

JENA ONLY

Given by USMA
History Dept to 11th Armored
Cavalry Regiment circa 1990

USMA for
11 ACR

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JENA STAFF RIDE

**US Army Military History Institute
Carlisle Barracks, Bldg. 22
Carlisle, PA 17013-5008**

I. Opening OPD:

- A. Discuss the purpose and conduct of a staff ride.
- B. Discuss the diplomatic/political context for the war against the Prussians.
 1. Why war?
 2. Prussian war aims?
 3. French war aims?
- C. Discuss the opposing armies.
 1. Organization.
 2. Technology.
 3. Operational and tactical doctrine.
 4. Generals and leadership.
 5. Logistics
- D. What were the national military strategies of the opposing countries?
- E. Discuss the campaign strategies that led to the battles of Jena and Auerstadt.
- F. Discuss the campaign.
- G. Draw out doctrinal insights: how does this campaign in 1806 help us understand the art of war as we practice it today?
 1. Movement to contact.
 2. Reconnaissance.
 3. Supporting distance.
 4. Logistical challenges and solutions.

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II. The Battle of Jena: The Staff Ride.

1. Stops that show tactical decisions, crucial tactical actions, and key doctrinal, administrative, and logistical considerations.

a. Stop 1: Cospeda. Visit museum; give overview of the battlefield and the battle using the terrain model. Discuss the significance of the Landgrafenberg. Was this, is this, critical terrain?

b. Stop 2: Windknollen Ridge. Focus on the operations of Lannes on 14 October as he executed Napoleon's orders: "What is important today is to deploy upon the plain. The dispositions indicated by the maneuvers and the forces the enemy shall show will be taken afterwards, so as to push him out of the positions he occupies, and which are necessary for deployment."

c. Stop 3: Lutzeroda-Closwitz line. Assess Lannes's actions against the Prussians as he cleared the Dornberg.

d. Stop 4: Mount bus and drive or preferably walk to Rodigen. Assess the actions of St. Hilaire and Holtzendorf.

e. Stop 5: Drive to Vierzehnheiligen. Stop in route to assess Augereau's actions against Prussian right.

f. Stop 6: Cemetary. Discuss care of wounded and dead.

g. Stop 7: Walk to Grawert marker.

h. Stop 8: Ruchel's attack

III. Post-Staff Ride Session:

A. Auerstadt: Overview and analysis.

B. The pursuit and end of the campaign.

C. Hot wash of the staff ride.

D. Insights from the staff ride. What have the cavalymen of the 11th ACR learned?

STOP 1: Cospeda and the Landgrafenberg:

- Use the terrain model in the museum to provide and overview of Napoleon's operational plan; critique its strengths and weaknesses:

-- The plan after Napoleon convinced himself that the main body of the Prussian army was between Jena and Weimar:

--- Lannes, Ney, Augereau, and Soult would fix the enemy at the Landgrafenberg.

--- Bernadotte was to move to Dornburg and attack the Prussian left flank.

--- Davout was to advance on Apolda to envelop the Prussian left rear.

-- Critique:

--- Napoleon had misjudged the enemy capabilities. He thought that he faced the main Prussian army. Brunswick's force of 63,500 was in fact withdrawing toward Auerstadt. Napoleon faced some 35,000 Prussians under Hohenlohe.

--- Napoleon misjudged the Prussian intentions; he felt that they might attack before he could. They were withdrawing instead; Hohenlohe was acting as the rear guard.

--- Napoleon ordered a piecemeal attack seemingly in the face of superior forces. He estimated that he faced 100,000 based on the campfires. He himself only had 55,000 at hand, with only about 25,000 deployed for attack. His operational system and orders should allow for the arrival: that number should increase to 80,000 by noon: 96,000 by 1300; and 150,000 by 1600 with the arrival of Davout and Bernadotte.

--- Davout's III Corps was left to handle Brunswick alone.

--- Napoleon had not established positive control over Bernadotte.

--- Had Napoleon correctly utilized his cavalry by sending Murat off toward Leipzig?

- Why did the French concentrate on the Landgrafenberg?

