

The Napoleon Series

The Campaign of 1814: Chapter 18, Part VIII

By: Maurice Weil

Translated by: [Greg Gorsuch](#)

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814

(after the documents of the imperial and royal archives of Vienna)

THE ALLIED CAVALRY

DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814

CHAPTER XVIII.

OPERATIONS OF THE ALLIED ARMIES FROM 25 MARCH 1814 IN THE MORNING
UNTIL THE END OF THE CAMPAIGN.

FÈRE-CHAMPINOISE. -- SAINT-DIZIER. --PARIS.

The Sovereigns and the Generalissimo pass in review the corps of the Army of Silesia. --The Emperor of Russia, King of Prussia and the Generalissimo, left Quincy early and following the road from Meaux to get to the advanced guard of their armies, had successively joined and passed the different corps of the Army of Silesia. At Charmentray, the Emperor Alexander had taken advantage of the halt made by Sacken, where we had just given the order to take position at Trilport, to review the corps, whose numbers of effectives on 17 March amounted to nearly 14,000 men who, despite having not fought since that time, in as much as the cavalry of Vasilchikov had only been engaged at Fère-Champenoise, was reduced to about 6,000 men. A little further on, between Claye and Villeparisis, the Sovereigns passed by the front of the Prussian troops of Yorck and Kleist.¹ Then visiting the level occupied by the brigade of Klüx they reconnoitered the positions occupied by the French rearguard and finally saw in the distance, Paris and the towers of Notre Dame.

Movement of the corps of the Army of Silesia and the third disposition. --The Russian troops of Langeron and Vorontsov had headed during this time on the road to Soissons, while the Prussian troops, having to await the arrival of the head of the column of the Allied Great Army, charged with its relief, remained motionless in their positions. Meanwhile the chief of staff of the army had sent a third order of movement. As the sovereigns and the

¹According to Droysen, the King of Prussia was to have been so unhappy with the condition and appearance of these troops, that when Yorck approached him to present his corps, the King confined himself to saying: "Poor appearance: your men are dirty," and was to have immediately turned his horse while Yorck was to have commanded: "*About face and forward march!*"

Generalissimo wanted to push that day up to Bondy, Gneisenau ordered the Prussian Ist and IInd Corps to continue their march to Aulnay-les-Bondy; to Langeron not to stop until he had reached the creek (the Morée), which flows between Dugny and Le Blanc-Mesnil. The infantry of the corps of Winzingerode was to be established with headquarters in Villepinte.

As we said above, the two Prussian corps had started their movement on Aulnay immediately after the arrival of the cavalry Pahlen and infantry of Prince Eugene of Württemberg.

Sending of a Russian parliamentarian to the advanced posts of General Vincent. --While the Sovereigns rejoined the column heads, the Generalissimo, informed of the delays of the corps of the Great Army experienced by the crossing of the bridges Trilport and Meaux, had used another means to gain the time required to bring both armies on to their positions. In the morning at 8 o'clock, an aide de camp of the Russian Emperor (Lieutenant General Uvarov), carrying letters addressed to the Minister of War, was presented to the outposts of Vincent in Vert-Galant, and asked to go to Paris to fulfill his mission and give the Minister the conditions of an armistice. General Vincent referred immediately to General Compans. He refused to let the Russian officer pass. However, he consented to send his letter and to suspend hostilities until the receipt of the response; but he sent the Allies the proclamation to the Parisians that Schwarzenberg had also entrusted to the Russian general.²

Combat of Bondy, Le Bourget and Aubervilliers. --The morning passed quietly from the side of Vert-Galant until noon. But shortly after noon the scouts of General Vincent informed him that the Allies took advantage of the truce to try to outflank the left with the cavalry of General Emanuel going to Gonesse and signaling by their movements operating to his right by road from Lagny, in the direction of Chelles. At this point the column head of the VIth Corps was already in Villeparisis, and Prince Eugene of Württemberg, made to immediately support the cavalry of Pahlen with the 14th Division³ (General Helfreich), ordered the two generals to occupy wooded hills of Coubron and then gain the Romainville plateau, in passing through Montfermeil and the park of Raincy. He himself, with the rest of his infantry and the 2nd Division of Cuirassiers, was placed in march by Livry on Bondy that he wanted to tackle head on, while the Prussian troops, heading towards Aulnay, would turn the northern edge of this forest. But the French generals, warned in time by their scouts, had, on the order of Compans, began their retreat on Paris.⁴ Retreating slowly and in good order, disputing the ground inch by inch, Compans had succeeded in occupying the village and the forest of Bondy, and the day was drawing to an end when the French general, attacked by Prince Eugene of Württemberg, gave his troops the order to abandon, first the forest and the village and to fall back on Pantin. General Vincent who saw that his cavalry could not render any service on the side of Bondy, was posted at the exit of wood to protect the infantry of Compans. Informed that the cavalry of General Emanuel fell back from Gonesse on La Villette, he had moved on Pantin, had crossed the canal and barred the Russian cavalrymen the way to La Villette. Night had already come when Prince Eugene of Württemberg entered Bondy, through the village and, turning left, marched on Romainville, where he joined with Pahlen who, passing through Rosny-sous-Bois, just arrived on this plateau.⁵

To the right of the VIth Corps the vanguard of Langeron had skirmished in the afternoon, between Bourget and Aubervilliers, with the extreme left of Compans who, after an insignificant commitment, had withdrawn behind the canal of Saint-Denis.

