

The Napoleon Series

The Germans under the French Eagles: Volume II

The Baden Contingent – Chapter 3 Part II

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CHAPTER III

CAMPAIGN OF 1809

EBERBERG. -- ESSLING. -- RAAB. -- WAGRAM. -- HOLLABRUNN.
ZNAÏN.

Battle of Raab (Győr) (14 June).

In the interval between the great battles of Essling and Wagram, Prince Eugene had arrived with the Army of Italy at Raab and fought against the Archduke John, after having made his union with the French cavalry of Lasalle and the Baden Brigade of Lauriston, sent to meet him by the Emperor.

Eugene deployed his troops in the following manner: in the center, the Seras and Durutte Divisions; on the left, the Severoli Division, the Baden, the cavalry of Sahuc and de Pully; on the right, Montbrun (with the Hessians) and Grouchy. The Army of Italy attacked the Archduke John by staggered columns, the right forward. The Baden, placed on the left of the Italians of Severoli, marched on the village of Szabadhegy, and were charged with the horsemen of Sahuc to observe the city of Raab and the entrenched camp of the Austrians.¹

After the victory, Lauriston proceeded from 15 June to the investment of the city; a summons having had no effect, the bombardment was opened without delay. The taking of Raab greatly interested the Emperor:

The Emperor to Marshal Davout.

Schönbrunn, 16 June 1809, 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

"I attach a lot of importance to taking Raab. If it is not taken, have your mortars go through at once and charge General Lasalle to put them in battery with his Hessian battalion... Those will fire until the time that General Lauriston (Baden Brigade) that I have charged to invest the town... will fire on his side..."

So the trench was immediately opened to lead the heavy artillery to the batteries. The siege fire began regularly on the morning of 21 June; the same day, that of the town ceased, and the Austrian commander, having consumed all his ammunition, surrendered and gave up the city on the 24th, with 2,000 garrison men, 18 pieces of cannon, and abundant supplies.²

The Baden Major Killinger had been killed in front of Raab by a Baden sentinel.³ The Baden Brigade joined the Grand Armée on the evening of 31 June, returned to the Legrand Division (4th Corps) and came under the command of Colonel Neuenstein, replacing General V. Harrant, a patient in Vienna.

¹Pelet, IV, page 90.

²Pelet, IV, page 142.

³*Denkwürdigkeiten*, page 29.

Battle of Wagram (5 and 6 July 1809).

The Emperor had used the months of May and June to organize the Island of Lobau (now "Napoleon Island") and prepare everything for the crossing of the Danube and the great battle he was going to fight with the Austrian armies, with a river at his back, and after a crossing in the face of strong force.

Everything was planned in the most minute details, as can be seen from the order of 2 July, the following extracts of which concern especially the Baden troops:⁴

Order.

At the camp of Napoleon, 2 July 1809, 11 o'clock in the evening.

"...Title II. -- The Duke de Rivoli will be placed according to the circumstances. He acts as the left of the army; 1st positioned, under the protection of the batteries of Isle Alexandre, 2nd position, under the protection of the batteries of Isle Lannes, 3rd position, in Enzersdorf."

"...Title III. -- The Duke of Rivoli will take his four divisions of infantry; he will leave a Baden regiment under the command of General Reynier."

"...Title IV. -- For the defense of the island. -- ...General Reynier will have under his command: a regiment of Baden, furnished by the corps of the Duke of Rivoli; the battalion of the Prince de Neufchâtel, etc."

"General Reynier will be in charge of the command of the island; he will take this service on the 3rd, at noon."

"The battalion of Neufchâtel and a battalion of Baden will be placed in the bridgehead, in which there will be 6 pieces of artillery; this movement will occur only during the night of 4 to 5."

The other Baden battalion will put 25 men on Isle Saint-Hilaire, 25 on Isle Masséna, 200 on Isle du Moulin, 25 on Isle Lannes, 25 on Isle Espagne and 25 on Isle Alexander. Which will make 325 men. The rest of the men will be in reserve to go wherever they are needed."

The Baden contingent, at the time of the battle of Wagram, had the following numbers:

The brigade returned from Raab (1st and 2nd Regiments), 2,841 men;
The Baden 3rd Infantry Regiment (Colonel Schoppf), 1,337 men;
The light dragons were detached from the 1st Corps, with the General Marulaz.
(Disposition of 1 July 1809).⁵

In execution of the order of 2 July, four companies of the Baden 1st Infantry Regiment, commanded by Major von Brandt, were placed on the night of July 4th to 5th as auxiliaries of the artillery on the Island of Lobau: they had much to suffer from the fire of the Austrian jäger sniping from the opposite bank of the Danube.

On the 5th of July, the 4th Corps, after having crossed the river, came to form on the left of the army, and advanced at about 10 o'clock in the morning, leaning on the Danube; it crossed Enzersdorf and, at half-past twelve, headed for Essling and Neuwirthaus. The Legrand Division marched on Süssenbrunn, under a violent cannonade. There was a curious incident, recounted in the memoirs of Colonel von Hochberg:⁶ Colonel Neuenstein, commander of the Baden Brigade, was on foot at the head of his troops and his horse followed him, held in his hand, when an Austrian cannonball removed the holsters from his saddle... The pistols, torn by the blow, flew into the air - without hurting anyone

⁴Pelet, III, page 383.

