

**A Century of The Russian Ministry of War
1802-1902
General Staff Historical Department
The Reign of Emperor Alexander I
1801 - 1805**

[translated into English from the original Russian by Peter G.A. Phillips]

27. The Increase In The Importance Of Company, Squadron And Battalion Commanders, With Regard To The Colonel-In-Chief And Inspector By 1805.

By March 1801, in our army, the commanders at the lower levels of the military hierarchy had no rights, and two figures of authority had been established over them, in the person of the regimental colonel-in-chief and the inspector. There was a note in one most humble report,¹ where this situation is quite correctly referred to as ‘the loss of long-established and customary good order from the army, with which the service, as well as respect for rank, for which your State has long been famous ...’

The anonymous author of the note, pointing out the need to restore ‘the chain of command, which is the life and soul of the army’ also speaks ‘of entrusting regiments to their colonels, as before, while captains should be at their posts and not have colonels there, with everything precisely maintained and such that every appointee is at their post...’ Attaching particular importance to the latter circumstance, the author states the following fact: ‘in one regiment there were sometimes so many generals, not to mention colonels’ that the former were in command of squadrons.

Thus, ‘restoring customary good order’ was an urgent necessity...

The ‘precise regulations in the charter’ were gradually amended and by the beginning of 1805 a completely different regulation had been approved,² namely: ‘in order for every commander to be most concerned with the battle-worthiness of the unit he commands, it is required that every squadron, company and battalion commander be fully answerable for them...’

Thus, commanders, and with them a more correct hierarchy in the chain of command, were established, as it was prescribed ‘to report on command’ any irregularities that were discovered in companies and battalions.

The appointed commander’s complete responsibility ‘for the greatest order within the regiment’ was brought to such a degree that ‘whenever something was discovered that they had been silent about, even though they were not participants’ the commanders themselves ‘were subject to equal punishment with the perpetrators, for failure to report it.’

Battalion commanders were instructed: ‘to inspect the companies from their battalion every four months and submit detailed reports to the colonel-in-chief as to the condition in which they were found.’

This replaced the previous statutory rule, according to which, ‘starting with the lieutenant colonel’ all field officers were to visit their companies monthly, ‘taking turns among themselves.’

The colonel-in-chief ‘is to examine each battalion in detail’ and was to report to the Inspector in what state they were found.

The inspectors were ordered:

1. ‘To ensure that the regiments are visited once every year, and if possible or if needs be, then more often.’
2. ‘Inspect all funds, book keeping, equipment and everything that is located at the regimental

¹ Military Scientific Archive of the General Staff (M.S.A.), department IV, No. 22.

² Complete Collection of Laws (C.C.L.), Vol. XXVIII, No. 21628, decree to the inspectors of troops dated 20 February [4 March] 1805, and those subsequent to this same decree.

headquarters; audit the nominal roll and interview the men, audit the horses in cavalry regiments, audit the armouries' and so on.

Before the inspection, the colonel-in-chief would demand a report from the squadron or company and battalion commanders, explaining whether everything was in order in the sub-units they commanded, and if anything emerged contrary to their statements, then they could be subjected to disciplinary action.

If the inspector found any irregularities, then he was obliged 'to demand that such omissions be corrected without fail and as quickly as possible, and to return to the regiment another time, solely to find out whether the prescribed orders have been fulfilled; and if it emerges that they have not been fulfilled, then to bring those responsible to justice; in the event of leniency in this regard, the inspector exposes himself to accountability.'

In addition, the inspector had to ensure 'that the slightest irregularity or disorder is absent from the regiments, not only as a result of abuse but also from dereliction of duty, as at the first appearance of disorder, he is obliged to take the most active measures to correct it without losing a moment, and should these prove insufficient, then to bring the guilty to deserved justice...'

A report would be produced following the inspector's review that described 'everything concerning both maintenance and training, and compliance with service regulations.'

