THE PLAINS OF MARS
European War Prints, 1500-1825

Selections from the Collection of the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation
Melissa Casale ’19 and Bailey Harper ’19
Under the Direction of Felicia Else and Shannon Egan
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# Table of Contents

5 Acknowledgments  
*Shannon Egan*

7 Renaissance Personifications: Putting a Face to Warfare and Peace  
*Melissa Casale ’19*

11 Soldiers and Their Weapons: The New Infantry and Artillery for the Renaissance Age  
*Melissa Casale ’19*

16 “English Dogs and French Frogs”: British Political Caricature in the Eighteenth Century  
*Bailey Harper ’19*

21 *No se puede mirar (One cannot look at this)*: Early Romantic Depictions of the Napoleonic War  
*Bailey Harper ’19*

29 Selected Prints

30 Albrecht Dürer, *The Knight on Horseback and the Landsknecht*  
*Melissa Casale ’19*

33 Hendrick Goltzius, *Allegory of War*  
*Melissa Casale ’19*

34 Lucas Cranach the Elder, *The Second Tournament with Lances, Staves, and Swords (The Second Tournament with the Tapestry of Samson and the Lion)*  
*Melissa Casale ’19*

36 Jacques Callot, *The Miseries and Misfortunes of War*  
*Melissa Casale ’19*

41 Nicholas-Toussaint Charlet, *Soldier at a Print-Seller’s Stand (Seriez-vous sensible?)*  
*Bailey Harper ’19*

42 Theodore Falckeysen after Benjamin West, *The Death of General Wolfe*  
*Bailey Harper ’19*

45 Francisco de Goya, *Tristes presentimientos de lo que ha de aconter (Sad presentiments of what must come to pass)*  
*Bailey Harper ’19*

46 Jean-Pierre-Marie Jazet after Horace Vernet, *Le Soldat de Waterloo (The Waterloo Soldier)*  
*Bailey Harper ’19*
Acknowledgments

This exhibition is made possible by a generous loan from the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation. I am grateful for early conversations between Felicia Else, Professor of Art History at Gettysburg College, and James Clifton, Director of the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation and Curator of Renaissance and Baroque Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, for initiating this opportunity to view over fifty original prints by renowned artists from the sixteenth through the early nineteenth century. *The Plains of Mars: European War Prints, 1500-1825* features works by Albrecht Dürer, Lucas Cranach, Théodore Géricault, and Francisco de Goya, among many others, and is an iteration of the larger exhibition curated by Dr. Clifton. The exhibition catalogue of the same title, published by Yale University Press, was written by Dr. Clifton and Leslie M. Scattone with Emine Fetvaci, Ira D. Gruber, and Larry Silver, and serves as a significant source for understanding the topics of war and peace, propaganda, heroism, brutal conflicts, and the harrowing aftermath of battle.

Spanning from the Renaissance to the Romantic periods and encompassing a wide geographic scope including Italy, Germany, France, Spain, the Low Countries, England, and North America, the prints in this exhibition depict triumphant Renaissance soldiers, devastating scenes of violence, and satirical caricatures of political figures. The earliest battle depicted in the exhibition is the French invasion of Italy in 1494 and the latest prints address the end of the Napoleonic Wars; many of the prints directly examine the emotional and physical effects of vicious conflict. For instance, Goya’s compelling “Disasters of War” series, completed in response to the brutality of the Spanish War of Independence, are included in the exhibition and serve as a powerful testament to the horrors faced by both soldiers and civilians.

Art history students Melissa Casale ’19 and Bailey Harper ’19 researched and wrote the essays that follow in this catalogue. Thanks are due to the Kolbe Summer Fellows Program and to Maureen Forrestal, Assistant Provost for Student Scholarly Engagement and Dean of Fellowships, Scholarships and Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity, for the support of Bailey’s study of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century prints, and to Prof. Else for her dedicated attention to Melissa’s research of prints from the Renaissance.

Special thanks are given to Professor Peter Carmichael, Director of the Civil War Institute, for drawing connections between the depictions of warfare on view in the Gallery with representations of the American Civil War in a public Gallery Talk. We are honored, too, that Dr. Clifton will be delivering a lecture in conjunction with the exhibition. Dr. Clifton not only will provide an overview of the exhibition, but also will focus on the concept of “mediated war.”

