General Paul Thiébault His Life and His Legacy

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GENERAL PAUL THIÉBAULT
HIS LIFE AND HIS LEGACY

By

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Dedicated

To

Luther Dudley Sigler
1880-1934
Corporal, 20th United States Infantry
Who started it all.

And

Robert Kenneth Godfrey
1911-2000
Ph.D. Duke University
Professor of Botany, Florida State University
Who demonstrated that it could be done despite all obstacles.
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ABSTRACT

Paul Thiébault (1769-1846) rose to the rank of général de division in the Napoleonic armies of France. He was also the author of military histories, studies of the operations of staff organizations, and a controversial set of memoirs published nearly fifty years after his death. This work describes Thiébault’s military career, relevant events in his personal life, and the creation and publication of his works of military theory, history, and his memoirs.

Thiébault’s military career was a long and varied one. The son of a distinguished French literary figure, Thiébault enlisted in the Paris National Guard immediately after the fall of the Bastille in 1789. He then served continuously as a combat leader, staff officer, and military governor until 1815. After the Restoration, he continued to serve, finishing his active military career as lieutenant-général and chief of the Comité de État-major.

Thiébault’s greatest contribution to the military art grows out of the staff manual he published in 1813, Manuel général du service des etats-major généraux et divisionnaires dans les armées, and his work with Marshal Gouvion Saint-Cyr in the creation of the Staff Corps of the French Army. This manual, together with his Mémoires, and his histories of the Siege of Genoa in 1800 and the French invasion and occupation of Portugal in 1807, constitutes a valuable legacy to France and to the world.
INTRODUCTION

Général de division Paul-Charles-François-Adrien-Henri-Dieudonné Thiébault is best known to Napoleonic scholars as the acerbic author of a five-volume collection of military memoirs covering the entire period from 1789 to 1815, detailed studies of the 1800 siege of Genoa, the Portuguese campaign of 1807-1808, and numerous other military and literary works. He is less well-known as the period’s leading theoretician of the general staff. Nevertheless, his Manuel des Adjudans Généraux et des Adjoints was studied not only by the French but also by British and Prussian officers during and after the Napoleonic wars. In 1813, he published a revised and updated version, titled Manuel general du service des états-major généraux et divisionnaires dans les armées, that was translated into several languages, including Spanish in 1817 at the direction of General Simón Bolívar for his use as a guide for the armies of his new South American republic.

If Thiébault was the leading theoretician of staff work, he drew lessons both from his own experience and from observing and serving with the leading French practitioner, Louis-Alexander Berthier, Bonaparte’s indispensable major-général. When appointed chief of staff in 1796 to the Army of Italy and its new commander, Napoleon Bonaparte, Berthier had wide experience in staff work but no published doctrine to guide him. Berthier’s instructions on staff procedure to the Army of Italy in 1796 would form the basis for the procedures later used by the état-major of Napoleon’s Grande Armée.

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4 The High Committee for War, of which the military theorist Comte Jacques de Guibert was secretary, had drafted a set of regulations for the Royal Staff Corps in 1788, but these had been lost in the revolutionary tumult. See Cours Supérieur d’Etat-major, Historique, www.defense.gouv.fr/terre/ (25 April 2002); and John Elting in *Swords Around a Throne* (New York, 1997), 82.
Thiébault, who served with Berthier in Italy in 1797-1798, codified, expanded, publicized, and explained these procedures.

Thiébault began his military career on 14 July 1789, when he joined the hastily-formed militia that became the National Guard battalion of the _Feuillant_ Section of Paris. He served as an enlisted man, then a company-grade officer with the _Armée de Nord_ in 1793-1796, and narrowly escaped the Jacobin purges that eliminated many of his superiors. In 1795, he first served with Napoleon Bonaparte during the events of 13 _vendémiaire_. Afterwards, he was assigned to Italy as a staff officer with the division of André Masséna, who would become both patron and friend. Thiébault remained with the French armies in Italy throughout the northern Italian campaign of 1796-1797, the occupation of Rome (1798), the capture of Naples (1799), and finally the withdrawal of the Army of Naples to northern Italy, rising in rank from captain to _adjudant-général_.

Returning to France on sick leave just before the Battle on the Trebbia (17-20 June 1799), Thiébault unwisely declined the opportunity to assist Bonaparte in the coup of 18 _brumaire_, a decision that would hinder his promotion to the top ranks of Napoleon's generals. Early in 1800, he rejoined Masséna’s staff in Italy, where he served gallantly throughout the siege of Genoa, earning a battle-field promotion to _général de brigade_, before returning to Paris and publishing his first major historical work, _Journal des opérations militaires et administratives des siège et blocus de Gênes_. Thiébault also published his first staff manual in 1800.

Thiébault went on to serve as brigade commander at the Battle of Austerlitz, where he was seriously wounded. After that assignment, he became governor of the German city-state of Fulda, then chief of staff for Andoche Junot during the 1807-1808 campaign in Portugal. Between 1808 and 1813, he served in Spain in various capacities, including as a _général de division_, military governor, and chief of staff. Finally, he was a division commander and special staff officer with Marshal Davout in Hamburg in 1814. Thiébault played little role in Napoleon’s “100 Days” of 1815. After the Restoration, he

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continued his military career as *Chef de Comité d'état-major*; the major role he played in the creation of the French Royal Staff Corps earned him wide recognition.

Thiébault wrote his memoirs in retirement. Controversy has long existed about Thiebault's authorship, his importance as a participant, and his reliability as a reporter and observer. Discrepancies concerning the number of volumes Thiebault actually wrote have seldom been acknowledged. The five volumes published in 1893, nearly fifty years after his death on 14 October 1846, had significant omissions relating at least to his personal history. During the last years of his life, moreover, Thiébault referred to his *Mémoires* having as many as eight volumes and implied that these were ready to be published.\(^6\) Whether Thiébault intended to omit early details or whether these and other gaps were the result of later editing remains a mystery. The delay of nearly fifty years in publishing the memoirs, and perhaps the questions about editing as well, almost certainly result from conflict between the children of his first marriage to Elizabeth Walker, the granddaughter of a Scottish earl, and of his second marriage to Elizabeth Chenais, the daughter of an impoverished refugee planter from Santo Domingo.

Thiébault’s sharp tone and judgmental analysis of his colleagues' personal motives and their military decisions provoked both controversy and questions about his veracity. One French scholar wrote: “He is the author of a celebrated memoir written with a pen dipped in vinegar not only for soldiers dead on the field of honor, but for his own few friends.”\(^7\) Nevertheless, historians for over the past one hundred years have used Thiébault’s *Mémoires* and his other works of military history as a primary source on the Napoleonic period.

Thiébault’s personal and military experiences during his early career, as well as the individuals with whom he served, profoundly influenced both his professional thinking and his later descriptions of his colleagues and the events in his memoirs. The objectives of this work, therefore, are twofold. The first is to examine Thiébault’s military career to determine the influences and events that catapulted him to a position of

\(^6\) It is impossible to determine if these volumes included additional material, were organizational changes of the same text, or were simply the handwritten manuscripts ready to submit to the publisher.

prominence by the end of his career, both in France and internationally, as the foremost expert on the organization and conduct of large military staff operations. The second objective is to determine, insofar as possible, the veracity, reliability, and comprehensiveness of his *Mémoires* and his other works of military history.

Other than his *Mémoires*, no full biography of Thiébault has ever been written. The goal of this dissertation is to present for the first time a critical biography of his career, his times, and his contributions to France and to the future.

![Figure 1. Général de Division Paul Thiébault.](https://example.com/generaldedivisionpaulthiebault.jpg)

*(Courtesy Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.)*
CHAPTER 1
THE ARMIES OF THE REVOLUTION, 1789 – 1795

Paul Thiébault was born in Berlin on 14 December 1769. His father, Dieudonné Thiébault, had been brought to Berlin by Friedrich the Great as director of his Grammar School – later the Military College of Prussia. Dieudonné was a member of the Berlin Academy of Science and the Fine Arts as well as a well-known member of the international literati of the time. Young Thiébault attended Friedrich’s Grammar School, where he first encountered the concepts of military science.

In 1784, Dieudonné, sensing the decline in King Friedrich’s health and an unpromising future with the King’s successor, moved his family home to Paris. There his literary and social connections quickly enabled him to obtain the posts of keeper of the archives and superintendent of inventories of the Royal Warehouse – the Garde-Mobile of Louis XVI. It therefore was within a circle of liberal nobility and upper bourgeois men of letters that Thiébault came of age. His friends and those of his family included the French ambassador to Prussia, the Duc de Guines (one of Thiébault’s godfathers); the Duc de Chartres; Nicolas de Chamfort, a member of the French Academy and associate of Mirabeau; Philippe Grouvelle, a noted Parisian playwright; and Charles Cadet de Gassicourt, who would one day become Napoleon’s personal pharmacist. Many of these friends would play a significant role in the early life of the younger Thiébault.

Coming of age in Paris, Thiébault inhabited the world of the upper bourgeoisie, flirting with girls, attending plays and balls, and accompanying his father on inspections of Royal property. But this world was changing. In the spring of 1789, King Louis XVI of France convened an assembly of the Estates-général in an attempt to solve the rapidly-worsening national fiscal crisis. The Estates first met on 5 May 1789 in the Royal Palace at Versailles. The process did not go smoothly, and during an elaborate picnic at

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1 Louis-Philippe, duc de Charters, son of Louis-Philippe-Joseph, duc de Orleans (also known as Philippe Égalité), and later King Louis Philippe of France.
Vincennes on 12 July 1789, the Thiébaults learned that rioting and disorder had broken out in the capital. Returning to the city, they encountered several bodies of troops and the streets marked by evidence of the rioting. The next morning, Royal troops had withdrawn from the streets and crowds began to prowl for arms in the city’s arsenals and gun shops. The elder Thiébault, realizing that the Royal Warehouse would soon become a target, removed his family, the crown jewels of France that were kept there, and some papers and money to the safety of a friend’s residence. About noon, the crowd invaded and pilfered the Warehouse, taking arms that had been stored there but otherwise causing little damage. The next morning – 14 July 1789 – the Thiébault family returned to their quarters.²

Upon the family’s return to the Royal Warehouse, young Thiébault left to buy one of the new revolutionary cockades and soon encountered a crowd of men led by a drummer. He asked where they were going. They said that they were going to seize the cannons stored at Les Invalides – the old soldiers’ home on the left bank. Thiébault joined them. A few days later, these men transformed themselves into the National Guard battalion of the Feuillant Section of Paris, and Paul Thiébault, thanks to his military training in Friedrich the Great’s Grammar School,³ was elected sergeant of the grenadier company.

Near the Thiébault family quarters in the Royal Warehouse, between the rue Saint Honoré and the Tuileries, lay the Convent of the Feuillants, which became the Section Headquarters. The neighborhood was inhabited by patrician bourgeoisie families, and the composition of the Section’s National Guard battalion and the politics of the section reflected their support for the Constitution of 1791. In 1790, both Thiébault and his father joined the Jacobin Club under the sponsorship of the Duc de Chartres. As the club became more radical, however, the Thiébaults quietly dropped out. Dieudonné's post at

² The Thiébault family occupied quarters in the Royal Warehouse, which was located on the Place de Louis XV -- today the Place de Concorde -- on a corner near the Tuileries. The building is now the Ministry of Marine and is located across the street from the American Embassy.

³ “Recalling some technical terms which I had picked up in military school in Berlin, and …one or two of Friedrich’s maxims, I was credited with more capacity than I possessed.” See Paul Thiébault, Mémoires du Général bon Thiébault (Paris, 1894), I, 224.
the Warehouse was abolished and, with his wife and daughter Pauline, he eventually moved to his hometown of Épinal in the Vosges Mountains.

Paul Thiébault remained in Paris in a minor administrative position amid the excitement of the tocsin bell and the alarm drum. As a member of the Feuillant battalion, he participated in most of the important political events in Paris in the next two years – the King's move from Versailles to the Tuileries in October 1789; the great review by the King and Lafayette on the Champs de Mars in 1790; the King's flight and return in 1791; and finally, the storming of the Tuileries and the arrest of the King on 10 August 1792. That day, however, Thiébault, accompanied by a small detachment of guardsmen, failed to prevent the massacre of prisoners held in the Feuillant Convent. Abandoning the increasingly radical National Guard and disgusted by the September Massacres three weeks later, he joined the 1st Butte de Moulins Battalion – one of the new volunteer battalions organized after the capture of Longwy and Verdun by the Duke of Brunswick and his Austrians.

Thiébault's battalion did not reach the Armée de Nord until after the Battle of Valmy on 22 September. On arrival, the battalion was assigned to General Jacques O'Moran's division. Thiébault, with his earlier experience in the National Guard, was quickly promoted to corporal and then to sergeant. His first major action was the Battle of Blaton, when General O'Moran defeated the Austrians on 6 November, the same day that General Dumouriez was winning the Battle of Jemappes ten miles to the south. After the fight, Thiébault, out of uniform, attracted O'Moran's notice. He had come directly from his sick bed where he was recovering from pneumonia brought on by the constant rain.

In the days that followed, Thiébault’s worsening condition led him to request sick leave. Even before leave was granted, he left the army and returned to the family home in Épinal. While recovering, he accompanied his father to Paris in December. In Paris,

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4 General Charles-François Périer Dumouriez commanded the Armée du Nord.

5 Thus initiating a pattern that he would follow through much of his military career. Thiébault was an acute hypochondriac and more than once used illness as an excuse to remove himself from an unpleasant situation. See Larrey's comments on Thiébault's
Philippe Grouvelle, now secretary to the provisional executive committee of the National Convention, obtained an appointment for Dieudonné Thiébault as one of the commissioners assigned to Belgium, specifically, as one of two commissioners to the town of Tournai. Through further effort by Grouvelle, Thiébault was appointed his father's assistant. At nearly the same time that Grouvelle was reading the sentence of death to Louis XVI, the Thiébaults set out for Tournai. Concerned about how the news would be received, they traveled slowly hoping that word of the King's execution on 21 January 1793 would precede them.

The commissioners were given "all power necessary to guarantee the security of the armies and to provide them with all kinds of necessary assistance." Consequently, upon arrival in Tournai, the Thiébaults, together with the second commissioner, Desforges Beaumé, were quartered in the Abbey of St. Martin, headquarters of General O'Moran, now commanding the district of Tournai.

The day after the arrival of the commissioners, O'Moran invited them to a dinner party he was hosting for a visiting friend and his family. The friend, a Scottish cloth merchant named George Hamilton, was living in Lille with Lady Mary Leslie Walker, the daughter of the Scottish Earl of Levin. Hamilton and Lady Mary were accompanied by two of Lady Walker's daughters, Isabelle and Elizabeth. It was at this party that Paul Thiébault first met Elizabeth, or “Betzy” as she preferred to be called, as well as Captain Étienne Jouy, O'Moran's aide-de-camp, who would become Thiébault's mentor, brother-in-law, and sometime nemesis.

wound at Austerlitz in Robert G. Richardson, Larrey: Surgeon to Napoleon's Imperial Guard (London, 1974), 99-100.

6 Then, as now in France, holding a military or civil appointment did not exclude one from simultaneously holding a political one.


Shortly after the Thiébaults' arrival in Tournai, O'Moran also introduced them to Mme. de Sillery, the Countess de Genlis; her niece, Mlle. Henriette de Sercey; and Mlle. Adélaïde d'Orléans, now Citizeness Égalité. Among the earliest émigrés, these ladies were living in Belgium under the protection of General Dumouriez while attempting to obtain passports to return to France as demanded by the Convention. The Countess de Genlis was reputed to have been the mistress of the elder Duc d'Orléans. For years she had guided the education of his children, including the duc de Chartres, the future duc d'Orléans and later King Louis-Phillipe, who now commanded a wing of the Armée du Nord. Thiébault quickly became a regular visitor to the young ladies of the household.

Within ten days of arriving in Tournai, Paul Thiébault was sent to represent his father and Commissioner Desforges Beaumé at a meeting of the Belgian commissioners in Lille. It is probable that on this occasion, Captain Jouy, who was already courting Isabelle Walker, accompanied Thiébault and provided him with the opportunity to renew his acquaintance with Betzy.  

Betzy and Isabelle Walker were part of Hamilton's household in Lille and treated him as their stepfather. Lady Mary was estranged from her first husband, Dr. James Walker, and had refused to move to Jamaica with him when he took a position there as a prison physician. Lady Mary and Hamilton had moved to Lille after meeting in London where she lived with her children, although Walker actually had custody of Lady Mary’s daughters and two sons, one an officer and future admiral in the Royal Navy.

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9 Victor-Joseph de Étienne Jouy (1764 – 1846). Originally a professional soldier who served in America during the Seven Years' War (1781-83) and in French India (1788-90). He retired from the army in 1797 in favor of the pen and in 1815 was elected to the Académie française. See Dictionnaire de biographie française, No. 18, 923.

10 Lady Mary met George Hamilton in London on an introduction from her husband in Jamaica. She then accompanied him to Lille, where she was joined by her daughters. George Hamilton died in 1797; Dr. Walker in 1802. See A. Thiébault, "Histoire de Lady Mary," Beinecke Library, Hamilton Papers, 9-16 and 38. When Lady Mary obtained a divorce from Walker is unclear. Letters to her in Lille are addressed to Lady Mary Leslie until after Hamilton's death, when they are addressed to the "widow Hamilton." See Thiébault Family Manuscripts, Lilly Library, Indiana University [hereafter Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS].
George Hamilton’s role is intriguing. Described as an English merchant "living at Lille in very grand style,“ he was a confident of both General O’Moran and General Theobald Dillon, O’Moran’s predecessor in Lille, despite the fact that England and France were at war. He was also at least a social acquaintance of John Harris, Earl of Malmesbury, British diplomat and spy-master, who before the French Revolution had run an extensive intelligence operation throughout the Low Countries. As late as 1797, Lord Malmesbury, together with one of his intelligence operatives resident in Lille, was in direct contact with Hamilton and Lady Mary while on a diplomatic mission attempting to obtain a peace treaty with the Directory. Malmesbury wrote in his diary:

Thursday, Aug. 31 [1797]. – Went to Hamilton’s house to dinner, with Conyngham – pleasant, and well contrived house. Hamilton very odd – Lady Mary, his wife, equally so. Two daughters married to French General officers – one to Thiébaud [sic], the other to Jouy. A daughter by him called Sophie, a great favorite.\(^{12}\)

Although these English contacts would cause young Thiébault considerable grief during his early years of military service, his courtship of Betzy progressed rapidly. Mme. Genlis recorded:

He [M. Thiébault] confided in me that he was in love with a young
Englishwoman, Miss Hamilton. ... In the course of obtaining the approval of her parents, which they gave, I met and greatly enjoyed the friendship of M. and Mme Hamilton.\(^{13}\)

At the same time, Thiébault’s social contacts in Tournai were paying military dividends. In late February 1793, General O’Moran commissioned him a lieutenant in the


\(^{12}\) James Harris, *Diaries and Correspondence of James Harris*, First Lord of Malmesbury (London, 1844), III, 250. “Conyngham” may have been Van Goens, a Dutch university professor and long-time intelligence agent of Malmesbury’s who used his Scottish mother’s name of Cunningham as an alias. See Elizabeth Sparrow, *Secret Service: British Agents in France 1792-1815* (London, 1999), 36 and 124.

Belgian 1<sup>st</sup> Tournai Regiment, one of the units raised after the Belgians, under pressure from the elder Thiébault and his fellow commissioners, voted to accept annexation to France. In March, Paul Thiébault was promoted to captain.

Figure 2. Belgium and France. (Map by R. Godfrey-Sigler.)

14 Brace suggests that the formation of Belgian units was part of Dumouriez's overall plan of setting up and independent government in the Low Countries that would force the Convention to restore a constitutional monarchy. See Richard Munthe Brace, "General Dumouriez and the Girondins, 1792-1793," American Historical Review, LVI, 3 (April 1951), 502.
On the war front, however, things were going poorly. On 18 March, General Dumouriez engineered his own defeat at Neerwinden when he deliberately isolated his left wing, commanded by General François Miranda. The center under the Duc de Chartres and the right wing under the Comte de Valence held firm, although Valence received a minor wound and both of his aides-de-camp were wounded or killed. When Valence, who was also the brother-in-law of Mme. Genlis, returned to Tournai, he offered one of the aide-de-camp positions to Thiébault along with a commission as captain in a French cavalry regiment. On 28 March, while Valance and the Thiébaults dined with Mme Genlis in Tournai, General Dumouriez and the Duc de Chartres arrived and Valence introduced Thiébault to Dumouriez. Dumouriez signed the orders authorizing Paul’s commission and the appointment. Valence then instructed Thiébault as follows:

You now only have got to procure your outfit, but you will not find what you want nearer than Lille; here is your leave to spend four days there, after which you will rejoin me at Saint-Amand. You will find the ladies there.\(^16\)

Not surprisingly, Thiébault had things other than a new uniform on his mind. In Lille, he proposed to Betzy Hamilton on 1 April.\(^17\) Meanwhile, on the same day, Dumouriez arrested the Minister of War and the four commissioners sent to return him to Paris under a charge of treason. In the days that followed, there was intense military activity in Lille and the nearby Camp de Madeline, as Dumouriez vainly attempted to seize the city.\(^18\) On 6 April, news arrived that General Dumouriez, the duc de Chartres, and General Valence had defected to the Austrians. The Countess de Genlis, Mlle. de Sercey, and Mlle. d'Orléans had gone with them.

\(^{15}\) Cyrus-Marie-Alexandre de Timbrune-Timroni, Comte de Valence. See Biographie Universelle (Paris, 1827), XLVII, 295.

\(^{16}\) Quoted in Thiébault, Mémoires, I, 378.

\(^{17}\) Paul Thiébault to his mother (in Épinal), 13 April 1793, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, Box 1, MS 4, F-1. Information on Paul’s engagement to Betzy, the travel of the Thiébaults to Lille, and confirmation of his arrest and release on parole are in this letter.

The elder Thiébault was in Lille meeting with Lazare-Nicolas Carnot. Together with Paul, he saw Mr. Hamilton, and they decided that Betzy would accompany the elder Thiébault to Paris. Paul would go with them part of the way before returning to his regiment. On the way back to Lille, however, Paul was mistaken for the duc de Chartres in disguise, arrested and taken to Amiens. There he encountered two of his father's commissioner colleagues also on their way back to Paris and the mistake was resolved. They were still laughing about the confusion when the latest bulletins from the Convention were posted. The third one posted was an intercepted letter from the duc de Chartres. It had unfortunate consequences for Thiébault:

Come quickly my dear Paul; we have a great need of you for an important and definite affaire. The ladies send their best regards and beg that you lose no time.

It is ordered that all post-masters on the road to Lille to furnish immediately the horses required by the bearer, who is charged with important dispatches.

St. Amand, April 2, 1.30 A.M.
(signed) Philippe-Égalité, Général de division

The letter was addressed to "Paul Thiébault, aide-de-camp, at the residence of Mr. Hamilton, rue Nationale in Lille." Thiébault was immediately arrested and escorted to the local jail.

On 12 April, Thiébault was taken to Paris under escort of two gendarmes; he was nearly lynched on the way when he was identified as "an aide-de-camp to Dumouriez." Arriving in Paris in the evening, the president of the committee on general security, Charles Alquier, ordered him held in the Abbaye until the next morning. The gendarmes, having befriended Thiébault, offered to let him go home if he gave his word to return in the morning.

The next twelve hours were busy ones. After locating his father, they spent the evening and the next morning either writing or visiting influential friends. By the time


20 Philippe Égalité (Duc de Chartres) to Paul Thiébault (copy), April 3, 1793, France, Archive de la Guerre, Service historique de l’armée de la terre, Château Vincennes [hereafter, Service historique], Correspondence de Armées de Nord 1-30 April 1793, Carton B1 11.
Thiébault appeared before the committee the next morning, influential persons, including members of the National Convention, had approached every committee member on his behalf. Furthermore, the dossier from Amiens had been lost thanks to an acquaintance of the elder Thiébault, whom Paul had contacted while being held in Amiens. The committee had a copy of the duc de Chartres's letter, but Thiébault defended himself by arguing ingeniously that "that General Égalité had addressed his letter to Mr. Hamilton's, where I never had any intention of staying, proving that there was not a relation between us." Lacking the documents from Amiens, and thanks to Thiébault's powerful supporters, the Committee placed him under house arrest with surety provided by two family friends – one a delegate to the National Convention, the other a well-known jurist.

As April turned to May, Thiébault remained under house arrest. There were no developments in his case. The dossier from Amiens never arrived and never would, but the level of terror was rising. Dumouriez's Chief of Staff, General Philippe Devaux de Vautray, although he had not followed Dumouriez to the Austrians, had been arrested and condemned to death.

On 24 May, Thiébault encountered Philippe Grouvelle, who had obtained the positions in Belgium for the Thiébaults five months earlier; Grouvelle had just been appointed Minister to the Republic of Denmark. He offered to fix matters with the Committee of General Security and obtain an appointment for Thiébault as secretary of legation in Denmark. Grouvelle commented presciently, "It is perhaps better luck right

21 Thiébault, Mémoires, I, 385. In fact, Thiébault was already engaged to Hamilton's stepdaughter Betzy.

22 This delegate was also a friend of Alquier, who may have been, in any case, inclined to treat Thiébault gently. Alquier had voted for the King's death but with the provision that he should be pardoned in the event of a general peace. He ultimately became a diplomat under the Consulate and Empire. He served as Napoleon's envoy to Pius VII and was eventually created a baron of the Empire. See Nouvelle Biographie Général (Paris, 1865), II, 215.

23 The family friend in Lille, M. Caron-Berquier, had intercepted and burned the package containing the dossier. See Thiébault, Mémoires, I, 389.
now to leave France and not come back for some years." Thibault accepted. Three days later, the Committee on General Security issued a letter exonerating Thibault. The same day, Devaux went to the guillotine.

Once he had escaped the Committee on General Security, however, Thibault then declined a diplomatic career in favor of returning to the army. By early June, he was on his way back to his regiment with the Armée de Nord, via Dunkirk to see his future brother-in-law Jouy, now promoted to major and adjutant-général under General O'Moran. Thibault rejoined his battalion, now redesignated the 24th Léger, at Landrecies. It was brigaded with a battalion of regulars in the early stages of Edmond Crancé Dubois’s amalgam, designed to stiffen the volunteers by grouping them with experienced troops.

Captain Thibault, however, was not to be bored with troop duty for long. On 25 July Jouy, newly promoted to général de brigade, sent Thibault orders to join him as an aide-de-camp. Jouy, acting under direct orders of the Committee on Public Safety, was organizing a column of 21,000 men from the Armies of the Ardennes and Moselle for the relief of the French garrison at Valenciennes. Valenciennes fell to the Austrians on 28 July. Jouy, after writing to Paris for further instructions, believed it was necessary to report, together with his aide-de-camp, directly to the representatives on mission with the Armée du Nord in Lille. The local representatives on mission questioned Jouy’s and Thibault's presence there rather than with their troops, especially because Jouy’s new wife was there as well. The representatives on mission ordered them back to Mézières where the relief column was concentrating. With new orders from Paris, Jouy successfully arranged the march of the reinforcements to the Armée de Nord, and they were back in Lille by 15 August.

In the meantime, on 6 August, General O'Moran had been denounced by the local representative on mission, Ernest Dominique Duquesnoy, and arrested. Thibault and

24 Quoted Ibid., I, 393.
26 Jouy had married Isabelle Walker in late June 1793.
Jouy arrived in Lille and met with Duquesnoy, who attempted to arrest them. Jouy, former aide-de-camp and current adjudant-général to O’Moran, decided that it would be wise for them to leave Lille quickly for Paris. He thought that he retained influence with the Committee on Public Safety.

In Paris, conditions were no better. They had been there only four days when a friend told them that they had been denounced and were to be arrested. The two men found a hiding place for the night. Jouy then gave Thiébault written orders to rejoin his regiment and they parted. Three days later – 24 August – Thiébault, with the aid of a falsified gate pass, left Paris to join his regiment, now part of the division of General Jean-Nestor de Chancel stationed near Maubeuge on the Belgian frontier. Thiébault was extremely fortunate to leave Paris with these documents because army officers were facing careful scrutiny by the Convention, and he and Jouy had been denounced only five days earlier. On 27 August, General Philippe Custaine, who had followed Dumouriez as commander of the Armée du Nord in May, was executed for disloyalty to the Republic.

By early September, Isabelle Walker Jouy, having no further word of her husband, left for Paris. Betzy accompanied her sister to the home of a family friend in Paris until Isabelle was able to meet her husband. After Jouy left Paris, Isabelle returned to Lille. Betzy, stubbornly refusing to heed her mother’s advice to reconsider a marriage to Thiébault, moved in with an acquaintance of Dieudonné Thiébault to await Thiébault’s return.

Thiébault reached Maubeuge on 3 September 1793. In Paris, terror was about to become "The Order of the Day." Jouy, who finally escaped to Switzerland, was, together with General O’Moran, condemned to death in absentia. Although the order for Thiébault's arrest in Paris remained valid, there was no pursuit.

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28 Mary Walker to “Kankar” [Betzy’s family nickname], 7 & 17 September, 2 & 29 October, 6, 17, & 20 November 1793, Beinecke Library, Hamilton Papers, Series I, 45-52.
29 After hiding for six weeks, Jouy finally escaped from Paris and decamped to Switzerland until after the fall of Robespierre.
During the next six weeks, Captain Thiébault took part in the confused fighting around Maubeuge, where his first action as a company commander was part of a failed attempt to lift the siege of La Quesnay. In the north, General Jean-Nicholas Houchard, Commander of the Armée de Nord, defeated the Duke of York at Hondschoot, but failing to pursue, he was arrested and sent to Paris, where he was executed on 15 November. The future marshal, Jean-Baptiste Jourdan, replaced him.

Thiébault's father had given him a letter of introduction to General Chancel, his division commander. Although Thiébault had been critical of Chancel's ability after the fighting around La Quesnay, he made a favorable impression on the general, and during the skirmishing around Maubeuge on 15-16 October, he accompanied the headquarters party on the battlefield. On 16 October, the same day that Jourdan defeated the Austrians a few miles to the south at Wattignies, General Chancel offered Thiébault a post as his aide-de-camp. That day in Paris, Marie Antoinette lost her head.

A few days later, Thiébault went to General Chancel's headquarters to assume his duties. Gendarmes guarding the headquarters told him that the general had been arrested by the representative on mission for failure to support Jourdan adequately. General Chancel was taken to Paris and together with General O'Moran executed on 6 March 1794.

Thiébault returned to his battalion in October 1793, but the following month he was ordered to Paris to serve as an assistant to Adjudant-général Alexis Cambray, assigned to the Army of the West. He took this opportunity to marry Betzy on 27 November 1803. Betzy had been placed under house arrest following the order of the Convention of 29 September for the arrest of all British nationals in France. Both Paul and Betzy hoped that marriage to a French officer would help both her and her family. To a certain degree, it did. She was paroled to Dieudonné Thiébault and permitted to live in his home. On 14 October 1794, she was released from all custody.

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30 Letter from Paul Thiébault to his father, 12 September 1793, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C1, MS IV, F-1.
31 Betzy Walker had been placed under house arrest on 13 October 1793 in custody of friends of Dieudonné Thiébault’s in Passy near where the Thiébault family was living.
When *Adjudant-général* Cambray was promoted to *général de brigade* and given a command in western France, however, he claimed that he was now unable to employ Thiébault.\(^{32}\) Again, the elder Thiébault saved the day, introducing his son to François-Xavier Donzelot, an *adjudant-général* and chief of staff of General Pierre-Marie Ferino’s division of the Army of the Rhine. Donzelot took young Thiébault on as an assistant and he joined Donzelot with the army on the eve of the Battle of Wissembourg (28 December 1793). Initially, they got on together very well, and Thiébault later declared that Donzelot’s example inspired him to write his first staff manual.\(^{33}\)

When General Jean-Charles Pichegru, commander of the Army of the Rhine, was ordered to take over the *Armée du Nord* in February 1794, Donzelot, accompanied by Thiébault, went to Paris to try to obtain a transfer to Pichegru’s new command. Donzelot successfully obtained an appointment, and Thiébault was authorized to accompany him. Thiébault delayed for several days in Paris with Betzy, and then rode to Lille to rejoin Donzelot. He was due for another surprise.

When Thiébault arrived in Lille on 20 April, Donzelot claimed that General Jean-Jacques Liébert, the Army Chief of Staff, had been unwilling to admit Thiébault to his staff, because his wife and his father-in-law had both been arrested under the Law of foreigners, and because Thiébault himself had been arrested the previous year following Dumouriez’s defection. Years later when he actually served under Liébert in Tours, Thiébault determined that General Liébert had said nothing and that Donzelot was simply attempting to disassociate himself from a potentially fatal embarrassment. The Terror was now at its height. Danton had been executed two weeks earlier.

Thiébault asked permission to rejoin his unit, the 24\(^{th}\) *Léger*. Donzelot told him that all the former Belgium units had been combined into five battalions of skirmishers

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\(^{32}\) Cambray served with the *Armée du Nord* from April 1792 until June 1793. He was promoted to *général de brigade* on 28 November 1793 and posted to the *Armée du l’Ouest* the same day.

\(^{33}\) Donzelot spent much of his career as a staff officer and was noted for his organizational and administrative abilities. He later served as chief of staff for Desaix in Egypt and for Augereau in 1803 and 1805.
(tirailleurs), and he did not know if Thiébault had been included in the reorganization. Therefore, Donzelot told Thiébault to remain in Lille, maintain a very low profile, and do nothing that would bring him to the attention of the Committee of Public Safety. It is clear that Donzelot simply wanted Thiébault out of the way – for if he were noticed, he might be arrested; if he were arrested, it would reflect badly on Donzelot. Donzelot was trapped. Given the atmosphere of guilt by association, he could neither have Thiébault with him nor could he denounce him.

Unable to serve with Donzelot openly, but still on the army's roll and unwilling to remain out of action, Thiébault claimed:

[I] Took the only course open ... – That of giving myself orders. ... I accompanied sometimes one division, sometimes another. I had, moreover, to avoid the divisional staffs, where I should have been too conspicuous. All that I could do was follow the operations of some general of brigade, who might take me for a staff officer assigned to him. After fighting all day, avoiding as much as possible any mention of my name, and abstaining from claiming any mention, I used to return to Lille, having smelt more powder than many staff officers.  

In this irregular position, Thiébault fought in two of the last major actions of the Army of the North – The Battle of Tourcoing on 18 May and the Battle of Tournai on the 24th. Letters from Betzy confirm that Paul was in Lille through this period, but reveal little as to what he was doing. Following Jourdan's victory at the Battle of Fleurus on 26 June, the Army of the North, now much reduced by the reassignment of many of its units to Jourdan's Army of the Sambre and the Muse, advanced into Belgium. Thiébault accompanied Donzelot first to Brussels and then to Antwerp.

In Paris, the Terror was reaching a crescendo. In Passy, near Paris, the elder Thiébault was the featured speaker at the "Festival of the Supreme Being" on 8 June. As the Terror mounted, however, he was unable to get a certificate of "civism," and wrote to his son that he contemplated suicide rather than wait to be denounced and condemned. Besides these personal problems, Donzelot, wishing to keep Captain Thiébault's profile

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34 Thiébault, Mémoires, I, 491.
35 Betzy Walker Thiébault to Paul Thiébault, 30 April 1794, 22 May 1794, and 9 June 1794, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C2, MS VI, F-1.
36 Betzy Walker Thiébault to Paul Thiébault, 9 June 1794, Ibid.
as low as possible, left him in Antwerp as the army advanced into Belgium. In late June, Donzelot asked Thiébault to accompany him to Brussels. They arrived on 29 June. There was cheering in the streets. It was 11 thermidor. Robespierre was dead.

Very soon thereafter, Thiébault left Donzelot’s staff and regained an assignment as a company commander with the 2nd Skirmisher [tirailleurs] Battalion – one of the skirmisher battalions formed from his former unit (the 1st Tournai/24th Léger). He led the company in the fighting in Belgium and Holland until after the siege of Breda in January 1795 that effectively ended the campaign in Holland. He then applied for and received three months of sick leave, which he spent in Lille with his wife Betzy, who had earlier been released from parole in Paris and returned to Lille.

Shortly after Thiébault arrived in Lille, his battalion marched through the town on its way to the Vendée as reinforcements for the army that was attempting to suppress the rebellion in western France. When Thiébault’s sick leave expired in April, he requested an additional four day leave in Paris en route to joining his battalion. The official reason was to see his father, Dieudonné. The real reason was that Thiébault had little desire to fight French insurgents among the hedgerows of the Vendée. He had other plans: “I hoped to find in Paris the means of reattaching myself to a general staff.”

Thiébault’s early career carried the seeds of his interest in the professional duties of an army staff officer. He also served as both a non-commissioned and a commissioned officer with units in combat. As assistant to his father in Tournai, he had his first exposure to the problems of dealing with subjugated people, and early on, his education, natural inclinations, and family connections moved him in the direction of staff work. In this regard, in later years he always acknowledged the deep impact that Adjudant-général Donzelot had made as a mentor and example.

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37 Thiébault, Mémoires, I, 521.
CHAPTER 2

LE TREIZE VENDÉMIAIRE, PARIS, 1795 – 1796

Captain Thiébault did not have to look far to find his new staff post. His old mentor and brother-in-law, Adjudant-général Étienne Jouy, had returned from Switzerland as soon as he learned of the death of Robespierre. By May 1795, with the help of Louis Gustave de Doulcet Pontecoulant and Marie-Joseph de Chénier, prominent Themadorian politicians, Jouy had been restored to the army at his old rank and been appointed chief of staff to General Louis Baraguey d’Hilliers.¹ In July, Jouy wrote to Thiébault: “I have asked for you as an adjoint and this has been accepted. You must come right away. I have asked that your letter of service be delivered here.”² After some further administrative difficulties, Thiébault received his appointment. D’Hillier’s command, camped near Marly southwest of Paris, was part of the Army of the Interior under General Jacques Menou.

Another officer in Paris at that time also obtained a staff posting to avoid service in the Vendée. Newly confirmed Général de brigade Napoleon Bonaparte had, with the help of Jouy’s friend, de Doulecet Pontecoulant,³ obtained a position in the Topographic Office of the Ministry of War to avoid leading an infantry brigade against the rebels.
Staff work held little appeal for Bonaparte, however, and he lobbied the Ministry of War for an assignment in Turkey as artillery advisor to the Grand Port. Political intrigues, coupled with Pontecoulont’s replacement on the Committee of Public Safety, and bureaucratic mistakes in the War Office, had reduced “Bonaparte, Napoleon” to the status

¹ Pontecoulant had been outlawed in 1793 as a Girondist, but escaped and returned to the Convention in March 1795. In July, he was elected president of the Convention. Chénier was both a politician and a literary figure. Author of the words of the Chant du depart, he was the brother of the famous revolutionary poet, André Chénier, executed by Robespierre.
² Jouy to Thiébault, 5 July 1796, Indiana University, Lilly Library, Jouy Manuscripts [hereafter Lilly Library, Jouy MSS].
³ Felix Markham, Napoleon (New York, 1963), 28.
of an unassigned officer on half pay. 4 Thiébault recalled his first sight of Bonaparte at this period: “The small man whom I had only seen in the Passage of the Feuillants looking like a victim; his untidy dress, his long lank hair, and his worn-out clothes showed his distress.” 5

Thiébault’s own career prospects were equally dim. In late August, his mentor and brother-in-law, Jouy, mishandled a demonstration, one of a growing number of protests against the proposed Constitution of the Year III and the Law of Two-Thirds. Jouy was relieved of his post, but through Pontecoulant’s influence, obtained an assignment in Lille. Yet it was alleged that his wife, Isabelle Hamilton, was the niece of the long-time British ambassador and spymaster in Holland, John Harris, Lord Malmesbury. He was again arrested, tried, and acquitted. He then resigned his commission and turned to literature, later becoming a well-known author and member of the Académie française. 6 Thiébault, left in Paris without a patron, briefly considered rejoining his battalion in the Vendée but was able to obtain permission from General Bernard Duvignau, the army chief of staff, to remain provisionally attached to the staff of the Army of the Interior. 7

The Constitution of the Year III and the Law of Two-Thirds, proposed by the Thermadorian leadership of the Convention, were approved by a plebiscite in early September. The plebiscite, however, was notable for the number of voters who abstained. Popular opposition, fanned by Royalist intrigues and fear of a renewed

4 On September 15, the War Office issued three separate orders; one striking Bonaparte off the list of generals in employment, the second sending him to Turkey, the third putting Bonaparte under the orders of “General Bonaparte, in charge of the military mission to Turkey.” See Markham, Napoleon, 29-30.

5 Thiébault, Mémoires, I, 533.

6 Dictionnaire de biographie française, (Paris, 1994), XVIII, 923; Thiébault, Mémoires, I, 524. The allegations concerning Isabelle Walker must also have reflected upon Thiébault’s wife, Betzy Walker.

7 Attachment “a la suite.” This technique of attachment to a staff without specific assignment was widely used in the French army of the time to ensure that extra officers were available quickly when needed. Berthier had ten officers attached “a la suite” to the État-major at Austerlitz, and in 1798, Thiébault found himself thus attached to the État-major of the Army of Rome.
Convention-led Terror, was growing. In the face of this unrest, the Convention ordered Jacques Menou to bring his troops from the Camp of Marly to the plain of Les Sablons across the Seine and nearer to the city. This action only infuriated the Parisians. On 10 vendémiaire (2 October 1775), thirty-eight of the forty-eight sections of Paris, led by Le Peletier Section, organized an alternate government. On the 12th, sixteen sections declared themselves in a state of formal rebellion, beat the drums to call out their National Guard battalions, and appointed General Louis Dancian8 to lead them. This move would cause some conflict for Captain Thiébault, because his long-time friend, Charles Cadet de Gassicourt, was the president of Le Peletier Section, which was leading the rebellion.

When the Convention received the news on the morning of 12 vendémiaire (4 October) that the Sections were calling up the National Guard, it ordered General Menou to move directly against Le Peletier Section, disarm it and break up the rebellion. Instead of moving promptly and with overwhelming force, Menou first procrastinated and then attempted to negotiate with the rebels. As the afternoon and evening wore on with no success, calls for Menou’s dismissal – first for incompetence, then for treason – grew louder in the Convention. Finally, about midnight, Menou, a number of staff officers including Thiébault, and the 21st Chasseur Regiment, rode to inspect his troop deployments for the evening. Approaching the Le Peletier section, they encountered a detachment of some forty National Guardsmen escorting drummers beating the “General,” the call for assembly. Menou ordered Thiébault to take a squadron of the chasseurs and disburse the guardsmen. Thiébault’s squadron charged, sabering the drummers and scattering the guardsmen. He returned with one wounded trooper, and about twenty prisoners including seven or eight drummers.9 That was the last action of

8 Louis-Michael-Auguste Theveuet Danican (1764-1848). An army officer under the ancien régime and the early republic, he was condemned to death in absentia after 13 vendémiaire, but fled to Holland and served the Royalists until the restoration.

the day. Thiébault and the other off-duty staff officers were relieved and ordered to report to headquarters the next morning at 9:00.

At 8:30 the next morning, Thiébault was going to a nearby stable to fetch his horse before reporting when the battalions of the rebellious national guards debouched from the side streets onto the rue Saint Honoré. A block north of the Tuileries Palace where the Convention was sitting and army headquarters located, rue Saint Honoré was the principal east-west street. Unable to reach his horse, Thiébault cut through the cul-de-sac Dauphine, where Bonaparte would later site his guns facing the Church of St. Roche, to the headquarters. There, he discovered that Menou had been relieved, and his place taken by “that small man…looking like a victim.” – Napoleon Bonaparte, the new field commander under Paul Barras, a soldier-turned-politician who had replaced Menou in charge of the Army of the Interior.

The rebellious National Guard battalions formed in line along the rue Saint Honoré from the Place de Vendome to the Palais Royal. The Church of St. Roche was approximately in the center of this line. The guardsmen waited while the politicians debated their next action and while the generals attempted to coordinate their actions with those of the National Guard battalions massing across the river on the left bank of the Seine. These battalions were unable to reach the Tuileries directly because the Convention’s troops controlled the Pont-Nationale, the only crossing in the immediate area. Together, nearly 30,000 men stood ready to overthrow the Convention.

Bonaparte, in contrast, moved quickly. Upon taking command, he immediately ordered Major Jochim Murat, commanding the 21st Chasseurs, to ride to Les Sablons, about three miles, and retrieve the artillery parked there. When the guns arrived, he posted them to cover the Pont-Nationale, the Quai Voltaire on the opposite side of the river, the open areas on his flanks – the Place de Republic on his left and the Place de Carrousel on his right – and in the Cul-de-sac Dauphin, a narrow street leading from the Church of Saint Roche into the center of his position. He deployed his 5,000 regulars of the Army of the Interior to support the guns, and then armed the members of the Convention so that they could defend themselves in the event of a last stand.
Finally, he ordered the elderly General Jean Berruyer\(^\text{10}\) and *Adjudant-général* Jean Baptiste Solignac to organize some 1,500 former guardsmen who had been expelled by the rebels for their sympathy with the Convention. These were called “the Patriots of ’89,” “the dedicated Battalion” or, by their opponents, “the Drinkers of Blood” (*buveurs de sang*).\(^\text{11}\) The reason for the final name will soon become apparent. What was Captain Thiébault doing during this time? Presumably, he was doing those things required of a junior staff officer – delivering messages, observing unit deployments, and reporting back to the chief of staff, General Bernard Duvigneau.\(^\text{12}\)

For much of the day, nothing happened. Around 4:00 p.m., General Louis Danican, the rebel commander, attempted to open negotiations, but his efforts were rebuffed by the Convention. Thirty minutes later, about a hundred soldiers of the “Patriot” Battalion under *Adjudant-général* Solignac, guarding one of the passages between the rue Saint Honoré and the Convention, began an argument with guardsmen from *Le Peletier* Section. According to Thiébault, Solignac gave the order to fire, thus triggering the fighting.\(^\text{13}\)

The rebels immediately opened an attack towards the Tuileries, down the Cul-de-sac Dauphin, supported by several ranks of massed musketeers on the steps of the Church of Saint Roche. The two guns Bonaparte had posted in the cul-de-sac replied with a “whiff of grapeshot,” clearing the steps and stopping the attack in its tracks. The full

\(^{10}\) Jean-François Berruyer (1738-1804) had been a professional soldier since the age of 13. Already retired, Barras recalled him to active duty on 1 September 1795. His last post was governor of Les Invalides under Napoleon, 1803-1804.


\(^{12}\) Rapport du Général Buonaparte sur le Journée du 13 vendémiaire, 6 October 1795, Napoleon Bonaparte, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier publiée par ordre de l’Empereur Napoléon III* (Paris, 1858-1869), No. 73, I, 99-101. General Duvignau was not relieved with Menou, and Bonaparte mentioned him favorably in his report of the action.

\(^{13}\) Thiébault, *Mémoires*, I, 537. Zivy, writing in 1898, only five years after Thiébault’s *Mémoires* were published, stated that “*Le Peletier* claim the cause was the *buveurs de sang*, not the army.” See Zivy, *Le treize vendémiaire*, 55. However, after an extensive search of the original official documents, Zivy concluded: “It is impossible to know which side took the initiative.” Ibid., 89. Thiébault kept his friendship for many years with Cadet de Gassicourt, the President of *Le Peletier*, and possibly based his account on Gassicourt’s recollections.
“Patriots of ‘89” battalion counterattacked and with the help of additional artillery cleared the entire rue Saint Honoré. Shortly thereafter, artillery covering the Pont-Nationale destroyed a second rebel column attempting to reach the bridge from the Left Bank. By six o’clock the rebellion had been effectively crushed by the guns of an artillery general.

Thiébault claimed that he accompanied Bonaparte and the staff at the fighting along rue Saint Honoré, at cannonade at the Pont-Nationale and afterwards to the headquarters at the Tuileries Palace. The next day, October 6, Bonaparte personally ordered him, together with a squadron of cavalry, to accompany Convention Representative Guillemardet on a tour of Paris districts to address the people and rally them to the Convention. Thiébault notes: “That was the first direct order that I ever received from him.”

On 10 October, the Convention abolished the sectional assemblies and ordered the reorganization of the National Guard, stripping it of its general staff, elite companies, artillery, and cavalry. It was united with the police, who had been unable to control the rebellious sections, and the combined force was placed under control of the Army of the Interior. The same day, Bonaparte was formally named the Deputy Commander of the Army of the Interior under Barras. Ten days later, when Barras was named to the new ruling Directorate, Bonaparte was appointed Commander in Chief of the Army of the Interior with the rank of Général de division.

In recognition of his performance in leading the “Patriots” Battalion in the fighting along rue Saint Honoré, the Committee of Public Safety confirmed Jean-Baptiste

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14 Thiébault, Mémoires, I, 537-38. Zivy, who did not apparently consult the Thiébault Mémoires, but relied primarily on the official records, claims that Napoleon’s whereabouts during the day is not known. Napoleon’s own report provides no indication as to where he actually was.

15 Probably Ferdinand-Pierre-Marie Guillemardet (b: 1765 – d. 1809). Representative from Saône-et-Loire to the Convention and one of the regicides who voted for the death of Louis XVI.

16 Thiébault, Mémoires, I, 539.

17 Zivy, Le treize vendémiaire, 103-04.
Solignac in the ranks of chef-de-brigade and adjudant-général\textsuperscript{18} on 20 October.\textsuperscript{19} Four days later, he was appointed chief of staff of a division of the Army of the Interior, and Captain Thiébault was appointed as one of Solignac’s assistants.

For the next year, Solignac, together with the future marshal, Général de brigade Guillaume-Marie-Anne Brune, spent most of his time reorganizing the Paris Police Force and the National Guard. Meanwhile, on 2 March 1796, the Directory appointed Bonaparte, who had been bombarding the directors with suggestions for operations in Italy, commander-in-chief of the French Armée d’Italie [henceforth referred to as the Army of Italy]. Bonaparte chose Louis Berthier to be his chief of staff.

Dieudonné Thiébault had previously met Berthier through a mutual friend, and at a farewell dinner given by this friend a couple of days before Berthier’s departure, the elder Thiébault approached Berthier about employing his son on the staff of the Army of Italy. Berthier agreed and asked that Captain Thiébault send him a written appeal that would serve as the basis of a memorandum to the Ministry of War requesting the assignment. Young Thiébault procrastinated and failed to send the request before Berthier left. Years later he wrote concerning this chance: “There has been the making of a couple of brilliant careers in the opportunities I have missed through carelessness or indecision…”\textsuperscript{20}

Part of Thiébault’s indecision may have stemmed from concern for his family. Betzy had lost a child soon after they were married. Now she was living in Paris with Paul and his father; during this time, his oldest living son, Adolphe Dieudonné Thiébault,

\textsuperscript{18} In the French Army of the period, chef-de-brigade was a line rank equivalent to that of colonel; adjudant-général was the equivalent staff rank. See Elting, Swords Around a Throne, 677.

\textsuperscript{19} Four years younger than Thiébault, Solignac had enlisted in a regular regiment in 1791 and spent his entire military career within France fighting insurgent groups. This gained him a series of rapid provisional promotions from the various représentants en mission with whom he served. Ultimately, however, he had been denounced and imprisoned over a disagreement with a representative. Released in May 1795, Solignac was serving “a la suite” with the Army of the Interior when the insurrection of 13 vendémiaire occurred.

\textsuperscript{20} Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 8.
was conceived. Nonetheless, over a year of garrison duty in Paris began to pale on Captain Thiébault, despite the brief but exciting interruption of the days of 13 vendémiaire. By now, Solignac was also bored with Paris while great victories were being won in Italy. In the fall of 1796, Solignac obtained an assignment to the Army of Italy as chief of staff for the division commanded by Général de division André Masséna. Thiébault accompanied him to Italy.

This year of duty with the staff of the Army of the Interior headquartered near Paris had much lasting significance for Thiébault. His participation on the side of the Directory in the events of 13 vendémiaire must have brought him favorably, if only briefly, to Bonaparte’s attention. As an assistant to General Solignac, he made the connection that would soon bring him to the attention of General Masséna, who would become one of Thiébault’s long-time patrons. Finally, his father again opened a door for him by arranging for him to approach Berthier, who was about to become Bonaparte’s chief of staff. His neglect of this important relationship would have reverberations for many years.

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21 Carl Adolphe Dieudonné Thiébault was born on 22 February 1797, four months after Thiébault left Paris for Italy. See Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C5, MS VIII, Family.
CHAPTER 3
WITH MASSÉNA IN ITALY,
NOVEMBER 1796 – MARCH 1798

André Masséna, the future Marshal of France, had long served with the Army of
Italy. He was promoted to général de division in late 1793 after the siege of Toulan,
where he first met Napoleon Bonaparte. After Bonaparte’s return to Paris, Masséna
remained in Italy, serving under Generals Charles Dumberion, Christophe Kellermann,
and Barthélemy Schérer. When Schérer resigned in February 1796, Masséna was given
temporary command of the army with the belief that the appointment would be made
permanent. He was bitterly disappointed when he learned that the Directory had named
his junior, Napoleon Bonaparte, as the new commander-in-chief.¹

Nevertheless, Masséna quickly adapted to his new commander and played a
decisive role in the battles of the summer and fall of 1796. During this period, Bonaparte
defeated the Sardinians, forced the Austrians into retreat, and besieged the fortress of
Mantua. Following the Battle of Arcola, 15-17 November 1796, Masséna’s division
went into garrison in Verona. Though victorious in routing the Austrians in the swamps
along the Adige River at Arcola, the division had suffered serious casualties and was
exhausted after three days of continuous marching and fighting. Bonaparte returned to
the army’s main base in Milan. While these events were unfolding, Thiébault, serving
with General Solignac, traveled from Paris to assume his duties on Masséna’s staff.

Masséna had been without a chief of staff even before the Battle of Arcola.²

Solignac had been assigned to the Army of Italy in late September, but had been delayed

¹ Masséna had been promoted to général de division during the siege of Toulan in 1793.
Napoleon received his promotion to that rank in 1795 following the events of 13
vendémiaire. Regarding Masséna’s disappointment, see Donald D. Horward’s “André
Masséna, Prince D’Essling, in the Age of Revolution,” Napoleonic Scholarship: The
en route, coming via Marseilles and Genoa. Learning upon arrival in Genoa that he was needed immediately with the army, Masséna rode to Milan alone. He left Thiébault and the rest of his staff to escort his coach and personal effects. Thiébault followed, but arrived in Milan to discover that Solignac had already left for Verona.

Before leaving Milan, Thiébault called on Bonaparte, who hosted him at dinner. He also went to see Berthier in the hope that Berthier would remember his earlier conversation in Paris with the elder Thiébault and offer him a position on the État-major at army headquarters. Thiébault recalled, however, that “he [Berthier] received my farewells coldly, and remarked, ‘Solignac must have need of you.’”

Thiébault rode on to Verona, but Masséna sent him back to Milan three days later with a dispatch for the commander-in-chief. Normally, the aide-de-camp or adjoint who performed this type of courier duty simply turned the message over to the headquarters staff and awaited a reply. Thiébault was less fortunate. Bonaparte called him in to his office and cross-examined him on the number and condition of Masséna’s troops, their logistical situation, location, and the situation of the enemy. Bonaparte’s rapid-fire questions led to a series of equivocal replies, such as “I do not know” and “I have just joined [the army].” Bonaparte was hardly satisfied; Thiébault was even more dissatisfied. He concluded that “service on the staff of his [Bonaparte’s] army will be the very devil, and as adjutant to Solignac, I would have to find a way not to suffer that experience again.”

Thiébault was learning what other staff officers in the Army of Italy had known for some time – Bonaparte insisted on informed and competent staff officers. Bonaparte had issued strict instructions regarding the qualifications of staff officers:

- It is ordered that generals who do not have the number of aides-de-camp required by law choose them immediately according to prescribed regulations.

- It is further ordered that adjutants-general who do not have assistants [adjudants] propose, without delay, the officers they consider capable of carrying out these important functions. No special considerations must influence their choice; which

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3 Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 25.

4 Ibid., II, 27. Thiébault claimed that from that time on he began to keep detailed notebooks.
must be determined only by their talents, morality and a pure and enlightened patriotism.

Upon receipt of this order, the adjutants-general will forward to the chief of staff the name, rank, and date of service of each of their assistants; with notes concerning their knowledge.

The adjutants-general are warned that the chief of staff has very precise orders from the commander-in-chief to examine the assistants and to replace those who are not able to support work with which the adjutants-general are charged.\textsuperscript{5}

Nonetheless, when Thiébault arrived in Verona, he was “scandalized by both the disorder and the lack of available information” at divisional headquarters. After his return from his disastrous meeting with Bonaparte, he attempted to correct this:

My first efforts were dedicated to organizing the work of the \textit{État-major} which Solignac did only in fits and starts…. This effort was guided by notes which I had taken while serving in the Army of the Rhine and which, seven or eight months afterwards, aided me in writing my \textit{Manuel des adjudants généraux}.\textsuperscript{6}

This manual clearly reflected how Thiébault saw himself and his duties. In an extended footnote concerning the duties of assistants (\textit{adjoints}) to the division chief of staff, he first reiterated the demand of Bonaparte and Berthier for competence, and then described the ability of \textit{adjoints} to act on behalf of the chief:

The mode of nominating these officers demonstrates how much the importance of their duties has been felt, since, in order to arrive at this station, it is necessary that these officers each obtain at once the confidence of the adjutant-general who accepts them, of the chief of the \textit{état-major} who accepts them, and of the minister of war who commissions them. …

With respect to the business of the chief of the \textit{état-major} and his assistants, it is not possible to determine the difference between them. An assistant may do the same service as the chief of the \textit{état-major}. His signature, preceded by these words, \textit{by order}, has the same force as the adjutant-general.\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{5} Ordre du jour, 9 germinal an IV (24 March 1796), \textit{Correspondance de Napoléon Ier}, No. 104, I, 127.

\textsuperscript{6} Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, II, 27-28. See Chapter 1 for Thiébault’s comments on his relations with François-Xavier Donzelot, \textit{adjutant-général} and chief of staff of General Pierre-Marie Ferino's Division of the Army of the Rhine, and Donzelot’s impact on Thiébault’s education in staff work.

\textsuperscript{7} Thiébault, \textit{Manual for Adjutants General and Adjutants of Division General Staffs (Manuel des Adjudans Généraux et des Adjoints employés dans les États-Major Divisionnaires de Armées)}, translated by The Military Library (London, 1801), 27.
This arrangement would have worked well with Thiébault’s superior, Jean-Baptiste Solignac. Slothful, an inveterate gambler and womanizer, Solignac was hardly an admirable commander. Although much of what is known about him came from Thiébault’s pen, other sources documented numerous instances of his avarice and rapaciousness. As division Chief of Staff, Solignac was in a position to control and profit from the contributions continually demanded by the Directory from the newly liberated Italian territories, and he used the position to his own advantage.\(^8\) Thiébault’s systematic approach and literary training worked well to keep the routine paperwork of the division under control with Solignac's minimal involvement. These talents, together with Thiébault’s personal courage, were recognized by Masséna, the division commander, and were the first elements of a relationship that turned into a life-long friendship between the two men.

Thiébault was quartered with Masséna’s division in and around Verona. The division served as Bonaparte’s primary maneuver force keeping the Austrians from the besieged fortress of Mantua. Some 20 miles to the north, Barthélemy Joubert’s division blocked the route south from the Tyrol between Lake Garda and the Adige River. To the south and west, Pierre Augerau’s division held the lower crossings of the Adige that led from Venice and Padua to Mantua. Jean Serurier’s reinforced division was laying siege to Mantua, while on the west side of Lake Garda an under-strength division under Général de brigade Louis Rey watched for an Austrian relief column. Bonaparte moved his headquarters to Bologna.

On 7 January 1797, the Austrian commander, Field Marshal Josef Alvintz, began another attempt to relieve Mantua. While his forces on the lower Adige probed Masséna’s and Augereau’s positions, he marched his main body of 28,000 men south along the upper Adige against Joubert’s 10,300 troops. First word of the Austrian

\(^8\) According to Thiébault, Solignac carried with him a personal fortune of 400,000 gold francs when he left Italy in 1797. See Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 132. This reputation followed him throughout this career. In 1806 he was convicted of diverting 550,000 francs to his own use from the army payroll, and as late as 1832, while still on active service, he was accused by Marshal Soult of financial irregularities. See Georges Six, Dictionnaire Biographique Des Généaux & Amiraux Français de la Révolution et de L'Empire (1792-1814) (Paris; 1934) II, 463.
movements reached Masséna on 8 January. Patrols were sent out, including one on the thirteenth led by Major Antoine LaSalle and accompanied by Thiébault. They ran into Austrian troops less than seven miles east of Verona near Caldiero on the road to Vincenzo and Venice.

That same day, Bonaparte arrived in Verona and assessed the situation. The previous day, Joubert’s division had been driven out of its position on the ridge at La Corona and had fallen back 10 kilometers to the hills surrounding the little town of Rivoli. Bonaparte concluded that the main Austrian attack was coming from the north. Leaving orders for Masséna and Augereau, he rode to join Joubert.

After leaving a contingent at Verona to cover the city and its approaches until they could be relieved by Augereau’s troops, Masséna sent one demi-brigade, the 18th, northwest to the town of Garda on the edge of the lake to cover Barthélemy Joubert’s far left. He then moved to support Joubert with two demi-brigades (the 32nd and the 75th), the 1st Cavalry Regiment and his horse artillery. As these troops marched through the night of 13-14 January, Masséna and his staff, including Thiébault, rode north towards the Austrian campfires reflected in the sky.

Masséna arrived ahead of his troops and conferred briefly with Bonaparte. At about nine in the morning as his troops advanced, Masséna, together with Thiébault and an aide-de-camp, rode forward towards the left of Joubert’s position. Here, the 29th and 85th Demi-brigades that formed Joubert’s left wing were under attack. As the officers approached, the 29th fell back and the 85th panicked and fled, leaving only Masséna’s party. After calling for the 32nd and 75th Demi-brigades from his own division, Masséna, together with Thiébault, succeeded in rallying a few of the 85th. As the Austrians renewed the attack, however, the rest of the 85th collapsed, leaving the two officers alone. When the Austrian skirmishers were close enough to call for their surrender, Masséna turned, jumped his horse over a rock and rode back toward the approaching 32nd Demi-brigade. Thiébault’s horse ingloriously stumbled on the same rock and he narrowly

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9 Thiébault, Memoires, II, 71. LaSalle was then serving as aide-de-camp to General François Kellermann. Later Général de division, Antoine Charles Louis LaSalle (1775-1809), an outstanding commander of French light cavalry, remained a close friend of Thiébault’s until killed at Wagram.
Figure 3. Battle of Rivoli. (Map by R. Godfrey-Sigler.)
escaped becoming a prisoner thanks to rescue by Masséna’s charging column. When the Austrians had been driven back, Masséna, as a sign of satisfaction, sent Thiébault to Bonaparte to report the repulse of the Austrians on the left.  

Hard fighting continued through much of the day, but ended in an Austrian defeat when Masséna’s 18th Demi-brigade, marching from Garda, cut off and trapped an Austrian force of 4,500 under General François-Joseph Lusignan that had attempted to outflank the French at Rivoli. The main French force, including Masséna’s 32nd and 75th, then counterattacked all along the front and drove the Austrians back in disorder. The next day, Masséna, with the relatively fresh 18th and most of the 32nd Demi-brigades, marched south to La Favorita to block an Austrian attempt to relieve Mantua. Thiébault, meanwhile, who had no replacement horse, remained with the rest of the 32nd and 75th Demi-brigades in the army reserve. Three days later on 18 January, he rejoined the division at Verona.

After the Fortress of Mantua fell to the French on 2 February 1797, Thiébault was constantly in the saddle. That same day Bonaparte started south with 6,000 men on a short expedition to intimidate the Pope. Masséna’s division, with those of Joubert and Général de brigade Jean-Joseph Guie, now commanding Augereau’s division, began a parallel march to the east and north against light Austrian opposition. They were supported by a division commanded by the future Marshal Jean-Batiste-Jules Bernadotte that had just been transferred from the Army of the Rhine. By the end of March, the army and Bonaparte, now returned from the Papal States, had concentrated at Klagenfort. Then, led by Masséna’s division, they drove to Loeben, only a hundred and sixty kilometers miles from Vienna, the Austrian capital. There a truce was signed on 8 April. During all these operations, Thiébault continued to perform the normal duties of an adjoint, carrying dispatches to and from army headquarters, accompanying cavalry reconnaissance patrols as the commander’s “eyes” and performing the countless miscellaneous duties that abound in any headquarters.

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10 Ibid., II, 55.
12 Ibid., II, 122-25.
The Preliminary Treaty of Loeden was concluded on 18 April, and the army prepared to return to Italy. Bonaparte sent Masséna to Paris with dispatches for the Directory; Masséna's division returned via Gratz and Udine under General Guillaume Brune, his senior général de brigade. At Gratz, Thiébault managed a torrid two-day affair with a young contessa. He then took a side trip to Venice, which had been occupied by French troops on 16 May. Due to these delays, when Thiébault returned to Udine, he fell in with the next division in line, commanded by Bernadotte. When he called on Bernadotte, he was invited to dinner. That dinner represented another crossroads in Thiébault’s career. Thiébault apparently impressed Bernadotte and was consequently offered several staff positions with units under the latter’s command. Although tempted, he ultimately refused:

I had the feeling of being up for auction during the two days in Udine. Everybody was bidding for me except the one for whom I would have knocked myself down. So, in spite of Solignac’s faults, I stayed with him. After all, he had just requested my promotion to major (chef de batallion) and, as it turned out, events proved me to be correct.\(^\text{14}\)

By June, Thiébault’s division was back in Italy quartered in the district around Padua where it was to remain for five months. During this period, Thiébault engaged in the usual pursuits of young officers in garrison – gambling, horse-racing, parades, balls, and flirting with the ladies. He visited Venice regularly, where the wife of his host, a pro-French Venetian nobleman, introduced him to the privacy and anonymity provided by the city’s principal means of transportation – the gondola.\(^\text{15}\)

Political developments in Paris extended this period of enforced leisure. Through the spring and summer of 1797, right-wing opposition to the Directory, fueled by royalist activity and British agents, grew. On 21 May, Emmanuel Louis Henri de Launay, Comte d’Antraigues, a French émigré and British agent traveling on a Russian diplomatic passport, was arrested in Trieste with documents implicating General Jean Charles

\(^{13}\) Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 97-102.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., II, 109. One assumes the missing bidder to be either Napoleon or Berthier.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., II, 120-21.
Pichegru in a plot against the Directory. Bonaparte sent this information with his friend and trusted subordinate, General Augereau, to his patron Barras. Augereau was given command of the troops that finally crushed the plot and supported Barras in the coup of 18 fructidor, (4 September 1797) by ousting two of the pro-rightist Directors.

In support of these governmental changes, Bonaparte launched a propaganda campaign in the Army of Italy to ensure that the army would support moves to protect Barras and the other pro-revolutionary Directors. This campaign included “black propaganda” in the guise of forged copies of the Moniteur. Shortly before the coup of 18 fructidor, Solignac called Thiébault to his office one evening, and instructed him to find the best printer in town to print 400 fabricated copies of the Moniteur. Solignac gave him a copy of the original, and the text of an article to be substituted for it. Thiébault was to perform his task secretly, with all drafts and waste destroyed, and the new copies delivered to Solignac before daybreak. “Not secrecy alone, but promptitude, was required; and in any event, to make Italians work at night, unprepared, printing French, and a whole copy of Le Moniteur, in a few hours, was not easy.” Thiébault delivered the copies to Solignac late, two hours after sunup. Solignac, under considerable pressure from Berthier and angered by the delay, put Thiébault under house arrest for a week. Thiébault used the week to write the first draft of his Manuel Adjudants Généraux et des Adjoints, a work that he had contemplated since his service with the Army of the Rhine.

Bonaparte passed through Padua on 27 October 1797 on his way to the Conference at Rastatt. The next month, Masséna and much of his staff, including Solignac, were given leave of absence, and they departed Padua on 17 November. Thiébault had not been given furlough, and thus was unable to obtain leave orders from General Berthier, who had been left behind as Chief of Staff under General Charles Kilmaine who had temporarily taken command of the Army of Italy. Without orders, but

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16 See Sparrow, Secret Service, 120-22, for a detailed account of Napoleon’s involvement in d’Antraigue’s arrest and the coup of 18 fructidor.
17 Lazare Carnot and Françoise Barthélemy. Carnot escaped abroad; Barthélmey was deported to Guiana.
18 Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 124.
19 Ibid., II, 125. The Manuel was published in Paris in the Year VIII (1799-1800).
with Solignac’s approval, Thiébault accompanied Solignac to Paris. There, he found that
his appointment as Chef de battalion had been confirmed by the Directory even before he
left Padua. He met with Masséna, who gave him post-dated leave orders. These orders
needed to be endorsed by the Minister of War, General Schérer. With the assistance of
the vivacious young wife of the elderly Comte Marc-René de Montafort, he obtained an
appointment with the Minister. She was the cousin of his old friend Charles Cadet de
Gassicourt and a friend of the Minister.20 The Minister, in turn, was an admirer and
supporter of Masséna. As a result of this network of friends and personal influence,
Thiébault’s orders were endorsed and he was able to remain in Paris on leave.

Masséna had hoped to obtain command of the Army of Italy, but despite his close
relations with Schérer, the Minister of War, Berthier received the appointment instead on
9 December. On 10 February 1798, following a staged incident at the Embassy in Rome,
Berthier marched on the city with 12,000 men.21 As Général-en-chef of the Army of
Italy, however, Berthier needed to be more centrally located in Milan, so on 3 February,
General Schérer ordered Masséna to return to Italy to take command of the garrison in
Rome.22 On 10 February, Masséna received secret instructions to overthrow the Papal
government and replace it with a secular one. Masséna left Paris the next day, and with
this task in mind, instructed Thiébault to join him in Rome.23

20 Gassicourt had escaped after 13 vendémiaire, but had been tried in absentia and
condemned to death. However, he was eventually pardoned and returned to Paris, where
he became a leading pharmacist, eventually becoming Napoleon's personal pharmacist.
21 Berthier marched following a demonstration on 27 December 1797 in which General
Duphot, military assistant to Joseph Bonaparte, ambassador to the Holy See, had been
killed. Berthier had secret orders from the Directory to strip the Pope and the leading
families of Rome of their treasures.
22 The Duphot incident took place on 27 December 1797. Masséna received his
appointment as commander of the Rome garrison on 3 February 1798, his orders on 10
February 1798, and departed for Rome on 11 February; Berthier occupied Rome on 10
February. Given the timing involved, the subversion of the Papal States appears to have
been a carefully-laid plan by the Directory. See Edouard Gachot, La Première
Campagne d'Italie (Paris, 1901), 324-26, for the timing and the complete text of both
Berthier’s and Masséna’s instructions from the Directory.
23 Masséna probably wanted Thiébault as a personal aide-de-camp. As a newly promoted
major, Thiébault was still too junior to be chief of staff, but too senior to be an assistant
Thiébault left Paris on 2 March, traveling to Rome via Milan, where Berthier had just reestablished his headquarters. Berthier had left Rome on 25 February together with Masséna after a mutiny of the garrison’s junior officers over their lack of pay. Masséna had established his headquarters at Ronciglione, 35 miles north of Rome. Berthier had continued to Milan, where Thiébault encountered him. In their conversation, Berthier stressed that Thiébault was to tell Masséna “that I [Berthier] had no hand whatever in what has happened in Rome.”

Thiébault joined Masséna just as he was leaving Ronciglione to return to Rome on 13 March. Three days later, when the Directory’s order relieving Masséna was received, Thiébault asked Masséna for further orders. The General replied, “Before one can give orders, one must have authority, and I no longer have any.” Masséna immediately departed for Genoa; Thiébault, recalled from his leave to the Army of Italy but now lacking an assignment, was placed “en suite” on the staff of the new commander of the Rome garrison, General Laurent Gouvin Saint-Cyr.

Thiébault’s participation in Bonaparte’s Italian campaign as an adjoint in the état-major of Masséna’s Division offered him several unique opportunities. The first advantage was to experience first-hand what Bonaparte and Berthier expected from a staff officer. General Solignac gave Thiébault the second opportunity by his own (adjoint) to an adjutant-general. As of June 2001, Thiébault’s retirement file, which should reflect all his assignments, was missing from the Archives de la guerre in Vincennes, and Georges Six provided no information on Thiébault’s assignments between his recall to the Army of Italy on 12 February 1798, the date his orders were issued, and his appointment to General Casabianca’s division of the Army of Rome in November of the same year.

