Marcin Baranowski

If there is someone who is braver than we are... Fortunes of the Polish Chevau-légers of the Imperial Guard

"<...> In the evening while we were camping I was visited by the generals of the French Imperial Guard <...> who congratulated me on my successful charge. It was especially pleasing for me to hear them say: *If there is someone who is a better soldier than we are, it's you!*" — Dezydery Chłapowski¹ reminisced the victorious fights of Reichenbach of the Imperial Guard Chevau-légers in the spring of 1813². The military superiority of the regiment, combined with its special position, composition and a beautiful colour of their uniforms were the reasons why the unit became the Polish showcase of the age. The bearing of the light cavalry regiment on the battlefield has been analysed many times, even by the Napoleon himself. The peaceful functioning of the unit and its discipline were regarded with less interest, yet there are some quite curious remarks on that topic can be found in the most prominent works on the Chevau-légers³.

In the mirowskie barracks — formation of the regiment

The regiment was established under the decree issued by the Napoleon in Kamieniec Suski (Finckenstein) on 6 April 1807. Regardless of the initial concepts, the unit became a part of the Imperial Guard. It involved a special status, thus, it was decided that the accepted volunteers will be between 18 and 40 years of age (however,

in reality there were cases when both of those age limits were exceeded) and of noble background. Moreover, they were to equip themselves at their own cost and provide their own horses. Many difficulties appeared during the forming stage of four squadrons. Thus, from the Warsaw mirowskie barracks single squadrons or companies were gradually dispatched⁴. During the 1807 campaign fought only the soldiers of the 1st squadron (and it was only a symbolic participation). The first experiences were not especially gainful. After many years Wincenty Placzowski⁵ complained: "We had no more than about 150 horses and we immediately marched out, following Napoleon to Königsberg, where we joined his Guard. We stayed in Königsberg for more than 14 days; we suffered unimaginable famine and all we had to eat were herrings"⁶.

The ranks of the Cheveau-légers was dominated by petty nobility. The regiment comprised of residents of practically all Polish lands before the partition but the highest proportion of the soldiers were from Masovia and Great Poland. Most of them were between 18 and 27. Despite being accepted to the Guard, initially only one in ten volunteers had some military experience⁷. Some officers, apart their upbringing, were educated in the Corps of Cadets, the Zamojski Academy or abroad⁸. The rest, according to Adam Turno⁹, were "good and deserving people who did not finish their education and joined the regiment so during those five years of constant fights, they couldn't have continued their learning"¹⁰. In another quotation (while writing about Paweł Jerzmanowski who later became famous) he adds: "...immersed in Weiss philosophy, a man of 40 years, who joined the army as a young cadet, without completing his education nor finishing his schools; he can speak Italian, French and German. The first three languages aren't his strong suit but his German is fluent. His ideas are quite uncommon"¹¹.

Calling the ideas of Jerzmanowski, who at the time of establishing the regiment had 8 years of military service and took part in 5 military campaigns, original is quite symptomatic. Due to the noble composition of the unit (and the particular set of behaviours connected with it), the fact that it was a part of the advantaged corps de Guard and the lack of experience of most soldiers (and, thus, the lack of discipline), the officers of the regiment had to deal with behavioural problems right from the very formation of that unit. Józef Załuski¹² recalled: "One needs to admit that our regiment of the Guard was filled with trouble-makers who, before they became good soldiers, stirred rows in Warsaw every single day"¹³. Another example of troubles with discipline in the first months after the formation of the regiment were the jokes of a Cheveau-léger, Józef Stadnicki (the prototype of the literary character known from *Huragan* by Gąsiorowski) made of the second-lieutenant, Andrzej Puzyna¹⁴. Writing to his wife, while marching through Germany, the squadron leader, Tomasz Łubieński complained on the bearing of his soldiers: "I have to be angry at them and scold them all day long", and in another letter he added: "I became really annoyed and I'm shouting at them like hell"¹⁵.

On the trail of gallops and fights — via Frankfurt, Châlons and Angoulême to Spain

The march of the regiment to France was quite adventuresome. The second unit dispatched from Warsaw and led by the squadron leader, Jan Koziętułski¹⁶, “was insulted in Berlin and, as a consequence, a fight between Berlin city-dwellers and our Cheveau-légiers ensued. For some of the former it was a very painful and long-remembered experience”¹⁷. Another group, led by captain Paweł Jerzmanowski, reached Frankfurt am Main without any obstacles. There, a city-dweller “insulted a Cheveau-léger, vilifying him for being a Pole. As a consequence, his house was immediately ravaged, with its residents barely escaping with their lives. The Polish light cavalry broke into the house and threw out all everything... even the furnaces”. Short-tempered compatriots calmed down only when Stadnicki, a brigadier (corporal) at the time, spoke to them. A bit later he himself outfought the soldiers of the Archbishop of Mainz, who tried to arrest him, forcing them to escape. He only surrendered to the French Gendarmerie (he supposedly said: “Now, this is very different! I deem you as colleagues and I obey the law”) but the very next day marshal Kellermann (former Bar confederate), amused by the information on the retreat of the entire German patrol fearing Stadnicki, released the Pole from detention¹⁸.

