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The Prussian Regiment of the Napoleonic Army



John G. Gallaher

THE tradition of foreign regiments in the French army is one that goes back for centuries. From Genoese crossbowmen in the Hundred Years' War of the fourteenth century and Swiss mercenaries of the sixteenth century to Swiss, German, and Irish regiments in the eighteenth century, non-French have served in the armies of the French kings. This practice was continued in the form of the French Foreign Legion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On the eve of the French Revolution the army of Louis XVI consisted of 102 line regiments. Of this number 11 regiments were Swiss, 8 German, 3 Irish and 1 Liegeois.¹ Thus 22 percent, 23 regiments, were composed of foreigners. These troops fought with distinction side-by-side with the French in European wars and overseas. For example, battalions from two regiments (Walsh and Dillon) of the Irish Brigade made up part of the French army that laid siege to Savannah in 1779.² However, the Revolutionary governments introduced sweeping changes in the army. In March 1791, the National Assembly decreed that all enlistments in the French army would become contracts between the individual and the state; not between the individual and the king. Then, as the direct result of the role of the Nassau Regiment, a German regiment, in the king's

1. On the royal army before the Revolution see Samuel F. Scott, *The Response of the Royal Army to the French Revolution: The Role and Development of the Line Army, 1787-93* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); and Robert S. Quimby, *The Background of Napoleonic Warfare: The Theory of Military Tactics in Eighteenth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957). On the makeup of the French army in 1789, see Scott, *Response of the Royal Army*, 4-45.

2. See W. S. Murphy, "The Irish Brigade of France at the Siege of Savannah, 1779," *Georgia Historical Society* 38 (December 1954): 307-21.

flight to Varennes in June of the same year, the Assembly decreed that all foreign regiments should be stripped of their foreign identity, such as names, uniforms, flags, banners, etc., and become regular line units. Thus the Nassau Regiment became the Ninety-sixth Infantry Regiment, the Walsh and Berwick regiments of the Irish Brigade became the Forty-seventh and Seventieth regiments, and so on. After 1791 there were no foreign regiments in the French army, although there remained foreigners.³ By 1793 there did exist seven legions of foreigners designated "light infantry," but they were used for political and linguistic purposes. They were not used in a true combat role and were of no specified size.⁴

In 1803 the First Consul, Napoleon Bonaparte, ordered the formation of an Irish Legion. This was the first of four foreign regiments to be formed. These regiments—two German, one Prussian, and one Irish—differed from the Westphalian, Bavarian, Dutch, or Italian units used by Napoleon during the Empire in that the former were made up of regular French officers and soldiers. Their commissions came by way of the minister of war in Paris, they were subject to French military discipline and law, and were paid from the French treasury. They fought under the tricolor flag, although the Irish also carried a green flag which Napoleon had given them.⁵ The other foreign units were actually parts of the Bavarian, Dutch, or Westphalian armies attached to, or assigned to, the French army. They wore their national uniforms, were paid by their respective governments, were subject to their own military law, and flew their own flags.⁶ They were frequently referred to as "allies," although that is a rather liberal use of the word since those satellite governments had little choice when Napoleon asked for troops.

The Irish Legion, which consisted of only about seventy officers and less than thirty soldiers for its first two and a half years, was formed for a very specific purpose. It was to accompany the French invasion of Ireland and to provide officers for the Irish regiments that would be

3. On these reforms within the French army during the Revolution, see J. P. Bertaud, *The Army of the French Revolution: From Citizen-Soldiers to Instrument of Power*, translated by R. R. Palmer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 45-46.

4. *Ibid.*, 75-77.

5. The flag given by Napoleon, at a time when he intended to use the Irish Legion in an invasion of Ireland, was green with a harp on one side and with the words "The Independence of Ireland" on the other side. See Miles Byrne, *Memoirs of Miles Byrne* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1972), 2: 38.

