

The Napoleon Series

The Germans under the French Eagles: Volume III the Saxons in Our Ranks Chapter One Part II: Campaign of 1806 – 1807

By Commandant Sauzey

Translated by [Greg Gorsuch](#)

The famous proclamation of the Emperor, addressed to the army, on 6 October, from his headquarters at Bamberg, marked the real opening of hostilities:

"Soldiers!...war cries were heard in Berlin... It is no longer Paris that the Prussians want to burn... Today it's their flag, which they boast of planting in the capitals of our Allies; it is Saxony that they wish to force to renounce, by a shameful transaction, its independence, by ranking it among the number of their provinces... Fools... They have already arrived on our outposts: where they will learn... that the enmity of the Great People is more terrible than the storms of the ocean!"

And in his message to the Senate of 7 October, the Emperor declared that "Saxony was invaded and the wise prince who governed it forced to act against the will and against the interest of his people."

Here was the latest information on the Saxons that reached the General Staff before the bloody affairs of Schleiz and Saalfeld:

1st Corps. -- Report of 6 October.

"...Saxons strengthen in Saalburg; they have artillery there..."

Report of Second Lieutenant Remy, 5th Hussars, to Colonel Schwartz.

7 October 1806.

"...On Saturday, 4 October, a corps of Saxons left Hof on Plauen; its stay in Hof lasted about three hours..."

Marshal Bernadotte to the Chief of Staff.

Kronach, 7 October 1806.

"I have the honor to inform you that the advice I have just received assures that the Prussians have left Hof to go to Plauen; on the eve of their departure, a large body of Saxons had arrived following their march, which had the same destination."

Marshal Soult to the Emperor.

Bayreuth, 7 October 1806.

"...According to the reports I received, there are at Hof two regiments of Prussian hussars, and at Aurbach, another, whose name I have not been able to name, two regiments of infantry of the same nation, and one battalion of Saxon grenadiers, all under the orders of General Tauentzien."

"The 5th, 1 officer and 8 Saxon dragoons arrived at Hof and immediately traced a camp behind and to the left of the city for a division of their troops which is said to have arrived today; this division is chiefly strong in cavalry. Another camp for 2,000 Prussians has been drawn at the same time on the right of that of the Saxons."

"At Plauen, it is still said that there are two divisions, one Prussian and the other Saxon..."

Arriving at October 8th: the powder had spoken, the veil was torn:

General Belliard to the Chief of Staff.

Ebersdorf, 8 October 1806.

"...The enemy was at Saalburg, numbering 600 men of Saxon infantry, 200 men of cavalry of the same nation, and as many Prussian cavalry. They wanted to defend the passage of the Saale. At the approach of General Wathier, the enemy fired a few guns; the city was attacked; the enemies have fled. If they had wanted to hold, we would have made small the anniversary of the fight of Wertingen..."

Marshal Soult to the Emperor.

Münchberg, 8 October 1806, 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

"...General Tautzien led some of his troops on Schleiz, the other part on Plauen where they were to join a division of Saxons who camped there; this general would have had at Hof 4 cavalry regiments including 2 Prussian and 2 Saxon, and 14 battalions including 4 or 5 of Saxon grenadiers."

"I continue my movement on Plauen, to get closer to Schleiz..."

Adjutant-Commander Girard, Deputy Chief of the Staff of the Cavalry Reserve, to the Grand Duke of Berg.

Tanna, 9 October 1806.

"...The troops occupying Hof withdrew to Schleiz by Plauen."

Fights of Schleiz and Saalfeld (9 and 10 October 1806).

The first serious engagement of the campaign was the fight of Schleiz (9 October); it was disastrous for the Saxons as well as for the Prussians.

Marshal Bernadotte to the Emperor.

Headquarters of Oettersdorf, 9 October 1806.

"...According to all reports, it appears that we had before us 7,000 to 8,000 men commanded by General Tautzien, composed of the following corps, namely: the regiment of Zweipel (Prussian), the regiment of Count Rechten (Saxon), a battalion of the regiment of Prince Maximilian (Saxon), a battalion of Prussians fusiliers, the hussars of Bila (Prussian), the light horse of Prince John (Saxon)."

"They have been attacked by only 700 horses and 1,000 to 1,200 infantrymen. I estimate the loss of the enemy to be 400 men, both killed and wounded and prisoners."

