THE ARMIES OF THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

Michèle Cartier FRPSC



Battle of Valmy. September 20 1792.

painting by J.-B. Mauzaisse

PLAN

- I. Before 1789
- II. From 1789
- III. The First Armies
 - The Declaration of Pillnitz
- IV. The French Revolutionary Armies
 - IV.1. Armies
 - IV.2. Siege of Toulon
 - IV.3. Siege of Lyon
 - IV.4. Defense of the Channel Coasts
 - IV.5. War in the Vendée
 - IV.6. Camp of Boulogne
- V. Conclusion

I. INTRODUCTION

Historical facts: Since the end of the Seven Years' War, the Kingdom of France is no longer in conflict with anyone. The troops are garrisoned within the borders.

The Revolution will cause drastic changes in the army. The armies of the Kingdom will become republican armies responsible for enforcing the republican order and spirit.

These armies will eventually increase and invade Europe during the Napoleonic Wars.

I. Before 1789

- > 3 different armies:
 - army of the Royal House: Gardes suisses
 - active troops
 - milice bourgeoise

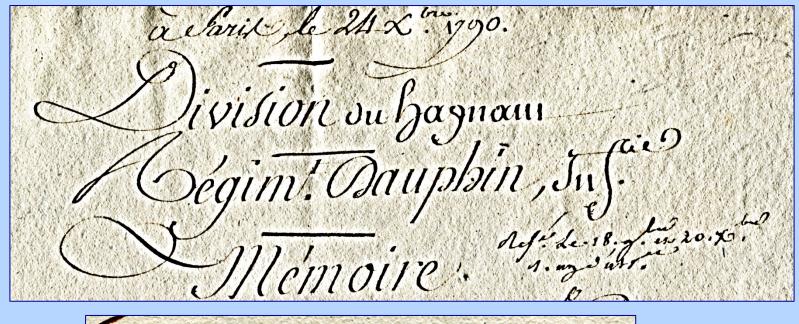
Letter to the treasurer of the Gardes suisses



- Niort to Paris
- 1788
- postage due12 sols
- Niort-Poitiers:19 lieues
 - = 4 sols
- Poitiers-Paris: 84 lieues
 - = 8 sols

II. FROM 1789

A regiment of the active troups, the **Régiment Dauphin** went to Paris in July 1789 to maintain order during the popular uprising.



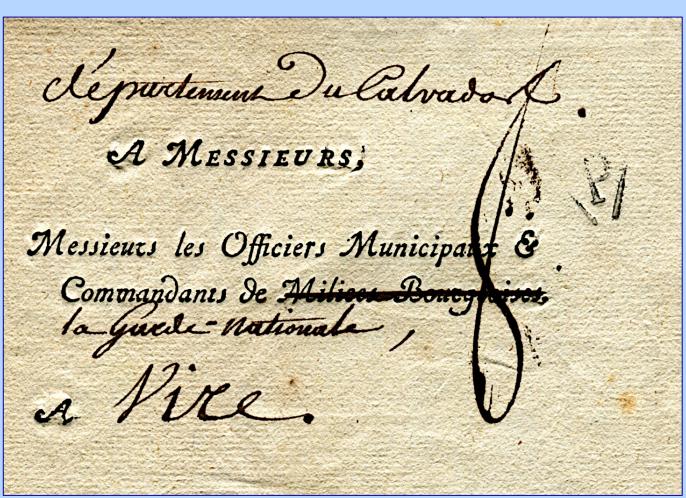
Chamillans of Invances 1st Le

- Paris
- Dec. 24 1789

➤ the *Milice bourgeoise* were united on July 14 1789 under the Marquis de Lafayette and renamed *Garde nationale* (National Guard).







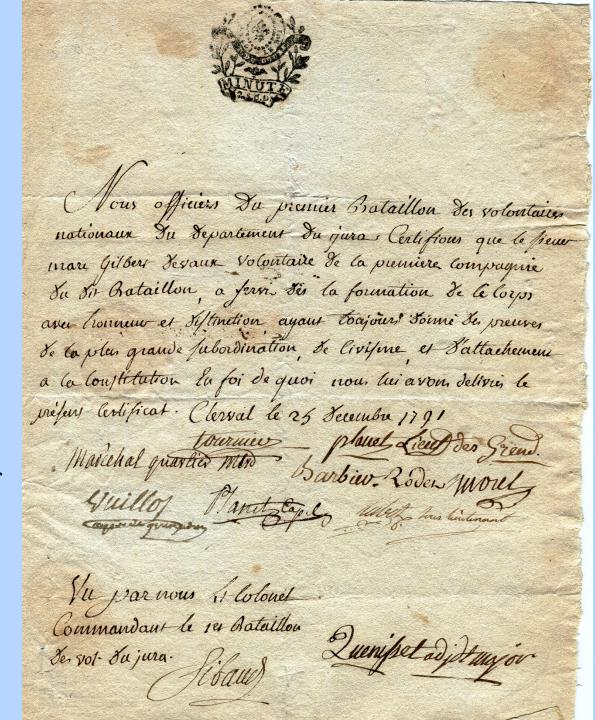
- Paris to Vire
- November 1st 1789

postage due 8 sols

National Guard): from the beginning in 1789 until August 1793, it consisted of volunteers; following the conscription, this militia will be incorporated into the different armies.

First Battalion of the national volunteers of the department of Jura

- Clerval
- December 25 1791



III. THE FIRST ARMIES



Declaration of Pillnitz

It was a statement issued on **August 27 1791** at Pillnitz Castle near Dresden (Saxony) by the Habsburg Holy Roman Emperor *Leopold II* and *Frederick William II* of Prussia. It declared their joint support for King Louis XVI of France against the French Revolution. (Wiki)

Foreign powers reinforced their military presences on the borders of France

- Feeling threatened, France creates on Dec. 14 1791, 3 armies at the borders
 - 1. Armée du Nord (Army of the North)
 - 2. Armée du Centre (Army of the Center)
 - 3. Armée du Rhin (Army of the Rhine)



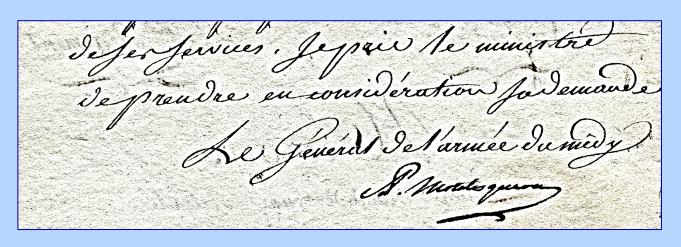
L.-M. Narbonne-Lara is the Minister of War (1791-1792) who will organize these 3 armies and appoint the Generals: *Rochambeau*, *Luckner* and *Lafayette*.





