

The Napoleon Series

The Germans under the French Eagles: Volume III the Saxons in Our Ranks Chapter Three Part II: Campaign of 1812

By Commandant Sauzey

Translated by [Greg Gorsuch](#)

CHAPTER III

CAMPAIGN OF 1812¹

II. -- Mobilization, gathering and concentration of the Army.

Article 8 of the peace treaty of Posen, of 11 December 1807, stipulated that, in the event of war, Saxony would supply the Emperor Napoleon with a contiguity of 20,000 men.

At the end of 1810, the strength of the Saxon army amounted to 31,500 men, two-thirds of whom were under the flag.

The order of mobilization for the contingent Saxon called to take part with the French Grand Army in the war against Russia, appeared on 15 February 1812. The troops which were to be part of it (7 regiments of infantry, 28 squadrons and 6 batteries, in all about 20,000 men), had been appointed as early as November 1811, the men on leave had been recalled, and the corps had assembled near Guben and Cottbus.

Higher orders had carefully provided for the needs of mobilized troops and prepared the organization of hospitals and food stores in the theater of future operations.

The mobilization took place as it had been ordered; each regiment of infantry and cavalry organized a depot to which were left the officers least able to campaign.

The number of pieces of artillery to be donated to the mobilized Saxon corps had been fixed by the Emperor Napoleon at 56; they were divided into 4 batteries of foot, 2 of horse, each with 4 pieces of 6 and 2 howitzers of 8, and in regimental artillery: each infantry regiment of line having 4 pieces of 4. Each division had a park of division ammunition, and the corps had a corps artillery park with 1,250,000 infantry cartridges and 200,000 cavalry cartridges.

The Saxon contingent formed the 7th Corps of the Grand Army (21st and 22nd Divisions).² Staffing conditions gave it at the beginning of March: 642 officers, 20,640 men and 7,013 horses, of which:

Headquarters.....	22	officers	25	men.
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¹ This chapter is based on the excellent work of M. Lieutenant-Colonel Exner: *Der Antheil der Königlich Sächsischen Armee am Feldzuge Gegen Russland 1812* (Leipzig, Dunker and Humblot, 1896). -- We have followed the same divisions in material, and we have happily followed the rich contribution made by the Saxon Archives of War in this part of our national history.

² *The Emperor to the Prince of Neufchâtel and Wagram, Major General of the Grande Armée*. Paris, 3 March 1812. -- "The 7th Corps will be formed by the Saxons. The 1st division will be number 21 and the 2nd division will be number 22..."

Commissariat.....	3	--	548 ³	--
Engineers and pontoons.....	6	--	81	--
Artillery and train.....	58	--	1,803	--
For each battalion of grenadiers.....	18	--	787	--
For each battalion of infantry	38	--	1,572	--
For each regiment of cavalry.....	37	--	659 ⁴	--
Regiment of hussars.....	37	--	817	--

The chief command of these troops was given, by order of the 9th of February, to Lieutenant General Lecoq; but in the middle of February the Emperor Napoleon appointed Major General Reynier to the command of the 7th Corps, with the consent of King Frederick Augustus of Saxony: Reynier had already commanded the Saxon contingent in the campaign against Austria, since 7 July 1809.

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Lecoq, who nevertheless remained at the head of the troops, saw himself reduced to the command of his division, in spite of the high instructions he had received from his government.

To delimit the sphere of action of each, Reynier wrote to him on April 6th:



LE GÉNÉRAL REYNIER
 COMMANDANT LE 7^e CORPS (SAXON) EN 1812.
 D'après une lithographie de la collection Ambroise TARDIEU.
 GENERAL REYNIER
 COMMANDER OF THE 7th CORPS (SAXON) IN 1812.

³ Including health personnel and a bakery of 60 men.

⁴ Except hussars.

(After a lithograph from the collection of Ambroise TARDIEU).

"I command the army; I take care of the dispositions, the movements and the military service, the relations of the army with the country which it occupies; I make it furnish by the country all that is necessary to it; I look after its well-being and the preservation of everything that came out of the kingdom. But I do not wish to enter into the organization and special administration of the Saxon army, into its internal discipline, and into the relations of the army with its government. It is to you, my general, as to the first general of the army, who commanded it before my arrival, and who has the confidence of His Majesty, it is for you to correspond with His Majesty and his ministers for all these objects. All the chiefs of the army must send you their reports; the chief of staff and the commissariat must work with you, receive and execute your orders for this part; they can do it when we are together, without detracting from the service they perform near me for the movements, the military operations, and the administration of the active army. If we are relieved, they will correspond with you as you deem fit."

