

**GENERALFELDMARSCHALL EWALD VON KLEIST
SON AND SOLDIER-THE FORMATIVE YEARS
1881-1918**

Luke G. Grossman

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Approved by

Konrad H. Jarausch

Wayne E. Lee

Joseph T. Glatthaar

Dirk Bönker

David T. Zabecki

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ABSTRACT

Luke G. Grossman: Generalfeldmarschall Ewald von Kleist: Son and Soldier—
The Formative Wilhelmine Years, 1881-1918
(Under the direction of Konrad H. Jarausch)

Despite his success as a World War II panzer commander and membership in the German officer corps' aristocratic elite, Generalfeldmarschall Ewald von Kleist is virtually unstudied. While most general officer biographies concentrate on high-level wartime leadership, the dual goals of this work are to identify the key elements in Ewald von Kleist's formative years and to provide a better understanding of the Wilhelmine Army officer corps.

This work maintains that the formative and foundational period, the first ten to fifteen years of an officer's career is of key importance. During this period an officer receives the bulk of his military training and education and forms his foundational understanding of officership. This too is when a person's "officer character," his sense of duty, understanding of honor, commitment to service, and concept of loyalty, are forged and hardened. Therefore, the study of these formative years is critically important for not only understanding the individual in his varied officer roles, but for framing and comprehending the entirety of the individual's career and the army in which he served.

This study's primary interrogative is; what were the key elements during these formative years that served to construct Kleist's personal and officer foundation? Investigation identified several influential elements. Membership in a prominent Prussian noble military clan opened doors for Kleist. Attending war school, military riding institute,

and the Kriegsakademie added knowledge and skill but also shaped attitudes and outlook. Mentorship by several officers spurred Kleist's officer professional development impelling further promotion. These and other influences combined to shape Ewald von Kleist's deep, firm, and undergirding foundation that supported him as a son and soldier for the rest of his life.

To achieve the second goal, a better understanding the Wilhelmine Army officer corps, the narrative maintains the contextual connections between von Kleist and the environment in which he found himself. Interwoven throughout the biographical account is information of significance and influence concerning social, organizational, economic, religious, and military elements as encountered by Kleist in the course of his early life and first decades of his career.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

a.D.	ausser Dienst (out of service, retired)
AK	Armee Korps
BA-MA	Bundes Archiv-Militär Archiv
DoR	Date of Rank
FR	Füsilier Regiment
GFAR	Garde Feld Artillerie Regiment (Guards Field Artillery Regiment)
GKD	Garde Kavallerie Division (Guards Cavalry Division)
GDKS	Garde Kavallerie Schützen Division (Guards Cavalry Rifle Division)
HHK	Höheres Kavallerie Kommando (higher cavalry commands)
HR	Husaren Regiment (hussar regiment)
KA	Kriegsakademie (war academy)
KIA	Killed in Action
KS	Kriegsschule (war school)
KHR	Leib Husaren Regiment (Life Hussar Regiment)
M	Mark
MRI	Militär-Reit-Institut (military riding institute)
NCO	Non-commissioned Officer
PoW	prisoner of war
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
SA	Sturmabteilung
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

INTRODUCTION

On 1 February 1943, Ewald von Kleist's promotion to *Generalfeldmarschall des Heeres* elevated him to the pinnacle of rank, power, and prestige in the German Army.¹ Von Kleist's promotion recognized and rewarded his skill as a battlefield commander. While he had successively led Panzer Group Kleist, 1st Panzer Army, and Army Group A to a string of significant victories, the awarding of the marshal's baton came as acknowledgement of his having superlatively commanded Army Group A's winter retreat in the face of far superior Red Army forces with minimal losses. The promotion not only confirmed him as a member of the Prussian/German Army command elite, but also as the leading member of the von Kleist family, a major *preußische adlige Militärclan* (Prussian noble military clan).² Unbeknownst at the time, the nearly three centuries long praxis of Prussian noblemen being promoted to *Generalfeldmarschall* by their king/*Führer* for exceptional military service to the crown ended with this promotion.³ Ewald von Kleist would be the last Prussian nobleman raised to the rank of *Generalfeldmarschall des Heeres*.⁴

¹ *Generalfeldmarschall des Heeres* (field marshal of the army) was the highest officer rank within the German Army. The higher rank of *Reichsmarschall* existed for the Wehrmacht with only Hermann Göring being elevated to this rank. Only twenty army officers achieved *Generalfeldmarschall* rank during World War II.

² Marcus Funck, *Feudales Kriegertum und Militärische Professionalität: Der Adel im preußisch-deutschen Offizierskorps 1860-1935*. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004), 10-11.

³ The first *Generalfeldmarschall* after the establishment of the of Brandenburg-Prussia and the Kingdom of Prussia was Otto Christoph Freiherr von Sparr. He was raised to *GFM* by Friedrich Wilhelm, Elector of Brandenburg on 20 June 1657.

⁴ Five more officers were promoted to the rank of *Generalfeldmarschall des Heeres* after von Kleist. Maximilian von Weichs, a member of the Bavarian aristocracy, was promoted on the same day as von Kleist but was second on

Only one year later, von Kleist disobeyed Hitler's no retreat directive in order to prevent Red Army encirclement of his command, Army Group A. On 30 March 1944, Hitler summoned *Generalfeldmarschall* von Kleist from his Eastern Front headquarters to the Berghof, the *Führer's* alpine residence and headquarters. Von Kleist accurately surmised the reason for the summons. The next day, after picking up fellow *Generalfeldmarschall* (GFM) von Manstein at his army group headquarters, the pair flew on to Berchtesgaden. On the evening of 1 April 1944, around 22:00 hours, the pair drove up the mountain to the Berghof. The atmosphere towards the field marshals was decidedly cool from Hitler's staff as they waited for their audience with the *Führer*. Von Manstein was summoned first.

In turn, von Kleist entered the immense, oak-ceilinged meeting room with its renowned panoramic view of the Alps. The *Führer* commenced the meeting by presenting the *Generalfeldmarschall* with the swords for the oak leaves of the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross. Certainly, the irony of receiving one of Germany's highest decorations for what had undeniably been unmitigated disobedience of Hitler's no retreat order was not lost on von Kleist. After all, knowing under what circumstances to disobey an order was a longstanding virtue of Prussian/German officership.⁵ Von Kleist recounted what followed.

After we had both taken our seats, Hitler told me something like this:

"I have seen fit to relieve you, as well as GFM von Manstein, of your army group command. You are one of the few commanders-in-chief who can lead at the operational level. For the moment and for a prolonged period of time the war in the East cannot be conducted [by normal methods] at the operational level. You should take it easy and rest. We are all more or less worn out by the hard years of

the promotion list behind von Kleist. Walter Model and Ferdinand Schörner were raised to *GFM*, but neither was ennobled. Finally, Wolfram *Freiherr* von Richthofen and Robert *Ritter* von Greim were promoted to *GFM* after von Kleist, but both were made *Generalfeldmarschall der Luftwaffe*.

⁵ Jörg Muth, *Command Culture: Officer Education in the U.S. Army and the German Armed Forces, 1901-1940, and the Consequences for World War II* (Denton, Texas: University of North Texas Press, 2011), 168-171. See Muth's synopsis and example of this Prussian/German officer attribute. Perhaps, von Kleist even remembered *Generaloberst* Ludwig Beck's 1938 statement, "military obedience has a limit where knowledge, conscience, and a sense of responsibility forbid the execution of a command."

war. Rundstedt is also old and ill, and I, too, do not feel well at all, sleep badly, and so on. Unlike some other commanders-in-chief and field marshals, you have never made mistakes, I know that....”

Since I knew that it was all just words, I broke off the conversation of my own accord and stood up. I said “Then I wish you, my Führer, all the best for the future.” He responded, “No, no, we won't part, we'll see each other again often.”

I did not see him again—or only when I turned around on the steps by the door to make a last bow; he stood there and looked at me contemplatively. This last look often haunts me. There was no triumph in it, that he had successfully wheedled me, but rather something pensive. “Here I am again, parting with a proven general...”⁶

Indeed, von Kleist was a proven commander; a very experienced officer with forty-four years of faithful service to the Fatherland. As he was chauffeured down the mountain and into retirement, he could not but have reflected on those four and a half decades and the many experiences over those years. Perhaps he even marveled a bit at how far he had come and how high his career had risen from his nascent officership as one of the *Kaiser's Leutnants* at the turn of the century.

⁶ Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen und Plaudereien" (handschriftliche Manuskripte), Heft V, 32-33. (BA-MA: N 354, Nachlass Kleist), 33-34. Hereafter, Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft #, page #.

I. The Importance of Prologue

Despite his rise to *Generalfeldmarschall*, his success as a panzer commander on multiple fronts, and being a prominent member of the officer corps' aristocratic elite, Ewald von Kleist's life and military career are virtually unstudied.⁷ Only a few short chapter-length biographical sketches overview von Kleist; leaving the reader with far more questions than answers about the life and career of this officer.⁸

While von Kleist remains uninvestigated, many other German Army commanders, general officers, and field marshals have had much written about them. The vast majority of biographies on German military leaders, especially World War II general officer biographies, have, however, focused predominantly on these officer's 1939-1945 wartime actions and experiences.⁹ While this concentration provides much needed scholarship on the Germany Army and officer corps at war, it has created an intellectual lacuna for the non-war years. Additionally, in the biographies of these World War II senior leaders, who first experienced war during 1914-1918, this determinative war experience is given but a few short pages.

⁷ No manuscript length work on Kleist's life or career is extant in either German or English. The largest work on Kleist is Clyde H. Davis' *von Kleist -From Hussar to Panzer Marshal-* (Houston: Lancer Militaria, 1979), a 110-page Imperial octavo softcover book presenting 301 photographs of or relating to Kleist and a 14,000-word biographical overview.

⁸ For a detailed analysis of these works see the historiography section of this chapter.

⁹ As an example, Mungo Melvin's biography on *Generalfeldmarschall* Erich von Manstein, *Manstein: Hitler's Greatest General* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin's Press, 2010), dedicates 327 of 510 pages, 64 percent, to Manstein's 10 total years at war. Of the 327 wartime pages, only nine (2.8 percent) are dedicated to the four years and two months of World War I. Melvin covers the other 76 years of Manstein's life, which included 29 years of peacetime active military service, in 183 pages. This, however, compares favorably to Steven H. Newton's *Hitler's Commander: Field Marshal Walter Model—Hitler's Favorite General* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2005). Newton devotes a mere four pages to the first 33 years of Model's life and only thirty pages on his twenty years of interwar army service. The other 333 pages (91 percent of the book) are on Model's ten years of wartime service. Newton dedicates thirty-two pages (ten percent of the total wartime pages) to the period 1914-1918, but of these only a dozen pages speak directly to Model's experience, the other pages providing the larger context of the conflict.

A survey of the older and more recent scholarship shows that an officer's formative years and the longer and often critical periods during which officers and the army they lead prepare for the next war through training, education, the update of tactics, and procurement of new weapons and equipment are rarely investigated in any substantive detail. Pre-World War I and interwar period 1919-1939 investigations on Germany that do look at these topics most often focus on perceived key elements of change such as technology, tactics, or doctrine.¹⁰ By and large these studies only tangentially touch on the officer corps. Little work has been done which provides a comprehensive picture of the intellectual, social, political, economic, or cultural status of or changes that occurred within the German officer corps or how individual officers navigated these environments. Additionally, officer biographies, have largely failed to place their subjects within the context of the officer corps in a coherent, meaningful, or insightful manner.

This biography of Ewald von Kleist sets out to investigate a much less traveled but no less important a road. Rather than examine his World War II commands and combat leadership, the scope of this investigatory work concentrates exclusively on von Kleist's early life and his time in the Wilhelmine Army. After an inquiry into the von Kleist family and Ewald's early life, the work turns to focus on a detailed study of his first nearly two decades as an army officer in the Wilhelmine Army.

An officer's junior ranking years and frequently even his first combat experiences, are often given short shrift in military biographies. This work maintains that this formative and foundational period, the first decade to decade and a half of an officer's career is key and critical. It is in this period that an officer receives the bulk of his military training and education from the

¹⁰ See Eric Dorn Brose, *The Kaiser's Army: The Politics of Military Technology in German during the Machine Age, 1870-1918* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) for an excellent pre-World War I study of tactics and equipment and James S. Corum, *The Roots of Blitzkrieg: Hans von Seeckt and German Military Reform* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1992), a scholarly example of an interwar study.

institution and within his own unit. From both formal and informal learning venues, the officer forms his foundational understanding of officership. Additionally, he experiences the most significant increase in his professional military competence throughout these early years. It is during this developmental time that the officer is most malleable and most subject to the influences of his superiors and the peers in his unit; influences that bend and shape the officer. In concert with individual persuasions, this period sees the largest amount of pressure from the institution exerted on the officer. This institutional influence ebbs as an officer matures and gains rank until as a senior ranking officer, the individual is able to exert considerable influence on the organization. This too is the stage during which the person's "officer character," that is his sense of duty, understanding of honor, commitment to service, and concept of loyalty, are forged and hardened. The aforementioned comprise some of the desirable officer character attributes. But this period also sees less than desirable elements develop in officers. Traits such as egocentricity, careerism, inappropriate blame shifting and credit taking, and backbiting, among others, emerge, strengthen, and are incorporated into the officer's character. In addition to the inputs from the institution, the unit, and individuals, the officer is expected to engage in personal self-development in order to improve areas which are insufficiently formed or matured or in which a deficiency of knowledge exists. During this period the officer discards inputs he deems of little value and selects and maintains those perceived as true, valuable, and appropriate.

Once an officer's character and his foundational set of principles have solidified, few significant alterations to these occur during the further course of an officer's career. Not only are the formative years critically influential on an officer's development but for the vast majority they establish the trajectory of the officer's career for the remainder of his time in service. Therefore, the study of these formative years is critically important for not only understanding

the individual in his varied and diverse officer roles, cadet, subordinate, peer, superior, staff officer, leader, and commander, but for framing and comprehending the entirety of the individual's career and the army in which he served.

To gain this understanding of von Kleist, many questions much be asked. The primary interrogative is; what were the key influencing elements during these formative years which together served to construct the foundation of Ewald von Kleist as a man and as an officer? A foundation that in turn would support his rise within the German Army to *Generalfeldmarschall*.

II. Historiography

From the period of Friedrich Wilhelm I of Prussia in the early eighteenth century until the *Götterdämmerung* of the Third Reich in 1945, numerous scholars have argued that the Prusso-German Army was the most durable and most important institution within the Prussian and post-unification German state. The Prussian and the post-1871 German Army and leading officers of these armies have certainly been the focus of much study over the past century and a half. Many historians, both scholarly and less scholarly, have endeavored on various levels to understand and in a myriad of narrative styles to explain the brilliant successes and devastating failures on and off the battlefield of the Prussian and subsequent German armies. Out of this vast volume of work many themes and lines of thought have emerged, most as sub or supporting narratives to a master narrative. The distilled primary master narrative is that of the “authoritarian German militarism” as exemplified by the concept of the Prusso-German army as a “State within a State.” Dr. Dirk Bönker wrote in 2005, “The notion of a distinct authoritarian Prusso-German militarism, set against political modernity and civil society, has long served as the master narrative of German modern military history.”¹¹ This narrative largely falls in line with and supports the larger, overarching German master narrative, “special path” or *Sonderweg*. Dr. Bönker wrote in describing this narrative that, “Few scholars of Imperial Germany would disagree with the late historian Thomas Nipperdey, otherwise a sharp critic of the notion of a German *Sonderweg*, when he wrote that the ‘special position of the military’ was a ‘dominant feature, politically, and socially’ in the Second German Empire and marked the limits of the

¹¹ Dirk Bönker, “Military History, Militarization, and the ‘American Century’,” in *Zeithistorische Forschungen/Studies in Contemporary History* 2 (2005): 105-109.

empire's (bourgeois) modernity, thus setting it apart from other countries."¹² While the notion of the German *Sonderweg*, with its emphasis on the failure of liberalism, the hobbling of civil society, and the harmful dominance of the aristocracy (pre-industrial elites) has been successfully challenged and replaced, the "emphasis on a special German militarism within the state, politics, and society has become one of the remaining explicit bastions of the old *Sonderweg* argument."¹³ While the roots of the army's social dominance and political independence can be traced back to before Frederick II, the largest implications of this independence were felt after 1864, the beginning of Germany's Wars of Unification.

A significant influence on and elucidation of this primary master narrative occurred with Gordon Craig's *The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640-1945* (1956).¹⁴ Craig, while not refuting the importance, impetuousness, and independence of the army, does largely absolve the army's intrusion into politics and foreign affairs, arguing that civilian authorities had numerous opportunities to bring the army into subservience to civilian masters during both monarchical and democratic governmental periods. While Craig offers a liberal interpretation, Gerhard Ritter provides a parallel but conservative examination. In his four-volume *The Sword and the Scepter: The Problem of Militarism in Germany*, Ritter examines the Army's relationship to civilian leadership similarly concluding that despite opportunities to bring the Army under civilian control, this did not occur and the Army brought its influence to bear in politics and foreign policy as well as on the battlefield.¹⁵

¹² Dirk Bönker, *Militarism in a Global Age: Naval Ambitions in Germany and the United States before World War I* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2012), 8.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army: 1640–1945* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956.)

¹⁵ Gerhard Ritter, *The Sword and the Sceptre: The Problem of Militarism in Germany*. Translated by Heinz Norden. 4 vols. (London: Lane, 1970–1973.)

These two works and other studies fed the overarching “authoritative German militarism” master narrative, but that narrative has not gone without challenge. The significant discrediting of the *Sonderweg* master narrative by the Marxist Counternarrative and the subsequent historiography has moved beyond both of these master narratives. Also criticized was the subordinate militarism narrative and a few historians bid scholars to move beyond this stale and increasingly unproductive narrative. It has, however, remained extremely durable. Regarding this persistence Dr. Bönker further observes, “two historians have recently noted with barely concealed frustration, this narrative has been, “until today, mostly resistant to any convincing empirical attempts to demonstrate lines of differentiation,” either in relation to social characteristics or national peculiarities.”¹⁶ Discontented with the master narrative due to its explanatory inadequacies other noted German historians, specifically Dr. Konrad Jarausch and Dr. Michael Geyer, have advocated for and challenged historians to move beyond this overly confining framework.¹⁷ They contend that the world, and Germany specifically, has become too complex for an all-encompassing master narrative to satisfactorily explain the past. Only by investigating a wide-ranging variety of sub-narratives and placing them in conversation with each other can we gain a more holistic understanding of nineteenth and twentieth century Germany and the Germans. The development of more sophisticated and specialized methods of inquiry fully supports this idea in both its concept and application.

In looking for more coherent, useful, and focused sub-narratives, two have been identified that are influential to this work on *Generalfeldmarschall* Ewald von Kleist. This first narrative, which is descriptively labelled the “Prussian-German Military Admiration” narrative,

¹⁶ Bönker, *Militarism* 8. The two historians are Thomas Kühne and Benjamin Ziemann.

¹⁷ Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003).

has deep roots within the American military and the supporting American historiography of the Prusso-German military as well as in German military historiography found in the German Nationalist historiography 1871-1945.¹⁸ On this side of the Atlantic, the narrative originated with the approbation of the Prussian-derived organization and training contributions of General Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben, erstwhile aide-de-camp of Frederick II, during the American Revolutionary War.¹⁹ This narrative continued through the Civil War as the literature recounted and praised German-Americans and former Prussian officers who fought on both sides as well as the positive organizational and tactical influences upon American forces modeled after Prussian counterparts.²⁰

This admiration persisted after Prussia's three successful Wars of Unification as the American military continued to look towards Germany as the model for military efficiency and effectiveness. This narrative continued into the twentieth century. A number of elements in the U. S. Army reforms enacted by Secretary of War Elihu Root in the first decade of the twentieth century were heavily influenced by the Prussian/German Army.²¹

¹⁸ German Nationalist historiography's most recognizable proponent is Heinrich von Treitschke. His five-volume *Deutsche Geschichte im Neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (seven volume English translation; *Treitschke's history of Germany in the Nineteenth Century*) is representative of this nationalist historiography in Germany.

¹⁹ Paul Lockhart, *The Drillmaster of Valley Forge: The Baron de Steuben and the Making of the American Army* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008). See this work for an objective view of von Steuben's contribution to American victory in the Revolutionary War and his post-war legacy.

²⁰ Examples from the Civil War era include an article in the *Cincinnati Daily Press* June 1st, 1861, which in part read, "a thousand brave German soldiers came out upon the field...The Regimental drill was one of the most perfect actions I ever witnessed... The commands were given by the bugle, and not a voice was heard above the tramping of feet as the soldiers moved to the order of the notes." Cited in Nathan W. Diebel, "Germans and the Union: Immigrants' Struggle Against Assimilation in the Civil War Era" (Honors Thesis, Oregon State University, 2019), 19. For a more recent example see, Stephen D. Engle, *Yankee Dutchman: The Life of Franz Siegel* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1993). Engle investigates the service of Baden-born and Baden Army trained Franz Siegel, who rose to major general in the Union Army. Siegel was praised by Abraham Lincoln for his ability to recruit German-speaking immigrants into the service of the Union. His abilities as a combat commander were however, less than notable, but this appears to not have adversely affected his more positively viewed reputation.

²¹ Philip L. Semsch, "Elihu Root and the General Staff," *Military Affairs* 27, no. 1 (May 1963): 16-27.

As America considered and finally entering the war against Germany in 1917, the rhetoric changed to vilify the Germany and its army as the enemy. This was a requirement to psychologically prepare the United States to send troops into combat. This defamation of Germany and the German Army and the calls to “Halt the Hun” faded once victory had been gained. Again, German military expertise received favorably reporting. Doing so raised the perceived level of American military prowess required to overcome such a capable foe.

During the 1930s, America watched as Germany rebuilt its army and launched a war of aggression in 1939. With Germany’s string of pre-1941 victories came a begrudging acknowledgement of the superiority of the German Army. Then as with World War I, America vilified Germany with the fascist Hitler and his Nazi henchmen replacing the Kaiser and his Prussian generals as the enemy. America sustained this understandable anti-German stance throughout the war. At the conclusion of World War II, the post-World War I swing from the German Army and its officer corps being a dastardly enemy to defeated but worthy adversary was suspended in the light of Germany’s overtly aggressive militarism, the widespread suffering and destruction cause by German military operations, and the shocking evidence of the Holocaust. Condemnation and punishment for this resulted in the termination of the territory formerly known as Prussia, the complete disarmament of Germany, and the dissolution of the German officer corps.²²

²² Abolition of the State of Prussia, Control Council Law No. 46 and Excerpt from Report of Military Governor, [February 25, 1947]: The Prussian State which from early days has been a bearer of militarism and reaction in Germany has de facto ceased to exist. Guided by the interests of preservation of peace and security of peoples and with the desire to assure further reconstruction of the political life of Germany on a democratic basis, the Control Council enacts as follows: Article I: The Prussian State together with its central government and all its agencies is abolished. Article II: Territories which were a part of the Prussian State and which are at present under the supreme authority of the Control Council will receive the status of Laender or will be absorbed into Laender. U.S. Dept. of State, *Germany, 1947-1949: Story in Documents* (Washington, DC.: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1950), 151.

The rapid estrangement of wartime allies into Cold War enemies, however, meant that the West, specifically the United States of America and Great Britain, needed the assistance of Germany against their former ally, the Soviet Union. This geopolitical need in turn created a necessity for a revival of the “admiration” narrative.²³ First, the two democracies had to make the former German enemy a politically acceptable ally. Secondly, the West needed a capable and respectable West German Army, one free of the taint of Nazism and worthy of taking lessons from on how to fight the Soviets. This allowed German knowledge of fighting the Soviets to be both sought and unreservedly accepted.²⁴ And finally, the raising of the former enemy’s quality and capability raised the value and worth of accomplishment of the both the British and American victors. The restoration of the “admiration” narrative provided an avenue not only for the rehabilitation of earlier elements of German military history but paved the way for the exoneration of Germany’s World War II *Wehrmacht*, and the officer who led it, regarding culpability for war crimes.

²³ Derek R. Mallet, *Hitler's Generals in America: Nazi POWs and Allied Military Intelligence* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2013), 11. Mallet observed, “The American perspective on the German generals who had come and gone from the United States between June 1943 and June 1946 changed from one of neglect and disregard to one of respect and admiration (emphasis added). Curiously, these senior officers became far more valuable to American interests after the war ended than they had been before. Indeed, these prisoners of war emerged as allies in the early years of the Cold War.” See Mallett’s Chapter 5 “Cold War Allies” and Chapter 6 “Conclusion” for an overview of the important events in the progression of America moving from indifference of their erstwhile enemy to collaborative efforts with German officers to gain knowledge from the German experience against the Soviets to embracing these former enemy officers as allies.

²⁴ See both, Ellinor F. Anspacher, Theodore W. Bauer, and Oliver J. Frederiksen, *The Army Historical Program in the European Theater and Command, 8 May 1945–3 December 1950. Occupation Forces in Europe series* (Karlsruhe, Germany: Historical Division European Command, 1951) and Donald S. Detwiler, Charles Burton Burdick, and Jürgen Rohwer, *World War II German Military Studies: A Collection of 213 Special Reports on the Second World War Prepared by Former Officers of the Wehrmacht for the United States Army* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1979) for information on the works produced by former *Wehrmacht* officers. See also, James A. Wood, “Captive Historians, Captivated Audience: The German Military History Program, 1945-1961,” *The Journal of Military History* 69, no. 1 (2005): 123-147. This scholarly article objectively articulates the history of German officer cooperation in these programs as well as examines the breadth and depth of influence the works of these German officer had on American military policy and planning as well as on post-war historiography. Wood opines, “These works have influenced the historiography of the Second World War in innumerable ways, and continue to have an impact upon the writing of military history today.” (p 146.)

The post-war revival of the admiration narrative both allowed and encouraged the supporting narrative that came to be known as the “myth of the clean *Wehrmacht*” to embed itself within the master narrative. Former *Wehrmacht* officers along with German, British, and American scholars cultivated both the idea and belief that the German Army, had neither been involved in nor supported the perpetration of war crimes and atrocities. They claimed that the culpability for crimes against both enemy combatants and civilians lay solely with the *Sicherheitsdienst (SD)*, *Schutzstaffel*, and *Waffen-SS*. By ignoring damning evidence, obfuscating relationships and cooperation between the Army and the *SD/SS*, and by narrowly focusing narratives on frontline warfighting and away from actions which involved prisoners of war and enemy non-combatants, authors directly, indirectly, and inadvertently strengthened this enhanced admiration narrative.

The list of books which belong to this narrative is immensely long, but among the most influential books of the “myth of the clean *Wehrmacht*” narrative were B. H. Liddell Hart’s *German Generals Talk*, Heinz Guderian *Panzer Leader*, *Generalfeldmarschall* Erich von Manstein’s *Lost Battles*, Walter Goerlitz’s *The History of the German General Staff* (1953), and Trevor N. Dupuy’s *A Genius for War*.²⁵

Liddell Hart’s *German Generals Talk* opened the door for the rehabilitation of the German Army leadership. His uncritical and apologetic investigation of a number of German campaigns and specific operations was derived from his post war correspondence with and interviews of a number of key German senior officer participants who in 1945-1948 were held in

²⁵ B. H. Liddell Hart, *The German Generals Talk* (New York: W. Morrow, 1948). Heinz Guderian, *Panzer Leader* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1952). This was the first US edition of Guderian’s 1950 German edition entitled *Erinnerungen eines Soldaten*. Erich von Manstein, *Lost Victories*, translated by Anthony G. Powell (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1958). Von Manstein’s original German language book, *Verlorene Siege*, was published in 1955. Walter Goerlitz, *History of the German General Staff, 1657-1945*, translated by Brian Battershaw (New York: Preager, 1953). Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1977).

British custody. Liddell Hart portrayed the cooperative German generals in a positive light, and for this, some of them in turn confirmed that they had taken much inspiration concerning Blitzkrieg operations from Liddell Hart's pre-war writings; a mutual admiration.

With the door opened by Liddell Hart, a number of German generals took the opportunity to present their first-person narratives of the war. *Generaloberst* Heinz Guderian seized the early opportunity to shape the narrative of the German officer corps and in particular advance his own contribution to Blitzkrieg and his role as the most important commander in Germany's panzer forces. With key protagonists, held incommunicado in Soviet prison or dead, Guderian's self-aggrandizement went unchallenged.²⁶ His own serious shortcomings as well as his approbation of Hitler and much of the Nazi ideology were conveniently left out of his work.

The next highly influence work was *Generalfeldmarschall* Erich von Manstein's *Verlorene Siege* (1955) and its translation, *Lost Victories* (1958). The work is von Manstein's military operational autobiography rather than a life and times autobiography. Von Manstein's traditional autobiography, *Aus einem Soldatenleben* (From a Soldier's Life) followed in 1958.²⁷ *Lost Victories* was lauded and even the well-respected American military historian S. L. A. Marshall praised von Manstein's manuscript and stamped his seal of approval on the former field marshal absolving him of criminal conduct, "Manstein was never a believer in Hitler...An old-line professional, he scorned nazism [*sic*] and most of its works. But against its menace he could exert no will of his own."²⁸ Too, Marshall confirmed the transfer of blame from the generals to Hitler. By the time von Manstein had published the original edition he had been convicted of

²⁶ Russell A. Hart, *Guderian: Panzer Pioneer or Myth Maker?* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, Inc., 2006). See Hart's work for an insightful, critical investigation and analysis of Guderian's career and post-war activities.

²⁷ Erich von Manstein, *Aus einem Soldatenleben* (Bonn: Athenäum, 1958). This work has not been translated into English.

²⁸ S. L. A. Marshall, "A Military Genius Who Helped Hitler Look Good," *New York Times*, October 5, 1958, BR3.

war crimes and sentenced to eighteen years in prison but was released after serving only four. This avoiding the political and ethical elements of the war. Von Manstein's book both reinforced the "myth of the clean *Wehrmacht*" as well as secured his own place in the pantheon of German heroes as "Hitler's Greatest General" and as Godfather to the reborn West German Army."²⁹ Many other follow the path established by von Manstein and Guderian.

Academic and popular biographers added to the hagiography of the senior officer corps. Works such as Kenneth Macksey's *Guderian: Panzer General* (1975) and Steven H. Newton's *Hitler's Commander: Field Marshal Walther Model—Hitler's Favorite General* (2006) are two of a long list.³⁰ Despite the lack of objectivity and less than full disclosure of illegal or unethical actions in this literature, a large number of these works need not be discarded wholesale. When read with circumspection and against the backdrop of known facts, valuable information can be gleaned.

In seeking information on the history of the *Generalstab* (General Staff, GS), few works have been produced despite the importance and influence of this. The two most influential are Walter Görlitz, *Der deutsche Generalstab. Geschichte und Gestalt, 1640–1945* (1950) and Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945* (1977).³¹ Görlitz investigates GS history over nineteen Chiefs of the General Staff and twelve different historical epochs. The final four chapters address the GS after Hitler's takeover in December

²⁹ "Hitler's Greatest General" is the subtitle of the most recent biography on von Manstein, Mungo Melvin's *Manstein: Hitler's Greatest General* (2010).

³⁰ Kenneth Macksey, *Guderian: Panzer General* (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1975) and Steven H. Newton, *Hitler's Commander: Field Marshal Walther Model—Hitler's Favorite General* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2006).

³¹ Walter Görlitz, *Der deutsche Generalstab. Geschichte und Gestalt, 1640–1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Frankfurter Hefte, 1950). The translated title, "The German General Staff. History and Shape, 1640–1945." The German edition was translated and published as Walter Goerlitz *History of the German General Staff, 1657-1945* translated by Brian Battershaw (New York: Praeger, 1953). The translated edition was heavily abridged and does not include some important passages from the original. Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1977).

1941. Görlitz chapters on the period 1640-1918 suffer from shallow inspection and historical stereotyping. Inaccuracies such as proffering the idea that von Moltke the elder avoided politics are blatantly misleading and misrepresentative as are a number of other statements concerning the nineteenth century GS and its Chiefs. While subsequent chapters are on firmer footing, they nonetheless are neither objective nor do they critically analyze the actual roles played by members of the GS and Hitler. Flimsy and unpersuasive explanations for the continued loyalty of senior officers to Hitler well past the point of knowledge of war crimes and that the war was lost, unsuccessfully attempt to exonerate the General Staff. Thus, Görlitz' work is of little value.

To decades later, Dupuy investigated what had made the Germans such formidable combatants from Friedrich the Great through World War II. He concluded that the Germans had “discovered the secret of *institutionalizing* military excellence.”³² He avoided, however, to as deeply investigate the failures and shortcomings of the German Army, the General Staff, and the officer corps. He uncritically wrote, “This matter of professionalism is important, because Germany’s involvement in, and loss of, the World Wars was in no way connected with the professional organization, indoctrination, or performance of the German General Staff.”³³ Dupuy’s unwillingness to objectively assess the bad aided in perpetuating a corollary myth, the “myth of the clean General Staff.”

The “admiration” narrative remained largely uncontested until the mid-1980s. That challenge came from what can be called the “condemnation” narrative. Tracing its roots back to the 1960s, this narrative began to strengthen in the decade before the fall of the Berlin Wall.³⁴

³² Dupuy, *Genius*, 5. (*italics* in the original)

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Early works that challenged the clean *Wehrmacht* myth were: Manfred Messerschmidt's *Die Wehrmacht im NS-Staat: Zeit der Indoktrination* (Hamburg: Deckers Verlag, 1969) shed light on senior German military leadership's limited and ineffective pushback against the propagation of Nazi ideologies within the officer corps and army; and

An influential early entry in this historiography aimed at repudiating the “myth of the clean *Wehrmacht*” was Omar Bartov’s *Hitler’s Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (1991). Bartov was the first Anglophone account to seek an explanation for the *Ostheer*’s (Eastern Army) performance on the Eastern Front both in its effectiveness in fighting the Red Army and in its criminality in the treatment of Soviet prisoners of war and civilians. Bartov sought to explain how the *Ostheer* was premeditatedly barbarized to the point that it, as a whole, was motivated unreservedly to committing untold numbers of atrocities. The four short core chapters each contain one of Bartov’s independent but interrelated theses on how this barbarization was accomplished. While Bartov seems to have had all of the tools at his disposal to make a weighty contribution to German military historiography, *Hitler’s Army* falls disappointingly short of its potential. With his real interest being a focus on the Holocaust, he nevertheless attempts to prove that the actions of millions of German officers and *Landser*s across nearly two hundred divisions could be explained by a few fairly simple factors. His findings largely rest on narrow slivers of information gleaned from the records of a mere three army divisions. Bartov’s evidence does not convincingly support the argument and its narrow context robs it of sufficient weight.

The “condemnation” historiography gained significant momentum when the *Wehrmachtsausstellung* (German Armed Forces Exhibition) opening in 1995. The exhibition showcased evidence that the German Army and not the *SS and SD* alone had been involved in the perpetration of war crimes. This spurred further critical reexamination in the subsequent decades as did the opening of archives formerly behind the “Iron Curtain.”

Christian Streit’s *Keine Kameraden: die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941-1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1978), which investigated the treatment of Soviet prisoners of war in German captivity.

An important work is Wolfram Wette's 2002 study, *Die Wehrmacht—Feindbilder, Vernichtungskrieg, Legenden* (The Wehrmacht—Images of the Enemy, War of Extermination, Legends).³⁵ While most other accounts of the crimes committed by the *Wehrmacht* focus exclusively on the Eastern Front and on the mass of low ranking German Army soldiers, Wette investigates the senior members of the officer corps and examines the history and continuity of their anti-Russian and antisemitic beliefs.³⁶ The author argues that the roots of antisemitism and anti-Russian/anti-Bolshevik attitudes are traceable back into the to pre-unification Prussian officer corps and maintain an unbroken continuity up to and through 1945. Wette, by placing the *Wehrmacht* senior officers in the context of the Prusso-German Army in which they spent their formative years, skillfully argues that the barbaric behavior of the army commanded by these officers was the apogee of these long-held elements of Prusso-German military tradition.

Another significant work is Ben H. Shepherd's *Hitler's Soldiers: The German Army in the Third Reich* (2016).³⁷ This work is the first general history of the German Army to include the enlarged primary source base of the eastern archives. The author investigates multiple themes through the prismatic spectrum of four primary questions.³⁸ Of key importance is his analysis of officer culture and his examination of the workings of the relationships between the senior officer corps and Hitler. He brings into sharp focus the confluence of the traditional

³⁵ Wolfram Wette, *Die Wehrmacht—Feindbilder, Vernichtungskrieg, Legenden* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag GmbH, 2002). The German edition was subsequently translated and published in English in 2006. Wolfram Wette, *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality*, trans. Deborah Lucas Schneider (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

³⁶ Ibid., 155. Wette mentions von Kleist in a discussion about payments to senior officers but misidentifies him as Heinrich von Kleist. Wette is not alone among respected historians who misidentify Ewald von Kleist, either in name or worse, confusing him with his distant cousin, Ewald von Kleist-Schmenzin, the outspoken civilian opponent of the Nazis who would be executed for his part in the 20 July 1944 plot.

³⁷ Ben H. Shepherd, *Hitler's Soldiers: The German Army in the Third Reich* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2016).

³⁸ Ibid., xi-xv. The themes investigated include: history of the army, personnel, strategy and operations, tactics and technology, and morality and ideology. The questions here are paraphrased from the original.

officer corps' long held concepts of antisemitism, anti-Slavic/Bolshevism, radical nationalism, careerism, and myopic focus on tactics, technology and operational level war which made most of them willing *Mitläufer* (fellow travelers) with Hitler and executors his war of annihilation in the East.

Objective analysis of German Army generals grew as these generals and their faithful subordinates began to die and the distance to the war became greater. The challenge to authority in the late 1960s spread to challenge to these military authorities as well. Thus, the objective investigatory eye was increasingly turned on the generals themselves. Examples of these critical works are Marcel Stein's works which include *A Flawed Genius: Field Marshal Walter Model, A Critical Biography* (2010).³⁹ Other noteworthy biographies that more objectively examined general officers include Bernhard R. Kroener's *Generaloberst Friedrich Fromm: Eine Biographie* (2005) and Mungo Melvin's *Manstein: Hitler's Greatest General* (2010).⁴⁰

A groundbreaking biography of World War II senior German Army leaders is Johannes Hürter's *Hitlers Heerführer: Die deutschen Oberbefehlshaber im Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion, 1941–42* (2006) (Hitler's Army Commanders: The German Commanders-in-Chief in the War against the Soviet Union, 1941-42).⁴¹ Other authors have produced collective biographies in the

³⁹ Marcel Stein, *Feldmarschall Walter Model: Legende und Wirklichkeit* (Bissendorf, GE: Biblio Verlag, 2001). Stein also authored *Generalfeldmarschall Erich von Manstein: kritische Betrachtung des Soldaten und Menschen* (Mainz: V. Hase & Koehler, 2000) (Field Marshal Erich von Manstein: A Critical View of the Soldier and Man). This work became *Field Marshal von Manstein, a Portrait: The Janus Head* (Solihill, UK: Helion and Company, 2007). Stein's detailed analysis of von Manstein's postwar obfuscation and outright perjury concerning his knowledge of and involvement with army atrocities helps place the field marshal's moral failings in the balance against his operational successes and is what gives the book most of its historiographical value.

⁴⁰ Bernhard R. Kroener, *Generaloberst Friedrich Fromm: Eine Biographie* (Paderborn: Verlag Ferdinand Schoenigh, 2005) and Mungo Melvin, *Manstein: Hitler's Greatest General* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2010).

⁴¹ Johannes Hürter, *Hitlers Heerführer: Die deutschen Oberbefehlshaber im Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion, 1941–42* (München: Oldenbourg, 2006). Also, Johannes Hürter, *Hitlers Heerführer: Die deutschen Oberbefehlshaber im Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion, 1941–42*, 2. Auflage (München: Oldenbourg, 2007).

form free-standing chapters on individual general officers.⁴² But none of these works takes the next highly complex step and compares the subjects. Hürter took on the challenge of the collective and comparative biography of twenty-five of the senior most army commanders and key leaders during the first year of Operation Barbarossa. The first two hundred pages focus on the social, educational, and professional backgrounds of the men as young officers from the last decades of the Wilhelmine Army, through the run-up to World War II. This seldom seen level of focus on the pre-World War II years adds significant value to this work. It is not without minor errors, omissions, and some misinterpretation.⁴³ The next four hundred pages deal with the actions of these officers on the Eastern Front through the investigation of five thematically focused sections. Hürter's work adds important understanding of not only the war in the East but of the initial group of senior German Army leaders who initiated the genocidal war against the USSR.

While the academic sources on German Army leadership between 1933 and 1945 are vast, information concerning the Wilhelmine officer corps is sparse.

The leading account of the German officer corps is Karl Demeter's *Das Deutsche Offizierkorps in Gesellschaft und Staat 1650-1945* (1962).⁴⁴ Originally published as *Das deutsche Offizierkorps in seinen historisch-soziologischen Grundlagen* (The German Officer Corps in its

⁴² Of sample of the works include: Gerd R. Ueberschär, (Hrsg.) *Hitlers militärische Elite* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 1998); Samuel W. Mitcham Jr., *Hitler's Field Marshals and Their Battles* (London: Guild Publishing, 1988); Correlli Barnett, ed., *Hitler's Generals: Authoritative Portraits of the Men Who Waged Hitler's War* (New York: Quill, 1974).

⁴³ Ibid., 28 and 58. Examples include, Hürter incorrectly states that Ewald von Kleist that despite being of the Prussian nobility, came from Hesse. He also erroneously reported that von Kleist joined the General Staff prior to the outbreak of World War I.

⁴⁴ Karl Demeter, *The German Officer-Corps in Society and State: 1650-1945* (New York and Washington: Praeger, 1965). Originally published as *Das Deutsche Offizierkorps in Gesellschaft und Staat 1650-1945*, 2nd edition (Frankfurt: Bernard & Graefe, 1962). Martin Kitchen, *The German Officer Corps, 1890-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968)

⁴⁴ Demeter, 32.

Historical-Sociological Foundations) in 1930, this pre-Nazi Era work was ground breaking in both its methodology and its critically objective treatment of the subject.⁴⁵ A revised and expanded edition was published in English in.⁴⁶ Those updates that addressed the Third Reich period were short, thin, and uncritical, detracting from the quality of the earlier portions of the work. Despite this, Demeter was the standard reference for the officer corps for many years. A useful survey over a three-hundred-year period it, understandably, lacks depth. Nevertheless, Demeter provided beneficial information on the aristocracy within the army, tracing its influence and demographics. Unfortunately, these demographics suffer from insufficient contextualization. The reader does, however, gain a solid sense of the issues that faced the officer corps and the growing challenge to their long held traditional values due to the required increase in the number of officers needed to lead the ever-growing Prussian and then German Army.

The second key work on the Wilhelmine officer corps is Martin Kitchen's *The German Officer Corps, 1890-1914* (1968).⁴⁷ Kitchen provides a more specific temporally focused inspection but like Demeter, is largely generalized and insufficiently contextualized. Kitchen contends that the deterioration of the army's officers, especially senior generals', connection with and understanding of the nation was a result of their growing conservatism in the face of modernity. Kitchen is acerbically critical of and finds no redeeming value in the entirety of the

⁴⁵ Karl Demeter, *Das deutsche Offizierkorps in seinen historisch-soziologischen Grundlagen*. (Berlin: Reimar Hobbing, 1930).

⁴⁶ By 1965, Demeter's 1930 edition had revised and expanded and was on its fourth edition and was entitled *Das deutsche Offizierkorps in Gesellschaft und Staat 1650–1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Bernard & Graefe, 1965). The English translation was: Karl Demeter, *The German Officer-Corps in Society and State 1650–1945*, trans. Angus Malcom (New York and Washington: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965).

⁴⁷ Martin Kitchen, *The German Officer Corps, 1890-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

officer corps. Despite its lack of objectivity, it is the only work focused on this important timeframe and must, therefore, be used; but only with circumspection.

In searching to understand the social makeup of the Wilhelmine officer corps, an essential work is John Moncure's *Forging the King's Sword: Military Education between Tradition and Modernization: The Case of the Royal Prussian Cadet Corps, 1871-1918*.⁴⁸ These studies offer a more focused investigation of aristocrats within the officer corps. Moncure's chapter on the background of *Kaiserreich* Prussia's cadets is detailed and informative. An extensive database enables a quantifiable assessment of aristocratic cadets is further enriched and contextualized with narrative examples of noble cadet's behavior, influence, and later military achievements.

Daniel Hughes' *The King's Finest: A Social and Bureaucratic Profile of Prussian General Officers, 1871-1914*, examines the later period of aristocratic officers' military service.

⁴⁹ This prosopographical study aims "to measure clearly the social roots of the generalcy and to define the major factors, social and military, in a successful career."⁵⁰ He contends that the centrality of the regimental structure enabled the army to successfully maintain an aristocratic social homogeneity. This study helps form a more accurate picture of the officer corps' social makeup and the actions of the nobility as they attempted to maintain their long-standing role within the officer corps and its upper echelons.

Only one work was found that investigates the *Kaiserreich* Army's education and training during an officer's formative period; Steven E. Clemente's *For King and Kaiser! The*

⁴⁸ John Moncure, *Forging the King's Sword: Military Education between Tradition and Modernization: The Case of the Royal Prussian Cadet Corps, 1871-1918*, (New York: P. Lang, 1993).

⁴⁹ Daniel J. Hughes, *The King's Finest: A Social and Bureaucratic Profile of Prussia's General Officers, 1871-1914*, (New York: Praeger, 1987).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

Making of the Prussian Army Officer, 1860-1914.⁵¹ Clemente investigates the officer-aspirant selection process and takes a detailed look at the structure, curriculum and life of the cadet schools. Next, he examines the little known but all important *Kriegsschulen* (war schools) and concludes with an inspection of the *Kriegsakademie* (war academy). Each chapter is an overview and not an exhaustive examination.⁵² Clemente's heavy reliance on primary German sources is boon. Hazy periodization, however, too often fails to note changes over time allowing the author to slip into many unproven generalizations. But the work, overall, has remained the key study on these areas for three decades.

The last works needing exploration are biographical works on von Kleist. The most important work is Clyde R. Davis' *Von Kleist—From Hussar to Panzer Marshal* (1979).⁵³ To date, this is the only work solely dedicated to the life and times of Ewald von Kleist. Primarily a picture book, it contains 301 photos concerning von Kleist, his family, and his time in the military. The book's primary value is its 14,000-word overview of von Kleist's life and military service. The work's primary shortfall is despite apparent access to von Kleist's army personnel records and post-war writings, Davis relied only on secondary sources for his information, thus, some inaccuracies are noted in the narrative.

Even with the large historiography of the Prusso-German Army and its officer corps, there is still much to be discovered and much to be learned.

⁵¹ Steven E. Clemente's *For King and Kaiser! The Making of the Prussian Army Officer, 1860-1914* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992).

⁵² No scholarly work on the Wilhelmine Army's officer accession process, *Kriegsschulen*, or *Kriegsakademie* appear to exist. These topics are ripe for investigation.

⁵³ Clyde R. Davis, *Von Kleist-From Hussar to Panzer Marshal*, (Houston: Lancer Militaria, 1979).

III. Approach and Conceptual Framework

The impetus for this work partially stems from the author's dissatisfaction with many of the biographical works on military officers (and a dearth of information on the office corps). While most more than adequately cover the high points of lives and careers they leave a shortfall of information on what occurs behind the scenes. These biographical studies can be likened to many accounts on military operations which focus on the frontline action, the tip of the spear, but neglect to investigate and give due credit to the logistics, intelligence, support forces, the shaft of the spear. Without the shaft, the tip could not effectively perform its job. While not always as "glamorous," the elements which prepare and support the military's efforts in war, play a key and critical role. Just as with combat forces, officer spend more time off the battlefield in the periods between wars than they do on wartime battlefield. The elements which influence, support, direct, and enhance officers' careers in peacetime are crucial to their performance in wars. This work thus strives to investigate and analyze those key and critical peacetime elements and his World War I experience, which, in this case, shaped the life and career of future *Generalfeldmarschall* Ewald von Kleist.

Biographical Methodology and Scope

This dissertation uses a modified-classical, chronological, biographical narrative. While a variety of methodological approaches exist, such as those used by Richard Weikart, *Hitler's Religion* (religious); Hans-Joachim Neumann, *Was Hitler Ill?* (medical and pharmacological); Rushan Magub, *Edgar Julius Jung, Right-Wing Enemy of the Nazis* (political) or; O. Whitmer's

The Inner Elvis (psychological); a modified-classic model provides the best narrative platform from which to investigate von Kleist.⁵⁴

The modification comes in the form of expanded contextual elements. It has been said that a text without a context is a pretext. By adding to the information normally included in a classical biography, a larger and more detailed contextual descriptions of the key elements that von Kleist encountered and that influenced him, a much deeper and broader understanding of both von Kleist and the Wilhelmine Army he served in is gained. To ensure contextual connection, the account interweaves significant, relevant, and influential social, organizational, political, economic, religious, and military elements throughout the narrative, as they are found within the pre-World War I German Army and its officer corps and as von Kleist encountered them. Thus, von Kleist is presented within the context of the military culture in which he found himself. The modified-classic model best enables the reader to track and understand the personal and professional development of von Kleist as produced by his experiences over the course of his early life and first decades of his career. Given the goal of presenting a picture of von Kleist set in the context of his life and times, this chronological building block approach facilitates the critical element of contextualization and maintains the threads of continuity. The narrative purposefully intertwines von Kleist's personal and professional lives in an attempt to maintain the inseparable connection between the two and to show the juggling of the two as it occurs in real life. With this, the dual goals of understanding von Kleist's formative years and gaining a better understanding of the World War I German Army and its officer corps hopefully will be met.

⁵⁴ Richard Weikart. *Hitler's Religion: The Twisted Beliefs that Drove the Third Reich*. Washington D.C.: Regnery History, 2016; Hans-Joachim Neumann. *Was Hitler Ill?: A Final Diagnosis*. Cambridge; Malden, MA: Polity Press, c2013; Rushan Magub. *Edgar Julius Jung, Right-Wing Enemy of the Nazis: a Political Biography*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2017; O. Whitmer. *The Inner Elvis: A Psychological Biography of Elvis Aaron Presley*. New York: Hyperion, c1996.

By practical necessity there are limits and boundaries of this work. First, the biographical narrative only includes what would have come into von Kleist's frame of awareness. As an example, this then admits the inclusion of artillery and cavalry information while excluding material on the largest part of the German Army, the infantry branch. Thus, military units, locations, schools, people, and events that would have been known to von Kleist and experienced by him set the outer boundaries of exploration and reporting. Likewise, the work is bounded in time. With a few exceptions such as some elements of the von Kleist family history, the timeframe under consideration is that of the *Kaiserreich*, 1871-1918. While von Kleist will serve another three and a half decades as an army officer after the end of World War I, that investigation must wait for another work.

Sources and Resources

The following section presents an overview of the sources and resources upon which this narrative is based and how they have been used to create a narrative of sufficient breadth and depth so as to realize the goals set for this contextual biography. Additionally, the sources and resources provide support for the analysis of events and influences in von Kleist's life and the formative years of his career.

World War II brought much destruction across Europe. In the last months of the war, Germany especially reaped what it had sown with the destruction of German towns, cities, industries, and homes. A concomitant destruction of much historical information and data occurred. The near complete destruction by Royal Air Force bombers on 14 April 1945, of the *Reichsarchiv* (national archive) in Potsdam and its vast collection of military records has had a profoundly adverse effect on historians through the present day. Von Kleist's personal and

professional documentary assets collection, what I will call his personal archives, suffered as well. First, a large portion of his archived information was abandoned and likely destroyed in January 1945, in preparation for the *Generalfeldmarschall* and his family's ordered evacuation of their estate, Weidebrück, north of Breslau, Schlesien, in the face of approaching Red Army forces. A second major loss occurred during the night 13/14 February 1945. Von Kleist, his wife, and younger son were caught in the firebombing of Dresden and several vehicles containing documentary files and personal possessions were destroyed. The final loss of documents contained in his personal archive occurred on 25 April 1945, when the *Generalfeldmarschall* was taken into custody by U. S. Army forces in Mitterfels, Bayern. Few of the confiscated documents, photographs, or possession have found their way back to the von Kleist family or into public archives. Thus, virtually all of Ewald von Kleist's personal archive was destroyed or lost. So, what remains?

Two key primary sources survive and serve as this work's documentary backbone. First is von Kleist's army *Personalakten* (personnel files). This file is preserved at the *Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv* (BA-MA) (federal archive-military archives). The file contains seventy-one documents including what appear to be all of von Kleist's forty-eight original *Qualifikations-Berichte* (qualifications reports, i.e., officer evaluation reports) and a complete and detailed *Laufbahn* (career brief).⁵⁵ The documents contained in his personnel file enable a comprehensive picture to be presented from this official side.

⁵⁵ The investigation of personnel files of four other *Generalfeldmarschalle* (Busch, von Küchler, von Reichenau, and von Weichs) and four *Generalobersten* (Guderian, Hoth, von Mackensen, and Reinhardt) who were immediate subordinates to von Kleist, showed that none of these officer's files contained any *Qualifikations-Berichte* for their three plus decades of military service prior to World War II. Some contained no reports at all. Thus, von Kleist's complete personnel file appears to be a very rare example. As a General Staff officer between 1916 and his promotion to general officer in 1932, he normally received two performance reports for each reporting period, one from his operational unit chain of command and one from his next senior General Staff officer in the administrative chain of command.

The second key document, actually a set of documents, are von Kleist's post-war writings. While he was in the custody of the British between 6 August 1945 and 1 May 1946, von Kleist recorded 473 pages of recollections from his career, memories of his life, observations on post-war events, and diary-style comments on life as a British prisoner of war. These "*Erinnerungen und Plaudereien*" (Reminiscences and Conversations), as von Kleist titled them, were written in pencil in ten red covered, A5 sized notebooks, the "red notebooks." In the opening lines, von Kleist wrote that his words were intended, "For my wife and my descendants."⁵⁶ These "red notebooks" are also held by the BA-MA.

As with all documents, a researcher must critically analyze the authenticity, informational trustworthiness, and purpose of the sources upon which he relies. Thus, an analysis of the "red notebooks" is appropriate. First, as to the authenticity, several observations support the conclusion that indeed Ewald von Kleist authored these notebooks in his own hand. The primary evidence lies in the large amount of personal information presented that would only have been known to von Kleist and his family. Details like the names of the horses on which he and his future wife rode on the day he proposed to her in 1909, detailed descriptions of his injuries sustained in two horse crashes before World War I, and personal family details regarding activities of his wife Gisela, and their sons, are examples. Supporting the authenticity is that these notebooks were written while a British prisoner of war and remained with British authorities after von Kleist's extradition to Yugoslavia in fall 1946. Additionally, other documents known to be produced by von Kleist prior to World War II show the same handwriting as the notebooks. Thus, the evidence points to the work being authentic and produced by von Kleist.

⁵⁶ Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen und Plaudereien" (handschriftliche Manuskripte), Heft 1, 1, (BA-MA: N 354/23, Nachlass Kleist).

Next, the researcher must assess the trustworthiness of the information presented; is it factually correct? In answering this question, the conditions under which the information was produced require review. At this time in their captivity period, German PoWs were not allowed access to personal records such as diaries, previous correspondence, etc.; military operational records such as unit war diaries; or maps. If PoWs wished to record their recollections they were forced to do so entirely from memory. Thus, von Kleist produced this large volume of personal, family, and professional history from his own recall of the past. The accuracy of his recollections is frankly impressive and manifestly demonstrates the strength and clarity of his memory. In working with and focusing on the information in the “red notebooks” which dealt with von Kleist’s life and career between 1881-1918, a period ending nearly three decades before he penciled the information, the verifiable inaccuracies can be counted on less than two hands; with most involving an inaccurate remembrance of a fellow officer’s name. No substantive errors of memory were found. While this deals with the verifiable information, some of von Kleist’s writing concerns information of often unverifiable nature, personal thoughts, assessment of motivations, and the like. While there is often no way to validate most of these, a few external sources have corroborated several incidents. An example is von Kleist’s interaction with *Sturmabteilung (SA)-Obergruppenführer* Edmund Heines, head of *SA-Gruppe Schlesien* headquartered in Breslau in 1934. What von Kleist recalled of the situation and his actions towards Heines in his 1945 writings is confirmed in several other independent works on the SA and army contestation for power before 30 June 1934. One cannot automatically assume that because verifiable information is factually presented that unverifiable information is equally factual. But in the case of von Kleist’s writings, this continuity of truthful accuracy of both

verifiable and less verifiable information appears justifiable and very highly likely and thus, the information presented by von Kleist is judged to be sufficiently trustworthy.

The next question that needs to be asked is, for what purpose did the author produce the documents. While writers of work produced while under duress, such as being incarcerated, or who have been challenged publicly, often openly state their purpose and specify their intended audiences, there are frequently hidden agendas and underling goals. Von Kleist's being held as a PoW and the likelihood that he would be charged as a war criminal make the situation ripe for penning accounts that proclaim his innocence and counter the known or expected accusations. Thus, von Kleist's writings must be carefully inspected for his agendas. The specific questions in this case are, did von Kleist's writings have secondary or hidden agendas, and if so, what were they?

Von Kleist's stated audience was his wife, his family, and his future offspring.⁵⁷ In reading and analyzing the entirety of von Kleist's prison narrative, I have concluded that his writings are as he stated, for his family with no underlying evidence of a premediated secondary agenda. This determination is based on the following reasons. First, the tone of the work remains consistently informal, chatty, and direct. Second, the writing is, as a whole, disjointed and unorganized. Von Kleist jumps between topics in both time and subject matter, frequently creating significant breaks in continuity and thought. This choppy and train of consciousness style narrative seems to work against what would be the desired effect of a clear and concise presentation of a hidden agenda. Next, von Kleist does comment on current events that impact him (preparation for the Nuremburg War Crimes Trials, interviews with Liddell Hart, etc.) and Germany at large (food and coal shortages, loss of eastern territories, etc.), but given the small space and focus on these topics, they are deemed as secondary. Von Kleist also writes a

⁵⁷ Ibid.

significant amount on past events that occurred between 1933-1945, and while he does include his own opinions of persons and events, these are brief, straightforward, and are not seen to shift blame or culpability from himself to others. Finally, approximately half of his narrative is about the period prior to 1918. In these sections, von Kleist is straightforward in his presentation of events, is minimal judgmental towards other individuals, and on occasion openly divulges his own feelings and thoughts. All of this adds virtually nothing in support of a defense for his actions during the Nazi period. Thus, this larger volume of neutral narrative seems to also indicate the lack of any hidden agendas. Therefore, it appears that von Kleist's statement of audience and purpose hold true and the information presented is not fabricated, manipulated, or altered to support any deliberate hidden or sub-agendas.

The "red notebook" narratives thus, have been judged to be authentic, maintain a very high degree of informational trustworthiness, and their main purpose has been assessed to be as stated by von Kleist. Given this, and the fact that the "red notebooks" represent almost the entirety of von Kleist's personal writings which survive, they are of key importance. I have chosen, when possible, to let von Kleist speak for himself by using quotations from his narrative. While there are instances where I could have summarized his words to speed the narrative along, in generally I have chosen to provide the full quotation as there is such little of his own voice to be heard otherwise.

The two primary von Kleist source bases provide little information with which to construct a sufficient and meaningful context in which to place his experiences. To provide sufficient contextual broadening, I have included information which is derived from primary parallel sources and adjacent primary sources. Primary parallel sources are those first-person narratives of individuals, primarily army officers, that had very similar experiences in other units

at or nearly at the same time as von Kleist. While the individual experiences differed in the detail, in the main, they would have been comparable across same branch regiments within the German Army. Adjacent primary accounts are those narratives that record events which occurred not at the same time as von Kleist experienced them but in the same unit or situation. An example is the first-person account of an officer in the same artillery regiment in which von Kleist served but which occurred a decade before von Kleist entered the unit. These accounts are only used if they the events have been deemed to not have significantly changed over the passage of time.

In addition to these other first-person narratives, a wide and varied set of sources has been used. A number of contemporary official government publications such as official army regulations, and the yearly compilation of *Kriegsministerium* orders in *Armee-Verordnungsblatt* (War Ministry Army Regulations Bulletin), and the annually produced *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preußischen Armee und des XIII. (Königlich Württembergischen) Armeekorps* (Rank and Quarters Lists of the Royal Prussian army and the XIII Royal Württembergish Army Corps). The last is a voluminous, detailed, and indispensable source, but one that is underutilized and somewhat difficult to use given the amount of information presented in a minimally user-friendly form. A useful companion reference to the rank list is the thrice weekly private publication, the *Militär-Wochenblatt* (Military Weekly Gazette), which, supported by the War Ministry, printed official orders and personnel information as well as unofficial news and articles on military topics. A surprising but highly useful set of sources were address books. Compiled with the well-known German precision and organization, address books yield specific information of sufficient detail in some cases to track not only an individual officer's residence but his official army unit and duty position, and long absences from the regiment.

Much useful information was found in a number of municipal archives. Again, the German system which documented arrivals and departures of residence and long-stay visitors, births, marriages, and deaths was a boon to tracking this key information. Additionally, some of these town and regional archives possessed military record one would expect to find only in the BA-MA. Finally, several private archives, namely the *Johanniter-Orden* (Order of St. John) and the von Kleist clan archives yielded key information. Normally closed to the public, these collections were supportive of this academic research once they understood the goal of the requests. All these, along other primary and secondary sources, have enabled the modified-biography to be sufficiently expanded so as to provide the desired breadth and depth of context in which to place Ewald von Kleist's life and career.

The above overviews the tangible sources but a note on the intangible or experiential sources is warranted. Military history holds many examples of the importance of knowing the terrain on which one will be operating. Commanders who have been able to walk, ride, or fly over the terrain where they will join battle inherently have an advantage over those that have not. That personal interaction with the terrain creates clearer understanding of the operating environment. I would contend that the same holds true for historians. Being able to visit and investigate the locations where their protagonists were born, grew up, were educated, worked, loved, lived and died, can bring a deeper and better understanding of their subjects and if used appropriately, can enhance their work.

It has been my good fortune to have visited a number of the locations in which von Kleist lived and worked. I have stood before the house in the small town of Braunfels an der Lahn in which Ewald was born. Walking the streets of Leer and Aurich in Ostfriesland, largely unchanged since Ewald's childhood, acquainted me with this unique area of Germany. The fresh

ocean breeze from the not-too-distant North Sea adding to the experience. To stand at the doors through which Ewald passed every day of his thirteen years of schooling was thought provoking. Riding the train from Potsdam to Brandenburg an der Havel and walks around the town under leaden November skies familiarized me with the environment in which von Kleist spent his first ten years in the army. Many of the building of his artillery regiments barracks remain intact, their facades unchanged from 1900. I spent several weeks in Hannover taking time from the archives to visit several of von Kleist's haunts such as the grounds of the *Militär-Reit-Institut (MRI)*. A half dozen of the red brick buildings still stand and the area where the outdoor riding arenas were are still identifiable. I have walked the park where he proposed to his wife and have bicycled through the former *MRI* hunting territory. I also have visited Cassel, Potsdam, Berlin, and Breslau, locations in which von Kleist served.

Biographical Methodology and Scope

To gain a deeper understanding of von Kleist and the officer corps to which he belonged, many questions must be asked. The overarching question of, what were the key influencing elements during von Kleist's formative years which together served to construct the foundation of Ewald von Kleist as a man and as an officer? To support the investigation which strives to answer this question I have identified seven of thematic areas have to guide this inquiry. A brief overview and amplifying information on each theme are presented to identify the focus and questions asked.

- German Army Systems and Processes

This theme strives to ask questions and make observations on several areas that appear to have had a strong effect on von Kleist and his officership, and indeed all officers. What were the controlling elements of army life in this era; that is what set the pace and performance of duties, and the rhythms of army life? What were the key elements of the officer accession process? What processes were used to evaluate officers' performance? What was the junior officer promotion system like and was there a difference between rank and officer responsibilities? What was daily life like for a junior officer in an artillery regiment? Where their duties or positions that were more influential for officer advancement?

- Officer Education, Training, and Experiences

A long-held belief by both Germans and others is that German officers were given high quality education and training in this period. As was previously shown, little study has been made in this area despite its likely significant influence on the beliefs and behavior of officers throughout their careers. A Biblical proverb states, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."⁵⁸ The significance of these formative educational experiences is hinted at by a World War I subordinate of General Hans von Seeckt, Major Koestring, who wrote to his mentor in 1926, "now they want to convert us finally and energetically to the republic. I fear that this will not work so quickly, for we officers of medium rank and younger officers have been educated in the German way and do not bother about

⁵⁸ Proverbs 22.6 King James Version.

parties...”⁵⁹ Early education and training appears to have significant and long-lasting effect and begs further investigation.

This theme investigates the types of education, training, and experiences a junior officer underwent during the foundational years of his career. What was the role of the *Kriegsschulen*? What role did the branch schools play, especially the artillery and cavalry schools? What was the *Kriegsakademie* educational process all about? How did the experiences junior officers had at the regimental level prepare them for war and what responsibility did they have in preparing soldiers under their command for war?

- People and Networks

The Wilhelmine Army at its core was a group of people task with the responsibility to protect the *Kaiser*/King and the Fatherland. As a hierarchical institution comprised of people, some individuals exert more influence and are more “important” than others. This theme seeks to identify the more important relationships von Kleist had with others individuals. Questions include: who were the key officers in von Kleist early career and how did they influence him as an officer? What influences did they have on his career? Recognition of von Kleist’s important peers is likewise a goal. The investigation also seeks to identify the members of von Kleist personal and professional networks and ascertain, if possible, the influence of these networks upon von Kleist’s first two decades as an officer. While connections are noted, the detailed tracking and critical analysis of von Kleist’s membership and positioning in various networks is generally beyond the scope of this work.

⁵⁹ Robert B. Kane, “The Hitlerian Oath of Loyalty of August 2, 1934: Origins, Consequences, and Significance” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California-Los Angeles, 1997), 113.

- Prussian-German Nobility

The mention of nobility or aristocracy seems to bring to many people's minds eye images of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table and Downton Abbey; the British aristocracy. (In this work, nobility, aristocracy, and the German *Adel* are used interchangeably.) It must be noted that the German nobility is very different from its British counterpart.⁶⁰ While the dissimilarities stem from many reasons, a key influence on their differentiation was the fact that the German nobility of the late nineteenth century had coalesced out of several hundred principalities, most with their own system of nobility. A further difference was due to the fact that the German nobility had not been enriched through the windfalls of colonial possessions like the English nobility. While there were some extremely wealthy German aristocratic families, the majority of Prussian nobility were not at this level of economic power. Amassing wealth on the scale of the English was thus not an expected byproduct of being ennobled in Prussia or the other German kingdoms.

Another importance to note about the Prusso-German nobility is the relatively flat hierarchy of aristocratic ranks. The royalty sat above the nobility and were a separate sub-class of the first Estate. Below the royalty sat the upper tier of the aristocracy. The titled nobility comprised only three primary ranks; *Graf* (count), *Freiherr* (baron), and *Ritter* (knight). Below this tier lay the largest portion of the aristocracy, the untitled nobility. Their ennoblement was only indicated by a "von," "von der," von dem," "zu," or "zur" preceding their family name. The distinction within the aristocracy was largely but not solely based one's rank but also on

⁶⁰ Members of the aristocracy hold verifiable ennobling documents from a sovereign that raised them or their families hereditarily to the noble class. All males of families with hereditary ennoblement remain noblemen throughout their lives. Women born into an ennobled family retain the membership so long as they remain unmarried or are married to an ennobled man. Women who marry out of the aristocracy, i.e., marry commoners, take on their husband's unennobled status. Women, noble or non-noble, who married ennobled men took on his level of ennoblement.

how early one's family had been ennobled. The further back in history, the more prestigious the family.⁶¹

The membership in and the influence of the Prusso-German aristocracy in the officer corps has been a topic of interest since before the German Unification of 1871 and remains one of interest. The nobility has, however, often been subjected to sweeping generalizations and significant negative stereotyping, frequently without solid evidential support.⁶² Also, the nobility has long been viewed as a narrowly homogeneous group sharing a tightly circumscribed band of political views, special interests, and economic stratum. Studies produced since the fall of the Berlin Wall, such as Stephan Malinowski's *Vom König zum Führer: Sozialer Niedergang und politische Radikalisierung im deutschen Adel zwischen Kaiserreich und NS-Staat* have begun to more deeply and objectively investigate the German nobility.⁶³ A significant work concerning the nobility and the military is Marcus Funck's *Feudales Kriegertum und militärische Professionalität. Der Adel im preußisch-deutschen Offizierskorps 1860-1935*.⁶⁴ Funck's highly

⁶¹ The author has not yet discovered an academic work in English which presents the history of or explains the workings of the system of German nobility.

⁶² See Stephan Malinowski, „Their Favorite Enemy: German Social Historians and the Prussian Nobility,” in *Imperial Germany Revisited: Continuing Debates and New Perspectives*, eds., Sven Oliver Müller and Cornelius Torp (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011), 141-156, for an excellent overview of the treatment of the nobility in post-war German studies.

⁶³ Stephan Malinowski, *Vom König zum Führer: Sozialer Niedergang und politische Radikalisierung im deutschen Adel zwischen Kaiserreich und NS-Staat* (Frankfurt am Main, Akademie Verlag, 2003), (From King to Führer: Social Decline and Political Radicalization in the German Nobility between Empire and National Socialist State. For a detailed overview of this work in English see, Stephan Malinowski, “From King to Führer: The German Aristocracy and the Nazi Movement,” in *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* XXVII, no. 1 (May 2005): 5-28. Since 1991, the only scholarly English manuscript on German nobility after World War I, appears to be Shelly Baranowski, *The Sanctity of Rural Life: Nobility, Protestantism and Nazism in Weimar Prussia* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). The only English language work on the German aristocracy during the *Kaiserreich* appears to be Shearer David Bowman's comparative work, *Masters & Lords: Mid-19th Century U.S. Planters and Prussian Junkers* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁶⁴ Marcus C. Funck, “*Feudales Kriegertum und militärische Professionalität. Der Adel im preußisch-deutschen Offizierskorps 1860-1935*” (Ph.D. dissertation, Technische Universität Berlin, 2003). This work has been scheduled to be published by De Gruyter Oldenbourg for the past decade with the most recent publishing date scheduled for March 2022. A recent check of the publisher shows that the work has apparently been removed from its “to be published” list. This manuscript was listed as one of the volumes in the *Elitenwandel in der Moderne / Elites and Modernity* series initiated in 2009, under the guidance of Heinz Reif. Both Malinowski and Schiller were students

detailed work investigates the process of military modernization in Prussia and Germany between 1860-1935 by examining the process by which noble “feudal warriorism” was replaced by a new “military professionalism.” Four parts trace “the twists and turns and detours of this process, [and] the multifaceted mutual relations and influences of the officer conceptions that are differentiated herein.”⁶⁵

The work at hand thus seeks to investigate the influence the nobility had on von Kleist. First, how was he personally influenced by being a member of the nobility? What was the background of his ennobled family and what role did that play in Ewald’s upbringing and decision to enter the army? How did von Kleist’s membership in the nobility effect his formative years? How ubiquitous and influential were noble officers in von Kleist’s formative officer years? Special attention is given to a numerical and percentage contextual comparisons of noble and non-noble officers in order to understand the influence of these groups.

In most works in which nobility are mentioned, only at the introductory mention of an aristocratic individual is their full title and name given, e.g., Baron Manfred von Richthofen. In subsequent reference only the last name is used. In order to maintain the desired level of awareness of the nobility and aristocratic officers and the ratio of title to untitled nobility, individuals will be initially identified by full name and title and subsequent mentions will generally continue to include title and family name or at a minimum the “von” and family name. Thus, Ewald von Kleist appears as von Kleist throughout the work. Members of the royalty likewise retain their titles on subsequent references.

of Professor Heinz Reif at Technische Universität Berlin. Professor Funck generously provided this author with a digital copy of the publishing-ready manuscript during a research trip to Berlin in 2019. Both Malinowski and Funck were students of Heinz Reif at Technische Universität Berlin.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 6.

- Religion

In a 1946 interview, von Kleist gave the reason for his Hitler directed retirement in February 1938, as largely due to religious reason. He stated, “I withdrew [retired] from the army because of the attitudes of the National Socialist Party toward the church and other religious questions and because I spoke up for religion too much.”⁶⁶ Von Kleist went on to say, “I was an outspoken advocate of religion and I issued a directive in my command that the young soldier must attend church services and be religious. I received an order from OKW that I should retract such an order. I declared that I would not do so.”

Given this and other indicators, such as membership in the *Johanniter-Orden* (Order of St. John), a Protestant religious order, von Kleist’s Protestant faith appears to have been of significant importance in his life. Thus, inquiry into von Kleist’s religious beliefs and practices are part of this study. Specific questions are: what were von Kleist’s religious beliefs? How did they influence his life and the formative years of his army career?

- Economics

Junior German Army officers were not paid well during the Wilhelmine period. Many *Leutnants*, especially those in the cavalry and artillery regiments, required supplemental financial support from their families to avoid going into debt. Given that von Kleist appears to have come from a financially middle to upper middle-class family it seems likely that finances had some effect on him and his career. Thus, the following questions are investigated. Did von Kleist’s familial financial situation impact his decisions when entering the army? Was von Kleist’s

⁶⁶ Leon Goldensohn and Robert Gellately, *The Nuremberg Interviews* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 330-331. In February 1938, von Kleist was commander of *Wehrkreis VIII* (Military District VIII), headquartered in Breslau.

financial situation during these formative years and did it effect his officership or his career goals?

- Horses, Equestrianism, and Hunting

Horses were a ubiquitous part of the Wilhelmine Army. By 1908, the army maintained over 100,000 horses on active-duty. Horses appear to be a central element not only for cavalry regiments but for artillery regiment that at the time were all horse drawn. Yet little on the influences of horses, the requirement for equestrian knowledge and skill is mentioned. For von Kleist, who joined an artillery regiment and thus was in a unit in which horses played a key role, this level of interaction with horses appears to not have been enough. In the aforementioned post-war interviews, von Kleist in response to a question about his time at the military riding institute stated, “Horses were my whole life at the that time—my entire passion was horses.”⁶⁷ Given this heavy interest in and interaction with horses, a better understanding of von Kleist’s horse and equestrian pursuits and efforts is sought. If von Kleist liked horses so much, why did he not initially join a cavalry regiment where the horse culture was stronger than an artillery regiment? How did von Kleist pursue equestrian knowledge? What role did horses play on-duty and off-duty in this formative portions of von Kleist’s career? What was Ewald’s experience at the *Militär-Reit-Institut* like?

In addition to equestrian events such as high-jumping, horse racing, and steeple chasing, many officers appear to have engaged in mounted hunting events, such as fox hunting. Likewise, while rarely mentioned there seemed to be a large wild game hunting culture within the officer corps. Information indicates that von Kleist participated in both mounted and dismounted hunting. In order to further investigate, this study will attempt to answer the

⁶⁷ Ibid., 340.

following. Was there a hunting culture within the German Army officer corps? If there was, to what level did Ewald participate in both mounted and dismounted hunting? If there was a hunting culture amongst the officer corps, what purpose did it serve?

CHAPTER 1 - AT THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW CENTURY

December 31, 1899. With a little imagination one can easily envision the *Silvesterfeier*, actually the *Jahrhundertfeier*, celebrated by German army officers in every garrison's *Offizierskasino* across the German Reich. It was an evening of merriment to ring in the new century. The scenes centering on the *Kasino* with officers in their glittering uniforms, their wives, fiancés, and girlfriends in their beautiful gowns, all enjoying the sumptuous food and drinking the bubbling *Sekt*. The regiment's musical ensemble playing classical and popular music and the dancing to Strauss waltzes among others filled the evening.¹

In the old provincial capital of Brandenburg an der Havel, three army regiments garrisoned in the town celebrated the ringing in of the new century.²

The year 1900 began in the old spa town and capital of Brandenburg "in the traditional manner" - as the leading local daily newspaper, the "Brandenburger Anzeiger", reported on Tuesday, January 2. Families sat "gathered around the steaming punch bowl", the churches were full of visitors on New Year's Eve, and the dance-loving people visited the numerous "entertainment establishments". At midnight, as the new century was heralded by all the church towers in the city, the people were in the streets. The police found "no disturbances". The weather was mild, with a light south wind and intermittent rain, in short: like so many a New Year's Eve without snow and ice. Special celebrations at the turn of the century had not been arranged by the city leadership, and only the garrison made itself more noticeable by supreme command of the Kaiser: the music corps and

¹ *Silvesterfeier* (New Year's Eve celebration), *Jahrhundertfeier* (turn of the century celebration), *Offizierskasino* (officer's mess or officer's club) each regiment maintained a building which housed the officers mess where officers took their meals and enjoyed off-duty diversions at the bar, billiards room, smoking lounge, reading room, etc., *Sekt* (sparkling wine, champagne).

² Brandenburg an der Havel, was home to the *Füsilier-Regiment Prinz Heinrich von Preußen (Brandenburgisches) Nr. 35*, *Kürassier-Regiment Kaiser Nikolaus I. von Rußland (Brandenburgisches) Nr. 6*, and *Feldartillerie-Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3*.

bandsmen of the Fusilier Regiment No. 35 "Prince Heinrich" marched through the city in the morning of the New Year's Day to "wake up" with resounding play, while in the parade formation from the infantry barracks on Magdeburger Strasse, the "35ers" had lined up for regimental roll call with guidons and regimental standards. A formation of neighboring cuirassiers also participated. Afterwards the regiment marched in formation to the services, depending upon confession, protestant or catholic. Afterwards a rollcall with the issue of the day's orders took place on the Neustädtischer Markt at 11.30 a.m. At the same time, the 100-shot salute from a battery of field artillery thundered down from the Marienberg into the city. Now the new century could begin!³

It was a wonderful time to be an officer in the *Kaiser's* Army. The last war was a distant memory for the older officers, a non-existent one for anyone born after the out-going century's mid-point. No war threatened and the army, especially its officer corps, was well respected by a majority of Germans and, as importantly, by Germany's potential enemies. And to be an officer in the army meant one was near the top of the social pyramid, an army commission being highly sought after and respected.⁴ No less than thirty-six officers bearing the von Kleist name would have experienced the euphoria of the evening and the shared in the grand thoughts of Germany's future in the new century.⁵

Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist was however, not yet one of them. For Ewald though, this *Silvester* was no doubt filled with two significant expectations; successfully passing his *Abiturprüfung* (school leaving examination) which loomed less than a month away and his entry into the army in a little over three months. The latter event would be the first step down the path of a military career that would last more than fifty-four years for Ewald.

³ Wolfgang Kusior, *Die Stadt Brandenburg im Jahrhundertrückblick* (Berlin: Verlag Bernd Neddermeyer, 2000.) 7.

⁴ Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640-1945* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 237.

⁵ Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preußischen Armee und des XIII. (Königlich Württembergischen) Armeekorps für 1900* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1900), 1225. Hereafter, *Rangliste and publishing date*. This official rank listing indexes 36 von Kleist officers, 31 officers serving on active duty and 5 as either reserve officers or *Landwehr* officers. It records that: 1 *General der Infanterie*; 2 *Generalmajore*; 1 *Oberst*; 3 *Majore*; 9 *Hauptleute*; 1 *Rittmeister*, 9 *Oberstleutnante*; and 11 *Leutnante* were on the army officer roles as of 7 May 1900.

This chapter pictures the German Army in the period 1871-1900 from the same vantage point as Ewald would have seen it in the spring of 1900. A brief review of the key components and factors effecting the German Army during the last three decades of the nineteenth century will provide a contextual understanding of the army that Ewald entered as a nineteen-year-old *Fahnenjunker* (officer candidate) on 3 March 1900. The focus period is from 1871 until 1900. This period encompasses the key elements of the integration of the Prussian, Bavarian, Saxon and Württemberg armies into a singular German Army, the assessments and readjustments based on the 1866 and 1870/71 campaigns, the growth of personnel by over twenty-five percent, a wave of militarily useful technological developments, the significant increase in the number and power of the bourgeois class within German society and Wilhelm II's ascension to the throne.

The German Army of the period was a complex consortium of variously sized semi-interdependent groups. To begin the investigation, the first section of this chapter focuses on four areas within the inter-war *Kaiserheer* (Imperial Army). Specifically investigated are: the unification of the four armies, Prussia, Bavaria, Württemberg and Saxony, into the German Army; the relationship of the *Kaiser* to his army; the officer corps and finally; the army's organization, specifically its main constituencies of the corps commands, the *Großer Generalstab* (Great General Staff), the branches (i.e., infantry, cavalry and artillery). A look at the influence and importance of the regimental commanders will conclude the first section. Beyond the scope of this chapter are other elements of the German Army such as the Non-Commissioned Officer Corps, the soldiers, the Reserve or *Landwehr* components, the Cadet Corps or the external influences on the army such as the *Reichstag*, arms manufactures or the railroads.

I. Unification of the German Army

By 1871, armies of different German states had been periodically fighting alongside one another for well over a century and a half.⁶ In the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, all but the southern German states of Bavaria, Württemberg and Baden joined Prussia in the defeat of Austrian Army at Königgrätz. During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71, all of the German states allied with Prussia to fight France. The German Unification of 1871 and its accompanying *Die Verfassung des Deutschen Reichs* (the Constitution of the German Empire) ensured the participation of all of the German states in future wars under the control of the Prussian Army.⁷

The function and control of an army relies heavily on several fundamental areas: its peacetime and wartime command authorities, its budget, and its administrative organization. The Imperial Constitution provided a number of foundational laws and governing principles which directly affected the future of the *Deutsches Heer* (German Army).⁸ Article 4 placed the

⁶ Peter H. Wilson, *German Armies: War and German Politics, 1648-1806* (London: Routledge, 1998.), 142. Prussia's first coalition war with a fellow German state occurred during the Siege of Stralsund ending 24 December 1715, when Prussia allied with Saxony and Denmark against Sweden.

⁷ Gordon A. Craig, *Germany 1866-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 11-39. The Unification of Germany took place in several phases. As a result of Prussia's victory over Austria in 1866, Prussia was able to consolidate its power and place itself at the head of the North German Confederation. The Confederation brought into the new federal state the 21 sovereign entities of: the Kingdoms of Prussia and Saxony; the Grand Duchies of Hesse, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Oldenburg, Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach; the Duchies of Anhalt, Brunswick, Saxe-Altenburg, Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, Saxe-Meiningen; the Principalities of Lippe, Reuss-Gera, Reuss-Greiz, Schaumburg-Lippe, Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt, Schwarzburg-Sondershausen, Waldeck and Pyrmont; and the Free and Hansiatic Cities of Bremen, Hamburg, and Lübeck. Prior to this, Prussia had annexed five former military opponents: the Kingdom of Hannover; the Electorate of Hesse-Kassel; the Duchy of Nassau; the Free City of Frankfurt; and the Hesse-Homburg area of Hesse Darmstadt. In November 1870, four more sovereign entities joined the Confederation: the Kingdoms of Bavaria and Württemberg, the Grand Duchy of Baden, and the remaining territory of Hesse-Darmstadt. On 10 December 1870, the Reichstag of the North German Confederation voted to assume the name *Deutsches Reich* (German Empire) for the new confederation. Austria was excluded from the Confederation. Thus, since 1866, thirty sovereign Germanic states had unified into one German empire. The new German Empire also had two imperial territories taken from France, Alsace and Lorraine.

⁸ Ernst Rudolf Huber, ed., *Dokumente zur Deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte* [Documents on German Constitutional History], vol. 2, 1851-1918 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1964), 289-305. Section XI *Reichskriegswesen* containing Articles 57 to 68 plus the *Schlussbestimmung zum XI. Abschnitt* are found on pages 301-304. While *Deutsches Heer* was the official name of the "German Army," the term *Reichsheer* (Imperial Army) is also used and can be considered

entire *Militairwesen des Reichs* (Imperial military establishment) under the jurisdiction of the Reich.⁹ Article 8 gave direction to the *Bundesrat* (Federal Council) on the formation of committees which include *Landheer* (state army), *Festungen* (fortresses) and *Seewesen* (sea establishments). Section XI. *Reichskriegswesen* (Imperial War Establishment) and its 12 articles provided specific information regarding German's land forces.¹⁰ The Constitution left much room for interpretation by and independence of action in the nine *Kontingente* (contingents).¹¹ But to better understand the actualities of the interpretation and the amount of independence exercised, a closer look at the three fundamental control mechanisms needs to be undertaken.¹²

Command authorities are critical for the control of an army whether at peace or war. Without clearly delineated authorities and chains of command armies quickly become dysfunctional and unable to effectively train, mobilize, or fight. The Constitution in Article 63 clearly established the *Kaiser* as the supreme commander (Commander-in-Chief) of all *Deutsche Truppen* (German troops) during peacetime and wartime. Under the *Kaiser*, the entire *Landmacht* (land force) of the Reich was to form a single *Heer* (army). As an exception, Bavaria maintained full control over its army personnel, but only during peacetime. The article

to be an equivalent term. Frank Buchholz, Joe Robinson, and Janet Robinson, *The Great War Dawning: German and its Army at the Start of World War I* (Vienna: Verlag Militaria GmbH, 2013), 99. Buchholz, Johnson, and Johnson record that both Kaiser Wilhelm I and Chancellor von Bismarck favored the term *Kaiserheer*.

⁹ Huber, 291. *Verfassung des Deutschen Reiches* (1871), Article 2, subsection 14; “14) *das Militairwesen des Reichs und die Kriegsmarine*,”. “*Militairwesen des Reiches*” is translated as “Imperial military establishment.” Of significance is the use of a broad term for the land forces rather than “army” or “armies.” The “military establishment” stands in sharp contrast to the specific term of “*Kriegsmarine*” (Navy). The broad term likely was chosen to ensure inclusion of all of the components of the multiple armies, that is: the active-duty armies, the reserve army elements, the *Landwehr* and all other associated land force components. Also of note, is the fact that only Prussia had a *Kriegsmarine* at the time of unification.

¹⁰ Huber, 301-304. Section 11, Articles 57 through 68 pertain to Germany's land force.

¹¹ *Kontingente* are the army formations of the following formerly independently sovereign states: Baden, Bavaria, Brunswick, Hessen, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Oldenburg, Saxony, Württemberg.

¹² Independent and sovereign *Kontingente* working and fighting together has a long history in the German speaking territories tracing its roots to the Holy Roman Empire and before. Echoes from the ghosts of this past can still be heard after 1870 and their influences can still be perceived.

also gave the *Kaiser* both the responsibility and authority to ensure that all elements of the *Deutsche Heer* were combat ready. Under this article, the *Kaiser* had full authority over organization, training, and equipping as well as selection of armaments and qualification requirements for officers.

Article 64 further strengthened the *Kaiser's* authority over the officer corps by requiring all general officers appointed as Commanding General of a force comprised of units of multiple contingents as well as all officers who commanded troops of more than one contingent to swear an oath of allegiance to the *Kaiser*. Furthermore, all officers and soldiers appointed by the *Kaiser* were required to swear an oath to him. Officers and soldiers appointed by the sovereign heads of the Federation, however, continued to swear their oaths to their respective sovereigns. The article allowed the *Kaiser*, without restriction, to reassign officers within, out of, or into any of the contingents as he deemed necessary. This authority empowered the *Kaiser*, as the central authority, to control all officer assignments. This permitted the best and brightest to be moved to where they were needed within the entire *Reichsheer* (Imperial Army). Conversely, it authorized the replacement of unqualified, undesirable, or underperforming officers of any contingent without the consent of their sworn sovereign. While the authority of the *Kaiser* with regard to overall army command authority and officer assignment is clear, other command authorities not expressly stipulated in the Constitution fostered a less than clear chain of command. Specifically, the *Sonderrecht* (special status) of Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg allowed these kingdoms to retain large amounts of control over their contingents. This was the result of a peaceful unification from above in which Prussia allowed the joining sovereign states to hold some of their previous rights and authority rather than a forced regime change with the winner dictating terms to the vanquished.

The movement towards a unified, homogeneous *Deutsches Heer* command authority was slowed by the *Sonderrecht* of the three kingdoms which were joined to Prussia in the unified Germany. Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg negotiated individual treaties with Prussia prior to the creation of a unified Germany. In the military sphere, these negotiations permitted the three kingdoms to retain their own war ministries.¹³ Germany established no combined or Imperial war ministry, rather the Prussian War Ministry served as the de facto war ministry. Along with Prussia, each of the three other war ministries, oversaw its contingent's administration. Each was responsible to its respective *Landtag* and not the *Reichstag*. As prescribed in extra-constitutional decrees, the three war ministries were not allowed complete independence of action, but looked to the Prussian War Ministry which set the standards they were expected to follow. Of note, one area of independence that remained with the three kingdoms was military justice. With the publication of the Constitution, Prussian military law went into effect for the entire *Reich*, including the military penal code of 3 April 1845, the military criminal court order of 3 April 1845, and the regulation on the honor courts of 20 July 1843. While Article 61 required the *Kontingente* to adopt the Prussian military penal code, military criminal court orders, and the regulations on honor courts, the three kingdoms retained their own military judicial system and judicial authority over their own troops. If the command authorities were somewhat convoluted, the military budget was somewhat less complicated.

Armies need money and the entity that controls the army budget has a large influence if not actual control over the army during both the peacetime and wartime. Article 58 stipulated that all expenses of the *Kriegswesen* (war establishment) were to be borne equally by all of the

¹³ Howard, 366.

States of the Federation, except Bavaria.¹⁴ Articles 58 and 62 made clear the centralization and control of the army budget at the imperial level. While each state paid its fair share based on population, any end of year surplus was not refunded to the states but held in the imperial budget. Only Bavaria enjoyed a budgetary *Sonderrecht*. While responsible for paying its fair share, the allocation of army funds was under Bavarian control and any additional army expenditures as well as any surplus remained under the purview of the Bavarian War Ministry. As before unification, the army budget lay outside the control of the *Reichstag* and with the *Kaiser*, his chancellor and the *Bundesrat*. The constitution, in Article 60, did however empower the *Reichstag* to set the army's peacetime strength.¹⁵ Article 62 set the minimum annual budget based on a specified amount per man. With the "power of the purse" retained, the *Kaiser* largely shaped his army as he saw fit.

The final element exercising significant influence over an army is its administrative organization, its bureaucracy. These elements oversee the day-to-day operations of the army, the organizations which: formulate, codify and disseminate guidance and directives; develop doctrine and tactics; oversee the accession, training, and utilization of personnel; investigate, test, and field arms and equipment; plan and conduct unit level exercises; and inspect and judge the combat readiness of army units. Article 63 provided clear guidance in this area. The article unmistakably established the preeminence of the Prussian Army and its lead role in creating an *einheitliches Heer* (uniform or homogeneous army). The regimental formations of the entire *Deutsche Heer* were consecutively numbered but were allowed to retain their traditional names

¹⁴ Burt Estes Howard, *The German Empire* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1913), 390-393. Bavaria enjoyed a *Sonderrecht* (special status or special right) in the *Verfassung des Deutschen Reiches* (1871) in several areas. Specifically, the King of Bavaria maintained control over the Bavarian Army during peacetime and Bavaria was allowed independent control over its military budget and spend its "lump sum" military budget allocation from the Imperial budget as it saw fit. See Howard for specific details of Bavaria's *Sonderrecht*.

¹⁵ Per the *Verfassung*, the budget of the *Deutsche Heer* was fixed at 225 Thaler for each man per the annual peacetime manpower strength as set by the *Reichstag* in accordance with Article 60.

parenthetically. The basic colors and patterns of the *Königlich Preußischen Armee* (Royal Prussian Army) served as the model for all uniforms. The *betreffenden Kontingentsherrn* (responsible contingent commanders) determined their contingent's insignia. Finally, in order to maintain standardization in the administration, maintenance, armament and equipment of all the divisions of troops of the *Deutsche Heer*, all Prussian Army orders were forwarded to the *Kommandeuren der übrigen Kontingente* (commanders of the other contingents) for implementation.¹⁶

Article 63 goes on to direct all commanders of the *Kontingente* to implement all orders issued by the Prussian Army to ensure the *unentbehrliche Einheit* (essential uniformity) in the areas of administration, provisioning, armaments, and equipment for *aller Truppentheile des Deutschen Heeres* (all troop formations of the German Army). Adding strength to the Prussian Army's administrative dominance was the *Kaiser's* authority to determine the organizational structure of all army formations. While the *Kaiser* became the army Commander-in-Chief in 1871, Wilhelm I either did not want or could not completely remove the *Kontingente* sovereigns from all connection, responsibility, or influence over their respective army units. Article 66 allowed that when nothing to the contrary was stipulated by particular conventions, the sovereign heads of the Federation or the senates retained the appointment authority for the officers of their respective contingents, subject to the restriction of Article 64. The sovereigns were the titular Commander-in-Chiefs of all the units belonging to their territories, and enjoyed the honors connected therewith. They had the right of inspection, to receive the regular reports and announcements of changes, as well as timely information regarding governmental publication of all promotions or nominations among their respective troops. While allowing the sovereigns to

¹⁶ This is due to the constitutional conflict in which Prussia did not have absolute authority over the entire state.

retain titular control of the land forces contributed by each of the kingdoms would not lead to any significant disputes or conflicts, the Prussian accommodation in this area was yet another de-synergizing element the *Reichsheer* was forced to accommodate.

Germany's 1871 unification required the uniting of the German state's various land forces. However, the individually negotiated pre-unification treaties and the *Verfassung des Deutschen Reichs* failed to mandate the full unification of Germany's new army. While the *Verfassung* clearly defined the command authority of the *Kaiser* and established the Prussian Army as the author and pattern for all doctrine, administrative directives and practices, military legal regulations, equipment, arms and uniforms, it fell well short of directing full integration. Specifically, the three kingdoms were allowed to keep their war ministries, their authority over internal personnel matters, judicial authorities and their own General Staffs. In Bavaria's case, they additionally retained peacetime control over its land forces, full budget control and its own *Kriegsakademie*.¹⁷ The largest shortcoming of the new *Reichsheer*, however, was the lack of a unified command below the *Kaiser*, since the failure to form an overall German War Ministry allowed several powerful and competing elements to maintain their hands on the levers that controlled the army. Specifically, the *preußische Kriegsministerium* (Prussian War Ministry) and to a smaller extent the three kingdom's war ministries, the *Militärkabinett* (Military Cabinet), the *Großer Generalstab* (Great General Staff), *Armee-Inspekteure* (Army Inspector Generals), the *Waffengattungen General-Inspekteure* (branch inspector generals) and the corps

¹⁷ Janet Robinson and Joe Robinson, *Handbook of Imperial Germany* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2009), 129. Prussian, Württemberg and Saxony sent their aspiring General Staff officers to the Prussian *Kriegsakademie* in Berlin for training. Bavaria retained its *Kriegsakademie* in München for the training of its General Staff officers.

commanders retained influence within specific elements of the army, elements which often overlapped responsibilities and areas of authority.¹⁸

Despite these powerful elements exercising power often at cross purposes or in conflict, little changed with regard to command authorities, the army budget, or the administrative organization between 1871 until 1900. No significant amendments to the Constitution were enacted and no imperial decrees substantially altered the 1871 arrangements. Thus, stasis was maintained for the last three decades of the century, neither allowing a divergence nor initiating a convergence of the Prussian Army and the nine *Kontingente* that constituted the *Deutsche Heer*.

II. The Kaiser and his Army

By the turn of the century, and in the twenty-nine years since unification, the army had sworn allegiance to three *Kaisers*. Wilhelm I served as the Commander-in-Chief for seventeen years. His successor, Friedrich III, reigned only ninety-nine days before succumbing to cancer.¹⁹ By 1900, Wilhelm II had been *Kaiser* for a dozen years, sufficient time for the Commander-in-Chief to stamp his mark on the army, a mark that was as complex and incongruous as Wilhelm's own personality.

¹⁸ Hein, Leutnant, *Das kleine Buch vom deutschen Heere* (Kiel und Leipzig: Verlag von Lipsius & Tischler, 1901) 24 ff. The *Reichsheer* was initially divided into five, by 1914 eight, *Armee-Inspektionen* (Army Inspectorates) headed by a general officer, the *Inspekteur* (Inspector). Each *Armee-Inspektionen* was assigned from two to five *Armee-Korps* (army corps). During peacetime, the *Armee Inspektuere* were responsible for monitoring and supervision of the subordinate corps on behalf of the Kaiser but they were without leadership duties. The *Inspektuere* were especially involved during their subordinate units' annual field maneuvers. During wartime, the *Armee-Inspektionen* were mobilized as army-level headquarters with their peacetime subordinate corps as their mobilized fielded forces. In addition to the *Armee-Inspektionen*, there were seven *Waffengattungen General-Inspektionen* (branch general inspectorates) each headed by a general officer *Inspekteur*: infantry; cavalry; field artillery; foot artillery; engineers, combat engineers and fortresses; and military education and training. These inspectorates were responsible for branch specific doctrinal and technical oversight.

¹⁹ Robinson, *Handbook*, 72.

As a twelve-year-old he had watched his father and grandfather ride in the parade celebrating the victory over France.²⁰ Despite a withered left arm, the future *Kaiser* aspired to become a soldier, like his father before him. This desire ensured that Wilhelm, at least in his early years as *Kaiser*, was favorably disposed towards the army. Despite the fact that Wilhelm chose to wear an admiral's uniform on his inaugural appearance after ascending the throne, the army welcomed him.²¹

Wilhelm quickly showed an active hand with the army by accepting the request for retirement from *Generalfeldmarschall* Helmuth von Moltke, Chief of the German General Staff, less than two months after becoming *Kaiser*.²² Wilhelm chose General der *Kavallerie* Alfred Graf von Waldersee to succeed von Moltke. During the years preceding Wilhelm's ascension to the throne, von Waldersee had become a personal friend and military mentor to the heir apparent. Wilhelm and his wife often dined with von Waldersee and his American-born wife, Mary.²³ Like Wilhelm, von Waldersee was aggressive, opinionated and active.

Within the first year of his becoming Commander-in-Chief, the army felt the effects of the *Kaiser's* energetic personality. Wilhelm influenced the retirements of many over-age in grade officers, both a needed action and a welcomed upward movement opportunity for younger officers.²⁴ The *Kaiser* further ingratiated himself with the army by more often than not appearing in uniform, making complementary references to the army in his public speeches, his

²⁰ Craig, *Germany*, 228.

²¹ Martin Kitchen, *The German Officer Corps, 1890-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 16.

²² Walter Görlitz, *History of the German General Staff: 1657-1945* (New York: Praeger, 1953), 115. Von Moltke, in 1888, was 88 years old and had served as Chief of the Prussian/German General Staff for 31 years. While beyond the scope of this work, any consideration of the German Army must address the significant and prolonged influence of von Moltke, the Elder.

²³ Isabel Hull, *The Entourage of Kaiser Wilhelm II 1888-1918* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 210. See footnote 14 for a detailed description of Wilhelm and von Waldersee's pre-1888 interactions.

²⁴ Kitchen, *Officers*, 16.

regular visits to army units, and his frequenting of Guards regiments in and around Berlin.²⁵ The *Kaiser*, with his pro-army stance gained much approval from all levels within the army.

The *Kaiser* further concentrated on and prioritized military matters at the expense of civil ones as his weekly schedule showed. While meeting only twice weekly with members of his *Civillkabinett* (civilian cabinet), he met once each week with the *Chef des Militärkabinetts* (Chief of the Military Cabinet), the *Kriegsminister* (Minister of War) and the *Chef des Großen Generalstabes* (Chief of the Great General Staff).²⁶ Additionally, Wilhelm enlarged, reorganized and elevated the importance of the *militärisches Gefolge* (military entourage) and renamed it his *Hauptquartier* (Headquarters). Strictly speaking, the *Hauptquartier* comprised the military officers who performed personal duties for the *Kaiser* and included generals *à la suite*, general adjutants and *Flügel-Adjutanten* (aides-de-camps).²⁷ The *Hauptquartier* also included the *Chef des Militärkabinetts* and *Chef des Marinekabinetts* (Chief of the Naval Cabinet) and their staffs.²⁸

First established as the administrative element to support the Prussian king, the *Militärkabinett* was relegated to a significantly less influential position by the Prussian Army reforms of the early nineteenth century. In the interim, the *Kriegsminister* regained his primacy as the key military advisor to the Prussian king only to be supplanted during the Wars of German Unification by the *Chef des Großen Generalstabes*. Wilhelm's inclusion of the *Militärkabinett*

²⁵ Kitchen, *Officers*, 16.

²⁶ Hull, *Entourage*, 31.

²⁷ Hull, *Entourage*, 175. Generals *à la suite* had no official position within the army but were attached to the *militärisches Gefolge* and served the *Kaiser* personally. As a matter of custom, generals of one monarch were retained *à la suite* by his successors. However, only generals selected by the current monarch performed duties. *Rangliste 1900*, 5-8. By 1900, the *militärisches Gefolge* contained eleven *General-Adjutanten*, (*Generalfeldmarschall* to *Generalleutnant*); eight *Generale a la suite* (*Generalleutnanten* and *Generalmajore*); twelve *Flügel-Adjutanten* (*Oberst* to *Hauptmann*); and eleven *Generale a la suite* of former Kaisers. All told there were forty-two officers, thirty of them general officers in Wilhelm II's 1900 *militärisches Gefolge*.

²⁸ *Rangliste 1900*, 8. In 1900, the *Militärkabinett* had seven officers assigned to it.

within the *Hauptquartier* restored the *Chef des Militärkabinetts*' position as an important, if not the key military advisor, to the *Kaiser*. A widening of responsibility in 1885, placed all army personnel matters requiring the *Kaiser's* approval under the purview of the *Militärkabinett* further increasing its power.

The *Chef des Militärkabinetts*, the *Kriegsminister* and the *Chef des Großen Generalstabes* all vied for power within the senior level of monarchical-military relations. None of the three senior military positions were controlled or significantly influenced by the Chancellor, the *Reichstag*, or each other since all reported directly to the *Kaiser*. Without a clearly established hierarchy, a line of authority below the *Kaiser*, or a clearly delineated statutory responsibility, the power of each position rested on the personality of the individual and his relationship with the *Kaiser*. Thus, over the last three decades of the nineteenth century, the power balance between the three senior army leaders shifted often. From 1871 until his retirement in 1890, *Generalfeldmarschall* von Moltke, as the *Chef des Großen Generalstabes* held the favored position. Von Moltke's replacement, *General der Kavallerie* von Waldersee, was *Kaiser* Wilhelm II's most trusted and thus, most powerful advisor largely due to his personal relationship with Waldersee which pre-dated Wilhelm's ascension to the throne. When von Waldersee fell out of favor and was replaced in 1891, the power shifted to *Chef des Militärkabinetts*, *General der Infanterie* Wilhelm von Hanke, and remained there through the turn of the century.²⁹ All five *Kriegsminister* from 1888-1900, seemed to remain in third place when it came to influencing Wilhelm, yet each benefitted from direct contact with the *Kaiser* during the regular weekly meetings.

²⁹ Annika Mombauer, *Helmuth Von Moltke and the Origins of the First World War* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 33. *General der Infanterie* Wilhelm von Hanke served as *Chef des Militärkabinetts* from 1888-1901.

But as the three top army leaders and other senior army leadership came into closer contact with Wilhelm, they were quickly disabused of their hopes that the new *Kaiser* would be a strong and sagacious military leader. The shallowness of his military acumen and his intolerance for military advice contrary to his own opinion did not bode well. Army leaders quickly learned that their new Commander-in-Chief was more concerned with appearances, both his and his army's, than with his army's war-making capabilities.

During the autumn 1890 *Kaisermanöver* (emperor's maneuvers), Wilhelm badly handled the army corps he commanded. Ineptitude caused him to maneuver his forces such that two divisions were separated by a river; subsequently, his corps was defeated. During the after-maneuver critique, *Chef des Großen Generalstabes*, General von Waldersee, pointedly criticized the *Kaiser's* mishandling of his corps.³⁰ Wilhelm blamed von Waldersee and the maneuver for being poorly set up. The *Chef des Großen Generalstabes'* days were numbered and in January 1891, four months after criticizing the *Kaiser's* leadership, von Waldersee was demoted to corps command. Wilhelm's actions clearly demonstrated that even a close personal friendship with the *Kaiser* didn't protect one from the Commander-in-Chief's inability to tolerate criticism, especially criticism of his military competence.³¹ Senior army leaders took notice and in subsequent years "arranged" the maneuvers so that the *Kaiser's* forces would win.

While it is easy to criticize the *Kaiser's* often superficial, amateurish, and egocentric approach to leading his army, there were times when Wilhelm correctly assessed the changes needed to maintain a strong army. Illustrative of this is the *Erlass* (decree) of 29 March 1892 in which the *Kaiser* declared,

³⁰ Kitchen, *Officers*, 86-88.

³¹ Hull, *Entourage*, 213.

“The rise in the people’s level of education makes it possible to widen the social circles from which recruitment to the corps of officers can be considered. It is no longer nobility of birth alone that can claim the privilege of furnishing the Army with its officers: nobility of character has at all times inspired the corps of officers and must be maintained there without diminution. But this will only be possible if officer-cadets are drawn from quarters in which nobility of character is the unquestioned ideal. As I see it, the future of My Army lies in the hands not only in the offspring of the country’s noble families and of the sons of My worthy officers and civil servants, who ancient tradition has made the chief pillars of the corps of officers, but also in the hands of sons in whom respectable bourgeois families have planted and cultivated a love for their King and Country, a warm feeling toward the profession of arms and a sense of Christian morality.”³²

If this *Erllass* was an indicator of a more liberal minded *Kaiser*, then another 1892 episode contradicted that notion. Only after being reminded of the 1874 Press Law and Article 27 of the Constitution was Wilhelm dissuaded from issuing an *Erllass* which would have prohibited officers from having any contact with newspapers. Feeling the need to suppress any and all negative comments, the *Kaiser* essentially muzzled his officers on 13 June 1894, when he ordered that officers were to be tried before either a court martial or honor tribunal if they were found to have published offensive statements in the press.³³ The *Kaiser* remained ever vigilant with regard to the army, especially its officers.

After the initial period of turbulence, during which the army leadership made their assessments and adjusted their interactions with the new *Kaiser*, the relationship stabilized. During the latter half of the century’s final decade, the army had to share the *Kaiser*’s time and interest with the rapidly growing *Kaiserliche Marine* (Imperial Navy). The establishment of the *Marinekabinett* in 1889 and Wilhelm’s growing interest in the nautical service undoubtedly took time away from the army. But by 1900, the *Kaiser*’s focus returned to the army as he committed

³² Karl Demeter, *The German Officer-Corps in Society and State: 1650-1945* (New York and Washington: Praeger, 1965), 25.

³³ Demeter, 168. *AKO* (*Allerhöchste Kabinett Order*) dated 13 June 1894.

army elements to China to crush the Boxer Rebellion. This was to be the army's first combat since 1871 and the first after having achieved Great Power status.³⁴ Certainly Wilhelm remained active and engaged with his army, especially with personnel issues and participation in the annual fall *Kaisermanöver*, thus the army was never left wanting for the *Kaiser's* interest or influence, for better or worse.

III. The Officer Corps

The nineteenth century was a period of significant change for the Prussian-German officer corps. The major changes occurred during three periods: the post-1806 reforms, the post-1864 and 1866 changes, and the modernization that took place during the last two decades of the century. Most of the changes improved the officer corps, making it more professional and better prepared for war, even if some of the senior officers didn't share that opinion. An oft-noted change was in the social demographic ratios of *Adel* (nobility) and *Bürgertum* (bourgeoisie) officers within the officer corps.

The Prussian Army that Napoleon defeated at Jena and Auerstedt in 1806 was led by an officer corps comprised of ninety percent *Adlige* (noblemen) and ten percent bourgeois men.³⁵ By 1860, the officer social ratio was sixty-five percent aristocratic and thirty-five percent bourgeois. At the turn of the century, only forty percent were aristocratic, the remaining sixty

³⁴ Isabel Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 173.

³⁵ Demeter, 7. Demeter sites the following numbers for 1806: 7-8,000 total Prussian Army officers and 695 bourgeois officers. Taking the median of 7,500 total officers, this then equates to 90.73 percent noble officers and 9.23 percent non-noble officers.

percent coming from the bourgeoisie.³⁶ The causes of the decreasing ratio of noble officers were complex and multi-faceted. However, the largest single factor for the change was the aristocracy's steadily declining ability to produce enough young men to serve as officers. By certain estimations, for the 1806 officer corps with its approximately 6,800 aristocratic officers, one in three Prussian noble families needed to supply a son to the Prussian Army.³⁷ To maintain the 1806 ratio of ninety percent noble/ten percent bourgeois in the 1900 *Reichsheer* with a total officer corps of 23,850, required the *Deutsches Reich* aristocracy to contribute nearly 21,500 sons for duty.³⁸ The aristocracy's turn of the century annual contribution needed to be around 675 men to meet the officer corps intake requirements. This contribution represents over a three hundred percent increase between 1806 and 1900.

While there are no precise statistics for the numbers of noble families or aristocratic individuals, scholars estimate that in 1800 there were between 20,000-28,000 families and 100,000-140,000 individuals.³⁹ By the mid-1920s, the population of nobles had declined rather than grown. Estimates for noble families range from 12,000 to 20,000 and aristocratic

³⁶ Demeter, 23 and Steven E. Clemente, *For King and Kaiser! The Making of the Prussian Army Officer, 1860-1914* (New York, Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1992), 205.

³⁷ Robert M. Berdahl, *The Politics of the Prussian Nobility: The Development of a Conservative Ideology, 1770-1848* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 21. Berdahl cites that there were approximately 20,000 noble families in the eastern provinces of Prussia in 1800. Taking Demeter's median number of 7,500 officers in the army in 1806, that equated to 6,777 noble officers serving. At the one in three families providing an officer ratio, 20,333 families would then have been required to contribute the 6,777 officers. Further adding information from William O. Shanahan, *Prussian Military Reforms, 1786-1813* (New York: AMS Press, 1966), 80, he states the Prussian Army of 1806 had a total of 192,908 troops. That equates to an officer/enlisted man ration of 1 officer for every 23 enlisted men.

³⁸ Kaiserlichen Statistischen Amt, *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich 1890* (Berlin: Verlag von Puttkammer and Mühlbrecht, 1890), 172. The *Jahrbuch 1900* reports the German Army of 1900 totaled 600,516 with and officer corps totaling 23,850 men. Had the army maintained its 1806 aristocrat/bourgeois 90/10 percent ratio, the officer corps of 1900 would have had approximately 21,500 noblemen or 26 percent of all aristocrats, obviously an untenable situation.

³⁹ Berdahl, *Politics*, 21. Berdahl cites 20,000 noble families, the low end of estimates. He does not postulate a total for individuals. For standardization, five individuals per family is used for calculations. Heinz Reif, *Adel im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, 2. Auflage (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2012), 8-9. Reif cites that at the beginning of the nineteenth century there were "about 28,000 families" and "an estimated 140,000 persons" of the nobility. Reif uses the five individuals per family ratio.

individuals are placed between 60,000 and 100,000; the consensus being between 70,000 -80,000 individuals comprising between 14,000 and 16,000 families.⁴⁰ Despite its numeric decline during the nineteenth century, the nobility of 1900 still sent over 9,500 sons into military service.⁴¹ This then represents an increase from 1 in 3 families in 1800 sending a son to the army to 1 in 1.68 in 1900. Thus, the aristocracy was contributing sons to the army in 1900 at nearly twice the intensity as it had a century before. And despite the declining ratio, the aristocracy still held significant influence throughout the officer corps.

While written regarding the 1860s Austrian officer corps, Dennis Showalter's quote is equally applicable to nineteenth century Prussian-German officer corps; "The officer corps was dominated at the higher levels by aristocrats. While this did not guarantee incompetence—the myth that a hereditary title is the equivalent to a prefrontal lobotomy is one of nineteenth-century liberalism's most persistent and pernicious legacies."⁴² Despite the undeniable decline in the percentage of noble officers, their influence, which was not as pernicious as many believe, gave way much more slowly than pure numbers indicated. In 1900, sixty percent of the generals and

⁴⁰ Reif, *Adel*, 9. Reif opines that in 1925 there were 60-70,000 noble individuals and observes that this could be as much as a 50 percent decrease from 1800. Stephan Malinowski, *Vom König zum Führer*, 3. Auflage (Berlin: Akademie Verlag GmbH, 2003), 34. Malinowski also points to the lack of definitive numbers of noble families or individuals. He cites that there were between 60,000 and 100,000 aristocratic individuals but states he will use and average of 80,000 individuals. The 5 person per family ratio is used when family numbers are not calculated in the cited works. The final numbers used here are Reif's highest and Malinowski's average. Unfortunately, no aristocratic population numbers were found near 1900 or before the end of World War I. "Ehrentafeln der Kriegsoffer des deutschen Adels 1921-1998" (The Institut Deutsche Adelsforschung). <http://home.foni.net/~adelsforschung/lex30.htm> (August 20, 2020). The Institut Deutsche Adelsforschung notes that a confirmed 4,780 noblemen died during World War I. Even if this total is fully added and an additional two persons per war death are added (to represent the possibility of these military age males having married and had at least one child) the approximate 15,000 additional aristocratic individuals only raises the potential 1900 total of aristocrats to 115,000 individuals and 23,000 families. This is still 17.9 percent lower than Reif's 1800 figures.

⁴¹ Kaiserlichen Statistischen Amt, *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich 1890* (Berlin: Verlag von Puttkammer and Mühlbrecht, 1890), 172. The *Jahrbuch 1900* reports the German Army of 1900 totaled 600,516 with and officer corps totaling 23,850 men. Steven E. Clemente, *For King and Kaiser! The Making of the Prussian Army Officer, 1860-1914*. (New York, Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1992), 205. Clemente cites the 1898 officer corps social ratio as 40 percent noblemen and 60 percent bourgeois men. Applying this 40 percent aristocratic officers with the *Jahrbuch 1900* total officer corps of 23,850 equates to approximately 9,500 noble officers.

⁴² Dennis Showalter, *The Wars of German Unification*, 2nd edition (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 20-21.

colonels were aristocratic.⁴³ As we will later see, all twenty-two of the corps commanders were noble officers. One need remember that these officers entered the army between thirty and forty-five years earlier, when the overall noble-to-bourgeois officer ratio stood nearly even. Thus, the senior officer ratios were less out of proportion than at first glance. Another officer subdivision confirming the strength of the aristocracy and their hold on the reins of power was the *Generalstab*.

The *Generalstab*, even more markedly than the general and colonel ranks, was populated by a demographically disproportionate number of aristocratic officers. This is of particular note in that, officers entered the *Generalstab* at an early stage of their career. Thus, despite their peer group being approximately 40 percent noble and 60 percent bourgeois, the *r Generalstab* in 1900 was 62.8 percent nobles and 37.2 percent bourgeois.⁴⁴ As one historian pointed out, “The ‘old boy’ network assured that if a billet at the Academy came down to the officer’s social origins, all else being equal, a ‘von’ generally would get the nod.”⁴⁵ This aristocratic class nepotism was not only evident within the *Generalstab* but throughout other areas of the officer corps.

Despite the growing number of bourgeois officers in the last quarter of the century, men with aristocratic heritage still retained a significant advantage within the officer corps. Noblemen more easily gained entrance into cadet schools as well as into more prestigious branches and regiments. This aristocratic advantage aided in selection for more prestigious positions, attendance at advanced officer schools and better assignments outside one’s parent

⁴³ Kitchen, *Officers*, 24.

⁴⁴ *Rangliste 1900*, 19-24. Totalling the number of General Staff Officers assigned to General Staff billets (both on the *Großer Generalstab*, in higher headquarters, and special duty assignments requiring a qualified General Staff Officer), in 1900 there were 199 aristocratic General Staff Officers and 118 bourgeois General Staff Officers, for a ratio of 62.5 percent aristocratic and 37.2 percent bourgeois. Assigned for duty in Berlin on the *Großer Generalstab* were 57 noble officers and 40 non-noble officers equating to 58.8 percent aristocrats and 41.2 percent bourgeois, a slightly higher rate of bourgeois officers than over all. General Staff Officers assigned in troop General Staff duty billets were 55 aristocratic officers and 49 bourgeois officers for a ratio of 52.9 percent to 47.1 percent.

⁴⁵ Clemente, 189.

regiment. These more prestigious and important postings in turn allowed the selected officer to gain more experience and military proficiency faster which further qualified them for more important positions; a case of the rich getting richer.

While there undeniably was a steady decline in the percentage of nobility within the officer corps it is much harder to gain an understanding of what that decline meant for the army and the officer corps itself. Much has been made of the rising bourgeois element within the officer corps and either their feudalization or the embourgeoisement of the aristocrats.⁴⁶ Both ideas express a linear movement from one social-political set of ideas to the other. This seems simplistic, especially when viewing what was occurring within German society at large. A more tenable and realistic concept is the movement to a different plain of social-political understanding, a modernizing, or updating, of class beliefs required to meet the realities of a Germany and Europe moving into the twentieth century. More recent scholarship supports this much more nuanced and complex approach. It suggests that the concepts of feudalization of the bourgeoisie or the embourgeoisement of the aristocracy fail to adequately acknowledge or explain the complex and multilayered relationships between the nobility and the bourgeoisie in or out of the military or the shift of beliefs within the officer corps.⁴⁷

At various times, in various ways, and to varying degrees aristocratic and bourgeois officers, especially the younger and more progressively minded ones, shared a great deal of

⁴⁶ See Kitchen, 27; Demeter, 29 and Craig *Politics*, 234. Demeter calls the process of the aristocratic officers adopting non-aristocratic ideas, habits, characteristics, and lifestyles “*embourgeoisement*,” while Craig called the process “bourgeoisification.”

⁴⁷ Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1866-1918* (München: C. H. Beck, 1990), 417-418. Nipperdey writes “But the aristocracy was not bourgeois, it remained aristocracy...” and “...as I said, the older opinion about a feudalization of the German bourgeoisie is absurd and makes the political analysis of power and the compromises at stake more difficult than easier.” Marcus Funck, *Feudales Kriegertum und Militärische Professionalität: Der Adel im preußisch-deutschen Offizierskorps 1860-1935* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004). Funck’s work examines, as one of the key elements, the complex and ever-changing multitiered relationship between aristocratic and bourgeois army officers between 1860 and 1935. He clearly views the binary concepts of aristocratic embourgeoisement and bourgeois feudalization as overly simplistic and un-substantiable.

economic, political, educational, religious and even social beliefs, all of the conservative bent. Certain army requirements brought both categories of officer closer together in mindset. For example, officers, both aristocrat and bourgeois, upon entering the army swore to defend the monarchy, not the constitution. While rarely talked about, the army was the element of force that was and would be employed against the population when and if revolution or riot broke out. *Kaiser* Wilhelm II in 1891, reminded the army recruits to whom he spoke that they should be prepared to fire on their own families if so ordered.⁴⁸ Officers were expected to lead their troops in such cases, regardless of class roots.⁴⁹

Similarly, support of the monarchy also meant standing against the increasing power of the working class and its most vociferous proponent and spokesmen, the social democrats. A change to a social democratic controlled constitutional democracy with power vested in the *Reichstag* would not have been to the advantage of either the aristocracy or the upper bourgeoisie. Thus, this is one example of sharing a common enemy that motivated a growing alliance between the aristocracy and the burgeoning upper bourgeoisie. This union which had formed at the end of the eighteenth century continued to deepen during the nineteenth century.⁵⁰

This alliance grew inside the army as well as outside as the nineteenth century progressed. Officers of both classes increasingly shared a growing appreciation for education, a belief in the benefits of technological progress, the value of martial virtues and the aristocracy of character. These not only brought the two classes of officers closer together but began moving

⁴⁸ Stig Förster, "The Armed Forces and Military Planning." In *Imperial Germany: A Historical Companion*, edited by Roger Chickering, 454-488 (Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1996), 463.

⁴⁹ Reichstag, *Stenographische Berichte des Reichstages, XII. Legislaturperiode, 2. Session, Bd. 259*, S. 898 (Berlin: Druck und Verlag der Norddeutschen Buchdruckerei und Verlags-Anstalt, 1910).

Emblematic of this concept was Elard von Oldenburg-Januschau's 29 January 1910, statement on the floor of the *Reichstag*, "The King of Prussia and the German Emperor must be able at any moment to say to a lieutenant: take ten men and close the Reichstag!"

⁵⁰ Berdahl, 3. Berdahl makes a convincing argument for this.

them forward lessening the prejudices of class distinction held by previous generations of aristocratic officers. While far from being eliminated, prejudices which hampered professionalization of the officer corps were a matter of decreasing practicality, utility, and sustainability in the rapidly modernizing German Reich.

In the day-to-day business of army life, aristocratic and bourgeoisie officers lived and worked closely with one another in the many garrisons spread across Germany. The type of regiment and its location significantly influenced the aristocratic/bourgeois ratio. Guards regiments, cavalry regiments, and regiments whose garrisons were located in desirable metropolitan areas showed a significantly higher percentage of aristocratic officers assigned. Bourgeois officers found it easier to gain acceptance into more technically oriented arms such as artillery, engineers, and logistics as well as at less desirable garrison locations. As an example: in the elite *1. Garde-Regiment zu Fuß* garrisoned in Potsdam, all eighty-five officers were aristocrats; in the *Grenadier-Regiment König Friedrich der Grosse (3. Ostpreußisches) Nr. 4* stationed in Rastenburg, Ostpreußen, only nine of the fifty-four officers were noblemen; for the cavalry's *2. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Königin Viktoria von Preußen Nr. 2* stationed in Danzig, Pommern, twenty-two of twenty-four officers were nobles and; in the *2. Rheinisches-Regiment Nr. 9*, stationed in Straßburg in the Elsaß, only nine of twenty-six officers were aristocrats.⁵¹ Not only did class play a significant role with regard to the regiments officer-aspirants attempted to join, finances too had to be considered.

The financial status of one's family significantly influenced the aspirant's suitability to become a member of any given regiment. While mid and higher ranking officers were paid more than civilians in comparable positions, junior officer salaries often did not meet the required

⁵¹ Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlet, *Rang- und Quartierliste der Königlich Preußischen Armee und des XIII. (Königlich Württembergischen) Armeekorps für 1901* (Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn: Berlin, 1901), 118, 141, 362 and 368.

financial expenditures incurred as a member of the officer corps. *Leutnants* earned 125 *Reichsmarks (RM)* per month, mid-grade *Hauptmann* received 383 *RM* per month, *Majore* earned 546 *RM* per month, while *Obersten* received 731 *RM* per month. As can be seen, it wasn't until promotion to Major that officer's pay became sufficient to lessen the requirements for income in addition to army pay. The increase of expenses incurred by army officers occurred largely in the post-1871 period. However, by the middle of the nineteenth century, branches and regiments started taking on "their own particular financial character to a much greater extent than before."⁵²

By the turn of the century, this meant that many junior officers, especially those belonging to guards, cavalry, and artillery regiments, required a *Zulage* (additional allowance) to avoid going into debt. The amount of *Zulage* required depended on a variety of factors, but most often was driven by the expenses of additional horses for cavalry and artillery officers, the cost of living incurred by residing in larger, more expensive cities, as well as the level of social obligations an officer was expected to keep. An unofficial handbook of the era suggested a per month *Zulage* of: 45 *RM* for infantry, 70 *RM* for artillery and 150 *RM* for cavalry. Guards officers posted in Berlin and Potsdam were expected to need an additional 100 *RM* per month, presumably to meet the officer's higher levels of social obligation in the proper manner.⁵³

For those officers who came from impecunious, but long-standing, aristocratic families, there was the little spoken of but often used *Königs-Zulage* (king's allowance). The 20 *RM* per month *Königs-Zulage* allowed penurious aristocratic sons and sons of officers to serve in lower prestige regiments and those units stationed in less desired locations in the provinces. One

⁵² Daniel J. Hughes, *The King's Finest: A Social and Bureaucratic Profile of Prussia's General Officers, 1871-1914* (New York, Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 1987), 70.

⁵³ Hughes, 72.

infantry regiment commander's wife reported that nearly one in five *Leutnants* were dependent on the *Königs-Zulage*.⁵⁴ Some officers, however, through frugality were able to live on their army salaries alone and thus at least enjoy the benefit of high social standing that their commissions brought. An officer's social position also made him a most eligible bachelor when it came to finding a wife.

Wives played an extremely important and complex role in the life of the Wilhelmine Army. Much could and sometimes did turn with regard to an officer's career depending on his marriage partner. First, officers were allowed only to marry with army approval. Based on *Militärkabinett* orders dating back to 1798, officers filed a request for marriage that routed first to their regimental commander, then to corps commander, the *Kriegsministerium* and ultimately to the *Kaiser*. The documentation included the woman's name, her father's *Stand* (social class) and occupation, detailed information on the intended bride's background and proof of outside income of sufficient worth to ensure no undue financial burdens were placed on the couple.⁵⁵ Therefore, even before an engagement took place, the future bride was vetted by the army. Any command level could disapprove the marriage request on essentially three grounds: the lady's unsuitability due to moral issues, an unsuitable social standing, or insufficient financial resources. Thus, marriage was not only an affair of the heart but one of social and pecuniary considerations. Marrying a woman from a wealthy family, whether noble or upper bourgeois, removed an officer's *Zulage* requirements and even enabled transfers to more prestigious and

⁵⁴ Hughes, 75

⁵⁵ Hughes, 99. At the turn of the century, a *Leutnant* had to show proof of a private income of a minimum of 2,500 *Reichsmarks* per year. A *Hauptmann* needed to show at least 1,000 *Reichsmarks* of extra income per year. For *Major* and above, no specific minimum was set by army regulations and the amount required was left to the judgement of the regimental or higher commander.

“expensive” regiments. While marriage was the first important step, a wife’s influence, positive or negative, on her officer husband’s career continued as he rose in rank.

There is sufficient evidence to conclude that the same disparity of levels of wealth within the whole of German society was present within the officer corps although with less adverse impact. While coming from an aristocratic family could secure a commission in all but the most prestigious regiments at mid-century, by 1900, wealth became a critical and sometimes determining factor. Impoverished officers, either aristocrat or bourgeois, could no longer survive in guards, cavalry, or the upper tier artillery and infantry regiments. Thus, financial requirements were one of many influences which forced changes within the officer corps in the last three decades of the century.

Regardless of social background or how affluent an officer was, his commission made him *hoffähig* (eligible to attend court functions). This classification went well beyond royal functions and opened the doors to the top social echelons. Here officers rubbed shoulders with their civilian social peers and established new or maintained acquaintanceships and friendships. It was through these contacts, as well as family relationships, that officers remained connected with the world outside the army. While there has been a pervasive and long-standing assessment that the pre-World War I *Kaiserheer* was “*ein Staat im Staate*” (a state within a state), that notion breaks down in the face of evidence of the interconnection army officers at all levels maintained with civilian counterparts, acquaintances, friends and relatives. While beyond the scope of this work to develop this thesis further, a few examples are in order. Reinhard von Scheffer-Boyadel, a *Major* in 1900, was the son-in-law of industrial tycoon Carl Adolf Reibeck. Karl Ulrich von

Bülow, a cavalry officer, was brother to future German Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow.⁵⁶ The *Reichsheer* officer corps was large and well-connected, often by blood, to the rich, powerful, and influential people throughout the Reich. And these connections not only were sustained but increased partly due to the increase in size of the officer corps in the last two decades of the century.⁵⁷

The increase in the *Reichsheer* authorized manpower in 1888, and again in 1893 when it reached 589,000 men, meant that more officers were needed.⁵⁸ In 1888, the number of officers in the Prussian army stood at 15,038.⁵⁹ Officer shortages were immediately felt and in 1889 officer intakes failed to fill the last eight percent of infantry officer positions. The officer shortage continued to and through the turn of the century as decreasing numbers of bourgeois men chose careers with less personal restrictions and less prejudice against their middle-class background. Aspirant officers from the bourgeoisie dropped accordingly to the point that some infantry regiments had no applicants. The shortage became significant so that by 1900, the *Reichsheer* was short nearly 1,400 junior grade officers, 5.6 percent of the officer corps.⁶⁰ In the final year of the century, the *Reichstag* voted to increase the army's peacetime strength by an

⁵⁶ Reinhard von Scheffer-Boyadel rose to *General der Infanterie* and was a corps commander during World War I. Karl Ulrich von Bülow became a Major-General of cavalry in World War I. Bernhard von Bülow served as German Chancellor 1900-1909.

⁵⁷ Dolores L. Augustine, *Patricians and Parvenus: Wealthy Businessmen in Wilhelmine Germany* (Providence, R.I.: Berg Publishers, 1994), 70-89. See her brief discussion on interactions between wealthy business families and army officers and her tables which show who and how often marriages took place between these families.

⁵⁸ Geoff Eley, *From Unification to Nazism Reinterpreting the German Past* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1986), 96.

⁵⁹ William Mulligan, "The Army" in Matthew Jefferies, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Imperial Germany* (Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015), 391. The source does not quantify the Prussian army and thus the number given could be a total for the Prussian, Saxon, Württemberg and Bavarian armies or solely the Prussian army. By 1914, the number of officers had increased to 22,112.

⁶⁰ Clemente, 207.

additional 23,000 for a total of 612,000 officers and men.⁶¹ This only further exacerbated the officer shortage.

Thus, in 1900, the officer corps officially contained 23,850 officers. The largest branch, the infantry, numbered 13,314 officers. The artillery had 3,852 officers while the cavalry contained 2,406. Engineer, communications, train, and special units contained another 1,680 officers. The remaining 2,598 officers, slightly over ten percent of the total, were on detached service outside their regiments. But numbers tell only part of the story.

The *Kaiserheer* officer corps of 1900 was a very different one than the one that had won the three Wars of Unification thirty years earlier. The changes in social ratios, the rise in professionalism, the move to learn and embrace new ideas and technology had moved the officer corps forward, made it more modern. Certainly, at the end of the century it stood much better prepared than it had at the beginning of the century to lead the army to war. It learned its lessons not only in the classroom and in the *Truppenübungsplätze* (troop training areas) but on the battlefields of five victorious wars. The officer corps had achieved a high level of performance and a proud tradition to live up to in the new century.

IV. Key Organizations within the Army

This section examines the three most influential organizational elements within the active duty *Reichsheer*: the *Kommandierende General des Armeekorps* (commanding generals of the corps, corps commanders), the *Generalstab* and the infantry, cavalry and artillery branches. The Wars of Unification clearly showed the need for modification and modernization of these

⁶¹ Martin Kitchen, *A Military History of Germany* (Bloomington, IN and London: Indiana University Press, 1975), 184.

elements. The period between 1871 and 1900 is correctly described as a period of growth, modernization, debate, and stability.

After the Kaiser, at the top of the pecking order when it came to immediate influence on the army stood the corps commanders. These general officers, typically in the rank of *General der Infanterie, Kavallerie* or *Artillerie* (three-star general), exercised the day-to-day command over the vast majority of the peacetime army. They were also the commanders who, during wartime would mobilize, deploy, and then command their forces in the field. While administrative communications went via the *Kriegsministerium*, the corps commanders had *Immediatvortragsrecht* (the right of immediate access to the *Kaiser*). With this direct access to the *Kaiser*, the corps commanders' status approached that of the *Chef des Militärkabinetts*, the *Kriegsminister*, and the *Chef des Großen Generalstabes*, all whom also possessed *Immediatvortragsrecht*. By 1900, the German army comprised twenty-three *Armeekorps*, containing the vast majority of the army's 496,000 active-duty troops.

In 1871, the newly unified German army counted eighteen *Armeekorps* and 402,000 troops. The Reichstag approved two expansions of the army between the end of the Franco-Prussian War and the turn of the century, adding five *Armeekorps*, two in 1890 and three in 1899. During the same thirty-year period, the authorized personnel expansions grew the army by 94,000 men.

Germany was geographically divided into twenty-two *Korpsbezirke* (*corps districts*), each headed by a *Kommandierende General des Armeekorps*. The *Gardekorps*, while headquartered in Berlin, had no geographic area of its own. The *Korpsbezirk* in many cases did not share the same boundaries as the *Bundesstaat* (federal states). The corps commanders and

the federal state's civilian governments operated in tandem but within their own spheres of control and responsibility.

For the corps commanders, their responsibilities lay in two key areas. These primary responsibilities the commanders bore was for the corps' training and the daily administrative oversight of the corps' subordinate units containing between 18,000-20,000 troops. Subordinate to each corps were two infantry divisions, two cavalry brigades, one field artillery brigade, one foot artillery regiment, one *Jäger* battalion and a combat engineer battalion. In addition to its combat troops, each *Armeekorps* had a railway detachment to assist with mobilization, an administrative department, a supply office, and a medical detachment assigned to it. Thus, each corps formed a complete, self-sufficient unit. The corps' approximately fifteen regimental-sized garrisons were spread between five and fifteen cities and towns within the *Korpsbezirk*.

It was the corps commander's responsibility to ensure that all elements were properly trained and combat ready. Large unit training occurred in the *Truppenübungsplätze* located in most of the *Korpsbezirke*. At these large military exercise areas, as well as on the smaller *Standort-Übungsplätze* (garrison training areas), troops trained with the tactics chosen by the corps commander. Of note, corps commanders exercised their independence regarding tactics as put forth in the latest *Felddienstordnungen* (Field Service Regulations). They could choose to ignore the prescribed tactics if they disagreed with them and direct training with other tactics, whether those tactics were more traditional or more progressive than those currently promulgated by the *Kriegsministerium*. Technical training remained the responsibility of the branches and their respective Inspector-Generals.

The second responsibility for corps commanders was the recruiting of officers and men for the corps' units. This included the annual intake of men serving their two-year army

Dienstpflicht (compulsory service).⁶² The yearly muster of over 200,000 men spread across the twenty-three *Armeekorps* made this a large, repetitious, and energy consuming task for all those involved with training the new recruits. Additionally, the commanders oversaw the reserve and *Landwehr* units within the *Korpsbezirk*.

But who were the men who exercised such a large amount of control over Germany's army? A brief biographical overview will help in understanding the general officers who held the position of *Kommandierender General des Armeekorps* in 1900. First, and most noticeable is that all twenty-three of these commanders were of the aristocratic class. Nearly half of the group's generals, ten out of the twenty-three, were titled nobility including three princes, one *Großhertzog* (grand duke), two *Grafen* (counts), two *Ritter* (knights), and two *Freiherren* (barons). The youngest commander was forty-three years of age, the oldest was sixty-eight, with the average age being fifty-nine. All of the generals served during the Wars of Unification as junior officers. Even the youngest, Prince Arnulf of Bavaria, at age twenty served as a lieutenant in the Franco-Prussian War. The tenure of the corps commanders is also notable. The numbers indicate that there was no normal or standardized time period for holding the position. In 1900, the longest serving commander held the reins for thirty years, the shortest for only one year. However, the average length in command was eight years, certainly long enough for the general to thoroughly shape the identity and capabilities of his corps.⁶³ Unquestionably, corps command in the peacetime was the top tier within the *Reichsheer*, only the positions of *Chef des Militärkabinetts*, *Kriegsminister*, and *Chef des Großer Generalstabes* being more prestigious and

⁶² Due to the longer training requirements, conscripts who went to the mounted arms (cavalry and artillery) served for three years.

⁶³ "Deutsche Armeekorps" (The Prussian Machine: Histories of Imperial German Corps). <http://prussianmachine.com/army/armycorps.htm> (May 12, 2015). The information contained on this site was analyzed to provide the information cited. The corps commander who had been in command since 1870 was Prinz Georg von Sachsen who commanded the *XII Armeekorps* (1. *Königliche Sächsische Armee-Korps*), his "own" corps.

powerful. Thus, it is not surprising that only four of the corps commanders in 1900 went on to other positions within the army; three moved laterally to command other corps and one commanded at *Armee* level during World War I. Four generals moved up into royal or civilian positions, most notably as the King of Saxony, Grand Duke of Baden, and Prince of Sachsen-Meiningen. The fourth became a member of the *Reichstag*'s Upper House. Excluding the royalty, the majority of the corps commanders retired following their corps commands after long and successful careers.

If the corps commanders superintended the day-to-day administration of the field army, it was the *Generalstab* and specifically the *Großer Generalstab* that influenced both the day-to-day actions of the army as well as its longer-range planning. While the *Generalstab* roots go back to the middle of the 1600s in the time of the Great Elector, the Prussian-German General Staff, in its modern form, came into being in the first decade of the nineteenth century under the guiding hand of General Gerhard von Scharnhorst. The Reformers, the group of senior officers who headed the reorganization of the Prussian Army after its defeat at the hand of Napoleon at Jena and Auerstedt, created the *Offiziers-Kriegsschule* (officers war school), later renamed the *Kriegsakademie* (war academy) and focused the school's three-year course of study on educating officers to higher levels of knowledge in military art and science, tactics, strategy as well as physics and French. Successful completion of the rigorous three-year course earned graduates entrance into the Prussian *Generalstab*. Another von Scharnhorst initiative placed a *Kriegsakademie* graduate as the chief of staff within the headquarters of each army corps and division. Here, neither as a co-commander nor a deputy commander, but as a highly-trained *Generalstab* officer, the chief of staff served as the commander's right hand providing advice as well as supervising the general's staff. As it has aptly been put it, "The Prussian command

structure combined the man of action with the man of intellect in a highly potent mix.”⁶⁴ The *Generalstab* proved its worth during the Wars of Liberation and was able to withstand the post-war reactionary movement to reverse, discontinue, or slow the 1807-1819 reforms.

During the forty years of peace and without the strong leadership of a von Scharnhorst, the *Generalstab* atrophied. The Roon Reforms of the early 1860s raised the authorized number of *Generalstab* officers to sixty-four. Officers assigned to the *Großer Generalstab* in Berlin, continued their professional development through participation in *Führerreise* (leader tour), war plan development, and intellectually focused staff work aimed at preparing Prussia’s army for the next war. On the other hand, officers assigned to *Truppengeneralstab* (general staff with troops, i.e., the field forces) found themselves more often than not attending to mundane administrative tasks rather than advancing the level of thought and preparedness of the corps and divisions on which staffs they served. The rise of General Helmut von Moltke to *Chef des Großen Generalstabes* in 1857, dramatically altered the trajectory of the *Generalstab*.

General von Moltke had a clear vision of what he wanted the *Generalstab* to become, the highly educated, exceedingly skilled officers whose praiseworthy character and selfless service would empower them to be the organizers, planners, leaders, and commanders of the Prussian Army. His steady, wise, and protective hand guided the building, development, and maturing of the *Generalstab* between 1857 and 1888. If there had been skeptics about the utility and capabilities of general staff officers, the three Wars of Unification silenced them.

General von Moltke and the *Generalstab*, both the *Großer Generalstab* and the *Generalstab* at division, corps, and army levels, reaped the rewards of a job well done. While von Moltke gained direct access to the Prussian king after 1866, that privilege was not codified

⁶⁴ Robert M. Citino, *The German Way of War: From the Thirty Years’ War to the Third Reich* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2005), 131.

in the military protocols. As recognition for the increased importance of the *Chef des Großen Generalstabes*, both in wartime and peacetime, a special Cabinet Order in 1883, gave him the right of *Immediatvortragsrecht* to the *Kaiser*. The *Chef des Großen Generalstabes* now stood on equal footing with the Chancellor, *Chef des Militärkabinetts*, and the *Kriegsminister*. Additionally, authorizations increased the *Generalstab* to one hundred and thirty-five officers in 1871, and two hundred and thirty-nine by 1888. Even with this increase, the *Generalstab* number just 1.24 percent of the entire officer corps.⁶⁵

By 1900, the German *Generalstab* as a whole, was at the zenith of its power, professional competence, and influence. The nearly three decades of peace gave it time to select, educate, and professionally mature the largest number of officers it had ever had. It was recognized across the officer corps that access to the higher levels of army command would most likely come through membership in the *Generalstab*. At the turn of the century, General Alfred Graf von Schlieffen had been *Chef des Großen Generalstabes* for nine years. During those years the *Großer Generalstab* worked on the planning for a two front war, a growing possibility given the growing French-Russian *rapprochement*.

If the *Generalstab* was the epitome of a well-educated, technically astute, and professionally sophisticated collection of high-quality officers with superb character it, was also a tactical-centric, organizationally and process focused, and an intellectually narrow homogenous group. Von Moltke, the elder, placed the highest emphasis on professional studies while deemphasizing non-military studies. Writing shortly before his 1888 retirement, von Moltke penned in the opening paragraph of the *Kriegsakademie Lehrordnung* (Regulations on Instruction), "In accordance with the objects for which the Military Academy is instituted, its

⁶⁵ Walter Görlitz, *History of the German General Staff: 1657-1945* (New York: Praeger, 1953), 96. At von Moltke's retirement in 1888, there were 239 qualified General Staff Officers, 197 in the Prussian contingent, 25 in the Bavarian contingent, 10 from Saxony, and 7 from Württemberg.

course of study must aim at a thorough professional education; it must not lose itself in the wide field of general scientific studies.”⁶⁶ In addition to not teaching scientific studies, the curriculum also failed to include broader subjects affecting military operations such as strategic studies, diplomacy, demography, and economics. The narrow focus on operational and tactical subjects pushed out studies on intelligence, personnel issues, or strategic logistics.

Despite the shortcomings of the *Generalstab* and its officers, it still outpaced its counterparts in other armies.⁶⁷ To its credit, the *Generalstab* did not rest on the laurels of its victories during the Wars of Unification, but instead continued to push itself in gaining and maintaining currency of knowledge in both the art and science of war. With no war imminent in 1900, the *Großer Generalstab* and the *Generalstabe* at the division, corps, and army levels continued to build its professionalism for the next war which would surely come.

The Wars of Unification can and should be seen as the “first fully ‘technological wars’ of the nineteenth century.”⁶⁸ The use and effectiveness of breech-loading rifles, rapid-firing precursors of machine guns, more specialized artillery, the railroad, and the telegraph heralded a change in how wars were fought. The battlefield became a deadlier place, especially for close formation infantry units and cavalry. Despite what some officers saw to be clear lessons

⁶⁶ Spencer Wilkinson, *The Brain of the Army*, 2nd ed (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co, 1895), 83. Translated and quoted by Wilkinson from the opening paragraph of the 1888 *Lehrordnung der Königlichen Kriegsakademie* (Berlin: E. S. Mittler und Sohn, 1888). Wilkinson continues with Moltke’s thoughts: “A sound formal education is the indispensable pre-requisite of a thorough military professional education. The deepening of the formal training, of the general intelligence and judgment, must therefore never be lost sight of during, and side by side with, the professional studies. Accordingly, the course will be based upon the knowledge gained in the cadet corps, the military schools, the school for artillery and engineers, and, as regards general knowledge, in the gymnasias. But a simple repetition of things already known, by way of refreshing the memory, cannot be sufficient. As the whole course aims at a higher culture, it must proceed independently, entirely free from the constraint of a school. The practical abilities of the officers, acquired during five years’ service, offer in many respects a foundation upon which the teachers can build.”

⁶⁷ David Stone, *Shattered Genius: The Decline and Fall of the German General Staff in World War II* (Philadelphia, PA: Casemate, 2012), 35. Stone writes, “However, while the German general staff was undoubtedly better prepared for war than were the high commands of the opposing French, British or Russian armies, in the area of intelligence the Germans made the cardinal error of underestimating their enemy.”

⁶⁸ Eley, 96.

requiring change, others held that only minor changes to traditional infantry and cavalry roles and tactics were sufficient to maintain Germany's military superiority. With these disparate views and the often vocal and bellicose disputes, some ending officer's careers, the last two decades of the century might best be described as turbulent in the area of tactical and operational doctrine.

The infantry was and remained the preeminent arm of the *Reichsheer* during the Wilhelmina era. Over sixty-six percent of army manpower was assigned to the infantry.⁶⁹ It was with infantry that wars were believed to be won. For the infantry, the battles against the Austrians and the French showed the influence of new technology on the battlefield as well as the need for new tactics to counter an enemy who possessed and effectively used technically superior weaponry. Against the Austrians in 1866, the technologically superior Dreyse needle-gun decimated the formations of muzzle-loading rifled-armed Austrians.⁷⁰ Conversely for the Germans, in 1870, the French armed with the more technologically sophisticated chassepot rifle inflicted significantly higher losses on the German forces during infantry-on-infantry duels.⁷¹ Many German units quickly adapted to counter this technical deficiency by using their more ubiquitous artillery to damage, disrupt, and disorganize French infantry positions prior to ordering their own infantry forward.

These lessons were not lost in the post-war years. Strong voices in the likes of *Generalleutnant* Sigismund von Schlichting and *Generalleutnant* Wilhelm von Winterfeld pushed for a modernization of offensive doctrine in the face of the strength of the defense armed

⁶⁹ Dennis Showalter, "Army and Society in Imperial Germany: The Pains of Modernization," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (October, 1984): 583-618.

⁷⁰ Dennis Showalter, *Railroads and Rifles: Soldiers, Technology and the Unification of Germany* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1975), 128. See Showalter's chapter on "Rifles" for an in-depth history of the development and use of the Dreyse needle-gun by the Prussian army.

⁷¹ Showalter, *Wars*, 247.

with rapid-fire weapons. On his ascension to the throne in 1888, Frederick III, erstwhile commander of Prussia's 2. *Armee* in 1866 and 3. *Armee* in 1870, ordered the infantry regulation updated. The committee appointed to oversee the rewriting contained von Schlichting, thus ensuring the voices of those favoring a more restrained and practical approach to the offense were heeded. The resulting regulation called for the use of artillery support as well as maneuver and cover for infantry on the offensive. It further called for delegation of authority to the regimental commanders and below on the field, seeking to end the long-standing general order for a final attack generated by commanders at division, corps and army levels. This delegation of authority was certainly the most contentious doctrine in the new regulation. Completed in June 1888, the month of Friedrich's death, the new regulation both recognized the lethality of the modern battlefield and reinforced the initiative given to commanders and leaders at all levels.⁷²

Despite the official mandate of the revised regulations, the progressive camp of von Schlichting met stiff resistance from many who held traditionalist views of the superiority of the offense generated by massed infantry company attacks. This debate between progressives and traditionalists continued, both on the exercise ground during annual *Kaisermanövers* and smaller maneuvers as well as in print, for the next dozen years. One important factor to note during the period was the independence of the corps commander. As described above, it was the corps commander who decided, directed, and oversaw the training of their subordinate units, not a centralized, army-wide command authority. Despite guidance provided in the 1888 infantry regulations, corps commanders used their autonomy and decided whether or not to follow this official guide; many did not and continued to train their units using traditional tactics.

⁷² Brose, 55-58.

The traditionalists gained the upper hand during the period prior to the turn of the century. Despite General von Schlichting's forced retirement in 1896, the progressives continued to advocate for change and their ideas continued to rationally challenge the traditionalists. Thus, at the turn of the century, debate between the progressives and traditionalist still raged. The situation was little different in the mounted arm.

The three Wars of Unification brought little glory to the German cavalry. The traditional and primary role of the cavalry, the massed cavalry charge which, when successfully conducted, saw enemy formations broken under the shock of horseflesh and sabers. In the battles against Austria, the Prussian cavalry contributed only marginally during the final phase of the Battle of Königgrätz. They, however, largely failed to support the army prior to the battle by finding and assessing the strength of the Austrian forces through reconnaissance, one of the key and traditional cavalry roles. Likewise, as Austrian forces fell back towards Vienna, Prussian horsemen were unable to mount a successful pursuit, another of their traditional roles.⁷³

In France during the 1870 campaign, the German cavalry claimed the spotlight a few times. At Mars-la-Tour, General Friedrich Wilhelm von Bredow commanded a two regiment charge, aptly named the "von Bredow's Death Ride," which successfully broke the French formations and allowed the crumbling Prussian infantry formations to withdraw.⁷⁴ There were another seven cavalry charges by the Germans during the war.⁷⁵ Arguably the most significant contributions of the cavalry were in the areas of reconnaissance, patrolling, and screening. With

⁷³ David R. Dorondo, *Riders of the Apocalypse: German Cavalry and Modern Warfare, 1870-1946* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012), 17.

⁷⁴ Dorondo, 25. The charge aptly named because of the approximately 800 Prussian cuirassiers and uhlans engaged, 379 men and 400 horses were casualties. Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest of France in 1870-1871* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 156. Wawro reports 420 of the 800 men were "lost." Of note, Chancellor von Bismarck's son, Herbert, was among the wounded.

⁷⁵ Brose, 10.

poor performances during the early battles, German cavalry became increasingly competent in these secondary yet important roles as the war continued. The lessening likelihood of successful large formation cavalry charges and the increasing value of the cavalry in reconnaissance and security duties was presciently noted by *Generalfeldmarschall* Helmuth von Moltke in his post-Austro-Prussian War assessments in 1868.⁷⁶ However, this wisdom went largely unheeded in the last three decades of the century.

With a view to recreating past glories and denying the lessons of 1866 and 1870/71, cavalry proponents led by Prince Friedrich Karl, revived the Frederician “three-wave” tactic and the primacy of large formation charges.⁷⁷ These tactics were codified in the 1876 cavalry regulation and tested during that year’s annual cavalry maneuvers. The famous “Konitz Maneuvers” conducted in 1881, however, “were to be the high-water mark of a remarkable revival in the fortunes of the German cavalry.”⁷⁸ Increasingly both those inside the cavalry and outside voiced their skepticism that cavalry had any viable or survivable role on the battlefield filled with rapid fire weapons and high explosives. The debates even reached the floor of the Reichstag in 1881.⁷⁹

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, the battle between the traditionalists and the progressives over the cavalry’s viability, combat roles, and formation tactics see-sawed back and forth. Proponents for modernization included Majors Friedrich von Bernhardt and Georg Friedrich von Kleist, a kinsman of Ewald von Kleist who rose to *General der Kavallerie* and the

⁷⁶ Dorondo, 17.

⁷⁷ Brose, 7. Prince Friedrich Karl was nephew to *Kaiser* Wilhelm I and the first Imperial Inspector General of Cavalry. He commanded the 1st Prussian Army during the Austro-Prussian War and the 2nd Army during the Franco-Prussian War.

⁷⁸ Brose, 8-9.

⁷⁹ Brose, 15.

head of the branch as *Generalinspekteur der Kavallerie*.⁸⁰ They and likeminded officers argued for a more realistic assessment of cavalry's use on the increasingly lethal battlefield as well as for the expansion of reconnaissance and security missions. Worried about the over-simplification and over-focus on shock tactics in the 1866 cavalry regulations, von Waldersee worked outside the normal channels and had the *Kriegsministerium* issue a provisional "field service order." The order directed that upon mobilization, fifty-four of the cavalry's one hundred and ten regiments would be sent to the fifty-four infantry divisions for the purposes of reconnaissance and security duties.⁸¹ In the last decade and a half of the century, the debate produced four revisions to the cavalry regulations counting the provisional "field service order"; 1886, 1887, 1893, and 1895. Additionally, the cavalry branch produced no less than three revisions of mounted arm marksmanship manuals in less than a decade.⁸²

The cavalry was the only arm required to defend its future utility and despite many calls for reduced numbers and even elimination, the mounted arm nevertheless survived largely intact. The elements supportive of the cavalry's survival and continued esteem were varied and complex, often as much emotional as logical. The protection and support from *Kaiser Wilhelm*

⁸⁰ H. Kypke, Hans Wätjens, Sigurd von Kleist, *Geschichte des Geschlechts v Kleist Dritter Teil-Biographien bis 1880 Dritte Abteilung Muttrin-Damensche Linie Der Damensche u d Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 2. Auflage (Hamm: Familienverband derer v. Kleist e. V., 2018), 361-362. Georg Friedrich von Kleist (* 25. September 1852; † 29. Juli 1923) was a distant relative of Ewald von Kleist but they had significant personal interaction and it is highly likely that General Georg von Kleist, who at the time was *Generalinspekteur der Kavallerie*, assisted then *Oberleutnant* Ewald von Kleist with his transfer from the artillery to the cavalry. See Chapter 3 for details. Georg Friedrich joined the 6. *Brandenburgische Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 52* and in 1869 received his commission as a *Sekondeleutnant*. After being wounded in the Franco-Prussian War, he transferred to the cavalry. He attended the *Kriegsakademie* and served in troop, staff and *Grossen Generalstabes* assignments rising to *Generalmajor* in 1901. In January 1907, Kleist was promoted to *General der Kavallerie* and made *Generalinspekteur der Kavallerie*. He served in this position until his retirement from active duty in April 1912. He was recalled to active duty at the outbreak of WWI and commanded *XXIII. Reserve Korps* which fought in the northern sector of 4. *Armee* in the Battle of Ypres. He was forced to give up command due to a heart condition. From 1910-1918 he served in member of the *Preußischen Herrenhauses*. He was a founding member and later chairman (1918-1919) of the "Preußenbundes" which worked to maintain and later restore the monarchy.

⁸¹ Brose, 54.

⁸² Brose, 53-55.

II, many senior generals, and even Bismarck helped balance the cavalry's opponents.⁸³ Certainly the cavalry's link with the aristocracy, its tradition of battle-winning successes dating back to Frederick the Great, its being seen as the keeper of the "flame of offensive spirit," and its epitomizing Germany's military might with its powerful horses and colorful uniforms all contributed to the cavalry's resilience and pride of place at the turn of the twentieth century.

The Prussian artillery had very different experiences in 1866 and 1870/71. Against the Austrians, the artillery saw little action and contributed only marginally to the Prussian victory. Their failure to contribute in a meaningful way caused the artillerymen to take a critical inward look. The army high command accepted two key revisions by the artillerymen. First, the artillery moved from a centralized artillery command to being placed under corps commanders, during both peacetime and wartime. Secondly, the standard order of the combat march was altered, artillery moving from the rear of the march to the front in order to facilitate getting the guns into action quicker.⁸⁴

These sagacious changes reaped significant rewards against the chassepot armed French in 1870. Time and again Prussian artillery devastated French infantry formations before Prussian infantry attacked. The crowning achievement of the artillery came during the Battle of Sedan when two hundred Prussian and Saxon cannon mercilessly shelled three French divisions in the Bois de la Garenne. When the Prussia infantry attacked, the survivors of the decimated divisions raised their hands in surrender without a fight.⁸⁵ The day's fighting cost the French 3,000 dead,

⁸³ Brose, 13. Brose notes that 2/3rd of the Prussia's corps commanders in the mid-1880s were cavalrymen. Additionally, Chief of the General Staff, General Alfred Graf von Waldersee was a cavalry officer. As to Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, it is to be remembered that when he appeared in uniform, it was in that of the cuirassier.

⁸⁴ Brose, 29.

⁸⁵ Wawro, 222-223. Brose, 27.

14,000 wounded and 21,000 captured against the German's 9,000 combined dead, wounded and missing.⁸⁶

The artillerymen, like their counterparts in the infantry and cavalry, however, failed to draw accurate lessons regarding the victories of 1870. The experiences of 1866 and 1870 were used as the validation for the primacy of field artillery over heavy and fortress artillery. To increase the quality and increase the capability of the field artillery, newly appointed *Generalinspekteur der Artillerie*, Theophil von Podbielski, in 1872, created a two track system splitting the field artillery and the heavy artillery.⁸⁷ A cavalryman himself, General von Podbielski prized equestrian skills as a means to increase the field artillery's mobility. Thus, he sought to more closely align the field artillery with the cavalry and spurred the adoption of the cavalry's exercise manual as a means of encouraging cooperation.

As the memories of combat faded, the artillery more and more focused on the need for mobility and perceived requirement to move as close to the enemy as possible. This in turn placed an emphasis on developing lighter, more mobile guns. In 1874, the 88-mm C-73 cannon was introduced and at the time was arguably the best cannon fielded by any European army.⁸⁸ But by 1880, developments in fortifications and field works brought the effectiveness of light field guns into questions. The *Großer Generalstab* pressed the artillery to develop guns capable of reducing fortifications and prepared defensive works. By 1883, a technical solution had been developed through the use of nitrogen-based high explosives. The new explosive shells combined with large caliber artillery successfully destroyed earthwork defenses. But the success

⁸⁶ Wawro, 224.

⁸⁷ Brose 32-33. Ironically, Theophil von Podbielski was a cavalry officer and served in cavalry units from *Leutnant* to *Generalmajor* when he commanded a *Kavallerie-Brigade*. While he was serving as *Generalinspekteur der Artillerie*, he was promoted to the rank of *General der Kavallerie*. He served as the head of the artillery from February 1872 until October 1879.

⁸⁸ Brose, 32.

was short lived as quick and relatively inexpensive countermeasures for reinforcing fortifications negated the explosive effects and were in place by Germany's would be enemies by the late 1880s.⁸⁹

By the mid-1880s, both field artillery and heavy artillery had fallen behind both numerically and technologically. The *Großer Generalstab* called for an increase in artillery numbers. The *Kriegsministerium* non-concurred and rejected the request in 1887.⁹⁰ By 1890, the C-73 cannon's barrels were becoming an issue, they were fast wearing out. A request for a replacement cannon was approved when the *Reichstag* authorized the order for seventy new C-73 batteries. This however, did nothing towards replacing the existing three hundred and sixty-four C-73 batteries.⁹¹ The crisis worsened by 1896, when it was reported that of the four hundred ninety-four authorized C-93 batteries only fifty-nine percent had barrels capable of firing regular rounds and less than eighteen percent were capable of firing high-explosive shells.⁹² The 1897 introduction of the new FK 96 field piece, however, failed to solve the problem. While its ballistics were superior to the C-73, its lightweight increased the recoil requiring the piece to be re-sighted between shots, drastically reducing its volume of fire. In order to prevent a completely incapable artillery arm, *Chef des Großen Generalstabes*, *Generalleutnant* Alfred von Schlieffen, forced the development and adoption of the 105-mm 1.FH-98. In 1900, the new cannon entered the army's inventory and the artillery arm began its recovery from more than a decade of internal squabbles, biased technical field trials of weapons, underfunding and general neglect.⁹³

⁸⁹ Brose, 39

⁹⁰ Brose, 63.

⁹¹ Brose, 64.

⁹² Brose, 65.

⁹³ Brose 66-68.

The last two decades of the 1800s may have been free of shooting wars for the young *Deutsches Reich* but this period was far from free of conflict in the infantry, cavalry, and artillery branches. The two decades, as we have seen, contained major disputes about tactics, roles, missions, and the use of technology. For the majority of the disputes, the traditionalists held sway despite the majority of them having seen first-hand the battlefields of Austria and France. One scholar observantly noted, “It is significant that in all three branches, conservative factions managed to write their technophobic doctrine into regulations.”⁹⁴ General von Waldersee in 1888, noted in his diary, “The more distance there is between us and [our last] war, the more backward our judgement has become.”⁹⁵

The newly unified *Reichsheer* of 1871 faced many challenges. First and foremost, it needed to integrate the armies of four kingdoms and the smaller contingents which came together with unification. The separately brokered agreements between Prussia and the three Kingdoms of Bayern, Württemberg, and Sachsen as well as the Constitution of 1871 failed to create a single, unified army. Prussia, jealous of its hegemony, failed to recognize that the united Germany would best be served by a single German *Kriegsministerium*, *Militärkabinett*, and *Generalstab*. By retaining its own pre-unification bureaucratic structures and allowing the three kingdoms to largely retain theirs as well, Prussia and thus the *Deutsches Reich* unquestionably lost the synergistic effect and efficiency that would have been achieved with a single unified command and administrative structure. Thus, the four armies ran in parallel, sometimes converging and at other times diverging, from 1871 onward. The unification of the four armies

⁹⁴ Brose, 41.

⁹⁵ Brose, 42.

did not occur until the establishment of the *Reichswehr* after the World War I. If the *Reichsheer* suffered from less-than-ideal command and bureaucratic structures, it suffered even more from the poor and erratic leadership of *Kaiser* Wilhelm II.

While there had been a period of hopeful anticipation by the army that the new *Kaiser* would bring strong, purposeful, and progressive leadership, they were quickly disabused of this idea. In short order, Wilhelm proved to be an egotistical, inconsistent, and petulant

Oberbefehlshaber des Deutschen Heeres (Commander-in-Chief of the German Army).

Furthermore, the *Kaiser's* military knowledge proved superficial and outdated, a true detriment to an army that knew it needed to continue to modernize both its tactics and weaponry. Thus, the army spent an inordinate amount of time and energy appeasing the *Kaiser's* ego and sophomoric wishes as well as moving to counter his negative influences in tactics, training, and personnel issues. By the turn of the century, the army had largely lost faith in the *Kaiser's* ability to lead the army either in war or peace, a belief that continued into and through World War I. Certainly, the army and its officer corps deserved a more competent and sagacious Commander-in-Chief.

The *Reichsheer* officer corps by 1900 had become the pride of the nation and the envy of many other armies. While certainly not without its faults, shortcomings, and weaknesses, it had over the course of the last three decades of the century developed itself into a more professional and modern officer corps. While there was still improvement to be made, especially when it came to lessening the focus of class distinction, the officer corps had largely learned to embrace new ideas and technology while holding on to the traditional martial values that had served them well on the battlefields of Denmark, Austria and France. The pace of change would accelerate in the decade and a half before the beginning of World War I, but of all the officer corps, Germany's would best handle them and field officers of higher quality than any of their allies or

enemy's. The solid foundations that the *Reichsheer* officer corps was built on showed itself during the long four years of World War I and beyond.

The last two decades of the century had been far from free of conflict when it came to deciding on how best to move the army's tactics, training, and weapons' development forward. Many debates, both significant and insignificant, raged within and between the army's branches. Traditionalists fought hard against the Progressives to maintain tactics that had been proven on the battlefield. However, many Traditionalists failed to realize or accept that the battlefield was changing, becoming more lethal with the advent of machine guns, high-explosives, and fast firing artillery. But at the end of the century, Traditionalists can be said to have held more key terrain than their Progressive "adversaries." However, in the next decade and a half, Progressives would win back some key terrain in the areas of infantry weapons, artillery development, and tactics, thus placing the *Reichsheer* on better footing at the beginning of World War I. But at the turn of the century, the *Reichsheer* was not well prepared for battle in the area of weapons and tactics.

Thus, because of decisions taken in the unification process and not subsequently remedied, in the aggregate, the *Reichsheer* which Ewald von Kleist entered in 1900, was not well prepared to go to war. Much work remained to bring the army into the twentieth century and prepare it for war on the modern battlefield, battlefields, however, that few could imagine in 1900.

CHAPTER 2 – THE VON KLEISTS

Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family: Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one. — Jane Howard

To Germans, writer Heinrich von Kleist, poet Ewald Christian von Kleist, and jurist and scientist Ewald Georg von Kleist, inventor of the precursor to the Leyden Jar, are notable, if not famous and well known von Kleist clan members. Any deeper reading of Prussian/German history quickly brings to light the fact that the clan von Kleist played an import role not only in cultural and scientific areas but in civil service and military arenas since the thirteenth century. This chapter opens the annals and investigates the von Kleist clan from its ennoblement, then moves on to trace the more specific line and family histories of Ewald's ancestors, and finally explores Ewald's childhood and teenage years.

The family originated in the area Belgard, Pommern.¹ The clan traces an unbroken lineage back to the person of Klest de Densin in 1289, thus classifying the clan as *Uradel*.² Over the course of six centuries, the clan grew not only in numbers but in name and reputation. By the mid-1800s, the clan had divided into two major lines comprising thirteen primary branches with

¹ All geographic locations (cities, towns, regions, districts, mountains, rivers, etc.) are noted by the name by which they would have been known during Ewald von Kleist's lifetime. To aid in identifying the locations, the present-day name is provided in a footnote. Belgard, Pommern (Pommerania) is present-day Białogard, Poland.

² H. Kypke and others, *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist: Dritter Teil - Biographien bis 1880 Dritte Abteilung, Muttrin-Damensche Linie Der Muttriner Ast*, 2. überarbeitete Auflage. (Hamm: 2017), 5. The classification of "Uradel" indicates that a family's nobility dates back at least to the fourteenth century.

over thirty major houses.³ By the beginning of the Wars of Unification, the von Kleist clan had established itself through its “quantity, quality, and continuity of military services from the eighteenth century” as one of the major *preußischen adligen Militärclans* (Prussian noble military clans).⁴ This clan history as well as his contact with currently serving von Kleist army officers undoubtedly influenced young Ewald. Thus, the examination of the von Kleist clan provides a personal and the familial context for Ewald.

The history of the five generations preceding Ewald was turbulent and the family’s fortunes fluctuated and eventually took a turn for the worse. Loss of the family estates severed Ewald’s grandfather’s, Christoph Albrecht Heinrich Julius, connection to the land and required him to seek a different career path. In turn, his son, Christoph Albrecht August Hugo also chose a career path outside the traditional landownership and military service. Hugo’s chosen career led him away from Pommern to one of the newly acquired Prussian territories where he sought to make his mark on the world and to raise his family.

While from an aristocratic house and one that had a history of landed estate ownership, Ewald’s father’s life factors and career choice meant a very different upbringing for Ewald. Reared far from the family’s ancestral lands of Pommern and Ostpreußen, Ewald lived his formative years in Ostfriesland where his father was a *Gymnasium* teacher. Examining Ewald’s childhood and the influences on his young life, offers an understanding of the context of Ewald’s formative years which in turn influenced his adult life and career as an army officer.

³ https://www.v-kleist.com/FG/linien_detail.htm (August 16, 2020).

⁴ Marcus Funck, *Feudales Kriegertum und Militärische Professionalität: Der Adel im preußisch-deutschen Offizierskorps 1860-1935*. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004), 10-11. Funck assesses that by 1914, there were fewer than one hundred Prussian noble families that were well-known for their military service, which Funck attributes to the families’ “*Quantität, Qualität und Kontinuität des militärischen Dienstes vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zum Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges*.” These families he calls „*adligen Militärclans*“ (noble military clans). The von Kleist clan is one of the nine families Funck names as examples.

I. The Clan von Kleist

At the time of Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist's birth in 1881, the von Kleist clan had already reached its zenith in numbers, wealth, and arguably influence, and was in decline. This Ewald, and there were dozens of Ewalds throughout the clan's history, was eighteen generations removed from the clan's progenitor, Klest de Densin.⁵ Klest first appears in the records in 1289 as a feudal vassal of Bogislaw IV, the *Herzog von Pommern* (Duke of Pomerania). The chronicles indicate that Klest and his bother held land by the Duke's leave at Belgard.⁶ Thus, by means of this record, the von Kleist clan dates its ennoblement to 1289, a date which classifies the clan as *Uradel* nobility.⁷ While the generations before and several generations after Klest de Densin are documentarily hazy, clan historians point to fragmentary evidence that Klest de Densin descended from *Ritter des Deutsche Orden* (knights of the Teutonic Order) who immigrated in the mid-thirteenth century to Pommern as part of the Holy Roman Empire's *Ostsiedlung* (Eastern settlement).⁸ Thus, Klest was an early inhabitant of the newly settled frontier and well aware of the continued eastward migration and colonization efforts in other areas of Pommern and Preußen by elements of the Holy Roman Empire as they sought to Christianize the indigenous, non-Christian Baltic tribes.⁹

⁵ Gustav Kratz, L. Quandt, George Adalbert von Mülverstedt, Wilhelm Stettin, neu herausgegeben von Sigurd von Kleist, *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist: Zweiter Teil, Allgemeine Geschichte*. 2. Auflage (Bergisch Gladbach: Familienverband derer v. Kleist e. V., 2007), 149. Hereafter, Kratz, *Allgemeine Geschichte*.

⁶ Belgard, Pommern is present-day Białogard, Poland, a city of approximately 25,000 in northwestern Poland. Białogard is approximately 20 miles (35 kilometers) south of the Baltic Sea coast and 85 miles (140 kilometers) northeast of Szczecin (formerly Stettin, Pommern).

⁷ Classification as *Uradel* indicates that the clan or family has proof that a forefather was ennobled before 1400. Thus, all members of the von Kleist clan who trace their paternal lineage back to Klest de Densin's are hereditarily ennobled via his ennoblement. Clans and families who trace their proof of ennoblement to a date after 1400 are classified as *Briefadel* (patent of nobility). *Briefadel* likewise share the same subsequent paternal hereditary ennoblement as *Uradel*.

⁸ Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen und Plaudereien" (handschriftliche Manuskripte) Bd. 4, Heft 3 (BA-MA: N 354/25, Nachlass Kleist), 16. Von Kleist records in his 1945 prisoner of war manuscript that "According to the *Gothaischen Handbuch der Uradeligen*, the Kleists first appeared in a document in Pomerania with Jaroslaw in 1175." Jaroslaw (1175) is identified in the clan history, however, the history notes that Jaroslaw was not raised to hereditary nobility. That hereditary ennoblement came to Jaroslaw's great-grandson, Klest de Densin. Von Kleist's recollection of this family information (without the reference to notes) indicates that he was familiar, if not well versed, with his clan's history.

⁹ Sigurd von Kleist, *Die Familie von Kleist*. (Hamm, Familienverband derer v. Kleist e.V., 2013), 1.

Klest de Densin's three sons, Dubbelslaff, Prissebur, and Volz, headed the three primary and long-standing family lines (*Linien*) of the von Kleist clan.¹⁰ The three lines are: Tychow-Dubberower *Linie*; Muttrin-Damensche *Linie*; and Villnow-Raddatzer *Linie*. Little is known about the three Kleist *Linien* during the two centuries after 1289, but by the 1470s, family members reappeared in the histories. Jürgen Kleist of the Tychow-Dubberower *Linie* served *Herzog* Boguslaw X as an advisor and later, in 1491, he rose to become the Chancellor of the *Herzogtum Pommern* (Duchy of Pomerania).¹¹ At this time, the clan received its most important granting of feudal rights in the form of a *Lehnbrief* (letter of enfeoffment), dated 13 April 1477. The letter from the *Herzog* Boguslaw X gave the freehold of land, all the properties then held and properties to be gained in the future, to all of Kleist de Densin's male descendants, which on that date numbered more than eighteen. This freehold right was in exchange for the Kleists' pledge of service.¹² This *Lehnbrief* and its key provisions firmly established the clan's three *Linien* as significant landholders in the area around Belgard, Pommern. At the time of the 1477 *Lehnbrief*, there were fewer than twenty male Kleists in the clan's fifth generation, but four generations later (beginning of the seventeenth century) the Kleist males totaled nearly one hundred.¹³ With this recognition of nobility and the guaranteed security of its properties, which remained in effect for the next three hundred years, the clan continued to flourish, at least when there were no wars.¹⁴

During the sixteenth century, Kleist clan members remained rooted to their lands or served in important administrative positions and thus remained with the *Herzogtum*. In 1534, an important event impacted the clan for it was in this year that the Reformation took hold in

¹⁰ The von Kleist clan genealogical nomenclature used in their records is: *Linie* (line) is the major clan subdivision and subordinate to this is the *Ast*. The *Ast* (limb) is the primary subdivision of the *Linie*. The primary subdivision of the *Ast* is the *Zweig* (branch). Subordinate to the *Zweige* are the *Häuser* (houses). *Häuser* are the name of and typically refer to a single family-owned *Gut* (landed estate or manor).

¹¹ Georg Heinrich Kypke, mit Ergänzungen von Diether Dennies v. Kleist, und Berndt v. Kleist (1971) überarbeitet von Sigurd v. Kleist, *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist Dritter Teil - Biographien bis 1880 Zweite Abteilung Tychow-Dubberower Linie*, 2. (1882). (Hamm: Familienverband derer v. Kleist e. V., 2020), 9-11. Hereafter, Kypke, *Geschichte, Tychow-Dubberower Linie*. It was during this two-hundred-year period when the spelling changed from Klest to Kleist.

¹² Kratz, *Allgemeine Geschichte*, 48-49. Additionally, the 1477 *Lehnbrief* stipulated that any fief whose lord died without male heirs would pass to the next closest male member of the clan rather than revert to the duke.

¹³ Sigurd von Kleist, *Die Familie*, 3. Von Kleist noted that more than half of the men in the later generation (IX generation) had already had sons of their own.

¹⁴ Only with the abolishment of Prussian feudalism in 1799, did these feudal rights granted in 1477 end.

Pommern. By 1542, the revised Pomeranian Church Constitution, which followed the church principles of Martin Luther, was in effect. The vast majority of the Kleist clan followed *Herzog Barnim IX* into the nascent *evangelische Kirche* (protestant church).¹⁵ The dedication to the church and its religious teachings remained strong in certain families throughout the clan's history. While Pommern remained neutral in the war kindled by the Reformation, the Thirty Years War, neutrality in the war brought neither peace or safety.

Between 1618 and 1648, Pommern suffered several occupations under both sides and was severely plundered by both imperial troops under General Wallenstein and Swedish forces under command of Gustavus Adolphus. The resulting destruction resulted in a decline in population of Pommern from 160,000 in 1630 to 96,000 by 1648, a loss of forty percent of the inhabitants.¹⁶ In the Peace of Westphalia, the series of treaties that concluded the Thirty Years War, the *Kurfürsten von Brandenburg* (Prince-Elector of Brandenburg), Friedrich Wilhelm, gained the succession of *Hinterpommern*, the land between the Oder River and *Pommerellen*.¹⁷ This area included the Kleist clan lands and thus the clan became vassals of Friedrich Wilhelm.¹⁸ While some members of the clan had been active beyond their estates and reached high levels in service of several generations of the Dukes of Pomerania, this realignment under Brandenburg-Prussia brought even greater opportunities for members of the clan to serve their sovereigns.¹⁹

¹⁵ While a deeper explanation of post-Reformation churches and their development in the territories that eventually formed Preußen in the eighteenth century is beyond the scope of this work, the following brief synopsis is provided for clarification. While the term "*evangelische Kirche*" is generally translated into "protestant church," this translation is too broad and linguistically misleading to be useful in the Prussian-German context. A more accurate translation for this term in the context of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is "a confessional union comprising churches following the Reformed and Lutheran tenants." For the von Kleist clan, members largely adhered to the Lutheran-based denomination with some families (for example, the von Kleist-Retzows of Kieckow) moving towards the more *evangelische* doctrinally conservative denominations such as the *Bekennende Kirche* (Confessing Church) in the 1930s-40s.

¹⁶ Peter H. Wilson, *The Thirty Years War: Europe's Tragedy* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 789.

¹⁷ *Pommerellen* (Eastern Pomerania) was the enclave of territory surrounding Danzig (present-day Gdańsk, Poland) and was ceded to the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland after the Thirty Years War.

¹⁸ Friedrich Wilhelm (*16 February 1620; † 29 April 1688) was the *Kurfürst von Brandenburg* (Elector of Brandenburg) and *Herzog von Preußen* (Duke of Prussia) and he ruled Brandenburg-Prussia, from 1640 until 1688. He was known as *der Große Kurfürst* (the Great Elector) for his military and political achievements. He was a staunch pillar of the Calvinist faith.

¹⁹ Sigurd von Kleist, *Die Familie*, 3. In the last half of the seventeenth century several Kleists left Pommern. In 1662, one Kleist left the service of the *Kurfürst von Brandenburg*, embraced the catholic faith and became a privy councilor to the Elector of Bavaria. He later joined the Bavarian Army, later left Bavaria to serve in the army of the Elector and Archbishop of Köln, was ennobled as a *Freiherr*, and founded the Rhenish branch of the von Kleists.

Over the course of the next century and a half, the von Kleist clan established itself as a member of upper echelon of *preußischen adligen Militärclans*.²⁰ The rise of Prussia and the ten wars it fought between 1653 and 1779 provided ample opportunities for military service. The clan history notes “A large portion of the [Kleist] men joined the Prussian army, at least temporarily. This also was true of the sons who were to inherit their family’s landed estates.”²¹ Von Kleists fought in every Prussian war of the eighteenth century and their copious officer contributions to the crown produced twelve generals including the clan’s first of three *Generalfeldmarschalls*.²² Bravery on the battlefield was not lacking as twenty von Kleists were awarded the *Orden pour le mérite*. It was, however, Friedrich II’s (the Great) three Silesian Wars (1740–1763) that confirmed the magnitude of the von Kleist clan’s presence within the army officer corps. During these three wars, 116 von Kleist men served. Just over one-quarter (30) of these officers were killed or died of wounds on the battlefields of the Silesian Wars.²³ The most famous of the von Kleists to die in these wars was Ewald Christian von Kleist, the renown poet. He died as from wounds sustained at the Battle of Kunersdorf in 1759.

During the 1700s, the von Kleist’s numerical growth enabled the clan’s ability to supply officers to the Prussian army. By the middle of the century, the clan’s male progeny reached its numerical zenith with nearly two hundred von Kleist males in a single generation. The clan grew not only numerically but in its accumulation of wealth, largely with its accumulation of land and *Landgüter* (landed estates). Clan documents record that just under six hundred named *Landgüter* were in the possession at one time or another by members of the clan between 1289

The branch still exists today. A small number of Kleists emigrated to Kurland, Denmark, and Russia and found service with the sovereigns in these territories.

²⁰ Funck, *Kriegertum*, 13. While Funck applies the term “*adligen Militärclans*” to the timeframe 1860-1935, it also aptly describes the Prussian “noble military clans and families” of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries and is thusly used in this work.

²¹ Sigurd von Kleist, *Die Familie*, 3.

²² Georg Heinrich Kypke und Sigurd von Kleist, *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist Dritter Teil - Biographien bis 1880 Erste Abteilung Vilnow-Raddatzer Linie*, (1878), 2. überarbeitete Auflage (Hamm: Familienverband derer v. Kleist e. V., 2018), 70-83. Henning Alexander von Kleist auf Radatz (* 1676; † 22. August 1749) joined the army in 1698, fought in three wars (War of Spanish Succession, Great Northern War, and War of the Austrian Succession) and in multiple battles and served under three Prussian kings. As a *Generallieutenant* during the War of Austrian Succession he was made a Knight of the Order of the Black Eagle awarded the *Ordern Pour le Mérite* for his leadership and bravery during the Battle of Mollwitz, Friedrich II’s first battle as the Prussian King, on 10 April 1741.

²³ Kratz, *Allgemeine Geschichte*, 5-6.

and 1945.²⁴ In addition to direct purchases, properties came into von Kleist members hand's as royal grants or gifts for loyal service to the crown while others came to be possessed by von Kleist's through marriage.²⁵

If the clan's growth had been aided by the Prussian kings, the decline was precipitated by these monarchs as well. In addition to the heavy battlefield toll on the von Kleist men, the strict financial requirements imposed on army officers who desired to marry often delayed marriage for a decade or more. This resulted in only about one-third of the aforementioned two hundred men having sons to sustain the next generations.²⁶ Nevertheless, the von Kleist clan continued to serve their sovereigns in the long nineteenth century.

From 1792 until 1815, the Napoleonic Wars provided numerous opportunities for military service. In the Prussian campaigns of 1806-1807, thirty-five von Kleist men served. Ewald's great-grandfather, Christoph Albrecht Leopold, saw combat as a *Seconde-Lieutenant* in the 1807 winter campaign. During the course of the 1806-07 campaigns, four members of the clan received the *Orden pour le mérite*, two von Kleists were killed, and thirteen were captured by the victorious French.²⁷ By the end of the Wars of Liberation and Napoleon's final defeat at Waterloo in 1815, eighteen of the thirty-five serving in 1806 rejoined to serve in the reconstituted Prussian army. An additional eleven von Kleists took up arms in 1813-1815. The toll was heavy as six of the twenty-nine men died for Prussia's liberation. Again, the von Kleists demonstrated bravery in the field earning three *Eiserne Kreuze I. Klasse* and fourteen *II*.

²⁴ "Verzeichnis der früheren Güter der Familie von Kleist" (Familienverband derer v. Kleist e. V.). https://www.v-kleist.com/FG_allg/gueter1.html (August 25, 2020); https://www.v-kleist.com/FG_allg/gueter2.html (October 2, 2020). An assessment of the information on von Kleist estates from 1289 to 1945, indicates that 503 named estates were owned by a member of the von Kleists. Another 91 named estates were reported as "temporarily owned" thus, putting the total number of von Kleist clan estates at almost six hundred. The von Kleist estates owned outside of the Duchy of Pomerania, the Kingdom of Prussia, the German Reich (1871-1918), and Germany (1918-1945) were not included in the total.

²⁵ William W. Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians: Brandenburg Junkers and Villagers, 1500-1840* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 280-333. For a highly informative look at the inner workings of a Brandenburg *Gutshof* (estate) see Hagen. He devotes an entire chapter to the ownership of the Stavenow *Gutshof* in Brandenburg by a von Kleist family from 1719-1809. Andreas Joachim von Kleist, the first von Kleist owner, was a career officer who rose to the rank of *Oberst* (colonel). King Friedrich Wilhelm I is postulated to have given Stavenow to von Kleist as a gift, or at minimum, gifted the *Oberst* other properties which were then sold in order to aid in the purchase of Stavenow. Hagen notes that Andreas Joachim at his death in 1738, owned Stavenow debt free.

²⁶ Sigurd von Kleist, *Die Familie*, 4.

²⁷ Von Kleist, *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist Erster Teil Urkundenbuch Fortführung Familientagsprotokolle und Nachrichtenblätter von 1858 bis 1955* (Hamm, Familienverband derer v. Kleist e.V., 2019), 89. Hereafter, Von Kleist, *Familientagsprotokolle*.

Klasse.²⁸ The Wars of Liberation saw the second von Kleist raised to the rank of *Generalfeldmarschall*, Friedrich Graf Kleist von Nollendorf.²⁹ In 1889, the *Generalfeldmarschall's* service was further acknowledged when an infantry regiment was named in his honor, *Grenadier-Regiment "Graf Kleist von Nollendorf" (1. Westpreußisches) Nr. 6*.³⁰

The next half century after the final defeat of Napoleon saw Prussia remain at peace. During these decades many von Kleists still elected to serve as army officers.³¹ Many other clansmen continued to focus on agricultural production and the running of their *Güter* while others served the crown and state in civil service jobs. The family's importance was confirmed by it being given a permanent hereditary seat in the 1850 established *Preußische Herrenhaus* (Prussian House of Lords).³² By mid-century, the clan began to organize and collectively moved to establish a family foundation. An article from the 6 June 1857, *Norddeutsche Zeitung* reported from Stettin,

"The von Kleist family met here on the 2nd and 3rd of this month. The subject of the discussions was, as we hear, the establishment of a family foundation. At the same time, the idea of having a family history written was said to have been suggested. The history of the Kleist's has always been closely connected with national and especially with Pomeranian history. Members of the latter have always been entrusted with the highest posts at court, in the civil service, and in the army. At the present time, the family counts among its members a high privy councilor, a provincial governor, a royal household hereditary master chef, a

²⁸ Ibid., 89.

²⁹ Georg von Kleist and Sigurd von Kleist, *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist Dritter Teil-Biographien bis 1800, Fünfte Abteilung, Das Leben des Generalfeldmarschalls Grafen Kleist von Nollendorf* (Hamm: Familienverband derer v. Kleist e.V., 2015). See this two-hundred-page biography first published in 1887 for more life and career details of *Generalfeldmarschall Grafen Kleist von Nollendorf*. Friedrich Emil Ferdinand Heinrich von Kleist, from 1814 *Graf Kleist von Nollendorf* (* 9. April 1762 in Berlin; † 17. February 1823 in Berlin) entered the army in 1778 and served as an officer until his retirement in 1821, at which time *König* Frederick William III raised him to the rank of *Generalfeldmarschall*. The General was a key Prussian military commander throughout the Napoleonic Wars.

