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A Soldier for Napoleon

The Campaigns of Lieutenant Franz Joseph Hausmann, 7th Bavarian Infantry

EDITED BY
JOHN H. GILL
TRANSLATED BY CYNTHIA JOY HAUSMANN

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Dedicated to all those who still practice the ancient and honourable art of writing letters.

We are especially grateful to Herr Dr Ernst Aichner and the staff of the Bavarian Army Museum in Ingolstadt for supplying invaluable material on the 7th Infantry Regiment and the Bavarian combat experience during the Napoleonic epoch. We would also like to thank Herr Dr A. Fuchs of the Bavarian Kriegsarchiv for his kind and swift assistance in providing a copy of Franz's Personalakt (OP 78406) and a wealth of other useful information.
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A Soldier for Napoleon

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CONTENTS

Maps

Illustrations

(between pages 128 and 129)

Preface

Franz Joseph Hausmann lived during one of the most important phases of Bavarian history and personally experienced many of the dramatic events that transformed that realm in the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century. Born in 1789, the year of the French Revolution, Franz first entered the army in 1799, the same year that Prince-Elector Maximilian IV Joseph assumed the Wittelsbach throne. Franz left active service in 1815 after the Battle of Waterloo, and finally departed the army in 1818 when the last Allied occupation troops came home from France. Through these years in uniform, he fought in every major Central European campaign of the French Empire: in 1805 against Austria and Russia, in 1806–07 against Prussia and Russia, in 1809 against Austria, in 1812 against Russia, and in 1813 against the combined Allied powers. Finally, in 1814, after Bavaria had changed sides and joined the Grand Alliance against Napoleon, he participated in the invasion of France with the Bavarian Corps of the Allied Main Army. Altogether this comprises a remarkable collection of military experiences for a young man of 25.

Through all the many trials and glories of these years, Franz maintained a detailed march journal and, from 1812, kept up a regular and lively correspondence with his parents, who were then living in Neuburg on the Danube. It is these often lengthy letters which form the foundation of this book. Though we know that some of the letters of 1812–14 have not survived because there are gaps in the sequence of numbers that Franz gave them, those that have remained provide unique insights into military life during the Napoleonic epoch, and we are pleased to offer them to the public for the first time.

The letters are supplemented by what Franz's family calls his 'military diaries'. Though some entries are nothing more than daily march destinations and distances, others provide rare first-hand glimpses into little-known corners of the period: the Bavarian combat experience in the Austerlitz campaign in 1805, for example, or the siege of Thorn (Torun) in 1813. To take advantage of these military diaries and to place the letters in context, we have structured this volume to include chapters on all of Franz's campaigns from 1805 to 1814. Each section begins with an historical overview and commentary on the Bavarian participation in the campaign; this is followed by the 'military diaries' for that year and, for 1812 through 1814, by the letters themselves.

The letters and diaries, written in a simple, practical style, come from a collection of Franz's papers held by his great-granddaughter, Cynthia Joy Hausmann. The diaries had been a part of Franz's life from his

earliest years. After leaving Aachen with his parents when his regiment (the 4th Grenadiers) was being relocated to Bavaria, the boy-cadet Franz, not quite ten years old, began in January 1799 to record his daily marches, probably with his father's help, from just before Essen all the way to Munich and later to Neuburg on the Danube. While on campaign from 1805 through 1814, Franz evidently kept rough notes from which he transcribed the diaries at some subsequent date. As Cynthia has discovered, it is clear in some places that several pages were written at one sitting, and one passage, the entry of 16 May 1809, contains a comment that was obviously added later, 'The fate that befell the town of Schwaz and several villages can be seen today in the ruins that are still standing there.'

Wilhelm Hausmann was also an important influence in his son's letters. We cannot assert with certainty, but may assume with considerable confidence that Franz's comprehensive letters begin in 1812 because this was the first campaign in which Franz was separated from his father. A sergeant-major in the same regiment as Franz (now the 7th Line Infantry), Wilhelm had entered service in 1777 and participated in all of Bavaria's wars up to and including 1809. He and his young son thus campaigned together in 1805, 1806–07 and 1809. On 24 April 1809, however, at the Battle of Neumarkt in Bavaria, Wilhelm took an Austrian musket ball in his right foot. This painful wound and his performance during the fighting earned him the award of the French Legion of Honour, but his injury ended his active service with the field army. Wilhelm remained in uniform, but had to stay behind when Franz rode off to war against Russia in the spring of 1812, promising the old soldier that he would maintain an accurate account of his travels and engagements. For the information that follows, then, we may be grateful to a father's care and a loving son's unswerving dedication.

As a final introductory note for those who think of the Napoleonic era as a piece of ancient history only one step removed from the Roman Empire, it is worth recalling that Cynthia Hausmann is only Franz's great-grand-daughter. Considering that most of us have probably known one or more of our grandparents and some have even been blessed to know great-grandparents, this little observation helps bring home the fact that the age of Napoleon is not all that far removed in time from our own after all.

John H. Gill, 1998

Introduction

Franz Joseph Hausmann

My great-grandfather Franz Joseph Hausmann served as a young officer with the 7th Bavarian Infantry Regiment and was one of the fortunate few members of Napoleon's *Grande Armée* to survive the Russian campaign of 1812–13. Later, after the Bavarians changed sides and joined the Allies in the campaign against Napoleon, Franz fought his way across France up to the capitulation of Paris on 31 March 1814. It was Franz's good fortune on these military campaigns to be serving as adjutant to one or another of the Bavarian commanding officers, thereby greatly increasing his chance of survival.

From the Russian campaign, Franz wrote a series of 24 letters (21 of which survive), and from the French campaign a series of 11 (only 4 of which survive). These letters were written to his parents, who were then living at Neuburg on the Danube, the garrison town of the 7th Bavarian Infantry Regiment, where his father was assigned to the Reserve Battalion.

I first became aware of these letters after the death of my grandfather, Franz's youngest son, in 1951. Although the quality of the paper and ink was probably as good as one would encounter today, through the years the letters had clearly been lovingly pored over by Franz's children. In places they were torn or mended with small strips of brown or transparent paper, some pages were out of order, and here and there my grandfather had pencilled in comments, as was his wont. Although Franz's handwriting was quite good, he used the old-fashioned Gothic script, sometimes squeezed comments into the margins, and generally wrote in a very small hand – in later years he would admonish his children to write as small as possible, so as to save postage by not using much paper.