John Obsta, Associate Registrar for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and Josine Corstens, Curatorial Assistant for the Sarah Blaffer Campbell Foundation, provided invaluable assistance with the loan of the prints from Texas. Leslie Casteel, Academic Administrative Assistant for Schmucker Art Gallery, and Sydney Gush, Preparator, Outreach Coordinator and Digital Scholarship Assistant, for Schmucker Art Gallery and Special Collections and College Archives, Musselman Library, are owed tremendous thanks for their committed and consistently excellent work. I am always appreciative of Ayumi Yasuda’s elegant and impeccable graphic design. Finally, the exhibition is supported in part by the Civil War Institute, the Department of Art and Art History, and EPACC, Gettysburg College. I am grateful for the Schmucker Art Gallery Advisory Committee and the larger Gettysburg College community for their dedication to our exhibitions and programs.

— Shannon Egan, Ph.D.
Director, Schmucker Art Gallery
TOP
Stefano Della Bella
(Italian, 1610-1664)
Death on the Battlefield
c. 1648
etching with engraving
8 ¾ × 11 ¾ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer
Foundation, Houston
BE2000.25

BOTTOM
Cornelius Schut
(Netherlandish, 1597-1655)
Fortune and Peace
c. 1630
etching and engraving
10 ¾ × 7 ¾ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer
Foundation, Houston
BE2000.16
Renaissance Personifications: Putting a Face to Warfare and Peace

Melissa Casale ’19

Artists in the Renaissance often represented abstract concepts such as life, death, love, virtue, and justice as personifications. The human forms used to convey these complex notions are often depicted as the idealized human figure as deities and allegories often seen in classical antiquity. The perfectly proportioned bodies are draped in classical clothing and reflect the Greco-Roman imagery that was popular during the Renaissance period. Such figures allowed audiences to reflect on the effects of war and peace with great subtlety, elaborating on the fears and hopes of those who endured conflict. This exhibition allows viewers to experience such images in which these conceptual ideas are given human form.

Stefano Della Bella’s Death on the Battlefield (1648) illustrates the figure of Death riding on a similarly decrepit horse through a fierce battle scene. The complex iconography of Death as an active skeletal figure takes inspiration from multiple visual traditions. One such tradition stems from Baroque funerary celebrations, which often included skeletons as part of extravagantly decorated churches; they were dressed in elaborately plummed headpieces and billowing drapery. The figure of Death also bears a resemblance to other visual representations of the fourth horseman of the Apocalypse described in the Book of Revelation; here, the horseman of Death, often portrayed as a skeletal figure on a horse, tramples over his victims. Della Bella’s image of Death also alludes to the medieval Dance of Death, which illustrates the idea that everyone is equal in the face of Death. In depictions of the Dance of Death, living figures are shown either dancing with or in the embrace of skeletal figures. In Della Bella’s print, Death is the only victor of the fierce battle while everything and everyone else around him is lead to devastation.

It is the harsh truth that death and war go hand in hand with one another. Both can be difficult events to fathom, making them ideal themes in allegorical works. Hendrick Goltzius’s Allegory of War (1578) (page 32) presents a complex picture of personifications and symbols, many influenced by classical antiquity, that come together to convey the destructive nature of war. War (Bellum) is dressed in armor and riding in a chariot, similar to how Mars, the god of war, is often depicted in antiquity. The chariot is preceded by a host of female personifications on horseback: Ambition (Ambitio), Insult (Contumelia), Contempt (Despectio), Sins of the People (Pessata Populi), Divine Punishment (Punitive Dei) Rebellion (Rebellion), and Injury (Iniuria), each evoking causes of warfare. These horrors of war emerge from the mouth of Hell in the lower right corner. The winged figure of Victory (Victoria) hovers over the scene on a cloud in the upper center. Latin verses the upper left corner state the danger of war’s folly: “This painted picture teaches that you groups who would lead the Moors into impious wars are dealing with raging Bellona and the cruel conjunctions of Mars.” With this verse comes the reinforcement that the true nature of war is devastation, making the prospect of peace much more appealing.

Allegorical prints of death and war emphasize the devastation seen in actual conflict, and personifications of peace and harmony offer viewers much more tranquil and hopeful compositions. For instance, in Cornelius Schut’s Fortune and Peace (1630) the figure of Peace leads Fortune by the hand down a sloping hill. The two figures are identified by their attributes—Peace with her laurel-wreath crown and palm frond, and Fortune standing on a sphere, representative of the Earth and her influence over it. Schut has chosen to portray Fortune with her hair down and flowing around her, a feature more characteristic of Occasio-Fortune, or Opportunity. In the seventeenth century, Fortune’s hair would be grasped to indicate the seizing of opportunity. However, in Schut’s print, Peace does not grasp Fortune’s hair and instead leads her by the hand. This gesture suggests a much gentler partnership between the two, perhaps insinuating that peacetime has been continuously sustained rather than brought about after a violent war.