²Compans to the Minister of War, Le Vert-Galant, 29 March, 9 o'clock in the morning. (*Archives of the War.*)

³Composition of the troops of the VIth Corps engaged at Livry and at Bondy: 14th Division: regiments of Tenguinsk and Estonia, 25th and 26th Eiger Regiments; brigade of Wolf (of the division of Prince Shakhovskiy): regiments of Murom and Chernigov.

⁴Operations of the General Vincent from March 19 to 29 (*Archives of the War*); STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 1.); Journal of Operations of Barclay de Tolly (*Topographical Archives*, n° 29188), and General HELLDORF, *Aus dem Leben der Kaiserlichen russischen Generals der Infanterie Prinzen Eugen von Württemberg*, III, 36).

⁵ STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 1.)

Positions of the front line of Allied corps 29 March in the evening. --As the left wing of the Allies was only beginning to cross the Marne at that time, as the Army of Silesia (right wing), forced to veer right, could not get up to the positions occupied by the VIth Corps, Prince Eugene of Württemberg and Pahlen were ordered to quit Romainville, leaving only outposts towards Romainville and Pantin and fall back on Noisy-le-Sec. The rest of the VIth Corps were staggered between Noisy-le-Sec and Bondy; the guards and reserves encamped around Villeparisis. The sovereigns and the Generalissimo settled in the château of Bondy. On the right wing the advanced guard of Katzler stopped at Drancy: the Ist and IInd Corps in Aulnay-les-Bondy; Langeron to their right at Bourget; Vorontsov with the infantry of Winzingerode and the headquarters of the Army of Silesia, in a second line behind the Ist and IInd Corps in Villepinte.

Positions of Generals Compans and d'Ornano, of the Marshals Marmont and Mortier, 29 March in the evening. --While Compans withdrew before the Russians of Prince Eugene of Württemberg, d'Ornano, leaving from Paris with the division of Michel (conscripts drawn from the depots of the Guard), had just passed Pantin. Informed of the retrograde motion of Compans, d'Ornano, thinking the General would not fail to take Pantin, brought his division on the position that extends between La Chapelle and Les Prés-Saint-Gervais. But instead of heading to Pantin, Compans, believing on his part, that this village was occupied by the troops of d'Ornano, sent the cavalry to Vincent in position in front of La Villette, the order to bivouac in front of La Chapelle to cover communications between Paris and Saint-Denis and establish west of Les Prés-Saint-Gervais on the hill of Beauregard overlooking the village and connecting to the position of Belleville, leaving to the troops of Marshal Marmont, arriving from Montreuil in the afternoon of the 29th, the task of defending and occupying his right at Bagnolet and Romainville. Pantin remained unoccupied therefore, since the French outposts stood west of the village and the grand guard of General Helfreich had had, by order of the sovereigns, gotten closer to Noisy-le-Sec.

Departing from Melun and Guignes, the 29th at daybreak, the two marshals, having effected a junction in Brie-Comte-Robert, were directed at Charenton, where they arrived early enough; but the confusion was so great they had found no instructions and after crossing the Marne, the column head of the Duke of Raguse remained in Montreuil. The bulk of the corps of Marmont stopped at Charonne, Vincennes and Saint-Mandé; the infantry of Mortier, further back still, at Bercy and Conflans; the cavalry, at Picpus.

It is especially difficult to find an explanation for this incomprehensible stop, those of the 29th at 9 o'clock and 11 o'clock in the morning. Clarke, by the first of his dispatches, informed Compans of the arrival of the Marshals that would be on his side to support him. In the second, recommending him to communicate faster with the Duke of Raguse, he added: "*The salvation of the State* depends perhaps on being able to contain the enemy for two or three days" and he advised Compans to occupy the heights of Romainville.⁶ At 4 o'clock in the afternoon, the Minister had renewed the order to Compans to meet Marmont and take his orders. But amid the concerns of all kinds that beset him and little accustomed otherwise to consider everything, to ensure the execution of orders given, Clarke forgot to complete the too vague instructions he had sent to the Marshals. Despite this, Marmont and Mortier are not free from blame and although they may invoke their excuse on the fatigue of their exhausted troops by forced marches, they should have nevertheless, soon after their arrival on the right bank of Marne and Seine, asked for instructions from the Minister and from King Joseph. The direction taken by the Allied armies was well known to them and instead of stopping southeast of Paris, Marmont should have, from the afternoon of the 29th, decided to push his advanced guard to the heights of Romainville, while Mortier was set to the left of Compans and Vincent.

Movements of the army of the Emperor. --The Emperor, whose arrival alone could repair the faults committed by his generals and ministers and prolong the defense of Paris during the few days that his army needed to reach the walls of the capital, had taken, before leaving in the morning with the cavalry of his Guard from Doulevant for Dolancourt, assisting in the expediting of movement orders on Troyes,⁷ that he had dictated overnight to the Chief of Staff.

⁶Clarke to Compans, Paris, 29 March, 9 and 11 o'clock in the morning, and Clarke to Marmont, 29 March, 11 o'clock in the morning (*Archives of the War*).

⁷Chief of Staff to Sebastiani, Saint-Germain, DeFrance, Maurin, Piré, Ney and Macdonald. Doulevant, 29 March, 3 o'clock in the morning. (*Archives of the War*.)