24 Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 152. Writing nearly forty years after the event, Thiébault took this denial as evidence of Berthier’s guilt or at least complacency in a plot to discredit Masséna. Although Thiébault arrived in Rome after the mutinies were well under way and was able to spend less than four days with Masséna (13-16 March), his Mémoires include an extensive defense of Masséna and condemnation of Berthier during this period. He also bitterly attacked Adolphe Thiers’ version of the affair from his Histoire de la révolution française (1834), published while Thiebault was working on his memoirs. Thiers’ account was the conventional wisdom at that time regarding the incident. See Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 141-169.

25 Ibid., II, 170.
inattention to duty. His lack of supervision gave Thiébault the means, even as a young
captain, to demonstrate his skills at staff work for Masséna. Thiébault’s expertise, in
turn, brought him favorably to Masséna’s attention, and Masséna obligingly used his
talents as an aide-de-camp. In that position, Thiébault won promotion to chef-de-
bataillon, and his next opportunity to serve on Masséna’s staff when Masséna took
command of the Army of Rome.
CHAPTER 4
THE ARMY OF ROME, MARCH 1798 – JANUARY 1799

General Laurent Gouvion Saint-Cyr arrived in Rome to take command on 26 March 1798, but for several weeks Thiébault remained without assignment. This period was devoted to sightseeing, balls, gambling, dueling, and, above all, the ladies. He described an amoral “la dolce vita” of the noble Roman families to whom he gained introduction thanks to his father’s literary reputation. He also witnessed the extreme poverty, crime, and ignorance in which the mass of people lived, especially in the Trasteverine quarter of the city.

On 1 April 1798, while Thiébault was exploring Rome, General Louis Charles Desaix arrived with secret orders to prepare selected units for embarkation as part of Bonaparte’s expedition to Egypt. Desaix’s chief of staff was Thiébault’s old superior from the Armies of the Rhine and the North, Adjudant-Général François Donzelot. More friendly was the future Minister of Police, Anne-Jean-Marie Savary, who had also served with Thiébault in the Army of the Rhine. Through Savary, aide-de-camp to Desaix, Thiébault met Desaix and, according to Thiébault’s memoirs, impressed him thoroughly. Desaix offered Thiébault a position as one of his aides-de-camp in the Egyptian expedition, even granting Thiébault’s request that he not be placed under Donzelot whom Thiébault had not forgiven for his vacillation in Belgium.

Thiébault, however, did not go to Egypt. On 22 April 1797, an insurrection erupted in the Lake Trasimene region on the main route to Milan, some 45 miles north of Rome. General Saint-Cyr immediately sent two battalions of the Rome garrison to

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1 Thiébault’s Victorian English translator devotes seven lines to this matter: “My acquaintances multiplied, and became every day more agreeable, including such ladies as the Princess Borghese, Princess Chigi, Duchess Ceva, Countess Ottoboni…[etc.]” See Thiébault, Memoirs (Butler translation) I, 360. Thiébault, in the published French version, devotes nine vivid pages to the topic. See Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 175-83.

2 Ibid., II, 202.
General Antoine Valette at Perugia, the headquarters of the district. He also ordered General Valette to take command of several regiments then marching south from the Army of Italy to replace those that had mutinied against Masséna and those being sent to Egypt. Valette was to form these units into a second division of the Army of Rome. For chief of staff of the new division, General Saint-Cyr chose the only available officer with even minimum credentials for the job – the young, as yet unassigned, Major Thiébault. Thiébault asked Desaix to intervene, but Saint-Cyr said that the need was urgent and no one else was qualified.

When Thiébault arrived in Perugia on 5 May, the insurrection was growing. It had originally begun as a local protest against a tax for a new civic festival imposed by the French-backed republican and, supposedly, atheistic government. A local leader, Egidio Vincente, took command, ordered the villagers and peasants to arm themselves and the priests of the surrounding parishes to cut down the recently-installed “trees of liberty” and replace them with crosses. The French garrison of 120 men in Civita Castellana on the road to Rome was massacred, and the other tiny garrisons in the northern Papal States were unable to suppress the uprising, which adopted the motto “For Christ, the Pope, and the Emperor.” In addition to the peasants, the uprising soon attracted “poachers, smugglers – all the vagabonds with whom Italy swarmed, and 1,500 galley-slaves who … managed to escape the prisons at Cività Vecchia.”

This insurrection reflected the pattern that the French would encounter throughout their campaign in central and southern Italy. First, they secured an easy occupation with the support of the more liberal locals; then excessive extortion followed, or plain looting by, or at the direction of, the government’s agents (and sometimes by the underpaid, underfed French troops). Finally, the peasants rose up, led by their local clergy, and soon joined by the less respectable elements of the community, a series of ambushes, skirmishes, and reprisals occurred that grew increasingly bloody and barbaric with each repetition. This spiraling violence and subsequent Italian revolts during this campaign made a profound impression on Thiébault that influenced many actions in later years.

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3 Ibid., II, 209. Cività Vecchia was a major port on the coast a few miles north of Rome.
Figure 4. Italian Campaigns. (Map by R. Godfrey-Sigler.)
Within a few days, the French restored order to the region, driving the leaders of the rebellion into the neighboring Duchy of Tuscany and recapturing the town of Civita Castellana. There they found three survivors of the garrison, two of whom had hidden in the sewers and a third who had been saved by the superior of a convent. What followed was a lesson that Thiébault took with him to Spain years later. Despite a plea for clemency by the town elders, the French sacked the town, with attendant murders and rapes. Thiébault later wrote:

In war some decisions are perplexing. After the horrors committed against our soldiers and supporters in which many of the rabble took some part, should the city be sacked as a punishment or an example? On the other hand, should a large number of innocents (in fact, if not in intent) be included in the reprisals? In similar cases, I have always thought not, so that even after capture by storm, no place has ever been sacked while I was in command.  

During the urban fighting, Thiébault’s horse had been shot and Thiébault had injured his foot in the fall. He was unable to walk for two weeks, thus missing any chance he might have had to rejoin Desaix, who sailed for Egypt from Cività Vecchia on 26 May. General Saint-Cyr decided to make the new division a permanent part of the Army, and Thiébault remained as its chief of staff when General Valette was replaced by General Gaspard Amédée Gardanne on 6 June.

The area that Thiébault’s division had to police included most of central Italy from just above Rome north to the borders of Modena and the Duchy of Tuscany and extended east through the Apennine Mountains to include the province of Ancona on the Adriatic Sea. The next rebellion broke out only four days after General Gardanne took command, this time high up in the Apennines. Gardanne and Thiébault led a column that quickly suppressed the outbreak. In the next few weeks, however, the division changed commanders several times, and Thiébault found himself under the command of General

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4 Ibid., II, 212.

5 This Gardanne later supported Napoleon Bonaparte in his confrontation with the Council of Five Hundred on 18 brumaire. He is not to be confused with General Claude-Matthieu Gardanne, who became Napoleon’s Ambassador to Persia in 1807 and was with Masséna’s Army of Portugal in 1811.
Joseph Marie Casabianca. At about the same time, the Directory relieved General Saint-Cyr and replaced him with General Jean-Etienne Championnet from the Army of the Rhine. Championnet was delayed, however, and, in the interim, the future Marshal, Jacques Etienne Joseph Macdonald, the senior division commander, became acting commander in chief in Rome.

Throughout July and August, local insurrections continued to erupt in the area. Towards the end of August, a fairly serious rebellion with cross-border support from Abruzzi Province broke out around Spoleto, about thirty miles southeast of Perugia in the Apennines. Thiébault volunteered to command the column sent to suppress the uprising. As they passed through the countryside, the troops observed that every village had its “tree of liberty,” as ordered by the republicans of the new Roman Republic. Yet each tree was topped, not with the usual liberty cap, but with a cross. Thiébault was able to disarm the villages around Spoleto without any serious fighting, and, by enforcing strict discipline on his troops, he prevented looting. He also made a special point to protect the convents and to call upon the mother-superiors to make sure there were no problems with his troops. He was less gentle with the monks and the monasteries, which “most ardently fomented the rebellion and, in view of this, were punished by my quartering troops there.” These efforts to maintain discipline earned Thiébault praise from the Prefect of Spoleto and the village mayors, and that good impression enabled him to set up an espionage network operating across the border into the neighboring Neapolitan-controlled province of Abruzzi that would soon prove its worth.

In late September or early October, Thiébault took a two-week leave in Rome. While there, he called on the acting commander in chief, General Macdonald, whom he had not yet met. Thiébault informed Macdonald of the intelligence his network was obtaining from Abruzzi concerning Neapolitan military preparations and predicted that

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6 General Casabianca was a Corsican, and consequently enjoyed Bonaparte’s indulgence through a long, if undistinguished, career. Thiébault had little respect for him (“the most wretched général de division under whom French soldiers have ever been reduced to serving,” and always referred to him as “General C---” in his memoirs. See Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 222.

7 Ibid., II, 235.
the Neapolitans would attack without warning. Macdonald dismissed Thiébault’s prediction, “making more of a joke of it than a general in his position should.”8 In fact, Macdonald was aware of the Neapolitan’s military build-up and made numerous efforts to stockpile supplies and ammunition.9 He apparently did not, however expect a surprise attack, and even after he took command of the division protecting Rome when the new general in chief arrived, he did not deploy his troops to meet this threat.

Returning to division headquarters in Perugia, Thiébault continued to receive intelligence reports of the Neapolitan preparations. He forwarded these reports to Macdonald’s chief of staff in Rome who appeared to ignore them, and Thiébault urged his immediate commander, General Casabianca, to prepare for a possible attack. Thiébault argued that sealed orders should be sent to subordinate commanders, outlining routes, assembly points, and defensive positions in the event of an attack. Initially, Casabianca thought that such efforts would be useless, but when Thiébault said that he would send provisional orders under his own authority as chief of staff unless specifically forbidden in writing, Casabianca grudgingly agreed.

Casabianca was probably glad he did. On 22 October 1798, Macdonald wrote to him that:

The rumors of war, the hostile preparations, have followed with such rapidity that Frenchmen [civilians] and Romans are leaving the capital: my secret reports and correspondence with our Ambassador in Naples and other diplomatic agents have confirmed them…..It is good to take several preliminary precautions which to ensure our security by organizing primary positions until we are sent reinforcements.10

Despite almost certain intelligence that the Neapolitans were planning a surprise attack, Macdonald apparently took few precautions himself. In his memoirs, written many years later, he said: “The Neapolitans, to the number of 70,000 or 80,000 men

8 Ibid., II, 242.
10 Macdonald to Casabianca, 22 October 1798, quoted in Jean Étienne Championnet, Souvenirs du général Championnet (Paris, 1904), 246.
marched to the extreme edge of all their frontiers, which I caused to be feebly (sic) watched and guarded. Everything pointed to a speedy outbreak of hostilities.”

General Championnet finally reached Rome on 20 November and took command of the Army of Rome. General Macdonald, who had hoped to be given permanent command of the army, reverted with little grace to command of the 1st Division stationed in and around Rome. Thiébault’s 2nd Division, with headquarters at Perugia, garrisoned the Marches, held the mountain passes through the Apennine mountains, and maintained a small garrison at Porto Maggiore at the Adriatic mouth of the Tronto River.

On 23 November 1798, General Casabianca and Thiébault rode to Rome to meet the new commander-in-chief. Thiébault was favorably impressed with the new commander, who, in anticipation of the Neapolitan attack, ordered Casabianca to move his headquarters from Perugia in Umbria, north of Rome, to Macereta on the eastern side of the Apennines near the Adriatic Sea. A new division under General Louis Lemoine was to be formed to hold the Umbrian region on the western side of the mountains. Casabianca’s division would now be designated the army’s 3rd Division. Casabianca and Thiébault planned to return to General Championnet’s headquarters the following morning for final instructions. In the middle of the night, however, they were roused out of bed by an aide-de-camp who said that the Neapolitans were attacking Macdonald’s 1st Division all along its front. They were required to report immediately to the commander-in-chief.

The Neapolitan attack was, at best, premature. If it had been launched in coordination with the combined Austrian/Russian push into northern Italy the following year, it might have had more success. Yet with the encouragement of the British, King Ferdinand IV of Naples and the Two Sicilies attempted to drive the French out of central Italy on his own. The Austrians sent him General Karl Mack von Lieberich to command his army. The British provided Sir John Acton who, after reorganizing the Neapolitan navy, became King Ferdinand’s Prime Minister and Commander in Chief, and lover of

the queen, Maria Carolina, sister of the ill-fated Marie Antoinette. Sir John was supported by the British Ambassador, Sir William Hamilton, and a British naval squadron under Rear Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson. The actual strength of the attacking Neapolitan army was about 40,000 men, but only a small percentage of these attackers were professional soldiers. The majority consisted of barely trained peasants or the rabble recruited from among the lazzaroni of the slums of Naples.

At the midnight meeting, Championnet said that he planned to abandon Rome and fall back on Civita de Castellana, just south of Perugia. He questioned what would happen to Casabianca’s advanced troops, and was reassured when Casabianca explained that provisional orders had already been issued for their concentration, crediting Thiébault for this foresight. Championnet reiterated his instructions that the 3rd Division shift its headquarters to the east side of the Apennines and coordinate its movements with General Lemoine. Casabianca and Thiébault departed immediately to execute these orders.

On the afternoon of 24 November, a Neapolitan force of some 12,000 men and 30 guns under the French émigré general, Antonio Micheroux, attempted to cross the Tronto River at Acolai. They were opposed by a single battalion of the 3rd Division – about 500 men. The French withdrew in good order up the coast road towards Fermo in accordance with Thiébault’s previously-issued orders. Casabianca and Thiébault brought the rest of the division to the eastern side of the Apennines. Reaching Fermo on 26 November, they reorganized the division into two brigades, one commanded by Général de brigade Jean Rusca, the other by Général de brigade Jean Monnier. The following evening, 27 November, believing that the area was still only lightly-occupied, General

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12 Sir John Francis Edward Acton (1736-1811). He was the grandfather of Lord John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton (1834-1902), the professor of modern history at Cambridge who wrote: “Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

13 A peculiarly Neapolitan social group. “Naples … was, next to Paris, the largest and most densely populated city on the Continent….Typical among the lowest population were the lazzari, chief essence of whose condition was having neither fixed employment nor special habitation. In a population of some 437,000 Colletta puts the lazzari at about 30,000,” See Constance Giglioli’s *Naples in 1799* (London, 1902), 29.

14 Antonio Gaspare de Micheroux (1736-1805).
Micheroux attempted a surprise amphibious landing at Fermo, but this was easily driven off by the troops on picket duty led by Thiébault.

The next day, General Casabianca led a patrol of fifty cavalry troopers and three companies of infantry (about 180 men) south along the coast road. Thiébault, leading an infantry battalion, followed them. About two miles south of Fermo, the patrol encountered the leading elements of Micheroux’s column. The result was an all-day engagement on the narrow coast road and the slopes of the mountains above it. The French won a decided victory, capturing 24 guns, over 400 prisoners, and three flags. According to Thiébault, this first French victory of the campaign flowed from superior tactical leadership by the field grade officers rather than direction by the generals, including Casabianca, who had been slightly wounded in the fighting. As a result of this victory, by 1 December the French were back in Ascola on the border with Abruzzi.  

On 3 December, General Casabianca was relieved and sent to command a rear-area garrison. General Rusca was appointed acting division commander, and Thiébault, who thought that Rusca had performed badly in the fighting on the 28th, considered resigning. He drafted a letter of resignation, but before sending it, showed it to General Monnier, who encouraged him to remain because Casabianca’s replacement would come from the more respected Army of the Rhine. Thiébault later wrote:

Struck by the expression ‘a general from the Army of the Rhine’ which promised order and method, I at once drew up situation, terrain, and unit status reports, suitable for briefing the general, for I took pride in demonstrating that the division possessed a chief of staff, who, although he did not hold the proper grade for the position, was both fond of and knowledgeable about his work.

Three days later, General Philibert Guillaume de Duhesme arrived to take over the 3rd Division.

Meanwhile, General Championnet left Rome to establish his headquarters near Viterbo some 40 miles to the north, and Macdonald was left to collect his scattered

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15 Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 262-72.
16 Ibid., II, 294-95.
17 Like Thiébault, General Philibert Guillaume Duhesme (1766-1815) began service as a volunteer in the Army of the North. He was mortally wounded leading the Young Guard in the defense of Plancenoit at the Battle of Waterloo.
division and evacuate the city, already in a state of insurrection. Macdonald later blamed his disorganized retreat on Championnet. Yet it appears to have been more the result of Macdonald’s own lack of foresight. Rome was lost, but when the French commanders learned of the 3rd Division’s victory at Fermo, they decided to make a stand:

After leaving Rome…I encamped at Monterosi, whence two roads branch off, one to Viterbo and one to Ancona….on hearing a rumor of a successful engagement at Fermo on the extreme eastern frontier of the State of Naples, I raised my camp and chose another at Civita Castellana, a good position naturally defended by several ravines and a castle.

In the days that followed, the divisions of Macdonald and Lemonie defeated the Neapolitans in a series of small actions, driving them out of the country. The French reoccupied the city of Rome on 10 December, and King Ferdinand, who had accompanied General Mack and the army on campaign, returned hurriedly to Naples. A few days later, on 21 December, the King and Queen Carolina, accompanied by Sir William and Lady Emma Hamilton, sailed on Lord Nelson’s flagship to Palermo leaving the defense of Naples in the hands of a regent, Prince Francesco Pignatelli, and General Karl Mack.

In the east, General Duhesme immediately began operations against the fortress of Civitella del Tronto on the Neapolitan side of the Tronto River. Thiébault was delighted to work for a commander whom he found organized and aggressive. He was puzzled, however, by the coldness that the General displayed towards him personally. At Duhesme’s initiative, their relationship was one of rigid formality. Yet a few days later, Duhesme appeared in Thiébault’s office, demanded to inspect his letter and order books, and then ordered Thiébault to accompany him to his own office. There, he handed Thiébault his own letter book and referred him to a paragraph in his first letter to Championnet. It said:

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18 Thiébault was a partisan of General Championnet; Macdonald, a rival. In their memoirs, both devote an excessive amount of effort in adversarial descriptions of the withdrawal from and recapture of Rome in December, 1798. Only Championnet’s own Souvenirs du Chapionnet, prepared after his death from his correspondence and official reports, provides a somewhat balanced view of a difficult maneuver.

19 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, I, 201.
I find here only a major as chief of staff. You know, my dear general, that I hold as a principal that one should discharge only functions appropriate to his rank; …I beg you, therefore, to dispose as you will of Major Thiébault, and to send me Adjutant-general Bonnamy, whom I do not think you can greatly need.²⁰

But Duhesme had changed his mind. He told Thiébault:

If they send me Bonnamy, I will make him commander of the advance-guard, but no one will take your place as my chief of staff. However, since you are performing duties above your rank, I shall never refer to you as anything but Adjutant-general. But to obtain that rank, you must earn it, and therefore, you will have to add to your functions as a staff officer those of a combat commander.²¹

After taking Civitella del Tronto on 7 December, Duhesme fortified the bridge over the river that linked Roman and Neapolitan territories and began operations to take the major town of Pesaro thirty miles to the south. Although the defeats at Fermo and Civitella del Tronto had been major military setbacks to the Neapolitans, the countryside rose against the French. Rear Admiral Horatio Nelson described the developments from the Allied perspective:

Michaux [sic – Micheroux] ran away as did all of the infantry…. So great was their panic that cannon, tents, baggage, and the military chest – all were left to the French. …Some ran thirty miles to Pesaro. The peasantry took up arms – even the women – to defend their Country.²²

Concerning this rebellion, Thiébault wrote: “A general insurrection broke out, not only in the Albruzzi, but in that part of Roman territory which formed the department of the Tronto. … Every isolated Frenchman was massacred…. Our bridge over the Tronto and the works defending it were captured.”²³ Nevertheless, Duhesme pressed on to capture Pescaro leaving the rear-area troops to suppress the rebels and reopen his line of communications.

²⁰ Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 299. Adjutant-General Charles-Auguste-Jean-Baptiste-Louis-Joseph Bonnamy (1764-1830). He replaced Victor Léopold Berthier as chief of staff of the Army of Rome on 8 December 1798, and would therefore have been unavailable in any event.
²¹ Ibid., II, 299.
²³ Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 303.
After Pescaro fell on 24 December, General Duhesme told Thiébault that he needed half a million francs to pay the troops and meet other expenses. Thiébault was to organize trustworthy officers to levy this charge on the Abruzzi. Thiébault replied that such an imposition by French officers would only fuel the rebellion. He suggested instead setting up a civil government that could collect the funds under the supervision of the French military but without their direct involvement. Duhesme agreed, and Thiébault quickly created a provisional constitution for the new state. He located a wealthy local noble, Antonio di Nolli, who agreed to head the government and to appoint a governing council. Consequently, the 3rd Division met its payroll and General Duhesme received a hundred thousand francs to meet his “other expenses.” Of this, he shared twenty thousand francs with Thiébault.24

Guerrillas continually threatened the coast road north to their principal supply base at Ancona. Thiébault organized a flotilla of coastal craft to move personnel, wounded, and dispatches. Encouraged by the success of this fleet, Thiébault used his influence to have a friend, Major Louis Coutard, appointed governor of Pescara.25 Together they outfitted three small coastal vessels as privateers as a personal venture. Although they hoped for great returns from raiding of Neapolitan coastal shipping, their hopes collapsed when the three ships encountered a storm on their first voyage. One ship was lost, the other two driven aground and abandoned by their crews.26

In the meantime, General Mack’s Neapolitan Army retreated from Rome and fell back towards Naples in disorder. With the capture of Pescara, resistance crumbled in the east, and General Duhesme’s 3rd Division was ordered to recross the Apennines and join the main army at Capau in front of Naples. This order proved difficult to execute in January due to heavy snow. Much of the division was without adequate shoes, and the

24 The new head of government, a Baron di Nolli, was perhaps less pro-French than he appeared. Thiébault’s share was in long-term bills of exchange endorsed by him. Although Thiébault realized some 14,000 francs, the last bill did not fall due until after the French withdrawal from Naples, and the Baron repudiated it. Ibid., II, 314.

25 Major Louis François Coutard (1769-1852) had a long and distinguished record in Germany, the Iberian Peninsula, and Russia, eventually retiring as a Lieutenant General in 1831. He married Hélèn Davout, cousin of Marshal Louis-Nicolas Davout.

26 Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 309-10.
division commissary said that it would be three weeks before enough shoes could be made. Thiébault proposed a quicker and more imaginative solution:

“You have,” I told the general, “only eight thousand men without shoes, and you are among a population where at least 50,000 are walking around in good ones – ten thousand of them must take off their shoes. … Send around a corporal’s guard and a few men carrying baskets, and call at every house beginning with those best off. …take all the good boots and shoes they find until they have ten thousand pairs.”

Within five days, both brigades had new shoes.

For the march through the mountains, Duhesme reorganized his division into three brigades. The first and second were commanded by Generals Rusca and Monnier, respectively. To command the third, Duhesme passed over several colonels, and assigned command to Thiébault with the comment: “You will lead it very well. And besides, it is because of you we can march at all.”

Together with General Duhesme, the leading brigade under Rusca left the Pescara area on 5 January 1799 for Solmona. General Monnier’s brigade left the next day. Thiébault, however, charged with assembling the scattered garrisons around Pescara and organizing a local national guard to hold the area for the French, did not march until 11 January. Meanwhile, the leading brigades marched against increasing partisan resistance. Rusca had to storm three villages with the bayonet. Monnier was forced to drive off a force of 3,000 insurgents. Attempting to enter Solmona, General Duhesme and his escort were ambushed and the general wounded in the mouth.

Thiébault’s brigade met little resistance, but, upon reaching Salerno on 13 January, he found 61 wounded French soldiers who had been left behind by the earlier French columns, and who feared, with good reason, they would be massacred as soon as the last French regulars departed. Thiébault’s solution, showing the perspicacity his memoirs often ascribe to his solutions, called a meeting of all male residents of the town.

27 Ibid., II, 320.
28 Ibid., II, 321.
29 “At Ascoli, three French prisoners were tied to trees and shot. At Otricoli, 30 wounded, many with arms or legs amputated, were shot in their ambulances.” Extract from a Proclamation to the Army of Rome at Trevi, 10 December 1798, quoted in Championnet, Souvenirs du Championnet, 269.
He explained to them that, while he knew their good intentions, they might not be able to prevent atrocities against the wounded after he left. Therefore, to protect themselves and to avoid possible retaliation, they would help transport the wounded to the French Army. Thiébault reinforced his concern for the welfare of the inhabitants of Salmona with the armed guard that surrounded the meeting, and then assisted in recruiting a party of over 500 stretcher-bearers. All of the wounded reached the French Army encamped outside of Naples safely. The stretcher-bearers were “footsore.”

The leading brigades of Duhesme’s division reached the main army before Naples on 13 January just after General Championnet signed an armistice with the royal governor of the city. Thiébault and his brigade rejoined the division three days later; he then turned command over to the demi-brigade commander and resumed his position as chief of staff.

On the 18th, General Duhesme, who remained in command despite his wounded mouth, took Thiébault to a meeting with the commander in chief. General Championnet congratulated Thiébault on his successful march, especially his success in bringing along the other units’ casualties, and he again remarked on Thiébault’s foresight in issuing contingency orders to his division at the beginning of the campaign.

The two generals then turned to immediate problems. General Lemoine had been sent to Paris with news of the armistice and the captured Neapolitan flags. General Rusca was transferred to the 1st Division to fill the vacancies created by Macdonald’s departure and the injury of his senior brigadier, General Maurice Mathieu. The army was thus reorganized into two divisions, with Duhesme commanding the left division.

Inside Naples, the government appeared to be losing control in the face of widespread rioting and looting. On 17 January, the truce broke down when 6,000 lazzaroni attacked the French camp. The royal government in the city collapsed and the insurgents set up a revolutionary council of four under the leadership of Michele di

30 Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 332-333.
31 From a careful reading of his memoirs, it appears that Thiébault’s provisional brigade actually consisted of a single demi-brigade (regiment), the 73rd Ligne, and the assorted garrison detachments that he collected in the Abruzzi around Pescara.
32 Ibid., II, 361.
Laudo ("Michael the Crazy"), one of the leaders of the *lazzaroni*, and the city was given over to violence and looting.

After several days of reconnaissance and skirmishing around the city, the French Army attacked. On the 21st, Duhesme’s division attacked the northern suburb surrounding the Piazza Capuana and the Porto Capuana. The suburb and gate was defended by a crowd of *lazzaroni* supported by twelve guns.

Two attempts to capture the Piazza failed, so late in the afternoon General Duhesme ordered Thiébault to lead a third attack. Taking the three battalions of the 64th Demi-brigade, the two-battalion 73rd *Ligne*, one battalion of the 30th *Ligne* and the 7th Mounted Chasseurs, Thiébault attacked on a wide front, avoiding the main Capua road, which was swept by the fire of the twelve guns mounted in the square. As the infantry drove in the enemy skirmishers and began to threaten the guns, Thiébault led the cavalry, which he had held in reserve, in a final charge that cleared the square capturing the guns. The Neapolitans opened fire from the surrounding houses. Thiébault sent the cavalry to the rear and ordered his pioneers to break down the doors of the houses. Instead of trying to storm each building, he ordered the troops to set fire to whatever woodwork they could find on the first floor of the houses, especially the staircases. The burning buildings drove the *lazzaroni* out, and as night fell, Thiébault was left master of Piazza Cabuana.

Duhesme, concerned that the troops were too exposed to enemy counter-attack, ordered Thiébault to fall back. Over Thiébault’s objections he repeated the order, and the troops withdrew.\(^33\)

The next day, 22 January, the attack was renewed. General Monnier had been wounded the previous day, so Duhesme no longer had any generals available for brigade commanders, and because of the face wounds sustained at Solmona, Duhesme could not actively lead but remained in the rear.\(^34\) His senior regimental commander, Colonel Jean

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\(^33\) See Giglioli, *Naples in 1799*, 121, for another account of the house-to-house fighting around the Porta Capuana.

\(^34\) Thiébault’s *Mémoires*, II, 380. In his report to the Directory, General Championnet wrote: “General Duhesme, commander of the attack on the left, accustomed to victory and to setting an example, led his troops with both valor and talent. He made a terrible slaughter of the *Lazzaroni* and took all their artillery.” See Championnet, *Souvenirs du Championnet*, 280.
Broussier, and Thiébault assumed command of the troops. Thiébault again took Piazza Cabuana together with eight more guns. Moving through the Porta Cabuana, he held the gate and the surrounding city streets against repeated counterattacks for the remainder of the day. On Thiébault’s left, Broussier battled with Swiss mercenaries the King had left in Naples and took the Madelaine bridge. Meanwhile French troops managed to relieve French partisans trapped in Fort Saint Elmo and to capture Fort dell’Uovo. Sporadic firing continued throughout the night, and the next morning, 23 January, a French assault captured the two remaining forts of the city, Castel Nuovo and Fort del Carmine. As resistance collapsed, the French partisans in Fort Saint Elmo, using religious intermediaries and possibly a sizable bribe, persuaded the leader of the lazzaroni, Michele di Laudo, to call a cease-fire.

That afternoon, General Championnet awarded Major Thiébault a battlefield promotion to chef-de-brigade and adjudant-général, for his actions in taking, retaking, and holding the Porta Cabuana, Thiébault had fulfilled General Duhesme’s expectations as a combat commander.

The nine months between March 1798 and January 1799 were some of the most important in Thiébault’s military career. Beginning as a junior major without assignment, he became the chief of staff of a provisional division through force of circumstance. He then served as a regular divisional chief of staff for five different commanders, including one (Duhesme) whom he highly respected and who provided Thiébault with several professional opportunities. As chief of staff of a division separated from the main army by the Apennine Mountains, he learned the lessons of independent operations. Engaged in countering insurgencies in the Marches and Abruzzi provinces, he learned valuable lessons in fighting guerrillas and pacifying restless civil populations. In his advance on Naples and fighting around that city, he had his first experiences commanding units larger than a battalion and combined arms. Thiébault learned these lessons well, and consequently earned his promotion to the highest of field grade ranks.

35 Thiébault received the line rank of chef-de-brigade as well as adjudant-général, a staff rank equivalent to that of colonel. See Elting, Swords Around a Throne, 676-77, and Six, Dictionnaire biographique, II, 493.
CHAPTER 5
THE ARMY OF NAPLES, JANUARY 1799 – JULY 1799

Thiébault’s first assignment in his new rank was to establish a guard for the Shrine of St. Januarius, the Patron Saint of Naples. The lazzaroni leader, Michele, had demanded this as part of the cease-fire agreement, and he escorted Thiébault and a company of grenadiers through the still-rioting city to the Cathedral, calling out “Rispetto a San Gennaro” and “Viva I Francesci.” There he introduced Thiébault to Cardinal Giuseppe Zurlo, Archbishop of Naples, and Thiébault placed the guard.1 Escorting by Michele and his followers, Thiébault returned to make his report to General Championnet, who invited him to dinner.

That night, to their surprise, the French officers dining with their general were invited to a performance of the “The Clandestine Marriage,” a comic opera by Domenico Cimarosa. There, General Championnet was cheered for a quarter hour by the aristocracy and bourgeois as liberator of the city and, perhaps more truly, guardian of their property against the threat posed by the lazzaroni. With justifiable cynicism, Thiébault commented:

The only possible comparison (to the demonstration) might be found in the frantic enthusiasm, which, four months and one day earlier, had been displayed in the same place for Nelson on his return from the battle of the Nile. … Never had the commanders of a foreign occupying army been the object of so much enthusiasm, so much gallantry.2

This enthusiasm continued, and the upper classes of the city vied to meet and entertain the French officers. Through Michel Lagreca, a young priest whom he had known in Rome, Thiébault established himself in a circle that included Michel’s brother, the Baron de Polignano, his sister, the Duchess of Parabita, and a variety of foreign and French officers and local nobles. Among the latter were the Baron de Ricciulli from the

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1 Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 399-402, and Giglioli, Naples, 122.
2 Ibid., II, 409-10.
Province of Calabria, and his wife, Pauline, a young woman from Milan. She was “a beauty and an inspiration; fashionable with that freshness, that brilliance, those graces which art cannot provide and never copied.” Thebault was in love again. He noted that “little sympathy existed between her and her husband” and thereafter spent as much time as possible attempting “to advance in the (good) graces of Mme. Ricciulli.”

Life in Milan was not entirely a round of pleasure. At General Championnet’s request, Thebault suggested several techniques to disarm and police the city that the general adopted. This included formally naming Michele di Laudo, who had escorted Thebault to the cathedral the day the city fell, as capo-lazzaroni (head of the lazzaroni) with an elaborate uniform, a gratuity of a thousand ducats, and the responsibility of reporting to Thebault every morning on the state of the city. The Neapolitan republicans holding Fort St. Elmo on 23 January had proclaimed a new government, the Parthenopeian Republic. The same day, Championnet formally renamed his army the Army of Naples. The next three days were spent in creating a provisional government; and on 27 January, General Championnet, his generals and their staffs, as well as members of the new government, all gathered in the Cathedral, before which a liberty tree complete with the red cap had been erected, to hear a Te Deum sung. The new republican government began to extend its reach into the rural areas south and east of Naples, and General Championnet began planning for an invasion of Sicily.

On the afternoon of 5 February, an edict appeared on the walls of Naples, signed by Guillaume Faypoult, Civil Commissioner of the French Republic, announcing that

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3 Ibid., II, 412. Paola Giuseppe Ricciulli (1774-1807). She was born in Milan, the daughter of Carlo Giuseppe, Marchese di Medici di Marignano. Her husband was Baron Gaetano Ricciulli del Fosso of Naples.

4 Ibid., II, 413 & 417.

5 Ibid., II, 424. General Macdonald also claimed to have recruited Michele di Laudo in the same way, but he provided less detail and Macdonald did not arrive in Naples until March, 1799, when Thebault was already in Pouille Province with his division. See Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, I, 217.

6 Guillaume-Charles Faypoult de Maisoncelle (1752-1817). He had been Minister of Finance of France in 1795, and was then assigned by the Directory as a representative in Naples.
“all contributions, taxes, and other payments imposed ... by French offices” were to be paid to him (Faypoult) alone and sequestering all public properties. The edict caused riots in Naples and considerable difficulty for General Championnet, who was in the midst of negotiating a “loan” from the Republican government. The General ordered the commissioner and his staff out of Italy. The commissioner, however, went only as far as Rome, where he joined Macdonald in complaining about Championnet to the Directory.

Three days after Faypoult posted his edict in Naples, Cardinal Fabrice Ruffo landed in southern Italy to lead the counter-revolutionary Army of the Holy Faith (Sanfedisti). He was quickly joined by the mountain peasants “who were none so poor but he had on one side of his bed the crucifix and on the other his gun. In these two lay all his faith.” The French thus met a kind of enemy that they would meet again in the Tyrol and in Spain.

To suppress the growing insurrection, General Championnet sent two divisions into the eastern and southern Neapolitan provinces. Duhesme’s division, marched with a 1,200-man supporting column of Republicans under Ettore Carafa, “the only capable soldier on whom the Republic could rely.” They proceeded east into the region of Poullie to pacify the region and occupy Foggia, the regional capital.

On 16 February, Thiébault was instructed to prepare movement orders for the division, with a date of departure from Rome of 19 February. The division marched on schedule, but not before Thiébault was able to arrange a “platonic” meeting alone with Madame Ricciulli. For the moment, Thiébault was more than content.

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7 Giglioli, *Naples in 1799*, 146.
8 Domenico Sacchinelli, priest-secretary to Cardinal Ruffo, quoted Ibid., 174-75.
9 Ibid., 192. It is interesting to note that although Thiébault described the campaign in Poullie in some detail, he mentioned Carafa and his legion only in a footnote. See Thiébault, *Mémoires*, II, 454.
10 In this private conversation, Mme. Ricciulli recounted to Thiébault how, as a fourteen-year old convent girl, she had been persuaded to marry the Baron Ricciulli and move to Naples; she expressed her unhappiness with the arrangement and of the Baron’s extreme jealousies. She ended, however, with the statement: “If, as I do not doubt, you have any interest in me, please be content with the title of ‘friend.’” Ibid., II, 456-58.
The division arrived in Foggia on 23 February. Here, Thiébault’s division was generally successful in pacifying the countryside, but at the cost of dispersing its troops widely throughout the region.

Duhesme and Carafa,...dividing and subdividing their forces, marched cautiously through districts where revolt was imminent or already accomplished, subduing small places on their way or making examples of them…and they were received in Foggia with open arms.…\textsuperscript{11}

With one of these scattered detachments, Thiébault was sent on 26 February to the east-coast port of Manfredonia to arrange for the resupply of the French garrison on Corfu. A commissary and an engineer officer, two companies of infantry, and a small detachment of cavalry accompanied him. While arranging for barges to transport the supplies, he noted a 22-gun corvette laying off-shore in the outer harbor. Being told that it was a vessel of the King of Naples, he boarded and captured the ship in the middle of the night using his infantry and two of the supply barges. Thiébault termed it “an amusing episode for an army officer (officer de terre) to capture by boarding on the high seas a ship of war.”\textsuperscript{12}

Upon returning to division headquarters in Foggia, Thiébault learned that General Championnet had been replaced on 28 February by General Macdonald on orders from the Directory and his division had been ordered to return to Naples. Thiébault was concerned for General Duhesme when he compared the brusque tone of the order to return with an ingratiating letter he received shortly thereafter from the new army chief of staff, Victor Léopold Berthier, brother of Bonaparte’s chief of staff, Louis Berthier. The letter read:

I have received, my dear comrade, your last report addressed to General Bonnamy. You have (correctly) understood the changes in the Order of the Day. I read with great pleasure among the papers of General Duhesme’s division, the reports, and historical journals which you have sent to the chief of staff. I have long known your methods and your military talents. The commander-in-chief also knows and appreciates them. Know that you will receive all that you merit.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11} Giglioli, \textit{Naples in 1799}, 190.
\textsuperscript{12} Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, II, 473.
\textsuperscript{13} Victor Léopold Berthier to Paul Thiébault, 2 March 1799. Ibid., II, 476.
From Foggia, Duhesme had initially protested the orders to fall back on Naples. He thought that he was succeeding in overcoming the insurrection, and that to withdraw at that point would only encourage the insurgents. There followed a flurry of orders and counter-orders. The brigade of Général de brigade Broussier – also promoted after the fall of Naples – remained to pacify the region. The rest of the division returned to Naples, but after Duhesme reached there on 16 March, he was relieved and sent to Milan.¹⁴

Thiébault, who had accompanied Duhesme to Naples, was told to return to Foggia and join General Jean Olivier,¹⁵ who was withdrawing from Calabria, as chief of staff. Thiébault delayed, remaining with General Duhesme until early April when the General left for Milan. Thiébault was on his way to join General Olivier when a courier carrying news of the defeat of General Schérer’s Army of Italy caught up with him. The courier was also carrying orders for all troops to fall back on Naples preparatory to a march north to support the Army of Italy.

From Foggia, Thiébault sent off orders to Major Coutard in Pescara to collect the garrisons in Abruzzi region and withdraw to Florence. Then, collecting Brouissier’s brigade, Olivier’s slow-moving division started back to Naples, arriving on 26 April. The Army of Naples, however, did not start north for nearly two more weeks. Numerous reasons have been given for the delay – supply problems, the necessity of garrisoning the forts, the need to rest the troops. Macdonald wrote: “Every dispatch…exhorted me to

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¹⁴ Thiébault’s concern for General Duhesme had been well-merited. In Milan, Duhesme together with Generals Bonnamy and Brouissier was arrested on charges brought by Faypoult and taken to France for trial together with General Championnet. There, however, they were all acquitted and returned to active service. Championnet, whom Phipps said “could have won a baton (of a Marshal),” died of disease while commander-in-chief of the Army of Italy early the following year. See Ramsey W. Phipps, The Armies of the First French Republic and the Rise of the Marshals of Napoleon I (London, 1926), V, 350

¹⁵ Jean Baptiste Olivier (1765 – 1813), had been appointed to command Macdonald’s old 1st First Division. An enlisted man in the Royal French army, he had received a commission during the revolutionary wars. After being wounded at the battle of Trebbia, 18 – 21 June 1799, he served in garrison positions for the remainder of his life. Napoleon made him a grand officer of the Légion d’honneur in 1804 and baron in 1811.
hasten my movements. I was, of course, anxious to do so, but I could not make greater speed.”

While Thiébault had been in Rome in late March, his relationship with Mme. Ricciulli had taken a peculiar turn. She informed him that her husband had agreed to a separation, and that he would be returning her to her family in Milan. Thiébault was crushed. But when she promised to write him “as a good friend,” he offered to assist them in obtaining passports and an escort. Before he left to join Oliver, he obtained agreement from Macdonald’s aide-de-camp, Adjudant-général Pamphile Lacroix, and the army’s chief of staff, Leopold Berthier, to provide these documents whenever he asked.

When Thiébault returned in late April as chief of staff of Olivier’s division, however, he found that the government of the Parthenopeian Republic refused to issue passports to anyone. As soon as word of the French withdrawal spread, over 500 of the leading families had requested passports for travel. It was obvious that they intended to take their portable wealth with them, thereby driving down the value of the Republic’s paper currency. To restore credit, the government had banned the issuance of passports. Pauline’s husband, the Baron Ricciulli, overcoming his jealousy, appealed to Thiébault for assistance. When Thiébault’s division returned to Naples, he appealed directly to General Macdonald for help in obtaining passports for the Ricciullis. The General said that this would be very difficult, but that he would provide an opportunity for Thiébault to make the case directly to the President of the Republic.

The General had been invited by the government to witness the “Miracle of St. Januarius.” This event traditionally took place on the Saturday before the first Sunday in May. In 1799 that Saturday fell on 4 May. The “miracle,” which was replicated several

16 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, I, 225. Thiébault, however, writing later, blamed the delay on the desire of Macdonald and the commissioners to complete the financial rape of Naples – 75,000 thousand gold louis for Macdonald, between 1,200,000 and 1,500,000 francs for the account of the civil commissioner, plus other large amounts for the personal accounts of the Directors. See Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 497-98. Napoleon, writing on St. Helena, also reproached Macdonald for this loss of two weeks. See “Precis des événements militaires des six premiers mois de 1799,” Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, XXX, 316.

17 Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 506.
times each year, occurred when a solid substance in a glass vial, reputed to be the blood of the martyred saint, liquefied during the ceremony. Aware of the impact of the “miracle” on the superstitious lower classes of Naples, the Republican government sought to associate itself and the French with it. Macdonald ordered Thiébault to attend and to join him at dinner with the government officials afterwards.

The “miracle” occurred on schedule, although Thiébault, in a rather ironic account suggested that Cardinal Zurlo was encouraged to ensure its performance by the threat of a pistol in the belt of Ignazio Ciaja, President of the Republic. In any case, the “miracle” had the desired effect of ensuring, at least temporarily, the loyalty of the masses to the Revolution. Eleonora de Fonseca Pimentel, the unofficial minister of information of the Parthenopeian Republic, wrote in her next edition of Il Monitore napoletano: “Saint Januarius has become a Jacobin.”

At the state dinner following the religious ceremony, Macdonald had Thiébault seated near the president, giving him the opportunity to plead his case for the passports. Overcoming the president’s objections by pointing out that the president had already made an exception for a lady-friend of General Macdonald, Thiébault succeeded in obtaining approval for the Ricciulli passports.

One last hurdle remained to Thiébault’s “realization of a delicious hope,” that Baron Ricciulli and his wife would accompany him to Milan.

There only remained for M. Ricciulli to ask me to travel with them as part of the family, for the disorder in the country made travel without military escort too dangerous. Ricciulli was terribly jealous, but he was also a terrible coward. What his honor wished to refuse, his fear made him accept.

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19 Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 509-10. Macdonald wrote: “I had the miracle of St. Januarius to be worked for our benefit, being myself present on the occasion.” See Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, I, 221. There were a variety of suggestions as to how the “miracle” occurred, but all involved some form of direct human intervention.


21 Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 513.
Preoccupied by his personal affairs, Thiébault did not return to the division headquarters at Maddaloni on the outskirts of Naples until 7 May. He was behind in his job as chief of staff, and the army was to march the next morning. He wrote:

No orders had yet been given and the regiments were distributed in various cantonments, though the division had to have its rations and be off the next morning. I wrote out a list of persons to whom the general movement order and instructions must be sent while dictating the order and instructions. I then rode at a gallop to the cantonments to give the different units verbal warning, handle objections and questions, and order each regiment to send two officers and a fourage party to Maddaloni.22

The withdrawal began on 8 May. Although General Macdonald referred to the movement as an advance to the support of the Army of Italy, it was a retreat. By the middle of June, Naples had been recaptured by Cardinal Ruffo’s Sanfidesi and the Parthenopeian Republic was destroyed.23

The army marched in two columns: one with General Macdonald along the coast road to Rome; the second, with Thiébault and under General Olivier, followed the inland route along the foot of the Apennines. Neither the weather nor the local inhabitants cooperated. It rained incessantly, and the local inhabitants took every opportunity to harass the troops. On two occasions, at the town of San Germano on 11 May and at Isola on the twelfth, the army encountered major opposition. Discipline began to break down, plundering increased, and with it, drunkenness. Supply problems increased as the leading elements stripped the countryside and troops at the end of the column went hungry. At Isola, where a bridge crosses the Garigliano River, the commander of the leading brigade asked Thiébault to lead six companies of grenadiers to seize the crossing and the entrance to the town.24 He led the attack across the bridge and took the town, losing sixty men on

22 Ibid., II, 519.
23 The small French garrison left in the city forts was repatriated to France under terms of the forts’ surrender, but as many as 4,000 supporters of the Republic, including Ciaja, Carafa, and de Fonseca Pimente were executed. Cardinal Zurlo was confined to the Monastery of Montevergine, where he died in early 1801.
24 Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 531. Each battalion contained a grenadier or “elite,” company presumably better disciplined than the “line” companies. Thiébault would have been commanding troops from six different battalions from at least two, and probably three, different demi-brigades (regiments).
the way. The rest of the division followed and pillaged the town despite Thiébault’s efforts to restrain them.25

Thiébault’s journal account of the retreat from Naples makes curious reading. He alternated between being the chief of staff of a division of nearly 6,000 troops and being the commander of a personal column – a strange ménage consisting of his assistant (adjoint), his secretary, his mistress, her daughter, a governess, her husband and a friend, all in three carriages, together with a forage wagon containing his personal equipment, and an escorting squad of cavalrymen. After Isola, that marked the border between the Kingdom of Naples and Rome, the discipline of many French units completely evaporated.26 In his efforts to protect his own party, Thiébault fell behind the division, and did not catch up until just outside of Rome.

The division entered Rome on 16 May, but was immediately ordered on to Florence. Thiébault prepared the orders and the division marched north the next day. Thiébault delayed his departure for two more days, attempting to make arrangements for Pauline Ricciulli and her companions to travel separately, as the Directory had instructed Macdonald to “have the army cease the scandal of the army hauling in its wake a train of women.”27 Thiébault caught up with the division on 20 May and marched with it to Florence, arriving on 26 May. There he had hoped to find Pauline Ricciulli, but she had not arrived. The next day, the division moved to Pistoia.

In Pistoia, Thiébault developed a lung disease that, from his description of the symptoms, appears to have again been pneumonia. In bed for several days, he was


26 Phipps, using Thiébault’s Mémoires to describe the mutinous troops during the march, wrote: “This sort of warfare ruined the discipline of the men: at one time, 300 or 400 men of one regiment intended to plunder and burn the baggage of the headquarters staff, and were only kept off the carriage and the mistress of the Chief of Staff of one division by the arrival of the grenadiers of another.” See Phipps, Armies of the First Republic, V, 274.

27 Thiébault, Mémoires, II, 547. It appears that Macdonald and Thiébault were not the only officers to find companions in southern Italy. Macdonald’s version of the halt in Rome was: “I left there the pontoon train, baggage and various other things that only encumbered my march.” See Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, I, 228.
improving when, on 7 June, Macdonald ordered the army to march to Modena to join the Army of Italy. Thiébault was drafting the movement orders for his division when a letter arrived from Florence. It was from Pauline. Despite his physician’s objections, he rode the 25 miles to Florence. The illness returned, and the next day he was too sick even to call on General Macdonald. The chief doctor and chief surgeon of the army were consulted, and they declared that he was too sick to remain on active service. On 10 June, General Macdonald authorized an indefinite sick leave in Genoa for Thiébault, before marching to Modena where he was injured on 12 June and on to defeat at the Battle on the Trebbia, 17-20 June.

Thiébault took a leisurely five days to reach the small port of Lerici. Pauline, abandoning any pretence of traveling under her husband’s protection, went with him. They took a coastal vessel to Genoa. There, despite Pauline’s care, his health did not improve significantly, and a local doctor decreed that he would recover only with a prolonged convalescence in France. Pauline would return to her family in Milan. Together they traveled to the little port of Savona a few miles west of Genoa. From there, she would take the inland route to Milan, avoiding the dangerous coastal route, the Corniche. He would take a ship to Nice and then travel overland to Paris. They parted on 10 July 1799.28

If the previous nine months with the Army of Rome had been one of Thiébault’s best performances, the six months with the Army of Naples were certainly undistinguished. Preoccupied with his own problems and pleasures, and unhappy with the removal from the army of two commanders whom he greatly respected—Championnet and Duhesme—his performance was at best lack-luster; at worst, self-serving. In this instance, however, he mirrored the performance of the army in which he

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28 The English translation of Thiébault’s Mémoires stated that he left Genoa for Paris on 10 June. See Thiébault, Memoirs of Baron Thiébault, trans. Butler, II, 2. This was obviously an error, as both versions stated that Thiébault wrote the movement orders for Olivier’s division to march to Modena on 5 June, and that he took five days to reach the town of Lerici on the Italian coast before embarking for Genoa. Ibid., I, 490-491. The French text gives the date of departure from Savona near Genoa for Paris as 10 July. See Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 23.
served. And his illness at Modena was at least fortuitous, possibly saving him from the injuries or capture that befell many of his colleagues a few days later at Trebbia.
CHAPTER 6
A LOST OPPORTUNITY

LE DIX-HUIT BRUMAIRE, 1799

Paul Thiébault returned to Paris from Italy with a considerable sum of money – the result of “two bonuses and several economies.”¹ With this money, he bought a small estate on the outskirts of Paris called Sainte-Larme. The estate had originally been the property of Abbé de Tascher, the uncle of Josephine Bonaparte and had been sold in the first divestiture of church properties ordered by the Estates-Général in 1791. Here Thiébault installed his father, his sister, and, despite his Italian dalliances, his wife Betzy. In May of the following year, when Thiébault was back in Italy, Betzy would bear his third surviving child, a daughter named Laure-Mélanie-Lisa.²

Thiébault also completed work on his Manuel des Adjudans-généraux et des Adjoint which would be published later the same year. He had started the draft while under house arrest in Verona in 1797, and he had successfully employed these principles as a divisional chief of staff with the Armies of Rome and Naples. Now it was simply a matter of revising the text and finding a publisher. To write the manual, he used the principles introduced by Berthier to the French Army during the Italian campaign of 1796-1797,³ his own experiences as a staff officer with the Armée du Nord and the Armée d’Italie, and his service as a division chief of staff in Italy. He also acknowledged two specific officers: “I owed all to the teaching and example of Duhesme and Masséna.”⁴

¹ Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 29. Thiébault had received a bonus of 20,000 Francs from General Philbert Duhesme; see Ibid., II, 313, and 30,000 francs from General Jean Championnet after the capture of Naples in 1798. See H. Charles Laurent, “Thiébault,” Biographies et Nécrologies Des Hommes Marquants (Paris, 1846); Ibid., III, 145.

² Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, MS VIII, “Family.”

³ Elting, Sword Around the Thrones, 82

⁴ Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 81.
When Thiébault returned to Paris in late July, he immediately called on the newly-appointed Minister of War, General Bernadotte. Joseph and Lucian Bonaparte, to whom Bernadotte was related by marriage, had supported him for the post. Thiébault remembered the favorable impression Bernadotte had made when they had met two years earlier. “I was curious to know if, in the eminent position that he had attained, I should find him as kindly as he had been at Leoben and Udine…” Thiébault found Bernadotte as friendly as before. Bernadotte offered to aid Thiébault, but he declined, claiming that that his rapid rise from captain to colonel, if further supplemented, would inspire jealousies in others. Bernadotte concluded by offering Thiébault an open invitation to join him at dinner whenever he wished – a mark of regard and an opportunity for patronage. Thiébault, somewhat uncharacteristically, wrote: “As a matter of good taste, I never use this sort of permission without reserve, and I only dined twice with Bernadotte when he offered me direct invitations.”

One likely calculation in Thiébault’s attitude may have been that he quickly learned that Bernadotte had become a serious opponent of his own patron, General Masséna. Although there had been friction between the troops of the divisions of the two generals in the 1797 Italian campaign, the friction did not appear to affect the relations between the two men at the time. Two years later, however, the situation was different.

While Masséna was in Paris in 1798 before going to Rome, there was talk of his candidacy for one of the positions in the Directory. Not surprisingly, this talk caused the current directors to suspect him of political ambitions. Further, Masséna, now commanding the Army of the Helvetia in Switzerland, was regarded as insufficiently aggressive in carrying out the Directory’s ill-conceived strategy that called for a series of simultaneous attacks by the Armies of the Danube, Helvetia, and Italy, against superior Austrian and Russian forces.

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5 Joseph Bonaparte was married to Julie Clary; Bernadotte was married to Julie’s sister, Désirée, Napoleon’s former fiancée.
6 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 29.
7 Ibid., III, 29.
8 See Steven T. Ross, Quest for Victory: French Military Strategy, 1792-1799 (South Brunswick, 1973), for an overview of the Directory’s management of these campaigns.
Despite the defeats of General Jean Baptiste Jourdan’s Army of the Danube at Stockach (25 March 1799), General Bartélemy Schérer’s Army of Italy on the Adige River (5 April), and General Macdonald’s Army of Naples at Trebbia (16-17 June) – the latter which Thiébault had only narrowly escaped – Masséna had managed to hold his position in Switzerland east of Zurich. In two days of heavy fighting on 3-4 June, he turned back the assaults of Austrian Archduke Charles’ army of some 115,000 Austrians, but then on the night of 5-6 June, he withdrew his own army of 79,000 to stronger positions west of Zurich, thereby giving up the city.⁹ Although sound strategy, this move caused serious dissatisfaction in Paris.¹⁰

In Paris, Bernadotte had come to the War Ministry in a reshuffling of the directors resulting from the coup of 30 prairial (18 June 1799). Bernadotte was verbose. In his ten weeks in the office, he produced some 40 addresses, proclamations, and circulars full of stirring appeals to patriotism.¹¹ Yet his instructions to the military commanders in the field were less useful, often resembling propaganda rather than orders. Masséna patiently endured Bernadotte’s directives, realizing that his grand words disguised a chaotic and uncertain grasp of the direction of military operations.¹²

Masséna’s withdrawal behind Zurich had already engendered criticism. Anonymous pamphlets and letters criticizing him now began to appear, possibly inspired by Bernadotte, who, stung by Masséna’s indifference to his proclamations and orders, sought to remove him. On 18 July, apparently with the approval of a minority of the directors, Bernadotte signed a letter replacing Masséna with General Jean Victor Moreau. At the last minute, the order was cancelled, probably through the intervention of Directors Barras and Roger Ducos.¹³

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⁹ Ibid., 177.
¹² Jean Baptiste Koch, Mémoires d’André Masséna (Paris, 1848-1850), III, 299.
¹³ Marshall-Cornwall, Marshal Masséna, 86. General Jean-Baptiste Marbot, in his memoirs also claims that his father, General Jean-Antoine Marbot, prevented an attempt by Bernadotte to relieve Masséna by giving discretion to the courier, Marbot senior’s aide-de-camp, a Captain Gault, to withhold the order if he judged it appropriate. The
Meanwhile, Thiébault rose to the defense of his patron, Masséna. After General Barthélemy Joubert’s defeat and death at the Battle of Novi on 15 August 1799, the Directory persisted in its instructions to Masséna to take the offensive against superior Allied forces. When he refused to do so, the campaign of vilification against him was intensified in the newspapers and broadsheets. After seeing one of these broadsheets, Thiébault became so strident on behalf of General Masséna that a family friend—unnamed, but “politically powerful”—warned him to be less “quixotic” in his defense. The “chiefs of the government,” the friend said, were the source of the attacks and Thiébault would definitely not improve his professional future by speaking so frankly.14

Even Masséna’s brilliant victories over both the Austrians and the Russians in the last two weeks of September did not end the press attacks on him in Paris. One newspaper published a particularly virulent attack that had “emanated from a sufficiently high quarter to deserve a more serious reception than mere contempt.”15 Thiébault, ignoring his friend’s advice, attempted to respond in the same paper. When the newspaper refused to print his reply, he rewrote it as a seven-page pamphlet and published it himself. Titled Des Victoires de Masséna, it was on the streets of Paris on 10 October 1799.16 Thiébault claimed that it received wide circulation.

Thiébault had ended his Des Victoires de Masséna with the prediction that the French would soon recover what they had lost in Italy. It soon became an obsession with him.

courier arrived at Masséna’s headquarters “five days before the battle of Zurich,” “took part in the Battle of Zurich,” and returned to Paris without delivering the order. As the First Battle of Zurich was fought 4-7 June 1799; the second Battle of Zurich was launched on 26 September; and Bernadotte’s tenure as Minister of War was 2 July to 14 September 1799, there is a timing problem here. If true, this would have been one of Bernadotte’s last official acts as Minister. It does, however, reflect Bernadotte’s continuing opposition to Masséna during this period. See Marbot, Mémoires du général, Bon de Marbot, I, 33.

14 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 51.
15 Ibid., III, 54.
16 A copy of Thiébault’s pamphlet, Des Victoires de Masséna (Paris, 1799) is available in the Bibliothèque nationale de France.
I dreamt all night and thought all day of how to remove the disgrace of 1799… . Several plans occurred to me, one of which seemed to make the most sense… . To give more precision to my thought, I wrote it down and had a clear copy made…. I then showed it to my father, who thought it more important than I had myself, and advised me to take it to the Minister of War and the President of the Directory… .

Before Thiébault could take his ideas to the Minister of War and the Directory, however, fate, in the guise of “that small man,” again intervened.

On 14 October 1799, Thiébault first heard of Bonaparte’s return from Egypt. Two days later, Bonaparte arrived in Paris. As a good Corsican, family matters came first, and Bonaparte saw his mother, Letizia, and his brothers, Lucian and Joseph, to listen to their advice that he divorce the indiscreet and now-absent Josephine. The same night, however, he paid an informal call on Louis Jerome Gohier, the President of the Directory. Two days later, on 18 October, he went to the Luxembourg Palace to make his official report to the Directors.

The same morning, Adjudant-général Thiébault called at Bonaparte’s house on rue Chantereine (rue de la Victoire). It was politic to call upon a returning and acclaimed general. Moreover, Thiébault was curious, if somewhat ambivalent, about his old commander:

I had studied him… so I had no doubt that he had been brought back not by patriotism but by ambition, and yet I yielded to the general enthusiasm. … I did not suspect that we were close to the crisis announced by his sudden presence.18

Bonaparte was out meeting with the Directors, so Thiébault left his card. Two days later, Thiébault called again. This time there was a large crowd at the house. He had only a minute to greet and congratulate Bonaparte on his Egyptian campaign. Bonaparte greeted him cordially, and closed their brief conversation with the words “I hope to see you again.”19

On 24 October, Thiébault took advantage of this offer, and again called on the house on rue de la Victorie. In the interim, Bonaparte had been busy. On the twenty-

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17 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 55.
18 Ibid., III, 60-61.
19 Ibid., III, 61.
second, he had dined with Gohier and Abbé Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, another of the Directors. Bonaparte and Sieyès did not get on well. Sieyès remarked afterwards: “Did you notice the conduct of that insolent little fellow towards a member of the government that could have him shot?” The next day, Bonaparte called on Gohier to propose that he replace Sieyès on the Directory. Gohier refused, pointing out that Bonaparte was under the age of forty, statutorily necessary for election to the Directory. In the next day or so, Bonaparte concluded that if he was to rule France, a coup would be necessary. He began to organize a “sort of privy council of supporters” He also began deploying three future marshals that he had brought with him from Egypt. Murat was to ingratiate himself with the cavalry of the Paris garrison; Jean Lannes, the old grenadier, with the infantry, and Auguste Marmont with the artillery.

When Thiébault called on the morning of 24 October, he found Bonaparte speaking with someone whom Thiébault did not recognize. When Bonaparte finished, he invited Thiébault to take a late breakfast with him and the now-reconciled Josephine. They spoke of Thiébault’s experiences in his recent campaign in Italy, and Bonaparte commented: “I understand that you conducted yourself well.” Only later did Thiébault realize the full import of what Bonaparte was saying.

I was surprised that he would say such good things about me, a simple adjutant-général. It is true that at that moment I was occupied totally by his reaction to me. I did not comprehend that he found himself without aides-de-camp, that as he was aware of my service record, and that I would have been able to ask of him to join his aides-de-camp. … Then, the thought did not occur to me.

It was only later that Thiébault realized that Bonaparte was offering him this opportunity. Bonaparte had brought four aides-de-camp with him from Egypt. Chef de

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20 From Louis Bourrienne’s Mémoires de M. de Bourrienne (Paris, 1826), I, 277. Also quoted, without attribution but probably derived from Bourrienne, by Thiébault. See Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 59.

21 This “privy council” consisted of his brothers, Lucien and Joseph, Berthier, Pierre-François Réal, Eustache Bruix, the Minister of Marine, and Charles Talleyrand, the Foreign Minister. See Joseph Fouché, Mémoires of Joseph Fouché (London, 1825), I, 94.

22 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 62.

23 Ibid., III, 62.
brigade Géraud Duroc,24 Major Antoine-Marie Lavallette,25 Lieutenant Antoine Merlin,26 and his step-son, Captain Eugéne Beauharnais. He had gone to Egypt with eight aides, but four had been killed in action or died of disease. Now that he was again going into action, Bonaparte needed a more complete staff, and he was offering Thiébault an opportunity to join him. All Thiébault had to do was ask. As an adjudant-général, he would have been Bonaparte’s second-ranking aide-de-camp.

The breakfast conversation then turned to the political situation in France and Bonaparte was outspokenly critical of the Directory. Thiébault became increasingly uncomfortable with Bonaparte’s “seditious” diatribe, and, fortunately, the meal ended quickly, as Bonaparte’s meals often did. Going to the drawing room, they met General Sérurier, who was in Paris on parole after having been captured by the Austrians in Italy, earlier that year. Bonaparte turned his attention to Sérurier, who would command Bonaparte’s reserve at the Pont du Jour on 18 brumaire, and Thiébault left. As he was leaving the house, however, Bonaparte appeared at the door and said: “Go and give your address to Berthier.”27

Thiébault was in a quandary. On one hand, he recognized the abilities of Bonaparte and the deficiencies of the Directory. On the other, he distrusted Berthier,
especially because of his treatment of Masséna in Rome two years earlier. Furthermore, “the Directors were part of the Constitution to which I had taken an oath; and I held to my oaths and have always had a horror of conspiracies.”

28 Was this rationalization or an overdeveloped sense of loyalty to individuals and institutions? Thiébault said that he went home and consulted with his father. After a short discussion, they decided that Thiébault would say nothing about the conspiracy he believed in progress, but he would not call on Berthier, because he had already reported officially to the Minister of War and the Military Governor of Paris.

In the days that followed, Thiébault went out as little as possible to avoid drawing attention to himself. Then on 6 November he claims to have become ill, so he had only newspaper accounts of the subscription dinner held by the Directors in the Temple de la Victoire (formerly the Church of San Suplice) to honor Bonaparte that same evening. Bonaparte, on the other hand, was very active. On 1 November, he met separately with Barras and Sieyès. With the help of his brother Lucian, Bonaparte arrived at an understanding with the latter for a plan that would overthrow the Directory and replace it with a three-man Consulate – an institution that Sieyès had proposed in a draft of a new constitution. After the coup, the positions would be filled by Sieyès, by another of the directors, Roger Ducos, and by Bonaparte. The plot was implemented by Chef de brigade Duroc, who became a very busy aide-de-camp, carrying the messages and instructions that coordinated the civil and the military wings of the conspiracy.

On the morning of 9 November 1799 (19 brumaire), a family friend called and told the Thiébaults that Bonaparte, accompanied by his generals and staff, had just left Paris for Saint Cloud, located on the outskirts of Paris. There the Assembly was to consider the resignations of three of the Directors on the previous day (18 brumaire). 29 This was to be the crucial test. Either the Assembly would acquiesce in the resignations, leaving Bonaparte in control, or they would outlaw him and the ultimate decision would

28 Ibid., III, 65.

29 Sieyès and Ducos had resigned as part of the plot. Talleyrand had intimidated Barras into resigning. Gohair and General Jean Moulin, the fifth director, refused to resign and were arrested. See D. Goodspeed, Bayonets at St. Cloud (London, 1965), 117-18 and 125-27.
depend upon whose orders the troops of the Paris garrison would obey. Thiébault’s elderly friend summed it up with a classical twist: “You are in memorable times. By tonight, General Bonaparte will be as despised as Cromwell or greater than Epaminondas.”

Thiébault suddenly recovered his health, donned his uniform, and drove to the Directors’ residence at the Luxembourg Palace. The Palace was closed and guarded by troops under General Moreau. (Gohair and Moulin were being detained there.) Refused entry, Thiébault then drove to the Ministry of War, where he was told that the Minister, now Edmond Louis Dubois du Crance, was not there. Unable to find anyone in the formal chain of command in Paris, Thiébault turned his carriage to Saint Cloud.

Arriving at Saint Cloud, Thiébault asked the first officer he met what was happening. The officer replied that nothing had happened yet, because the meeting rooms were not yet ready. After a quick breakfast, Thiébault found the generals and officers of the staff who had accompanied Bonaparte to Saint Cloud; they were in an upstairs salon, speaking in hushed tones. Bonaparte was not present, and even officers Thiébault knew were unwilling to speak to him in more than whispers. The tension in the room was palpable.

It was a long, tense afternoon. As the Council of Ancients and the Council of Five Hundred quibbled over legalities, Bonaparte and Sieyès sat in a cold and empty room that had been a reception salon of Marie Antoinette. Every few minutes, one of Bonaparte’s aide-de-camps, Captain Lavallette, brought them reports of what was happening in the Chambers and elsewhere.

After one of these reports, Bonaparte stepped into the adjoining room where his officers were gathered. He ordered a staff-officer to find a particular major and have him report immediately. When the officer arrived, Bonaparte asked why he had moved one of his posts. The major replied that it was upon orders of his own commanding officer. Bonaparte replied angrily, “There are no orders here but mine. Put this man under

30 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 67. Epaminondas (died 362 BCE) was the Theban general who led the Hellenic Confederation that destroyed Spartan hegemony and ensured Athenian supremacy in ancient Greece.

31 Ibid., III, 68.
arrest.” The strain, which became so apparent shortly afterwards with his garbled speech to the Council of Ancients, was weighing heavily on him.

Thiébault was present at this scene. Seeing the officer abused simply for carrying out his orders, Thiébault unwisely over-reacted. “Are we here to see things like this? I am opposed and am going back to Paris.” As he headed for the door, César Berthier, another brother of Bonaparte’s chief of staff, attempted to stop him. Thiébault stepped past him and returned to Paris. Writing thirty-six years after the events, he summed up his behavior that day:

Within an hour and a quarter, I had returned to my father’s house, having thus substituted an interminable series of tribulations, injustices, and disasters for a future that my role in the Army of Italy, my abilities, and my past feats of arms, had, for one moment, made possible. Sadly, it would be eight more years … before fortune again offered me another chance, when, at Valladolid, the Emperor Napoleon…again considered taking me as an aide-de-camp.

The next day, all Paris knew that the coup had succeeded and that Bonaparte was master of France. When the news arrived, the elder Thiébault’s first words were: “Well, now what are you going to do with you plan of campaign (in Italy)?” “And with myself?” replied the younger Thiébault. Dieudonné urged his son to request a private interview with Bonaparte, both to present his plan and to attempt to make amends for his recent behavior. Concerned that an interview would not be granted, Paul decided to stand on principle. He told his father:

32 Ibid., III, 68-69.
33 Ibid., III, 69.
34 Paul Thiébault, Journal des operations militaires et administratives des siège et blocus de Gênes, (Paris, 1846-1848), II, 29. The third edition of Thiébault’s journal of the siege of Genoa was finished in the year before he died. With this edition, Thiébault published a second volume of “Pièces Relatives et Justificatives,” the first of which is entitled “Extrait du Quartrième Volume de mes Mémoires – 18 brumaire.” Although it corresponds closely with pages 56 to 73 of Volume III of the 1893 Mémoires, this version offered somewhat more insight and was presumably the original Thiébault text untouched by a later editor.
I serve my country and those leaders that the country accepts. Therefore, since General Bonaparte now has that power, I will send my work to him in a few days. Then, to see how I stand with him, I will attend his first audience.36

On 16 November (25 brumaire) Thiébault forwarded his “Plan for a New Campaign in Italy” to the First Consul. A note to his covering letter which he published years later, Thiébault declared: “One will note that this letter does not contain a word relating to his (Bonaparte’s) advancement to power.”37 Nevertheless, it is unrestrained in its flattery, even by the standards of the eighteenth century:

The plan of campaign submitted herewith had been conceived before the happy outcome which resulted in your taking the national oath of office.

Struck by the portents of good fortune and glory which your return has provided, and convinced that nothing useful would escape your notice, since that time I have considered this work as without importance. If I have the honor to address it to you today, it is to furnish me with the occasion to offer you the tribute and admiration which the state of my health does not permit me to express to you directly.38

A few days later, Thiébault attended the first public audience of the First Consul at the Luxembourg Palace. The crowd formed a circle and Thiébault made sure that he was in the front rank. Bonaparte walked around the circle, nodding and speaking with various individuals. As he approached, he noticed Thiébault.

Thiébault painted a graphic picture of this scene that had such an impact on both his psyche and his career. Thiébault reported that Bonaparte’s face turned hard. It was not the face of the general who had followed him out of the house after breakfast and said “Give your name to Berthier.” Bonaparte stopped, looked hard at Thiébault, and said: “It appears that you know the roads of Italy well.” Thiébault stammered a response; Bonaparte took a pinch of snuff and moved on.39

Crushed, Thiébault left almost immediately. In his memoirs, he admits that the scene could have been far worse, but he never worked up the courage to return to the Luxembourg Palace while Bonaparte was in residence, thereby making, he said, an even

37 Ibid., II, 37.
38 Paul Thiébault to Napoleon Bonaparte, 16 November, 1799, Ibid., II, 37-38.
39 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 72.
greater mistake.\textsuperscript{40} Italy was already important for Bonaparte. He had just issued orders for André Masséna to take command of the Army of Italy. Italy would also again soon be important for Paul Thiébault.

The incidents surrounding 19 \textit{brumaire} highlight both Thiébault’s character traits and the personal and political errors he made because of them. If Napoleon actually was considering offering Thiébault a position on his personal staff, how would Thiébault have reacted to the later events? Bonaparte’s personal magnetism would probably have overcome any lingering institutional loyalties. Of course, only Thiébault’s version of this event exists, but a similar pattern was reflected throughout his life, so it was certainly possible that Bonaparte did hint at the possibility of a position, waiting only for Thiébault to accept the opportunity to ask for it, thereby indebted himself to Napoleon.

Thiébault was loyal, but he expressed his loyalty to ideas and ideals, not so much to individuals. He did not seem to make his choices because disloyalty was the greater evil. He may even have felt a reluctance to owe loyalty to individuals that demanded it, given the turbulence of politics at the time. And sometimes, his loyalty was misplaced. Thiébault’s conflict of loyalties between the failing Directory and the popular and effective Bonaparte and how he resolved the conflict to his own worst advantage exemplify this.

From this time forward, Napoleon recognized and made effective use of Thiébault’s talents for leadership, organization, and administration, but he never provided the sort of timely recognition and reward that Thiébault felt that he had earned.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., II, 32-33; III, 72.
CHAPTER 7

THE SIEGE OF GENOA, JANUARY 1800 – JUNE 1800

On 22 November, 1799, nine days after becoming First Consul of France, Napoleon Bonaparte appointed André Masséna as Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Italy. Masséna resigned his command of the Army of Helvetia at Zurich and traveled to Paris. He arrived on 7 December and reported to the First Consul the next day. For the next twenty days, Masséna attempted to bring some order to the administrative chaos that had reduced the Army of Italy to an unpaid, unsupplied, and undermanned shadow of the army that had crushed the Austrians at Arcola and Rivoli two and a half years earlier.\(^1\)

While in Paris, Masséna was visited by Adjudant-général Paul Thiébault who had served with Masséna at Rivoli as an aide-de-camp and had gone to Rome as a member of his staff in 1798. Masséna, remembering both Thiébault’s courage in action, his talents as a staff officer, and the loyalty exemplified by Thiébault’s public defense of his actions in Switzerland, immediately said: “You belong to my military household. Join me in Genoa as quickly as possible.”\(^2\)

In Paris, Masséna arranged for the other officers on his staff. His chief of staff was to be Nicolas Charles Oudinot, a future Marshal of France.\(^3\) The other senior staff officers reporting directly to the Commander-in-Chief were Marie-Martin-Antoine

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\(^1\) See Koch, *Mémoires d'André Masséna*, IV, 8-11, for an account of Masséna’s efforts in Paris.