Agostino Carracci’s Mars Driven Away from Peace and Abundance by Minerva (1589) uses mythological deities to demonstrate how war is antithetical to peace and abundance. Both Schut and Carracci emphasis a similar message: that peace can be stronger than war. However, Carracci’s engraving reveals a more tangible effort to keep war at bay. Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, is seen guarding the figures of Peace and Abundance from Mars, the god of war. Minerva physically pushes Mars away to one side while also laying her other hand comfortably upon Abundance’s shoulder. Abundance is depicted wearing a crown of grain and is seated atop a pile of discarded armor. Peace kneels next to her and holds a bowl to collect the life-giving milk of Abundance. The inscription at the base of the print states: “When Wisdom Drives out Mars, Peace and Abundance rejoice together.” In this print, Minerva takes on the role of peacemaker because she holds the power to keep Mars at bay. Carracci’s demonstrates that peace is achievable through the wisdom to guard oneself against the destructive nature of war.

With similar concepts of pacifism in mind, in Johan Wierix’s The Power of Peace (1577) the figure of Prudence (Prudentia) works at a forge, with scattered pieces of armor
and weaponry at her feet. These tools of destruction and warfare wait their turn in the fire and will be transformed into instruments of peaceful production such as spades and pitchforks. Prudence is accompanied at her forge by a host of figures symbolizing concepts relevant to the dynamics of warfare and peace. The personification of Reason (Ratio) stands to the right and points to the words on the forge, “Wisdom reproaches force with speech.” Behind Reason is a crowd of soldiers fighting, and above them with scales and sword in hand is Justice (Iustitia). Violence (violentia), wearing a breastplate and helmet, is forced into servitude and unwillingly operates the bellows of the forge behind Prudence. The figure of Time is represented as a bearded man with wings that is charged with constructing instruments of peace. These instruments will be used to cultivate the land behind him where Peace (Pax) looks on from above. Wierix shows the progression of warfare into peace with his depictions of wartime facets, such as Violence, yielding to aspects of peace like Prudence and Justice.

4. Scattone, 199.
Johann Wierix (Netherlandish, c. 1549–c. 1618)
The Power of Peace

1577
engraving
14 ⅜ × 18 ⅝ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BF.1999.32
TOP
Albrecht Dürer
(German, 1471-1528)
The Six Warriors
c. 1495
engraving
5 3/4 × 5 3/4 in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BE1998.8

BOTTOM
Albrecht Dürer
(German, 1471-1528)
The Standard-Bearer
1502
engraving
4 3/4 × 2 3/4 in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BE1999.24
During the Renaissance, there was almost continuous warfare in Europe, from the long struggle between the French and Spanish during the Italian Wars in 1494 to the wars of religion that stemmed from the Protestant Reformation that ravaged the continent from the mid-sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century. Over the course of these conflicts the techniques and tactics of war underwent rapid, profound, and widely recognized changes. The prints presented in this exhibition tell a story which encapsulates the complex and multifaceted emotions of these conflicts, while also cataloging the advancements of warfare and weaponry.

The late fifteenth century saw the creation of much larger-standing armies. The formation of these new armies called for the assembly of greater quantities of foot soldiers or infantrymen. As the infantry forces began to replace the previously coveted cavalry, the infantryman became the new face of the military. The German engraver Albrecht Dürer was a fundamental contributor to developments made in German printmaking, among which was the new imagining of the soldier. Dürer's *The Six Warriors* (1495) depicts a gathering of soldiers meant to represent a recruiting scene between Landsknechte, German infantrymen, and wondering mercenaries. The distinct uniforms of the Landsknechte, with a feathered hat and slashed sleeves, make it easy to pick out the two from the crowd, with one on each end of the gathered mercenaries. The mercenaries consist of two pikemen, a halberdier, and a cavalryman. The standing halberdier, silhouetted against a blank sky and an open lake, leads the viewer's eye across the row of his mates up the hill to the figure on horseback; on the left of the print, one of the Landsknecht confronts this rider.1

The recruitment of many infantry into the army of the Holy Roman Empire led to crowding and confusion on the battlefield. Consequently, visibility and organization became prioritized, and the banner carrier on the battlefield took up the dangerous job of making himself seen by the troops he led. Dürer's *The Standard-Bearer* (1502) depicts one of these banner-carriers that were quickly becoming important positions within the military ranks. The solitary figure dominates the print and is set amidst background elements of open water with distant mountains, a setting suggestive of the Germanic homeland. Dürer dressed his banner-carrier in a typical Landsknecht's uniform: ostrich feather on the hat, slashed sleeves, tights (with codpiece), and a sword for a weapon, which he grasps in his left hand. In his right hand, the young man holds an unfurled banner showing St. Andrew's cross and sparkling flints of the Burgundian forces. He faces the audience in an assertive contrapposto pose, meaning the standing human figure's weight rests on one leg as his other leg is bent at the knee.2