³⁰ Von Kleist, *Familientagsprotokolle*, 318. The regiment retained the von Kleist name until the post-World War One army reorganization.

³¹ Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preußischen Armee für 1835* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler, 1835), 387. Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preußischen Armee für 1852* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1852), 539. Twenty-nine von Kleist officers are listed in the *Rangliste* index for both 1835 and 1852.

³² Von Kleist, *Familientagsprotokolle*, 4. Hans Hugo von Kleist (* 25. November 1814 at Kieckow near Belgard; † 20. May 1892 at Kieckow) was the first von Kleist to sit as a permanent hereditary member of the Prussian House of Lords. The von Kleist family was given a seat on 2 July 1857. The von Kleist clan elected Hans Hugo to fill the seat on the family's behalf.

member of the Prussian House of Lords and 25 to 30 officers of all ranks of the army. They own at least 45 to 50 manors, most of which are located in Pomerania, comprising from 130 to 140,000 Morgen and representing a land value at the very least of 3 1/2 to 4 million Thalers.³³

As war clouds began to rise, this time with the unification of a greater Germany as its goal, the von Kleist clan took pause to look back at their military service to Prussia. The family took pride in the fact that between 1700 and 1860, 310 von Kleists had served as officers in the Prussian Army.³⁴ The forthcoming Wars of Unification added more officers to the list of those von Kleists who served.

In the 1866 war against Austria, twenty-eight clansmen fought. The families suffered no deaths but two men were seriously wounded.³⁵ In the Franco-Prussian War 1870-71, twenty-six von Kleists fought.³⁶ Among the combatants was Ewald's father, Hugo von Kleist. One clansman died in the fighting. Two men earned *Eiserne Kreuze I. Klasse* and sixteen *II. Klasse*.³⁷ Additionally, there were four von Kleists who served in non-combat roles as medics. The family history noted that the number of von Kleist combatants in the Wars of Unification was considerably smaller than during the wars of Friedrich II. The history further noted, "But the elation of professional military service is still in the blood of the family."³⁸ The clan thus, maintained its status as a leading *preußischer adeliger Militärclan* as it moved into the twentieth century; a century that saw the destruction of not only the von Kleist *adeliger Militärclan*, but the other military clans as well.

By 1908, clan *Vorsitzender* (chairman), General Georg von Kleist lamented the declining fortunes of the clan. In a message to the clan he wrote,

³³ Ibid., 4. The land area conversion is 130 Morgen equals 80 acres and 140,000 Morgen equals 86,520 acres. (1 Morgen equals 0.618 acres.) Using an exchange rate in 1871 of 1 *Thaler* = \$0.75 U.S. dollars, an approximate minimum value of the land is \$2,625,000 to \$3,000,000. (www.amason.net/hessen/thaler.htm) In 2020 dollars, this minimum land value is \$55,991,000 to \$63,990,000. (www.in2013dollars.com/us/inflation/1871)

³⁴ Von Kleist, *Familiientagsprotokolle*, 87. The history recorded that the *Kriegsministerium* (war ministry) files contain the name of these 310 officers.

³⁵ Ibid., 89.

³⁶ Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preußischen Armee für 1870/71* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1871), 100, 103, 963, and 980. Along with numerous lieutenants, captains, and majors from the von Kleist clan, there was one *Generalleutnant*, one *Generalmajor*, and two *Obersten* on the 1870/71 army rolls.

³⁷ Von Kleist, *Familiientagsprotokolle*, 89.

³⁸ Ibid., 89.

Fifty years is a long time span in the life of a nation and a family. Three names came to an end, names that were great in the past and also promised great things for the future. The last bearers of the of the name Kleist von Nollendorf and the connected names von Rüchel-Kleist and Graf Kleist von Loß were laid to rest in their graves.

Also, a number of estates have left the family's possessions, which successively have included about 600 names. Among others, Warnin, Raddatz, Juchow, Dubbertsch, Rauden, Lanzen and Siedkow, were sold. Damen and Groß Kroessin were regained again. Still the Prussian landed property consists of 32 estates in the hands of 22 cousins. The recently prominent tendency to secure the family's property through entailment will hopefully prevent further crumbling away and help to preserve the present ownership.

The family has grown out of the Pomeranian soil, a strong, widely branched tree. Its roots rest in its native soil. Let's try to preserve it, and at the same time ensure the healthy continuation of the family!

The family has had no great achievements in the last 50 years. Not even in the family's most closely held field, that of military service, has it achieved any brilliant deeds. Not since the wars of King Wilhelm I has a member of the family held a high-ranking position of leadership. But in a more narrowly limited circle, many capable men have created capable things. One of them has also become a historic figure, the intrepid leader of the conservatives in the constitutional struggles of the last century, the noble aristocrat Hans Hugo von Kleist-Retzow. We can therefore look back gratefully on our ancestors; the poet's words are befitting: "Blessed is he who remembers his fathers with gladness."

All the more, however, is the admonition addressed to us to acquire the great assets of competence, moral strength and loyalty inherited from them. Not only to possess it, but also to bequeath it undiminished to our descendants for the honor of the family and for the good of the fatherland, which for us is embodied in the sublime figure of our beloved king.³⁹

Georg von Kleist also noted that by 1908, there were only 110 male members of the von Kleist clan.⁴⁰ The next war would thin the ranks even more.

As in every previous war, the von Kleist men answered the call to the colors in 1914. In all, fifty-eight clansmen joined the ranks, nearly all as officers. The post-war published work, *Uebersicht über die Teilnahme der Familie von Kleist in Weltkriege* (Overview of the Participants of the Family von Kleist in the World War) enables an analysis of the clan's

³⁹ Ibid., 95. From a written address to the entire von Kleist clan dated 10 March 1908, Berlin.

⁴⁰ Kratz, *Allgemeine Geschichte*, 6. Georg von Kleist's 1908 foreword to the 2nd edition.

participation.⁴¹ The preponderance of officers served in the infantry and cavalry, both counting twenty-six officers in each branch. Only three officers served in the artillery and there was but a single naval officer. Four officers transferred from their parent branch to join the fledgling air service; two of these did not survive the war. Of the serving officers, six achieved general officer rank, the highest promoted to *General der Kavallerie*, and at least five served as general staff officers, including Ewald. The clansmen's bravery and service were recognized by the awarding of no fewer than twenty-eight *Eiserne Kreuze I. Klasse* and forty-four *II. Klasse*. One von Kleist, *Generalleutnant* Alfred von Kleist, earned the *Pour le Mérite*. The cost of bravery and service was very high. Seventeen von Kleists, nearly one in three, fell in battle or died as a result of wounds or illness. No less than thirteen were wounded in action. After 1918, like Germany, the clan struggled to understand and recover from the war. Additionally, stripped of its hereditary noble privileges, the clan struggled to comprehend its place in a defeated Germany with no monarch as liege lord.

The Treaty of Versailles mandate that Germany drawdown to a 100,000-man army meant that there were only just over 3,700 line officer positions.⁴² In 1913, there were twenty-eight active duty von Kleists officers in the army. By 1923, there were only five von Kleist officers on active duty.⁴³ The loss of the war and the subsequent dismantling of the German army severely constricted the clan's ability to place members into the army as officers.⁴⁴ Von Kleist men still gained admission to the officer corps but at a much lower overall number during the years of the Weimar Republic. With the expansion of the *Wehrmacht* beginning in 1935, more von Kleist men sought commissions in the army, air force, and navy. Finally, after several decades of absence, a member of the von Kleist clan climbed into the senior ranking leadership of the German Army. By 1936, Ewald von Kleist was promoted to *General der Kavallerie*, but as

⁴¹ Georg von Kleist, *Uebersicht über die Teilnahmen der Familie von Kleist in Weltkriege* (Wusseken: von Kleist'schen Familienverbände, 1920). This history is a fifty-six-page booklet containing short biographies of most of the von Kleist participants in World War One.

⁴² The Treaty capped the officer corps at 4,000 officers. There were just under 300 medical officer position leaving the remainder for line (infantry, cavalry, artillery, train, communications, etc.) officers.

⁴³ Reichswehrministerium (Heeres-Personalamt), *Rangliste des Detuschen Reichsheeres* (Berlin: E.S. Mittler & Sohn, 1923), 128. Three *Majore* one *Rittmeister*, and one *Leutnant* were the von Kleist clan contribution. Given the ranks, the three *Majore* and the *Rittmeister* had been selected to transfer from the old *Kaiserheer* to the new 100,000-man *Reichswehr*. The *Leutnant* was new having only been commissioned on 1 January 1923.

⁴⁴ While the overall number of von Kleist officers dropped by over eighty percent, the actual percentage of von Kleist officers within the army officer corps rose. In 1913, von Kleist officer population was 0.9 per 1,000 of the officer corps. In 1923, von Kleists were 1.4 per 1,000 of the officer corps population.

important, he was named commanding general of one of the thirteen German *Wehrkreise/Armeekorps* (military districts/army corps). This position placed him in the top twenty German army commanders. The name of von Kleist was once again in the top circle of the German military. Other von Kleists were also making themselves known.

Likely the second best known von Kleist of the Weimar and World War II period was another Ewald von Kleist, Ewald von Kleist-Schmenzin.⁴⁵ A staunch political conservative, von Kleist-Schmenzin early on saw Adolf Hitler and the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP)* for what they were. His active resistance to Hitler and the *NSDAP* began 1933. In 1938, he travelled to England in an effort to convince senior British officials of the need to stand up to Hitler concerning Czechoslovakia, explaining that this pushback against Hitler would give the domestic anti-Hitler resistance the grounds to act overtly against the dictator. His information when unheeded and the opportunity to remove Hitler passed. Undeterred, von Kleist-Schmenzin continued his resistance efforts. Von Kleist-Schmenzin's son, also Ewald, an army *Leutnant*, joined and was an active member of the military resistance circle centered on *Oberst Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg*. Both father and son von Kleist-Schmenzin were arrested after the failed 7 July 1944 Hitler assassination attempt. The elder Ewald was convicted of complicity in the plot and died on the guillotine on 9 April 1945. The younger von Kleist-Schmenzin was released due to lack of evidence.⁴⁶ For other von Kleists, the *NSDAP* was more acceptable.

In an analysis of aristocratic acceptance of and participation in the *NSDAP*, historian Stephan Malinowski, records that on 30 January 1933, five von Kleist clan members were registered *NSDAP* members.⁴⁷ By war's end, that number climbed to forty-three. Whether party membership after 1933 was voluntary or thought to be required to maintain a civil servant

⁴⁵ Bodo Scheurig, *Ewald von Kleist-Schmenzin. Ein Konservativer gegen Hitler* (Oldenburg: Stalling, 1968). See this for a comprehensive biography of von Kleist-Schmenzin and his opposition to Hitler. See also, Georg Heinrich Kypke mit Ergänzungen und Fortführung von Diether Dennies v. Kleist, und Berndt v. Kleist (1971), *Geschichte des Geschlechts v Kleist Dritter Teil-Zweite Abteilung enthaltend, die Biographien der Tychow-Dubberower Linie (GH Kypke 1882)* (Hamm: Familienverband derer v. Kleist e. V., 1971), 26-31.

⁴⁶ Ewald-Heinrich Hermann Konrad Oskar Ulrich Wolf Alfred von Kleist-Schmenzin (* 10. July 1922 at Gut Schmenzin, Pommern; † 8. March 2013 in Prien am Chiemsee) was the last surviving member of the 7 July 1944 plot. In 1962, he founded the *Wehrkundetagung* in Munich. He was the convenor of its successor, the Munich Conference on Security Policy, until his retirement in 1998.

⁴⁷ Stephan Malinowski, *Vom König zum Führer* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag GmbH, 2003) 574. Malinowski records the number of *NSDAP* members of fifty-three noble families.

position remains unclear. None of the *NSDAP* members appeared to have climbed the Nazi hierarchy to reach either high party rank or hold important party or civilian government positions. For the larger portion of the von Kleist clan, like a large number of their aristocratic class, early enthusiasm for the *NDSAP* likely stemmed from the commonly held goals with the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* (German National People's Party) (*DNVP*). The *DNVP* drew heavy support from aristocrats who were nationalistic, conservative, pro-monarchist. In the Weimar Era, both parties advocated for a strong nationalist agenda, withdrawal from the Treaty of Versailles, rebuilding of the army, programs favoring industrialists and large landowners, and opposition to growing government controls, social programs, and progressive taxation. Too, elements of both parties shared strongly antisemitic beliefs. But once the *NSDAP* gained power, exposed their underlying goals and programs, and began their overt efforts that ended other political party opposition, coopted and controlled the state *Evangelisch* and Catholic churches, and heightened their direct attacks on Jews, etc., many aristocrats lost their enthusiasm for the Nazis.⁴⁸ Some, like von Kleist-Schmenzin would remain outspoken, some like Ruth von Kleist-Retzow and Bernd von Kleist became active opponents of the Nazis; most aristocrats who opposed Hitler would do so quietly.⁴⁹

Regardless of stance concerning the Nazis, the von Kleist clan's destruction, as a long standing and important supporter of the state through providing officers to the army, civil servants, and politicians, and as significant agrarian landowners, came at the hands of Hitler and his supporters on battlefields of World War II.

The first von Kleist to fall during World War II was Ewald *Freiherr* von Kleist, a major and infantry battalion commander, killed in France on 14 June 1940. After this, another thirty-one von Kleists, twenty-seven men and four women, were killed in combat, died as a result of Allied bombing, died in Soviet captivity, or were murdered on their estates by Red Army

⁴⁸ Leon Goldensohn and Robert Gellately, *The Nuremberg Interviews* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 347. During a post-World War II interview when he was asked "his opinion concerning the persecution of the churches, extermination of the Jews, the killing of the partisans, and other atrocities committed by the Nazis, von Kleist made the following statement, "I feel strongest about the persecution of the churches. In fact, when I went away for the first time [retirement], on February 5, 1938, it was partly because I fought for the churches and was opposed to the National Socialist attitude towards them."

⁴⁹ Jane Pejsa, *Matriarch of Conspiracy: Ruth von Kleist, 1867-1945* (Minneapolis, MN: Kenwood Publishing, 1991). See this biography for a full account of Ruth von Kleist-Rezow's (nee Gräfin von Zedlitz und Trützschler) life in Pommern and her behind the scenes support of a number of the anti-Nazi resistance such as Ewald von Kleist-Schmenzin, Fabian von Schlabrendorff, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

forces.⁵⁰ By 1943, the *Landgüter* in von Kleist clan's hands totaled only twenty-five. By 1946, no estates remained in the possession of the clan. The majority of the von Kleists who lived in Pommern, Ostpreußen, and Schlesien fled west before the Red Army, those who did not risked being killed. The shattered remnants of a once proud and prolific clan were left to rebuild their lives in what for most of them was almost a foreign land. Thus, the two main supporting pillars of the eight centuries-long dynasty of the *preußischer adeliger Militärclan* von Kleist, the army and their ownership of the land were destroyed in the cataclysm of war.

The last clansman, the last von Kleist officer in uniform to die as a result of the war was Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist.

II. Ewald's Family Line

The importance and influence of family and family lineage cannot be underestimated in the life of Ewald von Kleist. As will be shown, once Ewald was in a position to set his own course, he steered back towards the traditional foundations and career paths which had long sustained the von Kleist clan and gained it an undeniable position in the upper echelon among the Prussian noble military clans. It is therefore important to investigate Ewald's family line and gain an understanding of the ideas, concepts, and habitus with which he was likely inculcated and the pressures he possibly felt from this familial history.

While clan records enable one to trace Ewald's family roots, the more relevant family history begins with Steffen Christoph von Kleist of Damen.⁵¹ Between the early 1500s and early 1700s, the previous six generations established the *Linie* Muttrin-Damensche, *Ast* Damen, *Haus*

⁵⁰ "Ehrentafel der Kriegsoffer, die von der Familie derer von Kleist in den Weltkriegen 1914-1918 und 1939-45 gebracht wurden." (Geschichte des Geschlechts von Kleist-Fortführung 1880-1980) <https://www.v-kleist.com/FG/fgn206.htm> and following. (October 26, 2020).

⁵¹ The von Kleist clan history often labels a member not only by name but by the estate they or their house owned. Thus, Steffen Christoph was associated with *Gut* Damen, which also gave name to the Muttrin-Damen *Linie*.

Damen. It was at the end of 1712, that Ewald's Great-Great-Great Grandfather, Steffen Christoph von Kleist was born as his father's eldest son. When Steffen Christoph was only five years old his father died (1717). Steffen Christoph's father's brother took over management of the family's estates.⁵² Despite being the eldest son and therefore heir to his father's enfeoffed estates of Damen B and part of Kieckow, Steffen Christoph elected to become a soldier.⁵³

Steffen Christoph enlisted in *Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 22* and by 1731 was an *Unteroffizier* (Sergeant).⁵⁴ On 22 February 1733, at age 20, he was promoted to *Fähnrich* (officer candidate). Perhaps knowing that he was to inherit his family's estates upon reaching legal adulthood, he apparently did not complete the requirements for earning his *Sekonde-Lieutenant's Patent* (commission) prior to leaving active duty on 6 April 1735. Now out of the army, Steffen Christoph and his year younger brother, Nicolaus Valentin, took over management of the estates they inherited from their father. Additionally, at the death of their paternal uncle, Georg Valentin, in 1730, the brothers inherited another estate (Nemitz),

⁵² Georg Heinrich Kypke, Hans Wätjens, Sigurd von Kleist. *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist Dritter Teil-Biographien bis 1880 Dritte Abteilung Muttrin-Damensche Linie Der Damensche und der Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 2. Auflage. Hamm: Familienverband derer v. Kleist e. V., 2018. 225. Hereafter, Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*. Georg Valentin von Kleist, younger brother to Steffen Nicolaus, Steffen Christoph's father, had served in the Saxon Army obtaining the rank of *Hauptmann* before leave active service to return to Pommern.

⁵³ Sean A. Eddie, *Freedom's Price: Serfdom, Subjection, and Reform in Prussia, 1648-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 40-41. Enfeoffment or entailment was a form of contractual control which governed the transfer of ownership of land. In this case, the land having originally been owned by the crown, was contractually granted as heritable property to an ennobled vassal in return for the vassal's and his subsequent heir's fealty (service) to the crown. Enfeoffment law governed how, when, to whom, and under what circumstances or conditions the entailed estate could pass into different ownership. The general idea was to restrict ownership transfer that would diminish the value of the entailed estate. Thus, eldest males inherited the entire entailed estate thereby maintaining it as a whole, rather than subdividing it between multiple inheritors into ever smaller parcels as the land was passed on to subsequent generations.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 225-227. No date is given for Steffen Christoph's enlistment but it was likely in 1729 or 1730 at age 16 or 17. At the time of his father's death in 1717, his father's father was still alive and held the family estates. Due to age and infirmities, the grandfather had authorized his sons to act on his behalf. The grandfather's death date is not recorded but was sometime after 1718. Family records give no information on who ran the estates from 1730 (death of Uncle Georg Valentin) until Steffen Christoph was discharged from the army in 1735. Perhaps he was given a leave of absence for all or part of the period between 1730 and 1735, which would explain why he was not promoted to *Sekonde-Lieutenant*.

shareholds in two more estates (Soldekow und Bartelin) and several small farms.⁵⁵ After a 1737 fraternal partition with his younger brother, Steffen Christoph retained only the Nemitz estate.⁵⁶ Four years later, in 1737, he sold this, his only estate, to another member of the von Kleist clan and purchased a *Gut* near Reinfeld in the *Kreis* (district) Rummelsburg.⁵⁷

After apparently settling in Reinfeld, Steffen Christoph married noblewoman Johanne Luise von Suckow. Their first child, Johann Gottlieb Christoph, was born in 1744. Apart from the births of another son and two daughters, nothing more is recorded about the nearly two decades following the purchase of Reinfeld in 1737. The next key event was the commencement of the Third Silesian War in 1756, a war that had significant impact on the family.

In 1756 or early 1757, Steffen Christoph was called back to the colors. Rejoining the army, he was promoted to *Lieutenant* and assigned to *Bataillon Manteuffel*. At the end of June 1757, a Russian army of nearly 100,000 men crossed west into Ostpreußen. By 5 July, the Russians took the fortress at Memel. On 23 August, General Apraxin, the Russian commander, led his army westward with the intent of capturing the Königsberg and thus gaining access to a sea port by which to resupply his force. The Prussian forces, commanded by *Generalfeldmarschall* Johann von Lehwaldt, moved to block the Russians. On 30 August 1757, the two armies met near the village of Groß-Jägersdorf. A hard-fought, ten-hour battle ensued.⁵⁸ By the end of the day, the larger Russian force had gained a tactical victory but were unable to

⁵⁵ Ibid., 226-227. Steffen Christoph's brother, Nicolaus Valentin, died without marrying but had sold his estates near Kieckow and Muttrin to a fellow clan member of another family line rather than passing them back to his older brother. Thus, the Kieckow and Muttrin estates passed out of Ewald's family-line's ownership.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 227. Nicolaus Valentin's share of the property partition handed to him, the estates of Damen B with its subordinate estates of Klein-Nemmerin and Sand, a portion of Katschenhagen (known as Burgwald), also a portion of Kieckow.

⁵⁷ Reinfeld (present day Słosinko, Poland) is located approximately 37 miles (60 kilometers) southeast of *Gut* Nemitz (near the present day Niemica, Poland).

⁵⁸ The village of Groß-Jägersdorf (near present day Mezhdurech'ye, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia) lay approximately 39 miles (63 kilometers) east of Königsberg.

exploit the advantage, thus yielding the strategic victory to the Prussians. Nearly 7,000 Russians fell while the Prussians lost approximately 4,600 dead and wounded. Three members of the von Kleist clan were among the battle's casualties.⁵⁹ *Lieutenant* Steffen Christoph von Kleist was killed during the battle.

Steffen Christoph's death left his widow with four young children, the eldest, Johann Gottlieb Christoph, having just turned thirteen. While the family history is mute on the effects of Steffen Christoph's death, it is clear that the ownership of *Gut* Reinfeld ended for the family.⁶⁰ Indications are that Steffen Christoph's widow was unable to oversee the continued management of the *Gut* or was unable to maintain the *Gut* in a financially viable condition, thus precipitating the sale of the estate. Without the prospect of inheriting an estate, both of Steffen Christoph's sons followed in their father's footsteps and joined the Prussian Army. Equally undeterred by their father's death in battle, both daughters married army officers.⁶¹ This continued voluntary participation as officers and as officer's wives gives an insight into the era's habitus as it indicates the positive opinion of and likely veneration by members of noble military clans of military service and death in battle, respectively.

⁵⁹ „Verlustig gegangene Offiziere der preußischen Armee 1757,“ (Institut Deutsche Adelsforschung). <http://home.foni.net/~adelsforschung/rang1757.htm> (September 20, 2020). The webpage lists 21 von Kleists killed, wounded, or captured in the battles fought by Preußen in 1757.

⁶⁰ Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast.* 177. After Steffen Christoph's death, *Gut* Reinfeld is not mentioned again until it reappears in the family history in the early 1800s when it was owned by the von Puttkamers. Johanna von Puttkamer, Otto von Bismarck's wife, was born at *Gut* Reinfeld on 11 April 1824.

⁶¹ Ludwig Wilhelm Brüggemann: *Ausführliche Beschreibung des gegenwärtigen Zustandes des Königl. Preußischen Herzogthums Vor- und Hinter-Pommern.* II. Teil, 1. Band, *Beschreibung der zu dem Gerichtsbezirk der Königl. Landescollegien in Stettin gehörigen Hinterpommerschen Kreise* (Stettin: H. G. Effenbart, 1784), 334. Sophie Wilhelmine, the elder daughter, married Philipp Christian von Borcke, a career cavalry officer. Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast.* 227. The younger daughter, Charlotte Amalie, married *Rittmeister* Alexander Ludwig Grafen zu Rantzau. After his death, she married a *Rittmeister* von Werner.

Johann Gottlieb Christoph, Ewald's Great-Great-Grandfather, entered *Dragoner-Regiment Nr. 9, Pomeiske Dragoner* in time to take the field with the regiment in August 1761.⁶² The young soldier took part in the raid in Greater Poland on Russian supply lines, a combat engagement at Gostyn, the relief effort for the besieged fortress at Colberg, and combat at Gollnow and Spie all before the regiment entered its winter quarters in Saxony in late 1761.⁶³ On 6 July 1762, the regiment participated in combat against the Austrians at Adelsbach. By August, the *Pomeiske Dragoner* reached Schweidnitz joining Friedrich II's forces. The king was intent on taking the strategically located fortress from the Austrians at Schweidnitz. On 24 August 1762, Christoph was promoted to *Fähnrich*. The Austrians capitulated on 11 October. An armistice brokered by the Saxons ended the fighting between the Prussians and the Austrians on 24 November 1762.

Christoph remained in the army and as a member of the *Pomeiske Dragoner* earned his commission as a *Sekonde-Lieutenant* on 2 July 1766, at age twenty-two. He went on to become a *Premier-Lieutenant* on 25 February 1780, and then a *Kapitain*. Christoph left the army on 2 April 1786, shortly after *Oberst* von Pomeiske gave up command of the *Dragoner-Regiment*.⁶⁴ Both officers served in the regiment for nearly twenty-five years.

⁶² Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast.* 227. Also, "Holstein-Gottorp Dragoons," (Kronoskaf: The Seven Years' War Project). http://www.kronoskaf.com/syw/index.php?title=Holstein-Gottorp_Dragoons (October 3, 2020). At this time in the Prussian Army, regiments not only were numbered but took the name of their current commander. *Dragoner-Regiment Nr 9* changed commanders on 9 April 1761 from *Oberst* Georg Ludwig, *Herzog* von Holstein-Gottorp (later Peter III, Emperor of Russia) to *Oberst* Nikolaus Alexander von Pomeiske. Von Pomeiske served as the regimental commander from 9 April 1761 until 23 August 1785. By August 1761, the regiment was encamped at Bunzelwitz (present-day Bolesławice, Jaworzyna Śląska) near Schweidnitz in Niederschlesien as part of Friedrich II's 50,000-man force.

⁶³ "Holstein-Gottorp Dragoons," (Kronoskaf), see this for more details on the operations of the regiment as part of the Prussian forces.

⁶⁴ Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast.* 227. While Kypke's history does not indicate whether Christoph served on active duty continuously from 1761 until 1786, it is likely that he did. During this period, it was not uncommon for officers and soldiers to be given large amounts of leave during peacetime allowing them to attend to families, estates, farms, and family businesses during critical times such as planting and harvest. See also Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians*, 247.

Earlier, good fortune smiled on Christoph and his brother, Franz Leopold, when in 1764, their paternal uncle, Nicolaus Valentin, died childless. His three *Güter* of Damen B and its two outlying estates of Klein-Nemmerin, and Sand passed to his nephews.⁶⁵ Four years later, as the result of a dispute between the brothers, the division of the inherited properties was chosen by means of casting lots on 21 December 1768. *Gut* Damen B fell to Christoph while the *Güter* Klein-Nemmerin, and Sand fell to Franz Leopold. Four years later, Christoph's Damen B estate was enfeoffed to him. Christoph enlarged his land holdings when on 12 September 1776, he purchased the landed estates held by his brother for 2,228 *Thaler*.⁶⁶ Thus by age thirty-two, Christoph held the hereditary rights to three estates.

The next major event recorded in the family history was a further enlargement of Christoph's land holdings. In January 1764, Sophie Wilhelmine, Christoph's sister, had married nobleman and cavalry officer, Philipp Christian von Borcke. Eighteen years later, upon von Borke death in November 1782, the two *Güter*, Perkuicken and Garbnicken, and three farms he received through a fraternal division of von Borke family properties, passed to his wife, Sophie Wilhelmine.⁶⁷ In turn, at Sophie Wilhelmine's death in November 1783, ownership of

⁶⁵ Ibid., 228. Franz Leopold von Kleist served in *Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 11*. He was a *Fähnrich* from 3 December 1769 and a *Sekonde-Lieutenant* from 6 July 1773. He left the army as a *Premier-Lieutenant* service on 9 December 1778 after twelve years of service. He took a civil service job the "Salt Director" in Rastenburg, Preußen. Franz Leopold died on 22 April 1805. He was twice married first to a non-noblewoman in 1777 and second to a noblewoman, daughter of a Major in 1786. No children resulted from either marriage.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 227-228. The account of the sale is recorded in both brother's biographies. Franz Leopold sold *Gütern* Klein-Nemmerin, and Sand, as well as the portion of Katschenhagen, known as Burgwald that he owned, to his brother, Christoph. To understand the value of a Thaler, see Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians*, 259-261. Hagen records that in 1776, "skilled urban workers often earned but a taler or two per week." (261)

⁶⁷ Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 227. The *Gut* Perkuicken (also Perkuiken, now Nakhimovo (Нахимово), Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia) and *Gut* Garbnicken (also Garbenینگken, now Yarki (Ярки), Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia) lay approximately six miles (ten kilometers) south-southwest of Labiau, Ostpreußen (present day Polessk, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia). Garbnicken is 3.5 miles (5.6 kilometers) south of Perkuicken on the same road, and Garbnicken is 1.2 miles (2 kilometers) north of the closest village, Goldbach (now, Slavinsk (Славинск), Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia). The farms of Adamswalde, Roddau and Wilhelminenhoff all lay in close proximity to the two estates, likely subordinate farms to them. All these properties lay approximately thirty-one miles (fifty kilometers) northeast of Königsberg.

Perkuicken and Garbnicken and the three farms passed to her elder brother, Christoph.⁶⁸

Consequently, in less than two decades the landless elder son of Steffen Christoph had inherited or purchased five *Güter*, three farms, and a portion of another farm.

Indications are by the time he turned forty years of age in 1784, Christoph was well established. Undoubtedly, he contemplated a career change from army officer to *Gutsbesitzer* (estate owner). Three years after securing his land inheritances, Christoph left the army. Two years later, in 1788, his wealth, position, and reputation enabled him to marry the nineteen-year-old Maria Elisabeth von Ostau. She was the eldest daughter of *Burgrafen* Christoph Albrecht von Ostau of Lablacken, Tactau, Willmanns and Campten near Labiau, an important and high-ranking civil servant in service to *König* Friedrich Wilhelm II.⁶⁹ During the next seven years, five children were born to Christoph and Maria Elisabeth as they established their household at Perkuicken. Tragedy, however, struck the family when Maria Elisabeth died giving birth to their fifth child, Franz Wilhelm on 13. February 1795.

At age fifty-one, Christoph found himself a widower with four young children. Despite his seemingly good prospects of remarriage, he remained single. A busy and important man, Christoph “was often absent attending to official matters and the child [Franz Wilhelm] was then left with the caretakers, his brother Franz Leopold, salt director in Rastenburg, asked to take care

⁶⁸ Ibid., 2278. Sophie Wilhelmine and Philipp Christian von Borcke’s marriage produced no children. The Prussian inheritance laws and especially enfeoffed land inheritance laws in effect at the time are complicated and complex and further explanation is beyond the scope of this work.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 228. The marriage took place on 26 May 1788. Christian August Ludwig Klaproth, *Der Königliche preußische und churfürstliche brandenburgische Wirklich Geheime Staats-Rath* (Berlin: Buchhandlung des Commerzienraths Maßdorff, 1805), 497. In 1788, the year of his daughter’s marriage to von Kleist, *Burggraf* von Ostau received the appointment from *König* Friedrich Wilhelm II as *preußischen Wirklichen Geheimen Etats-Minister* (Prussian Privy Budget Minister). Von Ostau was later raised to *Wirklicher Geheimer Etats- und Kriegsminister* (Privy Budget Minister and War Minister).

of little Franz and received him on 1 May 1795, at the age of 13 weeks.”⁷⁰ While Franz Wilhelm enjoyed the attentive and loving care of his uncle and aunt, his siblings were left largely in the custody of the aforementioned caretakers. The children’s upbringing brought a wide variation in their chosen life paths. The elder son, Christoph Albrecht Leopold entered the army. The next child, Wilhelmine, entered an abbey and became *Stiftsdame des von Seydlitz-Kalnein'schen Stifts* (Canoness of the Seydlitz-Kalnein Abbey) in Königsberg.⁷¹ Amalie Julie Eleonore became a *Gräfin* when she married *Rittmeister* Friedrich Leopold *Graf* zu Eulenburg in 1811.⁷² Their eldest son was Friedrich Albrecht *Graf* zu Eulenburg, Prussian Minister of the Interior from 1862 to 1878. The third daughter, Friederike died as a young child.⁷³ And the prodigy, Franz Wilhelm, died of virulent scarlet fever at the age of five and a half years old.⁷⁴

The single change noted, apart from daughter Friederike’s death, in the last five years of the eighteenth century for Christoph and his family was the sale of *Gut* Damen B and its outlying *Güter* of Klein Nemmerin and Sand. In December 1797, he sold these estates to fellow clansman, Major Otto Bogislaff von Kleist of Dubberow for 10,500 *Thaler*.⁷⁵ While no reason was given for the sale, it was possible that the sale profits supplied needed operating capital to support the other two *Güter* and other properties owned by Christoph.

⁷⁰ Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 230. See pages 229-232 for a detailed account of Franz Wilhelm short life, 1795-1800.

⁷¹ Ibid., 228. Wilhelmine born 20 September 1790, died 18 March 1859; sixty-eight years of age.

⁷² Ibid., 228. Amalie Julie Eleonore born 26 May 1792 at Perkuicken, died 6 November 1830; thirty-eight years of age. She bore three sons and two daughters.

⁷³ Ibid., 228. Friederike was born in 1793. No death date given.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 232. Franz Wilhelm born 13 February 1795, died 11 August 1800; age five years, five months, twenty-seven days.

⁷⁵ Georg Heinrich Kypke, mit Ergänzungen von Diether Dennies v. Kleist, und Berndt v. Kleist (1971) überarbeitet von Sigurd v. Kleist, *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist Dritter Teil - Biographien bis 1880 Zweite Abteilung Tychow-Dubberower Linie*, 2. Überarbeitete Auflage (1882) (Hamm: Familienverband derer v. Kleist e. V., 2020), 100. Otto Bogislaff von Kleist belonged to the Tychow-Dubberower *Linie*.

In 1801, Christoph was elected to the position of *Landschafts-Direktor* (managing director of landscape for Preußen) in Königsberg. At this point in time, his household consisted at most of his two surviving daughters, as his sole surviving son, Christoph Albrecht Leopold had already enlisted in the army. Christoph was active as the *Landschafts-Direktor* until his death in 1807, at age sixty-three. In reviewing Christoph's life, one observes that he remained closely tied to the von Kleist family traditions of military service and landed estate ownership. His nearly twenty-five years of military service, which included combat as a young officer, and his rise to the respectable rank of *Rittmeister*, attested to his solid acumen and reputation as an officer. As to Christoph's accrual of landed estates, he owes this success to Providence rather than skill and hard work. As noted, all of his *Güter* came to him due to relatives lacking direct heirs and the intricacies of Prussian laws governing enfeoffments. But once the land was firmly in Christoph's hands, he earned a reputation as a well-respected *Gutsbesitzer*, a fact confirmed by his election as *Landschafts-Direktor* by his peers. Christoph, thus not only remained bound to the von Kleist traditions but undoubtedly enhanced his family line's reputation within the *adligen Militarclans* of Preußen. The next generation would not fare so well.

The next generation began with the birth of Christoph Albrecht Leopold, Ewald's Great-Grandfather, on 19 May 1789, in Königsberg. The death of his mother when he was six years old, death of his younger sister shortly thereafter, and a busy father who left the children's care largely to caretakers cast a shadow on the Albrecht's youth. In 1800, Albrecht's father having secured the approval of *Oberst* Philipp August Wilhelm von Werther, the regimental commander, sent his eleven-year-old son to *Dragoner Regiment Nr. 6* as a *Junker* (young officer aspirant); thus, began Albrecht's military education. A month before his fourteenth birthday, Albrecht was promoted to *Fähnrich*. The regiment changed leadership when *Oberst* Johann

Kasimir von Auer assumed command of the regiment in April 1803. On 21 January 1806, Albrecht earned his commission as a *Sekonde-Lieutenant*.⁷⁶ Albrecht was in good company in *Dragonerregiment "von Werther" Nr. 6* as he served with future *Generalfeldmarschälle* Friedrich Karl Emil *Burggraf und Graf* zu Dohna-Schlobitten and Friedrich Heinrich Ernst *Graf* von Wrangel. In 1806, both *Graf* zu Dohna-Schlobitten and *Graf* von Wrangel were fellow, if somewhat more experienced, *Lieutenants* having earned their commissions seventeen and six years earlier, respectively. They all would, however, gain their first combat experience within the coming year.

Prussia entered a renewed coalition, the Fourth Coalition, against France on 9 October 1806. Albrecht did not see combat five days later at the disastrous battles of Jena and Auerstedt when Napoleon defeated the bulk of the Prussian Army. *Dragonerregiment "von Werther" Nr. 6* had the good fortune to be part of *Generallieutenant* Anton Wilhelm von L'Estocq's Corps located in Preußen. During October and November, General von L'Estocq's Corps consolidated the 50,000 men of the last remaining Prussian corps near Thorn. There, he awaited the December arrival of Russian troops under the command of General Levin August Gottlieb Theophil *Graf* von Bennigsen⁷⁷

The arrival of the Russian forces did cause an eruption of fighting, none decisive before both the French and Russian-Prussian forces entered winter quarters at year's end. The Russians left their winter quarters in January 1807 and General von Bennigsen marched westward to seek more favorable conditions in which to meet Napoleon. General von L'Estocq's Corps also marched west and by early February was near Osterode, Ostpreußen. Also, in early February,

⁷⁶ Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 229. Albrecht was promoted to *Fähnrich* on 10 April 1803. He was promoted to *Sekonde-Lieutenant* two months before his seventeenth birthday.

⁷⁷ Robert M. Citino, *The German Way of War: From the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2005), 119-128. See Citino for a detailed account and analysis of the Eylau Campaign.

Napoleon commenced his offensive and began his pursuit of the Russian-Prussian forces. By 7 February, the *Grande Armee* maneuvered to positions forcing General von Bennigsen's command of four Russian Corps to offer battle. Accounts describe the two-day battle as, "a hellish encounter over a land of frozen lakes and rivers and four-foot snowdrifts that made the simple movement of men and horses nightmarish."⁷⁸ The first day's battle commenced at about 14:00 hours with the French assaulting the static positions of the Russian rearguard. Bitter engagements continued until nightfall. During the day, General von L'Estocq's Prussian Corps moved as quickly as it could towards Eylau covering twenty-four miles over unimproved roads made treacherous by the winter weather. *Sekonde-Lieutenant* Albrecht von Kleist, in the advanced guard comprised of *Dragoner Regiment von Auer Nr. 6*, *Husaren Regiment Bosniaken Nr. 9*, and one horse-drawn artillery battery, had a long, hard, and cold day in the saddle.⁷⁹

General von L'Estocq's Prussian Corps continued its march on the 8th after only a few hours of rest. Upon arriving at Althof, a village at the far northwest extreme of the battle area, the Prussians conferred with staff officers sent by General von Bennigsen as to the best use of the Prussian Corps. At General Gerhard Johann David von Scharnhorst's, General von L'Estocq's chief of staff, insistence, the generals agreed that the Prussian Corps would conduct a flank march behind the Russian lines to attack the French on their vulnerable right flank. "It was a grueling approach march to Eylau. The front of the columns had fought their way through Ney's [French] patrols the entire way."⁸⁰ Again, Albrecht's regiment led the Prussian vanguard. General von L'Estocq's flank march would later be described as, "a model of the way in which

⁷⁸ Ibid., 122.

⁷⁹ Stephen Millar, „Russian-Prussian Order-of-Battle at Eylau: 8 February 1807” (Napoleon Series, August 2004). https://www.napoleon-series.org/military-info/battles/eylau1/c_eylauoob5.html (October 7, 2020).

⁸⁰ Citino, *German Way of War*, 125.

a flank march in the face of a near and powerful adversary should be conducted.”⁸¹ The Prussian Corps’ flank attack, while successful was not sufficient to tip the balance in favor of the Russians and Prussians. The French held the field. But the hard battle with its high casualties on both sides and the divergent retreat of the Russians and the Prussians dissuaded Napoleon from taking up his typical pursuit. General von L’Estocq extracted the remnants of his corps and moved east to Friedland, thereby holding the line of communications to the east open for the Russians. The next battles between the Russians-Prussians and Napoleon occurred in June 1807, at the battles of Heilsberg and Friedland. But young *Sekonde=Lieutenant* Albrecht von Kleist was not amongst the combatants.

The von Kleist family records provide no elaboration concerning Albrecht’s departure from the army on 28 April 1807. An analysis of the circumstances in early 1807, however, provides a plausible explanation for Albrecht’s actions. As far as continued service in the army was concerned, the future looked dim. The decisive defeat of the Prussia Army by Napoleon at Jena-Auerstedt six months before and the successive defeats of the remaining remnants of the Prussian Army at Lübeck (November 1806) and Eylau (February 1807) pointed to a likely dissolution of the army by either final defeat in battle or by treaty dictated by a victorious Napoleon. Either eventuality would see officers, especially junior officers turned out of the army. One can surmise that the young *Sekonde=Lieutenant* and his fellow officers likely contemplated this as well as preparing for the subjugation of Prussia to French rule the likely French occupation. Thus, the prospects of continued army service, possibly death or wounding in battle, or being taken prisoner by the French were less than ideal. Having endured an extremely harsh winter campaign and survived the hellish battle at Eylau, the not yet eighteen-

⁸¹ Ibid., 125.

year-old *Sekonde-Lieutenant* possibly had his fill of army life and war. As the sole surviving son of his father, family considerations also played their part.

The armies, French, Russian, and even their own Prussian forces, wreaked havoc on Prussian farms, both large and small, as the troops foraged for food, requisitioned horses and draft animals, dismantled wooden fences and structures for firewood, and quarter themselves in houses and barns. The proximity of the von Kleist *Güter* Perkuicken and Garbnicken to Königsberg quite possibly meant that they had been picked over by military forces passing through the area. Family documents noted that the *Güter* “suffered immensely during the war years.”⁸² In addition to the possible depredation of the family estates, Albrecht possibly received news of his father’s failing health. Again, family records are silent on either the cause of or exact date in 1807, of Johann Gottlieb Christoph’s death in Königsberg. If the young *Sekonde-Lieutenant* had received information concerning his father’s inability to oversee the family properties because of illness or death in the winter or early spring of 1807, this news combined with the less than promising future in the Prussian Army explain Albrecht’s decisions and actions.

Albrecht returned to Perkuicken and Garbnicken and with one of his sisters took over the management of the estates.⁸³ Despite his youth and seemingly stepping out of the family norms for marrying age, Albrecht wed Jenny Emilie von Steinwehr on 24 January 1809.⁸⁴ The groom was four months short of his twentieth birthday and the bride two months past her eighteenth

⁸² Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 229

⁸³ Ibid., 229. Which sister accompanied Albrecht to live on the estates is unclear. In 1807, Albrecht had just turned eighteen and his older sister, Wilhelmine, would have been seventeen years old, the younger sister, Amalie fifteen years old. Possibly it was Amalie as she later married *Rittmeister* Friedrich Leopold *Graf* zu Eulenburg at Perkuicken. Wilhelmine might by 1807, have already joined the Abbey in Königsberg at which she would later rise to Canoness.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 229. Albrecht’s father was forty-four when he first married, his paternal grandfather was at least thirty years old at his marriage.

birthday. Despite his youth, Albrecht's marriage to the daughter of a *Landschaftsrat* (territorial councilman) and retired Prussian Army *Major* confirmed his acceptable social, if not his financial, status within the minor nobility. The first child came eleven months later with the birth of Christoph Albrecht Heinrich Julius on 19 December 1809. Over the course of the next nine years, another six children were born to the marriage: Ernestine Amalie Auguste Luise born 6 May 1811, Christoph Friedrich Wilhelm born 12 May 1812, Marie born 11 June 1813, August Eduard Ferdinand born 23 February 1815 and died three months later, Christoph August Victor born 19 February 1818, and Christoph Ernst Albrecht born 6 March 1819.

A single incident in Albrecht's years as a *Gutsbesitzer* was recorded in the family history. In 1812, Albrecht had an altercation with a stage-coach driver. The driver, because of impassible roads elected to drive over von Kleist estate property. In doing so, he severely damaged the fences. In his anger, Albrecht stripped the driver's coat from him and gave him forty lashes with an ox harness. A court convicted Albrecht of assault and battery, sentencing him to one year in *Festungsarrest* (fortress detention). The sentence was reduced, after an appeal, to six months.⁸⁵ The next event to take Albrecht away from his *Güter* was his recall to the army.

Following the Convention of Tauroggen in late December 1812, and the 17 March 1813 Prussian call to arms by *König* Frederick William III with the famous "An Mein Volk" proclamation, Prussia broke its treaty with France and allied itself against Napoleon. In August, Albrecht rejoined the army this time as a *Lieutenant* in the 3. *Ostpreußischen Landwehr-Cavallerie-Regiment* and likely arrived in time to participate in the Battle of Großbeeren on 23 August 2013. Albrecht's regiment was one of four regiments comprising 1st Brigade under *Generalmajor* Dobschütz, one of the brigades within the *IV Preußisches Armeekorps* under

⁸⁵ Ibid., 229. *Festungsarrest* (fortress detention) was reserved for members of the higher estates, e.g., nobility, when the guilty party was granted an honorable conviction, a conviction which did not include work as a condition of the imprisoned sentence.

Generalleutnant Bogislav Friedrich Emanuel Graf Tauentzien von Wittenberg. General Tauentzien's Corps was one of the four corps that formed the Army of the North commanded by Marshal Bernadotte, Crown Prince of Sweden.⁸⁶ 1st Brigade was lightly engaged during the battle, one which ended with the French retreat. Two weeks later, the *Landwehr* would be in the thick of battle.

In early September, Napoleon ordered Marshal Ney to take Berlin. On 6 September, Ney's army met the Prussian contingent of Marshal Bernadotte's Army of the North commanded by *Generalleutnant* Bülow near the village of Dennewitz. General Tauentzien's Corps made the initial contact with the French while General Bülow deployed his other units. An account records the initial action of the *Landwehr Kavallerie*,

The battle began on the French right flank (Prussians' left). The head of Tauentzien's corps just reached the wood north of Dennewitz when Bertrand's artillery opened fire. The Prussians guns responded immediately. The Prussians saw several French infantry columns deployed north of Dennewitz. Behind the infantry stood cavalry. During the exchange of artillery fire three Prussian horse guns were seriously damaged, and several gunners were killed and wounded. To gain time for the deployment of Bulow's [sic] corps, Tauentzien ordered 9 squadrons of Landwehr cavalry to attack the flank of Fontanelli's Italian division. The Landwehr broke some of the Italian battalions. (We assume that the infantry was surprised by flanking attack and had no time to form squares against cavalry.) Lorge's cavalry division of 10 squadrons of horse chasseurs counterattacked but could not stop the Prussians. The French and the Italians fled, some directly through the infantry. The flight of cavalry triggered the flight of Bertrand's baggage train.⁸⁷

General Tauentzien's mounted force consisted of fourteen squadrons of *Landwehr Kavallerie*. Nine of the fourteen participated in the attack on the Italian infantry putting the

⁸⁶ George F. Nafziger, "Allied Forces Battle for Gross-Beeren, 23 August 1813. Order of Battle Files, George F. Nafziger Collection, Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

⁸⁷ "Battle of Dennewitz, 1813: Landwehr cavalry broke several Italian battalions." (Napoleon, His Army and Enemies.) http://napoleonistyka.atspace.com/Battle_of_Dennewitz.htm#_first_actions (October 8, 2020).

probability fairly high that *Lieutenant* Albrecht took part in this attack.⁸⁸ Later in the day, two squadrons of Prussian *Leib-Husaren* and two squadrons of *Landwehr Kavallerie* routed the French horsemen of Lorge's division forcing several French divisions to fall back. By the end of the day, the battle was clearly a decisive defeat for the French. And Albrecht had survived another pitched battle unscathed. He would not be so fortunate in his next.

During September and early October 1813, General Tauentzien reconstituted his force. By 23 October, his corps arrived at Torgau to support a Saxon division in the siege of the fortress. The siege lasted through the fall and into the new year with the French finally capitulating on 12 January 1814. Sometime during the siege, Albrecht was wounded. On 1 March he received a promotion to *Premier-Lieutenant*. He was released from active service on 21 December 1814, and returned home.⁸⁹

Albrecht, in addition to managing his two estates continued to maintain his association with the *Landwehr* by participating in periodic training.⁹⁰ On 15 November 1818, he became *Escadronführer* (squadron commander) in the 2. *Bataillon, 1. Königsberger Landwehr-Regiment Nr. 3*. On 27 March 1820, he became commander of 2. *Bataillon, 1. Landwehr-Regiments (1. Königsberg-Gumbinnen)*. Albrecht fully retired from military service effective 26 December 1820. His faithful service and combat experience were rewarded with promotion to *Rittmeister* and authorization to wear his uniform in retirement.

⁸⁸ George F. Nafziger, "Prussian Forces Battle of Dennewitz, 6 September 1813." Order of Battle Files, George F. Nafziger Collection, Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

⁸⁹ Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 229.

⁹⁰ Frank Bucholz, Joe Robinson, and Janet Robinson, *The Great War Dawning: German and its Army at the Start of World War I* (Vienna: Verlag Militaria GmbH, 2013), 162-166. The *Landwehr* was formed on 13 March 1813, when there was an urgent need for an army to fight Napoleon. At this first mobilization, *Landwehr* troops were inducted without prior military training. This was an early form of mass conscription. The combat capability of the *Landwehr* remained low throughout the Wars of Liberation period. After 1814, the *Landwehr* became the second echelon of military duty. Men, after serving in their enlistments in the active-duty army, passed into the *Landwehr* for fourteen years of duty. The duty was part-time consisting of periodic drills and unit exercises, thus serving as a semi-ready reinforcing element to the active-duty army in wartime.

Albrecht's life after the army was short. On 26 December 1824, four years to the day after his retirement from the *Landwehr*, thirty-five-year-old Albrecht died of lung disease. At his death, he left a widow with four sons and one daughter, the oldest child having just turned fifteen. While his time in the army could be described as successful, the management of his two *Güter* was much less so. His untimely death conceivably did not allow the needed time to return the estates to profitability after the war's adverse impact. Shortly after his death both of the family's estates, Garbnicken und Perkuicken, as well as the three farms of Adamswalde, Roddau and Wilhelminenhoff, were auctioned off and permanently lost to the family.⁹¹ That the *Güter* were in debt and the auction proceeds went to pay the Albrecht's debts is corroborated in the family history which recorded that his widow was left in impoverished circumstances. These circumstances drove her to return to her father's house in 1827, and send her four surviving sons to the army. The next generation thus entered adulthood, fatherless and landless, as well as penniless.⁹²

Ewald's grandfather, Christoph Albrecht Heinrich Julius, was born on 19 December 1809, in Königsberg, the first of his generation. Julius's life and career path were similar to that of his grandfather; service as an army officer, several decades of applying his hand as a *Landwirt* followed by a short period of civil service. For his first nine years, Julius remained at home and received his elementary education from tutors. In 1818, he enrolled in the Friedrichs-Collegium in Königsberg. The school received its elevation to become the first *königliches Gymnasium*

⁹¹ Ibid., 229.

⁹² Ibid., 233-236. The second son, Christoph Friedrich Wilhelm, (* 12 May 1812; † 27 December 1860) enlisted in the *1. Ulanen-Regiment* in Ostrowo. He failed to pass the officer's commissioning test and left the army after twelve years of service. He became a tax inspector in Tilsit. Fourth son, Christoph August Victor, (* 19 February 1818; † 15 May 1890 in Potsdam) received his education at the *Kadettenschulen* in Colm and Berlin. He earned his *Sekonde-Lieutenant's* commission in 1835 and entered *1. Artillerie-Brigade*. He served in various artillery postings eventually rising to *Generalmajor* and Commander of the *Artillerie des 2. Armee Corps*, which he led during the Franco-Prussian War participating in the Battle of Gravelotte, the Investment of Metz, and the Siege of Paris. He retired for medical reasons in 1872. He was appointed an *Ehrenritter des Johanniterorden*.

(royal grammar school) in Preußen only eight years before. There he studied for seven years concluding his *Gymnasium* education at the *Obersekunda* level.⁹³ With the civilian education requirements met for acceptance at one of the army's divisional schools, Julius left the *Gymnasium* and in October 1825, entered the army division school in Königsberg. Here he prepared for his *Fähnrichs-Examen* (officer candidate examination).

After the completion of his first year at the division school, Julius enlisted in the 3. *Infanterie Regiment* as a *Füsilier* (infantry private). He took the King's oath on 19 December 1826.⁹⁴ After two more years of study at the division school, nineteen-year-old Julius passed the *Fähnrich* examination on 15 May 1828.⁹⁵ After two years of service in the 3. *Infanterie Regiment* as a *Fähnrich*, he transferred to the 33. *Infanterie Regiment* and was posted to Graudenz. After five and a half years of education and training to become an officer, Julius received his commission as an infantry *Sekonde-Lieutenant* on 23 March 1831. During his time in Graudenz, he met and courted Anna Caroline Oßmann. She was the daughter of a *Oberamtmann* (district administrator) Joseph Adolph Friedrich Oßmann of Sallno near Graudenz.⁹⁶ Julius did well in the regiment during his three and a half more years as a

⁹³ *Obersekunda* was an upper-intermediate level, the class level two years short of the final year at the *Gymnasium*, the *Oberprima*, the required level for taking the *Abitur*. Students in the *Obersekunda* class were typically age sixteen to seventeen. By entering school in the academic year 1818-1819, Julius was only nine and a half years of age, a year younger than the traditional age for entering a *Gymnasium*. Graduating from the *Obersekunda* level was the minimum requirement to enter officer training in this era.

⁹⁴ Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 232. Julius enlisted as a private (*Füsilier*) in the 3. *Infanterie Regiment*, headquartered in Königsberg on 11 September 1826, likely just before the beginning of the second year of studies at the division school. By enlisting he became a member of the army and thus was entitled to army pay, albeit at a private's rank, while continuing his officer preparatory studies.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 232. Karl Demeter, *The German Officer-Corps in Society and State: 1650-1945* (New York and Washington: Praeger, 1965), 71-79. See Demeter for a satisfactory overview of Prussian officer education in the first half of the nineteenth century. Demeter notes that division school's course for officer candidate examinations (*Fähnrich-Examen*) preparation at the time Julius attended was three years long.

⁹⁶ Graudenz (present day Gruziadz, Poland) lies on the east bank of the Weichsel (Vistula) River approximately 70 miles (110 kilometers) south of Danzig (present day Gdańsk, Poland). Sallno (present day Salno, Poland) is located approximately 9 miles (15 kilometers) directly east of Graudenz.

Sekonde-Lieutenant and rose to battalion adjutant.⁹⁷ Despite an apparent solid career start, Julius received his discharge from the army under a statutory caveat on 15 October 1834. Julius and Anna married a month later on 18 November.⁹⁸

Good fortune came to the couple when Anna inherited a portion of *Gut Widlitz*, an estate not far from Sallno.⁹⁹ Soon after their marriage, the couple established themselves at *Gut Widlitz*. The couple's first child, Anna Emilie Thecla Amalie, was born 23 August 1835 at *Widlitz*. Fortune again smiled on the young couple when on 14 September 1836, the couples' first son, Christoph Albrecht Maximilian, was born. Also, during the year, Anna finalized the inheritance of her portion of *Gut Widlitz*. Julius then purchased the other portion of the estate for 11,000 *Thaler*, thereby bring the family full ownership of *Gut Widlitz*. Now as a *Gutbesitzer*, Julius dedicated himself to the cultivation of his newly gained estate. A second son, Christoph Ernst Albrecht August Benno, was born in 1838 but died in 1839. A third son, Christoph Victor Julius Emil, arrived on 11 April 1841. The second and final daughter, Julie Bertha Auguste Marie, was born in 1844.¹⁰⁰ After nine years at *Gut Widlitz*, Julius moved the family.

⁹⁷ Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preußischen Armee für 1834* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler, 1834), 112-113. Of the forty-two officers listed in the regiment, twenty-three were noblemen (54.8 percent).

⁹⁸ Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 233. Anna Caroline Oßmann was born on 31 December 1811, and thus twenty-three years old at her marriage on 18. November 1834. Julius was nearly twenty-five years old. Of note, Julius was the first, eldest son in at least eleven generations to marry a non-noblewoman. In the direct line of Paul Ludwig Ewald, Ewald's great-grandfather, Christoph Albrecht Leopold, was the last first son to wed a noblewoman. Ewald's younger son, Heinrich, wed a woman of noble heritage, Christa von Römer, in 1952.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 233. *Gut Widlitz* (near present day Widlice, Poland) was located approximately ten miles (sixteen kilometers) east of Sallno.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 236. Christoph Victor Julius Emil (* 11 April 1841 at Wilditz; † 24 September 1857 in Berlin) served as *Leibpage* (household page) to *König* Frederick William IV while an army cadet at the Berlin *Kadettenschule*. Victor died at age sixteen as a cadet. Julie Bertha Auguste Marie (* 18 August 1844 at Wilditz; † 14 August 1863 at Schlepecken a neighboring *Gut* to Lablacken), unmarried, she died four days short of her nineteenth birthday.

For unknown reasons, Julius sold *Gut Widlitz* in the spring of 1845 to a *Lieutenant* for the sum of 22,000 *Thaler*.¹⁰¹ By 1847, Julius found, rented, and the family took up residence at the *Lehngut* (enfeoffed estate) Schakaulack near Labiau.¹⁰² The *Gut* was owned by the von Trenck family.¹⁰³ Julius and Anna's fourth son, Christoph Albrecht August Hugo, arrived on 29 January 1848. Two more sons were born to the family, Christoph Albrecht Theodor in 1850 and Christoph Julius Benno in 1851. Father and mother were forty-two and forty years old, respectively, at the birth of their last child. Also, in 1851, Julius ended his officer's service with the army.

Upon leaving active duty in 1834, Julius transferred to the *Landwehr*.¹⁰⁴ He received his promotion to *Premier-Lieutenant* in 2. *Bataillon*, 1. *Landwehr-Regiment* on 18 October 1848. After reaching twenty-five years of military service, Julius voluntarily retired from the *Landwehr* on 9 October 1851. *König* Friedrich Wilhelm IV rewarded his honorable service with promotion to *Hauptmann* and permission to continue to wear the officer's uniform.¹⁰⁵ Leaving the army

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 233. The family history is mute on the reason for the sale but records that Julius previously sold approximately 60 Morgen (37 acres) for 500 Thaler to his wife's brother. This sale was possibly motivated by the need for additional operating capital for *Gut Widlitz*. The sale of the estate for 22,000 *Thaler*, the postulated value of the estate at the time Julius came into its possession nine years earlier, indicates that there had been no capital investments that improved the land's overall value. It is unknown if any of the money derived by the sale went to pay off outstanding estate debts. Of note, the sale was to a non-nobleman named *Lieutenant* Nonnenberg.

¹⁰² Ibid., 233. There are various spellings of the Schakaulack. The spelling found in the von Kleist family chronicles is used.

¹⁰³ "von der Trenck Family" (Remmick-Hubert.Home.Site) <http://www.remmick.org/Hohenzollern.Royal/Page7.html> (October 12, 2020). This site shows the genealogy of the von Trenck family. The last von Trenck recorded as having lived at Schaukalack was *Graf* Peter Leopold Friedrich von der Trenck (* 8 July 1769; † 21 December 1834 at Schakaulack). He gained the title of *Graf* on 2 July 1809. His father was *Generalmajor* Christoph Ehrenreich von der Trenck (* 7 April 1677 in Aken; † 14 May 1740 in Königsberg) was a Prussian *Generalmajor*, *Ritter des Ordens Pour le Mérite* also, a *Landeshauptmann* (governor) and *Erbherr* (hereditary lord) of Groß-Scharlack, Schakaulack and Meicken.

¹⁰⁴ *Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preußischen Armee für 1845* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler, 1845), 228. A snapshot in 1845 shows Julius as a *Seconde-Lieutenant* in the 3. *Bataillon*, 4. *Landwehr-Regiment* headquartered at Graudenz.

¹⁰⁵ *Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preußischen Armee für 1852* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler, 1852), 208. At the time of his retirement, Julius was an officer in the 2. *Bataillon*, 1. *Landwehr-Regiment* headquartered at Wehlau. *Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, Rang- und Quartier-Liste der*

was the first of a series of changes that occurred to Julius and his family. The decade 1853-1863 brought more changes, most unwanted.

The von Kleist's fifth son, Theodor, not yet three years old died on 12 February 1853. The third von Kleist son, Victor, died in 1857. The next blow came on 10 January 1862, when the eldest son, Albrecht, a twenty-six-year-old *Lieutenant* serving in *Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 41*, died four days after being shot in the abdomen during a pistol duel. Then, eighteen months later, Julius and Anna's younger daughter, Marie, died on 14 August 1863. Thus, four of the couple's eight children died during the decade, leaving only two sons and one daughter alive. In the midst of this turmoil, Julius ended his lease at Schakaulack in 1856. Except for deaths, the family record remains silent on Julius's history for the next eight years.

Having apparently no further prospects or interest in agriculture, Julius, like his grandfather, turned to civil service for his livelihood. On 1 October 1864, Julius entered Prussian civil service in the military post garrison administration and began his probationary service period as a *Kasernen-Inspektor* (superintendent of barracks infrastructure) in Königsberg. At age fifty-four, Julius received his permanent appointment in the Prussian civil service. In May 1867, Julius took a posting again in garrison administration in the newly acquired Prussian province of Hannover in the town of Northeim.¹⁰⁶ Two years later, in April 1869, he and Anna moved to a similar post in Göttingen where their fourth son, Hugo, was a university student.¹⁰⁷ Tragedy struck the family again in the autumn when they learned of their youngest son, Julius's,

Königlich Preußischen Armee und Marine für das Jahr 1868 (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1868), 762. The *Rang- und Quartier-Liste 1868* showed Julius as "*Hauptmann a.D. von Kleist Kasernen-Insp. = Northeim.*"

¹⁰⁶ Prussian defeat of the Kingdom of Hannover in 1866 and the territory's subsequent absorption into the Kingdom of Prussia opened up civil service jobs to Prussian citizens. Thus, Julius was able to take a job in Northeim, Provinz Hannover, and maintain his Prussian civil servant status. His son, Hugo, would enjoy this expansion of Prussian territory when he took a teaching position in Ostfriesland in the 1870s.

¹⁰⁷ Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 233 and 236. Northeim lay twelve miles (twenty kilometers) north of Göttingen.

death. The seventeen-year-old was serving aboard a merchant ship. He was lost when the ship sank in October 1869.¹⁰⁸ In 1870, Julius's seventy-nine-year-old mother died. She had been a widow for forty-six years. Julius died on 31 December 1873, in Göttingen, at the age of sixty-four. He left a widow, who survived him by twenty-seven years, and a single son and daughter.

Julius had not had an easy life. With his father's death when he was fifteen years old, Julius was thrust into the world to find his own way. Service in the army anchored his young life. Marriage, raising a family, and owning an estate framed his middle-age. Civil service and his wife buoyed him in his later years. Like his von Kleist forefathers, Julius's life centered on service to the crown and service on the land. Unlike the three preceding and the three following von Kleist generations, Julius had not marched off to war, and in this he was a most fortunate anomaly.

Christoph Albrecht August Hugo von Kleist, Ewald's father, arrived as the fourth son on 29 January 1848. He was born at *Gut* Schakaulack and spent his young childhood in this rural estate setting. The age gap between him and his three older brothers, they were twelve, ten, and seven years his seniors, undoubtedly separated Hugo from their more adventurous and physically demanding farm boy escapades. Likely he kept closer company with his sister Marie who was only three and a half years older and his younger brothers, Theodor and Julius, two and three years younger. At eight, Hugo's family moved off of *Gut* Schakaulack. While the family's residence from 1856 until 1864, when Julius entered civil service in Königsberg, was unreported, the family likely took up residence in Königsberg shortly after leaving Schakaulack. While there were three *Gymnasien* in Königsberg at this time, odds are that young Hugo entered his father's alma mater, Friedrichs-Kollegium in 1857. By Easter 1866, Hugo completed his final year at the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 238.

Gymnasium and successfully passed the *Abitur* (school leaving examination).¹⁰⁹ Passing the *Abitur* made him eligible to enter the army as a *Fähnrich* or attend university. Perhaps deterred by the deaths of two of his older brothers while in army service, Hugo elected to enter the university.¹¹⁰

Hugo commenced his studies in philosophy and philology at the Albertus-Universität Königsberg. The young scholar transferred from Königsberg to Georg-August-Universität in Göttingen after his first or second year. At Göttingen, Hugo studied under the eminent professor of classical languages, pedagogy, and epigraphy, Hermann Sauppe. Professor Sauppe recognized Hugo's special proficiency with classical languages when he described him as, "one of his most distinguished students in terms of understanding the Greek and Latin languages."¹¹¹ The end of his four years of academic labors was in sight as Hugo prepared for his graduation final examinations during the summer of 1870. There remained but one major hurdle between him and graduation...war.

Prior to 1866, Göttingen and its university had enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with the soldiers stationed in the city. "Göttingen became popular as a garrison, because the officers had the opportunity to attend university lectures. The numerous war veterans had a positive effect on the education of the officer corps. The officers never separated themselves from the rank and file of citizens."¹¹² After 1866 and the Prussian annexation of the Kingdom of Hannover, the large military presence in Göttingen ended. The Prussians amalgamated former Hanoverian

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 236.

¹¹⁰ Two months and a half months after Hugo's *Abitur*, the Austro-Prussian War erupted on 14 June and ended on 22 July 1866. Because the war was so short, there was no call to join the army nor did the war motivate Hugo to join the colors.

¹¹¹ Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 236.

¹¹² Günther Meinhardt, *Garnisonstadt Göttingen* (Göttingen: Göttinger Tageblatt, 1982), 71. See Meinhardt for a comprehensive history of Göttingen's military history and relationship with its garrison over 350 years the preceding the end of World War Two.

army regiments and incorporated these into newly established Prussian regiments. Restationing of regiments came with the reorganizations thus, Göttingen lost the regiment formerly stationed in the city.¹¹³ In March 1867, the city fathers made an appeal to General Vogel von Falkenstein, former Commanding General at Hannover and extant *Regimentschef* of the 56. *Infanterie-Regiment* (IR. 56), requesting that a regiment be stationed at Göttingen. The General, favorably disposed to the request, succeeded in having the IR. 56 moved from Köln to Göttingen later in the year.¹¹⁴

At the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, German university students rushed to the colors. Of the 13,765 students enrolled in German universities during the 1870 summer semester, 4,150 joined the army and marched to war.¹¹⁵ Göttingen university students likewise rushed to join the army. More than four hundred enlisted in the IR. 56, the “hometown” regiment.¹¹⁶ While Hugo had twice elected to not join the army, this time he answered the call. As a healthy twenty-one-year-old, a university educated young man, a loyal Prussian, and above all a von Kleist, the familial and social pressures Hugo felt to enter the army were certainly

¹¹³ Wilhelm Sunkel, *Geschichte des 2. Hessischen Infanterie-Regiments Nr. 82* (Berlin: F. Schneider und Comp., 1876), 129. Along with the amalgamation of regiments of the former Kingdom of Hannover and Electorate of Hesse and their absorption into newly established Prussian army regiments, Prussia introduced significant numbers of Prussian officers into these new regiments. For example, in the newly established (1866) *königliche Preußische 2. Kurhessisches Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 82*, only eighteen former Hessian officers from the amalgamated Hessian units were transferred into the new regiment while thirty-one Prussian officers filled the additional officer billets.

¹¹⁴ Meinhardt, *Garnisonstadt*, 73-74. *General der Infanterie* von Falkenstein commanded the Prussian forces in western Germany during the Austro-Prussian War. He commanded the invasion of the Kingdom of Hannover and the Electorate of Hesse. After the end of the war, he was reassigned as Commanding General *I Armeekorps* (Königsberg) and named *Regimentschef des 7. Westfälisches Infanterie-Regiments Nr. 56*. *Regimentschef* (Colonel-in-Chief) was an honorary title given to the person, in this era usually royalty, invited to hold this position. The position was purely honorary and the *Regimentschef* had no command authority over the regiment. Due to his former position and the high rank he held as an active officer in the Prussian Army in 1866/67, General von Falkenstein had influence on the positioning of regiments.

¹¹⁵ Harald Lönnecker, “Studenten und der Krieg 1870/71,” Portal für die Geschichte der Burschenschaft, 2009. http://www.burschenschaftsgeschichte.de/pdf/loennecker_studenten_und_der_krieg_1870-1871.pdf (October 13, 2020). The German students who went to war represented 30.1 percent of the matriculated university students. Of the 4,150 students who served during the war, 248 died in battle or from illness.

¹¹⁶ Meinhardt, *Garnisonstadt*, 74.

heavy. He was not, however, one of these enthusiastic enlistees in the local regiment. Hugo selected a path into the army that only a few of his fellow students chose, that of an *Einjährig-Freiwilliger* (one-year volunteer). Curiously Hugo sought entrance in another infantry regiment, the 2. *Hessische Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 82 (IR. 82)*.

Formed in 1866, out of elements of the former 2. *Kurhessische Infanterie-Regiment*, the new Prussian regiment took up residence at the garrison in Hanau, north of Frankfurt. While the records do not reveal the reason for Hugo's regimental choice, there are some factors that assist in explaining the selection. Most interestingly, *IR. 82* after the end of the war, returned not its garrison in Hanau but to the garrison in Göttingen. The planning for this move of garrison locations quite likely had been in progress prior to the outbreak of the war. Also, in 1869, Hugo's father, Julius, transferred from Northeim to Göttingen as *Kasernen-Inspektor*. In this position, the senior von Kleist would have been well informed about planned regimental relocations in which Göttingen played a part. Additionally, it is quite possible that qualified students filled all of the *Einjährig-Freiwillige* positions in *IR. 56* prior to the outbreak of the war given the convenience and desirability of the regiment's location. Thus, with the likely knowledge of *IR. 82*'s impending move, his own future educational plans factored in, and his parents living in Göttingen, Hugo chose to pursue admittance into *IR. 82* as an *Einjährig-Freiwilliger*.¹¹⁷ It is with *IR. 82* that Hugo von Kleist marched off to war.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preussischen Armee und Marine für das Jahr 1873* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1873), 429. Hugo von Kleist first appeared in the 1873 *Rangliste* as an "S-L" (*Seconde-lieutenant*). *Einjährig-Freiwilliger* were not listed in the *Rangliste*, nor were other ranks of officer candidates, only officers (active duty and reserve) who had received their *Patent* were listed in the regimental rolls. Thus, given the three years of service required for an *Einjährig-Freiwilliger* to complete his training and exercise participation requirements, it calculates that Hugo von Kleist joined the regiment in 1870, at or shortly before the outbreak of the war and was awarded his reserve commission in 1873. Other categories listed in the *Rangliste* include medical doctors, veterinarians, paymasters, chaplains, judge advocates general serving in line units.

¹¹⁸ Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 236. This history records that Hugo went to war in 1870/71 as an *Einjährig-Freiwilliger* and pursued a reserve officer's commission.

Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 82 completed its mobilization and began its movement towards France on 24 July 1870. Early on the morning of 4 August, the regiment, as part of *42. Brigade, 21. Division, XI. Armeekorps, III. Armee*, marched across the French border. By early afternoon, the regiment saw its first combat action and took its first casualty. The regiment endured a long and hard-fought engagement at Wissembourg. The battle continued on the next day, the 5th, as Germans pushed their attacks towards Froeschwiller and Worth. It took a third day of fighting for the Germans to break the French lines of defense and put them to flight. The Germans won the three-day battle, but the cost was high. *Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 82* lost five officers and seventy men killed, twenty officers and two hundred and sixty men wounded, and seventeen men missing. The officer dead included two half-battalion commanders, and two company commanders. The regimental commander and one of the two battalion commanders fell, severely wounded.¹¹⁹ All told, twenty-five of the fifty-five officers and over ten percent of the men were casualties in the regiment's first three days of fighting. After putting their wounded on trains back to Germany and a few days of rest, the regiment was again on the march on 13 August. The regiment's next major fight would be at Sedan.

By 31 August, the regiment arrived at Donchery, three and a half miles (five kilometers) west of Sedan. The regiment's nearly 3,000 men were part of the more than 120,000 German troops surrounding the French forces arrayed around the city. By 02:00 hours on 1 September, the regiment was on the march on the six-mile route to the position northwest of Metz where it would begin the attack. After the morning fog cleared and following the artillery preparatory barrages, the regiment attacked. The artillery took its toll on the French and the infantry

¹¹⁹ Sunkel, *Geschichte*, 134-142. See Sunkel for a detailed account of *Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 82*'s combat actions in France. For the most recent scholarly work in English on the entire war, see Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest of France in 1870-1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). For the best and most enduring scholarly work see, Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Invasion of France, 1870-1871* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962).

regiments pressed their attacks pushing the French back towards Sedan. By early afternoon the French lines faltered.

Looking down on the village of Floing, Hugo, along with the rest of *IR. 82*, must have observed disbelievingly as a brigade of French cavalry formed for an attack. The French attack, should it come, would be under the 144 artillery pieces of the two Prussian corps massed and ready for the attack. The French cavalry charged. The Prussian artillery fired shot after shot of shrapnel and cannister into the oncoming horsemen. The Prussian infantry confident in their positions and firepower, “delivered three aimed salvos, each brining down a wave of cavalry and then shifted to *Schnellfeuer*, individual rapid fire.”¹²⁰ The gruesome face of war showed itself as the Prussians poured fire into the French. A sergeant in a sister regiment recorded, “There were only heaped up bodies everywhere, yet one looked in vain for a single intact, undamaged corpse; the men had been mutilated [by the fire]. I spotted a beautiful pair of cavalry boots lying on the ground and picked them up; there were legs and feet still inside.”¹²¹ Hugo must have observed similar scenes which no doubt left a deep and lasting impression on him.

By later afternoon, the battle for Sedan was decided and Napoleon III surrendered to Wilhelm I. The French suffered three thousand dead, fourteen thousand wounded, and twenty-one thousand prisoners. The Germans casualties, dead, wounded, and missing totaled nine thousand. Casualties for *IR. 82*’s second major combat action totaled three officers, all *Lieutenants*, and thirty-seven men killed. Seven officers and one hundred thirty-six men were wounded and three men went missing. The unit history noted that three horses were killed, another eight wounded. The forty-nine *Eiserne Kreuze II. Klasse* (Iron Crosses 2nd Class)

¹²⁰ Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War*, 221.

¹²¹ Ibid., 221. The sergeant was Oskar Becker of the *I. Nassauisches Landwehr-Regiment Nr. 87*, a regiment in the other brigade of the *21. Division*, *IR. 82*’s parent division.

awarded to officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the regiment attests to the hard-fought battle at Sedan.¹²² But the war was not yet won.

In the few days after Sedan, the regiment rested and refitted. On 5 September, the *Ersatz-Mannschaften* (replacement unit) dispatched from the *Ersatz-Bataillon* (replacement battalion) arrived from Frankfurt a/M to fill the ranks thinned at Wissembourg, Worth, and Sedan.¹²³ On 11 September, the regiment began the march toward Paris. By 22 September, they moved into their position on the south-western side of Paris. For the next month and a half, the regiment saw limited action as the siege of Paris continued. But it was only time until the French surrender would come. On 18 January 1871, the regiment greeted the news from Versailles proclaiming Wilhelm I as *Kaiser* of the new *Deutsches Reich* with jubilation. Ten days later, after another heavy bombardment of the city, Paris surrendered and an armistice went into effect. *Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 82* remained in position at Chaville on the southwestern outskirts of Paris until 10 March when the regiment began its march towards home. From 13 March until 16 May, the regiment halted and bivouacked at Tournan, only twenty-five miles (forty kilometers) east of Paris. Only in late May did the regiment start east again. There were many pauses along the way. The three battalions of the regiment finally reached their new garrisons on 23 June 1871.¹²⁴ Hugo, however, did not have to endure the long march home.

During one of Ewald's post-World War II interviews, he confirmed that his father had been an *Einjährig-Freiwilliger*. Ewald further noted that his father contracted pneumonia which

¹²² Sunkel, *Geschichte*, 145-158. Officers in the regiment earned thirteen of the *Eisernen Kreuze 2. Klasse*, the remaining thirty-six by NCOs and enlisted soldiers. One of the regimental officers awarded the *Eisernen Kreuze 2. Klasse* for bravery at Sedan was *Hauptmann* Viktor Ernst Louis Karl Moritz von Loßberg, later *Generalmajor* and, father of Fritz (Friedrich) Karl von Loßberg, a *Generalmajor* (WWI) and later *General der Infanterie (Reichswehr)*.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 159.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 163. On 23 April 1871, the regiment received the news that it would take up new garrisons on its return to Germany. The regimental staff and 1st Battalion would go to Göttingen, 2nd Battalion to Hamel, and the *Füsilier* Battalion to Heiligenstadt.

caused him to be released from duty.¹²⁵ By the onset of autumn 1870, Hugo and *IR. 82* had moved into their static position during the Siege of Paris. With the arrival of cooler and wetter weather, the many unsanitary and substandard troop billets, and the close proximity of large numbers of men; disease quickly followed. A neighboring *Armeekorps* in the siege, the *II. Bayerischen Armeekorps*, reported that in October 1870 alone, 17,152 men, more than half its strength, were on the sick rolls.¹²⁶ Sometime after the turn of the year, Hugo contracted pneumonia.¹²⁷ His illness was severe enough to cause his evacuation home. Despite his recovery, Hugo continued to suffer after effects of the pneumonia. His son noted, he “was always sick as a result of the lung infection incurred in the War of 1870,” and he “was always very careful of his health.”¹²⁸ While it is evident that the war left Hugo with chronic physical ailments, it is probable that the war also left psychological scars. One of the latter’s later manifestations was that Hugo was not in favor of his son becoming an officer. With the war over and having sufficiently recovered by the summer of 1871, Hugo put the unpleasantness behind him and moved forward with his education.

Near *Michaelis* (29 September) 1871, Hugo took and passed his Göttingen University graduation examinations for teaching.¹²⁹ Rather than seek a teaching position back in Ostpreußen, Hugo performed his probationary teaching requirement in the newly acquired

¹²⁵ Goldensohn *Interviews*, 332.

¹²⁶ Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War*, 253. Wawro notes that this number of Bavarian sick in *II. Bayerischen Armeekorps* was six times the number of men it had lost in battle.

¹²⁷ Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, Abteilung Aurich, Sammlung M 10/120, „Beiträge zur Geschichte der Staatlichen Oberschule für Jungen “Ulricianum” in Aurich, gesammelt bzw. verfasst von Oberstudiendirektor Der. Erich Dieterich, (no date). Hereafter NLA/AU, M10/120, “Beiträge”. This work includes a biography on Hugo von Kleist provided by his sister, Herta Schwering. The biography specifies that Hugo participated in the French campaign in 1870 and in 1871.

¹²⁸ Goldensohn *Interviews*, 334.

¹²⁹ NLA/AU, M 10/120. Key academic tests such as the *Abitur* and *Prüfung pro facultate docendi* were reported as occurring at *Ostern* (Easter) or *Michaelis* (St Michael’s Day, normally 29 September). These two days also marked the start/end of school terms in this era.

Prussian territories at Lingen in *Provinz Hannover*.¹³⁰ He completed his provisional teaching period by Easter 1872 and quickly moved to Oldenburg, having found a regular teaching position at the city's *Großherzogliches Gymnasium*.¹³¹ Hugo spent the next eighteen months teaching and working on his dissertation. His dissertation, “De L. Apuleji Madaurensis libro, qui inscribitur de philosophia moralia” (L. Apuleji Madaurensis’ book entitled, The Moral of Philosophy) was approved by the philosophy faculty at Göttingen University and they awarded Hugo his Doctor of Philosophy degree on 30 October 1873.¹³² The dissertation saw publication in Flensburg in 1874.

With this important academic accomplishment in hand, Hugo stepped up the professional teaching ladder. He moved to Flensburg and began teaching as an *Oberlehrer* (senior teacher) at the Altes Gymnasium. Founded in 1566, the dreisprachiges Gymnasium (three language school) was well known for its high quality of education in Greek, Latin and Hebrew languages. Of the twenty-three teachers at the *Gymnasium*, twelve were PhDs.¹³³ Hugo taught here from September 1873 until early 1881. During his tenure in Flensburg, Hugo continued his research and writing. The up-and-coming academic’s first post-dissertation work, a treatise on the writings of Plotinus, a third century AD Hellenistic philosopher, *Der Gedankengang in Plotins erster Abhandlung über die Allgegenwart der intelligiblen in der wahrnehmbaren Welt*, saw publication in 1881.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ NLA/AU, M10/120, “Beiträge”, Biography of Hugo von Kleist.

¹³¹ Ibid. Otto Siefert, *Königliches Gymnasium und Realschule I. Ordnung zu Flensburg 1874 Jahresbericht* (Flensburg: L. P. H. Maass, 1874), 41. The *Jahresbericht* contains a short biography of newly hired teacher, Hugo von Kleist. Lingen was located in the territory of the *Königreich Hannover* and was thus in the territory annexed by Prussia in 1866.

¹³² Ibid., 41. L. Apuleji Madaurensis was Second Century AD Platonist philosopher and Latin language author.

¹³³ Ibid., 45. Hugo began his first year as an instructor in the *Sexta*, the youngest year of students.

¹³⁴ NLA/AU, M 10/120. Biography of Hugo von Kleist. Many *Gymnasium* teachers continued to pursue their studies to higher levels with a few of them moving up to university professorates.

Three short months after beginning his teaching in Flensburg, Hugo received news that his father, Julius died on 31 December 1873, in Göttingen. As the sole living male heir and with only his mother and married sister surviving, a portion of the inheritance would have come to Hugo. In this inheritance, however, there were no landed estates nor would any come to Hugo from other family members as had happened in preceding generations. The death of his father further disconnected Hugo from the norm of the von Kleist clan, active military service and estate ownership. In this, Hugo became one of the growing number of landless *Adel* (nobility). Additionally, Hugo's career choice as a teacher was a first for the von Kleist clan.¹³⁵

Hugo paired his 1873 academic accomplishment in earning his PhD with a military accomplishment in the same year. Despite Hugo's ambivalence towards the army, he nevertheless continued his pursuit of a reserve officer's commission. His wartime service fulfilled the normally year-long basic officer candidate training requirements for an *Einjährig-Freiwilliger* and he additionally appears to have been given credit for one of the two additional annual training exercise requirements. Having recovered his health, Hugo participated in the second and final of two annual summer training and military exercises, thereby completing the requirements for obtaining a reserve commission. Hugo appeared in the *Rangliste 1873* as a "S=L" (*Seconde-Lieutenant*) on the reserve officer list for 2. *Hessisches Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 82* with a unit attachment to the 2. *Bataillon, Oldenburgisches Landwehr-Regiment Nr. 91*. The

¹³⁵ Email correspondence to author from Sigurd von Kleist, von Kleist clan historian, on 9 January 2020. Herr von Kleist wrote, "It is also interesting that the father of Ewald was the first von Kleist to become a teacher. The branch seems to have lost its estate in East Prussia 50 years earlier. So, the branch must have had financial problems." This is a good example of fitting nobles into a bourgeois world of professions. Kypke, *Geschichte, Tychow-Dubrower Linie*, 234. A further search of the clan histories turned up only one other von Kleist prior to 1900 with a *Doktor der Philosophie* degree. Gustav Leopold von Kleist (* 1832; † 1906) after being pensioned off as a Major (from the Austro-Hungarian Army), he attended university in München and earned his *Doktor der Philosophie* in 1868. He then spent his time travelling or at his two *Gütern*.

Landwehr regiment's 2. *Companie* was in Oldenburg.¹³⁶ In 1873, his unit attachment transferred to the 1. *Bataillon*, *Schleswigsches Landwehr-Regiment Nr. 84*. The *Landwehr Regiment's 1. Companie* was in Flensburg.¹³⁷ Hugo fulfilled the annual training requirements for a reserve officer and remained physically qualified for duty. Normally, reserve officers transferred from their active-duty affiliation to *Landwehr* affiliation at the age of twenty-seven. Hugo remained an "active" reserve officer of *IR Nr. 82* until 1878 (thirty years of age) when he was transferred to the *Landwehr*. At this time, he maintained his attachment to *Landwehr-Regiment Nr. 84* in Flensburg.¹³⁸ With his academic career established and his status as a reserve officer, a social achievement that was much coveted, secure, Hugo achieved the implied societal prerequisites for marriage for a male of the minor nobility.

The family history is mute on how and when Hugo met his future wife. But on 4 October 1880, thirty-two-year-old Hugo married Caroline Dorette Elise (Elisabeth) Gley, a twenty-four-year-old non-noblewoman from Pritzwalk.¹³⁹ Elizabeth came from middle-class farmers with the family roots tracing back to Freiburg in Schlesien.¹⁴⁰ Her father, Rudolf Gley, owned a

¹³⁶ Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preußischen Armee und Marine für das Jahr 1873* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1873), 429. Information (promotions, unit assignments, etc.) contained in the annual *Rangliste* could be up to four months out of date by the time the book was printed. Later editions, from at least 1900 on, give the date that the information was current as of, usually early May; e.g., for the 1900 edition, the date was 7 May 1900. Given this, Hugo likely earned his commission sometime between June 1872 and May 1873. Thus, it is highly likely that Hugo's father had known of his son's dual accomplishments in 1873, earning both his PhD and his officer's commission. One wonders in which the senior von Kleist took more pride.

¹³⁷ Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preußischen Armee und Marine für das Jahr 1874* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1874), 436.

¹³⁸ Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preußischen Armee und Marine für das Jahr 1878* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1878), 438 and 636.

¹³⁹ Stadtarchiv Hannover, STA 2757/836/1956, von Kleist, Elisabeth Sterbanzeige. Hereafter, StadtA Hann. Caroline Dorette Elise Gley, in nearly all records and references, is referred to or called Elisabeth.

¹⁴⁰ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen" Bd. 4, Heft 3, 4. Ewald von Kleist fills in several of the details about the Gley family history. The possibility exists that this familial link to Schlesien was a factor, albeit a small one, in Kleist deciding to finally settle in Schlesien.

smaller estate at Kuhbier near Pritzwalk.¹⁴¹ Rudolf's father served as a court physician in Schwerin.¹⁴² The first ten months of the Hugo and Elisabeth's marriage are shrouded in mystery.

Hugo made plans to move from Flensburg to Kreuznach and begin teaching at the *Gymnasium an der Stadtmauer* commencing at Easter 1881.¹⁴³ It is uncertain if the move to Kreuznach occurred. Certain is that Hugo did not take up his teaching position there because his lung condition worsened to the point of his being unable to teach. Sometime before early August 1881, the couple found lodging in a house in Braunfels an der Lahn, in the shadow of *Schloss* Braunfels.¹⁴⁴ Hugo possibly sought relief for his lung condition in the fresh air of the town.¹⁴⁵

On Monday, 8 August 1881, the future *Generalfeldmarschall*, Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist was born in Braunfels.¹⁴⁶ In September, the family moved to Hannover.¹⁴⁷ Shortly after

¹⁴¹ Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 237. Rudolf Gley and Emilie (nee Schmidt) Gley were Elisabeth's parents. Kypke records that Rudolf was from Kuhbier und Voßberg bei Pritzwalk. Kuhbier, now a very small village with outlying farms, lays 4 miles (6 kilometers) west of Pritzwalk.

¹⁴² Grossherzog Mecklenburg-Schwerin, *Staatshandbuch für Mecklenburg-Schwerin* (Schwerin: Hofbuchdruckerei, 1837), 205. An Ernst Christian Gottlieb Gley is listed in the *Staatshandbuch für Mecklenburg 1837* as being a doctor in Schwerin. This is likely Ewald's great-grandfather on his mother's side.

¹⁴³ Kreuznach, now Bad Kreuznach, in 1881 was in the *preußische Provinz Großherzogtum Niederrhein*. And thus, the teachers were Prussian civil servants. Hugo was transferring from one Prussian province to another.

¹⁴⁴ Ewald von Kleist's birth is often and erroneously reported as being in Braunfels, Hesse. Braunfels an der Lahn in 1881, was a part of Prussia, not Hesse. Prior to 1803, Braunfels and the surrounding land were held independently and hereditarily by the *Grafen* (later *Fürsten*) von Solms-Braunfels, as a *Fürstentum* (princely principality). With *Der Reichsdeputationshauptschluss* 1803, the *Fürstentum* territorial independence ended and the territory was subordinated to *Herzogtum Nassau*. After Napoleon's final defeat and in the resulting land redistribution of the *Wiener Kongress* in 1815, the territory was ceded to *Königreich Preußen*. In 1871, Braunfels, as a non-contiguous Prussia enclave, fell under *Deutsches Reich, Königreich Preußen, Rheinprovinz, Regierungsbezirk Koblenz, Kreis Wetzlar*. This was the governing authority in 1881. Braunfels remained a Prussian territory under the *Rheinprovinz* until 1945. Additionally, all of von Kleist's military records indicate the place of his birth as: "Braunfels, Kreis Wetzlar i/Preussen." Thus, Ewald was actually born on what had been Prussia soil for several generations even if geographically remote from what is generally thought of as Prussia.

¹⁴⁵ Braunfels became an officially recognized *Lufikurort* (literally air cure place, a climatic spa location) but not until 1961.

¹⁴⁶ A visit in October 2019, to both the Braunfels city and *Schloss* Braunfels archives curiously did not uncover any official record (church birth records or separate contemporary birth records maintained by *Fürsten* Solms-Braunfels) documenting the birth of Ewald. An additional search for *Stadt Anmeldung* (city registration), records that would have noted the arrival and departure of Hugo and Elisabeth von Kleist, returned no results. Finally, a search conducted by the *Fürstliches Archiv* archivist through their records and a specific search of the *Fürstlich Gehaltsliste* (prince's payroll) returned no record of Hugo von Kleist. Lack of information in the *Fürstliches Archiv* eliminated the possibility that Hugo von Kleist's time in Braunfels was at the behest of or supported by the

establishing themselves in the new city, the new parents had their son christened at the *evangelisch-lutherischen* Gartenkirche St. Marien.¹⁴⁸ While Ewald was too young to remember the event, it nevertheless began his connection with the church, a relationship that grew and remained strong throughout his life.

The time spent at Braunfels and the autumn 1881 move to Hannover failed to bring about Hugo's recovery from his lung ailments. By Easter 1882, the deterioration of his health forced his medical retirement from civil service.¹⁴⁹ Also in 1882, Hugo's *Landwehr* unit of attachment changed from Flensburg to *Reserve Landwehr Bataillon (Hannover) Nr. 73*.¹⁵⁰ His poor health, however, did not stop Hugo from completing his scholarly work, *Plotinische Studien*. The treatise on the works of Plotinus, a third century AD Hellenistic philosopher, was published in 1883.¹⁵¹ In 1883, Hugo ended his military service and gained his release from the *Landwehr*.

then *Fürst*, Georg Friedrich Bernhard Wilhelm Ludwig Ernst *Fürst* zu Solms-Braunfels. The city of Braunfels acknowledges that Ewald von Kleist is a son of the city. The town's war memorial records his name. Additionally, Ewald's birth house, a half-timbered two-story house built in 1579 and located in the district where many of those in the employ of the *Fürst* lived, has worn a plaque announcing it as the birthplace of the *Feldmarschall* since WWII. The house was renovated in the recent decades and a new plaque was emplaced as the previous one located in an exterior wall was covered over during the restoration.

¹⁴⁷ Goldensohn *Interviews*, 329.

¹⁴⁸ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen" Bd. 4, Heft 3, 81. Von Kleist reports that he was christened in the same church, Gartenkirche St. Marien, as his wife was confirmed in and also in which she was most likely baptized. In November 2019, a visit to Gartenkirche St. Marien was made in order to search for key church records concerning both the von Kleist and Wachtel (Ewald's wife's family) families. A search in the church archives as well as at the *Evangelisch-lutherischer Stadtkirchenverband Hannover Kirchenbuchamt* and the *Stadtarchiv Hannover* failed to turn up any church record books concerning church weddings, christenings, church membership, or congregational history in the period 1870-1940. The church's records appear to have been either destroyed in the bombings Hannover suffered in WWII or the handover of the books from Gartenkirche St. Marien, to the *Kirchenbuchamt* was inaccurately registered and the books misplaced.

¹⁴⁹ Kypke, *Biographien Damensche u. Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 237.

¹⁵⁰ Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preußischen Armee und Marine für das Jahr 1882* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1882), 625 and 645. The *Rangliste* records the transfer in both the losing and gaining unit rolls.

¹⁵¹ Hugo von Kleist, *Plotinische Studien* (Heidelberg: Verlag von Georg Weiss, 1883), VIII. Hugo von Kleist's introduction was dated 16 November 1882 in Hannover.

He served twelve years and had remained a *Seconde-lieutenant* throughout.¹⁵² While in Hannover, two additional members of the family arrived. First, Hugo's widowed mother came to live with the family in Hannover. Then on 22 December 1884, Anna Marie Hertha, was born. Her birth completed the family as no other children were born to Hugo and Elisabeth.

While the family's sojourn in Hannover was a relatively short five years, they were Ewald's formative years and despite his youth, he likely formed an attachment to the city. Hannover, in time, would become the family's *Heimatstadt* (hometown). Ewald would return many times as a soldier to Hannover, would marry a hometown girl, and maintain his longest residence in the city. Hertha would marry a Hannover man and would retire to the city after World War II. The elder von Kleists would retire to Hannover during World War I. But all that was in the future. As for the present, the five years spent in Hannover had benefited the family and seen it grow. For Hugo the time was professionally advantageous. Additionally, he had regained sufficient health to reenter the teaching ranks. He found a teaching position and the family departed Hannover on 15 November 1886, for Leer, Ostfriesland.¹⁵³

III. A Prussian in Ostfriesland

The town of Leer lies in the flat coastal plains of Ostfriesland a short ten miles as the crow flies from the Ems River estuary and only thirty miles south of the North Sea coast. The

¹⁵² Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preußischen Armee und Marine für das Jahr 1883* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1883), 621. The conditions under which Hugo von Kleist separated from the *Landwehr* are not given. It is, however, likely that he secured his release on medical grounds given his "medical retirement" at Easter 1882 from Prussian civil service.

¹⁵³ Stadtarchiv Leer Sammlung, Anmelderegister 1881-1886, 388-389. NLA/AU, M 10/120. Hugo von Kleist was appointed as probationary teacher in Leer beginning at Michaelis (29 September) 1886. He was reappointed as an *Oberlehrer* (senior teacher) at Easter 1887.

town's proximity to the sea gives it a maritime climate with mild winters, cool but rainy summers, and prevailing winds off the North Sea which often brings precipitation with it. Having experienced a similar climate in Flensburg, it is likely that the clean, clear air from the sea kept Hugo's chronic lung problems at bay and thus influenced his decision to take a teaching position in Leer.

The town had not only a maritime climate but a sea port character as well. By the time of the von Kleist's arrival, the city had capitalized on its location a short distance up the Ems River from the river's mouth at Emden. Leer boasted a port with tide-independent ship docks. Ten years before, the completion of the last of the rail lines gave the city a railway junction in all four directions, the only one in Ostfriesland. Thus, the town was a key connection between land and sea. With approximately eleven thousand inhabitants in 1886, it was second in size only to Emden in Ostfriesland.

The von Kleists settled into a house at Pferdemarktstraße 61, a few short blocks away from the town center and the port.¹⁵⁴ Ewald remembered, "we lived in a small two-family home. It was sort of a duplex home. Our neighbors were a Jewish family of a very respectable and honorable type. He had two children who were about the same ages as my sister and myself."¹⁵⁵ Hugo's new school, the Königliches Gymnasium und Realgymnasium, founded in 1584, was just around the corner. The *evangelisch-lutherische* Lutherkirche was a short walk

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 388-389. Stadtarchiv Leer Sammlung, Anmelderegister 1897-1900, "K" 24 März 1899.

The family later moved down the street to Pferdemarktstraße 53 and Hugo von Kleist's mother continued to reside at Pferdemarktstraße 61 until the entire family moved to Aurich in 1899. The author's visit to Leer confirmed that the original homes are no longer standing and have been replaced by more recent construction. The Königliches Gymnasium at which Hugo von Kleist taught and Ewald attended is still standing with its original exterior.

¹⁵⁵ Goldensohn *Interviews*, 348. Von Kleist continued, "During the whole of my childhood I played with these children and we were like members of the same family. When the Jewish Eastertime [Passover] came, we visited our Jewish neighbors and ate matzos and sugar. Our other neighbor was a Jewish cattle dealer. I used to ride his horses across the meadows. I first learned to ride horseback this way."

away. Thus, the new von Kleist home was close to the focal points of the family: church, school, and town.

Ewald's childhood was for all intents and purposes normal. During his post-war interviews, Ewald recalled,

My father was an old philosopher, philologist, and student of ancient languages. ... Father was quite an affectionate man but was always sick as a result of the lung infection incurred in the War of 1870. He lived a lonely life aside from his contact with the immediate family, and as I said before, he was a bookworm whose mind dealt not with reality but with books, the works of the old Greeks, and his family. Frankly, he was more absorbed in his books than in his children. We children only saw him at mealtimes, and occasionally he would take a walk with us.¹⁵⁶

When asked if Hugo's lung ailments made him irritable, Ewald responded,

Not exactly, but he was always very careful of his health, and being with his children too much would tire his nerves. He was a man of extremely moderate habits, who drank one small glass of beer a day, did not smoke in the time I remember him, although I recall he told me that as a young man he smoked one or two cigars a day.¹⁵⁷

Ewald certainly considered himself a very different personality than his father, stating "I am more like my mother, ...my sister is more like my father. She is less active than my mother and more of a recluse. Father had a greater liking for his daughter whereas Mother was more [*sic*] fond of me."¹⁵⁸ While it is evident that Ewald's personality was quite different from his father's, it is likewise clear that the elder von Kleist passed his intelligence onto his son. Hugo's keen interest in academics, however, did not transfer to his son. More temperamentally like his mother, Ewald was also fortunate to inherit his mother's physical robustness which helped him

¹⁵⁶ Goldensohn *Interviews*, 332 and 334.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 334.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 334-335.

remain healthy and vigorous in childhood and beyond.¹⁵⁹ He survived measles and scarlet fever during an era in which such diseases were sometimes fatal. But as a healthy, active child, Ewald enjoyed the out of doors.

While there was time to play, a large part of Ewald's time was spent in school. He attended three years of elementary school before entering the Königliches Gymnasium und Realgymnasium where his father taught. Leer's *Gymnasium* was long established, well respected and had no problem attracting the bourgeois sons of the town's more affluent families. A quick count shows that besides the young von Kleist there was only one other ennobled son, a von Glan, in the school's just over two hundred pupils.¹⁶⁰ Ewald's classmates at Leer were: Tannen, Schuster, Hahn, Jannsen, Feenders, Meyer, Sanen, Hielsdorf, Tollner, Ritter, Relotius, Hake, Dirks, Klopp, and Klinkenborg.¹⁶¹ While Ewald was "surviving" school his father was thriving.

Dr. phil. von Kleist continued his work on Plotin. In 1888, he published *Zu Plotinos*, the third and fourth companion volumes to his early work. His superior academic activities and writings were recognized and at *Johannis* (24 June) 1893, Hugo was awarded the title of professor. Two years later, the school administration named him, chair of the Department of Ancient Languages, History and Geography at Leer. Then at Easter 1898, the *Rang der Räte vierter Klasse* (rank of Counselor 4th Class) was conferred on Dr. Professor von Kleist by the Prussian State. Hugo's next big step came when the Prussian State Education Board approved his selection as *Direktor der Königlichen Ulrich-Schule zu Aurich* (headmaster of the royal

¹⁵⁹ StadtA Hann, STA 2757/836/1956, von Kleist, Elisabeth *Sterbanzeige*. Ewald's mother lived to be 100 years, 1 month and 3 days old. She died on 23 May 1956, in Hannover, 18 months after her son.

¹⁶⁰ NLA/AU, Rep. 174, acc. 2005/012 Nr. 218, "Protocol Buch von 17.1.1986 bis 21.8.1912".

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Ulrich-school in Aurich) on 21 December 1898.¹⁶² It is hard to imagine that Ewald was enthusiastic about his father's promotion to headmaster.

The new position meant a move from Leer, where Ewald had spent all of his school years. It meant severing friendships, being disconnected from a known environment and routine, and moving to an unknown town, even if that town was only twenty miles northeast of Leer. It further meant that Ewald would spend his *Oberprima* year (his final or senior year) of *Gymnasium* in a new school and having to make new friends as he prepared for the all-important *Abitur* (school leaving examinations) he would sit early in the new year of 1900. Too, he would be not only the new outsider but also the son of the headmaster. To make things even worse, the headmastership came with the use of a house located on the school grounds. The family's moved on 21 March 1899, one month before Easter.¹⁶³

Aurich was in 1899, a small provincial county seat town of only two and a half square kilometers. With 5,899 residents it was less than half the size of Leer. Aurich was compact as compared to Leer with nearly two and a half times the population density.¹⁶⁴ A small canal, the Ems-Jade Kanal, connected Aurich to the port of Emden via waterway. Only in 1900, had the railway line connecting Leer and Aurich been completed.¹⁶⁵

As Easter passed, Ewald settled into his new school. His classmates numbered eight and, with the exception of one other young man, had studied together for at least the previous five

¹⁶² NLA/AU, M 10/120, Hugo von Kleist Biographie.

¹⁶³ Stadtarchiv Leer Sammlung, Anmelderregister 1897-1900, "K" 24 März 1899. Hugo von Kleist's mother, Anna, deregistered from Leer and moved to Aurich three days after her son and his family's departure.

¹⁶⁴ Otto Thiele, *Die Volksverdichtung im Regierungsbezirk Aurich* (Stuttgart: Verlag von J. Englehorn, 1901), 420-422.

¹⁶⁵ Hans-Jürgen Westermayer, *Festschrift 350 Jahre Ultricianum: Gymnasium Ultricianum Aurich 1646-1996* (Aurich: Druckerei A.H.F. Dunkmann, 1996), 20.

years.¹⁶⁶ Five of the young men lived with their parents in Aurich or in a nearby village. The other three classmates boarded in Aurich, their homes being too distant for the daily commute to school. The social mix was narrow and included sons of four merchants, a city clerk, a teacher, a pastor, and a retired civil servant. Ewald was again the only aristocrat. The religious mix was even narrower as all of the young men except Ewald, declared themselves Lutheran. Ewald declared himself as *evangelisch-uniert* (Protestant united). The age span was notable as there was twenty-five months between the oldest and youngest students. Ewald was the sixth youngest out of the nine, a full year younger than the oldest student and thirteen months older than the youngest student.¹⁶⁷

All but one of his classmates were bound for university and professions in medicine, the law, education, or the church. Two would go on to earn technical degrees.¹⁶⁸ The non-university attendee was Friedrich Schlüter, son of the retired Aurich postmaster.¹⁶⁹ Like Ewald, he was planning on entering the army.¹⁷⁰ Quite possibly, Ewald found in Friedrich a kindred spirit and

¹⁶⁶ NLA/AU, Rep 171, Nr. 505. “1890-1912 *Verzeichnis der Schüler*.” This book recorded the class enrollment and included academic, personal, and social data for each student. The one young man who had not been a longstanding member of the class was in the class behind this one. At mid-year, he was promoted to the *Oberprima* class and took his *Abitur* at *Ostern* 1900 with the rest of the class. So, while he had not been a class member, he had attended the school for a number of years. Additionally, this book lists a total of 184 pupils enrolled at *Ostern* 1899, of which 11 were of the Jewish religion, 10 identified as Catholics, and the remainder identified as some form of *Evangelisch* (*Lutherisch*, *Evangelisch-Lutherisch*, *Reformiert*, and *Evangelisch-Uniert*).

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ NLA/AU, M 10/120, “Beiträge zur Geschichte der Staatlichen Oberschule für Jungen “Ulricianum in Aurich.” At the time Ewald attended the school, there were around 160 total students. This school history also notes that 5 teachers and 105 students of Ulricianum died in WWI.

¹⁶⁹ Kolonial-Abteilung des Auswärtigen Amts, *Deutsches Kolonialblatt: Amtsblatt für die Schutzgebiete in Afrika und in der Südsee* (Berlin: Ernst Sigfried Mittler und Sohn, 1906), 310. Friedrich Schlüter joined *Infanterie-Regiment Prinz Moritz von Anhalt-Dessau* (5. Pommerschen) Nr. 42 and earned his *Leutnants Patent* (commission) on 18. September 1900. He went to Southwest Africa and on 27 April 1906, died of blood poisoning from a wound he had earlier sustained. Thus, had Ewald and Friedrich developed a friendship it ended with the latter’s death in 1906.

¹⁷⁰ Steven E. Clemente, *For King and Kaiser! The Making of the Prussian Army Officer, 1860-1914* (New York, Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1992), 229. Clemente notes that in 1900, there were 295 *Gymnasiums* with a total of 89,257 enrolled students. Of this number, 4,646 passed their *Abitur* and of these, 267 (5.7 percent) chose military careers.

ready compatriot as the school year progressed. As the days shortened with the approach of winter, so too loomed the *Jahrhunderstswende* (turn of the century) and just beyond that, the *Abitur*.

On 16 December 1899, Ewald drafted the required letter to the *Königliche Prüfungskommission für die Reifeprüfung zu Aurich* (royal test committee for school leaving examination at Aurich). Ewald wrote,

I, Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, of the Lutheran denomination, was born on August 8, 1881, the son of the current Gymnasium Director, Dr. Hugo von Kleist, in Braunfels. From Easter 1888, I attended the secondary school of the Realgymnasium in Leer. At Easter 1891, I entered the Sexta and at Easter 1898, I was promoted to the Unterprima class in the Gymnasium. At Easter 1899, I left the school with a certificate of maturity for entering the Oberprima and transferred to the Gymnasium in Aurich.

After passing the school leaving examination, I intend to study law.

Respectfully,

Ewald von Kleist¹⁷¹

What stands out from this letter is Ewald's stated intention to study law.¹⁷² The date of the letter is less than three months prior to Ewald's entering the army at Brandenburg a/H. The likely explanation is that even at this late date, Ewald, and more specifically, Ewald's father was uncertain as to Ewald's future. As we will later see, the senior von Kleist was not in favor of his son entering the army. Thus, this letter is a likely an expedient compromise by Ewald to calm his father.

¹⁷¹ NLA/AU, Rep. 171, Nr. 354, "Aurich Reifeprüfung Ostern 1900, Protocol der mündlichen Prüfung und Zeugnisse." This book contains all of the information, grades, test scores, notes, and graduation certificates from the *Abitur* (Easter 1900) at the *Gymnasium Aurich*. Ewald von Kleist's records are included. *Sexta* is the fifth class, *Unberprima* is the twelfth class (penultimate year), and *Oberprima* is the thirteenth class and final year of *Gymnasium*.

¹⁷² A law degree was a general degree and opened the doors to a government career or the legal profession.

The series of tests comprising the *Abitur* commenced in late January 1900, and were completed in time to have the test results certified and the *Zeugnis der Reife* (certificate of graduation) completed by early March. The records left allow an analysis of both the class's *Oberprima* year and the *Reifeprüfung* results.

The curriculum for the final school year included: religion, German, Latin, Greek, French, English, Hebrew (elective), history and geography, geometry, algebra, natural science, drawing (elective), choir (elective), and gymnastics (elective). The students received grades not only for *Leistungen* (academics) but additionally for *Betragen* (comportment), *Aufmerksamkeit* (attentiveness), *Fleiß* (diligence), and *Ordnung* (orderliness). The grading scale was numerical, the lower the number the better the mark. For *Betragen*, the grades went from 1 to 4. For *Aufmerksamkeit*, *Fleiß*, and *Leistungen* (academics), the grades were arrayed 1 to 5, again 1 being the best.¹⁷³ Teachers recorded the grades for each of the two semester per academic year. For the *Oberprima* class, their *Abitur* marks replaced their final semester grades.

In the narrow analysis of only his class, the grades Ewald earned show him to be at best a middling student. The class's *Oberprima* first semester grade point average (GPA) spread was 2.20 to 3.07.¹⁷⁴ Ewald's GPA was 2.73, placing him in the bottom third with a ranking of seventh out of nine. For the non-academic grades, Ewald earned a 2 in comportment and

¹⁷³ NLA/AU, Rep. 171, Nr. 139, "Censuren der Prima von Michaelis 1881 bis dahin 1890." This book contains the grades for all of students at the *Gymnasium Aurich*. For *Betragen* (comportment), the numbers equated to 1 = *gut* (good), 2 = *in ganzen gut* (generally good), 3 = *nichts ohne Tadel* (not above reproach), 4 = *sehr tadelnswert* (very reprehensible). For *Aufmerksamkeit* (attentiveness), *Fleiß* (diligence), and *Leistungen* (academics), the following grade descriptions were: 1 = *sehr gut* (very good), 2 = *gut* (good), 2-3 = *in ganzen gut* (generally good), 3 = *genügend* (satisfactory), 3-4 = *nur teilweise genügend* (only partially satisfactory), 4 = *nicht mehr genügend* (no longer satisfactory), 5 = *ungenügend* (unsatisfactory). Interestingly Dr. Hugo von Kleist upon taking over as Director at *Michaelis* 1899, expanded the previous grading scale and introduced the 2-3 and 3-4 marks as well as changing the definitions of grades 1-4 and deleted grade 5 for *Betragen*.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. The numerical grades were added and divided by the number of grades received yielding the student's grade point average. Of interest was the student's age appeared to not be a significant factor for grades. The top four students for both *Oberprima* grade point average and *Abitur* scores included the first and third oldest student and the two youngest students. Additionally, very few "1" or "4" grades were given.

attentiveness, but only a 3 in diligence. His teachers rated him 2, “good”, in German and orderliness. He earned a 3, “satisfactory”, in the remaining nine classes. He elected not to take Hebrew, drawing, or choir. The would-be officer fared slightly better in the *Abitur*.

The *Abitur* was a series of tests, both written and oral, given during a several week period over a wide range of subjects. The specific subjects tested at Aurich in 1900 included: religion, German, Latin, Greek, French, English, Hebrew, history, mathematics, physics, drawing, choir, and gymnastics. Ewald tested in all subjects except for Hebrew and drawing. Additionally, as during the academic year, *Betragen* (comportment) and *Fleiß* (diligence) received marks. With the same class members participating, an analysis of the *Abitur* results shows a strong parallel with the academic year’s grades and rankings. The *Abitur* “GPA” spread was from 2.21 to 2.97. Ewald rose two positions with a GPA of 2.72 to rank five out of nine; just climbing into the middle third.¹⁷⁵ With the exception of the number one and two academic year GPA students changing places in the *Abitur*, the top five students remained unchanged in ranking. The number sixth academic year GPA student, apparently not a good test taker, fell to number nine of out nine on the *Abitur*. Ewald and the two students behind him moved up one rank for the *Abitur*. Thus, the *Abitur*, by and large, reflected the student’s academic acumen. But like many such tests, it was an inaccurate measure of intelligence and poor predictor of professional or personal success. What mattered to Ewald and to the army was that he had the *Zeugnis der Reife* (school leaving certificate) in hand...and the army did not care if he was in the bottom third of his graduating class or not.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ NLA/AU, Rep. 171, Nr. 354, “Aurich Reifeprüfung Ostern 1900”. Von Kleist and Schlüter, the other student bound for the army, achieved the same *Abitur* average testing score of 2.72. Thus, von Kleist tied for the fifth of nine positions.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. See Appendix 1 for the translation of Ewald’s *Zeugnis der Reife*. The certificate was signed on 7 March 1900, six days before Ewald entered the army. At this late date, the examination board and Ewald’s father, one of the signatories, acknowledged Ewald’s plans to enter the army as an officer.

It is unlikely that his final school year, or for that matter the previous years, had been especially enjoyable for Ewald. But there was at least one lasting and pleasant recollection. During the summer trips to his maternal grandfather's home, he befriended a boy, Günther. Later, after World War Two, Ewald fondly recounted one of his childhood memories.

Our mothers were childhood friends. We were both almost the same age and played together during the whole vacations that my mother and we two children, Hertha and I, took almost every year in Pritzwalk. We stayed with my grandfather and my two aunts, Erna and Maria. ... Pritzwalk, with the river Dömnitz for swimming and rowing and the Hainholz with its forester's house, where we so often visited, still seems to me to be a youth's paradise.¹⁷⁷

This short account is the only childhood memory Ewald left behind. He recorded no other mention of life in Leer or Aurich, school attendance, or names of childhood friends.¹⁷⁸ This lack of childhood recollections in an account he left for his sons and future descendants pointed to a less than happy, contented, or enjoyed childhood. The lack of fatherly companionship and mentorship left Ewald to seek other mature male role models. While Ewald named no other adult males as part of or being influential during his childhood and teenage years, he did point to his interest in von Kleist family history. "I have always been interested in family history as so many other people are, and I have traced the family name of Kleist to the year 1175."¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen" Bd. IV, Heft 3, 4. The Dömnitz is the river running through Pritzwalk and the Hainholz is a nearby forest. The forester's house is now a restaurant and hotel. The boy, Günther, is Günther Quandt. See Hans Pohl "Quandt, Günther" in: *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 21 (2003), S. 34-35 [Online-Version]; URL: <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd124997821.html#ndbcontent>. Quandt went on to become a successful industrialist and multi-millionaire. His second wife was Johanna Maria Magdalena "Magda" (née Ritschel). After their 1929 divorce, Magda went on to marry Joseph Goebbels. Von Kleist made no mention of maintaining contact with Quandt after their childhood summer adventures ended.

¹⁷⁸ The aforementioned summer account is the only mention von Kleist makes of his childhood in the entirety of his prisoner-of-war writings which run to over 140 single-spaced typewritten transcribed pages.

¹⁷⁹ Goldensohn *Interviews*, 331. Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen", Heft 3, 14-16. In this section, von Kleist referenced the von Kleist clan and family history. He also made note of his learning more about his ancestral homeland (Pommern) during the annual clan gatherings he began attending after joining the army.

Ewald was undoubtedly heavily influenced by the positive traits of his father's character, that is the senior von Kleist's integrity, honesty, professional industriousness, thrift, piety, and humility. Too, Hugo had inculcated in Ewald the desirable aristocratic character elements of a high sense of duty, the requirement for honorable conduct in all things, and an unshakable loyalty to the king. Having, however, not received the kind of masculine mentorship and encouragement sons seek from their fathers, young Ewald looked elsewhere. He found it in unnamed men, perhaps his maternal grandfather among others. Someone taught Ewald to ride horses, sparked his interest in hunting, and encouraged his desire to become an officer. While there certainly were flesh and blood mentors and role models, Ewald also turned to his von Kleist ancestors for additional examples. In the chronicles of his forefathers and in the von Kleist clan history young Ewald found, as his actions in adulthood evidenced, what he was looking for. He found men who met the challenge and experienced the adventure of military officership, fathers who knew the rewards of and passed on to their children the enjoyment of the sanctity of rural life, and *Gutsbesitzer* who understood the fulfilment of land ownership.

Going against his father's desires, Ewald chose to enter the army.

CHAPTER 3 - ENTERING THE ARMY—THE MAKING OF A LIEUTENANT

“My son wants to be an officer but I don’t think he will be satisfactory as a soldier and officer.” –Hugo von Kleist¹

An officer’s junior ranking years in the army, especially the initial training period when he is an officer-aspirant, is often given short shrift in officer biographies. This work maintains that this formative period of selection and initial officer training and education are not only critically influential on an officer’s career progression but the study of this period is indispensably important to understanding the officer’s entire career in the army in which he served. Through a detailed examination of Ewald’s period as a *Fahnenjunker*, these key elements give understanding to this formative and foundational period.²

¹ Leon Goldensohn and Robert Gellately, *The Nuremberg Interviews* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 332. A quote from Ewald von Kleist to interviewer Goldensohn in 1945 stating what Hugo von Kleist had written to the army when applying for his son’s entry as an officer-aspirant.

² Steven E. Clemente, *For King and Kaiser! The Making of the Prussian Army Officer, 1860-1914* (New York, Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1992), 72-73. In an 1899 *Militärkabinett* order, the army replaced the long-used Francophonic titles of rank with Germanic titles. Thus, *Seconde-Lieutenant* became *Leutnant* and *Premier-Lieutenant* became *Oberleutnant*. The terms *Avantageur* (unofficial) and *Offizieraspirant* (official) were replaced by *Fahnenjunker* (literally flag or colors young mister). *Fahnenjunker* was both the category of the officer-aspirant between his entry into the army and his promotion to *Fähnrich* and the form of address for the young man, e.g., *Fahnenjunker Schmidt*, during this period. In the same 1899 order, *Portepéefähnrich* (sword knot cadet) was shortened to *Fähnrich*. This was then the official rank of the officer trainee after he: 1) passed (or was exempted from) the *Fähnrichsexam* (ensign examination) and received his *Zeugnis der Reife zum Fähnrich* (certificate of promotion readiness to ensign); 2) had received his *Dienst-Zeugnis* from his regiment; and 3) received his *Fähnrich Patent* (ensign commission) from the king. With these three pre-requisites met the officer trainee was then officially addressed as *Fähnrich Schmidt* and ranked above all of the enlisted and non-commissioned officers but below all of the commissioned officers. *Fähnrich* is often translated as “ensign”, however, this is confusing and misleading as an ensign in United States and United Kingdom militaries was and is a commissioned officer. The most appropriate equivalent in the United States Armed Forces is “cadet.” Cadet denotes an officer-in-training and an individual who has not yet earned an officer’s commission. For simplicity and clarity, the German terms of *Fahnenjunker* and *Fähnrich* are used.

As the last year of the old century unfolded, Ewald von Kleist began making preparations to enter the army as an officer candidate. In the months and weeks before his application to and final acceptance into a specific regiment, Ewald collected and assessed many pieces of information. This information in turn informed his decision as to the regiment in which he should seek admission. The key military figure in Ewald's application process was the commander of the intended regiment. This chapter commences with an investigation into the often-complex process of regimental selection and the role and influence of regimental commanders in that undertaking.

Once admitted, the officer-aspirant faced a significant period of training. The second section follows the *Fahnenjunker* training process, as it occurred within the chosen regiment, where the trainee learned basic military skills and began to acquire the knowledge and skills need for a junior officer in his branch of service. The third section investigates the significant period of the training which occurred away from the regiment at one of the various *Kriegsschulen* (war schools) in a program designed to ensure the homogeneity of character, loyalty to the *Kaiser*, and the achievement of the basic level of officer skills. Young men who successful graduated from the *Kriegsschule* returned to their parent regiments for a final period of training and validation before finally receiving their officer's *Patent* (commission).

All of this set the stage for his continued upward movement within the army. Without a sagacious choice of regiment and dedicated effort at learning his profession as a young lieutenant, Ewald's career would not have made himself eligible for promotion to staff officer ranks.³

³ The ranks from *Leutnant* to *Oberst* are categorized in two sections, *Kompanieoffiziere* (troop officers) and *Stabsoffiziere* (staff officers). *Kompanieoffiziere* serve as junior officers in the ranks, *Leutnant*, *Oberleutnant*, and *Hauptmann/Rittmeister*. These officer ranks are most often found performing duties within an army company, hence the name. *Stabsoffiziere* are *Majore*, *Oberstleutnants*, and *Obersten*. While these officers are found in

I. Choosing a Regiment

Officers...wanted the prestige of being associated with a “good” regiment, preferably one with its senior officers nearing retirement age. This way they stood a better chance at early promotion. “Good” meant dashing uniforms, decent postings to comfortable peacetime quarters, amiable companionship, acceptance into the highest levels of society, plus a variety of interesting soldierly activities throughout the year to prevent boredom. During wartime men might serve their King and Country, but they died for their regiments.⁴

The importance and influence of the initial branch and regimental selection cannot be underestimated in the career of Ewald von Kleist. For some officer-aspirants their entry into a regiment was easy and at times even a forgone conclusion due to generations of familial service in a particular regiment.⁵ In Ewald’s case, picking a regiment was not nearly so straightforward or easy despite Ewald being a von Kleist. Ewald’s eventual choice was influenced by a number of factors including personal preferences, financial constraints, personal networks, and regimental desirability.

In 1899, as Ewald finalized his research and prepared to apply to a specific regiment, the officer manpower situation was favorable for him. Ewald recalled, “I joined the field artillery, although at that time it was very difficult to be accepted because too many people wanted to join.”⁶ While a large number of applicants sought to enter the officer corps, the army

command positions, the majority are performing staff duties at various levels throughout the army, thus, their name. The American equivalents are company grade officers and field grade officers.

⁴ “The Making of a Warrior”, Land Force Staff Course handout. (The Regimental Rogue, undated). http://www.regimentalrogue.com/quotes/quotes_regimental_system1.htm (November 5, 2020). While this statement was made about the British Army, it is also accurate for the German Army at the turn of the twentieth century.

⁵ The term “officer-aspirant” is used to denote an individual, a civilian, who is pursuing a commission in the military but one who has not yet been officially inducted into the army. Once an officer-aspirant was sworn into the army he became a *Fähnjunker* and then after serving a number of months and passing an examination he was promoted to *Fähnrich*. *Fähnjunker* is also used as a general term of all officer trainees between their being sworn into the army and their commissioning as a *Leutnant*.

⁶ Goldensohn *Interviews*, 332. Statement made to Goldensohn in a post-World War II interview.

nevertheless was in the midst of an officer shortage. The increase in the *Reichsheer* authorized manpower in 1888, and again in 1893 brought with it an increased in the number of officers authorized.⁷ Shortfalls in officer recruiting quickly followed and in 1889 officer intakes failed to fill the last eight percent of infantry officer positions. A decade later in 1899, the *Reichstag* voted to increase the army's peacetime strength by an additional 23,000 for a total of 612,000 officers and men.⁸ This only further exacerbated the shortfalls. The officer shortage continued to and through the turn of the century so that by 1900, the *Reichsheer* was short nearly 1,400 junior grade officers, 5.6 percent of the officer corps.⁹ The army needed qualified officer candidates.

In seeking officers, the army first turned to its own officer-growing institution, the *Kadettenanstalten* (cadet schools). Fed by seven *Voranstalten* (preparatory schools), the *Hauptkadettenanstalt* (main cadet school) graduated approximately 250 young men each year who entered the army as *Fahnenjunker* or *Fähnriche*. A few select graduates entered directly as commissioned *Leutnants*.¹⁰ The graduates filled, on average, one-third of the required annual officer accession requirements. Twenty-two von Kleist sons graduated and entered the army through the cadet school system between 1871 and 1914.¹¹ As we have seen, Ewald von Kleist was not one of them.

⁷ Geoff Eley, *From Unification to Nazism Reinterpreting the German Past* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1986), 96.

⁸ Martin Kitchen, *A Military History of Germany* (Bloomington, IN and London: Indiana University Press, 1975), 184.

⁹ Clemente, *King* 207.

¹⁰ John Moncure, *Forging the King's Sword* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 9-20. See Moncure for a thorough investigation of the Prussian cadet school system.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 73. In an analysis of the over eleven thousand cadets, Moncure notes a significant number of cadets came from a small number of families. While he does not name them as "*adligen Militärclans*" (noble military clans), they clearly fit this categorization. There were nineteen families that had fourteen or more cadet graduates, totaling 380 *Hauptkadettenanstalt* graduates. The von Kleists rank sixth highest with twenty-two graduates.

In 1900, the Prussian contingent officer corps officially contained 18,603 officers. Of these, 14,542 served in the three combat *Waffengattungen* (branches): infantry (9,681), cavalry (1,883), and artillery (3,057).¹² These officers were distributed across the 173 infantry, 73 cavalry, and 84 artillery (field and heavy) Prussian contingent active-duty regiments. It is from these regiments that Ewald, a born Prussian, chose.

The first factor to influence which regiment to select was Ewald's personal preference concerning the *Waffengattungen* (arms branch) in which he wished to serve.¹³ Despite the likely ease with which he could have entered 2. *Hessische Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 82 (IR. 82)* due to his father's wartime membership in the regiment, Ewald appeared to quickly have eliminated the infantry branch. Hugo's personal experience and firsthand accounts of his time in *IR. 82* as well as descriptions of infantry combat provided his son an accurate and realistic picture, if one that was nearly three decades old. The other element that made the infantry less desirable was Ewald's budding interest in horses. While infantry officers in this era rode, they dismounted to lead their troops in battle. Their horses thus served as a mode of transportation rather than as a mandatory element of combat capability as they were for the cavalry and field artillery. This then allowed for more disconnection from horses and permitted them to be viewed with a more utilitarian eye. Too, there was a much weaker equestrian culture within the infantry officer corps. That is, fewer infantry officers participated in extracurricular equestrian activities such as

¹² Joseph Kürschner, *Staats-, Hof- und Kommunal-Handbuch des Reichs und der Einzelstaaten 1901* (Leipzig: G. J. Göschen'sche Verlagshandlung, 1901), 543-548. The handbook's numbers were for budget year 1900. Numbers include 388 officers and 14 battalions of *Jäger* (light infantry) aggregated to 7 regimental (infantry) equivalents. See also Kaiserlichen Statistischen Amt, *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich 1900* (Berlin: Verlag von Puttkammer and Mühlbrecht, 1900), 172, for the total number of officers within the German Army, that is the sum of the Prussian, Württemberg, Saxon, and Bavarian army contingents.

¹³ *Waffengattung*, the combat arms branches, were the infantry, cavalry, and artillery. The artillery was further subdivided into *Feldartillerie* (field artillery) whose artillery was light and horse-drawn and the *Fußartillerie* (heavy artillery) whose guns were of the heavier calibers and generally supported static warfare like the Siege of Paris 1870/71. Army support branches were *Ingenieur- und Pionierkorps* (combat engineers), *Verkehrstruppen* (transportation troops, e.g., railway troops), and *Train* (supply troops).

horse racing, jumping competitions, or *Schleppjagd* (drag hunting).¹⁴ Passing over the infantry, this left the cavalry and artillery.

For 1900, the 73 cavalry regiments needed to accession approximately 75 officer-aspirants to maintain their manning status quo.¹⁵ Doubtless, Ewald looked towards the cavalry as his branch of choice. In understanding this, a look at the influencing culture is instructive. Franz Carl Endres' analysis of the pre-World War One German officer corps illuminates several points.¹⁶ First, "Let us not forget that the officers, too, were children of their own environment

¹⁴ Oscar Christ, *Die Geschichte des Armee-Jagdrennens 1862 bis 1914* (Köln: self published, 1936), 5-8 and 19. Of the 127 officers on the list "Jockeys who died for the fatherland" in World War One, 103 were cavalry officers, 14 artillery, 8 infantry, 1 flyer, and 1 supply. Of the 51 winners of the *Armee-Jagd-Rennen*, 47 were cavalry officers, 3 artillery, and 1 infantry. The low number of infantry officers points to a much smaller and less vibrant equestrian culture across the infantry branch. *Schleppjagd* is similar to fox hunting. Rather than hunting and trailing a fox, the pack of hounds follows a scent trail (drag) previously laid down by one of the hunters. The riders (the field), follow the pack as they run the scent trail. The advantage of this form of mounted hunting is that it does not rely on live quarry and the trail can be laid down so as to avoid crops, overly difficult terrain, and going out of the allotted hunting territory.

¹⁵ This figure is derived from Moncure's information on the 250 graduating *Hauptkadettenanstalt* (HKA) cadets filling approximately 1/3rd of the annual officer-aspirant billets. Thus, it took, on average, 750 officer-aspirant admissions to meet the intake needs of, in 1900, a 18,603-man Prussian officer corps. This in turn equates to a 4 percent per year replenishment rate. For a Prussian cavalry officer population of 1,883, approximately 76 officer-aspirants or 1 for each of the 73 cavalry regiments was needed. In comparison, an investigation of the 1903 *Rangliste*, which includes dates of rank information for 1900 accessions, showed that more than half of the cavalry regiments accessioned 2 or 3 officer-aspirants in calendar year 1900. Gerhard Friedrich von Pelet-Narbonne, von Löbell's *Jahresberichte über die Veränderungen und Fortschritte im Militärwesen 1900* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1901), 22. Von Pelet-Narbonne records that the German Army accessioned a total of 190 cavalry officer-aspirants in 1900. Divided evenly across the army contingents, the Prussian contingent accessioned approximately 150 officer-aspirants. This was a 58 percent increase in accessions of cavalry officer-aspirants from 1899, when the Prussian cavalry accessioned approximately 95 aspirants. For calendar year 1900, Löbell's *Jahresberichte* records that a total of 1,244 men were accessioned and commissioned as *Leutnants*: 737 infantry, 190 cavalry, 198 field artillery, 27 foot artillery, 33 combat engineers and transportation, 18 supply, 41 explosive ordnance. Six hundred and seventy-two officers left the army; thus, the army grew in size by 572 officers. Daniel Hughes, *The King's Finest: A Social and Bureaucratic Profile of Prussia's General Officers, 1871-1914* (New York, Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 1987), 62. Hughes calculated that by 1914, the approximately 250 graduating *Hauptkadettenanstalt* cadets filled only about 1/5th of the annual officer-aspirant billets. This increasing reliance on non-HKA graduates to fill the army officer ranks can already be seen in the numbers for 1899-1900 officer accessions.

¹⁶ Franz Carl Endres, "The Social Structure and Corresponding Ideologies of the German Officer's Corps Before the World War" ("Soziologische Struktur und ihr entsprechende Ideologien des deutschen Offizierkorps vor dem Weltkrieg) trans. S. Ellison in *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 58 (1924): 282-319; trans. S. Ellison (New York: Works Progress Administration 1937), 5. As a German officer (Bavarian Army) and General Staff officer (active service 1897 to 1918), Endres' "insider" experience assisted him in making some candid observations about the pre-World War One officer corps. While his sociological analysis and assertions must be handled with circumspection, they do, however, offer a valuable perspective to assist in making one's own evaluations.

and, hence, subject to the influences of the forces about them.” This applied no less to the young men of Wilhelmine Germany. To the point of Ewald and a desire to join the cavalry, Endres offers the following:

For a complete survey of the “knighthood” complex, we must mention another attribute of the knight, namely, the love for a horse. Every young man aspired to be a horseman, believing that he would enlist in a light service, but this ideal was consciously or unconsciously accentuated by the notion that if one is really to be a knight, one must become a cavalry officer. This notion was not confined to the young. Families with feudal traditions sent their sons to cavalry regiments. Only when (in the reign of the first kings) a family became impoverished, did Prussia’s nobility find a “chivalrous” substitute in the Foot Guards; in fact, the illustrious traditions of the wars of Frederick the Great had made enlistment in the Foot Guards as “chivalrous” as in the cavalry regiments. In this manner, the poor nobles served in the infantry guards and the rich nobles in the cavalry.¹⁷

It would have been hard for a young man, a noble young man, in this era to not have been seduced or motivated by this chivalrous and romantic notion of being a cavalry officer. On a more practical and realistic note, Ewald’s competitive nature must be taken into account. While little information points to his competitive spirit in his early and later youth, it most certainly was there. This assertion comes from the competitiveness, in both physical and intellectual actions, he exhibited throughout his army career. His competitive nature would have motivated him join the best, to be around the best, to compete with the best, and to seek to be the best. As a nascent horseman this meant joining the finest cavalry regiment he could. In this pursuit of joining the cavalry Ewald was not alone. Many of the cadets graduating from the *Hauptkadettenanstalt* had family ties or other connections which gave them priority placement into many of the cavalry regiments. Too, there were other *adligen Militärclans* with closer and more recent associations to cavalry regiments than Ewald. Thus, Ewald was far from guaranteed an officer-aspirant’s position in the cavalry. But there was also the *Artillerie* to consider.

¹⁷ Ibid., 7. Endres’ assessment supports the idea of *Adel* differentiation and stratification due to financial circumstances as manifested by the regiments to which nobles sent their sons.

While there were eighty-five artillery regiments, certainly in Ewald's eyes they were not all equal. First, the fifteen regiments of *Fußartillerie* (foot artillery, i.e., heavy artillery) could be disregarded. In 1872, then Inspector General of the Artillery, General Theophil von Podbielski, divided the artillery into two separate entities; *Fußartillerie* and *Feldartillerie* (field artillery).¹⁸ The term foot artillery was an historical hold over and the branch more correctly was labeled "heavy" artillery. This branch included coastal and fortress artillery as well as the heavy, less mobile guns and mortars. This heavy artillery branch sought out officer candidates who were "mathematically and intellectual inclined" and who were motivated to embark on a "challenging education in the Artillery School."¹⁹ Ewald showed no special aptitude for mathematics or physics, having only achieved a middling *genügend* (satisfactory) in his final semester at the *Gymnasium* and on his *Abitur*.

The *Feldartillerie*, on the other hand, was a possibility. An unvarnished analysis of the field artillery illuminates why Ewald considered this branch favorably.

The overestimation of the "knight's horse" had, tactically speaking, especially pernicious effects on the field artillery. The field artillery, together with the engineers and the heavy artillery, was identified with the bourgeoisie, with whose history, incidentally, it was intimately connected. Under William II, a tendency manifested itself to make the field artillery as "chivalrous" in outward appearance as the cavalry. Before long, one thought of riding rather than of shooting. The question of giving the artillery officers advanced training in ballistics, which was formerly regarded as of paramount importance by the entire artillery force and, to its credit, by the heavy artillery corps up to the World War, was more and more disregarded by the field artillery after 1870. Instead of trying to distinguish himself in the science of gunnery, the field artillery officer was fired by the ambition to ride as well and to possess mounts as good as the cavalry officer. At races and horse shows one could see an ever-increasing number of artillery officers.

¹⁸ Eric Dorn Brose, *The Kaiser's Army: The Politics of Military Technology in German during the Machine Age, 1870-1918* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 32-33. See Brose for a thorough description of the two artillery branches and their post-1872 development, doctrine, and deployment.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

This branch of the army became eventually more and more expensive to those connected with it. General von Gleich in his book, already cited, reports: "Thus, the art of shooting has gradually become an undesirable duty." I myself knew a Bavarian division commander, who, in my presence, said once: "I wish the field artillery could be harnessed to oxen, so that the men might be induced to shoot and not merely to ride."²⁰

In essence, the *Feldartillerie*, with its focus on horses and horsemanship, was perceived to be nearly as chivalrous and desirable as the cavalry. Thus, if he found his way into the cavalry thwarted, Ewald could turn to the *Feldartillerie*.

With the personal preferences of branches sorted out, Ewald faced a set of financial realities. Nobility and wealth did not go hand in hand and Ewald's family line was not wealthy. His father's profession as a *Gymnasium* teacher and promotion to *Gymnasium Direktor* in 1899, placed the family in the financial middle class. The elder von Kleist, as a senior *Oberlehrer* with 20 years time-in-service, earned an annual income of 5,400 *Marks*.²¹ Added to this was between 500 and 900 *Marks* annually for superior service.²² Hugo's 1899 promotion to *Gymnasium Direktor* added 300 *Marks* to his regular annual salary. Longevity raises of 400 *Marks* came every 3 years until 29 years of service when salaries maximized at 6,900 *Marks* annually. Thus, for 1900, when all pay elements were totaled, the *Gymnasium Direktor* earned a gross annual income of approximately 6,200 *Marks*. With this salary Hugo supported a family that totaled five individuals. Besides Hugo, his wife and two children, he supported his widowed

²⁰ Endres, "Social Structure", 8.

²¹ Hans Wermbter, *Die höhere Schullaufbahn in Preussen statistisch beleuchtet* (Schalke: Verlag von E. Kannengiesser, 1901), 48-50.

²² Konrad Jarausch, *Students, Society, and Politics in Imperial Germany: The Rise of Academic Illiberalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 40-43. See Jarausch for an illuminating discussion on finances, costs, and salaries in German academia and their connection to and comparison with other German professions at the turn of the twentieth century.

octogenarian mother.²³ While able to live comfortably, Hugo's salary limited the financial support he could provide to his son in the form of *Zulage* (allowance).

From mid-nineteenth century, *Waffengattungen* and regiments had increasingly taken on "their own particular financial character to a much greater extent than before."²⁴ Expenses incurred by army officers continued to rise after German unification in 1871. By 1899, when Ewald contemplated a career as an army officer, most *Leutnants* and *Oberleutnants* required a *Zulage* to avoid going into debt. Officers serving in guards, cavalry, and artillery regiments and even those infantry officers in regiments with high prestige or posted in expensive metropolitan centers were in this group. The monthly stipend needed included a variety of financial elements, but more often than not was driven by the costs of acquiring and maintaining additional horses for cavalry and artillery officers, the higher expenses of living in larger, more expensive cities, and the numerous and often costly social engagements in which officers were expected to participate. *Das Kleine Buch von Deutschen Heere*, an informational guide of the era, informed its reader that a maximum per month *Zulage* of 45 *Marks* for infantry, 70 *Marks* for artillery and 150 *Marks* for cavalry was to be expected in Prussian regiments.²⁵ Guards officers posted in Berlin and Potsdam required an additional 100 *Marks* per month, ostensibly to meet the officer's higher levels of social obligation in the proper manner.²⁶ With a starting annual pay of 1,692 *Marks*, the above maximum monthly *Zulage* amounts equated to an additional stipend of 31.9

²³ Anna (née Oßmann) von Kleist, born in December 1811, was widowed in 1873. In 1873, Hugo was the sole surviving son and the financial support requirements above and beyond Anna's inheritance fell to him. Anna moved in with Hugo and his wife in 1881 or 1882 and lived with the family or very nearby from that time.

²⁴ Daniel J. Hughes, *The King's Finest: A Social and Bureaucratic Profile of Prussia's General Officers, 1871-1914* (New York, Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 1987), 70.

²⁵ Hein, *Das kleine Buch vom Deutschen Heere* (Kiel und Leipzig: Verlag von Lipsius & Tischer, 1901), 95. Hughes *King's Finest*, 72. Hughes reports that no army regulation governed *Zulage* amounts and that regimental commanders independently set the required *Zulage* for their regiments, sometime in excess of the recommended maximums. See Hughes, 69-74 for detailed discussion of junior officer supplementary income.

²⁶ Hughes *King's Finest*, 72. See Chapter 1 for more information on *Zulage* and official support to impoverished nobility.

percent for entry-level infantry lieutenants and 49.6 percent for artillery lieutenants. For cavalry lieutenants, the *Zulage* was 106 percent of their entry-level annual army pay!²⁷ Payment of the monthly *Zulage* had to be planned for the officer's first twelve to fourteen years, until his promotion to *Hauptmann/Rittmeister*, at which time the annual army salary became sufficient to live on. Additionally, the initial costs of an officer's first set of uniforms and required equipment was born by the officer and often ran to several thousand *Marks*.

Using these maximum expected *Zulage* amounts, familial financial support of Ewald should he enter a cavalry regiment equated to twenty-nine percent of Dr. Professor Hugo's von Kleist's monthly salary. Support in the form of 70 *Marks* per month for his son as an artillery *Leutnant* artillery equated to fourteen percent of the Dr. Professor's monthly income. Thus, the pecuniary realities of Ewald's situation, a noble family in the financial upper middle class but without sufficient savings or investments which could be accessed to pay a high *Zulage*, dictated Ewald's choice of branch. Admission to a cavalry regiment was financially out of the question. Even having well connected von Kleist "cousins" in the cavalry could not overcome the dearth of sufficient financial support for *Zulage* in the cavalry.²⁸ The officer-aspirant needed to seek a posting in a *Feldartillerie* regiment.²⁹ While of personal impact to Ewald, the broader reality

²⁷ Hein, *Heere*, 127.

²⁸ Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preußischen Armee und des XIII. (Königlich Württembergischen) Armeekorps für 1899* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1899), 93. Hereafter, *Rangliste and publishing date*. In 1899, seven von Kleist clan members were officers in the cavalry: *Generalleutnant a. D.* Karl Wilhelm Heinrich von Kleist, a recently retired cavalry regiment and division commander; *Oberst* Georg Friedrich von Kleist, 36th Cavalry Brigade commander; *Oberleutnant Freiherr* von Kleist, *Leib-Garde-Husaren-Regiment*, on assignment to the *Militär-Reit-Institut* Hannover; *Leutnant* von Kleist-Retzow, *Husaren-Regiment Fürst Blücher von Wahlstatt (Pommersches) Nr. 5*; *Leutnant* von Kleist, *Westfälisches Ulanen-Regiment Nr. 5*; *Rittmeister* von Kleist, *Ulanen-Regiment Graf zu Dohna (Ostpreußisches) Nr. 8*; and *Leutnant* von Kleist, 2. *Pommersches Ulanen-Regiment Nr. 9*.

²⁹ Wilhelm Keitel, "Schul- und Soldatenzeit bis zum 1. Weltkrieg, Schulzeit in Göttingen" (Manuskripte) Bd. 2, (BA-MA: N 54/2, Nachlaß Keitel), 36. Hereafter, Keitel, "Schulzeit." Keitel, the son of a successful 600-acre *Gutshof* (farm estate) owner, recorded that he and three other friends, all from the financial middle to upper middle class, "agreed to all choose the officer's profession, and because cavalry was too expensive and probably only possible in border garrisons, we all went to the field artillery, where one also rode horses." One of the friends was

was that the *Zulage* served as a discriminator among the *Adel* and thus was an element of intra-*Adel* stratification and differentiation within the army officer corps.³⁰

Unquestionably, Ewald and his father turned to family, friends, and acquaintances in search of information and recommendations regarding desirable artillery regiments. Hugo had two first cousins, Eugen Christoph Erwin, and Friedrich Wilhelm Victor Alfred, who were serving army officers. Erwin was an infantry major on the staff of *Grenadier Regiment König Friedrich Wilhelm II (1. Schlesisches) Nr. 10* at Schweidnitz, Schlesien. Alfred, an artillery *Hauptmann*, was serving on the staff at the *Oberfeuerwerker-Schule* (senior ordnance school) in Berlin. His parent regiment was the *1. Badisches Feldartillerie Regiment Nr. 14*.³¹ Alfred's

nobleman, Ferdinand Bock von Wülfigen, the son of a *Gutsbesitzer*. Another was Felix Bürkner, the son of a medical doctor professor at the University of Göttingen. Bürkner's own autobiography, *Ein Reiterleben*, 2. Nachdruck der Ausgabe Verden/Aller 1957 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag AG, 2008) corroborates Keitel's account. Bürkner writes, "At home, the big question arose as to how the private subsidy [*Zuschuss*] demanded at that time could be raised. It varied in amount from one branch to another - even from one regiment to another - and my good father was very worried about how he would manage with his small salary. Various discussions with my grandmother finally made it possible for him to give his consent [for me to join the army]. My most fervent wish, of course, was to become a cavalryman. One of my father's patients, Graf Alb. von Hardenberg, himself a member of the 5. Dragoner [Regiment] in Hofgeismar, offered to work on my behalf to achieve my goal. The regimental adjutant of Infanterie Regiment, Schwertfeger, also advised me to go to Lüneburg for Dragoner Regiment 16. But then I had to choose the field artillery as it was the only mounted branch that was within [financial] reach. My three friends, Ferdinand von Bock [von Wülfigen] and Theodor Baring had already secured entry to the 1. Kurhessisches Feldartillerie Regiment Nr. 11 at Kassel, Wilhelm Keitel with Niedersächsische Feldartillerie Regiment Nr. 46 in Wolfenbüttel." Bürkner found a posting in the 2. Kurhessisches Feldartillerie Regiment Nr. 47 at Fulda. He records that his parentally supplied *Zulage* as a young *Leutnant* was 75 Marks per month (page 60). For contexts, Bürkner records that it cost approximately 30 *Marks* per month to feed one horse. Bürkner, already an accomplished rider, went on to win multiple *Kaiserpreise* and was a member of the German Equestrian Team in the 1912 Olympics. In 1913, he was selected to serve as an instructor at the Cavalry School. His equestrian acumen played a role in his branch transfer from the field artillery to the cavalry in March 1911. His lack of independent financial support (*Zulage*) likely caused him to be placed in one of the lowest prestige cavalry regiments, *Jäger-Regiment zu Pferde Nr. 2* at *Langensalza*, a Thuringia provincial backwater, rather than with a more prestigious but more "expensive" *Dragoner* or *Husaren Regiment*.

³⁰ Marcus Funck, *Feudales Kriegerum und Militärische Professionalität: Der Adel im preußisch-deutschen Offizierskorps 1860-1935*. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004), 36-37. Funck contends that there was a strong and growing "internal differentiation of the German aristocracy" across many areas (aristocratic law, regionality, religious confession, social, and professional).

³¹ Georg Heinrich Kypke, Hans Wätjens, Sigurd von Kleist. *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist Dritter Teil-Biographien bis 1880 Dritte Abteilung Muttrin-Damensche Linie Der Damensche und der Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 2. Auflage (Hamm: Familienverband derer v. Kleist e. V., 2018), 240-241. Erwin (* 11 December 1855; † 23 March 1910) went on to serve as an *Oberst* and regimental commander before rising to *Generalmajor* and commanding 71. Brigade. He retired on medical grounds in 1909. Alfred (* 16 November 1857; † 15 March 1921) left the *Oberfeuerwerker-Schule* to assume command of an artillery battalion in 1901 but returned to the school as its

knowledge of the various field artillery regiments, their leadership, the training and professional standards of the unit, along with the reputations and unit cultures of the regiments would have been known to him given his years of experience. Additionally, his interaction with officer-students from artillery regiments across the Prussian contingent as they passed through the *Oberfeuerwerker-Schule* gave him up-to-date information. Other von Kleist relatives serving as active-duty artillery officers included: *Oberleutnant* Hans von Kleist, 1. *Garde-Feldartillerie-Regiment* (GFAR) (Berlin); *Oberleutnant* Leopold von Kleist, 2. *Garde-Feldartillerie-Regiment* (Potsdam); and *Hauptmann* von Kleist, *Großherzoglich Hessisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 25* (Darmstadt).³² Of note was *Oberleutnant* Leopold of the 2. GFAR. Beginning in autumn 1887, he was posted as an officer-student to the *Kriegsakademie* in Berlin. One of Leopold's fellow classmates was *Leutnant* Erich Stolz whose parent regiment was *Feldartillerie-Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3 (FAR 3)* (Brandenburg an der Havel).³³ Another more distant "cousin" was Robert von Kleist. In Robert, Ewald had his most knowledgeable and informative contact with regard to Brandenburg a/H and the city's three regiments. Robert joined *Brandenburgisches Füsilier-Regiment Nr. 35 (FR 35)*, garrisoned in Brandenburg a/H, in 1887, serving in this regiment until selected to attend the *Kriegsakademie* beginning in 1894. At the time Ewald sought information,

commander in 1903. He rose to *Oberst* in 1909 and commanded *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 74* (Torgau). He entered World War One as a *Generalmajor* in command of 6. *Feldartillerie-Brigade* and led the unit into combat on the Western Front. By 1915, he was a *Generalleutnant* in command of 115. *Infanterie-Division* which served on both the Western and Eastern Fronts. He was awarded the *Orden pour le mérite* for his outstanding leadership of the division. In early 1918, he was posted as *Kommandierenden General des Generalkommandos LVIII* on the Western Front. He ended the war as Commanding General of "Gruppe Kleist", a major element of the German 3. *Armee*. He retired from active duty on 7 July 1919. He was an *Ehrenritter des Johanniterordens* (Knight of Honor of the Order of St. Johns).

³² *Rangliste 1899*, 374-430.

³³ *Ibid.*, 380. Paul Kahle, *Adreßbuch der Stadt Brandenburg an der Havel* (Brandenburg a/H.: Paul Kahle Verlag, 1902) (Brandenburg Stadtarchiv: Akte: HPF9, Addressbuch 1900-1903. 1902 Edition (microfilm)). The address books give the names, ranks, army positions, and residential addresses of the officers assigned to the three army regiments located in Brandenburg a/H.

Robert was an *Oberleutnant* serving in Berlin on the *Großer Generalstab* but was still assigned to *FR 35*. Thus, Robert had knowledge of Brandenburg a/H, personal and professional connections in the regiments stationed there, and valuable information about the army in general.³⁴ Through these contacts, Ewald could have gathered information about *FAR 3* and Brandenburg a/H.

Finally, Hugo had the ability to reach out to officers with whom he served either on active duty or as a reserve officer in seeking information useful to his son. A particularly valuable source was *Generalmajor a.D.* Viktor von Loßberg. Von Loßberg was a company commander in 2. *Hessische Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 82*, Hugo's regiment, during the Franco-Prussian War. Hugo would have known von Loßberg, possibly he had even served in his company. While von Loßberg retired from active duty a decade earlier, his son, Fritz, an *Oberleutnant* on the *Großer Generalstab*, who would have been a knowledgeable source of information on desirable regiments.

While evidence of von Kleist's communications with these officers has not been found, some form of information gathering and recommendation seeking took place. Officer aspirants, especially ones with an ennobled family network, relied heavily on information from family members and relatives as well as friends, and acquaintances who had connections to regiments of

³⁴ Georg Heinrich Kypke und Hans Wätjen; überarbeitet von Heinrich von Kleist-Retzow und Sigurd von Kleist, *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist: Dritter Teil - Biographien bis 1880 Dritte Abteilung, Muttrin-Damensche Linie Der Muttriner Ast*, 2. überarbeitete Auflage (Hamm: Familienverband derer v. Kleist e. V., 2017), 30-31. Friedrich Georg Robert von Kleist (* 22 June 1868 in Bartenstein/Ostpommern; † 6 May 1943 in Schlawa/Pommern) joined the *Kadettenkorps* in 1880 and in 1887, was commissioned a *Sekonde-Lieutenant* in *Brandenburgisches Füsilier-Regiment Nr. 35*. Attended the *Kriegsakademie* (1894-1897) and served his probationary period on the *Großer Generalstab* between 1898-1900. Failing his probation, he was not selected as a career *Generalstaboffizier* and returned to troop duty with *Füsilier-Regiment Nr. 35* in 1900. Between 1900 and 1905, he served at Brandenburg and would have become personally acquainted with Ewald. In 1905, Robert joined the *Schutztruppe* (colonial troops) in Deutsch-Ostafrika and returned in 1910 to become company commander in *Grenadier-Regiment Nr. 9* in Stargard/Pommern. Promoted to Major in 1912, he went on to serve in World War One on both the Eastern and Western Front. In 1916, he took command of *Grenadier-Regiment Nr. 9* on the Western Front. In 1917, he was invalided out of combat due to combat exhaustion and Rheumatism and given a posting back in Germany. He retired from active duty in 1920 and was promoted to *Oberst*.

interest. Aspirants furthermore, sought and obtained personal introductions to regimental commanders. Additionally, recommendations from officers who knew the regimental commander or were of sufficient rank and reputation so as to be credible recommenders were pursued. All of this was a key and critical step in the process.³⁵

Although Ewald's process for determining and prioritizing the artillery regiments he wished to enter remains unknown, a list of factors which influenced his decisions can be derived.³⁶ The list of considerations fall into one of five major categories: regimental ranking, career opportunities, geographic factors, social environment, and personal preferences. Rather

³⁵ Otto Wien, *Ein Leben und viermal Deutschland: Erinnerungen aus siebenzig Lebensjahren 1906-1976* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1978), 62-64. While Wien's experience occurs two decades later, it is nonetheless informative and illustrates the criticality of personal contacts and references who have a close connection to a specific regiment. Wien wrote, "...my thought of choosing the profession of officer became a firm decision. About half a year before my high school graduation, I applied for admission to the Reichswehr as a flag junior officer. This application would have a special characteristic. The process, which was connected with some extraordinary fortunate circumstances, became clear to me in all its importance only later. The first fortunate circumstance was that through my membership in the "Junge Stahlhelm" I made the acquaintance of ... retired General von Eberhardt, who helped me with my application. Since he himself was from the Prussian Guard [regiments], he advised me to apply for the 9th Reichswehr Infantry Regiment in Potsdam, which was the so-called traditional troop of his old regiment, the 3. Garde Regiments zu Fuß. With my completed application already having his recommendation, I, again by a serendipitous coincidence, met a Herr von Niegelschütz during a visit to my uncle Theodor at his estate Kraplau. Herr von Niegelschütz talked to me in detail about my professional plans. I did not know that the gentleman speaking to me in civilian attire was a major in the General Staff and involved with officer accessions in the Reichswehr Ministry. He was obviously interested in my application, since he too - another happy coincidence - came from the 3. Garde Regiment, in whose traditional troop I was to join as a Fahnenjunker. Without me knowing it, he actively supported my application. I only realized this fact when I went with my father to Potsdam in the fall of 1924. I was introduced to Colonel Lademann, then commander of the 9th Infantry Regiment. That evening, General von Eberhardt took me to a meeting of former officers of the 3. Garde Regiment in Berlin. To my surprise, I met Herr von Niegelschütz there, now in the uniform of a Major of the Reichswehr. He greeted me cordially and asked me if I was pleased with his assistance. My joining the 9th Infantry Regiment was thus assured. I learned later that I had applied for the position of Fahnenjunker with nearly 100 other young Gymnasium graduates who also sought to enter the same regiment. It is most probable that my chance contacts with the old 3. Garde Regiment [officers] played a role in their decision." See also the aforementioned excerpt from Bürkner's *Ein Reiterleben* for an example of proffered assistance in gaining an introduction to a regiment. See too, Keitel, "Schulzeit in Göttingen", 39-41, for examples of assistance from relatives with regard to gaining admittance into an artillery regiment.

³⁶ A number of the items on the derived list of factors comes from a personal discussion with *Oberstleutnant* Dr. Christian Stachelbeck, Projektleiter 19. Jahrhundert im Forschungsbereich Deutsche Militärgeschichte bis 1945 am Zentrum für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften der Bundeswehr (ZMSBw) Potsdam, on 14 November 2019 at the ZMSBw. Others factors are identified in autobiographical and biographical accounts of officers in this era.

than a discussion of the individual elements in abstract, an analysis of the categories and their constituent elements for Ewald's selected artillery regiment follows.

Ewald's application to join *Feldartillerie-Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3 (FAR 3)* as an officer-aspirant was successful. When determining regimental desirability, a number of elements must be included. First, was the regiment's army order of precedence ranking. *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 3* ranked fifth in overall army artillery regimental precedence. It followed the two *Garde-Feldartillerie-Regiments*, *Feldartillerie-Regiment Prinz August von Preußen (Ostpreußisches) Nr. 1* (Insterburg), and *1. Pommersches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 2* (Stettin).³⁷ While this ranking was heavily ceremonial, it did carry over into operational capability and influenced a regiment's wartime mobilization priority as well as combat employment tasking. With a precedence rank of 5 out of 70, *Feldartillerie-Regiments*, *FAR 3* was a top tier regiment.

Apart from the army order of precedence ranking, past combat performance factored into a regiment's prestige. The regiment, established on 29 February 1816, from preexisting smaller artillery contingents traced its foundations back to 1771 and its establishment as the *Kolberger Garnisonartillerie-Kompagnie* (Kolberg garrison artillery company).³⁸ It participated in the 1897 Siege of Kolberg. Other artillery elements which were later combined into *FAR 3* fought throughout the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon. The regiment participated in numerous engagements during the Second Schleswig War 1864 during which three officers earning the *Orden pour le mérite*. In 1866, the regiment fought in the Battle of Königgratz where it fired

³⁷ Regimental precedence as identified by the numeric suffix, was a complex algorithm of date of regimental establishment, date of incorporation into the Prussian and later German armies, precedence of principality, and combat honors. After 1871, only Bavaria was allowed to maintain a separate order of precedence for the Bavarian regiments. All the other German principalities were ordered within a combined German Army order of precedence list.

³⁸ Karl von Stumpff, *Geschichte des Feldartillerie-Regiments General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgischen) Nr. 3* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1900), 3. See von Stumpff for a detailed history of the regiment.

over 2,850 rounds during the course of the day. The regiment suffered 1 officer and 6 soldiers killed and 4 officers and 44 enlisted men wounded. The loss of horses totaled 35 killed and 19 wounded.³⁹ In mid-July 1870, the regiment received its mobilization orders for the coming war against France. The regiment went to war with 65 active-duty officers, 8 of whom were noblemen.⁴⁰ The regiment fought in the battles at Spichern, Vionville—Mars-la-Tour, Gravelotte, Metz, Beaune la Rolande, Maizieres, Chilleurs aur Bois, and Le Mans. During the course of the war 6 officers and 76 enlisted men were killed in action/died of wounds and 35 officers and 460 enlisted men were wounded in action.⁴¹ The officers and men of *FAR 3* earned 17 *Eiserne Kreuze I. Klasse* and more than 360 *Eiserne Kreuze II. Klasse* for bravery on the many battlefields on which the regiment fought.⁴² Given its campaign record, the regiment had a very solid if not illustrious combat history.

Several other factors can be included in formulating the “regimental prestige quotient.” The commanding officers’ biographies could add to the prestige. For *FAR 3*, the seven commanders during the preceding two decades had not been exceptionally impressive, but rather “solid” commanders. Three of the seven were noblemen.⁴³ Excluding the incumbent, none of the other six commanders had been promoted to a higher position. Five retired directly after

³⁹ Ibid., 274-275.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 293-295. Noblemen were: the regimental commander, *Oberst* von Dresky, 1 *Major*, 1 *Hauptmann*, 4 *Premier Lieutenants*, 1 *Sekonde Lieutenant*. Additionally, one of the *Portepeee Fähnriche* and one of the *Sekonde Lieutnants der Reserve* were noblemen. Note that all of the officers came from the lower nobility as none had titles. Thus, the nobility rate of active-duty officers was 12.3 percent.

⁴¹ Ibid., 598-614. See the lists on these pages for the names of killed and wounded in action by battle. Of note, the regiment had no less than 521 horses killed in battle and more than 357 were wounded during the campaigns.

⁴² Ibid., 615-624. See these pages for the names, ranks, date of award, and hometown of the officers and men who were awarded the *Eiserne Kreuz*.

⁴³ Ibid., 582. This assessment is made as of spring 1899, when von Kleist would have been seeking information to inform his regimental choice decisions. The first two commanders of the period (1882-1899) were lower nobility. The last one and incumbent after 22 May 1899, was a *Oberst Freiherr* Wolf Dietrich Gustav von Amstetter-Zwerbach und Grabeneck.

having served as commander and one died while in command.⁴⁴ The *Kaiser* had only seen fit to raise two of the five retiring commanders to *Generalmajor* upon their exit from active duty.

Thus, the commanders' professional credentials added little to the prestige of the unit.⁴⁵

Another element of cachet was the number of noblemen in the regiment. In 1899, of *FAR 3*'s 73 officers, 12 were *Adel* (16.4 percent), of these 3 were titled. For comparison, *Feldartillerie-Regiment Prinz August von Preußen (Ostpreußisches) Nr. 1* noble officers numbered only 5 of the regiment's 68 officers. Despite being the highest precedence artillery regiment behind the four Guards regiments, *FAR 1*'s less desirable garrison location at Insterburg in the *Ostpreußen* hinterlands enabled it to only attract a meager 7.4 percent noble officers.⁴⁶ Even the next regiment in order of precedence did little better than *FAR 3. 1. Pommersches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 2* officer rolls included 11 *adlige Offiziere* in the regiment's total complement of 62 (17.7 percent noblemen). The garrison location of Stettin, a seaport town with over 200,000 inhabitants in this era, had enough cultural and social attractions to draw a higher number of nobility into *FAR 2*.⁴⁷ But these three regiments paled by comparison to others such as *FAR 6* and *FAR 10. Feldartillerie-Regiment von Peucker (Schlesisches) Nr.6* garrisoned at

⁴⁴ Karl von Stumpff, Generalleutnant, „Karl v. Stumpff Lebenserinnerungen 1858-1927“ BA-MA; MSG 2/12718 (Schreibmaschinenmanuskript), 186-195. See this unpublished autobiographical manuscript for an account of life as the *Chef der 2. reitenden Batterie in Brandenburg Frühjahr 1894-1899* in *FAR 3*. Of *Obersten* Humann and Eisentraut, von Stumpf recorded the following, “My first [regimental] commander, Colonel Humann, initially had reservations about giving me command of the highly coveted 2nd mounted battery. But he soon accepted me and was a benevolent commander until his death. I think of his successor, Colonel Eisentraut, with great reverence and heartfelt thanks. He was later a general and only recently died in Kassel. In my opinion and from my point of view, he was the model of a distinguished commander and I owe him much. His very favorable {officer} evaluation of me can be found in our family Bible.” Eisentraut's promotion to *Generalmajor* came at his retirement.

⁴⁵ Too, *FAR 3* had no *Regimentschef* (Colonel-in-Chief). *Regimentschef* was an honorary title given to the person, in this era usually royalty, how was invited to hold this position. The position was purely honorary and the *Regimentschef* had no command authority over the regiment. Having a high-ranking and involved *Regimentschef* added to the prestige of the regiment and also enabled regimental officers to be seen by and possibly to serve members of the royal families.

⁴⁶ *Rangliste 1899*, 377. All five of the ennobled officers were *Niederadel* (lower nobility and thus untitled).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 378. All eleven of the ennobled officers were *Niederadel*.

Breslau could boast that 38 of its 60 officers were aristocrats (63.3 percent).⁴⁸ *Feldartillerie-Regiment von Scharnhorst (1. Hannoversches) Nr. 10* stationed in Hannover, similarly had a high percentage of noblemen. Forty of the regiment's sixty-seven officers were ennobled (59.7 percent).⁴⁹ Both Breslau and Hannover were highly desirable garrison locations and each was the capital city of the former principality and as such these regiments continued to draw a large number of long-established regional nobility into their ranks. Thus, *FAR 3* with its contingent of a dozen *adlige Offiziere* was a middling regiment in this category. But their presence did give Ewald some aristocratic mutual support as well as fellow officers who likely shared a similar outlook on officership and life given their comparable social and economic stratum.

A final element in regimental prestige was the weaponry and associated equipment assigned to the unit as well as the quality of regiments horses. For an artillery regiment, that meant having the newest and most technologically advanced guns. New field cannons, Model C-96, began entering field artillery regiments in 1897 to replace the aging Model C-73.⁵⁰ *Feldartillerie-Regiment) Nr. 3* received the new model in April 1899. Thus, Ewald would be working with the latest field artillery guns.⁵¹ Inclusion of these factors would have aided Ewald in his calculations.

In assessing the amalgamation of elements of *FAR 3*'s regimental prestige quotient, the regiment did quite well. Its high place on the artillery precedence list, its strong combat

⁴⁸ Ibid., 383-384. Seven of the thirty-eight ennobled officers were titled (18.4 percent). Many of the ennobled officers came from the Schlesischen noble houses.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 388. Five of the forty *adlige Offiziere* were titled. The city of Hannover as the capital of the former Kurfürstentum Hannover and Königreich Hannover had long been a garrison city with a number of army regiments. Thus, it had a long history of drawing into these prestigious regiments the sons of the Hanoverian aristocracy, a practice it maintained even after 1866.

⁵⁰ Brose, *Kaiser's Army*, 97-105. See Brose for discussion of the developmental challenges of new and improved field guns, their fielding, and resistance to technological change within certain segments of the army.

⁵¹ Von Stumpff, *Geschichte*, 568. The new model of artillery field cannons, the *Feldkanone C/96*, were delivered to *FAR 3* beginning on 1 April 1899.

performance in multiple wars coupled with solid leadership by its commanders and officers, a sufficient number of noblemen, and having the best equipment all added up to *FAR 3* being a very desirable regiment and one of sufficiently high distinction.

The second area of consideration was career opportunities. The initial factor in this area was *Fahnenjunker* vacancies. The *Rangliste* of 1900, 1901, and 1902, provide data for analysis of officers commissioned and brought into *FAR 3* as *Fahnenjunker* in calendar year 1900. That evaluation shows that four officers received commissions in 1900 and that only von Kleist joined the regiment as officer-aspirants in the spring 1900. Thus, there was at a minimum one position available.⁵² Other important career opportunities included the ability of a regiment to gain its officers seats as students in army professional development schools. For a field artillery regiment these schools included the *Feldartillerie Schießschule*, *Oberfeuerwerkerschule*, *Vereinigte Artillerie- und Ingenieurschule*, *Militär-Reit-Institut*, and the *Kriegsakademie*.⁵³ While several of the schools operated by quota system (*Feldartillerie Schießschule* and *Militär-Reit-Institut*), others were entered via competitive nominations. Thus, the efforts exerted by a regiment to make or assist in making an officer competitive and then supporting his further preparation in order for the attendee success at the school were factors to be considered. In both 1898 and 1899, *FAR 3* had one *Leutnant* attending *Vereinigte Artillerie- und Ingenieurschule*, one *Leutnant* was at the *Militär-Reit-Institut* and four *Leutnants* were officer-students at the

⁵² *Rangliste 1902*, 390. *Fähnriche* were not included in the *Rangliste* nor in most other officer lists of the regiments. These individuals only appeared after they had earned their officer commissions. Thus, it is possible, though somewhat unlikely, that there was more than one vacancy in *FAR 3* and that the additional aspirant(s) did not successfully complete their pre-officer training. Of the four officers commissioned into *FAR 3* in 1900, two had completed their *Abitur* and two had not, joining with a *Reife zur Prima Zeugnis*.

⁵³ *Feldartillerie Schießschule* (field artillery shooting school, i.e., school of fire) at Jüterbog, *Oberfeuerwerkerschule* (senior ordnance school) in Berlin, *Vereinigte Artillerie- und Ingenieurschule* (unified artillery and engineer school) in Berlin, *Militär-Reit-Institut* (military riding institute aka. cavalry school) in Hannover, and the *Kriegsakademie* (war academy) in Berlin.

Kriegsakademie.⁵⁴ A final factor in the area of career development was the regiments disposition for allowing officers to either transfer out of the unit to other postings or to serve in external postings while being maintained on the regimental roll. Here again, *FAR 3* ranked well. In 1897, five regimental officers were assigned to posts outside the regiment.⁵⁵ In 1898, two officers were serving in assignments outside the regiment; one was on the faculty at the *Vereinigte Artillerie- und Ingenieurschule* and the second was posted to the *Auswärtiges Amt* (Foreign Office).⁵⁶ In 1899, the number of officers assigned outside the regiment rose again to five.⁵⁷ Additionally, the fact that two of *FAR 3*'s superior headquarters, *6. Feldartillerie-Brigade* and *6. Division*, were located in Brandenburg a/H meant that *FAR 3* officers could serve at these superior echelons and gain mid-level staff experience on a general officer's staff without moving to a different garrison thus avoiding the expense and professional and personal disturbances which accompanied a move to another location.⁵⁸ This was favorable as compared to other artillery regiments. Thus, in the area of career opportunities, *FAR 3* rated very well.

The third category was geographic factors. Where the regiment was located played a significant role in officer-aspirant's decision. From his eventual choice of *FAR 3* garrisoned at Brandenburg an der Havel, it is evident that neither close proximity to immediate family nor

⁵⁴ *Rangliste 1898*, 386-387. *Rangliste 1899*, 379-380. The officer attending the *Militär-Reit-Institut* was the same individual since the cavalry school was a two-year program. Two officer-students attended the *Vereinigte Artillerie- und Ingenieurschule*. The course at the *Kriegsakademie* was three years in length. There were six different officer-students at the *Kriegsakademie* during this two-year period. To have six officers attending the *Kriegsakademie* in such a short timespan spoke highly of both the officers and the regiment.

⁵⁵ *Rangliste 1897*, 333. One officer was assigned to the artillery testing committee, another *Hauptmann* was serving at the *Artillerie-Werkstatt* (artillery repair depot) in Spandau., two officers were serving on the staff of *8. Feld-Artillerie Brigade*, and the final one, a *Sekonde-Lieutenant*, was serving in an unidentified billet as an *à la suite* officer.

⁵⁶ *Rangliste 1898*, 386-387.

⁵⁷ *Rangliste 1899*, 379-380.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 54. While peacetime division and brigade staffs were very small, with at most three officers permanently assigned, it did give a few officers the opportunity to work for a general officer, and was largely considered a needed if not necessarily an enjoyable posting for officers with aspirations of higher rank and position.

being located in Pommern near the ancestral territory of the von Kleist clan were important considerations for Ewald.⁵⁹ As to other geographic factors, Brandenburg a/H. was well situated. The city lay approximately thirty miles (fifty kilometers) due west of Potsdam and approximately forty-two miles (sixty-eight kilometers) west-southwest of the center of Berlin. Thus, each of these metropolitan centers, with myriad attractions, social and cultural events, equestrian competitions, and multiple military garrisons were less than a sixty- or ninety-minute, respectively, and relatively inexpensive train ride away.⁶⁰ Yet, Brandenburg was distant enough so as to not share the higher cost of living nor the hustle and bustle of its much larger neighbors to the east.

Brandenburg's urban geography was also favorable. The town lay astride the Havel River, a watercourse sizeable enough for small ship and barge traffic, and was on one of the main east-west rail lines serving Berlin. The town was booming economically. Since 1875, the population had increased seventy percent so that at the turn of the century the total number of civilian inhabitants stood at 45,471.⁶¹ The expansion of industry, primarily the metal and toy making industries, created over 6,500 new jobs during the previous quarter century.⁶² New businesses of all varieties to support the increasing population came with the economic growth.

⁵⁹ J. Wiesikes Buchdruckerei, hrsg., *Adreß-Buch von Stadt und Dom Brandenburg a.H. 1904* (Brandenburg a. H.: J. Wiesikes Buchdruckerei, 1904). Ewald's family home in Aurich was approximately 250 miles (400 kilometers) from Brandenburg. In 1900, travel between the two towns by train would have taken the better part of a day. According to the 1904 Brandenburg *Adreß-Buch*, a 2nd class round trip train ticket from Brandenburg to Oldenburg (the closest city listed to Aurich) cost 35.70 Marks, or one quarter of a young *Leutnant's* 141 Marks per month army pay.

⁶⁰ Ibid. In 1904, a 2nd class round-trip railway ticket (Brandenburg to Berlin) cost 5.60 Marks. The same ticket to/from Potsdam cost 3.30 Marks.

⁶¹ Walter Kunkel, Karl-Heinz Röhring, Marcus Alert, Gudrun Bauer, Wolfgang Kusior *Chronik der Stadt Brandenburg: Das vergangene Jahrtausend-Streiflichter aus der Geschichte der Stadt Brandenburg. Zeittafel der Geschichte von Brandenburg (Havel)* (Berlin: Verlag B. Neddermeyer, 2003.), 32.

⁶² Ibid., 32 and 86. Industrial jobs increased from 3,035 in 1875 to 8,730 in 1900 (65 percent growth), 4,300 of these were in the metal and toy manufacturing sector. In 1900, city factories produced around 70,000 bicycles.

The three army regiments garrisoned in Brandenburg a/H added approximately 3,800 officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers to the city's population.⁶³ The city center was a thirty-minute walk from the three military *Kasernen* (barracks) that lay on the town's northwest outskirts. The recently completed horse-drawn tramline made travel quicker and easier around the city.⁶⁴

The land around Brandenburg, predominately flat farmland with some gently undulating terrain interspersed with forests, small lakes, and intersected by narrow watercourses made it ideal territory for cross-country equestrian riding as well as hunting.⁶⁵ Other than not being in close proximity to the seacoast, the countryside around Brandenburg was not dramatically different from Ostfriesland. As far as the town's religious geography was concerned, Brandenburg was staunchly *Evangelisch* and its churches could suitably meet the young *Leutnant's* spiritual needs.⁶⁶ Geographically, Brandenburg a/H was ideally situated.

Social considerations filled the next category. While a large part of the day was consumed with official duties, activities to occupy evenings and weekends needed to be considered. Thinking beyond his eighteen months or so as a *Fähnrich* to his commissioned officer time, Ewald would have been interested in how enjoyable and profitable his off-duty time might be. His thoughts likely focused first on the young men of his own age with which to

⁶³ Kusior, Wolfgang, *Die Stadt Brandenburg im Jahrhundertrückblick* (Berlin: Verlag Bernd Neddermeyer, 2000.) 10.

⁶⁴ Walter Kunkel, et al, *Brandenburg*, 91. The initial *Pferdebahn-Ringlinie* (horse-drawn trolley circular route) was completed in 1898, with an additional expansion completed in 1902.

⁶⁵ The description of the Brandenburg an der Havel, the surrounding countryside, the city's proximity to Potsdam and Berlin, and the ease of train travel to and from the city are derived from personal experiences of the author during the research phase of this project. Modern train travel is considered to be approximately twice as rapid as it was during Ewald von Kleist's time in Brandenburg.

⁶⁶ Keitel, "Schulzeit", 39. The religious predilection of a city or area for officer-aspirants with strong attachments to their confession was an important consideration. Keitel noted that he did not want to join *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 47* at Fulda, "because Fulda, where Felix [Bürkner] had connections, did not suit me because it was a Catholic region."

pursue off-duty interests and avocations. While many garrison towns had only one regiment, Brandenburg a/H boasted three fairly high-prestige regular army regiments: *Brandenburgisches Füsilier-Regiment Nr. 35*, an infantry regiment; *Kürassier-Regiment Kaiser Nikolaus I. von Rußland (Brandenburgisches) Nr. 6 (KR 6)*, a cavalry regiment; as well as Ewald's intended artillery regiment, *Feldartillerie-Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3*.⁶⁷ The pool of officers from which to form friendships and circles of acquaintances was of good size. *Füsilier-Regiment Nr. 35* had 14 *Oberleutnants* which included 4 noblemen and 28 *Leutnants* with 6 noblemen.⁶⁸ *Kürassier-Regiment Nr. 6* had 7 *Oberleutnants*, all noblemen, and 11 *Leutnants*, all *adlige Offiziere*.⁶⁹ Thus, these regiments added to FAR 3's 11 *Oberleutnants* with 3 noblemen and 38 *Leutnants* including 2 noblemen, totaled 109 *Leutnants*; 32 *Oberleutnants* and 77 *Leutnants*. Thirty-three, a full thirty percent, were *adlige Leutnants*. The prospects of finding appropriate and like-minded companions who shared similar interest was high for Ewald. Given the blue-bloodedness of the cavalry regiment and the interested horsemen of FAR 3, Ewald's off-duty pursuits of equestrian interests were sure to be met in a variety of riding activities, events, and competitions, both formal and informal. Too, this large a number of subalterns meant that there were a number of events, activities, and social meeting places that catered to them. While the military social environment looked promising, the civilian side of the social fence also needed to be considered.

⁶⁷ *Rangliste 1899*, 174-175, 327, and 379-380. *Brandenburgisches Füsilier-Regiment Nr. 35*, ranked relatively high at 44th in precedence of 173 total infantry regiments. Nine *Garde-Infanterie-Regiments* and 34 regular infantry regiments ranked above FR 35. The cavalry regiment, *Kürassier-Regiment Kaiser Nikolaus I. von Rußland (Brandenburgisches) Nr. 6*, ranked in the top fifth, 14th of the 73, of cavalry regiments. *Kürassier Nr. 6* had the eight *Garde-Kavallerie-Regiments* and five regular *Kürassier-Regimenter* above it in precedence. Cavalry sub-branch precedence was: 1) *Kürassier* (cuirassier), 2) *Dragoner* (dragoons), 3) *Husaren* (hussars), 4) *Uhlanen* (lancers), and 5) *Jäger zu Pferde* (mounted rifles).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 174-175.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 327. Of the seven ennobled *Oberleutnants*, two were titled (a *Graf* and a *Freiherr*) while the eleven *Leutnants* included three *Grafen*.

Brandenburg a/H with its large industry and manufacturing sector was in its rank-and-file political character largely of the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD)* bent. But officers were neither expected nor inclined, let alone permitted, to rub social shoulders with the rank and file but rather would find their “social home” among the town’s upper crust. For Brandenburg, the upper crust meant the upper middle class of professionals and the wealthier merchant class and the upper class, based on social and economic ranking, comprised the long-established nobility and the more recently established wealthy big businessmen and factory owners, respectively.⁷⁰ It was in this milieu that officers attended social event such as concerts, plays, dinner parties, picnics, spectator sporting events, as well as civic and national holiday festivities. The *Leutnants*, while too young and most often in too penurious a financial state to contemplate marriage, nonetheless sought out appropriate young ladies of the proper background and breeding to share social events such as cotillions, dances, and concerts. But given the high likelihood that the officer would remain on duty in his regiment until his promotion to *Hauptmann* thus becoming eligible for marriage, it was somewhat probable that he might also need to find a bride among the city’s daughters. Brandenburg, with its significant and growing number of successful and wealthy businessmen and their eligible daughters, was a promising location. Too, there were without doubt covert affairs and sexual liaisons between officers and women outside the group of eligible virgin brides. Some officers took “mistresses they could never marry while in the army. [And] as long as the lady understood the circumstances and the liaison did not become an embarrassment to the corps, nothing was said.”⁷¹

⁷⁰ Dolores L. Augustine, *Patricians and Parvenus: Wealthy Businessmen in Wilhelmine Germany* (Providence, R.I.: Berg Publishers, 1994), 70-89. See Augustine’s discussion of interaction between the nobility and the newly made wealthy bourgeois class. Also see her brief discussion on interactions between wealthy business families and army officers and her tables which show who and how often marriages took place between these families.

⁷¹ Clemente, *King*, 164. See also Endres, “Social Structure”, 31.

Finally, for the young officers, Brandenburg offered a wide variety of venues with which to pass their free time. Brandenburg had a “Sportpark” with a bicycle racing circuit, a sporting boat harbor and a large garden area. There was a pavilion and one could paddle a boat around a branch channel of the Havel River. The city’s several parks were free and an attractive retreat (*Ausflugsort*) for the citizens.⁷² In addition to this, the town had over 200 various *Gesellschaften* (societies) and *Vereine* (clubs).⁷³

Taken all together, for a city its size, Brandenburg a/H’s social environment had much to offer the young officer. With the substantial number of junior officers of the three regiments and the growing number of civilians in the social classes that officers interacted with, Brandenburg had a healthy and attractive social environment, one in which Ewald could no doubt find suitable and enjoyable activities to fill his off-duty time.

Finally, personal preferences were taken into account. These ranged from something as seemingly trivial as the color of a regiment’s uniforms, *FAR 3*’s were dark blue with red trim, to more substantive elements such as location selection based on an individual’s anticipated post-army career. Parental influences and opinions in this area needed to be taken into account as well.

As Ewald’s and his father’s information gathering period came to a close in the weeks and days before initiating contact with a regiment, the list of considerations within the five major categories became clearer and better understood. As Ewald’s passion for horses grew, he undoubtedly preferred to join the cavalry. But as he faced the fiscal realities, he narrowed his choice and focused on entering the artillery with the highest prestige and best opportunities both

⁷² Walter Kunkel, et al, *Brandenburg*, 91.

⁷³ Wiesikes, *Adreß-Buch Brandenburg 1904*. The 1904 address book listed 227 different associations, clubs, and societies ranging across the broad spectrum of social, sporting, musical, recreational, religious, political, and philanthropic interests.

professionally and personally. In the end, Ewald's choice was *Feldartillerie-Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3 (FAR 3)*. In retrospect, his regimental selection was wise and well thought out. With the regiment selected, the next step was the application process.

Leader, manager, trainer, tactician, disciplinarian, ambassador, subordinate, servant, father, mentor, gatekeeper, and sponsor were all are roles filled by regimental commanders. Given these roles and responsibilities as well as the broad latitude to fulfil them, the importance and power of the regimental commander in the Wilhelmine army cannot be underestimated.⁷⁴ His authority and control over the officers, non-commissioned officers and enlisted men of the unit was comprehensive and far reaching. For the officer-aspirant who was not a *Kadettenschule* graduate, the regimental commander was the key and critical constituent for entrance into the desired regiment and successfully clearing the hurdles en route to a lieutenant's commission.⁷⁵ The last two of the aforementioned roles, gatekeeper and sponsor, were the most important for the officer-aspirant. It was in the role of gatekeeper that Ewald and his father first interacted with the commander of *Feldartillerie-Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3*. As a gatekeeper, the regimental commander was responsible for ensuring that only acceptable officer-aspirants were admitted to the army. To ensure this, regimental commanders were carefully selected with the nod more often going to an *adlige Offizier*. While the percentage of noble officers promoted to regimental command had decreased

⁷⁴ Despite the power and influence wielded by regimental commanders in period between 1871-1918, the author found no studies on these officers.

⁷⁵ Moncure, *Sword*, 245-256. See this section for a detailed description of the process of placing *Kadettenschule* graduates in their initial regiments.

in the three decades since 1871, in 1900, fifty-four percent of the regiments were still headed by a nobleman.⁷⁶

In continuing the tradition from earlier eras, Wilhelm II's reign saw very few written rules or restrictions placed on regimental commanders regarding the selection of future officers. What regulations there were centered on ensuring that applicants were in the age window and had the prerequisite education.⁷⁷ The officially unwritten but acknowledged guidance from the *Kaiser* and on down the chain of command was, however, that regimental commanders were to maintain the social and political exclusivity of the officer corps. This task, based on the increasing number of army officers needed, the mutating aristocracy, the rising number of bourgeois families interested in placing their sons in the army, the increasing pressures for modernization and professionalization of the officer corps, and the elevated educational qualifications these processes required, was a complex and ever-increasing challenge for those on whom the officer selection responsibility fell. Succinctly put, the regimental commanders sought officer-aspirants with the correct character. What this meant in the Wilhelmine era is largely explained in the following:

⁷⁶ *Rangliste 1900*. A quick analysis of the regimental commanders of infantry, cavalry, and artillery regiments from the 1900 *Rangliste* shows the following for regiments in the Prussian contingent: total regiments = 327; there were 177 noble and 150 bourgeois commanders. The number (noble/bourgeois) and percentage (noble/bourgeois) of commander social background was: Infantry 102/65 (61.08 percent/38.92 percent); Cavalry 64/9 (87.67 percent/12.33); and Artillery 11/76 (12.64 percent/87.36). Manfred Messerschmidt, „Das Preußisch-Deutsche Offizierskorp: 1850-1890“ in *Das Deutsche Offizierskorp: 1860-1960* ed. Hans Hubert Hoffmann (Harald Boldt Verlag, Boppard am Rhein, 1977), 28. Messerschmidt provides a table of infantry, cavalry, and artillery regimental commanders' social backgrounds. He notes for 1875, 17 percent of infantry, 7 percent of cavalry, and 50 percent of artillery commanders were bourgeois. In 1885, those numbers were, 24 percent for infantry, 7 percent for cavalry, and 50 percent for artillery. Thus, comparing 1875 to 1900, noble regimental commander constituency had declined by 22 percent in infantry, 5 percent in cavalry, and 37 percent in artillery. This topic is ripe for study.