Marshal Soult, meanwhile, continued to inform the Emperor while marching on Hof. He informed him on the 9th of October, at 3 o'clock in the morning, that a reconnaissance sent to Hof had not found the enemy; he wrote from Hof, at 10 o'clock in the morning, that Saxon cuirassiers have withdrawn to Plauen; finally, at six o'clock in the evening, he informed from Großzöbern (now Burgstein) that the enemy was retreating on Gera, and that the army which covered Dresden and which had increased to 50,000 men, of whom 17,000 were Saxons, would not have passed

Freyberg.

The moment had come for the Emperor to exploit, for the benefit of the French cause, the discontent and indignation of the Saxon people; the Duke of Brunswick concentrated the Prusso-Saxon army at Jena, thus discovering Saxony, sacrificed to its strategic combinations:

The Emperor to M. Maret.

Ebersdorf, 10 October 1806, 5 o'clock in the morning.

"...Having from newspapers in Bamberg, Nuremberg and Würzburg that, on the 9th, the Prussian General Tautzien, with 6,000 Prussians and 3,000 Saxons, was attacked by the vanguard of the French army, commanded by the Grand Duke of Berg and overwhelmed them...; that the Saxon dragoons had sizeable losses; that the Guards Regiment lost its colonel, a respectable 60 years old man...; the Prussians are unworthy; that they have incorporated a Saxon battalion between two Prussian battalions to be so sure of themselves; that, of course, such a violation of independence and such violence against a weaker power can only outrage the whole of Europe..."

Here is the text of the proclamation which was disseminated in thousands of copies in French Germany and handed to all Saxon prisoners:

Proclamation to the people of Saxony.

Imperial Quarters of Ebersdorf, 10 October 1806.

"Saxons, the Prussians have invaded your territory. I go in to deliver you. They violently dissolved the bonds that united your troops and reunited them with their army. You must only not shed your blood for foreign interests, but not even for interests which are contrary to you."

"My armies were about to leave Germany, when your territory was violated; they will return to France when Prussia recognizes your independence and renounces the plans she has formed against you."

"Saxons, your Prince had refused until that moment to form engagements so opposed to his duties; if he has consented since, it is because he was forced by the invasion of the Prussians."

"I was deaf to the vain provocation which Prussia directed against my people; I was deaf as long as it only armed in its states; and it was only after she had violated your territory that my minister left Berlin."

"Saxons, your fate is now in your hands; do you want to remain uncertain between those who put you under the yoke and those who want to protect you? My successes will assure the existence and the independence of your Prince, of your nation. The success of the Prussians would impose eternal chains on you. Tomorrow they would ask for Lusatia, and afterwards the shore of the Elbe. But what am I saying? Did not they all ask? Have they not long since endeavored to force your sovereign to recognize a sovereignty which, imposed upon you immediately, would efface you from the rank of nations?"

"Your independence, your constitution, your liberty would no longer exist then only in remembrance, and the ghosts of your ancestors, the brave Saxons, would be indignant at seeing you reduced without resistance, by your rivals, to slavery prepared for so long and your country so belittled to become a Prussian province."

NAPOLEON.

While the Emperor appealed to the opinion of Saxony, the reports confirmed the importance of the victory of Schleiz, and Marshal Lannes was victorious at Saalfeld:

Marshal Lannes to the Emperor.

Saalfeld, 10 October 1806, 7 o'clock in the evening.

"...I left this morning at 5 o'clock with my army corps going on Saalfeld, where I found the corps commanded by Prince Louis of Prussia who was killed by a hussar of the 10th Regiment. I have the honor to convey to your Majesty his star (crachat) and an order... It appears that the corps which was at his command was composed of 5 regiments, including 3 Saxons and 2 Prussians, and 4 regiments of hussars, 2 of which were Saxons. and 2 Prussians."

"We tumbled the enemy into the river, made about 800 prisoners, killed or drowned a lot of people, took 21 pieces of cannon... I presume that we will pick up another 6..., about 20 caissons and at least 3 flags."

"There were scarcely 4,000 men of Suchet's division who have participated."

Report of General Suchet on the fight of Saalfeld

(Supplemented by excerpts from the 5th Corps Operations Journal.)

