The Napoleon Series

The Germans under the French Eagles: Volume VI Our Allies the Bavarians

Preface

By Commandant Sauzey

Translated by Greg Gorsuch

PREFACE

Lieutenant-Colonel Sauzey exposes to us, in this new volume, the facts and exploits of the Bavarians under the flags of Napoleon: like most Germans, the Bavarians, too, shouted "Long live the Emperor!": they also marched at the voice and under the auspices of the modern Caesar: they too can say "And our, Caesare duce!"

They fought well enough at the end of the campaign of 1805: Napoleon indulgently praised the services they had rendered him, gave a pension to Deroy, the rank of Grand-officer of the Legion of Honor to Wrede, twenty officer crosses and twenty knight crosses to the most valiant Bavarians of his army.

In 1806 and in 1807, they showed themselves undisciplined, plunderers, and, at times, they weakened before the enemy. But little by little, thanks to the contact with the French, they become -- in the words of Colonel Sauzey -- more mordant and more resolute.

In Germany, therefore, we are accustomed to seeing the Bavarian lion and the French eagle together. In 1809, Maximilian placed three divisions at the disposal of the Emperor, who entrusted them to Marshal Lefebvre; and Lefebvre, who sent to the King of Bavaria wise advice and his soldiers minute instructions, extolled the talents of General Deroy in the Tyrol. On another point in the theater of operations, Marmont declared himself satisfied with the bravery which the Bavarians displayed at Teswitz and Znaim.

The same courage in 1812: the Bavarians fell almost to the last in the disastrous retreat of Russia, and at the Moskowa, their riders rivaled heroism with ours.

This time again, as in his previous volumes, Lieutenant-Colonel Sauzey performed his task well. He drew on the essential sources, and in the story of the campaign of 1812 he made use of d'Albignac's precious papers: he follows Völderdorff most of the time, but, if need be, he contradicts and rectifies it; he omits no important detail; he knows how to be clear and interesting. His work, conscientious, documented, accompanied by beautiful reproductions of prints, portraits, facsimiles, deserves to be read and consulted by many fans of the history of the first Empire.

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