6. See Owen Connelly, *Napoleon's Satellite Kingdoms* (New York: Free Press, 1965); and John R. Elting, *Swords Around a Throne: Napoleon's Grande Armée* (New York: Free Press, 1988).

formed in Ireland to support the French. This Irish expedition was planned to coincide with the principal operation, which was the invasion of England to take place in 1804 or 1805. When the English expedition was postponed—indefinitely—the Irish Legion became a full strength combat unit (1806) of first one battalion, and by 1809 of three battalions.⁷ Between 1803 and 1806 two German regiments were formed in the French army. These units were manned by officers and men recruited principally from the states of southern and western Germany. They were made up of two or three battalions of less than eight hundred men each. They were mercenaries who joined the French army for better pay, food, and general conditions. Rather than scattering these Germans throughout the regular French regiments, they were concentrated into two all-German units.

The imperial decree that created the Prussian Regiment was dated 13 November 1806.⁸ Although there was a strong anti-French party at the court of Friedrich Wilhelm III, this feeling was not universal in Prussia in 1806. Napoleon sought to recruit junior officers, noncommissioned officers, and soldiers from among the thousands of prisoners of war who had fallen into the hands of the victorious French as they marched from the Saal through Jena-Auerstadt and Berlin into every corner of the Prussian state. In the absence of a strong modern nationalism, the subjects of the king of Prussia took service in the French army. The Peace of Tilsit, imposed upon Prussia by Napoleon, drastically reduced the size of its army. Then the Treaty of Paris, September 1808, limited the Prussian army to a total of 42,000 men.⁹ This reduction from a pre-Jena-Auerstadt strength of more than 200,000 men meant that 150,000 officers and men were discharged from the Prussian army in a two-year period. The officers who joined the Prussian Regiment of the French army were junior in rank, lieutenants and captains. They were of the lesser nobility and had hoped to make a career in the Prussian army. When this door was closed to them they sought that career in the Napoleonic army. There were few options open to them in civilian life. Furthermore, whereas there had been little hope in the

7. On the Irish Legion, see John G. Gallaher, "The Irish Legion in the French Army," *Consortium on Revolutionary Europe Proceedings* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 429–41.

8. See "Organisation de Régiment Prussien au Service de France," signed by the members of the Council of Administration, Leipzig, 14 March 1807, Service Historique de l'Etat-Major de l'Armée (hereafter cited as Arch. Guerre) X^h 18a.

9. Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 46.

Prussian army of rapid promotion or of ever rising to the rank of colonel or general, positions reserved for the Junkers and the court nobility, the French Revolution had opened the ranks of the army to ability. The examples of a provincial nobleman (such as Marshal Louis N. Davout), of non-nobles (such as marshals Joachim Murat, François Joseph Lefebvre, and Michel Ney), and even of a non-noble foreigner (Marshal André Masséna) widened the spectrum for these young Prussian officers of upward mobility in the French army. The rank and file who joined the French army were happy to leave behind them the brutal discipline, poor pay, and generally bad conditions of the Prussian army. In the Prussian army the common soldiers were shown “no respect for their individual moral worth, which allowed them no opportunity for advancement . . . and which regarded them as cannon fodder rather than as citizens.”¹⁰ It was not surprising that Prussian soldiers were attracted to the better pay, more reasonable discipline, opportunity for advancement, and better general treatment of the Napoleonic army.

Within a few months two and a half battalions had been organized at Leipzig under the authority of Charles, Prince d’Isembourg.¹¹ In this early period, virtually all of the officers and men who joined the new regiment had previously served in the Prussian army. After peace had been made at Tilsit, some Austrian veterans and non-Prussian Germans seeking service in the French army were sent to the Prussian Regiment. The reduction of the Prussian army after Tilsit produced an increase in the number of officers who requested a commission in the Napoleonic army. Lieutenant Edouard Schroeder is a typical example. He had been sent to a POW camp early in 1807. When the war ended that summer, he returned to Prussia to find that there was no place for him in the king’s reorganized and reduced army. Thereupon he asked for, and received, a commission with his former rank, that of lieutenant, in the Prussian Regiment.¹² Most of the men given commissions in the regiment after 1807 were professional soldiers who had served in the

10. *Ibid.*, 41. Craig footnotes this statement: Otto Hintze, *Die Hohenzollern und ihr Werk* (Berlin: 1916), 445.