After having traversed Germany, subsequent Cheveau-léger units entered France. The first impression the Polish cavalrymen made on the residents of the Empire, and, in particular the Second Military District (departments of Ardennes, Meuse and Marne), had to be quite strong. It was strong enough so that the commandant of the district, alarmed by the Gendarmerie, on 19 May 1808, drew an official complaint on the Poles. It reached the French Minister of War, Henri Clarke. The latter passed it to the division general, Frédéric Walther, who at the time was responsible for the units of the Guard stationing in Paris¹⁹. According to the correspondence, the Cheveau-légiers marching out from Mayence were galloping (“in groups”) in the streets of Dormans and Châlons on the Marne, they used their sabres against the intervening Gendarmerie (inflicting wounds on them), and, what is more, they fought against the city-dwellers of Châlons (and the reason for the fight was supposed to be “Polish arrogance”). Several Cheveau-légiers were arrested (for a short period of time). However, the sources do not mention any other consequences. To the advantage of the Poles was the fact of their immediate departure towards the Spanish border.

The French Minister of War suggested that the officers should discipline the young cavalrymen. In the official chronicle of the regiment, right after those occurrences major Pierre Dautancourt made a short remark: “Praiseworthy was the progress made by the officers and the Cheveau-légiers both in training and in other elements of the garrison service”, and Załuski added that the south-east march together with other units of the Guard was a valuable lesson for the Cheveau-légiers²⁰. The leading sub-units, led by Tomasz Łubieński, supposedly managed to “arouse public

admiration” of the residents of Bordeaux²¹. However, this idyllic image did not reflect the actual situation.

On 14 July 1808, a group led by Dautancourt (400 sabres), who left the regiment's depot in Chantilly, reached Angoulême. In the unit's chronicle there is only a brief remark that the regiment spent one night there²². Załuski later noted that the location of the city “resembled some Polish venue, like stony Wawel²³ or like Kamieniec Podolski²⁴, both surrounded by rivers”²⁵. After many years, Plączkowski still remembered that the route through the Pyrenees led via Frankfurt am Main, Châlons and Angoulême. Unfortunately, apart from the very fact of traversing such a route he did not thought adding any other remarks necessary²⁶. Again, the most complete source here is the exchange of the letters between the local Gendarmerie commander, commandant of 20th Military District and the Minister of War. This time, the case even reached Napoleon himself²⁷.

The reports describe the incidents that occurred on 14 July 1808 on the eastern suburbs of Angoulême (the La Bussatte Arrondissement), in Rue Saint-Roch, where the Cheveau-légers were accommodated²⁸. Between 9 and 10 a.m., at the house of a carpenter called Tirret, four light cavalymen appeared. The host agreed to accommodate only two Poles who had proper proof of accommodation — the rest was to spend the night in another building in the same street²⁹. “However, they decided to stay with their comrades simply because they did not like the neighbour's house”³⁰. At that moment Tirret had a rather unfortunate idea: he called his neighbour, who was a former Prussian captive living in Angoulême, and tried to resolve the situation. His intervention (it might have been his attempt to speak German) made things even worse. About 4 p.m. a brawl ensued which resulted, as Andrzej Nieuważny aptly put it, in: “...a Polish invasion on Tirret's home and Tirret junior's falling out of the second storey window”³¹. It is true that the Gendarmerie report says that Poles demolished a house “breaking everything they could get hold of” and that they threw young Tirret out of the window. This was only the beginning. The city mayor sent a twelve-people patrol (comprising of Gendarmes and soldiers of the departmental reserve company) and neighbours. The Cheveau-légers, in turn, were supported by a group of their regiment comrades. We do not know how many of them were there (of course, French sources mention that the Poles were more numerous). The light cavalymen first threw stones at the Gendarmerie and then counter-attacked them using bats and sabres. Some of the Polish cavalymen came on horseback — the report mentions that a few of Tirret's neighbours were “dragged by horses”. During the battle the sergeant of the Gendarmerie, who was slashed three times in his head and torso and lost his three fingers of this left hand (cut by his own weapon!), was heavily wounded. Then the brigadier and three Gendarmes were marked by Polish sabres, all of whom were later disarmed. The scattered law enforcement officers fled. Also two soldiers from the departmental reserve regiment were injured. The first one managed to hide from the Poles chasing him in one of the houses and the second one defended himself with a musket until he was surrounded. Then, he was slashed,

his weapon was taken away from him and broken. Moreover, several city-dwellers were also hurt. There were even women among the victims. A few local houses and gardens were demolished.

