

Remembrances Of Octobers Past Periodic Blog #13

Southern California has its hottest days of the year almost always in late September and early October. While visiting my ancestral home in San Diego recently, I was reminded of the past several Octobers when Marshal Enterprises (ME) would gather and pack games in a hot garage, either at the home where I grew up in San Diego, and then after selling that house, at a home that Monte owned in La Mesa in the shadow of the stately Mount Helix. Like clockwork, this year was no different than previous early Autumns, and the Santa Ana winds whipped up the fires and bad air that always accompanies this annual climatic visit to Southern California. As I drove one day between Los Angeles and San Diego, the dry heat reminded me of the past decades' visits to San Diego and what we would do as Marshal Enterprises.



From left to right Monte and Dennis packing games in Jim's garage October 2016

This year, however, was different---one event was different. Marshal Enterprises had not collected itself together from Michigan; Los Angeles and San Diego to pack games and dine at San Diego eateries still around from our youthful days in the 1970's to discuss future plans. The pandemic, our Spanish flu from a hundred years ago, had changed everything. As early as March of 2020 we knew our lives would change. While we participated in the Consim Dallas meeting in March, there was a certain dark shadow hanging over that event and when it became clear that the 2020 Tempe Consim meeting would not occur, we made the decision to defer our design and marketing activity for another year.

Next Publication of Big Game

Why that decision? We realized that many of our customers would be undergoing financial duress; and we would not be able to complete our playtesting for our 2020 game. Furthermore, with the postponement of the Tempe meeting, we would not be able to do our regular marketing. Finally, we were not sure we would be able to put together final production of our game. Thus, the decision to defer to 2021 our publication of our big game. Instead, we came out with a free game, La Bataille de Hagelberg 1813, which was published in June on the double anniversary of Marengo and Friedland.

More on Hagelberg in a future blog; but where are we in October 2020? I am pleased to report that development of our publication of our 2021 game, if anything is ahead of schedule. We will start playtesting shortly as the prototype of the game is fully developed, as are the special rules; the counters and the maps. Playtesting in California; Michigan; Utah and Texas will start in a few weeks. We are hopeful that Tempe Consim will occur, in June 2021 and we will announce the title then.

While this production is proceeding, we have been in contact with parties in both Japan and China about producing Japanese and Chinese language versions of the games. Japan is our largest non-American market; and China in the past few years has been growing quickly. We are hopeful that our discussions with these two different parties will continue to stimulate our markets overseas.

We still have a few Bautzen and Prussia 1806 counters left. Contact me directly at jgsoto9@msn.com if you are interested.

ME's Man of the Moment: Chernyshyov

French military officers often went back and forth between military commands and diplomatic assignments. Generals Savary and Sebastiani, both Napoleonic aides de camp, are perfect examples of this duality. Savary had extensive experience in the Spanish court, and later became chief of police. Sebastiani, served as ambassador to Constantinople, where he also designed the defense of that city from an English attack. These, and other similarly skilled French Imperial generals, used their talents to serve Napoleon and the Empire. Coalition generals, however, did not develop the negotiating and talking skills necessary for the easy shift to the diplomatic and other governmental arenas. Perhaps the Coalition reliance on their generals coming from the aristocratic class limited recruitment to diplomatic posts. The French reliance on men of multi-faceted talents to accomplish their variety of necessary solutions to complex problems seemed to find military leaders who could do more than lead a charge. However, this Blog's ME Man of the Moment is a Russian general who was able to function in a number of capacities and rivaled his French counterparts with his breadth of talents. He is Alexeiev Chernyshev.

Chernyshev was as close to a youthful prodigy produced by the Coalition as any figure in the Age of Napoleon. Born in Moscow in 1786, the son of a Russian lieutenant general and senator, Chernyshev's father enrolled his son in the Russian Chevalier Guard and the young cavalryman began his service as a 16 year-old in 1802—he was already known to the new Czar, Alexander, and recognized as a young man of extraordinary ability.

Czar's Personal Envoy to Napoleon

He would go on to serve with distinction at Austerlitz and then at Friedland. Alexander then appointed him to serve as his personal envoy to Napoleon after Tilsit. Chernyshev would accompany the French army throughout the War of the Fifth Coalition in 1809 and received the French Legion d'Honneur after Wagram. He was promoted to colonel at age 23.

He then served Russia as a military attaché in Paris. There, he also maintained a sophisticated, and, more important, an accurate intelligence operation which fed Czar Alexander with detailed order of battle information about the French forces ready to invade Russia. It was at this time, that he also negotiated with Bernadotte's Sweden shortly before the French invasion; and was able to conclude a successful continuation of the Baltic nation's friendly neutrality during the Franco-Russian 1812 War.

During the Campaign of 1812, Chernyshev showed his cavalry prowess with successful raids against the Austrian Schwarzenberg on the Southern front over a period of three months. He then defeated Eugene Beauharnais at Marienwerder on New Year's Eve, 1812. He led Russian forces into Berlin in 1813, and fought with distinction in several battles in the campaign of 1813, including Dennewitz, Luneburg and Hagelberg.

At Hagelberg, Chernyshyov led five Cossack regiments, which were instrumental in the Coalition victory. There, he charged Girard's right flank and caused the French to fall back in a disorganized fashion from the town of Hagelsberg. The Cossack pursuit of the French retreat led to the surrender of over half of Girard's forces and assured the immobilization of the French command. This immobilization, and Girard's resulting absence at Dennewitz, assured the Coalition victory there.

Chernyshyov continued to serve Russia in the campaigns of 1814 and 1815. At the age of 27, he was promoted to lieutenant general. But the Napoleonic wars were over. So what would the young general do ?



Alexander Chernyshyov: Russian Commander at Hagelberg

His familiarity with the Cossacks would propel him to being in the Don Cossack Troops' Commission from 1821-1835. In 1821 he was also named commander of the Light Division of the Imperial Guards, where he established a close relationship with the future Czar, Nicholas. He then aided Nicholas in several duties when he became Czar. He was Minister of War for more than 25 years. His service to three Czars ended with the Crimean War. Despite the Russian defeat in that war, his more than 50-year career in the Russian Army and government was probably the longest tenured significant service in Russian history.

Till our next blog...a study of La Bataille de Hagelberg 1813