By 1951 Franz's only living descendants were in the United States, and only my father and I had sufficient linguistic interest to attempt a preliminary translation for the benefit of other family members. The older generation was thrilled to learn what an honourable young man Franz had been, and the younger generation by and large merely noted the fact that some ancestor had written letters during Napoleon's time. So matters remained, until I recently realised that my days were slowly

running out and that I ought to make a serious effort to learn if there might be any outside interest in what had until then been considered strictly a family curiosity. I was fortunate enough to make contact with Lionel Leventhal of Greenhill Books and with Jack Gill, my co-author, who together have helped add another dimension to this material and place it in its broader military-historical setting. In the meantime family attics have also produced various other related treasures, notably Franz's military diaries, his voluminous later letters to his children, and the citations associated with his decorations.

In writing to his children, Franz often expressed his pride at being the third generation to serve in the Bavarian infantry. The first of the family to do so was Bartholomäus Hausmann (1724–1800), whose father was the assistant to the mayor of Heydeck, Bavaria and also had the unusual distinction of being able to read and write. In 1744 Bartholomäus joined the 4th Bavarian Grenadier Regiment at Neuburg and marched with them into garrison at Jülich, near Aachen in the Rhine Province, where he remained throughout his career. In the latter part of the 18th century Aachen was part of the Rhine Province that came under the protection of the combined Palatine-Bavarian Electorates. Bartholomäus' only son, Wilhelm Hausmann (1759–1841), was born in Jülich and joined the same regiment, now garrisoned at Aachen, where he married and had one son, Franz, in 1789.

A few months after Franz's birth in Aachen on 25 February 1789, the French Revolution erupted, and tensions between Revolutionary France and other European nations led to war in 1792. The ensuing fighting ebbed and flowed across the Rhineland region. Over the next few years Wilhelm Hausmann was engaged in campaigns against the French, particularly around Düsseldorf, which finally capitulated to the revolutionaries on 6 September 1795.

Franz did subsequently manage to attend primary school in Aachen for four years, but after that his father's regiment was ordered to march back to Bavaria, preparatory to helping fight the French in southern Germany. On 2 January 1799 Wilhelm, accompanied by his wife and son and whatever worldly goods they may have possessed, marched off from Aachen, arriving in Munich on 25 February 1799. After further moves within Bavaria, on 27 November 1799 the family finally arrived at Neuburg, which was to be the regiment's permanent garrison town. During the main period of relocation, from 1 January to 1 May 1799, ten-year-old Franz was carried on the payroll of the 3rd Company of the 4th Grenadier Regiment as a junior fourier or cadet (*Fourierschütze*).

Once settled in Bavaria, Franz lost his military status, and after arriving at Neuburg he spent four years attending the Latin School there. On 1 November 1804 he was then accepted as a fourier-trainee or cadet

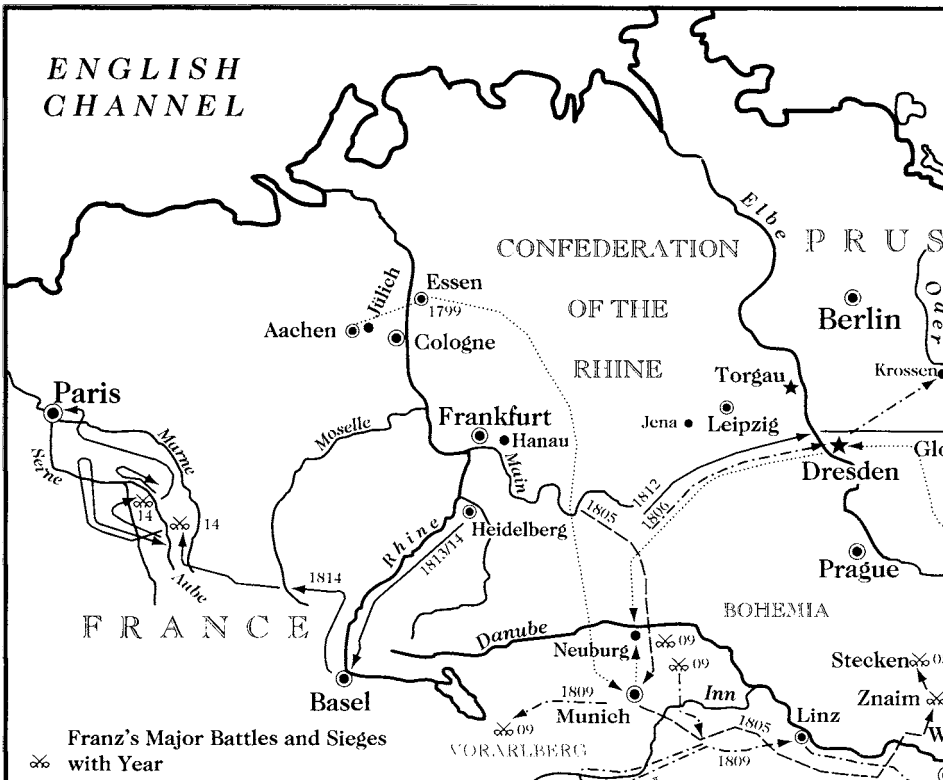
(*Fourierpraktikant*) in the 7th Bavarian Infantry Regiment *Graf Morawitzky*, as his father's and grandfather's regiment was now called. In addition to learning his military duties, in this capacity Franz also participated in Bavaria's campaigns in alliance with France against Austria, Prussia and Russia during the period 1805–09. On 1 November 1806 he was promoted to full fourier in the 1st Grenadier Company of the 7th Royal Bavarian Infantry Regiment, and on 1 August 1809, during the campaign in Austria, he was advanced to second lieutenant with the Reserve Battalion of the 7th Infantry (now *Löwenstein*). On 1 September 1809 he was also appointed adjutant of this unit.