"...The 17th Light seized the outlet of Beulwitz, and pressing the enemy on this point attracted his attention. Prince Louis-Ferdinand of Prussia, after having tried to dislodge them by its fire, commanded an infantry charge: 6 Prussian and Saxon battalions in battle formation on the front, and 4 in column on the left flank...; the enemy were not only overwhelmed but thrown back on the Saale... We made 1,500 or 1,800 prisoners, taking 4 flags and 33 pieces of cannon with their harnessed caissons..."

The counter point of this information is found in the very interesting report of M. von Mümpfling, engineer in the service of the King of Saxony. (The translation of this report is in the Archives of the War.) We extract the following passages:

"...On 7 October 1806, the vanguard of Prince Hohenlohe was formed in cantonments between Arnstadt and Saalfeld under the Prussian generals Schimmelpfenning and Pellet, and Saxons Trutzschlen and Bevilacqua; it consisted of 18 squadrons of cavalry, 9 battalions and 2 companies of infantry, 3 batteries to which joined 2 Saxon battalions of "Prince-Xavier"..."

"...On 9 October, Prince Louis concentrated the corps near Rudolstadt... He left 3 Prussian battalions in Blankenburg with 3 squadrons of Saxon hussars... He fortified the advanced guard with the two Saxon battalions of "Prince Xavier"..."

"...On the morning of 10 October, the Prussian outposts were attacked near Saalfeld. Prince Louis formed his corps in a column directed towards the left... At about 9 o'clock, the corps were in the following position from the right: 2 battalions "Prince-Clement", 1st Battalion, battery, 2nd Battalion; "Prince-Xavier", 1st and 2nd Battalion; 1st and 2nd Battalion of the "Elector"; the 2 battalions of "Müfling" in the 2nd line behind the 2 battalions of "Prince Clement", the 5 squadrons of Saxon hussars in the 3rd line."

"...Between 9 and 10 o'clock, three squadrons of Saxon's hussars passed through Saalfeld and joined the troops posted near this city..."

"The Saxon Regiment "Prince Clement" placed near Crösten formed the communication between "Müfling" and the Saxon regiments "Elector" and "Prince Xavier"... These two regiments were formed by battalions in checkered fashion in front of the right wing..."

"...French troops had advanced stealthily up to Beulwitz...; their violent fire forced the "Prince-Xavier" regiment to fall back in disorder until Crösten; the regiment of the "Elector" also withdrew..."

A successful counter-attack by the Elector Regiment, which retook Crösten, seemed partly due to the exhaustion of the ammunition of the 17th Light:

"...At 1 o'clock the brave regiment of the "Elector" was forced to abandon Crösten and retreat to Wohlsdorf... The "Prince Clement" regiment, attacked by the 21st Chasseurs, had its 1st Battalion taken or dispersed; the 2nd Battalion, attacked in its turn, suffered the same fate, and the Saxon General Bevilaqua was taken prisoner."

"...Prince Louis seeing all his infantry in disorder resolved to attack the enemy at the head of the five weak squadrons of Saxon hussars. But a French line enveloped the two lines of the Prince's cavalry. This maneuver and the unevenness of the ground caused disorder and confusion. The Prince received a wound through the body from a *maréchal des logis* of the 10th Regiment, which did not prevent him from continuing to fight until, covered with wounds, he fell dead in the arms of Lieutenant Nostitz...; his adjutant; 2 companies of the "Elector", attacked by the French cavalry (9th and 10th Chasseurs) were chopped into pieces and taken prisoner, as well as most of the batteries..."

"The Prince von Hohenlohe who was marching on Jena collected all that came from Saalfeld..."

Marshal Bernadotte to the Emperor.

Oettersdorf, 10 October 1806.

"...The colonel of the light horse "Prince Jean" of Saxony who was taken during yesterday died that night from his wounds..."

General Wathier to the Grand Duke de Berg.

Driesch, 11 October 1806.

"...The colonel of the 5th Regiment of Chasseurs entered Neustadt; a little beyond, he was seen again by a discharge of carbines at ten paces; he immediately summoned the *burgermeister* who had assured him that there were no Prussians or Saxons in the town or the environs, and he was obliged to treat them hard to make them confess that there had been beyond the city a regiment of Saxon dragoons, dressed in blue, and of infantry..."

