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John G. Gallaher - 2008 - Vorschau

THE AUSTERLITZ CAMPAIGN

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the head that the flag was taken. I swear upon my honor that no one in that battle was aware of the loss of the eagle. . . . Sire," I continued, "ask generals Vandamme and [Jacques-Lazare] Candras if the Fourth Regiment of the Line did not fight with courage at Austerlitz."⁶¹ Your Majesty will recall that it captured a battery of enemy artillery at bayonet point on the Pratzen Plateau, captured a Russian regiment with its colonel, and here are its two flags (an adjutant-major has them in his hand) that I offer to Your Majesty in the name of the regiment of your brother [Joseph]."—"In that case," the emperor said with a smile, "I will give you another eagle." There were then a hundred cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" from the entire regiment, and this ended the scene that I am describing.⁶²

The Treaty of Pressburg ending the war between France and Austria was signed on 26 December. It provided for, among other stipulations, the immediate evacuation of Vienna by French troops. Thus Vandamme resided in the Austrian capital for less than three weeks. While in Vienna, he proposed, and Soult approved, nominating 110 of his officers and men for the Legion of Honor. On 12 January 1806, the Second Division marched out of Vienna some 10,248 men strong. "The troops were superb," Soult wrote Berthier, "and there was an immense crowd to watch the last regiments, which were well dressed and marched in finest order."⁶³ The Treaty of Pressburg provided for the complete withdrawal of all French troops from the Austrian empire. However, there was a provision that allowed the French to occupy key positions in western Austria until the government in Vienna complied with all the terms of the treaty. Thus, Vandamme's division withdrew to Steyr on the Enns River and took up quarters in the district around the city.

Vandamme now considered the campaign to have officially ended, and he requested permission to leave the army and return on leave of absence to Cassel to spend time with his family. Napoleon granted him six weeks' leave, but with the instruction that it would not begin until his division went into permanent winter quarters at Augsburg.⁶⁴ The timing of his leave depended upon the Austrians' carrying out all the provisions of the treaty. Unfortunately, Vienna was in no hurry to comply, and Napoleon was in no hurry to withdraw his troops from