

An Army inside the Army

The Swiss regiments of the Sabaudian army 1741-1750

Giovanni Cerino-Badone

Introduction

The Italian military historiography has always little considered the presence of Swiss infantry regiments at the service of the Italian pre-unitary states. In many ways the units that had fought for the House of Savoy during the XVIII century had been almost totally forgotten. Some studies were made about uniforms and flags, much more about their leaders, but nothing about their soldiers, their operational history, and organisation¹. In a matter of numbers, the presence of such regiments was extremely significant, and we can easily speak about them as “an army inside an army”.

The Sabaudian strategy and the Swiss Choice

In 1742 the kingdom of Sardinia began the War of Austrian Succession (1740-1748) on the side of the Austrian Empire against Spain. At the beginning a fast moving offensive was possible against a Spanish force in Po Plain, compelling the enemy to abandon the north Italy. But at the end of the year, with the invasion of Savoy operated by the army of Don Philippe de Bourbon, the strategic initiative was irreparably lost. The operational theatre, by then, became univocal: France and Spain should have tried to overcome the “Fortress Piedmont”, gain the Po Plain and tear the Duchy of Milan up to the crown of the young empress Maria Theresa.

For the king of Sardinia, Charles Emmanuel III, was time to strengthen the alliance with London and Wien and the 13 September 1743 at Worms a new treaty was signed. The concept of this alliance for Turin was, more or less, this: lands (from Lombardy and Liguria) and moneys for the defence of Italy’s western border and to organize an offensive against the naval base of Toulon.

Now it was time to raise a strong army able to face the forces of both Spain and France. The Great Britain wanted about 40.000 Sabaudian and 30.000 Austrian soldiers to operate under the command of Charles Emmanuel III. To raise such a force should be an expensive business in term

¹ There are, fortunately, some exceptions. Quite important are: Paola Bianchi, *Onore e Mestiere. Le riforme militari nel Piemonte del settecento*, Torino 2002; Paola Bianchi, “*Baron Litron*” e gli altri. *Militari stranieri nel Piemonte del Settecento*, Torino 1998; Nicola Brancaccio, *L'Esercito del vecchio Piemonte (1560-1559). Sunti storici dei principali corpi*, Roma 1922, Virgilio Ilari, Piero Crociani, Ciro Paoletti, *Bella Italia Militar. Eserciti e Marine nell'Italia prenapoleonica (1748-1792)*, Roma 2000; Sabina Loriga, *Soldati. L'istituzione militare nel Piemonte del Settecento*, Venezia 1992. We can mention also these articles: Max F. Schafroth, «Le troupes suisses au service du Royaume de Sardaigne»; Roland Petitmermet, «Quelques notes sur les uniformes des Suisses au service du Royaume de Sardaigne», *Armi Antiche* 1968, pp. 133-147, pp. 157-199; Casimir de Rham, Louis Mühlemann, «Les drapeaux des régiments suisses au service du Royaume de Sardaigne»; Casimir de Rham, «Un drapeau colonel du Service de Sardaigne, à Neuchâtel», in R. Rapin, G. Uzzo, *Piemont XVIIIe – XIXe. Armes et technologie militaire, Royaumes de Sardaigne et d'Italie*, Torino 1994, pp. 73-93, pp. 95-103.

of manpower and money. The population of kingdom of Sardinia (2.343.000 souls) shouldn't have absorbed the new levy of over 10.000 men, necessary to put the army to its operational strength, without a direct negative impact on society and economy. In 1738 there was a soldier for 76 civilians, and even such request of manpower, in particularly for the 10 cantonal organized "regiments of provincial infantry", created many troubles especially to the rural communities². So it was immediately clear that the shortage of personnel should be avoided with the raise of new German or Swiss battalions. Every hired foreign soldier not only added to the strength of the state, but he freed a native subject for productive labour and deprived the enemy of a potential recruit. But even during the peace times the Sabaudian army was an extremely expensive toll of war. In 1738–1741, with a force of 30.500 men (39 infantry battalions and 32 cavalry squadrons), the army cost about 8 millions Livres and another million was necessary to the grain furniture of 6.901,5 tons, and a single regiment of Swiss infantry of two battalions (1.200 men) could cost over 270.000 Livres for years³. England poured into the cashes of Turin an annual subsidy of 200.000 Pounds (five million Livres)⁴.

After the campaign in Savoy in 1742 for the Court of Turin was clear that the time of offensive was over and, without a direct support by the imperial forces diverted in Silesia and against Naples, it was better to plan a new defence of the western alpine border. This idea, even strictly defensive, was a necessary measure against the numbers of the combined armies of France and Spain. Only on the Italian theatre they could line up these forces:

Year	Campaign	French-Spanish Army forces
1742	1 st Savoy	20.000
1743	Chateau Dauphin	30.000
1744	Villefranche	30.000
1744	Western Alps	55.000
1745	Maillebois' Army	65.000
1745	Lautrec's Observation Corp	13.000
1746	Gage/Maillebois' Army	40.000
1747	Provence Army	50.000
1747	Chevalier de Belle-Isle's Observation Corp	22.000

² The Regiments of Provincial Infantry had a cantonal organization and they were raised with men of an age between 18 and 40 years old. They, during the year, have to assemble twice times. Bianchi, *Onore e Mestriere*, pp. 88-91.

³ Archivio di Stato di Torino [by now ASTO], Corte, Materie Militari, Levata Truppe Straniere, Mazzo I d'addizione, *Memoria per provare gli vantaggi dei Reggimenti stranieri sui Reggimenti svizzeri al soldo di S.M.*

⁴ But it was necessary an integration with new revenues. At first there was resort to the sale of new feuds and public offices (26 September 1741), followed by injection of liquidity (27 November 1741). So there were allowed two issues of public debt for 6 millions pounds at the rate of 4% (4 December, 3 February and 24 November 1742). Finally, new taxes were raised, with a special one of 1.8 million Livres on feudal revenues (9 May 1742), the increase of stamp duty (16 May 1742) and register (4 June 1742). Virgilio Ilari, Giancarlo Boeri, Ciro Paoletti, *La Corona di Lombardia*, Ancona 1997, pp. 86-87 .

The Sabaudian army's size rose in less than a year from 30.500 (1741) to 43.000 men (1742). In 1747 there were about 55.641 soldiers, about them 20.400 were foreign mercenary and among these 11.200 were Swiss. The "Swiss choice" derived not only by manpower shortage, but also from a precise strategic plan. It was simply impossible to engage an aggressive manoeuvred campaign with two or more bloody engagements, and hope to save the army from a collapse. So in was now necessary to wait for the enemy offensive, and try to repulse every effort to conquer the "alpine bastion" with or without Austrian auxiliary forces. A chain of fortifications, both field entrenched camps and strong bastioned fortresses, was the tactical grip necessary to nullify the numerical superiority of the enemy. The Swiss regiments, which distinguished themselves in defensive combats in the War of Polish Succession (1733-1738), were exactly the kind of troops needed to defend effectively the Alps⁵.

The regiments: capitulation and organization

Swiss regiments had a greater resemblance to private commercial enterprises, while the contingents which were hired out by Swiss were used to raise money and sometimes also as an indirect instrument of policy. The raise of foreign regiments was adjusted with the system of "capitulation", the actual contracts between the Crown, the colonels in command and the cantonal authorities. With this agreement the regiments were kept in service for several years (from four to twelve years) and not for the duration of a campaign alone. Every unit was to procure the uniforms, but the armament and ammunition were supplied directly by the Sabaudian arsenals⁶. There were many privileges: the choice of recruits was at the discretion of the commander, without rigid religious constraints⁷. From a legal point of view, the Swiss were "almost independent", even for ordinary crimes, except those of "high treason and false money, affecting the King himself or his Honour, or the public peace and tranquillity of the State"⁸.

At the outbreak of hostilities three regiments, for a total of 7 battalions, had already signed their capitulation with the king:

- Regiment *Diesbach* (two battalions). Capitulation of twelve years, signed on 22 November 1738;

⁵ Giovanni Cerino-Badone, «I portinai delle Alpi». Strategie, tattiche e dottrine di impiego dell'esercito sabauda nella Guerra di Successione Austriaca (1742-1748)», in *Armi Antiche 2007*, pp. 105-165. For an overall view of the Austrian Succession War in Italy: Maximilian von Hoen, *Österreichischer Erbfolge-krieg, 1740-1748*, Vol. VIII, Wien 1905; H. Moris, *Opérations militaires dans les Alpes et les Apennins pendant la guerre de succession d'Autriche (1742-1748)*, Paris-Turin 1886; Alexandre de Saluces, *Histoire militaire du Piémont*, Vol. V, Turin 1818, pp. 349-542; François Eugène de Vault, Paul Avers, *Guerre de la Succession d'Autriche (1742-1748)*, 2 vols., Paris-Nancy 1892.