➤ on April 1792, a 4th army is created, from Besançon to the Mediterranean Sea, the *Armée du Midi* (Army of the Midi) commanded by the Chief General A.-P. de Montesquiou







- Briançon to Paris
- July 18 1792

Letter addressed to the Minister of War from General Montesquiou The tension continues to rise between France and the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire

It will lead to the declaration of war on April 20 1792

Document sent to all French departments from the King Louis XVI



DÉCLARATION DE GUERRE.

/10 215. 25 Avril 1792, An 4. de la Liberté.

DE LA PART DU ROI DES FRANÇAIS, AUNOM DE LA NATION.

LA GUERRE EST DÉCLARÉE AU ROI DE HONGRIE ET DE BOHEME.

Signé LOUIS. Et plus bas., ROLAND. A Consignée dans les Régistres de l'Alministration du Départe-

- ➤ following the **Brunswick Manifesto**, the King wrote a letter to the National Assembly saying: « The Nation is in danger ».
- ➤ in reaction, the Convention decides a **conscription of all French** from 18 to 25 years
- ➤ with the increase of soldiers, the armies will be split in 8 by the Minister of War J.-N. Pache (1792-1793)



IV. THE FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY ARMIES

- it was the French force that fought the Revolutionary Wars from 1792 to 1802
- in 1791, a large number of officers fled France to join the « Armée des émigrés »
- > a military school was set up: l'École de Mars



L'ÉCOLE DE MARS SCHOOL OF MARS June 1 1794 – October 23 1794 (5 months)

- Paris to Quimper
- July 9 1794
- franchise



One of 83 letters sent to each department

July 9 1794

COMITÉ

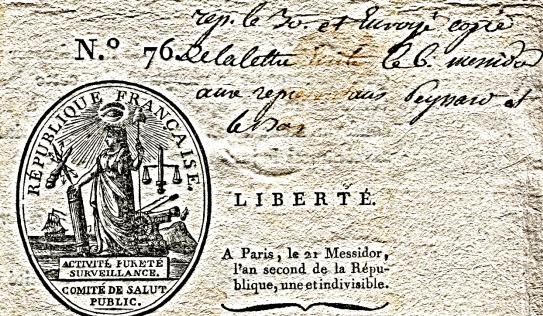
SALUT PUBLIC.

BUREAU de la

SURVEILLANCE É GALITÉ:

L'EXECUTION DES LOIX.

No. 1471.



LIBERTÉ.

A Paris, le 21 Messidor, l'an second de la République, une et indivisible.

Les Représentans du Peuple, composant le Comité de Salut Public, F.

Aux Agens nationaux, près les Districts.

PAR un décret du 13 prairial, la Convention a ordonné que, de chaque district de la République, il seroit envoyé six jeunes citoyens à Paris, pour entrer dans l'École de Mars.

.. Nota. L'ordre et la division du travail du

MINISTERS OF WAR CLAUDE-LOUIS PETIET 1796 - 1797



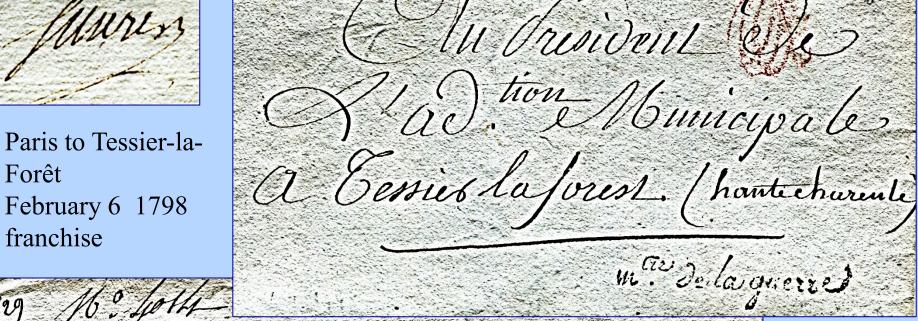
- Paris to the Battalion Chief of the 19th *demi-brigade* at the Headquarters, Place de Paris
 - December 2 1796



BARTHÉLEMY LOUIS JOSEPH SCHÉRER 1797 - 1799



- Forêt



DE LA GUERRE. BUREAU DE LA POLICE MILITAIRE (70

DÉPARTEMENT

LIBERTÉ.

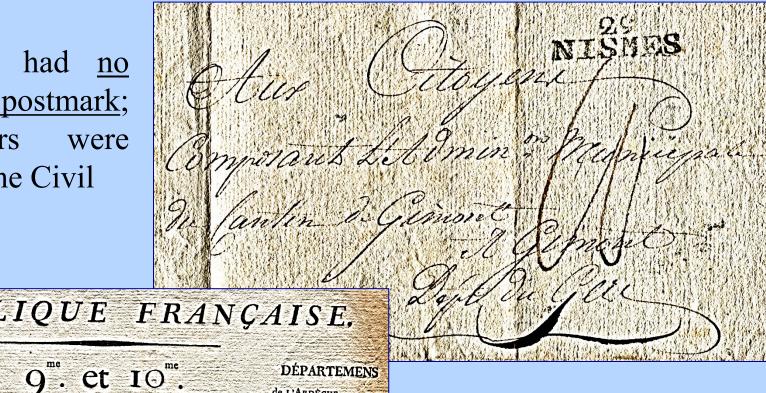


EGALITE.

Paris, le 18 / luviore an République française.

ARMÉE DE L'INTÉRIEUR - ARMY OF THE INTERIOR

- reated on July 12 1795 to keep order in Paris and its region
- Napoléon Bonaparte was Chief General until 1796 (March 26)
- > this army had military postmark; letters the mailed in the Civil Post Office



RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE,

VISIONS

L'an 4 de la République

française.

MILITAIRES

Commandées en chef par le Général

CHATEAUNEUFRANDON.