"I want you to always enjoy in the army all the consideration due to you by the confidence of His Majesty, your merit and your services; I desire, General, that you are well persuaded of the true esteem and confidence I have in you, as well as my most distinguished consideration."

Apart from a few incidents, such as that which occurred at the end of July, concerning the choice of locations in front of Wolkowysk and Kalisch, the best agreement prevailed between the two generals. Lecoq appreciated Reynier:

"He has made some mistakes, but he is a great general full of nobility and a friend of the Saxons. I lived for a long time beside him, I observed him and believe to know him well: cold and silent observer, he gave all his care to his soldiers and knew how to recognize their intrepidity."

After leaving with the mobilized 7th Corps, the troops remaining in Saxony (6,000 men) passed under the orders of the General Zeschau;⁵ they included:

The depots of the infantry regiments, each with 3 officers and 60 men;

The depots of cavalry regiments, each with 2 officers and 100 men;

The grenadier regiment of the Guard;

The regiment of light horse "Prince John" (until its departure for the Grand Army on 31 May);

The regiment of Cuirassiers of the Guard;

The unmobilized portion of the artillery and the corps of engineers;

The unmobilized portion of the chasseur corps.

Brigadier General de Gressot was chief of staff of Reynier; Colonel von Langenau (Saxon) performed the same duties with General Lecoq. While the former was chiefly engaged in the administration and convoys, the second concentrated on military affairs and operations.

⁵ General of Zeschau took part in the campaigns from 1793-1796, 1806 and 1809; in the reorganization of 1810, the future of the first infantry division. In 1813, after working on the reconstitution of the army, he commanded the infantry division, then all the Saxon infantry when it was united into a single division. After the battle of Leipzig, he rejoined King Frederick-Augustus with the 500 Saxons who did not pass the enemy.

III. -- Organization of the 7th Corps.

<i>General Commander in Chief</i>	Major General Count REYNIER (French).
<i>Chief of Staff</i>	Brigade General DE GRESSOT (French).
<i>1st Aide-de-Camp</i>	Colonel DE VERNEVILLE (French).
<i>2nd Aide-de-Camp</i>	Battalion Chief CHARLET (French).
<i>Commander of Engineers</i>	Colonel BRULAY (French).
<i>Lieutenant-General Commandant</i>	Lieutenant General EDLER VON LECOQ (Saxon). ⁶
<i>Chief of Staff</i>	Colonel VON LANGENAU (Saxon). ⁷
<i>1st Adjutant</i>	Major ALSTER, Staff. ⁸
<i>2nd Adjutant</i>	Major STUZNER, Staff.
<i>1st Aide-de-Camp</i>	1 st Lieutenant VON EINSIEDEL, 1 st Regiment of Light Infantry.
<i>2nd Aide-de-Camp</i>	2 nd Lieutenant VON LUTZBRODE, Life Guards
<i>Commissariat</i>	Major VON RYSSEL, Deputy Inspector of Review.
<i>Commander of the artillery</i>	Lieutenant-Colonel VON HOYER.
<i>Engineers</i>	Captain DAMM.
<i>Chief of Medicine</i>	Dr. RASCHIG.

The internal service of the headquarters was remarkably regulated. The orders to the different elements of the troops were, according to the precise instructions given by Reynier, written and signed by Langenau; then at least once a week, the latter sent a report signed by General Lecoq to the King of Saxony by an officer or a chasseur. The Saxon officers of the staff dispatched the office affairs, while the French officers of the headquarters, and especially Battalion Commander Charlet, whose aptitudes were remarkable, took charge of the foreign service, missions, reconnaissance, and so on.

1st Saxon division (21st of the Grande Armée).

<i>Commandant</i>	Lieutenant General EDLER VON LECOQ.
<i>Chief of Staff</i>	Lieutenant Colonel VON RYSSEL; then, on leaving 6 June, Major VON KOPPFELDS.
<i>1st Adjutant</i>	Captain VON CERRINI, of the Staff.
<i>2nd Adjutant</i>	Captain VON WATZDORFF, of the Staff. ⁹

1st Brigade of Infantry

<i>Commander</i>	Major General VON STEINDEL. ¹⁰
<i>Grenadier battalion (grenadier companies of the "Prince-Frederick-Augustus" and "Prince-Clement" regiments).</i>	-- Major VON LIBENAU.
<i>Infantry Regiment "Prince-Frederick-Augustus".</i>	-- Colonel VON BROCHEWSKI; then, on leaving 6 June, Colonel VON BOBLICK.
<i>Infantry Regiment "Prince Clement".</i>	-- Colonel VON MELLENTIN.

