

= Maximilian , Count of Merveldt =

Maximilian , Count von Merveldt ( 29 June 1764 ? 5 July 1815 ) , among the most famous of an illustrious old Westphalian family , entered Austrian military service , rose to the rank of General of Cavalry , served as Francis II , Holy Roman Emperor 's ambassador to Russia , and became special envoy extraordinaire to the Court of St. James 's ( Great Britain ) . He fought with distinction in the wars between the Habsburg and the Ottoman empires , the French Revolutionary Wars , and the Napoleonic Wars .

Maximilian entered the military as a young man , and acquired his first combat experiences the Habsburg wars with the Ottoman Empire . Following his experience in the Balkans , he retreated to the cloister at Bonn , where he spent a year as a novice in the Teutonic Order . At the outbreak of war between Austria and France in 1792 , he returned to military service , and proved an intrepid and enterprising cavalry field officer . His role in the Austrian victory at Neerwinden in 1793 earned him the honor of conveying the news to the Emperor in Vienna .

In the War of the Second Coalition , Maximilian served in Swabia and northern Italy and Switzerland . In subsequent wars between France and Austria , his role on the battlefield often meant the difference between defeat and victory . He was wounded and captured at the Battle of Leipzig and , as a condition of release , he agreed not to bear arms against France again . He was subsequently appointed as an envoy to Britain , where he died in 1815 .

= = Family and early career = =

Maximilian was born on 29 June 1764 in the ecclesiastical territory of Münster , in Westphalia . His was an old Westphalian family , raised to comital status in 1726 . He joined the military service in 1782 , in a dragoon regiment , and was promoted to lieutenant and first lieutenant by 1787 . In the wars between Austria and the Ottoman Empire , ( 1787 ? 1791 ) , he was a Rittmeister , or captain of cavalry and wing adjutant to Field Marshal Franz Moritz , Count von Lacy . In 1790 , Merveldt commanded the Volunteers Grün @-@ Loudon and later that year , after his promotion to major , he served on the staff of Field Marshal Ernst Gideon , Baron von Laudon in Moravia .

= = Military career = =

= = = War of the First Coalition = = =

Following the defeat of the insurrection in the Austrian Netherlands , he received permission from Field Marshal Laudon , shortly before the latter 's death , to take a one year novitiate in the Teutonic Order , at Bonn where he remained until April 1792 . The outbreak of the War of the First Coalition against France required his military talents and Mervelt rejoined the Habsburg army at as adjutant to Josias , Prince of Saxe @-@ Coburg @-@ Saalfeld . He led two infantry battalions in the Austrian victory at Neerwinden ( 18 March 1793 ) , during which his battalions repulsed a strong French column . For his role at the head of his battalions of grenadiers , which his commander considered greater than duty required , in this victory , Merveldt received the honor of carrying the message to the Emperor Francis in Vienna . There , he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and awarded the Knight 's Cross of the Military Order of Maria Theresa on 7 July 1794 . Subsequently , he was appointed as an attaché to the staff of Frederick , Duke of York .

In the 1794 campaign , Merveldt fought at the Battle of Famars and again at the Battle of Villers @-@ en @-@ Cauchies , 15 kilometres ( 9 mi ) south of Landrecies on 22 April , during which he commanded the right wing . After the Battle of Tournai ( 22 May 1794 ) , he was promoted on the field to Oberst ( colonel ) . His failing health prevented him from continued field service and he took sick leave until early 1796 . In 1796 he transferred to the 18th Cheveau @-@ légers Regiment Karaczay and fought at the Battle of Kirchb , in the Westerwald , where , despite the French superiority of numbers , the Austrians eked out a victory . At Kirchb , with two squadrons of

Chevaux @-@ legers , Merveldt saved the Austrian artillery from French capture , thus contributing to the Austrian victory . The Tagebericht ( daily dispatch ) of the Army of the Rhine referred to his keen sense of duty , and his ability to seize the moment , which , in this case , proved a vital element in the extraordinary success of the small Austrian force against the considerably larger French one . Afterward he was promoted to major general . He was assigned as proprietor of the First Lancer 's Regiment , and given command of a cavalry brigade in Franz von Werneck 's Reserve of the Army of the Lower Rhine .

Merveldt was known to his contemporaries for his strength of will , presence of mind , and his self @-@ control . Those same qualities made him attractive to his military superiors as part of the negotiation party in the cease @-@ fire preliminaries at Leoben in 1797 . He opposed Napoleon 's desire to move a general peace congress closer to Vienna , and later was a co @-@ signator of the Peace of Campo Formio on 17 November 1797 . He brought the document to Rastatt , where the Rastatt Peace Congress convened . He stayed in Rastatt in the capacity of ambassador .

