The Military and Diplomatic Career of Jacques Étienne MacDonald

Ricky Eugene Parrish
THE MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC CAREER
OF JACQUES ÉTIENNE MACDONALD

By

RICKY EUGENE PARRISH

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The members of the Committee approve the dissertation of Ricky E. Parrish defended on November 7, 2005.

________________________________________
Donald D. Horward
Professor Directing Dissertation

________________________________________
Patrick O'Sullivan
Outside Committee Member

________________________________________
Maxine Jones
Committee Member

________________________________________
William Oldson
Committee Member

________________________________________
Jonathan Grant
Committee Member

The Office of Graduate Studies has verified and approved the above named committee members.
I wish to dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my mother, Martha Beasley, who passed away in 2003, prior to the completion of this work. Her support was constant, and invaluable. I hope to continue with the same drive and zest for life that she exhibited during her life.
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the military and diplomatic career of Jacques Étienne Macdonald. It is based on archival research at the Archives de la Guerre, located at the Château de Vincennes, the Archives Nationales, and the Archives Diplomatiques at the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères in Paris, as well as printed primary sources from the period. This work is the first detailed examination of Macdonald’s career. Although he was not one of the greatest of Napoleon’s marshals, Macdonald’s career deserves scrutiny because it spanned the end of the *ancient regime*, the French Revolution and Napoleonic periods, the Restoration of the Bourbon dynasty, and ended shortly after the July Revolution of 1830. The length and success of his career marks Macdonald as an important historical figure of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and one worthy of scholarly study.

Macdonald’s career exemplifies the mobility of Frenchmen who adapted to the numerous changes that took place in France from 1789-1815, making the most of each shift in political fortune to advance himself in his chosen field. He used the patronage of the *ancien regime* to establish a position in the French military. Once the Revolution began, he advanced in rank due to the need for officers caused by the flight of the French nobles, war casualties, and the executions of military officers during the Terror. Rising to the rank of General of division in the French army, he became one of the successful generals who extended French control in Europe. He saw service in the Low Countries, Germany, and Italy during this time. Napoleon sought his support for his coup of 18 Brumaire, and he was rewarded with the command of the Army of the Grisons. After the campaign of 1800, Macdonald was sent on a diplomatic mission to Denmark. This post was his last official service until 1809 due to his
outspoken condemnation of the trial of General Jean Moreau as well as an ill-advised affair with Napoleon’s sister, Pauline Bonaparte.

Napoleon’s need for experienced commanders brought Macdonald out of retirement in 1809 for the campaign against Austria. From this point, he saw service in Italy, Hungary, Austria, Spain, Russia, Germany, and France before he was instrumental in negotiating Napoleon’s abdication in 1814. Macdonald’s military career shifted from active command to that of administration at this point. He took on various posts under the Bourbons, including Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honor, which he held until his retirement in 1831.

His contributions to France were significant during the Revolution and Empire and help to explain the establishment of French hegemony in Europe during the Napoleonic period.
The period of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Empire is one of the most colorful and interesting periods in history. Although Napoleon’s career has been examined in detail, there are many significant topics that have yet to be explored. The career of Jacques Étienne Macdonald is such an example. Born in a Scottish emigrant family, Macdonald proceeded to carve out a career that led him to the pinnacle of society during this period and beyond. He used the patronage system of the ancien régime to gain a position in the French military, and then took advantage of the fluidity of the Revolution to rise to the rank of general of division (1794). His dedicated service to Napoleon gained him the position of Marshal of France in 1809. From that point, Macdonald served in Spain, Russia, Germany, and France. In 1814, he was one of the men chosen to represent Napoleon in the negotiations that ended with the first abdication. Once this was completed, Macdonald served the Bourbons in the Senate and ultimately became the Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honor. This last service was especially important to Macdonald, because he was always concerned with the well-being of the soldiers.

There is no comprehensive study of Macdonald’s career. He wrote his Memoirs for his son in 1825. This was published in 1895, and while it provides a great deal of personal information, it is not a scholarly work, and is more than a bit one-sided. There are many studies that include Macdonald’s activities, especially concerning the 1813 and 1814 campaigns, but nothing that concentrates solely on him. It is my goal to fill in this gap in the historiography of the period. This dissertation will utilize the extensive collection of correspondence located at the Archives de la Guerre along with other primary source material located at the Archives Nationales and the Archives
Diplomatiques at the Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. Of the printed sources available, the correspondence at the Archives de la Guerre proved to be most valuable.
CHAPTER 1

FROM EARLY LIFE TO REVOLUTION

France has been the home for political exiles from the British Isles for many years. Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, fled there from the wrath of Henry II. James II, the last Stuart king of England, fled to France in 1688 as a result of the so called “Glorious Revolution.” In 1745, the pretender to the English throne, Charles Edward Stuart - "Bonnie Prince Charlie" - raised the Scottish clans against the Hanoverian king, but fled to France after his defeat at the battle of Culloden in 1746. With the prince went several supporters who also had to flee Scotland. One such man was Neill Macachaim, of the Macdonald clan. As a reward for his service to the prince, he was placed in Ogilvy's Scotch regiment, in the French army, and quickly forgotten.¹ This was how the son of a Scottish exile was born in France and who, later, was to attain one of its most coveted titles: Marshal of France.

Jacques-Étienne Macdonald was born 17 November 1765 in the city of Sedan. Soon after his birth, his family moved to Sancerre, which was close to the city of Bourges, south of Paris. Macdonald had a brother and two sisters, but his brother and one sister died at an early age. His education was "somewhat neglected" in Sancerre, but he was sent to school in Paris under the instruction of Chevalier Pawlet. His family planned for Macdonald to enter the clergy, with the

expectations of a cannonry at Cambrai, but his studies, especially the works of Homer, turned his attention towards the military.\(^2\)

Macdonald was encouraged to study mathematics for an engineering career, but he failed his first examination. Thanks to the intervention of several high-placed patrons, including Prince Ferdinand de Rohan, the Archbishop of Cambrai, he did not have to repeat his studies; on 1 April 1785, Macdonald was given a commission as a lieutenant in the Maillebois regiment, which was in the service of Holland. During this period, Macdonald served at Nijmegen, Arnhem, and Bois-le-Duc, training his men and preparing for a possible conflict with Austria. However, much to the disappointment of the new lieutenant, the Dutch made peace with Austria, and Macdonald's regiment was disbanded. Macdonald received a small lump sum payment rather than a pension and returned to France.\(^3\)

After staying in Sancerre for several months, showing off his uniform, Macdonald joined the French military. However, due to his service in a foreign army, which was denigrated at the time in France, he had to start as a simple volunteer on 12 July 1786 in Count Arthur Dillon's regiment (later renamed the 87th Line). He was promoted to sous-lieutenant de remplacement on 12 June 1787. He became a sous lieutenant on 1 December of the same year, and spent the next several years studying the soldier's profession.\(^4\)

Once the Revolution was underway, the opportunity for promotion allowed Macdonald to rise rapidly through the officer corps; he was promoted to lieutenant on 10 October 1791. The assistance of a patron was also helpful to the young officer's career. Macdonald was acquainted with General Pierre de Riel, Marquis de Beurnonville, who was to aid him several times during his early

\(^2\) Ibid., 5-7.
\(^3\) Ibid., 7-9; France, Archives de la guerre, Service historique de l'armée de la terre, Château de Vincennes, MSS, [hereafter Service historique], Dossier de Maréchal Macdonald, Carton MF-20.
career. However, the first instance of help was not related to the military. Macdonald met Marie-Constance Jacob, a young creole, and they fell in love. The father of the young lady, who had made a fortune in the West Indies, was reluctant to give his daughter away to someone with the limited prospects of a young army officer. However, thanks to the support of Beurnonville and other patrons, the gentleman changed his mind, and Macdonald married mademoiselle Jacob on 5 May 1791, becoming the first of his three wives.⁵

On 17 June 1792, Macdonald was made an aide-de-camp to General Beurnonville, who was given command of the Camp de Maulde, south of Tournai; there were eight battalions of infantry and ten squadrons of cavalry in the camp. Macdonald was not to stay with Beurnonville for very long, however; General Charles-François Dumouriez, charged with the command of the left flank of the Armée du Nord, moved his headquarters to the Camp de Maulde. Dumouriez, who needed staff officers, employed Macdonald for several tasks. Satisfied with his work, Dumouriez asked Macdonald to join his staff as an aide-de-camp. Although reluctant at first, Macdonald agreed and was promoted to captain on 19 August 1792 and began his new position ten days later.⁶

As an aide to General Dumouriez, Macdonald was involved in several battles of the Revolution. When he joined Dumouriez's staff, the Prussian general, Charles William Ferdinand, the Duke of Brunswick, was invading France. Macdonald was with Dumouriez, who supported the right flank of General François-Étienne Kellermann at the battle of Valmy on 20 September 1792.⁷

After the battle, Macdonald accompanied Dumouriez to Paris, where they arrived on 11 October to discuss the upcoming campaign in Belgium that the

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general was planning. They returned to the army at Valenciennes on 20 October. Macdonald went to Lille, where he accompanied a reconnaissance toward the town of Tournai, with the objective of gathering information for the upcoming French offensive. The commander of the reconnaissance was General Antoine-Nicolas Collier, Count La Marlière. The scouting party encountered an enemy force of about 1,200 men and two pieces of artillery. Although the French outnumbered these troops, the first shots caused Macdonald's party to flee back to Lille in a panic.8

Despite the failure of Macdonald's scouting party, the French received enough information to begin their campaign to conquer Belgium. The French army attacked an Austrian army under the command of Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen on 6 November 1792; this force was in an entrenched position on a height between the village of Jemappes and the city of Mons. The French army, which outnumbered the Austrians by almost four to one, frontally assaulted the position and, supported by their artillery, drove the enemy from the field. Macdonald, placed under the command of Louis Philippe d'Orleans, the Duke of Chartres9, led a regiment of dragoons during the final advance. For his efforts, Macdonald was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel of the 94th Line on 12 November 1792; however, he never joined that regiment but remained as an aide to General Dumouriez.10

After the battle of Jemappes, Macdonald again accompanied General Dumouriez to Paris, arriving on 1 January 1793.11 While in Paris, Dumouriez was very active, but with mixed results. He tried to save Louis XVI from execution, but failed. He also labored to replace the incompetent Minister of War, Jean-Nicolas Pache. In this, he was successful, and the new Minister was

9 In 1830, he became Louis Philippe, King of France.
General Beurnonville, Dumouriez’ friend and Macdonald’s first patron.
Macdonald renewed his acquaintance with General Beurnonville. Thanks to the
assistance of the General, Macdonald was promoted to the rank of Colonel and given command of the Picardy Regiment (2nd Line) on 8 March 1793.  

This promotion came at an opportune moment for Macdonald. General Dumouriez, increasingly at odds with the Jacobin government in Paris, plotted to overthrow his civilian opposition. However, his loss of the battle of Neerwinden caused him to lose prestige and the army did not support his attempted coup. Macdonald, who only joined his new command on 24 March, was not involved in Dumouriez's treason.

Macdonald's regiment was stationed at Orchies under the command of General Joseph Miaczynski. On 1 April 1793, he received news that the Minister of War was changing horses near his headquarters and that his presence was requested. Macdonald, surprised, met Beurnonville, who introduced him to four Commissioners of the National Convention; they questioned Macdonald on the movement of the army, but he was uninformed due to his recent arrival. This deputation of five men had been sent from Paris to arrest General Dumouriez, but were themselves arrested by the general and turned over to Austrian forces. The next day, Macdonald was ordered to march to Lille by General Miaczynski. This was part of Dumouriez' efforts to gain control of the government. However, the army did not support Dumouriez and word reached the civil authorities at Lille. General Miaczynski, sent ahead by Dumouriez, entered the city ahead of Macdonald and was arrested. The civil authorities in Lille also feared the presence of Macdonald's troops. Macdonald, moving with

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12 Service historique, Dossier de Maréchal Macdonald, Carton MF-20; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 18.
14 Northeast of Douai.
15 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 18; Jomini, Histoire critique et militaire, III, 138; Gazette Nationale, ou le Moniteur Universel, 97, 7 April 1793 (hereafter Le Moniteur).
his regiment, reached the outskirts of Lille when a courier met him; he was ordered to stop his march, make camp, and remain with his men.\textsuperscript{16}

Macdonald had several problems to overcome at this time. First, the civil authorities at Lille were suspicious of his motives and refused to admit the troops into the city. The soldiers needed food and shelter, however, so they were ordered to march to another suburb of Lille, where they were told that they would find food and shelter. Upon arrival, there were no supplies of any kind, the gates of the town was closed, and Macdonald was ordered to appear before the city council. The men in the regiment almost mutinied, but Macdonald was able to keep them under control. He entered the city, and was interrogated by the city council.\textsuperscript{17}

Fortunately for Macdonald, he had orders to march to Lille, not capture it. He convinced the council of his loyalty to France, and was told to return to his men and march to the camp of \textit{La Madeleine}. General Miaczynski, who declared that Macdonald’s loyalties were with the Revolution, gave him command of all the troops at the camp of \textit{La Madeleine} and those at Orchies. Macdonald returned to his troops and told them that their needs would be met. This raised their spirits; however, upon arrival at the camp, there was no food or shelter. The soldiers wandered off to forage for themselves, leaving Macdonald with the regimental standard. The next morning, the men responded to the call to assembly. Macdonald met with Adjutant-General Pierre Dupont, an old friend from his days with the Maillebois regiment, and he was able to obtain supplies for his men.\textsuperscript{18}

Macdonald had another test of loyalty to pass. General Dumouriez, upon hearing that Lille had not been taken by his troops, sent General Philippe Devaux, an old friend of Macdonald's, to carry out his orders. General Devaux arrived in the camp and made use of Macdonald's quarters while he was at a


\textsuperscript{17} Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 20-24.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 24-26; Phipps, \textit{Armies of the First French Republic}, I, 166-67. This was the same Dupont who commanded the French defeat at Baylen several years later.
meeting in Lille. General Louis-Jean Lavalette, the temporary military commander of Lille, ordered Macdonald to arrest Devaux as a further measure of his loyalty to the Revolution. When Macdonald entered his quarters at 8:00 P.M., Devaux welcomed him, but Macdonald stated, "My friend, I do not know what they want of you, but I have orders to arrest you." This disagreeable action had the effect of clearing Macdonald's name temporarily, but his association with Dumouriez, Beurnonville, and Miaczinski would haunt him during the Terror.¹⁹

The defection of Dumouriez paralyzed the Armée du Nord. It took the new commander, General Auguste-Marie Dampierre, some time to reorganize the army. Eventually, General La Marlière, who had commanded Macdonald's reconnaissance prior to the battle of Jemappes, arrived to assume command of the area around Lille. Almost immediately, the general was informed about the suspicious past associations of the colonel of the 2nd Line. The Lieutenant-Colonel superseded by Macdonald's appointment and a Captain who had served in the regiment were behind these accusations. General La Marlière summoned Macdonald, but was surprised when he reported. La Marlière assured Macdonald of his friendship, promised to defend him, and sent him back to his regiment.²⁰

General La Marlière made good on his promise within a few days. The two disgruntled officers took their complaints to a civil commissioner, who ordered an investigation into Macdonald's activities. At first, efforts were made to connect Macdonald to Dumouriez' treason; this failed because he had left his position as an aide-de-camp four months prior to the flight of Dumouriez. Next, the officers tried to have Macdonald transferred to a position as an Adjutant-General, which would allow the Lieutenant-Colonel to assume command of the 2nd Line. Macdonald argued that this would reflect badly upon his record as commander of the regiment, and suggested that the Lieutenant-Colonel should

be given the position of Adjutant-General. This satisfied General La Marlière and the civil commissioner, who promoted the Lieutenant-Colonel out of the regiment.\textsuperscript{21} Macdonald stayed with his regiment, forgotten for the moment by the civil commissioners.

Macdonald and the troops trained at the camp of \textit{La Madeleine} and skirmished regularly with the Allied forces. The Allied army moved towards Valenciennes on 23 May 1793, which was part of a general advance along the line. On this operation, a force of 500 Dutch troops entered the city of Tourcoing. General La Marlière counter-attacked the next day. Macdonald, along with another line regiment, 400 gendarmes, and a dragoon regiment attacked Tourcoing, taking most of the Dutch force prisoner; a grenadier of the 2nd Line captured a flag, which was presented to the Convention on 25 May 1793.\textsuperscript{22}

The skirmishing continued on, both at the front and with the Jacobin government in Paris. General La Marlière, who was confirmed as a general of division on 15 May 1793, was arrested on 22 July on charges of treason, and guillotined on 27 November.\textsuperscript{23} His successor was a former Lieutenant Colonel from the 2nd Line: Antoine-Anne Béru. Béru was promoted to general of brigade on 15 May and took command of Macdonald's division on 22 July.\textsuperscript{24} Macdonald, faced with the same situation as the disgruntled Lieutenant-Colonel from his regiment, spoke with General Béru, and agreed to work with him for both of their benefits.\textsuperscript{25}

On 17 August, the French outposts at Blaton and Lannoy were attacked by the Prince of Orange, who was covering the advance of the Duke of York towards Dunkirk. General Jean-Baptiste Jourdan, the future Marshal, ordered Béru to retake these two posts. Macdonald marched from Quesnoy on 18 August, surprised the garrison at Blaton, and captured seven guns. However,

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 28-29; Phipps, \textit{Armies of the First French Republic}, I, 182.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Le Moniteur}, No. 147, 26 May 1793; Chuquet, \textit{Valenciennes}, 94-95.
\textsuperscript{23} Six, \textit{Dictionnaire Biographique}, II, 41-42.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., I, 93. Béru was not promoted to general of division until 16 September 1793.
\textsuperscript{25} Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 30.
Béru was routed from Linselles and Macdonald had to withdraw back to his original position. Fortunately for Béru, the Allies were more interested in reaching Dunkirk than pressing their advantage, so they withdrew their troops. The French reoccupied the two posts without further opposition.  

Macdonald received credit for the success, such as it was, and was promoted to general of brigade on 26 August 1793 by General Jean-Nicolas Houchard, the new commander of the Armée du Nord.

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27 Service Historique, Dossier de Maréchal Macdonald, Carton MF-20.
Macdonald was surprised by his promotion to general, less than six months after his promotion to colonel. As a colonel, he commanded the frontier from Menin to Armentières and performed the duties of a general of brigade for several months prior to his promotion, but he had not expected the advance in rank. Although he spoke to René Levasseur and Pierre Bentabole, the Representatives on Mission, and questioned the appointment due to his youth and inexperience, the promotion was reaffirmed.28

Macdonald had good reason to worry about being promoted to the rank of general. The French government, which was controlled by the Jacobins at this time, took a dim view of generals who failed to achieve victory. The Committee of Public Safety, controlled by Maximilien Robespierre, demanded not only success from French generals, but also the proper attitude towards the Revolution. Generals who were of noble birth were looked upon with suspicion. By the end of 1793, 295 generals were removed from command, and seventeen of those were guillotined in 1793.29 Macdonald, due to his association with General Dumouriez and his Scottish ancestry, was scrutinized several times by the Representatives on Mission.

The day after his promotion, Macdonald was involved in a battle in the vicinity of Tourcoing. General Houchard launched an advanced towards Menin that was designed to draw the forces of the Duke of York away from Dunkirk. The plan called for the forces in the area to advance in three columns. On the left, Macdonald led his brigade against a Dutch force in Lannoy. The center column, commanded by General Pierre Dupont and accompanied by generals Béru and Houchard and two representatives on mission, marched through Mouveaux and attacked Tourcoing. The right column, commanded by General of Brigade Alexandre Dumas, attacked Linselles. Macdonald was unable to capture Lannoy, which was defended by a brigade of Dutch soldiers, and lost a piece of artillery in the process. General Dumas was also repulsed from Linselles. The

main column actually captured Tourcoing, but the troops started pillaging and ran when some Allied cavalry appeared on the scene.\textsuperscript{30}

Macdonald was not involved in the Battle of Hondschoote, which followed shortly after the fighting at Tourcoing. His division remained at the camp near Lille. After the battle, however, General Houchard attacked the Dutch in the vicinity of Menin and Wervicq. On 12 September the divisions of Generals Joseph Hédouville and Pierre-Marie Dumesny attacked Wervicq while Macdonald's division attacked Halluin on the left in three columns. Both attacks were repulsed that day, but the next day the French achieved success. General Béru pounded Halluin with an hour-long artillery bombardment and then made a two-pronged attack which took the city. Wervicq and Menin were also taken. The Dutch forces retreated to Haerlebeke, where the Prince of Orange hoped to reassemble his shattered forces. Macdonald's brigade, successful at Halluin, was praised by the Representative on Mission, Levasseur.\textsuperscript{31}

The Battle of Hondschoote, while technically a French victory, caused the downfall of General Houchard. He was arrested on 23 September 1793 and sent to the guillotine. General Béru, who began to suffer from the strain of command and was of noble birth, was deprived of his command on 9 October 1793, but Macdonald retained his command.\textsuperscript{32} General Jourdan, the next commander of the \textit{Armée du Nord}, attacked and won a victory against the Allies at the Battle of Wattignies on 15 and 16 October. Macdonald, who formed the left of the Army, was placed under a new commanding general on 14 October: Joseph Souham. These two men developed a friendship that lasted throughout their lives.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Le Moniteur}, 241, 29 August 1793; Chuquet, \textit{Guerres}, XI, \textit{Hondschoote}, 166.

\textsuperscript{31} Jomini, \textit{Histoire critique et militaire}, V, 61-63; Chuquet, \textit{Guerres}, XI, \textit{Hondschoote}, 266-69; Harry Calvert, \textit{Journals and Correspondence of General Sir Harry Calvert}, (London, 1853), 131-32. A Representative on Mission was a civilian representative of the National Assembly who travelled with the army and had the power to approve or negate military plans, order officers arrested, and represent the civilian government in the field. They were similar to Communist Commisars of World War II.

\textsuperscript{32} Six, \textit{Dictionnaire Biographique}, I, 93, 577.

Macdonald's men advanced and attacked a force of émigrés at Wervicq on 25 October. He then marched to Menin, which had been retaken by General Jean-Baptiste Dumonceau. However, the Duke of York responded to this advance and attacked the right of Souham's forces, prompting Macdonald's orders to withdraw from Menin to Lille on the night of 27 October 1793.34

Although it seemed that Macdonald was a successful Republican general, he came under suspicion once again due to his personality, his past associations, and his lineage. Moreover, he had made several enemies during the 1793 campaign. Macdonald was blunt, straightforward, and uninhibited, even during the Terror, and he never lost an opportunity to make a joke at other people's expense. When General Lavalette, who had been in command at Lille during Dumouriez' treason, was ridiculed by the officer corps due to his cowardly actions in the combat around Menin, Macdonald joined in the hazing, and described him as a "republican and superlatively revolutionary General."

Naturally, Lavalette was offended. A friend of Lavalette, General Simon-Camille Dufresse, a former actor and commander of a revolutionary army who had a guillotine engraved on his seal, feigned friendship with Macdonald, but tried to help Lavalette take his revenge. These men denounced Macdonald to the new Representatives on Mission, Louis-Antoine de Saint-Just and Philippe François Le Bas. Once again, Macdonald was under suspicion and his conduct was examined.35

Saint-Just decided to dismiss Macdonald and send him to the Revolutionary Tribunal in Arras. The basis of this dismissal was that Macdonald was not a revolutionary figure and, having a Scottish name, he must be an aristocrat. General Souham did his best to defend Macdonald. He told Saint-Just "I do not know if at the bottom of his heart he is a Republican, I cannot read his soul, but I know he is an excellent officer, who on every occasion has served the Republic well, and I answer on my head that, instead of betraying, he will

34 Ibid., 33; Calvert, *Journals and Correspondence*, 160-62; Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, II, 118.
35 Ibid., 33-34.
serve it as a brave soldier." Saint-Just replied that the army only wanted strong Republicans and that Macdonald had "neither the face nor the name of a Republican." Souham was ordered to send Macdonald to Lille, where he was to be imprisoned until trial. 36

Souham summoned Macdonald, who was unaware of his impending fate, and suggested that he should escape. Macdonald rejected his advice, and tried to find support from his friends. With Beurnonville's arrest and imprisonment by the Austrians and Dumouriez' defection, Macdonald had lost his patrons. Fortunately for Macdonald, Saint-Just and Le Bas were called away to Dunkirk and then to Paris. He continued to serve under Souham, who placed him in a new command at Cassel. Macdonald commanded eleven other generals of brigade and had about 40,000 men covering the front from Bailleul to the sea. 37

This was an important promotion for Macdonald. Although only a general of brigade, he carried out the duties normally assigned to a general of division. It showed that he was trusted by his commanders, and had performed well in his role as a general of brigade. His newly expanded command included overseeing the dispositions of Dunkirk, an important French port. He worked with General of Brigade Paul-Louis Peterinck, an engineer in command of Dunkirk, to defend and supply the city. 38

After the combat around Menin, the Armée du Nord went into winter quarters. It was during this time that an important event took place. The government decided to combine the professional troops of the ancien régime with the volunteers from the levies of the previous years. This amalgame called for the combination of one battalion of professional troops with two battalions of volunteers into "demi-brigades." It was hoped that the professional soldiers would give the volunteers the proper training and stability, and that the volunteers

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36 Ibid., 34; Pierre David, Histoire chronologique des opérations de l'Armée du Nord et de celle de Sambre-et-Meuse, 246-47; Six, Dictionnaire Biographique, I, 384, II, 74.
37 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 34-36.
38 Macdonald to Peterinck, 9 November 1793, Service historique, Correspondance du général Macdonald, B1-116.
would create a national spirit within the veteran battalions. The call for the *amalgame* originally came on 7 February 1793, when Edmond Louis Dubois-Crancé presented a report from the war committee to the National Convention calling for the combination of the professional and volunteer formations within the army. The policy of *embrigadement*, which temporarily joined battalions of professional and volunteer soldiers on an *ad hoc* basis, was to be carried out throughout the entire French army. However, the campaign of 1793 caused the delay of this reorganization. When the order came to implement the *amalgame*, Souham placed Macdonald in charge of this operation in his division in December 1793, prior to the arrival of the agents of the Minister of War who were sent to implement the new organization. Although Macdonald did not have the proper complement of troops in each demi-brigade, his activity allowed the *amalgame* to be carried out at a much faster rate than in the other divisions in the army.\(^\text{39}\)

Macdonald's first problem with the *amalgame* was locating the various units that were to be combined into the new demi-brigades. The battalions from the professional army were fairly easy to isolate, but the volunteers lacked discipline; if the volunteers did not like an area where they were assigned, they simply moved to another site. This caused chaos within the organization of the French army.\(^\text{40}\) Also, there was a problem obtaining the necessary recruits to fill out the old battalions. "L’agent supérieur Saignes" represented the Minister of War, and he was responsible for the reorganization of Macdonald's division. Souham reported several times to the Minister of War and to General Pichegru that the *amalgame* was halted due to the lack of troops.\(^\text{41}\)

The troops required to fill out the new demi-brigades eventually arrived, but these troops presented another problem to Macdonald. According to a law of


27 pluviôse an 1 (15 February 1793), no soldier could attain a rank beyond private if he could not read or write. This literacy requirement caused problems for Macdonald during his implementation of the *amalgame*. However, by 16 January 1794, five demi-brigades were amalgamated, and the entire *armée du Nord* was completely reorganized by the end of March. General Souham praised Macdonald's energy and his timely efforts.

In considering the early years of Macdonald’s career, he proved to be a competent commander who could be relied upon by his superiors to carry out any order given to him. Patronage advanced his early career, but his talent allowed him to continue his rise in the officer corps. He was adept in training new recruits, organizing and commanding forces as large as a division, and leading these men into battle. Macdonald developed the habit of commanding from the front, which he kept his entire career. Although leading by example was an advantage for a colonel or a general of brigade, it would prove to be a hindrance later in his career.

Macdonald’s personality was a major problem. His sarcasm and lack of tact repeatedly created trouble for him during the Terror. He did not seem to realize that his comments about others, deserved or not, could create trouble with government representatives. These officials had the power to remove officers from command, imprison, and execute them at a whim. Macdonald barely survived the Terror, and his lack of political awareness did not help.

Unfortunately, Macdonald learned his lessons on war in the *Armée du Nord*, which used standard 18th Century military doctrine. He did not have the advantage of learning his profession under the guidance of Napoleon Bonaparte, the military genius who exploded on to the world stage in Italy in 1796.

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CHAPTER 2

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1794

The campaign of 1794 began after a long period of training and political indoctrination. The Armée du Nord received a new commander-in-chief, General Jean-Charles Pichegru, on 6 January. The new commander, who transferred from the Armée du Rhin, evaluated his army from 27 February until 17 March, using this time to acquaint himself with his subordinates and the condition of the army. On 1 March, Souham warned Macdonald that General Pichegru and the Representatives of the People were going to inspect his area.¹ It was a good day for Macdonald, who raided the village of Cysoing and returned with several wagons full of corn as their spoils. The next day, Pichegru wrote to the Minister of War, Jean-Baptiste Bouchotte, describing Macdonald as a good officer, whose republican principles were not very pronounced. The Minister responded, "Watch Macdonald, who is very cold towards the Republic."²

Fortunately for Macdonald, both Souham and Pichegru respected and appreciated his abilities. On 26 February 1794, Souham ordered Macdonald to give his command to General Jean-François Thierry and to assume a new position with another brigade, located near the village of Flers;³ Souham felt that this command was going to be important in the upcoming campaign and he

¹ Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, II, 218; Coutanceau, Campagne de 1794, Part II: documents annexes, II, 38.
² Coutanceau, Campagne de 1794, Part II: Operations, I, 140-41; Phipps, Armies of the First French Republic, I, 276, 291.
³ This village is also known as Five
wanted a capable general in that position. Macdonald, who commanded the troops from Armentières to Wervicq along the line of the Lys River, objected, but took up his new command after Souham again ordered him to report to his new post.\(^4\)

Macdonald spent the month of March familiarizing himself with his new command. He kept a close watch on the movements of the enemy, making several reconnaissances to establish the strength and location of the Allied troops. During one of these scouting expeditions, he encountered problems with Lieutenant-Colonel Vatel, commander of the 10th battalion of Calvados. Vatel commanded a reconnaissance on 20 March 1794 that needlessly moved into an

exposed position. Macdonald cautioned him in a letter the next day to be more
careful.\(^5\) However, Vatel continued to act rashly; the Allied army conducted a
reconnaissance of its own during the first week of April. This movement was
made by a large force of Allied cavalry which heavily outnumbered the French
cavalry in the area. Macdonald moved his cavalry to observe this movement,
supported by infantry. Vatel, who was nearby, approached Macdonald and
stated, "Give me 50 chasseurs and I will exterminate them." Macdonald pointed
out that they were outnumbered and that the French cavalry would stay at their
posts. When Vatel persisted, Macdonald placed him under arrest. Because of
this incident, Vatel accused Macdonald of sending two emissaries to the Allied
forces.\(^6\)

This accusation came at a critical time for Macdonald. On 25 January
1794, Representative of the People, Ernest Duquesnoy, announced the
dismissal of all noble officers from the Armée du Nord. These officers were to
withdraw twenty leagues from the army and from Paris.\(^7\) Macdonald remained
with the army due to the intervention of generals Pichegru and Souham.
Pichegru, aware of Macdonald’s intimate knowledge of the area and his abilities
as a general, requested that Macdonald be allowed to remain with the army. This
was granted, but when he requested written approval of his retention in the army,
the representative, Florent Guiot, rejected the request. Macdonald was told his
retention was temporary, and it had to be approved after review by other
Representatives on Mission. When he stated that he would withdraw from the
army in accordance with the proclamation, he was told, "If you leave the army,
we will have you arrested and tried."\(^8\)

\(^5\) Macdonald to Vatel, 21 March 1794, Service historique, Correspondance du
général Macdonald, Carton B\(^1\)-109.
\(^6\) Pamphile Lacroix, Extrait du Précis des opérations de la brigade Macdonald, du
8 ventôse au 3 prairial an II (26 février - 22 mai 1794), par le général Pamphile
\(^7\) Lynn, Bayonets of the Republic, 82-83.
\(^8\) Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 37. Macdonald’s situation
was not unique. Many officers affected by this order were allowed to remain with
the army because their skills and knowledge were difficult to replace.
Macdonald stayed with the army, but his situation was not resolved. He wrote several letters to the Representatives on Mission, but there was no response.\(^9\) Vatel's charges came up during this time, and Macdonald was anxious to have them cleared up. He again wrote to the Representatives on Mission, asking for a ruling on his situation and for a rapid examination of the charges against him.\(^10\) Although never confirmed in his position with the Armée du Nord, Macdonald remained with the army during the campaign and was safe only after the fall of the Jacobin government during the Thermidorian Reaction.

During the period prior to the actual campaign, Macdonald attended to the many administrative duties that concern a military commander in winter quarters. He had to address the supply of his troops, including food, clothing, weapons, and ammunition. He kept his men busy patrolling their assigned areas, and posted them at various checkpoints to increase the security of his command. This included establishing posts which controlled river traffic that passed through his area, including the town of Deulsemont. Macdonald also had to respond to the various demands made by the Representatives on Mission. This could be something minor, such as the purchase of musical instruments for each battalion in his command to comply with a decree made by the representatives; or, it could be a more serious matter, such as sending troops to the villages of Cherang and Willem to arrest two suspected spies.\(^11\)

At the end of 1793, the Allied forces held Condé, Valenciennes, and Le Quesnoy. Their deployment included 132,000 men formed into three forces: 30,000 men in Flanders commanded by General Charles Clairfayt; 67,000 men

\(^9\) Macdonald to Florent Guiot, 29 March 1794; Macdonald to representatives of the people Choudieu and Florent Guiot, 24 April 1794; Service historique, Correspondance du général Macdonald, Carton B\(^1\)-109.

\(^10\) Macdonald to the Representatives of the People, 2 May 1794, Service historique, Correspondance du général Macdonald, Carton B\(^1\)-109.

\(^11\) Macdonald to the commander of Comines, 26 January 1794, Macdonald to Daurière, 16 February 1794, Circular to the chiefs of brigades, 25 March 1794, Macdonald to Souham, 3 April 1794, Service historique, Correspondance du général Macdonald, Carton B\(^1\)-109.
Fig. 4. Operations in Flanders, 1793-94.

concentrated near Valenciennes and led by Prince Coburg; 27,000 men on the Sambre and 8,000 men covering Luxembourg. The Allied command did not have a clear objective for their campaign; their plan was to continue to lay siege to the various French strongholds that they encountered, and to respond to any advance made by the French forces. The city of Landrécies was the first Allied target for the new campaign. 12

The French strategy called for an advance in Belgium while maintaining all other fronts. Their forces in that theater were divided into three groups: 70,000 men from the Armée du Nord commanded by Pichegru was to take the line of the Escaut; 24,000 men, also from the Armée du Nord and commanded by General

12 Blanning, French Revolutionary Wars, 112.
Jacques Ferrand, was to act as a pivot and hold in the center near Landrecies; and a force of 60,000 from the armies of Nord and Ardennes, commanded by generals Louis Charbonnier and Jacques Desjardins, was to cross the Sambre and advance on Mons.\(^\text{13}\)

Macdonald was part of the force advancing to the Escaut. His headquarters were located in the village of Five, which was east of Lille. During the month of April, troop movements by the Allies and information gained by reconnaissance and spies showed that the Allies were concentrating their forces to attack Landrécies. General Clairfayt was ordered to move his 28,000 Austrian and Hanoverian troops to Denain which took them away from the Menin area temporarily. Pichegru took advantage of this movement to begin his advance on 26 April: Souham’s division, including Macdonald’s forces, advanced on Courtrai and the division of General Jean-Victor Moreau besieged Menin.\(^\text{14}\)

Macdonald began his advance at 2:00 A.M. on 26 April. His forces were on the right flank of the division, so he attacked an entrenched position at Risquon-Tout. Under the cover of an artillery bombardment, he approached the position using a double-envelopment, which succeeded in forcing the enemy to retreat. The pursuit continued to the vicinity of Courtrai, and resulted in the capture of three cannon and a few prisoners. Macdonald halted with his advance guard in Courtrai and his brigade at Belleghem, facing Tournai; the French were surprised by the weakness of the Allied cordon.\(^\text{15}\)

The Allies, however, reacted to the French advance. Learning of the planned offensive through a set of captured orders, General Clairfayt counter-marched his forces and attacked the brigade of General Nicolas Bertin on 28 April, forcing him to withdraw to Tourcoing. Souham responded by sending

\(^{13}\) Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, II, 218-19.

\(^{14}\) Le premier division du l'Armée du Nord, du 7 floréal an 2 au 18 vendémiaire an 2, par le général Souham, Service historique, Carton B\(^\text{1}\)-44; Précis des opérations de la brigade Macdonald, par le général Pamphile Lacroix, Service historique, Carton MR-273.

Macdonald against Clairfayt; he commanded an unusually large force of 24,000 men, which included his brigade as well as the brigades of generals Nicolas Bertin, Henry Jardon, and Hermann Daendels, to attack the Allies at Aelbeke.  

Macdonald received orders after dinner on 28 April to move into position, and final orders were to be sent later in the evening. These orders came later than expected, because Macdonald's staff officer, Pamphile Lacroix, could not find his headquarters in the dark, and only arrived there after he found a soldier of the 5th Regiment of Chasseur à Cheval who guided him to Macdonald after 2:00 A.M., just an hour prior to the start of the movement. The brigades of Macdonald, Bertin, and Jardon were to attack Clairfayt frontally, while General of Brigade Daendels moved his forces on the rear of the Allied position.  

Clairfayt, who believed that the French were retreating, posted no pickets, but his troops were in a strong, entrenched position on a height near some windmills close to Mount Castrel. General Daendels made his flanking movement on the right of Macdonald. The engagement began with an artillery bombardment, followed by the French assault. The battlefield was heavily wooded, which made the French deployment difficult. The approach to the Allied position was also cut by several ravines, which tended to channel the French attack. The Allies kept up a heavy cannonade, and advanced out of their entrenchments to repulse the first assault. General Bertin's brigade withdrew, forcing the other forces to pull back as well. Macdonald reformed his forces and made a second assault, which was likewise repulsed; General Daendels had the same outcome with his flanking movement. Finally, after Souham ordered Macdonald to make a third assault at 2:00 P.M., the French forces, aided by an opportune charge by the 5th Chasseurs à Cheval, succeeded in breaking the Allied line, while the 24th and 68th demi-brigades took the center of the Allied line.

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16 Précis des opérations de la brigade Macdonald, par le général Pamphile Lacroix, Service historique, Carton MR-273; Souham to Macdonald, 28 April 1794, cited in Coutanceau, La campagne de 1794, documents annexes, 97; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, II, 236.

17 Précis des opérations de la brigade Macdonald, par le général Pamphile Lacroix, Service historique, Carton MR-273; Souham to Macdonald, 28 April 1794, cited in Coutanceau, La campagne de 1794, documents annexes, 97.
position, forcing General Clairfayt to withdraw on Mouscron. The Allied army lost 33 guns, 3,000 men killed or captured, 4 standards, and much of its baggage.\textsuperscript{18}

The battle of Aelbeke marked the first time Macdonald had direct command of a large force in an engagement. During the attack, he exhibited his tendency to personally lead the attack at the head of his troops. Leading from the front showed his men that he was willing to share the risks with them, and also encouraged the men to extra efforts. This is a good trait in a general of brigade, but not in an overall commander. Macdonald and Daendels led their troops during the third and final assault which succeeded in dislodging the Austrian troops from their position at Mount Castrel.\textsuperscript{19}

The French captured Courtrai, Menin capitulated to General Moreau, and General Clairfayt withdrew north. Nevertheless, the French forces were in great disorder after the battle, and the Allied army was allowed to retreat without pursuit. One of the reasons for the disorder was the pillaging which occurred after the combat. The troops, who were harangued by the Jacobin clubs and the "demagogues" felt that it was their right to take loot from the enemies of France. The Committee of Public Safety ordered the generals to seize or destroy everything belonging to the enemy; this included destroying the roads, burning forts, and blowing dams and causing other acts of destruction. However, the generals were opposed to such activity. General Pichegru complained to the representatives, and was rewarded with a bulletin that called for the arrest of anyone caught pillaging.\textsuperscript{20}

Macdonald established his headquarters on the banks of the Lys River and his troops remained there until 8 May. Part of the time was taken up in reorganizing his troops. A reconnaissance reported that a force of Hanoverians

\textsuperscript{18} Précis des opérations de la brigade Macdonald, par le général Pamphile Lacroix, Service historique, Carton MR-273; Le premier division du l'Armée du Nord, du 7 floréal an 2 au 18 vendémiaire an 2, par le général Souham, Service historique, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-44; Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes,} II, 236-37, \textit{Le Moniteur,} 223, 2 May 1794.