From 3 o'clock in the morning, the division of Henrion, had received orders to leave Bar-sur-Aube at 6 o'clock and head by the shortest route on Vendevre with the cavalry of Sebastiani. This cavalry going directly to Dolancourt, had to push as far as possible on the road from Troyes by Vendevre. It was also prescribed to General DeFrance, who had slept in Thors, to leave at 5 o'clock in the morning to go to Bar and take the head of the column formed by the troops of General Henrion. The parks of the army, covered on their sides by the infantry, had also started their movement at 5 o'clock in the morning.

General Maurin, posted with his cavalry at Morvilliers, would cross the Aube either by the bridge of Dienville or fording between Brienne and Bar-sur-Aube and would head on Troyes. He must find out if Chernishev or another general who maneuvered with his cavalry on Brienne.

Saint-Germain, starting at 7 o'clock, would follow by Dolancourt the movement of Sebastiani and would inform the Chief of Staff where he would rest. One repeated at the same time the order given Piré the 28th at 4:30 in the afternoon to stand with his division and a hundred Guards of Honor he found in Joinville, on Bar-sur-Aube and Colombey. He should seek to follow with the food and shoes that were found and collected in Chaumont.

Macdonald leaving his position, from that of Oudinot, passed by Saint-Dizier and followed the Guard on Troyes. Due to the presence of the Cossacks reported at Brienne, he would flank his march, warning Oudinot of his movement and informing the headquarters where he would spend the night.

At 4 o'clock in the morning Ney received orders to take up arms at 6 o'clock in the morning and march by Nully and Dolancourt to get as close as possible to Troyes.

Arriving at Nully the Emperor, warned of the appearance of cavalry parties lurking around and looking to cover the march of the park of the Great Army, ordered Saint Germain to communicate with Maurin who was beside Morvilliers and rest at Nully until a portion of the large park had defiled.

At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, after receiving letters from Paris, he no longer retained any doubt about the seriousness of the situation. The Austrians came to Lyon on the 21st and Allies armies were about to appear before Paris. Immediately after the departure of General Dejean, sending one of his aides that to Paris to announce his return and with orders to prolong the resistance, he prescribed to the Chief of Staff⁸ to send the Marshals Macdonald and Oudinot a warning of the situation and new orders imposing new hardships on his army. Oudinot and Macdonald should hasten their march by Dolancourt on Troyes. Maurin would start from the point where he was to go right on Troyes. A similar order was sent to Piré, "who would only stop for the time required for feeding his horses and go to the Emperor in passing." Once the orders are written the Emperor continued his movement on Troyes where, a few hours later, he ordered General Girardin, Berthier's aide, to go at full speed to Paris and to confirm the news of his immediate arrival.

Meanwhile the Guard itself could only push up to Troyes. It had after marching a harsher stop at Lusigny, while Macdonald could not go pass Nully and Oudinot reached only with great difficulty Doulevant. Piré, at meeting again the two squadrons which had been sent off and making a march of thirteen leagues, stopped at Villy-en-Trodes where he was preparing to go to Troyes on the 30th at six in the morning.⁹ Maurin, departing from Morvilliers at two o'clock in the afternoon had on the order of Sébastiani, pushed towards Rouilly in the end to cover the road from Piney.¹⁰

⁸Chief of Staff to Macdonald and Oudinot, Pont de Dolancourt, 29 March, 4 o'clock in the afternoon: "We have just received the mail from Paris. The spirit of the city is good. The Dukes of Trévisé and Raguse that have not suffered and that were to mass in Paris, are in a battle with numerous artillery at Claye, Blücher was to enter today the 29th at Meaux. His Majesty will be this night in Troyes, tomorrow at Nogent; you have to march day and night only taking the necessary rest intervals." (*Archives of the War.*)

⁹Piré to the Chief of Staff, Villy-en-Trodes, night of 29th to 30th, midnight (*Archives of the War.*)

¹⁰Maurin to the Chief of Staff, Morvilliers, 29 March, 1:45 in the afternoon. (*Ibid.*)

The cavalry of Winzingerode, Tettenborn and Chernishev had followed and observed from a distance the movement of the Imperial army. Leaving Saint-Dizier, it sojourned on the evening of the 29th at Montier-en-Der, with only the advanced guards going further.

The news, that the Chief of Staff had, on the orders of the Emperor communicated to the corps commanders, had taken away from even the most optimistic of them, the little confidence, the last glimmer of hope, the few illusions they had still held onto.

Macdonald himself, though the more disciplined and less argumentative than them, writing in the night of the 29th to 30th to the Chief of Staff,¹¹ could not help but to issue his opinion and exclaim, "It is too late to rescue Paris, at least by road we will follow; there are from here (from Nully) nearly 50 leagues. Assuming you force march and without obstacles, it will take at least four days. But what state will the army be in who must fight, because there are no resources from the Aube to the Seine, especially from Troyes to Nogent? The Allies being yesterday in Meaux have pushed their vanguard, and we are grieved to learn that they are now at the gates of Paris. Is it the combined corps of the Dukes of Trévisé and Raguse who will stop them to give us enough time to arrive? But the Allies are sure to return at our approach: they line the Marne and the crossings over it!"

"I would be advising that the Emperor, marching by Sens, should recall to him all the corps and detachments either by Melun or Fontainebleau; if Paris falls, then march to the enemy or we fall back on Augereau (Macdonald did not know Lyon was taken), a decisive battle on land chosen after the resting of our troops and, if Providence has marked our last hour, at least we succumb honorably instead of ending as miserables, scattered, taken and robbed by the Cossacks. If this operation does not prevail, it might have been wiser and safer to throw us with our debris into the Alsace and Lorraine. Anyway, we meet, we do not lose detail and without the fruit for our unhappy country."

