

²⁰J. H. Anderson, *The Waterloo Campaign 1815, or the Campaign in Belgium*, (London, 1907), 49.

²¹Jean Baptiste Adolphe Charras, *Histoire de La Campagne de 1815: Waterloo*, (Bruxelles, 1863), 112.

²²Ney's Order of Movement, Bas and T'Serclaes de Wommersom, *La Campagne de 1815*, V, 262.

assigning him to Ney until after 7:00 a.m. Due to the extreme congestion in Charleroi, it would take him most of the day to execute Ney's movement orders. The series of confusing and contradictory orders made a difficult river crossing movement even more difficult and created delays that would adversely affected the Battle of Quatre Bras.

Napoleon's armies never had to deal with conflicting or confusing orders before 1815. Throughout his military career, Napoleon had the help of Marshal Alexandre Berthier as his Chief of Staff. For most of his campaigns, Berthier translated the Emperor's ideas and decisions into clear orders for subordinate commanders creating an effective Imperial staff system. However, Berthier was not with Napoleon in 1815, dying under mysterious circumstances shortly after the emperor's return from Elba.²³ In his place Napoleon appointed Marshal Nicolas Soult as his Chief of Staff for the 1815 campaign. Soult had a good record on the battlefield, but had very little experience as a staff officer. He had served in the Imperial Headquarters under Berthier during the opening phases of 1813, but was given a field command, because Napoleon needed all of his capable generals in the field. Soult's inexperience was a contributing factor in the movement delays on 16 June and throughout the campaign.

Not only were disruptive orders issued to Ney on the morning of 16 June, but Napoleon issued several conflicting orders in the late morning of 16 June concerning the employment of Ney's wing of the army. In the same order that he gave command of the 3rd Cavalry Corps to Ney, Napoleon made it very clear that the Imperial Guard cavalry under Lefèbvre-Desnoëttes was only nominally under Ney's control.²⁴ The order stated that Ney was to avoid engaging Lefèbvre-Desnoëttes' Division decisively while at the same time ordering him to replace it with Kellermann's 3rd Cavalry Corps as quickly as possible. These orders increased the dispersion of the left wing and reduced Ney's ability to exercise direct control over his cavalry.

Napoleon remained unclear as to Ney's exact objective until late in the morning of 16 June. It was not until 10:00 a.m. that Napoleon issued the order that specifically ordered Ney to

²³Upon learning of Napoleon's return, Berthier fled Paris to join his wife in Bamberg, Bavaria. His physical and mental health failing, he was either pushed out or jumped out of the window of a Bishop's Palace. Robert B. Asprey, *The reign of Napoleon Bonaparte*, (New York, 2001), 384.

²⁴Napoleon to Ney, 16 June 1815, Napoleon, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, , No. 22058, XXVIII, 334-335.

concentrate his corps and seize the crossroads at Quatre-Bras.²⁵ Even before the order came from Napoleon, Ney ordered the concentration of his corps around the Frasnes/Quatre-Bras area. By 11:00 a.m., Ney had the 2nd Corps concentrated at Frasnes with *Lieutenant Général* Hippolyte-Marie Pire's light cavalry division conducting reconnaissance operations toward the crossroads.²⁶ He expected D'Erlon's corps to move up the road at any time as well as Kellermann's 3rd Corps. It was at that time that Ney received reports from the first stages of the Battle of Ligny.²⁷

Napoleon concentrated the main body of his army around Fleurus by 10:00 a.m. in an attempt to bring the Prussian army to battle. An hour later, Napoleon ordered Grouchy to begin his attack on the Prussian army. Grouchy attacked with the 3rd and 4th Infantry Corps and 1st, 2nd, and 4th Cavalry Corps along with the cavalry and infantry of the Imperial Guard totaling 68,000 men (including 12,500 cavalry) and 218 guns.²⁸ The Prussian army under Blücher consisted of three infantry corps with 84,000 men deployed in a line from the town of Ligny, along the Ligny Brook to the town of Sombreffe.²⁹ Napoleon wanted to keep the British and Prussians separated on 16 June to focus the main French attack on the Prussians. Thus, the action at Quatre-Bras was the secondary effort to the French main attack at Ligny. A decisive victory at Ligny would allow Napoleon to destroy the Prussians rapidly and would enable him to then concentrate the entire army against the British on another battlefield. Ney's secondary operations in the Quatre-Bras area occurred less than 8 miles away from the French main effort at Sombreffe. This explained why Ney was able to hear the artillery fire as he assembled his corps in front of Quatre-Bras.

NEY'S ATTACK AT QUATRE BRAS

Napoleon gave Ney very precise orders prior to the main French engagement at Ligny. At 11:30 a.m., he received an order from Napoleon to occupy the crossroads at Quatre Bras and to post a division at the town of Marbais prepared to support Grouchy and the right wing of the

²⁵Soult to Ney, 16 June 1815, Vaudoncourt, *Histoire des Campagnes de 1814 et 1815, en France*, II, 191.

²⁶Becke, *Napoleon and Waterloo*, I, 179.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 180.

²⁸Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 1038.

²⁹David G. Chandler, *Waterloo, the hundred days*, (London, 1980), 88.

army.³⁰ It took several hours to concentrate enough troops on 16 June to mount an attack. Almost immediately, the light cavalymen from Pire's Cavalry Division began to engage the British skirmishers and light troops deployed to cover the advance toward Quatre-Bras. The main French infantry attack did not begin until 2:00 p.m. All day Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, rushed reinforcements to Quatre-Bras. When Reille's Corps began its main attack, Wellington had only one infantry division with about 8,000 men holding the crossroads. Within an hour, the British had 20,000 men on the field as General Sir Thomas Picton's Division led additional reinforcements to Quatre-Bras.³¹ Against this reinforcement, Rielle's corps made only limited, local gains in the forested area on the western edge of the battlefield in the Wood of Bossu.



Figure 15: Quatre Bras

³⁰Soult to Ney, 16 June 1815, Vaudoncourt, *Histoire des Campagnes de 1814 et 1815, en France*, II, 192.

³¹Chandler, *Waterloo, the hundred days*, 92-3.

At 4:00 p.m., Prince Jérôme Bonaparte led his division into the Wood of Bossu and engaged Lieutenant General Hendrik George de Perponcher's Dutch/Belgian Second Division. At the time of Jerome's attack, Lieutenant General Charles von Alten's Third Division began to arrive on the battlefield. He immediately ordered his infantry regiments to fall into line in the gap between the troops of Perponcher's Second Division in the wood and of Picton's Fifth Division at the crossroads. As von Alten's Division began reinforcing the center of the British line, the lead elements of Kellermann's 3rd Cavalry corps began to arrive at Quatre-Bras.

Due to the mismanaged movement orders from Marshal Soult, Kellermann was not in a position to support Ney's operations at Quatre Bras until late in the day. Kellermann's Corps spent the night of 15 June and the early morning hours of the next day south of the Sambre River and east of Charleroi. He spent most of the day crossing the river and marching to join Ney's left wing of the army.³² In his movement orders, Ney wanted him to move one brigade to support the operations at the crossroads of Quatre-Bras while stationing the other brigades at Frasnes and Lieberches.³³ These movement orders from Ney to Kellermann reflected Napoleon's desire for Ney to station cavalry units at Frasnes and Lieberches. These two towns constituted the strategic left flank of the French attack and Napoleon wanted that flank covered by cavalry units to prevent any possible envelopment by the British. This preoccupation with the flank not only placed Kellermann on the battlefield late on 16 Jun but also ordered him to bring only one cuirassier brigade instead of his entire corps.

³²Michel Louis Ney, *Documents Inédits Sur La Campagne de 1815*, (Paris, 1840), 8.

³³Bas and T'Serclaes de Wommersom, *La Campagne de 1815*, II, 494.