\textsuperscript{19} Précis des opérations de la brigade Macdonald, par le général Pamphile Lacroix, Service historique, Carton MR-273.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
was located west of Mouscron, so Souham decided to attack it, using Macdonald’s brigade and the brigade formerly commanded by General Bertin, who was replaced by General Philippe-Joseph Malbrancq. However, the Hanoverians were used as bait to draw the French away from Courtrai, where Clairfayt attacked with his main strength. Macdonald and Malbrancq countermarched to intercept this attack, but the brigades of generals Dominique Vandamme and Daendels forced the Allies back.  

The Allies began a deployment, which was part of a "Plan of Destruction" created by the Austrian General Karl Lieberect Mack. This called for an Allied advance in six separate columns that would trap the divisions of Souham and Moreau. These columns were led by generals Clairfayt, Rudolph Otto, von dem Bussche, Christian Kinsky, the Archduke Charles, and the Duke of York. As planned, this attack outnumbered the French 75,000 to 50,000. However, the flaw of the plan was that the six Allied columns were not within supporting distance of each other, and it also called for precise timing to allow each force to arrive at its goal at the proper time. It also had the drawback of expecting the French to stay in their positions and not move their troops.

THE BATTLE OF TOURCOING

The French generals held a staff meeting at Menin on 17 May. In attendance were generals Souham, Moreau, Macdonald, and Jean-Louis Reynier, the adjutant general of Souham's division, Pamphile Lacroix, Macdonald's staff officer, and General Jean-Jacques Liébert, the Chief of Staff of the Armée du Nord. As the information of the Allied movements came in, the generals realized that two enemy columns were isolated and unsupported due to

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21 Précis des opérations de la brigade Macdonald, par le général Pamphile Lacroix, Service historique, Carton MR-273; Le premier division du l'Armée du Nord, du 7 floréal an 2 au 18 vendémiaire an 2, par le général Souham, Service historique, Carton B1-44; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, II, 251; A. Merchier, La bataille de Tourcoing (Roubaix: 1894), 9-11.

22 Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, II, 252-54; Merchier, La bataille de Tourcoing, 13-15.
the failure of the other Allied columns to reach their objectives. The French plan
for the Battle of Tourcoing called for General Moreau to contain Clairfayt's
column with his division while the divisions of generals Souham and Jacques
Bonnaud attack the two isolated Allied columns. The garrisons of Lille and Douai
were to delay the other two columns. This allowed the French to concentrate
40,000 men on the 20,000 isolated Allied troops.

Macdonald marched on the night of 17 May from Bisseghem, through
Moorseele and Keselbergh to Mount Halluin and Neuville, where he deployed his
troops for the assault the next day. At 3:00 A.M. on 18 May, his brigade entered
the village of Tourcoing; the Allied forces, drawn up outside of the town, allowed
the French to occupy it without a struggle. Then the troops of General Rudolph
von Otto bombarded the town while Macdonald formed his troops for an assault.
Unfortunately, the town’s configuration hampered Macdonald's efforts in
deploying his troops. The area of Macdonald’s deployment was so cramped that
one cannon shot decapitated thirteen men of the 3rd demi-brigade. Once his
troops were deployed, Macdonald launched an attack on the English troops led
by General Otto, which pinned them down while the troops of General Malbrancq
moved around their flank. Macdonald made three assaults from the village, but
was pushed back by some well-positioned troops. However, the movement of
General Malbrancq’s troops forced the enemy troops to withdraw quickly, leaving
his artillery in the hands of the French.

Macdonald began his pursuit of the Allied troops towards Leer, cutting off
the retreat of a regiment of British Guards in the process, but he received orders
to change his line of march. Moreau's division, weakened by detachments,
blocked the advance of Clairfayt, and was in danger of being overwhelmed.
Souham ordered Macdonald to support Moreau, but the distance was too far,

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23 These troops were aided by the Archduke Charles who suffered an epileptic
attack, which threw his staff into a panic and paralyzed that column.
24 Précis des opérations de la brigade Macdonald, par le général Pamphile Lacroix,
Service historique, Carton MR-273; Le premier division du l'Armée du Nord, du 7
floréal an 2 au 18 vendémiaire an 2, par le général Souham, Service historique,
Carton B¹-44; Merchier, La bataille de Tourcoing, 22-23; Blanning, The French
Revolutionary Wars, 113.
Fig. 5. La bataille de Tourcoing, 18 mai 1794.
and Clairfayt withdrew at dusk, before Macdonald could arrive. After the battle, the French returned to their former positions.

The Battle of Tourcoing was a decisive battle. The French took fifty-six pieces of artillery, along with wagons and ammunition. The Allies lost 4,500 dead or wounded, and 1,500 prisoners. The French lost 3,000 men. Macdonald received accolades for his bravery; he had led his troops into action, and rallied them when they fell back.\footnote{The material for this battle was based on Précis des opérations de la brigade Macdonald, par le général Pamphile Lacroix, Service historique, Carton MR-273; Le premier division du l'Armée du Nord, du 7 floréal an 2 au 18 vendémiaire an 2, par le général Souham, Service historique, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-44; Merchier, \textit{La bataille de Tourcoing}, 34-42.}

Once again, Macdonald led from the front.

THE BATTLE OF PONT-Å-CHIN

General Pichegru, who was absent during the Battle of Tourcoing, arrived on 19 May and ordered an attack with nearly 62,000 French troops on the Allies, located near Tournai. Macdonald commanded his brigade and that of General Jardon, totaling 16,000 men. The plan called for General Moreau's division, composed of the brigades of generals Vandamme and Malbrancq, to guard Courtrai and the line of the Lys River against General Clairfayt. Macdonald's force deployed to the right of Daendels, and was ordered to march through Aelbeke and Tombrouck to Saint-Léger, and then join with Daendels on the Escaut. To Macdonald's right were positioned the brigades of generals Thierry and Louis Compère. General Bonnau's division was to attack the center and left of the Allied army, more to pin it down than to force a decision.\footnote{Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, II, 263-65.}

The Battle of Pont-à-Chin, or Tournai, began at 5:00 A.M. on 22 May 1794. At first, Macdonald met with little resistance, reaching the Escaut and linking up with the brigade of General Daendels. These two generals met, and discarded as too dangerous a plan to cross the river and advance up the right of the Escaut to Tournai. General Daendels remained to observe the line of the
river, while Macdonald pursued the Allies up the left bank towards the unoccupied town of Tournai. With this objective in mind, Macdonald advanced at the head of a regiment of cavalry.\footnote{Jomini, \textit{Histoire critique et militaire}, V, 98-100. Jomini states that Macdonald was at the head of the 5th Regiment of Cavalry, while Coutanceau writes that he was leading five regiments. The correspondence only mentions three regiments of cavalry: 1st Cavalry, 2nd Cavalry, and the 5th \textit{Chasseurs-à-Cheval}. The \textit{Armée du Nord} was usually short on cavalry, so it is very unlikely that Macdonald had five regiments of cavalry under his command.}

When he reached the village of Pont-à-Chin, he was fired upon by a Hanoverian battery of artillery, positioned in front of a bridge. Without infantry support, Macdonald could not attack the position, and was forced to wait the arrival of his brigade. When it arrived, the Allied artillery withdrew to an

![Map of Flanders, 1793-94](image)

\textbf{Fig. 6. Operations in Flanders, 1793-94.}
entrenched position located a short distance beyond the village, where the forces Macdonald had been pursuing were reinforced by General Johan Wallmoden. Macdonald, unaware of this new development, moved through the village to assault the enemy position, but was met by a storm of grapeshot and musketry. Realizing that he could not advance, he withdrew to the other side of the village, leaving some skirmishers to observe his enemy.  

Unfortunately for Macdonald, the brigades of Thierry and Compère deployed to his right and the battle became a general mêlée. The Allies, recognizing the importance of having Pont-à-Chin as an anchor for their lines, pushed these skirmishers back and took the village. General Souham ordered Macdonald to take the town back at 10:00 A.M., and this began an eleven hour struggle. Macdonald made three assaults on Pont-à-Chin, gaining and being repulsed from the village each time. Shortly after 5:30 P.M., he received a message from General Pichegru, still at Pecq, admonishing him to continue his assault, despite the stubbornness of the defense.

Macdonald launched another assault, which again took the village, but the Allies sent reinforcements to chase off the French. The Duke of York sent seven Austrian battalions and the brigade of General Henry Edward Fox, which included the 14th, 37th, and 53rd Foot. These fresh troops attacked at 7:00 P.M., and threw Macdonald's exhausted men out of the town once and for all. The fighting continued until 9:00 P.M., when Macdonald withdrew his troops to their former positions.

The Battle of Pont-à-Chin was a very bloody engagement for both sides, with the French losing 6,000 men and the Allies suffering 4,000 casualties. There was very little direction from General Pichegru, who only came up behind Pont-à-Chin in time to be repulsed by the British troops as he was sitting down to

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dinner; very little was decided by the combat. Macdonald received much praise from General Souham, who wanted to halt the attacks on the village but was countermanded by General Pichegru.\footnote{Le premier division du l'Armée du Nord, du 7 floréal an 2 au 18 vendémiaire an 2, par le général Souham, Service historique, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-44; Jomini, Histoire critique et militaire, V, 101-03.} Macdonald's men also received praise for their determined fighting. These men were well trained, and during one of their forced retreats, they performed a maneuver known as a "passage of lines.") This is described in the Règlement du 1\textsuperscript{er} août 1791 as

> each company of the first battalion in line withdrew by a flank march and moved through the gaps in the second battalion created as each of the companies in the second battalion doubled its ranks; then the marching companies would loop about, coming into line again behind the second battalion.\footnote{Lynn, Bayonettes of the Republic, 248.}

This difficult maneuver, performed under fire, demonstrated the level of training Macdonald's men had achieved.

After the Battle of Pont-à-Chin, the initiative passed to the French again. The Allies tried to shuffle their forces between Ypres, which was threatened by General Pichegru, and Charleroi, which was menaced by General Jourdan. This indecision on the part of the Allies allowed Pichegru to begin the siege of Ypres on 1 June 1794. The division of General Moreau conducted the siege itself, while the divisions of generals Souham, Eloi-Laurent Despeaux, and Pierre-Antoine Michaud covered his operations. Macdonald conducted several reconnaissances during this time, reporting his findings to Souham's headquarters at Zounebeke.\footnote{Souham to Macdonald, 6 June 1794; Souham to Macdonald, 9 June 1794, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée du Nord et de Sambre-et-Meuse, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-33.}

On 10 June, General Pichegru tried to attack General Clairfayt, who was encamped near Rousselaere, with the three covering divisions. Macdonald was ordered to march at 11:30 A.M. and attack whatever enemy forces he found at
Oost Nieukerke and at Hooglède.\textsuperscript{35} However, Clairfayt withdrew to Thielt, so there was no major engagement that day. Three days later, when the French were not expecting it, General Clairfayt launched his own attack known as the Battle of Hooglède.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{35} Souham to Macdonald, 10 June 1794, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée du Nord et de Sambre-et-Meuse, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-33.
\textsuperscript{36} Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, III, 36.
The French, who must have failed to establish a picket line, were surprised when General Clairfayt attacked them in the vicinity of Rousselaere at 7:00 A.M. on 13 June 1794. The brigade of General Malbrancq, which was part of General Despeaux' division and formed the left of the French position, was routed almost immediately. The brigade of General Jean-Baptiste Salme, the next French formation, retired in good order, but was also severely mauled by the Allied advance. The next formation was Macdonald's brigade. Having gained a little time by the fighting withdrawal of General Salme, Macdonald formed his men up on the plain of Hooglède. With a regiment from General Jean DeWinter's brigade deployed to cover his rear, Macdonald held off repeated attacks by Clairfayt's infantry and cavalry for six hours. When the rest of DeWinter's brigade came up to support Macdonald's left, and General Salme's troops recovered and advanced, Clairfayt began a retreat.37

Adjutant General Alexis-Jean Duverger attributed the performance of Macdonald's troops to their "bravery, firmness, and intrepidity joined to the talents and rare coolness of its commander." 38 Macdonald, whose troops fought for six hours, lost about 400 men; the Austrians suffered about 900 killed or wounded.39 Five days later, the garrison at Ypres surrendered and General Clairfayt began a withdrawal to Ghent.

The fall of Ypres, combined with the French victory at the Battle of Fleurus40 on 26 June, demoralized the Allied command in the Low Countries. The contingents commanded by the Duke of York retreated north and east, while the troops under Austrian command retreated east and south, separating the Allied forces, and ended any thought of a concerted strategy.

Macdonald's actions during the first half of the 1794 campaign project a brave, intelligent commander who led by example. This had the advantage of

40 At Fleurus, on 26 June 1794, General of Division Jean Baptiste Jourdan led 76,000 French troops against 52,000 Allied troops led by Prince Coburg of Saxony, forcing the Allies to abandon Belgium.
inspiring the troops, but then he could not react to changing events during a
battle. One criticism of Macdonald was that he could not react to changing
events during a battle. Unfortunately for Macdonald, the course of the war
shifted away from his section of the Armée du Nord, and his actions during the
second half of the campaign were primarily reduced to sieges and pursuing the
retreating Allied forces into Holland. He did not have the opportunity or gain
exposure to the more dynamic system of warfare that Napoleon Bonaparte would
develop in Italy in 1796.
After the battle of Hooglède, General Pichegru and the Representatives on Mission decided that the Armée du Nord should take the offensive. On 1 July 1794, the army entered Bruges. Three days later, Macdonald advanced along the canal of Gand towards Oost Meulen Suyt, where he built a bridge to facilitate the passage of the army towards Brussels. His troops also made frequent reconnaissances along the road to Brussels, forming the way for the rest of the army.\(^1\)

General Pichegru entered Brussels on 10 July 1794, and the armies of the Nord and the Sambre-et-Meuse were roughly on line with each other the next day. At this point, the French had regained the territory they held prior to the disastrous battle of Neerwinden, but in a decidedly stronger position. Rather than act together, the two armies separated almost immediately; the commanders of the two armies, Pichegru and Jourdan, disliked each other and refused to cooperate. Macdonald advanced towards Antwerp, where the English and Dutch troops were located after retreating on their lines of communication, while the Army of the Sambre-et-Meuse advanced on the Austrian forces, which retreated on their lines through Maestricht, Köln, and Koblinz.\(^2\)

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\(^1\) Souham to Macdonald, 3, 4, 5, 8 July 1794, Service historique, Correspondance: Armées du Nord et de Sambre-et-Meuse, Carton B\(^1\)-35.
\(^2\) Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, III, 77-78.
The French did not press the English and Dutch, only skirmishing with them; Pichegru moved with the utmost caution. This allowed the Allies to evacuate Antwerp and the French occupied the city on 27 July, the same day Robespierre fell from power. The advance continued without much resistance. On 14 September, General Souham attacked and defeated the English at Boxtel, where he took 1,500 prisoners, six cannon, and some baggage. Macdonald was
at this battle, but his role was unclear. He led a reconnaissance near Bois-le-Duc on 22 September, the day prior to the beginning of the siege of that city.\(^3\)

Macdonald moved his troops to the vicinity of Helvoire, where he covered the siege works. There his troops were inactive. The Duke of York withdrew his troops behind the Meuse, and there was little effort put forth to save the city. When the commander of the city capitulated, on 9 October, he surrendered the city to Macdonald, who had served there in 1785.\(^4\)

On 18 October, Macdonald crossed the Meuse on pontoon bridges. The next day, the division attacked the outposts of the English army around Nijmegen, where the 9th Hussars made a brilliant attack on a battalion of the English 37th Foot. The cavalry regiment's uniforms were very similar to those of the Austrian "Hussars of Rohan," a body of \(\text{émigrés}\) serving in the Allied army. This allowed the French to ride right up to the English unit and attack without being fired upon. Most of the English battalion was taken prisoner, along with the regimental standard and two cannon. The French were very successful in this attack despite their lack of the most basic supplies.\(^5\)

Macdonald occupied a position opposite the Allied positions on the Waal River, between Grave and Nijmegen. The Allies withdrew most of their troops behind the lines of Nijmegen, from which they pulled back across the river, leaving only a small defensive force. The French began to bombard the city on 3 November, and the Duke of York responded by bringing up troops to raise the

\(^3\) La Première division de l'armée du Nord, 7 floréal an 2, au 18 vendémiaire an 3, (26 avril au 9 octobre 1794), par le général Souham. Service historique, Correspondance: Armées du Nord et de Sambre-et-Meuse, Carton B\(^1\)-44.
Fig. 9. Siege of Bois-le-Duc.

siege. This sortie made some gains, but was repulsed and driven back the next day. During the night of 7-8 November, the English withdrew their troops,
destroyed the bridge and left 1,200 Dutch soldiers as the garrison; this force soon surrendered, and the French captured 100 cannon in the city.\textsuperscript{6}

The French had Nijmegen, but the army could not cross the river, which was defended by the English army. While the French waited for the river to freeze, General Souham became ill and left the army. He turned command of his division over to Macdonald on 15 November.\textsuperscript{7} Less than two weeks later, on 28 November, Macdonald was promoted to general of division, eleven days after his 29th birthday.\textsuperscript{8}

Macdonald neither expected nor desired a promotion to the rank general of division with the political uncertainty that went hand in hand with the Revolution. However, he took his command and moved his headquarters to Nijmegen.\textsuperscript{9} When he took over the command of Souham's division, he had two immediate objectives. First, he had to seize the two remaining Allied positions on the south bank of the Waal River. These were the small stone and earthen fortress of Fort Saint-André and the fortified village of Oise-sur-Bommel, which was defended by about 2,000 Allied troops.\textsuperscript{10} Macdonald ordered General Reynier, who was now the commander of his old brigade, to seize these two positions. As the French troops approached Oise-sur-Bommel, rather than fight, the garrison abandoned the village, leaving their artillery intact. The same thing occurred on their approach to Fort Saint-André. By 28 December, the last Allied troop had left the south bank of the Waal.\textsuperscript{11}


\textsuperscript{7} Souham to Régispeutives du peuple, 15 November 1794, Service historique, Correspondance: Armées du Nord et de Sambre-et-Meuse, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-44.

\textsuperscript{8} Service historique, Dossier of Marshal Macdonald, Carton MF-20.

\textsuperscript{9} Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 38.

\textsuperscript{10} Souham to Pichegru, 1 October 1794, Service historique, Correspondance: Armées du Nord et de Sambre-et-Meuse, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-41.

Macdonald's second objective was to cross the Waal itself. Lacking adequate boats to make a successful crossing, the French army had to wait for the cold weather to cause the river to freeze. While the cold weather helped the French in their passage of the Waal, it also caused them problems. A bridge over the Meuse River collapsed on 19 December; this bridge was the main source to resupply Macdonald's corps. This event caused a shortage of rations for the troops in the area; Macdonald informed General Pichegru of the situation. Another problem he faced was the refusal of Dutch merchants to accept the assignats (paper money) that the French soldiers tried to use to purchase food and wine. This situation caused some pillaging by the French soldiers, but Macdonald quickly ordered the enforcement of the laws of the Republic and the bulletins of the Representatives on Mission by both the soldiers and by the Dutch citizens.

Macdonald ordered his troops to be ready to advance across the river once the ice became thick enough to bear the weight of the men. On 9 January 1795, the river had frozen above and below Nijmegen, but was still open at the town; Macdonald received word that the Allied army was evacuating Thiel, which was opposite his position. He saw a piece of artillery wheeled away from its position. He ordered General DeWinter to cross immediately to enter Thiel, and ordered the rest of his troops across the river. The next morning,

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12 Macdonald to Pichegru, 20, 24, 26 December 1794, Service historique, Correspondance: Règiste de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B³-118.
13 Macdonald to ordinance commissioner Lefevre, 28 December 1794, Service historique, Règiste de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B³-118; Simon Schama, Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands 1780-1813 (New York, 1992), 199.
14 This town is on the opposite bank of the Waal River from Nijmegen.
16 Macdonald to DeWinter; Macdonald to Jardon; Macdonald to Reynier; Macdonald to Pichegru; Macdonald to Captain Prud'honne, Captain of engineers, 9 January 1795, Service historique, Règiste de correspondance du général de
Macdonald sent four companies of grenadiers to attack the fort of Knotsenburg, supported by five batteries of artillery; fortunately for the French, the Allies had abandoned the fort.\textsuperscript{17} The crossing was made with little difficulty, and less interference from the enemy. Macdonald's forces captured thirty pieces of artillery, ammunition, and a supply of food, which was badly needed by the division.\textsuperscript{18}

The crossing of the Waal seems to have broken the spirit of the Allied army. The English began to retreat towards the northeast of Holland, while the Dutch troops withdrew into their fortresses. The English troops began to discard their weapons, artillery, and even their wounded, but they did not hesitate to plunder the homes of their Dutch Allies. The retreat became a rout, with fights breaking out among the English, Hanoverian, and Hessian troops.\textsuperscript{19} The French army followed without encountering organized resistance.

Once established on the north bank of the Waal, Macdonald's division began to pursue the Allied forces in the direction of Amsterdam. Units of the Armée du Nord seemed to enter into a race to see which division reached Amsterdam first. Macdonald's division did not win this race; it moved northwest, and had to stop to force the surrender of the fortress at Naarden on 21 January, the day after General Pichegru entered Amsterdam.\textsuperscript{20}

The bad weather began to take its toll on Macdonald's division. He reported to General Pichegru that more of his men were becoming ill; he also had to care for the sick and wounded enemy troops left behind in the flight of the division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-118; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, IV, 10-11.

\textsuperscript{17} Macdonald to General Boubert, 9 January 1795; Macdonald to Chef de bataillon Chotias, 10 January 1795, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-118; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, IV, 10-11.

\textsuperscript{18} Liebert to Joubert, 12 January 1795, Service historique, Correspondance, Armée du Nord, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-47, cited in Finley, "Career of Jean Reynier," 15.

\textsuperscript{19} Harcourt to the Duke of York, 11 February 1795, Public Record Office (hereafter PRO), London, War Office 1, 172, MSS.

\textsuperscript{20} Macdonald to the commander of Naarden, 21 January 1795, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-118; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 43-44.
Allied army.\textsuperscript{21} During its advance, the army came across many scenes such as the following:

Near a cart...we perceived a stout looking man, and a hearty young woman, with an infant about seven months old at the breast, all three frozen and dead. The mother had most certainly expired in the act of suckling her child, as with one breast exposed, she lay upon the drifted snow...the infant seemed as if its lips had but just then been disengaged, and it reposed its little head upon the mother's bosom...About fifty yards advanced was another dead man, with a bundle of linen clothes and a few biscuits, evidently belonging to the poor woman and child; and a little further was a horse lying down, but not quite dead, with a couple of panniers on his back, one of which contained the body of another child about two years of age, wrapped up in a flannel and straw...\textsuperscript{22}

General Reynier, commanding Macdonald's advance guard, found wagons, baggage, and undamaged artillery along the roadside.\textsuperscript{23} The Allied army was in no condition to put up any resistance, and continued to fall back behind the natural barriers formed by the rivers.

After a brief visit to Amsterdam, Macdonald continued the pursuit of the Allied army. He was given command of his division and the division of General Moreau, who remained at the army headquarters with General Pichegru; this division was commanded by General Vandamme in Moreau's absence. His orders were, first, to take up position on the Yssel River, and then to drive the Allied army out of the Dutch provinces of Drente, Friesland, and Groningen.\textsuperscript{24}

The harsh weather actually helped the French advance by freezing the rivers, but now the temperature began to rise; the thaw began, and this caused more problems for the French. When Macdonald's force reached the Yssel, the ice was beginning to break on the river. It threatened to carry away the bridges needed to cross the river. However, instead of destroying the bridge, the ice floes broke through a dike, which saved the bridge, but flooded the fields that the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{21} Macdonald to Pichegru, 23 January 1795, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-118.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Jones, \textit{Historical Journal}, 174-75.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Finley, "Career of Jean Reynier," 15.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 45; Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, IV, 21, 29, 59-61; Finley, "Career of Jean Reynier," 15.
\end{itemize}
soldiers had to march through. The roads and fields changed from a snowy desert into a seemingly endless bog of mud. Snow changed into freezing rain, which added to the soldiers' woes. The weather and the conditions of the roads made it impossible for the artillery and supply wagons to keep up with the infantry; at times, the soldiers were marching through waist-deep water. Fortunately for Macdonald, the Allied army retreated at the sight of French

Fig. 10. Operations in Holland, 1793, 1794-95.
soldiers, abandoning their artillery, weapons, and supplies, which were happily taken by the advancing French army. Macdonald also requisitioned food from several towns his division occupied.

The Allied army retired in three columns: the first column marched north, through Koevenden en route to Emden; the second column marched through Goor into the Duchy of Bentheim; the third column withdrew from Zutphen eastward into the Bishopric of Münster by way of Lochem. This withdrawal began on 27 January, and Macdonald followed with his two divisions. He found 600 invalid soldiers, along with medical staff, in Zutphen. By 5 February, he announced that he controlled every village in the province of Overyssel, and that he was moving to the border of Frisia.

The Allied forces, mostly English, retreated at the sight of French troops. Macdonald's old brigade, now commanded by General Reynier, acted as the advance guard; the English garrisons in Twente and Covorden withdrew before a shot was fired. On 7 February, Macdonald learned that the city of Groningen had capitulated to the Allied soldiers; nine days later, he received a letter from the Revolutionary Committee of Groningen asking for help against the Allied army. He responded by personally leading a brigade to help the people of Groningen; the Allied forces withdrew without a fight. Meanwhile, Macdonald's worst enemy at this time was still the weather; he received no communication

26 Macdonald to Pichegru, 3 February 1795, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B1-118.
27 Macdonald to Pichegru, 3 February 1795, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B1-118.
29 Macdonald to Pichegru, 5 February 1795, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B1-118.
31 Macdonald to Pichegru, 7 February 1795; Macdonald to Busch, member of the revolutionary committee of Groningen, 16 February 1795, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B1-118; Finley, "Career of Jean Reynier," 19.
from General Reynier from 17-27 February due to the severe rain and snow storms, which impeded their progress.\textsuperscript{32}

Macdonald followed the English forces from Groningen, and attacked them at Winschoten; he was surprised when they did not withdraw, and his troops were repulsed.\textsuperscript{33} Macdonald was called to Amsterdam, but General Reynier employed his division to expel the English from the village.\textsuperscript{34} By 8 March, Macdonald reported that the last of the Allied troops had crossed the Ems River.\textsuperscript{35}

This was the last fighting in Holland. The Allied army was replaced by a Prussian army. Macdonald was worried that he was about to face the combined forces of England and Prussia, but the Peace of Basle, signed on 5 April 1795, assured peace with Prussia. Macdonald's last encounter with the English was positive; on 11 March, Macdonald sent an offer to General William Harcourt, commander of the English troops, suggesting an exchange of prisoners. This was completed, and Vandamme arranged such an exchange at Bremen, just before the English departed on 14 April 1795.\textsuperscript{36}

Macdonald became the military commander of the provinces of Drente, Frisia, and Groningen. His main duties were to observe the retreat routes of the Allied army, watch the Prussian army, keep his troops supplied and ready for action, and maintain peace in the provinces under his command. Accordingly, he

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} Macdonald to Reynier, 23 February 1795, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-118; Finley, "Career of Jean Reynier," 19.
\item \textsuperscript{33} John Fortescue, A History of the British Army, (London, 1911), IV, 323.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Pichegru to Macdonald, 28 February 1795, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée du Nord, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-49, cited in Finley, "Career of Jean Reynier," 19-20.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Macdonald to Pichegru, 8 March 1795, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-118.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Macdonald to General Harcourt, commander of the English troops; Macdonald to Vandamme, 11 March 1795, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-118; Le général commandant les troupes anglaises a Bremen a Vandamme, 6 avril 1795, cited in Albert Du Casse, Le Général Vandamme (Paris, 1870), I, 243.
\end{itemize}
ordered General Jardon to locate the routes taken by the Hanoverians, Hessians, and émigrés.\textsuperscript{37}

Once the Allied forces had withdrawn, Macdonald began to work with the Prussian army to reestablish the free navigation of the Ems River. He sent General Reynier to discuss the placing of outposts and check points with the Prussian commander. They agreed on the procedure for boat passports as well as for travel between the French and Prussian controlled territory.\textsuperscript{38}

Finding food for his men caused problems for Macdonald. With the focus of the war shifting from Holland to Germany, supplies were hard to secure from France. Therefore, Macdonald had to requisition material from the Dutch. However, there was very little in the way of food in the area. The weather and the campaign in the provinces had destroyed or consumed supplies, and the citizens of the area were not eager to provide anything to the French army.\textsuperscript{39}

Macdonald had to suppress several mutinies among his troops because of the lack of food and discipline.\textsuperscript{40} He also enacted "harsh measures" to force the provinces to deliver the needed supplies. This action caused some complaints by the citizens, and Macdonald was ordered to exchange commands with General Souham.\textsuperscript{41}

Macdonald took possession of his new command on 4 June 1795, but did not remain there long. On 22 August, he was appointed commander of the French forces in Zéland, where he was ordered to prepare for a possible attack by the Royal Navy on Walcheren Island. He arrived at Middelburg on 3 September, and began to inspect his new command. One of his first

\textsuperscript{37} Macdonald to Jardon, 29 April 1795, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-160.
\textsuperscript{38} Macdonald to Jardon, 25 April 1796, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-160.
\textsuperscript{39} Simon Schama, \textit{Patriots and Liberators}, 222-25.
\textsuperscript{40} Macdonald to Moreau, 26 April & 2 May 1795, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-160.
\textsuperscript{41} Macdonald to the municipality of Groningen, 20 May 1795; Macdonald to the representative of the people of the province of Groningen, 24 May 1795, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-160; Six, \textit{Dictionnaire biographique}, II, 137.
observations focused on the poor quality of the food and the high numbers of ill soldiers.\textsuperscript{42} 

Macdonald began working with General Pierre Osten, representatives of the local government, and a Dutch admiral to prepare the defense of the island. The officials seemed more interested in legal niceties than in supplying the soldiers with food.\textsuperscript{43} Macdonald had to deal with these problems until he came down with the Walcheren fever himself.

The fever was severe, and Macdonald had to resign his command and return to France to recover from the illness.\textsuperscript{44} He left Holland at the end of October 1795 and briefly returned to duty on Walcheren Island in March 1796. However, his fever returned and he did not recover his health until he left the island, going to Utrecht to recover.\textsuperscript{45} He returned to Middelburg in May, but again was ordered to exchange commands with General Souham.\textsuperscript{46} Macdonald began training his troops, and he was put in command of three divisions which covered the left flank of the Armée de Sambre-et-Meuse in July. However, events in Germany soon caused Macdonald to be involved in a more direct manner.\textsuperscript{47}

The French offensive in Germany called for a dual advance by General Jourdan's Armée de Sambre-et-Meuse and General Moreau's Armée de Rhin-et-Moselle. Unfortunately for the French, they faced the best commander in the

\textsuperscript{42} Macdonald to the representative of the province of Zéland, 5 September 1795; Macdonald to Moreau, 7 September 1795, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-160. The area was famous for its unhealthy climate and typhoid fever, which was referred to as “Walcheren Fever.” The British lost over 12,000 men to this fever when they landed on that island in 1809.

\textsuperscript{43} Macdonald to Moreau, 13, 14 September 1795, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-160.

\textsuperscript{44} Macdonald to Moreau, 9 October 1795; Macdonald to Osten, 21 October 1795, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-160.

\textsuperscript{45} Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 47-48.

\textsuperscript{46} Macdonald to Osten, 22 May 1796, Service historique, Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-160.

\textsuperscript{47} Service historique, Dossier of Marshal Macdonald, Carton MF-40.
Austrian army: Archduke Charles, brother to the Emperor. Charles made use of interior lines and the lack of coordination between the two French armies to inflict several defeats on them, culminating in the battle of Würzburg on 3 September 1796. With both French armies in retreat, the Directory ordered General Beurnonville to replace Jourdan; Macdonald reinforced these two armies with four divisions.  

Fig. 11. Operations in Holland, 1793, 1794-95.

48 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 49; Six, Dictionnaire biographique, II, 137.
On 14 September, Macdonald's forces began to march from Deventer, arriving at the large entrenched camp at Düsseldorf on 24 September.\textsuperscript{49} He took up position on the Wupper River, and his forces covered the line from the left bank of the Stronderback through Cologne to Mülheim.\textsuperscript{50} Once in position, however, there was very little to do. Although General Beurnonville had orders to resume the offensive, the lack of supplies and material made such a movement impossible.\textsuperscript{51} The only action his troops saw was a small skirmish near the village of Volberg on 26 November and a raid on French communications on 5 December.\textsuperscript{52} By 13 December, the bridges around Düsseldorf were destroyed by ice, and the army went into winter quarters.\textsuperscript{53} On 5 February 1797, Macdonald gave command of his division to General of Brigade Louis Jean Gouvion.\textsuperscript{54}

After a brief trip to Belgium, Macdonald returned to France, where he represented the Armée du Nord at a celebration honoring French soldiers on 28 February 1797. At the parade, after he accepted the flag of the army, he gave a speech honoring the soldiers of the Armée du Nord, and he called for a national subscription, "patriotic and volunteer," for the effort against the remaining tyrant, "insolent Albion."\textsuperscript{55}

Macdonald returned to Holland in July 1797, after the Armistice of Leoben halted hostilities. Establishing his headquarters at Nijmegen, his duties included

\textsuperscript{49} Macdonald to Beurnonville, 14 September 1796; Macdonald to chef d'état major general of the Sambre and Meuse, Service historique: Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-161; Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 50.
\textsuperscript{50} Macdonald to Beurnonville, 2 October 1796, Service historique: Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-178.
\textsuperscript{51} Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 51.
\textsuperscript{52} Macdonald to Beurnonville, 26 November, 5 December 1796, Service historique: Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-178.
\textsuperscript{53} Macdonald to Beurnonville, 13 December 1796, Service historique: Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-178.
\textsuperscript{54} Macdonald to Gouvion, 5 February 1797, Service historique: Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B\textsuperscript{1}-178.
inspecting garrisons, hospitals, and prisons. He also had to secure provisions for his troops, try to prevent desertions, prepare festivities to celebrate the founding of the French Republic, and deal with complaints by citizens about the activities of his soldiers. These activities continued until 30 September, when he was ordered to move his division to Cleves.

Macdonald remained in the vicinity of Cleves and Cologne for just over a month. He trained and transferred troops, negotiated with the government of Cleves for the provisioning of his division, and worked with the other commanders in the area. One of the generals he corresponded with was General of Division Jean Étienne Championnet, who would be his commanding officer the following year in Italy. The two men got into a dispute over the number of troops in Macdonald's division. Championnet claimed that he had 25,000 men in his command, while Macdonald stated that, due to illness, desertions, and other causes, he only had 20,000 men. Macdonald returned to Holland with his division on 7 November. He became interim commander of French troops in Holland on 3 January 1798 when he replaced General Beurnonville. Macdonald himself was replaced on 12 January and returned to France.

During 1794, Macdonald had a solid year of fighting in Holland, and he gained experience commanding men in battle. This period was followed by two and a half years of experience as a military administrator. During this time, he dealt with most of the problems an officer faced while occupying foreign soil: insurrection, mutiny, inclement weather, training, lack of supplies, illness,

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56 Various correspondence, Service historique: Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B1-178.
57 Macdonald to Beurnonville, 30 September 1797, Service historique: Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B1-178.
58 Macdonald to Championnet, 14 October 1797, Service historique: Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B1-178.
59 Macdonald to Beurnonville, 7 November 1797, Service historique: Régistre de correspondance du général de division Macdonald, Carton B1-178, Six, Dictionnaire biographique, II, 137.
boredom, and administrative problems. He met these tasks with energy and gained valuable experience that would serve him well in the future.
CHAPTER 4

MACDONALD’S FIRST ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

In 1798, there was a great movement of troops within the territory controlled by the French. General Napoleon Bonaparte used Italy as a staging area for some of the forces that were destined to invade Egypt. Soldiers from the Army of Italy formed a large part of the Egyptian expedition. This resulted in a reduction of French troops in the area and the transfer of officers and men, including Macdonald, from other areas controlled by France into Italy. The Roman Republic, which was created by the Directory Government, was a significant part of the French holdings in Italy. Its location, on the border of the Kingdom of Naples, made it a buffer between that hostile government and the rest of French controlled Italy. Another important aspect of the Roman Republic was its wealth; the French government was financing many of its activities through the taxation of the new republics under French control.

In February 1798, the Army of Rome was formed when an insurrection by the inhabitants of that city forced the French to send 16,000 troops to put down the revolt; this new army was not an independent formation but subordinate to the Army of Italy.¹ On 13 July 1798, General Guillaume Marie Brune, the commander of the Army of Italy, nominated Macdonald as the interim commander of the Army of Rome.²

¹ Jomini, Histoire critique et militaire, X, 334-42.
² Brune to Schérer, 13 July 1798, Service historique, Dossier de maréchal Macdonald, Carton MF-40.
When ordered to report to Italy, Macdonald feared that he would have to join the Egyptian expedition; he was relieved when he found out that it had sailed before his arrival. General Brune allowed him to travel in Italy for two months after he arrived in Milan, so he apparently had few duties prior to his appointment in Rome. This was Macdonald's first trip to Italy and he made the most of it. Macdonald arrived in Rome towards the end of July, officially taking command from General Gouvion St. Cyr on 26 July. There were several problems facing the new commander. The first of these was the health of the French soldiers. Macdonald ordered hospitals built in Rome, Ancona, and the Circeo department to handle the problems, and demanded adequate medical supplies for the soldiers. On 23 October, when the supplies were not provided, he requested that the commissioners of the Directory of Rome do whatever necessary for the care of the sick troops in the Roman Republic.

A second problem that Macdonald faced was providing provisions for the soldiers, fodder for the cavalry, and stocking the various fortresses with food and munitions in the case of a siege. He also was in charge of supplying a steady grain supply for the city of Rome. Macdonald complained to the civil commissioners in Rome about the poor quality of the bread received from a new
Fig. 12. Central Italy, 1798.
bakery supplying the army. The supply of wine was also a concern; General Maurice Mathieu, one of Macdonald’s generals of brigade, arrested three men who supplied the hospitals with bad wine. He struggled to secure an adequate supply of grain in Rome while he prepared for a possible invasion by the Neapolitans.

By November 1798, it was becoming increasing obvious that the Roman Republic was facing an invasion from the Kingdom of Naples. Macdonald responded to this threat by strengthening and supplying the various fortresses in the Roman Republic. Extra gunpowder was sent to Rome. On 5 November 1798, Macdonald asked the commanders of the fortresses of Château St. Ange and Civita Castellana to report on their needs to withstand an attack. The next day, he ordered that the appropriate measures be taken for the subsistence of the Château St. Ange, Civita Castellana, and the city of Ancona; he also accelerated the supply of the army magazines. On 13 November, Macdonald ordered 12,000 rations of bread and forage for 4,000 horses be prepared. Finally, on 17 November, he ordered that the supply and preparations for siege at Civita Castellana be further increased. This was six days prior to the actual invasion of the Roman Republic by the Neapolitans.

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7 Macdonald to commissaires du Directoire de Rome, 11 October 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d’Italie, Carton B3-56. It is assumed that a previous bakery was fired due to poor quality bread.
8 Macdonald to Buhot, 17 October 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d’Italie, Carton B3-56.
9 Macdonald to the commander of Civita-Vecchia, 13 October 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d’Italie, Carton B3-56.
10 Schérer to Eblé, 1 November 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d’Italie, Carton B3-56bis.
11 Macdonald to Brulley, 5 November 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d’Italie, Carton B3-56bis.
12 Macdonald to Buhot, 6 November 1798; Macdonald to commissaires du Directoire executif à Rome, 7 November 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d’Italie, Carton B3-56bis.
13 Macdonald to Darcambat, 13 November 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d’Italie, Carton B3-56bis.
14 Macdonald to commander of Civita Castellana, 17 November 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d’Italie, Carton B3-56bis.
Eighteenth Century system of warfare carried a great emphasis on fortresses during any military campaign. Therefore, Macdonald was occupied with the upkeep, supply, and the assignment of troops to several fortresses in the Roman Republic. Because of the limited amount of troops in Italy as a result of the Egyptian expedition, he had to request extra troops to garrison the Château St. Ange. A month later, Macdonald asked for more troops as well as instructions concerning Civita Castellana, Ancona, and Château St. Ange. As mentioned earlier, he ordered an increase in the readiness of the fortresses on 6 November. One week later, Macdonald increased the number of artillery at Civita Castellana to twenty-five and also sent the 11th Line to reinforce the garrison.

