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Source: *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Sep., 1970), pp. 307-330

Published by: The University of Chicago Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1905867>

Accessed: 01/12/2009 03:43

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# The Regeneration of the Line Army during the French Revolution\*

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The development of the Royal Army during the French Revolution has been almost totally neglected by historians. Histories of the army of the Old Regime normally, and reasonably, conclude in 1789. Works on the army during the Revolution concentrate almost exclusively on the most striking military phenomenon of that period, the raising of vast armies of national volunteers. With a consensus rare in the historiography of the Revolution, historians of all persuasions have concluded that the regular, or line, army was in continual decline from the outbreak of the Revolution until its amalgamation with the volunteer units of citizen-soldiers in the Year II (1793–94).<sup>1</sup>

This view of the development of the line army is basically incorrect (see fig. 1). The army, despite a radical decline during the revolutionary events of 1789 and 1790, recovered in 1791 and by the end of 1792 had reached an expanded wartime strength considerably greater than in the years before the Revolution. Thus, the general neglect of the Royal Army during the Revolution has led to a lacuna in the history of the French army during one of the most crucial periods in its evolution. The present study can only begin to fill this gap. Indeed, only the most elementary consideration can be examined here—changes in strength from 1787 to early 1793. That such basic research is necessary is striking evidence of the lack of work in this area.

Information on the strength of the line army during the Revolution may be found in a number of sources. Decrees and ordinances deal with the strength of army units, but such documents indicate only required strength, which may or may not conform to the actual strength

\* This article is based upon research done in France during 1966 under the auspices of a Social Science Research Training Fellowship.

<sup>1</sup> A few examples may suffice to elucidate this point: Jacques Godechot, *La grande nation* (Paris, 1956), 1:140; Ramsay Phipps, *The Armies of the First French Republic* (London, 1926), 1:14; Georges Lefebvre, *The French Revolution from Its Origins to 1793*, trans. E. M. Evanson (New York, 1962), pp. 143, 228; Pierre Gaxotte, *La Révolution française* (Paris, 1965), pp. 167–70, 245–50.

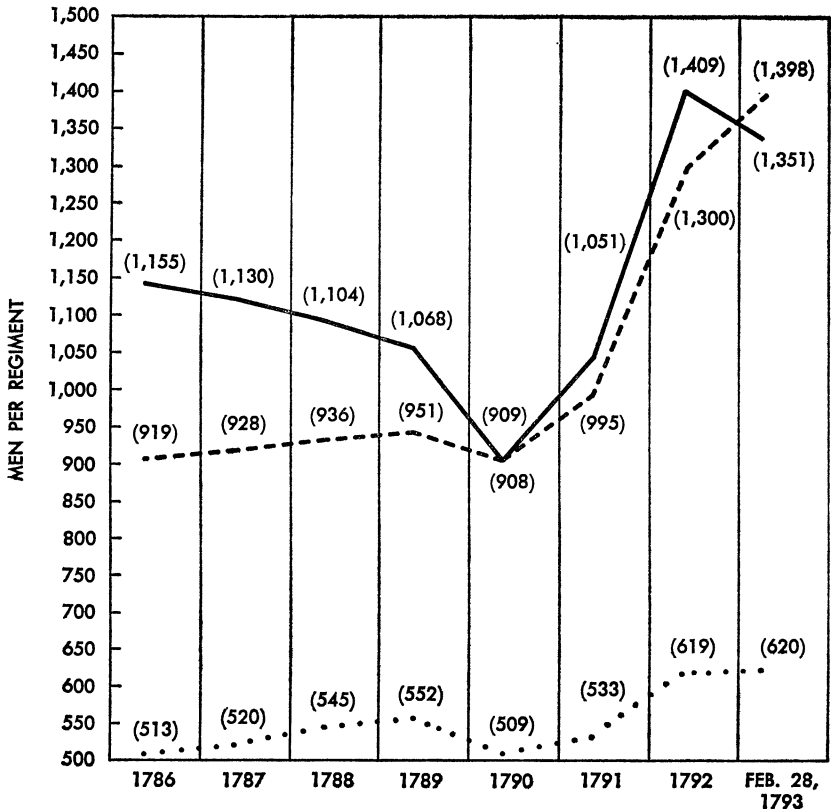


FIG. 1.—Average regimental strength at year's end. Solid line = infantry, dotted line = cavalry, dashed line = artillery.

of units in the field. Correspondance between high military and political officials, another possible source, suffered, then as now, from distance from the situation. Strength reports from regimental units are more accurate but lack descriptive detail; they do not provide the dates of desertions, the reasons for discharges, or descriptions of the men who received promotions. The primary basis for this study was the regimental registers or *contrôles de la troupe* which have been so expertly exploited for an earlier period by André Corvisier.<sup>2</sup> These registers, which recorded an outline of the military career of each enlisted man from the day of his entry into a regiment until his departure, are the most basic source for the troop strength of the French army in the

<sup>2</sup> See his *L'armée française de la fin du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle au ministère de Choiseul: le soldat*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1964).

eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup> These records alone were maintained by the regimental staff, which had immediate and personal contact with men included in the registers.

Between January 1787 and February 1793, when a decree of the National Convention ordered the amalgamation of the line regiments with the volunteer battalions, more than 300,000 men, recruited by voluntary enlistments, served in the ranks of the line army. In order to study such a large number of men, some selection or sampling technique is necessary. Some units were not studied because they did not exist throughout the entire period. The Royal Household troops, for example, were disbanded in June 1791. Eleven Swiss regiments and one Liégeois regiment were discharged in the fall of 1792 and apparently departed for home taking their records with them. Two cavalry regiments (the Royal Allemand or Fifteenth Cavalry and the Saxe or Fourth Hussars) emigrated *en masse* in 1792 and were dropped from the army rolls. Other units were created during the Revolution, for example, the 102d, 103d and 104th Infantry in 1791 and numerous cavalry units in 1792. In all, ninety infantry regiments, sixty cavalry regiments, and seven artillery regiments served continuously during the period under discussion. Finally, twelve light infantry battalions, created in 1788 and raised to fourteen in 1791, completed the major units in the line army.<sup>4</sup>

One quarter of the regiments which served from 1787 to early 1793 were studied in detail for changes in strength. This sample included twenty-three infantry, fifteen cavalry, and two artillery regiments. In order to avoid a prejudice that might be injected by investigating a particular bloc of regiments, such as the first twenty-three infantry regiments or every fourth regiment, the precise units were selected at random.<sup>5</sup> This sample group of forty regiments provides the basis for the following conclusions.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> These registers are preserved in the Archives de la Guerre (henceforth abbreviated as A.G.). The *contrôles de la troupe* for infantry regiments (in numerical order) during the period 1786 to the Year III (1794-95) are in Ser. Y14°; those for cavalry and artillery regiments (from 1786 to 1815) are in uncoded series, arranged numerically by regiment. Unless noted otherwise, the information in this article is drawn from these sources.

<sup>4</sup> No *contrôles* were available for the light infantry; so these units could not be studied in the same detail as the other regiments. Some inspection reports, however, did provide some, less complete information on these units. These will be noted when used for information.

