

# The Napoleon Series

## The Germans under the French Eagles: Volume IV The Regiment of the Saxon Duchies – Chapter Five Part V

By Commandant Sauzey

Translated by [Greg Gorsuch](#)

### THE REGIMENT OF THE SAXON DUCHIES

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#### CHAPTER V

##### THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN (1812)

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#### V. -- Rally at Königsberg.

Death had not finished striking the unfortunate regiment of the Saxon Duchies: out of the 50 men who reached the Niemen, 30 -- with Lieutenant Brückner -- fell into the hands of the Russians for leaving the road and seeking shelter and food in the neighboring Polish villages where the enemy had already preceded them; only about twenty soldiers, with Lieutenant Schauröth (of Cobourg) and Lieutenant Jacobs (of Gotha), recrossed the Niemen near Kowno on the evening of 12 December: it was all that remained under the arms of the 2,000 men of the Duchies Regiment.

But outside this small nucleus, many lost, sick or crippled soldiers, either alone or in small groups, also crossed the Niemen the following days under the protection of Marshal Ney who, with a handful of 1,500 men, grumblers (grognards) of the Old Guard, Bavarian, Hessian, Baden and soldiers of the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Rhine, defended Kowno and its bridge until the 15<sup>th</sup> of December. The greater number of these stragglers had taken the road to Johannisburg and Tilsit; on the false news that the Russian corps of Wittgenstein was approaching Tilsit, these isolated ones threw themselves on the road to Insterbourg and Tapiau.

The King of Naples had fixed for each of the corps of the Grand Army a rallying point, where all the elements of these corps were to be directed. The rearguard of Marshal Ney, assembled at Gumbinnen (Gusev) after the defense of Kowno, had settled at Innsbruck (Old Guard, Hessian, Baden, 12 pieces of artillery); the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps, with the Marshal Davout, rallied at Thorn (1,600 men); the 2<sup>nd</sup>, under Oudinot, to Marienwerder now Kwidzyn (1,000 men); the 3<sup>rd</sup>, troops of Marshal Ney, at Elbing (600 men); the 4<sup>th</sup>, the Italian Corps of Prince Eugène, at Marienburg (1,400 men); the 6<sup>th</sup> Corps, Gouvion-Saint-Cyr, at Plock; the 8<sup>th</sup>, composed of the Westphalians of Junot (400 men), and the 9<sup>th</sup>, under Victor, at Posen. The infantry regiments of the Old Guard together numbered 1,500 men, and the Polish lancers of the Guard 412 horsemen, of which 200 were still mounted.

As a result, from the 19<sup>th</sup> of December, the separated of the Duchies Regiment began to arrive at Königsberg, whence the depot had been previously sent to Berlin; on the 23<sup>rd</sup> the regiment had 16 officers, 17 non-commissioned officers and 103 corporals, sappers, drummers and soldiers.

Murat arrived at Königsberg on the 24<sup>th</sup>, and on the 28<sup>th</sup> reviewed the troops of the Confederation of the Rhine, who were there together. It was in this same place that, eight weeks before, General Loison had passed in review the 14,000 men of his division. The King of Naples saw the survivors. The Duchies Regiment was represented by 550 soldiers, half of whom were unarmed; that of Frankfurt numbered only 285 men, of whom scarcely 100 were able to

bear arms; the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Rhine (Anhalt-Lippe) and the 6<sup>th</sup> (Schwarzburg-Waldeck-Reuss), which had not been at Vilnius and Osmiana, had comparatively large numbers. The French regiments were reduced to lamentable proportions.