⁷⁷ Clemente, *King*, 27-54. See Clemente Chapter 2 “German Secondary Education and Officer Selection” for a detailed history of changes and policy contestations within the higher echelons of the German officer corps over the need to increase pre-commissioning educational requirements and the adherence to those requirements. While generally thorough, Clemente's discussion leaves the reader often guessing about the dates of regulatory, policy, and programmatic changes throughout the timeframe under consideration. A useful contemporary source is Bernhard von Poten, *Geschichte des Militär-Erziehungs- und Bildungswesens in Preußen* (Berlin: A. Hofmann & Comp, 1896), 225-252.

The term [character] appears repeatedly in regard to the selection process, but the full meaning in the Prussian sense must be understood. Traditionally, the word envisions impressions of high moral integrity and strength. One might add General von Bernhardt's description of the demands made by modern warfare: "Each individual must, ... display a large measure of independent judgement, calm grasp of the facts, and bold resolution." For the Prussian officer, however, these qualities were not enough, nor even the most important. ...

As the middle class secured an ever greater percentage of army commissions, character to the Prussian officer corps came to mean, in addition to the above, a reliable family background and personal commitment to the maintenance of the monarchy. In an age of rising democratic and socialist sentiments, there existed foremost in the thoughts of the high command and the Kaiser the fear and expectation of a coup d'état emanating from either the Reichstag or the streets—or both. The army was therefore counted on not only to defend the fatherland from foreign attack but also to protect the crown from its domestic enemies—those whom Bismarck first labelled as *Reichsfeinde*.

The fear of internal revolt persisted as the underlying reason for the enduring belief that the officer corps must remain an exclusive class set apart from and above the rest of society. The officer might, as in 1848, have to order his troops to fire on fellow Germans. To do so without hesitation, he must accept the traditional philosophy of unquestioned obedience to the king's wishes. ...

In William [II]'s mind only the sons of his trusted nobles, officers, and senior officials brought such natural [leadership] traits to the corps. They had been born and bred to command, and he would make sure that nothing prevented them from performing their historical role in the service of the crown. In turn, their natural leadership ability would serve as the model for their less-talented bourgeois counterparts to emulate. If the middle-class officer candidate was to survive in the Prussian officer corps, he had to demonstrate the ability to become an aristocrat in thought as well as action. If he exhibited any questionable social or political beliefs, he was not wanted regardless of his intelligence or unfilled quotas.⁷⁸

To summarize, character as applied to the aristocratic officer was a complex recipe of high moral integrity, ethical strength, a proper amount of independence of thought, an unperturbably demeanor, resolution in the execution of his duties, ironclad reliability, a tempered subservience to authority, piety before God, and unshakable loyalty to the king. The officer corps monitored its officers throughout their careers for each of these elements as well as the collective result. While the primary enforcers were the regimental commanders, and the general

⁷⁸ Clemente, *King*, 46-48.

officers, each level of command was expected to keep watch over its assigned officers to ensure minor and momentary unacceptable character deviations were corrected. More egregious offenses were brought to the attention of higher ups for it was unconscionable to harbor or abet an officer whose lack of character impinged the honor of the officer corps. Violations of character were dealt with in both unofficial and official Honor Courts. Other crimes and misdemeanors were dealt with in the normal military justice system.

The opening step in the application process was a letter of introduction sent to the regimental commander by the father or guardian on behalf of the officer-aspirant. As Ewald later recalled, his father was unhappy about his son's career choice, perhaps since he did not think Ewald had the inclination or aptitude to become an officer. Begrudgingly the elder von Kleist wrote the initial letter contacting the regiment, likely posting it sometime in the first several months of 1899.⁷⁹ His father wrote in part, "My son wants to be an officer but I don't think he will be satisfactory as a soldier and officer."⁸⁰ Certainly this was not a glowing nor even a positive endorsement of his son. The schoolmaster's son could not have hoped for a encouraging response. Ewald, however, was not to be disappointed by the reply. "Then came the

⁷⁹ Keitel, "Schulzeit", 39. Keitel reported that he made his introductory visit to the regiment into which he sought admittance during the Easter school vacation 1900. This was a full year before he completed the *Abitur*. His account indicated that the regimental commander notified him of his acceptance as a future officer-aspirant to enter the regiment at Easter 1901 in May or June 1900. Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 49. Bürkner reported that after an abortive attempt to secure a position in a cavalry regiment in the spring of 1900, he was interviewed in July 1900 by the artillery regimental commander who then offered him a position as an incoming officer-aspirant in March 1901. The offer was contingent on Bürkner successfully passing his Easter 1901 *Abitur*. Thus, the initial process of contacting a regiment appears to have normally commenced sometime between twelve and eighteen months prior to the officer-aspirant's intended date of entry into the army. Entry into the army for von Kleist, Keitel, and Bürkner was within a week of officially completing their *Abitur*, a timeframe that appears to be the norm in the first few years of the new century. While the date that the letter from the elder von Kleist was sent is unknown, however, it likely was drafted and sent before the von Kleist family moved from Leer to Aurich on 21 March 1898. The turbulence caused by the family's impending move and pressures of becoming a headmaster possibly explain the tone of Hugo von Kleist's letter to the army.

⁸⁰ Goldensohn, *Interviews*, 332. A quote from Ewald von Kleist to interviewer Goldensohn in 1945 stating what Hugo von Kleist had written to the army when applying for his son's entry as an officer-aspirant. Unfortunately, that correspondence has not survived.

unexpected answer, to the effect, ‘Please send your son immediately.’”⁸¹ The regimental commander who was undaunted by Hugo’s negative assessment of his son’s potential and whose interest in Ewald was obviously piqued was *Oberst* Gustav Eisentraut.

Oberst Eisentraut was a career artillery officer having joined the army in 1863 after completing his Magdeburg *Realgymnasium Abitur*. He fought in both the Austro-Prussian and the Franco-Prussian Wars, earning the *Eisernes Kreuz II. Klasse* and was wounded at the Battle of Wörth in August 1870. Following those wars, he served in three different artillery regiments and had been an instructor at the *Kriegsschule* in Kassel. He had come from *Feldartillerie-Regiment von Podbielski (Niederschlesisches) Nr. 5* (Glogau) to take command of *Feldartillerie-Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3* (Brandenburg a/H) on 18 April 1896, after the death of the incumbent commander. In the spring of 1899, Eisentraut’s time as commander was quickly coming to an end and he anticipated his retirement after thirty-six years of active service.⁸²

A positive connection between Hugo von Kleist and *Oberst* Eisentraut was likely made as both were academicians. Eisentraut was himself a historian and after his retirement went on to further study and become an expert in Hessian history as well as becoming a long-serving chairman of the Association for Hessian History and Regional Studies.⁸³ The shared interest in history was possibly enough to gain Ewald the positive response and thus enabled the following steps of the process to proceed. It was also in this period when the initial letter arrived at the

⁸¹ Ibid., 332.

⁸² Von Stumpff, *Geschichte*, 582. Eisentraut was retired after leaving command of *FAR 3* and promoted to *Generalmajor z.D.*

⁸³ “Vorsitzende des Vereins für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde e.V. Kassel“ (Verein für hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde 1834 e.V., September 19, 2020) <http://www.vhghessen.de/> (December 4, 2020). Eisentraut’s area of expertise was Hesse during the Seven Years’ War and prehistoric and early fortifications in Hesse, on which he published numerous essays. He served as the chairman of VhGL from 1901 until 1924.

regiment that the supporting character references on behalf of the officer-aspirant were sent. Relatives, friends, and acquaintances of the prospective officer's family whose personal recommendations would have been respected by the regimental commander were solicited for this support. The higher the rank and the stronger connection to the army and the particular regiment, the more likely these recommendations were to help get the officer-aspirant into the interview process.⁸⁴

The next step was the face-to-face interview of the officer-aspirant and his father by the regimental commander. Quite likely it was *Oberst* Eisentraut, who in his reply to the von Kleists, extended the invitation to come to Brandenburg a/H. But given that Eisentraut passed the command of *FAR 3* to *Oberst Freiherr* von Amstetter-Zwerbach und Grabeneck on 22 May 1899, it is possible that the outgoing commander extended the professional courtesy to the new commander and allowed him to conduct the face-to-face interview.⁸⁵ The interview was at a minimum a three-part event. First, there was the private interview between the regimental commander, the officer-aspirant, and his father. While the topics discussed during the meeting varied from commander to commander and situation to situation this was the opportunity for the commander to assess the personality and character of both the aspirant and his father.

Additionally, clarification to any questions concerning the aspirant's age, anticipated educational accomplishments, the family's previous and current connection to the army, the family's social

⁸⁴ See Footnote 35, for the assistance given to Otto Wien's application to *Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 9*.

⁸⁵ Von Stumpff, *Geschichte*, 580; *Rangliste 1905 and 1906*. Freiherr Wolf-Dietrich Gustav von Amstetter-Zwerbach und Grabeneck (* 26 April 1848 in Breslau; † 1917) joined the *Garde Artillerie Brigade* as a *Sekonde Lieutenant* in 1867. He transferred in 1872, to the *Garde-Feldartillerie Regiment* and was promoted to *Premier Lieutenant* in 1875. In 1881, promoted to *Hauptmann* and *Batteriechef* in *Großherzoglich Hessischen Feldartillerie Regiment Nr 25*. In 1887, assigned to *1. Garde-Feldartillerie Regiment* and in 1890, promoted to major and transferred to *2. Garde-Feldartillerie Regiment*. In the same year, took command of an *Abteilung* in the *1. Badischen Feldartillerie Regiment Nr 14*. Promoted to *Oberstleutnant* in 1896 and assigned as a staff officer in *2. Badischen Feldartillerie Regiment Nr 30*. In 1898, he returned to *1. Garde-Feldartillerie Regiment*. In 1899, he was promoted to *Oberst* and assigned to the regimental staff. By 1905, he was promoted to *Generalmajor* and in command of *5. Artillerie-Brigade* headquartered at Frankfurt an Oder. Von Amstetter-Zwerbach retired in the first half of 1906 and was promoted to *Generalleutnant a. D.* He died in 1917.

standing and political leanings, and the like were gained. Too, it is likely here that a discussion of financial support requirements (*Zulage*) were most likely discussed and confirmed by the elder von Kleist. The next step was a visit by the officer-aspirant to the regimental physician for a medical examination. For Ewald this meant seeing *Oberstabsarzt I. Klasse* Dr. von Mielecki, the senior regimental surgeon.⁸⁶ Meeting the physical standards and a clean bill of health cleared the way for continuing the entry process. Any medical issues found during the examination either eliminated the candidate or caused a consultation and waiver process to commence.⁸⁷ Given his health as a child and young man and his later long-standing good health, Ewald most likely passed the exam without problem. Having cleared the medical hurdle, the officer-aspirant and his father were hosted for a meal in the officers' mess. This ubiquitous and compulsory event gave the officers of the regiment an opportunity to meet and observe the prospective officer. Certainly, at a meal, the young man's manners and social graces were on display, his father's as well.⁸⁸ That this first face-to-face impression was important is well apparent.

⁸⁶ *Rangliste 1899*, 380. The *Rangliste* showed three physicians assigned to *FAR 3*. The senior was *Oberstabsarzt I. Klasse* Dr. von Mielecki, the second ranking, *Stabsarzt* Dr. Geise, and *Oberarzt* Brüggemann. *Oberstabsarzt* was equivalent to major, *Stabsarzt* to captain, and *Oberarzt* to lieutenant. Ewald could have been examined by any of the three; most likely it was either the *Oberstabsarzt* or *Stabsarzt*.

⁸⁷ Keitel, "Schulzeit", 40-41. Keitel named the regimental doctor and recounted being found deficient in chest circumference and having a varicose vein during his initial regimental medical examination. He expounded that with the assistance of an uncle who was a regimental surgeon in an infantry regiment who in turn contacted a senior civilian medical colleague, Keitel was reexamined. The second opinion by the "higher ranking" doctor, a favorable one, was passed to the initial examiner. Yielding to the higher-ranking medical opinion, the regimental surgeon was then satisfied that Keitel was physically fit enough to enter the regiment. Thus, Keitel successfully gained the needed medical waiver and was subsequently offered a posting in the desired regiment. This illustrates that there was no central physical examination board, that examinations were somewhat subjective, and that a second opinion could be gained outside army channels and favorably used to overcome an initial adverse regimental medical examination finding. This points to the likelihood that regimental physical examinations, given their "subjective flexibility" were used as one of the many tools to weed out not only medically, but politically and socially undesirable officer-aspirants. The "subjective flexibility" also allowed regimental surgeons to "overlook" borderline medical conditions for desirable officer-aspirants, thereby allowing them to be accessioned. Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 49. Bürkner likewise records the name of the examining regimental physician in his autobiography. Apparently facing the regimental physician was a "memorable" event, likely for the trepidation it caused the officer-aspirant.

⁸⁸ See Footnote 32, for Otto Wien's account of the interview meal with the regiment.

Following these “interviews,” the officer-aspirant returned home to await the regimental commander’s decision in the cases where he had not secured the nomination on the spot.

While not a foregone conclusion that Ewald would be accepted as an officer-aspirant in *Feldartillerie-Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3*, rejection was unlikely. In Ewald, *Oberst Freiherr von Amstetter-Zwerbach* had the superlative candidate for the artillery; one that met all of the social, political, religious, financial, educational, and physical requirements without issues. Socially, that ideal applicant was a young man of noble birth whose family name was recognized as being in the top tier of *preussischen adligen Militärclans* and whose father was a former or retired officer or a respectably ranked civil servant. Politically, Hugo von Kleist was a conservative who believed in and loyally supported the monarchy. He had passed these beliefs on to his son. As to religion, the family’s solid adherence to the *evangelische Kirche*, specifically, the *evangelisch-uniert* (Protestant united) likely pointed to the young man having imbibed the ethic of hard work, Christian piety, and having obtained the moral compass desired for a member of the officer corps. Financially, Ewald too was nearly ideal; a member of a family affluent enough to provide the needed *Zulage* but one that was also financially constrained and thus conscientious spenders resulting in a family that lived within their means. On this premise, Ewald was unlikely to overspend and get into debt. For education, Ewald was neither under- nor over-educated. As nobleman with an *Abitur*, it was a safe bet that he would successfully and without problem handle the academic requirements of the *Kriegsschule* and the *Offizierprüfung* (officer’s commissioning test) and thus require no special handling, additional instruction, or royal waivers. And finally, as a healthy and fit young man, he would be up to the physical challenges of officership in the field artillery. Succinctly put, Ewald possessed all of the needed attributes that should enable him to mature into a sharp, active

officer, one who could do well if he applied himself and whose true noble character would serve as an example for the group of bourgeois mathematicians with which he would serve.

II. The *Fahnenjunker*

On Tuesday, 13 March 1900, Ewald von Kleist walked through the ornate redbrick gateway of the Brandenburg an der Havel *Artillerie-Kaserne* and into the arms of the German Army. He would not leave the army's embrace until thirty-eight years later and then only for a short eighteen months.

Ewald first reported to the regimental office where he was greeted by the regimental adjutant, *Oberleutnant* Schlosser.⁸⁹ By luck or design, and undoubtedly to Ewald's liking, he was assigned to *Fuchs-Batterie*, the *Reiter Abteilung*, 2. *reitende Batterie* (mounted battalion, 2nd mounted battery), for his initial training.⁹⁰ The officer-aspirant was then taken to meet his

⁸⁹ Von Kleist left no description of his time as a *Fahnenjunker* in *FAR 3*. Nevertheless, his experiences were mirrored across the other field artillery regiments and while individually unique, would have been more or less the same as experienced by other *Fahnenjunker* in other regiments. To bring out the key events, this section relies heavily on Wilhelm Keitel's memoir and his detailed account of his time as a *Fahnenjunker* in *FAR 46*. There exists enough supporting information to accurately identify people, places, and events regarding von Kleist's own experience. This information will be footnoted. *Rangliste 1900*, 389. The regiment's page shows Schlosser as the regimental adjutant.

⁹⁰ Von Stumpff "Lebenserinnerungen", 186-188. *Hauptmann* von Stumpff handed the command of the 2. *reitende Batterie* over to *Hauptmann* Greßmann in the summer of 1899. The 2. *reitende Batterie* stood out for both its strong reputation and the color of its horses. Von Kleist would have had this impressed upon him and given the challenge of upholding the battery's reputation. In von Stumpff's memoir, the former battery commander wrote, "...in maneuvers we stood our ground. For independent missions and employment with the cavalry, the battery was particularly capable. The 2. *reitende Fuchs-Batterie* (2nd riding sorrel-battery) was well known in all of III Army Corps and had a good reputation. It would not have been possible to achieve such results with the battery if it had not been fortunate enough to have a full complement of excellent officers." Some cavalry and artillery units had horses of all one color and were thus sometimes referred to by the color of their mounts. Thus, in *FAR 3*, the 2nd battery had all or nearly all *Fuchs* colored (sorrel, a reddish coat color lacking any black. It is usually synonymous with chestnut.) horses. Examples of other units are the "Queen's Bays" and the "*Schimmel Schwadron*" (gray horse squadron).

Batterie Chef (battery commanding officer) (Batt CO), *Hauptmann* Oskar Greßmann.⁹¹ In short order Ewald was introduced to the other battery officers: *Oberleutnant* Siveke, *Leutnants* Lancelle, Hederich, Ahrens, and Schultze. Too, Ewald was introduced to *Major* Rautenberg, the *Reitende Abteilung Kommandeur*.⁹²

Next came the *Fahnenjunker*'s accommodations. The *Fähnrichsstube* (*Fähnrich*'s room) was located in the barracks. It was here that the two to three *Fahnenjunker* shared a communal room during the initial five to six months of training before leaving for *Kriegsschule*. It is most likely that Ewald had *Fähnrichsstube* to himself as the records show the regimental commander having nominated no other officer-aspirant for the training cycle beginning in the early spring of 1900. The next order of business was to put the young man in uniform. After visiting the battery tailor, Ewald began to look the part of a *Fahnenjunker*.

Now that he was in uniform it was time for Ewald to be sworn into the army. The *Fahneneid* (colors oath), so named because the oath taker often held onto the regimental colors while swearing his obedience and fealty to the sovereign. The *Fahneneid* was taken very seriously and most often administered with a certain amount of military ceremony. The oath, for a Prussian, was:

I (soldier's name) swear to God, the Omniscient and Almighty, a bodily oath
that I will loyally and honestly serve
His Majesty the King of Prussia, Wilhelm II, my most gracious sovereign,
in all and every incident, on land and at sea,
in times of war and peace, and in whichever places it may occur;
I will do my utmost to promote his Exalted Majesty's advantages and benefits,
but will also prevent damage and harm,
follow exactly the articles of war read to me

⁹¹ Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen und Plaudereien" (handschriftliche Manuskripte), Heft 2 (BA-MA: N 354/24, Nachlass Kleist), 56. Von Kleist confirms that Hauptmann Greßmann was his first battery commander in a passage about who attended his own wedding in 1910. "Attending from my regiment were my esteemed first battery commander and later battalion commander, Greßmann, along with Kaempfes, Boehms, etc."

⁹² *Rangliste 1900*, 388-389. The regiment's information indicates the names and ranks of the *Abteilung* and *Batterie Kommandeure* as well as listing the other officers and the battery to which they were assigned.

and the regulations and orders issued to me,
and conduct myself in a manner befitting and expected of a righteous, undaunted,
duty-bound and honor-loving soldier.
So help me God through Jesus Christ to salvation.⁹³

The *Fahneneid* was traditionally taking in one of three manners. For the infantry and cavalry, the favored form was for the oath taker to hold onto the regimental colors with his left hand while raising his right hand. Too, the oath could be taken with the swearer holding onto the tip of a drawn officer's saber. Finally, for an artilleryman, the oath was taken with his left hand on an artillery piece.⁹⁴ "What the flag is to other soldiers, the gun is to the artilleryman. He takes his oath by placing his left hand on his gun. This is supposed to be an affirmation that he wants to live as a good soldier and die rather than ever leave his gun in the hours of danger."⁹⁵

In short order, *Oberst Freiherr* von Amstetter-Zwerbach assigned a *Fähnrichsvater* (*Fähnrich's* father) to Ewald. Following the seeming tradition to give this paternalistic role to the junior most officer, the role likely fell to *Leutnant* Arnold Schultze, the youngest lieutenant in the 2. *reitende Batterie*.⁹⁶ The *Fähnrichsvater* was responsible for guiding Ewald's first months of training, teaching him the customs and courtesies of the regiment, and protecting him when needed from the extreme excesses of other officers as they tested the Ewald's character and mettle.

⁹³ Hans Zwenger, *Neues Handbuch für den Unterricht und die Ausbildung der Einjährig-Freiwilligen der Feldartillerie*, Zweite Auflage (Berlin: Vossische Buchhandlung, 1904), 9-10. For the non-Prussian army contingents, the King of Prussia's name was replaced by the contingent sovereign's name or the senate and was further appended with "to obey the orders of the *Kaiser* unconditionally." The last line of the above oath was used by soldiers of the *Evangelische Konfession* while Catholics stated, "With the help of God and His holy gospel." Jewish soldiers finished with, "With the help of God."

⁹⁴ Balthasar von Aulock, "Fähnrich in der alten Armee 1904/1905 beim Schles. Feldart. Rgt. Nr. 42 u. Kriegsschule Potsdam" (Manuskripte), (BA-MA: PH 12-II/62), 3. Von Aulock noted that in *FAR 42*, the oath was typically taken on the artillery piece with the special engraving.

⁹⁵ Zwenger, *Handbuch*, 9.

⁹⁶ Keitel, "Schulzeit", 46. Keitel names his *Fähnrichsvater*, *Leutnant* von Bülow, who was indeed the youngest officer in his battery. Von Bülow at the time had been a commissioned officer for no more than two and a half years, possibly only eighteen months.

With the formalities of army entry completed, training quickly commenced for Ewald. This training initially fell largely to non-commissioned officers of the battery. A peer recalled his first weeks of training as a *Fahnenjunker*:

My training program was actually regulated and supervised by the battery commander himself. He appointed Sergeant Henne, who singularly trained me from morning to night: lessons, artillery pieces, handheld weapons, and riding. Henne was a very energetic and hard non-commissioned officer. He was feared in the battery, but he was capable. Thanks to him I was able to settle in so quickly and grasp everything. His strictly official but tactful manner was directly motivating and beneficial. This excellent non-commissioned officer later appropriately became the battery first sergeant.⁹⁷

In the first weeks of training, the artillery *Fahnenjunker* technically ranked as a *Kanonier* (private) and as such, did the tasks that soldiers of this rank performed. For mounted units, these duties centered around the care and feeding of horses and the perpetual cleaning of stables. Ewald took part in these duties to briefly acquaint him with life as a *Kanonier*. Von Kleist's peer noted of this time in his training:

Sergeant Henne, as former feed-master had already threatened me with stable duty in the first few days. I would of course have to perform this duty as part of my training as soon as I had settled in. I urgently asked for immediate employment in the stable duty. Of course, this work could only be without interfering with the rest of the training. I thought I could handle the additional burden. My wish was granted. So, I raced without ablutions to the stable at 04:15 hours with the drivers in the canvas work uniform to scatter bedding, clean, and water the horses. The feed-master, however, was ordered to give me only one horse to take care of. This was the old "Gnome", who I also rode.⁹⁸

Despite the fact that in less than eighteen months a *Fahnenjunker* would be a commissioned officer in the regiment and thus directly in a position to return any overly cruel or inappropriate treatment he had suffered at the hands of the regiments non-commissioned officers,

⁹⁷ Keitel, "Schulzeit", 47.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 47-48.

harsh treatment, hazing, and pranks of various kinds did occur.⁹⁹ An example of such treatment was recorded by a *Fahnenjunker* in *FAR 46* when he along with enlisted recruits were hazed by non-commissioned officers.

Early in the morning, the recruit drivers crowded into the stable through the one middle door into the vestibule like a swarm of wild bees with their cleaning equipment. This had its reason, as I was soon to experience. The old drivers awaited the recruits there and with the long driver's whips vigorously assisted their passage. This was called "running the gauntlet". Unfortunately, this miserable and bad habit was passed on every year. Did the feed-master not see it?! The old Wachmeister Lege, who once stood behind the door in the dark without being seen, was different. He stepped in between, which was a great satisfaction for me, although nobody ever even touched me. Even then, I resolved to eradicate this infamous bad habit as an officer later on, even if I had to stand hidden behind the stable door at 4 o'clock in the morning like Lege.¹⁰⁰

Another oft occurring hazing practice in mounted units was to give an ill-tempered, poorly trained, or hard to ride horse to the targeted person, in this case an unsuspecting *Fahnenjunker*. Part of this was to test the rider's equestrian skills, partly it was meant to embarrass the rider.¹⁰¹ Undoubtedly, *FAR 3* had its own "traditions" that were passed on to both the *Fahnenjunker* and the annual intake of enlisted recruits during their early *Dienstpflicht* (compulsory military service) time. Hazing was in part a component in the general *Schließen* (whetting) of men new to the army in order to make them part of the military. Too, it was a

⁹⁹ Clemente, *King*, 72-73. Clemente dismisses first hand reports of harsh and abusive training citing that such training "would have weakened the class spirit and social exclusiveness the officer corps sought to promote and maintain." Keitel's account counters Clemente's position with his own personal example of harsh treatment and hazing at the hands of non-commissioned officers. An event he clearly did not approve of but one which nevertheless occurred.

¹⁰⁰ Keitel, "Schulzeit", 48.

¹⁰¹ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 51-52. Bürkner related an incident in which he, as a *Fahnenjunker*, was given an ill-tempered horse by a sergeant bent on embarrassing Bürkner in front of a group of officers. Despite being an experienced rider, the horse ran off with Bürkner during the course of a field exercise. He was however, able to regain control of his mount and returned to his assigned place before his absence was noticed by any of the officers. His observant and wise battery commander noticed the abnormal amount of sweat on Bürkner's mount and stated to the *Fahnenjunker* that his mount was the somewhat infamous "Lance of the 4th battery" and complemented Bürkner for being able to properly handle him. This compliment was made in the presence of the sergeant who had set Bürkner up for an embarrassing failure in front of his superior officer. Thus, the trick had backfired.

social class response between ordinary soldiers and aristocratic or wealthy young men. While hazing occurred during training, as it had in the past and continued in the future, the focus of the period was not on dispiriting or denigrating the *Fahnenjunker* but on ensuring that they were properly trained. This emphasis was important because the prospective officer normally remained in the same regiment for the first ten to fifteen years. Thus, the regiment reaped what it sowed with regard to military training and officer attitudes as a poorly trained or psychologically maladjusted officer could remain a detriment to the officers and men of the regiment for a long while. On the quality of training, another *Fahnenjunker* from *FAR 47* recorded:

In the beginning, however, the hardship [of our training] predominated, because we Junkers were polished by the long-in-service NCOs to a very high standard. During gun drills and gunnery aiming practice it was the toughest as nails Sergeant Tschammke who trained us. During the salute formations and the foot drill, the slow step and the parade march played a major role. The [enlisted *Dienstpflicht*] recruit year had already started October 1, ... i.e., half a year before our arrival. It was true, not only did we need to catch up with the enlisted recruits as quickly as possible, but also soon to outperform them.¹⁰²

The initial training focused on individual skills: calisthenics, marching, rifle and handgun marksmanship, swordsmanship, and elementary equestrianism.¹⁰³ In addition to martial skills training, basic military information was presented. One *Fahnenjunker* recorded,

The lessons given by our elegant, highly educated and intelligent officer in charge of recruits, Leutnant Frey, were very instructive. They introduced us to the soldier's virtues, articles of war and the glorious spirit of the German soldier, in which courage and bravery, zeal for unconditional obedience, loyalty and

¹⁰² Ibid., 50. Bürkner was exactly one year behind von Kleist, having entered *FAR 47* (Fulda) as a *Fahnenjunker* after successfully completing his *Abitur* in the March 1901.

¹⁰³ Zwenger, *Handbuch*, 202-311. Zwenger's handbook describes the soldiers *Ausbildung* (training) in detail. The basic training was categorized as *Fußexerzieren* (dismounted training) which included individual training, *Exerzieren in der Batterie* (training with the battery), and *Turnen* (gymnastics [physical fitness]). The rifle was the *Gewehr 88*, the standard issue bolt-action 8mm service rifle. The handgun was the *M1879 Reichsrevolver*, (10.6×25mm caliber), a single action, six-shot revolver, the standard issue between 1879 and 1908 when it was replaced by the *Pistole Modell 1908*, the famous Luger.

comradeship, as well as torturous cleanliness and order were demonstrated and made clear to us by examples from our war history.¹⁰⁴

Once Ewald had learned the daily duties of the *Kanonier* and shown sufficient proficiency in basic military skills, the training stepped up to more advanced training unique to the artillery. Undoubtedly, he looked forward to this and perhaps he shared a fellow *Fahnenjunker*'s assessment of these rigorous weeks of training: "But this learning from the bottom up, the mucking out and straw spreading, the polishing of equipment together with the old troops of the whole battery, soon brought to us a sense of comradeship, discipline, and to the lightning-fast execution of given commands and orders..."¹⁰⁵ Also, during the first weeks of his training, Ewald, as was standard protocol, made the requisite introductory social calls, in dress uniform with printed calling card in hand, at the homes of all of the married officers of the regiment where he formally met their families. Too, introductions to the bachelor officer were also completed.¹⁰⁶

At the turn of the century, German Army *Feldartillerie* regiments varied in size and composition; both elements determined by the regiment's assigned budget level. The basic unit for *Feldartillerie* was the *Batterie* (battery). Each *Batterie*, depending on its authorized table of organization and equipment, had either 4 or 6 guns, 4 or 5 officers, between 100 and 131 enlisted men, and from 44 to 120 horses assigned to it.¹⁰⁷ The batteries were one of 2 types, *fahrende Artillerie* (driving artillery) or *reitende Artillerie* (mounted artillery). The primary differences

¹⁰⁴ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 51. Bürkner was fortunate to have an articulate and interesting lecturer for these military subjects. BA-MA / MSG 2/12718, Karl v. Stumpff Lebens-Erinnerungen 1858-1936, 72-73. Von Stumpff remembers the lectures he endured as a *Fahnenjunker* in 1877/78 to have been "endlessly boring, our 'Herr Premier' did not know how to make the matter palatable, one could tell how bored he was when he dispensed his wisdom to us..."

¹⁰⁵ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 51.

¹⁰⁶ Keitel, "Schulzeit", 62.

¹⁰⁷ von Pelet-Narbonne, *Jahresberichte-1900*, 8.

between *fahrende* and *reitende Artillerie* lay in how the *Kanoniere* (gunners) were transported and the resultant tactics.

Since 1874, the *fahrende Artillerie* had been the standard form of field artillery. By 1900, most regiments were equipped with the *Feldkanone FK 96* (field cannon model 96). These guns were 7.7 cm caliber and the last widely fielded German light artillery gun model to be built without a recoil system. Each gun was drawn by a six-horse team. The horse team comprised three pairs of light to medium weight draft horses harnessed in tandem. Each of the near side (left side) horses in the pairs was ridden by a *Fahrer* (driver) who also controlled the off side (right side) horse. The team was controlled by the three drivers rather than a single driver with a set of long reins. This driving arrangement gave greater control, more maneuverability, and helped to ensure that all of the horses were pulling together. For the five *Kanoniere*, who served and fired the artillery piece, three rode seated on the limber and two rode on the gun carriage. These men were armed with bayonets and pistols. The gun team (drivers and gunners) was commanded by a *Geschützführer* (gun leader) who was either a junior officer or a non-commissioned officer (NCO). The *Geschützführer* rode his own horse. The weight of both the *Feldkanone* and the gunners riding on the limber and gun as well as the gunners' susceptibility to being thrown from their seats when traversing rough terrain meant that the driving artillery was slower, less maneuverable, and was more dependent on roads and paths than its *reitende Artillerie* counterpart.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the *fahrende Artillerie* remained primarily an infantry support weapon.

¹⁰⁸ Dr. Bernd Richter, *Bei der brandenburgischen reitenden Feldartillerie 1898-1918: Die Militärzeit von Ewald Richter vom Einjährig-Freiwilligen bis zum Kriegsende* (Bergisch Gladbach, no publisher, 2011), 5. Ewald Richter, a trained mechanical engineer, joined the *FAR 3* on 1 October 1898 as a one-year volunteer. He served with the regiment as a reserve officer until the beginning of World War One, when he entered active duty and stayed with the regiment throughout the war. Richter's memoir, found in the Brandenburg a/H *Stadtarchiv*, provided some information on *FAR 3* during the time von Kleist was a member.

The *reitende Feldartillerie*, was, by century's end, also equipped with *Feldkanone FK 96*. Like the *fahrende Artillerie*, the *reitende* guns were drawn by a six-horse team.¹⁰⁹ Here the similarity ended. The five *Kanoniere*, rather than ride the limber and gun, were each mounted on their own horse. Two additional members were added to the gun team, the two *Pferdehalter* (horse holders), who, when the gun was in action, took care of the eight riding horses (*Geschützführer* mount, the five *Kanoniere* mounts, and their two mounts). An officer or NCO served as the *Geschützführer*. By taking the *Kanoniere* off the limber and gun and placing them on their own horses, the pulling weight of the gun decreased and the danger of a gunner falling off was eliminated. This then made the *reitende Artillerie* much more agile which in turn made it possible to change positions more quickly and to better cope with difficult terrain. It also allowed the *reitende Artillerie* to maintain the quick pace of cavalry units and provide them with artillery support. While tactically more flexible, these *reitende Batterien* were more costly due to the higher number of men and horses.¹¹⁰ Thus, for the 1900 budget year, only 42 of the 562 *Feldartillerie Batterien* were *reitende*.¹¹¹ *Feldartillerie-Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3* was one of only a handful of regiments assigned *reitende Batterien*. The regiment possessed two of the twenty-two, six-gun *reitende Batterien*.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Von Stumpff, *Geschichte*, 568. The new model of artillery field cannons, the *Feldkanone FK 96*, were delivered to *FAR 3* beginning on 1 April 1899.

¹¹⁰ Richter, *Feldartillerie*, 5.

¹¹¹ von Pelet-Narbonne, *Jahresberichte-1900*, 8. There were a total of 42 *reitende Batterien* in the 1900 budget year. Twenty batteries were classified as *niedrigem Etat* (low budget) and authorized 4 officers, 92 enlisted men, 76 service horses, and 4 guns. The remaining twenty-two batteries were *hohem Etat* (high budget) with an authorization of 5 officers, 121 enlisted men, 120 service horses, and six guns. Thus, these were the highest cost, man- and horsepower but also the most tactically capable.

¹¹² *Rangliste 1900*, 388-389. Examination of the *Rangliste* shows that there were five officers assigned to each of the two *reitende Batterien*, thus indicating that the two batteries were “big” high budget batteries. This is possibly another reason why Ewald pursued entry into *FAR 3*; they were one of the few top budget *Feldartillerie Regimente* in the Prussian contingent.

Moving up to the regimental level, the basic artillery regiment comprised two *fahrende Abteilungen* (driving battalions). Each of these *Abteilung* had three *fahrende Batterien* (driving batteries) each with four guns, for a regimental total of twenty-four guns.¹¹³ The next budget level increased each battery by two guns for a regimental total of thirty-six field pieces.¹¹⁴ The uppermost budget level for *fahrende Batterien* saw no increase in guns but an additional two horse-drawn ammunition wagons.¹¹⁵ Sixty of the German Army's seventy *Feldartillerie Regimente* were two *fahrende Abteilungen* units. Six regiments were a matched unit, that is one each *fahrende* and *reitende Abteilung*, each with three batteries. The remaining nine regiments were "big" regiments with two *fahrende Abteilungen* (each with three batteries) and one *reitende Abteilung* (with only two batteries). *Feldartillerie-Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3* was a "big" forty-eight-gun regiment.¹¹⁶ The multi-tiered size and composition of the regiments within the artillery branch was then another hierarchical discriminator for tactical capability, regimental desirability quotient, and personal prestige for both officers and enlisted men.

¹¹³ von Pelet-Narbonne, *Jahresberichte-1900*, 8. For budget year 1900, there was a total of 562 artillery batteries across the entire German Army, 520 *fahrende Batterien* and 42 *reitende Batterien*. 199 of the 520 *fahrende Batterien* batteries (38.3 percent) were *niedrigem Etat* (low budget) with only the basic complement of officers, men, horses, and guns. These batteries were authorized 4 officers, 100-104 enlisted men, 44 horses, and 4 guns.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 8. For 1900, of the 520 *fahrende Batterien*, 309 were *mittlerem Etat* (middle budget) batteries (59.4 percent). These batteries were authorized 4 officers, 110-117 enlisted men, 56-60 horses, and 6 guns.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 8. For 1900, only 12 of the 520 *fahrende Batterien* were categorized as *hohem Etat* (high budget) batteries (2.3 percent). These batteries were authorized 4 officers, 127-131 enlisted men, 76 horses, 6 guns, and 2 ammunition wagons.

¹¹⁶ *Rangliste 1900*, 383-439. The *Rangliste* shows how many and what type of *Abteilungen* comprise each regiment. All but one of the "big" regiments with two *fahrende Abteilungen* and one *reitende Abteilung* were in the top twenty *Feldartillerie Regimente* in precedence ranking. The nine "big" regiments were: *1. Garde FAR* (Berlin), *FAR 1* (Gumbinnen), *FAR 3* (Brandenburg a/H), *FAR 5* (Sprottau), *FAR 8* (Saarlouis), *FAR 10* (Hannover), *FAR 11* (Cassel), *FAR 15* (Saarburg), and *FAR 35* (Deutsch-Eylau). In 1900, two of these nine regiments were commanded by noblemen. The six regiments with one *fahrende* and one *reitende Abteilung* were: *4. Garde FAR* (Potsdam), *FAR 2* (Stettin), *FAR 7* (Wesel), *FAR 34* (Metz), *FAR 42* (Schweidnitz), and *FAR 74* (Torgau). Of the six, only the *4. Garde FAR* was commanded by a nobleman.

A month after entering the army, Ewald received welcomed news. On 13 April 1900, the army issued a regulation officially exempting all officer-aspirants and *Fahnenjunker* who held an *Abitur Zeugnis der Reife* (certificate of graduation) from having to take the *Fähnrichexam* (ensign examination).¹¹⁷ This then meant that Ewald would not have to endure the week-long set of tests administered in Berlin. With this hurdle removed, Ewald could concentrate on his training in the regiment.

As Easter passed on 15 April, Ewald's concentration would have focused on learning how to function as a gun team member. During this period, he became acquainted with the requirement of the *Fahrer* in driving the six-horse gun team. A portion of the regiment's overall training focused on getting the artillery team horses back in condition and reaccustomed to pulling the artillery pieces after only light training during the winter months.¹¹⁸ Too, the new remounts needed to be trained and prepared for duty as riding horses or members of the gun teams. A *Fahnenjunker* from FAR 46 noted of this near-Easter period of training:

After Easter, the actual "driving training" began, but only after only harness exercises had been held to reaccustom the horses to working in teams after only being ridden singly during the winter riding and to break in the newly assembled teams. I was constantly on the move; [Sergeant] Lege explained all the

¹¹⁷ Clemente, *King*, 43 and 62-72. The *Fähnrichexam* requirement was codified in 1861 in the Prussian Army. By 1870, the *Ober-Militär-Prüfungs-Kommission* (Supreme Military Examinations Committee), under whose control the test was administered, had standardized the examination. All testing occurred at a central army testing facility in Berlin to which all test takers had to report. The week-long battery of tests, examined the civilian educational acumen of the young men seeking an army commission. Military topics were not tested. Those with a full *Gymnasium* education (*Abiturienten*) had no trouble with the examination as it was significantly less demanding than the *Abitur*. Those without an *Abitur* often turned to "crammers" who specialized in preparing young men for the tests. See Clemente for a thorough discussion of the *Ober-Militär-Prüfungs-Kommission*, the *Fähnrichexam* process, testing procedures, and topics, and use of cramers. Regimental commanders had the discretion over when the *Fähnrichexam* was taken. Many commanders required that the officer-aspirant pass the examination before they committed to bringing the young man into the regiment. This appears to be the case especially for those without *Abitur Zeugnis der Reife*. Other commanders allowed the officer-aspirant to enter the army and then take the examination while a *Fahnenjunker*. In all events, the officer candidate had to have successfully passed the test or been exempted (after April 1900) in order for him to be eligible for selection and promotion to *Fähnrich*, a prerequisite for attending *Kriegsschule*.

¹¹⁸ Keitel, "Schulzeit", 49-50. Keitel describes this process of re-training the horses after they had been ridden sparingly during the winter. This springtime training period too, was the one in which the second year enlisted recruits learned to ride and serve as drivers of the artillery horse teams.

formations and movements and I followed attentively while riding next to him. In the evenings, I reread the regulations so that these were imprinted in my memory. On horseback I felt absolutely safe, with my “tin pants” I was stuck on the old artillery saddle like a bur. The daily jumping of all the riders as individuals over the obstacles on the parade ground next to the ammunition magazine was just as much fun for me as it was for the CO himself, who led it.¹¹⁹

Near the end of April, however, the young *Fahnenjunker* received sad news from home. Likely, a telegram from his father arrived on Friday, 27 April notifying Ewald that his eighty-eight-year-old paternal grandmother, Anna (nee Oßmann) von Kleist had died in Aurich.¹²⁰ Given that Ewald had been training for six weeks, the flexibility of his single *Fahnenjunker* training scheduled, and coupled with the somewhat liberal leave policy, it is probable that Ewald received leave for several days to return to Aurich and attend the funeral.¹²¹ When Ewald returned at the end of April, the regiment’s focus was directed on its imminent summer training exercise.

The exercise, conducted from early May and into June, appears to have been the annual summer escalating unit training cycle.¹²² The exercise, or rather a series of short, three-to-five-day-long exercises of various sizes and complexities, began with the regiment training at the battery and then at the battalion levels. The training then progressed with participation of the full regiment in the field. With the regiment ready to operate as a complete unit, *FAR 3* was then

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 49-50.

¹²⁰ Georg Heinrich Kypke, Hans Wätjens, Sigurd von Kleist. *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist Dritter Teil-Biographien bis 1880 Dritte Abteilung Muttrin-Damensche Linie Der Damensche und der Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 2. Auflage. Hamm: Familienverband derer v. Kleist e. V., 2018. 233. It is likely that Hugo von Kleist’s mother was living with the family in Aurich. She had lived with or very near to Hugo and his wife for the previous two decades.

¹²¹ Keitel, “Schulzeit”, 49. Keitel notes that he was given a four-day leave shortly before Easter, 7 April 1901. His initial date of reporting to the regiment was 7 March 1901. Thus, he had only been on duty for one month before he earned his first leave as a result of superior performance during an inspection.

¹²² Richter, *Feldartillerie*. Author Richter lists the dates of the summer training exercises that Ewald Richter participated in or was absent from. The dates for the 1900 summer exercise are listed as 19 April until 13 June. It is likely that the *Einjährig-Freiwilliger* would have reported to duty in Brandenburg two to three weeks prior to the regiment commencing its training schedule.

paired with its sister artillery regiment, *FAR 39*, and trained to fight as an artillery brigade. The brigade was under the command of Württemberger, *Generalmajor* von Körber, *6. Feldartillerie Brigade Kommandeur*.¹²³ Next in the growing complexity of the training series came combined arms training. Here, *FAR 3* served as artillery support for its parent division, *6. Division*, commanded by *Generalleutnant* Jonas. The *Feldübungen* (field exercises) now at the division-level, moved on to a three-to-four-day mock battle against its sister division (in the *III. Armeekorps*), *5. Division*. The concluding level was the *Korpsmanöver* (corps maneuver). Here, under the leadership of *General der Infanterie* von Lignitz, the two infantry divisions, two cavalry brigades, and two artillery brigades of *III. Armeekorps* maneuvered against a *markirten Feind* (marked enemy).¹²⁴

The conclusion of this summer *Truppenübung* time did not spell the end of either the regiment's or Ewald's training. Three and a half months of training was behind him, but several more months of instruction remained before Ewald would leave for his stint at the *Kriegsschule*.

Sometime in the early to mid-summer, *Fähnrich* Kurt Schwarze returned to the regiment from his eight months at *Kriegsschule*.¹²⁵ Schwarze, a March 1899 graduate from the

¹²³ *Rangliste 1900*, 55.

¹²⁴ Kriegsministerium, *Felddienst-Ordnung* (1900) (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, Königliche Hofbuchhandlung, 1900), 187-190. "Manöver gegen markirten [1900 spelling] Feind" (maneuvers against a marked enemy) was as cost saving, in both numbers of troops and financial expense, form of field maneuvers in which a fully manned contingent "fights" against a unit of the same size but one that is only represented by a small percentage of personnel and weapons. Thus, a full army corps of approximately 20,000 men would maneuver against a "marked army corps" simulated with perhaps two infantry regiments, an artillery battalion, and a cavalry squadron, a force totaling not more than 4,000 soldiers. The term "marked" is derived from the simulating unit's personnel and positions being "marked" to differentiate them from the fully manned unit. The marked unit wears helmet or arm bands to identify its personnel and flags to indicate its battlefield positions. "Die neue Felddienst-Ordnung". *Militär-Wochenblatt* 85 (1900):388-396. See this article for information on the officially prescribed lengths of training exercises at the various army unit levels.

¹²⁵ *Rangliste 1901*, 395. "Kadetten-Vertheilung 1899." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 84 (1899) :665-674. This special edition reports the regimental assignments of the graduating cadets from the *Hauptkadettenanstalt-Berlin* for 1899. The list provides the name of the cadet, his regiment of assignment, and his rank upon entering the regiment, either directly commissioned as *Leutnant* or as *charakterisierte Fähnriche*. *Feldartillerie Regiment Nr. 3* received two cadets from the graduating class, Ahrens and Schwarze. Kurt Ahrens, due to his additional study to obtain his *Abitur* and the equivalency of attendance at a *Kriegsschule* while at the *HKA*, was directly commissioned as a

Hauptkadettenanstalt in Berlin, joined the regiment in the spring 1899 and served his *Fahnenjunker* time with *FAR 3* during the summer and fall before leaving to attend *Kriegsschule*.¹²⁶ His return to the regiment gave Ewald a fellow *Fahnenjunker* with whom to socialize as well as someone to provide him recent firsthand knowledge of the rigors of the *Kriegsschule*. But *Kriegsschule* was still at least three months away.

Ewald thus focused on the tasks at hand and under the tutelage of a few senior non-commissioned officers and the *reitende Abteilung* officers, training on a variety of subjects and in different positions within the *Batterie* and *Abteilung* continued apace into July. Under the watchful eye of the *Futtermeister* (fodder sergeant), Ewald learned about the feeding and routine health care of the battery's riding and draft horses.¹²⁷ Knowledge about the shoeing of horses came from sessions observing the battery's *Hufbeschlagmeister* (master farrier). Other NCOs continued to advance the *Fahnenjunker's* skills in fencing, calisthenics and gymnastics. Under officer tutelage came the introduction to tactics, field craft, weapon knowledge, military engineering, military drawing, officer duties and responsibilities, military law, and military administration at the battery and battalion levels. Equitation lessons continued as well.

Leutnant with a date of rank of 20 March 1899. Kurt Schwarze did not obtain his *Abitur* and was thus placed into *FAR 3* as a *charakterisierte Fähnrich*. As a result, he had to perform his minimum of six months of *Fahnenjunker* troop duty as well as attend the eight-month long *Kriegsschule*. Only after these requirements were fulfilled, was he commissioned a *Leutnant* on 18 October 1900, with the same date of rank.

¹²⁶ Schwarze attended a *Kriegsschule* course beginning between October 1899 and January 1900 and ending between June and September 1900. Given this, Schwarze was away from the regiment when von Kleist entered in March 1900, leaving von Kleist as the only *Fahnenjunker* in the regiment from March 1900 until Schwarze's return in the summer.

¹²⁷ Keitel, "Schulzeit", 59-60. Keitel was placed in charge as acting *Futtermeister* while the *Vizewachtmeister* (Staff Sergeant) was on 14-day leave. Keitel calls this period the toughest and most demanding of his seven months of *Fahnenjunker* time. Keitel grew up on a farm and so had much experience with the care and feeding of horses. Von Kleist, on the other hand, lacked this background and experience so it is doubtful that von Kleist fulfilled the *Futtermeister* duties unsupervised.

As July closed out, the regiment prepared for its annual trip to the gunnery range. Perhaps it was at this time that Ewald received his first promotion. After several months of training, the *Fahnenjunker* usually earned a promotion to the rank of *Gefreiter* (corporal).¹²⁸

At the end of the first week in August, *FAR 3* road marched to the Jüterbog *Truppenübungsplatz* (troop training area) to begin three weeks (7-27 August) of intensive artillery gunnery training.¹²⁹ Jüterbog was the designated *Truppenübungsplatz* for units belonging to the *III Armeekorps*. The area lay approximately forty-five miles (seventy-two kilometers) south-southeast of Brandenburg a/H. Jüterbog training space comprised nearly 23,000 acres, an equivalent of 35 square miles. This expanse enabled not only large formation troop maneuver exercises but also live fire artillery training, the regiment's key focus during their visit. For artillery at this time, the normal daily road march distance of between eighteen and twenty-five miles (thirty to forty kilometers) per day meant that it was an easy two-day march from Brandenburg.¹³⁰ As was standard practice, the other regiment in the *6. Feldartillerie Brigade*, *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 39*, stationed in Perleberg, was also at Jüterbog during the same period.¹³¹

¹²⁸ No records have yet been found which indicate the date for Ewald's promotion to *Gefreiter*. Keitel, "Schulzeit", 53. As comparison, Keitel was promoted to *Gefreiter* after serving a little over two and a half months. Indications are that Keitel was an above average *Fahnenjunker* and was thus likely promoted more rapidly than von Kleist. Given the comparative, the author concludes that it is most likely that von Kleist was promoted to *Gefreiter* between mid-July and early September 1900, between four and five and a half months of service. *Gefreiter*, while generally translated as corporal, is actually a rank between the U.S. Army ranks of private first class and corporal, and thus does not have a direct equivalent.

¹²⁹ Kriegsministerium, *Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt*, 1900, (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1900), 249-251. The *Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt*, a published collection of official army orders and administrative information, listed the schedule for all of the *Feldartillerie Brigade* annual gunnery training. The schedule included the dates and the designated ranges. *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 3* assigned to *6. Feldartillerie Brigade* along with *FAR 39*, were directed to participate at Jüterbog *Truppenübungsplatz* commencing 7 August and ending 27 August 1900. The order, promulgated on 6 April 1900 by the *Kriegsministerium*, provided *FAR 3* several months in which to prepare for their annual live gunnery training.

¹³⁰ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 53.

¹³¹ *Rangliste 1900*, 55 and 419. *6. Feldartillerie Brigade*, with its commander and small staff, was headquartered in Brandenburg a/H. The brigade was commanded by Königreich Württemberg *Generalmajor* von Körber.

On the second day at Jüterbog, Wednesday, 8 August, Ewald celebrated his first birthday as a soldier. He turned nineteen. Undoubtedly, he had to provide libations for the officers at the *Kasino* (officer's club).

A week later, Thursday, 16 August, was *Feldartillerie Regiment Nr. 3's Hauptehrentag* (primary day of honor). On this day, the regiment commemorated its most valorous combat and remembered the officers and men killed and wounded in the Battle of Vionville—Mars-la-Tour in France in 1870. One of the opening battles of the Franco-Prussian war, the battle saw a force of 67,000 men and 222 guns of two German corps (*III* and *X Armeekorps*) face a French force twice as large consisting of five corps totaling 138,000 men and 476 guns.¹³² As the *III Armeekorps* artillery force, the regiment's fifteen batteries fired over 12,750 rounds in support of the attacking German infantry and cavalry during the hard-fought twelve-hour battle.¹³³ The regiment's all-out effort cost *FAR 3* six officers and fifty-eight men killed; twenty-one officers and three hundred-thirteen men wounded. The horse casualties were high as well with 414 killed and 163 wounded.¹³⁴ While the battle was a tactical draw, it was a strategic victory for the Germans as it set the conditions for their successful siege of Metz. Five years earlier, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the battle, *Kaiser* Wilhelm II had telegraphed his greetings to the regiment, "Gratefully, I remember today the imperishable laurels won in the heated struggle and with heavy sacrifices in the battle of Vionville-Mars la Tour by my brave Brandenburgers. I

Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 39 was the second of two artillery regiments assigned to *6. Feldart-Brig*, and was garrisoned at Perleberg (62 miles/100 kilometers) northwest of Brandenburg a/H.

¹³² Ernst Hoffbauer, *Die deutsche Artillerie in den Schlachten bei Metz*, Zweiter Theil (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1872), 81. German total losses on 16 August dead, wounded, missing were 640 officers, 15,170 men; French losses totaled 879 officers and 16,128 men.

¹³³ Von Stumpff, *Geschichte*, 353.

¹³⁴ Hoffbauer, *Schlachten*, 107, 111-112. The regiment's full-strength numbers were 66 officers, 2,226 enlisted and 2,127 horses, and 90 guns. The regiment's losses during the single day's battle at Vionville—Mars-la-Tour equate to 9 percent of the officers killed, 31.8 percent wounded; 2.6 percent of the enlisted killed, 14.1 percent wounded; and 19.5 percent of the horses killed, 7.7 percent wounded.

charge you, who yourself fought that day, to extend my royal thanks and greetings to the III Army Corps."¹³⁵ Given the intensity and focus of gunnery training, it is probable that the regiment celebrated its *Hauptehrentag* before leaving Brandenburg.¹³⁶

During the three weeks at Jüterbog, Ewald's training focused on learning the tasks of all five gunner positions in order to participate in the live fire exercises. Here too, he experienced the first "pulling the lanyard", the artillery term for firing a field piece. Given the dedicated training space, the regiment took the opportunity to further train the horse gun teams in off-road and cross-country driving. The days were long and tiring and Ewald experienced the high heat of the summer during August.¹³⁷ The officers and men slept in separate barracks in the *Truppenübungsplatz* cantonment area rather than in tents or improvised shelters in the field. Ewald likely was billeted in the room set aside as the *Fähnrichsstube*. He possibly shared this room with the *Fahnenjunker* from *FAR 39*, Benary, Cordes and Cölle.¹³⁸

With the certification of the gunners completed and the regiment's competence in live firing demonstrated, the regiment decamped Jüterbog in late August and road marched the two days back to the home barracks at Brandenburg.

¹³⁵ Von Stumpff, *Geschichte*, 565.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 564-565. Given that *FAR 3* was at Jüterbog on 16 August 1900, perhaps the regiment celebrated the day before leaving for their training. Von Stumpff recorded that on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the battle of Vionville-Mars la Tour in 1895, the regiment had to celebrate ten days early, on 6 August, because the regiment was also scheduled to be at gunnery training on the actual *Hauptehrentag*.

¹³⁷ Keitel, "Schulzeit", 57. Keitel, exactly a year later, on his *Fahnenjunker* training during his regiment's annual gunnery training at another *Truppenübungsplatz* recorded his observations that likely were comparable to von Kleist's. "The gunnery training time was interesting but very exhausting. We three Junkers lived alone, but in an old corrugated iron barracks, where the heat was fierce and it never cooled down at night. Sleep was scarce, especially since in the morning - because of the heat - we had to move out early. I was constantly assigned to the 1st gun as gunner number 1. But unfortunately, I rarely rode in the training area, because we gunners had to march on foot through the long Münster forest; there was no riding in those days. These marches in the wind-sheltered dry pine forest, in the thick moor dust clouds in the sweltering heat were an unforgettable torture. The dust went through us, we were brown all over when we returned; it caused a lot of laundering."

¹³⁸ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 86 (1901):1896-1902. Albert Benary will cross paths with Ewald von Kleist when both attend the *Kriegsakademie* beginning in 1910. Of note, Benary will rank number 1 of more than 120 men on the seniority list at his commissioning to *Leutnant* in October 1901. Like von Kleist, his *Patent* will be pre-dated to 18 October 1900 due to having completed his *Abitur*.

As summer turned to fall, training continued. One of the training goals overseen by freshly promoted *Hauptmann* Bodo von Lüderitz, Ewald's new Battery CO, was to qualify Ewald as a *Geschützführer* (gun leader), the most basic combat role of a junior officer of artillery.¹³⁹ The *Geschützführer* was responsible for all aspects of the health, welfare, and training of the soldiers and horses of his section as well as the maintenance of the gun and support equipment.¹⁴⁰ In combat, he was in charge of the movement of the gunners and gun, for establishing the gun in firing position, and finally for the proper firing of the field piece as directed by the section, battery, and *Abteilung* commanders. A fellow *Geschützführer* in the regiment described the challenges, especially with the gun on the move. Being a gun leader

¹³⁹ *Rangliste 1887-1914*. *Hauptmann* Oskar Greßmann was the battery commander of the 2. *Reitende Batterie* in FAR 3 when von Kleist arrived at the regiment in March 1900. Von Kleist was assigned to Greßmann's battery for his *Fahnenjunker* training. In the late summer 1900, likely just before the regiment's gunnery training at Jüterbog in August, Greßmann was transferred to Headquarters III. *Armee*korps as an adjutant to the commanding general. *Hauptmann* von Lüderitz replaced him as the 2. *Reitende Batterie Chef*. Likely, von Kleist was less than happy about Greßmann's transfer as he thought highly of the officer. Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen", Heft II, 70. Here von Kleist records in 1945, that, "Oberstleutnant von Raumer was commander [Husaren-Regiment Nr. 14], a soldier from whom I learned most after Greßmann." Thus, von Kleist, after a full career and promotion to *Generalfeldmarschall*, credits *Hauptmann* Greßmann with teaching him the most. Greßmann returned to FAR 3 as the commander of the *reitende Abteilung* in December 1904 and once again von Kleist served directly under this officer. Oskar Gustav Albert Greßmann, (* 1861; † 19??) entered the army in 1881, as a *Fahnenjunker* in *Magdeburgisches Feld-Artillerie-Regiment Nr. 4*. He was promoted to *Portepe-Fähnrich* on 15 November 1881, and after attending *Kriegsschule* was commissioned as a *Second-Lieutenant* on 13 September 1882. In 1885, Greßmann attended *Artillerie- und Ingenieurschule*. In 1888, he was assigned to FAR 4's *reitende Abteilung*. In the autumn 1890, Greßmann was transferred to *Feld-Artillerie Regiment General - Feldzeugmeister (I. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3* and promoted to *Premier-Lieutenant* on 20 September 1890. He was promoted to brevet *Hauptmann* on 22 March 1895 and then to permanent *Hauptmann* on 14 December 1895 (V). Between 1898/99 and summer 1900 he served as commander of the 2. *reitende Batterie*. Between autumn 1900 and 1904/5, Greßmann served on the staff of III *Armee Korps*, FAR 3's parent corps. He was promoted to major on 19 December 1903 (A). In December 1904-January 1905, he returned to FAR 3 becoming commander of the *reitende Abteilung*. He was promoted to *Oberstleutnant* on 27 January 1911. He remained the mounted battalion commander until posted on 1 April 1912 to command *Kurmärkisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 39* (Perleberg). He entered WWI as *Oberst* and commander of FAR 39 on the Western Front until 2 October 1914, when he was promoted to command of 30. *Feldartillerie Brigade*. He commanded 30. *FAB* until 11 September 1915. Erich Prigge, ed. and trans. Philip Rance, *The Struggle for the Dardanelles: The Memoirs of a German Staff Officer in Ottoman Service* (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Books Ltd, 2017), footnote 107. Prigge identified Greßmann as having arrived in the Dardanelles from the Western Front and in September, he became the artillery commander for Fifth Army, with the rank of *Generalmajor*. Rose to the rank of *Generalleutnant*. Commanded 81. *Reserve-Division* from 2. July until 20. December 1918. He commanded 30. *FAB* again from 22 January 1919 until 3 May 1919. Retired after the war as a *Generalleutnant* and as of January 1923, was living in Weimar.

¹⁴⁰ In the U.S. Army in this era, a six-gun battery of artillery was subdivided into three two-gun "sections" (*Zug* in German), each commanded by an officer. The section was further divided into a one-gun "half-section." Thus, the leader of a half-section had the same roles and responsibilities as a German *Geschützführer*.

“was no small matter, besides the gun leader, each gun had five gunners, three drivers, two horse holders, and fourteen horses! Altogether this was over twenty-five yards long [in road march order]. An entire battery with six guns at that time was thus about 175 yards long.”¹⁴¹

On 30 August 1900, registration opened for the autumn *Kriegsschulen* courses and the regiment applied for a spot for Ewald.¹⁴² The first prerequisite for attending the course was that the *Fahnenjunker* had served six months of duty with troops in his regiment. Ewald met this requirement on 13 September, his sixth month anniversary of reporting to *FAR 3*. Thus, he was eligible to attend any of the fall courses, the first of which started on 30 September at Potsdam. The enrollment, which was determined by the *Inspektion der Kriegsschulen* (war school inspectorate), took place, and was normally made to the nearest *Kriegsschule*, but not to a school located at the *Fahnenjunker's* garrison's location.¹⁴³ For Ewald, the closest school starting in the appropriate timeframe was Potsdam. The inspectorate, rather, chose to send Ewald to Anklam, the next closest location. This course was the last to begin and did not commence until 11 November.¹⁴⁴ This delay provided Ewald an additional two months of training with the regiment, time which helped to better prepare him for the *Kriegsschule* course.

¹⁴¹ Richter, *Feldartillerie*, 8. Thus, the *Geschützführer* was responsible for ten enlisted soldiers and fourteen horses and one field piece.

¹⁴² Kriegsministerium, *Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt, Nr 15, 6. Mai 1900* (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1900), 289. The *Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt*, the official twice-a-month published compendium of army information, among other things contained the schedule of all of the *Kriegsschulen* course dates (start and end) and stipulated when registration for the courses opened. In this case, six schools began courses between 30 September to 11 November 1900, and registration opened one month before the first course started, thus registration began 30 August.

¹⁴³ Bernhard von Poten, *Geschichte des Militär-Erziehungs- und Bildungswesens in Preußen* (Berlin--A. Hofmann & Comp, 1896), 245.

¹⁴⁴ Kriegsministerium, *Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt, Nr 15, 6. Mai 1900*, 289. The six *Kriegsschulen* with autumn 1900 course start dates were as follows (distance from Brandenburg a/H listed in parenthesis): Potsdam, 30 September (45km); Neiße (present day Nysa, Poland), 7 October (500km); Cassel, 14 October (300km); Hersfeld, 21 October (340km); Metz, 4 November (750km); and Anklam, 11 November (225km). While no explanation has been found as to why von Kleist was not sent to the course closest to home and first available, it can be speculated that his delayed entry and selection for the last available date, was due to one or more of the following reasons: *FAR 3* did not make the request early enough to secure a position in the earliest course; von Kleist's order of precedence (entry date into the army, etc.) was not high enough to secure a spot in the Potsdam course; *FAR 3* judged that von

The second prerequisite was the *Zeugnis der Reife zum Fähnrich* (certificate of promotion readiness to ensign). Ewald received this critical certificate from the *Ober-Militär-Examinations-Kommission* (Supreme Military Examinations Committee) in late September.

The certificate read,

His Majesty the Emperor and King
have most graciously deigned to order that *Corporal Ewald von Kleist of
Feldartillerie-Regiments Generalfeldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgisches) No. 3*,
who has presented a fully valid high school diploma and has obtained for himself
the required certificate of service, shall receive the
Certificate of Promotion Readiness to Fähnrich
In accordance with this Most High command, the present certificate has been
executed under our signature and under the authority of the commission
regulations.

Berlin, 15 September 1900
Supreme Military Examinations Committee

von Scheel
General der Infanterie and President¹⁴⁵

In mid-September, Ewald finally earned his second promotion, this time to
Unteroffizier.¹⁴⁶

Kleist needed more training time at the regiment before he was ready to attend *Kriegsschule*; and/or accomplishment of the required documentation did not occur or did not reach the Inspectorate until after the Potsdam course was already filled.

¹⁴⁵ Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, (BA-MA: N 354, Nachlass Kleist; Akte 10, Zeugnisse Beurteilungen 1900-1920; Document 1). *Italicized* words are hand written on the certificate. Of significance, is that von Kleist's rank is recorded as *Gefreiter* (corporal). The author found several *Zeugnis der Reife zum Fähnrich* from other individuals in the archives and observed that all had obtained the rank of *Unteroffizier* by the date of the request to the *Ober-Militär-Examinations-Kommission* for the certificate. This seems to indicate that von Kleist was promoted to *Unteroffizier* behind the normal timeline for *Fahnenjunker*. Additionally, this is the certificate on which the date and grades of the *Fähnrichexam*, the week-long battery of tests given in Berlin, were recorded if the individual not been an *Abiturient*. Because von Kleist had completed the *Abitur*, this was noted on the certificate and was the reason that no examination grades appeared on the document.

¹⁴⁶ *Fahnenjunker* during their initial training period in the regiment, received, at most, two promotions; first to *Gefreiter* and then to *Unteroffizier*, before being commissioned and promoted to the rank of *Fähnrich*. Von Kleist's *Unteroffizier* promotion date is deduced from the dates of the regiment's request for his *Zeugnis der Reife zum Fähnrich* from the *Ober-Militär-Examinations-Kommission* in Berlin, likely a request made not later than 1

Ten days later, Ewald received the all-important approval from the regimental officers involved in his training, the second prerequisite for attending *Kriegsschule*. On 25 September 1900, seven officers signed Ewald's *Dienst-Zeugnis* (service certificate) attesting to his fitness to be promoted to *Fähnrich*. The certificate read:

Service Certification
on the supernumerary Unteroffizier proposed for the rank of Fähnrich
Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist vom Feldartillerie-Regiment General
Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgischen.) Nr. 3

The supernumerary Unteroffizier von Kleist has proven his academic suitability by presenting a school leaving certificate. He has always behaved as a morally educated, honor-loving young man, has shown much zeal and desire for service, is well versed in the essentials of non-commissioned officer duties, and possesses sufficient comprehension and physical fitness for military service. The undersigned therefore deem him fit for promotion to the rank of Fähnrich. We certify this on our honor and duty.

Brandenburg a/H, the 25. September 1900

von Lüderitz Hauptmann and Battery Commander	Siveke Oberleutnant
Hederich (Leopold) Leutnant	Schultze Leutnant
Ahrend Kurt Leutnant	
Rautenberg Major und Battalion Commander	
Freiherr von Amstetter-Zwerbach und Grabeneck Oberst and Regimental Commander ¹⁴⁷	

September, and the date that von Kleist's *Dienst-Zeugnis* was signed at the regiment, 25 September. The *Zeugnis der Reife zum Fähnrich* records von Kleist's rank as *Gefreiter* while the *Dienst-Zeugnis* records him as an *Unteroffizier*. Thus, the promotion seems to have come sometime between 1 and 25 September 1900. Given a median date of 13 September, von Kleist had served six months from entering the army before promotion to *Unteroffizier*. Von Kleist's promotion appears to be a month to two months later than a number of his contemporaries. For example, promotion to *Unteroffizier* occurred for peers, Wilhelm Keitel (later *Generalfeldmarschall*) and Theodor Groppe (later *Generalleutnant* and *Pour le Mérite* recipient) at four and a half months service and Georg von Küchler (later *Generalfeldmarschall*) at five months. There are instances, as shown by the lists of *Fähnrich* promotions in the *Militärwochenblatt*, of *Fahnenjunker* only being promoted to *Gefreiter* before promotion to *Fähnrich* and attending *Kriegsschule*. But a cursory assessment indicates that this was less than five percent of the cases for *Fahnenjunker* of the era.

¹⁴⁷ Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, (BA-MA: PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienst-Zeugnis 1900; Document 5). Hauptmann Bodo von Lüderitz was *Chef*, 2. *reitende Batterie*, and Oberleutnant Siveke and Leutnants Leopold Hederich, Schultze, and Kurt Ahrendt were all officers assigned to 2. *reitende Batterie*. Major Ernst Rautenberg was *Kommandeur*, *reitende Abteilung*, and Oberst Freiherr von Amstetter-Zwerbach und Grabeneck was

The final required document was the *Fähnrich Patent* (ensign commission) from the king.¹⁴⁸ This *Patent* was treated the same as other officer commissions, that is, it was granted from the sovereign, in this case from “his royal majesty the King of Prussia”, Wilhelm II.¹⁴⁹ Too, the large group of autumn *Fähnriche* commissions followed the normal protocol of being signed annually around mid-October.¹⁵⁰ Finally, as with all others, this promotion list was rank

Kommandeur, FAR 3. Rangliste 1900-1914. Son of Prussian Generalmajor Wilhelm Karl Heinrich von Lüderitz, Bodo Wilhelm Gustav Fritz Karl Otto (* 8. September 1866; † 28. Dezember 1916) was promoted to *Hauptmann* on 16 June 1900. He served as the battery commander of the 2nd riding battery from late summer 1900 until spring 1906. At that time, he was transferred to Pommern as the Director of the stud farm at Labes. *Ranglist 1914* reports that he joined *FAR 112* at the outbreak of the war and then rejoined *FAR 3*’s Ersatz-Abteilung. He died at Labes on 28 December 1916. “Zur Vervollständigung der Ordensliste”, *Wochenblatt der Johanniter-Ordens-Balley Brandenburg* 45, no. 43 (1904): 254. The *Wochenblatt* recorded that “Bodo von Lüderitz, Hauptmann und Batterie-Chef im Feldartillerie Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgischen) Nr.3” was appointed an *Ehrenritter* of the order on 8 August 1904.

¹⁴⁸ Wilhelm Keitel, “Schul- und Soldatenzeit bis zum 1. Weltkrieg, Meine Kriegsschulzeit” (Manuskripte) Bd. 2, (BA-MA: N 54/2, Nachlaß Keitel), 65. Hereafter, Keitel, “Kriegsschulezeit.” The vast majority of the *Fahnenjunker* by the time they arrived at their respective *Kriegsschule* course had been promoted to *Fähnrich*. As Keitel’s experience points out, however, promotion to *Fähnrich* prior to *Kriegsschule* was not mandatory. Keitel recounts that through a “flagrant failure” by his regimental adjutant, his application for promotion to *Fähnrich* was not forwarded at the proper time but delayed by a month. Thus, Keitel was a month into his *Kriegsschule* course before his promotion to *Fähnrich* arrived. He states that all of his classmates had already been promoted before arriving at the course.

¹⁴⁹ Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, (BA-MA: N 354, Nachlass Kleist; Akte 12, N 354-12 Beförderungen Ernennungen 1900-1936; Document 1). This document is the actual *Fähnrich Patent* sent to von Kleist. The document is on heavy embossed paper, preprinted except for the individualized information which was hand calligraphed by a royal scribe, and measures approximately sixteen by ten inches. His commission was dated 18 October 1900 with a seniority of “C2c.”

¹⁵⁰ *Militär-Wochenblatt* 85 (1900). There is a discernable pattern of *Fähnrich Patente* throughout the annual army accession and training cycle. *Militär-Wochenblatt* records the following number of *Fähnrich* commissions throughout 1900: January-106, February-7, March-18, April-85, May-96, June-23, July-18, August-28, September-17, October-203, November-102, and December-63; totaling 766. Given the standard time of seven months from entry into the army as a *Fahnenjunker* until commissioning as a *Fähnrich*, the key event which influences this timing occurs seven to eight months prior the month in which the *Fähnrich* is commissioned. Thus, the high number of commissions in the months of September and October was precipitated by the large numbers of young men leaving *Gymnasium* at Easter (March) after having just completed their *Abitur*. Additionally, the *Hauptkadettenanstalt* graduated its senior class in March, thus adding to the September-October numbers. The April-May increases occur seven to eight months after then next large school leaving date of *Michaelis* (St Michael’s Day, normally 29 September). Finally, the high January number was most likely the result of men leaving *Gymnasium* with a *Reife zur Prima Zeugnis* at Easter (March) and then cramming for several months prior to taking the required *Fähnrichsexamen* before entering the army in the months of May and June.

ordered with each *Fähnrich* receiving a specific number of precedents on his commission certificate. Ewald's *Patent* was dated 18 October 1900, and his order of seniority was "C2c".¹⁵¹

With these three pre-requisites met, Ewald was officially addressed as *Fähnrich*, and out ranked all of the enlisted and non-commissioned officers of the regiment. As the end of October approached it is likely that Ewald was given a week of leave to visit his parents prior to departing for *Kriegsschule*.¹⁵² He could take satisfaction and pride in completing the first segment of his officer training and his promotion to *Fähnrich*. It is however likely that he viewed the eight-month *Kriegsschule* course with a little trepidation both for what was unknown and because he would remain under a magnifying glass as a new set of eyes continued to assess his fitness to become a *Leutnant*.

¹⁵¹ The *Fähnrich Patent*, like all other officer commissions and promotions, had an order of precedence or seniority. Wilhelmine Germany was without doubt status and rank conscious. Thus, it is unsurprising that the army exhibited an elevated awareness of rank. (See above for regimental order of precedence awareness.) On an individual level, the need to know who was the senior ranking officer had practical requirements. For instance, it was important to be able to quickly determine who needed to assume command in combat when commanders and leaders had been killed or wounded. But the army's rank consciousness was prevalent in peacetime as well, perhaps more so. While in the era, rank precedence was used for official duties, it was also used for social occasions, e.g., who took the seat of honor, how reception lines formed, etc. For the historian, an officer's order of seniority can be a tool to understand how and where the officer placed in key events, such as promotions. Knowing how to interpret an officer's seniority ranking allows for a much deeper understanding of army documents such as the annual *Rangliste*. The officer rank and promotion order of precedence system requires explanation, however, as it is not quickly decipherable. The date of promotion, also termed date of rank (DOR), was the first element. For officers of equal rank, the one with the older date of rank (earlier promotion list date) was the senior. Next, if the officers were promoted on the same date, seniority was based on the officer's position within that list. The position of each officer on a given list was specified by a code of a single letter, two letters, or a letter-number-letter code combination. The first 25 positions have single uppercase letters A-Z (I was not used as it could be confused with a J), the second 25 positions, that is number 26 to 50, had an uppercase and lowercase letter Aa-Zz. Then the ranking code became an uppercase letter, a number, and then a lowercase letter with the trailing letter was always the same as the beginning uppercase letter, e.g., "D3d" and normally the list begins at A2a. (It appears that A1a through Z1z were not used, perhaps to avoid confusion.) For individuals ranked 51 and below, the precedence keys on the number and then the letter. So, for example, W (22nd) was higher than Dd (29th) and F2f (56th) was higher than A5a (126th). To use von Kleist's promotion to *Fähnrich* as an example, his seniority on the *Fähnrich Patent* list of 18 October 1900, was C2c. The list was published in *Militär-Wochenblatt* 85, Nr. 96 (1900), 2382-2387, shows this promotion list to have contained 203 men. The last man was been coded "C8c". Thus, von Kleist as "C2c" was 53 out of 203 in seniority or below the middle of the top third. Future *Generalfeldmarschall* Georg von Küchler, on the same list, had a seniority of Uu, or 45 out of 203, near the middle of the top third. How seniority was determined for *Fähnriche* has not been discovered but it was likely a computation of date of entry into the army, promotion to *Gefreiter* and *Unteroffizier* dates, and possibly the test scores from the *Fähnrichsexamen*, if taken.

¹⁵² Keitel, "Schulzeit", 63. Keitel is given eight days home leave just prior to reporting to *Kriegsschule*. Given that the *Kriegsschule* course was eight months long, it is likely that it was standard practice to give the newly promoted *Fähnriche* a short leave prior to departing their regiments for *Kriegsschule*.

III. At the *Kriegsschule*

The *Kriegsschulen* of the Wilhelmine era were direct descendants of schools established nearly one hundred years earlier.¹⁵³ One of the many von Scharnhorst army reforms of 1810 was the establishment of three schools to educate officer candidates.¹⁵⁴ With Napoleon finally defeated in 1815, the urgency of maintaining these schools ebbed and the Prussian Army

¹⁵³ The *Kriegsschulen* were a key and critical element of officer education and training from the 1860s until 1914 as the overwhelming majority of active-duty officers passed through these schools. The only exceptions were the 3,290 *Hauptkadettenanstalt Selekt*a cadets between 1871-1914 who were directly commissioned as *Leutnants* upon graduation from HKA, but who only represented between five and eight percent of all officers commissioned during these years. (see footnote 15) The *Kriegsschule* course then was the sole period of instruction and indoctrination as well as formative experience shared by nearly all across the multiple generations of army officers between German Unification and World War I. Despite the centrality of the schools in officer education, little scholarship exists concerning the *Kriegsschulen*. Detlef Bald, Gerhild Bald-Gerlich, Eduard Ambros (Hrsg.), *Tradition und Reform im militärischen Bildungswesen: von der preussischen Allgemeinen Kriegsschule zur Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr: eine Dokumentation 1810-1985*, (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1985) brief overview contributes little to a deeper understanding of *Kriegsschulen* between 1871-1914. The single best English language study comes from Steven E. Clemente, *For King and Kaiser! The Making of the Prussian Army Officer, 1860-1914* (New York, Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1992). Clemente dedicates a single, twenty-five-page chapter to *Kriegsschulen* between 1810-1914. While generally informative, this study suffers from hazy periodization of school elements (administration, oversight, personnel, curriculum, and student participation, etc.) and has virtually no information for the schools from 1896 until 1914. The most recent scholarship on German officer education, Jörg Muth, *Command Culture: Officer Education in the U.S. Army and the German Armed Forces, 1901-1940, and the Consequences for World War II* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2011), gives less than one page to description and analysis of the pre-World War I *Kriegsschulen*, rather focusing all investigation on the *Hauptkadettenanstalt*. Muth's failure to place the appropriate value on the influence and significance of the *Kriegsschulen* course seriously detracts from his work regarding pre-officer training and education, especially considering that a majority (eleven out of nineteen) of Germany's World War II army *Feldmarschälle* did not attend the *Hauptkadettenanstalt*. The academic lacuna concerning the *Kriegsschulen* despite its centrality in pre-officer education likely results from a dearth of primary sources from these institutions. The author, despite multiple axis searches, failed to unearth a single file of original documentation from any of the *Kriegsschulen* in any of the *Bundesarchive*. This absence of original source material is likely traced to the following chain of events. The *Kriegsschulen* were disbanded by direction of the Treaty of Versailles after World War I. The schools' files were then likely forwarded to the central *Reichsarchiv* in Potsdam. Subsequently, in April 1945, these school records were destroyed in a Royal Air Force bombing raid. Despite the probable destruction of the official school files, the author was able to locate and analyze a number of primary documents from several of the *Kriegsschulen* which are preserved in the personal files of faculty and students.

¹⁵⁴ Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 145. In 1810, General Gerhard von Scharnhorst directed the establishment of three military schools for the Prussian Army at Berlin, Breslau, and Königsberg with the task of preparing *Fähnriche* for successful passing of the test for promotion to lieutenant. These schools were one of several reforms aimed at raising the professional level of the officer corps while at the same time broadening its social basis. Paret notes, "These reforms only partially realized the intentions of the liberal majority of the [reform] commission: The nobility continued to dominate the officer corps, but now had to accommodate itself to a system of educational selection." Bernhard Poten, *Geschichte des Militär-Erziehungs- und Bildungswesens in Preußen* (Berlin: A. Hofmann & Comp., 1896), 141-164. See Poten for a detailed history of the establishment and history of the three 1810 established *Kriegsschulen*.

abandoned the three schools and returned to its previous practice of allowing each division to maintain its own school. By 1844, there were seventeen division schools.¹⁵⁵ With the anticipated army expansion, the *Militärkabinett* ordered a consolidation of the division schools into nine schools, one for each of the *Armeekorps*. The reorganization did little to update or increase the school's academic quality. Within a decade, this changed as pressure began to mount for a higher educational standard in the training of army officers. In 1854, *König* Friedrich Wilhelm IV placed General Eduard von Peucker at the head of the *Generalinspektion des Militärerziehungs- und Bildungswesens* (General Inspectorate of Military Training and Education) and charged him with updating officer education. In 1859, General von Peucker issued new regulations implementing a reorganization by disbanding the division schools and establishing three new schools, *Königlichen Kriegsschulen*, at Potsdam, Erfurt, and Neiße.¹⁵⁶ Attendance became mandatory for all officer-candidates and centralized control over the schools was retained by the *Generalinspektion*. While not without challenges largely due to the increase in officer demand in the 1860s, the *Kriegsschulen* continued to raise their academic standards through the internal development of manuals, handbooks, and practicums which directly supported the curriculum and helped standardize the courses between the schools. In 1865, the exemption for artillery and engineer *Fähnriche* was dropped and now all branches were required to send their *Fähnriche* to the school. Integrated classes served to increase the knowledge of and understanding between branches as well as served to break down some of the internal army socio-cultural barriers between the *Waffengattungen*.

¹⁵⁵ Clemente, *King*, 141.

¹⁵⁶ Poten, *Geschichte*, 225-228. Potsdam established in 1859 drew *Fähnriche* from the *Garde, II, and II Armeekorps*; Erfurt established in 1859 drew from *IV, VII, and VIII Armeekorps*; and Niesse established 1860 drew students from *I, V, IV Armeekorps*. Within a few years the alignment between the schools and corps dissolved and *Fähnriche* were drawn from across Prussia to any one of the *Kriegsschulen*. Bald, *Tradition*, 29-31 and 109. See Bald for a discussion of this action and a copy of General von Peucker's 19 August 1859 order directing the establishment of these schools. Neiße is now Nyse, Poland.

The expansions of the Prussian Army thorough annexation of territories and their army regiments in the 1860s and after the eventual German unification in 1871, outstripped the ability of the three schools to meet training demands. Authorities responded by funding and building additional schools: Engers (1863), Hannover (1867), Cassel (1867), Anklam (1871), and Metz (1872). Army expansion in the 1890s precipitated the establishment of *Kriegsschulen* at Hersfeld (1891) and Danzig (1893) in an effort to meet instructional needs.¹⁵⁷ Thus, by the turn of the twentieth century, ten *Kriegsschulen* trained the *Fähnriche* of the Prussian, Saxon, and Württemberg army contingents. Bavaria was allowed to maintain its own *Kriegsschule* at München from unification until 1919.

As the number of schools grew and the demands for more standardized and professionalized education increased, the army responded in 1875, by establishing a special department, *Inspektion der Kriegsschulen* (war schools inspectorate), under the *Generalinspektion des Militärerziehungs- und Bildungswesens*.¹⁵⁸ The *Inspektion* closely controlled the schools including the selection of all officers sent to be commandants, instructors, and inspection officers. The commandant of each school was a well-qualified and highly recommended *Oberstleutnant* or *Major* and was a graduate of the *Kriegsakademie*. The *Lehrer* (instructors), normally eight per school, were experienced *Hauptleute* or *Rittmeister*. These officers were responsible for the instruction of the theoretical subjects, the era's term for classroom instruction, such as tactics, topography, army organization, languages, etc. The governing *Kriegsschulen* personnel regulations stipulated that the instructors, also called *Waffenlehrer* (weapons instructors) were to be graduates of their respective area's advanced

¹⁵⁷ Poten, *Geschichte*, 246-252. In 1885, *Kriegsschule* Erfurt moved to Glogau. *Königreich* Württemberg closed its *Kriegsschule* Ludwigsburg in 1874 and sent its *Fähnriche* to other schools.

¹⁵⁸ Clemente, *King*, 144-145.

training course.¹⁵⁹ The six *Inspektionsoffiziere* (inspection officer) assigned to each school were likewise generally selected from top quality *Oberleutnants* who came highly recommended. Their primary duty was oversight of the *Fähnriche*. To enhance their contact and interaction with the young men, most of these officers were billeted in small, single-officer apartments within the *Fähnriche* barracks. Thus, these officers were unmarried, which was the normal status of *Oberleutnants*. Additionally, the *Inspektionsoffiziere* served as instructors primarily in the practical subject areas such as equitation, gymnastics, fencing, etc. No civilian instructors or teachers were employed at the *Kriegsschulen*.

Few officers declined the three-year minimum assignments to the *Kriegsschulen* as these postings were considered career enhancing and promotable positions.¹⁶⁰ For some, serving in the schools also was a path into attending the *Kriegsakademie* and entry into the general staff. As an additional incentive for serving as a *Lehrer* or *Inspektionsoffizier*, the army supplemented these officers' pay with a *Zulage*, which by 1895 was 450 *Marks* annually.¹⁶¹ Officers also received

¹⁵⁹ Poten, *Geschichte*, 244. The tactics and terrain instructors were to be graduates of the *Kriegsakademie*; the artillery instructors were to be one each from the *Feld-* and *Fuß-Artillerie* branches; a minimum of one of the two equitation instructors was to have graduated from the two-year course at the *Militär-Reit-Institut* (cavalry school); one of the two shooting instructors was supposed to have attended the infantry *Schießschule* (shooting school); and the gymnastics and fencing instructors were supposed to have been trained at the *Militär-Turn Anstalt* (Military Gymnastics Institute). To support the school's senior officer, there was an *Oberleutnant* assigned to each school as adjutant to the *Kommandant*.

¹⁶⁰ *Rangliste 1901*, 516-521. A cursory analysis of the officers in *Kriegsschulen* postings as of 1 June 1901 shows: all 10 of the commanders were *Oberstleutnants* and infantry officers; 4 of the 10 commandants were *Adel*. Of the 90 assigned *Lehrer*, all were *Hauptleute* and had an average of 6-7 years time-in-grade (approximately 20 years time-in-service), 18 of 90 (20 percent) were noblemen. Interestingly, cavalry officers appear to successfully stiff arm the assignment as only 1 of the 90 was from the cavalry. This dearth of mounted instructors supports the notion that the importance of teaching cavalry tactics was on the significant wane and thus not taught at the *Kriegsschule*. Conversely, 20 of the 90 (22.2 percent) instructors were *Ingenieur* and *Pionier* (combat engineer and sapper) officers despite having a very small number of officers in the branch. In 1900, there were 63 assigned *Inspektionsoffiziere* across the 10 schools. Fifty-seven were *Oberleutnants* (averaging about 3 years time-in-grade and approximately 11 years time-in-service) and six were senior *Leutnants*; 27 of the 63 (42.8 percent) were *Adel*. Here, the cavalry branch was better represented with 18 of the 63 (28.6 percent) officers coming from the mounted arm. It was these junior cavalry officers which were responsible for teaching equitation to the *Fähnriche*. Each *Kriegsschule* was allotted one *Oberleutnant* to serve as adjutant to the commandant. All 10 adjutants were from the infantry and 4 (40 percent) were noblemen.

¹⁶¹ Poten, *Geschichte*, 244-245.

additional financial support to pursue training and education enhancements which increased their utility and quality of instruction at the schools.¹⁶² But staff and faculty were kept busy with the increasing demand for *Fähnriche* training.

To meet the throughput demand, the *Militärkabinett* issued an *A.K.O. (Allerhöchste Kabinetsordre)* on 29 March 1893. The order directed that the *Kriegsschule* course be increased to thirty-five weeks duration and followed by a four-week period of leave for faculty and staff. The next course commenced immediately after the leave period thus enabling four courses to be conducted every three years. The starting dates of the courses were nominally set at 1 January, 1 April, and 1 October of each year. These multiple start dates allowed the accommodation of *Fähnriche* who left the *Gymnasium* at different times throughout the year as well as the annual March graduating class from the *Hauptkadettenanstalt*. By 1898, it appears, however, that the *Kriegsschulen* were unable to continue with the ambitiously paced plan to graduate four courses every three years at each of the schools. Despite the increasing number of annual officer accessions and the concomitant need for more student seats at the *Kriegsschulen*

¹⁶² Albert Louis Krüger-Velthusen, „Meine Tätigkeit als Lehre and der Kriegsschule zu Hannover im Jahre 1893 bis 1898 und als Kommandeur von 1907 bis 1910“, BA-KO; N 1015/350 (Schreibmaschinenmanuskript), 3. Document located in the Schwertfeger Nachlass. Then *Hauptmann* Krüger-Velthusen (* 1854; † 1940), an instructor at *Kriegsschule* Hannover from 1893 to 1898, was incentivized and officially supported in his Russian language improvement skills while on duty at the school. Krüger-Velthusen recounts, “In addition, French and Russian were taught to specially qualified *Fähnriche*. I took over the Russian lessons in addition to tactics and achieved good results with them. ... After the end of the first training course there was again a 4-month vacation break. I received leave to Galicia and Romania, instead of Russia because of the political tensions at the time. For this trip, I was granted a travel allowance of RM 1000. Instead of language studies, I got to know the country and its people, which was also important for me. After completing the next course, I received a 7-month leave to Russia and a travel allowance of RM 1,600. I thoroughly solidified my Russian language knowledge and also familiarized myself with the Russian school system. At the end of my trip, I had to submit a detailed report to the Inspector General on how Russian instruction should be established in our military educational institutions. Nothing came of that due to the circumstances.” As a comparison, a *Hauptmann* with Krüger-Velthusen’s time-in-grade earned approximately RM 500 per month. Johannes Bernhard Melcher, *Stammliste des Offizier-Korps des Infanterie-Regiments von Horn (3. Rheinisches) Nr. 29, 1813-1901* (Trier: Verlagsbuchhandlung von Jacob Lintz, 1901), 476. Krüger-Velthusen was a *Gymnasium Abiturient* and entered the army in 1874. He graduated from the *Kriegsakademie* in 1889 and then served eleven months on the *Großen Generalstab* (indicating he did not become a fully qualified GGS officer) before returning to troop duty. From January 1893 until January 1898, he served as an instructor at the *Kriegsschule* Hannover.

across the end of the century and into the new one, the *Inspektion der Kriegsschulen* moderated the 1893 plan of three year eight-month-long class periods: January-August, April-November, and October-May cycles. Between 1898-1902, they slowed their course graduation rate of one every nine months as called for in the previous plan. During this period, the ten schools graduated a course on average every ten and a half months (forty-five weeks) and also moved to broader set of course start dates.¹⁶³



Figure 1 Kriegsschule Anklam¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ *Militär-Wochenblatt*, Nrs. 94 – 98 (1898-1902). An analysis of the *Kriegsschulen* course dates for calendar years 1898-1902 was made. To allow comparisons between schools, the total number of months the school conducted courses added to the vacation time given was summed and was then divided by the total number of courses completed. This then indicated on average of how many months it took each school to conduct a course during the five calendar years examined. Anklam was the shortest timeframe graduating a course on average every 9.75 months, Hannover a close second at 9.8 months. Cassel, Hersfeld, and Neiße worked the least hard, each producing a course every 11 months. The remainder were: Danzig (10.0 months), Engers (10.6 months), Glogau (10.25 months), Metz (10.25 months), and Potsdam (10.5 months). The earliest and latest of start dates for each month during the five years investigated and the number of classes which started in the month (in parenthesis) are: January 5-7 (4), February none, March none, April 1-22 (12), May none, June none, July 7-23 (4), August none, September 30 (1), October 1-27 (16), November 4-12 (6), December none; 43 courses total. Again, the large number of courses commencing in October and November substantiate that the largest accession months for officer-aspirants were March and April. This information begins to illuminate the annual cycles and rhythms of the Wilhelmine army officer corps. See also footnote 150.

¹⁶⁴ Period postcard of *Kriegsschule* Anklam. “Meine Heimstadt Anklam,” <https://www.facebook.com/HeimstadtAnklam/photos/a.1413391672210441/2816930511856543/?type=3&theater> (February 16, 2021).

On Sunday, 11 November 1900, *Fähnrich* Ewald von Kleist reported to *Kriegsschule* Anklam, Mecklenburg.¹⁶⁵ Ewald and nearly one hundred other *Fähnriche* gathered in the school's gymnasium for the *Antrittsappell* (entrance roll call).¹⁶⁶ Here the commandant, *Oberstleutnant* Englebrecht, the eight *Lehrer*, six *Inspektionsoffiziere*, and staff were introduced.¹⁶⁷ The *Fähnriche* were then assigned to their *Inspektionen*, *Hörsäle*, *Dienst*, and *Reit=Abteilungen*.

Each of the six *Inspektionen* (squads) comprised between fifteen and seventeen *Fähnriche* with one of the *Oberleutnant Inspektionsoffiziere* assigned to oversee the group.¹⁶⁸ The *Inspektion* was the group in which the cadets lived and which daily accountability was maintained both by the *Oberleutnant* and by the *Inspektionsältester Fähnrich* (senior ranking cadet in charge). Each *Inspektion* had a mix of *Fähnriche* from the different branches. For a typical fifteen-man *Inspection*, eight were infantry (infantry, grenadiers, fusiliers, *Jäger*, or

¹⁶⁵ Von Kleist's records, neither personal nor official, directly record that he attended *Kriegsschule* Anklam. However, a comparison of von Kleist's official documents and the official documents of Theodor Groppe as well as additional information on Groppe indicate that both men attended the Anklam course beginning on 11 November 1900. Both of von Kleist's and Groppe's *Zeugnis der Reife zum Offizier* are located in the files of BA-MA, Kleist Nachlass N 354/10 and Groppe Nachlass N 739/28, respectively. Each document indicates that the *Offizierprüfung* was taken beginning on 26 June 1901. Both documents are dated 30 July 1901 and are in the same hand. The 26 June date is two weeks prior to the end of the Anklam course and fits the timeline of when the concluding test (*Offizierprüfung*) was given relative to the end of the courses. The test start date does not fit with any of the other school courses conducted in this timeframe. Groppe's biographical information indicates that he attended *Kriegsschule* Anklam.

¹⁶⁶ Poten, *Geschichte*, 250-251. Poten records the maximum student capacity at each of the *Kriegsschulen*: Anklam-100, Cassel-80, Danzig-108, Engers-100, Glogau-100, Hersfeld-112, Hannover-128, Neiße-107, Metz-120, and Potsdam-100. It is likely given the need for training that all or nearly all of the student spots in this course at Anklam would have been filled. To date, no roster of the *Fähnriche* attending the 11 November 1900 Anklam course has been unearthed. See Appendix 2, Table 2.2 for an overview of course participants. Generally, the courses comprised approximately 66 percent infantry *Fähnriche*, 15 percent cavalry, 10 percent field artillery, 5 percent heavy (foot) artillery, with the remaining 4 percent split between combat engineers, railway, supply, and telegraph *Fähnriche*.

¹⁶⁷ *Rangliste 1901*, 519-520. See Appendix 2, Table 2.1 for detailed information on the officers assigned to *Kriegsschule* Anklam during von Kleist's course.

¹⁶⁸ Poten, *Geschichte*, 250-251. With Anklam able to accommodate a maximum of 100 *Fähnriche*, the six *Inspektionen* would have been assigned with four having seventeen *Fähnriche* and two having sixteen when at maximum capacity. If there were a total of ninety *Fähnriche*, then each *Inspection* would have had fifteen *Fähnriche*.

Garde-Infanterie), two were cavalry, two were artillery, and the remaining two were from the support branches (combat engineers, telegraph, supply, or railway). This served to break down branch barriers, encourage understanding of other *Waffengattungen*, and develop intra-service comradery. The *Inspektion* was further subdivided into three to four *Stuben* (rooms) each with two to five *Fähnriche*. Each *Stube* had two plainly furnished rooms devoid of any personal furniture or articles; a *Kammer* (bedroom) with the requisite number of beds and a washstand for each cadet and a *Wohnstube* (living room) which held a standing desk for each of the cadets and a central table.¹⁶⁹ A locker for each cadet's uniforms was located in one of the rooms. Each *Stube* had its own *Stubenältester* (senior ranking cadet of the room) who was responsible for maintain order within the room. The *Wohnstube* provided the primary place for the *Fähnriche* to study in the evenings.

The next unit to which a *Fähnrich* found himself assigned was to one of the six *Hörsäle* (seminars).¹⁷⁰ These were the academic classroom groups in which the cadets attended their “theoretical” (classroom) lectures given by one of the eight *Lehrer*. Like the *Inspektionen*, each *Hörsaal* had a mix of officers from the different branches as well as a mix of educational levels.¹⁷¹ The theoretical classroom subjects each week included: *Tactics* (tactics-seven hours),

¹⁶⁹ Keitel, "Meine Kriegsschulzeit", 65. Keitel who attend Anklam, one year later (11 November 1901 to 12 July 1902) after von Kleist, provided the description of his *Stube* in the 1. *Inspektion*. Clemente, *King*, 150. Clemente provides some additional specifics on the rooms from across the *Kriegsschulen*. Bernhard Heinrich Schwertfeger, (BA-KO: N 1015/33, Nachlass Schwertfeger, Lehrer für Waffenlehre und Französisch an der Kriegsschule Hannover 1904-1908.), student rosters; hereafter Schwertfeger, *Kriegsschule*. Schwertfeger's documents from *Kriegsschule* Hannover between 1905-1908 indicate that each of the *Stube* held between two and five *Fähnriche*.

¹⁷⁰ The direct translation of *Hörsaal* is lecture room. The German military, however, uses the term which is more accurately translated in English as a “small academic seminar group.” Generally, in the military context a *Hörsaal* has between ten and twenty members. The term is used not only for *Kriegsschule* academic seminars but also at the *Kriegsakademie*. Schwertfeger, *Kriegsschule*, class rosters. At Hannover, there were six *Hörsäle* regardless of course size and each numbered between twelve and twenty *Fähnriche*. Like Anklam, Hannover had eight instructors, and thus there were likely two less *Hörsäle* than the number of assigned instructors.

¹⁷¹ Clemente, *King*, 145-146. Clemente asserts that the *Fähnriche* were tested upon arrival to determine their academic aptitude and then grouped in parallel groups according to their demonstrated intellectual capabilities. This testing appears to have been conducted beginning with General von Peucker's reforms in the late 1850s. This

Waffenlehren (weapons and ordnance-five), *Befestigungslehren* (fortifications-four), *Feldkunde* (topography and surveying-four), *Heerwesen* (army organization and regulations-two), *Planzeichnen* (map drawing-two), *Militärschreibenwesen* (military writing-one), for a total of twenty-five classroom lecture hours.¹⁷² In addition to the military classes, *Lehrer* provided instruction in foreign languages, either Russian or French, for two hours a week in order to provide a rudimentary familiarization with languages German officers were thought to most likely encounter should Germany go to war in the near future. Special class lectures covering *Feldartillerie* (field artillery), *Fußartillerie* (heavy artillery), *Pioniere* (combat engineering), *Telegraphieren* (telegraph), *Pferdkenntnis* (horse familiarization), and *Gesundheitslehre* (hygiene) were individually scheduled throughout the course.¹⁷³

The third group that the *Fähnriche* were assigned was to their *Dienst=Abteilung* (service section). The *Dienst=Abteilungen* were divided by *Waffengattungen* into two categories. One group consisted of a mix of officers from *Infanterie*, *Jäger*, *Fußartillerie*, *Pioniere*. The second category comprised *Fähnriche* of the mounted arms, *Kavallerie* and *Feldartillerie*.¹⁷⁴ The *Dienst=Abteilungen* were the sections for the practical instruction. There were five primary areas

practice by the turn of the century appears, however, to have been abandoned. Keitel, "Meine Kriegsschulzeit", 65. Keitel does not mention any arrival testing and states that on the first day he and the other *Fähnriche* were assigned to their *Hörsäle*. Schwertfeger, *Kriegsschule*, class rosters. Evidence from the class rosters Schwertfeger saved from *Kriegsschule* Hannover for the courses between 1905-1908, clearly list each *Hörsaal* being comprised of *Fähnriche* from each of the four academic levels: *Abituranten*, *Kadetten* (graduates of the *Hauptkadettenanstalt-Berlin*), *Fähnrichsprüfung mit Primareife* (test for *Fähnriche* with the certificate of achieving the level one academic year short of a full *Gymnasium* education), and *Fähnrichsprüfung ohne Primareife* (test for *Fähnriche* without having the certificate for achieving the level one academic year short of a full *Gymnasium* education). For the 1905 *Kriegsschule* Hannover course, each *Hörsaal* had four or five *Abituranten*, one *Kadett*, four or five *Fähnrichsprüfung mit Primareife*, and one or two *Fähnrichsprüfung ohne Primareife*. Five of seven in the last category were noblemen. The mix of educational levels indicated that *Fähnriche* were not stratified academically nor grouped in different *Hörsäle* based on scholastic achievement.

¹⁷² Schwertfeger, *Kriegsschule*, course academic plans and schedules. The topics and hours are off of the official printed *Stunden=Plan* (class schedule) for *41 Kursus 1905, Kriegsschule* Hannover.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. For *41 Kursus 1905, Kriegsschule* Hannover, there were six sections of the mix of *Infanterie*, *Jäger*, *Fußartillerie*, *Pioniere* and a single *Abteilung* of *Kavallerie* and *Feldartillerie Fähnriche*.

of practical skills at which the *Fähnriche* spent ten hours per week: *Turnen* (gymnastics-three hours per week), *Truppendienst* (branch familiarization-two), *Schießdienst* (marksmanship-one), and *Exerzieren* (drill-one).¹⁷⁵ The fifth area of practical instruction was *Reiten* (equitation). To accommodate this training, a fourth and final grouping was instituted, the *Reit-Abteilungen* (equitation sections). Here the young men were divided initially by branch, and then likely by riding ability.¹⁷⁶ Equitation skills improvement was allocated three hours per week for all of the *Fähnriche* regardless of branch.

The eight-month course comprised five distinct periods.¹⁷⁷ The first two intervals focused on theoretical and practical training in and out of the classroom. For Ewald's course, the first instructional period of sixty-six days ran from Sunday, 11 November 1900 until Friday, 25 January 1901. A two-week vacation period over came six weeks after the start of the course and allowed for the *Fähnriche* to return home for the Christmas and New Year's holidays. The second course interval of sixty days began Saturday, 2 February and ended on Friday, 12 April. The school suspended work for seven days around Easter Sunday (7 April), allowing the *Fähnriche* a week of home leave.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. Subject titles and hours per week derived from the *41 Kursus 1905, Kriegsschule* Hannover master schedule. Keitel, "Meine Kriegsschulzeit", 66. Keitel recorded that fencing, both with bayonnetted rifle and with practice sabers, was practiced in gymnastics class at Anklam.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. For *Kriegsschule* Hannover the *Dienst-Abteilungen* and *Reit-Abteilungen* were the same, at least in the initial preprinted course schedule. No other information clarifying the difference between the service and equitation sections was found. It stands to reason, however, that the more advanced riders regardless of branch would have been placed together so as to maximize the efficacy of the equitation training and allow more advanced riders to not be held back by less skilled *Fähnriche*. Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 55. Bürkner was in the class after von Kleist at Anklam. He reported that there were at least two *Reit-Abteilungen* which contained *Kavallerie* and *Feldartillerie Fähnriche*. This possibly hints at equitation sections being divided by skill rather than just by branch.

¹⁷⁷ Schwertfeger, *Kriegsschule*, course academic plans and schedules. The course training plan appears to be a standardized template that is overlayed on the calendar and only messaged to accommodate the observed holidays which fall during the course. The course calendar for von Kleist's *Kriegsschule* course at Anklam was derived using the 1905 and 1905/1906 course schedules from *Kriegsschule* Hannover as well as information from Keitel and Bürkner's accounts. Thus, while the Anklam dates conform to the template, they are the probably dates and have not been verified.

During these first two periods the, classes and instruction occurred Monday through Saturday while church attendance, light duty, and free time filled Sundays. The weekly schedule likely ran as follows.¹⁷⁸

Weekly Schedule for Periods 1 and 2	
Time	Event
06:00 hours	Reveille
06:30 hours	Morning Roll Call Formation—breakfast follows
07:00 – 07:50 hours	Morning Study Hour—on Tuesdays and Saturdays foreign language classes. Light duty begins at 08:45 on Sundays and holidays.
08:00 – 10:50 hours	Three 55-minute classroom instructional periods. Wednesdays were <i>Zur Verfügung</i> (available but not scheduled). (Classes: tactics, weapons and ordnance, fortifications, topography and surveying, army organization and regulations, map drawing, and military correspondence)
10:50 – 11:15 hours	Communal Breakfast
11:20 – 13:10 hours	Two 55-minute classroom instructional periods. Wednesdays were <i>Zur Verfügung</i> (available but not scheduled). (Classes: tactics, weapons and ordnance, fortifications, topography and surveying, army organization and regulations, map drawing, and military correspondence)
13:30 – 16-25 hours	Three 50-minute practical instructional periods. Thursdays were <i>Zur Verfügung</i> (available but not scheduled). (Classes: gymnastics, branch familiarization, marksmanship, drill, and equitation)
17:00 hours	Midday Roll Call Formation—midday meal follows (13:00 hours on Sundays and holidays)
18:15 – 19:45 hours	Evening Study Time
20:45 – 21:30 hours	Additional Instruction Hour (as directed by the daily order)
21:50 hours	Evening Roll Call Formation (on Sundays and holidays if restricted to post)
22:15 hours	Lights Out (on Sundays and holidays 23:15 hours)

In addition to classroom and practical instruction, *Fähnriche* participated in a number of additional duties. The primary area was in peer leadership at the *Stuben*, *Inspectionen*, *Hörsäle*, and *Dienst-Abteilung* levels. In these positions, *Fähnriche* were held accountable for those

¹⁷⁸ Schwertfeger, *Kriegsschule*, course academic plans and schedules. This schedule is pulled directly from the printed *41 Kursus 1905, Kriegsschule* Hannover master schedule. Given the standardization directed by the *Kriegsschulen Inspektion*, it is probable that all schools operated on the same or nearly the same timetable.

under their leadership, ensuring punctual attendance at required events, marching their units to the required locations, and enforcing the school's rules and regulations. Additional positions *Fähnriche* occupied were: rotational duty of *Fähnrich* of the day, three members on the school's *Ehrenrat* (honor board), five members on the *Fähnrichs-Kasino Kommission* (*Fähnrichs* mess committee), and members of various events committees such as ones who planned and produced military skills demonstrations and evening music and entertainment events.¹⁷⁹

While in the classroom and during practical instructions, officers assessed each *Fähnrich*'s aptitude and skills, additionally his attitudes, actions, and behavior were watchfully monitored outside of the formal instruction time. While the rules and regulations were somewhat strict and much like those found at similar institutions across Europe, the *Fähnriche* were not closely controlled by the overseeing officers. Rather, the young men were allowed wide latitude but were expected to demonstrate the self-discipline and self-control necessary to avoid violations, compromising situations, or academic shortfalls.¹⁸⁰ As an example, alcoholic beverages were prohibited in the barracks as was drunkenness, however, beer and wine were served in the *Fähnrichs-Kasino* and the young men were permitted to go into town and visit Anklam's pubs. Similarly, studying in the evening between 18:15 and evening roll call at 21:50 hours was voluntary with each *Fähnrich* expected to demonstrate self-discipline and select to attend to his books if his grades were not up to speed rather than go into town to seek libation or social interaction. Given his lack of academic acumen and need to closely attend to his class

¹⁷⁹ Kriegsschule Hannover, *Haus- und Schulordnung für die Kriegsschule in Hannover, 1905* (Hannover: C.L. Schrader, 1904), 24-30. Each school produced an annual rules and regulations document specific to that school for use in addition to the central regulations produced by the *Kriegsschulen Inspektion*. The example found in Schwertfeger files dates from 4 January 1905 as authorized by the school's commandant, *Oberstleutnant* Mohs and runs to thirty-three pages. *Fähnrich* of the day duties included manning a post which was a central point for command and control of the *Fähnriche* such as maintaining the sign out/sign in list of *Fähnriche* leaving the *Kaserne*, receiving notes, letter, telegrams from external sources and delivering them to the *Fähnriche*, etc.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 2-25. See this for lists of offenses and punishments. See also, Clemente, *King*, 151-154, for overview in English of rules, regulations, and punishments for offenses.

work, his somewhat shy personality, and his wish not jeopardize his success at the school with any lapses of judgement due to drink, Ewald likely remained most often in the barracks studying and socializing with likeminded *Fähnriche*.

Section 22 from the *Kriegsschule* rules and regulations provides a glimpse into some of the specific expectations of the *Fähnriche*.

§22. Comradely Behavior

Each war school student has the duty, through mutual and benevolent supervision, to preserve the unblemished honor of each individual and the of the collective whole. The war school students must distinguish himself everywhere, especially in public places, by civilized, modest, and courteous behavior. He must choose his company only from exceptional and educated circles.

Tactful corrections by comrades will, in most cases, put the one who violates these duties back on the right track. If these corrections do not lead to the desired result, or if a war school student allows himself to be guilty of gross violations of good manners, it is the duty of each student to report the matter immediately.

War school students are to socialize only in such public places as are frequented by locally stationed officers. If in doubt, the duty officer is to be contacted for advice.

A list of establishments forbidden to NCOs and enlisted men is located on each student room.

Permission of the command is required to hold festivities in smaller or larger groups. Special regimental, corps, or branch associations, were leading the development of a clique system and are therefore prohibited.

It is in accordance with the comradely spirit, war school students are expected greet each other on the street.¹⁸¹

The instructors and *Inspektionsoffiziere* maintained grades for the theoretical classroom work. While grades were not given for the practical instruction classes, information noting the lack of desired progress entered the student's record. Additionally, the officers kept a tally of infractions and punishments, if any, and maintained notes on the *Betragen* (comportment), *Aufmerksamkeit* (attentiveness), *Fleiß* (diligence) exhibited by each *Fähnriche*. At the end of each of the first two academic period, the pupils took comprehensive tests to assess how well the

¹⁸¹ Kriegsschule Hannover, *Schulordnung*, 24.

instruction was received and retained.¹⁸² By the middle of April, the two long periods of classroom focused training ended and the *Fähnriche* no doubt looked forward to getting out of doors in the warming spring weather.

The third period concentrated on practical training and comprised field exercises and an instructional field trip. This session totaled thirty-six days and ran between 19 April and 24 May. The surrounding countryside became mock battlegrounds and here the *Fähnriche* were expected to demonstrate that they could sufficiently translate their theoretical classroom knowledge into practical application. Thus, in the field they performed small unit tactics, conducted junior officer reconnaissance missions, created small unit orders and led the execution of those orders, and demonstrated proficiency in elements of field craft.¹⁸³

¹⁸² Clemente, *King*, 146-147.

¹⁸³ Clemente, *King*, 147.



Figure 2 Kriegsschule Map Sketch

A sketch produced by a *Fähnrich* for a *Kriegsschule* Hannover exercise in 1901.¹⁸⁴

During the field trip, *Fähnriche* saw different branches in action, actual fortifications, and in some cases conducted battlefield tours.¹⁸⁵ A *Fähnrich* attending Anklam in the course after Ewald recorded his thoughts on the field trip.

The *Kriegsschule*'s instructional tour was more or less interesting. We became acquainted with almost all branches and saw them as they demonstrated their duties: infantry and sappers in Stettin, field and fortress artillery in Thorn, the cavalry in Pasewalk. There we saw the *Königin-Kürassiere* drill in squadron and

¹⁸⁴ Karl Friedrichs, Generalmajor Dr., (BA-MA: N 94/17, Nachlass Friedrichs; Akte 17, *Kriegsschule* Hannover 1901). A hand-drawn sketch produced by *Fähnrich* von Lösecke (5. *Hannoversches Infanterie-Regiment* Nr. 165) while a student at *Kriegsschule* Hanover in October 1901. The sketch was attached to a regimental-level attack order written by von Lösecke for the second exercise day. This demonstrates not only the map drawing and sketching skills but also that even as *Fähnriche*, these students were theoretically working with and leading units three echelons above the one they would be commanding as young lieutenants.

¹⁸⁵ Schwertfeger, *Kriegsschule*, course academic plans and schedules. The 1905 *Kriegsschule* Hannover course conducted a six-day field trip to three 1870 battlefields in France. While highly likely, it is unknown if von Kleist's course participated in any battlefield tours.

regimental formations. Afterwards, the cavalry officers invited some of the *Fähnriche* to the officers' mess for dinner. Just to see the main dining room alone was an experience. In the dining room was a long wall which was adorned with the sixty-six flags and standards which the parent regiment of the Königin-Kürassiere, the Bayreuther Dragoner, had captured during their charges at the Battle of Hohenfriedberg on June 4, 1745, under the eyes of Friedrich der Grosse. Around the long table were high-backed chairs, which at the top of their centerpiece bore the family coat of arms of the cuirassier officers.¹⁸⁶

The fourth period entitled *Schlußwiederholung* (closing review) commenced immediately after the conclusion of the field training period. The short, twenty-seven-day session running between 30 May and 25 June, focused on review of key course material and final preparation of the *Fähnriche* for the looming final hurdle of the *Offizierprüfung* (officer's commissioning test).

The final, and for the *Fähnriche* the most critical phase, was taking the *Offizierprüfung*. The test, while not difficult and for which the *Fähnriche* were well tutored, must be successfully passed in order to become a commissioned *Leutnant*.¹⁸⁷ The test comprised a six-day set of written examinations, a nine-day study period, and concluded with a three-day series of oral examinations between 26 June and 13 July.¹⁸⁸ The standardized tests were administered and graded by the *Kriegsschule* instructors under the supervision of members of the *Kriegsschulen Inspektion* from Berlin.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 55-56. *Rangliste 1902*, 338-339. The cuirassier regiment Bürkner recalled was *Kürassier-Regiment Königin (Pommersches) Nr. 2*. In 1902, all twenty-eight officers in the regiment were noblemen. Eight were *Grafen* or *Freiherren*. It is likely that this regiment was an annual tour destination for *Kriegsschule* Anklam as it was located only thirty miles southeast of Anklam.

¹⁸⁷ Clemente, *King*, 156-157. See Clemente for a description of the officers commissioning test and how it was administered and graded.

¹⁸⁸ Schwertfeger, *Kriegsschule*, course academic plans and schedules. The testing schedule described is what was used in 1905 *Kriegsschule* Hannover course. It does, however, align precisely with the first day of testing as annotated on von Kleist's *Zeugnis der Reife zum Offizier* (certificate of promotion eligibility to officer) and the course end date listed in the *Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt*.

¹⁸⁹ Clemente, *King*, 156-157. Clemente comments on the oversight from *Kriegsschulen Inspektion*. Keitel, "Meine Kriegsschulzeit", 73-74. The presence of the officers from the *Kriegsschulen Inspektion* was strong enough to have Keitel remember them in his memoirs almost a half century later.

For Ewald, graduation from *Kriegsschule* occurred on Saturday, 13 July 1900. The ceremony was a brief affair during which the *Fähnrich* who had achieved the highest score on the *Offizierprüfung* was announced as having gained the *Allerhöchte Belobigung* (Sovereign's Commendation).¹⁹⁰ Additionally, those who have failed to qualify for graduation and commissioning were singled out in an apparent attempt to motivate them to avoid failure in their reattempt at the course and officer commissioning test.¹⁹¹ Each graduating *Fähnrich* received an *Abgangs-Zeugnis* (departure certificate). The *Abgangs-Zeugnis* was not a diploma to hang on the wall, rather a report card on the *Fähnrich*'s performance while at the *Kriegsschule*.¹⁹² Nine areas not covered in the *Offizierprüfung* had annotated grades: *Truppendienst* (troop duty), *Exerzieren* (training exercises), *Schiessen* (marksmanship), *Turnen* (gymnastics), *Fechten* (fencing), *Reiten* (equitation), *Telegraphieren* (telegraphing), *Führung* (leadership), and *Eifer* (zeal). Grading at

¹⁹⁰ Keitel, "Schulzeit", 73-74. Keitel records that at the July 1902 at *Kriegsschule* Anklam, he and another *Fähnrich* achieved the same highest score for the *Offizierprüfung* and that because there was a tie neither of them was awarded the *Allerhöchte Belobigung*. Apparently, the grade achieved on the *Offizierprüfung* did not hold a significant amount of weight in the calculations for order of merit on the *Leutnant* promotion list. The *Rangliste 1903* records that Schmidt (the *Fähnrich* who had tied with Keitel for the best test score) had an order of merit of Q (16th) and that Keitel's order of merit was W3w (93rd); both had their date of rank set on 19 August 1901. Clemente, *King*, 157. Clemente notes that the "*Königs Belobigung*" (King's Commendation) was awarded to *Fähnriche* who had achieved an "excellent" on the *Offizierprüfung*, but no date or timeframe is given for this practice.

¹⁹¹ Clemente, *King*, 157. Von Korn, biography from "*Gedenkausgabe für die Schüler der Kriegsschule Engers*" (BA-MA: PH 21/57; Engers 1898-1938). Not all *Fähnriche* who began their course at *Kriegsschule* completed the course and/or graduated. But as noted by Clemente and others, the "system" was forgiving for all but the egregious failures of character or criminal conduct. Of note, the system was tolerant and supportive of *Fähnriche* who did not complete the course through no fault of their own. It seems likely that this was especially the case when a *Fähnrich* was injured while undergoing training. Found in the *Gedenkausgabe* for the course conducted at *Kriegsschule* Engers in 1898 is the following account. On 21 July 1889, von Korn was thrown from a horse while attending *Kriegsschule* Engers. He suffered a double skull fracture and was released from the Engers in early September. After nearly a year of convalescence and private preparation, he passed the *Offizierprüfung* in Berlin and was commissioned a *Leutnant* on 16 July 1899 in the *Grenadier-Regiment zu Pferde Freiherr von Derfflinger (Neumärk.) Nr. 3*. He went on to have an eventful World War I when he was wounded, taken prisoner by the Soviets, and underwent an adventurous return through China finally arriving in Germany on 18 March 1920. He left the army and took over his father's *Rittergut* Neu-Stradam.

¹⁹² Helmuth August Christian Walter (BA-MA: MSG 2/13673 Walter, Helmuth, Generalmajor, "Bildalben mit persönlichen Unterlagen"; Abgangs-Zeugnis. Walter attended *Kriegsschule* Engers 19 April to 19 December 1903. All of Walter's grades were between "*sehr gut*" and "*ziemlich gut*." Von Kleist's *Abgangs-Zeugnis* was not found in any of his personal *Nachlaß* files or in his official army personnel record.

the *Kriegsschule* used numerical values, 1 to 9 (higher the better), thus enabling mathematical tallying and averaging of individuals and ranking across the course members. On the *Abgangs-Zeugnis* the grades were converted from whole numbers to word categorizations. As an example, the highest mark of “9” became “*vorzüglich*” (excellent) and “5” became “*befriedigend*” (satisfactory).¹⁹³ In addition to the grades, a hand written narrative assessment describing the *Fähnrich*’s performance, zeal, *Fleiß* (diligence), and comportment. Finally, any *Strafen* (punishments) the *Fähnrich* received during the course were annotated.¹⁹⁴ The *Kriegsschule Kommandant* signed the certificated. The certificate went with the *Fähnrich* and was presented to his regiment upon his return to the unit. Paired with the *Abgangs-Zeugnis* was the *Fähnrich*’s *Zeugnis der Reife zum Offizier* (certificate of promotion eligibility to officer).

The *Zeugnis der Reife zum Offizier* was the official certificate issued by the *Ober-Militär-Examinations-Kommission* testifying that the named *Fähnrich* met all of the educations and training requirements and was qualified to be commissioned as an officer. Ewald’s certificate read,

¹⁹³ Clemente, *King*, 68, 155-156, 255-256. Clemente draws the following from Wilhelm Nottebohm, *Hundert Jahre militärischen Prüfungsverfahren : die Königlich Preußische Ober-Militär-Prüfungskommission ; 1808-1908* (Berlin : Ober. Militär-Prüfungskommission, 1908). The grades, which mirrored those used on the *Fähnrichprüfung*, were: 9 “*vorzüglich*” (excellent); 8 “*sehr gut*” (very good); 7 “*gut*” (good); 6 “*ziemlich gut*” (fairly good); 5 “*befriedigend* or *genügend*” (satisfactory); 4 “*mittelmässig*” (mediocre); 3 “*nicht hinreichend*” (insufficient); 2 “*fast ungenügend*” (almost unsatisfactory); and 1 “*ganz ungenügend*” (entirely unsatisfactory).

¹⁹⁴ Walter; *Abgangs-Zeugnis*. The handwritten narrative on Walter’s document ran to seventy-five words in length. No punishments were noted.

His Majesty the Emperor and King
have most graciously deigned to order that *Fähnrich Ewald von Kleist of
Feldartillerie-Regiments Generalfeldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgisches) No. 3*,
who participated in the examination held on 26 June 1901 and the following days,
be awarded the following distinction

in Tactics	<i>fairly good</i>
in Weapons Knowledge	<i>satisfactory</i>
in Fortifications	<i>fairly good</i>
in Topography & Surveying	<i>satisfactory</i>
in Army organization & regulations and	
in Military Writing	<i>satisfactory</i>
in Map Drawing	<i>satisfactory</i>

Overall Performance	<i>satisfactory</i>
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has evidenced that the

Certificate of Promotion Readiness to Officer

shall be issued.

In accordance with this Most High command, the present certificate has been
issued.

Berlin, 30 July 1901

Supreme Military Examinations Committee

Frhr von Boenigk

General-~~Leutnant der Infanterie~~ and President¹⁹⁵

It is likely that Ewald happily departed *gottverlassen* (godforsaken) Anklam and left
behind the spartan lifestyle and high stress levels that were part and parcel of the eight-month

¹⁹⁵ Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, (BA-MA: N 354, Nachlass Kleist; Akte 10, Zeugnisse Beurteilungen 1900-1920; Document 2).

long *Kriegsschule* course. He no doubt looked forward to returning to Brandenburg and finally getting his commission.¹⁹⁶

IV. Finally—A *Leutnant*!

Changes had occurred in *FAR 3* while Ewald had been away. The one which most likely concerned the returning *Kriegsschule* graduate was the change of the regimental commander. After only two years at the head of the regiment, *Oberst Freiherr von Amstetter-Zwerbach* und *Grabeneck* was selected to move up and take command of *5. Feldartillerie Brigade*.¹⁹⁷ As *Freiherr von Amstetter-Zwerbach* had been the one to support Ewald's application to join the regiment and was thus somewhat a sponsor for von Kleist, his transfer meant that his personal as well as professional interest in seeing the success of Ewald in the regiment was no longer a present and positive influence. While it is certain that successor commanders continued to support their predecessor's choices, Ewald nevertheless would have to prove himself to the new commander in order to regain the full degree of support that he likely enjoyed under *Freiherr von Amstetter-Zwerbach*. The change of command took place in May 1901, and the new commander, *Major Freiherr von der Osten-Sacken und von Rhein*, was still getting his feet under him when Ewald returned in mid-July.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Keitel, "Schulzeit", 66. Keitel describes Anlam as *gottverlassen* (godforsaken) largely due to the fact that the small town had no theaters for plays or concerts, or other socially acceptable evening entertainments for either officers or *Fähnriche*. According to Keitel, a few bars and pubs was all that the town had to offer.

¹⁹⁷ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 86 (1901): 1180. The order directing the change was given by the *Militär-Kabinet* and approved by the *Kaiser* on 18 May 1901.

¹⁹⁸ "Julius Ottomar Hermann Frhr. von der Osten-Sacken (u. v. Rhein)" (GENi, December 5, 2016). <https://www.geni.com/people/Julius-Ottomar-Frhr-von-der-Osten-Sacken-u-v-Rhein/6000000020817176124> (April 16, 2021). Julius Ottomar Hermann Freiherr von der Osten-Sacken und von Rhein (* 1851; † 1919) was promoted

After a week or so of leave at home, Ewald returned to Brandenburg and set about settling himself back into the regiment and the city. Having successfully earned his *Zeugnis der Reife zum Offizier*, Ewald was promoted to *Degen-Fähnrichen* (sword *Fähnrich*).¹⁹⁹ Now as a senior *Fähnrich*, Ewald was no longer required to live in the barracks but was allowed to seek residence outside of the *Kaserne*. He found an apartment on his namesake's street, at Kleiststrasse 5.²⁰⁰ Upon Ewald's return from *Kriegsschule* in July, he met his "replacements," *Fahnenjunker* Wilhelm Kreich, Julius Dinglinger and Kurt Roeder.²⁰¹

Ewald faced one more important and significant hurdle to obtain his commission. That was the vote of approval by the regimental officers. The regimental commander convened all of the regimental officers and after the *Fähnrichsvater*, in Ewald's case, *Leutnant* Schultze, presented the *Offizierprüfung* results as well as his own assessment of Ewald, the officers voted. While the vote was not a forgone conclusion, it is most likely that the officers had unanimously approved of Ewald's receiving his commission and fully joining the regiment. Ewald, while having achieved only average marks and a middling overall assessment had likely done nothing

to major on 27 January 1896. He served as an *Abteilung Kommandeur* in *Feldartillerie-Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (2. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 18* prior to his assignment to the *Feldartillerie-Schießschule* in late 1899/early 1900, where he served as the deputy commandant. From the school he was selected to command *FAR 3*.

¹⁹⁹ As the title implied, the *Fähnrich* was entitled to wear a sword with his dress uniform. This showed him at last stage before his commissioning as a *Leutnant*.

²⁰⁰ Kahle, Paul. *Adreßbuch der Stadt Brandenburg an der Havel* (Brandenburg a/H.: Paul Kahle Verlag, 1902). Brandenburg Stadtarchiv: Akte: HPF9, Addressbuch 1900-1903. 1902 Edition (microfilm). The address book lists fourteen persons living in an unknown number of apartments at Kleiststraße 5. Three other army officers are listed at this address and it is possible that von Kleist shared an apartment with one or more of these junior officers. Those junior officers were: *Leutnants* August Schüler and Adolf Hüttmann, both of *Fusilier Regiment Nr. 35*. *Hauptmann* von Peschke, a battery commander in *FAR 3*, also lived at this address but it would have been unacceptable for a very junior lieutenant share an apartment with a captain and battery commander from his own unit. A fellow von Kleist clan member, *Hauptmann* Robert von Kleist (*Fusilier Regiment Nr. 35*), lived a few doors away at Kleiststraße 8. See footnote 34.

²⁰¹ *Rangliste 1903*.

that would have brought his loyalty or acceptability as a future officer into question. The regiment forwarded its approval to the king.²⁰²

Ewald was assigned to *II Abteilung*, commanded by *Major* Ernst Rudolf Sprotte and was placed in 6. *Batterie*, a *fahrende Batterie*, under the command of *Hauptmann* Georg Siegmund. While Ewald had missed the regimental training exercise conducted in May, he returned from the *Kriegsschule* a month prior to the regiment's scheduled annual gunnery training at Jüterbog.²⁰³ A week before the regiment left for training, Ewald celebrated his twentieth birthday on 8 August. The regiment began its two-day road march to arrive in mid-August at the *Truppenübungsplatz*. Between 15 and 31 August, the regiment trained its gunners and horses and conducted the live fire training needed to qualify its personnel on the guns.²⁰⁴

Three days after arriving at Jüterbog, on Sunday, 18 August 1901, Ewald was officially awarded his commission as a *Leutnant*.²⁰⁵ Undoubtedly there was a small ceremony and a party at the *Offizierskasino* to celebrate this propitious occasion. The official parchment document granting the king's commission arrived confirming Ewald's *Patent* was predated to 19 August 1900 with his seniority on the promotion list of "Qq". The Wednesday, 21 August edition of the

²⁰² Clemente, *King*, 158-160. See Clemente for a discussion of officer election which began in 1808 and was practiced until World War I. Both Keitel and Bürkner are silent on officer election so it seems likely that the election's occurrence and results were not shared with the *Fähnrich* in question.

²⁰³ Richter, *Feldartillerie*. Author Richter lists the dates of the 1900 summer training exercises that Ewald Richter participated in as 10 April until 4 June.

²⁰⁴ Kriegsministerium. *Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt*, 1901, 142-144. *Zeiteintheilung für die Schießübungen der Feldartillerie im Jahre 1901* (Time schedule for the Field Artillery Firing Exercises in 1901), directed that *Reitende Abtheilung Feldartillerie Regiments Generalfeldzeugmeister Nr. 3* was excused from attending the 15-31 August exercise at Jüterbog due to the fact that the *reitende Abteilung FAR 3* was directed to participate in the fall *Kaisermanöver* in support of the participating *Kavallerie Division*. Information from the *Rangliste 1902* and the *Adreßbuch der Stadt Brandenburg* place von Kleist in the 6. *Batterie* after he returned. Likely, von Kleist was disappointed that he was not allowed to stay in the *reitende batterie* in which he spent his *Fahnenjunker* time. He later would later return to the *reitende Abteilung*, which gives indication to his desire to be a member of this more equestrian centric and elite element of the regiment.

²⁰⁵ Von Kleist, (BA-MA: N 354, Nachlass Kleist; Akte 12, Beförderungen Ernennungen 1900-1936; Document 2). Von Kleist's original *Leutnant Patent* (lieutenant commission) document is preserved in his *Nachlass*.

Militär-Wochenblatt published the long list, 342 in all, of *Fähnriche* promoted to *Leutnant*; the list included “v. Kleist im Feldart. Regt-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburg.) Nr. 3, mit Patent vom 19. August 1900.”²⁰⁶

It had taken just over seventeen months for Ewald to accomplish the training and receive the education required to earn his commission. But his perseverance and hard work had paid off. Additionally, to compensate for his having remained at the *Gymnasium* for his final year in order to obtain his *Abitur*, his date of rank was pre-dated to 19 August 1900, a full year prior to his actual date of commissioning.²⁰⁷ This placed him senior to fellow regimental *Leutnant*, Kurt Schwarze.

At the first of September, *FAR 3* decamped Jüterbog and road marched back to Brandenburg. A short period of repair of equipment and reconstitution of the firing batteries followed. Likely a week or two of leave was granted to some of the officers and enlisted men prior to 1 October and the arrival of the new draft of annual recruits shortly thereafter.

²⁰⁶ *Personal-Veränderungen.*” *Militär-Wochenblatt* 86 (1901): 1895-1902. The list contained the names of the 342 *Fähnriche* promoted to *Leutnant* by order of the king on 18 August 1901. The list annotated those whose date of rank was other than 18 August 1901. There were 121 men identified as having their *Patent* predated to 19 August 1900, one day behind the promotion list of 18 August 1900. Von Kleist’s order of precedence on the promotion list with the date of rank of 19 August 1900 was “Qq” or number 41. The order of precedence on this list ran to precedence number “E5e”. The ranking of “Qq” placed von Kleist at the 34th percentile or at the very top of the middle third of the list. The formula for calculating order of precedence has not been uncovered.

²⁰⁷ „Die Abiturienten und der Offizierersatz,” *Militär-Wochenblatt* 85 (1900) :791-794. On 13 February 1900, an Allerhöchste Kabinetts-Ordres No. 266/2. 00. A. 3., was published which directed that *Fähnriche* that held the *Abitur* were, upon their commissioning as *Leutnants*, to have their dates of rank pre-dated to compensate for the additional year spent obtaining their *Abitur* before entering the army. This incentivized young men to obtain a higher educational standard, the *Abitur*, by removing the date of rank advantage of those who left school with only a *Zeugnis der Reife zur Prima*. Thus, von Kleist gained a full year of seniority over those who entered at the same time but without an *Abitur*. For him, this meant that at his commissioning he was not the youngest *Leutnant* by date of rank in *FAR 3*. His pre-dated commission placed him senior to fellow *Leutnant* Kurt Schwarze. Schwarze, was a March 1899 graduate from the *Hauptkadettenanstalt* in Berlin and joined the regiment in the spring 1899, a full year prior to von Kleist. Because he did not have an *Abitur*, Schwarze’s date of rank was his actual date of commissioning, 18 October 1900. Von Kleist’s date of rank was 19 August 1900.

Generalleutnant a. D. von Pelet-Narbonne, *Löbell’s Jahresberichte über die Veränderungen und Fortschritte im Militärwesen XXVIII Jahrgang: 1901* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1902). The *Jahresberichte* for 1901 reports that during calendar year 1901, 243 *Leutnants* had their commissions pre-dated due to their holding an *Abitur*. The individual branch numbers were: *Infanterie*-91, *Kavallerie*-41, *Feldartillerie*-82, *Fußartillerie*-4, *Pioniere*, etc.-22, and *Train*-3. Von Kleist was one of the 82 in the *Feldartillerie*.

A short three and a half months after his commissioning, Ewald received his first officer *Qualifikations-Bericht* (qualification report).²⁰⁸ The report follows:

Qualifications Report

to 1 December 1901
on *Leutnant Paul Ludwig Ewald* von Kleist
of *Feldart. Rgt. General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenb.) Nr. 3*

Age		Pensionable Service Time		Combat Ready	In the position since	Commission
Year	Months	Years	Months			
20	4	1	9	Yes	18 Aug 1901	19 Aug 1900 <i>Qq</i>

Medium-sized, slim, attractive appearance; with good intellectual gifts and sufficient physical capabilities. Of an open, amiable nature, which must however become even more outgoing, and very good manners. Eager and ambitious, he promises to become a capable officer.

*Freiherr von der Osten-Sacken und von Rhein,
Major und Regimentskommandeur*²⁰⁹

Given that *Major Freiherr von der Osten-Sacken* had only a few short months to scrutinize and interact with his newest *Leutnant*, the regimental commander undoubtedly relied on other information on which to base his assessment. Additional observations which aided him likely came from *Hauptmann* von Lüderitz, Ewald's Battery CO during his later *Fahnenjunker* training time, *Major* Ernst Rudolf Sprotte and *Hauptmann* Georg Siegmund, Ewald's new *Abteilung* and *Batterie* commanders, respectively, who had observed the new *Leutnant* while at Jüterbog, and from the narrative and grades on Ewald's *Kriegsschule Abgangs-Zeugnis*. Regardless of the sources, the regimental commander's assessment was less than glowing.

²⁰⁸ *Qualifikations-Bericht* (qualification report) was the equivalent of a U.S. Army officer's "Officer Evaluation Report" (OER). The OER is alternately titled "officer efficiency report", or "officer performance report: (OPR). The German Army in this period conducted a written evaluation of each *Leutnant's* duty performance, key attributes and qualities, and future officer potential every two years. Each report, handwritten by the regimental commander, closed on 1 December.

²⁰⁹ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; *Qualifikations-Bericht*; (Document 6). *Italics* indicates handwritten data.

While Ewald did receive commendation for his appearance and intelligence, he is only rated as having sufficient or average physical capabilities which likely included not only his gymnastic and fencing skills but also the quality of his equitation. The direct statement noting that Ewald needed to overcome his shyness and his overly reserved nature is a singularly negative statement. This shortfall of a required officer attribute led the commander to judge that Ewald could develop into a “capable” officer. The adjective capable is assessed to be equated to average or middle of the group. Thus, in the typical German military way of dividing groups into thirds, Ewald was seen to be squarely in the middle third of his *Leutnant* peer group. That projection at this point in his nascent career would point to his at best rising to *Major* before his retirement.

Ewald could not have been delighted with his first assessment, especially knowing that it would become a part of his permanent record. But as he looked forward to Christmas 1901, he could take solace that he had two full years before his next report, a good amount of time to work on developing into a better than average officer.

Ewald’s start in the army was less than sterling and begs a brief assessment. The key benchmarks by which Ewald’s progress and achievements can be measured are his promotions while a *Fahnenjunker*, his *Zeugnis der Reife zum Offizier*, and his December 1901 *Qualifikations-Bericht*. These documents show that Ewald was promoted to *Gefreiter* and *Unteroffizier* behind what appears to be the average timeline for such promotions. A number of his peers and near-peers received promotion to *Unteroffizier* between the four and a half and five-month point, while von Kleist was not promoted until his sixth month point. Given the short timeframe of *Fahnenjunker* training, a month is a significant amount of time. The second definitive assessment are the grades on his *Zeugnis der Reife zum Offizier* given when he graduated from *Kriegsschule* Anklam. In the six subjects for which grades were annotated on

the *Zeugnis* (tactics, weapons knowledge, fortifications, topography and surveying, army organization and regulations, military writing, and map drawing), he received two 6 (fairly good), and four 5 (satisfactory). Ewald's overall performance was assessed as a 5 (satisfactory).²¹⁰ Being rated as "satisfactory" was clearly average at best and likely slightly below average for *Fähnriche*. A much clearer understanding of Ewald's performance in and out of the classroom during his time at Anklam would have been gained had his *Abgangs=Zeugnis* found its way into his *Nachlaß*. The last piece of evidence is the 1901 *Qualifikations=Bericht*. As previously mentioned, the assessment by his regimental commander gives clear indication that *Major Freiherr von der Osten=Sacken* to date had observed the efforts and potential of a smart, well-mannered young man but one who had only performed in an average manner and one with middling potential.

When examining Ewald's history and situation, there are a number of elements which likely explain his slow and average start as an officer. First, despite being a von Kleist and member of one of the most successful *adligen Militärclans*, Ewald's up-brining and family dynamics were not conducive to passing on the clan's military acumen. Ewald's father, despite having served as an officer during the Franco-Prussian War and as a reserve *Leutnant*, apparently did not actively prepare his son for army service. Thus, the younger von Kleist likely gained little to no insight on the workings of the army from the elder von Kleist. There also is no

²¹⁰ Von Kleist, (BA-MA: N 354, Nachlass Kleist; Akte 10, Zeugnisse Beurteilungen 1900-1920; Document 2). Keitel, "Schulzeit", 73-74. Keitel records that he was informed that he was on the borderline between receiving a 9 or an 8 as his overall *Offizierprüfung* grade but because he had not been turned in a sterling performance in one of his oral examinations he was awarded the 8. Theodor Groppe Nachlass N 739/28, *Zeugnis der Reife zum Offizier*. Groppe, a fellow classmate of von Kleist at *Kriegsschule* Anklam, received three 7 (good), three 6 (fairly good), one 4 (mediocre). His overall grade was 5+ "*befriedigend*" (satisfactory). Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 56. Bürkner recorded that he received an overall grade of 7 (good) on his *Zeugnis der Reife zum Offizier*.

indication that any of the von Kleist relatives who were serving officers had any significant interaction with the Ewald before his entry into the army. Moreover, Ewald grew up in towns, neither of which had army regiments stationed in them. There then were no officers or sons of officers from which to gain information and insight into the military. To summarize these elements or the lack thereof, is to say that Ewald was unfamiliar and untutored in all things military and thus had no head start on acclimatizing to *Fahnenjunker* training.

Also attributable to his up-bringing was his somewhat introverted personality, as identified by his regimental commander. As a young man under the tutelage of his father, Ewald did not develop an outgoing, self-confident, or an extroverted personality. Army officers were required and expected to lead and often in that role sufficiently motivate subordinates to bend to the officer's will in order to accomplish the mission at hand. Officers thus had to inspire confidence in their leadership and this depended on an active and properly focused aggressiveness of character. The indications are that Ewald did not show these personality traits, thus throwing into suspicion his potential leadership abilities.

Once having reported to *FAR 3*, Ewald encountered some less-than-ideal situations, ones which likely slowed his progress as a *Fahnenjunker*. First, he had no fellow *Fahnenjunker*. Thus, he lacked several elements that are often beneficial in a challenging training situation. Another person provides simple companionship and gives their fellow trainees through mere presence the reassuring idea that they are not in this alone. This reinforces the idea that if someone else can get through this so can I. Multiple trainees often allow for the training focus and scrutiny to be shared and sometimes even shifted entirely off of a single individual providing a mental and emotional respite. Also, Ewald could have observed another *Fahnenjunker* as they were instructed and worked to perfect the training tasks, thus serving as an example.

Conversely, a fellow trainee could have offered suggestions, critiques, and assistance in learning new tasks. As a single candidate, Ewald was deprived of these supportive, encouraging, and helpful actions supplied by others undergoing the same situation.

The timing of some of Ewald's training was also less than ideal. The fact that the regiment entered a period of focused and likely large and complex regimental training in early May, a short six weeks after Ewald's arrival, likely caused his training to suffer. With little time under his belt, Ewald would have just been mastering the individual tasks (marching, military riding, elementary military knowledge, etc.) and would have been largely unable to perform the more complex military tasks required of a gun team member. At this level, he would have only been able to act as an observer during gun team or battery-level exercises rather than having enough skills that allowed him to participate and improve his skills. Too, there was the likely break in training to attend his grandmother's funeral, which while not long, was likely not conducive to training continuity.

Too, there are the dynamics of Ewald's relationships with the officers and non-commissioned officers responsible for his training. While Ewald admired his first battery commander, *Hauptmann* Greßmann, it is unknown how he fared under his second, *Hauptmann* von Lüderitz. At the same time, we are left with no information on the heavily influential relationship of *Leutnant* Schultze, his *Fähnrichsvater*, on Ewald. Schultze was responsible for guiding Ewald's first months of training, teaching him the customs and courtesies of the regiment, and protecting him when needed from the extreme excesses of other officers as they tested the Ewald's character. It is possible that young *Leutnant* Schultze did not understand the importance of his role or lacked sufficient knowledge and experience to appropriately shepherd

the *Fahnenjunker* and help him develop the needed officer skills and the self-confidence to use them.²¹¹

Finally, of note is that von Kleist made no reference to his time as a *Fahnenjunker* in his post-war writings. No mention was made of his initial time in *FAR 3*. He does not recount any of his training experiences nor the officers or men connected with his first eighteen months in the regiment. Likewise, he makes no mention of his eight months at *Kriegsschule* Anklam. Nor did he ensure that his *Abgangszeugnis* survived and entered his papers. This strongly portends that Ewald did not fondly view or recall his *Fahnenjunker* time. Rather it appears that this was a difficult and likely uncomfortable period, one in which his probable self-doubt made him uncertain as to the sagacity of his career choice. But there was no turning back.

Taken in total, these observations offer some ideas for the reasons that von Kleist had what can only be called—a slow start. But key to note is, that despite his delayed acclimatization to the military and his slow progress in mastering the wide variety of officer skills, the German army officer corps did not use this to predetermine his entire career. The army recognized that not all capable senior level officers are outstanding leaders from the day they entered the army but rather allowed them, in this case, Ewald, time to develop and get his feet under him. Over the course of the next half decade, Ewald would indeed do that and the following half decade would see him hit his stride.

²¹¹ Several officers from *FAR 3* are mentioned in von Kleist's post-war writings, but Arnold Schultze is not one of them. *Rangliste 1902* indicates that *Leutnant* Schultze left the regiment after only six years and was detailed to service with the *auswärtiges Amt* (Foreign Office).

CHAPTER 4 - THE LEUTNANT—REGIMENTAL DUTY 1901-1907

Once commissioned, the officer began his troop leading duties and focused on this for the next several years. It was usually during these first three to five years that the officer's career trajectory was established. How well an officer acclimatized to regimental military life, how rapidly his officership skills grew, his selection to attend army professional training courses, as well as being chosen for key intra-regimental duties, all of this served to differentiate the young lieutenants. This section investigates the first six years of Ewald's commissioned service time, from 1901 to 1907, when his duties were focused within his artillery regiment and looks to answer the questions of, what was duty as a junior officer like and what key factors aided in von Kleist's officer development.

The initial period of an officer's career centered on learning how to lead at the lowest officer level. For an artillery officer this meant oversight of and participation in the training of the annual intake of *Dienstpflicht* (service duty, i.e., compulsory service) soldiers and serving as a *Zugführer* (two-gun section leader). The annual training cycle, beginning in October and ending in September, dictated the yearly schedule of events for the entire regiment. The cycle commenced with individual soldier training and progressively moved up through gun crew, battery, and battalion level training and onto brigade, and division level exercises. The culmination of the training year was the autumn large force field maneuvers. The highlight of

these large force maneuvers occurred every four to five years when the regiment, as part of the designated army corps, participated in the grand *Kaisermanöver* (imperial maneuvers).

After two years of commissioned time, the artillery lieutenant was sent to his first professional military education since he attended *Kriegsschule* as a *Fähnrich*. The three-and-a-half-month course at the *Feldartillerie-Schießschule* (field artillery shooting school, school of fire) provided both theoretical and practical instruction to the junior artillery lieutenants. Once back at the regiment, the officers continued teaching and training recruits as well as receiving continuing training and education themselves from other officers in the regiment.

Von Kleist's interest in horsemanship and equestrian competition took root and grew significantly during this period. Playing a role in pursuing his passion were the financial constraints which faced most officers. Various tactics were used to achieve their financial goals. In Ewald's case, this goal was the purchase of a horse. With his own horse and rising skill as a horseman, Ewald began participating in equestrian competitions.

During the last period, 1905 - 1907, Ewald was selected to serve as the riding battalion's adjutant, an important and responsible position. It was during this timeframe that Ewald got his professional feet under him and began to show his potential as an officer.

I. The Shiny New Lieutenant

As 1901 closed with the holiday season and Christmas leave for Ewald, he had time to reflect on the events of the past year. A year ago, at this time, he had been at the *Kriegsschule* for a month and a half but six more months of training in Anklam remained ahead of him. Despite the often-slow turnover of officers at regimental level, *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 3* (FAR 3) had, during Ewald's nearly nine months away from the unit, experienced significant personnel changes. At the top, *Major Freiherr von der Osten-Sacken und von Rhein* replaced *Oberst Freiherr von Amstetter-Zwerbach und Grabeneck* as the regimental commander in May.¹ The new regimental commander's assessment of Ewald's officership in the *Leutnant's* first *Qualifikations-Bericht* (officer evaluation report) in early December 1901, had been less than ideal. Ewald would have to work harder to improve the commander's assessment of him.

While *Major Rautenberg* remained commander of the *reitende Abteilung* and the *1. and 2. reitende Batterie Chefs* were still *Hauptleute* von *Peschke* and von *Lüderitz*, respectively, they had not secured Ewald's reassignment to the *reitende Abteilung* upon his return from *Kriegsschule*. Likely disheartened given his growing interest in horses and horsemanship, Ewald could take consolation in the fact that the youngest *Leutnant* in the *reitende Abteilung* had already served as an officer for well over two years.

Instead of returning to the *reitende Abteilung*, Ewald was assigned to *II. fahrende Abteilung, Batterie Nr. 6*. *Major Ernst Rudolf Sprotte, II. Abteilung Kommandeur*, had anticipated the shortfall of officers in the *Abteilung* and so Ewald's assignment into *6. Batterie* had been out of necessity. *Oberleutnant Emil Kolbe* had returned to the regiment in late summer

¹ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 86 (1901): 1180. The order directing the change was given by the *Militär-Kabinett* and approved by the *Kaiser* on 18 May 1901.

after finishing his three-year general staff officer course at the *Kriegsakademie*.² He too was assigned to *II. Abteilung, 6. Batterie* along with Ewald. It was from Kolbe that Ewald would have received his initial firsthand information concerning what being an officer-student was like at the prestigious *Kriegsakademie*. One can assume that the young and impressionable *Leutnant* was somewhat awed by Kolbe and his newly acquired general staff officer knowledge and skills. It also is likely that from his interaction with Kolbe that Ewald's desire to attend the *Kriegsakademie* took root and began to grow. A few weeks later in October, two *II. Abteilung* officers left; *Leutnant* Krause departed for the three-year staff officer's course at the *Kriegsakademie* and *Leutnant* Stolze began his course at the *Vereinigte Artillerie- und Ingenieurschule* (Unified Artillery and Engineer School) in Berlin.

Also, in October 1901, speculation as to a possible new commander for *II Abteilung* had commenced upon notification that a *Hauptmann* Karl Bloch von Blottnitz was inbound to the regiment.³ The captain was just back in Germany after fifteen months on operations overseas where he had commanded the *Marine Feldbatterie des Ostasiatischen Expeditionskorps*.⁴

² Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preußischen Armee und des XIII. (Königlich Württembergischen) Armeekorps für 1898-1902* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1898-1902). Hereafter, *Rangliste* and publishing date.

³ *Rangliste 1876-1903*. Karl Bloch von Blottnitz was no stranger to *FAR 3*. He joined *FAR 3* in 1877, likely after graduating from *Hauptkadettenanstalt-Berlin*. He was commissioned between May 1878 and May 1879 and remained in the regiment for three years. From 1875-1878, *Oberst* Theodor Bloch von Blottnitz, most likely Karl's father, commanded *FAR 3*. Bloch von Blottnitz senior had earned the *Pour le Mérite* as a *Hauptmann* in command of an artillery battery of the *Schlesisches Feld-Artillerie-Regiment Nr. 6*, during the Austro-Prussian War. At the time of Karl's entry into the army, three other Bloch von Blottnitz were serving officers. Paul, joined *FAR 19* at the same time as Karl joined *FAR 3*. Paul was a graduate of *Hauptkadettenanstalt-Berlin*, attended *Militär-Reit-Institut*, and was a graduate of the *Kriegsakademie* (1893). In 1901, Paul was an instructor at the *Feldartillerie Schießschule*. Paul went onto become a *Generalleutnant* and was killed on the Western Front in 1918. A third brother had entered *FAR 18* in 1873-74. He served twenty-one years as an artillery officer, retiring in 1895. A fourth Bloch von Blottnitz was serving as a *Major* in the *1. Hanseatisches Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 75* (Bremen), possibly a fourth brother.

⁴ Kriegsministerium, *Armee-Verordnungsblatt, Nr 87, 5 Oktober 1901* (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1902), 2290. The *deutsche Ostasiatische Expeditionskorps* (German East Asia Expeditionary Corps) comprised an all-volunteer military force of nearly 19,000 German officers and men dispatched in the Summer of 1900 to China as part of an allied contingent to put down the Boxer Rebellion.

Though newly returned to *FAR 3*, the *Hauptmann*, at year's end was positioned to take over command of *II Abteilung* from Major Sprotte sometime in the spring. *Hauptmann* Bloch von Blottnitz brought with him recent operational and combat experience which he would be expected to pass on to the officers and men of the regiment, a positive for Ewald. In the early October edition of the *Militär-Wochenblatt* the regiment read sad news. It learned that *Kanonier* Franz Wegner, who had served in *FAR 3* prior to going to China as a member of the 6. *Ostasiatisches Infanterieregiment*, had died aboard ship during his return voyage to Germany.⁵

In November 1901, the announcement came that *Oberleutnant* Fritz Krueger was assigned to *FAR 3* upon his return from overseas duty on the staff of the *Ostasiatischen Munitionskolonnen Abteilung* (East Asian Ammunition Column Battalion).⁶ He too was assigned to *II. Abteilung, 5. Batterie*, to fill a vacant position.

Thus, by Yuletide 1901, with the exception of the possible change of commanders, the *II. Abteilung* manning had settled out. The sixth battery, however, remained one junior lieutenant short. As the second most experienced battery commander by date of rank, *Hauptmann* Georg Siegmund's three years of experience at the head of the six-gun battery would be expected to see him successfully manage this officer shortfall.

The Christmas break from duty gave Ewald the opportunity to reflect on what he had learned as a *Fahnenjunker* and what he needed to focus on as a newly commissioned officer. Five principal areas encompassed virtually the entirety of officership for the Prussian/German officer in this era. They were: the officer's honor; his professional and technical knowledge,

⁵ "Berichtungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 86 (1901), 2316. The 9 October 1901 edition, reported that native Berliner, *Kanonier* Franz Wegner's death occurred on 21 August 1901 aboard the "Batavia."

⁶ *Personal-Veränderungen.* " *Militär-Wochenblatt* 86 (1901), 2718. Personnel reassignment list printed in the 23 November 1901 edition of the *Militär-Wochenblatt*. *Rangliste* 1903, 391. Krueger's stay in *FAR 3* was short as he was transferred to *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 65* sometime before May 1903.

generally labeled as “theoretical” knowledge; knowledge and skills in the “practical” arts; personal character; and *Truppendienst* (troop duty) competence.

First and of foremost importance was that the newly commissioned *Leutnant* comprehend and fully embrace the officer’s code of honor. The code’s principles which all officers were expected to live by were best seen as delineated by Wilhelm I in his 1874 introductory royal order in the *Verordnung über die Ehrengerichte der Offiziere im Preußischen Heere* (Regulations governing Officer Courts of Honor in the Prussian Army).⁷

I therefore expect from the entire officer corps of My Army that, as before, so also in the future, honor will be its highest treasure. To keep it pure and spotless must remain the most sacred duty of the whole corps as well as of the individual. The fulfillment of this duty implies the conscientious and complete fulfillment of all other duties of the officer. True honor cannot exist without loyalty unto death, without unwavering courage, resolute determination, self-denying obedience, sincere veracity, strict reticence, just as it cannot exist without self-sacrificing fulfillment of even the seemingly smallest duties. It also demands the expression in the outward life of the officer that dignity which arises from the consciousness of belonging to the class to which the defense of throne and fatherland is entrusted.⁸

Ensuring that the new officer gained knowledge and understanding of the code was the prescribed responsibility of regimental commanders and all fellow officers.⁹ Ewald had during

⁷ Wilhelm II, *Allerhöchste Verordnung über die Ehrengerichte der Offiziere im Preußischen Heere, vom 2. Mai 1874, und Ergänzungsordres* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1901). (Royal Regulation on the Courts of Honor for Officers in the Prussian Army, of May 2, 1874, and Supplementary Regulations) This fifty-four-page book is a compendium of the regulations and directives from Wilhelm I and Wilhelm II concerning Prussian Army officer honor courts from 2 May 1874 until the most recent on 16 September 1898.

⁸ Ibid., 5. This is an excerpt from the second paragraph. For the entirety of the introductory order, see Appendix 3.

⁹ Ibid., 9. Wilhelm I states directly to regimental commanders in the final paragraph of his introductory order that it is their responsibility that all newly appointed officers, in both the standing army and in the reserves, receive knowledge of the officers’ code of honor expectations. Felix Bürkner, *Ein Reiterleben*, 2. Nachdruck der Ausgabe Verden/Aller 1957 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag AG, 2008), 56-61. By way of example, Bürkner demonstrated the deep and lasting impact and the impression that the Prussian Army officer’s code of honor had on him when he chose to quote the first four full paragraphs of Wilhelm I’s order in his autobiography which was written and published over a half century after his first coming in contact with the officer honor code. He insightfully recorded how young officers were aided in inculcating the officer’s code of honor, “In this sense the officer corps lived; and the older comrades influenced the younger ones, already at the communal lunch table of the bachelors in the

his *Fahnenjunker* time observed officers like *Hauptmann* Oskar Greßmann, now on detached duty from the regiment as an adjutant to the *Kommandierende General III. Armeekorps*, and *Oberst Freiherr* von Amstetter-Zwerbach not only live the honor code but give him instruction in how to understand and uphold an officer's honor. He would now need to look to the new regimental commander, *Major Freiherr* von der Osten-Sacken, *Major* Ernst Sprotte, and *Oberleutnant* Kolbe, among others, as examples of how an officer should guard, protect, and defend his honor as an officer. Too, he would count on the officers in his regiment to introduce him to "those circles for his social interactions in which good manners prevail" as he expanded his social connections with new friends and acquaintances¹⁰ Also, he was aware that in reality he never took off his uniform. Even in mufti, he was still an officer and needed to be ever mindful of Wilhelm I's admonition that, "in public places he must never lose sight of the fact that he must appear not only as an educated man, but also as the bearer of the honor and increased responsibilities of his class."¹¹

As to his professional and technical knowledge, Ewald had the grades from the theoretical subjects instructed and tested at the *Kriegsschule* to perform a retrospective assessment in this area. Only in tactics and fortifications had he earned the respectable grade "*ziemlich gut*" (fairly good). He, however, had only achieved a rating of "*genügend*" (satisfactory) in weapons knowledge, topography & surveying, army organization & regulations, military writing, and map drawing. He would need to improve his competence in all of these areas. Fortunately, there were a number of handbooks, manuals, and pamphlets available to him

officers' mess, where completely imperceptibly the example of a Captain von Balluseck and Parlowski or the First Lieutenants Freiherr von Puttkammer and Hueck compelled emulation."

¹⁰ Wilhelm II, *Verordnung über die Ehrengerichte*, 5.

¹¹ Ibid., 5.

for both on duty and off duty study in all of these areas.¹² Too, he needed to ensure that his knowledge of the regulations which governed basic training of recruits and the theoretical subjects in which he would instruct them was solid in order to preclude any missteps or embarrassing shortcomings in his performance of his instructional and demonstrational duties.

As for his skills in the practical military arts (equitation, fencing, gymnastics, shooting, etc.), there was always room for improvement. Certainly, with Ewald's increasing interest in horses he looked forward to *Offizierreitstunde* (officer riding hour, that is officer equitation classes) during which he could focus on improving his equitation.¹³ As to the other areas, instruction from those officers more experienced and skilled than he and some dedicated practice should gain him the desired improvement.

In the area of character, *Major Freiherr* von der Osten-Sacken had praised his "very good manners," and favorably noted his "open, amiable nature."¹⁴ The commander had, however, singled out Ewald's somewhat reticent demeanor and noted that Ewald "must however become even more outgoing."¹⁵ Likely, Ewald would become more outgoing as his self-confidence grew. Also, a part of intrapersonal development was religion. While rarely a focus, an acceptable religious character was also deemed necessary. The expectation of both officer and soldier was weekly church attendance and an appropriate maintenance of one's Christian faith.

¹² "Inhalts-Uebersicht." Beilage zu Nr. 107 des *Militär-Wochenblatt* 1901 (1901). This insert to the *Militär-Wochenblatt* contained twenty pages listing well over 750 recently published books and pamphlets on a wide variety of military subjects to include handbooks and books aimed at raising an officer's knowledge in specific subject areas such as gunnery, cavalry operations, instructing soldiers, geography, tactics, etc. This list illustrates the large selection of books on military subjects available to officers of all ranks.

¹³ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 60. In a situation possibly like von Kleist and indicative of the attitude towards officer equestrianism in field artillery regiments, Bürkner recalled, "After the wonderful riding hunts in the fall, we were given officer riding lessons by Freiherr von Puttkammer, who set them up very expertly and systematically and taught us much."

¹⁴ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Qualifikations-Bericht; (Document 6). These are direct quotes from von Kleist's first officer evaluation report written by *Major Freiherr* von der Osten-Sacken, dated 1 December 1901.

¹⁵ Ibid. Von Kleist left no record of his thought on his first officer evaluation or on what he thought of its author.

In a handbook on the professional duties of an officer, the author, an active-duty *Hauptmann*, supplied the answer to the question of “What does “Mit Gott” (with God) mean?” “The man should be educated to fear and trust God, that a living faith in God should be awakened and preserved in him, this is the will of his Majesty, our exalted emperor and supreme warlord. He stated: ‘I want religion to be preserved for the people.’ Therefore, in the army, religious sense is cultivated and the man is encouraged to attend church.”¹⁶ For Ewald, church attendance and attention to spiritual matters would continue at one of the *Evangelische* churches in Brandenburg a/H.

For the fifth significant area, *Truppendienst* competence, Ewald needed to focus substantial attention and effort on what was his primary duty within the 6. *Batterie*. Ewald received the typical duty for new *Leutnants*, that of *Rekrutenoffizier* (recruit officer).

II. *Rekrutenoffizier*

In the artillery, the battery *Rekrutenoffizier* was responsible for the training of the annual intake of *Dienstpflicht* (service duty, i.e., compulsory service) men, that arrived each October, just after the autumn harvest. While the normal period of obligatory *Dienstpflicht* service was two years in duration, the men who chose to serve in the mounted branches, *Kavallerie* and *Feldartillerie*, served three years due to the additional training requirements. In a six-gun

¹⁶ Kurt von Rabenau, *Die deutsche Land- und Seemacht und die Berufspflichten des Offiziers; Ein Handbuch für Offiziere, Reserveoffiziere und Kriegsschüler über die Einrichtungen des Heeres und der Marine sowie über die Berufs- und Standespflichten des Offiziers* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1906), 228. The section on “Mit Gott” is located in the chapter entitled “Der Offizier als Vorgesetzter und Erzieher” (The officer as superior and educator). The author uses the German Army motto, “Mit Gott für König und Vaterland” (With God for King and Fatherland) to address what he calls the ultimate purpose (*Endzweck*) of a soldier’s education.

fahrende Batterie, like Ewald's 6. *Batterie*, the authorized number of *Dienstpflicht* soldiers was eight-three. Thus, each year saw approximately twenty-seven experienced recruits leave after completion of their three years of duty and a similar sized group of new recruits, colloquially known as *Hammel* (castrated ram), join the battery to refill its ranks.¹⁷

The other two *Abteilungen* of the regiment had their own complement of new recruits to train. In II. *Abteilung*, Ewald's fellow *Rekrutenoffiziere* were *Leutnant* Meyer of 4. *Batterie* and *Leutnant* von Tempelhoff, 5. *Batterie*. A handbook on officership from the era informed the junior lieutenants in a section title "The duties of the subaltern officer", that since the battery commander was alone responsible for training and education of the battery, the lieutenant must perform his duties as directed by his superior even if he sometimes disagreed.¹⁸ The handbook advised the lieutenants that depending on his abilities he would be given greater or lesser independence to accomplish his duties. Due to the importance of recruit training and the usual inexperience of the *Rekrutenoffizier*, the author continued that the recruit "officer usually has to submit a precise schedule to his company commander or receives weekly instructions from him

¹⁷ Generalleutnant a. D. Gerhard Friedrich von Pelet-Narbonne, *Löbell's Jahresberichte über die Veränderungen und Fortschritte im Militärwesen XXVIII Jahrgang: 1901* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1902), 8. The authorized number of enlisted men (*Unteroffiziere, Spielleute, Mannschaften*) for a middle budget *fahrende Batterie* in 1901 was 115. Subtracting thirty-two non-commissioned officers, farrier, medic, and musicians, the battery had a maximum authorization of 83 enlisted soldiers, *Gemeine* (privates). It is unlikely that full manning was achieved during peacetime and thus the likely totals for a *fahrende Batterie* was 22-28 non-commissioned officers, musicians, etc., and 70-78 privates. It is also likely that in FAR 3 that 6. *Batterie* was the most undermanned of the six *fahrende Batterien*. The 6. *Batterie*, while authorized four officers, in late 1901/early 1902, only had three officers assigned while all of the other, both *fahrende* and *reitende Batterien*, had their full complement of four and five authorized officers, respectively. This points to the likelihood that the regimental commander "robbed" 6. *Batterie* to bring the other batteries closer to their full complement of authorized peacetime manning.

"Truppenstammrolle 1908, den 1. Reitenden Batterie, Feldartillerie Regiment Generalfeldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgisches) No. 3" (enlisted soldier roster), (BA-MA: PH 12-II/145), 2-3. This official list of enlisted soldiers assigned to 1. *reitenden Batterie*, FAR 3 records the names and personal information for the thirty-nine three-year *Dienstpflicht* soldiers who entered the battery in October 1908 as new recruits. Additionally, the names of three *Einjährig-Freiwilligen* (one-year volunteers) and one *Fahnenjunker*, who was duly commissioned into the regiment in 1909, are annotated. That thirty-nine recruits were assigned to the first mounted battery sheds light on the annual turnover of enlisted soldiers and the training that was required to bring nearly a full third of the battery's manning up to some semblance of wartime readiness each year.

¹⁸ Von Rabenau, *Ein Handbuch*, 250.

on what training he has to conduct with the men.”¹⁹ While the *Rekrutenoffizier* had able assistance in the various areas of recruit training from the battery’s noncommissioned officers, he was expected to be an active and participatory instructor himself.²⁰ He was likewise to be knowledgeable of his recruits and exhibit solicitude over their care and wellbeing.²¹ A *Rekrutenoffizier* of the era recalled that the “regimental commander demanded of his recruit officers that we know every recruit and his domestic circumstances: his profession, father's profession, hometown and his character. We had to know whether at home he had a ‘chicken in the pot’ or came from a poor background.”²² This knowledge, care of, and interaction with the soldiers for whom the officer was responsible, when properly enacted promoted not only good

¹⁹ Ibid., 250.

²⁰ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 58-59. Bürkner recorded his experience as a *Rekrutenoffizier*. “I was immediately assigned the new recruit class at my old 4th Battery, which I now had to train independently under [battery commander] Balluseck's supervision. I put all my ideals into this task, about which I could, to a certain extent, give an account to myself through the topic that I had been given for the first written winter assignment: ‘The recruit officer as superior and educator’. This work succeeded so well that it was passed on by the regiment and went via brigade and division to the corps, whose commanding general, Excellency von Witlich, judged it with extraordinary praise, as did the other superiors. Thus the “theory” was confirmed, and the practice gave double pleasure [in execution].”

²¹ Von Rabenau, *Ein Handbuch*, 226. The handbook advised the young officer that, “The officer must -honorably and uprightly- avoid everything that could cast even the slightest shadow on his moral conduct; he must be blameless in his entire demeanor. Strict and hard on himself, he must educate his subordinates with seriousness, constancy, and appropriate rigor. But at the same time show them his goodwill and interest in them through his always active care. He should stand above them, live with them, care for them. In this way, he will gain more and more influence and bring to better understanding and change in those elements of the people who are agitated against the authorities, the army, the officer class and the educated and propertied classes. So that the agitators and rabble-rousers will more and more lose the ground for their incitements, rabble-rousing, and slanderers. The officer cannot take this task seriously enough, in which even the youngest officer is called upon to participate with all his strength.”

²² Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 59. While there certainly were officers who failed to emulate the desired relationship and leadership of the subordinates, Bürkner’s description evidences that there were officers who understood and strove to follow the desired leadership ethos idealistically described in handbooks and other officership literature at the turn of the century. “This personal relationship of the officer to his men promoted the cohesion and comradeship immensely, while the authority developed by itself - by the fact that the lieutenant had to demonstrate everything himself in every duty. On free afternoons, e.g., on the marches in the maneuver area, we officers played soccer together with our men, reviewed their quarters and rations, just as we always had to taste the men's food in the barracks. On the other hand, we were obliged to pay attention to the strictest honorifics, especially on the street, and to show ourselves in public only as if we as neat as a pin. On the other hand, the affection for each man and the care for him aroused the affection of the men for their superiors.”

order and discipline and efficient training, but enhanced the officer's ability to lead his subordinates in both peacetime and wartime.

The initial fall training period began with what one officer called "*Vorschulen des Rekrutenpersonals*" (recruit kindergarten).²³ The 20-year-old *Rekruten* were fresh from farms and factories and had received no military training before reporting to their assigned regiments, thus they required instruction in the most elementary of military skills and knowledge. As the training year progressed the recruit training increased in rigor and complexity. Once the *Rekruten* learned the basics of marching, drill, and calisthenics in the autumn, training during the winter months moved on to include basic equitation, weapons familiarization, and gun crew skills. They also received lectures from officers and NCOs on military topics: army regulations, roles, responsibility, and restrictions of soldiers on and off duty, *Militärrecht* (military law), personal hygiene, first aid, regimental and army history, and information on pay and allowances. The recruits also performed routine fatigue duties such as care, feeding, and grooming of horses, stable duties, barracks cleaning, etc.

At the end of January 1902, the *Abteilung Kommandeur* conducted the first comprehensive inspection of each battery's new men. The trainees' progress in riding and gunnery procedures as well as overall training achievement was noted. Ewald and fellow *Rekrutenoffiziere* received critiques on how well the recruits under their tutelage fared in comparison to the others and how they needed to improve their training in areas in which the new soldiers showed less than desired proficiency.

Shortly after the January *Rekruten* inspection, *FAR 3* received the order, passed down from *III. Armeekorps* and *6. Division*, that the regiment would be participating as one of the

²³ Wilhelm Keitel, "Schul- und Soldatenzeit bis zum 1. Weltkrieg, Wolfenbüttel" (Manuskripte) Bd. 2, (BA-MA: N 54/2, Nachlaß Keitel), 81.

corps' units in the 1902 *Kaisermanöver* scheduled for the coming September.²⁴ The pinnacle of the year's *Größere Truppenübungen* (large-force troop exercises) pitted *III. Armeekorps*, under the command of *General der Infanterie* von Lignitz, against *V. Armeekorps*, commanded by *General der Infanterie* von Stülpnagel. Of particular importance to *FAR 3* was the order detaching its *reitende Abteilung* from the regiment and placing it as the sole supporting artillery *Abteilung* to provisional *Kavallerie-Division A* comprised of the *6. Kavallerie-Brigade* and the *1. and 2. Garde-Brigaden*. This was a prestigious honor for *FAR 3's reitende Abteilung*, but one in which Ewald likely was somewhat disheartened due to the fact that he was not in his former *Abteilung*. Nonetheless, it was exciting news for the regiment and helped motivate von Kleist, his fellow officers and soldiers alike during the seven intervening months of training.

With the required rudimentary knowledge and skills acquired, the freshmen recruits were able to join the second- and third-year soldiers in the spring refresher training of the horses, both riding and gun-team horses, the driving exercises, and the practice of gunnery procedures on the local training area. The culmination of the spring training period for the entire regiment was a three-part inspection. First, the personnel, including the officers and noncommissioned officers, of all the batteries underwent an open ranks inspection.²⁵ This was followed by an inspection of each battery at their guns. The final inspection sequence was the horse-drawn gun drill on the large parade ground and a final general inspection of the entire regiment. Regularly present for

²⁴ Kriegsministerium, *Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt*, 1902, (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1903), 35-37. The *Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt* published the army order directing the 1902 *Kaisermanöver* in Edition 5, 11 February 1902.

²⁵ An open ranks inspection is one in which each man's uniform and individual weapons are individually scrutinized by the inspecting officer. Any flaws, improper wear, dirty equipment, etc. are annotated and tallied for the overall grade. The name of this inspection is derived from the formation in which the men stand at attention. In open ranks, the men stand normally at least one extended arm's length away from the men on their left and right and two paces from the men in front and behind. This "openness" allows the inspectors to move freely around the individual soldiers. Closed ranks is a formation in which the men are nearly shoulder to shoulder and with only one pace (approximately three feet) between the soldiers to their front and rear. Closed ranks is normally used for marching troops such as during parades.

theses inspections were *6. Artillerie-Brigade Kommandeur* and the *6. Division Kommandeur*. In 1902, these were *Oberst Rüder* and *Generalleutnant von Liebert*, respectively. At least every other year the commanding general of the corps also attended.²⁶

In late April, the expected change of command for *II. Abteilung* occurred when newly promoted *Major* Block von Blottnitz took over from *Major* Sprotte.²⁷ This gave *Major* Block von Blottnitz a month to settle in as commander before leading his *Abteilung* to Jüterbog *Truppenübungsplatz* to participate in annual gunnery training. Also, in April, the regimental commander, *Freiherr* von der Osten-Sacken, received his promotion to *Oberstleutnant*.²⁸

The *6. Artillerie-Brigade*, comprised of *FAR 3* and *FAR 39*, spent 4 – 23 June 1902, at Jüterbog.²⁹ For the soldiers, to include the new recruits under Ewald's training supervision, this was an exciting time and a reward for their many hours of simulated gun firing practice back in Brandenburg as they participated in the live-fire training. Officers and men alike, gained competence and confidence in their assigned wartime skills during the days spent on the firing range. As for Ewald, this was his second live-fire training period at Jüterbog and thus he continued to gain familiarity with executing live-fire training plans, the procedures for

²⁶ Ibid., 85. It is likely that the *Kommandierenden General III. Armeekorps, General der Infanterie* von Lignitz attended the inspection in Spring 1902. His interest in the regiment would have been precipitated by his knowledge that he would be one of the two army corps commanders in the upcoming fall 1902 *Kaisermanöver*

²⁷ “*Personal-Veränderungen.*”. *Militär-Wochenblatt* 87 (1902): 1004. The 23 April 1902 edition, reported Bloch von Blottnitz promotion to *Ernannt* (brevet) *Major* (DoR 22 April 1902) and *Major* Sprotte's assignment as *Regiments Kommandeur, Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 5* garrisoned in Sprottau, Schlesien (present day Szprotawa, Poland).

²⁸ *Rangliste 1902*, 397. Interestingly, *Freiherr* von der Osten-Sacken was promoted on 22 April 1902 only to retire or be retired four months later, on or about 14 August 1902. Generally, officers were promoted to the next higher rank at their retirement as a nod from the king recognizing their distinguished duty. The fact that *Freiherr* von der Osten-Sacken was given his pension and was allowed the privilege to continue to wear the army uniform indicates that he was not removed for cause, at least not for a reason which would have sullied the honor of the officer corps or his personal honor.

²⁹ *Kriegsministerium. Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt, 1902*, 114-116. *Zeiteintheilung für die Schießübungen der Feldartillerie im Jahre 1902* (Time schedule for the Field Artillery Firing Exercises in 1902) was the *Kriegsministerium* ordered schedule for gunnery training for the artillery brigades at the various *Truppenübungsplätze* across the *Reich*. Once again, *FAR 3* enjoyed priority of schedule in the relative cool of June. The 5th and 38th Artillery Brigades were scheduled at Jüterbog in July and August, respectively.

transporting, handling, and firing of live ordnance, as well as the rules, regulations, and physical layout of the *Truppenübungsplatz*. His first Jüterbog experience was the previous year when he had been the regiment's solitary *Fahnenjunker*. Undoubtedly, he was happy to have stepped out of those shoes which were now worn by Rudolf Kaempfe and Walter Boehm, the regiments two *Fahnenjunker* accessions for 1902.³⁰ Too, Ewald had the opportunity to renew his acquaintanceships with Benary, Cordes and Cölle of *FAR 39*, all of whom, like Ewald, had received their commissions the previous August.³¹ By the end of June, the regiment had returned to Brandenburg and set its training sights on preparation for the *Kaisermanöver*.

In late August 1902, the regimental commander changed when *Major Freiherr von der Osten-Sacken und von Rhein* relinquished command to *Major Karl Drimborn*. Drimborn came from serving as an *Abteilung Kommandeur* in the *1. Westpreußisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 35* stationed in Deutsch-Eylau, Westpreußen.³² Thus, both the regiment and Ewald were

³⁰ "Kaempfe, Rudolf" (Lexikon der Wehrmacht, no date) <http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de/Personenregister/K/KaempfeRudolf.htm> (April 20, 2020). Kaempfe (* 10 April 1883 in Moscow; † 23 December 1962 in Stuttgart) joined *FAR 3* on 26 February 1902, after completing his *Abitur*. He remained with *FAR 3* until 1916 when he was transferred to duties as a general staff officer. He survived the war, was retained in the *Reichswehr* and entered World War II as commander, *31. Infanterie Division*. By January 1942, he had been promoted to *General der Infanterie* and was *Kommandierenden General* of *XXXV. Armeekorps*. In fall 1942, Kaempfe was relieved of command and placed in the *Führerreserve*. He was arrested for suspected complicity in the 20 July 1944 plot and imprisoned for the remainder of the war. He was further imprisoned by the Russians until his release in the fall of 1949. *Rangliste 1904-1914*. Walter Boehm joined *FAR 3* in spring 1902 after completing his *Abitur*. Boehm served as a troop officer in the regiment and replaced von Kleist as the *Adjutant, reitende Abteilung* in 1907. He remained in that position until he was posted as a student to the *Kriegsakademie* from October 1910 – 22 July 1913, where he was in the same class as von Kleist. Boehm returned to *FAR 3* and entered World War I with the regiment as an *Oberleutnant*. During the war, he rose to the rank of *Major* and ended the war on the general staff of the German Military Command in Finland. He retired from the army after the war. Both *Fähnriche* received their commissions on 18 August 1903, and both were pre-dated to 19 August 1902.

³¹ *Rangliste 1902*, 422. See also, Albert Benary, "Aus dem ersten Jahrzehnt des Regiments" (Schreibmaschinenmanuskript), (BA-MA: N 286/3, Nachlass Benary), 1-5. See Benary for his insightful recollections as a *Leutnant* of the training at Jüterbog in "Der Marsch zum Schießplatz" (The March to the Shooting Range) and "Der Schießplatz" (The Shooting Range).

³² "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 87 (1902): 1928 and 1942. *1. Westpreußisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 35* was, like *FAR 3*, a large, three *Abteilung* (two *farhrende* and one *reitende*), forty-eight-gun regiment. By the summer of 1902, Drimborn had been a major for nearly five years (DoR 18 November 1897), and left *FAR 35* where he had been the *reitende Abteilung Kommandeur*. *Rangliste 1873; 1875, and 1891*. Drimborn served as a junior officer in *Hessisches Feld-Artillerie Regiment Nr. 11* (Cassel) and as an *Abteilung Adjutant*. As a *Premier-Lieutenant*, he attended the *Kriegsakademie* 1884-1887. After graduating he was transferred

under the command of the third regimental commander in three years, an unusually high turnover rate for regimental commanders in this era. The change of command came with six weeks left before the beginning of the *Kaisermanöver*.

The heart of the *Größere Truppenübung* was the five maneuver days in which the Blue and Red Forces were in the field and “fighting” against one another. This large force movement occurred between 8-12 September, a Monday to Friday. For *FAR 3*, a unit of Blue Force and fighting under *III. Armeekorps* and *6. Infanterie Division*, the troop assembly area was in the vicinity of Frankfurt an Oder. Frankfurt lay one-hundred miles (one-hundred sixty kilometers) directly east of Brandenburg.

Given the scale of the exercise and the number of converging units, it is likely that *FAR 3* departed on the first or second day of September and covered the distance from home to Frankfurt a./O. in a three- or four-day road march. After setting up their camp in their assigned cantonment area, the regiment would have had several days to recover from the march and prepare for their participation.

to *Feld=Artillerie=Regiment Nr. 31* (Hagenau) and by 1891 was a *Hauptmann* and *Batterie-Chef* with *Feld=Artillerie=Regiment Nr. 33* (Metz). *Major Freiherr* von der Osten=Sacken und von Rhein retired from active duty and was rewarded for his honorable service by the authorization to where the regiment’s uniform in retirement.



Figure 3 Field Artillery Regiment on the March

Officers and men of an artillery unit in march formation taking a short roadside break.³³

The designated maneuver area encompassed the region between Frankfurt a./O. and Posen to the east.³⁴ The area was bounded by the Warta River to the north, the Oder River and the Obra Canal to the west and south, and the Obra River to the east. The approach terrain between the opposing forces was about twenty-five miles (forty kilometers) long and twelve and a half miles (twenty kilometers) wide. The area terrain made it difficult for the movements of larger units, because about half was covered with woods and in places with large lakes which enabled strong defensive sectors. The remainder, however, despite numerous small watercourses and ditches, was ideal for the deployment and use of all weapons types, provided excellent cover

³³ Redaktion der Woche, hrsg. *Kaisermanöver in der Ostmark 1902* (Druck und Verlag von August Scherl G.m.b.H., 1902), 13. This photo from the sixteen-page book entitled *Imperial Maneuvers in the Ostmark, 1902*. The book features over one hundred photos taken during the 1902 *Kaisermanöver*.

³⁴ "Rückblicke auf die deutschen Kaisermanöver 1902," *Allgemeine schweizerische Militärzeitung* 49 (1903): Heft 31, 251-254. The details of the maneuvers are taken from the article "A look back at the German Imperial Maneuvers of 1902" in the General Swiss Military Newspaper. See this approximately 3,000-word article for specific details and a relatively unbiased analysis of the maneuvers.

for the movements of larger bodies of troops, and gave cavalry the opportunity for very close reconnaissance.

The forces fielded were impressive in their size and numbers. The Blue Force was formed by the *III. Armeekorps*, with its two organic divisions (5th and 6th) and was reinforced by a guards division and by a cavalry division. The force totaled some forty-two infantry battalions, forty-five cavalry squadrons, forty artillery batteries, and two machine-gun detachments. The Red Force was formed by the *V. Armeekorps* with its organic divisions (9th and 10th) and had as reinforcements, a provisional 3rd Division and a cavalry division. Red strength was thirty-seven infantry battalions, forty-five cavalry squadrons, thirty-eight artillery batteries, and two machine-gun detachments; a force slightly lighter in infantry and artillery than its opposition. The forces also had nine combat engineer companies, a corps telegraph detachment each, and one airship detachment each.



Figure 4 Field Artillery Battery in the Field

A field artillery battery on line and firing during an exercise.³⁵

For Ewald and *FAR 3* the first two days of the “battle” passed without significant action, the regiment’s main responsibility was to position itself as part of *6. Division* as directed in

³⁵ Redaktion der Woche, *Kaisermanöver 7*. This photo shows the exposed position of the guns and gunners.

preparation to defend against the main attack of *V. Armeekorps* which was expected on Wednesday, Day 3 of the maneuvers. Midweek saw two divisions of *General der Infanterie von Lignitz's III. Armeekorps* successfully defend against all three divisions of *General der Infanterie von Stülpnagel's V. Armeekorps*. On Thursday, *III. Armeekorps* took the offensive as all three of its divisions attacked. Here, *FAR 3* would have contributed to supporting the infantry attacks as Blue forces sought to dislodge the defending Red forces.

The offensive succeeded, as expected having been led by the *Kaiser*, and *V. Armeekorps* began their retreat. Friday, the concluding day, opened with the Red Force arrayed again on the defensive. All three Blue infantry divisions attacked to fix the Red Force in position. The *Kaiser* at the head of a hastily formed cavalry corps, swung wide of the enemy's right wing and then delivered the decisive blow at a strategic point in the enemy's rear thus securing Blue's "victory."

A dispassionate report on the *Kaisermanöver* by a Swiss military newspaper opined on the *Kaiser's* cavalry attacks and openly "doubted the possibility of success of this great cavalry attack in a serious case."³⁶ The same newspaper reported that German infantry units had studied Boer tactics and on several days in small scale engagements were seen to be experimenting with these tactics.³⁷ Of particular interest to *FAR 3* and the budding artilleryman, Ewald, was the newspaper's assessment of German artillery tactics.

In the artillery duel, it was noticeable that in Germany, too, the desire to deploy large artillery lines seems to be dying out; at least at the battery level. The batteries mainly took up positions singly, sought above all a covered, unobserved entrance into their positions, as well as positions favorable to themselves. There was much less uniformity of the positions noted. It is generally recognized that this method of engagement offers considerable advantages in view of the tremendous effect of today's firearms, and since the rounds with smokeless

³⁶ *Kaisermanöver* 1902, 254.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 254. The employment of Boer infantry tactics is one of the central points of analysis of the article.

powder does not immediately reveal the position taken, and only the concern was raised that the force of the artillery attack, with which such great successes were achieved in 1870/71, might suffer. However, after the impression of the events of the maneuvers, especially on September 10, on the part of the 10th Division against the 6th, this fear seemed unjustified. - Once it is recognized that artillery can exert its powerful influence on the shaping of the battle in ways other than the greatest possible massing, it is not a large step further to the recognition of the principle that artillery must work in much closer contact with infantry, that it is not merely there for the great general task, but must also facilitate the approach of any infantry to the enemy.³⁸

It appears that 6th Division's artillery, *FAR 3* and *FAR 39*, did not fare so well against the batteries of 10th Division, *FAR 20* and *FAR 56*.³⁹ The narrative points to the latter's better battery disbursement and use of terrain to conceal and protect the guns. A further, albeit unwritten, reason for *FAR 3*'s poor performance was likely attributable to the less than proficient leadership of the regiment by its recently installed commander, *Major Drimborn*.⁴⁰

While Ewald makes no comment on this *Größere Truppenübung* of 1902 in his writings, he could not have been disappointed at having participated in his first *Kaisermanöver* within his first thirteen months of commissioned service. Perhaps, while the exercise was memorable, his performance, like that of his regiment, had not been noteworthy and was rather something to take silent note of his need for improvement.

³⁸ Ibid., 254.

³⁹ *Rangliste 1902*, 410 and 431-432. The two artillery regiments were, 1. *Posensches Feldartillerie Regiment Nr. 20* and 2. *Posensches Feldartillerie Regiment Nr. 56*. Both regiments were medium-sized with two *fahrende Abteilung* fielding thirty-six guns. Of note, *FAR 3*'s *reitende Abteilung*, while it had initially been assigned to the Blue Force cavalry division, by the commencement of the *Kaisermanöver*, another *reitende Abteilung* had been assigned to the cavalry division and *FAR 3*'s *reitende Abteilung* had rejoined the regiment. Thus, the combined seventy-two-gun *fahrende Regimenter* of 10th Division are reported to have outperformed the larger and more mobile combined eighty-four-gun *reitende* and *fahrende Regimenter* of 6. Division.