<sup>5</sup> For a brief explanation of and justification for this sampling, see Marie Jahoda, Morton Deutsch, and Stuart Cook, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* (New York, 1951), pt. 1, pp. 51-52.

<sup>6</sup> The officer corps, which formed a distinct element in the army and which

The years 1787 and 1788 were essentially years of normalcy for the line army. The line infantry was composed of 102 regiments (seventy-nine French, eleven Swiss, eight German, three Irish, and a Liégeois). To this force were added twelve light infantry battalions in 1788. In 1788 the cavalry underwent a reorganization which raised the total strength of that branch to sixty-two regiments of both heavy and light cavalry. Seven unmounted regiments comprised the artillery.

In 1787 and 1788 the average infantry regiment fell somewhat below its authorized strength of 1,150 men, including noncommissioned officers. This decrease was not alarming, and by the end of 1788 each regiment still mustered over 1,100 men on the average. Discharges and deaths were the principal causes of the decline in strength, while desertions, the bane of eighteenth-century armies, averaged only twenty-three men per regiment in both years. The loss in net strength, amounting to about 2 percent of the total authorized strength each year, was due primarily to a slight decline in the number of enlistments.

The situation in cavalry regiments during these two years was similar, except that while the infantry suffered minor losses, the cavalry enjoyed minor gains, due to an increase in enlistments. Desertions in the cavalry regiments averaged thirteen to fourteen men per unit during 1787 and 1788.<sup>7</sup> Thus the cavalry as a whole maintained itself at its authorized strength of approximately 33,000 men.

Like the cavalry, the artillery in 1787 and 1788 experienced a minor increase in strength, while desertions per regiment were even less than in the cavalry. Artillery regiments, however, remained nearly 500 men short of the authorized strength of 1,420 men each.

The general impression given by the changes in strength in the line army during the two years immediately preceding the Revolution is one of stability. The statistics given in this study are averages, and there were, naturally, variations. None of the deviations from the averages was remarkable, however. The desertion rates, even in the regiments where they were highest, were not alarmingly excessive. For example, the largest number of desertions in any regiment in one year was sixty-

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experienced a development different from that of the enlisted ranks, requires separate and special treatment (see Samuel F. Scott, "Les officiers de l'infanterie de ligne à la veille de l'Amalgame," *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* 40 [October-December 1968]:455-71).

<sup>7</sup>The number of men per cavalry regiment varied according to the type of regiment. In 1789 the authorized strengths for cavalry and dragoon regiments were 481 and 479 enlisted men, respectively; for each chasseur and hussar regiment, 655 enlisted men; and for the two carabinier regiments, a total of 1,320 men (see Édouard Desbrière and Maurice Sautai, *La cavalerie de 1740 à 1789* [Paris, 1901], pp. 105-7).

five. Almost all other losses were due to either some type of honorable discharge or death. Recruitment in the infantry was lagging but was not yet a matter for grave concern.

The first six months of 1789 showed no significant deviations from the pattern of the previous two years. The number of men lost to infantry units because of disciplinary action showed a slight increase, indicative perhaps of restiveness among the troops but certainly not a sign of serious danger. The desertion rates were almost identical with those of 1787 and 1788 (see fig. 2). Then came the Revolution.

The result was, in some regiments, a sudden and violent reaction which can be explained only in the context of revolutionary events. The average desertion rate for the second half of 1789 was almost triple that of the first six months. This increase, however, was due primarily to an extraordinary upsurge in desertions in a few units, rather than a general wave of desertion affecting all regiments equally. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, of the forty regiments studied,

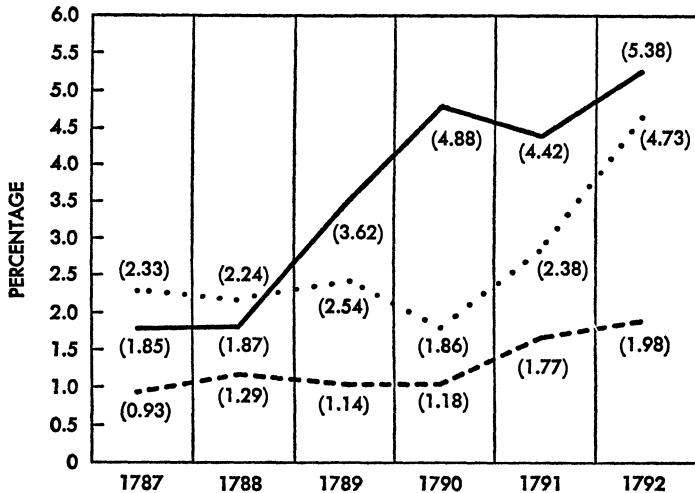


FIG. 2.—Desertion rates. These rates are based upon the total number of men who served in the sample regiments during all or part of the calendar year indicated. Important differences existed between the first six months of 1789 and the period from July to December. This is especially the case in the infantry: from January through June the desertion rate in this branch was 1.92 percent; in the second semester, however, it almost tripled, rising to 5.32 percent. In the cavalry the desertion rate was 2.08 percent in the first six months and 3 percent in the last six months. In the artillery, the most stable branch, the corresponding rates were 1.24 and 1.04 percent. Solid line = infantry, dotted line = cavalry, dashed line = artillery.

only nine had fewer desertions in the second half of 1789 than in the first, while three regiments had the same number of desertions in both semesters. A seasonal aspect of desertions—that is, more in good weather, particularly in the summer when traveling was easiest—only partially explains this imbalance.

A drastic increase in desertions was especially evident in the case of three infantry regiments. The Regiment of Provence (later the Fourth Infantry) had eleven desertions in the first six months of 1789; from July to December there were 125, of which 121 occurred in the month of July. The Dauphin Infantry Regiment (later the Twenty-ninth) had eighteen desertions from January through June and 111 in the following semester, of which ninety-six came in July. The Vintimille Regiment (later the Forty-ninth Infantry) suffered fourteen desertions in the first six months of 1789 and 219 in the second half of the year! One hundred sixty-five of these occurred in July and August and another forty-four in October. When one examines the histories of these regiments, one is particularly impressed by the following facts. The Regiment of Provence had been called to Versailles by the king in June and remained encamped at Neuilly through July.<sup>8</sup> The Dauphin Infantry Regiment was summoned from its garrison at Givet and arrived in Paris on July 15. It was sent back to Givet on July 28.<sup>9</sup> The Vintimille Infantry Regiment was also summoned to Paris in July 1789. It arrived on July 10 and was quartered in the *faubourgs* of Paris, but was sent back to its garrison at Douai soon after the fall of the Bastille and arrived in Douai July 24.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, the three infantry regiments (of twenty-three) which suffered a phenomenal increase in desertion in July 1789 and in the months immediately following had a striking characteristic in common: all three were in the Paris area during the disorders of July. To dismiss this as coincidence would be a parody of historical skepticism. Without doubt, there may have been other common characteristics, such as especially harsh discipline or a particularly disliked commander; however, everything suggests that the revolutionary atmos-

<sup>8</sup> Lieutenant Jacquinot and Capitaine Limal, *Historique du 4<sup>e</sup> Régiment d'Infanterie* (Auxerre, 1902), pp. 19–20.