Macdonald, as commander of the Army of Rome and, later, as governor of that city, had to handle complaints made against his soldiers in the Roman Republic. There were complaints against the conduct of General Communeau by the citizens of Velletry; he was transferred to Château St. Ange as a replacement for Georges Mouton as chef de bataillon. The citizens of Albano complained about the actions of the 16th Dragoons and Macdonald notified the commander of the regiment. He also handled complaints dealing with the civilian authorities, including a complaint against the commander of Toligno for levying a tax without authority, and two complaints about the abuse of authority by some military officers. Macdonald also ordered the arrest of a Captain Darnaud, who had fled to the Tuscan Republic; this man was accused of dishonoring the French name. These administrative problems were compounded by the lack of
cooperation of the civilian government with Macdonald and the military administration. These administrative problems may have led to Macdonald's involvement in a "coup" against the civilian government in the Roman Republic during the month of September.

The city commissioners, denounced by General St. Cyr, were still in power in the Roman Republic during Macdonald's first months of duty. However, the Directory resolved to replace these men, so they sent two new commissioners: Duport du Mont-Blanc, a former deputy, and a M. Bertolio, a former abbé. These men, along with the new ambassador, M. Bassal and Macdonald, removed the existing five directors of the Roman Republic from 14 to 17 September. However, the new commissioners proved to be just as corrupt and inefficient as their predecessors and Macdonald did not receive any more support for his troops; this hampered his efforts in putting down two insurrections that erupted during his tenure as commander of the French forces in Rome.20

On 27 July 1798, the day after he took command from General St. Cyr, Macdonald sent troops to the department of Circeo to repress disturbances in Anagni.21 The next day, he reported that there were insurrections in Ferentino, Frosinone, and the surrounding countryside. Macdonald sent 1,200 men to deal with the trouble.22

General of brigade Girardon, who was located in the town of Anagni, led the actual efforts to crush the revolt. On 30 July, Macdonald sent three hundred Polish troops of the Polish Legion to Anagni to assist Girardon.23 The next day, two battalions of the 30th Line were ordered to Ferentino to reinforce the French

17 November 1798; Macdonald to Senhard, 8 November 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-56bis.
21 Macdonald to Humbert, 27 July 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-54.
22 Macdonald to Brune, 28 July 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-54.
23 Macdonald to general in command of 300 Polish troops, 30 July 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-54.
troops there. That same day, Macdonald issued a proclamation to the people of Rome that the department of Circeo was under a state of siege. The town of Frosinone was captured by General Girardon on 3 August. General Girardon described the conditions to Macdonald: "The character of the insurrection is serious...fanaticism leads it on; the nobles are at its head; they believe we are at war with Austria, that the English are at Civita Vecchia and that we are abandoning Italy...it is absolutely the Vendée over again." The French formed mobile columns to deal with the insurrection, as the insurgents fled to the mountainous countryside and used tactics similar to those employed so successfully by the Spanish several years later. The town of Ferentino was captured on 10 August by General Maurice Mathieu after six hours of fighting; this ended the insurrection.

Several prisoners were captured and questioned after the first insurrection. The revolt was started by a former mayor of Frosinone in the name of the Pope; however, there was also some mention of Neapolitan influence in the revolt as well. This was another worry for Macdonald, since the department of Circeo was located on the border of the Kingdom of Naples, and he believed that the Neapolitans were preparing to invade the Roman Republic. Ferdinand IV, the King of Naples, a Bourbon, had placed a cordon of troops on the border with the Roman Republic and increased the number of troops as the revolt

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24 Macdonald to Casabianca, 31 July 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-54.
26 Macdonald to French commissioners to the Roman Republic, 3 August 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-55.
28 Macdonald to Gaultier, 5 August 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-55.
29 Macdonald to commissioners of the Directory, 10 August 1798; Macdonald to Casabianca, 11 August 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-55.
30 Macdonald to Brune, 3 August 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-55.
31 Macdonald to Gaultier, 5 August 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-55.
continued. The king called for a "levée en masse," and later ordered that ten out of every thousand men were to be drafted into the army. One high ranking Neapolitan officer was killed in the fighting around Frosinone. Macdonald wrote to General Paul-Louis Gaultier de Kerveguen, the interim commander of the Army of Italy, that the only reason that there was no invasion was due to the swiftness of the French reaction to the revolt. The decision to disarm the inhabitants of the areas involved in the revolt came soon after the end of the insurrection. This action took time, however, and was still not complete when another insurrection broke out in October.

A French chasseur was wounded by rebels near the town of Trossedi on 5 October. The next day, the entire Circeo department was in revolt again. Macdonald ordered General Girardon to take whatever measures necessary to suppress the new insurrection. The policy of disarming the villages was continued. However, there was little that the French could do. Three rebels were condemned to death at Frosinone on 30 October; two more men were arrested on 2 November. These two men were foreigners: the abbé de

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32 Girardon to Macdonald, 4 August 1798; Macdonald to Casabianca, 6 August 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-55.
33 Macdonald to commissaires du Directoire, 1 September 1798; Girardon to Macdonald, 4 September 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-55. This was not a levée in the same sense as those of the French.
34 Girardon to Macdonald, 5 August 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-55.
35 Macdonald to Gaultier, 7 August 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-55.
36 Macdonald to Brune, 1 September 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-55.
37 Girardon to Macdonald, 5 October 1798; Girardon to Macdonald, 6 October 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-56.
38 Macdonald to Girardon, 7 October 1798; Macdonald to commissioners of the Directory, 10 October 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-56.
Casamare and a man named Crisulti, were trying to leave the Roman Republic. This revolt was not suppressed for several months.

THE NEapolitan invasion of Rome

Macdonald prepared for a possible Neapolitan invasion soon after he took command of the Army of Rome. His efforts to ensure the supply of food, munitions, and the readiness of the various fortresses have already been mentioned. There were two other activities that Macdonald undertook to ensure the preparation for possible hostilities with Naples. First, he tried to increase his troop strength. This was done by creating National Guard units; General Joseph Casabianca formed one unit in Perugia and Macdonald increased the strength of the Roman Legion by incorporating Neapolitan deserters into it. He also informed his commanders on the proper course of action in the event of an invasion.

Macdonald also kept himself informed of the movements of the Neapolitan forces. This was done through the employment of spies, which was rather expensive. It was, however, effective in keeping track of the Neapolitan army.

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39 Girardon to Macdonald, 30 October 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-56; Girardon to commissaire du Directoire executif de la Republic francaise, 2 November 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-56bis.
40 Macdonald to Casabianca, 29 July 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-54; Macdonald to commissaires du Directoire, 24 August 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-55.
41 Macdonald to Casabianca, 3 September 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-55; Macdonald to Casabianca, 24 October 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-56; Macdonald to Casabianca, 2, 10 November 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-56bis.
42 Macdonald to commissaires du Directoire à Rome, 7 November 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-56bis. In this letter, Macdonald asked for 10,000 livres to continue his surveillance efforts.
Macdonald was aware of the formation of the cordon by the King of Naples. He was also informed when the Neapolitan troops began to concentrate on the border. These reports reaffirmed the continued concentration of troops and munitions, including forty-two cannon that were gathered at Sermonetta. Over 50,000 troops were involved in these "maneuvers" on the border. These troops formed into three units, and when the invasion came, Macdonald knew where the troops were going to cross the border.

Unfortunately for Macdonald, it was just prior to the outbreak of the war with Naples that the Directory decided to send a permanent commander for the Army of Rome. Jean Étienne Championnet was named as the new commander in Rome. Macdonald was named the commander of the first division of the Army of Rome. He was also named the governor of Rome.

Macdonald anticipated Championnet’s arrival with high expectations. As the interim commander in Rome, he had had very little influence on the civilian representatives. His troops were suffering from the lack of medical supplies and they were three months in arrears. He wrote a letter to Championnet on 12 November, assuming he would have more authority to deal with the needs of the troops. However, General Championnet stopped in Ancona on 15 November and did not arrive in Rome until 19 November. This did not give him time to

43 Macdonald to Brune, 6 September 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-55.
44 Girardon to Macdonald, 16 September 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-55.
45 Talleyrand to Schérer, 18 September 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-55. Only 11,000 of these troops were regulars; the rest were from the "levée en masse" mentioned earlier. Phipps, Armies, V, 241.
46 Girardon to Macdonald, 13, 14, 16, 21, 22 November 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-56bis.
47 Championnet to Macdonald, 20 November 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-56bis. His command consisted of the 19th Légère, 11th, 12th, and 30th Line, the Polish Legion, the 16th Dragoons, the 19th Chasseurs, the 2nd company of light artillery, and one company of sappers.
48 Maurice Faure, Souvenirs du général Championnet (Paris: 1904), 239.
49 Ibid., 248.
address the problems facing the Army of Rome prior to the invasion of the army of the Kingdom of Naples.

The Neapolitan army, commanded by the Austrian General Karl Mack, crossed the frontier and attacked French troops at several points on 23 November. This force consisted of over 50,000 men and 42 guns. The French troops withdrew in good order in accordance with the plans provided by Macdonald. On 25 November, General Championnet ordered Macdonald to destroy two bridges in Rome, and to garrison and defend the fortress of Saint-Ange. The next day, he first ordered Macdonald to make every effort to save Rome; then he decided that Macdonald should withdraw to Civita Castellana.

Macdonald, aware of public sentiment in Rome, asked General Championnet not to leave the city in broad daylight, because the people might revolt. Championnet agreed to this, but as Macdonald was making preparations for the evacuation, a disturbance brought him to his window in time to see General Championnet galloping out of the city, escorted by a detachment of 150 cavalry which Macdonald had planned to use. This event triggered the much feared insurrection in Rome. The people began to attack any French citizens, soldiers, or sympathizers who sought shelter where they could. Macdonald ordered the artillery to fire on the crowds, but sniper fire from upper windows forced the gunners to abandon their guns after only a few discharges of grapeshot. Macdonald decided to cut his way out on horseback; he and his staff rode through the Via del Popolo, along the Piazza di Venezia, and ended up near the Forum. There he met a column of French troops, led by General Maurice Mathieu, who entered the city after the disturbances began. This force, formed by men from the 31st demi-brigade, then began dispersing the crowd. After two

50 Girardon to Macdonald, 23 November 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-56bis.
51 Talleyrand to Schérer, 18 September 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-55.
52 Championnet to Macdonald, 25, 26 November 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-56bis.
hours of fighting, Rome was again under the control of the French troops. After making final preparations, the rest of the rations were passed out to his troops; the commander of the fortress of Saint-Ange was ordered to close his gates and consider himself besieged by a hostile enemy, Macdonald evacuated his troops without further hindrance from the citizens. Before he withdrew, Macdonald swore an oath that he would defeat the Neapolitans, and that he would return within two weeks. He also said that he would not shave until he returned. As he withdrew, the Neapolitan troops marched into Rome on 27 November.

THE BATTLE OF CIVITA CASTELLANA

Macdonald withdrew his troops to Civita Castellana. Although the Neapolitan troops did not hinder his passage, the citizens were up in arms, and attacked stragglers; one battalion of the 11th demi-brigade lost its baggage, which included all of the spare clothes of the officers. Fortunately for Macdonald, he was not pursued by General Mack, who was also having his own problems with the extremely wet weather of the season. Both generals spent the next two days reorganizing their forces: Macdonald occupied Civita Castellana and posted his troops to cover the various approaches to his position. Mack was forced to halt in Rome, where his forces regrouped; the large number of raw recruits within his army combined with the poor conditions of the roads made his advance very difficult.

Civita Castellana was a strong defensive position. There were only four possible directions of advance on the place, and each route was easily covered by a small force. This superb position afforded Macdonald an excellent position to await the advancing Neapolitan army. He posted his troops to take advantage

54 Ibid., 61.
55 Mack to Macdonald, 27 November 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-56bis.
57 Heriot, *French in Italy*, 200.
of the terrain. Macdonald commanded the reserve, which consisted of two battalions of infantry and one squadron of cavalry, at Civita Castellana.\textsuperscript{58}

These dispositions gave Macdonald the advantage of central position and enabled him to concentrate his forces where the threat was most severe. The positions were within supporting distance of each other, and Macdonald was able to take advantage of this when a detachment of the Neapolitan army came too close to his position on 30 November. A column of troops, consisting of 8 battalions of infantry and three squadrons of cavalry captured the village of Magliano, a short distance from Borghetto. Macdonald pulled the detachments of Generals Mathieu and Charles Kniaziewicz from their positions on the night of 30 November, marched them to Borghetto, and attacked the enemy position one hour before dawn on 1 December.\textsuperscript{59} He formed his troops up in echelon and attacked. The 5,000 Neapolitan troops ran, despite their formidable defensive position. The French seized the enemy baggage and captured several prisoners.\textsuperscript{60} Up until this point, Macdonald had been perturbed by the events in Rome, his need to retreat, and the success of other French detachments in minor skirmishes.\textsuperscript{61} The victory at Magliano satisfied him, but he was still anxious for more success. General Championnet ordered him to keep up a steady reconnaissance to be informed of the enemy's movements. Therefore, Macdonald ordered General Girardon to send patrols to Magliano and Foglia.\textsuperscript{62} General Louis Lahure's detachment was ordered to advance to Rignano to put

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 366.
\item \textsuperscript{59} Macdonald to Kniaziewicz, 30 November 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-56\textsuperscript{bis}; Macdonald to chef de b\textsuperscript{3}gade Salve, 1 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-57.
\item \textsuperscript{60} Macdonald to Championnet, 1 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-57; Mahon, \textit{Études sur les armées}, 358-59.
\item \textsuperscript{61} General Lemoine had repulsed the column of General Metsch at Terni, and General Casabianca, with thirteen demi-brigades and three squadrons of cavalry had defeated a force of roughly equal in size at Porto di Fermo on 28 November.
\item \textsuperscript{62} Macdonald to Girardon, 1 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-57.
\end{itemize}
down a revolt and to scout for signs of enemy movement. General François Étienne Kellermann put down a revolt in Nepi, which was instigated but not actually supported by the Neapolitans; there were over 100 people killed and much of the town was destroyed in the process. Kellermann then proceeded to attack a small Neapolitan column, which fled; the spoils from this action were "one regimental adjutant, one captain, 75 men, 40 horses, and three wagons with their teamsters."

Macdonald was puzzled over the inactivity of the Neapolitan army. Part of this inaction, as mentioned earlier, was due to the need for reorganization after the march into Rome. However, General Mack was also hampered by the indecision and temerity of the King of Naples. Ferdinand IV hoped to be able to assimilate the Roman Republic into his kingdom without a major battle. He, therefore, spent several days in Rome, reorganizing the government, giving out jobs, making devotions in various historic churches, and, finally, celebrating a Te Deum at Saint Peter's Basilica on 2 December. Of course, his army had to be nearby. Mack was aware of the presence of Macdonald, so he resolved to attack him on 4 December with overwhelming force.

General Mack divided his forces into several columns that converged on Civita Castellana from different directions. The main force, under the command of Mack, consisted of 15,000 troops while four other columns converged on the town from other directions. This tactic was similar to the one General Mack devised for the battle of Tourcoing. Both plans called for a concentric advance of several columns on a single position. The flaw in this plan, as in the plan at Tourcoing, was that the different columns were not mutually supportive. Indeed, once

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63 Macdonald to Lahure, 29 November 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-56bis.
64 Son of the future Marshal.
65 Macdonald to Championnet, 2 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-57; Mahon, Études sur les armées, 360-61.
66 Mahon, Études sur les armées, 362-63.
67 Précis historique de la campagne de l'armée Napolitaine, par le général Mack, MR 453, Service historique; Mahon, Études, 364-65.
the columns reached their assigned positions, they were divided by rough terrain that made even communication very difficult to execute. Mack, unfamiliar with the terrain as well as the actual position of the various French forces, divided his troops improperly.

Fig. 13. Battle of Civita Castellana, 5 December 1798.

The battle of Civita Castellana began when the main column of the Neapolitan army, commanded by General Mack, attacked the small force of
General Lahure at the village of Rignano. Due to the rugged terrain, Lahure’s force of one battalion of the 19th Légère and a squadron of cavalry was able to hold off this column with little effort, because Mack was unable to deploy more than a couple of companies at a time to attack the French positions. This economy of force on the part of Macdonald was instrumental in his victory.68

One of the Neapolitan columns attacked General Kellermann at Nepi at about the same time. Kellermann deployed his forces with his two squadrons of cavalry covering the flanks of his two battalions of infantry. This combat extended through the morning. Macdonald first sent the Polish Legion to aid Kellermann, reinforced by the rest of General Kniaziewicz’s command.69

Beginning his advance in two lines to cover Kellermann, at about one o’clock, when, much to his surprise, a second Neapolitan column, hidden and unsuspected, began to deploy to the right of his advance. General Kniaziewicz was able to quickly change the line of march of his second line and hit the emerging Neapolitan column as it was deploying. This column was thrown into disarray and proceeded to withdraw. The French took 8 cannon, 15 caissons, and some prisoners before returning to their original positions.70

When the first line of General Kniaziewicz’s brigade finally arrived at Nepi, the battle was already over. The Neapolitans, outnumbering the French by about two to one, had been routed and fled the field. Kellermann pursued the fleeing enemy fifteen kilometers past the village of Monterosi before returning to Nepi. When the fighting ended, the French had captured 15 cannon, 30 caissons, several standards, 900 horses and mules, the military chest, 3,000 muskets, all of the camp equipment, and 2,000 prisoners.71

68 Mahon, Études sur les armées, 365.
69 Macdonald to Kniaziewicz, 4 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d’Italie, Carton B3-57; Mahon, Études sur les armées, 365.
71 Macdonald to Championnet, 4 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d’Italie, Carton B3-57; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, IX, 204-05; Mahon, Études sur les armées, 367. Unfortunately, due to the large number of prisoners, the great amount of materiel captured, and the rough terrain, about half of the prisoners escaped.
With these two attacks successfully driven off, there were only two areas that Macdonald had to worry about. The village of Borghetto, where General Girardon guarded an important bridge, expected an attack by 10,000 men and 24 cannon. This massing of forces worried Macdonald, who withdrew his forces to Civita Castellana. The actual direction of the Neapolitan advance was uncertain, so Macdonald ordered another patrol to verify this information.  Meanwhile, Macdonald had stores of supplies at Civita Castellana and Otricoli, so he was able to disburse rations to his troops. Macdonald was also without news of the detachment of General Maurice Mathieu, who guarded the northern approaches to Civita Castellana.

While awaiting the Neapolitan advance, Macdonald spent the night of 4-5 December in Borghetto; he sent patrols on both sides of the river and found the small Neapolitan column sent to make demonstrations to the north of Civita Castellana. General Kellermann, who commanded in Civita Castellana while Macdonald was in Borghetto, was attacked and forced to evacuate Civita Castellana and cross the river at Borghetto; he did this in good order. General Kniaziewicz was attacked by an enemy column, but the attack was easily repulsed; the enemy commander was mortally wounded in the fighting on 4 December, so his troops were not enthusiastic about returning to the attack. After this attack, Kniaziewicz sent out patrols, and found the village of Corchiano defended against him by peasants. This village was reduced to rubble.

In the middle of making his disposition, Macdonald received a letter from General Championnet, recalling a battalion of the 64th demi-brigade, a unit from the division of General Louis Lemoine which had retreated from Rome with his

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72 Girardon to Macdonald, 4 December 1798; Macdonald to Girardon, 4 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-57; Mahon, Études sur les armées, 368-69.
73 Kellermann to Macdonald, 4 December 1798; Macdonald to Championnet, 5 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-57.
74 Macdonald to Mathieu, 4 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-57.
75 Macdonald to Championnet, 5 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-57; Mahon, Études sur les armées, 370-71.
division. This battalion was posted in Otricoli and Narni, guarding the supplies and the hospital of the first division. Macdonald, who was preparing for an attack, did not replace these troops immediately.\textsuperscript{76}

Macdonald continued to await the attack of General Metsch from Calvi, but it did not come that day. Due to the withdrawal of the battalion of the 64th demi-brigade and Macdonald’s failure to replace these troops, Metsch moved his forces on Otricoli, where he found the first division’s hospital. The Neapolitan troops killed some of the troops and mutilated others, both wounded and amputees. They then began to loot the provisions stored there.\textsuperscript{77}

When Macdonald learned that the Neapolitan troops had taken Otricoli, he immediately reacted. Gathering the available troops, Macdonald marched on Otricoli that night. Early in the morning of 6 December, he approached the village in a fog so heavy that the men could not see past four steps ahead. As the French troops approached, a ragged series of shots were fired from the defenders. Judging from the sporadic fire that the Neapolitan troops were disorganized, Macdonald ordered the two squadrons of the 16th Dragoons to charge along the road. This charge overwhelmed a Neapolitan cavalry regiment and drove off the gunners from a light battery. The infantry followed the cavalry, and destroyed the Neapolitan advance guard. This attack started a complete rout among the Neapolitans, who abandoned the town. Macdonald’s forces took 2,000 prisoners, 8 cannon, 3 standards, and over 500 horses.\textsuperscript{78}

As the fog lifted, and the town occupied, Macdonald discovered the atrocities committed by the Neapolitans. "I then discovered that I was dealing not with regulars, but with assassins, who had foully murdered my sick and wounded. The sight of some of these poor fellows, horribly mutilated, but not

\textsuperscript{76} Championnet to Macdonald, 4 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-57.
\textsuperscript{77} Mahon, \textit{Études sur les armées}, 373-74.
\textsuperscript{78} Macdonald to Championnet, 7 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-57; Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 62; Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, IX, 209-10; Mahon, \textit{Études sur les armées}, 373-75.
dead, increased our fury and thirst for vengeance." These troops must have been part of the Neapolitan "levée en masse" which put about 30,000 peasants into uniform. At Otricoli, Macdonald captured 6 cannon with their caissons, numerous cavalry horses, about 300 prisoners, and several officers. It was the action of these men that caused Macdonald to hate the Neapolitans for the rest of his life.

Macdonald decided to attack the Neapolitan forces at Calvi. General Championnet, who was planning an advance on Rieti with the 2nd division, approved Macdonald's plan, and placed a detachment of General Lemoine's troops on the road from Calvi to Rieti. Macdonald made his dispositions: General Kniaziewicz gathered his command in Magliano and General Mathieu placed his troops in Otricoli. General Kellermann was to remain at Borghetto, guarding the bridge. Macdonald remained in Otricoli with the reserve. Macdonald's forces advanced on Calvi along two routes which, due to the terrain, were isolated from each other.

Just as the two columns were beginning their advance on the morning of 8 December, three Neapolitan deserters were brought to Macdonald, claiming that the commander of General Mack's reserve, had crossed the Tiber with a column of three regiments and was planning to cut the first division off from the rest of the French army. This caused Macdonald some worry, but he covered his position by sending a reconnaissances from Kellermann's position while General Kniaziewicz sent a reconnaissances to engage this force if it were located. Unfortunately, the Poles became lost in their search, until one of Kellermann's patrols found them and set them back on their path. When his troops finally

79 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 62.
80 Macdonald to Championnet, 7 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-57; Mahon, Études sur les armées, 374.
81 Macdonald to Mathieu, Macdonald to Kellermann, Macdonald to Kniaziewicz, 7 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-57; Mahon, Études sur les armées, 387-89.
82 Macdonald to Kellermann, 8 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B³-57.
83 Mahon, Études sur les armées, 390-91.
reached their positions, it was too late for them to carry out the assault on Calvi. Macdonald ordered his troops to light numerous campfires to deceive the Neapolitan troops as to his exact numbers.84

General Mathieu approached Calvi from the northwest, while General Kniaziewicz advanced from the opposite quarter. Within the village, the enemy had a force of eight battalions and four squadrons of cavalry, in excess of 5,000 men. General Mathieu placed his troops on the heights overlooking Calvi, and began bombarding the village with his artillery. General Kniaziewicz occupied the road southeast of Calvi, and placed his troops behind a ravine to fire on the village. Shortly, the Neapolitans sent a deputation asking for terms of capitulation. Macdonald response was "Lay down your arms, or else run the gauntlet of my troops."85 He ordered General Mathieu, who received the deputation, to give them five minutes to make up their minds. The Neapolitan's surrendered; captured at Calvi were 120 officers, 4,000-5,000 prisoners, 300 horses, 5,000 muskets and cartridges, 15 flags, 8 pieces of artillery, and 2 generals.86

Within a period of six days, Macdonald's division had captured two generals and over 120 officers, taken over 6,000 prisoners, 31 cannon, 45 caissons, 8,000 muskets, 1,200 horses and mules, 15 standards, and the camp equipment and military chest of the Neapolitan army. This was, by far, the most significant action of the campaign. It stopped the Neapolitan advance, and forced the evacuation of the Roman Republic by the King of Naples. Meanwhile, Macdonald was able to re-equip his troops with the captured stores, and even make up some of the back pay owed them by the French government.

84 Macdonald to Kellermann, 9 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-57.
86 Macdonald to Championnet, Macdonald to Mathieu, 9 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B3-57; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 62-63; Mahon, Études sur les armées, 393.
It was at this point that Macdonald and Championnet came into conflict. On 9 December, Macdonald wrote Championnet and asked him to correct several mistakes in the bulletin describing the battle of Civita Castellana. He also wrote a letter to the commissioners of the Directory giving his account of the battle, and stating that he was ready to answer for his conduct before an unbiased board or committee.\(^8\)

The next day, General Championnet ordered Macdonald to determine the strength of the enemy in front of him; a large group of campfires were seen near Mount Buono, and Championnet wanted to identify this force and attack it, if it were the main Neapolitan force. Macdonald responded on 11 December that the Neapolitans were in Cantaluop and Sori. He described the terrain as impracticable, told Championnet of his lack of food, and asked for "lucid and intelligible" instructions.\(^8\) Macdonald also took exception to a bulletin issued by Championnet that claimed that Calvi was "surprised" by the French troops instead of stating the actual facts of the maneuvers completed by generals Mathieu and Kniaziewicz. Championnet responded on 12 December by repeating his previous orders and added ". . .Your letters, for some time, show a man in a bad humor; if my manner is displeasing to you, then I will have you replaced."\(^8\)

Another point of dissention between the two men was Macdonald's request that, since his division was the last to leave Rome, it should be the first to return to the city.\(^9\)

\(^8\) Macdonald to Championnet; Macdonald to the commissioners of the Directory, 9 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B\(^3\)-57. Macdonald does not indicate what he was accused of.

\(^9\) Championnet to Macdonald, 10 December 1798; Macdonald to Championnet, 11 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B\(^3\)-57.
This conflict between Macdonald and Championnet could have been disastrous for Macdonald's career. When the two men met on 15 December, an argument ensued. Fortunately, the commander of the artillery, General Jean Baptiste Éblé, was able to reconcile the two men for a short period of time.  

Macdonald ordered General Kellermann to advance towards Rome and attack any enemy forces that he found. The rest of the division advanced on Rome from Calvi via Tarano, Collevecchio, and Mount Rotundo. The Neapolitan army evacuated Rome on 12 December, so Macdonald’s occupation of the city was without opposition. Before the troops could get positioned around the city, a column of about 7,000 Neapolitan troops, commanded by Count Roger de Damas, a French émigré, approached the city just as Championnet's aide-de-camp was exiting the château of Saint Angelo with 200 men and 2 cannon. Damas believed that General Mack had negotiated safe passage for his force and was trying to move south. Negotiations took place, and the chef d'état-major Charles Bonnamy gave the Neapolitans one hour to lay their arms down. Damas agreed, as he was unaware of the weakness of the French forces at that particular point. Macdonald and Championnet rushed to the area with their troops, but Damas used the time to march his troops away from Rome, eventually escaping to Naples via Orbitello. Macdonald claimed to have expected Damas' escape, explaining that an émigré would not surrender himself.

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91 Macdonald, *Recollections of Marshal Macdonald*, 65. The discord between Macdonald and Championnet cannot be examined in depth due to the loss or misplacement of Macdonald's correspondence from this period. In his *Recollections of Marshal Macdonald*, Macdonald claimed that he wrote his correspondence to Championnet in a light, joking manner due to his great success against the Neapolitan army. He also claimed that two men on Championnet's staff - Romieux, the general's primary aide-de-camp and General Charles Auguste Bonnamy, the chef d'état-major - misconstrued his meaning. Macdonald admitted that he should not have written the letter asking for "lucid and intelligible" instructions, but denied that he showed anything but the proper respect for his commander.

to French custody. General Kellermann was dispatched in pursuit, but was unable to halt their escape.⁹³

Shortly after this episode, another Neapolitan column attacked the city at the Lateran gate in an effort to aid the passage of Damas' column, but this force was turned back by the 11th Line, which had been positioned by Macdonald to guard against such an eventuality. Finally, at about 11:00 P.M., a third Neapolitan force of about 600 men appeared in front of Rome, expecting a safe passage. This was a detachment that had maneuvered north of Civita Castellana during General Mack's first advance; it had harassed Macdonald's flank on his march to Rome. A deputation was brought to Macdonald, who told them that there was no truce, and that they should lay down their arms. When the Neapolitan representatives declined to do so, Macdonald ordered his men to escort the party back to their troops, and then tell the commander at the post to attack the enemy force and destroy it; meanwhile, he was going to go to bed. When the Neapolitan officer was assured that Macdonald was serious, he surrendered his force to Macdonald. Macdonald informed Championnet the next morning, explaining that he felt in unnecessary to disturb him over such a minor matter.⁹⁴

Macdonald remained in Rome for six days, reorganizing his troops, awaiting his artillery, which could not follow his division directly due to the rough terrain and bad weather, and the return of General Kellermann. During this time, another disagreement arose between Macdonald and Championnet. Shortly after their arrival in Rome, promotions were passed out by General Championnet, with most of them going to the staff. Macdonald argued that his division should receive its fair share of promotions, including a promotion for Maurice Mathieu to general of division. He also requested a promotion for his aide-de-camp, Captain Blésimar. When these nominations were rejected,

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Macdonald requested over three hundred promotions in rank for his division. Although this was entirely too many, he felt that his troops deserved recognition for their successful efforts.\textsuperscript{95} This was a mistake for it caused a division within the army by causing hard feelings between the various divisions that made up the Army of Rome. It also set the stage for the final breach between the two generals when they advanced into the Kingdom of Naples.

General Championnet decided to invade the Kingdom of Naples. The Directory in Paris opposed this project, and sent a courier with orders not to invade, but this dispatch never reached Rome because the courier was killed in the Piedmont.\textsuperscript{96} On 21 December, the army began its advance towards Naples. There was little organized resistance by the Neapolitan army, but the inhabitants, fired by proclamations issued by Ferdinand IV and further encouraged by the local priests, put up fierce resistance. Macdonald had some minor difficulty with the village of Arpino, which was captured with the bayonet and then forced to give a contribution of 200,000 piastres.\textsuperscript{97}

Macdonald arrived in front of Capua on 2 January 1799. An aide to General Mack met with Macdonald and Championnet and proposed an armistice. Championnet called a meeting of his divisional generals, but nothing was decided that day. Macdonald opposed an armistice. The next day, Championnet agreed to a forty-eight hour armistice, which infuriated Macdonald.\textsuperscript{98} He began deploying his troops for a siege. While he was doing this, he also renewed his demand for promotions for his division.\textsuperscript{99} There were several skirmishes with the

\textsuperscript{95} Macdonald to Championnet, 18 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-57; Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 69-70. The actual request for promotions was not in the Carton.
\textsuperscript{96} Heriot, \textit{French in Italy}, 205.
\textsuperscript{97} Macdonald to the township of Arpino, 30 December 1798, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-57.
\textsuperscript{98} Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, IX, 222; Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 70.
\textsuperscript{99} Macdonald to commander of Capua, 3 January 1799; Macdonald to Championnet, 3 January 1799; Macdonald to Championnet, 5 January 1799,
Fig. 14. Southern Italy, 1798.

Service historique, Correspondance: Armee d'Italie, Carton B^3^-57; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 70-71.
enemy, including an episode on 7 January 1799 where a battalion of the 30th Line was surprised by Neapolitan forces near the village of Caiazzo and general of brigade Anne Marie Boisgérard, the engineer who was in charge of the siege, was mortally wounded.\textsuperscript{100} The 30th Line was again attacked on 9 January, but this time it was supported by two other battalions. Finally, the three battalions attacked the Neapolitan forces on 10 January and routed them.\textsuperscript{101} The next day, General Championnet signed an armistice with the Neapolitan government, ending hostilities.\textsuperscript{102}

Macdonald opposed the armistice, feeling that the capture of Capua would have a "striking moral effect" in Naples, elsewhere in Italy, and even in Austria. With the end of hostilities, Macdonald asked to be relieved of his command, and wrote to the Directory asking to be employed in another theater of operations. Macdonald received permission to retire to Rome on 14 January, but he remained with his division until 17 January.\textsuperscript{103}

Before he left Capua, however, he received a visitor - General Mack, who arrived at his quarters at 5:00 A.M. The two men had a pleasant conversation. After the armistice, Mack asked for permission to return to Austria. He then asked for permission to pass the French lines. This was granted by Championnet, but revoked by the Directory. Mack was arrested in Ancona, and brought to Capua en route to Paris.\textsuperscript{104}

Instead of going immediately to Rome, Macdonald followed the army to Naples, arriving there one week after the occupation of the city. He then returned to Rome, where he awaited new orders. On 10 February, he was ordered to report to the Army of Mayence. Before he could leave Rome, another

\textsuperscript{100} Macdonald to Championnet, 7 January 1799, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-57.
\textsuperscript{101} Girardon to Macdonald, 9 and 10 January 1799, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-57.
\textsuperscript{102} Circular from General Championnet, 11 January 1799, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-57.
\textsuperscript{103} Macdonald to Championnet, 14 January 1799; Macdonald to Championnet, 17 January 1799, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-57; Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 71-72.
\textsuperscript{104} Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 72-73.
dispatch ordered him to Naples to replace Championnet as commander of the Army of Naples.\textsuperscript{105}

During this campaign, Macdonald performed his military duties very effectively. At the Battle of Civita Castellana, he deployed his troops with care, using the terrain to his advantage, defeating an enemy that outnumbered him greatly. His division captured many prisoners and much equipment. He also spent several months governing Rome, which was a good experience for him. Nevertheless, it was his relationship with General Championnet that threatened his reputation.

Macdonald's disagreement with Championnet began when the latter agreed not to withdraw from Rome during the day, so the citizens of the city would not have any excuse to begin an insurrection. However, within a few minutes of that agreement, Championnet galloped from the city, taking 150 cavalry posted by Macdonald at the Piazza del Popolo. This move triggered an uprising that caused many casualties among the French and their supporters. It was only crushed when General Mathieu sent the 30th Line back into Rome to quell the unrest.\textsuperscript{106} Macdonald was further irritated with Championnet by what he perceived as a lack of recognition of his division after the Battle of Civita Castellana and the recapture of Rome; he claimed that Championnet gave most of the promotions to his own staff and others, even though his division had defeated the bulk of the Neapolitan army.\textsuperscript{107} The final breach came as the French army invaded the Kingdom of Naples. Macdonald opposed a forty-eight hour armistice that Championnet accepted, and then Championnet negotiated the surrender of Capua, which Macdonald was preparing to besiege. Macdonald felt that the capture of Capua would "produce a striking moral effect" in Europe. Once hostilities ended, Macdonald asked to be relieved of his command, which was approved.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{105} Six, \textit{Dictionnaire biographique}, II, 137.
\textsuperscript{106} Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 57-59.
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 69-70.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 70-71.
For his part, Championnet claimed that he treated Macdonald well, offering him "praises and money" when he arrived in Rome. He stated that Macdonald was jealous, and caused dissention in the army by requesting over 300 promotions for his division, and then blaming Championnet for not awarding them. He also took exception to the tone of some of Macdonald's correspondence. Macdonald wrote in what he called a "gay rather than serious" tone, joking about not being able to obtain much glory from fighting the Neapolitans; he claimed that these letters were misconstrued deliberately by some of the headquarters' staff.

Macdonald was always outspoken, even when it endangered his life during the Terror. He undoubtedly spoke his mind when Championnet's hurried exit from Rome caused an uprising, and further aired his displeasure over what he saw as a lack of promotions for his division. However, asking for over 300 promotions was excessive. General Barthélemy Joubert, the commander of the Army of Italy, agreed with Championnet on this point. However, it was in character for Macdonald to speak up for his troops, and there was no other incident in his career where he was criticized in this way.

Macdonald's military reputation was enhanced by his service in Italy. He won several battles, trained and led his men effectively, and performed well as a military administrator. His deployment at the battle of Civita Castellana was flawless, and he orchestrated his defense from a central position rather than from the front. He gained experience dealing with civilian government officials as a theater commander, and learned first-hand how frustrating that could be. He also gained experience dealing with a subject population. The insurrection that took

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110 Macdonald, *Recollections of Marshal Macdonald*, 64. It is unfortunate that this correspondence has been misplaced in the archives, and it cannot be examined to verify these statements. These requests have been referred to in other works, but there is no actual copy of Macdonald's recommendations. The "bulletin analytique's" that were in the Cartons did include a list of promotion requests made by Macdonald, but this list only mentioned six men by name, and made no mention of the other three hundred promotions he requested.
111 General Joubert did not like Macdonald, either.
place in the Circeo district prepared Macdonald for the same type of problems that he faced in Naples in 1799, and in Spain in 1810-11. Once again, however, his personality caused him problems with his fellow officers. His difficulties with General Championnet caused dissension within the army, and could have led to problems during the latter portion of the campaign.
CHAPTER 5

FROM NAPLES TO THE TREBBIA

General Macdonald was in Rome, waiting for a new assignment when he received his nomination as commander in chief of the Army of Naples, replacing General Jean Championnet.\(^1\) This was a surprise to Macdonald, since he had recently asked to be relieved from the army due to the disagreement with his former commander. He arrived in Naples and took up his command on 27 February 1799. He found a country in disarray; insurrections were springing up everywhere in the new Parthenopian Republic.\(^2\) Nevertheless, Macdonald had to put down the revolts, organize a new government, and keep the army organized and supplied.

As far as forming the new government of Naples, Macdonald quickly informed the Directory that he had recalled the civil commissioners that were expelled from Naples by General Championnet. In this letter, and in another one dated three days later, he mentioned that he was a soldier, not a politician.\(^3\) Macdonald, it seemed, wanted as little to do with the civil government in Naples as possible. This allowed him to concentrate on the military aspects of his command.

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\(^1\) Macdonald, *Recollections of Marshal Macdonald* 73. Macdonald was originally reassigned to the Army of Mayence on 10 February 1799, but was ordered to Naples three days later. See Six, *Dictionnaire Biographique*, II, 137.

\(^2\) The Kingdom of Naples was renamed the Parthenopian Republic, after the ancient name of the city.

\(^3\) Macdonald to the Directory, 1, 4 March 1799 *Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de Naples*, Carton B\(^3\)-59. Macdonald was also aware that the civil commissioners could get you removed from command!
This command consisted of fourteen and a half infantry brigades, six regiments of cavalry, 2,435 engineers and artillery troops, and 6,000 Italians, for a total effective strength (on paper, at least) of 32,000 men.\(^4\) These men, however, were deployed throughout Naples and Rome. The troops in Naples were further dispursed to suppress the insurrections in various areas. General Jean-Baptiste Olivier, for example, marched his division towards Calabria, while General Philibert Duhesme had his division in the province of Apula.\(^5\) Despite the French military presence in southern Italy, the revolts continued to irrupt. Macdonald decided to concentrate on keeping the peace in the major cities (Naples, Rome, Florence).\(^6\) However, events in northern Italy put all of his plans to naught.