⁴⁰ "Abschiedsbewilligungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 89 (1904): 1251. Drimborn retired from the army as a *Major*, with a pension, in April 1904, after only twenty months in command of *FAR 3*. Retirement approved by the *Kaiser* on 24 April 1904. At the time of his retirement, Drimborn was the tenth most senior artillery major of two hundred twenty. Of note, Drimborn was promoted upon retirement to *Oberstleutnant*, an indication that his service was deemed honorable and sufficiently noteworthy. Too, Drimborn was granted the right to wear the army uniform in retirement.

The return to barracks from the *Kaisermanöver* and shortly thereafter the release of the *Dienstpflicht* soldiers who had completed their third year of duty signaled the end of the annual training cycle. For Ewald the year (October 1901 to September 1902) had been his first complete training cycle and much of his time and energy was focused on his *Rekrutenoffizier* duties. There was, however, time and energy left for other on and off duty activities.

III. A Horse of His Own

As a relative neophyte but serious equestrian, Ewald faced both the professional need and personal desire for a horse of his own. As a very junior *Feldartillerie Leutnant*, Ewald's base pay was 1,008 *Marks* annually/84 *Marks* monthly.⁴¹ This was certainly a step up from the twenty-three *Marks* per month he had earned as a *Fähnrich*.⁴² In addition to their base pay, *Leutnants* could receive *Servis* (rations allowance) and *Wohnungsgeldzuschuss* (housing allowance). If Ewald received these allowances, he collected an additional 24 *Marks* and 18 *Marks* per month for *Servis* and *Wohnungsgeldzuschuss*, respectively.⁴³ Receipt of both

⁴¹ Kriegsministerium, *Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt*, Nr 34, 15. Oktober 1901 (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1902), 371. The *Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt* listed the names of officers who were authorized to receive increases in their pay above the base amount. The list in the 15 October 1900 edition, lists "von Kleist Feldartillerie-Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3" as being authorized the pay amount of 1,008 *Marks* annually beginning 1 August 1901. A total of twenty-five *Feldartillerie Leutnants*, all commissioned on 18 August 1901, are listed. Artillery officers received different pay, and thus special authorizations, as compared to other branches. The junior most field artillery lieutenant was paid 1,008 *Marks* annually, while the junior most foot artillery lieutenant received 900 *Marks* annually.

⁴² Hein, *Das kleine Buch vom Deutschen Heere* (Kiel und Leipzig: Verlag von Lipsius & Tischer, 1901), 125. In 1900, the monthly pay during the *Fahnenjunker* period was: while a *Gemeine*- 6,60 \mathcal{M} ; as a *Gefreite*- 8,10 \mathcal{M} ; *Unteroffizier*- 21,60 \mathcal{M} ; and as a *Fähnrich*- 23,10 \mathcal{M} .

⁴³ Hein, *Das kleine Buch vom Deutschen Heere* (Kiel und Leipzig: Verlag von Lipsius & Tischer, 1901), 127. It is uncertain if von Kleist was entitled to and received the *Servis* and *Wohnungsgeldzuschuss* allowances. Information indicates that the authorization for payment of these allowances was specific to location, regiment and likely to an

allowances brought his gross monthly army pay to 126 *Marks*. Then too, there was the *Zuschuss* of fifty *Marks* per month received from his father. Against the combined maximum income per month of 175 *Marks* stood the young lieutenant's expenses. The mandatory items of rent, food, and clothing added up to between 100 to 150 *Marks* per month.⁴⁴ Expected participation at social occasions whether with fellow officers at the *Kasino* or outside the *Kaserne* were further expenses. Deductions for the regimental dues of at least thirty *Marks* per month further reduced surplus funds.⁴⁵ By the end of the month, with normal consumption habits it is unlikely that Ewald had more than a few *Marks* to place in savings.⁴⁶ If he was to save enough money for his own horse, Ewald, like many of his fellow mounted branch *Leutnants* across the army, had to find ways to reduce expenses.

While von Kleist remained silent on his financial situation as a young *Leutnant*, other junior artillery officers of the era wrote about their fiscal challenges.⁴⁷ From the latter's writings we gain a glimpse of methods of saving money. To reduce one of the larger expenses, rent, an officer sought cheaper and therefore smaller, less convenient, and less modern apartments. Soon after returning from *Kriegsschule*, Ewald took up residence at Kleiststraße 5. The address, an

individual officer. If von Kleist did receive both allowances his monthly income rose fifty percent over his base pay. If a *Leutnant* elected to live on the *Kaserne* then he forfeited his *Wohnungsgeldzuschuss*.

⁴⁴ Monthly rent for a furnished apartment cost between 50 and 100 *Marks*. The cost of food was approximately 60 *Marks*. Replacement uniforms, boots, gloves, and civilian clothes were paid for out of the *Leutnant's* pocket.

⁴⁵ Bernhard von Poten, *Unser Volk in Waffen, das deutsche Heer in Wort und Bild* (1887; reprint, *Wolfenbüttel: Melchior Verlag, 2008*), 299. The dues included fees for membership in the officer's mess, regimental library, music entertainment, gifts to departing commanders and officers, special event costs, uniform fund, and other fees and expenses. Poten cites that the cost for a cavalry or artillery lieutenant was at a minimum of thirty *Marks* per month, higher in some regiments. As can be seen, this set of fees consumed more than a third of a lieutenant's monthly base pay.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 298. Officers were paid on the first of the month for the coming month. Enlisted men were paid thrice monthly, on the 1st, 11th, 21st. As special formation, *Löhnungsappell* (pay roll call), was called and each enlisted man was paid what he was due. The amount of pay was recorded in his *Soldbuch* (pay book). The Officer of the Day oversaw the payroll disbursement to ensure each man received the proper amount.

⁴⁷ Albert Benary, "Der Leutnant." (Schreibmaschinenmanuskript), (BA-MA: MSG 2/2736), 21-22. Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 60-61. Keitel, "Schulzeit.", 80-89.

apartment building with thirteen residents was near the main train station, very near the main railway line and was a thirty-minute walk to *Artillerie-Kaserne*.⁴⁸ The apartment's location and type point to Ewald's effort to minimize rent costs. This apartment, however, appeared to not have been satisfactory for the young lieutenant. Some time prior to the end of 1902, Ewald moved to Luckenbergerstrasse 10. This new location, a building with five residents, was at the foot of one of the several bridges over the Brandenburg Niederhavel watercourse and a short distance from the heart of the city.⁴⁹ This apartment was only sixth tenths of a mile (one kilometer) from the *Artillerie-Kaserne*, a fifteen-minute walk, thus making it more convenient to get to post. Another cost saving strategy was for junior officers to share an apartment. A final and the most cost saving arrangement was to seek one of the few junior officer quarters on the *Kaserne*.⁵⁰ While the *Leutnant* forfeited a possible 18 *Marks* per month of *Wohnungsgeldzuschuss*, a probable savings of 30 to 80 *Marks* per month in rent outlay made living in barracks a desirable option.

Minimizing another major expense, food, also had its strategies. These included skipping meals, reducing portions, forgoing butter on bread, self-rationing or self-denial of expensive delicacies, and the like.⁵¹ Some officers were able to supplement their diets with food packages

⁴⁸ Paul Kahle, *Adreßbuch der Stadt Brandenburg an der Havel* (Brandenburg a/H.: Paul Kahle Verlag, 1902) (Brandenburg Stadtarchiv: Akte: HPF9, Addressbuch 1900-1903. 1902 Edition (microfilm)). The apartment was located less than 400 yards from the main Berlin-Magdeburg railway line which ran on the southside of Brandenburg a/H. The distance from the apartment to *Artillerie-Kaserne* was 1.5 miles (2.4 kilometers). Building residents included one *Hauptmann* (von Peschke, *FAR* 3), three *Leutnants* (von Kleist and Hüttmann, and Schüler of *FR* 35), one married woman without her husband, three widows, a typesetter, and three manual laborers, and a prison warden. As can be seen here, the officers, even ones of noble birth, lived shoulder to shoulder with the working class.

⁴⁹ Gustav Matthes, *Adreß-Buch der Stadt Brandenburg a. H. mit Einschluß des Domes* (Brandenburg a/H.: Gustav Matthes Verlag, 1903), 219.

⁵⁰ Keitel, "Schulzeit.", 80. Keitel occupied the *Leutnantswohnung* (lieutenant's quarters) belonging to 2nd Battery which had become available after the suicide of its pervious inhabitant, one *Leutnant* Schulz. Keitel's parents provided a few articles of furniture and housekeeping items to assist the young lieutenant.

⁵¹ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 60. Bürkner wrote of trying to save money, "Of course, we had to live very frugally. There was no butter on the bread - and in the Casino was already half a bottle Mosel at 35 Pfennigen, a worrisome luxury."

sent from home.⁵² Sons of estate or farm owners seem to have received this kind of parcel more often or in more copious quantities than their city-living counterparts. There were also opportunities to gain a meal here and there during the course of official duties, such as serving as the officer inspector to ensure the soldier's food was properly prepared and of acceptable taste and seeking duty assignments which included army provided rations while in the field. Avoidance of going to restaurants or pubs and rationing alcohol consumption and drinking less expensive beer than more costly wine were additional ways to save money. Certainly, *Leutnants* looked forward to dinner or special event (christenings, engagement parties, etc.) invitations from fellow officers, family, and friends in which they could enjoy a full and satisfying meal without having to fret over the cost. Too, officers who enjoyed hunting, both mounted and dismounted, sought and received invitations from land owners, as often as not either noblemen or well-heeled farmers, to join in hunts in the countryside. While the land owner retained the right to all game taken on his land, the invited hunting guests were traditionally given a hearty meal at the conclusion of a day's hunt. Hunts involving overnight stays in the country naturally brought with them additional meals provided by the host family.

Comprehensively curbing costs on the remainder of monthly expenses was additionally required to ring the maximum amount of savings from each month's pay. Thus, rationing coal for heating an apartment, asking for practical rather than luxury gifts from family, walking rather than taking a tram or horse drawn taxi, riding third class on the railway, seeking free social

⁵² Ibid., 61. Bürkner attended a course at *Feldartillerie-Schießschule* in Jüterbog in early 1904 along with school friend Wilhelm Keitel. Bürkner remembers, "The usual orders to attend the field artillery school of fire in Jüterbog brought me the pleasure of meeting Wilhelm Keitel during the course. Our trips to Berlin, which we always took together, depended on our wallets. We made four packets [of food] from the monthly cash balance and thus knew exactly what we could consume during the week. If a weekly package was used up, we stayed in the camp until the beginning of the next week, ate Helmscheroder sausage sandwiches and drank coffee. And so, we always got by with our pennies, thanks to the packages from home." Helmscheroder was Keitel's hometown and where the family farm was located. Thus, the local variety of sausage was included in the "care packages" sent by Keitel's farmer father.

events such as community concerts rather than paid ones, minimizing wear and tear on clothing and equipment, seeking good quality second hand items rather than new ones, having parents visit rather than incurring the expense of traveling home, using army facilities/utilities rather than one's own, for example, staying at the *Offizier-Kasino* to read in the evening rather than return to one's quarters and having to heat and light it, and a myriad of other cost savings tactics were employed.⁵³

For Ewald and his fellow equestrian minded officers, there were several other avenues not for saving money but for making additional income. The first path for the young *Leutnant* enthusiastic about horses was to enter equestrian competitions. The categories included flat track racing, steeple chasing, cross-country (similar to today's eventing), long-distance cross-country, arena jumping, and dressage. The competitions varied from small regimental contests, to division and corps level events, on up to regional, national, and international competitions. While the larger and more prestigious events required both high quality and thus expensive horseflesh and top-notch riding skills, the smaller events generally had classes in which an officer could ride his army owned and maintained *Chargenpferd* (officer's charger) for racing, cross-country, and jumping. The money-making part of entering these competitions lay in the event's prizes. Winning or placing second, third, and sometimes lower, earned the successful riders prizes. A relatively minor race in Braunschweig sponsored by *Husaren Regiment Nr. 17* for *Chargen- (Offizier-) Pferde* in the Autumn of 1903, had as its first prize award a silver

⁵³ Ibid., 60. Shortly after he was commissioned, Bürkner set the goal of saving thirty Marks per month from his salary and parental *Zuschuss* (75 Marks/month). Thirty Marks was the cost of feeding one horse for a month. After he had been able to successfully save the thirty Marks each month for half a year, he concluded that he could indeed live on the remaining monthly money and purchase fodder for one personally owned horse. Bürkner purchased a "thoroughbred gelding, Epigramm xx by Laureate II xx. Previously he had been successfully ridden in some races by the very well-known race rider, Eynard of the Saxon 18th Uhlans. I purchased him for 320 Marks. I bought him out of my children's savings, acquired saddlery - and was now the overjoyed owner of my first own horse."

salver.⁵⁴ A mid-level competition such as was held at the army's *Militär-Reit-Institut* in Hannover saw prizes in the top-level class competition, a multi-disciplined series of events over two days, in the amounts of: first place, a trophy and 1,500 \mathcal{M} ; second place, 700 \mathcal{M} ; third place, 400 \mathcal{M} ; fourth place, 200 \mathcal{M} ; fifth place, 100 \mathcal{M} ; and six and seventh places, each 50 \mathcal{M} .⁵⁵ The winner of the 1,500 \mathcal{M} was an *Oberleutnant* from a *Kürassier-Regiment* and in this single event he doubled his annual army salary which was 1,500 \mathcal{M} .⁵⁶ While officers who owned their own horses certainly incurred expenses, officers who chose to ride their duty mounts in competitions expended little money with a chance of winning prizes that made their efforts well worthwhile.

The second path to successfully owning personal mounts of the desired quality was through the training of horses. Unbroken or broken but minimally trained horses cost approximately half of the amount of a well broken and reliable riding horse. As the *Leutnants* gained experienced in the training of army remounts, they acquired the skill and knowledge

⁵⁴ Keitel, "Schulzeit.", 86-90. See Keitel's detailed account of preparations for and riding in the *Chargen- (Offizier-) Pferde-Rennen*. Of note, Keitel had earned his commission only a year prior to participating in this race. While he was a somewhat accomplished rider, this was his first serious flat race. Keitel further notes that he successful rode and twice more won this race in later years. He records, "In later years, I won the same race in Braunschweig twice more with the [horse] Novella; that's where I received the silver Empire coffee pot with cream pitcher and sugar bowl, and finally, in 1908, when I was already engaged, I was able to place the winning prize from this charger-horse race in the form of a silver centerpiece filled with violets on my then bride's birthday celebration table." While Keitel elected to keep his trophy, other officers no doubt sold or pawned the less meaningful merchandise prizes for hard cash.

⁵⁵ Militär-Reit-Institut, "Programm für das Konkurrenzreiten zu Hannover am 6. und 7. April 1906 in der neuen Bahn des Militär-Reit-Instituts." (Stadtarchiv Hannover, Akte 1. HR.20, Nr. 831. Correspondence from Militär-Reit-Institut and Hannover city officials.). The sixteen-page program lists a total of seven different classes or competition sections, five for officers and two for women riders during the two-day event. The total cash prizes for the event totaled 6,400 *Marks* with a number of trophies also presented. The entry price for each class varied from 20 *Marks* to free. For the top class, "Konkurrenz A" (competition class A), the competition was for officers of the German Army on any horse, Chargers and Duty horses excluded. The rider had to own the horse. There were forty-one competitors in this class: one *Major*, five *Rittmeister*, twelve *Oberleutnants*, and twenty-three *Leutnants*. Thirty-four were cavalry officers and the remaining seven were artillery officers. Twenty-eight officers (68.2 percent) were noblemen.

⁵⁶ "Konkurrenzreiten im Militär-Reitinstitut," *Hannoversches Tageblatt*, April 8, 1906, 3. Hein, *Deutschen Heere*, 127. *Oberleutnant* von Bültzingslöwen (DoR: 27 January 1903), *Kürassier-Regiment Nr. 7* (Halberstadt), as an *Oberleutnant*, earned 1,500 *Marks* per year salary. Thus, this single prize doubled his income. Winnings of this size, for example, could fund the purchase of a quality, well-trained, and experienced competition horse, or pay for fodder for four horses for one year.

which enabled them to train non-army horses. While the interest, aptitude, perseverance, and demeanor required to train horses was not found in many young officers of the mounted arms, for those who possessed the needed attributes, the way to owning quality horseflesh was open. As the budding and enthusiastic horseman gained knowledge and skill at equestrian training, he often began by purchasing a horse from a fellow officer. The ideal horse was one which was trained for army duty but which possessed the capability for training to a higher level. Purchased for a reasonable price, the new owner invested training time and effort. The training of one's personally own *Chargenpferd* was permitted during on duty time.⁵⁷ If the young *Leutnant* was successful, the horse increased in utility, value, and desirability. After six months or a year, the horse was sold, often to another officer of lesser equestrian skill or interest, at a profit for the *Leutnant*. In turn, the *Leutnant* purchased the next mount, one that required a little more training and was thus less expense, and the training and selling cycle continued.⁵⁸ Eventually and with persistence, the young officer could purchase one or more horses with the requisite pedigree and level of ability for his own personal stable thus satisfying his need for a quality *Chargenpferd* and his desire for a competition horse.

The third path to horse ownership for some officers was through army provisions.⁵⁹

Cavalry and *reitenden Artillerie Oberleutnants* and *Leutnants* who had been in the regiment for

⁵⁷ Keitel, "Schulzeit.", 93. Keitel reported that he was able to spend three hours a day in the riding arena training horses even when he was a recruit officer.

⁵⁸ "Plauderei über Reiten," *Militär-Wochenblatt* 85 (1900), 548-553. An un-named officer contributed the article on horse, horse prices, and the training of remounts by young officers. He provided the personal example of having purchased three green horses, trained them for six months, and sold them thereafter to infantry and artillery officers. He cleared a profit of five hundred Marks on each horse.

⁵⁹ Kurt von Rabenau, *Die deutsche Land- und Seemacht und die Berufspflichten des Offiziers; ein Handbuch für Offiziere, Reserveoffiziere und Kriegsschüler* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1912), 55. The term used for the artillery is "*reitenden Artillerie*" and thus appeared to mean junior officer assigned to *reitenden* and not *fahrenden Artillerie*. This would have affected von Kleist as he was at this time assigned to the *fahrenden Abteilung* and thus not eligible for this entitlement. See also, Erich Freiherr von Buddenbrock, *Immer ganz vorn: Erinnerungen 1873-1925*, ed. Martina Boetticher (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2013) 32, for details on the author's experience with this army officer's horse entitlement.

two years, received an officers' charger of their choice from the regiments remount horses. They were then expected to train the horse into a properly trained service mount. At the end of four years, the horse became the property of the officer and he was free to sell the horse if desired. The officer was entitled to pick a new horse and repeat the process. But for Ewald this was not an option as he was, for the time being, assigned to the *fahrenden Abteilung*.

While von Kleist enthusiastically declared, "My great passion was riding," his own accounts provide little illumination on his first half decade of life as a *Leutnant* and his concomitant equestrian activities. His early career endeavors are, however, retrospectively confirmed when one examines his pursuits and accomplishments in the second five years of his career. Whilst there are many indicators, two key events support the conclusion that Ewald was a committed and rapidly improving equestrian and a developing horse trainer. First, by 1906, he was in a financial position to purchase an Irish Thoroughbred mare, Miss Maddison, from *Hauptmann* Winckler, a fellow officer in *FAR 3*, for 1,200 \mathcal{M} .⁶⁰ Ewald recalled Winckler as a skilled dressage rider and thus the *Hauptmann* had most likely purchased Miss Maddison for competitions focused in this equestrian discipline.⁶¹ After having acquired her, Ewald trained her into a first-class steeplechaser and officers' charger winning several competitions with her in 1906 and 1907. Secondly, Ewald was selected to attend the two-year-long course at the *Militär-Reit-Institut (MRI)* commencing in October 1907. Only officers who showed high levels of dedication and interest as well as demonstrated superior equestrian skills and knowledge across a

⁶⁰ Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen und Plaudereien" (handschriftliche Manuskripte), Heft 2 (BA-MA: N 354/24, Nachlass Kleist), 84. Hereafter, Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft #, Seite #. It is likely that von Kleist was able to purchase his first horse in 1902 or the latest 1903.

⁶¹ *Rangliste 1904*, 388. *Oberleutnant* Hans Winckler joined *FAR 3*, in the fall 1903/winter 1904 and was breveted to *Hauptmann* on 18 August 1904. By May 1905, he was commander of *1. fahrende Batterie* and by May 1906 he was commander of *2. reitende Batterie*. From 1906 until 1914, Winckler commanded the *2. reitende Batterie* in *FAR 3*. Winckler was killed near Brégy, France on September 6, 1914. Von Kleist purchased Winckler's mare, Miss Maddison, sometime between the spring of 1904 and the summer of 1906.

number of riding disciplines were selected to attend. Shortly after arriving at *MRI*, Ewald was moved from the junior equitation class to the senior class, thereby clearly confirming his high level of horse riding and training skills and demonstrating even higher potential capabilities as a rider, equestrian instructor, and horse trainer. The knowledge and skills Ewald already had in hand by 1907 required multiple years of focused work in the saddle, committed study of equine science and equitation, and single-minded dedication. These accomplishments thus confirm that his efforts commenced as a nascent *Leutnant*.

Given von Kleist's enthusiasm for riding and his later confirmed enthusiasm for wild game hunting, it is also most probable that in the fall of 1901 or 1902 he began to participate in *Reitjagden* (mounted hunts).⁶² Given the presence in Brandenburg a/H of a regiment of *Kürassier* (*KR 6*), whose blue-bloodedness and equestrian culture demanded such sport, there was most certainly an autumn *Reitjagd* season. Even if the *Kürassier* officers looked down their noses at their neighboring bourgeois artillerymen, Ewald's aristocratic blood would have made him a welcomed participant.

As the autumn 1902 *Reitjagd* season commenced, so too did the annual recruit training cycle. Once again, Ewald found himself as the junior most member of *6. Batterie* and the *Rekrutenoffizier*. The 1902-1903 training year followed the same pattern as the previous year with a few notable exceptions for Ewald.

⁶² Keitel, "Schulzeit.", 82-83, 86-88. The officers of Wolfenbüttel garrison, to include Keitel and others of *FAR 46*, as well as officers of *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 17* (Braunschweig) joined together to form the "*Braunschweig Reiterverein*" (Braunschweig rider's association). A few officers from *Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 92* (Braunschweig) also rode in the weekly fall hunts in the area around Braunschweig. Braunschweig lay seven miles (twelve kilometers) north of Wolfenbüttel. Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 60. For members of *FAR 47* (Fulda), including Bürkner, there was also an autumn mounted hunt season. The newly minted *Leutnant* described the 1902 hunt season as "*herrlich*" (glorious).

IV. Off to Shooting School

In February 1903, Ewald began a three-and-a-half-month instructional course for *Leutnants* at the *Feldartillerie Schießschule* at Jüterbog.⁶³ The course ran from 10 February until 31 May. A course for *ältere Offiziere* (older officers, i.e., majors, captains, and senior lieutenants), ran concurrently with the junior lieutenant's course.⁶⁴ Ewald was one of ninety-five *Leutnants* in his junior officer course. There were four Saxon and four Württemberg lieutenants, the remaining eighty-seven officers were from the seventy *Feldartillerie Regimente* of the Prussian Army contingent.⁶⁵ Established at Jüterbog in 1890, the *Feldartillerie Schießschule* had been commanded by a *Generalmajor* since 1900. In 1903, *Generalmajor* Kehr headed the school. The instructor cadre comprised four *Majore* and a dozen *Hauptleute*.⁶⁶

The *Schießschule* was tasked with training field artillery officers of the army including officers from the contingents of Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg; the continuation training of

⁶³ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Personal-Bericht; (Document 13). Von Kleist's official record lists the course running from 10 February until 29 May 1903. The course commenced on Tuesday, 10 February, which allowed the officer-students to travel from their regiments on Monday. The course ended on Friday, 29 May, likely early in the day and thus allowed the officers to travel back to their garrisons on Friday rather than on the weekend.

⁶⁴ Von Pelet-Narbonne, *Löbell's Jahresbericht, 1903*, 23. The yearly report indicated that the 10 February to 31 May 1903, *Lehrgänge für ältere Offiziere* (course for older officers) was the second of two courses for older officers given during the 1902-1903 training year cycle. The second course instructed 85 officers: 4 Bavarian, 3 Saxon, 1 Württemberg captain; 5 Bavarian, 3 Saxon, and 2 Württemberg *Oberleutnants*; from 20 April until course end, 11 Prussian, 2 Bavarian, and 1 Saxon staff officer; from 4 to 31 May, 2 Prussian, 1 Bavarian, and 1

Saxon General Staff Officer, and the remaining 49 officers were Prussian contingent captains and senior lieutenants. Von Kleist would have rubbed shoulders with these officers. The first course for older officers ran from 1 October 1902 until 10 February 1903 and contained 81 captains and senior lieutenants in approximately the same numbers as the year's second course.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 6 and 23. The 10 February until 31 May 1903, course was the second *Leutnant* course for the 1902-1903 training year. The first course commenced 1 October 1902 and concluded on 31 January 1903. It comprised one hundred *Leutnants*, of which eight were from Saxony and four from Württemberg. To note is that both the junior officer and the older officer courses ran over the winter thus allowing the officers to be available to their regiments and staffs during the summer training deployments and larger formation exercises. Saxony had eight field artillery regiments, while Württemberg had four.

⁶⁶ *Rangliste 1903*, 436. Two majors and the commander's *Oberleutnant Adjutant* were the school's officer staff.

the troop units; further development of field artillery tactics, gunnery, guns, and munitions as well as conducting the associated tests; advanced training of the *Lehrtruppenteile* (school troops units); and training of school of fire instructors.⁶⁷

Attached to the school was the *Lehr-Regiment*, a large, three *Abteilung* regiment manned with hand-picked officers, NCOs and gunners. The regiment's batteries supported the school's curriculum and served as the instructional units which were "commanded" by the officer-students during their syllabus-directed practice and firing exercises. The *Lehr-Batterien*, under the command of their own officers, demonstrated artillery tactics and fired, as teaching aids, for those attending the various courses.⁶⁸

Education and training of the *ältere Offiziere* included gunnery, advanced tactics, terrain use, evaluation and handling of guns and ordnance, and general knowledge of the field artillery of other armies. This training was conducted by the school's *Abteilung A*, and was separate from the junior officer's course.

For Ewald and his classmates this was their first formal instructional course solely focused on artillery.⁶⁹ Their previous training had been within the regiments and the classes

⁶⁷ "Die Artillerie-Schießschulen in Jüterbog" (Garnisongeschichte Jüterbog St. Barbara e.V., no date). <https://www.hl-barbara.de/index.php/die-garnison/kaiserliches-heer/artillerieschiessschulen> (May 13, 2021). See this website for more detailed historical and photographic accounts of the *Feldartillerie Schießschule* and Jüterbog from 1890 until the present.

⁶⁸ *Rangliste 1903*, 437. The *Lehr-Regiment* was commanded by an *Oberst* and had forty-seven assigned officers, twenty-four of which were noblemen (fifty-one percent). The aristocrats included one *Fürst*, two *Grafen*, and four *Freiherren*. By comparison, the *Militär-Reit-Institut* had on staff, eighteen officers, fourteen of which were noblemen (seventy-eight percent). The *Infanterie-Schießschule* (Spandau) had sixteen officers on staff, eleven of whom were noblemen (sixty-nine percent). The *Fußartillerie-Schießschule* (Heavy Artillery School of Fire) (Jüterbog) had twenty in its cadre; none of the officers were noblemen. The very high number of *adlige Offiziere* in the school cadre indicated that posting to the infantry, cavalry, or field artillery school was considered a good assignment, while posting to the heavy artillery both as a branch and at its school was not. The *Feldartillerie Schießschule's Lehr-Regiment* wore the uniform of the 2. *Garde-Feldartillerie-Regiment* (with special identifying shoulder insignia) and normally supported the *Gardekorps* during training and maneuvers.

⁶⁹ The term "formal" is a present-day standard military training descriptor to indicate that the course of instruction is conducted by specially trained instructors, with a standardized and higher headquarters approved syllabus, most often conducted away from the student's home unit in a specially designated school or training establishment, and

conducted as part of their weapons familiarization at the *Kriegsschule*. This course's syllabus, like the *Kriegsschule* was divided into theoretical and practical components. Classroom theoretical instruction contained lectures on ballistics, munitions, gun care and maintenance, target selecting and ranging, gun aiming, single gun, gun section, battery tactics, and general knowledge of the field artillery of other armies.⁷⁰ The later included information and lectures on artillery tactics recently observed on the battlefields of the Boer War, the Boxer Rebellion, and the Russian invasion of Manchuria.⁷¹ In addition to lectures, officer students were tasked with writing essays on subjects such as ballistics.⁷² The practical training on the firing ranges, knowledge necessary for the use of guns, included: gun position selection and firing position preparation, target identification, range estimation, range finding, munitions handling, performance as a *Zugführer* (two-gun section leader), command of six-gun battery during firing, and battery tactics. Officer-students participated in many full-scale exercises where they acted as battery commanders and commanded live fire against a variety of mocked up targets representing enemy artillery positions, troop formations, and enemy held villages.

Duty began relatively early each weekday with drills at the guns to hammer home the command language of battery leadership and the gunnery rules. Also taught were practical techniques for target acquisition, target designation, use of scissors telescope and binoculars for

one that awards a certification upon successful completion. "Informal" training, on the other hand, is that normally conducted at the student's home unit, with experienced by not necessarily specially trained instructors from the unit.

⁷⁰ "Die Artillerie-Schießschulen in Jüterbog".

⁷¹ Eric Dorn Brose, *The Kaiser's Army: The Politics of Military Technology in German during the Machine Age, 1870-1918* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 85-111 and 138-147. See Brose's chapter "Past and Present Collide" and the first ten pages of "Toward the Great War" for a description of how observations of recent combat operations influenced or not the development, doctrine, and deployment of German forces to include field artillery. As the organization tasked with updating and revising documents concerning tactical artillery doctrine, methods, and procedures, the *Schießschule* cadre would have been interested in what was occurring on battlefields around the world. These topics no doubt found their way into lectures and discussions at the school.

⁷² Benary, "Jahrzehnt," 6. Benary's description of his first decade as an artillery officer includes a short section entitled "Schießschulkarl." In this section, he somewhat humorously overviews an officer-student's time at the school and the entertainments that close-by Berlin offered.

distance estimations, and the other shooting aids. Normal training weeks included three days of live firing on the various ranges with fully manned batteries of the *Lehr-Regiment*. On the non-range days, lectures were given by the cadre, the school's instructors. An early start allowed official duties to conclude not later than five o'clock in the afternoon, earlier on non-firing days.⁷³

The officer-students were authorized and usually accompanied to the course by their *Bursche* (batman). Thus, personal requirements such as uniform cleaning, care of personal mounts, and the like were taken care of by the batmen, as was the norm across the army. The free time accorded to the *Leutnants* during the course was significant and allowed for extracurricular activities. *Leutnants* were invited to join the cadre and the officers of the *Lehr-Regiment* for mounted hunts in the autumn. Time could be spent riding with friends and course classmates as well as training personal mounts if desired.⁷⁴ But the most oft engaged in and remembered pastime were the many trips to Berlin.⁷⁵ For most officers who attended from garrisons all across Germany the close proximity to Berlin, only an hour by express train, was an opportunity not to be wasted. Seemingly restrained only by their budgets, the young *Leutnants*,

⁷³ Keitel, "Schulzeit," 101-102. Keitel attended the *Feldartillerie Schießschule* along with his long-standing friend Felix Bürkner in the course that ran October 1903 to February 1904, the subsequent course after von Kleist attended earlier in 1903.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 102.

⁷⁵ Benary, "Jahrzehnt," 6. Benary recorded that often as early as three o'clock in the afternoon, class would be dismissed and the officer-students would rush to catch the next express train into Berlin. He recounts "the laughing, singing, and dancing [which occurred in] Berlin" as well as enjoying more serious entertainment at the theaters and philharmonic venues of the capital city. Keitel, "Schulzeit," 103-106. It takes Keitel four full pages in his memoirs to recount the details of his many visits to Berlin during the three-and-a-half-month course. Central to his account is frugality demonstrated by he and fellow classmates. He names the most reasonably priced restaurants and highlights a Bavarian beer pub that served large quantities of free pretzels with each half liter of beer, a boon for the penny-pinching *Leutnants*. He and Bürkner frequented Berlin so often that they bought monthly passes for the railway which were only cheaper once more than fifteen round trips had been made. Keitel also provides information on the concerts, shows, and plays he attended and the well-known performers of the era whose performances he enjoyed. Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 61. Bürkner recounted the daily financial frugality required while at the school so as to avail oneself of the entertainment to be found in Berlin. He too names specific restaurants, theaters, plays, and performers who he enjoyed while a *Schießschule* officer-student.

“*Schießschulkarls*” (shooting school Charlies) as they were derisively nicknamed by Berliners, frequented Berlin as often as they could.⁷⁶ For Ewald, the proximity of Brandenburg to Berlin, the same distance as Jüterbog, meant that he had the same relative convenience of travel to see the sites of Berlin if not the abundant free time afforded to the *Schießschule* officer-students. Undoubtedly, he did avail himself of this freedom to explore and enjoy the sites of Berlin with classmates. It is also likely that the free time allowed him to attend his first von Kleist *Familientag* (family day) meeting held in Berlin in February 1903.⁷⁷

For junior artillery officers the *Feldartillerie Schießschule* served several important functions. First, and foremost was the technical, practical, and hands-on education given the officer-students by the leading experts in their field. Despite the course’s relaxed academic schedule, the length of the course and the sequestering of the lieutenants at the school and away from the demands and distractions of their own regiments aided in providing the delivery of a focused yet comprehensive curriculum. The course was an obligatory event for artillery lieutenants who were between their first and third years of active service. The annual throughput of nearly two hundred junior lieutenants, virtually the entire year group, in two courses created and promoted standardization across the breadth of the German Army. The army-wide systematic education and training of the field artillery branch helped to overcome the variations

⁷⁶ Benary, “Jahrzehnt,” 6. Benary illuminates the term which he titles his short overview of his time at the *Schießschule*, likely either as a classmate of von Kleist or in the class which immediately preceded von Kleist’s course. The quip apparently used by women approached by the *Letuants* from the school of fire was, “Für Boxer zu schlapp und für Akademiker zu dämlich, also Schießschulkarl abwiesen.” “To wimpy for Boxers (the officers attending the Militär-Turnanstalt [military gymnastics institute]), and too dumb for the Academics (officers attending Kriegsakademie), so you must be a Shooting School Charlie.”

⁷⁷ von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen,” Heft 3, 14. Von Kleist wrote in his memoirs that he began participating in von Kleist Family Days from his “early lieutenant’s time.” Von Kleist, *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist Erster Teil Urkundenbuch Fortführung Familientagsprotokolle und Nachrichtenblätter von 1858 bis 1955*. (Hamm, Familienverband derer v. Kleist e.V., 2019), 76-119. While many of the family days have information concerning attendees and business conducted, the records are missing from the von Kleist clan archives for 1903-1907, the first years that Ewald would have been in attendance. But between 1890 and 1914, the meetings were held in Berlin, first at the Hotel Kaiserhof, and later at Hotel Prinz Albrecht, and finally at the Hotel Adlon. Meetings most often occurred in February. Von Kleist recalls meetings at the Kaiserhof and Adlon in his memoirs.

found within the four different army contingents and across all of the field artillery regiments. Additionally, seeing all of the branch's junior lieutenants allowed the cadre to assess the state and quality of the recent intake of officers, information of value to army leadership.⁷⁸ Finally, the gathering of half of a year group within one course allowed the officer-students to meet and become acquainted with many of their peers as well as to rub shoulders with the officer-students of the *ältere Offiziere* course. This facilitated not only personal friendships but professional interaction well after the end of the course.⁷⁹ At the end of May 1903, the officers departed Jüterbog for their respective regiments. For Ewald the time away from Jüterbog was short.

V. Regimental Troop Duty

Less than a week after Ewald finished at the school, *FAR 3* departed Brandenburg a/H for the road march to Jüterbog for their annual gunnery training. Training for *FAR 3* and its sister regiment, *FAR 39*, as well as for the two regiments of *5. Feldartillerie Brigade*, *Feldartillerie-Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (2. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 18* (Frankfurt a.O) and *Neumärkisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 54* (Küstrin) commenced 5 June 1903.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Keitel, "Schulzeit.", 107. Keitel reported in his memoir that he received a very good rating on his *Feldartillerie Schießschule Abgangs-Zeugnis* (graduation report, i.e., report card) for his time at the school. This confirms that the school, as a formal training institution, provided the graduate's commander with an assessment of the officer-student's performance during the course. Von Kleist's *Abgangs-Zeugnis* did not make it into his permanent army records or his personal files and appears to have been lost or destroyed.

⁷⁹ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen.", Heft 3, 25. Von Kleist points out in his memoir, a meeting during World War I with a general staff officer *Hauptmann* Hans Nagel, "an artilleryman with whom I attended the artillery school."

⁸⁰ *Verordnungs-Blatt*, 1903, 92. This indicated that Jüterbog was a large enough training and range complex to accommodate two full artillery brigades at the same time.

Commanding 5. *Feldartillerie Brigade* was *Oberst Freiherr* von Amstetter-Zwerbach und Grabeneck, erstwhile commander of *FAR 3*.⁸¹

During Ewald's late winter and spring absence, the officer roster for 6. *Batterie* had changed. While *Hauptmann* Siegmund remained the *Batteriechef*, *Oberleutnant* Siveke and *Leutnant* von Templehoff were transferred into the battery.⁸² Von Templehoff had taken over Ewald's duty as *Rekrutenoffizier* while he was at school. With Ewald's return, the battery was at full officer strength. As the junior officer, Ewald again took on the training of the new recruits and directed them through their first experience of firing live artillery. Fresh from the *Feldartillerie Schießschule*, Ewald would have been expected to demonstrate the new knowledge he had gained and the artillery officer's skills he had honed over the past months. On 2 July, the month's training at Jüterbog ended and *FAR 3* road marched back to *Artillerie-Kaserne* in Brandenburg.

In the continuing effort to save money, it is likely upon his return from being at Jüterbog for nearly five months that Ewald moved back into an apartment at Kleiststraße 5, near the train station.⁸³ While not as convenient for getting to the *Kaserne*, Kleiststraße was less expensive

⁸¹ *Oberst Freiherr* von Amstetter-Zwerbach und Grabeneck gave up command of *FAR 3*, two years previous in May 1901.

⁸² *Rangliste 1903*, 390. *Oberleutnant* Emil Kolbe who had returned from three years at the *Kriegsakademie* in late summer 1902 was transferred out of 6. *Batterie* and into 2. *Batterie*. *Oberleutnant* Otto Siveke and *Leutnant* Friedrich von Templehoff transferred in from 1. and 5. *Batterie*, respectively. "*Personal-Veränderungen*." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 88 (1903), 1909. Siveke's stay in the battery was short. In December 1903, he was transferred out of the active-duty army into a *Landwehr* posting and given a pension of a *Halbinvalide* (half invalid). He was medically retired for disabilities of a middling nature but severe enough to invalidate him for service as a reserve officer. Thus, he passed directly to the *Landwehr*, where he would remain available for limited military duty in time of war. He had served in the regiment for a dozen or so years before being invalidated out. Von Templehoff's stay was also short as he was transferred to 1. *reitende Batterie* in the autumn 1903.

⁸³ *Adreß-Buch Brandenburg 1903*, 219; and J. Wiesikes, *Adreß-Buch der Stadt Brandenburg a. H. mit Einschluß des Domes für 1904*, (Brandenburg a. H.: J. Wiesikes Buchdruckerei, 1903) (BaHSA; Akte HPF10, Addressbuch 1904-1907. 1904 Edition (microfilm), 89. The 1903 address book reports von Kleist's residence as Luckenbergerstrasse 10 while the 1904 edition reports his address as Kleiststrasse 5. Given the printing dates of the address books, von Kleist moved sometime between September 1902 and September 1903.

than the centrally located Luckenbergerstrasse. Ewald remained at Kleiststraße for the summer and fall.

As the summer continued, so too did the regiment's annual training cycle. Some of the *Einjährig-Freiwilligen*, reserve officers, and enlisted reservists assigned to FAR 3 had joined the regiment in the middle of June while the regiment was at *Jüterbog*. These officers and men remained with the unit participating in their mandatory periodic training until mid-August, a two-month period.⁸⁴

On 8 August 1903, Ewald celebrated his twenty-second birthday. On 18 August, Rudolf Kaempfe and Walter Boehm became the newest *Leutnants* in the regiment.⁸⁵ Kaempfe was placed in 2. *Batterie* while Boehm joined Ewald in 6. *Batterie* where he was positioned to become the *Rekrutenoffizier*. *Leutnant* von Templehoff moved to 1. *reitende Batterie*. The addition of these officers meant that von Kleist had six *Leutnants* below him and sixteen *Leutnants* above him on the regimental seniority list. As summer turned to autumn, the annual training cycle ended with the release of the senior group of *Dienstpflicht* soldiers at the end of September. September also saw the commencement of the fall *Reit-Jagd* season. The new crop of recruits arrived at the regiment in early October to begin the next annual training cycle.

In order to save five months of rent, von Kleist quite possibly stored his few belongings and terminated his lease at Luckenbergerstrasse 10 prior to leaving for *Schießschule* in mid-February 1903. The saving of five months of rent would have amounted to between 250 and 500 *Marks*, no small amount and a good start towards purchasing a trained *Chargenpferd*.

⁸⁴ Dr. Bernd Richter, *Bei der brandenburgischen reitenden Feldartillerie 1898-1918: Die Militärzeit von Ewald Richter vom Einjährig-Freiwilligen bis zum Kriegsende* (Bergisch Gladbach, no publisher, 2011), 5. Ewald Richter recorded that he was on duty with the regiment between 18 June and 12 August 1903, for "Exercise B", his second of three required exercises for completion of the requirements for a reserve commission. *Rangliste 1903*, 652. *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 3* had thirty-seven reserve officers assigned to it, one *Hauptmann*, five *Oberleutnants*, and thirty-one *Leutnants*.

⁸⁵ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 88 (1903): 2170. *Rangliste 1904*, 388. Both had entered the army with their *Abitur* and thus at their promotion their date of rank was predated by one year minus one day. Date of commission: 18 August 1903; date of rank: 19 August 1902. Boehm ranked high on the list at "F" (6th) while Kaempfe ranked at "Nn" (38th).

As second month of recruit training ended, Ewald received his second officer

Qualifikations-Bericht (qualification report).⁸⁶ The report follows:

Qualifications Report

to 1 December 1903
on *Leutnant Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist*
of *Feldart. Rgt. General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenb.) Nr. 3*

Age	Pensionable Service Time	Combat Ready	In the position	Commission
Year Months	Years Months		since	
22 4	3 9	Yes	2 ¼ Years	19 Aug 1900 Qq

Medium-sized, slim, attractive appearance; with good intellectual gifts and good physical capabilities. Of an open, amiable nature and very good manners. Eager and ambitious, he has become a useful officer who has satisfactorily trained the recruits. Fills his position well.

Drimborn,
*Major und Regimentskommandeur*⁸⁷

Major Karl Drimborn was Ewald's fourth regimental commander in less than four years. Drimborn had been in command for fifteen months at the time he wrote his first and only officer evaluation report on von Kleist. Less Ewald's time at the *Feldartillerie Schießschule*, Drimborn had nearly a full year to observe and interact with von Kleist in garrison, during one annual live fire training period, and in the field during the 1902 *Kaisermanöver*. Ewald had, however, been the immediate subordinate of 6. *Batteriechef, Hauptmann* Siegmund, for two and a half years, ever since his return from *Kriegsschule* in June 1901, and the daily interaction between these two officers made Siegmund's observations and assessments of Ewald a critical component of the

⁸⁶ *Qualifikations-Bericht* (qualifications report) was the equivalent of the U.S. Army officer's "Officer Evaluation Report" (OER). The OER is alternately titled "officer efficiency report", or "officer performance report" (OPR). The German Army in this period produced a written report evaluating each *Leutnant's* duty performance, key attributes and qualities, and future officer potential every two years. Each report, handwritten by the regimental commander, closed on 1 December.

⁸⁷ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; *Qualifikations-Bericht* 1903; (Document 7). *Italics* indicates handwritten data.

regimental commander's evaluation. And *Major* Bloch von Blottnitz, *II. Abteilung Kommandeur*, had monitored Ewald's performance for the past eighteen months and also passed on his views to the regimental commander. *Major* Drimborn's assessment was almost a carbon copy of Ewald's 1901 evaluation and decidedly unenthusiastic, likely echoing Siegmund and Block von Blottnitz judgments. The standard comments on appearance, intellectual abilities, physical attributes, and good manners were repeated. Ewald was reported to still be "eager and ambitious." The regimental commander's slightly positive appraisal was that Ewald had become "a useful officer" and that he had "satisfactorily" trained the recruits under his supervision. The evaluation's closing comment can be noted as somewhat complimentary, "fills his position well." There are no comments about his performance at the *Feldartillerie Schießschule* nor about his mounted skills or equestrian enthusiasm. In summary, this *Qualifikations-Bericht* left the impression that Ewald's officer qualities and capabilities were improving although he had not as yet shown any significant leadership skills. To his credit, it seemed that Ewald had worked at becoming a more outgoing officer personality as this comment from his previous evaluation was not repeated. Thus, von Kleist had, in the eyes of his superiors, gained some ground in the two years since his first officer assessment. It indicated that Ewald had moved up and if quantitatively located, he would place near the top of the middle one-third of *Leutnants*. Certainly, he would have liked a better assessment and was likely a bit disheartened. As 1903 ended, little did Ewald know that his situation within the regiment would shortly change for the better and provide him with the opportunity to develop and show the officer capabilities that to this time were less than evident.

On 11 February 1904, several dozen von Kleists of the different clan branches assembled for their annual *Familientag* (family day) in Berlin. Given his proximity to the event, interest in

family matters, and a desire to expand his clan interpersonal ties, Ewald likely attended. It was during Ewald's attendances at the *Familientage* between 1903-1907 that he met and became acquainted with *Generalleutnant* Georg Friedrich von Kleist. The *Generalleutnant* was a cavalryman who by 1904, had risen to the position of commanding general, 38. *Division* headquartered in Erfurt.⁸⁸ The General had six sons and one daughter, his oldest son a year younger than Ewald.⁸⁹ Ewald's relationship with this kinsman general would become an important element in his future career.

In mid-February 1904, *Leutnant* Walter Ahrens, the senior of the two Ahrens brothers in the regiment, received transfer orders to 2. *Pommersches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 17* (Bromberg).⁹⁰ Ahrens' departure triggered a series of moves amongst a number of *Leutnants* within the regiment. By the end of February, when the dust settled, Ewald happily found himself assigned as the junior most experience-wise *Leutnant* in 2. *reitende Batterie*. The *Batterie Chef* was still *Hauptmann* von Lüderitz. Fellow battery officers were *Oberleutnant* Kurt Wittich, and *Leutnants* Hermann Gnügge and Kurt Schwarze.⁹¹

As Ewald settled into 2. *reitende Batterie* and *Hauptmann* von Lüderitz integrated him into the training of the battery, the next change occurred. At the end of April 1904, the

⁸⁸ *Rangliste 1904*, 82.

⁸⁹ Georg Heinrich Kypke, Hans Wätjens, Sigurd von Kleist. *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist Dritter Teil-Biographien bis 1880 Dritte Abteilung Muttrin-Damensche Linie Der Damensche und der Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 2. Auflage (Hamm: Familienverband derer v. Kleist e. V., 2018), 361-363.

⁹⁰ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 89 (1904): 545. Notice given in 20 February 1904 edition of an order dated in Berlin on 16 February 1904.

⁹¹ *Rangliste 1904*, 388. Von Kleist's date of rank was 19 August 1900 and Kurt Schwarze's was 18 October 1900, however, Schwarze was not an *Abituranten* and thus he had served as a lieutenant since his commissioning date, ten months before von Kleist had been commissioned. *Hauptmann* von Lüderitz was the third most senior *Batterie-Chef* in the regiment with a date of rank of 16 June 1900. *Oberleutnant* Wittich DoR, 18 January 1901. *Leutnant* Gnügge DoR, 18 April 1896.

regimental command changed hands again. *Major* Drimborn retired from active service.⁹²

Major Franz Mottau, was selected to command *FAR 3* from his position as *fahrende Abteilung*

Kommandeur, 2. *Thüringisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 55* (Naumburg an der Saale).⁹³

Mottau was an experienced artillery officer entering his third decade in the army. Until his

service as *Adjutant* to the *Feldzeugmeister* (Chief of Artillery), *Generalleutnant* Stern, from

1889-1902, Mottau's career had been somewhat average with duty at regimental level.⁹⁴ The

support of the *Feldzeugmeister* was no doubt key to Mottau's selection as a regimental

commander. For the next five years, the regiment and von Kleist would benefit from Mottau's

steady leadership at the head of *FAR 3*.

⁹² "Abschiedsbewilligungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 89 (1904): 1251. Drimborn was retired from the army as a *Major*, with a pension, in April 1904, after only twenty months in command of *FAR 3*. Retirement approved by the *Kaiser* through the Military Cabinet on 24 April 1904. Drimborn was promoted upon retirement to *Oberstleutnant*, an indication that his thirty years of service (1874-1904) was deemed honorable and sufficiently noteworthy. Too, Drimborn was granted the right to wear the army uniform in retirement. Drimborn's retirement may have been precipitated by a lackluster performance as regimental commander in the 1902 *Kaisermanöver* and possibly for his less-than-ideal handling of his regimental officer manning when he allowed six officers to go to long-term school and duty assignments outside the regiment, creating an officer shortfall within the regiment.

⁹³ *Rangliste 1904*, 432. Major Franz Wilhelm Johannes Mottau (* 1 March 1858, Stallupönen, Ostpreußen; † ?) was promoted to major on 10 September 1898, and thus had served in this rank for five and a half years. *Rangliste 1884 and 1887*. Mottau joined the army after completing his *Abitur* and was commissioned in *1. Rhenisches Feld-Artillerie-Regiment Nr. 8* in 1873 or 1874. He was promoted to *Premier-Lieutenant* in 1885/6 and became the *reitende Abteilung Adjutant* by 1887. Between May 1890 and May 1891, he was promoted to *Hauptmann* and transferred to *Magdeburgisches Feld-Artillerie-Regiment Nr. 4* (Magdeburg) where he became a battery commander. By May 1894, Mottau transferred to *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 36* (Danzig) as a battery commander. As of May 1898, he was a member of the *Feldzeugmeisterei* (Office of Chief of Artillery) where he served as the *Adjutant* to the Chief of Artillery, *Generalleutnant* Emil Stern. While still serving with the Chief of Artillery, Mottau was promoted to *Major* (DoR: 10 September 1898 Ww) and provisionally attached to *Nassauisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 27*. By May 1902, Mottau completed his service with the Chief of Artillery and was assigned as an *Abteilung Kommandeur* in 2. *Thüringisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 55*. Assumed command of *FAR 3*, o/a 1 May 1904. He was promoted to *Oberstleutnant* on 22 April 1905 (Aa) and three years later Mottau was elevated to *Oberst* on 27 January 1908 (T). He retired from active duty with the permission to wear the army uniform. He retired to Wiesbaden. There is no indication that he was recalled to active duty during World War I. Married Anna Sophie Albertine Schlieben (* 1860, Wiesbaden; † ?).

⁹⁴ Prior to his service with the *Feldzeugmeister* (Chief of Artillery), Mottau's record does not show any extra-regimental service, e.g., no duties as an instructor at *Kriegsschule* or *Feldartillerie-Schießschule*, nor did he attend *Kriegsakademie*. While Mottau does go on to be promoted to *Oberstleutnant* and *Oberst*, his career does not progress beyond regimental command. His five years of command of *FAR 3* indicates that he was at least a solid commander at the regimental level but not suited for higher command.

By May, *FAR 3* was somewhat short-handed of officers for duty in the regiment. Six of the eight batteries were one officer short of their authorized strength.⁹⁵ The shortfall was an internal regimental issue due primarily to officers being temporarily assigned to long-term school courses. The regiment had three *Leutnants* attending the three-year course at the *Kriegsakademie* and one *Leutnant* at the two-year-long course at the *Militär-Reit-Institut*. Additionally, one *Leutnant* was on detached service with the *Auswärtiges Amt* (Foreign Office) and one *Hauptmann* was on a one year's leave. The shortage was both good and bad. Good in that it indicated that the regiment was adroit at helping prepare its officers to be competitive for selection for the *Kriegsakademie*.⁹⁶ The regiment had enjoyed higher than average success in having its officers selected to attend this prestigious and career enhancing school. Good in that the regimental leadership allowed officers to take career enhancing schooling and temporary assignments rather than deny them the opportunity by placing a higher priority on maintaining full officer manning within the regiment. Bad, because it shifted the missing officer's duties and responsibilities to the remaining officers and senior NCOs. Nonetheless, the regiment made due as it pressed on with its training cycle.

The regiment experienced a change in their annual summer *Schießübung* (firing exercise). Rather than go to their normal *Truppenübungsplatz* of Jüterbog, the live fire range for *III. Armeekorps* units, for training, *FAR 3* and its sister regiment, *FAR 39*, were ordered to

⁹⁵ *1. reitende Batterie*, was short one of its five authorized officers, *2. reitende Batterie*, von Kleist's assigned battery, had its full complement of five officers. Only *1. fahrende Batterie* had its full complement of four officers, while all of the remaining five *fahrende Batterien* were missing one of their four authorized officers. Not counted as assigned to a battery were the four *Leutnants* serving as *Adjutanten* for the regiment and the three *Abteilungen*.

⁹⁶ Selection to attend *Kriegsakademie* was based on competitive selection and not regimental or army corps quotas. A key component of success was the officer's preparation for the army-wide annual competitive *Kriegsakademie* examination. This preparation was, in part, officer self-study but part was assistance in subject matter knowledge by fellow officers, especially those who had already attended the three-year course.

undertake their annual live fire training at *Truppenübungsplatz Alten-Grabow*.⁹⁷ Alten-Grabow was the live-fire artillery range for units assigned to *IV. Armeekorps* (headquartered at Magdeburg). The range lay a short twenty-six miles (forty-three kilometers) southwest of Brandenburg a/H. The regiment set out on their road march from Brandenburg to the range so as to be able to commence training on Monday, 6 June 1904. As the regiment had not been assigned to this range before, the officers and men lacking the familiarity of their normal range at Jüterbog, proceeded a bit more slowly as they learned Alten-Grabow's regulations, procedures, range layout, and maneuver training areas. After three full weeks of training and live fire, the regiments decamped on Saturday, 25 June, to make way for the next brigade whose training commenced two days later. Back in garrison, *FAR 3* continued its summer and autumn training events.

In September 1904, Ewald's battery commander, *Hauptmann* Bodo von Lüderitz was nominated and invested as an *Ehrenritter des Johanniter-Orden* (Knight of Honor of the Order of St. John).⁹⁸ While Ewald was aware of the Order, this close association with one of the Order's *Ehrenritter* foreshadowed his own later knighthood in the *Johanniter-Orden* and thus is an early and significant connection. The Order traces its lineage back to around 1113 A.D. when it became associated with the Hospital of St. John the Baptist in Jerusalem during the time of the

⁹⁷ Kriegsministerium, *Armee-Verordnungsblatt, Nr 106, 14 April 1904* (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1905), 123. The two regiments of *38. Feldartillerie-Brigade, 1. Thüringisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 19* and

1. Thüringisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 55, from *XI. Armeekorps* (Cassel) took *6. Feldartillerie-Brigade's* spot at Jüterbog.

⁹⁸ "Ordens-Verleihungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 89 (1904): 2535. Nikolai Scheuring, "Liste der Ehrenritter des Johanniterordens 1853–1918" (Berlin: Johanniter-Orden, 2021). This document is a compilation of the names and occupations of the noblemen who were appointed as *Ehrenritter* between 1853 and 1918. In September 1904, a total of twenty-seven active-duty army officers were selected for knighthood in the rank of *Ehrenritter*. Two were active duty *Majore*, the remaining twenty-five army officers were *Hauptleute*, *Rittmeister*, and *Oberleutnants*. One officer was from the navy. Earlier in the year another twenty-six active-duty officers had been made *Ehrenritter*. The total of men selected for *Ehrenritter* during 1904 was 147 of which 55 (37.1 percent) were active-duty officers. Prior to 1948, all knights of the *Johanniter-Orden* were members of the nobility. This *adlige* requirement stretched back into the middle-ages.

early Crusades.⁹⁹ From 1158, *Kaiser* Friedrich Barbarossa had taken the *Order* under his personal protection beginning a line of Germanic association with the Order.¹⁰⁰ This association grew to become the *Balley Brandenburg des Ritterlichen Ordens Sankt Johannis vom Spital zu Jerusalem* (Bailiwick of Brandenburg of the Chivalric Order of Saint John of the Hospital at Jerusalem), commonly called *Johanniter=Orden*.

After the Reformation, the *Ballei Brandenburg* aligned itself with Martin Luther's teachings and became the German *Evangelisch* (Protestant) branch of the Knights of St. John. As a result of the Peace of Westphalia (1648), *Patronatsrecht* (right of patronage) fell to Elector of Brandenburg. From that time, one of the princes from the House of Hohenzollern has been the *Herrenmeister der Ballei Brandenburg* (Master of the Knights of the Balley of Brandenburg). One of the conditions placed on Prussian and King Friedrich Wilhelm III by Napoleon through the Peace of Tilsit (1807), was the dismantling of the Order. Friedrich Wilhelm III withdrew its status as an ecclesiastical order under the crown's protection, denied it the authority to accept new members, and confiscated the properties of the Order.¹⁰¹ Between 1812 and 1852, the Order was further secularized, having become in 1812, an award, the Royal Prussian Order of Saint John, for honorable service to the crown.

Under the authority of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV, the Order was formally restored by royal order on 15 October 1852.¹⁰² On 14 March 1853, the king's younger brother, Prinz

⁹⁹ Adam Wienand, hrsg. mit Carl Wolfgang von Ballenstein und Albrecht von Cossel, *Der Johanniterorden, Der Malteserorden: Der ritterliche Orden des hl. Johannes vom Spital zu Jerusalem, Seine Geschichte, seine Aufgabe*, Dritte überarbeitete Auflage. (Köln: Wienand Verlag, 1988), 41

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 303-311.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 502-504

¹⁰² Ibid., 505-506. The Order was officially titled, *Balley Brandenburg des Ritterlichen Ordens Sankt Johannis vom Spital zu Jerusalem*, a change from "*Ballei*." While the crown restored the Order, it did not return any of the Order's previous possessions. In 1852, eight original knights of the old, pre-1807 Order were still alive and through their renewed selection of knights the *Johanniter* continued. The knights who had been associated with the secularized order through their being awarded the Royal Prussian Order of Saint John were categorized separately as

Friedrich Carl Alexander von Preußen, was elected as *Herrenmeister* of the Order thereby restoring the Hohenzollern royal patronage, protection, and participatory leadership of the *Balley Brandenburg*. The Order quickly reconstituted itself and reenergized its benevolent work with forming and supporting hospitals as well as other charitable entities. The *Johanniter* saw the need for broader medical support. In 1863, it participated in the first international conference at Geneva of what later became the Red Cross and pledged the Order's support.¹⁰³ Three years later, in 1866, having foreseen the need for medical support of Prussia's field armies, the *Johanniter* mobilized at the commencement of the Austro-Prussian War, fifty-four light and heavy field hospitals.¹⁰⁴ Casualties from both sides overwhelmed the inadequate number of military and civilian supported field hospitals. In an emergency response, members of the *Johanniter-Orden* combined with several other civilian social support associations to create a group which formed and organized improvised collection points, temporary hospitals, and casualty transportation networks. This help was key and critical to the Prussian military medical efforts. The Order provided significant support during the Franco-Prussian War. The work of acquiring and funding civilian hospitals continued apace in the last several decades of the 1800s and by the time of *Hauptmann* von Lüderitz's accolade as an *Ehrenritter* in 1904, the *Johanniter-Orden* hospital system comprised fifty-two facilities with nearly three thousand bedspaces. In time, Ewald would become intimately familiar with the *Johanniter-Orden*.

With the close of September 1904, came the end of the training year. Ewald had now participated in three complete annual training cycles and had gained knowledge and experience as a *Zugführer*. He had been in 2. *Reitende Batterie* for the final six months of the 1903/04

"honorary knights" and where not given the right to select new knights or to participate in governing the reestablished ecclesiastical order.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 512.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 514-516.

training cycle and acquired a solid understanding of his gunners and soldiers. He had continued to work on his equitation skills and undoubtedly had by this time purchased his first horse.¹⁰⁵

Too, Ewald was riding competitively in smaller competitions.

For aspiring competitive riders like Ewald, there were a number of instructional books and pamphlets such as *Rennreiten: Praktische Winke für Rennreiter und Manager* (Horse Racing: Practical Hints for Jockey and Trainer).¹⁰⁶ Clearly written with army officer riders in mind, chapters and sections entitled “Influence on the Training of the Cavalry Officer”, “The Officer as a Role Model for the People”, “Riding Spirit”, and “Why Officers Ride Races” inform the would-be officer-racing jockey on how to pursue and obtain his goals. As with military knowledge, officers were expected to be actively engaged in self-study as part of their overall acquisition of deeper subject matter knowledge and practical expertise, both on and off duty. In addition to competitions, the autumn *Reit-Jagd* season gave Ewald additional opportunities to ride both for enjoyment and for improving his skills in the saddle. Likely his off duty social circles formed around equestrian interests and pursuits.

In order to continue and more deeply pursue his equestrian interests, specifically the goal of continuing to improve the quality of the horse(s) he personally owned and competed with, Ewald continued to live frugally. To lower living expenses, by November 1904, Ewald moved

¹⁰⁵ While no documentation was found, given von Kleist’s financial situation, it is likely that he was able to purchase his first horse sometime during the summer of 1902. It is possible that by not paying rent during his four months at the *Feldartillerie-Schießschule* and through other frugality that von Kleist had saved enough money to acquire a second horse or sell a horse and purchase a more expensive personal mount by the summer of 1904.

¹⁰⁶ Kurt von Tepper-Laski, *Rennreiten. Praktische Winke für Rennreiter und Manager*, Zweite, verbesserte Auflage (Berlin: Verlagsbuchhandlung Paul Parey, 1903). The book covers the main types of horse racing of the era and thus includes not only flat track racing but steeple chasing and hunt races. “Reiterrekorde-Die Unsterblichen” (Verband Deutscher Amateur Rennreiter, no date). <https://www.amateurrennsport.de/reiterrekorde> (August 28, 2021). Von Tepper-Laski was a very experienced “amateur” jockey with 260 career victories in 653 races. He ranks ninth in all-time most race wins according to the Verband Deutscher Amateur Rennreiter in their list of Jockey Records-The Immortals.

from his apartment at Kleiststraße 5, near the train station, to Magdeburgerstraße 30. The relocation to this different apartment was both a money and time saver.

Ewald shared the Magdeburgerstraße apartment, a short five-minute walk to the *Artillerie-Kaserne*, with fellow regiment mate, *Leutnant* Wilhelm Hederich. Wilhelm and Ewald had both joined *FAR 3* in March 1900. Wilhelm was directly commissioned as a *Leutnant* from the *Hauptkadettenanstalt-Berlin*.¹⁰⁷ Having served his time in both *reitende* and *fahrende Batterien*, Wilhelm's hard work, attention to detail, and promising officership had earned him selection as *I. Abteilung Adjutant*. In this key position, he was *I. Abteilung Kommandeur*, Major Rüstow's, right hand for administration of the one of the three regimental *Abteilungen*.

The Hederich brothers were influential in the regiment. Elder brother, Leopold, had served as the regimental adjutant from 1901-1903. In September 1903, Leopold had commenced the two-year officer course at the *Militär-Reit-Institut* in Hannover.¹⁰⁸ Middle brother, Hans, began serving by autumn 1903, as the *reitende Abteilung Adjutant*. Willy, the youngest brother had taken over as *I. Abteilung Adjutant* for the departing *Leutnant* Ahrens in early 1904. Ewald observed, "the three Hederich brothers, Leo, Hans, and Willy, were splendid fellows and good

¹⁰⁷ „Kadetten-Vertheilung 1900.“ *Militär-Wochenblatt* 85 (1900): 681. „Kadetten-Vertheilung 1900.“ Wilhelm was the youngest of three Hederich brothers assigned to *FAR 3*. Wilhelm graduated from the *Hauptkadettenanstalt-Berlin (HKA-B)* in March 1900. He began his time with *FAR 3* assigned to *5. Fahrende Batterie*. Wilhelm was then a *Zugführer* in both a *reitende* and *fahrende Batterie* before being selected to serve as *I. Abteilung Adjutant* by May 1904. *Militär-Wochenblatt* 79 (1894): 1859. Leopold was commissioned into *FAR 3* on 18 August 1894 with the same date of rank (18 Aug 1894 E16e). Leopold is not listed in the annual *HKA-B* posting list indicating that he did not attend the *HKA-B* like his two younger brothers. Between 1894 and 1901, he served in *5. fahrende Batterie* and *2. reitende Batterie*. By May 1901, Leopold was serving in the demanding position of regimental adjutant, a posting he held until attending *Militär-Reit-Institut* beginning in October 1903. He was promoted to *Oberleutnant* (DoR: 15 November 1904 J) during his second year as a student at *MRI*. He returned to *FAR 3* in the autumn 1905 and was assigned to *1. reitende Batterie*. *Militär-Wochenblatt* 85 (1900): 694. Wilhelm's older brother, Hans, also graduated from the *Hauptkadettenanstalt-Berlin*. After his March 1895 graduation, Hans was posted to *FAR 3*, as a *charakteristischer Portepeefähnrich*, and after training in the regiment and attendance at a *Kriegsschule*, he was commissioned as a *Leutnant* on 18 August 1896. The date indicated that he did not have an *Abitur* or equivalent.

¹⁰⁸ Fleischhauer, "Stammliste des Königlich Preußischen Militär-Reit-Instituts zu Hannover seit Gründung bis Kriegsausbruch August 1914" IV. Teil, (Schreibmaschinenmanuskript), (BA-MA: PH 21/41), 152-156. Hereafter, Stammliste *MRI*, Teil IV. Leopold Hederich was one of 129 officer-students in the academic year 1903/4 and one of 133 officer-students in 1904/5.

soldiers, but set the tone in the regiment a little too much.”¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, Ewald got on well with the brothers, especially Willy, and thus amicably shared an apartment with him from 1904 until Ewald left to attend the *Militär-Reit-Institut* in September 1907.¹¹⁰

VI. Battalion Adjutant

At the beginning of October 1904, Ewald temporarily moved up to an important duty position. The regimental adjutant, *Oberleutnant* Wilhelm Kohlbach was sent to the *Feldartillerie-Schießschule Lehrgänge für ältere Offiziere* (Field-artillery School of Fire Course for older Officers).¹¹¹ As an experienced adjutant, *reitende Abteilung Adjutant*, *Leutnant* Hans Hederich stepped up to fill Kohlbach’s position for the four and a half months of the

¹⁰⁹ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft 2, 54.

¹¹⁰ Paul Kahle, *Adreßbuch der Stadt Brandenburg an der Havel* (Brandenburg a/H.: Paul Kahle Verlag, 1902). Gustav Matthes, *Adreß-Buch der Stadt Brandenburg a. H. mit Einschluß des Domes* (Brandenburg a/H.: Gustav Matthes Verlag, 1903), 219. J. Wiesikes, *Adreß-Buch der Stadt Brandenburg 1904, 1905, 1906, and 1907*. An analysis of the Brandenburg city address books indicates that the apartment building at Magdeburgerstrasse 30 most likely contained four apartments. Three of the apartments had long-residing single residents. The fourth apartment had a number of residents, most often two junior officers but one year by a more well-paid single cavalry *Rittmeister*. This seems to point to the apartment being large enough to accommodate two officer residents with acceptable comfort. It is in this apartment that *Leutnant* Wilhelm Hederich appears as a resident some time prior to the late fall of 1903. Ewald is listed as residing at Kleiststrasse 5 in the late autumn 1903. He could have moved any time after this date (the date when the addresses were fixed for printing of the next year’s address book). Thus, he and Wilhelm may have started rooming together as early as December 1903. With the motivation to lower living expenses, an earlier date of beginning the shared apartment at Magdeburgerstrasse 30 is most probable.

¹¹¹ Von Pelet-Narbonne, *Löbell’s Jahresbericht, 1905*, 23. The *Feldartillerie-Schießschule Lehrgänge für ältere Offiziere* (Field-artillery School of Fire Course for older Officers) ran from 1 October 1904 until 10 February 1905. By late 1904, Wilhelm Kohlbach had served as regimental adjutant since 1901. Kohlbach was promoted to *Oberleutnant* on 18 January 1901. “Personal-Veränderungen.” *Militär-Wochenblatt* 89 (1904): 1754. On 15 June 1907, Kohlbach was promoted to *Hauptmann* and transferred to Lauenburgisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 45 as a *Batterie Chef*. *Rangliste 1914*, 505. He remained with FAR 45, entering World War I as a *Batterie Chef*. During the war he rose to command Reserve Field Artillery Regiment 14. He transitioned to the *Reichswehr* and by 1924 had retired as an *Oberst*.

Oberleutnant's absence. In turn, *Major* Rautenberg chose Ewald from the four available *Leutnants* in the *reitende Abteilung* to temporarily fill Hederich's position.¹¹²

In the late autumn, Ewald observed an unusual event with one of his fellow officers in the regiment. In November 1904, *Oberleutnant* Dietrich von Bredow was transferred from *FAR 3* to *Schutztruppe für Südwestafrika* (protection force southwest Africa). This transfer came at the end of von Bredow's first year as an officer-student at the *Kriegsakademie* in Berlin.

Interruption of the three-year course or a hiatus for operations abroad was highly unusual.¹¹³

Then in early December came the news that *Sergeant* Rudolf Kiesel, previously assigned to the regiment, had died of Typhus in hospital at Grootfontein, Namibia on 30 October 1904.¹¹⁴ Both of these events served to remind the officers and men of *FAR 3*, that overseas service and death as a soldier were not some distant occurrences that happened in other regiments and in other garrisons...in these cases they could put faces with the names.

The year closed with an announcement that certainly was welcomed by Ewald. *Major* Greßmann was ordered back to the regiment as *Kommandeur der reitenden Abteilung*.

Greßmann was returning after more than four years as *Adjutant* to *Kommandierenden General*

¹¹² J. Wiesikes, *Adreß-Buch der Stadt Brandenburg 1905*, 5. The address book lists von Kleist as "stellvertreter Abteilungs-Adjutant."

¹¹³ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 89 (1904): 3278. *Oberleutnant* von Bredow assigned to *Schutztruppe für Südwestafrika* effective 11 November 1904. "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 91 (1906): 499. Von Bredow was reassigned from *Schutztruppe Südwestafrika* back to *FAR 3*, by order dated 13 February 1906. *Rangliste 1906-1914*. Upon his return to Germany, von Bredow returned in Autumn 1906 to the *Kriegsakademie* where he completed his second and third year of the course. By May 1909, he was listed as on duty in the *Großer Generalstab*. Having passed his certification time on the *Großer Generalstab*, von Bredow was promoted to *Hauptmann* in the General Staff and posted to the *Generalstab, XVII Armeekorps* (Danzig). In 1913, he was back in troop duty as a battery commander in *4. Lothringisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 70*. He entered World War I with the regiment but rose to Chief of the Generalstaff, Headquarters, I Army Corps. He retired after the war as an *Oberstleutnant*. The interruption in his course at the *Kriegsakademie* for overseas duty did not adversely affect von Bredow's career. This incident shows the flexibility of the German Army in this era and its ability to make singular exceptions to policy.

¹¹⁴ "Verlustliste." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 89 (1904): 3627.

III. Armeekorps.¹¹⁵ During his tour of duty in Berlin, he served two years each under *General der Infanterie* von Lignitz and *General der Infanterie* Karl von Bülow.¹¹⁶ As *Adjutant* at army corps level, Greßmann gained a closeup view of how the upper echelons of the German Army worked and how business was conducted between the senior generals and their staffs at corps level. Additionally, he had been an observer of the interactions between army corps and the *Kaiser* and his entourage, *Kriegsministerium*, *Militärkabinett*, and *Großer Generalstab*.

With the notice of Greßmann's return to the regiment came the announcement of *Major* Ernst Rautenburg's selection as commander of 2. *Ostpreußisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 52* (Königsberg in Preußen). Rautenburg was the second *FAR 3 Abteilung Kommandeur* promoted to regimental command in as many years, following *Major* Sprotte who had been promoted to regimental command in the spring of 1902. Thus, *FAR 3* was proving itself as a good unit, one which had more than its fair share of promotions and successes in competitive schooling and assignment selections. Ewald's choice of regiment was being confirmed as a sagacious one. As 1904 drew to a close and a trip back to celebrate Christmas with his family in Aurich likely occurred, Ewald's future looked promising as he found himself back in the *reitende Abteilung* and anticipated serving once more under *Major* Greßmann.

As was normal with the army, personnel changes continued to occur and by February 1905, the first officer reassignments of the year took place. *Leutnant* Kurt Ahrens, the younger of the two Ahrens brothers in *FAR 3*, volunteered for foreign duty and was transferred to the

¹¹⁵ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 89 (1904): 3278.

¹¹⁶ *Rangliste, 1901-1914*. *General der Infanterie* Karl von Bülow would go on to command 2. *Armee* on the Western Front during the first eight months of World War I and be promoted to *Generalfeldmarschall*. The *III. Armeekorps Chef des Stabes* during Greßmann's last two years of duty in Berlin was *Oberleutnant* von Hutier. Von Hutier would go on to become a *General der Infanterie* and command 8. *Armee* on the Western Front during 1917 and 1918.

Schutztruppe für Südwestafrika.¹¹⁷ Also, in February, *Leutnant* Schultze was transferred from *Auswärtiges Amt* to *Schutztruppe für Kamerun* (Protection Force for Cameroon).¹¹⁸

Von Kleist, as acting *reitende Abteilung Adjutant*, assisted with the transition of command from Rautenberg to Greßmann early in the new year. Ewald helped the new commander settle in and regain his knowledge of the regiment and the *reitende Abteilung*. *Leutnant* Hans Hederich's work as the temporary regimental adjutant had met with the approval of *Major* Mottau and the regimental commander made Hederich his permanent *Adjutant*. *Oberleutnant* Wilhelm Kohlbach, upon his return from school, was assigned to 2. *Batterie* as the second ranking officer in the battery. *Major* Greßmann too, had found his temporary adjutant's work to his liking and on 1 March 1905, made Ewald's posting as *reitende Abteilung Adjutant* permanent.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 90 (1905): 562. Ahrens' army orders were dated 21 February 1905. Kurt Ahrens, had been a *Selekta* and had obtained his *Abitur* and the equivalency of attendance at a *Kriegsschule* while at the *Hauptkadettenanstalt-Berlin*. He had been directly commissioned as a *Leutnant* with a date of rank of 20 March 1899. Ahrens had by May 1903, been appointed as *II. Abteilung Adjutant*. He, however, by May 1904, had been removed from this post and placed as a *Zugführer* in 4. *Batterie*. Volunteering for foreign duty was possibly seen as a way to recover from this likely demotion and continue his career progression. "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 910 (1906): 2977. In October 1906, Ahrens was transferred from *Schutztruppen* duty back to the regular army. *Rangliste, 1907-1909*. He did not return to *FAR 3* but was assigned to 2. *Westpreußisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 36* (Danzig). He was promoted to *Oberleutnant* 27 January 1908 (C). By May 1908, he had been transferred first to *Triersches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 44* (Trier) and then transferred again to the *Landwehr, Landwehr Bezirk IV Berlin*. By May 1909, Ahrens was separated from the *Landwehr*. The fact that Ahrens did not serve any time as a reserve officer prior to being transferred to the *Landwehr* points to a significant event concerning military discipline or more likely, a violation of officer honor. Thus, if Ahrens' transfer to the *Schutztruppen* had been with the idea of recovering his career, the overseas duty and subsequent assignments did not fulfil this goal.

¹¹⁸ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 90 (1905): 1102. *Leutnant* Schultze would not return to *FAR 3* after his duty in Cameroon. He joined 2. *Nassauisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 63 Frankfurt* (Frankfurt a. M.), attended *Kriegsakademie* (1906-1909), served on staff of 15. *Feldartillerie-Brigade*, began World War I assigned to 2. *Großherzoglich Hessisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 61*. He rose to command *Feldartillerie-Regiment 504* by wars end. After the war, he retired as a *Major*.

¹¹⁹ *Rangliste 1906*, 393. Of the three *Abteilungen Adjutanten*, von Kleist had the least service time. His time as a commissioned *Leutnant* was seventeen months less than *Leutnant* Wilhelm Hederich, *I. Abteilung* and he was three full years junior to *Leutnant* Puscher, *II. Abteilung*. Von Kleist was five full years junior to the *Regimental Adjutant*, *Leutnant* Hans Hederich. Here, too, the influence of the Hederich brothers is seen in that two of the four *Adjutanten* post were held by the brothers.

Due to the significant influence that the position of *Adjutant* exerted on the careers of many officers, this insufficiently appreciated post invites an examination.¹²⁰ As a subjective indicator as to the position's importance, of the fourteen Prussian officers (commissioned in the Prussian army contingent) promoted to the rank of *Generalfeldmarschall* in the *Wehrmacht*, eleven had served as *Bataillone/Abteilungen* and/or *Regimental Adjutanten* as junior officers prior to World War I.¹²¹

A resource to which Ewald quite possibly turned to assist him in understanding and fulfilling his adjutant duties was the newly published handbook, *Der Adjutantendienst bei den Truppen aller Waffen* (Adjutant Duty with Units of all Branches).¹²² The author, a *Hauptmann Graf* von Schwerin, divided his information and advice into six primary sections: introduction to the position and general duties of an adjutant, written communications, orderly room

¹²⁰ Biographers and historians largely appear to have deemed the position of adjutant as unimportant as evidenced by the dearth of information on their officer-subjects holding this position. During his research, the author found only one discussion of *Adjutanten* in the post-World War II literature written on the German Army. Johannes Hürter, *Hitlers Heerführer: Die deutschen Oberbefehlshaber im Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion 1941/42*, 2. Auflage (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007), 54. Hürter, in his examination of the career paths and progression of the senior *Wehrmacht* commanders on the Eastern Front in 1941/42, dedicates a single paragraph to expounding on *Adjutanten*. He wrote, "The number of adjutants among the twenty-five officers of our group is astonishingly high. Fifteen already proved themselves as battalion-or-Abteilung or even regimental adjutants before World War I and three others then served as adjutants during the war. These lieutenants and first lieutenants while still quite junior had already taken a path which separated them from the mass of their comrades and offered better opportunities for profiling and higher qualification."

¹²¹ The eleven officers were: von Blomberg, von Brauchitsch, Keitel, von Rundstedt, von Bock, von Kluge, von Reichenau, von Manstein, Paulus, von Kleist, and Model. Only von Witzleben, Küchler, and Busch did not serve as adjutants. Rommel and Schoerner were too young to have had the opportunity to serve as adjutants prior to the beginning of World War I, and are thus not counted. Also not counted are the three Bavarian contingent officers promoted to *Generalfeldmarschall* in the *Wehrmacht*. Of these, however, one, von Weichs was a regimental adjutant, while it is unknown if Ritter von Leeb or List served as adjutants. The topic of the importance of and influence upon an officer's career by having served as an *Adjutant* is ripe for exploration.

¹²² Detloff Graf von Schwerin, *Der Adjutantendienst bei den Truppen aller Waffen, bei Garnisonkommandos und Bezirkskommandos* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1904). Graf von Schwerin was a *Hauptmann* and stationed in Potsdam at the time the book was published.

management, orderly room records, duties with the troops while in garrison, and troop exercises and duties in the field.¹²³

The introduction provides worthwhile insights which enable a more holistic view of not only the duties and responsibilities of an *Adjutant* but also of the benefits derived from serving in this position. The author commenced with a forewarning description of the *Adjutant's* duties. The service is not circumscribed by a sharply defined area with its own responsibilities but varies widely and are often quite different in the various branches. Thus, the sphere of duties and activities is governed by the officers and local circumstances and therefore, a fixed standard for service cannot be determined. Through judgment and tact of the individuals concerned, the proper limits of the adjutant's activities are established.

Being appointed an *Adjutant* is a sign of special trust, because it involves the imposition of particular duties. The fulfillment of these duties requires good military knowledge and practical vision, unconditional reliability and must be combined with skill and adroit tact. The officer selected to perform these duties must always strive to justify the confidence shown in him. His selection which is naturally based on recognition of his past performance must however, not lead him to arrogance and an over-estimation of himself, but he must regard it merely as an incentive to perform his duties evermore faithfully and conscientiously than he has hitherto done.

The *Adjutant* must remember at all times that he is directly subordinate to the commander and that he is there to assist the commander with all of the official duties that fall on the commander's shoulders and in accord with the commander's instructions. The *Adjutant* must,

¹²³ Ibid., in addition to the five sections concerning *Bataillone/Abteilungen* and *Regimental Adjutanten* duties, responsibilities, and procedures, the book contains a chapter on duties of a garrison headquarters adjutant and duties in a military district headquarters. These first five chapters run to one hundred forty-five pages, the following two an additional thirty pages. A final chapter of seven pages covers the duties of a *Gerichtsoffizier* (court officer). Two appendixes cover care of horses and allowances paid to adjutants.

however, also remember that he is not a personal aide-de-camp, but the adjutant of the unit. Therefore, he has the duty, insofar as it pertains to military service, to safeguard the official military interests of the troops to the best of his knowledge and always to exercise his care for them to the best of his ability. The *Adjutant* must also exercise care and concern for fellow officers. When dealing with officers of higher rank but who are subordinate to his commander, the *Adjutant* must never allow himself to be tempted to neglect the appropriate courtesies due officers senior in rank to him. Also, when dealing with his fellow junior officers, the *Adjutant* must remain humble as well as safeguard the secrecy of official classified information entrusted to him. He should, however, take the opportunity to provide helpful advice and assistance when in accordance with the army directives. Because his duties provide him access to matters that are outside the purview of his comrades, he can provide information on many topics and make use of his official knowledge to inform and assist his fellow officers.

Providing proper support to his commander is often demanding. The *Adjutant* must be able to understand the conceptual thoughts of his commander and then must be able to transform them into suitable written form for further transmission to superiors or to subordinates. The *Adjutant* must be able to tactfully and without additional orders ensure that the key provisions and circumstances that require consideration be understood by the recipients. Additionally, the *Adjutant* is rightfully expected by the commander to provide reliable support for the commander's memory at any time. In time and with some experience, the *Adjutant* will be able to independently foresee and prepare the necessary orders, as well as make suggestions of his own to the commander. Too, he will often be able to eliminate minor frictions and handle incidental trifles in the day-to-day operation without having to bother the commander, thus enabling the latter to devote more of his time and energies to the more important tasks of

command. The *Adjutant* who is enthusiastic about his work and gifted with initiative will be appreciative to his commander when he is given the opportunity to express his opinion freely, to act independently, and to present his own proposals.

When he has gained his commander's confidence, the *Adjutant* will be granted greater independence, an essential importance, in comparison to his peers is. His duties are generally not assigned to him by the hour, but he can, within certain limits, divide up his time and his work himself. Of course, he must make use of this freedom in such a way that the conscientious and expedient fulfillment of his actual official duties always comes first. He can and must, however, also make time to regularly attend drill and other participatory training events, even if his presence is not officially required. By doing this, as well as through academic self-study, he will expand his professional experience and knowledge.

In addition to the honorable, and at times heavy, duties that the *Adjutant* position imposes on the young officer, it also confers upon him special advantages, if he recognizes them as such and knows how to properly use them. First and foremost is the advantage of the constant personal contact with the commanding officer. From the much older and far more experienced officer the *Adjutant* has abundant opportunities to learn in a wide variety of situations and circumstances. Furthermore, in any kind of *Adjutant* position, the young officer gains insights into circumstances which were previously unknown to him. In many cases, he would not become acquainted with these areas for some time despite continued operational service. Whether he has to deal with administrative or personnel replacement matters, with preliminary war mobilization plans, or with legal matters as a court officer, or whether he has to assist his commanding officer in leading the troops on maneuvers, the *Adjutant* is often put in a position where he has to think about and judge questions which would otherwise not yet be within the

scope of his rank. When possessed of a good mind, perceptive powers of observation, an inquisitive nature, and a strong memory, the young *Leutnant Adjutant's* diverse tutelage, when properly appreciated, provides him within a few years' time, professional knowledge, experiences, and maturation which take his non-*Adjutant* fellow officers well more than a decade to obtain. *Graf* von Schwerin concluded his introduction with:

The faithful fulfillment of the multifaceted, difficult-to-approach duties of the adjutant, which are performed without misunderstanding or arrogant ambition, but which are combined with proper the use of the aforementioned advantages, will not only confer a feeling of much satisfaction for the moment, but will also yield good fruits in the later service career of the adjutant.¹²⁴

There were also immediate financial benefits of serving as *Adjutant*. Ewald's pay increased by eighteen *Marks* per month, the additional *Zulage* (allowance) paid to adjutants in troop units.¹²⁵ Additionally, *Adjutanten* received extra rations (feed and fodder) for the additional horses that they were authorized to keep and use in the course of their increased duties. This was a boon to the up-and-coming horsemen as Ewald officially received rations for two horses that were to supplement his single army-owned troop horse. This roughly equated to an extra sixty *Marks* per month and likely assisted Ewald in acquiring and maintaining more mounts or subsidizing the additional horse(s) he already owned.



Figure 5 Major Oskar Greßmann circa 1905.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 6.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 182-183.

In *Major* Greßmann, Ewald had a superlative officer and commander.¹²⁶ First, Greßmann, having entered *Feldartillerie-Regiment Prinz-Regent Luitpold von Bayern (Magdeburgisches) Nr. 4* the year Ewald was born (1881), had nearly a quarter of a century of field artillery Figure 3: service and experience.¹²⁷ Secondly, he had served in *FAR 3* from 1890 until 1900 and thus possessed significant knowledge of the regiment, its officers and its long-serving NCOs and horses. Third, the *Major* was an accomplished military rider and was noted for his excellence instruction during officer equitation classes.¹²⁸ Fourth, Greßmann, having just served as an *Adjutant*, was well attuned to the necessary and desirable treatment, guidance, and handling of an *Adjutant*. Fifth, he was known for his superb instructional abilities.¹²⁹ And sixth, Greßmann was

¹²⁶ “Obst Greßmann” (Axis History Forum, July 16, 2012). <https://forum.axishistory.com/viewtopic.php?t=190829> (February 2, 2020). Photo of *Major* Oskar Greßmann taken between 1904 and 1910.

¹²⁷ Albert Benary, „Der Lehrmeister“ (Schreibmaschinenmanuskript), (BA-MA: N 286/3, Nachlass Benary), 1-3. Benary wrote a short article for the regimental associations news Christmas 1961 newsletter. The recollections of events a half century old are tinted with nostalgia but not to the degree as to invalidate the observations offered. One of the sections recalled their pre-World War I regimental commander, *Oberstleutnant* Greßmann. Greßmann took command of Benary’s regiment, *Kurmärkisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 39* (Perleberg) on 1 April 1912 and remained the commander until 2 October 1914. Benary, with hindsight observed, “he was also a modern artilleryman, for whom the cannons were not just annoying objects trailing behind the horse teams, but who had become a shrewd tactician in [General der Infanterie] Bülow’s school”. Thus, even while an enthusiastic and highly component horseman, Greßmann was a progressive rather than a traditionalist artillery officer. See Chapter 3, Footnote 20 for more information on equestrianism in the artillery branch.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2. Sometime between Spring 1912 and Summer 1914, Greßmann successfully led *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 39*’s equestrian team at a national level competition in Berlin. Benary wrote, “In the centerpiece of the program, a show jumping competition, the then champion of the German show jumpers, Graf Holck, had just brought his horse over the jumps without any faults to the thunderous applause of the sold-out audience. A little bored, they looked at the program, an unknown name, Lieutenant Colonel Greßmann, Field Artillery Regiment 39. He was already riding into the arena, the image of an old school cavalry horseman, on his dazzlingly beautiful golden chestnut with a narrow blaze and long, well-groomed tail. With a jerk, he pulled the chinstrap of his cap under his chin, leaned forward a little, and then swept over the jumps like a tempest. A small mistake only on the last jump, otherwise he would at least have drawn even with Sturmwind, the darling of the audience. But even so, the Berliners were electrified. Their applause made the house thunder.”

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2. Benary entitled the section on Greßmann, “Der Lehrmeister” (the Master Teacher). Greßmann set the training bar for his units very high. Benary confirmed Greßmann’s ability to constantly challenge his units with new sets of tasks and tactical problems. The result for *FAR 39* were, “In one or two years he had brought the regiment, supported by his two divisional commanders, who were also exemplary horsemen and skilled in the field, and by a number of excellent battery commanders, to a level of training that has hardly been achieved elsewhere. The 1912 Kaisermanöver on the Prussian-Saxon border provided the proof. He received commendation after commendation for his conduct [as commander] from superiors of all ranks.”

a superlative officer and described by a subordinate as, “An exemplary superior, a fine comrade, a chivalrous admirer of women, in short, a knightly gentleman from crown to sole.”¹³⁰ In short, Greßmann was the consummate officer and a highly desirable mentor.

Many indicators are present which point to the formation of a mentor/protégé relationship between Greßmann and von Kleist for the period during which both were members of *FAR 3*. Ewald, in his post-World War II writings, clearly stated that of all of the officers that he had served with, he had learned the most from Greßmann. This is a formidable statement given it was written having been able to reflect back over forty-five years of active service.¹³¹

For the next two and a half years, the *Major* and the *Leutnant* would work closely together as *reitende Abteilung Kommandeur* and *Adjutant*. For the two years Ewald was away at *Militär-Reit-Institut*, Greßmann would safeguard Ewald’s standing within the regiment and then pull the returning school graduate back into the *reitende Abteilung*. In Autumn 1909-Spring 1910, Greßmann’s likely oversaw Ewald’s final preparation for taking the *Kriegsakademie* examination. And finally in December 1911, just before few months before his departure from *FAR 3* to take command of his own regiment, Greßmann likely took satisfaction in seeing his protégé gain the long-desired transfer to the cavalry, a move he likely supported. Indeed, von Kleist’s relationship with and service under Greßmann would be a key period in Ewald’s military career, one with lasting positive effects.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 1.

¹³¹ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.”, Heft 2, 70. Here von Kleist records in 1945, that, “Oberstleutnant von Raumer was commander [Husaren-Regiment Nr. 14], a soldier from whom I learned most after Greßmann.” Thus, von Kleist, after a full career, participation in two world wars, and promotion to *Generalfeldmarschall*, credits Oskar Greßmann with teaching him the most.

In late April 1905, the regiment had a reason to take a short break from its training regimen. On the 22nd of the month, the officers and men of *FAR 3* celebrated when Mottau, the regimental commander, was promoted to *Oberstleutnant*.¹³²

In late June, the regiment returned to *Truppenübungsplatz Jüterbog* for their annual period of live fire gunnery training.¹³³ Near the end of this training, the regiment received the sad news that *Leutnant* Erich Scheringer, a member of 2. *Batterie*, had died after a long and difficult illness.¹³⁴

In early September 1905, *Oberleutnant* Leopold (Leo) Hederich returned to the regiment from his two years of schooling in Hannover at the *Militär-Reit-Institut (MRI)*. From Leo, Ewald was able to gain firsthand knowledge about the course at the *MRI*. *Leutnant* Krause had been the last *FAR 3* officer to attend *MRI*, having completed the course in autumn 1901. A month later, Krause left for the three-year course at the *Kriegsakademie* taking his knowledge of *MRI* with him.¹³⁵ By now, Ewald was both aware of the course at the *MRI* and held aspirations

¹³² *Rangliste 1905*, 390. Mottau was promoted with a date of rank of on 22 April 1905 (Aa).

¹³³ Kriegsministerium. *Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt*, 1905, 128. *Zeiteintheilung für die Schießübungen der Feldartillerie im Jahre 1905* (Time schedule for the Field Artillery Firing Exercises in 1905). The two *Feldartillerie Regimenten (FAR 3 and FAR 39)* of 6. *Feldartillerie Brigade* participated at Jüterbog from 27 June until 15 July 1905.

¹³⁴ "Familien-Nachrichten," *Allgemeiner Anzeiger zum Militär-Wochenblatt* 87 (1905): 610. Erich Scheringer had joined *FAR 3* as a *Fahenjunker* and was commissioned a *Leutnant* on 27 January 1896 (Gg). He served as *Adjutant*, II. *Abteilung* between 1901 and 1903. The announcement posted in the *Militär-Wochenblatt* by the regimental commander read as follows: "On the 13th of this month [March], after a long and severe illness, a *Leutnant* in the Field Artillery Regiment General Feldzeugmeister (I. Brandenburg.) No. 3, Herr. Erich Scheringer, passed away in Halle a. S. The Regiment mourns the loss of a dear comrade and dutiful officer who earned the respect of his superiors and the trust and respect of his comrades and subordinates in a high degree. His memory will always be cherished. Brandenburg a. H. 16 July 1905. On behalf of the officer corps of Field Artillery Regiment General Feldzeugmeister (I, Brandenburg.) Nr. 3: Möttau, Oberstleutnant and Regimentskommandeur"

¹³⁵ *Rangliste 1901 and 1902*. In September 1901, Ewald had been commissioned less than two months and would have had other priorities which made it unlikely that he had asked *Leutnant* Krause about the course of instruction at the *Militär-Reit-Institut*. Majors Rautenberg and Bloch von Blottnitz had both attended the *Militär-Reit-Institut*, the former 1879-1880 and the latter 1884-1885. Their knowledge of the course at this time was more than two decades old and thus of limited value in the specifics. It is likely, however, that von Kleist did interact with these officers in order to gain their opinion of attending the *MRI* and to seek advice on the best way to prepare himself for possible selection and attendance.

of attending this prestigious training, which for an army officer horseman was the ultimate equestrian education. Now, his apartment mate's brother was able to provide Ewald with detailed information as well as offer suggestions on preparing for the course should he be selected to attend.

While Ewald was gaining information on Leo's time in Hannover, an event that would be of significant influence in Ewald's life occurred in that city. It is quite doubtful that Ewald noted or even saw the single line obituary in the 14 October 1905 edition of the *Allgemeine Anzeiger zum Militär-Wochenblatt* announcing the death of an "Edmund Wachtel, Hauptm der Landwehr. a. D. (Hannover)."¹³⁶ If he did recall the name, it would have been from having attended the same church as the Wachtel family while Ewald lived in Hannover as a child. Certainly, unknown to Ewald in 1905, was that he would marry Wachtel's daughter; a young lady he had yet to meet.

On the first of November, infantry *Leutnant* Weygand arrived at the regiment from the 7. *Lothringisches Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 158* (Paderborn) as an exchange officer.¹³⁷ He served with *FAR 3* for the next year and gained knowledge about the field artillery. He was assigned to one of the three *fahrende Batterien* in *II. Abteilung*.

Another officer death occurred in the regiment in November 1905. The news that *Major* Karl Bloch von Blottnitz died on 9 November, reached the officers and men.¹³⁸ He had been the

¹³⁶ "Familien-Nachrichten," *Allgemeiner Anzeiger zum Militär-Wochenblatt* 87 (1905): 873.

¹³⁷ *Personal-Veränderungen.* *Militär-Wochenblatt* 90 (1905): 2965. The exchange period ran from 1 November 1905 until 31 October 1906. Ten lieutenants appeared on the list of exchange officers. Three officers were sent from their parent infantry regiments to artillery regiments. Four were reserve infantry officers sent for a year of active duty with infantry regiments.

¹³⁸ "Nachweisung," *Militär-Wochenblatt* 91 (1906): 677. Major Bloch von Blottnitz date of death is listed in the listing of known deaths of officers, medical officers, and civil servants (*Beamter*) of the Royal Prussian Army in the 4th Quarter of 1905. A total of 38 men were listed and thus indicate that approximately 150 officers, medical officers, and civil servants in active Prussian Army service died each calendar year. No other obituary for *Major* Bloch von Blottnitz has been discovered. The cause of death has not been found. The date of death, 9 November

II. Abteilung Kommandeur since early 1902, and his influence had been felt in the regiment for over three years. His replacement was named in army orders of 18 November. *Major Freiherr* Max von Reitzenstein was transferred from *Schutztruppe für Südwestafrika* to *FAR 3* effective 1 December 1905.¹³⁹ While in Africa, *Major Freiherr* Max von Reitzenstein had served as *Kommandeur der II. Feldartillerie Abteilung* and had commanded his unit in the Battle of Waterberg on 11 August 1904.¹⁴⁰ If von Reitzenstein's reputation concerning his equestrian acumen preceded him, Ewald would have been pleased to see this officer join the regiment.

As 1905 closed, Ewald received his third biennial *Qualifikations-Bericht*. This was *Oberstleutnant* Mottau's first report on von Kleist. The regimental commander had observed

1905, was a Thursday. Thus, the death of the approximately forty-seven-year-old Bloch von Blottnitz may have occurred as a result of an accident on duty. Also, the possibility exists that he may have died as a result of a disease contracted while on duty in Africa.

¹³⁹ “*Personal-Veränderungen.*”. *Militär-Wochenblatt* 90 (1905): 3291. The 21 November 1905 edition reported the transfer of *Major Freiherr* Max von Reitzenstein. *Rangliste 1904, 1906, 1908, 1913, and 1914*. In 1904, then *Hauptmann Freiherr* Max von Reitzenstein (DoR: 14 September 1893 Y17y) was serving as the single staff officer of *I. Unter-Elsässisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 31* [Hagenau], and was the regiment's senior ranking *Hauptmann*. From this post he was transferred to *Schutztruppe für Südwestafrika* on 6 June 1904. He was promoted to *Major* on 15 September 1904 (E2e). He served as *Kommandeur der II. Feldartillerie Abteilung*, in Africa where he commanded his unit during the Battle of Waterberg and subsequent operations against the Herero. *Major Freiherr* Max von Reitzenstein was transferred to *FAR 3* effective 1 December 1905, and remained with *FAR 3*, as *II. Abteilung Kommandeur* until his transfer to *I. Westfälisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 7* as *Kommandeur der reitenden Abteilung* (Düsseldorf), a lateral move, in late March 1908. He was promoted to *Oberstleutnant* on 19 July 1911 and by May 1913, had risen to command *I. Westfälisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 7*. He led this regiment to war in August 1914. By the January 1918, *Freiherr* Max von Reitzenstein had risen to command *239. Infanterie Division*, which he commanded until 10 January 1919. He retired after the end of the war as a *Generalleutnant*. Given *Freiherr* Max von Reitzenstein's pre-war rise to command a regiment, he was a high-quality officer and would have brought his above average leadership and profession officer qualities to *FAR 3* between 1905 and 1908.

¹⁴⁰ “*Die Gefechte am Waterberg, 11. August 1904.*”. *Militär-Wochenblatt* 89 (1904): 3219-3225, 3305-3310, 3427-3430. It was at this battle that the German troops achieved a tactical victory by pushing the defending Herero off of the Waterberg Plateau with artillery and machine gun fire. The Germans, however, failed to encircle the Herero in the hoped-for decisive battle of annihilation. The majority of the Herero escaped the encirclement and retreated into the desert. Over the next several months, the German forces pursued, attacked, and blocked the Herero from significant sources of water which ultimately caused tens of thousands of Herero men, women, and children to die of thirst, starvation, and disease. The effect of the German policy, plans, and actions was the genocide of the Herero people. During the Battle of Waterberg, *Major Freiherr* Max von Reitzenstein was the artillery commander for *Abteilung* Mueller where he directed two artillery batteries. Subsequent to the battle, *Major Freiherr* Max von Reitzenstein was tasked with setting up and defending a *Sperrlinie* (obstacle line) at the edge of the Omahke Desert to block Herero attempts to reach water and safety outside the desert. The reports record that during one of the patrol columns he led between 3 and 6 November 1904, killed twenty-two Herero.

and interacted with Ewald for nineteen months. That entire time Ewald had been a member of *reitende Abteilung*, and for over a year had been the *Adjutant*. That position and the fact that the regimental and *reitende Abteilung* commander's offices and orderly rooms were located in the same *Kaserne* had thus given Mottau more opportunity to observe, interact, and assesses von Kleist than had been available to the former regimental commanders. The report follows:

Qualifications Report

to 1 December 1905
on Leutnant Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist
Adjutant of the mounted battery Feldart. Rgt. General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenb.) Nr. 3

Age	Pensionable Service Time		Combat Ready	In the position	Commission
Year Months	Years	Months		since	
24 4	5	9	<i>Yes</i>	4 1/4 Years	19 Aug 1900 <i>Qq</i>

Medium height, slim, good appearance. Physically, especially for riding, and mentally very well disposed. Solid character with very pleasant comportment. Very keen and diligent, proficient in all duty areas, very reliable battalion adjutant. Fills his position very well.

Mottau
*Oberstleutnant und Regimentskommandeur*¹⁴¹

This report, in essence, a fresh look over the course of a year and a half by the new regimental commander clearly indicated that Ewald had made significant improvements as an officer. Three key elements were likely responsible for this progress. First, Ewald had attended the *Feldartillerie-Schießschule*. This had broadened and deepened his technical knowledge and professional competence as an artillery officer. Second, he had rejoined the *reitende Abteilung* and for nearly a year had served under *Hauptmann* von Lüderitz. It appears that this reassignment gave Ewald the leadership and fellow officer support and comradery at the battery

¹⁴¹ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Qualifikations-Bericht 1905; (Document 8). *Italics* indicates handwritten data.

level that motivated and encouraged him to become more outgoing and confident. Finally, the mentorship of *Major* Greßmann further motivated, broadened, and sharpened Ewald's officership, professional competencies, and horsemanship. Mottau saw in Ewald, a pleasant, capable, and agreeably motivated officer. The key highlights Mottau made were Ewald's very good equitation skills and his high reliability as a battalion adjutant. Von Kleist was lauded for filling his positions "very well." All of this indicates that Ewald has moved up from being a middling *Leutnant* into the lower portion of the top third.¹⁴² Given this, Ewald appears to be on the cusp of truly hitting his stride as an officer and beginning to demonstrate the professional potential and the willingness to work hard which would be required to move him closer to the top of the top third.

VII. Hitting His Stride

As 1906 dawned, one of the key leaders of the German military changed. On 1 January 1906, *Generalleutnant* Helmuth Johannes Ludwig von Moltke, *der Jüngere* (the Younger) succeeded the retiring *General der Kavallerie* Alfred Graf von Schlieffen as *Chef des Großen Generalstabes* (Chief of the Great General Staff). The ramifications of *Kaiser* Wilhelm II's choice of von Moltke the Younger as Chief of Staff would be felt within the next decade. For *FAR 3* and Ewald, however, the changing of Chief of the Great General Staff had little impact on the day-to-day operations of the regiment. And thus, the annual training cycle continued as the

¹⁴² To quantitatively rank von Kleist, he moved from approximately the 50th percentile up to approximately the 25th percentile of his officer peer group.

holidays were left behind and the chill of winter in Mark Brandenburg greeted the officers and men as they began their daily duties.

Another officer fresh from duty with the *Schutztruppe für Südwestafrika* joined *FAR 3* on 1 February 1906. *Oberleutnant* Wilhelm Schönberg had served in *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 72 Hochmeister* (Danzig) prior to his assignment in German South West Africa.¹⁴³ In Africa, he had served in *II. Feldartillerie Abteilung*, as one of *Major Freiherr* Max von Reitzenstein's twenty-six officers and had arrived in time to participate in the Battle of Waterberg. Like *Major Freiherr* Max von Reitzenstein, Schönberg was an avid horseman with his sights set on owning high quality race horses. The arrival of these two officers in *FAR 3* bolstered the extra-curricular equestrian culture of the regiment.

In February, the regiment received confirmation from *III. Armeekorps* via *6. Division* that *FAR 3*, as subordinate to the division and army corps, would be participating in the 1906 *Kaisermanöver* planned for the forthcoming September.¹⁴⁴ Of particular note and importance to *Major* Greßmann and his *Adjutant* was the detachment of the *reitende Abteilung* from the regiment and its attachment as the artillery support to *Kavallerie-Division A*, one of the five

¹⁴³ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 89 (1904): 1521 and 91 (1906): 295 and *Rangliste 1906*: 393. *Oberleutnant* Wilhelm Schönberg (DoR: 14 September 1900 X23x) served in *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 72 Hochmeister* (Danzig) prior to being assigned to *Schutztruppe für Südwestafrika* and the *1. Feldartillerie Battalion* on 26 May 1904. He was part of the troop buildup in anticipation of the offensive against the Herero. It is likely that he participated in the Battle of Waterberg (11 August 1904) and the subsequent operations against the Herero. He served under *Major Freiherr* Max von Reitzenstein as one of the nine *Oberleutnants* assigned to the *2. Feldartillerie-Abteilung*. It is most probable that *Major Freiherr* Max von Reitzenstein was responsible for getting Schönberg assigned to *FAR 3* as Schönberg's posting followed von Reitzenstein's by two months. Besides having Africa in common, both officers were avid horsemen and high-quality horse owners.

¹⁴⁴ *Kriegsministerium, Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt*, 1906, 35-38. The *Militärkabinett* issued *AKO (Allerhöchste Kabinetts-Ordre)* Nr. 44 from Berlin on 22 February 1906. The order directed which units were to participate and dictated the cavalry regiments and mounted field artillery battalions which were to form the five provisional cavalry divisions and to which army corps these divisions were attached. *FAR 3's reitende Abteilung* was assigned to *Kavallerie-Division A* as its artillery support. The division's main force comprised three cavalry brigades of two cavalry regiments each. The divisional support units were two machine gun battalions and a *Pionier* (combat engineer) battalion. *Kavallerie-Division A* was subordinate to *V. Armeekorps*, and thus *FAR 3's reitende Abteilung* was detached from its parent regiment and assigned to a different army corps rather than serving in under its wartime aligned *III. Armeekorps*.

provisional cavalry divisions formed for the maneuvers. The order also stated that cavalry and artillery units which formed *Kavallerie-Divisionen A* and *B* would be assigned to and “fight” under a different *Armeekorps* than their peacetime parent *Armeekorps*, thus testing the interoperability of these mounted regiments and brigades. *Kavallerie-Divisionen A* was assigned to *V. Armeekorps*. Additionally, the five provisional cavalry divisions would participate in separate and special maneuvers at different *Truppenübungsplätze*. *Kavallerie-Divisionen A* and thus, *reitende Abteilung* under the command of *Major* Greßmann would be going to *Truppenübungsplatz* Posen located just north of the city of Posen.¹⁴⁵ The base order also contained the specific notification from the Kaiser: “I will make special arrangements for inspections of the cavalry divisions.” Thus, the eyes of the *Kaiser* would be on the cavalry and its supporting artillery specifically, but the rest of the regiment would be performing in possible view of the *Kaiser* as well. The training agenda for the spring and summer was focused to ensure that the entire regiment was prepared for its roles in the *Kaisermanöver*.

Despite the workload as *Adjutant* and participating in the *Abteilung*’s training, Ewald made time to participate in a riding competition held at the *Militär-Reit-Institut (MRI)*.¹⁴⁶ Two fellow officers from *FAR 3*, *Leutnants* Max Puscher (*II. Abteilung Adjutant*) and Walter Boehm (*I. reitende Batterie*), joined Ewald as competitors. The two-day event was held Friday and

¹⁴⁵ Posen is present-day Poznań, Poland.

¹⁴⁶ Militär-Reit-Institut, “Programm für das Konkurrenzreiten zu Hannover am 6. und 7. April 1906 in der neuen Bahn des Militär-Reit-Instituts.” (Stadtarchiv Hannover, Akte 1. HR.20, Nr. 831. Correspondence from Militär-Reit-Institut and Hannover city officials.). Hereafter, MRI Program 1906. The sixteen-page program listed a total of four officer-rider classes. *Konkurrenz A* was officer owned horses of any breed; *Konkurrenz B* was open to any officer mounted on personally owned Hanoverian purebreds. The *Kaiserpries Reit-Konkurrenz* class was open to all mounted officers who were posted to any of the army units in the City of Hannover. The final officer class was the *Jagd-Spring Konkurrenz* (Hunt Jumping class) and was open to all officers on their personally owned horse. The combined cash prizes for the four classes totaled 6,400 *Marks* with a number of trophies also presented. The entry price for each class varied from 20 *Marks* for *Konkurrenz A* to free for the *Jagd-Spring Konkurrenz*.

Saturday, 6 and 7 April 1906, on the grounds of the *MRI* in Hannover.¹⁴⁷ The competition drew officers from across the army to compete in one of four different classes or competition sections. Additionally, there was a single class for women riders who were wives or daughters of army officers. One hundred twenty-four officers and twenty-three women competed.¹⁴⁸ The general public was invited to attend with tickets costing between one and five *Marks*.¹⁴⁹

The premier class, *Konkurrenz A*, was a four-event competition consisting of a cross-country distance ride, show jumping in an arena, a timed jumping event, and a dressage test. This class, open only to German Army officers, allowed officers to ride any mount which they personally owned. Forty-one officers vied for the 1,500 *Marks* awarded to the winner of *Konkurrenz A*.¹⁵⁰ *Oberleutnant* von Bültzingslöwen from *Kürassier-Regiment Nr. 7* bested a number of well-known and experienced officer-riders and took home the trophy and the 1,500 *Marks*.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ J. Wiesikes, *Adreß-Buch der Stadt Brandenburg 1907*, 342. The three *Leutnants* and their horses would have traversed the 136 miles (220 kilometers) between Brandenburg a/H and Hannover by train. Likely a *Bursche*, possible three, accompanied the officers and their horses to attend to the tack and care of the horses in Hannover. Alternatively, the officers may have been able to hire the services of a *Bursche* from the soldiers stationed at the *MRI*. The cost of a round trip, third-class ticket was 14 *Marks* 10 *Pfennig*. The cost of transporting the horses was likely between 7 and 15 *Marks* each. The cost of competing in Hannover, when summing the transportation, accommodation, meals, *Bursche* compensation, and miscellaneous expenses was not less than 50 *Marks* and may have run as high as 75 *Marks*. For Ewald, a cost of 50 *Marks* would have consumed his entire parental *Zulage* for the month or 50 percent of his army pay including his *Adjutant Zulage*. Thus, the importance of prize money can be seen.

¹⁴⁸ *MRI Program 1906*. For the top class, *Konkurrenz A* (competition class A), there were forty-one competitors in this class: one *Major*, five *Rittmeister*, twelve *Oberleutnants*, and twenty-three *Leutnants*. Thirty-four were cavalry officers and the remaining seven were artillery officers. Twenty-eight officers (68.2 percent) were noblemen.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*. The five *Mark* ticket was for reserved seating in the viewing stands. One *Mark* gained admittance on Saturday to view two of the arena events.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*. For *Konkurrenz A*, the awards were: first place, a trophy and 1,500M; second place, 700M; third place, 400M; fourth place, 200M; fifth place, 100M; and six and seventh places, each 50M.

¹⁵¹ "Konkurrenzreiten im Militär-Reitinstitut," *Hannoversches Tageblatt*, April 8, 1906, 3. Hein, *Deutschen Heere*, 127. *Oberleutnant* von Bültzingslöwen (DoR: 27 January 1903), *Kürassier-Regiment Nr. 7* (Halberstadt), as an *Oberleutnant*, earned 1,500 *Marks* per year salary. Thus, this single prize doubled his income. Winnings of this size, for example, could fund the purchase of a quality, well-trained, and experienced competition horse, or pay for fodder for four horses for one year.

Ewald competed in the *Jagd-Spring Konkurrenz* (Hunt Jumping class), the class open to any officer mounted on a horse that he personally owned. Fifty-two officers entered this class, many of whom were not strangers to the winner's podium. Ewald rode his brown gelding named "Marian." *Leutnants* Max Puscher and Walter Boehm also rode in this class.¹⁵² The contenders for the first prize of 300 *Marks* consisted of three *Rittmeister*s, sixteen *Oberleutnants*, and thirty-three *Leutnants* mounted on horses with names like "Kiss me quick," "Trabant," "Cicero", and "Samuraj."¹⁵³ The competition was keen and even the winner of the *Konkurrenz A*, *Oberleutnant* von Bülzingslöwen, riding the same horse, only placed fifth in the *Jagd-Spring Konkurrenz*.¹⁵⁴

Ewald did not, nor did his regimental mates, finish high enough to earn any prize money.¹⁵⁵ But the experience of competing in such skilled company and before several important senior officers, such as *General der Kavallerie* von Stünzner, commanding general of *X. Armeekorps*; *General der Kavallerie* Edler von der Planitz, *Generalinspektuer der Kavallerie*; and *Generalleutnant* von Festenberg-Prackisch, incoming Commander of the *Militär-Reit-Institut*, was both memorable and professionally important. While this certainly was not Ewald's first equestrian competition, it was an important one for him. The trip to Hannover

¹⁵² *Rangliste 1906*, 393. Max Puscher was *II. Abteilung Adjutant* and Walter Boehm was in *I. reitende Batterie*. Von Kleist was two years junior to Puscher and two years senior to Boehm. It is likely here that von Kleist first met Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg, then a junior lieutenant in *Dragoners-Regiment „König“ (2. Württembergisches) Nr. 26* (Stuttgart), a future near-peer panzer commander of von Kleist during World War II.

¹⁵³ MRI Program 1906. Thirty-nine officers in the class were cavalrymen, nine artillery officers, and two officers each were from Sweden and Norway. Of the forty-eight German Army officers, thirty-two (66.7%) were noblemen. Of the nine artillery officers, two (22.2%) were noblemen. A number of the horses had English names which were not translated into German in the event program.

¹⁵⁴ H. von Eschbach, "Das Preisreiten des Militär-Reit Instituts am 6. und 7. April," *Hannoverscher Courier.*, April 8, 1906, 25. Both the *Hannoverscher Courier* and *Hannoversches Tageblatt* carried articles on the day before, both days of the competition, as well as Sunday wrap-up articles listing all of the prize winners.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* The prizes for the *Jagd-Spring Konkurrenz* were: first place, a trophy and 300M; second place, 300M; third place, 250M; fourth place, 200M; fifth place, 150M; sixth place, 100M; and seventh and eighth places, each 50M. The newspaper accounts only list the prize winners. Given this, von Kleist, Puscher, and Boehm finished below eighth place, but their ranking is unknown.

not only allowed him to compete and gain confidence in his equestrian skills but also to meet the instructors of the *MRI*, see the facilities of the school, talk to current *MRI* officer-students, and rub elbows with top-notch riders. On a lighter note, Ewald also undoubtedly noticed the attractive young women who attended in their spring finery.¹⁵⁶ All of this assisted in preparing Ewald for, what at this time, was a hoped-for spot as an officer-student at the school in the coming year or two.

The regiment's next noteworthy event occurred on 11 June in a somewhat unlikely place. The venue was the Berlin-Hoppegarten race course. Despite being a Monday, it was likely that a number of officers from *FAR 3* were present to watch the running of the most prestigious army horse race of the year, the annual *Großes Armee-Jagd-Rennen* (the All-Army Steeplechase). The *Kaiser* and his entourage, many senior army generals, wealthy and prominent civilians, and hundreds of army officers watched a field of fifteen horses and riders fiercely compete over the five-thousand-meter course. One could have heard the officers of *FAR 3* cheering as a brown gelding named "Gletscher" surged out of the last turn and was the first to cross the finish line. The horse was owned by one of their own, *Major Freiherr* von Reitzenstein, the recently appointed *II. Abteilung Kommandeur*.¹⁵⁷ While the *Major* owned the horse, he had selected *Leutnant* von Bachmayer of the *Leib-Garde Husaren* to ride the gelding likely due to the *Leutnant* being lighter and fitter. In the winner's circle, *Major Freiherr* von Reitzenstein received the *Ehrenpreis des Kaisers* (*Kaiser's Trophy*) and prize money totaling 6,520 *Marks*.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ "Konkurrenzreiten im Militär-Reitinstitut," *Hannoversches Tageblatt*, April 7, 1906, 4. „The riders preferred to stay outdoors in the warm spring sun, which had also caused the ladies to appear in light spring dresses in many cases.”

¹⁵⁷ Oscar Christ, *Die Geschichte des Armee-Jagdrennens: 1862-1914* (Köln: self published, 1936), 98-99.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. While as the owner, *Major Freiherr* von Reitzenstein received the prize money, the jockey and the trainer, a W. Theide, had to be compensated out of the winnings. The prize money of 6,520 *Marks* was only 32 *Marks* less than what *Freiherr* von Reitzenstein earned annually as an army *Major*, 6,552 *Marks* base pay. This was *Major Freiherr* von Reitzenstein's only time to appear in the winner's circle at the *Großes Armee-Jagd-Rennen*. While he

It would be a day of victory that *Freiherr* von Reitzenstein would remember for a long while. Another officer in the regiment, *Oberleutnant* Schönberg also owned race horses and set his sights to someday be in the winner's circle like von Reitzenstein. For Ewald, the entire day would have been instructive as he observed the horses, their jockeys, and listened to the discussion on training and race strategies. He undoubtedly gleaned some tips for his own lower-level racing participation.

The next key event came in July. For 1906, *FAR 3* and its sister regiment, *FAR 39*, were ordered to *Truppenübungsplatz* Döberitz for their annual live fire training from 23 July until 10 August.¹⁵⁹ Döberitz was located a short thirty miles (fifty kilometers) distance to the east, just north of Potsdam. The training area was normally used by the units of the *Gardekorps* stationed in and around Berlin and Potsdam. At approximately sixteen square miles of training space, Döberitz was slightly smaller than *Truppenübungsplatz* Alten-Grabow and only half the size of the regiment's normal training area of Jüterbog. The positive side of Döberitz was that it was a new range with different terrain and targets and thus challenged the gunners; good preparation for the upcoming *Kaisermanöver*. A few of the less-than-ideal elements were noted in a line from a poem: "Under thunder, hail, storm and lightening God created the Desert Döbertiz."¹⁶⁰ The regiment had been scheduled near the height of the summer and thus endured the heat and ubiquitous dust found on training ranges during the dry season. The range was small and therefore offered fewer training venues for maneuvering and practicing tactical employment of

may have entered a horse in other years, none of them finished in the top ten and were thus not noted in Christ's work. Of note, future Chancellor of Germany, Franz von Papen, who in 1906 was a *Leutnant* and regimental adjutant in the *Westfälisches Ulanen -Regiment Nr. 5*, started the race but his horse fell taking him out of contention. Von Papen was an avid and accomplished horseman; however, this seems to have been his only appearance as a jockey at *Großes Armee-Jagd-Rennen*.

¹⁵⁹ Kriegsministerium, *Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt*, 1906, (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1907), 74-76.

¹⁶⁰ Paul Deickert, *Historisches Döberitz, Döberitz wie es war und wie es ist* (Berlin: Verlag „Offene Worte“, 1936), 45.

the guns. At the conclusion of the live fire exercises, the start of the *Kaisermanöver* was just one month away for the *fahrende Abteilungen*. For the *reitende Abteilung*, the pre-maneuver exercises began only a week later at *Truppenübungsplatz* Posen.

As ordered, the six cavalry regiments, two machinegun detachments, one cavalry combat engineer detachment, and Greßmann's mounted field artillery battalion converged on Posen.¹⁶¹ Having been established only two years prior, *Truppenübungsplatz* Posen was Germany's largest and most modern training area. The assignment of *Kavallerie*=*Division A* to Posen pointed to the importance of the division and its expected leading role in the upcoming *Kaisermanöver*. From 17 until 28 August, the provisional cavalry division, under the command of *Generalleutnant Freiherr* von Langermann und Erlencamp, conducted training focused on the integration and interoperability of the three cavalry brigades, its mounted artillery battalion, and the division's support elements.¹⁶² At the completion of their eleven days of training, *Kavallerie Division A* moved south the approximately seventy-five miles (one hundred twenty kilometers) to its initial bivouac area near Glogau, Schlesien for the *Kaisermanöver*.¹⁶³

The main maneuver days were scheduled for 10 – 14 September 1906. The “battle” area lay some two hundred twenty-five (three hundred fifty kilometers) miles east, southeast of Brandenburg and would have taken between seven and ten days of road march to reach. Given the distance, it is most probable that *FAR 3* loaded its remaining 36 guns, 33 officers, 750 NCOs and soldiers, and 390 horses on trains and departed Brandenburg in the first few days of

¹⁶¹ Kriegsministerium. *Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt*, 1906, 35-38. Posen lay 200 miles (320 kilometers) east of Brandenburg. Given the distance, the *reitende Abteilung* likely travelled by rail from their home garrison to *Truppenübungsplatz* Posen.

¹⁶² Gerhard Friedrich von Pelet-Narbonne, von Löbell's *Jahresberichte über das Heer- und Kriegswesen 1906* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1907), 319. *Generalleutnant Freiherr* von Langermann und Erlencamp was the *Inspekteur* of *I. Kavallerie*=*Inspektion* (Königsberg in Preußen).

¹⁶³ Glogau is present-day Głogów, Poland.

September.¹⁶⁴ Once in Schlesien, the two *fahrende Abteilungen* joined the *III. Armeekorps* units in their assigned bivouac area. In order to make the maneuvers as realistic as possible, the unloading points and the unit arrival times for *III. And V. Armeekorps* units were kept secret from the *Kaiser* and the opposing forces.¹⁶⁵

The overall construct of the *Kaisermanöver* pitted a larger but dispersed force (*Blue*) against a smaller but consolidated force (*Red*).¹⁶⁶ The Blue Force, an *Armee* commanded by *General der Infanterie* von Lindequist, comprised *III. and V. Armeekorps* units (two infantry divisions with a cavalry brigade and artillery brigade, each), strengthened with *Kavallerie* Division A, one *Luftschifferabteilung*, and support troops.¹⁶⁷ Blue Force totaled fifty *Infanterie Batillione*, fifty *Kavallerie Eskadronen*, and fifty *Artillerie Batterien*. Red Force, the

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 8. Figures given are for the full authorized strength of the regiment; six *fahrende Batterien* (medium budget) and two *reitende Batterien* (high budget) and total 48 guns, 45 officers, 992 NCOs and soldiers, and 630 horses. The officers included the three medical doctors and three veterinarians assigned to the regiment.

¹⁶⁵ “Die bevorstehenden deutschen Kaisermanöver,” *Allgemeine schweizerische Militärzeitung* 52 (1906): Heft 34, 267-268. Hereafter, “*Kaisermanöver*” (1906). This Swiss military newspaper had several articles on the *Kaisermanöver* of 1906. This first article, entitled “The Forthcoming German Imperial Maneuvers” provided a short overview of the upcoming event.

¹⁶⁶ For ease of reference, *Blue Force units will be italicized with German spelling and nomenclature*. Red Forces will be normal font and will be identified with English spelling and nomenclature.

¹⁶⁷ *Rangliste 1906*, 43. *General der Infanterie* Oskar Fromhold Friedrich Olof von Lindequist (* 10 December 1838 in Jülich; † 16 April 1915 in Potsdam) served as *Generalinspektors der III. Armeeeinspektion* (Hannover). He was promoted to *Generaloberst* 1m 1906, retired in 1907, and was promoted to *Generalfeldmarschall* in 1911. Frank Buchholz, Joe Robinson, and Janet Robinson, *The Great War Dawning: German and its Army at the Start of World War I* (Vienna: Verlag Militaria GmbH, 2013), 126. The *Generalinspektor* nominally oversaw between two and five subordinate *Armeekorps* in peacetime. Their task was to inspect the army corps they oversaw and present their findings to the *Kaiser*. The *General-Inspekteure* oversight did not include full command authority as the Commanding Generals of the *Armeekorps* reported directly to the *Kaiser*. The planned wartime responsibilities for the five *General-Inspekteure* was to serve as a Commanding General of a numbered Army, e.g., Second Army. Thus, *General der Infanterie* von Lindequist was executing his wartime role as *Befehlshaber Dritte Armee*. In 1906, von Lindequist served as *Generalinspektors der III. Armeeeinspektion* (Hannover) with inspection responsibilities for *VII., VIII., XI. and, XVIII Armeekorps*, none of which were participating in the *Kaisermanöver*. Thus, von Lindequist was required to command units with which he was not familiar and conversely the *III. And V. Armeekorps* were serving under an “unknown” commanding general. This points to at least some amount of flexibility, interoperability, and standardization found in the German Army at this time. It also appears to indicate the willingness of senior German Army commanders to experiment during large scale maneuvers without an overriding fear that less than desired performance or tactical failure would end their careers. Although it must be pointed out that *General der Infanterie* von Lindequist was the most junior of the five *General-Inspekteure* and the only one who was not royalty. The four other *General-Inspekteure* were: Albrecht Prinz von Preußen, Bernhard Erbprinz von Sachsen-Meiningen, Leopold Prinz von Bayern, and Friedrich Großherzog von Baden.

reinforced VI Army Corps commanded by *General der Infanterie* von Woysche, comprised three infantry divisions, Cavalry Division B, a Saxon field artillery brigade, a Saxon cavalry brigade, a machine-gun battalion, one air ship detachment, and support troops.¹⁶⁸ Red Force totaled thirty-seven infantry battalions, forty-five cavalry squadrons, thirty-eight artillery batteries, four heavy howitzer batteries, and two machine-gun battalions and had the initial advantage of interior lines.

The attachment of *FAR 3's reitende Abteilung* to *Blue Force's Kavallerie-Division A* meant that *Major* Greßmann and his gunners would need to match the faster pace of the cavalry if the guns were to be in position to support the horsemen. For Ewald as the *Adjutant*, the exercise would challenge his administrative, leadership, tactical, and equestrian skills.¹⁶⁹ Administratively, the *Adjutant* was responsible for the majority of the written information that came into and went out of the *Abteilung*. This included the drafting and dispatch of orders by *Major* Greßmann; the receipt, deciphering, and passing of orders received from above; maintaining the *Kriegstagebuch* (war diary), creating and forwarding status reports to the *Division* covering men, horses, equipment, and supplies as well as the combat strength of the *reitende Batterien*. While *Feldartillerie-Abteilung* did not have a staff, there were a number of NCOs, and soldiers assigned to support the functioning of the *Abteilung* in the field. Ewald was the de facto chief of staff and was responsible for the leadership of these individuals and the running of the *Abteilung* command post, whether stationary or in the saddle. The support personnel included: clerks, the bugler, dispatch riders, orderlies, grooms, and the command post

¹⁶⁸ “*Kaisermanöver*” (1906): Heft 34, 267-268. The article also noted that a “volunteer automobile corps” of some fifty automobiles was to participate across the battlefield. *Rangliste, 1906*, 66. *General der Infanterie* von Woysch was the *Kommandierenden General VI. Armeekorps*.

¹⁶⁹ Von Schwerin, *Adjutantendienst*, 110. Graf von Schwerin spent thirty-seven pages covering the duties and responsibilities of adjutant during training exercises, troop maneuvers, and in wartime. He wrote, “High demands are made on the personal conduct of the adjutant on duty at the front. Prudence and agility, riding skills and a good horse are the preconditions for their fulfillment.”

security detachment. The adjutant was also responsible for the service horses belonging to the commander and *Abteilung* staff. Too, Ewald needed to keep track of the *Abteilung* surgeon, veterinarian, and paymaster as well as any other personnel temporarily assigned to the unit. The *Adjutant* was also responsible for the timely and ample ammunition resupply and were required to think independently about retrieving and unloading the ammunition wagons, tracking the resupply detachments and ensuring the connection with the ammunition columns as soon as possible.

While the tactical direction of the *Abteilung* remained the purview of the commander, the *Adjutant* was expected to assist the commander when and however needed and served as an extension of the commander's eyes, ears, and memory. The handbook on adjutant duties stated:

The adjutant must be able to maintain his positional orientation in the countryside. He acquires the necessary reliability in this respect by becoming habituated to the attentive observation of the terrain at all times and its military considerations. If he also makes his pleasure rides into reconnaissance rides, he will be able to give his commander valuable help in arranging and directing field duty exercises. He must always have a map, scale and compasses at hand, and through their diligent use, learn to quickly estimate and measure the distance on the map and in the terrain for weapons effects and march movements. ... The artillery adjutants take the distance to be considered for the opening of fire from the map and report it to the commander for further communication. When advancing the staffs, they must pay close attention to the terrain so that they can later follow the batteries on passable and concealed approach routes.¹⁷⁰

As a good *Adjutant*, Ewald would have worked diligently at keeping his situational awareness high thus allowing him to anticipate *Major* Greßmann's thinking and plans. His close proximity to the commander allowed him to observe how Greßmann thought, reacted, and directed the tactical employment of the two artillery batteries as well as how the *Major* interacted with and supported the division and its three cavalry brigades. Given his qualities as a teacher, it

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 111-112 and 143.

is likely that Greßmann, when time and conditions permitted, allowed and encouraged Ewald to ask questions on the operational planning and execution that he had observed. Also, Ewald would have been present for some of the post-maneuver critiques conducted by the senior *Blue* officers and the maneuver umpires. Very few junior officer positions provided the viewpoint and proximity to battlefield leadership than that of *Adjutant* making it an important position for officers who desired to learn their profession and prepare themselves for higher levels of responsibility. All of this, for an *Adjutant* of the *reitende Feldartillerie-Abteilung* attached to the Blue Force *Kavallerie Division* in a *Kaisermanöver*, required a superlative rider who was superbly mounted.¹⁷¹ Given his future, it stands to reason that Ewald performed his duties with distinction.

For Ewald and the *reitende Abteilung*, the maneuvers kicked off on the evening of 9 September, the day before the official start date.¹⁷² On that evening, *Kavallerie-Division A* rode fifteen miles (twenty-five kilometers) as the advanced reconnaissance for *V. Armeekorps*. The *Division* was reinforced with another composite *Kavallerie-Brigade*, culled from their assignments as divisional cavalry for the infantry of *V. Armeekorps*. Early on the 10th, *Kavallerie-Division A*, with its four *Kavallerie-Brigaden* and *reitende Feldartillerie-Abteilung*, advanced on the road from Lüben to Parchwitz to gain control of the Oder River crossing site at Katzbach for the *III. Armeekorps*, a march of eighteen miles (thirty kilometers).¹⁷³ The Red Force Cavalry Division B was ordered to find the Blue *Kavallerie* and oppose its controlling a

¹⁷¹ It is likely that von Kleist rode as one of his mounts during the *Kaisermanöver*, Miss Maddison. See footnote 61.

¹⁷² “*Kaisermanöver*” (1906): 267-268, 339-342, 349-352, 358-361, 373-376, and 413-417. The account of the maneuvers is synthesized from the six articles found in the *Allgemeine schweizerische Militärzeitung*. Von Pelet-Narbonne, *Löbell's Jahresbericht, 1906*, 318-325. See von Pelet-Narbonne for a detailed account of the cavalry actions during the entire *Kaisermanöver*.

¹⁷³ Lüben is present day Lubin, Poland. Parchwitz is present day Prochowice, Poland. The two towns lay approximately thirty miles (fifty kilometers) northwest of Breslau (present day Wrocław, Poland). Katzbach, present day Kaczawa, Poland.

crossing site on the Oder River. During the night of 9/10 September, Cavalry Division B had advanced one of its squadrons with machine guns and an engineer detachment to the Parchwitz defile and occupied it. The Blue *Kavallerie* sent to seize the Oder crossing site at Katzbach was repulsed after a sharp fight. *Kavallerie* Division A retreated in the direction of Lüben. The Red Cavalry Division maintained contact with the Blue *Kavallerie* and continued to threaten the Blue horsemen by bringing up the Red mounted field artillery battalion and a machine-gun detachment. The first round went to the Red Cavalry Division which showed forethought and initiative. Despite having one less cavalry brigade than Blue, it had forced Blue to withdraw and take up defensive positions. The Kaiser with the staff of the maneuver command and retinue arrived at 07:30 hours and was in a position to see the cavalry engagement. For the two cavalry divisions, the remainder of the day was spent conducting reconnaissance and screening activity with no significant contact reported. This allowed *Kavallerie* Division A to return to Parchwitz where it bivouacked that evening.

On the morning of the 11th, Blue *Kavallerie* Division A moved south from Parchwitz at 04:00 hours. Six miles south, at Petersdorf, the *Major* Greßmann positioned the two *Batterien* on the high ground facing west-southwest. *Maschinengewehre* were also placed on the heights. At 09:15 hours, Blue's 9. *Kavallerie* Brigade, supported by the two *Batterien* attacked the field artillery batteries of the Red 41st Division at Oyas. The Red's 41st Division, which had been advancing against the Blue's 10. *Division's* position, was repulsed. This presented an opportunity and the entire *Kavallerie* Division A attacked the 41st Division's retreating infantry. The Blue attack was supported by its *reitende Batterien* and *Maschinengewehr* at 09:45 hours near Oyas. Blue had won a clear victory largely due to the aggressiveness of Blue *Infanterie* of

the *10 Division* and the mobile superiority of Blue's large force of *Kavallerie* and its *reitende Artillerie*.

On the third maneuver day, 12 September, Red Force's VI Army Corps, was prevented from exploiting its previous day's victory over the *V. Armeekorps* by the fact that the column of the *III. Armeekorps* had reached a solid defensive line on the evening of the 11th. *Kavallerie-Division A* was tasked to cover the left flank of *III. Armeekorps* in its attack towards Wahlstatt-Oyas. Blue Force's *6. Division* was not well handled and its supporting *Artillerie* comprised of *FAR 3* and *FAR 39*, was bested by Red Force artillery. Blue Forces continued to arrive on line and concentrate their attacks against Red Forces throughout the 12th, forcing Red to give way and withdraw from indefensible positions. Blue's objective for the day had been reached and the Blue *Kavallerie-Division* had participated in the fight. It had been a long day for Ewald and *Kavallerie-Division A* as it had been underway since 01:00 hours and had maneuvered hard to protect the open flank of *III. Armeekorps*. The tactical and operational result of 12 September had been that the Red Force had not succeeded in its daring attempt, given the proximity of its two opponents, to overwhelm the completely fresh *III. Armeekorps* in a fortified position before the *V. Armeekorps* defeated its weak opponent at Oyas-Wahlstatt even more quickly. This allowed *V. Armeekorps* to aid *III. Armeekorps* in its fight for the strongly fortified heights in the line Kaltenhaus-south to Siefersdorf.

The last maneuver day, 13 September, saw the Red Force cavalry successful hold off an attack by Blue's *Kavallerie-Division A* against the left wing of the Red Forces. In the maneuver's denouement, Ewald saw his *Kavallerie-Division* bested again by Red horsemen. At the conclusion of the maneuvers, the *Kaiser* promoted Blue Force commanding general, *General*

der Infanterie von Lindequist, to *Generaloberst*, a sign that the monarch had been pleased with the General's performance.¹⁷⁴

The *Allgemeine Schweizerische Militärzeitung* provided a synopsis of the exercise.

The overall conclusion is that the organization of the maneuvers was simpler and more warlike than that of many earlier ones, and that the infantry has already proved to be well trained in the main requirements of their new regulations; that, on the other hand, the use of the cavalry left much to be desired; that the performance of the artillery was recognized as an excellent one. ... The performance of the cavalry during this year's maneuvers was not judged too favorably. ... Nevertheless, the cavalry progressed and important innovations were noticeable. The speed and accuracy of their movements were recognized, as well as their use of the terrain for cover. In strategic reconnaissance, the technical apparatus now available to the cavalry came into increased and successful use, particularly the cavalry telegraph and the telephone between the cavalry division commands and the various staffs. One also observed even in the forward reconnaissance squadrons cavalry telegraph-patrols.¹⁷⁵

While it appeared that the *Kaiser* was satisfied with the overall conduct of the maneuvers, it is unlikely that he was happy with the performance of Blue's *Kavallerie-Division A*. Despite being the numerically stronger force, it was thrice bested by Red's opposing Cavalry Division B. While Ewald left no specific comment on these maneuvers, it is likely that the less than desired performance of his division would have not set well with his professional or competitive

¹⁷⁴ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 91 (1906), 2601. *Generaloberst* von Lindequist date of rank was 13 September 1906. He remained *Generalinspekteur der III. Armee-Inspektion in Hannover* for another year, retiring from active duty on 11 September 1907 after having celebrated his fiftieth anniversary of entering the Prussian Army (2 May 1857). He was promoted to *Generalfeldmarschall* in 1911 and was at that time installed as a member of the Prussian House of Lords. From 1910-1914 he served as the Chairman of the *Deutschen Kriegerbunds* (German War Association), a German military veteran's association.

¹⁷⁵ "Kaisermanöver" (1906): 413-417. The *Allgemeine Schweizerische Militärzeitung* assessment ran to over 2,500 words and covered a full range of topics and was balanced between the major arms of infantry, cavalry, and artillery. It also noted the successes and shortfalls of the supporting elements such as combat engineers. The synopsis provided here provides more detail on the assessment of the cavalry action as that is the primary arena in which von Kleist participated. In the initial article, *Allgemeine Schweizerische Militärzeitung* noted the addition of a fifty automobile "volunteer" detachment and indicated that the automobiles would be used for transporting senior leaders behind the line as well as for courier duty between rear area headquarters. This is a relatively early appearance of the automobile in military maneuvers and curiously the post-maneuver assessment article does not comment on the use of these cars. Important for von Kleist, however, would have been to see the use of cavalry telegraph and telephone in the tactical environment. Likely he also noted the use of automobiles on the battlefield. See also, Von Pelet-Narbonne, *Löbels Jahresbericht, 1906*, 304-308, for an overall German report on the *Kaisermanöver*.

nature.¹⁷⁶ But it is certain that the *Adjutant* learned much as he watched *Major* Greßmann and the cavalry commanders of the division as they led their units.

While Ewald left no direct reference to the *Kaisermanöver* 1906, he did pen a summation of his participation in field maneuvers between 1905-1907.

Here I'll mention only one cavalry exercise at Alten-Grabow near Magdeburg. The *reitende Abteilung* of my old field artillery regiment participated in such exercises of cavalry division or corps almost every year. I was adjutant of the *Abteilung* for three years. During these training maneuvers, the deployment and employment of these larger army cavalry units were exercised in tactical situations. They required well-trained regiments and brigades, firmly in the hands of their commanders. They demanded good and spirited riding, most often in thick clouds of dust. The mounted *reitende Abteilung* had to operate in these fast-moving actions and position itself to fire into the mounted enemy before the [cavalry] attacked; an attack with which these exercises usually ended. It was already said at that time that such [cavalry] attacks were no longer useful during wartime given the modern developments of firepower; at any rate, one can hardly speak of divided opinions. For us, the young officers, however, the cavalry style of operations in which we participated was inspiring. It was overwhelming, as was the skill that was required and achieved.¹⁷⁷

It was during the cavalry exercise at Alten-Grabow that Ewald had his first experience with the *Kaiser* as a soldier.¹⁷⁸

So, it was in Alten-Grabow that the *Kaiser* and his entourage appeared. On one day the *IV Armeekorps* (Magdeburg), whose Commanding General was General von Hindenburg, whom I also saw for the first time as well, among others,

¹⁷⁶ Von Kleist left no record of his impressions of Schlesien during what was likely his first trip to the province. Twenty-two years later, von Kleist would be assigned to Schlesien for the first time when he was assigned as Chief of Staff, 2nd Cavalry Division (Breslau) in March 1928. His second posting to Schlesien came in 1932 when he was assigned as commander, 2nd Cavalry Division (Breslau) in January 1933. After seven years as the commanding general in Breslau (present day Wrocław, Poland), von Kleist was retired (February 1938) and he and his wife purchased a *Rittergut* just north of Breslau; less than an hour's drive from the maneuver area of 1906.

¹⁷⁷ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen.", Heft II, 71-72.

¹⁷⁸ The cavalry exercise von Kleist recalled occurred sometime between January 1905 and September 1907, while he was serving as the *reitende Abteilung Adjutant*. Not enough details are given to place the date exactly. The first meeting of *Kaiser Wilhelm II* could have occurred during *FAR 3's* 1907 annual live fire exercise conducted at Alten-Grabow between 29 April and 18 May 1907. Given the close proximity of Alten-Grabow, the exercise could have been a corps-level exercise during the summer of 1905 or 1907 which pitted *FAR 3's* parent *III. Armeekorps* against *IV. Armeekorps*, at the time commanded by then *General der Infanterie* Paul von Beneckendorf und von Hindenburg.

provided the enemy units. I believe it was in this case an infantry battalion. This battalion was surprised by the attack of an enemy unit. The battalion was so surprised that it did not fire a shot. I still remember today how the *Kaiser* at the end-of-exercise critique said: “The damned pen-wielding strategists write that cavalry attacks are no longer possible in a modern war. Here, once again, the great impact to morale of a surprise cavalry attack has been shown.”¹⁷⁹

Despite the *Kaiser*’s enthusiasm for cavalry attacks, von Kleist and his fellow officers could see that, “Large close-formation attacks by cavalry divisions or even corps, as we were still practicing them, were not to be seen on the future battlefield.”¹⁸⁰

The last few weeks of September, after the end of the *Kaisermanöver*, was a busy time for the regiment as it returned to barracks, repaired and cleaned the guns and other equipment, released the soldiers whose *Dienstpflicht* enlistments ended, and prepared for the new draft of incoming recruits who would arrive in the first weeks of October.

At the commencement of the new *Dienstjahr* (service year), 1 October 1906, the regimental commander, *Oberstleutnant* Mottau, placed an additional duty responsibility on Ewald’s shoulders, that of *Gerichtsoffizier* (court officer).¹⁸¹

One of the responsibilities of regimental command was enforcement of military law; the amalgam of army rules, regulations, orders, and directives. At the lowest level of army judicial authority, regimental commanders were given the power to preside as judges at courts-martials. Their authority was restricted to the enlisted soldiers under their command for alleged offenses which were punishable with short terms of confinement or of a petty nature.¹⁸² To assist him, the

¹⁷⁹ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.”, Heft II, 72-73.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Personal-Bericht; (Document 13). Von Kleist’s record shows he was appointed as *Gerichtsoffizier* from 1 October 1906 to 30 September 1907.

¹⁸² Von Schwerin, *Adjutantendienst*, 169. Von Schwerin includes a short chapter that summarizes the roles and responsibilities of *Gerichtsoffizier* (court officer). Regimental commanders and independent battalion commanders were empowered and directed to serve as the convening authority and presiding officer (judge) at courts-martials for

regimental commander appointed a junior officer, often one of the battalion adjutants, to serve as his administrative assistant for judicial actions.¹⁸³ The *Gerichtsoffizier* was duly sworn in at the start of his appointment.¹⁸⁴ The relationship of the *Gerichtsoffizier* to the presiding officer (commander) differed from the position of the adjutant to the commander. The primary difference was that the commander, using his own discretion could, but did not have to, call on the *Gerichtsoffizier* for assistance. Even when he did call on the *Gerichtsoffizier*, the legal proceedings always remained under the full and sole responsibility of the commander.

For the *Gerichtsoffizier*, military law prescribed quite specific powers and actions which were in sharp distinction from the rights and duties of the presiding officer (commander). Nonetheless, it was imperative that the *Gerichtsoffizier* be fully conversant in his responsibilities, particularly the directed legal administrative procedures, and fulfill his duties with precision and completeness so as to neither jeopardize a fair trial nor to allow his commander to legally or ethically misstep. The commander's leaned on their *Gerichtsoffiziere* for this assistance and what today would be called "quality control." A handbook recommended that, "The

non-commissioned officers and soldiers under their command. These commanders where, however, not authorized to serve as judge for officers. The convening authority and presiding officer (judge) for courts-martials of officers was given to the division commander or higher levels depending on the alleged officer offense. For non-commissioned officers and soldiers who were accused of more severe offenses, the convening authority and presiding officer (judge) was raised to the division commander or higher levels.

¹⁸³ It is possible that more than one *Gerichtsoffizier* could be appointed at the regimental level. For *FAR 3*, no information has been found which indicates if more than one officer was appointed as court officer.

¹⁸⁴ Von Rabenau, *Ein Handbuch*, 354. Von Rabenau wrote, "The court officers are appointed by the presiding officer [commander] from one of the subaltern officers. The subaltern concerned must have been a member of the army for at least one year. The judicial officer shall be sworn in by the presiding officer when taking up his office." The oath taking was public and specifically documented. Normally, the *Gerichtsoffizier* was appointed and sworn in at the beginning of the fiscal year (1 April) and his appointment ran for the entire fiscal year. In von Kleist's case, he was appointed six months into the fiscal year, on 1 October. "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 91 (1906): 2831 His appointment may have been precipitated by the fact that Wilhelm Hederich, *Adjutant* for *I. Abteilung*, was sent for a five-month temporary duty course at the *Militär-Turnanstalt* (military gymnastics school) as an officer-student from 1 October 1906 until 28 February 1907. If Hederich was a *Gerichtsoffizier*, his five-month absence would have dictated the need for another officer to be appointed to that duty. Von Kleist, however, remained a *Gerichtsoffizier* until he departed to attend the *Militär-Reit-Institut* course at the beginning of October 1907. This also meant that von Kleist was without a roommate for five months while Hederich was away at the course in Berlin.

Gerichtsoffizier, after having obtained a general idea of the scope of his activity and his duties, must study in detail for each case the legal and other provisions compiled in the ‘Compendium of Military Law’. Good books are available to guide him.”¹⁸⁵

The main duties Ewald performed as *Gerichtsoffizier* were primarily concerned with investigating the facts of the case during the period of preliminary proceedings. The findings were recorded officially in criminal reports, investigation reports, and eyewitness statements. This information was then used by the commander to determine if the case had merit and whether he would convene a court-martial. Should a court-martial be ordered, the investigation was handed over to professional legal experts in the form of a *Kriegsgerichtsrat* (courts-martial counselor, i.e., judge advocate general) or magistrate. The *Gerichtsoffizier* then represented the prosecution during the main proceedings.

Of significance was the injunction to the *Gerichtsoffizier* to maintain the integrity of the legal process and his own informed convictions over the directives of his commanding officer. Von Schwerin wrote, “If the Gerichtsoffizier considers an instruction, order or decision to be inconsistent with the law or other relevant regulations, he shall appeal against it. Even if this is unsuccessful, he must comply with the instruction of the presiding officer. However, the latter shall then bear sole responsibility.”¹⁸⁶ This concept mirrors and is consistent with other German army command-subordinate relationships such as a commanding general to chief of staff; in which the subordinate could officially protest and if the commander was found at fault, the subordinate did not share the responsibility or consequences. Thus, it can be seen that the duties and responsibilities placed on the *Gerichtsoffizier* were weighty and only officers who showed

¹⁸⁵ Von Schwerin, *Adjutantendienst*, 170.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 170. Should the *Gerichtsoffizier* raise a protest, the issue was to be recorded, filed, and submitted immediately to the court-martial for legal review. The review remains in consideration for the further handling of the case and under certain circumstances the opinion of the *Gerichtsoffizier* may also be valid.

attention to detail, were able to act in a fair and impartial manner, and could be trusted to maintain their convictions and integrity were appointed to this important position.

The advent of autumn also meant that the *Reitjagd* season had commenced. Certainly, Ewald was an active participant in the hunts in and around Brandenburg. And by this time, he had purchased Miss Maddison, a well-bred Irish Thoroughbred mare. On 4 November 1906, Ewald entered the *Hubertus-Jagdrennen*. He rode Miss Maddison to a second-place finish, earning an engraved silver cup and likely a small cash prize.¹⁸⁷ While this was only the second confirmed participation in an equestrian competition by Ewald, it can only be thought that by 1906, given the length and level of his equestrian endeavors Ewald had become a somewhat experienced and skilled competitive rider in steeplechasing and jumping competitions.

Ewald's professional training continued when between 10-22 December 1906, when he was sent to the *Gewehrfabrik* in Spandau.¹⁸⁸ These two-week courses held periodically provided junior artillery officers information and training on the maintenance of weapons and support equipment.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Trophy in possession of von Kleist family and viewed by author during November 2018 visit. The location of the race is undetermined.

¹⁸⁸ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Personal-Bericht; (Document 13). Von Kleist's record shows he was at the "*Gewehrfabrik in Spandau*" from 10 until 22 December 1906.

¹⁸⁹ Von Pelet-Narbonne, *Löbell's Jahresbericht, 1906*, 30. Courses on repair of weapons and support equipment attended by *Oberleutnants* and *Leutnants* were given periodically at the army-controlled weapons factories (Spandau, Erfurt, Danzig, Dresden, and Amberg). For 1906, the courses were divided between officers of all branches, excluding artillery, and all artillery officer courses. The segregation of the artillery officers indicates that their course was specific to artillery and included information on cannon maintenance which would have been of no value to officers of other branches. Löbell's article indicated that 93 officers attended each of the five Spandau courses. For the artillery officer courses, with sixty-eight field artillery regiments, this would have allowed each regiment to send one officer and half of the regiments to send a second officer to each course. Here again, von Kleist would have rubbed shoulders with a large number of fellow artillery officers in both official and off-duty venues.

For Ewald, 1906 had been a busy but professionally rewarding year. He had experienced much and learned much especially under the tutelage of *Major* Greßmann. The year 1907 would bring even greater professional and personal opportunities for Ewald.

The year commenced with good news. Kinsman, *Generalleutnant* Georg von Kleist, was made *Generalinspekteur der Kavallerie*, the top cavalry post in the German Army, and promoted to *General der Kavallerie*.¹⁹⁰ Robert, the General's eldest son, was a year younger than Ewald and the two young officers had much in common.¹⁹¹ It was good to have a fellow von Kleist in the senior leadership of the German Army especially as its senior cavalryman.

As an artillery officer, however, Ewald had followed the discussions and debates about the need to modernize the primary field artillery gun, the FK 96. The FK 96, a 77-millimeter light, mobile field cannon, was fielded in the German Army beginning in 1897.¹⁹² The fielding by the French of the *Canon de 75 modèle 1897* a year later made the FK 96 virtually obsolete due to the fact that the new French Army field gun incorporated a hydro-pneumatic recoil

¹⁹⁰ Georg Heinrich Kypke, Hans Wätjens, Sigurd von Kleist. *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist Dritter Teil-Biographien bis 1880 Dritte Abteilung Muttrin-Damensche Linie Der Damensche und der Ruschitz-Dargener Ast*, 2. Auflage. Hamm: Familienverband derer v. Kleist e. V., 2018, 361-362. Georg von Kleist was raised to *Generalinspekteur der Kavallerie* on 24 January 1907 and promoted to *General der Kavallerie* on 27 January 1907. By this date, Ewald had had the opportunity to attend several von Kleist Family Day gatherings and was acquainted with his high-ranking and powerful kinsman. The office of the *Generalinspekteur* was in Berlin making official and social meetings with the General more likely. *Rangliste 1907*, 375. The three oldest sons of the General, Robert, Heinrich, and Georg, were stationed at Fürstenwalde as *Leutnants* in *Ulanen-Regiment Kaiser Alexander II. von Rußland (I. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3*. The regiment was assigned to 5. *Division*, the sister division to Ewald's 6. *Division* in III. *Armee*korps.

¹⁹¹ von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen.", Heft 3, 14. Von Kleist noted in his post-war writings that "Robert, the last Lord of the Manor at Wusseken near Stolp, and I were very much alike. Like his father at one time and his brothers, Heinrich and Georg, and later also his stepbrothers, of whom I only knew Fedor, Robert served with a good regiment, the Fürstenwalder Ulanen 3." It is likely that Ewald had by 1907, established a connection with and some level of relationship with Robert and possibly Heinrich and Georg as well. Fürstenwalde lay to the east of Berlin and was seventy-five miles (one hundred twenty kilometers) east of Brandenburg.

¹⁹² Karl von Stumpff, *Geschichte des Feldartillerie-Regiments General-Feldzeugmeister (I. Brandenburgischen) Nr. 3* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1900), 568. The *Feldkanone FK 96*, were delivered to FAR 3 beginning on 1 April 1899.

mechanism. This allowed the “French 75” to be fired at a much higher rate.¹⁹³ The need to modernize the artillery with this technical advancement ignited debate in the German Army which did not end until 1904, when the decision was finally made to upgrade the army’s primary field gun. In a cost saving measure, the new gun used the existing FK 96 barrels and had the hydro-pneumatic recoil mechanism, new breech, splinter shield, and new carriage retrofitted, creating the FK 96 n/A.¹⁹⁴ The retrofitting and rearming of the field artillery regiments moved at a slow pace over the next four years. It was only by the end of 1907 that all of the active-duty corps had received the new guns.¹⁹⁵ Despite *FAR 3* being a high-ranking regiment in the important *III. Armeekorps*, the corps was one of the last to see its field artillery regiments receive the FK 96 n/A. Indeed, the *III. Armeekorps* field artillery regiments, including *FAR 3*, had participated in the September 1906 *Kaisermanöver* with the outdated FK 96.¹⁹⁶

The receipt by *FAR 3* of their new FK 96 n/A field pieces created the need for educating both the officers and the gunners on the new weapon.¹⁹⁷ Ostensibly Ewald was sent to attend his

¹⁹³ Brose, *Kaiser’s Army*, 65-66. The FK 96 could fire five to nine round per minute while the French 75 could fire up to twenty per minute. This was primarily due to the fact that the recoil system virtually eliminated the need for the gun to be re-sighted between each round.

¹⁹⁴ Officially designated the *7,7-cm-Feldkanone 96 n. A. (n. A. = neuer Art)* [new type]. The gun is also referred to as: FK 96 n/A; FK 96 n.A.; and C-96nA.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 142-143. The new FK 96 n/A’s deployment to the army was slowed by artillery traditionalists who thought the old FK 96 was sufficient and that the new FK 96 n/A with its splinter shield and recoil dampening mechanism would dampen the offensive spirit of the field artillery. But their opponents pointed to the battlefields of South Africa, and the Orient as proof that modern artillery (equipped with hydro-pneumatic recoil mechanisms and splinter shields) easily outclassed field guns without these updates. Ten German army corps were equipped with the FK 96 n/A between late 1904 and mid-1906 while the remaining twelve army corps received their guns between mid-1906 and mid-1907.

¹⁹⁶ “*Kaisermanöver*” (1906): 417. The *Allgemeine Schweizerische Militärzeitung* specifically highlighted that the only regiment participating in the September 1906 maneuvers to be equipped with guns having the new recoil dampening mechanism and splinter shields (i.e., the FK 96 n/A) was the *Feldartillerie-Schießschule Lehr-Regiment*, the regiment assigned to the school to fire in support of the officer-student courses conducted at Jüterbog. Thus, none of the field artillery regiments of *III*, *V*., or *VI. Armeekorps* had received their new FK 96 n/A guns.

¹⁹⁷ While the exact timing of *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 3*’s conversion from the old FK 96 to the new FK 96 n/A has not been pinpointed, deduction using the previously mentioned sources indicate that the regiment received the new guns sometime between October 1906 and July 1907. Most likely, the regiment received the new weapons by

second *Lehrkursus* at the *Feldartillerie Schießschule* at Jüterbog to gain the required technical knowledge and tactical training on the new gun.¹⁹⁸ The course ran just over three and a half months during which time Ewald and seventy-eight other field artillery *Leutnants* received a complement of classroom, on the firing range, and in the field instruction and practical experience.¹⁹⁹ By the time Ewald returned from Jüterbog at the end of May 1907, the officers, men, and horses of *FAR 3* had completed their three weeks of live fire training at Alten-Grabow and were back in garrison at Brandenburg.²⁰⁰

As the summer drew on, Ewald settled back into his *reitende Abteilung Adjutant* duties. Of significant importance to von Kleist was the upcoming selection of the next officer to attend the *Militär-Reit-Institut (MRI)* from *6. Feldartillerie-Brigade*. The centrality of equine study in its various forms at the cavalry branch's school were of far more interest to Ewald than the technically-centered focus of the equivalent course at the *Vereinigte Artillerie- und Ingenieurschule* (Unified Artillery and Engineer School) in Berlin or the advanced course at the *Feldartillerie Schießschule*. As a keen horseman, up and coming competitive rider, avid *Jagdreiten* hunter, and journeyman horse trainer, Ewald was intensely interested in attending the prestigious two-year officer's course. But his opportunity of obtaining a position at the *MRI* was limited. While each of the eighty-eight cavalry regiments were given one officer-student position every year, only one position was annually allotted to each of the forty-one field artillery

the end of 1906, as this would have allowed four months of familiarization and training to occur in garrison before the regiment's live fire exercise scheduled from 29 April to 18 May 1907 at Alten-Grabow.

¹⁹⁸ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Personal-Bericht; (Document 13). Von Kleist's record shows he was at the "*Lehrkursus der Feldart. Schießschule*" from 5 February until 25 May 1907.

¹⁹⁹ Von Pelet-Narbonne, *Löbell's Jahresbericht, 1907*, 22. Of the 79 *Leutnants* attending, 5 were from the Saxon contingent and one was from the Württemberg contingent.

²⁰⁰ Kriegsministerium, *Armee-Verordnungs-Blatt, 1907*, 102. The *Kriegsministerium* order, dated 28 March 1907, directed the *6. Feldartillerie Brigade* to conduct its annual live fire exercise at Alten-Grabow between 29 April to 18 May 1907.

brigades.²⁰¹ With each field artillery brigade having two field artillery regiments, this general meant that each *FAR* received an *MRI* allocation every other two-year-cycle. *Oberleutnant* Schrader of *FAR 39*, the other regiment in *6. Feldartillerie-Brigade*, would finish his two years at the end of the upcoming summer and Ewald's regiment was due to nominate the next officer sent by the *Brigade*.²⁰²

Given the strong equestrian culture of *FAR 3*, Ewald would not have been the sole officer desiring to attend *MRI*. *Leutnant* Max Puscher who had competed at the *MRI* competition in April 1906 with Ewald, was a likely candidate. So too were *Leutnants* von Templehoff, Wilhelm Hederich, Schwarze, and Kaempfe, all of whom were assigned to the *reitende Abteilung* and had the required time in service and thus experience. Also in contention were the two other *Abteilung Adjutanten*, *Leutnants* Kreich and Dinglinger.²⁰³ The selection was likely difficult and while the machinations of the *FAR 3* selection process are unknown, *Major* Greßmann's, along with the other two *Abteilung Kommandeure*'s opinion, would have carried much weight. Undoubtedly, Ewald had worked hard both as an adjutant and as a mounted officer. His career timing as an eligible candidate was very good. By attending the 1907-1909 *MRI* course, Ewald

²⁰¹ Fleischhauer, „Stammliste des Königlich Preußischen Militär-Reit-Instituts zu Hannover seit Gründung bis Kriegsausbruch August 1914“ V. Teil, (Schreibmaschinenmanuskript), (BA-MA: PH 21/41), 105. Hereafter, “Stammliste *MRI*, Teil V”.

²⁰² “Stammliste *MRI*, Teil IV”, 160 & 164. Teil IV has the roster of all of the officer-students assigned to the *Militär-Reit-Institut* between 1817 and 1914 and a roster of all of the officer-instructors for the same time period. *Leutnant* Leopold Hederich, from *FAR 3*, attended the course between 1903 and 1905, the two-year course prior to Schrader.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 173-174. An analysis of the artillery officers who were in the 1907/08 academic year *MRI* course which commenced on 1 October 1907, show that the longest serving officer had been commissioned in August 1895 and the shortest in October 1902. The vast majority of the artillery officers attending were commissioned between 1899 and 1901. Thus, von Kleist's August 1901 commissioning date placed him at the younger end of the commissioned time list. *Rangliste 1907*, 394. One *Obertleutnant* and nine *Leutnants* in *FAR 3* were in contention for attending the *MRI* course, *Oberleutnant* Humann, commissioned in 1895 was the oldest, Hans Hederich, commissioned in 1896, Puscher, commissioned in 1898, the next group commissioned in 1900 were von Templehoff, Wilhelm Hederich, and Schwarze; 1901 commission was von Kleist; 1902 commissions were Kreich, Dinglinger, and Kaempfe. The unknown variables for these officers were desire to attend, level of professional equestrian knowledge and skill, and future officer potential.

would still be a *Leutnant* when he graduated and thus would have several years of eligibility to gain entrance into the *Kriegsakademie* should he want to pursue that path. By not being selected to attend the upcoming *MRI* course, he would have to wait until the next posting came to the regiment in the autumn of 1911 and he would likely be an *Oberleutnant* at that time. This would likely preclude attending both *MRI* and the *Kriegsakademie*. If selected to attend the *MRI* in the autumn, Ewald's prospects for an above average career would be nicely enhanced and he would be in the center of the army's equestrian universe.

As the summer wore on and Ewald awaited the regimental commander's decision on who would attend the *MRI*, he continued to hone his professional acumen, officer knowledge, and equestrian skills. Self-study was always expected and encouraged for officers and perhaps Ewald read the newly published handbook for officers by Kurt von Rabenau, *Die deutsche Land- und Seemacht und die Berufspflichten des Offiziers* (German Land and Sea Power and the Professional Duties of the Officer). Rabenau opined on the most important professional duties of the officer and what qualities he must possess in order to fulfill them.

In order to function successfully as a teacher and educator in peace, and to entirely fill the position of leader in war, the officer must be a complete man, full of self-assurance and self-confidence, a personality that knows how to influence. Full of enthusiasm for his fine and noble profession, of irreproachable character, the officer must combine chivalrous manly virtues with justice, benevolence and caring welfare for his subordinates.²⁰⁴

Rabenau, along with many others, saw that self-assurance and self-confidence were the undergirding character elements which enable an officer to lead by influence and inspiration. Ewald's first *Qualifikationsbericht* in 1901, judged that his greatest weaknesses were his shyness and overly reserved nature. The regimental commander intimated that Ewald needed to

²⁰⁴ Von Rabenau, *Ein Handbuch*, 227.

significantly improve in these areas if he were to become something more than an average officer. In the intervening six years, Ewald had gained the critical character elements of self-assurance and self-confidence needed by an officer. One of the catalysts of this significant and accelerated development of self-confidence appeared to be Major *Greßmann*. His certainty in Ewald's abilities and potential was demonstrated with Greßmann's appointing Ewald as his *Adjutant* in early 1905. Too, Ewald himself could point to his relationship with *Oberstleutnant* Wilhelm Schönberg as a significant factor in his gaining confidence in his own knowledge and abilities. Schönberg arrived from Southwest Africa in January 1906, to join *FAR 3*. As an avid equestrian, he owned and raced horses. Likely due to being too heavy to be a competitive race rider, Schönberg employed other officers as his jockeys. In addition to official duties, Ewald developed a relationship with Schönberg as one of his off-duty jockeys. Ewald recounted:

In 1907, in Quedlinburg, I rode for him and raced his thoroughbred mare to third place on the last nature racecourse we still had in Germany. My weight with saddle was 160 pounds (seventy-two and a half kilograms), the lightest I ever weighed in a race. Looking back, it started with my relationship to Schönberg that I began to be self-confident about my abilities and knowledge as well as developing a feeling of superiority that I believed I had. I was certainly not a pleasant subordinate for him, just as I was not always a pleasant subordinate later on.²⁰⁵

Von Kleist also recalled, "In 1907, at Rathenow, I won the Kaiser Prize at the III Army Corps competition with an Irish thoroughbred mare, Miss Maddison, against experienced riders

²⁰⁵ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 53. Von Kleist describes Schönberg as "not the best" and it is likely that he and Schönberg's relationship was somewhat turbulent. While von Kleist does not illuminate the circumstances that led to his gaining self-confidence, it is likely that he had disagreements with Schönberg on how to ride his mounts during races. The race results likely favored von Kleist's knowledge and skill over the more experienced Schönberg and proved to Ewald that he did indeed possess significant knowledge and skill and to the level upon which he could rely on them with a high degree of certainty.

such as Rittmeister von Sydow. Miss Maddison was probably my best horse ever and I have owned many.”²⁰⁶

By late summer, the regimental commander, *Oberstleutnant* Mottau, had selected the officer he would send to *MRI*. Ewald would need all of the self-confidence he could muster as he would spend the next two years in Hannover at the *MRI* amongst the best cavalry officers and riders in the German Army.

While Ewald began making preparations for his time at the *MRI*, such as procuring an apartment in Hannover, he also participated in the regiments later summer training and the annual Autumn field exercise.²⁰⁷ As October approached, Ewald turned over the *reitende Abteilung Adjutant's* duties to his friend, Walter Boehm. Ewald likely enjoyed some leave at Aurich to visit his parents and sister. His parents would have reminded him of the time they lived in Hannover from 1881 until 1886.

While Ewald reported to the *Militär-Reit-Institut* on 1 October 1907, his fourth biennial *Qualifikations-Bericht*, the assessment of his last two years in *FAR 3* was completed by *Oberstleutnant* Mottau on 1 December 1907. The report follows:

²⁰⁶ Ibid., Heft II, 84. Rathenow was the garrison town of the elite *Husaren-Regiment von Zieten* (*Brandenburgisches*) Nr. 3. The regiment likely sponsored the race on behalf of the *III. Armee* corps. Von Kleist bought the mare from a regimental comrade, *Hauptmann* Winckler, an avid dressage rider, for 1200 Marks. “The mare got severe lung disease after Rathenow. I did not leave the stable day or night. She escaped with her life, but remained a strong “Roarer.” I sold her in Hanover to a farmer near Verden for breeding.” Hans Winckler appears on the *FAR 3* roster for the first time in 1904 as an *Oberleutnant*. In 1905, he was promoted to *Hauptmann* and took command of 1st Battery. From 1907 until 1914, Winckler commanded the 2nd Mounted Battery in *FAR 3*. Winckler was killed near Brégy, France on September 6, 1914. “Roarer” is the colloquial term for *Kehlkopf-pfeifer* (Laryngeal Whistler). As a result of the mare’s lung infection, she contracted this disorder which causes paralysis of the nerves and muscles required to fully open the larynx. This then adversely affected her breathing and precluded normal and full breathing under strenuous activity. Thus, this disorder ended her racing days and Kleist “put her out to pasture” in a humane way by selling her for breeding as the disease was not genetically transmittable.

²⁰⁷ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 64. The officer-students attending the *Militär-Reit-Institut* were not provided housing accommodations on the *Kaserne* and thus had to find private accommodations in the vicinity of the school. As Bürkner pointed out, officers often passed their apartments on to regimental mates or in the case of artillery officers, brigade mates. The ideal accommodations were ones which had a stable for the officer’s privately owned horse(s) and were close to the school.

Qualifications Report

to 1 December 1907
on *Leutnant Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist*
in *Feldart. Rgt. General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenb.) Nr. 3*
assigned to *Military Riding School Hannover Institute*

Age		Pensionable Service Time		Combat Ready	In the position	Commission
Year	Months	Years	Months		since	
26	4	7	9	Yes	6 ¼ Years	19 Aug 1900 Qq

Medium height, slim, very good appearance. Physically and mentally very well disposed. Steady, mature character, vivacious and confident with very pleasant comportment. Was an excellent battalion adjutant. Demonstrated earnest pursuit of further education, good eye for tactical situations. In every duty, also outside the regiment, very proven. Qualified for regimental adjutant. Fills all responsibilities of his position. Qualified for promotion.

Mottau
*Oberstleutnant und Regimentskommandeur*²⁰⁸

Oberstleutnant Mottau's 1905 assessment of Ewald after one and a half years of observation had indicated that he was a pleasant, capable, and agreeably motivated officer with very good equitation skills and a highly reliable battalion adjutant. With an additional two years of observing Ewald, the regimental commander had raised his assessment of the quality of Ewald's officership and potential in this *Qualifikations-Bericht*. Ewald had maintained his physical fitness and slim appearance. Mottau described the *Leutnant's* character as stable and mature, required attributes of an officer and he leaves the reader with the impression that Ewald is ahead of his peers in these qualities. The next identified character traits spoke to Ewald's self-assurance and self-confidence. Mottau described him as vivacious and confident, a stark difference from Ewald's first and second assessments. Mottau appeared to think Ewald had the needed self-confidence critical to an officer's successful leadership. Also, of note is that Ewald's

²⁰⁸ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Qualifikations-Bericht 1905; (Document 9). *Italics* indicates handwritten data.

self-confidence did not appear to manifest itself in an arrogant or rude manner but rather through a “very pleasant comportment.” As to the performance of his duties, Ewald received the superlative “excellent” in describing performance of his primary duties as battalion adjutant. Next Mottau assessed the *Leutnant*’s intrinsic motivation for professional improvement, and commented that Ewald was “earnest” in seeking more professional education. This was a likely nod towards Ewald’s attending the *Militär-Reit-Institut* and his future desire to attend the *Kriegsakademie*.

Then Mottau moved on to evaluate Ewald’s tactical acumen, a mandatory and critically assessed item. He judged the *Leutnant* as having a “good eye” rather than an “excellent eye” and so while somewhat laudatory, there was still room for improvement in this area. Returning to unspecified duties, Mottau gave rather high praise by writing “in every duty” Ewald has proved himself quite capable. The statement of “also outside the regiment” indicated a high level of trust and confidence placed in Ewald in an unsupervised situation...a trustworthy and responsible officer even when no one is looking over his shoulder. Finally, the regimental commander concluded with three typical and required boiler plate statements which are devoid of adjectives. He simply stated that Ewald is ready to move up to the more responsible position of regimental adjutant, that he performed all his duties as required, and that he was eligible for promotion.

This *Qualifikations-Bericht* is key as it indicated the important and significant maturation that had taken place in Ewald’s professional officer development. Ewald clearly flourished professionally, and likely personally, under *Major* Greßmann’s leadership and mentorship.

Other regimental officers no doubt also contributed to improving Ewald's military and equestrian knowledge and skills. Even the likely prickly relationship with *Oberleutnant* Schönberg had a positive effect on Ewald.

If Ewald had been a middling officer in the first three to four years of his commissioned service, then the two-year period between early 1905 and late 1907 saw him hit his stride and move to near the top of his *Leutnant* peer group. Key to note is that Ewald demonstrated excellence in all areas and maintained the critically important balance of the five principal areas which encompassed officership in this era: the officer's honor; professional and technical knowledge; knowledge and skills in the "practical" arts; personal character; and competence in military duties (troop leading and adjutant's duties). This excellence and balance quite possibly marked him as a high potential officer and one to possibly handle with special consideration in the future.

Indubitably, Ewald was upholding the centuries long tradition of commendable officership by members of the von Kleist *adligen Militärclan*. How far Ewald would rise in the army remained to be seen. The imperative next step, however, would be to prove himself in the crucible of the *Militär-Reit-Institut*.

CHAPTER 5 - THE LEUTNANT—AT THE CAVALRY SCHOOL 1907-1910

The paradise of the earth is found on the backs of horses.¹

In March 1907, Ewald von Kleist completed his seventh year in uniform. On 18 August 1907, he celebrated the sixth anniversary of his commission as a *Leutnant* in the German Army. While there had been several periods of schooling in the first seven years, the primary focus had centered on duty in the regiment. For von Kleist, the second seven years brought a change of focus from regimental duty to professional schooling. In his second seven years of service between August 1907 and August 1914, von Kleist spent five of those years as a student, an atypically long time for an officer.

Von Kleist's first period as officer-student was at the *Militär-Reit-Institut* (military riding institute). From October 1907 until July 1909, Ewald underwent a rigorous course in equitation and equine studies. In October 1910, von Kleist commenced the three-year general staff officer course at the *Kriegsakademie* (war academy, i.e., war college) in Berlin. Finishing the course at the *Kriegsakademie* in July 1913, Ewald's and his academic cohort were the last class to officially graduate before the outbreak of World War I.

¹ Oscar Christ, *Die Geschichte des ArmeezJagdrennens: 1862-1914* (Köln: self-published, 1936), 9.

During the three decades before The Great War, schools for specialized officer training and education grew in importance within a number of the armies across Europe. The Germany Army was in this group. By the first decade of the twentieth century, the German Army could count sixteen schools for the further education of already commissioned officers.² Despite the rise of both the number and importance attached to specialized officer schools, little has been written about the schools, their influence on the officers individually or the army officer corps at large. This chapter on von Kleist's time at the *Militär-Reit-Institut* and the following chapter on his three years at the *Kriegsakademie* use his attendance at these schools to investigate how these formal educational experiences influenced and effected Ewald's maturation as an officer and prepared him for future service in the army.

Admission to the *Militär-Reit-Institut* was, to a certain degree, competitive. Gaining entrance to the *Kriegsakademie* was highly competitive. Thus, preparation for the schools, in the case of the *Kriegsakademie* getting ready for the demanding qualification examinations, played a key role in both gaining entrance and success once in the course. This chapter inspects and assesses the entrance processes as well as Ewald's preparatory activities. Viewing von Kleist's activities as officer-student once enrolled in the schools assists in answering the questions of what did the schools teach and what were the educational methods employed to transfer

² ² Königliche Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preußischen Armee und des XIII. (Königlich Württembergischen) Armeekorps für 1904* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1904). Hereafter, *Rangliste* and publishing date. The Prussian contingent maintained eleven schools of higher officer learning while the Bavarian and Saxon contingents operated another five specialized officer schools. *Infanterie-Schießschule* (infantry shooting school), *Militär-Turnanstalt* (military gymnastics institute), *Militär-Reit-Institut* (military riding institute), *Feldartillerie Schießschule* (field artillery shooting school), *Fußartillerie Schießschule* (heavy artillery shooting school), *Oberfeuerwerkerschule* (senior ordnance school), *Vereinigte Artillerie- und Ingenieurschule* (Unified Artillery and Engineer School), *Militärtechnische Akademie* (military technical academy), *Kavallerie-Telegraphenschule* (cavalry telegraph school), *Militär-Veterinär-Akademie* (military veterinarians academy), *Kaiser Wilhelms-Akademie für das militärärztliche Bildungswesen* (Kaiser Wilhelm's Academy for the Military Medical Education), and the *Kriegsakademie* (war academy). The Bavarian contingent had: *Militärschießschule* (military shooting school), *Königlich Bayerische Artillerie- und Ingenieur-Schule* (Royal Bavarian Artillery and Engineer School), *Bayerische Kriegsakademie* (Bavarian war academy), *Königlich-bayerische Equitationsanstalt* (Royal Bavarian Equitation Institute), The Saxon contingent maintained the *Königliche Militär-Reit-Anstalt* (Royal Military Riding Institute).

knowledge from the faculty to the officer-students. Answering these inquiries in turn aids in an assessment of Ewald's performance at the schools as well as the effects they had on his development as an officer.

Attending the schools in Hannover and Berlin, took Ewald away from his parent regiment and allowed an expansion of both his professional and personal contacts and networks. As with previous chapters, this section will identify and analyze the relationships which were influential in von Kleist's life and career.

While each period of von Kleist's career shaped his future, some periods influenced his future more strongly than others. Ewald's successful attendance at the *Kriegsakademie* is one of those highly critical events which continued to upwardly propel his career. It was as an officer-student in the period 1907-1914, that Ewald established himself as a high potential officer.

I. A Better Horseman...Attending the *Militär-Reit-Institut*

At the time Ewald von Kleist entered the *Militär-Reit-Institut (MRI)* as an officer-student in 1907, the school was a decade short of its centennial anniversary. By order, König Friedrich Wilhelm III von Preußen on 10 December 1816, directed the establishment of a *Reinstitut für Offiziere, Unteroffiziere und Gemeine der Kavallerie* (riding institute for officers, non-commissioned officers, and troopers of cavalry).³ The school opened its doors for the first class on 1 October 1817 in Berlin. The class of twenty officers and one hundred forty non-

³ Carl Friedrich Mossdorf, *Kavallerieschule Hannover*, 3. Auflage (Warendorf, Deutschland: Fn-Verlag, 1989), 42-43. Comparatively, France founded its cavalry school at Samur in 1771, Austria at Neustadt in 1808, Italy at Venaria Reale in 1823, United States of America at Fort Riley, Kansas in 1892, and United Kingdom at Netheravon in 1904.

commissioned officers and troopers received instruction from a cadre of only four riding instructors.⁴ The school, its name changed to the *Militär-Reit-Unterrichtsanstalt* (Military Riding Academy), continued its training of cavalry men in Berlin for three decades. Due to political pressures and civilian encroachment on the school's barracks and riding areas, the school moved to Schwedt an der Oder in 1849. The school was restructured and now it was headed by either a general or colonel as the commandant. Below the commandant were two subordinate directors, one for the officer riding school and one for the non-commissioned officer riding school. Classes commenced on 1 November 1849, under the new name of *Militär-Reitschule* (military riding school).⁵ Prussian cavalymen trained at Schwedt contributed to the 1866 victory over Austria.

As a condition of Prussia's victory of 1866, the Kingdom of Hannover lost its sovereignty and was annexed as a province of Prussia. With Prussia's territorial annexation came an expansion of the army and its mounted arm. The existing cavalry school facilities in Schwedt proved to be insufficient and the decision was taken to relocate the riding school.⁶ Hannover was selected for a number of reasons. First, the school could occupy the sufficiently large former Royal Hanoverian stables. Second, the immediate area around Hannover provided ideal training ground for the horsemen. And finally, the Hannoverian State Stud Farm was

⁴ Ibid., 40-48. See Mossdorf's first eight pages of the chapter entitled "Die Wahl fiel auf Hannover" (The Choice Fell on Hannover), for a brief overview of the institute's history between its founding in 1816 and the beginning of World War I in 1914. Mossdorf's work runs to one hundred fifty pages but of those, less than twenty are dedicated to the first century of the institute's existence and work. The significant portion of the book focuses on the German Army Equestrian Teams between 1933 and 1939. Second priority is given to the school's development between World War I and World War II.

⁵ Gerhard Zeuschner, *Die Kavallerie-Schule Hannover: Eine kurze Darstellung der Geschichte der Kavallerie und einer Lehranstalt für Reiter, Fahrer und Pferde sowie deren Vorgängern* (Wolfenbüttel: Selbstverlag, 2002/2007), 69-70. Zeuschner provides a brief seventeen pages on the half century history of the *Militär-Reit-Institut* Hannover. This overview provides few details on the inner workings of the school and can, like Mossdorf, be categorized as a nominal overview.

⁶ Mossdorf, *Kavallerieschule*, 44.

located in nearby Celle and its subordinate farms were nearby.⁷ The Prussians anticipated that the movement of their cavalry school to the provincial capital would help integrate and ingratiate them with the Hannoverians.

On 1 April 1867, the school reopened in Hannover as the *Militär-Reit-Institut (MRI)* and was subdivided into the *Offizier-Reitschule* (Officers Riding School) and the Cavalry NCO School.⁸ For the officers, the year-long course in this era contained eight-five officers selected from among the seventy-eight cavalry regiments and seven artillery brigades. Twenty-six officers were selected by the directors to stay for a second, advanced year of study and training. By the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, the school stabled over three hundred army owned horses. To these another two hundred personally owned horses were brought by the officer-students to each course.⁹

The school closed during 1870-1871 but reopened soon after the cessation of hostilities. It quickly became apparent that the school had outgrown the former royal stables and that new and larger facilities and access to more expansive training areas were needed. Construction began of a purpose-built, multi-building *Kaserne* in the northern suburb of Vahrenwald in the spring 1875. When completed in the autumn of 1876, the new *Kaserne*, in addition to several

⁷ David R. Dorondo, *Riders of the Apocalypse: German Cavalry and Modern Warfare, 1870-1945* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2012). Dorondo's work appears to be the sole post-World War II general history of the German cavalry between 1870 and 1945 in English. As such, his work attempts to fill a large void in cavalry history accessible to English readers. While the book has its strengths, the work fails to investigate the history, impact, influence, or mission of the cavalry school in its various versions. In all, six sentences are given to pointing out both the school at Hannover and its successor at Krampnitz. Conversely, the Hannoverian State Stud Farm receives four mentions and over three pages of text.

⁸ *Meyers Großes Konversations-Lexikon*, Band 15. (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1905), 824. Bavaria maintained its own *Equitationsanstalt* (equestrian institute) for the training of cavalry and artillery officers of the Bavarian contingent. Officers of the Bavarian contingent did not attend *Militär-Reit-Institut*. Saxony maintained the *Militärreitanstalt* (military riding institute) in Dresden for training of officers of the Saxon contingent. Saxony, however, did send both cavalry and field artillery officers to Hannover for schooling at the *Militär-Reit-Institut*. Württemberg did not maintain a riding school. That Saxony and Württemberg sent officers to the *Militär-Reit-Institut* and Bavaria did not, was another indicator of the level of independence of the Bavarian contingent within the German Army and the closer links and integration of the Saxon and Württemberg contingents.

⁹ Mossdorf, *Kavallerieschule*, 44-45.

administration and classroom buildings, had stables for more than four hundred horses and six enclosed riding arenas. Over the course of the next quarter century, the school, and specifically the *Offizier-Reitschule*, gained in professionalism, influence, and importance under the leadership of five forward looking and somewhat progressive Chiefs of *Militär-Reit-Institut* and eleven Directors of the *Offizier-Reitschule*. The school's mission, which had coalesced by the turn of the twentieth century, was delineated in the Standing Orders of the *Militär-Reit-Institut*, dated 20 October 1900.

The *Militär-Reit-Institut* has the mission to educate its students to become skilled, determined riders and experienced riding instructors. Thorough training in arena riding must go hand in hand with the greatest possible practice of spirited riding in the field. A uniform, clear training program within the framework of the riding instruction is necessary for this purpose and provides the means of transferring firmly established horsemanship and true riding spirit from the students to the units.

The students are familiarized with the cavalry branch of service as far as the facilities and means of the institute allow. Special emphasis is placed on training in weapons and shooting. The students are trained in gymnastics, as well as in the demolition and construction work of the cavalry; furthermore, tactical practice rides and endurance rides take place.¹⁰

A careful reading of the school's mission clearly shows the focus and priority of effort to be placed on equitation and hippology. A weak secondary emphasis was to familiarize officer-students with the "cavalry branch of service as far as the facilities and means of the institute allow." Thus, the school was not a "cavalry" school charged primarily with or focused on

¹⁰ Otto Fleischhauer, "Stammliste des Königlich Preußischen Militär-Reit-Instituts zu Hannover seit Gründung bis Kriegsausbruch August 1914" I. Teil, (Schreibmaschinenmanuskript), (BA-MA: PH 21/38), 103-104. Hereafter, Fleischhauer, "Militär-Reit-Institut," Teil I. Quote from the Standing Orders of the *Militär-Reit-Institut*, dated 20 October 1900, and in effect for the period Ewald von Kleist attended the school, 1907-1909. Of note is that nothing is mentioned about the improvement of the artillery officers who attended. While there was overlap and compatibility of a portion of equitation skills and knowledge between the cavalry and mounted artillery, clearly, the school's focus was on the equitation and hippology and the army leadership was content to allow the mounted artillery officers who attended to improve their cavalry skills rather than gunnery skills.

educating officers in tactical and operational use of small and large mounted forces nor on the development of cavalry doctrine per se.