11. “Organisation de Régiment Prussien au Service de France,” signed by the members of the Council of Administration, Leipzig, 14 March 1807. Arch. Guerre, X^h 18a.

12. See “Rapport fait au Ministre [de la Guerre]” from the Bureau of Prisoners of War (5th Division of the Ministry of War), signature not legible, 21 January 1808, Arch. Guerre. X^h 18d.

various armies of Europe: Dutch,¹³ Swiss,¹⁴ Polish,¹⁵ or Spanish,¹⁶ as well as Prussian. Others had served in the armies of the lesser German states, and one had even served in a German regiment of the French army under Louis XVI.¹⁷ This regiment became truly a “Foreign Legion” of mercenaries in the traditional sense of the term. Absent was the nineteenth- and twentieth-century loyalty to a nation state. These men were more accustomed to the personal loyalty that was dying with the old regime. It was not so much the “French” army they were joining as it was the army of the Emperor Napoleon. When Napoleon abolished the Prussian and German regiments late in 1813 because he was at war with Prussia and some of the German states, a number of officers complained bitterly that they were loyal to France and the emperor, had been for many years, and requested duty in a combat regiment rather than the work (pioneer) battalions to which they were sent.¹⁸

The initial organization of a three-battalion regiment had been carried out at Leipzig under the Prince d’Isembourg. These battalions were at near full strength, that is close to eight hundred men each. By the summer of 1807 the regiment was stationed at Flushing, on the island of Walcheren, at the mouth of the river Scheldt. It became a part of the coastal defense designated to protect against a British invasion.

In mid-November of the same year several inspections of the regiment were held, and the reports that followed provide the first thorough description of its condition one year after its conception. The emperor had still not named a colonel to command the regiment, nor a major, second in command, to preside over its administration. The paymaster and the quartermaster were Prussians who did not understand the French system. The result was that the administration of the regiment

13. See “Régiment d’Isembourg: Mémoire de Proposition de Nomination à un Employ de Sous Lieutenant dans le dit Régiment,” on Frédéric Philippe Schenck. Signed W. Schanch, Major, Arch. Guerre, X^h 18d.

14. See “Etat de Service,” of Louis Alexandre Scholl, Arch. Guerre, X^h 18d.

15. See “4^e Régiment Etranger: Détail des Services,” of Guillaume Putthamer, Arch. Guerre, X^h 18c.

16. See the service record of ex-Lieutenant Joseph Hetfleisch, Arch. Guerre, X^h 18c.

17. See “4^e Régiment Etranger, Détail des Services,” of Ernst Charles Leschen, Arch. Guerre, X^h 18c.

18. See the letter written by Captains Jacques Buhlmann, Christian Eckhardt, and Georges Gosling, Assistant Surgeon Christophe Schroeder, and Second Lieutenant Pierre Ram to the Minister of War, 16 December 1813, Arch. Guerre, X^h 16a.

was a shambles.¹⁹ The officer corps was in reasonably good condition. It was composed of veterans, many of whom had combat experience, and as the report put it “They had the Prussian habit for subordination and a spirit for self-improvement.”²⁰ The rank and file was also deemed to be well trained and capable of active service. However, wrote General Louis Monnet, under whose command the regiment had been placed, they “are lacking everything.”²¹ They were still partially dressed in Prussian uniforms, lacking every type of military equipment, and did not even have paybooks. Four hundred uniforms were urgently needed with the coming of winter. Clearly the troops of the coastal defenses were treated as second class, with the Grand Army in central Europe receiving first what it needed and if anything was left it might find its way to the less prestigious units.²²

There was yet another major problem, and one not so easily solved, that faced the Prussian Regiment at Flushing. Malaria was rampant on the low-lying islands of Zeeland, and despite the consumption of great amounts of “Jesuit Bark,” which contains quinine, the French garrison suffered severely from what was referred to as the “Fever.” “Virtually the entire [Prussian] battalion is in the hospital or sick in bed,” wrote General Monnet on 26 November, “I have seen only a few men under arms.”²³ The men were finally saved from the perpetual fever when the garrison of Flushing surrendered to the English in August 1809, and they were shipped to POW camps in England.