<sup>9</sup> Lieutenant Dupleix, "Historique du 29<sup>e</sup> Régiment d'Infanterie," pp. 34–45. This handwritten history, which was done sometime after 1888, can be found in A.G., *Historiques des régiments d'infanterie*, in the carton for the Twenty-ninth Infantry Regiment.

<sup>10</sup> Capitaine Gelis, "Historique du 49<sup>e</sup> Régiment d'Infanterie de Ligne," pp. 68–75. This history, also handwritten, was received at the Archives de la Guerre on June 30, 1892. It can be found in the same series as indicated in the previous note, in the appropriate carton.

phere in Paris was the crucial factor in the desertion rate. In 1787 and 1788 two of these regiments had a below-average desertion rate. The Vintimille Infantry had a below-average rate in 1787 but had twice as many desertions (forty-six) as the average in 1788. The most one can draw from this is the speculation that the soldiers of Vintimille were more predisposed to desertion. The fact that this regiment lost nearly one-fifth of its troops in the second semester of 1789 tends to confirm this. Nevertheless, the influence of Paris cannot be minimized. Not one of the other twenty infantry regiments studied, whose desertion rates averaged only one-fifth to one-third as high, was in Paris at this time.

No such conclusive findings can be offered for the cavalry and artillery regiments studied, none of which was in Paris in July 1789. Of the fifteen cavalry regiments for which we have statistics, eight had more desertions in the second six months of 1789 than in the first semester, five had less and two had the same number in both semesters. All that can be said is that the cavalry suffered higher losses, due both to increased desertion and to an increase in the number of discharges and deaths, in 1789 than in the previous two years. These increases, however, were not great enough to indicate any definite conclusions. The artillery regiments also appear not to have been radically affected by the events of 1789.

The comparative stability which the cavalry and artillery displayed during the revolutionary events of 1789 was due to a number of factors. In the first place, the cavalry and artillery regiments studied did not directly confront a revolutionary upheaval such as that in Paris. Moreover, in the cavalry there was apparently a tighter discipline exercised by the officers and closer personal bonds between officers and men.<sup>11</sup> The artillery, which remained the most stable of the three branches throughout the early Revolution, contained the highest proportion of peasants and men from rural areas whose only training had come in the army. This specialized training resulted in a high degree of professionalism,<sup>12</sup> which, in turn, contributed to the stability enjoyed by this branch.

Enlistment rates for 1789 showed no radical departure from those of the previous years. It is interesting to note that in the line infantry there were more enlistments per regiment than in 1787 or 1788. In the cavalry and artillery, on the other hand, there were fewer enlist-

<sup>11</sup> See below, pp. 325–26.

<sup>12</sup> Samuel F. Scott, "The French Revolution and the Line Army, 1787–1793" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1968), pp. 137, 184–86, 223.



ments in 1789 than in the prior year, but more than in 1787. This is probably indicative of no more than a step-up of recruitment on the part of the infantry, because it had been steadily falling short of its authorized strength for two successive years, and a letdown in the cavalry and artillery, both of which had been steadily increasing their strength during the same period. At any rate, the changes were not great, and no profound conclusions are justified.

The light infantry battalions, which had been established as distinct units in 1788 and were still in the process of being brought up to full strength, did suffer substantial losses during 1789. However, their gains during the same year amounted to an average of approximately 100 men per battalion. These were more than enough to offset their losses, which averaged slightly more than fifty men per battalion. The fact that these units were new creations, still in the process of formation, makes it impossible to ascertain how much political events were responsible for changes in strength and how much dislocation was caused by reorganization.<sup>13</sup>

Events in the last six months of 1789 did prove that rebellion was infectious and that substantial parts of the army were highly susceptible to it. Some of the deserters from units in Paris during July joined actively in supporting the disorders. The defectors from the French Guards provide the best known example of this. In addition, there is evidence that deserters from other units participated in the attack on the Bastille.<sup>14</sup> This meant a double loss to the regime; not only was it deprived of a defender to repress opposition, but also a recruit, one technically skilled in the use of violence, was added to the rebels.

The political chaos in the latter half of 1789 worsened conditions in the army (e.g., pay in arrears, quotas of supplies not furnished by towns, scarcity of rations)<sup>15</sup> and at the same time provided an atmosphere in which these specific grievances about conditions in the army could be translated into political activity. Examples of troops refusing to obey orders multiplied during the last five or six months of 1789. Incidents occurred at Auxonne, Strasbourg, Caen, Thionville, Lille, and Nancy.<sup>16</sup> The stage was set for 1790, which for the line army was *l'année cruciale*.

<sup>13</sup> The figures given here are based upon the inspection reports available for 1789 for five of the twelve light infantry battalions (see A.G., Ser. X<sup>b</sup>124). This extremely valuable series was brought to my attention by M. Jean-Paul Bertraud, whose friendship and assistance is worthy of much more than this note.

<sup>14</sup> Charles Poisson, *L'armée et la garde nationale* (Paris, 1858), 1:37-45.

<sup>15</sup> Hippolyte Adolphe Taine, *The French Revolution*, trans. John Durand (Gloucester, Mass., 1962), 1:329-30.

<sup>16</sup> L. Hartmann, *Les officiers de l'armée royale et la Révolution* (Paris, 1910), pp. 130-31.

The average loss per infantry regiment during this year was 115 men, of whom fifty-five were lost by desertion. The effect of such excessive losses was further aggravated by a sharp decline in enlistments, which averaged only half as many as in 1789. A notable fact is that the number of men lost to these regiments as a result of disciplinary action in 1790 was more than one and one-half times as great as in the previous three years combined: 416 in 1790 and 260 in 1787, 1788, and 1789 together.

Certainly a number of desertions and punishments were motivated by factors totally removed from the political situation. But just as certainly one cannot account for the unusual increase in both phenomena without recourse to political conditions and the effects that these were having on the army. Two examples may help to substantiate this proposition. The Couronne (Forty-fifth) Infantry Regiment for three years prior to 1790 had lost an average of three men per year by disciplinary action and eighteen by desertion. In 1790 the regiment lost 108 deserters and twenty-three through punishments. During the same year it had been involved, together with the Royal Vaisseaux (Forty-third) Infantry in clashes with two cavalry regiments, Colonel-Général Cavalry and Normandie Chasseurs, garrisoned with them at Lille. In these struggles the natives of Lille supported the infantry regiments against the cavalry units.<sup>17</sup> The Auvergne (Seventeenth) Infantry, while garrisoned at Maubeuge in the latter half of 1789 and early 1790, was influenced by local political divisions which caused quarrels and encounters between different elements in the regiment, pitting the ordinary riflemen (*fusiliers*) against the elite companies of grenadiers.<sup>18</sup> Symptomatic of this dissension was the drastic increase in desertions from thirty-one in 1789, which was the highest figure for the previous three years, to 111 in 1790. Likewise indicative is the fact that during 1790 132 men in this regiment were stricken from the rolls without explanation, while during the previous three years there had been a total of only four soldiers dropped from the regiment in this way. Total losses in this regiment from all causes amounted to 538 men during 1790, about one-half the regiment's strength.