General provisions for the defense of Paris. --The fears of the Duke of Tarente were, unfortunately, too well founded and events were obliged to justify his fears. There was no government in Paris, except those that had disobeyed the orders of the Emperor, either ministers and the great bodies of the State, or management, although the lieutenant general of the Emperor had felt obliged to stay in the capital. Fearing responsibility for his actions, although exerting only a nominal authority, King Joseph after, in the afternoon of the 29th, making a brief reconnaissance of points by which the Allies were to head to Paris, had returned to the Tuileries to confer with Clarke, the ministers and Marshal Moncey, and issue, with their agreement, the general dispositions for the outer and inner defense of the capital.

At 11 o'clock in the evening, Clarke communicated to the Marshals Marmont and Mortier the orders affecting them. Marmont during the night was to meet between La Villette and Les Près-Saint-Gervais, with the corps of General Compans which passed under his command, and form the right wing of the defense on the whole front stretching from La Villette to Charenton.

Mortier received orders to effect the same night his junction at La Villette with the cavalry and a part of the troops of General d'Ornano, and charge to the left wing for the direction of defense between La Villette and Saint-Denis.

The National Guard under the command of Marshal Moncey, and the troops of General Hulin were to occupy the positions of the second line and had the task of defending the hills of Fontarabie, of Chaumont, of Montmartre, of the Batignolles, of Monceaux and of the Étoile, the gardens of Bercy, Ménilmontant, Charonne, Belleville and the plain of Clichy. The artillery of the National Guard was responsible for serving the battery of the enclosure. The artillery of the line would provide the service for the batteries of Rouvroy, of the Prés-Saint-Gervais and the mound of Fontarabie.

Concern of the Sovereigns. --Council of War of Bondy. --Despite the reassuring news that Talleyrand, Dahlberg and Montesquieu kept sending to the headquarters of the Emperor of Russia, despite the continual arrival of agents

¹¹Macdonald to the Chief of Staff, Nully, 30 March, 4 o'clock in the morning. (*Archives of the War.*)

and emissaries whose reports enabled the Sovereigns to get an exact account of the general situation of the minds, the disorder and the confusion that reigned in Paris, despite the enthusiasm that the sight of the capital had caused in the ranks of the Allied armies, Alexander could not chase from his mind the disquietude and concerns revived again by the dispatch of Colonel von Swichow that Wrede had just transmitted to headquarters, and according to which the advanced guard of Napoleon's army had occupied Sézanne the 28th in the evening.

Neither Alexander nor Schwarzenberg doubted ultimate success; but when launching the orders of attack for the next day, their fears were the still natural as they had no certain knowledge on the position of the army of the Emperor, they possessed no precise data on the direction taken by the Marshals, one did not even know of their arrival in Paris. The Emperor of Russia and the Generalissimo both felt that there was not a minute to lose, it was absolutely necessary to take Paris the next day. Also, however favorable the situation of the Allies was in total, one found the headquarters in the presence of so many unknown factors, problems of real gravity, which one wanted to find solutions to, before taking an extreme resolution, that one is led, in spite of oneself, to understand and justify the fears of Alexander and Schwarzenberg. The Allied army lacked food and had almost exhausted its ammunition. What would become of them if Paris was defending itself vigorously for two or three days and gave the Emperor time to arrive? Also, after conferring for part of the evening with Schwarzenberg, Volkonsky and Nesselrode, having approved the attack disposition prepared by the Generalissimo, the Emperor of Russia could not hide the seriousness of the circumstances rendered by his direct personal intervention and more indispensable than ever. When the council of war was over, he gave Nesselrode verbal order to take advantage of any favorable opportunity to address the capitulation of Paris, and charged Volkonsky to send in his name new instructions to Blücher and the Duke of Saxe-Weimar .

In the first of these dispatches sent to Blücher, the Emperor of Russia informed him that Wrede and Sacken remained momentarily at Meaux, to cover the rear of the army against a movement from Sézanne and Sacken would temporarily go under the command of Bavarian Field Marshal.

"Your Excellency," wrote Volkonsky, "will give General Sacken orders accordingly, telling him to send to Trilport three infantry battalions in order to guard the bridges. When the equipment and the cavalry of the army has crossed the Marne at Trilport, General Sacken ensure that two bridges are taken up and allow only one that will be enough to ensure the passage of detachment is located in La Ferté-sous-Jouarre." He was thus preparing to bring on the right bank of the Marne, from where the Emperor's column heads would appear, all detachments remaining on the left bank of the river. Moreover Volkonsky added in the same dispatch: "To maintain our communication with the Netherlands, we are only left the road from Compiègne to La Fère. Your Excellency will see the importance of seizing in advance Compiègne to ensure the mentioned line."¹² In this dispatch Volkonsky also gave Blücher special orders for the attack:

"H. M. the Emperor of Russia wants Y. E. to attack tomorrow at five in the morning, the height of Montmartre to gain control of it. The army of Prince Schwarzenberg attacks on its side the heights of Romainville. H. M. supposes that being master of these two points, we may thereby facilitate negotiations which it is proposed to start with the city of Paris."

This order, if it were executable,¹³ would have had considerable consequences, since the Army of Silesia would then be established without a fight on heights that the soldiers of Mortier occupied after the time stated in the dispatch.

