

= Jean @-@ Joseph Ange d 'Hautpoul =

Jean @-@ Joseph Ange d 'Hautpoul ( 13 May 1754 ? 14 February 1807 ) was a French cavalry general of the Napoleonic wars . He came from an old noble family of France whose military tradition extended for several centuries .

Efforts by the French Revolutionary government to remove him from his command failed when his soldiers refused to give him up . A big , loud @-@ voiced man , he led from the front of his troops . Although the failure of his cavalry to deploy at the Battle of Stockach ( 1799 ) resulted in a court martial , he was exonerated and went on to serve in the Swiss campaign in 1799 , at the Second Battle of Stockach , the Battle of Biberach , and later at Battle of Hohenlinden . He served under Michel Ney and Joachim Murat . He was killed in Murat 's massive cavalry charge of the Battle of Eylau in 1807 .

= = Early life = =

Born in an ancient noble family from the Languedoc , he entered the French royal army as a volunteer in 1769 . After having served in the Corsican legion , he transferred in 1771 to a Dragoon regiment . From 1777 , he served as an officer in the Dragoon Regiment of the Languedoc . By 1792 , he had become its colonel .

In 1802 , he married Alexandrine Daumy , and they had one child , born 29 May 1806 , named Alexandre Joseph Napoléon . His cousin , Alphonse Henri , comte d 'Hautpoul , also served in the Napoleonic Wars , as a lieutenant in the Iberian peninsula , and was taken prisoner at the Battle of Salamanca . He later became the 28th prime minister of France , from 1849 ? 1851 .

= = Revolutionary Wars = =

By contemporary accounts , d 'Hautpoul was a big man , possibly taller than Joachim Murat , who was nearly six feet tall . Endowed with broad shoulders and a big voice . He spoke the language of the common soldier , and led from the front . Early in the French Revolution , commissioners visited the various regiments to weed out dangerous , and prospectively traitorous nobles ; generally , the commissioners cowed the army into submission , but d 'Hautpoul 's cavalry regiment refused to be intimidated . When the commissioners came for their colonel , a scion of impoverished nobility , his soldiers refused to give him up : " No d 'Hautpoul , no 6th Chasseurs . " Thus , despite his noble birth , at the exhortations of his soldiers he remained in the French Revolutionary Army .

d 'Hautpoul served in the 1794 ? 1799 campaigns against the armies of the First and Second Coalitions . In April 1794 , d 'Hautpoul was promoted in the field to general of brigade and he commanded the brigade under both Jacques Desjardin and his successor , François Séverin Marceau @-@ Desgravières . After the battle of Fleurus , his unit was transferred to the division of François Joseph Lefebvre . In June 1795 , his provisional rank of general of brigade was made permanent by the Committee of Public Safety . He distinguished himself in a fight at Blankenberge on 13 September 1795 . In June 1796 , d 'Hautpoul was promoted to general of division and inspector of the cavalry . At Altenkirchen , he was wounded in the shoulder by a musket ball .

After his recovery , d 'Hautpoul was given command of the heavy cavalry of the Army of Sambre @-@ et @-@ Meuse under General Paul Grenier . After Neuwied , he was transferred to the Army of England under command of Lazare Hoche . When the French Directory abandoned the idea of an invasion of England , he was again deployed on the German front , this time as part of the Army of the Danube . After the French loss at the Battle of Ostrach , his Cavalry reserve protected the French retreat from Pfullendorf . A few days later , after failing to lead a timely charge at the Battle of Stockach , he was suspended on orders of the Army commander , Jean @-@ Baptiste Jourdan , who blamed d 'Hautpoul for the defeat . Acquitted by a court @-@ martial in Strasbourg , d 'Hautpoul resumed his duties at the end of July 1799 , having missed the critical actions at the First Battle of Zurich .

In 1799 , d 'Hautpoul commanded cavalry brigades under Ney , Lecourbe and Baraguey d 'Hilliers

in rest of the campaign in northeastern Switzerland . In the German campaign of 1800 , he served under Moreau and distinguished himself at the battles of Biberach and Hohenlinden , during which his heavy cavalry was instrumental in disrupting the Austrian infantry defenses .

= = Napoleonic wars = =

In July 1801 , First Consul Bonaparte appointed d'Hautpoul as inspector @-@ general of the cavalry and then awarded him command of the cavalry in the camps of Compiègne and Saint @-@ Omer . In August 1805 , d'Hautpoul was given command of the 2nd division of cuirassiers under Joachim Murat . At Austerlitz , d'Hautpoul distinguished himself by leading his heavy cavalry into the Russian center at the Pratzen heights , breaking the infantry squares . In 1804 , Napoleon made him a grand officer ( grand cordon ) of the Légion d'honneur and a senator , which carried with it an annual income of 20 @, @ 000 francs .

In the War of the Fourth Coalition , d'Hautpoul served at Jena and in the capture of Lübeck . Transferred to the Corps of Marshal Bessièrès in December 1806 , he again served under Murat in the maneuvers in East Prussia in the Winter of 1807 .

