

THE UNITED STATES NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

WARS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

BY

STEVEN T. ROSS



2000–2001

SELECTED READING FOR STRATEGY AND POLICY

Introduction

This handout is designed to provide background information on the impact of the French Revolution on warfare. It contains articles dealing with a range of subjects including the creation of a mass citizen army, Republican operations and strategies political goals, sea power, coalitions and popular insurrections. It covers the period 1789 to 1799. Although there is some overlap among the entries the handbook does present a general overview of the dramatic changes in warfare during the Revolution and sets the scene for Napoleon Bonaparte's wars of conquest.

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

In May 1789, when delegates gathered at Versailles, virtually everybody in France was a monarchist. In January 1793 France was a republic, and the new government tried and executed the deposed king. The startling transformation of French political and social life was accompanied not only by rapid change but also by considerable domestic violence. The situation was further complicated by the advent of foreign war.

When superimposed upon an already volatile situation, the war exacerbated existing problems and created new ones never before faced by a modern nation. The war led directly to the overthrow of the monarchy and efforts of the new Republic to mobilize resources for battle produced massive counterrevolutionary responses as well as strife within Republican ranks.

Survival, however, required Republican leaders to create a nation in arms sustained by a centrally directed economy. Moreover, the Republic had to undertake military measures unheard of outside of the writing of a few theorists. French leaders had to create massive new armies and, since most Royalist officers refused to fight for the Republic, create a new officer corps based on loyalty and talent rather than status. Republican leaders had to organize the new troops and devise a tactical system for their employment. A mass citizen army required hitherto unheard of tactics in order to cope with the professional Old Regime armies deployed by the Republic's enemies.

Between 1792 and 1802 the First French Republic fought two great power coalitions and defeated both of them. Simultaneously, Republican forces defeated internal counterrevolutionary armed movements. From the battle of Valmy in 1792 to the Battles of Marengo and Hohenlinden in 1800, warfare was almost uninterrupted. From the plains of Germany to northern Italy and from the high seas to Syria, French land and sea forces were in constant action. They did not win every battle, but republican methods of organization and tactics were effective especially in the hands of a growing number of talented generals, including Napoleon Bonaparte.

Having unleashed such vast military power, various republican governments had difficulty controlling the new military leaders. Consequently, a general finally seized power just as France emerged victorious against the Second Coalition. Nevertheless, the Republic had established a new style and method of warfare. Old Regime warfare was ultimately doomed and warfare was forever changed.

Old Regime Warfare

During the eighteenth century, rulers and statesmen were constantly at war. The great powers waged numerous conflicts for limited political objectives, including the seizure of a province or a colonial possession. Countries also embarked on unlimited wars designed to overthrow an enemy or reduce the power of a major state to the status of minor principality. France and her Allies tried to dismember the Hapsburg domains in the 1740s. During the Seven Years' War Austria, Russia, and France attempted to destroy Prussia as a major power, and the three Eastern Powers executed three partitions of Poland, thus eliminating that state from the map of Europe.

In their perpetual search for power, monarchs did not hesitate to intervene in the internal affairs of other states. Both Spain and France supported the efforts of Stuart pretenders to overthrow the Hanoverian dynasty in Great Britain. The French and Spanish Bourbons assisted American rebels in their struggle against British rule. Prussia aided Belgian revolutionaries against the Hapsburgs, and Russia supported a Polish magnate faction that opposed the king and his reform-minded clique.

The quest for power was relentless. No belief in the virtues of balance, order, and moderation restrained ambitious statesmen. No principles of law, religion, or morality held aggressive rulers in check. Maria Theresa was reputed to have been horrified at the First Partition of Poland, since Catholic Austria was taking land from Catholic Poland, yet one monarch noted that the more she wept the more she took. Great powers regarded weaker states as legitimate prey and were equally content to turn on each other if a favorable opportunity arose. There was no lack of greed or dearth of ambition within the ranks of Old Regime politicians. In fact, the only check upon the greed of one power was the countergreed of others. Since each power looked upon

the others as actual or potential rivals, no state was willing to allow another to increase its strength. Consequently, if a ruler sought new conquests, other powers would either resist or demand a share of the spoils.

The general equality of armed might prevailing among the great powers made it difficult for a state, acting unilaterally, to make extensive conquests. The major Continental powers—France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia—possessed armies numbering anywhere from 130,000 to 350,000 men. Officers came from the aristocracy, while the rank and file were drawn from society's lower orders—conscripted serfs, the unemployed, and even vagabonds and criminals. Governments in the west occasionally conscripted peasants but generally preferred to obtain their long-service soldiers from the marginal elements of society. Armies also made extensive use of mercenaries. The French army, for example, contained Swiss, Italian, Irish, and German formations, and the Prussian army was often over 50 percent non-Prussian. Great Britain depended upon an excellent navy plus a small standing army that could be expanded by hiring regiments from German princes. Mutual animosity and rough military parity made it almost impossible for a single power to impose its will on the others, and consequently, most aggressive enterprises fell short of complete success.

In the Austrian War of the Succession, for example, Britain supported Austria against France, Bavaria and Prussia, and the Hapsburg state emerged intact save for the loss of Silesia, which (though serious) was far from crippling. During the Seven Years War Britain aided Prussia, and the Hohenzollern monarchy preserved its territorial integrity while Great Britain scored significant colonial victories against France and Spain. To redress their losses, France and Spain helped the Americans win their independence from England.

The advent of the revolution in France did not change the nature and objectives of diplomacy. Security and expansion remained the fundamental goals of statesmen, including the leaders of Revolutionary France. French leaders in the 1790s employed diplomacy, armed force, and subversion in a manner similar to that of their Old Regime counterparts. The French did, however, devise new military methods of recruiting, organization, and tactics that gave the nation hitherto unimagined power, thereby enabling France to resist and defeat two great power coalitions and emerge as Europe's single strongest state.

France at War

Ironically, France went to war in April 1792 because politicians—including the king, a variety of political factions, ranging from Royalist to Republican, and a number of ambitious generals—sought to use a foreign war as a means of gaining power at home. The king hoped that foreign bayonets would destroy the revolution and the Constitution of 1791 and restore his power, while the Brissotins believed that a victory would gain popular approval and solidify their power in Paris. France was, however, not prepared for hostilities. There was no coherent strategy or clearly stated political objectives, the nation had no Allies, and the army volunteer units were unready for battle.

At Valmy the steadiness of volunteer battalions and the expertise of French gunners managed to halt the half-hearted invasion of the Prussian army. Louis XVI had been deposed by crowds convinced that he was in league with foreign powers, a National Convention had been elected, and two days after Valmy the Convention proclaimed France to be a republic. Enthusiastic volunteers plus old regular units then launched a series of offensives that overwhelmed enemy forces and enabled the Republic to overrun Belgium and the Rhineland.

The Nation in Arms

The tide of victory soon turned. Austria and Prussia reinforced their armies in the west, and new powers including Great Britain, the Dutch Republic, Spain, Portugal, the Italian princes, and the states of the German Empire joined the war against France in 1793. The Coalition armies drove the French from their initial conquests and invaded the Republic at the same time counterrevolution erupted in the Vendée, Brittany, Normandy, Lyon, Marseilles, and Toulon. The Convention was internally divided, and the Parisian *sans culottes* were ready to strike at the national government unless the Convention undertook a successful war effort and

guaranteed stable prices for basic necessities. Thus, by the spring of 1793, the Republic appeared to be on the brink of military defeat and internal anarchy.

French leaders, however, understood that to avoid catastrophe and probable partition they had to take immediate and drastic action. The Convention therefore, created the Committee of Public Safety to act as an emergency executive authority to direct the war effort. The Committee undertook a mobilization of the Republic's human and economic resources by introducing universal conscription and controls over the economy in order to equip and supply the growing armies. The Committee's efforts were generally successful. By the end of 1793 there were, including the old line army, earlier volunteers from 1792, and new conscripts, nearly 650,000 men under arms. By 1794 there were over 800,000 active troops.

The Committee also found officers to lead the expanded troops. Loyalty and talent replaced birth and purchase as the basis of promotion. Together the officers and the Committee devised a tactical system that combined the discipline of the line army with the élan of the volunteers and conscripts. The tactical system emerged over many months but ultimately provided French combat formations with flexible effective tactics that combined fire, shock, and skirmishing techniques.

The Committee of Public Safety also had to devise a strategy to fulfill the Republic's political objectives and employ the army effectively. Essentially, the Republic's goals were survival, recognition by other powers of the Republic's legitimacy, and a victorious peace—the precise details of which varied significantly from faction to faction and even from individual to individual.

Wars of the Republic

In 1793 French leaders called for attacks at virtually all points of the compass simply to halt the advance of the Coalition armies and defeat internal insurrections. By year's end the Republic had succeeded. Allied advances were halted and counterrevolutionary movements were either destroyed or drastically reduced in strength. The nation had fended off the danger of imminent destruction and gained the time to devise a coherent approach to the war.

In devising strategy for the 1794 campaign, the French government took into account the policies of their major enemies and the existing military situation. The Committee realized that Britain and Austria were the Republic's most determined foes and would agree to peace only in the wake of military defeat. Prussia, on the other hand, was at odds with Austria over the final partition of Poland and was a reluctant belligerent in the west. Furthermore, British and Austrian armies were located in French Flanders and in the northeastern departments, whereas the Prussian forces were further east and posed no immediate threat to Paris. The French, therefore, decided to mount major offensives against coalition forces from Flanders to the Sambre while standing on the strategic defensive against the Prussians.

The 1794 campaign, characterized by constant French attacks designed to wear down and ultimately break the British, Dutch, and Austrian armies along the Franco-Belgian frontier, was militarily successful. Republican armies defeated the coalition armies, overran Belgium, and, in the winter of 1795, successfully invaded the Dutch Republic. The British army was forced to leave the Continent; the Austrians fell back into Germany; and in the summer of 1795, despite a failure to defeat the Austrians in Germany, Prussia and Spain left the war and signed peace treaties with the Republic. Spain even became a French ally in 1796 and declared war on Britain.

Austria and England, however, remained at war with the Republic. Consequently, the post-Thermidorian Convention and the Directory had to devise new strategies to force Vienna and London to sue for peace. In 1796 France struck at Austria by launching campaigns in Germany and Italy. The German campaign called for two armies to advance east towards Vienna. The Italian campaign was to distract Austrian attention from operations in Germany. In Germany, however, the armies failed to support each other, and the Austrians defeated them in detail. The Italian campaign on the other hand was, under Bonaparte's leadership, spectacularly successful. The Directory also tried to strike at Britain by invading Ireland, but bad weather dispersed the expedition.

In 1797 Bonaparte continued his successful operations in Italy, while armies operating in Germany were also victorious. In the spring the Austrians asked for an armistice and peace talks, and concluded a formal peace with the Republic in October. Bereft of Continental allies Britain undertook negotiations with France. The talks failed. Britain remained at war with the Republic, which had nevertheless destroyed the First Coalition.

In 1798 French leaders sought to force Britain to conclude a peace before Austria and other powers resumed hostilities. The government concluded that a direct invasion of the British Isles was too risky given the strength of the Royal Navy. The Directory, therefore, decided upon a less direct approach of striking at British holdings in India rejecting the strategy of striking again at Ireland, where an insurrection was on the verge of exploding. The government appointed Bonaparte to lead an invasion of Egypt in order to establish a forward base for additional operations. From Egypt, Bonaparte was to send troops to India to cooperate with Mysore in a campaign against British holdings on the subcontinent. The loss of British India would, Paris hoped, be so devastating to Britain's economy that London would leave the war.

While the Irish rebellion was drowned in blood, the invasion of Egypt was quite successful; but the British sent a fleet into the Mediterranean that virtually annihilated the French fleet, thereby isolating Bonaparte's army. Furthermore, the French invasion of Egypt and the British riposte unleashed a chain of events that led to the formation of a Second Coalition. Russia, antagonized by the French intrusion into the Middle East where St. Petersburg had ambitions of its own, decided upon war with France. Austria also decided to renew hostilities, and by the first months of 1799 England, Russia, and Austria were ready to begin military operations.

As renewed war loomed on the Continent, events in Egypt, Syria, and India followed their own related course. Bonaparte decided to attempt to reach India by land and marched into Syria at the beginning of 1799. He was, however, unable to take the fortress of Acre and had to retreat to Egypt. He crushed a Turkish counter-offensive but realized that additional major operations were beyond his capabilities and in the fall left his army and returned to France. In India the British struck at Mysore and destroyed the hostile dynasty, thus securing their hold on the subcontinent.

For France, the opening campaigns of the War of the Second Coalition were little short of disastrous. In Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and Holland the Republic's armies suffered defeat after defeat. In the fall, however, France, taking advantage of divisions within the Allied ranks, launched a successful counterblow in Switzerland and soon after forced an Anglo-Russian army in Holland to capitulate. At this juncture Bonaparte, having returned from Egypt, seized control of the government, but the Coalition had already been broken.

In 1800 Bonaparte, like his predecessors, launched a dual campaign in Italy and Germany. Commanding personally in Italy, Bonaparte turned a near defeat into a victory at Marengo. Austria, nevertheless, fought on until defeated in Germany and then sued for peace. Austria left the war in 1801, and Britain, again isolated, came to terms in 1802. France had thus achieved the national goals of survival, recognition, and a victorious peace although the Republic had perished in the process.

The political and economic changes wrought by the French Revolution enabled the Republic to mobilize the nation and wage a people's war. France without Allies fought and defeated two major coalitions. Waging a popular war, however, produced problems rarely encountered by non-revolutionary states.

Civil-military relations, where military men challenged the authority of the government, had not been a serious issue during the Old Regime but became critically important in Republican France. Ambitious generals often tried to impose their own plans on the civil power and occasionally attempted to overthrow the regime. Lafayette and Dumouriez tried to march on Paris; Bonaparte dictated peace terms to Austria in 1797, ignoring the Directory's policy; Championnet on his own invaded Naples; and in 1799 Bonaparte seized power by force of arms.