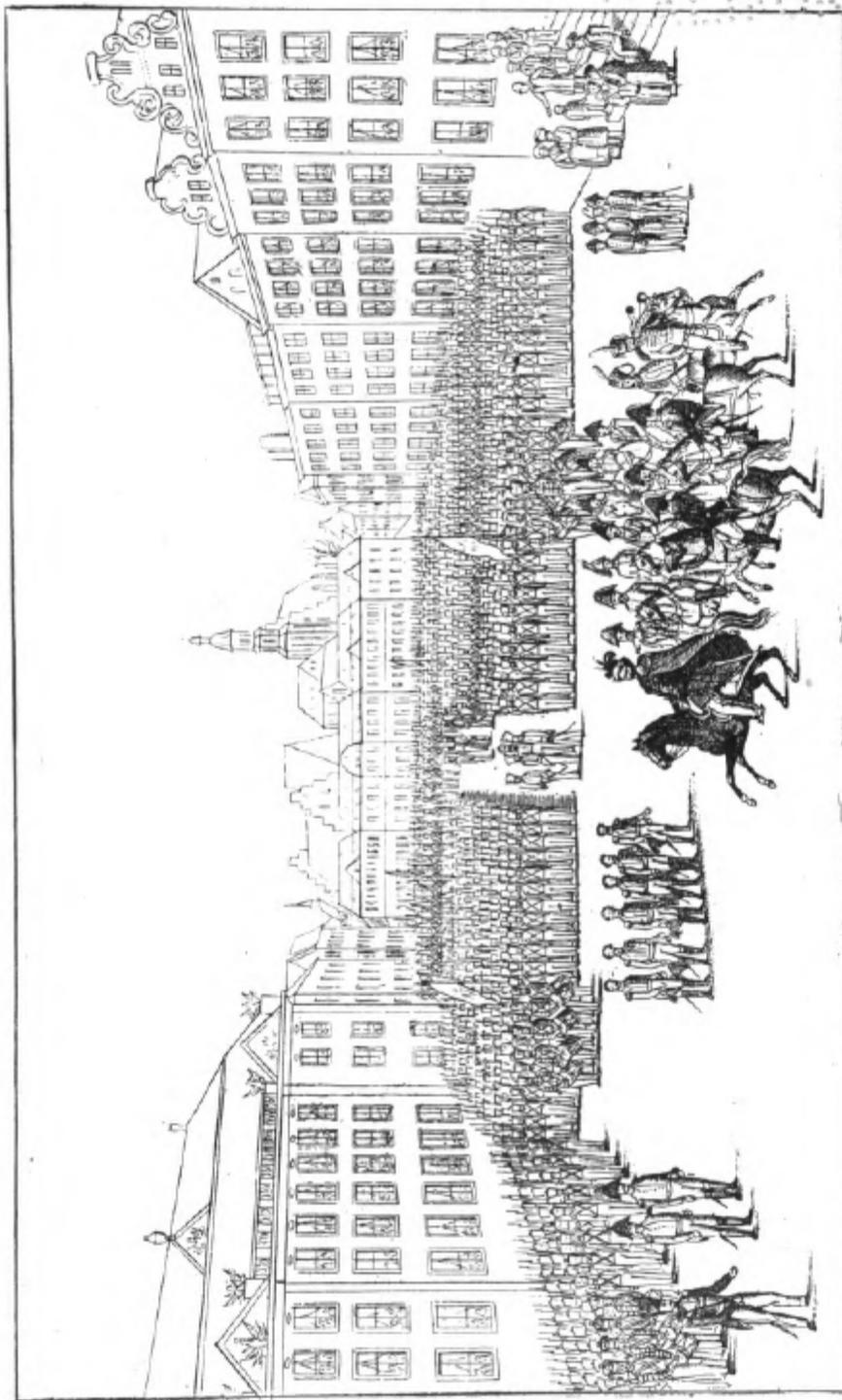
Arrived on the square, Murat made them bear arms; arriving in front of the Duchies Regiment and greeted them with these words: "Ah! these brave Saxons!" He also conversed with Colonel von Egloffstein, to whom he gave the testimony of his satisfaction at the recent events of the campaign. He was less flattering to other corps, especially to the 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Rhine, which had badly escorted the treasure-carriages, and to whom the King of Naples said "it deserves reproach."

The parade then took place. The debris of the French and Italian regiments Nos. 1, 3, 29, 105, and 113 passed to the enthusiastic shouts of "Long live the Emperor!" The regiment of Frankfort and the regiment of the Duchies also heard resounding "Es lebe der Kaiser! Then, the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Regiments of the Rhine pass in their turn, but remained silent ...

As a result of this review, arms and ammunition were distributed to soldiers who had none, and the Duchies Regiment received a new organization based on its present strength; it is formed into a battalion with four companies:

		Men.
Contingent of Gotha...	1 <sup>st</sup> Company. (all the remaining grenadiers are gathered there)...	100
--	2 <sup>nd</sup> Company...	100
Cobourg-Meiningen...	3 <sup>rd</sup> Company...	112
Weimar-Hildburghausen..	4 <sup>th</sup> Company. (including also the debris of the carabineers)...	176

Total, including officers: 483 men.



1812. — Revue passée par Murat, à Königsberg, le 28 décembre.

(D'après l'ouvrage de Geissler.)

1812. -- Passing in Review by Murat, at Königsberg, on 28 December. (After the work of Geissler.)

The command of the battalion was exercised by Colonel von Egloffstein and Major von Bose; lieutenant von Mauderode acted as aide-de-camp of the battalion. The companies had three officers, and five doctors completed the cadres.

All the surplus officers, twenty-four in number, were put "à la suite" and sent back to the Duchies a few days later, with fifty men suffering from freezing.

The King of Naples having carried his headquarters to Elbing on 2 January 1813, Marshal Ney remained at Königsberg. He had under his command the 34<sup>th</sup> Division (former Loison Division, then commanded by General Marchand and Brigadier Generals Franceschi and Devilliers).

The defection of the Prussians of the auxiliary corps of Yorck was known: the division of Grandjean composed of French, Poles, Bavarians and Westphalians, and belonging to the corps of Marshal Macdonald, threatened with being cut off by the Russians and the Prussians together, happily arrived, however, at Königsberg on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January; it was followed by the Russians, it only crossed the city, when the Marchand Division accompanied it to Frauenberg; from there, the latter went to Danzig, where it arrived on 14 January, after having gained the day before a happy fight against the Cossacks -- who had not been seen for four weeks and that the soldiers ceased to fear in the future.