In addition to the inclusion of new military positions and varieties of soldiers, sixteenth-century warfare benefitted from innovative advancements in weaponry and artillery. By the Renaissance period, the cannon had become a standardized weapon of warfare, proving to be effective in both combat and siege conflicts. Dürer's *The Cannon* (1518) depicts this military advancement in the central foreground with a Landsknecht standing guard. The illustration of such a powerful weapon conveys the message that this imperial city of Nuremberg stood ready to defend the German countryside from all invaders.3 Franz Brun's *A Gunner* (1559) portrays a similar message with its depiction of a cannon and the soldier set with the task of firing it, the gunner. As opposed to Dürer, Brun puts a greater emphasis on the gunner rather than the cannon. By the 1400s, gunners and other masters of artillery weaponry were considered to be specialized soldiers. They were regarded differently from the infantrymen because of their high level of skills and knowledge of cannons. Their abilities and familiarity with the weapons had become a valuable commodity in Renaissance warfare because of the importance of the cannon.4

Theodor Galle’s *Gun Powder/Casting of Cannon* (1600) shows both the production of gunpowder, taking place in a small room above the furnace, and the casting of cannons, happening below. The depiction of this manufacturing process highlights gunpowder's importance in the use of artillery weaponry. Molten bronze pours out of the furnace while a worker simultaneously adds more metal to be melted. The large-barrel cannon running horizontally along the central composition is presumably cast around a clay core. While these men construct cannons and gunpowder, a battle takes place out the window to the right. Newly constructed cannons line the city walls and fire onto unseen troops and all the while men indoors work to make more and more weapons to join in the fight.5
TOP
Albrecht Dürer
(German, 1471-1528)
The Cannon
1518
etching
8 ½ × 12 ½ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BF.1998.1

BOTTOM
Franz Brun
(German, 1535-1610/20, active c. 1559-1596)
The Gunner
1559
engraving
2 ¾ × 2 ¼ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BF.2002.1
Theodor Galle  
(Flemish, 1571-1633)  
*Gun Powder / The Casting of Cannons*  
c. 1600  
engraving  
8 × 10 3/4 in.  
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston  
BE1996.8
While the cannon remained a central military innovation in Renaissance warfare, another pioneering weapon had much of the same impact on the conflicts of the time: the musket. During the late sixteenth century, the musket quickly became a popularly used weapon among soldiers. The need to train new recruits in the proper way in which to use such a weapon became apparent. Jacques de Gheyn’s etchings from *The Exercise of Arms* (1607-8) include step-by-step drawings and illustrate the appropriate way in which to use a musket, as well as other types of rifles. The three prints from the series included in the exhibition depict sequences for handling three different weapons by three different soldiers. Print no. 35 shows a caliver, a smaller bore rifle, loaded from the flask. The soldier handling the weapon wears a steel helmet and broadsword. Another print (no. 34) shows a musket loaded from a bandolier and a larger weapon, supported on a rest, which is being carried in the soldier’s left hand. The third print (no. 6) depicts the proper way to use a pike, a spear-like weapon.6 As these new weapons become more popular to use in battle, they began to be depicted more frequently in artwork that depicted warfare. Renaissance military prints catalog the innovations of weaponry, including cannons that obliterated their opponents and muskets that could kill a man without requiring one to be too near to the other.

3. Ibid., 64-5.
6. Silver, 76.
LEFT
Jacques de Gheyn II
(Dutch, 1565–1629)
The Exercise of Arms, part 1,
no. 35
c. 1607–1608
engraving
10 3/16 × 7 3/16 in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BF.1998.5.2

ABOVE
Jacques de Gheyn II
(Dutch, 1565–1629)
The Exercise of Arms, part 2,
no. 34
c. 1607–1608
engraving
10 5/8 × 7 5/8 in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BF.1998.5.1

LEFT BOTTOM
Jacques de Gheyn II
(Dutch, 1565–1629)
The Exercise of Arms, part 3,
no. 6
c. 1607–1608
Engraving
10 3/4 × 7 3/4 in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BF.1998.5.3
“English Dogs and French Frogs”: British Political Caricature in the Eighteenth Century

BAILEY HARPER ’19

By the time British soldier and politician George Townshend (1724-1807) introduced to England the idea of comedic caricature in the 1750s, the techniques of printmaking and lithography made graphic images accessible to a wide audience. In contrast to visiting a gallery or museum to see a work of art, prints published in newspapers were inexpensive and available to everyone, regardless of socio-economic class. Viewers were particularly receptive to satirical prints, as this comedic approach made difficult topics easier to comprehend. Popular newspapers frequently printed works by artists such as William Hogarth (1697-1764), Isaac Cruikshank (1764-1811), and James Gillray (1756-1815), and their caricatures influenced public opinion on various subjects. These artists not only changed how people view the world, they also used their comedy to garner nationalist support for England during a time of war and revolution throughout Europe.

