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John H. Gill, ed., *A Soldier for Napoleon: The Campaigns of Lieutenant Franz Joseph Hausmann, 7th Bavarian Infantry*. Barnsley, U.K.: Frontline Books, 2016. 272 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, appendices, bibliography, and index. \$39.95 U.S. (cl). ISBN 978-1-4738-8269-0.

Review by John Lawrence Tone, Georgia Institute of Technology.

John Gill is a scholar of the Napoleonic era who has written several volumes on the French campaign against Austria in 1809 with particular attention to the experiences of the emperor's German allies. This makes him the perfect editor of the diaries and letters of Franz Joseph Hausmann, a young Bavarian officer who served Napoleon in several campaigns between 1805 and 1814, when Bavaria switched sides, and Hausmann joined the Allied invasion of France. In all of these campaigns, Hausmann kept military diaries and wrote letters to his parents. Some of these contain invaluable information about the life of a young officer and the experience of war in the age of Napoleon.

This book is a reprint of one published in 1998 by Greenhill Books. The fact that it is being reissued says something about the valuable nature of the materials and the quality of the historical essays that Gill has written to help frame them. Scholars and students of the period will be grateful that this resource remains in print. The subject matter may not interest everyone. Gill writes straightforward military history, with all the attention to uniforms, weapons, and tactical details that one would expect from the genre. Nevertheless, Gill is an outstanding writer and his skill allows him to illuminate important issues even when treating seemingly arcane details. For example, on December 21, 1805, the Bavarian army required officers to cut off their queues and style their hair "round," symbolizing the transition from an old-regime military to a new era of more national armies. According to Gill, most men let their "locks fall across the brow in a wild and unruly manner" (p. 33). This image helps us visualize the heroic, romantic, forward-looking gaze of soldiers like Hausmann, most of whose lives were destined to end tragically in service to Napoleon's ambition.

Gill explores the important theme of relations between soldiers and civilians. The Bavarians acquired an especially wicked reputation in this regard as early as the war with Prussia in 1806-07. Unfortunately, Hausmann left no diary or letters describing such tensions during the march through Saxony, so Gill brings other sources to bear, as he does throughout the volume. Hausmann does comment upon the cruel 1809 campaign in the Tyrol where insurgents made life miserable for the Bavarians and received hell in return. Unusually, Hausmann's diary entry for May 16, 1809, is not terse: "In general, the Tyrolean insurgents here demonstrated the greatest persistence, after having been abandoned by the Austrians right at the start of the fighting. Their persistence was poorly recompensed, however, for the peasants had to give way everywhere, and wherever the slightest resistance was encountered, everything was devastated and burned down. The fate that befell the city of Schwaz and several villages can be seen today in the ruins that are still standing there" (p. 84).

The Hausmann materials also illustrate the intense boredom of being a soldier between battles. Most diary entries are frankly tedious, nothing more than place names, indicating that the Seventh Regiment

had marched so many miles and cantoned in some village or town. Most readers will find themselves skimming these sections. Many of the letters are also about mundane concerns. Hausmann asks after his parents' health and constantly assures them that he is well, a reminder that disease was always a soldier's--and everyone else's--greatest enemy. He talks about his pay, his diet, his clothing, and directs his mother to have a blue cap made and sent to him. This causes some jealousy, and another officer makes a similar cap with a better feather in it. He talks about his horse and his dog and asks after friends. This is not exciting stuff, but it may actually serve to illuminate the truth that a soldier's life, even on active duty, was characterized by long periods of boredom punctuated by intense episodes of physical and spiritual crisis.

The letters become much more interesting when Hausmann enters Poland. He had been in the area on an earlier campaign and found it "much changed" (p. 135). War had laid the region to waste. Epidemic typhus raged among the people and diarrheal diseases, which Hausmann calls the Polish sickness (p. 149), struck down his friends. Rations were short. Supplies didn't adequately follow the army, and horses and men were weak with privation. Six days once passed with no bread. The army had no fodder, and the summer heat had killed the grass. Foraging was difficult because "wherever we go the inhabitants have all fled" (p. 145), or been relocated as part of the Russian scorched-earth strategy. Hausmann makes it clear to his parents that he, as an officer, is faring fine. In a letter from Wagrowiec on April 27, 1812, Hausmann wrote: "Up to now I have consistently lived very well. I have even become so fat that almost everything is too tight for me" (p. 130). A few months later he was still experiencing "no real privations. I live in such a way that I am not in a position to experience the conditions in which so many thousands find themselves" (p. 158). Being a comparatively wealthy officer had its benefits. Only during the last months of the campaign did Hausmann fall ill, which no doubt explains the lack of diary entries and letters as winter approached.

This book will remind readers of an often-forgotten truth about the destruction of Napoleon's Grand Army. The Russian cold did not destroy it. Heat, hunger, and disease did. The Bavarians reached Polotsk (then part of Russia) on August 7, 1812, "but the splendid contingent Napoleon had reviewed four weeks earlier had dropped from 25,000 to 16,000 men. The attrition only got worse. On August 26, Hausmann wrote to describe the desperate situation: "Disease is rife. On all roads one finds dead men who had been sent to the hospital but could not reach it for exhaustion and therefore died in a most pitiable manner. The French and the other allies do not fare a whit better" (p. 157). This made the young officer hope that the situation might force Napoleon to seek an armistice. By August 26, Hausmann counted fewer than 6,000 men nominally available for duty, but in truth these were "shadow-men" who "would not show up" if called to formation because they were too ill. And they continued to perish. "In the hospital at Polotsk, fifty to sixty men are dying every day, and likewise the number of sick increases" (p. 162). Reinforcements never arrived because they died en route. By the end of September, Hausmann's division had only 1,709 men. What happened to the Bavarians happened to the whole Grand Army. After typhus and dysentery did their work, the Cossacks and the Russian winter had only to mop up.

Hausmann and the Bavarians were left behind to garrison the city of Thorn, then in Prussia, during the first few months of 1813, after Napoleon and most of what remained of his army had retreated. The desperate siege warfare at Thorn and elsewhere is a little-known chapter of Napoleonic warfare, and this book sheds some light on the topic. The last set of letters and diary entries concern the invasion of France in 1814, when the Bavarians fought alongside the rest of Europe to bring an end to Napoleon's empire. To judge from the Hausmann materials, the Bavarians had no trouble at all fighting against their erstwhile allies. Indeed, what the Bavarians did in the Tyrol in service to Napoleon, they now did in Bar-sur-Aube and Troyes to the French, and Hausmann's principal concern was how he would feed himself with everything burned down. He didn't express any regrets about the suffering of French civilians.

Anyone interested in Napoleonic warfare would enjoy reading this book. It is also a useful resource for students looking for primary materials. The best sections concern the disastrous Russian campaign and confirm what is sometimes forgotten: Napoleon's disaster was mostly the result of summer diseases, which no one understood at the time. The scale of the tragedy that unfolded in Russia remains staggering. The papers of Hausmann help put a human face on it.

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