Let us take a look at what really happened, as contemporaries recount on colonels-in-chief and inspectors.³

Here is what one commander of a cuirassier regiment had to say about colonels-in-chief:⁴ 'The previous government forgot about the generals... Looking back now at these generals, one should be horrified, since because of them, regiments were diminished in peacetime and in war the results were meagre. One could see what kind of men were in control through the disorder in several. If it were possible to eliminate every reason for employing colonels-in-chief within regiments, then it might be possible that the talent of their superiors, who are currently striving with their entire being towards self-interest, might also be limited, although in some units they might turn towards duty and towards decent occupations. It should be noted that there are many colonels-in-chief who have not been gifted with any military merit, and they serve only their own interests; by removing them from office, it might serve to deprive the army of incapable generals. Since I have been serving in the army, I have noticed that the majority of generals are very unhappy if the conversation turns to military skills, but for the most part they talk about fodder and displeasure with the Provisioning Commission. It is almost as if they are deliberately trying to destroy the desire to serve among each of their subordinates... I have noticed in many regiments that the colonels-in-chief are unhappy when there is a squadron commander who trains his squadron often... I cannot say this about my colonel-in-chief, because from the moment I arrived in the regiment, he gave me complete authority over the entire regiment, and except for the internal affairs of the regiment, he does not intervene in anything...' Hence, it was natural that this anonymous commander believed that, 'military service is burdensome, starting from the commander to the lowest subordinate, it is the same for everyone...' He also does not neglect the abuse of appraisals, about which he has the following to say: '... can such a colonel-in-chief⁵ take it upon himself to give an opinion about 40 or 60 men in a regiment, who, having no talent himself, cannot inspire them, who is automatically accustomed to honouring and appreciating men who mirror his corrupt character, or are advocates of his self-interest; one word on his part, poorly written, out of anger, or sometimes out of ignorance, can decide⁶ the fate of

3 M.S.A. department IV, No. 22, see notes I and II in Appendix 1 to Part 27.

4 See Note II in Appendix 1 to Part 27. Although there is no definite indication of who exactly the author of the note is, its content shows that he is undoubtedly the commander of one of the cuirassier regiments.

5 'Such as we have described...'

6 'Deprive' in the original.

an officer...'⁷ In another note we find,⁸ as it were, a response to this sad description of the disorder, namely: '... Of course, there were abuses, but they only happened where there was no proper supervision, since previously there had been men who filled these appointments not out of duty, but through appearances and personal connections, but not at all because of shortcomings in the regulations, which were sufficient for all eventualities...' And to that end, 'I would like to know who might prove to me that whenever the officials are not at their posts,⁹ and their supervisors¹⁰ are weak, not firm in their communications, such that there would be no harm as a result?'

In any case, there is no doubt about the validity of these two extreme opinions, since they are confirmed by certain decrees. For example, the Supreme Decree of 20 February [4 March] 1805 states:¹¹ 'Based on observations made by Me, I have often seen difficulties occurring in the handover of regiments as a result of their disorder due to dysfunctional command, producing equal consequences through neglect of maintenance and non-compliance with the regulations in the prescribed orders, even if not always as a result of abuse.' In 1803,¹² inspectors received orders for colonels-in-chief and battalion commanders 'regarding the receipt and distribution of pay to lower ranks' and so on.

Incidentally, we have noted that the colonel-in-chief was himself the commander, while the regimental commander found himself in the role of the colonel-in-chief's assistant, which was a consequence of the decisions discussed above. Subsequently, we shall see that the colonel-in-chief played a prominent role in preparations for the departure on campaign - the Supreme decrees being issued to the colonels-in-chief of the regiments. What was the opinion on the usefulness of the inspectors? We refer to inspectors, by analogy with colonels-in-chief, as guardians of the inspections entrusted to them, but one contemporary, as already cited, expressly refers to them as 'supervisors...'¹³ This apt definition rightly indicates the true purpose of inspectors.