To fully understand why artists wanted to distort reality, one must recognize the political situation Europe faced during this period. There were three major events during the latter half of the 1700s which affected European politics and expansion; the first of which was the Seven Year’s War from 1756 to 1763. The war extended into America, Africa, India, and the Philippines, marking itself as one of the first wars fought by European powers for control of non-European territories. Consequentially, France lost control of territories in Canada, islands in the Caribbean, the Louisiana territory in America, and lands in India to England, among other nations. In the 1770s, British colonies across the Atlantic revolted and eventually won independence from Great Britain in the American Revolutionary War. France financially supported the colonies for numerous reasons, but namely as a reaction to the many restrictions England placed on trade in the colonies and resentment from the war over Canada. While the American Revolution was a minor issue for the British, its ideology greatly influenced France. Political and social philosophies of liberty and equality of the newly independent America inspired the Third Estate of France (commoners) to revolt against its absolutist monarchy in 1789. The French Revolution ended in 1799 then escalated once Napoleon proclaimed himself as Emperor of France in 1800. During the decade of revolution, France set itself apart from the other European powers and ultimately changed how the rest of Europe regarded the nation. With Napoleon Bonaparte as the head of the French Army with sights to conquer Europe, the British views towards France grew even more distasteful and fearful, despite early sympathy at the beginnings of the French Revolution. Caricature in the press became an important aspect in documenting and spreading news because the prints could explain events in a quick and concise manner. Prints were typically made and published in newspapers relatively soon after these occurrences and provided an artist’s particular perspective on political events. The subject matter ranged from propagandistic depictions of the military to imaginative and ugly representations of foreign nations.

William Hogarth typically used his work, both painting and etchings, to address the issues of morals in daily life. Although he rejected the classification, Hogarth nonetheless can be understood as an early caricaturist in his pointed interpretations of events. His approach toward nationalist propaganda was subtle and reminiscent of traditional art; while he did not distort the physical features of his subjects, he exaggerated specific aspects of life such as cuisine and fashion. When he depicted non-English subjects, Hogarth applied common stereotypes to assert that these other cultures presented a threat to British life. As the Seven Year’s War approached, he aimed to both slander the French culture as well as inform the people about the possible threat of invasion. One print seen in this exhibition, The Invasion: France (March 1756), served as recruiting propaganda for the British army. The accompanying caption reminds Englishmen of their strength compared to the French:

With lantern jaws, and croaking Gut,
See how the half-starv’d Frenchmen Strut,
And call us English Dogs!
But soon we’ll teach these bungling Foes,
that Beef & Beer give heavier Blows,
Than Soup & Roasted Frogs.
The Priests inflam’d with righteous hopes,
Prepare their Axes, Wheels & Ropes,
To bend the Stiff neck’t Sinner;
But should they sink in coming over,
Old Nick may fish twixt France & Dover
And catch a glorious Dinner!

The statements in this verse are at once powerful and humorous, notably the mention of “Old Nick,” another name for Satan, who fishes for drowned Frenchmen in the English Channel, between Dover, a coastal city in Southeastern England, and France. Hogarth depicts French soldiers as malnourished and weak. The men are dangerously thin, with hollowed cheeks and nearly...
William Hogarth
(English, 1697-1764)
The Invasion, Plate 1:
France
March 1756
etching
12 ½ x 15 ¼ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer
Foundation, Houston
BE:1983.5.73

William Hogarth
(English, 1697-1764)
The Invasion, Plate 2:
England
March 1756
etching
12 ½ x 15 ¼ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer
Foundation, Houston
BE:1983.5.74
TOP
Isaac Cruikshank
(English, c. 1764-1811)
The Wet Party
1793
etching with publisher’s color
17 × 21 ¾ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer
Foundation, Houston
BE1999.35

BOTTOM
James Gillray (English,
1757-1815)
The High German Method of
Destroying Vermin at Ratstadt
1799
etching and engraving with
publisher’s color
10 ¾ × 14 ¾ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer
Foundation, Houston
BE1999.34
no musculature on their legs. They stand in front of a building with a hanging shoe, a sign reading “Soup Meagre a la Sabot Royal” (Watery Soup at the Royal Shoe), and a bare rack of ribs in the window. One soldier at the lower right roasts four frogs on his sword and points to the flag above him that has written “Vengeance et le Bon Bier et le Bon Beuf de Angleterre” (Vengeance and the good beer and good beef of England). Two soldiers look like they are cheering at this flag, as if it promises to save them from starving. This representation shows that the French are much weaker and desire British life. He then illustrates, as indicated in the caption, the French priest prodding an axe blade over a horse-drawn cart filled with wheels and ropes that look like they are meant for torture. A statue with a paper stating, “Plan pour un Monastere dans Black Friars a Londre” (Plan for a Monastery in the Black Friars at London) also appears in the cart. This reference to a monastery invokes the anti-Catholic policies and persecution in England in the sixteenth century.

