

ADAM FALTYN • ANDRZEJ OLEJNICZAK

# BOLESLAVIAN EPISODES OF THE NAPOLEONIC WARS



**1000**  
JAHRE LAT  
GÖRNYCH LUZYC  
OBERLAUSITZ

**Interreg**  
Poland-Saxony  
European Regional Development Fund



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BOLESŁAWIEC 2021

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MUZEJ  
MUSEUM  
BAUTZEN  
BUDYŠIN

STÄDTISCHE  
MUSEEN ZITTAU



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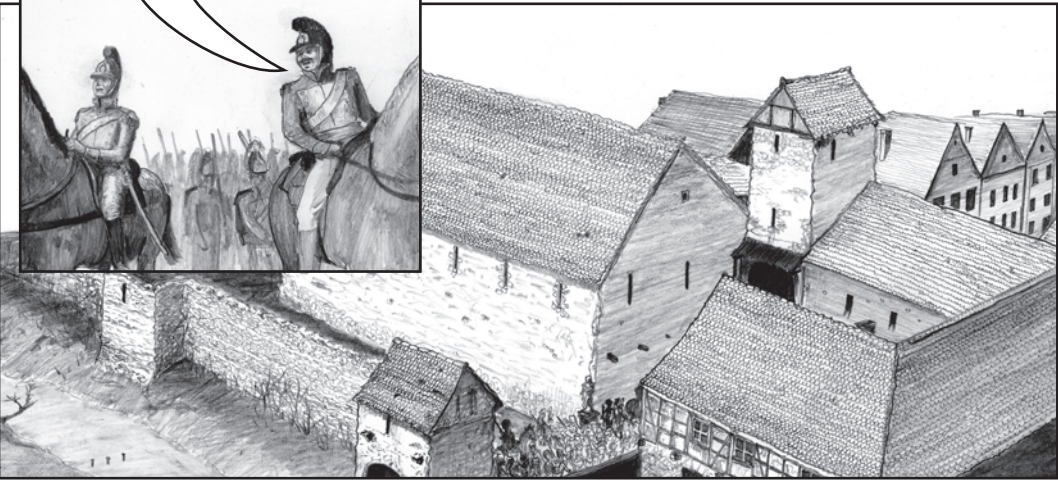
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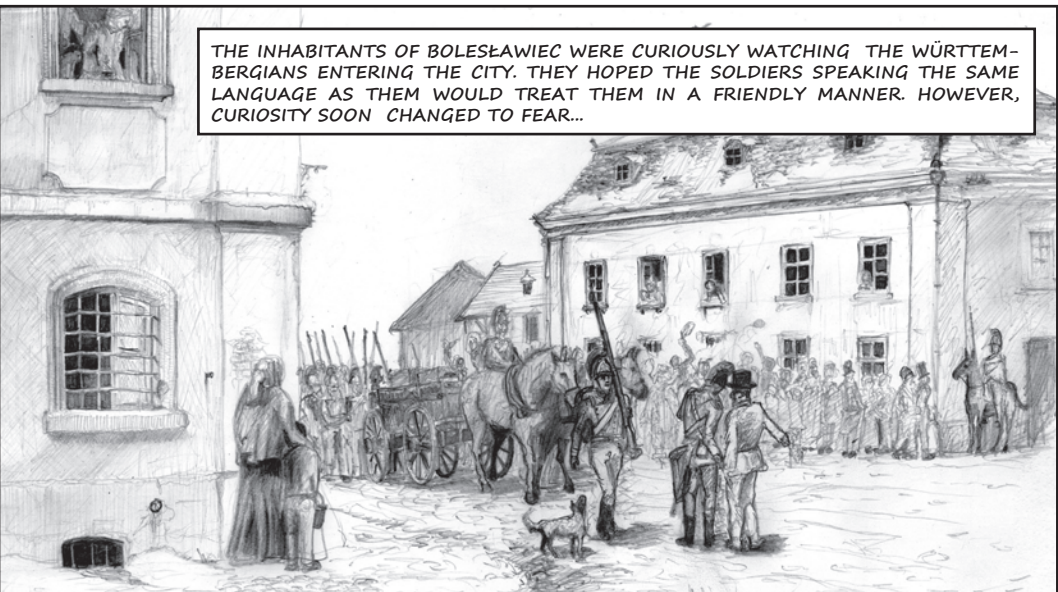


IN THE AUTUMN OF 1806, THE PRUSSIAN ARMY SUFFERED A DEFEAT IN TWO PARALLEL BATTLES: AT JENA AND AUERSTÄDT. VICTORIOUS NAPOLEONIC DIVISIONS MOVED EAST, TAKING OVER THE FORMER LANDS OF POLAND. ONE PART OF THE ARMY, COMPOSED OF THE WÜRTTEMBERGIAN AND BAVARIAN REGIMENTS, ENTERED SILESIA. THEY WERE LED BY THE EMPEROR'S BROTHER, PRINCE JÉRÔME BONAPARTE. ONE OF THE CITIES LOCATED ON THE ROUTE OF THEIR MARCH WAS BOLESŁAWIEC.

THIS TOWN LOOKS RICH. LET'S STAY FOR A NIGHT HERE, THE PEOPLE SURELY KNOW HOW TO ACCOMMODATE US. AND IF NOT, WE WILL ENTERTAIN OURSELVES, WITH WHAT ONLY THE HEART DESIRES.



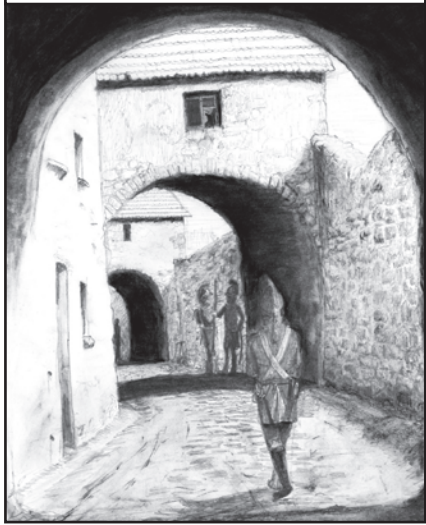
THE INHABITANTS OF BOLESŁAWIEC WERE CURIOUSLY WATCHING THE WÜRTTEMBERGIANS ENTERING THE CITY. THEY HOPED THE SOLDIERS SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE AS THEM WOULD TREAT THEM IN A FRIENDLY MANNER. HOWEVER, CURIOSITY SOON CHANGED TO FEAR...







GUARDS WERE POSTED IN THE CITY TO KEEP ORDER AND WATCH OVER THE INHABITANTS.



THE WÜRTTEMBERGIANS STAYED IN THE TOWN, TAKING ACCOMMODATION IN PRIVATE HOUSES. HOWEVER, PEACE DID NOT LAST LONG. SOLDIERS SOON BEGAN PILLAGING PROPERTY AND THE LIVESTOCK OF THE BOLESŁAWIEC FOLK. THE HIGH CONTRIBUTION, WHICH NAPOLEON IMPOSED ON THE CITIES OF SILESIA, INCLUDING BOLESŁAWIEC, WAS AN ADDITIONAL BURDEN.



SUPPLIES FOR THE WÜRTTEMBERGIAN SOLDIERS WERE DELIVERED BY PRIVATE ENTREPRENEURS, CALLED SUTLERS. THEY WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR DELIVERING FOOD AND OTHER NECESSARY GOODS. ONE OF THEM, DURING HIS TRIP FROM GŁOGÓW, STOPPED IN BOLESŁAWIEC AT THE BEGINNING OF DECEMBER 1806, AND THEN TRAVELLED ON TOWARDS THE VILLAGE OF OCICE.

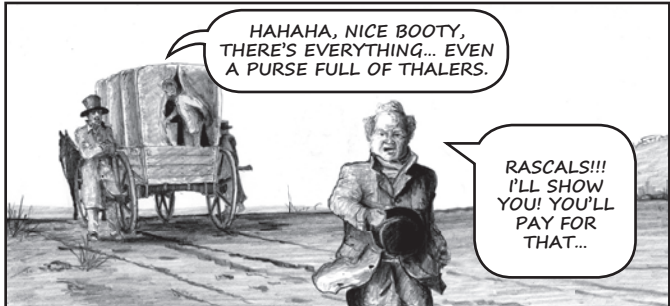
BETWEEN OTOK AND KRASZOWICE, HIS WAY WAS BARRED BY A FEW ARMED BOLESŁAVIAN RESIDENTS...

- STOP! HOLD YOUR HORSES!!!

GIVE US EVERYTHING YOU HAVE! OR YOU ARE DEAD!!!



OH MY! BANDITS! WHAT SHOULD I DO? I HAVE TO SAVE MYSELF...



HAHAHA, NICE BOOTY, THERE'S EVERYTHING... EVEN A PURSE FULL OF THALERS.

RASCALS!!! I'LL SHOW YOU! YOU'LL PAY FOR THAT...



