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PAPERS OF AUGUST VON GNEISENAU,
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Introduction

The records reproduced in this microfilm publication consist of papers of August von Gneisenau, an officer of the Prussian Army who served with distinction in the Napoleonic Wars, was an outstanding figure in the military reform movement in Prussia, and was prominent in the intellectual and political life of his time as a leader of strong liberal and nationalist sympathies. The binders and folders in which these documents are filed bear the imprint of the Heeresarchiv at Potsdam, which was the custodian of the collection; in the classification scheme of this organization the collection was identified as "Lager No. 513." Some binders also bear the earlier label of the Geheimes Archiv des Kriegsministeriums or of the Kriegs Archiv des Grossen Generalstabes; these institutions appear to have been previous repositories for parts of the collection. The Heeresarchiv originally was a part of the Reichsarchiv; in 1936, however, it was separated from the Reichsarchiv, and all military records and related materials in the custody of the latter were transferred to it.

During military operations in Germany in 1945 the documents reproduced in this microfilm publication came into the possession of the United States armed forces. In 1947 the War Department transferred them to the National Archives, where they constitute part of a body of records designated as Record Group 242, World War II Collection of Seized Enemy Records.

Field Marshal Graf von Gneisenau was born at Schildau, near Torgau, Saxony, on October 27, 1760, and died at Posen on August 23, 1831. at the age of 20 he entered the service of the Margrave of Ansbach-Bayreuth and fought with his troops as British mercenaries in North America during 1782-83. In 1786 he joined the Prussian Army and took part in the Polish campaign of 1793-95. For the next 10 years he devoted himself to military and political studies while on garrison duty at Lowenberg and Jauer. On the outbreak of war with France in 1806 he fought in the battles of Saalfeld and Jena and in the spring of 1807 conducted the successful defense of the fortress of Kolberg, on the Baltic, holding out until the Peace of Tilsit was concluded. In July 1807 he was appointed a member of the Commission for Military Reorganization, under the leadership of Scharnhorst. When Napoleon forced the resignation of the Prussian Ministry under Stein, Gneisenau retired and went abroad, visiting England, Sweden, and Russia; in 1811 he returned to Berlin. At the outbreak of the War of Liberation in 1813, he was made a major general and appointed quartermaster general to Blücher, but upon the death of Scharnhorst he succeeded to the latter's post as chief of staff of the Silesian Army. After the successful campaigns of 1813 and 1814 and the conclusion of the first Peace of Paris he was rewarded for his services with the title of count (Graf). During the brief campaign of 1815, at Ligny and Waterloo, he was again Blücher's chief of staff; in July 1815, he was promoted to the rank of general of infantry.

After a short period as commander of the 8th Prussian army Corps in the Rhineland, Gneisenau again retired in 1816. Two years later he was named Governor of Berlin and a member of the

Council of State (Staatsrat). In 1825 he was advanced to the rank of field marshal. When the Polish insurrection of 1830 broke out, an Army of Observation was organized to protect the Prussian frontier and Gneisenau was appointed to command it; while on this duty he died of cholera at Posen, August 23, 1831.

This collection of Gneisenau's private and official papers consists, in general, of letters and reports sent and received, manuscript and printed copies of Cabinet orders, tables of disposition of troops of the Prussian and other armies, military and political studies and memoranda prepared by or submitted to Gneisenau, muster rolls and other records of units of the Prussian Army, and directives and circular letters by the Prussian Ministry of War. The papers concern such topics as the defense of Kolberg; the campaigns of 1813, 1814, and 1815; negotiations with the French Government, 1814 and 1815; and the administration, organization, training, and equipment of the Prussian Army.

A register of the Gneisenau papers prepared by the Heeresarchiv is reproduced on Roll 1 of this microfilm publication. The documents have been microfilmed in accordance with the original sequence of items (Stücke) established by the Heeresarchiv. Several of the documents listed in the register were, however, missing from the collection when it was received by the National Archives. The following Stücke are not present:

Section A:

A5

Section K:

I/10, I/11, I/27, I/48, I/56, I/58, I/59, II/8, II/10, III/4

Section M:

4(26), 5(26), 7(27), 9(27)

In addition to the above missing items there are frequent other gaps in the order of the Stücke, caused by omissions, either intentional or accidental, in numbering. It should be noted also that the third volume of the register, designated "A Abt.-II," which was intended to be a register of miscellaneous personal letters received by Gneisenau, arranged in alphabetical order by name of correspondent, has been completed only up to the name "Roehl."

Most of the documents are in German, but many of the letters to and from English and Russian correspondents are in French, and there are a few items in Polish, Italian, and English. Some captured French correspondence is also among the papers.