Early in 1808 (13 March), after the regiment had been organized for well over a year, Colonel Fortuné Rodolphe Hartmanis was named commander. A very capable and competent administrator, which was precisely what the regiment needed, he was lacking in experience as a combat officer. The two battalions at Flushing and the depot at Lille were brought under control and put into good shape by this expe-

19. Bureau of the Inspector General to Minister of War, 22 November 1807; and “Régiment de Prusse, Livret pour la Revue d’inspection,” 19 November 1807, Arch. Guerre, X^b 18a.

20. Bureau of the Inspection General to Minister of War, 22 November 1807, Arch. Guerre, X^b 18a.

21. Monnet to Minister of War, 26 November 1807, Arch. Guerre, X^b 18a.

22. On the condition of the Prussian Regiment in November, 1807, see the following documents: “Régiment de Prusse, Livret pour la Revue d’inspection,” signed Général Muller, 19 November 1807; Bureau of the Inspector General to Minister of War, 22 November 1807; and Monnet to Minister of War, 26 November 1807, Arch. Guerre, X^b 18a.

23. Monnet to Minister of War, 26 November 1807, Arch. Guerre, X^b 18a.

rienced staff officer.²⁴ The First Battalion had been ordered to Spain at the end of 1807 under the command of *Chef de Bataillon* Gustav Magnus Lagerstrom. But when Lagerstrom proved to be incompetent and unfit, Napoleon ordered Colonel Hartmanis to Spain to rescue and restore the battalion. It was while he was still absent from Flushing that the English attacked Walcheren and the Second and Third Battalions of the Prussian Regiment were lost.

The English fleet first appeared at the mouth of the Scheldt on the morning of 29 July 1809. More than twenty thousand troops were landed on the north coast beginning in the evening of 30 July. General of Brigade Pierre Jacques Osten with three under-strength battalions unsuccessfully attempted to slow or hamper the invasion. The Second Battalion of the Prussian Regiment, along with the First Battalion of the Irish Regiment and a battalion of colonial troops, were driven from the beaches by gunfire from the English ships. As the withdrawal proceeded, the Prussians broke and began to flee to the rear. "They were in the greatest disorder," wrote General Osten in his report of the engagement, when "Petrezzoli, commander of the Irish Battalion arrived and blocked the road preventing the [Prussian] Battalion from fleeing and forced it to face the enemy."²⁵ Under cover of darkness order was restored in the battalion and the retreat continued through Middelbourg to Flushing. The Third Battalion of the regiment, which had taken no part in this first phase of the campaign, joined Osten's little army as it took up a position in the defensive perimeter about the fortified city.

By 2 August, Flushing was surrounded and the siege began. There were only minor engagements until the thirteenth when the English began a devastating bombardment from land and sea. With no hope of relief and the guns of the city silenced, General Monnet surrendered, unconditionally, on 15 August. The entire garrison was shipped to pris-

24. Rodolphe Hartmanis was born at Meliz Fauton in the Swiss canton of the Grisons in 1765. He entered the French army in 1780 as a second lieutenant. He rose through the ranks during the Revolutionary years, and was named colonel by Napoleon in 1808 shortly before taking command of the Prussian Regiment. General Monnet was very much impressed with Hartmanis, and in November 1808 he wrote to the Minister of War: "I have the greatest praise for the merit and talent for command of this officer. He has regenerated his regiment. . . . He is the best Corps commander in my command." Arch. Guerre, X^b 18a.