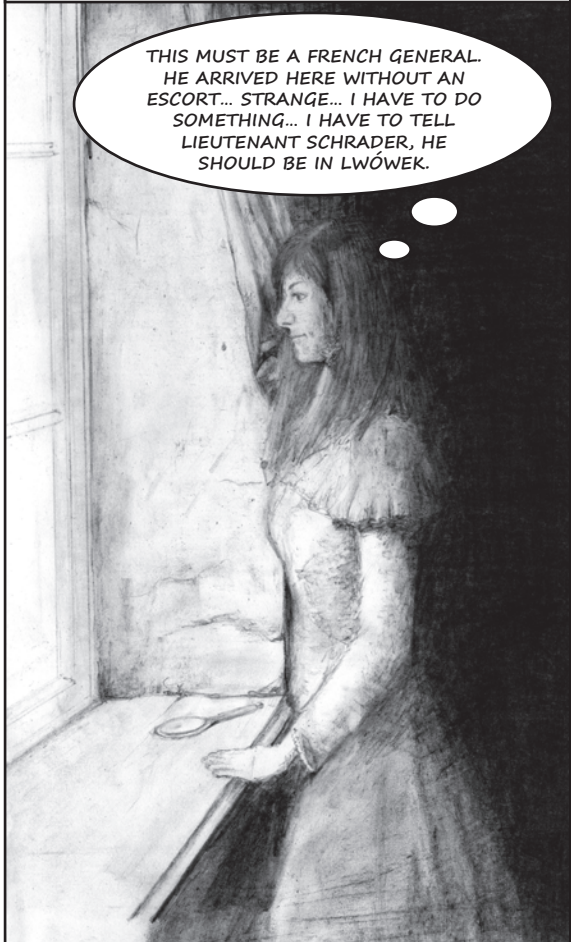
ON FEBRUARY 7, 1807, THE FRENCH GENERAL LE BRUN, CARRYING AN ARMY COFFER DURING HIS TRIP FROM ITALY, STAYED IN BOLESŁAWIEC IN A GUESTHOUSE CALLED "UNDER THE THREE LIMES" LOCATED IN THE TOWN SQUARE.



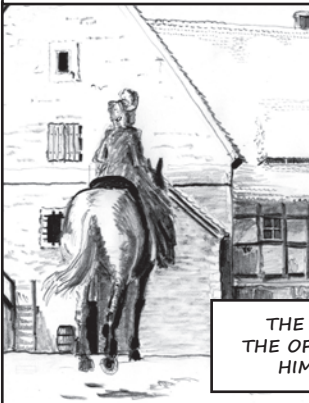
AT THAT TIME, THE TOWN WAS RELATIVELY PEACEFUL. NO SOLDIERS OF ANY ARMY WERE STATIONED HERE.

HIS ARRIVAL WAS NOTICED BY A BOLESŁAVIAN WOMAN, ROSALIE VON BONIN, WIFE OF THE PRUSSIAN STAFF OFFICER HEINRICH VON BONIN.

THIS MUST BE A FRENCH GENERAL. HE ARRIVED HERE WITHOUT AN ESCORT... STRANGE... I HAVE TO DO SOMETHING... I HAVE TO TELL LIEUTENANT SCHRADER, HE SHOULD BE IN LWÓWEK.



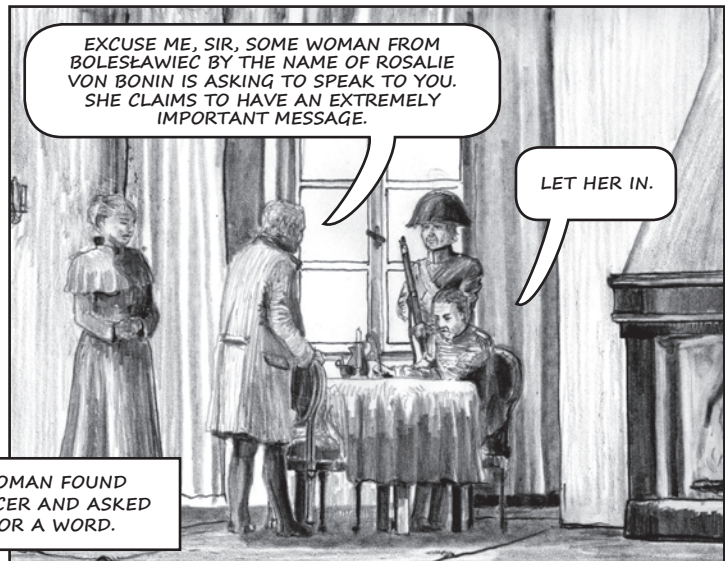
ROSALIE VON BONIN HEADED TOWARDS THE NEIGHBOURING TOWN, WHERE LIEUTENANT SCHRADER WAS TO STAY WITH HIS UNIT.



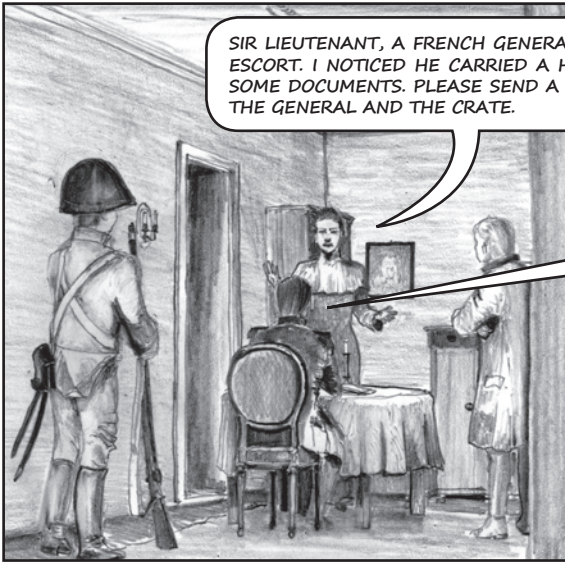
THE WOMAN FOUND THE OFFICER AND ASKED HIM FOR A WORD.

EXCUSE ME, SIR, SOME WOMAN FROM BOLESŁAWIEC BY THE NAME OF ROSALIE VON BONIN IS ASKING TO SPEAK TO YOU. SHE CLAIMS TO HAVE AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT MESSAGE.

LET HER IN.







SIR LIEUTENANT, A FRENCH GENERAL IS STAYING IN BOLESŁAWIEC, HE IS WITHOUT AN ESCORT. I NOTICED HE CARRIED A HEAVY CRATE. THIS COULD BE IMPORTANT, MAYBE SOME DOCUMENTS. PLEASE SEND A FEW SOLDIERS WITH ME, AND YOU WILL GET BOTH THE GENERAL AND THE CRATE.

VERY WELL, I WILL TAKE FOUR CAVALIERS AND GO WITH YOU MYSELF.



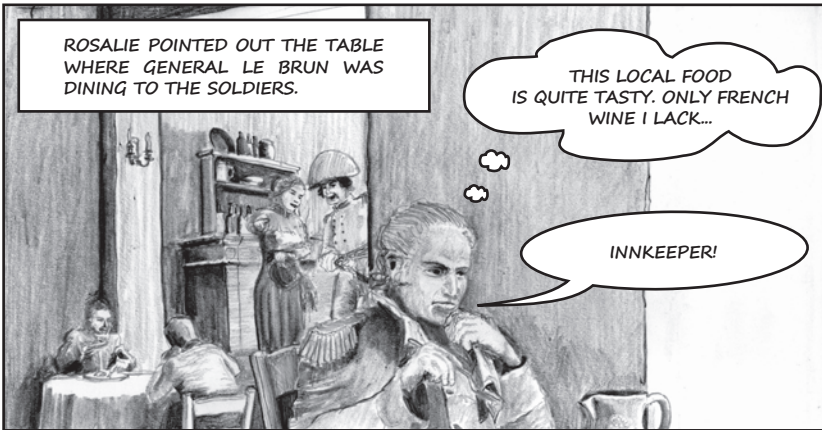
ROSALIE VON BONIN, ACCOMPANIED BY THE PRUSSIAN SOLDIERS, SOON ARRIVED IN THE CITY. THEY STOPPED BEFORE THE GUESTHOUSE WHERE THE GENERAL RESTED.



WHERE IS HE?

TAKE IT EASY, IN THE NEXT CHAMBER.

THE GUESTHOUSE WAS BUSY AS ALWAYS... THE HUBBUB OF GUESTS LOWERED THE FRENCHMAN'S VIGILANCE. BUSY WITH HIS MEAL, HE DID NOT PAY ATTENTION TO THE "NEW PATRONS"...



ROSALIE POINTED OUT THE TABLE WHERE GENERAL LE BRUN WAS DINING TO THE SOLDIERS.

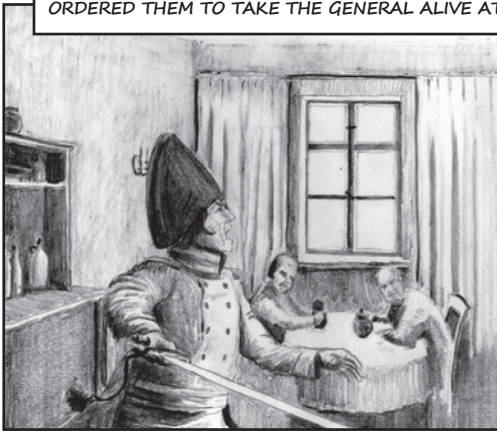
THIS LOCAL FOOD IS QUITE TASTY. ONLY FRENCH WINE I LACK...

INNKEEPER!

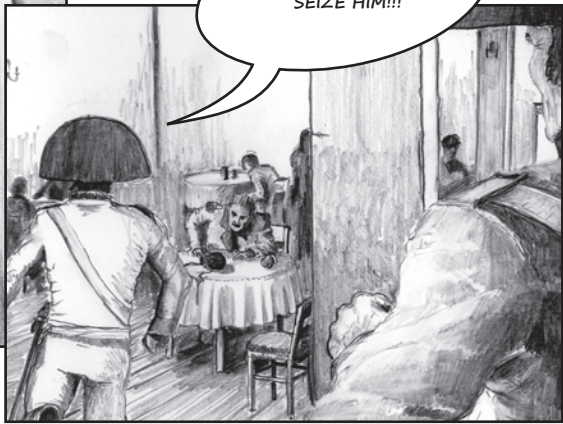




AT THAT VERY MOMENT, THE LIEUTENANT SCHRADER'S SOLDIERS BURST INTO THE ROOM. PRIOR TO THIS THE LIEUTENANT HAD ORDERED THEM TO TAKE THE GENERAL ALIVE AT ANY COST...



SEIZE HIM!!!



GENERAL, PLEASE DO NOT RESIST. YOU HAVE NO CHANCE ANYWAY. YOU'RE MY PRISONER NOW.