Marshal Davout to the Chief of Staff.

Pößneck, 11 October, 2 o'clock in the morning.

"...The prisoners made by the 13th Chasseurs report that there was at the Saalfeld affair 7 Saxon and 2 Prussian battalions, 1 Saxon hussar regiment and 2 Prussian squadrons..."

Marshal Soult to the Chief of Staff.

Weyda, 11 October 1806, 10 o'clock in the evening.

"...The Saxon troops who were at Weyda (2 regiments) are parties came three days ago and headed to Jena..."

The first successes of the French, as well as the directions taken by the retreating enemy columns, now made it possible to concentrate rapidly the army in the direction of Jena, where the bulk of the Prusso-Saxon forces were reported; the statements of the prisoners confirmed the centralized intelligence at the Imperial staff. Davout reported that three Prussian and Saxon prisoners, almost all of whom belonged to different regiments, declared that their corps (3,000 Prussians, 500 to 600 cavalry and 20,000 Saxons, including 3,000 cavalry), withdrew after the affair of Saalfeld on Jena... The Saxons seemed strongly dissatisfied with the way in which they were treated by the Prussians and hoped for an end to the war they are exercising in spite of themselves.

General Lasalle to the Grand Duke of Berg.

Mölsen, 13 October, half past midnight.

"I learned that a quarter of an hour before the squadron of the brave and intelligent Commander Maignet entered Weissenfels, 100 Saxons and Prussians had come out. Wherever I went, we were taken for Saxons."

Squadron Chief Méda, from the 7th Hussars, to General Lasalle.

Weissenfels, 13 October 1806, 5 o'clock in the morning.

"I entered Weissenfels as Saxon... I'm leaving in a while for Leipzig."

The Commander Méda, in his thrust on Leipzig, was to raise alarm in the rear of the Prussian army and to spread in abundance the proclamation of the Emperor to the Saxons:

Chief of Staff to the Grand Duke of Berg.

Gera, 13 October 1806.

"I send you a proclamation from the Emperor to the Saxons that you will display in Leipzig and spread everywhere..."

General Belliard to General Lasalle.

On the heights of Naumburg, 13 October 1806.

"My dear general... I send you proclamations. Spread them in the Saxon country; have them displayed if possible, by a party, in the city of Leipzig, and even in Merseburg if you can..."

General Belliard to General Milhaud.

(Same date.)

"...Spread in the Saxon country the proclamations that I have sent to you."

Squadron Chief Méda, from the 7th Hussars, to General Lasalle.

Bivouac, in front of Camburg, 15 October, 3 o'clock in the morning.

"...I arrived with my 100 horses in front of Leipzig, the 13th... made there the proclamation of His Majesty."

The letters intercepted made it possible to realize the moral depression that already existed among the Prussian troops:

Letter from a Prussian officer to one of his friends in Berlin.

Naumburg, 12 October 1806.

"The beginning of hostilities against the French was a very sad way for the German troops... The Saxon regiments "Prince John", "Xavier" and "Rechten" have suffered terribly. Since yesterday afternoon and all night, we only saw fugitives who were running after their regiment... We are worried frightfully. God grant that the King will not allow himself to be beaten, for this misfortune would be irreparable. Provided that the outcome of the present crisis is happy? Our situation is more sad and less reassuring..."

This letter was inserted in the *Moniteur* of 21 October 1806.

Battle of Jena (14 October 1806).

We come to decisive action: for the last time in this campaign, the Saxons will fight against us. The vanguard of

the French army abruptly attacked the village of Jena, where the 5th Corps overwhelmed the Saxon rearguard of General Tautzien and forced the passage of the Saale. (Report of General Suchet, 13 October.)

We borrow from Lieutenant-Colonel von der Goltz, of the German General Staff, on the participation of Saxon troops in the battle of Jena, the following details:

"Nobody expected a serious fight that day. In the headquarter as in the corps, everyone was at rest. The Saxon Niesemeuschel Division, which was encamped near the Schneckke, was only taking up arms at 6 o'clock in the morning... and 4 Saxon battalions which should have rejoined the corps of Tautzien to which they belonged, put in the state of defense the wood of Isserstadt."