¹² Volkonsky to Blücher, Bondy, 29 March. (*Journal of Sent Pieces*, n° 244; original dispatch in French)

¹³The Prussian officer, Captain von Reichenbach, who the Chief of Staff of the Army of Silesia sent the 29th in the afternoon to General Headquarters with the special mission to report as soon as possible orders for the next day, had first visited Claye where they still believed the Generalissimo to be and had rejoined in Bondy after making many detours. He was given the orders between 11 o'clock in the evening and midnight. The officer demanded in vain to be given a fresh horse and guide. He was obliged to re-route the horse exhausted from fatigue that he had mounted all day and, as one pretended a lack of guides, one merely indicate on the map a path, through the forest of Bondy , that would head to the Villepinte. The Prussian officer lost his way in the forest. After an all night wandering adventure, he considered himself fortunate to find in the end the road of Claye, but could not get to the headquarters

Before addressing to Rayevsky, to Seslavin, to Kaisarov, to Chernishev, and Ilovaysky XII instructions detailing completely the dispositions of the Generalissimo, the Emperor of Russia had sent the Duke of Saxe-Weimar the following dispatch: "Our armies are at Paris, that we will attack tomorrow and we hope to seize it. But the road to Compiègne and Soissons is our only line of communication, it is of utmost importance to ensure this and to keep it free. General von Bülow is in charge; but he has too few people. His Majesty wants you to make General von Borstell and all the troops belonging to the IIIrd Corps to immediately unite with him. His Majesty also wishes that you strongly take up the offensive. It is clear from the reports of the Minister of War to Napoleon, reports that we have intercepted, that General Maison having at his disposal 5,000 men, is unable to stand up to you."

Finally, as one had done after Leipzig, they sought to seize the person of Napoleon by promising 500,000 rubles to anyone who would take him to headquarters.

General dispositions and detailed orders to attack Paris. --The Generalissimo was just as concerned as the Emperor of Russia. If he was, like Alexander, fully aware of the movement of public opinion and the menace of the conspirators, he was very imperfectly informed about the military situation in the capital on the defensive measures taken by the lieutenant of the Emperor. Moreover, if we consider that, for more than twenty-four hours Schwarzenberg had no news from the corps of cavalry charged with informing him of the movements of the Marshals and the direction followed by the army of Napoleon¹⁴ and that he had received the wrong information from Colonel von Swichow, it will explain why, obliged deprived by all means from an immediate solution, the Generalissimo could only sketch out in his dispositions a broad outline of the role reserved for the three main groups of the Allied armies and was confined to delineate the probable zone of action of each of these groups.

"The right wing of the Great Army," wrote the Generalissimo,¹⁵ "will form the center of the attack and will move at the break of day against the heights of Romainville and Belleville. The left wing of the army will descend the Marne and will move on Charenton and Vincennes."

"The Army of Silesia, forming the right wing, will debouch at the time from Saint-Denis and from Le Bourget and attack Montmartre. Field Marshal Blücher will settle on the employment and the distribution of his troops and assume his arrangements for the attack when he is close to the battlefield."

of the Army of Silesia until the morning of the 30th at 6 o'clock. (According to the *Tagebuch* of Count Nostitz: *Kriegsgeschichtliche Einzelschriften herausgegeben vom Grossen Generalstabe*, 1884, IV, 135.)

Moreover, even if Reichenbach had succeeded in returning directly to the headquarters of the Army of Silesia, the various corps of the army were unlikely to receive their orders of movement until around 4 or 5 o'clock in the morning. Finally it is good to remember that, even in this case, Langeron, posted at Bourget, would have still nearly ten kilometers to reach the foot of the buttes Montmartre and the other corps of the army of Silesia were all billeted or bivouacked further back.

¹⁴Schwarzenberg, at the same time he was issuing the general dispositions, sent instructions to the heads of flying corps. Chernishev was ordered to send, by Sens, parties on the road to Fontainebleau. Ilovaysky XII was on the 30th in the morning to cross on the left bank of the Marne Cossacks charged with scouring the roads of Lagny, Croissy, Tournan and Brie-Comte-Robert, reconnoiter the existing bridges upstream of the confluence Marne on the right bank of the Seine, to establish and maintain communications with Seslavin. He entrusted to the latter general the task of sweeping the right bank of the Seine from Pont-sur-Seine to Melun, sending flying columns on the roads leading to Paris by de Nemours, Fontainebleau and Moret, to connect with Kaisarov.

After charging Kaisarov with monitoring of the right bank of the Seine between Montereau and Paris, Seslavin was to pass onto the left bank, settle and send specific information about the march of the Emperor.

¹⁵General disposition for attacking Paris, Bondy, 29 March, 11 o'clock in the evening; STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März. (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 1.)

"The corps of Sacken and of Wrede will remain during the battle at Meaux and at Trilport and cover the rear of the troops engaged in Paris against the movements that could be undertaken by the Emperor Napoleon from Vitry with his army."

The special dispositions to the Allied Great Army are not much more precise, more sharp or more detailed than the general disposition. It merely regulates the march of the two columns, with one using the road to Meaux, the other that of Lagny, having the mission to attack Paris. The right column, formed by the VIth Corps to which the Russian and Prussian guards would support and act as a reserve, was responsible for taking the heights of Romainville and Belleville. On the left wing the IVth Corps would debouch from Fontenay-sous-Bois, move on Vincennes, seize the woods of Vincennes, the villages of Saint-Maur and of Charenton and invest the château of Vincennes. The IIIrd Corps would follow and support its movement.