While the school had built a reputation of high-quality equestrian education and produced a number of renown riding instructors and competitive riders, not all of the happenings at the school were positive.

When Ewald arrived at the end of September 1907, the *MRI* was still recovering from a major scandal. In May 1907, news of an *MRI* officer's mental breakdown reached the Inspector General of Cavalry, General Georg von Kleist. An *MRI* officer-student recalled years later the situation that unfolded.¹¹ A *Leutnant* from the 20. *Karlsruhe Dragoner* collapsed under the weight of a very large gambling debt. His father, a district administrator, could not raise the large sum required to pay off the debt. In despair he wrote to General von Kleist, and bitterly complained about the conditions that had ruined his family.

This was followed by a highly embarrassing investigation at the *MRI*. Word went around that anyone who participated in gambling, even to a modest extent, should step forward as it was speculated that the punishment would be much lighter on those who confessed. In the end, at least one third of all officer-students admitted involvement. The instructors were told to remain silent, which they did. The Inspector General himself came to Hannover to conduct the investigation, because he had to report personally to the *Kaiser*. Shortly before Wilhelm II's visit to Hannover in mid-June, the officer's punishments were announced at roll call.¹² All those

¹¹ Wilhelm Keitel, "Schul- und Soldatenzeit bis zum 1. Weltkrieg, Wolfenbüttel" (Manuskripte) Bd. 2, (BA-MA: N 54/2, Nachlaß Keitel), 153-155. Keitel reported as an officer-student to the *Militär-Reit-Institut* on 1 October 1906, to begin his two years of education and training. He had been at the school for eight months when the scandal broke. He would have been personally acquainted with many of the officer-students who were involved in the scandal and subsequently dismissed. He was personally present when the *Kaiser* addressed the remaining and therefore, innocent officer-students. The account presented is paraphrased from his 1945 memoirs.

¹² Graf Robert von Zedlitz-Trützschler, *Twelve Years at the Imperial German Court*, trans. Alfred Kalisch (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1924), 189-191. Graf von Zedlitz-Trützschler, *Hofmarschall* (Lord Great Chamberlain) to *Kaiser* Wilhelm II from 1903-1910, noted the scandal in his personal diary. The observations are

involved initially received house arrest sentences. All officers from *Garde* and *Leib* regiments were transferred to frontier garrisons. All of the other officers were sent back to their regiments.

The scandal was enormous and reached its climax when the *Kaiser* himself gathered all the officers of the *MRI* and face-to-face expressed his indignation in the sharpest terms. The honor of the officer corps had been sullied; the individual officers having dishonored themselves. The malefactors, however, were no longer present; they were not allowed to appear before his majesty. With nearly one-third of the officer-students summarily dismissed, one remaining officer-student described the *MRI* as having become desolate. The riding duties had to be changed because there were not enough officer-students to exercise the school's horses.

The school's records show that of the one hundred twenty-nine officer-students who began the course year in October 1906, thirty-eight (thirty percent) had been transferred out of the *MRI* by the end of the academic year as result of their gambling involvement.¹³ Of the thirty-

informative and juxtapose Keitel's account, as von Zedlitz-Trützschler's are a view from the top down. Thus, they are included. "14th June 1907. There has just been another gambling scandal in Hanover! At the very beginning of his reign the Emperor believed that he had abolished gambling by severe measures and warnings. Strangely enough, nothing of the kind has happened. The Commander of the Riding School asked his officers which of them -- were guilty of gambling. Thirty confessed. All of these have now been retired, transferred, and so on. The Emperor was at Hanover two days ago and spoke very severely on the subject. No end has ever been put to gambling, but a commander who thus puts the question point blank, and to whom thirty officers confess, is a new phenomenon. The worst is that everybody says most of the most hardened offenders did not confess. How can any Commander [Generalleutnant August von Festenberg-Prackisch] bring himself to provoke a scandal in this way, when he knows the times in which we are living? No doubt because he knows that by doing so, he strengthens his own reputation as a man of high moral principle and energy. Naturally gambling must not be allowed to gain the upper hand among officers, but there are sensible ways of keeping it within bounds. In this case there has been a sad lack of intelligence and a lamentable want of adaptability to circumstances."

¹³ Otto Fleischhauer, "Stammliste des Königlich Preußischen Militär-Reit-Instituts zu Hannover seit Gründung bis Kriegsausbruch August 1914" IV. Teil, (Schreibmaschinenmanuskript), (BA-MA: PH 21/41), 166-170. Hereafter Fleischhauer, "Militär-Reit-Institut," Teil IV. Forty-one officers are listed as having left the school during the academic year, 1 October 1906 to 30 September 1907. Analysis shows that three officers who began the course left within the first four months of beginning and two of these officers were replaced. Typically, between three and eight officers were transferred out of *MRI* during any given academic year as a result of failing to meet school standards, misconduct, serious injury, personal matters, etc. If an officer-student departed before the end of the fourth month, the officer's regiment/brigade was allowed to send a replacement officer. Thus, it is likely that the remaining thirty-eight officers transferred out were transferred as a result of their honor violations (gambling). Using thirty-eight officer-students dismissed as the total number, nine were *Oberleutnants*, nineteen were second year students, and twenty-four (sixty-three percent) were noblemen, including three *Grafen* and five *Freiherren*. Of the forty-one artillery officer-students in the course, only two were dismissed.

eight, half were in the second-year cohort. Nearly two-thirds of the dismissed officers were noblemen. By the end of June 1907, there were only ninety remaining officer-student-officers; it was onto their shoulders that the horse-related training duties of the dismissed officers fell until the new student cohort reported for duty.

On Tuesday, 1 October 1907, Ewald von Kleist and one hundred twenty-eight fellow officers in full parade dress uniform stood at attention on the parade ground at the *Militär-Reit-Institut*.¹⁴ They were formally welcomed by the institute's Chief, *Generalleutnant* von Festenberg-Packisch. Felix Bürkner, a fellow artillery officer, and like Ewald, a member of the incoming class remembered that "The colorfulness and variety of all the hundred and twenty different uniforms and the young, wiry equestrian figures was doubtless a unique sight. The awareness: 'Now you belong to it, too,' really made the heart beat faster."¹⁵

The incoming officer-students in the junior class, nicknamed the "dummies," numbered eighty-one. The senior class, called the "two-year olds," had forty-eight members returning for their second year. The *MRI* directives, since 1900, had required that the incoming student-officer's regimental commander vouch that the *Leutnant* was of solid character and reliable conduct; confirm that the *Leutnant's* financial situation was in order; and state how much the officer received in his monthly *Zulage* (allowance).¹⁶ Certainly, the selection of the incoming

¹⁴ See Appendix 4 for the roster of officer-students attending the *Militär-Reit-Institut* officer's two-year course, 1907-1909.

¹⁵ Felix Bürkner, *Ein Reiterleben*, 2. Nachdruck der Ausgabe Verden/Aller 1957 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag AG, 2008), 64. Bürkner's account of his time at the *Militär-Reit-Institut* runs to some seventeen pages. But much of the narrative is his recall of the technical elements of horse training and riding. There are, however, some salient passages which illuminate not only his time at the school but fellow classmates as well. In this era, each regiment had its own distinct uniform. While the regiments within each separate branch (infantry, artillery, and engineers), and for the cavalry, the sub-branches, generally shared a similar style or cut of uniform and headgear, the colors and color combinations of the tunics and trousers, and adorning insignia were unique to nearly each regiment. Thus, the matriculation day officer-student formation would have indeed been a very colorful event.

¹⁶ Fleischhauer, "Militär-Reit-Institut," Teil I, 111. Directives from Standing Orders of the *Militär-Reit-Institut*, dated 20 October 1900. It was this Standing Order that von Kleist was governed by during his time at the school. The gambling scandal of May 1907 was not the first instance of officer-students besmirching their honor with the

officers had been closely scrutinized to ensure there would be no repeat of the previous spring's troubles.

The officer-students from cavalry regiments and from the *reitende Artillerie* were required to bring with them one army owned officer's charger and one personally owned horse.¹⁷ A *Bursche* (batman) from the regiment accompanied the officer to the *MRI* to both assist the officer and serve as a horse groom. Additionally, the *Kriegsministerium* tasked each of the *Armeekorps* with supplying personnel to support the school. The *III. Armeekorps*, the corps to which Ewald's regiment belonged, in addition to sending four officer-students and their *Burschen*, provided five troopers as grooms, one of which needed to be capable of painting, and one who was qualified to wait tables in the officer's mess.¹⁸

As the officer-students settled into the school, they became acquainted with the staff and instructors.¹⁹ Leading the *Offizier-Reitschule (ORS)*, the branch of the *MRI* which trained the officer-students, was *Oberst* Hermann Brecht. Brecht was entering his fourth year as *ORS* commander.²⁰ Under his daily guidance, the fourteen instructors conducted the various theoretical and practical class sessions with the officer-students. The one *Major* and thirteen

incurrence of unpayable gambling debts. Thus, the school, beginning in 1900, paid official attention to the incoming officer-student's character qualities and financial situation. Even with scrutiny by the regimental commanders and the school's leadership, officers whose character and self-discipline were not able to withstand the temptations of gambling were admitted. Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 87. Bürkner reported that in addition to receiving his parental *Zulage*, he also received a small allowance paid by his regiment for the two years he attended the school. This additional money was critical as he stated that he could not have attended the course without this additional financial support.

¹⁷ Keitel, "Soldatenzeit", 142. The army subsidized the officer's personal mount by providing rations for the horse while its owner was at the *MRI*.

¹⁸ Kriegsministerium, *Armee-Verordnungsblatt*, Nr 17, 27 Juni 1907 (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1907), 293-305.

¹⁹ See Appendix 5 for the *Militär-Reit-Institut* staff, instructor, and enlisted support organization and a roster of the staff and instructors of the *Offizier-Reitschule*.

²⁰ Otto Fleischhauer, "Stammliste des Königlich Preussischen Militär-Reit-Instituts zu Hannover seit Gründung bis Kriegsausbruch August 1914" II. Teil, (Schreibmaschinenmanuskript), (BA-MA: PH 21/39), 142. Brecht was assigned to the *Militär-Reit-Institut*, as *Kommandeur des Offizier-Reitschule* on 14 November 1903. From 22 May 1899, the two schools subordinate to the *Militär-Reit-Institut*, the *Offizier-Reitschule* and the *Kavallerie-Unteroffizierschule*, had at their heads *Direktoren* (Directors) who were both called and functioned as commanders.

Rittmeister were all cavalry officers and included twelve noblemen. The senior instructor had begun his teaching duties at the *MRI* in March 1900; the most junior instructor had been teaching for less than six months. The average *MRI* teaching experience of the *ORS* instructors was approximately two and a half years. As instructors at the army's premiere cavalry institution, they were hand-picked for their own riding skills as well as their ability to impart their knowledge to their students.

The first-year officer-students were divided into five sixteen-man *Abteilungen*, named for each of the cavalry sub-branches: *Kürassier*, *Dragoner*, *Husaren*, and *Ulanen*.²¹ The cavalry officers were placed in the *Abteilungen* corresponding to their sub-branch with the officer-students from the *Jäger zu Pferde* (hunter on horse, i.e., mounted rifles) and field artillery were distributed among the five *Abteilungen*. It was these *Abteilung* groupings that served as the year group's scheduling units. On beginning the two-year course, Ewald noted:

I first joined the riding section under Rittmeister von Reichlin, a dragoon Abteilung. The field artillerymen were distributed in all the different riding sections. My classmates were, among others, Leutnant von Rothkirch, Leutnant von Reinersdorff, Leutnant von Klitzing (Silesian) Agath, Sauer and others. We rode regular troop [school] horses, the officer's chargers we brought with us, [mine charger was] Lippspringer, and our own horses.²²

²¹ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 65. Given the number of first-year *Dragoner* officer-students, there was likely a second *Dragoner Abteilung* formed. The incoming class was about fifteen members larger than the normal class due to the dismissal of a number of first year officers during the previous academic year's gambling scandal and the requirement to fill what would have been second year participants with first year participants. The normal intake for first year officer-students was 45 or 44 cavalry officers and 22 or 21 artillery officers for a total first-year class size of between 67 and 65 officer-students, or four sixteen-man *Abteilungen*. The incoming first-year class in October 1907, totaled 81 officer-students, thus the need for another sixteen-man *Abteilung*.

²² Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen und Plaudereien" (handschriftliche Manuskripte), Heft 2 (BA-MA: N 354/24, Nachlass Kleist), 33-34. Hereafter, Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft #, page #. Bernhard Hermann Arthur *Freiherr* Reichlin von Meldegg, (* 1870; † 1929), von Kleist's first instructor was from *Dragoner Regiment Nr. 7*. Von Kleist lists five of the other fifteen fellow students in his assigned *Reitabteilung*. The were: *Leutnant* Friedrich Wilhelm von Rothkirch und Panthen, (* 1884; † 1953) parent unit was *Dragoner Regiment Nr. 8*; *Leutnant* Erwin von Reinersdorff-Paczensky und Tenczin, *Dragoner Regiment Nr. 12*; *Oberleutnant* von Klitzing, *Grenadier Regiment zu Pferd Nr. 3*; *Leutnant* Agath, *Dragoner Regiment Nr. 6*; *Leutnant* Sauer, *Dragoner Regiment Nr. 13*. Sixteen officer-students comprised a *Reitabteilung*.

The *ORS* operated six days a week, conducting classes Monday through Saturday. The scheduling for the five first-year *Abteilungen* was a somewhat complex rotating pattern of riding instruction, classroom lecture, and practical training. In all, each officer-student spent a minimum of thirty-three hours per week under the direct supervision of an instructor.²³ Of those thirty-three hours, twenty-five were spent on horseback: eighteen were in arena equitation classes, six hours of cross-country riding, and one hour of equitation class in support of the cavalry NCO course. Additionally, twice a week during the autumn hunting season and the summer drag hunt “season”, officer-students participated in these cross-country rides under the eye of their *Abteilung* instructor and senior school officers.²⁴ These hunts added another four to eight hours of saddle time during any given week. Not all instruction was taken in the saddle.

There were three hours of dismounted classes (one hour each of shooting, gymnastics, and dismounted horse practicums such as horseshoeing and lunging), and five hours of *Hörsaal* (lecture hall) instruction. The lecture’s subjects included equine sciences (physiology, confirmation, nutrition, diseases and their treatments, veterinary practices, etc.) as well as theoretical subjects such as cavalry history, doctrine and tactics, mounted training and exercise planning, and war mobilization and planning. The schedule indicated that there were additional

²³ Königlich Preußischen Militär-Reit-Instituts zu Hannover „*Akademien, Schule der Pr Armee Wohnungslisten und Stundenplan*“ (BA-MA: PH 21/33). No *Stunden Plan* (hour plan) was discovered for the 1907-1909 academic years. The *Stunden Plan* beginning 5 January 1914, was discovered and serves as the basis for the information on the officer-student weekly academic plan that was in effect during von Kleist’s course. Additionally, Bürkner’s and Keitel’s accounts contributed to understanding the school’s curriculum and class execution. The annual academic calendar likely had at least five distinct periods: 1) the Autumn period, 1 October to late December; 2) Winter period, early January to end of March; 3) Spring period, early April to end of June; 4) Staff officer’s Information course period, all of July; and 5) Summer period, August and September. Certainly, each of these academic periods had its own schedule and rhythm with events particular to one period but absent in others. For example, between 1 October and the end of December, the *Wildjagd* season was open and during these months, the *MRI* conducted a minimum of two hunts each week. These hunts were absent in the winter and spring periods because the wild game hunting season was closed. Generally, there were few changes either in staffing of the *Offizier-Reitschule* or in the number or makeup of officer-students attending between 1907 and 1914. Thus, the later *Stundenplan* would have changed little from when von Kleist attended.

²⁴ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 68-69.

events such as war gaming and lectures, as well as special cross-country riding events that were specifically scheduled both during and outside the normal supervised times.

The officer-student's supervised work day alternated from beginning at 07:00 hours and finishing at 12:00 hours to commencing at 13:15 hours and ending at 19:00 hours. In addition to the five to six hours of supervised instruction each day, students were expected to use unsupervised time to exercise their personal mounts, participate in voluntary extra-curricular cross-country rides, prepare their mounts and themselves for upcoming competitions, perform the needed work in support of their classroom lectures, and to study for upcoming *Kriegsakademie* selection tests.²⁵ One communal daily meal for the officers was served at the *MRI, Mittagstisch* (mid-day table, i.e., lunch) which commenced at 19:30 hours Monday through Saturday and at 13:30 hours on Sundays.

By far the largest portion of an officer-student's instruction occurred in the saddle. The goal was to give enough high-quality instruction, practice, and experience so as to produce first-class instructors who would then impart their knowledge to the officers, NCOs, and soldiers of their regiments upon their return. The first-year "dummies" spent a minimum of four hours each school day improving their own riding skills while training their mounts. Three hours were spent in the riding arena, an hour each on one of the school's horses, the officer's charger they brought with them from their regiment, and their personally owned horse. The fourth hour was spent outdoors practicing jumping. Even for the experienced and physically fit officer-students the three to four hours a day in the saddle was exhausting. The different training methods such as riding bareback, riding without stirrups, and low jumping without the use of reins, taxed muscles and nerves, especially early on in the course as the newcomers were adjusting to the physical

²⁵ Ibid. The *Offizier-Reitschule* actively assisted officer-students in preparing for upcoming *Kriegsakademie* qualifying examination. On Thursday afternoons, *Kriegsakademie* preparation was given after the end of the day's instruction in one of the school's lecture halls.

demands of so much time in the saddle.²⁶ The seven enclosed riding arenas ensured instruction took place without the adverse effect of weather. A further eight outdoor riding arenas provided additional training capability.

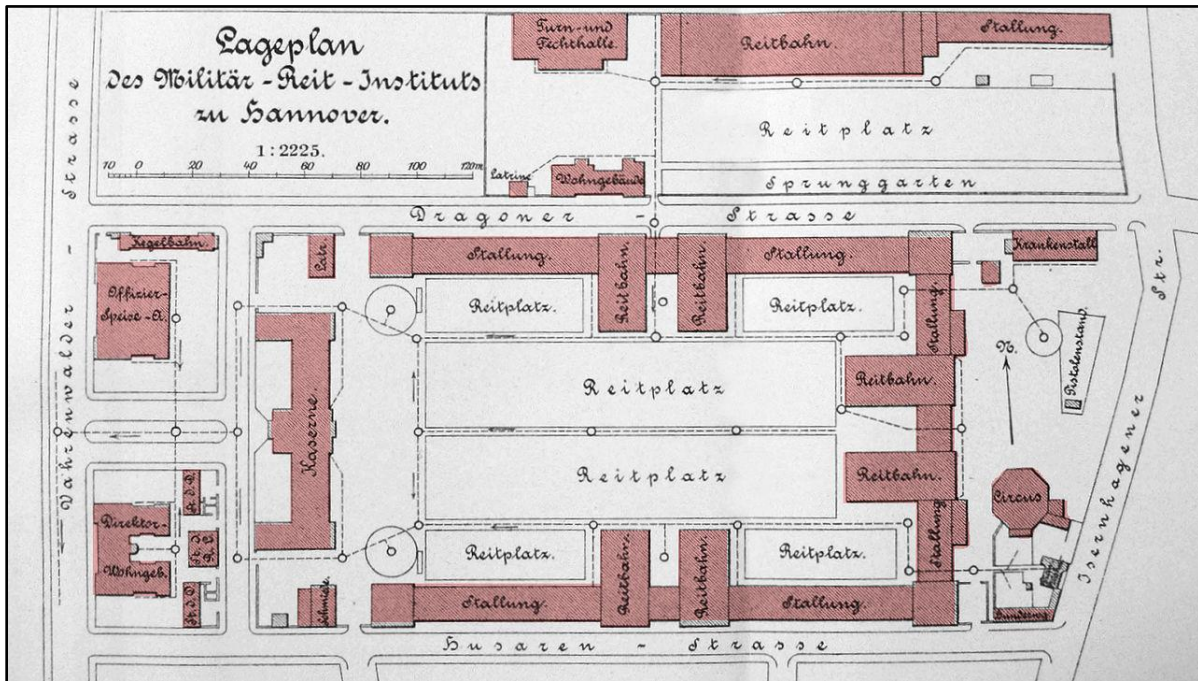


Figure 6 Militär-Reit-Institut

Site Plan of the Militär-Reit-Institut in Hannover, circa 1896²⁷

In addition to the dressage lessons in the enclosed riding arenas, the officer-students trained in jumping and cross-country riding. Individual jumps up to a height of four feet seven inches (one point four meters) were required daily. Also, each training day included a cross-

²⁶ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 65. Bürkner recalled that the „meticulous discipline in the riding arena was practiced daily with us one-year-olds on three horses to the point of literal exhaustion - of course without stirrups at first. After the four hours of riding, we pulled ourselves home, as it were, by the trees along the side of the road. We were all training to the maximum, at least I was.” The officer-students were primarily between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-one.

²⁷ “Plan der Anlage um 1896 mit Erweiterungsgelände nördlich der Dragonerstraße” (Militärreitinstitut Hannover, Wikipedia, July 24, 2020). https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milit%C3%A4rreitinstitut_Hannover#/media/Datei:Milit%C3%A4rreitinstitut_Hannover_Plan_1896.jpg (July 7, 2021).

country ride with at least one horse depending on the phase of training. Only severe winter weather precluded these rides.²⁸

To aid in the school's organization and facilitate development of the specialized equestrian disciplines, the *MRI* was divided into two *Ställe* (stables): the *Schulstall* (school stables) and the *Jagdstall* (hunting stables). A military officer, normally a *Rittmeister*, served as the *Stallmeister* (stable master). Aided by an assistant, often a civilian or senior NCO, the *Stallmeister* oversaw both instructors who primarily focused on the stable's specific disciplines and the horses that were used in that training. During Ewald's time at the *MRI*, the *Schulstall*, was headed by *Rittmeister* von Oesterley and assisted by a former riding instructor from the Spanish Riding School in Vienna, *Herr* Gebhardt. The *Schulstall* concerned itself with dressage instruction and remount training.²⁹

Dressage, the descendent of "classical riding," strove to develop the rider's correct seat (posture when mounted) and his proper and well-balanced body position whose movements were in harmony with those of the horse, and the correct application and timeliness of aids (application of reins, leg pressures, balance changes, etc.) in order to direct the horse's movements.

Remount training was the process in which an unbroken (unridden) horse was trained and schooled over a two- to three-year period to a level that ensured that the horse was ready to perform its duties in the regiment on active service.³⁰ The "young" remount was a horse in its

²⁸ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 68.

²⁹ Mossdorf, *Kavallerieschule*, 46-47.

³⁰ *Meyers Großes Konversations-Lexikon*, Band 16. (Leipzig: Bibliographisches Institut, 1908), 794. The entry entitled "Remonte" is paraphrased here: Remount (ing) is the regular refreshment of the horse stock of the mounted and horse-drawn units by young horses. This replacement usually takes place at the beginning of the annual service year (October). In Germany, the annual replacement quota for cavalry is one of every ten horses, for artillery one of nine, for the Military Riding Institute one of seven to one of three. The annual requirement is more than 8,000 horses (the army maintains 103,000 service horses in peacetime). East Prussia supplies approximately two-thirds of

first year of army training during which time it learned to take a rider's weight, was trained to ride straight and in circles in the three basic gaits. "Old" remounts were horses undergoing their second and third year of schooling during which time they were trained to jump and ride cross-country without hesitation or bad habits. Remount training was of critical importance to mounted cavalry and artillery regiments.³¹ These units received the untrained remounts and it was left to them to sufficiently and suitably train the remounts for duty in the regiment. Poor training led to poorly trained horses which could lead to substandard combat capabilities and ultimately failure on the battlefield. Thus, the ability to properly and thoroughly train remounts was a priority for the mounted units. The *MRI* graduates would be expected to oversee remount training once they returned to their respective regiments.

The *Jagd stall* was the second stable and its focus was on the field-oriented riding disciplines: jumping, cross-country riding, distance riding, and mounted hunting. *Graf* Friedrich

the needed horses. The horses bred in Hanover, Oldenburg, Mecklenburg and the Elbe Duchies are only partly useful for the army because of their weight. Saxony, Bavaria, and Württemberg cover only part of their requirements themselves. Remounting, i.e., the purchase of remounts, is carried out in Germany by *Remonteankaufskommissionen* (remount purchase commissions). Each purchasing commission or committee comprised one staff officer, two lieutenants, one veterinarian and several soldiers which conducted the purchase of horses at specially designated remount markets. Horses purchased as three- or three-and-a-half-year olds are taken into remount depots and, after one year, are delivered to the troops by these depots. During that year, the remounts undergo rigorous daily exercise in all gaits, allowing them to mature physically and mentally. They are, however, not ridden at the depots. Additionally, the depots accustomed the remounts to life in military stables as well as various military environments and noises such as gunfire, kettledrums, and flapping flags. The depots and purchase commissions are under the command of the *Remonteinspekteur* (Inspector of Remounts, a *Generalleutnant* in the *Kriegsministerium*). Prussia has 18 remount depots with an occupancy of about 9,550 horses: Jurgaitschen (Darkehmen district), Neuhoof-Ragnit (Ragnit district), Kattenau (Stallupönen district), Brakupönen (Gumbinnen district), Preußisch-Mark (Mohrunge district), Sperling (Angerburg district), Liesken (Friedland district) and Weeskenhof (Prussian-Holland district) in the province of East Prussia; Bärenklau in Brandenburg, Neuhoof-Treptow a. R., Ferdinandshof and Dölitz in Pomerania, Wirsitz in Posen, Wehrse in Silesia, Hardebek in Holstein, Arendsee in Saxony, Hunnesrück and Mecklenhorst in Hanover. Bavaria has 5: Fürstenfeld, Schwaiganger (founded in 1807), Benediktbeuern, Schleißheim and Remontenanstalt Neumarkt, the Kingdom of Saxony 3: Skassa, Kalkreuth u. Obersohland a. R., Württemberg 1: Breithülln. The riding horses were expected to serve for ten years in the mounted regiments, while draft horses in artillery and transport units were expected to serve nine years before they exited the army and their military service.

³¹ Henry C. Whitehead, "Recruit and Remount Instruction in a German Cavalry Regiment," in *The Rasp 1913*, ed. Richard H. Kimball (Menasha, WI: George Banta Publishing Company, 1913), 201-204. Whitehead, a U. S. Army cavalry captain provided his observations and assessments of German cavalry remount training at the regimental level for the U. S. Army Mounted Service School's annual publication.

von Königsmarck had joined the *MRI* faculty in August 1905, as a thirty-seven-year-old *Rittmeister* and had taken over leadership of the *Jagdstall* as *Stallmeister* the previous spring, in April 1907.³² In addition to overseeing the instructors and managing the care and training of the horses assigned to the *Jagdstall*, the *Stallmeister* served as the Master of Fox Hounds. As Master, he was responsible for the *MRI's Meute* (pack of hounds) and directing the numerous mounted hunts conducted by the school.

While the school's leadership placed heavy emphasis on the importance of instruction and practice in the riding arenas in dressage, jumping, and schooling remounts, this "classroom" instruction was balanced by *Geländereiten* (cross-country riding). "Without sport, our mounted arm cannot endure a long peace."³³ Specifically, *Hindernisrennen* (obstacle races), *Dauerritte* (endurance rides) and *Jagdreiten* (mounted hunting) were thought ideal for training for the rigors

³² Fleischhauer, "Militär-Reit-Institut," Teil II, 144-149. Gerd von Ende, *Berliner Rennfieber: Galopp und Trab zu 150 Jahren Hoppegartener Turf* (Hamburg: tredition GmbH, 2018), no page number, from biography section. Friedrich Wilhelm Adolf Graf von Königsmarck (* 27 February 1868; † 6 May 1945) whose mother was a von Kleist (Elisabeth von Kleist: * 30 September 1841; † 17 February 1921), came from an equestrian family. His brother, Walter, was a well-known and highly successful jockey having won 132 of the 530 races he rode in. Walter transferred from the cavalry to the air service in World War I and was killed while serving as a pilot. "Fritz" was even more successful as a jockey having won 196 of the 661 races in which he rode. His parent regiment was the *Königs-Ulanen-Regiments (1. Hannoversches) Nr. 13*. He left the army directly from his service at the *Militär-Reit-Institut* between May 1909 and May 1910 to take over *Gut Karnzow*, Ostprignitz, Brandenburg, the family's estate. Von Königsmarck was recalled to active duty during World War I and served with his former regiment, *Ulanen-Regiment Nr. 13*. He retired after the war as a *Major* and returned to his estate. Two days before the end of World War II, von Königsmarck is reported to have committed suicide at his estate.

³³ Siegfried von Sanden, *Geländereiten: (Kriegs-, Jagd- und Dauerreiten)* (Leipzig: Grethlein & Co., 1901), 7. A quote attributed to *General der Kavallerie* Heinrich Gottschalk Wilhelm von Rosenberg (* 1833; † 19. April 1900). Von Sanden's book is illustrative of the types of instructional handbooks available to army officers. Von Sanden, a retired *Oberstleutnant*, provided one hundred fifty-six pages of advice and instruction over a wide range of topics pertinent to cross-country riding. The quote of General von Rosenberg was also printed on the title page as "Motto:..." As a decorated combat veteran having fought in the Franco-Prussian War 1870/71, von Rosenberg was a leading proponent of cross-country riding in its various forms as critical to the training of cavalry officers. While never assigned to the *Militär-Reit-Institut*, his position as a leading cavalry general in the last quarter of the nineteenth century positioned him to exert strong influences on the mounted arm. Among his many contributions to the *MRI*, in 1866 he founded the "Reit-Jagd Verein" (the pack of hounds was later taken over by the *MRI*) and was a leading proponent of integrating mounted hunting and horse racing in the *MRI* curriculum. Wolfgang Leonhardt, "Rosenbergstraße. and Rosenbergplatz," in *Vahrenwald, Vinnhorst. Drei hannoversche Stadtteile mit Geschichte(n)*. 1., neue Ausgabe (Norderstedt: Books on Demand, 2011), 58. He earned significant recognition for his involvement with and improvement efforts at the *MRI* and he has been called "the father of German officer riding."

of wartime riding of the type a cavalry officer was expected to perform. The area around the *MRI* was ideally suited for this type of riding.

The terrain for the [cross-country riding and] hunts was ideal, located east of Hanover from the Vahrenwalder Heide starting through Langenhagen and Isernhagen in the general direction of Celle: Meadows, paddocks, hollows, heath, forest, so actually only natural obstacles. All high jumps were the willow fences, which were however always maintained by the riding school in the best condition so that the farmers did not replace these jumps with wire fencing. The relationship with the farmers was excellent. For the Hubertus hunt they were all invited to a big breakfast; they made it their business to make their pastures available; damages were of course decently compensated. However, no farmer ever had to carry out repairs to his fences himself.³⁴

Even as the new cohort of officer-students was still settling in at the school and commencing their riding instruction in their assigned *Reitabteilungen* (riding section), they began learning the terrain and jumping obstacles in the school's cross-country and hunting territory.

The autumn *Reitjagd* (mounted hunting) season commenced as the officer-students reported for duty on 1 October.³⁵ The twice weekly mounted hunts began at once. Ewald had arrived at the *MRI* prepared for these hunts. "I had purchased for 2,400 RM, at that time a lot of money, a huge strawberry roan hunter from [a man named] Waltmann. I didn't really like the horse, but at that time it turned heads and was a good hunting horse."³⁶ Ewald's preparation for the *Reitjagden* hinted at the importance placed on these rides at the *MRI*.

³⁴ Keitel, "Soldatenzeit", 150. Mossdorf, *Kavallerieschule*, 48. Additionally, the *Militär-Reit-Institut* owned approximately 1,200 acres (500 hectares) to the north of Hannover on which it constructed a variety of jumping obstacles and cross-country riding courses for training and as hunting land.

³⁵ "Über die dienstlichen Reitjagden." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 85 (1900), 596-602. See the article "Über die dienstlichen Reitjagden" (About the On-duty Mounted Hunts). This 2,400-word article provides an overview of mounted hunts as conducted across the German Army at the turn of the twentieth century and delivers an informative critical assessment of the training shortfalls of these hunts in the desired goal of preparing mounted officers for combat riding.

³⁶ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 34. The cost of this horse at 2,400 Reichsmarks at this point in von Kleist's career was equivalent to one and a half years of his army pay. Von Kleist's ability to buy this horse, as well as other horses (Miss Maddison for 1,200 RM) points to his skill at minimizing living expenses, as well as earning additional income. While he possibly received additional financial assistance from his father over and above his

While British fox hunting influenced the *Reitjagden* conducted by the *MRI*, cavalry and artillery regiments across the German Army, and German civilian equestrian hunt clubs, a considerable number of socio-cultural, historic, geographic, climatic, and wildlife factors led to the development in the nineteenth and early twentieth century of a separate and distinct style of Germanic mounted hunting.³⁷ *Reitjagden* was one of the main pedagogical pillars undergirding the *MRI*'s mission to educate its students to become skilled, determined riders and experienced riding instructors. Over the course of the academic year, the school conducted two different types of mounted hunting: *Wildjagden*, and *Schleppjagden*.

Of the two hunting types, *Wildjagden* was the most complex and demanding of both horse and rider.³⁸ The *MRI*'s regulations governing the conduct of its *Wildjagden* stated:

The purpose is to give the officers assigned to the Military Riding Institute the opportunity to move quickly and safely on horseback in unknown, sometimes rough terrain in all weather conditions and to learn how to determine the horse's gait. Hand in hand with this goes the proper treatment and care of the horse and the assessment of its performance, which is usually undervalued.³⁹

monthly *Zulage* (likely still only 50 RM per month), it is more likely that Ewald earned additional money from competition successes and buying, training, and selling horses.

³⁷ As an example, *Wildjagden* (wild game hunting) was conducted in the autumn and winter months for several reasons. *Schwarzwild* (wild boar) were indigenous to the area and generally considered a nuisance, especially by farmer because of the crop damage that the animals could cause. This period was one of the defined hunting seasons for *Schwarzwild* and thus allowed this animal type to be used ethically and legally for mounted hunting. Additionally, most of the crops had been harvested allowing hunters to ride across farm fields without damaging crops. Also, the weather was somewhat more favorable. With less precipitation than at other times of the year, the ground was more likely to be dry and conducive to a firmer footing for the horses.

³⁸ The description of *Wildjagden* at the *Militär-Reit-Institut* in the first decade of the twentieth century is synthesized from the following sources 1) Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 34; 2) Keitel, "Soldatenzeit", 150-151; 3) Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 68-70; and 4) Camill von Dungern, "Es kommt auf den Augenblick an." (*Schleppjagd 24 Das Portal für den Sport in Rot*, 2017). https://www.schleppjagd24.de/front_content.php?idart=5860 (February 23, 2020).

³⁹ *Militär-Reit-Institut, Bestimmungen über den Betrieb der Wild-Jagden mit der Königl. Meute beim Militär-Reit-Institut*, (Hannover: Militär-Reit-Institut, October 1, 1907), (NLA HA ZGS 2/2 Nr. 238). This eleven-page, quarto-sized booklet of regulations was likely issued to each incoming officer-student. It came into effect the day von Kleist's *MRI* course commenced.

To achieve its goals the school conducted a *Wildjagd* on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons each week in the autumn and winter, until the weather turned severely cold. Between noon and one o'clock on hunt days and regardless of the weather, *Rittmeister Graf* von Königsmarck, the Master, with the assistance of the *Oberpikör* and the four annually selected *Pikör-Offiziere*, led the *königliche Meute* out of the kennels and toward the selected starting location.⁴⁰ The staff and instructors rode a variety of horses, from school mounts, to officer's chargers, to their own hunters. Officer-students were allowed to ride the charger they had

⁴⁰ The Master, also called the "Huntsman," was responsible for leading, guiding, and controlling the *Meute* (pack of hound). The *Militär-Reit-Institut's Meute* had the designation as "*königliche*" (royal) because in 1868, the king, Wilhelm I, provided 20,000 Marks to purchase and support the pack of hounds for the specific use by the MRI to train its officers. A *Pikör* (whipper-in) is a person who assists the Master with the pack of hounds. The *Pikör* is not only a highly skilled hunt rider, but has demonstrated the ability to work both collectively with the Master and the other *Piköre* as well as independently to control the pack of hounds. Should hounds break off from the main pack and pursue a scent trail on their own, a *Pikör* would be sent to "round up" the errant hounds and guide them back to rejoin the main pack. Thus, the *Pikör* needed to be able to navigate independently and allow no obstacles to thwart his task with regard to the control and safety of the hounds. Additionally, the *Pikör* assisted in controlling the hounds when the quarry had gone to ground and, in some cases, he would be required to dispatch the hunted game to prevent injury to the hounds or a wounded game animal from escaping. Finally, the *Pikör* served as an escort for dignitaries who rode in the hunt. As an escort, the *Pikör* ensured the safety of the dignitary as well as guided the person over jumps of an appropriate difficulty so as not to embarrass or injure the guest by minimizing the risk of a fall. The *Oberpikör* was the senior ranking whipper-in and was normally a long serving *Wachmeister* (first sergeant) at the MRI.

brought with them from their regiment, their personally owned horse, or like Ewald, a personally owned hunter. Trailing the pack by a short distance rode the Chief of the *MRI*, distinguished visitors, and the remainder of the “hunt field.”⁴¹ The Chief, dignitaries, civilian guests, officers not assigned to the *MRI*, and the staff and instructors of the *MRI* were permitted to wear the traditional hunt “uniform” consisting of a red tunic, white leather trousers, boots with white

⁴¹ The Chief of the *MRI* held the senior most position of the hunt and acted as the host of the hunt. In the United Kingdom and America, the position the Chief held is called “Master of Foxhounds (MFH). The MFH often serves as both the Master and the Huntsman. The Huntsman is the person who is directly responsible for leading and controlling the hounds during the hunt as well as overseeing the daily care and upkeep of the pack. With the *MRI*, the Chief, rather than act as the Huntsman (which the *MRI* called the *Meister* (Master)), acted as Field Master (FM). A Field Master leads the hunting field, the group of hunt riders. It is his responsibility to lead the field in the chase once the hounds have begun to follow a scent trail and are in hot pursuit. The FM is in charge of ensuring the safety and discipline of the hunt field and can send offending hunter home or in some instances monetarily fine the riders for offenses committed. Protocol dictates that no rider passes, rides ahead of the FM, or rides closer to the hounds than the FM.

cuffs, black cap and white stock tie. Officer-students were not permitted to wear the red tunic but wore their regimental uniforms. This large group of officers, normally one hundred or more, followed behind in the myriad different uniforms of all the army's cavalry regiments. Intermixed were the blue and green uniforms of the artillery officers and the red tunics; a sight which presented an unforgettable picture.



Reitschuljagd. Von Angelo Jank.

Figure 7 Militär-Reit-Institut Reitjagd circa 1910

Painting of Officers and Civilians participating in a Militär-Reit-Institut Reitjagd circa 1910, by Angelo Jank.⁴²

⁴² "Reitschuljagd" by Angelo Jank, circa 1910. (Wikimedia Commons File:3911 Illustrierte Zeitung, Kriegsnummer 202, Angelo Jank, Reitschuljagd.jpg., September 26 2019). https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:3911_Illustrierte_Zeitung,_Kriegsnummer_202,_Angelo_Jank,_Reitschuljagd.jpg (July, 16 2021). Object is in the public domain. The painter has taken artistic license in portraying the hounds mixed in with the jumping field of riders. In reality, the hounds would have been ahead of the riders both to provide them an undamaged line of scent and for their own safety to keep them from coming under foot of the galloping and jumping horses.

Shortly before the arrival of the hunt field (the mounted hunters) at the starting location, a *Schwarzwild* (wild boar) was released. The game was given a twenty-minute head start before the hounds were maneuvered so as to pick up the scent trail and start the pursuit.⁴³ The length and difficulty of the hunt rested largely on the endurance and cunning of the *Schwarzwild*. The path taken by the game routinely made it difficult for the riders to stay close to the pack over all of the terrain obstacles, through thickets, across moor land, over wide water ditches, through forests, or across heavily broken ground. The riders had to jump obstacles such as fallen trees, hedgerows, farm gates, creeks, ditches, and the like which obstructed their desired route or they had to find their way around unpassable areas.

The intermingled *MRI* instructors observed and noted the performance of the officer-students for on the spot or post-hunt instruction.⁴⁴ While there were halts, typically when the pack lost the scent and had to search again to find it, there were gallops of as long as eleven miles (eighteen kilometers) with as many as forty jumps and numerous long leaps over broken ground or small water courses.

The goal of the rider was to be in the correct position when the cry of the pack indicated that they had cornered the normally exhausted *Schwarzwild*. With the game gone to ground, the Chief signaled that the chase was ended and the rider(s) with the best position would then “dig out” the *Schwarzwild* by a back leg, holding on in such a way that the Chief could administer the *coup de grâce* with traditional *Hirschfänger*.⁴⁵ The officer-students were expected to show the

⁴³ The *Schwarzwild*, typically an *Überläufer Keiler* (a male wild pig between one and two years of age) was used, as the animal was at its prime for speed, endurance, and strength. The *MRI* generally received their *Schwarzwild* from the royal hunt preserve at nearby Springe, continuing to enjoy royal support for the hunts.

⁴⁴ School leadership and instructors on occasion rode out ahead of the hunt field to surreptitiously take up positions of observation at various jumps to observe how the officer-students negotiated the obstacles.

⁴⁵ The dismounted rider had to approach the exhausted but still quite dangerous *Schwarzwild* and grab a hold of it by the back leg. By holding the leg, he could keep the *Schwarzwild* from turning on him and using its tusks. He then dragged the animal into a position where the dismounted Chief or Master could administer a fatal stab with the

sangfroid of experienced hunters.⁴⁶ After a few more traditional elements of ceremony including given pieces of hide to the pack of hounds as a reward for their work, the pack, Chief, Master, *Piköre*, and field of riders turned towards the stables. Depending on the route of the hunt, the ride home could take several hours, with the group returning after dark and as often as not in the fog, rain, or snow typical of the north German plain at that time of year. Participants noted that despite the weather there was always a sense of accomplishment after a ride, a knowledge that one had been able to meet the variety of challenges which had been encountered. “Riding the game hunts in autumn until deep into December, i.e., until frost, behind a ringing pack was nevertheless an almost fairy-tale experience.”⁴⁷

The second type of mounted hunt conducted at the *MRI* was the *Schleppjagd* (drag hunt).

These hunts occurred in the summer months, normally in June and July. The organization,

traditional German hunting coup de grâce weapon, the *Hirschfänger*. This weapon was a short-bladed sword of between eighteen and thirty inches and was developed to dispatch wounded deer and wild boar. As part of the end of hunt tradition, each rider removed his right glove, a symbolic participation with the rider(s) who could only “dig-out” the game with his bare hands.

⁴⁶ Philipp Leopold Antonius Hubertus Boeselager, Florence Fehrenbach, and Jérôme Fehrenbach, *Valkyrie: The Plot to Kill Hitler* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2009), 5-6. An ardent interest in wild game hunting was an element that was often found within the small group of personal interests and activities pursued by army officers in the eras up until the end of World War II. Hunting was viewed as an especially suitable pursuit in preparing a young man for the rigors of officership as he would live it on the battlefield. Philipp Freiherr von Boeselager, himself a German army officer from 1937-1945, wrote of hunting, “It was hunting that truly shaped our behavior in nature, and profoundly influenced our way of life. ... Hunting was not only a way of hardening the body. It prepared us, without us being aware of it, for the laws of life, for the struggles of existence: saving one’s strength, fleeing from an adversary, recovering, knowing how to use cunning, adapting to the enemy, assessing risk. We learned how to keep our sangfroid in the tumult of dogs excited by the battle, how to cut the throat of a stag or a boar in the coup de grâce and look without revulsion at the dark red fluid bubbling out of a mortal wound. We did not shiver upon seeing the brown trickle running down the pale pelt of a young deer, or the bloody foam staining the chops of an animal exhausted by the chase. We withstood the glassy stare of the dead animal and, finally, collecting these bloody, damp trophies, the *spolia opima* of modern times. Hunting also accustomed us to the laws of violent death, internalizing the notion of an offering. Yes, hunting was a preparation for the supreme sacrifice—the sacrifice of life.” No work in English on hunting and Prussian/German army officers has been found by the author. The high level of participation by the officer corps in both mounted and dismounted hunting of wild game and its place in the officer’s milieu makes the topic ripe for investigation. Wolfram G. Theilemann in his work, *Adel im grünen Rock: Adliges Jägertum, Großprivatwaldbesitz und die preußische Forstbeamtenenschaft 1866-1914* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag GmbH, 2004) dedicates a fifty-page chapter to investigating the connection of the military with hunting and its practice during the *Kaiserreich*.

⁴⁷ Keitel, “Soldatenzeit”, 150. The manner in which von Kleist, Keitel, Bürkner, and others write about their experiences of participating in *MRI Wildjagden* clearly indicates that these hunts were positive and memorable events for them.

participating personnel, protocols, and many of the traditions of these hunts mirrored those of the *Wildjagd*.⁴⁸ The primary difference was that no live game was used. Rather, a rider laid down a scent trail by dragging a small cloth sack or perforated metal ball containing animal scent behind him across the countryside.⁴⁹ This method allowed the hunt leadership to plan the “course” that was to be ridden. This enabled a number of variables to be controlled such as the length of each run and the number, types, and dimensions of obstacles to be jumped. The overall effect was a more structured and predictable event. But this did not necessarily mean a less challenging or demanding hunt than a *Wildjagd*.⁵⁰

The hunt field riders faced a variety of jumping obstacles, from natural jumps over fallen trees and across watercourses to man-made split-rail fences to *Koppelricks* (double post and rail jump).⁵¹ In the *MRI*’s hunt area, the average obstacle height was four and one-quarter feet (one and one-third meters) high. Other jumps topped out at just over five feet high (one and one-half meters). Many of the jumps were firmly fixed. These obstacles required the horse to cleanly clear the jump. Failure to do so often resulted in a fall in which both rider and horse risked

⁴⁸ An exception to this was that some of the *Schleppjagden* during the Staff Officers Course were strictly duty rides and thus closed to civilian guests.

⁴⁹ Likely, a single or a pair of the instructors served as the riders who laid the scent trail. The scent used was often excrement or offal from a *Schwarzwild*, a scent with which the pack of hounds was familiar and trained to follow. The cloth bag or perforated metal ball deposited the scent as it bounced along behind the rider. To end the run, the scent-layers lifted the bag or ball off the ground. They then rode to the predetermined start of the next run, dropped the scent bag/ball and rode the next run. In this way, the course and length of each run was established. The scent was usually laid fifteen to thirty minutes before the hound were to begin the hunt so as to ensure a fresh and easily followable trail.

⁵⁰ Camill von Dungern, “Es kommt auf den Augenblick an.” (*Schleppjagd 24 Das Portal für den Sport in Rot*, 2017). https://www.schleppjagd24.de/front_content.php?idart=5860 (February 23, 2020). An example recorded by von Dungern illustrates how strenuous a *Schleppjagd* could be. In 1913, one *MRI* drag hunt saw one continuous run of fifteen and one-half miles (twenty-five kilometers). All of the one hundred and thirty-five participating horse and riders arrived at the end of the run within fifty-one minutes. Only one of the well trained and conditioned horses suffered permanent damage as a result of this noteworthy run.

⁵¹ Many of the permanent jumps were identified by individual nicknames, e.g., “*Zahlmeistergraben* (the paymaster’s ditch), and the “Wietze”, a wide watercourse jump, where many “went swimming.”

injury.⁵² Again, the riders had to work to keep up with the fleet-footed hounds who, with a strong scent line, could set a very fast pace. Thus, the challenge presented to the officer-student as well as the training value gained, lay in the requirement for the rider to overcome fixed obstacles in more or less unknown terrain while maintaining a brisk pace. The rider was educated to think and act rapidly, to correctly judge adjacent riders, and to stay clear of hunters whose riding was undisciplined, wild, or reckless.⁵³ The horse, when a skilled rider was up, was schooled in cross-country riding and obstacle jumping and became a more confident, reliable, and obedient mount. And if the horse was an officer's charger, a better prepared mount for combat duty.⁵⁴

During these hunts, given their known route, *MRI* leadership and instructors could easily pre-position themselves to observe the officer-students at numerous obstacles. Thus, in this manner, the *Schleppjagd* was a better and more efficient venue in which to view and assess the skills, judgement, determination, and aggressiveness of the officer-students.

In addition to the officer-students of the two-year course, the *Stabsoffizier-Kursus* (field grade officer's course) rode in the summer *Schleppjagden*. This month-long course brought cavalry officers who were assigned to staff position to the *MRI* for what was called an

⁵² Ibid. In this era, considerations for rider and horse safety were not at the present level. While at this time, very high competition jumping fences and fences used in some training situations were frangible, that is parts of the jump would give way or come apart, minimizing potential injury to horse/rider, if the horse jumping obstacle failed to cleanly clear the jump, most regular jumps, especially natural jumps were non-frangible. In the period after *Rittmeister Graf von Königsmarck* directed that some of the highest jumps be made solid and immovable with reinforcing steel bands, nine of eleven good hunting horses were killed (injured and had to be put down) attempting to clear the jumps. The *MRI* leadership backed away from this overly difficult and dangerous path, reverting to more tried and proven jump construction and heights.

⁵³ Mossdorf, *Kavallerieschule*, 83.

⁵⁴ As in *Wildjagden*, the officer-students rode the officer's charger they had brought with them from their regiment, their own charger, or a personally owned hunter. Additionally, they were required to ride one of the remounts they had been training on one hunt a week.

“Information Course for Staff Officers of Cavalry.”⁵⁵ Approximately twenty-five cavalry officers received classroom lectures and participated in mounted instruction. Participation in the eight to twelve *Schleppjagden* was mandatory for these officers. One of the two-year course officer-students recalled:

The staff officer course participated in the *Schleppjagden*, which were ridden during the summer months. The staff officers of the cavalry regiments had to get their qualification to become regimental commanders in this hunt course. These hunts were pure duty: the Abteilungen rode in broad front behind their riding instructor with intervals between each other. [Civilian] hunting guests or ladies would not be tolerated in the field. The natural obstacles were reinforced or raised. Also placed in the course were wide water ditches, the famous "Wietze", in which some went swimming. The jumps became more difficult as course went on.⁵⁶

Indications are that each of the cavalry staff officers was required to show a sufficient level of skill and acumen during the *Schleppjagden* in order to be placed on the list of approved candidates from which future regimental commanders were selected.⁵⁷ Thus, the *Majore* who desired to become regimental commanders would have been seen taking the course and especially the *Schleppjagden*, seriously. Unlike for the two-year course officer-students, however, the staff officers were not allowed to bring their own hunting mounts. The *MRI*

⁵⁵ Otto Fleischhauer, “Stammliste des Königlich Preußischen Militär-Reit-Instituts zu Hannover seit Gründung bis Kriegsausbruch August 1914“ V. Teil: Informationskurse für Stabsoffiziere der Kavallerie von 1817-1914, (Schreibmaschinenmanuskript), (BA-MA: PH 21/42), 103-104. Hereafter, Fleischhauer, “Militär-Reit-Institut,” Teil V. This file contains rosters of course participants. The course was not conducted in Summer 1907 due to an outbreak of disease amongst the school horses. In 1908, twenty-four cavalry *Majors*, the majority serving as staff officers in cavalry regiments, attended the course from 29 June to 25 July 1908. In 1909, twenty-four cavalry *Majors* and one Great General Staff *Major*, attended the course from 5 – 31 July 1909. Nearly all of the attendees were serving at the regimental level as either the single regimental staff officer or as a *Eskadron Chef* (squadron commander). No syllabus or information identifying the topics covered during the course has been located in the archives.

⁵⁶ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 70-72. Bürkner wrote that once a week the officer-students were required to ride one of the old remounts that they had been training in the *Schleppjagd*.

⁵⁷ No work on or assessment of the important position of regimental commander has come to light. This topic is ripe for investigation.

leveled the playing field by providing the horses from the school's stables and requiring the *Majore* to ride unfamiliar mounts.⁵⁸

The *MRI Schleppjagden* ended as high summer arrived and the pace of activities at the school slowed and the summer leave period began.⁵⁹

For Ewald, the summer of 1908 was still distant as he and his fellow classmates settled into the riding instruction, the academic lectures, and the *Wildjagden* of the autumn of 1907. Indications are that Ewald was well prepared for the rigors and demands of this highly selective course. Certainly, he had gained insight on the course, its challenges and requirements, from fellow regiment mate, *Oberleutnant* Leo Hederich. Hederich had completed the course only two years prior and thus was able to provide up-to-date information and recommendations as well as “intel” on the school's instructors. Too, as a “certified” *MRI* instructor, Leo would have provided Ewald with advanced equitation lessons. Perhaps, it was Leo who suggested that Ewald purchase a quality hunt horse in order to have this advantage while in Hannover.

Proof of Ewald's high equitation skills and knowledge came in late fall. Ewald recalled, “After a few weeks I was transferred from the so-called ‘one-year-olds’ to the ‘two-year-olds’ and into Major Berner's from the 12th Uhlans [Abteilung].⁶⁰ Instead of riding the regular troop

⁵⁸ Fleischhauer, “Militär-Reit-Institut,” Teil I, 116.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 107 and 109. Indications are that during August and September, the *MRI* conducted few if any mandatory academic events. The school's regulations stipulated that officer-students who remained for the second year of the course were allowed to take leave during the entire month of September. These officers were allowed to participate with their parent units in field maneuvers during this period and the *MRI* had established provisions to ship the officer's mounts to the exercise if needed. Instructors were allowed and encouraged to participate in special cavalry field exercises. Requests for the instructor's participation was sent through the Inspector-General of Cavalry to the King for approval not later than 1 May each year. See also, Hayden W. Wagner, “Hints on Hanover,” in *The Rasp 1913*, ed. Richard H. Kimball (Menasha, WI: George Banta Publishing Company, 1913), 205-206. Wagner, a lieutenant in the Third U. S. Cavalry Regiment, offered two pages of information and tips for officer attending the *Militär-Reit-Institut*. He confirmed that the school closed on 15 August and that the new class did not start until 1 October. He further identified three academic vacation periods; two and a half weeks at Christmas, two weeks at Easter, and three weeks at Whitsuntide (Pentecost) occurring forty-nine days after Easter.

⁶⁰ *Rangliste, 1909 and 1914*. *Rittmeister* Gustav Berner's parent regiment was the *Litthausisches Ulanen-Regiment Nr. 12* (Insterburg). *Rittmeister* Berner (DoR: 17 September 1898) had joined the *MRI* as an instructor on 1 October

horses, I rode the young and old remounts. I was one of three whose equitation was specifically recognized.”⁶¹ Fellow artillery officer, Felix Bürkner, and *Dragoner Leutnant* Ludwig (Lutz) Riedesel *Freiherr* zu Eisenbach were the other two officers to receive this promotion into one of the five advanced *Reitabteilungen*.⁶² The promotion of two artillery officers and only a single cavalry officer indicated that the school held little prejudice against artillery officers but promoted on the basis of performance and merit.

With this promotion to the second-year riding section, Ewald’s school schedule stabilized. The second-year officer-students reported for duty at 08:00 hours, Monday through Saturday.⁶³ For the next five hours, until 13:00 hours, he rode five different horses: a school (regular troop) horse, a young remount, an old remount, an officer’s charger, and finally his personally owned mount. The required lectures were taken in the afternoon.⁶⁴

1906. He was promoted to *Major* on 27 January 1909, and thus von Kleist remembers him as a *Major*. Berner rejoined *Ulanen-Regiment Nr. 12* after his duty at the *MRI* and entered World War I with this regiment. He was promoted to *Oberstleutnant* and took command of *Reserve Ulanen Regiment Nr. 1*. He was killed in action on the Eastern Front on 21 February 1915, near Emowo (Przasnysz), present day Emowo, Poland.

⁶¹ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 34-35. The placement of von Kleist with the second-year officer-students is significant in that it indicated that he had already achieved the level of competence expected at the end of the first year of the course. This further substantiates that von Kleist received significant additional equitation training in *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 3 (FAR 3)*, likely under the tutelage of *Major* Greßmann, *Oberleutnant* Leo Hederich, and other skilled officer-instructors.

⁶² Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 70-71. Bürkner remembered, “Shortly before Christmas 1907, I had the honor of being transferred from the ‘one-year-olds’ to the ‘two-year-olds.’ Grateful for everything I had learned with *Freiherr* von Wrangel, [my first *MRI* instructor], grateful especially for the delightful hours in his and his wife’s hospitable home, I felt somewhat ‘redeemed’ when I was transferred to the *Abteilung* of *Rittmeister* von Negenborn. [Transferred] at the same time with me [to Negenborn’s *Abteilung* was] the Hessian *Leibdragoner* Lutz Riedesel *Freiherr* zu Eisenbach.”

⁶³ Königlich Preußischen Militär-Reit-Instituts zu Hannover “*Akademien, Schule der Pr Armee Wohnungslisten und Stundenplan*” (BA-MA: PH 21/33).

⁶⁴ It is unclear if the three officer-students promoted to the advanced riding sections were required to attend the first-year classroom lectures with their fellow first-year colleagues, received special instruction, or just fully participated in the second-year’s school schedule.

II. Off-Duty Time in Hannover

While the officer-students were kept busy at the school, like at other formal military officer training courses of the era, there was significant free time during which the officer could choose his own activities. Hannover offered many diversions.

As a provincial capital, the former royal residence city of Hannover had flourished in the four decades since the province's incorporation into Prussia. In those forty years, the population had grown two hundred and fifty percent, from 100,000 inhabitants to over 250,000.⁶⁵ The linking of the province to Prussia had stimulated industrial and commercial growth, with a forty-five percent and thirty-nine percent growth, respectively, between 1882 and 1907.⁶⁶ As a long-standing cultural center, Hannover continued to offer a large number of high-quality performing arts venues. The rising number and wealth of the city's businessmen, merchants, and *Rentiers* (men of private means) encouraged the formation and growth of establishments catering to the increasing demands for goods, services, and entertainment by these upper bourgeois. Additionally, the significant number of military units and headquarters brought a large number of officers to live in Hannover who also contributed financially to the city's businesses. The military-friendly atmosphere of the city and the other many appealing aspects of the city attracted a large number of retired officers. In 1897, thirty-two retired general officers had chosen Hannover as their retirement home. One Hannover newspaper article called the city a "*Pensionopolis für Offiziere*" (retirement mecca for officers).⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Dieter Brosius, Klaus Mlynek, and Waldemar Röhrbein, *Geschichte der Stadt Hannover, Band 2, vom Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts bis in die Gegenwart* (Hannover: Schlütersche Verlag, 1994), 355.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 357. The figures are for the increase in the number of the workforce of each category.

⁶⁷ "v. Blomberg und Hannover," *Hannoversche Anzeiger*, Nr. 61, 13. March 1937, 6. (NLA HA ZGS 2/2 Nr. 236). The 1937 newspaper article commemorating *Generalfeldmarschall* von Blomberg's fortieth year of military service, provided a brief overview of Hannover in 1897.

As far as cities and their adjacent country environs went, Hannover and its surrounding countryside were a desirable locale in which to spend one's off-duty time while attending the *MRI*. For cultural entertainment, officers could attend a wide variety of musical and theatrical performances.⁶⁸ If the officer-student had not had enough of horses on duty, he could attend the horse races at the newly opened Großen Bult race course. Moreover, with the proper introductions to area land owners, an officer could gain an invitation to non-mounted hunting and the enjoyable country hospitality of landed aristocracy and estate-owning gentry. With similar introductions, officer-students were welcomed into the homes of city residents as well.⁶⁹ In addition to these, there were additional avenues by which officers could participate in other social venues of mixed company.

Having settled in at the *MRI*, and after enjoying the holiday season, Ewald allowed himself to be induced to venture further into social activities. "Soon after Christmas 1907, I was reluctantly persuaded to take part in Gavotte lessons which were to take place in the homes of the participating young ladies, all of whom were unknown to me."⁷⁰ The first lesson took place

⁶⁸ Keitel, "Soldatenzeit", 147. As an officer-student at *MRI*, Keitel had sufficient free time to avail himself of Hannover's cultural offerings. This was encouraged by an officer's ability to purchase subsidized tickets, reducing out of pocket costs for the ever-frugal *Leutnants*. Keitel recalled, "Like our student days in Göttingen, Felix Bürkner and I were very diligent and regular theatergoers. The two front rows in the general seating area were reserved for the Reitschule. At noon, when the released from duty in the courtyard of the Reitschule, the concierge in the Zimmermann Officer's Mess distributed theater tickets for the evening. Rarely were the tickets already taken. We actually always were able to get tickets and at only 1 Mark per seat. A Riding School officer could not spend a less expensive evening in better company than this. After the theater, a glass of beer or a Bols at the corner of the Karmarsch and Georgstrasse and then a streetcar to Vahrenwald and home. The theater in Hannover, at that time still a court theater, was well managed and also usually well-staffed with artists. I greatly enriched my repertoire there."

⁶⁹ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 38. Von Kleist, during his time at the *MRI*, participated socially with fellow officers and families of Hannover. Of his socializing he wrote, "Of the many houses in which I socialized as a riding student in Hannover, I will only mention here that of General von Seydlitz. One of his two daughters, Irmtrud, married my riding school friend, Otto von Walterstorff. They still are numbered among our friends today. We have seen them and their children, three daughters and one son, Harald, repeatedly over the years." The referenced *General* von Seydlitz is possibly *Generalmajor* Kurt von Seydlitz-Kurzbach, uncle of World War II *General der Artillerie* Walter von Seydlitz-Kurzbach.

⁷⁰ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 35. The Gavotte was a medium-paced dance style from France which was popular in the 1800s and into the first decades of the 1900s.

at the home of a Municipal and Building Councilman Stever.” In attendance was Gisela Wachtel, a young lady who had only a few weeks before turned eighteen years old. “At this first Gavotte lesson, I danced with Gisela and she sat opposite me at dinner.” The blue eyed, light brown haired young woman caught Ewald’s eye. “I liked her from the first sight, her vitality and cheerfulness. We agreed that we would continue to learn the Gavotte together as dance partners.” Ewald and Gisela continued to meet at weekly gavotte lessons and began what would become a serious relationship. “So, these times at the Gavotte became a particularly pleasant and happy one for me.”

Gisela Wachtel was a Hannover native, born in the city on 20 December 1889.⁷¹ Born in the family home, Gisela’s mother was attended by a midwife. The father was Eduard Albert Theodor Edmund Wachtel. Born in 1841 to a well-to-do merchant family in Quedlinburg, Edmund entered business as a young man. By 1879, he was Director of the Zuckerfabrik Neuwerk near Hannover and in the subsequent quarter century served on the board of directors of other firms.⁷² A large portion of his wealth likely resulted from his association with the Ilseder Hütte Ironworks in Peine during the company’s reconstitution and expansion phase in the 1860s and 1870s.⁷³ It is probable that he secured a large quantity of dividend earning company

⁷¹ Geburtsregister, Jahrgang 1889, Band 7, Nr. 5012. Stadt-Archiv Hannover. Gisela’s birth was registered a week afterwards, on 27 December 1889. As she was not yet named, her father returned to the registrar’s office on 4 February 1890 to have her name officially entered into the town’s birth registration book. Her full name was Johanne Amalie Gisela Wachtel. The birth registration recorded key information including the names of the baby’s parents, mother’s maiden name, address, father’s occupation, religious confession, and time of birth.

⁷² “Handelregister,” *Chemiker-Zeitung*, Jahrgang III, No 16. Cöthen, den 17. April 1879, 204. Edmund Wachtel was listed in this trade journal’s business registry as the “Direktor der Action-Zuckerfabrik Neuwerk bei Hannover.” “Todes-Anzeigen,” *Hannoverscher Courier*, October 11, 1905, 4. Colleagues of Wachtel’s placed a death notice in the Hannover paper. The notice indicated that Wachtel had been a long-serving member of the board of directors for the firm Chemikalie Fabriken Oker und Braunschweig. The Zuckerfabrik Neuwerk was a sugar refining enterprise. The area around Hannover produced a large amount of sugar beets which in turn were processed by a number of sugar factories.

⁷³ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 59. Ewald reported that “He was a co-builder of the Ilseder Hütte and a long-time member of the board of directors. He had interests in and was a leading executive in many other industrial works—I only remember Braunschweiger Maschinen and Neuwerk-Zucker, but there were others.”

stock as well drawing a salary as a member of the firm's board of directors. By 1887, Edmund had amassed sufficient wealth to leave full-time employment and take up the lifestyle of a *Rentier* and live on the earnings of his investments and board memberships.⁷⁴ The accumulated wealth enabled the Wachtels to move to Hannover and build or purchase a villa in one of the city's wealthier suburbs near the Eilenriede *Stadtwald* (city forest) at the latest by 1887.⁷⁵

In addition to his successful business ventures, Edmund's social status was raised by his service in the army. Wachtel served during all three Wars of Unification reaching the rank of *Hauptmann* in the *Landwehr*.⁷⁶ While Edmund had enjoyed successful business and *Landwehr*-officer military careers, his personal life was somewhat more difficult. Gisela's mother was Edmund's third wife. Likely, Edmund was twice widowed, perhaps losing his spouse(s) during childbirth. Neither of these marriages, however, appear to have produced children.

Edmund married Stephanie Theona Alice Röber, the daughter of a *Gutsbesitzer* (landed estate owner). Born in 1866, Stephanie was twenty-five years younger than her husband.⁷⁷ The couple's first child, a son, was born in 1887.⁷⁸ Georg Viktor Berthold suffered from intellectual

⁷⁴ Standesamt I Hannover, Geburtenbuch, Jahrgang 1887, Band 3, Nr. 2075. Birth Registration. Dated 13 June 1887 and amended 14 July 1887. StadtA HA: The birth registration of Edmund's son, Georg Viktor Berthold Wachtel, recorded the occupation of the father as *Rentner* (retired). Edmund was forty-six years old at the time of his son's birth.

⁷⁵ The large, multi-storied home was located at Tiergartenstraße 1, later renumbered to number 3. The house stood opposite of the Neues Haus, an elegant concert café with terraces and a large concert garden at the west end of the 1,600-acre (640 hectare) Eilenriede *Stadtwald* (city forest). Both the Neues Haus and the Eilenriede were popular destinations for the citizens of Hannover during the period between 1895 and World War II. The street name was changed to Hindenburgstraße after World War I. The Wachtel villa was destroyed by Allied bombing attacks during World War II and was not rebuilt. Tiergartenstraße fronted on the green space of Eilenriede Park to the north.

⁷⁶ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 59. Ewald recalled that Wachtel took part in the three wars, 1864, 1866, 1870/71. His obituaries also identify him as a *Hauptmann a.D. Landwehr*.

⁷⁷ Sterbe-Nebenregister, Jahrgang 1912. StadtA H, STA 2459/2201/1912. Stephanie Theona Alice (nee Röber) Wachtel was born 19 September 1866, in Kiebitzdamm; Kreis: Oscherleben, to Wilhelm Johann Röber and Amalie Anna (nee Spiehr) Röber.

⁷⁸ Standesamt I Hannover, Geburtenbuch, Jahrgang 1887, Band 3, Nr. 2075. Birth Registration. Dated 13 June 1887 and amended 14 July 1887. StadtA HA: Georg Viktor Berthold Wachtel was born on 7 June 1887 at home, Tiergartenstraße 1A, Hannover. On 14 July 1887, Edmund Wachtel had the birth record amended to show that the

disabilities attributed to excess pressure on the brain during birth.⁷⁹ Two and a half years later, the couple's only other child, Gisela, was born. By the time Ewald met Gisela in the winter 1907/08, Edmund Wachtel had been dead two years.⁸⁰ *Fraulein* Wachtel was just one of Hannover's many eligible young women.

For the unmarried officers, Hannover presented an opportunity to meet a larger and more diverse group of marriage-eligible young ladies than was to be found in many of their hometown garrison. For the *MRI* officer-students as senior *Leutnants* and *Oberleutnants*, the beginning of the acceptable window for marrying as far as the army was concerned, was still five to ten years away. Even if the officer-student considered himself a number of years away from marrying, striking up acquaintanceships with the fairer sex was allowed and encouraged. One never knew who one might meet or the opportunities which might be presented.

Regardless of the timing in the officer's career, two hurdles for marriage had to be cleared in order to receive the king's permission to wed; the first concerned honor, the second concerned money.⁸¹ First, was the matter of the intended bride's honor. She had to come from an honorable, that is an acceptable, stratum of society. The woman's family must be from the aristocracy, from the middle or upper bourgeoisie, or she must be the daughter of a military officer. Daughters of fathers connected directly to manual labor or even highly skilled artisans as well as the petty bourgeoisie were deemed unacceptable as officer's wives. If her family was

son born on 7 June 1887 was named "Georg Viktor Berthold". At the time of Berthold's birth, his father was forty-six and his mother was three months short of her twenty-first birthday.

⁷⁹ This infirmity restricted Berthold's mental development and made him a semi-invalid all his life. Upon his mother's death in 1912, Gisela assumed the legal guardianship of Berthold and retained this responsibility until Berthold's death after World War II. Throughout his life, Bertold required a constantly available care giver.

⁸⁰ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 59. He died on 7 October 1905, at age sixty-four. "He fell during a bicycle ride in the Eilenriede, got a large bruise, and developed a blood clot which ended the life of this man. He was, according to all accounts, a splendid, upright, soldierly man, and capable businessman."

⁸¹ Steven E. Clemente, *For King and Kaiser! The Making of the Prussian Army Officer, 1860-1914* (New York, Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1992), 163-164.

socially acceptable, then the spotlight turned on the woman herself. Her own personal honor, as embodied in her own unblemished reputation, had to be intact. With the questions of honor satisfied, the army turned to the matter of money.

Here the army concerned itself with the question, “Would the marriage put the officer into a financial situation where he would be unable to maintain the socio-economic position expected and required of an army officer?” The factors used in the equation to derive the answer appear to have been unique to each couple.⁸² Some of the officer’s elements were his rank (and thus his income level), expected date of next promotion (and the increase in pay), the amount and conditions of the officer’s debt, if any, the duty location (cost of living), the amount of the officer’s familial *Zulage* and if it would continue, personal wealth of the officer, the officer’s family wealth, and the officer’s access to family finances. For the potential bride, what was the size and form of her dowry, would her family pay off the officer’s debt (if he had one) as part of the marriage arrangement, would her family pay their daughter her own *Zulage* after marrying, and what was the financial support available to her should her officer-husband die on active duty?

For *Leutnants* and *Oberleutnants*, a denied request meant waiting until promotion to *Hauptmann/Rittmeister* when that promotion brought a significant pay increase and a

⁸² To illustrate the point, an infantry *Hauptmann* serving in a regiment in a small East Prussian garrison town with no supplemental income but without debt requests to marry an aristocratic woman whose father is a mid-level civil servant without significant additional wealth (much like Ewald von Kleist’s sister would have been) but who will bring a 5,000 *Mark* dowry to the marriage. Because the officer is in a financially self-sufficient situation and the bride is bringing a small but not insubstantial dowry, the regimental commander approves the marriage. In the next example, a newly promoted *Oberleutnant* serving in a cavalry regiment in a provincial capital requests permission to marry a woman in the same situation as the previous example. The regimental commander disapproves the request due to the fact that the couple would have to live on the inadequate *Oberleutnant’s* pay for the next five to six years and that the dowry is too small to ensure that the couple can maintain the required socio-economic level. He tells the officer to wait until he is promoted to *Rittmeister*.

concomitant financial security.⁸³ Under the right financial conditions, however, an officer might gain approval to wed prior to achieving his own financial security through his promotion to *Hauptmann/Rittmeister*. In an era during which marriage decisions were more heavily influenced by rational and pragmatic factors than by the emotional and romantic attraction generated by the couple, the need for social, moral, religious, and personality compatibility cannot be dismissed. Certainly, there needed to be some minimum level of like-mindedness to serve as the basis for the development of both future non-emotional and emotional marital attachments. In the marital calculus of Wilhelmine Germany there were a significant number of daughters of wealthy businessmen who were amenable to marrying into the nobility, some of these women married aristocratic army officers.⁸⁴ Other wealthy ladies were content to marry non-aristocratic officers thereby entering or maintaining membership in this stratum of society.⁸⁵ Should the *Leutnant* or *Oberleutnant* find a woman who would bring sufficient wealth to the marriage to ensure that the couple could meet and sustain the required socio-economic echelon, his request might meet with the army and king's consent for the union.

⁸³ Hein, *Das kleine Buch vom Deutschen Heere* (Kiel und Leipzig: Verlag von Lipsius & Tischer, 1901), 126-127. In 1900, the annual salary of an *Oberleutnant* was 1,500 Marks, while a *Hauptmann/Rittmeister II. Klasse* (lowest) earned 2,700 Marks per year. If the officer received the maximum additional allowances for substance and housing, an *Oberleutnant* received 2,460 Marks and a *Hauptmann/Rittmeister II. Klasse*, 4,572 Marks per year. Thus, promotion from *Oberleutnant* to *Hauptmann/Rittmeister II. Klasse* brought with it a forty-four percent increase in base pay.

⁸⁴ Dolores L. Augustine, *Patricians and Parvenus: Wealth and High Society in Wilhelmine Germany* (Oxford and Providence: Berg Publishers, 1994), 79-81. See Augustine's brief analysis of the marriage of wealthy businessmen's daughters. One key statistic reported was that intermarriage of businessmen's daughters with the traditional ruling class, taken to be the aristocracy, was found in one-third of all of the cases with sufficient categorizing information. Clemente, *King*, 163. Clemente makes the point that a woman of Jewish heritage was considered an appropriate officer's wife in the Wilhelmine era if she was rich enough. Again, this points to the importance of the infusion of wealth into the officer corps.

⁸⁵ Keitel, "Soldatenzeit", 181ff. As an example, Keitel met and courted Lisa Fontaine while he was an officer-student at the *Militär-Reit-Institut*, 1906-1908. She was the daughter of a successful and wealthy *Gutsbesitzer* (estate owner) and Hannover brewery (Brauerei Wülfel) owner. Keitel and Fontaine were engaged in August 1908 and married on 18 April 1909. At the time of his marriage, Keitel was still a *Leutnant* and would be promoted to *Oberleutnant* sixteen months after his wedding on 18 August 1910. Permission for *Leutnant* Keitel to marry indicated that Lisa Fontaine brought a significant amount of financial support to the marriage.

The king's representative for asking the questions concerning honor and finances and determining if the marriage should be recommended for approval was the officer's regimental commander. In yet another key area of an officer's life and career, the regimental commander served as the gatekeeper. In the matter of officer marriage, he was vested with the power and authority to control his officers and safeguard the honor and integrity of the officer corps. Through their decisions, the regimental commanders were furthermore able to directly influence the corps' social composition and economic health; not unimportant influences.

III. Risks and Rewards at the *Militär-Reit-Institut*

At the *MRI*, the change of the calendar to 1908, brought a change in the academic schedule. With the autumn *Wildjagden* season over, the twice weekly afternoon hunts were replaced by more time in the covered riding areas and when the weather and footing for the horses permitted, cross-country rides. Schooling of their five assigned horses filled the mornings of the second-year officer-students, of which Ewald was now counted for equation classes. Ewald could not but have looked forward to the coming months, ones which were to be filled professionally with horses and personally with a blossoming relationship with *Fraulein* Wachtel.

On 1 February 1908, the Chief of the *Militär-Reit-Institut*, *Generalleutnant* von Festenberg-Packisch, died unexpectedly. Ewald attended the funeral and was struck by the sight of the General's favorite horse being led riderless behind the casket with empty boots reversed in

the stirrups.⁸⁶ *Oberst* von Alten, left command of the *1. Garde-Ulanen-Regiment* (Potsdam) to assume the leadership of the *MRI* a week later.⁸⁷ On the same day as von Alten was appointed as *MRI Chef*, the commander of the *Offizier-Reitschule*, *Oberst* Brecht was transferred to Hofgeismar and the eventual command of *Dragoner-Regiment Freiherr von Manteuffel (Rheinisches) Nr. 5*. His replacement was *Oberst Baron* Digeon von Monteton.⁸⁸ Very shortly after *Generalleutnant* von Festenberg-Packisch's death, Ewald had a close brush with death himself.

During one of the school arena training sessions, Ewald and his mount crashed and toppled taking a jump.⁸⁹ The accident left Ewald unconscious for two hours. He was taken to the hospital where he was diagnosed with a serious concussion. The prescribed recovery was for Ewald to spend six weeks in bed in a darkened room.⁹⁰ When he was sufficiently recovered, he

⁸⁶ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 48. Von Kleist wrote in 1945, "At the funerals of the owners of feudal estates from the time of Charlemagne in Westphalia, the horse also stood with the boots turned upside down [backwards] in the stirrup at the open church door, even until today."

⁸⁷ Fleischhauer, "Militär-Reit-Institut," Teil II, 151. *Oberst* Karl von Alten (DoR: 27 January 1907 U) was appointed as the Chief of the *Militär-Reit-Institut* by orders dated 9 February 1908.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 151. *Oberst* Wilhelm Baron von Digeon und Monteton (DoR: 27 January 1908) left command of *Ulanen-Regiment Kaiser Alexander II. von Rußland (1. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3* (Fürstenwalde) to take command of the *Offizier-Reitschule* on orders dated 18 February 1908. *General der Kavallerie* von Kleist appears to have taken the opportunity of *Generalleutnant* von Festenberg-Packisch's death to also replace *Oberst* Brecht, thereby infusing the *Militär-Reit-Institut* and the *Offizier-Reitschule* with fresh leadership and ideas.

⁸⁹ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 35-36. Leon Goldensohn and Robert Gellately, *The Nuremberg Interviews* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 329. In neither source does von Kleist's give the date of the accident. His own account only indicated that the accident occurred sometime shortly after he met and became Gisela Wachtel's dance lesson partner. The events which bound the accident are *Generalleutnant* von Festenberg-Packisch's funeral, which occurred during the first full week of February 1908, and the *MRI* riding competition held on 10-11 April. The period between these two events was nine weeks long. Given the length of his recovery and that he appeared to have participated in the 10-11 April 1908 equestrian competition, Ewald's accident must have occurred during the second full week of February 1908.

⁹⁰ Ibid. In "Lebenserinnerungen", Von Kleist wrote that he spent "lange" (long) weeks in the hospital and then was given recuperation leave which he spent at least a portion of at his parents' home in Aurich. Goldensohn recorded, "...he was unconscious for two hours and had to spend six weeks in bed in a darkened room." A likely timeline was that Ewald spent three to four weeks in the hospital under observation and then, with his recovery going well, he was given an additional two to three weeks of recuperation leave before reporting back at the *MRI* where he would have been examined and declared fit for duty. Depending on the date of the accident, this would have allowed Ewald two to four weeks of riding before the 10 April 1909 riding competition.

travelled to his parents' home in Aurich for a few weeks of convalescent leave. Upon his return to the *MRI*, he was declared fit to resume his riding duties and the school's curriculum.

Riding accidents were an occupational hazard and the army was prepared to deal with officer's injuries. For officers who suffered serious illness or injury which permanently left them unable to perform their required duties, there was the option of medical retirement and a partial pension.⁹¹ For officers who were able to return to duty, support in both treatment and the needed period of recuperation was given.⁹²

The *Militär-Reit-Institut Konkurrenzreiten* (riding competition) occurred 10 and 11 April 1908.⁹³ The *MRI* expanded the 1908 competition from the 1906 event. Two additional classes for officers were added, a class for officers with full-blood Thoroughbreds and a remount class. A second jumping event class for women was also added as were two polo demonstration events and a quadrille on *MRI* school horses led by one of the instructors. Prize money to be awarded totaled 7,200 *Marks* with the top rider in the most prestigious event earning 1,200 *Marks* and a trophy presented by *Prinz* Friedrich Leopold von Preußen, a cousin of *Kaiser* Wilhelm II.⁹⁴

Other dignitaries present at the event were *General der Infanterie* von Loewenfeld, Commanding

⁹¹ See Chapter 4, footnote 82.

⁹² Keitel, "Soldatenzeit", 155ff. In the early spring 1907, Keitel, then a first-year officer-student at the *MRI*, suffered a double fracture of his pelvis when the horse he was riding crashed against a fixed jump. In the ensuing tumble, the horse landed on Keitel who had been unseated. Keitel was taken to the hospital where he was diagnosed by an army physician with a double fracture and internal injuries. Keitel noted that the cost of his single hospital room was 8 Marks per day and that the cost was paid by the Stuttgarter Accident Insurance Company. Keitel spent five weeks in the hospital and then was given convalescent leave of four to six weeks. He was allowed to begin horse riding five weeks after the accident. He returned to the *MRI* by the middle of June and was pronounced fit enough to participate in several *Schleppjagden* in July. He was then directed by his physician to take additional convalescent leave for the ten days prior to the commencement of the annual course on 1 October 1908. He was declared fit for full duty at that time. In the end, it was approximately six months between the accident and Keitel's return to full active-duty status.

⁹³ Militär-Reit-Institut, "Programm für das Militär-Reit-Institut in Hannover am 10. und 11. April 1908 stattfindende Konkurrenzreiten." (Stadtarchiv Hannover, Akte 1. HR. 20, Nr. 831.).

⁹⁴ "Konkurrenzreiten beim Militär-Reitinstitut II," *Hannoversches Courier*, April 12, 1908, 3. *MRI* instructor and *Schulstallmeister*, *Ritmmeister* von Oesterley won the premier class, *Konkurrenz A*, and took home the 1,200 *Marks*. This demonstrated that the school did indeed have highly skilled and capable instructors who were not only qualified to instruct but could win major competitions against the best riders across the entire German Army.

General of X. *Armee*korps; *Fürst* Georg zu Schaumburg-Lippe; and *Generalinspekteur der Kavallerie*, *General der Kavallerie* Georg von Kleist. Ewald undoubtedly took the opportunity to welcome his kinsman to the competition.

While Ewald had the option to participate in several of the classes, he elected to compete in only the *Kaiserpreis* (Emperor's Prize) class.⁹⁵ This class was open to mounted officers stationed at one of the army units in Hannover. As an officer-student at the *MRI*, he qualified for this class and was one of the twenty-nine officers who entered. The officers rode army owned chargers. Ewald was mounted on Lippspringer, his six-year-old chestnut mare. Ewald failed to place in the top three. Two of his fellow first-year classmates earned the first and second places, while a second-year officer-student earned third place honors.⁹⁶

During Ewald's hospitalization and recuperation, he and Gisela drifted apart.⁹⁷ After Ewald returned to duty and for the next year, he occasionally saw Gisela at tennis, parties, dances, and possibly church.⁹⁸ While they were courteous towards each other, the bonds that

⁹⁵ Militär-Reit-Institut, "Programm 1908". Likely, due to his recent injury and short time back in the saddle, Ewald decided to participate in the least strenuous class. The *Kaiserpreis* class contained, one *Hauptmann*, five *Oberleutnants*, and twenty-three *Leutnants*. Twenty-one were cavalry officers, the remaining eight were artillery officers. Of the twenty-nine, fourteen riders (forty-eight percent) were noblemen. Non-noblemen took the top three class places. Fellow classmates Bürkner and von Waltersdorff, among others, rode in the more demanding *Jagd-Spring* (hunter jumper) class. Neither of these officers placed in the top eight in that class.

⁹⁶ "Konkurrenzreiten beim Militär-Reitinstitut II," *Hannoversches Courier*, April 12, 1908, 3.

⁹⁷ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 35-36. While Ewald was recuperating, Gisela and her mother travelled to Paris. On their return, they "were assaulted and choked on the train on their way back home. Worse things were only avoided by Gisela's presence of mind and she pulled the emergency brake. I read about it on my convalescent leave at my parents' house in Aurich." This incident points to Gisela's quick wittedness and calm demeanor.

⁹⁸ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 55. The church was Gartenkirche St. Marien. Von Kleist was christened in the church in 1881 and his parents likely attended services there during their five-year sojourn in Hannover, 1881-1886. Gisela Wachtel was both christened and confirmed in St. Marien and likely her parents and she were congregants. A search for church records by the author at Gartenkirche St. Marien and with the Kirchenbuchamt des Evangelisch-lutherischen Stadtkirchenverbandes Hannover failed to turn up any information concerning a history or listing of the congregants of Gartenkirche St. Marien in the period between 1880 and 1930. The christening and marriage records of Gartenkirche St. Marien were also not found by either the church or the Kirchenbuchamt archivists. This likely points to the records being destroyed during the bombings of World War II as the church was heavily damaged during these raids, especially the 8/9 October 1943 attack. However, the

they had formed between them during the winter's Gavotte lessons had significantly loosened. Other young men entered Gisela's orbit. Ewald, seeing this, recalled, "... I withdrew, not knowing whether Gisela truly liked me, or whether she was still deciding between others and me. I was also stubborn and caused myself pain, which also hurt others. Quickly, weeks turned into months during which I avoided Gisela."⁹⁹ Even though he stopped courting Gisela, he was still quite interested in her. In an unguarded moment he even stated his wish to become engaged to her to an acquaintance in August 1908.¹⁰⁰

Ewald focused on making up for lost time in the saddle caused by his February accident. There were instructors who made themselves available for additional instruction during off-duty time and perhaps Ewald availed himself of this expert assistance.¹⁰¹ By September 1908, the end

archivists provided no confirmation of the destruction of the church records and thus, they may have been misplaced in the Kirchenbuchamt after they were transferred from the church several decades ago.

⁹⁹ Ibid., Heft II, 36.

¹⁰⁰ Keitel, "Soldatenzeit", 188. In mid-August 1908, just after the graduation of the senior *MRI* year group, of which Wilhelm Keitel was a member, Keitel and von Kleist had a conversation which the former remembered in some detail thirty-seven years later. Keitel noted, "On August 20 or 21 - it was a Sunday - after a hard night of celebration, I was at the station and boarded the express train to Bremen-Norddeich; A few moments later, Lieutenant Ewald von Kleist (later Field Marshal, retired.), then of the 3rd Artillery in Brandenburg, appeared and joined me in a 3rd class compartment. He had a wretched hangover and was on his way to Borkum. He could not be engaged in conversation until Bremen. There I asked him to join me for a meal in the waiting room. He came with me, but could not enjoy anything; which made it taste all the better to me. We told each other the destinations and he freely stated that he wanted to get engaged to a wealthy lady from Hannover (a financier's daughter) in Borkum; he was fed up with pinching and scraping to get by with the 50 Marks per month allowance. I thought, even if I were drunker than you, I would never tell you why I was going to Norderney. I would rather have bitten off my tongue, this was not a business trip I was on. We then went our separate ways." Keitel was on his way to Norderney to proposed to Lisa Fontaine, daughter of a wealthy estate and brewery owner near Hannover. Of note are Keitel's reference to the woman von Kleist was interested in, a financier's daughter, a description that matched Gisela Wachtel. And secondly, to the fact that von Kleist was tired of "pinching and scraping to get by on 50 Marks a month allowance." This is a reference to the familial *Zulage* Ewald was receiving. The veracity of Keitel's information is high, so the sum is probably accurate. Finally, one suspects that Keitel clearly remembered this encounter with von Kleist, in which he had the upper hand, because of his long-standing resentment of army officers who were aristocrats, cavalry officers, and graduates of the *Kriegsakademie*; von Kleist would be all three. As to von Kleist's destination, Ewald may have been headed to the island of Borkum or possibly to his parents' home in Aurich, which was on the rail line between Bremen and the ferry connection to Borkum. It is possible that his parents were vacationing on Borkum and he was on his way to join them. Concerning his statement to Keitel, it appeared that von Kleist had voiced his desire and not his actual intent as he did not become engaged to anyone in the summer of 1908.

¹⁰¹ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 65. Bürkner recounted that *Rittmeister Freiherr* Albert von Wrangel would offer additional instruction on Sundays. In addition to off-duty instruction, the *Freiherr* and his wife hosted Bürkner in

of his first year at the *MRI*, Ewald had recovered from his concussion and was fully fit for duty. Proof of this came with an important selection.

In preparation for the beginning of the new academic year and the commencement of the *Wildjagd* season, the *MRI* selected four of the officer-students going into the second course year as *Pikör-offiziere*. Being chosen as a *Pikör* was a high distinction and confirmed that the selected officers were the best overall riders in their year group. Indeed, this was one of the high points of Ewald's equestrian accomplishments and confirmed his long years of preparation and training dating back to his earliest days in *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 3*. It too, was another mark of distinction which identified Ewald as a high potential officer. Along with Ewald, Friedrich (Fritz) von der Lippe, Felix Bürkner, and Alex Wernitz were selected.¹⁰² The *Pikör-offiziere* were the only officer-students permitted to wear red hunt tunics and were identified as *Piköre* by a distinctive white and black armband. Ewald's fellow *Pikör*, Bürkner, recalled:

For each *Wildjagd*, the *Pikör-offiziere* were assigned by name at roll call as escorts of the Chief, the commander [of the Officers Riding School] or the Master. [We also could be assigned] for launching the game, if the terrain made this advisable, riding on the wings of the hunt field and as the trailing officer, or also to high-ranking guests as their escort officer. The "launching" of the boar required being mounted on a sure-footed and fast horse and the instinct of the hunter.¹⁰³

their home. Bürkner wrote, I was "Grateful for everything I had learned with Freiherr von Wrangel, grateful especially for the delightful hours in he and his wife's hospitable home." Of note is that instructors were permitted to engage professionally and socially with officer-students outside of normal duty hours. This indicates that a somewhat familial and collegial atmosphere existed at the *Offizier Reitschule*.

¹⁰² See footnote 40 for description of the duties of a *Pikör* (whipper-in). Friedrich (Fritz) von der Lippe, (* 1879; † 1956) initially joined 8. *Infanterie-Regiment*, transferred to cavalry (13. *Husaren-Regiment*) in 1903, served in WWI with his regiment and infantry units, was retained in *Reichswehr*, and retired from active duty in 1935. Recalled for duty in 1939, served in support units until 1943 and his final retirement. He rose to *Generalleutnant*. Fritz Theodor Alexander Wernitz, (* 1874; † 1938), later von Wernitz, parent unit was *Jäger-Regiment zu Pferde Nr. 2*. He rose to major. His father was *Generalleutnant* August Friedrich Anton Ernst Louis Theodor von Wernitz, (* 1848; † 1922), ennobled by Wilhelm II on February 5, 1913.

¹⁰³ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 73. See Appendix 6 for a more detailed account of the responsibilities and requirements of a *Pikör-offizier*.

Being selected was indeed a great honor and one that brought Ewald into contact with many high ranking and distinguished guests who rode in the *MRI Wildjagden*.

It is most probable that Ewald first met *Kronprinz* (Crown Prince) Prince Wilhelm, son of *Kaiser* Wilhelm II, during the hunts at the *MRI*. The Crown Prince was a frequent *MRI* hunt participant, coming from Berlin to ride in both *Wildjagden* and *Schleppjagden*.¹⁰⁴ Ewald would have had the opportunity to engage the Crown Prince in conversation over the course of several hours during each hunt in which he rode as Wilhelm's escort officer. Too, the Prince, himself an excellent rider, would have had the chance to observe Ewald's equestrian skills and to judge him as an officer. Ewald's acquaintanceship with the Crown Prince would have a significant influence on von Kleist's future career.

The riding instructor to which Ewald was assigned for his second year was *Major* Adolf Coupette, of the 8. *Husaren*. The family network connected Ewald with *Frau* Coupette, born *Freiin* von Kleist.¹⁰⁵

The highlights of Ewald's second year at the *MRI* largely occurred in the spring and summer of 1909. In April 1909, the *MRI* held its now annual riding competition. Now titled "*Preisreiten*" (prize riding), the event was held on 2 and 3 April. The event grew to eight classes for officers, up two from 1908. While the women still competed in two classes, the number of female contestants had risen requiring one of the classes to compete in two sections. Ewald

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 72. The Crown Prince was a very accomplished rider and successful equestrian event competitor. Bürkner recalled his skill, "He was also presented with the stiff series of Hainhauser Koppelricks [post and rail jumps] (1.30 meter fixed), which he, in the uniform of the Queen's Cuirassiers, overcame in his elegant seat with his lower legs stretched out, in front of the hunting field next to the chief in an exemplary manner."

¹⁰⁵ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 37. Therese Marie Helene Eleonore *Freiin* von Kleist was from the Muttrin line of the von Kleist clan. Upon marrying a non-nobleman, she forfeited her title. She attended the von Kleist family gathering in Berlin on 10 February 1908. Ewald likely was injured a few days prior to the family meeting and thus was unable to attend.

elected to ride in three classes.¹⁰⁶ On Friday, 2 April, he competed in the class for Hanoverian horses, riding his own five-year-old brown mare named Königstein. The class winner earned 600 *Marks*. On Saturday morning, he competed in the class for the officers of the Hannover garrison. Here he rode his assigned charger, the chestnut mare, Lippspringe. The competition was stiff with forty-eight other riders. On Saturday afternoon, Ewald entered Königstein in the *Qualitätsprüfung* (quality test) for Hanoverians. Ewald, as in the 1906 and 1908 *MRI* competitions, failed to rank high enough to earn any prize money or bring home any trophies.¹⁰⁷ In the case of his Hanoverian mare, Königstein, Ewald's being unsuccessfully competitive at the *MRI* was likely influenced by his inability to afford a high enough quality of horseflesh. In the two classes in which Ewald competed with Königstein, the horse's level of breeding was an element that was judged and was in all likelihood a significant factor in computing the class ranking. And while the mare was undoubtedly well trained by Ewald, her bloodline as exhibited in her confirmation was possibly not competitive with the top ranking Hanoverians in the class.

As the summer began to heat up, so too did Ewald and Gisela's relationship, warming rapidly from its tepid state of the previous year and a half.

The summer also included a noteworthy episode concerning Ewald's career and its future trajectory. Ewald's equestrian skills had received notice from senior ranking cavalry officers. During his time at the *MRI*, Ewald had met and conversed with his kinsman, *General der Kavallerie* Georg von Kleist. The matter of Ewald's future career was discussed and it was likely during this meeting that Ewald expressed his interest in transferring from the artillery to

¹⁰⁶ Militär-Reit-Institut, "Programm beim Militär-Reit-Institut in Hannover am 2. und 3. April 1909 stattfindende Preiseiten." (Stadtarchiv Hannover, Akte 1. HR. 20, Nr. 831.).

¹⁰⁷ "Preisreiten beim Militär-Reit-Institut Hannover I," *Hannoversches Courier*, April 3, 1908, 14. "Preisreiten beim Militär-Reit-Institut Hannover II," *Hannoversches Courier*, April 4, 1908, 18-19. Von Kleist is listed in three classes as a competitor but his name is not to be found in the listing of those who placed in the prize money or earned trophies.

the cavalry.¹⁰⁸ As with fellow classmate Bürkner, cavalry regimental commanders made the suggestion to Ewald to apply for transfer to the cavalry.¹⁰⁹ “Near the end of riding school, I was asked by the Kommandeur der 4. Lübener Dragoner whether I wanted to transfer to his regiment. I was ready to go but my regiment commander in Brandenburg did not give his permission for the transfer.”¹¹⁰

In June, Ewald participated in a memorable event, the second Prinz-Heinrich-Fahrt (Prince Heinrich Tour). The tour was not with horses but with automobiles. Prince Heinrich von Preußen, a younger brother of *Kaiser* Wilhelm II, was an automobile racing enthusiast and in 1907 had founded a long-distance touring car reliability competition. The first competition took place in June 1908. The second competition held 10 – 18 June 1909, saw one hundred and eight automobiles take on the challenge of motoring a 1,151-mile (1,857 kilometer) course which took them from Berlin through Breslau–Tatrafüred–Budapest–Wien–Salzburg and finished in München. To ensure compliance with the rules and fair gamesmanship, a neutral observer rode

¹⁰⁸ Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen und Plaudereien" (handschriftliche Manuskripte), Heft 3 (BA-MA: N 354/25, Nachlass Kleist), 15. Hereafter, Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft 3, Seite #. Von Kleist wrote in 1945, "General der Kavallerie von Kleist always showed a great deal of interest in me. I knew him from the Family Days, our family reunions. From my early lieutenant's time, I had attended these almost every year. He had seen me in the school stables in Hannover. He had also sponsored my request to transfer to the cavalry." While *General der Kavallerie* von Kleist supported Ewald's wish to transfer to the cavalry, he did not abuse his position and authority to enact the transfer. It appears rather, that he worked behind the scenes to "encourage" the official process to occur.

¹⁰⁹ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 87. Bürkner recorded, "During the second year of riding school, commanders of various cavalry regiments had suggested that I apply for transfer to their regiment. First and foremost, my own regimental commander, Colonel Neugebauer, had to agree to this. When I reported back to Fulda on October 1, 1909, and made the corresponding request, it was denied me - with the quite understandable reason that I would first have to make the knowledge I had acquired in Hanover useful to the regiment for at least two years."

¹¹⁰ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 48-49. *Rangliste 1909*, 400. Mottau, regimental commander of *FAR* 3, had been promoted to *Oberst* on 27 January 1908. "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 94 (1909), 1490 and 1499. *Oberstleutnant* Burandt (DoR: 18 June 1908 E) took command of *FAR* 3 on 22 May 1909. His predecessor, *Oberst* Mottau was retired with a pension and the permission to wear the regimental uniform on orders dated 22 May 1909. It is most likely that it was *Oberstleutnant* Burandt who disapproved von Kleist's request for transfer to the cavalry during the summer of 1909.

in each car. A number of the neutral observers were military officers.¹¹¹ Ewald was selected to ride in one of the cars designed and built by August Horch. Horch had won the 1906 Herkomer Trial, the predecessor of the Prinz Heinrich Fahrt. While Horch's cars did not win the 1909 event, the car in which Ewald was riding did finish the challenging endurance test for automobiles. Ewald commented what a marvelous experience it was for "a lowly lieutenant."¹¹²

Returned from his automobile adventure, Ewald's focus turned back to horses. As the end of his two years at the *MRI* approached, he rode in one last competition as an officer-student. He recalled, "At the end of the second year, I took part in the Kaiserpreis Ritt [Kaiser's Prize Ride], which at that time was over sixty-two miles [one hundred kilometers] long. It was a considerable effort for the horses. I had a very good time, but my tactical solution was not considered sufficient."¹¹³ Again, Ewald was not amongst the prize recipients. But if he was disheartened by the results of his efforts on horseback in this competition, he would see his final pursuit on horseback at the *MRI* meet with success.

On Wednesday, 18 August 1909, Ewald's graduation from the *MRI* was only two days away. It was an important day and one he would always remember. "I rode with Gisela Wachtel in warm weather; I on Lippspringer, she on Adonis. We rode to the Tiergarten in

¹¹¹ Likely a request was made by Prince Heinrich to the army asking for officers to serve as neutral observers. The army in turn, sent out a call for volunteers. The fact that von Kleist was allowed to volunteer for this event while an active student at the *MRI* indicates that the attendance and participation rules at the school were somewhat relaxed. Specifically for von Kleist, he had already missed at least six weeks of schooling due to his injury in the late winter and his subsequent recuperation time. Fellow student, Felix Bürkner, was also allowed "time off" from school to visit the Spanish Riding School in Vienna and to take several weeks of instruction there. This practice points to the likelihood that the learning standards at the *MRI* were largely performance based and not attendance based. Too, it seems that the school was flexible in providing lectures to officer-students who missed them for whatever reason. This may have been accomplished by providing the officer-student with a copy of the lecture which officer-instructors normally wrote out long-hand and then read to the class. Several of these lectures were found in various archives.

¹¹² Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 38-39. See Appendix 7 for von Kleist's account of entire 1909 Prinz-Heinrich-Fahrt.

¹¹³ Ibid., Heft II, 48.

Hannover...”¹¹⁴ On that ride, Ewald proposed to Gisela. She accepted. In the previous months each had come to the realization that the other one was what they wanted in a marriage partner.

From Ewald’s perspective, Gisela was a desirable wife for a number of reasons. He was attracted to her because of her vitality and cheerfulness. She was educated and cultured.¹¹⁵ Despite her youth, Gisela was responsible and mature.¹¹⁶ Physically, Gisela was an attractive young woman with light brown hair, deep blue eyes, and feminine figure. And, she enjoyed riding, a significant bonus for the Ewald, the avid equestrian. Finally, Gisela’s financial situation was ideal.

The Wachtel family’s finances were of a substantial amount. Given that Edmund Wachtel had retired from active work more than a decade before his death, the family’s wealth had been structured so as to provide income of sufficient amount to maintain the affluently comfortable lifestyle without the need for additional income provided by continued active employment. With Gisela’s widowed mother well established and only requiring money for the upkeep of the household and traveling, she would not place a heavy drain on the investments. Also, Gisela’s brother, Berthold, due to his infirmities, would not require any large amounts of money such as capital investments for his own business ventures, the purchase of a house for

¹¹⁴ Ibid., Heft II, 30. Von Kleist continued his evaluation of his engagement and subsequent marriage to Gisela Wachtel. “Today when I look back from the prison camp on this long succession of years, I do so with a deep feeling of gratitude towards God and my dear wife. We have led a long and rich life together. We have also borne many a very difficult fate together, the heaviest of which we probably bear now. That is the sorrow for our people and fatherland, the lost homeland, loss of everything we possessed, a completely uncertain, an almost hopeless future, the great concern on our hearts for our eldest son, the separation, the impossibility to bear and share with each other the most difficult things we have to suffer through now. But the first hope remains that we will see each other again.”

¹¹⁵ Ibid., Heft II, 61. Von Kleist wrote that Gisela spent a year in Paris and attended the Sorbonne during that stay along with her cousin, Hanna Vogler. Given the financial situation of the Wachtel’s, it is probable that Gisela was privately tutored and had received an education befitting a young lady of her social and economic station. Gisela traveled having made trips to Italy and France at a minimum by the time of her marriage. Although unconfirmed, it is likely that Gisela was fluent in French.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., Heft II, 60. Ewald judged, “After her father’s death, Gisela was her mother’s support and friend. It was at that time when she changed from a happy, cheerful, and spoiled little daughter to a responsible, independently acting person. But she never lost her innate cheerfulness and her radiating freshness.”

himself, etc. Berthold would not marry and thus, the Wachtel portfolio would come under Gisela's control at her mother's death. In the meantime, there was undoubtedly an annual allowance paid to Gisela. Thus, Ewald would experience the reality of what many of his impecunious fellow aristocrats dreamed of, the recapitalization of an aristocratic house by means of the significant financial infusion of bourgeois wealth. In his marriage to Gisela, Ewald found both love and money.

From Gisela's perspective, Ewald was a desirable marriage partner. He was intelligent, ambitious, and hardworking. His army superiors had judged him of a "steady, mature character, vivacious and confident with very pleasant comportment."¹¹⁷ His successes at the *MRI* had bolstered his self-confidence as well as identified him as an up-and-coming officer with high potential. His growing network of high-ranking officers and influential people was beginning to open important doors professionally and socially. Too, Ewald was a member of a well-established and respected aristocratic family and *adligen Militärclan*. Marriage to Ewald would bring Gisela into the nobility and thus raise her social standing, an aspiration of some bourgeois young women.¹¹⁸ The lifestyle of an affluent army officer's wife would allow Gisela to have an active role in supporting her husband's career. Personally, she would undergird him by managing the household and children when they came and allow him to focus on his professional duties. Socially, she would, by serving as a gracious and generous hostess and paring with Ewald as an engaging and charming guest, significantly enhance the "off duty" social and recreational side of Ewald's career. And Ewald was a handsome young man, especially in his

¹¹⁷ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Qualifikations-Bericht 1905; (Document 9). *Oberstleutnant Mottau's* assessment of Ewald as written in von Kleist's December 1907 Officer Evaluation Report.

¹¹⁸ Augustine, *Patricians*, 79-81.

uniform. Thus, with a marriage to Ewald, Gisela would find purpose and love, as well as elevation to the aristocracy.

Ewald and Gisela's engagement was not made public. "When we got engaged, it was not to be immediately published and was not to be announced in Hanover either. My dear mother-in-law probably feared the jealousy of the now not so lucky suitor, an 8th Kürassier, Lieutenant Jaques, a Hannover native and my classmate."¹¹⁹ Too, Ewald had not yet received the official permission required from the army for him to wed.¹²⁰ Ewald made a quiet exit from Hannover after the graduation festivities at the *Militär-Reit-Institut*. Despite a few bumps, Ewald had made the best of his two years in Hannover. His hard work and dedicated efforts had earned him high praise and recognition.¹²¹ His perseverance and strength of character had gained him an exceptional wife (to be). He had at last hit his full stride as an army officer.

¹¹⁹ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 36.

¹²⁰ Faeckenstedt, PERS 6/545 Personalakte Faeckenstedt; Antrag des Leutnants und Regimentsadjutanten Faeckenstedt auf Erteilung der Heiratserlaubnis. (15 Juli 1924), (Document 16) (BA-MA). No officer marriage application for the army's approval of marriage in the pre-World War I era was found in the personnel records which were searched. One example from the Weimar Era was found. Ernst Felix Faeckenstedt (later one of von Kleist's World War II Chiefs of Staff) application filed in 1924, by then *Leutnant* Faeckenstedt, regimental adjutant in the *1. (Preuß.) Reiter-Regiment*, was discovered. The official document listed the *Leutnant's* birthdate; the intended bride's full name; the full name of her father, his occupation, her parent's residence, her mother's maiden name; the name and occupation of the intended bride's deceased or divorced husband (if any); and a signed declaration stating, "I dutifully declare that my bride and I are entirely free of debt, and that we are able to maintain a debt-free household." It was signed by Faeckenstedt. The regimental commander wrote, "The above application of Lieutenant and Regimental Adjutant Faeckenstedt is forwarded with the request to obtain higher authority to marry. The requirements for H.V.Bl. 1924 No. 8 83.8 are fulfilled." He signed the document. The request was in turn forwarded through *1. Kavallerie Division* and then to the *Heeres-Personalamt* (Army Personnel Office) in Berlin. At each level it was approved and then returned to the requestor. From filing at the regiment until approved at the *Heeres-Personalamt* in Berlin took one week. Faeckenstedt married Elli von Sperber (* 24 September 1900) on 7 November 1924, at the bride's parent's estate, *Rittergut Lenken*, near Tilsit, Ostpreußen.

¹²¹ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Qualifikations-Bericht 1909; (Document 10). Von Kleist's regimental commander, *Oberleutnant* Burandt, reported in Ewald's December 1909 Officer Evaluation Report, that *Leutnant* von Kleist had returned from the *Militär-Reit-Institut* with a most excellent *Zeugnis* (performance report). As with other formal professional army officer education courses, completion of the two-year officer's course at the *Militär-Reit-Institut* brought with it an official *Abgangszeugnis* (graduation certificate) complete with grades for the major element of the course. Von Kleist's graduation certificate was not found in his army personnel file or in his *Nachlass*.

IV. Return to Regimental Duties

Within a fortnight of returning to Brandenburg a/H and *FAR 3*, Ewald found himself in the field and participating in a *6. Division* exercise.¹²² The intra-division-level maneuver was held on 10 – 11 September 1909, south of Guben in the vicinity of Stargardt just east of the Lausitzer Neiße River.¹²³ The Blue Force, under the flag of *11. Infanterie-Brigade*, was a provisional combined-arms brigade which comprised *Füsilier-Regiment Nr. 35*, one battalion of *Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 20*, *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 3* (two *fahrende Abteilungen*), one squadron of *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 3*, one company of combat engineers, and a company of supply troops.¹²⁴ *Oberst* Wilhelm Sack, commander of *6. Feldartillerie-Brigade*, acted as the commander of the provisional brigade. *Oberst* Friedrich Guderian commanded the *Füsilier-Regiment Nr. 35*.¹²⁵ Opposing the Blue brigade was a Red brigade commanded by *Generalmajor* Wilcke, the *12. Infanterie-Brigade Kommandeur*.

¹²² Ibid., Document 13. Von Kleist was officially reassigned from the *MRI* to *FAR 3* on 1 October 1909. Thus, he was technically on temporary duty with his regiment during the field exercises of 10-11 September 1909.

¹²³ Guben is present day Gubin, Poland; Stargardt is Stargard Gubiński, Poland. The region lays approximately eight-five miles (one hundred forty kilometers) southeast of Berlin and twenty-five miles (forty kilometers) northeast of Cottbus, Germany.

¹²⁴ „Division-Manöver der 6ten Division am 11ten September 1909 Gefechtsbericht“ (BaHSA; Akte 21. 4-6.). This file in the Brandenburg a/H city archive contains the *Gefechtsbericht* (combat report) for the *6. Division* maneuvers. The report is a compilation of actual brigade and subordinate level orders, engagement reports, patrol reports, and maps. The acting brigade commander made written comments before passing the report up for review and written comment by *Generalleutnant* Riemann, *6. Division Kommandeur*, and *Kommandierende General des III. Armeekorps*, *General der Infanterie* von Bülow. The forty-four-pages of documents including reports and the senior commander comments provides a grass roots view of German Army tactics, techniques, and procedures of combat and support units, notably medical, in the field in the decade prior to World War I.

¹²⁵ “Personal -Veränderungen.” *Militär-Wochenblatt* 94 (1909), 871. On 22 March 1909, *Oberstleutnant* Friedrich Guderian (* 1858; † 1914) took command of *Füsilier-Regiment Nr. 35* (Brandenburg a/H) and two days later was promoted to *Oberst*. He was the father of Heinz Guderian, commander of panzers and *Generaloberst* in World War II. It is likely that von Kleist first met or observed the senior Guderian during this September 1909 exercise. Given the small size of Brandenburg a/H and the proximity of the *Füsilier* and *FAR 3 Kaserne*, it is possible that *Oberst* Guderian and von Kleist became professionally, and perhaps personally, acquainted especially if *Oberst* Guderian rode or hunted. It is possible that the very junior *Leutnant* Guderian, during visits to his parents’ home in Brandenburg a/H, interacted with von Kleist. It may have been at this time that the seeds of animosity, which were in full bloom by spring 1940, were first planted.

The opposing forces maneuvered against one another for two days. For Ewald, this was his first exercise under the leadership of the new regimental commander, *Oberstleutnant* Burandt. On the morning of the second day, Ewald made his presence on the “battlefield” known while on patrol. He led an early morning artillery reconnaissance patrol in an effort to locate the enemy’s artillery positions. At 06:45 hours, having located two artillery batteries, he hastily scribbled his first patrol report in pencil.¹²⁶ He dispatched a rider to take the message to brigade headquarters where it arrived thirty minutes later. *Oberst* Sack noted that the message was a good one from the artillery patrol. The division commander was less impressed, penning later that the information was too vague.

At 07:45 hours, von Kleist penciled his second report. He had found two more batteries and reported their location. This dispatch arrived at headquarters only eleven minutes after being written. Again, Sack noted his satisfaction “good report from the artillery patrol.”¹²⁷ Von Kleist’s last patrol report of the morning was dispatched at 08:00 hours and arrived at headquarters twenty minutes later. He and his patrol had found eight more enemy guns emplaced near one of the small villages in the area. Von Kleist’s effort and information did not significantly aid the Blue brigade commander’s understanding of the battlefield and the enemy’s locations. *Oberst* Sack penned, “Good as a first message. However, the message to the brigade must be supplemented by information about the exact position of the artillery via a sketch.”¹²⁸ Fresh from school and well trained in cross-country riding, it appeared that other elements of Ewald’s artillery patrol leader skill set were a bit rusty.

¹²⁶ Ibid., Patrol Report #25. The distance between von Kleist and headquarters was approximately two miles (3.2 kilometers) in a direct line.

¹²⁷ Ibid., Patrol Report #31. The distance between the patrol and headquarters was approximately the same as for the first report.

¹²⁸ Ibid., Patrol Report #34.

There were still a few weeks before Ewald was officially required for duty in the regiment. “Naturally I immediately rushed back to my fiancée after our maneuvers. We should however, not stay in Hannover. Mother invited me on a trip to the Upper Italian lakes, a wonderful, wonderful trip that I always think back to.”¹²⁹ But while travelling the engaged couple was spotted by a neighbor from Hannover who reported the meeting back home and the secret of Ewald and Gisela’s engagement slowly leaked out.

With his leave expired, Ewald returned to Brandenburg. There he moved into one of the apartments in the *Kasino* (officer’s mess) ostensibly to save money. Too, he would need to begin the search for appropriate married accommodations for when he brought his bride back to Brandenburg after their marriage next summer. In the regiment, *Major* Greßmann succeeded in pulling Ewald back into the *reitende Abteilung* where he became the third ranking officer in *I. reitende Batterie* below the battery commander, *Hauptmann* Schönberg, and *Oberleutnant* von Stumpf. Here, Ewald was given the duty of helping train the older remounts and other sections which contained the experienced soldiers. In these training areas, the regiment was getting a return on their investment of having sent Ewald to the *MRI*. For Ewald, service under Schönberg was not pleasant as he considered the *Batterie Chef* less than an ideal leader. Nonetheless, he was happy being back under the leadership of Greßmann.¹³⁰ Ewald recalled of the time between the September 1909 and September 1910,

Otherwise, I have few memories of this year, my engagement filled me completely. I also prepared myself for the war academy examination and passed it as third best of my year group. In November, our engagement was published. Gisela then came to our regimental ball in the winter and stayed with the young and friendly couple Kaempfe. Many of my comrades of the same age were married to nice wives and later this gave us a group of friends. Once again, I

¹²⁹ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 36-37.

¹³⁰ Ibid., Heft II, 52-53. Von Kleist noted that he “owe much to the regiment for the education they gave me in becoming a soldier.”

experienced many a cheerful evening with my old comrades and friends, Tempelhoff, Scheffer, Schwarze, Kreich, Willy Hederich, etc.¹³¹

A focus of Ewald's autumn and winter efforts was preparing for the upcoming *Kriegsakademie Aufnahmeprüfung* (qualifying examination). Annually in October, the Chief of the General Staff published the testing schedule and the plan for the examination for the forthcoming March.¹³² While the different subject areas of the test were well known, the testing commission narrowed the preparation focus in two areas; history and geography.¹³³ For history, one century was specified from which the questions would come. For geography, a continent or smaller section was identified. The commission also published the reference sources for history and geography which were to be used in preparing for the exam. As with other important officer testing, e.g., the *Fähnrichprüfung*, the *Leutnants* were not left to their own devices on how and what to study.

Examination preparation assistance came in three primary ways. First and most prevalent was self-study. There was a variety of materials and aids to guide and support the officer's individual preparation. Commercially produced books and pamphlets on the topics covered in the exam were readily available. Staff officer *Major* Karl Krafft's handbook and annual supplements were popular. In the first decade of the 1900s, Krafft produced several additions and multiple updated supplements to his *Handbuch für die Vorbereitung zur Kriegsakademie*

¹³¹ Ibid., Heft II, 53-54.

¹³² Generalstab, *Lehrordnung der Königlichen Kriegsakademie 1912*, (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1912), 22. Copy held in BA-KO: N 1015/222, Nachlass Schwertfeger. The *Lehrordnung's* (instructional regulations) twenty-six pages of regulations provided guidance concerning the syllabus, specific subject information, directions on the final examination, and directives for the qualifying examination.

¹³³ Ibid., 23-24. The specific areas tested on the qualifying examination were: formal tactics (deployment and logistics), applied tactics, arms and ordnance, fortifications, topography and surveying, terrain sketching, history, geography, mathematics, and a foreign language (French, English, Russian, or Japanese).

(Handbook for Preparation for Entrance to the War Academy).¹³⁴ The supplements published the actual examination questions given on the previous qualifying examination and provided discussion and solutions to those questions. Thus, the officer gained insight into the style and terminology of the test questions, especially the essay questions, and was provided with high-quality examples of suitable answers. To further aid self-study, manuals with practice test questions and their answers were easily acquired.¹³⁵ As an artillery officer, Ewald would have had an easy time answering the 1909 exam question on arms and ordnance, “Is it appropriate to give heavy field howitzers shrapnel in addition to high explosive shells, or should shrapnel remain with the weapons which currently employ it?”¹³⁶

The second method of preparation were officially sponsored tutorial sessions. Some army units provided officer instructors, study materials, and sanctioned time, both during and after duty hours, to aid their *Leutnants* in preparing for the examination. As was noted, the *Militär-Reit-Institut* dedicated several hours a week to scheduled, formal instruction.¹³⁷ Other units, especially those with access to qualified instructors, held organized instructional sessions.¹³⁸ Brandenburg a/H was home to 6. *Division* headquarters and three regiments. It is

¹³⁴ Karl Krafft, *Handbuch für die Vorbereitung zur Kriegsakademie*, 3rd revised edition (Berlin: Mittler und Sohn, 1903). Revised editions were produced in 1907 and 1916. The supplements entitled, *Die Aufgaben der Aufnahmeprüfung 19xx für die Kriegsakademie: Besprechungen und Lösungen* (The Questions of the 19xx Entrance Examination for the War Academy: Discussions and Solutions) were published each year between 1904-1914.

¹³⁵ Advertisements for these handbooks, manuals, pamphlets, and study aids were to be found in most of the military journals read by officers, e.g., *Deutsches Offizierblatt*.

¹³⁶ Karl Krafft, *Die Aufgaben der Aufnahmeprüfung 1909 für die Kriegsakademie: Besprechungen und Lösungen*, 2. *Nachtrag zum Handbuch für die Vorbereitung zur Kriegsakademie* (Berlin: Mittler und Sohn, 1909), 21. The officer was given three hours in which to compose his written essay for this question. Krafft was not a member of the *Generalstab der Armee* (Army General Staff).

¹³⁷ See footnote 24.

¹³⁸ Clemente, *King*, 185-191. See Clemente’s discussion of units that better prepared their officers for the examination. For an example of *Kriegsakademie* test preparation materials see MA-BA Akte B 15/3 (Nachlaß Scheibel). This file contains a practice operations order written by *Leutnant* Scheibel, IR 154, in late December 1908. It was reviewed and commented on by *Hauptmann* Weniger, a *Generalstabsoffizier*. *Leutnant* Scheibel was selected to attend *Kriegsakademie* beginning in October 1909 and graduated in 1912.

possible that the division, under the guidance of *Major i.G. Freiherr von Stoltzenberg*, the division's General Staff officer, organized a training program for *Leutnants* of *FR 35*, *Kür-Rgt 6*, and *FAR 3*. Also, given that there were nine officers in *FAR 3* in the *Kriegsakademie* eligibility zone, the regiment may have conducted its own program.¹³⁹

The third method of preparation was the informal information passing and assistance given by fellow officers who had graduated from the *Kriegsakademie* or who had gone through their own qualifying examination.¹⁴⁰ Even officers who had not attended but were known for their leadership, tactical, and communications skills could be called upon to read and critique the *Leutnant's* practice essays, terrain sketches, and operations orders. But for Ewald there was more than just studying for the upcoming exam.

Official duties of supervising the training of remounts and soldiers, the autumn *Wildjagd* season, and the numerous social events that accompanied Christmas and the ringing in of the new year all kept Ewald busy. Trips to Hannover to see Gisela and further plan their wedding and establishment of a home, made the fall and winter speed past.

¹³⁹ Mark R. Stoneman, "Wilhelm Groener, Officering, and the Schlieffen Plan" (Ph.D. dissertation, Georgetown University, 2006), 56. While the window of eligibility to attend the *Kriegsakademie* shifted several times during the *Kaiserreich*, for von Kleist's time, the attendee must have had a minimum of three years commissioned service and was not due to be promoted to *Hauptmann* for at least five years. Thus, the window was between the third and ninth year of total commissioned service. Von Kleist's commissioned time started in August 1901, therefore, in August 1909, he had just entered his eighth year of total commissioned service. *Ranglisten 1900-1910*. Between 1900 and 1909, nine officers from *FAR 3* had attended the *Kriegsakademie*. All of the officers appeared to have graduated the school with two going on to serve on the *Großer Generalstab*. While no comparative analysis has been undertaken, to have, on average, one officer per year enter the *Kriegsakademie* appears to be well above the norm. This seems to indicate that *FAR 3* had some kind of perennial formal or informal program for officer preparation. Given the rapid turn over of regimental commanders, the regiment's success does not appear to be linked to one or two influential commanders. The success of *FAR 3* officers points to the regiment's high standing, both in army precedence and officer quality. The regimental commanders were able to maintain a high intellectual and character standard for officer accessions and this, coupled with prioritization of continued officer education and training, enabled the regiment to achieve a high selection rate for the *Kriegsakademie*.

¹⁴⁰ *Rangliste 1900-1910*. For the year von Kleist was back at *FAR 3*, October 1909 to September 1910, three officers in the regiment, *Hauptleute* Kolbe, Winckler and *Oberleutnant* Hertzberg, had attended and graduated the *Kriegsakademie* and thus could have provided expert information and test preparation guidance.

As 1909 drew to a close, Ewald received his fifth *Qualifikations-Bericht* (officer evaluation report). While *Oberstleutnant* Burandt had taken command of the regiment the previous May, he had only had several months in which to observe Ewald after his return from the *MRI*. The report follows:

Qualifications Report

to 1 December 1909
on Lt Paul Ludwig Ewald v. Kleist
in *Feldart. Rgt. General-Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenb.) Nr. 3*

Age	Pensionable Service Time	Combat Ready	In the position	Commission
Year Months	Years Months		since	
28 4	9 9	Yes	8 ¼ Years	19 Aug 1900 Qq

Is not yet sufficiently known to me personally. His previous regimental commander, Colonel Mottau, writes about him: "Medium height, slender, very good appearance. Physically and mentally very well disposed. Steady, mature character, vivacious and confident with very pleasant comportment. Was an excellent battalion adjutant. Demonstrated earnest pursuit of further education, good eye for tactical situations. In every duty, also outside the regiment, very proven. Qualified for regimental adjutant. Fills all responsibilities of his position. Qualified for promotion."

Lt. v. Kleist returned from his 2-year posting to the Military Riding Institute on September 1, 1909, bringing with him quite an excellent report card. Already during his first year he had ridden with the second year's section and was a whipper-in. He has also made the impression on me of being an exceptionally capable officer. Fills all responsibilities of his position. Qualified for promotion.

Burandt
*Lieutenant Colonel (designated with leadership of the regiment)*¹⁴¹

Because of his limited time to assess von Kleist, Burandt chose to repeat verbatim the bulk of Ewald's previous performance report. That he does so lends weight to the assessment that the 1907 *Qualifikations-Bericht* was a very strong one. Again, the key elements were covered such as Ewald's character, tactical acumen, trustworthiness, and performing all his duties very well. Of note, is the phrase, "Demonstrated earnest pursuit of further education...".

¹⁴¹ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Qualifikations-Bericht 1909; (Document 10). *Italics* indicates handwritten data.

This statement of Ewald's desire to obtain further education was a direct pointer to von Kleist's intent to pursue admission to the *Kriegsakademie*.¹⁴² That statement would be important when Ewald made his application to the *Kriegsakademie* in the coming spring. Burandt then made note of Ewald's excellent *Zeugnis* (performance report) that accompanied him on his return from his two years at the *MRI*. Burandt specifically noted that von Kleist had been advanced during his first year to the second year's equitation section. Too, the regimental commander highlighted that Ewald had also been selected as a whipper-in, a sign of the wide recognition of and importance attached to this *MRI* equestrian honor. Burandt echoed the high praise with his own very strong, if somewhat qualified, endorsement that von Kleist "also made the impression on me of being an exceptionally capable officer."¹⁴³ Perfunctorily he closed with the two required statements that the *Leutnant* filled his positional responsibilities and that he was qualified to be promoted to *Oberleutnant*.¹⁴⁴ Ewald's hard work, dedication, and perseverance had gained him an excellent report, one that clearly placed him near the top of the upper one third of his peer group.

As of 1 January 1910, A Mehmed Emin, a *Hauptmann* in the Imperial Turkish Army, was appointed to serve as a *Leutnant* assigned to *FAR 3*.¹⁴⁵ *Oberleutnant* Eckhardt was sent

¹⁴² Given that this statement was placed in von Kleist's 1907 *Qualifikations-Bericht*, it indicated that Ewald had already made his wishes known to attend *Kriegsakademie* and that this goal was supported by his regimental leadership. The placement of the statement in von Kleist's 1907 report allowed for it to become an early statement of record, even though his attending the *Militär-Reit-Institut* would delay his seeking admission to the *Kriegsakademie* by two years.

¹⁴³ Burandt qualifies the statement by stating that von Kleist made the "impression" rather than overstating that his performance showed him to be an exceptionally capable officer.

¹⁴⁴ It is probable that this was the top of the stack of *Qualifikations-Bericht* in von Kleist's promotion record which was examined by the promotion board in January 1910. It would also have been the last and most important report that was examined by the *Kriegsakademie* during the 1910 selection process.

¹⁴⁵ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 94 (1909): 3498. A 7 December 1909 notice, identified fourteen Turkish officers who were assigned to different regiments within the German Army: one *Vizemajor*, eight *Hauptleute*, three *Oberleutnants*, and two *Leutnants*. All of the officers were assigned as *Leutnants al a suite*. Six officers were assigned to infantry regiments, two to cavalry, three to field artillery, one to heavy artillery, one to combat engineers, and one to a telegraph battery. This is noted to point to the Germany Army's pre-World War I cooperation and interaction with the Turkish Army.

from *FAR 3* to serve as an exchange officer with a cavalry regiment, *Jäger-Regiment zu Pferde Nr. 2* (hunters regiment on horse, i.e., mounted rifles), for one year.¹⁴⁶

The 27th of January was a much-awaited day each year. First, it was *Kaiser Wilhelm II's* birthday with the accompanying fanfare. Secondly, the *Kaiser* held to the tradition of promoting military officers on his birthday. Thus, the army published a set of officer promotion lists with the promotion date of 27 January.¹⁴⁷ For 1910, the list of *Leutnants* promoted to *Oberleutnant* contained Ewald von Kleist's name. Over four hundred men were promoted to *Oberleutnant* across the army. Ewald's ranking on the list was G14g (three hundred thirty-second in precedence).¹⁴⁸ From his date of commission in 1901, Ewald had served eight years and five months as *Leutnant*.¹⁴⁹ The increase in rank, however, brought no increase in pay. By 1909, the officer pay scale had been altered. *Leutnants* and *Oberleutnants* now were grouped together and

¹⁴⁶ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 94 (1909): 3023. Eckardt was promoted to *Oberleutnant* and assigned as an exchange officer with *Jäger-Regiment zu Pferde Nr. 2*, garrisoned at Langensalza, from 1 November 1909 to 31 October 1910. This is another example of the exchanges that occurred between branches as well as another indicator that *FAR 3* was interested in broadening its officers by encouraging out of regiment professional opportunities.

¹⁴⁷ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 95 (1910): 287-332. The promotions were at every officer rank from *General der Infanterie* to *Fähnrich*, as well as promotions of reserve officers. Promotions were published in the *Militär-Wochenblatt* by regimental precedence and not as a complete list for one rank from first to last promotee. Also, the order of precedence on the list is not identified only the officer's regiment. During an analysis of the *Rangliste 1910*, the highest *Oberleutnant* ranking found for the 27 January 1910 list was F17f indicating that there were at least 406 officers promoted to *Oberleutnant* on this list.

¹⁴⁸ *Rangliste 1910*, 403 and 426. A comparison of the promotion list on which von Kleist was commissioned on 18 August 1901 (on which all of those commissioned had their date of rank pre-dated by one year to 19 August 1900), shows that the number one officer, Albert Benary, was promoted on the 27 January 1910 *Oberleutnant* list like von Kleist. Benary's order of precedence on the 1901 list was A (1) and on the 1910 list W12w (296), or thirty-six higher than von Kleist. On the 1901 list, Benary was forty higher than von Kleist. Further analysis indicates that officers on the same list as *Leutnants* retained their relative ranking on the *Oberleutnant* list.

¹⁴⁹ The normal time spent as a *Leutnant* in this era was eight to ten years. The *Oberleutnant* promotion board for January 1910 appears to have been the first in which the *Leutnants* whose date of rank was pre-dating by one year at their commission (due to the March 1900 ruling about officers entering with an *Abitur*) were promoted. Von Kleist and his fellow commissionees in August 1901, who had their *Abitur*, were promoted with eight years and five months of active commissioned service time or nine years and five months of "Date of Rank" time. It appears that the *Leutnants* commissioned one year later (August 1902) who had their *Abitur*, were promoted with only eight years active service time (nine years of Date of Rank time). Wilhelm Keitel and Felix Bürkner fell in this group. For those without an *Abitur*, like Georg von Küchler (later *Generalfeldmarschall*), he served a full nine years active service time between commission as a *Leutnant* (18 August 1901) and his promotion to *Oberleutnant* (18 August 1910).

their pay increased as a function of service longevity rather by both rank and longevity as before. Ewald's most recent pay increase occurred when he began his seventh year of commissioned service, in September 1908. At that time, his pay rose to 158.33 *Marks* per month/ 1,900 *Marks* per year base pay.¹⁵⁰ The *Servis* (rations allowance) and *Wohnungsgeldzuschuss* (housing allowance) remained the same but Ewald forfeited the housing allowance because he lived on the *Kaserne*. He possibly collected an additional 24 *Marks* for *Servis*. Ewald would still have needed his familial *Zulage* to support his officer-equestrian lifestyle. Now, of the forty-four officers assigned to *FAR 3*, Ewald ranked twenty-ninth, the junior most of the fifteen *Oberleutnants* in the regiment. He outranked the regiment's fifteen *Leutnants*.

In March, Ewald helped celebrated the investment of fellow *FAR 3* officer, *Hauptmann* Eduard Ritter und Edler von Oetinger when he was knighted as an *Ehrenritter* in the *Johannerorden*.¹⁵¹ This was the second officer from the regiment with whom Ewald was familiar to receive knighthood in this religious order.

By mid-March, all of Ewald's attention was focused on the *Kriegsakademie Aufnahmeprüfung*.¹⁵² Ewald, fellow regiment mate, Walter Boehm, and possibly other officers from the regiment traveled to *III Armeekorps* Headquarters in Berlin to take one of the most important examinations in their military careers. The testing was a multi-day affair covering ten

¹⁵⁰ Kurt von Rabenau, *Die deutsche Land- und Seemacht und die Berufspflichten des Offiziers; Ein Handbuch für Offiziere, Reserveoffiziere und Kriegsschüler, Dritte Auflage* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1912), 13-20. The forfeited *Wohnungsgeldzuschuss* amounted to 25 *Marks* per month/ 300 *Marks* per year.

¹⁵¹ "Ordens-Verleihungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 95 (1910): 747. 12 März 1910 edition (No. 33). The announcement read, "Captain and Battery Commander in Field Artillery Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (1st Brandenburg) Nr 3, Ritter und Elder von Oetinger, after examination of the same by the Chapter and on the proposal of the Most Serene Lord Master, to appoint Prince Eitel-Friedrich of Prussia of Royal Highness as Honorary Knights of the Order of St. John." "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 94 (1909): 2242. *Hauptmann Ritter und Edler von Oetinger* (DoR: 27 January 1909) was transferred as supernumerary officer in the *3. Garde-Feldartillerie Regiment* to *FAR 3* as a staff officer on 1 April 1909. On 1 August 1909 he became an authorized Battery Commander on *FAR 3*'s manning document and took command of 1st Battery.

¹⁵² Clemente, *King*, 185-191. See Clemente for an overview of the *Aufnahmeprüfung* (qualifying examination) process in the years between 1871 and 1914.

subject areas.¹⁵³ For the foreign language portion of the test, Ewald selected English.¹⁵⁴ A total of twenty-five testing hours was given to the examinees to complete their written answers.¹⁵⁵ The primary test proctors were the Chiefs of Staff at each of the army corps. Tests were administered under the watchful eye of *Hauptleute* or *Staboffiziere* (field grade officers) with no more than twenty-five test takers in one room.¹⁵⁶ No study or test aids other than foreign language dictionaries or logarithmic tables were permitted in the testing rooms. The test answers and all associated material bore no information identifying the officer or his unit. Rather all materials to be graded were given a coded number. The master code sheet from each testing location was sent under separate cover directly to the *Kriegsakademie* Director. This anonymity enabled the test graders of the *Kriegsakademie Studies Commission* to score the answers in a neutral and unbiased manner. Only after the entire exam had been graded and the overall score calculated were the test taker's names reassociated with their scores.

In addition to the test scores, the officer's application package contained a career vita, copies of his *Qualifikations-Berichte* (officer evaluation reports), and a newly written, special *Qualifikations-Bericht* by the regimental commander on the applicant. That report contained a number of mandatory assessments concerning the officer's fitness for training and service as a

¹⁵³ Generalstab, *Lehrordnung*, 22-26. The specific areas tested on the qualifying examination were: formal tactics (deployment and logistics), applied tactics (there were two test sections on this area), arms and ordnance, fortifications, topography and surveying, terrain sketching, history, geography, mathematics, and a foreign language (French, English, Russian, or Japanese). The *Kriegsakademie* paid the travel, lodging, and per diem for the test takers to travel to their army corps headquarters and take the examination.

¹⁵⁴ Von Kleist took English during his three years at the *Kriegsakademie* and while no records were found to confirm his language choice for the qualifying examination, it is most likely that he tested in English in which he had some proficiency. Von Kleist had studied English at the *Gymnasium*.

¹⁵⁵ Krafft, *Aufnahmeprüfung 1909*, 7-58. The examination contained no oral portion.

¹⁵⁶ Generalstab, *Lehrordnung*, 22-26. This *Kriegsakademie* regulation contained an annex which detailed the *Aufnahmeprüfung* testing procedures.

general staff officer.¹⁵⁷ Additionally, officers higher in the applicant's chain of command could add supplemental assessments concerning the aspirant's fitness for *Kriegsakademie* attendance. The applicant's package was sent to the *Armeekorps*, in Ewald's case *III. Armeekorps*, and was likely routed from the regiment through brigade to division to allow for additional comments. From the *Armeekorps*, it went to the *Kriegsakademie*. With the examination completed and the application in the hands of the *Kriegsakademie* by the end of March, all Ewald could do was wait for the results to be announced.

In early June, Ewald's next memorable experience occurred. For the second time he participated as an observer in the Prinz-Heinrich-Fahrt. During the seven-day event, 2-8 June 1910, Ewald rode with Friedrich (Fritz) Opel, the brother of the previous year's winner, Wilhelm Opel. Ewald recalled that Fritz was a reserve cavalry officer assigned to the same *Dragoner Regiment* as his *MRI* friend, Lutz *Freiherr* von Riedesel.¹⁵⁸ The 1910 endurance test went from Berlin via Braunschweig-Cassel-Nürnberg-Straßburg-Metz to Homburg vor der Höhe; a total of 1,205 miles (1,944 kilometers).¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ August Kuhn, *Die Aufnahme-Prüfung für die Kriegs-Akademie* (Berlin: Verlag der Liebelschen Buchhandlung, 1899), 6-7. The mandatory items which the applicant's regimental commander must comment on in the special *Qualifikations-Bericht* were: "a) whether the officer was familiar with active service with troops and had proved himself capable on all occasions; b) whether he had a serious inclination for higher academic training combined with the corresponding abilities; c) whether he was in good health, so that he could be expected to remain in the royal service for a long time; d) whether he was of reliable conduct and strong character; e) whether his economic circumstances were in order, whether and how much allowance he received; f) to what extent he would be required to contribute to the regiment's mess fund during his assignment to the war academy." Again, it is noteworthy that an officer's financial status is a matter of concern and affirmation was required that the officer had his financial affairs under control. The key factors playing on this were the officers attending the *Kriegsakademie* were primarily *Oberleutnants* and had not reached a level of pay which largely eliminated normal fiscal concerns and the *Kriegsakademie* being located in Berlin drove an increase cost of living for most officers who attended. Von Kleist's official engagement to *Fraulein* Wachtel helped him clear the financial hurdles.

¹⁵⁸ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 54. Ludwig (Lutz) Riedesel *Freiherr* zu Eisenbach was assigned to *Leib-Dragoner-Regiment (2. Großherzoglich Hessisches) Nr. 24* (Darmstadt). He attended *Militär-Reit-Institut* the same two years as von Kleist. *Rangliste 1908*, 674. Opel is listed as a reserve *Leutnant* in *Dragoner-Regiment Nr. 24*. It is possible that it was through Lutz's association with Opel that the later requested Ewald as his observer.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Heft II, 54-55. Von Kleist's account is paraphrased. Homburg vor der Höhe is presently known as Bad Homburg.

Ewald's trip was less than pleasant as he suffered from a severe case of tonsillitis and ran a high fever during most of the event. On the second evening he met Gisela in Braunschweig. He was introduced to her relatives, the senior a retired privy councilor and "a prince of a gentleman whose Braunschweig dialect was quite thick", his wife Elsbeth and daughter Lotti.¹⁶⁰

As Ewald pulled into Straßburg on the evening of Monday, 6 June, the fourth leg of the event, he was greeted with wonderful news. He had been selected to attend the *Kriegsakademie* starting in October!¹⁶¹ A celebration ensued with dinner at the famous Valentin's restaurant. Little sleep was had that night.

The next day brought Ewald face-to-face with the stark realities of the world of automobile racing. The Straßburg to Metz leg included the second speed trial, a 3.4 mile (5.5 kilometer) run "on a narrow, sharply curving road bordered by poplars, which one looked at with concern."¹⁶² One of the Adler automobiles failed to negotiate the curves, left the road, and crashed. Its owner was severely injured, the driver and civilian neutral observer were killed outright. There was a brief pause to determine if the speed trials would continue. Ewald wrote, "It was! We started as one of the next cars - I kept under the tarpaulin covering the rear seat and we reached a little over 90 km."¹⁶³ To celebrate their survival, they dined that evening at the well-known restaurant, Moissier in Metz. The tour concluded the next day in Homburg. While Fritz Opel was not the winner, Ferdinand Porsche won, the fact that Opel's car had successfully

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., Heft II, 54.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., Heft II, 53-55. Ewald reported that his examination had been the "third best of my year group." It is unknown how von Kleist came to this knowledge. But taken as a true statement, von Kleist did indeed test well on the examination. His superlative testing would have also have bolstered von Kleist's professional self-confidence and confirmed to himself and others his professional military capabilities. Fellow regimental officer, Walter Boehm, had also done well and was selected to attend.

¹⁶² Ibid., Heft II, 55.

¹⁶³ Ibid., Heft II, 55. By Metz, von Kleist was not quite recovered from his illness, but nonetheless participated in dinner that evening.

endured the twelve-hundred-mile journey and crossed the finish line was noteworthy. Again, Ewald could not but have learned a great deal about automobiles, internal combustion engines, and the maintenance and logistics requirements of wheeled machines.

When Ewald returned to Brandenburg in mid-June, only three and a half months remained before he had to report to *Kriegsakademie* in Berlin. With his move to Berlin now a certainty, he and Gisela shifted their efforts to finding and furnishing a place to live in the capital city. In the interim, Ewald still had duty to be performed with the regiment.

The regiment's annual live fire training was conducted at *Truppenübungsplatz Döberitz*. Between 18 July and 9 August 1910, *FAR 3* and its sister regiment, *FAR 39*, endured the heat of high summer in the "*Wüste*" (desert) of the Döberitzer Heide (moor) northeast of Brandenburg a/H.¹⁶⁴ Ewald would have missed seeing his decade long compatriots in the 39th, Benary, Cordes, and Cölle. *Oberleutnant* Benary was away at the *Kriegsakademie*, *Leutnant* Cordes had replaced Ewald at the *MRI* and was in Hannover, and Cölle had transferred out of the regiment.¹⁶⁵ It may have been at this time that Ewald first experienced medical complications due to the concussion he sustained while at the *MRI*. The loud, sharp reports of artillery fire possibly caused or exacerbated ear and hearing problems. Concern for Ewald's hearing would grow over the next year and a half.

There was one more major event for Ewald before he departed the regiment for the *Kriegsakademie* at the end of September. While *III. Armeekorps* and its subordinate unit, *FAR 3*,

¹⁶⁴ Kriegsministerium, *Armee-Verordnungsblatt*, Nr 6, 29 March 1910 (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1910), 88. Hereafter, "Kriegsministerium, *AVB 1910*, page." This order published the annual live fire training schedule for all of the army's field artillery brigades and regiments. As usual, 6. *Feldartillerie-Brigade*'s two regiments, *FAR 3* and *FAR 39*, were paired and sent to training together. In 1910, the brigade was sent to the *Gardekörps* training area at Döberitz rather than their own corps' training area of Jüterbog.

¹⁶⁵ *Rangliste 1910*, 426. Benary had been promoted to *Oberleutnant* on the same list as von Kleist. In the summer of 1910, he was completing his second year at the *Kriegsakademie*. Cordes, while commissioned on the same date as Benary and von Kleist had, due to the fact that he had not had held an *Abitur* when he was commissioned and had not had is commission pre-dated, was still a *Leutnant* in the summer of 1910.

were not participants in the 1910 *Kaisermanöver*, *FAR 3's reitende Abteilung* had been ordered to participate in the secondary cavalry division maneuvers held in conjunction with the main force-on-force maneuvers. The *reitende Abteilung* was attached to *Kavallerie-Division D* as its artillery support.¹⁶⁶ Cavalry Division D conducted its mounted exercise at *Truppenübungsplatz Döberitz* for a week in early September as the opposing force for the *Garde Kavallerie-Division*.¹⁶⁷ Major Greßmann led the *reitende Abteilung* as its commander while *Hauptleute* Schönberg and Winkler served as the battery commanders for the 1st and 2nd batteries, respectively. Ewald, assigned to 1st Battery, would have been able to closely observe *Hauptmann* Schönberg's leadership. Potentially it is here that von Kleist, with his self-confidence supported by his significant experience of the *MRI* and his nomination to attend *Kriegsakademie*, tangled with Schönberg. Ewald recalled, "Looking back, it started with my relationship to Schönberg that I began to be self-confident about my abilities and knowledge as well as developing a feeling of superiority that I believed I had. I was certainly not a pleasant subordinate for him."¹⁶⁸ But the finish of his time under Schönberg's command was in sight, by the end of the month Ewald would be in Berlin at the *Kriegsakademie*.

¹⁶⁶ Kriegsministerium, *AVB 1910*, 30-33. *Kavallerie-Division D* comprised 6. *Kavallerie-Brigade* (the 6. *Division's* cavalry brigade and sister brigade to 6. *Feldartillerie-Brigade*, *FAR 3's* parent brigade) and the 3. *Garde Kavallerie-Brigade*. 6. *Kavallerie-Brigade's* two subordinate cavalry regiments were: *Kürassier-Regiment Kaiser Nikolaus I. von Rußland (Brandenburgisches) Nr. 6* (Brandenburg a/H) and *Husaren-Regiment von Zieten (Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3* (Rathenow).

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 30-33. No specific dates were given for the secondary cavalry division maneuvers. The likely time frame was the week prior to the main *Kaisermanöver* which was held on 8, 9, and 10 September 1910.

¹⁶⁸ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 53. Von Kleist described Schönberg as "not the best" and it is likely that he and Schönberg's relationship was somewhat turbulent. While von Kleist does not illuminate the circumstances that led to his gaining self-confidence, it is likely that he had earlier disagreements with Schönberg on how to ride his mounts during races back in 1907. But, at that time, von Kleist was not a subordinate of Schönberg when he was Major Greßmann's *Abteilung Adjutant*. For the year between *MRI* and *Kriegsakademie*, von Kleist was a direct subordinate of *Hauptmann* Schönberg. This correlates with von Kleist stating that he was not a "pleasant subordinate for him [Schönberg]."

But there were a few more important things for Ewald to attend to. On Tuesday, 13 September, Ewald and Gisela visited the city registrar's office in Hannover and completed their marriage application.¹⁶⁹ The banns were publicly posted the next day in both Hannover and Brandenburg a/H and remained posted until the 29th of the month. The *Hannover Anzeiger* newspaper carried the notice of the planned marriage on 21 September 1910.¹⁷⁰

Ewald and Walter Boehm were undoubtedly feted by their *FAR 3* fellow officers of as they prepared to head to Berlin and begin their three-year absence from their regiment.

The two years Ewald had spent at the *Militär-Reit-Institut* had been important years for his career. His strong performance had confirmed that the regiment's decision to send him. While at the school, von Kleist had gained significant knowledge in hippology as well as brining his equitation skills to the highest levels. In doing so he had thus joined the top echelon of army horsemen and established his reputation at what today we would call the tactical/technical level. He was a "Top Gun" of his day. His only significant shortcoming was his ability to be a prize-winning competitor in the various equestrian contests. Likely, the largest single factor in this was not lack of riding skill on Ewald's part but the lack of owning top-quality horseflesh with which to compete. At his point in his career, his army salary was insufficient to purchase the quality of horses needed to put him in the winner's circle or on the eventing podium. As he left the *MRI*,

¹⁶⁹ Standesamt I Hannover, "Anlagen zu der Heirats-Urkunde No. 1846." STA 4858/1546/1910. StadtA HA. This file contains the original marriage application completed on 13 September 1910 by Ewald and Gisela. A second page bears the stamp and signature of the magistrate in Brandenburg a/H that the banns were publicly posted in that city as well. The form states that the *Aufgebot* (banns) must be publicly displayed for a minimum of fourteen full calendar days, from midnight to midnight.

¹⁷⁰ "Standesamt." *Hannoversche Anzeiger*, Nr. 221, 21 September 1910, 13. The notification from the *Standesamt* read, "Oberleutnant E. v. Kleist zu Brandenburg und G. Wachtel, Tiergartenstr. 3."

Ewald likely thought that this would change once he married and had access to the large financial reservoir which Gisela brought to their marriage. Those funds could support the purchase of significantly higher quality horseflesh.

Also, while at the *MRI*, Ewald had significantly enlarged his professional network. He was classmate to future Olympic competitors, prize-winning horse owners, as well as top notch cavalry and artillery officers who would make their professional marks in two future wars. More importantly von Kleist established an acquaintanceship with Crown Prince Wilhelm as well as relationships with current and future army senior leaders and commanders. The key military relationship which Ewald established during this period was with his von Kleist “cousin”, *General der Kavallerie* Georg von Kleist. This relationship would bear fruit within a few years and positively effect Ewald’s future in the army. In all of this, Ewald continued to develop his professional competence, his self-confidence, and leadership capabilities while still retaining a “very pleasant comportment” and modest ego. But Ewald was leaving this somewhat idyllic hands-on tactical phase of his career and entering a new phase of his career and life; *Kriegsakademie* and marriage. Both would have a significant impact on the young *Oberleutnant*’s future.

CHAPTER 6 - THE OBERLEUTNANT—AT THE KRIEGSAKADEMIE 1910-1914

'Tis education forms the common mind; Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.

— Alexander Pope

After having diligently prepared for the competitive *Kriegsakademie* (war academy, i.e., war college) *Aufnahmeprüfung* (qualifying examination), Ewald testing performance and his previous officership record earned him a position in the Class of 1913. Three years of challenging academic work followed. Finishing the course at the *Kriegsakademie* in July 1913, Ewald's and his academic cohort were the last class to officially graduate before the outbreak of World War I. On 1 October 1910, Ewald began the three-year General Staff officer preparation course of studies. Ewald was in a coveted position. Successful completion of the course and appointment as a member of the *Generalstab des Armees* (Army General Staff) which in turn meant accelerated promotions, high quality operational assignments, and a higher probability of reaching the rarified ranks of general officer before the end of one's career. For the best of the best, the road would lead to the highest command and leadership positions in the German Army.

Despite the importance of the *Kriegsakademie* no comprehensive study of the institution has been undertaken since prior World War II.¹ This chapter uses von Kleist's attendance at the

¹ Bernhard Schwerfeger's *Die großen Erzieher des Deutschen Heeres: Aus der Geschichte der Kriegsakademie* (Potsdam: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion b. H., 1936) is the last academic investigation of the *Kriegsakademie*. For studies on the history of the German *Generalstab* 1870-1945, which are accessible to English speakers, one needs to look back to 1977 and 1950 for the two most recent investigations of that organization; both of which lack critical analysis and fall into the historiography of "the myth of the clean *Wehrmacht*." Trevor N.

German Army's premier school, the *Kriegsakademie*, to investigate how this schools influenced and effected Ewald's maturation as an officer and prepared him for future service in the army.

Too, this chapter inspects and assesses von Kleist's activities as officer-student once enrolled and assists in answering the questions of what did the war college teach and what were the educational methods employed to transfer knowledge from the faculty to the officer-students.

By answering these questions one can in turn assess Ewald's academic performance as well as the effects the course had on his development as an officer. Finally, the identification and analysis of the relationships which were influential to Ewald's life and career will continue to be made.

While every episode of von Kleist's army career influenced his future, some periods shaped and guided his future path more keenly than others. Ewald's successful attendance at the *Kriegsakademie* is one of those highly critical events which continued to upwardly propel his career. As an officer-student at the *Kriegsakademie* in the period 1910-1914, Ewald proved himself a high potential officer.

Dupuy, *A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1870-1945* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1977) and Walter Goerlitz, *History of the German General Staff, 1657-1945*, trans. Brian Battershaw (New York: Praeger, 1953), a partial translation of Walter Görnitz, *Der deutsche Generalstab. Geschichte und Gestalt, 1657-1945* (Frankfurt/M: Verlag der Frankfurter Hefte, 1950).

I. An Interesting Start at the *Kriegsakademie*

At the time Ewald von Kleist entered the *Kriegsakademie* on 1 October 1910, the school was a fortnight shy of its one hundredth anniversary. The opening paragraph of a feature article in the *Militär-Wochenblatt* announced the approaching milestone.

On October 15, 1910, one hundred years will have passed since the *Kriegsakademie* opened its doors to give young officers the opportunity to further their education in general scientific as well as in military matters and thus to increase their capability in their military profession. Even though the facilities of the *Kriegsakademie* have naturally been subject to multiple changes during this century as required by the demands of the time, this highest military educational institution is still based today in its organization and in all its essential points on the same proven foundations on which it was built by König Frederick William III according to the proposals of the great reorganizer of the army, Generalmajor von Scharnhorst, in 1810. The flowering of the army, the majority of the men who trained our army into a useful tool of war and those who led it to battle and victory in the glorious wars, passed through the *Kriegsakademie*. In its lecture halls were laid the foundations for training for the higher command positions.²

The predecessors of the *Kriegsakademie* and the beginnings of staff officer education in the Prussia Army dated back to 1765 and the establishment of the *Académie des Nobles*.³ Friedrich II (the Great) saw the need to educate the officers who advised him and his subordinate generals on military matters. The limited nature of staff officer duties and minimal wartime requirements in the Prussian Army for the next nearly forty years as well as disinterest by König Friedrich Wilhelm II spurred little educational development despite the formation of this school. By 1800, however, Napoleonic era warfare demonstrated that war had become increasingly

² Kurt Freiherr von Manteuffel, "Zur Jahrhundertfeier der *Kriegsakademie*." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 95 (1910), 813-820. The article ran in the 19 March 1910 edition, in anticipation of the upcoming centennial celebration. *Generalleutnant* Kurt Freiherr von Manteuffel (* 4 January 1853; † 26 February 1922) was appointed the Director of the *Kriegsakademie* on 7 July 1909, and served in that capacity until he retired at the end of March 1913. He had been promoted to brevet *General der Infanterie* on 7 April 1911. He was recalled at the beginning of World War I and served as Deputy Chief of the Greater General Staff until 29 December 1914, at which time he was made acting commander of *XIV. Armeekorps* Headquarters in Karlsruhe and served there until August 1916. His two sons were army officers and both were killed in action during World War I.

³ Clemente, *King*, 172.

complex. Staffs showed themselves as an essential requirement as they handled both everyday staff duties and assisted commanding generals during battle. The need for well-trained officers to serve on these staffs became apparent in the Prussian Army as well. Also seen was the need for reform of the Prussian Army.

By 1804, under the leadership of then *Oberstleutnant* Gerhard Scharnhorst, the *Akademie für junge Offiziere der Infanterie und Kavallerie* (the Academy for Young Officers of Infantry and Cavalry) opened.⁴ Scharnhorst's goal for the school was to provide a broad education to officers who were enroute to the newly formed General Staff as well as troop officers. A critical need had arisen in Scharnhorst's eyes; that of providing highly skilled officers as advisors to the less than competent commanders.⁵ The defeat of Prussia by Napoleon at the battles of Jena/Auerstadt in 1806, again reinforced the need for dedicated staff officers thoroughly educated in military art and science.

This imperative brought about the establishment of an institution that would endure for one hundred years when von Kleist entered in 1910. On 15 October 1810, the *Allgemeine Kriegsschule* (General War School) began classes for staff officers.⁶ The establishment of

⁴ Clemente, *King*, 172. Gerhard Johann David Scharnhorst (* 12 November 1755 in Bordenau near Hannover; † 28 June 1813 in Prag), left the Hanoverian Army in 1801 and joined the Prussian Army. As a proven military educator, Scharnhorst was placed in charge of reorganizing the obscure Officers Military Institute in Berlin into the Academy for Young Officers and recommenced staff officer training. Scharnhorst was ennobled and promoted to *Oberst* in 1804.

⁵ Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945* (Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977), 25. Dupuy requotes Scharnhorst from Reinhard Höhn's *Scharnhorsts Vermächtnis* (Scharnhorst's Legacy) (Bonn: Athenäum-Verlag, 1952), 312-313. "Normally it is not possible for an army simply to dismiss incompetent generals. The very authority which their office bestows upon generals is the first reason for this. Moreover, the generals form a clique, tenaciously supporting each other, all convinced that they are the best possible representatives of the army. But we can at least give them capable assistants. Thus, the General Staff officers are those who support incompetent generals, providing the talents that might otherwise be wanting among leaders and commanders." While Höhn's methodological flaws significantly diminish the book's credibility and value (see Peter Paret's review in *The America Historical Review*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (Apr., 1973), 459-460.), the quote is likely reliable.

⁶ Clemente, *King*, 172. There exists no recent (post-World War II) comprehensive history of or detailed academic work on the *Allgemeine Kriegsschule/Kriegsakademie* in the English language. Clemente offers a brief history of the school in the years before 1860 and then dedicates approximately twenty pages to a synoptic history of the

student selection standards occurred, and a broad-based curriculum was instituted.⁷ During the first several decades of the General War School's existence, such luminaries as Carl von Clausewitz served on the faculty.⁸ By 1823, the school was conducting a three-year long course, a course length it retained into the twentieth century.

The final victory against Napoleon and the waning of the Prussian military reform movement brought a decreased interest in and attendance at the *Allgemeine Kriegsschule* in the remaining years of the first half of the nineteenth century. But the school continued to modify and improve its curriculum and pedagogical methods. Until 1826, the instructors read their lectures to the officer-students who listen in silence and without interactive discussion.⁹ That year, at the suggestion of an instructor, *Hauptmann* von Radowitz, the “*applikatorische*

Kriegsakademie between 1860 and 1914, its curriculum, entrance requirements, and analysis of the officers who attended. The chapter suffers from overreaching generalizations, unclear periodization, and an assessment of the school and its staff officer graduates based nearly exclusively on their failure to understand and prepare for the waging of total war in 1914-1918. Despite being focused on officer education in the German Armed Forces from 1901-1940, Jörg Muth's *Command Culture: Officer Education in the U.S. Army and the German Armed Forces, 1901-1940, and the Consequences for World War II* (Denton, Texas: University of North Texas Press, 2011), contains virtually no information on the *Kriegsakademie* 1901-1914, despite how many of his German protagonist attended during this timeframe. Muth rather focuses his discussion on the post-World War I years for both the American and German staff officers' schools. He misses the point that while U.S. Army leaders of World War II, e.g., Marshall, Eisenhower, Patton, Taylor, etc., attended the Command and General Staff College and War College in the 1920s and 1930's, their German counterparts, von Kleist, von Rundstedt, von Manstein, Guderian, etc., attended the *Kriegsakademie* in the years before World War I. For a history in German of the *Kriegsakademie* during its first century see, Bernhard Schwertfeger's *Die grossen Erzieher des deutschen Heeres: Aus der Geschichte der Kriegsakademie* (Potsdam: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1936).

⁷ Ibid., 173. In the first years, officers required a minimum of five years of service and the high recommendation from their commanders to even be allowed to take the entrance test. The ten-day examination tested students' knowledge and served as the basis for selection of the most capable officers to begin the course of study. Martin van Creveld, *The Training of Officers: From Professionalism to Irrelevance* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 23. Military subjects as well as mathematics, physics, chemistry, and foreign languages were included in the school's syllabus.

⁸ Walter Görlitz, *History of the German General Staff: 1657-1945* (New York: Praeger, 1953), 60-61. Von Clausewitz eventually became the director of the school, 1818-1831.

⁹ Von Manteuffel, “Jahrhundertfeier,” 816-817. Von Manteuffel names von Radowitz as the instructor who was the proponent of the “*applikatorische Lehrmethode*” (application method of instruction). Due to the increased work for both instructor and student the proposal met with resistance but within a few years the new instructional method gained acceptance and was practiced in the applicable subjects at the school.

Lehrmethode” (application method of instruction) began to be used.¹⁰ In 1836, *Schlußarbeiten* (final papers) were introduced.¹¹ This allowed more specific oversight of the officer-students’ academic work and better assessment of their performance. In 1843, at the instigation of Höpfner, a war history instructor, the *Allgemeine Kriegsschule* introduced free discourse by the officer-students as a means of promoting and encouraging them to think for themselves in an independent manner.¹² These pedagogical gains were consolidated and advanced by an energetic and academically minded *Generalinspektor der Militärerziehungs- und Bildungswesens* (Inspector General of Military Training and Education).

Generalleutnant Eduard von Peucker, in 1854, was chosen to lead the *Generalinspektion des Militärerziehungs- und Bildungswesens* (General Inspectorate of Military Training and Education). Von Peucker directed a number of curricular reforms at the *Allgemeine Kriegsschule* during his tenure as Inspector General between 1854 and 1872.¹³ It was Peucker’s concept that the school was not only “to be identified as the top military educational institution” but to take on “almost the character of a military university in the areas of the formal

¹⁰ Charles D. Rhodes, “How Best to Instruct Officers of our Army in Tactics,” *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States Volume XLIII (1908)*, 211. Captain Rhodes, a U.S. Army officer wrote, “Von Peucker unhesitatingly condemned the dogmatic, one-sided recitation, and recommended the method of application (*applikatorische lehrmethode [sic Lehrmethode]*). This method consists, in the German War Academy, in ‘combining the employment of precise and substantial recitations, with practical application of the object of instruction in such a way that the student can discover an analogy and draw logical deductions, and accustom himself with the professor’s aid to applying what he has learned to particular cases, to circumstances in real life, thus putting his knowledge to use with facility and assurance, with a view to the performance of duties which will be entrusted to him. Education of this kind gives character that solid quality so valuable in war.’” The quote is not directly attributed to General von Peucker by Rhodes but is most likely taken from the general’s written description of the *applikatorische Lehrmethode*.

¹¹ Von Manteuffel, “Jahrhundertfeier,” 817. The *Schlußarbeiten* (final papers) was similar to what today is called a “term paper.” The officer-student, under the guidance of an instructor, selected, researched, and wrote an essay on a military topic.

¹² *Ibid.*, 817.

¹³ Clemente, *King*, 185-191, 142 and 173. General Peucker was appointed Inspector General of Military Training and Education in 1854 by Friedrich Wilhelm IV. Peucker was promoted to *General der Infanterie* on 22 November 1858. See Chapter 3 for General Peucker’s influence and impact on the education and training of officer aspirants and the modernizing of the *Kriegsschulen*.

disciplines.”¹⁴ He further anticipated that it would become, “the seat of higher military learning that would originate new ideas and spread them throughout the army.”¹⁵ These changes brought an increased prestige for the school. To herald these changes, the school was renamed the *Kriegsakademie* in 1859.¹⁶

By 1871, the contributions of trained staff officers to the victories over Denmark (1864), Austria (1866) and France (1870/71) had established the value of the *Kriegsakademie* within the Prussian-German Army. The capabilities of the general staff officers that aided in the victories on the battlefield were directly tied to the *Kriegsakademie*. The prestige of the *Großer Generalstab* and in particular, its chief, *Generalfeldmarschall Graf Helmuth von Moltke*, Chief of the Greater General Staff, enabled the *Großer Generalstab* to successfully bid for control of the *Kriegsakademie* in 1872.¹⁷ The Chief of the General Staff from this time on controlled the academic high ground of the academy, the curriculum. It was with this gain of control that the top graduates of the *Kriegsakademie* began receiving assignments to the *Großer Generalstab* for further staff training.

With the addition of the former kingdoms of Saxony and Württemberg, the officers belonging to those contingents brought a small increase in the number of officer-students. From

¹⁴ Detlef Bald, *Bildung und Militär: das Konzept des Reformers Eduard von Peucker* (München: Zentrum für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften der Bundeswehr, 1977), 42. Detlef quoted von Peucker's *Instruction für den Umfang und die Methode des Lehrganges auf der Königlichen Kriegs-Akademie* (Berlin: 1868). See also, Bernhard Poten, *Geschichte des Militär-Erziehungs- und Bildungswesens in Preußen* (Berlin: A. Hofmann & Comp., 1896), 272-291. See Poten for a more detailed history of General von Peucker's actions and activities with regard to the *Allgemeine Kriegsschule/Kriegsakademie* during his tenure as Inspector General of Military Training and Education.

¹⁵ Martin van Creveld, *The Training of Officers: From Professionalism to Irrelevance* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 26.

¹⁶ Clemente, *King*, 173.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 174. The retirement of *General der Infanterie* von Peucker in 1872 precipitated *Generalfeldmarschall Graf* von Moltke's bid for control. The cabinet order of 21 November 1872, did not give full control of the school to the *Großer Generalstab*. The *Generalinspektion des Militärerziehungs- und Bildungswesens* and the *Kriegsministerium* maintained some control, mainly in the area of the academy's budget. The *Großer Generalstab* controlled the personnel assigned to the school's administration and faculty.

1872 onwards, multiple *Hörsäle* (lecture halls) were established to handle this increase.¹⁸ By 1876, the school's annual intake was one hundred officers, for a total of over three hundred across the three year groups. Now under *Generalfeldmarschall Graf* von Moltke's control, the academy developed increasingly into a military technical school.¹⁹ The number of general education subject hours, mathematics in particular, were greatly reduced. These hours were replaced with more militarily focused subject matter. Also at this time, General Staff combat veterans of the German Wars of Unification began joining the staff and faculty bringing their real-world experiences into the classroom. Changes and improvements continued after von Moltke's retirement in 1888.

Generalleutnant Freiherr von Manteuffel, *Kriegsakademie* Director at the school's centennial, provided an informative description of the key developments during the two decades before Ewald entered the *Kriegsakademie*.

From 1890 to 1896, Lieutenant General von Brauchitsch succeeded Lieutenant General von Lattre as director. Under his leadership, the number of assigned officers increased from 300 to 400, due to the ever-increasing number of candidates for the qualification examination. From 1895 onwards, 133 officers were enrolled every year. A necessary consequence of this increase was the distribution of each class to three lecture sections and, related to this, the increase in the number of teachers. The ever-increasing demands that were being made on the activities of the teachers, especially those belonging to the General Staff, led to the hiring of teachers on a regular basis in the budget of the War Academy, especially at the suggestion of Lieutenant General von Villaume, who was director from 1896 until his death in 1900, and whose activities had the most beneficial consequences for the Academy. The next directors were Lieutenant General Freiherr von Rechenberg until 1902, Litzmann until 1905, and von Flatow, the son of the former director, until 1909.

In this latter period, the War Academy was granted an improvement that had long been sought, but had been postponed again and again for lack of funds, but now a favorable coincidence made its execution possible, namely the - albeit only

¹⁸ Von Manteuffel, "Jahrhundertfeier.", 818.

¹⁹ Clemente, *King*, 175-180. See Clemente's comparison of the curriculum of mid the 1820s, 1870s, 1890, and 1912.

provisional - formation of a special riding school. The possibility of improving the riding skills of the officers assigned to the academy had hitherto been very limited. In the past, a small number of officers had received riding lessons at the Royal Stables, but this privilege had later ceased. For a time, lessons were also given by a civilian stable master for a small fee. Finally, riding instruction was entrusted to a cavalry regiment of the Berlin garrison. All these attempts, however, could only be weak stopgap measures, nor did they provide the opportunity to hold field exercises with the officers, which were indispensable for their training. The situation was all the more striking and palpable because all countries that have higher military educational institutions of this type of the war academy provide them with horses in abundant numbers. Finally, in 1907, it was possible to rent stables and a riding arena in the immediate vicinity of the Academy in Dorotheenstraße and to establish a riding school there, to which horses and grooms from cavalry regiments of the army are sent.

The value of this facility, which, however, only meets the "lowest" requirements in view of the small number of horses, cannot be estimated highly enough for the efficiency of the War Academy. Only in this way will it be possible to train officers effectively in general staff service and to obtain a more accurate assessment of their performance than has hitherto been the case. The value of the riding school is all the more important because, as of October 1909, in order to meet the ever-increasing demand for qualifying examinations, 160 officers have been enrolled each year, so that in the future 480 officers will be assigned across the three years.²⁰

General von Manteuffel's article concluded,

It is beyond the scope of this description to go into detail about the many changes in the curriculum and the subjects taught. Nevertheless, it will have given a picture of how this, our highest military educational institution, has adapted to the growth and changes of the army in the various periods of time and how it has taken into account the changes in the general education of the nation, how it has also met the increased demands of the science of war as a result of the last campaigns, but how it still rests on the principles and pursues the same purposes for which it was founded in 1810. Thus, the War Academy will celebrate its centenary in the proud awareness of what it has achieved for the army, but at the same time in the serious endeavor to continue in the future to train the officers

²⁰ Von Manteuffel, "Jahrhundertfeier.", 819-820. *Generalleutnant* (eventually *General der Kavallerie*) Bernhard Eduard Adolf von Brauchitsch (* 12 October 1833; † 7 May 1910) served as *Kriegsakademie* Director from 20 September 1890 to 18 April 1896. He was the father of *Generalfeldmarschall* Walther Heinrich Alfred Hermann von Brauchitsch (* 4 October 1881; † 18 October 1948), *Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres* (Commander-in-Chief of the Army) from February 1938 until December 1941. Of note is the importance placed on the equitation training of the officer-students, even by General von Manteuffel, a career-long infantry officer. Even at this late date, the importance of the horse, not as a front-line shock weapon, but as an indispensable enabler for the performance of an officer's and staff officer's duties is still demonstrably dominant.

entrusted to it through independent and happy work. And for them above all to be loyal to the duty of becoming particularly useful members of their officer corps who can be used in important positions for the benefit of the army.²¹

By its centenary anniversary, the *Kriegsakademie* was well established and well respected. Through its doors lay the prospect for accelerated promotion and increased opportunities for entry into the senior ranks of the German Army. The opportunity to attend was pursued by many *Leutnants* and the competition so keen that by the time that Ewald sought admission, only one-fifth of the eight hundred applicants were selected for admission to the *Kriegsakademie*.²² The school “was able to attract the crème de la crème.”²³ Ewald had been happy to clear this high hurdle by being selected to attend this career changing school.

The one hundred and sixty-one officers of the freshman class officially commenced their assignment to the *Kriegsakademie* on 1 October, which in 1910 fell on Saturday.²⁴ They joined the returning one hundred sixty-one junior class and one hundred thirty-two senior class

²¹ Ibid., 820.

²² Van Creveld, *Training*, 27.

²³ Ibid., 27.

²⁴ Bernhard Schwertfeger, “Lehrer an der Kriegsakademie und Tätigkeit im Großen Generalstab, 1909-1914” (BA-KO: N 1015/42, Nachlass Schwertfeger). Hereafter, Schwertfeger, *Kriegsakademie*. This file contains a copy of the *Kriegsakademie*-produced, instructor-used officer-student roster for each of the three different year groups for the academic year 1910/11. The rosters included the officer’s name, rank, his parent unit, that unit’s army corps affiliation, the assigned foreign language section, and the *Hörsaal* (lecture seminar) to which the officer was assigned. The rosters were most likely compiled at the beginning of the Academic Year 1910/11. *Rangliste 1910, 1911, 1912, and 1913*. The Class of 1913 had its first fatality even before the course commenced. *Leutnant* Franz von Lieres und Wilkau of the *Garde Füsilier Regiment* died on 28 September 1910, only two days before he was to report to the *Kriegsakademie*. One *Oberleutnant*, a *Graf* Fink von Finkenstein, joined the incoming freshman class after the “Schwertfeger Rosters” were completed. The 1911, 1912, and 1913 *Rangliste* record him as being assigned to the *Kriegsakademie* as an officer-student and member of the Class of 1913. Thus, the Class of 1913 is considered to have a total of 161 German officer-students for Academic Year 1910/11. *Oberleutnant Graf* Fink von Finkenstein likely was the direct replacement for *Leutnant* von Lieres und Wilkau given that both were from the *Garde Armeekorps* and the open slot would have gone to the missing officer’s army corps. Fink von Finkenstein could have responded to a short notice assignment to the school as he lived in Potsdam and was single. Most likely, Fink von Finkenstein was the next highest applicant within the *Garde Armeekorps*.

members.²⁵ Ewald, as a member of the Class of 1913, signed in at the school and began to meet his fellow officer-students.²⁶ On Monday, 3 October, the matriculation activities for the freshman class commenced.²⁷

One hundred and seven *Oberleutnants* and fifty-four *Leutnants* comprised the incoming class.²⁸ The majority, ninety-four, were infantry officers. The next largest branch was field artillery represented by forty-four officers. Of the remaining twenty-three officers, ten were cavalrymen, six were *Pioniere* (combat engineers), five were heavy artillerymen, one was a *Train* (supply) officer, and one came from a railway regiment.²⁹ The nineteen *Garde* officers, all infantry, artillery, or combat engineer officers, showed the continued success of guard

²⁵ Ibid. The school's rosters show the junior class (Class of 1912) commencing with 161 returning German officer-students and one foreign officer-student (*Hauptmann* from the Royal Greek Army General Staff). The senior class (Class of 1911) had 132 returning officer-students and no foreign officers. These numbers confirm the increase to 160 students per class as of 1 October 1909. The additional student above 160 in the Class of 1912 is likely a member of earlier classes, who for some reason (medical leave of absence, personal leave of absence, etc.), fell back into this class. See Chapter 4, footnote 112, for an example of an officer falling back into a later class.

²⁶ For ease of identification and categorization, the author has chosen to use an American classification for the different year groups attending the *Kriegsakademie*. The term "Class of 19xx" is used to denote the year of the officer-student's planned graduation. For example, von Kleist attended the school from 1910 to 1913, and is a member of the Class of 1913. Neither the German Army nor the *Kriegsakademie* used this style of identification. Rather, the officer-students were identified by *Hörsaal* level and section during each year. In this manner, von Kleist in the academic year (AY) 1910/11 was a member of *Hörsaal* Ic, his middle year he was in *Hörsaal* IIc, and in his final year, AY 1912/13, he was a member of *Hörsaal* IIIc.

²⁷ See Appendix 8 for a roster of the Class of 1913.

²⁸ No full or comprehensive roster or set of rosters of officers who attended the *Kriegsakademie* between 1871 and 1914 appears to have survived. In a comprehensive search of BA files at the MA (Freiburg) and KO (Koblenz) that had *Kriegsakademie* information in them, the author found only one example of a multi-year officer-student rosters, in the Schwertfeger Nachlaß. The only other rosters discovered, less than half a dozen, were for single *Hörsäle*. This lack of information on who attended and when they attended significantly detracts from developing a more comprehensive and accurate picture of the *Kriegsakademie* and *Generalstab des Armee's* history during the *Kaiserreich*.

²⁹ Schwertfeger, *Kriegsakademie*. The analysis was made from the combined "Schwertfeger Rosters", the army *Rangliste 1910-1913*, and the *Militär-Wochenblatt 1910-1911*. There were: 107 (66.5 percent) *Oberleutnants* and 55 (33.5 percent) *Leutnants*. The branch representation was as follows: 94 (58.4 percent) infantry officers, 44 (27.3 percent) field artillery, 10 (6.2 percent) cavalry, six (3.7 percent) *Pioniere* (combat engineers), 5 (3.1 percent) heavy artillerymen, 1 (0.6 percent) *Train* (supply) officer, and 1 (0.6 percent) railway officer. Stoneman, "Groener," 59. For comparison, the three classes present at the *Kriegsakademie* in 1894 had the following branch participation: Infantry-63 percent, artillery-26 percent, and cavalry-10 percent. The comparison between 1894 and 1910 shows both infantry and artillery approximately the same, while cavalry representation was down by two-thirds. While Stoneman gives only raw numbers for combat engineers and railroad officers, there were certainly more of these branch officers attending in 1910 than fifteen years earlier.

regiment preparation of their officers and the over representation of this small slice of the German Army.³⁰ The nobility was slightly underrepresented as compared to the army officer corps demographics with the Class of 1913 containing forty ennobled officers.³¹ A little over one-third of the one hundred sixty-one class members were married.³²

The junior and senior classes, knowing one another as well as the school's processes and procedures moved more quickly into their classes and activities. The freshman class appeared to have accelerated more slowly to the standard pace of life as a student. Settling into and provisioning new private accommodations, seeing to stabling for personal mounts, ensuring *Bursche* (batmen) were taken care of, issuing of books and school supplies, being briefed on the special and elaborate military etiquette required in the capital, and a myriad of other small details took time. By the time the matriculation process was about over, a significant disruption occurred.

³⁰ Ibid. Of the 19 (11.8 percent) *Garde* officers, none came from the *Garde* cavalry regiments. One *Garde* officer was a field artilleryman, one was a heavy artilleryman, and one was a combat engineer. The remaining 16 *Garde* officers were infantrymen.

³¹ Ibid. The Class of 1913 had 39 (24.22 percent) noble officers, of which 3 were *Grafen*, 5 were *Freiherren*, and the remaining 31 were untitled *Adel*. The largest contingent of *Adel* officers were infantry officers, 29 (74.4 percent) followed by artillery officers, 8 (20.5 percent), and cavalry officers, 2 (5.1 percent). Of the 39 *Adel* officers, 16 (41.0 percent) were *Garde* officers. Three of the 19 *Garde* officers were not noblemen. Wilhelm Diest, "Zur Geschichte des Preußischen Offizierskorps 1888-1918," in *Das Deutsche Offizierskorps: 1860-1960*, ed. Hans Hubert Hoffmann, 39-57 (Boppard am Rhein: Harald Boldt Verlag, 1977), 49-50. Diest gave the percentage of 4,201 *Leutnants* and 2,098 *Oberleutnants* in the Germany Army in 1909 as: *Adel* = 29.94 percent and *Bourgeois* = 70.06 percent. Thus, the nobility was underrepresented by approximately 5 percent indicating, at least for the *Kriegsakademie* Class of 1913, a decline in noble influence and possible future representation on the General Staff.

³² Registratur der Kommandantur von Berlin, *Militär-Adreßbuch (Taschen-Rangliste) der Militärbehörden und Institute des Standortes Berlin, Sommer 1913* (Berlin: No publisher information, 1913). Hereafter, Berlin, *Adreßbuch 1913*. A copy held by ZMSBw. The Class of 1913 had 57 (36.3 percent) married officers. Thirty-seven (34.6 percent) of the *Oberleutnants* were married while 20 (36.4 percent) of the *Leutnants* were married. Four officers' marital status is undetermined and they were excluded from the percentage figures. Infantry officers in this class had a 17.8 percent marriage rate; cavalry officers 1.9 percent; artillery officers 12.7 percent, and *Garde* officers 2.6 percent. This address book, likely printed in May 1913 with information dating from 6 May 1913, contains a full roster of *Kriegsakademie* military leadership, instructors, and officer-students. Each officer-student's rank, date of rank, *Hörsaal*, parent unit, marital status, and home address is listed. Student-officer marital status for the Class of 1913 is derived from this document and thus includes officer marriages between entry to the school on 1 October 1910 and May 1913.

On 15 October 1910, the *Kriegsakademie* held the formal events celebrating the one hundredth anniversary of the school. The audience of academy alumni, high ranking army officers, distinguished civilians, and current faculty, staff, and officer-students listened to a number of speeches including one given by retired *Generaloberst Graf* von Schlieffen. In his brief remarks he paid homage to those who had gone before and challenged those who followed.

A book entitled "War History," lays before anyone who wants to become a general. The reading is, I must admit, not always spicy. One has to work one's way through a mass of unpalatable ingredients. But behind this one reaches the facts, often gratifying facts. ...

In former times, of course, the study of war was easier. Striving and ambitious princes took part in one or a series of campaigns in the entourage of a general and tried to prepare themselves for their profession by means of visual instruction. This might have been possible in the era of wars fought with set-piece battles on a narrow scale. Now, in the era of mass armies and long periods of peace, this method is no longer applicable. It cannot be replaced by instruction on training grounds and maneuver fields.

We must now, however, return to the past and seek the experiences of what occurred a shorter or longer time ago, experiences which the present denies us. "Experiences, however, are of no use," Frederick the Great said, "if one does not think them through," process them internally and seek to apply them, for example; construct a Leuthen from the experiences of Kolin.

Moltke proceeded according to this concept. Through the constant work of searching the past, applying it to the present and the future, he made his successes possible and established his fame. If, in this spirit, the officers who pass through the *Kriegsakademie* emulate this great man, the army will never lack commanders and field guides. ... Three cheers for the *Kriegsakademie*!³³

In addition to the speeches by several dignitaries during the formal portion of the celebration, the day's festivities contained three other sections.³⁴ The musical portion presented

³³ Alfred Graf von Schlieffen, "Rede des Generaloberst Graf Schlieffen auf die *Kriegsakademie* am 15 Oktober 1910." (BA-MA: N 15/3, Nachlaß Scheibel). *Generaloberst Graf* von Schlieffen's speech ran to just over nine hundred words and would have taken a short four to five minutes to present.

³⁴ *Kriegsakademie*, "Programm für die Hundertjahrfeier der *Kriegsakademie* am 15 Oktober 1910." (BA-MA: N 38/34, Nachlaß Lequis).

ten works including pieces by Bach, Schubert, Wagner, and Mendelsohn. It concluded with the rousing “Finnländischer Reitermarsch.” The third section was a series of comedic skits performed by officer-students. *Leutnants* played roles such as “Clementine,” “Edith, the niece,” “Mädchen Minna,” and “Leutnant Kramer: in “Cupid’s Tactic.” “Marie” and “six lady dancers” entertained the audience in “Dreams and Awakening”, while others presented a puppet show entitled “The Devil and his Grandmother.” The comedic finale was the performance by seventeen *Oberleutnants* as “The Tyrolean Ladies Band.”³⁵ The final event was a formal six course meal for two hundred and one of the selected event attendees.³⁶

The anniversary event celebrated not only the centennial of the *Kriegsakademie*, but a century of rising Prussian/German Army dominance on the fields of battle. The officers educated at the *Kriegsakademie* had played significant roles in those victories. But so too had kings Friedrich Wilhelm III and Wilhelm I and statesmen like Karl August von Hardenberg and Otto von Bismarck. Little could those who attended the event have fathomed that the *Kriegsakademie* had reached its zenith and that within a decade its doors would be shuttered by Germany’s victorious enemies. Little did Ewald’s class know that it would be the last cohort to graduate in peacetime from the illustrious school.

³⁵ Ibid. There were seven different comedic acts in the light-hearted portion of the program.

³⁶ Ibid. The program contained the dinner seating chart. Notable attendees included: *Generaloberst Graf* von Schieffen, *Generaloberst* von Plessen, *General der Infanterie* von Hindenburg, *General der Kavallerie* von Kleist, *Oberst* von Freytag-Loringhoven, *Oberst* Balck, *Oberstleutnant* Ludendorff, *Major* von Loßberg, *Major* Schwertfeger, and fifty-one *Oberleutnants* from the school. Ewald von Kleist was not listed on the seating chart.

II. *Oberleutnant and Frau von Kleist*

But with certainty, Ewald had other thoughts on his mind during the centennial celebration. His wedding was a mere three days away. Perhaps Ewald and some of his classmates celebrated the impending wedding with a *Junggesellenabschied*, “bachelor’s farewell” party before Ewald trained west to Hannover. Once in Hannover, he attended to a few last-minute details and began welcoming family and friends as they arrived.

The wedding occurred on Tuesday, 18 October. The first stop was at the city registrar’s office for the civil ceremony. Here, Ewald and Gisela filled out the civil marriage form. Ewald’s father, Hugo, and Gisela’s great-uncle, William Spiehr, a governmental construction engineer in Braunschweig, served as the signatory witnesses.³⁷ The marriage party proceeded to the church for the all-important religious ceremony. Ewald recalled,

We were married in the Gartenkirche [St. Marien], where I was baptized and where Gisela was baptized and confirmed. The very sumptuous wedding dinner was in the wonderfully floral decorated hall of the Karstens Hotel. Our little [Gisela’s] mother had ensured everything was the best for us.

I was very uncomfortable in my high uniform boots, they were too short, and I was only relieved during the festivities when mother’s maid, Anna, who later became a maid in our house, brought me other shoes and long trousers. One got married in high boots, tunic, bandolier, sash, and helmet with black horse hair plume of the mounted artillery.

There were hardly any relatives present from my side; I have only a few remaining. Except for my parents and sister, really only one came from Jelle—our grandmother Oßmann’s sister. From Gisela’s side, which is richly blessed with relatives, many attended. Grandmother Röber (nee Spiehr), with her Mienchen (Minna Schierdig), Ivan Mackensen with Aunt Hedwig, their daughters Gertrud and Erika, Voglers from Halberstadt and many more were there.

³⁷ Standesamt I Hannover, Heiratsbuch, Jahrgang 1910, Band 7, Nr. 1846. Marriage Registration. Dated 18 October 1910. StadtA HA. William Spiehr, *Regierungs- und Baurat*, from Braunschweig, was Gisela’s maternal grandmother’s brother. It can be inferred that he was the closest male relative to Gisela who attended the wedding and thus had the duty/honor to serve as her witness. His age was recorded as sixty-six.

Attending from my regiment were my esteemed first battery commander and later battalion commander, Greßmann, along with Kaempfes, Boehms, etc.³⁸

After dinner, the newlyweds took the train to Bremen and spent their wedding night in the luxurious Hillmann Hotel. On Wednesday, Ewald and Gisela continued on their modest honeymoon, which Ewald recalled was short “because the *Kriegsakademie* had already started.”³⁹ The first stop was Brussels to visit the world’s fair, *Exposition Universelle et Internationale de Bruxelles* (the Brussels International 1910). From Belgium the pair travelled to Düsseldorf to visit Gisela’s relatives, the Mackensen von Astfelds. At the time, “uncle” Ivan was a *Major* and commander of the *Westfälisches Ulanen-Regiment Nr. 5*.⁴⁰ Here was another

³⁸ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 55-57. Amelia Anna Röber (nee Spiehr), was Gisela’s maternal grandmother. “Ernst Vogler,” (Ernst Vogler, Wikipedia, February 8, 2019), https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Vogler (August 5, 2021). The “Voglers from Halberstadt” were likely Ernst Vogler (*1876; †1954) and his wife. Ernst was a banker, like his father, also Ernst, before him. After his education and gaining some business experience, he joined his father’s bank, Bankhaus Ernst Vogler, in Halberstadt in 1905. He would go on to serve as a reserve cavalry officer with *Dragoner Regiment Nr. 16* during WWI. He would rise to the rank of *Rittmeister* and earn the *Eisernen Kreuz II Klasse*.