⁵*Campaigns of Napoleon.*

⁶*Denkwürdigkeiten*, page 175.

Masséna strongly repulsed the troops of von Klenau in the direction of Breitenlee with the divisions Molitor and Carra-Saint-Cyr, while the Legrand division outflanked them by their right. Towards six o'clock in the evening the Marshal arrived at Breitenlee, with Molitor; Boudet, Saint-Cyr, and Legrand occupied Wagram, Leopoldau, and Süssenbrunn; the troops spent the night on the conquered ground.

The next day, 6 July, the second day of the battle, three of the divisions of the 4th Corps and a part of Prince Eugene's troops formed the reserve of the French army. Aderklaa was occupied by the Austrians: at 7 o'clock, Masséna launched Carra-Saint-Cyr against this village, which was kidnapped and lost. It was at this moment that the panic of the Saxon Corps compromised the result of the day; the enemy was motioning on his right an offensive which directly threatened our line of retreat. The Emperor then ordered the 4th Corps to stop the Austrian right at any price, and Masséna immediately engaged his divisions, formed in columns by battalions en masse, on the road to Neuwirthaus, while Boudet defended Aspern with fury.

The column of the 4th Corps stopped from time to time at the threats of the Austrian cavalry; then it resumed its march under the fire of a formidable artillery.

"...Masséna runs through the battalions: with his martial face, his sparkling eyes, he represented to us, in his phaeton with white horses, a warrior of heroic times. This extraordinary spectacle also strikes the enemy and attracts a hail of bullets..."

"This march was one of the most beautiful infantry movements ever executed. The brave Campi, receiving from General Legrand, at a critical moment, the order to march at an accelerated pace, commands "Ordinary Pace!" And tightens the ranks of the 20th Light plowed by cannon ball. His gallant countenance imposed on the enemy. Masséna went to Leopoldau and established his headquarters there; his troops line the road to Brünn, near which they bivouac at night."⁷

During this terrible and glorious day, Marshal Masséna had three wounded aides-de-camp around his carriage, beside which the Baden horse artillery Captain von Freydorfeut had a leg removed...

On 7 July, the 4th Corps took part in the pursuit of the Austrian army and Baden Lieutenant-colonel von Franken received the cross of officer of the Legion of Honor for having broken, with the sappers of the 1st Baden Regiment, the Kornenbourg gate, allowing the Baden jäger to enter this city where several hundred Austrians were taken prisoner.⁸ General Pelet, in his *Relations on the Campaign in 1809*, attributed this feat of arms to the 26th Light Infantry Regiment.

⁷Pelet, IV, page 204 and following.

⁸*Denkwürdigkeiten*, page 26.



1809. LE GÉNÉRAL LEGRAND
Commandant la 1^{re} division du 4^e corps (4).
(D'après la *France militaire*.)

1809. THE GENERAL LEGRAND
Commander the 1st division of the 4th Corps.⁹
(According to *Military France*.)

Masséna marched on Stehrau on the 8th of July, pursuing the corps of the Prince von Reuss; the Legrand Division occupied this village in the evening; the Marshal received the order to move his entire army corps to Znaim.

Battle of Hollabrunn (9 and 10 July).

On 9 July, the Division of Legrand attacked Hollabrunn: the 18th Infantry Regiment was on the road; the Baden on the left and the 26th Light in the vineyards, on the right: the Prince von Reuss lost the village, took it again, and lost it again; the arrival of the Carra-Saint-Cyr Division on the 10th of July, and the failure of the enemy that same day at Schöngrabern finally obliged the Austrian general to retire.

Fights on the Thaya (11 July).

Continuing his movement, General Legrand captured Klosterbrueck with the 18th and 26th Regiments and the Baden Brigade; but in the face of very superior forces, he was obliged to retreat. Fortunately, Marmont came with the 11th Corps and restores the fight to our advantage. Marshal Masséna then went to Znaim; the 18th and 26th Regiments emerged from the bridge, soon followed by the Baden Brigade. Saint-Cyr entering into action, and our line thus established, Masséna was about to attack the city when they came to announce a suspension of arms.

During the armistice of Znaim, the Baden troops encamped a few hours from this town, in the village of Osterlitz, and the whole of the 4th Corps was cantoned in the very circle of which Znaim was the chief town.

Diplomatic negotiations did not end until 14 October, the day when peace was signed in Vienna. During this time, the feast of 15 August was celebrated with brilliance, by a large religious ceremony in the Cathedral of St. Stephen (Stephankirche). Marshal Masséna received the title of Prince of Essling; the Baden contingent had largely

⁹Legrand (Cl. Just Alexandre, count). Born in Plessis-sur-Saint-Just in 1762, died in 1815. -- Elected chief of a battalion of Volunteers of the Moselle, General of Brigade in 1791, General of Division in 1799. Decides the victory to Hohenlinden. He was distinguished at Austerlitz, at Lübeck, at Essling, at Wagram; was covered with glory, with the 2nd Corps, at the crossing of the Berezina. Senator in 1813; Peer of France under Louis XVIII.

contributed with its blood to the new reward granted by the Emperor to its illustrious chief.