WITHIN JUST A FEW MOMENTS, THE SHOCKED GENERAL WAS OVERPOWERED...



AS A MARK OF SURRENDER, THE FRENCH GENERAL GAVE HIS SWORD TO ROSALIE VON BONIN; THIS GESTURE BECAME A SYMBOL, IMMORTALIZED 100 YEARS LATER ON THE TOWN HALL WALL.



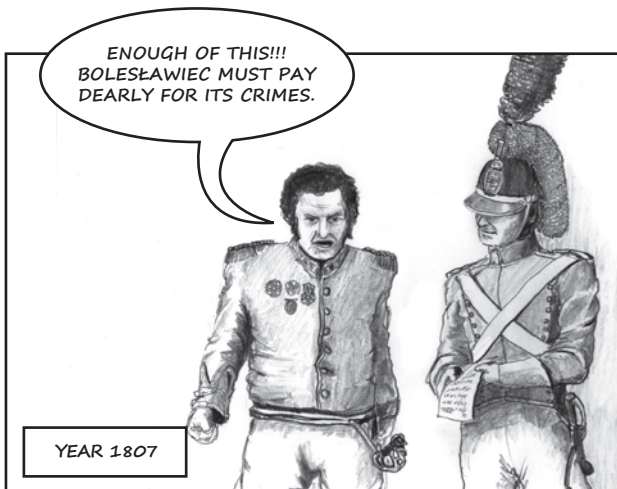
THIS IS THE WOMAN WHO PUT YOU IN OUR HANDS.

LADY, TAKE THIS SWORD, I'M YOUR CAPTIVE.

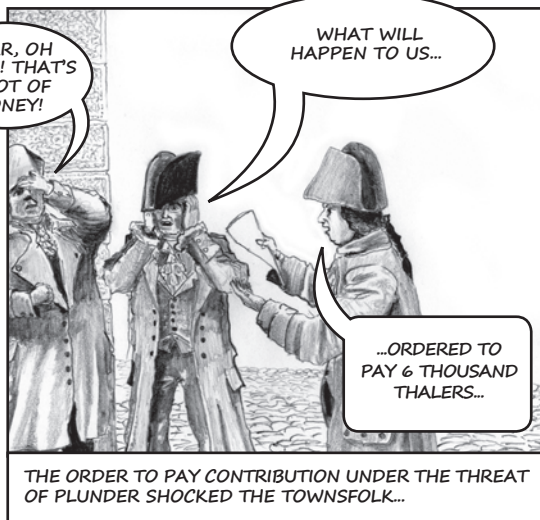
THE PRUSSIAN SOLDIERS TOOK THE FRENCH GENERAL IN CUSTODY. ADDITIONALLY, OVER 70 THOUSAND THALERS FROM THE FRENCH ARMY COFFER CARRIED BY THIS HIGH RANKING NAPOLEONIC OFFICER FELL IN TO THEIR HANDS.



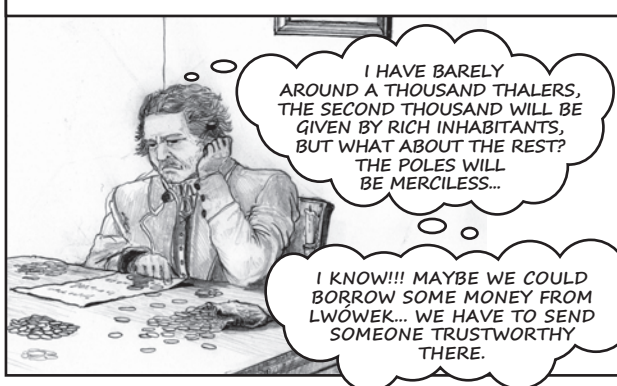
NEWS ABOUT THE SUTLER ROBBED NEAR BOLESŁAWIEC AND THE LOSS OF THE ARMY COFFER REACHED THE COMMANDER OF THE NAPOLEONIC DIVISIONS IN SILESIA, THE EMPEROR'S BROTHER, PRINCE JÉRÔME BONAPARTE STATIONED AT THE TIME IN WROCLAW.



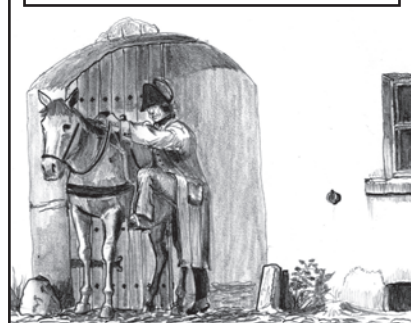
MEANWHILE, POLISH UHLANS FROM THE POLISH-ITALIAN LEGION ARRIVED IN BOLESŁAWIEC FROM ITALY. PRINCE JÉRÔME ORDERED THEM TO COLLECT CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE CITY TO THE AMOUNT OF 6,000 THALERS. IF THE INHABITANTS COULD NOT COLLECT THE REQUIRED SUM, THE POLES WERE ORDERED TO PLUNDER BOLESŁAWIEC.



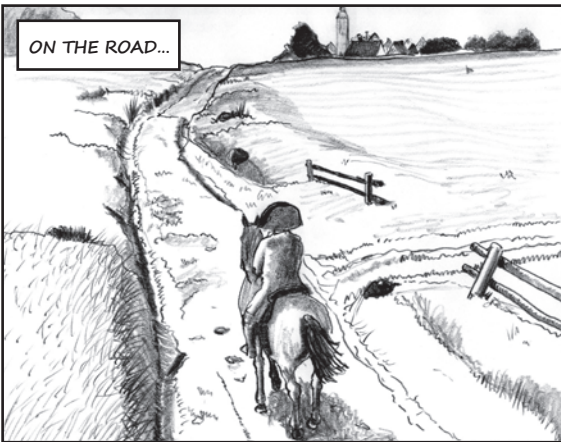
MAY 12, 1807. EVENING, AROUND 8 PM IN THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR OF BOLESŁAWIEC...



WITHIN A FEW MINUTES, A MAN TRUSTED BY THE MAYOR LEFT THE TOWN IN ORDER TO REACH LWÓWEK.





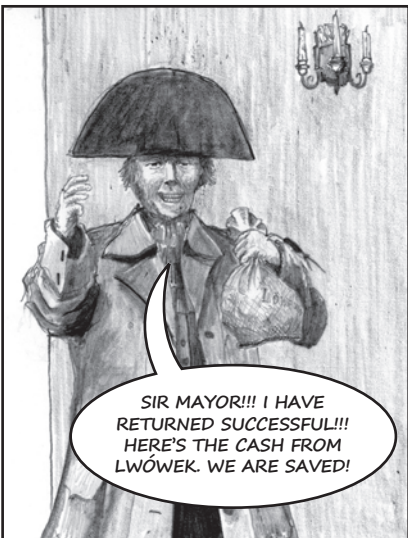


SOME TIME LATER, THE MESSENGER ARRIVED IN THE NEIGHBOURING TOWN.

IN THE TOWNHALL OF LWÓWEK...

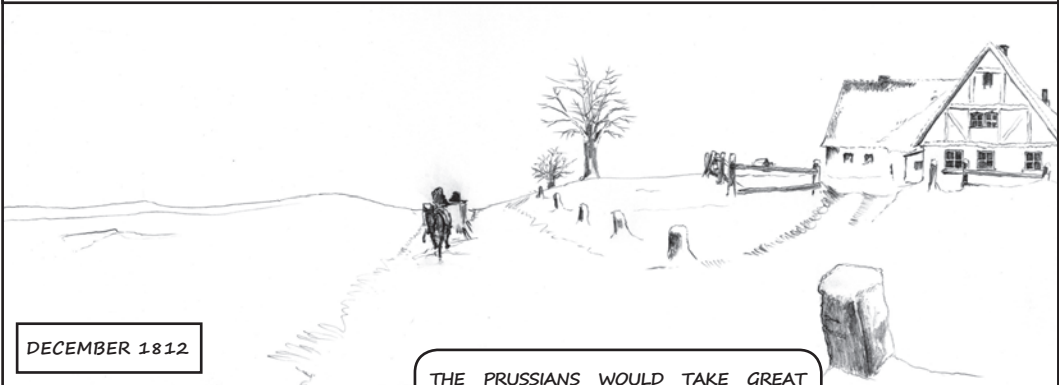


BOLESŁAWIEC COLLECTED THE ENTIRE AMOUNT OF CONTRIBUTIONS. THE MONEY WAS THEN TRANSFERRED TO THE COMMANDER OF THE POLISH UHLANS, MAJOR PIOTR ŚWIDERSKI, ON MAY 12, 1807 AT 10 PM.





NAPOLEON LEFT HIS ARMY AFTER IT HAD BEEN SHATTERED IN THE EAST ON DECEMBER 5, 1812. HE SET OUT FROM SMARHON (TODAY BELARUS) ON THE WAY TO PARIS TO ORGANISE NEW TROOPS AND CONTINUE THE WAR. HE WAS TRAVELLING INCOGNITO IN THE COMPANY OF GENERAL ARMAND CAULAINCOURT AND LIEUTENANT STANISŁAW DUNIN-WĄSOWICZ.



DECEMBER 1812

THE PRUSSIANS WOULD TAKE GREAT PLEASURE IN THE OPPORTUNITY TO CAPTURE ME. SURELY THEY WOULD HAND ME OVER TO THE ENGLISH WHO WOULD EXHIBIT ME IN AN IRON CAGE IN THE CENTRE OF LONDON.

SOMEWHERE IN POLAND...

GOOD IDEA, WE ARE CROSSING A HOSTILE COUNTRY.

SIRE, IT WILL BE MUCH SAFER IF YOU TAKE A FAKE SURNAME FOR THE JOURNEY, FOR EXAMPLE MINE, PRINCE OF VICENZA.