= = = War of the Second Coalition = = =

At the outbreak of the War of the Second Coalition in March 1799 , and the dissolution of Congress on 7 April 1799 , Merveldt returned to his regiment , which by this time had crossed the Lech and Iller rivers , and was advancing into Swabia . During the campaigns of 1800 , he commanded the left wing by Eckartsweiler at the Battle of Alt @-@ Breisach on 25 April , and on 10 May conducted a rear @-@ guard action to protect the Imperial army 's withdrawal . He remained with his brigade on the right bank of the Danube , where he directed a series of bold actions against the French , and then along the Iller and Lech rivers , he organized a series of well @-@ timed thrusts designed to keep the French from pushing the retreating army . After the battle at Offenburg , he was promoted to lieutenant field marshal on 4 September 1800 . At the Austrian defeat in the Battle of Hohenlinden on 3 December , Merveldt commanded a division in the left wing . He signed the 24 @-@ hour cease @-@ fire at Kremsmünster with Jean Victor Moreau on 22 December . During the cease @-@ fire , he retreated to Pressburg .

= = Diplomatic and military career during the Napoleonic Wars = =

= = = Napoleonic Wars = = =

In 1805 he was in Berlin when the hostilities between France and Austria resumed , and he returned to the Danube valley , where he fought a series of rearguard actions . He avoided being caught in the capitulation of Ulm and fell back toward Mikhail Kutuzov 's Russian army . With 6 @,@ 000 soldiers in six line and ten Grenz infantry battalions plus 14 squadrons of cavalry , Merveldt made for Styria , hoping to join the army of Archduke Charles . Napoleon detached Louis Davout 's III Corps in pursuit . Slowed by heavy snow in the mountains , his " poorly @-@ handled corps " was overtaken by the French at Gross @-@ Ramig , also called Mariazell , in the Austrian Steiermark , on 8 November . His exhausted troops were routed by General of Brigade Etienne Heudelet de Bierre 's advanced guard of Davout 's III Corps ; half , about 2 @,@ 000 , were taken prisoner , and they lost four colors and 16 guns .

After the War of the Third Coalition , he acted as ambassador to St. Petersburg for over two years , with the assignment of improving military relations between the armies of the respective countries . He attempted to do this , including trying an offer to mediate between Britain and France , and was appointed Privy Councilor . During this time , he married Maria Theresia Gräfin von Dietrichstein .

In 1808 he was given command of a cavalry division in Lemberg . In early 1809 , Merveldt became a prominent member of the group pushing for war against France , together with such notables as Archduke Ferdinand , Archduke John , Empress Maria Ludovika of Austria @-@ Este , and Count Heinrich von Bellegarde . In the 1809 campaign , Merveldt 's force was stationed in the Bukowina and part of Galicia , and from 1809 to mid @-@ 1813 , he spent three years in Moravia .

On 22 July 1813 he was appointed governor of the fortress of Theresienstadt and shortly after that Commanding General in Moravia and Silesia . He then became commander of II Corps ; the First Division held the village of Nollendorf , in the French defeat at the Battle of Kulm ( now Chlumec ) on 29 ? 30 August 1813 .

On 16 October , during the Battle of Leipzig , Merveldt 's forces were arrayed on the right flank of the French center , commanded by Napoleon . On his own right stood Wittgenstein 's Corps , and beyond that , Johann von Klenau 's . His troops were interspersed among several wooded sections and surrounding several small villages : Dölitz , Mark @-@ Kleeburg and Gautsch . Opposite him were the forces of Józef Antoni Poniatowski and Pierre Augereau . He rode out to view the battlefield and to direct the disposition of his force . Near Dölitz , which lay close to the French line , he wandered into a troop of Hungarians , or so he thought , but they were actually a mixed group of Saxons and Poles , whom he mistook for Hungarians , and was captured . Most of the action , on the first day , occurred to the north , where Blücher 's Prussians repelled Michel Ney 's cavalry , but when Napoleon heard that Ney and Marmont had been forced back , he sought a cease @-@ fire from the Allied monarchs . He called for Merveldt , and , after a meeting , Merveldt carried Napoleon 's proposal to the allied monarchs , which they refused .

= = = Final diplomatic missions = = =

As a condition of his release at Leipzig , he agreed not to participate in combat against France . Subsequent to his release , Merveldt was appointed commanding general of Moravia , and lived in Brno , where he received in January 1814 the instructions to proceed to London as an envoy extraordinaire to the Court of St. James 's , replacing Baron Wessembourg . He arrived in London in early March , and met the Prince Regent at Carlton House on 7 March 1814 , where he ceremoniously presented his ambassadorial credentials . He was well @-@ received in Britain , and became a notable personage , invited to many social events ; he told good stories about the wars and the various people he had encountered , which made him popular in social circles . His comings and goings were widely reported in the society columns : For example , on 4 July 1814 , he attended a lecture by the Abbé Secard , and was listed among the distinguished persons present . When he died in 1815 , the British government proposed to bury him at Westminster Abbey . However , his widow took into account his last wishes and had the remains sent to Germany . He was buried in the crypt of the Michaelis chappel in Lembeck Castle where his grave still exists .

In 1903 , in the Lößnig neighborhood of the city of Leipzig a square and a street were named after Maximilian von Merveldt , in honor of his contribution to the Battle of Leipzig . In 1950 , the communist authorities of East Germany renamed Merveldt square to Rembrandt square and Merveldt street to Rembrand street .

= = = Newspaper sources = = =

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