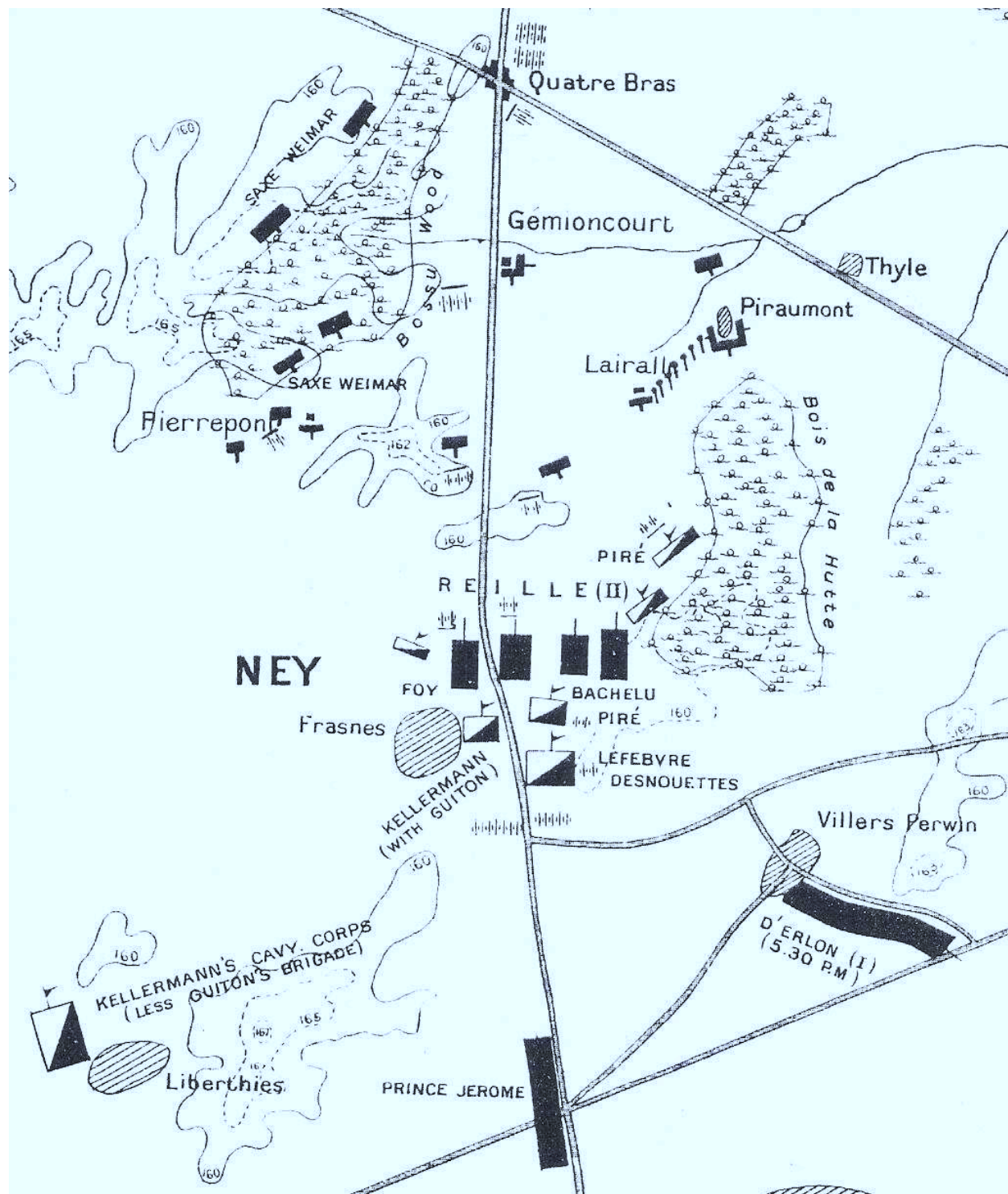


Figure 16: Liberches and Frasnés

KELLERMANN'S CHARGE

Kellermann's cavalry was the last reinforcement to reach Quatre Bras on 16 June. He appeared on the battlefield at the head of Guiton's Brigade at around 4:00 p.m.³⁴ Simultaneously, another order from Napoleon reached Ney. This new order described the situation at Ligny and ordered him to make a decisive effort to seize the crossroads and then send a division towards Lingy to take the Prussians in the rear as they began to retreat.³⁵ As soon as Ney saw Kellermann's cavalry reach the field of battle, he immediately began to organize an attack aimed at penetrating the center of the British line. Ney used Kellermann's Cavalry as the main effort in his attempt to comply with the Emperor's last order of the day.

Ney organized the remaining units of his Corps to support and exploit the cavalry charge into the center of the British line. He ordered the remaining squadrons of Pire's 2nd Light Cavalry Division to charge with Kellermann's 8th and 11th Cuirassiers to create a gap in the center of the enemy line that would enable *Lieutenant Général* Maximilien Sébastien Foy's Division of Reille's Corps to attack through the gap and gain control of the crossroads. As he made contact with Kellermann on the battlefield, he gave the following order, "My dear general, a great effort is necessary. On you perhaps depends the fate of France. You must charge and break through the infantry in our front. Advance and I will have you supported by all of Pire's cavalry."³⁶ Kellermann reminded Ney that he had only one brigade of cuirassiers, 800 cavalrymen, but Ney was adamant about the importance of a charge on the enemy's center.³⁷ Kellermann returned immediately to his men and gave orders for the attack. At the same time, Ney ordered Pire's division to support Kellermann's cavalry. Foy's Division was also instructed to support the successful charge with an infantry attack.³⁸ These three attacks would penetrate the enemy lines

³⁴Ibid., V, 10.

³⁵Soult to Ney, 16 June 1815, Vaudoncourt, *Histoire des Campagnes de 1814 et 1815, en France*, II, 193.

³⁶Evelyn Wood, *Cavalry in The Waterloo Campaign*, (London, 1895), 87.

³⁷There is considerable disagreement concerning this argument. Chandler, Charras, and Bas all claim that not only did Kellermann disagree with Ney, but that Ney had to "jibe" him into charging see Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 1052; Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, Charras, *Histoire de La Campagne de 1815*, 195; Bas and T'Serclaes de Wommersom, *La Campagne de 1815*, I, 523. The only author that offers any proof of this is Bas, who includes Kellermann's report to Ney after the battle see Bas and T'Serclaes de Wommersom, *La Campagne de 1815*, III, 255. The report does not substantiate this claim.

³⁸François Étienne Kellermann, "Observations sur La Bataille de Waterloo en Réponse à un écrit Intitulé Campagne de 1815 Fait à Sainte-Hélène et Publié Sous le Nom de Gal Gourgaud " *Revue du Souvenir Napoléonien* 64, no. 438 (2002): 89.

and force the enemy to retreat from the field in disorder. This retreat would allow Ney to control the crossroads and to send infantry to pursue the retreating Prussians.

Following Ney's orders, Kellermann organized the cavalry charge. He ordered General Guiton to form his brigade into echelon by squadron with double spacing between squadrons. While the officers of the 8th and 11th Cuirassiers formed their squadrons for the charge, Kellermann rode up and down the line, calling on the courage and honor of the heroes of the battles of Marengo and of the Pyramids.³⁹ Placing himself with Guiton at the head of the lead squadrons, the cavalry began to advance on the enemy line.⁴⁰ Kellermann led the cavalry north along the road to Brussels until it crossed the Gemioncourt Brook. Once across, the cavalry began to spread out. The ground between the Brussels road and the wood of Bossu was at a slight incline leading up to the crossroads.⁴¹ There was tall rye growing in the fields in front of the British position reducing their ability to see the charge coming. The tall rye also impaired Kellermann's ability to see the British formation, but it did allow him to identify location and disposition of the arriving British units and to direct the charge at what he perceived as the weak point in the enemy's line. The cavalry moved into these fields of rye as they advanced towards the center of British position.

³⁹Charras, *Histoire de La Campagne de 1815*, 523.

⁴⁰Bas and T'Serclaes de Wommersom, *La Campagne de 1815*, II, 524.

⁴¹Wood, *Cavalry in The Waterloo Campaign*, 88.

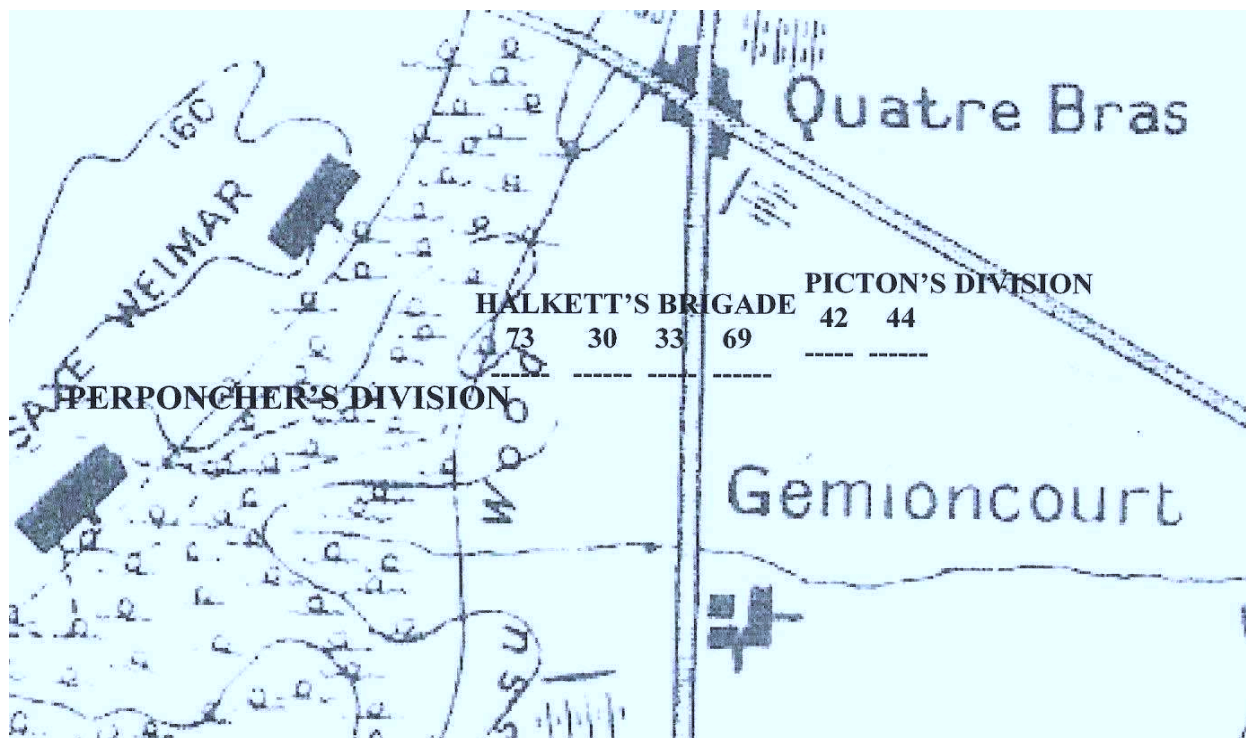


Figure 17: Quatre Bras before Kellermann's Charge

As the French cavalry entered the south end of the field of rye, General Sir Colin Halkett's Brigade of von Alten's 3rd Division formed up on the north end of the field of rye between the woods and the crossroads. The infantry regiments of the brigade completed the continuous British line with the 69th Foot linking up with the 42nd Foot of Picton's Division near the crossroads, followed on their left by the 33rd, the 30th and the 73rd Foot. These regiments linked up with the elements of Perponcher's Division to their right to form a more continuous line to the south of the crossroads of Quatre Bras.⁴² When the Duke of Wellington noticed the French cavalry advancing towards the line, he ordered the entire division to form into battalion squares. The 30th and 73rd Foot led Halkett's Brigade as it moved into position and formed into square with the 33rd Foot quickly following suit.⁴³ The 69th Foot also began to form into square when the Prince of Orange rode up and ordered it back into line.⁴⁴ The countermanded order

⁴²Chandler, *Waterloo, the Hundred Days*, 99.