DECEMBER 13, 1812 AT 7 AM, THE EMPEROR ARRIVED IN BOLESŁAWIEC AND STAYED IN THE GUESTHOUSE CALLED "UNDER THE BLACK EAGLE". PRIOR TO THIS, THE SLEIGH BROKE AND REQUIRED IMMEDIATE REPAIR.

DURING HIS STAY, NAPOLEON TREATED HIMSELF TO A MEAL AND DRANK A COFFEE FROM A BLUE CUP WHICH LATER FOUND ITS WAY TO THE LOCAL MUSEUM. UNFORTUNATELY, THE CUP WAS LOST AFTER THE WORLD WAR II.

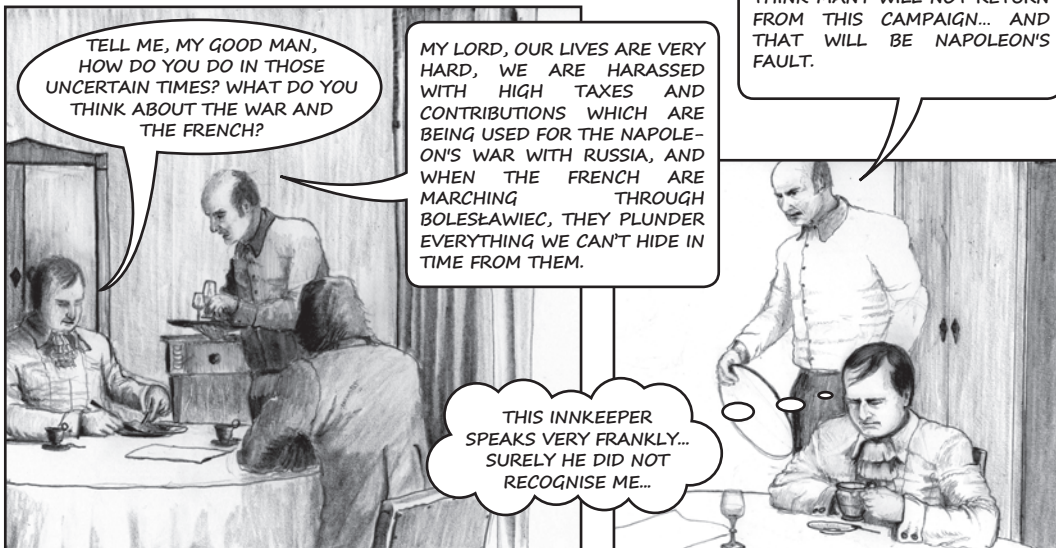


DURING HIS BREAKFAST, THE EMPEROR BEGAN A CONVERSATION WITH THE OWNER OF THE PLACE, THE INNKEEPER ZOLLER.

TELL ME, MY GOOD MAN, HOW DO YOU DO IN THOSE UNCERTAIN TIMES? WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE WAR AND THE FRENCH?

MY LORD, OUR LIVES ARE VERY HARD, WE ARE HARASSED WITH HIGH TAXES AND CONTRIBUTIONS WHICH ARE BEING USED FOR THE NAPOLEON'S WAR WITH RUSSIA, AND WHEN THE FRENCH ARE MARCHING THROUGH BOLESŁAWIEC, THEY PLUNDER EVERYTHING WE CAN'T HIDE IN TIME FROM THEM.

WAR IS A TERRIBLE THING. IF OUR LIVES ARE THAT HARD, WHAT MUST BE HAPPENING IN RUSSIA? THEY ARE HAVING A HARSH WINTER OVER THERE... I THINK MANY WILL NOT RETURN FROM THIS CAMPAIGN... AND THAT WILL BE NAPOLEON'S FAULT.



THIS INNKEEPER SPEAKS VERY FRANKLY... SURELY HE DID NOT RECOGNISE ME...

KNOWING THE OPINION OF THE BOLESŁAVIAN INNKEEPER, THE EMPEROR SPOKE TO THE ACCOMPANYING GENERAL CAULAINCOURT...



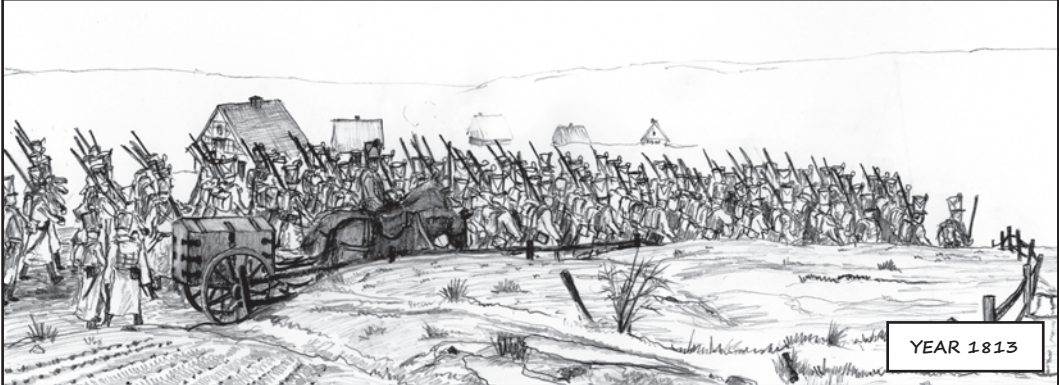
THIS MAN IS RIGHT, HE UNDERSTANDS MORE THAN MANY IMPORTANT PEOPLE. AND HE IS NOT EVEN A COURTIER...

THE SLEIGH WAS QUICKLY REPAIRED AND AS EARLY AS 8 AM, NAPOLEON DEPARTED FROM BOLESŁAWIEC TO CONTINUE HIS JOURNEY TO FRANCE. HE ARRIVED IN PARIS ON DECEMBER 18, 1812 AND IMMEDIATELY BEGAN TO ORGANISE A NEW ARMY.

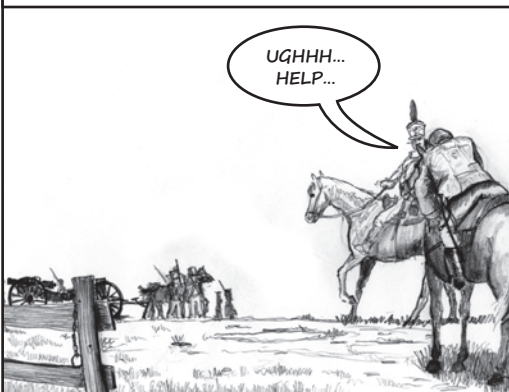




THE REGULAR RUSSIAN ARMY ALLIED WITH THE PRUSSIAN ARMY COMMANDED BY THE PRINCE OF SMOLENSK MARSHAL MIKHAIL KUTUZOV APPEARED IN BOLESŁAWIEC IN APRIL 1813. THE SOLDIERS FOLLOWING NAPOLEON WERE STATIONED IN BOLESŁAWIEC FOR A FEW DAYS.



ON APRIL 20, MARSHAL KUTUZOV, ALONG WITH HIS TROOPS, LEFT THE TOWN. JUST AFTER THEIR DEPARTURE, THE COMMANDER COLLAPSED OF TYPHOID FEVER IN BOLESŁAWIEC.



OFFICERS ACCOMPANYING THE MARSHAL, DECIDED TO RETURN SICK KUTUZOV TO BOLESŁAWIEC.

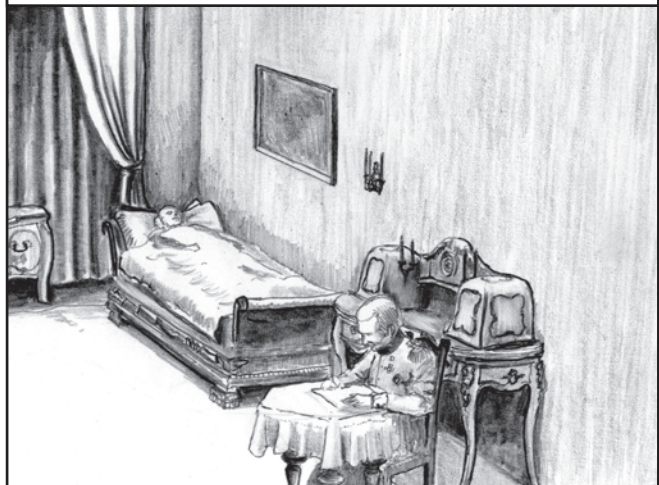
THERE'S NO POINT IN PROCEEDING. THE COMMANDER MUST REST. WE NEED TO GO BACK TO THE TOWN AND CALL A DOCTOR.



THE HOUSE OF THE SALT MERCHANT MAJOR VON MARK AT MIKOŁAJSKA STREET, WAS CHOSEN AS THE MARSHAL'S QUARTERS.

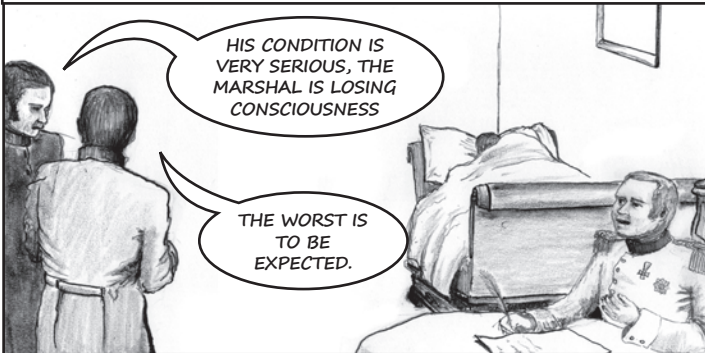


KUTUZOV WAS LOCATED IN THE UPPER ROOM. THE DOCTORS DID THEIR BEST, BUT THE SICKNESS WAS QUITE SEVERE...





DOCTORS' TREATMENTS DID NOT BRING RESULTS AND KUTUZOV'S CONDITION WAS WORSENING. EVEN THE FINEST COURT DOCTORS OF THE PRUSSIAN KING FREDERICK WILLIAM III AND THE RUSSIAN EMPEROR ALEXANDER I ARRIVED IN BOLESŁAWIEC, BUT THEIR EFFORTS WERE IN VAIN.