DÉPARTEMENS

- de L'ARDÈCHE.
- de L'ARRIÈGE.
- de L'AUDE.
- de L'AVEYRON.
- du GARD. du Gers.
- de la HAUTE-GARONNE
- des Hautes-Pyrénées. de L'HÉRAULT.
- de la Lozère.
- des Pyrénées Oriental du TARN.

de la HAUTE-LOIRE

- Nîmes to Gimont
- July 24 1796
- postage due

ENREGISTRE



postage due 5 sols
 no franchise

- from the Headquarters in Dijon
- May 10 1799
- Civil Post Office

Comet lieutenant à la suite de la 13 mm propriée d'infrie legre à Johnne ville

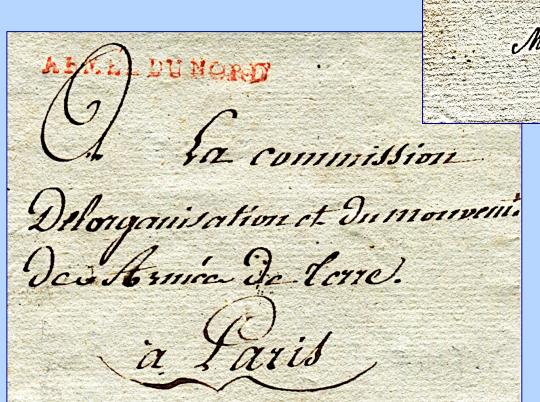
IV. 1. CHRONOLOGY OF THE FRENCH FIRST 3 ARMIES

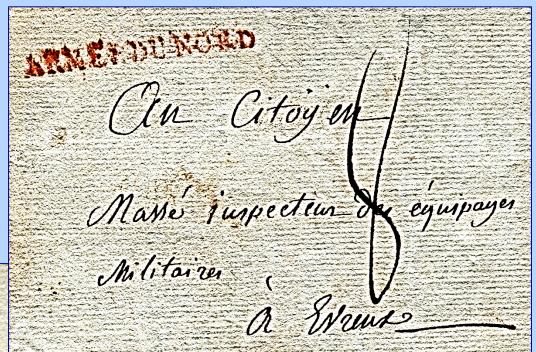
Belligerents: France against the Coalition of Holy Roman Empire (Habsburg Monarchy and Prussia), G-B, Dutch Republic, Spain, *Armée des émigrés* etc...

1. Armée du Nord Army of the North	1791	Armée du Nord 1792 Armée des Ardennes	 • Armée du Pas-de-Calais —→ Armée de Belgique • Armée de Sambre-et-Meuse (1794)
2. Armée du Centre Army of the Center	1791	Armée de la Moselle 1792	
3. Armée du Rhin Army of the Rhine	1791	Armée des Vosges Armée du Rhin	• Armée du Rhin-et-Moselle (1795) —> Armée d'Allemagne (1797) 1797 Armée du Rhin Armée de Mayence Armée du Danube (1799) Armée de Mayence Armée du Rhin Armée du Rhin

1. Armée du Nord (Army of the North)

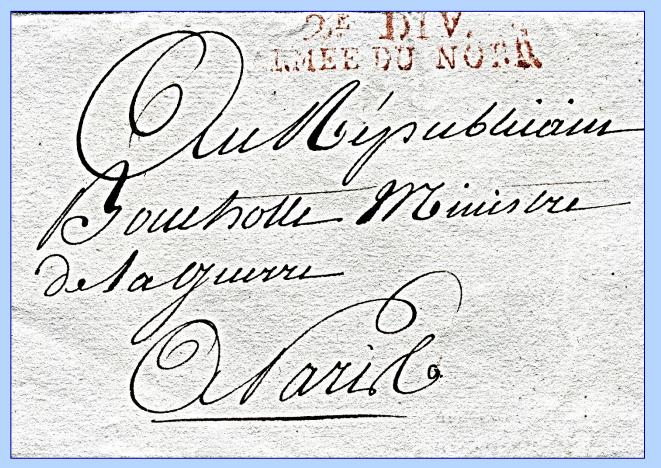
- 1792-1797
- area of operations: northern border; later: Belgium and Batavian Republic
- battles: Valmy, Jemmapes... conquest of Belgium





- red postmark of 1794
- 48 mm

- red postmark of 1795
- 39 mm



Letter to the Minister of War J.-B. Bouchotte (1793 – 3 months) in Paris from General P. de Dampierre

- 1793
- franchise

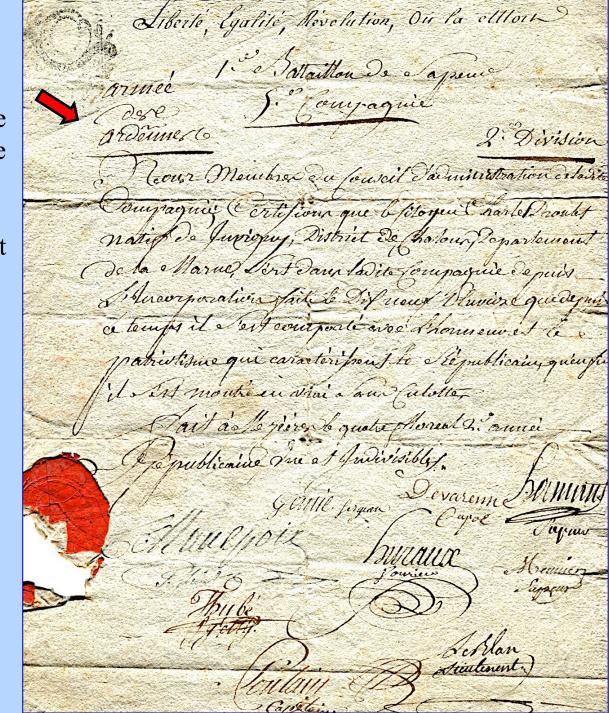
According to the law of September 3rd, 1792, the **postal franchise** is reserved for generals, commissioners, commander-in-chief of division and the commissioning officers.