There were examples of similar, dramatic losses of men in regiments which were not so evidently and directly involved with politics.

<sup>17</sup> Capitaine Beslay, *Historique du 45<sup>m</sup>e Régiment de Ligne* (Laon, Aisne, 1899), pp. 74-80.

<sup>18</sup> Capitaine Pagès-Xatart, "Auvergne—17<sup>em</sup>e Régiment d'Infanterie de Ligne, 1597-1893: historique," pp. 195-224; handwritten, received at the Archives de la Guerre October 3, 1894. This history can be found in the series *Historiques des régiments d'infanterie*, in the carton for the Seventeenth Infantry.

The Salm-Salm (Sixty-second) Infantry had between eighteen and twenty-three men per year desert during the years 1787–89; in 1790 there were 198 desertions. During the same year eighteen men, compared with a total of four during the prior three years, were lost due to disciplinary action. Some of these dismissals and punishments were for criminal acts, for example, “accessory to theft”; more than half, however, were for political crimes, for example, “disseminating inflammatory literature.” The Anjou (Thirty-sixth) Infantry averaged only fifteen desertions per year from 1787 to 1789; in 1790 there were 117 desertions. Of these desertions, seventy-two came in mid-July at the time of the celebration of the National Federation (July 14, 1790). From 1787 to 1789 a total of nine soldiers were lost to the regiment as a result of disciplinary action; in 1790 fifty-three soldiers, of whom almost half were dismissed for deserting in July, were lost in this way.

There were no inspection reports for the light infantry battalions during 1790, and, having no troop registers, one can make no definite conclusions. However, given the trend of heavy net losses in all the units studied, it might not be amiss to speculate that the light infantry units were subjected to the same general decline.

The pattern of large net losses so evident among the line infantry regiments was prevalent also in the cavalry regiments in 1790. However, in these units the cause was a drastic decrease in enlistments rather than increased losses. Indeed, the average number of desertions and losses due to other causes was less than in 1789 and approximately the same as in 1787 and 1788. The number of men in the fifteen regiments studied who were dropped from the rolls as a result of disciplinary action increased considerably in 1789 and 1790: twenty-seven in 1787, thirty-two in 1788, seventy-nine in 1789, and eighty-eight in 1790. These figures indicate that the cavalry was not disintegrating like many infantry regiments, but rather that rebellious elements were being successfully purged.

This conclusion is further supported by the decline in enlistments, which in 1790 had fallen to about one-third of the number of the previous two years. Since recruitment depended much more on the initiative of the recruiters than on that of the recruits, the regimental cadres, who were charged with recruitment, were almost certainly curtailing their efforts. All of this, together with the estimate of the Marquis de Bouillé, the commander at Metz, that in the summer of 1790 he could depend upon a much higher percentage of his cavalry than his infantry,<sup>19</sup> indicates that the cavalry regiments, although suffering

<sup>19</sup> See Ernest d'Hauterive, *L'armée sous la Révolution, 1789–1794* (Paris, 1894), p. 116.

losses in strength, did cope with the crisis of military authority and discipline in 1790.

This is not to say that cavalry units were immune to disorders. On the contrary, the significant increase in disciplinary dismissals, usually accompanied by a dishonorable discharge (*cartouche jaune*), gave evidence of this. The work of Henri Choppin on troubles in three cavalry regiments in 1790 provides a detailed study of the disorders among cavalry troops. The men of the Royal Champagne (later Nineteenth) Cavalry, under the leadership of a young noble, Sublieutenant Davout,<sup>20</sup> refused to obey their officers. The citizens and National Guard of Hesdin, where the regiment was stationed, supported the troops. The insubordination lasted from April 20 to August 21, 1790, when the discharge of thirty-four ringleaders ended the disorders.<sup>21</sup>

The Regiment of La Reine (Fourth) Cavalry, garrisoned at Stenay, was in revolt against its officers from July 30 to August 28, 1790.<sup>22</sup> The Regiment of Mestre-de-Champ Général (Twenty-third) Cavalry took part in the mutiny at Nancy in August 1790, which was crushed only by a superior force under Bouillé after substantial losses on both sides.<sup>23</sup> Clearly, there was considerable unrest and even revolt among cavalry units in 1790. However, lack of a broad base of support within the regiments and determined action by the officers brought these under control. Only when supported by two infantry regiments at Nancy was a cavalry regiment able to offer sustained opposition to its officers.

The situation in the artillery regiments was similar to that in the cavalry. The net loss in strength was due more to a decline in enlistments than to increased losses. The desertion rate remained about the same as in previous years, but losses from other causes rose slightly. Enlistments, however, were only about one-half as many as they had been in previous years. The result was a net loss of almost forty-five men per regiment. An increase, although not a dramatic one, in the number of disciplinary actions resulting in loss to the regiment in 1789 and 1790 suggests that perhaps a tightening of discipline managed to keep losses down. At the same time, few fresh recruits were inducted into the regiments. Of the three major branches, the artillery, which lost a smaller percentage of its personnel than the others, showed the greatest stability.

However, even artillery units were not immune to the turmoil going

<sup>20</sup> This is the same Davout who became one of Napoleon's marshals at the age of thirty-four.

<sup>21</sup> Henri Choppin, *Les insurrections militaires en 1790* (Paris, 1903), pp. 157-86.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 206 ff.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112-50.

on in the army. The Regiment of Grenoble (Fourth) Artillery did get involved in the disorders of 1790. Some soldiers from the regiment joined in an uprising at Valence in which Voisins, the commander of the Artillery School in that city, was murdered.<sup>24</sup>

The same type of rebellion against privilege and traditional authority which occurred in civil society in the early Revolution found its counterpart in the military. The bases for much of the unrest in the army were specifically military conditions (e.g., the great mutiny at Nancy began over complaints about the control of unit funds). However, even when the motivation was entirely apolitical, these revolts can be explained only in the context of the Revolution. As late as early 1789 such widespread conflict between officers and men would have been unthinkable. Furthermore, as exemplified above by the case of the Auvergne Infantry at Maubeuge and the Royal Champagne Cavalry at Hesdin, some troops did become directly involved in local political disorders. The disorganization of the army in 1790 was, then, part of the general disintegration of traditional society.

The fact that the army exhibited the same rebellious spirit as did other major segments of French society made it impossible for the regime to halt or control the Revolution. By the end of 1790 the strength of the entire line army, including the light infantry, can be estimated at approximately 130,000 soldiers and noncommissioned officers, a net loss of more than 20,000 men during the year.<sup>25</sup> More serious was the fact that the reliability of these troops to defend the government was very doubtful, especially in the infantry, which comprised almost three-fourths of the army.