THE TOWNSFOLK COVERED THE NEIGHBOURING STREETS WITH STRAW IN ORDER NOT TO DISTURB THE SICK MAN WITH THE NOISE OF PASSING CARRIAGES.



THE HUGE COMMITMENT AND EFFORTS OF THE DOCTORS DID NOT GIVE ANY POSITIVE RESULTS; THE RUSSIAN MARSHAL MIKHAIL KUTUZOV DIED ON APRIL 28, 1813 IN HIS BOLESŁAVIAN QUARTERS.



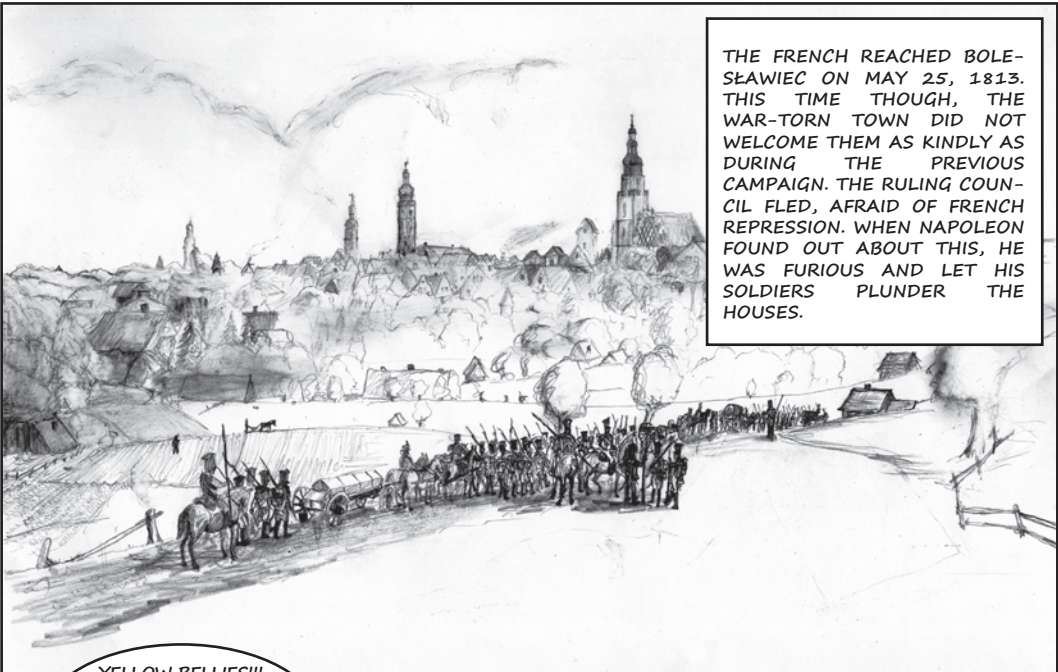
THE BODY WAS EMBALMED, WHILE REMOVED INTERNAL ORGANS WERE PLACED IN A METAL CASKET AND BURIED IN FRONT OF THE CHAPEL OF ST ANNE IN BOLESŁAWICE – IN A PLACE WHERE SICK KUTUZOV WAS FORCED TO RETURN TO THE TOWN. SOON AFTER THAT, A MONUMENT IN HONOUR OF THE MARSHAL WAS ERRECTED THERE. ON MAY 9, 1813, THE FUNERAL PROCESSION, BID FAREWELL BY THE TOWNSFOLK AS WELL AS PRUSSIAN AND RUSSIAN SOLDIERS, SET OFF FOR ST PETERSBURG, WHERE THE MARSHAL'S BODY AND HEART WERE PLACED AT THE KAZAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL CHURCH.



May 1813



NAPOLEON QUICKLY REBUILT HIS ARMY. IN MAY 1813, NAPOLEONIC TROOPS ACHIEVED TWO VICTORIES OVER THE COALITION - AT LÜTZEN AND BAUTZEN. THEY GAVE CHASE AFTER THE PRUSSIAN AND RUSSIAN FORCES. THE ROUTE OF THE RETREATING COALITION FORCES LEAD TO SILESIA AND, AS A RESULT, THE NAPOLEONIC ARMY IN PURSUIT OF THE ENEMY, ONCE AGAIN ENTERED SILESIA... JUST LIKE SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE, IN 1806...



THE FRENCH REACHED BOLE-SŁAWIEC ON MAY 25, 1813. THIS TIME THOUGH, THE WAR-TORN TOWN DID NOT WELCOME THEM AS KINDLY AS DURING THE PREVIOUS CAMPAIGN. THE RULING COUNCIL FLED, AFRAID OF FRENCH REPRESSION. WHEN NAPOLEON FOUND OUT ABOUT THIS, HE WAS FURIOUS AND LET HIS SOLDIERS PLUNDER THE HOUSES.

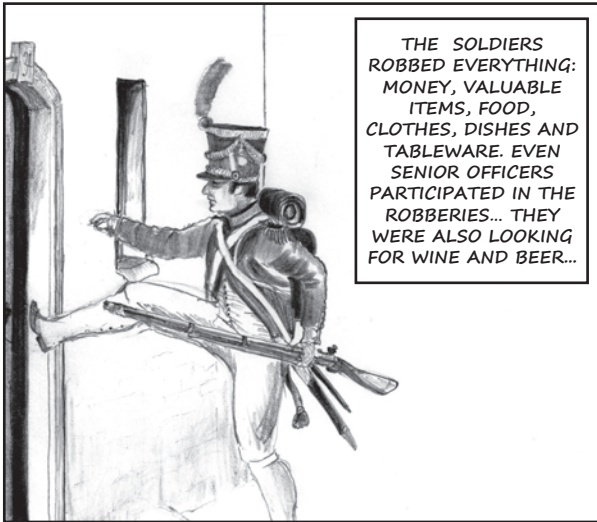
YELLOW BELLIES!!!  
HOW DARE THEY ESCAPE  
ME? TRAITORS, ALL OF  
THEM!!! SOLDIERS! GIVE  
THEM WHAT THEY  
DESERVE!!!



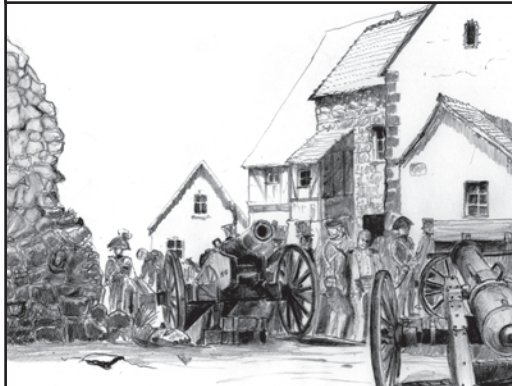
OPEN THE DOOR,  
OR WE WILL BREAK  
IT DOWN!!!







IN 1813, BETWEEN JUNE AND AUGUST, A GARRISON OF NAPOLEONIC TROOPS WAS STATIONED IN THE TOWN. DURING THE ONGOING TRUCE, BOLESŁAWIEC WAS BEING PREPARED TO DEFENCE.



WE HAVE A LARGE SUPPLY OF GUNPOWDER AND BULLETS, AS WELL AS MANY CANNONS. SOME FOOD IS ALL WE NEED, THEN WE CAN DEFEND OURSELVES HERE FOR A LONG TIME...



DURING THE FORTIFICATION WORKS, CARRIED OUT UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF MARSHAL MARMONT, PALISADES AND ARTILLERY POSITIONS WERE ERECTED AND THE TOWN MOAT WAS DEEPENED. BY ORDER OF NAPOLEON, A FRENCH SAPPER COMMANDER FROM THE 6TH CORPS, MAJOR CONSTANTIN, PREPARED A PLAN TO DEFEND THE TOWN.





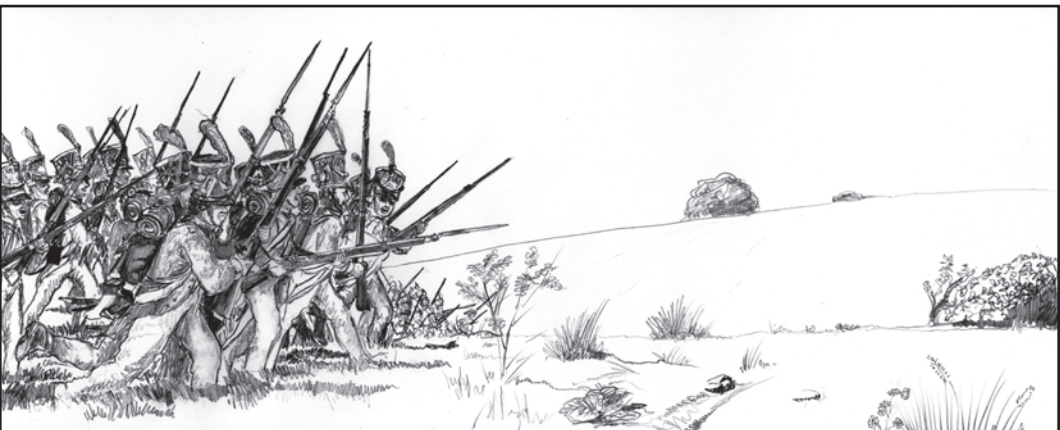
EN AVANT!!!

VIVE  
L'EMPEREUR!!!



ON AUGUST 15, 1813, COALITION TROOPS BEGAN HOSTILITIES AFTER A TWO-MONTH CEASEFIRE PERIOD. THE FRENCH INITIALLY RETREATED BEHIND THE BÓBR RIVER, BUT UNDER NAPOLEON'S FIRM ORDER, THEY STARTED TO ATTACK. THE FIGHT FOR BOLESŁAWIEC BEGAN, AND AFTER THE RUSSIANS WERE FORCED OUT OF THE TOWN, NAPOLEON'S SOLDIERS LAUNCHED AN ATTACK ON THE 'PRÓC' ESTATE, WHERE RUSSIAN CANNONS AND INFANTRY WERE PLACED...