The Vth Corps would remain around Meaux to monitor the Marne.

A quick glance at these last instructions are sufficient to demonstrate in such a peremptory fashion that the order was unenforceable. Not to mention the late hour of its sending, even without insisting that this disposition only managed to be sent to the Crown Prince of Württemberg¹⁶ at one o'clock in the morning, it is clear that neither of the corps of the left wing were posted so as to get in line in time to come and form in the morning the center of the battle line. Indeed, the one stopped in Annet, only had its light cavalry at Chelles, while the other had not yet crossed the Marne.

So the result of these orders and positions occupied by the different corps of the Allied Great Army, was that only one of the corps, the VIth, and a few hours later the Russian and Prussian guards were able to take part in combat during the whole morning of the 30th and were at risk of being seriously threatened on their left. This danger had still not escaped the Generalissimo who, in the dispatch he sent to Blücher and by whom he was communicating to him such dispositions, added when speaking of the IVth Corps: "The forced march, this corps has made today, will delay its entry into the line."¹⁷

The center of the battle line was going to be even more in the air, as the Army of Silesia only received the morning of the 30th the disposition from Gneisenau signed by Blücher at 8 o'clock in the morning. The corps of Langeron, debouching from Aubervilliers, was to attack Montmartre from the west side, by Clichy, surveying Saint-Denis if this village was still occupied by the French and attack beside the route of Paris. The two Prussian corps of Yorck and Kleist, supported by the infantry of Winzingerode, under the orders of Vorontsov, had been directed on La Villette and La Chapelle, to attack Montmartre from the east and search for a moment of opportunity to slip between the hillocks of Cinq-Moulins and the barriers of Paris.

In a word, blessed by delays in carrying the transmission of the orders, blessed by time lost in crossing the Marne, for reasons of precautionary measures that one had thought necessary to be taken to cover the rear against an attack of the Emperor, the Allies, at the beginning of the battle of Paris, were only able to put into the line, the 30th in the morning, the feeble division of General Helfreich, later reinforced between 7 and 11 o'clock in the morning by the remainder of the VIth Corps and the two divisions of Russian cuirassiers of General Kretov.

30 March. --Orders of Battle and positions of the troops for the attack and defense on 30 March in the morning. --If it is superfluous to describe a terrain known all too well, at that time, the successive enlargements of Paris, the great work performed for three quarters of a century, had changed in appearance without altering the overall configuration of soil, it is essential, however, to take a look at the numbers there were for the attack and defense, the positions that the troops of Marmont, Mortier and Moncey, of the generals d'Ornano, Compans and Hulin, firstly, and the various corps of the Allied armies on the other, occupied or would be occupied 30 March.

¹⁶Journal of Operations of the IVth Corps. (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, XIII, 56.)

¹⁷Schwarzenberg to Blücher, Bondy, 29 March.

On 30 March, at daybreak, when the drums beat the general in Paris, some of the troops of the defense were already established since the day before in their positions, others in march or about to be placed in march to take their battle stations.

Charged since the day before at 11 o'clock in the evening, with the defense of the right wing of the battle front, from La Villette to Charenton,¹⁸ Marmont had for this purpose the following troops that occupied or would occupy in the morning of the 30th the positions indicated below:

On the far right, the cavalry of generals Chastel and Vincent was to deploy in battle formation on the front line between Charonne and Montreuil. The 1st Cavalry Corps (divisions of Bordesouille and Merlin) had orders to form a second line behind the road Montreuil. On the order of King Joseph, the infantry of the 6th Corps would be established: the division of the Duke of Padoue in Montreuil-sous-Bois and the plateau of Malassise; the Lagrange Division in battle formation in front of the park of Bruyères, right and left of the route of Belleville in Romainville; the Ricard Division, formed in massed battalions in reserve in the park of Bruyères and in front of the hillock of Turrets. To the left of the divisions of the 6th Corps and also under the orders of the Duke of Raguse, General Compans, who spread with his division through the woods of Romainville and Les Prés-Saint-Gervais, had sent General Ledru des Essarts to occupy the hillock of Beauregard. The Boyer Rébeval Division, attached to the troops of Marmont and Compans, was posted in the plain, to the north of Les Prés-Saint-Gervais between Belleville and the canal of Ourcq, covering the road from Pantin.

The Duke of Raguse had all in all, according to the dispositions of effectives of 29 March, from 3,310 men and 1421 horses belonging to the 6th Corps, from the troops of generals Compans, Ledru des Essarts, Boyer Rébeval, Chastel and Vincent, amounting to about 7,000 men, 1400-1500 horses, a total for the right wing of 11,700 men, without including the 400 men who were guarding the château de Vincennes, the 800 men provided by the National Guard, veterans etc., occupying Saint-Maur and Charenton, and six companies of grenadiers of the National Guard who, with students from École Polytechnique and 28 guns were in position at the barrier du Trône. The defense of the right wing still had, in fact positional batteries, a battery of four pieces on the hill of Fontarabie, enfilading the road of Montreuil; another battery of six pieces on the Mont Louis (Père Lachaise), beating obliquely the way from Charonne to Ménilmontant; and two batteries established, one to the southwest of the park of Bruyères, the other at the hillock of Beauregard, commanding the approaches to Prés-Saint-Gervais; a twelve pieces of battery 12 in front of Les Prés-Saint Gervais; one of four-piece at Chaumont on the hillock and finally, the very edges of the canal of Ourcq at Rouvroy at the point where the left of the Boyer Rébeval Division was connected to the division of Michel, a battery of twelve pieces of 12 defending the debouchment between Pantin and Romainville.