³⁹ Ibid., 56. Of note is that von Kleist was allowed to take leave of a week’s duration only two weeks after the commencement of his *Kriegsakademie* course. This likely indicated that the full academic schedule had not yet begun or the lessons were sufficiently light so as to enable von Kleist to easily make up the missed coursework. Regardless of the situation, authorizing leave even to allow an officer to marry, during a formal course indicated the somewhat relaxed attitude and procedures at the *Kriegsakademie* in this era. Von Kleist left no indication as to why the wedding was not held earlier when it would not have taken him away from his duties at the *Kriegsakademie*.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 56-57. The exact relationship between Gisela and the Mackensen von Astfelds is unclear. But Frau Hedwig Mackensen von Astfeld’s mother was Charlotte Spiehr and thus related in some way to Gisela von Kleist’s maternal grandmother. Von Kleist wrote, “Uncle Ivan, until then a long-time white dragoon from Darmstadt (No. 23) [sic 24], had recently become commander of the 5th Ulanen, who probably at the time needed a strict commander. Ivan’s nicknamed in the army was “the Terrible.” Complaints against him soon arose; if perhaps or even probably in principle he was right, he also determined. As is so often in life, [he was] to shout hurrah on the wrong foot and was retired as a [lieutenant] colonel. He moved to his scenically beautiful estate Wendorf near Crivitz in Mecklenburg, which he had bought earlier from his wife’s saved income. It was beautiful, but unfortunately it was also too grand an undertaking. Since the soil was not good in many cases and the forest, one section remained as primeval forest, did not yield much, the property required subsidization. Unfortunately, Aunt Hedwig sold it later, around 1924, when her other income became scarce.” (* 16 January 1861 at Astfeld; † 14 January 1944 at Radebeul near Dresden) joined 2. *Hannoversches Dragoner-Regiment Nr. 16* in the early 1880s. He attended the *Militär-Reit-Institut* and by 1904 was a major and squadron commander in the *Leib-Dräger-Regiment (2. Großherzoglich Hessisches) Nr. 24* (Darmstadt). He married Hedwig Wittekop (* 4 January 1866 at Braunschweig; † 19 February 1946 at Testorf) on 15 August 1890 and with her had three children. The couple divorced on 9 January 1923. Ivan Mackensen commanded the *Westfälisches Ulanen-Regiment Nr. 5* (Düsseldorf) from 17 May 1910 until 19 May 1911 and was retired as an *Oberleutnant*. He was recalled during World War I and served as Chairman of the German-Ukrainian Captured Material Distribution Commission in South Ukraine. He survived the war and retired as an *Oberst*.

connection into the cavalry branch for Ewald. After a short stay, Ewald and Gisela trained to Berlin. During their honeymoon, Gisela's mother had seen to the installation of the furniture which had been "made with much care by Rehbacks in Hanover earlier."⁴¹ She festively welcomed the newlyweds to their new home.

In Berlin, the couple "rented a very nice apartment at Xantenerstrasse 20/II" in the affluent Wilmersdorf neighborhood in the southwestern part of the city. They were the first tenants of the spacious second floor apartment.⁴² Xantenerstrasse lay a single block south of the famous Kurfürstendamm and in sight of Olivaerplatz in what could be called a "high-rent" district. The location, however, required Ewald to spend thirty minutes commuting one way to and from the *Kriegsakademie* on Dorotheenstraße in the shadow of the Brandenburger Tor (gate) in central Berlin.⁴³ On the other hand, he was only a fifteen-minute walk from one of the well-known Tattersall stables and its riding arena located on the Kurfürstendamm near Uhlandstrasse. Here Ewald kept as many as four horses. The riding arena "played an important role" for Ewald during his time in Berlin.⁴⁴ From the Uhlandstrasse Tattersalls, Ewald and Gisela were only a few minutes ride on a shaded bridlepath, in the middle of the Kurfürstendamm, from the greenspace bridlepaths of the Zoologischer Garten, its adjacent Tiergarten, and the Grunewald to the west.

The move to Berlin was a significant demarcation in Ewald's personal life and professional career. Personally, he entered into married life with its attendant responsibilities

⁴¹ Ibid., 58.

⁴² Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 57-58. The building was completely destroyed during the Berlin bombings of World War II and not rebuilt into its original style or configuration.

⁴³ Ibid., 57. The distance between the von Kleist apartment on Xantenerstrasse and the *Kriegsakademie* located at Dorotheenstrasse 58-59 (one block north east of the Brandenburger Tor in the heart of Berlin, was just over three miles (six kilometers). The commute on horseback or via public transportation was comparable at approximately thirty minutes, not including the time it would have taken Ewald to walk to Tattersalls to get his horse.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 57.

and requirements. In Gisela he would find a loving, capable, and strongly supportive wife. Professionally, he commenced the most important peacetime assignment of his career as he entered the *Kriegsakademie*. The education he received and the professional connections he established changed the course of his career in both the short and long term. Additionally, and of significance in both his personal and professional lives, he gained access to significant wealth. Personally, this enabled him to leave behind him the lean years of his first decade in the army and then embrace and realize an upper-class and an idealized aristocratic lifestyle in which he was far less restricted with regard to horses, hunting, travel, accommodations, and material possessions. Professionally, the wealth Gisela brought to the marriage made possible new opportunities within the army, enabled new levels of military networks, and freed Ewald from the weight that constant and strict frugality placed on the shoulders of married officers.

On Monday morning, 24 October 1910, as Gisela and her mother looked forward to a day of work in further setting up the apartment, Ewald turned his focus to his studies in the Dorotheenstraße.

III. Life as an Officer-Student

The Class of 1913 was divided into three *Hörsäle* Ia, Ib, and Ic. The seminar was the primary group in which the officer-student remained for all three years. Each *Hörsaal* had a roughly one-third of the officers from each of the different branches. The primary determining factor for *Hörsaal* placement was the student-officer's elective subject. In 1910, there were five electives from which an officer could choose: mathematics, or one of four foreign languages:

English, French, Japanese, and Russian. Once selected, the officer studied this elective for the entire three years.⁴⁵ *Hörsaal Ia* was the most diverse as far as electives were concerned as its fifty-three members studied three languages. Thirty-six elected French, thirteen selected Russian, and four chose Japanese.⁴⁶ *Hörsaal Ib* was the advanced French seminar with all fifty-four student-officers divided into three sections of French.⁴⁷

Ewald was assigned to *Hörsaal Ic*. This was the mathematics and English seminar. Eight student-officers elected to improve their mathematics skills while forty-five chose to study English. Ewald selected English and was placed in English section 2.⁴⁸

The *Hörsaal* was the central unit of the officer-student's academic world. With the exception of the elective courses, and some all-class special lectures, all of the specific courses were taught at the individual *Hörsaal* level. It is also likely that the *Hörsaal* was assigned its own "home room" and that instructors came to the *Hörsaal* rather than the fifty plus officer-students moving from room to room throughout the day's academic schedule. This home room thus allowed the officer-students to keep their book and academic supplies in that room as well as store their personal items (coats, sabers, etc.) in the nearby cloakroom.⁴⁹ Further supporting

⁴⁵ Officers who elected to study mathematics were required to only take the subject for their first two years. They had no elective requirements in their third and final year.

⁴⁶ Schwertfeger, *Kriegsakademie*. The student-officers were apparently divided by linguistic ability. French had sections 1 and 2 for 36 pupils, Russian had sections 1, 2, and 3 with only 13 students, while the 4 officer-students who took Japanese were in a single section. Each section was assigned to and taught by the same instructor, usually a civilian linguist.

⁴⁷ Ibid. The seminar's French sections were 3, 4, and 5.

⁴⁸ Ibid. *Hörsaal Ic*'s English sections were 1, 2, and 3, while there was only a single mathematics section of eight officer-students. Interestingly, seven of the math pupils were infantry officers and the remaining one was an artillery officer.

⁴⁹ Kriegsakademie Direktor, *Vorschrift für die Offiziere der Kriegsakademie* (Berlin: Buchdruckerei G Heinicke, 1910), 29. In the *Regulations for Officers of the Kriegsakademie*, paragraph 77 stipulated that unworn articles of clothing (e.g., overcoats, hats, etc.) and weapons were not to be taken into or left in the *Hörsaal* or the officer's mess. Likewise in paragraph 79, officers were prohibited from bringing their dogs to the academy.

this idea was the fact that the officer-students were assigned seats in their classroom.⁵⁰ The *Hörsaal* rooms were arranged in a two-table wide, seven rows deep configuration with a narrow isle separated the two tables of each row. At each table sat four officers.⁵¹ While the officer-students selected their seats there was some oversight and mingling of branches. Each four-man table had at least two branches represented. It is likely that the four-man tables served as a mini-staff during tactical planning events or functioned as a team of four for other academic group exercises. Unfortunately, Ewald's *Hörsaal* seating chart has not been discovered and thus we are denied a glimpse into his seminar room.

Given the large number of officer-students at the *Kriegsakademie* it could not be expected that there would be the same level of familiarity and comradeship as each officer experienced in his own regiment. To a larger degree, officer-students identified with their year group. The officer-student's surrogate regiment was, however, their assigned *Hörsaal*. Thus, in Ewald's case, fifty-four officers formed the basic unit of military association during the course's three years.⁵² Officer-students demonstrated this camaraderie and their closer ties by maintaining connections with their fellow *Hörsaal* members after graduation.⁵³ As within a

⁵⁰ Ibid., 28. In the *Regulations for Officers of the Kriegsakademie*, paragraph 74 stipulated that "every officer selects a seat in the seminar room and a seat in the language classroom. The senior ranking student and the senior ranking officer in the language class have until 8 October to provide the seating chart to the registrar's office. After that no change may be made to the seating arrangements."

⁵¹ "Sitzliste Hörsaal Ia, Kriegsakademie, Berlin, 1913/14" (BA-MA; Akte MSG 2/13673, Walter, Helmuth, Generalmajor.- Bildalben mit persönlichen Unterlagen.). This file contains a seating chart for seminar Ia Class of 1916 of which Helmuth Walter was a member. The seating pattern is four officers per table by seven rows deep on each side of a central isle. In Walter's seminar, all fifty-six seats were filled. Schwertfeger, *Kriegsakademie*. Schwertfeger's file includes several seating charts. All of the seating charts found follow the same format, providing the student-officer's name, rank, parent unit and seat number. In analyzing the seating charts, at no four-man table sat officers all of the same branch. Most often there were three infantry officers and either an artillery, cavalry, or engineer officer as the fourth member.

⁵² Stoneman, "Groener," 62-63. See Stoneman for a short description of comradeship at the academy during Groener's time as an officer-student.

⁵³ The BA-MA contains several files in which *Kriegsakademie* post-graduation associational materials are preserved. In each case, the association was amongst a single *Hörsaal*. No materials were found which were the Class of 19xx or included all *Hörsäle* of a single year group.

regiment, the *Hörsaal* had a number of subgroups, the officers brought closer together by previous association, commonality of branch, mutual interests, proximity of their accommodations, similar family situations, etc. For Ewald, no previous acquaintanceships with other members of *Hörsaal Ic* are readily identifiable. Ewald's fellow regimental mates, Walter Boehm and Julius Dinglinger, were, however, assigned to *Hörsaal Ib* and *Hörsaal IIa*, respectively. Additionally, Ewald had been two-year classmates at the *Militär-Reit-Institut* with fellow artillerymen, *Oberleutnant Koch (Hörsaal Ia)* and *Oberleutnant Georg von Kuchler (Hörsaal Ia)*, as well as having overlapped with *Oberleutnant Güntzel (Hörsaal Ib)* for one year in Hannover.⁵⁴ As to officers with whom Ewald possibly established friendships were fellow noble artillerymen in his *Hörsaal*, Hans Henning von der Schulenburg (*FAR 11*), *Oberleutnant von Gülich (FAR 23)*, and *Oberleutnant von Lengerke (FAR 11)*. Also, it is possible that Ewald gravitated towards the two cavalry officers in the *Hörsaal*, *Oberleutnant Pretzell (Husaren Regiment Nr. 5)* and *Oberleutnant Senftleben (Regiment Königs-Jäger zu Pferde Nr. 1)*. Additionally, von Kleist likely formed a friendship with the well-known and successful equestrian competitive rider, *Leutnant Edward Jenö von Egan-Krieger (Leib-Husaren Regiment Nr. 1)*. Their mutual interest in good horseflesh and equestrian competitions would have given much common ground for their friendship and bridged the gap between Jenö being in *Hörsaal Ia* and Ewald in *Ic*. Furthermore, the two lived a short fifteen-minute walk from each other and likely Egan-Krieger also used the stabling services and riding arena of Tattersalls on the

⁵⁴ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 82-84. Bürkner identifies von Kleist and von Kuchler, also a future *Generalfeld-marschall*, as having been in the same circle of friends while at the *Militär-Reit-Institut*. While both von Kleist and von Kuchler were artillerymen, attended the *Militär-Reit-Institut* together for two years, were members of the same year group at the *Kriegsakademie* for three years, and possibly had other official army interactions, their relationship appeared to be no deeper than acquaintanceship. Von Kleist makes no mention of von Kuchler in his writings nor does von Kuchler's name appear in the von Kleist family guestbook.

Kurfürstendamm.⁵⁵ A key element to camaraderie is the sharing of common experiences. For the officer-students at the *Kriegsakademie*, those shared experiences were primarily their academics.

Military instructors and civilian professors conducted classes Monday through Saturday. For all of the year groups, classes began no earlier than 08:00 hours and were fully concluded by 15:00 hours.⁵⁶ Each *Hörsaal* had its own schedule which varied only slightly from the others in the same year group. Ewald and the other members of *Hörsaal* Ia underwent twenty-four hours of classroom instruction and two hours of equitation class per week. For Ewald and his fellow English Section 2 classmates, the academic week ran as follows:⁵⁷

Monday:	Two hours of Tactics (09:00-11:00) with <i>Major</i> Ezettritz
Tuesday:	Two hours of Military History (09:00-11:00) with <i>Major</i> Ezettritz Two hours of English (11:00-13:00) with Prof. Dr. Krueger
Wednesday:	One hour of Geography (08:00-09:00) with Prof. Dr. Lehmann-Filkes Two hours of English (09:00-11:00) with Prof. Dr. Krueger Two hours of Arms & Ordnance (11:00-13:00) with <i>Major</i> Beckmann One hour of History (13:00-14:00) with Prof. Dr. Hoeniger One hour of Equitation (14:00-15:00)
Thursday:	One hour of Military Law (09:00-10:00) with Dr. Glasewald Two hours of Fortifications (10:00-12:00) with <i>Major</i> Tiersch
Friday:	Two hours of History (09:00-11:00) with Prof. Dr. Hoeniger

⁵⁵ Berlin, *Adreßbuch* 1913, 70 and 74.

⁵⁶ Each instructional period (“hour”) ran from fifteen minutes after the hour until the top of the hour, e.g., forty-five minutes. Multiple hour class sessions were not broken up so that officers in a two-hour block had one hundred five minutes (one hour and forty-five minutes) of instruction.

⁵⁷ See Appendix 9, *Kriegsakademie* Course Schedules.

Two hours of Tactics (11:00-13:00) with *Major* Ezettritz

Saturday: Two hours of English (09:00-11:00) with Prof. Dr. Krueger

Two hours of Military History (11:00-13:00) with *Major* Ezettritz

One hour of Military Hygiene (13:00-14:00) with Prof. Dr. Hoffmann

One hour of Equitation (14:00-15:00)

The summary: English-six hours; Tactics-four hours; Military History-four hours; History-three hours; Arms and Ordnance-two hours; Fortifications-two hour; Equitation-two hours; Geography-one hour; Military Law-one hour; and Military Hygiene-one hour. *Major* Ezettritz spent the largest amount of instructional time with the seminar each week at eight hours.

Military instructors, *Majors* Ezettritz and Tirsch were from the *Großen Generalstab* while *Major* Beckmann, an artillery officer, was seconded from the *Militärtechnische Akademie*. The military hygiene instructor was a military doctor, *Stabsarzt (Hauptmann) Professor Doktor* Hoffmann from the *Kaiser Wilhelms-Akademie*. The military law instructor was a civilian in the military administration service, *Ober-Kriegsgerichtsrat* (lieutenant colonel judge advocate general) *Doktor* Glasewald (also a *Hauptmann des Landwehr*). *Professor Dr.* Robert Hoeniger earned his Ph.D from Georg-August-Universität Göttingen in 1888 and in that same year came to teach at the *Kriegsakademie*.⁵⁸ *Professor Doktor* Gustav Krueger was an *Oberlehrer* (senior

⁵⁸ “Robert Hoeniger” Wikipedia, April 17, 2021). https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Hoeniger (August 23, 2021). Hoeniger (* 27 June 1855 in Ratibor, Oberschlesien; † 23 October 1929 in Berlin) studied philosophy (social history) at Georg-August-Universität Göttingen completing his dissertation on the Black Plague in German in 1881. In 1888, he was promoted (*promovierte*) to Doctor of Philosophy. In 1909, he published *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg und die deutsche Kultur* (The Thirty Years War and German Culture).

teacher) at the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Realgymnasium in Berlin as well as one of four civilian English instructors at the *Kriegsakademie*.⁵⁹

The two equitation instructors assigned as adjunct faculty to the *Kriegsakademie* in academic year (AY) 1910/11 were *Rittmeister* von der Lancken-Wakenitz from *Ulanen Regiment Nr. 9* (Demmin) and *Oberleutnant* von Hardt of *Husaren Regiment Nr. 11* (Crefeld). *Rittmeister* von der Lancken-Wakenitz, like Ewald, was a graduate of the *Militär-Reit-Institut (MRI)*. *Oberleutnant* von Hardt, on the other hand, had been dismissed after less than one year at the *MRI* in 1907, for his involvement with the gambling scandal.⁶⁰ Teaching future general staff officers equitation was apparently not a plum assignment for up and coming cavalry officers as these two officers' histories indicated. Given his level of proficiency, it is likely that Ewald was not required to attend the two hours of weekly equitation instruction but released to ride on his own.

The academic workload during the first and second academic years was, by all accounts, light. Ewald makes no mention in his memoirs of the subjects studied or his scholarly efforts in either his freshman or junior years.⁶¹ Reportedly instructors assigned minimal amounts of

⁵⁹ Alois Brandl and Ludwig Herrig, eds, *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* LXI Jahrgang, CXVIII. Band (Braunschweig: Druck und Verlag von George Westermann, 1907), 164. *Professor Doktor* Gustav Krueger was listed in the membership roster of the *Berliner Gesellschaft für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*, as of January 1907. His instructional affiliations are annotated in this list. No additional information was found on geography and mathematics instructor Prof. Dr. Lehmann-Filkes.

⁶⁰ Fleischhauer, "Militär-Reit-Institut," Teil IV, 162-165. *Rangliste* 1908, 374. Then *Leutnant* von Hardt had entered the *MRI* in October 1906 from the *Leib-Garde-Husaren Regiment* (Potsdam). His complicity in the gambling scandal brought his honor into question and he was transferred from the *Leib-Garde-Husaren* to the much less prestigious and poorly located 2. *Westfälisches Husaren-Regiment Nr. 11* in Crefeld in the Rhine region (now Krefeld). He entered World War I with *Husaren-Regiment Königin Wilhelmina der Niederlande (Hannoversches) Nr. 15*, as an *Oberleutnant*, survived the war, and retired as a *Rittmeister*. *Rangliste* 1913 and 1914. *Rittmeister* von der Lancken-Wakenitz retired from the army by May 1913 and records indicate that he was not recalled to military duty during World War I.

⁶¹ B. H. Liddell Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill: Germany's Generals Their Rise and Fall, With Their Own Account of Military Events, 1939-1945* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd, 1948), 202-203. Von Kleist remarked to Liddell Hart in a post-World War II interview what he had and had not learned at the *Kriegsakademie*. "Clausewitz's teachings had fallen into neglect in this generation—even at the time when I was at the War Academy and on the General Staff. His phrases were quoted, but his books were not closely studied. He was regarded as a military

homework during at least the first two years.⁶² The consensus appears that the academic pace required was easily met.⁶³ A more substantial indication of the minimal academic workload for officer-students comes in the large number of off-duty activities of the aforementioned *Leutnant* Jenö von Egan-Krieger. During his three years at the *Kriegsakademie*, von Egan-Krieger continued to avidly participate in horse racing. The highlight of his racing career came in calendar year 1912 when he won an incredible sixty-one races. But more remarkable in light of his official duty as a full-time officer-student was that he raced in a total of two hundred thirty-nine contests in what was ostensibly the second half of his second year at the *Kriegsakademie*.⁶⁴ Von Egan-Krieger's equestrian activities did not hurt his academic work or his performance during the school's staff exercises. The young officer graduated near the top of his year group and was placed on the *Großer Generalstab* in the railway section to serve his probationary staff time.⁶⁵

philosopher, rather than as a practical teacher. The writings of Schlieffen received much greater attention. They seemed more practical because they were directed to the problem of how an army inferior in strength—which was always Germany's position in relation to the whole—could overcome enemies on both sides who, in combination, were superior in strength. But Clausewitz's reflections were fundamentally sound—especially his dictum that war was a continuation of policy by other means. It implied that the political factors were more important than the military ones. The German mistake was to think that a military success would solve political problems. Indeed, under the Nazis we tended to reverse Clausewitz's dictum, and to regard peace as a continuation of war. Clausewitz, also, was prophetically right about the difficulties of conquering Russia.”

⁶² Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg, “The German General Staff, Part I: The Imperial Period,” *Military Review*, Volume XLII, Number 11 (November 1962), 19-32. Concerning the academic pace Geyr von Schweppenburg recalled, “The time schedule was rather routing during the three years of training. Whoever wanted it could have a great deal of free time. In the third year, though, intensive work was required in Berlin—work which was decisive for the student's final rating.” Geyr von Schweppenburg was Class of 1914.

⁶³ Clemente, *King*, 191. Clemente reported that Heinz Guderian, Class of 1916, “recalled a curriculum that did not make excessive demands” on his time during his single year at the *Kriegsakademie* AY 1913/14.

⁶⁴ Christ, *Armee-Jagdrennen*, 13 and 16. Von Egan-Krieger competed in flat as well as steeple-chasing races most often riding horses owned by others. In his horse racing career between 1905 and 1914, he rode in 934 races and won 220 of those contests. In the racing season of 1912, he tied with *Leutnant Freiherr* von Berchem (3. *Garde-Ulanen*) for the greatest number of wins by army officer jockeys, both winning 61 competitions. To participate in 239 races during the approximately 30 weeks-long racing season (April through October), von Egan-Krieger averaged 8 races per week. While many of these races were at Berlin area race courses, a significant number were located in other cities such as Magdeburg, Hamburg, and Mannheim.

⁶⁵ “von Egan-Krieger, Jenö” (Lexikon der Wehrmacht, no date). <https://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de/Personenregister/E/EganKriegerJenovon.htm> (August 24, 2020). Jenö Edward Jakob Ernst von

With the daily in-class average of less than four and one-half hours, even with two and one-half hours of daily preparation outside class, the officer-student's academic work day average would have totaled only seven hours. For Ewald, this left a good amount of time to spend with Gisela and his horses.

As October turned into November, Ewald and Gisela settled into their new Berlin routines. For a week in early December, Gisela's mother and brother were houseguests. The end of December brought the first academic break from school over Christmas and the New Year.

In February 1911, the annual von Kleist Family Day took place. It was here that Gisela was introduced for the first time to many in the von Kleist clan. Ewald recalled,

Gisela probably took part in our Family Day for the first time as a young wife in February 1911. And it was certainly not easy for her to show up in the midst of so many relatives who were strangers to her. Many we knew by name only. There too, our esteemed cousin, the Inspector General, took care of her in a particularly chivalrous manner. I had the impression that she also liked everything.”⁶⁶

Egan-Krieger (* 10 July 1886 at Gut Bernstein, Komitat Eisenburg in the Kingdom of Hungary, after 1921 Burgenland; † 22 February 1965 in Köln) graduated from the *Ritterakademie* (knights academy) in Brandenburg an der Havel in 1904 with his *Abitur*. He then joined the *1. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1* in 1904 and was commissioned as a *Leutnant* on 18 August 1905. A short five years later he entered the *Kriegsakademie*. During the late winter of his final year at the *Kriegsakademie* he was promoted to *Oberleutnant* (DoR: 18 February 1913). On 1 April 1914, he was assigned to the *Großen Generalstab* to begin his two-year probationary period of staff work. He was assigned to the Railway Section. At the outbreak of the war, he was assigned first as an assistant railway officer on the staff of the *2. Armee*. Shortly thereafter he was assigned as second aide-de-camp to the *Oberbefehlshaber 2. Armee*, *Generaloberst* Karl von Bülow. It is possible that von Kleist came to meet von Egan-Krieger while the younger man was a student in Brandenburg a/H. The two would have overlapped for approximately three years and given their interest in horses, could have become acquainted during this time.

⁶⁶ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft III, 15. *General der Kavallerie* von Kleist was in 1911, stationed in Berlin. Von Kleist, *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist Erster Teil Urkundenbuch Fortführung Familientagsprotokolle und Nachrichtenblätter von 1858 bis 1955*. (Hamm, Familienverband derer v. Kleist e.V., 2019), 111-113. The record of the 1911 family day meeting is not in the von Kleist family association archives. The *Familientagsprotokolle* does not have any information on the 1911 meeting. In 1910, the meeting was held at the Hotel Prinz Albrecht in Berlin. The 1912 family day was held at the Adlon Hotel, Berlin. Thus, the 1911 meeting could have been at either the Prinz Albrecht or the Adlon. General Georg von Kleist well as being the *Familienverband Vorsitzender* (family association chairman) was the clan's representative as a member of the *Preußischen Herrenhaus* (Prussian House of Lords). He was raised to that position in 1910.

The event took place in Berlin and *Generalinspekteur der Kavallerie* Georg von Kleist presided over the proceedings as the *Vorsitzender* (chairman) of the clan. Likely Ewald and the General again discussed the possibility of Ewald's transfer from the artillery to the cavalry branch during this Family Day. While Gisela seemed to have been warmly welcomed into the von Kleist clan, she had her own relatives in and around Berlin.

"Gisela also had a high ranking general as a relative in Berlin with whom we spent time during our time at the *Kriegsakademie*. General Messing had married an actual cousin of Gisela from the Mummental house in Quedlinburg. He was inspector of the railway troops, formerly also an airshipman."⁶⁷ Wilhelm Messing had on 3 April 1911, been posted to the Inspectorate of Military Air and Motor Vehicles as the chief inspector. His promotion to *Generalmajor* came on 27 January 1912.⁶⁸ In March, Ewald and Gisela made a short trip to Quedlinburg to visit one of her other cousins, Elisabeth Gruson, the sister of Louise Messing. Elisabeth's husband, Ernst, was a *Hauptmann* and company commander in the 5. *Hannoversches Infanterie Regiment Nr. 165* and stationed in Quedlinburg.⁶⁹ Before Easter 1911, Ewald, Gisela, and her mother "took a nice trip to Rome and Naples that included Capri."⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 16.

⁶⁸ *Rangliste 1911* and *1912*. "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 96 (1911): 1065. On 3 April 1911, *Oberst* Messing was appointed to the position of *Inspekteur des Militär Luft- und Kraftfahrwesens* (Inspector of Military Air and Motor Vehicles). Messing served in this position until December 1916 and thus would have been present in Berlin for most of Ewald and Gisela's time in the capital city. Wilhelm Eduard Messing (* 15. May 1857 in Georgenthal bei Ohrdruf, Herzogtum Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha, Königreich Preußen, Deutscher Bund; † 8 December 1927 in Berlin-Lichterfelde) had married Gisela's father's sister's daughter, Gisela's first cousin Louise Vogler, on 3 June 1894.

⁶⁹ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 16. Von Kleist further recalled that Gruson went on to earn the *Pour le Mérite* during World War I and that he was the regimental commander of Kurt Zeitzler, von Kleist's Chief of Staff from August 1939 until January 1942. "Gruson, Ernst" (Wikipedia, December 19, 2020) https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Gruson (June 2, 2020). Ernst Gruson would go on to rise to *Oberstleutnant* during World War I, command a *Freikorps* battalion after the war, enter the *Reichswehr*, and retire from the army in 1922, as an *Oberst*. He was promoted to *Generalmajor* on 27 August 1939 at the so-called "Day of Tannenburg."

⁷⁰ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 58. The *Kriegsakademie* took one of their academic breaks around the Easter holiday each year. Easter occurred on Sunday, 16 April 1911. The academic break was possibly from

When Ewald returned to Berlin after the Easter break, two months remained in his first academic year. As May turned to June, the focus narrowed to preparing for and passing the end of year examinations. For the freshman class this meant five tests: 1) history of war, 2), fortifications, 3) tactics, 4) arms & ordnance and, 5) their elective subject (for Ewald this was English). The instructors prepared the assignments for each area. For tactics, foreign language, and mathematics there was a single task, the other areas had three tasks each.⁷¹ The examination *Lehrordnung* (teaching regulation) directed,

All assignments must be constructed in such a way that there is no direct use of previous exercise notebooks. The greater the latitude left for the exercise of judgment, the more the assignments will serve their purpose.

In the case of work to be completed under supervision, the working time shall not be excessive in duration.

The work done shall be graded for its intrinsic value. In addition to the knowledge presented, the judgment and decision-making skills displayed shall be taken into account. The form of the work, stylistic skill, clarity and sharpness of expression shall also be taken into consideration.⁷²

The examinations in history of war and fortifications were given as take-home tests, to be completed individually by the officer-student outside of class. The remaining three areas, tactics, arms and ordnance, and the foreign language test, were all supervised by the instructors.⁷³ Given

Saturday, 8 April until Monday 24 April, two full work weeks. This trip points to the relaxed pace of academics at the *Kriegsakademie* and Ewald's recently gained access to wealth and financial security.

⁷¹ Kurt Freiherr von Manteuffel, *Bestimmungen für die Lehrer der Kriegsakademie* (Berlin: Buchdruckerei G. Heinicke, 1912), 5. In the Regulations for the instructors of the *Kriegsakademie*, the Director designated the number of assignments for each examination area and directed the instructors to turn in the planned examination assignments to him for review and approval not later than 1 May 1911. The testing material was to be kept secret until it was handed out to the officer-students.

⁷² Generalstab, *Lehrordnung*, 18.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, no time requirements were direct other than the individual tests were not to be "excessive in duration." This likely meant that the total time of the test was three to five hours in tactics and arms and ordnance. It was likely only a few hours in the foreign language. As with the *Kriegsakademie* qualification examinations, the only test aids allowed were dictionaries and logarithmic tables. This restriction points to the unstated requirement that the officer

the third official academic break around *Pfingsten* (Pentecost) which was on Sunday, 4 June 1911, the tests likely occurred during the second, third, and into the early portion of the fourth week of June as the in-class academic year officially ended on Friday, 30 June 1911 for the freshman class.⁷⁴

These final examinations were graded by the individual course instructor.⁷⁵ All of the graded examinations were then forwarded to the *Studienkommission* (studies commission) whose members reviewed and validated the examinations and grades.⁷⁶ Once approved, the examinations were returned to the *Kriegsakademie* administration.

In addition to the final examination grades, the officer-students received an assessment of their year's performance.⁷⁷ Designated military instructors provided an evaluation on each officer in addition to the final course grade. The teachers of elective classes, all most all of whom were civilians, provided only a numerical grade as their assessment.

have a mind capable of remembering large amounts of detailed data and be able to recall the correct data even when under pressure.

⁷⁴ *Kriegsakademie, Vorschrift*, 1.

⁷⁵ Generalstab, *Lehrordnung*, 19. The grades mirrored those used on the *Fähnrichprüfung* and the *Kriegsschule Abgangs-Zeugnis* (departure certificate) showing a uniform consistency between the different levels of officer professional education programs. The grades used at the *Kriegsakademie* were as follows: 9 “*vorzüglich*” (excellent); 8 “*sehr gut*” (very good); 7 “*gut*” (good); 6 “*ziemlich gut*” (fairly good); 5 “*genügend*” (satisfactory); 4 “*mittelmässig*” (mediocre); 3 “*mangelhaft*” (insufficient); 2 “*fast ungenügend*” (almost unsatisfactory); and 1 “*ganz ungenügend*” (entirely unsatisfactory). Only grade 3 changed from “*nicht hinreichend*” to “*mangelhaft*,” but meant the same thing, insufficient. This grading system was used for evaluation of individual and overall performance during the officer-student's time at the academy.

⁷⁶ Clemente, *King*, 175. Clemente reported that the *Studienkommission der Kriegsakademie* (Studies Commission of the War Academy) had oversight of all academic areas of the school. It was headed by the *Kriegsakademie* Director and the committee “reviewed all teaching plans, recommended faculty appointments, annually determined the procedure and questions for the entrance exam, graded the results, and judged the annual retention and ultimate fitness for graduation of each student.” *Rangliste* 1911, 519. As of May 1911, the committee consisted of: *General der Infanterie Freiherr von Manteuffel* (President), *Generalleutnant Krause* (from the combat engineer inspectorate), *Generalmajor Stein* (*Großer Generalstab*), *Generalmajor von Hutier* (*Großer Generalstab*), *Generalmajor Freiherr von Freytag-Loringhoven* (*Großer Generalstab*), *Generalmajor von Bertram* (*Großer Generalstab*), and as recorder, *Major Krug von Nidda* (Adjutant to the *Kriegsakademie* Director). Four of the six members were ennobled. Only one of the voting members was not a member of the *Großer Generalstab* but was a combat engineer, potentially indicating the growing importance of this branch.

⁷⁷ Generalstab, *Lehrordnung*, 20.

Ewald received grades for five subjects at the end of his first academic year.⁷⁸

Tactics	7 (<i>gut</i>)
Military History	7 (<i>gut</i>)
Arms and Ordnance	7 (<i>gut</i>)
Fortifications	7 (<i>gut</i>)
English	6 (<i>ziemlich gut</i>)

While no numeric grade appears on von Kleist records, only the descriptive word, his grade point average for his first year was six point eight (out of a possible nine point zero) or just below “gut.” It appeared that his grades were average to slightly above average and that there was room for improvement. With the first year’s coursework completed, Ewald anticipated a summer in the saddle.

One of the training elements during an officer’s three years at the *Kriegsakademie* were the summer assignments to a different branch of the army. During each of the first two summer periods the freshman and junior classes were dispersed among various regiments for six to ten weeks of familiarization training outside their own branch.⁷⁹ After the first year, artillery

⁷⁸ Kriegsakademie, “Abgangs-Zeugnis” (BA-MA: N 354/10, Document 3, Nachlass Kleist). Kriegsakademie, “Abgangs-Zeugnis” (BA-MA: N 739/28, Document 5, Nachlass Groppe). While the grades for each course were reported at the end of the academic year, the *Abgangs-Zeugnis* (departure certificate) only annotated the courses which had active-duty military officer instructors. The courses taught by civilians or specialist officers, e.g., doctors, judge advocate generals, were only annotated as having been taken. Kriegsakademie, “Abgangs-Zeugnis” (BA-MA: N 221/1, Document 3, Nachlass Geyer). Two other *Kriegsakademie Abgangs-Zeugnis* were located in the files of the BA-MA. Theodor Groppe was a classmate of von Kleist and a member of *Hörsaal Ib*. For his AY 1910/11 freshman year grades he received: Tactics-6 (*ziemlich gut*); Military History-7 (*gut*); Arms and Ordnance-6 (*ziemlich gut*); Fortifications-7 (*gut*); and French-7 (*gut*). Groppe did not do as well as von Kleist in the key area of tactics nor in arms and ordnance. Hermann Geyer, a year ahead of von Kleist and Groppe, in the Class of 1912, for his freshman year in AY 1909/10 earned: Tactics-8 (*sehr gut*); Military History-8 (*sehr gut*); Arms and Ordnance-8 (*sehr gut*); Fortifications-6 (*ziemlich gut*); and English-9 (*vorzüglich*). Geyer’s grades were a bit better than von Kleist. Geyer was called to the *Großen Generalstab* in 1913, while neither von Kleist nor Groppe were called to the *Großen Generalstab*. All three, however, survived World War I, were made *Generalstaboffiziere*, and joined the *Reichswehr*. Geyer rose to corps commander and *General der Infanterie* in the *Reichswehr*. Groppe was awarded the *Pour le mérite* in World War I, entered World War II as a *Generalmajor*, and reached the rank of *Generalleutnant* before running afoul of the *SS* and being imprisoned. Looking at the grades indicates that even the highest grade of a 9 (*vorzüglich*) was obtainable. A comparative the three years’ grades for these three officers follows.

⁷⁹ Kriegsakademie, *Vorschrift*, 1. The freshmen class ended on 30 June 1911 while the junior and senior classes ended the academic year on 31 July 1911 after having participated during July in the practical field exercises. It is undetermined when the freshmen and junior classes commenced and ended their summer practical exchange

officers were normally sent to infantry regiments.⁸⁰ Possibly because Ewald was being considered for branch transfer from the field artillery to the cavalry at this time, he was assigned to summer duty with a cavalry regiment rather than an infantry regiment.

Ewald's joined the 2. *Hannoverisches Dragoner-Regiment Nr. 16* likely in early to mid-July. The regiment was stationed in Lüneburg. Possibly Ewald had requested to serve with this regiment as he had familiarity with *Dragoner* in that his first equitation instructor at the *Militär-Reit-Institut* had been a dragoon officer and Ewald had been placed in one of the *Dragoner Abteilungen* with a number of dragoon officer-students. He furthermore had been asked by a *Dragoner* regimental commander to join his unit. Too, it was possible that Ewald hoped to transfer to the Lüneburg regiment. Given Ewald's social class and economic status, he fit in well with the officers of *Dragoner Nr. 16*.⁸¹ The regiment was commanded by nobleman, *Oberstleutnant* von Bodelschwingh. Of the twenty-seven officers assigned to the regiment in the summer of 1911, twenty-one were from aristocratic families.⁸² In view of the relatively short

programs in the other branch regiments. The officer-students would likely have been allowed short periods of leave either at the beginning or end of their summer assignments.

⁸⁰ Clemente, *King*, 183. The *Großen Generalstab* delineated the summer assignments for the *Kriegsakademie* students. As of 1901, in the *Dienstordnung der Kriegsakademie* (Service Orders of the War Academy), the assignments were as follows (parent branch, branch of assignment after the first year, branch of assignment after the second year): Infantry, field artillery, cavalry; Cavalry, field artillery, infantry; Artillery, infantry, cavalry; and Engineers, infantry or field artillery, cavalry.

⁸¹ Stoneman, "Groener," 60. Stoneman noted that "Authorities supported this training by sending officers to units where they fit in socially and culturally." Additionally, he recorded that they posted Groener to regiments "which enabled him to live with his mother and save money, and also put him reasonably near his fiancé." These observations appear to be correct indicating that the *Kriegsakademie*, at least to some degree, took into account the officer-student's personal situation with regard to finances, relationships, and preferences.

⁸² *Rangliste* 1911, 364. *Dragoner-Regiment Nr. 16* had three titled noblemen, one *Graf* and two *Freiherren*. Of note was that fourteen of the fifteen *Leutnants* were *Adel* ensuring that for at least the intermediate future the regiment would remain staunchly noble. It is possible that von Kleist became acquainted with *Leutnant* Christian von Pentz while serving his summer duty with the regiment. Von Pentz went on to marry Annemarie von Hindenburg, daughter of the future *Generalfeldmarschall* and *Reichspräsident*, in November 1912. If von Kleist and von Pentz met in the summer of 1911, this then would become another line of connection for Ewald to the von Hindenburg family. By summer of 1911, then *General der Infanterie* von Hindenburg was retired and living in Hannover. It is possible that it was also during this summer that Ewald and Gisela became acquainted with the von Hindenburg family, especially, the General's son, Oskar, an army *Oberleutnant* in the 3. *Garde-Regiment zu Fuß*,

distance of eighty miles between Lüneburg and Hannover, it is probable that Gisela spent at least part of the time that Ewald was with the *Dragoners* with her mother in Hannover.

Von Kleist made no comment on his summer with *Dragoner Nr. 16*, rather he recalled the extremely tense political situation between France and Germany in what became known as the Second Moroccan Crisis.⁸³ Lasting from April until November 1911, the dispute was settled between France and Germany through negotiations. News of the events occurring concerning the confrontation were the talk of the officer-students as they regathered in Berlin to start the academic year.

IV. *Kriegsakademie* -Year Two and a Cavalry Officer at Last

Familiar with the school and its procedures, the Class of 1913, now the junior class, settled in to the year's academic schedule. For Ewald and the members of *Hörsaal IIc* that meant the following course schedule:⁸⁴

Monday:	Two hours of Military History (09:00-11:00) with <i>Oberstleutnant</i> von Eisenhart-Rothe
	One hour Naval Warfare (11:00-12:00) with <i>Korv. Kapt.</i> Köhler
	Two hours of English (12:00-14:00) with Prof. Delmer
Tuesday:	Two hours of English (09:00-11:00) with Prof. Delmer

and daughter, Annemarie. Oskar was two years younger than Ewald and Annemarie was two years younger than Gisela.

⁸³ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 69.

⁸⁴ Schwertfeger, *Kriegsakademie*. See also, Appendix 9 for von Kleist's second year, AY 1911/12 course schedule.

Two hours of Transportation & Communications (11:00-13:00) with
Hauptmann Mossner

One hour of Topography & Surveying (13:00-14:00 with *Major* von
Hahnke

Wednesday: Two hours of Tactics (10:00-12:00) with *Major* von Böckmann
One hour of Fortifications (12:00-13:00) with *Major* Tiersch

Thursday: One hour of Equitation (10:00-11:00)
Two hours of History (11:00-13:00) with Dr. Rieß
One hour of Map Drawing (13:00-14:00) with *Hauptmann* Wagler
One hour of Equitation (14:00-15:00)

Friday: One hour of Constitution (09:00-10:00) with *Freiherr* von Zedlitz
Two hours of Military History (10:00-12:00) with *Oberstleutnant* von
Eisenhart-Rothe
Two hours of English (12:00-14:00) with Prof. Delmer

Saturday: One hour of Equitation (09:00-10:00)
One hour of History (10:00-11:00) with Dr. Rieß
Two hours of Tactics (11:00-13:00) with *Major* von Böckmann
One hour of Equitation (13:00-14:00)

The summary: English-six hours; Tactics- four hours; Military History-four hours;
Equitation-four hours; History-three hours; Transportation & Communications-two hours;
Fortifications-one hour; Naval Warfare-one hour; Topography & Surveying-one hour; Map
Drawing-one hour; and Constitution-one hour.⁸⁵ The academic classes totaled twenty-four hours

⁸⁵ Generalstab, *Lehrordnung*, 6-17. See *Lehrordnung* for a short description of the individual course objectives and contents for each academic year group.

per week with an additional four hours spent in the saddle in equitation class. Unlike the freshmen year when both military history and tactics were taught by one instructor, the second year had a different officer for those two courses. The elective instructor spent the most time with the officer-students each week with six hours while the two senior military instructors, *Oberstleutnant* von Eisenhart-Rothe (military history) and *Major* von Böckmann (tactics) each spent four hours with the seminar per week.

Military instructors, *Oberstleutnant* von Eisenhart-Rothe, *Majors* von Böckmann, von Hahnke, and Tirsch, and *Hauptmann* Wagler were all from the *Großer Generalstab*. *Hauptmann* Mossner was seconded from *Luftschiff Bataillon Nr. 1* and *Korvettenkapitän* Erich Köhler was an *Admiralstab der Marine* (Imperial Admiralty Staff) officer, seconded from the navy to the staff of the *Kriegsakademie*.⁸⁶ Dr. phil. Ludwig Reiß was a distinguished professor with expertise in the area of German and Japanese history and had served as an exchange professor in Japan for fifteen years before joining the *Kriegsakademie* faculty.⁸⁷ The two equitation instructors, *Rittmeister* von der Lancken-Wakenitz and *Oberleutnant* von Hardt, remained the same.

As Ewald's classes got underway, he and Gisela celebrated their first wedding anniversary as they continued to spend time together on horseback and enjoy the cultural venues Berlin had to offer. Ewald remained a participant in mounted competitions. In late October, he competed in the multiday *Concours des Reichsverbandes für deutsches Halbblut* (Concours of

⁸⁶ *Korvettenkapitän* was equivalent to the army rank of *Major*.

⁸⁷ "Reiss, Ludwig" (Wikipedia, October 22, 2020). https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwig_Riess (August 29, 2021). Reiß was a student of historian Leopold von Ranke while studying at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin where he earned his doctorate 1884. Reiß was born into a German Jewish family in 1861 and married a Japanese woman in 1888 with whom he had five children. No additional information was discovered concerning Dr. Delmar, an English instructor or *Freiherr* von Zedlitz, the civilian constitution instructor.

the Imperial Association of German Halfbloods).⁸⁸ He competed in the twenty-five-kilometer cross-country race on the 23rd. Ewald crossed the finish line in relatively good time but failed to earn a place on the podium.⁸⁹ He failed to place high enough in any of the events on the 24th to be reported in the *Militär-Wochenblatt*. On the final day of the competition, he rode well enough to place fourth in the consolation class for horses that had not earned a first or second place in any of the jumping classes.⁹⁰

Friend from *MRI* days, Felix Bürnker, overnighted with the von Kleist's on the 24/25th, the last day of the competition.⁹¹ Gisela's cousin, Gertrud Mackensen von Astfeld, Ewald's sister, Hertha, and Ewald's riding school friend, Otto von Waltersdorff visited and stayed with the couple in October and November. Gisela's mother spent the last two weeks of November with her daughter and son-in-law. The number of visitors and off-duty activities again show the relaxed pace of academics and mandatory events as a second-year officer-student.

On 1 December 1911, Ewald received his sixth officer *Qualifikations-Bericht*.

⁸⁸ *Halbblut* (literally half-bloods) are horses which are a cross between *Vollblut* (Thoroughbreds) and another breed of horse. The goal was to produce a horse which was versatile, with excellent speed, and agility but with toughness and endurance. Given their often somewhat more temperamental nature they were mostly suited to professional riders, e.g., army officers, as *Halbblut* horses made ideal army remounts and officers chargers.

⁸⁹ "Vom Wettbewerb deutscher Hallblut." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 96 (1911), 3087-3089. The competitors were primarily German Army officers.

⁹⁰ "Vom Wettbewerb deutscher Hallblut (Schluß)." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 96 (1911), 3158-3162. Von Kleist rode his Hanoverian chestnut mare, Lippspringer. He had Lippspringer, his army-supplied charger, for at least five years and had ridden her throughout his time at the *Militär-Reit-Institut*. By this time the four years had passed and von Kleist took ownership of the mare in accordance with the army regulations and had possibly selected another army-owned charger to begin the four-year process again.

⁹¹ Guest book held by the von Kleist family and examined by the author during a December 2019 visit to the family. Hereafter, "von Kleist Guestbook." The guest book was a wedding present to Ewald and Gisela from Gisela's grandmother. Its one hundred pages record visitors to the von Kleist home from October 1910 until January 1938.

Qualifications Report
to 1 December 1911
on Oblt Paul Ludwig Ewald v. Kleist
in Feldart. Rgt. General=Feldzeugmeister (1. Brandenb.) Nr. 3., assigned to
Kriegsakademie

Age	Pensionable Service Time	Combat Ready	How long in	Commission
Year Months	Years Months		Position	
30 4	11 9	Ja	1 Year 10 Months	27.1.1910 G14g

Medium height, slender, very good appearance. Physically and mentally very well dispositioned. Firm and mature character, vivacious and confident with very pleasant comportment. Demonstrated earnest pursuit of further education, good eye for tactical situations. Always fully completed tasks on time and in good order. Was an excellent battalion adjutant and is qualified for regimental adjutant. On returning from his assignment to the Military-Riding-Institute on 1.9.1909, he brought with him a very excellent report card. Already during his first year he had ridden with the second year's section and was a whipper-in. Is an exceptionally capable officer. Fills all responsibilities of his position.

Burandt
Colonel and Regimental Commander ⁹²

An analysis of this officer evaluation report sheds more light on the regimental commander than it illuminated Ewald performance and potential. Burandt, the commander, said virtually nothing new nor did he add any informative observations about von Kleist. Thus, this *Bericht* is an almost word-for-word repetition of the 1909 *Bericht*. Clearly there was not a directive that required information included in an evaluation to be after the date of the last report. Burandt again repeated information concerning von Kleist's excellent performance as *reitende Abteilung Adjutant* that dated back more than five years and that had ended by the time of Ewald's 1907 *Bericht*. The commander also regurgitated von Kleist's accomplishments, performance, and selection as a whipper-in while a student at the *Militär-Reit-Institut* in 1908 and 1909. While Ewald was away at the *Kriegsakademie* approximately half of the time covered

⁹² Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Qualifikations-Bericht 1911; (Document 11). *Italics* indicates handwritten data.

in the report, he did spend a full year back in the regiment (October 1909-September 1910). Given this period of time and that it encompassed almost a complete annual training cycle, the commander would have had plenty of time to observe von Kleist “on duty.” While possibly, it is rather unlikely that during this year that Ewald’s concentration and efforts on preparing for the *Kriegsakademie* qualification examination, his focus on his upcoming marriage, and his extracurricular equestrian activities significantly detracted from his on-duty performance to such a degree that there was nothing praiseworthy about his professional accomplishments. The lack of new information or the mention of specifically observed activities by the commander appeared to indicate that the commander either did not think much of von Kleist or that the Burandt took the minimalist approach in writing the *Bericht* knowing that Ewald was all but officially transferred to the cavalry.⁹³ To Burandt’s credit, he did not overtly undermine Ewald’s career or promotion potential by downgrading or diminishing any of the descriptions or mandatory statements. Thus, this evaluation appeared to neither have helped nor hurt Ewald in either the short or long term. It was rather a proforma placeholder in his records.

In mid-December, Ewald received an early Christmas present. He learned that his long-desired transfer to the cavalry branch had been approved. From his time at the *Militär-Reit-Institut (MRI)* and possibly even earlier, Ewald had openly made it known that he desired to

⁹³ That Burandt thought little of von Kleist is a distinct possibility. It is conceivable that Ewald had gotten off on the wrong foot with Burandt by requesting the new commander approve his request for branch transfer to the cavalry in the fall of 1909. The regiment had just sponsored von Kleist’s two-year hiatus from regimental duty with the likely expectation of payback in the form of several years leading the regiment’s equestrian training. Burandt possibly perceived a lack of dedication to the regiment, in particular, and the artillery, in general, and the commander reciprocated with a lack of enthusiasm about this officer. Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 87. Bürkner made a similar request to transfer to the cavalry of his artillery regimental commander on return from his two years at the *Militär-Reit-Institut*. His commander told him that he would first have to serve two years in the regiment as payback for the regiment sending him to Hannover. After two years, the request would be reconsidered. Two years later, Bürkner’s request was granted and he transferred to a cavalry regiment.

transfer from the field artillery to the cavalry.⁹⁴ His equestrian interests and skills and his personal temperament were of such a nature as to indicate that Ewald would be more suited as a cavalry officer than continuing as an artillery officer. While the cavalry was the most prestigious branch, von Kleist does not appear to have desired the branch transfer for this somewhat vain reason. Rather, as he later expressed, “Horses were my whole life at this time—my entire passion was horses.”⁹⁵ Joining the cavalry would be an unrequited goal until the door had been firmly closed to the possibility of a transfer. Ewald’s acted upon his intent when he had presented his request to transfer from *FAR 3* to *Dragoner-Regiment von Bredow (1. Schlesisches) Nr. 4* (Lüben) in the late summer of 1909. That transfer was denied by his artillery regiment commander, *Oberleutnant* Burandt. Despite this temporary setback, Ewald continued to seek the branch transfer. Von Kleist clearly held the same fervor for becoming a cavalry officer as his *MRI* classmate, Felix Bürkner, who wrote, “With heart and soul I was a cavalryman, in peace and war...”⁹⁶

While at the *MRI*, he had also made his desire to become a cavalry officer known to his distant “cousin,” *General der Kavallerie* Georg von Kleist, the chief cavalry officer in the German Army at the time. Ewald maintained contact with the General and saw him more often once Ewald was stationed in Berlin. Now at the *Kriegsakademie* and to a certain degree out from under the eyes of his regimental commander back in Brandenburg, Ewald renewed his efforts to transfer to the cavalry. While there appeared to be no significantly influential

⁹⁴ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 69. Von Kleist wrote concerning the timeframe of his desire to transfer to the cavalry, “This happened because of my known willingness to transfer to the cavalry from my time at the Militär Reit Institut.”

⁹⁵ Goldensohn, *Interviews*, 340. It is quite possible that von Kleist’s desire to be a cavalry officer could be traced back to the time of his regimental selection before joining the army. He may have desired to join a cavalry regiment but it was likely the financial constraints and his father’s lack of support that closed the door to the cavalry at that point in time. By seeking admission to the *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 3*, Ewald picked the next best thing to being in the cavalry, a horse-centric artillery regiment.

⁹⁶ Bürkner, *Reiterleben*, 96.

relationships between Ewald and any of the members of the eventual cavalry regiment he joined, *Husaren-Regiment Landgraf Friedrich II. von Hessen-Homburg (2. Kurhessisches) Nr. 14 (HR 14)* at Cassel, there are at least several incidental links with regimental officers. *Oberleutnant* Hermann-Gustav von Santen was one year ahead of von Kleist at the *Kriegsakademie*. It is probable that the two officers met soon after Ewald entered the school in October 1910. Also, from Ewald's second year at the *MRI*, he likely knew *Leutnant* Hellwig. Either or both officers could have made favorable recommendations to their regimental commander about Ewald and his suitability as a cavalry officer.

The critical officer on the receiving side of Ewald's branch transfer appeared to have been *Major* Hasso von Raumer. By May 1908, von Raumer an experienced *Generalstabsoffizier*, had been posted to the *Kriegsakademie* as an instructor in tactics and military history.⁹⁷ During Ewald's freshman year at the school, von Raumer instructed several of the junior class seminars.⁹⁸ It was during this year von Kleist and von Raumer came in contact with one another. The young officer-student apparently impressed the senior General Staff major. In the course of the Ewald's first year, his wish to transfer to the cavalry became known to von Raumer. In September 1911, shortly before the beginning of Ewald's second academic year, von Raumer was transferred to the staff of the *Militär-Reit-Institut*.⁹⁹ The assignment to the *MRI* was a holding pattern while von Raumer waited for *Oberst Graf* von Beroldingen, the

⁹⁷ *Rangliste* 1890, 1895, 1898, 1900, 1904, 1905, 1907, 1908, and 1909. Von Raumer was also an *Ehrenritter* of the *Johanniter-Orden* having been knighted in 1902.

⁹⁸ Schwertfeger, *Kriegsakademie*. The Academic Year course schedule for 1910/11 showed von Raumer teaching both tactics and military history to *Hörsäle* IIb and IIc.

⁹⁹ Fleischhauer, "Militär-Reit-Institut," Teil II, 157-159. Von Raumer was officially transferred to duty at the *MRI* effective 1 October 1911. The note concerning his assignment to the *MRI* clearly indicated that he was there while he awaited his assignment as a regimental commander. Possibly this time also included a refresher equitation course in order to prepare von Raumer for the rigors of regimental command in the saddle. This indicates some of the inner workings of the German Army personnel system in this era and its intermediate range planning and procedures for command assignments.

commander of *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 14*, to retire. In the autumn 1911, von Raumer likely requested that von Beroldingen either request or accept the transfer of von Kleist into *HR 14*.¹⁰⁰ With the cavalry regiment who would accept von Kleist found, the second requirement was his release from the field artillery.

The second and likely more influential support for Ewald's transfer came from *General der Kavallerie* von Kleist. A well-known and respected general officer, the General could and likely assisted in identifying a cavalry regiment that would be willing to take Ewald as a branch transfer officer and give him a place to take root as a "real horseman." While it is also likely that the General could have forced the issue of transfer with his significant influence in the upper echelons of the army, evidence indicates that he did not exert undue influence in the matter. It was however possible that the Inspector General of Cavalry was the one to discover a path to overcome the interference of Ewald's artillery regiment commander and avoid his vetoing the transfer again. That avenue came through the medical department.

While initially thought to have been unfortunate, Ewald's horse crash at the *MRI* and his subsequent concussion in February 1908, turned into a useful event. The concussion served as the needed rationale for the transfer from the field artillery to the cavalry. Thus, Ewald's transfer was not officially due to operational necessity or personal preference but rather to medical need. On 19 December 1911, Ewald was transferred out of the field artillery on medical grounds. The official transfer paperwork stated, "Justification for Transfer: he has diminished hearing in the right ear caused by a concussion. It is feared that continued duty with artillery weapons will

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 159. Major von Raumer transferred from the *MRI* and took command of *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 14* on 22 May 1912. "Personal -Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 97 (1912), 1508. Oberst von Beroldingen retired on 22 May 1912, with a full pension and permission to wear the uniform of *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 14* as a retired officer.

cause deafness.”¹⁰¹ Ewald and those assisting him with the branch transfer had found an official and legitimate loophole to justify the branch transfer. The official justification overrode any of Ewald’s artillery regimental commander’s objections and cleared the way for the transfer. And with that, Ewald found himself happily assigned to *Husaren-Regiment Landgraf Friedrich II. von Hessen-Homburg (2. Kurhessisches) Nr. 14* at Cassel. The transfer was announced in the 21 December 1911 issue of the *Militär-Wochenblatt*.¹⁰²

Ewald had worked hard to make himself a top-quality candidate and a desirable officer for the cavalry.¹⁰³ Von Kleist’s demonstrated acumen as a horseman as validated by his ranking and accomplishments at the *MRI* and his demonstrated superior officership which had earned him attendance at the *Kriegsakademie* had placed him in a strong position professionally to transfer. While he was a socially acceptable candidate as a scion of a well-known and respected *adligen Militärclan*, it was, however, his wife’s money that vaulted him over the last hurdle and made him a fiscally acceptable candidate. With Ewald’s equestrian, military, social, and financial status proven, the influence of a von Kleist “cousin” had catalyzed the transfer process

¹⁰¹ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; “Grounds for Transfer.” document; (Document 12). How diminished Ewald’s hearing was is unknown. But this is the only mention of a hearing problem that has been uncovered by this researcher.

¹⁰² “Personal-Veränderungen.” *Militär-Wochenblatt* 96 (1911), 3640.

¹⁰³ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 69. Von Kleist noted that two of his *Militär-Reit-Institut* classmates, Felix Bürkner and Otto von Waltersdorff, had both effected transfers from the field artillery to the cavalry. In Bürkner’s case, his Olympic-level equestrian acumen motivated the transfer. Due to his socio-economic status, his father was a non-ennobled medical doctor and university professor, Bürkner was transferred to one of the lowest prestige cavalry regiments, *Jäger-Regiment zu Pferde Nr. 2* (Langensalza), on 30 March 1911. Von Waltersdorff transferred into the *Braunschweigisches Husaren-Regiment Nr. 17* (Braunschweig). He was transferred conditionally on 1 April 1911, to serve a probationary year before he was unconditionally transferred on 1 April 1912, to *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 17*. While von Kleist made no mention, it is likely that von Waltersdorff married into money and thus made himself socio-economically acceptable to join what was a higher status cavalry regiment. At the time of his transfer, the regiment had twenty-six officers assigned, of which seventeen (65 percent) were noblemen. In comparison, *Jäger-Regiment zu Pferde Nr. 2* at the time of Bürkner’s transfer had twenty-eight officers of which six (21 percent) were ennobled officers. One cannot help but to suspect that part of the task of the school (*MRI*) was to find high quality artillery officers and provide them a pathway into the cavalry via the side door.

and brought Ewald's desire to become a cavalry officer to fruition. This would prove to be a career trajectory changing event.

As the winter drew on, Ewald encountered an officer who would become famous but at that time was just another colonel on the Great General Staff, *Oberst* Erich Ludendorff. During that winter, the newly minted cavalry officer and Ludendorff often rode in the large riding arena at Tatersalls on the Kurfurstendamm. Ewald recalled,

The arena was still mostly unlighted. Ludendorff pale, had a bloated face that was grim. His horse, a fat chestnut, had a hundred legs, that is the horse was always in a hurry and prancing to go faster. Ludendorff thought he could calm him down and constantly made "Sh, Sh" noises in an attempt to slow the horse's gait. My young horse greatly disliked this, probably thinking it was the buzz of a horsefly on the path. And this in turn annoyed me. I wished that Ludendorff would just go far away.¹⁰⁴

The von Kleist's had successfully settled into their lives and lifestyle and enjoyed Berlin during the first half of Ewald's three years at the *Kriegsakademie*. The second half, commencing in January 1912, however, would be a very strenuous period for the couple. Ewald and Gisela would encounter and endure a number of difficult events. The first blow came with the hospitalization of Gisela's mother in early January. Despite what had looked like a successful operation, Ewald's mother-in-law died on 18 January 1912.¹⁰⁵ Her mother's early death left Gisela without living parents at the age of only twenty-two. In addition, her mother's death left

¹⁰⁴ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 28. In one of the few errors of recall found in von Kleist's memoirs, he incorrectly dated his winter morning riding encounters with Ludendorff as having occurred in the Winter 1912/13. As will be seen, Ewald was not riding during that period. Additionally, Ludendorff was posted off of the *Großer Generalstab* to the command of *Niederrheinisches Füsilier-Regiment Nr. 39* in Düsseldorf in mid-January 1913. It is doubtful that von Kleist's opinion of Ludendorff changed later on when the pale, bloated faced, and poor horseman attained fame during World War I and notoriety after.

¹⁰⁵ Sterbe-Nebenregister, Jahrgang 1912. StadtA H, STA 2459/2201/1912. Stephanie Theona Alice (nee Röber) Wachtel was only forty-five years of age at the time of her death.

Gisela as her semi-invalid brother's legal guardian.¹⁰⁶ "To allay Gisela's pain a little" the couple traveled to Mentone, France, on the Riviera during the Easter academic break.¹⁰⁷

In early March, Ewald and the members of his *Hörsaal* held their *Höhepunktfest* (pinnacle celebration). The event marked the halfway point of their time at the *Kriegsakademie* and the beginning of the hopefully easier downhill side of their staff officer education. The traditional celebration by each of the three junior class *Hörsäle* was a fancy meal at one of Berlin's many restaurants. The festivities included, a musical performance, the reading of poems, and comical presentations by class members.¹⁰⁸ This lighthearted evening of revelry helped balance the academic seriousness of the school.

¹⁰⁶ Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, "Weidebrück" (BA-MA: N 354/37.1, Nachlass Kleist). Paperwork contained in this file describe the legal status of Berthold Wachtel and his sister, Gisela. Despite Berthold Wachtel's legal incompetence, he inherited a significant portion of his father and mother's estate including the Hannover villa and farm ground near Quedlinburg. It is likely that Gisela had her own smaller inheritance. But even despite her brother's legal incompetence, Gisela could not exercise complete autonomy and control over the assets owned by Berthold and required court approval for certain actions regarding Berthold's property. As an example, Gisela and Ewald had to apply for permission to sell the Hannover villa and Quedlinburg farm land in 1938, when they were generating capital to purchase their own property in Schlesien.

¹⁰⁷ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 61. Menton, France, is a town on the French Riviera near the Italian border. Mentone is the Italian spelling and was used by von Kleist. He noted that they met their friend, Hans Georg von Chamier-Glisczinski, at Mentone. This appears to be *Oberleutnant* von Chamier-Glisczinski who in 1911, was serving in the *Lehr-Regiment* at the *Feldartillerie-Schießschule* at Jüterbog. Further investigation indicates that von Chamier-Glisczinski was likely a 1900/01 *Kriegsschule* classmate of von Kleist. Von Chamier-Glisczinski was a *Leutnant* in *Feldartillerie-Regiment von Podbielski (1. Niederschlesisches) Nr. 5* at Sprottau and Sagan. It is possible that von Kleist and von Chamier-Glisczinski attended the same *Leutnant's* course at the *Feldartillerie-Schießschule* in 1903. The friendship seems important to both parties as von Chamier-Glisczinski visits the von Kleists in Berlin several times as recorded in the von Kleist Guestbook. Von Chamier-Glisczinski was also an accomplished equestrian and horse race rider. *Rangliste 1914*, 500. *Hauptmann* von Chamier-Glisczinski transferred from the *Lehr-Regiment* to *Kurmärkisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 39* prior to the start of World War I. It is likely that von Kleist recommended von Chamier-Glisczinski to the regimental commander of *FAR 39, Oberst* Greßmann, von Kleist's erstwhile mentor from *FAR 3*. By December 1914, he was serving with *Reserve Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 6* and he was killed in action on 17 December 1914, near Helenka, Poland. Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 61. Von Kleist confirms von Chamier-Glisczinski's death in Poland during World War I after noting that he met them in Mentone, France in the spring of 1912. This is another of von Kleist's close friends who was killed in World War I.

¹⁰⁸ "Almanach des Jahrgangs 1908-1911" (BA-MA: PH 21/83, Document 2). See this file for a copy of program for *Hörsaal* Ila, Class of 1911, *Höhepunktfest* held on Saturday evening, 5 March 1910, at the Restaurant Schaurté in Berlin.

On 6 April 1912, *General der Kavallerie* Georg von Kleist retired from active duty and shortly thereafter took up residence at his estate, Wusseken, near Stolp in Pommern.¹⁰⁹

With the completion of the coursework by early June, Ewald and his classmates focused on the end of year testing. For the second-year class, their examinations were a military history test completed outside of class, a proctored exam in tactics, and a test on fortifications conducted either in or out of class. Additionally, the officer-students completed an examination in their elective of a foreign language or mathematics. With these examinations finished by the end of June, the class prepared to go to the field.

For both the junior and senior classes, July heralded their *Schlußübungsreise* (closing training trip). During the month, the officer-students left the classrooms at Dorotheenstraße behind and exchanged theoretical (classroom) training for practical (hands-on) training. The training was under the guidance of the *Hörsaal*'s regular instructors for tactics and general staff service. Each *Hörsaal* was normally divided into three sections, each section led by a *Generalstabsoffizier* on temporary duty from his *Großer Generalstabs* position. The standard unit for which the officer-students planned and “commanded” during the exercise was an infantry division.¹¹⁰ Officer-students performed different tasks such as terrain sketching and analysis, operations order writing, acting as the division commander, and the serving as various

¹⁰⁹ “Personal-Veränderungen.” *Militär-Wochenblatt* 97 (1912), 1037. *General der Kavallerie* Georg von Kleist retired from active duty but was retained as an officer *ala suite* of *Ulanen-Regiment Kaiser Alexander II. von Rußland (1. Brandenburg)* Nr. 3, with a full pension. Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft III, 13.

¹¹⁰ *Generalstab, Lehrordnung*, 19-20. The teaching regulation included the following on the conduct of the year-end training exercise, “On the basis of simple wartime situations, the decisions of the higher unit commander and the activities of the general staff officer are to be outlined. The guidelines given for general staff trips are authoritative with the guidance that, in general, the unit size is an infantry division in the corps unit and is not to be increased. Considerations of the war and battle situation, tasks that promote certainty in command, discussion of tactical conditions with regard to the terrain, and dissection of orders made according to their effect on the troops must be alternated in their use. Each participant should be given the opportunity to solve various tasks from the above-mentioned areas during the course of the trip.”

members of a division staff. Much time was spent in the saddle as the officers moved around the simulated battle area.

As in the previous year, instructors computed a final grade for the courses and the military instructors provided written assessment on each of their officer-students. Ewald received grades in four subjects at the end of the second academic year.¹¹¹

Tactics and General Staff Service	7 (<i>gut</i>)
Military History	7 (<i>gut</i>)
Fortifications and Siege Warfare	7 (<i>gut</i>)
English	7 (<i>gut</i>)

Von Kleist's grades in military subjects showed no marked improvement over the previous year and again ranked his work as average to slightly above average. His grade in English improved gaining one numeric point. Computing a GPA, Ewald earned a seven (out of a possible nine point zero) or a solid "gut." There was still room for improvement in his final year.

¹¹¹ Kriegsakademie, "Abgangs-Zeugnis" (BA-MA: N 354/10, Document 3, Nachlass Kleist). Kriegsakademie, "Abgangs-Zeugnis" (BA-MA: N 739/28, Document 5, Nachlass Groppe). Kriegsakademie, "Abgangs-Zeugnis" (BA-MA: N 221/1, Document 3, Nachlass Geyer). Continuing the comparison of von Kleist with the other *Kriegsakademie Abgangs-Zeugnis* located in the files of the BA-MA. Theodor Groppe, von Kleist's classmate in *Hörsaal Ib*, earned for AY 1911/12: Tactics and General Staff Service-7 (*gut*); Military History-5 (*satisfactory*); Fortifications and Siege Warfare -7 (*gut*); and French-8 (*sehr gut*); a 6.75 overall GPA and thus slightly below von Kleist's 7.0 GPA. Hermann Geyer, a year ahead of von Kleist and Groppe, in the Class of 1912, for his junior year in AY 1910/11 earned: Tactics-8 (*sehr gut*); Military History-8 (*sehr gut*); Fortifications-8 (*sehr gut*); and French-7 (*gut*). Geyer's GPA was 7.75. Of note, Geyer had switched languages from English to French in his second year. Von Kleist's and Groppe's Class of 1913, was, during their junior year in AY 1910/11, on a slightly modified curriculum from the previous years' classes as can be seen by comparing von Kleist and Geyer's courses above.



Figure 8 Ewald and Gisela von Kleist

Ewald and Gisela von Kleist, circa July 1912. Ewald in the uniform of the *Husaren-Regiment Landgraf Friedrich II. von Hessen-Homburg* (2. Kurhessisches) Nr. 14. (Photo from author's collection.)

With the second year's coursework completed, Ewald anticipated a summer in the saddle with his new cavalry regiment.

Ewald recalled of the summer of 1912,¹¹²

In 1912, instead of training with the infantry, I trained with my new regiment in Cassel, in the squadron of the Rittmeister Hunecken. When I first reported to the regiment, Oberst Graf Beroldingen was still commander. One of his daughters was the wife of von Lieres und Wilkau of Alt Rosenberg/Silesia. Now, Oberstleutnant von Raumer was commander. He was a true soldier and the one I learned the most from after Greßmann. Von Raumer trained his regiment to be war-ready and educated his officer corps in an exemplary manner, while Beroldingen had led the regiment with a very loose rein. He [von Raumer] treated me with great kindness. I arrived while the regiment was conducting its summer training at the garrison.

We did a lot of field exercises, especially practicing river crossings under simulated combat conditions. We then had the opportunity to demonstrate some of these exercises to Kaiser Wilhelm II. So, while the Kaiser was present, there was a garrison-level exercise, which began early in the morning with patrols from our regiment crossing of over the Fulda River. I was one of the patrol leaders. We swam beside our horses, and when possible, our clothes and also boots were placed in a feed bag, which was still filled with straw [to make it float]. The bag was tied to a picket rope and pulled along.

This summer the Kaiser visited the Kaiserin Auguste Viktoria, born Prinzessin von Schleswig-Holstein, Sonderburg-Augustenburg. Every summer the Kaiserin spent many weeks with her court at Schloß Wilhelmshöhe near Cassel with its magnificent park. The Kaiserin was a good mother, she often had a moderating influence on the Kaiser, confined herself to her duties, and was popular and revered by the people everywhere.¹¹³

¹¹² Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 69-70 and 82-84. This passage, while directly translated from von Kleist's memoirs, has been arranged so as to provide a logical thematic flow.

¹¹³ Ibid. Von Kleist noted that because he had severed the previous summer (1911) with a cavalry regiment he had met the criteria for wear of the uniform of one's new regiment after a branch transfer. Normally, the branch transferred officer was required to remain in his former branch uniform for a period of one year after his transfer. This allowed von Kleist to begin the wear of his hussar uniform not later than the beginning of July 1912. Von Kleist noted that when he reported to the regiment, *Oberst Graf Beroldingen* was still the commander. Professional military courtesy would have dictated that von Kleist travel to Cassel to report to his new commander shortly after his assignment in mid-December 1911. He and Gisela likely made this trip during the *Kriegsakademie* Christmas break

An event, likely in early August 1912, altered the remaining summer.¹¹⁴

Gisela and I stayed in the Schloßhotel Wilhelmshöhe, which was very nice. One morning I wanted to show the Kaiserin's equerry, Hellmich, my officers charger. I rode along the asphalt road, which was made slippery by cars and water. Gisela and Hellmich could see me from the breakfast table where they were sitting. The horse lost its footing, rolled over and buried me under it. I was paralyzed in the first minutes and it looked bad. The empress's personal physician, Professor Dr. Zunker, examined me and had me transferred to the Red Cross hospital. But it was only a spinal cord compression and some pulled muscles. By noon, the *B.Z. am Mittag* had already reported the accident in Berlin. The paper reported that I was a member of the Kaiserin's entourage. Even a South American newspaper, excerpts from which were later sent to me, stated that I had died in the accident. That was the first time I was declared dead.

That incident ended up like this for me. I was in hospital for several weeks. Then I was with Gisela for a longer time, and still more [recuperation] lying down at my dear parents in Aurich in Ostfriesland. I only was able to mount a horse again around Whitsun [11 May] 1913. Right on the first ride I crashed again in Berlin on the Kurfürstendamm, but not with such lasting consequences. But since then, I have had respect for smooth asphalt. Otherwise, my great passion was riding and Gisela shared this passion.¹¹⁵

Ewald had again avoided death or serious injury as a result of a horse crash. Such accidents were an occupational hazard and a risk officers, especially mounted officers, accepted in the course of their duties.

But there were also offsetting good news. It was likely in July, while in Cassel, that Gisela informed Ewald that she was pregnant.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., Heft II, 82-84. Von Kleist did not identify the date of the accident. But given the recuperation time he delineated and the fact that he had sufficiently recovered to begin classes at the *Kriegsakademie* on 1 October 1912, point to the incident occurring near the beginning of August 1912.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., Heft II, 82-84. Curt Hellmich, was one of the *Stallmeisters* (equerry) to the royal household. *B.Z. am Mittag*, the *Berliner Zeitung* was a well-known tabloid paper of the day. Pfingsten (Whit Sunday-Pentecost) fell on Sunday, May 11, 1913. As a result of his injuries, required recuperation, and other family events, von Kleist did not ride a horse for approximately nine months.

V. *Kriegsakademie*-The All-Important Third Year

On 1 October 1912, Ewald's last year at the *Kriegsakademie* commenced. The senior class had, for unknown reasons, added a fourth *Hörsaal*, IIIId.¹¹⁶ Ewald remained assigned to *Hörsaal*, IIIc, however, twelve officer-students from Ewald's seminar transferred to the new group. Forty officer-students remained in IIIc. An additional twenty-four officers from IIIa and IIIb joined new *Hörsaal* IIIId.

The number of courses was reduced from the previous year's ten to six. The focus on tactics and general staff service grew. For Ewald and the members of *Hörsaal* IIIc, the final year's course schedule was:¹¹⁷

Monday:	One hour of Equitation (08:00-09:00) One hour of Siege Warfare (10:00-11:00) with <i>Major</i> Tiersch Two hours of Tactics & General Staff Service (10:00-12:00) with <i>Oberstleutnant</i> von Rath Two hours of English (12:00-14:00) with Prof. Delmer One hour of Equitation (14:00-15:00)
Tuesday:	Two hours of Siege Warfare (11:00-13:00) with <i>Major</i> Tiersch Two hours of Surveying (13:00-15:00) with <i>Major</i> Launhardt
Wednesday:	Two hours of Military History (10:00-12:00) with <i>Generalmajor</i> von Kuhl One hour of Tactics & General Staff Service (12:00-13:00) with <i>Oberstleutnant</i> von Rath Two hours of English (13:00-15:00) with Prof. Delmer
Thursday:	No Classes or Activities Normally Scheduled
Friday:	One hour of Equitation (09:00-10:00)

¹¹⁶ Schwertfeger, *Kriegsakademie*. Berlin, *Adreßbuch* 1913. A comparison between the rosters found in the Schwertfeger file and the address book allow the identification by name and seminar of the members of each *Hörsaal* in AY 1912/1913.

¹¹⁷ Schwertfeger, *Kriegsakademie*. See also, Appendix 9 for von Kleist's third year, AY 1912/13 course schedule.

Two hours of Military History (10:00-12:00) with *Generalmajor* von Kuhl
One hour of Tactics & General Staff Service (12:00-13:00) with
Oberstleutnant von Rath

Saturday: Two hours of Tactics & General Staff Service (10:00-12:00) with
Oberstleutnant von Rath
Two hours of History (12:00-14:00) with Prof. Dr. Hoetzsch

The summary: Tactics & General Staff Service-six hours; Military History-four hours; English-four hours; Siege Warfare-three hours; Equitation-three hours; History-two hours; Surveying-two hours;¹¹⁸ The academic classes totaled twenty-one hours per week with an additional three hours spent in the saddle in equitation class. The seminar's tactics and general staff duties instructor, *Oberstleutnant* von Rath spent the most time with the officer-students each week at six hours, while *Generalmajor* von Kuhl (military history) spent four hours with the seminar per week.

Of the instructors during the final year, Ewald later recalled two, *Generalmajor* von Kuhl and civilian history instructor, Prof. Dr. Hoetzsch.¹¹⁹ Notably, both taught history. Von Kleist later served a few echelons below then *Generalleutnant* von Kuhl on the Western Front in 1918. Ewald remembered that, "Professor Hoetzsch gave historically oriented and very interesting lectures in the large lecture hall to the combined audience of the three senior sections of the *Kriegsakademie*. He came over from Posen, where he had taught at the university. During these lectures I always sat next to Schleicher."¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Generalstab, *Lehrordnung*, 6-17. See *Lehrordnung* for a short description of the individual course objectives and contents for each academic year group.

¹¹⁹ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 21-22. The only other instructors noted by von Kleist from his time at the *Kriegsakademie* were his junior year (AY 1911/12) tactics and military history instructors, *Major* von Böckmann and *Oberstleutnant* von Eisenhart-Rothe, respectively. He made no comment beyond naming them.

¹²⁰ Ibid., Heft III, 27. One wonders whether von Kleist remembered the professor as much as he remembered his seat mate, future general and chancellor, Kurt von Schleicher. See also, Fritz Epstein, Fritz, "Hoetzsch, Otto" In *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 9 (1972), 371-372. <https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118838180.html#ndbcontent> (August 31, 2021). Otto Hoetzsch (* 14. February 1876 in Leipzig; † 27. August 1946 in Berlin) was a German historian, publicist, interpreter and politician with the Deutschkonservative Partei, DNVP und KVP. From 1906 to 1913, he taught at the Royal Academy in Posen and from 1911, Early Modern European history at the *Kriegsakademie* in Berlin. After World War I, he was connected to *Generalfeldmarschall* von Hindenburg and

Ewald's academic workload increased in his third year, but he and Gisela still "had time to enjoy the theater and social life in Berlin" as they had in the past two years.¹²¹ The couple had visits from friends and relatives during the autumn.¹²²

The *Kriegsakademie* paused over the Christmas and New Year's holidays. On 19 December, Gisela's maternal grandmother, Grandmother Röber and one of Gisela's cousins, Minna Schierdig, arrived to spend the holidays.¹²³ Likely they also planned to stay for the imminent birth of the Ewald and Gisela's first child.

Likely in early January 1913, a year after Gisela's mother died, the couple suffered the "second great sorrow" in their young marriage.¹²⁴ Gisela gave premature birth to a stillborn boy. After the birth, she became seriously ill suffering "kidney inflammation, thrombosis, and pleurisy on both sides. Her life hung by a hair. For weeks and months, she lay in bed and suffered mentally and physically. She never recovered physically. A nurse, Sister Lina, tended her together with Dora and me."¹²⁵ As Ewald recovered from the "bitter disappointment" of losing their first child, he focused on tending to Gisela and his studies at the *Kriegsakademie*.¹²⁶

possibly co-authored the GFM's autobiography *Aus Meinem Leben* (1920) with *Generalleutnant a.D.* Hermann Mertz von Quirnheim, father of 20 July 1944 conspirator, *Oberst i.G.* Albrecht Mertz von Quirnheim.

¹²¹ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 13-14.

¹²² Von Kleist Guestbook." *Leutnant* von Chamier-Glisczinski, Gisela's brother, Berthold, and Gertrud von Mackensen made visits to the couple in October and November 1912.

¹²³ Ibid. Grandmother Röber and Minna Schierdig visit was recorded in the guestbook from 19 December 1912 until 1 February 1913.

¹²⁴ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 21. Von Kleist gave no date or timeframe of the premature birth other than to record that it occurred during his third academic year. Circumstantial evidence in the fact that Ewald did not do any riding until May 1913, that the couple apparently did not travel during the Easter and Pentecost academic breaks as they had in the past years, that there are no guestbook entries between 1 February and September 1913, and that the couple's moved to Cassel in August 1913, point to the birth, Gisela's illness, and months-long recovery, occurring in the seven months January to July 1913.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid. Von Kleist wrote in 1945, "It was during this time that the second great sorrow in our young marriage struck us. Our hopes for a first child were bitterly disappointed."

In March, the leadership of the *Kriegsakademie* changed when *General der Infanterie Freiherr von Manteuffel* retired.¹²⁷ *Generalleutnant* von Gündell arrived from command of the 20. Division to take the directorship. It is likely that Ewald and his fellow officer-students barely took notice of the change. As spring gave way to summer, the third-year class prepared to jump the two remaining hurdles before graduation.

The first academic challenge was the perennial end of year final examinations. Officer-students had two options for completing the military history requirements. They could choose to research, write, and present several essays during the academic year or select a larger, single work to be submitted not later than 15 June.¹²⁸ All of the officer-students who had taken a foreign language as their elective took a final, proctored examination. For those who had chosen mathematics, the study of this subject and testing ended at the conclusion of their second academic year. For the graduating class, however, the examination in tactics and general staff service did not take place in the classroom. Rather all of the exercises and work that the officer-student produced on the *Schlußübungsreise* comprised their final examination grade in those two areas. These grades were a significant element in their overall grade and categorization.

The completion of the senior class's final in-class examination was cause for celebration. The "*Bankfest*" was a lighthearted look back at the *Hörsaal*'s time in academics at the school and a celebration confirming that all who attended the festive event had successfully climbed the series of academic mountains with which they had been presented over the past three years.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 98 (1913), 793, 819 and 1763. *General der Infanterie Freiherr von Manteuffel* was retired with a full pension. *Generalleutnant* von Gündell was appointed Director of the *Kriegsakademie*, coming from serving as commanding general, 20. Division. In June 1913, von Gündell was promoted to brevet *General der Infanterie*.

¹²⁸ *Kriegsakademie, Vorschrift*, 20-21.

¹²⁹ "Almanach des Jahrgangs 1908-1911" (BA-MA: PH 21/83, Document 3). See this file for a copy of typescript program for *Hörsaal* IIa, Class of 1911, *Bankfest*.

Too, it was likely a final respite before leaving on the challenging and critical *Schlußübungsreise*.

In the middle of June 1913, Ewald's fellow classmate, *Oberleutnant* Jenö von Egan-Krieger made news. Von Kleist recalled, he "was a well-known amateur jockey. He was somewhat of a sensation in the time before the World War." On Friday, the 15th, "He rode in a horse race in Magdeburg and later that same afternoon another in Grunewald [Berlin], which he [also] won. He reached the latter by plane."¹³⁰ Perhaps this was von Egan-Krieger's way of celebrating the completion of his *Kriegsakademie* academics. This incident again points to the somewhat relaxed pace of academics and the flexibility of schedule afforded to officer-students.

The *Schlußübungsreise* commenced at the beginning of July and ran for three weeks. Since the senior class officer-students had participated the previous year, they largely knew what to expect. Despite this knowledge, the pressure to perform well was significant as this was their last opportunity to prove their knowledge and skill, as well as their general staff and leadership potential prior to *Kriegsakademie* leadership deciding their staff officer categorization. By the conclusion of the exercises, the die seemed to be cast as to their future possibilities for achieving the coveted appointment to the *Generalstab der Armee* and with this the potential for accelerated promotion into the upper echelons of the German Army.

Despite the significant length of the school and the substantial accomplishment of having completed the course, there was apparently no graduation ceremony, at least not an official one in Berlin. Undoubtedly some form of celebratory event marked the conclusion of the

¹³⁰ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 15. Rolf Roedingh, hrsg. *Das Deutsche Reiterbuch* (Berlin: Deutscher Turnier- und Renn-Sport-Verlag, 1929). This book also recorded von Egan-Krieger's memorable event of 15 June 1913. Both races were named prize steeplechase contests; at Magdeburg the "Gaza-Jagdrennen" and in Berlin, the "Preis von Leipzig." Von Egan-Krieger was reported to have piloted the plane himself, which created even more of a sensation. Von Egan-Krieger's significant number of extra-curricular events in the form of equestrian competitions did not hinder his work at the *Kriegsakademie* as he graduated with the highest categorization and was selected for duty on the *Großer Generalstab*.

Schlußübungsreise. Quickly and quietly the officers, and if married their families, packed up their possessions and returned to their regiments.¹³¹ Officially, von Kleist was transferred on 22 July 1913, from his assignment at the *Kriegsakademie* to his new cavalry regiment. Likely, he and Gisela departed Berlin for Cassel at this time. Ewald and his fellow graduates then waited for several months for the potentially career changing *Abgangs-Zeugnis* and their staff officer categorization to be sent to them.

For the instructors and general staff officers who led and directed the *Schlußübungsreise*, the final requirement for them was the highly important assessment of each officer-student's performance in tactics and general staff duties. These written reports strove to emphasize the officer's special military and character traits.¹³² Equitation skills were singled out with the raters being reminded that for officers in the top two categories, an "appropriate degree of riding ability [was] required."¹³³ These final *Schlußübungsreise* reports and all of the grades, as well as the *Hörsaal* performance assessments during the previous three years, were collectively used by the director, the administrative faculty, and the *Studienkommission* to determine each officer's overall class standing and the critical categorization.

Before proceeding, a short overview of the German Army General Staff is presented to describe and clarify this somewhat complicated and often misunderstood element of the German Army. In the pre-World War I era, the *Generalstab der Armee* (Army General Staff) was the sole staff branch within the German Army.¹³⁴ Officers who had undergone general staff training and passed a probationary period on the staff were appointed to the *Generalstab der Armee* as a

¹³¹ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Personal-Bericht 1913. The official date recorded in von Kleist's army personnel record for the end of his temporary assignment to the *Kriegsakademie* was 22 July 1913.

¹³² Generalstab, *Lehrordnung*, 20-21.

¹³³ Ibid., 21.

¹³⁴ Here the term "branch" means one of the specialized sub-elements within the German Army such as infantry, cavalry, field artillery, etc.

Generalstabsoffizier (GSO). There were two levels or categories of staffs within the army: the *Großer Generalstab* (Greater General Staff), and the *Truppengeneralstab* (troop general staff). The former was located in Berlin and was the staff of the Chief of Staff of the Army, while the latter staffs were located throughout the army at corps, division, brigade, and inspectorate levels.

The normal route to becoming an officer in the *Generalstab der Armee* was graduation from the *Kriegsakademie*, classification by the KA as qualified for “*Generalstab*” duties, pass a probationary period, and finally be selection for permanent appointment as an officer in the *Generalstab der Armee*. The officers who were appointed were then technically branch transferred from their parent branches (infantry, cavalry, etc.) to the *Generalstab der Armee*. After their transfer, these officers’ assignments were managed by the personal office of the *Großer Generalstab*. Only the officers appointed to the *Generalstab der Armee* were authorized to wear the General Staff Officer uniform with its carmine leg stripes.

Once a member of the *Generalstab der Armee*, the *Generalstabsoffizier* was generally posted to one of four categories of assignment: duty on the *Großer Generalstab*, duty on a general staff of a troop unit (division, corps, etc.) in a *Truppengeneralstab* position which was authorized a *Generalstabsoffizier*, duty at one of the army schools in a billet that was authorized for a *Generalstab der Armee* officer, and duty in a line unit normally in a command billet (company, battalion, regiment).

There was another type of staff officer; the non-*Generalstab der Armee* officer who served on a “general officer staff” at the brigade, division, or corps level, and even on the *Großer Generalstab*.¹³⁵ Service on a general officer’s staff did not automatically make one a *Generalstab der Armee* officers. Now to resume.

¹³⁵ To maintain clarity, this work employs the following nomenclature: capitalization of *Generalstabsoffizier* and General Staff Officer (GSO) indicates that the officer in question is a fully qualified member of the *Generalstab der*

The decisive element of the final assessment by the *Kriegsakademie* faculty and leadership was the classification of each officer-student for future duties. The four possible categories were:¹³⁶

- 1) General Staff,
- 2) higher level Adjutants,
- 3) instructors at military schools,
- 4) other duties in special positions

For those officers who received the “*Generalstab*” (General Staff) (GS) classification, this represented a nomination for assignment to the *Generalstab der Armee*. In the spring following the completion of the *Kriegsakademie*, selected officers were temporarily assigned to the *Großer Generalstab* in Berlin. Here they then served an approximately two-year probationary period where they worked as an apprentice or provisional staff officer. If they were deemed to have successfully “passed” this probationary period, they were appointed as permanent General Staff Officers.

Armee; capitalization of Greater General Staff (GGS) indicates that this is the *Großer Generalstab*; capitalization of General Staff (GS) indicates the *Generalstab der Armee*; non-capitalization of general staff officer indicates a non-GSO officer serving on a troop general staff; and general staff indicates a troop general staff.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 21. The four categories listed in the 1912 *Lehrordnung* were: “a) Generalstab, b) höhere Adjutantur, c) Lehrfach, d) sonstige Verwendung in besonderen Stellen.” For the officers appointed as General Staff Officers, their careers from that point forward were managed by the GGS personnel section. For *höhere Adjutantur* officers, should Germany go to war, it was these *höhere Adjutantur* officers who would step up to fill the general staff officer billets of the expanded army in regular and especially in reserve and *Landwehr* divisions. In the German vernacular of the day, even though the *höhere Adjutantur* officers filled positions on the staffs of units commanded by a general officer, they were not referred to as *Generalstabsoffiziere* or said to be in the *Generalstab der Armee*. Those two descriptors were reserved to fully qualified *Generalstabsoffiziere*. Like *höhere Adjutantur* officers, *Lehrfach*, because of their *Kriegsakademie* education, could also serve at higher staff levels during wartime. But, this last category of officer in the exigency of wartime could fulfill lower-level staff officer positions at the brigade and division levels. Of note, is that the *Kriegsakademie* did not disenroll or otherwise disqualify officers who did not meet the established criteria for selection as GSOs, higher adjutants, or instructors. Rather they were allowed to continue, to graduate, and to return to troop duties. No information on or indication of what percentage of officers were categorized as “other duties in special positions” has yet been found. With the possible exception of officers qualified for the *Generalstab*, there appeared to be no quotas for the various categories. Officers were rather categorized against a standard of performance. Officers could serve in a lower category which would obviate the need for quotas.

The next highest classification, “*höhere Adjutantur*” (higher level adjutants), identified graduates who were qualified to serve in staff position not required to be filled by a GSO. The term “*Adjutantur*” had a broader meaning than adjutants or aide-de-camps. The *Adjutantur*, like General Staff Officers, were *Gehilfe* (helpers or assistants) to military commanders and other military leaders, e.g., inspector-generals. While battalions, regiments, brigades, and inspectorates had requirements for staff work, they were not authorized GSOs for these billets. Divisions were only allocated one GSO, the division Chief of Staff, while army corps headquarters were allotted only three GSOs, the Chief of Staff and two subordinate GSOs. At brigade and above command echelons, many officers who were assigned to perform staff work were graduates of the *Kriegsakademie* and had been categorized as *höhere Adjutantur*.

The third category, “*Lehrfach*” (teaching field), were qualified to instruct at *Kriegsschulen*, the branch schools (e.g., *Infanterie- and Artillerie-Schießschulen*, *Militär-Reit-Institut*). Many of these schools required some instructors, especially tactics instructors, to be *Kriegsakademie* graduates.

The final categorization, “*sonstige Verwendung in besonderen Stellen*” (other duties in special positions) was given to officers who for a variety of reasons, were not suited to normal staff duties, adjutant responsibilities, or teaching assignments. These officers were sent back to regimental troop duty and likely progressed at only a slightly faster rate than troop officers who had not attended the school. These officers were considered to have failed the course.

The entire process of grading, ranking, and categorization could take up to six months. Upon completion, the results were sent to the Chief of the Greater General Staff and all of the

army corps commanders. The completed *Abgangs-Zeugnis* and the final narrative assessment were sent to the individual officer, likely through his regimental commander.¹³⁷

Ewald received his *Abgangs-Zeugnis*, the *Kriegsakademie Direktor, General der Infanterie* von Gündell's assessment, and his classification by the end of November.

Ewald received the following grades in five subjects for his senior year.¹³⁸

Tactics	7 (<i>gut</i>)
General Staff Service	7 (<i>gut</i>)
Military History	7 (<i>gut</i>)
Siege Warfare	8 (<i>sehr gut</i>)
English	7 (<i>gut</i>)

In the key subjects of tactics, general staff service, and military history, Ewald's grades remained the same as in the previous year. His only improvement came in siege warfare where he improved one grade over his past year's performance. His final academic year GPA was seven point two (out of a possible nine point zero), an improvement of two tenths of one point.

¹³⁷ Clemente, King, 192. Von Kleist received his final grades and assessment prior to 1 December 1913 as his classification and some of the written assessment by the *Kriegsakademie Direktor, General der Infanterie von Gündell*, were included in Ewald's *Qualifikations-Bericht* which was completed by and dated 1 December 1913.

¹³⁸ Kriegsakademie, "Abgangs-Zeugnis" (BA-MA: N 354/10, Document 3, Nachlass Kleist). Kriegsakademie, "Abgangs-Zeugnis" (BA-MA: N 739/28, Document 5, Nachlass Groppe). Kriegsakademie, "Abgangs-Zeugnis" (BA-MA: N 221/1, Document 3, Nachlass Geyer). Continuing the comparison of von Kleist with the other *Kriegsakademie Abgangs-Zeugnis* located in the files of the BA-MA. Theodor Groppe, von Kleist's classmate in *Hörsaal Id* (he was transferred from *Hörsaal a* to *d* for his final year), earned for AY 1912/13: Tactics-8 (*sehr gut*); General Staff Service-7 (*gut*), Military History-7 (*gut*); and Siege Warfare-8 (*sehr gut*). No French grade given. Groppe's 7.50 GPA was slightly higher than von Kleist's 7.2 GPA. Groppe was not called to duty with the *Großen Generalstab* but entered World War I with his infantry regiment. During the war he served in various troop commands as well as a brigade and division adjutant. He earned the *Pour le Mérite* leading his battalion in 1918. He was retained in the *Reichswehr* and served on various staffs and command positions. At the beginning of World War II, he took command of an infantry division but ran afoul of the Nazis for his strong Catholic faith and criticism of the regime's policies. He was arrested and imprisoned but managed to avoid execution in the last days of the war by escaping from his military captors. Hermann Geyer, a year ahead of von Kleist and Groppe, in the Class of 1912, for his senior year in AY 1911/12 earned: Tactics-9 (*vorzüglich*); General Staff Service-8 (*sehr gut*), Military History-8 (*sehr gut*); Siege Warfare-8 (*sehr gut*); and French-7 (*gut*). Geyer's GPA was 8.00. Geyer was called to the *Großen Generalstab* for his two years of probationary service beginning on or about 1 April 1913. The beginning of World War I cut short his probationary period and he was made a *Generalstabsoffizier* and served throughout the war in various staff and troop leading positions. He survived the war, was taken into the *Reichswehr* and rose to the rank of *General der Infanterie* by his retirement from active duty on 30 April 1939. He was recalled at the outbreak of World War II and commanded an army corps in the Polish, French, and Russian campaigns. He relinquished command and was placed in the *Führerreserve* in December 1941. He was fully retired without further service on 31 December 1943.

His cumulative GPA for the three years was seven point zero, a solid “*gut*.” Ewald’s grades showed him as a steady but not outstanding pupil. Of his fourteen grade-reported courses, he earned twelve sevens “*gut*”, one six, “*ziemlich gut*,” and one eight “*sehr gut*.”

The fact that he achieved his highest GPA during his final academic year in which he was recovering from a serious horse crash, suffered the stillborn birth of a child, agonized during the period when his wife was gravely ill, and supported Gisela during her prolonged convalescence testified to his makeup. Despite the emotional stress of his wife’s illnesses and the pressure to perform at the *Kriegsakademie*, Ewald demonstrated his ability to remain focused as well as mentally and emotionally stable. This also suggests Ewald’s ability to compartmentalize during this prolonged stressful period as he successfully balanced a demanding home life and challenging studies at school.¹³⁹ Among other attributes, successful wartime commanders demonstrated the ability to maintain their composure and focus during high stress events. Evidence of these character traits would have been beneficial when the school assessed the potential of the officer-student.

In the same correspondence as his *Kriegsakademie Abgangs-Zeugnis* von Kleist received the narrative assessment of his *Kriegsakademie* performance, what could be termed as an *Abgangs-Beurteilung* (graduation assessment).¹⁴⁰ The form, signed by the *Kriegsakademie Direktor*, General von Gündell, comprised six sections with pre-printed headings. Each section was completed by typewriter for the individual officer. The first section identified the officer-student by rank and last name as well as his parent regiment. The next section “academic

¹³⁹ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 83-84. From mid-August 1912 until mid-May 1913, Ewald did not ride horses. While is likely that he had recuperated sufficiently from his August 1912 horse crash, to permit riding by the end of 1912, Ewald rather chose to postpone his equestrian activities until such time as Gisela was sufficiently recovered and his school tasks were well in hand.

¹⁴⁰ *Kriegsakademie*, “*Abgangs-Beurteilung*” (BA-MA: N 354/10, Document 4, Nachlass Kleist). The following paragraphs refer to this original document preserved in von Kleist’s Nachlass. The date of the document was 6 September 1913, thus, completed two days after von Kleist’s grades were officially noted on his *Abgangs-Zeugnis*.

achievement” noted the officer’s average level of achievement in each of the three years and the overall assessment of academic standing. Von Kleist received “*gut*” (good) for each of his course years as well as a “*gut*” for his overall evaluation. In keeping with the overall grading system, there were only two higher ratings; “*vorzüglich*” (excellent); 8 “*sehr gut*” (very good). His academic achievements, while not especially noteworthy, had been a steady and solid average to slightly above average.

The third section “special skills” was used to record an officer-student’s competence as a foreign language translator with lines for “suitable” as or “especially suitable” as a translator in the identified language. The third line allowed the Director to add any other special skills of note. Ewald had apparently not achieved the required level of English proficiency to qualify as a translator and thus there were no comments in this section.

The fourth section identified and assessed the officer’s service with other branches. This was the abbreviated report on which branches the officer had served with during the two periods of summer duty. Normally, the officer-student served with the other two major branches in order to gain experience with the different arms. Ewald for reasons earlier identified had served with the cavalry during both summer periods. The short statement was, served in “a cavalry regiment with very good results.”

The next section was the all-important Director’s narrative assessment. General von Gündell’s short, thirty-seven-word appraisal succinctly assayed von Kleist’s three full years of hard work.

Distinguished, open, and calm character with a finely developed sense of tact. Intellectually and militarily quite well disposed. He possesses good tactical understanding as well as a good understanding for the leadership of larger cavalry units. Bold in his decisions, energetic and logically consistent in his execution. Superb horseman.

The final section, although short, would alter the trajectory of the officer's future career. While entitled "*Vorschlag*" (recommendation), the categorization was much more than a suggestion. Four words directed von Kleist's future "Höhere Adjutantur (sehr geeignet)" higher level adjutants (very suitable). Assignment to the prestigious *Generalstab* was not to be in Ewald's future.

A brief analysis of *Kriegsakademie* Director's assessment sheds light on the evaluation's constituent elements and how von Kleist was appraised with regard to those components.

The *Kriegsakademie Abgangs-Beurteilung* largely conformed to the substance and style of the normal troop officer's *Qualifikations-Bericht*. As with the *Bericht*, the *Abgangs-Beurteilung* contained five distinct categories for evaluation: character, intellectual capability, military aptitude, tactical competency, and future positional recommendations. Only physical fitness, a normally reported category in each *Bericht*, goes unassessed. While character description appeared second in the normal reports, the *Kriegsakademie* addressed it first, confirming its priority of place in the graduate's assessment and pointing to the criticality of character in an officer's makeup. Ewald's character was described and summarized in three words and a short descriptive phrase, "Distinguished, open, and calm character with a finely developed sense of tact." First, von Kleist's demeanor and bearing were described with the term "distinguished." This denoted that von Kleist was dignified in comportment and appearance and had an excellence in his conduct. "Open" spoke not to an officer who was isolated, aloof, or arrogant, but rather one who exhibited the traits of approachability, forthrightness, and honesty of personality. "Calm character" as used here, seemed to point primarily to Ewald's composed and unflappable nature. The Director concluded his direct assessment of von Kleist's character by identifying the officer's "finely developed sense of tact." Certainly, tact, as demonstrated by

adroitness, sensitivity, and skill in dealing with others, especially senior leaders with large or sensitive egos, was a highly desirable character trait for a staff officer and future senior leader to possess. Too, Ewald's tactfulness enhanced and supported the other components of his character.

General von Gündell next turned to Ewald's intellectual and military capacities. He noted that the *Oberleutnant* was "quite well disposed" intellectually and militarily. This indicated that von Kleist had a very capable mind, one that was able to deal with the difficult and complex mental demands placed on officers serving in higher staff and command positions. Without overt reference to Ewald's grades the Director allows the astute reader to overserve the dichotomy between Ewald's strong intellectual abilities and his "B / B minus" academic performance. While Ewald did, at times, have a lot to deal with, it appeared that he was somewhat lackadaisical or lacked a stronger motivation in his academic efforts. To be militarily well disposed, pointed to von Kleist's possessing the desirable martial qualities of loyalty, respect for authority, dedication to duty, and placing service above self as well as willingly accepting the discipline, hardships, and demands of life in the army.

Next came the key assessment of Ewald's skill and expertise in tactics. General von Gündell wrote, "He possesses good tactical understanding as well as a good understanding for the leadership of larger cavalry units. Bold in his decision, energetic and consistent in his execution." Here, the Director blended his assessment of Ewald's tactical competency with a recommendation for future assignments. Despite his relative inexperience in the cavalry, von Kleist was judged as having already apprehended the knowledge needed to lead "larger cavalry units" of brigade and division size.¹⁴¹ Implicit in this pronouncement was the recommendation

¹⁴¹ General von Gündell used the phrase "*größerer Kavallerie-Verbände*" (larger cavalry units) rather than the phrase "*Höheres Kavallerie-Kommandos*" (Higher Cavalry Commands). *Höheres Kavallerie-Kommandos* (HKK)

that von Kleist be assigned as a staff officer at the cavalry brigade level during peacetime and on a cavalry division's staff during war.¹⁴²

Following immediately, von Gündell identified the set of character traits which most directly shaped and supported Ewald's tactical perspicacity. The general stated, he is "bold in his decision, energetic and logically consistent in his execution." Ewald was neither hesitant nor overly-cautious in the tactical environment. Rather he demonstrated a daring and at times an audaciousness in his tactical decision-making and planning, an attribute that was highly desired in German commanders. Once his decision was made, von Kleist followed with vigorous "battlefield" actions but ones that maintained their rational, coherent, and reliable components.¹⁴³ Von Gündell's words, while laudatory, paint the picture of an officer who, while quite tactically capable, was clearly not in the top tier of tacticians.

To conclude his assessment, the Director highlighted Ewald's superlative riding skills, thus continuing to indicate that officer equitation skills remained of significant import and were a substantial discriminator within the officer corps, even among *Kriegsakademie* graduates. The final statement confirmed von Kleist's classification as an officer who was "very suitably" qualified for "Higher Adjutancy" positions. General von Gündell left the reader with the clear and concise perception that von Kleist was an officer of outstanding character, one who possessed a high degree of intelligence, was fully endowed with the desired military qualities,

were corps-level cavalry units, comprised of two or three cavalry divisions and identified in the German Army wartime mobilization organization tables. There were no peacetime standing *HKK*. Taken literally, von Gündell was stating that von Kleist had an understanding of the leadership requirements of cavalry brigades and divisions, but not yet of a cavalry corps.

¹⁴² There were no standing cavalry divisions during peacetime. Cavalry divisions, however, were heavily exercised in that during each annual *Kaisermanöver*, four provisional cavalry divisions were formed and exercised both as part of and separately from the main force-on-force troop maneuvers.

¹⁴³ Otto E. Moll, *Die Deutschen Generalfeldmarschälle 1935-1945* (Rastatt/Baden: Erich Pabel Verlag, 1961), 73. Moll's post-World War II chapter on von Kleist is subtitled, "Kühler Kopf, abwägender Verstand" (cool head, appraising mind). This descriptive phrase of von Kleist's generalship and wartime commandship is congruent with von Kleist's *Kriegsakademie* assessment thirty years prior.

and who was highly capable of becoming a very good, but not a superlative, future staff officer and mid-level commander within the German Army.¹⁴⁴

The few accounts describing *Kriegsakademie* procedures in this era indicate that approximately thirty percent of each year's graduates earned the highest categorization.¹⁴⁵ These officers were, in turn, temporarily assigned to the *Großen Generalstab* for a further two-year period of probationary training and evaluation. At the conclusion of this time, approximately fifty percent had met the final selection criteria and became fully qualified *Generalstaboffiziere*. An analysis of the Class of 1913 shows that of the one hundred fifty-seven graduates, forty-five (28.6 percent) received orders to the *Großer Generalstab* to commence their probationary period beginning on 1 April 1914.¹⁴⁶ The outbreak of World War I four months after the beginning of the Class of 1913's probationary period, interrupted the final peacetime step in the GSO qualification process. The exigencies of the war and the transition to wartime GSO qualification procedures therefore disallows any further GSO matriculation comparison of Class of 1913

¹⁴⁴ Samuel W. Mitcham Jr., "Kleist: Field-Marshal Ewald von Kleist," in *Hitler's Generals*, ed. Correlli Barnett (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1989), 249-263. Mitcham, one of the few military historians to deal with von Kleist, assessed the *Generalfeldmarschall's* thusly, "As a military commander, Field-Marshal von Kleist was no genius - although he showed flashes of genius. Although space precludes an account of tactical details, his retreat to and evacuation of the Kuban in 1943 were masterpieces of military leadership. His men knew that they were being led by a highly competent general and they liked him and had confidence in him, for he had earned their trust and respect. He was so solid and dependable that he inspired confidence, both from subordinates and from his senior officers. Perhaps a little too conservative, he is not to be ranked in the same category as Manstein and Rommel, arguably the best of Hitler's generals. He must, in this writer's view, be placed just behind them, in the second rank of military greatness."

¹⁴⁵ Johannes Hürter, *Hitlers Heerführer: Die deutschen Oberbefehlshaber im Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion 1941/42*, 2. Auflage (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007), 57. Clemente, *King*, 193. Hürter cites that "a mere third," and Clemente states "only about 30 percent" were selected to follow on with their probationary period on the Greater General Staff.

¹⁴⁶ *Militär-Wochenblatt* 99 (1914), 834-839. *Rangliste 1914*, 14-15. The lists in these two sources allow for a by name accounting of who from the Class of 1913 was temporarily assigned to the Greater General Staff beginning 1 April 1914. Indications are that probationary officers were temporarily assigned to the *Großer Generalstab* initially for one year. If their first year was successful, their assignment was extended for a second year. Had the peacetime selection process continued which normally saw fifty percent of the officer categorized as *Generalstab* go on to be selected and become fully qualified as *Generalstaboffiziere*, then only twenty-three officers would have joined the GS. This would have equated to only one in seven (14.4 percent) officers who began the course in 1910, in the end becoming a fully qualified GSOs. Hürter, *Heerführer*, 58. Hürter incorrectly identified von Kleist as having been assigned to the *Großen Generalstab* in peacetime, i.e., 1914 for a probationary period.

graduates with their predecessors. The war would, however, open up the opportunity for graduates, such as von Kleist, who had not been categorized as suitable for duty on the GS to become fully qualified *Generalstaboffiziere*.

While von Kleist's superlative *Kriegsakademie* qualification exam ranking might have seemed to predict a very high graduation ranking, Ewald had not earned the highest categorization nor the opportunity of the taking the direct path to serving on the *Generalstab*. Nonetheless, von Kleist had done well. Ewald appeared not to have been overly disappointed in his final rating and he expressed no regret or disappointment in not having been selected for *Generalstab* duty.¹⁴⁷ Nor did von Kleist come to exhibit any of the debilitating or adverse psychological effects as described by Geyr von Schweppenburg as being common to graduates, especially those who had received second tier classifications.¹⁴⁸ Von Kleist rather appeared to have been realistic about his performance, acknowledging both the level of his professional exertions and the personal weight he bore, especially during the last half of the course.

¹⁴⁷ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 28-30.

¹⁴⁸ Leo Geyr von Schweppenburg, "The German General Staff, Part I: The Imperial Years," *Military Review* XLII, no. 11 (November, 1962): 19-32. Leo Dietrich Franz Reichsfreiherr Geyr von Schweppenburg (* 2 March 1886 in Potsdam; † 27 January 1974 in Irschenhausen) was a member of *Kriegsakademie* Class of 1914, one year behind von Kleist. In an article written nearly two decades after the end of World War II and almost a half century after having attended the *Kriegsakademie*, von Geyr offered the following observation and criticism about the school and its graduates. "In criticizing the War Academy, a final remark concerning the psychological sphere is in order. For those officers who were not rated as 'Qualified for General Staff' the knowledge of this frequently left a lasting psychological effect, the disease of the so-called 'transposed' general staff. It could be diagnosed as a bitterness against that academy and its more successful representatives, and often developed in the officer a kind of inferiority complex. The disease was particularly apparent in those men who were 'only' accorded the qualification for higher level adjutant duty. In most cases it proved to be incurable." Despite Geyr von Schweppenburg's firsthand knowledge and experiences, his critique must be viewed with circumspection and at a minimum questioned in the light of the realities known to the officers who attended the *Kriegsakademie*. Namely, it was common knowledge that simply graduating from the school did not automatically guarantee admission to the General Staff. Each officer would have known that at most one-third of the graduates would receive the General Staff categorization and then only one half these officers would ultimately be selected as fully qualified *Generalstaboffiziere*. While Geyr von Schweppenburg's asserted that the adverse psychological effects frequently manifested themselves in all officers not "Qualified for General Staff," it seems most likely that those officers who were embittered or antagonistic towards the school and those classmates qualified for the General Staff would have been predominately found in the narrow percentage of graduates who had only just fallen short of the General Staff qualification bar.

As von Kleist had not been anointed as one of the chosen few in the form of selection for the General Staff, what had his hard work gained him? First, his categorization as *höhere Adjutantur*-qualified was his credentialing as trained staff officer. This qualification placed him in the top eight percent of his officer year group.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, Ewald's training ensured that he was highly knowledgeable of and well versed in the use of the standard set of procedures, regulations, formats, protocols, and techniques used in operational military planning. This standardized knowledge permitted von Kleist to be universally assignable at different command echelons across the breadth of the German Army. Too, his knowledge and experience not only empowered his own use of the above tools in the tool chest of German Army staff officers, but enabled him to teach others how to use these standard tools. All of this education made him an especially valued professional asset within the army. Additionally, Ewald significantly expanded his professional network of military officers. Both through personal exposure while an officer-student at the *Kriegsakademie* and as a graduate, Ewald was accepted into not only a wider but higher-ranking circle of professional contacts who could be called upon for information, advice, and assistance in the future. Finally, while not headed to the *Generalstab*, Ewald's *Kriegsakademie* education and his categorization as fully qualified for duties in the *höheren Adjutaturen* virtually guaranteed future assignment to positions of increased responsibility, importance, and influence at the brigade, division, and possibly army corps levels. Along with these positions would come accelerated promotions. Thus, von Kleist had gained much for his

¹⁴⁹ Gerhard Friedrich von Pelet-Narbonne, von Löbell's *Jahresberichte über die Veränderungen und Fortschritte im Militärwesen 1901* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1902), 19. Using a simple, straight mathematical formula (disregarding officer attrition), of the total of the 1,168 men who were commissioned as *Leutnants* in 1901, von Kleist's year group, if 45 qualified for the General Staff and an additional 45 qualified for higher adjutant duties, these 90 *Kriegsakademie* graduates, who were assumed to be the top tier of their officer peer group, equated to the top 7.7 percent of that group.

three years of effort at the *Kriegsakademie*. Time would tell to what extent his exertions would aid his career.

As Ewald and Gisela prepared to leave Berlin, von Kleist retrospectively gave the perception that while he was happy to have attended the *Kriegsakademie*, he was happier to be back on mounted duty with troops. He was ready to realize his long-time goal of being a cavalry officer whose primary duty was to be in the saddle and leading cavalymen each day.

VI. The *Oberleutnant* Becomes a Hussar

Ein mutiges Pferd
Ein scharfes Schwert
Ein tapferer Reitersmann
Deutschland nur nützen kann.

—Inspirational adage in the stables of Reiter-Regiment 1¹⁵⁰

Cassel, the city famous for being the home to the Brothers Grimm and the former capital of the Electorate of Hesse-Cassel, lay along the Fulda River.¹⁵¹ Prussia defeated the principality during the Austro-Prussian War in 1866 and annexed the territory. Throughout the nineteenth century, Cassel had transformed from a princely residence city to a growing industrial center. By 1910, the city's population stood at 125,000. The Wilhelmshöhe Palace served as a favored summer residence for *Kaiser* Wilhelm II and his family.

¹⁵⁰ Klaus Christian Richter, *Die feldgrauen Reiter* (Augsburg: Weltbild Verlag GmbH, 1993), 74. Translation: A courageous horse, A sharp sword, A brave horseman, Germany can only use.

¹⁵¹ The spelling of Cassel was changed to Kassel in 1926.

The military presence in Cassel in 1913 was significant. The senior unit was the *XI. Armeekorps* under the command of *General der Infanterie Freiherr Reinhard von Scheffer-Boyadel*. Next in importance stood the *22. Division* commanded by recently ennobled *Generalleutnant Otto Liman von Sanders*. A further four brigade headquarters, two infantry regiments, a hussar regiment, a field artillery regiment, a supply battalion, an artillery depot, a company of palace guards, and the *Kriegsschule* Cassel all called the city home.¹⁵²

Ewald and Gisela had become acquainted with the city the previous summer during Ewald's short training period with his new regiment, *Husaren-Regiment Landgraf Friedrich II. von Hessen-Homburg (2. Kurhessisches) Nr. 14*. The couple found a residence in a quiet and upscale neighborhood a short walk west of the Karlsau Park, a park just south of the city's center. Ewald recalled that "Gisela furnished our beautiful apartment in Kassel at Terrasse 13... with its beautiful view across the floodplain of the Habichtswald."¹⁵³ While Gisela worked to make the apartment a home, Ewald departed to participate with the regiment in a cavalry exercise.

By the middle of August, Ewald was at *Truppenübungsplatz Senne*. Located north of Paderborn on the western edge of the Teutoburger Forest, the locale had long been a military training area.¹⁵⁴ In 1913, it was the general training area for units assigned to the *VII. Armeekorps*. For several weeks in August, the *Truppenübungsplatz* was "where a cavalry

¹⁵² *Rangliste* 1913.

¹⁵³ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 13 and Heft III, 29.

¹⁵⁴ The Senne, later renamed Sennelager, Troop Training Area (*Truppenübungsplatz*) lay north of Paderborn and south of Bielefeld in northwestern Germany. The area became a military training area in 1817 and has been in near continuous use until the present time. From 1891, the former cavalry training area was designated a "General Military Training Area". The thirteen and one-half square mile area (thirty-five square kilometers) was under the control of *VII Armeekorps* in Münster.

exercise of a provisional cavalry division under General von Hollen took place.”¹⁵⁵ The training was one of several ancillary cavalry division exercises connected to the year’s *Kaisermanöver* but held separately from the main maneuvers.

The provisional cavalry division, *Kavallerie Division D*, in the *Kaisermanöver* order of battle, comprised three cavalry brigades, a *reitende Feldartillerie Abteilung* and a machine gun battalion.¹⁵⁶ To utilize his recent education, Ewald was pulled up from his regiment to serve as the *Ordonnanzoffizier* (aide-de-camp) to *Generalmajor* Raimund von Pelet-Narbonne, provisional commander of *Kavallerie Division D*.¹⁵⁷

Generalmajor von Pelet-Narbonne penned an official *Bericht* assessing von Kleist’s performance during the exercise.

¹⁵⁵ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft III, 28-29. “Gustav Freiherr von Hollen” (The Prussian Machine, no date). <http://prussianmachine.com/aka/hollen.htm> (September 3, 2021). *Gustav* Karl Emil Beatus *Freiherr* von Hollen (* 22.12.1851 in Schönweide; † 07.11.1917) joined the *Schleswig-Holsteinisches Ulanen-Regiment Nr. 15* - Straßburg im Elsaß in 1873 as a *Portepée-Fähnrich*. Served in various cavalry regiments and from 1898 until 1903 he served in the *Kürassier-Regiment „Kaiser Nikolaus I. von Russland“ (Brandenburgisches) Nr. 6* in Brandenburg an der Havel. It is likely that von Kleist knew of the then *Major* von Hollen being also stationed in Brandenburg an der Havel. Von Hollen rose to command the *Regiment Königs-Jäger zu Pferde Nr. 1* in Posen by 1905. In 1908, he took command of the *4. Kavallerie-Brigade* (Bromberg). He was promoted to *Generalleutnant* and assumed command of the *21. Infanterie-Division* at Frankfurt am Main on 1 October 1912. It would have been in this capacity that von Kleist served under him during the autumn maneuvers at Senne in 1913. Von Hollen became the *Höherer Kavallerie Kommandeur 4 (5. Armee)* at the outbreak of WWI. He commanded the 3. and the 37. *Infanterie Divisionen* during 1914-1915. He fell ill in August 1916 and died from this illness in November 1917. He had been promoted to *General der Kavallerie* on 27 January 1917.

¹⁵⁶ Kriegsministerium, *Armee-Verordnungsblatt, Nr 4, 25 Februar 1913* (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1914), 14-19. *Kavallerie Division D*’s assigned units were: in the *38. Kavallerie Brigade, Jäger-Regiment zu Pferde Nr. 2* and *Jäger-Regiment zu Pferde Nr. 6*; in *22. Kavallerie Brigade, Dragoner-Regiment Freiherr von Manteuffel (Rheinisches) Nr. 5* and *Husaren-Regiment Landgraf Friedrich II. von Hessen-Homburg (2. Kurhessisches) Nr. 14*; *22. Kavallerie Brigade, Kürassier-Regiment Graf Geßler (Rheinisches) Nr. 8* and *Husaren-Regiment König Wilhelm I. (1. Rheinisches) Nr. 7*; *Reitende Abteilung 1. Kurhessischen Feldartillerie Regiments Nr. 11*; and *Maschinengewehr-Abteilung Nr. 2*.

¹⁵⁷ *Rangliste 1885-1914*. Raimund Karl Johann von Pelet-Narbonne (* 1856; † 19 June 1914) was a career cavalry officer climbing the ranks primarily as a cuirassier officer. After commanding the *1. Garde-Ulanen-Regiment* he was promoted to commander *30 Kavallerie-Brigade* (Straßburg in Elsaß) and served in this capacity from April 1911 until April 1914. On 22 April 1914, von Pelet-Narbonne was promoted *Generalleutnant* and placed in command of the *Garde-Kavallerie-Division*. He died two months later on 19 June 1914. He was invested as an *Ehrenritter* (knight of honor) in the Johanniter-Orden in March 1894. Likely his provisional cavalry division command during the 1913 *Kaisermanöver* confirmed his fitness for division command.

Report
on Oberleutnant v. Kleist,
of Husaren-Regiment Landgraf Friedrich II. von Hessen-Homburg
(2 Kurhessisches) Nr. 14

Assigned as aide-de-camp to Cavalry Division D. 1913

I consider it my duty to point out this officer. An altogether excellent and versatile aide-de-camp, who evinces tactical vision and educated thinking. With the greatest passion for the profession, always deliberate and with a distinguished, calm demeanor, Oberleutnant von Kleist stands out to me as a particularly pleasant personality.

*von Pelet-Narbonne
Major General and Commander of
30th Cavalry Brigade*

*Straßburg i/E 29/VIII. 13*¹⁵⁸

Von Kleist clearly made a very good impression, both professionally and personally, on the experienced cavalry officer. Ewald would enhance his reputation at the end of the maneuvers.

“After the exercise was finished, a Kaiserpreis ride took place. It ended in Hofgeismar. This time it was only an orienteering and cross-country ride, not the long endurance ride like it was at Hanover. I was the best of my regiment and received a silver chalice. My performance was not quite enough to earn first place this time either.”¹⁵⁹ With his earning top place amongst the regiment’s riders, Ewald had clearly demonstrated his expertise in this aspect of his

¹⁵⁸ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Bericht über den Oberleutnant v. Kleist 1913; (Document 15). *Italics* indicates handwritten data. The heading of this report was typewritten, and is the first instance of the use of a typewriter in von Kleist’s personnel file. This is one of the indicators that the typewriter use was becoming more widespread within the German Army at this time, especially at the lower unit levels. In December 1913, von Kleist’s personnel file was updated and the majority of a new *Personal-Bericht* (personnel record) (document 13) was typed.

¹⁵⁹ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft III, 29. Hofgeismar lay approximately forty miles (sixty-four kilometers) south southeast of Senne. This would have been the approximate distance for the ride. Given von Kleist’s description, the route was not marked requiring the riders to use a map and compass to select their course through the unknown territory. Thus, it was not only the horse’s speed but the rider’s ability to take the most direct route which contributed to the lowest times.

equestrian skill set and this certainly helped establish his credibility in the regiment. This start boded well for his future with the hussars of Cassel.

By all indications, Ewald fit in well with his new regiment. As with many cavalry regiments, especially, the units with higher precedent, *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 14* had a high percentage of ennobled officers.¹⁶⁰ In 1913, twenty-two officers were assigned to the regiment. Of these, eighteen (eighty-two percent) were aristocrats. At the top of the regiment stood *Oberstleutnant* von Raumer.¹⁶¹ The regiment's sole staff officer was *Major* von Niesewand. Of the six *Rittmeister*, only two were aristocrats. Seven of the eight *Oberleutnants* and all six of the *Leutnants* were noblemen. One-third of the ennobled officers were titled and included *Leutnant* Wolfgang Prinz zu Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg, four *Freiherren* and one *Ritter und Edler*. As a member of a well-respected *adligen Militärclan*, Ewald fit in well socially with his fellow officers. While likely not the wealthiest of the regiment's officers, the von Kleist's resources allowed Ewald and Gisela to sustain a lifestyle that ably met expectations.

On the professional side, the regiment was also a good, if not superlative, fit for the new graduate of the *Kriegsakademie*. Ewald's arrival in mid-summer enabled him to not only participate in the August cavalry division maneuvers but in the September divisional maneuvers as well. Ewald recalled a memorable experience at the beginning of these exercises.

I led [Rittmeister] Hünke's squadron to the training area. I will never forget that ride through the beautiful Werra valley via Kreuzburg, Eisenach and onto Weimar. An unforgettable sight was when we stepped out of the forest near Eisenach one morning. For the first time in my life, I saw the Wartburg Castle bathed in the rising sun.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ *Rangliste* 1913, 385-386.

¹⁶¹ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 98 (1913), 2767. Hasso von Raumer was promoted to *Oberstleutnant* on 10 September 1913.

¹⁶² Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 30. The distance between Cassel and Weimar is approximately ninety-five miles (one hundred fifty kilometers) and would have taken two to three march days to traverse on horseback.

Ewald further recalled the exercise and in particular some of his early experiences with the 22. *Division* commander, *Generalleutnant* Liman von Sanders. Again, *Kriegsakademie* graduate von Kleist was pulled up to serve as a staff officer in a higher command echelon.

During the 1913 division maneuver, I was assigned with an 11. *Feldartillerie* Hauptmann, Freiherr von Werthern, to the staff of Liman von Sanders. Liman was very nervous, very hard and irritable. His General Staff officer und his regular aide-de-camp soon rode their own paths. The General was waiting to catch me, his temporary aide-de-camp, out. But it went quite well. Characteristically for him and with boundless vehemence he insulted his regular aide-de-camp for no reason and then after a while he turned around and gave him a *thaler*. The maneuvers ended with an attack on a fortified position in the Weimar area.¹⁶³

The beginning of October brought the commencement of the new training year. Ewald quickly dived into his responsibilities.

I was assigned by my commander, von Raumer, to select and manage the troop horses. Kassel was generally regarded as a poor riding garrison as the roads and paths were granite hard. Nevertheless, I found some beautiful hunting grounds in the small valleys where brooks and rivers ran. I was assisted in setting up the horse jumping obstacles by the young Lieutenant von Alvensleben, a son from the Ostrometzko branch. He owned a magnificent hunting horse.

Regularly I rode with the commander and [the regiment's] staff officer, Major von Niesewand, the father of Frau von Goßler and Frau von Weichs rode together. Often, we rode with the division commander, *Generalleutnant* Liman...¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Ibid., Heft III, 31. *Rangliste* 1903 and 1913. In 1913, von Werthern was still an *Oberleutnant*. *Hauptmann* Freiherr von Werthern was commissioned as a *Leutnant* in 1. *Kurhessisches Feldartillerie Regiment Nr. 11* (Cassel) in 1900 (DoR: 18 August 1900 D3d), the same day as von Kleist. Von Kleist interestingly uses the term “*Thaler*.” The *Thaler* coin dated back to the Holy Roman Empire but was replaced by the *Mark* after German Unification in 1971. The 3-Mark all silver *Vereinsthaler*, however, continued to be circulated until 1908 when it was withdrawn as legal tender. The term “*Thaler*” must have still been used colloquially well after the coin left circulation to denote a coin of a few *Marks* value.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., Heft III, 29-30. The Frau von Weichs mentioned is Margarethe von Niesewand (* 1891; † 1976), wife of army officer, Maximilian von Weichs, later *Generalfeldmarschall* von Weichs and peer of von Kleist. Magarethe married von Weichs in 1928 and was, at this time, the unmarried sister of *Major* von Niesewand.

“Otto Liman von Sanders” (The Prussian Machine, no date). <http://prussianmachine.com/aok/liman.htm> (September 4, 2021). Otto Viktor Karl Liman, from 1913, Otto Viktor Karl Liman von Sanders, (* 17. February 1855 in Stolp; † 22. August 1929 in München) was a German *General der Kavallerie* und Ottoman Marschall. After a civilian *Abitur*, he entered the army as a *Fahnenjunker* in *Leibgarde-Infanterie-Regiment (1. Großherzoglich Hessisches)*

With the autumn came hunt season. Again, von Kleist's skill in the saddle, experience as a whipper-in at the *Militär-Reit-Institut*, and unflappable temperament earned him the position of serving as a mounted escort for dignitaries. Able to tactfully handle the irascible *Generalleutnant* Liman von Sanders, Ewald found himself assigned as the general's hunting escort. He vividly recalled the experiences.

Liman von Sanders also took part in the mounted hunts on several occasions. These occasions were not always pleasant for me because I was responsible for riding with him. Particularly unpleasant was his habit of shouting loudly when he became nervous even during the more solemn ceremonial parts of the hunt. I used to say to him at the Hallali that I admired how well his horse, a black horse, went over the course. Since he was exceedingly vain, this calmed his ungracious mood. And still we parted on unfriendly terms.

At that time, he was appointed as head of the military mission in Turkey and played an important role. Things did not go the way he or others above him had thought they would go. The English objections had much to do with this.

Well in short, Liman appeared for the Hubertus hunt in Wilhelmstal, in which the Dragoner Regiment 5, a sister regiment in our brigade, also took part. The hunt ground was well chosen, not particularly difficult, but varied; including a jump over a wall into the forest. I asked Liman to follow me, riding directly on my track especially in the forest. He did not do so and tore his face open on a low hanging branch when he jumped into the woods. He raged about this and left me most ungraciously. Without a doubt this accident hurt his vanity when he had to appear with a bruised face in the circle of ladies who were waiting for us by the blazing fire in a clearing in the woods for the Hallali, and because he had to appear in Berlin the next day in this condition. So, I left Liman, ... with whom I had otherwise always gotten along skillfully, on unfriendly terms, at least from his point of view.¹⁶⁵

Nr. 115 in 1874. He attended the *Kriegsakademie* (1878-1881) and while a student branch transferred from infantry to cavalry. He served in *Garde-Dragoner-Regiment (1. Großherzoglich Hessisches) Nr. 23* after the *Kriegsakademie* and was posted to the General Staff in 1887. He commanded *Husaren-Regiment Graf Goetzen (2. Schlesisches) Nr. 6* and the *22. Division* before being posted to Turkey in 1913. In 1913, he was ennobled by *Kaiser Wilhelm II*. He served in Turkey, both as head of the German Military Mission and as a field commander, for the entirety of World War I. He returned to Germany and retired in 1919.

¹⁶⁵ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 31-33. Hallali or Halali is the traditional ceremonial gathering at the conclusion of the hunt which includes the huntsman, the pack of hounds, and the field of riders. *Dragoner-Regiment Freiherr von Manteuffel (Rheinisches) Nr. 5* was quartered in the town of Hofgeismar, approximately eighteen miles (thirty kilometers) north of Kassel. At the time of the 1913 hunt, *Obersteutnant* Alfred von Hülst was the regimental commander.

On 1 December 1913, Ewald received his seventh officer *Qualifikations-Bericht*. While the general format of the evaluation report did not change, the status of being a *Kriegsakademie* graduate apparently now required or allowed for multiple endorsements by commanders up the chain of command. In this case, the report having been written by Ewald's regimental commander, *Oberstleutnant* von Raumer, had three additional senior commander's make comments to the evaluation.

Qualifications Report

to 1 December 1913

on *Oberleutnant* Paul Ludwig Ewald v. Kleist

in *Husaren-Regiment* Landgraf Friedrich II. von Hessen-Homburg (:2 Kurhessisches) Nr. 14

Age	Pensionable Service Time	Combat Ready	How long in	Commission
Year Months	Years Months		Position	
32 4	13 9	Ja	3 Year 10 Months	27.1.1910 G14g

A man without fault, endowed with all good human and military qualities.

The director of the Kriegsakademie, General of the Infantry von Gündell, judged him on September 6, 1913: "Distinguished, open, and courageous character with a finely developed sense of tact.

Intellectually and militarily quite well disposed. He also possesses a good understanding for the leadership of larger cavalry units. Bold in his decision, energetic and logically consistent in his execution. Superb horseman. Higher adjutancy (very suitable)."

- In my opinion, Oberleutnant von Kleist without a doubt belongs on the General Staff.

He lives in a happy marriage and a good situation.

Fills all responsibilities of his position., is qualified for promotion, and is recommended for higher adjutancy positions.

von Raumer

Lieutenant Colonel and Regimental Commander

Oberleutnant von Kleist made an exceptionally favorable impression on me in all situations in which I was able to observe him after his return from the Kriegsakademie. Major General von Pelet-Narbonne, as commander of Cavalry Division D, to which he was assigned as an aide-de-camp, also commented on him in this sense. I highly recommend this above average and gifted officer for the higher adjutancy. Fills all responsibilities of his position and is qualified for promotion.

von Wurmb

Colonel and Brigade Commander.

Oberleutnant von Kleist is an officer who deserves special attention because his prowess and clear judgment, combined with indefatigable vigor and perfect tact, favorably distinguish him in all situations. - He would be fully suited for General Staff service in the field. - I recommend him for brigade adjutant and for preferential promotion. - Fills all responsibilities of his position.

*Liman von Sanders
Lieutenant General and Division-Commander*

*I endorse his assignment to the higher adjutancy and his preferential promotion.
Frhr. von Scheffer-Boyadel.
General of Infantry and Commanding General¹⁶⁶*

This was by far the best and most laudatory of all of Ewald's officer evaluations reports to date. Despite having served on duty in the regiment and been directly observed by the regimental commander for less than a total of four months, *Oberstleutnant* von Raumer unreservedly delivered an assessment that could hardly have been more adulatory. After declaring von Kleist without fault as a man and possessing all of the best qualities of man and officer, von Raumer introduced *General der Infanterie* von Gündell, Director of the *Kriegsakademie*, assessment of Ewald's *Kriegsakademie* performance. As the *Kriegsakademie* report did not become a part of von Kleist's official personnel record, von Raumer's quoting of the assessment made it a permanent part of Ewald's officer performance history.

Next, von Raumer asserts his own opinion of von Kleist's capabilities vis-à-vis the *Generalstab.*, to which we will return momentarily. Interestingly, the commander then comments on Ewald's marriage and personal state of affairs, declaring him to be "in a happy marriage" and a "good situation." The latter was taken as a confirmation of von Kleist's

¹⁶⁶ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Qualifikations-Bericht 1913; (Document 16). *Italics* indicates handwritten data. The endorsements, or additional rater comments end with the army corps commander, in this case, *General der Infanterie Freiherr* von Scheffer-Boyadel. Subsequent *Berichte* also end with a corps commander's review regardless of how many echelons the report had to pass through. Here the corps commander was three echelons above the regiment. Of note, von Raumer's quotation of General von Gündell's assessment has two errors. First, von Raumer changes the adjective describing von Kleist's character from "calm" to "courageous." The second is the omission of "tactical" before "understanding" in the third sentence. Both alter the meaning of the statements. The first "calm to courageous" is relatively small but the second instance of omitting tactical fails to transmit von Kleist's skill in this key area.

personal economic status being sufficient for his membership in the regiment. Finally, the commander concludes with the proforma statements confirming that the *Oberleutnant* fulfilled all of the duties of his position, was ready for promotion.

Most striking in this evaluation is von Raumer's very pointed and strong statement, "In my opinion, Oberleutnant von Kleist undoubtedly belongs on the General Staff." As a *Generalstabsoffizier* with experience on the *Großer Generalstab* and a former instructor at the *Kriegsakademie*, von Raumer is not without credibility as to the knowledge and insight on the qualities needed by a *Generalstabsoffizier*. His statement, while respectfully caveated, clearly indicated his disagreement with the *Kriegsakademie* leadership in not ranking von Kleist as qualified for the *Generalstab*. Hindsight showed that von Raumer, like Greßmann, saw Ewald's future potential more clearly and presciently than most of their peers. This is likely due to the fact that both of these officers invested significant time and effort as mentors and in so doing came to know Ewald, his character and his intellectual/military capabilities the best. This knowledge, in turn, enabled them to divine his future potential more clearly. Having clearly made his point, von Raumer respectfully did not further press his opinion, but rather closed with recommending Ewald for higher adjutancy positions.

Next to make comments on von Kleist was *Oberst* Adelbert von Wurmb, commander of the 22. *Kavallerie-Brigade* (Cassel).¹⁶⁷ Von Wurmb's assessment of von Kleist was summed up by the statement, "made an exceptionally favorable impression on me in all situations..." The brigade commander drew in the opinion of *Generalmajor* von Pelet-Narbonne, commander of Cavalry Division D during the *Kaisermanöver*, to strengthen and broaden his strong words of

¹⁶⁷ *Oberst* Adalbert Hugo Ulrich von Wurmb (* 1860; † 1935) left the command of Ulanen-Regiment Hennigs von Treffenfeld (Altmärkisches) Nr. 16 on 1 April 1913, to take command of 22. *Kavallerie-Brigade* (Cassel). He entered World War I at the head of this brigade and led it until 26 January 1917. He went on to command 5. *Kavallerie-Division* and retired as a *Generalleutnant* after the war.

praise for Ewald. *Oberst* von Wurmb does not venture into speculation as to von Kleist's suitability for the General Staff, but rather recommended the *Oberleutnant* for a position in the higher adjutancy.

The second endorsing officer was the commander of 22. *Division*, *Generalleutnant* Otto Liman von Sanders.¹⁶⁸ Despite the reported discord between the general and the *Oberleutnant*, as reported by von Kleist, the division commander penned a glowing assessment of the recent *Kriegsakademie* graduate. Whatever personal animosity Liman von Sanders may have had towards Ewald, none of that came through as the general identified von Kleist as an officer who “deserves special attention” and “preferential promotion.” The gruff cavalryman praised Ewald's prowess, clear judgement, indefatigable vigor, and most interestingly, his perfect tact. While not willing to take as strong a stand as von Raumer did concerning von Kleist's suitability for selection to the General Staff, the division commander nevertheless did endorse von Kleist for elevation to General Staff duty during wartime. Ewald must have been a bit surprised to read his division commander's comments.

The final endorsement came from the desk of the *Kommandierende General des XI. Armeekorps*, *General der Infanterie Freiherr* von Scheffer-Boyadel.¹⁶⁹ The statement was a simple, succinct, but solid endorsement for the *Oberleutnant* confirming that he should be sent to a posting in the higher adjutancy as well as be preferentially promoted.

¹⁶⁸ See footnote 327.

¹⁶⁹ “Reinhold Freiherr von Scheffer-Boyadel” (The Prussian Machine, no date). <http://prussianmachine.com/aok/scheffer.htm> (October 2, 2021). Reinhard Gottlob Georg Heinrich Freiherr von Scheffer-Boyadel (* 28 March 1851; † 8 November 1925) joined the army in 1870 and earned the *Eisernes Kreuz II* during that war. Served as an infantry officer, graduated from the *Kriegsakademie*, eventually serving as Chief of Staff for the Gardekörps before being selected to command *Kaiser Alexander Garde-Grenadier-Regiments Nr. 1* in 1899. Ennobled by Wilhelm II in 1906, now *Freiherr* von Scheffer-Boyadel, went on to command 2. *Garde-Division* before being promoted to *General der Infanterie* and assuming the post of *Kommandierenden General des XI. Armee-Korps* in 1908. He entered retirement on 31 December 1913, but was recalled to active duty at the outbreak of World War I. He commanded five different corps during the war and was awarded the *Pour le Mérite* for his outstanding leadership during the Battle of Łódź in November 1914.

All in all, this *Qualifikations-Bericht* was confirmation of von Kleist's outstanding character, high abilities, and significant future potential. He could reasonably expect to be promoted in the not-too-distant future. Too, Ewald must have understood that his assignment out of *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 14* to a higher adjutancy posting was likely to occur sooner rather than later. In the meantime, he and Gisela would work to enjoy life in the regiment and Cassel.

The fall hunt season and the autumn training cycle closed with the end of the year. In January 1914, at the beginning of the winter training period, Ewald was transferred to *Rittmeister* Curt von Ulrich's squadron.¹⁷⁰ Von Ulrich was a *Generalstabsoffizier* and was serving his period of troop duty at the squadron/battalion command level before being reassigned to the *Generalstab* duties. Ewald's daily duties included equitation instruction. Ewald recalled his "memories of the happy winter of 1913/14. I usually released my riding section from duty early in the morning. I was then back home to have breakfast with Gisela and usually did not have to be back at the barracks until around 10 o'clock for the officer riding lesson which I gave."

Off duty activities were equally as enjoyable for the Ewald and Gisela. Gisela had recovered her health and was able to rejoin in the social events once again. In Cassel, the couple "had a large circle of friends and acquaintances, were guests and often had guests."¹⁷¹ They

¹⁷⁰ "Curt von Ulrich" (Wikipedia, March 11, 2019). https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curt_von_Ulrich (September 5, 2021). Curt Albert Paul von Ulrich (* 14. April 1876 in Fulda; † 2. February 1946 in Speziallager Nr. 8 Torgau (Fort Zinna)) was the son of Prussian *Generalmajor* Albert Ulrich (1836-1906). After receiving his *Abitur*, he joined *Großherzoglich Hessische Garde-Drägoner-Regiment Nr. 23* in September 1894. After attending the *Kriegsakademie* he was posted to the *Großer Generalstab*. Prior to World War I, he was assigned to *Husaren-Regiment Landgraf Friedrich II. von Hessen-Homburg (2. Kurhessisches) Nr. 14* where he served as a squadron commander. He served in various staff positions as a *Major* during World War I. He also commanded a regiment and was Quartermaster of an *Armeeoberkommando*. He was seriously wounded and declared unfit for combat. He was retained in the *Vorläufigen Reichswehr* (200,000-man) and posted back to *Husaren Regiment Nr. 14* in Kassel as officer in charge of the decommissioning element. He was retired on 1 April 1920, as an *Oberstleutnant*. In 1925, von Ulrich joined the NSDAP and SA and served as *Gauführer* (district leader) in Hessen-Nassau-Nord and Hessen-Nassau-Süd. Following other positions for the NSDAP, von Ulrich assumed the position of *Oberpräsident* (governor) for the Province of Saxony on 1 December 1933. He fell ill in 1940 and was retired from service in February 1944. He was arrested by the Western Allies, handed over to the Soviets, and he died in Soviet Special Camp No. 8 in Torgau in February 1946.

¹⁷¹ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 35.

continued to meet and rub elbows with high-ranking personages. During this time, they made acquaintance of *Oberleutnant Prinz* Reuß Heinrich XXXIII who was married to *Prinzessin* Viktoria Margarete von Preußen, niece of *Kaiserin* Auguste Viktoria, wife of *Kaiser* Wilhelm II. *Prinzessin* Viktoria and Gisela got along particularly well. “During the winter, the youngest son of the *Kaiser*, *Prinz* Joachim von Preußen, was also transferred to the regiment. He was a nice, if somewhat clueless boy” who was then only twenty-three years old.¹⁷²

On 22 March 1914, Ewald was promoted to *Rittmeister*.¹⁷³ His promotion was a supernumerary one in that there were not enough budgeted captain’s positions for the appointment to *Rittmeister* to receive a normal *Patent* (commission).¹⁷⁴ As a *Rittmeister*, Ewald was now a prime candidate to become a cavalry *Eskadron* (squadron) commander.¹⁷⁵

Within six weeks of his promotion, von Kleist received notification that he was being transferred to *1. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1 (LHR 1)* at Danzig (Langfuhr) in Pommern. The

¹⁷² Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft III, 35-36. Von Kleist noted, “Later in the year 1915, I saw him again in Lotzen at the Oberkommando Ost, where he showed me the picture of his secret bride, a Princess of Anhalt. This marriage also later ended tragically.” Prinz Joachim von Preußen was assigned to *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 14* at the end of January 1914.

¹⁷³ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft III, 38. Von Kleist noted in his memoirs that he was promoted to *Rittmeister* with a *Vorpatent* (pre-dated commission). Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). Von Kleist’s personnel record indicated that his date of rank was 22 March 1914 with a precedence of V23v on that list.

¹⁷⁴ “Personal-Veränderungen.” *Militär-Wochenblatt* 99 (1914), 850. The promotion announcement of 22 March 1914, stated that von Kleist was promoted “überzählig” (supernumerary). Some of the elements of a supernumerary promotion remain unclear. Uncertain is the promotees pay status. It is possible that because the position was not accounted for in the regiments budget, i.e., the regiment was only authorized a certain number of *Hauptleute*, or within the personnel portion of the army budget, that the newly promoted officer did not receive the higher rank pay until a vacancy at the new rank occurred. Possibly, the newly promoted officer was paid not by the regiment but by a central army pay fund. Janet Robinson and Joe Robinson, *Handbook of Imperial Germany* (Bloomington, IN: Author House, 2009), 171. The pay raise when it did occur was significant. Von Kleist’s base pay went from 175 Marks/month to 283.33 Marks/per month, a 39.3 percent increase totaling an additional 108.33 Marks/Month or 1,300 Marks/year. Increases in *Servis* and *Wohnungsgeldzuschuss* would also have been realized. While the commencement of pay seems foggy, what appears to be clear was that the officer was allowed to wear the new rank and that his date of rank was tied to his promotion date and not to when his commission became “regular,” that is not supernumerary. Von Kleist’s *Nachlaß* does not contain his *Patent* (commissioning certificate) for either *Rittmeister* or *Major*.

¹⁷⁵ Each cavalry regiment had five *Eskadronen* (squadrons). Normally, a *Rittmeister* commanded the squadron but junior *Majore* also commanded at this level. The squadron was roughly equivalent to an infantry company and artillery battery. In 1913, in *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 14*, all five squadrons were commanded by *Rittmeister*.

official transfer was to the staff of the *LHR I* and the orders were dated 20 May 1914.¹⁷⁶ The transfer appeared to have taken von Kleist somewhat by surprise. He and Gisela had settled into Cassel and were, by all accounts, contented both personally and professionally, “we had settled in so happily, living so gladly in our house.”¹⁷⁷ Ewald assessed the time the couple had spent in *HR 14* and recalled that the period had been “very professionally instructive” under the tutelage of *Oberstleutnant*-von Raumer. Behind Greßmann, Ewald attributed learning the most from this cavalry and *Generalstabsoffizier*. There appeared to be another significant mentor/protégé relationship developing between von Raumer and von Kleist. Ewald noted that he suspected that von Raumer would have been happy to have kept him in the regiment. In addition to the professional gains during the ten months in Cassel, the “period was very pleasant in both social and comradery interactions. ... The departure from Kassel was very difficult for both Gisela and me.”¹⁷⁸

While Ewald could not have known what would occur in a few short months, the transfer to Langfuhr and the *Leib-Husaren* likely saved his life.

My war mobilization position was then taken by Oberleutnant Hellwig. He fell soon after the war began. Raumer became chief of staff of an H.K.K.—Higher Cavalry Command. He also fell when he rode forward to the advanced guard when it had encountered a hold up. The ways of destiny are often wonderful, what seems to be a misfortune today is nevertheless a good thing. So, in retrospect, I probably have no regrets about my transfer to the 1. *Leib-Husar* Regiment.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ . “Personal-Veränderungen.” *Militär-Wochenblatt* 99 (1914), 1520. The notice in the *Militär-Wochenblatt* stated that von Kleist, as an *überzählig Rittmeister* from *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 14* was transferred to the staff of *1. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1*. The transfer order was recorded as being dated 20 May 1914. In the same *Militär-Wochenblatt* personnel assignments announcements was the transfer of *Major* von Frantzius from squadron command in *1. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1* to the staff of *Magdeburgisches Husaren-Regiment Nr. 10* (Stendal).

¹⁷⁷ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 13.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., Heft III, 38.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., Heft III, 38. Fritz Hellwig (* ?; † 10 August 1914) was an *Oberleutnant* in *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 14*. He joined the regiment in early 1902 and received his commission as a *Leutnant* on 22 June 1902 (A2a). Hellwig attended the *Militär-Reit-Institut* October 1908-September 1910, the next year group behind von Kleist. Hellwig was promoted to *Oberleutnant* on 16 June 1911. He served in *1. Eskadron* and mobilized with the regiment for duty

Certain decisions of the German Army at times are unclear and Ewald's transfer to the *Leib-Husaren* is a case in point. Possibly, von Kleist's assignment to *HR 14* was a planned short-term posting meant as a holding pattern until such time as he had been categorized upon graduation from the *Kriegsakademie*. Possibly, *HR 14* was a needed first-stop in a mid-ranked *Husaren* regiment before assignment to a top-tier cavalry regiment. Perhaps, an opportune vacancy in the *Leib-Husaren* allowed von Kleist to be pulled up to this more prestigious regiment. While the reasons behind the transfer are likely undiscoverable, the people who were involved can be feasibly deduced.

At the top of this list was *Kronprinz* Wilhelm, the *Kaiser's* son and erstwhile commander of *1. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1*.¹⁸⁰ The prince's frequent visits to Hannover to ride with the *Militär-Reit-Institut* Hunt allowed *Kronprinz* Wilhelm to meet and closely observe the then officer-student von Kleist. As a whipper-in, Ewald would have served as Wilhelm's escort thereby coming to enter the prince's circle of acquaintances. While Ewald was in Berlin, chance meetings between the two likely occurred at the any number of equestrian events. Most recently, the contact between Wilhelm and von Kleist had been reinforced when the prince's younger brother, *Prinz* Joachim, joined *HR 14* in January 1914.

on the Western Front. He was wounded on 8 August 1914 at Saint-Souplet, France and died two days later on 10 August 1914. As von Kleist noted, Hellwig filled his war mobilization position. Ironically, Hellwig received his fatal wound on von Kleist's birthday. Hasso von Raumer was transferred out of the regiment in June or July 1914, shortly after von Kleist left, to serve as Chief of Staff of the *Höhere Kavallerie-Kommando Nr. 1 (HKK 1)* under *General der Kavallerie* Manfred *Freiherr* von Richthofen. *Höhere Kavallerie-Kommando Nr. 1* was comprised of the *Garde-Kavallerie-Division* and *5. Kavallerie-Division* and was the cavalry corps assigned to *III. Armee*.

¹⁸⁰ August von Mackensen, *Die Leibhusaren Ihre Geschichte im Weltkriege* (Berlin: Verlag E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1929), 3. *Kronprinz* Wilhelm served as the regimental commander of *1. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1* from 15 September 1911 until 12 December 1913. After his command ended, he maintained his official association with the regiment by being designated an "à la suite" officer in the rank of *Oberst*.

The second most influential officer von Kleist knew with a direct connection to the *LHR 1* was *General der Kavallerie* August von Mackensen, then the commanding general of *XVII. Armeekorps* headquartered at Danzig. Of General von Mackensen, Ewald recalled,

The *Leib-Husaren-Brigade*, with the 1. *Leib-Husaren-Regiment* mounted on gray horses with red Kolpaks and the 2. *Leib-Husaren-Regiment* mounted on black horses with white Kolpaks, was especially close to the heart of the then Commanding General, August von Mackensen. He had achieved the amalgamation of these regiments into a single brigade at Langfuhr. He had been the first brigade commander. General von Mackensen ...[and] we met at the von Schack's wedding at Gut Wendorff near Crivitz in Mecklenburg. He was about the only one I knew from the brigade when I went there.¹⁸¹

After General von Mackensen left command of the brigade in 1903, he maintained a close and interactive relationship with *LHR 1*, whose uniform he was granted permission to continue to wear. Both *LHR 1* and *LHR 2* were subordinate regiments assigned under *XVII. Armeekorps*. As an element of his commandership, von Mackensen would have officially been involved in the assignment of officers into and out of the army corps. Undoubtedly, he monitored and, when required, made input into the assignment process to ensure that high quality officers were assigned to key positions throughout the army corps' subordinate units.

Ewald's next strongest connection to the *Leib-Husaren* was through Jenö von Egan-Krieger. The three years that the two officers spent together at the *Kriegsakademie* allowed for a significant acquaintanceship if not friendship to develop between the Ewald and Jenö. On 1 April 1914, *Oberleutnant* von Egan-Krieger had been assigned to the *Großen Generalstab* for his two-year probationary period. Also, in the regiment was *Major* Carl von Borcke, whom Ewald

¹⁸¹ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 13-14. A kolpak is the fabric flap that folds from the crown to the side of a hussar's *Pelzmütze* (busby). To which regiment the officer or trooper belonged could be told by the color of the kolpak and the ornamentation of the busby. A busby is the short, cylindrical, fur-covered headdress that was traditional worn by hussars. Both the 1. and the 2. *Leib-Husaren-Regimenten* had as front ornamentation on their busbys, the *Totenkopf* (death's head) skull. The *Braunschweigische Husaren-Regiment Nr. 17* also wore the *Totenkopf*. The referenced von Schack wedding was the marriage between Ivan and Hedwig Mackensen von Astfeld's daughter, Gertrud, and Hartwig von Schack.

had known from Brandenburg a/H, when the then *Rittmeister* was an officer in *Kürassier-Regiment Nr. 6*.¹⁸² Additionally, von Kleist rubbed elbows with *LHR 1* officers, then *Leutnants* Emich Graf zu Solms-Wildenfels and Harry Douglas, for a year each while at the *MRI* but had not established a relationship with them.¹⁸³ While there was no direct connection between *Oberstleutnant* Georg von Eicke und Polwitz, the *LHR 1* regimental commander in the spring of 1914, and von Kleist, the fact that von Eicke was a *Kriegsakademie* graduate likely made Ewald's transfer more acceptable.¹⁸⁴ Lastly, the influence of retired *General der Kavallerie* Georg von Kleist's cannot be discounted. In the final analysis, the collective synergy created by some or all of the aforementioned officers catalyzed Ewald's assignment and generated *Militärkabinett* (Military Cabinet) orders which sent the newly minted *Rittmeister* to the premier *Husaren* regiment in the German Army.¹⁸⁵

By the end of May 1914, Ewald and Gisela were in Langfuhr. While the transfer orders stated Ewald was being assigned to the staff of *LHR 1*, he was within a few days of his arrival

¹⁸² Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 15. Von Kleist wrote, "Oberstleutnant of the Staff, Major von Borcke, father-in-law of Heinrich Graf Dohna (regimental adjutant to the Crown Prince). I knew Borcke from Brandenburg an der Havel, where he was in the 6. Kürassier. Dohna became a general in World War II and was shot after July 20, 1944. He was on the list as presumptive Oberpräsident."

¹⁸³ Also, there was a *Rittmeister* Hans Mackensen von Astfeld serving as a squadron commander in *1. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1* in the 1913-14 timeframe. This officer was related to Gisela's relative, the retired cavalry officer and *Oberstleutnant* Ivan Mackensen von Astfeld. Had the two Mackensen von Astfelds' relationship been close enough, the *Rittmeister* may have attested to von Kleist's acceptability into the regiment and endorsed his transfer.

¹⁸⁴ Of note, all of the three commanders involved, *Kronprinz* Wilhelm, and *Oberstleutnants* von Raumer and von Eicke und Polwitz, were knights in the *Johanniter-Orden*. H. Kypke and others, *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist: Dritter Teil - Biographien bis 1880 Dritte Abteilung, Muttrin-Damensche Linie Der Muttriner Ast*, 2. überarbeitete Auflage. (Hamm: 2017), 170. There was a distant connection between Georg Heinrich von Eicke und Polwitz (* 7 March 1868 at Marschwitz; † 7 December 1918 in Breslau) and Ewald von Kleist. Von Eicke und Polwitz's mother was born a von Kleist, Adelheid Luise Freiin von Kleist. She was descended from the Kurland branch and thus a distant and many times removed relative of Ewald.

¹⁸⁵ There was one other hussar regiment higher in precedence than *1. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1*, the *Leib-Garde-Husaren-Regiment* (Potsdam). As a *Garde* regiment, the *LGHR* had a foot in both the ceremonial world and the operational world. *1. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1*, brigaded together with its sister regiment *2. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 2*, located far from the pomp and circumstances of Berlin and Potsdam, remained far more operationally focused and thus were viewed as more combat capable than the *LGHR*. Too, *LHR 1* and *LHR 2* were *Kriegsakademie* "friendly" as they regularly had officer qualify and attend the school as well as had commanders and staff officers who were graduates.

given command of 3. *Eskadron*. “My predecessor, Rittmeister Walzer, formerly of 12. Ulanen, ... was sent to the Spanish Riding School in Vienna and then was to take command of the Schulstall in Hannover.”¹⁸⁶

The transfer to Langfuhr was not a smooth experience for the von Kleists. Despite his family’s history in Pommern, Ewald noted that, “Neither of us knew the East.” A statement which inferred somewhat of a social-cultural discomfort in their new surroundings. Further complicating their efforts to establish themselves, the short-notice assignment at the beginning of the summer vacation season put the von Kleist’s at a disadvantage in finding permanent quarters in the Baltic coast town of Danzig, suburb Langfuhr, and its surrounding communities. They found temporary quarters in a boarding house in Zoppot, a coastal resort town five and a half miles (nine kilometers) north of Langfuhr and *LHR I’s Kaserne*.¹⁸⁷ A further search turned up “a pretty and large villa in Jaeschkental. The apartment had two floors, which had been connected from floor to floor with a staircase. The apartment was very, almost too spacious for us.” The couple planned to move into this apartment in the autumn after enjoying the summer in Zappot.

In the regiment, Ewald also experienced a rocky start. “The 1. Leib-Husaren Regiment had had Kronprinz Wilhelm von Preußen as its commander until the fall of 1913. His successor was Major von Eicke und Polwitz. He was congenial towards me but I probably was not congenial towards him.”¹⁸⁸ Despite this apparent antipathy towards his new regimental

¹⁸⁶ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 12.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. The boarding house was likely very nice as von Kleist recalled that a pair their fellow boarders were retired *Generalleutnant* Kuntzen and his wife. They were the parents of one of von Kleist’s new regimental fellow officers, *Leutnant* Adolf-Friedrich Kuntzen.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., Heft II, 14.

commander, von Kleist noted that “The regiment was good, the officer corps was well-mannered and at the same time unassuming and ambitious.”

As June 1914 began, the primary officer personnel changes in the regiment had ended. Ewald was the new commander of 3. *Eskadron* while *Rittmeister* Hans Eschenburg was the new commander of 2. *Eskadron*.¹⁸⁹ Their three fellow squadron commanders were relatively experienced. *Rittmeister* Erich von Poellnitz had been the 1. *Eskadron Chef* for more than five years, *Rittmeister* Werner von Bresler, 4. *Eskadron Chef* for nearly four years, and *Rittmeister* Hans Mackensen von Astfeld, 5. *Eskadron Chef* for just over four years. The regimental adjutant was *Leutnant* Eberhard “Buschchen” von Mackensen, the talented son of *General der Kavallerie* von Mackensen.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ *Rangliste 1909*, 367. “Personal-Veränderungen.” *Militär-Wochenblatt* 95 (1910), 867. “Personal - Veränderungen.” *Militär-Wochenblatt* 96 (1911), 842. “Personal -Veränderungen.” *Militär-Wochenblatt* 99 (1914), 1520. *Rittmeister* Erich von Poellnitz and Hans Mackensen von Astfeld had been members of *LHR 1* for more than six years, while *Rittmeister* Eschenburg had come up in the regiment’s sister regiment, 2. *Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 2*, where he had served as regimental adjutant. On 1 April 1910, Eschenburg began a two-year assignment to the *Großer Generalstab* apparently to serve a probationary period concluding in possible qualification as a *Generalstabsoffizier* despite not having attended the *Kriegsakademie*. In 1911, while posted to the *GGS*, he was transferred from *LHR 2* to *LHR 1*. At the conclusion of his unsuccessful probationary period in the spring 1912, Eschenburg returned to Langfuhr and took up duties in *LHR 1*. He was made commander of 2. *Eskadron* at the end of May 1914, at the same time von Kleist took command of 3. *Eskadron*.

¹⁹⁰ “von Mackensen, Eberhard” (Lexikon der Wehrmacht, no date). <https://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de/Personenregister/M/MackensenEv.htm> (September 3, 2020). Friedrich August Eberhard von Mackensen (* 24 September 1889 in Bromberg; † 19 May 1969 in Alt-Mühlendorf near Nortorf) was the fourth of five children of August and Dorothea, (nee von Horn) von Mackensen. He joined the army as a *Fahnenjunker* on 1 October 1908, and was commissioned as a *Leutnant* on 23 January 1910. He entered World War I as the regimental adjutant, 1. *Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1*. He was wounded on 23 August 1915, and after recuperating was posted as an aide-de-camp on the *Generalstab der Heeresgruppe* Scholtz and subsequently was qualified as a *Generalstabsoffizier*. He was promoted to *Hauptmann* on 20 May 1917. He was retained in the *Reichswehr* and served in both troop and *Reichswehrministerium* posts during the 1920s and early 1930s. He was promoted to *Oberst* on 1 September 1934, and on 1 May 1935, assumed the position of Chief of the General Staff of *Generalkommando X. Armeekorps* in Hamburg. He subsequently served as a cavalry brigade commander and Chief of Staff of Army Group Command 5 in Vienna. At the outbreak of the Polish Campaign, he was Chief of the General Staff of 14. *Armee*. After the French Campaign, he was promoted on 1 August 1940, to *General der Kavallerie*. On 15 January 1941, he was given command of 111. *Armeekorps* and commanded this corps on the southern East Front from June 1941 until his promotion to Commanding General of 1. *Panzerarmee* on 22 November 1942. As commander of 111. *Armeekorps* and 1. *Panzerarmee*, von Mackensen was a direct subordinate to von Kleist for twenty-nine months, until his transfer to the Italian Front in November 1943. Due to disputes about command style, he was relieved of command by Hitler in July 1944, and placed in the Führer-Reserve. He ended the war without having been recalled to active duty. He was captured by the Allies and was held by the British. On 30 November 1946, in Rome, von Mackensen was convicted of war crimes, namely his complicity in the retaliatory executions of 335 Italian civilians, and

Ewald met and took the measure of his subordinate officers, *Oberleutnant Burggraf und Graf zu Dohna-Schlobitten*, *Leutnant Montû*, *Leutnant Kuntzen*, and *Leutnant Freiherr von dem Bottlenberg* genannt von Schirp, as well as the nearly one hundred and forty non-commissioned officers and enlisted troopers.¹⁹¹ Ewald remembered, “My squadron was in order, only the quality of horses left a lot to be desired, this despite its former commander, Walzer, being so excellent a horseman. Many horses were lame or broken down. I had many, I think about fifteen, that I ultimately had to put down.”¹⁹²

By the time von Kleist arrived in late May, *LHR I* had completed the squadron-level exercises and the training with the entire in the regiment was ready to commence. In preparation for leading his *Eskadron*, Ewald “practiced a lot with match sticks because the actual drill of the regiment was really an art and demanding routine.”¹⁹³ While challenging, Ewald enjoyed his continued duty in the saddle.

The field training in the hot summer of 1914 was a great pleasure for me. I still believe today that I trained my men particularly well, getting them combat-ready there. And I explored new ways. Because it was so hot during the day, I held many night exercises and trained my men to become cat-like in the dark.

During the summer training, Ewald again met *Kronprinz* Wilhelm.

Once in the summer of 1914, the Crown Prince lead an exercise. He took favorable note of me and I heard him express his amazement at how well I led the squadron within the regiment. He and the Crown Princess then led the regiment back to the barracks at Langfuhr - A glorious, happy time, the likes of which

sentenced to death. In 1947, his sentence was reduced to life in prison. In 1952, he was released from prison and lived in West Germany until his death in 1969.

¹⁹¹ August von Mackensen, *Die Leibhusaren: Ihre Geschichte im Weltkrieg* (Oldenburg in Oldenburg and Berlin: Druck und Verlag von Gerhard Stalling, 1929), Anlage 4. From a regimental officer roster at the time of war mobilization, 1 August 1914.

¹⁹² Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 16.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

Germany will probably never see again; and yet World War I was already looming on the doorstep.¹⁹⁴

Ewald recalled the atmosphere during the month of July.

So, we experienced the tension before the outbreak of the war in Zoppot and Langfuhr. The German people and all of us were convinced that we were the ones threatened, that this was a defensive war for us. But all agreed that in order to preserve our honor and defend our homeland we would stalwartly and skillfully take up arms. There was something uplifting about the awareness and feeling that our entire (*II.18*) people closed ranks and stood united. The tension began with the murder of the heir to the Austrian throne and his wife in Sarajevo by Serbian terrorists. As always human optimism, we too shared the hope as well until the "threat of war" was finally declared that the tense situation could be avoided after all by an appropriate declaration by the Serbian Government.

During this time, the Crown Prince was staying in in his villa at Zoppot. He daily asked the regiment how the situation was. So, he was obviously not informed by Berlin. The crowds in Zoppot were uplifting in the evenings when they enthusiastically came together to sing national songs played by the spa orchestra. And yet surely everyone, in the depths of their hearts, was thinking with sorrow and pain of their own fate and that of their relatives. So did I when I drowned out this worry and sorrow over the separation from my dear wife and sang "Was schert mich Weib, was schert mich Kind."¹⁹⁵

As the threat of war grew, *LHR 1* continued with its summer training plan. In late July, the regiment made final preparations for the rail transport of its thirty officers, nearly seven hundred NCOs and troopers, nearly eight hundred horses to *Truppenübungsplatz Warthelager* near Posen.¹⁹⁶ There it would participate with its sister regiment, *LHR 2*, in brigade-level exercises commencing in early August.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., Heft II, 16-17.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., Heft II, 17-18. "Was schert mich Weib..." is from the song "Die beiden Grenadiere" (The Two Grenadiers) written by Heinrich Heine and put to music by Robert Schumann. The translation of the line Kleist quotes is "What do I care about wife, what do I care about child;"

¹⁹⁶ Mackensen, *Die Leibhusaren*, 3. *Truppenübungsplatz Warthelager* lay 186 miles (300 kilometers) south-southwest of Langfuhr. Given the distance, *LHR 1* and *LHR 2*, both stationed at Langfuhr, would have entrained to and from the maneuvers near Posen.

On Friday, 31 July 1914, as the train loading process was about to begin, the regiment received the warning notification “imminent threat of war.”¹⁹⁷ Late on the afternoon of Saturday, 1 August 1914, *1. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1* received its *Mobilmachungsbefehl* (mobilization for war orders). Ewald von Kleist and the regiment were going to war.

Ewald, after fourteen years of active peacetime service, was called to war. Very few officers of his rank had acquired the training, education, and officer leadership experience he had. His knowledge of horses, artillery, and cavalry had been significantly strengthened by courses at the *Artillerie-Schießschule* and *Militär-Reit-Institut*. During his time at the *Kriegsakademie* he had received three years of arguably the best general staff officer education and training. Ewald had also benefitted from the mentoring of officers such as Greßmann and von Raumer. All of this had, in theory, superbly equipped and prepared von Kleist for the critical and exacting task which loomed before him...leading men in combat. His actions on the battlefield would measure how well he had learned those lessons.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

CHAPTER 7 - THE RITTMEISTER—A CAVALRY COMMANDER AT WAR 1914-1915

“In the platoon leader out in front, in the captain and the cavalry captain on whom all eyes are fixed, lies the strength of the army.”

— *Generalfeldmarschall* Helmuth von Moltke ¹

By the official start of summer in 1914, Ewald von Kleist would have undoubtedly told anyone who asked that he was indeed a very fortunate cavalry officer. Not only was he a newly promoted *Rittmeister* in arguably the top hussar regiment in the army, but he had been given command of his own *Eskadron* (squadron). He was on the cusp of what would undoubtedly be the best assignment of his tactical-level career. As a squadron commander, he was expected to lead his officers, NCOs, and hussars from the front. He would be primarily responsible for the training of the squadron’s men and horses. He would be required to use his equine science knowledge to first select and then maintain in top condition, the squadron’s one hundred and fifty horses. In all of this, there would be minimal administrative tasks, far less than at the next echelon of regimental command. In a nutshell, Ewald would be expected, allowed, and encouraged to fully immerse himself in the essence of the cavalry. In the end, all of his efforts and the collective efforts of his officers, NCOs, hussars, and horses would be focused on building a high level of combat capability. Little did Ewald suspect in mid-June 1914, that the

¹ Attributed to *Generalfeldmarschall* Helmuth Karl Bernhard von Moltke as presented in Großer Generalstab, Abteilung für Kriegsgeschichte I. (Hrsg.), “Moltkes taktisch-strategische Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1857 bis 1871. Zur hundertjährigen Gedenkfeier der Geburt des General-Feldmarschalls Grafen von Moltke.” in: *Moltkes Militärische Werke. II. Die Thätigkeit als Chef des Generalstabes der Armee im Frieden*. Zweiter Theil. (Berlin, Mittler und Sohn, 1900), 1.

test of his squadron's combat capability would not be on the *Truppenübungplatz* but in deadly combat against the Russians.

This, and the following chapter, follow Ewald's course through the war from his perspective and primarily focuses on his personal experiences. His post-World War II memoirs recount a significant number of events, incidents, and assignments between August 1914 and November 1918. These memories serve as the springboard for this and the next chapter's narrative. While von Kleist penciled the highlights, the task of providing the factual and interpretive context was left to his biographer. That encircling context strives to explain and illuminate von Kleist's experiences as well as to elucidated some little-known wartime actions which directly impacted Ewald and his career. Thus, these chapters seek to answer the central questions of "What did von Kleist experience and how did his pre-war training and education contribute to his wartime performance?"

The reader will quickly perceive that the narrative is imbalanced. In taking its lead from von Kleist's memoirs, this account does not address the unparalleled death and destruction of the Great War. This non-inclusion of the accounts of the dead and wounded men and horses, the vast destruction on the battlefields on both the Eastern and Western Fronts, and the widespread civilian suffering is not meant to whitewash, downplay, or avoid the horrors of war. For war is never absent death, agony, and destruction. But as with many who have experienced war, von Kleist exhibited the more prevalent human reaction to what he had seen and endured. He chose to leave the sad and the bad in the shadows of his own mind and pen the agreeable, amusing, and sanitized accounts of his wartime experience. Unfortunately, to date, no record of the killed or wounded in action for the units that von Kleist commanded or was a general staff officer for

have come to light. Their discovery would have been a welcomed element and counterbalance to Ewald's account and the official histories upon which these two chapters heavily rely.

Ewald experienced two distinct periods during the war as defined by his roles and responsibilities. For the first period, from August 1914 until October 1915, von Kleist participated in the war as a combat commander. In the first months of the war, he formed and commanded a replacement squadron of hussars. Over the course of the next year, his leadership responsibilities expanded as he was given command of increasing numbers of horsemen as well as artillery, and infantrymen. By the summer of 1915, Ewald's command had grown to what might best be called a combined arms *Aufklärungsabteilung* (reconnaissance detachment) of nearly regimental size. The *Abteilung Kleist* (Detachment Kleist) comprised several cavalry squadrons, a bicycle-borne infantry company, an artillery battery, and machine gun platoon. During the summer and into September 1915, Ewald led this force during the long-distance offensive operations on the central Eastern Front. Relinquishment of his cavalry command in October 1915 ended the first phase.

During the second phase, November 1915 to November 1918, Ewald served exclusively as a staff officer. During these three years, he served in a variety of different staff positions at various levels. Between August 1914 and December 1917, von Kleist was posted to units serving on the Eastern Front. Here he gained experience in both battles of movement and positional warfare. In January 1918, Ewald began his duty on the Western Front which lasted until the end of the war. With the end of the war came the end of the Wilhelmine Era and the Wilhelmine Army; the army which had formed Ewald's foundation.

I. Left Behind

On Friday, 31 July 1914, the key German leadership, the *Kaiser* Wilhelm II, Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, and *Generaloberst Graf* Helmuth von Moltke (the younger), *Chef des Großen Generalstabes* (Chief of the Greater General Staff), received confirmation that Czar Nikolaus II had ordered the Russian Army into general mobilization.² Von Bethmann Hollweg knowing he could no longer resist General von Moltke's demand for Germany's own general mobilization, requested and received the *Kaiser's* authorization to send out the "imminent threat of war" notification.³ This notice put the entire Germany Army, including the *Leib-Husaren-Brigade* and its two subordinate regiments, the *1. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1* (*LHR 1*) and the *2. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 2* (*LHR 2*), on alert. For *LHR 1* and *LHR 2* the warning order halted the regiments' loading of the trains for their impending training deployment. Regimental leadership initiated a recall of officers, non-commissioned officers (NCOs), and troopers absent on leave or temporary duty elsewhere.

On Saturday, 1 August 1914, the *Kaiser's* general German mobilization order was promulgated. The *1. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1* received its *Mobilmachungsbefehl* (war mobilization order) late in the afternoon. The order directed an early afternoon rail departure two days later, on 3 August, for *LHR 1*. The initial order, however, left in question the regiment's destination. Within a few hours, the expected march assignments, combat

² Konrad Jarausch *The Enigmatic Chancellor* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 172-174. See this account for the lead up to the war from the political/diplomatic perspective. For an account of the coming of the war from the military perspective, see Gerhard Ritter's, *The Sword and the Scepter, Volume II: The European Powers and the Wilhelminian Empire, 1890-1914* (Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1970).

³ August von Mackensen, *Die Leibhusaren: Ihre Geschichte im Weltkriege* (Oldenburg in Oldenburg and Berlin: Druck und Verlag von Gerhard Stalling, 1929), 3-4.

organizational structure, and deployment actions, as based on pre-war planning, were appreciably altered for *LHR 1*. The changes also impacted Ewald von Kleist.

For the regiment, the significant change came when subsequent deployment orders detached the *Leib-Husaren-Brigade* headquarters with its two subordinate regiments, *LHR 1* and the *LHR 2* from their planned go-to-war higher units, the *36. Division* and *General der Kavallerie* August von Mackensen's *XVII Armeekorps*. The *Leib-Husaren-Brigade* and its two regiments were now to travel west towards Belgium where they would join the 5. and 8. *Kavallerie-Brigaden* and come under the control of the 2. *Kavallerie-Division*, commanded by *Generalmajor* Friedrich Freiherr von Krane.⁴ The 2. *Kavallerie-Division* was teamed with the 4. and 9. *Kavallerie-Divisionen* in *Höhere Kavallerie-Kommando Nr. 2*, commanded by *General der Kavallerie* Georg von der Marwitz.⁵

The mobilization order caught the regiment flat-footed. Of the thirty officers on the regiment's roll in early May, only eighteen were present and fit for duty on 1 August 1914.⁶ Nine of the regiment's officers were away on leave or temporary duty and three had been

⁴ Deutschen Offizier-Bund, *Ehren-Rangliste des ehemaligen Deutschen Heeres auf Grund der Rangliste von 1914 mit den inzwischen eingetretenen Veränderungen* (Berlin: E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1926), 70. This volume was based on the official Kriegsministerium, Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preussischen Armee und des XIII. (Königlich Württembergischen) Armeekorps für 1914*. Hereafter, *Rangliste 1914 (1926)* so as to differentiate from the official Kriegsministerium *Ranglist 1914* published in May 1914. The work included additional information such as the date and location of officers killed or wounded in action, the officer's final wartime assignment, and the officer's duty and rank status as of 1926. Transition of officers from the *Kaiserheer* to the *Reichsheer Reichswehr* was also noted. Kriegsministerium, Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preussischen Armee und des XIII. (Königlich Württembergischen) Armeekorps für 1914* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1914), 70. At the outbreak of the war, *Generalmajor* Friedrich von Krane (* 1859; † 1929) was commanding general of 39. *Kavallerie-Brigade* (Colmar in Elsaß) and was moved up to take command of the wartime activated 2. *Kavallerie Division*.

⁵ *Höhere Kavallerie-Kommandos (HHKs)*, essentially cavalry corps, were not standing formation during peacetime but formed upon mobilization for war. The *HHKs* were, however, exercised annually during the autumn and *Kaisermanöver* when up to four *HHKs* were provisionally established and exercised in the field.

⁶ Kriegsministerium, Geheim Kriegs-Kanzlei, *Rang- und Quartier-Liste der Königlich Preussischen Armee und des XIII. (Königlich Württembergischen) Armeekorps für 1914*. 386. Hereafter, *Rangliste 1914*. Also, *Rangliste 1913*, 376.

transferred or retired.⁷ Von Kleist and the two newly commissioned *Leutnants* Saß and von Hartmann were the additions to the regiment's roster and thus brought the total of immediately available to twenty-one.⁸

The recall of officers netted only five of the absent nine officers and saw their immediate return to the regiment. *Rittmeister* Walzer returned from leave, *Oberleutnant Burggraf und Graf* zu Dohna-Schlobitten was released from assignment at the *Großen Generalstab*, *Oberleutnant* von Fischer-Treuenfeld arrived from the *Kriegsakademie* which suspended its courses, and *Leutnants* von Schmidt and von Goerne returned from their respective riding schools.

The regimental commander, *Oberstleutnant* Georg von Eicke und Polwitz, was faced with the need to prioritize and fill the thirty mobilization officer billets with the now available twenty-six officers in a short two days. Von Eicke chose to heavily reorganize his regiment in order to balance the experience within the squadrons as well as fill several additional wartime posts.⁹ Additionally, he sought officers external to the regiment to fill the manning shortfall.

⁷ Von Mackensen, *Leibhusaren*, 251. *Rangliste 1914*, 386-387. Major von Borcke, the regimental staff officer, was in Hannover at the staff officer's information course at the *Militär-Reit-Institut (MRI)*, *Rittmeister* Walzer was on leave before starting his course at the Spanish Riding School in Vienna, and *Oberleutnants* Heinrich *Burggraf und Graf* zu Dohna-Schlobitten and Jenö von Egan-Krieger were in Berlin having just started their probationary period on the *Großen Generalstab*. Also in Berlin was *Oberleutnant* von Fischer-Treuenfeld, an officer-student at the *Kriegsakademie*. *Leutnant* Montû was on assignment with Telegraph Battalion Nr. 1 and *Leutnant* Immo *Burggraf und Graf* zu Dohna-Schlobitten was still convalescing from a fall from a horse and was not war-fit. *Leutnant* von Schmidt was at attending the two-year course at the *MRI* and *Leutnant* von Goerne was a student at the *Offizier Reitschule* in Soltau. In April, *Rittmeister* von Brünneck had been posted as *Adjutant* to the *Leib-Husaren Brigade*. Von Brünneck was a graduate of the *Kriegsakademie* (Class of 1912), he had been called on 1 April 1913, to serve his probationary period on the *Großer Generalstab*, but had been sent back to the regiment at the end of his first year. *Oberleutnant* Emich *Graf* zu Solms-Wildenfels had retired and would have to be recalled. In May, *Major* von Frantzius transferred to another hussar regiment and was thus lost to the regiment.

⁸ "Personal-Veränderungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 99 (1914): 1873, 1876. Less than six weeks earlier, *Leutnants* Saß and von Hartmann had been promoted from *Fähnrich* and received their commissions as *Leutnants* in *LHR 1* on 23 Jun 1914. Both would be wounded in action by late 1914, be promoted to *Oberleutnant* and survive the war.

⁹ Von Mackensen, *Leibhusaren*, 251. *Rangliste 1914*, 386-387. Within the regiment, excluding the commander, nineteen out of twenty-five officers found themselves in different squadrons than the ones to which they had been assigned prior to mobilization. The three officers recruited from outside the regiment were assigned to one of the squadrons to balance experience. One officer, a *Leutnant* Dietz, whose parent unit was the *Jäger-Regiment zu Pferde Nr. 2* and who was on duty as instructor at the *Kriegsschule* Danzig, joined the *LHR 1* rather than return to his unit in Langensalza. He would eventually rejoin his parent regiment, rise to *Major*, and survive the war. The

When the dust settled, von Eicke chose *Rittmeister* Erich von Poellnitz, *Rittmeister* Hans Eschenburg, *Rittmeister* Walzer, and *Rittmeister* Hans Mackensen von Astfeld as the squadron commanders to command the four combat ready squadrons that would deploy on 3 August. *Rittmeister* Werner von Bresler, the former 4. *Eskadron Chef*, was to take charge of the *Ersatz-Transport* (replacement column) and follow the main body towards Belgium a few days it had departed Langfuhr.¹⁰ Three officers from outside the regiment were found and assigned to fill the remaining deploying officer positions. *Oberstleutnant* von Eicke directed *Rittmeister* Ewald von Kleist to remain in garrison and take command of the *Ersatz-Eskadron* (replacement squadron).¹¹

Ewald was disheartened at *Oberstleutnant* von Eicke's decision and recalled,

When the mobilization was declared, I had to take over the 4th squadron as replacement squadron for the regiment. *Rittmeister* Walzer happened to be on leave in Thymau/Ostpreußen and now appeared to take over his old 3rd squadron... That was a real disappointment for me. My regiment joined a cavalry division and cavalry corps in the West, in Belgium. I had to stay behind, serve as commander of the replacement squadron and prepare the replacement squadron according to the mobilization calendar.¹²

two other officers, both *Leutnants der Reserve*, Seidler and Holtz, were called up from the *LHR 1* reserve officer contingent and placed in squadrons to serve as *Zugführer* (platoon leaders). Additionally, a *Fähnrich* Fließbach was deployed with 4. *Eskadron*. He would earn his commission, rise to *Oberleutnant*, and survive the war after being wounded in action.

¹⁰ Von Mackensen, *Leibhusaren*, 251. By the time of deployment, only one officer billet was not filled, the regimental staff officer. *Major* von Borcke, the regimental staff officer, was away in Hannover at the staff officer's information course at the *Militär-Reit-Institut (MRI)*. At mobilization, he did not return to rejoin the regiment but was assigned other duties and eventually became the commander of *Reserve-Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 69*. On 30 December 1918, *Oberstleutnant* von Borcke returned to the regiment and took command of *Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1*. He served as its last commander before the regiment was disbanded in March 1919. Two reserve officers, *Oberleutnant d. R.* von Frank and *Leutnant d. R.* Benske, joined the regiment to fill two wartime billets and deployed with the regiment on 3 August 1914.

¹¹ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). Von Kleist's *Dienstlaufbahn* (service career, i.e., service history) show that on 2 August 1914, von Kleist was transferred from 1. *Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1* to its sister regiment, 2. *Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 2*, as commander of the *LHR 2 Ersatz-Eskadron* (replacement squadron). Three days later, on 5 August, von Kleist was transferred back into 1. *Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1*, as commander of the *LHR 1 Ersatz-Eskadron*.

¹² Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen und Plaudereien" (handschriftliche Manuskripte), Heft II (BA-MA: N 354/24, Nachlass Kleist), 18-19. Hereafter, Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft #, page #. Thymau, Ostpreußen (now Tymawa, Poland) lay only forty-seven miles (seventy-five kilometers) south of Langfuhr. Given the cross-regimental assignment, the *Leib-Husaren-Brigade Kommandeur*, *Generalmajor Graf*

Von Kleist's discontent was evident and noticed.

For the last time, the officer corps gathered in the officer's mess for a farewell meal. Commanding General von Mackensen also attended. He must have noticed that I glumly sat there among my comrades who were now going out to defend their fatherland. He spoke with me, saying that a long, hard war was imminent and that the troubles in the East were many. I, too, would be deployed in time.¹³

At first blush, *Oberstleutnant* von Eicke's decision to replace Ewald with the returned *Rittmeister* Walzer as the commander of 3. *Eskadron* appears to be a case of favoritism and regimental cronyism. A further assessment of the situation likely shows a different impetus. Of first note is that von Eicke had been in command of *LHR 1* for only seven and a half months at the time. His background indicated that he had not been associated with the *Leib-Husaren* and thus likely had no significant previous interaction with Walzer. With no predisposition towards Walzer, von Eicke would have formed his own opinion of the squadron commander based on direct observations during the first half of 1914. Second, Ewald and von Eicke shared two key educational assignment experiences; both were graduates of the *Militär-Reit-Institut* and the *Kriegsakademie*. Thus, von Eicke's indirect professional perceptions of von Kleist were supported by his own personal knowledge of these two alma maters. In contrast, Walzer had attended neither school. Too, the regimental commander had witnessed firsthand Ewald's efforts to improve the squadron handed to him by Walzer. As noted earlier, in addition to being a proven equitation instructor, von Kleist demonstrated that he was a much better judge of horseflesh than Walzer when he culled the unfit horses in the squadron. Finally, Ewald had

von Schmettow, and 2. *Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 2 Kommandeur, Oberstleutnant Edler Herr und Freiherr von Plotho*, as well as *Oberstleutnant* von Eicke would have been involved in the decision of where to assign von Kleist.

¹³ Ibid., Heft II, 19. Von Kleist continued in his memoir, "How right he was. Years after the unfortunate war, I saw him for the first time at Reich President von Hindenburg's. Then he said to me: 'Do you remember what I told you on August 1st, 1914, Kleist?' An example of his excellent memory, which has always distinguished him." The final regimental meal was, by this account, on Saturday evening 1 August 1914.

proved himself a fast-learning squadron commander during the regimental exercises held only a few weeks before.