25. "Rapport Fait par le Général de Brigade Osten à Son Excellence Monseigneur le Ministre," [hereafter referred to as Osten's Report] signed Osten, 30 August 1810, Arch. Guerre, C² 103.

oner of war camps in England.²⁶ Only a handful of wounded officers and men, who had been evacuated to the south (left) bank of the Scheldt before 6 August, and a few wounded officers, whom the English allowed to leave Flushing on their word, remained of the two battalions of the Prussian Regiment. With the exception of the disorder and confusion of the first day of combat, the Prussians accounted well for themselves. It is true that on 10 August General Osten deemed it prudent to order two hundred men of the Second Battalion into the city of Flushing because a few Prussians had deserted to the English the previous night. But the battalion had fought bravely just a few days earlier in a sortie when it lost an officer and thirty-five men.²⁷ How many Prussian troops became prisoners of war is difficult to calculate. However, the two battalions had numbered 1,666 officers and men on 1 August, and 190 more arrived from the depot at Lille on 6 August. All were either killed, died of the "fever," or taken prisoner.²⁸

Two-thirds of the strength of the Prussian Regiment was wiped out at a single stroke. There remained only the First Battalion in Spain and a handful of officers and men at the depot at Lille, and the situation south of the Pyrenees was anything but comforting. Battalion Commander Lagerstrom was not competent, not capable, and usually not sober. Complaints and bad reports had begun to reach Paris in May 1808, and Colonel Hartmanis was ordered to Spain in the summer of the same year. His departure was delayed until December by pressing problems at Flushing and Lille. When he did arrive at Burgos on 18 January 1809, he found that Lagerstrom had already been relieved of his duties and removed from the battalion.²⁹ Hartmanis found the First Battalion in the most deplorable condition. Of the 760 officers and men on the roster, less than 400 were present and under arms. He described more than half of the officers corps as having no instruction,

26. On the British expedition, the campaign of 30 July-2 August, and the siege of Flushing, see Gordon C. Bond, *The Grand Expedition: The British Invasion of Holland in 1809* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979); and Osten's Report, Arch. Guerre, C² 103.

27. See Osten's Report, Arch. Guerre, C² 103.

28. On the strength of the Flushing garrison see "Situations" (of the Army of the North), Arch. Guerre, C² 512. These figures are also given by Bond, *Grand Expedition*, 173-74.

29. On charges brought against *Chef de Bataillon* Lagerstrom and his removal, see Hartmanis to Minister of War, 18 January 1809, Arch. Guerre, X^h 18a; "Etat Nominatif de M. M. les Officiers existant au dit Régiment à l'époque du 1 Février 1809," signed de Pirch, Major, Arch. Guerre, X^h 18a; and "Etat nominatif de M. M. les Officiers existant au dit Régiment à l'époque du 10 Mars [1809]," signed de Pirch, Major, Arch. Guerre, X^h 18a.

no morale, and bad conduct. The administration of the battalion was in the same distressing condition as the officer corps. The generals under whom the battalion served had no confidence in its ability. Thus it was employed in the rear of the army and assigned unimportant duties. "I knew before I left France," lamented Hartmanis to the minister of war, "of the poor composition of the officers of this Battalion, but I did not believe that it was as bad as I actually found it when I arrived."³⁰ His conclusion was that the only way to save the First Battalion was to recall it from Spain to Lille or Flushing and to reorganize it by merging its officers and men with the other battalions of the regiment.

The deplorable condition of the First Battalion of the Prussian Regiment was only in part the result of the poor commander. A more serious problem was that it was detached from the regiment in battalion strength and eight hundred miles from the regimental depot. Attached to a brigade here, or sent to do garrison duty there, it had no home south of the Pyrenees. There was no high-ranking officer with any serious interest in the battalion. Its commanding officer, a mere *chef de bataillon*, even had he been competent, would have had little influence. At best, the battalion received what was left over. It was a constant struggle to get the attention of someone in Paris, where the decisions were made, to get needed equipment, clothing, money, or promotions.

In the spring of 1809 command of the First Battalion was conferred upon *Chef de Bataillon* Antoine Aubier de Rioux, as Colonel Hartmanis's health had failed, and he was forced to return to France.³¹ This very capable officer wrote to the minister of war in mid-April: "All the efforts that I have made to re-establish order in the battalion you have seen fit to entrust to me have been insufficient. If you do not come to my aid by sending several good officers from the battalions at Flushing, which have a surplus, I will be absolutely destitute."³² Three months later, in mid-July, he was still pleading for four or five good officers, but he reported that the condition of the battalion was improving. When he had taken command, the strength on paper had shown 700 men, but in fact there were only 330. As the result of gathering up the debris of the battalion and recruiting in Spain, he had increased that number to 540 men present and under arms. Nevertheless, he believed that there was a catastrophe lurking just beneath the surface if he did not receive additional good officers.³³ The requested officers and reinforcements were