⁴³Halkett to Siborne, 5 November 1835, H. T. Siborne, *Waterloo Letters; A Selection From Original and Hitherto Unpublished Letters Bearing on The Operations of The 16th, 17th, and 18th June, 1815, by Officers Who Served in The Campaign*, (London, 1891), 320.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 318.

caused some confusion as the French cavalry appeared out of the rye. Thus Halkett's Brigade became the center of the British line and was not prepared to defend against a cavalry charge with three regiments in square and one moving from square to line.

As the 69th Foot reformed its line, Kellermann's Cuirassiers came out of the tall rye into the center of the regiment's position. The cavalry crashed into the forming line of the 69th Foot, broke through the line, and chased the British into the woods.⁴⁵ As the 8th Cuirassiers charged through the companies of the 69th Foot, cavalryman Lamy from the 5th company captured the only British regimental flag by the French at Quatre-Bras.⁴⁶ Kellermann ordered Lamy to carry the flag back to inspire the infantry division that was supposed to follow up the charge. He carried the flag back to Foy's division as it prepared to support the cavalry charge. A cheer carried all through the Division as Lamy paraded the color in front of the infantry columns.

While Foy's division prepared to attack, the cavalry attack continued towards the crossroads at Quatre-Bras. Kellermann's cavalry were not the only French horsemen involved Ney's final attempt to penetrate the British line. Simultaneously with Kellermann's charge against the regiments of Halkett's Brigade, elements of Pire's division charged the British 42nd and 44th Foot of Picton's 5th Division.⁴⁷ The squadrons of the light division mustered only 500 cavalymen for the charge.⁴⁸ They made several charges to break the squares of the 42nd and 44th Foot. The British infantry regiments withstood the fury of the attack, but with heavy casualties. Elements of Pire's Division charged into the center of the 42nd Foot, momentarily breaking the infantry square, enabling the cavalry to isolate and destroy two of the British companies. The remaining soldiers of the 42nd Foot trapped several French cavalymen inside their positions as they reformed into a smaller regimental square. These cuirassiers trapped inside the square died at the hands of the 42nd Foot.⁴⁹ These attacks widened the gap created by the initial charges of the 8th Cuirassiers. The attacks of squadrons of Pire's Division assisted Kellermann's cavalry in

⁴⁵Ney, *Documents Inédits Sur La Campagne de 1815*, 59

⁴⁶Jean Baptiste Berton, *Précis historique, militaire et critique des batailles de Fleurus et de Waterloo, dans la campagne de Flandres, en juin 1815; de leurs manoeuvres caractéristiques, et des mouvemens qui les ont précédés et suivis*, (Paris, 1818), 36.

⁴⁷Wood, *Cavalry in The Waterloo Campaign*, 91.

⁴⁸Henry Houssaye, *1815*, (Paris, 1894), 210.

⁴⁹MacKenzie MacBride et al., *With Napoleon at Waterloo, and other unpublished documents of the Waterloo and Peninsular campaigns, also papers on Waterloo by the late Edward Bruce Low, M. A.*, (Philadelphia: PA 1911), 130.

creating the conditions for a successful supporting infantry attack into the center of the British line.

Although the British formation suffered heavy casualties from the initial charges of Pire's Division and the 8th Cuirassiers, it was not until the second charge of the 11th Cuirassiers that truly penetrated the enemy position. Initially, the 30th and 33rd Foot suffered from a continuous wave of cavalymen pouring fire into their massed squares. Throughout the first series of charges, they suffered heavy casualties, but maintained their formations and the integrity of the British line. After the first attack, Kellermann reformed the 11th Cuirassiers for another charge against the 30th and 33rd Foot from the exposed flank previously protected by the 69th Foot. This renewed charge broke the 30th Foot and drove it into the woods while turning the 33rd Foot away from the center of the British formation.⁵⁰ This created a hole in the British line through which Foy's Division could attack and seize control of Quatre Bras.



Figure 18: Quatre Bras after Kellermann's Charge

⁵⁰Batty, *An Historical Sketch of the Campaign of 1815*, (London, 1820), 50; Charras, *Histoire de La Campagne de 1815*, 196.

Once the cavalry charges created a significant split in the British line, Kellermann led the cavalymen around the remaining squares and continued into the rear of Halkett's Brigade towards the crossroads. A farmhouse overlooked the crossroads that Kellermann's cuirassiers reached as the northernmost point of their penetration.⁵¹ After charging through Halkett's Brigade, horsemen of the 8th and 11th Cuirassiers mixed together into a disorganized mass of cavalry, time was necessary to reform into an effective formation. The British prevented Kellermann's cavalry from reorganizing; they began taking fire from sharpshooters in the woods of Bossu and the Farmhouse area.⁵² Kellermann attempted to rally his squadrons around the farmhouse waiting for Foy's infantry. He controlled the area around the crossroads for approximately a half an hour until sharpshooters killed his horse out from underneath him.⁵³ Although he tried in vain to maintain control of the cavalry on foot, the combination of increasing rifle fire, the lack of infantry support, and the approach of Major General George Cooke's 1st Division sent the disorganized mass of cavalymen streaming back to the safety of the French lines.⁵⁴ Kellermann attempted to re-organize the scattered squadrons of the brigade, but to no avail. He finally grabbed onto the bridles of two Cuirassiers and road back to safety suspended between the two horses.⁵⁵ Without infantry support, Kellermann's Cavalry was not capable of defending the crossroads against an infantry counterattack.

The disordered remnants of Kellermann's charge streamed back toward the French lines and swept up the brigades of Pire's division. The combined masses of cavalry retreated directly into the slowly advancing infantrymen of Foy's Division. This division, fatigued from the attacks against the wood of Bossu earlier in the day, disintegrated as the masses of cavalymen passed through their columns.⁵⁶ The officer's of all three units were unable to control the retreating men who showed little signs of stopping north of Charleroi. Ney had to position himself in front of the streaming mass of infantry soldiers and cavalry to stop the headlong flight.⁵⁷ By the time Ney

⁵¹Jomini, *The Campaign of Waterloo*, 142.

⁵²Colonel Heymes, *Relation de La Campagne de 1815, Dite de Waterloo, Pour Servir à l'Histoire de Maréchal Ney*, (Paris, 1829)), 558-59.

⁵³Jomini, *The Campaign of Waterloo*, 142, Bas and T'Serclaes de Wommersom, *La Campagne de 1815*, II, 524.

⁵⁴Kellermann, "Observations sur La Bataille de Waterloo," 27.

⁵⁵Ney, *Documents Inédits Sur La Campagne de 1815*, 9.

⁵⁶Wood, *Cavalry in The Waterloo Campaign*, 93.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 93.

rallied the fleeing French troops it was after 6:00 p.m. and the British with over 30,000 outnumbered the French at Quatre-Bras by several thousand men, including many who had not been engaged earlier in the day.⁵⁸

Kellermann's attack constituted Ney's last and best hope of breaking the British lines at Quatre-Bras. The breaking of the square of the 69th and 33rd Foot, and the turning of the 30th Foot into the woods opened a gap the British line. Kellermann himself said of the attack in a report to Ney after the battle:

Complete success was ensured with the results that you wanted if only the lancers had followed us. But the cuirassiers, receiving a hail of rifle fire from all sides, could not profit by the advantage which they had obtained by resolute and bold charges against infantry which could not be intimidated and which made fire in cold blood like an exercise.⁵⁹

The slowness of Foy's support failed to turn Kellermann's success into the defeat of the British army. The cavalry alone could not hold the crossroads against infantry counterattack.

The initial phases of the 1815 campaign reminded his enemies of the Emperor's earlier victories during the Consulate and early Empire. The French corps assembled along the Belgium border without alerting the British or the Prussians of their intentions. French infantry and cavalry crossed the Sambre River rapidly, pushing enemy outposts before them, and achieved an advantageous position from which to strike the Prussian Army. Unfortunately, what began with the genius of 1805, ended on 16 June with the mediocrity of 1813. Confusing orders from Napoleon's headquarters impaired Ney's ability to concentrate his forces against the British at Quatre Bras. Vague orders kept Kellermann's cavalry on the south side of the river until late in the morning of 16 June. These same types of confusing orders kept D'Erlon's Corps from supporting either Grouchy at Ligny or Ney at Quatre Bras. Even after Kellermann's 3rd Cavalry Corps crossed the river and was in a position to support Ney's attack, his orders prevented him from reaching the battlefield with more than a single cuirassier brigade. The other brigades of the 3rd Cavalry Corps maintained positions on the strategic flank of the French Army and conducted screening operations against a possible British envelopment.⁶⁰ The mismanagement of orders and

⁵⁸Hofschröer, *1815: The Waterloo Campaign*, I, 304.

⁵⁹Kellermann to Ney, 16 June 1815, *Bas and T'Serclaes de Wommersom, La Campagne de 1815*, III, 255-56.

⁶⁰Kellermann, "Observations sur La Bataille de Waterloo," 27.

preoccupation with the strategic flank of the army kept thousands of cavalry and infantrymen from making a difference against the British at Quatre Bras. These decisions enabled the Duke of Wellington to amass a superior force on the defensive against Ney's left wing.