The situation settled when major Dautancourt with a few Polish officers of the regiment appeared (the latter, according to the Gendarmerie, fraternized with their soldiers). The prefect of the department and the site commandant (*commandant de place*) with his troops also came to the site. Then Dautancourt called an assembly. The Cheveau-légers were arrayed in a rectangle and Tirret was asked to point out the perpetrators. He managed to recognize only two of them (not all Poles took part in the assembly). Those men were arrested. After two hours a brigadier of the 7th Cheveau-léger Company, whose last name was written down in the report as “Gauty”, became their bedfellow³². Right after the fight this junior officer insulted a guard standing before the barracks of the reserve company. He was detained and Tirret indicated him as the main culprit who had struck the first blow.

The military criminal code applicable in the French Army was very strict. It pertained mostly to the offences committed during the war and in the face of the enemy. However, the detained Cheveau-légers (depending on the qualification) were facing a sentence ranging from several months in prison to several years in shackles³³. Moreover, there was the case of the lost muskets and belts that belonged to the Gendarmerie. Thus, the irritated reaction of the commander comes as no surprise. The very next day he received a message from the site commandant saying that the Poles must be released. In the bill of protest sent to the commander of the military district the Gendarme saw it as an insult to the entire formation. His outrage surely increased due to the justification for releasing the Cheveau-légers (it was probably drawn up by Dautancourt himself). It stated that the arrested men must attend to their horses and, due to the fact that they are the members of the Imperial Guard, they should not have been detained by the regular Gendarmerie at all. The second argument was seemingly only slightly less offensive. In the said period the Élite Gendarmerie (of the Guard) encompassed only two squadrons who accompanied the Imperial staff³⁴. Dautancourt was perfectly aware of that because he had served in the Élite Gendarmerie. On 15 July the light cavalry left Angoulême with no obstacles, marching towards the border with Spain. They crossed it only in the beginning of August.

“Only tobacco and vodka kept me alive” — from the Iberian Peninsula to the suburbs of Soissons

From that moment the Poles were mostly gaining experience in difficult conditions of the Spanish war and the charge of Somosierra made them famous in the history of the Polish cavalry. Not only did their military skills improve but the level of their discipline also increased. There is only one citation concerning the breach of disciplinary rules in the regiment during the first period of their manoeuvres on

the Iberian Peninsula: “There was an official quarrel between one Cheveau-léger of a tall posture and a short junior officer. The subordinate seemed to deride his superior, especially because he seemed to have a numerous audience. I ran to the scene and, not thinking much, I took out my sword and I hit the insolent fellow him with the flat”. The reaction of lieutenant Załuski did not entirely produce the desired effects. Theoretically, corporal punishments were banned in the French Army. Thus, upon the regiment leader’s command Załuski was also rebuked (he had to hand over his sword and a guard was placed before his shelter which was very unsettling for the diarist)³⁵.

At the beginning of 1809, shortly after having left the Iberian Peninsula, Tomasz Łubieński wrote to his wife: “I am extremely pleased with my squadron; it’s plain sailing; the people behave so peacefully and properly that the residents say that they have never seen such an army”³⁶. In fact, after the Spanish campaign the information on having trouble with the discipline appeared only occasionally. However, it does not mean that the Cheveau-légers lacked imagination. While fighting against Austria, in the spring of 1809, the officers were invited to dinner by the grand equerry of the king of Bavaria. “He was really kind to us but my fellowmen indulged in making some jokes that were really inappropriate” — Łubieński complains³⁷. However, it does not change the fact that after the victorious battles in Spain the war with Austria was another noble occasion to prove the skills of the Cheveau-légers (for instance the successful Wagram charge).

In the following year, a part of the regiment was to return to the Iberian Peninsula. The discipline of the light cavalry aroused no reservations. Załuski mentioned only the death of an unruly blacksmith from the Chassurs à Cheval of the Imperial Guard (due to his difficult character he was called “Rebelle”). Back in a French inn, he accosted Zieliński, a Cheveau-léger (“from Praga near Warsaw”). A battle between the moustached French veterans and Polish youth ensued and “Rebelle” fell a victim to it, “slashed with a sword in the back of his head so hard that doctor Deplace, called at once, declared him dead”³⁸. The case was hushed up by the commanders of the two detachments who regarded it as an act of self-defence. There is also a second mention of inappropriate jokes of a Cheveau-léger (“a son of a respected Warsaw merchant”) of a catholic priest but the issue was resolved when the soldier was detained in jail and apologized the priest for his misbehaviour³⁹.