1. Point of concentration. Lannes's advance guard occupied both the heights and the town of Jena at first light on 13 October. Lannes initial actions here with his two divisions (Gazen and Suchet) constituted a supporting attack to fix the Prussians while Napoleon executed a turning movement, thinking that the center of concentration was at Erfurt. Napoleon's thinking changed once he divined that the main Prussian army was at Weimar-Jena instead and that it was in the process of retreating to Magdeburg. At that point Napoleon wanted to attack the main army of the Prussians before it could withdraw, thinking it was between Jena and Weimar. The Landgrafenberg plateau then became the point of concentration.

2. Commanding heights. As Dodge pointed out: "To debouch from Jena to Weimar . . . The possession of the Landgrafenberg is a prerequisite." Corporal Coignet of the Guard deployed behind Lannes described it on the night of the 13th:

"On the other side of the city [Jena] we found ourselves at the foot of a mountain as steep as the roof of a house: this we had to climb, and immediately form battalions on the table-land. We were obliged to grope our way along the edge of the precipice; not one of us could see the other. It was necessary to keep perfect silence, for the enemy was near us. We immediately formed a square, with the Emperor in the middle of the guard." [Why did the Prussians give up Jena and the Landgrafenberg if Hohenlohe was to cover the Prussian withdrawal?]

- Is the Landgrafenberg key terrain? Would you seize it today if you had to mount an operation in vicinity of Jena? Would you incorporate into your defense?

- "Order of the Day" dictated between 0300 and 0400 hours on 14 October:

- Major issue for discussion: Should Napoleon have ordered a piecemeal attack considering the overall operational situation?

STOP 2: Windknollen Ridge:

- Lannes attacked Closwitz in order to gain deployment room on the plateau for Augereau's VII Corps to deploy on his left and Ney's VI and then Soult's IV Corps to form up on the right. The Guard constituted the reserve.

- Napoleon's specific instructions were: "What is important today is to deploy upon the plain. The dispositions indicated by the maneuvers and the forces the enemy shall show will be taken afterwards, so as to push him out of the positions he occupies, and which are necessary for deployment."

- Lannes oriented Suchet's division on Closwitz, with Gazan's two lines in support on the left.

- What problems should Lannes have anticipated as he planned for the attack of his two divisions at 0630 hours on 14 October?

- Darkness and ground fog.
- Difficult terrain.
- Lack of preparation time after he received the order and transmitted it to his division commanders.
- Prussian resistance.

- How would you plan an attack along the same general axis of advance today?

STOP 3: Lutzeroda-Closwitz line: Map 67

- Assess Lannes's assault against Tauenzien to gain this line: (What were the effects of fog?)

-- Hampered by rough terrain and fog, Lannes's attack strayed to the left. [Corporal Coignet commented that "We were obliged to feel our way like blind men, constantly falling up against each other. . . . The accursed fog was a great drawback to us. . . ." [The fog did screen French movements and conceal its comparative weakness and mass of troops, including the reserves, as artillery targets.]

-- He had to pass his second line through the first to continue the momentum of the attack as he reoriented on Vierzehnheiligen.

-- He lost Vierzehnheiligen and the forward slope of the Dornberg but was able to hold on to the crest while he cleared Lutzeroda.

-- Vedel's brigade stopped the attempt by Prussian units routed by St. Hilaire to pass behind Lannes to Kapellendorf.

-- Ney, finding the right closed by St. Hilaire, filled Lannes's open left and attacked and took Vierzehnheiligen.

-- Augereau, after extricating himself from the Cospeda ravine, attacked the Saxons at Isserstadt.

- Assess the Prussian defense of the Lutzeroda-Closwitz line and the Dornberg:

-- Hohenlohne was not seeking a battle. He was acting on the defensive to buy time for the Prussian withdrawal. Started attack with artillery at 0600 hours.

-- Tauenzien was able to resist Lannes's attack for 2 1/2 to three hours. Launched some counterattacks.

-- Supports of pickets brought up. Troops fired volleys into the fog at flashes of guns. Case and volleys did damage although the forces could not really see each other.

-- Saxons overlapped in center and on left fell back to Dornberg: 1st Bn August, 1st Bn Rechten, Cerrini's Bde of Saxons.