In northern Italy, the Army of Italy, led by General of Division Barthélémmy Schérer, opened the campaign for Italy on 26 March when French forces fought Austrians under the command of Lieutenant-General Paul Kray along the Adige River in the Cisalpine Republic. After ten days of sporadic fighting, the Austrians shattered the French army at the Battle of Magnano on 5 April 1799. The French lost between 10,000 and 11,000 men over the eleven day period.\(^7\)

These battles had an immediate impact upon the Army of Naples. On 28 March, General Schérer began calling for reinforcements from Macdonald's command. The first request was for General Kellermann's unit to be transferred to the north. The second letter ordered Macdonald to send the 1st Polish Legion, a demi-brigade of infantry, and a regiment of dragoons.\(^8\) Another call for

\(^5\) Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, X, 123-29. Olivier replaced Duhesme in Apula when he was recalled by the Directory.
reinforcements was followed, on 8 April 1799, with an order to march the entire Army of Naples north to support the Army of Italy.9

Unfortunately, Macdonald could not march immediately. He had to recall the various detachments of the army in preparation for the march north. He also had to establish the Neapolitan National Guard of 15,000 men, garrison and provision the fortresses in the country, organize a convoy of 4,000 horses to transport the baggage of the army, and deal with English naval Captain Thomas Trowbridge on a matter of captured British sailors. It took him a month to settle the various issues and leave the Parthenopian Republic, hopefully, to defend itself.10

The first task was to concentrate the army and provide garrisons for 20 towns and posts.11 Macdonald wanted to bring all of the French troops north with him, while local forces garrisoned the country, but he was overruled by General Schérer. The Army of Naples ended up leaving over 7,600 soldiers in Naples, Gaeta, Capua, and Ancona.12 Macdonald confirmed, in a letter to General Schérer, that the army was concentrated on 25 April; but troops were still marching in from Apula.13 Of course, the withdrawal of troops from the outlying provinces led to revolts against French rule, and the troops had to crush them as they marched towards Naples.14

The most serious of these uprisings occurred when the English landed several hundred troops. Supported by some royalist forces, they captured Castelamare. The small garrison, fired upon by the British frigates, and

9 Schérer to Macdonald, 3, 8 April 1799, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de Naples, Carton B³-60. See also Édouard Gachot, Souvarow en Italie, (Paris, 1903), 215-16.
10 See Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 74-76; Gachot, Souvarow en Italie, 216.
11 Gachot, Souvarow en Italie, 216.
12 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 77; Schérer to Macdonald, 11 April 1799, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de Naples, Carton B³-60; Gachot, Souvarow en Italie, 216 fn 1.
surrounded by enemies, tried to surrender. However, even with English troops present, the locals massacred all of the defending French except for one officer, who managed to escape. Macdonald wasted no time in sending troops to retake the town. Two gunboats and two bomb ketches were sent to harass the frigates, while General of Brigade Jean Sarrazin attacked the land forces. Macdonald offered a reward of twenty-five *louis* to whoever brought him the flags of England and Naples flying over the city; the flags were quickly removed from the ramparts and brought to Macdonald. General of Brigade François Watrin also dispersed revolts that irrupted in Cava, Vietri, and Salerno, inflicting 2,000 casualties.\(^{15}\)

The French troops returned to camp to prepare for the upcoming campaign in the north.

Macdonald established his camp at Caserta, on the left bank of the Volturno River, for the concentration of the army prior to marching north. The army was ready to march in the first week of May, but Macdonald had one more duty to perform. Every year, the miracle of Saint Janarius, the patron saint of Naples, was observed. Macdonald, wanting to cover every possible eventuality before he marched north, took 20 men to the ceremony. If the miracle, which consisted of the dried blood of the saint became liquid, it would seem that the saint was blessing the Republic. The miracle did take place, much to the disappointment of the masses, and the French army march north the next day, 7 May.\(^{16}\)

Macdonald organized the Army of Naples into an advance guard and two columns for the march. The advance guard was commanded by General of brigade Jean-Baptiste Salme. Macdonald led the first column north; it included the headquarters, the artillery park, the reserve, and the cavalry division. This


\(^{16}\) Macdonald, *Recollections of Marshal Macdonald*, 78; Paul Charles François Adrien Dieudonné Thiébault, *Mémoires du général Bon Thiébault*, (Paris, 1894), II, 506-07; Gachot, *Souvarow en Italie*, 217. According to Thiébault, the saint had some extra help. The President of the Republic threatened to shoot the Cardinal Archbishop if the miracle did not occur.
column marched along the coast, and then cut through the Pontine Marshes and arrived in Rome on 26 May without incident. The second column was commanded by General Olivier, was not so fortunate.

Fig. 15. Macdonald’s March.

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Olivier’s column\textsuperscript{18} marched on a line east of the first column, and ran into trouble 12 April at the town of Isola, on the Garigliano River. The town was situated in a very strong and defensible position. Since the river was not fordable at this point, the army needed to use the bridges in the town in order to move its artillery and baggage. A group of Neapolitans, controlling the town, refused to allow the French to cross the river. A five-hour fight ensued, ending with the total destruction of the town and the death of most of the inhabitants.\textsuperscript{19}

The army was reunited in Rome on 17 May. Macdonald spent three days drawing up instructions, discarding his baggage train to help speed his march, and strengthening the garrison to 2,568 men.\textsuperscript{20} Macdonald began coordinating his movements with the new commander of the Army of Italy, General of division Jean-Victor Moreau, with whom he had served in the Armée du Nord in 1793-94. Moreau warned Macdonald that the enemy had moved as far south as Modena and Reggio.\textsuperscript{21} Moreau suggested that there were two possibilities for the junction of the two armies: first, the Army of Naples could take the coast road from Florence to Genoa where the two armies could unite. Second, Macdonald could cross the Apennines at Modena, make a feint towards Mantua, and march to Piacenza, where the Army of Italy would meet them to form an overwhelming force against the Allied army commanded by Field Marshal Alexander Suvarov. Macdonald wrote to Moreau on 19 May, stating that he preferred the route to Piacenza, because he was worried about the poor roads along the coast.\textsuperscript{22} Macdonald was also worried about the possibility of the Allied army crossing the Apennines and catching his army strung out on the march.

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\textsuperscript{18} Olivier’s column consisted of the 12\textsuperscript{th}, 30\textsuperscript{th}, 73\textsuperscript{rd}, and 97\textsuperscript{th} demi-brigades, the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 25\textsuperscript{th} Chasseurs and a battery of light cannon.
\textsuperscript{19} Lahure, Souvenirs de la vie militaire, 222-23; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, X, 327-28; Thiébault, Mémoires du général Thiébault, II, 529-32.
\textsuperscript{20} Gachot, Souvarow en Italie, 218 fn1.
\textsuperscript{21} Moreau to Macdonald, 5 May 1799, Service historique, Correpsondance: Armée de Naples, Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-61.
\textsuperscript{22} Macdonald to Moreau, 29 May 1799, Service historique, Correpsondance: Armée de Naples, Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-61; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, X, 330-31; Gachot, Souvarow en Italie, 218.
While Macdonald made plans, the Army of Naples continued the march northward, reaching Florence on 26 May. The army averaged between 24 and 30 miles a day. When Macdonald arrived in Florence, he concentrated his various detachments and created a new division, commanded by General of division Joseph Montrichard, who was attached to the Army of Italy. Additional information allowed Macdonald to further establish his plan for the campaign. First, he was informed that General of division Claude-Victor Perrin had taken Pontremoli from Allied troops, opening his communications with Moreau in Genoa. He also learned that the Allies had posted troops, under the commands of Austrian generals Karl Ott and Friedrich Hohenzollern, in the Duchy of Modena, so he had to factor this information into his plan to join Moreau and the Army of Italy.

The final plan that developed between Macdonald and Moreau called for Macdonald to descend from the Apennines and sweep General Hohenzollern from Modena. Then, feinting towards Mantua, he would quickly march to rendezvous with Moreau near Piacenza. Moreau was to bring the Army of Italy out of Genoa, and cross the Apennines at Bobbio to join with Macdonald in the vicinity of Piacenza (basically following the route of General Victor). In order to keep the Allies guessing, Moreau had several stories printed in the newspapers that he had received 15,000 reinforcements from France, and that he was planning on marching to relieve the siege of Turin. Moreau finally agreed to this plan on 11 June. The next day, Moreau wrote to Macdonald, setting the date for the union of the two armies near Piacenza on 16-17 June.

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25 Moreau to Macdonald, 8, 11 June 1799, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de Naples, Carton B3-62; Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, X, 334-35; Mathieu Dumas, *Précis des événemens militaires des événemens militaires, ou, Essais historiques sur les campagnes de 1799 à 1814* (Paris, 1817-1826), I, 184. Originally, Moreau was to advance to Piacenza via Novi and Voghera, which would have put him right in the path of the Allies advancing from Turin. Moreau objected to this plan.
This phase of the campaign began on the morning of 12 June, with the Army of Naples marching out of the Apennines and attacking the isolated Austrian troops in the Duchy of Modena. Macdonald organized his forces, from east to west: on his right were the divisions of generals Montrichard and Jean-Baptiste Rusca, which were to move quickly past Bologna, pushing the Austrian troops of General Johann Klénau back and cutting off the retreat of Hohenzollern's forces in Modena; Macdonald ordered the divisions of Olivier and Watrin to advance and attack Hohenzollern at Modena. General Jean-Henri Dombrowski was to march his Polish troops west of Macdonald, ending up between Reggio and Modena while General Victor pushed down the Taro River valley to attack the division of General Ott, pushing him back towards Piacenza.27

Macdonald soldiers attacked Hohenzollern's troops in front of Modena, and drove them back into the city. Montrichard's troops, however, did not appear in time to cut off their retreat, so the Austrian troops escaped, but not before losing 1,500 dead, 2,000 prisoners, 12 guns, 3 flags, and a great deal of their bagage; in total, about one-third of their effective force was destroyed.28 Some of the French troops began to pillage the town, and Macdonald, worried about the overall situation, took some cavalry to reconnoiter the territory beyond Modena. This was a mistake because he was caught ahead of his escort by a group of Bussy Chasseurs, French émigré cavalry serving in the Austrian army. These troops charged Macdonald, whose riding stick got caught in his equipment so he could not avoid them; he received a saber cut to the head and the hand, was unhorsed, and trampled. His escort, along with a battalion of grenadiers rescued him, and killed or captured all but two of the enemy chasseurs.29

Macdonald now faced two problems. He had successfully defeated and pushed back the forces of Hohenzollern and Klénau, which gave him a clear road

27 Duffy, Eagles Over the Alps, 87-89.
29 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 93-95; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, X, 337-38; Lahure, Souvenirs de la vie militaire, 226-27.
to his junction with the Army of Italy. However, he was now severely wounded and he could not sit a horse; he had to walk or ride in a carriage, which he believed would diminish his ability to command troops on the field of battle. He also had to address the rivalry developing between the officers of the Army of Naples and those of the Army of Italy. This friction might have allowed the escape of Hohenzollern's forces, so it had to be addressed. Macdonald wrote to the Directory on 5 June, calling for the union of the two armies, and asking to be relieved of command.\footnote{Macdonald to the Directory, 5 June 1799, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de Naples, Carton B\textsuperscript{3} -62.} He was well aware of the conflict between the two groups of officers, and of the need for unity of command. Nevertheless, there was no time for the response to arrive from Paris. More immediately, after being wounded, Macdonald offered the command to each of his divisional commanders in turn; each refused. They responded that, once the junction of the two armies occurred, General Moreau would be the natural leader of the French forces. Macdonald agreed with them.\footnote{Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 96.} This, then, seemed to put the problems at rest, and allowed Macdonald to move on to unite with the Army of Italy.

Macdonald detached the divisions of Montrichard and Olivier to make a feint towards Mantua, and to make sure that General Kray, who was besieging Mantua, did not fall on his rear. However, Kray had already lifted the siege, but was covering the crossings of the Po, in case Macdonald tried to relieve Mantua. The rest of the Army of Naples marched from Modena to Reggio on 13 June, entered Parma on 14 June, and arrived at Borgo-San-Domino, east of Piacenza on 15 June, where General Victor's forces joined Macdonald's army. Unfortunately, there was no sign of General Moreau. The Army of Naples was in a critical position. General Kray had lifted the siege of Mantua and marched to cover the Po River crossings south of Mantua. He could cut Macdonald's lines of communication with Florence. General Ott was established on the Tidone River, barring the French from reaching the strategic area of Stradella, which is the point where the Apennines approach the Po, and which would have been a good
position for an inferior force like Macdonald's to fight a superior foe. Suvarov was undoubtedly marching to attack the Army of Naples before it could unite with the Army of Italy, so Macdonald had a decision to make; should he wait for Moreau's arrival, or fall back and try to unite with him on the other side of the Apennines?

Macdonald decided to wait in the vicinity of Piacenza, hoping that Moreau would arrive in time to join him to confront Field Marshal Suvarov. General Victor agreed; he informed General Moreau that the moment was favorable to attack the enemy. Unfortunately for the French, the Allies arrived first. When word of Macdonald's march first reached the Allies, Suvarov was besieging the citadel of Turino. General Michael Melas, the senior Austrian officer in the Italian theater, was concentrating troops in the vicinity of Alessandria. Both reacted quickly to the news that Macdonald had arrived in northern Italy. Suvarov left a token force to continue the siege of Turino and marched east, uniting with General Melas' troops along the way. The Allied army marched swiftly to support General Ott's Austrian troops located between the Tidone and Trebbia rivers.

THE BATTLES OF THE TREBBIA AND TIDONE RIVERS

Macdonald advanced on General Ott with the three divisions of generals Victor, Rusca, and Dombrowski on 16 June, forcing him from his positions outside of Piacenza back to the left bank of the Tidone River. This river flows from the Apennines to the Po River, and is located about 5 kilometers west of the Trebbia River, flowing almost parallel with it. The French took Piacenza, masked the citadel, which was garrisoned by 600 troops, and were content to keep Ott at a distance. This was the deployments on the morning of 17 June, the first of three days of battle collectively known as the Battle on the Trebbia.

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33 Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, X, 340; Duffy, Eagles over the Alps, 90-92.
34 Ibid., X, 341.
Macdonald, feeling the effects of his wounds, gave command to General Victor on 17 June. Victor was ordered by Macdonald to advance to the Tidone River, defeat General Ott's forces, and then hold there; he was not to push far beyond the river line. The banks of the Tidone River were steep, between two and three meters high, and were a good defensive line. The French outnumbered Ott's troops 18,000 to about 6,000, and Macdonald did not expect to fight the entire Allied army that day. The French moved out of their bivouac at 5:00 A.M., and advanced on the enemy. Victor's division was on the French right, with Rusca in the center, and Dombrowski on the left. The French easily pushed Ott's forces across the Tidone River; unfortunately, they did not stop there. Seeing how easily the enemy fell back, General Rusca decided to attack across the river, despite the objections of General of brigade Henri-François Charpentier, one of General Victor's commanders. The Polish troops of Dombrowski also crossed the river, at 9:00 A.M., outflanking the Austrian troops. The French troops pushed Ott almost three miles back from the Tidone River, and inflicted close to 50% casualties by 1:00 P.M. At this time the advance guard of Field Marshal Suvarov started arriving on the field.

Through extraordinary efforts, Suvarov was able to bring part of his army onto the field of battle. These reinforcements quickly increased to the strength of 30,000 men, and began pushing the French back over the ground they had just won. Although the French were spread out across the battlefield, they fought bravely, and contested every foot back to the Tidone River. They used each

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35 There is a controversy surrounding General Victor's location during this portion of the battle. Macdonald wrote in his memoirs that Victor was not with his troops, and that he remained in Piacenza. However, Macdonald wrote in his report of the battle that Victor received the order to withdraw his troops as the French left was threatened, leading one to assume that he was with his troops at the time. John Weinzerl points out that there is no archival evidence to prove Victor relinquished command to anyone. See Macdonald to Directoire executif, 25 June 1799, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de Naples, Carton B3-62; Weinzerl, The Military and Political Career of Claude-Victor Perrin, .

36 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 98-100; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, X, 341-42; Dumas, Précis des événemens militaires, I, 195-96; Lahure, Souvenirs, 230-31; Duffy, Eagles over the Alps, 94-5; Gachot, Souvarow en Italie, 248-49.
topographic feature to delay the advancing Allied forces, and struck at the optimal time to cause the greatest damage to Suvarov’s troops. However, as the day wore on, the superiority of numbers began to tell, and the French were pushed back in disorder, re-crossing the Tidone River. Macdonald, told of the action, wanted to hold the area between the two rivers, but was informed that
there was not a good line to defend, so he sent orders to pull the army back to the Trebbia River, leaving only the advance guard of General Salme and Dombrowski’s Poles on the left bank. The fighting stopped at 9:00 P.M.\textsuperscript{37}

There was no news from General Moreau during the night of 17 June or the morning of 18 June. The divisions of Olivier and Montrichard arrived, and Macdonald put them in the French line, and held General Watrin back as his reserve. After making his dispositions early in the afternoon, Macdonald hoped that the Allies would not attack that day, believing that any delay would allow Moreau to arrive with his 20,000 men to give the French a decided advantage. Macdonald called a meeting of his senior officers which had barely begun when firing erupted along the line, signaling the Allied attack. The officers immediately went to their units.\textsuperscript{38}

Suvarov attacked the French line in four columns: In the south, Prince Peter Bagration was to try and turn the French left - this was to be the main Allied effort; north of this, a Russian division was to attack in support of Bagration’s flanking maneuver and attempt to cross the Trebbia at Gossolegngo; the third column was to attack between Gossolegngo and the road from Piacenza; the forth column, consisting mostly of Austrian troops, was to attack along the highway itself.\textsuperscript{39}

Fighting started on the French left. Bagration tried to turn the French and pin them against the Po River and Piacenza. His Russian troops fought against the Poles of Dombrowski; there was no quarter asked or given between these old foes. The Poles would have been overwhelmed if the divisions of Rusca and Victor had not crossed the Trebbia River to support them. The French started to push the Russians back, when Suvarov showed up with reinforcements and

\textsuperscript{37} Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 100; Duffy, \textit{Eagles over the Alps}, 95.
Fig. 17. First Day on the Trebbia, 18 March 1799.
stabilized the fight. The Allies slowly pushed the French back to, and then across the Trebbia.\textsuperscript{40}

On the French right, General Salme's advance guard was in an isolated position north of the Piacenza road, and did not move until the divisions of Olivier and Montrichard crossed the Trebbia. This triggered an attack by General Melas which quickly pushed the French brigade back, wounding, in quick succession, General Salme and Adjutant-General Jean Sarrazin; Colonel Louis-Jacques Lahure took command of the advance guard. The French were forced back in this area as well. Fighting halted at darkness, around 9:00 PM.\textsuperscript{41}

Once again, Macdonald had to make a decision - stay and fight, or retire. There was still no news on the arrival of Moreau, but General of Division Jean François La Poype arrived at Bobbio with a brigade of infantry. With his entire army present, Macdonald decided to not only stay and fight, but to take the offensive the next day, 19 June. Macdonald organized the army into three groups. On the right, the advance guard and the reserve, commanded by General Watrin, were ordered to push along the road and turn the Allied left. In the center, General Olivier was ordered to attack Suvorov's center, supported on his left by General Montrichard's division. On the left, General Victor was ordered to turn the Allied right, using his division and the divisions of generals Rusca and Dombrowski. The cavalry was positioned in between and to the rear of each division, for support. Everyone was to be on line and ready to attack at the signal, given at 9:00 A.M.\textsuperscript{42} He also ordered General La Poype to march from Bobbio and attack the Allied right flank at Castel San Giorgio.\textsuperscript{43} However, General Montrichard's troops were not on line until noon, and he did not

\textsuperscript{40} Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, X, 343; Dumas, \textit{Précis des événemens militaires}, I, 197-98; Duffy, \textit{Eagles over the Alps}, 100-02.
\textsuperscript{42} Macdonald to Directory, 25 June 1799, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de Naples, Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-62.
\textsuperscript{43} Macdonald to La Poype, 19 June 1799, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de Naples, Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-62.
accompany them. The signal, a massive cannonade, was given at noon, and the French surged across the Trebbia River to come to grips with the enemy. The French attacked along the line. Dombrowski's Poles had marched upstream, crossed the river, and then came crashing down on Prince Bagration's flank. Generals Rusca and Victor supported this movement by attacking straight across the Trebbia, but they were prevented from containing Bagration by the movement of General Franz Rosenberg. These forces fought the entire day, with Dombrowski making three separate charges, and being repulsed each time. In the end, the Polish contingent was almost completely destroyed.

On the right, General Olivier made good headway against the Austrians. Catching them gathered around their cooking fires, he quickly captured the village of San Niccolo, as well as two guns from Ott's forces. This attack might have punched through the Allied line, if it had been supported by General Montrichard's troops, to his left. However, this division crossed the river, advanced slowly, and began fighting the troops commanded by General Egor Förster, directly to their front. While this was going on, a column of Austrian dragoons used the broken terrain to cover their movements and charge into the flank of the 19th Chasseurs, routing them. This caused the 5th Légère, which was advancing in skirmish order, to collapse, and this caused the entire division to melt away. Montrichard, on the other bank of the Trebbia, tried to stop the retreat, but to no effect. As a result, the left flank of General Olivier's division was open to attack, so he had to halt his advance, and turn part of his force to cover the sudden collapse of Montrichard's division. With no support on the left, he

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44 Macdonald to Moreau, 21 June 1799, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de Naples, Carton B3-62; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 102-03; Lahure, Souvenirs de la vie militaire, 235.
45 Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, X, 345-46.
was forced to pull back. General Watrin and the advance guard advanced as far as the Tidone River, and was preparing to turn the Allied left, when the

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disaster in the center forced them to withdraw back to the river as well.\textsuperscript{48} General La Poype was unable to assist in the battle due to some well-placed Allied infantry.

After three days of hard fighting, Macdonald's forces were unable to engage in battle for another day, despite his willingness. Meanwhile, Macdonald had finally received news of General Moreau's positions. Rather than follow the agreed-upon plan, Moreau had detached a brigade of infantry, commanded by General Lapoype to the village of Bobbio. The rest of the Army of Italy had left Genoa and moved cautiously towards the division of General Heinrich Bellegarde. However, Moreau did not attack the Austrians until the day after the Battle of the Trebbia had ended (20 June 1799)! Macdonald had fought for three days, waiting for Moreau to join him, but Moreau, unexplainably, changed the plan without informing Macdonald.\textsuperscript{49}

French casualties were heavy, with over 7,000 wounded left in Piacenza. General Olivier lost a leg during the combat. Generals Victor, Dombrowski, Rusca, Salme, Charles-Louis Grandjean, Jean Sarrazin, and Jacques Blondeau were wounded as well; General Alexis Cambray was killed. Macdonald was feverish from the wounds he received at Modena. In total, the French lost over 10,000 men in the three day battle. The Allies lost 6,000 men.\textsuperscript{50}

There was plenty of blame for the loss. General Moreau earned the bulk of it; he unilaterally decided to change the French plan without informing Macdonald. General Montrichard was to blame for the tactical setback of 19 June. Macdonald made several mistakes. By leaving the two divisions in the vicinity of Modena, his forces were outnumbered on 17 June. Moreover, in

\textsuperscript{48} Macdonald to Moreau, 21 June 1799, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de Naples, Carton B\textsuperscript{3}-62.


sending General Watrin's division out with the reserve, Macdonald did not have a reserve to fill the gaps in his lines when Montrichard's division was routed. The friction between the elements of the Army of Italy and the Army of Naples came into play on 17 June, as General Rusca (Naples) ignored General Charpentier (Italy) and pushed across the Tidone to further engage General Ott's forces.

The soldiers on both sides fought courageously, after having made strenuous marches. With the loss on the Trebbia, the French lost their hold on northern Italy, with the exception of Genoa. What had started out as a great chance to clear Italy of Allied troops turned into a French disaster. Lahure, an officer of Macdonald's advance guard, commented, "It makes you wonder what a victory on the Trebbia would have meant. Italy saved, no Marengo. What a change, then, in the destinies of France and the whole world!"

Macdonald now had to break contact with the enemy, and attempt to join the remnants of his army with the Army of Italy. In order to deceive the enemy, a thin rear-guard of cavalry held the right bank of the Trebbia, and kept the campfires burning, making it seem that the French army was still in camp. The wounded also had to be cared for; Macdonald wrote to the Duke of Parma and General Melas, asking them to care for the untransportable wounded. Once this was completed, the retreat was begun.

While the army was preparing to march, sappers cut a path through the rough terrain around Piacenza, so that the army could march without interference from the Austrian batteries in the town's citadel. These batteries were firing at random towards the main road, which caused such a danger to the wounded that Macdonald wrote to the citadel commander, asking for a cease fire while the wounded were moved into town. With that settled, the French army was ready to withdraw from the Trebbia.

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51 Lahure, *Souvenirs de la vie militaire*, 250.
53 Lahure, *Souvenirs de la vie militaire*, 242. The wounded were well treated.
54 Gachot, *Souvarow en Italie*, 274.
55 Ibid., 274-75.
Macdonald organized his army into several columns. First, General Victor moved the three divisions under his command (Victor, Dombrowski, and Rusca) to cross the Nura River at San-Giorgio. These troops were to take up positions there to cover that major crossing point. The divisions of generals Watrin, Montrichard, and Olivier marched towards Roncaglia and Ponte-Nura, under the command of General Watrin, who took over for General Olivier, who was wounded. Macdonald marched with his headquarters to Cadeo. The plan was to break contact with the Allied army during the night, and place the Nura River between the two armies. This did not occur, since General Victor was late moving his troops, and was sighted by the Allied picket line. The French army was pursued to the Nura River, harassed especially by the cossacks. The

56 Ordre de mouvement de l'armée de Naples, 20 June 1799, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de Naples, Carton B³-62; Lahure, Souvenirs de la vie militaire, 244.
divisional artillery of Victor and Rusca was recovered by Macdonald, as he moved to assist the hard-pressed French columns. The 17th Légère demi-brigade held up the Russian pursuit for several hours at San-Giorgio, surrendering only after running out of ammunition.

Macdonald reorganized his army on 22 June, at Reggio. The advance guard and the division of General Rusca were dissolved, and merged into the divisions of Watrin and Dombrowski. Field Marshal Suvarov halted his pursuit on 22 June at Larda; he received news of General Moreau’s movements, and decided to shift his emphasis to the north. General Ott was placed in charge of the pursuit, utilizing the divisions of generals Hohenzollern and Klénau as well as his own units. The only other major action of the retreat took place on 24 June at Sassuolo. General of brigade André Calvin, defending this post with the remnants of his brigade, was attacked by an Austrian force. After a brief defense, he withdrew into the hills behind the town. This was very unfortunate, since the army’s artillery park and baggage was passing through the area at that time, so it was quickly captured. Fortunately for the French, Macdonald was not far away and he reacted promptly. Two groups of French troops, one led by Macdonald, and one by Adjutant-General Pamphile Lacroix attacked the Austrian force, forcing them to surrender. The French took 600 prisoners, and regained their guns and baggage.

Macdonald arrived in Pistoia on 28 June, and remained there with the army for several days for reorganization and resupply. From there, he marched along the coastal road to rendezvous with the Army of Italy, which took place on 3 July. Macdonald stayed in Genoa, assisting Moreau with the reorganization of the combined forces of the armies of Italy and Naples. He took sick leave on 15

59 Ibid., XI, 373.
July, and left the army on 3 August, when he sailed from Genoa to return to France.\textsuperscript{61} The wounds he suffered at the Battle of Modena were not healed. He was coughing blood, running a fever, and he had severe pain in his chest.\textsuperscript{62} Macdonald's health took considerable time to recover, and he complained of it for several years.

In his role as commander of the Army of Naples, Macdonald began this campaign effectively. He first deployed his forces to deal with the mounting insurrection in Naples. He also prevented the controversy between himself and General Championnet from undermining the success of the French in Naples. Then, he rapidly moved his forces through hostile territory. Macdonald was able to attack and defeat the scattered Allied detachments, but was severely wounded at the Battle of Modena. This hampered his effectiveness later when, as commander, he was forced to rely on his subordinates during the first day of fighting between the Trebbia and Tidone rivers. Once he was in contact with General Moreau, he proposed a very ambitious plan to defeat the Allies in Italy. Unfortunately, he was unable to implement this plan out, due in part to the unexplained actions of General Moreau. Macdonald saw the chance to defeat the Allied army at the Trebbia River. He contained Suvarov for three days, hoping that Moreau would appear on his flank or rear and sweep the field. Moreau, who had 25,000 men, could have covered the Allied detachment with 10,000 men, and maneuvered with the remainder. If this had been done, and Moreau had arrived on the battlefield on either the second or third day of the battle, the outcome would have been very different. During his retreat from the Trebbia, Macdonald divided his forces into several small columns, to facilitate rapid movement. Unfortunately, this led to the capture of several of the detachments, but the remainder of his army survived to join Moreau at Genoa.

\textsuperscript{61} Six, \textit{Dictionnaire Biographique}, II, 137.
When Macdonald arrived in Paris on 20 August, the city was in turmoil. The Directory government was collapsing. The members of the Directory were more worried about retaining power than solving the problems of France. The Jacobins were plotting to overthrow the Directory, and bring about a return of the Committee of Public Safety and another Terror. The Abbé Emmanuel Sièyes was organizing a coup led by a military figurehead; Macdonald was approached, but refused to participate.  

Shortly thereafter, Macdonald and the rest of Paris received word that General Napoleon Bonaparte had landed, unexpectedly, in the south of France, and was traveling to Paris. Macdonald was a friend of Josephine Bonaparte, Napoleon's wife, as well as several of his brothers and sisters. Once Napoleon was settled in his apartments, Macdonald and General Moreau had dinner with him; both men were questioned about their recent campaign in Italy. Macdonald decided to support Napoleon in the Coup of 18 Brumaire. He spent some time with Napoleon, as did many other senior officers. Macdonald was with Napoleon on 18 Brumaire when he reviewed 10,000 troops in the Tuileries Gardens, and also accompanied him to the

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1 It is doubtful that Macdonald was asked to lead the coup, despite his claims. See Macdonald, *Recollections of Marshal Macdonald*, 119; Thierry Lentz, *Le 18 brumaire: Les coups d'Etat de Napoléon Bonaparte* (Paris, 1997), 193-94.

2 Macdonald, *Recollections of Marshal Macdonald*, 119. Napoleon wanted the support of both men, and tried to patch things up between them.

chambers of the Council of Ancients. From there, Macdonald took command of the troops at Versailles while Napoleon completed his coup at St. Cloud.4

Once the Directory was overthrown, new assignments were made. Macdonald was mentioned as a possible Consul, but was opposed by Napoleon as a "foreigner."5 Macdonald would not have been interested in any case; what he wanted was command of an army. What he got was the position of Lieutenant-General of the Army of the Rhine, serving under General Moreau.6 Macdonald was discouraged because he was under the impression that he was to be given an independent command. He confronted Napoleon, who then removed Macdonald from the Army of the Rhine, and told him to rest and heal, because he was still suffering from the wounds he received at Modena; indeed, the doctors had him on a diet of milk and sago.7 Macdonald continued his recovery for several months. In the meantime, he took the position of Inspector-General on 21 January 1800.8

Napoleon created the First Army of the Reserve, crossed the Alps, and won the great victory at Marengo. However, the Second Army of the Reserve was created at Dijon, using the cadre of the 13th Légère, 19th, 70th, and 72nd Line.9 Macdonald was transferred to this army on 29 March 1800, and given command of it on 24 April 1800.10

Due to his wounds, Macdonald did not join the army in Dijon until 2 September, just as the army was moving into Switzerland, where it was to operate between the armies of the Rhine and of Italy. Orders were sent to the

5 Charles Maurice Talleyrand, Talleyrand (New York, 1903) II, 90.
6 Napoleon to Berthier, 7 December 1799, Napoléon Bonaparte, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier publiée par ordre de l'Empereur Napoléon III, (Paris, 1858-1869), No. 4418, VI, 29.
8 Service historique, Dossier de Maréchal Macdonald, Carton MF-20.
10 Service historique, Dossier de Maréchal Macdonald, Carton MF-20.
army even as Macdonald was traveling from Paris. Napoleon wanted the army to be in position to cover the right flank of the Army of the Rhine as it began its offensive at the resumption of hostilities.\footnote{Napoleon to Carnot, 29 August 1800, \textit{Correspondance de Napoléon ler}, No. 5075, VI, 565.}

Napoleon announced that the army would consist of 30,000 men. However, this was just propaganda to keep the Austrians uncertain as to how many French troops were available, and where they were going.\footnote{Dumas, \textit{Précis des événemens militaires}, V, 74.} There were approximately 12,000 men in the army. These troops were organized into four brigade-sized "divisions." In order to keep the illusion of creating an army of 30,000 men, each of these divisions had a General of division in command: Gabriel Venance Rey (1st Division), Louis Baraguey d'Hilliers (2nd Division), Antoine Morlot (3rd Division), and Emmanuel Grouchy (4th Division). Rey's division was deployed on the eastern border of Switzerland; the other three were either in Dijon, or marching to their new stations in preparation for the new campaign. The army was in its new positions by 17 September 1800; the first division was stationed at Feldkirch and in the Montafou valley; the second division was located at Raperschwyl; the third division was at Bischofzell; and the forth division, along with Macdonald's headquarters, were at St. Gall.\footnote{Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, XIII, 174; Leplus, \textit{Campagne de 1800}, 37-38.} Macdonald was ready for the resumption of hostilities, but an armistice signed at Hohenlinden was renewed three days later, so Macdonald had 45 more days to prepare his troops for an offensive.\footnote{Leplus, \textit{Campagne de 1800}, 43; Blanning, \textit{The French Revolutionary Wars}, 258.}

The strategic situation of the campaign placed the French and Austrian armies facing each other in three theaters of operations. First, the main armies operated in the German states, with General Moreau commanding the French Army of the Rhine, which had about 100,000 men; he was opposed by
the Emperor's brother, Archduke Johann, who led about 130,000 men. In Italy, General of division Guillaume Brune commanded the French Army of Italy, which had 55,790 men; he was facing General Heinrich Bellegarde, who had about 90,000 men. Macdonald was to move his army between the two French armies, to coordinate with them, and protect each of their flanks. He faced a combined force of 20,213 men, led by Field Marshal Lieutenant Josef Auffenberg and General Johann Hiller.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 5-6.
Macdonald placed his troops in bivouacs across the eastern cantons of Switzerland: Rey's division was in the upper Rhine River valley between Berneck and Feldkirck; Baraguey d'Hilliers division was posted between the banks of Lake Zurich and Lake Zug; Grouchy's division was at St. Gall; Morlot's division was at Bischofzell and along the eastern shore of Lake Constance; the cavalry reserve, commanded by General of division Pierre Garnier Laboissière, was situated between Zurich and St. Gall. The 2nd Army of the Reserve was renamed the Army of the Grisons on 17 October 1800.

The armistice with the Austrians allowed Macdonald to address several problems. On 1 October, he traveled to Augsburg to meet with General Moreau, taking his chef d'état-major Mathieu Dumas with him. This trip allowed the generals to plan their joint operations once hostilities were renewed. It also allowed the two men to settle the differences arising from the Trebbia campaign and its aftermath as well as their contention over the command of the Army of the Rhine. One area of common agreement between the two men was a strong feeling of support for the French Republic. Both men also felt some jealousy towards the growing power of Napoleon, the First Consul. Finally, Macdonald requested assistance from the Army of the Rhine, as the government of the Swiss Cantons could not afford to feed his small army.

Macdonald's plan pleased Moreau and followed the spirit of Napoleon's instructions for the Army of the Grisons. General Moreau agreed to reinforce the Army of the Grisons to 25,000 men, which would allow Macdonald to cover the right and rear of the Army of the Rhine while, at the same time, force the Austrian troops out of the Tyrol. However, due to Austrian reinforcements facing Moreau, he decided not to release any significant number of troops to Macdonald (Moreau had about 100,000 men, Archduke John had 130,000 men). Napoleon

16 Ibid., 44.
17 Service historique, Dossier de Maréchal Macdonald, Carton MF-20.
18 Philippe de Segur, An Aide-de-Camp of Napoleon (New York, 1895), 23.
19 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 120-21; Dumas, Précis des évènemens militaires, V, 76; Leplus, Campagne de 1800, 44-45.
20 Leplus, Campagne de 1800, 45-46.
had 10,000 elite troops in reserve in France, but was holding on to them in case the offensive on the Rhine stalled. Macdonald was only able to obtain eight days of food for his army. General Éblé, the artillery commander for the Army of the Rhine offered him the draft horses located at the depot of Deux-Ponts, but all of these horses were either sick or lame. Macdonald was unhappy with his lack of reinforcements, but had few options. The strategic situation in Italy changed as well, forcing Macdonald and Moreau to forego the plans that Macdonald suggested to drive the Austrians from the Tyrol, so Macdonald was forced to plan for a more southern orientation for his army.

General Brune, commanding the Army of Italy, detached 10,000 men to guard his right flank in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany due to insurrections supported by Austria and Naples. This caused a shift in Napoleon's grand strategy, and Macdonald had to concentrate on covering the left flank of the Army of Italy rather than the right flank of the Army of the Rhine. Macdonald was ordered to move General Baraguay d'Hilliers' division into the Valteline pass, to replace the division of General of division Donatien Rochambeau, since General Brune needed him in Tuscany. The path that this division took was through the Splügen Pass; although this division passed through the area without great difficulty, the weather became inclement, and this seemed to make this movement impossible for the rest of the army. Macdonald sent his Chief of Staff, Mathieu Dumas, to Paris to give this account to the First Consul in person. Also, Dumas was to seek reinforcements, supplies, and further orders. On 23 October, Napoleon listened to the reports of the scouts, the engineers, the locals, and Adjutant-General Achille Dampierre that the Army of the Grisons could not make such a movement. He then questioned Dumas on the deployment of the forces opposing the French. Napoleon then informed Dumas of the role of the Army of the Grisons would perform in the upcoming campaign:

22 Leplus, *Campagne de 1800*, 63.
23 Ibid., 46.
24 Napoleon to Lacuée, 22 October 1800, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, No. 5134, VI, 604.
We will remove them from this immense fortress of the Tyrol without fighting. It is necessary to operate on their flanks to threaten their line of retreat; they will evacuate all of the high valleys at once. I will not change anything in my plans: return promptly, I will break the armistice. Tell Macdonald that an army can always pass, and in any season wherever two men can place their feet. It is necessary that, fifteen days after the resumption of hostilities, the Army of the Grisons is at the sources of the Adda, Oglio, and Adige. It is not the numerical force of an army, but the goal, the importance of the operation, which is the measure of the command.\textsuperscript{25}

Napoleon did order that 200,000 francs be sent to Macdonald that enabled him to purchase supplies for the army.\textsuperscript{26} Macdonald realized that he was going to have more problems combating the terrain of the Alps than he was fighting the Austrians. However, he went about his task with energy. The armistice was rejected on 8 November, and hostilities resumed two weeks later, Macdonald received new orders concerning his march route. His division on the north flank, commanded by General Rey at Feldkirck, was replaced by a small division from the Army of the Rhine. Macdonald was ordered to cross the Splügen Pass, attack the Austrians in the Valteline area, and cover the left flank of the Army of Italy. Macdonald was to inform General Brune of the strength and location of his forces to coordinate their movement.\textsuperscript{27} In order to carry out this project, Macdonald reorganized the army, and initiated a program of misdirection to confuse the Austrian commanders. General Grouchy, who was transferred to the Army of the Rhine, was replaced by General Vandamme, who took command of the advance guard. Generals Baraguay-d'Hilliers and Morlot continued to command divisions, along with

\textsuperscript{25} Dumas, \textit{Précis des événemens militaires}, V, 152-54.
\textsuperscript{26} Leplus, \textit{Campagne de 1800}, 64. However, Macdonald was still looking for the funds on 7 December. See Macdonald to Napoleon, 7 December 1800, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de réserve et des Grisons, Carton B\textsuperscript{2}-196.
\textsuperscript{27} Napoleon to Berthier, 19 November 1800, \textit{Correspondance de Napoléon Ier}, No. 5186, VI, 648.
General of division Charles Pully, General Laboissière led the cavalry, while General Rey commanded the infantry reserve.²⁸

Macdonald moved his headquarters to Rheineck, at the head of Lake Constance. He then started to repair roads in the area of Feldkirch that led into

²⁸ Ordre de Mouvement, 2 December 1800, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de réserve et des Grisons, Carton B²-196; Dumas, Précis des événements militaires, V, 159-60.
the Voralberg, and also began sending reconnaissance patrols along this route, as well as towards Lanquart and the Upper-Engadin area. This caught the attention of the Austrian forces in the area, who expected Macdonald’s forces were going to advance in that direction. In order to keep the enemy guessing, and ensuring that they did not discover his movement prematurely, or move on his rear, General Morlot’s division was moved to hold the various passes in the area of Lanquart as well as Gatthur and Zum-Kloster; his orders was to secure the rear areas of the Army of the Grisons. This was done immediately after the armistice was renounced, but before hostilities resumed.