While one part of the regiment fought in Spain, the other served the Emperor. According to the introduction to *Wspomnienia o Joachimie Hempłu*⁴⁰: “In 1810 and 1811 there was no military action that our troop could boast about”. At the time, the light cavalry was twice used as an escort by the Emperor and his wife during the tours around the Belgian and Dutch departments⁴¹. The second expedition was especially tiresome for the Poles because of the season (autumn of 1811) and the humid Dutch climate that led to many illnesses. Some troops fell down with the *typhus contagiosus*, while others treated themselves with alcohol and tobacco. Joachim Hempel⁴² wrote from Amsterdam to his mother: “I have been well for the

entire voyage despite all the work and discomforts but I must confess that only tobacco and vodka kept me alive and all those who chewed tobacco and drank heavily are healthy"⁴³.

On 30 October 1811 in Düsseldorf, the Cheveau-léger detachments previously sent to escort the Emperor were joined together under the command of Koziatulski and marched out to the barracks in Chantilly. The chronicle kept by "Papa" Dautancourt describes that stage very succinctly: "On 11 November we spent the night in Dinant. On 15 — a stop in Mubert-Fontaine, Rimogne and Harcy. On 20 in Reims. On 26 — return to Chantilly"⁴⁴. We should stop for a moment between Reims and Chantilly. On 22 November the Cheveau-légers spent the night in Soissons, approx. 100 km north-east of Paris. The Dutch from the 2nd Cheveau-léger Regiment of the Guard, who were coming back to their garrison in Versailles, were also accommodated there⁴⁵.

About 19 the local Gendarmerie brigade (sergeant, brigadier and 4 gendarmes) was notified by Mrs Villemont from the "White Horse Inn" on the unrest in the town caused by the Polish troops. The name of the establishment was, at the time, very popular, but luckily the anxious innkeeper had a support in the person of Mrs Charles, the café owner living in the Saint Martin suburbs. Thus, we know that the situation took place in the south part of the town, relatively close to the Aisne⁴⁶. On their way, the gendarmes encountered an officer of the 2nd Cheveau-léger Regiment who also asked them to intervene. The Polish Cheveau-léger did not respect his officer distinction and disregarded the threat of calling up the Gendarmerie. The next moment, a larger group, marching along St. Martin street, met another officer of the 2nd Cheveau-léger Regiment with a sergeant and two privates accompanying him. Now the gendarmerie report becomes a bit unclear. Eleven troops and gendarmes were suddenly attacked (for no reason) by the Polish Cheveau-légers (who outmanned them) and a fight ensued. The Poles were winning from the beginning (disarming the sergeant of the 2nd Regiment, two troops and a gendarme, overpowering another two "who were injured"). At the time, the sergeant of the Gendarmerie (the author of the report) was to call the Poles to settle down in the name of the Napoleon. Even if this hilarious scene does not seem realistic, then the upcoming events bear all traces of high probability. The sergeant major was attacked, he chipped his sword defending himself and then he was struck in the head with a lance. He decided to call for the support of the Dutch Cheveau-légers (who were stationed in the former Benedictine sisters' monastery located nearby). The further part of the report contains a few incoherent fragments. One says that on site a Polish officer appeared and he encouraged his troops to fight brandishing his sabre and called threats towards the gendarmes. This supposedly prevented the gendarmes from capturing one of the culprits and forced them to back out a little. However, the town witnessed new cases of unrest, which lead to the detention of several individual Cheveau-légers. One of the Poles was arrested in his quarters, another one in a café (upon seeing the gendarmes, he seized his sabre at once, which was quite typical)⁴⁷.

However, a brigadier, Kazimierz Szpotański⁴⁸, presented the genesis of the incident in Soissons in a very different light: “A brigadier with four troops of our guard, accompanying Koziatulski, went for a meal to <...> inn. There, at their sight, the French officers started telling the civilians about Poland and the life in Poland, saying that Poles live with pigs, that they eat wholegrain bread and black cabbage and that they do not have anything in Poland that they are eating here.

The Poles pretended that they do not understand. They just wanted to have a meal and go back to their duties... However, one of those officers accosted them. He patted the brigadier on the back and said:

— Well, you don’t know anything that you eat here. You certainly don’t have that in your country.

— You are mistaken, Sir — the brigadier replied.

— What you have just said is true about Polish peasants and not Polish citizens.

— No — the other said — all Poles live like pigs!

The latter replied:

— You are lying and officers don’t lie!

Upon hearing that, the French leaped up and drew out their swords. The Poles took out their weapons, quickly overpowered their enemies and left the inn.

The French officers went out to get their guard so that they could face the Poles again. Once more the Polish troops managed to defended themselves and forced the enemy back but the French did not retreat. They doubled their ranks and attacked once more. Then, the real battle begun...”⁴⁹

A very interesting thread of the entire story is the Polish rye bread that was so despised by the French during the campaign of 1807⁵⁰. Some of them changed their mind only in 1812 during a meal shared by the officers of the Chassurs à Cheval of the Imperial Guard with the squadron leader of the Cheveau-légers, Seweryn Fredro, who was of an impressive figure and was famous for his enormous strength “the French officers <...> complained on the Lithuanian rye bread <...> and claimed <...> that rye bread increases stomach acid production and that white bread is much healthier and that they grew up eating white bread. Fredro, bored with such a long and foreign speech, said with a lively voice:

— Well, well, gentlemen. You say that you grew up eating white bread and I say that I grew up eating rye bread, and, as you can see, I’m not a weakling so let’s see who is stronger, me or you, and which bread makes a man heftier”⁵¹. After hearing this argument there was nothing more to be said and the discussion ended.