As soon as the hostilities were suspended, Masséna wrote to the Grand Duke of Baden:¹⁰

Marshal Masséna to Grand Duke Charles Frederick of Baden.

Vienna, 23 August 1809.

"Monseigneur, the Count von Hochberg has handed me the letter which Your Royal Highness has done me the honor to write to me. The suspension of hostilities has brought the moment when the services of the campaign find their reward. Those of your son do him as much honor as your Royal Highness was satisfied with the knowledge escaped from the perils of war. I have therefore thought it my duty to ask him for the decoration of officer of the Legion of Honor, which I hope will be granted to him. Your Royal Highness may be persuaded that I will be very anxious to assert the titles of the Count von Hochberg in all circumstances, and I will consider myself very happy if he deigns to recognize in these eagerness a slight mark of sentiments of deep veneration with which I have the honor to be, Monseigneur, of your Royal Highness, the most humble and obedient servant."

Marshal, Duke of Rivoli,

MASSÉNA.

As for the Emperor, he announced the conclusions of peace to his ally at Baden the same day that the Treaty of Vienna was signed:

The Emperor to Grand Duke Charles Frederick of Baden.

Schönbrunn, 14 October 1809.

"My Brother, I hasten to announce to Your Highness that peace has been signed today, at 9 o'clock in the morning, between the Count de Champagne and the Duke of Lichtenstein. The Count de Champagne will send a copy of the articles to your Minister of Foreign Relations. On this account, my brother, I pray to God that he will have you in his holy and worthy guard."

Your good brother, NAPOLEÓN.

The 4th Corps was designated to be part of the occupying forces which were to leave the Austrian territory only as and when the articles of the peace treaty were executed.

An order addressed to the Chief of Staff regulated this progressive evacuation in the following way, as regards the 4th Corps:

The Emperor to the Chief of Staff.

Schönbrunn, 14 October 1809.

"...My intention is for the army to withdraw methodically, so that it is not for a moment exposed to the whims of bad faith..."

"Thus, from 1 November, the first period of the evacuation indicated in the treaty, the Duke of Rivoli with 40,000 men will concentrate in Krems... In the second period, or that part of the evacuation of Vienna from 15 to 18 November, the Duke of Rivoli will be in Krems... Finally, the third period, that is to say on 15 December, I would make known my intentions on this Corps... We will blow the citadel of Brünn four days after ratification of these exchanges..."

¹⁰*Denkwürdigkeiten*, page 201.

"On the 1st of November, the Duke of Rivoli will have evacuated Moravia and will concentrate with all his army corps in Krems..."

When the war was over, Marshal Masséna separated from his young aide-de-camp Colonel Hochberg of Baden, , in the most cordial and affectionate manner: the letter he wrote to him on this occasion was a true certificate of courage and bravery given by a master in the matter:¹¹

Marshal Masséna to Colonel Count W. von Hochberg.

Vienna, 25 October 1809.

"I hasten, Monsieur Count, to send you the leave which His Highness the Prince Major General (Chief of Staff) has granted you upon my request. On the eve of getting away from the German army¹² as well as from you, I cannot refrain from giving you a testimony of my regrets and my satisfaction for the services you have rendered in the past campaign that has just ended against Austria. You have been with me as an aide-de-camp in all the difficult circumstances, especially the memorable battles of Eckmühl, Essling and Wagram, and the battles of Ebersberg, Hollabrunn and Znaim, and you have everywhere shown the cold bloodedness and bravery which constitute the true soldier. It would be very agreeable to me, Monsieur Count, if new dangers were solicited for new efforts, you would be called upon to share those whom I will always be anxious to do for the prosperity of the arms of His Majesty the Emperor and King, and of the sovereigns his allies."

I beg you, Monsieur Count, to accept the expression of my esteem and devotion.

The Marshal, Duke of Rivoli, Prince of Essling,

MASSÉNA.

Finally, in the middle of December, the Baden troops were put at the disposal of their government:

The Emperor to the Chief of Staff.

Paris, 9 December 809.

"My Cousin, the Minister of War gives orders... to the Baden to return to Baden... It is necessary that you see my Minister of Foreign Affairs to see the steps I have taken with the small courts of Germany to have at my disposal new troops of the Confederation which will form a division for Spain... Write to my minister in Baden to find out what is thought about in this respect by this sovereign. I want him to start all that is necessary to complete the cadres he has in Spain. Make me a report which will make known the help that I can hope for by this way. Assure this..."

NAPOLÉON.¹³

The Baden showed themselves full of bravery and devotion by fighting in 1809 in the ranks of the Grande Armée. They began to acquire the best qualities of the old troops; we shall see them now, in 1812, on the icy plains of Russia, consecrate their reputation, and, with our soldiers, strengthen the bonds of military brotherhood and, without fail, commune with them in victory and in death.

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¹¹*Denkwürdigkeiten*, page 202.

¹²Marshal Masséna was sent to Portugal.

¹³Pelet, IV, page 488.