Before Macdonald could begin to attempt the crossing of the Splügen Pass, he first had to locate enough food for the army. The army's forty-five day stay in the Swiss cantons had exhausted the local provisions. As a result, the food had to be brought up to the army from Riva, a town in Italy at the southern end of Lake Como. Once the food situation was addressed, the army could begin its attempt at crossing the Alps in winter.

The Splügen pass began at the village of Thusis. The path to the pass was known as the Via-Mala (Unhappy Way); it was very narrow, with many rocks and boulders littering the route. It climbed for most of its distance, crossing and recrossing the Rhine River with bridges as high as 300 feet above the torrent. After climbing for seven miles on this path, the village of Splügen was reached. Here the slope increased to sixty degrees for the final ascent to the summit of the pass. In good weather, it took ninety minutes to climb the final ascent, and then another ninety minutes to descend to a hospice, which was at the opening of a small valley. This six hundred meter valley led to the slopes of the Cardinel, and the last segment of the descent from the Splügen pass. This part of the pass, while not as steep as the earlier part, was dangerous nonetheless. The heat of the sun could melt some of the snow, which would freeze into ice, making this slope extremely dangerous, as it twisted along the side of the mountain. Finally,

31 Ibid., V, 157-58.
the village of Isola marked the end of the most dangerous segment of the pass, and led to the villages of Campo-Dolcino, San-Giacomo, and Chiavenna. The total distance from Thusis to Chiavenna was about fourteen miles. This was the terrain that Macdonald's small army had to cross in the middle of winter.

General of brigade Nicolas Aulmont de Verrières, leading three companies of sappers and a detachment of artillery, was the first to attempt to cross the pass. This force arrived in Thusis on 24 November, and discovered that the artillery wagons could not negotiate the first approaches to the pass. Therefore, small sleds were built to carry the guns. Unfortunately, these new sleds were so

32 Ibid., V, 162-67.
small that they could not carry all of the ammunition. The excess cartridges were distributed to the troops, who were already overburdened with five days rations, as well as their usual equipment.\textsuperscript{33} This took two days. The next detachment, led by General Laboissière at the head of the 10th Dragoons, the 1st Hussars, and the 12th Chasseurs climbed up to the pass. This combined force started their ascent on 27 November. The local guides marked the path with stakes and 50 workers pressed the snow to provide a solid path; General Laboissière walked with these workers, ahead of the main column. Half way between Thusis and the summit, the weather deteriorated, with a blinding snow storm causing extreme difficulty for the workers. The winds caused an avalanche that struck the column; thirty dragoons and their horses were swept into the abyss in an instant. As a result, the column had to return to the village below. General Laboissière and the workers at the head of the column had no choice but to continue on, and they eventually reached the hospice where they waited for the rest of the army. The storm persisted for three days.\textsuperscript{34}

The guides and workers declared that it would take fifteen days to clear the path, and even then, only infantry would be able to pass. Macdonald, who arrived during the storm, refused to accept their judgment because he knew that if the army were stuck in the valley with no outlet, it would slowly starve. The guides brought four of the largest oxen available, and they began to press the snow and mark the path again; a company of sappers followed and improved the path. After much effort, the column reached the summit, only losing a few men and horses. This column continued to the hospice, where they joined General Laboissière. Two more columns crossed the pass on 2-3 December, leaving only the fourth column and the rear-guard to make the crossing. On 4 December, Macdonald and the last column began their crossing, but a steady snowfall began, and continued as they made their ascent to the summit. Once

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., V, 161.
\textsuperscript{34} Mathieu Dumas to Berthier, 6 December 1800, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de réserve et des Grisons, Carton B\textsuperscript{2}-196; Dumas, \textit{Précis des événemens militaires}, V, 167-68. Some of the Dragoons were also rescued by the workers.
there, they found that the snow had filled in the trench, the markers were all covered, and there was no indication that a path had ever been made. The guides and workers declared that the pass was closed, and began to return to the village below. Macdonald recalled the workers, and he moved to the front, locating the path with the long sounding poles used by the local inhabitants. With Macdonald marking the path, the workers, sappers, and grenadiers began pressing the snow to create a path so the column could pass. The storm continued to harass the column, and did not let up for several days. The entire army finally assembled around Chiavenna on 6 December. Several hundred men and mules, as well as numerous sleds were lost in the crossing, but the crossing had been successful – a testament to Macdonald’s judgment, ability, and determination.35

Austrian General Hiller, who expected Macdonald to attack in the northern part of the Tyrol, hastily pulled his troops back from their positions when informed of the march of the Army of the Grisons. He was planning to attack Macdonald when word of the French victory at Hohenlinden on 3 December 1800 arrived at his headquarters. The Austrians did attack the French rear-guard at Zutz and Scamp, taking 250 prisoners and causing Macdonald to worry about an enemy deployed along his line of march, but they withdrew from the Vorarlberg and Engadin valleys and entrenched their troops close to Mount Tonal.36

With the Austrians withdrawing eastward, and the French victorious in Germany, Macdonald was in a perfect position to assist the Army of Italy in its operations. Unfortunately, the lack of provisions forced him to wait until a supply train arrived from Milan. Macdonald requested assistance from General Brune, in the form of food and clothing. Eight days of marching through the mountains

35 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 121-22; Dumas, Précis des événemens militaires, V, 169-74.
36 Macdonald to Brune, 11 December 1800, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de réserve et des Grisons, Carton B²-196; Dumas, Précis des événemens militaires, V, 174-75; Jomini, Histoire critique et militaire, XIV, 158. Napoleon predicted that they would withdraw during his interview with Mathieu Dumas on 23 October 1800.
in the winter had exhausted his rations and worn out the shoes of the army. General Brune was able to provide Macdonald with some food and artillery, but he wanted him to move the troops commanded by General Baraguey d'Hilliers into the Valteline to replace those of General Rochambeau. Meanwhile, Brune concentrated his army prior to attempting to cross the Mincio River. Macdonald had already ordered this move, but the weather kept General Baraguey d'Hilliers' troops from moving for three days.

The Army of the Grisons took the following positions after their epic crossing of the Splügen Pass. Vandamme's advance guard was the northernmost unit, between the pass of Apriga and the village of Edolo, observing the Austrians who were entrenched close to Mount Tonal. Baraguey d'Hilliers, at the upper end of the Valteline at Bormio, formed the link with General Morlot's division, still covering the rear of the army. Generals Pully and Rey were positioned around Tirano and Sondrio. Macdonald positioned his headquarters at Morbegno.

When the campaign began, Macdonald had about 12,000 men available for operations. From that number, four thousand men remained in Switzerland to defend Coire and Feldkirch, leaving Macdonald 8,000 men for offensive operations. With the divisions of Baraguay d'Hilliers and Morlot covering the outlets from the Engadine and Valteline areas, Macdonald only had about 5,000 men available for offensive operations, a number much too small for any effective action. In his interview with the First Consul, Mathieu Dumas was informed that the Army of the Grisons would be reinforced to an operating strength of 12,000 men, and it would be supporting the left flank of the Army of Italy with a

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37 Macdonald to Brune, 7 December 1800, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de réserve et des Grisons, Carton B²-196.
38 Brune to Macdonald, 8 December 1800, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d'Italie, Carton B²-196.
40 Leplus, Campaign de 1800, 68-69.
Fig. 23. Trent and vicinity.
drive on the city of Trent. Macdonald, therefore, expected to receive reinforcements to carry out any further offensive operations. It is with this in mind that he began to plan the next phase of his operations.

Macdonald saw how his successful maneuver through the Splügen could force the enemy from prepared positions, so he designed a plan to force the Austrian army to retreat from its line on the Mincio River without having to risk a frontal attack. According to his plan, if the Army of Italy reinforced the Army of the Grisons to the strength of 23,000 men, Macdonald would be able to march around the northern flank of the enemy, via Mount Tonal or the Col di Apriga, and take the city of Trent. This move would threaten Bassano and force their army to retreat from the Mincio River to beyond the Adige River as well as cut Austrian communications with the Tyrol. He sent his chef d'état-major, Mathieu Dumas, to General Brune's headquarters with this plan. General Brune, concentrating his army to attack the Austrians along the Mincio River from Mantua to the southern end of Lake Garda, refused to change his plans, and went so far as to complain about the slow march of the Army of the Grisons.

It was at this point that the two generals began an argument that only ended with the intervention of General of division Louis Alexander Berthier, the Minister of War, and Napoleon himself. Macdonald, who had to watch the Austrians around Mount Tonal, cover the left flank of the Army of Italy, occupy the passes into the Grisons, and coordinate his actions with General Brune, did not have enough troops to do all of those things. As a result, General Brune ordered the Army of the Grisons to attack the Austrians at Caffaro, on 14 December; Macdonald refused. Pointing out that he had to place two of his

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41 Mathieu Dumas to General Oudinot, 15 November 1800, cited in Leplus, *Campagne de 1800*, 297-98.
“divisions” to guard the Austrians at Mount Tonal and cover the passes into the Grisons, Macdonald only had 5,000 men available for any offensive operations. He told Brune that either he receive reinforcements to give the attack a chance for success, or he would send his two available divisions to the Army of Italy, and take the rest of his army north and join up with the Army of the Rhine; he did not want to undertake an attack that was doomed to fail before it started. Macdonald sent a copy of his letter to Napoleon, informing him of the situation.44

What Macdonald did not know was that Brune was actively working to make his job as General in Chief of the Army of the Grisons more difficult. He interrupted several attempts by Macdonald to collect the resources to supply and move the army. For example, Macdonald sent a buyer to purchase 400 mules to carry the supplies for the army; Brune halted this effort by saying the man was buying mules for the Austrians. Brune also stopped one commissioner of the Army of Italy from distributing 50,000 rations of biscuit to the Army of the Grisons, and stopped another commissioner from issuing eau-de-vie as well.45

Fortunately for the French, Napoleon intervened at this point. General Berthier, the Minister of War, forwarded Napoleon’s orders to the two generals. Napoleon placed the Army of the Grisons under the command of General Brune. He also told Macdonald that he would not strengthen his army at this time, but might do so if it were necessary for him to march on the Drave River. Macdonald was also ordered to concentrate his forces, and to march on Trent, which would have the dual purpose of threatening the Austrian right flank as well as drawing off troops from the main body, thereby giving Brune a better opportunity to advance against the enemy.46

44 Macdonald to Brune, 16 December 1800; Macdonald to Napoleon, 16 December 1800; Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de réserve et des Grisons, Carton B2-196.
45 Dalton to Berthier, 22 December 1800, cited in Leplus, Campagne de 1800, 132.
46 Napoleon to Berthier, 20 December 1800, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No.5229, VI, 677; Berthier to Macdonald, 20 December 1800, cited in Leplus, Campagne de 1800, 383-84.
With the command issue solved, Macdonald started this phase of the campaign. General Brune transferred the Italian Legion, 1,348 men commanded by General of division Joseph Lechi, to the Army of the Grisons to serve as a liaison force between the two armies; this detachment also escorted a convoy of much-needed food to the Army of the Grisons.\footnote{Beavais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, XIII, 260.} Macdonald developed a new campaign plan for his army to support the Army of Italy, and threaten the Austrian right flank at the same time. First, he ordered General Vandamme to reconnoiter the pass at Mount Tonal, to see if the weather would allow an army to cross there, despite the Austrians entrenchments. Generals Morlot and Baraguay d'Hilliers were ordered to begin a movement through the Engadin valley; in effect this operation was independent of the Army of the Grisons due to the rugged terrain of the Alps. The rest of the army moved on Morbegno, in order to support Vandamme in the event he was successful at Mount Tonal, or to find a passage across the Col di Aprica and into the Camonica Valley, circumventing Mount Tonal.\footnote{Ordre général à l'armée, 20 December 1800, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de réserve et des Grisons, Carton B\textsuperscript{2}-198.} Either of these options would allow Macdonald to debouch into the Val di Sole and be within four marches of San-Michele, above Trent. Consequently, it would be possible to cut the communications of the Austrian army of Italy with its army in the German states, and isolate the forces of generals Johann Loudon and Philippe Vukassovich in the mountains.\footnote{Beavais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, XIII, 259.}

General Vandamme, after receiving the reports on the Austrian emplacements on Mount Tonal, decided that a surprise attack might capture the entrenchments, which was manned by a single battalion of troops. He designated General of brigade Antoine Joseph Veaux to lead an elite group of 150 men drawn from the advance guard.\footnote{Ibid., 261; Leplus, \textit{Campagne de 1800}, 135. This group consisted of three companies of carabiniers from the 1st and 17th Légère and the grenadiers of the 104th Line.} This attack began the French advance against the Austrian forces in Italy and the Alps.
In order for this attack to succeed, the troops had to climb, single-file, along a narrow, ice-covered path approaching the Austrian lines, and then form up for the attack. The troops began their march on the night of 22-23 December. They captured an outpost at Ponte di Legno, and then advanced along the narrow approach to the entrenchments. The troops were spotted by the Austrian Stojanich brigade as they approach, so they began to take heavy fire. The French troops continued their advance, without firing a shot, and took the first entrenchment at bayonet-point. Following the fleeing Austrian troops to the next set of entrenchments, the French were unable to breach this line, and General Veaux reluctantly called off the attack.\(^{51}\)

Two days after the failed attack on Mount Tonal, Macdonald received the news from General Baraguay d'Hilliers that the Austrians were pulling back in the Engadine Valley to Martinsbruck. This news, along with the advance of the Army of Italy and its victories at Pozzolo (25 December) and Monzambano (26 December), encouraged Macdonald, and reduced his fears of an Austrian thrust into the Alps by Bellegarde.\(^{52}\) He decided that he would demonstrate in front of Mount Tonal again with Vandamme's advance guard, while the divisions of Pully and Rey, along with Lechi's Italian Legion, marched south to Pisogne, and then over to the Chiese River, to have a more direct march on Trent and perhaps cut off some of Wukassovich's troops, isolating them from the bulk of Bellegarde's army.\(^{53}\) He encouraged his men by asking them if they were going to allow the Army of Italy to pass them down in the plains.\(^{54}\)

In fact, the Austrian army was in full retreat. After his losses, Bellegarde wanted to concentrate his army. Therefore, the two Austrian divisions left strong rear-guards behind while beginning their withdrawal. Macdonald wanted to give these forces the impression that he was trying to force passage through the


\(^{54}\) Segur, *An Aide-de-Camp of Napoleon*, 37.
Tonal pass, which would hold them in place while he made his sweep around their southern flank to cut them off from Trent. On 29 December, Vandamme sent a reconnaissance against the Austrian outposts in the Tonal Pass; this was

Fig. 24. Trent and vicinity.
repulsed by superior forces. Two days later, covered by a snow storm, Vandamme sent General Veaux against the entrenchments with 450 men from the 1st and 17th Légère. After some initial success, this column was forced to retreat.\textsuperscript{55}

Vandamme’s demonstrations in the Tonal Pass succeeded in its aim; Macdonald, after several failed attempts to find passage through the mountains, arrived in Pisogne on 1 January 1801 without any interference from Austrian forces. His forces were reinforced by the arrival of General Rochambeau's division from the Army of Italy. General Brune, once across the Mincio River, realizing the importance of Macdonald's operations to provide security for his left flank, sent this division to Salo, on Lake Garda, and Rocca d'Anfo, on Lake Idro to support the efforts of the Army of the Grisons. Macdonald immediately ordered Rochambeau to take Stora, to cover the outlet of the Sarca valley while he took the rest of his forces into the Trompia valley.\textsuperscript{56}

Macdonald continued his march, this time across a pass on San Zeno, one of the most dangerous areas of the Alps. This passage was so difficult, the cavalry and artillery had to detour through Brescia and then follow along the Chiese River valley to rejoin the infantry. The column, moving by forced marches, and covering forty miles in one day, reunited in Storo on 6 January, still fifteen miles from Trent. It was at this point that the Austrians discovered Macdonald's advance; the French column met the Austrian rear-guard, commanded by General Paul von Davidovitch. Macdonald ordered General Pully's division and the Italian Legion, led by General Lechi to attack; they forced the Austrian rear-guard from position after position, until they reached their entrenched position of Pietra, between Roveredo and Trent.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 306; Leplus, \textit{Campaign de 1800}, 163-64. This was the extent of Rochambeau's assistance to the Army of the Grisons, since Brune, on 1 January 1801, ordered him to occupy Mori and to send 2,000 men to secure La Corona from the Austrians.
To the northwest, at the same time, Generals Baraguay d'Hilliers and Morlot were also pursuing the retreating Austrians, moving from Glurens and Schlanders towards Méran and Botzen (Bolzano); their goal was to debouch to the north of Trent, pursuing any forces to their front, and cutting off any possible retreat from Trent in that direction.\textsuperscript{58}

The movements of the Army of the Grisons, along with the advance of general of division Bon Adrien Moncey's column of the Army of Italy, put great pressure on the Austrian rear-guard. Their forces in the vicinity of Trent amounted to about 12,000 men. These troops held off General Lechi's attack on 6 January by destroying a bridge across the Adige River. However, the arrival of General Pully's division allowed the French build another bridge, and the two divisions stormed across the bridge and pushed the Austrians out of Trent. Macdonald again marched the Army of the Grisons forty miles in a twenty-four hour period to attack these forces at the same time as General Moncey.\textsuperscript{59}

Macdonald could hear the combat between the Austrians and General Moncey's troops, and his eagerness was transferred to his troops when they realized that they were about to entrap the enemy troops.\textsuperscript{60}

Realizing their critical position, the Austrians used a ruse to save their troops. A staff officer approached General Moncey's position, informing the French that an armistice had been concluded by the armies near the Rhine. He suggested that the two armies in the mountains should conclude the same type of agreement to avoid unnecessary loss of life. The sound of Macdonald's artillery did not carry to Moncey's position, so he was completely unaware that Macdonald had taken the city, and was rapidly closing on the Austrian positions. General Moncey agreed, but only if the Austrians abandoned Trent. As the Austrians had already been forced out of Trent by Macdonald, this was readily approved. Once this armistice was signed, including all of the forces in the

\textsuperscript{58} Ordre de mouvement, 29 December 1800, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée de réserve et des Grisons, Carton B\textsuperscript{2}-198.
\textsuperscript{60} Segur, \textit{An Aide-de-Camp of Napoleon}, 38.
vicinity of Trent, a copy was taken to Macdonald, forcing him to halt his pursuit of
the Austrians retreating from Trent.\textsuperscript{61}

Macdonald did not let this situation last very long. He wanted to achieve
some military glory from this campaign, and he saw his opportunity in a two-
pronged attack on the city of Botzen, with General Pully's division advancing
from the south, while the two divisions led by General Baraguey d'Hilliers
approached from the north-west. This attack began on 12 January 1801. The
Austrians tried to halt this attack by invoking the Armistice of Steyer, which had
been agreed upon by General Moreau, but Macdonald refused to halt his attack,
due to the trick played on the French in the vicinity of Trent. The arrival of one of
General Moreau's staff officers finally convinced Macdonald that an armistice had
been signed.\textsuperscript{62} He agreed to halt operations, providing that General Baraguey
d'Hilliers was allowed to move his forces to join with the main body of the Army of
the Grisons.\textsuperscript{63}

Macdonald's role with the Army of the Grisons was that of a leader and a
motivator. He showed extreme physical bravery when he led his troops through
the snow-covered Tonal Pass. Napoleon was correct in his observation that an
army could pass where two men could walk side-by-side, and Macdonald proved
his statement. Although he did not encounter much armed resistance,
Macdonald gained a reputation for skill in mountain warfare during this campaign
which may not have been deserved. He did show a good grasp of the strategic
situation when he planned the various maneuvers of the Army of the Grisons to
support the Army of Italy, especially his advance on Trent. His enthusiasm was
transferred to his men, helping them overcome the dangerous terrain of the Alps
in the winter. Realizing that it was equally dangerous to retreat as to advance,
he led his troops through some of the harshest terrain on earth. The crossing of

\textsuperscript{61} Dumas, \textit{Précis des événemens militaires}, V, 293-94; Beauvais de Preau,
\textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, XIII, 312-13; Jomini, \textit{Histoire critique et militaire}, XIV, 202-
03.
\textsuperscript{62} Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, XIII, 315-16; Dumas, \textit{Précis des
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., XIII, 316; Jomini, \textit{Histoire critique et militaire}, XIV, 209.
the Splügen Pass in the winter ranks as one of the most impressive military feats in history. Although it did not have the same strategic results as Napoleon’s crossing at the St. Bernard Pass with the Battle of Marengo, it did accomplish his goal of forcing the enemy to retreat. Macdonald coordinated the various columns of the army with great skill, showing confidence in his subordinates, and getting the most out of their performance. He impressed his subordinates with this drive, especially Mathieu Dumas, his chef-d’état major. He worked well with the generals in his command, including Vandamme, who could be troublesome at times. Macdonald was motivated by his drive to win military laurels, and it was this that led him to advance when others might have questioned his orders.
CHAPTER 7

DIPLOMACY, DISGRACE, AND REDEMPTION

Macdonald established the army into winter quarters in the Italian Tyrol, posting the men across the area near Trent. He remained in this area until the spring thaw, and then began to move his troops back to Switzerland. On 15 April 1801, while on the march, Macdonald received instructions to return to Paris; he had been appointed as “envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary” to the court in Denmark.¹

Macdonald had no interest in a diplomatic career, and was puzzled by his appointment. In Paris, he reasoned with Charles Maurice Talleyrand, Napoleon’s Foreign Minister, that he could better serve France by remaining with his troops, in case of another outbreak of hostilities. It was explained to him, however, that the diplomatic mission was for public consumption; his real mission was to reorganize the defenses of Copenhagen against an attack by the English fleet. With this explanation, Macdonald accepted the new post.²

Macdonald received his instructions on 13 June 1801. During his appointment to Copenhagen, he was to offer French support for the League of Armed Neutrality, gather information on the relations between Denmark and Sweden, with the intent of improving these dealings, and work to improve the defense of Denmark against the English fleet.³

¹ Service historique, Dossier de Maréchal Macdonald, Carton MF-20; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 122.
³ Instructions pour le général Macdonald, envoyé extraordinaire et ministre plenipotentiary de la République a sa majiste le Roi de Danemarck, 13 juin 1801,
This diplomatic and military mission for Macdonald was doomed from the start. On 2 April, without a declaration of war, Admiral Horatio Nelson entered Copenhagen harbor with 12 ships of the line and attacked the Danish ships anchored there.\(^4\) After a five hour fight, the Danes surrendered, thus saving their capital from bombardment; the two sides signed an armistice that ended hostilities. The Danes lost six ships of the line, seven other ships, and their docks were in shambles.\(^5\) This action, combined with the assassination of Czar Paul I of Russia on 24 March, ended any chance of a continuation of the League of Armed Neutrality. Word of the battle and subsequent armistice reached Paris prior to Macdonald’s departure. Although he tried to point out the uselessness of his orders, Macdonald went to Copenhagen, via Berlin.\(^6\)

Macdonald’s travel to Copenhagen was a tour-de-force for Macdonald. Philippe de Segur, a junior attaché and aide-de-camp, wrote the following about their travels:

> It would have been impossible to present for the first time to the North of Europe a more illustrious or worthy representative of the pure glory of the arms of the Republic. This journey was a continual triumph for Macdonald, in which we had even more than our proper share. The multitude pressed after us on every occasion; Macdonald showed himself generous even to prodigality, above all, towards any needy Frenchman whom he met on his way. . . \(^7\)

Upon arrival in Copenhagen, Macdonald met with the two French diplomats in residence there, one of whom was General Beurnonville.\(^8\) He was introduced to the Danish Foreign Minister, and then presented to the King and the Prince Royal, where he represented France’s support for Denmark against the English. However, after Nelson’s attack, England and Denmark signed a

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\(^4\) Nelson was second in command to Admiral Sir Hyde Parker.


\(^7\) Segur, *An Aide-de-Camp of Napoleon*, 53.

\(^8\) The French ambassador to Denmark was M. Bourgoing, Macdonald’s future father-in-law from his third marriage.
peace accord, which made the military situation moot. Denmark and Sweden both wanted control of Norway, and this issue prevented any cooperation between them. Within a month of arriving in Copenhagen, Macdonald began requesting his recall to France.9

Although Macdonald expected to be recalled immediately, he remained in Copenhagen for five frustrating months. During this time, his relationship with Talleyrand deteriorated, and Macdonald felt that the Foreign Minister was keeping him away from Napoleon. Upon his return to France, in January 1802, he visited Talleyrand, informed him of his displeasure, and left, refusing to deal with him again.10

The diplomatic post in Copenhagen was Macdonald’s last official government post for seven years. Several things led to his virtual exile from the army. An ill-advised affair with Napoleon’s sister, Pauline Bonaparte,11 hurt his standing in the eyes of the First Consul. Macdonald’s public complaints over his failure to receive reinforcements during his campaign in the Grisons also put him at odds with Napoleon. Then, in 1804, Macdonald was implicated in the trial of General Moreau, a rival of Napoleon’s who was implicated in the Cadoudal Plot of 1804, but he was exonerated;12 he also publicly expressed his view that Moreau had not been given a fair trial.

As a result, Macdonald spent the five years following the trial of General Moreau at his estate in Bourges, Courcelles-le-Roi. He attended few functions in Paris. He did offer to provide Sir Walter Scott some correspondence between

9Macdonald to Talleyrand, 29 August 1801; Macdonald to Talleyrand, 19 September 1801, Archives Étrangères, Correspondance politique: Danemark, Vol. 177; Segur, An Aide-de-Camp of Napoleon, 54.
10Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 125-26; Six, Dictionnaire Biographique, II, 137.
11Pauline was actually involved with Macdonald, Moreau, and Beurnonville at the same time.
12Macdonald and Moreau remained friends after their disagreement in Italy. They were together at a party near Pont Chartrain in June 1802. See Thomas Thornton, A Sporting tour through various parts of France, in the year 1802, (London, 1806), 89.
himself and Napoleon for his biography of Napoleon, but this offer was refused.\textsuperscript{13} Although he was apparently out of favor, he was awarded membership in the Legion of Honor on 16 October 1803, and then made a Grand Officer of the Legion on 14 June 1804.\textsuperscript{14} He was asked to serve Joseph Bonaparte in Naples on 27 February 1807. Macdonald refused the position because he was unclear if the post was civil or military; moreover, he still nursed a grudge against the Neapolitans because of their treatment of the French wounded in 1799.\textsuperscript{15} This early retirement that Macdonald endured was made bearable by his duties as a father. He spent time with his daughters from his first two marriages. He enrolled them in Madame Campan’s school so they would be properly educated.\textsuperscript{16} He led this private existence for five years.

Fortunately for Macdonald, he retained the friendship of Napoleon’s wife, Josephine. She continued to show her friendship in public, and was instrumental in helping him acquire a position in the Army of Italy.\textsuperscript{17} Early in April 1809, Macdonald received orders to report to Eugène de Beauharnais, Viceroy of Italy. He completed his business in France and left for Italy, stopping in Turin and Milan along the way.\textsuperscript{18} Napoleon informed Eugène of this appointment in a letter dated 2 April which stated,

\begin{quote}
My son, I have given orders for General Macdonald to serve in the Army of Italy; he is going there immediately. That officer has talent and nerve, but I do not trust his political opinions at all. . .I suppose that he will serve you to his utmost, and that he will serve in areas that call upon his talents and previous services. I have said nothing to him. He will be employed as a general of division, but he will be given command of a wing. This
\end{quote}

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\textsuperscript{13} Laure Junot Abrantès, \textit{Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d’Abrantès; ou Souvenirs historiques sur Napoléon, la révolution, le directoire, le consulat, l’empire et la restauration} (La Haye, 1831-35), IX, 29.
\textsuperscript{14} Service historique, Dossier de Maréchal Macdonald, Carton MF-20
\textsuperscript{15} Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 129.
\textsuperscript{16} Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 127.
\textsuperscript{17} Georgette Ducrest, \textit{Mémoires sur l’impératrice Joséphine, ses contemporains, la cour de Navarre et de La Malmaison}, (Paris, 1828), I, 358-59.
\end{flushright}
fear he will receive from you will tie him to you entirely. ¹⁹

Fig. 25. The 1809 Campaign in Italy.

¹⁹ Napoléon to Eugène, 2 April 1809, Eugène de Beauharnais, Mémoires et correspondance politique et militaire du prince Eugène, Publié, annotés et mis en ordre par baron Albert du Casse (Paris, 1858-1860), IV, 417.
However, Macdonald was informed by the Minister of War, Henri Clarke, of his appointment, thus spoiling Napoleon’s plans.\textsuperscript{20}

Macdonald did not join the Army of Italy until after Eugène’s defeat at the battle of Sacile on 16 April by Austrian forces under the command of Archduke Johann.\textsuperscript{21} His arrival caused something of a stir. In his haste, Macdonald had to wear his Republican army uniform, and this sight heartened the veterans of the army.\textsuperscript{22} On 27 April, Macdonald received command of the right wing of the Army of Italy, which included the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} French infantry divisions, commanded by generals Jean-Baptiste Broussier and Jean-Maximilien Lamarque, as well as a brigade of Dragoons commanded by General of brigade François Guérin.\textsuperscript{23}

On 28 April, the Army of Italy was situated in the area between the Adige and Alpone rivers. Macdonald’s corps was between Caldiero and the Adige. The army sent out a series of general reconnaissance in preparation for an advance on the Austrian forces. There were skirmishes between the two forces, but no major actions. When Archduke Johann began withdrawing towards Vicenza, due to Napoleon’s success on the Danube, the French pursuit began on 1 May; Macdonald rebuilt the bridges over the Alpone River. He sent Broussier’s division to Lonigo, after detaching two battalions to Montebello. Macdonald’s forces skirmished with the Austrian rear guard during this movement, forcing the enemy to retreat as the French advanced.\textsuperscript{24} Archduke Johann halted behind the Brenta River, but soon withdrew when threatened by a French division operating to the south. The French army crossed the Brenta River at Bassano on 5 May.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{20} Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 128.
\textsuperscript{21} His first correspondence is dated on 21 April 1809.
\textsuperscript{22} Jean Nicolas Auguste Noël, \textit{Souvenirs Militaires d’un officier du Premier Empire} (Paris, 1895), 59.
\textsuperscript{24} Broussier, \textit{Journal historique de la Division Broussier}, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d’Italie, Carton C\textsuperscript{4}-10.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.; Beauharnais, \textit{Mémoires}, V, 57-60; Buat, \textit{Étude critique}, II, 57.
THE BATTLE ON THE PIAVE

The French reached the Piave River the next evening. Macdonald placed Lamarque’s division at Visnadella and Broussier’s division at Lovadina. The two armies faced each other across a stretch of the river that ran from west to east. At certain points, the river narrowed to a distance of 350 yards. Eugène, who had over 45,000 men in the area, decided to cross the river and attack the Austrian forces, which numbered around 30,000 men. This confrontation evolved into the Battle on the Piave.\(^26\)

A reconnaissance of the river revealed three fords – one at Narvese, another at Priula, and a third just east of San-Nichiol. The 8\(^{th}\) Chasseurs scouted the left bank of the Piave on 7 May. This revealed that Archduke Johann had covered the ford at Narvese with the Austrian 8\(^{th}\) Corps, while the closest Austrian troops to the Priula and San-Nichiol fords was their 9\(^{th}\) Corps, three and five miles away from the respective fords. This faulty disposition allowed the French to take advantage of the poorly covered fords in their deployment. Archduke Johann did send one battalion to guard each ford after the French reconnaissance. One of the problems confronting the French was the Piave River itself; it rose in its banks during the day, making a crossing very difficult. It was decided that the advance guard would cross the Priula ford to cover the building of a pontoon bridge. Once the bridge was completed, Macdonald’s corps would cross and deploy towards the San-Nichiol ford, where the corps of General of division Paul Grenier, along with the bulk of the cavalry, would cross simultaneously with the advance guard. This would allow the cavalry to hold the ford while the infantry crossed the river. General Grenier would then deploy on the right flank of Macdonald. Once the units were over the river and deployed, the Army of Italy would advance on the Austrians.\(^27\)

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The battle began at 7:00 A.M. when the French artillery fired on the Austrian battalion that was guarding the Priula ford. The advance guard crossed the river and took a position about 500 meters in front of a dike. The water rose steadily during the morning, causing some difficulty. Macdonald, leading
Lamarque’s division, began crossing the river at 12:30 P.M. They reached the left bank of the river and deployed, but Broussier’s division was lacking one of its brigades, which was unable to cross due to the rising river. At 3:00 P.M., Macdonald inspected the French lines and reported to Eugène that the troops were in position and "overflowing with ardor." Unfortunately, the river was also beginning to overflow, and the French were forced to halt the crossing with only 30,000 men over the river, about equal to the size of the Austrian army. However, the French had two advantages. The Austrians had wasted their cavalry against the advance guard, giving the Army of Italy superior mobility and flexibility. Moreover, the Austrians had to deploy on a broad front to prevent an outflanking maneuver, which left Archduke Johann with a small reserve. The French were able to concentrate their troops at the point of attack, allowing them to achieve numerical superiority which Archduke Johann could not counter because of his insufficient reserve.

In his report to Eugène, Macdonald stated that the battlefield was quiet, but that the Austrians could attack at any moment. He saw that the Army of Italy had the chance to attack and cut off the right wing of the Austrian army; it was a gamble, “double or nothing,” and Macdonald was ready to make the effort.

With the support of Eugène, the Army of Italy attacked at 4:00 P.M. and Macdonald’s two divisions formed the center. The French left led off the attack, and Macdonald, supported by a 24-gun battery, attacked the Austrian 8th corps. The Austrians, who were formed up behind a dike, were pushed back across the Piavisella stream; this forced the Austrian 8th corps to pull back in order to

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29 Macdonald to Eugène, 8 May 1809, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d’Italie, Carton C4-10.
31 Macdonald to Eugène, 8 May 1809, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d’Italie, Carton C4-10; Macdonald, *Recollections of Marshal Macdonald*, 143-45.
Fig. 27. The Battle on the Piave, Phase two, 10:30 AM.

maintain an unbroken front line. There was hard fighting along the front. At one point, General Grouchy intervened with his dragoons to save one of Macdonald’s
batteries from an Austrian hussar regiment.\textsuperscript{32} General Broussier’s division entered the village of Grave and ended the battle at Bocca di Strada; General Lamarque led his division across the Plavisella at Campana and fought his way to Santa-Lucia. The Austrians fell back in disorder. Eugène called a halt to the fighting at 9:00 P.M.\textsuperscript{33}

Macdonald’s troops made the major assault and wanted to continue the pursuit, but Eugène stopped the attack before his divisions could exploit the Austrian rout. Rather than pursue, he halted the Army of Italy, and moved his headquarters back across the Piave to Lovadina.\textsuperscript{34} Macdonald felt that he could have cut off the Austrian right wing if he had been allowed to continue his pursuit. He even mentioned a meeting with the officials of the town of Conegliano, who said that the Austrian right wing could have been isolated if there had been any type of pursuit.\textsuperscript{35} There are descriptions of the disordered state of the Austrian army, which did not halt its retreat until it reached the town of Sacile. Macdonald described Eugène’s actions as timid, and blamed the recent defeat at Sacile as the reason. Eugène did act cautiously or even timidly in calling off the pursuit because there were several Austrian units that were unaccounted for, and he did not want to risk the chance of undermining his victory by a blunder at this point.\textsuperscript{36} However, over one third of the French army was intact and rested, having yet to cross the river; if the French had pursued with their cavalry, the victory on the Piave could have been much more decisive. As it was, the Austrians lost 9,000-10,000 men killed, wounded, or captured. They also lost 15 cannon and 30 caissons. French losses were 2,000 killed or wounded.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{32} Emmanuel Grouchy, \textit{Mémoires du maréchal de Grouchy} (Paris, 1873-74), III, 21.
\textsuperscript{33} Eugène to Napoléon, 9 May 1809, Caffarelli to Duroc, 9 May 1809, Eugène to Clarke, 10 May 1809, Captain Zoepffel to Clarke, 13 June 1809, Beauharnais, \textit{Mémoires et correspondance}, V, 73-75, 178-81, 184-89, 198-200; Pelet, \textit{Mémoires sur la guerre de 1809}, III, 203-06; Vaudoncourt, \textit{Histoire politique et militaire}, I, 239-43.
\textsuperscript{34} Pelet, \textit{Mémoires sur la guerre de 1809}, III, 207.
\textsuperscript{35} Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 146-47.
\textsuperscript{37} Pelet, \textit{Mémoires sur la guerre de 1809}, III, 206.
The pursuit of the Austrian army began on 9 May. Macdonald’s two divisions were held at Conegliano, despite his desire to lead the pursuit. Once on the move, Macdonald marched with the main column of the Army of Italy. On 12 May, Eugène divided the army into two columns. Macdonald was given his two divisions, plus the dragoons led by General Pully, 14,000 men in all. He was ordered to pursue the Austrians into Carniola and prevent the raising of the Croatian Feudal Ban. He was to capture the fortress town of Laibach and establish contact with General of division Auguste Marmont, who commanded the 11th Corps in Dalmatia.

Macdonald’s column marched towards Udine and Palmanova on 12 May. The Austrian forces in the area, under the command of Generalmajor Johann Kalnassy von Kalnas and General Unton Zach, were too weak to oppose Macdonald, so they withdrew at his advance, leaving supplies and wounded to be taken by the advancing French. On 14 May, Macdonald crossed the Isonzo River near Gorizia, where more supplies were captured, including “eleven pieces of heavy artillery” used in the siege of Palmanova, “two mortars, and approximately 4,000 musket balls, bombs and shells.” Macdonald also sent two battalions, commanded by General of Brigade Jean-Jacques Schilt, to Trieste, where a store of 22,000 muskets and other munitions were captured, as well as two hundred parcels of goods embargoed by the Continental System.

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38 Modern day Ljubljana.
41 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 148; Eugène to Napoléon, 23 May 1809, Beaucharnais, Mémoires et correspondance, V, 222; Beavuais de Préau, Victoires, conquêtes, XIX, 160; Vaudoncourt, Histoire politique et militaire, I, 293; Buat, Étude critique, II, 59.
From the Gorizia area, Macdonald marched on the fortifications at Prewald, arriving there on 17 May. After the commander of the garrison refused to surrender, General Broussier’s division made several assaults on the position before besieging the fortress. On 19 May, the Austrian commander was again
called upon to surrender his position; negotiations took place, and Prewald capitulated on 20 May, giving the French over 2,000 prisoners, 15 pieces of artillery, and a large quantity of munitions and supplies, including 550 barrels of flour.\textsuperscript{42}

On 18 May, while the operations at Prewald were underway, Macdonald ordered General Lamarque’s division to march on Laibach, the main Austrian military base in the area; the division arrived there on 20 May. The site was fortified in such a way that all the approaches to the town were covered. However, the outnumbered Austrians were unable to man the entire defense network; they abandoned the defensive works and occupied the citadel above the town. The commander of the fort was called on to surrender, but he refused.