30. Hartmanis to Minister of War, 18 January 1809, Arch. Guerre, X^b 18a.

31. Aubier de Rioux to Minister of War, 14 April 1809, Arch. Guerre, X^b 18a.

32. Ibid.

33. Aubier de Rioux to General Tabarier, Chief of the Bureau of Infantry, 17 July 1809, Arch. Guerre, X^b 18a.

eventually sent to Spain, and under the strong hand of Aubier de Rioux the battalion was combat ready in the spring of 1810.

With the formation of the Army of Portugal early in 1810, the First Battalion of the Prussian Regiment became a part of General Jean Solignac's Second Division in General Jean Andoche Junot's Eighth Corps. Marshal André Masséna was given command of three army corps, General Jean Louis Reynier's Second Corps, Marshal Michel Ney's Sixth Corps, and Junot's Eighth. Masséna was assigned the task of marching against the combined Anglo-Portuguese army, under the command of General Arthur Wellesley, future Duke of Wellington, and to capture Lisbon. But before the campaign could begin, it was necessary for him to capture Ciudad Rodrigo, Almeida, and Astorga. The first two objectives, assigned to Ney and his Sixth Corps, were needed as bases of supply and to eliminate enemy garrisons that would have been in Masséna's rear, while the capture of the third, assigned to Junot, would secure the French right flank and right rear.³⁴ The Prussian Battalion distinguished itself during the month-long operation at Astorga, and in particular its elite company (Carabinier) commanded by Captain Felix Czarnota. Once a breach was made in the wall, a battalion of elite companies from the various units of Solignac's Second Division was assembled for the dubious honor of attacking the city. The attack took place on the evening of 21 April. All of the officers of the Prussian Company, including Captain Czarnota, were wounded and forced to leave the field. On the morning of the twenty-second, when the city surrendered, Sergeant Major Frédéric Fenicke was in command of the company in the breach.³⁵

The months of June, July, and August 1810, were occupied with the sieges and captures of Ciudad Rodrigo, La Concepción, and Almeida. At the end of August, the Second Battalion of the Prussian Regiment, reformed after the surrender at Flushing, arrived at Salamanca.³⁶ Because both battalions of the regiment were at about half-strength they were ordered to be merged into one in the middle of October and

34. On the opening phase of the campaign and the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, see Donald Horward, *Napoleon and Iberia: The Twin Sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, 1810* (Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1984)

35. On the Siege of Astorga, see Byrne, *Memoirs of Miles Byrne*, 2: 103–5. On Captain Czarnota and the role of his company in the siege, see Aubier de Rioux to Minister of War, 1 and 28 August 1810, Arch. Guerre, X^h 18a.

36. On the arrival of the Second Battalion, see Aubier de Rioux to Minister of War, 28 August 1810, X^h 18a.

designated the First Battalion.³⁷ The Prussian battalions in Spain had a high desertion rate in addition to losses from enemy action and sickness. The desertion rate of the Second Prussian Battalion was higher than that of the French units, but about the same as the other foreign battalions (two Irish) in Spain. The rank and file of the foreign battalions, both Irish and Prussian, had been recruited from the prisoner of war camps and by recruiting officers in the lesser German states. The foreign recruits after 1808 were of poorer quality than those who had joined the French army in the wake of the reduction of the Prussian Army (1806–8). In fact the quality of the recruits in the Irish Regiment became so bad that Napoleon ordered that regiment to stop recruiting.³⁸ The Second Prussian Battalion lost many men, as did the Third Irish Battalion, in 1809–10, on the long march from its depot at Lille in northern France to central Spain. The combination of desertion and the inability to meet the rigorous physical strain of the prolonged marching, about nine hundred miles, resulted in only about half of the men who left their depot arriving in Spain.³⁹ The orders from Paris and Lille to merge the two Prussian battalions—the two Irish battalions were also ordered merged for the same reasons—were slow to reach Spain. Masséna's army marched against the enemy in Portugal in mid-September, thus the actual incorporation of the Second Battalion into the First was delayed until the army was before the line at Torres Vedras. Thus two under-strength battalions of about four hundred men⁴⁰ each began the long march to Lisbon.