In 1792, the *Armée du Nord* (Army of the North) will be divided in 2 armies by a Decree of the Convention

- Armée du Nord
- Armée des Ardennes: right wing of the Armée du Nord

- Mézières
- 4 Floréal an II

→ April 23 1794

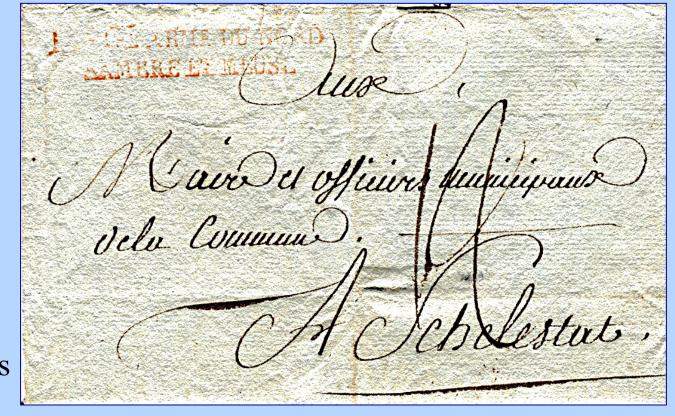


By Decree of the Convention dated June 29 1794, the right wing of the Army of the North forms with the left wing of the Army of Moselle and the Army of the Ardennes, the *Armée de Sambre-et*-

Meuse

B^{AU} G^L ARM^S DU NORD SAMBRE ET MEUSE

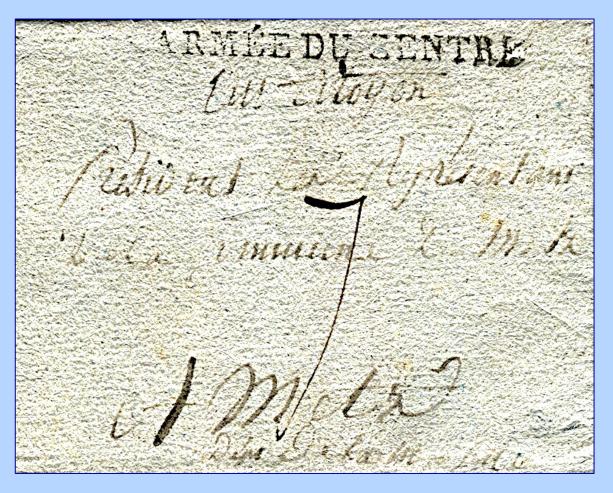
- Eichhoffen to Schelestat (Sélestat) Alsace
- 10 Floréal an III
 - → April 29 1795
- postage due 12 sols



The postal marking on this letter will be used only for General Headquarters in Eichhoffen (Alsace) from 1794 to 1796

2. Armée du Centre - Army of the Center (1791)

- it will soon become the **Army of the Moselle** (Oct. 1st 1792)
- > the Commanding Officer was Marquis de La Fayette

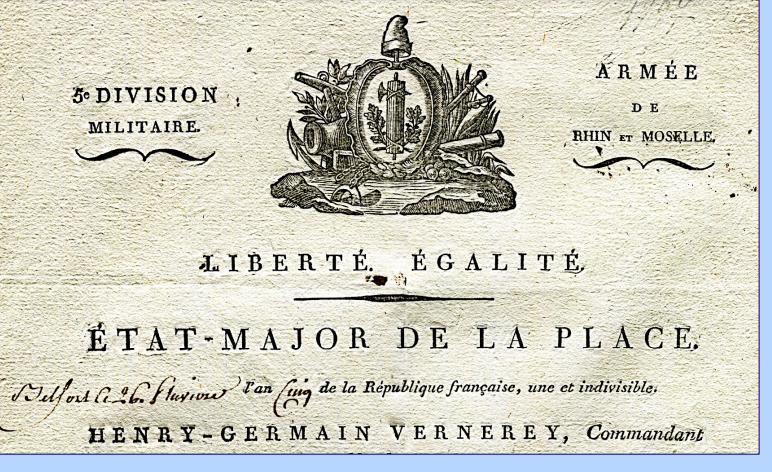


- Sedan to Metz
- postage due 7 sols

1000 Bataillog Butot Armice de Lamogelle Armée de la Moselle Blienschwiller Nous mimbres De ucondril Dad ministration foutique de Recommeilloure avoierrect Dugade, magarine Das El Stemes 100 Lamos elle 500 Bar 1793 • 1st and 6th Battalions Baraillog Du Rot Presimint ter Duensiel Dadunistration Vouflignes De Recommender avoir rein to ugard magarin elereffet & ho. pour l'equipement Dudit Bataille of ad Blischereilles la une of ghowisible Jasombers Afonda and of the Rhine will be reunited under the name of Army of Rhine-and-Moselle

Armée de Rhin-et-Moselle - Army of the Rhine-and-Moselle

- ➤ lasted only 9 months
- ➤ this army will be reunited to the *Armée de Sambre-et-Meuse* to become the *Armée d'Allemagne* Army of Germany (1797)



- headquarters in Belfort (Alsace)
- 26 Pluviose an V →
 Feb. 14 1797

^{*} no specific postal marking for this army; it is likely that the postal service of the *Armée de Sambre-et-Meuse* was used

3. Armée du Rhin - Army of the Rhine (1791)

retritories: in the beginning, the department of Ain, after the region of the Rhine from Mainz to Basle, from Bitche to Porrentruy, the region of Besançon advancing towards the East

Letter from the Headquarters of the Army of the Rhine



September 23 1794

franchise

Armée du Rhin - Army of the Rhine

Letter from the Headquarters of the Army of the Rhine in Obersulm to the Headquarters of the Army of the Rhine-and-Moselle in Ottmarsheim (Alsace)



- 5 Fructidor an III
 → August 22 1795
- postage due 10 sols

on back
DEB. OTTMARSHEIM

 letter transfered to Huningue (Alsace)



Preparation for the Battle of Wissemburg (Dec. 1793)

The victory will clear all Alsace from the Austro-Prussian army and the *Armée des émigrés*.



- Landau to the cantonment of Rhot (Rott) near Wissemburg (Alsace)
- June 1793
- postage due 4 sols

au fort de landau le 24. Time 1993. L'ai l'ele la la Papublique framaise une et insiristible.

Historical facts: France declared war on the Habsburg Monarchy on April 1792.

- ➤ July 1792, the Prussian army joined the Austrian side and invaded France, only to be rebuffed at the Battle of Valmy.
- ➤ 21 January 1793, the revolutionary government executed Louis XVI.
- ➤ This united all European governments, including Spain, Naples and the Netherlands against the Revolution.
- February 1st 1793, France declared war against Britain and the Netherlands and soon afterwards against Spain.
- ➤ In the course of the year 1793 the First Coalition was formed.
- France will then face the powerful British Royal Navy.