The regiment's deployment to the front meant that the officer left behind needed to exercise command of the *Ersatz-Eskadron* with little oversight. Additionally, he would need the skills to choose the recruits to fill the squadron, select horses to mount the new hussars, and organize the provisioning and equipping of the unit. While all of the regiment's *Rittmeister* were highly experienced, it was the junior most *Rittmeister* who was professionally the best equipped, through a combination of education and experience, to take the reins of the *Ersatz-Eskadron*. Von Kleist was the optimum choice. Again, the importance and power of the regimental commander was demonstrated and, in preparing to go to war, von Eicke made a militarily prescient choice.¹⁴ Once more, a regimental commander's decision would favorably alter the trajectory of von Kleist's career.

On Ewald's return to the boarding house that evening or the next, as Gisela and he discussed his being left behind, the increased level of disorder due to the commander's reorganization, and the events outside the *Kaserne*, Gisela might have opined that there was still a possibility that war might be averted. She may have read Ewald an excerpt from the newspapers in which Chancellor von Bethmann Hollweg seemed to hold some small hope for peace and was quoted as saying, "Should all our attempts [for peace] be in vain, should the sword be forced into our hand, we shall go into the field of battle with a clear conscience and the knowledge that we did not desire this war."¹⁵

The forty-eight-hour period between the receipt of the *Mobilmachungsbefehl* and *LHR* I's rail departure was filled with a flurry of activity. The first undertaking was for the troopers

¹⁴ *Rangliste 1914 (1926)*, 428. *Rittmeister* Walzer survived the war but retired at its end as a *Major*.

¹⁵ Jarausch, *Chancellor*, 177.

to draw additional uniforms and equipment items from the regiment's war-reserve supply rooms.¹⁶ Each hussar received their personal pre-assembled bundle of supplementary clothing from the squadron supply corporals.¹⁷ Next, the cavalrymen were issued the wartime equipment for their horses, items such as nosebags, additional saddle blankets, and spare horseshoes.¹⁸ With all of their combat uniforms, personal and horse accoutrements in hand, the hussars sorted and packed all the items according to regulations.

While the *Zugführer* (platoon leaders) were busy supervising their troopers, the specialist NCOs took care of their tasks. The supply corporals packed and loaded additional uniforms and equipment in the squadron's horse-drawn support wagons. The *Futtermeister* (fodder NCO) loaded the horse *eisernen Rationen* (iron rations) on the supply wagon.¹⁹ The armorer corporal collected all of the edged weapons and saw to the sharpening of their blades. The regimental veterinarians inspected the horses of the four deploying squadrons, identifying the unfit mounts and exchanging them with combat capable horses from the *Ersatz-Eskadron*. And the farriers checked and replaced worn horseshoes. Firearms were issued near the end of the pre-deployment process. By late Sunday evening, all but the last-minute mobilization requirements

¹⁶ Curt von Ulrich, *Das Husaren-Regiment Landgraf Friedrich II. von Hessen-Homburg (2. Kurhessisches) Nr. 14* (Oldenburg i O.: Druck und Verlag von Gerhard Stalling, 1933), 15-16. Mobilization tasks were largely standardized and the sequence pre-planned. See also, Max von Schreibershofen's *Das deutsche Heer* (Berlin and Wien: Ullstein & Co., 1913), 76-87, for a pre-war (1913) description of the planned mobilization process of the German Army and its units.

¹⁷ Ulrich Herr and Jens Nguyen, *Die deutsche Kavallerie von 1871 bis 1914: Uniformierung und Ausrüstung* (Vienna: Verlag Militaria, Edition Stefan Rest, 2006), 38-129. Herr and Nguyen's work is a 629-page encyclopedic compendium of German cavalry uniforms, weapons, equipment, and horse tack. The hundreds of high-quality photos, many in color, of authentic artifacts ably give the reader a sense of the style and fashion of cavalry officers and troopers and their equipment in the imperial era.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 174-221. See this section for information on the equipment of cavalry troopers and their mounts.

¹⁹ The *eisernen Rationen* (iron rations) for mounted units consisted of eleven pounds (five kilograms) of oats per horse. This equated to half of one day's ration for one horse. Iron rations for the officers and men, a three days emergency ration of hardtack, canned meat, and tinned vegetables, were also issued and packed on their cavalry mounts.

had been completed. The officers and hussars were packed and ready to leave the next morning. The farewells to family and friends remained before departure.

On Monday morning, 3 August, the *Kaserne* was a beehive of activity as the cavalrymen saddled their mounts and performed the last tasks required for deployment. Von Kleist could not have been anything but frustrated, disappointed, and envious as he watched *Rittmeister* Walzer mount up, move to the head of 3. *Eskadron*, and lead the squadron, that had for a few short weeks been his, out of the barracks and towards the train station. Within a few hours, the officers and men of *LHR I* had loaded their horses and equipment on to their assigned train and climbed aboard.²⁰

The wives, families, and friends of the members of the regiments gathered at the station to say their last goodbyes and send the regiment off. *General der Kavallerie* von Mackensen was on hand to wish the *Leib-Husaren* farewell. Shortly after noon, the train taking the main body of the regiment pulled out of the Langfuhr station and headed west.²¹

The two remaining *Rittmeister* from the regiment, von Kleist and Werner von Bresler, mounted and turned their horses toward the now largely empty barracks and stables. *Rittmeister*

²⁰ Frank Buchholz, Janet Robinson, and Joe Robinson, *The Great War Dawning: German and its Army at the Start of World War I* (Vienna: Verlag Militaria GmbH, 2013), 293-295. The army used a standardized train comprised of locomotive, coal car, and fifty-four passenger and freight cars. A cavalry regiment deploying with four squadrons required two full trains, 108 total cars: one officer passenger car, seventeen freight cars for NCOs and troopers, and ninety freight cars for the 720 horses. Nearly half of an additional train would have been required to transport the led riding horses, draft horses, supplies, and wagons.

²¹ Von Mackensen, *Leibhusaren*, 251. The four squadrons of *LHR I* departed on 3 August with twenty-three active-duty officers, three reserve officers, one *Fähnrich*, three surgeons, three veterinarians, one paymaster, and approximately 720 NCOs and hussars, and nearly 750 horses. The *Leib-Husaren-Brigade* with its two subordinate regiments reached their unloading station of Jülich and Eschweiler and had finished the unloading process by early on 6 August. Thus, the nearly 750-mile (1,200 kilometer) trip from Langfuhr to the unloading stations just east of Aachen, took approximately sixty hours.

von Bresler directed the readying of the *Ersatz-Transport* for departure in a few days.²²

Rittmeister von Kleist turned his focus on assembling the *Ersatz-Eskadron*.

II. Independent Command

Men of military age flocked to the colors seeking to join in the defense of the fatherland. Ewald noted that “the volunteers reported in large numbers, some even came from the Rhine, travelling from garrison to garrison to find a unit to take them on. I was sorry to reject so many. From the mass of boys, I enlisted those who had a secondary education, could swim, ride and shoot.”²³ To assist von Kleist with the task of forming the replacement squadron, *Leutnant* Immo *Burggraf und Graf* zu Dohna-Schlobitten, a few NCOs, and a handful of hussars were also left behind.²⁴ Likely several activated reserve officers were drawn into the *Ersatz-Eskadron* to serve as *Zugführer* and support Ewald in his efforts.

²² Ibid., 5-6 and 251. *Major* Werner von Bresler led the *Ersatz-Transport* from Langfuhr to where it joined the *LHR 1* in the vicinity of Aachen. Von Bresler was the sole officer but was accompanied by two reserve *Vizewachmeister* and an unknown number of enlisted hussars, horses, and wagons. It is likely that the *Ersatz-Transport* brought the majority of the regiment’s nearly sixty extra riding horses, the fifty-four *Zugpferde* (draft horses) and seventeen regimental support wagons that included: 1 four-horse staff baggage wagon, 4 two-horse squadron baggage wagons, 5 two-horse rations wagons (including 1 sutler wagon), 5 four-horse forage wagons, and 2 six-horse bridging equipment wagons. This replacement column likely departed Langfuhr on 5 August and was reunited with the regiment on 7 August. On 8 August, *Major* von Bresler took command of *1. Eskadron/LHR 1* and *Rittmeister* von Poellnitz was promoted to *Major* and took the vacant position as the regimental staff officer. More personnel changes took place before the *Leib-Husaren-Brigade*, *LHR 1* and *LHR 2*’s first contact with the enemy on 9 August 1914. The *Leib-Husaren-Brigade Kommandeur*, *Generalmajor Graf* von Schmettow, was promoted to *9. Kavallerie-Division*. His replacement as brigade commander was *Oberst* Frankenberg und Ludwigsdorf on 7 August. From *LHR 1*, *Oberleutnant Graf* zu Dohna-Schlobitten was transferred to *Hohere Kavallerie Kommando* as an *Ordonnanzoffizier* and *Leutnant Freiherr* von der Bottlenberg was transferred to *2. Kavallerie-Division* as an *Ordonnanzoffizier*. Thus, *LHR 1* had five of its seventeen (twenty-nine percent) *Oberleutnant/Leutnants* who deployed in the initial contingent taken out of troop leading duties and posted as *Adjutanten* or *Ordonnanzoffiziere* in direct support of senior officers.

²³ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 19-20.

²⁴ Von Mackensen, *Leibhusaren*, 251. Eberhard von Mackensen, “*Leutnant Immo Burggraf und Graf zu Dohna-Schlobitten*,” *Der Leibhusar* 33 (1937): 2. Immo Burggraf und Graf zu Dohna-Schlobitten post-war obituary

As men in the reserve, *Landwehr*, and *Landsturm* were being called up, so too were horses. By 1914, Germany had a well-developed system that registered and tracked all commercial and civilian owned horses capable of use by the army during time of war.²⁵ Military *Pferdevormusterungs-Kommissare* (horse pre-conscription-examination commissioners) within each of the army corps areas oversaw this horse conscription-registration program. Two retired army officers served as the commissioners and headed the inspection teams within each cavalry brigade recruiting district.²⁶ During the annual *Musterung* (muster) held at the sub-county level, each horse was inspected and records updated as to age, size, category (riding, draft, heavy draft), and fitness for war duty.²⁷

published in the newsletter of *Leibhusaren-Bund*. On 1 August 1914, the *Leutnant* was still on convalescent status after a horse crash at the end of 1913, and thus was not mobilized with the rest of the regiment. After possibly assisting von Kleist for a few days with forming the *Ersatz-Eskadron*, *Leutnant* zu Dohna-Schlobitten was assigned to *Reserve-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1*. He deployed with this reserve regiment to the Eastern Front on 8 August 1914. He was awarded the *Eisernen Kreuz 2. Klasse* on 21 October 1914 for the many officer patrols he had led to date. On 25 November 1914, he was killed in action at the head of a patrol near Lowicz, Poland.

²⁵ Kriegsministerium, *Pferde-Aushebungs-Vorschrift* (Schleswig: F. Johannsen's Buchdruckerei, 1902). The twenty-page *Pferde-Aushebungs-Vorschrift* (Horse Conscription Regulation) provided detailed guidance on the duties, responsibilities, programs, and procedures of the *Pferdevormusterungs-Kommissare* (horse pre-conscription-examination commissioners). This updated regulation was signed by Wilhelm II on 1 May 1902 and of note was directive to not only the war ministry but also to the finance ministry, the interior ministry, and the ministry for agriculture, estates, and forests. A copy of this regulation was located at NLA HA, in file Dep. 111, Nr. 1856. *Pferdemusterung*. 30. Mai 1911, Stadt Pattensen.

²⁶ *Rangliste 1913*, 549-552. See as an example, the *Pferdevormusterungs-Kommissare* list of 1913 that identified the seventy retired officers (colonels, lieutenant colonels, majors, and captains) who were assigned to the thirty-five cavalry brigade recruiting areas as the overseers of the horse pre-conscription-examination commission inspection teams. All of the *Kommissare* officers were "z.D.," *zur Disposition* (literally at the disposal [of the king]), thus they were retired officers who were still subject to recall to active duty but who were officially employed in these military *Beamter* (government service) positions. While the majority were retired cavalry officers, there were a number of retired artillery and *Train* (supply) officers. All of these z.D. officers had received permission to continue to wear their army uniforms and the regimental whose uniform they were permitted to wear was listed along with their date of rank. This is yet another indicator of the power and prestige of military service in the Wilhelmine era as well as an example of military support jobs and careers once an officer left the active-duty army.

²⁷ See NLA HA, Dep. 111, Nr. 1856. *Pferdemusterung*. 30. Mai 1911, Stadt Pattensen. This file contains a completed copy of the *Pferde-Musterung* (horse muster) registration list for the horses that would undergo the annual muster in Pattensen (a suburb of Hannover) in the summer of 1911. The record lists the details of the approximately 160 horses located within the Pattensen civil district that the inspection team would expect to inspect. The seven-page form was signed by the Pattensen magistrate. While dependent on the number of horses to be examined in a day, a standard examination team consisted of one of the commissioners, a veterinarian and several NCOs and troopers. The veterinarian, NCOs, and troopers were likely from one of the nearby cavalry or artillery

The army's mobilization brought an immediate need for more horses. By 2 August, the first full day of mobilization, horse induction musters began.²⁸ Given Ewald's urgent need for horses, he undoubtedly turned to *Oberstleutnant z.D. Schubert*, the Danzig-based *Pferdevormusterungs-Kommissar* for the *Leib-Husaren-Brigade*.²⁹ As the local commissioner for the past six years, Schubert would have been well acquainted with the district's horse population. Certainly, *Oberstleutnant* Schubert would have inducted a number of fit, well-trained mounts and earmarked them for the *Ersatz-Eskadron*.³⁰ Thus, the *Ersatz-Eskadron/Leib-Husaren Regiment Nr. 1 (EE/LHRI)* began to take form as men and horses began refilling the empty barracks and stables in Langfuhr.

By the end of the first week in August, most eyes turned towards Germany's western borders. The bulk of the German Army, seven armies in all, was massing along the French and Belgian borders. On 4 August, the German 2. *Armee* crossed the Belgian border initiating the Schlieffen Plan combat operations. In the East, as part of the calculated risk predicated on the

regiments. The team could be augmented with more army veterinarians, active-duty officers, and additional NCOs and troopers.

²⁸ Antje Strahl, *Das Großherzogtum Mecklenburg-Schwerin im Ersten Weltkrieg: Von der Friedens- zur Kriegswirtschaft* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2015), 73-75. Stahl presents an informative overview of the induction of horses for war duty in the early days of the war in several municipalities in Mecklenburg-Schwerin. See this account for difficulties in enlisting the required number of horses encountered by the induction officials.

²⁹ *Rangliste 1913*, 550; *Rangliste 1907*, 415; and *Rangliste 1908*, 422. *Oberstleutnant z.D. Schubert's* retirement from active duty was reported in the *Rangliste 1907*. He retired as a *Major* and his last active-duty regiment was in the 2. *Westpreußisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 36* where he served as an *Abteilung Kommandeur*. The regiment was stationed in Danzig and upon leaving active duty, Schubert took the position of *Pferdevormusterungs-Kommissar* (horse pre-conscription-examination commissioner) in the Danzig recruiting district supporting the *Leib-Husaren-Brigade*. He was breveted to *Oberstleutnant* on 22 March 1910.

³⁰ Strahl, *Großherzogtum Mecklenburg-Schwerin*, 74. The wartime *Musterung* examination team varied in composition from the peacetime team. The wartime teams comprised the district commissioner, two representatives of the *Stellvertretende Generalkommandos* (Deputy General Commands) from the *Armeekorpsbezirk* (Army Corps district), a veterinarian and three assessors. The team had the task of inspecting and financially appraising the selected horses. The assessors then paid the owners a financial compensation for each animal inducted. Alfred Satter: *Die deutsche Kavallerie im Ersten Weltkrieg. Fachbuch zur neueren Geschichte* (Norderstedt: Books on Demand GmbH, 2004), 62. Sattler noted that from 1 August 1914 to June 1915, over 693,000 horses were conscripted but of those, only 350,000 were purchased. See pages 61-66 for more information on the German Army's horse requirements and consumption during the war.

assumption that the Russians would be slower to mobilize and commence combat operations than the French, a single army, the 8. *Armee*, was left to defend Germany's eastern border.³¹

The Russian mobilization, however, moved at a faster pace than the Germans had calculated. On directives precipitated by *Oberbefehlshaber der 8. Armee*, *Generaloberst* Maximilian von Prittwitz und Gaffron's decisions, army units in the region that had not been sent west with the mobilization were directed to prepare for the defense of East Prussia. On 8 August, Ewald's thirty-third birthday, orders transferred *Ersatz-Eskadron/Leib-Husaren Regiment Nr. 1* from under the command of *Stellvertretende Generalkommando XVII. Armee-Korps* (Deputy General Command XVII Army Corps) to the command of *Festung Graudenz* (Fortress Graudenz).³² Von Kleist's unit was sent to one of *Festung Graudenz*'s subordinate commands, *Festung Marienburg* (Fortress Marienburg). By 10 August, the move from Langfuhr

³¹ The German 8. *Armee* was commanded by *Generaloberst* Maximilian Wilhelm Gustav Moritz von Prittwitz und Gaffron (* 27 November 1848; † 29 March 1917) with *Stabschef* (Chief of Staff) *Generalmajor* Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Graf von Waldersee (*1 September 1860 at Brandenburg an der Havel; † 7 September 1932). A total of four *Armeekorps*, three active duty and one reserve were assigned to 8. *Armee*: I. *Armeekorps* commanded by *Generalleutnant* Hermann Karl Bruno von François (* 31 January 1856 in Luxembourg; † 15 May 1933); XVII. *Armeekorps* commanded by *General der Kavallerie* August von Mackensen; XX. *Armeekorps* commanded by *General der Infanterie* Boje Friedrich Wilhelm Nikolaus von Scholtz (* 24 March 1851 in Flensburg; † 30 April 1927); and I. *Reserve-Korps* commanded by *General der Infanterie* Otto Ernst Vincent Leo von Below (* 18 January 1857 in Danzig; † 09 March 1944).

³² Upon German army corps mobilization and deployment to the field, *Stellvertretende Generalkommandos* (Deputy General Commands) were activated. Commanded by *stellvertretende kommandierende Generäle* (Deputy Commanding Generals), these commands were the executive authority in the army corps districts with civilian administrations being subordinated to them. In addition to ensuring civilian law and order, the commands were tasked with the mission of supplying their parent army corps with military equipment including arms, ammunition, and horses. The Deputy General Commands did not exercise command and control of combat operations. Upon general mobilization, *General der Infanterie* Max von Schack (* 14 June 1853 in Stettin; † 6 March 1924 in Naumburg (Saale)) was recalled from retirement and assumed command as the Deputy General Command XVII Army Corps headquartered in Danzig. Fixed fortifications in the form of fortresses were a component of the German homeland defense. Fortress commanders were considered field commanders and were assigned forces, both fixed and mobile, as required to perform their missions. As the Russians threatened East Prussia, fortification commanders were assigned infantry, cavalry, and mobile field artillery units as they became combat ready and available. The three fortresses at Graudenz, Kulm, and Marienburg were under the overall command of *Generalleutnant* Ernst von Zastrow (* 23 June 1858 in Arnshagen; † 27 March 1926) who was both the military Gouverneur of Graudenz and commander of Fortress Graudenz. Graudenz is present day Grudziądz, Poland.

to Marienburg and Kalthof was completed.³³ In the shadow of the Marienburg, the thirteenth-century Teutonic castle, the men and horses of *EE/LHRI* continued their training in earnest.

With Germany at war and Ewald now deployed with his squadron for an indeterminate length of time, Gisela faced a choice of remaining in Langfuhr or relocating elsewhere. The couple had little time to become familiar with the “East” and the environs of Danzig and Langfuhr or to make friends or acquaintances. No familiar von Kleist relatives were nearby. With little favoring a decision to remain in Langfuhr other than the uncertain likelihood of Ewald being able return to see her from time to time, Gisela decamped the Zoppot boarding house where she and Ewald had resided during the summer. She chose to return to the familiar surroundings of Hannover, taking up residence in the Wachtel villa which had remained fully furnished after the death of Gisela’s mother two and a half years earlier.³⁴ With a move-in-ready residence, a thick network of friends and acquaintances, and Gisela’s deep knowledge of Hannover, returning to her hometown made imminent sense. With Gisela in Hannover, safely located far from the fronts and with the support of long-time friends, Ewald would be relieved of most of his concerns for the safety, welfare, and comfort of his young wife. His energies could remain focused on his wartime duties.

By 14 August, German and Russian cavalry reconnaissance units had for nearly a week and a half engaged each other in the frontier border zones on each side of the international

³³ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 20. Marienburg (Malbork, Poland) lay thirty-six miles (fifty-eight kilometers) southeast of Langfuhr/Danzig. Kalthof (Kałdowo, Poland) lay just west across the Nogat River from Marienburg.

³⁴ Ibid., Heft II, 23. There is insufficient information to determine the status of the Wachtel villa other than to its state of furnishings. Nor is there any reference to Gisela’s invalid brother, Berthold. The possibilities are that Berthold had been brought to Langfuhr, that he had been institutionalized in Hannover in the care of others, or that he and his caregivers remained in the Wachtel villa using only a few rooms or one of the multiple floors. Whatever the situation, it is reasonable to think that with her return to Hannover, Gisela had direct oversight of her brother and his care during the increasingly challenging environment of the wartime home front.

boundary.³⁵ German intelligence in this period had identified two Russian armies approaching the East Prussian border. In the north, likely aimed at Königsberg was the Russian 1st Army under General of Cavalry Paul von Rennenkampf. To the south below the Masurian Lakes, in a march from near Warsaw northwest towards Allenstein was the Russian 2nd Army commanded by General of Cavalry Alexander Samsonov.³⁶

With the threat of Samsonov's 2nd Army in the south less of an immediate threat than von Rennenkampf's 1st Army, *Generaloberst* von Prittwitz ordered a smaller force south to defend near the border on a line from Strasburg to Ortelsburg.³⁷ While the *XX. Armeekorps* was the primary unit dispatched, mobile units belonging to the Fortresses Thorn and Graudenz were also ordered south to the Strasburg and Lautenburg areas for border defense. *Generalmajor* Fritz von Unger commanded the mobile fortress forces.³⁸ Von Unger, in need of a fast, mobile cavalry reconnaissance element, turned to the only cavalry unit under the command of Fortress Graudenz, von Kleist's *EE/LHRI*.

Von Kleist and the *EE/LHRI* had arrived at Marienburg only four or five days prior to von Unger receiving his orders to move south. Ewald's had a scant two weeks since unit's formation and it was still in the recruiting and training phase. Only a portion of the hussars were deemed combat-ready. With the dilemma of needing cavalry troops immediately for the defense

³⁵ Reicharchiv, *Der Weltkrieg 1914-1918: Die militärischen Operations zu Lande*, Zweite Band (Berlin: E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1925), 32-101. Hereafter, Reicharchiv, *Weltkrieg*, Band: page(s). See also, Dennis E. Showalter, *Tannenberg: Clash of Empires* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1991), 139-210.

³⁶ General von Rennenkampf's Russian 1st Army is also referred to as the Njemen-Armee (after the Njemen (Memel) River), while General Samsonov's Russian 2nd Army is known as the Narew-Armee (after the Narew River).

³⁷ Reicharchiv, *Weltkrieg*, Band 2: 60 and 361.

³⁸ Ibid. *Generalmajor* Lucius Valerius Moritz Hermann Fritz von Unger (*31 July 1862; † 1945), in addition to his own units from Graudenz (six replacement infantry battalions, two machinegun detachments, three field artillery batteries, one company of reserve combat engineers, an aircraft detachment, and one replacement cavalry squadron from *XVII Armeekorps*) he had under his command for the border defense mission, 70. Landwehr-Brigade, and two infantry battalions from Danzig.

on the southern border but also needing to continue to fill and train a full combat-ready squadron, von Unger made the decision to detach one platoon from the squadron as his reconnaissance element. The platoon leader selected was the next most experienced officer in the *EE/LHR I* after Ewald, *Oberleutnant* Emich Graf zu Solms-Wildenfels.³⁹ The war's exigencies would preclude the *Oberleutnant* or his platoon returning to von Kleist's command.

In preparation for meeting the Russian 1st Army, *Generaloberst* von Prittwitz had arrayed three of his four corps along a roughly thirty-mile line running southwest from Stallupönen in northeaster East Prussia. On Saturday, 15 August, von Rennenkamps lead divisions began crossing the Prussian border. Elements of *Generalleutnant* von François's *I. Armeekorps* (A.K.) tangled with reconnaissance elements on the 15th and again on the 16th as von Rennenkampf used the day to close up his three infantry corps on the border. On Monday, 17 August, the three Russian infantry corps advanced westward where they encountered the German main line of resistance near Stallupönen. The Russian's uncoordinated effort allowed the German *I. Armeekorps* to successfully defend Stallupönen and its other positions. German counterattacks caused several Russian divisions to retreat east. The Germans had halted von Rennenkampf and bloodied 1st Army's nose. Rather than pursue the Russians eastward,

³⁹ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 21. The loss of what likely was a full-strength platoon, thirty-five to forty troopers, and a highly qualified officer, was a heavy blow to the squadron. This left between 100-120 hussars in the squadron, many of who were still not combat-ready. Von Mackensen, *Leibhusaren*, 17. *Ranglisten 1900-1914*. *Oberleutnant* Emich Hermann Werner Graf zu Solms-Wildenfels (DoR: 18.8.13) (* 5 February 1883 at Münzenberg; † 12 November 1961 at Frankfurt a/M) joined the *I. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1* and was commissioned as a *Leutnant* on 18 August 1904. He married to Erika (nee von Boehn) (*17 April 1882 at Sagerke, Stolp, Pommern; † 18 February 1976 in Usingen, Landgrafschaft Hessen) and the marriage produced four children. His brothers were, Friedrich Ernst, Karl *Oberleutnant in Garde-Schützen-Battalion* in 1913; and older half-brother Otto, personal adjutant to *Kronprinz* Wilhelm. On 22 April 1914, Emich retired with pension and authorized to wear *LHR I* uniform. Recalled at outbreak of war, he served shortly in the *Ersatz-Eskadron* under von Kleist, and then was reassigned on 30 March 1915, out of *LHR I*, but ended war in *LHR 2*. He was awarded both the *Eisernes Kreuz II. Klasse* and *I. Klasse*. He retired after war as *Rittmeister*. Recalled during World War II to active duty, served as a town (*Ort*) commander (Dordrecht) in occupied Holland, rose to *Oberst* (DoR: 01.04.1942).

Generalleutnant von François ordered *I. Armeekorps* to withdraw westward and establish a new defensive line near Gumbinnen, fifteen miles (twenty-five kilometers) to the west of Stallupönen.

After resting and consolidating his forces on 18 August, General von Rennenkampf put his army on the march westward on the 19th. Perceiving the opening of gaps between several of the Russian corps that could be exploited, the three German *Armeekorps* (*I. A.K.* in the north, *XVII. A.K.* in the middle, and *I Reserve Korps* to the south) attacked on the 20th. While *Generalleutnant* von François's *I. Armeekorps* had success on the north wing, *General der Kavallerie* von Mackensen's *XX. Armeekorps* at the center, suffered heavy losses and was driven back. *I. Reserve-Korps* under *General der Infanterie* von Below saw only light engagements during the day.

While General von Rennenkampf's 1st Army had been slowed by its battles at Stallupönen and Gumbinnen, General Samsanov's 2nd Army had continued its march and had on 20 August begun to cross the Prussian border on the line Ortelsburg-Neidenburg-Soldau.⁴⁰ The German 8. *Armee* commander had ordered *General der Infanterie* von Scholtz's *XX. Armeekorps* to move southwest and establish a defensive line against the Russian 2nd Army. The proximity of the two Russian armies had, however, significantly unnerved both *Generaloberst* von Prittwitz and *Generalmajor* Georg Graf von Waldersee, 8. *Armee* commanding general and chief of staff, respectively. The primary subordinate corps commanders held the opinion that the German forces facing the Russian 1st Army were strong enough to defeat General von Rennenkampf and then turn to meet the approaching Russian 2nd Army by effectively exploiting interior lines. *Generaloberst* von Prittwitz and his Chief of Staff held firm and ordered preparations for a general retreat of German Forces west to the Weischel (Vistula) River line, some 155 miles (250

⁴⁰ The line Ortelsburg (Szcztyno, Poland)-Neidenburg (Gmina Nidzica, Poland)-Soldau (Działdowo, Poland) ran northeast to southwest and was a distance of approximately fifty miles (eighty kilometers) between Ortelsburg and Soldau.

kilometers) to the west from Gumbinnen.⁴¹ By the 22nd, a number of German divisions had entrained and begun their movements west towards the Vistula.

General von Rennenkampf, despite success on the 20th, halted his units on the 21st to rest and resupply rather than continuing to pursue the German forces as they continued to withdraw westward. On the 20th and 21st, *Generaloberst* von Moltke had received a number of reports from the commanders in East Prussia leaving him to conclude that while the situation was not good, it was not nearly so desperate as reported by *8. Armee's* commander. By evening of the 21st, von Moltke had lost confidence in *Generaloberst* von Prittwitz's ability to command *8. Armee* and as *Chef des Generalstabes des Feldheeres* (Field Army Chief of General Staff) he had secured the *Kaiser's* approval to replace von Prittwitz and his chief of staff. *Generaloberst* Paul von Hindenburg and *Generalmajor* Erich Ludendorff were the selected replacements and were notified the next morning. By the afternoon of the 23rd, the new command team was in place and taking control of the situation. Orders went out to halt the German movement towards the Vistula and rather move to reinforce *General* von Scholtz's *XX. Armeekorps* in preparation for a battle against the Russian 2nd Army southwest of the Masurian Lakes.

As the von Hindenburg/Ludendorff plan for engaging Samsonov's 2nd Army developed, in addition to the units already active in the *8. Armee's* order of battle, freshly formed and newly trained units received orders to reinforce the defense of East Prussia. Units echeloned forward, that is, reserve and *Landwehr* units that had been called up at the general mobilization and that had been performing rear area security moved eastward to be actively incorporated into the four frontline Germany army corps. In turn, the newly formed and trained units (replacement active

⁴¹ The Weichsel (Vistula) River ran from its headwaters near the present-day tri-border region of Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland, northeast then north through Warsaw, then northwest to Bromberg, Westpreußen (Bydgoszcz, Poland), and then north to Danzig and the Baltic Sea.

duty, additional reserve, *Landwehr*, and *Landsturm*) backfilled the rear area security positions. It was in this general reinforcement effort that von Kleist's *EE/LHRI* began active service.

On Monday, 24 August, Ewald received orders directing him to take “the section of the Ersatz Eskadron which was combat-ready” and move eastward from Marienburg to Oberländer Kanal (Elbląg Canal) near Miswalde.⁴² This move placed the “half mobile replacement squadron” out at the eastern periphery of the semi-circular reconnaissance area whose perimeter arced from Elbing in the north, through Saalfeld at the center, and ended in the south at Graudenz.⁴³ Ewald located another replacement unit, likely near one of the few crossing sites in the area, the railway bridge that spanned the canal. It was probably a *Landwehr* or *Landsturm* infantry company that was engaged in constructing and occupying defensive positions. While not specified, the mission of Ewald's *EE/LHRI* would have been that of general mounted reconnaissance to the east of the north-south running Oberländer Kanal with a specific task of interdicting any Russian cavalry reconnaissance units and prevent them from reporting back to the main Russian forces.

⁴² Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 20. Von Kleist does not provide a specific date of the squadron's reassignment. The date was deduced from von Kleist's follow-on activities and the general situation in East Prussia at this time. Von Kleist does not report under whose command his squadron was at this time nor do other records indicate by whom, other than *Generalleutnant* von Zastrow, the units forward (east) of Marienburg and Graudenz were commanded. Miswalde (present-day Mysłce, Poland) lay twenty-five miles (forty kilometers) east-southeast of Marienburg. Miswalde was one of the small towns along the main east-west railway line from Marienburg to Allenstein and was ten miles (sixteen kilometers) directly west of the railway bridge which crossed Oberländer Kanal between Samrod (Sambród) and Maldeuten (Maldyty). While von Kleist does not identify how many hussars were combat ready and constituted the section of the squadron that he took with him to Miswalde, the number was likely between eighty and one hundred, the equivalent of three *Züge*, and approximately half of the standard 180 trooper/horse strong combat deploying squadron. This would have left at least one squadron officer at Marienburg to continue to oversee the training of the approximately sixty to eighty non-combat ready troopers and horses. Von Mackensen, *Leibhusaren*, 17. The regimental history specifically refers to von Kleist's unit as it deployed forward from Marienburg in mid-August 1914 as “halbe mobile Ersatz Eskadron des 1. Leibhusaren-Regiments” (half mobile replacement squadron). This specific reference confirmed that the strength of the von Kleist's unit at this time and in the subsequent battle at Wormditt, was half-strength; between eighty to one hundred hussars.

⁴³ Reicharchiv, *Weltkrieg*, 2: Karte 4. This map shows the line labeled “Stellungs-Erkundung” (positional reconnaissance). Elbing is present-day Elbląg, Poland and Saalfeld is Zalewo, Poland.

Several days later, likely early on 28 August, von Kleist's headquarters ordered him to send a patrol to Allenstein in order to "ascertain the situation there."⁴⁴ The orders likely precipitated from reports of Russians to the southeast of Allenstein moving towards the key crossroad city. Ewald's *Kriegsakademie*-trained mission assessment skills led him to determine that the more than forty-five-mile (seventy-two kilometers) distance to Allenstein and well over 100-mile (160 kilometer) round trip was too great for his hussars to accomplish in a timely manner, thereby negating the usefulness of any information gained. "Despite my objection that the distance was too great and that this information could be obtained in a different way, this order stood."⁴⁵ Apparently not wanting to risk his troopers and more likely to demonstrate that the mission was better accomplished by means other than a horse-mounted cavalry patrol, Ewald elected to undertake the mission himself via automobile.

"I myself decided to carry out the mission using the car of my veterinarian."⁴⁶ On the morning of Friday, 28 August, Ewald, accompanied by the squadron's veterinarian, Hugo Schlaefer, set out by automobile towards Allenstein. "We travelled from town to town, using the telephone to report our reconnaissance all the way to Allenstein and along the road to

⁴⁴ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen.", Heft II, 21.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Heft II, 21. Given that the telephone system largely stayed operational and switchboard operators remained in place, it is likely that Ewald saw this as a more practical and expeditious means of intelligence gathering given the distance and time constraints.

⁴⁶ Ibid., Heft II, 21. This incident is insightful. Von Kleist does not record that he took any other personnel with him other than the veterinarian. Frustrated by the unreasonableness of the order and his inability to change the higher headquarters' mind, Ewald decided to execute the reconnaissance mission in the shortest time and with the minimum of disruption or adverse impact to his unit. His familiarity with automobiles, gained during the two *Prinz Heinrich Fahrts* and likely already personally owning an automobile, caused him to pragmatically choose an automobile over a horse for this mission. Too, he chose to minimize the impact on his soldiers that the poorly ordered mission would have caused if he had executed it in a traditional manner. Certainly, this hints at Ewald's comfort with executing an assigned mission using the fullest meaning of *Auftragstaktik*. Hugo Schlaefer, *Tierarzt* (veterinarian), in 1927 was reported to have been living in Praust, Kreis Danziger Höhe, Westpreußen, Deutschland (currently Pruszcz Gdański, Poland), a town/suburb two miles to the south of Danzig. Schlaefer's name does not appear in any of the *Rangliste* or in the *Leib-Husaren-Regiment* history. It is most likely that he was a civilian veterinarian who volunteered to serve in the army at the outbreak of the war. Given his post-war residence, it is also likely that he lived near Danzig prior to the war and was thereby quickly linked with von Kleist's *Ersatz-Esakdrön*.

Hohenstein.”⁴⁷ The generally easterly route was likely via Mohrungen-Locken-Gedahlen to Allenstein and stretched approximately forty-four miles (seventy kilometers) long. Von Kleist and Schlaefer likely arrived at Allenstein around noon and thus had missed encountering the Russians who had occupied the city the previous day and on the morning of the 28th by a scant two hours.⁴⁸ Before turning southwest towards Hohenstein at Allenstein, Ewald chose to pay a visit to one of his cousins, Olga *Freiin* von Hoverbeck, the owner of *Gut Nickelsdorf*.⁴⁹ The estate lay a few miles northeast of the city. In addition to checking on the wellbeing of his cousin and gaining any information she possibly had concerning the Russians, Ewald likely found fuel and oil for the automobile as well as provisions for his onward journey.

Retracing their route through Allenstein, the pair continued towards Hohenstein, some ten miles (sixteen kilometers) southwest along the main road. Within a short time, the sounds of battle were identifiable. In the vicinity of Hohenstein, von Kleist encountered a Schleswig-Holstein *Landwehr Brigade* actively engaged with the Russians. Ewald noted that the “brigade was deployed here in a difficult situation, some of it was in retreat.”⁵⁰ To avoid the battlelines,

⁴⁷ Ibid., Heft II, 21.

⁴⁸ Karl-Bernhard Müller and Michael A. Tegtmeier, *Tannenberg: Militärgeschichtlicher Reiseführer* (Berlin: Verlag E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 2000), 93. The Russian XIII Army Corps had departed Allenstein beginning at approximately 10:00 hours on 28 August.

⁴⁹ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 22. Ewald’s father’s sister was Olga’s mother. H. Kypke and others, *Geschichte des Geschlechts v. Kleist: Dritter Teil - Biographien bis 1880 Dritte Abteilung, Muttrin-Damensche Linie Der Muttriner Ast*, 2. überarbeitete Auflage. (Hamm: 2017), 233. Olga *Freiin* von Hoverbeck was born Olga Mahraun, daughter of Anna Emilie Thecla *Amalie* (nee von Kleist) (* 23 August 1835 in Widlitz, † Allenstein after 1914) and Otto Mahraun (* 21 June 1824; † 1868) a *Kreisgerichts-Rat* (district court councilor) in Allenstein. Amalie and Otto were married 26 March 1856; the marriage ending at Otto’s death in 1868. Olga would have been born between 1857 and 1868, so was thirteen to twenty-four years older than Ewald von Kleist, her cousin. Olga was adopted by Leopold Freiherr von Hoverbeck (* 25 July 1822 in Nickelsdorf; † 12 August 1875 in Gersau, Switzerland) and his wife, Leopoldine Käswurm (* 1831), and after her adoptive father’s death, Olga inherited Gut Nickelsdorf (today Nikielkowo, Poland), an estate located five miles (eight kilometers) to the northeast of the city center of Allenstein (Olsztyn, Poland).

⁵⁰ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 21. Wehrkreiskommando I, *Schlachtfelder in Ostpreußen* (Königsberg: Königsberger Allgemeine Zeitung und Verlagsdruckerei, 1932), 62-66. The Schleswig-Holstein *Landwehr Brigade* that von Kleist ran into was either the 33. *gemischte Landwehr-Brigade* (Kommandeur Generalmajor Viktor von Oertzen) or 34. *gemischte Landwehr-Brigade* (Kommandeur Generalleutnant Ernst von

von Kleist had to traverse counter-clockwise to the north and west of Hohenstein on secondary and farm roads. During this time, Ewald “met a General Staff major from Hindenburg’s headquarters who told me that a great victory was imminent. So, I was on the battlefield at Tannenberg.”⁵¹ Having executed his mission with regard to ascertaining if the Russians were in Allenstein, Ewald and Schlaefer turned their automobile north and motored the approximately forty-eight miles (seventy-eight kilometers) from Hohenstein to Miswalde.

During the round-robin journey, the *Rittmeister* and the veterinarian had travelled between 110 and 140 miles (177 and 225 kilometers) in the sweltering August heat on the dry and dusty roads of East Prussia. The mission would likely have taken between twelve and eighteen hours given the due caution required when attempting to locate the enemy in unfamiliar terrain. Too, time was required to question local Germans and report the finding to higher headquarters by telephone along the route. The mission was not only long, but somewhat foolhardily conducted as Ewald likely later realized.

Pressentin) of the *1. Landwehr-Division* (*Kommandeur Generalleutnant Georg Freiherr von der Goltz*). The division was engaged on the northeast outskirts of Hohenstein during the afternoon of 28 August 1914. Von Kleist also recorded that “I also saw Hauptmann von Wachs, who later became the Landstallmeister, with his Landwehr battery and stopped him.” Karl Reinhard Wachs (* 1 March 1870 Hanerau; † 5 December 1966 Hamburg) was likely *Leutnant* Wachs (DoR: 18 August 1895) who as a young officer was assigned to the *Feldartillerie-Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (2. Brandenburgisches) Nr. 18* (Frankfurt a.O.). It was probable that von Kleist became acquainted with Wachs between 1900-1910, when they were both artillery officers. By 1907, Wachs was a *Hauptmann* (DoR: 15.9.1905) in *Feldart. Regiment. General-Feldmarschall Graf Waldersee (Schleswig.) Nr. 9*. Wachs’ *Landwehr* unit was likely a Schleswig-Holstein regiment and an element of the *Landwehr Division von Goltz*. From 1912-1926 Wachs was the *Königlich Preussischer Landstallmeister* (director of the royal Prussian state stables) in Travental (schleswig-holsteinische Landgestüt mit seiner Holsteiner-Zucht), Schleswig-Holstein. From 1926-1935 he was the *Landstallmeister* (director of a state stud farm) in Dillenburg, Hesse, and rose to the rank of *Oberst*. His wife was Friedliesel *Freiin* von Dalwigk zu Lichtenfels (* Kassel 17 March 1897, † Hamburg 16 December 1975, buried at Gut Hanerau), was the daughter of Friedrich Ludwig *Freiherr* von Dalwigk zu Lichtenfels, *Königlich Preussischer Generalmajor a.D.*, und der Elisabeth von Knobelsdorff-Brenkenhoff. This battlefield meeting was recalled by von Kleist over forty years after it occurred and is highlighted to illustrate the long and durable relationships established in the Wilhelmine Army and through the military horse community. Source: “Wachs, Karl Reinhardt,” in Hessische Biografie, December 5, 2021. <https://www.lagis-hessen.de/de/subjects/idrec/sn/bio/id/9441> (December 26, 2021).

⁵¹ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 21.

Given the fluidity of Russian unit movements, the large number of Russian fast-moving cavalry units, the splintering and scattering of numerous small enemy units that occurred during the Battle of Tannenberg, and the fact that von Kleist had narrowly missed encountering the Russians in Allenstein, it appeared that Providence had protected Ewald who exhibited more imprudent thrust than circumspect leadership during his first combat mission. The mission, most appropriate for a *Leutnant*, was in retrospect, inappropriately performed by von Kleist, the squadron commander. Through his actions, he dropped the mantle of his command and performed the mission as an individual officer thereby improperly endangering himself and jeopardizing his squadron for the period of his absence. Given, however, the well-known phenomenon sometimes exhibited by combat commanders, company, squadron, and even regimental commanders, during their adrenalin-fueled combat initiations when they have been seen to forget their command responsibilities and reverting to their days as a junior lieutenant, shoulder a rifle; the neophyte and unblooded *Rittmeister*'s actions can be both understood and pardoned.⁵²

III. First Blood

Back at Miswalde and back in command of *EE/LHRI*, Ewald received orders on Sunday, 29 August, to entrain his squadron and move from Miswalde to Wormditt.⁵³ Wormditt lay

⁵² Ernest N. Harmon with Milton MacKay and William Ross MacKay, *Combat Commander: Autobiography of a Soldier* (Englewood Cliff, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), 26-30. See Harmon's account for his candid assessment of his first combat experiences while serving as a captain and commander of a U.S. cavalry squadron in France during World War I. Harmon called his inappropriate episode of manning a machine gun rather than commanding his provisional squadron, "boyish heroics."

⁵³ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 22. Von Kleist gives no date for the move from Miswalde to Wormditt (Orneta, Poland), but given the events two days later, on 31 August, the move was most probably accomplished on 29 August 1914. The Passarge River is the present-day Pasłęka River.

thirty-four miles (fifty-five kilometers) to the east-northeast of Miswalde, thirty-two miles (fifty kilometers) north-northwest of Allenstein, and several kilometers east of the Passarge River (Paślęka River). Von Kleist sent several billeting NCOs ahead of the main party. The squadron's 80-100 hussars and horses were loaded and by early afternoon chuffing along via the mainline Mohrungen-Allenstein-Guttstadt to Wormditt. During the transit, von Kleist received several reports from the billeting NCOs giving him the impression that there were strong, large-force Russian cavalry units with their reconnaissance squadrons moving west in the vicinity of Wormditt.

At Wormditt, an Ostpreußen provincial town of 5,500 inhabitants, the squadron offloaded under the protection of troops already in the town. Here von Kleist met *Major* Wilhelm Klein and his small staff from Braunsberg.⁵⁴ They had a very different picture of the enemy's disposition and actions. Both Klein and von Kleist thought it odd that the Russian cavalry would continue west when their main force had been defeated at Tannenberg. Von Kleist wrote that "The rumors and false reports followed in rapid succession."⁵⁵

Upon detraining at Wormditt, the *EE/LHR1* came under the command of *Major* Wilhelm Klein. Klein, in a similar circumstance as von Kleist, the officer chosen to remain behind at the deployment of his regiment and oversee the building of the *Ersatz-Bataillon* (replacement battalion), now found himself in command of an ad hoc combined arms *Abteilung* (detachment).⁵⁶ The *Abteilung*, along with Klein's mobile *Ersatz-Bataillon/Infanterie-Regiment*

⁵⁴ Ibid., Heft II, 22. Braunsberg, present day Braniewo, Poland, a town approximately twenty-six miles (forty-two kilometers) north of Wormditt.

⁵⁵ Ibid., Heft II, 22.

⁵⁶ *Ranglisten 1900-1914*. Wilhelm Klein entered the army in 1889-1890. By the turn of century, he was an *Oberleutnant* (DoR: 13 September 1899 Kk) serving as the regimental adjutant in *I. Nassauisches Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 87* (Mainz). He held that position until his transfer to serve as adjutant to the commander of *75. Infanterie-Brigade* (Allenstein) sometime between May 1905-May 1906. On 15 September 1905, Klein received his promotion to *Hauptmann*. He remained *75. Infanterie-Brigade* adjutant until his transfer in late 1910-early 1911 to

Nr. 148, was reinforced by *Landwehr Bataillon 21*, an *Ersatz-Batterie/Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 36*, and a platoon of *Landwehr Pioniere* (combat engineers) from *XXII. Armee Korps*.⁵⁷ The arrival of von Kleist and his *EE/LHR1* gave the detachment a much welcomed fast-reconnaissance element. Klein's rearguard mission was to block the Passarge River crossings west of Wormditt and Mehlsack from Russian use.⁵⁸

On Monday, 30 August, reports of a large force of Russian cavalry near Mehlsack came into Klein's command post.⁵⁹ He dispatched Ewald who took the bulk of his squadron to investigate. Cautiously approaching Mehlsack and ready to do battle, von Kleist confirmed the erroneousness of this report. Rather than finding 2,000 Cossacks ready to fight, the *EE/LHR1* identified the "enemy" as a herd of cattle. The ten-mile ride back to Wormditt allowed the adrenaline to ebb from the hussars.

On the morning of 31 August, von Kleist led the squadron out on a reconnaissance patrol to the south of Wormditt on the western side of the Passarge River. What ensued was Ewald's first encounter with the Russians while at the head of his squadron.

I came across a [Russian] reconnaissance detachment. It came from the west and rode east towards the Passarge River between Wormditt and Liebstadt. We were able to ambush it and [our firing] forced it to change course. The situation was uncomfortable because I knew that we were between the reconnaissance detachment and the main force of the enemy cavalry. I turned back [towards

prestigious *Grenadier-Regiment Kronprinz (1. Ostpreußisches) Nr. 1* (Königsberg i. Pr.). Klein served as 7. *Kompanie Chef* from his arrival until his transfer out of grenadiers on 16 June 1913. Klein was transferred to 5. *Westpreußisches Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 148* (elements in Elbing and Braunsberg). On 1 October 1913, Klein was promoted to *Major* and until the beginning of the war likely served as the second staff officer in the regiment. The bulk of *Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 148* mobilized and was assigned to 74. *Infanterie-Brigade/41. Infanterie Division/XX. Armee Korps* and participated in the defense of East Prussia. *Major* Klein, as the second most junior *Major* and without a command of his own, was assigned to remain in garrison and raise the *Ersatz-Bataillon*. The urgency of the situation by late August 1914, saw him at the head of his *Ersatz-Bataillon* deployed in defense of the area north of Allenstein.

⁵⁷ Wehrkreiskommando I, *Schlachtfelder*, 102-103.

⁵⁸ Mehlsack (present-day Pieniężno, Poland) was located ten miles (sixteen kilometers) north of Wormditt, astride the main north-south rail line and approximately the same distance to the east of the Passarge River.

⁵⁹ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 22-23.

Wormditt] with my squadron after this discovery, one which did not correspond at all with what the commander in Wormditt had assumed.⁶⁰

The encounter highlighted the inadequacy of German forces to successfully screen the large numbers of Russian cavalry reconnaissance elements that preceded their cavalry divisions. Additionally, the encounter demonstrated that von Kleist had gotten over his imprudent independence and maintained a firm command of both himself and his hussars during their first firefight with the enemy. Too, Ewald's assessment of the situation and the likelihood of the large, main force of Russian cavalry in the vicinity would be confirmed before the day was through.

By 15:00 hours, *EE/LHR1* was back in Wormditt. Von Kleist reported his finding to *Major Klein*. As the *Major* was giving Ewald new orders, Russian artillery fire began landing in the town.⁶¹ Lead elements of the Russian 2nd and 3rd Cavalry Divisions with strong artillery support had come from the direction of Krossen, a village one and one-half miles (three kilometers) to the east of Wormditt.⁶² The first of Klein's *Abteilung* to engage the four Russians cavalry regiments and their two supporting mounted artillery batteries was the *4. Kompanie* of his *Ersatz- Bataillon* whose position lay on both sides of the brickyard in the vicinity of

⁶⁰ Ibid., Heft II, 23. Liebstadt (present-day Miłakowo, Poland) lay eight and one-half miles (fourteen kilometers) south-southwest of Wormditt and three miles (five kilometers) west of the Passarge River.

⁶¹ Wehrkreiskommando I, *Schlachtfelder*, 102-103.

⁶² Alexey Likhovorik, "Действия 1 армии 18(31) авг." ("Actions of the 1st Army 18(31) August.") Архив проекта, July 21, 2012. (Project Archive, July 21, 2012.) http://www.grwar.ru/library/EastPrussiaVIII/EPO_08_29.html (December 21, 2021). The original source for the information presented by Likhovorik is from the book by В. Рогвольд Конница, 1-й русской армии в Восточной Пруссии (август-сентябрь 1914 г.). Ленинград и Москва., Военная типография ГУРККА, 1926. С. 100-112. (V. Rogvold, Cavalry of the 1st Russian Army in East Prussia (August-September 1914). (Leningrad and Moscow: Military printing house GURKKA, 1926), 100-112.) The attacking Russian units were the 2nd and 3rd Cavalry Divisions of General von Rennenkampf's Russian 1st Army. Rennenkampf had halted his infantry's movement in an effort to link up with Samsanov's 2nd Army but had directed some of his cavalry elements to both search the area near Allenstein in an effort to establish contact with 2nd Army. Their additional mission was to destroy railroads to the west of the line Königsberg-Rastenburg.

Wormditt station 1,500 meters east of the town center. An additional Russian squadron and six artillery pieces led by an impatient Lieutenant General Hussein Chan Nachtschiwanski, commander of the Russian 2nd Cavalry Division, moved through Krossen and maneuvered to the north with the objective of occupying the *Hospitalforst*, a thickly wooded area of high ground north-northeast of the city where a hospital was located.

Von Kleist recalled,

I alerted my squadron, which had just ridden into town, and galloped with it over the long bridge out of the city towards the heights where the city hospital was located. This [I did] since these heights seemed to me to be decisive if one wanted to protect the town of Wormditt east of the Passarge.⁶³

In the *Hospitalforst*, General Chan Nachtschiwanski and the squadron he was accompanying unexpectedly received fire from a German unit. It is likely that this was von Kleist's squadron which had been able to quickly reach the wooded heights von Kleist referenced. At the tree line, the hussars would have dismounted and taken up firing positions deeper in the woods in order to defend this key terrain. Other elements of *Major Klein's* command came onto line and returned the Russian fire. Von Kleist remembered that it took some time to get the *Ersatz Feldartillerie-Batterie* in position and firing. This decisive event occurred around 17:30 hours. The German artillery fire broke the Russian attack and the Russians withdrew and retreated east. The battered Germans made no significant pursuit.

The four regiments of Russian cavalry had failed in their mission to break the rail connection between Braunsberg and Allenstein at Wormditt. Their poorly coordinated attack was costly. Casualties included one cavalry division commander killed, one cavalry division

⁶³ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 23.

commander wounded, seven officers, forty troopers, and forty horses killed or wounded.⁶⁴ A number of Russian horses were captured.⁶⁵

The defense of Wormditt cost the Germans as well. Germans killed in action totaled at least twenty: one warrant officer, three NCOs, and sixteen enlisted soldiers.⁶⁶ Von Kleist saw the burial of the first hussar killed under his command, *Gefreiter* Hoch.

Von Kleist was himself nearly a casualty. He wrote in 1945, that as he led his squadron out of town toward the wooded heights, the enemy artillery fire dropped close.

At a gallop crossing the bridge embankment a shell exploded among the trees lining the street and a piece of shrapnel tore my Busby off my head. I got the Busby back the next day. This incident made its way to my dear wife, who had in the meanwhile moved back to her family home in Hannover. ... It was reported

⁶⁴ Likhovorik, "Actions." The commander of the Russian 3rd Cavalry Division Lieutenant General Belgard, was fatally shot in the action in or near Hospital Forest. The commander of the Russian 2nd Cavalry Division Lieutenant General Chan Nachtschiwanski was wounded but remained in command of his division. Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 24. In one of his few memory errors, von Kleist recalled that "Their leader, a khan, fell in this my first battle."

⁶⁵ Von Mackensen, *Leibhusaren*, 17. The regimental history noted that while it was still on the Western Front on 28 September 1914, "Already among the replacements was a Russian army horse that the 'half mobile replacement squadron of the 1st Leibhusaren-Regiment' had captured at Wormditt."

⁶⁶ Gustav Ponath, *Die Geschichte des 5. Westpreußischen Infanterie-Regiments Nr. 148* (Gäbersdorf, Bezirk Breslau, Deutschland: Kommissionsverlag der Buchdruckerei Diesdorf, 1933), Verlustlisten des IR 148. Infanterie-Regiments Nr. 148, 4. *Ersatz-Kompanie* lost a total of twelve men: one *Offizierstellvertreter* (deputy officer), one *Unteroffizier* (corporal), nine riflemen, and one bugler. Max Dehnen, "Die Kriegsgräber in Ostpreußen von 1914/15," Beihefte zum Jahrbuch der Albertus-Universität Königsberg/Pr. XXVII (Würzburg: Holzner-Verlag, 1966), 66. Dehnen in his work on war graves in East Prussia, recorded the names and resting places of soldier killed in action at Wormditt on 31 August 1914. In addition to eight of the infantrymen killed from *Infanterie-Regiments Nr. 148*, he listed seven additional soldiers killed in action. From *Landwehr Infanterie-Regiment 21*, *Unteroffizier* Pyczka, *Gefreiter* Templin, *Landwehrmänner* Bielecki, Klamrowski, Kusch, and Renner. He also identified *Gefreiter* Hoch of *Ersatz-Eskadron/Leib-Husaren Regiment Nr. 1*, and *Unteroffizier* Hörner from *Etappen-Kraftwagenpark 8* (communications zone, i.e., Rear-Area, Motor Pool 8). All but the last were buried in the Wormditt *Evangelischen Kirchenfriedhof* (protestant church cemetery) while *Unteroffizier* Hörner was buried in the Wormditt *Katholischen Kirchenfriedhof* (catholic church cemetery). No records were found indicating a comprehensive total of killed in action, wounded in action, missing in action, or horses killed or wounded in action. Given the average ratio of four wounded in action (WIA) to every one soldier killed in action (KIA), the German WIA likely totaled approximately eighty. Taking this estimate and the other figures on hand, the Russians suffered an approximate total of fifty KIA/WIA; ten KIA and forty WIA, while the Germans suffered approximately one hundred total KIA/WIA; twenty KIA and eighty WIA. The heaviest German casualties appeared to have been from the 4. *Ersatz-Kompanie/Ersatz-Bataillon/Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 148*. This was the unit that was first and most heavily engaged by the Russian cavalry with artillery support at the outset of the battle.

that I was wounded in the head and during the bandaging of my head a Russian officer came in and said I was his prisoner.⁶⁷

This incident left Ewald unscathed physically and cognitively. If von Kleist's conduct during his first mission to find the enemy had been more impulsive than circumspect, this, his first battle was a recompense. While no details have surfaced as to Ewald's specific actions at the head of his squadron at Wormditt, the evidence is strong that they were exemplary. The proof; his being awarded the *Eisernes Kreuz II. Klasse (EK II)* (Iron Cross 2nd Class). The expediencies of wartime showed in the certificate which read:

Certificate

To Rittmeister v. Kleist of the Ers. Esk. 1st Leibhus. Rgts. No. 1

has been by His Majesty the Emperor and King

for his brave conduct in action at Wormditt on 31.8.14.

awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class.

Graudenz, 3.11.14

v. Zastrow

*Lieutenant General and Governor of Graudenz.*⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 23-24. Von Kleist noted that he suspected the information had come to his wife from the wife of Erick Ferdinand von Witzleben-Normann, Hildegard (nee von Meyer) von Witzleben-Normann, a relative of a friend from Hannover who, in August 1914, was residing in Marienburg. This incident provides an example of the flow of erroneous information during wartime.

⁶⁸ Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, "Orden und Auszeichnungen (Verleihungsurkunden)" (BA-MA: N 354/11, Document 10, Nachlass Kleist). The approximate half sheet of common-quality A4-sized paper and the pre-printed title, *Kaiser's* statement line, and the line identifying the award indicate the wartime expedience even at this early date of the war. The other specific lines of information were hand written. Of note, the award was approved some two months after the battle. Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). The date for the award of *Eisernes Kreuz II. Klasse (EK II)* as recorded in von Kleist's official personnel record was 4 October 1914. Perhaps this was the approval date of the list of on which von Kleist's name appeared recommending the awarding of the *EK II*. Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 24. Von Kleist recorded in 1945, "We returned to Marienburg and there I was awarded the Iron Cross 2nd Class, at that time still a rare and much esteemed decoration."

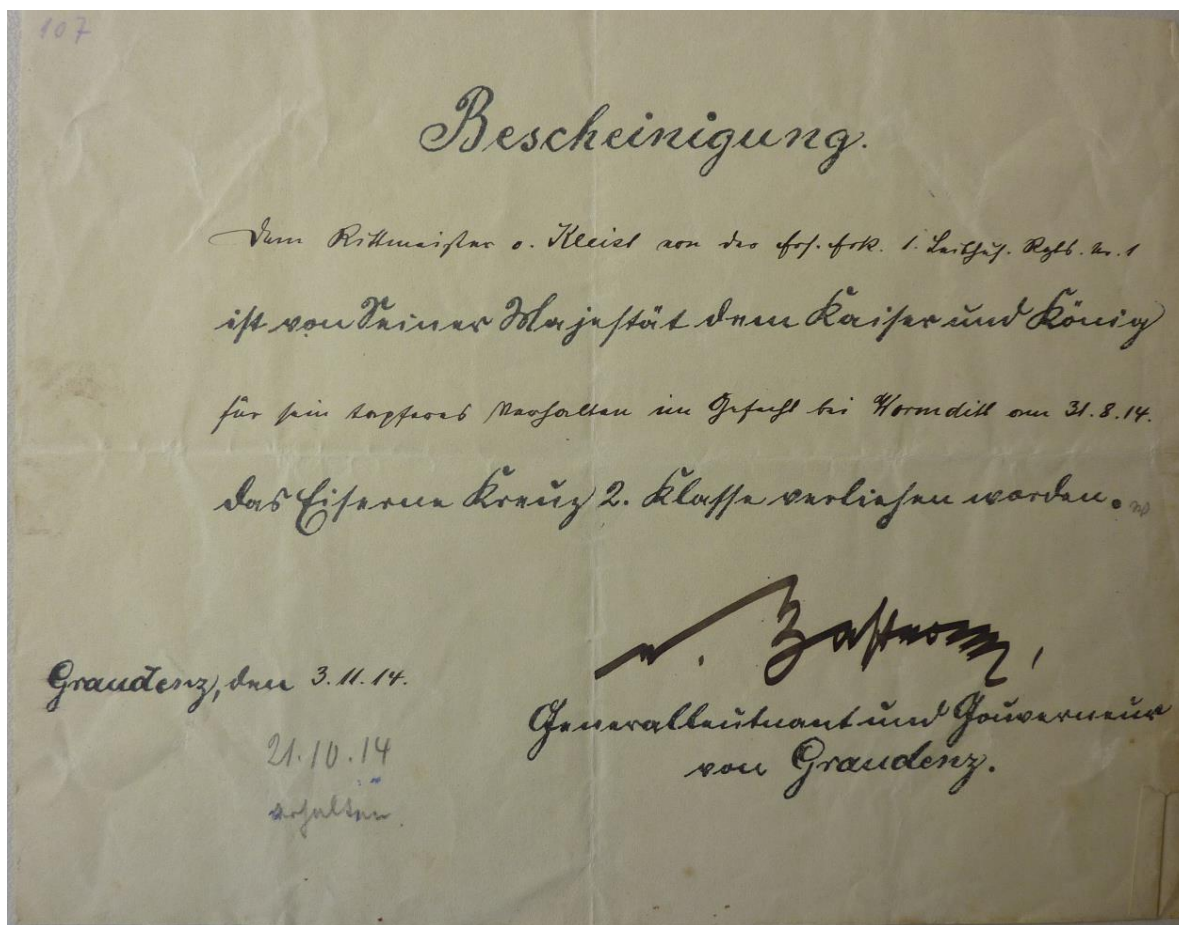


Figure 9 Iron Cross 2nd Class Certificate

Ewald von Kleist's certificate awarding him the Eisernes Kreuz II. Klasse (Iron Cross 2nd Class) for his brave conduct during the Battle of Wormditt, 31 August 1914. Author's photo.

The young *Rittmeister* had indeed acquitted himself well in his first battle.

With the Russians in retreat in the first days of September 1914, and the threat of Russian cavalry west of the line Labiau-Wehlau-Angerburg-Lyck in eastern East Prussia largely eliminated, German rear area units refitted and continued training. A week after the Battle of Wormditt, on 7 September 1914, the *EE/LHRI* returned to Marienburg and Kalthof to gather and train reinforcements, integrate the hussars who had completed their training, and prepare for further combat action.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Von Mackensen, *Leibhusaren*, 17.

IV. Hussars in the Small War

After only a few days “in Marienburg and Kalthof, the trained cavalry troops were then transferred to the southern border of East Prussia as the 1. mobile Ersatz Eskadron of the XVII. Armeekorps, temporarily known as Leibhusaren-Eskadron von Kleist.”⁷⁰ Von Kleist’s squadron was one of the mobile replacement units that comprised the *Hauptreserve Graudenz* (main reserve of Fortress Graudenz). The provisional detachment commander was *Oberst* Conrad Pfafferott.⁷¹ The 8. *Armee* commander ordered *Hauptreserve Graudenz* along with the 35. *Reserve-Division*, the 70. *Landwehr-Brigade*, and *Landwehr-Division Goltz* to provide flank and border protection between Thorn and Chorshela, a distance of some ninety-three miles (one hundred and fifty kilometers).⁷² Along with ensuring Russian units did not reenter into Prussia, the intent was to establish an army corps base at Mława, a recently captured town just across the East Prussia-Russian Poland border. The base would enable further combat operations to the east when the significant invasion of Russian territory commenced.

By mid-September 1914, *EE/LHRI* was in the south. Von Kleist recalled,

Here at the border position near Mława we now had a constant “small war” with the Russians on the opposite side. Every morning we or my patrol rode past our outposts into the outlying area and battled with the Russians. In the evening we returned to our lines. My boys could not get a better education. Oberleutnant

⁷⁰ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 24.

⁷¹ Ibid., Heft II, 24. Kleist noted, “The provisional detachment was led by Oberst Pfafferott, who was killed in 1916 or 17 on the Kleine Bersina by a lightning strike.” *Rangliste 1914 (1926)*, 368. Pfafferott began the war as an *Oberstleutnant* (DoR: 1 October 1912 Aa) serving as the staff officer in 9. *Westpreußisches Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 176* (Kulm and Thorn). He was likely left behind at the deployment to form the *Ersatz-Bataillon* or more likely appointed commander of the *Landwehr-Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 21* at Danzig upon its mobilization. He was promoted to *Oberst* after taking command of the regiment. He died on 29 July 1916 in Mjagiwitschi.

⁷² Reicharchiv, *Weltkrieg*, Zweite Band, 273. Thorn is present-day Toruń, Poland and Chorshela is Chorzele, Poland. Thorn lay almost directly west of Chorzele, on the Weichsel (Vistula) River. Mława, present-day Mława, Poland, was captured on 3 September 1914, by the 35. *Reserve Division*.

Würtz, nicknamed “Panje,” Leutnant Henkel, Feldwebel Lüders (a broker from Hamburg) and the veterinarian Schlaefer from Praust were my comrades.⁷³

In September, the primary German effort on the Eastern Front was to the north in the First Battle of the Masurian Lakes where the goal was to expel the Russians from East Prussia. The main battles were fought between 7 and 14 September 1914. The majority of the German 8. *Armee*, reinforced by two corps transferred from the Western Front, pushed the Russian 1st Army and the newly formed 10th Army (formed from the remnants of 2nd Army) eastward in a number of engagements. The two Russian armies retreated across the border to regroup. The German offensive to clear East Prussia of the invaders had cost 8. *Armee* approximately 9,000 casualties. They had inflicted over ten times that number on the Russians who lost 100,000 men.⁷⁴ Officers, men, and horses continued to join von Kleist’s *Ersatz-Eskadron*. On 21 September 1914, future aerial ace, Johannes Janzen joined the squadron as a *Kriegsfreiwilliger* (wartime volunteer).⁷⁵

⁷³ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 26. Rangliste 1913, 726. *Oberleutnant* Würtz was likely a reserve officer aligned with *Ulanen-Regiment von Schmidt (I. Pommersches) Nr. 4* prior to the outbreak of the war. *Leutnant* Henkel was a reserve officer aligned with *I. Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1* and would have been called to active duty at mobilization. He likely had been assigned to the *Ersatz-Eskadron* as one of its initial officers.

⁷⁴ Reicharchiv, *Weltkrieg*, Zweite Band, 317. The official history recorded losses for the Russians in the September battles as 100,000 men, of which 70,000 were killed or wounded and 30,000 taken as prisoners. Nine thousand Germans were killed or wounded in these battles.

⁷⁵ The Aerodrome, “Johann Janzen’s regiment,” March 5, 2015, <https://www.theaerodrome.com/forum/showthread.php?t=63553>. An excerpt from the Bayerische Kriegsstammrollen ancestry.de was cited with the information that Johannes Max Janzen (* 21 May 1896 at Fronza, West Prussia; † 18 October 1945 in Soviet PoW camp) was affiliated with the following army organizations, “21.09.1914 als Kriegsfreiwilliger in das Ersatz-Eskadron des 1. Leib-Husaren-Regiments Nr. 1 eingetreten; 21.11.1914 mit 1. mobile Ersatz-Eskadron von Kleist (Division von Breugel) ins Feld; 16.02.1915 zur Landwehr-Infanterie-Regiment von Gundlach kommandiert.” Janzen’s service in von Kleist’s squadron was reported to be as a *Gerfreiter*, *Unteroffizier*, and *Vizewachtmeister*. He was promoted to *Leutnant der Reserve* on 24 February 1915, shortly after his transfer to the infantry. He transferred to the flying corps and went on to become a thirteen-victory aerial ace.

From mid-September until early November, von Kleist led his squadron during its daily skirmishes with the Russians in the area between Mława and Praszysz.⁷⁶ Of this time, Ewald recalled,

The major battles and great achievements for our Landsturm, which was heavily involved here, were the advances on Chiechanow [sic] and Praszysz. These were aimed at drawing and holding in position strong Russian forces. I can still see the Landsturm with their black cloth coats and the old Landwehr Tschako attacking over white snow fields. Instead of a cartridge pouch, the cartridges were wrapped in newspaper and hung on a cord around the neck.

There were no field kitchens. My squadron put a potato steamer on a two-wheeled Russian cart, which was drawn by four pinto ponies. When it arrived with its widely seen smoking chimney it always caused great joy. It was our pride and joy.⁷⁷

By the end of October, the Russians had reconstituted and realigned two army corps southeast of Mława with the intent of penetrating the thinly held southern East Prussian border.

On 3 November 1914, General von Zastow's *Festung Graudenz* mixed force was reorganized into two subordinate divisions: *Landwehr-Division Breugel* and *Division Wernitz*.⁷⁸ Von Kleist's *Erstatz-Eskadron* was allocated to *Landwehr-Division Breugel*, the division named

⁷⁶ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). In the combat record section of von Kleist's service history, the only combat action recorded between early September and early November 1914, was "Attack and Border Defense Actions under the Government of Graudenz" from 11-17 October 1914. Praszysz lay twenty-three miles (thirty-seven kilometers) east-southeast of Mława.

⁷⁷ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 26-27. *Tschako* (shako) is a tall, cylindrical military hat, most often seen with a visor. The black *Tshako* was largely retained by *Landsturm* units when the active Prussian Army instituted *Pickelhaube* in the mid-nineteenth century.

⁷⁸ Reicharchiv, *Der Weltkrieg 1914-1918: Der Herbst-Feldzug 1914, Sechster Band* (Berlin: E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1929), 341. At this point in the war, some newly constituted formations from *Abteilung* to *Armee-korps* were given the names of their commanders. Commanding General of *Division Wernitz* was General Theodor von Wernitz (* 1848; † 1922). In August 1915, the division was reorganized/renamed as the 86. *Infanterie-Division*. Commanding General of *Landwehr-Division Breugel* was Willem Hendrick Clifford Kocq von Breugel. Clifford was not a first name but rather the leading element of the family name, thusly, Clifford Kocq von Breugel. The *Rangliste* spelled the *Generalleutnant's* name as "Clifford Kocq von Breugel." All *Leibhusaren* documents (history and association's newsletter) also use this spelling. Von Kleist and some others give the spelling as "Clifford Cocq von Breugel." The official army spelling is used for clarity. Clifford Kocq von Breugel (*2 April 1856; † 17 May 1933) served as Commander of the 1. *Leib-Husaren Regiment Nr. 1* from 20 March 1906 until 14 September 1911, and 25. *Kavallerie-Brigade* commander prior to the outbreak of World War I. He served first as commander *Landwehr-Division Breugel* from November 1914 and as the *Kommandeur* of the reorganized/renamed follow-on 85. *Landwehr Division* from 25 September 1915 until 16 August 1918. He retired as *Generalleutnant*.

for its commander, *Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq von Breugel, erstwhile commander of *Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1* and the *25. Kavallerie-Brigade*. At this time the Russians attacked. General von Zastow's two divisions fell back north to the defensive line Strasburg-Soldau-Neidenburg approximately eighteen miles (thirty kilometers) to the northwest of Mlawa.⁷⁹ On 7 November, Russian forces began their artillery bombardment of Soldau and Neidenburg. On the 10th, the Russians began their probing attacks against the German strongpoints. Von Kleist wrote of the fight,

In this battle I closed a gap between the battle group around Soldau and the one around Neidenburg, and I owe it primarily to a 10-centimeter battery (Messerschmidt) assigned to me. My task, which in the first look, probably seemed hopeless to my new division commander, Lieutenant General Cocq von Breugel (a former Leibhusaren commander), when he gave me my order that night. The 85. Landwehr Division was newly formed at that time. When the Russian, under the impression or as a result of their defeat in the Great Vistula Bend by Mackensen, also halted the battle on our front.⁸⁰

Here, likely for the first time, *Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq von Breugel gave von Kleist command of a combined arms detachment.⁸¹ The detachment included, for this battle, Messerschmidt's battery of horse-drawn 10.5 cm IFH 98/09 field howitzers and possibly an infantry company and machine gun platoon.

⁷⁹ Reicharchiv, *Weltkrieg*, Sechster Band, 340. *Generalleutnant* von Zastrow's force by early November 1914, had grown to thirty-two battalions, half of which were *Landsturm*, nine cavalry squadrons, and sixteen field artillery batteries. Soldau is present-day Działdowo, Poland and Neidenburg is Nidzica, Poland. Each of the towns had a population of approximately 5,000 in 1914.

⁸⁰ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 27-28. Von Kleist further elaborated, "The Battle of Neidenburg-Soldau tied down large forces that would otherwise have been used against Mackensen's battles near Lodz in November 1914." The parenthetical (Messerschmidt) appears to recall the name of the officer commanding the artillery battery. This was possibly *Oberleutnant* Messerschmidt (DoR: 18 August 1910 T4t) who began the war in the *2. Westpreußisches Fußartillerie-Regiment Nr. 17* (Danzig).

⁸¹ Georg von Kleist, ed., *Uebersicht über die Teilnahme der Familie von Kleist am Weltkriege* (self published: Wussek, Pommern, 1920), 43. The war biography noted that "He [Ewald] participated in the battles of Soldau-Neidenburg and the battles of Prasnysz and Chikhanov in the winter of 1914/15 in this unit, repeatedly as the leader of mixed detachments of all arms." This information coupled with von Kleist's statement that the 10-centimeter battery of Messerschmidt was "assigned to me" supports the idea that von Kleist commanded more than just his *Ersatz* cavalry squadron at this time.

For ten days, the Russians attempted to gain the advantage and attacked in multiple thrusts against the fifteen-mile (twenty-three kilometer) line between the two towns.⁸² With no significant success and as part of the reverberations sent through the Russian Front by General von Mackensen's victories at the head of the German 9. *Armee* on the Vistula southeast of Thorn, the Russians broke off the attack on Neidenburg-Soldau. The German force, predominantly comprised of "Ersatz, Landwehr, and Landsturm troops, which were completely inadequately equipped in every respect and outnumbered, fought off the best Russian troops for a full six days, a remarkable achievement."⁸³ Superior leadership, organization, and motivation look to be the keys to this German success. Early on the morning of 17 November, the Russians began their retreat towards Mława.

To bolster the East Prussian defensive force, the *Höhere Kavallerie Kommando Nr. 4* (*HHK-4*), under the command of *Generalleutnant* Gustav *Freiherr* von Hollen, was ordered east from the Western Front.⁸⁴ One of *HHK-4*'s subordinate units was *Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1* (*LHR 1*). The regiment entrained in France on 16 November 1914, and arrived on the border of East Prussia a few days later.⁸⁵ Ewald recalled, "My regiment transferred to the vicinity of Willenberg and comrades visited me. I was able to instruct them about the fighting methods of the Russians and warn them against recklessness. I remember talking to Leutnant Graf

⁸² Wehrkreiskommando I, *Schlachtfelder*, 140-142. See this source for a detailed account of the ten-day set of battles.

⁸³ Reicharchiv, *Weltkrieg*, Sechster Band, 341-342.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 342. The *Höhere Kavallerie-Kommando Nr. 2* had as its subordinate divisions, 2. and 4. *Kavallerie-Divisionen*. One of the brigades assigned to 2. *Kavallerie-Division* was the *Leib-Husaren Brigade* with its two subordinate regiments: 1. *Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1* and 2. *Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 2*. Gustav Karl Emil Beatus *Freiherr* von Hollen (* 22 December 1851 at Schönweide; † 7 November 1917) was, at the outbreak of the war, commander of 21. *Infanterie-Division* (Frankfurt am Main) but upon mobilization he was named commander of *Höhere Kavallerie-Kommando Nr. 2* with an assignment on the Western Front.

⁸⁵ Von Mackensen, *Leibhusaren*, 22.

Kaiserlingk [*sic*] in this manner.”⁸⁶ Given that he had been actively battling the Russians for two and a half months, Ewald’s insights into Russian tactics, capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses would have been of significant value to his regimental colleagues. But within a fortnight von Kleist would be frustrated and saddened to learn that *Leutnant* von Keyserlingk had not heeded his warnings and, had “by his own foolhardiness”, gotten himself killed.⁸⁷

With aid of the reinforcements, the newly constituted *Korps Graudenz* pursued the retreating Russians. By 19 November, elements of the *Korps* had crossed the border and by the 21st had retaken Mława.⁸⁸ The Russians offered only light resistance as *Korps Graudenz*

⁸⁶ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 26. The officer was *Leutnant* Archibald Graf von Keyserlingk

⁸⁷ Ibid., Heft II, 26. Von Kleist wrote, “Despite this [my warnings against recklessness], he fell by his own foolhardiness a few days later.” Eberhard von Mackensen, “Leutnant Archibald Graf von Keyserlingk,” *Der Leibhusar, Nachrichtenblatt des Leibhusaren-Bundes*, Nr 34, (April) 1938, 1-2. Archibald Graf von Keyserlingk (* March 23, 1889; † November 29, 1914). His eulogy is found in the 1938 annual publication of *Der Leibhusar, Nachrichtenblatt des Leibhusaren-Bundes* (The Life Hussars, Newsletter of the Life Hussars Association). A pre-WWI photograph of *Leutnant* Graf von Keyserlingk was the cover picture of the 1938 issue. A short biography and eulogy followed on the inside cover. This reported that on 29 November 1914, while at the head of a patrol and finding no Russians, von Keyserlingk sheltered the patrol in a woods and proceeded with only one Polish speaking soldier towards the town of Chorzele. He was shot in the open while approaching the town. Despite an attack by the patrol, they were unable to recover the *Leutnant’s* body. A farmer reported his death and a few days later when the town was in German hands, von Keyserlingk’s body was exhumed and sent home for burial. The article noted that the *Leutnant* had been awarded the *Eisernes Kreuz II. Klasse* for earlier actions in France. *Leutnant* Graf von Keyserlingk made an impression on von Kleist given the fact that thirty years later, Ewald recalled the officer by name and included reference to him in his prison camp writings. As is often the case, one generally remembers the extremes rather than the average. Thus, it is likely that von Kleist either thought highly of this junior cavalry officer and mourned his death as a foolish waste or, he thought von Keyserlingk an imprudent and arrogant officer whose own foolishness got him killed, despite the warnings. One is left to ponder what von Kleist’s thoughts were in the late spring of 1938, when he received his copy of *Der Leibhusar* and was reminded of *Leutnant* Graf von Keyserlingk in the associations memorializing of the lost officer. Of note, the *Leibhusaren-Bund* first began memorializing the officer killed in World War I in the Spring 1928 edition of *Der Leibhusar*. The newsletter, usually around thirty approximately A5 sized pages and printed twice annually in this period, had a photo of the memorialized officer on the front cover and a page to two-page biography which generally included the details of his wartime death. This practice continued through 1939. The fresh reminders of these officer and comrades killed during WWI likely served not only as a remembrance of the individuals but as a reminder of the damages of the war and the continuing injustices of the peace that followed; injustices that needed to be rectified.

⁸⁸ Reicharchiv, *Weltkrieg*, Sechster Band, 342.

maintained their pursuit. By 24 November, *Division Breugel*, with von Kleist's squadron acting as divisional cavalry, had reached the heights south of Zjechanow.⁸⁹



Figure 10 Rittmeister Ewald von Kleist, circa 1915

Rittmeister Ewald von Kleist. While undated, the photo was likely taken between October 1914-April 1915 given von Kleist's hussars uniform and the surrounding environment. (BA-MA N-354/32)

⁸⁹ Ibid., 342-343. See this section for the details of the pursuit of the Russians from 17-25 November 1914. Zjechanow is present-day Ciechanow, Poland and is located twenty-three miles (thirty-seven kilometers) south of Mława.

During this time, the *Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1* was fighting nearby and von Kleist was able to report face-to-face with his regimental commander, *Oberstleutnant* von Eicke und Polwitz near Przasnysz. They discussed von Eicke's desire to see von Kleist and the "Leibhusaren-Eskadron von Kleist" come back under command of the regiment.⁹⁰ Likely the young *Rittmeister* did not express his contrary opinion. The regimental commander's hopes were not to be realized and Ewald noted, "I remained independent and did not join the regiment or a cavalry division. And even at the time, I preferred that."⁹¹ The command of an independent cavalry squadron and at times, a larger mixed-arms force, obviously suited von Kleist. Too, in *Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq von Breugel Ewald appeared to have a division commander under whom he could agreeably serve.

By early December the weather had turned wintery. The German's had reached the limit of their advance on the Ciechanow-Przasnysz line. The German units had been drastically weakened during the previous three months of the back and forth fighting in the border region. The Russians had, by early December, been able to reinforce their units. They exploited the exhausted state of *Korps Graudenz* and attacked at the end of the first week of December 1914.⁹²

But then we had to quickly retreat again because all in all our forces were only weak, most of the units being either Landwehr and Landsturm. I remember a retreat from Chiechanow [*sic*] to Mlawka, where I covered the retreat with my squadron on the night of 10 December 1914 with the temperature at -10 degrees Celsius. At that time, we gave way as far as the southern border of East Prussia. But by 24 December 1914, we were back in Mlawka again. In our sector, between Mlawka and Chiechanow [*sic*], a winter war of position occurred.⁹³

⁹⁰ Von Mackensen, *Leibhusaren*, 18.

⁹¹ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 26.

⁹² Reicharchiv, *Weltkrieg*, Sechster Band, 343-346.

⁹³ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 27-28. Minus 10 degrees Celsius is fourteen degrees Fahrenheit. Reicharchiv, *Weltkrieg*, Sechster Band, 343-346, corroborates von Kleist's recall of events in December 1914. For an account of one infantry regiment's action during this period see the account from the operational *Kriegstagebücher* (war diaries) of the *Landwehr-Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 99*, one of the regiments in *Division Breugel*. Otto Pempel, *Das Landwehr-Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 99* (Oldenburg in Oldenburg and Berlin: Druck und Verlag von Gerhard Stalling, 1922, 24-28.

On 19 December 1914, *Generalmajor* Karl Suren took over command of *Korps Graudenz* and the year ended with the corps defending a widely extended line close to the position it held at the beginning of November.⁹⁴

As 1914 ended, it would have been natural for Ewald to have taken a few minutes, perhaps an hour or two at most, and withdrawn from the unrelenting duties of a commander in combat to reflect. Certainly, thoughts of Gisela back at home in Hannover and that this was their first Christmas and New Years of their married life that they would not spend together would have been foremost in his mind. Too, one could not help but contemplate the news of comrades killed in action since the war began only five months prior. Ewald could count the following officers with whom he had served: from *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 3*, *Major* Kolbe (KIA 31 August) and *Hauptmann* Winkler (KIA 6 September); from his *Hörsaal C Kriegsakademie* class, *Leutnant* Betrams (KIA 22 August), *Oberleutnant* Brandeis (died 26 August), *Hauptmann* Fellingner (died 28 November), *Leutnant* Friecke (KIA 17 September), *Oberleutnant* Gieseke (KIA 28 November), *Oberleutnant* Nietzsche (KIA 24 August), *Oberleutnant* Püttmann (KIA 3 November), *Oberleutnant* von der Schulenberg (KIA 12 September), *Oberleutnant* Schultz (KIA 20 December), and *Oberleutnant* Windelband (KIA 10 November); from *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 14*, *Oberleutnant* Hellwig who had taken Ewald's mobilization spot (KIA 10 August); and from *Leib-Husaren Nr. 1*, *Leutnant* von Kühne (KIA 28 August), *Oberleutnant* Fleischer (23 October), *Leutnant* von Reichel (KIA 23 November), *Leutnant* Burggraf und Graf zu Dohna-Schlobitten (26 November), and *Leutnant* Graf von Keyserlingk (29 November).⁹⁵

⁹⁴“Surén, Karl,” The Prussian Machine, no date. <http://prussianmachine.com/akb/suren.htm> (January 5, 2022). Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Viktor Surén (* 19 December 1860; † 21 November 1927) at the outbreak of the war as a *Generalmajor* (DoR: 22 March 1912), was the commander of 22. *Infanterie-Brigade* (Breslau). Upon mobilization he was promoted to command 11. *Reserve-Division*, a unit in the 5. *Armee*.

⁹⁵ *Rangliste 1914* (1926).

One of the hardest blows was the death of his mentor and former commander, *Oberstleutnant* von Raumer (KIA 26 August), from whom he had learned much. At least nineteen officers with whom he had served, many he had known well, were gone. Certainly, Ewald knew that others would join them. But not him. He believed he had the knowledge, the skill, the training and education, and most importantly the will to stay alive and to keep as many of his hussars alive as well. Too, his faith in God sustained him. If, as a member of the von Kleist clan, he had not been born for this, then he had chosen this path and he would fulfill his sworn duty to King and Fatherland.

As 1915 commenced, Ewald and his squadron settled into winter quarters. The location was at Kosiny Kapićzne, just to the south of Mława on a small estate belong to a *Frau* von Olszewska.⁹⁶ The official record stated that “for Zastrow Corps, combat activity in January and early February was limited to minor raids on both sides, reconnaissance in force, and insignificant artillery engagements.”⁹⁷ As January ended, Ewald received some welcomed news.

Once again, von Kleist’s bravery and leadership had been recognized. On 27 January 1915, he was officially awarded the *Eisernes Kreuz I. Klasse (EK I)* (Iron Cross 1st Class).⁹⁸ The simple certificate read as follows:

⁹⁶ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft II, 28. Kosiny Kapićzne, now a small village of approximately two dozen homes in the middle of agricultural countryside, lays six miles (nine kilometers) to the southwest of Mława.

⁹⁷ Reicharchiv, *Der Weltkrieg 1914-1918: Die Operationen des Jahres 1915: Die Ereignisse im Winter und Frühjahr*, Siebenter Band (Berlin: E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1931), 170.

⁹⁸ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). The date for the award of *Eisernes Kreuz I. Klasse (EK I)* as recorded in von Kleist’s official personnel record was 27 January 1915 and thus matched the official award certificate.

Certificate of Possession

His Majesty the Kaiser and King
has the awarded
Rittmeister v. Kleist
in the 1st Replacement-Squadron XVII Army Corps
the Iron Cross 1st Class.

Corps Headquarters *Mlaw*, den 27. January 1915

The Commanding General
*Surén*⁹⁹

While the record does not indicate the action(s) for which Ewald received Iron Cross 1st Class, it most likely was for his outstanding leadership and demonstrated bravery between the 3-17 November 1914 in the combat operations near Soldau-Neidenburg. Given von Kleist's recall of his unit's actions when they "closed a gap between the battle groups around Soldau and the one around Neidenburg," it was likely for this specific action that he earned the *EK I*. Again, Ewald had demonstrated significant achievements on the battlefield and the *EK I* attested to his continued suitability and likely high potential within the officer corps.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, "Orden und Auszeichnungen (Verleihungsurkunden)" (BA-MA: N 354/11, Document 11, Nachlass Kleist). *Italicized* information was handwritten. The rest of the document was pre-printed with a simple double-lined frame border. A purple stamp "Korps v. Zastrow" and imperial eagle was affixed to the left of the commander's signature.

¹⁰⁰ Von Kleist makes no mention of earning the *Eisernes Kreuz I. Klasse (EK I)* (Iron Cross 1st Class) in his post-World War II writings. For von Kleist, this was the last medal or award to be earned by him during this war. By the end of the war, over 163,000 *Eisernes Kreuz I. Klasse (EK I)* (Iron Cross 1st Class) medals had been awarded. Thus, the *EK I* was by no means a rare or high award. The awarding, however, of von Kleist's *EK I* came early in the war and before the inflationary increase in the awarding of all levels of medals. For an officer to have served the entire war without having earned at a minimum the *EK I* would have brought serious question as to the officer's bravery/leadership and as well decreased an officer's chances for being retained in the 100,000-man army.

Between 17 and 24 February 1915, the left wing of the *Armeegruppe Gallwitz* commanded by *General der Artillerie* Max von Gallwitz conducted an offensive against the Russians forces at Przansnysz.¹⁰¹ While *Division Breugel* remained in its position on the defensive, von Kleist's *1. Ersatz-Eskadron XVII Armeekorps (1EE/XVII AK)* was ordered to support the offensive as part of *Generalleutnant* Kurt von Morgen's *1. Reserve Korps*.¹⁰² Von Kleist clan information indicated that Ewald commanded a "mixed detachment of all arms" during this operation.¹⁰³ Ewald himself recalled the bitterly cold weather during the limited offensive. Despite the cold, the German encirclement of Przansnysz completed on the 24th, netted approximately 10,000 prisoners of the 63rd Russian Reserve Division, 36 artillery pieces, and 14 machine guns. The Germans established a defense but by the 26th, heavy pressure was being applied by the Russians causing the General Morgen's *1. Reserve Korps* to fall back to its starting positions. Despite being pushed back, "*blutige Franz*" (bloody Franz), as von Kleist recalled his nickname, opined, "The operation on Przansnysz was 'one of the most daring in the history of war', and for himself 'the most interesting and exciting of the whole war.'"¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Reicharchiv, *Weltkrieg*, Siebenter Band, 460. In another reorganization of the units on the southern East Prussian Front, *Armee-Abteilung Gallwitz* (also known as *Armeegruppe Gallwitz*) was formed on 10 February 1915, with *General der Artillerie* Max Karl Wilhelm von Gallwitz (*2 May 1852 in Breslau; † 18 April 1937 in Naples, Italy) commanding. *Armee-Abteilung Gallwitz* as of 13 February 1915, had as subordinate units: 37. *Infanterie-Division*, *Landsturm. Gruppe Goslich*, *Korps Zastrow (Graudenz)*, 2. *Kavallerie-Division*, 1. *Garde-Reserve-Division*, *Korps Dickhuth (Thorn)*, and *1. Reserve Korps*. Units under *Korps Zastrow (Graudenz)* commanded by "*Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq v. Breugel (14 ¼ *Bataillonen*, 2 *Eskadronen*, 8 *Batterien*). *Brig. Falkenhayn (Ldw. I.R. 61 u. 99, Ers./Ldw. I.R. 5, Fstgs. M.G. Abt. 1 u. 4)*, *Brig. Pfafferot (Ldw. I.R. 17 u. 21, Ers./Ldw. I.R. Eulm, Fstgs. M. G. Abt. 7, Fstgs. M. G. Abt. v. Stülpnagel, Ers. Fstgs. M. G. Abt. 2)*, *Radf. Komp. Marienburg, ½ Radf. Komp. Graudenz, 1. u. 2. mob. Ers. Esk. XVII. A. K., 2. Ers./Felda. R. 36, 2. Ers./Felda. R. 73, 2. Ers./Felda. R. 79, 5./Fuß. R. 15 (s. F-H.), ¾ I./2, G. Ldw. Fuß. R. (s. F. H.), 7./Fuß. R. 15 (10 cm-Kan.), 4. /Pi. Btl. 26, 1. Res./Pi. Btl. 26.*" Note that von Kleist's *Ersatz-Eskadron* is listed as *1. mob. Ers. Esk. XVII. A. K* (1st mobile Replacement Squadron XVII. Army Corps).

¹⁰² Ibid., 460. The official records indicate that the name of the squadron that von Kleist commanded had changed from "*Ersatz-Eskadron/Leib-Husaren Regiment Nr. 1*" to *1. Ersatz-Eskadron XVII Armeekorps*. The facilitate correlation with official documents, the new designation is used.

¹⁰³ Von Kleist, ed., *Teilnahme*, 43. See footnote 81.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 256-257. Quote pulled into *Der Weltkrieg 1914-1918* from E. v. Morgen, *Meiner Truppen Heldenkämpfe* (Berlin: E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1920). (My Troops' Heroic Battles). Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 28.

For von Kleist and his hussars, the war settled back into a static phase with reconnaissance and security missions as well as minor raids to harass the enemy.

In the spring and early summer 1915, the main effort on the eastern front was further south in the Gorlice-Tarnow sector of Galicia. Here troops under General von Mackensen launched a major offensive in early May. In the southern East Prussian sector, the status quo was maintained until July 1915.

In early July, Ewald received his first wartime and eighth officer *Qualifikations- Bericht* (qualifications report). The general format of the evaluation report did not change from its peacetime predecessor. The report was hand written by von Kleist's direct superior, *Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq von Breugel, the division commander. And in keeping with von Kleist's status as a graduate of the *Kriegsakademie*, he received an additional rating from his corps commander, in this case *Generalleutnant* Karl Surén. While not specifically dated, the *Bericht* was likely completed within the first week of July, given the intense combat operations that commenced by the middle of the month.

Von Kleist wrote of the battle, "Once in an attack by our left sector on Praszynsz by General von Morgen (called Bloody Franz), we took 10,000 prisoners; but then had to evacuate quickly. My squadron was also deployed to take part-it must have been February 1915-and it was bitterly cold."

Qualifications Report

to July 1915

on Rittmeister Paul Ludwig Ewald v. Kleist

Leader of the 1st mobile Replacement Squadron XVII Army Corps (Replacement Leibhusaren 1)

Age		Pensionable Service Time		Combat Ready	How long in Position		Commission
Year	Months	Years	Months		Years	Months	
33	11	15	4	Ja		15	22.3.1914 V33v

Medium height, slim, dapper. A particularly capable trustworthy officer, of high energy, great diligence and versatile interests. He is very reserved and has excellent comportment. He has attended the War Academy with success, and his outstanding gifts of intellect especially manifest themselves in the tactical field. Because of his outstanding entire personality, I highly recommend Rittmeister v. Kleist for no orderly room [office] duties. He fills his position as squadron commander excellently and is qualified for regimental commander as well as for promotion.

Clifford Cocq v. Breugel
Lieutenant General and Division Commander

Agreed! I also support his use on a troop unit general staff.
Suitable for promotion and regimental commander.
Fills his position quite well.

Suren
Lieutenant General and Commanding General¹⁰⁵

At the time of the writing, von Kleist had served under Clifford Kocq von Breugel's direct command for a full eight months. During that time, the division and von Kleist's squadron, acting as divisional cavalry, participated in the critical defensive Battle of Niedenburg-Soldau in mid-November 1914 and in the following offensive that pushed the Russians back to beyond Mława by early December. In February 1915, von Kleist led his squadron in support of General Morgen's *I. Reserve Korps*' encirclement of a large force of Russians at Przyszysz. During both these operations, Ewald had been given command of an all arms detachment.

¹⁰⁵ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Qualifikations-Bericht 1913; (Document 17). *Italics* indicates handwritten data.

Between March and June 1915, while the infantrymen of *Division Breugel* remained in stationary fortified positions, Ewald was active leading his hussars in daily reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance missions and the occasional minor raid. Thus, von Breugel had observed von Kleist under a variety of combat conditions and over a sufficient enough period to know his subordinate's mettle.

Even during wartime, the boilerplate open remarks on officer's physical appearance remained. Ewald was again described as of medium height and slim physique but with the new descriptor, "dapper." The second sentence was one of the two key statements of the report. In it, von Breugel first categorized Ewald as "a particularly capable, trustworthy officer." As an independent cavalry squadron commander, von Kleist conducted many of his activities outside of and away from the direct oversight of the division commander. Being a career cavalry officer himself, von Breugel was well acquainted with what was needed to successfully command an independent cavalry unit. In these duties, Ewald had proven himself especially talented but also dependable and responsible.

The commander continued by noting that his subordinate was very energetic as well as having demonstrated a high level of conscientiousness. The first attribute enabled von Kleist to physically and mentally work the long, hard hours required to lead in combat, while the second confirmed that he had applied his energy to the correct tasks. The sentence concluded with an acknowledgement of Ewald's "versatile interests." This pointed to his flexibility of mind and willingness to investigate and assimilate information beyond those required for his duties. Today, one would say that the officer has broadened himself.

Jumping to the *Bericht's* second key statement, von Breugel assessed the all-important factor of the officer's tactical acumen. The writer stated, Ewald's "outstanding gifts of intellect

manifest themselves especially in the tactical field.” As with previous reports, Ewald’s strong intellectual aptitudes were again mentioned. Here, those superlative capabilities were identified as having been demonstrated in combat. Unpacking von Breugel’s shorthand, von Kleist had shown the division commander that he could create, plan, lead, and execute combat operations with a high degree of skill. Von Breugel identified, at the sentence’s opening, a significant reason for Ewald’s capability as having been his “success” while attending the *Kriegsakademie*. Clearly, graduation from the *Kriegsakademie* was a key identifier in an officer’s record and continued to signal his high potential even when he had not been categorized as qualified for *Generalstab* duties.¹⁰⁶ Also, it is likely that even at this point in the war, there were discussion and plans to begin selecting and training non-*Generalstab*-qualified officers for duties as *Generalstaboffiziere*. Von Breugel’s *Kriegsakademie* highlight was possibly a point out that von Kleist would be suited for such duties.¹⁰⁷

Next identified and commented upon were Ewald’s personality traits. Von Breugel’s assessed von Kleist to have a “very reserved” nature. This reticence appeared to be separated from von Kleist’s command and leadership personality and directed at Ewald’s demeanor when involving personal, family, or unofficial matters. Too, it likely pointed to the lack of a large ego

¹⁰⁶ *Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq von Breugel and Ewald von Kleist appear to have shared a very similar *Kriegsakademie* experience. Both graduated, von Breugel in 1889, but neither was categorized as qualified for the *Generalstab* duties. While unconfirmed, von Breugel likely received the second-tier rating of “höhere Adjutantur” (higher level adjutants) given his future duties. Upon graduation, von Breugel returned to his regiment, *Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1*, for a few years. He served first as a deputy then as a squadron commander. He was then selected to serve as personal *Adjutant* to Prince Heinrich von Preußen, *Kaiser* Wilhelm II’s younger brother, between 1895-1899. He then returned to serve as a cavalry staff officer, a commander at the regimental level, and then as a brigade commander before the war.

¹⁰⁷ Given the number of general staff officers already killed, the creation of a large and increasing number of wartime units requiring general staff officers, and the closure of the *Kriegsakademie*, the only immediately available pool of trained staff officers were the officers who had completed the full three-year *Kriegsakademie* course. On the first rung of desirability were those officers rated in the second-tier, those qualified for “höhere Adjutantur” (higher level adjutants). Certainly, with the closure of the army schools who had as instructors rated in the third-tier, “*Lehrfach*” (teaching field) would also have freed up these officers for consideration for staff duties in the field.

as is often seen to develop in successful commanders. The final comment regarding Ewald's character was von Breugel's remark of his subordinate's "outstanding entire personality."

The division commander's conclusion held the recommendations for Ewald's future. In what seems like a rather opaque future position recommendation, von Breugel pens the delimiting statement of "I highly recommend Rittmeister v. Kleist for no orderly room duties." Certainly, the *Generalleutnant*, after having written such a strong assessment would not have left future readers in doubt on such an important aspect. Thus, what appears today to be a nebulous statement was in the day, very likely, widely and easily understood as a strong recommendation to keep von Kleist in the field and in command of a combat unit and not mundane paper-pushing. The final sentence reconfirmed Ewald's excellence as a squadron commander. Additionally, it verified his readiness for promotion to major and of most significance, von Breugel assessed the young *Rittmeister* to be ready to become a regimental commander, a post normally held by someone with ten to fifteen years more experience than Ewald. This was a high recommendation indeed.

Of note, no mention was made of von Kleist's significant combat command leadership experience or his having earned the *Eisernes Kreuz I and II. Klasse*. The absence of comment on these important areas leads one to conclude that these topics were "out of bounds" for an officer at this level's *Beurteilung*.¹⁰⁸ Overall, this *Bericht* should be considered von Kleist's second strongest, ranking just behind, the previous report, a glowing assessment by *Oberstleutnant* von Raumer.

¹⁰⁸ While the awarding of the *Eisernes Kreuz* and the list of combat actions were found in von Kleist's *Personelakte*, those annotations contained no amplifying information beyond dates and locations. Thus, no qualitative assessment of von Kleist's performance during the multiple combat engagements in which he participated entered his permanent military record.

The corps commander, *Generalleutnant* Surén's, comments were short and to the point. He fully concurred with von Breugel's assessment. The general added that he thought von Kleist ready and capable to be a *Generalstabsoffizier* on the staff of a combat unit at division or corps level. Too, *Surén* agreed that Ewald was not only ready for promotion to *Major* but ready to command a regiment. Again, this was high praise and important recommendations for the junior *Rittmeister*. Nearly one year into the war, Ewald was living up to the von Kleist *adligen Militärclan*'s reputation of producing excellent combat officers. But there was no time for resting on laurels as the war was on the cusp of moving into its second year.

V. Leading the Advanced Guard

The attacks in Galicia were successful and by June 1915, the forward progress created a salient around Warsaw. Wanting to exploit General von Mackensen's success, *Chef des Generalstabes des Feldheeres* (Chief of the General Staff of the Field Armies), *General der Infanterie* Erich von Falkenhayn, and *Oberbefehlshaber Ost* (Commander-in-Chief East) (*Ober Ost*), *Generaloberst* Paul von Hindenburg, resolved to attack the salient from the north.

Ober Ost assigned *Armeegruppe Gallwitz* the task of breaking through the Russian main line of resistance opposite its position in southern East Prussia and driving the main effort towards Siedlce. For General von Gallwitz, "The bold thought of advancing directly deep into the enemy's rear—Siedlce lay 140 kilometers in front of my front—vividly occupied me."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Reicharchiv, *Weltkrieg*, Siebenter Band, 278. Siedlce lay approximately 125 miles (200 kilometers) southeast of Mława and approximately 70 miles (115 kilometers) west of Brest-Litowsk (current day Brest, Belarus).

On 13 July 1915, *Armeegruppe Gallwitz* commenced its attack.¹¹⁰ General Suren's corps supported the main effort and during the first several days was given the task of limited attacks to fix the opposing Russian units while the main breakthrough effort was conducted by two other corps. On the first day, *Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq von Breugel's division stormed the Russian's advanced positions on a three and three-quarter miles (six kilometers) wide front. By mid-day on the 14th, the German attack had largely shattered the front and many of the Russian units were in retreat. Many of the German divisions pursued the enemy and by the end of the second day a number had moved forward by some six to ten miles (ten to fifteen kilometers). *Division Breugel* had, however, met stiff resistance and due to its weak combat strength was pinned down from the evening of the 14th and through the next day. On the 16th, the division broke through and was coming onto line with the other divisions of the corps as they continued to push the Russians.

The pursuit was on. The near continuous advances spurred the need for fast moving reconnaissance to keep the division informed of Russian activities. To meet this requirement during the operation, *Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq von Breugel gave von Kleist the command of a combined arms *Aufklärungsabteilung* (reconnaissance detachment) comprised of two to three cavalry squadrons, a bicycle company, one machine gun platoon and a two-gun artillery section.¹¹¹

By 23 July 1915, *Division Breugel* participated in the capture of Pultusk, a town forty-three miles (seventy kilometers) from the division's line of departure near Mława only ten days

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 282-293. See this section for a comprehensive account of the breakthrough battles. *Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq von Breugel's division was still assigned to *Korps Surén* for these battles.

¹¹¹ Von Kleist, ed., *Teilnahme*, 43.

earlier.¹¹² Between 25 July and 6 August, *Division Breugel* as part of *XVII. Reservekorps* fought on the Narew River in an attempt to break through the Russian opposition that had formed on this defensive barrier. By 7 August, the corps had accomplished the breakthrough and pushed another seventeen miles (twenty-eight kilometers) to the Bug River near Wyszkw.¹¹³ On 7 August, von Kleist's unit participated in the capture of Serock.¹¹⁴ The three-week offensive by *Armeegruppe Gallwitz* and the right wing of 8. *Armee* had been costly. German casualties between 13 July and 8 August amounted to more than 56,000 men. The infantry had taken the brunt of the casualties and on average, each infantry division's strength was down by more than one-third. In turn, the aforementioned Germans units had captured over 80,000 Russian.¹¹⁵

With the capture of Warsaw by the German 9. *Armee* imminent, *Armeegruppe Gallwitz's* mission of supporting that effort from the north had been accomplished. *Ober Ost* determined that the next imperative was to continue the offensive, widening it in order to drive the entire Russian forward line further to the east. In doing so, the Russian threat still present near the border of central and northern East Prussia would be eliminated. Thus, on 8 August 1915,

¹¹² Ibid., 312-322. On 21 July 1915, the *XVII. Reservekorps* was formed from elements of *Korps Zastrow*. *Division Breugel*, the 86. *Landwehr-Division*, and the 1. *Garde-Reserve-Division* were realigned under *XVII. Reservekorps*. Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). The capture of Pultusk is recorded on the list of von Kleist's combat actions. Pultusk lay just to the west of the Narew River.

¹¹³ Ibid., 355.

¹¹⁴ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). The "Capture of Serock" was noted on von Kleist's combat actions list as having occurred on 7 August 1915. The "Battle on the Narew" was listed as occurring from 25 July until 7 August 1915. Serock lies at the confluence of the Narew and Bug Rivers approximately twenty-five miles (forty kilometers) north of Warsaw. Serock is eighteen miles (thirty kilometers) to the southwest of Wyszkw. Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 28-29. Von Kleist wrote in 1945, "In the early summer of 1915, the offensive through Poland began for us as well. This was initiated by General von Mackensen by the Battle of Tarnow-Gorlice. ... Even then, however, one wondered why our north wing had not been deployed from east East Prussia with a wider perimeter-the forces were insufficient-Hindenburg and Ludendorff did not get the divisions they needed from Falkenhayn. So, this offensive did not turn into a great battle of annihilation. ... Our travels in this offensive took us from the area south of Mlawka, to Chiechanow, Pultusk, [Nowo] Georgiewsk near Warsaw." Nowo Georgiewsk (also Nowogeorgiewsk) was a fortress at the confluence of the Vistula and Narew Rivers and is now known as Modlin Fortress.

¹¹⁵ Reicharchiv, *Weltkrieg*, Siebenter Band, 359-360.

Division Breugel and the other unit under General von Gallwitz began to turn northeast to attack elements of the Russian 12th Army.

The rapid movement of General von Gallwitz' troops, which included the *Division Breugel*, can be traced through Ewald's official combat record. Already on 8 August, Ewald's thirty-fourth birthday, the three-day (8-10 August) battle near Tstrow began.¹¹⁶ On the 11th and 12th, von Kleist battled near Tschistrew-Sambrow, twenty miles (thirty-two kilometers) to the northeast of Tstrow. Between 13-18 August, the division having turned ninety degrees to the southeast, conducted a pursuit operation of nearly fifty miles (eighty kilometers) which culminated in a fight near Bielsk between 19-25 August.¹¹⁷ Commencing on the 26th, the division conducted a week-long pursuit action between Bielsk and Swislocz, a distance of fifty-eight miles (ninety-four kilometers).

Ewald provided insight into his actions during this six-week-long combat operation.

The advance was uplifting for my hussars and me. I led a kind of advance reconnaissance detachment in the 85th Landwehr Division; namely the 3 squadrons of divisional cavalry reinforced by a fortress machine gun platoon and other reinforcements as required. It was always the first unit [listed] in the division orders, called Abteilung von Kleist. On the whole, which we did not quite realize at the time, the Russians, as planned, put up a sufficient delaying resistance when they pulled their troops out of Poland.

To our front it looked something like this. First of all, a breakthrough of the enemy's lines under strong artillery employment for that time. For the first time, Colonel Bruchmüller (Breakthrough-Müller), who later became famous, made his first appearance as artillery commander in the 86th Infantry Division at Pultusk. Then pursuit. In the evening, we encountered the Russians, again dug in. Their positions had been dug by civilians and all the villages had been cleared and were burning. "Scorched earth", [a term] I heard here for the first time. Our advance

¹¹⁶ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). Tstrow (present-day Ostrow Mazowiecka, Poland) was twenty-four miles (thirty-nine kilometers) northeast of Wyszkow. Tschishew-Sambrow is current day Zambrow, Poland.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. Bielsk is known currently as Bielsk Podlaski, Poland and lays thirty-one miles (fifty kilometers) south of Białystok, Poland. In the ten days between 8-18 August, the *Division Breugel's* infantrymen covered a direct-line distance of seventy miles (one hundred and twelve kilometers) between Tstrow and Bielsk on foot. Von Kleist's and his hussars likely covered at three times that distance performing their reconnaissance, screening, and liaison duties.

would come to a halt. Attack orders [arrived] for the next day. After the arrival of the artillery and deployment of the infantry, the Russian fell back, leaving only cavalry as rearguards. I was in front to allow our own infantry to advance uninterrupted. Thus, for me it was fighting and skirmishing throughout the day. The Russian has always been a master at this kind of fighting. ... I said, "with the Russian soldier, when properly led, you can conquer the world."¹¹⁸

VI. Unsaddled

The long days in the saddle, short nights, and hard fighting had, however, taken a toll on Ewald. On Thursday, 2 September 1915, von Kleist was invalided out of action and transported to *Kriegslazarett-Abteilung Nr. 55* (war hospital detachment number 55) at Bialystok. There he was diagnosed with dysentery as well as hemorrhoids and an intestinal fistula. The latter two conditions were severe enough to require surgery.¹¹⁹ Ewald spent eight days recovering from the dysentery before being well enough to travel on to Hannover. On 10 or 11 September, he was discharged from *Nr. 55* and transported to a hospital in Hannover for his operation. There he saw Gisela for the first time in over thirteen months. He possibly had a few days of convalescent

¹¹⁸ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 29-30. At this time, Georg Bruchmüller (*11 December 1863 in Berlin; † 26 January 1948) was an *Oberstleutnant* and commander of the 86. *Infanterie Division* artillery. See David T. Zabecki's *Steel Wind: Colonel Georg Bruchmüller and the Birth of Modern Artillery* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1994) for a comprehensive investigation of Bruchmüller's wartime actions, tactics, influences on German artillery employment, and post-war legacy.

¹¹⁹ Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, "Kriegslazarett-Abt. Nr. 55, Bialystok.-Bescheinigungen des Oberstabsarztes" (BA-MA: N 354/1, Nachlass Kleist). The original document of approximately A4 size is present in this file. The document was folded into quarters and several of these sections were used to provide information on von Kleist. All three entrees were dated 10 September 1915 and signed by the attending doctor, Dr. Katsazik *Oberfeldarzt* (equivalent rank of lieutenant colonel). The first entry was "Kriegslazarett Abteilung Nr. 55, Bialystok, 10.9.15. Rittmeister v. Kleist, 1. Leib-Husar. Regts. 1, must undergo an operation for hemorrhoids and [have] fifteen days [convalescent leave] in Hannover." The second entry, "Holder of this certificate has been in the military hospital since 2.9.15 and is free of disease." And the final entry, "The holder of this certificate, Rittmeister v. Kleist, is free of vermin."

leave at their home on Tiergartenstrasse.¹²⁰ It was also probable that Ewald saw his parents in Hannover as well, as Hugo von Kleist's retirement had commenced at the beginning of the autumn school vacation.¹²¹ In all he had two weeks in Hannover before departing for the front around 27 September.¹²² The quickness with which Ewald recovered from dysentery and his operation attested to the robustness of his physical makeup. This was to be his only leave for medical reasons during the war.

During the nearly month that Ewald was away from the division much had occurred. The German offensive continued with the division fighting at Wolkowyszk, on the Zelwianka and Njemen Rivers, and on the Szczara River.¹²³ By the time von Kleist returned, the Russians had stopped the German advance and the front was stabilizing and hardening. Ewald found *Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq von Breugel's division occupying positions along the narrow

¹²⁰ Gisela had returned in August 1914, to her family house in Hannover. This home would remain Gisela's primary residence until late September 1929, when she and her sons joined Ewald in Berlin after his move from Breslau where he had served as Chief of Staff, 2. *Kavallerie-Division*.

¹²¹ Ewald's father, Hugo von Kleist, at age sixty-seven, entered retirement from his headmastership of the *Gymnasium* in Aurich at the commencement of the autumn school vacation, that in 1915, likely began the week before *Michaelis* (29 September, a Friday). Ewald's parents and sister then relocated to a home in Hannover in November 1915. To see Ewald and to look for their new home, Ewald's family could have been in Hannover during the last week of September 1915. Hans-Jürgen Westermayer, *Festschrift 350 Jahre Ulricianum: Gymnasium Ulricianum Aurich 1646-1996* (Aurich: Druckerie A.H.F. Dunkmann, 1996), 93. "At the beginning of the autumn vacations in 1916 [*sic*], then called St Michael Day vacation, Director von Kleist retired. For many years he had led his Ulricianum in the spirit of humanistic ideals with self-evident authority. We students saw him not only as a strict but just guardian of order, but also as a basically kind fatherly educator. He took his leave without much fuss and without a public retirement ceremony, which did not seem appropriate in such serious times. Upon his retirement, the outgoing director was given the honorary title of 'Geheimer Studienrat.'" This account erroneously dates Hugo von Kleist's retirement in 1916. The von Kleist family histories report the retirement occurred in the autumn 1915. Anmelderegister Stadt Hannover., Aktenzeichen 138, 1241. Stadt-Archiv Hannover. The Hannover city residency registry records show no date for Hugo's establishment of residency, however, his wife, Elisabeth, and daughter, Herta's, records both show that they established residency at Podbielskistraße 336, on 1 November 1915. Geheimer *Studienrat* (privy councillor of education) was an honorary title bestowed for long and distinguished service as an educator. The prefix attached to "-rat" was changed to denote the area of accomplishment, e.g., *Geheimer Kommerzienrat* for commerce and industry, or *Geheimer Medizinalrat* for outstanding contributions to medicine.

¹²² Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 29. This was to be von Kleist's only wartime medical leave.

¹²³ "85. Landwehr-Division" (GenWiki, November 24, 2018). [http://genwiki.genealogy.net/85._Landwehr-Division_\(WK1\)](http://genwiki.genealogy.net/85._Landwehr-Division_(WK1)) (January 17, 2022). Wolkowyszk is present-day Vawkavysk, Belarus, Zelwianka the Zelvyanka River, Belarus, and Szczara is the Shchara River, Belarus. These places are between 25 and 75 miles (40 and 120 kilometers) east of Grodno, Belarus.

kleine Beresina just to the north of this small tributary's confluence with the Njeman. Also, on 13 September 1915, Division Breugel was redesignated as 85. *Landwehr-Division* (85. LD.)¹²⁴

Of the summer and fall 1915 campaign through Poland, Kleist commented.

Even then, however, one wondered why our north wing had not been deployed from east East Prussia with a wider perimeter. The forces were insufficient as Hindenburg and Ludendorff did not receive the divisions they needed from Falkenhayn. So, this offensive did not turn into a great battle of annihilation. Despite daily partial victories, the Russians managed to evade encirclement again and again. This also included a last attempt with German army cavalry. The attempt to form an envelopment around Wilna-Molodetschno in autumn 1915 failed. The [German] forces were too weak and came into a most difficult situation. Our own infantry did not arrive in time. So, the great offensive generally ended on the line we held with trench warfare until the Russian Revolution in 1917.¹²⁵

At the end of September 1915, von Kleist returned and resumed command of the 1. *mobile Ersatz-Eskadron XVII. Armeekorps* which he found digging in on the western bank of the kleine Beresina (Little Berezina).¹²⁶ Von Kleist recounted the squadrons and division's autumn 1915 activities.

We were at the Little Berezina - the crossing was named I think, Borrisowo - not very far from the confluence of this river with the Njemen (sector of the neighboring division). The order was given to extend the line that had been reached, to repair it, to improve the connecting lines, to build paths, and all to do

¹²⁴ Ibid. At the time of the redesignation, the division had three assigned cavalry squadrons: 1. und 2. *mobile Ersatz-Eskadron XVII. Armeekorps* and the *mobile Ersatz-Eskadron Grenadier-zu-Pferd-Regiment Freiherr von Derfflinger (Neumärkisches) Nr. 3*.

¹²⁵ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft II, 28-29. Wilna is present-day Vilnius, Lithuania; while Molodetschno is Maladzyechna (Mołodeczno), Belarus. The Sventziany Offensive began on 9 September 1915 and was a cavalry-centric operations aimed at encircling the Russian forces in the vicinity of Wilna-Molodetschno. When the Russians divined the German plan, they withdrew rather than fight and allow themselves to be encircled. By 29 September 1915, with the operational objectives not achieved, the Germans ended the offensive without capturing the anticipated high number of Russians, but they had straightened the front line, thereby reducing the distance to be defended as the war became one of position rather than maneuver. See Reicharchiv, *Der Weltkrieg 1914-1918: Die Operationen des Jahres 1915: Die Ereignisse im Westen im Frühjahr und Sommer, im Osten von Frühjahr bis zum Jahresschluß*, Achter Band (Berlin: E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1932), 500-539.

¹²⁶ The "kleine Bersina" has been translated as "Little Berezina." This small river, also "Berezyna," is possibly better known as "Western Berezina" or by its local names, Svislach or Svislač or Svisloch. The modern German is Swislatsch (Bjaresina). It is a river in Belarus, a right tributary of the river Berezina. The Njemen River also variously called the Memel, Nieman (PL), and Neman.

all the things needed as pertaining to positional warfare. Since most of our positions were in a swampy forest, the breastworks had to be built of wood and earth, the paths had to be corduroy road, and the dugouts as log blockhouses. My squadron was withdrawn behind the front line and we set up camp in a village we had to ourselves. Here, too, as everywhere else, the people and cattle had been taken away by the Russians. Only a few of them returned one by one.¹²⁷

During the summer offensive and into the autumn, information indicated that *Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq von Breugel and von Kleist had, among others, been discussing the creation of a new wartime cavalry regiment, possibly under the control of the 85. *LD*. The two *Ersatz-Eskadronen XVII. Armeekorps* and the squadron of *Ersatz-Eskadron Grenadier-zu-Pferd-Regiment Freiherr von Derfflinger (Neumärkisches) Nr. 3*, all of which were already under the 85. *LD*, would provide the bulk of the troops and horses. On this initiative, Ewald wrote.

My Abteilung Kleist, which I had led throughout the summer, was established as Cavalry Regiment 85. Contrary to the suggestion of my division, which had proposed me as its leader, an old Major or Lieutenant Colonel Weidlich (Dragoon 16) came from the homeland. My relationship with him would have become like the one with my battery commander Schönberg in 1909/10. That is, I felt superior to him in war experience and was, therefore, also self-confident. I would no doubt have expressed this - a weakness of mine, for sure. It was, therefore, a good thing that I was assigned to the staff of the 85th Landwehr Division to replace the 1st General Staff Officer, Hauptmann von Bronikowski. The headquarters at that time was located in a one-story wooden manor house in Juraczischki.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft 3, 41-42. Borrisowo appears to be present-day Borisovka, Belarus as this small town is located just to the west of the Western Berezina. The confluence of the Western Berezina and Neman is 12 miles (20 kilometers) direct line distance southwest from Borisovka. Von Mackensen, *Leibhusaren*, 18. This location of the confluence of the Little Berezina and the Njemen correlates to the position given in the Leibhusaren history as being located on the "kleine Beresina (südlich Smorgon)" south of Smorgon. Smorgon (present-day Smarhoń, Belarus) is located approximately 57 miles (93 kilometers) north of Borisovka and is the next largest town to the north.

¹²⁸ Ibid., Heft 3, 42. The history of the *Kavallerie-Regiment Nr. 85* (Cavalry Regiment 85) is unclear but its creation appeared to be in keeping with a wider reorganization effort in the late summer 1915. War Department (US), *Histories of Two Hundred and Fifty-One Divisions of the German Army Which Participated in the War (1914-1918)* (Washington: Government Printing Officer, 1920), 558-568. The reorganization of a number of divisions, primarily divisions comprised of *Landwehr* and *Ersatz* units, into square divisions and classified as "Allgemeine Divisionen" (general or general-purpose divisions) on the Eastern Front was likely an initiative to meet the fast-moving pace of operations during the summer of 1915. Also, the additional cavalry and artillery elements given to these divisions pointed to the need to increase the mobility and firepower of these lower combat powered *Landwehr* infantry divisions. In August 1915, the following divisions were reorganized: 85. *Landwehr Division*, and the 86., 87., and 88. *Infanterie-Divisionen*, all units in *XVII. Reserve-Korps* and *Korps Dickhuth* (both under *Armeeabteilung*

The end of von Kleist's time as a commander in the saddle and the end of the war of mobility on the central Eastern Front coincided. With the no foreseeable need for large numbers of horsemen, cavalry units were being disbanded with the cavalymen being sent to infantry units as replacements or being tasked with behind-the-line support duties. Thus, had Ewald continued to command troops he most likely would have been sent to the infantry as a company or battalion commander. His commander's saw, however, that von Kleist had the skills and the education to transition to staff duties. Ewald had proven himself to be a brave, competent, and very capable commander; capable enough to be considered for a combat cavalry regimental command. His command capabilities had outpaced his rank and precluded him from this significant jump. Consequently, pulling von Kleist out of command did not disparage his record but rather made better use of his abilities while lessening the talented *Rittmeister's* exposure to death or wounding in the trenches. Thus, Ewald's career changed paths from combat command to general staff officer duties.

Gallwitz). Assigned to each of these divisions was a cavalry regiment bearing the division's number, e.g., *Kavallerie-Regiment 86*. The regiments were assigned four cavalry squadrons each which were a mix of detached regular, replacement, reserve and *Landwehr* squadrons. *Rangliste 1914* (1926), 740ff. Three of these regimental commanders are found in this reference; *Generalmajor a.D* Heinrich von Keszycski, *Oberst a.D.* Jebens (formerly of Dragoon Regiment 14), and *Rittmeister a.D.* Adolf von der Lippe (formerly Dragoon Regiment 9). All were recalled to active duty to from retirement. The *Rangliste* does not identify when during the war these officers held their regimental commands of *Kavallerie-Regiment 88* (KR), *KR 84*, and *KR 85*, respectively. Von Kleist recalled that the officer who took command of *KR 85* was a major or lieutenant colonel Weidlich formerly of *Dragoner-Regiment Nr. 16*. An *Oberst* von Weidlich appeared in the *Rangliste 1914* (1926). He was recalled to active duty after having retired from command of *Dragoner-Regiment 10*. He ended the war as *Generalmajor* and military district commander in Rumania. Beyond the two aforementioned references, no other information regarding the establishment, operations, or disbandment of these cavalry regiments has been found. Given that the war on the Eastern Front stalemated and entered a long period of positional war by the end of October 1915, thus negating the need for additional division-level cavalry, it is likely their establishment was halted and the cavalry squadrons dispersed or dismounted. This mention by von Kleist is the only reference to *KR 85*. Given that Ewald went on to serve on the staff of *85. Landwehr Division* for almost another year and thus, would have often interacted with von Weidlich, it again is probable that *KR 85* was never fully formed or that it was disbanded after a short length of time. Juraczischki is present-day Juraciški, Belarus. The town was large enough to have a post office, a large railway station and small rail yard. Juraczischki lay eleven miles (eighteen kilometers) to the west of Borisowo and the front lines of the *85. Landwehr Division*. Juraczischki appeared to be the nearest town with sufficient infrastructure, was on the rail line with a rail freight yard; thus, was the central supply point for the division. Also, at eleven miles from the front, it was beyond the range of Russian artillery.

Despite a less than auspicious beginning, that of being left behind by his regiment to form the *Ersatz-Eskadron*, von Kleist had done well in command. He had ably recruited, trained, and then deployed the squadron in a relatively short time. His leadership had earned him the *Eisernes Kreuz II. Klasse* during his first major combat engagement. He had gone on to earn the *Eisernes Kreuz I. Klasse* by January 1915, again while leading his hussars against the Russians. And he had skillfully commanded the rapidly moving combined arms *Aufklärungsabteilung* that led the advance of the 85. *Landwehr Division* nearly two hundred miles (three hundred twenty-five kilometers) deep into Russia in less than six weeks.

What had contributed to Ewald's success as a squadron commander? While there undoubtedly were myriad contributing factors, a brief analysis points to two elements and one capability that come to the forefront. The first element was the high-quality military training and education Ewald received. In the thirteen years between his commissioning and the outbreak of World War I, Ewald spent no less than five years as an officer-student in formal schooling under the tutelage of first-rate instructors. The first courses von Kleist attended were the pair of junior artillery officer courses at the *Feldartillerie Schießschule*, each several months long. This instruction included both theoretical (classroom) and practical (live-fire gunnery) training. The second school, also primarily focused at the technical and tactical level, was the *Militär-Reit-Institut*. The two-year length of this course enabled Ewald to acquire a broad, deep, and comprehensive knowledge base in equine science, horse management and training, equitation, and tactical cavalry operations. Again, both theoretical and practical components ensured not only an academic knowledge but applied skills capability. The final key education course was von Kleist's three years at the *Kriegsakademie*. While heavily focused on the transmission of theoretical knowledge at the tactical and operational levels, practical knowledge was also an

element of the curriculum as student-officers drafted operational plans, wrote tactical orders, and spent time with different army branches and in the field participating in troop exercises.

The second element that significantly bolstered Ewald's ability to lead and command were the practical experiences gained primarily while serving as *Major* Greßmann's *Abteilung Adjutant* in the *Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 3*. During several large-scale exercises, Greßmann's *Abteilung* (battalion) had been detached from the regiment and been assigned to directly support a cavalry division with the *Abteilung's* twelve field guns. The detachment from the parent unit and attachment to another unit, especially one of a different branch, creates unique challenges and imposes special requirements.¹²⁹ During these exercises, Ewald would have both closely observed how *Major* Greßmann handled the responsibilities, tasks, and challenges of independent command. Too, Ewald would have directly participated with the tasks that enabled close and successful support by his *Abteilung* of the cavalry divisions to which it was attached. These experiences certainly gave Ewald a leg up when it came to his *Ersatz-Eskadron* being detached from its parent regiment and attached to a *Landwehr* infantry division. Also, Ewald's experience as an artillery officer would have been a boon to his command ability when artillery was assigned to support his cavalry squadron both in the defense, as at Niedenburg-Soldau, and on the offensive during the division's drive into Russia.

But the elements of quality training, superior education, and excellent experiences do not in and of themselves guarantee leadership success. What is required to capitalize on these

¹²⁹ A unique requirement, for example, might be; a major in command of the artillery battalion was in possession of professional knowledge and expertise that exceeded that of the general officer who commanded the cavalry division to which the artillery battalion was attached. The junior officer might be ordered to do something by the division commander that was either physically infeasible or tactically unsound and the junior commander would have to tactfully disabuse the general of his folly. An example of a special requirement would be, an independent artillery battalion commander would have to specifically ensure that artillery unique supplies (ammunition, gun replacements, etc.) were requisitioned by the cavalry division, something that was not a normal function for a different branch unit. The artillery battalion thus had far less direct expert supervision and less knowledgeable support when detached from his parent unit.

elements is the capability to synthesize and integrate these elements into actionable leadership conduct. Ewald had, over the course of his pre-war career, developed this capability. Thus, when presented with the higher and more complex demands of independent squadron command, von Kleist's education, experiences, and capability to integrate these elements into his leadership enabled Ewald to successfully rise to meet the challenges of the most demanding type of command, combat command.

CHAPTER 8 - THE RITTMEISTER—A GENERAL STAFF OFFICER AT WAR 1916-1918

Viel leisten, wenig hervortreten-mehr sein als scheinen

— *Generaloberst* Alfred Graf von Schlieffen ¹

In the middle of August 1915, Ewald von Kleist transitioned from command to staff duties, commencing the second portion of his World War I experience. Rarely does an officer welcome being taken out of command and placed into a staff position. Von Kleist was no exception having much preferred to remain a commander in the saddle. But as an obedient officer, he accepted the order to join the staff without question. Had he pushed back, Ewald's arguments would have been met with the heavy-weight counterargument that the army had significantly invested in him by giving him the best institutional education that an officer could receive in preparation for service on the staff. He had, after all, not only attended the *Kriegsakademie* for three years, but had graduated and received the second highest categorization. Now, the war was creating an increased need for general staff officers and who better to fill that need than an already *Kriegsakademie*-educated officer. All that was Ewald needed to complete the requirements for general staff duty was some practical, hands-on training

¹ Attributed to then *Generaloberst* Alfred Graf von Schlieffen from his speech given at the celebration of his 50-year anniversary of military service in 1903. Reference from Robert T. Foley, *Alfred von Schlieffen's Military Writings* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), xxi. Graf von Schlieffen in turn attributed the saying to *Generalfeldmarschall* von Moltke (the elder). The phrase is translated, "Achieve much, stand out little-be more than you appear to be." The quote has come to be the ex post facto motto of the 1871-1945 German General Staff Corps.

under the watchful eye of a “real” *Generalstabsoffizier*. Thus, Ewald’s superiors put him on the track to becoming a fully qualified *Generalstabsoffizier*.

This chapter begins by tracing Ewald’s steps in the process of qualifying as a General Staff Officer between October 1915 – March 1917. The narrative then tracks von Kleist’s four general staff assignments which followed between April 1917 and the end of the war in November 1918. In Spring 1918, von Kleist was transferred from the Eastern Front to the Western Front where he fought against the French in the Verdun Sector and against the British near Amiens. The end of the war found Ewald on the staff of *VII. Armeekorps* on the relatively quiet Elsaß sector of the Western Front.

As with the previous chapter, this chapter’s narrative road map follows von Kleist’s post-World War II memories of the events that occurred three decades before. Those recollections, written without the aid of notes, diaries, or maps, demonstrate the strength of Ewald’s mind and memory as his recall of places and names proved to be virtually flawless as corroborated by external sources.

I. Apprentice General Staff Officer at the Division Level

On 17 October 1915, von Kleist gave up command of his cavalymen and was reassigned as a temporary staff officer on the staff of 85. *Landwehr Division*.² He served as the temporary

² Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). The dates he served as a “substitute general staff officer” were 17 October - 20 November 1915. It is likely that the division commander, *Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq von Breugel, perceived that the best course of action for both the division and von Kleist was to reassign him within the division rather than lose him to an assignment outside the division. It was during this period on the Eastern Front that a large number of cavalry officers and NCOs were dismounted and reassigned into infantry units. It is possible that von Kleist could have gone to the infantry or given his *Kriegsakademie* training, been reassigned to the staff of another division or corps.

replacement for the *Ia* or divisional operations officer, *Hauptmann* von Oppeln-Bronikowski for a month.³ Between 1-31 December, Ewald was sent to the neighboring 86. *Infanterie-Division* to serve as a temporary general staff officer.⁴

Ewald had little time to contemplate the ringing in of the New Year. On the first day of 1916 he began his month-long stint as *Adjutant* to the *Kommandeur 171. Infanterie-Brigade*, *Generalmajor* Paul Liebeskind.⁵ On 2 February, Ewald, having returned to his parent division, was again assigned as a temporary general staff officer working for *Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq von Breugel. As a staff officer his main responsibilities were drafting and publishing operations, administrative and logistics orders, reviewing incoming intelligence reports, collecting and passing intelligence information to the corps staff, requisitioning men, supplies, and ammunition, maintaining personnel rosters, and keeping the units war diary and a myriad of other things.

With the situation relatively quiet in the 85. *LD*'s sector, the division commander was able to temporarily release von Kleist from his divisional duties and send him up an echelon to

³ *Rangliste 1904-1914 (1926)*; and *Gothaisches Genealogisches Taschenbuch der Uradligen Häuser* (Gotha: Justus Perthes, 1917), 612. *Hauptmann* Hans Karl Werner von Oppeln-Bronikowski (* 18 April 1880 in Cassel; † 18 November 1919), son of Hans Friedrich Julius Emil (*Rittmeister a. D. and Rechtsritter des Johanniter-Orden* (Knight of Justice of the Order of St. John)), was a general staff officer on the *Generalstab der Armee*, who at the beginning of the war was beginning his second probationary year with the *GGSt*. His parent regiment was *Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 93*. After serving on the staff of 85. *Landwehr Division*, this officer was reported to have ended the war on the *Generalstab des Kommandierenden General der Luftstreitkräfte* as a *Major* and then died, 18 November 1919. Von Oppeln-Bronikowski married Antonie Anna Marie *Freiin* von Gleichen (nee von Rußwurm) (* 30 August 1885 in Dessau; † ?) in Dessau on 24 September 1905. The couple had two sons, Günther Hans (* 5 January 1907 in Zerbst) and Joachim Hans (* 23 January 1910 in Berlin-Wilmersdorf) born while his father was a student at the *Kriegsakademie*. HKW had an older brother, Hans Louis Albrecht Richard (*28 July 1869 in Tilsit), a *Major* and *Bataillon Kommandeur Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 91* in August 1914, *Oberstleutnant a. D.* following the war and who was *Ehrenritter* (Knight of Honor) of the *Johanniter-Orden*.

⁴ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). The 86. *Infanterie-Division* was the sister division to 85. *Landwehr Division* within the same corps.

⁵ *Ibid.* Von Kleist was temporary adjutant between 1-26 January 1916. The 171 *Infanterie-Brigade* was one of the two brigades in the 86. *Infanterie-Division*. *Rangliste 1914 (1926)*. Had von Kleist taken time to reflect on the year 1915, he would have counted at least four more officer friends/acquaintances killed in action: from *Feld-Artillerie-Regiment Nr. 3*, *Oberstleutnant* Kreich (12 June); from the *Militär-Reit-Institute*, *Major* Berner (21 February), his second year *Abteilung* instructor; and from his *Kriegsakademie Hörsaal*, *Oberleutnant* von Gülich (19 March), *Oberleutnant* von Stülpnagel (15 March).

serve as a temporary general staff officer on the staff of *XVII. Reserve-Korps*.⁶ Here von Kleist was able to more closely observe *Generalleutnant* Karl Surén and witness some of the general's eccentric behavior as well as gain experience on a corps staff. He gives us a glimpse into a division headquarters. Ewald recalled,

The Commanding General was General Suren, very majestic. And because of that, he occasionally seemed a bit ridiculous. In front of the table in the room where we used to gather, a young officer dressed in a light-grey Litewka and white vest, either on his way to or from the frontlines, appeared and reported in. Suren reached out his hand and suddenly he cried out: 'This young man dared to shake hands with his commanding general.'

Another time, during a car ride to the front, Suren was with the adjutant in an enclosed car. Somewhere, a dutiful Landsturm soldier was standing guard, his rifle with a fixed bayonet. Suren asked the soldier something, but he didn't understand. Suren said 'Come closer' and made the same hand movement. The man jumped into the car and in doing so inadvertently thrust his bayonet through the roof. We recounted to each other stories like that almost every day.⁷

While a cursory review of von Kleist's post-squadron command positions appears to indicate that he was merely a "temporary hire" in various units and unable to find a "job," this was not the case. Rather than being unsuitable to fill a permanent staff position, he had actually entered a training program to become a fully qualified *Generalstabsoffizier* (GSO). With the war entering its second winter and with no expectation of victory in the near term on either front, the German Army needed to not only continue to supply men for the trenches and officers to lead those soldiers, but also officers trained in the complex and demanding work of the staffs at all

⁶ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). Von Kleist was officially assigned to the *XVII. Reserve-Korps* from 3 March-22 April 1916.

⁷ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 444-45. "Surén, Karl," The Prussian Machine, no date. <http://prussianmachine.com/akb/suren.htm> (January 5, 2022). Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Viktor Surén (* 19 December 1860; † 21 November 1927) commissioned as a *Sekonde-Lieutenant* on 12 November 1878 likely in *Schlesisches Füsilier-Regiment Nr. 38* (Schweidnitz). Rose to *Oberst* by 18 May 1908 and assumed command of *Infanterie-Regiment "von Winterfeldt" (2. Oberschlesisches) Nr. 23* (Neiße) on 27 July 1908. Promoted to *Generalmajor* on 22 March 1912, and assumed command of *22. Infanterie-Brigade* (Breslau) on the same day. Started WWI as Commander *11. Reserve-Division (5. Armee)*. Went on to command *30. Infanterie-Division, XVII. Reservekorps* (25 September to 3 September 1916), *XXV. Reservekorps*, and *Generalkommando z.b.V. Nr. 61* (Balkans). Promoted to *Generalleutnant* on 27 January 1915. Retired from the army on 20 December 1918.

levels. For many officers, who like Ewald had successfully completed their *Kriegsakademie* education but had not been identified for *Generalstab* duties, their time at the school had given them the theoretical knowledge to become *Generalstabsoffiziere*. What remained was the practical training under the tutelage of a fully qualified GSOs such as *Hauptmann* von Oppeln-Bronikowski. Ewald's various assignments, while temporary, were those experiential periods in his GSO training. Von Kleist's General Staff training would last the remainder of 1916 and into early 1917. His further education included several courses away from the front in 1917 and 1918. While not explicitly stated, Von Kleist's writing supports this idea. "This command was then always replaced by another assignment. Thus, I basically gave up my squadron at the end of October 1915, but wore the uniform of the Leibhusaren probably until the end of 1916 or the beginning of 1917, and then finally put on the General Staff uniform."⁸

⁸ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 42-43.



Figure 11 Ewald von Kleist as Staff Officer

While undated, this photo was likely taken between October 1915 and March 1917. Von Kleist is wearing his Leib-Husar uniform with his Totenkopf busby clearly displayed in the background. (Author's collection)

By the end of April 1916, Ewald was back with the 85. *LD* on the Eastern Front and commenced a six-month period with the division as a substitute general staff officer.⁹ Two short temporary duties provided von Kleist with different perspectives. For three weeks in June, Ewald traded duties and served as *Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq von Breugel's *Adjutant*. Then for three days at the end of July, Ewald would again visit the 86. *Infanterie-Division*.

It was early in this period that Ewald likely had a close brush with serious injury from an unlikely avenue. He later recounted the episode. "Bronikowski and I had our workrooms and bedrooms next door to each other. We were going to bed when suddenly I heard Bronikowski scream. I rushed through the open door to him. He had taken off his shirt to wash and his big Doberman had bitten into his bared chest. I seized the dog and tore him away. The dog grabbed at me and bit me in the left forearm."¹⁰ After subduing the dog, indications were that it was infected with rabies. Von Kleist's wound was quickly cauterized which successfully kept him from contracting rabies. His fellow officer was not so fortunate. "Bronikowski, however, took the dog's head to the Pasteur Institute in Germany. There Bronikowski was successfully treated for rabies and returned, but with serious heart abnormalities."

⁹ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). Von Kleist was reassigned to the 85. *Landwehr-Division* again on 23 April 1916, as a substitute staff officer. He continued in this status until 28 October 1916. There were temporary duties for von Kleist during this period. Between 1-19 June 1916, he was assigned as *Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq von Breugel's *Adjutant*. Between 28 July and 1 August 1916, he was sent as a general staff officer to "gain a perception of operations in the 86th Infantry Division."

¹⁰ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 43. Von Kleist does not give a date for this incident. But given that he likely had to fill in for the several-month absence of von Oppeln-Bronikowski, the period May-October 1916 appears to be most likely as Ewald's duties were within the 85. *Landwehr-Division* during these six months. Unclear is the location to which von Oppeln-Bronikowski travelled for treatment as no Pasteur institute existed in Germany. Likely it was a medical facility that specialized in applying Pasteur's rabies treatment protocol. Von Kleist's scars were still plainly visible thirty years later. Entering this episode into his memoirs, von Kleist commented that "I just showed the scars [to his roommate Generalfeldmarschall Hugo Sperrle], which are clearly seen because the wound was then cauterized." Von Oppeln-Bronikowski died 18 November 1919, at thirty-nine years of age. Of note, officers were sometimes allowed to keep personal pets, most often dogs, even while serving in front line units. While Ewald and Gisela were fond of and kept dogs at home, Ewald makes no mention of having a dog with him at the front during the war.

II. A Broadening of Perspective

At the end of July, Ewald travelled two hundred and fifty miles south to spent three days with 86. *Infanterie*=*Division* “to gain a perspective on operations,” in what was another experiential lesson in his planned GSO training.¹¹ In March 1916, the 86. *Infanterie*=*Division* had been pulled out of the line next to von Kleist’s 85. *LD* and transferred south to join *Generaloberst* Hermann von Eichhorn’s 10. *Armee* then under *Heeresgruppe* *Linsingen*. June and July found the 86. *ID*, now commanded by *Generalmajor* Carl Gronau, fighting to contain the Russian’s Brusilov Offensive.¹² The Russians launched the offensive on 4 June 1916.

Between 28 July and 4 November 1916, the 86. *ID* fought in the Battle of Kowel (Kovel). Ewald’s period of observation, 28 July-1 August, coincided with the Russian’s renewed attempt to breakthrough at Kowel. On the 28th, the Russian Guards Army, which had been sent as reinforcements, commenced its first attack in coordination with the renewed attacks of the Russian 3rd and 8th Armies. The three Russian armies contained nearly 250,000 men against 115,000 of the German-Austrian forces. On the initial day, the two Guard’s Corps suffered over 30,000 casualties. The attack lasted several more days before the Russians called a halt after only very minor gains but experiencing devastating numbers of casualties. The Battle of Kowel was the Russian’s high-water mark of this war. Undoubtedly, Ewald learned much from watching the large-scale, pitched battle but unfortunately, he left no comments on what he had

¹¹ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). Von Kleist’s *Dienstlaufbahn* recorded between 28 July - 1 August 1916, von Kleist was sent “zur Wahrnehmung der Geschäfte als Genst. Offz. bei der 86. I. D.” (as a general staff officer to gain a perception of operations at the 86th Infantry Division). *Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq von Breugel’s well-established contacts within the 86. *ID* likely facilitated von Kleist’s second observation visit to this sister division. Von Kleist’s army records do not annotate the Battle of Kowel, thus, as an observer, Ewald was not considered to have participated in the battle. Kowel (present-day Kovel, Ukraine) was 250 miles (400 kilometers) south of von Kleist’s division headquarters at Juraczischki.

¹² Norman Stone, *The Eastern Front 1914-1917* (London: Penguin, 1998), 260-263. See Stone for a more detailed description of this portion of the Brusilov Offensive.

observed. Shortly after returning to Juraczischki, Ewald celebrated his thirty-fifth birthday on 8 August 1916.

Ewald continued his duties on the staff of 85. *LD.* throughout the late summer and into the autumn. Little combat action occurred as no battles were listed either in von Kleist's or the division's records. By mid-October 1916, von Breugel had informed Ewald that he was going to be reassigned to a higher-level headquarters, the planned next step in gaining the highly coveted carmine stripes. Before he reported to his next assignment, Ewald was granted a short period of leave back in the Germany.¹³

¹³ No record, official or unofficial, denoted this period of leave that occurred sometime during the third and fourth weeks (15th-27th) of October 1916. Other evidence, however, does exist; nine months later, on 6 July 1917, Gisela gave birth to a son. It is likely that von Kleist made the trip to Hannover as he could see Gisela as well as his father, mother, and sister who now lived in the city.



Figure 12 Ewald and Gisela von Kleist, circa 1916

Possibly taken during Ewald's home leave October 1916. He wears his Leib-Husar uniform with Iron Cross I & II Class. Gisela appears less than happy, perhaps knowing Ewald is soon due back at the Front. (Author's collection)

Of his time assigned to the headquarters of the 85. *Landwehr-Division*, Ewald penned,

Life here in the divisional staff, which of course I had known well for a year, was very comradely. There was my division commander, old Leibhusar, Cocq von Breugel, Bronikowski, von Studnitz, an Adjutant formerly of the 12th Hussars, and Graf Emich Solms, my regimental comrade and member of my Ersatz Eskadron. He had deserted me at the end of August 1914, that is, he had made himself and his long-distance patrol an independent unit for the rest of that period of the war. He was also arguably the commander of the headquarters troops with the title of *Ordonnanzoffizier*. The other members of the staff also reappear clearly in my memory, but I cannot recall all their names.¹⁴

Thus ended Ewald's longest unit association during the war. In total, he had served four days short of two years in the division; his time evenly split between field command and staff duties.

III. Apprentice General Staff Officer at the Corps Level

On 29 October 1916, Ewald reported for duty at the newly formed *Armeeabteilung Scheffer* (AA-S). The move was neither distant nor to a completely unknown unit as AA-S had

¹⁴ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 43-44. "von Studnitz, Bogislav," (Lexikon der Wehrmacht, no date). <http://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de/Personenregister/S/StudnitzBogislavv.htm> (June 24, 2021).

Bogislav von Studnitz (*2 September 1888 in Buderose; † 13 January 1943, in an accident near Larissa in Greece), after completing his cadet training, entered the 2. *Garde-Feldartillerie-Regiment* as a *Fähnrich* on 28 February 1907. He remained with this regiment until transferring to the cavalry in 1912, when he joined *Thüringisches Husaren-Regiment Nr. 12*. He entered the war with this regiment and at the end of 1914 transferred to the *Landwehr*. He served in various staff positions throughout the remainder of the war. He was promoted to *Rittmeister* on 18 December 1915. Surviving the war, he was brought into the *Reichswehr*, first serving in the 2. *Kavallerie-Division* and then in the 1. *Kavallerie-Division*. He served in various cavalry regiments and on division staffs as a general staff officer rising to Chief of Staff of the 1. *Kavallerie-Division* in April 1934. Promoted to *Oberst* on 1 April 1935, he was named military attaché to Poland and served there until November 1938. Now as a *Generalmajor*, he assumed command of *Infanterie-Kommandeur 24*. At the outbreak of WWII, he was made commander of 87. *Infanterie-Division* on the Western Front. After participating in the French Campaign in 1940 as commander of this division, he and the division transferred east in preparation for Operation Barbarossa. He led his division on the Central Eastern Front until 22 August 1942 and on this date was placed in the *Führerreserve*. He was recalled to active duty on 1 January 1943 as Commanding General Saloniki-Ägäis and then took over command of *Oberfeldkommandant 395*. He died as the result of an accident near Larissa less than two weeks after returning to active duty.

been formed out of *XVII. Reserve-Korps* (*XVII RK*), the corps to which the 85. *LD* belonged.¹⁵

Accordingly, von Kleist had worked with a number of the general staff officers during the previous year. The AA-S headquarters was located at Lida, a city located thirty miles (fifty kilometers) to the west of the 85. *Landwehr-Division*'s headquarters. Ewald's new commanding general was *General der Infanterie* Reinhard *Freiherr* von Scheffer-Boyadel who had taken command on 3 September 1916.¹⁶

Ewald was officially assigned to the headquarters as an *Ordonnanzoffizier* in general staff section II.¹⁷ The orderly officer's position at corps level was best defined as a general assistant. Without specific duties, the officer was available to assist other general staff officers when and where needed. Often orderly officers were used as messengers for important documents sent to

¹⁵ Reicharchiv, *Der Weltkrieg 1914-1918: Die Kriegsführung im Herbst 1916 und im Winter 1916/17*, Elfter Band (Berlin: E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1938), 354 and 380. On 3 September 1916, *General der Infanterie* Reinhard *Freiherr* von Scheffer-Boyadel replaced *Generalleutnant* Karl Surén as commanding general of *XVII. Reserve-Korps*. On 9 October 1916, the German *12. Armee* was disbanded and the headquarters of *XVII Reserve Corps* was used to form the new *Armeeabteilung Scheffer*. This new *Armeeabteilung* took over control of what had been the *12. Armee* sector of the front line in the Lida area. For a period of time, *Armeeabteilung Scheffer* continued to also be referred to by its former *XVII. Reserve-Korps* designation.

¹⁶ "Scheffer-Boyadel, Reinhold Freiherr" The Prussian Machine, no date. <http://prussianmachine.com/aok/scheffer.htm> (January 24, 2022). *Reinhard* Gottlob Georg Heinrich *Freiherr* von Scheffer-Boyadel (*28 March 1851 in Hanau; † 8 November 1925) joined the Infanterie-Regiment "von Wittich" (3. Kurhessisches) Nr. 83 (Kassel) in 1870 and participated in the Franco-Prussian War where he earned the Iron Cross. After graduating from the *Kriegsakademie*, he was selected for duty as a *Großer Generalstaboffizier*. He served in a variety of staff and troop command postings and by 1908, had risen to *General der Infanterie* and commanding general of *XI. Armeekorps* (Cassel). Von Scheffer entered *zur Disposition* (inactive but subject to recall) status on 31 December 1913. In 1890, *Kaiser Wilhelm II* raised then Scheffer and his wife, Margarete, the daughter of industrial tycoon Carl Adolf Reibeck, to the nobility. In 1905, von Scheffer acquired the Boyadel estate in Niederschlesien and with its baronial hereditary entailment, he added Boyadel and was raised to a *Freiherr*. At the beginning of the war, he was placed in command of *XXV Reservekorps* and successfully led the corps in the Battle of Lodz where his command was encircled by Russian forces. Successfully breaking out of this predicament, von Scheffer's corps captured 16,000 Russian prisoners and 64 artillery pieces. Von Scheffer remained in command of troops until the end of the war. It was during von Scheffer's time as corps commander in Cassel that von Kleist would have met the general. As the corps commander, von Scheffer endorsed von Kleist's December 1913 *Beurteilung*.

¹⁷ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). The assignment was officially recorded as, "Transferred to an aide-de-camp position in *Armee Abteilung Scheffer* in Ila section 135i from 29 October 1916." The meaning of "135i" is not known. While technically assigned to Section II, the position of *Ordonnanzoffizier* (aide-de-camp) was flexible in that the officer could be assigned to a wide range of supporting duties across the corps' staff.

the corps' subordinate units. Thus, this position provided the opportunity to gain a wider perspective and knowledge of the workings of the general staff.

A key figure to both *Armeeabteilung Scheffer* and von Kleist was *Oberst* Ernst Kabisch, the Chief of Staff.¹⁸ Kabisch had joined *XVII. Reserve-Korps* as General Surén's Chief of Staff in September 1915. General von Scheffer retained the fifty-one-year-old *Oberst* who then guided the transition of the headquarters in October 1916. *Oberst* Kabisch continued Ewald's general staff officer practical training and education. Ewald recalled that he "worked in the Ib, Ic and Ia shops, one after the other, on the staff of the General Kommando des XIV [*sic*] Reserve Korps."¹⁹ Von Kleist got on well with Kabisch and conversely Kabisch thought highly of the up-and-coming young staff officer.

¹⁸ "Kabisch, Ernst," (Lexikon der Wehrmacht, no date). <https://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de/Personenregister/K/KabischErnst.htm> (June 27, 2021). *Ernst* Friedrich Karl Albert Kabisch (* 2 June 1866 in Kurwitz; † 23 October 1951 in Stuttgart) joined the army as a *Fahnenjunker* on 29 March 1884, enlisting in the *I. Westpreußische Fußartillerie-Regiment Nr. 11* (Thorn). He earned his commission on 16. September 1885. He attended the two-year course (October 1887 to September 1889) at the *Artillerie- und Ingenieur-Schule*, Berlin. After returning to his artillery regiment and serving as a battalion adjutant he was selected to attend the *Kriegsakademie* (October 1891 to July 1894). After completing general staff officer training, he was selected to serve on *Großen Generalstab*. He was promoted to *Hauptmann* on 21 March 1897, to *Major* on 27 January 1905 and to *Oberstleutnant* on 27 January 1912. After promotion to *Oberst* on 22 March 1914, he assumed command of *5. Lothringisches Infanterie-Regiment Nr. 144* on 20 May 1914. He led this regiment into combat at the outbreak of the war and was wounded three weeks into the campaign on 24 August 1914. After recovering from his wound, he served on various staffs to include: *Gouvernement von Metz* (*Generalleutnant* von Winterfeld's Chief of Staff); from 23 September 1914, *III. Reserve-Korps* (Hans von Beseler's Chief of Staff); from 9 July 1915, *XVII. Reserve-Korps* (Karl Suren and *Freiherr* von Scheffer-Boyadel's Chief of Staff); and from 3 October 1916, *Armee-Abteilung Scheffer* (*Freiherr* von Scheffer-Boyadel's Chief of Staff). He was promoted to *Generalmajor* on 18 June 1917. He continued as *Freiherr* von Scheffer-Boyadel's Chief of Staff at *Generalkommando 67* until 2 November 1917, when he assumed command of *81. Reserve-Infanterie-Brigade*. On 5 March 1918, he took command of *54. Infanterie-Division* and served as this division's commander until after cessation of hostilities. On 9 October 1918, he earned the *Pour le Mérite* for outstanding leadership of his division in defensive actions during the Allied Offensive. After the war, he commanded *Reichswehrbrigade 31* in the Wesel Sector and the unit was active in the Ruhr area disturbances. In May 1920, he took command of *Reichswehr-Brigade 13*. On 27 September 1920, he was selected as *Infanterieführer V* (Stuttgart) and on 1 October 1920, promoted to *Generalleutnant*. He retired from active service on 15 June 1921 and in retirement continued his work as a writer on military subjects. On Tannenberg Day (1 September 1939) he was promoted to the character of *General der Infanterie*. He was recalled to active duty and became General Staff of *Heeresgruppe Nord* (from October 12, 1939: *Heeresgruppe B*) and took part in World War II. On 15 June 1940 he retired from active service.

¹⁹ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 46-47. Von Kleist wrote in 1945, "My chief of the general staff was *Oberst* Kabisch, known for his military writings, even during this war. I exchanged letters with him many times until the end of this war. He was a sector commander in Wesel after World War I. In 1920, after the Kapp-Putsch, the Fortress Wesel was attacked by red troops and defended by Kabisch." Kabisch authored over fifteen books

In January 1917, Kabisch, after observing Ewald for two and a half months, penned von Kleist's second wartime officer evaluation report.²⁰ The format of the *Qualifikations-Bericht* (qualifications report) had changed to a simpler and more condensed format. The pre-printed form asked five questions for the evaluator to answer: 1) Is the appraisee fulfilling his position?; 2) If not, for what reasons?; 3) Is the appraisee suitable for the next higher position and for which one?; 4) If not, for what reasons?; and 5) Does the personality of the appraisee, his behavior as a superior, subordinate, comrade, give reason for special remarks and to which ones?. The form offered a place for comments from higher command, but for this report, no additional endorsements were received.

To the first question, does the officer fulfill the duties of his position, a straightforward “Ja” (yes) was noted and made Section 2 comments unneeded. Commenting on von Kleist's suitability for promotion to the next higher position, Kabisch opened with the key observation that Ewald was “Qualified for transfer to the General Staff.” Supporting this, the *Oberst*

primarily on German military operations and leaders of World War I; the majority being published between 1931 and 1939. Concerning the staff at corps level, the *Ia* (1st general staff officer) was the operations officer and was responsible for planning and monitoring the execution of combat operations. He reported directly to the corps chief of staff and was the corps commander's operations expert; the modern day “G3.” The *Ib* (2nd general staff officer) was responsible for logistics, transportation of heavy baggage, ammunition and resupply columns also, prisoners of war; a modern day “G4.” The *Ic* was responsible for military intelligence, updating the commander and staff on enemy actions and situation assessments and for ensuring proper communications systems (telephone, telegraph, etc.) were functioning; a modern day “G2.” There was also an *Id*, typically provided administrative support to the *Ia* in the form of orders production and distribution as well as obtaining maps, and keeping the *Kriegstagebuch* (war diary). The normal order of precedence was *Ia*, *Ic*, *Ib*, and *Id*. Even today, these various functions and the personnel of these staffs, at and below corps level are informally referred to as “shops,” i.e., personnel in “the G3 shop” are responsible for operations issues. See Buchholz, *Great War Dawning*, 131-133 for an excellent overview of general staff positions and duties at the corps level in English.

²⁰ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Qualifikations-Bericht 22 January 1917; (Document 18). Of note, is the fact that von Kleist apparently did not receive a *Qualifikations-Bericht* either at the year point from his July 1915 report or upon leaving the 85. *Landwehr-Division*, fifteen months after his last report. That *Oberst* Kabisch highlighted some of Ewald's experiences and confirmed his previous commanders' satisfaction with his work, points to the likelihood that no report was written and not that it just did not find its way into von Kleist's permanent personnel file. In cross-referencing von Kleist's official *Dienstlaufbahn*, Kabisch's comments blend information concerning von Kleist's experiences with the 85. *Landwehr-Division*, the 86. *Infanterie-Division*, and the 17. *Reserve-Korps* between October 1915 and October 1916. The report was physically handwritten by a *Major* Barack, one of the adjutants in the headquarters, and signed by the corps Chief of Staff, *Oberst* Kabisch.

recorded that, prior to von Kleist's transfer to a staff position in *XVII. Reserve Korps*, the officer had "independently," that is without the supervision of a senior General Staff Officer, "conducted the duties as a General Staff Officer [at division level] ... from May to September 1916, to the utmost satisfaction of the division commander and the commanding general." The paragraph closed with the recommendation that because of his previous experience as a divisional 1st General Staff Officer (GSO), von Kleist should not be assigned to a division as a 2nd GSO.

In Section 5, Kabisch made comments on von Kleist's personality.

Equally proven as a worker on the staff of the General Command and also one in the independent position as a substitute division general staff officer. Clear, calm, determined, sound tactical perceptions, outstanding concept of command. - Impeccable as a superior, subordinate and comrade. - In view of the fact that there has been a great turnover of general staff officers at General Command XVII Reserve Corps in recent months, it is requested that Rittmeister von Kleist remain with the XVII Reserve Corps upon his transfer to the General Staff. - If Rittmeister von Kleist is still assigned to a division as a General Staff officer, a replacement will be required.²¹

Once again, von Kleist's report affirmed his unflappable, determined nature as well as his strong, if not superior, understanding of tactics. He received high praise for both his command aptitude and being a highly skilled and dependable staff officer, all the while remaining an ideal superior, subordinate, and peer. A close reading indicated that by late January 1917, *Oberst* Kabisch considered Ewald's transfer to the General Staff a foregone conclusion. In today's parlance, this was indeed a "top block" report and one that would continue to strongly support Ewald's further advancement in both command and staff.

The portion of the front for which *AA-S/ XVII Reserve Korps* was responsible remained relatively quiet throughout the fall of 1916, the winter 1916/17??? and into the spring of 1917.

²¹ Ibid.

Von Kleist's personnel record simply listed "*Stellungskampf an der Beresina*" (positional warfare on the Berezina) lasting until 4 August 1917.²² The name of the corps' daily newspaper, *Die Wacht im Osten* (The Watch in the East), encapsulated the corps' mission during this period.²³

IV. Sewing on the Carmine Strips of a General Staff Officer

Two significant events occurred on 13 March 1917. The larger event would significantly affect the German war effort while the smaller would alter the future career of a German officer. In the evening of the 13th, the German *Oberste Heeresleitung* (Supreme Army Command) was informed that a revolution had broken out in St. Petersburg.²⁴ The event toppled a series of dominoes, the first one coming a few days later when Tzar Nicholas II abdicated the throne. Despite the unfolding of events that were deemed favorable to Germany, the German Army, lacking sufficient forces on the Eastern Front, was in no position to initiate an offensive. "Thus, in full agreement with the political considerations of the Reich Chancellor, the efforts of the Supreme Army Command were soon directed toward promoting the process of [Russian] disintegration, which seemed to have begun, through propaganda rather than through military

²² Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3).

²³ Armee-Abteilung Scheffer Schriftleitung und Geschäftsstelle, *Die Wacht im Osten*, January-December 1916. The majority of the daily issues for the year 1916 are available digitally from Universitäts-Bibliothek Heidelberg (https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/wacht_im_osten). The soldier daily was a four-page broadsheet containing news from the other war fronts, the home front, stories on military leaders and combat decoration recipients, as well as lighter items such as poems, short stories, jokes, riddles, crossword puzzles. A weekly supplement was produced and contained eight heavily illustrated (photos, drawings, maps, etc.) pages. As one would expect for military security, no military information on the unit itself was contained in the newspaper.

²⁴ Reicharchiv, *Der Weltkrieg 1914-1918: Die Kriegsführung im Frühjahr 1917*, Zwölfter Band (Berlin: E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 1939), 82-83. The information on the outbreak of the revolution came initially from an intercepted Russian radio transmission.

operations.”²⁵ This in turn meant that no significant operations utilizing units of AA-S/ XVII Reserve Korps was being planned for the upcoming months.

The smaller event of 13 March, directly impacted Ewald. On this day, one of his long-term goals was realized, appointment as a General Staff Officer. Von Kleist’s official personnel record entry read, “Retained in General Staff post with the XVII Reserve Corps, transferred to the General Staff of the Army as a Captain.”²⁶ The war had created an expanded need for fully qualified General Staff Officers. Ewald’s categorization upon graduation from the *Kriegsakademie* and his continued high level of performance in command had qualified him for a second chance at an apprenticeship that could lead to appointment as a bona fide general staff officer. The peacetime two-year apprenticeship on the *Großen Generalstab* in Berlin had become impractical during wartime. An ersatz program took its place, one which saw apprentices serve under General Staff Officers in a variety of positions within division and corps field headquarters. Von Kleist’s wartime General Staff internship had lasted sixteen months during which he had gained a wide experience by serving on at least three divisional staffs and

²⁵ Ibid., 83.

²⁶ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). The entry read, “unter Belassung in Generalstabs Stelle beim XVII. Reserve Korps als Hauptmann in Generalstab der Armee versetzt.“ Of note, is that von Kleist, despite being a *Rittmeister*, was transferred into the General Staff corps (i.e., group or branch) as a *Hauptmann*. This further confirms that the transfer was not a partial, temporary, or provisional wartime transfer as all *Rittmeister* gave up that rank and became *Hauptmann* upon appointment to the General Staff corps and for the remainder of their time at this rank when serving in *Generalstab* billets. For clarity, a *Generalstab* billet or post was a position that was authorized to be and was normally filled by a fully qualified *Generalstabsoffizier* (GSO), that is one who had normally completed the full *Kriegsakademie* course and had successfully passed his probationary period of service on the *Großen Generalstab*. Those authorized billets were on the *Großen Generalstab*, in a troop (army corps & division) headquarters (army corps chief of staff and the *Ia* and divisional *Ia*), one or two posts in administrative headquarters (inspectors), at army schools (*Kriegsschule* tactics instructors, selected *Kriegsakademie* instructor positions, etc.), and in a few other billets that required the trained expertise of a *Generalstabsoffizier*. Upon transfer to the General Staff corps, the officer’s future assignments were controlled by the *Großen Generalstab* personnel office in order to ensure proper GSO utilization and manage the GSO’s career development with appropriate staff and command assignments. All of the GSOs assigned to staff positions wore the distinctive GSO uniform with it uniquely colored and prominent carmine trouser stripes on the vertical, outside pants leg. Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft III, 42-43. Von Kleist noted, “Thus, I basically gave up my squadron at the end of October 1915, but wore the uniform of the Leibhusaren probably until the end of 1916 or the beginning of 1917, and then finally put on the general staff uniform.” Von Kleist’s putting on the General Staff uniform would have been authorized with his appointment to the *Generalstab der Armee*.

one corps staff. He had performed well and received high ratings from his commanders and Staff Officer superiors. Thus, a goal which can be traced back for at least a decade, had finally been realized. At long last, *Hauptmann* von Kleist was entitled to don the highly respected carmine striped uniform.

As spring 1917 turned into summer, the German forces on the Eastern Front monitored the situation in Russia. The forward lines of *Armeeabteilung Scheffer* remained relatively quiet. Ewald's elation over becoming a general staff officer was replaced with hopeful anticipation and hesitant apprehension. Sometime in the New Year, Gisela had informed Ewald that she was pregnant. Her due date was in mid-July. Ewald definitely looked forward to becoming a father but Gisela's previous history was cause for concern.

To continue Ewald's education and likely as a means to facilitate a brief period of leave, von Kleist was assigned to attend a course at the *Artillerie-Schießschule Wahn*.²⁷ The start date was Friday, 1 June 1917, with the course likely lasting at most a week. Back at the front, Ewald sweated out the arrival of the baby.

But the greatest event in my life during this timeframe, which came near its end, was the birth of our first child, my dear Peter. ... After our hopes for a child were bitterly disappointed in 1914, the happiness for Gisela and me was all the greater now.

I received the news on the day of the birth [6 July] and I managed to get in touch with my dear wife by telephone from Lazduny near Iwje, near the confluence of the Little Beresina and Njemen. For that time, the telephone connection was quite an achievement. I could still hear Gisela's voice, even if the words were only made understandable through the lady telephone operator in Warsaw. I knew that

²⁷ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). The annotation is a single line and gives only the beginning date for what was likely a short course designed to provide staff officers with an update on the latest artillery tactics and techniques. Wahn was one of the several *Fuß-Artillerie-Schießschulen* (heavy artillery shooting schools) and was located approximately halfway between Köln and Bonn on the east side of the Rhine on the Wahner Heide (Wahn Heath). It is possible that the course included the latest tactics and techniques for the use of artillery-fired poison gas as the school undertook development and trials of chemical weapons. The likely route of von Kleist's train travel after leaving the Eastern Front en route to Wahn would have been Posen-Berlin-Hannover-Köln-Wahn. Thus, it is highly probable that Ewald saw Gisela during his short time away from the front. Von Kleist does not mention either attending the Wahn course or any leave during the summer 1917.

Gisela and our little boy were doing well. Gisela knew that I had received the good news and was happy with it. At that time, people were already talking from the Eastern to the Western Fronts with special telephone amplification systems.²⁸

Kleist's own words attest to the singular importance of, as well as the joy that the healthy birth of his first son brought to him.

In late July, von Kleist received notification of another desirable and likely long aspired to position. On 21 July 1917, Ewald was officially appointed as an *Ehrenritter des Johanniter-Ordens* (Knight of Honor of the Order of St. John).²⁹ The event of his entrance into the *Johanniter-Orden* allows a rare and brief glimpse into von Kleist's religious beliefs and spiritual character. While the Order's history and von Kleist's connection to a few of its knight-members has been previously explored, Ewald's 1917 selection solicits further investigation.

Being selected for membership in the *Johanniter-Orden* was no small matter in either procedure or commitment. The first hurdle was the requirement for the potential candidate to be male and "belong to the German nobility or to the nobility of the Prussian monarchy, [and] be of Protestant confession."³⁰ Men could not actively or officially request to become a knight. A

²⁸ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 47. Named Johannes Jürgen Christoph Ewald von Kleist, the child was most often called "Peter" by family and friends. Gisela apparently experienced no complications with the birth and the child was healthy and also without medical issues. Lazduny (present-day Lazduny 1, Belarus) was likely the forward command post of *Armeeabteilung Scheffer/XVII. Reserve-Korps* or one of its subordinate divisions. From Lida, Iwje (present-day Iūje, Belarus) lay twenty-five miles (forty kilometers) east and Lazduny lay another eight miles (fourteen kilometers) further east. Lazduny was six miles (ten kilometers) south of von Kleist's previous division's 85. *Landwehr-Division*) at Juraczischki.

²⁹ Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, "Beförderungen und Ernennungen (Ernennung zum Ehrenritter des Ordens St. Johannis vom Spital zu Jerusalem)" (BA-MA: N 354/12, Document 4, Nachlass Kleist). The original certificate of commissioning in the *Johanniter-Orden* is present in this file. The A4-sized certificate attests to von Kleist's *Patent* (commission) as an *Ehrenritter* (Knight of Honor). Ewald's rank, position, and name were handwritten. "den Hauptmann in Generalstabe der Garde-Kavallerie Division Ewald von Kleist". The document is signed by *Ordensstatthalter* (Governor of the Order), Hermann *Graf* Wartensleben-Carow. The document was hand dated, 21 July 1917. Von Kleist was not officially, per his army personnel file, transferred to the *Garde-Kavallerie-Division* until 3 August 1917. Thus, the certificate was likely completed after 3 August 1917 and dated back to the day of the council's approval but still showed Ewald's new assignment.

³⁰ Johanniterorden, *Statuten der Balley Brandenburg des Ritterlichen Ordens St. Johannis vom Spital zu Jerusalem oder des Johanniter-Ordens* (Berlin: Julius Sittenfeld, 1886), 7ff.

knight in good standing in the order had to come to the conclusion that the nobleman both possessed and demonstrated the attributes of Christian character and practice that made him suitable for membership in the order. At least one additional knight had to observe and concur that the noblemen did indeed hold and exemplify the attributes of an *evangelisch* (Protestant/Lutheran) Christian belief. If the nobleman expressed a suitably strong profession of the Christian faith and an unhesitant willingness to commit to service in and support of the Order, a minimum of two knights would then personally endorse and sponsor the man for consideration as an *Ehrenritter*.³¹ The application package then was sent to the Order's leadership for consideration. *Ehrenritter* appointments were made twice annually, while *Rechtsritter* were invested only once annually.³²

To what had Ewald specifically confirmed and affirmed by his willingness to become a *Ehrenritter*? First, with regard to the *Order*, Ewald had acknowledged the purpose of the Order and committed to be one “who by his way of life demonstrates an attitude corresponding to the purposes of the Order.”

The purposes of the Order are the battle against unbelief and the service and care of the sick, as expressed in the affiliated vow of the Knights of Justice, which also serves as a guideline for the Knights of Honor. The Order establishes, as far as its means permit, hospitals and institutions corresponding to its purposes throughout the country, the former especially in small towns for the sick of these towns and the countryside, and it also assumes the management of such hospitals and institutions which are entrusted to its protection and submit to its rules.

During wars in which Germany is involved, the Order devotes its energies to the care of the wounded and sick victims of war.³³

³¹ The majority of personnel and historical records of the *Johanniter-Orden* were destroyed during an Allied bombing raid on Potsdam during World War II. Ewald von Kleist's file was lost and thus, it is not known who von Kleist's nominators were. (Author's conversation with Andreas von Kleiwitz, *Johanniter-Orden* historian and archivist, on 20 November 2019, *Johanniter-Orden* Archive, Berlin.)

³² Being raised to *Rechtsritter* appears to be in recognition for a deep and continued service in and involvement with the mission of the Order, maintaining an active and faithful religious life, honorable performance of one's secular profession, and likely appropriate financial contributions as befitting to one's pecuniary resources.

³³ *Johanniterorden, Statuten*, §23 and 37.

Additionally, Ewald confirmed more specifically, aspects of his Christian beliefs by his positive affirmation of the elements contained within the vow taken by *Rechtsritter*. He agreed:

That he will faithfully adhere to the Christian religion, especially to the confession of the Protestant church, wear the cross of the order on his chest as a sign of his salvation, not be ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but rather confess it by word and deed, defend it courageously and chivalrously against the attacks of unbelief, and lead a life worthy of this confession in the fear of God, truth, justice, chaste morality and faithfulness.

That he recognizes the battle against unbelief, the service and care of the sick, as the purpose of the Order of St. John, ...

That he will fight a good and chivalrous battle against the enemies of the Church of Christ and against the disturbers of divine and human order everywhere, as well as to favor, promote and spread the Christian nursing of the Order to the best of his ability.

He shall confess and pledge that he will always and under all circumstances be faithful, loyal and obedient to His Royal Majesty of Prussia, the sovereign and high patron of the Balley, seek and strive for the welfare and the best of the fatherland and fight courageously and fearlessly for the King and the fatherland, risking life and limb. ...

Finally, he shall confess and pledge that he will preserve the honor of the Order everywhere, promote its best and always render willing obedience with all loyalty and reverence to the superiors in the Order, especially to any ruling Master in this Masterhood, in accordance with the statutes of the Order, and also that he will conduct himself and prove himself in all matters and in all places, at home and in public, in his own matters and in those of others, as befits a Christian Knight.³⁴

Ewald thus, confirmed his salvation in Jesus Christ, his belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, his willingness to support and defend the Church against its enemies, and his desire to conduct himself, in public and private, as was befitting of a believer in Christ, a Christian Knight. Additionally, he acknowledged his “pledge that he will always and under all

³⁴ Ibid., “Gelübde der Rechts-Ritter des Johanniter-Ordens” (Vows of the Knights of Justice of the Order of Saint John). While Ewald, as an *Ehrenritter*, was not required to take a vow of confession or service to the Order, he was expected to use the *Rechtsritter* vow as a guideline for his personal beliefs and actions. Given that von Kleist continued with the Order, was elevated to *Rechtsritter* in 1935, and at that time took the *Rechtsritter* vow, it is likely that in 1917, he held no reservations concerning the appropriateness, accuracy, and validity of the vow and its key elements.

circumstances be faithful, loyal and obedient to His Royal Majesty of Prussia,” and defend the sovereign with his life. The latter was a natural and compatible reinforcement of his oath as an officer in the Prussian Army.

By mid-July, the *Johanniter-Orden* leadership had reviewed the information concerning Ewald’s nomination and had deemed him suitable for appointment. On 21 July, the senior council of the Order met and approved the semi-annual list of *Ehrenritter* candidates. The newly appointed knights would have been informed and after accepting the honor would then have been sent their appointment certificate after the payment of their initiation fee.³⁵ For *Ehrenritter* there was no *Ritterschlag* (investiture ceremony) and no requirement to be officially presented to his regional chapter.³⁶

While the honor of becoming an *Ehrenritter* was high, it was not excruciatingly exclusive. In 1917, three hundred sixty men were brought into the Order as Knights of Honor. Of those, one hundred eighty-two (50.6 percent) were active-duty military officers. Ewald was in august company as the 1917 *Ehrenritter* appointees announced in the *Militär-Wochenblatt* included among other notable noblemen, *Generalfeldmarschall* von Hindenburg and future

³⁵ Ibid., §26. The initiation fee as of 1886, was 1,000 *Marks*. Additionally, knights had to pay for the Order’s ceremonial uniform insignia (approximately 100 *Marks*) and a robe. An annual minimum contribution, set at 60 *Marks* in 1858, likely raised to 75 *Marks* by 1914, was also expected. Per Herr von Klewitz, the new *Ehrenritter* was expected then to purchase his robe and begin participation in the Orders’ business. There was a “probationary” period of six years before the *Ehrenritter* was allowed to purchase his *Johanniter-Orden Kreuz* and thus for six years he only was allowed to wear the robe at official functions.

³⁶ The Balley Brandenburg was, at this time, divided into fifteen regional *Genossenschaften* (confraternities or chapters): Preußen, Brandenburg, Pommern, Posen, Schlesien, Sachsen-Provinzial, Rhein, Schleswig-Holstein, Hannover, Westfalen, Württemberg-Baden, Mecklenburg, Hesse, Königreich Sachsen, and Königreich Bayern. Interestingly, von Kleist chose to affiliate himself with the Pommerischen Provinzial-Genossenschaft (Pomeranian Provincial Confraternity) despite having only a distant connection to that region. Affiliation in one region did not exclude association with members of another region and thus it is likely that von Kleist, while living in Hannover, Berlin, Potsdam, and Breslau during the later years of his career associated with these *Genossenschaften*. In 1937, von Kleist would switch his association from Pommern to Schlesien. Knights who affiliated themselves with a *Genossenschaften* were obliged to pay an annual contribution to the chapter in lieu of to the general account of the Balley Brandenburg.

Generalfeldmarschall, then artillery *Hauptmann* Georg von Kuchler.³⁷ Having accepted the knighthood, Ewald was authorized to wear the *Johanniter-Orden Kreuz* (cross) on his military uniform.³⁸ Von Kleist's association with the Order would endure throughout his life.³⁹

By the end of July 1917, Ewald had completed nine months of service on the staff of *Armeeabteilung Scheffer*.⁴⁰ His appointment as a General Staff Officer and his continued first-

³⁷ "Ordens-Verleihungen." *Militär-Wochenblatt* 102 (1917): 726-728. Nikolai Scheuring, "Liste der Ehrenritter des Johanniterordens 1853–1918" (Berlin: Johanniter-Orden, 2021). This document is a compilation of the names and occupations of the noblemen who were appointed as *Ehrenritter* between 1853 and 1918. For comparison and context, in 1913, the last full pre-war year, 234 *Ehrenritter* were appointed of which 98 (41.8 percent) were active-duty officers. In 1915, the first full year of the war, 163 *Ehrenritter* were appointed of which 57 (35.0 percent) were active-duty officers; in 1916, 328 were appointed, 181 (55.2 percent) active-duty officers; and in 1917, 360 were appointed, of which 182 (50.6 percent) were active-duty officers. The Order normally maintained between 3,000-4,000 *Ehrenritter* and approximately 1,000 *Rechtsritter* in the years prior to World War I.

³⁸ The *Johanniter-Orden Kreuz* for *Ehrenritter* was a white Maltese cross with four Prussian eagles in black between the four "V" or arrowhead shaped concave quadrilaterals with a gold crown surmounting. This enameled metal cross was worn at the neck. Additionally, in lieu of the neck cross, officers were allowed to wear a simple cloth Maltese cross sown to the lower left breast of normal duty and semi-dress uniform tunics. Until 1914, the army *Rangliste* identified officers who belonged to the *Johanniter-Orden* by a pictogram, different for each *Ehrenritter* and *Rechtsritter*, symbolizing the Order's cross. Officers were officially allowed to wear the *Johanniter-Orden Kreuz* on their uniform until the mid-1930s, when under the influence of the *NSDAP*, the authorization was revoked. A few officers were still seen wearing the cross after this date, which should be taken as a sign of resistance to the movement to completely secularize the officer corps by *NSDAP* national and elements of army leadership.

³⁹ On 25 June 1935, von Kleist would be raised to the rank of *Rechtsritter* (Knight of Justice). His second son, Heinrich, would become an *Ehrenritter* in the 1950s. Per a face-to-face conversation with Andreas von Kleiwitz, *Johanniter-Orden* historian and archivist, on 20 November 2019, one of Heinrich's recommending Knights was Prince Oskar, son of Wilhelm II, (Herrenmeister at the time). This indicated that Prince Oskar had personal knowledge of Heinrich and his Christian character. Prince Oskar had served as a staff officer in then *Generalfeldmarschall* von Kleist's headquarters on the Eastern Front during World War II.

⁴⁰ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 46. Von Kleist noted in 1945, that while in *XVII. Reserve Korps*, he had served with Hermann Hoth and Eberhard von Livonius. Hermann Hoth (* 12 April 1885 in Neuruppin; † 25 January 1971 in Goslar) was a fellow *Kriegsakademie* classmate (Class of 1913) of Ewald. Hoth had been selected for *Großen Generalstab* duty and had been ordered to Berlin in April 1914, to begin his probationary period. Hoth served in various staff positions and commanded an infantry battalion and a *Feldflieger-Abteilung* before being assigned to the staff of *Kommandierenden General der Luftstreitkräfte*. He ended the war as *Ia* of *30. Infanterie-Division*. Retained in the *Reichswehr*, Hoth would rise to *Generaloberst* and command 4. *Panzerarmee* in Russia during World War II. On von Livonius, von Kleist wrote, "Livonius, [was] later an *Oberst* and one of our more distant neighbors in Silesia. His last active-duty assignment was as commander of *Reiter-Regiment 8* in Oels. But in 1928, he retired under unpleasant circumstances and a few years later married his old childhood sweetheart, Frau von Johnston (born von Kramsta) of Klein Bresa near Deutsch Lissa." Of significance, von Kleist would request to be allowed to wear the uniform of the *Reiter-Regiment 8* at his retirement in 1938. Eberhard von Livonius (* ?; † ?) was commissioned as a *Leutnant* (DoR: 30 Jan 1900 K) in the *I. Garde-Dragon-Regiment* on 30 January 1900. He attended the *Militär-Reit-Institut* 1906-1908, overlapping with von Kleist for one year. Promoted to *Oberleutnant* (DoR: 18 October 1909 G38g) in 1909 and by 1912, was serving as regimental adjutant in *I. GDR*. He began WWI as *Rittmeister* (DoR: 1 Oct 1913) the adjutant to *Generalmajor Graf von Rothkirch und Trach*, the Commander of *2. Garde-Kavallerie-Brigade*. In addition to serving with von Kleist in the *XVII. Reservekorps*, he also was on the *Generalstab* of *119. Infanterie Division*. He was retained by the *Reichswehr* and by 1924 was an

rate work at AA-S/XVII. *Reserve Korps* had continued to reinforce Ewald's reputation as an excellent GSO. *Oberst* Kabisch and the General Staff chain of command, deemed von Kleist ready for duty as the senior Staff Officer in a division.⁴¹

V. A Staff of His Own - *Ia* of the *Garde-Kavallerie-Division*

On 3 August 1917, by order of the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army, von Kleist was transferred to the *Garde-Kavallerie-Division* (GKD) as *1. Generalstabsoffizier* (1st General Staff Officer).⁴² The transfer took place "at the time when it was expected that the Brusilov offensive, which had been so successful at first, would expand to the Pinsk front. The Kerensky Government, which took the helm after the first revolution in Russia, still held on to its alliance with England and France and even continued combat operations."⁴³ The GKD commander was *Generalleutnant* Adolf von Storch was the long-serving division commander.⁴⁴ Von Kleist replaced *Hauptmann* von Bülow as the division's *Ia* (1st GSO, operations officer).⁴⁵

Oberstleutnant on the Staff of 3. *Kavallerie-Division*, serving in this position until the beginning of 1926. He was named Commander of 6. (*Preußisches*) *Reiter-Regiment* and served in this capacity from 1 March 1926 to 31 January 1927. On 1 February 1927 he assumed command of 8. (*Preußisches*.) *Reiter-Regiment* and remained commander until 1 May 1928. He retired from this position as an *Oberst* and in retirement became a *Landwirt* (farmer) at his property near Klein Bresa. Von Livonius was invested into the *Johanniter-Orden* as an *Ehrenritter* on 29 July 1916.

⁴¹ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Qualifikations-Bericht 22 January 1917; (Document 18). *Oberst* Kabisch, rather than drafting a new officer evaluation report, merely annotated on von Kleist's Januar 1917 report, "Has continued to perform well." The statement was dated 8 August 1917.

⁴² Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3).

⁴³ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 56.

⁴⁴ Adolf Georg Ernst Louis von Storch (* 1856; † 1930), commanded the *Garde Kavallerie Division* from 19 June until 23 September 1914 and again from 1 December 1914 until 21 February 1918. He rose to the rank of General der Kavallerie.

⁴⁵ *Rangliste 1913* and *1914 (1926)*, 84. *Hauptmann* von Bülow (possibly Georg) (DoR: 22 March 1913 S4s), a *Generalstabsoffizier* who started the war on the *Generalstab* of the *General-Inspektion der Kavallerie* (the general

Both in peacetime and wartime the *Garde-Kavallerie-Division* was an elite formation. In peacetime, the division comprised the eight guard cavalry regiments and was the only standing cavalry division in the army.⁴⁶ Ewald's distant "cousin", Leopold, had served in the division prior to the war as a *Generalstabsoffizier*. The *GKD* had begun the war on the Western Front where it remained until being transported east in July 1915.⁴⁷ During the war, the division had largely retained its top-tier ranking but by the summer of 1917, "had long since relinquished the horses" and one of its four brigades had been detached.⁴⁸

The Garde Kavallerie Division was at that time and had been since the autumn of 1915, located in the Rokitno Marshes, next to the 5. and 9. Kavallerie Divisionen. The division, which again played an important role in this war with Russia, had led the way south to this location under Mackensen during the campaign in Poland.

The Guards Cavalry Division had as its section the nose of solid ground protruding from Pinsk to the east into the swampy area [Rokitno Marshes]. Pinsk itself was a respectable city surmounted by domes, one also with a large number of quite respectable wooden houses, the dachas, small summer cottages with gardens on the outskirts of the city, already quite Russian. A large part of the population was Jewish. Pinsk itself seemed to me to be an important timber transshipment center, which arrived here as rafts.

staff of the Inspector General of Cavalry) and ended the war assigned to the staff of the *Chef des Generalstabes des Feldheeres* (Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army). He retired at wars end as a *Major*.