\(^2\) Thiébault, *Mémoires*, III, 76.

\(^3\) Nicholas-Charles-Oudinot, duc de Reggio (1767-1847). Son of a brewer, Oudinot earlier had served as Masséna’s chief of staff in Switzerland. Napoleon made him a marshal in 1808; he fought with Napoleon through 1814 but refused to join him for the Hundred Days. A good, solid soldier, he was notable for the number of wounds he incurred (at least 22) and the number of sons and grandsons who became generals of France (5).
Andrieux, the deputy chief of staff; Honoré-Charles Reille; Nicholas-Hyacinthe Gautier; and François Frédéric Campana. Masséna also requested that Général de division Nicholas Jean-de-Dieu Soult, who had served under him in the Army of Helvetia, be assigned as a Lieutenant General to command one wing of his army.

While in Paris Masséna attempted to obtain the logistical support he needed for the Army of Italy. The army had been stripped of many of its best troops by Bonaparte to support his expedition to Egypt in 1798. The Directory fragmented the Army further, detaching large units to invade the Papal States and Naples in their never-ending search for new sources of foreign revenue to offset inefficient tax collection at home. By the winter of 1799-1800, the Austrian and Russian forces of the Second Coalition had forced the French back to the crest of the Maritime Alps, so that they held only the coastal road, the Corniche, between Nice and Genoa. The army had not been paid for five months, there were neither boots nor uniforms, rations were short or non-existent, entire units were deserting. Moreover, the plague had broken out in Nice. Of an authorized strength of 150,000 men, only about 36,000 were present. Of these, only 28,000 were fit for duty.

In Paris, Masséna received assurances that money, men, and supplies would be available, and Bonaparte even instructed Berthier, now the Minister of War, to fulfill

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4 Marie-Martin-Antonine Andrieux (1768-1802). Andrieux became Acting Chief of Staff for Masséna after Oudinout left to join Suchet’s wing and conducted the initial negotiations for the evacuation of Genoa with the Allied commissioners. He died of yellow fever two years later in Santa Domingo while serving with the French expedition under General Charles Leclerc.

5 Honoré-Charles Reille (1775-1860). Made a Marshal by Napoleon, he commanded the 2nd Corps at Waterloo and eventually became Masséna’s son-in-law.

6 Nicolas-Hyacinthe Gautier (1774-1809). Masséna’s aide-de-camp who received a battlefield commission as adjudant-général from Masséna after the second Battle of Zurich. He was a général de brigade and Oudinot’s chief of staff when he was mortally wounded at Wagram.

7 François Fédéric Campana (1771-1807). Eventually promoted to général de brigade (1805) and served until the Battle of Jena, after which he left the army for a civil administrator’s position in Italy.

8 Koch, Mémoires d’André Masséna, IV, 32.
Masséna’s needs.

Nevertheless, despite the promises of Bonaparte and Berthier, little was forthcoming. Thiébault recalled, “He [Masséna] was urgent in his demands, and he was met with liberal promises. Nothing was refused him, the objective being to convince him to start without delay for Genoa; but it did not go beyond words…”

Masséna left Paris on 27 December, traveling first to his home in Antibes for a brief visit, then to the Army’s rear headquarters in Nice. At Fréjus on the way he found a battalion of the Army of Italy that had piled arms and was begging bread from house to house. He restored order, but the next day, he found the same thing happening in other towns on his route.

Thiébault’s orders assigning him to Masséna’s staff were issued by General Berthier on 8 January 1800. Before leaving to follow Masséna, Thiébault called on Berthier and was given one hundred thousand francs to deliver for use in the army’s hospitals. He then departed, accompanied by Major Louis Coutard, his colleague from days with the Army of Naples. Major Coutard had been wounded, captured, and then paroled by the Austrians at Trebbia the previous summer. Thiébault realized there was little chance of exchange for Coutard in Paris, and hoped to secure his exchange once the army was again in contact with the Austrians.

Thiébault followed Masséna south, taking a riverboat from Lyon to Avignon and then going overland to Nice. For part of the way he accompanied the new chief of staff, General Oudinout. Thiébault arrived in Nice just after Masséna had departed for Genoa. After giving the 100,000 francs to the army paymaster, still in the city, Thiébault followed Masséna. Rather than take the difficult 125-mile coast road to Genoa, Thiébault hired a Maltese sperone, a low, eight-oared galley with an auxiliary lateen rig that was usually rowed rather than sailed. By sailing at night Thiébault avoided patrolling

9 Arreté: pouvoir l’extraordinaire donnés à Masséna général en chef de Armée d’Italy, 22 December 1799, Correspondance de Napoléon 1er, No. 4437, VI, 41.
10 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 75.
11 Ibid., III, 79. What Thiébault refers to as a sperone was most probably a small trawler outfitted for smuggling, the sperone being the distinctive beak that substituted for a bow-sprint in several varieties of vessels of the period. This sort of vessel was popular as a smuggling and pirate craft in the Mediterranean in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
British warships and arrived in Genoa with the accumulated dispatches and military mail for army headquarters.

Upon Thiébault’s arrival, Masséna appointed him his military secretary and lodged him at his headquarters. Assisted by two secretaries and the two staff captains (adjoints) whom he was authorized, Thiébault responded to the Commander-in-Chief’s desire for speed and impatience with paperwork by developing a system to handle Masséna’s correspondence. As Masséna’s confidence in him grew, Thiébault drafted more and more of the correspondence, until they had worked out a system that took most of the burden of military paperwork off Masséna’s shoulders.\textsuperscript{12} Although Thiébault characterized his work as “more responsible than that to which my rank entitled me,” it accorded with the description of staff duties which Thiébault outlined in his \textit{Manuel des Adjudants Généraux et des Adjoints}.\textsuperscript{13} In this manual, Thiébault made a sharp distinction between the functions of a chief of staff, whom he envisioned as both a deputy commander-in-chief and a staff director – “a person acting in a double or diversified capacity” – and other senior staff officers – the adjudant-généraux. These officers would head staff sections responsible for specific functions, including handling all but the most sensitive of the commander’s correspondence.\textsuperscript{14}

After the Battle of Novi the previous year, the Austrians had pushed the French back until they held only a small enclave on the Italian coast running along a line north from the coastal town of Recco about 12 miles east of Genoa to the crest of the Maritime Alps, then west along the crest until a point northeast of Nice, where the line turned north to the Swiss frontier. In all, the line extended roughly 200 miles. Most vulnerable was the 60-mile east-west stretch along the crest of the Maritime Alps. Seldom more than 12 miles wide between the mountains and the sea, it was traversed by the \textit{Corniche} but was vulnerable to attack both from the north, and from sea-borne operations by England’s Mediterranean Fleet under Lord George Keith. Opposing Masséna, Austrian General

\textsuperscript{12} Among the Masséna Papers held by the Archives nationales in Paris are numerous documents signed by Thiébault “pour le général-in-chef,” or conducting affairs on his behalf. See France, Archives nationales, Fonds Masséna, AP 311, Cote 86 (Genes).

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., III, 84.

Baron Michael Friedrich Benedikt von Melas commanded 128,000 men in Italy, including some 38,000 on garrison duty.\(^\text{15}\)

Masséna divided his 36,000 men into three wings. The right, under the command of Soult, consisted of the garrison of the city of Genoa under the command of Général de Division Sextius Alexandre-François Miollis (6,000) and a mobile force of two more divisions totaling about 12,000 men under Soult’s direct control. Guarding the line of the Maritime Alps and protecting Soult’s communications were three divisions of less than 13,000 men under Général de division Louis-Gabriel Suchet. Suchet, another future marshal, had been acting commander-in-chief of the Army of Italy after General Jean Championnet died of the plague the previous year and was retained by Masséna. Finally, on the far left, Général de Division Louis-Marie Turreau’s force of 6,000 men covered the mountain passes that led to Savoy south of Lake Geneva and on to Lyon.\(^\text{16}\)

The delay by the Austrians in following up their success of the previous autumn in the reconquest of Italy led everyone, including Bonaparte, to underestimate their aggressiveness. Bonaparte had been developing a plan to recover the lost ground in Italy ever since he became First Consul. By late March, the plan was completed,\(^\text{17}\) and in early April, he formally communicated it to Masséna.\(^\text{18}\) Bonaparte would create and lead the Army of the Reserve through the Alps to surprise the Austrians while Masséna held the enclave in Italy. The Army of the Reserve began to move south from Dijon on 27 April, so Masséna’s mission was simple – to pin down as much of the Austrian Army as possible for as long as possible, while the Army of the Reserve fell upon the Austrian’s rear.


\(^{17}\) Napoleon to Moreau, Plan for the Army of the Reserve, 22 March 1800, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, No. 4695, VI, 259.

\(^{18}\) Napoleon to Masséna, Overall Plan and Instructions, 9 April 1800, Ibid., No. 4711, VI, 221.
By the time Masséna received Bonaparte’s message, Melas had already struck. On 5 April, the Austrians attacked all along Masséna’s eastern and northern fronts and quickly achieved success. Along the coast to the east, French forces were driven out of Recco and back to Nervi within 5 miles of Genoa. In the north, Melas’ forces quickly took the Calibona Pass – a major route inland above Savona, a small fortified port about 24 miles west of Genoa – and then marched to the sea, cutting the Corniche between Nice and Genoa, isolating the garrison in the Citadel of Savona. Masséna, in Genoa together with Thiébault, the rest of the staff, and Soult’s 18,000 men, was cut off from Suchet and the army’s main supply base at Nice.

With Masséna no longer able to communicate freely with Paris, Suchet or Turreau, Thiébault’s correspondence duties were reduced to only a fraction of his former workload. Masséna, therefore, asked Thiébault to keep a detailed account of the siege. Thiébault, however, was already keeping a notebook on the military situation, as he had ever since his first stormy meeting with Bonaparte in 1797. These notes then formed the basis for Thiébault’s Journal des operations militaires et administratives des siège et blocus de Gênes.¹⁹

The actual events of the siege, from the initial Austrian attack on 5 April until the final French withdrawal two months later can be summarized briefly. The Austrian attack split the forces of General Soult in and around Genoa from those of General Suchet who was attempting to hold the mountain passes to the north. The Austrians reached the sea near Savona, about forty miles west of Genoa on the Corniche, cutting the road and isolating the garrison in the citadel. Masséna’s first reaction was to counter-attack in an attempt to unite the wings of his army and regain control of the Corniche. He sent Oudinot by sea with a message to Suchet in an attempt to coordinate a joint

¹⁹ The Journal des operations is necessarily a key document for all later studies of the siege. Others, using additional material, have expanded and modified it. Edouard Gachot wrote of his definitive study of the siege: “A présenter les fait du Blocus, le general Thiébault s’est employé, mais sans être dominé par un souci d’exactitude.” Thiébault was there and wrote extensively, so all subsequent authors have sought to improve upon Thiébault’s exactitude.
attack on Austrian forces around Savona. Oudinot sailed in a privateer commanded by Joseph Barvasto. On 12 April, Soult, with the Geneva striking force, attacked towards the west. For reasons that remain unclear, Suchet failed to attack from the other direction. Soult’s troops, hampered by rough terrain inland and denied the use of the Corniche by Lord Keith’s offshore bombardment, an example of nineteenth century naval gunfire support of ground operations, failed to make progress. The following day Masséna, accompanied by Thiébault, brought forward reserves from Genoa.

In addition to their administrative duties, staff officers were expected to accompany the commander-in-chief in combat and to act in a leadership role on his behalf at critical moments. Thiébault’s first opportunity came during this attempt to reestablish contact with Suchet’s wing of the army. With Masséna and the reserve moving in support of Soult, Thiébault was given command of two battalions and instructed to move them forward in support. Initially, Thiébault encountered a group of 3,000 Austrian prisoners who had overpowered their guards while being sent to the rear. Restoring French control, he continued along the coast road, until British naval guns drove his column off the Corniche and into the hills to the north.

On the coast road, Soult’s attack stalled. Masséna, in a rage, dismissed the commander of the attacking brigade and took command himself. Even

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20 Oudinot stayed with Suchet for the remainder of the siege, although the boat’s captain, Joseph Bavastro returned to Genoa. See Marshall-Cornwall, Marshal Masséna, 107, and Thiébault Mémoires, III, 106. Oudinot’s position as Chief of Staff with Masséna was taken by his deputy chief of staff, Adjudant-général Andrieux.

21 Various reasons have been ascribed to Suchet’s lack of cooperation. There were obvious tactical difficulties, but some authors have attributed it to Suchet’s unwillingness to place himself under Soult’s orders in the absence of Masséna, because they held the same rank. However, Soult’s appointment as lieutenant-général had come directly from the Ministry of War, making him the more senior officer. See Koch. Mémoires d’André Masséna, IV, 122, 365.


23 The unfortunate commander, Adjudant-général Saqueleu, was an old friend of Thiébault’s. They had served together as junior officers in the Belgian 24th Léger Battalion of the Army of the North in 1794. Thiébault claims that he managed to stave
off the court-martial of Saqueleu until the end of the siege, when the issue became moot. Saqueleu died of yellow fever in Santa Domingo in 1802. Ibid., I, 140-41.

Masséna’s inspired leadership was not enough, however, and the attack failed. By the time Thiébault’s troops could reach the front lines through the rough terrain in the hills, the French had already been firmly repulsed. Fighting continued for several days until finally Soult’s wing was forced to withdraw into the fortified lines around Genoa.

For Thiébault, the only bright spot in this action was that an Austrian lieutenant colonel was captured and Thiébault managed to have him exchanged for his friend, Major Louis Coutard. Shortly afterward, Coutard was assigned to command his former unit from the Army of Naples, the 73rd Demi-brigade.

The walls of the city of Genoa had been constructed in the Middle Ages and were no match for modern cannon. But the strength of Genoa lay not in its walls and fortifications but in the surrounding terrain which prevented a besieger from establishing the formal parallels and approaches necessary for a successful eighteenth century siege. To take the city, it would be necessary to either take the surrounding high ground to bombard the city, or starve the city into submission. The Austrians and their English allies tried both methods. By 24 April, the city was completely cut off, and the Admiral Keith, commanding the British naval blockading force, sent Masséna the first demand to surrender. Masséna peremptorily refused it, and Keith retaliated by beginning a naval bombardment of the city.

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24 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 99.

25 The city of Genoa was enclosed by two mountain streams, the Polcevera on the west and the Bisagno on the east. The mouths of these streams were about three and half miles apart on the coast. About three miles inland to the north of the city and separating these two streams was high ground topped by two peaks, the Due Fratelli, (The Two Brothers), 1,850 and 2,000 feet high, one slightly north of the other. Descending from high ground around Due Fratelli were two ridges which follow the course of the Polcevera and the Bisagno, respectively. These, together with the sea, enclosed Genoa in an isosceles triangle of natural fortifications. Along the top of the ridges, a masonry rampart had been constructed in the eighteenth century, and at the apex of the ridges a strong bastion (La Serone) had been constructed. This, in turn, was dominated by the detached Fort Diamante on the northern peak of the Due Fratelli. The seaward side was protected by gun batteries emplaced on the moles protecting the anchorage and mounting guns up to 32 pounders. Outside the rampart topping the ridges were several smaller forts commanding high ground, including Fort Quezzy. See Marshall-Cornwall, Marshal Masséna, 103-05.
Fighting continued throughout the remainder of April, usually small actions along the ridges, punctuated by a major Austrian attempt to take the high ground and the outlying forts overlooking the city on the thirtieth. Masséna, with Thiébault accompanying him, led the counter-attack.

Initially, the Austrian attack isolated Fort Diamante on the crest of the Due Fratelli, and captured three outlying forts that served as satellites to the outer rampart. Masséna personally directed a counter-attack against the key position of Fort Quezzy. Thiébault carried an order to the commander of the 3rd Demi-brigade to attack the unfinished entrance of the fort with his two-battalion regiment. The position was held by two strong Hungarian battalions, and when the colonel commanding the 3rd was seriously wounded, the unit began to fall back in disorder. At this point, Masséna committed his last reserve, two battalions of the 2nd Demi-brigade. Dividing the force into three sections, he sent General Miollis with one battalion to attack on the left to isolate the fort, and Thiébault, with half of the second battalion to renew the attack on the Fort’s entrance. Despite odds of five to one, Thiébault’s troops stormed the entrance at bayonet-point. Masséna led the last half-battalion to join Thiébault, and the fort fell to the French.26 That evening, Thiébault received a field promotion to général de brigade.

In all, Thiébault records a total of 90 separate actions in the 57 days between the first the Austrian attack on 5 April and the opening of negotiations to evacuate the city on 2 June.27 Following his failure to gain the heights above the city in the first week of May, Melas concentrated the majority of his troops against Suchet in the west, first driving him behind the Var River and then forcing that line. On 11 May Melas captured the French army’s main base at Nice. To contain Genoa, Melas left Feldmarschall-Lieutnant Peter Carl Ott with a corps of some 30,000 men to hold the starving 12,000 effective French soldiers left within the city.28

26 Thiébault, Journal des operations, I, 223-27. This was indeed Masséna’s last reserve. Thiébault notes in his Journal that the actual city fortifications including the coastal batteries were held that day by only 80 Frenchmen, many of whom were ill. All others were engaged in beating back the Austrian attacks on the perimeter.
27 Ibid., I, Table 2, 418-32.
28 Marshall-Cornwall, Marshal Masséna, 110.
On 11-13 May, Masséna made a last attempt to break out to the northeast at a point called Monte Cresto. The effort was too much for the hungry and exhausted French soldiers. General Soult was wounded and captured attempting to rally his troops, and the French again withdrew into the fortifications of the city.\(^{29}\)

Although Masséna was able to maintain his lines, the tight naval blockade was starving the city. With the isolation of the city, Thiébault's correspondence duties were non-existent, and he was assigned to collate the ration-issue reports from the subordinate divisions and summarize them for the command-in-chief, while the other senior staff officers were each assigned to oversee the issuance of a specific food item such as bread, meat, or wine. These seemingly routine duties acquired considerable importance as food grew short and the opportunities for hoarding and black-marketing of army supplies increased. Senior staff officers were limited to two horses each, junior officers to one. The remainder was turned over to the commissary department.\(^{30}\)

On 15 April, the French troops were reduced to half-rations – 12 ounces of wheat bread supplemented by meat or cheese. By the end of the siege, the daily ration had been reduced to five ounces of an oily mixture of oats, bran, beans, linseed, and cocoa supplemented by a few ounces of horsemeat – civilians received only half as much, and several thousand Austrian prisoners being held in hulks in the harbor were given even less. Only the wine ration remained constant at a pint and a half a day.\(^{31}\)

The troops supplemented their rations in any way they could, eating cats and rats when they could catch them. There were even reports of cannibalism among both the troops and civilians. Thiébault managed to improve his own rations by two biscuits a day from the stocks of Captain Bavastro’s privateer, which had returned after delivering

\(^{29}\) In his *Journal des operations*, Thiébault is critical of Soult’s insistence on continuing the attack on the 13\(^{th}\) and this criticism has been picked up by other writers such as Gachot. This has not endeared Thiébault to admirers of Soult. For example: “Thiébault, Soult’s constantly carping critic, [my emphasis] says in his *Journal of the Siege of Genoa* that Masséna was unhappy about the Mount Cresto operation…” See Peter Hayman, *Soult: Napoleon’s Maligned Marshal* (London, 1990), 37.


Oudinet to meet Suchet. Thiébault had earlier purchased a quarter-share in the privateer, together with Masséna and Masséna’s personal secretary, Charles-Marie Morin, in hopes of making money from prizes. The privateer never made any money, but Thiébault’s investment return of two biscuits a day from the ship’s stores was definitely preferable to the oily paste that passed for bread by the end of the siege. Thiébault, and presumably Masséna and Morin, shared this bounty at the commander-in-chief’s table, where Masséna and his senior staff were served the same rations as the troops.\(^\text{32}\)

As the siege wore on, it became more difficult to communicate Masséna’s orders, to his detached forces or with Bonaparte himself. Oudinot had managed to leave with orders for Suchet in early April, but failed to return. On 2 May, Adjudant-Général Reille, who had been sent to Paris in early April, slipped through the blockade and brought Bonaparte’s letter written on 9 April outlining the plan for the Italian campaign and enjoining Masséna to do all he could to contain the Austrians in place.\(^\text{33}\) On 27 May, Major Jean-Baptiste Franceschi,\(^\text{34}\) one of Soult’s aides-de-camp whom Masséna had sent with a dispatch for Bonaparte, swam ashore with a reply, informing Masséna that the Army of the Reserve had begun to cross the St. Bernard Pass into Italy.\(^\text{35}\)

The sea route was obviously risky. Lord Keith, as early as 9 April, had threatened to hang or shoot anyone who attempted to communicate with the French.\(^\text{36}\) Overland was even more difficult. In addition to the besieging Austrian troops, military couriers were beset by local bandits and an insurgent populace, a sometimes overlapping category given the poverty to which the inhabitants had been reduced by the war. Thiébault lost

\(^{32}\) Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 105

\(^{33}\) Napoleon to Masséna, 9 April 1800, (two letters), Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 4711, VI, 271, and 274.

\(^{34}\) Jean Baptiste Franceschi-Delonne (1767-1810). He ultimately became a Général de brigade of cavalry and died in captivity in Spain in 1810. See Six, Dictionnaire biographique, I, 465.

\(^{35}\) Napoleon to Masséna, 14 May 1800, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 4795, VI, 354.

\(^{36}\) Kevin McCrainie. “A Damned Sullen Old Scotchman” – The Life and Career of Admiral George Keith Elphinstone, Viscount Keith, 1746-1823, (Florida State University, 2001), 175.
one of his own assistants who was captured (along with four other couriers) while attempting to deliver a message to General Soult. Nevertheless, not all communications in or out of the city were stopped. Thiébault managed to remain in touch with Pauline de Ricciulli, who had returned to Milan after parting with Thiébault in Genoa the previous summer. In Genoa, Thiébault found a smuggler who, for a price, carried messages, written “in Italian, without signature, and without address,” between the lovers. In his memoirs, Thiébault concludes: “Although General Masséna and his lieutenants were not able to communicate even with their advanced posts, I was able to write Milan twice and receive replies; which proves again that the devices of war are not as clever as the devices of love.”

Masséna had received repeated requests to surrender from both the Austrian and British commanders. Based on the letter from Bonaparte smuggled into the city by Major Franceschi, Masséna believed that Bonaparte could relieve him by 30 May. Rations were again reduced; the civilian death toll rose to 400 a day; discipline began to break down. But instead of relieving Genoa, Bonaparte turned toward Milan in search of the main Austrian army. He would find it two weeks later near Alessándria at the little village of Marengo.

When relief did not come, Masséna on 1 June agreed to open negotiations for the evacuation of the city. Before the French and Allied commissioners met on 2 June, Ott received orders from Melas to raise the siege immediately and join him to oppose Bonaparte and the Army of the Reserve. Ott ignored this order. On the second of June, representatives of the French and Austrian armies and the British fleet met to discuss terms for the surrender of Genoa.

Negotiations continued for three days, but Masséna stubbornly refused to sign anything containing the word “capitulation” and Lord Keith’s representative, Captain Philip Beaver, the British Commissioner, insisted that the five French privateers still in the harbor become prizes of war for the British navy. In the end, Masséna won, even personally persuading Lord Keith in the closing moments of the negotiation to permit

37 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 92.
38 Ibid., III, 104.
him to keep the privateers. The convention was signed on the evening of 4 June. The French Army, at least those who could, was allowed to march out the city gates and back to Nice, with their guns and baggage. Nevertheless, they were forced to leave most of the heavy guns behind because there were no horses left to pull them.

Masséna, Thiébault, and most of the other staff officers returned aboard the privateers with important documents, the remains of the army pay chest, and a number of Genoese citizens who had supported the French and who thought it unwise to remain in Genoa under Austrian occupation. Masséna departed on 5 June for a brief visit with his family at Antibes. Thiébault boarded Captain Bavastro’s ship the same day and sailed for Nice. Before leaving, and in violation of the convention, he smuggled aboard twelve new bronze cannon which had originally belonged to the arsenal of Genoa, not the French Army. These he hid under the baggage of the refugees that he had on board. En route to Nice, the ship was stopped by a British frigate. Fortunately, Thiébault was able to distract the officer leading the boarding party from thoroughly searching the ship, and, by playing on his sympathy for the “gallant defenders of Genoa,” he induced the frigate captain to send him two bags of biscuit, two dozen bottles of wine, two hams, and a fresh salad.39

Upon arrival in Nice, the authorities were less impressed by the “gallant defenders of Genoa.” An officious public health officer escorted by four soldiers, boarded the ship and declared that, as the ship had been in contact with a foreign ship – the frigate – the ship and its passengers had to be placed in quarantine. Having survived plague-stricken Genoa, the returning officers did not feel that fresh English salad represented a serious public health threat to France. Under Thiébault’s orders, they disarmed the health officer’s escort and disembarked en mass. Within a couple of hours, however, Thiébault learned that a formal complaint had been placed against him. He consulted with General Oudinot, the chief of staff whom he found in Nice, and the General advised him to rejoin Masséna immediately. An hour later, Thiébault was telling his story to Masséna in Antibes. Masséna remarked: “OK, OK. Remain with me. We leave tomorrow at 4:00

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39 Ibid., III, 107.
a.m., and the sound of the guns will fix everything.” Thiébault heard no more of the matter.40

The next morning, Thiébault sailed with Masséna back to Nice. There he disembarked and took charge of the general staff’s baggage and equipment, while Masséna, who had a minor wound in the leg, Chief of Staff Oudinot, and Adjudant-général Reille continued in a small boat to Finale, about 20 miles east of Nice. There Thiébault rejoined him and they began reorganizing and refitting the troops who had been evacuated from Genoa. In the meantime, General Suchet and his wing of the Army of Italy had recrossed the Var and began sending out probes in pursuit of the retreating Austrians. Suchet met Masséna in Finale to argue for a rapid pursuit of the withdrawing Austrians and a link-up with First Consul Bonaparte and the Reserve Army now operating somewhere south of the Saint Bernard Pass. Masséna, believing that his efforts to hold the main Austrian force at Genoa had not been adequately appreciated by the First Consul, was not enthusiastic. Thiébault noted Masséna’s response to Suchet’s proposal was: “I have done enough for that little shrimp.”41

Suchet’s proposed offensive did not matter. After the fall of Genoa, General Ott marched his Austrian corps north to join Melas, but most of his troops were too late to reach the main Austrian army in time for the Battle of Marengo on 14 June. The day after Masséna’s meeting with Suchet, word of Bonaparte’s victory at Marengo arrived, and the following week Masséna was instructed to report to the First Consul in Milan. Recently-promoted Général de brigade Thiébault rode with him.

Both Masséna and Thiébault had the right to be proud of their achievements. Thiébault, through a combination of courage, ability, and luck had risen from the rank of captain to general officer in only three years, and Masséna – at Rivoli, at Rome, and at Genoa – had been an important factor in his rise. Masséna had achieved what Bonaparte wanted. He had contained a major portion of the Austrian army until the Army of the Reserve had crossed the Alps and was ready to engage them. Then and now, soldiers and scholars recognize Masséna’s contribution to the success of the campaign. On the day

40 Ibid., III, 107-09.
41 “J’ai assez fait pour ce petit bougre-là.” Ibid., III, 116.
after the Battle of Marengo, as they were signing the Armistice of Alessándria, Melas’ chief of staff commented to Berthier, “You won the battle, not in front of Alessándria but in front of Genoa.”

Thiébault accompanied Masséna to Milan. They arrived late in the afternoon, and Thiébault went immediately to see Madame Ricciulli, who was living in Milan alone, following her husband’s return to Naples some months before. The next morning, Thiébault reported to Masséna and went with him to his initial interview with General Bonaparte.

When they arrived at Bonaparte’s headquarters, Masséna was summoned to an inner room to meet with Bonaparte and Berthier. Thiébault and the rest of Masséna’s staff officers remained in the outer room, occupied by the staff and senior officers of the Reserve Army. Murat who had commanded Bonaparte’s cavalry at Marengo was there as was Jean Junot, who had been paroled by the British after being captured returning from Egypt, and Bonaparte’s aide-de-camp, Duroc. Thiébault was acquainted with Murat, and several other staff officers; nevertheless, he found the conversation very strained. The tension, fueled by rumors already circulating of serious problems between Bonaparte and Masséna, was eased only by an arm-wrestling match between Murat and an artillery major. Then Masséna appeared at the door. “Gentlemen,” he said, “The First Consul is returning to Paris, and I command the army.”

Thiébault was assigned quarters with General Masséna as he returned to the duties of military secretary for the general. Masséna now commanded the greatly enlarged Army of Italy which had incorporated the much larger Reserve Army. “If [these duties]

42 Over a hundred and sixty years later, the distinguished military historian David Chandler wrote: “The business of Genoa proved to be the key to the entire campaign.” See Chandler, The Campaigns of Napoleon, 286.

43 General Jean-Andoche Junot (1771-1813), duc d’Abrantès.

44 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 123. This was not as simple as it appeared. “Bonaparte had intended to nominate his favorite general, [Louis-Charles] Desaix, as his successor in the field, but Desaix had been killed at Marengo. There was no other senior officer with the ability or experience of Masséna.” See Marshal-Cornwall, Marshal Masséna, 119. Thiébault also made this point. See Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 122.
were less important [than in Genoa], they were much more numerous,” he wrote. Thiébault’s duties as military secretary involved all correspondence relating to matters involving the troops, which Masséna had organized into four wings under Generals Soult, Suchet, Duymesme, and Adrien Jeannot de Moncey. To handle these duties, Thiébault was assigned two staff captains (adjoints) and four secretaries.

In his memoirs, Thiébault described Masséna as “precise and demanding” in the execution of his orders. Thiébault’s working day started at 7:00 am “on the dot” and, with an 11 o’clock break for lunch he worked until 1:00 p.m. He then returned to the office at 4:00 p.m. and stayed until 8:00 p.m. This time usually included dinner and a final conference with Masséna before the last letters were signed, summarized in the huge registers and dispatched to their recipients. After dinner, Thiébault would often meet Pauline for an evening of operas, masquerade balls, or promenades, often lasting until two or three in the morning. “It was not easy.” He wrote, “To reconcile military duties with those of love.” Somehow, he also found time to revise and prepare two copies of his Journal of the Siege of Genoa; and to sit with Pauline for portraits by Jean-Baptiste Wicar, a pupil of Jacques-Louis David and a member of the special committee created by Bonaparte to select works of art to be exported from Italy to France.

Thiébault’s memoirs of these times give no indication of the problems that were about to engulf his commander. Although an outstanding soldier, Masséna was a relatively poor administrator. Thiébault’s assistance was invaluable to him. Unfortunately, others abused Masséna’s trust. Technically, the northern Italian provinces

45 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 124.
46 In 1800, returning to France after the Battle of Marengo, Napoleon began to organize his new Reserve Army into the corps d’armée that eventually were adopted for the entire French army. See Elting, Swords Around a Throne, 56.
47 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 126.
48 Ibid., III, 126.
49 Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Wicar (1762-1843). Born in Lille, Wicar was an expert in Italian paintings and antiquities. In 1794, he had been appointed Keeper of Antiquities at the Louvre and was director of the Academy of Fine Arts in Naples under Joseph Bonaparte.
were not conquered territories but neutral states, and so their occupation presented a somewhat different problem. Before leaving Italy, Bonaparte had set up a system of French civilian ministers in each Italian state who were to assess and collect contributions to support the army. This system quickly broke down. Denied sufficient funds to support the army, Masséna turned collection of the financial resources over to his Chief Commissary, Philippe Aubernon. Numerous abuses crept into the system and on 5 August, Aubernon was recalled by Lazare Carnot, now rehabilitated and again Minister of War, to explain the reports of corruption in the Army of Italy that were circulating in Paris. Carnot, who had been supportive of Masséna, began writing increasingly concerned letters expressing displeasure with the state of financial affairs of the Army of Italy. Finally, after interrogating Aubernon in Paris, on 11 August, Carnot wrote two sharp letters to Masséna. The first concerned what Carnot saw as a number of personnel problems within the Army of Italy; the second concerned “the [financial] abuses and malpractices of every kind which occur daily in the Army of Italy.” In the charge that hit closest to Masséna personally, Carnot, possibly on the word of Aubernon, accused Charles Morin, Masséna’s personal secretary, with forgery of bank notes and bills of exchange and he concluded:

I must reveal to you that among the individuals on your staff are mentioned some who are unworthy of your confidence and should even be considered as dangerous.

It is my duty, Citizen General, to inform you of these facts from which you will realize that decisive measurers are urgently needed. The Government is considering these and I shall inform you as soon as a decision has been reached.

Although Thiébault was not directly concerned with the Army’s logistical and financial matters, Morin was a personal friend and sometime business partner. They had been together throughout the siege of Genoa, and in his memoirs Thiébault wrote:

All that concerned administration or relations with the authorities or governments of the countries which we occupied was entrusted, not to me, but to M. Morin, a

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50 Philippe Abernon (1757-1832) had been Masséna’s Commissary during the siege of Genoa. He continued to serve as a commissary officer in various capacities until the end of the Empire.

51 Carnot to Masséna, 11 August 1800, quoted in Koch, Mémoires d’André Masséna, IV, 326.
man of great ability who, during the campaigns of 1799 and 1800, rendered notable service to General Masséna… [The things] that made him so valuable were his forceful ideas, a rare understanding of military administration, and a great ability to provide the troops with all that the country could provide, joined with a talent for speaking and writing with energy, clarity, and precision.\textsuperscript{52}

The “decisive measure” decided by First Consul Bonaparte was to relieve Masséna and replace him with General Guillaume-Marie-Anne Brune, who had been assembling a new Reserve Army in the interior of France. Masséna received the announcement of his replacement at 6:00 a.m. on 22 August 1800. Within twelve hours, he had left his headquarters in Milan, after issuing a low-keyed farewell address to the army.\textsuperscript{53}

When the dispatch bearing this news arrived, Masséna took it to Thiébault’s office and told him that he planned to leave the same day. He asked Thiébault if he could take a copy of his \textit{Journal of the Siege of Genoa} with him. Thiébault wrote, “Fortunately, I had revised one of the copies and brought it to him a half-hour later.”\textsuperscript{54} Thiébault then asked for authorization to return to Paris for reassignment. Masséna granted this request, though Thiébault then asked for permission to remain in Milan for some time rather than accompanying Masséna immediately. The attraction to Madame Ricciulli was still strong.

On leave in Milan, Thiébault became “a stranger to that great machine called an army.” For a time, Pauline appeared to be his primary concern: “I lived only for her; with her.”\textsuperscript{55} Eventually, however, reality intruded upon his idyll. His leave was expiring, and if he remained in Milan, he would be assigned to one of the divisions of the Army of

\textsuperscript{52} Thiébault. \textit{Mémoires}, III, 85.

\textsuperscript{53} Thiébault maintained that Masséna’s relief from command of the Army of Italy was the result of an earlier decision by Napoleon and Berthier, postponed only by the death of Desaix, and he said nothing of the administrative and political problems that plagued Masséna throughout the summer of 1800. In fact, at no time did either Napoleon or Carnot accuse Masséna of anything more than extravagance in the management of the Army of Italy. See Ibid., III, 122 & 129.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., III, 131. This was the version that was published as the first edition of the \textit{Journal des operations}.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., III, 133.
Italy. Already, the new commander, General Brune, was asking question about Thiébault’s availability. Thiébault had no interest in serving under General Brune, “a commander,” he wrote, “who was physically a giant…, and morally a dwarf….” But he was still torn between his desire for his military career and his feelings for Pauline Ricciulli; ambition won out. He had not yet been confirmed in his new rank of *général de brigade* by the government in Paris, and to remain in Italy would risk losing his promotion if Brune failed to endorse it. He decided to leave for Paris. To Pauline, he justified his departure using a letter from his father citing urgent family matters. After a painful scene, they parted. Although Pauline would remain a factor in Thiébault’s life, he would never see her again.

For Thiébault, the siege of Genoa had been the culmination of his military education. For operations, for logistics, and for combat leadership, Thiébault himself wrote: “The siege of Genoa was my best school.”

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56 Ibid., III, 133.

57 It is not clear exactly when Thiébault left Milan for Paris. He received his furlough papers from Masséna on 22 August 1800. Writing about leaving Pauline, he wrote: “Once I recognized that it (parting from Pauline) was inevitable, the need to choose a day of departure was a sorrow impossible to face. In this agony of indecision the weeks passed; the weeks, then the days.” Ibid., III, 136. Therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that he did not return to Paris until late in 1800.

58 Ibid., III, 83.
CHAPTER 8
PEACE AT AMIENS, CONFLICT AT HOME, 1801 – 1805

Thiébault’s life between 1801 and 1805 was punctuated more by personal vicissitudes than significant career change. Though not an immediate problem, his marriage to Betzy Walker was showing the strain of constant and lengthy separations, different backgrounds and lifestyles, not to mention Thiébault’s preoccupation with his Italian lover.

Thiébault arrived in Paris to discover that he was already a twice-published author. His *Manuel des Adjudants Généraux et des Adjoints employés dans les Etats-Major Divisionnaires de Armées* had been published shortly after he had left for Genoa, and the first edition of *Journal des operations militaires et administratives des siège et blocus de Gênes* was already at the booksellers.¹ Dieudonné, Thiébault’s father, had found a publisher even before Masséna arrived in Paris from Italy with the edited copy of the journal, and Thiébault had fifty author’s copies waiting for him in Paris.²

Social duties occupied his first days at home. The day after his arrival in Paris, Thiébault called on General Murat and Murat’s new wife, Caroline Bonaparte, to deliver the bride a gift from General Martin Vignolle, Commander of the Fortress of Milan – an expensive pearl necklace that Thiébault had carried from Italy. Murat and Thiébault had been friends since their days with the *Armée du Nord*, where Murat had once, somewhat

¹ Thiébault was ordered to join Masséna in January, 1800. The first French edition of the *Manuel* was published by the printing-house Magimel in Paris the same year, naming *Adjudant-général* Thiébault the author, and making reference to his service in Italy under Solignac on Masséna’s staff. See Thiébault, *Manuel*, 149. The first edition of his *Journal des operations militaires et administratives des siège et blocus de Gênes*, also published in 1800, styled the author “A French General Officer.”

² Thiébault’s *Journal des operations* was first published in the fall of 1800. It was translated by John Maunde and published in England in 1801 and also republished in French early the same year. The third and final French edition (1846) with a second volume of “Piéces relatives et justificatives” was edited by Thiébault and published just after his death in Paris.
ironically, envied Thiébault his opportunities for advancement as a staff officer, rather his own chances as a simple cavalry trooper. The situation now was reversed.3

After enjoying breakfast with the Murats, Thiébault called on Masséna. The General expressed his thanks for the elder Thiébault's help in publishing the account of the siege of Genoa. Thiébault then asked Masséna about the First Consul’s reception of the book. Masséna recounted:

The day the work was to appear, I received a note asking for a copy and forbidding me to dispose of any others until I had had an interview. The next day, I went to the Tuileries. When the First Consul saw me, he said, ‘I have read The Journal des operations militaires et administratives des siège et blocus de Gênes it is a good piece of work, I am satisfied with it, and everyone else should be.’

Bonaparte’s reaction was welcome news to Thiébault. He had been greatly concerned that, by emphasizing Masséna’s role, especially now that Masséna was in some discredit with Bonaparte, he would risk confirmation of his appointment as général de brigade. The fear that he would not be confirmed continued to haunt him, and he apparently resolved that it was better to be an unconfirmed general than risk the loss of even this title by asking for and being refused confirmation. As a result, Thiébault did not ask Murat, Masséna, or any of his other acquaintances to intercede on his behalf, and he avoided calling on either the First Consul or the Minister of War because such a call could lead to a discussion of his promotion.

In Paris, Thiébault lived with his father Dieudonné and his sister Pauline. His wife Betzy apparently remained with her mother, Lady Mary Walker Hamilton, in Lille, where she had lived while Paul was in Italy. Paul, although he still had neither confirmation of his new rank nor another assignment, pushed her to join him in Paris.

My advice is still that you go to Ste. Larmes when Papa goes and that you return with him to Paris. Answer me in this regard….I still do not have any word of what I will become. The Consul said yesterday that I will not return to Italy. One

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3 “No traces…now remained of the envy that he [Murat] had shown at my position at the camp at Marly [in Belgium].” Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 142.

4 Ibid., III, 142.
sends me to Portugal, the other on the Constantinople expedition…. [I am] if not indifferent, at least resigned. 

Finally, in early 1801, Dieudonné Thiébault brought the matter of the promotion to a head. At a dinner party in Paris, the elder Thiébault met General Junot, who was then Governor of Paris and aide-de-camp to Bonaparte. When they were introduced, Junot, who had met Paul during the Rivoli campaign and again after Marengo, asked why Paul had not called on him. The elder Thiébault replied that his son’s appointment had not yet been confirmed, and he was therefore maintaining a low social profile to avoid the appearance of soliciting favors. Junot replied that that was nonsense and asked that Paul join him for breakfast the next day.

At breakfast, the younger Thiébault met Junot’s new wife, the former Laure Permon and future Duchesse d’Abrantes. He described her as “pretty,” “lively,” “amiable,” and “striking.” After breakfast, Junot asked Thiébault why he was “sulking.” Thiébault replied, “I cannot call on anyone except those from whom I expect nothing.” Junot told him: “Those who do not ask do not get. However good your cause may be, you must plead it yourself.” He told Thiébault to meet him at 9:00 a.m. the next day at Bonaparte’s office in the Tuileries.

The next morning, 3 March 1801, Thiébault employed Junot’s name as a password and was at Bonaparte’s office by 8:55 a.m. Shortly afterwards, Junot and General Edouard Mortier, commander of the Paris Garrison, arrived. Moments later, Bonaparte entered. He glanced at Thiébault, and then ignored him while he discussed other matters with Mortier. When they finished, Junot went over to Bonaparte and quietly said a few words. Bonaparte turned to Thiébault and asked, “You are General Thiébault?” After a moment, the meaning registered, and Thiébault replied, “To be so, I require your confirmation.” “You shall have it. … Good day, General Thiébault,”

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5 Paul Thiébault to Betzy Walker Thiébault, 16 February 1801, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C1, MS V, F-2. Ste. Larmes was a family farm near Amiens.

6 Thiébault, Mémoires III, 154. Thiébault and the Duchess d’Abrantes remained life-long friends. He provided her with a long account of his defense of Junot’s 1807 Portugal campaign when he met Napoleon; it was included in her famous memoirs. See Laure Junot, Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d’Abrantes (Paris, 1893), VII, 427-35.

7 Ibid., III, 155.
Bonaparte replied.\(^8\) Three days later, orders arrived confirming Paul Thiébault as général de brigade, with a date of rank of 30 April 1800, the day that Thiébault had led the storming party through the gates of Fort Quezzy in the hills above Genoa.

Thiébault immediately called on Berthier, both to thank him and to request new orders to return to Milan or at least to the Army of Italy. Berthier, however, simply replied that he did not know the intentions of the First Consul, and that Thiébault should remain in Paris until these were clear.\(^9\) It was not long, however, until Thiébault received orders, not totally to his liking. On 1 April, Berthiér assigned him as commander of the 2\(^{\text{nd}}\) Brigade of the newly-formed Corps of Observation of the Gironde in Poitiers. The Corps was under the command of Bonaparte’s brother-in-law, General Charles Leclerc.\(^10\)

Bonaparte had specifically named Thiébault for this assignment, and far more was implied in this appointment than simply another brigade command.\(^11\) This is clear from a letter of instruction that Bonaparte sent to his aide-de-camp Anne-Jean-Marie-René Savary in Rocheport the same day.

Two squadrons of the 24\(^{\text{th}}\) Chasseurs totaling 300 men, two battalions of the 90\(^{\text{th}}\) totaling 1,000 men, two companies of artillery, 15 artillery artificers and an utility caisson and six guns, leave the 13\(^{\text{th}}\) [geminal or 3 April] for Poitier, where they will form part of the Corps of the Gironde. They can, according to circumstances, be embarked. Général de brigade Thiébault is being sent to Poitiers to receive all these troops.\(^12\)

Though the evidence is not conclusive, Bonaparte appears to be using the Corps of Observation of the Gironde not only to further his objectives on the Iberian Peninsula, but also as a cover to assemble troops for an overseas expedition, most probably an attempt to regain the Capetown colony on the southern tip of Africa.\(^13\) This colony,

\(^8\) Ibid., III, 157.
\(^9\) Ibid., III, 158,
\(^10\) Napoleon to Berthier, 18 March 1801, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 5471, VII, 103.
\(^11\) “5\(^{\circ}\) Order General Thiébault to go to Poitiers to take command of the troops being sent there.” See Napoleon to Berthier, 1 April 1801. Ibid., No 5493, VII, 123.
\(^12\) Bonaparte to Savary, 1 April 1801, Ibid., No. 5495, VII, 124.
\(^13\) O. Troude, Batailles Navales de la France (Paris, 1868) III, 222-23.
formerly controlled by the Dutch, had been taken the British in 1795. With Holland now allied to France, recovery of this colony would threaten Britain’s route to India.

In January, Vice Admiral Eustache Bruix had been sent to The Hague with instructions to formulate a joint plan to retake Capetown using French and Dutch troops and ships supported by Spanish naval units. Napoleon wrote at least four letters on 1 April, including those to Berthiér and Savary naming Thiébault as troop commander. All four referred to preparations for a naval expedition from Rocheport to be commanded by Admiral Bruix, but they carefully make no mention of the expedition’s objective. The letter to General Leclerc spelled out further instructions for him to make a demonstration of his troops in Bayonne, but then to return to Bordeaux and organize a separate force to be placed at the disposition of Admiral Bruix before the remainder of the Corps of Observation marched into Spain.

Thiébault apparently knew nothing of the mission of the combined-arms task force he was to lead nor where it was going, at least initially. Shortly after he took command of the troops in Poitiers, he began receiving “semi-confidential” letters from Admiral Bruix requesting information about the status of the troops and their equipment. Finally, on 5 May, he received an order, “direct from Malmaison” and hand-carried by a senior staff officer, that he was to proceed with his force to Rochefort to embark on a secret mission. He would be told the destination when the expedition was 250 miles at sea. On 13 May, Thiébault wrote his wife Betzy from Rochefort: “I have sad news…. I command the troops who are to embark on the fleet of Admiral Bruix and I leave without knowing my destination. It is a secret mission.”

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14 The colony was returned to the Dutch in 1802 following the Peace of Amiens, but then retaken by the British in 1804.

15 Bonaparte to Forfait [Minister of Marine], 13 January 1801, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 5235, VI, 719.

16 The other two messages are Bonaparte to Leclerc, 1 April 1801, Ibid., No. 5494, VII, 123; and Bonaparte to Bruix, 1 April 1801, Ibid., No. 5496, 125.

17 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 191-92.

18 Paul Thiébault to Betzy Walker Thiébault, 13 May 1801, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C1, MS V, F-2. In this letter, Thiébault also discusses the advisability of
When Thiébault arrived in Rochefort, he met his old friend, Jean Savary, now a general and aide-de-camp to the First Consul. They had served together as young officers in the Army of the Rhine, and as colonels in Italy. Savary had been in Rochefort for some time as Bonaparte’s personal representative overseeing preparations for the expedition. There, Thiébault also met Général de brigade César d’Houdetot, a very well-known general serving on the état-major and attached to Admiral Bruix. 19

Thiébault, always very conscious of rank and protocol, was uncomfortable serving with General d’Houdetot. D’Houdetot was one of the most senior Généaux de brigade in the French Army; Thiébault was the most junior. Thiébault, however, was in command of troops and d’Houdetot was only on the Admiral’s staff. Thiébault expressed his protocol dilemma to Savary, as well as his personal concerns about his family responsibilities and his father’s age (not mentioning the as yet unresolved problem of Pauline Ricciulli). Savary suggested that he write to Bonaparte, simply pointing out the problem in rank with General Houdetot.20 Thiébault sent his letter via one of Savary’s couriers on 13 May. On the 20th, Thiébault received orders to report to Leclerc’s headquarters of the Corps of Observation of the Gironde at Bordeaux.21

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19 César-Louis-Marie-Françoise Ange, compte de Houdetot (1749-1825). General d’Houdetot had risen to the rank of maréchal de camp, a rank comparable to général de brigade, under King Louis XVI and was President of the Assembly of the colony of l’Île de France (Mauritania) at the time of the Revolution. Stripped of his position, he remained abroad until 1798 when he returned to France. He was restored to the rank of général de brigade, and served in a number of staff positions usually relating to naval or port affairs.

20 Thiébault’s family concerns included his new daughter, Laure Melanie Lise, who had been born in Lille on 30 May 1800 while Thiébault was besieged in Genoa. Another personal concern was the unresolved promise to return to Milan and his lover, Mme. Ricciulli, with whom he was in regular correspondence. Laure ultimately married Jacques Marquet de Montbreton, one-time secretary to General Leclerc during the Haitian campaign and later a colleague of Étienne Jouy and historian of the Napoleonic era.

21 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 198. One can speculate how Napoleon received the news that his most recent general of brigade did not want to have the honor of independent command of troops on a secret, foreign mission. Certainly, Napoleon would not have
By taking a fast coastal vessel, Thiébault arrived in Bordeaux late the next day in time for a brief interview with Leclerc before the General-in-chief departed to lead the 1st Division of the Corps of Observation into Spain. Thiébault was given command of the last two regiments of the Corps just arriving in Bayonne, with orders to rejoin the rest of the Corps in Ciudad Rodrigo in western Spain. On 6 June, Thiébault crossed to Irun in Spain with the last brigade of the Corps of Observation of the Gironde.²²

The primary mission of the Corps had already been achieved. On 20 May, the same day that Thiébault left Rochefort to rejoin the Corps, Manuel Godoy, the Spanish First Minister and favorite of the Queen of Spain, had led a Spanish force across the Spanish-Portuguese border and fought a brief engagement with surprised and woefully unprepared Portuguese troops near Elvas, while occupying the towns of Olvença and Juromenha without opposition. Godoy sent the Spanish queen two branches of oranges, claiming the oranges were given to him as tokens of the Portuguese submission. This “war” has henceforth been known as “The War of the Oranges.” On 28 May, Louis Pinto de Sousa, the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs, arrived in Badajoz to negotiate a peace treaty with Godoy and his ally, the French Ambassador, Lucien Bonaparte. Pinto de Sousa resisted the Spanish and French demands until 7 June, when he heard that advance elements of Leclerc’s corps had entered Portugal near Ciudad Rodrigo and were threatening the fortress of Almeida. The subsequent Treaty of Badajoz required Portugal to pay a large indemnity to France and surrender the town and district of Olivença to Spain.²³

Thiébault and his brigade continued south from Irun along the road through Burgos and Valladolid, finally reaching Salamanca on 26 June. He paused there only one

²² “[From Bayonne] will be leaving the day after tomorrow for Salamanca. ‘Paul Thiébault to Betzy Thiébault, 4 June 1801, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C1, MS V, F-1.

²³ Although the 1801 Treaty of Badajoz was modified by the Treaty of Madrid in 1801, it became null and void with the Spanish/French invasion of Portugal in 1807. The District of Olivença was formally restored to Portugal by the 1814 Treaty of Vienna, but even today it remains in Spanish hands despite periodic attempts by Portugal to recover it through the World Court.
day before marching on to Ciudad Rodrigo where he reported to General Leclerc at his headquarters. Here, Leclerc told him that command of his three divisions was already held by three généraux de brigade senior to Thiébault, but offered him command of the “advance guard” consisting of three regiments of infantry, one cavalry regiment of chasseurs, and six guns. This force screened the cantonments of the army around Ciudad Rodrigo and watched the Portuguese forces pending the ratification of the treaty. Thiébault’s headquarters was in the village of Gallegos, about 10 kilometers from the Portuguese fortress of Almeida.

Throughout July, Thiébault’s force remained on the frontier, but he was twice recalled to Ciudad Rodrigo to preside at capital court-martials. In each case, Leclerc made it clear that he wished a death sentence to create an example for the army. The first man was acquitted. The second case was a court of appeal for an already-passed sentence. Again, Leclerc took pains to let Thiébault and the other court members know that he would be pleased if the sentence was confirmed. The general’s position was so clear that Thiébault was unable to find an officer to represent the defendant. Finally someone suggested a sergeant in the 5th Dragoons, then commanded by Louie Bonaparte. Thiébault asked the young sergeant to act as defense attorney, but the sergeant declined, saying that he had just put in a request for a commission and was reluctant to jeopardize his chance for it. Thiébault appealed to his honor and stressed his responsibility for the man’s death should the man in fact be innocent. The young sergeant finally relented, defended the condemned man brilliantly, and the man was acquitted. Fortunately, the sergeant’s commission as sub-lieutenant was already confirmed. Years later, during the reign of Louis Philippe, Thiébault had the occasion to call upon the Director of Personnel of the French Army, Marie-Joseph-Théodore, Comte de Meulan, who reminded the surprised Lieutenant-général Thiébault of that particularly useful lesson he had learned as a young sergeant.24

Thiébault himself was not so fortunate. General Leclerc relieved him of command of the advanced guard and placed him in charge of a brigade of the 1st
Division, commanded by Général de brigade Louis Monnet. On 10 August, this division together with the Corps headquarters returned to Salamanca, and shortly afterwards, General Leclerc, his staff, and the 2nd Division of the Corps returned to France to begin preparations for Leclerc’s expedition to Santa Domingo. In Salamanca, Thiébault became well acquainted with the Bishop of Salamanca, Antonio Tavira. While dining with the Bishop at the Episcopal Palace one day, Thiébault noted the slum that filled the space between the Bishop’s Palace and the great Cathedrals of Salamanca. The Bishop said that he had tried for years to have them removed, but neither pleas nor financial offers could convince the religious order that owned them to give the houses up. After several years, he had eventually given up. Thibault was later to remember this conversation during his second expedition to Spain.

From Salamanca, Thibault took leave to go to Madrid, where he was entertained by the French Ambassador Lucien Bonaparte, watched with interest a bullfight, and met a number of charming, attractive, and presumably available, ladies. Nevertheless, the inactivity of garrison life in Salamanca weighed heavily on the spirits of both officers and enlisted men, and all were relieved when the Corps of Observation of the Gironde was slowly withdrawn from Spain after the signature of the Treaty of London on 1 October 1802. Leclerc, together with his staff, had been recalled in early October to begin organizing the new Armée de Sainte-Dominge. Thibault, now acting division

25 Général de brigade Louis-Claude Monnet de Lorbeau (1768-1816), promoted to Général de division on 27 August 1803.

26 Antonio Tavira Almazán (1737-1807). Bishop of Salamanca 14 August 1798 until his death on 8 January 1807, less than a year before Thibault again returned to Salamanca with Junot’s Corps.

27 Thibault, Mémoires, III, 242 -44, Thibault was still married to Elizabeth (“Betzy”) Walker. In his Mémoires, however, he described his continuing fidelity not to his wife, but to Pauline. “I never wished to betray my fidelity to Pauline to whom my letters continually carried my sentiments of fidelity.” In evaluating both Thibault the man, and the veracity of the Mémoires, even written more than 35 years later, this contrasts with any of several of his letters to Betzy at that time that contain repeated declarations of affection.

28 The Treaty of London between France and England was a preliminary to the more comprehensive Peace of Amiens, signed 25 March 1803.
commander, led the last of the Corps of Observation back to France in November. Leclerc sailed from Brest on 14 December, and the Corps of Observation of the Gironde was formally disbanded 16 January 1802, although Thiébault and others were kept on active duty and at full pay.

Even before reaching Paris, however, Thiébault had an unpleasant surprise. Waiting for him in Bayonne was a letter from his former mistress, Pauline Ricciulli. In his Mémoires, recalled:

In arriving at Bayonne, I found a letter from Pauline. She reminded me in terms that upset me of the promise I had made that I would leave Spain from Barcelona and return to Milan via Genoa. “I expected that this promise would make up for all the others which I had vainly expected.” I had really made this commitment, and had written her so from Salamanca. But duty called. If I had simply remained commander of a brigade in Monnet’s division, I could have found twenty reasons to quit that brigade in Salamanca and disappear for two months. But I received a division to command and orders to take that division to Bayonne.

Thiébault wrote back immediately explaining his reasons and promising that when he returned to Paris, he would do everything possible to be assigned to the Army in Italy. About her reply, he wrote: “Towards the end of my stay in Paris (March 1802), I received a final letter in which Pauline threw my promises in my face and told me of the return of my portrait.” The actual end of “l’affaire Ricciulli” may, however, have been slightly more dramatic. Several months later in December 1802, Paul’s father, Dieudonné Thiébault, wrote Paul from Paris:

Two very large men followed by a servant arrived at my house. Only one named himself as Baron de Nolli, of Abruzzi, Kingdom of Naples. Both were acquainted with you, since on entering they even recognized your portrait….I do not know what they had to say to you, but they are here for a fortnight and they appear to want to see you badly. Someone told them you would arrive soon….

M. the Baron asked me if you were married, if you had children, if your wife lived with you. I told him the truth but without details. It seems that the Princess of Castel-forte, … [resident in Paris] …has a letter to give you personally from

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29 Napoleon to Berthier, 8 October 1801, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 5787, VII, 354-55; and Napoleon to Berthier, 21 November, 1801, No. 5872, Ibid., VII, 415.

30 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 277.

31 Ibid., III, 277.
Madame Ricciulli who is presently in Milan. It seemed to me that all this would be good for you to know before arriving.\textsuperscript{32}

While Thiébault was serving in Italy and during the interlude before assignment to the Corps of Observation in the Gironde, Betzy Walker Thiébault and their two children, Adolphe and Laure, lived with her now-widowed mother, Lady Mary Walker Hamilton, at the residence of her deceased stepfather on Rue Nationale in Lille. On return from Italy, Paul lived with his father and sister in Paris, but visited Lille with some regularity. Lady Mary had left Lille for London on family business as soon as travel was permitted between the two countries by the preliminaries of the Treaty of London (1 October 1801);\textsuperscript{33} Betzy remained in Lille to take care of the Hamilton property. Thiébault attempted to persuade her to come to Paris with the children, but became impatient when Lady Hamilton failed to return. On 18 March 1802, he wrote to Betzy: "Fifteen days ago, my dear Betzy, you told me that your mother would return imminently. Not only has she not returned, but you yourself have no news of her... [and] you have not written her that I propose to receive you in Paris."

He went on to discuss the sleeping arrangements for the children – they would apparently live with his family. He countered her arguments against moving including her frugality and ill health. He concluded: "Adieu, my very dear Betzy. While I scold you, I love you very much and I embrace you with all my heart."\textsuperscript{34}

The day after he wrote Betzy, 19 March 1802, Thiébault received orders to report to Général de division Jean-Jacques Liébert, commanding the 22\textsuperscript{nd} Military District with headquarters in Tours. General Liébert had been chief of staff of the Armée du Nord in

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\textsuperscript{32} Dieudonné Thiébault to Paul Thiébault, 13 December 1802, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C1, MS III, F-1. Baron Antonio de Nolli was an Abruzzi nobleman who had collaborated with the French. Thiébault had arranged for him to be Chairman of the Revolutionary Council of Pescom, in December of 1798 during the Naples Campaign when Thiébault first met Mme. Ricciulli. \textit{L'affaire de la Ricciulli}, while of little historical significance, becomes important in assessing the overall veracity of Thiébault’s \textit{Mémoires}.
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\textsuperscript{33} Lady Mary (London) to Betzy Thiebault, 29 September 1801 and 22 November 1801. Beinecke Library, Hamilton Papers, Series I, Box 1, No. 73 and 74.
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\textsuperscript{34} Paul Thiébault to Betzy Walker Thiébault, 18 March 1802, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C1, MS III, F-1.
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1794 and, together with General Donzelet, had been instrumental in keeping Thiébault from actively serving on the army staff, despite his assignment to it, for fear of “guilt by association” if the Committee of Public Safety learned of it. Now, however, Thiébault was able to convince himself that Donzelet had been responsible for “seven-eighths” of the problem, and he expected no difficulty serving under Liébert.\(^{35}\)

On 25 March 1802, the Peace of Amiens was signed, and all Europe was at peace for the first time in ten years. In May, Thiébault went with his wife and children to the farm that Dieudonné Thiébault had purchased, called Ste. Larmes, about thirty kilometers from Amiens on the road to Paris.\(^{36}\) When Thiébault reported to General Liébert, on 2 June 1802, Betzy was again pregnant. With Thiébault's encouragement, Betzy remained at the farm for the summer. Thiébault, however, would never really return to their life together.

At the headquarters of the 22\(^{nd}\) Military division, General Liébert offered Thiébault command of one of two sub-divisions of the 22\(^{nd}\) Military Division, one with its headquarters collocated with Liébert’s in Tours, the other in Le Mans. At the urging of his aide-de-camp Richebourg, who was from Tours, he chose the former, the département d'Indre-et-Loire.

On 14 July 1802, Thiébault participated in the Bastille Day ceremonies. General Liébert made a speech, a proclamation by the First Consul was read, and a parade followed. Afterwards, a friend suggested that Thiébault accompany him to the home of François Chenais, a former planter originally from Nantes, who had lost his estates in Santa Domingo during the slave uprising of 1792. At the Chenais residence, Thiébault was introduced to M. Chenais’ daughter, Elisabeth Chenais. This young lady had been married at the age of 15 to a lawyer in Tours, but she later divorced and went back to her family. Over the next few weeks, Thiébault saw much of Elisabeth, and once again fell in love.\(^{37}\)

\(^{35}\) Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 279.

\(^{36}\) A. Thiébault, "Histoire de Lady Mary," Beinecke Library, Hamilton Papers, 90.

\(^{37}\) Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 287-295. From this point forward, Thiébault’s Mémoires assumed a somewhat different tone. Elizabeth Walker, his first wife, was never named and only mentioned briefly and indirectly; the affair with Pauline Ricciulli was treated as
On 3 August, instructions arrived from Paris that the Haitian leader Toussaint de L’Ouverture, who had been captured by Leclerc, was being taken from Brest to Fort Joux in the French Jura, and that each military district was responsible for the escort through its respective area. Rather than simply leaving the duty to his aide-de-camp, Thiébault himself rode to out to meet the famous Haitian leader. Thiébault noted that Toussaint still believed that he was going to Paris to meet with Bonaparte and that, despite three overcoats and the mid-August heat, he was already suffering greatly from the cold. Thiébault said that he did not have the heart to tell him of his actual destination.\textsuperscript{38}

In August, Thiébault traveled to Ste. Larmes to oversee some repairs and to follow up on the investigation of a burglary that had severely frightened his wife. After his return to Tours, Betzy, now six months pregnant, decided to return to Lille to be with her mother and younger sister Sophie. Shortly after she arrived, Betzy became very ill. As a result, Thiébault’s father and other family members wrote alerting him to the seriousness of the situation. In response, Thiébault wrote:

\begin{quote}
My very dear Betzy – I received a letter from Catherine that causes me the most lively uneasiness. She tells me that you are very sick. If General Liébert had been here, I would have left immediately to see you, but he is absent and I am alone here.\textsuperscript{39}
\end{quote}

In December, the affair with Mlle. Chenais had progressed to the point where Thiébault wrote a long letter to Betzy asking for a divorce.\textsuperscript{40} He refrained, however, from sending it at that point. Thiébault even managed a one-day visit to see Betzy in a grand but futile passion. Elisabeth Chenais, however, figured prominently throughout the remaining two and a half volumes.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 300-01. Toussaint de L’Ouverture (1743-1803). Bonaparte ordered him imprisoned in Ft. Joux in the French Alps. He died 14 April 1803 of a cold and starvation.

\textsuperscript{39} Paul Thiébault to Betzy Walker Thiébault, 21 October 1802, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C1, MS III, F-1.

\textsuperscript{40} Paul Thiébault to Betzy Walker Thiébault, 15 December 1802; attached to a letter from Paul Thiébault to Betzy Walker Thiébault, 17 April 1803, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C1, MS V, F-3. One can only speculate to what extent the initial decision to ask for a divorce was influenced by the inquiries on behalf of Pauline Ricciulli that Dieudonné had warned Paul about on 13 December 1803.
Lille on 1 January 1803. Just after the visit, Thiebault received word that Betzy had given birth on 4 January to another son, whom she had named Alfred.\footnote{Paul Thiebault to Betzy Walker Thiebault, 6 January 1803, Lilly Library, Thiebault MSS, C1, MS IV, F-3.}

Thiebault’s military duties were minimal, so he continued his attentions to Elizabeth Chenais, to whom he now referred by her Creole nickname, “Zozotte.” He also participated in the local Masonic lodge (where he was actually senior to General Liébert) and \textit{l’Académie des sciences et belles-lettres de Tours}, which had made him an honorary member in May, 1803. A portion of his speech accepting this latter honor provides an insight into Thiebault’s personality and his literary aspirations:

> What work is more honorable and more honored than that to which you dedicate yourselves?...Throughout the centuries, the answer to this is that kings, philosophers, legislators, judges, politicians, and warriors who have their own abilities, aspire to the reputation of author.\footnote{Paul Thiebault, \textit{Discours lu à l’Académie des sciences et belles-lettres de Tours le 13 rarial an XI} (De “Imprimerie de Duhart-Fauvet [Tours ?], 1803) 5. Lilly Library, Thiebault Mss, Additional Manuscripts. During this same period, his letters to Betzy in Ste. Larmes and later in Lille become less frequent and colder in tone, while Betzy’s become more desperate. For example: “I beg you to take a few moments from your great occupations [underscore in the original] to send me some [news].” Betzy Walker Thiebault to Paul Thiebault 30 September 1802, Lilly Library, Thiebault MSS, C2, MS VI, F-2.}

Peaceful pursuits did not long occupy Thiebault. On 10 May 1803, diplomatic relations with England were broken, and on 18 May, England declared war on France. On 22 May, in retaliation for the British seizure of French merchant vessels prior to the opening of hostilities, Bonaparte ordered the arrest and internment of all British subjects in France capable of serving in the militia. In fact, most French prefects interpreted this order to mean all British subjects in France, male or female, although both Betzy and her mother appear to have escaped arrest this time.

On 17 April 1803, Thiebault sent Betzy the letter which he had actually written the previous December asking for a divorce. An acrimonious exchange of letters ensued between them. Thiebault’s father was not pleased. His father wrote him a twelve-page letter of frank criticism and advice.
Do Italians not travel any longer? Are they blind and deaf in their own house? Are they mute here [in France]? Did you come back alone from Spain or else from other places? All around Tours, is there no echo? I know many things, because everyone else knows before me….I learned a long time ago the madness of your easy lifestyle in various places, especially in Italy, in Naples in particular [section blacked out], and after that I learned of the one in Tours who is the last straw. 43

He then went on to discuss the woman in Tours:

I cannot say anything about her appearance 44….She may be lovely but that is not enough for a true attachment. I saw many of these [creoles] in the cities where I lived, and they were pretty and lovely coquettes with whom we could have fun but for whom we had no respect…..She had 100,000 francs from this [her first] marriage and where are they now?...How do you propose to take care of her extravagant tastes and vanity?

And finally, he attempted to appeal to Thiébault's sense of honor:

[What would you think] of a man of 34 years, married for ten years, having three children whose only future is their father, who just divorced to marry one such as she whom I have just described….Tell me what judgment you would make of this man.

That summer as the personal debate continued, Junot, who was still Military Governor of Paris, asked Thiébault if he would like to take command of one of the sub-districts of the 1st Military Division headquartered in Paris. Thiébault quickly accepted the chance, although he had to overcome objections from Zozotte, with whom he was by now deeply involved. On 3 October 1803, he reported to Junot’s 1st Military Division and was given command of the Department of Loriet headquartered in Orleans. On 3 November, he was assigned to command the 1st Division’s sub-division that controlled

43 Dieudonné Thiébault to Paul Thiébault, 10 July 1803, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C1. According to his grandson Adolphe, Dieudonné had very detailed information about the Chenais family and Zozotte’s reputation at least in part from his maid, married to Thiébault’s valet Jacques. See A. Thiébault, "Histoire de Lady Mary," Beinecke Library, Hamilton Papers, 130.

44 Although he was little disposed to compliment her, Thiébault’s son Adolphe wrote about Elisabeth Chenais: "In spite of her faults and vices...[and] without being pretty, she had grace, much spirit, charm and seduction in her voice and manner... . She was frank, well-mannered, grand in all things, and generous." See A. Thiébault, "Histoire de Lady Mary," Beinecke Library, Hamilton Papers, 154.
the Departments of Seine-et-Oise and Eure-et-Loir. Here, he had a choice of locating his headquarters in either Versailles or Chartres, and quite naturally, he chose Versailles.\(^{45}\)

Thiébault had not held his new command long when, on 23 December, Junot asked Thiébault if he would be willing to serve as Junot’s second-in-command on an expedition that was not in Europe and required sea travel, but which would not last long. If he took the assignment, Junot promised that Thiébault would be a *général de division* within six months.\(^{46}\)

Thiébault accepted and left immediately for Rochefort, stopping briefly in Tours to see Zozotte. While in Tours he received the cross of chevalier of the Legion of Honor.\(^{47}\) On 29 December, he arrived at the cantonment at Saintes, located about 30 kilometers from Rochefort. Saintes served as the staging area for troops about to go abroad. There he found two regiments of infantry, two of cavalry, and two companies and a train of artillery. Thiébault had been there only a few days when a letter arrived from Junot saying that he had been ordered to take command of the grenadier division of the new *Armée d’Angleterre* so he would be replaced as commander by General Joseph Lagrange. Thiébault immediately wrote to Junot and to Murat, who had replaced Junot as commander of the 1\(^{st}\) Military Division. To Junot, Thiébault pointed out that he had agreed to this expedition to serve under him; to Murat, he expressed the wish to return to the Paris area and resume his sub-division command in Versailles. Both wrote back agreeing, and in late January 1804, with new orders to the 1\(^{st}\) Military Division, Thiébault started back to Paris.\(^{48}\)

It is difficult to determine exactly what expedition Bonaparte had in mind for Junot and Thiébault. Thiébault gave no further information on the destination. Furthermore, the force that was gathering at Saintes was not large, perhaps 2,000 – 2,500

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\(^{45}\) The Department of Seine-et-Oise was abolished in 1968, and Versailles became the préfecture of a new Department named Yvelines.

\(^{46}\) Thiébault, *Mémoires*, III, 324; however, Georges Six reported the date of the assignment as 14 December 1803.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., III, 325, 367. Thiébault was promoted to the grade of *Commandant* (now *Commandeur*) as part of the ceremonies surrounding Napoleon’s coronation in 1804.

\(^{48}\) Ibid., III, 330, 332.
men. This provided a clue to the probable destination. In late October 1803, Bonaparte wrote to the Minister of Marine and the Colonies, Vice-amiral Denis Décris, the following:

I desire, Citizen Minister, that you collect at Rocheforte and Brest the means of transportation for the Expedition to Ireland. …. I desire to have at Rochefort the means to transport 500 horses and 2,000 men. These, as well as the different squadrons, it seems to me to be prepared to leave on 1 pluviôse [22 January 1804].

Returning to Paris to resume command of his subdivision, Thiébault lingered a bit too long in Tours. “I had planned to spend only a few days in Tours…but the days passed so quickly they seemed to be days only by the calendar. ‘No one,’ Zozotte told me, ‘will carry Versailles away in your absence…’.” Finally, Thiébault decided he had to leave, and called on his former Commander in this division, General Liébert. Liébert gave him a letter to deliver to Général de division Jean-Claude Moreau, which he did the following day, 17 February. Thiébault had never previously met General Moreau, and was completely unaware that on the previous day, Napoleon had ordered the arrest of General Liébert as a member of the conspiracy of Moreau, General Charles Pichegru, and Georges Cadoudal.

After leaving General Moreau (who would be arrested on 25 February), Thiébault called on General Murat as his new commander. Murat was congenial enough, but asked Thiébault where he had been during the past three weeks. He then informed Thiébault that the First Consul had asked who was commanding the Versailles sub-division because of some reported disturbances in the area. When told that Thiébault had not returned from the Cantonment of Saintes, Bonaparte had ordered another general appointed. Murat said he could no longer offer Thiébault Versailles, therefore, but he had reorganized the sub-divisions so that Thiébault would command one that included Eure-

49 Bonapart to Décris, 30 October 1803, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 7233, IX, 86.

50 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 333.

51 Bonaparte to Regnier [Le Grand Juge], 16 February 1804, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 7546, IX, 315. Liébert was arrested and forced to retire, but was reinstated and assigned to the état-major of the Grand Armée in April, 1806.
et-Loir and Loirat. His headquarters would be in Orleans. On 20 February, Thiébault received his new orders.