The reference to France invading is a call to arms for the British to come together for war. France and its accompanying print, The Invasion: England, were published a second time in 1759 with an announcement that these were the preparations for war in France and England, to be published in public places, “both in Town and Country.” England portrays British men as full-bodied, enthusiastic, and sexualizes soldiers to entice men to join the military. A woman measures the shoulders of a man painting a figure on a building while another woman holds a fork pointing upwards from the lap of a man lying on a table next to a beer stein. A soldier rests on the ground, playing a tune on his fife, as another man with a large gut has his height measured, and soldiers march in an orderly fashion I the background. The corresponding caption states that the hungry French soldiers are envious of the British and they would fail to attack England because “No Power can stand the deadly Stroke, / That’s given from hands & hearts of Oak.” Considering these two prints, it is obvious that Hogarth wanted to illustrate the Frenchmen as starved and unwilling to fight and the British army as entertaining and powerful. This early form of caricature combines reality with fear, represented through exaggerated stereotypes that encourage the viewer to take a decisive political stance.

Decades later, Scottish artist Isaac Cruikshank adopted a similar approach of caricaturizing events during the French Revolution. In 1793 he etched The Wet Party, a colorful print that describes the Duke of York and Albany’s actions in Dunkirk and Flanders. In an unsuccessful year-long incident, the Duke, Prince Frederick Augustus (1763–1827), attempted to reclaim Holland from French invasion during the French Revolution. Despite early success, the Duke ultimately failed to gain control in Holland; officers on leave then spoke widely of the Duke's inefficacy and reputation for indulging in wine and sex. Cruikshank, one of numerous artists to illustrate this famous event, is much more cynical about the British military than Hogarth, who died in 1764 just after British victories from Seven Year’s War. The Wet Party or The Bogs of Flanders, a new Song depicts the Duke of York and Albany in a lake, a reference to the swampiness of Flanders. He speaks to his officers below him, who look depressed and disappointed, as he straddles an overtly phallic cannon. The scene shows the conflicting emotions of the soldiers. The sad officers on the right, possibly a reference to those who spread the rumors of the Duke’s failures and extravagances, contrast with the joyful cymbal and triangle players almost covered with water, a Scotsman sitting on a drowned tent singing another verse of the song below, and a man fishing from atop a sign which states, “Best Roads to Dunkirk.”

The soldiers and the song, along with the drum and guns strewn on a tree, suggest that the Duke abandoned his responsibility to Britain and the military. This decadence reflects the improper lifestyle Hogarth referenced in his moralizing series. Cruikshank and most of England would have been familiar with those prints and seems to use similar artistic elements to show that the Duke does not represent true British ideals. While it is not typically proper to critique a royal in such a way, this kind of scene recognized its own ridiculousness and resonated throughout England as a comical episode in history.

While critiquing the Duke’s military incompetence, Cruikshank also encouraged soldiers to keep fighting despite the poor leadership, again propagandizing the military. He juxtaposed the bleakness of war with a more cheerful sentiment to “Damn fear, drink on, be jolly, boys!”

Compared to Hogarth and Cruikshank, James Gillray utilized caricature in its most extreme form; his political prints display dramatic distortions of reality to the point of total imagination. His style pushes the boundaries of artistic license while still suggesting real events. While his original response to the French Revolution in 1789 was sympathetic, he later criticized all participants in war, whether they were the perpetrators or victims. His print The High German Method of Destroying Vermin at Ratstatt (1799) is an interesting example of how one could use humor to make death and violence tolerable for a public audience while still addressing the ridiculousness of the French Revolution. The scene refers to the conclusion of the Congress of Rastatt (Ratstatt) in 1799, a group...
originally formed in 1797 to compensate German princes who had lost land to Revolutionary France. Three French ambassadors, Jean Debray, Ange-Élisabeth-Louis-Antoine Bonnier, and Claude Roberjot, remained in Ratstadt which caused Austrians to grow suspicious. Thus, the Frenchmen were ordered to leave the city and on 28 April as they were leaving, Austrian hussars (cavalrymen) attacked their carriage. Bonnier and Roberjot were murdered, and Debray was left for dead.13 Gillray, who etched and published this print within a month of the event, depicts both Austrians and Frenchmen as cartoonish figures. The text on the bottom left states, “Now you shall see! how the cruel Austrians turn’d the Heads of? two French Gentlemen, whose brains were deraigned [sic].” Two Austrian hussars decapitated two of the French ambassadors and are shown playing with their heads while the third ambassador in the background, Jean Debray, flees the scene, chased by a mob, covered in large bloody slices. Gillray provocatively juxtaposes humor and death. Although based in truth, this scene is completely imaginary. Of course, it is impossible for a beheaded body, with a fountain of blood streaming from its neck, to wave its arms around to look for its head. The other decapitated body is upside down, with its back facing the viewer and head set between its feet in the air. The hussar holding the latter seems to be critiquing his grotesque creation while the other has a head spiked on his sword and teases the body. Each figure is misshapen in some way, notably Debray who seems to have lost his nose and one hussar with only five teeth. Filled with absurdities, Destroying Vermin deflects from reality with satirical caricature to make contemporary events comprehensible and entertaining. Viewers would find more humor in this slap-stick subject, particularly because of the distance of possibilities were too ridiculous to be reality.  