⁴⁶ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 56-57. Von Kleist noted, "Before the World War, [with the exception of the *Garde-Kavallerie-Division*] we had only cavalry brigades as the largest permanently established unit under the Generalkommando. The brigades were then alternately pulled together to participate in large-scale cavalry exercises under the command of their presumptive mobilization division commander from the Kavallerie Inspektionen. But otherwise, as I said, these wartime division commanders only had influence as inspectors, the Kommandierenden Generale were responsible."

⁴⁷ J. Vogel, *Bis Pinsk mit der Garde-Kavallerie* (Potsdam: Stiftungsverlag, 1918). For an account of the *Garde-Kavallerie-Division* day-to-day combat action from the division's transfer to the Eastern Front in July 1917 until the end of its advance near Pinsk in mid-October 1915, see this work written by the Court Chaplain Dr. Vogel, the division's chaplain. Available digitally from Openlibrary.org.

⁴⁸ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 58-59. Von Kleist listed the officers who were in the division when he arrived. "The division commander was General von Storch, adjutant Rittmeister von Knyphausen, neighbor of Oskar Hindenburg in East Prussia. Prince Stolberg-Stolberg, Prince zu Wied, ruler of Albania, which he had only been for a short time, a Rittmeister von Parport from the Warthegau, Alfred von Wietersheim, Neuhooff as orderly officer, also a Freiherr von Schönaich, son-in-law of Herr von Oheimb of Dreireben, Oberschlesien, a brother-in-law of the two Grafen Pfeil from Kreisewitz, furthermore a Hauptmann der Reserve von Behr from Mecklenburg and Graf Brühl, [the demesne of] Pforten in der Lausitz."

The Pina River with its tributaries often formed large swamps and reed beds and can only be crossed on a few paths, dams or by boat. For those who know the area, however, there are more paths than one might think. Anyway, this was an extremely quiet section of front here. Since 1915, there had only been reconnaissance patrols and hunting parties active from both sides. The positions were in place, but not safe from heavy fire. Now suddenly in late summer 1917, they were to be strengthened. Since the only railroad line via Pinsk led to the front, we actually got cement, which was really needed in the final emplacements here. In any case, when I joined the division there was a certain tense atmosphere, but it soon subsided.⁴⁹

On a relaxing Sunday afternoon in September or October 1917, von Kleist experienced another close call with death or serious injury. The event was noteworthy enough to be recalled thirty years later.

We were [headquartered] in Albrechtovo near Pinsk, right in the frontline on the Pina. From the autumn 1915, the divisional staff had been separated from the enemy by only 10 kilometers of swampy territory. One Sunday afternoon in the autumn of 1917, when we were drinking our after-lunch-coffee in the communal living room, we were jolted out of our quietude by artillery fire. The house was damaged, all the communications lines were cut, so that we could not even call for retaliatory fire. Heeresgruppe Gronau, to which we were subordinated, afterward desired for us to disappear from the front line. We looked for new quarters in a forest about 15 kilometers west of Pinsk, but the manor house there did not quite suffice. We had to requisition one of the wooden houses from Pinsk and rebuild it there.⁵⁰

The Russian artillery attack was a stark reminder that despite the front being “quiet,” there was still a war on and an ever-present lethality was still its inseparable companion.

⁴⁹ Ibid., Heft III, 57-59. Likely the tense atmosphere at least in part created by political events in Russia. The political turmoil might possibly lead to a German offensive and hard combat deeper in Russia. That the division was being reinforced made the likelihood of active combat more likely. Once more definitive plans had been made, the tense atmosphere subsided. The Rokitno Marshes, also known as the Pinsk or Polesie Marshes, are located in the current southern part of Belarus and the north-west of Ukraine. The cover approximately 100,000 square miles (260,000 square kilometers) and are formed by the network of rivers and rivulets off of the Pripyat River. The town of Pinsk lays on the north side of the Pripyat River. The Pina River flows in to the city of Pinsk and is the left tributary of the Pripyat River.

⁵⁰ Ibid., Heft II, 9-10. Albrechtovo (present-day Al’Brehtovo, Belarus) was a village just to the east of Pinsk; today it is a suburb of Pinsk. Pinsk lays 100 miles east of Brest-Litovsk and is on the northern bank of the Pina River. Von Kleist questioned the situation: “I wonder if the owner of that house ever found it again? What was the legal status of this property?”

If the autumn contained dangers and hardship; it also contained a few days of happiness for Ewald.

It was not until the fall that I was able to come home briefly for the first time to see our child. The one for whom we had waited so long and which Gisela had endured so many worries and fears and had so anxiously protected herself for months, something completely against her temperament. We were very happy and grateful.⁵¹

During his leave, Ewald and Gisela showed the importance of their religious faith and practice when they attended to a significant religious matter, the baptism of their son. “After much deliberation, at the request of my dear wife, he was given my name ‘Ewald’, but he was always called Peter.”⁵² The baptism took place in Gisela's parents' house in Hannover, now the house which Ewald and Gisela called home. The baptism was performed by Pastor Mestwirth from the Gartenkirche, who came out of retirement to perform the sacrament. Pastor Mestwirth was well-known to the family as he had confirmed, if not baptized, Gisela. Additionally, he baptized Ewald in 1881. The occasion was witnessed and celebrated by Ewald's parents, Gisela's maternal grandmother, *Frau* Amalie Röber, her guardian Minna Schierdig, two of Ewald's aunts from his mother's side, and Dora Bertram.⁵³ Given the level of preparation, the involvement of Pastor Mestwirth, and the presence of a number of family members, the baptisms can be seen as a religiously significant event for Ewald and Gisela.

⁵¹ Ibid., Heft III, 80-81.

⁵² Ibid. The son's name was Johannes Jürgen Christoph Ewald von Kleist. He was called “Johannes after her cousin Hans Vogler-Schönwaldau [Mecklenburg-Schwerin or in Kries Goldberg Silesia]. This was probably because we saw in him as an energetic man who could be a support to him in the case that both parents would leave him early. In addition, he received the name Christoph before his primary name. A long line of my direct ancestors carried this name before the primary name. One can recognize from this, as it were, the affiliation to the “Georgs line” of the Damen-Muttrin branch of the von Kleist family. My father is also called Christoph Hugo.”

⁵³ Ibid. Dora Bertram appeared to be a combination of abigail, nursemaid, and governess in the von Kleist household. She was described by Ewald in 1945 thusly, “Our old Oa -Dora Bertram, who came to us in the first years of our marriage and faithfully experienced joy and sorrow, rise and now our fall, and is now almost 70 years old [and still] with my wife.” Concerning the family that had gathered to live in Hannover, Ewald noted, “This circle of old relatives then continued to come to our table almost every Sunday and thus saw our children Peter and Heinrich grow up and rejoiced in our happiness.”



Figure 13 Three Generation of von Kleists

Ewald von Kleist holding son, Ewald (Peter), while Ewald's father, Hugo von Kleist looks on. While undated, the photo is undoubtedly on the occasion of Ewald's leave from the Eastern Front in the autumn of 1917, and the occasion of his son's baptism in Hannover. Note that Ewald wears the uniform of a Hauptmann and Generalstabsoffizier, with its broad carmine leg stripes and collar tabs. The photo was taken in the Wachtel, now von Kleist family home in Hannover. (Author's collection)

After a meaningful, but short leave, Ewald returned to the *Garde-Kavallerie-Division* still occupying its fixed positions east of Pinsk. The front remained quiet as the Germans looked eastward trying to divine what was happening with the political situation in Russia. By the end of the first week in November 1917, the Bolsheviki had seized power in the capital and the communist revolution was spreading. Lenin's government acted quickly to begin peace negotiations with Germany. Ewald recalled,

In the Pinsk sector we experienced the first peace efforts of Soviet Russia in the autumn of 1917. Here the first Russians came over to initiate meetings with us. They were received in the quarters of a Bavarian Colonel Dengler. They were

served tea and they were waited on by German orderlies!!! Then they were further escorted to Heeresgruppe Gronau, and then came the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, which were later broken off once again. There followed another [German offensive] occupation of Russian territories, Minsk - as far as Lake Peipsi in the north.⁵⁴

Negotiations began in earnest. Between 2-17 December 1917, a ceasefire was agreed. On the 17th, an armistice went into effect between Soviet Russian and the Central Powers. Five days later, the peace talks commenced at Brest-Litovsk. The guns remained silent through Christmas and into January 1918, as the negotiations continued. During this time and in anticipation of concluding the negotiated peace, Germany began moving some of its forces that faced the Russians westward to France. The transfer of troops and weapons were planned to bolster the German forces facing the British and the French in preparation for offensive operations in the coming spring.

For the *GKD*, the period between early December 1917 and early February 1918, was quiet as the division maintained its positions. During this time, planning for the division's future use on the Western Front commenced. But by early February, the negotiations had stalled with the Russians wanting to leave the situation in a "neither war nor peace" status; a position that was unacceptable to the Germans. Knowing the inability of the Russian Army to seriously resist an offensive, the Central Powers launched a three-prong offensive, *Operation Faustschlag*, on 18 February 1918. The Central Power forces took large swaths of territory as the Russians were unable to make any serious resistance. By 25 February, the Germans were a mere 100 miles from Petrograd, the capital, and threatening to continue their march on the city. On 3 March, the Bolsheviks agreed to comply with German demands and signed the peace treaty.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Heft II, 10.

Von Kleist and the *GKD* did not participate in the *Operation Faustschlag*, rather the division was placed in reserve of *Heeresgruppe Linsingen*. Ostensibly, this was due to the fact that the division was slated for reorganization and retraining prior to its transfer to the Western Front. Ewald had a key role in this transformation

During his time in command and on several staffs in the East, Ewald had witnessed what he considered to be an ineffective and inefficient unit and personnel replacement policy. In Ewald's eyes, the policy failed to understand, preserve, or capitalize on unit cohesion, morale, and esprit de corps.

This understanding had been completely lacking until then, as long as we had been in the East. For a long time, young officers and NCOs had been pulled out of the old cavalry divisions and transferred to the infantry, which had bled more. This threatened to undermine the quality of our own units, and we even began to pull out closely associated units, disband them, and distribute them to units of foreign countries. Thus, I remember that a machine gun squadron of 12th Reserve Dragoon Regiment was formed from 2nd Dragoon Regiment and shipped from Pinsk to Beverlo in Belgium. Officers, NCOs, enlisted men, horses, vehicles, weapons, everything was separated to be used in [a number of different] new formations. To form them was urgent, but not so [urgent as to require these actions]. The best, the spirit of tradition, the sense of camaraderie, hardened in the common experience of war, the pride of the personnel in its squadron, all the best elements that makes a unit [effective], were scorned and only [individual] men, horses, vehicles, personnel and material were obtained from it.⁵⁵

To avoid this kind of degradation to combat capability for the *Garde-Kavallerie-Division* and other sister cavalry divisions in the vicinity of Pinsk, von Kleist proposed a different plan. “At my instigation and my insistence, the 3 cavalry divisions positioned near Pinsk—as far as you can still call them that, because it didn't have any horses, only its old cavalry spirit—were liberated and from them the Guards Cavalry Rifle Division was formed.”⁵⁶ The aforementioned

⁵⁵ Ibid., Heft III, 63.

⁵⁶ Ibid., Heft II, 11 and Heft III, 63. The quote is from the first reference, however, von Kleist repeated himself in the second reference, reiterated that the plan to retain the cohesion of the *Garde-Kavallerie-Division* and two other

incident with the dragoons strengthened von Kleist's conviction that more combat capability would be retained by combining likeminded cavalymen who had shared East Front experiences, and still possessed the cavalry spirit, into a transformed cavalry rifle division rather than to disband these units and send the personnel and equipment piecemeal into the fight on the Western Front as universally assignable replacements. Certainly, von Kleist did not champion this new style of reorganization alone but had the support of *Generalleutnant* von Storch, the division commander, and a number of other higher-level commanders and staff officers. Nevertheless, there was skepticism and Ewald had to defend his plan to OHL and OB Ost.⁵⁷ Despite the odds, the plan was approved.

While units were being ready for movement to the west, so too were *Generalstabsoffiziere* with familiarization courses and temporary assignments to the Western Front. Between 4-11 January 1918, von Kleist attended a *Generalstabsoffizier* course at Wahn, near Köln. From there, he proceeded on or about 12 January to France and the sector of the front under the control of *Heeresgruppe Deutscher Kronprinz* (Army Group German Crown Prince) for the "purpose of training in Western Front fighting."⁵⁸ Ewald was forwarded to a Bavarian *Generalkommando* on the Verdun Front and then on to a frontline division for a closer and more detailed view of the war.⁵⁹ Ewald found himself with the 22. *Division* on the Verdun Front. For

cavalry divisions and reorganize them into the *Garde-Kavallerie-Schützen-Division* was his and that he pressed for the approval of this plan. No other reference has been found to either support or contradict von Kleist's claim. The *Garde Kavallerie Schützen Division* (GKSD) was formed from the Garde Kavallerie Division on/about March 15, 1918 at Zossen. The GKSD played a significant role in the suppression of the Spartacus Uprising and support of the Kapp Putsch.

⁵⁷ Ibid., Heft III, 61-62.

⁵⁸ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). The period the the West Front indoctrination was recorded as 12 January-14 February 1918. The entry recorded that von Kleist was temporarily assigned to *Heeresgruppe Deutscher Kronprinz*.

⁵⁹ Ibid., Heft II, 11. Von Kleist wrote, "I had been sent for several weeks to a Bavarian Generalkommando on the Verdun Front. I went to the 22. Division (Kassel) to gain experience in the West as I had never been at the Western

several weeks, until 14 February, von Kleist was integrated into and worked on the division staff in order to gain experience and learn how operations were conducted on the Western Front. While not recorded, Ewald may have had the opportunity to stop through Hannover for a day or two of leave during this temporary duty away from the Eastern Front.

Shortly after mid-February 1918, Ewald was back with the *Garde-Kavallerie-Division*. Here he learned that his plan for the division's reorganization was coming to fruition as the division had received orders to prepare for movement to a training area back in Germany. On 22 February 1918, *Generalmajor* Heinrich von Hofmann replaced the sixty-one-year-old *Generalleutnant* von Storch as the *GKD* commander.⁶⁰ The fifty-four-year-old von Hofmann's solid reputation as a cavalryman, general staff officer, and proven combat leader who had earned the *Pour le Mérite* at the head of his division in the fall of 1917, made him the senior leaders' choice to actively and aggressively lead the *GKD* through its reorganization and training and into combat on the Western Front. Von Kleist likely quietly approved of this change in leadership given von Hofmann's reputation as "a wise, distinguished, and highly regarded commander."⁶¹ But Ewald also pointedly observed that the General was not in the best physical condition due to heart trouble.

Front." The 22. *Division* was the division to which Ewald's first hussar regiment, *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 14*, was aligned during the pre-war timeframe.

⁶⁰ "von Hofmann, Heinrich" The Prussian Machine, no date. http://prussianmachine.com/diva/hofmann_h.htm (February 5, 2022). Heinrich Karl Reinhard von Hofmann (* 6 April 1863 in Darmstadt; † 17 July 1921 at Bad Nauheim) began his career as a cavalry officer having been commissioned a *Sekonde-Lieutenant* in the 3. *Schlesisches Dragoner-Regiment Nr. 15* (Hagenau) in 1881. A graduate of the *Kriegsakademie*, he was appointed to the *Großer Generalstab*. He entered the war as the commander of 41. *Kavallerie-Brigade* which fought at Stallupönen, Gumbinnen, Tannenberg, and Masurian Lakes. By November 1914, he was elevated to command the 4. *Kavallerie-Division*. In 1916, he took command of the 195. *Infanterie-Division* on the Eastern Front from 31 August-21 April 1917. The division was transferred to the Western Front and von Hofmann continued in command until February 1918. On 12 November 1917, von Hofmann was awarded the *Pour le Mérite* for his leadership of the division.

⁶¹ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 61. Despite his heart condition, von Hofmann remained at the head of the division throughout the war, handing the command to his successor only in February 1919. By July 1920, his worsening heart condition forced his retirement from active duty. He died a year later.

By 16 March, the *GKD* had completed its transfer off the Eastern Front and found itself at *Truppenübungsplatz Zossen* twenty-five miles (forty kilometers) south of center of Berlin. *Generalmajor* von Hofmann, Ewald, and the rest of the staff were located in the small town of Zossen.⁶² At Zossen, the division received the needed personnel replacements as well as the latest weapons and equipment. For a little more than three weeks the division underwent training in West Front tactics, techniques, and procedures. By the end of the first week of April 1918, the division was deemed combat ready and prepared for movement to the Western Front. The reorganization included a name change to *Garde-Kavallerie-Schützen-Division (GKSD)*, thus distinguishing it as a new type of formation.

The awaited German spring offensive, codenamed *Operation Michael* (also referred to as *Kaiserschlacht*), commenced on 21 March 1918. The Germans, reinforced by the divisions freed from the Eastern Front, sought to break through in the Cambrai-St. Quentin area, splitting the French and British armies, and driving to the coast. While the German offensive ruptured the British lines and achieved advances of as much as forty miles (sixty-five kilometers), the ability to sustain the offensive was beyond the reach of the German Army's capabilities and by 5 April, the offensive had stalled short of Amiens.

The freshly reorganized, reinforced, equipped, and trained *GKSD* left Zossen on 10 April arriving in the *18. Armee* area of operations by 12 April 1918.⁶³ The division moved forward via St. Quentin to Ham on the Somme River. But the *GKSD* had arrived too late to be fed into this

⁶² Ibid., Heft III, 60-61.

⁶³ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3). The *18. Armee* was commanded by *General der Infanterie* Oskar von Hutier.

first of the German spring offensives. Rather, as von Kleist noted, the division was withdrawn before entering combat and was sent to Maubeuge for further training.⁶⁴

Maubeuge was where von Kleist and the *GKSD* parted company. The reprieve from the rush to put the division into combat allowed for more enhancements to be made with the division. Upon reaching Maubeuge, von Kleist was replaced by *Hauptmann* Waldemar Pabst as the *I. Generalstabsoffizier (Ia)*. Ewald recalled,

Major [*sic*] Pabst, who later became well known, took my place. Until then the whole division staff consisted only of cavalymen. The parting from my division, which I had fought for against all odds, even at the OHL and OB Ost, was very painful for me, even though I understood that a General Staff officer with West [Front] experience had to be transferred into this division. The division's good composition and spirit already created high expectations of success.⁶⁵

For von Kleist, this was the second time during the war when his leadership aspirations went unmet. His earlier non-selection for cavalry regimental command and this non-selection as a 1st General Staff Officer of a top-tier division shared the same key component; senior

⁶⁴ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 61. "Garde-Kavallerie-Schützen-Division" (Wikipedia, January 29, 2022) <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garde-Kavallerie-Sch%C3%BCtzen-Division> (February 6, 2022). The training at Maubeuge focused on *Stoßtruppen* (stormtrooper) tactics and was conducted under the supervision of *Major* Willy Rohr and his *Sturm-Bataillon*. At the conclusion of the training, the division executed a "Große Übung" (big exercise). The spectators attending included: Austrian Emperor Charles I, Crown Prince Wilhelm of Prussia, Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff of the Supreme Army Command, Generals Friedrich Sixt von Armin, Fritz von Lossberg, and Oskar von Hutier. Von Kleist's concept for reorganizing the *Garde-Kavallerie-Division* and retaining its cohesion and spirit in the end was prove valid as the division acquitted itself well during the remainder of the war.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Heft III, 61-62. *Rangliste 1907-1914 (1926)*. Ernst Julius Waldemar Pabst (* 24 December 1880 in Berlin; † 29 May 1970 in Düsseldorf). Joined the army as a *Fahnenjunker* in 1899 and was commissioned as *Leutnant* in 1900 (DoR: 18 August 1900 X9x). Pabst attended the *Kriegsakademie* from 1907-1910 (Class of 1910). Likely categorized as qualified for the *Großen Generalstab*, he was assigned to the *Landesaufnahme* (land reconnaissance office), a section under the Chief of the General Staff of the Army, for what was probably his *GGs* probationary period beginning in April 1911. Pabst was not appointed to the *GGs* and by May 1912, was back with his infantry regiment, *Infanterie-Regiment von Winterfeldt (2. Oberschles) Nr. 23*. (Neiße) where he became the regimental adjutant. At the beginning of the war was pulled up to serve as *Ordonnanzoffizier* at the *12. Infanterie Division*. He began World War I as a *Hauptmann*. Michael Wettengel, "Pabst, Ernst Julius Waldemar," in *Neue Deutsche Biographie (NDB). Band 19* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1999), 740. Pabst would become infamous for ordering the 15 January 1919, extrajudicial executions of Rosa Luxemburg und Karl Liebknecht while still the *I. Generalstabsoffizier* of the *Garde-Kavallerie-Schützen-Division* during the Spartacist Uprising. He would also be a key leader in the March 1920 Kapp Putsch.

leadership not willing to take a risk with such a young and inexperienced officer. While a significant disappointment, Ewald, in both cases, exhibited a calm, level-headed, and mature acceptance of the decisions by his seniors. Von Kleist's acceptance also points to his sagacity of knowing when to rebut and pushback and when to salute smartly and march on. On this occasion, he simply pulled up his bootstraps and pressed on with the position to which he was assigned.

In the process of the *Garde-Kavallerie-Division's* change of leadership one of the last tasks of the outgoing commander, *Generalleutnant* von Storch, was to write performance reports on his immediate subordinates. On 22 February 1918, the general composed what would be Ewald's last wartime officer performance report. The press of the war showed in the document which was completely handwritten and devoid of the normal supplemental information such as time in position, date of rank, etc. Even the title "*Urteil*" (assessment) was written by the general. *Generalleutnant* von Storch penned in a clear hand,

Hauptmann von Kleist - since August 1917 as 1st General Staff Officer with the Guards Cavalry Division - is a very adroit, congenial personality; he has admirably proven himself in every respect. He is intellectually very well disposed and militarily, equally well educated, has fast perception and quick decision-making power, energetic and skillful in the formulation of his proposals and orders. Hauptmann von Kleist quickly orients himself in any situation and has a good judgment for tactical conditions.

Off-duty, he is an amiable comrade, a vivacious and open-minded person who enjoys great esteem and popularity everywhere.

In the field, 22. February 1918

*von Storch
Generalleutnant⁶⁶*

⁶⁶ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Urteil, 22 February 1918; (Document 26).

Three months after von Storch's assessment and three weeks after von Kleist was transferred out of the *GKSD*, *Generalleutnant* von Hofmann, *GKSD*'s new commander, found time to append Ewald evaluation. Von Hofmann inked,

I concur with the above assessment. I got to know Captain von Kleist, albeit only for a short time and mainly on the training area, as a very likeable, tactful, hard-working general staff officer endowed with a talent for organization and articulate speech.

3 May 1918

von Hofmann
*Generalleutnant und Divisions-
Kommandeur.*

In reviewing von Storch's assessment, three elements stand out. First, the area with the most information covered, what could be called, Ewald's intellectual and military skill set. As with previous reports, von Kleist's high intelligence and his robust military education were highlighted. These attributes in turn supported von Kleist's decisiveness across the breadth and depth of his staff officer duties. Von Storch confirmed Ewald's "good" but not "excellent" tactical acumen but praised the *Hauptmann*'s ability to quickly and correctly orient himself in even the most difficult of situations. Indeed, Ewald was a very capable General Staff Officer.

The second element of note was the judgement of von Kleist's peers and subordinates. Von Storch interestingly commented on the high regard in which Ewald was held in off-duty and casual situations. His personality made him a pleasant, companionable, and popular officer. This indicated that von Kleist was able to appropriately compartmentalize duty and off-duty situations and skillful balance his authority as *Ia* and being a comrade. It also points to confirming that Ewald was not the type of officer who presented a deferential smile to his commander while whip-cracking his subordinates.

The final element, the one with which von Storch lead off, was Ewald's personal character. The commander's laudatory description of and high praise for Ewald's "adroit and congenial personality" reinforces pervious assessments of von Kleist. The general confirmed that Ewald had maintained this high level of character in all circumstances and under all conditions. Arguably, it was this strong but congenial character that enabled von Kleist to possess and use his strong intellectual and military acumen to great effect. He was able to wield these hard-earned capabilities but notably, without the acerbic arrogance exhibited by many other highly talented officers. Certainly, *Generalleutnant* von Storch, with his long experience, confirmed von Kleist's superior character and performance as a general staff officer as well as perceiving the *Hauptmann's* future high potential.

Generalleutnant von Hofmann's confirmed his agreement with von Storch's assessment and added his own, somewhat qualified observations. Owing to his brief and thus somewhat shallow knowledge of von Kleist, the incoming commander did laud Ewald's likeable nature and tactful demeanor, another of von Kleist's of noted traits. He specifically praised the general staff officer for his strong work ethic and his organizational skills. Von Hofmann, for the first time in an evaluation report, directly addressed Ewald's communications skills. He wrote that Ewald manner of speech was clear and precise. Communication skills are an attribute that is often overlooked. The ability of commanders and key staff officers to communicate articulately is, however, of great importance. Thus, in this final wartime officer evaluation, von Kleist was reported as still a top-tier officer and general staff officer whose high abilities were firmly supported by his magnanimous and principled character and his excellent intellectual and military competencies.

VI. Into the Trenches - *Ia* of an Infantry Division on the Western Front

For Ewald, that next assignment was with the 225. *Infanterie Division* as its 1st General Staff Officer. He reported to the division on 15 April 1918.⁶⁷ The division commander was *Generalleutnant* Wilhelm von Woyna, a career artillery and General Staff Officer.⁶⁸ Von Woyna and von Kleist shared the artillery, the *Kriegsakademie*, and the *Johanniterorden*. The division was formed in July 1916, on the East Front as *Division Melior*, named after its first commander.⁶⁹ In November 1916, the division was redesignated the 225. *Infanterie-Division* (225. *ID*) and was transferred to the Rumanian Carpathians where it entered positional warfare. In July 1917, the division was moved to participate in the defense against the Russo-Romanian offensive. In October and early November, it took part in the Austro-German counteroffensives

⁶⁷ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3).

⁶⁸ *Rangliste 1882-1914* (1926). Wilhelm Friedrich Ludwig von Woyna (* 3 June 1863; † May 1950) joined *I. Ostpreußisches Feldartillerie-Regiment Nr. 16* (Königsberg, Preußen) and was commissioned on 15 April 1882. He served in the regiment until selected for attendance at the *Kriegsakademie* in 1890. While at the *Kriegsakademie*, Woyna transferred to *I. Garde-Feldartillerie-Regiment* (Potsdam) in 1892. He graduated from the *Kriegsakademie* in 1893 (Class of 1893). After serving his probationary period on the *Großen Generalstab*, he was appointed as a *Generalstabsoffizier* (GSO). He was promoted to *Hauptmann* in 1895 (DoR: 22 March 1895 T4t) and by 1896 was serving as a GSO on the staff of the *Gardekörps*. Von Wonya alternated between staff and command positions rising to *Oberst* in 1911. During the period 1910-1912 he served as an instructor at the *Kriegsakademie* and thus, overlapped with von Kleist for nearly two years, although von Woyna does not appear to have been one of von Kleist's *Hörsaal* instructors. He was appointed as commander of *Großherzoglich-Mecklenburgisches Feld-Artillerie-Regiment Nr. 60* (Schwerin) in 1912. In early 1914, he took command of *15. Feldartillerie-Brigade* (Köln) and was promoted to *Generalmajor* on 22 April 1914. He entered the war in this post but by the end of August 1914, had been pulled up to serve as Chief of Staff to *General der Infanterie* Hermann von François in *I. Armeekorps* on 28 August 1914, in the midst of the Battle of Tannenberg. In August 1915, Wonya was made commander of 3. Landwehr-Division and in June 1916, commander of 5. Reserve-Division. On 28 December 1916, he took command of 225. *Infanterie-Division*. He was promoted to *Generalleutnant* on 27 January 1918. Upon the 225. *Infanterie-Division*'s dissolution in July 1918, he became commanding general of *VII. Armeekorps*, replacing his former commander General Hermann von Francois. After the war, he was placed in command of 20. *Infanterie-Division* (Hannover) beginning on 9 February 1919. He retired as a *Generalleutnant*. Von Woyna was made an *Ehrenritter des Johanniterordens* on 28 July 1903. In 1911-1912, he was raised to *Rechtsritter* in the Order. Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 63. Von Kleist noted that von Woyna "lived to the last deeply embittered and lonely in Schwerin."

⁶⁹ War Department (US), *Two Hundred and Fifty-One Divisions*, 707-709. Also, "225. Infanterie-Division" (GenWiki, March 8, 2015). [http://genwiki.genealogy.net/225._Infanterie-Division_\(WK1\)](http://genwiki.genealogy.net/225._Infanterie-Division_(WK1)) (February 7, 2022).

in the vicinity of Ocna, Romania. In late November 1917, the division entrained and moved to the Western Front.

During the first week of December, the 225. *ID* joined *Armee-Abteilung C* commanded by *Generalleutnant* Georg Fuchs.⁷⁰ The division occupied a sector of the front south of Vaux-lès-Palameix-Suezey, a position that overlooked the low ground of the Meuse River less than a mile to the west. The position was on the south-eastern portion of the “Verdun Arc.” It was in this position that von Kleist joined the division on 15 April.

The division, at this time comprised a single infantry brigade, an artillery regiment, an engineer battalion, one cavalry squadron, a mine thrower company, and a communications detachment.⁷¹ The men came from Alsace, Baden, Westphalia, East Prussia, and the Rhineland.⁷² A large number were Poles. The 18. *Reserve-Regiment* had refused to make an attack in January 1917 while in Hungary, and its bad reputation followed it to the Western Front. American intelligence rated the 225. *ID* as a third-class combat division by the spring of 1918.⁷³ Thus, it was a far different formation than the division von Kleist had just left.

The Verdun Arc remained quiet for the remainder of April and into early May 1918. On 13 May, the division was withdrawn from its sector and moved to *General der Kavallerie* Georg von Marwitz’ 2. *Armee* near Amiens, opposite the British and Canadians. There the 225. *ID*

⁷⁰ On 1 January 1918, in preparation for the coming spring offensive, *OHL* formed *Heeresgruppe* Gallwitz with the subordinate *Armee-Abteilung C* pulled from *Heeresgruppe* Herzog Albrecht and 5. *Armee* pulled from *Heeresgruppe* Deutscher Kronprinz. *General der Artillerie* Max von Gallwitz commanded his namesake *Heeresgruppe*.

⁷¹ War Department (US), *Two Hundred and Fifty-One Divisions*, 707-709. The division’s subordinate units were: 173. *Infanterie-Brigade* with *Reserve-Infanterie-Regiment* Nr. 18, *Reserve-Infanterie-Regiment* Nr. 217, and *Infanterie-Regiment* Nr. 373; 3. *Eskadron/1. Hannoversches Uhlán Regiment* Nr. 13; *Arko* Nr. 225 (*Artillerie Kommando*) with 2. *Kurhessisches Feldartillerie-Regiment* Nr. 47; *Pionier-Bataillon* Nr. 225 *Divisions-Nachrichten-Kommandeur* Nr. 225; and *Minenwerfer-Kompanie* Nr. 41.

⁷² *Ibid.* This document’s information was based on intelligence reports gathered by the U.S. Army during and after the war.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 709.

went into the line near Moreuil on the 15th, “in the most forward salient of the bogged-down offensive in front of Amiens.”⁷⁴ Von Kleist further recalled, “This was a breezy spot. The enemy had massed a lot of artillery in this dangerous spot and was also firing on our positions from the flanks. When in the evening we stood in front of our command post, an old English post, we saw in the wide semicircle the flashing of the artillery and the rising of the signal flares of all colors, an eerie fireworks show.”⁷⁵

On 22 May, the British attacked and threw the 225. *ID* back nearly nine miles (fifteen kilometers) to old trench lines near Beaufort-en-Santerre. The division lost 2,358 prisoners and an untold number of dead and wounded.⁷⁶ Between late May and 7 August, the 225. *ID* was in the trenches, fighting in the territory bounded by the Ancre River in the north and the Avre River in the south; a v-shaped territory with the apex facing west towards Amiens. The east-west running Somme River bisected this territory. On 6 July 1918, *Generalmajor* Georg von Wodtke took command of the 225. *Infanterie-Division*.⁷⁷ *Generalleutnant* von Woyna moved up to command *VII. Armeekorps*, replacing his old Battle of Tannenberg commander, the retiring *General der Infanterie* Hermann von François. A quiet July led the Germans to believe that the

⁷⁴ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft III, 63. 2. *Armee* was one of the four armies under *Heeresgruppe Kronprinz Rupprecht*. In the summer and autumn of 1918, the other three armies were: 4, 6, and 17 *Armeen*.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ War Department (US), *Two Hundred and Fifty-One Divisions*, 707-709.

⁷⁷ “Wodtke, Georg von” (Metapedia, April 3, 2021) https://de.metapedia.org/wiki/Wodtke,_Georg_von (February 8, 2022). Georg Eduard Johann von Wodtke (* 2 February 1864 in Graudenz; † 1942 in Naumburg an der Saale), son of Prussian Army *Generalleutnant*, he joined *Leib-Grenadier-Regiment (I. Brandenburg) Nr. 8* as *Fähnrich* in 1883, and was commissioned a *Sekond Lieutenant* on 13 September 1884. By 1907, he had served as a battalion adjutant, graduated from the *Kriegsakademie*, was appointed as a *Generalstabsoffizier*, and was a Major serving as an Adjutant to the *General Inspekteur, General-Inspektion des Militär-Erziehungs- und Bildungswesens*. He began the war as an *Oberstleutnant* in the *Kriegsministerium* serving as *Chef 2. Infanterie-Abteilung*. He commanded the 29. *Infanterie Brigade* and then was promoted *Generalmajor* and became commander of the 225. *Infanterie Division* on 6 July 1918. He held that post until the division was disbanded on 1 September 1918. He retired as a *Generalmajor* in December 1919 after having commanded the 43. *Infanterie-Brigade* in Kassel for ten months. Two of his four brothers were killed in World War I.

front around Amiens would remain quiet for a while longer. Nearly thirty years later, Ewald recalled in significant detail the events that occurred in an all but quiet August 1918.

One of von Kleist's *Kriegsakademie* history instructors, *Generalleutnant* Dr. Hermann von Kuhl had been posted in August 1916, as Chief of Staff of *Heeresgruppe Kronprinz Rupprecht*.⁷⁸ When the 225. *ID* moved to the Amiens Front it fell under this *Heeresgruppe*. Ewald recalled that, "I saw General Kuhl during this summer only once, I think on the 5th or 6th of August 1918. He had a good reputation."⁷⁹ The meeting occurred at a briefing given by General von Kuhl near Péronne attended by the staff officers of the 2. *Armee* and its subordinate corps and divisions. It was here that Ewald first met and became acquainted with Walter von Reichenau, later *Generalfeldmarschall*, but at the time the *Ia* of the recently reorganized 7. *Kavallerie-Schützen-Division*. Von Kleist remembered,

Von Kuhl spoke to us about the planned course of events for the next few months. He explained, for example, that offensive operations of 1918 had come to a standstill. And that we would have to prepare for another winter, that we would have to extend the positions we had held and gained, that we would have to establish and supply them for the winter. Also, that some offensive actions would continue to be conducted in order to capture enemy personnel and reconnaissance.⁸⁰

After the end of the meeting, Ewald took the opportunity to report what he considered to be important intelligence information to General von Kuhl personally. Ewald's division had conducted a large raid the previous night after engine and chain noises had been repeatedly heard during the previous few days. The raiders had cleared out the village of Hangard and had captured a number of Canadians. From the prisoners' interrogations, the division learned that a

⁷⁸ Robert T Foley, "Hermann von Kuhl," in *Chief of Staff: The Principal Officers Behind History's Greatest Commanders, Volume 1*, ed. David T. Zabecki (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2008), 149-161. See this chapter for an excellent overview and assessment of von Kuhl's career and service as chief of staff to several commanders during World War I.

⁷⁹ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 22.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

major attack against the German's projecting salient east of Amiens was imminent. Von Kuhl listed to Ewald's report but rejected the information saying that the division in question's strength had been exhausted at Compiègne. Even at this late date, the German intelligence capability was still badly lacking and critical information was not flowing up channel in a timely manner. In this case, von Kleist's information was correct as the British launched a major offensive on 8 August 1918, the opening phase of the Allies "Hundred Days Offensive." Eight August would become known as the "Black Day of the German Army."

With von Kuhl dismissing any threat of imminent attack, von Kleist confirmed that he was still permitted to go on leave.

General Kuhl also had no objection to me taking my leave which had already been approved. Nevertheless, to this day, I still reproach myself for going. As I was leaving, I asked my faithful batman, Frank, 'What will you do if English tanks suddenly appear in front of our division headquarters, (an old English tunnel system on the way between Harbonnière-Rosière)? He answered, 'I will rescue the luggage of Herr Hauptmann.' And so, it unfortunately happened.⁸¹

Ewald proceeded with his leave training to Köln where he met Gisela who had come west from Hannover. He arrived either on the 6th or the 7th in time to celebrate his thirty-seventh birthday with Gisela on Thursday, the 8th. The leave was cut short by the news of the British attack in the sector of the front occupied by Ewald's division. On the evening of the 8th, the pair read the army report of the attack. It mentioned English cavalry at Harbonnière.⁸² While Ewald

⁸¹ Ibid., Heft III, 23.

⁸² For a very detailed account of the British Forces cavalry and tank attack in the Harbonnières-Rosière sector on 8 August 1918, from the British perspective, see the Marquess of Anglesey's, *A History of the British Cavalry: 1816-1919, Volume 8: The Western Front, 1915-1918 Epilogue, 1919-1939* (London: Leo Cooper, 1997), 239-246. Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 23. Von Kleist noted, "August 8, 1918 was the blackest day on the Western Front. Ludendorff wrote about it in his memoirs and my old Chief of the General Staff Kabisch wrote a book about the day. It was here that it became so clear to the top leadership for the first time that the Western Army's power to resist and will to resist was broken."

was in Köln, the division had been in the path of the British Force's combined tank and cavalry attack. He later recounted the attack and his actions upon returning to the division.

In dense fog, which was apparently artificially reinforced, the English attacked early on 8 August. In the sector of the neighboring division to my right, the enemy struck a detachment, I think it was the 13th Infantry Division which had just entered the trenches, broke through and rolled up the front of my division. Strong tank forces followed by large cavalry units pushed forward over our artillery emplacements and up to the house of the division staff. Also, some tanks appeared at our command post and cavalry even appeared behind them. They were repelled by the headquarters' guard. But the whole front was torn open. As for the divisions deployed at the front, only remnants remained.

I went back immediately and found my division staff behind the Somme [River] south of Péronne. Even though the officers told me that if I had been there, it would not have happened, I do not believe that. Our division was burned out. It had been deployed in the front position since May. In the protruding salient they had constantly received heavy fire from both flanks and suffered heavy losses. In addition, there had been a very unpleasant flu so the company strengths were very weak. In any case, a successful defense without sufficient manning of the front line, a really sufficient defense in depth, to which I had always attached great importance, was only fictitious.

The British drove the remnants of the 225. *ID* north across the Somme River. For several days, the 225. *ID* and the fragments of other divisions fought but then gave way. Ewald recalled; they continued their retreat "northwards towards Cambrai with the remnants of several divisions under our command. The front by then was only a veil."⁸³ By 20 August, the British had pushed the 225. *ID* north to the vicinity of Pozières, fifteen miles (twenty-five kilometers) from where the offensive had begun at Harbonnières less than two weeks earlier. The Germans still had some fight left as Ewald remembered.

At the point of the army was the village of Pozières which was occupied by the English. Our 83rd Infantry Division had just pulled back and so the right wing of our army was hanging in the air. Its Generalstabsoffizier, Hauptmann Nagel, was an artilleryman with whom I had attended the artillery shooting school.

I remember today how at that time the Ia, at the army level I think, a Major von Caracciola called me. He described the situation to me and said 'Kleist, I know

⁸³ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 25.

you'll sort things out'. I then drove up and reached one of our regiment commanders (Oberst Freiherr von Dücker). I persuaded him to counterattack Pozières. A battalion under Major Graf von Königsmarck, 13th Uhlán, and our old master at the Kavallerie Schule in Hannover, then took the village back.⁸⁴

Von Kleist was in elite company as both *Major* Caracciola-Delbrück and *Oberst* Wilhelm von Dücker earned the *Pour le Mérite* for their actions near Amiens and Pozières, respectively. But bravery was not enough to stop the Allied advance.

⁸⁴ Ibid., Heft III, 25-26. Kleist attended two courses at the *Schießschule* (Artillery Shooting School); 1) from 10 February to 29 May 1903 he attended the *Lehrkursus* (training course) at the *Feldartillerie Schießshule* and 2) from 5 February to 25 May 1907 he attended the *Lehrkursus* at the *Feldartillerie Schießshule*. It would have been the second of these courses that Kleist would have been a classmate of Nagel. "Nagel, Hans" (Lexikon der Wehrmacht, no date). <https://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de/Personenregister/N/NagelHans.htm> (May 4, 2020). Hans Nagel (*27 November 1882 in Stade; †20 May 1964 in Stade) on 1 October 1903 joined 2. *Hannoversche Feld-Artillerie-Regiment Nr. 26* as an *Einjährig-Freiwilliger*. He was commissioned as a *Leutnant* in 1905 and entered the war in *Feldartillerie-Regiment General-Feldmarschall Graf Waldersee (Schleswigsches) Nr. 9*. Promoted to *Hauptmann* on 24 December 1914, Nagel served in various staff positions to include 19. *Landwehr-Division*, the 83. *Infanterie-Division*, and the 4. *Kavallerie-Division*. After the war he served as *Stabschef des Freikorps Maercker*. He was discharged from the army on 20 May 1920 and promoted to *Major*. After serving in the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* in the 1920s and early 30s, Nagel reentered the *Reichswehr* on 1 May 1934 and was assigned to *Generalkommando I* as *Inspekteur der Wirtschaftsinspektion*. He served in various economic, armaments, and occupation positions during the war and rose to the rank of *Generalmajor*. At the end of the war, he was taken prisoner and held until 7 July 1947.

Rangliste 1895-1914 (1926), and "Verleihungen des "Pour le Mérite" an der Westfront: Alois Caracciola-Delbrück" (Forum für deutsche Militärgeschichte, December 30, 2012). <http://forum.balsi.de/index.php/topic,7574.0/nowap.html?PHPSESSID=6aa0aa8963becd4bbb171728f1f9d292> (February 8, 2022).

Alois Caracciola-Delbrück (* 29 July 1873 in Remagen; † 24 October 1948 in Starnberg); his parent regiment appeared to be 1 *Kurhessisches Infanterie Regiment Nr. 81*. The 1904 *Rangliste* showed him as assigned to the *Kriegsakademie*, so he attended sometime between 1901-1907. By August 1918, Caracciola was a *Major* and *Chef des Generalstabes Generalkommando z.b.V. Nr. 54*. Note: *Generalkommandos* were established beginning in 1916 to serve as corps level headquarters and were without organic subordinate units. *GenKdo 54* was positioned at Amiens when the British attacked on 8 August 1918. Per the second source, Caracciola was awarded the *Pour le Mérite* for personally conducting reconnaissance between the British and German front lines. His observations resulted in the Germans occupying high ground on 6 August 1918. Possession of this key terrain significantly strengthened the German resistance against the Allied attacks on 8 August 1918.

"Verleihungen des "Pour le Mérite" an der Westfront: Wilhelm von Dücker" (Forum für deutsche Militärgeschichte, December 30, 2012). <http://forum.balsi.de/index.php/topic,7574.0/nowap.html?PHPSESSID=6aa0aa8963becd4bbb171728f1f9d292> (February 8, 2022). Wilhelm von Dücker (* 13 April 1871 in Minden / Westfalen; † 29 April 1941 in Berlin-Charlottenburg). Dücker was awarded the *Pour le Mérite* for his leadership during the battle near Albert, France on 21 August 1918 while in command of *Infanterie Regiment 373/225. Infanterie Division*. Despite the regiment being fought out, *Oberst* von Dücker gather available troops, guns and combat engineers. Despite the threat of enemy tanks, he led the fortuitously timed and surprise attack resulting in the capture of the key terrain, namely the village of Pozières. The taking of Pozières allowed units of Marwitz's Army to withdraw later that night and avoid encirclement by British. Von Dücker retired as *Generalmajor* after the war. Records do not indicate that he was a *Freiherr* as recalled by Kleist. *Major*, then *Rittmeister Graf* von Königsmarck had joined the *Militär-Reit-Institut* faculty in August 1905, as a thirty-seven-year-old *Rittmeister* and had taken over leadership of the *Jagdstall* as *Stallmeister* in April 1907.

The 225. *ID* and the remnants of fifteen other divisions that had come under its command, struggled for another week. But by 28 August, the division had bled out in the continuous fighting against superior numbers. On that day it was withdrawn from combat and placed in *OHL* reserve. On 1 September 1918, the 225. *Infanterie-Division* was officially disbanded. Despite the bitterness of losing the division and the sting of defeat, von Kleist took some pride that the division was “once again praised in the Heeresbericht” (official army communiqué).⁸⁵

VII. Ending the War with the VII Army Corps

There was, however, still a war on and Ewald was still fit and capable. After what was likely a fortnight of light, temporary duty at one of the higher echelon headquarters, von Kleist was reassigned. On 14 September, he reported for duty as the *Ia* at *Generalkommando VII Armeekorps* (*VII. AK*), then headquartered Heilig Blasien in Elsaß.⁸⁶ Undoubtedly, von Kleist had been pulled into *VII. AK* by its commanding general, *Generalleutnant* von Woyna. The appointment confirmed that von Woyna had thought well of Ewald and his staff officer abilities. Von Kleist’s direct boss was *Oberstleutnant* Joachim von Amsberg, the corps chief of staff.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft III, 25.

⁸⁶ Von Kleist, PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist; Dienstlaufbahn; (Document 3) and von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft III, 72. Heilig Blasien in Elsaß is present-day Saint-Blaise-la-Roche, France. The town lay thirty-seven miles (sixty kilometers) southwest of Strasbourg in the northern Vosges Mountains.

⁸⁷ Dermot Bradley, *Die Generale des Heeres 1921–1945. Band 1* (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1993), 59–60. Joachim von Amsberg (* 26 August 1869 in Schwerin; † 5 September 1945 in Rostock) joined the *Großherzogliche Mecklenburgische Grenadier-Regiment Nr. 89* in 1890 as a *Fahnenjunker* and was commissioned as a *Sekonde Lieutenant* on 17 November 1891. His family was raised to the nobility that same year. By 1897, he was a battalion adjutant and from 1900-1903 attended the *Kriegsakademie*. After successfully serving his probationary period on the *Großen Generalstab*, von Amsberg was appointed as a *Generalstabsoffizier*. Between 1906 and 1912, he served

The VII. AK sector had been quiet for a considerable time, but with the Americans attacking further north, the corps prepared itself for a major attack. That attack never came. Of the summer and fall of 1918, von Kleist summarized the events.

In 1918, after the failure of our spring offensive, it was clear that we could not end the war by a victorious decision. It was then only by an exhaustion peace on both sides to end, after the peace offer of the emperor, I think Christmas 1917, was rejected with scorn.

After 8.8.18, however, it was to be feared that our front and above all our homeland would not be able to withstand a long further strain until the enemy also reached exhaustion. The enemy only now received a considerable increase in strength from the Americans, who gradually landed about 1 million soldiers in 1918, well fed and well clothed and equipped. We were starved, worn out and poorly equipped with weapons and ammunition from ersatz material. Although the Americans had little combat experience, they gave moral strength to our enemies and were able to take over broad sections of the front, for example at St. Michel, south of Metz.

If the will had been there, the front and the homeland could have resisted the enemy for a whole winter. ...Our leadership was so good that it would not have exposed us to annihilation in encirclement battles, our homeland was not reduced to rubble by terror-attacks, and we had our backs free in the east. Militarily, however, our front collapsed in the south, in Macedonia, because the Bulgarians stopped fighting. When Hindenburg and Ludendorff called on the government to conclude an armistice, there was still so many reserves that it would not have been necessary to surrender unconditionally and that the enemies could still see a profit in an inexpensive truce.⁸⁸

in various staff and command billets. In 1912, he was appointed as personal *Adjutant* to *Prinz Eitel Friedrich* von Preußen and was promoted to *Major*. He accompanied the prince to war as the *Eitel Friedrich* commanded the *1. Garde-Regiment zu Fuß* on the Western Front. In February 1916, von Amsberg was reassigned as 1st General Staff Officer on the *Generalstab des Garde-Reserve-Korps*. In June 1916, he was made *Chef des Generalstabs des XV. Armeekorps* and promoted to *Oberstleutnant* in January 1918. He was posted as *Chef des Generalstabs des VII. Armeekorps* on 23 August 1918. He remained in this position through the return to Germany and the demobilization. He was transferred to the *Reichswehr* where he commanded a regiment, was commander of the Infantry School and was dual hatted as commander of 2. *Division* (Stettin) and commanding general of *Wehrkreis II*. In 1927, he was promoted to *Generalleutnant*. He retired at the end of September 1929, and was promoted to brevet *General der Infanterie* upon his retirement.

⁸⁸ Von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen." Heft III, 70-73.

The end came suddenly and surprisingly. When the revolution broke out in early November, Ewald was sick in bed with a high fever.⁸⁹ He and his fellow officers were shocked by the news of the revolution. The news that the Kaiser had abdicated came as a hard blow. Only in time would its meaning and that it precipitated the end to monarchy and Imperial Germany sink in. But at the present, maintaining control of the troops and preparing for the withdrawal were the priorities.

On 9 November 1918, while fighting on the front lines in France was waning, the fighting on the home front was waxing. Unexpectedly, the first battle of the home front was not fought by Ewald but by Gisela. Ewald recounted the confrontation.

On the night of the revolution on 9 November 1918, Gisela had a rather unpleasant experience, the second of its kind in her life. During the night there was a violent knocking on the locked front door and the bell was rung. The disturbance caused Gisela and Dora to come down to the entrance. At the front door stood men with red armbands. They declared that they would have to arrest me because I had opened machine-gun fire on the railway station square earlier in the day. Gisela's objection that I was not in Hannover but at the front in Alsace was not accepted.

Instead, a thorough search of the house took place. ... All of the cupboards and drawers were searched and some things were taken. These revolutionary heroes also entered our bedroom, where Peter was sleeping in his crib. Gisela forced them out, but as it turned out later, they took some of her jewelry. They also took Gisela's pistol from her, but she [had the presence of mind] to take out the cartridges so that she would not be shot with her own gun.

Finally, these heroes ended up in the wine cellar where Dora intervened. She gave them each a bottle and said "now get out." It must have been an exciting night for the women. The neighbors, banker Ephraim Meyer, had unfortunately not heard anything and so could not help. Also, the Commanding General, who himself had been beaten up the day before, could do nothing.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Ibid., Heft III, 36. Von Kleist recalled a personal interaction with Prince Joachim with whom he had become personally acquainted when both were assigned to the *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 14* before the war. Ewald wrote, "During the days of the revolution in 1918, Prinz Joachim visited me in Heilig Blasien in Alsace. I was lying in bed with a high fever, but I was able to ensure him that even as an imperial prince he could return home unhindered. But that he should expect some harassment in Strasbourg, because he was still in the army. Soon afterwards he took his own life, probably because of the grief about Germany, the downfall of the House of Hohenzollern, and the personal disappointment in his marriage. For his mother, the Empress, this was another severe heartache."

⁹⁰ Ibid., Heft III, 82-83. Von Kleist's account gives another somewhat rare glimpse into Gisela's character. Here she again demonstrated a calm, level-headedness in the face of significant danger. Now as a mother, her protective

In 1945, von Kleist reflected on the end of his first war,

In 1918 our enemies, America in particular, had promised the German people a favorable peace if they would separate from the Kaiser. Like everyone, he had to accept that promise, and after Scheidemann had proclaimed the republic by announcing the abdication of the Kaiser in a mendacious way, the Kaiser could only wage a civil war, seek death or go abroad. Certainly, the majority of the troops were still behind the Kaiser and it would still have been possible to pull some reliable divisions, such as my old Guard-Cavalry-Rifle Division, out of the front and put down the revolution by force. But the military collapse had to come sooner or later. Perhaps then it would have been a complete catastrophe similar to today, because the revolution in the homeland would not have lasted long.

It has been said that the emperor should then have sought death on the battlefield at the head of his troops. A captivating thought, but he would then, just to create an exit for himself, have dragged other men with him to their deaths. Suicide was out of the question for him, given his deep piety. Besides, it would then be even easier for his enemies to write the history and portray him as the one guilty of the war. His decision to go to Holland and thus clear the way for the German people for a sustainable peace was therefore not a cowardly escape. It must also be noted that Field Marshal General v. Hindenburg advised him to take this step.⁹¹

An analysis of von Kleist's thoughts gives the impression that he was not a die-hard believer in what came to be called "The Stab in the Back" explanation for Germany's defeat. He does, however, seem to hold the opinion that even in November 1918, Germany still had the means to resist through the winter and into 1919, if it could have found the leadership to motivate this last effort. That effort in turn, he believed, would have given the Entente the reason to accept less than an unconditional surrender.

Too, there appears to be the likelihood that von Kleist also drew a distinction between defeat and not winning. From the vantage point of the end of World War II, he could argue that the ends of the wars had been very different. In World War II, the German Army had been

nature came to the forefront during the confrontation. Of note, was the fact that Gisela was armed with what Ewald twice refers to as "her pistol." Given the description, she apparently had drawn the pistol to confront the intruders while they were making a search of the bedroom. Outnumbered and likely threatened by the intruders who were also armed, she surrendered her weapon but not before she emptied the pistol of its cartridges. The ability to unload the pistol in this stressful situation indicated Gisela's familiarity with the weapon, likely acquired under Ewald's tutelage.

⁹¹ Ibid., Heft III, 76-78.

completely and catastrophically defeated and Germany itself had been totally occupied by Germany's enemies. But, in the first war, the German Army had marched off the battlefields in France (and not battlefields in Germany) and Germany had not been occupied by a foreign enemy. Much like what occurs in boxing, the German Army had not been "knocked out," but has suffered a "technical knocked out." It was then not about the end but rather the means by which defeat came. For the German Army Officer corps this was a subtle but important distinction. The total defeat in World War II completely destroyed the officer corps and irreparably shattered its honor. The loss of World War I, while it had sullied the honor of the officer corps, it had not damaged that honor beyond repair. With a culling of the dishonorable and disheartened, a period deep of introspection and circumspection, and a period of penitence, the officer corps' honor could be restored.

There would, however, be more difficult days ahead on the home front.

At VII. AK headquarters, information came in concerning the armistice and the German withdrawal from the front. So too did reports of mutinous German troops.

"In general, the troops remained disciplined; only in units stationed in the rear areas did the revolution lead to attacks and riots. This occurred in our sector as well. I sent my auxiliary officer, Hauptmann i.G. Schelle, later known as a sportsman and horseman, ...to the revolting battalion. He restored order in a very short time."⁹²

Von Kleist resented the conditions imposed by the Allies, seeing them as all but unachievable, even the requirements for the very front-line units. The four years of static war had created an enormous support system with its men, machines, and facilities as well as large stockpiles of supplies. To quickly dismantle and either turn over or withdraw all of this was a

⁹² Ibid., Heft III, 73. *Hauptmann* Theodor Schelle, began the war as a *Leutnant* in the *Thüringisches Ulanen-Regiment Nr. 6* (Hanau). By the end of the war, he was a *Hauptmann* on the General Staff of *XII. Armeekorps*.

herculean task. With satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment, von Kleist penned, “With us [in the *XII. Armeekorps*] these movements succeeded. I was excellently supported in my work by Hauptmann i.G. Tittel.”⁹³

Within a week of the armistice, *VII. Armeekorps* furled its colors and departed its last field headquarters. Münster, Westfalen, was the corps’ pre-war home. “It was to maintain order there in its home province” as well as oversee the demobilization of units from *Armeegruppe Kronprinz Rupprecht von Bayern*. Of the march back, Kleist remembered,

We went via Kehl and crossed the Rhine to the south over a pontoon bridge. My last quarters on the west bank were with a German farmer's wife, who bade me farewell with the words "poor Germany." We drove that day with red flags on our motorcars. To my indignant request to remove them, the driver replied, "Orders from the boss." The next day, however, these flags disappeared again. We came to the Black Forest town of Haslach on the right bank of the Rhine.⁹⁴

Ewald von Kleist was back on German soil...he had survived war.

Ewald von Kleist had not just survived the war; he had excelled at his chosen profession. Nearly a decade and a half of training, education, military exercises, and experiences in the

⁹³ Ibid., Heft III, 74. “Tittel, Hermann Karl Richard Eugen” (Lexikon der Wehrmacht, no date). <https://www.lexikon-der-wehrmacht.de/Personenregister/T/TittelHermann.htm> (February 9, 2022). Hermann Karl Richard Eugen Tittel (* 12 November 1888, Wallendorf / Thüringen near Lichte, Kreis Königsee; † 22 August 1959 in Münster) was a pre-war *Leutnant* in *Fußartillerie-Regiment General-Feldzeugmeister (Brandenburgisches) Nr. 3*. Attendance at the *Militärtechnische Akademie* (Berlin) prior to the war and his early wartime performance had apparently qualified him to enter the wartime *Generalstabsoffizier* program. He had succeeded and by the end of the war had been appointed as a *Generalstabsoffizier*. He was retained in the *Reichswehr* and served with von Kleist in *Wehrkreiskommando VI* in Münster. He served in various staff and command positions throughout the interwar period. By September 1943, Tittel had risen to the rank of *General der Artillerie* and commanding general of *LXX. Armeekorps* in Norway. He became a prisoner of war and for a time was held at Special Camp 11 with fellow PoW, Ewald von Kleist.

⁹⁴ Von Kleist, “Lebenserinnerungen.” Heft III, 74.

artillery, cavalry, at key schools, as well as off-duty, had provided von Kleist with a solid foundation. During the war, he had been able to rely on this this sound foundation as well as build on it over the course of his nearly forty-five months at the front. Ewald's hardy physical constitution was also a key factor in his ability to endure the substantial rigors of frontline duty and remain healthy and fit for duty for so many months. As has been seen, von Kleist established himself as a capable combat commander and as a highly skilled and hard-working General Staff Officer. While he had earned both classes of the Iron Cross, Ewald had not gone on to earn any higher decorations for either command or staff work. In this regard, he must be rated in the tier below his future *Generalfeldmarschälle* peers von Blomberg, von Bock, Busch, Rommel, and Schörner, all who earned the *Pour le Mérite* during the war.⁹⁵ Likely, von Kleist had fewer opportunities to earn higher awards given the length of time he spent on relatively quiet sections of the front.

Of von Kleist's approximately forty-five months on duty at the front, thirty-eight were spent on the Eastern Front with the remaining seven spent on the Western Front at the end of the war. During his time fighting the Russians, Ewald participated in active offensive and defensive operations as well as static or positional warfare. All of von Kleist's participation on the Eastern Front in *Bewegungskrieg* (mobile warfare) was as a cavalry commander. These mobile operations totaled approximately eight months and occurred between August 1914 and October 1915. The other seven months of this period Ewald led his hussars in probes, raids, and reconnaissance patrols in the large contested area between the German and Russian strongpoints. From November 1915 until Ewald's transfer to the Western Front in February 1918, von Kleist's

⁹⁵ Gerd von Rundstedt was nominated for the *Pour le Mérite*, but did not receive the award. He did, however, receive the *Ritterkreuz des Königlichen Hausordens von Hohenzollern mit Schwertern*, as did future fellow *Generalfeldmarschälle*, Wilhelm Keitel, Günther von Kluge, Erich von Manstein, Walter Model, and Erwin von Witzleben. Other von Kleist peers to earn this award were: Johannes Blaskowitz, Werner von Fritsch, Theodor Groppe, Franz Halder, Kurt von Hammerstein-Equord, and Hermann Hoth.

Eastern Front experience was on the staffs of brigade, division, and corps during the *Stellungskrieg* (positional warfare) period which saw trench warfare against the Russians.

With the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk came von Kleist's transfer to the Western Front. Here he joined a third-class division in the front line in the relatively quiet Verdun Sector as the division's *Ia* (operations officer). A month later in May 1918, the division was transferred to a more active sector facing the British near Amiens. In August, Ewald began what was his most challenging period in France. Having been on leave when the full force of the British 8 August offensive hit the division, Ewald was not in position to direct the division's defense or retreat for several days. By the time he arrived back at the front, the division had lost heavily in both troops and terrain. For the remainder of the month, von Kleist worked to keep the remnants of the division and other fragmented units from being overrun by the continued British advances which included tanks. It is undoubtedly here that he saw the highest loss of German forces killed in action, wounded in action, and captured. With this, he had seen the brutal realities of Western Front trench warfare as well as the beginning of the Allies' war-ending offensives. Thus, with the exception of the mountain warfare of the Carpathians and Northern Italy, von Kleist had experienced the full breadth of combat types of land warfare conducted in World War I.

Additionally, von Kleist gained key knowledge of the challenges and requirements for commanding combined arms units. While his command was of a relatively small regimental-sized unit, his staff work encompassed division and corps level combined arms operations. All this would serve Ewald well in the next war.

Von Kleist also showed an ability that crossed into both command and staff areas, that of organizational competence. As problem solvers, military officers are often called upon to fix, modify, or create organizations in order to regain or improve effectiveness and efficiency. Two

instances of von Kleist's solid organizational skills were seen during the war. First, was his command of the ad hoc combined arms *Aufklärungsabteilung* (reconnaissance detachment) of the 85. *Landwehr Division* in the spring-summer offensive of 1915. The effective employment of cavalry, artillery, bicycle-borne infantry, and machine gun troops in their role of a fast-moving *Aufklärungsabteilung* required well-considered as well as perceptive impromptu organizing skills. The second instance was von Kleist's reorganization plan for the *Garde-Kavallerie-Division* and two sister cavalry divisions. Here, von Kleist showed that he understood the tangible requirements of reorganizing a unit. But, as importantly, demonstrated that he had a firm grasp of the intangible elements which effected units. In this case, that critical elements were esprit de corps and the shared like-mindedness of the mounted troops. Ewald's organizational skills were both lauded by the new division commander and confirmed by the success of the *Kavallerie-Schützen Divisionen* in combat in France.

Indeed, von Kleist had proven himself over the course of the war and in each assignment as a highly capable and versatile officer, whether as a commander or as a *Generalstabsoffizier*.

While von Kleist had done well if not having thrived during the war, many of his fellow officers had not. Although Ewald does not mention the death and destruction he witnessed in his writings, it could but not have affected him in some way. The news of the death of friends, colleagues, and fellow regimental compatriots arrived throughout the war. The heaviest toll for Ewald was in 1914, when he counted at least nineteen officers with whom he had served, many he had known well, killed in action. Each subsequent year brought news of more deaths and severe wounding of friends, comrades, and relatives. Objectively, the depth of the impact caused by officer deaths can be understood through the numbers of killed in action. Subjectively, the intangible depth of the misfortune cannot be accurately fathomed.

Three accountings from organizations of which von Kleist was a member show the numerical damage. First, was Ewald's first cavalry regiment, *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 14*, to which he was assigned from December 1911 until May 1914. Of the twenty-one officers with whom von Kleist served in May 1914, ten (forty-eight percent) were killed in action (KIA) or died during the war.⁹⁶ Included in that number was the regiment's commander and von Kleist's mentor, *Oberstleutnant* von Raumer. Next, despite his short pre-war time in the *Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1*, Ewald could not but have been aware of the regiment's war losses. Of the thirty-one officers assigned to the regiment, nine (twenty-nine percent) were KIA.⁹⁷ The third unit of close association was von Kleist's *Kriegsakademie Hörsaal C* (Class of 1913). His near-daily, interaction with his fifty-three section mates over a three-year period saw the forming of close bonds with some and a collegial relationship with most. Over one quarter of this group, fifteen (twenty-eight percent), were dead by war's end.⁹⁸

Possibly, von Kleist's pre-war timing of assignments aided in dealing with the deaths of his fellow officers. Ewald's branch transfer from the artillery to the cavalry in 1911, his five years as a student in two schools, his short nine months in Cassel with *Husaren-Regiment Nr. 14*,

⁹⁶ *Rangliste 1913 and 1914 (1926)*.

⁹⁷ August von Mackensen, *Die Leibhusaren: Ihre Geschichte im Weltkriege* (Oldenburg in Oldenburg and Berlin: Druck und Verlag von Gerhard Stalling, 1929), 248-274. Additionally, of the remaining twenty-two officers, at least seven were invalidated out of the front lines for wounds, while at least another eight were evacuated for serious illness. Thus, of the assigned officers as of May 1914, half (51.6 percent) were KIA/WIA during the war. *Oberst* von Eicke und Politz, the regimental commander died within two months from the end of the war.

⁹⁸ Data compiled from from *Rangliste der Königlich Preussischen Armee, 1900-1914* editions; Bernhard Schwertfeger, "Lehrer an der Kriegsakademie und Tätigkeit im Großen Generalstab, 1909-1914" (BA-KO: N 1015/42, Nachlass Schwertfeger); *Militär-Wochenblatt 1910-1914*; and Registratur der Kommandantur von Berlin, *Militär-Adreßbuch (Taschen-Rangliste) der Militärbehörden und Institute des Standortes Berlin, Sommer 1913* (Berlin: No publisher information, 1913). Twelve officers were killed in action and the other three died while in the combat zone or as a result of wounds or illness incurred during combat. Of the twelve KIA, six appear to have been killed in action while serving in a division or higher general staff officer billet.

"Kriegsakademie Jahrgang 1911 Namenliste" (BA-MA: N 251/v66, Document 1, Nachlass Möller-Witten). By comparison, the *Hörsaal C* for the Class of 1914, the year following von Kleist; of the fifty-five graduating officers, ten (eighteen percent) were KIA or died of wounds during the war.

and his very brief two and a half months with the *Leib-Husaren* before the outbreak of the war all served to attenuate forming and maintaining deep friendships with officers in these units. The lack of a long-term association with a regiment helped von Kleist avoid entanglement in the unit politics and internal clique membership. But alternately, the lack of close association robbed him of the support and sense of belonging that most other officers enjoyed with their parent or go-to-war regiment. Left with few choices for regimental affiliation, Ewald chose to maintain a membership in the *Leibhusaren-Bund* (Life Hussars Association) for most of the interwar period.⁹⁹ Given that he had no shared peacetime or wartime experiences with the regiment, that he had not been integrated into the hussars, and had not had time to bond with his fellow officers, he remained for all practical purposes an outsider and a peripheral member.

Von Kleist's autobiographical silence on the loss of fellow officers is mirrored by his muteness on horses. Ewald's pre-war memories were replete with equestrian information on individual horses as well as on- and off-duty riding reminiscences. These narratives give the clear impression that Ewald viewed horses as far more than utilitarian tools to be used and disposed of without emotion. Thus, the lack of a single mention of horses during the period 1914-1918 is striking.¹⁰⁰ The postulated reason for this silence is that the predominant memories remained, even by 1945, distressing to von Kleist. One of the inherent hazards of being a cavalryman was being involved with and being impacted by the death and maiming of horses

⁹⁹ Besides the *Leibhusaren-Bund*, von Kleist's only other professional military affiliation which has come to light was with the Vereinigung Graf Schlieffen e.V., formed with a membership of mostly German General Staff officers (technically outlawed by the Treaty of Versailles), this by invitation only organization served to link high potential officers together during the Weimar and Third Reich periods. It is likely that von Kleist belonged to a general German cavalry association or possibly an association affiliated with the interwar Cavalry School. As to non-military association, his affiliation with the *Johanniter-Orden* is certain and likely he was heavily involved with this Order. Too, it is likely that von Kleist was a member of national and local hunting groups as well as civilian horse breed and equestrian organizations.

¹⁰⁰ The only references to horses von Kleist made were peripherally when discussing cavalry units who had given up their horses, or horses being transferred as part of unit breakups and redistributions. He made no mention of any of the horses he rode during the war or the horses in his wartime cavalry squadron.

during war. Some cavalrymen develop deep and abiding affection for their mounts, an affection that can grow even deeper during wartime.¹⁰¹ It is likely that Ewald rode his Hanoverian mare, Lippspringer, to war.¹⁰² She had been his personal officer's charger since 1908; she had been the horse Ewald was riding when he proposed marriage to Gisela in 1910. The loss of Lippspringer, and other horses that had been faithful mounts and companions may have been bitter memories Ewald chose to leave in the past.

Beyond officers in the units to which he belonged; Ewald lost fellow members of the von Kleist clan. As one of the longest serving and foremost *adligen Militärclans* (noble military clans), one would expect the von Kleist's to answer their sovereign's call to war. At the outbreak of the war, thirty-five von Kleists were already in uniform either on active duty, in the reserves, or in the *Landwehr*.¹⁰³ Another twenty-three cousins joined the military during the war years. Thus, of the sixty-two physically qualified men between the ages of seventeen and fifty-nine, a total of fifty-eight (ninety-four percent) actively served.¹⁰⁴ Two von Kleist served as

¹⁰¹ Max Kuhnert, *Will We See Tomorrow?* (London: Leo Cooper, 1993), 149. Kuhnert's autobiography of his time as an enlisted German cavalryman attached to an infantry regiment during the first portion of World War II provides an excellent example of the attachment that can form between horseman and horse. On experiencing the combat death of his horse, Siegfried, on the Russian front, Kuhnert wrote, "In all the many months (it had been like a lifetime), he had been my comrade, my protector; he had carried me out of trouble any times; he had listened for me and warned me of any danger. I had always relied upon him in a thousand and one situations. I had cried on his shoulder when I was in despair, and he had even made me laugh at some of his antics. He had never complained when I had nothing to give him, not even water. To me he had not been 'just a horse', he had been my best friend, a friend in a thousand, full of warmth and understanding. ... Suddenly I felt utterly alone."

¹⁰² Lippspringer was foaled in 1902, and would have been a twelve-year-old at the outbreak of the war. At twelve, she would still have been in her later prime.

¹⁰³ Georg von Kleist, ed., *Uebersicht über die Teilnahme der Familie von Kleist am Weltkriege* (self-published: Wusseken, Pommern, 1920). The thirty-five von Kleist men already on the army rolls represented fifty-six percent of the von Kleist men who were physically qualified and between the ages of seventeen and fifty-nine.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., Georg von Kleist wrote, "Of the 15 who remained behind, four were over 70, 5 over 60, and three over 40, 1 protested. Only two cousins were not fit for field service. A sign that the lineage still preserved even its virility." When the aged (sixty and over) and those rejected for military duty for physical reasons are subtracted from the pool of eligible von Kleist men, an astounding ninety-four percent of the remaining men aged fifty-nine and younger served in the military. Notably, only one von Kleist was a conscientious objector.

corps commanders, and two were division commanders. One earned the *Pour le Mérite*.¹⁰⁵ But if there was glory there was also death. Of the fifty-eight von Kleists who served, seventeen (twenty-nine percent) were killed in action or died of wounds. The clan felt the losses across the height and breadth of the family tree. Ewald's erstwhile benefactor, *General der Kavallerie* Georg von Kleist, the von Kleist clan *Preußischen Herrenhauses* representative and clan *Vorsitzender* (chairman), personally suffered the loss of three of his six sons on the war's battlefields. This was the first battlefield scything of the von Kleist clan in nearly half a century and the first of such magnitude since the wars of Friedrich II (the Great).

Not only was the war a deep demographic cut of the males in the von Kleist clan but in other *adligen Militärclans* and indeed across the ranks of the entire German aristocracy and royalty. The German aristocracy mobilized in such numbers "so that one can speak without exaggeration of a total war commitment of the nobility."¹⁰⁶ For the Prussian contingent of the army, approximately 13,600 noblemen answered the call to arms.¹⁰⁷ Of these aristocrats, 3,405 were killed representing eight point three percent of total Prussian officer deaths.¹⁰⁸ When

¹⁰⁵ "von Kleist, Alfred" The Prussian Machine, no date. <http://prussianmachine.com/aka/kleista.htm> (February 13, 2022). Friedrich Wilhelm Viktor Alfred von Kleist (* 16 November 1857 in Magdeburg; † 13 May 1921 in Brandenburg an der Havel) earned the *Pour le Mérite* for his handling of his corps in the defense against an attempted French breakthrough during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in September 1918.

¹⁰⁶ Marcus Funck, *Feudales Kriegertum und Militärische Professionalität: Der Adel im preußisch-deutschen Offizierskorps 1860-1935* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2004), 344. See Funck (pp 340-363) for an excellent in-depth examination of noble officer deaths in World War I.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. Of the approximate 13,600 aristocratic men to serve in the military, the vast majority, approximately eighty-five percent, served as officers. The remaining men served as *Fähnriche* (officer candidates), approximately ten percent; while the remaining five percent served in the enlisted ranks. If one categorizes the *Fähnriche* as officers, then approximately 12,920 aristocrats served as Prussian officers. Thus, of the wartime Prussian officer total (active-duty, reserve, and *Landwehr*) of 204,885, 12,920 or 6.3 percent were ennobled. When placed into the overall social class demographic context, the nobility at less than 0.2 percent of the total population, were 300% or thirty times overrepresented in the Prussian officer corps.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 343. The 3,405 officer deaths were divided as follows: 2,740 active officers (26.2 percent), 529 reserve officers (2 percent), and 136 Landwehr officers (2.95 percent). Again, when placed in societal class demographical context, ennobled officers died at rates higher than either their 0.2 percent of the general population and higher than their 6.3 percent of the officer population. These officer numbers include casualties incurred during the revolution, uprisings, and border fights during 1919/20.

summarizing the human cost to the German aristocracy recent scholarship noted that “About one-eighth of all noble men, almost one-fifth of noble men of conscript age, and almost 25% of the nobles actually serving as officers or officer candidates thus did not survive World War I. As expected, the percentage distribution of aristocratic war dead by region shows the clear preponderance was in the Prussian nobility.¹⁰⁹ The aristocracy had remained true and loyal and despite the high price, it had honored its commitment to defend the Fatherland.

While the end of war often brings a return to normalcy, the end of this war for many Germans did not. The abdication of Wilhelm II, the razing of the monarchy, the concomitant elimination of the nobility as a legal class, and the revolutionary outbreaks across Germany all made the futures of aristocratic army officers most uncertain. For Ewald von Kleist and his fellow regular army officers, aristocratic or not, the end of the war was the end of the Wilhelmine Army, the army of their youths.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 343-345. Funck further explains, “The burdens of the front were borne primarily by young officers from the group of lieutenants, deployed below the regimental level, who also became younger and younger with the increasing duration of the war, so that one can certainly assume an extensive loss of up to 40% of the nobility generation of men born between 1885 and 1900.”

CONCLUSION

The dual goals of this work were to identify the key elements in Ewald von Kleist's formative years and gain a better understanding of the Wilhelmine Army officer corps through a detailed investigation of von Kleist's life and career during the period 1881-1918. To achieve the second goal, the narrative maintained the contextual connection between von Kleist and the environment in which he found himself. Interwoven into the biographical account was information of significance and influence concerning social, organizational, economic, religious, and military elements as encountered by von Kleist in the course of his early life and first decades of his career.

This work asserts that an officer's formative phase, the first ten to fifteen years of an officer's career, is key and critical as it is during this period that the individual's officership foundation is formed and career trajectory established. To understand von Kleist's formative years, this project sought to answer the overarching question of, what were the key influencing elements during these formative years which together served to construct the foundation of Ewald von Kleist as a man and as an officer. The investigation of Ewald's experiences during the Wilhelmine period enabled this question to be answered and those key elements to be identified. The following reviews those findings.

For Ewald, family and societal influences guided the first important stages of establishing his foundation as a son. Born ten years after Germany's Unification, he was raised in the heady environment of a united Germany. He imbibed the idea that Germany had an important and rightful destiny to play on the world's stage. This had in part come through the army's victory over the French in 1871, which enabled the growing capability and opportunity as Germany sought to occupy its "place in the sun." Ewald perceived the prestige of being an officer in the heavily militarized society of Wilhelmine Germany. Reinforcing this was his own familial heritage. He was a son of a well-established and highly respected *preußische adlige Militärclan*. His interest in the clan had familiarized him with the family's history and its habitude of service to the crown and agrarian land ownership. This familial legacy and the rewarding opportunities of an army career open to a von Kleist did not go unheeded.

Ewald's upbringing in Leer can, however, be seen as a having been somewhat confined and uninspired. Ewald, while intelligent, was an unmotivated student and evidenced an indifference to following in his father's academic footsteps. Von Kleist senior was a thinker not a doer; his son appears as his father's opposite. Too, Ewald seems to not have had a particularly enjoyable childhood. Although he was raised in a stable and harmonious home guided by Christian values, Ewald likely did not enjoy participation with or support of his father in his non-academic interests. As a young man on the verge of picking a career path, Ewald was presented with a choice, follow his father's non-military but civil servant path or enter the army as an officer like so many of his clan. Ewald elected to follow the clan's calling rather than his father's voice. The son chose to be a soldier.

Despite being a von Kleist and having the aristocratic bloodline that made him eligible for entry into every regiment of the army, Ewald's admission into the army was controlled by

another significant element. That element was financial. Limited family finances meant Ewald could only expect a relatively small monthly supplement. This financial constraint barred him from entrance into the Guards, a few upper tier infantry regiments, and likely all of the army's cavalry regiments. Given his apparent dislike of the infantry, Ewald's only recourse was to join the field artillery. For the first decade of army service, finances remained a constant constraining element for von Kleist.

During the process of working to gain entry into his selected regiment, Field Artillery Regiment Nr. 3, Ewald encountered a key individual, the regimental commander. Regimental commanders were endowed with significant authority which in turn enabled them to control and influence many areas of a junior officer's life and career. The initial point of control was as gatekeeper to the regiment and thus, the army. He alone determined if Ewald would be accepted as an officer-candidate into the regiment.

Ewald's record indicated he had difficulty in what today is called "acclimatizing to the military environment." The contributing factors to this were Ewald's introverted nature intensified by a lack of self-confidence, his lack of familiarity with military life, the less than optimum timing and conditions of his initial regimental training, and undoubtedly the lack of officer-instructors who viewed Ewald's initial period as one of education and training rather than as trial and testing.

The next key element Ewald encountered in this foundational period was the *Kriegsschule*. Here he was brought together with around one hundred other officer-trainees from across the army for an eight-month training and education program. Away from their regiment's influence but under the tutelage and supervisory observation of high-quality officers, the young men were given a standardized course of instruction on a variety of military subjects. Included

in the course were lectures on officership, officer honor, and the requirements of officer duty. Here loyalty to the crown, obedience to superiors, and the criticality of officer honor were expounded. The schools represented one of the few controlling and standardizing bottlenecks in the German officer corps. Over ninety-seven percent of all German army officer-trainees passed through the doors of the ten *Kriegsschulen* in the early 1900s. These schools' influence on the officer corps should not be underestimated. During von Kleist's *Kriegsschule* course it appears that he only performed to an average level.

Commissioned as a *Leutnant* shortly after returning from the *Kriegsschule*, von Kleist entered a period of regimental duty as a junior troop leader. For the next two and a half years, Ewald's primary duty was training recruits in his artillery battery. It was during this time that his interest and participation in equestrian training rapidly grew. Even after several years on the job, the young lieutenant's officer evaluations still showed him lacking self-confidence and performing in only an average manner. Indeed, von Kleist had a very slow and unpropitious career start.

In early 1904, things began to favorably change for Ewald. In February, he was transferred into his regiment's riding battalion. Given that everyone, even the gunners, rode individual mounts, duty in the riding battalion was considered more prestigious than duty in the non-riding battalions. The battalion was also more horse-centric than the other two battalions of the regiment. This situation better suited Ewald and supported his growing equestrianism. Thus, Ewald's duty environment improved and he likely enjoyed a better relationship with his new battalion commander. October 1904, brought another important change. Ewald was selected to temporarily fill the position of battalion adjutant, an important and professionally challenging posting.

Early in 1905, Ewald experienced the beginning of his first significant career turn. It was at this time that *Major* Oskar Greßmann, a highly-qualified, well-respected, and well-connected officer, returned to the regiment and took command of the riding battalion. Greßmann and von Kleist quickly established a mentor/protégé relationship. Greßmann saw von Kleist's potential as both officer and equestrian. Von Kleist saw in his commander, an officer worthy of emulation and one from which he could learn much. The combination of Greßmann's mentorship, Ewald positive and motivated response toward the challenging duties and responsibilities of an adjutant, and his rapid equestrian skills improvement produced a dynamic change. In the space of four years, 1903-1907, von Kleist evolved from an introverted and average performing officer in the middle of his lieutenant group to an exceedingly competent, self-confident, and high-performing officer near the top of his peer group. This gaining of self-confidence also saw Ewald begin to challenge superiors he deemed less competent, knowledgeable, or capable than himself. While other officers certainly contributed and were influential, including *Oberstleutnant* Mottau, the regimental commander since April 1904, *Major* Greßmann's mentorship is judged to have not only invigorated Ewald's career but reoriented his career trajectory and placed him on the beginning of a path to potential senior leadership.

Oberstleutnant Mottau and *Major* Greßmann provided Ewald's career yet another important boost. In the summer of 1907, they selected von Kleist to attend the prestigious *Militär-Reit-Institut's* two-year-long equitation course. The course instructed an assemblage of top cavalry and field artillery lieutenants from across the army, the anticipated future leaders of cavalry. Ewald's thorough pre-course preparation by his regiment set him up for success at the school. That, coupled with von Kleist's high motivation to learn and his outstanding performance in the saddle, earned him high recognition both at the school and across the

mounted arms of the army as being one of the best horsemen in the army. This again confirmed that von Kleist was a high-potential officer. At the school he made important contacts with his distant cousin, *General der Kavallerie*, Georg von Kleist, Chief of Cavalry, and *Kronprinz* Wilhelm, the *Kaiser's* son, among others. Both would have significant influence on Ewald's future.

Also, while at the school, Ewald met his future wife. His 1910 marriage to Gisela Wachtel, daughter of a wealthy industrialist, gained von Kleist entrance into a significantly higher economic strata of both bourgeois and aristocratic society. The wealth Gisela brought to the marriage enabled the couple to live well, enhanced their ability to better represent the army in social settings, as well as successfully weather World War I, and the economic turbulence of the interwar period. This financial security relieved Ewald from the frustrations and constraints he had endured during his first ten years in the army.

Returning to his artillery regiment in autumn 1909, von Kleist came back under the supervision of *Major* Greßmann. During the seven months between September 1909 and March 1910, Greßmann guided Ewald's preparation for an all-important test, the 1910 *Kriegsakademie* qualifying examination. Von Kleist's successful testing was a result of correctly aligned studying and indicated Ewald had "figured out" the "army way." His hard work paid off and he was selected to attend this prestigious and career enhancing three-year staff officer preparation course.

Von Kleist's overall *Kriegsakademie* performance was above average, but he again showed a lack of motivation towards classroom study earning only average grades. The *Kriegsakademie*, like the *Kriegsschule*, was an institutional bottleneck as graduation from the academy was the only door into the army General Staff. Thus, the school served as a gatekeeper

to the General Staff but also ensured a consistent and standardized education was provided to all the officers who attended. At the school Ewald gained important and foundational knowledge in tactical and operational problem solving that would serve him well throughout his career. While not placed in the top tier with those who continued on with the process leading to an appointment to the General Staff, von Kleist ranked in the second tier and was deemed qualified for higher level non-General Staff positions. This ranking placed him well within the top ten percent of all officers in his year group.

While at the *Kriegsakademie*, von Kleist became acquainted with the officer who became his second mentor during his foundational years, *Major* von Raumer. Von Raumer first played an important role in von Kleist's branch transfer from the field artillery to the cavalry in late 1911. Also instrumental to von Kleist's transfer was his distant cousin, *General der Kavallerie* Georg von Kleist, who as Chief of Cavalry served as Ewald's highly placed benefactor.

Upon von Kleist's 1913 graduation from the *Kriegsakademie*, Ewald joined the hussar regiment von Raumer commanded. There the mentor/protégé relationship developed further. While von Kleist spent less than a year under von Raumer's command, he gained much. Von Kleist later identify von Raumer as the next officer behind Greßmann from whom he had learned the most.

Von Kleist's star was still on the rise and in May 1914, he found himself transferred to the premier hussar regiment in the German Army, *Leib-Husaren-Regiment Nr. 1 (LHR1)*. This was likely due to the influence of *Kronprinz* Wilhelm, *General der Kavallerie* Georg von Kleist, and *General der Kavallerie* August von Mackensen. This prestigious assignment was a product of four elements: von Kleist's ability to take his education, training, and experience and meld it

into a high level of officer professionalism, his aristocratic pedigree, his wife's wealth, and influence on his behalf from high places.

While von Kleist exhibited many of the positive and virtuous, and thus desired, officer attributes, some less than desirable character traits manifested themselves. Ewald identified his own selfishness in his relationship with his wife, a trait that undoubtedly carried over into other areas of his life and career as well. Too, Ewald showed a degree of laziness. This was evidenced in his education. Despite a strong intellect, he never achieved the academic success of which he was capable either in civilian or military education courses. His initial slow start in the regiment and mediocre performance as a recruit training officer also hint at indolence rather than ineptitude. Ewald did, however, show great diligence for things that interested him such as equestrian activities. Also, von Kleist displayed a streak of insolence resulting from his lack of tolerance of superior officers whom he thought less skilled or less competent than himself. This suggests the development of a strong but not overly enlarged ego.

The final stage of von Kleist's foundation building occurred during 1914-1918. In retrospect, Ewald likely benefited far more from what initially looked like an unenviable beginning. Being new to the *LHRI*, he was left behind to form the replacement squadron as the regiment deployed to the Western Front. As events unfolded, von Kleist served as an independent cavalry squadron commander for the first fourteen months of the war. His success in this demanding and challenging leadership position can largely be attributed to what von Kleist learned from Greßmann, who himself was often an independent commander during peacetime large-force maneuvers. In his first wartime division commander, *Generalleutnant* Clifford Kocq von Breugel, a fellow cavalryman, von Kleist found a commander who trusted him and with whom he worked well. Von Breugel in return protected von Kleist from being

transferred to an infantry command in 1915, a time when cavalry units were being disbanded and their officers and men transferred to the trenches. This protection improved Ewald's chances of surviving the war given the higher casualty rates of officers serving on the front-line commanding infantry units. Rather, von Breugel pulled von Kleist onto his staff. Thus, it was under von Breugel's tutelage that von Kleist served the first portion of his wartime General Staff qualification training.

Having proven himself during his final General Staff qualification training, von Kleist was assigned to the prestigious Guards Cavalry Division as its senior Staff Officer. Here his initiative for reconfiguring and retraining the division for Western Front duties earned him recognition for his organizational skills. But, his lack of Western Front experience worked against him and he was reassigned to a low-quality division as its senior Staff Officer. Here he performed well. As the war drew to a close, von Kleist was ordered to a higher-level army corps post. In retrospect, this appears to have been a purposeful plan with a view towards post-war duties. By the end of the war, von Kleist had clearly established himself as a highly competent tactical commander and a very skilled General Staff Officer; he was marked as an officer with continued high potential for increased responsibility and rank.

A final pertinent question is suggested; how representative was von Kleist of the Wilhelmine officer corps? While Ewald shared a number of characteristics with a large portion of his fellow officers, a number of other attributes combined to make him an atypical member of the Wilhelmine junior officer corps in its last two decades of existence. The common elements across the majority of the officer corps flowed from a shared membership in the same relatively narrow slice of conservative socio-economic and political stratum. Ewald was raised in what for all practical purposes can be labeled a middle/upper middle-class household. His father, like

many of Ewald's fellow officers' fathers, was a white-collar professional. Too, the strongly illiberal social and political outlook with its ardent support for the monarchy was a shared point of view. But here the elements of commonality end.

The elements that set von Kleist apart from the typical Wilhelmine junior officer begin with his family. When Ewald entered the army in 1900, only forty percent of the officers were ennobled.¹ Ten years later, ennobled officers had slipped to thirty percent of the total officer corps. Thus, von Kleist was a member of a declining aristocratic minority. Belonging to a leading *preußische adlige Militärclan* placed Ewald in an even smaller minority of the ennobled officers. The next attribute which set him apart from a majority of his peers was his possession of an *Abitur*. Of the 1,168 officers commissioned in 1901, only one in five (243) entered with this level of civilian education.² This academic background provided Ewald with a better set of tools with which to deal with the increasing rigor of professional military education. Too, while it is difficult to assess with a high level of certainty, von Kleist appeared to have been more religiously minded than many of his fellow officers. His association with the *Evangelisch* church in Hannover and his membership in the Order of St. John point to this religious activity. Another key separator was von Kleist's economic status. While he had started out as a rather typical officer fiscally, his marriage to a wealthy woman raised him to a considerably smaller stratum of well-heeled officers.

¹ Steven E. Clemente, *For King and Kaiser! The Making of the Prussian Army Officer, 1860-1914* (New York, Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1992), 205. Clemente records that in 1898, forty percent of the officers were ennobled with sixty percent being middle class and in 1910, thirty percent were ennobled and seventy percent middle class.

² Gerhard Friedrich von Pelet-Narbonne, *von Löbell's Jahresberichte über die Veränderungen und Fortschritte im Militärwesen 1901* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1902), 15. While the number of *Abitur* holders continued to rise during the pre-World War I years, it would not be until after the war that an *Abitur* became a mandatory entrance requirement for the officer corps.

Von Kleist's military career prior to World War I is also uncharacteristic of the Wilhelmine junior officer. Ewald's attendance at both a branch school (*Militär-Reit-Institut*) and the *Kriegsakademie* place him at the very top of his peer group for military education. His attendance at the *Kriegsakademie* and his selection as qualified for higher adjutant duties alone put him in the top eight percent of his officer year group.³ Adding his attendance at a branch school narrows the already elite group even more. Finally, his selection as a member of the General Staff confirmed his advantaged status within the officer corps. Thus, von Kleist's nobility, wealth, military education and experiences, and promotion to the General Staff make him an atypical rather than a representative member of Wilhelmine officer corps. But even with the many career-aiding element, success in the army was not a forgone conclusion.

Ewald von Kleist's army career had gotten off to a slow start. But during this formative period in the Wilhelmine Army, a set of key influencing elements, as identified throughout this work, combined to construct Ewald von Kleist's deep, firm, and supportive foundation. This foundation would support him as a son and soldier for the rest of his life.

November 9, 1918 was a watershed for the German Army and its officer corps. On that date, *Kaiser* and *König* Wilhelm II abdicated and the Wilhelmine Army passed into history. The 9th of November also marked the day that *Hauptmann* Ewald von Kleist's formative years ended. But von Kleist's career was far from over.

³ See Chapter 6, footnote 149.

Von Kleist accompanied the command staff of *VII. Armeekorps* back to its pre-war garrison headquarters in the city of Münster in Westfalen.⁴ There as the corps *Ia* (operations officer) he was involved in bringing order to the chaotic military situation on the Homefront and guiding the demobilization process for units within the military district under *VII. Armeekorps*' control. The corps also gathered and controlled *Freikorps* units that were loyal to the newly formed democratic government led by President Friedrich Ebert. These *Freikorps* units were used to put down the socialist and communist sparked uprising in the Ruhr. Between February and May 1919, pro-republic *Freikorps*, under the command of *VII. Armeekorps*, engaged in violent strike-breaking actions against rioting workers and had bloody clashes with anti-republic forces. In May 1919, *Reichswehr-Brigade 7* was formed at Münster from a number of *Freikorps* units as part of the formation of the *Vorläufige Reichswehr* (Provisional Reichswehr). Von Kleist transferred to the brigade as its operations officer on 5 May 1919.

During the course of the summer 1919, von Kleist was selected for retention and transfer into the *Übergangsheer* (Transitional Army). He took the oath of allegiance to the Weimar Constitution on 16 October 1919. Ewald was still posted to *Brigade 7* when it was one of the government forces used to put down the Kapp-Putsch-ignited Ruhr uprising and battle the "Red Ruhr Army" in later March and early April of 1920.⁵ The *Reichswehr* troops and *Freikorps* units gave no quarter to the workers. Approximately one thousand workers were killed while the government forces lost nearly five hundred killed.

⁴ The following synopsis of von Kleist's life and career between November 1918 and October 1954 is created from his army personnel file (Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, BA-MA: PERS 6/7 Personalakte von Kleist), and the "Red Notebooks" (Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen und Plaudereien" (handschriftliche Manuskripte); BA-MA: N 354/23-26, Nachlass Kleist). Information from other sources is separately footnoted.

⁵ Heinrich August Winkler, *Germany: The Long Road West*, Volume 2, trans. Alexander J. Sager (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 370-372.

Likely at von Kleist's request, he was transferred to *Reichswehr-Brigade 10* in June 1920. The brigade was located in Hannover thus allowing Ewald to return to what had become his hometown and resume a genuinely peacetime lifestyle. It was during this time that Ewald became friends with Oskar von Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg, the *Generalfeldmarschall's* son, a *Hauptmann* on the staff with von Kleist. As the *Reichswehr* worked to reduce manpower to its 100,000-man cap, *Brigade 10's* staff was subsumed into the *6. Division* and on 1 January 1921, Ewald switched hats to become the division's 1st General Staff Officer. Gisela and Ewald's last child, a second son, was born in March 1921. On 1 February 1922, after nearly twenty-two years of service, von Kleist was promoted to *Major*.

Six and one-half years after leaving command of his wartime cavalry squadron, Ewald transferred back to troop duty as a squadron commander in the Hannover-garrisoned *13. Reiter-Regiment* in April 1922. Fourteen months later, he was transferred to the renamed *Kavallerieschule* and began a four-and-a-half-year assignment as an instructor. Promotion to *Oberstleutnant* in December 1926, still indicated von Kleist's upward mobility. After five and one-half years of troop duty, Ewald returned to the staff with his assignment to *2. Kavallerie-Division* headquartered at Breslau. In March 1928, two months later, Ewald was made the division's chief of staff. It was here that von Kleist and Gerd von Rundstedt, the division commander, worked closely together for the first time.

As part of the apparent experience-broadening for high potential officers, von Kleist next moved to Berlin to serve as *3. Division/Wehrkreis III* Chief of Staff from June 1929 until January 1931. This was to be von Kleist's last assignment as a staff officer. From 1931 until 1944, all of von Kleist's assignments would be as the unit's commander, all but the first one as commanding

general. Of note, all of Ewald's staff assignments were in operational commands; he was never posted to the *Reichswehrministerium*.

On 1 February 1931, Ewald took command of the prestigious 9. (*Preußisches*) *Infanterie-Regiment* in Potsdam, again a career-broadening assignment. Eleven months later, von Kleist was promoted to *Generalmajor* (frocked) and returned to Breslau as commander of the 2. *Kavallerie-Division*. He officially took command of the division on New Year's Day 1932. On 1 October 1932, his promotion was made permanent.

It was from Breslau that von Kleist watched Hitler and the Nazi Party come to power. Through a combination of skill and good timing, General von Kleist found himself in a fortuitous position. Over the course of the next three and a half years, von Kleist rode the crest of the rearmament wave as Germany rebuilt its military forces. The 2. *Kavallerie-Division* disbanded in May 1935, becoming the enlarged *Generalkommando VIII. Armeekorps*. A further expansion created *Wehrkreis VIII*. Von Kleist was dual-hatted, commanding both organizations. His growing command responsibilities brought promotions. In December 1933, he was promoted to *Generalleutnant*. A little over two and a half years later, on 1 August 1936, he was promoted to *General der Kavallerie*. As one of the thirteen *Armeekorps/Wehrkreis* commanding generals, von Kleist had risen to the senior ranks of the new, enlarged, and reinvigorated German Army. Given the size and strategic location of his *Wehrkreis*, bordering Poland and Czechoslovakia, he was one of the more influential generals. In 1935, the Ewald was raised to *Rechtsritter* (Knight of Honor) in the *Johanniter-Orden*.⁶

Von Kleist's position, however, brought him into increasingly turbulent and oppositional contact with Hitler and senior Nazis who sought to increase their power in Schlesien. Marked by

⁶ Johanniter-Orden, *Johanniter Ordenblatt-Monatsschrift des Johanniterorderns* 76 (1935): 50-51. Von Kleist was raised to *Rechtsritter* on 25 June 1935.

his association with Nazi-resistant senior generals like *Generaloberst* Kurt *Freiherr* von Hammerstein-Equord, *Generaloberst* Werner *Freiherr* von Fritsch, and *General der Infanterie* Gerd von Rundstedt, von Kleist was one of sixteen senior generals ordered retired by Hitler in the immediate aftermath of the Blomberg-Fritsch affair.

Officially entering retirement on 1 March 1938, Ewald and Gisela commenced the search for a *Rittergut* as Ewald intended to become a farmer and horse breeder. Later in the year, the couple purchased, *Gut Weidebrück*, a five-hundred-acre estate several miles north of Breslau, thus embracing one of to the von Kleist clan's traditional vocations, that of agrarian land ownership.⁷ Ewald's retirement was, however, short lived.

In late August 1939, von Kleist was recalled to active duty.⁸ He was given command of *XXII. Armeekorps*, a motorized corps. The corps fought in southern Poland as one of General von Rundstedt's Army Group South's units. Shortly after the end of the Polish Campaign, the corps was shipped to western Germany and began preparations for the invasion of France. By the time the final operational plans were approved, von Kleist found himself in command of an army-sized component, *Panzergruppe von Kleist*, comprised of three panzer corps. This *Panzergruppe* was the German Army's main effort with orders to cross the Meuse as rapidly as possible and split the French and British forces in a dash to the English Channel coast. As recognition for his leadership in the successful campaign, von Kleist was awarded the Knights Cross of the Iron Cross and promoted to *Generaloberst* on 19 July 1940.

⁷ Hermann von Kleist, "Über die Güter der Familie," *Geschichte des Geschlechts von Kleist-Fortführung 1880-1980*, Dezember 1981. <https://www.v-kleist.com/FG/fgn205.htm> (June 4, 2021).

⁸ Von Kleist's World War II and post-war record is synopsized from Samuel W. Mitcham, Jr., "Kleist: Field-Marshal Ewald von Kleist," in *Hitler's Generals*, ed. Correlli Barnett (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1989), 249-263.

With the French campaign concluded, von Kleist and his now renamed *Panzergruppe I*, were transferred to the east to make preparations for the invasion of Russia. Before that invasion, von Kleist's panzers participated as one of the three major elements in the invasion of Yugoslavia. Within four days of crossing the border, von Kleist's *Panzergruppe* captured Belgrade, the capitol, and after only eleven days of operations, the Yugoslavs surrendered on 17 April 1941.

Panzergruppe I quickly moved to Romania to make final preparations for the commencement of Operation Barbarossa. On 22 June 1941, von Kleist's panzers spearheaded the armor attack in the south as one of the main elements of *Generalfeldmarschall* von Rundstedt's Army Group South. From June of 1941 until his dismissal by Hitler in April 1944, von Kleist continuously played a key role on the Southern Front rising from commanding general of a panzer group, to panzer army commander, and finally to commander-in-chief of an army group. During this period, von Kleist showed his versatility as he led his forces in both offensive and defensive operations. On 1 February 1943, von Kleist received his field marshal's baton. By Spring 1944, Hitler was convinced that the style of maneuver warfare of which von Kleist was a masters was over and he replaced the able field commander. Effective 1 April 1944, von Kleist entered the *Führerreserve* and returned to Weidebrück.

Von Kleist was not be recalled to active service. It is almost certain that the von Kleist was approached by members of the 20 July 1944 plot. But his understanding regarding his oath to the Hitler, Christian teachings concerning murder, his long-held view of officer duty, integrity, and honor, and possibly a pragmatic skepticism concerning the likelihood of overall success kept him from overt support of the conspiracy. He was, however, arrested, detained, and question by

the *Gestapo* in the wake of the assassination attempt. He was released and no further actions were seemingly taken towards him or his family.

In January 1945, as the Red Army approached Breslau, the *GFM* was directed to evacuate west in order to avoid capture. His elder son, now an army captain, remained with the defenders of Fortress Breslau and was taken prisoner by the Red Army. He survived Soviet captivity but was not repatriated until January 1956. Von Kleist's wife and younger son accompanied him in his flight west. On 25 April 1945, von Kleist was taken into custody by U. S. Army forces in Bavaria.

The *Generalfeldmarschall* quickly found himself in British custody and held primarily in Britain until summer 1946. During this time, no war crime indictments by the western Allies appear to have been brought specifically against von Kleist. In what looks to have been a politically motivated attempt to woo Tito towards the West and away from the USSR, the British government extradited von Kleist to Yugoslavia in September 1946.

Von Kleist was tried for war crimes in Yugoslavia. Found guilty, he was reportedly sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment. In 1948, the Yugoslavs handed von Kleist over to the Soviets. He was again tried for war crimes, convicted, and sentenced to twenty-five years imprisonment, in reality a life sentence. From entering Yugoslavian custody in autumn 1946 until March 1954, Ewald was held incommunicado by his captors. Neither the *GFM* nor his family received any information from or about the other. Likely given his failing health, the Soviets began allowing one postcard in and out per month and Ewald reestablished contact with his family. He learned that his wife and younger son were safe in western Germany and that he was a grandfather. On 15 October 1954, six months after the first news of his family, Ewald von

Kleist died in solitary confinement. He was buried without ceremony in a common, unmarked grave.

No biography of a World War II German *Generalfeldmarschall*, even one that does not examine the Third Reich period, can go without addressing the protagonist's participation in Hitler's wars of aggression. This is especially true when the officer in question was a senior military commander on the Eastern Front where the Wehrmacht's successful military campaigns included and were followed by innumerable atrocities and genocidal actions aimed at achieving the Nazi's racial and political policies against the Jews, Slavs, and Bolsheviks.

As this work has shown, von Kleist exhibited the meritorious traits of a high sense of duty, honor, and loyalty, the mainstays of the Prussian/Germany officer virtues. He had learned the military requisite of being able to separate a person from his position with regard to obedience and respect. Obedience was required based on the individual's position and not based on an approval of the individual's character or competence. Specifically, this compelled a deep deference to the head of state, be that the *Kaiser* or later, Hitler, without having to admire or approve of the man himself. He shared with his peers an illiberalism and was comfortable in the authoritarian hierarchy of the armies in which he served. Along with these personal traits, von Kleist demonstrated a high level of professional military competence as evidenced during both peacetime and war. It was this combination of personal and professional qualities that undergirded von Kleist's rise in rank and responsibility.

The German officer corps and the army it led also exhibited personal and professional military competence as well. During the Wars of Unification and throughout World War I, the German Army demonstrated, by and large, a high level of tactical and operational battlefield excellence. The *Reichswehr* worked hard to regain this high standard after the defeat of World War I. Noteworthy was the fact that during the vicissitudes of peace and war, under both the monarchy and the republic, the army did not rebel against the German governments which it served. While officers in the army leadership had sought to influence the country's political path, they had not violated their oath to the *Kaiser* or the Republic and moved to seize the political levers of power by military force. As an institution, the Army had remained obedient to the lawfully constituted authority.

With the establishment of the Hitler led government in January 1933, the army remained a critical element as well as a potential threat to the *Führer's* strategy. The army constituted one of the few institutions that independently could offer significant resistance to the Nazis' plans and programs. Thus, the army had to either be replaced by a new military institution aligned with the Nazis' worldview such as the *SA* or *SS*, or it had to be co-opted and brought into subservience to the regime. Hitler chose the latter. Early actions by the *Führer* satisfied both the army's desires as well as the Nazis' agenda and included repudiation of the Versailles Treaty, the rearmament of Germany, and the remilitarization of the Rhineland. As Hitler, however, moved the country towards evermore likely military conflict with territorial claims on the Sudetenland and the Polish Corridor, by 1937, the army senior leadership began to have concerns over Germany's military capabilities should war occur. The army assessed it would not be ready for war until 1941 or 1942.

By the fourth year of his government, Hitler was more clearly showing his hand. In November 1937, he informed the senior military commanders of his intention to secure Germany's autarky through territorial expansion to the east. In February 1938, Hitler in a second round of senior officer retirements removed another layer of Nazi-resistant army leadership. The dismissal of *Generaloberst Freiherr* Werner von Fritsch, Commander-in-Chief of the German Army, von Kleist, and a number of other general officers enabled the *Führer* to replace these senior army commanders with less Nazi-resistant officers. In the wake of these leadership changes and Hitler's increasingly aggressive demands with regard to the Sudetenland, some senior army leaders considered the option of forcibly removing Hitler from power should war occur in response to overt aggression against Czechoslovakia.

By mid-1938, army leadership was placed on the horns of a dilemma. The army could either break its long-standing tradition of obedience and loyalty to the legally constituted government as well as break their personal oath to Hitler and execute a treasonous military coup or it could remain subservient to the will of the *Führer*. The former would in all likelihood lead to a bloody civil war pitting the army and anti-Nazi forces against pro-Hitler forces which included the *SA* and the *SS*. The latter risked possible German defeat in the anticipated war against the French, British, Polish, and Czechs. The peaceful settlement of the Munich Agreement on 30 September 1938, eliminated the *raison d'être* and any likelihood of success for an army led coup. Further command structure reorganizations of the army, additional elevation of senior officers favorably disposed to the Nazis, and continued strong popular support of Hitler significantly reduced the likely success of any army-initiated coup d'état.

With the end of any collective army opposition, the decision of compliance with or resistance to Hitler and his programs devolved to the individual officer. The officer's decision

and subsequent positioning on the compliance-resistance spectrum was arrived at through a complex calculus comprised of a myriad of factors some of which were: ethical, moral, and religious beliefs and requirements; amount and veracity of information concerning unethical, immoral, and criminal activities; ability to influence events; perceived risk to self, family, friends, and associates; and support from or by others. For many, this calculus was on going throughout the war and governed their responses across a wide continuum from full compliance, support, and participation to fully-committed, active, overt resistance. The officers at the ends of the spectrum of responses are relatively easy to identify. For the officers in between, the ability to accurately locate them on the spectrum nearly eight decades after the fact is at best extremely difficult and most often, unachievable.

As to von Kleist, only a cursory investigation was made into his participation in World War II during the research conducted for this work. Thus, no vetted information can be offered concerning his complicity or culpability in war crimes or involvement with regard to genocidal actions on the Eastern Front. But as with von Kleist's senior army command peers, the evidence undoubtedly points to some level of guilt concerning his acts of commission and omission as they relate to war crimes committed by subordinate officers and soldiers and complicity, cooperation, and support of units under his command with the *SD*.

In his position as a senior general officer and field commander, von Kleist faced many difficult decisions. Having neither experienced the complex and at times harsh realities of Germany between 1900-1945 nor borne the incredible weight and responsibility of large force command in combat as had Ewald von Kleist, nothing seems to be more arrogant or imprudent than for me to offer a moral judgement on a man and officer who was challenged by decisions and situations with which I have never been confronted. Rather, the more sagacious and

productive course appears to be to engage Ewald von Kleist as a son and soldier from whom much can be learned.

APPENDIX 1: SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATE

Translation of School Leaving Certificate Assessment of Student Ewald von Kleist

**Gymnasium
At
Aurich**

Certificate of School Leaving

Paul Ludwig Ewald v. Kleist, Protestant-united
born August 8th 1881 in Braunfels near Wetzlar, son of the Gymnasium Director v. Kleist at Aurich, was
1 year at the Gymnasium, two years in Prima (1 year in Lower Prima at the Gymnasium in Leer) 1 year in
Upper Prima.

I. Comportment: good

Diligence: generally good

II. Knowledge and Skills:

Religious Instruction: satisfactory

He has acquired sufficient knowledge about the contents and the context of the holy scriptures, about the foundations of his denomination, and of the key elements of church history.

German: good

The examination essay was satisfactory. In all other respects, however, he showed himself to be well versed in the literature; also, he knew how to correctly order his thoughts and expressed himself with pleasing dexterity in his school essays.

Latin: satisfactory

In his school work, he translated the prose writers and poets most often with accurate understanding and in an appropriate manner of expression. His grammatical and overall knowledge was generally satisfactory.

Greek: satisfactory

His translations of prose and poetry usually expressed an accurate comprehension of the train of thought and had sufficient dexterity of form. His grammatical knowledge was generally satisfactory.

French: satisfactory

He translated the assigned poets and prose writers with understanding and dexterity. His grammatical knowledge was satisfactory.

English: satisfactory

He translates easier prose without any particular difficulties and with skillful expression.

Hebrew:

History and Geography: good

The curriculum of the *Oberprima*, which he went through twice due to a change of school, has he acquired in part satisfactorily and in part with good success.

Mathematics: satisfactory

The knowledge corresponds to the requirements of the examination regulations.

Physics: satisfactory

The knowledge is according to the requirements of the examination regulations.

Gymnastics: satisfactory

Drawing:

Choir:

The undersigned examination committee has awarded him, as he is now leaving the
Gymnasium to prepare for an officer's career, the certificate

of school leaving

and releases him with best wishes for his future prosperity.

Aurich, the 7th of March 1900

Royal Examinations Committee

Seven signatures follow (including Dr. v. Kleist, Director)

Source: NLA/AU, Rep. 171, Nr. 354, „Aurich Reifeprüfung Ostern 1900”.

APPENDIX 2: KRIEGSSCHULE ANKLAM FACULTY AND STUDENT ROSTERS

Kriegsschule Anklam Faculty Roster 1900

Name / Rank	Position	Branch	Parent Regt	DoR	Post KS Information	Rank in 1924
Englebrecht / Obstlt	Kommandant	Inf	IR Nr. 128	22.5.1899 K	Rtd 1908 as Genmaj	† 1909
Hellriegel / Oblt	Adjutant	Inf	IR Nr. 99	20.7.98 D5d	Died on active duty 1905	† 1905 on active duty
Groß / KW Hptm	Lehrer	Inf	GR Nr. 123	14.9.1893	Maj 1904, BatCO 1908, Rtd 1909	† 1910 Maj a.D
Kahns / Hptm	Lehrer	Pion	Pion B Nr 7	14.9.1893 N15n	Maj 1905, Pion BatCO 1910, Obstlt at begin WWI	Genmaj a.D.
Breusing / Hptm	Lehrer	Pion	Pion B Nr. 10		Maj 1905, separated 1910 as Maj, recalled WWI rear area duty	† 1921 Obstlt a.D
Frhr. von Dalwigk zu Lichtenfels	Lehrer	Inf	IR Nr. 83	15.12.1894 Ff	Maj 1906, Obstlt 1913, Kmd KS Glogau 1914, Kdr LIR 6 WWI,	† 1922 Genmaj a.D.
Leu / Hptm	Lehrer	Inf	IR Nr. 14	27.1.1895 O4o	KA 1890, Maj 1905, GGS 1909, GR 9 Kdr 1914, Kdr 84 ID WWI	1920 Genmaj a.D.
Winzer / Hptm	Lehrer	FeldArt	FAR Nr. 4	18.6.1895 E3e	Maj 1907, 3GFAR Kdr 1914, G.Arko Kdr 1916-1918	Genmaj a.D, † 1943
von Redern / Hptm	Lehrer	Inf	IR Nr. 15	27.1.1896 Vv	GGs 1908, Maj 1909, GGS all WWI, Oberst	† 1921
Suasius / Hptm	Lehrer	FußArt	FuArt Nr. 3	10.9.1898 G3g	Maj 1910, BattCo, Arko 228 in WWI	Oberst a.D.
Wunderlich / Oblt	Inspk-Off	Inf	IR Nr. 129	20.5.1897 L	IR 53, Hptm 1904, Maj 1914, RIR 237 Kdr in WWI	Oberstlt a.D.
Billmann / Oblt	Inspk-Off	Inf	IR Nr. 169	27.1.1898 X	Hptm 1905, trans Inf-See-Bat 1910, IR 32 1914, IR 31 Kdr WWI,	Oberstlt a.D.
von Hagen / Oblt	Inspk-Off	Inf	IR Nr. 23	27.1.1898 Z	IR 23, Hptm & JagB5 1905,	† 1911 on active duty
von Hake / KS Oblt	Inspk-Off	Kav	Sach G-RR	26.3.1899 Jj	Rttm 1905, Maj Sach G-RR 1914	Oberstlt a.D.
von Westernhagen / Oblt	Inspk-Off	Inf	IR Nr. 26	27.1.1900 R3r	IR 92, Hptm 1907, left army 1913, WWI recalled, retired late in WWI as Maj	† 12.9.1918 in Altheide, DE
v. Pressentin / Lt	Inspk-Off	Kav	DragR Nr. 18	27.1.1895 U2u	Oblt 1904, DR 18, trns to Res DR 17 1912,	unknown

Data from *Rangliste der Königlich Preußischen Armee, 1900-1914* editions.

Abbreviation: BatCO – battalion commander, Drag – dragoon, G.Arko – group artillery command, GFAR – Garde Feldartillerie Regiment, GGS – Großen Generalstab, GR – grenadier regiment, Inspk-Off – Inspektion Offizier, IR – infantry regiment, Inf-See-Bat – infantry sea battalion, JagB – Jäger Battalion, Kdr – commander, Kmd – commandant, LIR – Landwehr infantry regiment, Pion – Pionier (combat engineer), RIR – reserve infantry regiment, Rtd - retired, Sach G-RR- Sachsen Garde Reiter-Regiment, † - died,

Kriegsschule Course Participant Statistics

Fähnriche Data for Kriegsschule Engers 1898 Course (10 July 1898 - March 1899)

Branch / Adel	Inf	Adel	Kav	Adel	FAR	Adel	FuArt	Adel	Pion	Adel	Train	Adel	Tele	Adel	Eisen	Adel	Total Fähn	Total Adel	KIA WWI
All Inspks	62	10	15	9	5	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	86	20	32
% of all Course Mbrs	72.09%		17.44%		5.81%		1.16%		0.00%		3.49%		0.00%		0.00%			23.26%	34.41%
Adel % of Branch Mbrs		16.13%		60.00%		20.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%			

Data from BA-MA PH 21/57 (1898 Kriegsschule Engers)

Fähnriche Data for Kriegsschule Engers 1903 Course (19 April 1903 - 19 December 1903)

Branch / Adel	Inf	Adel	Kav	Adel	FAR	Adel	FuArt	Adel	Pion	Adel	Train	Adel	Tele	Adel	Eisen	Adel	Total Fähn	Total Adel	KIA WWI
All Inspks	48	16	10	6	11	5	5	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	79	27	17
% of all Course Mbrs	60.76%		12.66%		13.92%		6.33%		5.06%		1.27%		0.00%		0.00%			34.18%	21.52%
Adel % of Branch Mbrs		33.33%		60.00%		45.45%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%			

Data from BA-MA MSG 2/13673 (Akte Walter)

Fähnriche Data for Kriegsschule Danzig Course (4 April 1904 - 4 December 1904)

Branch / Adel	Inf	Adel	Kav	Adel	FAR	Adel	FuArt	Adel	Pion	Adel	Train	Adel	Tele	Adel	Eisen	Adel	Total Fähn	Total Adel	KIA WWI
Inspk 1	10	3	2	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	4	
Inspk 2	11	4	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	5	
Inspk 3	9	4	2	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	15	6	
Inspk 4	9	4	3	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	16	7	
Inspk 5	11	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	15	4	
Inspk 6	10	3	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	15	4	
Total Course	60	21	13	8	8	1	5	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	92	30	17
% of all Course Mbrs	65.22%		14.13%		8.70%		5.43%		2.17%		1.09%		1.09%		2.17%				23.26%
Adel % of Branch Mbrs		35.00%		61.54%		12.50%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%		0.00%			

Data from BA-MA N 503/V7 (Nachlass Hoth)

Notes: Three rosters for *Kriegsschule* courses between 1898-1904 were found at BA-MA. At most they represent five percent of the courses conducted at the ten *Kriegsschulen* during these six years and thus are statically insignificant. Nevertheless, the data is informative and likely sufficiently representative of the courses to be of value. Inf (*Infanterie*) includes all *Garde-Infanterie*, *Infanterie*, *Grenadier*, and *Jäger* regiments.

KS Engers 1898: The names and regiments of seven course members were lost and not included on the roster used to calculate the course statistics. The roster indicated that five *Fähnriche* left the course early (did not graduate). These were not counted in the course total, but the attrition rate for this course was 5.5 percent and hints at a likely attrition rate between three and ten percent per course. There was one *Garde-Inf-Rgt Fähnrich* in the course and he was a nobleman.

KS Engers 1903: All seven of the *Garde-Inf-Rgts Fähnriche* were noblemen.

KS Danzig 1905: Data allowed all six *Inspektionen* to be individually tallied. All thirteen of the *Garde-Inf-Rgts Fähnriche* were noblemen.

APPENDIX 3: PRUSSIAN ARMY OFFICER HONOR COURT REGULATIONS

Translation of Kaiser Wilhelm I's Introductory Order contained in the revised *Verordnung über die Ehrengerichte der Offiziere im Preußischen Heere, vom 2. Mai 1874.*

It is my will that the decree executed by me today concerning the courts of honor of the officers in My Army be understood and applied in the spirit that has distinguished My Army from time immemorial.

I therefore expect from the entire officer corps of My Army that, as before, so also in the future, honor will be its highest treasure. To keep it pure and spotless must remain the most sacred duty of the whole corps as well as of the individual. The fulfillment of this duty implies the conscientious and complete fulfillment of all other duties of the officer. True honor cannot exist without loyalty unto death, without unwavering courage, resolute determination, self-denying obedience, sincere veracity, strict reticence, as it cannot exist without self-sacrificing fulfillment of even the seemingly smallest duties. It demands also in the outward life of the officer that dignity expresses itself, which arises from the consciousness of belonging to the class to which the defense of throne and fatherland is entrusted. The officer should endeavor to choose only those circles for his social interactions in which good manners prevail. And in public places he must never lose sight of the fact that he must appear not only as an educated man, but also as the bearer of the honor and increased responsibilities of his class. The officer must refrain from all actions that could be detrimental to the reputation of the individual or the collective, especially refraining from all debauchery, drinking, and gambling, from the assumption of obligations with which even the appearance of dishonest behavior could be connected, from gambling-like stock exchange activities, from participation in profit-making societies whose purpose is not unimpeachable and whose reputation is not impeccable, as well as in general from every striving for profit in a way in which integrity is not clearly recognizable. He must not carelessly pledge his word of honor.

The more luxury and well-being proliferate elsewhere, the more serious is the duty of the officer class never to forget that it is not material goods which have earned and will maintain his highly honored position in the state and in society. Not only could the officer's martial prowess be impaired by an effeminate way of life, but the complete shattering of the foundation and ground upon which the officer class stands, is the danger which the pursuit of profit and a life of luxury would bring with it.

The more zealously the officer corps cultivates loyal comradeship and proper esprit de corps, the easier it will be for them to prevent outrages, to guide comrades who have gone astray back into the right paths, and to avoid useless quarrels and undignified squabbles.

The officer's justified self-esteem must never degenerate into a lack of respect for or superiority over other ranks. The more the officer loves his profession and the higher he regards its purposes, the more he will appreciate to what extent the full confidence of all classes in the officer's class is a condition for the successful and glorious solution of the last and highest task of the army."

I have confidence in the reserve officers and in the retired officers, to whom I have granted the continuing honorific of uniform and rank, that, as they continue to share in the honor of rank, they will always remain mindful of the obligation required to preserve this honor, even in their civilian circumstances.

The regimental commanders and those commanders to whom the same duties are assigned are responsible to me first of all for keeping alive a refined sense of honor in the officer corps of both the standing army and of the reserve. With the means at their disposal for the training of junior officers, they have the opportunity to exert influence on the preservation of the spirit, which alone makes an army great, and reaches far beyond the scope and duration of their own activity. They will be especially successful in fulfilling this duty when they earnestly urge the younger officers to follow the well-intentioned instructions of their older comrades. Furthermore, let the commanders leave no doubt that it is an essential duty of the older officers to watch over and train their younger comrades.

When by means of education, example, instruction, warning and command, incidents that require the judgement of officers, as ordered by the honor court regulations, will become increasingly rare.

The provisions of this regulation have the purpose of promoting the transmission of the proven traditions of chivalry in the officer's rank. And they provide the means to intervene in an orderly manner where an officer is accused of having damaged his honor or where he himself fears this.

In this context, the honor councils should be the primary agents of the commanders, while the latter are exclusively responsible for the direction of the honor courts and for the proper handling of honor court matters occurring in their jurisdiction. The honor councils shall also provide comradely advice to those of their comrades who turn to them concerning matters of honor. By making the composition of the officer corps honor councils dependent on election of peers, it is not only my intention to give the commanders particularly suitable structures for the often-difficult business in matters of honor, but also to find such officers for these official positions who possess the confidence of their comrades to such a high degree that they can successfully act as their appointed counselors in matters of honor. I presume that no officer will be guided in his choice by any motives other than those which coincide with my intentions.

The courts of honor, however, have the double task of both clearing the honor of the individual from unfounded suspicions by their decision, insofar as other ways of doing so are not open to him in accordance with his rank, and of intervening against those members of the corps whose conduct does not correspond to the proper sense of honor and the circumstances of the officer corps, in order to safeguard the honor of the officer corps. The cases in which such intervention may become necessary cannot be exhaustively determined in advance. My intention expressed above is intended to provide a guide for identifying them in detail.

At the same time, I assure you that the commanders, in proper appreciation of the punitive authority vested in them for the preservation of discipline and the maintenance of their authority, will not send such cases to honor courts which should be settled by disciplinary means, in order to not denigrate the weighty significance of an honorable court decision.

In all proceedings of the honor councils and the honor courts, the sense of mutual goodwill shall prevail in addition to the consideration of the preservation of class honor. The proceedings should be limited to discussion of the points of accusation and should not deal with secondary matters or be complicated and delayed by unnecessary formalities. It must also be ensured at all times that the internal affairs of the officer corps are not taken further outside its circle than is unavoidably necessary.

Trusting that noble morals and good manners will continue to grow in the officer corps of My Army, and that private quarrels and insults among officers will occur less and less frequently, I have suspended the procedure prescribed by Regulation II of July 20, 1843. Only for the officer who gets into a private

dispute with another officer that affects his honor, the obligation to report it, or have it reported by a comrade, to his honor council continues to exist, at the latest when he issues or receives a challenge to a duel. The honor council then must report to the commander immediately and, if possible, before the duel takes place. And to make an attempt at reconciliation wherever custom permits. If this does not succeed, however, then to ensure that the conditions of the duel are not disproportionate to the seriousness of the case. If a duel takes place, the president of the honor council or a member of it must go to the place of the fight as a witness and see to it that the custom of the officer corps is observed in the execution of the duel.

Only if one or the other of the parties involved has violated the honor of his class in the cause or settlement of the private dispute that has arisen, should action be taken against officers by way of a court of honor. This must happen in particular in the case, which is always possible, if an officer has sacrilegiously inflicted a grave insult on a comrade without any cause. For I will no more tolerate an officer in My Armies who is capable of violating the honor of a comrade in a sacrilegious manner than I will tolerate an officer who does not know how to preserve his honor.

The regimental commanders and those commanders equivalent to them are to see to it that every newly appointed officer of the standing army and of those in the reserves receives knowledge of my order. The officers of My Army are also to be often reminded of My will expressed here by occasional readings at meetings of the officer corps.

Berlin, 2 May 1874

Wilhelm.

Source: *Allerhöchste Verordnung über die Ehrengerichte der Offiziere im Preußischen Heere, vom 2. Mai 1874, und Ergänzungsordres.* (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1901), 5-9.

APPENDIX 4: MILITÄR-REIT-INSTITUT-HANNOVER OFFICER-STUDENT

ROSTERS

**Officer-Students Attending the Military Riding Institute and Officer's Riding School Course
School Years 1907/08 and 1908/09**

Officer-Student Course Roster- *Offizier-Reitschule* 1907-1908

Regiment	Rgt #	Class #	Rank	Title	Name
RdGdC		1	Lt	Erbgraf von	Bentinck und Waldeck-Limpurg
G-Kür		2	Lt	von	Neumann-Cosel
Kür	1	3	Lt	Frhr von	Buddenbrock
Kür	2	4	Lt	von	Levetzow
Kür	3	5	Oblt	von	der Trenck
Kür	4	6	Lt	Graf von	Merveldt
Kür	5	7	Oblt	von	Collani
Kür	6	8	Lt	von	Eggeling
Kür	7	9	Lt	Frhr von	der Borch
Kür	8	10	Oblt	von der	Decken
G-Reit-R (S)		11	Lt	von	Schwerdtner
Karab. R (S)		12	Lt		Merz
G-Drag	1	13	Lt	von	Livonius
G-Drag	2	14	Lt	von	Wagenhoff
Drag	1	15	Lt		Roth
Drag	2	16	Lt	Frhr von	Wilmowski
G-R z Pf	3	17	Oblt	von	Klitzing
Drag	4	18	Lt	von	Willert
Drag	5	19	Oblt	Frhr von	Grote*
Drag	6	20	Lt		Agath
Drag	7	21	Lt		Lauenburg
Drag	8	22	Lt	von	Rothkirsch und Panthen*
Drag	9	23	Lt		Koch
Drag	10	24	Lt		Braemer
Drag	11	25	Oblt	von	Horn
Drag	12	26	Lt	von	Reinersdorff-Paczenski u. Tenczin (Erwin)
Drag	13	27	Lt		Sauer
Drag	14	28	Lt	Frhr von	Schaezler
Drag	15	29	Lt		Lotz
Drag	16	30	Lt		Englemann
Drag	17	31	Lt	von dem	Knesebeck (Wedig)
Drag	18	32	Lt	von	Mecklenburg
Drag	19	33	Lt	von	Pape

Drag	20	34	Lt	Graf von	Yrsch-Pienzenau (Wilhelm)
Drag	21	35	Lt		Sommerhoff
Drag	22	36	Lt		Reiß
Drag	23	37	Lt	von	Werneburg
Drag	24	38	Lt	Frhr von	Eisenbach, Riedsel (Ludwig)
Drag	25	39	Oblt		König
Drag	26	40	Lt	von	Grävenitz
Leib-G-Hus		41	Lt	von	Esbeck-Platen
Hus	1	42	Lt	Graf zu	Solms-Wildenfels
Hus	2	43	Lt	vom	Kalau vom Hofe
Hus	3	44	Lt	von	Treuenfels
Hus	4	45	Lt	Frhr von	Gersdorff*
Hus	5	46	Lt		Wühlisch (Georg)
Hus	6	47	Oblt	von	Seydlitz-Kurzbach
Hus	7	48	Lt	von	Bennigsen*
Hus	8	49	Lt	von	Beck
Hus	9	50	Oblt		Pochhammer* (replaced by Lt Prieger)
Hus	10	51	Lt	von	Sybel
Hus	11	52	Lt		Pauwels
Hus	12	53	Oblt	von	Arnim*
Hus	13	54	Lt	von der	Lippe
Hus	14	55	Oblt	von	Hochwaechter*
Hus	15	56	Lt	von	Bandel
Hus	16	57	Lt		Stern
Hus	17	58	Lt	von	Finckh
Hus (S)	18	59	Oblt	Frhr von	Reitzenstein
Hus (S)	19	60	Lt	von der	Decken
1 G-Ulan		61	Oblt	Graf zu	Stolberg-Wernigerode, Carl*
2 G-Ulan		62	Lt	Frhr von	Reitzenstein
3 G-Ulan		63	Lt	von	Fabricius*
Ulan	1	64	Lt		Roether
Ulan	2	65	Lt		Saenger
Ulan	3	66	Lt	Frhr von	Nordeck
Ulan	4	67	Lt		Wendorff*
Ulan	5	68	Lt	von	Brentano*
Ulan	6	69	Lt	von	Steuben
Ulan	7	70	Lt		Brenken
Ulan	8	71	Lt		Krauseneck
Ulan	9	72	Lt	von	Kardorff
Ulan	10	73	Lt	von	Widdern, Cardinal*
Ulan	11	74	Lt		Frowein
Ulan	12	75	Lt		Glahn
Ulan	13	76	Lt	von	Löbbecke (Ferdinand)

Ulan	14	77	Oblt		Boege
Ulan	15	78	Lt		Wolff
Ulan	16	79	Oblt	von	Wachs
Ulan (S)	17	80	Lt	von	Minckwitz
Ulan (S)	18	81	Lt	Graf zu	Münster
Ulan	19	82	Oblt		Picht
Ulan	20	83	Lt	Frhr von	Wöllworth-Lauterburg
Ulan (S)	21	84	Oblt	von	Lüttichau*
Jag z Pf	1	85	Lt		Schweigge
Jag z Pf	2	86	Lt		Wernitz
Jag z Pf	3	87	Lt		Bruch
Jag z Pf	4	88	Oblt		Fischer
1 G-FAR	1	89	Lt	von	Briesen
2 G-FAR	2	90	Lt	von	Knoblauch
FAR	1	91	Lt		Gerlach
FAR	2	92	Oblt		Breithaupt
FAR	3	93	Lt	von	Kleist
FAR	5	94	Oblt		Boldt
FAR	7	95	Oblt		Lenne
FAR	8	96	Lt		Kochs
FAR	9	97	Lt	von	Walterstorff
FAR (W)	13	98	Oblt		Forster
FAR	14	99	Lt	von	Nippold
FAR	20	100	Lt		Bieler (Franz)
FAR	21	101	Lt		Kolaczek
FAR	24	102	Lt	von	Stumpfeld
FAR	25	103	Lt	von	Küchler
FAR	26	104	Lt		Mohrmann
FAR	33	105	Lt		Sinkel
FAR	34	106	Lt		Banck
FAR	35	107	Lt		Münchmeyer
FAR	36	108	Lt		Schrewe
FAR	40	109	Lt		Tölke
FAR	42	110	Lt	von	Portatius (Kurt)
FAR	46	111	Lt		Keitel
FAR	47	112	Lt		Bürkner
FAR (S)	48	113	Oblt		Weynert
FAR	51	114	Lt		Abegg
FAR	53	115	Lt		Ramin*
FAR	54	116	Lt		Braeuer (Hermann)
FAR	55	117	Lt	Frhr von	Hiller von Gaertringen
FAR	58	118	Lt		Bender
FAR	59	119	Lt		Schultze

FAR	63	120	Lt		Hoeckner
FAR (S)	64	121	Lt		Höfert
FAR (W)	65	122	Lt		Krengel
FAR	66	123	Oblt		Held
FAR	67	124	Lt		Güntzel
FAR (S)	68	125	Oblt		Rabe
FAR	73	126	Lt		Werner
FAR	74	127	Lt		Eckhardt
FAR	76	128	Lt		Weber
FAR (S)	78	129	Lt		Gauß

Data from Otto Fleischhauer, „Stammliste des Königlich Preußischen Militär-Reit-Instituts zu Hannover seit Gründung bis Kriegsausbruch August 1914“ IV. Teil, (Schreibmaschinenmanuskript), (BA-MA: PH 21/39), 167-174. “*Wohnungsliste des Militär-Reit-Institut am 1. Oktober 1910*“, (BA-MA: PH 21/33).

One foreign officer (Romanian) attended the course in 1907-1908.

* Indicates that officer was transferred out of the course before course end.

Bold indicates officer-student was in the second year of the two-year course.

The course roster is arranged by regimental precedence.

Abbreviation: Drag – dragoon, FAR –field artillery regiment, G – guards, G-FAR –guards field artillery regiment, G-Reit-R – guards mounted regiment, Gr R z Pf – grenadier regiment on horse, G-Ulan – guards lancer, Hus – hussar, Jag z Pf -- mounted rifles, Karab. R – mounted rifle regiment, Kür – cuirassier, Leib-G-Hus – life guard hussars, Lt – lieutenant, Oblt – first lieutenant, ORS – Officers Riding School, RdGdC – Regiment der Garde du Corps, Rgt – regiment, (S) – Saxony, Ulan – lancers, (W) – Württemberg.

Notes:

- One hundred twenty-nine officer-students (OS) were assigned to the course for academic year 1907/08. The academic year ran between 1 October 1907 and 30 September 1908.

- Forty-eight (37 percent) OS were second-year course members, the remaining eighty-one (63 percent) were first-year course members. This represented a higher than normal first-year course population. The was largely due to the large number OS who were dismissed in academic year 1906/07 for involvement in the gambling scandal and who would have been second-year course OS in 1907/08.

- The course had twenty-five *Oberleutnants* and one hundred four *Leutnants* for an approximately 20/80 percent split.

- Eighty-nine (69 percent) OS were cavalry officers, the remaining forty (31 percent) were artillery officers.

- Sixty-seven (52 percent) of the OS were noblemen. The aristocratic ranks represented: one *Erbgraf* (hereditary count), five *Grafen*, twelve *Freiherren* and forty-nine untitled noblemen. Of the sixty-seven aristocratic OS, there were fifty-eight (87 percent) ennobled cavalry OS and nine (13 percent) ennobled artillery officers.

- The *Militär-Reit-Institut* housing address list from 1 October 1910, indicated that forty-six of the one hundred thirty-two (24 percent) officer-students for academic year 1910/11 were married.

- Three of the OS in this year group went on to rise to the rank of *Generalfeldmarschall*: Keitel, von Küchler, and von Kleist. All three were artillery officers.

(Statistics based on 1 October 1908 enrollment data.)

Officer-Student Course Roster- *Offizier-Reitschule* 1908-1909

Regiment	Rgt #	Class #	Rank	Title	Name
RdGdC		1	Lt	Graf von	Lehndorff
G-Kür		2	Lt	von	Neumann-Cosel
Kür	1	3	Lt	Frhr von	Buddenbrock
Kür	2	4	Lt	von	Platen (Joachim)
Kür	3	5	Lt	Frhr von	Esebeck
Kür	4	6	Lt	von u. zu	Mühlen
Kür	5	7	Oblt	von	Collani
Kür	6	8	Lt	von	Eggeling
Kür	7	9	Lt	Frhr von	der Borch
Kür	8	10	Lt		Jaques
G-Reit-R (S)		11	Lt	von	Schwerdtner
Karab. R (S)		12	Lt		Merz
G-Drag	1	13	Lt	Frhr von	Lersner
G-Drag	2	14	Lt	von	Wagenhoff
Drag	1	15	Lt		Fuß* Oblt v. Osterroth transferred in
Drag	2	16	Lt	von	Moltke
G-R z Pf	3	17	Oblt	von	Klitzing
Drag	4	18	Lt	Frhr von	Buddenbrock
Drag	5	19	Lt	von	Butler
Drag	6	20	Lt		Agath
Drag	7	21	Lt		Lauenburg
Drag	8	22	Lt	von	Uechtritz und Steinkirch
Drag	9	23	Lt		Koch
Drag	10	24	Lt		Hevelke
Drag	11	25	Lt		Jumpertz
Drag	12	26	Lt	von	Reinersdorff-Paczenski u. Tenczin¹
Drag	13	27	Lt		Sauer
Drag	14	28	Lt	Frhr von	Schaezler
Drag	15	29	Lt		Lotz
Drag	16	30	Lt	von	Mansberg
Drag	17	31	Lt	Frhr von	Esebeck (Joachim-Friedrich)
Drag	18	32	Lt	von	Mecklenburg*
Drag	19	33	Lt	von	Pape
Drag	20	34	Lt	Graf von	Yrsch-Pienzenau (Konrad)
Drag	21	35	Lt		Sommerhoff
Drag	22	36	Lt		Reiß
Drag	23	37	Lt	von	Werneburg
Drag	24	38	Lt	Frhr von	Eisenbach, Riedsel (Ludwig)
Drag	25	39	Oblt		König*
Drag	26	40	Lt	von	Grävenitz* Lt Frhr v. Thermann*

Leib-G-Hus		41	Lt	von	Esbeck-Platen
Hus	1	42	Lt		Douglas (Harry)
Hus	2	43	Lt	vom	Kalau vom Hofe
Hus	3	44	Lt	von	Treuenfels
Hus	4	45	Lt	von	Boehm-Bezing
Hus	5	46	Lt	von	Wühlisch (Georg)
Hus	6	47	Oblt	von	Seydlitz-Kurzbach
Hus	7	48	Lt	von	Leyser
Hus	8	49	Lt	von	Beck
Hus	9	50	Lt		Prieger
Hus	10	51	Lt	von	Sybel
Hus	11	52	Lt		Pauwels
Hus	12	53	Oblt	von	Westrem zum Gutacker
Hus	13	54	Lt	von der	Lippe
Hus	14	55	Lt		Hellwig
Hus	15	56	Lt	von	Bandel* Lt von Voß transferred in
Hus	16	57	Lt		Stern
Hus	17	58	Lt	von	Hantelmann
Hus (S)	18	59	Oblt	Frhr von	Reitzenstein* Frhr v. Stralenheim trans in
Hus (S)	19	60	Lt	von der	Decken
1 G-Ulan		61	Lt	von	Flemming*
2 G-Ulan		62	Lt	Frhr von	Mirbach
3 G-Ulan		63	Lt	Frhr von	Geuder gen. Rabensteiner
Ulan	1	64	Lt		Roether
Ulan	2	65	Lt		Saenger
Ulan	3	66	Lt	Frhr von	Nordeck
Ulan	4	67	Lt		Kleffel (Paul)
Ulan	5	68	Lt	von	Brentano
Ulan	6	69	Lt	Graf von	Brül (Hans-Moritz)
Ulan	7	70	Lt		Brenken
Ulan	8	71	Lt		Krauseneck
Ulan	9	72	Lt	Graf zu	Rantzau
Ulan	10	73	Lt	von	Obernitz
Ulan	11	74	Lt		Frowein
Ulan	12	75	Lt		Grassmann
Ulan	13	76	Oblt	von	Flotow
Ulan	14	77	Oblt		Boege
Ulan	15	78	Lt		Wolff
Ulan	16	79	Oblt	von	Schallehn
Ulan (S)	17	80	Lt	von	Minckwitz
Ulan (S)	18	81	Lt	Graf zu	Münster
Ulan	19	82	Oblt		Picht
Ulan	20	83	Lt	Frhr von	Wöllworth-Lauterburg

Ulan (S)	21	84	Lt		Mieze
Jag z Pf	1	85	Lt		Schweigger
Jag z Pf	2	86	Lt		Wernitz* Lt Dulier transferred in
Jag z Pf	3	87	Lt		Bruch
Jag z Pf	4	88	Oblt		Preetzmann
Jag z Pf	5	89	Lt	von	Goßler
3 G-FAR	3	90	Lt	von	Kröcher
4 G-FAR	4	91	Lt	von	Hahn
FAR	1	92	Lt		Gerlach
FAR	2	93	Oblt		Breithaupt
FAR	3	94	Lt	von	Kleist
FAR	4	95	Lt	von	Michaelis
FAR	7	96	Oblt		Lenne
FAR	8	97	Lt		Koch
FAR	9	98	Lt	von	Walterstorff
FAR	10	99	Lt	von der	Decken
FAR (S)	12	100	Lt		Busch
FAR	18	101	Lt		Baarth
FAR	19	102	Lt		Wernick* Lt Mager transferred in
FAR	21	103	Lt		Kolaczek
FAR	23	104	Lt		Freyer
FAR	25	105	Lt	von	Küchler
FAR	26	106	Lt		Mohrmann
FAR (W)	29	107	Oblt	von	Rosenstock von Rhöneck
FAR	31	108	Lt		Stapenhorst
FAR (S)	32	109	Lt		Brürkner
FAR	34	110	Lt		Banck
FAR	41	111	Lt		Breithaupt
FAR	42	112	Lt	von	Portatius (Kurt)
FAR	47	113	Lt		Bürkner
FAR (S)	48	114	Oblt		Lobenhoffer
FAR	50	115	Lt		Sigriz
FAR	51	116	Lt		Abegg
FAR	52	117	Lt		Draudt
FAR	53	118	Lt		Walter
FAR	55	119	Lt		Lehmann
FAR	58	120	Lt		Bender
FAR	60	121	Lt	von	Keller
FAR	63	122	Lt		Hoeckner
FAR (S)	64	123	Lt		Höfert
FAR	66	124	Oblt		Held
FAR	70	125	Lt		Stellbrink
FAR	71	126	Lt		Heike

FAR	72	127	Lt		Krüger
FAR	75	128	Lt		Heydenreich
FAR	76	129	Lt		Weber
FAR (S)	78	130	Lt		Gauß

Data from Otto Fleischhauer, „Stammliste des Königlich Preußischen Militär-Reit-Instituts zu Hannover seit Gründung bis Kriegsausbruch August 1914“ IV. Teil, (Schreibmaschinenmanuskript), (BA-MA: PH 21/39), 167-174.

1. *Leutnant* Erwin von Reinersdorff-Paczenski und Tenczin transferred out early in the course and was replaced by his older brother, *Oberleutnant* von Reinersdorff-Paczenski und Tenczin.

There were no foreign officers reported as participating in the 1908/09 year group.

* Indicates that officer was transferred out of the course before course end.

Bold indicates officer-student was in the second year of the two-year course.

The course roster is arranged by regimental precedence.

Abbreviation: Drag – dragoon, FAR –field artillery regiment, G – guards, G-FAR –guards field artillery regiment, G-Reit-R – guards mounted regiment, Gr R z Pf – grenadier regiment on horse, G-Ulan – guards lancer, Hus – hussar, Jag z Pf -- mounted rifles, Karab. R – mounted rifle regiment, Kür – cuirassier, Leib-G-Hus – life guard hussars, Lt – lieutenant, Oblt – first lieutenant, ORS – Officers Riding School, RdGdC – Regiment der Garde du Corps, Rgt – regiment, (S) – Saxony, Ulan – lancers, (W) – Württemberg.

Notes:

- One hundred thirty officer-students (OS) were assigned to the course for academic year 19087/09. The academic year ran between 1 October 1908 and 30 September 1909.
- Seventy-three (56 percent) OS were second-year course members, the remaining fifty-seven (44 percent) were first-year course members.
- The course had sixteen *Oberleutnants* and one hundred fourteen *Leutnants* for an approximately 10/90 percent split.
- Eighty-nine (68 percent) OS were cavalry officers, the remaining forty-one (32 percent) were artillery officers.
- Sixty-five (50 percent) of the OS were noblemen. The aristocratic ranks represented: five *Grafen*, thirteen *Freiherren* and forty-seven untitled noblemen. Of the sixty-five aristocratic OS, there were fifty-five (85 percent) ennobled cavalry OS and ten (15 percent) ennobled artillery officers.

(Statistics based on 1 October 1909 enrollment data.)

APPENDIX 5: MILITÄR-REIT-INSTITUT-HANNOVER – ORGANIZATION

Staff, Faculty, and Support Personnel of the Military Riding Institute and Officer's Riding School 1907

Officers

- 1 *Generalleutnant* as Chief of the Military Riding Institute
- 1 Field Grade Officer as Commander of the Officer's Riding School
- 14 *Rittmeister* as Instructors
- 2 *Oberleutnants* as Adjutants (to Chief and Commander)

Doctors

- 1 *Major* (Doctor)
- 1 *Oberleutnant* (Doctor)

Civil Servants and Paymasters

- 1 *Major* or *Hauptmann* (Veterinarian)
- 1 *Oberleutnant* (Veterinarian)
- 1 *Oberleutnant* or *Leutnant* Paymaster
- 2 Junior Paymasters

Enlisted Personnel

- 2 First Sergeant
- 2 Staff Sergeants
- 14 Corporals with 2 as clerks and 2 as blacksmiths
- 1 Reenlisted from obligatory military service
- 7 Private First Class
- 159 Privates
- 1 Medical corporal

Temporarily Assigned Personnel

- 129 Officers as students
- 147 Privates as orderlies (Batmen)
- 1 Bugler
- 8 Blacksmiths

Duty Horses

- 263 Service Horses
- 6 Cart Horses

Total of: **211 Permanently assigned officers and men and 269 horses**
 285 Temporarily assigned officers and men and approximately 90 personal mounts
Grand Total **496 Officers and Men and more than 350 horses**

Note: The *Militär-Reit-Institut* had two subordinate schools, the Officers Riding School (ORS) and the Corporals Riding School. Only the staff of the *MRI* and staff and faculty of the ORS are annotated.
Source: Otto Fleischhauer, „Stammliste des Königlich Preußischen Militär-Reit-Instituts zu Hannover seit Gründung bis Kriegsausbruch August 1914“ I. Teil, (Schreibmaschinenmanuskript), (BA-MA: PH 21/38), 136.

Staff and Instructor Roster- *Offizier-Reitschule* 1907-1908

Name / Rank	Position	Assign	Parent Regt	DoR
von Festenberg-Packisch, August / Genlt	Chef MRI	4. 1906 †	MRI	27 Jan 1906 G
von Alten, Karl/ Oberst (as of 9 Feb 1908)	Chef MRI	2. 1908	G-Ulan Rgt 1	27 Jan 1907 U
Brecht, Hermann / Oberst	Kdr ORS	11. 1903	Ulan Rgt 14	13 Sep 1906 H
Baron Digeon von Monteton, Wilhelm / Oberst	Kdr ORS	2. 1908	Ulan Rgt 3	28 Jan 1908 G
von Restorff, Courtland / Rittm	Adj to Chef	9. 1905	Drag Rgt 18	13 Sep 1906 H6h
Frhr von Rotenhan, Hans / Rittm	Adj to Kdr	9. 1904	Ulan Rgt 3	13 Sep 1906 P6p
von Barnekow / Major	Lehrer	3. 1900	Gr R z Pf 3	15 Jun 1907 Rr
Coupette, Adolf / Rittm	Lehrer	9. 1902	Hus Rgt 8	18 Nov 1897 T5t
Berner, Gustav / Rittm	Lehrer	9. 1906	Ulan Rgt 12	17 Sep 1898
von Heusch, Sigismund	Lehrer	4. 1902	Drag Rgt 8	27 Jan 1900 M6m
Frhr Reichlin von Meldegg, Bernhard / Rittm	Lehrer	9. 1906	Drag Rgt 7	22 Mar 1903 M3m
von Jagow, Walter / Rittm	Lehrer	7. 1904	Hus Rgt 3	18 Apr 1906 W6w
Malotki v. Trzebiatowski, Friedrich / Rittm	Lehrer	4. 1902	Hus Rgt 6	18 Apr 1903 B7b
von Negeborn, Arthur / Rittm	Lehrer	9. 1905	Drag Rgt 24	19 Dec 1903 G
von Papen, Albert / Rittm	Lehrer	3. 1907	Ulan Rgt 6	15 Sep 1904 H7h
Frhr von Wrangel, Wilhelm / Rittm	Lehrer	9. 1906	Kür Rgt 3	15 Sep 1905 J5j
Graf von Königsmarck, Friedrich / Rittm	Lehrer	8. 1905	Ulan Rgt 13	27 Jan 1906 N3n
Witt, Otto / Rittm	Lehrer	5. 1907	Hus Rgt 11	10 Apr 1906 A2a
Frhr von Kirchbach, Karl-Werner / Rittm	Lehrer	5. 1906	Ulan Rg 12	21 May 1906 Ern
von Oesterley, Friedrich / Rittm	Lehrer	12. 1906	Hus Rgt 17	27 Jan 1902 W3w

Data from Otto Fleischhauer, „Stammliste des Königlich Preußischen Militär-Reit-Instituts zu Hannover seit Gründung bis Kriegsausbruch August 1914“ II. Teil, (Schreibmaschinenmanuskript), (BA-MA: PH 21/39), 150-151; *Rangliste der Königlich Preußischen Armee*, 1907, 1980 editions; and „*Wohnungsliste des Militär-Reit-Institut am 1. Oktober 1910*“, (BA-MA: PH 21/33).

Abbreviation: Drag – dragoon, Genlt – lieutenant general, Gr R z Pf – grenadier regiment on horse, G-Ulan – guards lancer, Hus – hussar, Kdr – commander, Kür – cuirassier, ORS – Officers Riding School; Rgt – regiment, Rittm – Rittmeister; † - died on active duty.

Notes:

- *Generalleutnant* August von Festenberg-Packisch died on 1 February 1908 while still on active duty. His replacement as of 9 February 1908, was *Oberst* Karl von Alten, who transferred in from command of the *1. Garde-Ulan Regiment*.
- *Oberst* Brecht, commander of the officers riding school was transferred to *Husaren-Regiment Freiherr von Manteuffel (Rheinische) Nr. 5* as commander on 18 February 1908. His replacement as commander of the officers riding school was *Oberst Baron* Digeon von Monteton as of 18 February 1908. The *Oberst* left command of *Ulanen-Regiment Kaiser Alexander II. Von Rußland (1. Brandenburg.) Nr. 3* (Fürstenwalde) for the *MRI*. At the time of *Oberst Baron* Digeon von Monteton's transfer from *Ulanen-Rgt Nr. 3*, three sons of Inspector General of Cavalry, *General der Kavallerie* Georg von Kleist were lieutenants in the regiment.
- The *Chef des Militär-Reit-Institut* was empowered with military discipline and leave-granting authority of a division commander. The *Direktor des Offizier-Reitschule* functioned as a commander and was empowered with the same authorities as a regimental commander.
- At the beginning of the academic year (October 1907), of the sixteen officers assigned to the *Offizier-Reitschule*, there was one *Oberst*, one *Major*, and fourteen *Rittmeister*. There were fourteen *Lehrer* (instructors); the longest ORS tenure was seven- and one-half years, the shortest was five months.
- All sub-branches of the cavalry were represented on the faculty. The breakdown was: One was a *Kürassier*, three were *Dragoner*, five were *Husaren*, six were *Ulanen*, and one was a *Grenadier zu Pferd*

officer. No *Feldartillerie* officers served as instructors despite approximately one third of each annual course coming from that branch. A further investigation shows that between 1890 and 1914, no artillery officer served as staff or faculty at the school. Likely, a search prior to 1890 would show that no artillery officer served in these capacities at the school. Even the most talented of artillery officers were not allowed to join as staff or faculty until their conversion to cavalry officers. A notable example was Felix Bürkner. In January 1914, Bürkner, an artillery officer-student member of the course 1907-1909 and member of the 1912 German Olympic Equestrian Team, joined the ORS as an instructor. Prior to his assignment to the school, he was branch transferred from artillery to cavalry and joined *Jäger Regiment zu Pferd Nr. 2* in April 1911, prior to the Olympics.

- Twelve of the sixteen officers (seventy-five percent) assigned to the *Offizier-Reitschule* on 1 October 1907, were noblemen, included one *Graf*, and four *Freiherren*. In early 1908, a non-nobleman (*Oberst* Brecht) was replaced by nobleman (*Oberst* Baron Digeon von Monteton) raising the percentage to eighty-one percent noblemen, with six of thirteen noblemen having titles.

- The *Militär-Reit-Institut* housing address list from 1 October 1910, indicates that both the Chef, MRI and the Kdr ORS were married. Thirteen of the fourteen officer instructors were married, and one of the two adjutants was married. One of the instructors was a *Major* and the remaining were *Rittmeister*.

APPENDIX 6: REITJAGDEN AT THE MILITÄR-REIT-INSTITUT

Reitjagden and the *Piköroffizier* at the Militär-Reit-Institut

Translation of Felix Bürkner's account of being a *Piköroffizier* (whipper-in) at the Military Riding Institute in 1908/09.¹

At the end of the first year, some of the "first-years" were appointed *Piköroffiziere* and thus recognized [for our riding skills].

With this appointment, we received the white-black *Piköroffizier* armband for life and were now allowed to ride in the red tunic during the *Wildjagden*, like the riding instructors, Master, commanders, and the Chief [of the MRI]. For each *Wildjagd*, the *Piköroffizier* were assigned by name at roll call as escorts of the Chief, the commander [of the Officers Riding School] or the Master. [We also could be assigned] for launching the game, if the terrain made this advisable, riding on the wings of the hunt field and as the trailing officer, or also to high-ranking guests as their escort officer. The "launching" of the boar required being mounted on a sure-footed and fast horse and the instinct of the hunter.

As a special test for the *Piköroffiziere*, a cross-country race wearing the red tunics was organized once a season. The race was quite tough requiring riding over a difficult, obstacle-laden course of about 6,000 meters. The race could have been started on the suggestion of the riding instructor because once someone was made a *Pikör*, for personal reasons and not because of his good cross-country riding. But this soon became apparent in such tests of the individual, which were carried out on the basis of heart and courage, and which could not be replaced by the best and most expensive hunting horses. The *Piköroffizier* races were ridden individually like a

¹ In this translation, "*Pikör*" and "*Piköroffizier*" are used interchangeably.

cross-country ride in the fastest possible time. This, together with the number of faults due to falls, jumping refusals, or stopping, gave the result. The jumps were firmly fixed.

Guests from the garrison as well as civilians were always welcome to the Hanoverian *Wildjagden*, so that we, especially at the Hubertus hunts, had about three hundred participating riders.² A regular guest was the famous Englishwoman, Miss Swinburne, who spent many years of her life in Hannover just to ride in the hunts. Although short-sighted, she rode with exemplary grit, which never waned despite many a bath in the Wietze.³ Her age could not be estimated. She was always in good spirits, a friend to us all, and her teas, at which the happiest mood prevailed, were regularly attended and enjoyed. In other private houses, too, we were often invited to tea after the hunts by civilian ladies and gentlemen who rode with us. For example, at the home of Herr von Cölln, who rode mighty Irish hunters, at the home of Frau Gerlach or the excellently riding Frau Dr. Hedwig Spickenboom, who was always well mounted, at the home of Bahlsen and others, where we always met the extremely entertaining Alex von Gustedt, with whom I became friends for life. He was the son of a former commander of the officer school, General von Gustedt, a reserve officer of the Schwedt dragoons, rode with Oesterley in the school stable, and later had many show successes on the beautiful chestnut mare Vicky, which he trained for a Bavarian owner and good rider, Mrs. Mauritz. We were good friends with his sisters, especially "Reh." A contemporary and participant in the sporting world was the young Kramsta, son of Exzellenz von Kramsta, the famous "Grüner", who even in his old age was an excellent rider and often appeared in civilian riding suit on a new, elegantly brought out horse at

² The Hubertus Hunt was held on or about 3 November, the day honoring St. Hubertus, the patron saint of hunters, as well as, mathematicians, opticians, and metalworkers.

³ A well-known water obstacle.

the old farm, rode his loops on a bare curb bit at roll call time and often found prospective buyers.

Source: Felix Bürkner, *Ein Reiterleben*, 2. Nachdruck der Ausgabe Verden/Aller 1957 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag AG, 2008), 73-74.

APPENDIX 7: ACCOUNT OF THE 1909 PRINZ HEINRICH FAHRT

Ewald von Kleist's account of his participation in the 1909 Prinz Heinrich Fahrt as a neutral observer

In the early summer of 1908 [sic 1909], I took part in a Prinz-Heinrich Fahrt as an impartial observer. These tours were a continuation of the Herkomer Prize and they contributed a lot to the development of our touring cars. In 1908 [sic 1909] the journey led from Berlin via Cottbus, Breslau, Ohlau over the Tatra Mountains to Budapest, Vienna, Salzburg, and Munich. For me, a lowly lieutenant, who had never made a big trip before, it was a marvelous experience.

I rode in a Horch car driven by a Darmstadt engineer Freiherr von Löw.¹ All of the Horch automobiles participating were looked after by their builder, Horch.² He also drove [the tour] in his own car with his wife and his master mechanic. At that time Horch was an independent manufacturer, later the factories in Chemnitz took over his name.

The tour demanded a measured speed test on the first and last day, one near Cottbus and the other in the Forstenrieder Park. Today I can no longer remember the speeds we reached. But in 1910, we already drove fifty-five miles per hour (ninety kilometers per hour) and faster. On the long-distance trip maximum speeds were not required. Every repair and fuel supply became difficult, because there were of course no gas stations as we have today.

On this occasion I also saw Silesia for the first time. I saw Jews in caftans and with long beards. The first night we stayed in Breslau, then in Tatranská Lomnica, Budapest, Vienna, Salzburg. Hungary welcomed us warmly, at the border was a big gate of honor with stuffed animals of the territory and a cold buffet. In the villages were gypsy music bands; the mayors

¹ Freiherr Ludwig Löw von und zu Steinfurth.

² August Horch. He won the 1906 Herkomer Trial with a car of his design and construction.

handing out salt and bread. In Budapest a great reception, one in honor of Prinz Heinrich. But also, because there was a particularly German-friendly atmosphere in Hungary, because we had provided loyal secondary aid during the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary. Austria's claims on Bosnia were derived from the Reichstädter Agreement (July 8, 1876). The question plays a recurring role in Bismarck's memoirs. On the evening of our arrival a large meeting took place in the combined officers' mess, to which delegations from all the Hungarian garrisons appeared. Active Austro-Hungarian regiments and Hungarian Honvéds. Afterwards, attired as we were in the mess dress uniform, we were taken by a Hungarian Rittmeister from one theatre cabaret to another. The performance was interrupted when we appeared. And the singer, etc., gave their best performance of their popular songs. The next day there were light athletic competitions on Margaret Island (the first time I heard and saw anything like that) and in the evening there was a magnates' ball, where you could see elegant dresses, lots of precious jewelry and the splendid Hungarian magnates' outfits.

From Budapest our cars drove at a snail's pace to Vienna. In the carburetor a kind of snow precipitation formed. This was explained to me as being caused by the carburetor's surface. They expected an advantage in the speed test with this [type of] carburetor. [Which, even though the tour was a test of reliability] the speed test would be [influential and] much spoken about.

In Vienna, a comrade's reception took place in the artillery officers' mess. We were guests of His Majesty Emperor Franz Joseph at [a performance of] Rheingold in the Court Opera House. Also, we were shown the Spanish Riding School and the riding section of a Hussar Regiment. All highly interesting and an experience for me. The Austrian Cavalry Regiments changed their garrison in rotation, after, I think after two years in the empire, they went to the

border regions, e.g., Galicia, where they served, cut off from all culture and civilization, often one squadron in a village. The officers had to learn to speak several languages. In Salzburg we were guests of the Kaiserjäger, this officer corps made a Prussian impression. In Forstenrieder Park, the speed test took place on the first, and at that time only, dust-free road in Germany.

Source: Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist, "Lebenserinnerungen und Plaudereien" (handschriftliche Manuskripte), Heft 2 (BA-MA: N 354/24, Nachlass Kleist), 38-42.

APPENDIX 8: KRIEGSAKADEMIE OFFICER-STUDENT ROSTER CLASS OF 1913

Kriegsakademie Officer-Student Roster Class of 1913

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H#	Adel	Name	Rank	H	Branch	Parent Unit	Rgt #	∞	GGs	RW
1		Bertram,	Oblt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	78	N		
2		Borries, von	Oblt	A	Inf	Garde Rgt zu Fuß	1	N	KzD	
3		Bulcke, Richard	Oblt	A	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	17	Y	W	N
4	von	Egan-Krieger, Edward Jenö von	Lt	A	Kav	Husaren Rgt	Leib1	N	KzD	N
5		Ehrhardt	Lt	A	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	22	Y	KzD	
6		Eilker,	Oblt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	78	N		
7		Erlenwein	Lt	A	Kav	Ulanen Rgt	7	Y	KzD	
8		Evert,	Oblt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	14	N		
9		Grabow,	Lt	A	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	73	N		
10		Graubner,	Lt	A	Kav	Dragoner Rgt	14	Y		
11		Hesse,	Lt	A	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	8	Y	KzD	
12		Hoth, Hermann	Lt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	72	N	KzD	Y
13		Hundt,	Oblt	A	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	31	Y		
14		Isenburg,	Oblt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	143	N	KzD	
15		Joachim	Oblt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	151	U		D
16		Koch	Oblt	A	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	8	N		
17		Koeppel, Werner	Oblt	A	Inf	Grenadier Rgt	6	Y		
18		Kohrt,	Lt	A	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	73	Y	KzD	
19		Koopmann,	Oblt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	29	N		N
20	von	Küchler, Georg von	Oblt	A	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	25	N	KzD	Y
21		Kühn	Lt	A	Eisenb	Eisenbahn Rgt	3	N	KzD	
22		Liebisch	Lt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	82	Y	KzD	
23		Loebbecke	Oblt	A	Kav	Dragoner Rgt	6	N		
24	von	Mackensen von Astfeld	Lt	A	Inf	Garde Gren Rgt	2	N	KzD	

25		Maenß	Lt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	26	Y	KzD	
26		Messerschmidt,	Oblt	A	Fußart	Fuß-Artillerie Rgt	2	N		
27		Mielke,	Lt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	176	N		
28		Moldzio,	Oblt	A	Kav	Dragoner Rgt	11	N		
29		Nübling,	Lt	A	Inf	Grenadier Rgt	123	Y		
30		Oertel,	Oblt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	117	Y	KzD	
31		Oesterreich	Oblt	A	Inf	Grenadier Rgt	8	Y		
32		Poppe,	Oblt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	46	N	KzD	
33		Potthoff,	Lt	A	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	52	N	KzD	
34		Raabe,	Oblt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	177	N		
35		Sander	Oblt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	116	N		
36		Schäfer	Oblt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	82	Y		
37		Schindler	Oblt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	131	N		
38		Schmidt	Oblt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	66	N		
39		Schroeter	Lt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	20	N		
40		Schwarz	Oblt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	23	N		
41		Seiffert	Lt	A	Inf	Füsilier Rgt	37	N	KzD	
42		Stengel	Oblt	A	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	47	N		
43	Frhr	Treusch von Buttlar-Brandenfels, Frhr	Oblt	A	Inf	Garde Gren Rgt	2	Y		N
44		Ulich	Oblt	A	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	48	Y		
45	von	Waldow, von	Oblt	A	Inf	Grenadier Rgt	1	Y		
46	Graf	Wartensleben, Graf von	Lt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	149	Y		N
47		Weiser	Lt	A	Inf	Füsilier Rgt	36	N	KzD	
48	von	Weitersheim, von	Lt	A	Inf	Garde Gren Rgt	4	N	KzD	Y
49		Welßien	Oblt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	26	N		
50	Graf	Westarp, Graf von	Lt	A	Feldart	Garde-Feldart Rgt	1	N	KzD	
51		Willisch	Lt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	125	N		
52	von	Zabiensky, von	Oblt	A	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	132	N		
53		Zipper	Oblt	A	Pion	Pionier Bataillon	3	Y		N
1		Berner	Oblt	B	Inf	Grenadier Rgt	123	Y		
2		Bitthorn	Oblt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	159	N		

3		Boehm, Walter	Oblt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	3	Y	KzD	
4	von	Boetticher, Friedrich von	Oblt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	64	Y	Y	iG
5		Böhme	Oblt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	1	Y		
6		Brill	Oblt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	88	N		
7	von	Budritzki, von	Oblt	B	Inf	Garde Rgt zu Fuß	2	N		
8	von	Bültzingslöwen, von	Oblt	B	Inf	Garde Rgt zu Fuß	4	Y		
9	von	Cossel, von	Lt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	18	N		
10		Elschner	Oblt	B	Fußart	Garde Fußart Rgt	1	N		
11	von	Ernst, von	Oblt	B	Inf	Grenadier Rgt	109	Y		
12		Eyssen	Oblt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	63	N		
13		Fiebrantz	Oblt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	36	N		
14	von	Giycki, von	Oblt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	64	Y	W	
15		Groppe, Theodor	Oblt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	131	N	W	iG
16		Güntzel	Oblt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	67	Y		
17		Hansen	Lt	B	Inf	Füsilier Rgt	9	N		
18	Frhr	Hausen, Frhr von	Oblt	B	Inf	Grenadier Rgt	100	Y		
19		Heinzel	Oblt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	63	Y		
20		Hofrichter	Oblt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	27	N		
21		Kaehl	Lt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	53	N		
22		Kanitz	Lt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	54	Y		
23	von	Keller, von	Lt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	105	N		
24		Kolaczek	Oblt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	21	N		
25		König	Oblt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	47	N		
26		Kutzen	Oblt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	117	U		
27		Laeis	Oblt	B	Fußart	Fuß-Artillerie Rgt	7	Y		
28		Langemeyer	Lt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	175	Y		
29		Mehlbürger	Oblt	B	Pion	Pionier Bataillon	10	N		
30		Merkel	Lt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	29	Y		
31		Neugebauer	Lt	B	Inf	Grenadier Rgt	9	N	KzD	
32		Oßwald	Lt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	126	N		
33		Pistor	Oblt	B	Kav	Dragonier Rgt	13	N		

34		Pitsch	Oblt	B	Inf	Füsilier Rgt	36	N		
35		Poten	Lt	B	Kav	Ulanen Rgt	8	N	KzD	
36		Pratje	Oblt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	34	N		
37		Rebling	Oblt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	63	Y		
38		Reimann	Lt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	26	N		
39	von	Rochow. Willy von	Oblt	B	Kav	Kürassier Rgt	6	N		
40		Schaffitzel	Lt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	88	N		
41	von	Schleicher, Kurt von	Oblt	B	Inf	Garde Rgt zu Fuß	3	N	W	iG
42	von	Schnehen, von	Oblt	B	Inf	Garde Rgt zu Fuß	3	N		
43		Schreiber	Oblt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	55	N		
44		Schulz	Oblt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	126	Y		
45	von	Schwedler, von	Lt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	88	Y	KzD	
46		Siemon	Oblt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	42	N		
47		Steinbeck	Oblt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	77	N		
48		Tewaag	Oblt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	59	N		
49	Frhr	Uckermann, Frhr von	Lt	B	Inf	Garde Gren Rgt	3	N		
50		Vogel	Oblt	B	Inf	Machinengewehr Abteilung	11	Y		
51		Voigt	Oblt	B	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	48	N		
52	von	Wallenberg, von	Lt	B	Inf	Garde Gren Rgt	1	N	KzD	
53		Wendorff	Lt	B	Inf	Jäger Bataillon	2	N	KzD	
54		Zurborn	Oblt	B	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	16	Y		
1	von	Arnoldi, von	Oblt	C	Inf	Garde Rgt zu Fuß	2	N	KzD	N
2		Baesler, (Bäsler)	Oblt	C	Inf	Grenadier Rgt	10	N	N	N
3		Bertrams	Lt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	88	N	KzD	KIA
4		Bohnstedt, Richard	Oblt	C	Pion	Garde Pionier Bat	-	N	KzD	N
5	von	Bonin, Erich von	Oblt	C	Inf	Füsilier Rgt	80	Y	W	iG
6	Frhr	Brand zu Neidstein, Max Frhr von	Oblt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt (W)	124	N	N	N
7		Brandeis	Oblt	C	Fußart	Fuß-Artillerie Rgt	11	Y	N	D
8		Diether	Oblt	C	Train	Train Bataillon	16	N	N	N
9	Frhr	Falkenhausen, Frhr von	Oblt	C	Inf	Grenadier Rgt	11	N	N	N

10		Fellinger, Hermann	Oblt	C	Pion	Pionier Bataillon	3	Y	N	D
11	Graf	Fink von Finkenstein, Graf	Oblt	C	Inf	Garde Rgt zu Fuß	1	N	W	N
12		Friecke	Lt	C	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	58	N	N	KIA
13		Gabriel	Lt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	74	N	W	N
14		Giseke, Helmut	Lt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	69	N	N	KIA
15		Groth	Oblt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	58	N	KzD	KIA
16	von	Gülich, von	Oblt	C	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	23	U	N	KIA
17		Hagen	Lt	C	Fußart	Fuß-Art Rgt (S)	12	Y	N	N
18	von	Heugel, von	Lt	C	Inf	Garde Gren Rgt	3	N	N	N
19		Hoffmann, Alfred	Lt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	21	N	KzD	Y
20		Höring	Lt	C	Feldart	Feld-Art Rgt (W)	29	N	KzD	iG
21		Kannengießer	Oblt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt (S)	103	Y	W	iG
22	von	Kleist, Ewald von	Oblt	C	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	3	Y	W	iG
23		Koellner	Oblt	C	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	44	Y	W	N
24		Krüger	Oblt	C	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	23	N	N	N
25		Kühlenthal	Oblt	C	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	23	Y	KzD	iG
26		Kühns	Oblt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	141	N	KzD	N
27		Lange	Oblt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	27	N	KzD	N
28	von	Lengerke, von	Oblt	C	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	11	Y	W	N
29		Lieber	Lt	C	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	72	N	KzD	iG
30		Mattner	Oblt	C	Inf	Grenadier Rgt	9	Y	KzD	N
31	von	Müller, von	Lt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	76	U	W	N
32		Neyman	Oblt	C	Inf	Grenadier Rgt	3	N	N	Y
33		Nieschling	Oblt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	71	N	W	N
34		Nietzsche	Oblt	C	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	48	Y	N	KIA
35		Otto, Albert	Oblt	C	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	43	N	KzD	D
36		Petersen	Lt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	32	N	KzD	iG
37		Pongratz	Oblt	C	Pion	Pionier Bataillon	12	N	N	Y
38		Pretzell	Oblt	C	Kav	Husaren Rgt	5	N	N	N
39		Püttmann, Wilhelm	Lt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	28	Y	N	KIA
40	von	Rosenberg-Gruszczynski, von	Lt	C	Inf	Garde Rgt zu Fuß	1	Y	KzD	N

41		Schmid, Hermann (Schmid-Dankward)	Oblt	C	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	55	Y	W	N
42		Schöne	Oblt	C	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	10	N	KzD	N
43	von	Schulenburg, Hans-Henning von der	Oblt	C	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	11	N	N	KIA
44		Schultz	Oblt	C	Feldart	Feld-Artillerie Rgt	51	N	N	KIA
45		Senftleben	Oblt	C	Kav	Regt Königs-Jäger zu Pferde	1	Y	W	N
46	von	Stülpnagel, von	Oblt	C	Inf	Garde Machgwhr Abt	2	Y	N	KIA
47		Taute	Lt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	126	N	KzD	KIA
48	von	Wedelstädt, von	Lt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	26	Y	KzD	N
49	von	Wegerer, von	Oblt	C	Inf	Füsilier Rgt	80	N	N	N
50		Weiß	Oblt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	26	Y	N	N
51		Weppen	Oblt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	120	Y	N	N
52		Weste	Oblt	C	Inf	Infanterie Rgt	82	N	KzD	N
53		Windelband	Oblt	C	Pion	Pionier Bataillon	19	N	N	KIA
54	von	Wrochem, von	Lt	C	Inf	Garde Rgt zu Fuß	2	N	N	N

Data compiled from from *Rangliste der Königlich Preussischen Armee, 1900-1914* editions; Bernhard Schwertfeger, “Lehrer an der Kriegsakademie und Tätigkeit im Großen Generalstab, 1909-1914” (BA-KO: N 1015/42, Nachlass Schwertfeger); *Militär-Wochenblatt 1910-1914*; and Registratur der Kommandantur von Berlin, *Militär-Adreßbuch (Taschen-Rangliste) der Militärbehörden und Institute des Standortes Berlin, Sommer 1913* (Berlin: No publisher information, 1913).

Abbreviation: Abt – Abteilung (battalion), Art – Artillerie (artillery), Bat – battalion, D – died between 1910-1924 non-combat cause, Feldart – Feldartillerie (field artillery), Fußart – heavy artillery, Gren – grenadier, H – Hörsaal (lecture section), H# – officer-student number within the Hörsaal, Inf – Infanterie (infantry), GGS – Großen Generalstab (Great General Staff), iG – im Generalstab (on the General Staff), KIA – killed in action during World War I, Kav – Kavallerie (cavalry), KzD – Kommandiert zur Dienstleistung bei Großen Generalstab (temporarily assigned to the Great General Staff), Lt – Leutnant (lieutenant), Machgwhr – Machinegewehr (machine gun), N – no, Oblt – Oberleutnant (first lieutenant), Pion – Pionier (combat engineer) Rgt – Regiment, Rgt # – number of the regiment, S – Saxony, Train – quartermaster, U – unknown, W – Württemberg, Y – yes, ∞ – married.

Notes:

- The roster is arranged first by Hörsaal (lecture section) and then alphabetically. The officer-student Hörsaal used is the initial one to which they were assigned in October 1910.
- The leading number is the officer-student's alphabetical position within his Hörsaal.
- The second column identifies the rank/title if the officer was ennobled.
- The rank given was the officer's rank at the commencement of his studies at the *Kriegsakademie* in October 1910.
- Officers who did not graduate from the three-year *Kriegsakademie* course are indicated with a ~~strike through~~ of their name. Graduation was assumed if the officer was listed in the May 1913, Berlin *Militär-Adreßbuch*.
- The officer's parent branch as of October 1910 is identified.
- The officer's parent regiment followed by the regiment's numerical designation is given and was as of October 1910.
- They symbol ∞ an abbreviation for "married." The officer's marital status is shown as of May 1913. A "U" indicates the officer's marital status is unknown.
- The GGS column indicates, when known, if the officer was further associated with the *Großen Generalstab*. KzD – *Kommandiert zur Dienstleistung bei Großen Generalstab* (temporarily assigned to the Great General Staff) indicates that the officer was ordered to a probationary period on the GGS in April 1914. A "W" indicates that the officer was either qualified as a GS officer during the war or that he performed in positions which normally were occupied by GS officers, e.g., divisional chief of staff.
- The final column indicates if the officer was retained in the Reichswehr after 1921. A "KIA" in this column indicates that the officer was killed in action during World War I. A "D" indicates that the officer died of non-combat related causes between September 1910 and May 1924. An "iG" indicates that the officer was qualified and served in the Reichswehr as a "general staff officer" despite the Versailles Treaty prohibition of the General Staff. The period of qualification and the official certification as a *Generalstabsoffizier* generally occurred during the officer's duties in World War I. A "N" indicates that the officer did not or was not transfer into the *Reichswehr*, while a "Y" indicates that the officer served in the *Reichswehr* after 1921.
- Blank cells in the last two columns indicate missing data.

APPENDIX 9 KRIEGSAKADEMIE COURSE SCHEDULE

Hörsaal Ic Academic Schedule 1910-1911

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8-9			Geography Prof Dr. Lehmann- Filkers			
9-10	Tactics Major Ezettritz	Military History Major Ezettritz	English 1 & 2	Military Law Dr Glasewald	History Prof Dr. Hoeniger	English 1 & 2
10-11				Fortifications Major Tiersch		
11-12		English 1 & 2	Arms & Ordnance Major Beckmann		Tactics Major Ezettritz	Military History Major Ezettritz
12-13						
13-14			History Prof Dr. Hoeniger			Military Hygiene Prof Dr. Hoffmann
14-15			Riding			Riding

This is specific to Ewald von Kleist and all other officer-students who were in English Section 1 or 2. English Section 3 and the Mathematics Section scheduled varied slightly from this schedule in the English and riding sections. All *Hörsaal Ic* officer-students attended the tactics, military history, arms and ordnance, military law, fortifications, and military hygiene classes together.

Source: Bernhard Schwertfeger, "Lehrer an der Kriegsakademie und Tätigkeit im Großen Generalstab, 1909-1914" (BA-KO: N 1015/42, Nachlass Schwertfeger). The schedule is derived from the printed Academic Year 1910/11 *Hörsäle* Class Schedule.

Kriegsakademie Course Schedules

Hörsaal IIc Academic Schedule 1911-1912

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8-9						
9-10	Military History Oberstlt. von Eisenhart-Rothe	English 4 & 5			Constitution Freiherr von Zedlitz	Riding
10-11			Tactics Major von Böckmann	Riding	Military History Oberstlt. von Eisenhart-Rothe	History Dr. Riehs
11-12	Naval Warfare Korv. Kapt. Köhler	Transportation and Communications Hauptmann Mossner		History Dr. Riehs		English 3 & 4
12-13	English 3 & 4		Fortifications Major Tiersch			
13-14		Topography and Surveying Major von Hahnke		Map Drawing Hauptmann Wagler	Riding	
14-15				Riding		

This is specific to Ewald von Kleist and assumes he was in English Section 4. English Sections 3 and 5 and the Mathematics Section scheduled varied slightly from this schedule in the English and riding sections. All *Hörsaal IIc* officer-students attended the tactics, military history, transportation and communications, fortifications, naval warfare, topography and surveying, map drawing, history, and constitution classes together.

Source: Bernhard Schwertfeger, "Lehrer an der Kriegsakademie und Tätigkeit im Großen Generalstab, 1909-1914" (BA-KO: N 1015/42, Nachlass Schwertfeger). The schedule is derived from the printed Academic Year 1911/12 *Hörsäle* Class Schedule.

Kriegsakademie Course Schedules

Hörsaal IIIc Academic Schedule 1912-1913

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8-9	Riding					
9-10	Siege Warfare Major Tiersch				Riding	
10-11	Tactics & GS Service Oberstleutnant von Rath		Military History GenMaj Kuhl		Military History GenMaj Kuhl	Tactics & GS Serv Oberstleutnant von Rath
11-12		Siege Warfare Major Tiersch				
12-13	English 7		Tactics & GS Serv Oberstleutnant von Rath		Tactics & GS Serv Oberstleutnant von Rath	History Prof. Dr. Hoetzsch
13-14		Surveying Major Launhardt	English 7			
14-15	Riding					

This is specific to Ewald von Kleist and assumes he was in English Section 7. The other English Section schedule varied slightly from this one. All *Hörsaal IIIc* officer-students attended the tactics and general staff service, military history, siege warfare, surveying, and history classes together.

Source: Bernhard Schwertfeger, "Lehrer an der Kriegsakademie und Tätigkeit im Großen Generalstab, 1909-1914" (BA-KO: N 1015/42, Nachlass Schwertfeger). The schedule is derived from the printed Academic Year 1912/13 *Hörsäle* Class Schedule.

APPENDIX 10: TECHNICAL INFORMATION ON STYLE AND FORMAT

The following information is provided as clarification regarding style and format.

Many of the individuals identified in this work have multiple forenames. The German style of the early twentieth century was to underline the name by which the person normally went by, e.g., Paul Ludwig Ewald von Kleist. This format is used when that name is known.

Ranks and titles appear as they would have at the specific point in time they are referenced. Prior to 1899, the German Army used francophone rank titles for junior officers. *Premier-Lieutenant*, *Seconde-Lieutenant*, *Oberstlieutenant*. In this work these are used prior to 1899 while post 1899 references use the Germanic rank, *Leutnant*, *Oberleutnant*, etc. For German Army ranks, ones which have no English equivalent or the English translation is inaccurate or confusing, the German rank is used.

German ennobled titles, ranks, German Army unit names, and German words are *italicized*. First usage of German words is accompanied by a parenthetical English translation. For words or phrases whose direct translation is unclear, an additional translation of meaning of the word is given, e.g., *Kopfkissenbezug* (head pillow cover, pillowcase). Additionally, German words that have crossed over into American usage or are familiar to English speakers are sometimes given English endings; “s” to indicate plural, or an apostrophe to indicate possession, rather than the grammatically correct German spelling.

Place names are given as von Kleist would have known them. A footnote accompanies these indicating the currently used name and its general location if obscure.

The military style of dates is used: day, month, year.

APPENDIX 11: AUTHOR INFORMATION

A work such as this emulates from an individual's acquired knowledge, both academic and experiential. In addition to my doctoral degree academic work, I bring to this work a significantly different experiential background, that is a set of experiences, education, and tools, than does the typical graduate student.

Without doubt the most significant experiences which bear on this work are from twenty-seven years of service as an active-duty U. S. military officer.¹ Nearly half of those years were spent in combat arms units and included three combat tours in the Middle East, one as a battalion level commander.² Initial officer education occurred through the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) rather than through the military service academy. Advanced officer education came at Fort Leavenworth, through both the Command and General Staff Officers Course and the School of Advanced Military Studies.³ Duty on military staffs at the battalion, division, corps (in combat), and army levels served to give the requisite staff skills required by a senior officer. My experience culminated with service as a chief of staff to a German lieutenant general in a North Atlantic Treaty Organization headquarters.

¹ The author entered active duty in the U.S. Air Force (USAF) in February 1987 after receiving a commission through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) and retired 27 years later. Trained as a fighter pilot, the author served four tours flying the F-16 and two flying the A-10.

² While having served in the USAF with its different unit nomenclature and service specific terms, army terms will be used for simplicity.

³ These two U.S. Army officer courses are each nine months long. Approximately half of the U.S. Army majors attend the Command and General Staff Officers Course (CGSOC). The School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) is a highly selective additional year's education following completion of CGSOC. When the author attended, approximately 3 percent of the army's majors were selected to attend SAMS. Taken as two-year course of study, CGSOC/SAMS is as close an approximation as any U.S. military service's operational level education is to Germany's previous *Kriegsakademie* and current Bundeswehr *Führungsakademie*. During SAMS, officer students receive courses in military history, theory, and single-component and joint-force military planning from upper tactical level through full-spectrum operational level operations to lower strategic level. SAMS graduates are awarded a Masters of Military Art and Science degree.

While a serving officer, I took advantage of several unique educational and experiential opportunities which bear on this work. First, while stationed at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, the author was a member of the Fort Leavenworth Hunt and rode to hounds for two foxhunting seasons.⁴ At the conclusion of the second season, the author “earned his colors.”⁵ The second unique opportunity occurred during a tour of duty in Germany when the author earned his “*Grünes Abitur*” (officially a *Jagdschein*; German hunting license) and successfully hunted wild game in Baden-Württemberg.⁶ All in all, the author spent over thirteen years stationed in Germany which provided numerous opportunities to learn more about Germany, the Germans, their culture, and their history.

Finally, in a different type of intangible experience, I have felt the exhilaration of successfully taking a three-and-a-half-foot jump atop a fox hunting horse. I have felt the adrenaline rush induced by riding a fifteen-hundred-pound steed at a full out gallop across freshly harvested fields in pursuit of the quarry. I have been awestruck by the serenity and beauty of a snow covered primeval German forest at midnight under a full moon in a hunter’s *Hochsitz* (raised hide). I have participated in the time-honored traditions and savored the comradery of fellow loden clad hunters around the bonfires after a *Drückjagd* (drive hunt). All

⁴ The Fort Leavenworth Hunt (FLH) was established in 1926. In 2000-2002, the period of the author’s FLH membership, the club was the last remaining military foxhunt club in America.

⁵ “Earning one’s colors” is the term for official recognition by an organized hunt club that the member has demonstrated sufficient equestrian and hunting skills to be elevated to a full member of the club. Demonstrated skills required include: a high level of general equestrian riding skills to include proven jumping skills over a minimum of 3 ½ foot obstacles, demonstrated skill at properly handling a horse in the hunt field (the name of the group of riders) and with the pack of hounds, thorough knowledge of horse care, a solid knowledge of the science and techniques of foxhunting, and a thorough knowledge of and proper use of foxhunting etiquette.

⁶ Earning a German hunting license is far more complicated and expensive than getting an American hunting license. In 2008, the earning of a *Jagdschein* required over 75 classroom hours of instruction and another 25 hours at a shooting range. The certifying test included 120 question written test, a practical test to demonstrate knowledge and safe hunting practices in front of an examining panel comprising three State of Baden-Württemberg Master Teaching Hunters, and three different practical shooting tests. Once earned, the *Jagdschein* is good for life, a hunter must merely maintain hunting insurance and pay an annal state tax to keep a license active.

of this has increased my perspective, and orientation with regard to von Kleist, his life, and his formative years, an expanded understanding that hopefully enhances this work.

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