Public opinion also became an important factor in French strategic decision making. Old Regime rulers had been able to send their armies to war and conclude treaties without reference to popular wishes. In England, parliamentary opinion did have an impact on foreign policy, but parliamentary politics involved a rather narrow elite. In Republican France, however, governments did have to consider public reactions to the

great issues of war and peace. The public could and did manifest its opinions on the great affairs of state either by direct popular insurrection or via the electoral process. Public opinion thus became a major element in government.

During the wars of the First French Republic, political and diplomatic methods and objectives were remarkably similar to the goals and objectives of Old Regime states. What changed dramatically was the means available to French statesmen, means that enabled the Republic to survive, expand the national frontiers, and defeat the combined might of the rest of Europe.

Two contemporary commentators, Goethe and Clausewitz, recognized that the Revolution had introduced fundamental changes in the way states made war. An enormous gulf had opened between the cabinet wars of the Old Regime and the people's wars of the French Revolution.

On the evening of 20 September 1792, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who had accompanied the Prussian army during the invasion of France, was discussing the French victory at the Battle of Valmy. Goethe informed the Prussian officers that a new era had dawned.

Carl von Clausewitz, in reflecting on the impact of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, also understood that a fundamental change had taken place. He described Old Regime warfare as a game of kings and princes noting that

War thus became solely the concern of the government to the extent that governments parted company with their peoples and behaved as if they were themselves the state. Their means of waging war came to consist of the money in their coffers and of such idle vagabonds as they could lay their hands on either at home or abroad.¹

Warfare was ineffective, not because the rulers of Europe were peacefully inclined, but rather because commanders leading fragile armies were reluctant to risk battle. Clausewitz noted that before the Revolution

The plan for a given campaign was to take an enemy fortress or prevent the capture of one's own. No battle was ever sought, or fought, unless it were indispensable for that purpose. Anyone who fought a battle that was not strictly necessary, simply out of an innate desire for victory, was considered reckless. A campaign was usually spent on a siege, or two at the most. Winter quarters were assumed to be necessary for everyone. The poor condition of one side did not constitute an advantage to the other, and contact almost ceased between both. Winter quarters set strict limits to the operations of a campaign.²

The results of war were limited not by design but by circumstance. Rough military equality among the great powers and the limitations of Old Regime armies set finite limits on the results of warfare. The French Revolution, by transforming the subject into a citizen, in turn changed the face of war by making possible a people's war. Clausewitz understood the fundamental transformation of war noting that

In 1793 a force appeared that beggared all imagination. Suddenly war again became the business of the people—a people of thirty million all of whom considered themselves to be citizens. The people became a participant in the war; instead of governments and armies as heretofore, the full weight of the nation was thrown into the balance. The resources and efforts now available for use surpassed all conventional limits; nothing now impeded the vigor with which war could be waged, and consequently the opponents of France faced the utmost peril.³

Despite some hyperbole and oversimplification, both Goethe and Clausewitz understood that if the political ends of warfare remained fairly constant, the means had changed dramatically.

Notes

1. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 589.

2. *On War*, p. 591.

3. *On War*, pp. 591–92.

*Revolutionary Government
Policy and Personalities*

NATIONAL CONVENTION (1792–1795). The National Convention consisted of 749 deputies elected in September 1792. The Convention was supposed to write a new constitution for the nation and govern the country as a provisional government until the constitution could be put into effect. The Convention faced daunting tasks, for in addition to its assigned role it had to deal with the foreign war, domestic counterrevolution, factional conflicts among the deputies, and direct pressure from the Parisian populace.

The deputies were drawn primarily from the middle class. The largest occupational group were lawyers, but there were also clergymen, doctors, soldiers, businessmen, farmers, and even a few noblemen. Many of the deputies had political experience—191 of them had served in the former Legislative Assembly, and 83 had been members of the Constituent Assembly. Others had been local officials. Only a small minority had no prior experience in government.

The Convention was divided into factions: about 25 percent of the deputies were anti-Parisian Girondins. Montagnards—who favored the creation of a strong central government, at least for the duration of the war emergency, and were willing to make some concessions to the demands of the Parisians, including price controls and a vigorous war effort—comprised slightly more than 30 percent of the deputies. Known as the Mountain because they occupied highest seats in the convention hall, most Montagnards were also members of the Jacobin Club. The remaining members of the convention were known as the Plain, whose members tended to react on an issue-by-issue basis. During the Crisis of 1793, however, the plain, more often than not, tended to support the Montagnards. The Mountain, therefore, had the support of about two-thirds of the deputies by late 1793.

The Convention to meet immediate threats to the new Republic created a highly centralized regime, including controls over the nation's manpower and economy. A series of committees, including the Committee of Public Safety, and Representatives on Mission, armed with plenary powers, were created in order to conduct an efficient and unified war effort.

Ironically, most studies of the Convention focus on issues of politics and social policy rather than on the issues that beset the Republic. The later political right has accused the Convention of being composed of leftist ideologues trying to impose abstract political ideas on reality. Marxists tended to claim that the Convention was an arm of the bourgeois that sought to crush the aspirations of the lower classes. A few have argued that extraordinary circumstances drove the deputies to take extraordinary measures to deal with problems that, if unsolved, might have led to the collapse of the Republic.

The achievements of the Convention were impressive. A war emergency government was created, and its powers were renewed each month by the Convention until the emergency was resolved. After July 1794, much of the power of the Committee of Public Safety was reduced. Foreign invasion was defeated. Counterrevolutionary forces, though not eliminated, were greatly reduced in power. The nation was effectively mobilized. On the other hand, the Convention did not succeed in creating a smoothly functioning democracy, and the government created by the constitution of 1795 was quite weak. The Convention did turn the tide of the war but never ended hostilities successfully. Foreign and internal stability ultimately eluded the Convention, but the deputies by their efforts did enable the Republic to survive the crisis of 1793 and turned the tide of battle against both foreign and domestic enemies.

COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SAFETY (1793–1795). The deposition of the king, creation of a republic, foreign war, the outbreak of counterrevolution, and political factionalism threatened to reduce France to a state of anarchy and open the way for foreign conquest. As a response to the growing crisis, French leaders had to create a strong centralized authority. On 15 August 1792, before dissolving itself, the Legislative Assembly transferred the powers of the deposed monarch to an Executive Council of Ministers. The Council, however, could not function effectively because of the heavy workload borne by individual ministers. Consequently, the National Convention created on 1 January 1793 a Committee of General Defense with 24 members selected from among the elected deputies. The Committee was to assist the ministers and decide on urgent military measures. The Committee, however, was too large and unwieldy to function effectively, and the Committee of General Defense called for the creation of a smaller more efficient Committee.

On 28 March the Convention created a Committee of Public Safety, and on 6 April named the nine deputies who would compose the committee. Between 7 April and 10 July 1793 the Committee sought to reinvigorate the war effort. Gradually, the Convention eliminated so-called moderates and brought onto the Committee deputies from the Montagnard faction, who were above all things concerned with the survival of the Republic and winning the war. By 10 July 1793, the Committee of Public Safety consisted of the twelve deputies, led by Robespierre, who composed what future generations were to call the Great Committee of Public Safety.

The members of the Committee were largely successful middle-class lawyers and businessmen. There were also two army officers, an ex-nobleman, and an actor. They were deputies from the Convention, and their powers were renewed by the Convention each month. Some have viewed the Committee as a group of ideologues willing to use any means to create their vision of a Jacobin Republic. They were, according to this view, essentially abnormal individuals who obtained power in abnormal circumstances. Others have argued that Committee members were essentially normal people forced to cope with the near catastrophic conditions besetting France in the summer of 1793. They had, according to this view, to take extraordinary measures to cope with prevailing conditions. They had to establish a constitutional dictatorship in order to deal effectively with the foreign war and counterrevolution while simultaneously coping with political turbulence within the Republican ranks.

Ironically, most scholars and commentators have focused on the Committee's political and social policies and the Committee's relationship with society's lower classes. A crucial question, however, remains: How did the Committee deal with diplomatic and strategic issues?

Essentially, the Committee moved effectively to nationalize the people and the economy in order to win the war. The Committee created a national army by mobilizing the nation's populace, expanding the army, and abolishing distinctions among regular volunteer and conscript troops. By 1794 the nation had more than 800,000 men under arms. The Committee, despite a belief in a free market economy, established wage, price, import, and export controls to sustain the war effort and provide essential commodities at affordable prices to the lower classes. The Committee found officers to train and lead the new armies and devised a strategy for their employment.

In 1793 the Committee insisted on vigorous offensives on all fronts to halt the progress of counterrevolution and coalition advances. In the winter of 1793 France had gained breathing space. The Committee then noted that Austria and England were the powers most committed to the war, while Prussia was a reluctant partner. Moreover, the Austrian and British armies along with other contingents were located in the Low Countries and northern France, thus posing a more immediate threat to Paris than enemy forces in the Rhineland or along the Alps and Pyrenees. The Committee, therefore, decided that the Republic's main offensive operation in 1794 would take place along a front from the Channel to the Meuse, and directed reinforcements to the Army of the North. The offensive was ultimately successful, which in turn led to the Thermidorian Reaction of 27 July 1794, wherein Robespierre and his closest Allies on the Committee were removed from office and executed.

During its time in power the Committee had functioned effectively. The Law of 14 Frimire (4 December 1793) and 12 Germinal (2 April 1794) had centralized power in the Committee's hands by subordinating ministers and local authorities to Committee direction. In its day-to-day operations, Committee members distributed tasks among themselves. Some, like Carnot and Prieur de la Côte d'Or, dealt with military matters, others with the navy or provisions or diplomacy. Robespierre may well have been the dominant figure, but responsibility was collective and all served at the pleasure of the Convention.

After Thermidor, the Committee continued to function with limited powers. It confined itself essentially to issues of war and diplomacy, and personnel was changed each month. Nevertheless, the Committee had a number of successes: Holland was overrun, and Prussia and Spain left the war and recognized the Republic. The Convention, meanwhile, had finished writing a new constitution on 22 August 1795, and the Committee disappeared in November. It had, despite its shortcomings, organized the nation for war and enabled the Republic to survive.

TERROR, THE (1793–1794). As a response to foreign invasion, rebellion, and internal subversion, the Convention established what amounted to a centralized instrument of national defense. The structure of the Terror involved a number of incremental steps.

On 10 March 1793, the Convention established a Revolutionary Tribunal to punish crimes against the Revolution. A law of 21 March gave legal status to local Committees of Surveillance that had formed spontaneously in many departments and ordered areas without Committees to establish them. The Committees had the power to arrest suspects. A law of 19 March called for the rapid execution of rebels taken in the field, while a law of 23 April called for the deportation of refractory priests; if they returned, they were subject to immediate execution. The Law of Suspects of 17 September 1793 defined crimes against the revolution to include both political and economic crimes, such as hoarding and counterfeiting.

On 10 October 1793, the Convention declared that the French government was, until the end of hostilities, a revolutionary regime. The constitution was suspended, and the Committee of Public Safety received the authority to nominate generals, regulate the activities of ministers, and exercise control over local officials. On 14 December 1793 the Convention further extended the Committee's powers. Ministers were to report on their activities to the Committee every ten days. Local authorities were forbidden to alter or amend decrees emanating from Paris, and locally elected officials in districts and communes were replaced with national agents responsible directly to the Committee. Finally, the decree placed the conduct of foreign affairs directly in the hands of the Committee.

A final step in the centralization of governmental authority came on 1 April 1794, when the Convention abolished the council of ministers and replaced it with a dozen commissions reporting directly to the Committee. The Committee of Public Safety quickly emerged as the locus of power in the Republic.

Known as the Republic of Terror and Virtue, the regime was designed to deal with a near-catastrophic emergency situation. *Terror* in theory was directed at the enemies of the Revolution. *Virtue* did not mean a puritanical system of morality. Rather, the use of the word “virtue” derived from a Latin term, meaning a willingness to subordinate personal interests to the good of society during a crisis. Justice was not, of course, fully even-handed. Many people were arrested for what others perceived as disloyalty. Political rivals occasionally fell victim to the Revolution not for disloyalty but for disagreements, legitimate for the most part, over policy.

The Terror did not turn France into a charnel house. The total number of people executed during the Terror numbered about 40,000. The vast majority of those executed were rebels taken with arms in hand waging war against the government. The Terror fell most heavily in the Vendée, Brittany, Lyon, Toulon, and Marseilles, all areas of major counterrevolutionary insurrection. By the summer of 1794, as the tide of war turned, the Convention turned and destroyed the leaders of the Terror, some of whom had come to believe that opposition to their views was tantamount to treason. The Terror, nevertheless, worked in that it enabled the government to organize the nation for total war, defeated the internal rebellions, and turned the tide of battle against the nation's external enemies.

REPRESENTATIVES ON MISSION. Representatives on Mission were deputies to the National Convention assigned to oversee the armed forces, enforce the laws in the departments, supervise conscription, and organize the war economy. The Convention first sent deputies on mission on 22 September 1792 when deputies went to Orléans and the north to restore order. On 9 March 1793, the Convention divided France into 41 regions each of two departments, assigning two deputies to each region. Other deputies were assigned to field armies. Members of the Committee of Public Safety also undertook missions, and in 1793–1794, as many as 130 deputies might be on mission at any one time.

A law of 4 December 1793 that codified the conduct of the revolutionary government provided the Representatives on Mission with virtually plenary powers. A Representative on Mission could arrest suspects, establish special courts, and have convicted suspects executed. They could issue decrees, fix prices, requisition private property, and levy taxes. They could dismiss or promote army officers, and try and execute officers suspected of disloyalty. Representatives on Mission were responsible for their actions and were required to

report to the Committee of Public Safety on a regular basis. Representatives could be punished for going beyond the letter and intent of the law.

A minority of the Representatives were corrupt; others were fanatics. On the whole, however, the system worked effectively. The authority of the Convention was brought into the countryside. The Federalist revolt was broken and the Vendean revolt was contained. Armies were raised, war factories established and the nation effectively mobilized. The system did not work perfectly—few systems do—but the Representatives on Mission did extend the authority of Paris into the departments. They played a major role in organizing France for total war.