The Prussian battalions were initially assigned to escort the army's artillery and baggage. When this isolated train, marching north of the main army, was attacked by a detachment of Portuguese militiamen, the Prussians were instrumental in saving it and enabling the campaign

37. On the merger of the two battalions, see Minister of War to Aubier de Rioux, 17 October 1810; Chief of the Bureau of Inspection to General Taborie, Chief of the Bureau of Infantry, 9 November 1810; and "Etat Nominatif de MM. les Officiers du dit [Prussian] Régiment à l'époque du premier Décembre, 1810," signed Colonel Hartmanis, (particularly the note at the bottom of the page on the Second Battalion), Arch. Guerre, X^h 18a.

38. General Deschamps to Minister of War, 14 July 1810, Arch. Guerre, X^h 15.

39. Ibid.

40. In his *Battle of Bussaco: Masséna vs Wellington* (Tallahassee: Florida State University, 1965), Donald D. Horward gives the figure 29 officers and 957 men (see p. 163) for the two regiments. However *Chef de Bataillon* Aubier de Rioux, writing on 28 August 1810, said that of the 400 men of the Second Battalion that had just arrived, only 270 were present and under arms. See his letter to the Minister of War, Arch. Guerre, X^h 18a. The First Battalion was less than 500 men.

to continue.⁴¹ Junot's Eighth Corps took no part in the battle of Bussaco. It stood at arms in the valley below while Ney and Reynier unsuccessfully attacked the Allied position along the ridge. The Prussians shared the hardships of the French army before the Torres Vedras line and took their turn as the rear guard during the retreat. Back in Spain by early spring 1811, the First Battalion remained with the Army of Portugal, and under Marshal Auguste Frederic Louis Marmont, campaigned in the west for the next year. In October 1811, Battalion Commander Aubier de Rioux reported that his command had only 140 men present and under arms, and asked again for reinforcements.⁴² He received additional troops, not from France, but from the Second Battalion of the Irish Regiment. The officers and noncommissioned officers of the Irish Battalion were ordered back to France in a major reorganization of that regiment, while the rank and file, many of whom were German, were merged into the Prussian Battalion.⁴³

Shortly before the battalion was recalled to France in 1812, it was all but destroyed at Logarnevo. Casualties were heavy, including three officers, and most of the men fell into enemy hands. The supply wagons were lost with the cash box and the battalion's records. Even the battalion's flag had been lost crossing the Tagus.⁴⁴ The battalion was reduced to company strength, and was of little value to Marmont's army. It left Spain at the end of the summer 1812, and it arrived at its depot at Lille on 1 November. Only nine officers and seventy-one noncommissioned officers and men answered the roll call on 7 November.⁴⁵

By the end of 1812 the regiment had three full strength battalions in Holland as coastal defense units, and a fifth battalion being formed at Lille. The remnants of the First Battalion were also at Lille. With the disaster in Russia, all available men were sent to Germany to create the army to be led by Napoleon in the campaign of 1813. Thus the First and Fifth Battalions remained incomplete and of little use at the depot. The Second, Third, and Fourth Battalions had been recruited from the

41. See Howard, *Battle of Bussaco*, 55–56; and Baron de Marbot, *The Memoirs of Baron de Marbot*, translated by Arthur John Butler (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1913), 2: 415–16. In Marbot's account of this affair, he says it was the Irish instead of the Prussians. Otherwise, the account is accurate.

42. Aubier de Rioux to Minister of War, 10 October 1811, Arch. Guerre, X^h 18b.

43. Byrne, *Memoirs*, 2: 142–43.

44. Aubier de Rioux to Minister of War, 22 September 1812, Arch. Guerre, X^h 18a.

45. These figures are given in "4e Régiment Etranger, [Prussian Regiment] 1r et 5e Bataillons: Tableau numerique presentant à l'époque du 7 novembre, 1812," signed by the members of the Consul of Administration, Arch. Guerre, X^h 18a.

lesser German states and Holland. Although the officers were still Prussian, the troops were primarily German.

