

Good example of a view from the field: a napoleonic soldier essay

[History](#), [French Revolution](#)



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A View from the Field: A Napoleonic Soldier falls among the many military memoirs in the book written by Charles Parquin that depict the perspectives of a typical Napoleonic soldier on matters pertaining to their well-being. The document captures the social relations of the soldiers while at their military bases. The difficulties that they underwent during the warring periods are also part of the memoir. It incorporates the fighting tactics and the varied techniques that the Napoleonic soldiers used for offensive and defensive purposes. The document is further spiced by the acknowledgement of the soldier's patriotism and their extent of heroism in the midst of traumatizing conditions. This paper will tend to expose the circumstances that encompassed the lives of the Napoleonic soldiers in the battlefields by using the perspective of the life of a single prominent soldier during the epoch of war.

The interpersonal relationship between the soldiers during the time of Napoleon was not as healthy as it seemed to be, on the arrival day of the new corporal. The soldiers have been portrayed as having small wrangles among themselves though; they tend to disguise their feelings with plastic grins. The document commences with the promotion of one of the soldiers to the rank of a corporal after being recommended by the captain of the troop then, Captain Lavigne. He sets to join the patrolling troop that was stationed Lannion in the coast of Atlantic. His promotion at first was received by a warm reception as his stripes were celebrated with much joy. The other soldiers seemed to have been happy about the new rank that had been acquired by the corporal but later, differences emerged. The poor relationship between the soldiers is also seen when the new corporal notices

a sabre that is not up to standards on the weapon rack. He questions Chasseur Hayer about the owner, but he receives an unkind and ruthless reply. Hayer instead of answering the question, he gets angered and challenges the corporal into a combat. He says, " Only a newcomer can have the nerves to criticize an older member of the troop " Instead of giving the chasseur a four day punishment, the author decides to accept the challenge of a duel that almost leads to his death. This reaction clearly shows that the members of the troop had hard feelings of rank rivalries among themselves. There was an internal war of supremacy in the armies during Napoleonic time.

During the time of Napoleon, some of the weapons used by the soldiers, did not meet the required standards as noticed by the author. He notices in the weapon's rack, a sabre that was below the standards of cleanliness. Though the troop was supplied with new weapons before the battle at Jena, they used them for the wrong purpose and later threw them away. This was evidence of their misuse of the weapons. During the time of Napoleon, the armies fought in ranks and they mainly focused on numbers, as opposed to skills. From the story, it is seen that the first rank of the Russians troops is brought down, but they fail to change their tactics but unveils a fresh rank to face the Napoleonic soldiers. A common tactic used by the armies was to attack from multiple fronts as the Russian army did when facing the Napoleonic army. The armies also used guerilla warfare to ambush their enemies. Attack could be launched on the enemy at any time of the day or night just to catch the enemy unaware. Speed and swiftness were never left to chance as was indicated by the author in their operation, in the

province of Leon.

During the time of Napoleon, the level of food supply was relatively good. Soldiers could obtain foodstuffs from their environment of battle and in the areas where they had camped. Not much of packed food was carried to the military bases during their departure to the war field. In the village of Gera on their way to the battlefield in Jena the soldiers obtain great supplies of the geese and sheep that were raised in large numbers. They camped in the potato fields where they dug potatoes using their bayonets. The soldiers by then could also obtain food from their enemy camps and stations after an ambush. This is depicted at the instance when the Napoleonic troops led by the author decided to eat up the food that was prepared by the Russian grenadiers.

The troops can be honored for their bravery and confidence in the battlefield. They did not care about how armed they were during the war, but they focused on how well they could use their weapons against the enemy. This is shown at the moment when they throw away their new bayonets before they went into action. The brevity, patriotism and stamina of the leaders of the war during the Napoleonic time cannot be undermined. This is attested by the instance when the wounded Sergeant of the 5th Hussars persisted in action despite the fact that a cannon-ball had hit his left arm. He continued encouraging his counterparts that it could work. He said, “ Come on, my brave chasseurs! The Prussians are not that bad.” The leadership of the soldiers was truly one based on action. The colonel while making orders, he too falls to his own commands and stays unmoved and composed as their enemy drew closer. The boldness expressed by the author when he was

seized by the band of guerrillas led by Lieutenant d'Aguillard is admirable. He knows that he had little chances of escaping forcefully, decides to remain calm, and manipulates the enemies by use of insightful words.

The patriotism of the soldiers during the time of the Napoleon was also commendable. The soldiers were expected to put a lot of their effort in the battles of their nation so as to give glory to their country. The soldiers responded positively to their call of responsibility and served with diligence even if the reward was not matching their sacrifices. The author had participated in many campaigns for a long period, but he states that their sleepless nights, bloody wounds and their extreme exhaustion could only be rewarded by words of the Emperor: “ soldiers, I am so pleased with you, you have surpassed my expectations.”

In conclusion, during the time of Napoleon armies used their available weapons tactfully in guerilla warfare. Inspire of their harsh living conditions during the time of war and the unpredictable food supply they were often bonded together as one army in providing services in the army to realize a universal victory for their country.