ROBESPIERRE, MAXIMILIEN (1758–1794). Robespierre was a lawyer who was elected as a delegate to the Estates General in 1789. At the Estates General and Constituent Assembly, Robespierre became a spokesman for democratic principles. Although out of office in 1792, he denounced the drift to war, claiming that the conflict would be long and brutal, and would lead to a military dictatorship. He was right, and on 27 July 1793 he entered the Committee of Public Safety, which did indeed establish an emergency dictatorship that lasted until July 1794.

Historians have, according to their political views, pictured Robespierre as everything from a bloodthirsty dictator to a proto-socialist or a timid representative of the French bourgeoisie. Few of these views take into account the prevailing military situation or offer judgments as to Robespierre's abilities as a war leader.

A few scholars, such as R. R. Palmer, have recognized that Robespierre and the Committee faced serious problems and that failure to solve them would lead to defeat, collapse, and anarchy. Robespierre and the Committee in fact organized the nation and turned the tide of the war. Nor did Robespierre act alone. He may have been the first among equals on the Committee and the Committee's chief spokesman, but the work of transforming France into a state that had to wage total war was a collective effort.

There were, of course, cruelties and injustices committed. This is often the case in a revolutionary situation compounded by a foreign war. The British in Ireland in 1798–1799 can hardly be said to have acted with decorum and impartial justice. The point remains that under Robespierre's guidance and leadership France turned the tide against enemies both foreign and domestic. Far from being a bloodthirsty fanatic, Robespierre may well have been a normal person forced to cope with grossly unusual circumstances. French victories in 1794 allowed Robespierre's enemies to turn against him. He was arrested and executed just as Republican armies were completing the conquest of Belgium.

CARNOT, LAZARE (1753–1823). The son of a notary, Carnot, though of middle-class origin, was able to enter the military engineering school at Mézières, and became an engineer lieutenant in 1773. Carnot soon found his career stymied by his bourgeois origins since he could not be promoted above the rank of captain. In 1791 he was, along with his younger brother, elected to the Legislative Assembly, where he identified himself with leftist groups favoring a more open society and a career open to talent.

After the overthrow of the monarchy, Carnot was sent to the Army of the Rhine to ensure its acceptance of the new regime, and in September 1792 he was elected to the National Convention, where he sat with the Mountain and voted for the death penalty for Louis XVI. He also served as representative on mission to the Pyrenees and to the Army of the North, where he discovered Dumouriez's treason and ordered his arrest.

In August 1793 Carnot joined the Committee of Public Safety, where he devoted himself to military affairs. Known as the Organizer of Victory, he had to supervise the organization of the nation's vast citizen armies and find able and loyal officers to lead them. Along with Neur de la Côte d'Or he had to supervise the arming and equipping of the armed forces. He also had to deal with the problems of counterrevolutionary campaigns and foreign invasion. In 1793 he insisted upon vigorous attacks on all fronts to halt the enemies of the Republic. He insisted that field commanders seek out enemy forces and attack them constantly. In the following year he called for the main French effort to be directed against the Austrians and English and reinforced the area from the Channel to the Meuse as the critical operational zone. Again he called for vigor and constant offensive actions designed to wear down the Republic's enemies until French armies could win

crushing victories. Though no one man made possible the French triumphs of 1793 and 1794, Carnot certainly played a major part in the Republic's victories.

Surviving Thermidor, Carnot remained on the Committee until March 1795 and then became a Director, where he continued to supervise military affairs. He opposed the Fructidor Coup of 1797 and fled to Geneva to avoid arrest. He returned to France after Bonaparte's seizure of power in 1799 and was elected to the Tribunal in 1802 where he voted against the creation of a life consulate. He also voted against the creation of the Empire in 1804 and retired to private life in 1807. In 1814 Carnot rallied to Napoleon, defending Antwerp until the first abdication. During the Hundred Days he served as the interior minister, and after Waterloo he went into exile in Germany for the rest of his life: an unrepentant Republican to the end.

BONAPARTE, NAPOLEON (1769–1821). Napoleon Bonaparte was born at Ajaccio, Corsica, on 15 August 1769. He was the second son of Carlo Bonaparte and Letizia (born Ramolino). His father was a lawyer with minor aristocratic credentials who died in 1785. Since Corsica had passed to French rule the year before Bonaparte's birth, his parents sent him and his brother Joseph to learn French at a preparatory school at Autun, to replace the Corsican dialect spoken at home. After Autun, Napoleon attended the Royal Military School at Brienne, where sons of poor aristocrats were given military training and education. At Brienne he was noted for his forceful temperament, Corsican patriotism, and an aptitude for science and mathematics. In 1784 Napoleon transferred to the military school in Paris and in 1785 was commissioned into the La Fère Artillery Regiment.

He then served in a number of garrison posts. Under the direction of his regimental commander, Jean Pierre du Teil, Napoleon received expert instruction. The Baron's younger brother was an advocate of mobile artillery tactics that provided in battle direct support to the infantry. The Baron had his cadets experiment with his brother's new tactical concepts. Thus, by 1789, Napoleon had received an excellent military education including instruction in the most advanced artillery techniques.

Napoleon initially supported the Revolution but remained a Corsican patriot until a political feud with Paoli, the leader of the Corsican nationalists, forced him and his family to leave the island and settle in southern France, where Napoleon sided with the Jacobins against both the Royalists and their rivals within the Republican camp. Still an obscure artillery captain, Napoleon joined forces with troops sent to recapture Toulon and Marseilles. Both cities had fallen into the hands of Royalists, who in turn had welcomed the armed intervention of British and other First Coalition armed forces. At Toulon Napoleon executed a successful attack on forts dominating the southwest approaches to the city, which in turn forced the British and their Allies to evacuate the port. For his success, the government in June 1794 promoted him to general of brigade. With the Thermidorian Reaction, Napoleon was arrested and incarcerated but was soon released. He went to Paris seeking a new command along with other surplus artillery officers. He even thought of offering his services to the Ottoman Army.

Napoleon, however, soon found a chance to revive his career. He met Paul Barras, a member of the new Directory, and on 5 October 1795, Barras employed him to suppress a rightist rising in Paris. He dispersed the Royalist sympathizers with the famous whiff of grapeshot, and for his efforts the government appointed him commander of the Army of Italy. Napoleon also met Josephine Beauharnais the widow of an aristocrat executed during the Terror and Barras's former mistress. He married her on 9 March 1796 and two days later left to take command of the Army of Italy. He was twenty-six.

Upon reaching the Army of Italy, he quickly established his personal ascendancy over his more experienced divisional commanders by sheer force of personality. He won the support of the rank and file by promising victory, glory, and riches on the fertile lands of Italy. His campaign was supposed to be a secondary thrust to compel the Austrians to divert troops from the main front in Germany.

The Italian campaign of 1796–1797, one of the most famous in the annals of military history, established Bonaparte's reputation not only in the France of his time, but as a military leader without peer. Yet, oddly enough, the campaign was in many ways characteristic of many of the campaigns waged by the Republic. The employment of combined arms divisions, the use of artillery as a direct support weapon for the infantry, and the employment of flexible infantry tactics combining the use of line, column, and skirmisher techniques

were methods used by all Republican armies. Furthermore, rapid movement and the waging of constant battles designed to have a cumulative effect on the enemy's ability to continue to fight were additional hallmarks of Republican operational techniques. Napoleon's genius then lay not in tactical or operational innovations but in execution. He led what in many ways was a typical Republican army in terms of recruitment, organization, tactics, and battle doctrine but he did so with a style, boldness and flair unmatched by friend and foe alike. Thus, without winning a single decisive battle, he defeated the Austrians in a whole series of lesser engagements, drove them from Italy, and, in conjunction with successful invasion of Germany in 1797, forced them to sue for peace.

Bonaparte also indulged in a growing taste for politics during his Italian campaign. As he moved through northern Italy, he began to create satellite or sister Republics. He seems to have had a number of motives, including easing his logistical problems by establishing friendly regimes behind his army's line of march, alarming the Hapsburgs by the implied threat of spreading revolution into Austria, and enhancing his own prestige. The Directory in 1796 was, however, less interested in Italy than in Belgium and the Rhineland, and the foreign minister had a plan for peace with Austria that called for Austrian recognition of the French annexation of Belgium and the Rhineland and Austrian compensation in Bavaria and northern Italy. In 1797 Bonaparte negotiated with the Austrians, and his peace with Austria undermined the Directory's plan and committed France in Italy. The Directory, however, realized that public opinion demanded peace. Moreover, the government had just relied upon the army to purge Royalists who had been elected to the legislative corps, and was unwilling to challenge the most successful general. The government, therefore, accepted Bonaparte's settlement, thereby enhancing Napoleon's political as well as military reputation.

Napoleon was next placed in charge of the Army of England, a force designed to invade Britain and force London to sue for peace. Napoleon, however, discovered that crossing the Channel was too dangerous because of the dominance of the Royal Navy. Rejecting the idea of renewing attempts to invade Ireland, he proposed an invasion of Egypt as an indirect means to attacking British trade and power in India. The Directory accepted his proposal, and in the summer of 1798 he invaded and conquered Egypt. Britain's naval riposte, however, left him isolated in Egypt. He thereupon decided to invade Syria and perhaps attempt an overland march to India. Vague instructions from Paris in effect gave him complete freedom of action, and he seems to have believed that such a campaign was feasible. Initially, he made great progress, but in 1799 his army was unable to take by storm or siege the city of Acre. He returned to Egypt and concluded that his position was ultimately untenable and, leaving his army behind, returned to France, landing on 8 October just as France was in the process of winning the War of the Second Coalition.

Once again luck favored his ambitions. A number of Directors were planning a coup against other Directors and the legislature. The plotters had previously chosen a general to assist them, but the general had died in battle in Italy. The plotters then turned to Napoleon, and the coup of Brumaire, 9–10 November 1799, in fact made Napoleon, now thirty years old, the master of France. In 1800 Napoleon's victory at Marengo, coupled with Moreau's victory in Germany at year's end, forced Austria out of the war. Isolated, England decided to sue for peace, and in 1802 France with Napoleon as its undisputed master was finally at peace.

Of course, Bonaparte's ambition, which knew no rational limits, guaranteed a new round of wars that would ultimately lead to his downfall. Napoleon was a fascinating product of the Old Regime and the Revolution. The Old Regime gave him his education and training. The Revolution gave him his opportunity. Of course, the Revolution gave many people their opportunity, but only Napoleon with his talent, charisma, and good fortune combined with an insatiable urge to dominate his human and material environment could have seized the opportunities available. Only he was able to take the forces unleashed by the Revolution and use them for his own ends.

Coalitions and Strategy

STRATEGY, FRENCH. Strategy is the art and science of using campaigns to attain the military and political goals of the state. Depending upon the nature of the war, strategy may aim at the complete destruction of an enemy's ability and will to resist. Such a strategy would most likely be pursued in an unlimited war; i.e., a war in which the complete conquest of the enemy was the political objective. In other cases, strategy might call for inflicting sufficient defeats upon an enemy until the enemy decided that further fighting would be more expensive and dangerous than making territorial and economic concessions. Such a strategy, designed to increase the costs of the war to an opponent, is usually followed in a limited conflict where belligerents seek concessions rather than overthrow.

The First French Republic fought limited wars in that Paris did not seek the destruction of its most powerful enemies. France essentially sought survival, recognition as a legitimate regime, and a victorious peace involving some annexations (although the nature and extent of the annexations varied from political faction to faction and over time). To obtain survival, recognition, and a victorious peace, France had to mobilize the full range of the country's human and economic resources, thus fighting a total war for limited aims.

To achieve the national objectives, the Republic had to devise a strategy to force its enemies to sue for peace. Paris, engaged in what amounted to a multifront war, had to decide where and against whom to deploy its armies, which armies to reinforce, and where to place the main emphasis of operations.

In 1792 the French had to wage a defensive strategy to halt the Allied advance on Paris. Subsequent attacks, after Valmy, produced initial victories in Belgium and the Rhineland, but political problems at home and in occupied territories prevented the government from devising a coherent national strategy.

Allied counterattacks and internal counterrevolution in 1793 threw France on the defensive. The advance of Coalition powers forced the Republic to introduce national mobilization and to mount desperate counterattacks in Flanders and northern Alsace simply to stabilize the situation. On other fronts, French armies also struggled to halt Allied armies, while major offensive operations were organized against counterrevolutionary forces in the Vendée, Brittany, Lyon, and the coastal enclaves on the Mediterranean. The strategy of 1793 was essentially defensive. The Republic emphasized halting the Allies in northern and eastern France, since the main Allied armies operated there and because the enemy forces in Flanders and northern France posed a direct threat to Paris. Counterrevolutionary movements also had to be crushed, or at least reduced in strength, to provide for the Republic's internal security. By the end of the year, the Republic had blunted both internal and external offensives and won a breathing space in which to devise a more coherent strategy for the following year.

In late 1793 the Committee of Public Safety decided to wage its major campaigns in 1794 along the Franco-Belgian frontier. The Committee had concluded that Britain and Austria were the Republic's most determined foes, their armies were the largest coalition forces, and they were closer to Paris than the Prussian forces in the Rhineland. Furthermore, it was clear to Paris that Prussia was more interested in Poland than Paris and might be convinced to leave the war, whereas only military defeat would force London and Vienna to come to terms. The Committee, therefore, reinforced its armies in the north and ordered operations in Flanders and on the Sambre. Attacks on the wings of the Coalition forces would compel the Allies constantly to shift reserves and wear down the enemy forces to a point where French forces could defeat them.

The strategy of striking Allied forces on opposite wings ultimately succeeded, and by the late summer French forces, victorious in Flanders and on the Sambre, were advancing into Belgium. The pursuit lasted until the following year when, in the winter of 1795, the Republic's armies occupied Holland and most of the Rhineland. Prussia and Spain left the war soon after, but a drive into Germany, designed to force Austria to sue for peace, was unsuccessful.

In 1796 the French decided to focus on the defeat of Austria. The government called for two advances into Germany and a spoiling attack into Italy. Paris also tried to mount an invasion of Ireland in order to use the island as a bargaining chip in peace talks with England. All campaigns except the Italian campaign, however, failed, and neither England nor Austria felt sufficiently threatened to seek peace. Consequently, French strategy in 1797 focused primarily on Austria. Bonaparte advanced from Italy into southern Austria, while renewed campaigns in Germany achieved initial success. The Austrians finally concluded that the costs and

risks of continued fighting were too great and sued for peace. Britain, isolated from Continental allies, also entered peace talks with the Directory, but the talks failed.