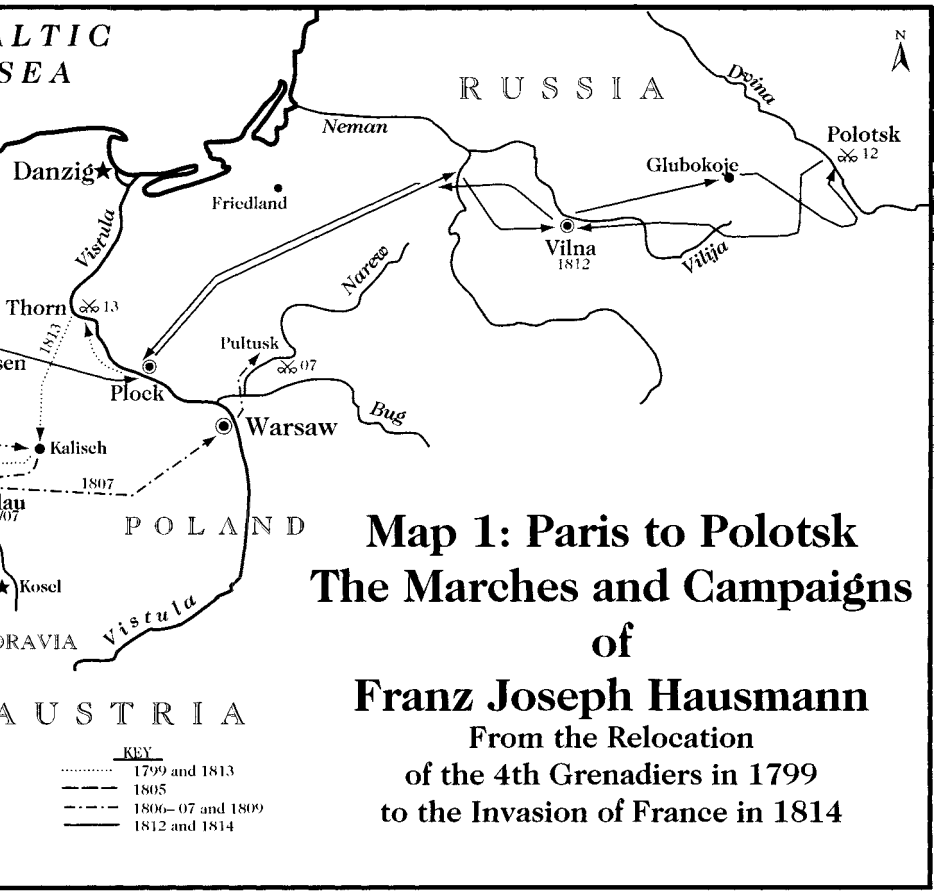
Wilhelm, meanwhile, continued to serve as a non-commissioned officer in the 7th Infantry. He was made a member of the French Legion of Honour, the notification of which was provisionally issued to him from Napoleon's headquarters at Ebersdorf on 13 May 1809, in recognition of his role in the Battle of Neumarkt on the Rott on 24 April of that year.

However, Wilhelm had received a severe wound in the foot at Neumarkt which would keep him out of active campaigning for the remainder of his long career in uniform. For most of the rest of this career, he was assigned to the Reserve Battalion of the 7th Infantry at Neuburg as a recruiting officer, although in June 1813 he was named lieutenant and adjutant of the 4th Battalion of the Rezat District Mobile Legion (later re-designated as the 17th National Field Battalion) and served in this capacity for a time. Promoted to captain on 26 October 1833, Wilhelm died in Neustadt on the Haardt (today Neustadt on the Weinstrasse) on 19 July 1841 as a retired officer in that rank.

When Franz marched out in March 1812 preparatory to the invasion of Russia, his father (owing to his injured foot) remained at Neuburg with the Reserve Battalion, and it was largely through military friends and couriers that the two corresponded with each other. As Franz's letters show, his father expected regular, well composed letters detailing the regiment's marching route, military engagements, personnel particulars and general living conditions in the field. Wilhelm's training and discipline are reflected in young Franz's pains to separate fact from rumour in his narrative, and in his apologies for not having the time (sometimes in the midst of battle!) to organise his material better. Throughout, Franz does his best to follow his father's advice to 'act with reason' and 'stand like a man'.

In the letters, young Franz's main concerns at first are about wearing the proper uniform and keeping correct account of his finances, but as his unit closes with the enemy he concentrates on describing the military engagements. The Bavarians, who formed part of the *Grande Armée*'s left flank, most notably succeeded in heading off the Russians under General Wittgenstein at the Battle of Polotsk, 18–19 August 1812, which Franz


ENGLISH CHANNEL
CONFEDERATION OF THE RHINE
PRUS
Elbe
Essen
1799
Jülich
Aachen
Cologne
Berlin
Torgau
Krossen
Paris
Frankfurt
Hanau
Jena
Leipzig
Dresden
Gl
Marne
Seine
Moselle
Main
1812
1805
1809
14
14
Rhine
1813/14
Heidelberg
Prague
1814
Aube
FRANCE
BOHEMIA
Danube
Neuburg
09
09
Stecken
Basel
1809
Munich
Inn
Znaim
Linz
1805
09
VORARLBERG
1809
TYROL
09
Vie
Franz's Major Battles and Sieges with Year
Note: Movements for 1814 have been simplified for clarity on this map.



Map 1: Paris to Polotsk
The Marches and Campaigns of
Franz Joseph Hausmann

From the Relocation
of the 4th Grenadiers in 1799
to the Invasion of France in 1814

treats at length. For his participation in this battle Franz was made a knight of the French Legion of Honour, the provisional notification of which was sent him on 25 September 1812 from Moscow, where Napoleon was at that time. During the following cruelly cold winter, Franz came down with typhoid fever on the disastrous retreat from Russia, a death march so horrible he says he cannot bring himself to write about it. Following the retreat, he suffered through the siege and capitulation of the fortress of Thorn (Torun) in Poland, and he was finally able to return to Neuburg on 13 July 1813. On his way home from Thorn Franz learned that he had been promoted to first lieutenant on 18 May 1813.