Coming back to Soissons, the account by Szpotański, apart from the behaviour of the French, explains the reasons for the aversion of the Dutch cavalry against Poles. According to him, the source of the trouble was the fact that the Polish Cheveau-légers were armed with lances which had been introduced before the end of 1809. The light cavalry welcomed the new item which was deemed as a traditional Polish weapon. The Dutch had a different opinion about the lances and, what is more, Poles became their instructors⁵². “They were mostly angry that <...> they, experienced

soldiers, had to undergo drill training under the young foreigners”⁵³. In Soissons, the superiority of the Poles in handling the lance was visible even in the Gendarmerie report; the Poles are called the lancers and the Dutch – the Cheveau-légers.

“Our counsel defended them really skilfully” – defendants

After the incident in Soissons the civil authorities, with the prefect of the Aisne Department in charge, tried to call the Poles to the account at any price. It must be admitted that after the unfortunate events of last night the commanders of the both quarrelled detachments of the Guard managed to work together and persuaded the mayor of Soissons to hand out credentials for the Poles. This way, they intended to settle the dispute⁵⁴. Even the imperial secret police noticed those efforts, presenting to Napoleon an excerpt from the report drawn up by the prefect of the Aisne Department in the beginning of December⁵⁵. However, the case was heard by the military court of the Guard. Five privates: Franciszek Świtalski (age: 23, height: 170 cm, from the Sieradz Land), Jan Rayski (age: 27, height: 168 cm, from Great Poland), Maciej Znaniński (age: 22, height: 176 cm, from Kuiavia), Jakub Zieliński (age: 24, height: 168 cm, from Great Poland) and Józef Urniasz (age: 26, height 171 cm, a Lithuanian) were indicted. On 12th December 1811, the court comprising of officers and junior officers of various regiments of the Guard found them not guilty. Szpotański mentioned: “Our counsel defended them really skilfully so only the French were to blame”⁵⁶. The commander of the Guard cavalry, marshal Bessières, did not hide his surprise looking at 21 aggrieved French and Dutch, saying “But you are all well, no one has been injured and I wonder why...”⁵⁷

It is worth to take a closer look at the five accused Poles. Their fortunes, in the micro scale, ideally depict the course of the Cheveau-léger service. All defendants belonged to the 3rd Cheveau-léger Company who became famous for its Somosierra charge. However, only Świtalski, Rayski and Zieliński took part in that campaign. Znaniński was a member of the regiment since its very beginning but the records of his service indicate only that he took part in the war of 1809. Urniasz, who had been transferred to the Guard from the 3rd Regiment of the Warsaw Dutchy Uhlans, also participated in the Austrian campaign. Later Świtalski and Urniasz were promoted to the ranks of sergeant. Rayski became a brigadier and was awarded with the Legion of Honour. An unfortunate fate befell to Znaniński who, at the time of the retreat from Russia, went missing near Vilnius at the beginning of December 1812. The rest of the troops remained in the detachment until Napoleon’s abdication and in 1814 they returned to the former Polish territory⁵⁸.

With the beginning of the Russian campaign, peace was irretrievably over. The accounts of the last years of the Empire do not state any information on any serious discipline problems among light cavalymen; they were doing exceptionally well during wartime. Various events forced them reconnect with the German citizens. The relations between them were of various character, starting from friendly bonds with

the residents of Saxony to open hostility against Prussians 18 December (1812. — *M.B.*). We were led by the squadron leader Jerzmanowski. When we stopped in a village, he called the village bailiff and two assessors to his quarters and said that if we were to be attacked by the Cossacks, he'll shoot them in the head for betraying us because they were Germans")⁵⁹. However, even a severe defeat and biting frost did not devoid the Cheveau-légers of their imagination. Adam Turno recalled a windy winter rest in the cobblestones of Königsberg: "<...> we were famished and through the window we could see a laid table. I was the only one who could speak German so my mates send me to buy some food. The city-dwellers didn't want to sell us anything but I saw a poor child and I said that *it has parasites*. They thought that I was a doctor. I gave them a prescription of something that cannot do any harm to anyone: radish and mustard seed juice. They offer me food so I ate and my friends watched me through the window. They were hungry but they couldn't stop laughing at the whole situation"⁶⁰.

“Discipline is not an end we seek...”