IV. 2. THE SIEGE OF TOULON

> from September to December 1793

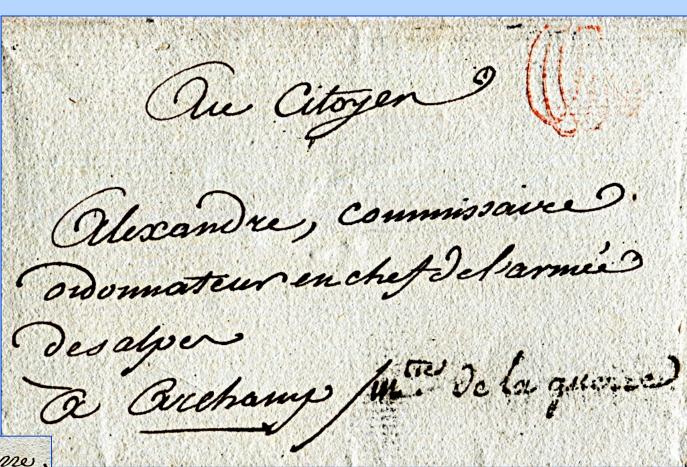
> on September 4 1793, the Ministry of War, Jean-Nicolas PACHE, sent 2 detachments from the **Army of the Alps** and the **Army of**

Italy

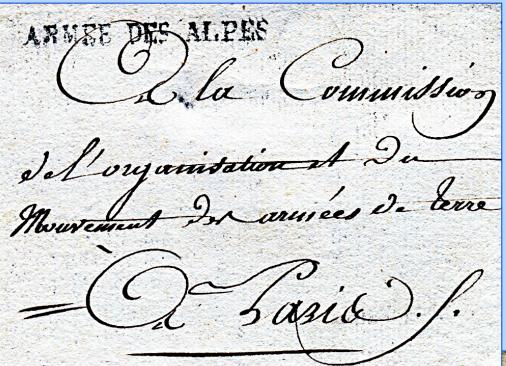
Paris to Archamps

• 1793





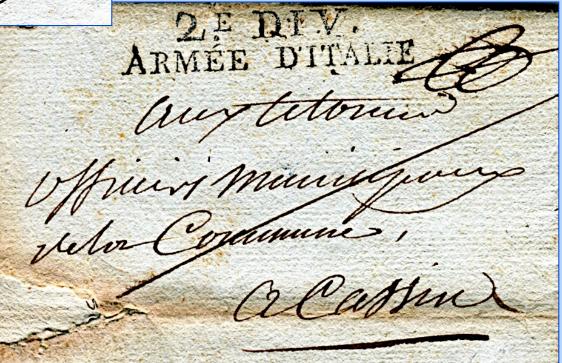
Le ministre de la guerre



➤ the 2nd Division of the Army of Italy will meet the Army of the Alps to free the city

- Toulon to Paris
- 1793

- Toulon to Cassin
- 1794



- ➤ Napoléon Bonaparte distinguished himself during this siege; he will be promoted Brigadier General
- ➤ on December 24 1793, a decree: The infamous name of Toulon is suppressed. This commune will henceforth bear the name of « Portla-Montagne ».



IV. 3 SIEGE OF LYON

- in 1793, the people of Lyon revolted against the revolutionary government
- ➤ a violent repression from the *Convention nationale* from August 9 to October 9 1793
- > the city was encircled by detachments of the Armée des Alpes, the Armée d'Italie and the Armée révolutionnaire de Paris

- Paris
- March 71793



ARMÉE REVOLUTIONNAIRE DE PARIS

- it was the armed arm of the revolutionary exaggeration
- because of this a decree dissolved this army on March 27 1794

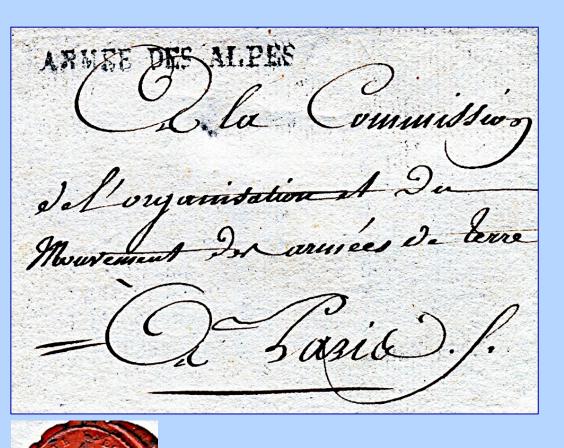
Armée du Midi 1792

Armée des Pyrénées

Armée des Alpes 🤇

Armée de Savoie

Armée d'Italie



- to Paris
- 1793

➤ a decree (October 12 1793) ruled that Lyon was to lose its name...



April 1793

1793

Che Citoyen Editan Nothie
Colleray of tothe Sulvanor

con point Suff Espirit

Diprochement Sie gand

Dec.

Au Edbyen Survey :

Intrepreneur der merlagene D

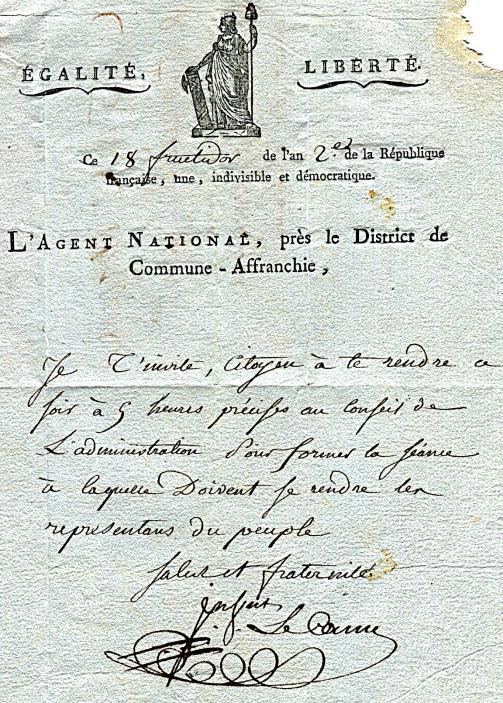
de ha faone

Mue de la Revolution 77.688

1797

- ➤ M. de Robespierre is dead and the *Terror* is over
- ➤ AFTER THE SIEGE... we must now appease...
- Lyon to *Commune* affranchie (Lyon)
- September 4 1794
- military franchise





➤ after the Declaration of War to England on Feb.1st 1793, France must protect its northern border from a possible British invasion

> the Armée des Côtes (Army of the Coasts) is created

➤ the Armée des Côtes will be divided by decree on April 30 1793:

- Armée des Côtes de Cherbourg

- Armée des Côtes de Brest

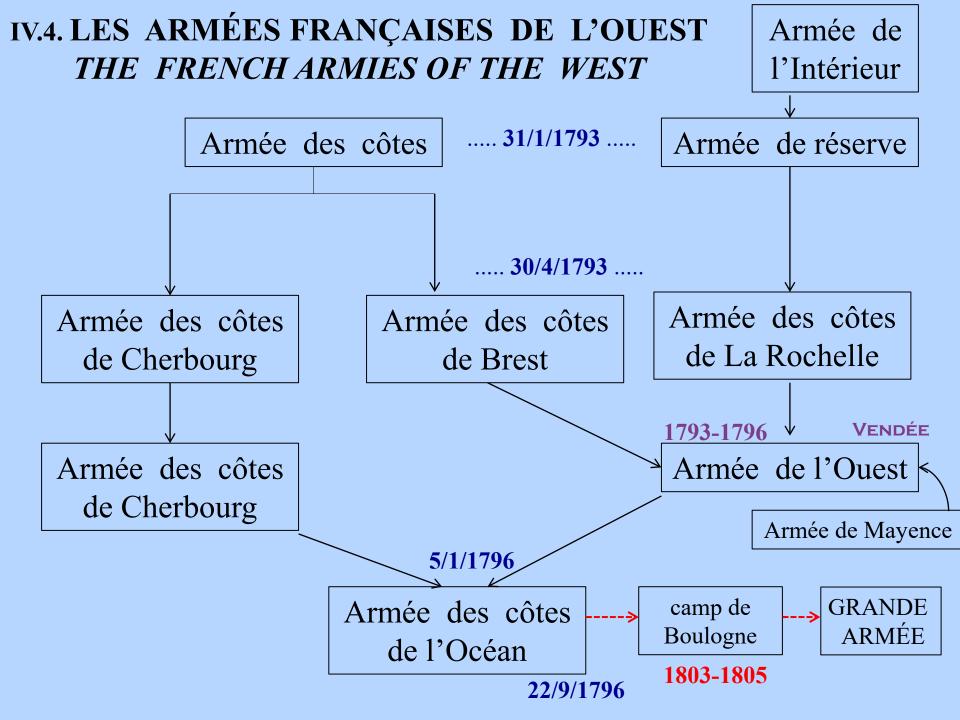


- September 17 1793
- postage due 13 sols

seal: 2nd Battalion



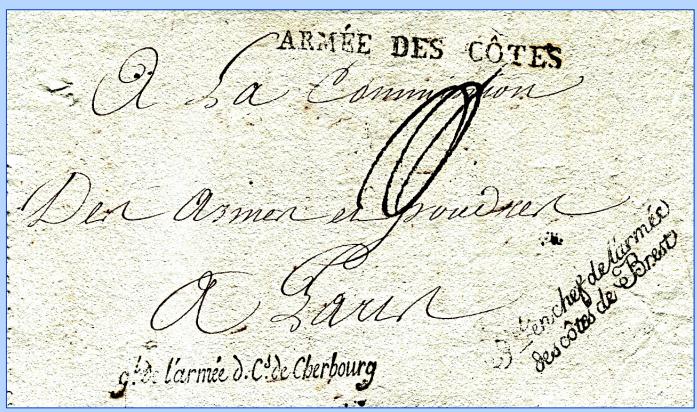






- Headquarters in Rennes
- Nov. 21 1794
- franchise





IV.5. GUERRE DE VENDÉE - War in the Vendée and CHOUANNERIE

- ➤ the Royalists revoltent against the French Revolutionary government in 1793-96
- > reasons...
- > Republican repression...







Letter from Albert RUELLE; he leads the fight against the Vendeans

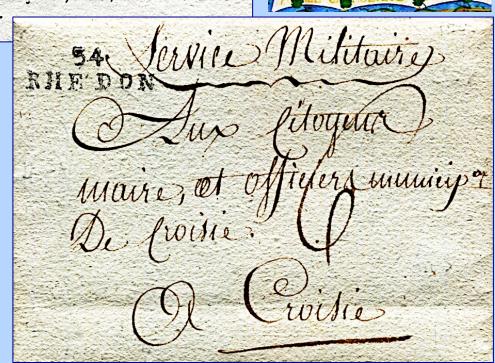
signature

- ➤ 2 Decrees: the Civil Constitution of the Clergy (1790)
- > the military conscription necessary to fight the wars in Europe (1793)

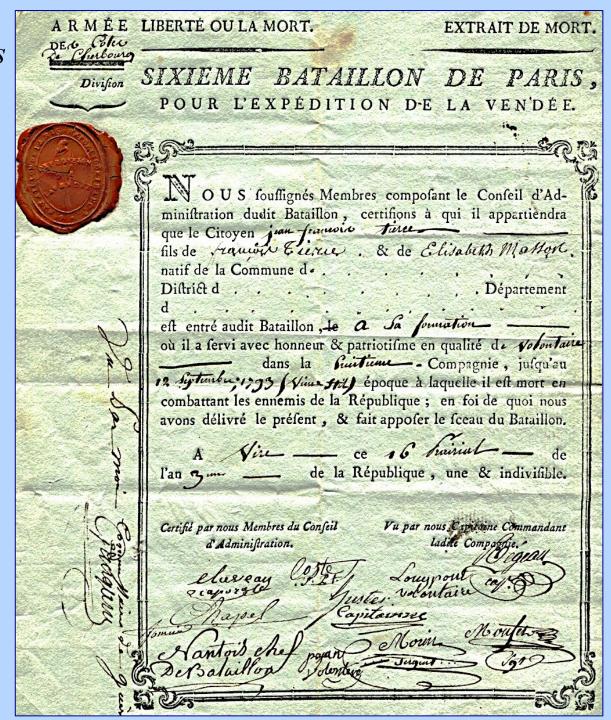


Letter about the conscription from the 'Military Police'

- Rhedon to Croisic (NW France)
- postage due 6 sols

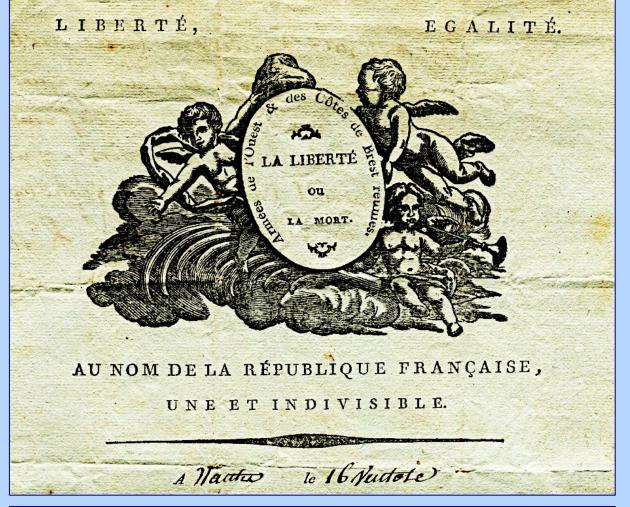


- the Armée des Côtes
 de Cherbourg
 6th Battalion from
 Paris
- ➤ Vire to Paris
- ➤ 16 Pairial an III
 - → June 4 1795



