(as regards junior officers) were practically Limited to orderly work and reconnaissance, especially topographical reconnais­sance. Subordinate generals had aides-de-camp only. Apart, then, from the “adjutants” or personal staffs (amongst whom must be reckoned the commander-in-chief’s secretary, generally a civilian), the staff in the field in Frederick the Great’s day was the quartermaster-general’s staff, and it was chiefly con­cerned, both in peace and war, with military engineering duties. In the Seven Years’ War Frederick’s Q.M.G. staff@@1 comprised two to six officers, usually engineers, and by 1806 the quarter­master-general had practically monopolized engineering and scientific appointments at headquarters. Summer the staff officers devoted to surveying and topographical reconnais­sance; winter to the codification of the information obtained. None of them were employed or trained with troops, although Frederick the Great sometimes made the quartermaster-general’s officers at Berlin do duty with the guards.

With the French Revolution, however, the organization of the staff gradually modified itself to suit the new conditions of warfare. The size of armies necessitated subdivision and separate staffs for the subordinate leaders, their mobility re­duced the importance of minute topographical reconnaissance, and the necessity of communicating between the several groups of an army produced an increased demand for orderly officers. But naturally a fully developed staff system did not spring to life immediately. Only by degrees were generals evolved who could handle large and mobile armies, and the highly gifted army leaders who in time appeared, Napoleon of course above all, scarcely needed a general staff. Napoleon had a chief of staff, Marshal Berthier, who bore the old title of “ major- general,” but Berthier was practically a chief clerk, a man of extraordinary aptitude for business. Berthier’s staff was dis­tinctly a mobile war office, and the great captain who needed not advice, but obedience, was wont to despatch his orders by a crowd of subalterns. The principal contribution, there­fore, made by Napoleon to the development of staff organiza­tion was the thorough establishment of the principle of corps and divisional autonomy. Corps and divisions to be self- contained required, and they were furnished with, their own staffs. The old type of “ quartermaster,” whose “ castra-metation ” and engineering science had been essential in the days of rigid indivisible armies, disappeared and gave way to a type of staff officer whose duty was to translate his chief’s general instructions (other than those delivered in the field by the gallopers of the personal staff) into orders for the various subordinate commanders. The general staff officer’s functions as strategical assistant to his chief were non-existent. This system worked satisfactorily in the main while Berthier was at the head of the central office, somewhat less satisfactorily in the Waterloo campaign when Marshal Soult occupied his place, and worst of all it worked in various wars of the 19th century in which the self-contained great general was not fortheoming. The general staff became a mere bureau, divorced from the army. Thus on the French side in 1870 Marshal Bazaine so far distrusted his general staff that he forbade it to appear on the battlefield, and worked the army almost wholly by means of his personal staff. Thus the latter, the mere mouthpiece of the marshal, issued sketchy strategical orders for movements, and so reduced the rate of marching of the army to five or six miles a day; while the former, kept in the dark by the com­mander-in-chief, issued either no orders at all or orders that had no reference to the real condition of affairs and the marshal’s intentions. The army at large distrusted both staffs equally.

The Prussian general staff was as different from this staff of bureaucrats and amateurs as day from night. Even before 1806 Massenbach *(q.v.)* had added the preparation of strategical plans to the work of the quartermaster-general’s staff, obtaining thus at the expense of the adjutant-general’s side the powers of a general staff in the modem sense. That he was incapable of using these powers is shown by the mournful history of Jena. But another quartermaster-general in the war of 1806,

Scharnhorst (*q.v.*) took up his work and in a very different spirit. In Scharnhorst’s first instructions of 1808 it was laid down that an *accurate* knowledge of troops and a *general* know­ledge of country were essential to a staff officer who was to be practised in exercises with troops and also in surveying. Scharn­horst, moreover, distributed general staff officers in peace to the provincial commands. The business-like habits which he instilled into his pupils, and their close touch with com­manders and troops, began a tradition of efficient and accurate staff work in the field, work in which the previous Prussian staff (and indeed all contemporary staffs except Napoleon’s) had failed. Thus it was that although the battle of Gravelotte- Saint-Privat was fought on the German side by over 200,000 men and in two or three distinct phases with little central direction, and, moreover, was not finished until after dark, Moltke had in his hands at dawn next morning a complete account of the events of the battle, and of the losses and con­dition of the troops of each corps. This was the fruit not only of methodical training in the theory of staff duties but of constant practice with troops in field manoeuvres.

Another very important feature of the Scharnhorst system was the periodical return of all general staff officers to regimental duty. This indeed has often been considered the keynote of efficiency. It did not at first meet with universal approval, but, like so many other military institutions in Prussia, finan­cial considerations helped to ensure its retention until its in­trinsic merits were proved in war. Just as the army was kept at a low peace effective and augmented on mobilization from a numerous reserve, so the staffs were small in peace, but as many officers as possible were passed through them so as to form a staff reserve within the regimental strength of the army.

But above all, the circulation of staff officers made it possible to educate the regimental officer in the approved doctrines of strategy and tactics. “ Unity of doctrine ” meant that instead of the complicated instructions hitherto issued for any operation, a brief note or even a hint was sufficient. In an army with a “ doctrine ” all ranks from general to subaltern speak the same language and use the same term in the same sense. There must always be shades of interpretation, varying with the individual officer, as was notably the case in all that Prince Frederick Charles and Blumenthal did in execution of Moltke’s “ directives ” in 1866 and 1870. But the general lines of action in such an army are thoroughly fixed.

A further consequence of the new conception of staff work was an enormous increase in the “ discretionary ” powers of all officers. If there is to be one and only one doctrine, that doctrine must be comprehensive and elastic, and education in it must consist chiefly in applying the general principle to the specific case. Thence it was not a long step to the notion that an officer could disregard a superior’s orders if the situation on which they were based was wrongly conceived or had changed in the meantime. For the test of such independent action is that the “ inferior should be conscientiously satisfied that the superior, in his place, would act as he himself proposes to do,” and this, of course, is the very purpose of unity of doctrine. The exercise of initiative was peculiarly useful and necessary in the case of the staff officer. He could not only' disobey superior orders, but give orders in the name of superior authority. He was better able than any other person to say, not only what action the Field Service Regulations laid down generally for such problems as that in hand, but also what solution his own general, possessing better information than the regimental officers, would adopt if present. The latitude in this respect accorded to German staff officers as well as to German commanders, is a most striking phenomenon of the war of 1870 *(e.g.* Colonel von Caprivi before Vionville and Colonel von der Esch at Wörth).

The result of unity of doctrine, then, was that a properly qualified officer could act as a substitute for his superior, and that the orders which he gave in that capacity were obeyed even by officers higher in rank than the originator of the order. This principle, owing to the peculiar circumstances of the

@@@1 The “general staff” was simply the list of general officers.