The 1st Regiment of the Cheveau-léger Guard was the most vivid Polish unit of the Napoleonic age. Looking at the behaviour of the light cavalymen in the first months of its existence, it is very hard not to compare it to the 18th century Polish cavalry, together with all its flaws, mostly lack of discipline. The French solutions, combined with the noble imaginativeness, equestrian training and fencing skills, have proven to be superb. Together with the increasing level of the regiment's military efficiency, the officers had to face less and less problems with discipline among their subordinates. The bond of origin and upbringing reduced the distance between the regiment's cadre and privates which, on one hand, led to the problems with keeping order, but on the other, cemented the group. It could be seen not only in the battle of Wagram or Reichenbach but also in Angoulême and Soissons. An excellent French cavalryman, the captain of the 2nd Regiment of the Cheveau-léger Guard, wrote many years later: „The severity of the laws of military discipline should be adapted, as a whole, to the spirit of the people to be governed by them, and, in detail, to the character of the provinces furnishing the recruits; <...> To treat a Frenchman like a Dutchman, to punish one man exactly like another, displays only ignorance or laziness on the part of authority, and cannot possibly effect any useful purpose. <...> Discipline is not an end we seek, but a means to secure it”⁶¹.

¹ Dezydery Chłapowski, Dryja coat of arms, was born in 1788 in Great Poland. He began his military career in the Prussian Army (1802–1806 — lieutenant) and later he continued it in the Polish Army (1806–1808 — captain). From 21 February 1808 he was the orderly officer of Napoleon. On 13 January 1811 he joined the Cheveau-légers as the squadron leader. He resigned on 19th July 1813. See *Tarczyński M.* Generalicja powstania listopadowego. Warszawa 1980.

- P. 397; *Bielecki R.* Słownik Biograficzny Oficerów Powstania Listopadowego. T. I. Warszawa, 1995. P. 288–289.
- ² *Chłapowski D.* Pamiętniki. Vol. I: Wojny napoleońskie 1806–1813. Poznań, 1899. P. 157–158.
- ³ *Karpowicz M., Filipiak M.* Elita jazdy polskiej. Warszawa, 1995; *Bielecki R.* Szwoleżerowie Gwardii. Warszawa, 1996; *Morawski R., Nieuważny A.* Wojsko Polskie w służbie Napoleona. Gwardia: szwoleżerowie, Tatarzy, eklererzy, grenadierzy. Warszawa, 2008.
- ⁴ *Bielecki R.* Szwoleżerowie. P. 16–19.
- ⁵ Wincenty Placzkowski was born in 1772 in Galicia. He began his military service on 14 June 1807 as a private Chevau-léger, taken captive during the Battle of Beresina. See *Ibid.* P. 110.
- ⁶ *Placzkowski W.* Pamiętniki... porucznika dawnej gwardyi cesarsko-francuzkiej spisane w roku 1845. Żytomierz, 1861 (reprint: Oświęcim, 2008). P. 25.
- ⁷ *Bielecki R.* Szwoleżerowie. P. 19–21; *Karpowicz M., Filipiak M.* Elita... P. 38–39.
- ⁸ Wspomnienie o Joachimie Hemplu. Kraków, 1877, p. 8, 11; *Karpowicz M., Filipiak M.* Elita... P. 47.
- ⁹ *Adam Turno*, Trzy Kotwice coat of arms, was born in 1775 in Great Poland and was general Kazimierz Turno's brother. He was the captain of the 9th Uhlan Regiment of the Duchy of Warsaw. On 1 April 1812, he joined the Chevau-légers as a lieutenant and on 1 January 1814 he became the captain of the 3rd Regiment of the Eclaireurs of the Guard. See *Bielecki R.* Szwoleżerowie. p. 382.
- ¹⁰ *Turno A.* Z pamiętnika // *Skalkowski S.* Fragmenty. Poznań, 1928. P. 98.
- ¹¹ *Turno A.* Z pamiętnika. P. 120.
- ¹² *Józef Załuski*, Junosza coat of arms, was born in 1782 in Galicia. He began his military service in 1807 as a lieutenant and after 4 years he was promoted to the squadron leader. He was captured during the French Campaign of 1814. Załuski is deemed to be the “squadron’s chronicler”. See *Bielecki R.* Szwoleżerowie. P. 383.
- ¹³ *Załuski J.* Wspomnienia. P. 66.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.* P. 66–67; *Bielecki R.* Szwoleżerowie. P. 113, 379.
- ¹⁵ *Lubieński R. hr.* General Tomasz Pomian hrabia Lubieński. Vol. I, Warszawa 1899, p. 105–106.
- ¹⁶ Jan Kozieltulski, Abdank coat of arms, was born in 1781 in Masovia. He joined the Chevau-légers as the squadron leader during the formation of the unit. On 25 October 1812 he became a major and on 1 January he was promoted to lieutenant — commander of the 3rd the Regiment of the Eclaireurs of the Guard. See SHD. 2 Ye 2131, Kozieltulski; *Bielecki R.* Szwoleżerowie. P. 375.
- ¹⁷ *Załuski J.* Wspomnienia. P. 101.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.* P. 94–95.
- ¹⁹ SHD. Xab 41, Garde Impériale. 1. Chevau-légers, the Leader of 2nd Military Arrondissement to Clarke, Mézières 19 May 1808; *Ibid.* Clarke to Walther, Paris 21 May 1808.
- ²⁰ Źródła do historii pułku polskiego lekkokonnego Gwardii Napoleona I / compiled by A. Rembowski, W. Nabywaniec. Vol. I. Oświęcim, 2012. P. 93.
- ²¹ *Załuski J.* Wspomnienia. P. 105.
- ²² Źródła... Vol. I. P. 94.
- ²³ The Polish royal residence in Cracow, located on a hill on the Vistula.
- ²⁴ The famous fortress by the Smotrych River guarding the south-eastern borderland of Poland before the partition period.
- ²⁵ *Załuski J.* Wspomnienia. P. 191.
- ²⁶ *Placzkowski W.* Pamiętniki. P. 26.
- ²⁷ SHD. Xab 41. Garde Impériale. 1. Chevau-légers, Rapport Extraordinaire du 14 au 15 Juillet an 1808, Place D’Angoulême; *Ibid.* Captain Saulnier to division general Olivier, Angoulême 15 July 1808; *Ibid.* Division general Olivier to Clarke, Périgueux 16 July 1808; *Ibid.* Clarke’s Report for Napoleon, Paris 22 July 1808.
- ²⁸ Chenaud. Plan géométrique et topographique de la ville d’Angoulême. Limoges, 1843.
- ²⁹ The French 26th Chasseurs à Cheval Regiment marched with the Dautancourt’s group which, at the earlier stages, made finding proper quarters more difficult. See Źródła... P. 94.