Despite the superior numbers of British soldiers defending the crossroads at Quatre Bras, Ney had an opportunity to accomplish his mission by penetrating the British line and forcing Wellington to retreat, leaving the crossroads under French control. Once Kellermann's Cavalry appeared on the battlefield, Ney had available the forces necessary to penetrate the center of the British line. He hastily organized a combined cavalry and infantry assault using Kellermann's Cavalry to spearhead the charge supported by elements of Pire's Cavalry Division and Foy's Infantry Division. Ney created a sound plan to use the cavalry to create a hole in the British line through which Foy's Division could attack thereby disrupting the British line and causing Wellington to retreat. The initial stages of this combined attack went extremely well. Kellermann's Cavalry broke one infantry square and disrupted several more. With pressure from Pire's Division, the French cavalry forced the British infantry regiments to form and reform their squares away from the center of the British line. Kellermann then continued his charge through the British to seize and hold the crossroads for a full thirty minutes. However, the failure of Ney's combined attack was the lack of coordination between the cavalry and the infantry. The inability of Foy's Division to rapidly attack through the weakened center of the British gave Wellington time to order a counterattack against Kellermann's exposed and disorganized cavalry. What started as a combined arms attack ended in failure as an uncoordinated cavalry attack.

Kellermann's charge at Quatre Bras demonstrated several realities of combat against the British in 1815. His charge showed that the British line, and thus British infantry squares were not impervious to cavalry charge if properly planned and led. Kellermann's Cavalry was extremely successful against British infantry when his cavalry hit them while changing from line to square, or when they had just formed up from the march. Another reality of fighting the British lay in Wellington's defensive tactics. His dispositions made the British line difficult to penetrate. Even when Kellermann broke the line and occupied a position to threaten the rear of several brigades, there was no British retreat. The infantry squares remained in their place in the line and waited for Wellington to organize a counterattack to repulse the enemy.

CHAPTER 5: WATERLOO

The French maintained an excellent strategic position as the smoke cleared over the battlefields of Quatre Bras and Ligny. Napoleon considered both battles to have accomplished their missions. His main effort against the Prussians at Ligny was a great success. He drove the Prussians off the field inflicting 16,000 casualties and causing what looked like the beginning of a retreat toward the east. Ney's action at Quatre Bras, while not the successful destruction of the British advanced guard that Napoleon anticipated, still prevented the British from assisting the Prussians as they had promised. After both battles, Napoleon maintained his central position between the British and the Prussians. On the night of 16 June, Napoleon looked as if he could inflict the decisive defeat that would raise the morale of the French people, and cause the Allied powers to consider negotiations instead of a second invasion of France.

While the strategic situation of 16 June gave several advantages to Napoleon, the French Army fled from Belgium on 19 June with a majority of the army broken and unable to stop the Allied advance towards Paris. Napoleon's decisions and orders on 17 and 18 June enabled the Allies to unite at Waterloo. Operationally, Napoleon attacked the British at the strongest part of their defensive formation without any form of envelopment or maneuver. An examination of the cavalry operations Napoleon ordered on 17 and 18 June demonstrated the impact of changes in his operational method of warfare as well as an effective way of analyzing the French defeat. The 3rd Cavalry Corps under the command of General Kellermann provided a unique opportunity to follow the cavalry operations of the Battle of Waterloo and understand how they affected the course of the battle.

The operations of Kellermann's 3rd Cavalry Corps were unique in several ways that made them an excellent way to study the cavalry operations during the Battle of Waterloo. Like a majority of the French Army preparing to advance on the British, it spent most of 17 June reorganizing south of the Quatre Bras battlefield. As the 3rd Cavalry Corps consisted of heavy cavalry, both cuirassiers and carabineers, it formed the principle cavalry unit in Napoleon's reserve. Due to the limited nature of the heavy cavalry's missions, Kellermann's cavalry executed Napoleon's *coup de grace* to destroy the enemy formation and rout the entire British Army. Thus, following the actions of the 3rd Cavalry Corps produced a focused study on both the

concentration of the French Army, their activities against the British on 17 June, and the actions of Napoleon's heavy cavalry during the Battle of Waterloo the next day.

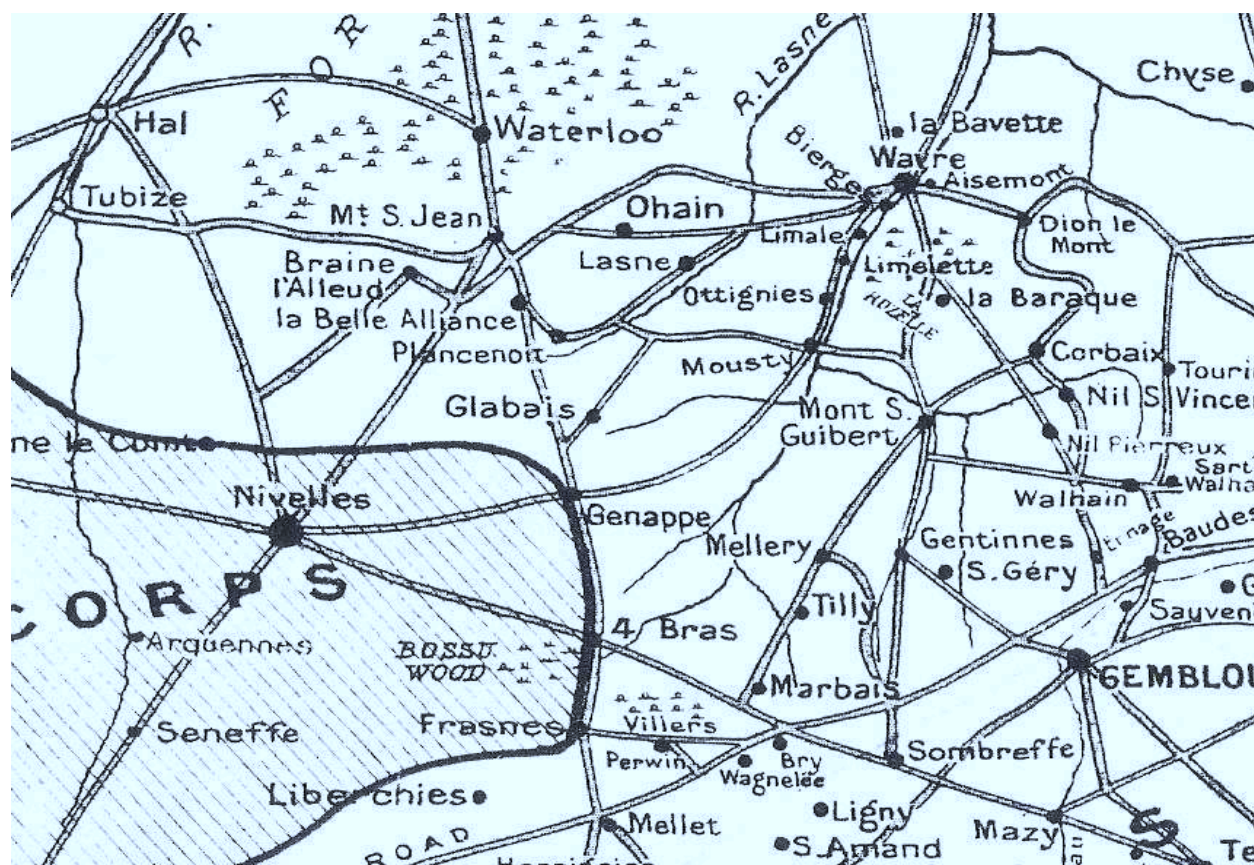


Figure 19: Plancenoit

The French forces began consolidating for further offensive operations following the Battles of Quatre Bras and Ligny on the night of 16 June. Ney's retreating forces bivouacked and reorganized in the area of Frasnes.¹ Following the battle, Kellermann concentrated the division of L'Hertier with the rest of Ney's Army. He lost contact with Roussel's Division at Liebertches and the second brigade of L'Hertier's Division and was unable to regain contact with them until 17 June.² On the morning of 17 June, the 3rd Cavalry Corps reunited both of its divisions at Frasnes and united with the main body of the army. Following Ligny, Napoleon transferred the 6th Infantry Corps, the Imperial Guard, and the 4th Cavalry Corps to the left wing under Ney and took control of that wing personally. This reorganization created the order of battle for Napoleon's main effort against the British at Waterloo.

¹Heymes, *Relation de La Campagne de 1815*, 560.

²Kellermann to Ney, 16 June 1815, Bas and T'Serclaes de Wommersom, *La Campagne de 1815*, III, 255-56.

Napoleon's inactivity on 17 June wasted much of the strategic initiative gained by his rapid invasion into Belgium and the Battles of Quatre Bras and Ligny. After Battle of Quatre Bras, the French cavalry of D'Erlon's Corps maintained contact with the British rearguard at the crossroads. The British remained in command of the crossroads at Quatre Bras on the morning of 17 June, and retreated north only when pressured by a powerful French advance at 11:00 a.m.³ When the British retreated on towards Waterloo, the French cavalry pursued them as far north as Genappe.⁴ Without fighting a major action, the French army bivouacked in the area of Plancenoit in preparation of engaging the British in battle on 18 June.⁵

The pursuit of the British on 17 June resembled more of a reconnaissance than an actual pursuit.⁶ Napoleon had several fresh units available to apply real pressure on the British. D'Erlon's corps did not participate in the Battles on 16 June and was capable of more aggressive pursuit. Kellermann's Corps also remained capable of offensive operations. Although Guiton's Brigade suffered casualties at Quatre Bras, the other three brigades of the 3rd Cavalry Corps remained fresh and untouched by the rigors of combat.⁷ That constituted at least one infantry corps and one cavalry corps that Napoleon had available to conduct pursuit operations on 17 June.