In the summer of 1813, with the regiment still in Holland, Colonel Hartmanis was relieved of his command. This action was taken upon direct orders from Napoleon, based on information he had received from Anne Jean Marie René Savary, his minister of police, which attacked Hartmanis's character and competence to command a regiment. Because the accusations tended to be flimsy and of questionable validity, and because the minister of war did not share Savary's opinion of Hartmanis, the colonel was sent to Italy as an adjutant commander (a questionable promotion) while an investigation of the charges was conducted.⁴⁶ In his place was named Jean Baptiste Talba, a French officer who had been promoted to colonel for his new command.⁴⁷ However, Talba's tenure as regimental commander was brief, for on 25 November 1813, Napoleon ordered the Prussian Regiment to be dismantled.

The campaign of 1813 had reached its climax at Leipzig in mid-October. Prussia had already turned against France in the winter of that year, and as Napoleon's armies retreated from Germany across the Rhine, other German states joined the victorious Allies. The emperor deemed the Prussian and German troops in his foreign regiments to be unreliable if called upon to face their fellow countrymen in combat. Thus they were ordered to join two hastily formed pioneer battalions in northwestern France. These pioneer battalions did not see action in the campaign of 1814.⁴⁸ The same decree that abolished the Prussian Regiment also put an end to the German regiments and purged the Irish Regiment of its German and Prussian officers and men. Ten officers and 319 men were sent away from the Irish Regiment to the pioneer battalions. The men of the Prussian Regiment who were French, Swiss, Polish, Italian, and Irish, were sent to Antwerp and incorporated into the Irish Regiment.⁴⁹

46. On this Hartmanis affair, see "Rapport fait au Ministre," signed Taborie, Chef of the Bureau of Infantry, 10 July 1813, Arch. Guerre, X^h 18c.

47. "4^e Régiment Etranger: Contrôle nominatif de les Officiers au 1^r septembre, 1813," signed by the members of the Consul of Administration, Arch. Guerre, X^h 18a.

48. On the disbandment of the Regiment see "Extract des Minutes de la Secrétaire d'état," signed Napoleon, 25 November 1813, Arch. Guerre, X^h 18a.

49. On the purge and reorganization of the Irish Regiment, including the incorporation of troops from the disbanded Prussian Regiment, see "Régiment Etrangers Procès verbal des Militaires d'origine Russe et Allemand sortant du dit Régiment et de nouvelle Composition de ce Corps," 19 December 1813, Arch. Guerre, X^h 16a.

The suppression of the Prussian Regiment followed the logic of contemporary French nationalism. Prussians and Germans in the French army would be suspect when pitted against Prussian or German armies. However, many of those foreign soldiers in the French army had little or no allegiance to the principality in which they had been born and raised. They had become good soldiers in the Napoleonic army, and judging from their past performance would have continued to serve with honor. Be that as it may, the Prussian Regiment disappeared just a few months before the Napoleonic Empire disappeared. Recruited from the prisoner of war camps, in many cases simply to get out of the prison camps, its men had served well at Flushing and in Spain. Many of the noncommissioned officers and soldiers would find their way into the foreign regiment (referred to as "the Legion of Prince Hohenlohe") organized under the second Bourbon Restoration at Toulon.⁵⁰ A number of the officers, ended up in French regiments after the Hundred Days. The Prussian Regiment in the Napoleonic army was in one respect a continuation of the practice of the old royal army, which had regiments of several nationalities, and at the same time it was the end of an era. The French army in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries would not have foreign regiments designated Prussian, or Irish, or Swiss or German. However, it would have a legion of foreigners. This Foreign Legion was formed for the propose of serving first in North Africa as a part of the army extending French control in Algeria. By the twentieth century it had become a legend, and after World War II it fought from Algeria to French Indo-China. But all nationalities served side-by-side, and all officers were French. This was a very different structure and organization from the four foreign regiments of the Napoleonic years.

50. Byrne, *Memoirs*, 2: 237.