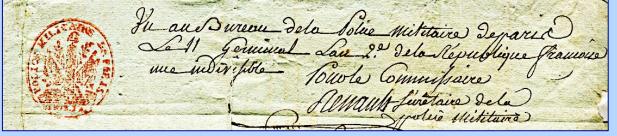
The Armée des Côtes de Brest reunited with the Armée de l'Ouest

(of the West)



- Nantes to Paris
- 16 Ventose an II
- → March 6 1794

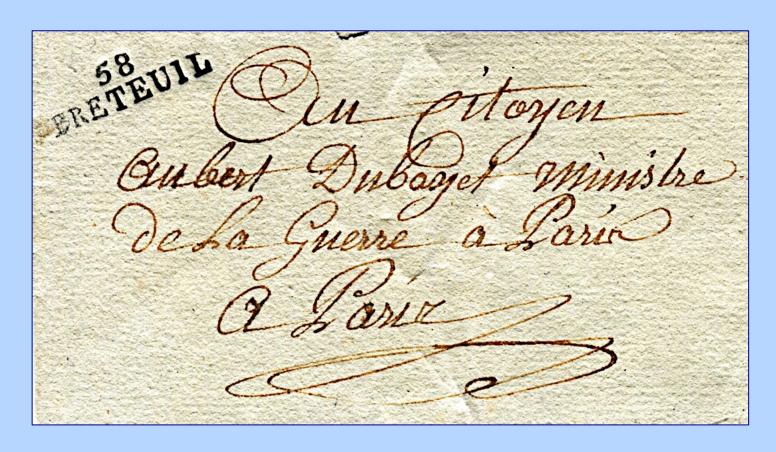
- answer at the bottom of the letter from the 'Police militaire de Paris'
- 11 Germinal an II
 - → March 31 1794

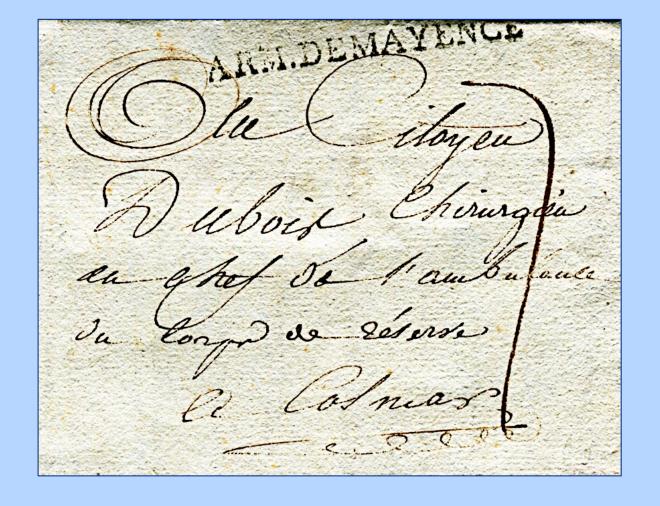


the *Armée de Mayence* (Army of Mainz) is sent to the *Vendée* to strengthen the Republican armies fighting against the insurgents

Letter addressed to General Aubert Dubayet, Minister of War from the *Armée de Mayence*

- he will parade at the head of the army in Nantes on Sept. 3 1793





est ay oute de g primaire and

- Mainz to Colmar
- 9 Frimaire an 7
- → November 29 1798

ARMÉE DE L'OUEST

armee

ARMY OF THE WEST

Jean-Baptiste CARRIER

Bylaw signed by Carrier November 22 1793

Carrier was sent, early in

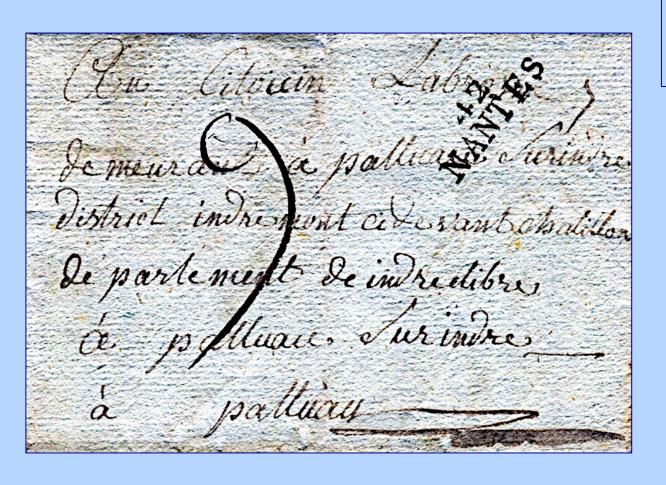
October 1793, to Nantes, under orders from the National Convention to suppress the revolt of anti-revolutionists. He established a revolutionary tribunal in Nantes and victims were sent to guillotine, shot or disposed of in an inhumane way.

In a twenty-page letter to his fellow republicans, Carrier promised not to leave a single counter-revolutionary at large in Nantes.

Guillotined in Paris on Dec. 1794

Diberté égalité Veloust Au nom de la Republique francise une et indivisible Mantes le deuxieune jour de la Parniere d'aude) de l' frimaire Mois de lan deux de la rymblique Française, une et judivisible). Carrier representant du pemple peris larme delocies msiderant que les motifs qui asount de termine a Mettre un ambargo, à ceque les bateaux ne seu fent Monter ni descendre labire dequis anyors jusqu'a nantes ont fest et vouland douver ala Marigation toute (activité que les finonstonus) perintent que dis a jour la Marigation de la bira est libre et quid Pera juris à bus les Balletiers de renonter et descendre librement la riviere El rejerisintant dazengle) Gigni Larrius

- Nantes to Palluau
- 23 Prairial an II → June 11 1794
- postage due 1794

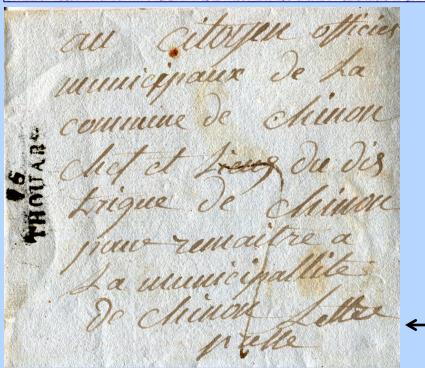


Letter from a soldier to his father:

« ...je ne travaille pas je suis au servis de la république... quand on sers sa patrie lon donne toujours assez... »



- Fontenay-le Peuple to Montaigu
- 1793
- postage due 5 sols
 - Angers to Saumur
 - 1794
 - postage due 4 sols





- Letter from a soldier in Thouars
- 1794

Armée d'Angleterre – *Army of England*1797-1800

> a new army to prevent the landing of the British in France

ARTILLERIE.