With the signing of the Ried Treaty on 8 October 1813, the Bavarians switched their allegiance away from Napoleon and joined the Allies. For the next few weeks, however, Franz himself enjoyed a respite from the wars, travelling around Bavaria from 8 October to 10 November 1813 and on 30 October coincidentally missing out on the battle of Hanau, where his battalion lost three officers dead and five more wounded. Franz met up with his unit at Heidelberg on 10 November 1813 to join in the invasion of France.

During the subsequent campaign, Franz writes about the battles where 'we met the enemy without flinching', including the battle of Chaumesnil, where 'the Emperor himself was in command against us'. Here Franz particularly reports on the fate of individual officers, since he believes that 'the newspapers will have already told you about our fortunate and unfortunate incidents'. After fighting his way across France to Paris, the provincial Bavarian was amazed to find the French capital 'fantastically large' and 'illuminated day and night by innumerable shops or boutiques'.

After Napoleon's abdication on 6 April 1814, Franz decided to leave the military, because he believed that the armed forces would be cut back in peacetime and that the chances of promotion would therefore be slim. As he would write on 27 June 1854 to his son Otto, who was by then fretting over his own slow promotion to first lieutenant in the artillery,

> Back then [when I was a lieutenant in the infantry] I allowed myself to be driven by dissatisfaction over the sudden insertion of four mobile legion battalions into my regiment and to be overcome with worry that I would not become a captain until I had grey hair and would even have to sacrifice for that with pay of 44 francs a month, and that is why I left the service.

Although Franz would go on to a distinguished career in the Bavarian civil service, he always showed a certain nostalgia for the military, and

he encouraged several of his sons to consider military careers, with varying degrees of success.

On 1 December 1814 Franz went on leave status from the military and proceeded to Augsburg, where for the next four years he studied cameralistics (economics) at the university. Upon his graduation in 1818, he joined the Bavarian civil service and finally left the military on 30 April 1818.

All of Franz's civil service was spent in the Palatinate, which at that time formed part of the Kingdom of Bavaria (the elector of Bavaria having become King Maximilian I Joseph in 1806). Franz began his new career on 21 April 1818 with an assignment as actuary with the regional commission in Zweibrücken. There he married Catharina Chandon, the daughter of a local merchant, with whom he had three children who lived beyond infancy. On 16 September 1824 Franz was assigned to Kaiserslautern as inspector of the main prison, and on 17 March 1826 he was promoted to regional commissioner in Pirmasens. On 7 January 1834 he was assigned in the same capacity to Neustadt on the Haardt, where his wife died in childbirth later that same year.

On 10 October 1837 Franz took a second wife, Antonia Adolay, the daughter of a landowner and notary in nearby Frankenthal, with whom he had eight more children. Franz's career continued to prosper, and on 28 October 1843 he was appointed royal counsellor in Neustadt.

In 1848–49 revolutionary unrest sporadically swept across the Palatinate. On 20 July 1848, for example, Franz remarked to his son Otto that he had been busy pacifying a student mob that had marched over from Heidelberg. On 22 May 1849 Franz told Otto, who was assigned to nearby Fort Germersheim with the 2nd Artillery Regiment *Zoller* during this period, that the president of the Palatine government had fled to the fort, and that he (Franz) would soon seek refuge there.

By the autumn of 1849, Franz was back in Neustadt, and then, probably in late 1850, he was promoted to royal counsellor in Speyer, at that time the capital of the Palatinate, making him the second-highest government official in that jurisdiction (after the president). Franz held the counsellor's position until he died of a heart attack on 30 July 1856. Along the way he received several decorations from the Bavarian king, but the highlight of his career came on 25 October 1852, when King Maximilian II came to Speyer and personally dubbed Franz a knight of the Order of St. Michael, thereby entitling him (but not his descendants) to use the noble form 'von Hausmann'.

Throughout his life Franz strove to send his children to the best schools available, pointing out to them that, although he could not leave them any financial fortune, he was willing to give them the best education possible, so that they would become honourable and self-sufficient

members of society. For the boys this meant preferably a military education leading to a career in the army, while the girls were sent to finishing schools.

After initial disciplinary struggles as a cadet, the oldest boy, Otto (1830–1917), had a successful career in the Bavarian artillery (not the infantry, to his father's regret), dying as a retired colonel. The next two boys, Franz (1834–77) and Fritz (1838–62), had even greater difficulty adapting to military life and were in and out of various military schools and tutoring sessions. The other boys were too young when Franz died for him to have exerted any significant influence on their careers.

Upon his death in 1856, Franz senior's widow had to make do with a very small pension. Franz had estimated that it would amount to only some 300 francs annually, which was roughly as much as it had been costing him to send one child to boarding school for a year. It is therefore not surprising that most of the children emigrated to the United States, the land of opportunity, although some, either unmarried or without children, remained in Germany.

Of interest is the fact that Fritz and the next youngest boy, Eduard (1843–77), not only emigrated but on 22 April 1861 enlisted in Company D, 4th New York Volunteer Infantry, to fight in the American Civil War. Fritz was killed at the battle of Antietam on 17 September 1862; Eduard was wounded in the same battle and discharged, later to marry and settle in Chicago.

My grandfather, Julius (1849–1951), Franz's youngest child, emigrated in 1869, became an American citizen in 1874, and founded a successful importing business in New York. He spent long periods of time in Germany around the turn of the century, even maintaining a house there in Weissenburg (in Alsace, now Wissembourg in France) where his unmarried sisters lived. In approximately 1923, when travel between Germany and the United States again become possible after World War I, he came into possession of all his father's letters and diaries.

Presumably, these had previously been kept by his half-brother Otto, Franz's eldest son, who had remained in Germany. Otto, however, had no children, and after his death in 1917 my grandfather assumed responsibility for the family legacy. In the war-related interim before someone from my family could bring these papers and related mementos to the United States, they were probably kept by Franz's unmarried daughter, Mathilda who, by the time of her death in 1939, was the last of Franz's descendants living in Germany.

In his later letters to his children Franz makes it clear that he considers a military education the best preparation for a successful life, on one occasion pointing out to his son Otto that not only Napoleon, 'the greatest man of our times', but also Friedrich Schiller, 'the greatest poet', were

products of military schools (letter of 16 May 1844). Elsewhere the concerned father exhorts his son serving in the artillery always to be 'pleasant and obedient to your superiors, friendly to everyone, as well as sociable and thoughtful toward your subordinates' (letter of 20 March 1851), to keep a clear conscience, and, above all, to trust fearlessly in God.

