

**THE SPIRIT OF MILITARY
INSTITUTIONS:
OR, ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES
OF THE ART OF WAR**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649122059

The spirit of military institutions: or, Essential principles of the art of war by Marshal Marmont & Henry Coppée

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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MARSHAL MARMONT & HENRY COPPÉE

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THE SPIRIT
OF
MILITARY INSTITUTIONS;
OR,
ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES
OF
THE ART OF WAR.

BY
MARSHAL MARMONT,
DUKE OF RAMONA.

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATEST EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED
BY THE AUTHOR,

WITH ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES,

BY HENRY COPPÉE,
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
LATE AN OFFICER OF ARTILLERY IN THE SERVICE OF THE U. S.



PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1862.

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J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Eastern  
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MARSHAL MARMONT'S DEDICATION.

TO THE ARMY.

I DEDICATE my book to the army.

The army was my cradle; I have passed my life in its ranks. I have constantly shared in its labors, and more than once I have shed my blood, in those heroic times the memory of which shall never be lost.

Arrived at that age when all the interest and the consolations of life are found in meditating upon the past, I address to the army a last token of remembrance.

The soldiers, my companions in arms, united in themselves all the military virtues. To valor and to the love of glory, natural to Frenchmen, they joined a great respect for discipline and an unlimited confidence in their commander,—the first elements of success.

And thus, under my command, never, with equal forces, have they been beaten. Often conquerors, in spite of inferiority of numbers, they but very seldom yielded even to an immense superiority of force, or to the fatality of circumstances, and even then they always remained formidable enough, in the midst of reverses, to cause the enemy almost to regret his victory.

The soldiers of the present day march worthily in the footsteps of their predecessors; and the courage, patience and energy which they have unceasingly displayed in the long and painful war in Africa, demonstrate that always and everywhere they will respond to the needs and the exigencies of the country.

The former were the object of my most assiduous cares and of my liveliest solicitude.

The latter, as long as I live, shall have my warmest sympathies.

THE MARSHAL DUKE OF RAGUSA.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE work now presented to the public has remarkable claims to the respectful attention of military men.

The French title, "*De l'Esprit des Institutions Militaires*," is perhaps most exactly translated, "Essential Principles of the Art of War." Here then will be found a condensation of these principles, not gathered from books, but presented from the author's experience of campaigns in which he played important parts, and on battle-fields of which he was an eye-witness, and, in many cases, a commander of the highest grade.

A brief enumeration of the principal events in his career will prove that he was essentially a fighting man and a skilful general, who has won the right to lay down the principles and make the criticisms contained in this work.

AUGUSTUS FREDERICK LOUIS VIKAR DE MARMONT was born at Châtillon, on the Seine, July 20, 1774. He was a sub-lieutenant before he was sixteen; and was with General Bonaparte at Toulon, and during the campaign of 1796 in Italy. He was the first man to disembark of the expedition to Egypt. Having returned with Bonaparte to France, he was with him on the 18th Brumaire; and in the campaign of 1800 he was director of the artillery, in its difficult passage over the St. Bernard and under the guns of the Fort of Bard, as well as on the victorious field of Marengo. At the end of the campaign he was general of division. He rendered excellent service at Wagram in 1809; and at Znaim was made Marshal of the Empire and Duke of Ragusa. Transferred to the command of the army of Portugal in place of Massena, in 1811, he displayed great skill; but lost the battle of Salamanca, being wounded early in the action. His arm was amputated a few days afterwards, and he was incapacitated from taking the field until 1813. In that year his genius and valor were splendidly conspicuous at Lützen, Bautzen, Dresden and Leipsic. In the terrible battle around Leipsic,

of which he gives us such graphic glimpses, he was badly wounded in several fingers of the remaining hand; but, guiding his horse with one sound finger, he charged the enemy at the head of his reserves.

Too much praise cannot be accorded him for his untiring energy and cheerful valor in the movements upon French soil in 1814. The fields of Brienne, Champ-Aubert, Vauchamps, Montmirail and others bear witness to his worth. His dispositions for the defence of Paris, and the battle which he fought there against overwhelming numbers on the 30th of March, 1814, were a fitting close of his military life; they were splendid efforts.

I need not enter upon the question of his evacuation of the city, and his submission to the Bourbons, further than to say that he was empowered by Joseph Bonaparte to open a conference with the allies, and that he stipulated for a guarantee of life and liberty to the Emperor Napoleon.

My task does not require me to speak of his career under the Restoration: he remained true to the Bourbons.

Those who desire fuller information may find it in his *Memoires*, 9 vols. 8vo., in which he vindicates his political and military conduct.

I have kept as close to the original as the idiom would permit, so as to present the author's very words: the few notes, generally of a popular character, are designed for elucidation to the general reader: the military man will find the original clear enough without notes. The author's notes are marked with the initial of his name, M.

My object in translating the work is to offer to the patriotic soldiers now in the field, in defence of the government, constitution and laws, a summary of the great practical principles of the art of war, which they may daily apply. Indeed, I have been struck by finding on almost every page some exact elucidation of military questions now arising, explanations of our military successes, and reasons for the reverses we have sustained. This is not a proper time to draw the parallels; they must be left to the intelligence of the reader and the labors of the future historian.

H. C.

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Scarcity of good military books. Special treatises do not contain the principles of the art. Character of the writers of antiquity —Polybius and Vegetius, more curious than useful, (note.) Character of modern war. Difficulty of command in the modern art. In what it consists. Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Reveries of Chevalier Folard. Camp of Bayeux, and experiments of Dumesnil-Dursand. General Roguist. Particular object of the present work. Richness of our military literature. Works of the first order. Writings of Napoleon. "Principles of strategy" of the Archduke Charles. Marshal Gouvion Saint-Cyr. Twenty campaigns and fifty years of experience..... 25

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GENERAL THEORY OF THE MILITARY ART.

CHAPTER I.

Definitions.

The art of war. Genius for war. Necessity of a knowledge of human nature. Why one man may be worth ten, and how ten men are not worth one. Mind and character. Military arts.