The same contemporary stated:¹⁴ an inspector may be 1,000 or more *versts* [667 miles] away from the inspection, and therefore, can he, without being with the troops, 'know about their condition in every unit completely, not only seeing all the shortcomings, but also discovering each of their merits?' The answer to this question, of course, can only be in the negative, which is further accentuated by the fact that the inspector could not carry out the supervisory mission as required by 'the regulations in the prescribed orders...' The same contemporary therefore notes the following: 'The regiments, knowing the approximate date of the inspector's arrival, are already prepared by then; that he, in order to be brief, in order to have time to get around everyone,¹⁵ barely has time to observe them in training, and therefore draws his conclusions, which has almost become *de rigueur*, on the basis of the following: whenever a regiment has trained well, both the regiment and the regimental commanders are graded the best, the most battle-worthy.' Meanwhile, 'incomparably more is then required (of them) in regimental service: one must see how orderly the regiment is, whether all ranks are showing due deference...' Thus, a natural consequence was 'observation of a large test of drill on the parade ground, which was done in isolation' since the most important thing was to have time to do the rounds. The anonymous commander of the cuirassier regiment also has this to add:¹⁶ 'In order for inspectors to supervise everything in the regiments entrusted to them strictly, they must not have regiments themselves, because for the most part they set a bad example

7 Therefore, he believes that it would not be a bad idea to take precautions against this, such that every field officer, together with the colonel-in-chief, would give their view, at least collectively they could not all be mistaken.

8 See Note I in Appendix 1 to Part 27.

9 See Note I in Appendix 1 to Part 27, commanders at all levels.

10 As the colonels-in-chief and inspectors are referred to.

11 C.C.L. Vol. XXVIII, No. 21628.

12 C.C.L. Vol. XXVII, No. 20932.

13 See Note I in Appendix 1 to Part 27. Let us remember that General Rusanov said in his 'piece' [Part 9] that the inspector is needed only for supervision.

14 Inspection areas are shown in diagram No. 1.

15 Particular attention should be paid to the Siberia, Orenburg, Moscow and Caucasus inspections.

16 See Note II in Appendix 1 to Part 27.

with their own regiments, knowing that no one else is monitoring their regiment and, having sinned themselves, they corrupt the others...' These are the observations of contemporaries regarding inspectors!

In addition, it must be added that in wartime the inspector very often did not know when this or that regiment had left the inspection; this was reported to him retrospectively for information only...¹⁷

As before, neither the colonel-in-chief nor the inspector had the right to transfer company commanders (or squadron and battalion commanders) without approval from the Sovereign Emperor.¹⁸

Usually the colonel-in-chief presented a listing for Supreme discretion, while the senior Adjutant General, Count Lieven, would inform him of the subsequent resolution.

Here are two despatches as examples:¹⁹

1. To General-of-Cavalry Mikhelson, dated 9 [21] September 1805: 'The Sovereign Emperor has deigned to approve the attached listing of all battalion and company commanders of the Fanagoria Grenadier Regiment, presented by the colonel-in-chief of that regiment, Major General Count Kamensky, dated 8 [20] August last.'
2. To General-of-Infantry Tsitsianov, dated 1 [13] October 1805: 'The Sovereign Emperor, was presented two company assignments for the Astrakhan Garrison Regiment by Your Excellency in the report of 29 August [10 September], He has deigned to approve the appointment of Captain Shostakov and Major Bryukhov as combatant company commanders, and Captain Petrov to the invalids.'

Some despatches show that even the distribution of officers below company level was subject to Supreme approval. For example, on 19 [31] July 1805,²⁰ the 'listing by company of field officers and subalterns of the Kamchatka Garrison Battalion has been approved.'²¹

Overall, we have come to the conclusion that regimental colonels-in-chief continued to be 'caretakers' rather than commanders, whose role had been reduced to strict supervision of the regiment; the inspector, as stated above, was a 'supervisor' of regiments, entrusted to monitor them, but not as a commander.

However, by 1805 the debate was heating up about whether 'regiments should be entrusted to proper colonels, as had happened previously, and should inspectors be replaced by commanders...'²²

Appendix 1 to Part 27.