"The noise of the Closewitz fight was beginning to be heard from Kapellendorf camp; the Tautzien Division was ordered to move on Vierzeñnheiligen... By the time General Grawaert arrived with the head of his corps before Vierzeñnheiligen, the retreat of General Tautzien was clearly outlined; the cavalry, with 19 squadrons and a Saxon battery, went forward to collect the debris of Tautzien... In order to connect with the Saxons who occupied Isserstadt the division obliqued slightly to the right; at Isserstadt was standing also the Saxon cavalry with a battery..."

"...When von Grawaert's battalions arrived on the outskirts of Vierzeñnheiligen, the 4 Saxon battalions who occupied Isserstadt passed into the second line..."

We know the events that took place rapidly on this point of the battlefield; instead of vigorously approaching the first French line with the three arms united, the Prince of Hohenlohe, waiting for Rùchel, who did not arrive, preferred to have his infantry act alone, the Saxons of Tautzien forming his right; this attack does not succeed. Vierzeñnheiligen remained in the hands of the French... The cartridges began to fail all along the Prussian line, while the French skirmishers, hiding behind the hedges and in the houses of the village, fired at the enemy as at a target.

"...The left wing was the first to retreat, but soon the retreat of the right wing changed into a complete defeat. Only the Saxon battalion "Aus-dem-Wenkel", in the middle of which was the Prince, did not lose its composure: it made a brilliant retreat and managed to withdraw... At 2 o'clock in the afternoon, the army looked like a river of fugitives."¹

The great act of the tragedy was played out: it was necessary to profit quickly from the victory. The day after the battle, the Emperor imposed a strong contribution of war on the enemy countries occupied by his troops. The Electorate of Saxony was taxed at 25,375,000 francs (Decree of 15 October 1806, at the Imperial quarter at Jena.) It was about *one million* for every *thousand men* furnished by Saxony to the Prussians; but the same evening, the 6th Bulletin of the Grande Armée attenuated, in which was possible, the bitterness of the contribution imposed on the countries of Saxony.

6th Bulletin of the Grande Armée.

Weimar, 15 October 1806, in the evening.

"6000 Saxons and more than 300 officers were taken prisoner. The Emperor had the officers assembled, and told them that he saw with difficulty that their army was making war against him; that he had taken up arms only to insure the independence of the Saxon nation and to oppose its incorporation into the Prussian monarchy; that his intention was to send them all home, if they gave the word never to serve against France; that their sovereign, whose qualities he knew, had been extremely weak, thus yielding to the threats of the Prussians and letting them enter his territory; but that all this must end; that the Prussians remain in Prussia, and that they did not interfere in any way with the affairs of Germany; that the Saxons were to be united, in the Confederation of the Rhine, under the protection of France, a protection which was not new, since for two hundred years, without France, they had been invaded by Austria or by Prussia; that the Emperor had taken up arms only when Prussia had invaded Saxony; that it was necessary to put an end to this violence; that the continent needed rest, and that, in spite of the intrigues and low

¹ Foucart, *Jéna*, pg. 632.

passions which agitate several courts, it was necessary that this repose should exist, it must have cost the fall of some thrones."

Indeed, all the Saxon prisoners were sent home with the proclamation of the Emperor to the Saxons and assurances that they did not want their nation.

The following declaration was signed by the Saxon officers:

"We, undersigned, general, colonels, lieutenant-colonels, majors, captains and Saxon officers, swear on our word of honor not to carry arms against His Majesty the Emperor of the French, King of Italy and his allies, and we take the same commitment and make the same oath in the name of all the low-ranking officers and soldiers who have been taken prisoner with us and whose state is attached, even if we receive the formal order of our sovereign Elector of Saxony. -- Jena, 15 October 1806."

Signed: Baron von NIESEMEUSHEL, Saxon Lieutenant-General; Mathias BOGISLAUS VON ZIEBLENSKI, Lieutenant-Colonel, etc. (follow the signatures of 120 other officers).

We can read again in the 14th Bulletin, dated Dessau, 22 October:

"...The Sovereign of Saxony thanked the Emperor for the generosity with which he has treated, and which will wrest it from Prussian influence. However, many of his soldiers perished in this fight..."

The eagerness of the Saxon troops to leave the Prussian ranks was real; we see them in fact passing with arms and baggage to our side, whenever they were not too much ensconced in the still existing Prussian corps.