> 10 lieues wide along the coast from

Brest to Ostende

Poste aux armées Army Postal Service



Brest

- (O) Servical De Division Moulins Connuandant en Ref Paile Ganihe & D
- Commandant en Geof l'aile Ganche el É L'armée D'Ougtet vri
 - & Allemir

- Headquarters in Rennes to Rennes
- December 1798
- franchise

1 French *lieue* (league) = 3,898km

G.-B.

FRANCE

English Channel

IV. 6. LE CAMP DE BOULOGNE THE CAMP OF BOULOGNE 1803 - 1805

- in mid-May 1803, England broke the peace treaty signed in Amiens with France
- in response, the First Consul Bonaparte plans to disembark his troops on English soil
- ➤ Bonaparte chooses Boulogne-sur-Mer as a base
- the camp housed 60,000 soldiers

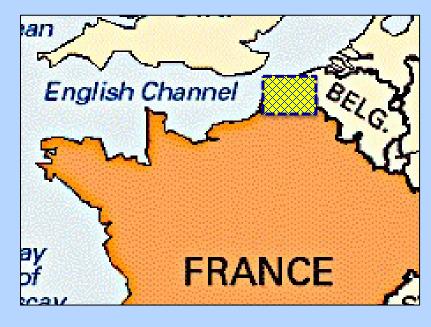
 armée des côtes de l'Océan

 (army of the Ocean Coasts)
- in August 1805, troops headed to southern Germany to fight the 3rd Coalition

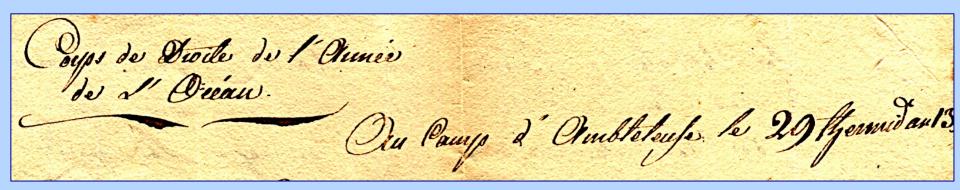
Grande Armée (Great Army)
(200,000 soldiers)



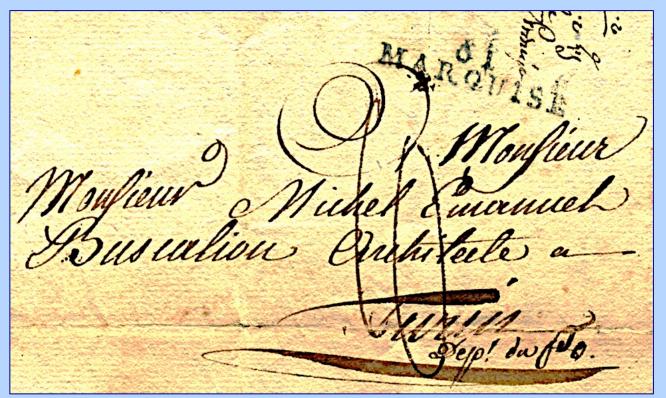
Inspecting the Troops. 1804



IV. 6.2. Camp d'Ambleteuse: port



letterhead: Right Wing of the Armée de l'Océan



- Marquise to Turin (104 dept. Pô)
- August 17 1805
- postage due 10 dc



back: regimental seal

IV. 6.3. Camp de Saint-Omer à Boulogne

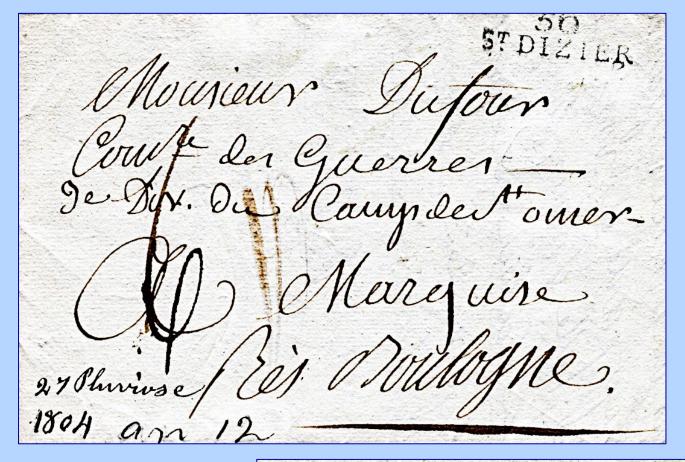
Letter to the Engineer General *Count Henri Bertrand* from the Aidede-camp of Napoléon Bonaparte, *Count Jean Le Marois*

« ... le Maréchal désire recevoir chaque jour... le rapport journalier de l'arme que vous commandez... »

- 11 Thermidor an 12 → July 30 1804
- signature Lemavois

CAMP Etan-Major-Général. DE SAINT-OMER. war Au Quartier Général à Berelogie le 11 Hermidon an 12. Le Général de Division, Chef de l'Etar-Majov-Genéral, Ou feveral commendent Le Genie. Le Marechal communedant la chat desire, General, Eccevin Claque j'un asant gheere. In matie le Rapsport journalier de L'arme que vous connumbres je vous nivite encourey vence à Donne, le ondre, nécessaire, pour que vous Soyer à même de remplie Ses lutention, pour cet objet: je vou prie le Mu procurer reception de un lettre. pour le Général de division chèpe d'état major Hadjudant commandent Soliet de detertunja

Letter to the Commissioner of War. Division 9. Camp de Saint-Omer



1 Divier ce ex Muira au Dourse.

- St-Dizier to Marquise near Boulogne
- February 17 1804 postage due 6 décimes

IV. 6.4. Camp de Bruges (Ostend)





seal: headquarter

Letter from Chief General L.-N. (d'Avout) Davout, Duke of Auerstaedt, Prince of Eckmühl to General J.-M. Petit

- Bruges to Dunkerque
- 1803

DEPARTURE OF CAMP OF BOULOGNE September 3 1805



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