The evidence offered thus far, while providing statistical data, does little to alter the traditional, impressionistic description of the line army during the Revolution. In 1791, however, this decline of the army was arrested and reversed. This last fact has been generally disregarded or

<sup>24</sup> Lieutenant Clément, "Historique du 4<sup>e</sup> Regiment d'Artillerie," pp. 94-104; handwritten, received at the Archives de la Guerre November 6, 1890. This document can be found in the series *Historiques des régiments d'artillerie*, in the carton for the Fourth Artillery.

<sup>25</sup> This estimate of line army strength is above most other estimates. Camille Rousset, in *Les volontaires, 1791-1794* (Paris, 1892), claims that 30,000 men were missing by October 1, 1790 (p. 3). Charles-Louis Chassin, *L'armée et la Révolution* (Paris, 1867), gives an incredibly exact figure of 123,984 men present for the same date (p. 98). S. Vialla, *Marseille révolutionnaire* (Paris, 1910), claims a total of 115,000 men in late 1790 (p. 159). Jules Leverrier, *La naissance de l'armée nationale* (Paris, 1939), estimates a total of less than 120,000 by the beginning of 1791 (p. 67). The discrepancies may be due to a willing acceptance of official figures, a neglect of enlistments during the year, or poor techniques of estimation.

ignored, probably because historians of the army during this period have concentrated on the levies of volunteers which began in 1791.

This year was a period of drastic changes in the army. A decree of January 1, 1791 abolished the names of all regular units, reminiscent of the glories of the Old Regime, and replaced them with numerical designations. In June the Royal Household troops were disbanded. The following month the distinction between French and foreign regiments was abolished. In late August three new line regiments, the nuclei of which were members of the paid National Guard of Paris, and two light infantry battalions, formed in the same way, were created. Meanwhile, between June and August 1791 approximately 100,000 volunteers from the National Guard were called to full-time military service. These "national volunteers," organized in local battalions, formed an entirely separate and distinct—and often rival—army until after the decree of the Amalgam of February 21, 1793.

Besides these organizational changes, the composition of the line army was radically altered. There was a substantial decline in losses among infantry regiments. The desertion rate per regiment remained practically unchanged, at slightly less than fifty-five men per regiment. Losses from other causes, however, were considerably lower than in 1790 (134 men per regiment in 1791 in contrast with 170 in 1790), partly because losses by disciplinary action were less than one-third of the previous year's total. Losses would have been even lower except for the increasing number of noncommissioned officers who were promoted to officers to fill the openings caused by the resignation and emigration of noble officers. In 1791 almost 600 men left the ranks of infantry regiments for this reason.

The great increase in strength which the infantry experienced in 1791 was due primarily to a wave of recruits. Almost 35,000 men enlisted in infantry regiments during that year, an average of 332 enlistments per regiment. Excluding the three new regiments, it can be estimated that the infantry enjoyed a net gain of more than 14,000 men, despite losses.

Inspection reports for the light infantry battalions also showed a sizeable increase in strength between 1789 and 1791. There is, unfortunately, no information for 1790. In 1789 nine of twelve battalions averaged 362 men; in 1791 four of these same units averaged 405 men each. In addition, two new battalions had been formed.<sup>26</sup>

Cavalry regiments also made substantial, but less dramatic, net gains in 1791. These were accomplished despite increased losses. The

<sup>26</sup> For these inspection reports, see A.G., Ser. X<sup>b</sup>124 and 199–201.

desertion rate increased from less than eleven in 1790 to fifteen deserters per regiment. Losses from all other causes also increased, from fifty-five to almost eighty men per regiment. These increased losses occurred because more men were discharged and more were stricken from the rolls in 1791 than in previous years. Enlistments, on the other hand, increased considerably and were four times as numerous as in 1790. They did not, however, reach the enormous figures which they did in the infantry. The cavalry was being renewed but at a much less frantic rate than was the infantry.

Once again in 1791 the artillery regiments displayed more stability than the other two branches. The desertion rate increased in this year but still averaged less than twenty men per regiment. Losses from other causes were similar to those of the previous three years. The enlistment rate was more than three times as great as in 1790 and greater by far than in any year since 1786. Instead of being renewed, however, the artillery gave the impression of absorbing increased numbers into its established organization.

Explanations for these developments must be sought in various areas both within and outside the army. One of the major causes of desertion, conflict between officers and men, had been mitigated in 1791. In September of 1790 a decree of the National Assembly had made all new appointments as sublieutenants subject to competitive exams, reserving, however, one-fourth of such vacancies for noncommissioned officers. By 1791 the enforcement of this decree had begun to break down the previous caste distinctions in the army. This measure failed to fill the officer vacancies, and a decree of November 29, 1791 suspended the examinations and simply reserved one-half of the sublieutenancies for noncommissioned officers of the line army and one-half for National Guard members. Although the effects of this measure were not felt until the following year, approximately 800 men were commissioned from the ranks during 1791, and by the end of that year ex-rankers constituted about one-sixth of the entire officer corps.

The vacancies which these soldiers filled had been created primarily by the resignation and emigration of noble officers. This tendency had received new impetus in 1791. Simply the changing of the names of regiments to numbers had alienated many officers.<sup>27</sup> On June 11, 1791 the Assembly demanded an oath from officers, individually and in writing, swearing fidelity to the nation, the law, and the king and promising to accept the new constitution (as yet not promulgated). Of the approximately 9,500 officers in service, about 2,000 refused

<sup>27</sup> J. Revol, *Histoire de l'armée française* (Paris, 1929), p. 132.

to do so.<sup>28</sup> On July 30, 1791 a decree abolished all orders of chivalry and all decorations except the Cross of St. Louis and forbade the use of all noble titles even if preceded by *ci-devant*.

The failure of the flight to Varennes and the suspension of the king from his functions was a crucial point in the history of the emigration. The king himself had given the example, and it could no longer be considered dereliction of duty, desertion, or treason to follow his lead. By the end of 1791 at least 2,000 additional officers had emigrated.<sup>29</sup>

The departure of these opponents of the changes brought by the Revolution and their replacement by commoners from the ranks undoubtedly increased the homogeneity of the army. Nevertheless, noble dominance of the officer corps remained after noble monopoly had disappeared, and conflicts between troops and noble officers persisted. The Seventeenth Infantry Regiment, for example, was commanded entirely by nobles. From May to July frequent conflicts led to all the officers being driven away. The new colonel, Dumas de Saint-Marcel, appointed July 25, 1791, was able to get only seven officers to return to the regiment.<sup>30</sup> A similar situation occurred in the Twentieth Infantry, which was garrisoned at Perpignan during 1791. After frequent conflicts and failure to win over their men, the majority of the regiment's officers emigrated to Spain.<sup>31</sup> With the encouragement of local clubs the men of the Thirteenth Cavalry and Second Dragoons also chased away their noble officers and took command themselves.<sup>32</sup> Conflicts such as these help to account for the desertion rate.

Another important motive for desertion in 1791 was the attraction of the newly formed battalions of national volunteers. Approximately 100,000 of these men were called up by the National Assembly after the flight to Varennes. The volunteers enlisted in their own departmental battalions for one campaign only, that is, until December 1, 1792. They elected their officers and noncommissioned officers. They received a rate of pay much higher than in the line army and were subjected to a less vigorous discipline. Early regulations required that all officers and noncommissioned officers of the national volunteers

<sup>28</sup> Albert Soboul, *L'armée nationale sous la Révolution* (Paris, 1945), p. 54. Hartmann (n. 16 above), p. 288, says 1,500.