Two Notes Regarding Military Service And Customs.

I. A Most Humble Memo From An Anonymous Person 'Regarding The Loss Of Internal Order In The Army, About The Need To Divide The Army Into Divisions, Rather Than Inspections, And About The Handover Of Regiments To Colonels' 1805.²³

17 This issue will be discussed in detail in Part 28, The Gradual Generation Of Armies And Corps From 1802 To 1805.

18 Although in the C.C.L. 1803 there was a decree in which it was mentioned that commanders of invalid companies should be submitted to His Majesty for approval (C.C.L. Vol. XXVII, No. 20883), we will present facts that shed a quite different light on this issue.

19 M.S.A. department I, No. 244, log of directed decrees and orders.

20 Moscow Branch of the Overall Archive of the General Staff (M.B.), minutes of the Chancellery for Military Campaigns, book No. 52; Directed Decrees for 1805, No. 1670.

21 The listing by company of officers was as follows: 1st Company - colonel-in-chief and seven subalterns (two aides-de-camp); 2nd Company - a major (company commander) and four subalterns; 3rd Company - as for the 2nd, 4th and 5th companies each of four subalterns (company commanders were captains).

22 See Note I in Appendix 1 to Part 27.

23 M.S.A. department IV, No. 22. Note: on the original, the year 1804 is marked in pencil, but the actual contents of the memo, the mention of 'the recent campaign' show that it would be more correct to attribute it to the end of 1805, since in February 1806 orders had already been issued for the divisions mentioned in the memo.

‘The care and efforts of Your Imperial Majesty, raised solely for the improvement and benefit of your kindly loyal peoples, while my unlimited love for Your Most Serene Person, has overcome all my timidity, and I, having removed all doubt, dare to begin to explain some circumstances concerning the army, with the voice of truth, in the hope that if they turn out to be absurd, then throw them in the fireplace and destroy the memory of them; as I by no means intend to publish them to the world, but present them for the discretion of a just Sovereign, loving and protecting his people with repeated risk to his own life, simply to acknowledge his troops and raise their spirits giving them strength. The fearlessness with which Your Imperial Majesty acted in the recent campaign is, of course, known to the whole world, and is the reason for this boldness of mine.

History has shown us, as Your Imperial Majesty is well aware, that from the beginning of its existence Russia has never had such a strong mobilisation as it has had most recently; but unfortunately it was not consistent with success. Although every reason has now been laid on our vile allies and their apparent treason, I have also conveyed above that I intend to speak with the voice of truth, yet the truth cannot be expressed immutably wherever it is prohibited. And therefore I must say that all those who know the art of war and history will not forgive this for falling for such an obvious deception; as in order to draw conclusions from events, this custom has almost become *de rigueur* for all; and because this art itself requires so much sharpness and skill in order to foresee all things and anticipate even the slightest danger, and not fall into the traps laid, because military leaders must be both warriors and politicians and should not begin any undertaking without accurate intelligence. Collecting and considering all the detail in accordance with the best deconfliction and closest to first-hand observation and knowledge of the circumstances, to embark on and achieve the aim, these are of the essence, and great commanders were provided just so, out of necessity, against which neither valour nor courage can be of any use, but may be even more harmful, which is also what happened.