In 1798 the French faced only one opponent and initially contemplated an invasion of the British Isles to force London to accept peace. The risks of a cross-Channel invasion, however, appeared too great, and instead, the French decided to strike at British holdings in India via Egypt. The French assumed that the loss of valuable colonies in India would force the British to sue for peace, but Britain's effective use of sea power, although it failed to stop the invasion of Egypt, isolated the Army of the Orient in Egypt and stymied French strategy. Moreover, the British naval victory set off a chain of events that led to the formation of a Second Coalition.

In the opening phases of the new or renewed war, the French attempted a repetition of their earlier strategy of mounting campaigns in Germany and Italy to split Allied forces and threaten the Hapsburg crown lands. The offensive, however, failed, and France was soon thrown on the defensive in Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and Holland. The Republic then sought an opportunity for a counterblow, which they found in Switzerland. The Directory reinforced Masséna's army, which enabled him to launch an offensive in September 1799. The victory also had the effect of convincing Russia to leave the coalition. In the following year the French conducted operations in Italy and Germany, winning victories in both areas and forcing Austria out of the war. Once again isolated, England concluded a peace with France in 1802.

Throughout the wars of the First French Republic, France fought for extensive but still limited aims. The French, often faced with threats on several fronts, constantly had to select which battle areas were the most critical and organize coordinated campaigns to compel their enemies to seek peace. The Republic was reasonably successful staving off invasion in 1793 and shifting the tide of the war in 1794–1795. Campaigns in 1796 and 1797 were not as effective, but by 1797 the combination of operations in Germany and Italy were sufficient to force Austria to end hostilities. Efforts at overseas operations failed in the face of British naval power. The initial campaigns of 1799 were also a failure, but as in 1793, the French designated a vital area and mounted an effective counter-offensive. In 1800 the dual thrust in Italy and Germany produced the desired results. By 1802 French strategy had driven the nation's enemies out of the war and enabled the Republic to attain its goals of survival, recognition, and a victorious peace.

EGYPTIAN EXPEDITION (1798–1801). Late in 1797, only Britain remained at war with France. The Directory wanted to force Great Britain to sue for peace before Continental powers resumed hostilities. France had three strategic options: a direct invasion of Britain, an expedition to Ireland, or an attack on British trade in India via Egypt.

Initially, the Directory sought to invade England, but soon concluded that France lacked the naval and transport assets to attempt the risky but potentially decisive cross-Channel venture. Aiding Irish rebels and then using Ireland as a pawn in negotiations with London was never seriously considered. This left an invasion of Egypt as the most acceptable option. An Ottoman province actually controlled by local Mameluke rulers, Egypt appeared easy to take. The absence of a British fleet in the Mediterranean since Spain became a French ally in 1796 gave the French confidence that troops could be safely transported to Egypt. Once ensconced in Egypt, the French were to develop the area and send forces to French-controlled islands in the Indian Ocean, from which location they would move to India and in conjunction with the Sultan of Mysore attack British holdings in India.

On 19 May 1798, the Army of the Orient, 35,000 men strong led by Napoleon Bonaparte, sailed from Toulon and other French and Italian ports. After capturing Malta on 11–12 June, the fleet reached Alexandria on 30 June. The French quickly took the city and moved on Cairo. After defeating the Mameluke army on 21 July, the French took the city the next day. Bonaparte immediately began to organize a government, including the establishment of a research institute and printing presses. Bonaparte also undertook talks with Moslem clerics about the possibility of converting his army to Islam, but this and other efforts to win popular support failed to win the loyalty of the populace.

The British naval riposte into the Mediterranean and the Battle of the Nile isolated his army from resupply and reinforcement from the Metropole. Thus, if Bonaparte's position in Egypt was secure, his broader

mission had reached a strategic impasse. Bonaparte, therefore, decided to attempt an overland invasion of India. Following in the footsteps of Alexander the Great, he planned to march through Syria to the Euphrates and from there to Persia and India, rallying the populace of these areas to his cause.

Whether the plan was feasible or not, Bonaparte initially made substantial progress until he reached Acre on 20 March 1799. He besieged the city for two months but failed to dislodge the defenders. Defeated, he returned to Egypt, crushed a Turkish army at Aboukir, and on 23 August sailed for France, leaving his army behind.

After a failed effort to negotiate an evacuation of Egypt, the Army of the Orient held out until forced to capitulate in 1801. Bonaparte brought with him on the expedition over 150 scientists, one of whom had told the British the destination of the Army of the Orient. The British ignored this information. The scientists, who among other achievements found the Rosetta Stone, founded modern Egyptology. Furthermore, it was not the French who used the Sphinx for target practice and damaged the statue's nose. The Mamelukes had already done this.

EL ARISH, CONVENTION OF (28 JANUARY 1801). After Bonaparte's departure from Egypt, Kléber, his successor, and Sir William Sydney Smith, commander of British naval forces in the eastern Mediterranean, opened negotiations for the departure of the Army of the Orient from Egypt. On 28 January an agreement that French troops would be sent back to France on Turkish ships was signed, but the British government repudiated it.

COALITION, FIRST (1792–1797). The original members of the First Coalition were Austria and Prussia. The motives of the courts of Vienna and Berlin were mixed. Both powers feared and disliked the ideology of the Revolution and were concerned for the safety of Louis XVI and his family. Austria also wished to preserve the French monarchy, since France was an important Austrian ally, and Louis XVI's wife was an Austrian princess. Prussia, however, was equally concerned with using the war against France as a means of obtaining compensation at the expense of Poland. Both powers were convinced that the war that began in April 1792 would lead to a quick victory and a restoration of Louis's position.

The overthrow of the French monarchy plus the battles of Valmy and Jemappes, however, led to an expanded conflict as French forces overran Belgium and the Rhineland. The French occupation of Belgium, the opening of the port of Antwerp, and the execution of Louis XVI brought new powers, including Great Britain, Holland, Spain, the German princes, and the Italian states into the conflict. Coalition counterattacks in 1793 reconquered Belgium and the Rhineland and were followed by Allied invasions of northern and eastern France. On other fronts, Coalition forces crossed the Pyrenees, seized portions of the French Mediterranean coast, and threatened the line of the Alps. Coupled with counterrevolutionary risings in western France and parts of the Rhône Valley plus political turmoil in Paris, the Coalition seemed by the summer of 1793 poised on the brink of victory.

The dramatic French response—national mobilization—placed the ability of the Coalition to crush the Republic in doubt. Moreover, the Coalition was far from united. The British dispersed thousands of troops in an effort to seize French colonial possessions, while Austria and Prussia remained divided over the fate of Poland. Both powers kept thousands of men in the east to check each others' designs. Consequently, the French, in a series of desperate offensives in late 1793, halted Allied advances and reduced the threat of internal counterrevolution. French offensives in 1794 focused on Flanders and the Franco-Belgian border area. Constant French assaults from the Channel to the Meuse River were ultimately successful and once again the Republic occupied Belgium and most of the Rhineland.

In 1795 the Coalition began to fall apart. After a French invasion, the United Provinces became a sister republic. Offensives in Germany failed, but Prussia signed a treaty with France and left the war, as did Tuscany and Spain. In 1796 Spain rejoined the war, only this time as a French ally. French armies, meanwhile, campaigned unsuccessfully in Germany in 1796, but the Italian Campaign was unexpectedly and spectacularly successful. Successful operations in Germany in 1797 coupled with additional victories in Italy drove Austria to sue for peace at the end of the year, leaving only England still at war with France.

The First Coalition was motivated partly by ideological concerns, but conflicting territorial ambitions worked against the formulation of a coherent strategy. The Coalition also underestimated French capabilities and resolve and failed to react effectively to the changes in warfare wrought by the Revolution.

COALITION, SECOND. The isolation of Bonaparte's army in Egypt presented an opportunity for the enemies of France to form a new Coalition. The British devised plans to reduce France back to within the borders of 1792, restore the monarchy, restore the stadtholder in Holland, unite Holland with Belgium, and compensate Austria with provinces in Italy. Austria and Russia agreed to an alliance in August 1798, and in late December Britain and Russia signed a treaty of alliance. Prussia, however, refused to participate and remained neutral.

Coalition strategy called for 17,500 Russian and 13,000 British troops to invade Holland. Some 94,000 Austrian and 24,000 Russian troops would operate in northern Italy along with 27,000 Russians and 45,000 Austrians in the Tyrol and eastern Switzerland. An additional 80,000 Austrians would advance in southern Germany. The Austro-Russian forces would advance to the Franco-Swiss border and drive the French in Italy back to the Alps. Finally, the Austro-Russian force in Switzerland, reinforced by contingents from Italy, would advance into eastern France while the Anglo-Russian army moved south into Belgium. The Allies would then proclaim the Restoration and, aided by royalist rebellions, the Allied armies would advance on Paris.

The French, with 365,000 men under arms, were outnumbered but nevertheless decided to launch a series of offensives designed to disrupt the Coalition while keeping up civilian morale at home. Initially, the Coalition enjoyed resounding success. In March 1799 Archduke Charles Von Hapsburg in Germany defeated Jourdan's army at the Battle of Stockach. Jourdan's defeat in turn uncovered Masséna's left flank in Switzerland, forcing him to retreat back to Zurich. In early June Masséna defeated Austrian attacks on Zurich, but suffered such heavy casualties that he pulled back to a shorter, more secure position to the west of the city. In Italy, the French attempt to advance across the Adige was hurled back with severe losses. In April the Austrians advanced, seized Rivoli, defeated the French again, and forced them to retreat. The Austro-Russian army then advanced into the Po Valley, took Brescia, and isolated a French garrison in Mantua. By late April Coalition forces were in Milan, and within a month the Allies had occupied Turin, and the French fell back to Genoa.

The French then ordered forces in Rome and Naples to move north, unite with units in northern Italy, and mount a counterattack. The French commanders decided to launch a two-pronged assault but failed to coordinate their actions. Troops from Rome and Naples under Macdonald's command took Modena and Parma, but units in the north did not move. The Allied army was, therefore able to defeat the French in the two-day Battle of Trebbia (17–19 June). Remnants of the French force then joined with the forces in Genoa. The French mounted another attack in Piedmont, led by Joubert, but the Austro-Russian army on 15 August won another victory at the Battle of Novi. The French retreated with heavy losses, including Joubert, and sought to hold a line from Geneva to Genoa. In the north the Anglo-Russian army landed in Holland on 27 August, seized the Dutch fleet, and established a firm bridgehead. Counterrevolutionary risings also began in Brittany, the Vendée, and southwestern France. Though not dangerous in and of themselves, the risings tied down thousands of troops desperately needed at the front.

The Coalition appeared victorious, but differences in political objectives came to the fore and disrupted Allied strategy. The Russians favored the restoration of old regime governments in Italy as well as France, a view that put them at odds with their Allies. The Austrians for their part had no intention of uniting Belgium with Holland. Rather, Vienna wanted to seize Belgium for itself and then exchange it for Bavaria while at the same time expanding its holdings in Italy. The original Allied plan required the forces in Germany to protect the right flank of the Russian forces in Switzerland by attacking Basel and Belfort. The presence of Charles's army was especially necessary while the Russians in Italy were moving north to join the Russian contingent around Zurich. Vienna, however, ordered the archduke to move north and invade Belgium in early September *before* the Russian contingents were united. Austro-Russian forces in Switzerland were, therefore, momentarily isolated.

The French government, seizing its fleeting opportunity, rushed reinforcements to Masséna and ordered him to attack as soon as possible. Masséna moved on 25 September, crushed the Russian force at Zurich, drove back the supporting Austrian Corps, and then turned on the Russian units moving north from Italy. The Russians escaped but suffered severe losses. The Russian defeat in turn exposed Charles's army, which in mid-October pulled back from the Rhine into central Germany. Finally, in Holland, French and Batavian forces led by General Brune prevented the Allied army from expanding its foothold, and forced its commander on 18 October to ask for terms. Thus, by the time Napoleon returned from Egypt and participated in the Brumaire Coup, the Directory had already reversed the course of the war.

Russia, feeling betrayed, left the Coalition, and for the 1800 campaign Bonaparte had only the Austrians left in the field. His victory, actually a near-defeat, at Marengo did not drive Austria out of the war, but a subsequent French victory at Hohenlinden in December 1800 convinced Vienna to sue for peace. After the treaty of Luneville, Britain was isolated and also began peace talks with France, signing a peace treaty in 1802. As with the First Coalition, the Allies underestimated France and failed to fully coordinate their political goals and strategies. The French, after initial defeats, were thus able to mount effective counterblows and defeat the hostile alliance.

Military Reform and Innovation

FRENCH ROYAL ARMY. In the late 18th century the French Royal Army consisted of the Royal Household Troops, the regular forces, and the militia. The Household Troops included the Bodyguard, the Swiss Guards, and the French Guards, for a total of some 7,278 men. The regular forces comprised 79 French and 23 non-French regiments with about 113,000 men. There were 62 cavalry regiments with 33,000 men and seven artillery regiments with about 7,000 troops. There were also some 75,000 men in the militia. The militia were mainly peasants chosen by lot. They received little training and in wartime served in depots and forts.

To fill its ranks the regular army relied upon volunteers who signed up for eight-year enlistments. Young men signed up for a variety of reasons, including economic hardship, escape from dead-end lives, and a search for adventure. Sometimes enlistment was offered to debtors, vagabonds, and criminals as an alternative to imprisonment. Town dwellers were overrepresented in the army because the presence of permanent garrisons in many cities made recruitment easier. French society in the 1780s was 80 to 85 percent rural, but 35 percent of the soldiers came from places with a population of 2,000 or more. Whether rural or urban, artisans and shopkeepers made up a majority of the soldiers. Only about 15 percent of the regular army was of peasant origins, while 63 percent were former artisans and shopkeepers, 13 percent day laborers, and ten percent bourgeois. Border provinces along the northern and eastern frontiers supplied more recruits than other areas of France, probably because of the presence of numerous garrisons and depots, which made recruiting easier.