The left wing under the command of Marshal Mortier, responsible for the defense of the front extending from Pantin up to Saint-Denis, consisted of the Young Guard divisions of the Charpentier, Curial and Christiani (4,900 men) and the 1900 horses of Belliard.

These troops departed at the break of day from their cantonments from Picpus, came before assuming the positions of La Villette and Montmartre, to strengthen at seven in the morning the left of Marmont. The Charpentier Division massed in reserve at the foot of the hillocks of Chaumont; the Curial Division, arrived behind Pantin, was temporarily charged with support of the brigade of Secrétant of the division of Michel. The division of Christiani pushed up alone between La Villette and La Chapelle, stood in support of the Robert Brigade (division of Michel), whose outposts occupied Aubervilliers. Belliard's cavalry came to deploy between the Chapel and Saint-Ouen in front of Clignancourt, up to the entrenchments remains raised in 1792. The cavalry depots of the Guard (800 horses under the General d'Autancourt), formed the left of the cavalry and were placed at the avenue of Saint-Ouen.

The effectives of the troops of Mortier, rose when including the Michel Division and cavalry of d'Autancourt, to about 11,000 men. 600 men furnished by a battalion of Young Guard and two cadres of infantry line officers formed the garrison of Saint-Denis and 550 men from the infantry depots and a veteran company, guarded the bridges of Neuilly, Saint-Cloud and Sèvres. In terms of artillery and without speaking of either the battery of

¹⁸Minister of War to Marmont, Paris, 29 March, 11 o'clock in the evening (*Archives of the War.*)

Rouvroy nor the twenty pieces brought back by Marshals, Mortier had on the left wing five pieces in battery on Montmartre and two pieces in position at the foot of this mound, at the junction of roads of Saint-Ouen and Clichy.

But these 25,000 men, assigned to external defense of the capital, were for the most part in movement to get the 30th in the morning to the points where they had to spend the night in combat positions that could and should have been occupied by them the day before. Only the newly formed divisions of generals Boyer de Rébeval and Michel, and the troops of Compans, Ledru des Essarts and Vincent had been placed from Meaux and Claye, to adorn the center, the 30th in the morning, a line from the edge of Aubervilliers, joining the canal of Ourcq behind Pantin and extending to the Romainville plateau, beside Prés-Saint-Gervais.

To conclude the presentation of the forces available to King Joseph, it is essential to take into account some 2,000 men belonging to the depots of the line and of the Guard, 12,000 men provided by the National Guard and posted to for the most part from Bercy and Fontarabie to the barrier of the Étoile, a thousand artillerymen of the national guard, the line and the navy. The effective total of the number of forces that took part in the defense of Paris was therefore nearly 42,000 men and 154 guns.

Despite the time that had been lost to the crossing of the Marne, despite the considerable losses that reduced the corps to about half their original strength, despite the posting of Bülow and the light division of Maurice Liechtenstein and the stop imposed on Sacken and Wrede, however, the Allies had, for the attack, more than three times superior forces to those of defense, and more than five times as many troops of Marmont, Mortier, Compans and d'Ornano.

If we refer to the terms of the disposition of the Generalissimo one will see, in fact, that the corps of the Great Army had brought in the left wing of the attack the 27,000 men of the IVth and IIIrd Corps, to the center of the 12,000 men of the VIth Corps and the 16,000 men of the guards and Russian and Prussian reserves, while the Army of Silesia was to come into line on the right wing with 47,000 men provided by the Russian corps of Langeron and the infantry Winzingerode and the Prussian Ist and IInd Corps. The attack thus had troops forming a total of just over 100,000 men.¹⁹

¹⁹ Location and order of battle of the Allied armies 30 March in the morning:

Great Army under the command of Field Marshal Prince Schwarzenberg:

Left wing. --Crown Prince of Württemberg: IVth Corps (Württembergers) --Advanced Guard: Lieutenant General Prince Adam of Württemberg; Austrian and Württemberg cavalry of generals von Walsleben and Jett and infantry brigade of von Stockmeyer. --Main body, Württembergers: Feldzeugmeister Count Franquemont. 1st Division: Lieutenant General Baron Koch; brigades of Prince Hohenlohe, von Misani and von Lalance. 2nd Division: Lieutenant General von Döring (Infantry Regiment, n° 7) and the brigade of Stockmeyer detached to the vanguard. --Austrians: Field Marshal Lieutenant Count Nostitz. Brigade of grenadiers of General Trenck and brigades of cuirassiers of General Count Desfours and Colonel Seymann. --Total of IVth Corps: 15,000 men who, leaving at 5 o'clock in the morning from Annet, were in march on Saint-Maur, Charenton and Vincennes.

IIIrd Corps: Feldzeugmeister Count Gyulay. Advanced guard: Field Marshal Lieutenant Count Crenneville; Hecht Brigade. --Main body: 1st Division: Field Marshal Lieutenant von Weiss; brigades of Spleny and Grimmer. --2nd Division: Field Marshal Lieutenant Count Fresnel; brigades of Pflüger and Longueville; about 12,000 men in motion to cross the Marne at Meaux. --Total effectives: 27,000 men.