⁶ About Sabaudian firearms: Francesco Sterrantino *Le armi da fuoco del Vecchio Piemonte 1683-1799*, 2 vols., Torino 2002.

⁷ Loriga, *Soldati* cit., p. 36.

⁸ ASTO, Corte, Materie Militari, Levata Truppe Straniere, Mazzo 1 da inventariare, *Rappresentanza unigliata a S.M. il di 15 luglio 1736 sul punto della giurisdizione de Regimenti Svizzeri*.

- Regiment *Rietman* (three battalions). Capitulation of eight years, signed the 27 February 1741;
- Regiment *Guibert* (two battalions). Capitulation of ten years, signed the 18 August 1741, with the raise of two companies to form the 3rd Battalion.

The operational necessities of the new conflict persuaded the king to enlist another six Swiss battalions:

- Regiment *Reydt*, raised the 12 January 1742, on one battalion. In May was raised a 2nd Battalion, followed by a 3rd Battalion the 22 February 1743;
- Regiment *Keller*, raised the 27 February, on two battalions;
- Regiment *Meyer*, raised the 1 June 1744, was composed of a strong battalion of four companies of 175 men each, two of which were raised in the Canton of Glarus, and two in that of Appenzell;
- 4th Bn. Regiment *Kalbermatten* (formerly *Rietman*), raised in the course of 1744.

During the war the Swiss battalions rose from seven (1740) to 16 (1747), while the troops had increased by 62,5%, rising from 4.200 to 11.200 men⁹:

Swiss infantry of the Sabaudian Army 1740-1747								
Regiment	1740		1743		1744		1747	
	Bns	Men	Bns	Men	Bns	Men	Bns	Men
<i>Rietman, Kalbermatten</i>	3	1.800	3	2.100	4	2.800	4	2.800
<i>Guibert, Utiger</i>	2	1.200	3	2.100	3	2.100	3	2.100
<i>Diesbach, Roguin, Roi</i>	2	1.200	3	2.100	3	2.100	3	2.100
<i>Keller</i>	-	-	2	1.400	2	1.400	2	1.400
<i>Reydt, Salis</i>	-	-	3	2.100	3	2.100	3	2.100
<i>Meyer</i>	-	-	-	-	1	700	1	700
Total	7	4.200	11	9.800	16	11.200	16	11.200

The regiments organized their battalions in four great companies of 175 men each, like the Louis XV's Armée Royale. Each company was organized as a small independent unit, with its flag and its own rate of grenadiers, usually reorganized into a separate company during war campaigns¹⁰.

The Swiss infantry regiments became, during the conflict, real separate brigades. The Regiment *Kalbermatten* in 1744 counted 4 battalions, for a total force of 2,800 men. Similarly other three regiment-brigades were raised, *Reydt/Salis*, *Diesbach/Roguin/Roi*, *Guibert/Utiger*, each organized in three battalions. However, it was quite rare that these units should operate with all their battalions together. The combat doctrine of the Sabaudian army provided no more than two battalions of the

⁹ ASTO, Corte, Memorie politiche per rapporto all'interno, Storie della Real Casa, Mazzo 21-22, Daniel Minutoli, *Relation des Campagnes faites par S.M. et par ses Généraux avec des Corps Séparés dans les années 1742 et 1748*, 5 vols., 2 Atlas; Torino, Biblioteca Reale [by now BRTO], Manoscritto Militare 155; Ilari, Boeri, Paoletti, *La Corona di Lombardia*, pp. 86-97.

¹⁰ Every battalion had four company flags. This feature was seen as unnecessary since "le superflue de deux drapeaux par Bataillon ne serve que pour agrandir le trophée des enemis an cas de malheur, comm'il est arrivé au Regiment de Keller, qui fur pris prisonier de guerre à l'affaire de Villefranche". ASTO, *Memoria per provare gli avvantaggi dei Reggimenti stranieri*.

same regiment grouped under the same command, to avoid Colonels with the same powers of command of higher officers, like Brigadier Generals.

The *Gentil Galant* goes to war: the Swiss officer between business and warfare

The Swiss officer was a strange mixture between a warlord and businessman, between the sense of duty of obedience to the sovereign under whose flags he fought and his personal interests. The social origin was not obvious. Eleven of the regimental commanders who served in the War of Austrian Succession, seven belonged to the nobility and of these only four had already been a social position of prestige within the various cantonal councils. Not all of them descended from families of soldiers, and only 4 colonels boasted a relative who already served in any regiment in foreign pay. They were mostly veterans of the War of Polish Succession (1733-1738), but there were also those who, like Johann Rietman, had fought in the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1713). Characters like Alexandre de Guibert Syssac and Augustin Gabriel Roguin had for a military career a real passion to the point that they were able to make important innovations in the army of Savoy, especially working to improve the tactical *Reglement d'Exercice et de Manouvres*. Only B at Gaspard Uttiger seemed to be the "Homo Novus" between the regimental commanders. Trained as a magistrate in the canton of Zug, political troubles led him to choose a military career when, already 36-year old, many of his colleagues in uniform have boasted for many years a military experience of all respect. For the recruitment of junior officers, and later of soldiers, the Colonels relied on a network of patronage formed by relatives, friends or members of their cantons. Jean Reydt had begun his career in the regiment of his father, while Louis-Albert Roguin, when he rose the 13 November 1733 a new regiment for the king of Sardinia, offered the gallons of lieutenant colonel to his cousin Gabriel Augustin Roguin¹¹. From the battalions' rolls relationships, the geographic and religious proximity emerge inside the Swiss officers' staff, whose careers had necessarily a different process from the rest of the army, more linked to internal dynamics of the regiments and of the original Swiss "community"¹². In Regiment of Bernese infantry *Diesbach*, which we will use as an example of regimental history, of 60 officers 57 were from Berne or the

¹¹ The contacts were taken directly from the colonel with his possible future junior officers. One of these negotiations is well described in the *Nouvelle H elo ise* by Rousseau, when Saint-Preux wrote to Julie that "M. Roguin m'a offert une compagnie dans le regiment qu'il l eve pour le roi de Sardaigne. J'ai  t e sensiblement touch e de l'estime de ce brave officier; je lui ai dit, en remerciant, que j'avais la vue trop courte pour le service et que ma passion pour l' tude s'accordait mal avec une vie aussi active". Albert Jansen, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Frangments in dits. Recherches biographiques et litteraries*, Paris-Neuch atel-Gen ve-Berlin 1882, pp.1-2.

¹² During the campaign of 1747 in the 3rd Bn. of the Regiment *Kalbermatten* the officers of the Company Oswald, [Captain de Oswald, LtCaptain Pfundt, Lt Peyer, Ensign Bougganer] not only were all from Schaffhausen but they were all Protestant. Asto, Sezioni Riunite, Ufficio Generale del Soldo, Ruolini di Rivista, Reggimento Kalbermatten, 1747, Mazzo 57. Similar conditions are found in almost all the Swiss battalions' rolls.

nearby countryside¹³. The roles of 1742 revealed that 29 officers belonged to twelve different families, forming a network of internal relationships that today we can only guess¹⁴.

At least the regimental commanders, however, responded to the high command about their actions and the king of Sardinia seemed very pleased with their performance on the battlefield. At least eight officers reached the rank of general before ending their career, while two others were decorated with the Cross of Knight of the Order of SS. Maurice and Lazarus. However the fundamental business of the army was to fight, and although the actions were brief and infrequent, they were also quite violent and the battlefield pretended its toll of life and three Colonels, Gabriel Augustin Roguin, Alexandre Guibert and Johann Reydt, fell in action or for injuries. Even within single regiments losses were serious:

Officers' losses of Regiment <i>Diesbach-Roguin-Roi</i> 1742-1747			
Killed in Action	8	13,3%	36,6%
Deaths during the campaign (Disease, wounds)	6	10%	
Wounded	8	13,3%	
Prisoners	3	5%	
Resigned	13	21,6%	
Total	38	63,3%	

The Regiment *Diesbach-Roguin-Roi* lost during the war 38 officers, the 63,3% of the total. This is a very high percentage. However, only a portion of these losses can be attributed to actions of war. Only the 36,6% was wounded, killed or taken prisoner, and almost all the wounded personnel was able to resume service. Most of the losses were due to voluntary departure, or to withdraw from the contract due to personal reasons. The percentage, although high, did not reach the critical threshold of 50 %, as it happened often in the Prussian army of Frederick II during the Seven Years' War. The officer corp, the key guidance and control of troops in battle, was badly damaged but not in such a

¹³ For the present work I have chosen to focus on the roles of the Regiment *Diesbach-Roguin-Roi*. The choice fell on this unit because its documents are the most complete among the ones existing in the Nation Archive in Turin. This regiment was severely involved in combat, which results a good way to test how military operations have impacted on the strength of single units. ASTO, Sezioni Riunite, Ufficio Generale del Soldo, Ruolini di Rivista, Reggimento Diesbach 1742-1743, Mazzi 20, 23; Reggimento Roguin 1744, Mazzo 24; Reggimento Roi 1745-1748, Mazzi 26-30, 32.