Note from the Chief of the Engineering Battalion Legrand on what happened at Wittenberg following the affair of the 17th, at Halle, at the entrance of General Davout's corps on the 20th of October.

"...A Prussian lieutenant with 30 men received the Prince of Württemberg order to return to Wittenberg to burn the bridge and blow up the powder magazine as soon as the French appeared."

"On the 20th, at 9 o'clock in the morning, a French patrol of men appeared on the bridge, the Prussian lieutenant fired his explosives, and immediately ran along the glacis to reach the powder magazine, with a trail of gunpowder, he tied his fuses, lit them, and went away."

"At the same time, the inhabitants of the town, who feared the loss of their bridge, and had kept the fire-pumps ready, had hurried to the fire at the moment of the departure of the Prussians; the fire was extinguished after a quarter of an hour. On the other hand, other inhabitants of the city harassed the Prussians on the glacis and the powder magazine whose explosion would have ruined their homes. They even killed a Prussian with a pitchfork, and joined some of the Saxon soldiers who were in charge of guarding the magazine, and tore off the fuse. This is how the beautiful bridge and 300 thousands of powder were saved."

Marshal Davout to the Emperor.

Wittenberg, 20 October 1806, 11 o'clock in the evening.

"...50 chasseurs of the 1st Regiment I sent for reconnaissance on Torgau seized the bridge that the Saxons did not defend, saying they were at peace with us."

Marshal Bernadotte to the Chief of Staff.

Headquarters, on the left bank of the Elbe, 22 October 1806, 2 o'clock in the morning.

"...I left the division of Rivaud in Bernburg to receive the horses and the arms of a regiment of Saxon hussars that must cross this town... I learned from the Saxon general that two of these regiments of cavalry coming out of

Magdeburg had arrived at Gomersdorf and were to proceed to Wittenberg. I have ordered General Wathier, who will be returning to Zerbst at noon, to have these two regiments driven to Dessau, where General Oudinot is stationed."

Marshal Bernadotte to the Chief of Staff.

Zerbst, 22 October, noon.

"A deputy whom I had left near General Rivaud has just realized that the operation of the delivery of the horses was being finished. Yesterday, at four o'clock, already near a regiment had been dismounted; the horses were counted, and the commissary of war drew up minutes; the rest arrived. Having been informed that a part of this cavalry was still on the right bank of the Elbe, and being informed that General Wathier had not yet been able to cross the bridge near Dessau, I sent a staff officer to Major General Oudinot to direct them to Rosslau with this general. General Wathier has just assured me that he had met the regiment of light horse of "Prince John" led by this officer."

Pils tells us in his own way how Oudinot disarmed these Saxon regiments:

"While marching on Dessau, Oudinot cut off the retreat of two regiments of Saxon cuirassiers, which he brought back to that city. These riders wept with rage for being caught. Arrived at the place d'armes, they were dismounted and their horses served for the foot dragoons (division commanded by Oudinot). They did not keep the men who could return to their homes. As for the officers, they demanded their word that they would no longer serve against France."

"The Saxon army concluded an armistice, and shortly afterwards separated definitively from the Prussian army, against which it continued the campaign. The Elector received as a reward as the title of King."

It was not everything for the Emperor to have detached the Saxony of the Prussian party, it was now necessary to use the resources of this country and to prepare the entry of the Elector into Confederation:

The Emperor to the Elector of Saxony.

Imperial Camp at Halle, 21 October 1806.

"Brother, I received the letter from your Most Serene Highness the Elector. My esteem for him is equal to my desire to see as soon as possible the established and consolidated relations of peace between us. In two or three days, I will appoint a minister for that purpose, to get along with the person your Highness has appointed. I have ordered, however, that the hostilities should cease, and I beg him, consequently, to order, on his side, that his troops be recalled from the Prussian army. Your Highness can not doubt the pleasure I will have to see him and meet him and that of the Electoress."

The following letter affirms the Emperor's intention to use the resources of Saxony without delay. Prince Jerome would occupy Dresden with the Bavarian and Württemberg contingents.

The Emperor to the Chief of Staff.

Wittenberg, 23 October 1806.