In Orleans, Thiébault was host, for a time, to some sixty British individuals or families who were interned under Bonaparte’s May 1803 order. Among this group were Thomas Bruce, Lord Elgin, who had removed the marble friezes from the Parthenon of Athens the year before as British Ambassador to Constantinople, and General Count Daniel Charles O’Connell. O’Connell, a French Royalist of Irish extraction, had authored the French Drill Regulations of 1788 while serving in Louis XVI’s Irish Brigade before becoming an émigré and acquiring British nationality.\(^52\)

Between April and June 1803, Thiébault suffered another personal setback. His privateering venture in partnership with Charles-Marie Morin, Masséna’s personal secretary during the Siege of Genoa, had actually taken several prizes that were to be adjudicated in the French Admiralty Prize Court. In April, he anticipated good news from Marseilles, but by early May, he heard that the decision was going against him. Finally, on 17 June, while attempting to negotiate a property settlement with Betzy, he wrote: “The affair of the Corsair is lost. I was obliged to pay back the 4,500 [francs] that I received, and I do not know where in the world to find it.”\(^53\)

On 21 May 1804, Thiébault accepted the oath of fidelity to the new Emperor of France, Napoleon Bonaparte, from officers of the local garrison and local officials. Travel to Paris to participate in the installation ceremonies of the new Emperor consumed much of the following weeks, and despite his father’s bitter opposition, Thiébault

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\(^{52}\) General Count Charles Daniel O’Connell was the uncle of the hero of Irish independence in 19\(^{th}\) century, Daniel O’Connell, and prior to the French Revolution had sponsored Daniel in the Irish College in Douai, France.

\(^{53}\) Paul Thiébault to Betzy Walker Thiébault, 17 June 1803, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C1, MS III, F-3. Earlier fragments relating to this case appear in Dieudonné Thiébault to Paul Thiébault, 30 April 1803, Ibid., C1, Ms III, F-1 and Paul Thiébault to Betzy Walker Thiébault, 8 May 1803, Ibid., C1, Ms V, F-1.
obtained a decree of divorce from Elizabeth Walker on 7 July 1804.\textsuperscript{54} Two weeks later, he married Elisabeth Chenais in Tours.\textsuperscript{55}

After the wedding ceremonies, the couple returned to Orleans. In October, they traveled to Paris to participate in balls and ceremonies surrounding the coronation to the Emperor. They remained in Paris until January when Thiébault was obliged to return to his command. Life was now a round of garrison duties, training, and preparation of troops to serve in the \textit{Grande Armée}. On 14 June, a son Edouard, his first child by Zozotte, was born, and his wife was very sick for over two months. As she started to improve, Thiébault went to Chartres to conduct a regimental inspection. By the time he returned on 30 August, he found both mother and child extremely ill. The little boy died two days later.\textsuperscript{56} Thiébault attempted to console his new wife, who was distraught over the child’s death.

This period of Thiébault’s life included significant career events as well as personal developments that would influence both his reputation as a military officer and his legacy as a historian or memorialist.

As Thiébault returned to Paris, two of his works were being published – the \textit{Manuel des Adjudants Généraux et des Adjoints employés dans les État-major} and his \textit{Journal des operations militaires et administrative des siege de Gênes}. The first volume established Thiébault’s reputation as a foremost French theorist in respect to military staff operations of the time. The second work certainly attracted Bonaparte’s attention and contributed to his confirmation as \textit{général de brigade}. Thiébault then received an immediate appointment to brigade command for what appeared to be a secret overseas mission and later led to his first expedition to Spain under General Leclerc.

\textsuperscript{54} Copy of divorce decree of Paul Thiébault and Betzy Mackercher Walker (also Walcker), 7 July 1804, Ibid., C2, Ms VI, F-7.

\textsuperscript{55} “Mariage de Paul Charles Dieudonne Thiébault, fils de Dieudonné Thiébault, and de Nicole François Dozzis, avec Elisabeth Chenais, fille de François Chenais et de Elisabeth Pondary, le 21 juillet 1804 à Tours.” Centre Géneologique de Touraine (Record 37); Index national géné par la Fédération Française de Généalogie; Base Informatisée de Généalogie sur Internet. http://www.bigenet.fr/livraison.php?secelection=E163002447 (11 June 2005).

\textsuperscript{56} Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, III, 404.
On the personal side, however, Thiébault’s preoccupation with his long standing and now long-distance affair with Pauline Ricciulli had continually strained his marriage to Betzy Walker. When Pauline finally broke off their affair, whether because she had discovered that he was married or simply out of frustration with his procrastination, the first marriage to all intents and purposes had already failed, and he quickly found himself another paramour. His marriage to Elisabeth Chenais immediately upon his divorce from Betzy would color the memories included in his Mémoires and embitter the children of both marriages in a manner that appears to have affected their ultimate publication.
CHAPTER 9
THE BATTLE OF AUSTERTLITZ, 1805 – 1806

On 2 September 1805, as Thiébault struggled with the death of his son and the illness of his wife, orders arrived assigning him to Marshal Soult’s 4th Corps of the Grand Armée headquartered in Landau on the left bank of the Rhine. There he would take command of the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Division commanded by Général de division Louis Saint-Hilaire. Since his orders indicated that he was to report no later than 12 September, he left almost immediately, taking time only to send a messenger to Zozotte’s mother in Tours and to arrange for Zozotte to live with their doctor until her mother arrived. Unhappy that the orders pulled him from his family at this important time, Thiébault only later recognized the possible damage to his career implicit in this assignment. He later wrote:

If my mind had not been occupied by more serious matters, I would have been more upset by being placed under the orders of Marshal Soult, who, for the past five years had made no secret of his feelings towards me, and who, given his character and the differences in our ranks, could be fatal to my career.¹

Thiébault’s criticisms of Soult after the 1800 siege of Genoa had been neither forgiven nor forgotten. This became quickly apparent during his initial interview with Soult when he reported on 12 September. Although he was a friend of Général de brigade Charles Morand, who commanded the 1st Brigade, Thiébault pointed out that he should properly command that brigade as the senior général de brigade of the division. Soult abruptly replied that, as général-en-chef, he could assign officers as he saw fit. Thiébault countered that Soult was not a général-en-chef, but corps commander, and insisted on correct military protocol. Soult conceded, but created an “advance guard” for General Morand, so Morand would continue to march at the head of the column.²

¹ Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 412.
² Thiébault and Morand became friends in 1798 when Morand was in Rome preparing for the Egyptian campaign. Morand’s “advance guard” consisted of a single, two-battalion regiment, the 10th Léger (1,500 men) under Colonel Pierre Pouzet. Thiébault’s 1st
March they did. Thiébault wrote: “My division took only a secondary part in this [the Ulm] campaign and my memories of it are more of marching than of fighting.”

On 26/27 September, Soult’s 4th Corps crossed the Rhine, together with Ney’s 6th Corps and Davout’s 3rd Corps on its right and left, respectively. Soult’s corps was in the center of the Grand Armée and followed the army’s line of communications. During the period from 3 to 6 October, the entire right and center of the army pivoted south towards the Danube and began the encirclement of Austrian General Karl Mack in Ulm. Soult’s corps crossed the Danube on 9 October and continued south to Landsberg and Memmingen to capture Austria depots; then west, and finally north again, halting in a blocking position south of Ulm until the city surrendered on 20 October. The corps then took part in the pursuit of the Austrians to the east, recrossing the Danube on 17 November, where it made first contact with the withdrawing Russian forces under Marshal Mikhail Kutuzov. By the end of November, the French army was concentrated around the city of Brunn, in Moravia north of Vienna. The Allied Army – the Russians under Tsar Alexander I and the regrouping Austrians under Emperor Franz Joseph – was concentrating around Olmütz about eighty kilometers to the northeast.

On the afternoon and evening of 1 December, the armies formed for battle – the French army was concentrated with its left flank resting on some high ground ten kilometers from Brunn on the road to Olmütz and the small town of Austerlitz although Davout’s 3rd Corps was still marching from Vienna. The remainder of the French army – Soult’s 4th Corps – was stretched out to the right along a line of villages lining a small stream, the Goldbach. On the right, the 3rd Division commanded by Général de division Claude Legrande held a large chateau complex in the village of Sokolnitz and the village

Brigade was composed of the 14th (1,700) and 36th (1,700) Lignes, each of two battalions. The 2nd Brigade (3,500), commanded by Général de Brigade Louis Varé, was composed of the 43rd and 55th Lignes. Georges Six in his Dictionnaire Bigraphique places Thiébault in command of the 2nd Brigade, as do many of the published Orders-of-Battle of the Austerlitz campaign. However, given the size and composition of the elements of Saint-Hilaire’s division, Thiébault’s account of the division’s organization appears to be more correct.

3 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 411.
Figure 6. Battle of Austerlitz. (Courtesy of Department of History, U.S. Military Academy.)
of Tellnitz on the far left of the line. Saint-Hilaire’s division held the center of this line in the villages of Puntowitz and Kobelnitz with Général de division Dominique Vandamme’s 2nd Division on its left. Thiébault’s headquarters was in the latter village. Across the Goldbach from him, the fires of the Allied army lighted a ridge of high ground, the Pratzen heights, as they prepared to attack the following day.

The next day was to be the anniversary of Napoleon’s coronation as Emperor, and a torch-lit demonstration broke out among the French troops. Thiébault and his friend Morand rode up the line to the Emperor’s headquarters on Zuran hill, a couple of kilometers away to discover the cause of the commotion. When they arrived, Thiébault discovered that his friend, Andoche Junot, who had abandoned his post as Minister to Portugal and ridden across Europe to be with his old commander Napoleon, had just arrived to serve on the Emperor’s staff.  

While Napoleon received the adulation of his wildly cheering soldiers, his chief of staff, Marshal Berthier, continued to work. At 8:30 p.m., he sent the following order to Marshal Soult:

Marshal Soult will give orders for three divisions to take places beyond the ravine at seven o’clock in the morning, in such a manner as to be prepared to commence operations of the day, which is to be a march to the front by echelon, the right wing in advance. Marshal Soult himself, report to the Emperor at his Headquarters at seven-thirty in the morning.  

Thiébault returned to his headquarters at Kobelnitz about 11:00 p.m. There he found orders from General Saint-Hilaire to form his brigade at 3:00 a.m. the next day in front of the village with the rest of the division. Given the early hour the brigade was to stand to arms, Thiébault did not bother to go to bed.

The next morning, Marshal Soult reported as ordered to the Emperor at his headquarters on Zuran Hill. There, he met the other commanders – Marshal Jean-

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5 Berthier, by order of the Emperor, 805, Disposition Générales Pour la Journée Du II, 1 December 1805, Correspondance de Napoléon ler, No. 9535, XI, 537.
6 Thiébault. Mémoires, III, 455-56. As the village is bordered by the Goldbach, it would be necessary to cross the stream to form in front of the village – that is, on the side of the stream nearest to the Pratzen Heights.
Baptiste Bernadotte commanding the 1st Corps; Marshal Louis-Nicolas Davout commanding the 3rd Corps, Marshal Jean Lannes, the 4th Corps; Marshal Joachim Murat commanding the Cavalry; Marshal Jean-Baptiste Bessieres, The Imperial Guard; and Marshal Berthiér, the Chief of Staff. At this morning meeting, Napoleon made some adjustments to the plan he had worked out the previous night, the most significant of which affected Soult's 4th Corps. Soult's 3rd Division commanded by General Legrande had been skirmishing that night along the lower Goldbach and was already engaged with the enemy. In the morning, Napoleon confirmed Soult's deployment of Legrande's division along the lower Goldbach, and instructed him to make the initial attack on the Pratzen Heights using only his 1st and 2nd Divisions, commanded by General Saint-Hilaire and General Vandamme, respectively. Soult had moved these troops across the Goldbach earlier that morning in accordance with Berthier’s orders of the previous evening.

As the other Marshals received their orders, saluted and departed, Napoleon kept Soult. A report had arrived that the Allied troops had left the heights of Pratzen undefended. According to General Thiébault, Napoleon asked Soult: "How long do your troops need to get to the top of the Pratzen?" Soult is said to have replied that he required no more than twenty minutes. Napoleon replied: "Very well. We'll wait another quarter of an hour." Fifteen minutes later, he said: "Go." Soult returned to the flats east of the

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7 Philippe Paul Ségur. *An aide-de-camp of Napoleon* (New York, 1895), 246.
8 Thiébault, *Mémoires*, III, 457. The same conversation is reported in the official "Relations de la bataille d'Austerlitz" prepared by the *Depot de Guerre* in 1847. See Berthier et. al, *Relations et rapports officiels*, 92; and Ségur in *An aide-de-camp of Napoleon*, 247. However, Ségur reports that Soult replied: "ten minutes," an improbable time, even from the advanced line of departure. If this conversation was accurate, Soult was being very optimistic. From flats on the eastern side of the Goldbach in front of Kobelnitz where St. Hilaire’s Division was formed to the top of the Pratzenberg is approximately 3000 meters. Adolphe Thiébault, quoting his father’s notes on the battle, stated that division’s advance began “shortly after 8:00 a.m.” See A. Thiébault, “Passage du Goldbach,” *Spectateur Militaire*, Mai, 1847, 11. His father’s brigade engaged the enemy in Pratze below the summit “towards 9:00 a.m.” See A. Thiébault, “Role de la Brigade Thiébault a la Bataille d’Austerlitz,” *Spectateur Militaire*, Mai, 1847, 6. Therefore, the advance required at least an hour. Also see Donald D. Horward, “Austerlitz Revisited,” *Proceedings of the Consortium on Revolutionary Europe*, 1993, 254.
Goldbach, where the morning mist and the smoke of campfires still hid the division of Saint-Hilaire and Vandamme. Napoleon's plan was to permit the Allied Army, some 86,000 Russian and Austrian troops serving under their own monarchs, Alexander I and Francis II, to attempt to flank him on the right. Then, while elements of Davout's 3rd Corps which had begun arriving on the right held them, Napoleon would, in turn, attack the Allies' center and rear with most of his army. The key to the battlefield was the Pratzen Heights, the high ground above the village of Pratze (Prace in Czech) – a roughly five-kilometer ridge that ran southeast from Stare Vinohrady ("Old Vineyards") (290 meters altitude) through a saddle above the village to Pratzenberg (Pratze Hill- 325 meters). This high ground separated the area south of the Brunn-Austerlitz road, which was to be Napoleon's main axis of attack, from the villages of Augezd, Tellnitz, and Sokolnitz, which marked the Allies' intended route.

Much of the Allied army, operating under a plan proposed by Major General Franz von Weyrother, the Austrian Chief of Staff, had camped on and to the east of the Pratzen Heights on the night of 1-2 December. Organized in four roughly corps-size columns under the overall command of Russian General Mikhail Kutuzov, they had begun moving during the night. By 8:00 a.m. the last of first three columns had cleared the Pratzeberg and was beginning to descend towards Tellnitz in the lower Goldbach valley some two miles south of General Saint-Hilaire's Division.

Soult's second division under General Vandamme was on the left, massed in front of the village of Girzikowitz. Its mission was to clear the northeastern edge of the Pratzen Heights and maintain contact with Bernadotte's 1st Corps on its left. General Saint-Hilaire's Division – 6,800 strong – was drawn up along a three-kilometer front before the villages of Puntowitz and Kobelnitz. Its mission was to clear the Pratzen Heights and serve as a pivot for the Army.

When Soult returned from Zuran Hill, he issued his final orders to his division commanders as the troops finished the last of a triple ration of brandy. General Saint-Hilaire relayed Soult's orders to his subordinates. The 2nd Brigade, on the division's left, was to seize the peak of Stare Vinohrady and then operate in conjunction with Vandamme's division. The two battalions of Morand’s advanced guard were to seize the Pratzeberg while Thiébault’s 1st Brigade cleared the village of Pratze in the saddle below
the two peaks and then joined the advance guard on the Pratzen Heights. General Saint-Hilaire would accompany the advance guard.

Several days before, Napoleon had given instructions to Marshals Soult and Bernadotte describing how he wished each division to be formed. The first regiment was to be deployed in line; the second in closed battalion column behind the first, in order to have both the firepower of the line and the shock of the column available. A French battalion at this time consisted of nine companies each with an actual strength of approximately 80-90 men. One company was organized as an elite (*voltigeur*) company for skirmishing, while the others were grouped into two-company divisions. The usual maneuver formation in battle was a closed battalion column of divisions, each division in three ranks one pace apart; each division three paces behind the other. This resulted in a formation of men approximately fifty by twenty-five meters, with a front of about 50 men. In a regimental column, the leading battalion would be followed by the second at a distance of approximately 50 meters. Apparently, Saint-Hilaire and Thiébault modified Napoleon's order-of-battle instructions slightly (as did the other divisions of Soult's command) with the 10th *Léger* deploying in line, and the 1st Brigade following in a line of regiments in battalion column.

Shortly after 8:00 a.m. the columns began to advance. General Morand's 10th *Léger*, deployed in line, angled slightly to the southeast towards the Pratzeberg. Behind the 10th *Léger*, Thiébault's brigade marched up the gently rising slope in a line of battalion attack columns. As the brigade crossed the 240-meter contour, Thiébault ordered the left-hand battalion, the 1st Battalion of the 14th *Ligne* under the regimental

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9 "Vues de l'Empereur au sujet d'ordre de bataille" (26 Nov 1805), *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, No. 9527. XI, 531.

10 The organization was adopted for light infantry battalions in March, 1804 and for line battalions in September, 1805. See Elting, *Swords Around a Throne*, 209. The two-company divisions (c. 180 men) should not to be confused with the divisions of a corps, which averaged 6,000-8,000 men.


12 A. Thiebault, “Passage du Goldbach,” 11, quoting notes of his father.
commander Colonel Jacques François Mazas, to clear the village of Pratze on the brigade’s left. Deploying into a line of companies, but without sending forward skirmishers, the battalion moved to the edge of a ravine through which a branch of the Goldbach brook flowed, separating the battalion from the village. As it reached the edge

![Figure 7. St. Hilaire's Division at Austerlitz, 2 December 9:00 a.m. (Map by R. Godfrey-Sigler.)](image)

of the ravine, a Russian battalion concealed on the other side of the ravine stood and fired a volley that broke the battalion. It turned and fled back behind the rest of the brigade, and for a short time, only two guns of the 5th Foot Artillery, which had accompanied the battalion, remained to oppose the Allied buildup south of the village. The Russian reserve battalion, the Apsheron Musketeers, reinforced by three additional battalions of
the Little Russian Grenadiers, charged three times. Twice, the gunners drove them back. The third time, they abandoned their guns.\textsuperscript{13}

Thiébault reacted:

I rode forward, calling to Mazas to rally his battalion. Then, dismounting, I ordered the 36th (his right two battalions) to march on the village ... and charging at the head of the 2d battalion of the 14th, which deployed as it ran, I flung myself into the ravine where my horse could not have got down, attacked the Russians with the bayonet and routed them....\textsuperscript{14}

Thiébault at the head of the 2nd battalion of the 14th Ligne routed two Novgorod battalions while the 36th Ligne under Colonel Houdar de Lamotte deployed into line and attacked the four Russian battalions south of the village, recapturing the guns, wounding two Russian generals and capturing one. The six routed Russian battalions fled to the northeast, disorganizing the remaining five battalions of the Russian units of the 4th Column. General Kutuzov attempted to rally them, and, for his pains was slightly wounded by a musket ball fired by someone in the 36th. The Tsar, also in that area of the field, sent his physician to help. Kutuzov told the doctor: "Assure him [the Tsar] that I am not badly hurt," and then, pointing towards the Pratzen Heights, "That is where we are really hurt."\textsuperscript{15}

If Colonel Mazas' first battalion had been surprised by Russian fire, this was far less destructive, at least in the long run, than the surprise received by the Russian commander in that area of the battlefield. General Kutuzov, although in nominal command of the entire army, had remained with the 4th (and last) Column. Shortly after 8:00 a.m., a Russian staff officer, Major Carl F. Toll, rode through the village in advance of the 4th Column and observed, for the first time, the advance of Saint-Hilaire’s

\textsuperscript{13} "Lieutenant General Miloradovich’s Report to General Kutzov on the Battle of Austerlitz," M. I. Kutzov: sbornik dokumentov M.I. Kutzov: Compilation of the Documents (Moscow, 1954); Bowden, Napoleon and Austerlitz (Chicago, 1997) 348 sourcing Pravikov, Petit Historique du 10º grenadiers Petite Russe (Morchansk, 1889), 43.

\textsuperscript{14} Thiébault, Memoires, III, 468.

division. Toll galloped back to the Russian co-commander of the column, Lieutenant-General Mikhail Miloradovich. Miloradovich sent forward the only troops at hand – three weak battalions, two of the Novgorod Musketeers and one of the Apsheron Musketeers, totaling only 750 men plus a few hussars and two guns. One battalion stayed in reserve, another deployed south of the village of Pratze, and the third battalion – the one that surprised Colonel Mazas – deployed along the bank of the ravine. Thiébault’s counterattack routed all three battalions. An Austrian officer in his account of battle describes the impact of the attack upon General Kutuzov:

A massive column of French infantry was suddenly seen in a bottom, in front of Pratzen. ... General Koutousoff [Kutuzov], whom this movement of the enemy had taken by surprise, (thinking himself the assailant, and seeing himself attacked in the midst of his combinations and his movements), felt all the importance of maintaining the heights of Pratzen against which the French were moving. ... It was the summit of the heights of Pratzen which decided the fate of the day.

While Thiébault was reestablishing the left flank, Morand's light infantry arrived at the crest of Pratzenberg and almost immediately came under attack from rear brigade of the 2nd Allied Column under Russian General-major Serge Mikhalavich Kamensky. A traffic jam had delayed Kamensky's brigade earlier in the morning when the Austrian cavalry, finding themselves in the wrong position, simply cut through the 2nd Column in an attempt to take to their proper position. Kamensky saw the French on the Pratzen


Heights as his brigade descended into the lower Goldbach valley. He reversed his troops and advanced with 4,000 men towards Morand's 10th Léger deployed on the crest. Kamensky sent one battalion to his left, nearly outflanking the 10th Léger. General Saint-Hilaire, the division commander, saved the situation by bringing the 1st Battalion of the 14th Ligne double-time from the rear where Colonel Mazas had rallied it, and put it in line on the right of the 10th Léger.

Thiébault, having cleared the left flank, marched the three battalions still under his direct control, the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 36th Ligne and the 1st Battalion of the 14th Ligne, towards the left of the 10th Léger. As he was doing this however, he saw a body of troops moving towards the Pratzen Heights from the east, to his left and rear. As they came closer, one called out: "Don't shoot, we are Bavarians." Thibault halted his column and General Saint-Hilaire joined him. They had a short discussion as to the true nationality of the troops. They were, in fact, the Austrian brigades of General-majors Franz Jureczek and Heinrich Rottermund under Lieutenant-General Johann Karl Kollowrath, the Austrian co-commander of the 4th Column. Thibault rode forward for a closer look. As he did so, he met General Morand, who was also concerned about the identity of the new troops on his left flank and rear. While they were trying to identify the new troops through their spyglasses, they saw a "Bavarian" officer ride to make contact with an officer from Kemensky's Brigade. That was enough.18

Thiébault brought up the 1st Battalion of 36th Ligne on the left of the 10th Léger to act as a pivot. He then posted the 2nd Battalion in line facing east towards the new arrivals. On the far left of his line, he posted the 2nd Battalion of the 14th Ligne in attack column formation "so as to have a mass which I could oppose, if necessary, to those that were advancing against us and a force with which I could, without disturbing my line, meet cavalry or other corps that might try to surround us."19

Thus was formed the "hook" – the "crochet" as Austrian General Karl Stutterheim called it. The French line now extended from slightly west of the highest point of the Pratzen Heights east for about 800 meters, then turned north and ran for perhaps another

18 Thiebault, Mémoires, III, 471.
19 Ibid., III, 470.
800 meters down towards the village of Pratze, where the line was anchored on the Church of the Holy Cross. The French battalions in line required a frontage of about 200 meters. The 2nd battalion of the 14th Ligne in assault column on the left needed about 50 meters. Even with the necessary intervals between the battalions, they were stretched thin. But the battalions did not simply stand still – "The French generals" wrote General Stutterheim, "maneuvered their troops with that ability which is the result of a military eye, and of experience, taking advantage of the inequalities of ground to cover their troops from fire, and to conceal their movements."²⁰

When the division had moved out in the morning, General Saint-Hilaire had allocated half of the divisional artillery, two eight-pound guns and a howitzer, to General

Morand, and the other half, two four-pound guns and a howitzer, to General Thiébault. It was the two four-pounders that had been lost and regained in the fight over Pratze village. In his new position, Thiébault placed his three guns between the two battalions of the 36th Ligne. In that moment, Chef de bataillon Hippolyte René Fontenay arrived with the 4th Corps's reserve artillery, six twelve-pound guns. Thiébault placed these guns in three-gun sections on each flank of the 36th Ligne. He then masked the guns with squads of infantry and ordered them to load with a combination of round and grapeshot. Fontenay complained that this would ruin the guns, but Thiébault replied: "It will be all right if they last ten minutes," and ordered the guns laid at a range of 15 or 20 toises (30 or 40 meters).

Approaching Thiébault's three battalions and gunners totaling some 2,600 men were 16 Austrian battalions over 8,000 strong. They were not, however, Emperor Francis' best troops. They were formed mostly of unhealthy soldiers or untrained recruits from the 6th (depot) battalions of their regiments. Thiébault ordered his men to shoot for the white cross belts of the Austrians, and, when they approached to a distance of forty yards, the infantry hiding the guns fell back.

Their fire (the guns) vied with that of my line, which was the best infantry in the world for standing firm, aiming straight and knocking over the enemy with perfect coolness. ... I saw every round tear large square holes through these regiments till they retired in a flying mass from the attack on my three battalions. I had not lost a single man....

As Thiébault’s three battalions prepared to receive the Austrians, Kamensky's Brigade was pushing Morand's men slowly back over the hill – the infantry firing by volley while the artillerymen manhandled their guns to the rear. But as the Austrians on the left broke and fled, the Russian attack also slowed.

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21 Fontenay was a cousin of Thiébault’s childhood friend and later pharmacist to Napoleon, Charles Cadet-Gassicourt.

22 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 471.

23 Depot battalions were normally left at the regiment's home base to train new recruits. In this instance, the Austrians had them with the field army, possibly because so many Austrian depots had been already overrun by the French.

24 Thiebault, Mémoires, III, 472.
The ardor of this attack soon evaporated. ..., the enemy and his steadiness soon changed it to a slow uncertain pace accompanied by an ill-directed fire of musketry.  

Now, the hinge of Austerlitz swung, and the door began to close on the Allies in the lower Goldbach valley. Thiébault swung his troops to the right to face south, aligning on Morand's men. Then, all six battalions advanced down the slope of Pratzberg, behind Kamensky's troops driving them down the slope to the south and capturing three guns and two flags.  

During a brief lull in the fighting, the three generals on the Pratzen Heights searched for support, but none could be seen. Except for the timely arrival of Fontenay's guns, nothing had been heard from any higher headquarters.

We had no news either of the Imperial headquarters or of Marshal Soult, and it was with a certain anxiety that we had become convinced of our isolation. We held the heights, but were not done with having to defend them.  

If the French were having command problems, theirs were nothing compared to those of the Allies. Three Russian brigade commanders had been wounded. The co-commanders of the Allied 4th Column, Kollowrath and Miloradovich, had been defeated by fighting individually and without effective coordination. Kamensky's brigade was fighting independently of the rest of Prschibitschewski's Division, and the other units of the Allied 3rd Column were under growing pressure from Davout's Corps, now arriving at Tellnitz. Even the senior leadership of the Allied Army was collapsing. Tsar Alexander, who had originally taken his post on the top of Stare Vinohrady, had been swept along by the Russians retreating from their defeat in Pratze village. General Kutuzov, bleeding from his head wound and unable to rally the Russians, had moved on to join Kollowrath's forces, and, later Kamensky's Brigade. At the end of the day, he confessed "that he could not report on the conduct of his officers 'since my location on

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that day did not permit me to see in person what was happening elsewhere on the field."  

Despite the destruction wrought upon Kollowrath's Austrian troops of the 4th Column and the repulse of Kamensky's brigade, the Russian and Austrian officers, including Kutuzov and General Weyrother, rallied these regiments and launched one last desperate attack on the hill, attacking on a wide front up the southern slope towards the crest of the Pratzen Heights. Slowly, the French were pushed back towards the crest. As they reached the crest, there was another pause. General Saint-Hilaire met with Thiébault

Figure 9. St. Hilaire's Division at Austerlitz, 2 December 11:00 a.m.  
(Map by R. Godfrey-Sigler.)

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and Morand, and proposed that the division withdraw to a more defensible position. The three officers were standing behind Colonel Pierre Pouzet of the 10th Léger Infantry who overheard them. Colonel Pouzet turned to the group and said:

Retire, general? If we take one more pace to the rear, we are done for. There is only one way to get out of this with honor, and that is to put our heads down and go at everything in front of us and, above all, not allow the enemy time to count our muskets.²⁹

The commanders returned to their units, and for the next half-hour, the battle for the crest raged. Thiébault had two horses shot from under him. Colonel Mazas of the 14th Ligne was killed, as was Thiébault's aide. Colonel de Lamotte of the 36th Ligne and General Saint-Hilaire, the division commander, were wounded.

It was at this juncture that an officer from Army headquarters finally appeared; he was Colonel Alexandre de Girardin, aide-de-camp to Marshal Berthier. Although Girardin’s duty was simply to determine the situation and condition of Saint-Hilaire's division and return to headquarters, he remained "riding incessantly to and fro from end to end of our lines, pushing the men's knapsacks, as one may say, he gave powerful aid in supporting and cheering them on... ."³⁰

The Allied attack wavered and collapsed. The French advanced in a final effort, driving them off to the southeast, capturing three more guns and two flags, and pursuing them with cannon fire. General Saint-Hilaire went to the rear to have his wound dressed, and Thiébault became the acting division commander.

To the south, Napoleon had planned to defend initially the lower Goldbach from Kobelnitz to Tellnitz, a distance of about three kilometers, with Legrande's thinly spread Third Division of Soult's 4th Corps. Hard-marching reinforcements, the leading elements of Général de Division Victor Friant's division of Davout's 3rd Corps, began arriving at 6:00 a.m., just about the time Kienmayer, leading the advance guard of the 1st Allied Column, opened the battle with attack on Legrande's single regiment, the 3rd Ligne, garrisoning Tellnitz. Davout's buildup continued until 1:00 p.m., when together with Soult, the final assault on the Allies was launched.

²⁹ Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 475.
³⁰ Ibid., III, 476.
On the Pratzen Heights, Thiébault's hinge continued to swing to the south. As his force faced west from the heights, Général de brigade Victor Levasseur’s 3rd Brigade of Legrande’s Third Division, marching down the Goldbach from below Kobelnitz, joined it. At this point, Levassuer's brigade was one of the very few brigades in the army that had not been engaged. Thiébault placed this brigade on the right of his own, with Morand's 10th Léger Infantry on his left. At about this same time, General Saint-Hilaire returned with further orders. Varés’ long-absent 2nd Brigade of the division also arrived, the latter on the right flank of Vandamme's division that had crossed the Stare Vinohrady. This massed force completed the rout of Kollowrath's Allied 4th Column, and then wheeled to the south to join Saint-Hilaire.31

Saint-Hilaire's new orders were to advance off the Pratzen Heights, occupied by Vandamme's division, and to drive down behind the Russians and attack the village of Sokolnitz and Sokolnitz Castle. The Castle, a few hundred meters north of the village, was not truly a castle, but rather a large complex of buildings, with a chateau and a tangle of lanes, stables, a massive five-story granary, and a large enclosed garden called the "Pheasantry." The Russians here were facing west, defending themselves against an attack by General Friant's 3rd Corps division coming across the Goldbach. Suddenly, they were surrounded.

Levasseur's Brigade attacked through the Pheasantry and the fields north of it. Thiébault, leading the 36th Ligne and the remnants of the 14th Ligne swept down behind the Russians attacking the Castle complex, while the 10th Léger attacked between the Castle and Sokolnitz village. By now, the smoke and noise was overwhelming. In the confusion, Russian discipline and organization began to collapse as the French troops drove in for the final assault. Surrounded, the Russians fought bitterly:

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31 The following description of the fighting and the around the village and castle of Sokolnitz and the end of the fighting is based on Soult, “Rapport de la bataille d’Austerlitz par Soult,” 26-27; and Berthier, “Rapport de la bataille d’Austerlitz par Berthier,” 62-64; both in Berthier, et. al., Relations et Rapports Officiels de la Bataille d’Austerlitz. See also A. Thiébault, “Role de la Brigade Thiébault,” 18-22; and Thiébault, Memoires, III, 479-82.
Those [Russians] who guarded the house and its outbuildings made a desperate defense. Avenues, stables, barns – everything served them for shelter, and everywhere they fought till the last extremity. A great massacre took place.\textsuperscript{32}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Figure 10. St. Hilaire's Division, 2 December 1:30 p.m.} \textit{(Map by R. Godfrey-Sigler.)}
\end{center}

Having cleared the Castle area, Thiébault was attempting the realign his troops with those of Morand and Levasseur when he saw a group of his men taking long shots at some Russian guns. He found a sub-lieutenant and ordered him to form the men up. He then searched for an officer to lead an attack on the guns. "I could not see a captain – officers were getting scarce ..."\textsuperscript{33} Since the guns had to be silenced before he could move the brigade forward, Thiébault resolved to do it himself. Leading his little band, he approached within 30 meters of the guns when they fired. Thiébault went down,

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., III, 479.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., III, 480.
wounded in the shoulder and arm by grapeshot. The sub-lieutenant and twenty men were killed. The others overran the guns. The battle was over for General Thiébault. Thirty minutes later, it was over for everyone.

Thiébault was taken to the nearby village of Schlapanitz, probably to the Church of the Blessed Virgin that was being used as a field hospital.³⁴ There, his wounds were initially dressed by the regimental surgeon of the 36th Ligne. Hit by a grapeshot in the right shoulder, the round had passed through his body, breaking the collarbone and exiting just above the shoulder blade behind. The next day, Thiébault was moved to the Trassler Printing House on Orlé Street in Brunn.³⁵ There, Dominique Larrey, Chief Surgeon of the Imperial Guard, debrided the wound, assisted by regimental surgeons of the 36th Ligne and of the 8th Hussars, while Pierre François Percy, Surgeon-General of the Army, and Napoleon’s own surgeon, M. Alexander-Urbain Yvan, observed.³⁶ Given the seriousness of the wound in a part of the body where amputation was impossible, the danger of infection, and the possibility of internal bleeding, Thiébault’s prospects were not very good. When Percy again visited two days later, nevertheless, he was extremely pleased that neither internal bleeding nor infection had developed. From this point onward, Thiébault began a slow and erratic recovery.

The first news Thiébault’s family had of his wound was the report of it in Napoleon’s 30th Bulletin of the Grande Armée (3 December 1804) published in Le Moniteur on 16 December. The 33rd Bulletin (7 December) reported that Thiébault was out of danger and the 36th Bulletin (14 December 1808), which was dedicated to recalling “the deeds of valor that have illustrated the Grande Armée,” contained the following paragraph:

General Thiébault was dangerously wounded and was carried off by four Russian prisoners. Six wounded Frenchmen saw them, chased the Russians, and seized

³⁵ This building still exists. Ibid., 269.
the stretcher, saying, “It is an honor belonging to us alone to carry a wounded French General.”

Later, Thiébault’s friends commissioned a painting based on this incident and presented it to Thiébault’s wife.

While in Brunn, Thiébault had several opportunities to speak with General Weyrother, the former chief of staff of the Allied Army who had been appointed governor of the province of Moravia with his headquarters at Brunn after the armistice. He and Weyrother took these opportunities to discuss the battle in depth. The fruit of these discussions was subsequently incorporated in a pamphlet Thiébault published in 1806.

By mid-December, Thiébault felt well enough to dictate letters to his family and others, including one to General Saint-Hilaire that he sent to Vienna by military courier. General Saint-Hilaire responded the next day:

The rapidity and uncertainty of your evacuation delayed my expression of concern about your wounds, of which I had news the other side of Kobelnitz.

The capture of the village and the honors we gained there cost us much, because you are among the brave who shed their blood….. [My esteem and attachment] have both been well justified by the outstanding conduct which you demonstrated throughout the entire battle….The Emperor will take account of everything…

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37 “Trente-sixième bulletin de armée,” Le Moniteur universel, 4 Nivôse XIV. In his Mémoires (III, 482,) Thiébault stated that Berthier actually observed this incident, which is why it appeared in the Bulletin, He noted, however, that the French troops were from his own brigade and actually said that they alone would carry their general. Berthier’s own report of the battle placed him in this location at this time.


39 Thiébault, Notes du général Thiébault sur la Relation de la Bataille d’Austerlitz. This material was also included in the manuscript of his memoirs and was used by his son Adolphe to publish two articles on the battle in Spectateur Militaire in 1847.

40 General Saint-Hilaire to General Thiébault, 15 December 1805, which is Attachment 2 to “Pauline Thiébault to Betzy Walker, 15 January 1805.” Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS., C1, MS V, F-1.
Consequently, Thiébault was certain that he would be promoted. Not only General Saint-Hilaire, but many other people, including some in Napoleon’s headquarters, assured him that his promotion to général de division “was a done thing.”

A treaty ending the War of the Third Coalition was signed on 26 December, and the French army evacuated Moravia on 12 January 1806, leaving Thiébault and some 800 other French wounded behind in Brunn. Thiébault was impatient to leave. As early as 5 January, he had written his family giving them an itinerary and instructing them to write him care of “general delivery” in various cities. He was not able to leave until 25 January, however, and he took two days to travel to Vienna. There, his wounds opened slightly, so rather than the single day of rest he planned, he remained there for six. He then left and arrived in Linz on 4 February.

Marshal Soult’s 4th Corps Headquarters was in Linz. At some point before his arrival there, Thiébault learned that General Morand had been promoted to général de division but that he had not. He therefore attempted to avoid meeting Soult, but Soult insisted on calling on him. In the interview, Thiébault asked why an officer junior to him who had been engaged in the same fight had been promoted (Morand) and he had not, and he accused Soult of holding a grudge because of Thiébault’s book on the siege of Genoa. Soult agreed that he did not feel that the book had done him justice but denied that he had neglected Thiébault in his own report of the battle to Napoleon. When they parted, Soult even asked Thiébault to smuggle two cashmere shawls through French customs for his wife.

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41 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 500.

42 “Décret de 3 Nivose XIV (23 December 1805), Le Moniteur universel, 9 January 1806, listed the promotions of ten généraux de brigade, including Morand and General Pierre Merle of Soult’s 3rd Division.

43 Although Soult in his after-action report stated, “All the generals of brigade deserve to be mentioned,” he singled out Généraux de brigade Morand, Merle, and Joseph Schiner of Vandamme’s 2nd Division for promotion, but not Thiébault. See Soult, “Rapport sur la bataille d’Austerlitz par Soult,” in Berthier, et al., Relations et Rapports Officiels de la Bataille d'Austerlitz, 28.

44 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 523.
Before his departure from Linz, Thiébault wrote to his father about his failed promotion. Apparently responding to a letter from his father who had seen the promotion lists in *Le Moniteur*, and who was encouraging Thiébault to resign, he replied:

You letter pleased me in some ways…(but) I know how to wait and to judge when it is necessary to have patience and consistency. Throughout this entire affair, the only important thing was that I conduct myself in a meritorious way. I did so, and this must be sufficient for my family as it is for myself.

I will return to Paris by the end of the month, and we will speak of this then. I will see if I can change your mind. Despite your fears, I have none for the Emperor’s justice.

My wounds improve, but I must travel slowly and carefully. Thiébault

PS – It is unjust that I have not been promoted, but I would have been surprised if I had been. There is a secret that cannot be written, but one that our acquaintance, your old friend, can explain, if he remembers what I was saying to him before I left for the Army.45

Thiébault traveled from Linz to Salzburg (8 February) where he was forced to rest for two days and then proceeded to Munich (12 February) where Berthier had established the headquarters of the Grand Armée when Napoleon returned to Paris. Thiébault blamed not only Soult, but also Berthier for what he saw as the injustice of the missing promotion. Consequently, he did not call on the Général-major, but simply sent an aide-de-camp to say that his injuries prevented him from seeing Berthier and to request orders to return to Paris. Berthier was annoyed. Thiébault wrote: “I think he was unhappy that I could not go 200 paces to see him when I had already come 275 leagues on the way to Paris.” Berthier issued Thiébault a sick furlough for two months but told the physician accompanying him that Thiébault should remain in Munich where there were several good hospitals where he could be treated better than by military doctors. Thiébault decided to ignore this later instruction, or rather, to reinterpret it, and to go on to the Hospital of Gros-Caillou in Paris. He left early the next day giving Berthier “more complaints against me.”46 Traveling via Ausburg, Salzburg, and Nancy, Thiébault

45 Paul Thiébault to Dieudonné Thiébault, 5 February 1806, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, Carton 1, MS III, F-1. The “secret” was very likely Paul’s concerns about being assigned under Soult, which he had discussed with a friend before leaving France the previous September.

arrived at Versailles on 25 February. After seeing his father and sister Pauline, he went on to Paris and a reunion with his wife on 26 February.

For the next six months, Thiébault and Zozotte lived in a rented apartment as he recovered from his wounds. Much time was spent visiting friends, including Marshal Masséna and his family, Marshal Murat, and General Junot. When Thiébault saw Napoleon at court, the Emperor appeared friendly and concerned with his recovery. In August, the Thiébaults went to Soisy-sous-Étioles in the country for an extended visit with Thiébault’s old friend from Genoa, Charles Morin. Morin had been Masséna’s personal secretary and Thiébault’s partner in the abortive privateering scheme at that time. During their visit, a messenger from the Imperial Court arrived with orders that Thiébault was to call on the Emperor at Saint Cloud the next morning at 9:00 a.m. Thiébault immediately returned to Paris, and the next morning, reported promptly. Napoleon, dressed for hunting, received him pleasantly, inquired concerning his wounds, and told Thiébault that he was promoting him to général de division. As Thiébault left, Murat, who was getting ready to go hunting together with a number of the Imperial Household, asked what the Emperor had said. When Thiébault replied, Murat, Duroc, Savary, and several others congratulated him. On his return home, Thiébault suggested to Zozotte that she not spread the news until it was officially released. Nevertheless, she passed the secret on to several others, one at a time; an act that would result in considerable embarrassment.

A week passed without any official announcement. Thiébault checked with Hugues-Bernard Maret, the Secretary of State, who said that he had received no news of the promotion. He then raised the issue with his friend, Marshal Murat. Murat suggested that he go to Saint Cloud for the general audience that Napoleon conducted after Mass each Sunday. Thiébault did so twice, but had only a moment with Napoleon, who, when told that the notification of the promotion had not been received, simply nodded and passed on. Finally, Junot asked the Emperor directly why Thiébault had not received

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47 Since 1934, this village about 25 kilometers south of Paris has been known as Soisy-sur-Seine.
48 Ibid., III, 546.
notification of his promotion. Napoleon replied: “He shall have it,” but said no more.

No further word arrived, and Thiébault unhappily resigned himself to waiting.

What had happened to the promotion? At the time, Thiébault thought that it was primarily Soult’s influence that prevented it. In retrospect, however, he came to blame Berthier equally:

I do not understand now how I misunderstood my position. The truth was that Berthier, who together with Soult had blocked my promotion in Vienna, had returned from Munich the very evening after my audience at Saint Cloud. He had held up my appointment and was waiting for an opportune time to inform the Emperor, who, at the second audience was still unaware of it, as neither Maret nor Murat had spoken to him [Napoleon] of it.49

War was again on the horizon, this time with the Prussians. In mid-September, Napoleon issued orders for the deployment the Grande Armée from its cantonments in southern Germany. On 25 September, Napoleon left Paris, arriving at the Army’s headquarters in Wittenberg on 2 October. Thiébault, angry over his denied promotion, resolved not to again serve as a général de brigade. He remained in Paris pleading his unhealed wounds.

The Battle of Austerlitz marked a critical point in Thiébault’s professional life. Although he had held brigade commands before, he had never held that position in combat. On 1 December 1805, he led his brigade in the center of one of Napoleon’s greatest battles; the division of which his brigade was a part – General Saint-Hilaire’s – played a key role in taking the Pratzen Heights and routing the Allied Army. At the end of the battle, Thiébault, who had briefly served as the acting division commander, received a serious wound while personally leading an attack on a Russian battery. This battle wound had certainly come immediately to Berthier’s, and presumably Napoleon’s, attention.

49 Ibid. III, 548. This account of the question of promotion in Paris is taken solely from Thiébault’s memoirs (Ibid., III, 540, 543-48). It is interesting to note, however, that Berthier’s official account of the Battle of Austerlitz describes the action on the Pratzen Heights in considerable detail, crediting the leadership of General Saint-Hilaire, and only mentions Thiébault’s wound. See "Rapport de la bataille d'Austerlitz par Berthier" in Berthier, et. al., in Relations et Rapports Officiels de la Bataille d'Austerlitz, 63.

Berthier, however, makes no recommendations in this report for promotions for anyone.
As a result of Austerlitz, Thiébault could reasonably expect promotion to général de division. He believed that it was not forthcoming, despite Napoleon’s apparent promise because of the machinations of Marshals Soult and Berthier. Soult’s own report of the 4th Corps’ actions during the battle seems to support this interpretation. Although Thiébault’s Mémoires were written many years after the battle, Soult’s report was drafted on 16 December, only two weeks later, and mentions Thiébault most prominently in repeating the story of his medical evacuation by the grenadiers of the 36th Ligne, a story that had already appeared in Napoleon’s 36th Bulletin, which was published two days earlier.

The source of Soult’s antipathy towards Thiébault can perhaps be explained in terms of Thiébault’s treatment of Soult in his Journal de bloc de Genê. The reason for Berthier’s annoyance is somewhat harder to identify, and could have been caused by Thiébault himself. Berthier’s success as Napoleon’s chief of staff was due largely to his precision and expectation that orders would be followed. Beginning with Thiébault’s refusal to follow up on his father’s introduction to Berthier through his deliberate misinterpretation of Berthier’s orders to remain in Munich after the Battle of Austerlitz, Thiébault’s record of meeting Berthier’s expectations was spotty at best. Thiébault’s conjecture that Berthier was ultimately the one responsible for his failure to be promoted in the winter of 1805-1806 rests primarily on circumstantial evidence, but also, perhaps, in Thiébault’s understanding of the strains between the two of them.

Thiébault would perhaps have been pleased with the tribute paid to him by his own daughter, Laure, in a poem she published in 1874 entitled “La Colonne d’Austerlitz.” The poem appeared in a book by the same name by her husband, Jacques de Norvins. After praising Napoleon and the Marshals (including Soult) she wrote:

Aux vainqueurs d’Austerlitz, impérissable hommage,
Le bronze de Praxen redira d’âge en âge
De Thiébault la vaillance, et la bouillante ardeur
Il proclamera sa valeur!

Modern historians, nevertheless, use Thiébault’s vivid accounts of the fighting for the Pratzen Heights as one of the primary sources for understanding that part of the Battle of Austerlitz.
To the victors of Austerlitz, imperishable homage,
The Pratzen bronze [of the guns] tells the ages
Of the gallant Thiébault of impetuous zeal,
It proclaims his valor!\textsuperscript{51}

CHAPTER 10
FULDA AND TILSIT, 1806 – 1807

Napoleon went to war in September 1806 against Prussia, Russia, and England in the War of the Fourth Coalition. He decisively defeated the Prussian Army at Jena-Auerstadt on 14 October 1806. Nine days later, he issued the Wittenberg decrees that placed all Prussian possessions between the Elbe and the Rhine under French control. He also claimed those German states that he felt had been Prussian allies, including the possessions of the Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbürtal, the Prince of Orange-Nassau, The Duke of Oldenburg, the Elector-Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, and several smaller states.¹

The decrees organized the territories into five governorates. Thiébault, possibly at the urging of General Junot, was named to head the fourth governorate consisting of the former territories of the Prince of Orange, with his headquarters at Fulda.² Berthier’s order arrived in Paris on 29 October where Thiébault was still recovering from the wounds received at Austerlitz the previous year.³ Although Thiébault had been seeking an active duty position, he hesitated. He felt that he had not yet received adequate recognition for his role at Austerlitz. Although Napoleon had promised him a promotion to général de division, the promotion had not yet been announced, and Thiébault remained reluctant to return to duty as a général de brigade. His friends, and particularly General Junot, told him he was not being sensible. He was to be one of the first

¹ Décret, 23 October 1806, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 11054, XIII, 473-76.
² In late August 1806, Junot wrote to Napoleon “I renew, Sire, the request that I made that General Thiébault; that brave general is here without assignment and therefore unhappy.” Junot to Napoleon, 22 August 1806, Christóvas Ayres de Magalhaes Sepulveda, História Orgânica e Política de Exército Português, XII [Diário de Junot na primerira invasão francesa em Portugal] [hereafter Sepulveda, “Diário de Junot”], 12.
³ The wound was apparently very slow to heal. Thiébault makes reference to his arm still being bandaged in December 1806. See Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 37. The handwriting in a letter to his son, Adolphe, written earlier the same year, is virtually printed and very shaky. See Paul Thiébault to Adolphe Thiébault, March 1806, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C1, MS V, F6.
governors named for a conquered country with all the privileges and prerogatives of such a position. Furthermore, the other four governors – Henri Clarke, Louis Loison, Joseph Lagrange, and Jacques Gobert – were already *généraux de division*; therefore, his promotion was all but a formality.

Accepting the assignment with reservations, Thiébault left Paris on 12 November 1806 and arrived two days later at the headquarters of Marshal François-Christopher Kellermann, commanding the Army of the Reserve in Mainz. Here, too, the Empress Josephine held court. Thiébault first called on Kellermann, and then on Josephine, who insisted that he carry a message on her behalf to Carl-Theodor von Dalberg, the Prince-Primate of the new German Confederation, in Frankfurt. These calls further delayed Thiébault, who sent his aide-de-camp ahead to Fulda; on the evening of 19 November he finally arrived in the city. A corporal of gendarmes and four hussars in strange uniforms with flaming torches met him at the gate and escorted him to the palace. There, as he descended from his carriage, he was welcomed by the gendarmerie major commanding the garrison, a platoon of gendarmes, two platoons of infantry of the line, and one of hussars in the unfamiliar uniforms, in addition to a large and elaborately uniformed household staff.  

Inside, the major presented the Baron von Tann, grand marshal in the court of the former ruler, the Prince of Orange, now president of the provisional government of the State of Fulda. Thiébault invited the Baron to dine with him, and after dinner they talked until one in the morning as the Baron outlined the political, financial, and administrative condition of the country, and described the various functionaries whom Thiébault would meet the following day.

On the morning of 20 November, Thiébault first reviewed the French troops assigned to his garrison and the small unit of local hussars that had met him the previous

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5 Ibid., IV, 4.
6 Thiébault was authorized a force of one company of a battalion of the 18th *Ligne* and one company of the 3rd *Hussars*. He noted in his memoirs that these troops were soon recalled to the *Grande Armée*, and he was left with only a few gendarmes and the unit of 24 local hussars for a local garrison. See Ibid., IV, 4.
Figure 11. Germany and Central Europe. (*Map by R. Godfrey-Sigler.*)
evening. Next, he was visited by the Prince-Bishop of Fulda, Adalbert III von Herstalle. Fulda was the home of one of the oldest monasteries in Europe, founded in 744 AD by Saint Sturm, a disciple of Saint Boniface. During the 16th Century, the state had been elevated to an ecclesiastical principality under the abbot, and after 1750, the abbot had also been the bishop of Fulda. However, in 1803, the state had been secularized by the Imperial Recess and turned over to Wilhelm-Friedrich, Prince of Orange-Nassau and husband of the niece of Friedrich the Great. Since then, the Prince-Bishop had held only religious duties, but was still widely seen as first citizen of the state. Thiébault received him with full military honors and arranged to return the call at the Episcopal palace the following day.

Following the meeting with the Prince-Bishop, the Baron von Tann introduced Thiébault to the other members of the provisional governing council. In addition to himself as president, the council was comprised of three other senior officials of the former court of the Prince of Orange-Nassau – the Grand Almoner, the Grand Equerry, and the Grand Huntsman. Under these four senior officials, were twenty-four councilors of state, resplendently garbed in scarlet coats with golden embroidery. Organized in seven chambers, they were bureaucrats who directed the day-to-day operations of the government. These councilors of state were “gentlemen from the nobility of the country, and the seven principals were from the most noble and richest families.” Later, he visited the hospitals, where four hundred French soldiers were recovering from wounds or illness, the barracks, and the armories and magazines. He set a schedule for regular meetings with both the officials of the provisional government and his immediate French

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7 Ibid., IV, 23. The family names were: von Tann, Brack, von Schecse (de Schenck), Senfl de Pilsach, and Thomas. See France, Archives nationales, AP 618/1, Fonds Thiébault (Fulda). [hereafter, Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Fulda)]. Neither first names nor associations with the titles have been found.

8 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 5.
subordinates – the *Intendant-général*, the garrison commander, and the *commissaire de guerres*.⁹

Thiébault soon noted an excess of formality and ceremony, not only on formal occasions, but in the course of normal business and the day-to-day running of his household, which he said was “a little too much for my taste.” However, the Baron von Tann insisted that all the formality and ceremony be maintained. Thiébault, Tann maintained, was only temporarily the head of government, and, when peace was restored, the country would revert to some prince. “Therefore,” he said, “I wish to conserve my authority, my role, my seniority, and power so that one day I will receive credit for maintaining all the ceremony of this court.”¹⁰

In a letter to his father, Thiébault described his first few days in Fulda and the elaborate ceremonies, which included a grand Te Deum Mass at which he was the guest of honor, a similar ceremony at the local synagogue, and the enthusiasm of the general populace for the French.¹¹ Thiébault’s letter replied to one from his father that had given him advice on ruling a German state, (“trust no one and require regular reports”) and the preservation of libraries and antiquities to be found there.¹²

As his first official public act, Thiébault had a proclamation drawn up, printed, and posted throughout the city and in the outlying villages, announcing his assignment as

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⁹ *The intendant* was a French official having overall responsibility for all financial matters relating to France. The *commissaire de guerres* was a civilian in charge of supply, equipment, and hospitalization of French troops.


¹¹ Paul Thiébault to Dieudonné Thiébault, 30 November 1806, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C1, MS III, F1. In this letter, Thiébault notes that he sent his aide-de-camp to represent him at the synagogue. During the ceremony, a Christian fanatic threw a stone that broke a window in the synagogue. Thiébault wrote: “Despite my partiality for Christianity, I cannot excuse this zeal, and the believer who did this stupid thing is in solitary confinement and he can stay there until he rots.” He also sent his father a copy of his initial proclamation.

¹² Dieudonné Thiébault to Paul Thiébault, 19 November 1806, Ibid.
governor. It called upon all citizens of the state to accept the new government and to act as loyal subjects of the Emperor.\textsuperscript{13}

The citizens of Fulda were not slow to respond. Thiébault had brought with him an order from Napoleon which levied a war contribution of 1,300,000 francs on the State. The same day that Thiébault issued his proclamation, the Provisional Governing Council wrote a long letter to Lauran, the Intendant-général, that acknowledged the request but, after outlining the income and resources of the country, stated:

You can only draw the conclusion, Monsieur l’Intendant, the impossibility of the above mentioned contribution.

We have confidence that our tables and associated remarks have convinced you that the requested contribution is beyond our means…We, therefore, have confidence that you, M. Intendant, will dispense with the contribution which his Majesty has requested, or, at least the greatest part of it.\textsuperscript{14}

On 1 December, the Council wrote directly to Thiébault asking that he spare the State the contribution of foodstuffs ordered by Napoleon because of the risk of famine and to enable Fulda to provide assistance to neighboring provinces. Thiébault forwarded this letter to Berthiér. On 4 December the Prince-Bishop of Fulda also wrote directly to Napoleon requesting that the forced contribution be reduced as “the country is small, poor, and still subject to famine and disease as the war continues.”\textsuperscript{15} These pleas did not lighten the load on Fulda. Rather, it was increased by a further levy of 500 horses, 300 of which were to be cavalry mounts and 200 for the artillery. Letters asking for relief continued to be sent to Thiébault by the Council, but Thiébault wrote: “I did not attempt to support these demands for relief, which were quite useless.”\textsuperscript{16}

In military matters, Thiébault was more fortunate. In early October 1806, Marshal Adolphe-Edouard Mortier had occupied Fulda as he marched through north

\textsuperscript{13} Proclamation to Citizens of Fulda, 20 November 1806, Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Fulda), printed, unnumbered.

\textsuperscript{14} Provisional Governing Council [hereafter PGC] to Intendant-General Lauran, 20 November 1806, Ibid., No. 1.

\textsuperscript{15} PGC to Thiébault, 1 December 1806, Ibid., No. 24; Prince-Bishop of Fulda to Napoleon, 4 December 1806, Ibid., No. 27. Thiébault noted on the PGC’s covering letter to that of the Bishop, “It was not answered.”

\textsuperscript{16} Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 23.
Germany on the way to join the *Grand Armée*. In Fulda, Mortier had disbanded the militia and attempted to disarm the populace leaving only the 24 ceremonial hussars. Much of Thiébault’s negotiation with the Provisional Government during the first month of his administration involved questions of who could carry arms. The hussars, police officers, and even foresters were subjects of correspondence. Then, in mid-December, the question became moot.

First, on 12 December, orders arrived that a four-battalion regiment of light infantry to be called the Westphalia Regiment, was to be organized from within the five governorates, and Fulda was to provide one battalion. Thiébault, drawing on his staff experience, took the lead in this effort. He drafted a memo to his fellow governors, the new regimental commander, the Prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, and Berthiér recommending standards of uniform and equipment that were then adopted. Thiébault was especially proud of the battalion raised in Fulda. This battalion, composed entirely of well-paid volunteers with experienced commissioned and non-commissioned officers, took the nickname of “the Model Battalion,” and, according to Thiébault, the nickname was still being used when he met the battalion several years later in Spain.\(^{17}\)

Just after Christmas, however, the Baron von Tann and M. de Schenck requested a confidential conversation. In Thiébault’s office, they told him that they had information that more than 30,000 men were prepared to take up arms against the French in nearby Hesse-Cassel and that a force of 12,000 was planning to march on Fulda to extend the insurrection.\(^{18}\) Thiébault immediately called a meeting of his French subordinates to inform them of the alleged plot. Since the troops available to the French were limited to the Foldois hussars, a dozen French gendarmes, and those French soldiers in the hospitals

\(^{17}\) Ibid., IV, 22.

\(^{18}\) The revolt in Hesse-Cassel involved Hessian soldiers disbanded by General Mortier as well as some peasants. The rebellion might have been avoided since the French had intended to recall three Hessian regiments, which they assumed to be mercenaries. See Napoleon to Lagrange, 6 November 1806, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, No. 11186, XIII, 597. However, the order was apparently misunderstood and the troops did not realize that they were to be recalled to service rather than to be interned as prisoners of war (as originally ordered in Napoleon’s decree of 23 October 1806), and that their officers, who were already in prison or on parole, were being recalled with them. See Owen Connelly, *Napoleon’s Satellite Kingdoms* [Malabar, FL, 1990], 183.
who had recovered sufficiently to bear arms, both the garrison commander and the Intendant recommended that the French fall back on Frankfurt. Thiébault rejected this advice, ordered the men of the French community and the convalescents organized into provisional companies, and he sent letters to both Marshal Kellermann in Mainz and the French Ambassador to the Confederation in Frankfurt to alert them.

In the afternoon, Baron von Tann returned to announce that the situation was deteriorating and that the roads in both directions – to Erfurt and Frankfurt – had been cut. This conversation followed:

Von Tann: The country is still quiet; however, I am not able to say that it will remain tranquil, and, if an insurrection breaks out, it will be terrible. Most Germans will think carefully before taking part, but once the first barriers are down, the shock will be that of a charging bull. You are in an enemy country, in the middle of a population that has only surrendered to force. If it was not for the warm feelings that you have personally inspired in the Fuldoise, the explosion would have already happened.

Thiébault: It is the service of the Emperor, not myself, that is important. But tell me: Is this country Catholic and Hesse Protestant?

Von Tann: Yes, governor.

Thiébault: The two countries are more often enemies than friends?

Von Tann: That is exactly right.

Thiébault: The replacement of the Prince-Bishop by the Prince of Orange was an insult to the Fuldoise?

Von Tann: I agree.

Thiébault: The Prince-Bishop is dear to and respected by all the population?

Von Tann: Generally.

Thiébault: His brother, the Baron d’Arstalt (von Herstalle), the former chief of the militia, is esteemed and loved?¹⁹

¹⁹ Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 25-6. Having spent the first sixteen years of his life in Berlin, Thiébault was fluent in German and had a considerable understanding of the German character. In this instance, he played upon the desire of the traditional aristocracy (the Barons von Tann and von Herstalle) to maintain their own positions, and the deeply felt split between Catholics and Protestants in Germany, dating back to the religious wars of the 16th and 17th centuries and the Treaties of Augsburg (1555) and Westphalia (1648) that divided the German states along confessional lines.
Following this logic and much to the surprise of Baron von Tann, Thiébault immediately issued orders to form a militia force of eight battalions and appointed the Baron von Herstalle to command it again. Within a week, Thiébault had a force of some 3,000 militia, dressed in their traditional uniforms, and under their own officers. He announced the formation of this force, and issued a proclamation to the citizens of Fulda announcing that some “criminals,” taking advantage of the apparent paucity of French forces in the area, were despoiling villages in Hesse. After enumerating the overwhelming French forces that would respond to the rebellion, he expressed his faith in the loyalty and good sense of the Fuldoise:

People of Fulda, you would never participate in the evil frenzy of pillage nor the assassinations committed by those who do so under the pretext of attacking the French. ... You understand the consequences that this conduct would entail, and you applaud the calm and security that result from your warm sentiments...and respect for the sacred person and the orders of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor Napoleon.

For my brave Fuldoise, I value your conduct, and I will never neglect to serve you by working to obtain a reduction in the demands made upon you.

In the meantime, Kellermann immediately responded to Thiébault’s letter, dispatching a force of 1,400 infantry, two hundred cavalry, and four guns to his assistance. En route to Fulda, the French force encountered the insurgent column, dispersed it, and reopened communications with Fulda.

With peace assured, on 18 December 1806, the Empress Josephine took the opportunity to visit the Prince-Primate in Frankfurt before her planned return to Paris and sent word to Thiébault that she wished to see him there. Thiébault visited Frankfurt for

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20 On 29 December 1806, Thiébault received a petition from former officers of the regiment of Fulda describing how they had been relieved by Mortier and asking for their positions back. Thiébault noted his approval on the covering letter from the Provisional Government and added an invitation to them to his New Year’s reception. See Petition of Officers of the Regiment of Fulda to General Thiébault, 29 December 1806, Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Fulda), No. 49.

21 Proclamation to the Inhabitants of Fulda, 1 January 1807, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C2, MS IX, F1.

22 Exchange of correspondence between Thiébault and Col. Saserre, 3 & 4 January 1807, Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Fulda), No. 55.
three days as her guest. Although he had known Josephine for several years, he was surprised at the warmth of his reception. As he was making his farewells, she said “A word with you, my dear general, concerning a priest who lives in your governorate and whom I recommend to you.” Although she could not remember the priest’s name, which was supplied by one of the ladies-in-waiting as Sonnet de la Milousière, she went on, “he has several important claims to make, which he will tell you himself, and you are to remember that I take a serious interest in this matter.”

When Thiébault returned to Fulda, he mentioned Josephine’s request matter to the Baron von Tann and was surprised by the Baron’s vehement response. “He (the priest) is the most forward, the most avaricious person, a great imposter, and the most wicked of men, a rouge, impudent and cynical as the worst catholic priest.” Apparently, the priest, a refugee from the Terror in France, had been serving as a schoolmaster in one of the near-by villages, and he had been asked to serve as an interpreter for General Mortier and the Prince-Bishop earlier that year. For this, the Prince-Bishop had given him ten louis, and as thanks had subsequently been bombarded with a series of demands by the priest for “saving the country.”

Shortly after the New Year, the Abbé Sonnet, whom he described as short, fat, and imperious, visited Thiébault. The Abbé demanded that Thiébault immediately appoint him Councilor to the Prince-Bishop and award him a pension of 600 florins a year. Thiébault referred the problem to the Provisional Governing Council, which responded that they already had perfectly capable advisors for the Prince-Bishop and that any annuity would have to come out of funds earmarked for the French indemnity.

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23 On 21 December 1806, Thiébault wrote his father from Frankfurt describing the round of balls, parties, and calls on both the Empress and Hortense, Queen of Holland who, with her young son, Napoleon Charles, was with the Empress. He stated that he would return to Fulda the next day, when the following conversation with Josephine took. See Paul Thiébault to Dieudonné Thiébault, 21 December 1806, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C1, MS III, F1.

24 Empress Josephine, quoted in Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 43.

25 Ibid., IV, 44.

26 PGC to Thiébault, 15 February 1807, Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Fulda), No. 81.
Negotiations continued; the Abbé increased his demands, the Governing Council resisted, and the Governor become more impatient with them all. Eventually, Thiébault issued an official order, appointing the Abbé councilor to the Chapter of the Cathedral, authorizing an official annuity of 600 florins a year, and that “this is the complete and entire provision on behalf of Abbé Sonnet.” This was still insufficient; and the Council, when it acknowledged Thiébault’s order, noted that the Abbé continued to make additional demands, including the award of the Cross of the Chapter of Fulda (an order that had been abolished with the secularization of the state in 1802), an increase in his annuity, the post of President of the Cathedral Chapter, and lodging in the Palace (where Thiébault resided). When these demands were refused, the Abbé retired in a huff to the village where he had previously resided while threatening an appeal to the Empress. Thiébault countered with an explanatory report to the Empress and attempted to regain her favor by sending her a rare Swiss chamois, originally intended for the Prince of Orange, for her zoo in Malmaison. Ultimately, the affair lasted over a year, and eventually an official investigation was undertaken that cleared Thiébault. Thiébault, however, knew that the incident had permanently damaged his standing with the Empress.

Even as he was dealing with the Abbé Sonnet, Thiébault had two other crises on his hands – one political, one personal. The political crisis was the result of an attempt by some younger members of the State Administration to take over the Governing Council. Shortly after he had arrived, one of the members of the Council, Senfft von Pilsch, requested leave on the grounds of ill-health, and, when it was granted, immediately left Fulda for his family estates in Saxony. Thiébault mourned the loss of the only competent member of the Council other than the Baron von Tann. A number

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27 Thiébault to the PGC, 30 March 1807. Ibid., No. 90.
28 PGC to Thiébault, 31 March 1806. Ibid., No. 91.
29 When Thiébault returned to Paris from Tilsit, she received him “coldly” and referring to the incident in his memoirs, he commented: “As to the Empress, I had plenty of proof of the unhappiness she held in my regard.” Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 49.
30 Senfft von Pilsch to Thiébault, 10 December 1806, Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Fulda), No. 32; Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 58.
of the younger men who were members of the various governmental chambers, especially those on the Financial Chamber, approached Thiébault, complementing him on his efforts to have the war indemnity reduced, and suggesting that a ‘younger and more zealous’ governing council would be of great assistance to him in achieving this goal.

Thiébault, now the ripe old age of thirty-six himself, and by temperament a stubborn supporter of regularity and order, responded that the Baron von Tann was doing an excellent job, and that he (Thiébault) did not have authority from the Emperor to change the established governing structure. Suddenly, the members of the Council began receiving anonymous attacks, placards appeared overnight on the streets with caricatures of the council members with donkey’s ears, and Thiébault himself received two unsigned inquiries questioning the integrity of his administration.

One cannot comprehend, one wrote, how a man of spirit is able to support such ordinary men; how the governor of Fulda is able to leave the country in such miserable hands; how a French general is able to compromise the interest of the army; and how a devoted subject of the Emperor hesitates to serve the interests of the Empire.

Thiébault ordered the placards torn down and burned by the public executioner, and replaced with notices condemning this sort of interference. A few days later, however, he received a letter signed by a number of private citizens asking him to authorize a delegation of ‘young men, zealous, and capable’ to travel to the Imperial Headquarters to ask for a reduction in the war contribution. Noting the words ‘young men, zealous, and capable,’ Thiébault believed this to be an attempt by officials of the Chambers to by-pass him and to appeal directly to the Emperor for a change in the Council. He simply responded to the issue, however, by pointing out that he and the Baron von Tann had already approached the Emperor and were awaiting a reply.

The rebellious officials were not deterred. This time, in an attempt to obtain authorization to meet the Emperor, they themselves prepared a letter and without clearing it through the Governing Council, sent it with a three-man delegation who demanded to see the Governor. Thiébault refused to recognize the delegation, to meet with them

31 A ‘chamber’ was a subsidiary bureau of the Provisional Government.

32 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 59.
formally, or to accept the letter. Instead, he met them in an anti-room, chided them for attempting to bypass the Governing Council, and told them:

I should punish you and your associates for this demarche and for all that has preceded it. It is to avoid a repeat of this extremity that I have not received you as a delegation. … I confine myself to instructing you to consult with your colleagues more regularly, with moderation, and tell them that in both their public and private acts to stop this, as I am at the end of my patience.\textsuperscript{33}

Even this did not prove sufficient. The members of the Finance Chamber, who had been the ringleaders from the first, refused to take orders from the Governing Council and attempted to obstruct the day-to-day functions of the government. Thiébault ordered an investigation into the whole affair. The investigation complete, he issued an order that described the efforts to subvert and replace the Governing Council, named the Chamber of Finance as the “hotbed and obvious instrument” of the intrigue, penalized its members, and removed them from their posts. Baron von Tann, in the presence of the Council, all the Chambers, and a detachment of gendarmes, publicly read the order to them. The ringleader was sentenced to four days arrest in the guard-house, the Secretary of the Chamber and an official who had authored a false report to the Governing Council were sentenced respectively to eight and four days of house arrest, “with a gendarme in residence,” and the remaining six members were fined varying amounts.\textsuperscript{34} The gendarmes then marched the officials, complete in their scarlet court uniforms, off under arrest.

Thiébault’s second crisis was more personal. He still believed that Napoleon would reward him for his performance at Austerlitz with promotion to the rank of \textit{général de division}. So, when Thiébault saw the \textit{Le Moniteur universel} of 8 February 1806 which published two decrees of Napoleon promoting six more \textit{généraux de brigade} to \textit{généraux de division},\textsuperscript{35} he was very upset and wrote to a friend at the Imperial

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., IV, 60.
\textsuperscript{34} Order of the Governor of Fulda, 30 April 1807, Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Fulda), printed, unnumbered.
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Le Moniteur universel}. 8 February 1807 (Paris), Premier semestre, 150. Thiébault, claims that it was the issue of 24 March and that he “instantly took pen in hand and wrote directly to Napoleon.” See Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, IV, 62. However, a careful examination of that newspaper between the end of January and the end of March, 1807,
Headquarters trying to find out what happened. He waited six weeks without a satisfactory reply, and, therefore, on 24 March he wrote directly to Napoleon asking for confirmation of his appointment and signing the letter” “Thiébault, *Général de division.*”

Berthier’s reply arrived a few days later:

> Although no one, General, desires more than I that you be named *général de division*, I was astonished, and His Majesty was equally astonished, to see that in your demand, you signed yourself ‘*Général de division, Governor of Fulda.*’ There does not exist in my office any decree naming you *général de division*, and one cannot until it is conferred by a decree of His Majesty. …”

Thiébault knew that Berthier was not a friend; he believed this resentment dated back to his failure to follow up on his father’s introduction in 1796, and was reinforced by his support of Masséna in Italy in 1797. Thiébault, therefore, believed that Berthier was mocking him, and deliberately holding up his nomination. There followed an acrimonious exchange of correspondence between the tenacious Thiébault and Berthier, with Thiébault continuing to use the title *général de division*, that ended abruptly with a letter from Berthier dated 10 April 1807, relieving Thiébault as Governor of Fulda, naming *Général de brigade* Georges Kister as his replacement, and ordering Thiébault to report to Imperial headquarters for further orders.

While awaiting the arrival of General Kister, Thiébault completed his administration of the governorate. On 30 April, he issued the decree removing the officials of the Chamber of Finance. He then requested a detailed report on the status of payment of the war contribution that was prepared by the new Chairman of the Chamber of Finance. Thiébault received the report on 10 May. Against the levy of 1,300,000

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indicates that there were no other promotions to *général de division* published during that period. This would account for an otherwise hard-to-explain letter dated 10 February 1806 from Thiébault to General Jean Le Marois, an aide-de-camp at Imperial Headquarters, asking him to follow up on his letter to Berthiér asking about his promotion. See Thiébault to Le Marois, 10 February 1806, Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Fulda), No. 96. It is probable that Thiébault waited until he received an answer to this letter.