¹⁴ ASTO, Ufficio Generale del Soldo, Ruolini di Rivista, Reggimento Diesbach 1742, Mazzo 20. I find bonds of kinship between the following officers: Jean Rodolph de Diesbach, Bern, Captain and Colonel; Bernard de Diesbach de Bern, Captain; Augustin Roguin d'Iverdon, Bern, LtColonel; George Augustin Roguin, d'Yverdon, Cton de Bern, Captain; Jonas Francois Roguin, D'Iverdon, Cton de Bern, Captain; Augustin Gabriel Roguin d'Iverdun, Bern, LtCaptain; Daniel Roguin, d'Yverdon, Cton de Bern, Ensign; Samuel Tscharner, de Bern, Lt Captain; Vincent Louis Tscharner, Bern, Lieutenant; George Steiguer, Bern, Captain; Sigismond Steiguer, de Monaz de Bern, Lieutenant; Albertus Steiguer, Bern, Second Lieutenant; Amedé Bonstetten, Bern, Ensign, Samuel Bonstetten, Bern, Ensign; David Friderich Tschiffelÿ, Bern, Lieutenant, Charles Tschiffely, Bern, Second Lieutenant; Victor Rodolph de Gingins baron de la Sarra, Bern, Captain; Victor de Gingins, d'Orny de Bern, LtCaptain; Sigmond Weiss, de Molens Cton de Bern, Captain; Frantz Fridrich Weiss, Bern, Ensign; Charles Pillissier de Verey, Bern, Lieutenat; Adam Pillissier de Verey, Bern, Ensign; Jean Francois Müller, Bern, LtCaptain; Albert Müller de Marnand, Bern, Ensign; Louis D'Erlach, Bern, LtCaptain, Rodolph d'Erlach, Bern, LtCaptain; Gabriel de Wattenville, Bern, Captain; Sigmond de Wattenville, Bern, Second Lieutenant.

way as to cause a collapse of discipline and battle-effectiveness also in the final stages of the conflict.

The NCO: the backbone of the battalions

Under the eyes of the colonel commandant and his officers the great part of everyday duty inside the regiment was devolved to non-commissioned officers, corporals, and a number of non-combatant specialists, like the *Ministre*, the *Aumonier*, the *Chaplain*, the *Surgeon* and the *Drum Major*. At the level of the company, contributions to the life and running of the unit were made by *First Sergeants*, *Sergeants*, *Corporals*, *Lace Corporals*, *Drummer* and *Fifers*.

Every company had four *First Sergeants*, who were supposed to be formidable peoples, since *we consider the sergeant as the soul of the company, so he has to be an honourable and faultless man*¹⁵. They executed the orders of the captain and lieutenants, oversaw the distribution of rations, inspected quarters and camp lines and maintained the alignment and order of the company in march and in battle. *First sergeants* also had the task of collecting the company muster list, but even they inspect and kept records of all guards, detachments and working parties. At the beginning of the war sergeants had a *Kurzgewehere* or *Hallebard de sergent*, a particularly short pike, different in they form from the others used in the Sabaudian army and, among the other soldiers of the same regiment, only them were allowed to carry a short curved blade, called *Sabro*¹⁶. The basis of the company was indeed on the shoulders of *Corporals* and *Lace Corporals*. These were reable soldiers who had to kick a party of six or seven men into wakefulness every morning in their chamber or tent, and make sure that they and their weapons were in a presentable state to go on parade or guard, take the road, or face the enemy in action. Then they had the duty to maintain discipline in the ranks, inspecting weapons, uniforms and equipments, and they had to command guards and small detachments.

In battle NCOs were the fundamental link between officers and soldiers. They controlled if their men had understood orders in the right way and, more important, they were the real element of control and discipline over privates. With their impressive pikes and sticks, they had to punish or literally to push into the battle their soldiers.

The high command wanted for these task men who were steady, brave and physically strong. According to the regiment's traditions and due to Canton of recruiting, NCOs had to be of a restricted Swiss area. Soldiers had to recognize his direct superior as a truly genuine element of the land of recruiting for each unit.

¹⁵ ASTO, Corte, Biblioteca Antica, H.VI.28, *Etat du Régiment des Garde de S.A.R.*, p. 26.

¹⁶ Giorgio Dondi, *Armi in asta europee del Museo Storico Nazionale di Artiglieria di Torino*, Collegno 2005, pp. 175-176; Maurizio Lupo, *Le Lame del Re. Sabri & Spade dell'Armata Sabauda dal 1560 al 1831*, Torino 2007.

We can consider now the situation of NCOs in the Regiment *Diesbach-Roguin-Roi* at the beginning of the war in 1742 and at the end in 1747. Nominally it was a regiment of Bernese infantry:

NCOs geographical provenience in the Regiment <i>Diesbach-Roguin-Roi</i>				
Country	Total number	Percentage	Total number	Percentage
	1743		1747	
Bern	146	58,4%	110	41%
Swiss (general)	42	16,8%	70	26,1%
Holy Roman Empire	24	9,6%	23	8,6%
Germany (general)	35	14%	50	18,6%
Alsace-Lorraine	2	0,8%	12	4,5%
Poland	1	0,4%	3	1,1%
Total	250	-	268	-

The number of the NCOs had changed during the war, and they passed from 250 to 268; the raising of a new 3rd Battalion, recruiting teams and the necessity of a more rigid discipline inside the regiment (more or less completely reconstructed after the heavy losses of the 1744/1745 campaigns) were strictly necessary. In 1743 about 146 NCOs (58,4%) came from Bern and its Canton. Losses, difficulties in recruiting and lack of available replacements meant that in 1747 the number of Bernese NCOs reduced to 110 (41%).

The command of the regiment tried replacements among the soldiers from the Berne or at least, Switzerland. The rate from other Swiss cantons rose from 42 (16,8%) to 70 men (26,1%). In numerical terms, despite the heavy losses suffered by the regiment, the element of Swiss troops among the graduates still remained predominant (67,1%) over other European groups (32,9%). Staying the German language spoken within the regiment, soldiers from the Holy Roman Empire and Germany were promoted NCOs. In 1743 there were around 59 (23,6%), rose in 1747 to 73 (27,2%).

“On dit que tu parts pour la guerre, dans le Piémont servir le Roi”: the Swiss private soldier

The soldiers who enlisted in the Swiss regiments were all volunteers. The war operations severely depleted the regional nature of some Swiss units, which overcome the lack of recruits originating from the cantons accepting soldiers of other nationalities able to speak, according to the nature of the regiment, German or French. Then, towards the end of the War of Austrian Succession, colonels had at their command only a fifth of the troop of Swiss nationality, "the others are almost all Germans, but there are also French and even the Savoyards, who deny their homeland and declare them as truly Swiss to take four and a half moneys a day "¹⁷.

¹⁷ ASTO, Corte, Materie Ecclesiastiche, Eretici, Mazzo 1 da inventariare.

Analyzing the rolls of Regiment *Diesbach-Roguin-Roi* we can reconstruct in detail the situation for what concerns the nationality of the troops:

Grenadiers and privates' geographical provenience in the Regiment <i>Diesbach-Roguin-Roi</i>				
Country	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage
	1743		1747	
Bern	941	56,6%	513	30,8%
Swiss (general)	243	14,6%	205	12,3%
Holy Roman Empire	187	11,2%	460	27,6%
Germany (general)	245	14,7%	372	22,3%
Alsace-Lorraine	31	1,8%	74	4,4%
Piedmont	1	0,06%	-	-
France	6	0,3%	-	-
Poland	3	0,2%	14	0,8%
Holland	2	0,1%	9	0,5%
Great Britain	-	-	1	0,06%
Denmark	1	0,06%	-	-
Ireland	1	0,06%	-	-
Unknown	1	0,06%	15	0,9%
Total	1.662		1.663	

The war and the need to increase quickly the regimental strength led to a rapid change of the nature of the soldiers, both from the quality and nationality point of view. If in 1742 56,6% of soldiers were recruited in the canton of Bern, five years after the percentage reaches only 30.8%. The percentage of soldiers natives from Switzerland went from 71,2% in 1743 to 43,1% in 1743. The Sabaudian army spoke three languages: Italian, French and German. The regiments were formed with companies linguistically homogeneous among themselves, since the orders were sent to men in their language of origin¹⁸. Therefore the recruiters engaged primarily subjects of the Austrian Empire or, more simply, all those who were able to speak and understand the German language. In 1747 50% of the Regiment *Roi* was actually formed with men from the Habsburg Empire and Germany. Although the officers preferred soldiers with an age between 30 and 40 years, adult and able to endure the hardships of a campaign of war, 62,6% of these were less than twenty-two, 28,4% among twenty to thirty, and only 9,9% had more than thirty. The young age and extraction urban (30%) make them turbulent, difficult to manage in the campaign and in combat, easy to demoralize and opportunists ready to exploit the failings of their superiors¹⁹.