Although it did not hurt Franz's career that King Maximilian I Joseph took a special interest in his army and apparently also in Franz, and that Franz would continue to enjoy good relations with the king's son and grandson, Ludwig I and Maximilian II, it is evident that the military discipline and code of honour passed on to Franz by his father and grandfather must have contributed greatly to his later outstanding career, culminating in his becoming the king's top representative in the Palatinate.

The young Bavarian lieutenant who wrote the letters which appear later in this book was already demonstrating in them the moral principles and deep faith in God that humanised his life-long firm belief in orderly conduct and military obedience. I trust that those same admirable qualities are today still shared by many military officers around the world, and by many Hausmanns, young and old.

Cynthia Joy Hausmann, 1998

Conventions

In an effort to make this book a pleasant as well as an informative read, we have adopted the following conventions:

- Franz's erratic spelling of place names has been regularised and, in some cases, modernised. The Polish and Russian names used represent a compromise between modern accuracy and historical familiarity; readers will thus find Vilna instead of Vilnius and Polotsk instead of Polock or Polack. Where major Polish and Slovak towns have been renamed in the twentieth century, these new names are included in brackets after the old German names Franz knew – for example: Willenburg [Wielbark].
- German ranks have been rendered into English. Although this is a fairly straightforward process for ranks up to colonel (*Oberst*), it is important to keep in mind that a Bavarian *Generalmajor* (translated as major general) was a brigade commander and thus performed basically the same functions as a modern British brigadier or American brigadier general. Similarly, a *Generalleutnant* (translated as lieutenant general) would command a division as would a major general in the armies of the United Kingdom or the United States today.
- Original French and Austrian rank titles are preserved insofar as this is feasible and convenient. A table at the end of the volume relates these to current U.S. and British ranks.
- Ligne and Léger respectively are used for French line and light infantry units.
- Military units are often described in the text by both their number and their name (the Bavarian 4th Chevauxlegers are also the *Bubenhofen* Chevauxlegers).
- To minimise confusion between individuals and units, those units which were also known by the names of their proprietors or their commanders are shown in italics (for example, Oberstlieutenant von Butler commanded the Bavarian 5th Light Infantry Battalion *von Butler*).
- Battalions or squadrons are designated by Roman numerals (thus II/7th indicates the 2nd Battalion of the 7th Infantry Regiment).
- The term *Rheinbund* throughout refers to the Confederation of the Rhine.
- Occasional gaps or illegible sections in Franz's letters or diaries are shown thus [...].
- The authors are responsible for all translations: Ms Hausmann for Franz's material; Mr Gill for the translations in the commentary.

Chapter One

The Bavarian Army, 1805–14

Bavaria was a state in transition in the year 1805 when Franz Hausmann embarked upon his military career. A principality within the Holy Roman Empire under the rule of Prince-Elector Maximilian IV Joseph, it consisted of a diverse group of plots and holdings scattered across the face of western Germany from the Alps to the Meuse River. Many of the territories had no physical connection to the heartland of Old Bavaria (Altbayern) around Munich and the Danube – indeed, it was in a distant enclave between the Meuse and the Rhine that Franz had been born in 1789. Moreover, even the contiguous parts of the realm were speckled with countless principalities, duchies, ecclesiastical properties and other areas beyond the Prince-Elector's control. Within his own monarchy, he was opposed by entrenched estates and other interests whose rights and prerogatives were protected by the constitution of the decrepit old Empire. Maximilian thus found his authority constrained both externally and internally.

Like several other German states in the early nineteenth century, however, Bavaria was changing. Led by the chief minister, Maximilian Montgelas, the Prince-Elector and his government instituted a broad series of reforms that pushed Bavaria toward Montgelas' ideal of a modern, unitary, centralised state ruled by a powerful monarch and administered by an efficient bureaucracy. These sweeping reforms reached into every corner of the Bavarian state and society, including the military. Franz thus found himself entering an army that was rapidly modernising to meet the needs of this image of the state as well as the new demands of warfare on the cusp of the Napoleonic era.

The Nation's Army

Like the rest of Bavaria's institutions, the Bavarian Army changed dramatically between 1799 and 1814, transforming itself from a dynastic, essentially mercenary force into a truly national military. The first steps in this process began shortly after Max Joseph's accession as elector in 1799; that is, just around the time young Franz Joseph Hausmann was

being entered on the rolls of the 4th Grenadier Regiment as a boy cadet.

Max Joseph found the army in dire need of reform. As a member of the Holy Roman Empire, Bavaria had contributed contingents to the Allied Coalition fighting against Revolutionary France from 1793 through 1797, but the Bavarian soldiers, though courageous, were poorly prepared for combat. Training, equipment, uniforms, supply and leadership were all grossly deficient. Training was perhaps the most glaring problem, and the Bavarian battalions in the Wars of the French Revolution demonstrated little fire discipline, complete ignorance of skirmishing tactics, and no ability to react to unexpected situations. Nor was the composition of the army encouraging. Bavaria drew its common soldiery from the very lowest elements of society by a mixture of voluntary recruitment (which took in numerous foreigners and mercenaries) and the draft; indeed criminals were often condemned to duty in the army. Discipline was correspondingly harsh and young men of any means at all purchased exclusion from military service. Small wonder, then, that the military occupied an unenviable position in the Bavarian social order.

Once in uniform, appalling inadequacies in the procurement of supplies and replacement equipment often left the men in pitiable condition, ragged, starving and unpaid. As a provincial commandant observed in 1795, 'naked and barefoot, the troops move about to the ridicule of the Austrian Army'.[1] Muskets were of poor quality and varying calibres, and the infantry's white uniform (designed by an American) was generally despised.[2] The army also suffered from serious manpower shortages brought on by the monarchy's chronic financial woes and compounded by desertion, poor pay and wretched conditions of service. In 1795, for example, the nine infantry 'regiments' mustered a total of only 776 soldiers fit for field duty.[3]

The officer corps did little to ameliorate the plight of the common soldier and generally proved helpless in the field. Many officers acquired their commissions through purchase, and promotions were often granted based on favouritism or aristocratic status rather than professional competence. As a result, the army's higher ranks were filled with men who had little prior military education or experience. When they attended to their duties at all, they frequently adhered strictly to the letter of the regulation books and seldom provided the imagination, drive and leadership necessary to overcome the army's deficiencies in training and administration.