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36 Berthiér to Thiébault, 3 April 1807, Thiébault, *Mémoires*, IV, 63.

37 Ibid., IV, 65.
francs, Fulda had paid 872,724.91, or two-thirds of the required amount. The removal of the previous members of the Chamber of Finance, however, only added to Thiébault’s personal problems. When the Abbé Sonnet heard of this, he secretly returned to Fulda from the village where he had been staying and met with the former finance councilors. His offer to go to Imperial Headquarters and intercede for them was accepted, and with a false passport and funds provided by them he left for Finkenstein. Thiébault did not hear of this until two days after the Abbé’s departure. He hoped that the report he had already submitted would clear him. It apparently did.

General Kister arrived in the evening of 17 May; Thiébault and his wife, Zozotte, who had joined him in March, left without ceremony the next day. If he had been in a hurry to leave Fulda, however, he was in no hurry to report to Imperial Headquarters. He and his wife traveled to Frankfurt and remained there nine days as guests of the Prince-Primate. He then accompanied Zozotte as far as Mainz on her return to Paris before starting back to Imperial Headquarters which was still located in Finkenstein, northwest of Warsaw.

Thiébault reached Berlin on 3 June where he paused for eight days, visiting the Kriegs Acadamie that his father had directed and where Paul had been a student twenty years earlier. He spent much of the time visiting old family friends, including Prince Ferdinand of Prussia, the younger brother of Friedrich the Great. The Prince, who disapproved of the war with France and had remained in Berlin, spoke warmly of Dieudonné Thiébault’s biography of King Friedrich, Souvenirs de vingt ans.


39 Thiébault wrote: “When I arrived at the Imperial Headquarters, I found no trace of this miserable person, …my last letter had been sufficient to explain the situation.’ See Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 65. For the full inspector’s report, which includes Thiébault’s letter, see Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Fulda), between documents 95 and 96.

40 The Provisional Governing Council of Fulda had a presentation sword worth 4,500 francs made in Paris. It was presented to him there on 1 September 1807. The blade was inscribed ‘Au général Thiébault, le pays de Fulde reconnaissant,” and his campaigns itemized on the hilt. See Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 67. See Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Fulda), unnumbered, for a tracing of the engraving on blade and hilt.
While Thiébault dallied on his way to Imperial Headquarters, an official order, naming him commander of the 3rd Brigade of the 3rd Division of Davout’s 3rd Corps, issued by Berthier on 24 May,\textsuperscript{41} was still trying to reach him. Now, however, he realized that “the time for a reasonable stop had flown” and he therefore “traveled night and day.”\textsuperscript{42}

Thiébault was too late. At Kulm (now Chelmo, Poland), he encountered Prince Camille Borghèse on his way to Paris with the 57th Bulletin of the Grand Armée and news of Napoleon’s victory at Friedland (14 June 1807).\textsuperscript{43} Then, Thiébault fell sick with a fever in Koenigsberg, so when he finally reached the Imperial Headquarters in Tilsit, the peace with Russia and Prussia had almost been concluded. Thiébault reported to Berthier, immediately but with some trepidation. Berthier brusquely asked him “How long have you been here?” “For the past hour,” Thiébault replied. “Have you received orders?” Berthier asked. “I have received nothing,” Thiébault replied. Berthier ended the interview with “Good, you will receive orders,” and abruptly dismissed him.\textsuperscript{44}

In the days that followed, Thiébault observed the negotiations from a distance, visited a camp of Russian Cossacks, participated in the famous dinner which the Imperial Guard gave for their Russian counterparts, and dined with friends. Now, standing on his pride, Thiébault refused to again raise the question of his rank. However, the issue arose when he was invited to dinner by old friends, Generals Charles Morand and Nicolas Gauthier. Morand had commanded another brigade in Saint-Hilaire’s division at Austerlitz and was now a général de division. Gauthier, now a general de brigade, had commanded a regiment at the siege of Genoa and had been seriously wounded there in

\textsuperscript{41} Lettre de service, 24 May 1807, and Berthier to Thiébault, same date, Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Fulda), completed form and unnumbered letter. Morand commanded the 1st Division of the 3rd Corps. Morand, who had commanded the Advance Guard of St. Hilaire’s Division at Austerlitz while Thiébault commanded the division’s 1st Brigade, had been promoted to général de division in December 1805. Thiébault’s new brigade consisted of only two battalions of the 7th Léger.

\textsuperscript{42} Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 84.


\textsuperscript{44} Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 81.
the initial assault on Fort Quezzy where Thiébault had led the final assault that won him his promotion to *général de brigade*. Both men now served in Davout’s 3rd Corps, Morand commanding the 1st Division had fought at Auerstadt, and Gautier commanding the 2nd brigade of the 3rd Division. According to Thiébault, both men spoke disparagingly of Davout, calling him overly-exacting, suspicious, but lucky and almost stupidly courageous. “May God preserve you, my dear Thiébault, from serving under his orders,” said Gautier who went on to warn him that another brigade in the 3rd Division had been without a commander for six weeks.

As Gautier had anticipated, the following day Berthiér’s order of 24 May caught up with Thiébault. He was assigned to the 3rd Brigade of the 3rd Division of Davout’s Corps. With the order came a covering letter of the same date ordering him to report to Davout’s headquarters. Thiébault claimed that he decided to ignore the six-week old order and to wait and see what would happen. However, there exists a letter from the Imperial Headquarters in Tilsit dated 1 July reiterating Berthiér’s instructions. On 6 July, General Claude-Marie Hervo, chief of staff of the 3rd Corps, sent Thiébault another letter ordering him to report to General Charles Gudin de la Sabonnière commanding the 3rd Division. Thiébault continued to ignore these instructions.

The Treaty of Tilsit was signed by Napoleon and Alexander of Russia on the morning of 7 July. That afternoon, the two emperors and the King of Prussia reviewed two divisions of the 3rd Corps and Napoleon presented General Morand with the Legion of Honor. Thiébault wrote that when Napoleon arrived before the 3rd Division, he asked where Thiébault was and was told that he had not joined the unit. Thiébault claimed that General Géraud Duroc, aide and close friend of Napoleon, later told him that if the Emperor had found him there, he would have been satisfied by Thiébault’s

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45 Ibid., IV, 89
46 Berthier to Thiébault, 24 May 1807, Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Fulda), unnumbered.
47 Col. [Jean] Le Camus, 3rd Aide-de-état-major, to Thiébault, 1 July 1807, Ibid., unnumbered.
48 General Claude Hervo to Thiébault, 6 July 1807, Ibid., unnumbered.
submission and would have named him général de division on the spot.\textsuperscript{50} Thiébault, however, was not there. That morning, General Hervo had come to Thiébault with a direct order from Davout to report immediately. Thiébault returned with Hervo to Davout’s headquarters, where he told Davout that he had not joined the corps since his wounds had been reopened by the journey to Imperial Headquarters and that he was again in need of medical treatment. Davout asked if he would put that in writing. Thiébault, writing with his left hand, did so, and Davout took the note to the Emperor, who, preoccupied with preparations for departure, simply noted approval and sent the note on to Berthiér. Two hours later, Thiébault received orders authorizing his return to France and four months of sick leave to take the waters at Barrèges.\textsuperscript{51}

Thiébault’s brief career as military governor of the State of Fulda was satisfying to his ego. This office also provided him with valuable experience in managing conquered lands, experience that would serve him well later in Portugal, Spain, and Hamburg. He was able to walk the narrow line between achieving Napoleon’s imperial objectives – if not Josephine’s personal ones – while maintaining sufficient trust and confidence of the local populace to govern, supported by only minimal French forces. Here, the ability to speak German fluently that he acquired in childhood must have also been invaluable, as well as the advice of his father, Dieudonné Thiébault, who had himself spent 20 years in Germany.

The failure to be promoted to général de division still rankled him, but his attempt to address the issue by forcing Berthier’s, and by implication Napoleon’s, hand was doomed to failure from the start. If Berthier was one of the causes for his failure to receive the promotion, direct confrontation, malingering, and virtual disobedience to

\textsuperscript{50} Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, IV, 101. In his \textit{Mémoires}, Thiébault stated that the review took place on 6 July, but throughout the afternoon of the 6\textsuperscript{th} Napoleon was engaged in negotiating the final details of the treaty and meeting Louise, Queen of Prussia, who had just arrived. The award of the Legion of Honor on the 7\textsuperscript{th} to Morand, who had fought with Thiébault on the Pratzen Heights at Austerlitz, the date of Berthiér’s order to Thiébault, and the conversation with Duroc, gives weight to this version of events.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 103-04; Berthier to Thiébault, 7 July 1807, Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Fulda), No. 64. Barrèges is a resort in the province of Hautes-Pyrénées noted for the healing quality of its springs.
direct orders would certainly not succeed. Thiébault may have also misjudged Napoleon and the Emperor’s habit of creating loyalty by making officers indebted to him. If the Emperor was aware of the problems between Thiébault and Berthier and had intended to announce Thiébault’s promotion at the final 3rd Corps parade at Tilsit, Thiébault’s refusal to appear on the somewhat specious grounds of ill-health resulting from his wound was self-defeating. This occasion was neither the first nor the last time that Thiébault claimed ill-health to escape unwanted assignments. This time, nevertheless, he would soon have to reverse himself to obtain another position he badly wanted.
CHAPTER 11
THE CORPS OF OBSERVATION OF THE GIRONDE, 1807

Thiébault arrived in Paris to find that Zozotte had already purchased a house and was busy entertaining old friends and making new ones.¹ Thiébault, however, still faced several problems, both professional and personal. First, his orders from Berthier authorized four months of sick leave taking the waters at Barrèges. To remain in Paris would put him in violation of these orders and again raise the question of reporting to Davout’s corps. However, he still wished to resolve the question of his promotion to général de division and to attempt to resolve the conflict with his father over his abandonment of Betzy and marriage to Zozotte.

Although Dieudonné had already entailed much of his estate to pass ultimately directly to Betzy’s sons, Adolphe and Alfred, he complained about Zozotte’s careless behavior towards him. He was also continually nagging Paul to provide Betzy with more money to enable her to educate the boys. Thiébault tried to effect reconciliation between Zozotte and his father. He claimed to have achieved this: “Zozotte, Naïs, and I traveled to Versailles, where he lived. One trip was enough to efface all the bad feelings. Zozotte was delightful and enchanted my father with her grace and amiability.”² This is perhaps excessive; a later letter from Dieudonné still reflects a considerable coolness toward Paul’s new wife.³

Regarding his promotion, Paul Thiébault found himself in a quandary. The Empress Josephine had not forgiven his failure to support her protégé in Fulda, thus removing that channel of influence. After considerable indecision, he resolved to call on the Emperor at Saint-Cloud and to remind him of the earlier promise made there. When

¹ Dieudonné Thiébault to Paul Thiébault, 20 June 1807, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C1, MS III, F1.
² Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 111.
³ Dieudonné Thiébault to Paul Thiébault, 23 October 1807, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, C1, MS III, F1.
he previewed his speech to the Emperor on an old friend, Charles-Louis Cadet-Gassicourt, the rehabilitated revolutionary who was now well-known to the Emperor. Gassicourt suggested that the Emperor’s reply might be: “But it is also here [at Saint-Cloud] that you abandoned me on 18 brumaire.” Again Thiébault hesitated, and, while he hesitated, an opportunity to evade the issue entirely arose.

On 2 August 1807, Napoleon ordered the formation of the “Corps of Observation of the Gironde” at Bayonne on the French/Spanish border and named General Andoche Junot as its general-in-chief. The formation of this Corps was one piece of a plan to gain control of the Iberian Peninsula, and close the remaining loopholes in the Continental System that Napoleon had established in 1806. Immediately upon returning to Paris, Napoleon had written General Jean François Aimé Dejean, the Minister of Administration for War, of his intention to form an army of 20,000 men and 40 guns at Bayonne on the Spanish border, and rumors of the plan quickly began circulating in Paris. As early as 30 July, the Spanish Ambassador in Paris, Antoine Sébastien Ferrero Fieschi, Prince de Masserano, had reported to Madrid of the planned concentration of French troops at Bayonne. The decree of 2 August closed the military camps in Normandy and Brittany and transferred those troops to Bayonne. Defense of the northern

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4 In 1806, Charles-Louis Cadet-Gassicourt, former revolutionary (see Chapter VI) was now a well-known pharmacist. He had organized the new Board of Health for Napoleon’s Minister of Interior, Jean Antoine Chaptal. The year following this conversation (1809), he was appointed personal pharmacist to the Emperor and accompanied him on the campaign against the Fifth Coalition.

5 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 114.

6 Décret, 2 August 1807, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 12973, XV, 580.

7 Napoleon attached great importance to denying the British goods to the European continent as he explained to Junot in great detail. See Napoleon to Junot, 10 May 1808, Ibid., No. 13843, XVI, 98-99.

8 Napoléon to Dejean, 29 July 1807, Ibid., No. 12947, XV, 560. General Dejean was the second man in the Ministry of War, and was effectively acting as the Minister of War. That position was officially held by Berthier, in addition to his post as Major-général of the Grande Armée.

and eastern coasts of France was left to the 3rd Battalion of the 5th Léger, a handful of marines in Rochefort, and local National Guard units.

General Junot received this command for what may have been a variety of reasons. Appointed Minister to Portugal in 1805, he was well acquainted with the Prince-Regent John. He was in fact still technically the French Minister, although he had left Portugal to serve under Napoleon in the Austerlitz campaign and then had remained in Paris as Military Governor while Napoleon campaigned in Germany and Poland. This command to invade Portugal would provide Junot with an opportunity to distinguish himself as an independent commander or finally to receive his marshal's baton. It was also a reward for Junot’s long and loyal service to Napoleon.

There was another possible reason. Junot had long been an admirer of Napoleon’s sister, Caroline Bonaparte, dating back to her school days in Madame Jeanne-Louise-Henriette Campan’s academy for young ladies. Both Junot and Caroline were now married – Junot to Laura Permon, the future Duchess d’Abrantes, and Caroline to Marshal Murat, but Napoleon had received reports from Joseph Fouché, his Minister of Police, that Junot was seeing Caroline rather indiscreetly while her husband served with Napoleon in Poland. These reports resulted in a stormy interview between Junot and the Emperor when Napoleon returned to Paris in July, and shortly thereafter, Junot received orders assigning him to Bayonne commanding the new corps and a long way from Paris.

Paul Thiébault was a long-time friend of both Junot and his wife. Thiébault and Junot had become friends during the Italian campaign of 1797-98 when Captain Thiébault was an adjoint on Masséna’s staff and Colonel Junot was first aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte. Junot had been instrumental in getting Thiébault’s promotion to général de brigade confirmed in 1800, and he had been helpful in obtaining Thiébault’s assignment as Governor of Fulda. Thiébault had met Laura Junot shortly after her

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10 The First Secretary of the French Legation in Lisbon, M. François Maximillien Gérard de Rayneval (1778-1836), was serving as chargé d’affaires. He went on to serve as First Secretary to General Armand Caulaincourt when he was Napoléon’s Ambassador in Moscow (1807-1812), and he continued in the diplomatic service as Minister to Sweden, Ambassador to Switzerland, and finally Ambassador to Russia for Napoleon and well into the Bourbon Restoration.

11 Mme. Junot, Mémoires de Madame la Duchesse d’Abrantes, VI, 410-11.
marriage to Junot and said of her: “One cannot imagine a happier, livelier, more amiable, more outstanding young woman,” an admiration he held for the rest of his life.

As soon as Junot’s appointment was announced, Thiébault called on him to offer his congratulations, and Junot suggested that Thiébault become his chief of staff, if his health permitted. Thiébault replied: “My wounds allow of anything that suits me; that is, of any duty which a général de division may perform. The duties of chief of staff are not incompatible with that rank, and...you can count on me, though my wounds are not really closed.”

The next day, however, Junot told Thiébault that Berthier had refused to permit the assignment, saying that Thiébault should be either at Barréges taking the waters or at Tilsit with Davout. At Junot’s urging, Thiébault immediately called on Berthier, and emphasizing his service at Austerlitz, convinced Berthier to reconsider. The following day, 28 August 1808, Thiébault received his appointment as Chief of Staff of the Corps of Observation of the Gironde.

The Corps was to assemble in and around Bayonne near the Spanish border. Bayonne was the last city in France on the western-most of the only two routes through the Pyrenees then capable of handling large armies. The other, in the east, led from Perpignan on the Mediterranean to Catalan and Barcelona. The road from Bayonne crossed the Pyrenees near the Atlantic coast, ran to Hendaye, and then through Vitoria to Burgos where it divided, one branch going south to Madrid; the other southwest to Valladolid, Salamanca, Ciudad Rodrigo, and the Portuguese border.

Thiébault quickly departed Paris for Bayonne. On the way, he spent a day in Versailles with his father, now 75 years old. He probably saw his sons, Adolphe and

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12 Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 154.
13 Ibid., IV, 123.
14 In one of the very few favorable comments about Berthier in the entire five-volume Mémoires, Thiébault wrote here: “Berthier was not an ill-natured man; he was even good-natured. The ill-humor with which he pursued me was special and of a personal nature, not a habit, and when one got him alone, he was accessible to all sorts of honorable feelings.” Ibid., IV, 124.
Alfred, who were now studying in the Lyceé which his father directed. Then, stopping only briefly to greet Zozotte’s family in Tours, he hurried to Bayonne where the army would assemble.

The experienced troops in the Corps of Observation did not come from the Grand Armée in German and Poland, but from the now-defunct cantonments of northwestern France. These included two regiments of troops that had been left by the Grande Armée to guard the Northwestern coasts, the 70th and the 86th Lignes, each of two battalions of older soldiers, and one battalion each of the 15th and 16th Lignes. The remaining infantry consisted of ten third (depot) battalions comprised almost completely of new recruits, and foreign troops including two Swiss battalions, one from the Italian Piedmont, and one from Hanover. The cavalry consisted entirely of the fourth (depot) squadrons of regular units, organized in temporary regiments. Only the cavalry officers, non-commissioned officers, and four troopers in each squadron were experienced soldiers. The rest were raw recruits – “young soldiers on young horses” – one officer described them. The artillery was also handicapped. Although most of the gunners and officers had experience, Napoleon’s new artillery train battalions, which provided military drivers and horses for the guns and caissons, were all in Eastern Europe, so the Corps of Observation had to fall back on the old expedient of hiring civilian contractors to provide the horses and their equipment. In addition, there was no horse artillery available to support the cavalry division. All together, the army totaled nearly 23,000 infantry, 2,200 cavalry, 1,100 artillerymen with 38 guns, detachments of gendarmes and engineers, and the usual entourage of sutlers and vivandières.

Thiébault arrived in Bayonne on 29 August to begin planning for the reception and quartering of the army. The troops were to arrive between 4 and 17 September, and were to be cantonned throughout the region but close enough to enable their

15 Dieudonné Thiébault to Paul Thiébault, 23 October 1807, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS., C1, MS III, F1.
concentration within three days.\textsuperscript{18} Junot arrived on 5 September, having delayed in Paris as long as possible to receive his final instructions. For the next month and a half, the officers and non-commissioned officers attempted to turn the raw recruits into an army. The \textit{commissaries des guerres} under M. Laurent Trousset,\textsuperscript{19} \textit{ordonnateur en chef}, the civilian head of the support services, attempted not only to keep the army fed and supplied, but to make plans to support the army on its march to Portugal.

While the Corps of Observation assembled and prepared for its march to Portugal, Napoleon was setting the stage for the first step of his plan to dominate the entire Iberian Peninsula. On 12 August, on instructions from Paris, M. François de Rayneval, the \textit{Chargé d'affaires} of the French Legation in Lisbon, delivered a note to the Portuguese government demanding that Portugal immediately join the Continental System, renounce its long-standing alliance and declare war upon Great Britain, sequester all British goods, and arrest all British subjects in Portugal. The Spanish Ambassador delivered a similar note at the same time, and both diplomats informed the Portuguese that if these demands were not met, they had instructions to immediately request their passports and declare war. The Prince-Regent of Portugal, João, replied that although he was willing to comply with the Continental System and close his ports to the British, he was unwilling to confiscate British property or to arrest its citizens. Unsatisfied with this reply (which had been formulated with the concurrence of the British government), the French and Spanish mission chiefs left Lisbon on 30 September.\textsuperscript{20}

In Paris, General Gerard Duroc, confidante of Napoleon and Grand Marshal of the Emperor’s Palace, was negotiating secretly with Don Eugenio Isquierdo, personal envoy of Manuel Domingos Godoy, Prince of Peace and First Minister of Spain.\textsuperscript{21} The resulting

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18} Dejean to Napoléon, 3 August 1807, Archives nationales, AF\textsuperscript{iv}, No. 1604, cited in Grasset’s, \textit{La guerre}, I, 431.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Laurent François Trousset (1768-1812). As a senior civilian administrator of Napoleon’s armies, he eventually received the \textit{Legion d’honneur}. He died near Vilna in 1812 on the retreat from Russia.
\item \textsuperscript{20} André Fugier, \textit{Napoléon et l’Espagne, 1799-1808} (Paris, 1930), II, 238.
\item \textsuperscript{21} These negotiations were so secret that the Spanish Minister in Paris, the Prince de Masserano, was not aware of them.
\end{itemize}
Treaty of Fontainebleau, signed 27 October 1807, partitioned Portugal into three states. The northernmost, the province of Entre Douro e Minho with the capital at Oporto, was to be given to the King of Etruria.\textsuperscript{22} The two southern provinces, Algarve and Alentejo, were to become the Principality of Algarve, a Spanish protectorate under Godoy himself. The three central provinces – Tras-os-Montes, Beira, and Estremadura – would form a third kingdom with Lisbon as its capital. This third kingdom might or might not be restored to the House of Braganza upon the return of peace. To achieve this grand design, a convention signed at the same time as the treaty permitted the passage of the Corps of Observation of the Gironde through Spain en route to Portugal and guaranteed Spanish logistical support. Upon entry into Portugal, a Spanish force of 11,000 men and thirty guns under General Juan Caraffa would join the Corps. The Spanish also agreed to provide two additional forces – a division of 10,000 men under General Francisco Taranco y Plano to take possession of Oporto and the northern province, and another of 6,000 under General Francisco Maria Solano, Marquis of Socorro, to occupy the provinces of Alentejo and Algarve. The treaty also provided for the formation of a second French

\textsuperscript{22} The king of the short-lived Kingdom of Etruria (1801-1808), Charles Louis Bourbon-Parma, was related to the King of Spain. In 1808, Napoleon reabsorbed the Kingdom of Etruria into the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, which he then gave to his sister Elisa.
Corps of Observation of the Gironde of 40,000 men at Bayonne, ostensibly to reinforce the troops in Portugal if the British landed a force to support Portugal.\textsuperscript{23}

As the Corps of Observation trained in the villages and countryside around Bayonne, Junot, accompanied by Thiébault and other members of his staff, regularly inspected the various units, hospitals and depots, and attempted to inspire the new recruits. The motto of Junot and his staff became: “I will have the hardest labors; you will enjoy the greatest advantages.”\textsuperscript{24}

On 10 October, Junot sent a long report to Napoleon detailing the status of his army.\textsuperscript{25} Thiébault’s état-major still lacked both sufficient \textit{adjudant-commandants} and \textit{adjoints} (field and company grade staff officers). The 1\textsuperscript{st} Division under Général de division Henri-François Delaborde was the most experienced, in the best condition, and nearly at full strength. The 2\textsuperscript{nd} Division under Général de division Antoine LaRoche-Dubouscat,\textsuperscript{26} lacked a \textit{général de brigade} for one brigade, had slightly greater personnel shortages, and needed additional training. It was ready, however, to begin a campaign. The 3\textsuperscript{rd} Division under Général de division Jean-Pierre Travot was in the worst condition. It was composed almost entirely of the depot battalions of raw recruits still in need of training, and ten of the eleven battalions were at half strength or less. The cavalry division to be commanded by the still-absent Général de division François-Étienne Kellermann was equally inexperienced. The fourth squadron of seven different cavalry regiments was organized into three provisional regiments. Because of a shortage of forage in the Pyrenees region, the cavalry were quartered in the department du Gers six days’ march from Bayonne, and while their morale was good, their training was nearly

\begin{enumerate}
\item This summary taken from Junot to Napoleon, 10 October 1807, Sepulveda, “Diário de Junot,” 94-98.
\item General La Roche-Doubouscat left the army for health reasons shortly before the Army marched into Spain began. He was replaced as commander of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Division when the division reached Salamanca by Général de division Louis-Henri Loison, who the previous year had served as a military governor in Germany with Thiébault.
\end{enumerate}
non-existent (‘son instruction est presque nulle’). The artillery under Général de division Albert-Louise-Valentine Taviel lacked a horse battery for the cavalry division and specialists (carpenters, blacksmiths, farriers, and saddles), although these had been requested from the Ministry of War. In his 10 October letter, Junot also requested funds for an additional 110 caissons with artillery and infantry ammunition and 500 additional horses to draw them. The arsenal at Bayonne was capable of manufacturing the ammunition and vehicles if funds were available. The engineers lacked all materiel, and an additional company or two of sappers was needed. Overall, however, morale of the army was high, Junot wrote, and he believed that they would be capable of undertaking the mission that the Emperor had assigned to them.

In this report, Junot repeatedly stated that the various resources requested had not been met by Minister of War, Henri-Jacques Clarke. Junot did not like Clarke, a situation that dated back to first Italian campaign of 1796 when the Directory had sent Clarke to the Army of Italy to watch then-General Bonaparte. Although Clarke shifted his loyalties to Napoleon, at least until 1814, his and Junot's continuing mutual dislike was reflected in much of their correspondence of this period. Clarke felt that Junot was insubordinate, and Junot was certain that Clarke was depriving his army of resources out of spite. This friction created problems for Thiébault. On one occasion, Thiébault received a strong complaint from Clarke, saying that he (Clarke) had been questioned by Napoleon about Junot’s force; that he had been unaware of the specific issue; and that he blamed Thiébault for not keeping him informed. Thiébault took this letter to Junot, who laughingly admitted that he had used his privilege of corresponding privately with Napoleon to embarrass Clarke. Thiébault, although he distrusted Clarke, knew that he

27 Junot to Napoleon, 10 October 1807, Sepulveda, “Diário de Junot,” 97.
28 Clarke had replaced Marshal Berthier as Minister of War shortly after Junot assumed command of the Corps of Observation of the Gironde.
29 See Mme. Junot, Mémoires de Madame la Duchesse d’Abrantes, VI, 531-36, for her version of the conflict between the two men.
30 According to Mme. Junot, when Junot complained to Napoleon of being forced to report to Clark, Napoleon authorized Junot to report directly to him, and his chief of staff to correspond with Clarke. Ibid., 533. Although there are a few letters between Junot and Clarke in the Archives de la guerre for this period, most of the Army’s
could not make an enemy of him. He wrote, “Even if Junot is outstanding and Clarke unpleasant, their mutual dislike made victims of officers caught between them.”

This awkward reporting structure did little to help Junot’s reputation with Napoleon, either. Junot’s report to Napoleon, dated 10 October 1808, crossed on its way to Paris with a sharp query to Junot based on a note Napoleon had sent to Clarke. On 12 October, Napoleon wrote to Clarke:

Send a special courier to General Junot at Bayonne. Inform him that I am unhappy that he has not corresponded with you daily and that he has not informed you of the situation of his army and administration.

Give him an order to march within twenty-four hours after the receipt of your letter to enter Spain with his army and move to the frontier of Portugal. Spain must have given the orders for the supply of his troops.

Let General Junot know that my ambassador has left Lisbon; therefore there is not a moment to lose to forestall the English.

Clarke’s order to march into Spain arrived in Bayonne on 15 October. On 16 October, an advance party of a staff officer, a supply officer (commissaire des guerres), and the Corps’ chief of medicine entered Spain to ensure preparations for the march. The following day, the leading elements of the 1st Division marched into Spain. Thiébault’s Order of the Day issued that morning speaks only of “a march in Spain” and enjoined the officers and men of the Corps to stay on the best of terms with the Spanish and forbade independent foraging. Attached to the order was an “Instruction for the Troops Marching in Spain,” covering march discipline, bivouacking, baggage trains, and correspondence to Clarke is from Thiébault. See France, Archives de la guerre, Service historique de l’armée de la terre, Château de Vincennes, MSS, [hereafter Service historique], Correspondance: Armée de Portugal, Cartons C7 and C8. In his Mémoires, Thiébault noted that the Relation de l’Expédition was “only a copy of my reports to the Minister of War. The first part of that work is based on the report I sent him from Abrantes and the first reports from Lisbon; the second part, a report I wrote during my voyage from Lisbon to Quiberon.” See Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 182.

31 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 158.

32 Napoléon to Clarke, 12 October 1807, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 132237, XVI, 94.


Figure 13. Expedition to Portugal. (Map by R. Godfrey-Sigler.)
hospitals. Given the details involved and the supplemental order of march, it was clear that Thiébault had been working on these orders for some time.\(^{35}\) Planning for the detailed movement of the command and drafting the necessary orders was the principle duty of division, corps, and army chiefs of staff in the early 19\(^{th}\) century. In his first staff manual, Thiébault himself wrote in reference to a chief of staff: “the first office [function] (which might be considered as the particular office of an État-major-général) would comprehend, first, everything appertaining to the movement of troops, prisoners of war, and organization of the army.”\(^ {36}\) Thiébault’s meticulous instructions and well-controlled march order were classic examples of how this should be done. They were not, however, very Napoleonic, as will be seen.

Napoleon replied to Junot’s 10 October report the same day that Junot’s army began its march into Spain. Napoleon wrote: “I have received your letter of the 10\(^ {th}\). My intention is that you correspond every day with the Minister of War and sometimes with me.” He went on to tell Junot of the formation of a 2\(^ {nd}\) Corps of Observation of the Gironde, and that, although the Portuguese had declared war on the British in response to his demands, he was still not satisfied. He believed that the Portuguese were stalling, waiting for a British expeditionary force to be sent, so he wanted Junot to be in Lisbon by 1 December. He specifically instructed Junot to report in detail on the military geography of the part of Spain though which he would pass. He also informed Junot that some of his requests for additional staff officers, troops for the 2\(^ {nd}\) and 3\(^ {rd}\) Divisions, and the engineers would be met.\(^ {37}\) Separately, he ordered Clarke to provide Junot with

\(^{35}\) Thiébault, Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal, Appendix 2. The instructions and order of march specified that the army was to march in sixteen brigade-size columns, one leaving Bayonne each day. This would keep the road uncongested and enable the Spanish to provide the necessary supplies. The cavalry was to move last, giving it more time to remount, train, and move from its cantonments to the assembly-point in Bayonne.


\(^{37}\) Napoléon to Junot, 17 October 1807, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 13267, XVI, 115-16.
additional funds for the artillery, the engineers, and the “secret” fund, and to meet the payroll of the Army until 1 January.\textsuperscript{38}

On 22 October, Junot replied to Napoleon’s letter. He reported that the troops had crossed the border exactly as ordered, although he himself was still in Bayonne, and would leave with the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Division. He reported that the army would be reunited by 26 November in cantonments between Salamanca and Ciudad Rodrigo; it would be prepared to enter Portugal “in good order” on 1 December; and he anticipated arriving in Lisbon in ten days.\textsuperscript{39}

On 3 November, Junot again wrote Napoleon, this time from Vitoria in Spain. He indicated that there had been a few difficult days for the march since it had been raining heavily and there was considerable difficulty in obtaining the required amount of wheat for the army’s bread. Nevertheless, “it is impossible to see better marching and to have troops better disciplined and better led.” Junot wrote that he would be in Valladolid by 11 November, and then march on to Salamanca prior to entering Portugal from the Spanish town of Alcantara along the Tagus River.\textsuperscript{40}

This choice was an important decision.\textsuperscript{41} There are three main routes into Portugal to Lisbon. The most northern was from Burgos to Oporto and then south along the coastal Rua Royal. This route was very indirect and was already being used by General Taranco y Plano’s Spanish corps marching on Oporto. The most feasible route from Spain to Lisbon ran south of the Tagus River but required crossing the three-mile estuary of the Tagus to reach Lisbon. There was an adequate and direct route from Salamanca via Ciudad Rodrigo to Coimbra and then south to Lisbon. Its major drawbacks were that it lay almost entirely within Portuguese territory and was blocked by

\textsuperscript{38} Napoléon to Clarke, 16 October 1807, Ibid., No. 13257, XVI, 106. In this letter, Napoleon also indicated that after 1 January 1808, the expenses of the army would be paid by Portuguese contributions to be worked out diplomatically with Spain.

\textsuperscript{39} Junot to Napoleon, 22 October 1807, Sepulveda, “Diário de Junot,” 99.

\textsuperscript{40} Junot to Napoleon, 3 November 1807, Ibid., 101-02.

\textsuperscript{41} Napoleon, in his note to Clarke of 16 October, indicated that he wanted Junot to “act on the banks of the Tagus” but did not assign a firm route. However, Mme. Junot in her Mémoires indicated that Junot already knew of Napoleon’s plan before leaving Paris. See Mme. Junot, Mémoires de Mme. Junot, VI, 535.
the fortress at Almeida on the Portuguese side of the border. Napoleon chose none of these, but rather what appeared to be a shorter route. It ran south from Ciudad Rodrigo to the Spanish city of Alcantara (where the Spanish corps commanded by General Caffara was gathering), and then along the north bank of the Tagus River to Lisbon. Although there were no major fortifications guarding this route, the road from Cuidad Rodrigo to Alcantara was inadequate and there were virtually no improved roads on the Portuguese side of the border on the north side of the Tagus until Abrantes. Furthermore, the crossing of the Zezere River, a northern tributary of the Tagus about halfway to Lisbon, would be extremely difficult if the Portuguese disputed the crossing.\footnote{Foy, History of the War in the Peninsula, II, 37 and William Eliot, A Treatise on the Defense of Portugal (London, 1811), 82-85. After passing the Zezere, Thiebault wrote: “After seeing the redoubts of the batteries still in place on the right bank of the Zezere, we were convinced that if the Portuguese had placed 3,000 men there, we would not have passed.” See Thiébault, Relation de l’Éxpédition du Portugal, 63.}

Napoleon based his decision regarding the route on political rather than military considerations. He wanted Junot to be in Lisbon “as a friend or as an enemy” by 1 December to forestall a possible landing by a British expeditionary force that had just left Copenhagen. He also wanted to seize the Portuguese fleet anchored in Lisbon harbor before the 2nd Corps of Observation of the Gironde entered Spain. To do this, Napoleon looked at his maps and saw that the Tagus was the shortest route from Spain to Lisbon, and a route that would permit the army to use the river for transportation once it reached Abrantes. Unfortunately, the maps did not indicate the deplorable to non-existent condition of the roads in the barren, rugged mountains to be traversed, nor the abysmal weather that was to be encountered. Napoleon had at his disposal a very detailed plan for the invasion of Portugal prepared by General Dumouriez for the French and Spanish courts in 1769.\footnote{“He (Dumouriez) had spent a long time in Portugal and knew the country better than the Portuguese themselves.” Grasset, La guerre d’Espagne, I, 102-04.} Napoleon’s contempt for the slow marching, ponderously encumbered operations of the old royal armies led him to ignore this study, which concluded that the
route Napoleon had chosen was one of the most difficult and would require careful preparation.  

Junot’s letter of 3 November had not reached Napoleon when the Emperor reacted impatiently to Junot’s letter of 22 October. On 28 October, Napoleon ordered Clarke to tell Junot that he wanted to accelerate the march. Then, on 31 October, he sent Junot a long instruction beginning, “I do not approve at all of your march.” The march of 16 brigade-size columns was too slow. Junot should march his troops by division, he should move his cavalry from the rear to the front of his march, the 1st Division should arrive in Salamanca by 10 November, in Alcantara no later than the 20th, and in Lisbon by 1 December, Napoleon wrote:

There should be no difficulty for the 1st Division to enter Portugal on the 22nd. From Alcantara to Lisbon the distance is 50 leagues [150 miles]. Given this, the 1st Division should be in Lisbon the first of December and all the rest following.  

Napoleon calculated that Junot’s troops could march 200 miles from Salamanca to Alcantara in nine or ten days, have one day to rest and refit, and then march the next 200 miles to Lisbon in another ten days. Perhaps the hardened grognards of the Grande Armée could march 25 miles a day over the roads of Austria and the German principalities. To maintain that pace, however, for the 400 miles from Salamanca to Lisbon in the rain, over virtually non-existent mountainous roads, and with insufficient supplies, might seem a bit daunting for Junot’s new recruits.  

In his study, Mémoires sur la Portugal, Doumouriez had recommended the valley of the Tagus as the best route to attack Lisbon. However, he stressed the need for sufficient supplies to be stockpiled and that the principle effort should be on the left bank of the Tagus until Villa Velha, thus avoiding the worst of the Beria, and then crossing and continuing to Lisbon. Ibid., 104-105. Grasset concluded, “Events show that the grave faults committed in 1807 were principally the result of forgetting the advice of Dumouriez.” Ibid., 106. Napoleon also had little patience with Junot’s supply problems. See Napoleon to Clarke, 5 November 1807, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 13327, XVI, 165.  

Napoleon to Junot, 31 October 1807, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 13314, XVI, 151-54.  

March rates and distances varied enormously in this period, but for sustained marching, Clausewitz estimated that 15 miles a day was a normal day’s march for a column on reasonable roads, and 25 miles a day would be a forced march. In each case, regular rest days were required.
Nevertheless, Napoleon wanted Junot to be in Lisbon on 1 December. As one of Napoleon’s most loyal subordinates, Junot would follow his orders without question. And with Junot’s efforts to follow Napoleon’s instructions, Thiébault’s carefully designed march orders quickly turned to shambles. Junot received Napoleon’s letter on 6 November at Pancorbo, a village in northern Spain between Vitoria and Burgos and about 165 miles northeast of Salamanca. Junot was with the 3rd Division, and the army was spaced out in 16 columns between Valladolid and Salamanca. In response to Napoleon’s instructions, Thiébault issued new orders instructing all but the brigades of the 1st Division to begin forced marches to close with the other brigades of their division and then on to Salamanca. These orders meant that, although the leading units had relatively little forced marching, the brigades of the third division and the cavalry had to make forced marches all the way to Salamanca. By means of these accelerated marches and neglecting to take the usual rest days, the two columns of General Delabodre’s 1st Division reached Salamanca on 9 November. Three days later, as the rest of the army reached the city, the leading brigades departed for Ciudad Rodrigo.

The Spanish provided stockpiles of supplies for the French as far as Salamanca, though there were some shortages and disputes over exchange rates. Junot had already complained of these problems to Napoleon in his letter of 22 October. Napoleon, ignoring the logistics needs of the army, replied: “I do not intend to permit this march to be delayed one day under the pretext of a lack of supplies. That reason is only for those who wish to do nothing; 20,000 men can live anywhere, even in the desert.”

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47 Junot to Napoleon, 6 November 1807, Sepulveda, “Diário de Junot,” 103-04. Junot acknowledged receipt of the Emperor’s letter of 31 October, and promises to have his 1st Divison in Alcantara by 20 November. Thiébault gave the date for the receipt of this order as 9 November. The difference probably was due to the fact that Thiébault and much of the état-major were with the leading elements of the army, arranging for supplies, quarters, and hospitals. See Thiébault, Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal, 348.

48 Grasset, La guerre d’Espagne, I, 134; Thiébault, Relation de l’Éxpédition du Portugal, 19 and 348.

49 Napoleon to Clarke, 5 November 1807, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 13327, XVI, 165.
Because of Thiébault’s careful planning, the troops found supplies, quarters, and hospital facilities were available when they reached Salamanca. The forced marches of the previous few days had caused some straggling, so Thiébault arranged for a detail to remain in Salamanca to gather stragglers together, provide facilities for rest and resupply, and send them on to the Army. In Salamanca, he issued new orders for the march to Alcantara. The army was to march in eight brigade-size columns, each a day apart and each accompanied by its artillery and baggage. But now, the 50 leagues (150 miles) were to be covered in only five days – 30 miles a day. And beyond Salamanca, the Spanish authorities had made no provision to supply the French troops.

General Junot left Salamanca with the leading brigade of the 1st Division on 12 November and went on ahead, arriving in Alcantara two days before the first troops. Thiébault, having provided for the stragglers still coming in from the march to Salamanca, left there on 14 November, marching in the middle of the column with the 2nd Brigade of the 2nd Division. As the troops marched first to Ciudad Rodrigo and then south along country tracks to Alcantara, the situation progressively deteriorated. Describing the march on the 17th just beyond Ciudad Rodrigo, he wrote:

The brigade left…at five in the morning. The rain fell in abundance: all the roads were inundated and in some places had disappeared. …A violent storm blew up; and it was not possible to find any trace of the road; even the guides themselves were lost…The confusion became total…It was no longer a march column. It was a mass of scattered men only searching for a way to escape their suffering….No attention was paid to the voice of their officers.

Thiébault rode ahead. At eleven in the evening, he came to the bivouac of the 1st Brigade of the 2nd Division and ordered out all their drummers to beat a long roll while a huge bonfire was lit. Little by little, troops of the 2nd Brigade drifted in. One battalion had only sixty men still with the regimental eagle.

Nevertheless, the first French troops reached Alcantara on 17 November. The Spanish division of General Caffara was already there. The French requisitioned all

50 Thiébault, Relation de l’Expédition, 19, & 349; Foy, History of the War in the Peninsula, 27.
51 Thiébault, Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal, 24-25.
52 Ibid., 28.
available powder and lead from them to make new cartridges since there was not a dry one in the entire French army. Documents pillaged from the Archives of the Knights of Alcantara provided the necessary cartridge wrappings. Although no specific provisions had been made to supply the French, it was possible to issue a half-ration of bread to each man, and one head of beef and two goats to each battalion by utilizing all the resources of the town.\textsuperscript{53}

On 18 November the light infantry (\textit{voltigeurs}) company of the 70\textsuperscript{th} \textit{Ligne} crossed the the Rio Erges, a tributary of the Tagus, and occupied the Portuguese village of Segura to hold the bridge. The next day, the advance guard consisting of the rest of the 70\textsuperscript{th} \textit{Ligne}, two companies of Spanish engineering troops, and a regiment of Spanish horse, joined them; in 48 hours the French had reached Castel-Branco, 25 miles inside Portugal.\textsuperscript{54}

Thiébault organized a depot under his deputy chief of staff, \textit{Adjudant-commandant} François Bagnériis, at Zarza la Mayor on the Spanish side of the Rio Erges. Together with a \textit{commissaire de guerre}, Bagnériis was to receive the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Division and the cavalry, which had still not caught up, as well as stragglers from the leading two divisions, most of the artillery, and the supply caissons and wagons. Then, on the 20\textsuperscript{th}, General Junot, Thiébault and the État-major, the 1\textsuperscript{st} Division, its artillery, and a six-gun battery of Spanish horse artillery, crossed the Rio Erges at Segura. The 2\textsuperscript{nd} Division, without artillery, crossed further downstream near where the Erges emptied into the Tagus. The 3\textsuperscript{rd} Division and the remainder of the Spanish under General Caffara were to follow as soon as possible.

On the two-day march to Castel-Branco, the route of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Division was deserted and mountainous, but not too difficult for infantry. With the exception of the Spanish horse artillery, however, the guns fell to the rear and would not rejoin the division for several days. The route of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Division, closer to the Tagus and therefore more deeply cut by streams and ravines, was much more difficult. Furthermore, there were a

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 32.

\textsuperscript{54} “It [Castello Branco] has a population of 6,000 inhabitants, which in such a country is a considerable number.” Foy, \textit{History of the War in the Peninsula}, 50.
few small villages and individual farms close to the river that enticed the troops who were already on half-rations to fall out in search of food.\textsuperscript{55}

The two divisions arrived at Castel-Branco on the night of the 21\textsuperscript{st}. The 1\textsuperscript{st} Division, arriving at 9:00 p.m., bivouacked in the open. The 2\textsuperscript{nd} Division, because of its poor condition, was quartered in the homes of the town. The city’s 11 bakeries were immediately put to work preparing bread for the troops. To maintain order, sentinels were placed at each bakery, and staff officers, including Thiébault, rode from one to the other, attempting to keep order and ensure a fair distribution. Nevertheless, only two ounces of bread and some dry beans and rice could be issued. “There was no meat to be had,” Thiébault wrote, “but a little wine was issued.”\textsuperscript{56} Privation was beginning to tell on the troops, and soon looting broke out. Junot personally arrested two looters and had them shot before the column departed the next day.\textsuperscript{57}

For the next three days, as the rain increased and straggling became greater, the Army continued in two columns. Because of the growing number of stragglers, a temporary base was established in village of Sobreira to gather them together to follow the leading columns. Marching with the advance guard, Junot and Thiébault reached Abrantes on 24 November. The next day, the main body marched into the town. Junot wrote to Napoleon:

After excessively difficult marches in country without any resources and on terrible roads, cut by torrential streams, and without receiving a single ration of bread since Alcantara, my first two divisions arrived in Abrantes this morning; but having left behind about 1,200 men.\textsuperscript{58}

The rest of the army was even further behind, however. The 3\textsuperscript{rd} Division arrived three days later; the cavalry did not all arrive until 2 December; and the artillery, even with twelve horses or oxen pulling each gun, did not arrive in Abrantes until 6 December.

Three matters were of immediate concern to Thiébault as Chief of Staff. His first priority was to supply the troops with adequate rations. Fortunately, the city of Abrantes

\textsuperscript{55} Thiébault, \textit{Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal}, 40.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 39-40.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 40.
and the surrounding area were comparatively well-stocked, and so “for the first time since Salamanca, that is to say, since 12 November, a complete ration was issued,” and supplies were sent back to the trailing columns. The second was the resupply of shoes, since many of the troops including officers were barefoot or with their feet wrapped in rags. Thiébault ordered the requisition of 10,000 pairs of new shoes from the city and the surrounding province and at the same time sent representatives house to house to collect shoes and boots, thus acquiring an additional 4,000 pairs.  

The third issue was to restore contact with the Ministry of War in Paris. Thiébault has not written Clarke since 12 November. General Junot’s message of 25 November to Napoleon went by courier via the left bank of the Tagus through Badajoz and Madrid to Paris. Thiébault prepared a full situation report for Clarke, but then had difficulty finding another courier, because all unit commanders were unwilling to release anyone from their under-strength units for the task.

On 26 and 27 November, the engineers attempted to bridge the Zezere River that flowed into the Tagus just west of Abrantes. This crossing was covered by unoccupied fortifications and was a highly defensible position if the Portuguese intended to oppose the French. The Portuguese 3rd Oporto Regiment, however, which had been marching towards the French on the 25th, returned to Lisbon when Junot sent an aide with a letter assuring the Portuguese that the entry of the French was in the best interests of Portugal. But if the Portuguese did not oppose the crossing, nature did. Another storm and a flash flood on the Zezere destroyed the bridge the engineers were building.

Undeterred, Junot organized the grenadier and voltigeur companies of the advance guard and first division into four provisional battalions totaling 1,500 men. This force succeeded in crossing by boat, but not until the boat carrying Junot and his chief of staff was swept out of the mouth of the Zezere and forced to land below the mouth on the right bank of the Tagus.

59 Thiébault, Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal, 55.
60 Ibid., 61; Foy, History of the War in the Peninsula, II, 55-56.
61 Thiébault, Relation de l’Éxpédition du Portugal, 63.
While the army struggled to cross the Zezere, José Oliverira de Barreto, a Portuguese merchant who had lived in France, arrived and sought a meeting with Junot. He was, it turned out, the representative of the new Portuguese Regency Council. He informed Junot that the Prince-Regent of Portugal had decided to leave the Kingdom and sail to Brazil. Through Baretto, the Regency Council requested that Junot halt and send a representative to discuss arrangements for the reception of the French troops in Lisbon. Shortly thereafter, François-Antonie Hermann, the French Consul-General – and with M. Reynald’s departure, the senior French diplomat in Portugal – arrived and confirmed that the Prince-Regent was about to leave. Junot sent him back with M. Baretto along with instructions to attempt to keep the Prince-Regent and the Portuguese fleet in Lisbon.\footnote{Fugier, \textit{Napoleon et L’Espagne}, 349-51; Thiébault’s \textit{Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal}, 63-64; Foy, \textit{History of the War in the Peninsula}, 53-54. There was some disagreement as to the true role of M. Barretto. Thiébault and Foy saw him as the agent for the Commander d’Araugo, the Chairman of the Regency Council created by the Prince-Regent, who wished to arrange for a peaceful occupation of Lisbon. Junot saw a sinister motive: to delay the entry until the Prince-Regent and the fleet had escaped. See Junot to Napoléon, 30 November 1808, Sepulveda, “Diário de Junot,” 111-13.}

Junot, however, did not halt. Not only was he under orders from Napoleon to be in Lisbon by 1 December, he also wished to prevent the departure of the Portuguese fleet. Therefore, he pushed ahead through torrential rains with the four elite battalions of the advance guard, a portion of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Division, and the \textit{état-major}. The Zezere crossing was approximately ninety miles from Lisbon. On the 28\textsuperscript{th}, this force marched forty miles to Santarém, a town of about 10,000 inhabitants. The following day Junot pushed on, with only the advance guard and the staff, to arrive at Sacavém, a suburb of Lisbon, at nine in the evening. Here, two delegations waited to meet him. One, composed of Portuguese general officers, officially informed Junot of the departure of the Prince-Regent aboard the Portuguese flagship, the \textit{Principe Real}, as well as most of the Portuguese fleet carrying the State archives, the treasury, and several hundred refugees. In one of the ironies of history, a small British squadron led by the HMS \textit{Bedford} under command of
Captain James Walker escorted the Prince-Regent to Brazil. Captain Walker, the brother of Betzy Walker, was Paul Thiébault’s former brother-in-law.\(^6^3\)

Jean-Baptiste Mure, Vice-Counsel of the French Legation, headed the second delegation to visit French headquarters. Junot sent Mure back to Lisbon with orders to prepare for the French army and with a proclamation to be translated into Portuguese, printed, and distributed throughout the city. It read in part:

> Inhabitants of Lisbon: My army is about to enter your walls. It comes to save your port and prince from the influence of England. . . But this Prince, so respectable from his virtues, has suffered himself to be misled….Inhabitants of Lisbon, remain tranquil in your houses: Dread neither my army nor myself. We are only terrible to our enemies and the wicked.\(^6^4\)

The next morning, following the appearance of this proclamation, Junot with Thiébault and the remains of his advance guard marched into Lisbon. The Army of Portugal that conquered Lisbon consisted of 1,500 men, the straggling remnants of the four battalions of elite troops “without a single cavalryman, without a gun, without a dry cartridge that could fire” and led by Junot and Thiébault, the only two mounted men in the occupying army.\(^6^5\)

Upon entry into the city, the French were met by a detachment of the city’s Legion of Police under the command of Count Jean-Victor Novion, a French émigré who had fled France in 1792. Since 1802, Novion had commanded the Guarda Real de Policía. Within this force, he had organized an elite corps called the Légion de Novion that so insured peace and security on the streets of Lisbon that Novion received the

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\(^{63}\) Kenneth Light. “Journey of the Royal Family to Brazil, 1807-1808” in Proceedings of the First International Conference for Anglo-Portuguese Studies (Lisbon, 2001), and Lilly Library, Thiébault Mss, Ms VIII, "Family…Elizabeth MacKercher Walker.” During the voyage, Captain Walker became a close friend of the Prince-Regent who later presented him with the Portuguese Order of the Tower and Sword and several valuable gifts. The family irony is also clearly present in Thiébault’s son Adolphe’s family history. See A. Thiébault, “Histoire de Lady Mary,” Beinecke Library, Hamilton Papers, 122-23.

\(^{64}\) Proclamation of General Junot, 29 November 1807” in Foy, History of the War in the Peninsula, 554.

\(^{65}\) Thiébault, Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal, 69.
decoration of Commander of the Order of Christ from the Prince-Regent. Novion, nevertheless, quickly reconciled himself with his former countrymen. Due primarily to his efforts, order had been maintained in the city during the two days between the Prince-Regent’s departure and the arrival of the French. His efforts also prevented any demonstrations by the population of 200,000, of whom 40,000 were estimated as capable of bearing arms, that could have overwhelmed the tiny force of exhausted Frenchmen upon their arrival.

The French first secured the Tower of Belem and Fort São-Julião da Bara, whose guns covered the mouth of the Tagus, thus preventing the departure of the remainder of the Portuguese Fleet. Junot and his staff then returned to the center of the city, escorted by only 30 of Novion’s mounted policemen. Here, he met the members of the Regency Council left by the Prince-Regent. Junot outlined the priority requirements of the Army, including rations, quarters, billeting of officers, establishment of hospitals, and the immediate production of 25,000 pairs of shoes. Thiébault, charged with managing these projects, named a governmental commission consisting of four French officials and four Portuguese officials. Special commissaires were assigned to each project. Thiébault also named a board of officers to oversee quartering, and assigned Portuguese officers and interpreters to Junot’s headquarters and his own staff. Immediately after their arrival in Lisbon, Junot wrote a long letter to his wife. He said:

66 António Pedro Vincente, O Tempo de Napoleão em Portugal (Lisbon, 2000), 70.
68 The Prince-Regent’s party and the accompanying British ships had been delayed by contrary winds until 29 November, when eight Portuguese men-of-war and three frigates sailed. There remained in port four ships-of-the-line and four frigates in various stages of repair. See Junot to Napoleon, 30 November 1807. Sepulveda, “Diário de Junot,” 112, 114. When Junot and his officers arrived at the Tower of Belem, one of these ships attempted to leave port, but surrendered when the French fired on it. See Thiébault, Relation de l’Expédition, 72f.
69 Thiébault, Relation de l’Expédition, 73-74.
I have been well-content with Thiébault, whom you have known for a long time. He has acted in these difficult circumstances with the courage of a hero and the delicacy of a lady.\textsuperscript{70}

Thiébault took quarters in the home of Jacome Ratton, a rich Portuguese merchant and industrialist. Ratton had been born in France, but his parents immigrated to Portugal shortly after his birth. He became a naturalized Portuguese subject and, as a leader in the economic life of the Kingdom, was made a knight of the Royal Household and of the Order of Christ. However, he had never cut his French ties, had married the daughter of a former French consul, and was a leader of the pro-French faction in the city.\textsuperscript{71} Thiébault described his arrival at M. Ratton’s home in Lisbon:

Our clothes had no color or shape. I had not changed my linen since Abrantes; my feet were showing through my boots, and in this condition, I took possession of one of the most beautiful and elegant apartments in this capital. My host offered me a change of linen, found me boots to buy, and [after] I washed and shaved…one of M. Ratton’s carriages took me to the general-in-chief’s quarters, where I worked straight through for seven hours. \textsuperscript{72}

At three in the afternoon of 30 November, the remaining French troops began straggling into the city. First to arrive was the 70\textsuperscript{th} Ligne. The 70\textsuperscript{th}, together with the elite battalions, had been part of the advance guard but had fallen behind on the march from Sacavém. The two battalions of the 70\textsuperscript{th} were sent to relieve the exhausted grenadiers and light infantry holding the forts at the mouth of the Tagus. The next day, these troops took control of the arsenals, customs house, and the port, and began manufacturing cartridges and finding artillery to put into service. That afternoon, word arrived that the remainder of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Division, still lacking its artillery, had reached Sacavém and would arrive in Lisbon the next day. The division, which had numbered 9,000 upon leaving France, marched into Lisbon that day with a strength present for duty of 1,500. As Thiébault reported:

\textsuperscript{70} Mme. Junot, \textit{Mémoires de Mme. Junot}, VI, 562.

\textsuperscript{71} Jacome Ratton (1736-1822) was arrested after the departure of the French and exiled to England where he remained until 1814 when he was permitted to return to Portugal. See \textit{Portugal: Dicionário Histórico, Corográfico, Heráldico, Biográfico, Numismático e Artístico}. João Romano Torres, ed. Lisbon, 1904-1915. Electronic edition (Manuel Amaral), http://www.arqnet.pt/dicionario/ratton-jac.html. [March 9, 2005].

\textsuperscript{72} Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, IV, 145.
At one or two days’ interval, the units of the army arrived, or at least the scraps of these units and always in miserable condition. Companies of 140 men were reduced to 15. … Eagles [regiments] arrived with 250 men out of 2,500…Every day they continued to arrive … on boats down the Tagus, on peasants’ donkeys, without arms, without clothes, without shoes….Three weeks after arrival in Lisbon, this army, which had left Bayonne with 25,000 men, still did not have 10,000 present for duty.\textsuperscript{73}

Little by little, the army regrouped. Thiébault and his staff worked 20-hour days to refit and reequip them, and eventually the losses from the march totaled only 1,700 men.\textsuperscript{74} As the army was reorganized, the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Division was sent north of Lisbon to guard the small port of Peniche and the towns of Torres Vedras and Cintra against the threat of a rumored British landing.\textsuperscript{75} The 1\textsuperscript{st} Division initially garrisoned Lisbon and the right bank of the Tagus while the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Division, the cavalry, and the artillery straggled in.

Thiébault arranged to have General Caffara’s Spanish forces, which had accompanied Junot’s troops, dispersed among the French forces. Initially, the Spanish corps under General Solano occupied the left bank of the Tagus with the exception of two key fortresses at the mouth of the river. French units were dispatched to occupy the border fortresses of Almeida and Elvas, while the Spanish corps under General Taranco occupied Oporto in the north. Portuguese troops in the vicinity of Lisbon were disbanded or furloughed, and the remainder of the army was reorganized in a much reduced manner with the best units being sent to France under the Marquis d’Alorne for service.

\textsuperscript{73} Thiébault, \textit{Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal}, 78-79.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 79. There were some exceptional units. Thiébault recounts that the light infantry company of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Battalion of the 70\textsuperscript{th} Ligne did not lose a single man on its march from Brest to Lisbon. The experience of General Brenier’s brigade was more usual. It left Bayonne with 3,600 men. It arrived in Lisbon with less than 300, but when it finally regrouped, it had lost only 27 men. Ibid., 78f.

elsewhere.76 The horses of the disbanded Portugese cavalry were requisitioned by the French.77

Feeding, quartering, and reequipping an Army was expensive, and Napoleon had made it clear to Junot that he expected Portugal to pay all the bills of the army.78 This was made especially difficult by the fact that the Prince-Regent had taken most of the treasury with him, leaving only a token amount of hard currency in the treasury and 200,000,000 francs worth of rapidly depreciating paper money in circulation.

To meet the requirements of the army, Junot demanded that his new Regency Council authorize a forced loan of 50 million francs.79 He confiscated and sold property left behind by the resident British merchants who had fled with the Prince-Regent; he also delayed payments to the civil servants, the Portuguese army, and pensioners. All of these measures only contributed further to depreciation of the currency.

In this situation, M. Thonnelier, the Paymaster-General, suggested to Thiébault that the financial situation presented an opportunity to make a considerable amount of money through a scheme of currency manipulation. First, the rumor would be spread that the French were considering repudiating the paper currency. This would cause a further rapid depreciation. Then, using M. Ratton’s son, Jacques, as a figure-head, they would use hard currency from the Army’s treasury to buy up the paper currency at a huge discount. Then, when the paper was virtually worthless, General Junot would announce that the Army would accept the paper money on a par with the hard currency cruzado. The value of the paper money would soar, and by selling it back to the public for hard currency at only a slight discount, the perpetrators would pocket an enormous profit. Thiébault discussed it with M. Ratton, who agreed. M. Thonnelier then presented the scheme to General Junot together with their offer that he share in the profits. Fortunately

76 Thiébault, Relation de l’Éxpédition du Portugal, 84; Foy, History of the War in the Peninsula, 88-89.
77 Oman, History of the Peninsular Wars, I, 29, 31.
78 Napoléon to Junot, 31 October 1807, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 13314, XVI, 151; Napoleon to Clarke, 5 November 1807, Ibid., No. 13327, XVI, 165.
79 Thiébault, Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal, 86.
for the economy of Portugal and the reputation of the French, Junot immediately turned the scheme down.\footnote{Before leaving France, Junot had made Thiébault promise that he would not engage in any “extra-curricular” financial affairs without informing him (and providing him with a share of the profit). It is an interesting insight into the public morality of the time that Thiébault recounts this story in his Mémoires years later without any indication of embarrassment or guilt. See Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 133; 151-53.}

Shortly after arriving in Portugal, Thiébault apparently developed another case of pneumonia brought on by the rigors of the march and exhaustion from his extended working hours. On 14 December 1806, he wrote his father a congratulatory letter to celebrate Dieudonné’s 75\textsuperscript{th} birthday. After expressions of congratulations and love, he added: “I suffered greatly for eight days with a serious congestion of my chest. Since yesterday, I am better and less congested, and hope to go out soon.”\footnote{Paul Thiébault to Dieudonné Thiébault, 13 December 1807, Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, MS V, "Lettres et papiers de famille: De 1798 à 1846.” Adolphe Thiébault, who organized a collection of his father’s papers, noted on this letter: “This was written nine days after his [Dieudonné] death in his 74\textsuperscript{th} year.”} Only a few days later, Junot told him that a letter from Madame Junot had mentioned that Thiébault’s father had died. The next day, a letter from Thiébault’s sister Pauline confirmed that Dieudonné had died on 4 December, just short of his 75\textsuperscript{th} birthday. Thiébault was heartbroken. He truly loved and respected his father, who had done much for him and supported him loyally in all things but his divorce from Betzy and his remarriage.\footnote{Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 154.} He had returned from Tilsit to a bit of a quandary, with the need to reconcile his father’s concerns about his grandchildren with his wife’s ambition. Their differences were no longer an issue.

The expedition to Portugal had also served to sidestep the question of his promotion in the face of Berthier’s resistance. When Junot suggested that Thiébault accompany him as Chief of Staff on an expedition to Portugal, Thiébault had quickly taken the opportunity to serve, if not as a \textit{général de division}, at least in a position that he felt merited that rank. Largely due to Thiébault’s efforts as Chief of Staff, the
organization of the new *Corps d'Observation de Gironde* in southwestern France and its initial march into Spain were well-managed military operations.

Nevertheless, the operation did not move fast enough for Napoleon, who had also to consider the likely English reaction to his attempt to close one of the largest loopholes in the Continental System. Napoleon’s preemptory orders to Junot to accelerate the operation despite Spanish inefficiency, bad roads, and worse weather ultimately resulted in a breakdown, first of the supply system, then of the march order and discipline.

Of the nearly 27,000 organized and well-supplied French troops that left Bayonne on the French-Spanish border on 17 October 1807, 1,500 wet, exhausted, and virtually disarmed grenadiers arrived in Lisbon on 30 November. Fortunately, Napoleon’s boldness, aided by Portuguese indecision and English lethargy, resulted in the peaceful occupation of Lisbon, although the Prince-Regent, his court, and much of the Portuguese fleet had escaped. As Junot’s scattered units and stragglers trickled in to Lisbon, Junot and Thiébault set about restoring the French army to its original strength.
CHAPTER 12
THE ARMY OF PORTUGAL, 1808

Once the army was reunited and reequipped, one of Thiébault’s primary duties was to ensure civil order and the security of the French troops in Lisbon. In the first days of the occupation, these duties fell almost entirely on Count Novion’s Legion of Police, and the populace of Lisbon appeared generally docile and quiet. However, on 15 December, as soon as he felt that he had sufficient troops in Lisbon, General Junot ordered the Portuguese flag hauled down from above the citadel of the city and the French tricolor hoisted in its stead. This resulted in an uproar of protest in the streets that the French put down with a show of force, parading the troops through the city with fixed bayonets and unlimbering artillery in the public squares.\(^1\) Thereafter, to insure the security of the French, Thiébault organized a system of sentinel posts and mobile patrols throughout the city to supplement the police. To do this, he drew upon his experiences in Naples in 1798-99, where he had handled urban security for General Championnet.

As in Naples, where he had worked closely with Michele di Laudo, the leader of Naples’ lazzaroni, Thiébault worked with the Count de Novion as his local collaborator. In early January 1808, the Count sent Thiébault a plan for the collaboration of the police and the army for securing the city. Especially interesting in this plan was the proposal that civilian magistrates investigate and try all cases brought by either the civilian or military police. The Lisbon garrison commander or the commanding general would then confirm the sentences. This system would “ensure that the ‘men of the robe’ [i.e. judicial persons] supervise it and prevent the abuses by the military which have inspired fear during the past six years [i.e. since the accession of the Prince-Regent].”\(^2\)

\(^1\) Foy, *History of the War in the Peninsula*, 69, and Thiébault, *Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal*, 87. There is a minor inconsistency in these two sources. Foy said the incident occurred on “Sunday, 13 December.” Thiébault said that it took place on 15 December.

\(^2\) Count de Novion, “Reflections on Organization of the Police Military and Civil,” 1 January 1808, France, Archives nationales, AP 618/1, MSS, Fonds général Thiebault,
Napoleon’s overall plan for the Iberian Peninsula soon disrupted the calm that prevailed in Lisbon and the country as a whole, with the exception of the disturbances of 15 December 1807. Napoleon’s first measure was a Decree issued on 23 December 1807 and received in Lisbon early in January 1808. The decree ordered the imposition of a “ransom” of 100 million francs on the personal property of the Portuguese. At the same time, Napoleon ordered Junot to govern the kingdom without reference to the Regency Council and to form and dispatch a brigade of Portuguese troops to the Grande Armée in Germany. The name of the 1st Corps of Observation of the Gironde officially changed to the Army of Portugal. Meanwhile, in Spain, events also quickly unfolded. On 22 November 1807, the 2nd Corps of Observation of the Gironde, 28,000 men under General Pierre Dupont, entered Spain along the same route as Junot's force had followed, and went into cantonments between Valladolid and Salamanca. Ostensibly, this force was a reinforcement for Junot’s Army of Portugal. However, another 28,000-man force named the Corps of Observation of the Coasts of the Ocean under Marshal Bon-Adrien Jeannot Moncey, entered eastern Spain on 9 January 1808. Henceforth, the fortunes of the Army of Portugal would be closely linked with events in Spain.

Thiébault, as chief of staff, received orders to secure the routes between Spain and Lisbon and to bring up those stragglers who had remained at Zarza la Mayor in Spain, as well as the reinforcements that were due to arrive from France. Recognizing the difficulties of the route along the right bank of the Tagus that the army had originally followed, Thiébault set up two alternate routes. He ordered the troops assembling at Zarza la Mayor to march south and enter Portugal along the route on the right bank of the Tagus, from Badajoz through Elvas and the southern province of Alentejo to Lisbon. For more direct contact, he established units consisting of a Portuguese officer as translator, and a detachment of French hussars and gendarmes to patrol the route from Lisbon through Coimbra and Almeida to Cuidad Rodrigo and Salamanca and thence to

"Occupation française de Portugal [hereafter Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Portugal)].

Valladolid and the French border. Both routes also provided communications with Madrid either directly through Badajoz or via Valladolid. Through these routes, the Army received reinforcements totaling 3,000 infantry and 300 cavalry before Spanish and Portuguese insurgents closed them in June 1808.  

Upon arrival in Lisbon, the Army of Portugal had found another potential reinforcement waiting for them. On 11 and 12 November, a Russian squadron under Vice-Admiral Dimitri Nikolaevich Seniavin had entered the port of Lisbon. This squadron was returning to the Baltic from the Mediterranean following the Peace of Tilsit when it received news of the impending break in relations between Russia and Great Britain. Admiral Seniavin and his force managed to reach Lisbon, at that time a technically neutral port, prior to the English blockade, first by Admiral Sidney Smith and then Admiral Charles Cotton. Admiral Seniavin, however, remained unwilling to sail out against the British, even after he learned in late December of Alexander I’s declaration of war (2 December 1807) against England, and

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4 Thiébault, Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal, 93-94.

5 “Junot to Napoleon” 30 November 1807, Sepulveda, “Diário de Junot,” reports the presence of the Russians as well as listing five Portuguese ships of the line and five frigates still in port and now in French hands. Napoleon had provided Junot with a small naval detachment under Capitaine de vaisseau Jean-Jacques Margendie (1766-1835) for reconditioning and handling the Portuguese ships. Junot also named Margendie Port Captain and Chief of the Lisbon Arsenal. See also Thiébault, Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal, 86-87; and Foy, History of the War in the Peninsula, II, 75.
In obedience to his instructions from Paris, Junot on 1 February 1808 announced the abolition of the Regency Council established by the Prince-Regent and the creation in its place of a Governing Council under the supervision of French Counsel-General Hermann. Portuguese sentiments were mollified, however, by the retention of most members of the Regency Council in the new Governing Council, where they were paired with French officials as heads of ministries, and by the announcement that the 100 million franc fine imposed by Napoleon would be reduced to 40 million francs.

With the entry of the 2nd Corps of Observation of the Gironde into Spain in November and of the Corps of Observation of the Coasts of the Ocean in January, as well as the growing tension of diplomatic relations between France and Spain, the Spanish First Minister Manuel Godoy became increasingly nervous about French intentions. In March he recalled the Spanish forces from Portugal. The division under General Solano had occupied the Alentejo and the Algarve, the southern provinces of Portugal, and controlled the road along the left bank of the Tagus from Lisbon through the border fortress of Elvas to Badajoz and Madrid. These forces withdrew immediately. Those Spanish troops of General Taranco’s division initially withdrew into Galicia, but then returned to Oporto. Junot reorganized his army, placing small French garrisons in Elvas and along the coast south of the mouth of Tagus. General Kellermann received command of these troops and placed his headquarters at Setubal on the Tagus across from Lisbon. In the north, Junot sent General François Quesnel to Oporto to take command of the

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8 General Taranco had died in January and had not yet been replaced by General Domingos Belesta.
Spanish forces.\textsuperscript{9} The Spanish division under General Caffara, however, remained in garrison in and around Lisbon, although the tension continued to grow between the Spanish and French forces.

During the early months of 1808, Junot began to demonstrate increasingly erratic behavior and a lack of attention. Thiébault recalled several cases of this behavior, some of which were only humorous or flippant. However, some were to have serious military consequences. Thiébault wrote:

After one groundless quarrel, I intended to leave the army and leave without orders. General [Louis] Loison told him [Junot] of it, and from that time, though I could not avoid some rough treatment, he never erupted at me as he did with almost everyone else.\textsuperscript{10}

General Maximillian Foy, then serving with the Army of Portugal as an artillery colonel, confirmed Junot’s temperament in his own history of the campaign. Concerning the same period, he wrote:

Junot was born with a talent for observation.... All the good that a sudden inspiration could produce might be expected from him; but nothing of that for which a methodical and continuous system of conduct is required. All his valuable qualities were stifled by a fiery temper, habits of dissipation, and such an obstinate aversion to labor that it palsied the exertions of those to whom he delegated some portions of his power.\textsuperscript{11}

Despite his reservations, Thiébault labored on. In February, he began considering what the Army would do in case of a general insurrection, a major British landing, or both. After ordering a survey of the entire region within a 30-mile circle of Lisbon by an engineer of his staff, Thiébault recommended that the Army be prepared to withdraw to the left bank of the Tagus on Setubal Peninsula across from Lisbon. The rugged coast here could be easily defended against landings, while the Fort at Bugio controlled the mouth of the Tagus, and the landward side could be easily defended by a fortified camp between the port of Setubal on the south coast and the Tagus. This position sat astride

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\textsuperscript{10} Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, IV, 168. Thiébault believed that Junot’s increasingly erratic behavior foreshadowed his later insanity and suicide in 1813.
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\textsuperscript{11} Foy, \textit{History of the War in the Peninsula}, II, 100.
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the main road through Elvas to Madrid, thus providing an easy route for a relief force if
the Army of Portugal were besieged. As the area could produce plentiful supplies of
wheat, bread, and wine, Thiébault estimated that the Army could hold out for as long as
four months in such a position.\textsuperscript{12}

Junot recognized the value of the plan, but his lack of attention to day-to-day
military matters, occasional slothfulness, and frequent forgetfulness resulted in his failure
to authorize the necessary orders to stockpile provisions, move the contents of the Lisbon
arsenal to Setubal, and construct the necessary field works.\textsuperscript{13} Therefore, when the need
arose in August, plans for a redoubt had not been implemented.

Despite the deteriorating situation in Spain, French efforts appeared to be going
well in Portugal. The Portuguese army accepted reduction, reorganization, and,
command by Pedro de Almeida, the Marquis d’Alorna, an opponent of Prince-Regent
João, as \textit{Inspecteur-général} and \textit{Général-de-chef} (\textit{inspector-geral e comandante-chefe}).\textsuperscript{14}
A force of almost 6,000 men of the Portuguese army, with the title “Portuguese Legion,”
was sent to serve with the French \textit{Grand Armée}. Commerce, which had virtually stopped
with the French invasion, was improving, and all the foreign envoys assigned to Lisbon
had remained with the exception of the Papal Nuncio who escaped one night on a fishing
boat to join the British blockading squadron. Discussion was also growing of the
possibility among the Portuguese that Napoleon might designate a new King and
constitution for Portugal. Junot, who truly believed himself popular with the people, had

\textsuperscript{12} Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, IV, 170-7; and “Note de manuscrite de 4 p. sur
l’approvisionnement dur Portugal et la crainte de la famine par le blocus anglais,”
undated, between two documents dated 7 January and 27 March 1808, Archives
nationales, Fonds Thiebault (Portugal). The lines of Torres Vedras, Wellesley’s defense
line from the sea to the Tagus north of Lisbon that halted Masséna in 1810, were
approximately twice as long as the line proposed by Thiébault and could be easily
bypassed by an amphibious landing through any one of several small ports along the
Atlantic coast.