<sup>29</sup> Chassin, p. 117; Georges Sagnier, *La désertion dans le Pas-de-Calais de 1792 à 1802* (Blangemont, 1965), p. 25; and Arthur Chuquet, *La première invasion prussienne* (Paris, 1886), p. 40.

<sup>30</sup> Pagès-Xatart (n. 18 above), pp. 203–10.

<sup>31</sup> Capitaine E. de Fonclare, *Historique du 20<sup>e</sup> Régiment d'Infanterie* (Châteauroux, 1896), pp. 6–16.

<sup>32</sup> D'Hauterive (n. 19 above), pp. 167–69.



have prior military experience in either the line army or the National Guard. Some were specifically required to have had regular army service: one of the two lieutenant colonels was required to have been a line captain, the adjutant major had to have been a lieutenant in the line army, and the sergeant major had to be chosen from among line noncommissioned officers. Many soldiers of the regular army deserted to join volunteer battalions which offered this much more appealing form of military service.<sup>33</sup>

With this new, more attractive army enlisting 100,000 men in 1791, it is necessary to investigate how the regular army was able to get over 50,000 recruits during the same year. A major factor in increased enrollment was the reform of recruitment practices. A series of decrees in February and March 1791 made municipalities responsible for reviewing the terms of all enlistments, thus severely curbing the fraud and violence so common in the past.<sup>34</sup> In addition, the system of voluntary enlistments for a bonus was maintained. The prospect of the immediate payment of a large sum, about 100 *livres*, undoubtedly had more appeal for some recruits than the higher regular pay of the volunteers.

Other changes in the line army made the lot of a soldier much less degrading than previously. On April 29, 1791 previous legislation (the law of September 19, 1790) forbidding all ranks to attend clubs even when off duty was revoked. In February 1791 the Assembly had decreed that all soldiers with sixteen or more years of honorable and uninterrupted service were to receive the rights of active citizens, regardless of the amount of taxes they paid. This was the beginning of a policy followed throughout the Revolution which raised the status of a common soldier from that of a hired mercenary to that of an honorable profession worthy of the aspirations and respect of all good citizens.

Finally, the desire to defend France and the Revolution against a hostile, arming Europe, a trait usually attributed to the volunteers of 1791, cannot be denied to the recruits to the line army. The choice of enlisting in the volunteer battalions or line regiments was probably often determined by the presence of a recruiter from one army or the other in the potential recruits' town or village. The cold calculation of the advantages of joining one army over those of joining the other was probably absent more often than present.

By the end of 1791 the line army had recovered from the losses

<sup>33</sup> Eugene Carras, *La pensée militaire française* (Paris, 1960), p. 200; Chuquet, p. 16.

<sup>34</sup> Bernard Mouillard, *Le recrutement de l'armée révolutionnaire dans le Puy-de-Dôme* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1926), pp. 11-12.

of 1790 and had a total strength greater than at any time since the beginning of the Revolution. Even these substantial gains were, however, dwarfed by the mass mobilization of 1792, which, contrary to what is generally maintained, affected the line army at least as much as the volunteers.<sup>35</sup>

Besides this great increase in strength, which will be described presently, important changes also took place in the organization of the line army during 1792. In the autumn of 1792 twelve line regiments, eleven Swiss and the Liégeois, were disbanded because of their political unreliability. During the same year most of the personnel of two cavalry regiments (the Royal Allemand or Fifteenth Cavalry and the Saxe or Fourth Hussars) emigrated, and both units ceased to exist as such. On the other hand, during 1792 five colonial units were incorporated into the line army as the 106th–110th Infantry Regiments. Furthermore, after August 10, 1792 numerous new mounted units (free corps, legions, volunteers) were created. Of these, four regiments (one cavalry, one chasseur, and two hussar units) were officially incorporated into the line army by the end of the year.<sup>36</sup> The number of artillery regiments was raised to eight by the decree of August 27, 1792, which ordered the reorganization of the Artillery of the Colonies and designated it as the Eighth Artillery Regiment.

Into these units poured an enormous influx of recruits during 1792. In the infantry regiments studied<sup>37</sup> there was an average gain of 587 men per regiment! Losses too were high. An average of 220 men per regiment were lost during the year, eighty-seven of whom were deserters. By the end of 1792 the average infantry regiment mustered more than 1,400 men. Although the information on the light infantry is sparse, it does appear that the fourteen battalions were also being brought up to their authorized strength of 700 men each.<sup>38</sup> Information

<sup>35</sup> Typical of this misimpression is the view of Godechot, who, in speaking of the better conditions in the volunteer battalions of 1791, says: "Henceforth, the professional army ceased getting recruits. All those who wanted to be soldiers engaged in the Volunteers" (*La grande nation*, 1:140).

<sup>36</sup> The only satisfactory discussion of this complicated phenomenon (and a very good description it is) can be found in Édouard Desbrière and Maurice Sautai, *La cavalerie pendant la Révolution*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1970), 1:122–46.

<sup>37</sup> Because three troop registers (those of the Twenty-ninth, Thirty-sixth, and Fortieth Infantry Regiments) were incomplete for 1792, the conclusions for that year are based on a sample of twenty, not twenty-three, infantry regiments. It might be noted that all three were engaged in combat during 1792, and this may explain the neglect of records.

<sup>38</sup> This estimate is based upon the inspection reports of three battalions (the Fifth, Eighth, and Twelfth Light Infantry), dated between May 24, 1792 and May 12, 1793 (see A.G., Ser. X<sup>o</sup>200 and 201).

on what types of gains and losses these units experienced was unavailable. There can be no doubt, however, that there had been a substantial increase in the number of enlistments.

The situation in the cavalry regiments was for the first time similar to that in the infantry. Desertions, which averaged thirty-four per regiment, were twice as numerous as in 1791 and three times the average of 1790. Other losses averaged slightly more than seventy men per regiment. Enlistments showed a less spectacular increase than in the infantry but were indeed remarkable. An average of almost 190 men per regiment enlisted in 1792.

Artillery regiments enjoyed the greatest net gains of all branches. Almost 500 men per regiment enlisted in 1792. Desertion rates were 50 percent higher than in 1791 but still amounted to less than thirty men per regiment. Losses from other causes increased greatly (more than 75 percent) from 1791, and this was the only area in which the artillery differed markedly from the other two branches. For the first time, in the period of this study, the artillery regiments approached their authorized complement of men.

The basic reason for these drastic changes was obviously the coming of the war which began in April 1792. France and the Revolution were mobilizing all their forces to wage war against the hostile states of Europe, and in this mobilization considerable attention was paid to the line army, without which military victory would probably have been impossible.