I report from experience, having taken up military service from a young age and loving it, having been in various actions, without letting any matter go unnoticed, and therefore, as far as I can judge and what seems to me to be beneficial, then, in accordance with all pure advice, as God is my witness, I find that the glory of Your Majesty’s armed forces has suffered from the loss of the long since introduced internal order already customary in the army, with which the service has been associated, as well as the most necessary veneration of rank, in the cost²⁴ of which Your State has long been famous and which was looked upon with envious eyes; and now, although the troops are the same, yet there is not the same respect from either the enemy or our neighbours, there is neither that good morale, nor that good order in the service, the best precursor to victory, and although they could not have had any special influence on either, it began to decline from the time when they began to change the exercises, as well as manoeuvres; yet men who enjoy respect and trust for their love of novelties alone, not least excelling in trivia, thought to introduce new, even self-contradictory, customs and without any foundation or track-record, in the hope of obtaining great success; and at the same time, they clearly went about destroying the previous order and establishing such destruction that: previously, it had always been taken for granted for a soldier on appropriate (occasions)²⁵ to be read the articles of war and instil in them where their duties lie with regard to their obligations to the Sovereign and their superiors, and I submit to the practical judgment of Your Imperial Majesty from the affairs of the recent campaign whether these observations are necessary or not; others, out of timidity, or perhaps out of preference, do not tell the truth, such that they would show approval to those who love useless novelty in order not to lose face and, succeeding in all this, led to the previous service and its decisions becoming discredited; eventually, they sowed and germinated the thought that the entire previous service was based on abuse alone, although it is very noticeable that at present there are much greater costs, but no benefits; of course, there were abuses, but they only happened where there was no proper

24 The writing in the original is completely illegible; the first two letters are difficult to decipher. We have taken the word cost in the sense of evaluation, dignity.

25 There were probably accidental omissions and ‘occasions’ was missing from the original.

supervision, since previously there had been men who filled these appointments not out of duty, but through appearances and personal connections, but not at all because of shortcomings in the regulations, which were sufficient for all eventualities.

And to that end, I would like to know who might prove to me that whenever officials are not at their posts, and their supervisors are weak, not firm in their communications, such that there would be no harm as a result. Be that as it may, I speak of that to what I attribute all the weakening, and of that which is very obvious, as a result, I have not found myself presenting lengthy evidence, but I am content simply to present to discerning discretion the fruits of military operations from the past and present and about those improvements that I consider are also necessary for the Army, which, as they have their basis upon the former, then for this reason I am prompted to state with regard to these conclusions of mine: I consider it more useful for the good of nations if time and circumstances require, that old laws should be improved and supplemented rather than to write new ones for whatever department, and even less so for the military.

I shall explain the intentions I deem necessary in the first instance below:

1. To restore the customary discipline in the army to full strength, which has always been a guiding principle for taking measures appropriate for destroying enemy intentions, but now without it there is no initiative nor the morale for which Russia has always been famous.
2. Yet chain of command most of all, which is the life and soul of the army, and which is very simple to introduce by employing prudent and appropriate principles for various eventualities, and this applies to experienced commanders who best know their extent, since immoderate severity and inflexibility discourages initiative and diminishes courage just as much as idleness is harmful to service, because it makes soldiers negligent and detracts them from valuing their obligations. And since such observations depend on the maintenance of good order, it follows that the commanders must be well-versed in their duties, treasuring the truth, being resolute and speaking out not just occasionally, but always without fear, and such that they would act in the interests of the service on the subject at hand, and not those of patrons.
3. Distribute the troops into divisions, detachments and brigades rather than inspections, there are no disadvantages in this, while the benefit is that there would be greater oversight, and these same generals would be among the troops constantly and have complete knowledge of their state in every unit, therefore, being able to see not only all the shortcomings, but also to be able to discover the capabilities of every man, while the general will have a lot of things to do to improve and prepare, both before the start of a campaign as well as during it, which he alone, no matter how skilled he may be, cannot manage to complete, but he must have trust in the subordinate officers present with him, delegating according to their abilities for each assignment, but if he does not know them, then what kind of success can there be, as not everyone has the aptitude for every task. If Your Imperial Majesty's army is divided into divisions, detachments and brigades, then, depending on the region and circumstances, each division should have a park of artillery with all its accoutrements as well as the various appointments relevant to the force, such as: from the quartermaster's, engineering, provisioning, commissariat and medical departments, in which case, even if a planned movement does not follow, then the entire division could set off in its entirety, or at will; but the generals would know the troops, and the officers and soldiers them (the generals). To supplement this, it is very necessary even vital that regimental artillery always be present with the regiments. It is also considered essential that divisional commanders (who, even in combat units cannot change anything or reintroduce anything, and their duty in everything is to act in accordance with Supreme orders and the specified regulations, to supervise and insistently demand that Your Majesty's duties be carried out in all units without any omissions and with precision), present their initial despatches to the authorities, such that those who have been selected who also have command over the civil sector in those