\textsuperscript{13} Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, IV, 171; and “Stratégie pour la défense du Portugal” (undated),
Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Portugal). Thiébault estimated that such a defense
would require a stockpile of three or four hundred thousand biscuit rations and an
ammunition reserve of a million cartridges.

\textsuperscript{14} A lieutenant general, in the Portuguese Army, the Marquis became \textit{Général de division}
Pierre d’Almeida, Marquis d’Alorna, (1755-1813) in the French army on 21 March 1812.
hopes of receiving the crown. Thiébault, however, attributed the French success to “shock of the audacity of our arrival, which, despite our failings and lies, still endured.”

For a short time during his stay in Lisbon, Thiébault studied musical composition, wrote both music and poetry, and had an imprisoned forger produce a calligraphic copy of a collection of his *Recueil de pensées* which he dedicated to his wife. He also enjoyed an active social life of theater and balls, and claimed that at least one young lady fell passionately in love with him. Nevertheless, he had remained faithful to his wife, as he insisted in Fulda, to the point of tossing the young lady’s farewell gift of a jeweled locket containing a lock of her hair over the side of the ship as he departed Lisbon harbor.

News quickly reached Lisbon of the 2 May uprising in Madrid, and soon restlessness among both the Spanish troops and the Portuguese population could be felt steadily increasing. Napoleon sent orders to Junot to open communications with Marshal Bessières, commanding French forces in Western Spain, and to send 4,000 reinforcements to General Pierre Dupont, who was marching into Andalusia. At the same time, revolutionary juntas were springing up throughout the Spanish provinces in opposition to the French. General Loison, leading elements of his 2nd Division, found the town of Ciudad Rodrigo closed to him and was therefore unable to make contact with Bessières’ troops in Leon. *Général de brigade* Jean Avril, commanding the reinforcements for Dupont, was unable to pass the Spanish frontier in the face of Spanish opposition. On 30 May, the insurgents took the Spanish fortress at Badajoz. By early

18 *Général de division* Pierre Dupont de L’Etang (1765-1840).
19 Napoleon to Junot, 11 May 1808, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, No. 13861, XVII, 115, and Napoleon to Junot, 13 May 1808, Ibid., No. 13880, XVIII, 13 May 1808.
June, the juntas of Seville and Galicia were sending agents into Portugal to preach opposition to the French.

On 9 June, General Junot received word that the Spanish troops in Oporto had mutinied and arrested General Quensel, his staff, and his small French escort. He immediately decided to disarm the Spanish troops under General Caffara in and around Lisbon. Once Junot made the decision, Thiébault went to work putting it into action, although only about 2,000 French troops were immediately available. Working throughout the day, Thiébault drew up orders for the Spanish units and secret instructions for the French. Some of the Spanish units were dispatched on combined marches with the French to separate them from their comrades. Others were surrounded in their barracks and disarmed. Two regiments, the 1st and 2nd Grenadiers of Old Castile, were ordered to cross the Tagus to new stations. As they broke up to board the ferries, they were taken into custody, disarmed, and taken the hulks of the old Portuguese warships where they and their compatriots were interned. Within 24 hours, the Spanish force of six battalions of infantry, a regiment of cavalry, together with artillery and engineers, were safely disarmed and interned, their officers paroled. Only a few escaped the French dragnet.

After the Spanish mutiny in Oporto, the Portuguese there formed their own revolutionary junta; after some indecision, they declared for rebellion. Insurrection spread throughout the country. In the south, on 20 June, the populace of Villa Viçosa revolted and besieged the French company garrisoning the town in their local fort. The city was retaken by the prompt action of General Avril, 200 rebels were killed and the leaders of the rebellion shot. Thereafter, Thiébault reported, “Tranquility reigned

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20 General Quesnel was turned over to the British and held in La Coruña until that city was taken by the French in 1809. See the diary of Captain Jean Gaspard Hulot, a young artillery officer on Quesnel’s staff for details of the arrest and imprisonment of the French officers in Oporto. Reproduced in Henry Du Motey, *Un hero de la Grand-Armée: Jean Gaspar Hulot de Collart* (Paris, 1911), 141-208.

completed in Villa Viçosa, the inhabitants having recognized their error and implored the clemency of the General.”

Despite the deteriorating situation in Spain, Napoleon continued to believe that the situation in Portugal was under control. His last letter to Junot in early June expressed his satisfaction at the introduction of the Code Napoleon in Portugal. He gave instructions for the outfitting of captured Portuguese fleet and told Junot to raise additional troops for the Portuguese Legion serving with the *Grand Armée*. Perhaps recognizing the growing unrest, however, Napoleon warned Junot: “I do not want your tranquility to be troubled [by the need to raise troops]. It is necessary to employ primarily persuasion [to ensure enlistments].” Junot had a more realistic view. Even before receipt of Napoleon’s last letter, he wrote:

> The insurrection every day takes on a more serious character and grows larger. I have no news of the Grand Duc du Berg [Marshal Murat in Madrid], but I presume that he will take measures to reestablish our communications though Badajoz.

More telling yet was the series of bulletins that Thiébault had begun to publish for the information of the Army and the populace of Lisbon. The first bulletin, a single page issued 25 June, recounted suppression of the revolt at Villa Viçosa. The second, issued 27 June, reported an action at Villa de Beja on the 22nd where 1,200 insurgents were killed; the French also lost a number of men including two majors, a captain, and two lieutenants. The third issue of 7 July recounted another engagement near Beja on 5 July when French forces under General Pierre Margaron intercepted a mob of 7,000 insurgents marching on Lisbon from Coimbra. The insurgents fled after losing 600 killed; the French lost only one dead and several wounded. The fourth bulletin, issued 13 July, described operations of General Loison’s 2nd Division between 17 June and 11 July. Starting from Almeida, the division marched north across the Tagus skirmishing continually, but was neither able to reach Oporto to rescue General Quesnel nor to stamp


23 Napoleon to Junot, 5 June 1808, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, No. 14053, XVII, 305.

out the insurrection. The division ended its march at Santarém, having left a garrison at Almedia. It reported at least 3,000 insurgents killed in the three-week period with a loss of 20 French dead and 300 wounded.25

Thiébault’s fifth bulletin, issued 15 July, reported two incidents in which French outposts drove away or captured members of two small landing parties from Admiral Cotton’s blockading fleet on the coast north of Lisbon.26 Thiébault did not, however, mention that student insurgents from the University at Coimbra had starved out the small French garrison at Fort Santa Catrina at Figueira da Foz, at the mouth of the Mondego River or that in preparation for an invasion, Admiral Cotton had already landed a force of 400 Royal Marines to occupy the fort at Figueira that commanded the bay.27

Thiébault’s sixth bulletin, eight pages long and issued 2 August, began: “Despite their own best interests, their most holy oaths, the People of Portugal, misled by evil and foreign insinuations, continue their illegal insurrection.” The bulletin reported that General Loison’s division had fought a major action against a combined force of Portuguese insurgents and Spanish regulars on 28-29 July at the town of Evora on the road between Lisbon and Badajoz. The French finally recaptured Evora together with seven guns and eight enemy flags. The bulletin claimed the Portuguese and Spanish lost 5,000 dead and 2,000 prisoners, including a Spanish general and three colonels, at a cost of 90 French dead. The city was sacked. Thiébault ended:

This victory must be the last that we have to win. It must disabuse men of standing and convince the Portuguese people that we are their friends; that when


27 “I have received a letter from Sir Charles Cotton, of the 9th instant. … He has occupied a post with 400 marines at Figueira on the Mondego, in front of Coimbra, at which place, or at Peniche he thinks it would be most advisable for me to land.” Wellesley to Castlereagh, 26 July 1808, Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, The Dispatches of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington (London, 1852) [hereafter Wellington’s Dispatches], III, 39.
they take arms against us, they arm themselves on behalf of their most cruel enemies.  

The 2 August issue was also the last bulletin Thiébault would write in Portugal. The day before, a British army under General Sir Arthur Wellesley, began coming ashore at Figueira. Wellesley had brought with him from Ireland 9,000 British troops. Forty miles north of Lisbon, he met an additional 5,000 troops under command of General Brent Spencer who had sailed from Gibraltar a month earlier. During the first week of August, this combined force under Wellesley’s command disembarked while the commanders made contact with the Portuguese insurgent forces, including remobilized regular and newly-organized militia regiments, gathering around Coimbra under Portuguese General Bernardim Freire.  

Junot learned on 2 August that the British had landed in force. He immediately ordered a concentration of the army in and around Lisbon. The most critical problem was to ensure the timely return of Loison’s division. After taking Evora, Loison’s division had continued east to Elvas, the Portuguese fortress-town facing Badajoz, in response to a report that a new Spanish force of 15,000 had crossed the border. The fortress of Elvas was garrisoned by the French and had been bypassed by the Spanish troops who had fought at Evora. Loison replaced its commander who was dying of wounds received a few days earlier, and was conducting a reconnaissance-in-force in the direction of Badajoz when Thiébault’s emphatic order to march to Lisbon (“carried by several officers and couriers”) reached him on the evening of 4 August.  

Loison’s 60-mile march from Elvas to Abrantes took five days. Slow by Napoleon’s standards, Loison’s troops had been marching steadily since leaving Lisbon on 25 July, and had fought a major two-day battle. When they reached Abrantes on the 9th, they were exhausted. Thiébault wrote:


29 Bernadim Freire de Andrade (1759-1809). A career Portuguese officer of noble birth, Friere had retired upon the departure of the Prince-Regent but returned to duty after the uprising in Oporto. He took command of the Portuguese troops in Coimbra on 5 August. See Vinhente, O Tempo de Napoleão, 275.

The troops arrived there [Abrantes] worn out, overwhelmed by the heat, and with provisions exhausted. The inhabitants along the route all fled, and there was neither wine, nor meat, nor bread; there had been no water for entire days… and false information cost several delays while the troops searched for it.\textsuperscript{31}

Meanwhile, the French had to block any march by the British or their Portuguese allies on Lisbon until Loison arrived and the rest of the army assembled. To do this, General Henri Delaborde was ordered to take his division north to delay the Allies. He departed the cantonments near Lisbon on 6 August and spent the next several days attempting to determine the enemy's exact location and intentions. Wellesley had several options. He could march on Lisbon via the coast road through Torres Vedras or via the Royal Road further east. Alternatively, he might march east through Coimbra, and meet and defeat Loison’s division before the French army could concentrate.\textsuperscript{32}

The British army began its march south along the coast road on 10 August.\textsuperscript{33} By 12 August, Delaborde had located the British force at Leiria and slowly began to fall back to a position he had already chosen near the village of Roliçia. On the 15\textsuperscript{th}, British riflemen skirmished with his pickets. Wellesley then halted for a day to bring up his entire army before assaulting Delaborde’s position at dawn on the 17\textsuperscript{th}. Delaborde’s force of 4,000 Frenchmen was badly outnumbered by Wellesley’s 14,000.\textsuperscript{34} Instead of

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\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 172.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 174, and Oman, \textit{History of the Peninsular War}, I. 232. Wellington chose the coast road to stay in close contact with the British fleet.
\textsuperscript{33} There was disagreement between Wellesley and Freire over several issues, including supply and which route to take to Lisbon. Therefore, Wellesley chose to stay close to the sea, joined by only a single 1,500-man Portuguese brigade.
\textsuperscript{34} These numbers reflected the total strength as carried on the muster rolls of each command. In various accounts, there was wide variation as to both the number of troops actually engaged in the action, the strength of the other side, and then number of casualties, especially the enemy’s. For example, Thiébault claimed that 6,000 British and 1,900 Frenchmen were actual \textit{combatants} (he italicized the word, apparently to make the point that this was the actual number engaged), that the British suffered 2,000 casualties, and the French 600. See Thiébault, \textit{Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal}, 181. Wellesley stated that Delaborde had 6,000, but complained that he had been able actually to commit only five battalion and portions of two others, perhaps 4,000 or 5,000 men, to action. See Wellesley to Castlereagh, 17 August 1806, \textit{Wellington’s Dispatches}, III, 81; he reported his own loss as 479, including 74 missing. See Wellesley to Castlereagh, 18
\end{flushright}
trying to hold his position, Delaborde fought a masterful delaying action throughout the
day, losing about 600 men. That night, he brought his still intact force off the field and
withdrew to a point near Torres Vedras. Wellesley, who had lost about 450 men, failed
to pursue. On the 18th, having no news of either Loison’s division or the French forces
gathering in Lisbon, Delaborde withdrew to the high ground around Montachique, the
last defensible position north of the city.  

On 11 August General Loison’s division left Abrantes for Santarém after a two-
day rest. Another two days of rest at Santarém were necessary before the troops, after
leaving another small garrison there, resumed their march to Torres Vedras, arriving on
the 18th. The march from Abrantes was not without its own casualties. Thiébault noted
that the division, when marching, lost about a hundred men a day through water shortages
and heat exhaustion. 

Kellermann, meanwhile, brought all the other outlying garrisons from Alentejo
into Lisbon, leaving only garrisons in the forts on the left bank at the mouth of the Tagus,
as well as the garrison left behind by Loison at Elvas. With these troops and those in and
around Lisbon, Junot and Thiébault attempted to pull together a reinforcement to support
the divisions of Loison and Delaborde in the anticipated battle north of Lisbon.

This problem proved to be difficult because Junot was convinced that his primary
mission was to hold Lisbon at all costs. As the insurrection spread, the Police Force
under Count Novion, now promoted to maréchal-de-camp  in the “French” Army of
Portugal, began to suffer major desertions; Lisbon’s inhabitants became increasingly
sullen and unmanageable. In June, the annual Corpus Christi procession, traditionally led
by the Prince-Regent and the Patriarch, almost degenerated into an anti-French riot that

August 1808, Wellington’s Dispatches, III, 83. I have made my own estimates by
comparing contemporary accounts and reputable secondary sources.

35 Thiébault, Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal, 183; Thiébault, Mémoires IV, 184-85.

36 Thiébault, Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal, 193. This would have totaled a loss
of nearly 1,000 men.


38 The equivalent of général de brigade in the French army.
was suppressed only by turning out the city garrison and bringing in troops from surrounding cantonments. By August, the situation had deteriorated considerably, and Junot thought it necessary to leave a garrison of 4,500 men under General Travot and Maréchal-de-camp Novion to man the citadel and the forts on the right bank, to protect some 3,000 hospitalized French soldiers, and to guard the Spanish prisoners being held on hulks in the river and to maintain control of the city.\textsuperscript{39}

In an attempt to release some of the French troops for field duty, Junot appealed to Admiral Seniavin for the loan of some of the 6,500 sailors and marines aboard his squadron. The Admiral refused, commenting that Russia was not at war with Portugal, only England, and that he would fight only if the British fleet actually tried to enter the Tagus.\textsuperscript{40} The only additional reinforcement Junot could locate was a volunteer regiment of dragoons formed by the French residents of the city. One of the most prominent of these, Count Louis-Auguste-Victor de Bourmont, another French refugee living in Lisbon, insisted on obtaining a commission and being attached to Thiébault’s État-major.\textsuperscript{41}

On the evening of 15 August, in an attempt to reassure the populace of Lisbon, Junot held a grand ball for his officers and the officials and dignitaries of the city. He also took that as the opportunity to issue last-minute instructions to General Travot and these officials. Then, at dawn on 16 August, he left the city accompanied by Thiébault, the État-major, the army reserve of a regiment of dragoons, three battalions of infantry, and ten guns, the reserve ammunition, and the army’s treasury. Together, the force was about 1,600 men. It marched only as far as suburb of Sacavém, however, where the ferry


\textsuperscript{40} Foy, \textit{History of the War in the Peninsula}, II, 500.

\textsuperscript{41} Thiébault, \textit{Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal}, 187. Whatever Thiébault felt about it at the time, thirty years later, in his \textit{Mémoires}, he wrote: “At what price he obtained the honor of returning [to France] as a major on the staff, in the service of a country which he never deserved to see again….A traitor in the presence of the enemy, betraying all those who served under the same flag [a reference to Bourmont’s desertion to the Allies on the eve of Waterloo].” See Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, IV, 209.
over the Ria Trañcao, a tributary of the Tagus, so slowed the march that Junot stopped for a day to build a bridge.

On 17 August, as the force crossed the Trañco to march north to join Generals Delaborde and Loison, news arrived that the British were landing in Lisbon. The troops reversed their march until word arrived that the original report was false. After turning the column around yet another time, Junot gave command of the reserve to Thiébault and rode off to join Loison’s division at Aconite. That night, Junot wrote to Thiébault: “I am collecting my army at Torres Vedras. We shall give battle to the English; make haste if you wish to be in the party.”

On the 19th, Thiébault received another order to push ahead with the artillery, and he arrived at Torres Vedras that evening. The next day, the remainder of the train struggled in under command of M. Thonnelier, the Paymaster-General, with an escort of two companies of infantry.

Delaborde’s division also arrived at Torres Vedras on the 19th and 20th. That night, Junot reorganized his army. According to Thiébault, 9,200 combatants (combattans) were present. Junot organized the force into two infantry divisions, a cavalry division, and a reserve.

Reconnaissance reports received during the day indicated that rather than marching directly on Lisbon through Torres Vedras, Wellesley had left the main route

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45 The French Army was now organized as follows: the 1st Division under General Delaborde, consisting of two brigades, under Generals Jean-Guillaume-Barthélemy Thomières and Antoine-François Brenier, and five guns (originally eight, but three had been lost at Roliça); the 2nd Division under General Loison including two brigades under Generals Jean Solignac and Hugues Charlot, and eight guns; the cavalry division of four regiments, each of two squadrons, under General Pierre Margaron; and a Reserve. The reserve of two provisional regiments of grenadiers (four battalions) was under General Kellermann and the artillery reserve of ten guns under Colonel Foy. See Thiébault, *Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal*, 193-94.
and moved even closer to the sea through a line of hills on both sides of the village of Vimeiro. This position covered the roadstead at the mouth of the Ria Macira where additional British reinforcements were arriving with Wellesley’s successor as commander of the army, General Sir Harry Burrard.46

Wellesley’s position was a strong one, his left near the sea and covered by the fleet, his right extending east along the hills to some high ground just east of the village of Vimeiro. Beyond this point was a series of hills and ravines. Southeast of the village was a flat-topped hill projecting from the line of hills behind it, and over which the road runs from Torres Vedras to Vimeiro and thence to the sea. Initially, Wellesley had placed his left here, with the majority of the army facing south to cover the road along the coast from Mafra where he expected Junot’s approach.

Junot had left Lisbon with the intention of fighting the British, and he did not intend to delay and let the British come to him. Although he had not reconnoitered the British position thoroughly, he ordered an attack for the next day, 21 August, and began moving his troops through a long defile to the west of Torres Vedras.47 By 7:00 a.m. that morning, the French were through the defile and forming up about five miles from Vimeiro, still out of sight of the British. Junot then began his advance, each of the divisions side by side in a column of brigades with artillery in the gaps and the cavalry covering the flanks. Junot’s initial lack of reconnaissance and this formation ultimately determined the course of the battle.48

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47 Foy wrote: “This position had not been reconnoitered by the French. The detachments of their cavalry which had approached earlier to it, merely reported that the English were concentrated around Vimerio, and that three lines of fires had been distinctly seen during the night.” See Foy, History of the War in the Peninsula, II, 516.
48 In his report of the battle, Thiébault simply noted that the first scouting reports were received about noon on the 20th. See Thiébault, Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal, p. 194. However, in his Mémoires, written after the death of both Junot and Mme. Junot, he was much more critical. “There should have been a personal verification of the reconnaissance entrusted to the engineering offices, and … to get a thorough knowledge of the ground, and of the positions of the enemy forces and guns. Yet, without a personal look or knowledge of against what or whom he was marching, the General-in-chief ordered an immediate attack.” See Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 187.
The first French troops seen by the English were the cavalry on Junot’s right flank. Wellesley, whose own reconnaissance had been limited by an acute shortage of cavalry, realized that the French were approaching his position from Torres Vedras in the east rather than from the south along the coast road from Mafra. He immediately began to shift troops to his own left under cover of the reverse slope of the line of hills.\textsuperscript{49}

Junot, observing that the British left appeared to be up in the air, sent Delaborde’s first brigade under General Antoine-François Brenier to the right, intending to flank Wellesley’s position on the hill before Vimeiro. He then ordered Delaborde to take his second brigade and attack the hill directly. When this attack was beaten back, Junot ordered Loison to support this attack with one brigade, while the other under General Jean Solignac was sent to the right to support General Brenier.

\textsuperscript{49} Wellington to Castlereagh, 21 August 1808, \textit{Wellington’s Dispatches}, III, 90.
The British had established eighteen guns on the hill before Vimeiro to support two brigades of infantry screened from the French by the crest of the hill. Each time a French unit approached in column up the hill, the guns drove them back with heavy casualties. After both the brigades of Delaborde and Loison were thrown back, Junot sent forward first one grenadier regiment of the reserve, then his final reserve regiment led by General Kellermann himself. They, too, were driven back by the converging fire of the guns firing the new shrapnel shells and six British infantry regiments. In an attempt to rally his troops, General Junot rode with Thiébault towards the hill. Thiébault described the closing scene:
The second [grenadier regiment] under Kellermann in person followed and was no less badly mauled. Thus, three of France’s best divisional generals with six regiments were all in a place where none of them should have been….and as our situation deteriorated every minute, the general-in-chief, followed by me, went himself to this ill-starred ground. The result was that ....our three brigades [Loison’s second brigade, Delaborde’s second brigade, and the reserve] were led by not only their own generals of brigade, but also three generals of division, a chief of staff, and the general-in-chief.\footnote{Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 189.}

Meanwhile, on the French right, Solignac’s and Brenier’s brigades, lacking any senior commander to coordinate them, fought separate and unsupported battles against an increasing number of British troops as Wellesley continued to shift troops to his left. Solignac was badly wounded and Brenier was wounded and captured together with his chief of staff. Finally, Junot sent Thiébault to the right. There, Thiébault rallied the troops of the two brigades and was able to withdraw them in good order by passing to the

\begin{figure}
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{vimeiro_map}
\caption{Vimeiro: Second French Attack. (Map by R. Godfrey-Sigler.)}
\end{figure}
rear, alternating the brigades to cover the retreat.\textsuperscript{51} On the left, the French fell back screened by Margaron’s cavalry. Putting the best interpretation on it, Thiébault wrote in his report:

We rested in this manner, masters of the field of battle for more than three hours after the end of the action, which enabled us to cover the removal of our wounded, who were treated on the battlefield and evacuated to Torres Vedras in good order.\textsuperscript{52}

The rest of the army followed. The French had lost 13 of their 23 guns; 1,000 men were killed or taken prisoner; and 800 wounded.\textsuperscript{53} The British General Burrard,

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure18_vimeiro_frenchwithdrawal.png}
\caption{Vimeiro: French Withdrawal. (Map by R. Godfrey-Sigler.)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{52} Thiébault, Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal, 202.
\textsuperscript{53} In his initial report of the battle, Wellesley wrote: “P.S. Since writing the above, I have been informed that a French general officer, supposed to be General Thiébault, the chief of the Staff, has been found dead upon the field of battle.” See Wellesley to Lt.
arriving on the battlefield at the close of the action, took command of the British army, and forbade any pursuit. The British had lost 134 killed, 534 wounded, and 51 missing.\footnote{This account of the Battle of Vimerio is a brief summary of the accounts contained in Thiébault, \textit{Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal}, 195-203; Foy, \textit{History of the Peninsular War}, II, 517-525; and Wellesley to Castlereagh, 21 August 1808, \textit{Wellington’s Dispatches} III, 90-93. In his \textit{Mémoires}, Thiébault acknowledges that his report of the Battle of Vimerio and its publication in \textit{Relation de l’Expédition} glossed over the “full particulars” of the battle which he then proceeded to relate as “painful memories regarding General Junot.” He criticized Junot’s lack of reconnaissance, over-hasty deployment, and piecemeal commitment of troops. Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, IV, 180-95.}

The next morning, 22 August, Junot called Thiébault and the other senior officers to a council of war. They considered several alternatives including fighting another battle outside Lisbon, attempting to march out of Portugal to rejoin the French army in Spain, or fortifying and holding Lisbon itself. The consensus was that only the last was feasible, and even that option would ultimately result in the destruction of the French army since additional British reinforcements were known to be on the way, and there was already a shortage of rations. The final decision was “to undertake negotiations with the resolve to obtain an honorable treaty, or bury ourselves in the ruins of Lisbon.”\footnote{Thiébault, \textit{Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal}, 207-08.}

General Kellermann, who spoke good English as a result of serving for two years in the French Embassy in Philadelphia, was sent under the pretext of arranging a prisoner exchange to see if negotiations were possible.\footnote{Through the influence of his father, General (later Marshal) François-Christophe Kellermann) the younger Kellermann had been appointed to the staff of Chevalier Jean-Baptiste de Ternant, Ambassador to the United States, between 1790 and November 1793. Originally, a lieutenant, he maintained his commission and during the period in America was promoted successively to first lieutenant, captain, and \textit{chef d’esquaderon}. See Terry Gordan, “The Early Life and Career of general François-Étienne Kellermann, 1770-1811” [Florida State University, 1973], 3-4.}

With the departure of Kellermann for the British camp, the army continued its withdrawal to Lisbon. Junot returned immediately to the capitol. The Divisions of

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Delaborde and Loison formed a screening force, while Thiébault led the Grenadier reserve, the artillery park, two regiments of cavalry, and the staff back towards Lisbon.\(^{57}\)

The next day, 23 August, Kellermann returned after achieving considerable success. By not revealing his knowledge of English, he had been able to use information overheard in comments by the British; he had succeeded in negotiating and signing an armistice and provisional treaty. It provided for the French evacuation of Portugal. They would not be considered prisoners of war, but the British would transport them to French ports together with their weapons, horses, baggage, and any Portuguese and French civilians who wished to accompany them; the Russian flotilla would be treated as if in a neutral port, and not pursued for twenty-four hours after leaving.\(^{58}\)

The French continued their withdrawal into Lisbon while Kellermann and George Murray, Quartermaster-General of the British Army, continued negotiations.\(^{59}\) Several modifications to the original agreement were necessary. The most important was that Admiral Cotton refused to agree to the conditions respecting the Russian fleet, and the entire agreement almost broke down. Admiral Seniavin, however, continuing to maintain his independence from the French, insisted that he would negotiate his own agreement with Admiral Cotton. Ultimately, the squadron was interned in England.\(^{60}\) The final treaty, the Convention of Cintra, was signed on 30 August 1808 at the Palace of Cintra outside Lisbon and ratified the next day.\(^{61}\)

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57 Ibid., 208.
58 Ibid. 210-11.
59 General Sir George Murray (1772-1846). He was promoted to major-general in 1811, and, with one interruption, served as Wellington’s Quartermaster-General, and effectively, his chief of staff, until 1814. He was recalled from Canada upon Napoleon’s return from Elba, but arrived after the Battle of Waterloo. His place was taken there by Col William DeLancey, Deputy Quartermaster-General, who was mortally wounded.
60 Admiral Seniavin’s final agreement provided for the return of all Russia sailors to Russia aboard British ships, and the internment of the ships themselves in London until the end of hostilities. As a result, Admiral Seniavin was relieved of all responsibilities and not recalled to active duty until 1826. See Horward, “Anglo-Russian Crisis,” 64-66, for details of Seniavin’s negotiations with Admiral Cotton.
61 England initially rejoiced over the victory at Vimerio, but this was quickly followed by almost universal condemnation when the lenient terms of the Convention were published.
The French withdrew from the forts guarding the Tagus and their camps outside the city, and bivouacked in the squares of the city. They had to place heavy guards around themselves, as, with the impending French withdrawal, the populace of Lisbon turned hostile towards the French – jeering, threatening, and occasionally murdering an isolated soldier. General Loison, whom the Portuguese accused of atrocities, required a guard of four battalions of infantry and four guns. Thiébault claims that his reputation with the Portuguese, however, was so positive that he was able to reduce his own guard to 24 men and was able to ride through the streets with only his orderly in attendance.

After the signing of the Convention, the British and French exchanged symbolic hostages. An Adjudant-Commandant from the French side and Colonel Rufane Donkin, Deputy Quartermaster-General from the British Staff, reported to the opposing headquarters to remain until the evacuation. Thiébault recounts that Donkin called on him and said:

I have translated your Manual for Adjutants-general into English. In that work you undertook to follow it up by a complete work on the subject, I have come for the purpose of asking you to keep your word, and to say that there is a translator all ready for you.

Wellesley, Burrard, and General Hew Dalrymple, who superseded Burrard in command, were all recalled to England on 23 September for a Board of Inquiry. Wellesley’s own letters indicated that he was at least in favor of the general concept. “I must say that I approve of allowing the French to evacuate Portugal, because I see clearly that we cannot get them out of Portugal otherwise, ….Without such an arrangement, we should be employed in the blockade or siege of the places they would occupy during the season in which we ought and might be advantageously employed against the French in Spain.” See Wellesley to Capt. P. Malcolm, HMS Donegal, 29 August 1808, Wellington’s Dispatches, III, 103. Also see Richard Schneer’s study “Arthur Wellesley and the Cintra Convention: A New Look at an Old Puzzle” in Journal of British Studies, 19, 2 (Spring 1980); 93-119, for an understanding of the complex British politic maneuvering surrounding the Board of Inquiry, which resulted in Burrard and Dalrymple fading into obscurity and Wellesley in returning to command the Allied armies on the Iberian Peninsula.

63 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 205.
64 General Sir Rufane Shaw Donkin, 1773-1841.
65 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 197. Thiébault identifies him variously as “Col. Duncan, a colonel of the general staff of the English army,” see Thiébault, Relation de l’Expédition
As the British gathered the shipping necessary to move over 20,000 Frenchmen back to France, Thiébault worked on preparing the embarkation orders. In addition to the army, he had to issue special orders for the return of the former émigrés including Count Bourmont and Marshal de camp Novion who had been invaluable to the French in securing Lisbon with his police. He also issued a final General Order covering the military stores and personal property that could be taken away. Interpretation of this order later became a serious point of contention between the French and the English as the British claimed that the French were “looting” Portugal.

Finally, the French began to embark and sail for France. The troops of the 1st Division began loading on 11 September as the first British troops officially entered Lisbon. On 13 September, General Junot went aboard the frigate HMS Nymph, and Thiébault boarded the corvette HMS Filla. On 14 September, the first convoy of 41 merchant vessels and two warships sailed for La Rochelle. The 2nd and 3rd Divisions, together with the artillery and cavalry, sailed between 15 and 30 September, and the garrisons from Almeida and Elvas did not leave until 8 December, together with sick and wounded who could not be moved earlier along with a few stragglers. By then, the

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66 As in the case of Bourmont, Thiébault would come to regret his assistance to Novion. “…at the Restoration, this general of Napoleon became one of the most ferocious Ultras…and earned appointment as one of those grand provosts who, in 1815, presided over those political assassinations.” See Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 208.

67 Paul Thiébault, General Order No. 67, 7 September 1808, Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Portugal).

68 See Oman, Peninsular Wars, I, 281-82. Thiébault admitted that many objets d’art and other valuables were wrongly removed but claimed that he himself took nothing and had no difficulties in exiting the country. See Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 197-98.

Army of Portugal, now re-designated the 8ème Corps d’Armée, had already reentered Spain.

Because virtually every act of a chief of staff is in the name of his commanding officer, knowledge of their relationship can be key to understanding the military operation. Clearly, Junot allowed Thiébault wide latitude to apply his ideas on how staff officers could support the operations of large, independent military units. Although Junot exhibited a dependence on alcohol and increasingly erratic behavior, he might have constrained Thiébault's ability to apply these new concepts. However, Junot obviously had considerable confidence in him. As communications with Paris deteriorated because of distance and hostile action, Thiébault actually had greater opportunity to influence army operations. Finally, Junot's confidence in Thiébault, not only as a staff officer but also as a combat leader, was shown in the Battle of Vimeiro when he relied on Thiébault to rally the right flank of his army.

During the period Thiébault was Chief of Staff of the Army of Portugal, he played a decisive role in the successful recovery and refurbishing of the Army after the taxing march from Salamanca. Thiébault also wanted to plan for future contingencies, such as his proposal and survey of a final defensive position for the entire army on the Setubal Peninsula. Unfortunately, this sort of contingency planning, a normal function of modern staff officers, was not well understood during the early years of the 18th century.

Thiébault also acquired experience in the politics of managing the fragile coalition with the Spanish and in the basic governance of Lisbon with some 300,000 restless Portuguese. His success with the Spanish coalition partners was evident when they trusted him enough to accept the orders that led them into captivity. Due to his management of Lisbon’s internal security with the assistance of the French émigré, Count Novion, the French forces never had to deal with a massive local uprising such as those in Madrid in May 1808, despite periods of major unrest in Lisbon. Furthermore, even after the signing of the Convention of Cintra when the French had far less control of the streets, Thiébault felt confident enough with the Portuguese to permit himself to dismiss his personal escort.

Finally, the chance meeting with British Colonel Donkin during this period influenced Thiébault to expand his Manuel des Adjudans Généraux et des Adjoints
employés dans les Etats-Major Divisionnaires de Armées to share his newly developed expertise as Chief of Staff in a larger and more complex military formation. The expansion of this work would ultimately become an important part of Thiébault’s lasting legacy.
Thiébault’s voyage back to France presented serious problems. First, a packet sailing from England passed over London newspapers that included Wellington’s erroneous report of Thiébault’s death; Thiébault worried about the effect the false news would have on his family. Then, the British flotilla carrying Thiébault and the 1st Division from Portugal was caught in a September storm that scattered the fleet and delayed arrival in France by several weeks. After the ten days of supplies that the French had brought with them were exhausted, everyone had survived on ship’s rations of moldy bread and salt beef. Thiébault used this time to complete a long report to Clarke, the Minister of War, detailing the activities of the Army of Portugal since June when its communications with France had been cut until the evacuation of Lisbon.  

Late on 14 October 1808, most of the convoy approached Quiberon Bay, but the forts guarding the port refused to acknowledge the flagship’s signals. Thinking that the commander of the battery had requested orders from his superior, the British commodore anchored out of range and waited for daybreak. The next morning, however, the batteries again refused to answer the British signals. The British commodore, citing his shortage of provisions, was about to weigh anchor and sail for England, when Thiébault, as Chief of Staff, claimed to speak for the General-in-Chief to obtain a 36-hour delay. He then managed to convince the captain of the Filla to seize a nearby French fishing boat. The next morning, 16 October, Thiébault donned his full dress uniform and together with an aide and four other officers boarded the fishing boat and sailed into the port. As the boat approached the shore, a French shore post went to arms at the sight of the French officers.

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1 The Convention of Cintra permitted Junot to send one courier, his aide-de-camp, de La Grave, with news of the Convention to Paris, but Thiébault was responsible for providing a full report to Clarke and the Emperor. This report formed much of the substance of the second half of Thiébault’s Relation de l’Éxpedition de Portugal. See Thiébault, Relation de l’Éxpedition, ix-x.
Thiébault asked the commander for an explanation and the officer replied that they were under orders to deny landing to General Dupont’s army. Once the confusion was cleared up, Thiébault sent an aide to Paris with his dispatches, while he began to organize the disembarkation of the troops.

As soon as the disembarkation was completed and new orders were issued to assemble in Bordeaux for the Army of Portugal, now redesignated the 8th Corps, Thiébault departed for Paris to see his wife and family. He went despite an order from the Minister of War that no officer of the Army of Portugal was to come to Paris. Thiébault was recognized in Paris and received a curt letter from Clarke ordering him back to Bordeaux. Nevertheless, he remained in Paris for over a week, in part to become acquainted with his new daughter Claire, who had been born while he was in Portugal. Thiébault finally reached Bordeaux on 25 November.

When Thiébault reported to General Junot, the General handed him two letters. The first was an instruction from Clarke that Junot should reprimand Thiébault for his visit to Paris. The second was from Berthier in Burgos dated 19 November. It stated that the Emperor had authorized Thiébault's promotion to général de division. The official order was dated 17 November, two days before Thiébault left Paris for Bordeaux.

Thiébault attributed his promotion to the Emperor’s positive reaction to his report on the Portuguese campaign, which the Emperor read just after his return from Erfurt even before Clarke saw it.

For the next four weeks, Thiébault directed the reorganization of the Army of Portugal as the 8th Corps, first in Bordeaux, then in Bayonne. Then, on 20 December, the corps marched into Spain. Almost immediately, Junot received orders to leave the corps and take command of the 3rd Corps in Aragon. Thiébault was ordered to remain with the

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2 General Pierre Dupont’s surrender at Baylen in July 1809 provided for the repatriation of the French army. However, only the general officers were paroled and returned to France where they were immediately arrested. Most of the army was marched to Cadiz and died in captivity aboard prison hulks.

3 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 224-29. Thiébault made a point of demonstrating that he, as a général de brigade, took charge of this emergency although there were two généraux de division, Kellermann and Delaborde, aboard the commodore’s flagship.

4 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 240.
8th Corps as it continued into Spain under the provisional command of General Loison. By 6 January 1809, corps headquarters had reached León, where orders arrived disbanding it. The 3rd battalions, which had originally been used to fill out the Army of Portugal, were to return to their parent units. The remaining battalions were placed in two weak divisions, under the command of Generals Delaborde and Étienne Heudelet, General Travot’s replacement, and assigned to Soult’s 2nd Corps. Loison was named governor of León. Thiébault received instructions for the disposition of various staff officers and Portuguese officers and interpreters assigned to corps headquarters. He then rode to the Emperor’s headquarters in Valladolid to request reassignment.

Thiébault arrived just in time to observe the Emperor at a military review. As the parade ended, Napoleon caught sight of General François Legendre, who had been General Dupont’s chief of staff. A public chastisement of the General followed; the Emperor concluded by saying: “If you had fought instead of surrendering…the insurrection in Spain would not have been so successful, England would not have an army in the Peninsula, and how differently would things have turned out. Perhaps the destiny of the world.” With that, the Emperor turned his back. Lagrange’s career was in ruins.

Napoleon left the parade ground, and Thiébault went to find quarters for the night. As he was leaving, Savary, still aide-de-camp to the Emperor, told Thiébault that the Emperor wished to see him in his apartments in a quarter of an hour. Thiébault did a quick examination of his conscience. Although the two situations were not identical, both Thiébault and LaGrange had been chiefs of staff for armies that had been defeated with considerable damage to the French position on the Peninsula. Despite his recent promotion, was his own career to be cut short?

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5 Oman, *History of the Peninsular Wars*, I, 417.

6 Berthier to Thiébault, 13 January 1810, France, Archives nationales, AP 618/1, `Fonds général Thiébault, Campagne d'Espagne [hereafter Fonds Thiébault (Spain)].`

Napoleon greeted him with a simple “Good morning, sir. So you capitulated to the English and evacuated Portugal.” Thiébault called the ensuing conversation, “The Audience of a Hundred Minutes.”

Initially, Napoleon wanted to know the details of campaign in Portugal and the Battle of Vimeiro. Thiébault, although he had resolved to protect the reputation of his friend Junot, respected the facts as he had reported them, amplifying the rationales for various decisions when Napoleon questioned them. “I was amazed,” Thiébault later wrote, "that he remembered the contents of my report better than I did myself.”

Napoleon’s conversation with Thiébault then shifted to the new campaign that Napoleon was planning in Portugal under Marshal Soult. Here, Thiébault felt on much firmer ground, since he believed that no one knew Portugal better than he did at that time. Napoleon asked about the relative difficulty of invading Portugal from the north. Thiébault replied that it was both longer and would involve crossing four major rivers to reach Lisbon (the Minho, the Douro, the Vouga and the Mondego), as opposed to the central route over the mountains of the Beira and the Tras-os-Montes. Nevertheless, three of these rivers had major cities on the right, or north, bank – Tuy on the Minho, Oporto on the Douro, and Coimbra on the Vouga – that could support river crossing operations, and the route ran on adequate roads through the most fertile portion of Portugal. Napoleon appeared pleased as Thiébault’s statements validated his own judgment.

As the interview was concluding, Napoleon very pleasantly asked Thiébault if he desired anything. Surprised, Thiébault responded, “Yes.” He would like an order to release from prison Maréchal de camp Novion, the police officer who had done so much for the French in Lisbon. Novion, arrested as an émigré when he returned to France with the Army of Portugal, was being held at Nantes.

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8 Ibid., IV, 261.
9 Ibid., IV, 261-271. Mme. Junot recounts this portion of the interview as a defense of her husband in her own Mémoires. Here, she gives Thiébault credit for permitting her to recount the details of the interview based on his cahiers (notebooks or manuscripts). The text of her account and that in Thiébault’s Mémoires are almost identical except for some material deleted by her. See Mme. Junot’s Mémoires de Mme. Junot, VII, 427-35.
Napoleon quickly agreed and then asked again: “Do you have any other request.” Thiébault’s reply was both typical and disastrous. As he later wrote:

Destiny, spiteful destiny, willed … that I saw myself as having too many claims to condescend to make a request…. My pride prevented me from humbling myself. My service spoke for itself. I replied: “No sir.” Instantly, the Emperor’s brow clouded and he dismissed me with the words: “In that case, sir, I wish you good morning.”

As Thiébault left the Emperor’s apartments, he met Savary who eagerly asked him if the Emperor had given him the opportunity to make a request. Thiébault said that the Emperor had twice given him the opportunity, but he had asked only for the release of Count Novion. Savary’s face fell, and he swore slightly before he entered the Emperor’s apartment. This marked a long break in their friendship. In retrospect, Thiébault believed that Savary had been pursuing his project of obtaining the post of Napoleon’s aide-de-camp for Thiébault. Thiébault’s unwillingness to ask, however, and Napoleon’s unwillingness to bestow an honor not requested, had doomed the project and embarrassed Savary.

Nonetheless, the following day, Thiébault received orders naming him Governor of the three Basque provinces with his headquarters to be located in Vitoria. On 18 January while en route from Valladolid to Vitoria, Thiébault stopped in Burgos. The city had been captured and pillaged the previous November when Soult had defeated the Spanish Army of Estremadura outside of the city. A member of the French Corps-Legislative, Stanislas Girardin, who had visited Burgos a month later described the devastation:

The city was opened to pillage and disorders of all kinds. This pillage lasted nearly fifteen days…. The churches were devastated, the tombs profaned,

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10 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 276.

11 Thiébault’s Mémoires is the only source of this account. In a footnote, he recounts his later, very distant relations with Savary while Minister of Police and in the early years of the Restoration, but adds “Since 1830, we have again restored our friendship (Depuis 1830, nous nous retutoyâmes.)”. See Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 279n. It is also interesting that Savary makes absolutely no mention of Thiébault in his own memoirs despite their long association. See Ann-Jean-Marie-Renée Savary, Mémoires du Duc de Rovigo [Paris, 1828].

12 Order, Berthier to Thiébault, 14 Jan 09, Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Spain).

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the sacred vessels stolen…Burgos offered a spectacle difficult to describe. On one side was misery; the houses abandoned by their inhabitants, the streets deserted, a situation one rarely finds in Spain. In the morning one is at great pain to find food for the coming day….”

Girardin described how he was treated to an elaborate and apparently expensive dinner party by the Military Governor, Général de division Jean Darmagnac despite the devastation of the city. Thiébault was appalled by General Darmagnac’s vindictive attitude towards the Spanish and by reports from his staff of the indiscipline of the local French troops and the liberties they were taking with the Spanish civilians. Apparently, Napoleon, who had passed through Burgos en route back to France the previous day, had also been troubled, because the following day, Thiébault received a note from Napoleon’s aide Duroc. It read: “The Emperor bids me write and tell you to wait at Burgos for further orders from the Prince of Neuchâtel [Berthier].”

Thiébault was not pleased. He had hoped to make his headquarters in Vitoria, a quiet, pretty town close to France where his wife could join him. Instead, he found himself assigned to a city that had first been pillaged and then badly mismanaged. While he awaited new orders, he retired to his room to write a short book on popular love songs that was later published in Paris. However, he also sent his aides-de-camp, secretary, and domestics out to investigate and survey the town. They reported a town racked by “famine, ruin, despair, [and] pestilence.” A day and a half latter, orders arrived from Berthier naming Thiébault governor and commandant of the province of Old Castile and instructing him to establish his headquarters in Burgos. Shortly thereafter, a second order, issued earlier and addressed to Thiébault as Governor of Biscay Provinces in Vitoria, announced that Marshal Bessières, duc d’Istrie, has been appointed commander of all of Upper Spain (from the Tagus River to the French border) and that Thiébault

13 Stanislas Girardin, Mémoires de S. Girardin (Paris, 1834), II, 216.
14 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 282.
15 Paul Thiébault, Du Chant et particulièrement la romance (Paris, 1813) and Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 283-85. In the former, Thiébault names as a French woman composer “Mme. Baron Th…, who created a charming …love song.” (p. 93).
16 Order. Berthier to Thiébault, 20 January 1809, Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault (Spain).
Figure 19. Spain. (Map by R. Godfrey-Sigler.)
would report to him. Thibault, in a letter to Bessières on 29 February 1809, confirmed that he had received this message from Berthier, and, as Governor of Old Castile, he would not only comply, but also follow Berthier’s instructions to keep Marshal Jean-Baptiste Jourdan, King Joseph’s chief of staff in Madrid, also informed.

Thibault’s previous experience in occupied countries, especially the Kingdom of Naples in 1798-99 and the recent expedition to Portugal, convinced him that it was essential to win the populace over to the side of the French. This was especially true in Spain where insurgency was already increasing throughout the country. Almost immediately, he discovered that much of the food shortage in Burgos was the result of speculators operating with both the connivance and assistance of some French officers, including at least one of General Darmagnac’s aides-de-camp. Thibault broke up this ring of speculators and called together the civil and military administrators to tell them that such behavior would no longer be tolerated. He then reviewed the troops of the garrison and held officers’ call where he informed the regimental officers that, in the future, they would be held responsible for bad behavior by their troops including harassment of civilians and unauthorized requisitions. Finally, he set up a new superior court with both French military and Spanish civilian judges, with himself as President, to deal with the most egregious crimes. Thibault maintained that in this way he was able to make direct contact with all social classes of the province and could better understand their problems. He also maintained that in cases involving conflict between civilians and the military, “the latter were always more severely judged.”

In a further attempt to win the support of the local populace, Thibault undertook an unusual project. The tomb of the legendary 11th century Spanish hero, El-Cid (Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar), and his wife Jimena at the Monastery of Saint Pierre de

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17 Order, Berthier to Thibault, 17 January 1809, Ibid.
18 Thibault to Bessières, 29 January1809, France, Archives de la Guerre, Service historique de l’armée de la terre, Château de Vincennes, MSS [hereafter Service historique], Armée de nord, -- Correspondance de la Vieille-Castille (général Thibault), Carton C 250. A major problem for the French throughout the war in Spain was the conflicting lines of authority, involving the court in Madrid, the military governors, and the generals-in-chief of the various armies.
19 Thibault, Mémoires, IV, 294.
Cardeña had been vandalized by a unit of French cavalry. Accordingly, Thiébault wrote to King Joseph that he believed that it was the French responsibility to restore it.²⁰ Although the monastery was located some ten miles from Burgos, Thiébault ordered that a new tomb be built in center of the city. The new tomb was dedicated on 15 June 1809, the anniversary of El Cid’s birthday, with much religious and military pomp and ceremony. Thiébault had the following legend inscribed on two sides, both in French and in Spanish:

Through the Care  
Of His Excellency General of Division Thiébault  
Governor of Old Castile  
The Remains of El Cid and Jemina  
Were Collected and Transported Here  
With the Debris of Their Tomb

On the third side, inscribed in Latin:

The Memory of Great Men  
Must Be Honored  
By All People  
In Every Time and Place

And on the fourth side:

In the Reign of Joseph  
1809.²¹

Thiébault also undertook a number of far more practical activities. He reorganized the military hospital services in Burgos and installed a French administrator recommended by his friend Charles Louis Cadet-Gassicourt. He forbade burials in the churches as unhealthy, opened a cemetery on the edge of the city with the support of the

²⁰ Thiébault to King Joseph, 3 March 1809. Service historique, Correspondance de Gouvernement de la Vieille-Castille, Carton C²50

²¹ Inscriptions are from “Sketch of Tomb of El-Cid.” Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS, MS IX. Although three of the inscriptions were obliterated in 1813 following the French withdrawal, the tomb with its Latin inscription existed until 1842 when the remains of El Cid and his wife were moved first to City Hall and later to the Cathedral of Burgos where they lie today
Figure 20. Tomb of El Cid, Burgos.
(Courtesy Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.).
Archbishop, and began work on a citadel within the city which served as General Jean-Louis Dubreton’s stronghold when he held out against Wellington’s siege in 1812. With greater security, shops and markets reopened, and houses were repaired. When Girardin of the Corps-Legislative returned to France from Madrid six weeks after his original visit, he wrote:

> On the 31st of January 1809 we arrived in Burgos. The marks of the devastation which had been inflicted on this city a short time ago were receding. The inhabitants in large measure had returned to their homes. General Thiébault had succeeded General Darmanac in command. He is a man of spirit, and ....agrees that things are better and credits his own administration with the improvements.

Protecting the citizens of Burgos and Old Castile, even from their own government, nonetheless presented problems. In September, while leading one of his mobile columns, Thiebault encountered “a carriage, drawn by six mules and escorted by an officer on each side and Spanish soldiers.” When Thiebault asked about this cavalcade (which he referred to as a ‘masquerade”), he was told that it was that of Don Francisco Amoros, “commissionaire extraordinaire” en route to inspect all the Spanish officials of Thiebault’s government.

Don Amoros’ first order of business upon his arrival in Burgos was to send the local Commissioner of Police to Thiebault to announce that “L’Illustissime” (The Most Illustrious) had arrived and was clearly expecting Thiebault to call upon him. Thiebault was not to be intimidated. He had been appointed by the Emperor; he was responsible for the entire government of the province; and he would not cede this Imperial authority to a representative of the royal court in Madrid. Several days followed with each attempting to upstage the other through the use of protocol. Thiebault came out the better, since he could more effectively control civic and social events. Amoros wrote to

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22 Thiebault, Mémoires, IV, 303-05, 328.
23 Girardin, Mémoires de S. Girardin, II, 296.
24 Thiebault, Mémoires, IV, 349. Colonel Francisco Amoros was commissioner of police and later Minister of Interior of King Joseph’s government in Spain. In 1814, Amoros fled to France with the retreating French army and began a new career as an exercise coach in Paris where he popularized his method with a book, Manuel d’éducation physique, gymnastique (Paris, 1830). He was so successful that he is today referred to as the father of French gymnastics.
the King attacking Thiébault's anti-insurgent efforts and complaining that Thiébault had not had the courtesy to receive him as the King's representative. On 10 September, Amoros wrote Thiébault a long letter stating that as a member of the Spanish government, Thiébault had no choice but to obey his orders, and then outlining his authority and his plans for uncovering subversion in the province. Thiébault responded:

> You believe that I am a member of the Spanish government and therefore subject to your commands... I do not accept this. An order of the Emperor named me governor of Old Castile, and the government in Madrid may not limit my powers.

Amoros informed Thiébault that he had instructed the postmaster to intercept the mail of “suspicious” Spanish officials based on his authority from Madrid. These suspects included the Prefect, the Supervisor of Finances, and the Corregidor. Thiébault revealed this to those officials, and discovered that the Corregidor was already paying “protection” money to Amoros. Thiébault issued an order reiterating that the police were under his sole charge and should take orders from no one else. Thiébault reported all this to his superiors, General Kellermann and the Minister of War, and, with Kellermann’s approval, forbade Amoros from intercepting the mail. In late September, Amoros wrote to various ministers in Madrid saying that he was leaving Burgos to report personally on the French military in Old Castile. He left in early October taking with

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26 Thiébault to Amoros, 11 September 1809 and Thiébault to Amoros, 12 September 1809, Service historique. Service historique, Correspondance de Governement de la Vieille-Castille, Carton C8.250,

27 Ordre, 12 October 1809. Service historique, Correspondance de Governement de la Vieille-Castille, Carton C8.250,


29 Amoros to various ministers, 26 September 1809, Egerton collection, Papeles tocantes, 388/f.110.
him many complaints against Thiébault. Thiébault recognized that this conflict would create considerable ill-will on the part of King Joseph. He was, however, determined to maintain his position as the Emperor’s, not the King’s, representative.\(^{30}\)

As governor of the province of Old Castile, Thiébault’s principal mission was to secure the French lines of communications. The primary line of communications between France and the western half of Spain ran from Bayonne in France through Vitoria to Burgos. At Burgos, the route divided; the easterly route went south to Madrid, the westerly route running southwest to Valladolid, Salamanca, toward Portugal. The need to patrol these roads and to provide escorts for convoys of supplies, artillery trains, and remounts en route from France to the French armies in Spain was constant. In addition, Burgos required a strong garrison since it served as a major ammunition depot and hospitalization facility for the French army in Spain.

These duties posed no great problem in the early days of Thiébault’s appointment. The Spanish armies were in disarray after Napoleon’s massive intervention to restore Joseph to Madrid the previous November, and the guerillas were neither numerous nor well-organized. The regular Spanish forces, however, were reorganizing themselves in the northern coastal province of Asturias. In order to keep open communications between Marshal Soult, invading northern Portugal from La Coruña, and the main French lines of communication, Napoleon wrote to Clarke on 1 April 1809, giving orders for an offensive in Asturias.\(^{31}\) Two of the attacking forces would include Marshal Ney’s 6\(^{\text{th}}\) Corps attacking from Galicia in the west, where he was operating in support of Soult, and Général de division Jean Bonnet, Governor of Santander, leading his division of 5,000 garrison troops attacking from the east. The third column was that of General François Kellermann, who had succeeded Marshal Bessières as military governor of Upper Spain on 9 March when Bessières was recalled to France for the forthcoming campaign against Austria. For troops, Kellermann had only his own cavalry division, so he stripped the already undermanned garrisons of the north, including Burgos. Even so, he was unable

\(^{30}\) Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 348-49.

\(^{31}\) Napoleon to Clarke, 1 April 1809, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 14989, XVIII, 497.
to gather more than 5,000 men, so additional troops had to be sent from Aragon.\textsuperscript{32} Thiébault was left with only his personal escort of the Regiment of Nassau Chasseurs à Cheval and 250 invalids left behind by Marshal Mortier’s 5\textsuperscript{th} Corps.\textsuperscript{33}

Because of the difficulty in marshalling the necessary forces, Bonnet’s campaign in Asturias actually began on 27 April and lasted until 11 June when the Spanish general Francisco Ballesteros was defeated Santander was recaptured. Ultimately, the Spanish forces fled into the hills or were evacuated aboard British vessels.

It was probably a portion of Ballesteros’ scattered forces that threatened Burgos in late June.\textsuperscript{34} Thiébault received a report that Ballesteros’ force was nearby, planning to take the undefended city the next day. Thiébault took what precautions he could, and informed a delegation of citizens that if Ballesteros attacked, Thiébault intended to explode the large store of powder kept in the city’s warehouses. According to Thiébault, the bluff worked and the Spanish forces withdrew. A more likely version is that the Spanish force reported nearby was the remains of \textit{La Princesa} and \textit{Soria} Regiments, some 600 men. These troops had escaped after Ballesteros’ defeat at Santander and marched 250 miles through French occupied territory to Aragon. That summer they became the basis of the \textit{partida} of Pedro Villacampa.\textsuperscript{35} Kellermann withdrew his forces

\textsuperscript{32} Oman, \textit{History of the Peninsular Wars}, II, 377.

\textsuperscript{33} Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, IV, 232.

\textsuperscript{34} Thiébault’s account in his \textit{Mémoires} placed these events several weeks earlier, when he said that he had received a report that Ballesteros was within ten miles of Burgos with his full force of 17,000 men (Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, IV, 325-28). However, the English editor of the \textit{Mémoires} pointed out the problem of reconciling Thiébault’s timing with a dinner party he gave for General LaSalle and Pierre Louis Roederer on 29 April 1809 that M. Roederer described in a letter to his wife. See Thiébault, \textit{Memoirs} [ed. Butler], [London, 1896], II, 253n. It therefore appears more likely that the rumor was based on the retreat of Spanish forces from Santander after Ballesteros’ defeat on 21 June 1809.

\textsuperscript{35} Pedro de Villacampa y Periel (1776-1845?) was a Spanish regular officer serving under General Joaquin Blake in Aragon. His \textit{partida} was a mixed force of regular troops and partisans, but its tactics after 1809 were entirely those of the guerillas. Villacampa took command of these forces when they first arrived in Catalunya. See Oman, \textit{History of the Peninsular Wars}, II, 387 and Charles Esdaile, \textit{Fighting Napoleon} (New Haven, 2004), 59, 142.
from Astoria to Valladolid by the end of June, restoring at least some troops to Thiébault for the occupation of the province of Old Castile.

During this period, General Suchet, who commanded the 1st Division of Mortier’s 5th Corps, had been named to replace Junot in command of the 3rd Corps, now headquartered at Saragossa. Although Suchet’s orders were issued on 5 April, they did not reach him for several weeks since he was already on the march with his division, first to Burgos and then to Valladolid. At some point, probably around 10 May, he spent five days with Thiébault in Burgos, where the orders reached him. Suchet left immediately for Saragossa, but Thiébault claimed that before his departure, Suchet offered him command of one of the divisions of the 3rd Corps, and that Thiébault, in a decision he would come to regret, refused the offer because his wife Zozotte was to join him in Burgos.

Thiébault soon had plenty to occupy his time. The withdrawal of the 5th Corps from Aragon left the 3rd Corps overextended, and the insurgent bands became much more active. These bands were reinforced by regular Spanish troops that had become separated from their armies by the repeated Spanish defeats. Villacampa’s force, organized around the troops that had retreated from Santander, became one of the largest and most effective guerrilla units. Operating from its hideouts in the mountainous region southeast of Burgos on the border of Aragon and Old Castile, this force was the principal one with which Thiébault had to contend. Suchet described the French problem:

One French regiment had been long stationed in Soria [the western-most province of the Kingdom of Aragon] and had been able to hold at least a certain portion of the country; but it was recalled to Madrid, and the regiments of Soria and Princesse, detached from the corps of [General] La Romana, were established and

36 Napoleon to Clarke, 5 April 1809, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 15009, XVIII, 509, and Oman, History of the Peninsular Wars, II, 411. Suchet himself stated that he did not arrive in Saragossa to take command of the 3rd Corps until 19 May 1809. See Louis Suchet, Mémoires du maréchal Suchet sur ses campagnes en Espagne [Paris, 1834], I, 15.

37 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 331. Zozotte disliked Spain, and returned to Paris after only a month. Thiébault’s later regrets were because of the necessity of then serving under Generals Dorsenne and Caffarelli, both officers with whom he came in conflict.
organized in the region of Calatayud. Their strength ... formed the basis of the Corps of Villacampa, the active partisan.\textsuperscript{38}

In the summer of 1809, Thiébault personally initiated operations against the partisans. Usually leading a mobile column of his Nassau Chasseurs and select detachments of infantry, he attempted to break up various guerrilla bands operating southeast of Burgos along the roads to Madrid or Saragossa. The columns set out in response to reports by spies or to an incident on one of the roads. The guerrillas usually fled before Thiébault could catch them, but occasionally, by pushing the pursuit to the limit, he was able to overtake and defeat various bands, especially if they were laden with plunder from an ambushed convoy. Thiébault recounted one incident when he almost surprised Villacampa himself who had been collecting “contributions” from the villages in the eastern part of the province. Alerted by a spy, he nearly surprised the band at dusk as they were settling in a village for the night. The guerrilla sentries provided just enough warning for most of the band to escape into the gathering dusk, leaving behind a burning house. The combined efforts of the troops and the unenthusiastic villagers failed to put out the fire. The French troops camped in the village over night and returned towards Burgos the next day. It was not until some weeks later that Thiébault learned that Villacampa had set fire to the house himself, after placing the kegs containing the “contributions” totaling the equivalent of 25,000 francs in the cellar to be recovered after the fire and the departure of the French. Thiébault retaliated by arresting the corregidor and five leading citizens of the village and imposing a fine of 25,000 francs.\textsuperscript{39}

In another incident, Thiébault encountered a much larger force of Spanish horsemen, led by two “young amazons...beautiful as angels, fierce as demons ...who taunted and even shot their pistols at us.”\textsuperscript{40} Although outnumbered, the Nassau Chasseurs charged, their commander promising to bring back one of the girls for Thiébault. The charge was successful, although the girls escaped and the Spanish disappeared into the mountains. Thiébault later reported the incident to Kellermann: “I

\textsuperscript{38} Suchet, \textit{Mémoires du maréchal Suchet}, I, 55.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., IV, 368-370.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., IV, 372.
have seen nothing more brilliant than this attack. The boldness, the impetuosity, and the execution …were outstanding.”

Despite efforts by Thiébault and the other regional governors, and increasingly sharp orders from Paris and Madrid to ensure the safety of the routes from France, the insurgency was growing and efforts to counter it had failed. Kellermann wished to keep his forces together to counter expected thrusts by the Spanish armies to Astoria, Galicia and southern León, rather than disbursing them to pursue the guerillas. On 26 September, Marshal Jourdan wrote Kellermann and clearly instructed him to use all of his troops to guard the lines of communications and to leave the responsibility of guarding western Spain to Ney’s 6th Corps. To guard the roads, Kellermann favored the use of fixed posts and garrisons and disapproved of Thiébault’s use of mobile columns to pursue and disburse the guerrilla bands. Thiébault outlined their disagreement:

He [Kellermann] thought it useless to pursue the guerillas into the heart of the mountains, as the roads had to be guarded and the use of troops deprived the roads of their regular protection. He was nevertheless wrong. In every conquered country, and above all in Spain, to maintain your authority you must impress the people and thus break up the guerilla bands, upon which the hopes of the Spanish partisans relied, had considerable moral value in my governorate.

In reports to Marshal Jourdan and others, Kellermann made no secret of his disagreement with Thiébault. “General Thiébault is in the mountains south of Burgos on a long expedition that will probably be useless,” and “I attribute the redoubling of boldness [of the guerrillas] to the absence of General Thiébault, following I do not know what phantom in front, while they rise behind him.”

In addition to the use of mobile columns to chase down insurgent bands, Thiébault established fortified garrisons in the towns and villages along the roads, and relieved

41 Thiébault to Kellermann, 24 August 1809, Service historique, Correspondance de Gouvernement de la Vieille-Castille, Carton C 250.
43 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 375.
44 Kellermann to Jourdan, 12 October 1809, and Kellermann to Garrison Commander in Burgos, 17 October 1809, in Service historique, Correspondance de général Kellermann, 16 August – 21 October 1809, Carton C 240.
them weekly, so he had troops moving constantly around the province. This dispersion provided him with a force of infantry on which he could draw and combine with his cavalry – two squadrons of the Nassau Chasseurs à cheval – to be able to create quickly a mobile column in any part of the province.\textsuperscript{45}

Despite Thiébault’s efforts, the insurgency that threatened the lines of communication continued to grow and the displeasure of the government in Madrid increased commensurately. In an October letter to the Minister of War, King Joseph wrote:

I have received the letters of 9 and 10 October; [but] we have lost six couriers. General _ [left blank] _ does not appear to be suitable for the post which he occupies in Burgos. It is there that the correspondence is intercepted – between Briviesca and that city.\textsuperscript{46}

For Thiébault, the worst was yet to come. Marshal Jourdan, the King’s chief of staff, had requested his return to France, and Napoleon had granted that request. The same day as his letter to the Minister complaining about the unnamed general, Joseph wrote to Marshal Soult, Thiébault’s old nemesis, concerning arrangements for Soult to replace Jourdan.\textsuperscript{47} Soult arrived in Madrid to take up the post a few days later. On 6 November, in his first report to the Minister of War, Soult wrote:

General Bonnet has written on the 28\textsuperscript{th} that all is quiet in his area [Santander]. The reports of Generals [Jacques de]Tilly [Governor of Ségovie], Thiébault and [Pierre] Boyer [Aliva] are less satisfactory. It appears that communications with Bayonne are becoming more and more difficult: only detachments of 2 or 300 men are able to pass; it is always affairs with the brigands; some couriers are taken, detachments overwhelmed, and posts disrupted.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{45} Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires} IV, 370. The field force available to Thiébault at that time was the 118\textsuperscript{th} \textit{Ligne} and the Nassau \textit{Chasseurs à cheval}, a two-squadron cavalry regiment from the principalities of Nassau-Usingen and Nassau Weilbourg in the German Confederation. At full strength, this would have totaled some 2,400 infantry and 520 horsemen although actual strength tended to be 60-70\% of these numbers.

\textsuperscript{46} King Joseph to Clarke, 27 October 1809, \textit{Mémoires du roi Joseph}, VII, 47. Briviesca is a town about 40 kilometers northeast of Burgos on the road to Vitoria.

\textsuperscript{47} King Joseph to Soult, 27 October 1809, Ibid., VII, 46.

\textsuperscript{48} Soult to Clarke, 6 November 1809, Ibid., VII, 55.
Soult went on listing the actions that he proposed to take. Among these, he had ordered General Solignac to march from Valladolid with a force of one infantry regiment, one cavalry regiment, and two guns. Solignac was to pass through Burgos and on to Vitoria, destroying insurgent bands, taking hostages, and making examples of all who opposed the French. He was to “cooperate” with the military governors, but was authorized to take Thiébault’s troops, the 118th Line and the Nassau Chasseurs, and add them to his own force.

At about this time, Thiébault complained that he became ill from overwork and suffered from hallucinations. As a result, he wrote to Marshal Jourdan in Madrid asking that he be excused from sending personal reports for a few days. But instead of a few days of sick leave, he received a letter from Marshal Soult, regretting that Thiébault was unable to attend to his duties and, therefore, they should be turned over to General Solignac. Thiébault replied to Soult:

I have just received your letter informing me that in view of the circumstances and on the supposition that I am indisposed and unable to perform my duties, His Majesty has charged General Solignac to provisionally replace me….I have agreed with General Solignac, who has just arrived, to work together until a new order clarifying matters is received.

It is possible that Thiébault had not previously known that Soult had replaced Jourdan, nor of General Solignac’s orders to take Thiébault’s troops and conduct a punitive campaign through the governorate where Thiébault had been working hard to gain the support of the Spanish people. This effort to split the people from the guerillas was an important part of the counter-insurgency policy that Thiébault had developed. A letter from Joseph to the Minister of War, however, offers another possibility. After describing how a repressive policy in Biscay governorate had been successful, Joseph wrote:

On the other hand, I have, to my pity, some French officers who withhold the truth from me in order to complain to Paris, which seems to me to be against the ordinary rules of reason and military regulations. General Thiébault must be replaced in Burgos. I hope that General Solignac is better able to maintain

49 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 376-77.

50 Thiébault to Soult, 19 November 1809, Service historique, Correspondance de Gouvernement de la Vieille-Castille, Carton C8250.
communications and that his character and constitution better resist those inconveniences of all kinds that are attached to the extraordinary war we fight. General Thiébault is sick.  

The affair of Amoros still infuriated Joseph (“the complaints to Paris”), and there was nothing “provisional” about his order. He wanted Thiébault recalled, and would certainly be supported by his new chief of staff, Soult. The official order relieving Thiébault, dated 15 November 1810 and signed by Soult, arrived in Burgos on the 19th or 20th of November. Thiébault noted the order in his letter book on 20 November. The same day, Thiébault wrote two letters. The first was to King Joseph, in which he defended his record and cited the difficulties with which he had been forced to contend. The second was to the Minister of War in Paris complaining that he thought his supercession was illegal, since he had been appointed by the Emperor, not the King, and that Joseph had removed him because of his conflict with the King’s commissioner of police.

Exactly what happened next to Thiébault is difficult to determine. Thiébault left Burgos within hours after Solignac’s arrival without further orders or instructions from either Kellermann or Soult.

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51 Joseph to Clarke, 15 Novembre 1809, Mémoires du roi Joseph, VII, 73.
52 Order Relieving General Thiébault, entered 20 November 1810, Service historique, Correspondance Armée d’Espagne (1808-1814), Carton C⁰ 250. In his Mémoires, however, Thiébault never refers to Soult as Joseph’s Chief of Staff and places all the responsibility on Jourdan.
53 Thiébault to King Joseph, 20 November 1809, and Thiébault to Clarke, 20 November 1809, Service historique, Correspondance de Gouvernement de la Vieille-Castille, Carton C⁰ 250.
54 Thiébault, Memoires, IV, 378. Georges Six in his summary of Thiébault’s military career notes that Thiébault was relieved at Burgos on 15 November 1809 (the same day as Joseph’s letter to Clark saying that Thiébault must be relieved), but was not authorized to return to France until 28 February 1810. Furthermore, according to Six, Solignac was never appointed Governor of Burgos but simply assigned en suite to Marshal Jourdan (and presumably Soult, his successor) from January 1809, when Junot’s old 8th Corps was disbanded, until 11 January 1810, when he was assigned to organize in Burgos a division of the new 8th Corps that would become part of Masséna’s Army of Portugal. See Six, Dictionnaire Biographique, II, 495.
Thiébault claimed that after leaving Burgos, he almost immediately reconsidered his actions.\footnote{This was not the first time that Thiébault had pled ill-health to avoid or escape an unpleasant military situation. It is possible that he was aware of Soult’s appointment as King Joseph’s military advisor and his own low esteem with Joseph; as a result, he tried to distance himself from them without losing his post by pleading illness. If so, he must have been surprised at the firm and immediate response.} Enroute from Burgos, he wrote his wife what had happened and asked her to attempt to find out what its impact in Paris would be. He would wait for a reply in Irun, situated along the Spanish-French border. In due course, she replied that Napoleon was displeased with King Joseph’s arrangement and that orders were on the way to reassign Solignac and restore Thiébault to his post in Burgos. Finding that he was still in good standing in Paris, Thiébault, making no mention of the message from his wife, wrote Berthier that although he had been appointed to his post by the Emperor, he had left Burgos without protest, in respect for the King and the desire to avoid a conflict in authority in the eyes of the Spanish. He said that he had waited for orders from Paris for 12 days; but he had received none so he would come to Paris for new ones. Thiébault left immediately for Bordeaux, where he met his wife; they then proceeded together to Paris, arriving shortly before the wedding of Napoleon to Archduchess Marie-Louise of Austria.\footnote{Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, IV, 382-85. A footnote on page 483 stated that Solignac was reassigned as a division commander in the new 8th Corps under Junot.}

Obviously, there was a serious discrepancy in timing between Thiebault's account of events at Burgos and other sources. The Paris ceremony uniting Napoleon and Marie-Louise took place on 1 April 1810, which placed Thiébault in Paris at that time. He had been away from his post without further orders for at least five and a half months. However, a plan for the next invasion of Portugal, which he was to present to Napoleon in April, is dated as “Burgos, January 12, 1810” and is signed “\textit{le général de division, gouverneur de la Vieille-Castille.”}\footnote{Thiébault, \textit{Relation de l’Éxpédition}, “Plan d’une nouvelle campagne en Portugal; Burgos, le 12 janvier 1810,” 332-44.} Thiébault claimed that in Paris, he had some difficulty in meeting either Berthier or Napoleon; both of them were caught up first in preparations and then the wedding itself. When he finally met Berthier, he was told,
“The Emperor wants you to return to Burgos.” Moreover, the Imperial Guard was being sent to Spain to suppress the insurrection. Thiébault argued that because of the insurgents’ unwillingness to risk all-out battles, it would take more than repeated minor defeats to end the insurgency. Berthier simply replied: “The Imperial Guard will take care of all these difficulties.”

Thiébault then returned to Burgos, arriving in mid-May. Masséna had already passed through on his way to take command of the Army of Portugal then besieging Ciudad Rodrigo. Exactly what was Thiébault’s status at this time? Thiébault maintained that when he returned to Burgos, he thought that he was returning as governor, and he elaborated the plans he had made to repair whatever damage Solignac’s period of command had inflicted on relations between the French and the Spanish population.

In Burgos, however, Thiébault found that a division of the Imperial Guard under Général de division Jean-Marie Dorsenne had just arrived. Thiébault immediately came into conflict with Dorsenne, who believed that terror and reprisal were the only ways to defeat the insurgents and pacify the country. Even if Thiébault had reassumed his position as governor, Dorsenne was an officer of the Imperial Guard and technically Thiébault’s superior, although Thiébault’s junior in date of rank.