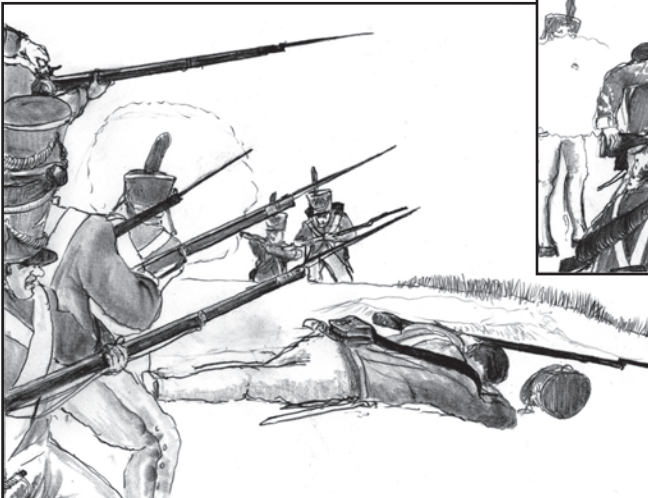
AT THE 'PRÓC' ESTATE



THE DYNAMIC ATTACK OF THE FRENCH CAUSED CONFUSION AMONG THE RUSSIAN TROOPS. GUNPOWDER SMOKE FROM CANNONS AND RIFLES LIMITED THE VISIBILITY OF THE SOLDIERS ON BOTH SIDES... MOMENTS LATER, THEY WERE FINALLY FACE TO FACE...



AFTER FIRING THE GUNS...



A HAND-TO-HAND FIGHT BEGAN...

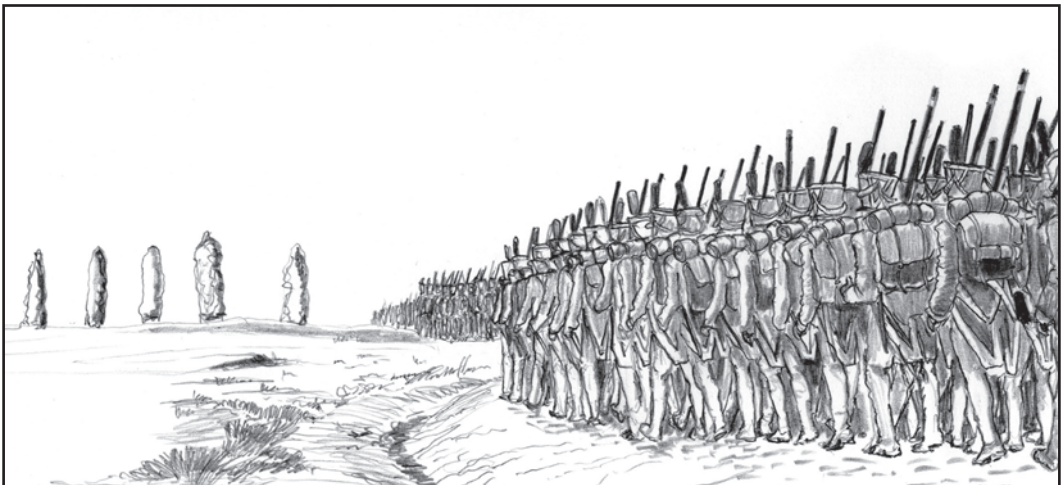
SOON THE CLASH MOVED TO THE ESTATE BUILDINGS... SLOWLY, THE RUSSIANS WERE BEING FORCED OUT OF THE BUILDINGS...



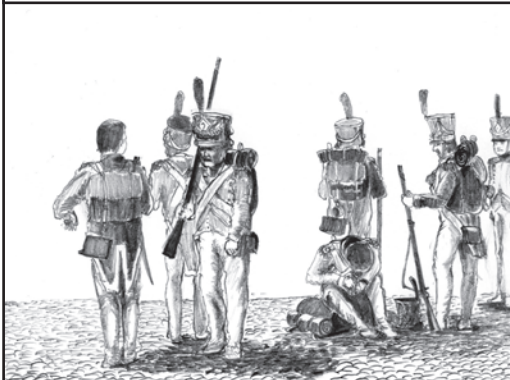




THE FRENCH WON THE BATTLE AND CAPTURED THE HILL WHERE THE ESTATE WAS LOCATED. THEY OBTAINED SEVERAL CANNONS, AND TOOK RUSSIAN PRISONERS OF WAR. THE RUSSIANS AND PRUSSIANS RETREATED TOWARDS LEGNICA. AT THAT TIME, EMPEROR NAPOLEON WON THE BATTLE OF LWÓWEK AND THE FRENCH ADVANCED FURTHER. THE NAPOLEONIC TROOPS, UNDER THE COMMAND OF MARSHAL MACDONALD, HEADED FOR THE KACZAWA RIVER... THE UPCOMING BATTLE SEEMED EASY TO NAPOLEON'S SOLDIERS... THEY WERE ALREADY ENJOYING THEIR VICTORY.....



UNFORTUNATELY... THE FALLING RAINS, SWOLLEN RIVERS, AND MOST OF ALL - THE ERRORS OF THE FRENCH COMMANDERS RESULTED IN THE DEFEAT OF THE NAPOLEONIC ARMY BY THE KACZAWA RIVER. THE CRUSHED FRENCH TROOPS BEGAN TO PASS THROUGH BOLESŁAWIEC...

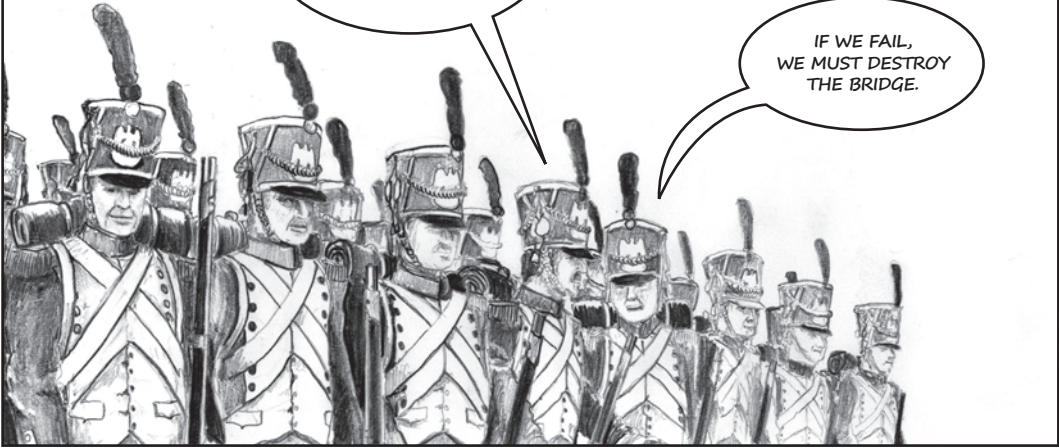


THE RETREATING FRENCH DESTROYED THE TOWN GATES, BLOWING THEM UP. THE DEFENSIVE WALLS WERE ALSO PARTIALLY DESTROYED AND NEVER REBUILT.

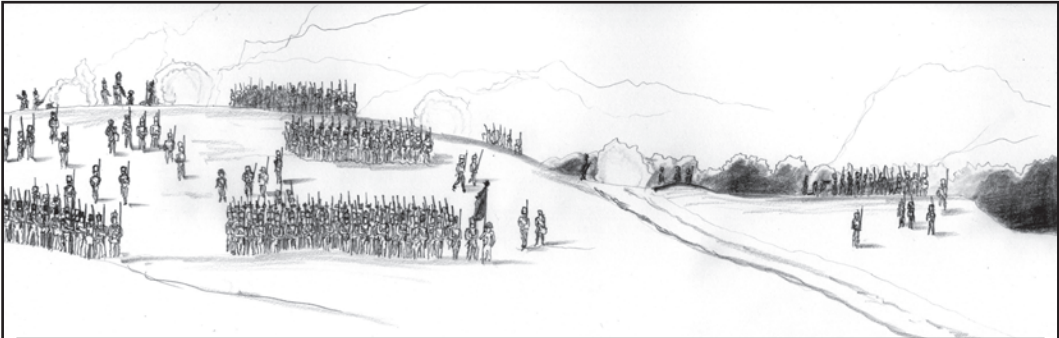
IN ORDER TO RE-ORGANISE THE RANKS, THE FRENCH HAD TO KEEP THE COALITION TROOPS ON THE BÓBR RIVER. TROOPS OF THE 5TH CORPS OF GENERAL LAURISTON WERE PREPARING FOR BATTLE.

YOU HAVE TO KEEP THE BRIDGE AT ALL COSTS, OUR TROOPS NEED REST BEHIND THE RIVER.

IF WE FAIL, WE MUST DESTROY THE BRIDGE.