The pursuit operations against the British were slow and ineffective. Napoleon also failed to order a vigorous pursuit of the Prussians by the forces left under the command of Marshal Grouchy.⁸ Although Grouchy prepared several of his units to begin the pursuit of the Prussians immediately following the Battle of Ligny, Napoleon did not allow Grouchy to begin a deliberate pursuit until the afternoon of 17 Jun. Failing to order an aggressive pursuit of the British enabled them to withdraw unmolested to the favorable terrain at Waterloo and allowed the Prussians to consolidate and move not to the east back toward its base at Liege, but to the west to support the British at the Battle of Waterloo.

³Heymes, *Relation de La Campagne de 1815*, 561.

⁴*An Account of the battle of Waterloo, fought on the 18th of June, 1815, by the English and Allied forces, commanded by the Duke of Wellington, and the Prussian army, under the orders of Prince Blucher, against the army of France, commanded by Napoleon Bonaparte*, (London, 1815), 13.

⁵Beauvais de Préau, *Victoires, Conquêtes, Désastres, Revers et Guerres*, XXVI, 196.

⁶Heymes, *Relation de La Campagne de 1815*, 561.

⁷Kellermann, "Observations sur La Bataille de Waterloo," 27.

⁸Becke, *Napoleon and Waterloo*, II, 8.

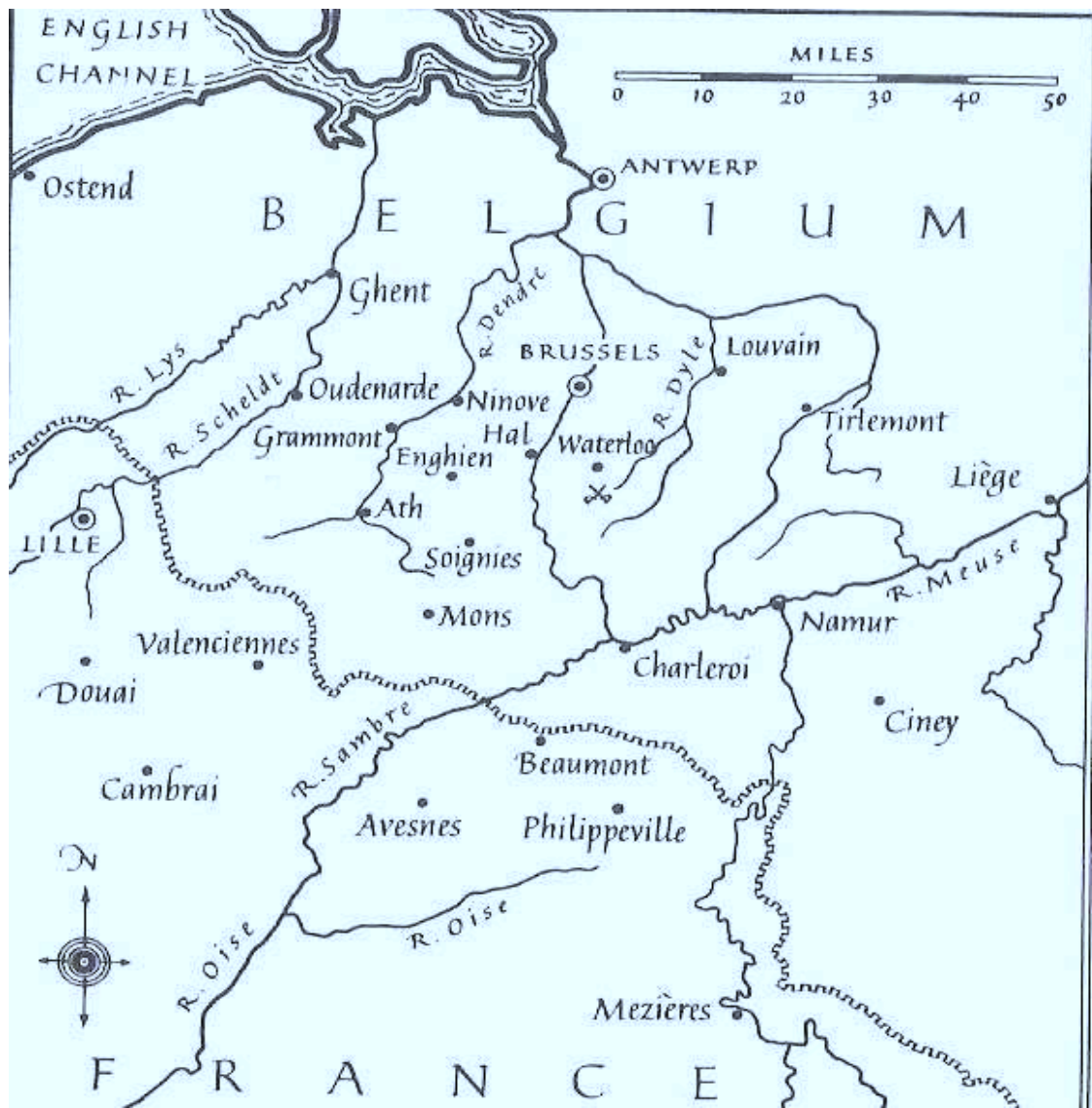


Figure 20: Brussels and Liege

The Battle of Waterloo began early on the morning of 18 June as Napoleon formed the French Army into three lines. Reille's 2nd Corps on the left and D'Erlon's 1st Corps on the right formed the first line of the army. The second line consisted of Kellermann's 3rd Cavalry Corps on the left behind Reille's Corps, Lobau's 6th Corps in the center, and Milhaud's 4th Cavalry Corps behind D'Erlon's Corps on the Right. The Infantry and Cavalry of the Guard formed the third and last line of the initial French dispositions at Waterloo.⁹ The French Army at Waterloo

⁹Wilson, *General Wilson's Journal, 1812-1814*, , 437.

numbered 72,000: 49,000 infantry, 7,000 artillery with 246 guns, and 16,000 cavalrymen.¹⁰

Unlike earlier battles with dispersed divisions and corps concentrated on the battlefield, the French Army used this formation to advance from Plancenoit north to the field of Waterloo.

Following the Battle of Quatre Bras, Wellington withdrew his army north and chose the field to the south of Waterloo to await the French attack. Two roads intersected the field, one leading to Charleroi, and the other to Nivelles at the small village of Mont St Jean. An elevated ridgeline ran east to west in front of the village. About 250 yards in front of the ridgeline were the farm buildings of La Haye Sainte, which commanded the sloping valley to the south. The chateau of Hougoumont constituted the southwest end of the ridgeline 450 meters from the crossroads. To the east, the ridgeline ran another 700 meters almost perpendicular to the Charleroi road and ended on the little knoll overlooking the hamlet of Papelotte.¹¹ The rains of the night of 17 June turned the entire field at Waterloo into mud making it extremely difficult to traverse.¹² The undulations of the terrain south of Waterloo created a naturally strong defensive position.

¹⁰Becke, *Napoleon and Waterloo*, II, 19.

¹¹W. Siborne, *History of the Waterloo campaign*, (London, 1990), 203.

¹²Becke, *Napoleon and Waterloo*, II, 4.



← South

Figure 21: Waterloo

The Duke of Wellington arrayed his divisions along the natural ridgeline south of Mont St Jean. He placed Cook's First Division from the Hougoumont towards the crossroads. General Sir Henry Clinton's Second Division fell in on the left of Cook's Division and manned the center part of the ridgeline to the west of the Charleroi road. Von Alten's Third Division manned the ridgeline from the end of the Clinton's Division to the crossroads. Picton's Fifth Division completed the British main line from the crossroads east along the *chemin D'Ochain*.¹³ The British forces at the start of the Battle of Waterloo numbered 68,000: 50,000 infantry, 5,000 artillery with 156 guns, and 12,500 cavalry.¹⁴ Thus in the early phases of the battle, the French outnumbered the British in all of the combat arms.

Wellington used the ridgeline throughout the battle to shield his forces from French observation and cannon fire in a technique known as the reverse slope defense. Wellington used this defensive technique throughout his campaigns in Spain. He favored a long thin linear formation with artillery generally spread uniformly to support the entire line and picked troops on both flanks.¹⁵ The terrain at Waterloo afforded Wellington just such an opportunity to deploy the British along the reverse slope of the ridgeline overlooking Mont St Jean.

In the battle lines facing the plateau of Mont St Jean, Napoleon positioned Kellermann's Cavalry and the Imperial Guard as his strategic reserve. Thus, as the battle opened at 11:00 a.m. with an attack by Reille's Corps on Hougoumont, Kellermann's cavalry remained in formation behind the fighting.¹⁶ The attack on the British right flank was a diversion as Napoleon planned his main attack on the British left flank using D'Erlon's 1st Corps.¹⁷ However, Jérôme's Division led the attack on Hougoumont and became decisively engaged. The diversion on the British right flank began to require more and more troops. Early in the fighting, Napoleon ordered Kellermann to send his horse artillery to support Jérôme's Division attack.¹⁸ This horse artillery continued to support the attack on the British right flank through the rest of the day, and was unavailable to Kellermann for the rest of the battle.

¹³Chandler, *Waterloo, the hundred days*, 129.

¹⁴Becke, *Napoleon and Waterloo*, II, 35.

¹⁵Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare In The Age of Napoleon*, 184-85.

¹⁶Chandler, *Waterloo, the hundred days*, , 133.

¹⁷Campagne de 1815, Napoleon, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, XXXI, 226-27.

¹⁸Campagne de 1815, *Ibid.*, 229.