Two laws in January and July 1792, which have been generally disregarded by historians, were responsible for the great increase in the strength of the regular army in that year. The law of January 25, 1792 required that all members of the National Guard not on active duty and all citizens capable of bearing arms report to the capital of their canton on the first Sunday following the publication of the law. Men from these two groups could at that time enroll in the line army. All men eighteen to fifty years of age were eligible to enlist. Bonuses, one-half of which were to be paid upon enlistment and the other half in the regiment, were set at 80 *livres* in the infantry and 120 *livres* in the cavalry and artillery. The term of enlistment was reduced from eight to three years, or even less if conditions warranted.<sup>39</sup>

A decree sanctioned July 22, 1792 following the declaration of *la patrie en danger* maintained the same length of enlistment and the same bonus conditions; however, the minimum age was lowered from

<sup>39</sup> B. C. Gournay, ed., *Journal Militaire* I (1792):67-71. This journal served as the semiofficial bulletin for military announcements from its founding in 1790 until its replacement by the *Bulletin Officiel* in 1886.

eighteen to sixteen. Furthermore, the departmental directories were to receive a sum of ten *livres* for each recruit to the line army in order to defray the expenses of supervising recruitment. Most important was the provision of this law which set a quota of men for each department; for the first time in its history the line army was to depend upon a form of conscription, rather than the ancient policy of voluntary enlistments. The total number of recruits to be thus raised for the line army was set at 50,000.<sup>40</sup>

During 1792 there were in fact approximately 70,000 enlistments in the three basic branches. Despite the loss of almost 30,000 men and despite the disbanding of twelve foreign infantry regiments and the emigration of two cavalry regiments, by the end of 1792 the line army could boast a net gain of 20,000–25,000 men. The motivation provided by the new legislation and the threat of foreign invasion were primarily responsible for this increase.

The war also accounted for the increased desertion rate. As Corvisier points out in his excellent study,<sup>41</sup> desertion rates increased considerably during wartime. Imminent personal danger, wretched physical conditions, and the chaos of combat provided both motives and means for increased desertion. Nothing in the histories of the infantry regiments studied indicated a factor which could provide an explanation for the increased number of desertions, except the war and, of course, the expanded size of the regiments. However, the average increase in the strength of infantry regiments in 1792 was less than 40 percent; the increase in desertions, over 60 percent.

Cavalry regiments increased their strength by an average of more than 15 percent, but desertions increased by more than 125 percent. It is questionable whether this large increase in desertions can be blamed solely on the war. What evidence there is, although not entirely conclusive, indicates that generally a greater solidarity between noble officers and their men existed in the cavalry than in other branches. A more extensive and demanding training of both rider and mount, which was required in the cavalry, may well have created a tighter discipline in this branch than in the infantry.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the proportion of foreigners, especially in the hussar regiments,<sup>43</sup> may have made the bond between

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 415–34.

<sup>41</sup> *L'armée française*, 1:736.

<sup>42</sup> For details on cavalry training, according to the ordinance of 1788, see Desbrière and Sautai, *La cavaleri de 1740 à 1789*, pp. 100–102.

<sup>43</sup> A sample of 3 percent of one-half of the men in the cavalry regiments, as of February 28, 1793, indicates that while 4 percent of the cavalry as a whole was composed of foreigners, 12 percent of the hussars were foreigners, mostly Germans.

officers and men a stronger tie than political loyalties. Some specific instances certainly bear this out. The only two regiments of the line army to follow their officers into emigration were two cavalry regiments (the Fifteenth Cavalry and Fourth Hussars) in 1792. On April 8, 1792 fourteen officers and fifty men of the Twelfth Cavalry deserted from Altkirch in Alsace and passed over the frontier.<sup>44</sup> The Sixth Hussars suffered the greatest loss through desertion of all cavalry regiments in 1792; it lost 101 deserters, of whom approximately half passed over to the enemy at the time of Lafayette's treason in August.<sup>45</sup> Later, other cavalry regiments were roughly influenced by the emigration of Dumouriez in April 1793. The Third Dragoons lost over 100 men by emigration at that time, and the First Hussars had nearly 200 men pass over to the enemy during the same episode.<sup>46</sup> Clearly, many of the desertions in cavalry units during 1792 were emigrations, rather than simple desertions.

During 1792 the average artillery regiment increased its strength by more than 30 percent. Desertions increased by approximately 50 percent. The conditions of war, it appears, were primarily responsible for the excess of desertions.

Losses from causes other than desertion showed a slight decrease, except in artillery regiments, where they increased. This was due to a number of factors. The number of discharges dropped considerably from 1791 to 1792; the number of men discharged in the latter year was only about 40 percent of the figure for 1791. The nation could not afford to lose experienced soldiers and so restricted its discharge policy. On the other hand, war introduced a new category into the loss columns, combat losses. These, however, were very small and made only minor differences in 1792.

More important as a cause of loss to the enlisted ranks were the promotions of men to officers. Approximately 2,200 men from the ranks were commissioned as officers in 1792. This was caused by the increasing wave of emigrations by noble officers in that year. The declaration of war on April 20 presented to many of them the opportunity to restore the king to his powers by joining the army of the *émigrés*. From mid-April to mid-July 500–600 noble officers resigned their commissions or left their posts.<sup>47</sup> The outrages inflicted on the king on

<sup>44</sup> Desbrière and Sautai, *La cavalerie pendant la Révolution*, 1:41.

<sup>45</sup> Capitaine C. Voisin, *Historique du 6<sup>m</sup>e Hussards* (Libourne, 1888), pp. 8–20; d'Hauterive (n. 19 above), p. 230.

<sup>46</sup> This information is from the *contrôles* for these two regiments.

<sup>47</sup> Spenser Wilkinson, *The French Army before Napoleon* (Oxford, 1915), p. 117; Sagnier (n. 29 above), p. 25.

June 20 and his deposition on August 10 motivated still more noble officers to emigrate.<sup>48</sup> Even those noble officers who chose loyalty to France over loyalty to the monarchy were often hounded from the army by clubs, radical newspapers, or their own troops.<sup>49</sup> It can be estimated that by early 1793 more than half the officers serving in the line army were former enlisted men promoted since 1789.

In the first two months of 1793, immediately before the decree of the Amalgam, the line infantry regiments studied<sup>50</sup> suffered a decline in strength. There was a net loss of more than fifty men per regiment. This was due primarily to a precipitous decline in enlistments, which averaged only eight per regiment for January and February. Losses due to desertions and other causes declined, but not nearly enough to compensate for the lack of enlistments.

On October 23, 1792, after the invaders had been stopped at Valmy in the previous month, General Kellermann had three salvoes fired to announce the fact that no enemy remained on the soil of the Republic.<sup>51</sup> This successful defense was followed by an equally successful offensive which culminated in the French victory of Jemappes on November 6, 1792. The conquest of Belgium followed. Meanwhile, the army of General Montesquiou had conquered Savoy, and the army of General Custine had penetrated into the Rhineland. Thus, by early 1793 most of the line regiments were fighting on foreign soil. The authorities, both military and civilian, were hopelessly unprepared to meet this situation. The supply system had broken down, the *assignats* could purchase nothing, and transportation was in horrible condition.<sup>52</sup> Under these circumstances it was not surprising that reinforcements fell off drastically.