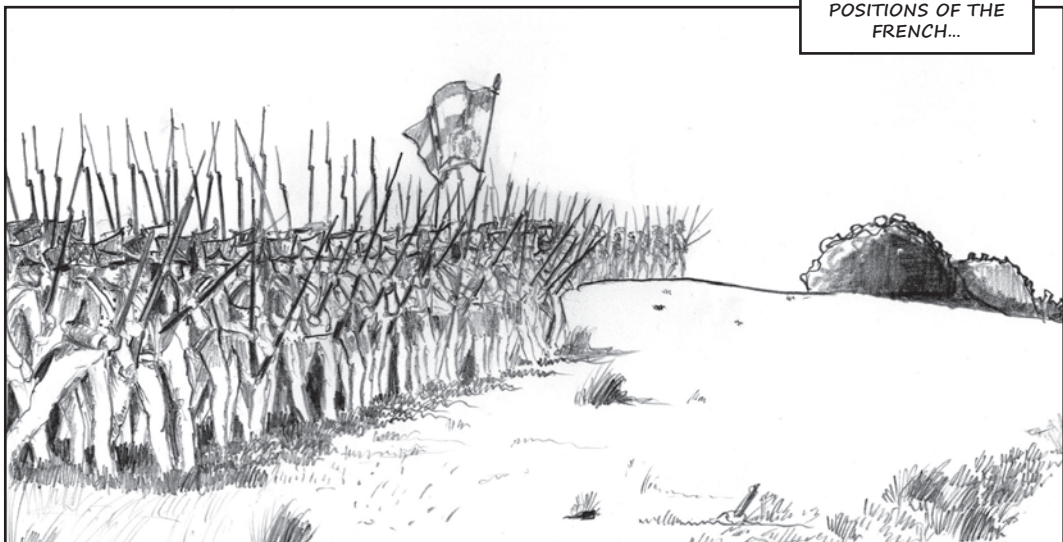
RUSSIAN AND PRUSSIAN TROOPS WERE PREPARING TO ATTACK THE BRIDGE. THE ALLIES DEPLOYED ARTILLERY ON THE HILLS CLOSE TO THE RIVER...



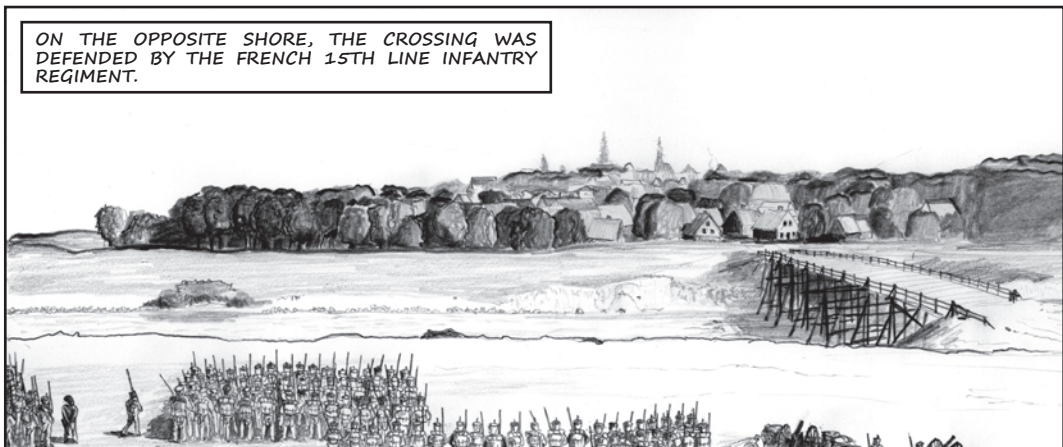
THE CANNONS COMMENCED THE BOMBARDMENT OF THE FRENCH TROOPS DEFENDING THE BRIDGE. THE COALITION INFANTRY LAUNCHED AN ATTACK...



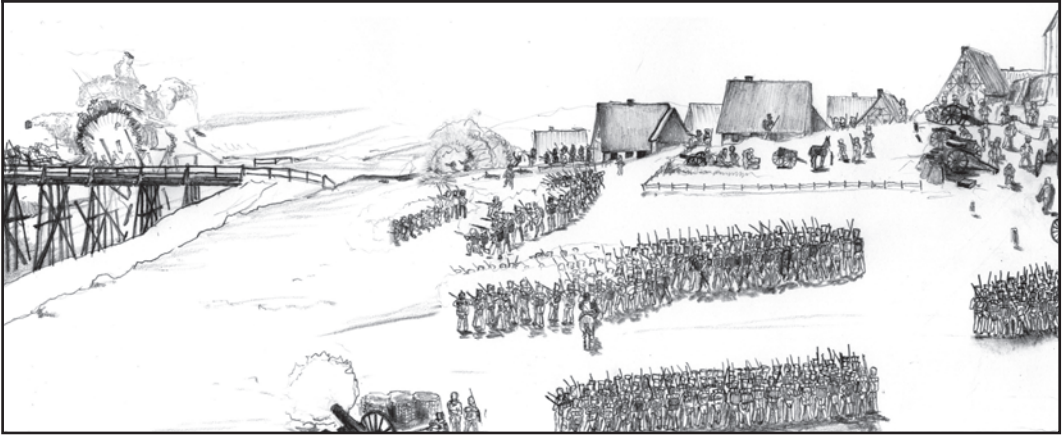
RUSSIAN TROOPS  
WERE THE FIRST TO  
ATTACK THE  
POSITIONS OF THE  
FRENCH...



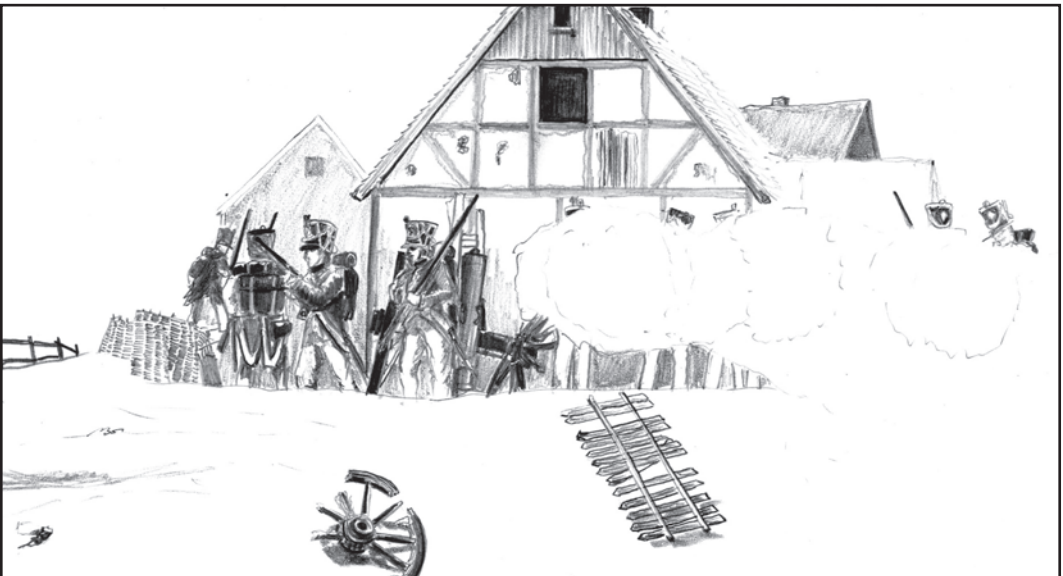
ON THE OPPOSITE SHORE, THE CROSSING WAS  
DEFENDED BY THE FRENCH 15TH LINE INFANTRY  
REGIMENT.



THE FRENCH MANAGED TO DESTROY PART OF THE BRIDGE WITH ARTILLERY AND SET FIRE TO THE REMAINING FRAGMENT...



THE HAIL OF GUNFIRE CAUSED ENORMOUS LOSSES ON BOTH SIDES...

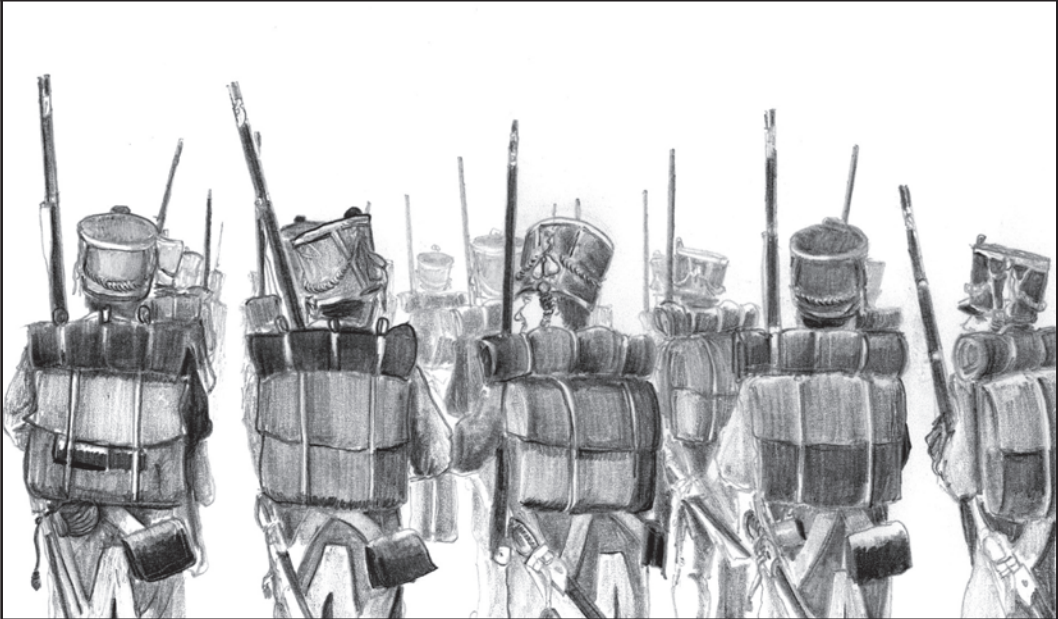




THE BRIDGE WAS DESTROYED. THE COALITION TROOPS STOPPED AT THE BÓBR RIVER. THEY DID NOT START CHASING THE FRENCH UNTIL THE NEXT DAY, WHEN THE BRIDGE WAS TEMPORARILY REPAIRED.



TAKING ADVANTAGE OF A TEMPORARY BREAK IN HOSTILITIES, THE FRENCH RETREATED BEHIND THE KWISA RIVER, AND THEN - THE LUSATIAN NEISSE RIVER. AFTER THAT, NAPOLEON'S ARMY NEVER RETURNED TO SILESIA.