governorates, on the basis of the previous laws, for whom it would be more convenient to take on the provision of rations for the troops, to broker agreements and amicable dealings between military personnel and merchants, with regard to changing villages according to circumstances, such that some villages are not burdened more than others. There is not a word here about the Guard or barracks in the capitals; as I am not concerned with the Guard, rather to place field regiments in quarters in other locations, since barracks do not bring any other benefits besides being a burden to the soldiers, but they also make for high costs in the locations occupied by them, because when a soldier is in quarters, he needs neither firewood nor lighting for the barracks, he gives his rations to the householder, and whatever he cooks for himself, he eats together with them; it has happened in prosperous locations, where there were good lodgings, that the owners would not take their rations from them, but the provisions remained with the *artels* as reserves, and the housewives always washed their guests' shirts along with their linen. Indeed, one can safely say that there are many other benefits besides, yet nothing but harm from a barracks.

4. And for this reason I conclude that the divisional commanders should be appointed from among your subjects, and not from those who have come to Russia temporarily and do not know the language, rights, or customs of Russians, but they must be precisely such that not only the officers but every private would be cared for like a neighbour, without which a general would receive neither goodwill nor trust from our soldiers; and if a commander does not apply himself and act in accordance with the customs of the nation, no matter how skilful a general may be, he will not succeed in anything, and especially if he appoints the men with whom he grew up and served in that land, then there can be no good only huge disadvantages. I could give many examples on this point, but I do not consider it necessary for Your Majesty, since your men know, also from many deeds and experiences, they are equally well aware of this: have foreign immigrants done us any good so far, except in arts and crafts, which have nothing to do with this.
5. The current inspections cannot be relied upon as all improvements assigned to them may already be carried out by divisional commanders, whose rules and responsibilities would be more widely applied than those of these inspectors.

And if it pleases Your Majesty when assigning troops for inspection, then this purpose has to be by Supreme Will, the benefit of this is that neither the commanders nor the regiments will know the specific date. Therefore, they should try to be at hourly readiness, but not in such a way that the inspector is 1,000 *versts* or more [667 miles] away from his inspection, and the regiments, knowing the approximate date of the inspector's arrival, are already prepared by then; that he, in order to be brief, in order to have time to get around everyone, barely has time to observe them in training, and therefore draws his conclusions, which has almost become *de rigueur*, on the basis of the following: whenever a regiment has trained well, both the regiment and the regimental commanders are graded the best, the most battle-worthy, from whom incomparably more is also required in regimental service: one must see how orderly the regiment is, whether all ranks are showing due deference. Since this relates to the skill of the commander, who must lead his subordinates on to both fear and love him, who is obliged by his behaviour to be an example to every subordinate and must be strict in all judgements, but not cruel.

It is a well-known fact that men are not born with equal abilities, some are very good at one thing, but incapable of another, that duty requires such classification and appraisal, and if there is just one path for everyone, then nothing but utter trouble should be expected.

In conclusion, in addition to the assumptions explained in the first instance, I dare to present the following for Supreme consideration: because it is very noticeable for everyone that in Your Majesty's army, respect for rank has lost its due value, and it is even more difficult to have the desired success without it, as the most important element in the art of war is veneration of rank, something that was previously so highly valued and which is the foundation of the army and the

integrity of the state. It has collapsed because both the worthy and the undeserving began to enter indiscriminately, and since it is impossible for everyone to have a post in accordance with their status, then they began to be assigned and are sometimes still assigned to lowly positions that are humiliating to them, according to their rank, whoever is unworthy by status to have a position according to these persons, is it better not to assign it, so that another, being of the same status with them, does not feel humiliation, and through this alone the service endures. I shall keep silent about those others here, but I present to Your Majesty the circumstance known to you, how many generals there were in just one regiment, not to mention the colonels, but especially in the cavalry; and a general commanded one squadron at that time, when in another a captain held a similar command, and in the regiments they were dealt with as officers, then what kind of respect should there be for rank.