As a result, Thiébault was unable to accomplish anything independently, and, given his disagreements with

58 Ibid., IV, 394-95.
59 Ibid., IV, 399-400n. Thiébault’s plan, an insightful model for counterinsurgency operations, contained three parts. The first was a propaganda/information campaign using a weekly journal and local officials to inform the citizenry of civic progress made under the French occupation and the damage done to their own welfare by the activities of the partidas. The second was the gradual creation of a Spanish national guard which would supplement, and in some cases, replace French regulars. The third was to request that the province of Soria in the Kingdom of Aragon, the primary stronghold and hideout of the insurgents, be added to his district; he also requested an additional infantry regiment and 200 cavalry to enable him to have strong mobile columns operating along the main routes of Old Castile and Soria.
60 “Each grade of the Guard was the equivalent of the next higher one of the line.” See Elting, Swords Around a Throne, 187. Although there was no higher military rank than général de division, this provision insured that Dorsenne was senior to Thiébault.
Dorsenne’s brutal handling of the occupation, he was neither asked nor did he volunteer to perform further duties.  

Instead, Thiébault turned his attention to another project that he had been contemplating for some time – the completion of a new staff manual to supplement and expand his earlier Manuel des Adjudans Généraux et des Adjoints employés dans les États-Major Divisionnaires de Armées that had first been published in 1801. Thiébault had been encouraged to do so by the translator of his first manual, Colonel Sir Rufane Donkin, Deputy Quartermaster-General of the British army in Portugal, while Donkin was a hostage at French headquarters during the negotiation of the Treaty of Cintra in August 1808. When Thiébault returned from Portugal, he found that his original manual was no longer in print, and that it needed considerable revision in light of the development of the army corps structure and new regulations introduced by Napoleon and Berthier. Thiébault’s official duties, however, had prevented him from undertaking the project until he “…was able to dedicate several weeks to the effort” beginning in Burgos in July and finishing in Salamanca in November 1810.

Masséna had been appointed to command the new Army of Portugal on 17 April 1810 while Thiébault was still in Paris. That army was to consist initially of three corps – the 2nd Corps under Général de division Jean-Louis Reynier, the 6th Corps under Marshal Ney, and the 8th Corps commanded by General Junot. Its mission was to conquer Portugal and drive the British from the Iberian Peninsula. Thiébault had met with Masséna several times while in Paris, and was aware that this appointment was

61 Thiébault wrote: “General Dorsenne not being more disposed to give me work than I was in a humor to do it for him, I had nothing requiring my attention for I was in truth governor in partibus (without jurisdiction).” See Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 410.

62 Thiébault, Manuel général du service des etats-major généraux et divisionnaires dans les armées (Paris, 1813), ix, 12-14. Although the first draft was completed in late 1810, the work was not published until 1813 when Thiébault finally returned to Paris, probably because of the death of his father, who had previously served as his literary agent.

63 Imperial Decree, 17 April 1810, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 16385, XX, 338.

64 Donald D. Howard, Napoleon and Iberia: The Twin Sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, 1810 (Gainesville, 1984), 50-53.
pending. Earlier that year Thiébault had prepared a new plan for a campaign in Portugal together with another study entitled “A Military Reconnaissance of the Frontier of Beira and an Examination of a Corps of 25,000 Men Which Would Attempt to Force Passage.”

On 15 April, Thiébault sent copies of the “Plan” and the “Reconnaissance” to Napoleon who apparently gave it considerable attention. Thiébault recalled:

I later learned from [Armand] Canouville, one of Berthier’s aides-de-camps, the plan was at once taken to the Emperor, who, after reading it twice asked to read it once more and did not return it.

Masséna’s staff was also aware of the material, as Thiébault had also sent a copy to him. General Pelet in his history of this Portuguese Campaign wrote:

General Thiébault sent us two good memorandums on Portugal. The presence of this distinguished general would have been very useful to our Army. A single conversation with him at that moment might have enlightened us on everything. However, we had been given a fatal quantity of itineraries, notes, inventories, and statements of every description which contradicted each other. ... In the end, I was obliged to compile an extract of the best accounts and attach it to a few ideas on a plan for the campaign in Portugal.

Throughout the summer of 1810, Thiébault apparently did little except continue work on his new treatise on staff operation. In September, however, he received a new assignment that would again make him an active participant in the war in Spain. On 2

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65 Thiébault to Napoléon, Lettre d’envoi et annexée Plan d’une novelle campagne en Portugal, 15 April 1810, Service historique, Reconnaissances (Portugal, 1801-1868), Carton M1 1357. The covering letter, manuscript copies of both the Plan and the Reconnaissance, and notes concerning them are included in a collection created by Général de division Jean Jacques Pelet in the 1830’s when he commanded the Depot de la Guerre at Château de Vincennes. Pelet himself also summarized Thiébault’s Plan and his Reconnaissance in another paper in this collection entitled “Extrait de divers Mémoires sur le Portugal” dated 1810 and prepared when he was a Chef de-bataillon and aide-de-camp to Masséna. The Plan and the Reconnaissance were also published in the 1817 edition of Thiébault’s Relation de l’Expédition du Portugal (Paris, 1817), 304-344.

66 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 410. Napoleon sent Chef d’escadron Armand Canouville (1785-1812), an aide-de-camp of Berthier, twice to Spain in 1810 to report on the situation of Masséna’s Army of Portugal. In Spain, Canouville, who was killed during the Russian campaign in 1812, would have had the opportunity to speak with Thiébault.

67 Jean-Jacques Pelet, The French Campaign in Portugal, 1810-1811, An account by Jean-Jacques Pelet, ed. and trans.by Donald D. Horward (Minneapolis, 1973), 135-36. Pelet’s extract is almost certainly the same as that found in the Archive de la Guerre and referred to above.
September 1810, Napoleon instructed Minister of War Clarke to organize a new corps, the 9th, in Burgos. The new corps was to be commanded by Général de division Jean-Baptist Drouet D’Erlon. In his initial orders, Napoleon stressed the urgency of the formation of this unit, since it was to operate as part of Masséna’s Army of Portugal to protect its supply lines and maintain communications with the French forces in Spain. The organization of the new corps progressed more slowly than Napoleon desired, and, on 28 September, Napoleon wrote three letters of instructions concerning the 9th Corps to Berthier, now Chief of Staff of the French Army of Spain. The first instructed Berthier to order Drouet to move the 9th Corps to Valladolid, and to ensure that he and all other commanders understood that Drouet was in overall military command of the areas of Spain through which Masséna’s communications passed – Biscay, Old Castile, and León. In the final letter, Napoleon wrote:

Tell General Drouet to take General Thiébault for chief of staff. That general, who knows Galicia and Portugal, can be most useful to him. Let General Thiébault know that I expect that he will support General Drouet in every way, and that I expect to have only praise for the services he will render me in this regard.

Berthier, the perfect staff officer, appended a handwritten note to Thiébault’s orders. It read: “The Emperor bids me tell you, General Thiébault, that on this occasion he counts upon your zeal in his service and you devotion to his person.”

Thiébault immediately accepted this assignment, both because it would give him the opportunity to again serve under Masséna and because, if Masséna left the command, the next senior general in the Army of Portugal was Junot, who could be counted on to

68 Napoleon to Clarke, 2 September 1810, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No.16183, XXI, 102. Marshal Jean-Baptist Drouet D’Erlon (1765-1844) is best known for his corps’s confused performance in the battles of Quatre Bras and Ligny (16 June 1815) prior to the Battle of Waterloo. Proscribed during the Restoration, he fled France but eventually was pardoned and returned to become governor of Algeria. Louis Philippe named him a Marshal of France in 1843.

69 Napoleon to Berthier, 28 September 1810, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 16961, XX, 179-81.

70 Napoleon to Berthier, 28 September 1810, Ibid., No. 16963, XX, 184.

71 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 420.
provide a certain amount of patronage. Indeed, it was possible that he had been acting as Drouet’s chief of staff for some time before the formal orders arrived from Paris, establishing the new corps.\textsuperscript{72}

The assignment of the 9\textsuperscript{th} Corps to oversee and protect all of Masséna’s communications lines, however, quickly bogged the still-disorganized corps down. Insurgency was again on the increase, and Kellermann simply did not have enough troops to protect the lines of communication. The 9\textsuperscript{th} Corps found itself fighting insurgents in Biscay at the very beginning of Masséna’s lines of communication.\textsuperscript{73} General Drouet had apparently listened to Thiébault’s ideas concerning the use of mobile columns and the creation of a local national guard for countering insurgence. Much of the insurgency was now concentrated near Miranda on the headwaters of the Ebro River on the road between Burgos and Vitoria. Drouet wrote:

I was able, through marches and countermarches, to eject Mina [the famous guerilla leader] from along the Ebre River, and free all communications with France. I formed in Vitoria a national guard which served together with the French detachments to furnish escorts for couriers.\textsuperscript{74}

The delay caused by the counterinsurgent operations in northern Spain, meanwhile, was at the expense of the rest of the Army of Portugal. After the fall of the Portuguese border fortress at Almeida at the end of August, the Army of Portugal had marched towards Lisbon, arriving before Wellington’s lines of Torres Vedras in early October. Pelet, writing of Masséna’s shortage of manpower in his account of the campaign, stated: “The twelve thousand men of the 9\textsuperscript{th} Corps, promised as reinforcements from the beginning, were kept in northern Spain at the very moment we

\textsuperscript{72} There are a number of letters from Kellermann addressed to Thiébault as Chief of Staff of the 9\textsuperscript{th} Corps, dated as early as 6 September 1810. Service historique, Correspondance administrative du général Kellermann, du 16 Mars 1809 au 18 Novembre 1810. Carton C\textsuperscript{243}.


\textsuperscript{74} Jean Drouet d’Erlon, Le maréchal Drouet, comte d’Erlon: vie militaire (Paris, 1844), 63.
began our march.”

Reinforcements from the 9th Corps were desperately needed for a successful assault on the Lines of Torres Vedras, and delays caused by Drouet’s efforts to subjugate the insurgents in the north gave Wellington additional time to improve his defenses while Masséna’s troops consumed more of his limited store of supplies. Yet, the insurgent efforts were so successful that Napoleon in Paris was obtaining his information on the location and state of the Army of Portugal from the English newspapers, and Masséna, in an attempt to communicate with Napoleon, was obliged to send back Général de brigade Maximilian Foy with an escort of 400 cavalrymen to Paris in late October. By early November, learning that the 9th Corps had not moved beyond Valladolid and still with no word from Masséna, Napoleon angrily ordered Drouet to move with at least part of his force into Portugal. Foy did not arrive in Paris until 22 November. Despite the preemptory orders from Paris, the leading elements of the 9th Corps, together with Général de brigade Charles-Mathieu Gardane's returning troops, did not make contact with Masséna’s forces until 26 December.

During this time, Thiébault had been engaged in organized, supplying, and training the new units of the 9th Corps. He described these efforts thus:

The 9th Corps had been scratched together rather than formed [and]...troops were collected on the march. Generals and administrative officers joined it as they could. Nothing had been done regarding the organization of the [support] service when it arrived in Burgos. Nevertheless, when it reached Salamanca, it was ready to march upon Ciudad Rodrigo, and afterwards take up a position between Santarem and Almeida. [before]…entering Portugal with bread and four days’ biscuit [sic]; and each division followed by a herd of cattle.

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75 Pelet, *Campaign in Portugal*, 147-48. As a result, Masséna was forced to leave troops under General Charles Gardane to garrison Salamanca and the fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida until the 9th Corps arrived.

76 Ibid., 260.

77 Ibid., 321.

Thiébault marched with the 9th Corps headquarters, reaching Salamanca on 6 November. As General Drouet and the Corps’ 1st Division were preparing to move to Ciudad Rodrigo and then Portugal, however, Thiébault fell ill with a stomach complaint, possibly acute diarrhea. Drouet therefore ordered him to remain in Salamanca to collect and send forward the 2nd Division, stragglers, and replacements both for the 9th Corps and for the remainder of the Army of Portugal. As Drouet’s command included all forces in the rear of the Army of Portugal, Thiébault, by virtue of his rank, also became military commander of the district of Salamanca, because he outranked the current governor, Général de brigade Jean-Victor Rouyer, who became commander of the city’s garrison.

Thiébault’s return to Spain was marked by several career milestones. He was promoted to général de division, a promotion long overdue in Thiébault’s mind. He completed his manual on the organization and operations of divisional and corps staffs. And Napoleon again recognized of his abilities as a military governor and staff office through repeated difficult assignments. Thiébault’s return was also marked, however, by the gradual disappearance of his old patrons – Masséna, Junot, and Savary – and the appearance of both old and new rivals, especially Marshal Soult and General Dorsenne.

In Spain, as before in his career, Thiébault’s pride and tactlessness once again overcame his good sense in dealing with his superiors. His pride made him unable to accept Napoleon’s belief that a truly loyal subordinate must also be personally indebted to the Emperor. His tactlessness led him to insist stubbornly on his precedence as the governor appointed by the Emperor when dealing with King Joseph and his subordinates. His strained relations with Solignac and Dorsenne, however justifiable in themselves, were also traits that further hindered his career.

On a more positive note, Thiébault developed his own theory of counter-insurgent warfare, based on his experiences in Italy, Germany, and now Spain. If apparently no more effective than the more brutal methods of other French commanders, Thiébault’s strategy to counter insurgency was at least far more humane and had more potential to

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win the inhabitants to his side. In Salamanca, he would have another opportunity to apply this strategy.
CHAPTER 14
SALAMANCA AND BURGOS, 1811 – 1812

Thiébault now performed two functions, as Chief of Staff of the 9th Corps and as acting governor of the Province of Salamanca. The province included not only the city of Salamanca but also the fortress town of Ciudad Rodrigo, under Général de brigade Jean-Baptiste Cacult; he had been detached from Junot’s 8th Corps when the city was captured by Masséna’s army in July 1810. However, until the arrival of the 9th Corps in November, Ciudad Rodrigo had been garrisoned by troops under General Claude-Matthieu Gardane, mostly dismounted dragoons from Ney’s 6th Corps.

The leading elements of the 9th Corps arrived in Salamanca on 6 November. Thiébault accompanied them since the chief of staff was responsible for arrangements for quartering the troops. After the advanced guard reached Ciudad Rodrigo, Gardane left there on 20 November with a convoy of supplies for Masséna but was driven back on Drouet’s advancing columns by a small force of Portuguese militiamen after an indecisive advance. His force then became the 9th Corps’ advance guard on its march to join the Army of Portugal. Drouet’s force finally joined Masséna’s on 26 December 1810.

Thiébault spent his early days in Salamanca recovering from stomach problems. General Kellermann, with whom Thiébault had been coordinating closely on matters of route security, finance, and supply for the 9th Corps and the Army of Portugal, was replaced as commander of the Army of the North by Marshal Jean-Baptist Bessières, duc d’Istrie. As general-in-chief of the Army of the North, Bessières assumed responsibility

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1 Thiébault mentions meeting General Foy, who was on his way to Paris and who had arrived in the province on 8 November, but not his own date of arrival. See Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 427.
2 Kellermann to Thiebault, 17 November 1810, Service historique, Correspondance du général Kellermann, du 19 septembre 1810 au 5 avril 1811, Carton C8242.
3 Bessières was appointed General in Chief of the Army of the North on 15 January 1811.
for the rear areas of the Army of Portugal, freeing Drouet’s 9th Corps to move into Portugal. This appointment made Bessières superior to the military governors of the six military regions of western Spain that ran from the French border to the Tagus River.\(^4\) One of Bessières’ first acts was to ask Thiébault to give up his position as Drouet’s chief of staff and remain as military governor in Salamanca. Kellermann transmitted Bessières’ offer:

I have just returned from Burgos where I had paid my respects to the duc d’Istrie. His Excellency gave me some dispatches for you which I hurry to pass on….The Marshal, not knowing of your presence in Salamanca, had sent me orders from Vitoria to take command up to the frontier of Portugal, but, having told him that you were in place and already commanding there, he decided to revoke that order.\(^5\)

Bessières offered to create a new governorate in Spain for Thiébault headquartered in Salamanca. It would be the Seventh and would consist of the provinces of Toro and Zamora from the old 6\(^{th}\) Governorate, and Salamanca, Ciudad Rodrigo, and Almeida – the southern portion of the Kingdom of León. Bessières then improved his offer by pointing out that Thiébault would “command the advance guard of the Army of the North.” Thiébault quickly accepted.\(^6\) The new governorate and Thiébault’s transfer and appointment were approved by Berthier on 12 February 1811.\(^7\)

Thiébault’s primary mission was to secure the passage of troops and supplies from Valladolid to Almeida, just across the Portuguese border. From Almeida, security became the responsibility of the Army of Portugal. The increase in Spanish guerilla

\(\) \(^4\) Thiébault, *Mémoires*, IV, 424-25. Bessières controlled the 3rd (Navarre), the 4th (Biscay), 5th (Old Castile), and the 6th (León), as well as the separate provinces of Asturias and Salamanca. See Berthier to Masséna, 16 January 1811, Napier, *History of the War in the Peninsula and the South of France* (New York, 1882), III, Appendix, 357-358. The other two -- the 1st (Aragon) and 2\(^{nd}\) (Catalonia) were under King Joseph’s Chief of Staff. Napoleon had created this arrangement during the summer of 1810, possibly to further his own ambitions to annex the northern provinces of Spain. See Charles Oman, *A History of the Peninsular Wars*, IV, 200-01, 460.

\(\) \(^5\) Kellermann to Thiébault, 12 February 1811, Service historique, Correspondance du général Kellermann, du 19 septembre 1810 au 5 avril 1811, Carton C\(^8\)242.


\(\) \(^7\) Berthier to Bessières, 12 February 1811. Service historique, Correspondance de Armée de Espagne, Carton C\(^8\)65.
activity that began in 1810 eventually created a serious problem for the French Army, both in manpower and overlapping jurisdictions. Initially, Thiébault’s only significant antagonist was the Spanish partisan band led by Don Julian Sanchez, a former Spanish non-commissioned officer.8

The role of the Spanish irregulars in this area, and specifically of Don Julian Sanchez, grew out of the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo and the shifting control of the region around Salamanca. The city of Salamanca had changed hands several times. During Junot’s first invasion of Portugal (1807-1808), the Spanish were initially allies of the French. With the beginning of the Spanish War of Independence in the summer of 1808, the Spanish immediately reasserted their control over Ciudad Rodrigo as part of the campaign to isolate the Army of Portugal. British General Sir John Moore and Marshal Ney had successively occupied Salamanca during the La Coruña campaign (October 1808 – January 1809), but Ciudad Rodrigo, the border fortress, remained in Spanish hands under the command of Lieutenant General Andrés Pérez de Herrasti. Ney, who had occupied Salamanca in pursuit of Moore, later established his headquarters there.

The French siege of Ciudad Rodrigo lasted almost six weeks, until 10 July 1810. General Herrasti surrendered to Ney only after the city walls had been breached and the French infantry were forming for a final assault.9 In the morning darkness of 23 June

8 Most of the detailed biographic information about Don Julian Sanchez is taken from Emilio Becerra de Becerra, Las Hazañas de unos Lanceros. (Salamanca, 1999), 20-21. According to Becerra, Julian Sanchez was the son of a small farmer from the village of Muñoz near Salamanca. In 1793 at the age of 19, he enlisted in the Mallorca Infantry Regiment that was sent in September to reinforce Spain’s British allies in their defense of Toulon against the revolutionary army of France. When the British withdrew, Sanchez returned to Spain, and served against the French, the British, and the Portuguese as alliances shifted. He left the army and went to work near Salamanca. In 1807, however, he rejoined the army as an irregular lancer with a volunteer unit in Ciudad Rodrigo. Due to his previous military experience, he rose rapidly, being promoted to corporal five days after he enlisted and to second lieutenant by February 1808. A footnote in Pelet’s Campaign in Portugal adds: “Don Julian Sanchez was the son of a wealthy landowner from San Martino del Rio....He waged a private war against the French to avenge the honor of his family; his sister was raped and his father’s house pillaged by French soldiers.” See Pelet, Campaign in Portugal, 75n.

9 For a detailed description of the French siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, see Horward’s Napoleon and Iberia.
Figure 21. Central Spain. (Map by R. Godfrey-Sigler.)
before the city had been fully invested, however, Herrasti’s mounted force – between 100 and 200 lancers under the command of now-Lieutenant Colonel Julian Sanchez – slipped out of the city across a ford over the Agueda River; they overran the French outpost guarding the ford, and escaped.\textsuperscript{10}

With the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, Don Julian was promoted to full colonel and given command of all partisan forces between the Tagus and the Duero Rivers. This area was essentially identical to that of Thiébault’s new Seventh Military Governorate. Don Julian’s own force grew until he had under his command 700 horsemen, about 1,000 foot soldiers and two light, 4-pound artillery pieces.\textsuperscript{11} In the latter half of 1810 and early 1811, this was the only Spanish force located between the Tormas and the Agueda Rivers. With this force, Sanchez roamed the area between Ciudad Rodrigo and Salamanca, a distance of about 90 miles – mostly a wide plain broken by a range of hills and three substantial streams. As his force grew, the French garrison at Ciudad Rodrigo, which was under Thiébault’s jurisdiction, became progressively more isolated.\textsuperscript{12}

One of Thiébault’s first direct confrontations with Don Julian resulted from the presence of Madame Junot, the Duchess of Abrantés, in the theater of operations. She had accompanied her husband as far as Ciudad Rodrigo, but remained there when the Army of Portugal invaded Portugal. At Ciudad Rodrigo, she gave birth to a son (whom she nicknamed Rodrigo); as conditions in Ciudad Rodrigo under the semi-blockade imposed by Don Julian’s guerillas grew worse, she decided to move to Salamanca. Thiébault received word of her intentions and the intelligence that Don Julian was aware of her planned movement. Sanchez intended to ambush the Duchess’ escort near the

\textsuperscript{10} There is some disagreement as to how many troops escaped from Ciudad Rodrigo with Sanchez. His Spanish biographer says 260. Wellington variously gave the number as 190 and 95. See Howard in \textit{Napoleon in Iberia}, 345, note 27. Marbot gives the figure as 200. See Jean Marbot, \textit{The Memoirs of Baron de Marbot} (London, 1892), II, 82.

\textsuperscript{11} “Biografías Julián Sánchez "El Charro,”” Asociación Histórico Cultural Salamanca 1812 (March 30, 2003).

\textsuperscript{12} Sanchez is repeatedly the subject of correspondence between Kellermann and Thiébault in late 1810. See Service historique, Correspondance du général Kellermann du 19 septembre 1810 au 5 avril 1811, Carton C\textsuperscript{8}242.
village of Matilla, about halfway between Ciudad Rodrigo and Salamanca. Thiébault led two battalions of infantry and two squadrons of cavalry to meet the lady and escort her safely to Salamanca, where she insisted on remaining. 13 Concerning her residence in Salamanca and Don Julian, she later wrote:

I was, for a long time, a close neighbor of Don Julian and shared in the terror that his men inspired; terror which was based on terrifying accounts. .... I would not be able to praise him [at all] if he had been able to execute his project to capture me and to sacrifice many of my escort. 14

The shortage of French manpower to confront the guerrilla activity was compounded both by the lack of central control and by the friction among King Joseph, the generals commanding the territorial armies such as the Army of the North, and those of the field armies, such as Masséna and later Marmot of the Army of Portugal. Replacement battalions marching from their depots in France to join their regiments in the field would often be intercepted by local commanders, who would keep them in their own garrisons claiming that the route was unsafe, even for battalion-size groups. 15 There was sometimes truth in this – Don Julian on several occasions defeated battalion-size forces – but often the military governors simply wanted or needed the additional troops for their own counter-insurgency sweeps and for local escort duties.

Thiébault was not immune to this temptation. In July 1811, he convinced Bessières to place a replacement battalion that was marching to join Masséna, commanded by Col. Emmanuel-Frédéric Sprünglin, under his command. Sprünglin later wrote:

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13 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 431-33. In her Mémoires first published in 1836, Mme. Junot dramatically recounts the march from Ciudad Rodrigo towards Salamanca with her small escort and the meeting with Thiébault in the Forest of Matillia. She then quotes three paragraphs from Thiébault’s “notes” concerning the incident. See Laure Junot, Mémoires de Madame la Duchesse d’Abrantes (Paris, 1893), VIII, 195-99.

14 Mme. Junot, Mémoires de Mme. Junot, VIII, 386. She states in a footnote, however: “I afterwards learned that I was indebted for the courtesy to the Duke of Wellington, who told him: ‘Listen, we do not make war on women.’ I was then only the object of a great reconnaissance of Don Julian.” Ibid., 336n.

I was ordered to take my battalion to Salamanca and to remain for some time under the orders of the governor of the province, Général de division Thiébault, governor of the province who absolutely lacked infantry and was menaced daily by the guerillas of D. Julian Sanchez. ... I remained in Salamanca nearly two months under the orders of General Thiébault. My battalion was camped in the surrounding villages where it was employed primarily in overseeing the collection of grain for the magazines. I was very bored... [Je m’y ennuyais beaucoup.]

Col. Sprünglin and his command eventually escaped Thiébault’s clutches, but through the winter of 1810-1811, Thiébault collected, by his own account, some 18,000 infantry and 1,700 cavalry, including replacements for Masséna, to oppose an estimated 6,000 or 7,000 partisans under Don Julian. With this force, in January 1811, he set a trap for Don Julian. While pretending none but the most routine activity, he quietly reinforced the garrisons of Ledesma and Alba de Tormes, a small town on the plain between Salamanca and Ciudad Rodrigo. He sent a column of 4,000 reinforcements towards Ciudad Rodrigo, halting it overnight at the village of Matilla, halfway to Rodrigo. Then, at a prearranged time, the force at Matilla split into four columns, and a total of ten other 1,000 man columns emerged from Ledesma, Alba de Tormes, and Salamanca. Two of these columns closed all the crossing points east and west of Salamanca along the Tormes River while the others swept through the hilly, wooded country south of the Tormes River. Two of Don Julian’s detachments were caught in villages and destroyed. Others were forced out of their wooded hideouts onto the plains, where Thiébault’s cavalry could cut them down. According to Thiébault, nearly 2,000 partisans surrendered and another 1,200 were killed or wounded, cutting Don Julian’s force by half. Having sufficient troops at least briefly, Thiébault was able to carry out

17 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 448. Thiébault’s numbers seem excessive, both for his own and Don Julian’s forces. General Foy passed through Salamanca a month or so later and picked up the troops designated for the Army of Portugal. When he reached the Army outside the Lines of Torres Vedras in February 1811, he had with him just under 2,000 replacements. See Pelet, Campaign in Portugal, 376n.
18 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 448-50.
the kind of successful anti-partisan sweep that eluded most French commanders due to their manpower shortages. 19

Thiébault attempted to follow up his success against Don Julian by opening negotiations to encourage him to defect. Thiébault first established contact through an intermediary. When the response to this indirect approach was favorable, the Prefect of Salamanca, Don Antonio Casaseca, an Afrancesado, 20 took up the negotiations. The negotiations with Sanchez progressed to the point that Thiébault had put forth an offer of the rank of général de brigade, command of a regular force of 6,000 Spanish troops composed of Sanchez’s own former partisans in French pay, and a French decoration. 21 Negotiations appeared fruitful, but several weeks elapsed while Don Julian discussed the proposal with his senior officers. Finally:

The terms of the proposal were drawn up, and we had only three days to wait for a meeting of all who were to sign it ... when the news arrived that the Army of Portugal was falling back on Salamanca in full retreat ....This news marked the end of all my dreams. 22

Thiébault had been conducting these negotiations as his own project. His intention had been to pit Spanish against Spanish, and thereby win a moral and

19 The manpower problem was a two-edged sword for the French. Although there never seemed to be enough troops to adequately control the partisans, the troops allocated to this duty were at the expense of the field armies. The British historian Charles Oman noted that by the summer of 1810, the partisans were responsible for tying up three armies (the Armies of the North, Catalonia, and the South) totaling 38,000 men who could have been more usefully employed by Masséna in his confrontation with Wellington in Portugal. Oman further noted that the partisans were tying down nearly twice their own number. He suggests that they never numbered more than 20,000 and seldom were more than half of them operational at one time. See Oman, History of the Peninsular Wars, III, 490-91.

20 A Spaniard who was collaborating with the French. Most were from the urban lower-bourgeoisie who admired the principles of the French Revolution and Napoleon’s legal reforms. Others were simply opportunists.

21 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 450-53. Thiébault does not state exact dates, but it must have been in early 1811, as he noted that General Foy passed through Salamanca on his return to join Masséna during the negotiations, and Foy reported to Masséna in Portugal in February, 1811.

22 Ibid., IV, 452-53. News of Masséna’s withdrawal that began on 3 March probably reached Salamanca the middle of that month.
psychological victory. In the interests of secrecy, he had negotiated without receiving approval from any higher headquarters. He later wrote: “I told only the Duchess d’Abrantes in Salamanca, and ... later, I reported it to the duc d’Istrie.”

By 12 April, Masséna had established the headquarters of the Army of Portugal at Salamanca; he worked feverishly to refit his battered divisions while the units rested and absorbed such replacements as were available. He had left behind a garrison in the Portuguese fortress of Almeida, but the fortress, together with Ciudad Rodrigo, was again isolated by Don Julian’s guerrillas. Masséna had provisioned Almeida for six weeks as he fell back, and in early May he moved forward to relieve the town. Wellington’s Allied Army slowly followed Masséna. Leaving one division to screen Almeida, Wellington took up defensive positions a few miles south of Almeida at the village of Fuentes de Oñoro. As Masséna moved forward, he broke Don Julian’s blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo, and Don Julian fell back to join the main Allied army. For the first time in nearly a year, Don Julian’s lancers, now formally designated a two-regiment brigade with Sanchez as general of brigade, fought as part of a regular force during the action at Fuentes de Oñoro on 4 and 5 May 1811.

Don Julian and his troops were problematic not just as enemies, but as allies. One of the British officers described Don Julian and his partisans thusly:

A more verminous set of fellows you never beheld. The infantry in English clothing and the cavalry, both horse and man, completely armed and equipped in the spoils of the enemy, so it is next to impossible to distinguish friend from foe. The Don himself wears a pelisse like the 16th Dragoons with an immense hussar cap and the Eagle of Napoleon reversed. In this dress, [he is] accompanied by

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23 Ibid., IV, 453. Sanchez’s own day-by-day account of his unit’s actions reports very heavy fighting between 2 and 4 February 1811, followed by a general withdrawal. There are no entries between 24 February and 1 April. Sanchez’s account, dated 30 April 1816 appears in Appendix 2 of Becerra, Hazañas, 156-60. There is, of course, no mention of negotiations with the French.

24 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 454. Thiébault apparently waited until somewhat later to report to the duc d’Istrie, who did not receive a report on the matter until early June, just before Bessières’ departure for France. See Thiébault to Bessières, 5 Juin 1811, Service historique, Correspondance de Armée de Espagne, Carton C873.
two aides-de-camp generally genteel in appearance, twelve lancers, a trumpeter on a grey horse.  

Like their appearance, Don Julian’s troopers’ performance was more partisan-like than soldierly. On the 4th, Don Julian’s brigade remained in reserve. On the night of 4-5 May, Wellington ordered it forward to watch the extreme right of his line. To support Don Julian, he sent forward two squadrons of the British 14th Light Dragoons. The officer commanding these British supports described what happened:

Just at daybreak, I requested Don Julian to show me where his pickets were placed. He pointed out to me what he said was one of them, but I observed to him that in the dusk of morning, it looked too large for a picket. The sun was rising rapidly dispelled the fog and the illusion at the same time, for Don Julian’s picket proved to be a whole French regiment dismounted. They now mounted immediately and advanced against us.

The partisan pickets had simply quietly melted away at first sight of two regiments of French General Louis Montbrun’s dragoons. However, despite Montbrun’s success in turning the British right, the battle ended with a French defeat, and Masséna withdrew again to Salamanca. The French garrison in Almeida evaded the British division posted to contain them and followed Masséna. Don Julian, now nominally under the command of General Carlos de España, Commander of the 1st Division of the Spanish Army of Estremadura, resumed the blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo with the support of Wellington’s Light Division on the south bank of the Agueda.

On 10 May, Masséna received word that he was replaced as commander of the Armée du Portugal by Marshal Auguste Frédéric Marmont, the duc de Ragusa. Shortly thereafter, Wellington moved much of his force south to support Marshal Beresford’s Portuguese forces besieging the fortress of Badajoz, which guarded the southern route from Portugal to Spain. In response, Marmont marched the Army of Portugal south to

26 “Diary of Captain Botherton” in Henry Hamilton, History of the 14th (Kings) Hussars (London, 1901), 86.
27 Oman, History of the Peninsular Wars, IV, 358. Napoleon had decided to replace Masséna as early as 27 April. See Napoleon to Berthier, 27 April 1811, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 17660, XXII, 136.
support Soult’s forces defending the southern reaches of Estremadura, one of the rare instances of cooperation between the French marshals not imposed by Napoleon himself.

Although Ciudad Rodrigo remained under blockade by Don Sanchez and the British Light Division, some contact was possible, and with a sufficiently strong escort, couriers and supplies could move between Salamanca and the fortress. Thiébault wrote:

Don Julian, who had established himself afresh between the Agueda and the Tormes, interfered with our smallest consignments, all the more actively because of his need to get his negotiations with me forgotten. He was supervised by the Marquis de España, whom the Cadiz Junta, not thoroughly trusting Don Julian and not wishing to leave to leave him to himself, had sent to command in the Estremadura.²⁸

Thiébault, in the meantime, turned his attention to winning “the hearts and minds” of the Spanish in Salamanca. In late April, shortly before the Battle of Fuentes de Oñoro, Thiébault had introduced Bessières to the provost and rector of the University of Salamanca and had obtained from Bessières a promise to intercede with King Joseph’s government to provide support for the University. Bessières agreed, and a university committee was formed which drew up a set of recommendations that were forwarded to Bessières and the King.²⁹ Thiébault later spelled out his reasons: “My object was to produce a moral effect on the inhabitants and to win partisans to my side who would take an interest in the preservation of order and the maintenance of my authority.”³⁰ Although the memorandum was completed and presented to the Marshal, who forwarded it to Madrid, Bessières was replaced as commander of the Army of the North, and Salamanca was turned over to the Army of Portugal. These changes in the French administration – and the decline of French fortunes in Spain – prevented full implementation of the plan. Some of the recommendations, nevertheless, were carried out under Marshal Marmont after the Army of Portugal took responsibility for Salamanca.³¹ For these efforts, on 8 November 1811, the University of Salamanca awarded Thiébault an honorary doctorate.

²⁸ Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 492.
²⁹ See Florencio Amador, La Universidad de Salamanca en la Guerra de la Independencia (Salamanca, 1915), 65-68, for the University’s plan.
³⁰ Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 481.
³¹ Amador, La Universidad de Salamanca, 90ff.
although not without dissent from some members of the University Senate.\textsuperscript{32} The university did not award this honor again until the following year when an honorary doctorate was awarded to the Duke of Wellington.

In attempting to win the loyalty of the Spaniards, Thiébault tried to reduce the exactions and requisitions under which the citizens labored and to improve the criminal justice system. Imitating Napoleon’s plans for Paris, he ordered the streets cleaned, ensured that they were lit at night, numbered the houses, put up signs with the names of the streets and squares, and created a new cemetery to prevent further burials in the churches.\textsuperscript{33}

In 1801, Thiébault had been a brigade commander in the \textit{Corps d’observation de Gironde}, a gesture of support from First Consul Bonaparte to the Spanish in their conflict with the Portuguese that year. At that time, while his brigade was stationed in Salamanca, Thiébault had met Don Antonio Tavira Almazán, the local bishop. Bishop Tavira had complained that the area between the Bishop’s palace and the cathedral was owned by a particularly disreputable band of monks over whom he had no control, and they had filled the area with cheap rental housing. The situation was the same ten years later when Thiébault returned as governor.\textsuperscript{34} As part of his civic improvement campaign, and to win the support of community leaders, Thiébault managed in the summer of 1811 to get the houses condemned on the grounds of sanitation, demolished them, and had a plaza built in their place.\textsuperscript{35} The grateful citizens named the new plaza “Plaza de Thiébault” in gratitude. The next year, however, the name was changed to \textit{Plaza del Collegio Viejo}.

\textsuperscript{32} “Claustro Pleno de 8 de Noviembre de 1811,” Ibid., 110-114.

\textsuperscript{33} Ricardo Robledo, \textit{Salamanca, Ciudad de Paso, Ciudad Ocupada} (Salamanca, 2003), 73-74.

\textsuperscript{34} Antonio Tavira Almazán (1737-1807) was bishop of Salamanca 1798-1807. In 1811, his successor was Gerardo José Andrés Váquez Parga, O.Cist. (1747-1821). Bishop Váquez fled from Salamanca in 1809 during the initial French occupation and went to Galicia where he preached a crusade against the French. See Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, IV, 427, 493-96.

\textsuperscript{35} Entries for 14 March and 10 June 1811 in the diary of Joaquín Zaonero. See Joaquín Zaonero, \textit{Libro de Noticias de Salamanca} (Salamanca, 1998), 76, 79.
Despite Thiébault’s efforts in the town, Don Julian still controlled the countryside. The commander at Ciudad Rodrigo was Général de brigade Hilaire-Benoit Reynaud, who had replaced General Cacult. In June, 1811, Reynaud sent one of his aides with an escort of between three and four hundred cavalrymen with a message to Thiébault asking for various items for the garrison. The size of the escort gives some indication of the strength of Don Julian’s blockade. When the column tried to return to Ciudad Rodrigo, Don Julian ambushed it. Forced to retreat to Salamanca, the column lost the supplies they were taking, as well as several prisoners and a number of dead and wounded.

Figure 22. Plaza de Thiébault, Salamanca. (Courtesy Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.)
Thiébault claimed that he sent a large relief column to rescue the force, but there is no mention of such relief in Sanchez’s account, and it is discounted by other scholars.\(^{36}\)

By September 1811, it was necessary to resupply Ciudad Rodrigo. Based on Don Julian’s raiding operations and captured dispatches, Wellington had abandoned the siege of Badajoz in July and moved the main body of his army north to again threaten the city: Wellington wrote:

Don Julian had been so successful in the blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo, that up to that moment [July 1811] the enemy had not been able to keep open any communications with the place or to supply it at all with provisions.

A return of the supplies in the place, when it was left by Marmont in the beginning of June, had likewise been intercepted, from which it appeared that the provisions would be exhausted by the 20\(^{th}\) of August. It was therefore determined to send the army across the Tagus immediately, and to blockade Ciudad Rodrigo...\(^{37}\)

Wellington did not institute a formal siege but rather a blockade, with the Allied forces located west and south of Ciudad Rodrigo and Don Julian’s patrolling the northern and eastern approaches. General Dorsenne, now commanding the Army of the North in place of Bessières, and Marshal Marmont, who marched the Army of Portugal north to stay between Wellington and Madrid, decided that it would take their combined armies to break the blockade and resupply the city. General Dorsenne ordered Thiébault and all his available garrison troops to join the Army of the North in the field as the Army’s 1\(^{st}\) Division.

As the armies gathered, Don Julian’s ability to intercept couriers presented Wellington with a new problem and a new opportunity. In August and early September, Don Julian’s partisans sent a number of captured messages. This time, the messages were encoded in a cipher that had not been encountered earlier. Wellington turned the problem over to Major George Scovell, his Chief of Guides and superintendent of the

\(^{36}\)Thiébault, *Mémoires*, IV, 499. Thiébault placed the column from Ciudad Rodrigo at 400 men and the French relieving force at 1,200. Sanchez’s account of the action stated that the column returning to Ciudad Rodrigo was 400 French troopers; his own force was 300 infantry 200 cavalry, and two guns. See Becerra, *Hazañas de unos Lanceros* (Salamanca, 1999), 99.

\(^{37}\)See *Wellington’s Dispatches*, VIII, 514.
army’s communications. Scovell, an officer from the British middle class and a graduate of the new Royal Military College at Wycombe, had been struggling to gain the recognition of the aristocratic Wellington. With the help of the messages captured by Don Julian’s partisans and his own talents for code-breaking, Scovell finally found his niche. Working with several of the captured messages, he finally discovered the key. On 18 September, Wellington wrote to the secretary of war in London:

I enclose the deciphered copy of a letter in cipher from General Montburn to the Governor of Ciudad Rodrigo, from which it appears that it is the enemy’s intention to endeavor to introduce large supplies of provisions into that place from the side of Plaseneia, as well as that of Salamanca. The date being all in cipher, and not having been able to discover that part of the key, we do not know exactly on what day the operation is to commence, but I should imagine about the 20th or 21st.  

The operation did indeed begin on 21 September. Wellington, knowing from another intercepted dispatch that he was outnumbered by the combined French armies, fell back from Ciudad Rodrigo, permitting the resupply of the city.  

The French, however, did not take advantage of their numerical superiority. Marmont and Dorsenne followed Wellington only hesitantly, sending two brigades of cavalry and Thiébault’s division, the smallest in either army with only 4,000 men, forward on a reconnaissance. The cavalry discovered the British 3rd Division badly scattered and unprepared in the area of El Boden on 25 September. A brisk cavalry action broke out until Thiébault brought up his division, and the British withdrew. Two regiments of the 3rd Division were cut off and the others roughly handled. The British Light Division posted on the north side of

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38 Wellington to Earl of Liverpool, 18 September 1811, Wellington's Dispatches, VIII, 290. These captured messages were in the Petite Chiffre (Little Code) in use by the French field armies in Spain at that time. This early experience, however, and Don Julian’s continued ability to intercept French communications, eventually enabled Scoville to break the French Grand Chiffre (Great Code) and to make an extremely valuable contribution to the Battle of Salamanca (22 July 1812) the following year and throughout the rest of Wellington’s campaign in Spain. See Oman, History of the Peninsular Wars, V, Appendix XV, 611-14, and Mark Urban’s The Man Who Broke Napoleon’s Codes (New York, 2001) for a fuller discussion.

39 “It was also discovered from an intercepted return of the Army of the North that they were much stronger than they had been supposed in July, when the plan was determined to make the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo.” See Wellington's Dispatches, VIII, 514.
the Agueda Rive was also isolated. The isolated regiments of the 3rd Division crossed to the right bank of the Agueda and, followed by the Light Division passed around the French army to rejoin Wellington’s main force several days later.

That night, 25-26 September, with Thiébault’s division in the lead, the French armies closed up on the British drawn up in line. Thiébault was prepared to resume the attack at daybreak. Instead, Marmont and Dorsenne arrived at 9:00 a.m. to inspect the English position. Marmont, possibly intimidated by Wellington’s reputation for fighting effective defensive battles, elected not to attack, and, that night, set the combined French armies in motion to the rear. Thiébault’s division, once the “advance guard of the Army of the North,” was to form the rear guard, departing at 1:00 a.m. on the 27th.

That night, Thiébault observed that the fires of the British camp were dying out prematurely; he sent a company of voligeurs to investigate. The company commander returned within an hour to inform Thiébault that the British had abandoned the camp. Thiébault immediately informed his superiors. At first light, having received orders from Dorsenne to pursue and hearing that the French army was turning around, he started after the British. Thiébault caught up with the British rear guard at the village of Aldea de Pont and drove them out of the village. He was attacked in turn by troops of the British 4th and 5th Divisions, and a back and forth struggle over the village ensued. Thiébault’s division, now reinforced by that of Général de division Joseph Souham, held the village as dusk fell, and they waited for the rest of the army to come up. Instead, Thiébault received the news that Marmont had again ordered the pursuit to be broken off and the army to withdraw to Ciudad Rodrigo.40

The opportunity for a superior French force to catch Wellington’s Anglo-Portuguese Army on the road while short two divisions was lost. The French armies

40 This description of the actions at El Bodon and Aldea de Ponte was compiled from Dorsenne to Berthier, 30 September 1811, Service historique “Correspondance de Armée de Espagne” Carton C82; Marmot to Berthier, 30 September 1811, Wellington’s Dispatches, V, 783; and Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 507-529. Dorsenne’s report gave credit to Thiébault for his actions at both El Bodon and Aldea de Ponte. Marmont failed to mention him, giving credit to Souham’s division and the cavalry brigade of the Army of Portugal, although both were temporarily under Thiebault’s orders, since Souham was absent.
returned to their respective cantonments. Wellington withdrew further into Portugal, establishing his headquarters at Freneda just over the Portuguese border. Don Julian, who had been operating in the French rear, returned to reestablish the blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo.

The September resupply of Ciudad Rodrigo would have been more adequate but for the fact that the combined armies of the North and Portugal totaling some 56,000 men had then skirmished for over a week in the area, heavily drawing down the rations available to the fortress. On 15 October, Don Julian scored a major success when he captured General Reynaud, the governor of Ciudad Rodrigo. The governor had left the city for some exercise and to inspect the garrison's cattle herd grazing across the river from the town. A group of Don Julian’s guerillas was hiding nearby with the intention of seizing some French cattle. Deciding that the odds were right, the guerillas overwhelmed the General’s small escort and rode off with the General, two of his escort, and several head of cattle.

By the end of October, the shortage of rations at Ciudad Rodrigo and the loss of the garrison commander to Don Julian convinced Thiébault that another resupply mission was necessary. Thiébault appealed to General Dorsenne for assistance, but the General, while ordering Thiébault to resupply the fortress, was unwilling to provide any additional troops. Although Wellington had withdrawn most of his troops into quarters around Freneda, he had left the Light Division within striking distance of Ciudad Rodrigo to support Don Julian if any resupply attempt was made.

Thiébault knew that the 3,500 field troops available to him would be unable to force their way through to Rodrigo against any determined opposition. Understanding

41 Thiébault stated that 200,000 rations (1 ration = 1 soldier/1 day) were consumed by the armies from the provisions supplied to the fortress. See Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 529. If the troops had originally marched with the four days rations (56,000 x 4 = 224,000) that would be required to go and come back from Salamanca, and they were in action around Ciudad Rodrigo 8 days (8 x 56,000 = 448,000), that figure does not seem unreasonable. The garrison of Ciudad Rodrigo was approximately 2,000 men, so the rations consumed by the combined armies in four days would have kept the garrison for at least three months.

42 Dorsenne to Berthier, 21 October 1811, Wellington’s Dispatches, V, 783, and Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 534.
that preparations for such an activity would quickly become known to Spanish spies, Thébault put out the story that Salamanca was required to support the deployment of a division of 12,000 men from the Army of Portugal to Fades de la Sierra (a small village about fifteen miles south of Salamanca and not on the road to Rodrigo). After gathering the supplies and dragooning *Général de brigade* Jean-Leonard Barrié, an officer enroute to the Army of Portugal, to be the new garrison commander, he then closed the gates of Salamanca for 48 hours. When everything was ready, he led the oxen-drawn supply carts together with General Barrié and what escort he could gather on an 18-hour forced march to Rodrigo. The column arrived unmolested, the troops unloaded the carts, Thébault installed the new garrison commander, and they started back. On arriving in Salamanca the column had been only slightly harassed by Don Julian’s pickets looking for the missing convoy.  

Thébault’s success rested partially on timing, determination, luck, and his decision to close the city gates for two days. Both sides had spies, but the primary British agent in Salamanca was the Rector of the Irish College of the University of Salamanca, Father Patricio Cortes, who also held the Chair of Natural History and Astronomy at the University. The 72-year old Father Cortes, or Patrick Curtis, communicated by sending letters out of the city using innocent-seeming couriers, who passed the letters to Don Julian’s outposts who in turn quickly carried them to Wellington’s headquarters. By closing the city, Thébault had prevented any message from getting out.

The “secret war” worked both ways, and Thébault had his own network of agents which extended as far as Wellington’s headquarters across the border in Portugal. In late fall, these agents began reporting that Wellington’s troops were obviously preparing for a

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43 Ibid., IV, 530-48.  
44 After the capture of Salamanca in July, 1812, Wellington called on Father Curtis to thank him personally. Therefore, when the French briefly returned in 1813, Father Curtis was forced to flee to the British lines for protection. Father Curtis eventually returned to Ireland, where he became Archbishop of Armagh and primate of all Ireland, before dying of cholera at the age of ninety-two. See “Biografías Patrick Curtis. Asociación Histórico Cultural Salamanca 1812 (March 30, 2003) and Urban, *Napoleon’s Codes*, 123, 204.
siege, stockpiling fascines and gabions\textsuperscript{45} in large quantities. Thiébault reported this to his superior, General Dorsenne, who refused to take them seriously. On 5 January 1812, Dorsenne wrote to Marshal Marmot:

\begin{quote}
I have the honor to address to Your Excellency two original letters dated the 1st and 5\textsuperscript{th} instant from General Thiébault, governor of Salamanca. Although I have little faith in their content, because I have been seeing similar reports for six months, I believe it would be useful to send them to you...If Julian Sanchez has tried to cut our communications with that place [Ciudad Rodrigo] I can only attribute it to your movements on Valencia.\textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

The enclosed letters from Thiébault reported the buildup of engineering supplies, bridging equipment, and large quantities of foodstuffs and beef at Wellington’s camps. After summarizing his information in his letter of 1 January, he stated: “I believe that an attack on Rodrigo is going to begin, and all these reports leave no doubt of that.”\textsuperscript{47}

The same day that Thiébault wrote this letter to Dorsenne, Wellington issued a memorandum to his staff that began:

\begin{quote}
1. The cars [carts] ... now employed in collecting at Las Agallas the fascines, gabions, and pickets...and all the cars at the cantonments ... to rendezvous at Las Gallas on the 5\textsuperscript{th} to be loaded with gabions and fascines and pickets on the same day and to move on the following morning to Ciudad Rodrigo.\textsuperscript{48}
\end{quote}

On the 8 January, the Allied Army invested Ciudad Rodrigo. So tight was Don Julian’s control of the roads between Rodrigo and Salamanca that General Barrié was only able to get the news that he was being attacked to Thiébault by using a disguised Spanish courier who carried the note by a circuitous route. Thiébault did not receive the note until 13 January; Marmont and Dorsenne got the news on the 14\textsuperscript{th} and began to call the troops out of their cantonments. Ciudad Rodrigo fell to the Allies on 19 January, even before Marmont arrived in Salamanca with three divisions on 21 January. The fall

\textsuperscript{45} Fascines were bundles of branches a foot thick and as much as ten feet long used to quickly build field fortifications. Gabions were hollow bottomless baskets 3 or 4 feet high and 2 or 3 feet in diameter. Set up and filled with earth they were used in the construction of earthworks during sieges.


\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., IV, 280

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Wellington's Dispatches}, VIII, 521.
of this important border fortress marked an important turning point of the Peninsular War. From that point forward, the French would nearly always be on the defensive.

Shortly before the British attack on Ciudad Rodrigo, orders arrived from Paris transferring the 6th and 7th Governorate from Dorsenne’s Army of the North to Marmont’s Army of Portugal, and Thiébault afterwards attributed the loss of Ciudad Rodrigo in part to the failure of General Dorsenne and Marshal Marmont to cooperate.\(^49\)

Napoleon had already begun to strip the Army of the North of troops, especially those of Dorsenne’s Imperial Guard, to support his forthcoming campaign in Russia. This campaign was probably also the reason behind the reduction in the area of responsibility of the Army of the North. However, by converting the Army of Portugal from a field force to a territorial command, it set up a further competition between the two generals.

When Marmont arrived in Salamanca on 21 January, Thiébault, now aware of the loss of Ciudad Rodrigo and the change in command structure, told the Marshal that since he was assigned to the Army of the North, he would be leaving to report to the Army’s new headquarters in Vitoria. It was unclear to what extent this decision was based on a mutual dislike between the two men – Marmont had neglected to give Thiébault any credit for his actions at El Bodon and Aldea de Ponte, and later wrote very disparagingly of Thiébault’s performance.\(^50\) Thiébault later claimed that despite the knowledge that he would have to give up an important governorship, he made the decision for personal reasons. He wrote that his wife Zozotte had received an anonymous letter accusing him of having a Spanish mistress in Salamanca, and that he made the decision to leave in order to reassure her.\(^51\)

Thiébault reported to Dorsenne in Valladolid in late January 1812. Dorsenne then used Thiébault's skills to organize the march of the Army of the North back to Burgos

\(^{49}\) Thiébault, *Mémoires*, IV, 554.


\(^{51}\) Thiébault, *Mémoires*, IV, 556. There was no evidence of a mistress in Salamanca, but Thiébault’s son, Adolphe, later accused his father of having a Spanish mistress in Burgos. See A. Thiébault, "Histoire de Lady Mary," Beinecke Library, Hamilton Papers, 156. It is possible that Thiébault’s daughter, Claire, who was responsible for the ultimate publication of his *Mémoires*, and/or her editor, Fernand Calmettes, mixed the two issues, accidentally or deliberately.
after he turned over Valladolid to the Army of Portugal. In Burgos, Thiébault had initially hoped to be reappointed governor of that province, but *Général de brigade* Louis Emanuel Reys, Thiébault’s junior but an officer of the Imperial Guard, was given the position, and Thiébault remained assigned *en suite* to Dorsenne’s staff.

A worse personal insult was to follow. The Army of the North's paymaster-general, M. Thonnelier, who had been with Thiébault in Portugal, shared a bundle of newspapers that he had received from France with him. One of them contained an article on the loss of Ciudad Rodrigo with the sentence, “Due to the culpable negligence of the Governor of Salamanca, the city of Rodrigo had been without communications for two months…”52 Thiébault believed that the calumny was inspired by Marmont to excuse his own negligence. Marmont in his memoirs blamed virtually everyone else, including Dorsenne and General Barrié, and the city’s governor, for the loss of the town.53 Thiébault demanded that Dorsenne provide him with a written statement exonerating him. Dorsenne originally refused, but after a very public show of temper, Thiébault obtained a statement, made copies, and sent them off to all the important people he knew, including one copy for his wife to deliver personally to Berthier with instructions to obtain a personal answer. According to Thiébault, Berthier read the statement, frowned and replied: “Write to Thiébault that he may rest easy. The Emperor now knows what happened there.”54

A few months later, the wounded Marshal Marmont passed through Vitoria on his return to France after the Battle of Salamanca. Thiébault, in charge of the city, rendered the proper military honors, but otherwise ignored the Marshal. On leaving, however, the Marshal sent one of his staff officers to assure Thiébault, on his word of honor, that neither he nor anyone else in the Army of Portugal had given that report to the newspapers. Thiébault suddenly realized that he must have been mistaken, and that the

52 Thiébault, *Mémoires*, IV, 566.
54 Thiébault, *Mémoires*, IV, 568.
culprit instead was the now-departed and deceased General Dorsenne who had been so unwilling to give him a statement.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, IV, 569. General Dorsenne left Spain in early May, 1812, and died in Paris on 24 July the same year from a failed surgical procedure to treat an earlier head wound.}

\textit{Général de division} Marie-François Caffarelli du Falga, another officer of the Imperial Guard and a former aide-de-camp to Napoleon, took over the Army of the North and moved the headquarters of that army from Burgos to Vitoria. Thiébault was his senior general; as such, he took command of the city and the established garrisons whenever Caffarelli took the field. Caffarelli did so almost immediately, taking virtually all of the available able-bodied troops into the Province of Biscay in response to reports of British amphibious operations in support of Spanish insurgents in the province. When Marmont requested reinforcement against Wellington’s move on Salamanca, Caffarelli replied that he was surrounded by strong insurgent bands, that Biscay was menaced by a British naval expedition consisting of six ships of the line, nine frigates and six sloops, and that he planned to march immediately against this expedition. He could only support Marmont’s army, therefore, with some cavalry and artillery.\footnote{Caffarelli to Marmont, 20 June 1812 and Caffarelli to Marmont, 26 June 1812, see Marmont, \textit{Mémoires}, IV, 414-16. In fact, the expedition under Commodore Sir Home Popham consisted of two ships-of-the line, five frigates, two sloops, and some transports carrying only two battalions of Royal Marines. However, the expedition provided great moral and logistical support to the insurgents in Biscay, and the combined forces were able to capture several minor ports and the city of Santander. Caffarelli ultimately sent Marmont only one brigade of cavalry and a battery of light artillery, and even these did not arrive until after the Battle of Salamanca on 22 July 1812. Oman, \textit{History of the Peninsular Wars}, V, 550.}

In the beginning of July, Caffarelli left Vitoria to march west into the Province of Biscay, putting Thiébault, his senior subordinate, in charge. As soon as Caffarelli departed with the last remaining brigade of the Imperial Guard in Spain, the insurgent leader, Francisco Espoz y Mina, attacked the city with half of his force, about 4,000 men, while the remainder moved into Biscay to meet the British expedition. Caffarelli quickly returned, only to find that Thiébault had organized all available troops – mostly replacements, invalids, and gendarmes – into a defense force. \textit{Général de division} Pierre Thouvenot, a former governor of Biscay and now in Vitoria, formed an infantry unit by
rounding up all the stragglers and convalescent he could find, while the army’s
*Inspecteur aux Revues*, Chief Personnel Auditor, M. Etienne Buhot, organized a cavalry
unit from the gendarmes, invalided cavalry troopers, and some contract hunters. With
the return of the Guard Brigade, the French actually had a slight numerical advantage
over Espoza’s force. However, Caffarelli attempted to fight the insurgents outside the
city. The badly-commanded battle cost the French 300 killed before they retreated to the
city. Thiébault took no direct part in this battle, although there was apparently a surfeit
of general officers in Vitoria at the time, but he and his colleagues were appalled by
Caffarelli’s ineptness. “What could we have not done,” Général de division Claude
LaFerriere, the cavalry commander, glumly asked Thiébault, “if Mina [Espoza y Mina]
had commanded the Army of the North and Caffarelli commanded the insurgents?”

For a short time then, Thiébault thought that he might be able to escape what was
for him a very unhappy and unproductive situation. After Marmont’s loss at Salamanca,
the Marshal had returned to France, leaving Général de division Bertrand Clauzel in
temporary command of the Army of Portugal. Napoleon ordered Masséna to return to
Spain and take over his old command. When Thiébault heard this, he was hopeful that he
could obtain command of a division from his old patron and leave the “veritable bedlam”
of the Army of the North. Unfortunately, Masséna reached only Bayonne, but his
health failed, and he wrote to the Minister of War asking to be relieved.

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57 Personal communication from Dr. John Trone, George Technical University, 11
November 2005, including a passage from Coleccion de los Trimestres de la Division de
Navarra, Archivo General de Navarra, Seccion Guerra, Legajo 17, Carpeta 53,
concerning Espoza’s attack on Vitoria. The *Inspecteur au Revues* of the French army
was a civilian member of the *Intendance* charged with personnel matters other than
normal unit-strength reporting. They were granted assimilated military rank, ranging
from captain to général de division. See Elting, *Swords Around a Throne*, 91.

58 Francisco Espoza y Mina, *Memorias Esopo y Mina* (Madrid, 1962), 118-19;


60 Ibid., IV, 575.

61 Masséna to Clarke, 6 Septembre 1812. Service historique, Correspondance de Armée
de Portugal: 1806 – 1814, Carton C715.
Relations between Caffarelli and his subordinates became very strained. A clique was forming, consisting of Thiébault, General Thouvenot; General LaFerrière; M. Thonnelier, the paymaster-general; and M. Buhot, the *Inspecteur aux Revues*. They adopted the nickname “sapajou” or “spider monkey” for their commander. While Caffarelli was leading such troops as he could gather to assist the Army of Portugal in raising Wellington’s siege of Burgos in late October, Thiébault, as commandant of Vitoria, opened a correspondence directly with the Minister of War and presented his own views along with the recommendations of General Thouvenot for the operations of the Army of the North.\(^{62}\) General Thouvenot also wrote independently to the Minister. When Caffarelli discovered this correspondence, he was furious, and a major quarrel ensued.

That was enough intrigue for Thiébault. Napoleon’s 29\(^{\text{th}}\) Bulletin of 3 December 1812 announcing the disastrous retreat of the *Grande Armée* from Russia had just been received. Thiébault immediately wrote to Clarke in Paris requesting a six-month leave with pay and an assignment with the reconstituted *Grande Armée*. The request was granted without delay, and he left traveling with a regiment of Polish lancers that was returning to help rebuild the French cavalry. They were ambushed by a superior force of Espoza’s insurgents and forced to take refuge with the French garrison at Villa Real. After three days, they were rescued by a brigade of the Imperial Guard, which then escorted them north on the road to Irun under continuous Spanish sniper fire. Thiébault concluded: “I left the Peninsula for the last time after spending seven successive years there, ... and the farewell of the Spaniards was given to me by the fire of their muskets.”\(^{63}\) Caffarelli returned to France the following month, recalled to answer questions concerning his performance. He was escorted by the last brigade of the Imperial Guards returning from Spain.

\(^{62}\) Thiébault to Clarke, 23 October 1812, Ibid., and Thiébault, *Mémoires*, IV, 579-81. In these latter pages, Thiébault quoted extensively from letters to and from Clarke that he claimed were in his personal possession. Wellington’s siege of Burgos was between 19 September and 21 October 1812.

\(^{63}\) Ibid., IV, 591.
Thiébault’s last two years in Spain were plagued by several problems that hampered all French operations in that country – the unwieldy command structure imposed by Napoleon, the steadily declining quantity and quality of French troops in that theater of operations, the increasing effectiveness of the Spanish guerrillas, and the success of the Anglo-Portuguese army. During the final two years of Thiébault’s service in Spain, the weaknesses of the command structure Napoleon had created became glaringly apparent. Some of these deficiencies, such as the conflict between Soult, King Joseph, and Masséna, and others, Thiébault documented extensively, inevitably to Soult’s disadvantage. In other instances, Thiébault was often caught in the middle – as Chief of Staff of the 9th Corps when issues arose between Drouet and Bessières over the question of who was responsible to protect Masséna’s lines of communication; as Governor of Salamanca and commander of a division of the Army of the North when coordination problems arose between Dorsenne and Marmont; and even as commandant in Vitoria when Joseph and Marmont failed to cooperate, enabling Wellington to gain victory at the Battle of Salamanca.

Thiébault, like all senior French officers, also had to cope with the declining quantity and quality of French troops that were available to carry out his mission. Initially, replacements arriving were almost always new conscripts, and even when new units, such as the 9th Corps, were formed, the new regiments were often fourth or fifth (depot) battalions of established regiments, lacking sufficient experienced officers and non-commissioned officers. Thiébault, like his colleagues, reacted as he felt he must, delaying or dragooning replacements intended for the field armies. As a result, they left large portions of their areas unoccupied to ensure troops would be available for escort duties; and ultimately relying heavily on fortified posts rather than mobile columns. This problem was only accentuated in the latter part of 1811 and through 1812, as Napoleon stripped Spain to support his Russian campaign.

In personal terms, Thiébault’s year in Salamanca was perhaps one of his best. Well into his old age, he took pride in his doctorate from the university there. He fought Don Julian Sanchez to a standoff. And he was carried on the French army records as the
victor at Aldea de Pont.\textsuperscript{64} He had been able to resupply Ciudad Rodrigo with a force of only a couple of thousand men – an operation that had required the combined forces of two field armies only months earlier. If his tour in Salamanca ended with the loss of that key city, Thiébault, at least, was clearly not to be blamed.

\textsuperscript{64} Six, \textit{Générous}, II, 494. Thiébault is still recognized as the victorious general at the battle of Aldea de Pont today.
CHAPTER 15
THE DEFENSE OF HAMBURG, 1813 – 1814

Thiébault arrived in Paris in early February 1813. Almost immediately, he
attended Napoleon’s Sunday reception after Mass at the palace. Napoleon recognized
him, and, after an exchange of pleasantries, Thibaut assured the Emperor of his desire
to serve again. The Emperor replied: “I will keep you in mind.”¹

Thiébault’s primary order of business was to publish the staff manual that he had
finished while in Spain. He rightly believed that it would prove useful in rebuilding the
Grande Armée. Since publishers were notoriously unwilling to put up the money
necessary to produce such a publication – it was nearly 600 pages long when printed –
Thiébault applied to the Ministry of War for assistance. He wrote to Clarke, who asked
to review the manuscript. Two weeks later, General François Pommeruel, Director-
General of Publications, asked Thiébault to come to his office. An old friend from the
days of the Army of the North, Pommeruel told Thiébault that in view of the importance
and originality of the material, he was prepared to recommend publication. Despite the
fact that it represented only Thiébault’s personal views, the manuscript could nonetheless
be published only if the chapter on the government of foreign countries was omitted
because it raised political concerns at the very highest level. Thiénault ultimately
conceded, but in publishing the manuscript, he still attempted to have the last word.² In
the finished publication he included the title of the offending chapter – “Subdivision
Seven: The Generals, Governors, and Commandants of Provinces and the Regulations
for their Conduct” followed only by three rows of dots.³

Thiébault had requested and been granted a six-month furlough, but the demand
for qualified officers to rebuild the Grande Armée was too great. On 21 March 1813,

¹ Thiébault, Mémoires, V, 11.
² Ibid., V, 14.
³ Thiébault, Manuel Général du Service des État-Major, 431.
Thiébault received orders from Berthier to report to Mainz to await further orders. Thiébault arrived in Mainz on 29 March, but orders did not reach him until 16 April. Berthier had forgotten neither Thiébault nor his virtual insubordination in Tilsit in 1807 when he evaded his assignment to Marshal Davout’s corps. This time, Thiébault was ordered to Wesel to take over the 3rd Division of Marshal Davout’s 1st Corps. Thiébault commented: “Thus my request to leave the least competent commanders of the Army of Spain resulted only in placing me under the orders of the most detestable commander of the Grande Armée.”4

Davout’s 1st Corps had totaled over 72,000 of the best-trained and best-equipped men of the Grand Armée when it crossed the Niemen into Russia in June, 1812.5 When the remnants of the corps regrouped in the Polish city of Thorn in late December, only 800 officers and 1,500 enlisted men remained, many of them sick or wounded.6 Davout’s corps fell back across Poland with the rest of the French Army, slowly picking up reinforcements as it went. On 6 March, Eugène Beauharnais, now commanding the remnants of the Grande Armée, abandoned Berlin and fell back on the line of the Elbe River. The 1st Corps was ordered to Dresden.

Thiébault’s initial orders were to recreate the 3rd Division in Wesel from sixteen depot battalions of other regiments of the 1st Corps. When he arrived, however, there were only portions of the assigned battalions, without brigade commanders, staff officers, or artillery. During the interim, Thiébault sat as president of a court-martial that, against the clearly expressed wishes of both Davout and Napoleon, all but acquitted the Dutch-English Count William Gustavus Bentinck, leader of the Orange party opposition in Oldenbourg of rebellion and treason. Thiebault later quoted a letter from the Emperor to Général de division Jean Le Marois, formerly an aide-de-camp to Napoleon and at this

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4 Thiébault, Mémoires, V, 25. Much of Thiébault’s account of this campaign in his Mémoires consisted of criticisms of Davout’s judgment and performance.
5 Chandler, Campaigns of Napoleon (New York, 1966), 1109.
6 Davout to Berthier, 30 December 1812, Davout, Correspondance du maréchal Davout, No. 1146, III, 435-36.
time military governor of Wesel, demanding that Bentinck be tried, convicted and executed.\footnote{Thiébault, Mémoires, V, 33. This letter is not found in Correspondance de Napoléon Ier nor in other collections of Napoleon’s correspondence.}

After the court-martial, Thiébault obtained permission to go to Brussels for a week to purchase horses. From Brussels, however, he took an unauthorized four-day side-trip in disguise to Paris to see Zozotte. All went well until, on the last day, she discovered a copy of his will and a summary of his financial situation. He had divided everything he owned into six portions – one for her and one for each of his children, two from his marriage to her and three from his marriage to Betzy. Zozotte, known for her profligate ways, claimed this was not nearly enough, in spite of the fact that she would also inherit his military pension. They parted unhappily, and for the next year, Zozotte’s letters “pretended grief and complained of her most cruel destiny.”\footnote{Ibid., V, 43. This incident had implications for Thiébault’s family that affected their relationship and perhaps the ultimate publication of the Mémoires.}

While Thiébault was in Wesel attempting to organize the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Division, Napoleon arrived in Mainz to take command of the Grande Armée. Napoleon wanted Hamburg to be a key base for his 1813 campaign but the French, who had ruled Hamburg since 1806, had lost control of the city. In 1806, the Hanseatic commercial cities of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck had been occupied by French troops as part of Napoleon’s effort to seal off Europe from England under the “Continental System.” From 1806 to 1810 these cities were administered by the governor of the 32\textsuperscript{nd} Military District. Then, under a senatus consultum decree on 13 December 1810, Napoleon annexed the cities to France, creating three new French departments – the Département des bouches de l’Elbe (Hamburg), the Département des bouchettes du Weser (Bremen) and the Département l’Ems Supérieur (Osnabruk).\footnote{“Hamburg,” in Jean Tulard, Dictionnaire Napoléon (Paris, 1989), 862-63.}

In late 1812, however, the citizens of Hamburg revolted when news arrived in Hamburg that the Provincial Assembly of East Prussia had declared its support for the defection of General Hans Ludwig von Yorck’s Corps from the Grande Armée without reference to the King of Prussia. The pent-up frustrations of six years of French rule and
the destruction of the commerce of the former free port by the Continental System resulted in rioting by the longshoremen and apprentices of the city. French citizens, including the hundreds of customs officials who had been assigned to Hamburg were threatened, beaten, and robbed. The small French garrison under Général de division Claude Carra Saint-Cyr\textsuperscript{10} retreated to the city’s citadel, and attempted to restore order by summarily executing six of the most culpable leaders of the riots. His garrison had already been stripped by the demands of the army in Russia, however, and consisted of only three companies of gendarmes and some six hundred customs officers whom he organized into a provisional battalion. On 12 March, learning that the Russian Colonel Friedrich Karl baron von Tettenborn was approaching the city at the head of 1,500 Cossacks, Saint-Cyr withdrew to Bremen, held by General Dominique Vandamme.\textsuperscript{11} Six days later, Colonel Tettenborn’s Cossacks entered Hamburg. The city senate declared Colonel Tettenborn an honorary citizen, and Tettenborn issued a proclamation calling on the citizens to organize a Hanseatic Legion.\textsuperscript{12}

Two thousand young men quickly volunteered; Tettenborn’s Cossacks were soon reinforced by other \textit{landwehr} battalions recruited in the region; and on 29 April 1813, a force of infantry and a battery of the British King’s German Legion (KGL) arrived from England.\textsuperscript{13}

Clearly, before Napoleon could follow his plan to use the city as his base against Berlin, he had to regain control. He ordered Davout to reoccupy Hamburg and the

\textsuperscript{10} Général de division Claude Carra Saint Cyr (1760-1834) was not the more famous Marshal Laurent Saint-Cyr. General Carra St. Cyr had served as aide de camp and then deputy to General Aubert du Bayet when Bayet was Ambassador to Turkey (1796-1787). After Bayet’s death, he served an additional year as French \textit{chargé d’affaires} in Turkey. He fought at Aspern in 1809 as commander of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Division of André Masséna’s 4\textsuperscript{th} Corps where he was cited for his bravery and leadership.

\textsuperscript{11} Colonel Friedrich Karl Baron von Tettenborn (1778-1845) was originally from Baden. He had previously served in the Austrian army and after 1812 in the Russian Army. See Alexander Mikaberidze, \textit{The Russian Officer Corps} (New York, 2005), 395.


\textsuperscript{13} N. L. Beamish, \textit{History of the King’s German Legion}, (London, 1832-37), II, 141-42.
surrounding districts, and to establish his headquarters there.\textsuperscript{14} General Vandamme was assigned to the 1\textsuperscript{st} Corps and ordered to recapture Hamburg. Vandamme began his attacks on the outlying suburbs of Hamburg on 29 April, but the siege progressed slowly with only inexperienced and untrained troops available. On 18 May, with the signature of a French-Danish reinsurance treaty, Danish troops in near-by Altona received orders to support the French.\textsuperscript{15}

Davout, meanwhile, was marching north from Dresden with the remains of the original 1\textsuperscript{st} Corps. He received instructions en-route on dealing with the “treasonous” citizens of Hamburg. Even before Hamburg was recaptured, Berthier, in a ciphered letter, forwarded Davout instructions on how to treat the city:

You will arrest immediately those subjects of Hamburg who have taken service under the title of Senators….and shoot the five most guilty, …. have all the officers of the Hanseatic Legion shot, and …you will impose a contribution of 50 million on the cities of Hamburg and Lübeck.\textsuperscript{16}

Davout’s forces approached the main defenses of Hamburg on 29 May. Colonel Tettenborn decided that discretion was the better part of valor. He withdrew from the city, evacuating all the senators, the Hanseatic Legion, and the KLG.\textsuperscript{17} Danish troops entered the city the next day from the north, and Vandamme’s troops entered the city on the 31\textsuperscript{st}. That same day, Thiébault in Wesel received orders to march his division to Bremen on the western edge of in the 32\textsuperscript{nd} Military District. Two days later, following the French victories at Lutzen on 2 May 1813, and Bautzen on 21-22 May, Napoleon

\textsuperscript{14} Napoleon to Eugène, 18 March 1813, \textit{Correspondance de Napoléon Ie.}, No. 19734, XXV, 120-22. Davout actually received the order from Eugène some time before April 17\textsuperscript{th}.