A reconnaissance of the fort revealed that an assault would be impractical. In addition, many of his troops, including Macdonald himself, had contracted dysentery during the campaign, impairing the effectiveness of his troops. General Broussier’s division arrived at 8:00 PM on 22 May, while preparations were being made for the siege, giving Macdonald a full complement of forces again. Macdonald received orders from Eugène to march to Bruck, by way of Marburg and Graz, leaving a small force masking the town and fort to continue the siege of Laibach. He made several demonstrations in front of the fort, simulating the preliminaries of a major assault, with the intention of marching the bulk of his forces away during the night. During these demonstrations, the commander of the garrison sent an offer of capitulation. Macdonald told the officer, “You are doing wisely. . . I was just going to sound the attack.” The surrender of the garrison at Laibach on 23 May gave Macdonald 4,000 prisoners, three standards, 65 pieces of artillery, 7,000 muskets, great amounts of rations

Fig. 29. Pursuit to Bruck.

and munitions, and the military pay chest.\textsuperscript{43} This success was praised in an Order of the Day, published by Eugène.\textsuperscript{44}

Macdonald left a small garrison at Laibach, with orders to wait for General Marmont, while he marched to Marburg, to join General Grouchy. These forces, about 19,000 men, then marched to Graz, arriving on 29 May. Archduke Johann had left a garrison at Graz, but it could not fight the combined forces of Macdonald and Grouchy. The garrison commander withdrew into the fortress above the city, allowing the French into the town. An agreement was reached between the two forces in which the Austrians allowed the French free use of the town and bridges across the Mur River. In return, the French agreed not to conduct military operations in the town, sparing it from damage. Nevertheless, the siege of the fortress began on 30 May.\textsuperscript{45}

On 1 June, before the fall of the fortress, Eugène received orders from Napoleon to advance into Hungary. Macdonald sent out a strong party towards Marburg, in order to link up with General Marmont, and also detached 3,000 men to observe the enemy’s movement around Kormend. Broussier’s division remained at Graz, continuing the siege, while Macdonald, on 9 June, took the divisions of Lamarque and Pully to Kormend; he reached the town on the night of 10 June. Napoleon wanted Archduke Johann’s army located and defeated; then the Army of Italy was to move north to join the main French army. However, Napoleon was worried about his lines of communications and the appearance of

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
  \item Joseph Marie Dessaix, \textit{Journal de marche et d'opérations du général Dessaix}, Service historique, Memoires et Reconnaissances, MR-743.
\end{thebibliography}

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Macdonald was ordered to join Eugène at Papa, where he expected to engage the Austrians. However, the Austrians withdrew to Raab. Macdonald arrived at Raab at the very end of a battle where Eugène defeated the combined forces of Archduke Johann and Archduke Josef on 14 June; Macdonald’s forces did not take part in the battle.⁴⁷

Operations were minimal during the last half of June. Macdonald marched, first towards Graz and then towards Ofen, as Napoleon wanted to try and draw off Austrian troops in the area by making a feint in the direction of Budapest. However, Napoleon eventually ordered the Army of Italy to join the Grande Armée at Ebersdorf, in preparation for his effort to destroy the main Austrian army under Archduke Charles. Thus, the Army of Italy marched north on 2 July in order to take part in the Battle of Wagram.⁴⁸

THE BATTLE OF WAGRAM

The Grande Armée crossed the Danube River on the night of 4-5 July and took position early the next morning. The Army of Italy began the Battle of Wagram in the second line, behind the corps of Marshal Louis Nicolas Davout. Napoleon ordered the attack to begin between 6:00-7:00 AM. As the battle progressed, the Army of Italy moved into the front line due to the success of Marshal André Masséna, on the French left. In the afternoon, Napoleon ordered the Army of Italy to launch an assault on the Austrian line to take the heights

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⁴⁷ Macdonald claimed that he arrived on the battlefield of Raab near the end of the battle, which gave Eugène’s troops the extra energy to defeat the Austrians. This was not true. He also felt that Eugène should not have accepted battle at Raab because he had not concentrated all of his forces prior to the engagement. This was a valid point, but Macdonald probably did not know of Napoleon’s letter to Eugène, ordering him not to engage Macdonald’s troops too heavily. See Beauharnais, Mémoires et correspondance, V, 279-83; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 152-53.

⁴⁸ Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 155-57; Epstein, Prince Eugène, 131-32.
between the villages of Wagram and Baumersdorf. Macdonald led the attack, marching at the head of Lamarque’s division; he was supported by the divisions of generals Jean-Mathieu Serras and Pierre-Francois-Joseph Durutte and the light cavalry of General of division Louis-Michele Sahuc. The attack advanced, pushing the first Austrian line back in disorder and capturing 2,000 prisoners and five colors. The second Austrian line pushed Macdonald’s column back; he reformed his forces, and counterattacked. It was at this point that the Austrian commander, Archduke Charles, arrived with reinforcements. Macdonald’s troops gave up ground slowly, but a panic ensued, and the Army of Italy fled in disorder, only stopping when they were rallied by the Imperial Guard. Fortunately for Macdonald, the Austrians did not pursue. Macdonald estimated his losses at 2,000 men.

On the morning of 6 July, the Austrians started their offensive early, causing Napoleon some concern. Macdonald was to lead the Army of Italy across the same ground as the day before; however, due to the heavy Austrian attack on the French left and the flight of the Saxon corps led by Marshal Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, the Army of Italy had to change its front almost ninety degrees to meet this new threat. In order to support Macdonald, Napoleon brought up the artillery of the Imperial Guard and combined it with the artillery of the Army of Italy, forming a “hundred gun battery” under the command of his aide-de-camp, General Jacques Lauriston. This battery, and Macdonald’s infantry, combined to halt the advance of the Austrian 3rd Corps.

Just after noon, Napoleon gave the orders for the great assault. Macdonald, in the right position at the right time, was ordered to break through

49 Macdonald predicted the failure of this attack, but Eugène refused to go against Napoleon’s orders. See Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 155.
50 Ibid., 159-61; Pelet, Mémoires sur la guerre de 1809, IV, 187-92; Petre, Napoleon and the Archduke Charles, 360-61; Jean Thiry, Wagram (Paris, 1966), 177-78.
51 Pelet, Mémoires sur la guerre de 1809, IV, 216-19; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 162-63; Petre, Napoleon and the Archduke Charles, 364, 369-71.
Fig. 31. Wagram, 5 July 1809.
the Austrian line between Aderklaa and Sussenbrunn. The divisions of Lamarque and Broussier, twenty-one battalions, were down to a combined total of about 8,000 men.\textsuperscript{52} These troops were formed up into a hollow square; the front section contained two lines of four battalions in an attack column, the left flank was made up of a column of seven battalions, and the right flank contained a column of six battalions. This dense formation was supported by the cavalry of the Imperial Guard on the right, by General Etienne Nansouty’s cuirassiers on the left, and by General Serras’ division to the rear. This formation was launched against the Austrian 3\textsuperscript{rd} Corps and its reserve grenadiers.\textsuperscript{53}

As Macdonald led his troops against the Austrian’s line, the dense formation was under the constant fire of the enemy cannon, causing heavy casualties. Within a short period of time, his command was reduced from 8,000 to 1,500 men. In General Broussier’s division, there were 590 dead, 184 amputees, and 1506 other wounded.\textsuperscript{54} Macdonald angrily called for support. Napoleon responded by sending one division of the Army of Italy to attack Wagram, on Macdonald’s right, one to attack the village of Breitenlee on his left, and General Carl Philipp Wrede’s Bavarians and the Young Guard to support Macdonald directly.\textsuperscript{55} General Marmont was also committed to the attack on the left of General Nicolas Charles Oudinot, so Napoleon had only two regiments of the Old Guard left as his final reserve.\textsuperscript{56}

Archduke Charles ordered his army to withdraw about the same time that these reinforcements were moving to attack; Napoleon had won his victory, but the Austrian army had not been destroyed. Macdonald and his troops did not

\textsuperscript{52} Petre adds in the nine battalions of Serras’ division with the twenty-one of Lamarque and Broussier, which would show an even greater percentage of losses up to this time.


\textsuperscript{54} Broussier, \textit{Journal historique}, Service historique, Correspondance: Armée d’Italie, Carton C\textsuperscript{4}-10.

\textsuperscript{55} However, Napoleon ordered the Young Guard commander not to engage his troops too heavily, in case he needed to withdraw them for use elsewhere.

participate in any further action immediately after the battle of Wagram. On the morning of 7 July, Napoleon awarded Macdonald his marshal’s baton, making him the only marshal to have that honor bestowed upon him on the field of battle.\textsuperscript{57}

After the campaign, Macdonald received more awards from Napoleon. On 14 August, he was awarded the Grand Eagle of the Legion of Honor. The next day, Napoleon awarded him an annual donation of 60,000 francs from the Kingdom of Naples. On 9 December, Macdonald received the title of Duke of Tarente, and a month later, received another annual donation of 20,000 francs from Napoleon.\textsuperscript{58}

Once the armistice between France and Austria was concluded, Macdonald was ordered to march to Gratz, where he oversaw the occupation of Styria by the French troops. On 14 October, he was given orders to concentrate his troops, in preparation for the withdrawal from Austria back to Italy.\textsuperscript{59}

The campaign of 1809 was Macdonald’s best performance as a tactical commander. From the Battle on the Piave, where he saw the chance to isolate and destroy the Austrian right, to his actions as an independent commander detached from the Army of Italy, to his actions at Wagram, Macdonald successfully performed all of the tasks assigned him. During his maneuvers through Carniola, his forces captured 93 guns, 29,000 muskets, 6,000 prisoners, the military pay chest at Laibach, and large amounts of rations and other supplies. He also disrupted the Austrian attempts at raising troops in this area as well. The combination of this campaign with his past efforts in Italy and the Low Countries made him deserving of the marshal’s baton.

\textsuperscript{58} Service historique, Dossier de Maréchal Macdonald, MF-20.
\textsuperscript{59} Napoleon to Eugène, 14 October 1809, \textit{Correspondance de Napoléon Ier}, No. 15945, XIX, 675-76; Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 177.
CHAPTER 8

SPANISH INTERLUDE: THE ARMY OF CATALONIA

Macdonald was recalled to France on 9 January 1810, once his presence was no longer required with the Army of Italy.\(^1\) It was not long before he received his first assignment as a Marshal of France. On 24 April 1810, Macdonald was made governor of Catalonia, and commander-in-chief of the 7\(^{th}\) Corps, which was also called the Army of Catalonia.\(^2\)

In 1807, Napoleon had been disturbed by Portugal’s lack of support for the Continental System, his embargo against British goods. When the Portuguese government refused to close its ports to British shipping, Napoleon invaded with the assistance of Spain in November 1807.\(^3\) At this time, Napoleon became fully aware of the incompetence of the Spanish government, and resolved to bring order to chaos by replacing the King of Spain, Charles IV with Joseph Bonaparte. This decision caused an insurrection in Spain that lasted until Napoleon’s first abdication in 1814 and tied down considerable French resources during this time.\(^4\) It was here that Macdonald was sent to serve.

Macdonald received instructions to create a mobile force of about 18,000 men in Catalonia, and move to rendezvous with General of division Louis Suchet,

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\(^1\) Napoleon to Clarke, 9 January 1810, *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, No. 16124, XX, 125.
\(^2\) Napoleon to Clarke, 24 April 1810, Ibid., No. 16411, XX, 359; Extrait des minutes de la secrétairerie d’Etat, 24 April 1810, Service historique, Dossier de Maréchal Macdonald, Carton MF-20.
\(^3\) Chandler, *Campaigns of Napoleon*, 596-99.
who commanded the 3rd Corps. These two forces were then to besiege Tortosa and Tarragona. Macdonald was the senior of the two officers. Further instructions stated that Macdonald was to besiege Tarragona while Suchet attacked Tortosa. Unfortunately, this Spanish expedition was not going to be as simple as it seemed on paper.

Macdonald arrived in Girona on 21 May 1810. His first task was to try and improve the relationship between the French government and the Spanish inhabitants. He found a province in disarray due to the heavy repression used by his predecessor, Marshal Charles Augereau. Discipline in the army was lax, and looting and insubordination common. The population was desperate, and took its frustration out on the soldiers at every chance. This was something that Macdonald would not accept. He issued a bulletin on 27 May 1810 that ordered a halt to the abuse and repression that was practiced by the previous administration. He also addressed his troops, and ordered them to halt looting. He further instituted a policy forcing the men to pay for excess damages and started issuing punishment for those caught looting. Furthermore, he instituted a policy that allowed citizens to retrieve property illegally seized by the French. This did not endear him to his troops. This policy might have worked had the French instituted it at the beginning of their administration of the province, but by the time Macdonald arrived, there was too much anger and resentment between the soldiers and the citizens of Catalonia to arrange an accommodation.

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5 Napoleon to Clarke, 7 May 1810, 29 May 1810, Ibid., No. 16445, XX, 388, No. 16521, XX, 450-51.
6 There is no record of when he actually arrived. His first bulletin was published on 23 May 1810.
7 William Napier, *History of the war in the Peninsula and in the south of France, from the year 1807 to the year 1814* (London: 1876) III, 192.
10 Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, XX, 54-55. There are numerous bulletins issued by Macdonald that mention the return of property to the rightful owners that had been sequestered by the French. See Service historique, Bulletins from Spain, Carton C8-135.
Before Macdonald had the chance to complete his reorganization of the French administration in Barcelona, he was forced to insure the food supply for the citizens as well as his troops. It was reported to Napoleon on 12 May 1810 that it was vital to re-supply Barcelona, so Macdonald was aware of the problem prior to arriving in Spain.\(^{11}\) Even in peaceful times, the area did not produce enough food for the city. Previous French administrations had stripped the province bare. In normal times, food would be shipped in from Aragon or by sea. This could not be done in 1810, due to the British control of the sea, and the guerilla activity throughout the province. The French had to send convoys from Perpignan, through Figureas, to Barcelona.\(^{12}\) This was a difficult proposition for several reasons. First, the French government provided wagons more suited for the well-kept roads of France and Germany rather than the mountains of northern Catalonia.\(^{13}\) This resulted in slow travel through a countryside that was teeming with enemies. These guerillas forced Macdonald to use two of his divisions to protect the huge convoys as they moved south. Employing such a large force to protect the convoy meant that food was distributed to feed the soldiers protecting the convoy. As a result, there was less food available for the city when the wagons arrived. Macdonald was also methodical in his approach to moving convoys. Rather than try to rush through the mountains as quickly as possible, Macdonald formed his troops up on both sides of the convoy and sent engineers ahead to repair the roads and bridges that had been damaged or destroyed by the insurgents.\(^{14}\)

Macdonald had to ensure the food supply for Barcelona and his troops, so he marched with 10,000 men, organized into two divisions, to escort the first re-supply caravan from France to Barcelona. This convoy included 5,000 barrels of

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\(^{11}\) France, Archives Nationales, (hereafter Archives Nationales) AF IV, MSS, Carton 1625, dossier 1, “Rapport a sa majesté l’Empereur et Roi du 29 avril an 1810.”


\(^{13}\) Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, XX, 141.

\(^{14}\) Napier, *War in the Peninsula*, III, 193.
flour, 500,000 rations of *eau-de-vie*, and 1,000 barrels of rice.\(^{15}\) Macdonald left Perpignan on 10 June and reached Barcelona eight days later. He immediately returned to France to prepare another convoy.\(^{16}\) This second convoy arrived in Barcelona on 19 July. Macdonald used the slow and steady method with these first two re-supply convoys, which wasted considerable time and fatigued the soldiers.\(^{17}\) The third convoy, which left Perpignan on 8 August, moved at a faster pace, with less emphasis on order. Once this shipment of food arrived in Barcelona, Macdonald was finally free to march southwest, in order to unite with General Suchet.\(^{18}\)

Macdonald left General Baraguey d'Hilliers in command of Upper Catalonia with 18,000 men\(^{19}\) when he marched out of Barcelona. His corps consisted of three divisions, with a total strength of 16,000 men.\(^{20}\) He arrived in Lerida on 29 August 1810, where General Suchet met him to coordinate their efforts in the area.\(^{21}\) Although Napoleon wanted both Tortosa and Tarragona besieged simultaneously, the generals decided to attack the two cities in sequence. It was agreed that Suchet's men would conduct the siege of Tortosa, and Macdonald's force would cover the operation. Macdonald transferred his Neapolitan division to Suchet's corps to assist in the siege, while he gave Macdonald the food supplies at Monzon. Macdonald placed his remaining troops

\(^{15}\) Archives Nationales, AF IV, MSS, Carton 1625, dossier 1, “Sommaire des dépachès du Duc de Tarente du 29 mai au 8 juin”; Macdonald to Clarke, 29 May 1810, Service historique: Correspondance de maréchal Macdonald, Carton C\(^8\)-129.

\(^{16}\) Napier, *War in the Peninsula*, III, 192-93.

\(^{17}\) Order of movement, 14 June 1810, Service historique: Correspondance de maréchal Macdonald, Carton C\(^8\)-129.

\(^{18}\) Macdonald to Clarke, 1 August 1810, Service historique: Correspondance de maréchal Macdonald, Carton C\(^8\)-129.

\(^{19}\) Another 10,000 were in hospitals in and around Barcelona. See Oman, *Peninsular War*, III, 495.

\(^{20}\) A French division commanded by General of Division Bernard Frère, an Italian division, and a Neapolitan division.

around Tarega, Guisona, Agramunt, and Cervera, where he established his headquarters. He finished posting his troops on 6 September 1810.\footnote{Macdonald to Clarke, 30 August 1810, Service historique: Correspondance de maréchal Macdonald, Carton \textsuperscript{C}8-129; Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 186; Oman, \textit{Peninsular War}, III, 495-96.}

\begin{center}
\textbf{CATALONIA}
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On 5 September, while in the process of moving his troops, Macdonald’s advance guard encountered elements of Spanish regular troops at Cervera. The advance guard defeated the enemy, and captured their ammunition, baggage,
and ambulance. One hundred Spanish troops were either killed or captured in this skirmish.  

During the next month, Macdonald sent columns into the hills to engage the Spanish who were harassing his troops. These columns also were ordered to collect provisions. An example of one such column, formed of Italian troops, skirmished with Spanish forces its entire journey, and returned without provisions, but with wounded soldiers for their efforts.  

Although this was a common result of these expeditions, Macdonald was able to collect a significant amount of provisions at Lerida and Balaguer.  

Macdonald believed that he was keeping the Spanish forces away from General Suchet with his raids into the hills. However, the Spanish commander, Enrique O'Donnell, conceived and executed a plan that forced Macdonald from his encampments and his covering position. O'Donnell staged several raids into northern Catalonia, causing trouble for the French forces there. In response, Macdonald marched from his positions with four brigades – two French and two Italian - on 18 October 1810, hoping to capture the local Junta at Solsona. Although the enemy leaders escaped, Macdonald did locate a concentration of enemy forces at Cardona. Macdonald approached the Spanish, who were in a strong position with a castle as their main defense, flanked by high hills and a river to their front. Recognizing that an attack on this position would be costly in manpower, Macdonald decided not to engage the enemy. Unfortunately, a column of troops, which marched separately from the main column, ignored orders and attacked the entrenched enemy. An Italian brigade, supported by General Salme's brigade, was driven back with significant losses. Macdonald refused to support this action when he arrived with the reserve, and withdrew his entire force to Solsona.  

Once he reorganized his troops, Macdonald returned to his original positions supporting Suchet. He remained here for two weeks,  

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23 Archives Nationales, AF IV, MSS, Carton 1625, dossier 2, Clarke to Napoleon, 20 October 1810; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XX, 136-37.  
24 Napier, War in the Peninsula, III, 196; Oman, Peninsular War, III, 496-97.  
25 Ibid., 196.  
26 Napier, War in the Peninsula, III, 198-99; Oman, Peninsular War, III, 499-500.
when he received distressing news that required him to return to Upper Catalonia.

The Spanish successes in northern Catalonia and at Cervera ignited the Catalan insurgency to new heights of resistance. Foraging parties were ambushed and assaulted. French stragglers were murdered by the guerillas. Even large groups of soldiers were attacked and killed by the locals. Macdonald, who disagreed with the heavy-handed tactics of his predecessor, had to resort to the execution of any partisan who was captured with weapons in hand, and several towns were burnt in retaliation for the guerilla activity. This violence, and the needs of Barcelona, combined to force Macdonald to move from his positions near Tortosa.

Meanwhile, Barcelona was once again running low on food. One convoy was captured by Spanish forces, and another arrived in Gerona, but could not advance beyond due to guerilla activity. A third convoy was prepared to leave Perpignan, but General Baraguay d'Hilliers did not have any available forces to guard the supplies from Gerona to Barcelona. Since General Suchet had not started the siege of Tortosa, due to the arrival of his siege train, Macdonald decided to march to Gerona to escort the food to Barcelona. He informed Suchet on 4 November 1810, and moved his troops to Gerona, where he arrived on 10 November. He collected the convoy, as well as reinforcements sent from France, and escorted them to Barcelona, arriving there on 25 November. Once this was accomplished, he returned to the vicinity of Tortosa to cover Suchet’s forces, linking up with them on 13 December at Mora.

28 Oman, Peninsular War, III, 500-01.
29 There were 10,000 men listed as sick in hospitals, 6,000 men stationed in Barcelona, about 4,000 men guarding the coast and the lines of communications, and 14,000 men with Macdonald. This left 16,000 men that General Baraguey d’Hilliers posted to defend the important strategic locations in Upper Catalonia. See Belmas, Journaux de sieges, III, 414.
30 Archives Nationales, AF IV, MSS, Carton 1625, dossier 2, Clarke to Napoleon, 20 November 1810; Napier, War in the Peninsula, III, 199-200; Oman, Peninsular War, III, 500-01. Suchet was somewhat worried about supplies during this period, but was not inconvenienced by Macdonald’s absence. See Louis Suchet,
Once again, Macdonald covered Suchet’s position, sending columns of troops to disperse any concentrations of Spanish forces discovered in their vicinity. One such operation, carried out in conjunction with a column from Suchet’s forces, captured 4,000 sheep and oxen, which were duly added to the supplies of the two French armies.\textsuperscript{31}

The actual siege of Tortosa began on 19 December, when Suchet’s forces drove the Spanish outposts back into the town. The city surrendered on 2 January 1811. Macdonald was then free to move his forces from the vicinity of Tortosa to the next target, Tarragona. Macdonald arrived at Reus, ten miles from Tarragona, on 11 January 1811. He could not besiege the city because he only had 12,000 men, and he had not moved his artillery from Lerida. The Spanish, led by the Marquis of Campo Verde, concentrated 8,000 infantry at Tarragona, and 3,000 infantry and 800 cavalry at Valls, a short distance north of Macdonald’s position. These troops began to harass Macdonald’s forces, attacking foraging parties and a detachment of Italian dragoons. Macdonald responded to these attacks on 14 January 1811, by marching against Valls.\textsuperscript{32}

Macdonald sent 2,000 Italian troops as his advance guard to Valls, but the Spanish withdrew to the heights of Pla and Fuencaldas. The officer\textsuperscript{33} commanding the Italians ignored orders and pursued, having some success against their rear guard. As the Italians approached the town, the Spanish cavalry charged from the town, throwing the Italian infantry into disorder, and mortally wounding their commanding officer. The rest of the Italian division advanced, sent by Macdonald to assist their comrades, and they also were

\textsuperscript{31} Napier, \textit{War in the Peninsula}, III, 201.
\textsuperscript{32} Beauvais de Preau said that the Spanish had 8,000 men at Valls, Napier states that they had 6,000 men, while Oman writes that they had 3,000 infantry and 800 cavalry. See Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, XX, 297-98; Napier, \textit{War in the Peninsula}, III, 212; Oman, \textit{Peninsular War}, IV, 242-43.
\textsuperscript{33} This was the same officer who acted against orders at Cardona.
thrown into disorder. This action might have developed into a total route, but Colonel Jacques Delort arrived with a squadron of the 24th Dragoons, and charged into the advancing Spanish. This charge was successful, and it allowed the Italians to withdraw to Macdonald’s position at Valls. Macdonald refused to commit any more troops to assist the Italians. This was a mistake: he could have caught the Spanish in the open field and routed them as they pursued the Italians.  

On 16 January, Macdonald found his forces surrounded. Campo Verde advanced from Tarragona, joined by other Spanish forces from Pla. Macdonald

Fig. 33. Tortosa & Tarragona.

\[\text{Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XX, 297-300; Napier, War in the Peninsula, III, 212-13; Oman, Peninsular War, IV, 242-43.}\]
prepared his troops for battle, but Campo Verde withdrew to Tarragona, and the other Spanish force refused combat. Macdonald decided to march to Lerida to consolidate his forces. The same evening that the Spanish refused to fight, Macdonald made a well-ordered night march. To surprise the Spanish, he successfully withdrew from between the two enemy forces and reached Lerida on 19 January, unmolested, where he stayed until the beginning of March.35

By the beginning of 1811, Napoleon, unhappy with Macdonald’s progress in Catalonia, decided to reorganize the military and civil dispositions in Catalonia and Aragon. The districts of Tortosa, Lerida, and Tarragona were placed under General Suchet’s command, while Macdonald was limited to Upper Catalonia, with Barcelona as his headquarters.36 In addition to the territory, Macdonald also transferred his forces in those areas to Suchet’s command. However, in order to travel from Lerida to Barcelona, he employed 7,000 infantry and 700 cavalry as an escort.37 Leaving Lerida on 26 March, he approached Manresa, where his advance guard, composed of Italian troops, was fired upon by Spanish forces in the town. As the Italian troops withdrew, the wounded were attacked by guerillas, and their throats were cut. This enraged the Italians, and when Macdonald successfully stormed the city, the Italians set fires, which spread throughout the town, forcing Macdonald and his officers to flee in haste. This fire resulted in attracting every armed Spaniard in the area; they proceeded to harass Macdonald’s column over the next three days, inflicting over 400 casualties. On 2 April, Macdonald and his escort arrived in Sabadel, outside of Barcelona. There he sent his escort back to Suchet, while he finished the journey with his staff and the wounded.38

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35 Ibid., XX, 301-02; Napier, War in the Peninsula, III, 213; Oman, Peninsular War, IV, 243-44.
36 Napoleon to Berthier, 9 March 1811, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 17443, XXI, 535-36.
37 Oman, Peninsular War, IV, 485.
38 Macdonald to Suchet, Macdonald to Clarke, 1 April 1811, Service historique: Correspondance de maréchal Macdonald, Carton C8-131; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XX, 304-06; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 187.
Macdonald’s new orders focused his attention to Montserrat, but before he could begin this project, a singular act of treachery changed the entire complexion of the conflict in Upper Catalonia. The fortress of Figueras was seized by 700 Spanish guerillas, aided by three agents inside the fort\textsuperscript{39}, at 2:00 A.M. on the night of 9-10 April 1811. Once the French were disarmed within the fortress and opened the gates, 3,000 Spanish partisans poured into Figueras and secured their prize. The governor and 1,600 soldiers and camp followers were captured.\textsuperscript{40} The six hundred Italian troops in the town below the fortress withdrew rather than try to retake it.

The French responded immediately. The six hundred Italian troops were quickly joined by five hundred troops from Gerona, with orders to invest the fortress. This was not a sufficient force to stop the Spanish from reinforcing and re-supplying Figueras. Shortly thereafter, Figueras was surrounded by 6,000 French infantry and 500 cavalry. Macdonald quickly wrote to Suchet, requesting the return of the men he recently transferred. Although Macdonald outranked him, Suchet refused, stating that it would take twenty-five days to concentrate the troops and march to Figueras. Macdonald would have to make due with the soldiers available to him in Upper Catalonia, supported by any reinforcements sent to him from the south of France. Since Figueras was located just twenty miles from the French border, this seemed to make sense.\textsuperscript{41}

Macdonald remained in Barcelona until 1 June, working on administrative duties and directing reinforcements Napoleon sent from France, while General Baraguey d’Hilliers oversaw the siege of Figueras. He arrived at the siege on 2 June, with 15,000 men to surround the fortress. Defensive works were built to protect his men from any sortie by the enemy. These works were defended by

\textsuperscript{39}These men received 21,000 francs for their treachery. See Emmanuel Martin, \textit{La gendarmerie français en Espagne et en Portugal} (Paris, 1898), 409.
\textsuperscript{40}Macdonald to Clarke, 16 April 1811, Service historique: Correspondance de maréchal Macdonald, Carton C\textsuperscript{8}-131; Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, XX, 307-08.
\textsuperscript{41}Macdonald to Suchet, 16 April 1811, Service historique: Correspondance de maréchal Macdonald, Carton C\textsuperscript{8}-131; Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 187; Oman, \textit{Peninsular War}, IV, 488.
field artillery as well as infantry. Since he did not have the siege artillery to breach the walls, he was forced to blockade Figueras and starve the defenders out. He also had the men prepare positions in the event the Spanish tried to raise the siege from beyond the French positions. These lines stretched over six miles in length. It was fortunate for the French that the Spanish regular army had been repulsed by Baraguey d’Hilliers on 3 May when they attacked the besieging forces around Figueras, and Suchet’s siege of Tarragona attracted most of their attention away from Figueras. All Macdonald had to contend with was the activity of the local guerillas, which was annoying, but not serious. This was fortuitous, since he was ordered on 12 June to send five thousand men to assist in the attack on Montserrat.

The siege of Figueras lasted much longer than Macdonald expected. The supplies that were stored in the fortress, combined with the provisions brought in by the Spanish at the beginning of the operation, enabled the guerillas to hold out for over four months. This meant that the French suffered from the intense Spanish heat during June and July. The soldiers also suffered from malaria, and from illness due to unsanitary latrines. Macdonald himself suffered his first attack of gout on 13 July.

Macdonald received proof that the garrison was running out of food on 17 July, when the commander released 850 French and Italian prisoners, who were ill. No officers were released. The soldiers inside the fortress were on half rations, and releasing the prisoners reduced the number of people that had to be

42 Ibid., 188.
43 Macdonald to Clarke, 6 May 1811, Service historique: Correspondance de maréchal Macdonald, Carton C 8-131; Macdonald recalled Julius Caesar’s siege of Alesia, where the Roman general had to defend against attacks from the city as well as the surrounding countryside. See Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 188.
44 Belmas, Journaux de sieges, I, 206.
45 Napoleon to Clarke, 12 June 1811, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 17799, XXII, 271-72; Macdonald to Suchet, 7 May 1811, Service historique: Correspondance de maréchal Macdonald, Carton C 8-131. The Spanish lost 2 flags, 80 officers, and 1500 prisoners.
46 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 188.
Macdonald received information on the amount of food and the number of men capable of bearing arms in the fortress. This was from the imprisoned French commander, General of brigade François Guillot, who smuggled a note out to the besiegers. This allowed Macdonald to calculate that the Spanish would not be able to hold out much more than another month.  

Macdonald expected the Spanish to sortie from the fortress in an attempt to escape. They had made several attempts to flee during the siege, but each was repulsed. He expected that this would occur on the night of 15 August, Napoleon’s birthday. However, it was the next day that the garrison tried to break out. Two thousand guerillas demonstrated against the north side of Macdonald’s lines, but were driven off with little effort. Later that evening, the garrison tried to break out to the southwest. Once again, the besieged were turned back, this time with a loss of 400 men.  

Three days later, on 19 August 1811, the Spanish raised the white flag, and surrendered, giving Macdonald 1,500 prisoners. Two thousand Spanish died during the siege. He allowed the officers to retain their swords out of respect for their bravery.  

Shortly after the capitulation, Macdonald’s gout was complicated by a high fever, so on 29 September 1811, he requested to be relieved of command. It was approved and Macdonald re-entered France on 19 October 1811.
Macdonald’s service in Spain did not add to his reputation as a soldier. He won no major battles, captured no major city, and lost an important fortress due to treachery. He also had problems with the Italian troops under his command. The rash actions of these troops caused him trouble at Valls, and they also burned most of Manresa to the ground. Perhaps it was his objection to the war in Spain that kept him from attacking the Spanish at Cardona and Valls with more vigor. However, his service was not completely without merit. He was the first of the French administrators who tried to rule the province with humanity and common sense rather than brutality and looting. He was able to maintain his troops in a very hostile territory. He cooperated with General Suchet at the siege of Tortosa, sending one of his divisions to assist in the operation. When the fortress at Figueras was captured, Macdonald responded rapidly, and was able to bottle up the majority of the Spanish guerrillas in one location, which aided in controlling the insurrections in the rest of the province.

52 Macdonald, *Recollections of Marshal Macdonald*, 186. Macdonald wrote that he “had a very strong objection to the manner in which war was carried on in Spain.”
CHAPTER 9

THE RUSSIAN DISASTER: 1812

When Macdonald left Spain, he was only able to walk with the aid of crutches. He spent the next six months convalescing. During this time, events took place that led to his next command. Relations between France and Russia had deteriorated since the peace accords were signed at Tilsit in 1807. Napoleon negotiated for a marriage between himself and the Grand Duchess Anna was unsuccessful, and Napoleon went on to marry the Austrian Archduchess Marie Louise. There was also tension due to Russian designs on Moldavia and Wallachia, French activity in the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and the reopening of Russian ports to British goods, in violation of the Continental System. With all of these factors in mind, Napoleon decided to go to war with Russia in 1812. Macdonald’s new command involved this daunting task.

He was appointed the commander of the 10th Corps, which would be on the extreme left flank during Napoleon’s invasion of Russia. This invasion had the goal of forcing Tsar Alexander I to comply with the Continental System, which closed continental markets to British trade. Macdonald was ordered to travel to Berlin on 3 April 1812, prior to his appointment as corps commander. He was still not completely recovered from the gout. As he recalled, he left his “armchair at Figueras, one crutch in Paris, and the other in Berlin.”

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1 Napoleon to Berthier, 30 April 1812, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 18673, XXIII, 456.
2 Berthier to Macdonald, 3 April 1812, Service historique, Dossier de Maréchal Macdonald, Carton MF-20.
3 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 191.
Macdonald’s corps formed in the vicinity of Koenigsberg at the end of May. It included 32,500 men and 84 pieces of artillery. The formation consisted of Westphalians, Poles, Bavarians, and Prussians, who made up two-thirds of the entire formation. The two divisional commanders were General Julius von Grawert (Prussian) and General of division Charles Grandjean (Allied). The Prussian contingent arrived on 6 June 1812, and Macdonald was ordered to move his corps to the vicinity of Tilsit by 19 June.

Napoleon formed the Grande Armée into a main army, under his direct command, two auxiliary formations, under the command of his step-son, Eugene de Beauharnais, and his brother, Jerome Bonaparte, and two flanking forces, an Austrian corps commanded by Prince Karl zu Schwarzenberg and Macdonald’s 10th Corps. Facing Napoleon were two Russian armies, commanded by Prince Mikhail Barclay de Tolly and Prince Peter Bagration. Napoleon planned to interpose himself between the two Russian armies, using the strategy of central position. This would allow him to keep the two enemy forces separate, and crush them in sequence, rather than having to face their combined strength.

Macdonald’s original role in the campaign was to threaten Riga and St. Petersburg as well as the right flank of Count Peter Wittgenstein, who commanded the Russian forces in Kovno province, and the fortified camp of Drissa.

The campaign began on 24 June, when Macdonald’s forces crossed the Nieman River, two days before Napoleon’s crossing. The 10th Corps was ordered to march to Rossieny, in an effort to turn Wittgenstein’s flank, and drive

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4 Georges Bertin, La Campagne de 1812 (Paris, 1896), 8; 10th Corps Composition (1812), Carnet de la sabretache, Series 2, Vol. 7, 1908, 762; This does not include the siege train.
5 Napoleon to Berthier, 13 June 1812, Correspondance de Napoléon ler, No. 18787, XXIII, 570; Peter Paret, Yorck & the Era of Prussian Reform (Princeton, 1966), 191.
6 Chandler, Campaigns of Napoleon, 755.
7 Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXI, 131.
Fig. 34. From Koenigsberg to Riga.
the Russians towards Marshal Oudinot’s 2nd Corps.\(^8\) This maneuver was unsuccessful, because the Russian forces withdrew, and Macdonald had problems due to the unreliability of his maps.\(^9\)

Napoleon had successfully positioned himself between the two Russian armies, and decided to crush the Russian Second Army, commanded by Bagration. However, this force was able to avoid a trap planned by Napoleon at Mogeliv, so the emperor decided to turn north and attack the Russian First Army. This force had retreated to the fortified position around Drissa and Dunaburg, on the right bank of the Dvina River, so Macdonald was ordered to advance to Poneviej, which put him in position to move either to the east, to support the move on Drissa, or move north, and threaten Riga and St. Petersburg.\(^10\)

During this move, some of Macdonald’s troops surprised a detachment of about 170 Russian soldiers and Cossacks guarding a supply magazine. Fifty Prussian hussars were able to overcome the sentries, and attack the rest of the enemy in a tavern. After a wild melee, the Cossacks that were still alive surrendered. The lieutenant in charge of this affair was awarded the Legion of Honor for his efforts. This was the only success of the advance, as the Prussians were very slow at carrying out their orders, allowing the Russians to destroy several supply magazines in the area.\(^11\)

The effort against Drissa was unsuccessful, because the Russians withdrew in the face of Napoleon’s advance again. The major actions of the campaign were far removed from Macdonald as Napoleon tried to bring the Russians to battle around Smolensk. Even at this early date, before confronting the Russians, there were losses in the French army due to illness and desertion. Another problem was the loss of horses due to the hot and dry weather, especially among the horse artillery. As operations became more extensive,

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\(^8\) Napoleon to Berthier, 24, 25 June 1812, *Correspondance de Napoléon ler*, No. 18858, 18864, XXIII, 626-27, 631.

\(^9\) Macdonald to Berthier, 30 June 1812, Archives Nationales, AF IV, Carton 1645.\(^5\)

\(^10\) Napoleon to Berthier, 2 July 1812, *Correspondance de Napoléon ler*, No. 18887, XXIV, 10.

Fig. 35. Advance to Riga.
Napoleon ordered Macdonald to buy 2,000 horses in Courland, and send them to the main army. Macdonald also sent along a convoy of supplies to Napoleon, which reached the main army on 16 July.

As Macdonald’s forces approached their new posts along the Dvina River, the Russian forces in Riga began to react, and moved to attack Macdonald’s left flank. Lieutenant General Ivan von Essen, the military governor of Riga, sent a detachment to attack the Prussian troops posted near Eckau. These two forces met on 18 July at Sorgen. Despite being greatly outnumbered, the Prussians forced the Russians to retreat. The Russians had to content themselves with occupying Eckau and leaving troops to defend the town. Macdonald ordered General Grawert to retake the town. On 19 July, this was accomplished after a long combat. Both sides lost about 600 men, and the Russians also lost 200 prisoners and a regimental standard.

Macdonald crossed the Dvina River on 22 July, prepared to begin the siege of Dunaburg. When he arrived at the city on 2 August, he found fortifications that were incomplete and undefended, so he occupied the town without opposition. He found 20 guns, 40,000 cartridges, and other ammunition. Macdonald ordered the razing of the fortifications. While this was being carried out, Macdonald and his enemy remained stationary for almost three weeks. The only event of note that took place during this time was that General von Grawert became ill, and was replaced by General Hans von Yorck, who despised Napoleon.

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12 Napoleon to Berthier, 9 July 1812, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 18935, XXIV, 46.
13 Napoleon to Berthier, 16 July 1812, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 18952, XXIV, 65-66.
14 Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXI, 167.
15 Ibid., 167-68.
16 Napoleon to Maret, 22 July 1812, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 18994, XXIV, 101; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXI, 168.
Meanwhile, Macdonald was criticized for not helping Marshal Oudinot in his efforts against General Wittgenstein at this time, although fighting in the vicinity of Polotsk was fifty miles away, and extremely difficult to coordinate any type of joint operation against the Russians. Also, Macdonald had to consider that he was nearly one hundred miles away from Riga, which Napoleon wanted captured so that the French could use its port facilities to facilitate the movement of supplies to the main army. Another consideration was the lack of activity and initiative shown by the Prussians. While they defended themselves when attacked by the Russians, the Prussian division demonstrated little effort unless Macdonald was close by or actually there in command. Napoleon ordered Macdonald to coordinate his operations with Oudinot at the beginning of the campaign, but as time passed, and the French advanced further into Russia, it seemed that Napoleon did not want Macdonald to advance further east than Dunaburg. Without direct instructions from Napoleon, Macdonald was content to focus on the area from Dunaburg to Riga.¹⁸

On 19 August 1812, Napoleon ordered Macdonald to advance his entire force on Riga.¹⁹ The 10th Corps moved closer to Riga while the siege train from Koenigsberg approached the area. The Russians had 18,000 men in the vicinity of Riga.²⁰ On 26 August, General Essen led a series of attacks on the Prussians, first at Grafenthal, and then the following day at Dalhenkirchen. Macdonald brought up a brigade to help the Prussians, but by the time he arrived, the affair was over. The Russians lost 1,200 prisoners as well as those killed in combat. This was the only action in this region for a month.²¹

¹⁸ Napoleon to Berthier, 2 July 1812; Napoleon to Maret, 4 August 1812, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 18887, XXIV, 10, No. 19041, XXIV, 140-41. Napoleon only mentions that Macdonald should be making a diversion to assist Oudinot.
¹⁹ Napoleon to Berthier, 19 August 1812, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 19100, XXIV, 183-84.
²⁰ Clausewitz, The Campaign of 1812, 45.
²¹ de Conchard, Campagne et Défection du Corps prussien de la Grande Armée de 1812, par Vermeil de Conchard, Service historique, Carton MR-676; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXI, 197-98; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 192.
Macdonald took up position at Jacobstad, while the Prussians observed Riga from Mittau.