2. Ibid., 37-56. This specific chapter is important to understanding the variations in how British figures considered the revolution in France. Paulson quotes numerous British sympathizers of the “first phase” of the revolution—namely the Storming of Bastille. Soon after, there is evidence of concern for the revolution extending throughout Europe in correspondence between British philosophers.
3. Hogarth’s most popular series are A Harlot’s Progress (painted 1731, engraved 1732), The Rake’s Progress (painted 1732-1734, engraved 1734, published 1735), and Marriage a-la-Mode (1743-1745). The three series each depict how Hogarth believed sin, namely greed and lust, eventually destroyed a person. See Diana Donald, The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).
4. Paulson, 182. In J. B. Nichols’ Anecdotes of William Hogarth (1833), Hogarth is quoted to have called caricature “the lowest part of the art of painting and sculpture.”
5. Cambridge Dictionary Online. “Old Nick” is an old-fashioned and humorous way of naming the devil or Satan.
6. Blackfriars is an area in the Southwest corner of London. It was the location of a notable monastery until Henry VIII dissolved it in the sixteenth century.
8. “See John the Soldier, Jack the Tar,/With Sword & Pistol arm’d for War,/Should Mounsir dare come here!/The Hungry Slaves have smelt our Food./They long to taste our Flesh and Blood./Old England’s Beef and Beer!/Britons to Arms! And let ‘em come./Be you but Britons still, Strike Home./And Lion-like attack ‘em./No Power can stand the deadly Stroke./That’s given from hands & hearts of Oak,/With Liberty to back ‘em.”
10. The soldier sings “And while we can get crowdy/boys/we’ll scorn to fly!”
12. Paulson, 184. His sympathy is shown in his cartoons Freedom and Slavery (27 July 1789) and The Offering of Liberty (August 1789).

No se puede mirar (One cannot look at this): Early Romantic Depictions of the Napoleonic War

BAILEY HARPER ’19

In contrast to the Neoclassical style, which aimed to present idealized and venerated images of legends and leaders, the movement known as Romanticism that emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Europe sought to exaggerate emotional experience as a reaction against the typical artistic canon. This approach encouraged artists to challenge the “normal” reality and illustrate the grotesque and unpleasant perceptions of the world. The Napoleonic Wars from 1800–1815 inspired artists such as Théodore Géricault (French, 1791–1824) and Francisco de Goya (Spanish, 1748–1826) to reflect on the experiences of the victims and victors of war. Their Romantic prints and lithographs emphasize individuals’ pain, anguish, and terror.

In the first years of the nineteenth century, Napoleon Bonaparte sought to conquer each corner of Europe, invading Italy and Spain in the south and Russia in the north. During the Napoleonic Wars, coalitions comprised of Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and many other nations struggled to stop Napoleon’s invasion throughout Europe. It was not until the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 that Napoleon was finally defeated and expelled to St. Helena. Despite his military and political failures at the end of his career, Napoleon was revered by numerous Frenchmen of all socio-economic classes. Staunch Bonapartists commissioned artists to create prints of Napoleon’s military prowess to promote his successes before the Bourbon Restoration (1814–1830). One wealthy Bonapartist, Antoine-Vincent Arnault, selected Théodore Géricault to create two lithographs for Arnault’s collection Vie politique et militaire de Napoléon (1822–1826). These works commemorate Napoleon’s campaign in Egypt (March in the Desert or Marche dans le désert) and his initial invasion into Italy (Crossing of Mount St. Bernard or Passage du Mont St. Bernard) (both 1823).3