The officer corps was overwhelmingly of aristocratic background. Ranks of colonel and above were reserved for nobles who had been presented at court. Most officers, however, came from the provincial nobility. A series of military schools established in the 1750s admitted only the sons of poor noblemen who could prove four generations of nobility, and a law of 1781, known as the Ségur decree, required four generations of nobility of anyone who wanted to enter the army as an officer, thus excluding commoners and nobles of recent origin. By 1789, of some 10,000 officers, over 90 percent were noblemen, and between 1781 and 1789 fewer than 50 men rose from the enlisted to officer ranks. Provincial noblemen wanted to reduce the special privileges of the court nobility and create a more professional officer corps, but a profession that remained closed to new nobles and commoners.

After 1763, there was a good deal of thought and action given to improving the capabilities of the Royal Army, but the army was still far from being a truly national citizen force. With the coming of the Revolution, the army suffered much turmoil. Troops were reluctant and at times unwilling to act against popular uprisings, and there was much desertion from both enlisted ranks and the officer corps. By the end of 1790 army strength had declined from about 150,000 to less than 130,000 men. In 1791 and 1792 some 5,000 officers left their posts, and by the spring of 1794, out of some 10,000 officers in 1789, 6,693 had abandoned their commissions and over 3,000 left the service in some other manner, including death in battle. About 87 percent of the officers on duty in 1789 had left active service by 1794. After war was declared, the old Royal Army expanded again to about 180,000 men by early 1793 when the amalgamation decreed the creation of a single national force.

FRENCH REPUBLICAN ARMY. Revolutionary France created between 1791 and 1794 an army that was authentically representative of the nation. The Royal Army in 1789 was a force led by aristocrats and staffed by society's lower orders. The enlisted ranks had a representation from urban backgrounds far out of proportion to the population as a whole. About 63 percent of the troops came from artisan or shopkeeper backgrounds, although peasants composed the vast majority of the population. Although France was only 15 percent urban, over 30 percent of the troops were from urban areas. Moreover, volunteers from frontier provinces supplied more recruits than other areas.

During the first year of the Revolution, the composition and size of the Royal Army changed only marginally. The army's strength remained at about 150,000, growing to 180,000 by 1793. The number of troops with origins as artisans and shopkeepers fell, but remained high—48 percent—while the number of peasant soldiers grew from 19 to 39 percent. Thus, the number of soldiers from urban areas remained much higher

than the overall urban population percentage. Frontier provinces continued to supply a disproportionate number of men.

In 1791, however, the Legislative Assembly called for volunteers from the National Guards, a bourgeois militia established two years earlier to keep order and check any governmental attempt to use the army in a coup. The Volunteers of 1791 formed their own battalions. About 101,000 men volunteered. They were overwhelmingly urban in origin, with only 15 percent coming from rural areas. The volunteers were from fairly well to do backgrounds. Although mainly artisans and shopkeepers, they were from the upper levels of these occupations. The troops elected their own officers, many of whom had previous service in the line army. The volunteer battalions fought in the 1792 campaigns, but in the winter of 1792–93 most men left their units, since they had signed on for only one campaign and were legally free to leave the army two months after notifying their officers.

In July 1792 the Legislative Assembly called for 42 more battalions of volunteers. The response was massive, far greater than the government demanded. The Volunteers of 1792, in fact, formed over 250 battalions and reached a total strength of about 220,000 men. The force was 69 percent rural and 31 percent urban, with peasants appearing in greater numbers than ever before.

In February 1793 the Convention called for 300,000 new troops. Each department was assigned a quota of troops, and if a department did not meet its quota, compulsory enlistment would be used to raise necessary manpower. The February *levée* also permitted the hiring of replacements. Unfortunately, the *levée* did not work well. It produced only about 150,000 men, and attempts to enforce it sparked off counterrevolutionary rebellions in the Vendée. Troops of the February 1793 *levée* contained a high percentage of peasants. Urban recruits came from social levels lower than those who had volunteered in 1792.

The *levée en masse* of 23 August 1793 imposed universal conscription. The hiring of substitutes was forbidden. The *levée en masse* produced about 300,000 men. The troops were reflective of the population at large. About 84 percent of the *levée* came from rural areas and 16 percent from towns and cities, a population distribution representative of the nation at large. The *levée* was both geographically and socially representative of the nation's population. Thus, in 1791, France raised an essentially bourgeois force. In 1792 the volunteers were a *sansculotte* force drawn from the lower middle classes. In February 1793 the volunteers came from among the young and poor, and in August the recruits represented with reasonable accuracy the social and demographic distribution of the nation at large.

The government sought to enhance the national as opposed to regional nature of the army. The amalgamation eliminated distinctions between the regular and volunteer units. The creation of half-brigades ordered in 1793, but because of the exigencies of war not completed until 1794 placed a line unit alongside two volunteer battalions. Moreover, no two volunteer or conscript battalions from the same department served together in the same half-brigade. Finally, the conscripts from the February and August 1793 *levées* did not form new battalions. Rather, they were used as replacements for existing formations, thus further ensuring that fighting units consisted of Frenchmen from every part of the nation.

The composition of the officer corps also changed dramatically. In 1789 about 85 percent of the officers were noble and 15 percent non-noble. By 1795 the percentages had been reversed. Nobles who supported the Revolution continued to serve, although their presence was often greeted with suspicion. The majority of the officers were drawn from the middle class and artisan ranks, and the number of officers from peasant backgrounds climbed dramatically. In 1794 about 44 percent of company-grade officers had bourgeois backgrounds. Some 26 percent had artisan origins, and 24 percent were of peasant background.

Officers tended to be young. More than half the generals in 1793–94 were under 45 years old. Napoleon Bonaparte, for example, was an army commander at age 26. The officers had a fair amount of military experience. About 21 percent of the officer corps had joined the army with the volunteers of 1791 and 28 percent with the volunteers of 1792. About half the officer corps had been in the army before 1789, usually as enlisted men or NCOs. Among the general officers, 87 percent had been in the army before 1789, and half of them had been officers prior to the Revolution. About 87 percent of the colonels had also been in the army before 1789; half of them had been officers and 30 percent had been NCOs. Among infantry captains, 60 percent had pre-Revolutionary military experience, usually as enlisted men or NCOs. The percentage of

officers with prior experience in the Royal Army was higher in the cavalry and artillery than in the infantry. The Revolutionary concept of the career open to talent and the pressures of military expansion and war had thus fundamentally changed the officer corps. The leadership cadre of the French Republican army, in contrast to the officers of the Old Regime army, bore a much closer resemblance to the army's rank and file than ever before.

The size of the French Republican army also grew dramatically. From a force of about 150,000 in 1789, the army grew to a strength of more than 600,000 men by the end of 1793. By 1794 there were about 800,000 active troops. Additionally, there were troops in garrisons training camps, hospitals, prisoners, and National Guardsmen, thereby expanding the paper strength of the army even further.

LEVÉE EN MASSE (23 AUGUST 1793). The *levée en masse* was the culmination of efforts to create a mass citizen army and to place the whole process of conscription and military organization on a coherent, well-organized basis. The French army had already grown substantially by early 1793. Volunteers from 1791 and especially those of 1792 had led to the creation of hundreds of new battalions. At the same time, thousands of recruits had joined the ranks of the regular army. By the early summer of 1793, nearly half a million men were under arms, organized into more than 500 battalions. Nevertheless, the military situation faced by the Republic was nearly catastrophic, and the government needed to organize and direct the entire nation in a coherently organized war effort. Therefore, on 23 August 1793, the National Convention declared:

From this moment and until all enemies are driven from the territory of the Republic the French people are in permanent requisition for army service. Young men shall go to battle; the married men shall forge arms and transport provisions; the women shall make tents and clothes and shall serve in the hospitals; the children shall turn old linen into lint; the old men shall repair the public places to stimulate the courage of the warriors and preach the unity of the Republic and hatred of Kings.

The decree further declared that national buildings would be converted into barracks and workshops, that citizens had to turn over to the government arms, saddle horses for the cavalry, and non-essential draught horses for the artillery. The Committee of Public Safety was also empowered to create arms factories and requisition workers. Representatives were to be sent to localities to oversee the implementation of the decree. They were invested with unlimited powers.

Typically, requisitioned troops gathered at the canton or district level, where they were given a physical check by a review council. Before moving, the draftees often received rudimentary military training by ex-soldiers or non-commissioned officers sent from active formations. Contingents then moved towards the battle zones under the control of "conductors," who made arrangements for each night's lodging either in churches, public buildings, and if necessary in private dwellings. The conductors also sought to keep up the morale of the young men, who were leaving home for the first time. The long marches hardened the draftees and showed them that they were part of the nation.

Some 300,000 draftees ultimately reached their destinations, where they were assigned as replacements to understrength battalions and demi-brigades. The *levée* increased the overall strength of the French army to about 800,000 men present under arms. The paper strength of the army, including men in convalescent depots, missing, or prisoners of war was even higher. Whatever the final figure, France by 1794 had created an enormous citizen army drawn from all segments of the populace and all geographical areas. France had a national army rather than a collection of regional forces, and the national army of the Republic was destined to change the nature of warfare.

FIELD ARMIES, FRENCH REPUBLIC. The number of armies in the field varied as did their size. At one point there were 12 field armies. Armies were created and disbanded according to circumstances at particular moments. The average number of armies was ten. A field army could contain as few as 20,000 men. Alternatively, a field army could have over 100,000 men under arms. Field armies were named after the areas in which they operated. In 1794, for example, field armies included: The armies of the Sambre-Meuse,

North, Moselle, Ardennes, Italy, Coast of Brest, Alps, Cherbourg, West, East Pyrenees, and West Pyrenees. The war minister in 1794 reported that, including garrisons, National Guards, and others not present for active service, there was a grand total of 1,108,000 men under arms, of whom over 800,000 were in the field—a dramatic increase over 316,000 reported in February 1793. By 1798 numbers had fallen to 387,000, not including forces in Egypt. The sporadic use of the *leveé* and the introduction of the draft law in 1798, however, gave the government the means to raise and maintain adequate numbers of soldiers. After the emergency of 1793–1794, the Republic generally kept between 350,000 to 450,000 men under arms.

LOGISTICS. Broadly defined, logistics means the production or procurement of weapons, munitions, food, and clothing for the army, and the delivery of these supplies to the troops. During the Old Regime, troops depended upon a series of fixed magazines containing necessary supplies for the army. The Revolution and subsequent expansion of the armed forces rendered the traditional system largely irrelevant.

The Republic did a fairly good job in supplying weapons. At the start of the war there was a severe shortage of firearms. There were only some 150,000 pattern '77 muskets available, and the government arsenals produced only 42,000 pieces a year. In 1793 a number of arsenals were captured by coalition troops. Carnot and Prieur de la Côte d'Or proceeded to meet the emergency by centralizing musket production in Paris. Eventually, some 258 public workshops were established, which by 1794 employed more than 5,000 men and turned out some 750 muskets per day. Moreover, private forges and workshops were pressed into public service. Thus, in contrast to early 1793, when serious thought was given to arming troops with pikes, armies by the end of the year were armed with standard muskets.

Saltpeter, an essential element in the manufacture of gunpowder, was also in short supply in 1793, a situation made worse by the fact that major imports of saltpeter from Turkey were cut off. By August 1793, the army had only 14 million tons of gunpowder on hand against a requirement of 80 million. In September the Committee of Public Safety reinstated the right of search of private property and encouraged citizens to search houses, cellars, stables, and eaves for saltpeter. Saltpeter was ground in flour mills and a new factory was set up at Grenelles. Eventually, France produced over 30,000 pounds of gunpowder per day.

In 1793 Monage estimated that France needed an additional 6,000 cannons and invented a simplified casting method. Furnaces were built in converted churches, and workers were taught the new methods in special classes. Copper for bronze guns was found by requisitioning church bells and roofs. In 1793 nearly 7,000 cannons were cast, and by 1795 France had about 4,800 bronze siege and fortress guns, 2,800 iron siege guns, and 2,500 field guns.

Uniforms, shoes, and other clothing presented a more difficult problem. At the start of the war the Line Army was equipped as were the volunteers of '91. In 1792 new waves of volunteers were occasionally outfitted by their villages, but the situation rapidly deteriorated. Bouchotte, the war minister, tried to remedy the situation by setting up public workshops in the sections of Paris to make uniforms. He also ordered that every shoemaker in the country had to provide five pairs of boots every ten days for each person he employed, and in the winter of 1793–1794 he ordered that shoemakers produce only footwear for the army. Such measures were not sufficient, and local commanders and Representatives on Mission often resorted to requisitions. Still, despite all government efforts, Republican troops always looked remarkably scruffy both at home and in the field.

Food supply for the armies was an especially difficult problem. Troops were officially supposed to receive one and a half pounds of bread per day, as well as half a pound of meat, an ounce of rice or two ounces of dried vegetables, a quart of wine, and small amounts of brandy and vinegar. To provide for 7–800,000 men was a daunting task that was never fully accomplished.

At the start of the war, the government tried to leave supply to private contractors. Failing this approach, the Committee of Public Safety ordered commanders to procure what they required from the peoples of conquered territories or even from local French resources.

In 1793 the Convention created a group of *commissaires ordonnateurs*. A commissary official must have served as a commissary in the old line army or as a serving soldier with experience as a quartermaster or sergeant-major. The original 390 commissaires, therefore, included a large number of veterans. Many others

were new to the military, but they were often notary clerks, teachers, lawyers, or local government officials in their previous civilian occupations and soon became fairly competent supply officers.

The *commissaires*, working with field armies and military districts, had sweeping powers. They could buy supplies anywhere they could find them, and if owners were reluctant to sell, supplies could be seized. If no local transport was available, they could requisition horses and carts. *Commissaires* were generally responsible for collecting, storing, and issuing rations. The government generally hired private contractors to supply food and clothing, and *commissaires* had to deal with the contractors, exercising overall quality control.

The system did produce a good deal of graft and corruption. Moreover, it was unable to supply the armies with a consistent flow of rations. In turn, many units resorted to requisitions, and Republican armies learned to supplement their official supply system by living off the country, preferably an enemy's country.