2nd Brigade of Infantry

⁶Born at Torgau, commanded in 1806 at Jena a battalion of grenadiers and was wounded in this battle; wounded again before Wagram as major-general in leading his battalions to the assault; commanding in 1812 the Saxon 1st Infantry Division; commanding Saxon troops in 1813 at Großbeeren and Dennewitz (Jüterbock).

⁷Taken in May 1813 from service in Austria; served during the campaign of 1813-1814 in the staff of Prince Schwarzenberg.

⁸With the aid of Colonel de Langenau he left the service of Saxony, and without waiting for the authorization of his government, passed to the Russian headquarters; in 1815 went into the service of Prussia.

⁹Killed at Waterloo as colonel in the service of Prussia.

¹⁰In 1809 commanded the Infantry Regiment of Low; then the 2nd Infantry Brigade of Polentz's Division; distinguished himself at Wagram; commanded, in 1812, the Saxon infantry when it was reduced to battalions.

Commander..... Major General VON NOSTITZ.¹¹
Infantry Regiment "Prince-Antoine". -- Colonel VON GABLENTZ; at departure 6 June,
 Colonel VON RYSSEL.
1st Light Infantry Regiment. --Lieutenant Colonel VON EGIDY¹², then Major VON
 SCHONFELD.

Cavalry Division (dissolved at the beginning of June).

Commander..... Lieutenant General VON FUNCK.¹³
1st Aide-de-Camp..... 1st Lieutenant VON KRAUSHAAR, Light Horse
 Regiment of Polentz.
2nd Aide-de-Camp..... 1st Lieutenant VON LIEBESKIND, Regiment of Hussars.
Light Horse Regiment (uhlan) "Prince Clement". -- Colonel VON GABLENTZ.¹⁴ From June 17,
 Lieutenant-Colonel VON ZEZSCHWITZ.
Light Horse Regiment of Polentz. -- Colonel VON MANN.
Regiment of hussars. -- Colonel De Engel.

Artillery of the division. -- Commander, Major VON GROSSMANN.
battery of horse artillery. -- Captain Le ROTH.
battery of foot artillery. -- Captain VON BRAUSE.
 12 regimental pieces of 4 and 1 division park.

2nd Saxon Division (22nd of the Grande Armée).

Commandant..... Lieutenant General VON GUTSCHMID, and after his death
 on 8 June 1812, Lieutenant General VON FUNCK.
 Chief of Staff..... Lieutenant Colonel VON ZEZSCHWITZ.¹⁵
1st Adjutant..... Captain VON FABRICE, of the Staff.
2nd Adjutant..... Captain VON LANENAU, of the Staff.
Aide-de-Camp..... 1st Lieutenant VON WOLFERSDORFF, from the
 2nd Light Infantry Regiment.

1st Infantry Brigade

Commander..... Major General VON KLENGEL.¹⁶
Infantry Regiment of the King. -- Colonel VON GOPHARDT.
Infantry Regiment of Niesemeutchel. -- Colonel VOGEL, then Major VON SCHLIEBEN.
Grenadiers battalion (companies of the 2
 regiments) -- Major VON BRAUSE.

2nd Infantry Brigade.

¹¹ Campaigns of 1806, of 1809 as Colonel; taken prisoner in Kalisch in 1812; employed with his brigade by the Allies at the siege of the Alsace towns in 1815.

¹² Killed on October 11th.

¹³ Later, commander of the 2nd Infantry Division.

¹⁴ Covered with two squadrons the retreat of the Saxon cavalry at Jena; fight at Kaczyn in 1809; command since the middle of June 1812 the brigade of light cavalry of the 7th Army Corps; after the battle of Kalisch, conducted this brigade to Galicia, where he could not succeed in rallying with the 7th Corps; command, in 1815, the Saxon troops in France.

¹⁵ Taken prisoner in Kobrin.

¹⁶ Campaigns 1806-1809; taken to Kobrin with all his brigade.

<i>Commander</i>	Major-General Major VON SAHR. ¹⁷
<i>Grenadier Battalion</i> (companies of the "Prince-Antoine" and Low regiments).	-- Major ANGER.
<i>Grenadier Battalion</i> (companies of the "Prince Maximilian" and Rechten regiments).	-- Major VON SPIEGEL.
<i>2nd Light Infantry Regiment.</i>	-- Lieutenant-Colonel VON TETTENBORM.

Cavalry Division (dissolved at the beginning of April 1813).