³⁰ *Morawski R.*, *Nieuważny A.* Wojsko Polskie. P. 106.

³¹ *Ibid.* P. 106.

³² It is difficult to confirm who was it exactly. The most similar last name in the regiment was Henri Gault de Saint-Germain — a Frenchman born to a Polish mother. Gault actually served in the 7th Company but only from 1810. See *Bielecki R.* Szwoleżerowie. P. 174.

³³ Code pénal militaire, ou nomenclature alphabétique des délits militaires, suivi d'un extrait des toutes les lois qui prononcent les peines à infliger aux auteurs de ces délits. Lille, 1813. P. 5–7.

³⁴ *Pigeard A.* La Garde Impériale 1804–1814. Paris, 2005. P. 167.

³⁵ *Zahuski J.* Wspomnienia. P. 126.

³⁶ *Lubieński R.* hr. General. Vol. I. P. 137–138.

³⁷ *Ibid.* Vol. I. P. 151.

³⁸ *Zahuski J.* Wspomnienia. P. 192. In the regiment register there were a few Zielińskis but only two of them were from Warsaw (Szymon — N 112 and Antoni — N 1452). Szymon Zieliński (born in 1783), the son of Mateusz, a Cheval-léger of the 5th Company, took part in the second expedition to Spain. See SHD. 2 Yc 157. Registre Matricule. Régiment de cheval légers-lanciers “polonais” de la Garde Impériale. Vol. 1 (n° 1 à 1800), 1807–1812. P. 18–19, 242. Cf. *Bielecki R.* Szwoleżerowie. P. 91, 188. Bielecki erroneously states that Franciszek Zieliński (N 106 in the register) was also from Warsaw, mistaking his course of service for that of Jacek Kowalski (N 107).

³⁹ *Zahuski J.* Wspomnienia. P. 197.

⁴⁰ Wspomnienie o Joachimie Hemplu. P. 28.

⁴¹ *Chlapowski D.* Pamiętniki. P. 106–107; Źródła... Vol. I. P. 156–157, 167–168.

⁴² Joachim Hempel of his own coat of arms, born in 1787, was from the Lublin Land and was associated with the Czartoryski family. He joined the ranks of the regiment since the very beginning of its existence. He began his service as a private Cheval-léger but by 1814 he reached the ranks of a captain. See *Bielecki R.* Szwoleżerowie. P. 113–114.

⁴³ Joachim Hempel to his mother, Amsterdam 18 X 1811 // Listy braci Hemplów. URL: <http://napoleon.org.pl/index.php/biblioteka-empire-u/czytelnia/zrodla/687-listy-braci-hemplow> (date of access 01.11.2016).

⁴⁴ Źródła... Vol. I. P. 168.

⁴⁵ The regiment was established on 13 September 1810, after the Kingdom of Holland was incorporated into the French Empire. Its core were the troops of the former Hussar Regiment of the Dutch Guard. See *Pawly R.* Les Lanciers Rouges. Erpe, 2005. P. 11, 16–17.