The manpower of the Sabaudian army flowed more or less voluntarily from different parts of

¹⁸ Regulations and tactical exercises were also printed in bilingual books (in French and German language) to help Swiss troops to integrate them better inside the Sabaudian army. These volumes, distributed among the officers and NCOs, are now extremely rare. *Recueil de ce qui se pratique dans le Régiment Suisse de Saconay, au service de Sa Majesté Britanique persentement dan les Armées de Son Altesse Roiale de Savoie, sous les Ordres de Mylord Galloway, à l'égard de la Justice & Police du Régiment: avec l'exercice Militaire, mis ed François & en Allemand, pour l'intelligence des Officiers qui n'entendent que l'une de ces deus Langues*, Ivreé 1694.

¹⁹ Loriga, *Soldati*, pp. 109-134.

Europe. The recruits came from Northern Europe through the Alps from the pass of the Great St. Bernard, and they were set aside in Aosta, Ivrea, Turin and, depending on the actual position of the regiment, in Novara or Cuneo.

Recruits of the Regiment <i>Diesbach-Roguin-Roi</i>				
Country	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage
	1743		1747	
Bern	92	26%	47	8,3%
Swiss (general)	59	16,7%	72	12,8%
Holy Roman Empire	63	17,8%	252	44,8%
Germany (general)	86	24,3%	130	23%
Alsace-Lorraine	47	13,3%	37	6,5%
France	1	0,3	3	0,5%
Poland	2	0,5%	5	0,8%
Holland	3	0,8%	2	0,3%
Great Britain	-	-	2	0,3%
Ireland	-	-	1	0,1%
Unknown	-	-	11	1,9%
Total	353		562	

In 1743 42.7% of recruits had arrived from Switzerland, and 26% of the total was made up of volunteers of the canton of Bern. Important, but contained, the rates made up by deserters from the Austrian Army (17,8%) and young people from the German states (24,3%). Equally important it was the presence of Alsace and Lorraine volunteers (13,3%), most of them deserters from the French Army during the campaigns of 1743 and 1744. Four years after the relationship had reversed: losses, difficulties in recruiting Bernese natives and the presence of many imperial units in northern Italy, with their numbers of deserters and stragglers, allowed the recruiters to enlist increasing rates of Austrians. In 1747 their presence was already rising to 44,8%. The enrolment of people from the Germanic area was only slightly decreased to 23%.

The bonus paid for the volunteers was a consistently useful recruiting sergeant. The legal maximum of 9 Livres was frequently exceeded, and a tall, well-set-up man could count on negotiating successfully 25 Livres and more²⁰. It was the equivalent of a labourer's annual salary, which not every recruit spent on cheap liquor and expansive women. It offered the basis for a reasonable next egg: a new army, a new regiment and a new bonus paid. The discipline of the regiment was obviously in pain, forcing to increase the presence of non-commissioned officers, selected as possible between the survivors Swiss elements. A certain freedom of religion was allowed, and it was also possible to recruit people of Protestant faith. The company "Mezza Roguin", of Regiment *Diesbach*, in 1743 has 15 Protestants soldiers out of 88 enlisted men, the

²⁰ ASTO, Corte, Materie Militari, Ufficio Generale del Soldo, Mazzo 2 da inventariare, *Stabilimento per la sussistenza del soldato*.

17% of the total strength. Privates of the reformed religion were another factor of disturbance in the discipline, it was a source of fights, hindering compliance with the Catholic practices and promoting a "freedom of speech too licentious" ²¹.

Tactics

The Swiss units used a basic tactical regulation called *Reglement d'Exercice et de Manouvres* of 15 May 1709²². Inspired by Anglo-Dutch combat doctrine developed during the War of Spanish Succession, the *Reglement* remained in use in the Sabaudian infantry until the early 50s of the eighteenth century. The battalion was lined up to four ranks, with the unit's flags banded together in the centre a few steps from the first line.

L E C
SoooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooSoooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooSoooooooooooooooooooooS
ooo
ooo
SoooS
S S

Infantry company, 1741-1750. C; captain. L; lieutenant. E; Esign. S; sergeant. c; corporal. o; private.

Reading the rolls of the regiments we can understand that there was indeed the necessity to equalize the administrative and the tactical organization. The company then was often understood as a stationary unit for use in combat. When the battalion was engaging a firefight, it was deployed in 3 ranks, divided into 13 platoons (12 of fusiliers and one of grenadier), one of which was the group behind the flags. This central platoon divided the battalion into two wings, each of six platoons. All companies could hold a total of 175 m. This deployment during the first half of the XVIII century was not yet fully understood by many officers²³.

²¹ Loriga, *Soldati*, pp. 35-39.

²² BRTO, Saluzzo 488. *Reglement d'Exercice et de Manouvres. A' Coni le 20 Mai 1749. Maniere de tirer de pied ferme contre l'Infanterie, donnée le 15e Mai 1709*. This is a copy of the original Regulation. The organization of the work suggests that, combined into a single manuscript, there are actually two separate books, one about the regulations for the movement and another one on the organization of combat. It is doubtful in such way the *Maniere de tirer de pied* was applied in campaign.

²³ During the War of Polish Succession the French officers were uncomfortable with these tactics, and at the Battle of Parma (29 June 1734) the Marshal de Coigny forced the Sabaudian regiments to fight like their French allies: "À la bataille de Parme, l'infanterie piémontoise étoit sur trois rangs, et c'est ainsi qu'elle étoit exercée; mais quand un bataillon devoit aller au feu, Mr de Coigny le faisoit mettre sur quatre, avec ordre aux deux premières, d'avoir la baionette au bout du fusil, et de ne point tirer, mais quand les deux autres voudroient le faire, de mettre genoux en terre, puis de se relever, et de porter le fusil sur le bas gauche. Voilà ce qui s'appelle chercher midi à quatorze heures, que de faire combattre une troupe autrement qu'elle n'est dressée." Charles de Warnery, *Anecdotes et pensées historiques et militaires, écrites vers l'année 1774*, Halle 1781, p. 83.

finally those of the extremities. When the situation was too dangerous, it was necessary to use the square²⁵.

The *Reglement* appeared to be one of the most advanced of its period. Its main characteristics can be summarized in the following points:

- Emphasizing the fire power. On this element, the *Reglement* was nothing short of futuristic. While the Imperial and the French maintained their heavy tactical units in 4 ranks, the Sabaudian infantry on the battlefield could use a formation in four or three ranks according to tactical situation. To fire it was always recommended the three ranks with fire platoons. The aim was to saturate a front of 175 meters wide by 75 deep with 2045 rounds per minute²⁶.

- Low effectiveness in attack. The advance in line with covering fire did not give sufficient depth and was too slow to exploit advantageous tactical situations. The evasive manoeuvres broke the front of the battalion and embarrass the unit that was to face an enemy's counterattack.

- Good efficiency in defence. From a static position, better if properly entrenched, firepower developed could, if properly used, stop any assault.

In any way, the *Reglement* appeared to be some only a sort of written suggestion of the unit commanders who, like the French *Armée Royal*, developed tactical rules for each regiment²⁷.

During the conflict, the army of Charles Emmanuel III should maximize its combat tactics, especially in matters of defence to the point that, in 1748, it had reached a high degree of efficiency. The Royal Order of the 6 October 1743 codified a new defensive doctrine based on the increased firepower of the units deployed with an unprecedented formation of two ranks²⁸.

The face of battle

Despite the subsequent questionable reputation, which occurred mostly because of the sudden surrender of the castle of Bard 7 October, 1704 and for some few episodes of the next War of the Alps (1792-1796), the Swiss units fought much better and with greater determination than other far

²⁵ ASTO, *Etat du Regiment des Gardes de S.A.R.*; BRTO, Manoscritto Militare 234, *Recoeil de plusieurs plans des defferentes manouvres que la troupe de Sa Maiesté le Roy de Sardaigne doit faire, tel qu'il l'ordonne d'exeuiter dans le reglement qu'il donné l'an 1755*.