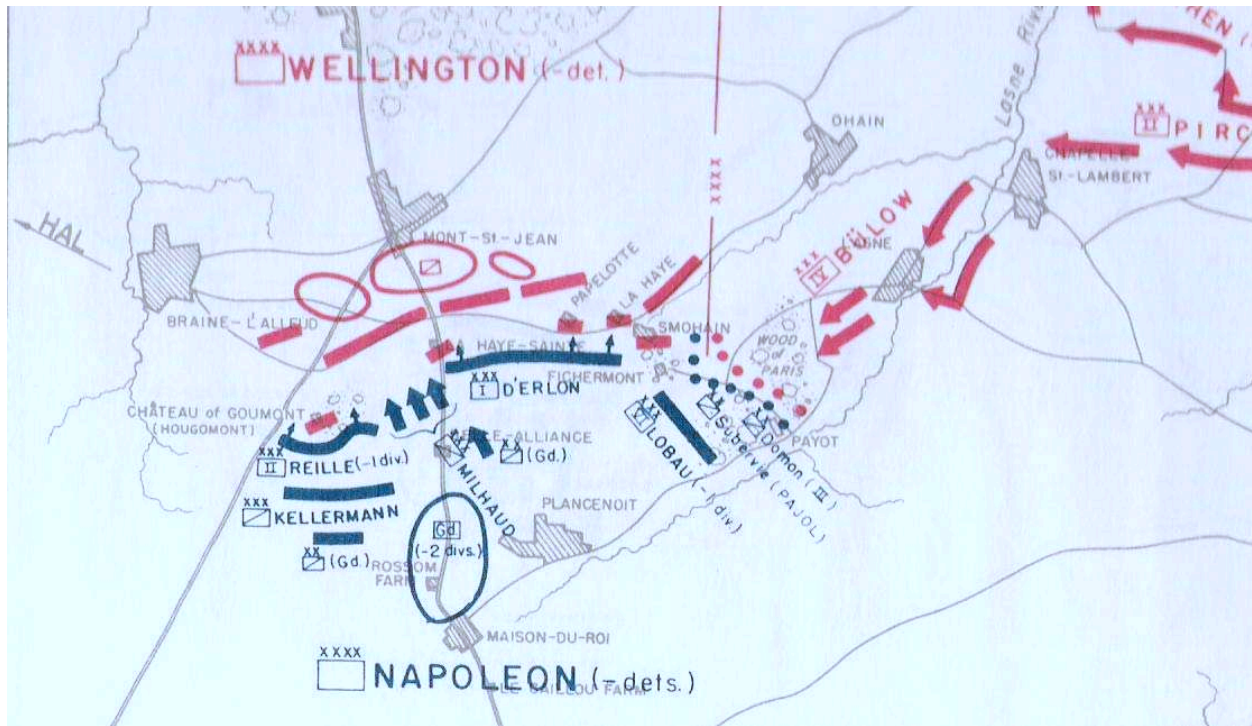


Figure 22: Waterloo 1:30 p.m.

The main French attack started at 1:30 in the afternoon on the enemy's left flank. As it advanced toward the British lines, the lead elements of Bulow's 4th Prussian Corps contacted the French cavalry screen at Chapelle-St-Lambert.¹⁹ Napoleon quickly dispatched Lobau's 6th Corps to move toward St-Lambert to support the light infantry and to delay the Prussians from reaching the field of Waterloo.²⁰ Meanwhile, the main French attack stalled and failed to penetrate the British line. At about 2:00 p.m., Lord Uxbridge lead a British cavalry charge that broke the attack of D'Erlon's Corps.²¹ This counter-attack by the British cavalry successfully drove the French back to their artillery support at which point Napoleon ordered a French cavalry attack on Uxbridge's cavalry. This French counter attack broke the British cavalry and the threat of continued attack on the routed elements of D'Erlon's Corps.²² The British counter-attack that drove the French main effort from the British line ended the first phase of the Battle of Waterloo.

¹⁹Becke, *Napoleon and Waterloo*, II, 56.

²⁰Campagne de 1815, Napoleon, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, XXXI, 230-31.

²¹Becke, *Napoleon and Waterloo*, II, 69-70.

²²*Ibid.*, 71.

This charge swept forward and ascended the plateau towards Mont St Jean. The cavalry crashed over the military crest of the plateau and charged directly into a checkerboard of twenty infantry squares.²⁵ At the corners of the infantry squares were batteries of artillery. These gunners received orders to continue to fire until the cavalry closed in and then retreat into the nearest square for protection, leaving the guns unprotected during the cavalry charges.²⁶ This tactic caused a tremendous amount of damage to the French cavalry squadrons allowing the British crews to fire into the French cavalry until the charge closed with the squares. Inconceivably, the guns were not destroyed or captured by the French because the cavalymen failed to carry the usual spikes used to disable the guns. As a result, Milhaud's and Lefèbvre-Desnoëttes' cavalry made very little impact on the British line and retreated taking heavy casualties.

Meanwhile, Bulow's Corps began to pressure the French right flank and rear areas. Napoleon saw the masses of French cavalry begin to retreat back over the ridgeline and into the valley below and said "It is an hour too soon, but what has been done must be supported."²⁷ At around 5:00 p.m., Napoleon decided to commit the majority of his cavalry reserve and ordered Kellermann to advance on Mont St. Jean and break the British lines.²⁸ Napoleon believed that only supporting Milhaud and Lefèbvre-Desnoëttes' charge would defeat the British before the Prussian main body reached the battlefield. This attack committed the entire French cavalry to a frontal attack against the British line.

Although Kellermann disagreed with the wisdom of Napoleon's orders and commented on the lack of infantry and artillery support for the renewed effort against the British center, he quickly formed his command for the charge.²⁹ He ordered his corps to advance first with Roussel's Division on the left and then L'Heritier's Division on the right. With the 3rd Cavalry Corps, the cavalry of the Imperial Guard under General Jean Guiot advanced toward the enemy's center. Napoleon stated in his memoirs that he did not want the Imperial Guard cavalry to accompany this charge saying, "I noticed this, and sent Count Bertrand to recall it; it was my reserve. When this General arrived there, it was already committed and any movement of

²⁵Becke, *Napoleon and Waterloo*, II, 78-79.

²⁶Cavalié Mercer, *Journal of the Waterloo Campaign, Kept Throughout The Campaign of 1815*, (Edinburgh, 1870), 310.

²⁷Campagne de 1815, Napoleon, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, XXXI, 233.

²⁸MacBride et al., *With Napoleon at Waterloo*, , 177.

²⁹Kellermann, "Observations sur La Bataille de Waterloo," 33.

withdrawal would have been dangerous.³⁰ Napoleon understood the ramifications of the loss of his cavalry reserve; he realized would need it later in the battle, but was unable to recover the Guard Cavalry before they committed to the charge.

This advancing charge provided a rallying point for the disordered masses of cavalrymen streaming back down the hill. The cavalrymen of Milhaud's 4th Cavalry Corps and Lefèbvre-Desnoëttes' Imperial Guard cavalry rallied around Kellermann's Cavalry and began to swell the ranks of the charge. These units reformed to the right of Kellermann's Corps extending the line of cavalry for several hundred meters. Due to the debris of the previous attacks on Mont St. Jean, Kellermann directed the 3rd Cavalry Corps to charge on the left side of La Haye Sainte, while the reformed elements of Milhaud and Lefèbvre-Desnoëttes' charge attacked on the right side of the La Haye Sainte.³¹ What started as a charge of 5,000 cavalrymen became a massive wall of horseman of over 10,000 men in seventy-seven squadrons.³² Cavalrymen of all types cuirassiers, lancers, dragoons, carabineers, and chasseurs participated in what was one of the greatest horse cavalry charges in the history of warfare.

Napoleon was not the only one who understood the need to maintain a reserve. Kellermann wanted to create a reserve for his corps consisting of one of his brigades. As the cavalry reached La Haye Sainte, there was a small depression with tall Rye growing in it that was hidden from the view of both the British at Mont St Jean, and the French. Kellermann took this point to detach Blanchard's Carabineer Brigade from the advancing charge.³³ Having led decisive cavalry charges in the past, he knew the important role that cavalry played in the pursuit or the retreat.³⁴ He realized the importance of maintaining a cavalry reserve so he detached the brigade with the hopes of having a fresh unit to rally the corps following the charge.³⁵ Blanchard's Brigade would stay hidden in the La Haye Sainte area until after Kellermann's attack, and would enable the 3rd Cavalry Corps to continue to influence the battlefield.

³⁰Campagne de 1815, Napoleon, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, XXXI, 234-35.

³¹Kellermann, "Observations sur La Bataille de Waterloo," 33.

³²There are some differences in opinion as to exactly how big the charge really was. Napoleon in his memoirs states that it was 12,000 cavalrymen, pg 125. Colonel Heymes in his defense of Ney stated that 15,000 cavalrymen charged the center of the British line, pg 565. In his *Campaigns of Napoleon*, Chandler used a figure between 9,000 and 10,000 to describe Kellermann's cavalry charge, pg 1084.

³³Kellermann, "Observations sur La Bataille de Waterloo," 33.

³⁴Marango, 1800 and Alba de Tormes 1809.

³⁵Houssaye, *1815*, 365.

Kellermann made the final approach to the crest of the plateau under the cover of a furious French artillery attack.³⁶ Because the British Infantry remained in squares, they suffered their greatest casualties of the day from the artillery preparation for Kellermann's cavalry charge. This charge crested the ridgeline and slammed into the British squares. The squares, however, held against this flood without the loss of one infantry regiment or a single color.³⁷ There were several reasons why the British squares held firm against the French cavalry. According to several different accounts, there were very few horses or cavalymen killed on the bayonets of the British squares. Ensign Gronow of the 1st Foot Guards said of the cavalry charge that, "after 4:00, the squares were full of the dead and the dying. The cuirassiers breastplates reflecting ball, the British musket fire killed less men, but lots of horses. The horses would stop twenty feet from the squares."³⁸ The horses were unwilling to crash through the bayonets of the squares. Kellermann's charge literally moved around and in between the squares receiving fire from both the first and second line of British Foot. With the enemy in tightly maintained and well-disciplined squares, there were no weak points to exploit.