Perhaps the major benefit derived from logistics difficulties was that Republican armies travelled light. An Old Regime army allocated over fifty pack animals to carry tentage. Officers were entitled to travel in carriages and to bring with them large retinues of personal servants. An army of 50,000 men required 100 wagons to haul supplies. Republican armies, perhaps making a virtue of necessity, had a much shorter "logistical tail." Troops did not carry tents and slept in the open whenever possible. Battalions had but a few carts for essential items. Consequently, the citizen soldier of the Republic could march farther and faster than his Old Regime counterparts, thereby enhancing the operational capabilities of the field armies.

MORALE. Morale is a crucial factor in war. In the 18th century it was the factor that enabled soldiers to trade volley fire with an enemy at a range of 100 yards or less. Morale enabled soldiers to overcome their fear of death or mutilation.

In Old Regime armies, the basis of troop morale was loyalty to their primary group—a squad or platoon. The wish to be well-regarded by their immediate companions and the fear of embarrassing themselves were crucial elements in troop morale. It allowed soldiers to submerge their human fears by mechanical obedience to orders. Beyond primary group loyalty, pride in the larger unit, respect for superior officers, and occasionally admiration for senior commanders contributed to effective morale. Soldiers, however, received little or no support from civil society. Civilians tended to view soldiers as agents of repression drawn from the dregs of society.

Soldiers of the Republic, though motivated by primary group loyalty, had the added advantage of being viewed in a heroic mold by society at large. Soldiers were seen as the shields of the Republic and saw themselves as defenders of liberty. Drawn from the full range of the population, Republican fighting men were part of, not separate from, the civil social order. Consequently, military leaders could rely on the enthusiasm of the individual fighter in addition to discipline to enhance battle performance. Republican officers could demand more of their men than could officers in Old Regime armies. The French could also employ innovative tactics and rely on individual initiative to a degree not possible in traditional armies.

Old Regime soldiers were good and usually fought well. They won many battles and when defeated rarely broke and fled in disorder. What they lacked was tactical flexibility, since officers simply could not imagine giving private soldiers a large measure of individual initiative. French soldiers were not always triumphant, although they improved with training and experience. French Republican soldiers were occasionally subject to panic, despair, and desertion. Nevertheless, with their morale sustained by the knowledge that the country looked upon them as protectors and that citizenship included the obligation to serve the nation, French troops evolved a style of warfare—aggressive, persistent and flexible—that gave them inherent advantages over their enemies.

The growth of literacy in the late 18th century meant that many Republican soldiers were able to write, or have written for them, letters home. These letters reveal that troops—although suffering severe privations due to strains in the logistics system, and feeling homesick—were genuinely convinced that they were fighting for a good cause and that the nation as a whole appreciated their efforts.

“LA MARSEILLAISE”. “La Marseillaise” was written on the night of 25–26 April 1792 by Roget de Lisle, an army captain in the engineer corps. In 1792 Roget de Lisle was in Strasbourg. At a social gathering on 25 April the mayor of the city commented that the army that was preparing for war had no marching song of its own. The mayor asked de Lisle, who was an amateur musician, to write a song for the volunteers. He wrote the tune and lyrics, originally called “War Song of the Rhine Army,” in a single night. The mayor in turn distributed the song to local army units.

The song was an immediate hit and by late summer was known throughout France. The song received the name “La Marseillaise” because a battalion of volunteers from Marseilles, while storming the Tuileries on 10 August 1792, sang the song. From that time the song became the unofficial national anthem of French Republican regimes. The lyrics describe essentially the idea of citizens leaping to the defense of the nation to protect it from the forces of the Old Regime. The song displays militance and determination but is still in orientation defensive. The famous last verse, for example, states in literal translation: “To arms, citizens. Form your battalions. March, march. Their impure blood will water our furrows.” France, according to the anthem, is not trying to wage a war of conquest but is defending itself from invasion. Plato once noted “Let me write the songs people sing and you may write the laws.” Though not perhaps universally true—what can one say about “You ain’t nothing but a hound dog”?—popular songs often express the attitudes and aspirations of a population.

INFANTRY. During the wars of the Old Regime and French Revolution, infantry was the queen of battle. Eighty to 90 percent of an army’s manpower was composed of infantry. Cavalry and artillery functioned as supporting arms. In 1791, for example, the Austrian army of 164,000 men had 13,500 gunners, and the French army of 150,000 had fewer than 10,000 gunners in 1788.

Since Old Regime armies were led by the nobility and drew enlisted personnel from conscripted serfs or society’s lower orders, the recruiting base was narrow and armies were small. In the late 1780s Prussia fielded 186,000 men and Russia 200,000. Bavaria had a 15,000-man army, Saxony 23,000, Piedmont 40,000, and Britain 39,000 plus 34,000 Hanoverians.

Infantry fell into two broad categories—line and light. Line infantry fought the main engagements, using a linear order employing volley fire. Fire superiority was the key to victory. A field army would deploy in a three-rank line that, depending on the size of the force, would stretch from one to three miles. A second line would often deploy behind the first. Troops had been trained to deploy from march formation into a battle line and load and fire their muskets in unison.

Light infantry was used to screen an army’s movements and pursue a beaten enemy. Light troops were kept functionally separate from regular units. The Austrians, for example, often used Croats as light infantry and cavalry. The Russians employed Cossack horsemen. The British used Scottish Highlanders.

The French Revolution produced numerous changes in the army. Venality in commissions was abolished. The Officer Corps was opened to all on a basis of talent rather than birth, and the coming of war in 1792 led to a dramatic expansion of the army. Volunteers in 1791 and 1792 and conscripts in 1793 boosted army muster rolls to a paper strength of 670,000 by early 1794. By June 1794 the French army contained over 800,000 men. The vast majority of the troops were infantrymen.

The basic tactical unit was the nine-company battalion, which in contrast to the armies of the Old Regime, employed far more flexible tactics. Troops were taught to operate as skirmishers or as part of a firing line or assault column. *Tirailleurs* (light troops) were no longer isolated specialists performing their tasks away from the main battle force. Skirmishing became an integral part of battlefield tactics, since close order and light tactics were executed either by the same men or by subordinate units of a single tactical command. The French thus evolved an all-purpose infantryman able to act as a skirmisher, participate in a column, or take a position on a firing line.

A battalion usually moved into action in an open column. Upon reaching the battle, the French would close ranks forming closed columns by division, which was a formation two companies wide and four deep. The companies stood in three rank lines. Thus, the column actually resembled a rectangle eighty men across and twelve deep. The ninth company usually remained in the rear as a tactical reserve. The commander then

had numerous options. Depending upon the tactical situation, he could detach companies and send them forward as skirmishers. He could even deploy the entire battalion as skirmishers. He could alternatively direct the companies remaining in column to deploy into a firing line, or he could order the column to deliver a charge. Moreover, French soldiers soon learned to shift from one tactical mode to another during an engagement to respond to battlefield situations.

The three-battalion half-brigade enjoyed similar flexibility. The commander could place all three battalions in line, establish a line of battalion columns, or place some battalions in line and others in columns covered by skirmishers. Bonaparte often used the “*ordre mixte*,” which had one battalion in the center deployed in a firing line while the flanking battalions moved in column formation. Skirmishers covered the entire front. With experience, units learned to shift from one mode to another rapidly and efficiently.

Another characteristic of French infantry was high morale. Old Regime armies were held together by rigid discipline and primary unit personal loyalties. Desertion was, nonetheless, endemic. French Republican armies, of course, relied upon small unit loyalties, but French troops also knew that they were viewed by the population as the shield of the nation, a factor that greatly enhanced morale and helped produce a willingness to bear privations and face battle without massive desertions. Numbers, though important, were not the sole explanation of the growing effectiveness of the French infantry. The fact that the soldiers were citizens enabled commanders to use flexible tactical techniques and call for sacrifices unheard of in the past.

MUSKET. The standard infantry weapon of French Republican infantrymen was the Charleville 1777 musket, a smoothbore flintlock weapon, about 50 inches long, firing a .70 caliber lead ball. The official range of the weapon was over 1,000 meters, but in practical terms the range against formed bodies of troops was about 250 meters. The range against individual targets was about 100 yards. Fouling required the barrel to be cleared after 50 rounds, and the flint to be changed after 10 to 12 discharges. The average rate of fire was one or two rounds a minute, although expert marksmen could do better. Aimed fire was not, however, tactically important since muskets were not particularly accurate. Commanders, therefore, relied upon volley fire delivered at close range—usually 100 yards or even less.

French infantrymen also carried a 15-inch triangular-shaped socket bayonet for shock action. The havoc caused by “cold steel” tended to be more moral than physical. Fear of the bayonet rather than its actual use caused units to break. Considering the fact that after the Battle of the Pyramids in 1798, French infantrymen easily bent their bayonets into hooks to fish Mameluke corpses out of the Nile, the relatively rare use of the bayonet in actual combat was quite practical.

Rifled weapons were available. They had a longer range and greater accuracy, but because of the rifling took longer to load. A few soldiers carried rifled carbines, but the vast majority of the soldiers used the musket. Other European armies were armed with similar weapons. Later, the British army made more extensive employment of rifled weapons.

ARTILLERY. Often called the ultimate argument of kings, artillery played a crucial battlefield role during the Revolutionary wars. Napoleon himself began his military career as an artilleryman. At the start of the Revolution, the Royal Artillery was probably the best in Europe due to the work of J. B. Gribeauval between 1764 and 1789. Despite much opposition from conservative elements, Gribeauval succeeded in reducing the number of field gun calibers to 3-, 12-, 8- and 4-pounders plus a 6-pound howitzer. (In artillery terminology, guns were described by the weight of shot, which also determined the gun’s caliber.) Guns and carriages were supplied with interchangeable parts, prepackaged rounds, sights, and elevating screws. Gunners were organized into seven regiments, each with a depot and training school. In 1789 the Royal Artillery contained 11,000 men plus nearly 10,000 militia men and 2,106 colonial gunners equipped with 1,300 field and 8,500 fortress guns.

A standard 12-pounder cannon had a caliber of 121 mm. The barrel was 7 feet, 7 inches long and weighed 2,172 pounds. The carriage weighed 2,192 pounds. Guns were drawn by between four and six horses and had crews ranging from fifteen for the larger pieces to eight for smaller ones. Cannon fired round shot, bagged grapeshot, and canister shot. Howitzers used explosive shells. A twelve-pounder cannon had a direct fire range of up to 1,000 meters, an 8-pounder 900 meters, and a 4-pounder 850 meters. In some cases, ricochet

fire with solid shot could increase a cannon's range. Heavier guns could fire one round per minute while a 4-pounder could fire two shots per minute.

A number of pre-Revolutionary artillerymen argued that the main mission of field artillery should be to support the infantry by firing on the enemy foot soldiers. Counter-battery fire should be undertaken only in cases of dire necessity. Many artillery officers, like their counterparts in other branches, left their posts out of opposition to the Revolution, but the artillery arm suffered less than the infantry or cavalry from emigration. Thus, in 1792, the artillery was well-prepared to play a leading role, and its power was enhanced by the introduction of horse batteries, where gunners rode along with the field pieces.

During the battles between 1792 and 1799, artillery played a significant role. French divisions and half-brigades contained their own artillery, and in 1795 the divisions and armies of the Republic contained 1,250 field guns, while another 1,350 lighter cannons were posted to the half-brigades. Guns were usually organized into batteries of eight pieces and subdivided into pairs. A perennial problem for the artillery was that the army hired horses and drivers from private contractors. In July 1793, for example, four firms supplied 142,000 horses. Occasionally, civilian drivers refused to move into dangerous positions and at times fled in droves, as happened after Neerwinden. It was not until 1800 that field gun drivers were permanently militarized. French field artillery, because of pre-Revolutionary reforms and an innovative officer corps, thus became an integral part of the Republic's combined arms formations and played a crucial battlefield role.

ARTILLERY AMMUNITION. The artillery of European armies employed a variety of munitions including:

Bar-shot: a solid metal bar surrounded by musket balls enclosed in a metal container.

Canister: a tin container filled with musket balls.

Case-shot: almost identical to canister.

Grapeshot: a cloth bag filled with musket balls like canister and case-shot; the balls scattered when fired.

Langridge: pieces of iron packed like case-shot and often used at sea to destroy sails and rigging.

Roundshot: a round solid ball of metal; its weight varied according to a gun's caliber.

Shrapnel: invented by a British officer, Henry Shrapnel (1761–1842), it consisted of a hollow sphere packed with powder and musket balls. It exploded in the air by means of a fuse. The French did not use shrapnel.

DIVISION. By the later 18th century the Royal Army had divided France into 18 military divisions. These were territorial commands with permanent garrisons. Inspector generals could conduct combined arms maneuvers. It was the Republic that created combat divisions—a combined arms field formation. In 1792 some army commanders created a unit with two brigades under a single officer, but these formations had no organic artillery or cavalry elements. Other generals continued to regard the brigade as the largest subunit of a field army. The Decree of 21 February 1793 merging regular and volunteer battalions also created a two-brigade division consisting only of infantry. Divisional commanders, however, began to obtain organic artillery and cavalry elements.

Divisional strength varied. By 1794 a division might contain from two to four half-brigades with troop strength ranging from 7,800 to 13,400 men. Some divisions had no artillery while others had as many as a dozen field guns. The post-1794 division usually had three half-brigades, although the number of cannons and horsemen continued to vary widely. Divisions were generally known by the name of their commanders. A division commanded by General Lannes, for example, would be officially known as Division Lannes. Despite the absence of uniformity, the multiarm combat division strengthened the French army. A division could march and fight on its own or as part of a larger force. An army could, therefore, move by separate routes thereby speeding movements and concentrate for battle just before or even during an engagement. Generals could, therefore, wage encounter battles or begin a battle and feed troops into the fighting according to specific tactical circumstances.

REPUBLICAN TACTICS. Flexibility became the hallmark of French Republican tactics as French soldiers learned to fight in line for fire action, in column for maneuver and shock action, and in skirmish order. The Republican army developed the all-purpose soldier. Commanders learned to employ the various modes of combat according to circumstances and to shift from one mode to another during combat.