²⁶ These theoretical performances were obtained in shooting by trained troops not in real battle situations with human material under combat stress. However, they indicate how it was possible to get in perfect condition, a performance superior to those of a machine gun of the First World War. B. P. Hughes, *Firepower. Weapons Effectiveness on the battlefield, 1630- 1850*, London 1974, pp. 27-29.

²⁷ About French tactics of the eighteenth century: Jean Lambert Alphonse Colin, *L'infanterie au XVIIIe siècle: La tactique*, Paris 1907. After the war, Charles Emmanuel III ordered to draft a new regulation and new tactics for the whole army: BRTO; Manoscritto Militare 233, *Nouvel Exercice Militaire pour les Troupes d'Infanterie de SA Maiesté le Roi de Sardaigne adapté dans le Congrès tenu à la presence de S.A.R. le Duc de Savoie avec l'explication de chèque tems en figure, 1751*; Saluzzo 256, *Etude de l'infanterie au recherche des regles propres au service de SMS, composée de Troupes Nationales & Etrangerés, à Alexandrie MDCCLII*.

²⁸ ASTO, Corte, Materie Militari, Imprese, Mazzo 4 d'addizione; *Relazione giornaliera dell'operatosi dall'Armata accampata nella Valle di Casteldelfino, comandata dal Marchese d'Aix, compilata dal colonnello Monfort che vi fece le funzioni di Magg. Generale*.

more prestigious Sabaudian regiments²⁹. The beginnings of the Swiss infantry were not the best, and in winter 1742 the first campaign in Savoy had raised doubts about the capacity of the mercenary troops. The Regiment *Keller* sent the 2nd Battalion to serve as a garrison force in Sardinia³⁰, but kept the 1st Battalion on the mainland, which participated in operations in Savoy, and it was severely decimated by desertions. Before the end of the year, the whole battalion had no more than 70 men under its flags³¹. This unit, not yet fully reconstituted, in 1744 was sent to the entrenched camp of Villefranche, and deployed to defend the trenches at the Collet de Villefranche. During the fighting of 21 April, the 1st *Keller* was surrounded and forced to surrender, along with the 2nd *Fucilieri*, 1 *Aosta*, 2nd *La Regina* and 1st *Sicilia*. The Swiss battalion had fought for three hours entrenched into the Thاون's Farm, until the exhaustion of ammunition. The Colonel surrendered only after receiving assurances that he and his men would not have been passed for arms³². Regaining the lost positions, alongside the 2nd Battalion of Regiment *Saluzzo* and the single battalion of Regiment *Tarantasia*, was the task of the 1st *Bourgsdorff* and of the 3rd *Guibert*, which regained the control of the Collet and the previously lost Mont Gros³³. The Swiss and Germans regiments gave at the battles of Pierrelongue (19 July 1744) and Madonna dell'Olmo (27 September

²⁹ On 7 October 1704, after three days of blockade, the castle of Bard in Aosta Valley, defended by a battalion of the Regiment of Swiss infantry *Reding*, commanded by the Colonel himself, Major General Jean François de Reding Biberegg, surrendered to the forces of Vendôme and La Feuillade. The ancient medieval fortress could not withstand the siege of the two French armies, and Reding considered more prudent to achieve a conditional surrender. Released on parole he had travelled to Turin to justify his behaviour, but he found the duke of Savoy Victor Amadeus II highly unsympathetic towards him, due to the fact that in the same campaign other four fortresses or cities had already fallen. He therefore abandoned the service of Savoy and at the end of the year he entered in the French service, as Brigadier General. He rose the 3 March 1705 the Regiment *Reding* at the service of France. He died in Madrid in 1706, ranked *Maréchal de camp*. Inside the new kingdom of Italy of the second half of the nineteenth century, his name became a synonym for traitor. Commenting his choice to serve Louis XIV after the events of Bard, Giuseppe Prato wrote that "unfortunately in the French service he was not caught by a Piedmontese bullet"; G. Prato, *Il costo della Guerra di Successione Spagnola e le spese pubbliche del Piemonte dal 1700 al 1713*, Torino 1907, p. 281; Virgilio Ilari, Giancarlo Boeri, Ciro Paoletti, *Tra i Borboni e gli Asburgo*, Ancona 1996, p. 332. Far more serious was the attitude of the captain Bégoz of the Bernese Regiment *Roch-Mondet*, who, according to his contemporaries, the 23 April 1794 sold its positions in trenches of Petit St Bernard. His failings, deliberately or not, were, however, a convenient excuse to cover the grim and disastrous material and moral situation of the Sabaudian army, whose units (1st, 2nd battalion Regiment *La Marina*, 1st, 2nd Battalion Regiment *Saluzzo* 1st, 2nd battalion Regiment *Vercelli*, 3rd Grenadier Battalion) during the battle fled in the face of the enemy. On the fighting spirit of the Swiss units were little regarded incidents like the splendid defensive action of the 2nd Grenadiers Company of the Regiment *Christ*, commanded by Captain and Lieutenant Paul and Ippolito Schreiber, at the battle of San Michele Mondovì, the 19 April 1796. Virgilio Ilari, Piero Crociani, Ciro Paoletti, *La Guerra delle Alpi*, Roma 2000, pp. 161-163, 295-296.

³⁰ Here the Regiment became famous especially thanks to the music performed by the Ensign François-Joseph-Léonti Meyer de Schavensée (Luzern, 10 August 1710 – 1790). Later he was transferred on the continent, just in time to be captured at Villefranche in April 1744. Alexandre Choron, François Fayolle, *Dictionnaire historique des Musiciens*, Vol. II, Paris 1811, pp. 277- 278.

³¹ "A battalion of Keller, Swiss, like others similar units it should be of seven hundred men, had no more than seventy". Gaspare Galleani D'Agliano, *Memorie storiche sulla Guerra del Piemonte (1741-1747)*, Torino 1840, p. 45.

³² Moris, *Opérations militaires dans les Alpes*, p. 32. The Thاون's Farm ("Cascina Thاون"), still existing today, was since then renamed "Fort Thاون". It was said that the conquest of the farm won a *Te Deum* in Madrid's churches. Louis Durante, *Histoire de Nice, depuis sa fondation jusqu'à l'année 1792*, Vol. III, Turin 1824, pp. 92-95.

³³ Useful sources about the Battle of Villefranche are: BRTO; Miscellanea 46, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé à la défense des Retrenchemens de la Comté de Nice*; Miscellanea 130, *Relation de l'attaque des retranchements de Villefranche en 1744*.

1744) a significant test of strength and fighting spirit. It was not surprising that the 19 July 1747 the defence of Gran Serin Redoubt, the keystone of the entrenched camp of Assiette in Susa Valley, was assigned to the 2nd and 3rd Battalion of Regiment *Kalbermatten*, and to the 3rd Battalion of Regiment *Roi*. The assault of the column of Lieutenant-General De Villemur was rejected, and rightly Damiano Giuseppe Maria del Carretto, earl of Priocca, in his report of the battle could write that “the three Swiss battalions fought on the Serin with their usual courage”³⁴.

But it was an hard-won military glory. The Regiment *Diesbach-Roguin-Roi* had a nominal force of 2.100 men. The losses were very severe, but the regimental staff did its best to keep the battalions at their usual strength, maintaining an average of 2.057 soldiers, just 43 below the theoretical force.

Strength of Regiment <i>Diesbach-Roguin-Roi</i> 1742-1747						
1742	1743	1744	1745	1746	1747	Annual average
2.250	2.110	2.013	2.003	1.883	2.085	2.057

The losses suffered by the regiment between 1742 and 1747 were impressive. At the end of 1747 3.896 men had been removed from the rolls. Also excluding from the list 500 dismissed soldiers (24%) exempted from service since their non-suitability for military life, old age or never recovered wounds and all the 121 men who were expelled for their unseemly behaviour (5,8%), the losses still remained 3.154, the 153,3%.

Losses of Regt. <i>Diesbach-Roguin-Roi</i> 1742-1747								
Year	1742	1743	1744	1745	1746	1747	Total	Percentage
Killed	131	93	334	303	288	112	1.261	61,3%
Wounded	-	-	251	22	-	25	298	14,4%
Prisoners	-	1	13	159	3	33	209	10,2%
Deserters	219	96	72	376	397	317	1.477	71,8%
Missing	-	-	2	28	-	-	30	1,4%
Other causes	6	6	2	50	40	17	121	5,8%
Discharged	34	120	47	133	128	38	500	24,3%
Total	390	316	721	1.071	856	542	3.896	-
Percentage	17,3%	14,9%	35,8%	53,4%	45,4%	26%	189,4%	-

At the end of 1745 the losses were 2.164, of whom 861 killed, 271 wounded, 173 prisoners and 763 deserters, the 105,2%. The year 1745 was particularly difficult, since the combined armies of French and Spain inflicted a series of stunning defeats to Charles Emmanuel III. The Regiment *Roi* during that campaign lost the 53,4% of its men.