**1812. — LE GÉNÉRAL MARCHAND**  
Commandant la 34<sup>e</sup> division (ancienne division Loison) (1).  
(D'après A. Tardieu.)

1812. -- GENERAL MARCHAND Commander of the 34<sup>th</sup> Division (formerly Loison Division).<sup>1</sup>  
(After A. Tardieu.)

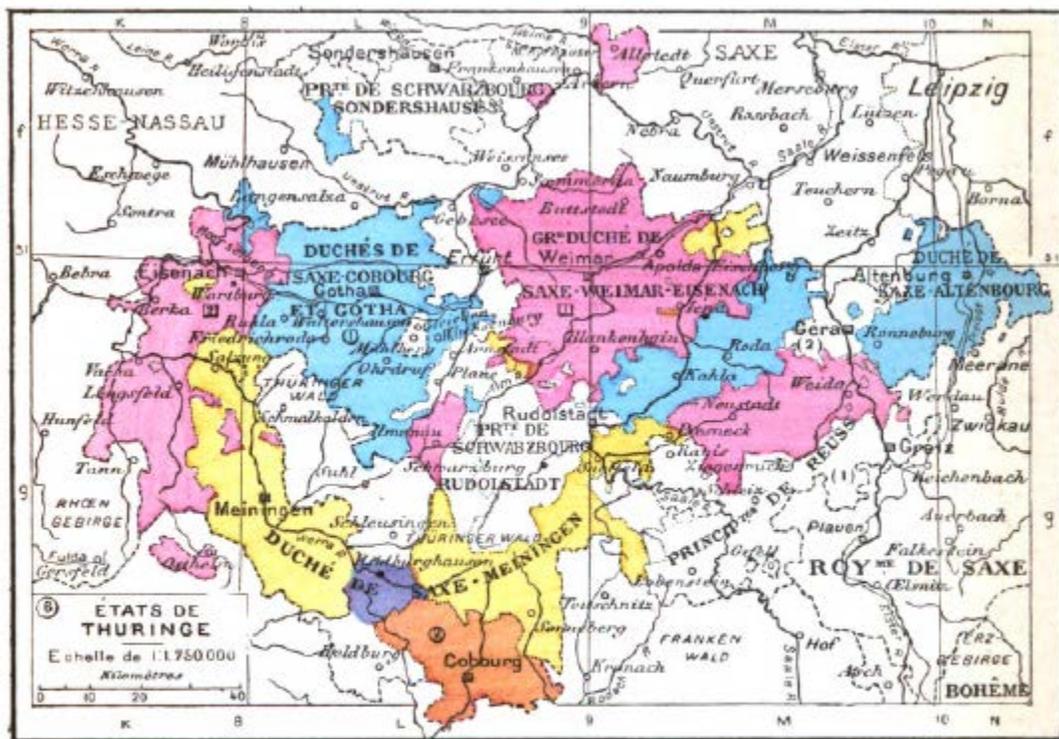
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<sup>1</sup> Marchand (Jean-Gabriel, Count), born in the Albenc (Isère) in 1765, died in Saint-Ismier (Isère) in 1851. Lawyer in the Parliament of Grenoble, committed in 1791. Siege of Toulon, campaigns of Italy and the Rhine Chief of Battalion after Loano (1795), he was made prisoner at Rivoli, and exchanged on the orders of Bonaparte, who appointed him Colonel; Brigadier General after the peace of Amiens; General of Division in 1805. Was distinguished at Friedland; the campaigns of Spain (Tagus, Torres-Vedras, Fuentes de Oñoro), Russia, Saxony (Lützen, Bautzen, Leipzig). Accused of having delivered Grenoble to the Emperor during the Hundred Days, was put on trial in 1816, and acquitted. Returning to the army in 1831, he was named peer of France by Louis-Philippe.

Left at Danzig, the battalion of Duchies would contribute to the defense of this place: we will find it in the last part of this study.

But we must not finish this chapter without giving back to these Saxons the tribute of admiration to which they are entitled. The fatigues, the sufferings of a painful retreat, the dangers of fighting, death in Russia's great shroud of snow .... they had borne all, overcome all; the honor of arms had been jealously guarded by these brave men, and the few who had survived the massacre forever magnify the Sovereign ally, the Protector of Confederation, in the acclamations of the review of Königsberg. These Germans of the Rhine, at our school, had really become, after these last years of war, the appreciated emulators and the rivals jealous of our immortal soldiers of the Empire.

### LES CINQ DUCHÉS DE SAXE



- Gotha
- Hildburghausen
- Weimar
- Meiningen
- Cobourg

(Carte tirée de l'Atlas VIDAL LABLACHE, Armand Colin, éditeur, Paris)

### THE FIVE DUCHIES OF SAXONY

(Map from the Atlas VIDAL LABLACHE, Armand Colin, publisher, Paris)

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