A nine-company battalion usually marched to action in an open column. Upon entering combat, French infantry usually formed double company columns by division, a formation two companies wide and four deep. Since the companies stood in three rank lines, the column resembled a rectangle eighty men wide by twelve deep, with the ninth company in reserve.

The battalion commander then had numerous options. Depending upon a particular situation, he could detach companies forward as skirmishers. He could then reinforce his skirmish line using the entire battalion in open order if appropriate. Alternatively, he could order the companies remaining in column to deploy into line for fire action, or he could order the column to deliver a bayonet charge.

The half-brigade enjoyed similar flexibility. The commander could place all three battalions in a firing line or establish a line of battalion columns or place some battalions in line and others in column. A fairly common initial deployment was the *ordre mixte*, wherein the center battalion deployed in a firing line while battalions on either flank moved in a double company column. Skirmishers would cover the entire formation.

The precise combination of line column and skirmish order varied widely. At Hondshoote, for example, Jourdan's division advanced in a line of columns, and then, after coming under fire, the entire division moved forward in open order. At Toulon, battalion columns covered by skirmishers stormed British entrenchments. At Tourcoing, several battalions fought in line while skirmishers fired at the flanks of advancing coalition columns. At Fleurs, Kléber's division fought in linear order with skirmishers covering the flanks. Lefebvre's division also fought in line, and when the Austrians fell back, several battalions pursued in column.

Initially the French periodically had problems shifting formations during a battle, and Allied commanders often launched effective counterblows while the Republican troops were in the midst of moving from one mode to another. By mid-1794, however, the French had learned by hard experience to execute shifts rapidly and cohesively. The ability to fight in close order or tight formations and the capacity to shift rapidly from one mode to another provided the French with the means to combat Old Regime armies on better than even terms.

FRENCH MILITARY OPERATIONS. The operational level of war may be broadly defined as the employment of engagements for the purpose of a campaign. After 1792, the armies of the Republic developed a distinctive operational style based upon the size, motivation, and capabilities of the field armies and the political requirements of the government. French armies by 1793–94 were large, on the whole well-motivated, and organized tactically to wage flexible, aggressive battlefield engagements. The government needed victory to survive the onslaught of foreign and domestic enemies and to retain the support of the Parisian populace, who demanded vigorous prosecution of the war. Thus, in 1793, the government called for offensives on virtually all battlefronts and, in 1794, instructed commanders to avoid sieges whenever possible, mask enemy garrisons with a minimum number of troops, seek major field engagements, and follow every victory with a relentless pursuit. Moreover, defeats in the field were not to be the signal for a retreat. Rather, they were to be the cause of renewed attacks. Republican armies were to attack constantly, exhaust the enemy, and ultimately defeat the nation's foes on the field of battle.

In 1794 Jourdan's operations provide an excellent example of the evolving Republican operational style. Jourdan led the right wing of the Army of the North, plus the Moselle and part of the Army of the Ardennes. Jourdan's force, ultimately known as the Army of the Sambre-Meuse, first crossed the Sambre River on 12 May only to be driven back. Renewed attacks on 20 May, 25 May, and 29 May were also defeated. Jourdan advanced again on 12 June. He was defeated and attacked again on 18 June and finally secured a firm lodgment across the Sambre. He advanced rapidly on Charleroi and brought the coalition army to battle at Fleurs

on 26 June. After the victory, the Sambre-Meuse army moved rapidly into Belgium, taking Namur in mid-July.

The French operational technique of constant offensives did not always succeed. In 1795 and 1796 operations in Germany failed. In 1799 French offensives in Germany were also defeated. In Italy, by contrast, Bonaparte's campaign of 1796–1797 was strikingly successful. Using Republican operational techniques, Bonaparte moved rapidly and attacked constantly, keeping his enemies off-guard and on the defensive. In 1799, though on the defensive, the French were constantly seeking opportunities to attack.

French armies rarely sought to annihilate their enemies in a single engagement. They were instinctively too clever to think that a single battle would decide a campaign or a war. Rather, the French employed a combination of attrition and annihilation. Constant assaults would wear down enemy strength and morale until an engagement would produce a victory of some magnitude. Operational style, then, was a process, not a search for a simple decisive solution.

Napoleon as ruler of France did seek decisive victories and won a number of battlefield triumphs between 1805 and 1807 that many viewed as decisive victories. He failed to profit from these triumphs, raising serious doubts about the nature of his so-called decisive battles.

After all, if a battle, no matter how successful, does not produce beneficial long-term political results, can it in fact be labelled decisive? Soldiers and scholars, however, became mesmerized by Napoleonic victories and tended to define the object of war as the effort to wage a single, war-winning decisive engagement or campaign. In so doing they ignored the experience of the Republic, whose leaders by accident or design learned that battles were the culmination of a process and that operational techniques could enhance the prospects of victory, but could not in and of themselves guarantee success.

CASUALTIES. During the wars of the Old Regime casualties as a percentage of the total number of troops engaged were quite heavy. At the Battle of Zorndorf, for example, the Prussians with some 30,000 men lost 40 percent of their troops. Losses for an entire war were, because of the size of armies and the relative infrequency of battles, fairly modest. France lost 50,000 men killed and wounded during the War of the Polish Succession (1731–1735). During the War of the Austrian Succession (1741–1748), French casualties amounted to 140,000 killed and wounded. The Seven Years' War (1756–1763) cost France 175,000 killed and wounded. Prisoners and desertions would expand the total casualty figures. In the War of the Austrian Succession France lost 50,000 prisoners, and during the Seven Years' War France lost about 100,000 prisoners and suffered some 70,000 desertions. In the War of the Austrian Succession total casualties as a percentage of troops engaged ranged from 44 to 3 percent. The average casualty rate per battle was about 15 percent.

By contrast, during the wars of the First French Republic casualties as a percentage of forces engaged in a particular battle were fewer than in Old Regime battles, while total losses in a war were greater since armies were larger and engagements more frequent. Battle losses between 1792 and 1802 ranged from 36 percent at Näfels and 29 percent of forces engaged at the Trebbia to less than 2 percent at the Pyramids. The average loss rate as a percentage of forces engaged was a bit less than 7 percent. On the other hand, during the War of the First Coalition (1792–1797) estimates of French losses range as high as 300,000 killed and wounded and over 100,000 prisoners. Estimates of casualties between 1798 and 1802 are about 140,000 killed and wounded and a similar number of prisoners. A high percentage of the wounded did not survive their wounds because of the nature of military medicine. Wounds that would be survivable today were fatal in the 1790s, primarily because of infection. Furthermore, many of the deaths recorded were not the result of battle but of disease and generally poor conditions of sanitation. It has been estimated that for every battle death there were several deaths due to various diseases. On the other hand, most prisoners survived captivity, which was often brief because of the widespread practice of parole, wherein captured soldiers were released upon the promise of not taking up arms again for a specified period of time. Released prisoners could be and were employed against other enemies. Thus, the Mainz garrison capitulated on parole and was immediately redeployed to the Vendée in 1793.

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS. Civil-military relations are always complex but never more so than during a time of revolution and upheaval, when the very legitimacy of the state is in question. In normal times, the fact that civilian and military authorities often disagree on a wide range of issues ranging from budgets to operations is not surprising. In fact, such differences of opinion can often be fruitful. Real problems arise when the military refuses orders from the civilian government or even takes up arms against the government. Control of the military was a perpetual problem during the Revolutionary decade, 1789–1799, and it was the failure to solve the problem that led to the demise of the First Republic.

Military disobedience to the government actually began prior to 1789. Royal efforts to reorganize government finances foundered at least in part because the government feared that the officer corps would refuse to impose the reforms by force. In 1789 Louis XVI did not launch an armed coup against the Assembly because he and his advisors feared that the enlisted men would not march against the Parisian populace.

With the coming of war in 1792, coupled with continued internal turbulence, problems of civil-military relations became more serious and volatile. Ambitious generals began to seek power for themselves. Other commanders often accepted the incumbent regime but sought to impose their own views of strategy or foreign policy on the political authorities.

In 1792 and 1793 a number of generals tried to strike directly at the government. Lafayette, after the overthrow of the monarchy, sought to march on Paris. His troops, however, refused to follow him. In 1793 Dumouriez tried to establish himself as the ruler of an independent Belgian state. When the government foiled his intention, he too sought to march on Paris. As with Lafayette, his troops refused to follow him, and Dumouriez had to flee to the Allied lines.

During the Terror, a period of emergency government in late 1793 to mid-1794, the government tightened its control over military leaders through the use of Representatives on Mission, government agents who were deputies in the Convention. Officers were compelled to obey the political authorities. Armed with plenary powers, the Representatives could promote, demote, and even arrest officers they suspected of disloyalty. There were abuses. Failure or even lack of complete success was occasionally met with arrest and death. Loyal officers of aristocratic background were often removed from command simply because of the accident of their birth. Given the dangerous and chaotic conditions prevailing in late 1793, the over-zealous actions of some Representatives on Mission was unfortunate but probably inevitable. On the other hand, the Committee of Public Safety did find a corps of officers who were loyal, talented, and dedicated to victory. Despite its blemishes, the system of emergency government achieved notable successes.

After the Thermidorian Reaction, the Convention and the Directory dismantled much of the machinery of the Terror. The use of Representatives on Mission was discontinued. They were replaced by army commissioners whose powers were greatly reduced. Again, ambitious generals like Moreau and Pichegru seized their opportunity to turn against the regime. Moreover, the government often turned to the army to resolve its political problems. The coup of September 1797 placed the Directory in debt to the military. This debt, coupled with general war-weariness, enabled Bonaparte to dictate his rather than the government's terms at the Campo Formio Peace. In the following year Championnet created a republic in Naples against the wishes of the government.

In 1799 the Directors sought to use the army again to purge the legislative and some of their own members. This extra constitutional action gave Bonaparte the opportunity to use his participation in the November coup as a stepping stone for his own seizure of power. Thus, the failure of the Republic to resolve definitively the problem of civil-military relations in large measure contributed to the regime's demise.

Navies

NAVY, BRITISH. Throughout the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, the Royal Navy dominated the seas. Between 1793 and 1802, the Royal Navy destroyed or captured 56 French, 10 Spanish, 25 Dutch, and 5 Danish ships of the line with a loss of 26, mostly due to storms and other hazards of the sea. Quantatively and (more critically), qualitatively, the Royal Navy was superior to the naval forces of any power or combination of powers on the European continent.

In 1793 the Royal Navy possessed 141 ships of the line and 165 smaller warships including frigates. Moreover, the navy possessed bases and dockyards capable of supporting and enlarging the fleet. By 1797 the Royal Navy contained 161 ships of the line and 209 other war vessels, and by 1799 the numbers had increased to 176 and 221, respectively. By 1800 the Royal Navy contained 180 ships of the line and 233 other warships. Of course, the navy had numerous tasks to perform, ranging from the blockade of French and later Spanish Atlantic and Mediterranean ports to the protection of overseas bases and the escort of convoys. Nevertheless, the British won every major naval engagement.

Superior numbers were not the explanation of British dominance at sea. At the Glorious First of June, numbers of British and French ships were equal. At Cape Saint Vincent, 15 British vessels defeated 28 Spanish ships, while at Camperdown the numbers of British and Dutch ships were equal. At the Battle of the Nile numbers were again equal.

The quality of the officers and seamen made all the difference. By 1793 Royal naval officers were in essence professionals. Typically, an officer came from a middle-class background and had gone to sea as a youth, serving at least six years as a midshipman before being promoted to lieutenant. Afterwards, further advancement was a function of longevity or bravery and, frequently, a combination of both. There was in the navy no purchase of commissions.

Crews consisted of a small percentage of volunteers and large numbers of impressed men, often not even British. In peacetime, warships were not fully manned to save expenses. When war came, press gangs would be unleashed in seaport towns, merchant vessels would be stopped at sea, and able-bodied men would be dragged into the navy. Thus in 1790 the Royal Navy had fewer than 20,000 sailors, but by 1800 there were about 120,000 men in the fleet. Crews were ill-paid, ill-fed, and subject to brutal discipline, although life afloat was probably not much more brutal than civilian life ashore.

Officers were, however, able to turn impressed seamen into highly effective fighters. British warships typically spent months—even years—at sea, and officers had more than ample time to train their crews not only in the handling of a single ship but also in the methods of working in squadrons and fleets.

Finally, it is worth noting that British naval commanders were very aggressive. They were constantly seeking battle and opportunities to crash their foe. The traditional tactics of fighting in strict linear order had in practice by the late 1790s given way to more flexible tactics that called for a *mêlée*. British vessels would seek to break through an enemy battle line and then wage a series of single- or multiple-ship engagements. Nelson, for example, typically encouraged his subordinates to seize tactical opportunities and exploit them. The flexible aggressiveness of the Royal Navy was in a sense a naval parallel to the tactical and operational methods of the French army, with the striking exception that no British fleet was ever defeated at sea.

Naval superiority had a number of significant strategic consequences. The Royal Navy effectively prevented a hostile invasion of Britain. The navy also virtually eliminated French seaborne commerce and, despite the activities of privateers, protected British commerce. This in turn helped provide the wealth that Britain required, both for its own war effort and for subsidies to enable coalition partners to put armies in the field against France. The navy could also transport armies to crucial fighting fronts. Alone, the supremacy of the Royal Navy did not guarantee the defeat of France. The fate of two coalitions between 1793 and 1802 is evidence enough that sea power alone could not defeat a land power. Nevertheless, for Britain, the navy was necessary but not sufficient. Necessary in that it was the essential element in Britain's survival and prosperity; not sufficient in that to defeat France, Britain, along with a number of great power Allies, had to defeat the French on the ground. Naval supremacy however, guaranteed that even a defeat on land would not be ultimately catastrophic and that Britain could always try again to form new coalitions. In wars against the Republic, Britain failed to defeat France, but was ultimately successful against Napoleon.