Napoleon gave Macdonald carte blanche to deal with Riga on 10 September 1812. Once he received these orders, Macdonald advanced on Riga with his entire force. This proved prudent, because the Russians received reinforcements from Finland on 23 September. These troops, destined to join Wittgenstein’s corps, were stopped on their march by General Essen to attack the Prussians, and perhaps capture the siege train, which had finally arrived. Macdonald’s forces were attacked by 22,200 men and 27 guns. The attacks started on 26 September and lasted until 1 October. Despite outnumbering the Prussians by 8,000 men at the beginning of this attack, and being concentrated rather than spread out, the Russians were turned back at all points. Macdonald arrived on 29 September with a brigade from Grandjeans division, and led the counterattack near the city of Bauske. The results of the six days of combat was 5,000 Russians were killed or captured, while Macdonald lost about 1,200 men.

After the victory of Bauske, Macdonald failed to follow up the success. Shortly after this battle, Macdonald was ordered to send the siege train back to Danzig, due to the lateness of the season, and the worry that the heavy guns would become stuck with the approach of winter weather. Without the siege guns, Macdonald could not capture Riga, so he was reduced to observing the Russians, and attacking them if they advanced too far outside of the city.

It was six weeks before the Russians sortied out from Riga. General Essen was replaced by Marquis Filippo Paulucci, who decided to retake Fridrichstadt. He sent out a detachment on 14 November that captured the town without opposition. Macdonald responded the next day by sending a Prussian

22 Napoleon to Maret, 10 September 1812, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 19186, XXIV, 242-43.
23 Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXI, 226-27; Conchard, Campagne et Défection du Corps prussien, Service historique, Carton MR-676.
24 Napoleon to Maret, 8 October 1812, Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, No. 19266, XXIV, 302-03; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 192.
detachment that successfully retook the town. On 16 November, Macdonald advanced with his forces, and found two Russian divisions near Dahlenkirchen; there was some light skirmishing between the advance troops of the two armies. The next day, fighting began at 8:00 AM, and lasted until noon when the Russians rapidly withdrew into Riga. Many of their troops tried to cross the

Fig. 36. Vicinity of Riga & Dünaberg.
frozen Dvina River, and drown when the ice broke. The Russians lost 3,000 men and left 1,500 prisoners.25

After this combat, Macdonald ordered his men to return to their positions. On 21 November, Paulucci receiving news that the main French army was retreating from Moscow, believed that the troop movement he was observing was a general retreat by the 10th Corps to cover Napoleon’s flank. He was surprised to find Macdonald’s outposts still in place, and was forced to return to Mittau, where he observed the Prussians.26

For the next three weeks, the two commanders watched each other without any combat. Macdonald, who was ignorant of the actual condition of the main army, continued to cover Riga, but as mid-December arrived, he began to concentrate his forces for a possible movement.27 Although a Prussian officer brought back news of the disintegration of the main army, Macdonald refused to believe it. The relationship between Macdonald and von Yorck had deteriorated to such an extent that he felt that the Prussians were trying to lower the morale of the 10th Corps on purpose. He was also expecting official word from Vilna. In fact, a Prussian Major was sent to deliver orders to Macdonald, but the officer took a deliberately circuitous route, from Vilna to Mittau via Tilsit and Teltsch, so the orders did not arrive until 18 December.28 Macdonald promptly began his withdrawal the next day, personally marching with Grandjeans division, while the Prussians followed a day behind.29 The roads were in such bad condition, due to the snow and frost that it took eight days to march thirty miles. Macdonald arrived at Koltiniani on the evening of 25 December, and defeated a Russian brigade at Piklupenen, capturing most of the soldiers and several guns. The next day, the

25 Conchard, Campagne et Déflection du Corps prussien, Service historique, Carton MR-676; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXI, 289-90. The text states that Macdonald fought the Russians on 16-19 September, but this is obviously incorrect, because this would have been prior to the fighting around Bauske.
26 Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXI, 290.
27 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 193.
28 Clausewitz, Campaign of 1812, 216-17.
29 Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXI, 308-09. His forces included six battalions, six squadrons of cavalry, and twelve guns.
division reached Tilsit. Macdonald waited in Tilsit for his other division, unaware of the treachery taking place at the time.

Fig. 37 Retreat from Riga.

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30 Ibid., XXI, 309; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 195.
The Russians had been trying to convince the Prussians to change sides while they were covering Riga. The Prussian commander, von Yorck, did nothing at the time, but on 25 December, the Russians placed 1,400 cavalry, commanded by General Hans von Diebitsch, between von Yorck’s division and Macdonald, who was at Tilsit. For five days, the Russian general negotiated with von Yorck, and on 30 December, the Prussian general signed the Convention of Tauroggen, which declared the Prussian troops to be neutral. Macdonald, who reversed his march because he was worried that some trouble had befallen the Prussians, was informed of this revelation on the evening of 30 December in a letter from von Yorck, and the desertion of the Prussian cavalry. Macdonald, who had fifty or so Prussian cavalry at his headquarters, allowed them to leave rather than place them under arrest.

The results of the Prussian desertion at Tauroggen was staggering to the French cause. With the loss of 17,000 Prussian troops, Napoleon had to abandon any idea of holding the Russians in East Prussia and Silesia and continued his withdrawal westward. This action by von Yorck also became the catalyst that induced the King of Prussia to break his treaties with France and join together with Russia to oppose the French occupation of the German territories.

Macdonald performed adequately, during the 1812 campaign. He protected the extreme right flank of the Grande Armée, caused over 10,000 enemy soldiers to be killed or wounded, captured 20 cannon and 40,000 cartridges. Also, he was responsible for sending horses and other needed supplies to the main army as the campaign lengthened. Macdonald tried to coordinate his activities with Marshal Oudinot, but the distance was too great,

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31 One factor in von Yorck’s defection was the friction between him and Macdonald. Once again, it was Macdonald’s sense of humor that caused problems for him with his associates. See Conchard, Campagne et Défection du Corps prussien, Service historique, Carton MR-676; Clausewitz, Campaign of 1812, 226-27.
32 Clausewitz, Campaign of 1812, 220-42; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 199. Clausewitz was involved in the negotiations with Yorck, and delivered a detailed account of the deliberations.
which was a common theme throughout the campaign. Once he began his withdrawal from the vicinity of Riga, Macdonald ably avoided the various traps that were set for him by his Russian adversaries, even after losing the Prussian contingent of his corps. Macdonald’s mistakes during this campaign were a lack of initiative, especially in relationship to the siege of Riga, and his lack of tact with General von Yorck.
CHAPTER 10

1813: THE DEFENSE OF GERMANY

Following the defection of the Prussians at Tauroggen, Macdonald retreated from Tilsit, pursued by General Wittgenstein. Arriving at Koenigsberg on 3 January 1813, he continued his march towards Dantzig, skirmishing with the Allied advance guard along the way. When he arrived on 12 January, he received orders from Joachim Murat, Marshal of France and King of Naples, to put his forces under the command of the governor of the city, General Jean Rapp. He was authorized to return to France on 10 February 1813. He made a quick trip to Paris, where he recovered from an illness and was involved in organizing the new army being raised by Napoleon. Going back into the field, Macdonald was named commander of the 11th Corps on 10 April 1813.1

As commander of the 11th Corps, Macdonald was again under the command of Eugène de Beauharnais. Eugène commanded the Army of the Elbe, which was to contain the Allies until Napoleon could concentrate his new army on the Saale River.2 Macdonald’s command consisted of 22,000 men organized into three divisions.3

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1 Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXII, 6; Service historique, Dossier de Maréchal Macdonald, Carton MF-20; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 206-09.
2 Charles Louis Marie Lanrezac, La manoeuvre de Lützen (Paris, 1904), 117. The Army of the Elbe consisted of the 5th Corps, commanded by general of division Jacques Lauriston, 14th Corps (Macdonald), 1st Cavalry Corps, commanded by general of division Marie-Victor Latour-Maubourg, a small detachment of the Guard and several small divisions for a total of 62,000 men.
3 Ibid., 117. The number given by Beauvais de Preau was 18,000. See Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXII, 34.
On 29 April, Macdonald was in the area of Merseberg. Napoleon ordered Eugène to concentrate there, while the Army of the Main was at Naumburg, moving towards Lützen. This had the effect of forcing the Allies to evacuate the city of Halle, which was on the Saale River. Napoleon wanted to defend the river until the French army completed its concentration.⁴

Being critically short of cavalry, Napoleon did not have accurate information on the location of the Allied army⁵ so he ordered Macdonald to build a bridge at Merseburg to ensure rapid communications between both wings of the army. Macdonald was also to place an advanced post half way between Merseburg and Naumburg to facilitate any messages or orders.⁶ At Merseburg, he found the corps of General von Yorck, which had abandoned him at Tilsit. Macdonald exacted a bit of revenge by forcing them out of the city.⁷

Napoleon ordered the Army of the Elbe to extend itself across the Saale River from Merseburg to Schladebach on 30 April. He was still seeking information about Allied movements.⁸ Napoleon started moving in the direction of Leipzig, using elements of the Army of the Elbe as the advance guard. The main line of movement was the road that linked Naumburg, Weissenfels, Lützen, and Leipzig. However, he was searching eastward in the direction of Zwenkau and Pegau.⁹

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⁴ F. Lorraine Petre, *Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany – 1813* (New York, 1974), 57. Marshal Oudinot, with the 12th Corps, and a division of Wurttemburg troops were still two days march away from the Army of the Main.

⁵ Napoleon had about 7,500 cavalry, as compared to over 24,000 cavalry for the Allies. See Petre, *Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany*, 65.

⁶ Napoleon to Berthier, 30 April 1813, *Correspondance de Napoleon Ier*, No. 19927, XXV, 283-84.


⁸ Napoleon to Eugène, 30 April 1813, *Correspondance de Napoleon Ier*, No. 19933, XXV, 287-89.

⁹ Napoleon to Eugène, 1 May 1813; Napoleon to Berthier, 2 May 1813 *Correspondance de Napoleon Ier*, No. 19936, XXV, 292, No. 19942, XXV, 294-95.
Fig. 38. 1813 Campaign, Initial dispositions.
The Allied army was indeed to the east of Napoleon. The commander in chief of the Allied army was General Wittgenstein, but it was Tsar Alexander I who determined the movements of the coalition forces. His plan was to attack the right flank of the French army which the Allies believed was stretched out on the road between Weissenfels and Leipzig. Wittgenstein’s scouts failed to inform him of the two concentrations of French troops.\textsuperscript{10} The target of the attack was the village of Kaja (Kaya), which the Allies believed was only held by a small flank guard.

**THE BATTLE OF LÜTZEN**

The Allied surprise attack, which took place at midday on 2 May 1813 found, not a weak flank guard, but Marshal Michel Ney’s corps in bivouac in and around Kaja. The initial attack fell on General Souham’s division. The French would have been in position to repel the Allied assault if General Souham had made a reconnaissance towards Pegau, ordered earlier in the day.\textsuperscript{11} Napoleon reacted swiftly, however, and concentrated his forces at the battle. Macdonald, who had been advancing towards Leipzig, was halted by Eugène and turned in the direction of Lützen. Unfortunately, because of the distance and several attacks by enemy cavalry, it was three hours before the 11\textsuperscript{th} Corps could reach the field of battle.\textsuperscript{12}

At 4:00 P.M., the 11\textsuperscript{th} Corps formed up on the heights to the right of the Allied army. The front of Macdonald’s three divisions was covered by a battery of sixty guns. Macdonald attacked the right flank and reserves of the Allied army.\textsuperscript{13} This action preempted an attack on the left of the French line by Prince Eugen of

\textsuperscript{10} Petre, *Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany*, 66-67.

\textsuperscript{11} Napoleon to Berthier, 2 May 1813, *Correspondance de Napoleon Ier*, No. 19942, XXV, 294-95. Either Ney did not convey the orders to Souham, or he failed to follow them properly. Whatever the case, the French were surprised by the Allied assault.

\textsuperscript{12} Fain, *Manuscrit de mil huit cent treize*, I, 351-52.

\textsuperscript{13} Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, XXII, 39-40; Fain, *Manuscrit de mil huit cent treize*, I, 362; Eugène Labaume, *Histoire de la chute de l’empire de Napoléon, ornée de huit plans ou cartes, pour servir au récit des principales
Wurttemburg, who was surprised by the arrival of the new French corps. As Macdonald pressed the attack, the Allies responded by sending their reserves, a Russian grenadier division commanded by General Peter Petrovich Kanowitzin, and a mass of cavalry to stop the threat to their flank and rear. However, the troops of General of Division Maurice Etienne Gerard were well placed in reserve and easily held off the enemy cavalry. Macdonald’s other two divisions, commanded by generals of division Henri-François Charpentier and Philibert

Fressinet, captured the village of Eisdorf, which had anchored the Allied line. General Fressinet also captured the village of Kitzen.  

The attack on the right flank of the Allied army was a success. While the 11th Corps occupied the enemy reserves, Napoleon attacked in the center with the Imperial Guard. On the French right, a corps under the command of General Henri-Gatien Bertrand was advancing against the Allied left, completing

![Fig. 40. Battle of Lützen, 2 May 1813, Macdonald’s approach.](image)

Napoleon’s double envelopment of the Allied line. The combination of the two forces on their flanks and the assault by the Guard in the center was decisive. The Allies were being forced back when darkness ended the battle. The position of the 11th Corps on the right flank of the Allied army cut off their retreat through

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14 Labaume, *Histoire de la chute de l’empire*, I, 153-54; Petre, *Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany*, 82.
Zwenkau, so the entire army had to withdraw through the city of Pegau. If Napoleon had been able to pursue the Allies with a sizeable cavalry force, the victory may have been more decisive as the Allied army retreated in confusion.\(^\text{15}\)

Macdonald implemented his orders very well during this battle, moving his corps from an advance on Leipzig to an assault on the Allied right. He positioned his forces in such a way that the Allied cavalry thrown against him was unable to halt his attack. Only more cavalry could have allowed him to move on the Allied flank and rear any faster than he did. Macdonald’s tactical skills contributed to the victory at Lutzen and reaffirmed Napoleon’s confidence in him.

The French pursuit of the Allied army began on 3 May but it was subdued due to the extreme fatigue of the troops. Macdonald’s corps, along with the 1\(^{\text{st}}\) Cavalry Corps, formed the central position of the advance guard; on the left was the 5\(^{\text{th}}\) Corps (Lauriston) and on the right was the 4\(^{\text{th}}\) Corps (Bertrand). Macdonald and the 1\(^{\text{st}}\) Cavalry Corps only moved as far as Podelwitz, which was only five miles beyond Pegau on the first day of the pursuit.\(^\text{16}\) Napoleon was unsure which direction the Allies had taken, so the French implemented a search pattern similar to that used in the 1806 campaign against the Prussians: three columns within supporting distance of each other.\(^\text{17}\)

Macdonald encountered the Prussian rear guard in the morning of 5 May, trying to cover the crossing of the Mulde River. The French attacked and pushed the Prussians back in disorder. This French advance endangered the Russian corps under General Mikhail Andreivitch Miloradovitch who responded by sending troops to Hartha to stop Macdonald’s advance. The Allies were pushed beyond Hartha, but the French did not advance further that day.\(^\text{18}\)

\(^{15}\) Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, XXII, 42; Fain, *Manuscrit de mil huit cent treize*, I, 365.
\(^{16}\) G. Clément, *Campaign de 1813* (Paris, 1904), 172.
\(^{17}\) The Russians fell back to Frohbourg; the Prussians were at Borna and Colditz. See Petre, *Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany*, 92; Fain, *Manuscrit de mil huit cent treize*, I, 371.
\(^{18}\) Fain, *Manuscrit de mil huit cent trieze*, I, 371; Petre, *Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany*, 93-94.
Continuing the pursuit, the Allied rear guard was defeated again on 6 and 7 May by Macdonald’s advance guard. General Miloradovitch conducted an impressive withdrawal, stopping at every defensible position and forcing Macdonald to deploy his troops to push the enemy back. On 8 May, the advance guard was in sight of Dresden. The Allies had decided not to defend the city and withdrew further east. \(^{19}\) Napoleon ordered bridges built and, under the cover of two batteries which totaled eighty guns, the structures were completed. One bridge broke during the night of 9-10 May, but was restored on the afternoon of 10 May, so General Charpentier’s division crossed into Dresden. \(^{20}\)

After Dresden was occupied, the Allies retreated eastward towards Bautzen. Since Napoleon was still unsure of the direction of the Allied retreat, he again sent several columns to search for the enemy. \(^{21}\) Macdonald, in charge of the advance guard on the road to Bautzen, battled the Allied rear guard at Weissig on 11 May, at Schmiedefeld and at Bischofswerda on 12 May, where his troops killed or captured over 2,000 men. \(^{22}\) Macdonald halted at the remnants of Bischofswerda for two days, then attacked Miloradovitch again at Gödau on 15 May. After taking Gödau, Macdonald’s pickets found the Allied encampment on the eastern side of Bautzen. \(^{23}\)

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\(^{20}\) Ibid., 182.

\(^{21}\) Napoleon dissolved the Army of the Elbe on 12 May and incorporated the 4\(^{th}\), 6\(^{th}\), 11\(^{th}\) and 12\(^{th}\) corps, the Guard, and the 1\(^{st}\) Cavalry Corps into his main army. Marshal Ney commanded an army that was used as a feint against Berlin, which consisted of the 2\(^{nd}\), 3\(^{rd}\), 5\(^{th}\), and 7\(^{th}\) corps, 2\(^{nd}\) Cavalry Corps, and a division of light cavalry detached from the 1\(^{st}\) Cavalry Corps. See Napoleon to Berthier, 12 May 1813, *Correspondance de Napoleon Ier*, No. 19996, XXV, 333.

\(^{22}\) Napoleon to Ney, 13 May 1813, *Correspondance de Napoleon Ier*, No. 20006, XXV, 340-41; Fain, *Manuscrit de mil huit cent treize*, I, 384; Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, XXII, 46. The village of Bischofswerda was burnt when the Allies, who tried to destroy some supplies stored there, let the fire get out of control.

\(^{23}\) Clément, *Campagne de 1813*, 190; Petre, *Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany*, 104-05.
Because the French army was still spread out, Macdonald used the ruse of lighting many campfires to inflate the size of his forces. When Napoleon realized that the Allied army was preparing to fight, he concentrated his forces on Bautzen. Ney was ordered to march toward the pending battlefield. Napoleon himself reached the area on 19 May.

THE BATTLE OF BAUTZEN

The disposition of the French army prior to the Battle of Bautzen the south flank of the army included the 12th, 11th, 6th, and 4th corps, forming the front line. The Imperial Guard and the 1st Cavalry Corps were held in reserve. Napoleon had about 115,000 troops available to him. Marshal Ney’s forces, which numbered about 84,000 men, were to move in from the north and envelop the right of the Allied army. However, it would take him time to bring his forces to the area. Napoleon decided to attack the Allied army on 20 May to contain his enemy while his flanking force arrived to deliver the decisive attack on the following day. The Allied army, which had about 96,000 men in entrenched positions along the Spree River, stretched from just south of Bautzen to the village of Klix to the north.

Macdonald was ordered to throw a bridge across the river and capture the town of Bautzen. The battle began on 20 May at midday, when the French artillery began bombarding the enemy positions and French skirmishers advanced on the Allied troops. As Macdonald’s divisions advanced, they found that the stone bridge which crossed the river into Bautzen had not been destroyed; one division took the bridge. Building two more bridges, the troops then attacked the town of Bautzen itself. With his corps supported on the right by

24 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 212.
25 Napoleon to Macdonald, 15 May 1813, Correspondance de Napoleon Ier, No. 20011, XXV, 343-44; Clément, Campagne de 1813, 192.
26 Marshal Nicolas Soult had command of the north wing of the French line.
27 Clément, Campagne de 1813, 211; Lanrezac, La manoeuvre de Lützen, 308-11; Petre, Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany, 116-20.
Fig. 41. Battle of Bautzen, 20 May 1813, First day.

Oudinot’s 12th Corps, and on the left by Marmont’s 6th Corps, Macdonald made a frontal assault on the town. After several hours of heavy fighting, Macdonald’s
troops seized the town around 5:00 P.M., with some help from the division commanded by General of division Jean Dominique Compans.  

Marshal Oudinot, on Macdonald’s right, was hard pressed at this time and Macdonald contemplated pulling his troops back. However, his chef d’état-major, Louis August Bourmont, convinced him that General Gerard’s division could relieve the pressure on the 12th Corps. The 112th Line, led by Colonel Charles de la Bedoyère, rushed to the attack and kept the French line advancing. 

By nightfall, the French had driven most of the Allied army from its original positions; only Field Marshal Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher had held his position. Miloradovitch, pushed out of Bautzen and threatened by the 12th Corps on his left, ordered a withdrawal to the prepared positions behind the city. Napoleon’s plan was working. The success of Oudinot, Macdonald, and Marmont convinced the Allied commanders that the French objective was to cut their army off from Austrian aid. The only Allied commander who contemplated a possible attack from the north was General Augustus Wilhelm Gneisenau, Blücher’s chief of staff. He, however, was overruled, and the Allies shifted a considerable portion of their reserves to meet the expected threat to their left. 

On 21 May the French attack began at 5:00 A.M. The orders for marshals Macdonald, Oudinot, and Marmont were to press the attack on the Allied left so that they would not suspect the real attack was coming on their right. Macdonald and Oudinot carried out their orders almost too well. Oudinot’s advance alarmed

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30 This is the same Bourmont who deserted to the Allies during the Waterloo campaign.


Allied headquarters, and they sent reinforcements that began to push the 12th Corps back. Macdonald, who reached the heights of Rabitz, behind the town of Bautzen, began an advance at midday which brought the Allied push against Oudinot to a halt.  

Fig. 42. Battle of Bautzen, 21 May 1813, Second day.

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33 Petre, *Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany*, 127-30.
Marshal Ney’s attack began around 11:00 A.M. Shortly after this, Napoleon ordered the right and center to attack with all of their troops, to hold the Allies in place while Marshal Ney came around the Allied right. Marshal Ney diverted to the village of Preititz so the Allies were able to slip out of the trap that Napoleon had set for them. The Allied commanders ordered a retreat at 4:00 P.M., and what should have been a decisive victory was just another battlefield success. French casualties totaled 21,200 killed and wounded while the Allies also lost 20,000 men.34

At Bautzen, Macdonald once again performed his duties effectively. His attacks on the two days of the battle alarmed the Allied command enough that they shifted reserves to halt his advance; this was exactly what Napoleon wanted them to do. Macdonald was also able to support the 12th Corps on both days, which assisted Napoleon’s plan to attract the attention of the enemy to their left flank. He also held the Allied troops that were to his front while Marshal Ney made his move around the northern flank of the enemy position.

The Allies were able to retreat in good order, aided by the rear guard action of Eugen of Wurttemburg and the elite troops of the Allied reserve. This retreat was aided again by Napoleon’s acute lack of cavalry. Also, a thunderstorm broke over the battlefield at 6:00 P.M. slowed the immediate pursuit as well. By the end of the day, Macdonald’s corps had reached Meschwitz, southwest of Hochkirch.35 His troops continued their pursuit of the Allied army, overtaking the Russian rear guard on 25 May, and fighting a 12-hour battle.36 Macdonald continued pursuing the Allies until the fighting ended with the signing of the Armistice of Plasswitz on 2 June 1813. On 5 June, Macdonald was ordered to bivouac his troops in the vicinity of Löwenberg, along the Bober

34 Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXII, 51-53; Clément, Campagne de 1813, 226-28; Fain, Manuscrit de mil huit cent treize, 409-14; Petre, Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany, 127-35.
35 Fain, Manuscrit de mil huit cent treize, I, 417; Petre, Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany, 135-36.
36 Petre, Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany, 145.
River. In his immediate area were the 3rd Corps (Ney), the 5th Corps (Lauriston), and the 2nd Cavalry Corps (Sebastiani). \(^{37}\)

Macdonald spent the two and a half month truce training his conscripts. On 6 August, Napoleon ordered Macdonald to reconnoiter along a line that connected Silesia and Bohemia, specifically the passes in the vicinity of Greiffenberg, Friedland, Zittau, and Neustadt. Six days later, Napoleon sent word to Macdonald that the armistice was ending, and that hostilities would begin.

\(^{37}\) Ordre, 5 June 1813, *Correspondance de Napoleon Ier*, No. 20089, XXV, 421-22.
resume on 17 August. The armistice was broken by the Allies on 15 August, when French outposts were attacked by the Army of Silesia.

After the Prussians violated the terms of Plasswitz, Napoleon decided to turn Allied eagerness into his own advantage. He began to concentrate his forces in Silesia, including the Imperial Guard, in the hopes of decisively defeating the combined Russian and Prussian army commanded by Field Marshal Blücher. Macdonald received notice that the emperor was on the move and that a battle would occur on 21 August. However, the French commanders did not know about the Trachenberg plan, adopted by the Allies in July. This scheme called for the avoidance of battle with Napoleon himself, while the Allied armies of Bohemia, Silesia, and the North advanced to attack Napoleon's communications and subordinates. The major battle that Napoleon expected was little more than a skirmish at Goldberg. The French advance continued eastward in pursuit of Blücher's Army of Silesia until 22 August.

On 22 August, word arrived at the Imperial headquarters that an Austrian army led by Field Marshal Karl Philip Schwarzenberg was threatening the vital French supply base at Dresden. Napoleon reversed his march and quickly moved toward Dresden with the Imperial Guard and the 6th Corps, commanded by Marshal Marmont. Before he left, Napoleon created the Army of the Bober, consisting of the 3rd, 5th, 11th corps and the 2nd Cavalry Corps, totaling approximately 100,000 men. As a mark of recognition, he gave the command to Marshal Macdonald. Marshal Ney, the commander of the 3rd Corps and Macdonald's senior, was ordered to join Napoleon on his return to Dresden, leaving General Souham in command of the 3rd Corps. Although Ney's

38 Napoleon to Macdonald, 6 August 1813; Napoleon to Berthier, 12 August 1813, Correspondance de Napoleon Ier, No. 20335, XXVI, 9, No. 20354, XXVI, 33-34.
39 Macdonald to Berthier, 16 August 1813, Service historique, Correspondance du maréchal Macdonald, C2-154; Petre, Napoleon's Last Campaign in Germany, 66-159, 185.
40 Napoleon to Macdonald, 20 August 1813, Correspondance de Napoleon Ier, No. 20426, XXVI, 124, No. 20428, XXVI, 125-26.
41 Petre, Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany, 183-84.
instructions were clear, he started west with his entire corps, which led to a separation of the 3rd Corps from the rest of the Army of the Bober. This would prove significant in the Battle of the Katzbach.

Fig. 44. Situation prior to the Battle of the Katzbach.

Napoleon to Berthier, 23 August 1813, Correspondance de Napoleon Ier, No. 20441, XXVI, 133-34; Petre, Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany, 250.
Macdonald’s orders were to push the Army of Silesia past Jauer, then fall back to a defensive position on the Bober River. He was then to guard Napoleon’s communications against any threat from the east, and also prevent Blücher from reinforcing Berlin.\(^{43}\) Therefore, Macdonald prepared to move on Blücher. On 24 August, the 3\(^{rd}\) Corps was west of the Katzbach River, at Rothkirch; the 5\(^{th}\) Corps was on the right bank of the Katzbach River, east of Goldberg and the 11\(^{th}\) Corps was near Goldberg, on the west bank of the river.\(^{44}\) The 2\(^{nd}\) Cavalry Corps was operating near 3\(^{rd}\) Corps.\(^{45}\)

Blücher expected to be attacked on 24 August. He ordered a general reconnaissance in the belief that Napoleon had moved back towards Dresden. This proved to be correct so Blücher prepared to resume his offensive as well. The Army of Silesia consisted of Russian and Prussian troops numbering approximately 86,000 men.\(^{46}\)

There was little action on 25 August, as both sides were preparing their movements. Macdonald also had to wait for the 3\(^{rd}\) Corps to return from where Ney had erroneously marched it. The morning of 26 August began with a heavy rain that lasted the entire day and into the night. This rain served as a shield that obscured the movements of each army.\(^{47}\) Macdonald issued detailed orders to his subordinates concerning the approaching advance. The 5\(^{th}\) Corps was to move on Jauer via the Goldberg road. At Goldberg, General Lauriston detached General of division Jacques Pierre Puthod and his division of 6,000 men to carry

\(^{43}\) Napoleon to Berthier, 23 August 1813, *Correspondance de Napoleon Ier*, No. 20442, XXVI, 134-36.
\(^{44}\) Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, XXII, 80.
\(^{46}\) Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, XXII, 80; Petre, *Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany*, 251-52.
out a flanking movement through Schönau.\textsuperscript{48} The 3\textsuperscript{rd} Corps was to advance on Jauer by marching through Liegnitz and Neudorf, coming up on the right of the Allied army and possibly taking the enemy in the flank. The 11\textsuperscript{th} Corps and the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Cavalry Corps were ordered to cross the Katzbach at the Schmokowitz ford, near Kroitzsch. The infantry was to move along the right bank of the Wüthende-Neisse, and the cavalry was to advance to the left bank of the stream. Both were then to advance on Jauer.\textsuperscript{49}

Macdonald created a complicated and detailed plan. The problem with his scheme was that the various columns advancing on Jauer were not within supporting distance of each other. Also, Macdonald did not have accurate information on the location of the enemy forces before him. This plan, in many ways, was similar to the plan created by the Austrian General Mack which resulted in the Battle of Tourcoing in 1794.

Blücher also issued orders on 26 August for an advance. Believing that the French were in a defensive position on the left bank of the Katzbach, he planned to attack and contain the 5\textsuperscript{th} and 11\textsuperscript{th} corps while he used the bulk of his forces to concentrate on the isolated 3\textsuperscript{rd} Corps at Liegnitz. Neither Macdonald nor Blücher considered the possibility that the other commander might be advancing.\textsuperscript{50}

The terrain that formed the battlefield was extensive. The Katzbach flowed northeast from Goldberg. About four miles before the stream reaches Liegnitz, it was joined by another stream, the Wüthende-Neisse. Both streams were easy to cross in dry weather, but heavy rains cause them to flood.\textsuperscript{51} To the west of the Katzbach, wooded hillocks were prevalent, which would hamper the use of cavalry and give an advantage to infantry. On the east bank of the Katzbach, however, a steep bank led up to the plateau of Jauer. This plateau

\textsuperscript{48} Petre mentions that an Allied force was seen on the right flank of Macdonald’s forces, which was another reason given for the movement of Puthod’s division. No one else mentions this Allied force.  
\textsuperscript{49} Norvins, *Portefeuille de mil huit cent treize*, II, 314-15; Petre, *Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany*, 251-52.  
\textsuperscript{50} Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, XXII, 80-81.  
\textsuperscript{51} Wüthende translates as “raging” or “roaring.”
Fig. 45. Battle of the Katzbach, 26 August 1813.
was open and fairly level – ideal for cavalry. From the French position, there
were only two narrow trails that led to the top of the plateau.52

Both armies began their march around 2:00 P.M., in ignorance of their
opponents’ activities. Almost immediately, the 5th Corps ran into the Allied
pinning force commanded by a French émigré, General Andrault Langeron. This
combat formed the right of the French line. Both Macdonald and Blücher were
informed of the fighting.53 Blücher immediately ordered his forces to halt and
turn to face the advancing French. Macdonald, who was on his right flank at the
time, was unable to control the advance of troops up on to the plateau.54

Macdonald formed the 11th Corps between Klein-Tinz and Weinberg. His right
was anchored on the Wüthende-Neisse, where Lauriston covered his flank with
the 5th Corps. The left flank of the 11th Corps was supposed to be supported by
the 2nd Cavalry Corps, and Souham was expected to appear with the 3rd Corps
on the road from Liegnitz to turn the Allied flank. This failed to materialize
because Souham marched his corps along a different road. The 2nd Cavalry
Corps did move to support the 11th Corps, but the cavalry was slowed down by
the narrow roads climbing the heights of the plateau, which were also being used
to move artillery and infantry up to the battle.55

Souham, for some reason, decided to ignore his orders to use the
Liegnitz-Jauer road and followed the cavalry through the Kroitsch ford.56 As a

52 Jean Baptiste Antoine Marcelin, baron de Marbot, *The Memoirs of Baron De
Marbot* (London, 1988), II, 378-79; Petre, *Napoleon’s Last Campaign in
Germany*, 250.
53 Rapport sur l’affaire du 26 aout 1813, Service historique, Correspondance:
Grande armée, Carton C2-154; Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, XXII,
81; Labaume, *Histoire de la chute de l’empire*, II, 326; Norvins, *Portefeuille de mil
huit cent trieze*, II, 315.
54 In his *Recollections of Marshal Macdonald*, Macdonald commented that he
gave specific orders for the advance on the plateau, and none of them were
55 Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, XXII, 81; Labaume, *Histoire de la
chute de l’empire*, II, 326-27; Norvins, *Portefeuille de mil huit cent trieze*, II, 315-
16; Petre, *Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany*, 252-53.
56 Macdonald to Berthier, 27 August 1813, Service historique, Correspondance:
Grand armée, Carton C2-154.
result, the 11th Corps was only supported by the elements of Sebastiani’s 2nd Cavalry Corps, which consisted of just over 5,000 men.

The Allied commanders did not waste time in taking advantage of French vulnerability. The front and flank of the 11th Corps was charged by cavalry. A large group of Cossacks also moved around the flank of the French line. As Allied cavalry began their charge, some of Sebastiani’s cavalry was just reaching the plateau. The French cavalry tried to counter-charge the Allied cavalry, but the disordered horsemen, outnumbered almost four-to-one, were thrown back in disorder.57

The rain prevented any musket fire, so the French had to form square to try and repel the Allied cavalry. The Allies also did this to repel the few French squadrons that were able to attack them. At first, the French squares held off the Allied cavalry. The cavalry could not break the squares and the infantry could not attack the cavalry. However, both sides did have lancers.58 Unfortunately for the French, the bulk of the Allied cavalry were Uhlans, and they did heavy damage to the French squares. Artillery fire was also effective against the massed targets that the compact French infantry squares presented. The infantry combat, without preliminary musket fire, was carried out with bayonets, swords, and muskets used as clubs.59

Into this confusion, elements of the 3rd Corps began to arrive on the battlefield, not on the flank of the enemy, but behind the disorganized cavalry of Sebastiani’s command.60 Two brigades tried to support the cavalry, allowing

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57 Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXII, 82; Labaume, Histoire de la chute de l’empire, II, 327; Marbot, The Memoirs of Baron De Marbot, II, 381-82; Norvins, Portefeuille de mil huit cent trieze, II, 316-17; Petre, Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany, 254-55.
58 Lancers and Uhlans were armed with a 9-foot long lance which could reach past the defending bayonets of the infantry. See John Elting, Swords Around a Throne (New York, 1988), 242 ff 26.
60 Souham to Berthier, 26 aout 1813, Service historique, Correspondance: Grande armée, Carton C²-154.
them to form up, rest, and regain order, but the Allied forces overwhelmed the
French and pushed them back into the ravine over the edge of the plateau. The
Allies captured the artillery park and most of the baggage belonging to the 11th
Corps.61

Once again, the weather became a factor in the battle. The Katzbach
River and the Wüthende-Neisse stream, which had been crossed without
difficulty earlier in the day, were now swollen and the fords were treacherous. As
elements of the 11th Corps and 2nd Cavalry Corps were descending the heights,
Macdonald tried to create a diversion to give them time to make an orderly
withdrawal across the streams. The divisions of generals Joseph Jean Albert
and Étienne Pierre Ricard, of the 3rd Corps were sent to attack the flank of the
Allied army. Unfortunately, these troops, supported by fifteen cannon and
commanded by the chef d’état-major, ran headlong into the corps of General
Dmitri Osten Sacken, which had deployed in a covering position on the Allied
right flank. The two French divisions were forced back with heavy losses, harried
by Cossacks until 2:00 A.M.62

On the French right, General Lauriston advanced, driving the Allies out of
Weinberg and Hennersdorf. Although outnumbered, the 5th Corps held its own
until Allied reinforcements attacked their left flank. By the close of the battle,
Lauriston’s outnumbered troops were forced to retreat back to Hennersdorf which
was evacuated only after the battle had ended.63

The French army retreated during the night. The rain had flooded the
roads, the swollen streams carried away all of the bridges so the various units of
Macdonald’s command were forced to move by different routes: the 11th Corps
retreated on Buntzlau, the 5th Corps moved to Prausnitz, while the 3rd Corps and

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61 Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXII, 82; Labaume, Histoire de la
chute de l’empire, II, 327; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 218;
Marbot, The Memoirs of Baron De Marbot, II, 382; Norvins, Portefeuille de mil
huit cent trieze, II, 316-17.
62 Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXII, 82-83; Labaume, Histoire de la
chute de l’empire, II, 328; Norvins, Portefeuille de mil huit cent trieze, II, 317;
Petre, Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany, 255.
63 Petre, Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany, 255.
2nd Cavalry Corps formed the rear guard. Lauriston was attacked at Goldberg on 27 August, forcing the 5th Corps to abandon eighteen pieces of artillery in their retreat.\textsuperscript{64} That same day, Macdonald called a council of war with his generals and colonels. He informed them that they had done their duty, and that the losses were his fault for advancing into unsuitable terrain in a rainstorm, leaving the Katzbach River in his rear. This action ended arguments among the officers and eased the tensions, which allowed them to focus on regrouping the various elements of their commands.\textsuperscript{65} This was a good example of Macdonald’s ability as a leader of men. Rather than try to lay blame upon any of his subordinate officers for not following his orders precisely, Macdonald was able to direct them on the more pressing issue of reassembling the army.\textsuperscript{66}

French losses in the battle and during the retreat were staggering: 20,000 men killed, wounded, or captured, and 110 wagons, over 200 caissons, and 100 guns were lost. There is no recorded total of Allied losses, but six hours of hand-to-hand fighting must have caused heavy casualties. It is noteworthy that there was a high level of desertions by the Prussian Landwehr during the night. The Battle of the Katzbach was undoubtedly a French defeat, but the Allied army sustained heavy losses as well, perhaps as much as 10,000 men. Blücher did not pass the Katzbach until 1 September 1813.\textsuperscript{67}

Macdonald made several mistakes as commander of the Army of the Bober. First, he should not have advanced until every unit in his army was concentrated within supporting distance of each other. However, beginning his

\textsuperscript{65} Marbot, \textit{The Memoirs of Baron De Marbot}, II, 384-85. Marbot was not the most reliable of witnesses, but considering that he described Macdonald, Marmont and Oudinot together as insufficient to make up for the loss of Marshal Jean Lannes after the Battle of Wagram, his praise of Macdonald can be taken at face value. See Marbot, \textit{The Memoirs of Baron De Marbot}, II, 23.
\textsuperscript{66} Macdonald found the time to spread the blame on some of his subordinates in his \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}.
\textsuperscript{67} Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, XXII, 84-85; Labaume, \textit{Histoire de la chute de l’empire}, II, 329-30; Petre, \textit{Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany}, 256.
movements against Blücher before the 3rd Corps was near enough to support his army was probably the greatest mistake he made in the campaign. Macdonald’s second mistake was detaching troops on his right (Puthod’s division) so they were isolated from the battle and ended up being trapped against the Bober River. Sending two divisions of the 3rd Corps to provide a diversion, when the battle was all but over, could be considered a third mistake. These divisions were weakened for no appreciable gain, and they could have been used later to cover the retreat of the army. A fourth mistake was his failure to determine the exact location of his enemy before he began his movements. If Macdonald had been aware that Blücher was advancing, he would not have chosen the plateau of Jauer as his battlefield.

Macdonald’s forces retreated from the Katzbach, their morale shattered by the brutal hand-to-hand fighting. The loss of morale was so great that Napoleon himself had to travel to the east of Bautzen on 4 September at Hochkirch to rally the men and lead them against the pursuing Allies. Of course, once it was discovered that Napoleon was advancing against them, Blücher once again began to withdraw.