There were, of course, exceptions to this broad picture. Not all of the aristocrats were incompetent; the minor nobility produced able offspring such as Generals Deroy and Wrede, for example, who performed well fighting against the French Revolutionary armies and would continue to

demonstrate their leadership skills under Napoleon. Similarly, in terms of composition, the lower strata of the officer corps were somewhat variegated. For those of non-noble origin, however, the chances of promotion beyond the lowest officer ranks were slim. With neither the funds to buy higher positions nor the social connections to arrange advancement, they were consigned to spend their careers as lieutenants and captains, usually serving under men far junior to themselves in age and experience.

Indeed, Franz's family represents the new type of officer appearing in the Bavarian Army as Max's reforms took hold, men promoted on the basis of merit and experience. His grandfather, Bartholomäus (1724–1800), the son of a minor town official, had joined the army in 1744 and became a non-commissioned officer; his father, Wilhelm, enlisted in 1777, made sergeant in 1790, gained a promotion to second lieutenant in 1813, was pensioned as a first lieutenant in 1822 and was granted honorary captain's rank 11 years after his formal retirement; while Franz, though only a sergeant's son, was able to enter the officer ranks in 1805 at the age of sixteen.[4] It is also interesting to note that Wilhelm was not promoted until 1813, that is after the Russian debacle, when the Bavarian Army was searching for anyone with leadership experience to fill the depleted ranks of the regular officer corps and simultaneously to find leaders for its new militia battalions (the 'Mobile Legions').[5]

The years of war with France from 1793 to 1797 had only exacerbated the army's problems. When Max Joseph donned his Elector's cap in 1799, he therefore found that his army was hardly commensurate with his state, now once more at war with France (1799–1800). The artillery was in sad condition, there were only 700 horses for the eight cavalry regiments and the total available infantry numbered barely 8,000.[6] Trapped in a war he did not want – much of which would be fought on Bavarian soil – and fearing his ally Austria's predatory designs on his lands, the new Prince-Elector quickly realised that he would need to initiate a complete overhaul if he intended to play anything but a pawn's role on the German political scene. Moreover, modernisation of the military and improvements in the soldier's lot were completely in accord with his enlightened approach to governance.

Max Joseph recognised, however, that he himself was not suited by position or background to the task of drafting and implementing a comprehensive reform programme and therefore engaged the talents of a group of military and civilian experts to create a new army for Bavaria, one that fitted his new image of the state. This group included Montgelas (Prime Minister), General Johann Nepomuk von Triva (Minister of War), General Bernhard Erasmus Count von Deroy and General Karl Philipp

Baron von Wrede. Although Franz had no direct personal contact with such elevated personages as Montgelas and Triva, Deroy and Wrede were two of Bavaria's most senior and most talented generals. Their names accordingly appear frequently in Franz's letters and diaries as he served either with or under them in almost every one of his campaigns.

Max began initiating reforms almost as soon as the reins of state were in his hands. He started by forbidding the purchase of officers' commissions, a crucial step that paved the way for later improvements in the standards of the officer corps. He also replaced the unpopular and uncomfortable white uniform with a new pattern in Bavaria's traditional cornflower blue and introduced the high-crested helmet (*Raupenhelm*) which would be the distinctive headgear of the Bavarian army for many years to come.

The new war with France (1799–1800) and the disastrous defeat at Hohenlinden (3 December 1800) delayed further military reforms, but in 1804–05, Max and his advisers introduced a broad series of measures which transformed the Bavarian Army into a modern, national force. Key to these reforms was the announcement of general conscription in 1804. Under this law, all physically fit men between 16 and 40 years of age, and at least 5 feet 2 inches tall, were liable for military service (in practice most were between 18 and 36 years old). Once conscripted, the soldier was committed to eight years in uniform with one year of war counting as two years of peace. There were no provisions for evading duty by hiring a substitute or paying a fee, although Mennonites and Jews could purchase an exemption for 185 gulden. Numerous other exemptions meant that the lower classes continued to supply most of Bavaria's ordinary soldiers; government officials, teachers, students, artisans and many others, for example, were not subject to conscription. These exemptions notwithstanding, the recruiting base was considerably enlarged, resulting in an army that was more representative of its nation. Furthermore, the recruitment of foreigners was discouraged and criminals were no longer sentenced to join the army. Service to King and Country thus became the honourable duty of each Bavarian citizen.

To make the army more attractive, increase its effectiveness and enhance its public image, conditions for officers and soldiers were significantly improved. Under Max's paternal eye (his men referred to him as 'Father Max' or 'Our Max'), steps were also taken to modernise the army's administration, organisation and medical services. Corporal punishment was retained, but its impact was palliated and channels were established through which soldiers could raise complaints of maltreatment. Under a new, more liberal relationship between officers and their men, the soldiers were to be motivated by the honour of national service and regimental pride rather than fear of physical abuse. These

noble impulses were to be further stimulated by the creation of service medals for officers and men and, in 1806, by the founding of the Military Order of Max Joseph. Soldiers were thus no longer simply mercenaries or criminals (or both), but citizens in the service of their country; officers were no longer merely young nobles who received responsibility by virtue of wealth or social connections, but men of proven military ability who attained their ranks by merit. For example, one sergeant who distinguished himself in 1805, was promoted to lieutenant in 1809 and concluded his career as a colonel – a nearly impossible level of advancement under previous conditions.[7]

Another set of innovations brought better treatment of soldiers and their families. Terms of service were reduced, pay was increased (albeit marginally), a veterans' home was founded and pensions were decreed for both officers and men. Moreover, the state began to demonstrate greater concern for army families by establishing funds to support the widows and orphans of soldiers killed on active duty. Though hardly perfect or foolproof, these steps did much to alleviate the nagging financial insecurity felt by the common soldier and his family.