NAVY, FRENCH. Despite much sacrifice and heroism, the Republic's navy was no match for the British fleet. French warships, 76 in 1793, were well-designed and well-constructed. The officers were highly trained and the crews no worse than the human material used by the British. The turmoil of the Revolution did have an impact on the navy, especially in terms of the loss of experienced leaders through emigration or execution. The abolition of the specialist gunnery corps also produced much turbulence in the enlisted ranks. The British destruction of naval facilities at Toulon plus the destruction of ten and seizure of three French ships of the line further weakened the Republic's fleet. Between 1793 and 1802 the French lost 56 ships of the line and over 150 frigates. On the other hand, the Revolution's excesses were temporary, and there is evidence that the impact of Republican beliefs actually enhanced crew morale. There are after all numerous examples of warship crews fighting on against terrible odds rather than striking their flag. Moreover, considering the fact that the Bourbon navy did not have a stellar record against the British in wars of the Old Regime, the loss of Royalist officers may not have been that harmful. During the Seven Years' War, for example, the French lost 45 ships of the line and 19 during the American Revolution. Perhaps the weakness of the Republic's navy was in other areas.

In the first place, France faced the best navy in the world: the British Royal Navy, sustained by a country that understood that sea power was the crucial component of their national power. By contrast, France was a land power. Mortal threats to France came only from the land. The British understood that in the process of resource allocation the navy had to have first priority. Similarly, the French had first to build up their armies. A second factor was that the Royal Navy had more training than the French navy. At the start of the war in 1793, the Royal Navy put to sea and stayed there. Consequently, officers trained not only crews of a single vessel but also learned to operate as part of a larger force. The French constantly faced an almost insoluble problem: they could remain in port and be safe or attempt to put to sea to gain proficiency in fleet evolutions and face defeat. Consequently, throughout the Revolutionary Wars, French ships often fought brilliantly while fleets did badly. The French simply could not overcome a legacy of defeat that stretched back to the days of monarchy in the face of the world's best fleet.

WARSHIPS. The primary ship of war of the 18th century and early 19th century was the full-rigged wooden sailing ship. Ships were classified according to their armament. The largest, mounting 100–120 guns, were called first rates; those with 90–98 guns were second rates; ships with 64–84 guns were third rates. Ships with 80 guns or more had three gun decks, while the rest had two decks. First, second, and third rate vessels were the capital ships of the fleet. In the 18th century ships usually fought in a linear formation and were called ships of the line.

Of ships below the line, those with 50–60 guns were termed fourth rates; those with 32–44 cannon were fifth rates; those with 20–28 guns were sixth rates. Armament on ships below the line was carried on a single deck. The smaller warships were called frigates and served as scouts, convoy escorts, and merchant raiders.

Ships' guns were a mixture of 32-, 24-, and 12-pounders. A 32-pounder was 8 1/2 feet long with a 6 1/2-inch caliber. It weighed two tons and had a crew of 15. Guns normally fired solid shot but could also fire chain, grape, and canister. The maximum range for solid shot was 2,500 yards, but more damage was caused by firing at about 400 yards, where a round could penetrate up to three feet of timber and cause splinters that were lethal to anybody in their path. By the late 18th century British ships carried one or more carronades, a short-barreled gun that fired a 68-pound shot. The French navy also adopted them.

The 74-gun ship of the line was the most common warship in many fleets. The 74-gun ship was 160 feet long and 45 feet wide. It had a draught of nearly 20 feet and weighed over 2,000 tons. It carried a crew of 590 officers and men, and in good sailing weather had a speed of about seven knots. Battle tactics in the 18th century involved fleets deployed in line trading broadsides. The British ultimately came to prefer the *mêlée*, where individual ships or small groups of vessels fought individually, supplementing broadsides with musket fire from snipers in the rigging. Ships were rarely sunk in an engagement. Rather, a ship battered beyond endurance capitulated to its opponent. During the Revolutionary wars, the British Royal Navy was generally dominant at sea. French warships were better designed than British vessels, but the British had the advantage of numbers and experience.

Popular Insurrections

THE VENDÉE. The Vendée is located south of the Loire, which forms its northern boundary. To the west, the Vendée's approximate border ran through the towns of Samur and Thouars. The southern boundary was sixty miles south of the Loire, following a road connecting the small port of Les Sables with Fontenay.

Topographically, the Vendée consisted of the *marais* and the *bocage*. The *marais*, near the coast, was flat and marshy and sparsely populated. Further inland, the *bocage* consisted of fields, small villages, and buildings enclosed by thick hedges and crisscrossed by sunken roads. The *bocage* covers most of the Vendée; to the east, the *bocage* gives way to rich agricultural districts.

In 1790 about 800,000 people lived in the Vendée. The vast majority of the population worked on the land. Most peasants were tenant farmers, sharecroppers, or day laborers. There was also a large number of drifters, who were unemployed or only seasonally employed. The nobles in the region were on the whole quite poor and their estates not much different from neighboring farms. The small towns were largely administrative centers and contained small textile businesses. The peasantry was also quite religious, and parish priests were important and influential figures in the peasant communities.

Even before the Revolution, there was considerable tension between the peasantry and the middle classes in the towns. The middle class was not subject to militia service, and the peasants, who often worked for textile makers during the winter season, felt they were being exploited.

The middle classes accepted the Revolution and were the chief beneficiaries of Revolutionary reforms, including access to local offices and the sale of church lands. The peasants also disliked the church reforms of 1790 and continued to follow priests who refused to accept the Civil Constitution of the Clergy.

Into this explosive brew came the war, the execution of the king, and the disastrous military situation of early 1793. In late February the Convention introduced a *levée* of 300,000 men. Word of the new law reached the Vendée in early March. By 3 March young peasants and artisans banded together and pledged to resist conscription. There were riots in many towns. On 11 March riots spread to towns throughout the region, as peasants attacked constitutional priests and local officials. By 13 March the Vendée was in open revolt, and hundreds had been killed. The rebellion initially was a popular spontaneous uprising against the Parisian government and local officials and individuals who supported the Republic. By the middle of March, the insurgents controlled most of the Vendée.

The government's response was to push small detachments into the Vendée to restore order, but the small columns were rapidly crushed. In early April the government sent 20,000 men, organized into four columns, into the Vendée. Republican troops, who were drawn from the National Guard, lacked training and had little knowledge of the terrain. In a series of engagements between 19 and 22 April, government troops were defeated and pushed back with heavy losses. In May the Vendéans defeated additional Republican offensives.

The Vendéans also began to give their rebellion a permanent organization. The original bands of rebels were led by a wide variety of individuals—peasants, artisans, former soldiers, and local nobles. The Vendéans established a Grand Council for civil administration, located at Chatillon in the center of the Vendée, and parish councils including a local priest who maintained morale. For military affairs a Supreme Council of 30 officers was appointed, although there was no supreme commander. The armed bands were loosely organized. In the *bocage* the largest band, known as the Catholic and Royal Grand Army of Anjou and Haut Poitou, could mobilize 40,000 men. In the western *bocage* the Catholic and Royal Army of the Center contained 10,000 men, and the Army of Retz and Bas Poitou in the *marais* had about 12,000 men. The three armies retained a total of 7–8000 men permanently under arms, while the remainder worked their fields until the regional commands ordered mobilization, which was transmitted from parish to parish by the ringing of church bells.

On 9 June the Army of Anjou and Haut Poitou stormed Samur, and on 12 June, the Vendéans chose Cathelineau, a wagoner and leader of one of the earliest bands, as supreme commander. Senior leaders then decided to attack Nantes. Forces from the *marais* would advance north while the Army of Anjou and Bas Poitou moved from Samur to the west. The dual offensive against Nantes failed because the two columns did not coordinate their attacks. The Army of Retz and Bas Poitou attacked and was driven back on 28 June. The Army of Anjou and Haut Poitou attacked a few days later. It too was driven back, and Cathelineau died in the fighting.

The Vendéans withdrew to the *bocage*, where they drove back Republican probes and elected Elbée, a former soldier, as the new supreme commander. The Vendéans had thus managed to hold their own but had failed to break out and spread their rebellion to other regions. Nor had they taken a port in order to receive weapons and perhaps troops from England.

The Republicans, who had been employing primarily National Guardsmen and untrained recruits in the Vendée, in August sent the veteran Mainz garrison of 12,000 men to the west. In September the Republic launched another offensive into the *bocage*, but the Vendéans ambushed and defeated individual columns. The Republicans retreated. They were not, however, completely defeated and soon organized another offensive.

Under Kléber's command, three large columns moved into the *bocage*, converging on Chatillon. On 16 October 1793, Kléber entered Cholet and organized its defense with 32,000 men. The Vendéans were cornered and, with 35,000 men, launched a massive counterattack on 17 October. The Vendéans sustained a major defeat, Elbée was killed, and the Vendean army, accompanied by thousands of women, children, and elderly people, retreated to the Loire. On 19 October 65,000 Vendéans crossed the river into Brittany. Only a few thousand men under Charette in the *marais* held out in the Vendée.

In Brittany the Vendéans decided to move north to Laval and from there to the coast to capture a port where they could obtain support from the British. On 13 November the Vendéans tried and failed to storm Granville on the Channel and retreated back to the Vendée. They attacked and failed to take Angers, moved back north, took Le Mans on 10 December and were defeated upon leaving the town on the 12th. Unable to cross the Loire back into the Vendée, they moved west, where Kléber caught them at Savenay on 23 December. The Republicans annihilated the desperate Vendéans, and only small groups made their way back to the *bocage*.

By the end of 1793 the Vendéans were broken as a military force. In 1794 Republican forces, using roving columns, kept up pressure on guerrillas, who operated in small scattered bands. The war of ambush and reprisal went on throughout the year. In February 1795, after the Republic promised amnesty, exemption from conscription, and the free practice of religion, Charette made peace with the regime. In May Stofflet also concluded a truce.

A third insurrection broke out in 1795 in conjunction with the abortive Quiberon expedition. It lasted until early 1796, ending with Stofflet's death and Charette's capture and execution. A fragile peace was established, but insurrection erupted again in 1799 in a less effective form. A tenuous peace was restored in 1800, but throughout the Imperial period, the government's writ was not complete in the Vendée.

The rising of 1793 was a broad-based popular insurrection. The ensuing war and pacification was, as is the case in most guerrilla conflicts, terribly brutal. Both sides committed atrocities, and the murder of prisoners and noncombatants was common. It is estimated that approximately 15 percent of the population of the Vendée perished in battle or as the result of blue and white reprisals. Well into the 20th century, the Vendée was known for its deep political divisions, with the town voting Jacobin-Republican and the countryside clerical conservative.

IRELAND. Ireland after 1782 was in theory an autonomous state with its own parliament that recognized George III of England as the sovereign of the Kingdom of Ireland. Ireland was, however, dominated by a Protestant Ascendancy that excluded Catholics (who formed 80 percent of the population), and Protestants who were not members of the established church from political participation in political life. In 1791 the Society of United Irishmen was founded in Belfast, and lodges spread quickly throughout Ireland. The Society was essentially a middle-class organization that advocated parliamentary reform and the removal of Catholic disabilities. Though largely Protestant in membership initially, the Society soon included a large number of Catholics.

After Britain went to war with France, the small chance of reform faded, as the British began to treat lodges as criminal organizations and suspended the *habeus corpus* act. Consequently, many United Irishmen abandoned the path of moderate reform, looking instead to revolution with the aid of Republican France. France during the Old Regime had occasionally invaded or devised plans to invade Ireland. While looking to

France, the Society reconstituted itself as a secret organization and adopted many of the demands of the Defenders, a peasant organization that called for lower rents and abolition of tithes paid to the established Church of Ireland. The Society decided to send one of their leaders, Theobald Wolfe Tone, a Protestant lawyer, to France to appeal for help. Tone went first to the United States and then set out for France. Tone obtained interviews with Carnot and Hoche in 1796, and the French agreed to assist the United Irishmen. Hoche was placed in command of a 13,900-man expedition. French motives were different from those of the United Irishmen, since the Directory intended to use a French-controlled Ireland as a pawn in bargaining with Britain. Paris probably intended to return Ireland to London in return for peace and British recognition of French Continental conquests. In any event, storms dispersed the French fleet, and the expedition, though it reached the Irish coast undetected, did not land. The Battle of Camperdown foiled a Batavian attempt to an Irish landing in 1797.

After 1796, the United Irishmen continued to organize and arm themselves and renewed appeals to France for military assistance. By the spring of 1798 the Society claimed to have 278,000 members, of whom 100,000 were armed. The British responded by vastly increasing the Irish garrison to 103,000 men: 39,500 regulars, 26,000 militia, and 37,500 yeoman recruited from the Protestant gentry. The French, however, decided against a second expedition to Ireland and instead mounted the invasion of Egypt.

The United Irishmen then decided to act unilaterally setting the date of their rising for 23 May. The British, meanwhile, in addition to widespread resorts to martial law and repression, also made effective use of paid informers whose activities enabled the authorities to decapitate the Society's leadership. Thus, when the rebellion did erupt, it was initially sporadic and uncoordinated. In a wave of minor clashes, the United Irishmen were defeated.

The rebellion then took an unexpected turn when it spread to Wexford. Initially a peasant revolt led by parish priests, it soon took on political overtones as local United Irishmen joined its ranks and transformed a Catholic peasant rising into a political movement. The rebels, however, lacked arms and, despite a number of victories at New Ross and Gorey, the British gathered 20,000 men and on 19 June defeated the Irish at New Ross and on 21 June crushed the pike-armed rebels at the Battle of Vinegar Hill. The British then pursued the scattered remnants, showing no mercy to captured or suspected rebels. As many as 50,000 people died in the rebellion of 1798.

The French, finally, did attempt to send aid landing a battalion in western Ireland in late August. The French scored a number of local victories and raised a number of local forces but were run to earth and forced to capitulate on 8 September. Another expedition was caught at sea. The British captured several ships, and Wolfe Tone, who commanded a battery on one of the ships, was taken prisoner. Despite the fact that Tone was a brigadier in the French army, he was condemned to death, but took his own life on 19 November.

Ireland had represented a great opportunity for France. Had the United Irishmen received adequate help, Britain's strategic position would have seriously deteriorated. Bonaparte had talked with Irish leaders but preferred to go to Egypt. He later noted while on St. Helena, "if instead of making the expedition to Egypt I had made one to Ireland what would England have been today. . . ?"