Table of contents, showing the distribution of the Stücke and describing briefly the contents of each roll, is reproduced on each of the 40 rolls of this microfilm publication.

In addition to the Gneisenau papers, Record Group 242 in the National Archives includes about 48 linear feet of other records formerly in the Heeresarchiv at Potsdam. These include the papers of such German military figures as Hermann von Boyen, 1771-1848 (reproduced as microcopy 207); Wilhelm Groener, 1867-1939 (Microscopy 137); Helmuth von Moltke, 1800-1891; Albrecht von Roon, 1803-79; Gerhard von Scharnhorst, 1755-1813; Alfred von Schlieffen, 1833-1913; and Hans von Seeckt, 1866-1936 (Microscopy 132). Also included in this record group is a collection of German military documents, 1679-1935 (Microscopy 129), that appears to have been prepared by the Hitler government as an exhibit for propaganda purposes.

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1	Heeresarchiv registers of the Gneisenau papers Section A, Stücke A3, A1, A25, A10: Copies of Prussian cabinet orders (issued over the King's signature) to Gneisenau and to other officers and government officials. 1806-31, relating to such subjects as the organization of the artillery and engineer department (1808), fortification of Spandau and Breslau (1808-9), employment of the Landwehr, and instructions for corps and brigade commanders (1813); letters and reports from Gneisenau to the King, 1785-1831; and letters and studies by Gneisenau dated before 1812, relating to certain aspects of strategy in the war against Napoleon and other subjects.
2	Section A, Stücke A8, A16, A4: Letters and studies by Gneisenau, 1816-31, including observations on the status of the Radziwill family (1824), maneuvers in Silesia (1828), and insurrection in Poland (1831); and miscellaneous studies and notes by Gneisenau, some undated and the others dated before 1806, relating mainly to his household and farm management.
3	Section A, Stücke A15, A11: Notes and studies by Gneisenau, 1806-31, including personal financial accounts (1818-20) and genealogical notes; and miscellaneous studies, 1798-1831, by various authors, relating to such subjects as the redistribution of Polish lands in South Prussia (1794-98), the location and composition of Russian Army units (1811), foreign troops in North Germany (1811), siege warfare (1815), a Russian plan of operations against Turkey (1821), the revolution of 1830 in France, and Prussian military organization (1830, by Clausewitz).
4	Stücke A, Stücke A9, A17, A13, A7: Mainly letters and reports received by Gneisenau in the campaigns of 1813, 1814, and 1815 from subordinate officers during field operations in Germany and France, relating to matters of supply, movement of troops, disposition of the Prussian forces, and similar subjects; and a few copies of letters sent or received by such persons as Blücher or Scharnhorst during those years.
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- Princess Wilhelm of Prussia, 1811-30; and letters to Gneisenau from Clausewitz, 1809-28.
- 8 Section A, Stücke A33-A39: Letters to Gneisenau from General von Clausewitz, 1829-31, and Frau von Clausewitz, 1813-31; from General Wilhelm von Scharnhorst and his family, 1816-31; from Duke Frederick William of Brunswick, 1810-15, Prince Blücher, 1807-18, General Gerhald von Scharnhorst, 1808-13, and others; from Prince Anton Radziwill and his son Ferdinand, 1813-30; and from Generals von dem Knesebeck and von Grolman, 1813-25.
- 9 Section A, Stücke A40-A46: Letters to Gneisenau from General von Muffling, 1813-29; from General von Boyen, 1810-27 (there are also copies of several letters from Gneisenau to Boyen, 1815-29); from War Minister von Hake, 1815-31; from Hardenberg, 1811-22, and Humbolt, 1813-30; from Stein, 1809-31 (mainly copies); from Finance minister von Bülow and others, 1808-25; and from Generals von Valentini, von Pfuel, Bülow von Dennewitz, Kleist von Nollendorf, de Moulin, von Thielmann, von Rottenburg, von Steinmetz, and von Krauseneck, 1809-29.
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- 13 Section A, Stücke A64-A69, A73: Official reports from Councilor von Ribbentrop, 1815-26; letters from Minister Graf von Reden, 1810-11, and from his widow, 1816-30; letters from Herr E. F. Schröder of Kolberg, 1808-13, and his widow, 1814-25; letters from General von Rüchel, 1813-15; "English Correspondence," 1812-16, consisting of letters from Lt. Gen. Charles Stewart, Maj. Gen. Hudson Lowe, King William of Holland, Prince William of Orange, King Max Joseph of Bavaria, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Castlereagh, Nesselrode, Metternich, and others; and commissions, diplomas, citations, passports, and other personal documents issued or granted to Gneisenau, including his military commissions from the rank of major to that of field marshal, 1806-29.
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