While reforms such as these addressed the composition of the army and the everyday well-being of the soldier, others were aimed at improving its combat performance. Structurally, the infantry and cavalry regiments were completely reorganised and the entire army was expanded to a size more appropriate to Bavaria's international position. For Franz Hausmann, the immediate impact of these structural changes was the disappearance of his former regiment, the 4th Grenadiers, from the Bavarian order of battle and the creation of the unit that would be his home for the next ten years, the 7th Line Infantry Regiment.[8]

Tactically, the Bavarians modernised by consciously following the French model, adopting the use of small, flexible columns to enhance battlefield manoeuvrability, and introducing skirmishing as a standard element of the tactical commander's repertoire. Twenty especially clever and agile men in each company were designated as 'Schützen' to perform light infantry duties; granted short green plumes and other distinctions (*see* illustrations), they held elite status similar to the company of grenadiers in each battalion. In 1809 the number of Schützen per company was increased to 36, and 1811 saw the creation of a separate Schützen company for each light and line battalion. Deroy was the principal architect of the new infantry regulations, but the section on skirmishing was almost entirely Wrede's work. Together, they effected the transition in the Bavarian infantry from the stiff, linear forms of eighteenth-century combat to the fast, adaptable tactics of the Napoleonic age.[9]

The organisation, training and equipment of the artillery were also significantly improved by borrowing from the French. Here the credit

belongs to General Jakob Count von Manson, an expatriate Frenchman and student of his countryman, the renowned Jean Baptiste Vacquette, Comte de Gribeauval. Count Manson formed his guns into permanent batteries, increased the overall number of artillerists, reintroduced light artillery (albeit not true horse artillery as only some of the crew were mounted, the remainder riding on the equipment) and promoted the tactical employment of guns en masse. In addition, a train battalion was raised in 1806 to provide greater mobility in the field. These innovations greatly improved the effectiveness of the formerly deplorable Bavarian artillery, making it a valuable adjunct to the infantry and cavalry arms.[10]

Franz thus embarked upon his military career at a time of great activity and change, and the army he came to know was dramatically different in structure, composition, spirit and even appearance from that which his father and grandfather had joined many years before. By the autumn of 1805, when Franz fought his first campaign, this reorganised and reformed army numbered some 26,000 men divided among 13 line infantry regiments (each of two battalions), six light infantry battalions, two dragoon regiments, four chevauxlegers regiments and three artillery battalions. With some transitory exceptions (a 7th Light Infantry Battalion existed from 1807–11 for example), this general structure remained constant for the next eight years (*see* Appendix 6, pages 252–3).

Absorbing the lessons of its campaigns and profiting from the example of its French allies, the army steadily improved. Under the pressure of Napoleon's demanding standards and the heat of combat in the campaigns of 1805, 1806 and 1807, a new Bavarian army was forged. Fighting the first and last battles of the 1809 war against Austria, it experienced its most successful campaign, winning the recognition of friend and foe alike for its battlefield performance. Three years later, it impressed all observers, Napoleon included, as it marched into Russia, but the horrors and hopelessness of that campaign drained its strength and spirit. Small shadow remnants fought on with honour in 1813 under French eagles, but the tide was turning against France and by October that year, Bavaria had switched sides, joining the Allied effort to evict Napoleon from Germany and ultimately participating in the invasion of France in 1814.

The Bavarian defection in 1813 was mostly the result of simple political calculation – Napoleon had been badly defeated and Max Joseph hoped to preserve his crown and lands by siding with the Allies in a timely fashion – but it was also an expression of mounting Bavarian dissatisfaction with their distinctly subservient position in the Napoleonic galaxy.[11] In the early years of the alliance, most Bavarians had welcomed the close ties to France as a safeguard against Austrian designs and felt honoured to serve under the banners of the greatest soldier of the age.

Curiously, Max Joseph's son and heir apparent, Crown Prince Ludwig, was an embarrassingly vocal exception. He had always detested Napoleon and all things French and became increasingly vociferous, outspoken and incautious over time. 'It is well known that I would rather fight against the French than for them!' he once declared.[12]

Sentiments such as these, initially rare, gradually became more common as disappointment and frustration began to outweigh enthusiasm. The causes were many. Napoleon's insistence on appointing Frenchmen as the senior commanders of the Bavarian contingents was one major irritant, as were the seemingly endless French demands for money, logistic support and ever more soldiers. But the French tendency to treat the Bavarians, indeed all non-French troops, as second class fighting men was perhaps the most annoying feature of the relationship – many Bavarians complained that they were given the dull or onerous campaign chores (such as secondary sieges or line of communication protection) rather than the more dangerous, but also more prestigious, battlefield tasks.

French dominance even manifested itself in all manner of everyday matters. Correspondence between the Bavarian division commanders and their King was conducted in French, for example, as were the communications exchanged among the Bavarian generals. On outpost duty, pickets and guards were instructed to use the French challenge '*Qui vive?*' rather than the German '*Wer da?*' ('Who goes there?'). In 1809 even the official seals of the three Bavarian divisions showed the arms of Bavaria surmounted by the words '*première* [or *deuxième* or *troisième*] *division bavaroise*'.[13] Some of these measures were simply practical expedients in a composite, multilingual army (the use of a common challenge, for example), but they still rankled, injuring Bavarian pride.

Overlooked in the victorious early campaigns, annoyances such as these festered over time and began to creep into the open in the latter part of 1809. Although the main, conventional campaign of 1809 against the Austrian regular forces was Bavaria's most glorious experience as a French ally, disagreements over operations against the pertinacious Tyrolean insurgents that year left a corrosive legacy of mutual suspicion. What had been minor irritations became ugly affronts to national sovereignty and the well of Bavarian tolerance began to dry up. Most military men still retained their commitment to the alliance and their faith in Napoleon as they marched for the River Neman [Niemen] in 1812, but the Russian catastrophe effectively expunged pro-French sentiment for most of Max Joseph's soldiers. The dreadful retreat from Russia and the gruelling 1813 campaign in Germany brought more disputes and Max Joseph's decision to side with the Allies in October seemed to many a decision long overdue.[14]

Disaffection and defection notwithstanding, the Bavarians proved valuable allies to France right up to the close of their association. If perhaps not as vigorous and durable as some of the other German contingents or as impetuous as the French themselves, they were solid, courageous, reliable soldiers.