"Order M. de Thiard (chamberlain of the Emperor) to take command of the Dresden town. He will leave by the left bank of the Elbe, join the head of the Bavarian division, and enter with it into the city. He will be careful to maintain good discipline in the city of Dresden. He will order the greatest consideration for the Elector and his family. He will take possession of the arsenal and all the powder and war magazines. We are not at peace with the Elector; we have been at war; we are in a state of armistice. All stores of saddles, shoes, sheets, harnesses, ammunition of war, and remounts belong to the army as means of war which the Elector does not need. General Songis will send an artillery officer to take possession of the artillery and give it a proper direction to the interests of the army. General Chasseloup will send an engineer officer to reconnoiter the town."

"...3 Bavarian and Württemberg divisions will have their quarters prepared. The guard of the palace will be left to

the Guards of the Corps and to the Guards of the Elector. The Elector must not have at Dresden more than 400 men on horseback and 1,200 or 1,500 men of infantry; if there were more, the rest must return to its regular garrisons."

"If one realizes that there is a spirit of resistance in Dresden, one will wait for the arrival of the second column to act more absolutely as masters. These instructions will be given to Prince Jerome and the commandant of the place; one and the other will correspond with the Chief of Staff."

"Many forms, many processes, a lot of honesty; but, in reality, to seize everything, especially means of war, under the pretext that the Elector no longer needs it..."

The debut of M. de Thiard at Dresden was particularly difficult; the Elector received him with an undisguised bad humor:

M. de Thiard to the Chief of Staff.

Dresden, 25 October 1806.

"...I arrived in this residence yesterday morning; I found General Hédouville (Chief of Staff of Prince Jerome) who had preceded me there. We went together to the Elector, who received us in the worst possible way... The proposal to seize the arsenal will create here a great sensation; I will do it tomorrow and I will succeed... there isn't in this residence, not even in the army, any magazine of sheets, equipment, etc., for the reason that the companies are in the account of the captains... There are still in the city 2,600 men, but in forty-eight hours there will only remain the number that His majesty set... the Bavarian division commits quite a lot of excess... I am a lot happier with the vanquished than with the allies."

The Elector had to resign himself to understanding that, despite his request not to see any troops passing through his capital, the Dresden position was too important in the circumstances for the Emperor not to be sure of it, and that military precautions were to be taken without compliments; at last he finally recovered, invited Hédouville to dinner, and even went so far as to give M. de Thiard a collection of maps of the Prussian fortresses, which was of the greatest use for the war of sieges by which the campaign continued.

There were only a few squadrons of Saxon cavalry left in the retreating Prussian columns, which we should soon see emerge from the enemy ranks:

General Savary to the Emperor.

Nauen, 26 October 1806, 10 o'clock in the morning.

"...At Rathenow we have seen two regiments of Saxon cavalry, both of them dressed in red, marching with the Prussians (Column Hohenlohe) and also took the road to Neustadt."

Marshal Soult to the Chief of Staff.

Rathenow, 29 October 1806.

"...Yesterday, arriving at Rathenow, 5 squadrons of Saxon cavalry were presented to the vanguard by asking to return to Saxony and declaring that having indirectly learned that there was an armistice in favor of the Saxon troops, they desired to enjoy it."

"Having no opinion or order concerning this armistice, I told them that I received them first as prisoners of war, but that in consideration of their approach, I allowed them to go to Dessau until Your Highness may have informed them of His Majesty's intention in regard to them."

"According to this declaration, the officers, 51 in number, have signed for them and for their troop which consists of 515 non-commissioned officers and soldiers, that they would consider themselves as prisoners of war and would not take up arms against His Majesty the Emperor and King, nor against his allies, until perfect exchange, in the event

that the armistice to which they believe would not exist, and, on this assumption again, they undertook to surrender to the French army the 486 troop horses they bring."

"Your Highness will find attached the status of the detachments that make up the 5 squadrons, as well as the commitment of the officers who command them."

"This cavalry was employed under the orders of Prince Hohenlohe, whom they left on the road near Gransee, wishing to march on Stettin. Before leaving, they announced to the Prince the intention of leaving his army, and, without waiting for his answer, they set out; the officers also said that, in the same army, there were still three battalions of Saxon grenadiers who were only waiting for a favorable opportunity to follow them..."

Placed on the Napoleon Series: January 2019