The general conclusion is that it is easier to build something from scratch than to fix something damaged. And therefore, I do believe even now that their restoration should begin with this, such that the regiments should be entrusted to their colonels, as before, while captains should be at their posts and not have colonels there, with everything precisely maintained and such that every appointee is at their post. However, I do not dare explain in more detail about all the circumstances relating to general service and regimental duty, but conclude this in the hope that if these reports turn out to be inconsistent with the will of Your Majesty, then you will not blame me, for God knows that when I started this, I had no other object than my diligence, and if at least some of my assumptions are worthy and Your Majesty orders them to be implemented, I shall be happy to have fulfilled the Supreme will and to have been of some use...'

II. Anonymous Memo From The Commander Of A Cuirassier Regiment.

'Some thoughts of mine and notes regarding military service and customs.'²⁶

The reasons preventing military service from thriving in its present form and these hindrances are brought up to actual knowledge by military ranks; the shortcomings and abuse in the testing of equipment and other items.

Who does not know that achieving substantive military rank means that each of them, feeling their destiny to be a diligent defender of their Fatherland and the Tsar, becomes proficient in the skills required for this subject, for their own grade at least, true to their duty in the smallest detail, enterprising and active everywhere and always.

Therefore, in times of peace, those gifted with talents and understanding must learn, increase their agility, become accustomed to hard work and anxiety, to readiness for any contingency and to constant movement; during times of peace, one must imagine and work as if at war, in order to operate successfully in a real war. Unfortunately, in our army military service is burdensome, starting from the commander to the lowest subordinate, it is the same for everyone; those having completed it are considered most free having superficially fulfilled almost everything of an irrevocable and enforced duty. Even if one could find some diligent men, they have been discouraged by others, and especially by commanders who do very little.

The previous reign, having reorganised the military superficially, gave them an internal evil that, no matter how excellent, the current reign has been unable to demolish, and therefore is unable to discern every abuse. The general who directs the regiment must be known to the Emperor, if not personally, then at least by ability or merit, so that an officer commanding a squadron can get the most out of the lower ranks, yet a general must dominate and lead the officers, among whom are talents and ideas, excellent qualities for various aptitudes, the general must persuade them towards knowledge, duty, behaviour, even dealings, to distinguish between aptitudes and to employ them well; to administer the regiment in a martial and efficient manner; such a general should be filled with knowledge, character, firmness of feelings, have an ambition for reason, hard work and tirelessness.