Macdonald was left to face Blücher on 5 September when Napoleon returned to Bautzen. Macdonald slowly fell back from Görlitz to Bautzen over the next two weeks, crossing the Spree River on 11 September, and informing Napoleon on 19 September that he was being pursued by the Allies there. Napoleon began a period of making and altering plans to attack the Allies. He

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68 Petre believed that Macdonald should not have been on the offensive at all. However, Napoleon gave Macdonald clear instructions to attack the Allied army, push it past Jauer, and then fall back behind the Bober in a defensive posture. Napoleon wanted to make sure that Blücher did not send troops to reinforce Berlin or slip past Macdonald and threaten his own communications.
69 Petre mentions that a second division was detached along with Puthod, but there is no other mention of this division.
70 Rapport des operations du 11e corps depuis le 26 aout jusqu’au 31 du meme mois. Service historique, Correspondance: Grande armée, Carton C2-154; Petre, Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany, 269-70.
71 Napoleon to Berthier, 11 September 1813, Correspondance de Napoleon Ier, No. 20544, XXVI, 220-21; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXII, 107.
would advance in one direction, only to find that the enemy would withdraw from him, while advancing elsewhere. This happened when Napoleon advanced with Macdonald on 22 September. Napoleon used 3rd and 11th Corps to push Blücher back to Bautzen. Napoleon then decided to withdraw behind the Elbe River, so Macdonald was ordered to retire to cover Dresden. Macdonald arrived at Weissig, five miles from Dresden, on 25 September.\footnote{Napoleon to Berthier, 22, 25 September 1813, \textit{Correspondance de Napoleon Ier}, No. 20609, XXVI, 265-66, No 20625, XXVI, 282; Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 227; Petre, \textit{Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany}, 290-93.}

\textbf{WACHAU AND LEIPZIG}

The theater of war shifted across Saxony in the direction of Leipzig, and Macdonald marched his corps westward. By 9 October, he was at Mockrehna.\footnote{Napoleon to Berthier, 9 October 1813, \textit{Correspondance de Napoleon Ier}, No. 20729, XXVI, 363; Petre, \textit{Napoleon's Last Campaign in Germany}, 309.} As Napoleon concentrated his forces around Leipzig, Macdonald marched to Taucha. On 16 October, Napoleon, taking the central position at Leipzig, screened the forces of Blücher off to the north with Marshal Marmont while he attempted to strike a decisive blow against the Army of Bohemia, commanded by Field Marshal Schwarzenberg, located to the south. Schwarzenberg attacked Napoleon at 9:00 A.M. During the early hours of the battle, Napoleon ordered Macdonald to deploy between Holzhausen and Liebertwolkwitz, with Sebastiani’s cavalry to his left, in preparation for an attack on the Allied right flank. This gave him just over 21,000 men under his command.\footnote{George Nafziger, \textit{Napoleon at Leipzig}, (Chicago, 1996), 101.} At 11:00 A.M., this attack began, with Macdonald personally accompanying Charpentier’s division in an assault on the Kolmberg heights. This powerful attack almost captured an Austrian general, Count Johann Klenau, whose horse was killed.\footnote{Napoleon to Berthier 15 October 1813, Bulletin, 16 October 1813, \textit{Correspondance de Napoleon Ier}, No. 20811, XXVI, 423; No. 20815, XXVI, 426-29; Berthier to Macdonald, 15 Octobre 1813, Service historique, Correspondance: Grande armée, Carton C²-157; Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, XXII, 201.
Macdonald pressed his attack at Wachau, moving from Charpentier’s division to join the division of General François Ledru. At 4:00 P.M., he led an assault on Seifertshain, while his other divisions attacked Gross Pösna and the Nieder Holz, to the rear of the Allied position. When darkness fell, Macdonald’s

Fig. 46. Battle of Wachau, 16 October 1813.

troops still held the Kolmberg heights, Fuchshain, Seifertshain, and the Nieder Holz. \(^{76}\) Despite Macdonald’s efforts to the southeast, other attacks were not so successful and the battle was a draw.

Macdonald performed well during this battle, once again completing the tasks assigned to him by Napoleon very effectively. Again, he led from the front, with the divisions of both Charpentier and Ledru. This was particularly effective since his troops were not well-trained forces, but were much like the troops in the early years of the Revolution.

There was no combat the day after the Battle of Wachau, due to the weather, the lack of ammunition, and the need to redeploy the army. Napoleon decided to shorten his lines as the Allies pressed him from the north, east, and south. At 2:00 A.M., Macdonald moved his men from their bivouac to take positions at Zuckelhausen, Holzhausen, and in reserve behind these posts. The appearance of some Cossacks threatened his baggage train, but otherwise, the movement occurred without problems. His new position brought him in line with the troops led by General Reynier.\(^{77}\)

On 18 October, the Allies began their attack in the morning, and Macdonald’s troops came under artillery fire as early as 10:00 A.M. By 1:00 P.M, General Charpentier was forced to withdraw from Holzhausen, or be overwhelmed by superior numbers. This movement caused General of division Jean Marchand to withdraw from Zuckelhausen to keep the line intact. The 11\(^{th}\) Corps now held the line between Zweinaundorf and Paunsdorf, in the Leipzig suburbs. The Allies began to bombard the French line once again. Macdonald ordered his men to shelter in ravines and other cover until the enemy advanced.

\(^{76}\) Macdonald to Napoleon, 16 October 1813, Service historique, Correspondance: Carton C\(^{2}\)-158; Beauvais de Preau, \emph{Victoires, conquêtes}, XXII, 130-35; Petre, \emph{Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany}, 338.

\(^{77}\) Berthier to Macdonald, 17 October 1813, Service historique, Correspondance: Carton C\(^{2}\)-158; Beauvais de Preau, \emph{Victoires, conquêtes}, XXII, 137; Petre, \emph{Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany}, 354, 359.
It was during this time that Macdonald witnessed the defection of the Saxon contingent of General Reynier’s corps.\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{78} Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 228-29; Petre, \textit{Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany}, 360.
Fortunately for Macdonald, the Allied army did not advance until the forces of Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, the former Marshal and Crown Prince of Sweden, arrived on the battlefield at 5:00 P.M. Zweinaundorf was taken by the Allies, recaptured by Macdonald’s men, and finally claimed by General Klenau. Macdonald held on to the other portions of his line, pulling back to the suburbs of Leipzig itself at the last moment, as darkness ended the fighting.  

The next day, Macdonald’s troops were part of the rear guard designated by Napoleon to hold the Allies at bay while the remainder of the army retreated across the Elster River. Unfortunately, the single bridge that crossed the river was prematurely destroyed by a nervous soldier, trapping Macdonald and his troops on the east side of the river. Macdonald was able to cross two of the smaller arms of the river without much problem. When he reached the banks of the main portion of the river, he found that an engineer officer had cut down two trees, one on each side of the river, and tried to tie them together with some planking to make a walkway. This makeshift bridge had fallen apart prior to Macdonald’s arrival, and only the two trees were left for anyone to attempt to cross there. Macdonald decided to attempt to cross despite the danger. He was able to make it most of the way across before falling into the river. Fortunately, he was able to stand up in the river at that point, and was helped up the steep, slippery bank by some soldiers. Most of the troops from his corps were trapped and captured on the east side of the river.

Macdonald rejoined the remnants of his corps, which totaled less than a thousand men, and began his march with the rest of the Grande Armée to the Rhine River. Commenting on the demoralization and lack of organization in this retreat, he spent at least two hours trying to organize part of the retreat over the Saale River, but gave it up as hopeless. The retreat lasted for ten days, with

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79 Petre, *Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany*, 366.
82 Ibid., 238-39.
several Allied attacks. Macdonald was not involved in these attacks since he was with the advance guard, leading the army back toward the Rhine River. On 30 October, the French army encountered a combined Austro-Bavarian army of 30,000 men, led by Count Wrede, formed up outside the town of Hanau. Wrede, who thought Napoleon was further north and only expected to encounter a flanking portion of the French army, expected little resistance.\footnote{Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, XXII, 153-54; Petre, \textit{Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany}, 388-89.}

Napoleon, observing the disposition of the Allied force barring his road to France, commented that “he had been able to make Wrede a count, but not a general.”\footnote{Petre, \textit{Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany}, 389-90.} The Allied army was divided by a stream that could only be crossed by a single bridge, effectively isolating each wing from the other. Although Napoleon only had about 17,000 men available at that time, he decided to attack. Macdonald was ordered to attack the Allied left at 7:00 A.M. He moved forward General Charpentier with 3,000 skirmishers, part of the Young Guard, General Sebastiani’s cavalry, and the heavy cavalry of the Guard.\footnote{Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, XXII, 155.} Macdonald quickly threw back six battalions of Bavarian troops in great disorder. By noon, Macdonald, supporting Marshal Victor’s troops, had cleared most of the Allied forces from the Hanau woods. General Antoine Drouot, Napoleon’s artillery officer, was able to form a battery of fifty guns in the woods opposite Wrede’s left and by 3:00 P.M. the Allied artillery was silenced. This artillery bombardment, combined with the attack of the French cavalry, forced the Allied troops to retreat in great disorder.\footnote{Ibid., XXII, 155-56; Petre, \textit{Napoleon’s Last Campaign in Germany}, 390-91.}

Napoleon faced no more opposition on his way to France, and the French army reached the Rhine River on 2 November. Macdonald was ordered to give command of the 11\textsuperscript{th} Corps to General Charpentier, travel to Cologne, and take
command of the frontier defense from the Moselle River to Zwolle.\textsuperscript{87} This marked the end of the 1813 campaign.

Early in the campaign, Macdonald performed effectively as a corps commander. At Lützen, he quickly marched his corps from the Leipzig road to the battlefield, and drew off the Allied reserves, which allowed Napoleon to launch the Imperial Guard in the crucial assault of the battle. At Bautzen,

\textsuperscript{87} Correspondance de Napoleon Ier, No. 20845, Napoleon to Berthier, 1 November 1813.
Macdonald led his corps for two days, making an attack that had the Allies believing that Napoleon was trying to cut them off from Bohemia. Only Ney’s inept handling of the flanking force allowed the Allied army to escape. Macdonald’s efficient handling of his corps prior to the Armistice of Plasswitz pleased Napoleon, who rewarded Macdonald with the command of the Army of the Bober. This turned out to be a mistake. Macdonald showed serious flaws as an independent commander at the Battle of the Katzbach. Reverting back to a divisional commander’s psyche, Macdonald once again proved his abilities at the Battle of Wachau, almost turning the Allied right flank. His actions during the retreat to the Rhine show that he was still a first rate tactical commander. He led his troops at the Battle of Hanau effectively, and again demonstrated the qualities that led Napoleon to name him a marshal of the Empire. Yet, like many of his fellow marshals he was unable to make the final transition from a corps commander to an independent army commander.
CHAPTER 11

LA PATRIE EN DANGER

Macdonald arrived at Mayence on 3 November, ready to assume the
defense of the Lower Rhine River, with a frontier of 300 kilometers. For this task,
he was given command of the 11th Corps, which was based at Bingen, and the
2nd Cavalry Corps, which occupied Coblenz. 1 Fortunately for the French, the
Allies did not immediately try to cross the Rhine River. Consequently, Napoleon
had an opportunity to rebuild his depleted forces. Macdonald moved to Cologne
on 7 November to assume command of his district. The task was daunting since
the Allies had approximately 245,000 men immediately available for the invasion
of France, while Napoleon barely had 60,000 tired soldiers available after the
retreat from Leipzig. 2

Macdonald spent six weeks organizing the defense of the Lower Rhine.
He received troops sent to him from the depots, and placed them in garrisons at
Coblentz, Cologne, Nimègue, and Dewinter as well as reinforcing the 11th
Corps. 3 However, even with these reinforcements, Macdonald still lacked the
necessary numbers of troops to properly defend the frontier. He had to withdraw
slowly to the left bank of the Rhine River as the Allies advanced into his area on

1 Napoleon to Clarke, 11 November 1813, Correspondance de Napoleon Ier, No.
20982, XXVI, 577; Cantonnements de l’armée, 2 November 1813, Service
historique, Correspondance: Grande armée, Carton C2-159; Jean Regnault, Le
maréchal Macdonald et la defense du bas-Rhin (Nancy, 1931), 14.
2 Henry Houssaye, 1814 (Paris, 1937), 60; F. Loraine Petre, Napoleon at Bay
3 Berthier to Macdonald, 7 November 1813, Service historique, Correspondance:
Grande armée, Carton C2-160; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald,
255.
12 November. Napoleon believed that the Allies were exhausted, and would need several months before they attempted to continue the campaign. He was mistaken; Blücher crossed the Rhine River on 1 January 1814. The campaign for France had begun.

At the beginning of the campaign, Macdonald was threatened on three sides: From the north by the Prussian General Friedrich von Bülow, from the northeast by Russian Field Marshal Ferdinand Winzingerode, and from the southeast by the Russian General Saint-Priest. Due to the lack of troops, Macdonald could not contest the Allied crossing of the Rhine River, which took place in his sector on 13 January. He consolidated his troops, and began a retrograde movement to the southwest, which allowed him to keep ahead of the various forces trying to overtake him. Napoleon ordered Macdonald to remain mobile, and to threaten the right flank of Field Marshal Blücher’s Army of Silesia. His force, made up of the 5th and 11th Corps, and the 2nd and 3rd Cavalry Corps, consisted of approximately 10,000 men and 40 guns. Because of his comparative weakness, Macdonald could not make a stand against either of the opposing forces, so he was ordered to retire through Liège to Châlons-sur-Marne, and try to defend the latter.

Macdonald was near Liège when Napoleon arrived at Châlons-sur-Marne on 26 January. This was too far away for him to take part in the major battles of Brienne and La Rothière. He was not given any details about the French defeat at La Rothière, but he was ordered to protect Vitry, and to try and keep the land between the Aube and Marne rivers open. On 31 January, Napoleon also

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5 Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, XXIII, 35.
6 Napoleon to Macdonald, 10 January 1814, *Correspondance de Napoleon Ier*, No. 21083, XXVII, 26-27.
warned Macdonald that the corps of General von Yorck was at Bar-sur-Aube, where he was in a position to threaten Vitry, St. Dizier, and Châlons-sur-Marne.\(^8\)

On 2 February, Macdonald became the target of the Army of Silesia, when Blücher decided to try and destroy his force on the Prussian march towards Paris. Macdonald, whose 10,000 men were unable to face even one corps from the Army of Silesia, had to retreat continuously before nearly 60,000 men.

\(^8\) Napoleon to Berthier, 31 January 1814, *Correspondance de Napoleon ier*, No. 21154, XXVII, 106-07, No. 21161, XXVII, 110-11.
Napoleon took advantage of Blücher’s focus on Macdonald, combined with the slow pace of General Schwarzenberg, to make an assault upon the left flank of the Army of Silesia. Macdonald was forced out of Châlons-sur-Marne on 5 February by the corps of General von Yorck. The local inhabitants negotiated a truce between Macdonald and the Prussians which allowed the French to withdraw unmolested and save the town from more destruction.\(^9\) Despite constant skirmishing, Macdonald was able to keep ahead of the Allied forces, crossing the Marne at Chateau-Thierry, although he was almost captured while eating breakfast outside of Epernay.\(^10\) The pursuit of Macdonald caused the Army of Silesia to become scattered over an area of approximately 44 miles. This allowed Napoleon to launch an assault on the flank of the Allied army with local superiority in numbers.

On 9 February, Macdonald crossed the Marne again at La Ferte-sous-Jouarre, desperately defending against an attack by Allied forces. That evening, Napoleon arrived in the area, with the intention of attacking Blücher’s forces the next day. Macdonald informed Napoleon that von Yorck was near Epernay with 15,000 men.\(^11\) In quick succession, Napoleon won a series of brilliant victories over the Army of Silesia at the battles of Champaubert, Montmirail, Chateau-Thierry, and Vauchamps on 10-14 February, inflicting over 25,000 casualties on the Allies. The Emperor wanted Macdonald to go on the offensive and attack the forces in front of him after his victory at Champaubert, but Macdonald had destroyed the bridges at La Ferte and Trilport on his withdrawal to Meaux.\(^12\) This meant that he was unable to comply with Napoleon’s orders. While at Meaux,

\(^9\) Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, XXIII, 85-86.
\(^11\) Macdonald to Berthier, 9 February 1814, Archives Nationales, AF IV, Carton 1669\(^B\), dossier 3.
\(^12\) Macdonald stated in his *Recollections of Marshal Macdonald* that the destruction of the bridge at Trilport was accidental. See Macdonald, *Recollections of Marshal Macdonald*, 267.
Fig. 50. Defense of France, 7 February 1814.
Macdonald was reinforced by 8,000 National Guard and 2,000 conscripts. With over 20,000 men, Macdonald was in a position to assist Napoleon’s efforts against the Army of Silesia. Unfortunately, due to the destruction of the bridges, Macdonald was unable to reach Chateau-Thierry in time to cut off the Army of Silesia after the French victory at Montmirail. This would have cut off the Allied retreat across the Marne.

Fig. 51. Defense of France, 24 February 1814.

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13 Macdonald to Berthier, 10 February 1814, Archives Nationales, AF IV, Carton 1669, dossier 4; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXIII, 87; Petre, Napoleon at Bay, 61-63.
When Napoleon received news that Schwarzenberg’s Army of Bohemia was advancing to the south, he ordered Macdonald to move his forces to Montereau to reinforce Marshals Oudinot and Victor.\textsuperscript{14} He marched to the rendezvous and took a position at Solers.\textsuperscript{15} On 13 February, Macdonald became ill and his corps was placed under the temporary commanded of General Sebastiani. Macdonald returned to command in time for the Battle of Mormant. He took a good number of prisoners during the pursuit, but was unable to reach Bray in time to cut off the retreat of Prince Eugen of Wurttemburg on 18 February; he found the bridges destroyed, so he was unable to pursue the enemy any further.\textsuperscript{16} Macdonald was opposed by General Wrede on the opposite side of the Seine River at Bray. Once this Allied force retreated on 20 February, Macdonald was able to partially restore the bridge, and cross the river.\textsuperscript{17}

By 24 February, Napoleon decided to march north to deal with the Army of Silesia once again. Macdonald was instructed to keep the Army of Bohemia contained behind the Aube River. He moved to Bar-sur-Aube where, along with Marshal Oudinot, he was to push the Allies back to Vendoeuvre and Bar-sur-Seine. Macdonald’s forces included the 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 7\textsuperscript{th}, and 11\textsuperscript{th} Corps along with approximately two cavalry corps, totaling about 40,000 men.\textsuperscript{18} In an effort to convince the Allied commanders that Napoleon was still in the area, the French

\textsuperscript{14} Dispositions Générales, 13 February 1814, \textit{Correspondance de Napoleon Ier}, No. 21244, XXVII, 187; Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, XXIII, 107.
\textsuperscript{15} Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, XXIII, 109.
\textsuperscript{16} Napoleon to Berthier, 17 February 1814, \textit{Correspondance de Napoleon Ier}, No. 21280, XXVII, 211-12; Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, XXIII, 114, 120; Agathon Fain, \textit{Souvenirs de la campagne de France} (Paris, 1914), 58; Houssaye, 1814, 71-72;
\textsuperscript{17} Napoleon to Berthier, 20 February 1814, \textit{Correspondance de Napoleon Ier}, No. 21321, XXVII, 245; Petre, \textit{Napoleon at Bay}, 93.
\textsuperscript{18} Napoleon to Berthier, 21, 24 February 1814, \textit{Correspondance de Napoleon Ier}, No. 21330, XXVII, 253; No. 21361, XXVII, 284; Beauvais de Preau, \textit{Victoires, conquêtes}, XXIII, 129; Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 269; Fain, \textit{Campaign de France}, 104; Houssaye, 1814, 115; Petre, \textit{Napoleon at Bay}, 96.
soldiers were ordered to shout “Vive l’Empereur” as if he was making an inspection of the troops.¹⁹

Fig. 52. Defense of France, 27 February 1814.

Before Macdonald could move to join with the rest of his forces, Marshal Oudinot, commander of the 7th Corps, placed his troops in a vulnerable position. The Allied army attacked him piecemeal on 27 February, inflicting 3,500 casualties and forcing the marshal to retreat. This movement forced Macdonald to withdraw his forces or be outflanked by the Allies. Consequently, the Army of Bohemia successfully crossed the Aube River, and began their pursuit.

Macdonald, who withdrew as slowly as possible, defending every defensible position until he was attacked at Bar-sur-Seine by Eugen of Wurttemberg on 2 March. Macdonald destroyed the bridges over the Ource and Seine rivers, and

¹⁹ Houssaye, 1814, 115.
inflicted five times the casualties that he sustained, but was still forced to retreat. He arrived at Troyes on 3 March, finally uniting with the rest of his command.  

On 3 March, Macdonald once again became ill so his command was placed under Marshal Oudinot. He was still ill when the Allies began to probe his lines on 6 March. Fortunately, Field Marshal Schwarzenberg was in no hurry to launch a major assault, concerned over Napoleon’s actions. This allowed the French a much-needed respite. The Allies did not press their attack until 14 March, when Bray was bombarded by General Wrede, and Wittgenstein’s 6th Corps crossed the Seine River and marched towards Villenauxe in an effort to turn Macdonald’s right flank. This advance continued for two days, forcing Macdonald to withdraw to Provins. The news of Napoleon’s defeat of an Allied corps at Rheims on 13 March served to halt the advance of the Army of Bohemia on 17 March, and allowed Macdonald to follow the retreating Allies back towards Troyes and Arcis-sur-Aube.  

Macdonald maneuvered on the left flank of the Army of Bohemia while Napoleon approached the right flank. This caused great concern at Allied headquarters. Napoleon expected Schwarzenberg to retreat with the army so he could link up with Macdonald, gather up the garrisons in the frontier fortresses, and then drive the Army of Bohemia across the Rhine River, followed by an attack on the Army of Silesia. Unfortunately for the French, Schwarzenberg decided to turn and face Napoleon with a vastly superior force; this resulted in the Battle of Arcis-sur-Aube on 20-21 March. Although Napoleon sent urgent orders to Macdonald to march with all speed, he did not arrive in the vicinity of the battle until 9:00 P.M. on 21 March.

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20 Report from Macdonald to Napoleon, 2 March 1814, Archives Nationales, AF IV, Carton 1669, dossier 5; Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXIII, 159-61, 164-65; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 269-70; Petre, Napoleon at Bay, 157-58.  
21 Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXIII, 169-72; Petre, Napoleon at Bay, 158-60.  
22 Beauvais de Preau, Victoires, conquêtes, XXIII, 177-79; Houssaye, 1814, 303-18; Petre, Napoleon at Bay, 167-77.
Macdonald’s troops acted as the rear guard for Napoleon as he withdrew from the vicinity of Arcis-sur-Aube. Macdonald kept the Allies from crossing the
Aube at Arcis the entire day of 22 March, forcing them to detour around him.\(^{23}\) That evening, Macdonald was ordered to retreat towards Vitry. Due to a mistake on the part of General of division Francois Amey, Macdonald’s artillery park was attacked and 15 guns, along with prisoners, were captured by cavalry from the Russian Imperial Guard.\(^{24}\)

Macdonald’s troops were followed by the Allies, and there was some skirmishing between the two forces, but for all intents and purposes, his role in the combat was over. Once the Allied army marched on Paris, which began on 25 March, there was little fighting left. Macdonald was ordered to march to Vitry on 27 March.\(^{25}\) Napoleon arrived at the Palace of Fontainebleau on 31 March. Macdonald arrived, with his three corps, on 4 April. He found a conference in progress between Napoleon and several of his subordinates, including Hughes Bernard Maret, the Duke of Bassano, Marshals Ney, Berthier, and François Lefebvre, in addition to several generals. The subject of this meeting started out contemplating an advance on Paris, but ended with his subordinates convincing Napoleon to abdicate his position as Emperor.\(^{26}\)

The Emperor wanted to march on Paris, but Macdonald and the others convinced Napoleon that the army was tired, and they did not want Paris damaged like Moscow. After the marshals spoke of the state of the army, and Macdonald gave him a copy of a letter sent to the marshals from General Beurnonville, Napoleon agreed to abdicate in favor of his son, with Marie-Louise as Regent.\(^{27}\)

\(^{23}\) Petre, *Napoleon at Bay*, 179-80.
\(^{24}\) Beauvais de Preau, *Victoires, conquêtes*, XXIII, 183-84; Armand Caulaincourt, *No Peace with Napoleon* (New York, 1936), 17; Petre, *Napoleon at Bay*, 181.
\(^{25}\) Napoleon to Berthier, 27 March 1814, *Correspondance de Napoleon Ier*, No. 21544, XXVII, 409.
\(^{27}\) Ibid., 289-91; Caulaincourt, *No Peace with Napoleon*, 133; Fain, *Campaign de France*, 214-15.
Once this was decided, Napoleon appointed three men as his Commissioners to deal with the Allies. Initially, Marshals Ney, Marmont, and General Caulaincourt were named, but after a moment’s reflection, he withdrew Marmont’s name, and chose Macdonald as the third member of the delegation. Napoleon commented to Caulaincourt, “I might give you the Duke of Tarente in place of the Duke of Ragusa (Marmont). Macdonald does not like me, but he is a man of his word, of high principles, and he can be relied upon…” After an interview with Macdonald, this decision was reaffirmed.

Macdonald rode in Caulaincourt’s carriage to Essonnes, where they met Marshal Marmont, who was surprised to see them. When they explained their mission, Marmont became very nervous. He finally explained that he had been in communication with the Allies with the expressed intent of turning his corps over to them in exchange for the promise of safety for Napoleon. The three Commissioners were shocked to hear this, and were assured by Marmont that he had made no binding agreement. After further discussion, it was agreed that he would accompany the other three on their mission.

Macdonald and Caulaincourt were both concerned by the unexpected turn of events. The strength of their effort to establish a Regency for Napoleon’s son was supported by the French army. If Marmont allowed his corps to be surrendered to the Allies, this would completely negate the position of Napoleon’s Commissioners. When the four men were passed through the Allied lines, they halted at Chevilly, where the Allied army’s advance guard headquarters was located. While there, Macdonald spoke with Prince Eugen of Wurttemberg who informed him that Marmont had actually completed his arrangement with the Allies. Macdonald was furious, and after informing

28 Caulaincourt, No Peace with Napoleon, 138.
29 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 293; Caulaincourt, No Peace with Napoleon, 142-47. Marmont wrote that the three representatives of Napoleon “demanded” that he accompany them to Paris. See Auguste Marmont, Mémoires du maréchal Marmont, duc de Raguse, (Paris, 1857), VI, 261.
Caulaincourt and Ney of his discovery, he confronted Marmont, who agreed to cancel his agreement. 30

The four men entered Paris, and were escorted to a 3:00 A.M. meeting with Tsar Alexander I. 31 The Russian Emperor started the meeting by flattering the men and the French army. Marshal Ney began the French reply, followed by Macdonald and Caulaincourt. The two-hour meeting ended with Alexander asking the Commissioners to call on him at noon, allowing him to confer with his Allies on the subject of the abdication and Regency. When they left the Tsar, the three marshals and Caulaincourt entered a room full of members of the “Provisional Government.” Macdonald halted only long enough to have strong words for his old friends, generals Beurnonville and Dupont. 32 Thereafter, Macdonald and his companions retired for the evening.

The three Commissioners met at Marshal Ney’s house for breakfast at 11:30 A.M. While there, Marmont informed them that his divisional generals had led his corps through the Allied lines. It was obvious the foundation of the Commissioners’ arguments had been undermined. The three men hurried to their meeting with Alexander, hoping to have the Regency approved before word of the defection of Marmont’s corps reached him. Unfortunately, this did not happen, and the Allies refused to consider the matter further. It was at this time that the island of Elba was mentioned as a possible place of exile for Napoleon. Macdonald and his comrades were able to negotiate a 48-hour armistice in order to return to Fontainebleau and inform Napoleon of the decision. 33

The Commissioners informed Napoleon of the Allies refusal to consider a Regency. After much discussion, Napoleon agreed to an unconditional abdication. On 6 April, Macdonald was once again sent to Paris, along with Ney

30 Caulaincourt, No Peace with Napoleon, 152-54.
32 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 300-03; Caulaincourt, No Peace with Napoleon, 155-57; Bourrienne, Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte, III, 434-35.
33 Caulaincourt, No Peace with Napoleon, 168-76; Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 303-08.
and Caulaincourt, to act as Napoleon’s Commissioner.\textsuperscript{34} The abdication was accepted by Alexander, with several small wording changes, the next day. Macdonald worked with Schwarzenberg on the line of demarcation for the armistice. Fortunately for Napoleon, Macdonald noticed that the line drawn by the Austrians would have forced Napoleon to move from Fontainebleau; this was changed after he objected.\textsuperscript{35}

The Provisional Government named Louis XVIII the King of France on 5 April. Two days later, various officers, including marshals Oudinot, Jourdan, Kellermann, and Lefebvre, began to send in their declarations of allegiance to the new sovereign. Macdonald refused to do so, since he was still acting as the representative of Napoleon.\textsuperscript{36}

Once the final copy of the abdication was signed by the Allied representatives on 12 April, Macdonald and Caulaincourt returned to Fontainebleau with the document. Marshal Ney remained in Paris, as he had already declared his service to Louis XVIII. The next day, Macdonald had his final interview with Napoleon. At 9:00 A.M., he was ushered into the Imperial presence. Napoleon looked very ill, and Macdonald asked him if he was not well. Napoleon replied that he had been ill most of the night.\textsuperscript{37} The Emperor told Macdonald that he was touched and grateful for his service. He admitted that he was prejudiced against him, and that he was sorry he had not rewarded him as well as he might. As a token of his appreciation, Napoleon gave Macdonald the sword presented to him by Murad Bey, during his Egyptian Campaign. He accepted the gift, and then said his final good-bye to Napoleon.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{34} Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 309-14; Caulaincourt, \textit{No Peace with Napoleon}, 177-96.


\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 323-26; Caulaincourt, \textit{No Peace with Napoleon}, 213-14.

\textsuperscript{37} There is a claim that Napoleon tried to commit suicide the night before by taking poison that he had carried with him since the 1812 campaign. If he did, the poison had lost its potency, so it only made him very sick.

\textsuperscript{38} Macdonald, \textit{Recollections of Marshal Macdonald}, 327-29.
Macdonald performed his duties during the 1814 campaign with his usual skill, marching and evading superior enemy forces while Napoleon tried to defend France. Hopelessly outnumbered, he could not greatly affect the outcome of the campaign. As a result, he saw limited combat. When Napoleon decided to abdicate, he had enough respect for Macdonald’s integrity to name him as one of the three representatives to negotiate with the Allies. Macdonald performed this task judicially with honor, putting forth his best efforts to secure a Regency for Napoleon’s son, the King of Rome. When this failed, he continued to act as the Emperor’s representative even as many officers, politicians, and other Marshals rapidly swore their allegiance to the incoming Bourbon regime. Macdonald continued to fulfill his duty to Napoleon until the abdication was complete, and only then did he swear an oath to the new government.
CHAPTER 12

CONCLUSION

After Napoleon signed the articles of abdication and left for Elba, Macdonald offered his allegiance to the Bourbons. He was welcomed to the new regime with titles and position by Louis XVIII who made him a Peer of the Realm on 4 June 1814. Upon Napoleon’s return to France in March 1815, he accompanied the Count of Artois to Lyon. When the troops sent to attack Napoleon joined him instead, Macdonald returned to Paris. He escorted Louis XVIII to the Belgian border, but he refused to leave France. He returned to Paris. Although Napoleon tried to recruit him, Macdonald refused to accept a command. As he was preparing to retire to his estates, he had an attack of the gout, which forced him to remain in Paris. After the disastrous Waterloo campaign, Macdonald was appointed the commander of the Army of the North, with orders to disband it. On 2 July 1815, he was named the Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honor, a post that he held until 23 August 1831. He was appointed to the Privy Council on 19 September 1815. He served the Bourbons and in 1831 he retired from service after Louis Philippe had become King of France. During the last years of his life, Macdonald spent his time at his estates near Bourges. He died on 25 September 1840; he was described as “one of our most illustrious soldiers” by Le Moniteur Universel. His body was placed at the hotel des Invalides shortly before Napoleon’s body was returned to France from St. Helena. He was laid to rest at Pere Lachaise cemetery.

39 Macdonald, Recollections of Marshal Macdonald, 346.
40 Le Moniteur, 27 September 1840.
Macdonald was an excellent example of a soldier who took advantage of the fluid political situation during the French Revolution to rise to the upper echelons of French society. He learned his trade in the Armée du Nord, where many of the early Revolutionary battles were fought. As an aide-de-camp to generals Beurnonville and Dumouriez, he gained first hand experience on how an army was commanded. He was soon promoted to the rank of colonel, and he began his career in leading men.

Macdonald's performance as a regimental colonel and as a general of brigade was marked by success. He only spent five and a half months as a colonel before he was promoted. Part of this was due to attrition: the war caused casualties, and the Representatives on Mission were responsible for the execution of many French generals. As a general of brigade, Macdonald fought at Tourcoing, Werwicq, Courtrai, and Hooglède, leading his men and learning valuable lessons that helped him in his career. He was a general of brigade for fifteen months serving in General Souham’s division of the Armée du Nord before his promotion to general of division.

Macdonald reached the rank of general of division as the Armée du Nord was ending its existence. In this capacity, he was instrumental in the conquest of Holland and the surrender of Bois-le-Duc on 22 September 1794. Once this conquest was complete, Macdonald became a military administrator, governing territory in the northern section of Holland. He did not engage in any more fighting until he was transferred to Italy in 1798.

As the temporary commander of the Army of Rome and the military governor of the city, Macdonald matured as an administrator. He dealt with many civil and military matters, and saw the impact of politics on the army. He was not interested in the political aspects of his position, preferring to concentrate on the military. This made him a perfect administrator, as far as the politicians were concerned, because Macdonald allowed them free reign in their "requisitioning" for the Directory government as long as the army’s needs were met. Macdonald fell somewhere in between the corrupt civilians who were
looting these territories, and General Championnet, who tried to reform the government in his brief time in the area.

Macdonald’s relationship with Championnet was strained either due to a personality conflict, or poor communication. The rupture between these two generals threatened the success of their invasion of Naples. Although Macdonald performed well militarily, winning the battle of Civita Castellana, he resigned his position as commander of the 1st French division of the Army of Italy rather than serve under Championnet. Before he received another assignment, Macdonald was appointed commander of the newly named Army of Naples, in place of Championnet, who was recalled to Paris.

Macdonald’s commands in Rome and Naples provided him with experience in another aspect of military administration -- fighting insurrections. The revolts in the Circeo department of the Roman Republic and in the Parthenopian Republic were good training grounds for his later service in Spain. In each of these areas, Macdonald tried to use common sense and humanity to calm the areas, with varying degrees of success. He was interrupted in these efforts in the Naples area with the outbreak of the War of the Second Coalition.

When Field Marshal Suvarov defeated the French Army of Italy, Macdonald quickly concentrated his troops and marched north. He communicated with General Moreau, creating a plan to defeat the Allied army. Unfortunately, Macdonald’s inexperience as a commander-in-chief led to major problems. His plans failed to achieve superiority at the point of battle (mass). This, along with the hesitation of General Moreau doomed the French at the Battle of the Trebbia and Tidone. After this defeat, a severely wounded Macdonald returned to France to recuperate.

Macdonald’s return to France roughly coincided with Napoleon’s return from Egypt. Aware of the corruption and incapacity of the Directory government, Macdonald threw his support behind Napoleon during the Coup of 18 brumaire. As a reward, he was given command of the Army of the Grisons, which made an extraordinary winter march through the Alps to protect the flanks of the armies of Italy and the Rhine, outflanking the Austrians opposing General Brune.
At this point in his career, Macdonald was one of the senior generals in the French army, well-respected by the soldiers and the general population. Unfortunately, several circumstances forced him into a temporary retirement that lasted for five years. He was ordered to go to Denmark for a diplomatic mission that was doomed to fail before he departed France. When he realized this, he demanded his recall to France. Combined with this, he had an ill-advised affair with Pauline Bonaparte, Napoleon’s sister. The third factor was Macdonald’s friendship with General Moreau, whom Napoleon viewed as both a rival and a conspirator in the Cadoudal Plot in 1804. Although he was implicated by association with Moreau during the trial, nothing was proven, and he was allowed to retire to his estates. It was not until 1809 that Macdonald was recalled to active service.

The 1809 campaign can be considered perfect as far as Macdonald’s conduct was concerned. Every operation that he undertook was successful, including his independent command when he detached from the Army of Italy. His determined and courageous fighting at the Battle of Wagram, under the eyes of the Emperor, earned him his Marshal’s baton and the title of duc de Tarante. He did not have much time to enjoy his new rank and status. In April 1810 he was made governor of Catalonia and commander of the 7th Corps.

Macdonald’s service in Spain was satisfactory but not brilliant; of course no French Marshal reaped glory from their service in Iberia except perhaps Suchet. While he did not gain major military achievements, he was the first French administrator who tried to use common sense, moderation, and even-handed justice in the province. He was instrumental in the siege of Tortosa, covering the forces of General Suchet. His rapid response to the capture of the fortress of Figueras ensured that a large number of Spanish guerrillas were bottled up so they could not affect his operations. He ended his service in Spain with the recapture of the fortress.

Macdonald’s service in Russia was as peripheral as his location. Located on the extreme northern flank of the Grand Army, he saw very little fighting. It was unfortunate for him that his contingent was mostly Prussian, and these
unenthusiastic troops betrayed the French cause at Taurrogen. Macdonald brought the rest of his command safely back into Poland before he returned to France to prepare for the 1813 campaign.

Macdonald proved that he continued to be a competent corps commander during the first part of the 1813 campaign. His actions at Lützen and Bautzen were all that Napoleon could require from his subordinates. Macdonald’s defeat at the battle of the Katzback reinforced that he was, at the very least, an unfortunate commander who had not learned his lesson concerning mutually supporting columns. At Wachau, Leipzig, and Hanau, Macdonald again served competently as a corps commander, finally crossing the Rhine River in December 1813.

During the 1814 campaign, Macdonald did not experience much combat since he was usually outnumbered by the Allied forces. Napoleon still depended on him, giving him independent commands when necessary. With the capture of Paris, Macdonald was chosen to represent Napoleon’s interests while negotiating his abdication. He performed this duty with honor; he only made his accommodations with the Bourbons after all treaties were signed and approved by both participants.

Macdonald’s legacy is his honesty, integrity, and loyalty. Throughout his career, he was willing to express his views, even though he might have been executed during the Revolution. His candor was one factor in his virtual exile from 1804-09. Once he regained his position, he continued to speak his mind. This cost him the position of Minister of War during the Restoration, as he was regarded as too outspoken for the position. He served the Bourbons’ loyally and retired soon after the establishment of the July Monarchy. When he retired, Macdonald could look back on a career that spanned 40 years and lifted him to the upper reaches of French society. In the final analysis, although Macdonald is often regarded as one of Napoleon’s less capable Marshals, the details of his career demonstrate that he was a first rate general and tactician who served the Revolution, Napoleon and France with loyalty, dedication, and honor.
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**ARTICLES AND DISSERTATIONS**


Ricky Parrish was born in Augusta, Ga. on 4 July 1961. He attended Augusta College, where he was awarded the George Rush Franklin Scholarship. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in History in 1990. From there, he attended Georgia Southern University from 1990 to 1992, where he was elected President of the Pi Alpha Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta History Honors Society in 1991, and was awarded the George A. Rogers Scholarship in History. He earned a Masters of Arts in History in 1992.

In the fall of 1992, he was accepted into the Institute on Napoleon and the French Revolution and began his doctoral studies at Florida State University under the direction of Dr. Donald D. Horward. He was awarded the Institute on Napoleon and the French Revolution Doctoral Fellowship for the 1992-93 academic year. From 1992 to 1995, he taught the World Civilization courses as a Teaching Assistant. He was awarded the George Greene Scholarship in 1993, the Thomas Campbell Teaching Award for 1994-95, an American Society of Arms Collector’s Scholarship, the Martha and Proctor Jones Dissertation Fellowship, and the Leitch-Wright Dissertation Travel Grant in 1995, and was made an Academic Fellow in the International Napoleonic Society in 1996. He was also elected President of the Delta Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta in 1994. In the fall of 2005, he completed the requirements for his degree, defending his dissertation on 7 November 2005.

Ricky is currently an Associate Professor of History at Brevard Community College in Melbourne, Florida. He has held this position since 1997. During this time, he created two educational videos on the Battle of Hastings and the Second Punic War. He also coaches the Academic Team. He has presented
several papers on a variety of topics at conferences in the United States and Italy. Several of these papers have been published in the Selected Papers of the Consortium on Revolutionary Europe, the Proceedings of the International Napoleonic Congress, and the American Society of Arms Collectors Bulletin.