Center. --General of Infantry Count Barclay de Tolly. VIth Corps: General of Cavalry Rayevsky. 1st Corps of Russian infantry: Lieutenant General Prince Gorchakov II. --5th Division: Major General Mezentsev. --14th Division: Major General von Helfreich. 2nd Corps of Russian infantry: Lieutenant-general Prince Eugene of Württemberg. --3rd Division: Lieutenant General Prince Shakhovskiy. --4th Division: Lieutenant General Pyshnitsky. --Cavalry Corps: Lieutenant General Count Pahlen. Division of hussars: Major General Rüdinger. Brigade of lancers: Major General Lisanevich. --Total of VIth Corps: 12,000 men.

The VIth Corps occupied the morning of the 30th the first line positions.

Both sides had therefore, before engaging, committed mistakes that in one way or another they tried to fix in the morning. While Mortier filed before the day and followed the outer boulevards of Charonne to Belleville, Marmont had, as had the Allies, recognized the importance of the position of Romainville, had gone before the day from Saint-Mandé, Montreuil, Malassise and Bagnolet, hoping to get first to the place that Compans had evacuated the day before, and that a reconnaissance sent at midnight had found still unoccupied.²⁰

Guards and Reserves: General Count Miloradovich. 3rd Corps of Grenadiers: Lieutenant General Count Lambert. 1st Grenadier Division: Lieutenant General Choglov. 2nd Grenadier Division: Lieutenant General Paskevich. Russian Imperial Guard: Lieutenant General Yermolov. 1st Infantry Division of the Guard: Lieutenant General Baron Rosen. 2nd Infantry Division of the Guard: Lieutenant General von Udom. Infantry Brigade of the Prussian and Baden Guard: Colonel Baron von Alvensleben. --Cavalry: Light Cavalry Division of the Russian Guard: Lieutenant General Chalikov. --Reserve Cavalry Corps: Grand Duke Constantine. 1st Cuirassier Division: Lieutenant General Depreradovich. 2nd Cuirassier Division: Lieutenant General Kreto. 3rd Cuirassier Division: Lieutenant General Duka. Cavalry brigade of the Prussian Guard: Colonel La Roche von Starkenfels. Approximately 16,000 men in the second line and in support of the VIth Corps. --Total effectives in the center: 28,000 men.

Right wing. --Army of Silesia: Field Marshal von Blücher.

Russian corps of General-Lieutenant Count Langeron: 8th Corps of Russian Infantry: Lieutenant General Rudzevich. 9th Corps of Russian Infantry: Lieutenant General Kornilov. 10th Corps of Russian Infantry: Lieutenant General Kapsevich. 4th Cavalry Corps: Lieutenant General Baron Korff. (In march, would debouch on the battlefield from 10 o'clock): 17,000 men.

Prussian 1st Corps: General of Infantry von Yorck: 1st Division: Lieutenant General Horn; 2nd Division: Prince William of Prussia. Reserve Cavalry: General von Jürgass: 10,000 men.

Prussian IInd Corps: Lieutenant-General von Kleist: 9th Brigade: General von Klüx; 10th Brigade: General von Pirch. Reserve Cavalry General von Zieten: 8,000 men.

Corps of Russian infantry of generals and counts Stroganoff and Vorontsov (infantry corps of Winzingerode): 12,000 men.

These last three corps came from Aulnay and Villepinte and followed the corps of Langeron. --Total effectives of the right wing: 47,000 men.

In addition to these 102,000 men, the Allies still had the following detached corps nearby and which could join at the first call: Vth Corps (Austro-Bavarian): Field Marshal Count Wrede. 20,000 men in Meaux and flying corps formed by the Cossacks of Generals Kaiserov and Seslavin on the Aube and one the Seine. 6,000 men belonging to the Great Army.

Finally if, in totaling the above figures, one adds a further 17,000 non-combatants including troops employed to guard the headquarters and parks, artillerymen, escorts of the convoys and baggage, pioneers, sappers, walking wounded, etc., one arrives for the two Allied armies operating against Paris, with a total of 183,000 men present under arms on 30 March in the morning.

²⁰ Marmont, *Memoirs*, VI, 241292.

Marmont criticized the officer employed in reconnaissance of not being in Romainville. This is a fairly simple means to discharge his responsibility. The officer sent by the Duke of Raguse had pushed up to Romainville and found there was no one. This was up to the Marshal to see if he wanted to take the position or wait for the day to do it.

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General Rayevsky had the same idea as the Duke of Raguse. In the end to quickly repair a mistake committed the night before, forcing the generals Helfreich and Roth to evacuate Pantin, the commander of the VIth Corps had prescribed to General Helfreich to put the 14th Division in march before daybreak; this general was threw in force the brigade of Roth (25th and 26th Eiger Regiments) on Pantin, and Lyalin Brigade (regiments of Tenguinsk and Estonia) on Romainville. Towards 6 o'clock, when the Russian 14th Division began the fire, Prince Eugene of Württemberg had taken up arms with his 2nd Corps and prepared for its part, to Noisy-le-Sec. The Russian generals hoped to achieve a reoccupation unopposed of their advanced positions of the night before. But the march of Marmont, the offensive taken by his troops between Romainville and Pantin, the importance that the Duke of Raguse attached to the possession of these two villages were, from the beginning, changing the character that the Allies wanted to give the action and forced them to seriously begin the fight before their main forces had come into line.

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