To recover the losses, very intense operations of recruitment were necessary. During the campaigns of 1744, 1745 and 1746 eventually 2.648 men were lost for various reasons.

³⁴ ASTO, Corte, Museo Storico, *Rélation de l'affaire de l'Assiette faite par Mr le Comte de Priouque, 19 Juillet 1747.*

Nevertheless it was possible to recover in the same period 2.962 replacements. Overall, between 1742 and 1747, 4.101 volunteers were enlisted.

Recruits of Regt. <i>Diesbach-Roguin-Roi</i> 1742-1747						
1742	1743	1744	1745	1746	1747	Annual average
323	377	403	958	1.601	439	683

The new soldiers were raised, trained and sent as soon as possible to the front. Of these 604 were lost, mostly for desertion. In 1746 teams of recruiters selected men so unreliable that on 266 replacements 168 (63%) deserted before the end of the campaign.

Recruits' losses inside Regt. <i>Diesbach-Roguin-Roi</i> 1742-1747							
Year	1742	1743	1744	1745	1746	1747	Total
Killed	7	12	11	21	24	3	78
Wounded	-	-	7	-	-	-	7
Prisoners	-	-	1	-	-	1	2
Deserters	12	13	8	102	168	57	360
Transferred	-	-	-	-	51	2	53
Other	3	3	9	35	8	13	71
Discharges	-	4	4	8	15	2	33
Total	22	32	40	166	266	78	604
Media	6,8%	8,4%	9,9%	17,3%	16,6%	17,7%	-

Losses and lack of replacements undermine the stability of an army. All armies have a breaking point. It can be achieved when men of fighting units are taken to calculate, more or less rigorously, that the chances of survival have gone over the dividing line between possibility and probability of random death that can happen and its apparent statistics recurrence. This line is usually felt when the losses incurred during a conflict come to equal the number of troops in force to combat units. In the winter of 1745, soldiers recognized that the chances of survival had against him: "my number is up", as says the British Tommy.

This caused a collapse of the efficiency of the Sabaudian military machine that in the winter of 1745-1746 came to the point of collapse. Defeated militarily and with the French-Spanish forces about a day's of march from Turin, Charles Emmanuel III proposed peace negotiations and suggested a change of alliances³⁵. But regiments did not collapse.

The officers in every unit had suffered severe strokes but not likely to diminish the internal organization of the battalions. To recover from the crisis the new recruits, mostly deserters from the Austrian or French, were absorbed in the best possible way, while non-commissioned officers were kept as possible "Swiss". The Regiment *Roi*, like many others, despite the losses had now reached 105,2%, remained a credible fighting force and, together with Regiment *Kalbermatten*, it was

³⁵ The French-Spanish avant-gardes stormed the Castle of Gabiano the 12 November 1745, gaining a position just 40 km from the walls of Turin. P. Savio, *Asti occupata e liberata (1745-1746)*, Asti 1927, p. 81.

employed with success in the defence of the Assiette entrenched camp in July 1747. In March 1746, just seven months after the defeat of Bassignana (27 September 1745), the Sabaudian army gave way to an all out offensive on the eastern Piedmontese front, concluding it the after eight months on the west side of the Var into French territory. But that was its last manoeuvred action.

By the end of the summer 1745, with the army of Charles Emmanuel III reached its limits, the Austrian units aggregated to the Sabaudian forces were always more numerous³⁶.

Year	Numerical strength of the imperial forces on the front of Piedmont
1744	5.500
1745	10.000
1746	45.000
1747	25.000

From the campaign of 1746 the actions of the army of Charles Emmanuel III were limited to siege operations. The king avoided fighting in the open field and always he scrupulously waited the enemy behind solid trenches on field previously and carefully selected, studied, topographed and adapted to a static defence. The French and Spaniards, unable to engage the enemy in manoeuvred battle of large proportions, had little option but to attack frontally a complex of entrenched camps or try to bypass them with elaborated manoeuvres, with great loss of time³⁷. This strategy in the biennium 1746-1747 allowed the Sabaudian commands to limit losses on the battlefield, but at the cost of making the army a true “army in being”. In naval warfare, the “fleet in being” is a naval force that extends a strategic influence without leaving its port, the enemy is forced to provide forces to continually monitor it. Unable to destroy it, both the French and Spanish and the Anglo-Austrian army needed to have the king of Sardinia allied or at least neutral, to secure a decisive edge in the Italian countryside. So the Sabaudian army remained an important card to play in the diplomatic negotiations, with both Vienna and London to Madrid and Paris.

The Peace

The 11 May 1748 Charles Emmanuel III, informed of the opening of peace negotiations, unilaterally ordered the suspension of hostilities on the Italian front. All the colonels of Regiments of foreign infantry, Swiss, Germans and Italians were well aware that their units would be severely curtailed, if not disbanded. It started an underground war, made up of memorials, defamation, letters and personal talks with the king to obtain a renewal of the capitulations. The German officers

³⁶ Minutoli, *Relation des Campagnes*, Atlas, Vol. I, Vol. II.

³⁷ Already at the battle of Bassignana Charles Emmanuel III tried to retire once the offensive intentions of the enemy became clear. Only Piedmont Brigade, attacked in the central sector of the front, did not have time to avoid the contact. At Piacenza, although it was able to reach the field in time for the great battle of 16 June, the Sabaudian army marched with a step so slow to suggest a king’s intention to avoid the battle and watch the fight from an acceptable distance. Reed Browning, *The War of Austrian Succession*, Alan Sutton 1995, pp. 273-276; Ilari, Boeri, Paoletti, *La Corona di Lombardia*, pp. 179-181, 200-201.

were among the first to move, and already in 1749 a "memory" came to the War Bureau to prove the military superiority of German regiments. Very astutely they pointed out that their regiments cost 248.435 Livres, instead of the 274.351 Livres necessary for a Swiss regiment. It seemed that the Swiss transfer all of their moneys gained in Piedmont elsewhere, while the German troops spent more willingly in Piedmont. Swiss infantry regiments were accused of not being able to engage any offensive action, to be lazy and disobedient and not suitable for war. But at this point the relations with the sovereign worked much more and better than any document or report, and it was no doubt that the Swiss officers enjoyed a privileged relationship with the Court of Turin. The battalions were put on the foot of peace, and only a few of them were eventually disbanded, like the Italian regiments *Lombardia* and *Sicilia*, the Regiment *Corsica*, and the Regiment of German infantry *Baden-Dourlac*³⁸. The only Swiss regiment that occurred the same fate was the unlucky Regiment *Keller*.

Conclusions

The Swiss soldiers were a veritable army into the army, distinguished by lavish wages, ample privileges and the right to pursue justice by its courts. They made their fortunes in the kingdom of Sardinia thanks to a human capital rich of a military experience of immediate use and great value. Inside the Sabaudian army different military units, like the Swiss regiments, different in culture, language and traditions coexisted, according to a phenomenon far more widespread than we might think today, conditioned as we are by ideas of national belonging alien to the XVIII century society. The kings of Sardinia over the heterogeneity of their army had built their strength, a characteristic that during the next century was not understood and, indeed, intensely criticized³⁹.

³⁸ The dismissal of the regiment caused frictions between Prince Karl Wilhelm Eugen, prince of Baden-Dourlac and Hochberg, and Charles Emmanuel III. Despite the discord, the prince, former Brigadier General, was promoted to Major General the 28 March 1748, Lieutenant General the 14 February 1749, then General of Infantry the 6 March 1771. ASTO, Corte, Materie Militari, Levata Truppe Straniere, Mazzo I d'addizione, *Promemoria del Principe di Baden contenente alcune rimostranze dal medesimo fatte all'occasione della riforma del suo Reggimento. Colle determinazioni date da S.M. in proposito*.

³⁹ In particularly Ferdinando Augusto Pinelli, *Storia militare del Piemonte in continuazione di quella del Saluzzo, cioè dalla Pace d'Aquisgrana sino ai dì nostri*, Vol. I, Torino 1854. A more balanced analysis is in Bianchi, "Baron Litron", pp. 5-9.

Appendix. List of Regiments and Biographies

Abbreviations:

G = General. LG = Lieutenant General. MG = Major General. BG = Brigadier General. Col = Colonel. LCol = Lieutenant Colonel. M = Major. C = Captain. LC = Lieutenant Captain. L = Lieutenant. SL = Second Lieutenant. E = Ensign. Ct = Cadet.