⁴⁶ Plan des divers agrandissements de l'enceinte de Soissons [s. d.]; Jeune S. le. Plan de Soissons et de ses environs... [1768]; *Poincellier N.* Plan de élévation de la ville de Soissons et ses environs. 1747.

⁴⁷ SHD. Xab 41. Garde Impériale. 1. Cheval-légers, Proces verbal en forme de rapport d'une rebellion des lanciers polonaises contre la gendarmerie et la garde du 2e regt. de cheval-légers à Soissons, 22 XI 1811; *Ibid.*, Malouet do Clarke'a, Laon 26 XI 1808.

⁴⁸ Kazimierz Szpotański, Dunin coat of arms, born in 1787, was from the Sieradz Land. In 1807 he began his service in the regiment as a private Cheval-léger. He took part in all military campaigns until 1814, reaching the ranks of a sergeant. See *Bielecki R.* Szwoleżerowie. P. 149.

⁴⁹ *Szpotański K.* 20 000 kilometrów w siodle // Płomyk. 1975. N 4. L. 111.

⁵⁰ *Dąbrosz-Drewnowska P.* Le Grand Duché de Varsovie vu par les Français — le visage du Grand Duché de Varsovie dans les documents français de ce temps, Thèse pour obtenir le grande de docteur de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne. Lublin, 2013. P. 233 (typescript).

⁵¹ *Zahuski J.* Wspomnienia. L. 95.

⁵² *Pawly R.* Les Lanciers. P. 17.

⁵³ *Szpotański K.* 20 000 kilometrów. L. 111.

⁵⁴ SHD. Xab 41. Garde Impériale. 1. Cheval-légers, Malouet to Clarke, Laon 26 XI 1811; *Ibid.* Moncey to Clarke (?), Paris 26 XI 1811; *Ibid.* Hulin to Clarke, Paris 27 XI 1811; *Ibid.* Chantelair to Hulin, Soissons 28 XI 1811; *Ibid.* Malouet to Clarke, Laon 30 XI 1811; *Ibid.* Clarke to Bessières, Paris 30 XI 1811; *Ibid.* Hulin to Clarke, Paris 1 XII 1811; *Ibid.* Clarke to Bessières, Paris 4 XII 1812.

- ⁵⁵ Gotteri N. La Police secrète du Premier Empire. Bulletins quotidiens adressés par Savary à l'Empereur de juillet à décembre 1811. Vol. III. Paris, 1999. P. 384.
- ⁵⁶ Szpotariski K. 20 000 kilometrów. L. 111.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid. L. 111.
- ⁵⁸ SHD. 2 Yc 157, Registre Matricule. P. 173, 203; SHD. 2 J 468. Jugement militaires. Jugement 1264; Bielecki R. Szwoleżerowie. L. 137–138, 158–159. I wish to thank Cezary Wołodkiewicz, MA, from the Gdańsk University for making the sentence of 12.12.1811 available to me.
- ⁵⁹ Turno A. Z pamiętnika. L. 108.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid. L. 110.
- ⁶¹ Brack A.F. de. Cavalry Outpost Duties. Souvenirs. Auzielle, 2008. P. 59–60.

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Марцин Барановский. «Есть ли кто-нибудь более смелый, чем мы...» — приключения польских рейтаров Наполеоновской гвардии

1-й полк **рейтаров** Императорской Гвардии был самым известным польским отрядом наполеоновской эпохи. В его рядах находились молодые польские дворяне, которые с ранних лет учились верховой езде и фехтованию. Объединение этих навыков с французским обучением и дисциплиной дало большой эффект на поле битвы. Однако прежде чем кавалеристы стали опытными солдатами, они доставили много забот своим командирам и французской жандармерии. В тексте представлены шалости, которые поляки допускали вне поля битвы. В начальный период существования полка они были продиктованы юношеской фантазией и отсутствием дисциплины. Статья основана на французских архивных материалах, польских дневниках и мемуарах.

Ключевые слова: Наполеон, Императорская гвардия, польская кавалерия, жандармерия, дисциплина.

Marcin Baranowski. *If there is someone who is braver than we are...* — fortunes of the Polish Chevaulégiers of the Imperial Guard

The 1st Regiment of the Chevau-léger of the Imperial Guard was the most vivid Polish unit of the Napoleonic age. Young Polish noblemen, who have been learning to ride a horse and use swords since their childhood, served in its ranks. Combining their skills with French training and discipline resulted in great accomplishments on the battlefield. However, before the Chevau-légiers became experienced soldiers, they caused their commanders and the French gendarmerie a lot of worries. The text describes the antics outside the battlefield, which resulted from youthful fantasy and lack of discipline, and took place in the initial period of the regiment's existence. The article is based on French archival materials and Polish diaries and memoirs.

Key words: Napoléon, The Imperial Guard, polish cavalry, gendarmerie, discipline.

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