26 M.S.A. department IV, No. 22, despatches for 1804 to 1805.

The previous government forgot about the generals, as there was but one line operating the process, and looking back now at these generals, one should be horrified, since because of them, regiments were diminished in peacetime and in war the results were meagre. One could see what kind of men were in control through the disorder in several. If it were possible to eliminate every reason for employing colonels-in-chief within regiments, then it might be possible that the talent of their superiors, who are currently striving with their entire being towards self-interest, might also be limited, although in some units they might turn towards duty and towards decent occupations. It should be noted that there are many colonels-in-chief who have not been gifted with any military merit, and they serve only their own interests; by removing them from office, it might serve to deprive the army of incapable generals. Since I have been serving in the army, I have noticed that the majority of generals are very unhappy if the conversation turns to military skills, but for the most part they talk about fodder and displeasure with the Provisioning Commission. It is almost as if they are deliberately trying to destroy the desire to serve among each of their subordinates. I have noticed in many regiments that the colonels-in-chief are unhappy when there is a squadron commander who trains his squadron often and try to bring him down, and say to him: why torment the men and horses for nothing? I cannot say this about my colonel-in-chief, because from the moment I arrived in the regiment, he gave me complete authority over the entire regiment, and except for the internal affairs of the regiment, he does not intervene in anything. Colonels-in-chief for the most part only demand that the horses be fed, and do not ask: have they been out and taught the men to ride well? And the squadron commanders, seeing this, kept their horses all winter without any exercise; in the spring, when the regiments concentrate for training, the horses are so heavy in the first weeks of training that a quarter of an hour is a long time for them to walk at pace, and after that there are a lot of sick horses. Cavalry horses must always be in such a state that they can cover 20 *versts* [13 miles] at a trot and then manoeuvre, and this is exactly what the Chevalier Garde Regiment does. It is necessary to test the battle worthiness of the squadrons in quarters, drill alerts, officers should be forced to operate primarily as a detachment, outpost duties, and patrolling, so that in wartime they would know who to employ and where. Likewise, regarding real military skills, soldiers, one might say, are blindly accustomed to certain riding patterns and superficially swinging a broadsword rather than fencing, ceremonial pistol drills rather than actually shooting at a target; are officers in regiments not at all forced to have two riding horses, a government-issued horse is usually given to them as a yearling; officers, having no idea of horsemanship, would rather spoil than train their horses. The squadron commanders, seeing that they were ruining the alignment with their horses, were forced to allow the best cuirassiers to take them; indeed, how can officers and cuirassiers ride well when the regiment where I am serving has not had a *Bereiter* [riding-master] for 25 years? In many regiments, according to returns, they show a full complement of horses, but sometimes there is a deficiency of up to 150; there is a method to this, everyone will certainly collect all the required remounts per year for the regiment in the autumn, and then the inspector will arrive, inspect and reject them on the spot, the unfit and those who have served their time will be cast by the regiment, yet for inspectors to supervise everything in the regiments entrusted to them strictly, they must not have regiments themselves, because for the most part they set a bad example with their own regiments, knowing that no one else is monitoring their regiment and, having sinned themselves, they corrupt the others.

In my opinion, it is very disadvantageous to quarter squadrons in villages; for the most part, the squadrons of a regiment are divided among three or four villages, and nowhere fewer than two; it is impossible to have good oversight of the soldier, the soldier identifies more with the peasants than with his comrades, he does not gain the spirit of a soldier, but gets used to idleness and sloth, and one cannot give him the spirit or appearance of a soldier.

Although there are several training methods, the mistaken regulations for training established in cavalry regiments will always prevent the men from becoming true warriors.

Together with the disadvantages described above, whenever the soldier does not receive a true impression of efficiency, courage and obedience, whenever his uncertain mind is forced to carry it

out, and the passion is as strong as the commander's eye can guard; whenever he does not have it in his soul that he is assigned to fight for the good of the State, of which he is a part as are his family, as well as for the Sovereign, as the main spring of state welfare, but fights only because he is forced to do so. It has been tried and tested that almost always a soldier in battle only considers himself subordinate to the officer, where subordination is most necessary, then small things, disobedience, robbery are allowed freely, and when he is restrained there is no strength when he is the victor, also when he is defeated; a scoundrel is rarely stopped; it is possible to rally and encourage them; the soldier considers the obedience instilled to be necessary only in exercises and as a last resort, and does not care, because military actions have not been instilled in him in peacetime.

He wields all his weapons for display and to show that he is trained, but not at all in such a way that he might act against the enemy; in order for an officer to serve with ambition and try to learn the skills, very progressive lists are needed; they have now been established with excellent subjects, but are associated with the most terrible abuse. Can such a colonel-in-chief take it upon himself to give an opinion about 40 or 60 men in a regiment, who, having no talent himself, cannot inspire them, who is automatically accustomed to honouring and appreciating men who mirror his corrupt character, or are advocates of his self-interest; one word on his part, poorly written, out of anger, or sometimes out of ignorance, can decide the fate of an officer. It would not be a bad idea to take precautions against this, such that every field officer, together with the colonel-in-chief, would give their view, at least collectively they could not all be mistaken.'