Sources for Biographies: ASTO, Sezioni Riunite, Patenti Controllo Finanze II, Vols 1-20; François Girard, *Histoire abrégée des Officiers Suisses qui se sont distingués aux services étrangers dans des grades supérieurs*, 3 voll., Fribourg 1781-1782; Emmanuel May de Romainmoitié, *Histoire militaire de la Suisse et celle des Suisses dans les différents services de l'Europe, composée et rédigée sur des ouvrages et pièces authentiques*, Vol. VII, Lausanne 1788.

Regiment of Valais infantry Rietman-Kalbermatten

Colonels. 21-12-1731, **Johann Rietman** (Schaffhausen, 14 March 1679 – Schaffhausen, 15 March 1761). Son of the Pastor Heinrich Rietman, he began his career in 1696 as Ct Regt. *Muralt* at the service of Holland. In 1702 he fought in 1702 and 1703 campaigns. In 1704 he was recruited as the LC in the company of LCol. Vincent Tschärner in the Sabaudian Regt. *La Reine*. He participated at the siege of Verrua in 1704-1705, in January 1706 he was at the siege of Nice, where he was severely wounded, and in the summer he was at the defence of Turin. The following year he participated at the siege of Toulon in 1708 and, at the head of the grenadier company, at the capture of the Fort of Perosa in Chisone Valley. On 12 March 1713 he was appointed M in the Regt *Hakbrett*. With this unit he made the campaigns in Sicily during the War of the Quadruple Alliance. The 14 March 1725 he became LC and then he received the command of the regiment (21 December 1731). In the war for the Polish Succession he participated to the operations in Piedmont and Lombardy (Sieges of Novara and Tortona, battles of Parma and Guastalla). He received three wounds at the battle of Parma, he was made BG (4 November 1735) in reward for his services, charged of the government of Como, where his regiment was garrisoned. He was appointed MG 20 October 1737. In the campaign of 1742 participated in the siege of Modena and Mirandola. On 5 January 1743 he left the service for the effects of injuries on the battlefield and he retreated to Schaffhausen with a pension of 6.000 Livres; 24-5-1744, **Bruno Kalbermatten** (Sion, 22 February 1700 - Turin, 26 April 1762). Member of one of the most powerful family of the Valais, and of the city of Sion in particular, he was the grandson of Nicolas Kalbermatten, Mayor of Sion, Bailiff of St. Maurice and the owner of a Swiss regiment in the pay of the duke of Savoy in 1616. He was the

son of Jacques-Arnold, Knight of St. Michael, Mayor of Sion, Grand-Châtelain and Captain General of Dixain. Bruno had served in the Regt. *Hackbrett* in 1717 as E, and he was garrisoned in Sicily until 1719, becoming in the meantime, SL in 1718, L 1719, LC in 1722 and C in 1724, M the 29 April 1731, LC the 15 October 1733. With this position he participated at the campaigns of 1734 and 1735. For his conduct in action at the battle of Parma he was awarded of the Knight's Cross of the Order of SS. Maurice and Lazarus. After the withdrawal of Riedtmann in January 1743 he was placed in command of the regiment renamed *Kalbermatten*. On 14 May 1754 he was promoted to BG, the 24 February 1757 MG and the 11 January 1761 he reached the rank of LG.

Uniform. Dark blue coat, waistcoat, breeches with white laces, yellow lining, cuffs and collar.

Record. 1742: Po campaign (1st, 2nd Bns), Savoy campaign; 3rd Bn in garrison in the Fenestrelle Fortresses, 4th in Cuneo. 1743: Chateau Dauphin (1st, 2nd Bns), 1st Bn heavily engaged at the village of Chateau, 86 men lost. 1744: it performed a superlative defence action at Villefranche (1st, 2nd Bns), defence of Cuneo (1st, 2nd Bns), Madonna dell'Olmo (3rd, 4th Bns, losses 136). 1745: Bassignana (1st, 2nd, 3rd Bns). 1746: sieges of Asti and Tortona, Provence (1st Bn). 1747: Liguria campaign, Breil (1st, 4th Bns), it played a decisive role at the battle of Assiette Gap (2nd, 3rd Bns), Stura di Demonte. It was the best fighting unit of the Sabaudian army during the War of Austrian Succession.

Regiment of Bernese infantry *Diesbach-Roguin-Roy*

Colonels. 17-5-1737, **Jean Rodolfe de Diesbach** (Bern, 1 March 1688 - Rolle, 27 December 1750). He was the son of Nicolas de Diesbach, already in the service of the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, LC in French service, Generalissimo of Bernese Milice during the war of 1712. He began to serve in a Swiss regiment in Dutch pay. On 20 February 1736 he entered at of the Kingdom of Sardinia as C in Regt. *Roguin*. On 15 April 1737 he obtained the property of the regiment and he became BG on 15 January 1744. He retired from service the 10 April that year coming back in Switzerland, after obtaining the Bailiwick of Romainmoitier. He was also the owner of Dinningen; 10-4-1744, **Augustin Gabriel Roguin** (Yverdon, 9 September 1700 - Mont Passet, 19 July 1744). Member of a noble family of Yverdon and cousin of Albert Louis Roguin, in 1720 entered in the service of king Augustus II of Poland, who in 1728 put him in the second regiment of the Guards as C. In 1732 he obtained the command of a company in this regiment, when his cousin Albert Louis Roguin in January 1734 offered him the rank of LC of the regiment who was about to rise for the king of Sardinia. He left the service of the king of Poland by participating actively in the formation of the new unit. He fought the 19 September 1734 at the battle of Guastalla. In 1742 he was at the sieges of Modena and Mirandola. Then at the battle of the Campo Santo (8 February

1743) he commanded the 1st and the 2nd Bns located on the right wing, contributing to the annihilation of the Spanish Regt. *Guadalaxara*. Impressed by his conduct, the imperial Field Marshal Traun offered him the command of a regiment in Austrian service. Similarly he won the praise of Charles Emmanuel III and the patent of Col of infantry. In April 1744 he obtained the Regt. *Diesbach* and the head of it he was killed in action at the battle of Pierrelongue the 19 July 1744, hit by a bullet in the chest shot by a grenadier of the Regt. *Poitou* while armed with a spear he was fighting for the defence of the redoubt of Mont Passet. It was buried on the battlefield; 22-7-1744, **Pierre Antoine Louis Roi** (Romainmotier, 2 February 1688 - Susa, 24 February 1760). He was the son of Frederic Roi, secretary and later the bailiff of Romainmotier's assessor. On 10 March, 1706 he was engaged in the Netherlands Regt. *Tscharner* as E. He fought in the War of Spanish Succession and he was reformed in 1716 with the rank of LC. He went to French service in 1719 as C in the Regt. *Brendle* from which he took leave to go to the service of the kingdom of Sardinia the 13 November 1733, raising a company in the Regt. *Roguin*, to whom the same day he was appointed M. He served actively in all the campaigns of the War of Austrian Succession, the 28 April 1744 he was appointed LCol and the 22 July of that year Col and owner of the regiment. He became a BG on 7 February 1754, MG on 23 February 1757. He retained the command of the regiment until the day of his death occurred the 24 February 1760 in Susa. He is buried in the temple of Ciabàs in Angrogna San Giovanni (TO).

Uniform. Dark blue coat and waistcoat and breeches, with white laces, red lining, cuffs and collar.

Record. 1742: Po campaign (1st, 2nd Bns), Savoy campaign (3rd Bn). 1743: the whole regiment present at Camposanto with 139 losses, Chateau Dauphin (1st, 2nd Bns). 1744: it lost about 360 (18%) men in Varaita Valley (combats of Rochaz and Pierrelongue), colonel Roguin killed in action. Madonna dell'Olmo. 1745. Bassignana (1st Bn), defence of Tortona (2nd Bn), defence of Alessandria (3rd Bn). 1746: Asti (1st Bn), siege of Valenza. 1747: Liguria campaign (1st, 2nd Bns), with Regt. *Kalbermatten* it was decisive for the victory at the Assiette Gap (3rd Bns), Stura di Demonte. During the conflict it had been suffered heavy losses but it proved to be, with *Kalbermatten*, the best fighting regiment of the whole Sabaudian army.