THE END

## Historical characters presented in the comic

**Rosalie von Bonin (née Hoffmann)** - b. February 2, 1781. Wife of the Prussian staff officer Heinrich von Bonin who owned an estate in the village of Łąka. In February 1807, she contributed to the capture of the French General Brun and taking from him a large sum of money. She went in the direction of Kłodzko, to the Duke of Pszczyna, who at that time was the commander of the Prussian army in Silesia. She asked him to send one of the units to collect the money due to the Prussian king from the municipal treasury. She was assigned 70 cavalymen under the command of Lieutenants Schrader and Fischer, who reached the vicinity of Lwówek. Ultimately, Rosalie von Bonin entered Bolesławiec accompanied only by Lieutenant Schrader and four soldiers. Unexpectedly for her and her companions, a Napoleonic officer came to Bolesławiec, who was looking for accommodation for the French General Brun. He was captured and imprisoned by the Prussian soldiers accompanying Rosalie. Then, the Prussians, together with Mrs von Bonin went to General Brun, who, seeing the superiority of his opponents, gave up his sword as a sign of surrender. More than 70,000 thalers from the French coffers carried by the General fell into the hands of Prussian soldiers and were then taken over by one of the soldiers - Corporal Schmidt. General Brun also had to submit a written confirmation of his captivity, which was a huge dishonour for the then high officer. Rosalie von Bonin died on December 27, 1841.

**Jean-Antoine-Alexandre Brun (Le Brun)** - b. April 15, 1761 - French Brigadier General, imperial baron, decorated with the Commander of the Legion of Honour in 1805. He developed his military career in the revolutionary army, commanding light infantry semi-brigades. He took part in the Napoleon's Egyptian campaign in 1798–1801, during which he even commanded the citadel in Cairo (1798). On February 10, 1807, he was officially appointed brigadier general and was also taken prisoner by Prussia in Bolesławiec on that day. In the same year, he commanded a brigade in the Ocean Coast Observation Corps. Then he fought in Spain. After returning in 1809, he was assigned to the headquarters of the Grand Army. In the following years, he served in French military districts. During the 1812 campaign, he was the governor of Piława and then Grodno, from where he evacuated in December that year. He served in the 1813 campaign as the commander of the 2nd Brigade in the 4th Infantry Division of Marshal Victor's 2nd Corps. He was captured near Leipzig. In 1814, he returned to France, but did not take part in the fighting during the Hundred Days. He died on December 4, 1826.

**Jérôme Bonaparte** - b. November 15, 1784 in Ajaccio - the youngest brother of Emperor Napoleon I. During the campaign in Silesia in 1806/07, he was the commander of the allied forces corps, which was transformed into the 9th Corps of the Grand Army at the beginning of 1807. His troops consisted of two Bavarian and one Württembergian divisions. After the Treaty of Tilsit, he became the King of Westphalia and sat on the throne in Kassel. In the autumn of 1807, Napoleon assigned his brother the command over the Polish-Italian Legion (later known as the Vistulian Legion), whose units had been created since June that year in Silesia (Wrocław, Nysa, Prudnik, Biała). Being a rather weak administrator, Jérôme did not possess the same abilities as the Emperor. Somewhat reckless and extravagant, he was often criticized for his decisions. During the campaign of 1812, the Emperor entrusted him with the command of the right wing of the army. Criticized by Napoleon for being sluggish and allowing the Russian army under Bagration to retreat from the border, he arbitrarily left the army and returned to Westphalia. At the head of a small army, he took part in the campaign of 1813, but when he learned of the defeat at Leipzig, he left the country and went to France. He accompanied his brother during the Hundred Days. After Napoleon's final abdication, he lived in the Kingdom of Württemberg and in Austria. Years later, he returned to France and became a marshal. He died at his Villegienis estate near Paris on June 24, 1860.

**Piotr Świdorski** - b. March 15, 1756 in Poznań - a soldier of the First Polish Republic, appointed captain in 1794. After the fall of the Kościuszko uprising, he emigrated to Wallachia, where he served in the Polish Legion. In 1797, he joined the Italian Legion (Dąbrowski Legions). He served in the infantry, then moved to the legionary cavalry regiment, receiving the rank of major. At the beginning of 1807, he commanded a legionary cavalry regiment, which he brought from Italy to Silesia. He commanded the regiment during the victorious battle with the Prussians at the Struga river near Wałbrzych, on May 15, 1807, where he was wounded. After the creation of the Polish-Italian Legion, he was promoted to colonel and commander of the Legion's 3rd Infantry Regiment. In 1808, he was retired, but a few years later, at the end of 1813, he was on the staff of General Jan Henryk Dąbrowski in Sedan. He died in Krakow on September 19, 1826.



**Mikhail Illarionovich Kutuzov, actually Golenishchev-Kutuzov** – b. September 16, 1745 in St Petersburg. He started his military service as a cadet at the age of 12. He gained his combat experience in the 1860s in Poland, participating in the battles of the Russian troops against the Bar confederates. Then he fought against the Turks in Crimea. As an outstanding officer, he was an adjutant to the later Field Marshal Aleksander Suvorov. War merits made Kutuzov the governor of Crimea in 1789. Seriously injured during the fighting with the Turks – a Turkish bullet passed right through his temples. There was a probability of total blindness, but thanks to his great luck and medical treatment, Mikhail Kutuzov could see perfectly, despite the drooping eyelid of one eye. During the Polish-Russian war in defence of the Constitution of 3 May 1791, Kutuzov commanded a corps operating against Polish troops in Ukraine. His person still arouses many emotions among Poles. Known for his hostility to the Polish state, he has been called a Pole-eater, murderer of Poles, etc. General Kutuzov left the service after a few years and in 1801 became the governor of St Petersburg. It was Napoleon's war with Austria in 1805 that brought him back to active service as a commander of the army that was going to help the Austrians. After losing the battle of Austerlitz, he was ousted by the tsar. Alexander I "recalled" himself of the old general in 1812. Under pressure from the court, the tsar agreed to let Kutuzov take command of the entire army. Despite the bloody battles fought and lost by the Russians, he retained his command and received the title of Duke of Smolensk from the tsar. At the beginning of 1813, the Russian army entered the territory of the Duchy of Warsaw, and Kutuzov was already a field marshal at that time. In March 1813, the Marshal issued a proclamation in Kalisz, which was to encourage the Germans to fight Napoleon's France. Kutuzov, already ill at the time, practically ceased to command, although he continued to accompany the army. The Marshal arrived in Bolesławiec together with the Tsar Alexander I on April 18, in the afternoon. Soon after, the tsar's retinue continued its journey to Lubań. Initially, Kutuzov left with the tsar, but he had to give up the journey due to a high fever. The place from which he was supposed to return is in the former Bolesławiec. The sick Marshal stayed at the house of the salt merchant, Frederick von Mark. They tried to hide the commander's illness from the soldiers for as long as possible by issuing orders on his behalf. Unfortunately, the doctors' efforts proved futile and on the evening of April 28, 1813, at 9:35 pm, Field Marshal Mikhail Golenishchev-Kutuzov died. His body underwent embalming to prepare it for the long journey to St Petersburg. His entrails were removed during the embalming and placed in a small tin casket to be buried on May 8 near the Chapel of St Anne in Bolesławiec. The next day, the Marshal's body and heart were taken to St Petersburg, where they were placed at the Kazan orthodox cathedral church.

**Napoleon Bonaparte** - b. August 15, 1769 in Ajaccio, Corsica. Emperor of France. He began his military career in the royal army as a second lieutenant in artillery in 1786. After the revolution broke out, he joined it. He distinguished himself during the capture of Toulon, which was defended by royalists and English troops in December 1793. He was appointed brigadier general (February 6, 1794) for his merits. He suppressed the royalist uprising on October 5, 1795, using artillery in street battles, for which he was promoted to the rank of major general and appointed commander of the internal troops. Then he became the commander of the Army of Italy, which he reformed and with which he won a series of victories over the Austrians and the Piedmontese. He went with the army to Egypt (May 19, 1798). He then returned and carried out the 18th Brumaire coup (November 9-10, 1799). He became the first consul. He beat the Austrians again and regained northern Italy, and made peace with Austria and England. On December 2, 1804, he was crowned Emperor of France. He defeated the Austrians and Russians at Austerlitz in 1805, then the Prussians at Jena (1806) and the Russians at Frydland (1807). Returning from Tilsit, after making peace with Russia and Prussia, on July 16, 1807, between 10 and 11 pm, he travelled through Bolesławiec for the first time. Next time he visited the city during the preparations for the expedition to Russia, on May 29, 1812. The Emperor was welcomed in Bolesławiec by the highest authorities of the Legnica region and the Lwówek-Bolesławiec district. Napoleon again passed through Bolesławiec on December 13, 1812, on his return from Russia where he suffered a defeat as a result of which the Napoleonic army practically ceased to exist. He then stopped briefly at the "Under the Black Eagle" guesthouse. He rebuilt the army in the early 1813 and attacked the coalition army in Germany, defeated them at Lützen and Bautzen, and then moved towards Silesia. During the spring campaign of 1813, the Emperor and his troops entered Bolesławiec on May 25. He stayed here until the morning of May 27, when he set off towards Chojnów and Legnica. His last visit to Bolesławiec took place on June 7, 1813. Napoleon was then returning to Dresden after signing the armistice in Pielaszkowice, and spent the night in Bolesławiec. He continued his journey on the next day, June 8. After the end of the truce, he won the battles of Lwówek and Dresden. He was defeated at the Battle of the Nations at Leipzig and retreated to France. He won over a dozen victories during the 1814 campaign in France, but he had to abdicate in the face of the overwhelming coalition forces. He got possession of the island of Elba, off the Italian coast. On March 1, 1815, he landed in France and reached Paris in a triumphant procession. He was defeated at Waterloo on June 18 and abdicated for a second time on June 22. He was exiled to the island of St Helena, where he stayed under British guard until his death on May 5, 1821. His remains were brought to France in 1840 and buried in the Church of the Invalids in Paris.



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