\textsuperscript{15} The Kingdom of Denmark which included Norway at this time was an opponent of Sweden, which was now a member of the 6\textsuperscript{th} Coalition. Swedish troops under Crown Prince Bernadotte were massing in Swedish Pomerania.

\textsuperscript{16} Berthier to Davout, 7 May 1813. Reproduced in Commandant Étienne Bazeries’ \textit{Les Chiffres De Napoléon Ier Pendant la Campagne de 1813} (Fontainebleau, 1896), 23-25.

\textsuperscript{17} For his success in Hamburg, Colonel Tettenborn was promoted to Major General on 28 March 1813 and was awarded the Russian Order of St. George (3\textsuperscript{rd} Class) on 12 August 1813. He later returned to Baden and served as ambassador to Vienna.
signed the Armistice of Plasswitz with the Allies to see if he could obtain a negotiated peace.

The day after the fall of Hamburg, Davout sent two letters to Berthier reporting the situation in Hamburg. The fortifications were in good condition, all the naval artillery left on the walls by the French in March was still operable, and large stores of English ordinance had been found. On the other hand, Davout found himself “greatly embarrassed” by being unable to carry out the Emperor’s orders that Berthier had outlined in his message of 7 May. The senators of Hamburg and the officers of the Hanseatic Legion had all fled.\textsuperscript{18}

Thiébault and his troops arrived in Bremen on 6 June. A week later, the division was ordered to Hamburg, where Thiébault was temporarily assigned as Commandant of the city until the arrival of \textit{Général de division} Thierry Van Hogendorp.\textsuperscript{19} When Thiébault reported to Marshal Davout, the Marshal’s opening remark was: “You saved a traitor. You were to make the Count Bentinck a necessary example, and instead you made the trial a victory for the enemies of the Emperor.”\textsuperscript{20} It was not a good beginning.

Napoleon at this point had been unable to achieve a decisive victory in spite of defeating the Allies at the battles of Lützen and Bautzen. To press his campaign against the Allies, he still saw Hamburg as vital and developed a new plan to use Hamburg as a pivot of French operations. On 15 June, he wrote to Davout:

The possession of Hamburg is of the highest political importance and is one of great importance militarily; and I will not be content on this important point until

\textsuperscript{18} Davout to Berthier, 31 May 1813, Davout, \textit{Correspondance du maréchal Davout}, Nos. 1349 and 1350, IV, 137-39.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Général de division} Thierry Van Hogendorp (1762-1822). Hogendorp had been a senior diplomat, general, and government official under both the Batavian Republic and the Kingdom of Holland. When the Kingdom of Holland was annexed to France in 1810, he was made \textit{Général de division} in the French Army. During the Hundred Days, he served as Governor of Nantes. Afterwards, he did not return to Holland but emigrated to Brazil to found an agricultural settlement.

\textsuperscript{20} Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, V, 49.
Hamburg can be regarded as a strongpoint, provisioned for several months and has everything necessary for its defense.\footnote{Napoleon to Davout, 15 June 1813, \textit{Correspondance de Napoléon Ier}, No. 20124, XXV, 449.}

To reinforce his point, Napoleon sent the Chief of Engineers of the Imperial Guard, \textit{Général de division} François-Nicolas Haxo,\footnote{François-Nicolas Haxo (1774-1838). General of Engineers. Haxo had been Chief of Engineers for Davout’s 1\textsuperscript{st} Corps in Russia, but had been invalided home with typhus. He returned to Germany as governor of Magdeburg before being promoted to Chief of Engineers of the Imperial Guard and sent to Hamburg.} to Hamburg to inspect the post with a detailed letter of instruction to Davout. Hamburg was to be fortified in such a way that a garrison of 6,000 men with 100 to 150 guns could hold the city against an attack by a force of 50,000 men.\footnote{André Savary, \textit{Relation de la Défense de Hambourg} (Paris, 1846), 7–10.} Haxo designed two new fortresses on the north and south sides of the city, and a five-kilometer causeway over the north and south branches of the Elbe and the intervening swamps to connect the fortified suburb of Haarbourg with the city garrison.\footnote{Ibid., “Plan.” The author had served as a captain of engineers in Hamburg during the period of the siege.}

Thiébault was relieved as commander of Hamburg by General Hogendorp on 24 June, and marched his division to Lübeck, together with a detachment of Danish cavalry. In Lübeck he became commandant of the city and of the district of Eutin, as well as commander of the new 40\textsuperscript{th} Division.

Thiébault initially faced two problems. The first was the lack of discipline or even military training on the part of his Danish allies. In a report to Davout, Thiébault complained bitterly of their behavior. Davout forwarded the reports to the Prince of Hesse, their commander. The Prince sent his Chief of Staff, Lieutenant Colonel Charles, Count de Bardenfelth, to Lübeck to investigate. As a result, the Danish general commanding the force in Lübeck was replaced, and relations between the French and the Danes improved immediately.\footnote{Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, V, 63.}
Figure 23. Defenses of Hamburg. (Map from Spectateur Militaire July 1856.)
Thiébault's second problem was the resentment of the inhabitants of Lübeck toward the French. Lübeck had been one of the great Hanseatic free cities, and Napoleon’s Continental System's had destroyed their very profitable role as a free port for British and American goods entering eastern Europe. Davout at first had ordered the arrest of 50 of the most vocal citizens denouncing the French. Because of his own experiences in Fulda, Burgos and Salamanca, Thiébault thought Davout's order was very unwise. Although he declared a state of siege to execute the order and directed a disarmament of all citizens that produced three thousand muskets, he tried to mitigate the worse effects of Davout's instructions. Nevertheless, rioting broke out on 6 July. Thiébault responded by declaring martial law. Some 560 persons were arrested and sent to Hamburg to work on the new fortifications. The instigator of the riots, a butcher named George Prahl, was captured, tried before a military commission, and shot. Thiébault reported, “If they could never have us as friends in this country, as in the others [Fulda, Burgos, Salamanca], they will have us to fear.”

In this case, Davout's tactic worked well enough, although German bitterness about the French occupation remained into the twenty-first century. The following month, Marshal Davout wrote to Berthier:

> The reports reaching me from Lübeck tell me that all is tranquil in those parts both on the part of the enemy’s advance posts and on the part of the inhabitants since I took 500 or 600 of the worst and transported them to the Island of Wihelmsbourg [where fortifications were being built]. [And] complete harmony reigns between the Danish and French troops.

In Lübeck, Thiébault also had to deal with an ongoing reorganization of his division. When he first joined the 1st Corps in Hamburg, the rest of the former 3rd Division under the command of General Louis Loison, Thiébault’s old friend, still remained, so Thiébault’s division was designated the 3rd bis Division. After Thiébault left for Lübeck, Napoleon ordered Davout to send Vandamme south with the 5th Division to take command of a new 1st Corps, and Davout’s command was redesignated the 13th Corps. This corps was to consist of Loison’s 3rd Division, Thiébault’ 3rd bis Division,

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26 Ibid., V, 62.
27 Davout to Berthier, 6 August 1813, Davout, Correspondance du maréchal Davout, No. 1463, IV, 256.
and the 50th Division under General Louis-Joseph Vichery. In addition, Davout's command now included a Danish division of 12,000 troops under Prince Frederick of Hesse. Altogether, Davout's force comprised some 43,000 men. With the requirements for garrisoning the 32nd Military District and the loss of hospitalized men, however, his field army totaled only some 27,000 men.\(^{28}\) After much reshuffling of battalions to better align the regiments and balance the size of the divisions, Thiébault’s division was finally renamed the 40th. The division consisted of the 1st Brigade, commanded by Général de brigade Louis-Thomas Gengoult with eight battalions; the 2nd Brigade commanded by Général de brigade Victor-Joseph Declambre with ten battalions; and eight 8-pound guns.\(^{29}\) Like the rest of the 13th Corps, however, virtually all of the enlisted men were new, relatively untrained, conscripts.

Although still officially in a period of armistice, Napoleon wrote Davout on 5 August outlining his plan for a new campaign.\(^{30}\) The initial objective was Berlin. Davout’s role was to strike east with his field army in support of Marshal Nicolas-Charles Oudinot, who would be attacking north towards Berlin with four corps totaling 60,000 men. The purpose would be to protect the left flank of Oudinot’s army and to crush Bernadotte’s Swedish corps between them. At this time, Davout’s forces were opposed only by a relatively small Allied force (25,000) of mixed nationalities under General Ludwig Wallmoden.\(^{31}\)

\(^{28}\) Général de brigade César de Laville, Chief of Staff of the 13th Corps, wrote “Mémoire sur la siège et la défense de Hambourg.” This report was reproduced in both Davout’s Mémoire de M. le maréchal Davout, prince d’Eckmühl au roi (Nancy, 1890), 49-123. This publication also included Davout’s memorandum to King Louis XVIII giving an account of his behavior in Hamburg; see also Davout’s Correspondance du maréchal Davout, IV, 288-349. The text used here is from Davout’s Mémoire au roi, 50. Hereafter cited as: Laville, “Mémoire sur le Siége.”

\(^{29}\) Napoleon to Berthier, 18 June 1813, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 20145, XXV, 463-64; Napoleon to Davout, 1 July 1813, Ibid., No. 20206, XXV, 519-20; and Thiébault, Mémoires, V, 58.

\(^{30}\) Napoleon to Davout, 5 August 1813. Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 20333, XXVI, 8.

\(^{31}\) Laville, “Mémoire sur le Siége,” 54-55. Generalmajor Ludwig Graf von Wallmoden-Gamborn (1769-1862) was born in Hanover and served in the Hanoverian, Prussian, Austrian, English, and Russian armies before returning to Austrian service in 1815. In
Davout began operations two days before the truce officially ended (17 August), striking southwest along the right bank of the Elbe River. Thiébault received a series of orders instructing him to march from Lübeck leaving behind only a small garrison of Danes and customs officers. From the start, Thiébault’s maneuver was hindered by conflicting orders and bad staff work that resulted in his troops marching much further than necessary to reach their initial objective – the town of Wandshek. Throughout this account of his service under Davout, Thiebault is extremely critical of Davout’s tendency to micro-manage tactical operations and the resulting operational confusion on the part of his subordinates.

At Wandshek Davout ordered two of Thiébault’s battalions (the 1st and 2nd of the 30th Ligne) to serve as an advance guard under the newly-arrived and newly-promoted Général de division Marc Pecheux.32 Pecheux had been sent by Napoleon to give Davout an extra general officer. Davout then sent much of the 2nd Brigade under General Gengoult across the Elbe River on an independent reconnaissance up the right bank. Thiébault followed the advance guard with the remainder of his 1st Brigade, the division artillery, and Davout and his staff. The 13th Corps reached Lauenburg, some 30 miles from Hamburg, on 18 August. Here, the French were blocked by a force entrenched behind the Stecknitz Canal.33 After a sharp fight the next day, Thiébault’s 30th Ligne, this time under Davout’s aide-de-camp Colonel Frédric Houdetot, drove the Allied forces out

August 1813, he commanded a mixed corps of Russian, Prussian, Swedish, Hanoverian, and English units on the right flank of the main Allied armies. See Mikaberidze, The Russian Officer Corps, 443.

32 Général de division Marc-Nicolas-Louis Pecheux (1769-1831). In July, Davout had asked for more general officers. See Davout to Berthier, 6 July 1813, Davout, Correspondance du maréchal Davout, IV, 214. Napoleon had replied: “I am sending you another general from the Guard who is good and who will serve to replace either Loison or Thiébault.” See Napoleon to Davout, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No 20339, XXVI, 19-20. Pecheux had just been promoted to général de division in May, 1813.

33 The Stecknitz Canal was the oldest artificial waterway in Europe. Begun in 1398 A.D. as a means of transporting salt from the salt-works south of the Elbe River to Lübeck, it remained in service until 1900 A.D. when it was replaced by the Elbe-Lübeck Canal.
of their entrenchments at the point of the bayonet, and secured the crossings of both the Elbe and the canal.\textsuperscript{34}

The 13\textsuperscript{th} Corps, with Thiébault’s division again in the lead, moved on through Wittenburg to Schwerin, a distance of some 80 miles against only light opposition, arriving on 23 August. Both Thiébault and Davout established their headquarters in Schwerin, and there the 13\textsuperscript{th} Corps remained, conducting reconnaissance patrols, but not moving forward. On 2 September, Davout received word that Oudinot had been defeated 20 miles outside Berlin on August 23rd at Gross Beern and was retreating. Davout immediately fell back to a line along the Stecknitz Canal between Lauenburg and Ratzeburg to cover Hamburg while Thiébault’s division took positions near Lauenburg. Although Oudinot has been criticized for inept leadership with his Army of four corps at Grossbeern, neither Davout nor Napoleon’s staff work could be held blameless. When the battle took place, Davout was still nearly 200 miles away in a position that put little pressure on either the forces of Bernadotte or those of Prussian General Friedrich von Bulow, who was defending Berlin.\textsuperscript{35}

Davout held the Lauenburg - Ratzeburg – Lübeck line along the Stecknitz Canal from 4 September until 13 November. General Pecheux took over the 50\textsuperscript{th} Division, and Vichery was shifted to the 40\textsuperscript{th} Division. Thiébault, meanwhile, was again named governor of Lübeck with instructions to protect the left flank of the Corps. He protested the assignment, but Marshal Davout only replied: “You know the country by heart. ....No one will be more useful there [in Lübeck] than you.”\textsuperscript{36}

While Thiébault worked to maintain order in his district, dilatory fighting continued along the Stecknitz line. Thiébault gathered the 30,000 rations a day that

\textsuperscript{34} Thiébault, \textit{Mémoires}, V, 87-88; Davout to Berthier, 6 July 1812, Davout, \textit{Correspondance du maréchal Davout}, No.1473, IV, 269.

\textsuperscript{35} Details of the movement of Davout’s Corps in this period are taken from Thiébault’s \textit{Mémoires}, V, 89-105 and Leville’s “Mémoire sur le Siège,” 50-57. Throughout this section, Thiébault was critical of Davout’s indecisive campaign plan, hesitant advance from Lauenburg to Schwerin which had taken seven days to advance the 78 miles from Wandsheek to Schwerin, and his decision to halt at Schwerin.

Davout's force needed from the province of Eutin. Skirmishing with elements of Wallmoden’s corps continued through September all along the front, while elements of the Allied corps crossed to the left bank of the Elbe and began to attack the outposts that guarded Davout’s line of communications between Hamburg and Magdeburg. In an attempt to protect this line, Davout sent General Pecheux with a detachment of five battalions, four field guns, and some light cavalry across the Elbe. Wallmoden stripped the forces facing the Stecknitz line and crossed the river with a force of about 5,000 infantry including the British 73rd Foot, 2,800 cavalry, twenty-eight guns, and half a Congreve rocket battery of the British Royal Horse Artillery. On 16 September, Wallmoden surprised Pecheux’s small force near the town of Göhrde. Initially, the French resisted, but were eventually routed by the fire of the Royal Horse Artillery’s

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38 The British regulars had been landed at Wismar in Northern Germany on 8 August to reinforce the King’s German Legion. See Beamish, _History of the KGL_, II, 174.
rockets. Then in early October, Tettenborn, now a major general, crossed the Elbe with a mixed force of Cossacks, regulars, and landwehr to attack Bremen. After a short bombardment, the French garrison surrendered on 15 October. Hamburg was now loosely surrounded.

The Battle of Leipzig was fought 16-18 October. Davout’s forces received the first news of the battle on 25 October from enemy bulletins. Reports soon arrived that the entire Allied Army of the North under Prince Bernadotte, composed of General Friedrich von Bulow’s Prussian Corps, the Swedish Corps, and a Russian Corps under Field Marshal Ferdinand Wintzingerode, was moving north between the Elbe and the Weser Rivers towards their rear. Meanwhile, Davout had received no orders from the headquarters of the Grande Armée. Despite the urging of Loison and Thiébault to abandon Hamburg and fall back on the Rhine, he refused, stating:

“I do not interpret orders, and I form no opinion as to intentions. The Emperor has ordered me to keep Hamburg and I shall defend that place until the last extreme; besides, so long as Magdeburg, Hamburg, and Danzig hold out, the Emperor has lost nothing.”

On 12 November, Davout began to withdraw his forces back to the vicinity of Hamburg. At about the same time, he received the official reports of the Battle of Leipzig, the defection of the Bavarians in September and the Saxons at Leipzig, and the retreat of the main French army to the Rhine, while Napoleon had established his headquarters at Mainz. The courier brought an enciphered letter from Napoleon outlining his intentions and instructing Davout to leave a strong garrison in Hamburg and then withdraw through Holland. If he was unable to withdraw, he was to operate between the Elbe and the Weser Rivers to pin down as many Allied troops as possible.

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39 “Two batteries [sic] of Congreve rockets which had an effect that was completely new for our soldiers, contributed to the disorder of this affair.” Laville, “Memoire sur le Siége,” 58.
41 Thiébault, Mémoires, V. 125. Hamburg and Magdeburg remained in French hands until the war ended. See Vincent Esposito and John Elting, Military History and Atlas of the Napoleonic Wars, Map 144. Dantzig surrendered on 29 November 1813.
42 Laville, “Mémoire sur le Siége,” 70.
Davout did not believe that he could withdraw, because he would now have to fight Bernadotte’s superior force while leaving 8,000 of his men in hospitals and a garrison sufficient to defend the extensive outworks that he had constructed around Hamburg. He turned all his efforts, therefore, to completing the defenses of the city and collecting adequate provisions. To improve the corps’ ability to supply itself, Davout ordered Thiébault to turn over his command in Lübeck to his cavalry commander, General François-Antoine Lallemand, and to report to Hamburg to take charge of all supply acquisition by both military units and the civilian contractors of the *Intendance* with the title *Chargé en chef de approvisionnements*, or Chief of Military Supply.\(^{43}\)

The position was without precedent in the French army. Traditionally, all such support activities had been conducted by civilian administrators – *Intendants* and *commissaries-de-guerre* – who, although they were employed by the army and reported through the appropriate chief of staff, were not in the direct chain of command. Davout’s order reached Thiébault on 4 November.\(^{44}\) Thiébault was not unhappy to be leaving Lübeck, for he still believed that the heavy-handed government required by the Marshal was counter-productive. He was no happier with the new orders, however, and seriously considered resignation. Although he left Lübeck the next day, Thiébault rode to the 3\(^{rd}\) Division headquarters in Ratzeberg so that he could consult with his friend Loison before he reported to Hamburg. Loison told him:

> Privately, I had something to do with this decision. If I did not advise it, I at least suggested it, for it was not the Marshal’s own idea. But you may be sure that he has adopted it so fully he will not abandon it, and what greater mark of confidence could he show for you. …Our safety or destruction will not depend upon musketry or cannon-shot. We shall not be delivered until someone comes for us…Our whole future is, therefore, wrapped up in the question of subsistence, and this cannot remain in charge of a commissary-general and his subordinates.\(^{45}\)

After his talk with Loison, Thiébault arrived in Hamburg on 6 November. The first person he called upon was Count François de Chaban. The count was an experienced French civil servant and served as both *Intendant-général* of the 32\(^{nd}\)

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\(^{43}\) Ibid., 306.

\(^{44}\) Thiébault, *Mémoires*, V, 146-47.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., V, 148-49.
Military District and Conseiller d’État in of the three Hanseatic provinces. Thiébault had expected some resistance to his appointment, because he would now be in a position of authority over many of Chaban’s functions. He was pleasantly surprised to find that the Count welcomed working with him.\textsuperscript{46}

Together, Thiebault and Chaban reviewed the logistical status of the Army. Supplies were on hand to support the army until the army until the end of March, 1813. They agreed, however, that if Davout insisted on remaining in Hamburg until relieved, Napoleon would not be able to undertake a campaign until summer, and supplies for several more months would be required.\textsuperscript{47} They worked out a division of labor and a plan to collect the needed supplies. They planned also to create the workshops needed to repair uniforms and equipment and make ammunition; to collect forage for the horses; and to establish regulations for the bakers of the city concerning the price of bread, the supplies of milled grain to be kept on hand, and even the requirements for firewood that would have to be stockpiled. To enforce the rules and procedures, Thiébault gave general officers including division commanders specific responsibilities for overseeing certain aspects of the logistics effort – Loison was in charge of issuing rations to all the troops, Watier, commanding the cavalry, was in charge of the forage, and Thiebault himself oversaw the all-important grain supply. Généraux de brigade were assigned specific items, such as the liquor ration, and all regimental and company officers were required to supervise issue and control of supplies and to audit supplies on hand. The procedures introduced by Thiebault were unique for their time.\textsuperscript{48} He was fortunate that logistics had always been a major concern of Marshal Davout as well, so he received the Marshal's full support in his efforts.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., V. 149-50.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., V. 153.

\textsuperscript{48} Although today this sort of activity by company and field grade officers is expected in at least the modern American army, the details of logistics were seldom a concern for officers of 18\textsuperscript{th} and early 19\textsuperscript{th} Century armies, who relied almost entirely on the civilian Intendance service.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., V, 158. See Elting, \textit{Swords Around a Throne}, especially “Logistics,” 553-556, for a complete discussion of Napoleonic logistics.
As a final measure, anticipating the inevitable increase in illness among the troops during the winter, special efforts were made to ensure their cleanliness, the adequacy of their rations, and their staffing. Comte de Chaban took specific charge of the hospitals. In support, Thiébault, very aware from his first assignment in Burgos of the problems of military hospitals, reprinted and published the chapters of his *Manuel général du service des états-majors* relating to army medical care to provide guidance for the line officers, who were required to visit their own hospitalized troops regularly.\(^{50}\) In order to ensure adequate staffing when local doctors indicated a reluctance to serve in the military hospitals, Thiébault gave the doctors a choice – serve voluntarily and live at home, or be confined to military quarters and be escorted to and from the hospitals.

In mid-November, the Danes declared a truce, pending the negotiations with Sweden that ultimately culminated in a treaty of peace and alliance signed in Kiel on 14 January 1813. With this truce, General Lallemand was forced to leave Lübeck, because virtually the whole garrison was Danish. Nevertheless, Thiébault was still able to obtain some supplies from the neighboring Danish town of Altona. Thiébault made contact with two merchants, who agreed to purchase fresh meat, alcohol and tobacco on behalf of the French in Altona, and to smuggle them into the city. With Davout’s authorization, Thiébault obtained funds from Comte de Chaban and made arrangements with Admiral L’Hermitte, who commanded Davout’s small fleet of riverboats, to help the smugglers bring the material into town.\(^{51}\)

By early December, the Stecknitz and smaller streams were freezing over. The freeze permitted the Allies much greater maneuverability, and on 3 December, Davout withdrew all of his forces inside the lines surrounding Hamburg. The 13\(^{th}\) Corps at this time consisted of 42,000 men of whom 8,000 were in the hospital. It had 76 six and twelve pound field guns, 350 additional guns of various calibers emplaced in the fortifications, 7,500 horses, 270,000 kilograms of powder and two million prepared cartridges, as well as a number of Congreve rockets that the French had copied after their

\(^{50}\) Paul Thiébault, *Instruction pour mm. les officiers, chargé de la visite des hôpitaux* (Hamburg, 1814).

\(^{51}\) Ibid., V. 159; Pierre Charrier, *Le Maréchal Davout* (Paris, 2005), 640.
disastrous experience at Göhrde in September.\textsuperscript{52} In addition to duties as Chargé en chef de approvisionnements, Thiébault was again given a divisional command, this time the charge of 16 infantry battalions – mostly of non-French origin – and the cavalry. These troops were to guard the northeastern approaches – the approaches least likely to be threatened – and to serve as a general reserve.\textsuperscript{53}

Gradually, the Allied ring tightened around Hamburg; Davout, Thiébault, and the other officers strained to provision their forces and improve their fortifications. It was during this period that most of the so-called “atrocities” of which Davout was accused took place.

The first allegation related to Davout's demand that the city deliver the contributions Napoleon had ordered to enable him to pay the troops and purchase supplies and rations. When the Chamber of Commerce of the city could agree on neither the amount nor method of payment, Davout seized over 12 million francs from the Bank of Hamburg. The bank then had the responsibility to recover the funds from the citizens and businesses of Hamburg. Although the seizure was undertaken on behalf of the army and with as much legality as the situation allowed, the allegation that Davout “stole” the money from the Bank never entirely disappeared.\textsuperscript{54}

The second allegation grew out of instructions Davout gave when it had become apparent that a siege of Hamburg was a real possibility. On 6 November, Davout ordered that all inhabitants should stock provisions sufficient to withstand a six-month siege. This order fell hardest upon the poor of the city, who were unable to purchase such a quantity in advance. When it became apparent that many were unable, or unwilling, to

\textsuperscript{52} Laville, “Mémoire sur le Siége,” 63 & 77.

\textsuperscript{53} Thiébault, Mémoires, V, 158; Digby Georges Smith, The Greenhill Napoleonic Wars Data Book (London, 1998), 526.

\textsuperscript{54} After Davout’s return to France, he was banished to his home outside Paris for his alleged war crimes. In response, he wrote his Mémoir au Roi, which defended this and his other actions on the grounds of military necessity. Nevertheless, as late as 1890, Field Marshal von Molke, Chief of the German General Staff told the Reichstag: “Did we not see in 1813 during that vile French period when he was already in full retreat, a Marshal of France, as a gesture of farewell, put the Bank of Hamburg in his pocket.” See the front-piece of the 1890 reprint of Davout’s Mémoir au Roi.
obey these orders, Davout on 19 December ordered the expulsion the next day of all who had not complied, as well as all persons who had not been born in Hamburg. Nearly 25,000 persons were forced to leave the city. Most found shelter in Altona and the nearby villages of Ottensen and Barmbeck, but some 1,000 were reported to have died of hunger and exposure. Thiébault ordered the issuance of identity cards to all those permitted to remain in the city, and preference was given to inhabitants without families, or at least without children. Thiébault called it most cruel, but noted that once the decision to remain in Hamburg was made, one could not hesitate over adopting whatever means were necessary.

The third situation arose on 3 January 1814, when a reconnaissance demonstrated that enemy troops approaching from Danish-held Altona could arrive within 250 paces of the French fortifications without being observed. Davout ordered that the entire suburb of Hamburgerberg be burned to clear his field of fire. The inhabitants, including the patients in a local hospital, were given little warning and forced out into the German winter with only what they could carry. Several of the patients died. General César Laville, the Chief of Staff, wrote: “These actions, rigorous to be sure, were made necessary by the circumstances and authorized by the terrible laws of war.”

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55 Both Laville and Gallaher, referencing German sources, state that 25,000 persons were expelled from the city. See Laville, “Mémoire sur le Siége,” 85; John Gallaher, The Iron Marshal [Carbondale, 1976], 287. The number of 1,000 deaths from exposure in this instance was given by the Press Office of the City of Hamburg in an on-line exhibit entitled “Hambourg et France: Passé et avenir communs,” http://www.hamburg.de/Behoerden/Pressestelle/hambourg-france/francais/d/15.htm (Dec. 7, 2003)

56 Thiébault, Mémoires, V, 157.

57 Général de brigade César Laville De Villa Stellone (1775-1848). Originally a Sardinian cavalry officer from Turin, he joined French service in 1799. Promoted to Général de brigade in December 1812, he became Chief of Staff of Davout’s 1st Corps the following month. He remained with Davout as Chief of Staff of the 13th Corps, 1813-1814, and served as Davout’s Secretary-General in the Ministry of War during the Hundred Days of 1815.

58 Laville, “Mémoire sur le Siége,” 82.
Thiébault was never Davout’s friend and probably was “Davout’s most outspoken critic.” Nevertheless, Thiebault later countered the accusations of these so-called atrocities: “As much as I regard him as a poor general, he nevertheless has three incontestable qualities – integrity in matters of finance; concern for his troops…; [and] a fanatical devotion to duty.”

In any event, Davout’s determined leadership certainly sustained the French. With the exception of a series of major assaults in February, none of which were against Thibault’s side of the city defenses, and which the defenders repulsed, fighting remained light. The Allied commander, now Russian General Levin Bennigsen, was content to restrict the fighting to small combats while keeping the city surrounded with his force of 120,000 men. Because of Thiebault’s preparations taken to feed and maintain the garrison, the horror of most sieges – hunger – did not appear. Thiebault’s efforts had increased the army’s stores so it could survive a blockade until October, 1814. As a result, the French troops remained warm, well-equipped, and well-fed, with every expectation of remaining so until it could be relieved by Napoleon’s campaign the following summer. A young cavalry officer who served as a member of a commission auditing the stores wrote: “We found that, for 30,000 men, there was wheat and flour for 18 months, salt meat for two years, an enormous quantity of wine, rum, and spirits; all of good quality and in an excellent state of preservation.”

The only serious problem was the inevitable and anticipated scourge of illness. Each day ten to thirty soldiers died of disease. An outbreak of typhus made February and March the worst months. More than 1,850 soldiers died in that period, along with the Comte de Chabon, who died on 22 March 1814 from an infection caught while visiting

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one of the hospitals. By April, the number of deaths from illness had dropped to 350 per month.\textsuperscript{63}

Because of the siege, news from the outside was slow to arrive. The last definite news from France, dated 20 March and received only in mid-April, indicated that the Allies were being repulsed. On 18 April, however, General Bennigsen received word that Paris had surrendered and Napoleon had abdicated on 6 April. Bennigsen sent this news to Davout, who sharply rejected it.\textsuperscript{64} Bennigsen attempted several more times to convince Davout that the French government had changed, or even to negotiate a truce; Davout, remembering the many times each side had deceived the other throughout the years of war, refused to believe him. Davout was not convinced of Napoleon’s abdication, until his own cousin arrived from Paris on 28 April and affirmed the news. On 29 April, the white flag of Royalist France was hoisted over the garrison.

After almost a month of preparation, the French troops began to leave Hamburg on 26 May with their arms, artillery, and baggage. Davout, whom the Bourbons had replaced with General Gérard, rode with the first troops. Thiébault accompanied him. On the final day of May 1814, the last French effective departed the city, leaving 5,000 sick behind to recover. Excluding the sick left behind, the 13\textsuperscript{th} Corps returned to France with 26,000 men, 100 guns, and 4,000 horses for the cavalry, artillery, and trains.\textsuperscript{65}

Thiébault had been very displeased to be deprived of the opportunity for an active field command during the siege of Hamburg. Closer analysis of Davout’s employment of Thiébault as \textit{Chargé en chef de approvisionnements}, nevertheless, reveals that this position made the very best use of Thiébault’s abilities. The merits of Davout’s decision to remain in Hamburg through the winter of 1813-14 can be debated. Certainly, Thiébault and Loison questioned the decision at the time, and Thiébault remained highly critical of Davout’s performance. The relatively good condition of the 13\textsuperscript{th} Corps, nevertheless, was in large part due to Thiébault’s efforts; at the end of the war, Davout’s Corps was the largest single undefeated French force still in the field. Although

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Laville, “Mémoire sur le Siége,” 108, 117, 121.}
\footnote{Ibid., 121.}
\footnote{Ibid., 123.}
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Thiébault once again missed the opportunity to prove himself on the field of battle, as a result of Davout's decision he again pioneered a new type of military staff officer, the Logistician, recognized today as vital to an army's success in war.
CHAPTER 16
THE ROYAL STAFF CORPS AND THE MÉMOIRES,
1815 – 1846

The Hundred Days

Thiébault, on his return to France, made his peace with the new rulers of the country, as did most other serving officers. General Dupont, who had lost a French corps to the Spanish in 1808, was appointed Minister of War by the new regime, and asked Thibault if he wished to remain on active duty. Thibault hesitated, citing fatigue and the recent death of his father-in-law. Dupont insisted that Thibault at least be presented both to King Louis XVIII and to the Count d’Artois. Thibault’s audience with the King raised no significant problem, but the interview with Artois was more difficult. Thibault later wrote somewhat astringently: “Monsieur [The Count de Artois] received us with inconceivable grace, as one might receive amnestied criminals; and Madame displayed all the harshness appropriate towards rebels whom one still hopes to see punished.”

The one member of the royal family that Thibault was genuinely glad to meet again was Louis-Philippe, the duc d’Orleans. Their bond of childhood friendship remained, and at their meeting they exchanged reminiscences of their time together in the Armée de Nord. Thibault wisely refrained, however, from mentioning the Duke’s unfortunate note to him on the eve of the Duke’s defection to the Austrians with General Dumouriez. When the Duke inquired about his future plans, Thibault was vague. In hindsight, Thibault faulted himself again for not requesting a position; he claimed that the Duke was prepared to offer him the post of aide-de-camp.

1 Thibault, Mémoires, V, 228.
2 Ibid., V, 257. Thibault compared this event to the discussions he had with Napoleon before 18 Brumaire and again in Valladolid in 1809. In each case, he believed that his unwillingness to put himself forward forestalled future advancement. Thibault’s son later claimed in a family history that the Duke twice offered his father the position, and that Thibault twice declined because of pressure from his wife. See A. Thibault, “Histoire de Lady Mary,” Beinecke Library, Hamilton Papers, 134.
Although awarded the cross of a *chevalier de Sainte-Louis* on 31 July 1814, Thiébault was placed in inactive status effective 1 September. When Marshal Soult replaced Dupont as Minister of War and then was himself replaced by General Clarke, the prospects for *Général de division* Thiébault's reemployment appeared very slim. Nevertheless, word of Napoleon’s escape from Elba reached Paris on 9 March. On 11 March, Marshal MacDonald was named commander of the forces in Paris, and Thiébault was recalled to active duty. He was assigned responsibility for the forces guarding the bridge over the Marne River where it joins the Seine at Charenton southwest of Paris. Napoleon arrived in Paris by another route and spared Thiébault the vexing dilemma of deciding if his notion of “duty” would demand that he fire on the Emperor.\(^3\) When a senior staff officer wearing the tricolor cockade of Imperial France rather than the white one of the King arrived, Thiébault followed his new orders and went home.

For nearly a week, Thiébault vacillated – was Napoleon the lawful ruler of France or was he a usurper? Unable to resolve this dilemma, he simply stayed home and made no attempt to approach either Napoleon or Davout, who had been appointed Minister of War on 20 March. In late March, however, Thiébault had a caller, Jean-Philibert Maret. Maret had been Prefect in Orleans when Thiébault commanded the military district there, and Maret’s wife was the godmother of Thiébault’s first child by Zozotte, their son Edouard. Maret had later been appointed a Counselor of State by Napoleon. He came to urge Thiébault to declare his support for Napoleon. The Bourbons would not be coming back, Maret argued, and Thiébault was not rich but had many family responsibilities. Neither Davout, who was already Minister of War, nor Berthier was Thiébault’s friend.\(^4\) It was vital, therefore, that Thiébault write Napoleon to declare his support and send a second, signed copy to Davout. Taking the advice of his old friend, Thiébault wrote the letter. Maret took the letter to the Emperor.\(^5\)

\(^3\) Thiébault, *Mémoires*, V, 290.
\(^4\) They did not yet know that Berthier had refused to join Napoleon again.
\(^5\) Ibid., V, 208-301.
Despite the letter, Thiébault received no orders until Napoleon left Paris for the Armée de Nord. Then, General Jean-Baptiste de Valance called on Thiébault. Valance was commander of a new Reserve Corps that was to be formed in and around Paris, and he offered Thiébault, his former aide-de-camp, command of one of the divisions. On 20 June, while Thiébault was still waiting for his troops – National Guardsmen, recalled veterans, and new conscripts – to assemble, word arrived of the defeat at Waterloo. Thiébault went to the Ministry of War for orders and was told that the Reserve Corps was not going to be formed and he was relieved. The next day, Thiébault went to the Elysée Palace where he spoke to Napoleon for the last time. “Sire,” he said, “permit me to lay at your feet a devotion both profound and respectful.” “It is now France with which we must be concerned,” replied Napoleon. They parted for the last time.

Under the second Restoration, Lieutenant-général Thiébault at first fared well. Marshal Gouvion de Saint-Cyr, who had given Thiébault his first divisional chief of staff post in 1798 in Italy, was named Minister of War. The Marshal then appointed Thiébault commander of the 18th Military District with headquarters in Dijon. This assignment, however, was very short-lived. Saint-Cyr was replaced in September 1815

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6 Jean-Baptiste Cyrus-Maire-Alexandere de Timburne-Thiembronne, Comte de Valance (1757-1822). In 1793, after offering Thiébault a position as his aide-de-camp, the count had defected to the Austrians with Dumouriez and the duc d’Orleans. He had returned to France in 1801, had been rehabilited and was appointed senator by Napoleon in 1805 and reinstated in the army in 1806.

7 Ibid., V, 361.

8 Thiébault’s final reminiscence of the Emperor came from his old friend, Charles-Louis Cadet-Gassicourt. Gassicourt had resumed his post as the Emperor’s pharmacist when Napoleon returned from Elba, and he shared this story after the Emperor had been exiled to St. Helena. Before leaving for Waterloo, Gassicourt claimed, the Emperor had instructed him to prepare a small but powerful dose of poison that the Emperor wished to have with him in the event of defeat or capture. On the night of 21 June, the Emperor took the poison, but then changed his mind and called Gassicourt to find an antidote. By inducing violent vomiting, Gassicourt was able to prevent the poison from taking effect. When he heard that the Emperor’s death on St. Helena was the result of a massive stomach lesion, he told Thiébault: “Some particles of the poison cannot have been extracted, and therefore sooner or later death was inevitable.” See Ibid., V, 374.

9 The rank lieutenant-général replaced that of général de division under the Bourbon regime.
by Thiébault’s old antagonist, General Henry Clarke. Clarke soon discovered the copy of Thiébault’s March letter to Napoleon in the files at the Ministry of War. On 24 October, Thiébault was relieved, placed on inactive status, and banished to Tours under police surveillance.

Then, on 4 April 1817, Marshal Masséna died, and Thiébault was asked to give the internment address at Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris. General Reille, Masséna’s son-in-law, demanded on behalf of the family that Thiébault be permitted to return to Paris. Even General Clarke could not deny a request from the family of a Marshal of France, and the Minister of Police lifted the surveillance and allowed Thiébault to return.

On 10 April, Thiébault spoke at the burial following Masséna’s requiem mass. In a moving address, he reviewed Masséna’s long and distinguished military career without once mentioning Napoleon Bonaparte, and he noted that although Masséna’s illness had prevented him from receiving it directly, the King had sent the Royal Marshal’s baton to the family after his death. Thiébault ended with this peroration:

One calls again for the Infant of Victory…Death alone responds. But still posterity cries out: Glory is the life of heroes, and Masséna has not ceased to live! (La gloire est la vie des héros, et Masséna n’pas cessé de vivre!)  

Shortly after Thiébault's return to Paris, Marshal Gouvion de Saint-Cyr again replaced General Clarke as Minister of War. The return of the King and the Count d'Artois, next in line for the throne, also brought a flood of returning émigré nobles, all claiming to hold general officer rank in the Army of Louis Joseph, Prince of Condé. It soon appeared that France would have more generals than Napoleon had ever named. Saint-Cyr wanted to reform the army, and his first effort was to limit the number of

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12 Louis-Joseph, Prince of Condé (1736-1818). A lieutenant-général under King Louis XVI. In the early days of the Revolution, he attempted to form a French Royal Army in exile, but it was never significant and after the Peace of Lunéville (1801) it was disbanded and he went into exile in England.
general officers to 130 lieutenants-généraux and 230 marcheux de camp (the old royalist term for général de brigade). Of these, 80 lieutenant generals and 130 brigade generals were to be on active duty, the remainder in the reserve.13 Saint-Cyr’s most important and long-lasting achievements, however, were the creation of a separate corps of general staff officers and the establishment of a school to train them. Thiébault became his principal collaborator in this effort.

The Royal Staff Corps

When Saint-Cyr asked a number of senior officers for recommendations on how the staff corps should be organized and trained. Thiébault replied with suggestions based on a pamphlet that he had written in 1801 and published privately, entitled De la nécessité de distinguer les quartiers-général, des états-major des armées, et de l’organisation des uns et des autres. The original purpose of the pamphlet was to clarify the difference between a "headquarters" (le quartier-général) and a “general staff” (état-major de armée), in response to reviewers' criticisms of his Manuel des Adjudans Généraux et des Adjoint employés dans les Etats-Major Divisionnaires de Armées published earlier that year. The pamphlet had described not only the organization and duties of army staffs in considerable detail, but included a chapter on the “Choice and the Admission of Officers to the Staffs, and the Natural and Acquired Qualities that Must Distinguish Them.”14 This chapter formed the theoretical basis of the Royal Staff Corps and its new school, the Ècole d’application d’état-major.

The Royal Staff Corps, organized by a royal decree of 6 May 1818, consisted of 30 colonels, 30 lieutenant colonels, 90 majors, 270 captains, and 125 lieutenants in peacetime, and could be expanded to 640 officers in time of war.15 The Staff Corps was to be restricted to graduates from the new staff school, the Ècole d’application d’état-major. Candidates had to be graduates of either the school of application for infantry and cavalry officers that Napoleon had created in the town of Saint-Cyr, or the

that had trained Napoleon’s technical specialists – artillery officers and engineers.

To develop the new school’s curriculum, Saint-Cyr then recalled the French army’s best known theorist of staff organization and function, Paul Thiébault, to active duty. Thiébault was appointed President of the Comité d’état-major, consisting of the eight lieutenant-generals assigned to the Royal Staff Corps. He was placed in charge of supervising the staff school and classifying the new staff officers according to their qualifications.

At this time, Thiébault’s second staff manual, his Manuel général du service des etats-major généraux et divisionnaires dans les armées, was translated into several languages, including English, Russian, German, and Spanish. One Spanish edition was published at the direction of Simon Bolivar, who wished to use it with his new Latin American army. Like Thiébault’s earlier manual, this work profoundly influenced the development of general staffs throughout the western world, with the possible exception of the United States. The Prussians used Thiebault’s work, but went beyond it by giving the chief of staff greater power that made him essentially a deputy commander. Although Thiébault’s material was known in the United States, and his colleague Jomini’s operational doctrine was enthusiastically accepted at the new military academy at West Point, the American staff system before the Civil War never developed into anything more than a loosely connected set of bureaus in the War Department that dealt directly with each field commander. Even in the United States, however, Thiébault’s emphasis on the written aspects of staff procedure had an impact.16

Thiébault also authored another work in collaboration with General Claude Preval entitled Examen et proposition concernant l’organisation du corps d’état-major that called for further a expansion of the Corps. In this work, Thiébault argued that enlisted personnel should also be assigned to the Corps to provide ceremonial troops, escorts, and some technical services, including secretaries, copyists, printers, engravers, and even a

16 Hittle, The Military Staff: Its History and Development (Harrisburg, 1961), 101. It is interesting to note the similarities of the forms recommended by Thiébault in his Manuel Général and those contained in the 1861 edition of the Revised Regulations for the Army of the United States republished by the National Historical Society, Harrisburg, 1980.
unit of aeronauts for balloon operations. The work was never published, but the manuscript is available in the *Archives de la guerre* at Vincennes.\(^\text{17}\)

Thiébault spent over twenty years of active service developing his thinking on how military staffs should operate. He served in virtually all of the staff positions in the French armies of the Revolution and the Empire, beginning with his assignment as *adjoint* to *Adjudant-général* Donzelot in the Army of the Rhine in 1793. At that time, he had asked his new superior what he should read to learn his duties and was told: “There is no work which contains what you want to know, and you will not be able to hope for any theory but what results from your own practice.”\(^\text{18}\) Thiébault then served as an *adjoint* to Masséna’s Chief of Staff, General Solingnac, in Italy in 1796. There he first encountered Berthier’s instructions and applied them to his own work. He went on to serve as divisional chief of staff with the Army of Rome and the Army of Naples in 1797-98, military secretary to Masséna in 1800, and chief of staff of the Army of Portugal in 1807-1808.

Thiébault’s experiences, however, were not limited to staff work. He had served as a combat commander in positions including company commander (Breda), brigade commander (Austerlitz), and division commander (Aldea de Pont). And he also served four times in politically sensitive military governor positions in Germany and Spain, and as the first modern military logistics officer with Davout in Hamburg. This range of experience was unusually wide for any officer of the period, and Thiébault managed to codify much of it in his staff manuals and related publications. All of these experiences culminated in his work with the Royal Staff Corps – work remembered today in the French Army’s own history of the development of the *État-major*.\(^\text{19}\)

The new Staff Corps generated serious opposition in France, especially its emphasis on education and training. Most of the resistance came from the aristocratic officers who had returned with the Restoration. They believed that the innate leadership

\(^\text{17}\) Service Historique, Corps d’État-major, Carton E\(^\text{18}\) 1954.


qualities of the aristocracy were more important than experience, ability, and dedication. This divergence became more visible after Marie-Victor-Nicholas de Fay, marquis de La Tour-Maubourg, replaced Gouvion de Saint-Cyr as Minister of War in 1819. The following year, a book entitled Réflexions sur le Corps royal de l’Etat-Major was published anonymously. The author attacked the Royal Staff Corps on a variety of grounds, arguing that the Staff Corps would be too far from the line units, warning that the existence of the Corps would limit promotions, and suggested that staff officers would be bureaucrats rather than leaders. The book was actually written by a young staff officer, François-Gervais-Edouard Le Couturier, a relation of the Count Artois. Born in 1793, Le Couturier had remained in France and studied at the Lycée Imperial, then had joined a band of royalist irregulars (federés) in the Vosges in 1815. The following year he was admitted as a supernumerary in Count Artois’ guard. He had been admitted to the École d’application d’état-major in 1818, and graduated as an aide-major in 1821.

In reply to Le Couturier’s attack, Thiébault wrote Réflexions sur le Corps royal de l’Etat-Major ou Examen de l’Ecrit Public sous le Même Titre, to counter what he termed “a reactionary work.” In this book, he described the genesis and nature of, and the need for the Royal Staff, and concluded:

It [the staff corps] provides France with an institution that she, and only she, lacked. Second, it forms a nursery for officers, making them familiar with all aspects of the great art of war. Third, having a corps that is the meeting place and center of all arms, where members can better consider the affairs of war and of politics, and which in this enlightened century, places the army in a better and more elevated situation than it has held until now.20

Unfortunately for Thiébault, the assassination of the duc d’Berry, son of the Comte d’Artois, paved the way for the ultra-royalist faction to triumph in the court of Louis XVIII. Without Marshal Gouvion Saint-Cyr’s protection, Thiébault was relieved of his duties in April of 1822 without further assignment.

During his lifetime and for many years thereafter, Thiébault’s writings on the organization and operation of military staff work represented his greatest contributions to the military art. His staff manuals received international acclaim, and his service after the Restoration as president of the comité d’État-major had long-lasting effect on Marshal

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20 Thiébault, Réflexions, 135.
Saint-Cyr’s new French army staff college and on the thought of general staffs throughout the 19th century.

Thiébault’s military service nonetheless had hardly ended. When his good friend, the duc d’Orléans, became King Louis-Philippe of France in 1830, Thiébault was recalled to the active reserve, where he continued until he reached the full retirement age of 65 in 1834. In retirement, he remained active in military affairs and wrote numerous pamphlets and articles on military issues such as recruitment and the problems of the defense of Paris. He also authored several other works on matters as diverse as English gardens, woman poets, and political theory, and he continued work on a novel that he hoped would counter the philosophy of Pierre Choderlos de Laclos’ then scandalous Des Liaisons dangereuses.21

**Thiébault’s Mémoires**

Thiébault’s most important work, and the work for which he is best known, however, is his controversial Mémoires. The Mémoires were published in 1893-1894, more than forty-five years after his death on 14 October 1846. They are often quoted and nearly as often maligned. The well-known scholar of military history, Colonel John Elting, concluded:

> These [Thiébault’s Mémoires] were originally thought to be reliable, at least regarding events in which Thibault had no personal interest. Later research by Vincent Cronin has shown that they were put together from scattered notes by a ghost writer some fifty years after Thibault died.22

The “ghost writer” was Fernand Calmettes, who edited the 1893-1894 edition of the Mémoires published “under the auspices” of Claire, Zozotte’s oldest daughter, who

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21 The novel was never published. Thibault mentioned beginning this novel while awaiting orders in Irun in 1809. See Thibault, Mémoires, IV, 381. It was described in some detail in “Thibault,” a printer’s proof with corrections in Thibault’s handwriting found in the Thibault Mss., IX, f.2, 94, probably written in 1813; a 1825 biography by his son-in-law mentioned a Romance, “not put on sale “ (Arbnault, et. al., Biographie Nouvelle Des Contemporains (Paris, 1822-1829), IXX, 452); and in a biography written in 1846 mentioned an unpublished novel of manners (romance de mœurs) of five volumes (“Thiébault,” Biographies et Nécrologies des Hommes Marquant (Paris, 1846), III, 162.

22 Elting, Swords, 688. Also see Vincent Cronin in Napoleon Bonaparte: An Intimate Biography (New York, 1972), 445-46.
lived with Thiébault until his death and was never married. Calmettes was a professional editor of memoirs and other works in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and, as such, a well-known literary figure of his time.

The controversy over authorship inspired by Cronin’s assertions is highly debatable. Several extended passages clearly written by Thiébault and published before or within a year of his death, for example, closely parallel and in large sections duplicate word-for-word the published edition of the Mémoires. One such passage is the “Extrait” concerning 18 brumaire discussed in Chapter 6. A second series of correlations appear in two articles written by his son Adolphe on the battle of Austerlitz that appeared in the French military journal Spectateur militaire, in May and June, 1847, shortly after his father’s death. Adolphe claimed to quote extensively from his father’s cahiers. These quotes compare closely with the account of the battle that appears in Paul’s Mémoires. Finally, Madame Junot in her memoirs published in1836 quoted an extensive passage that she claimed was written by Thiébault especially for her book. The passage appears in the Mémoires that Thiébault was writing at that same time, and described a conversation between Thiébault and Napoleon following the withdrawal of the French Army from Portugal in 1808. A similar coincidence of texts appears in the description of her rescue by Thiébault during his governorship of Salamanca from the Spanish insurgent leader Julian Sanchez’s attempt to capture her. These texts are virtually identical to the account in Thiébault’s own Mémoires published nearly sixty years later.

24 Adolphe Thiébault, “Bataille d’Austerlitz – passage du Goldbach”. Note: “Extrait du Spectateur militaire (Cahier de May 1847),” and ”Role de la Brigade Thiébault a la Bataille d’Austerlitz,” Note: “Extrait du Spectateur militaire (Cahier de Juin 1847), Paris: L. Martinet, 1847. The term, “cahier” is usually translated “notebook.” However, it can also have the meaning of a “rough book” i.e. “draft.” Adolphe Thiébault is believed to have been using the term in this latter sense.
25 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 261-271; Laure Junot, Mémoires de Madame la duchesse, VII, 427-35.
Although this evidence of authorship supports the conclusion that the *Mémoires* were not “ghost-written” from “scattered notes,” reservations remain concerning the editing itself and Thiébault’s reliability as a historian. After extensive review, the issues can be reduced to two – were the *Mémoires* significantly altered after Thiébault’s death, and was Thiébault’s historical account reliable.

According to Thiébault, the “Extrait” discussed above and published the year he died was from the fourth volume of his *Mémoires*. In the published version of the *Mémoires*, this text appeared in Volume III. Elsewhere in the same “Extrait,” he also referred to a ‘seventh volume’ of his memoirs. 27 Finally, the biography of Thiébault that appeared in Laurant’s *Biographies et necrologies des hommes marquants du XIX siècle* in 1846, and most probably written before his death, stated that Thiébault was the author of an eight volume set of memoirs. 28 Thiébault died in October of that year, but as late as 1876, Larousse’s *Dictionnaire universel* still attributes an eight-volume draft memoir to him. 29 The problem remains: Did the eight volumes of Thiebault’s manuscript draft reduce to five printed volumes, or where there more significant alterations than can be positively identified.

Thiébault first began work on his memoirs in 1815, soon after the second Restoration. In describing his reasons, he wrote:

> It was at this miserable and feeble time that I developed the project to pull together my *Mémoires*; because in comparison to the heroic period reflected in my earlier memories, what would the following period hold? The stories of the Revolution and Empire would never fail to be read…and, an actor in that drama could recount, with little talent but with great accuracy, that part of it in which he had been involved. 30

The published *Mémoires* end with Zozotte’s death in 1820. “From that fatal date…,” he later wrote, “I disregarded all later memories, and if I have added several

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lines, it was to finish consideration of the many years I had …covered."³¹ Two pages later Thiébault asked of himself:

"Should I speak after that of my children? But not having given my father grandsons, who could at least count as such, I would know how to deal only with the daughters . . . daughters finish like solitary flowers or . . . enter in other families according to their destiny."³²

The sudden death of Thiébault’s second wife Zozotte at the age of 39 occurred on 22 July 1820,³³ leaving him with three daughters, Claire, Naïs, and Alphonsine. The closing years of his and Zozotte’s life together had not been especially happy. Zozotte’s extravagances, flirtations, and “attacks of nerves” annoyed and embarrassed Thiébault. In the Mémoires, he commented on various incidents, but tended to minimize their difficulties. He wrote that “the year 1819 was one of only two years during our 16 years of marriage that I was not perfectly happy.”³⁴ His son Adolphe gave a more graphic description of the couple’s conflicts and infidelities during this period. According to Adolphe: “It was not uncommon for them [Paul and Zozotte Thiébault] to go weeks at a time without seeing each other during fights, …and to employ a servant to carry notes between them.”³⁵ Adolphe said his father’s grief was so exaggerated that it caused ridicule, and quoted one of Paul’s childhood friends as saying that "the general loved her so only since she was gone.”³⁶

Thiébault’s relationship with his eldest son Adolphe had long been strained. Adolphe passed his examinations for the École d’application d’état-major and was admitted in 1819 as one of eight supernummary (uncommissioned) cadets. He graduated

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³¹ Ibid., V, 430. According to Thiébault’s own notes, the Mémoires were finished in 1836.
³² Ibid., V, 433. Thiebault had two sons, Adolphe and Alfred, by his first wife, Betzy, as well as a daughter Laure. The eldest, Adolphe, was very close to his grandfather. The operative words in this passage may be “grandsons, who could at least count as such,” which would appear to indicate that Thiebault did not acknowledge his sons. Of Thiébault’s three daughters by Zozotte, two remained single; and one married.
³³ Thiébault, Mémoires, V, 248-49.
³⁴ Ibid., V, 414-15.
³⁶ Ibid., 155.
in 1821 and was assigned to the garrison at Verdun. Adolphe finally received his commission as a lieutenant in the Royal Staff Corps in 1824.\textsuperscript{37} Thiébault had expressed hope that Adolphe would help him revise and republish his 1813 manual after its international success because of Adolphe's youth and position in the Staff Corps. He claimed he had dropped the project when Adolphe refused to help.\textsuperscript{38}

Adolphe, on the other hand, blamed his father for delaying his military career for ten years. He had attended the Lycée Napoléon (later the Lycée Royal Saint Louis) between 1812 and 1816. As son of a serving general, the Restoration government had offered him a commission as a sub-lieutenant in 1814. His father, however, had refused to give Adolphe the money to purchase the horses and equipment needed by a commissioned officer.\textsuperscript{39} Disappointed, Adolphe had traveled to England with his mother, Betzy Thiébault, and stayed for over a year before returning in 1818 to obtain admission to the École the following year.

After Zozotte’s death, however, Thiébault agreed to outfit Adolphe for his first assignment in Verdun. In a black-bordered letter announcing the dispatch of a trunk containing some of Adolphe’s new uniforms and equipment to Verdun, Paul and all of his children from both marriages included notes saying how much they would miss Adolphe.\textsuperscript{40}

Claire, Thiébault’s oldest daughter by Elizabeth Chenais, finally published the Mémoires in her old age.\textsuperscript{41} In a note written in 1893 and included in the preface to the Mémoires, she wrote:

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 124, 131, 151. In this manuscript, Adolphe expressed considerable anger at his father for the ten-year delay in receiving his commission.

\textsuperscript{38} Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 418.

\textsuperscript{39} A. Thiébault, “Histoire de Lady Mary,” Beinecke Library, Hamilton Papers, 131.

\textsuperscript{40} Lilly Library, Thiébault MSS., Ms V, F-6. The black border indicated Thiébault was still at the time in official mourning for his wife. Unfortunately for future historians, this family equanimity did not last, because if it had at least some of the questions regarding the authorship and credibility of Thiébault’s Mémoires might never have arisen.

\textsuperscript{41} According to a note by the editor, Fernand Calmettes, Claire died on 19 April 1894 without seeing the completed publication. She was eighty-six, had never married, and
had lived with her father until his death in 1846. Editor’s footnote, Thiébault, *Mémoires*, III, 315.
I am the last survivor of the six children of my father, General Baron Thiébault. His name is ended. I have taken it as a duty to carry out his intentions and to publish his handwritten *Mémoires*. I hope that these will be an addition to the history of his times and will contribute to a better knowledge and a more complete appreciation of my father by the present generation.\(^{42}\)

When Thiébault died, what was the status of these memoirs? What happened to Thiébault’s manuscript in the years between his death and the publication of his *Mémoires*, especially since Thiébault died apparently believing that he had an eight-volume set of memoirs ready for publication, if not already at the publishers? Did an eight-volume printer’s proof await final editing, or was there only an eight-volume manuscript that would ultimately be published in five volumes? Paul’s oldest son, Adolphe Thiébault, is known to have had access to his father’s manuscript at least until 1847. Adolphe, eventually a major in the Royal Staff Corps and a published author in his own right, clearly used Thiébault's draft in his own articles. Compelling evidence exists, however, to suggest that revisionist family history rather than concern over accuracy of military and political details may have affected the final editing and content.

The most significant and apparent gaps of fact relate to Thiébault’s personal life. Betzy Walker, to whom Adolphe was obviously devoted, is never mentioned by name in the *Mémoires*, and her existence is barely recognized in an editor’s footnote. Thiébault had demanded a divorce from Betzy Walker in 1803, very shortly after the birth of their last child, a son Alfred. Within days of finalizing their divorce in 1804, he married Elizabeth “Zozotte” Chenais, with whom he had three children who survived. Yet Thiébault treated in detail his romances with Pauline Ricciulli and with other women during the Italian campaigns while he was still married to Betzy. By contrast, his life with, purported fidelity to, and great love for Zozotte take up a disproportionate share of the final two volumes of the *Mémoires*. This disparity, therefore, raises questions about how much detail involving Betzy and his early years with the *Armée du Nord* was expunged, either by the editor or by a family member. Was material on the first wife

\(^{42}\) Thiébault, *Mémoires*, I, xi. In discussions of the children of both families, those who died in infancy are not considered. Although Thiébault had no identifiable male descendents after his grandson by Laure was killed in action in North Africa, both Adolphe and Laure also had daughters who survived and married; Nais had a son and daughter.
expunged at his daughter Claire’s insistence? And, even if this could be established, the question would remain as to what else was left out of the final publication either at her instigation, or due to earlier editing of the manuscript.

In later years, Adolphe compiled and bound a large collection of family letters and papers. The known collection primarily concerns the maternal side of his family, but also includes many of his father’s and grandfather's papers, published material about his father, and a collection of letters and papers concerning Étienne Jouy, who remained a long-time friend of Betzy and her children (Jouy’s wife was Betzy’s sister). No evidence concerning Thiébault’s Mémoires or the original manuscripts (cahiers), however, has been found in these collections, although they do contain printer proofs of several of General Thiébault’s other works.

The editor, M. Calmettes, explicitly stated that there were a number of deletions from the original manuscript. In three places the editor speculated on the substance of deletions based on what appears before or after the missing passage. He excused two of these by pointing out that the texts before and after each section refer to individuals, usually royalists, who became influential during the Restoration, suggesting that Paul thought it untactful to publish them. The third deletion concerned Thiébault’s purchase of the Richelieu château in the Department of Indre-et-Loire in the spring of 1815, the very time he was unable to find the money to outfit his son as a sub-lieutenant. In a footnote to the description of this latter omission, Calmettes wrote:

This seems to be the meaning of this mutilation. In several other sections the same scissors cut some passages to follow the interest or opinion that someone wished to serve. But we were able to find among the notes and papers left by the General some sections of his first draft (des essais de première réduction) or the

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43 These papers are available in three collections: The Thiébault Manuscripts and the Jouy Manuscripts held by the Lilly Library of Indiana University, and The Lady Mary Hamilton Papers: 1758-1853, held by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University. However, from the inspection of the bindings and evidence of their provenance, all three collections were originally part of a single collection assembled by Adolphe Thiébault in the latter half of the 19th Century. Betzy returned to France and died at the home of her brother, Admiral Walker, in Blois, France, on 22 October 1824.

44 Thiébault, Mémoires, I, 273 and V, 264.

material necessary to fill the gaps. And we indicated only those the very rare suppressions were it was not possible for us to discover the equivalent.\footnote{Ibid., V, 395 footnote.}

Finally, there is a certain inconsistency to the \textit{Mémoires} themselves. Volumes I through III are fairly straight-forward military histories, but also include many personal reminiscences except those concerning his life with Betzy. The military aspects of these volumes of the \textit{Mémoires} compare quite accurately with other first-hand accounts. Volume IV, which begins shortly after his marriage to Zozotte, on the other hand, is of very mixed quality. Volume IV covers his service in Fulda, the period with Junot during the invasion of Portugal, and his service in Spain from 1808 to 1812. Like the earlier volumes, some of his military history compares closely with other memoir accounts and primary source material. On the other hand, his service as governor of Burgos and later in 1812 with the Army of the North – both unpleasant periods in his life – are covered in a confused and imprecise way, with the decisions for many of his actions attributed to his feelings for Zozotte and the timing blurred. Finally, Volume V again takes on an entirely different character, replete with precise dates, extensive footnotes by Thiébault himself, and long quotes from official correspondence.\footnote{There is surprisingly little material concerning Thiébault in the \textit{Archives de la guerre}. Even his own service dossier is missing from the Archives’ very complete collection of officer dossiers of the period. It is possible that much relevant official correspondence and other papers were removed by Thiébault himself from the \textit{Depot de la guerre} in the 1830s when Thiébault was completing the \textit{Mémoires}. Between 2000 and 2002, the \textit{Archives nationales} in Paris acquired three small collections of official correspondence that originated in General Thiébault’s personal papers. In these collections are a number of short summaries in Thiébault’s handwriting as well as official documents. This is probably the type of material the editor Calmettes used to fill some of the missing portions of the manuscript. See Archives nationales, Fonds Thiébault, AP618.}

In summary, one can judge that the \textit{Mémoires} published in the 1890s were certainly written by Thiébault. They were not the creation of editor Fernand Calmettes from “scattered notes.” It is very likely, however, that at least a sizable portion of what Thiébault wrote and intended to be published – as much as three volumes worth – was not included in the final publication. All of this raises some as yet unanswerable questions. Exactly what was included in the missing material in addition to his life with
Betzy; why was it removed, and why was Adolphe Thiébault, a soldier, a published author in his own right and retired, not more involved in the publication of the Mémoires? There is considerable circumstantial evidence that points to a deep division in the family. It is unclear if the divisions were among the children of the two marriages or between Thiébault himself and his children. Adolphe claimed in his family history that Thiébault himself sowed foment between the children of his two families. At no place did Adolphe indicate if these attempts succeeded after his half-sisters reached adulthood, and he and his siblings went on with their lives.

In any case, numerous other family details that could be expected from the tenor of the later volumes are missing. Laure, Thiébault's daughter with Betzy’s, is mentioned only once in the Mémoires – in the context of the will that Zozotte discovered in 1813. Further, the Mémoires refer once in a footnote to Laure's husband, Jacques Marquet de Montbreton de Norvins, without mentioning that he was Thiébault's son-in-law. Thiébault had strongly opposed Norvins' marriage to Laure in 1823 on the grounds of economy, but was blackmailed into agreeing to it by Adolphe, who had discovered his father in a compromising situation with the governess of his half-sisters and used the knowledge to force his father’s consent to Laure's marriage. Norvins had been General Leclerc’s secretary in Santa Domingo and later became a well known Napoleonic historian. In 1827, Norvins wrote Histoire de Napoleon, the first serious biography of the emperor, and he also collaborated with Betzy’s brother-in-law, Étienne Jouy, in the publication of the 20-volume Biographie nouvelle des contemporaines, 1820-1829.

What can be said about Thiébault, the man? Whatever his family life, he was no better or worse than many of his contemporaries. As a soldier, he was unquestionably a courageous and able, if less-than-dramatic, leader of men. He was also a skilled and talented staff officer, capable of elaborating and communicating his commander’s plans in an age when staff officers were often glorified messengers or political or family

49 Thiébault, Mémoires, IV, 45fn.
50 A. Thiébault, “Histoire de Lady Mary,” Beinecke Library, Hamilton Papers, 163.
sycophants. His promotion record is instructive. Thiébault was promoted from non-commissioned officer to lieutenant for courage in battle (1794); from lieutenant to captain (Belgium, 1775) and from captain to major (*chef de escadron*) (Italy, 1798) for his performance on various staffs. His promotions from major to colonel (*chef de brigade/adjudant-general*) (Naples, 1799) and from colonel to *général de brigade* (Genoa, 1800) and to *général de division* after Austerlitz were for battlefield leadership.

Thiébault was also an intelligent and perceptive practitioner of civil/military relations as his repeated assignments as military governor (Fulda, Burgos, Salamanca, Lübeck) and military/political assignments in Naples, Lisbon, and Hamburg demonstrate. Nevertheless, his greatest strength was as a staff officer, where success demanded a high degree of analytical skill, clarity, order, tact, and procedure.

Many of Thiébault’s skills as a staff and civil affairs officer were the direct result of his early education. His father Dieudonné, a pedagogue firmly rooted in the traditions of the Enlightenment, provided him with the skills to generalize from his military experiences and to put these principles into action. Although before the age of 14 he had received some basic training at Frederick’s military school in Berlin, his real military training was based on experience. Like many of the thinkers of the Enlightenment less cynical than Voltaire, Thiébault believed not only that “virtue was its own reward” but that it would be recognized by others and rewarded in the “best of all possible worlds.” The thought did not initially occur to him that failing to follow up on Berthier’s request for a letter to call in 1796, or describing Soult’s performance at the siege of Genoa critically in 1800, or even implicitly questioning Napoleon’s treatment of conquered nations in his 1813 manual would inhibit his advancement. This characteristic ingenuousness combined with a misplaced sense of pride also played a role in his refusal to “ask” for favors, either from Berthier (1796), from Savery (1803), from Napoleon (1807, 1809), or even from his friend the *duc d’Orleans* (1814).

These same character traits also carried the seeds of Thiébault’s career problems. Perhaps the most critical point was during the days of *18 brumaire* when his insistence on obeying the dictates of proper order and procedure led him to absent himself from assisting Bonaparte in the coup and even to insult him, at least by implication if not to his face, in the salon at St. Cloud. He behaved this way despite the fact that he clearly
understood that the government of the Directory had led France to the brink of disaster and that Bonaparte had both the ability and the popular support to remedy the problem. The tact that serves a staff officer well in dealing with line officers appears to have masked a degree of shyness or an unwillingness to confront and deal with potentially hostile situations with superiors.

Thiébault himself recounted other examples of these traits throughout his *Mémoires*, but his behavior during the days surrounding *18 brumaire* was the most critical. Napoleon Bonaparte prized intelligence and ability in his officers, but he prized personal loyalty even more highly. Over the years Napoleon forgave many lapses of judgment or performance in his subordinates, but he seldom completely forgave a lapse of loyalty. Bonaparte regarded Thiébault’s attitude during the crucial days of *brumaire* as a failure of loyalty. Moreover, Thiébault’s indirect attempt to recover Bonaparte’s good will by sending his “Plan for a New Italian Campaign” a few days later was not sufficient for the forthright Corsican. Bonaparte thus never completely forgave Thiébault, although he would continue to make extensive use of Thiébault’s abilities until the end of the Empire. Thiébault himself recognized this. Writing of this plan for a new Italian campaign, he noted:

> It [Thiébault’s plan] in many respects anticipated the plan so brilliantly carried into effect at Marengo. I do not know whether it was to this that I owed, not the good will of the First Consul – I had lost that forever – but his favorable opinion. As I learned from those about him, he never failed to see that some use could be made of me, but he never forgave me for not having following him when he most needed supporters.

> It was probably not just Thiébault’s “Italian Plan” that attracted Bonaparte’s interest. He also knew both Thiébault’s record of performance and his publications.

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51 Thiébault’s plea of ill-health in the covering letter of the “Plan” to Napoleon also echoed another character trait that reappeared throughout his life. Although Thiébault appeared to have generally enjoyed robust good health (he lived to the age of 77), he often fell ill at convenient times – to avoid service with his regiment in the Vendée; in Italy just prior to the Battle on the Trebbia; the days of *19 brumaire*; after Austerlitz, and at least twice while he served in Portugal and Spain in his later career. This tactic was also used by others to avoid distasteful or unpleasant service as exemplified by Napoleon when he was ordered to the Vendée.

52 Thiébault, *Mémoires*, III, 73.
Bonaparte had personally reviewed and approved a passage in Carnot’s *Sur la defense des place de guerre* that read: “The journal on the defense of Genoa, which was written by a distinguished officer...should be read by all soldiers called upon to defend prepared positions as a source of valuable instruction.”\(^{53}\) Bonaparte was also undoubtedly familiar with Thiébault’s *Manuel for Adjutants-General and Adjutants* and his other military writings.

Although many historians rely on Thiébault’s *Mémoires* and military histories, he is often accused of rewriting history in his memoirs to favor his angers and resentments about his own fortunes and those of his contemporaries. John Gallaher in his biography of Davout summarizes this criticism: “He was, like Vandamme, disillusioned that he had not received a marshal’s baton and considered himself more intelligent and more capable than Davout [or many of Napoleon’s other Marshals].”\(^ {54}\) Others, moreover, maintain that Thiébault was an “energetic hater” and “full of clever, malicious little stories.”\(^ {55}\) Indeed, the French Napoleonic scholar, Jean Toulard called Thiébault “the sharpest tongue in the army” with considerable justice.\(^ {56}\)

Unquestionably, like all the officers in the Imperial Army, Thiébault had his “enemies” list, headed by Soult. Clarke, and Berthiér, and he rarely hesitated to place the least favorable interpretation possible on the actions of the former two. Yet the only time he was critical of Berthier’s military performance was in Rome in 1798, a situation that resulted in problems for Masséna. Thiébault was never critical of Berthier’s staff work, and his criticism of Soult long predates his *Mémoires* with his account of the Siege of Genoa. Thiébault was also unsparing of many others, including his friends and patrons, Masséna and Junot, for their performance in Portugal, as well as at least some of his own missteps and follies.

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\(^{53}\) Thiébault, *Journal des operations*, II, xi.

\(^{54}\) Gallaher, *The Iron Marshal*, 216.


\(^{56}\) Toulard, *Dictionnaire Napoléon*, 1636.
To assess Thiébault’s reliability, it is necessary to separate his factual history from his analysis of the personal motives that sometimes governed operations. Even his leading modern critics give him credit for factual accuracy. Tulard, after commenting on Thiébault’s “sharp tongue,” declared that the Mémoires “supply … useful information,” and Elting stated that “his accounts of events in which he had no intense personal interest are considered highly factual.”57 If the events recounted in the Mémoires are compared to other contemporary accounts, Thiébault’s version of the facts is usually confirmed and often provides supplementary detail consistent with the events described. Thiébault often judged individuals harshly and his operational analysis may be disputed; one can nevertheless conclude that his factual history is as true as a man’s memory can recall.

Perhaps the best way to judge Thiébault is to take him at his own word. Comparing the performance of generals in Italy in 1797-1798, he was positive about Championnet, whom he respected, and Moreau, whom he detested, while being very critical of MacDonald whom he thought a “likable” and “valiant soldier,” Thiébault concluded: “I might have loved or hated them all alike, but I would have said [concerning their performance] neither more nor less.”58

The performance Thiebault expected of others, he demanded no less of himself. He made great contributions to the professionalism of the military staff and the military art. As a soldier, he was dedicated to France; he served loyally during the Revolution, the Republic, and the Empire. While not gaining the recognition he desired during his lifetime, his legacy in the Mémoires and other writings continues to influence historians and soldiers today.

Paul Thiebault died at his home in Paris on 14 October 1846 at the age of 77. He was buried at Père Lachaise cemetery in the tomb he designed for his father and where he had buried his wife Zozotte. His tomb on Path 28 of the cemetery is surrounded by those of his comrades-in-arms. Located near by are the crypts of Davout and Ney, and within a

57 Esposito and Elting, Military Atlas, “Recommended Reading List – Thiébault” (London, 1999), [no page number].

58 “Au rest, je les aurais indistinctement haïs ou aimés, les ou les autres, que je n’en aurais dit ni plus ni moins.” (Thiébault, Mémoires, III, 17.)
few yards stands the towering obelisk of his old friend and mentor, André Masséna, defender of Genoa.

Figure 26. Lithograph of Tomb of Général Paul Thiébault, Paris. (Courtesy Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.)
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