Regiment of Lucernois infantry *Guibert-Outtiger*

Colonels. 10-11-1733, **Alexandre Guibert de Syssac** (1677 - Turin, 28 January 1746). He was a refugee French Huguenot original from Agennois, who fled in 1694, naturalized in 1735 in Neuchâtel. In 1697 he entered in the service of William of Orange, king of Great Britain, then he was officer in the regiments of migrants in Sabaudian service *Demeyrol* and *Desportes*. With a Queen Anne's license on 22 February 1703 he rose for a company in the Regt. *Deportes*, M in 1716

of the same regiment, and LCol in 1722. Guibert in 1726 left the service of king Victor Amadeus II for reasons for dissatisfaction, but in 1733 he wanted to return to the Sabaudian army signing the capitulation the 6 November for the levy of a new Swiss regiment, named *Guibert* of two Bns, at the head which he served with distinction in the two military campaigns of 1734 and 1735. On 12 March 1737 he became BG. After the War of Polish Succession he continued to train hard his unit. In particular he paid close attention in bringing to completion the perfect training of the newly raised 3rd Bn in the course of 1742. On 6 October 1743 he participated at the head of a brigade at the battle of Casteldelfino, he faced the French brigade d'Anjou and a detachment of 1.200 Spanish on the Battagliola Ridge. On 20 January 1744 as reward for his conduct in battle he was promoted MG, in this same year he distinguished himself in the defence of entrenched camp of Pierrelongue (19 July 1744), but could not prevent the fall of the redoubt of Mont Passet, in whose defence Regt Guibert suffered heavy casualties. The evening of 19 July he was responsible for organizing the rearguard of the army that departed from Casteldelfino. On 15 January 1745 the king appointed him LG. The 27 September of that year Guibert commanded the left wing of the army at the battle of to combat Bassignana, where he faced two successive attacks of the enemy, and after the centre of his defensive line was broken, he acted as covering rearguard, exposing himself dangerously. Guibert had his horse killed, he received three wounds of gunfire, and he had one of his legs broken by a bullet. Captured by the Spaniards, he was subsequently released on parole and had himself transported to Turin where he died of his wounds the 28 January 1746; 11-2-1746, **Beat Gaspard Uttiger** [Outtiger or Outhiger] (Zug, 1697 - Alessandria, 13 August 1753). He was the son of Conrad Uttiger Martin, Treasurer of Zug, Bailiff and Hünenberg and Walchweil. According to family traditions he started to serve in the judiciary, resulting in 1715 in the office of Grand-Sautier in 1715, and a state councillor of the Canton in 1726. Temporarily away from home for the political problems, in 1733 he entered the service of the king of Sardinia, raising a company for the Regt. *Guibert*. He was appointed M the 15 December in that year, he made the campaigns of 1734 and 1735. The 11 November 1738 he became LCol, the 11 February 1746 Col owner, and the governor of Novara. He was then appointed BG the 16 January 1747.

Uniform. Dark blue coat, red lining, lapels, cuffs, waistcoat, breeches.

Record. 1742: Po campaign (1st, 2nd Bns). 1743: it was decisive at Chateau Dauphin (1st, 2nd Bns). 1744: Villefranche (3rd Bns), Pierrelongue (1st, 2nd Bns), 2nd Bn heavily engaged with 132 losses. Defence of Cuneo (3rd Bns), Madonna dell'Olmo (1st, 2nd Bns). 1745: heavily engaged at Bassignana (1st, 2nd Bns), it performed an excellent defensive action, colonel Guibert killed in action. 1746: Asti, siege of Tortona (3rd Bn), Provence (1st Bn). 1747: Liguria campaign. A regiment with a strong reputation, especially thanks to its colonel Guibert, a good tactician.

Regiment of Grison infantry *Reydt-Salis*

Colonels. 30-5-1742, **Johan Reydt** (Chur, 1700 – Alessandria, 1746). Coming from a noble family in Chur, Grisons, he was the son of David de Reydt, C in a regiment of Grisons infantry, Regt. *Schmidt*, in the service of the General States of Holland. In 1716 he had entered in the Dutch service as E in the company of his father. In 1727 he was admitted to the Grand Board of the town of Chur. In 1732 he obtained a company in the regiment of which his father had become Col owner in 1730. In 1733 he left the service of Holland to enter that of the king of Sardinia, as LCol of the Regt. *Donnaz*. In this quality he fought in the campaigns of 1734 and 1735, distinguished himself so much that 5 December 1735 he obtained the license of colonel. When the Regt. *Donnaz* was reformed in the spring of 1737, the king kept the Colonel Reydt to his service with a pension of 3,500 Livres. Having raised a Grisons regiment in 1742 that bears his name, he fought in the campaigns of 1743, 1744 and 1745. Twice seriously wounded in the battle of Bassignana, he died of his wounds the 22 February 1746 during the blockade of the Citadel of Alessandria. The Governor of the fortress, Marquis Ignazio Giovanni Battista Caraglio, had refused to grant him permission to leave the stronghold; 27-4-1746, **Thomas Baron de Salis et Seigneur de Haldenstein** (16 April 1712 - October 1784). Son of Johann and Marie-Luce Haldenstein-Flandrin Schawenstein, he entered the service of Holland in 1728 as Ct in the Regt. *Schmidt*, from which he was discharged as LC in October 1733. He raised a company in the Regt. *Donnaz* serving the king of Sardinia during the War of Polish Succession in the campaigns of 1734 and 1735. He was reformed in March 1737, but he returned to service the 19 January 1742 as Major in the Regt *Reydt*, where he became LCol the 19 May 1745 and the 15 March 1746 Col owner. He left the service the 12 April 1752 and he retired at home, where he died in October 1784.

Uniform. Red coat with red lining, black cuffs, collar, red waistcoat and breeches.

Records. 1742: Savoy campaign. 1743: Mont Cenis (1st Bn, Chateau Dauphin. 1744: Madonna dell'Olmo (1st, 2nd Bn). 1745: Defence of Alessandria (1st, 2nd Bn), colonel Reydt died of disease. 1746: Provence (1st Bn). 1747: Liguria campaign.

Regiment of Glaris and Appenzell infantry *Meyer*

Colonel. 1-6-1744, **Adrian Meyer** (1704 - Off the coast of Nice, April 1774). He came from a family of Herisau in the canton of Appenzell. On 10 March 1721 he began military service in the french Regt. *Affry* as E in the company of his cousin, the BG Johann Meyer. In January 1723 Adrien became SL, in 1725 L and in 1731 LC. In 1734 he left the service of France to go to the Emperor Charles VI, raising a company for the Regt. *Schmidt*, the Protestant cantons had granted to

the emperor for the defence of frontier towns. Having been reformed by his company in 1738, he retired to his homeland. In 1742 Captain Meyer went to Turin in the spring to raise a battalion of Swiss Protestants of 700 men. Adrien Meyer had commanded the regiment for the duration of the war as LCol with great distinction, gaining the commission of Col the 15 January 1747. He was appointed BG the 14 May 1754, MG the 15 January 1761, LG the 27 March 1771, and finally second in command in Sardinia for the last three years. Called back in Piedmont, he died at sea during the crossing from Cagliari to Nice in mid-April of 1774.

Uniforms. Dark blue coat, red lining, cuffs, collar, waistcoat, breeches.

Records. 1744: garrison duty. 1745: 151 (27,5%) men lost at the disaster of Joussaud; 1746, Asti; 1747: Assiette, Valle Stura di Demonte. It was created as garrison force, but since 1746 it was employed in first line.

Regiment of Lucernois infantry Keller

Colonel. 11-3-1742, **Johann Martin Franz Keller** (Luzern, 1703 – Luzern, 9 October 1766). Member of a family of recent nobility (imperial diploma of 28 January 1719), he began his career in 1721 in France, the Regt. *Gardes Suisses* as E. In 1726 he went to Rome to serve as Lt in the Swiss Guard of the Pope. In 1728 he became a member of the Grand Council of the Republic of Lucerne, Secretary of the Board in 1735, when he resigned June 24, 1735 by the papal army. He practiced in that office until 27 December 1741. He went to Turin and the 15 January 1742 he raised a Regt. of Swiss Catholics with whom participated in the campaigns of the War of Austrian Succession, obtaining the patent BG the 15 January 1747. Reformed the regiment in 1749, Keller retired from service, in 1751 he was elected Chancellor of Lucerne and the 10 January 1753 he received from the king of Sardinia, the order of SS. Maurice and Lazarus.

Uniforms. Dark blue coat and breeches with white laces, red lining, cuffs, collar, red waistcoat with white laces.

Records. 1742, Savoy campaign (1st Bn), garrison duty in Sardegna (2nd Bn). 1743: garrison duty. 1744: The 1st Bn was wrongly placed on the battlefield of Villefranche and compelled to surrender after a three hours firefight (1st Bn). 1745, Ceva; 1746-1747, garrison service. An unlucky regiment, nearly destroyed in Savoy and a Villefranche.