- Assess Gazan's attack against Lutzeroda.

-- Saxon battalions in Lutzeroda came under fire of own batteries in rear and had ammunition wagon blown up.

STOP 4. Rodigen:

- Trap and countertrap:

-- Hohenlohe had ordered Holtzendorf to seize the Saale crossing at Dornburg.

-- Holtzendorf had marched to the sounds of the guns and collided with St. Hilaire. He had attacked in order to extricate himself. (He unknowingly had had the opportunity to envelop Lannes's corps had the envelopment been allowed to continue unimpeded.)

-- Assess St. Hilaire's actions:

--- Aggressive use of skirmishers.

--- Soult's Cavalry Brigade (8th Hussars and the 11th and 16th Chasseurs) enveloped the left of the Saxon Light Cavalry covering Holtzendorf's left. Attacked continued against the infantry.

--- French infantry attacked and finished the work.

--- Prussian horse

Rodigen - Nerkwitz

Holtzendorf is without orders; although hampered by the fog is marching to the sound of the guns (from Lannes' attack on Closewitz-Lutzeroda line).

Light Troops in front as skirmishers run in to St. Hilaire's skirmishers in fog. St. Hilaire pushing onto plateau for deployment. Holtzendorf's skirmishers brush St. Hilaire's aside and main body deploys into line by eckelon to left.

In fog, Cav Brigade of Soult's Corps (8th Hussars, 11th and 16th Chasseurs) Falls suddenly on Prussian left, crushing the force and sending it reeling toward Nerkiwitz. Trench pursuit catches Holtzendorf at Nerkwitz ford.

Two battalions of Holtzendorf's force continue unmolested toward Vierzehnelin where there subsec. appearance somewhat disturbed Emperor's main attack

-- Illustrates possibilities of Holtendorf's attack on Lannes' Flank.

STOP 5: Vierzehnheiligen:

- Assess Napoleon's actions to crush the Prussians in the vicinity of Vierzehnheiligen.

-- Lannes took the Dornberg and linked up with Ney just as Hohenlohe attacked.

-- Ney's fires from Vierzehnheiligen and massed artillery fires stopped the Prussians.

-- On line, the Prussians exchanged fires.

-- Napoleon attacked with Soult on Lannes's right Ney's two divisions, and three cavalry divisions Klein's Dragoons and Nansouty's and d'Hautpoul's Cuirassiers.

-- Repeated attacks by the light cavalry of the corps helped to break the Prussian will to continue to fight.

STOP 6: Cemetary: Discuss medical care using excerpts from Parker.

- Medical care at time (Read)
--- Lannez
--- Lasez

- Transportation of wounded (Wagons)

- Current medical practice: (every soldier)
-- How to prevent death?
-- How to position medical personnel/system?

--- How did they treat dead?

--- How will you take care of dead enemy/ ?

STOP 7: Grawert's position:

- Assess Hohenlohe's actions to retake Vierzehnheiligen.

- Hohenlohe had been committing forces piecemeal to stop what he must have thought was only Napoleon's advance guard.

- Hohenlohe hoped to be reinforced by Holtzendorf (He would not arrive having been crushed by St. Hilaire) and Ruchel.

- His infantry fought in the open for two hours against the fires of the French.

- General Grawert had marched to the sounds of the guns to help Tauenzien.

- Until about noon Grawert exchanged volleys with Ney's forces and even checked several attacks by his cavalry.

- Grawert had to fight off attacks from Lannes on his left and Ney in the center. He finally withdrew to Gros-Romstadt.

STOP 8: Prussian Infantry Marker

- Assess use of the cavalry to fill the gap between the infantry and Kollin' Detachment. Why?

STOP 9: Vicinity Kapellendorf (Ruchel's attack):

- Assess Ruchel's attack.

- Ruchel responded slowly to Hohenlohe's calls.

- Instead of preparing to cover the retreat or attempting an envelopment, he launched a frontal assault in wedge formation.

- Soult enfiladed his troops with artillery: Desjardins attacked his right, and St. Hilaire his left with the bayonet.

- Why did Ruchel take so long?

- What should he have done? Screen the withdrawal vice attack?