= = = Battle of Eylau = = =

When military activity resumed in the winter of 1807 , Napoleon hoped to overwhelm a Russian rear guard at Hof near Eylau , which was called " Preussisch Eylau " ( and is now within the borders of the Russian Kaliningrad Oblast ) . He ordered his dragoons to take a bridge ; they failed and suffered severe casualties . D'Hautpoul and his cuirassiers ? heavy cavalry of big men on big horses ? thundered over the bridge and scattered the Russian rear guard . As the retreating infantry fled , d'Hautpoul 's cuirassiers captured four guns and two standards . Napoleon was so pleased with d'Hautpoul and his cuirassiers that he embraced the six @-@ foot man in front of his division the next day . In his own turn , d'Hautpoul was so pleased that he announced first , to have such a compliment , he must be willing to die for his emperor , and second , to his troops : " The Emperor has embraced me on behalf of all of you . And I am so pleased with you that I kiss all your arses . "

The pursuit of the Russian troops continued . On 7 February 1807 , the French arrived outside the village of Eylau , as night was falling . In some confusion , the Imperial coach rumbled into the village , although the Emperor was setting up his camp a few kilometers away . The Russian patrol in the village chased off the coach driver and his men and plundered the Emperor 's belongings ; in turn , the Imperial escort chased them off . More and more men were sent into the engagement , and in the end the French took the village when the Russians withdrew . Both sides lost 4 @, @ 000 men in the contest for the village and the Emperor 's nightshirt . Settling for the night , they prepared to engage the next day .

The next morning , the two armies of unequal strength faced each other across frozen fields fissured by ice @-@ covered streams and ponds , which were in turn covered by snow and drifts . The snow and gloom meant that neither side was aware of the inequalities of men and artillery . Napoleon opened the engagement by sending Soult 's's corps , which successfully pushed the Russian right flank back , nearly turning the Russian force . To follow up on this success , he ordered Pierre Augereau 's force to attack the left center . No sooner had Augereau and VII Corps , plus St. Hilaire 's division , sallied out when a sudden snow storm engulfed the battle field . In white @-@ out conditions , Augereau 's entire corps disappeared in a flurry of whirling snow . When the snow cleared , friend and foe alike discovered that the first units onto the field had wandered off course . The line of march should have taken them directly to the Russian flank ; have no point of reference , they had instead followed the terrain and led the entire corps parallel to the Russian line , along a V @-@ shaped formation in which the left and center merged , and directly into the face of the Russian 70 ? gun batteries . The artillery , although shocked to find a French Corps advancing straight toward them , immediately opened fire , as did the Russian infantry on both sides of Augereau 's corps .

The result was devastating . Five thousand French soldiers fell in a matter of minutes and the entire

engagement stood on the brink of disaster . Not only did they face the Russian fire , but the French artillery pounded them as well . Augereau 's Corps melted under the withering fire , the bayonets of the Russians , and the onslaught of the cavalry ; as they retreated to their own lines , Napoleon was nearly captured at the Eylau churchyard , where he had established a lookout post , but his escort cavalry chased the Russians away .

= = = Charge at Eylau = = =

To fill the breach left by Augereau 's decimated corps , Napoleon ordered Murat 's cavalry reserve , 80 squadrons of 10 @, @ 700 cavalymen , into action at 10 : 30 in the morning . They had to cover 2 @, @ 500 yards ( 2 @, @ 300 m ) of snow @-@ covered , obstacle @-@ filled ground , which they could not do at a gallop . Murat 's Reserve charged into the Russian squares in two columns : Grouchy 's cavalry , d 'Hautpoul 's cuirassiers and General Louis Lepic 's grenadiers ? 24 squadrons in total ? were flank to flank when they hit the Russian center . This was the occasion of Lepic 's famous comment , " Heads up , by God ! those are bullets , not turds ! " Grouchy , Lepic , and d 'Hautpoul 's horse broke the center , wheeled , and charged a second time . On the second charge , they broke the second formation of squares ; at this point , Grouchy 's men were forced back , but d 'Hautpoul 's cuirassiers pounded forward , reaching the Russian reserve .

At this point , the horses were nearly blown , but d 'Hautpoul 's cuirassiers charged the third line , which they also broke . The Russian cossacks , assembled in the reserve , entered the melee , but their light horses were no match for the French mounts , big horses confiscated from the Prussians the previous year . The Russian infantry had started to reform their squares behind d 'Hautpoul 's men . During this charge , d 'Hautpoul was struck by artillery grapeshot and badly wounded . Several of his men managed to carry or drag him back to French lines .

Napoleon 's valet recounted :

... I seem still to hear the brave d 'Hautpoul saying to His Majesty , just as he was galloping off to charge the enemy : " Sire , I am going to show you my big heels ; they will go into the enemies ' squares as if they were made of butter ! " An hour later he was dead . One of his regiments while fighting in an interval of the Russian army , was shot down and cut to pieces by the Cossacks ; only eighteen of them escaped . General d 'Hautpoul , three times forced to recoil with his division , thrice rallied them to the charge ; the third time , he again rushed on the enemy , crying in a loud voice : " Cuirassiers , forward , in the name of God ! forward , my brave cuirassiers ! " But grapeshot had mowed down too many of these heroes . Very few of them were in condition to follow their leader , who fell , covered with wounds , in the middle of a Russian square into which he had flung himself almost alone .

The Emperor ordered the best surgeons to attend to d 'Hautpoul . These disagreed on the method of treatment . Against the advice of military surgeon , Larrey , d 'Hautpoul refused to have his leg amputated and he died a few days later .

There is some disagreement in the records about his actual date of death : the original death record of the parish at Eylau indicates he died of wounds on 1 February 1807 , but this was before the battle , and it is possible that the pastor simply left off a digit in his record , or , more likely , that the record was transcribed incorrectly . Other records suggest that he died the day after the battle ( 8 February ) , on 11 February , or on 14 February . Originally buried at Worienen , His son , Alexandre Joseph Napoléon , brought his remains to France in 1840 to be buried in the family crypt at the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris . D 'Hautpoul 's heart is conserved in a vault in Les Invalides , and his name is inscribed on Column 16 of the Arc de Triomphe , among the first 384 names to be inscribed at the Arc .