Much of the credit for their contributions belongs to the re-invigorated Bavarian officer corps. Deroy was a thorough, conscientious, proficient veteran, and Wrede, if ambitious and sometimes obstreperously independent, was an excellent leader on the battlefield. Even the difficult Crown Prince performed satisfactorily, especially when assisted by able staff officers such as General Clemens von Raglovich. The cavalry brigadiers were particularly noteworthy, consistently exhibiting keen tactical judgment and a sure ability to motivate their troopers in the most trying circumstances.

The infantry was steady, the cavalry determined in the attack (if not always wise in defence) and the artillery both brave and capable. Moreover, all three arms displayed a fine grasp of flexible tactical manoeuvre. Their weaknesses included outpost duty, marching, and commanders' initiative, and they acquired an unpleasant reputation for being hard on the local populations wherever they were quartered (including in Bavaria).[15]

Even in enumerating their failings, however, it is important to note the brilliant exceptions. Indeed, inspired by leaders such as Wrede at his best, Bavarian troops performed marvels. His own division's astonishing march to Wagram in 1809 or the steadfast performance of isolated Bavarian detachments in the sieges of Thorn and Danzig [Gdansk] in 1813–14 are but two examples. Max Joseph's army may not have been the best of *Rheinbund* contingents, but during nine years of almost uninterrupted warfare, Napoleon and the French owed no little debt to the fidelity, competence and valour of the Bavarian Army.

Vignettes of Military Life

In closing out this brief introduction to Franz Hausmann's letters, it seems useful to provide some insights into how the Bavarian Army's officers and men lived during the Napoleonic period. While some of the practices and incidents described below were common to many armies of the era, others were uniquely Bavarian; in both cases they serve to fill in the background detail of the military panorama portrayed in Franz's correspondence.[16]

Lodgings A variety of different types of lodgings was available to Franz and his compatriots depending upon rank and circumstances. In peacetime, officers would normally live in their own homes or rent suites

of rooms within their means. Men on long-term furlough (to reduce the burden on the state's exchequer, a significant percentage of a unit's strength could be on extended leave at any one time) would usually return to their home towns or wherever they could find temporary employment.[17]

Those men who remained in the regimental garrison, however, lived in conditions that seem very primitive indeed to the modern observer. Often old, cramped and dilapidated, barracks offered the individual soldier almost no privacy. Men slept two to a bed and did not even have a wardrobe to store their belongings, rather their equipment and personal effects were kept on bare shelves above their beds or hung from nails on the walls.

Soldiers' wives shared the barracks room with their husbands' comrades. Married non-commissioned officers (NCOs) might enjoy the luxury of a partition to afford some sense of personal space, but common soldiers and their spouses were fortunate to have a curtain round their beds. Children were brought into the world in this near-public barracks environment and most women evidently received medical attention there as well.

In some cases at least, sergeants' wives seem to have played a major, and sometimes deleterious, role in the lives of their husbands' companies. Major General Franz Joseph von Gaza, for instance, Inspector General of the Infantry and one of the early reformers of the Bavarian Army, was staunchly opposed to NCO marriages, evidently owing to some extraordinarily negative experiences with termagants. In his opinion, permitting an NCO to marry was detrimental to unit morale and performance because 'then not only is he punished, but the company as well'.[18] Given Gaza's testimony, poor pay, and limited quarters, it is perhaps not surprising that NCOs and soldiers were discouraged from marrying, and that soldiers of all ranks were required to pay a significant marriage fee to the state if they did decide to wed. This official scepticism notwithstanding, the number of authorised wives per company was raised from four to six in 1804.

Women frequently accompanied their husbands' companies on campaign, sharing the hardships of marches and the dangers of the battlefield. A veteran remembered seeing a soldier's wife hurrying by his battery during a battle in 1809 with her small brandy cask and an apron full of bread. When he and his comrades asked her for some schnapps, she replied 'no, I have only been able to round up a little and my company needs it, my people are under fire and I must be with them.'[19]

When on campaign, officers and men alike would either receive quarters in towns along the route of march or would bivouac under the open skies. Billeting in towns and villages was a fairly regularised affair

in theory. The soldier received a 'lodging billet' which authorised him room and board in some local citizen's home; the citizen then exchanged the billet for his allotted remuneration. That, at least, was the system in theory. In practice, the system was open to all manner of abuses, and the incessant quartering of French troops on the local populace was a key source of German complaints about the alliance with Napoleon. In difficult circumstances, such as the retreat from Russia, all such orderliness could collapse completely, but even in better times, a company would sometimes have to employ its bayonets to enforce its right to its assigned barn.

When lodgings under a proper roof (however crowded) were unavailable, units would establish camp in a convenient field or wood. Except on peacetime manoeuvres, tents were not carried, but if they arrived early enough, the men might erect rude shelters constructed from local materials, vegetation, for example, or a nearby farmer's fences, sheds and home.[20]

If a unit were to be in one place for an extended period of time, these temporary structures would acquire more permanent features; Franz describes just such an encampment in his letter of 9 July 1812. The French were justly renowned for constructing tidy regimental villages given time and resources, and an envious Saxon officer admired the lodgings of some fellow Germans assigned to garrison Passau during the 1809 campaign,

> Behind the newly-constructed fortifications, we recognised our close countrymen of Gotha, who had built themselves huts of straw and branches under the shade of some fruit trees and were savouring the contents of a great tun [of beer] which the nimble serving girl could hardly tap fast enough.[21]

Food Officers and men who were billeted on the populace also received their meals from their temporary hosts. Alternatively, the home owner might be required to provide the soldiers some space around the fire to prepare whatever rations the men had been issued with. The host's responsibilities in this regard were explicitly outlined. For a soldier quartered in a town on a long-term basis in peacetime, a typical day's provisions in 1807 were to include a nourishing soup, vegetables and half a pound of meat or an equally satisfying replacement; bread and drink were not included. For this fare, the soldier was to pay the householder three kreuzer. If the soldier was on field duty, the host was responsible for providing a loaf of bread (one and a half pounds in weight) and a pint of beer daily in return for six kreuzer (three from the soldier, three from the government).[22]

Hosts were frequently required to supply a small amount of brandy