After taking heavy casualties from the rifle fire and artillery of the infantry squares, the disordered cavalymen began to stream down the hill back toward the French lines. Kellermann was wounded during the charge and was unable to rally the cavalry. The discipline and order of the charging cavalymen broke on the immovable British infantry squares. Ney, seeing the initial charge fail, noticed the Blanchard's Brigade at the La Haye Sainte area.³⁹ He took command of the Brigade, used it as a rallying point for the disordered cavalry, just as Kellermann's initial charge had done with Milhaud's cavalymen, and led the last and final cavalry charge of the day.⁴⁰ Ney's charge achieved the same result as the other charges; no squares broke, and there was no penetration of the British line. Although taking heavy casualties, the British squares remained in command of the field and the ruined French cavalry retreated back through the French infantry lines.⁴¹ It was at this time, approximately 5:30 p.m., that the combined attacks of two Prussian Corps on the French right flank drew more of Napoleon's attention.

³⁶Batty, *An Historical Sketch of the Campaign of 1815*, 103.

³⁷John Codman Ropes, *The Campaign of Waterloo; A Military History*, (New York, 1892), 310.

³⁸Antony Brett-James, *The Hundred Days; Napoleon's last campaign from eyewitness accounts*, (New York, 1964), 134-136.

³⁹Kellermann, "Observations sur La Bataille de Waterloo," 33.

⁴⁰Houssaye, *1815*, 375.

⁴¹Ropes, *The Campaign of Waterloo*, 310.

The appearance of Blücher on the French right flank made Napoleon's situation desperate. He ordered elements of the Young Guard to support Lobau's 6th Corps' position at Plancemoit against the Prussians while he ordered his last and final reserve onto the field of battle.⁴² Napoleon ordered an echeloned infantry attack aimed at the same part of the British line as the cavalry charges. He hoped this last charge of the Imperial Guard would send the British into flight and snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. The Imperial Guard marched toward the British lines and although the British lines appeared ready to break, the attack was unsuccessful.⁴³ The British, now in line formations, withstood the impact of the infantry charge with rifle and cannon fire and sent the decimated Imperial Guard back down the slope towards the rest of the French army. It was at this moment that Wellington ordered his entire line to advance down the hill against the French.⁴⁴ From his vantage point, Wellington could see that Napoleon had no reserves left and that his army was in disarray. The pressure from the Prussians and the frontal attack of the British broke Napoleon's army.⁴⁵

The failure of Kellermann's cavalry charge at Waterloo demonstrated the predictably negative results from the following the orders given for the employment of the 3rd Cavalry Corps. The charge suffered from three operational problems; it was an uncoordinated attack, it constituted a frontal attack into the enemy's defensive position without any kind of maneuver, and it represented a reinforcement of failure on the battlefield. Kellermann's best efforts on the battlefield could not overcome these failures of operational planning. Napoleon's decision to employ the 3rd Cavalry Corps in a charge that defied several of the operational principles that he used successfully in the past led not only to the destruction of the French cavalry, but also to his defeat at the Battle of Waterloo.

Kellermann's last charge was an uncoordinated attack consisting exclusively of cavalrymen and all of the heavy cavalry available to Napoleon at Waterloo. This type of attack was much less effective and powerful than the coordinated attack, which consisted of all three combat arms working together to destroy the enemy. While there was an artillery preparation of the British line between Milhaud's and Kellermann's charge, once the cavalry moved in front of the guns, they ceased to influence the battle due to Wellington's use of the reverse slope defense. Since Napoleon ordered Kellermann's horse artillery batteries to support Jérôme's Division in its

⁴²Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 1086.

⁴³Becke, *Napoleon and Waterloo*, II, 123-24.

⁴⁴Hofschroer, *1815: The Waterloo Campaign*, II, 145.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 148.

attack on Hougoumont, the 3rd Cavalry Corps had no direct artillery support available to support the charge. There was also no infantry support of the charge. Napoleon did not include supporting infantry in the orders to Kellermann prior to advancing on the British line, so Kellermann understood that it was not Napoleon's plan to reinforce his attack with infantry columns. Napoleon failed to move infantry toward the British line to take advantage of any penetration the cavalry attacks might create. Kellermann's tactical victory at the Battle of Quatre Bras demonstrated the need for close infantry support in order to make a cavalry penetration decisive. Napoleon planned and ordered Kellermann's charge as an uncoordinated attack and in doing so weakened his best chance of breaking the British line.

The defeat of the French Army at Waterloo was not the last phase of Kellermann's active military career. Following the disastrous results of his cavalry charge at 5:30 p.m., the French cavalry fled the field of battle in a tremendous mass of disorganized cavalymen.⁴⁶ Re-establishing order as soon as he could, Kellermann retreated to the Quatre Bras area to reform the French Cavalry. In the confusion following the battle, General Foy led a small group of his divisional staff and scattered remnants of his regiments south in an attempt to reform the elements of the French Army. He came upon Kellermann and exclaimed "Kellermann, this is good, he knows this ground and has fought here recently."⁴⁷ Along with all of the divisions and corps of the defeated French Army of the North, Kellermann worked hard to reorganize the 3rd Cavalry Corps as the French retired towards Charleroi.⁴⁸ The only element of the Army of the North to avoid defeat at the hands of the enemy was Grouchy's right wing of the army still pursuing the Prussians.

On 19 June 1815, Grouchy commanded the only disciplined forces in the Army of the North. Throughout the night, Grouchy's forces maintained the position on the plateau of Wavre they seized from the Prussians the day before. General Thielemann's Prussian Corps prepared attack the French position in an attempt to regain the lost position. The Prussians fought hard, inspired by news of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, but fell back before. Grouchy turned the Prussian left and drove them from the field by 10:00 a.m.⁴⁹ It was at this time that Grouchy learned of Napoleon's defeat.

⁴⁶Becke, *Napoleon and Waterloo*, II, 97.

⁴⁷Maximilien Foy, *Discours du Général Foy: Précédés d'Une Notice Biographique*, ed. Pierre-François Tissot and Charles Guillaume Etienne, (Paris, 1826), I, 415.

⁴⁸Kellermann, "Observations sur La Bataille de Waterloo," 41.

⁴⁹Becke, *Napoleon and Waterloo*, II, 191.

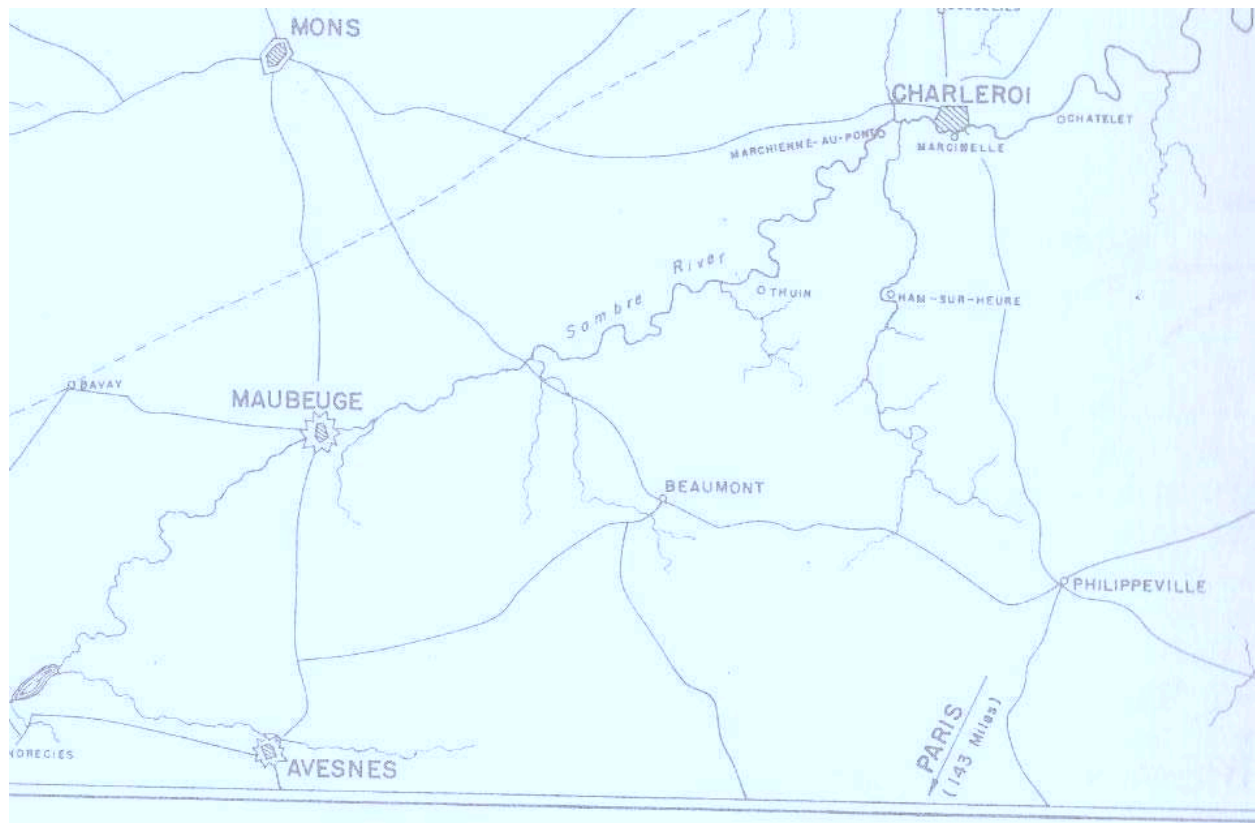


Figure 24: From Charleroi to Avenes

While the Army of the North began to reorganize on the move from Charleroi to Avenes, Napoleon rushed from Waterloo to retake control of the situation in France. He quickly began to issue proclamations for future victories and to create reinforcements for the Army of the North.⁵⁰ To the Army, he ordered the corps to assemble at various locations. He ordered the 3rd Cavalry Corps to Vervins and Rheims.⁵¹ Napoleon's plan was to consolidate his army around Rheims the forces that fought at Waterloo and Grouchy's Army. When Grouchy learned of the defeat at Waterloo, he immediately ordered a retreat and headed for the only bridge across the Sambre River still in French hands. Namur was his objective and he used speed and cavalry to move his

⁵⁰Napoleon to Soult, 19 June 1815, Ibid., II, 298

⁵¹Ibid., II, 202.

army back towards Paris.⁵² From 19 through 22 June, The French Army attempted to regroup and consolidate between the Allied Armies and Paris.