<i>Commander</i>	Lieutenant General VON THIELMANN. ¹⁸
<i>1st Aide-de-Camp</i>	1 st Lieutenant VON SEYDWITZ, Cuirassiers of the Guard.
<i>2nd Aide-de-Camp</i>	1 st Lieutenant MINCKWITZ, Cuirassiers of Zastrow.
<i>Regiment of the Life Guards.</i>	-- Colonel VON LEYSSER. ¹⁹
<i>Regiment of the Cuirassiers of Zastrow.</i>	-- Colonel VON GRUNEWALD, ²⁰ then Colonel VON TRUTZSCHLER.
<i>"Prince-Albrecht" Light Horse Regiment.</i>	-- Colonel LESSING.
<i>Artillery of the division.</i>	-- Commander: Major AUENMULLER.
<i>2nd battery of horse artillery.</i>	-- Captain VON MILLER.
<i>3rd battery of foot artillery.</i>	-- Captain BONNIOT.
8 regimental pieces of 4 and division park.	

Army Corps Artillery Reserve.

<i>Commander:</i>	Major HOYER.
<i>2nd battery of foot artillery.</i>	-- Captain SONTAG.
<i>4th battery of foot artillery.</i>	-- Captain ROUVROY.
<i>Artillery Park.</i>	-- Lieutenant-Colonel HAUSMANN.
<i>Pontooners.</i>	-- 1 st Lieutenant BRUCK. - 20 metal pontoons and 5 wooden pontoons. A bridge of trestles was left in Warsaw in the march forward.

At the end of March 1812, the forces of the 7th Corps rose to:

18 infantry battalions;
28 squadrons;
6 batteries and 20 regimental cannons.

The following changes occurred during the campaign period:

The regiments of the Life Guards and Zastrow Cuirassiers, as well as the Hiller Battery, were assigned, under Thielmann's command, to the 4th Cavalry Corps. The light horse regiment "Prince Albrecht" entered the 3rd Cavalry Corps. The cavalry of the 7th Corps realized then no more than a light brigade of three regiments, under General von Gablentz; the number of squadrons available to this army corps was only 16; it fell to 13, after the loss at Kobryn of 3 squadrons of the uhlands regiment "Prince Clement", and went back to 14 after the reorganization of a squadron to

¹⁷ Commanded a company in 1806 in the Rechten Regiment; commanding the 1st Infantry Division at Bautzen in March 1813; wounded in June 1813 in Großbeeren as commander of the newly formed 2nd Infantry Division.

¹⁸ Singled out in 1806 as an excellent cavalry officer; Chief of Staff in the division of Polentz in 1807 in the campaign against Prussia and Russia; commanding in 1809 the Saxon troops in the expedition against the Duke of Brunswick; took the Rajewsky's Redoubt at the battle of Moskowa; had not left Napoleon since the departure from Moscow; refused in 1813 to open Torgau to the French, then went to Russian service, then to Prussia where he commanded the Prussian 3rd Corps at Ligny and Wavres.

¹⁹ Commander in 1809 of the two squadrons of the Life Guards in the Saxon contingent; seriously wounded at Moskowa and taken prisoner.

²⁰ Died on the 20th of June.

this regiment.

The number of infantry battalions fell to 17 after the detachment of the grenadier battalion Brause, was sent to Bialystok to cover the stores and hospitals established on this point.

After the battle of Kalisch, some infantry regiments were reduced to one battalion: then the Saxon infantry formed no more than a single division.

The only reinforcements received by the 7th Corps were:

273 cavalry men, with 398 horses;
1,220 infantrymen;
175 men of artillery and the train, with 182 horses.

In all: 14 officers, 1,677 men and 578 horses.

Berthier and Maret had asked General von Watzdorff (sent to the Grand Headquarters on the orders of Napoleon) that the regiment of Guard Grenadiers and that of the Guard Cuirassiers be sent to the Grand Army to reinforce the Saxon contingent. The general informed them that the King of Saxony could not comply with this request, the Saxon contingent being complete, and the troops remaining in Saxony scarcely sufficing.

At the end of May, 1812, the regiment of light horse "Prince John," whose two squadrons had escorted the Emperor on his voyage to Saxony, was sent to the Grand Army: Napoleon wished to have this regiment in the army, whose dress and horses had struck him; then the "Rechten" and "Low" infantry regiments, hitherto garrisoned at Konigsberg and Glogau; they were assigned to the 9th Army Corps.

Including the infantry regiment "Prince Maximilian", which was sent with a battery to Pomerania in August 1812 and entered the Morand Division, in charge of the defense of the coast, the Saxons provided for the campaign of 1812:

The 7th Corps: 656 officers, 22,317 men;
The troops given to the 9th corps: 113 officers, 3,680 men;
The troops given to the Morand Division: 42 officers 1,700 men.
In all: 810 officers and 27,707 men.

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