However, the situation was not the same in the cavalry regiments investigated. They maintained their average strength at almost exactly the same level. As in the infantry, losses from desertions and other causes dropped significantly. The fact that the French now found themselves invaders in foreign country undoubtedly accounted for this situation. Unlike the infantry, however, the average increase in en-

<sup>48</sup> Hartmann (n. 16 above), pp. 486–88, 499.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 512–14, 520–22.

<sup>50</sup> The troop registers of six infantry regiments were incomplete for early 1793. Hence, the basis for the succeeding conclusions is a sample of seventeen, not twenty-three, regiments. Each of these six regiments was engaged in foreign combat areas during this period.

<sup>51</sup> Arthur Chuquet, *La retraite de Brunswick* (Paris, 1887), p. 208.

<sup>52</sup> Arthur Chuquet, *Jemappes* (Paris, 1890), pp. 130, 166; Gaxotte (n. 1 above), p. 299; Charles de Gaulle, *France and Her Army* (London, 1945), pp. 35–36.

listments was enough to offset the losses which were suffered. In this instance our study of *average* changes is misleading, however, for one-third of the total gains among the fifteen cavalry regiments investigated came in one regiment, the Third Hussars. This regiment was one of the very few line regiments studied that remained in France during this period.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, for most of the cavalry units there was a decline in strength in early 1793, not as great as in the infantry but due to the same factor, a decrease in enlistments because of the conditions imposed by the war.

Artillery regiments, in contrast, continued their phenomenal growth, increasing by almost 100 men per regiment in the first two months of 1793. This increase brought their average strength to almost 1,400 men each, only slightly less than their full complement. Losses, as in the other two branches, declined significantly. It is noteworthy that the Fourth Artillery, which had all of its companies in action in Savoy,<sup>54</sup> enlisted no recruits in January or February 1793, while the Sixth Artillery, which had companies in France,<sup>55</sup> engaged 241 recruits.

Thus, in early 1793 the line army suffered a slight decline in strength, but one which is readily explained by the peculiar circumstances of the army at that period. It appeared that the problems within the line army, which had caused its near collapse in 1790, had been largely resolved. Resignations and emigrations had purged much of the officer corps, and conflicts between troops and officers had been greatly, although not completely, alleviated. Ex-rankers, most of whom had proven their military value during the Old Regime, filled a majority of the junior officer posts. In the ranks a huge influx of recent enlistments had added youth and, presumably, enthusiasm to the professionalism of the older soldiers. The contributions of the line army to the victories of the previous autumn had been at least as great as, and probably greater than, the contributions of the national volunteers.<sup>56</sup> With more than 175,000 men in early 1793, the line army constituted an essential element of the armed forces of the French Republic.

<sup>53</sup> See Capitaine Raoul Dupuy, *Historique du 3<sup>e</sup> Régiment de Hussards* (Paris, 1887), pp. 9–14.

<sup>54</sup> Clément, (n. 24 above), pp. 94–104.

<sup>55</sup> Anonymous, *Résumé de l'histoire du 6<sup>e</sup> Régiment d'Artillerie* (Valence, 1903), pp. 36–37.

<sup>56</sup> Here are only two, but important, examples. At Valmy the French infantry was composed of forty-four battalions of line infantry and thirty battalions of volunteers, while the cavalry and artillery units were all from line regiments (Godechot, 1:140). At Jemappes there were thirty-two infantry battalions of the line army and thirty-eight of volunteers, while the cavalry included ten line regiments and three free corps (Chuquet, *Jemappes*, pp. 72–3).

Since the first levy of national volunteers in 1791, two armies had existed side by side, the volunteers clothed in the blue uniforms of the National Guard and the line army still in the white of the Royal Army. Recruitment, promotion, discipline, pay and administration were different and distinct for the two armies. This situation persisted until February 21, 1793, when the proposal of Dubois-Crancé to amalgamate the two forces was passed into law by the Convention. The purpose of this measure, which formed two battalions of volunteers and one battalion of line infantry into one infantry "demi-brigade," is usually interpreted as a desire to combine the revolutionary fervor of the volunteers with the professional experience of the regulars.<sup>57</sup> Undoubtedly this was a motivation, but the matter cannot be dismissed so simply.

Since the opening of hostilities both types of troops had served together in field armies. Furthermore, they had been integrated rather than used as two distinct forces. In the campaign of 1792 Lafayette had commonly used a tactical unit termed a "brigade," composed of two volunteer battalions and one line regiment (two battalions).<sup>58</sup> In some instances the demi-brigades of the Year II were even more exactly foreshadowed. The first battalion of the Seventeenth Infantry Regiment was combined with the First Battalion of the Meurthe and the Second Battalion of the Saône-et-Loire to form the Seventh Brigade of the Army of the North in late July 1792.<sup>59</sup> At the same time the first battalion of the Forty-fifth Infantry Regiment was united with two battalions of volunteers to form the Second Brigade at the camp of Maubeuge.<sup>60</sup> In the army of Dumouriez, which won the victory of Jemappes in November 1792, the infantry was organized in essentially the same manner.<sup>61</sup>

There can be little doubt that, principles aside, the practical solution of immediate and pressing problems in administration and tactics demanded some sort of amalgamation. Chassin, in his discussion of the report of Dubois-Crancé in February 1793, summarizes these problems very well. He points out the following: the multiplicity of different units required too complex an administration; the variable number

<sup>57</sup> For example, see Jean Jaurès, *L'armée nouvelle* (Paris, 1915), pp. 168-69; Albert Soboul, *Les soldats de l'an II* (Paris, 1959), p. 171; and Léon Lévy-Schneider, "L'armée et la Convention," in *L'oeuvre sociale de la Révolution française*, ed. Emile Faquet (Paris, 1901), pp. 396-97.

<sup>58</sup> Chuquet, *La première invasion prussienne*, p. 76.

<sup>59</sup> Pagès-Xatart, pp. 210-22.

<sup>60</sup> Beslay (n. 17 above), p. 85.

<sup>61</sup> Chuquet, *Jemappes*, pp. 72-73.



of effectives in different types of units made it impossible for a commander to assess his strength accurately; continued inequities in pay between the volunteers and regulars might tear the army apart; a unified program of instruction was necessary to train recruits rapidly; and, finally, the excessive number of small staffs was a useless drain of needed officers.<sup>62</sup> Such practical considerations could not but have influenced the decision on the "Amalgam."

Thus, although it was displaying a vitality and homogeneity without precedent in its past, the line army was abolished as a distinct institution on February 21, 1793.<sup>63</sup> Political principles and military exigencies dictated this measure. The success of the Amalgam, which was proven by the victories of the Year II, was due in large part to the line army, as it had been changed and adapted by the events of the Revolution.

<sup>62</sup> Chassin (n. 25 above), p. 164.

<sup>63</sup> The actual implementation of this decree was a long and difficult process, one not completed until years after the decree. The research of M. Jean-Paul Bertaud has already indicated this fact and will eventually provide a much clearer idea of the results of this policy.