Although the Army of the North attempted to contest the Allied advance, they could not stop the advance of the British and Prussian Armies, or the other armies of the 7th Coalition. On 20 June, Grouchy's left wing of the Army of the North concentrated around Avesnes and urged Prince Jérôme to take command of the forces attempting to maintain contact with the Allied Army.⁵³ The army continued to maintain a position between the Allies and Paris. By 26 June, 65,000 men were reunited with Grouchy's wing around Laon.⁵⁴ That day, news reached the commanders of the Army of the North that Napoleon abdicated and that a provisional government was in control of France. This news had a tremendous impact on the soldiers of the Army of the North.

In his order revealing the abdication to the Army, Grouchy ordered the soldiers of France to continue fighting until orders changed from the Provisional Government.⁵⁵ The impact on moral was incredible, as it seemed to sap the spirit of soldiers and officers alike.⁵⁶ From 19 to 22 June, Kellermann kept his cavalry in contact with the Prussian Army as it moved to Charleroi, across the Sambre River, and into France. Once the announcement of the Emperor's abdication, there was apprehension as to how to fight this new war. On 24 June, Kellermann wrote Grouchy a letter explaining his situation, and also asking for orders concerning the war effort.⁵⁷ The 3rd and 4th Cavalry Corps were still observing the Allied forces as they moved steadily south, while maintaining positions at Rheims and Fismes. Kellermann also asked Grouchy for instructions concerning the defenses of Rheims? About the National Guard and the war supplies in the city? There was very little command and control over the effort following Napoleon's abdication. With Napoleon abdicated, the motivation for the French people collapsed. Kellermann ordered the 3rd Cavalry Corps into cantonments in the Compiegne area on 28 June and ended his active military career. While isolated fighting still took place throughout the summer, the majority of the Army of the North ceased to operate as a military organization.

⁵²Ibid., II, 193.

⁵³Kellermann, "Observations sur La Bataille de Waterloo," 41.

⁵⁴Ibid.: 41.

⁵⁵Grouchy to the Army, 22 June 1815, Service historique, C¹⁵ 6.

⁵⁶Kellermann, "Observations sur La Bataille de Waterloo," 42.

⁵⁷Kellermann to Grouchy, 24 June 1815, Emmanuel Grouchy and George Grouchy, *Mémoires du Maréchal de Grouchy*, (Paris, 1873), 392-393.

Napoleon misused the cavalry throughout the Battle of Waterloo. His first failure was in the planning for the attack on the British position at Waterloo. Instead of ordering a coordinated attack employing infantry column attacks on the enemy's main force in conjunction with a strong cavalry attack on the enemy's flank and rear areas, Napoleon formed his entire army up on the same line of operations and led the entire army, cavalry and infantry, into a series of frontal attacks. By attacking the center of the British defensive position, Napoleon gave Wellington the initiative. Wellington could reinforce threatened sectors of the line while continuing to re-supply his forces and give the British the advantage of interior lines. The strength of the British position was a direct result of Wellington's deployments of his infantry squares into a checkerboard formation. This checkerboard formation made continued cavalry attacks ineffective, since the loss of a single square would not significantly weaken the British line. Even if Kellermann's charge had penetrated one or two or five infantry squares, the rest of the squares would have held against the remaining cavalry charges and as Napoleon failed to provide for close infantry support, the British would have the opportunity to reinforce the weakened parts of the line. Moreover, his failure to maintain a cavalry reserve turned the defeat of the Imperial Guard's last infantry attack into the rout of the entire French Army. Ney's desire to charge until there were no French cavalry squadrons left, and Napoleon's inability to recall the Guyot's Cavalry provided him with no way of disengaging from the combined British-Prussian forces. Thus the day ended with the failure of the French Army to break the British line and their subsequent retreat after the arrival of the Prussians.

CONCLUSION.

Despite age and illness, Kellermann had an extremely active military career during the decline of the Empire. He began his return to active duty in March 1813 when he commanded the cavalry brigade of Ney's 3rd Corps through the Battle of Lutzen on 1-2 May. Following the battle, he commanded the advanced guard in the pursuit of the Allies that culminated in the Battle of Bautzen on 21-22 May. As the *Grande Armée* was reorganized during the summer of 1813, Napoleon gave Kellermann command of the 4th Polish Cavalry Corps. He conducted screening and reconnaissance missions from August through October when Napoleon ordered the withdrawal and concentration of the army at Leipzig. Although suffering from poor health, he commanded the left wing of Marshal Murat's cavalry charge at Wachau on 16 October 1813. This attack proved too much for both Kellermann and the *Grande Armée*. While the army retreated west after their defeat at Leipzig, Kellermann was sent back to Paris to recuperate and prepare for future campaigns.

His convalescence was brief as the Allied armies advanced into France. In early February, Napoleon gave Kellermann the command of a cavalry division, and then transformed Kellermann's Division into the 6th Cavalry Corps. This corps fought under Marshal Victor and defeated the Allied advanced guard at Mormant. This victory started an Allied retreat that ended at Bar-sur-Aube. When Schwarzenberg attacked across the Aube River on 27 February, it was Kellermann's Corps that covered the army and allowed Oudinot to withdraw in good order. The 6th Corps also played a central role in delaying the Allied advance towards Paris through the end of March when negotiation and Napoleon's abdication brought an end to hostilities. Following the Bourbon Restoration, Kellermann becomes part of the Bourbon Army. Highly decorated, he was given prestigious cavalry commands.

However, when Napoleon returned from Elba, Kellermann rapidly return to the Imperial colors. Given command of the 3rd Cavalry Corps, he fought with Ney at the Battle of Quatre Bras on 16 June where his cavalry charge penetrated, but failed to break the British line. Two days later at the Battle of Waterloo, Kellermann led the second and largest cavalry charge of the battle into the center of the British line. With over 10,000 cavalymen, Kellermann's charge failed to penetrate the line or break any squares. Following this charge, the French cavalry remained disorganized, but Kellermann did rally his corps on 19 June. He continued to delay the Allied advance on Paris through the beginning of July after Napoleon abdicated.

Following the return of Louis XVII, Kellermann was retired from active duty and not offered a place in the new army. He spent three years acting on several monument commissions until the death of his father in 1818. He then became the second *Duc de Valmy* and took his father's seat on the *Chambre des Pairs*.⁵⁸ He influenced several cavalry and army reforms and was one of only five deputies who voted for the death of Charles X in 1830. His political career ended with his death in 1835 when his son Edmund Kellermann became the 3rd *Duc de Valmy*.⁵⁹

Despite Napoleon's apparent misuse of cavalry during the decline of the Empire, Kellermann proved to be a highly effective and successful cavalry commander. Contrary to the familiar images of the French Army in this period, he inspired his cavalymen with bold and daring leadership. They responded by defeating enemies that often outnumbered them time and time again. Even during the series of French defeats from 1813 through 1815, Kellermann enhanced his reputation as being one of the finest cavalry officer of the Empire.

The Kellermann family grave stands proudly in La Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris with the battles of Valmy and Marango carved on the central arch. These were the battles that made both Kellermanns heroes of France. But Marengo was not Kellermann's only success on the battlefield, and the study of his career from 1813 through 1815 presents many examples of courage and valor. It is only fitting that the Kellermann mausoleum stands only meters from the monuments of those comrades with whom he served during the decline of the Empire-- Ney, Macdonald, Grouchy, and Foy to name only a few

⁵⁸Six, *Les Généraux de la Révolution et de l'Empire*, II, 4.

⁵⁹Joseph Valynseele, *Les Maréchaux du Premier Empire: Leur Famille et Leur Descendance*, (Paris, 1957), 207-211.

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Michael Bonura was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. on 26 November 1974. Moving to New Mexico in 1980, he graduated from Cibola High School and was accepted into the United States Military Academy. After four grueling years, he graduated as a member of the Class of 1997 and was commissioned an Armor Lieutenant. Spending his first three years in Vilseck, Germany, he came back to the U.S. when he made Captain in December 2000.

After a short period in the U.S., Michael volunteered to go to Korea in Aug 2000. He took command of Apache Troop, 4-7 CAV in Camp Garry Owen Korea. Command was twelve months of hard training and divisional alerts. Following the tour in Korea, Michael went to Tennessee to train the only Armored Cavalry Regiment in the National Guard, the 278th ACR. Following this assignment, Michael applied to FSU and entered a two-year masters program with the Army's Advanced Civil Schooling detachment. He will report to West Point and begin teaching military history to cadets in the fall of 2006