Géricault studied under well-known Neoclassical artists at the Louvre such as Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825) and Antoine-Jean Gros (1771–1835).4 These teachers worked in a traditional manner, a style reminiscent of the Renaissance and inspired by classical antiquity; they were also notable Bonapartists who propagated Napoleon as a military leader in their works of art. In contrast to David’s and Gros’s alignment with Napoleon in their history paintings and portraits, Géricault instead focused on the soldiers and their experiences during war. After attaining success beyond his predecessors’ influence, Géricault’s work expressed more liberal ideals correlating with the Romantic movement. It is important to note that Marche dans le desert and Passage du Mont St. Bernard were commissions, but Géricault does not present Napoleon as heroically as in David’s painting Napoleon at the Saint Bernard Pass (1801). In Géricault’s compositions Napoleon is the subject, but the soldiers also have individual characteristics and are active in the scene. In both of Géricault’s lithographs, Napoleon is merely directing soldiers towards their goal; he is not the one fighting the war. In fact, Géricault was encouraged to alter his original compositions to fit Arnault’s Bonapartist ideals.5 His non-commissioned and unnoticed lithography focuses more on the soldier’s experience in war and largely ignores the idealized Napoleonic image.

Retour de Russie (Return from Russia) (1818) is one of Géricault’s most compelling lithographs depicting the aftermath of war in the Romantic style. Retour illustrates the French army returning to France from Russia after the French defeat in Moscow in 1812.6 The snowy ground and the emaciated dog on the left and horse with heads bowed in defeat to suggest the setting. An infantryman with a cap and cane carrying a soldier on his back subtly appears in the background on the right. Géricault uses the sense of touch and sight within the central group almost ironically. The grenadier walking the horse has his right sleeve pinned to his coat, signifying his amputated arm while the cuirassier, sitting on the horse, is blinded. These two soldiers help each other return home by providing the eyes and hands the other does not have. This scene represents the cruel aftermath and irreparable damage of war.

Some scholars believe that Géricault used imagery of Eastern figures as the ideological opposition of the Bourbon Restoration (1814–1830).7 In his Mameluke Defending a Wounded Trumpeter (1818), a non-French soldier is the protagonist. The Mamelukes were Eastern Mediterranean equestrian soldiers enlisted in Napoleon’s Grande Armée after his campaign in Egypt in 1798. From 1816 to 1817 the Mameluke soldiers left in France were killed by Royalist forces under the Bourbon Restoration for their participation of the Napoleonic army.8 Mameluke depicts an awe-inspiring Mameluke protecting a limp French trumpeter slung across his horse from the attacking Eastern European soldier. The hero courageously stands over a dead, unidentified soldier as he faces his assailant. The print serves as an allegory of individuality and equality and suggests that the hero could be anybody, not only a recognizable leader. Géricault challenges the traditional mindset of the decorated officer like Napoleon as champion and instead illustrates a non-Frenchman.
Théodore Géricault
(French, 1791-1824)

*Passage du Mont St. Bernard*
1822
lithograph
14 ½ × 16 ¼ in.

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BE.1999.8
TOP
Théodore Géricault (French, 1791-1824)
Retour de Russie
1818
lithograph
17 ½ × 14 ¾ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BF.1999.27

BOTTOM
Théodore Géricault (French, 1791-1824)
Mameluke Defending a Wounded Trumpeter
1818
lithograph
13 ½ × 10 ¾ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BF.1999.26
**TOP**

Francisco de Goya  
(Spanish, 1746-1828)  
And are like wild beasts (Y son fieras) from the series The Disasters of War (Los Desastres de la Guerra)  
1810-1820/1863  
etching with aquatint  
6 ¼ × 8 in.  
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston  
BE1979.26

**BOTTOM**

Francisco de Goya  
(Spanish, 1746-1828)  
One cannot look at this (No se puede mirar) from the series the Disasters of War (Desastres de la Guerra)  
1810-1820/1863  
etching with aquatint  
5 ¾ × 8 in.  
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston  
BE1979.48
as strong and superior. Géricault also changed the way a non-European was viewed. Artists often treated the foreign figure as exotic and beautiful, inactive in their compositions. Rather than a passive figure, the Mameluke acts on his own and should be both feared and admired.

Compared to Géricault’s lithography, Francisco de Goya’s etchings of the Napoleonic War in Spain were arguably violent and extremely graphic. The Peninsular War (1808–1814), also referred to as the Spanish War of Independence, began due to Napoleon’s invasion of Madrid on the second and third of May 1808.10 As an attempt to control the nation, Napoleon crowned his brother Joseph as king, forcing the Spanish king to abdicate. The six years following the Madrid invasion had casualties of over 100,000 soldiers and civilians, not including the British and Portugal allies who joined Spain during the Peninsular War.11 Goya, the court painter to the Spanish crown, privately documented the terror Spain felt during this war through his eighty-etching series Los Desastres de la Guerra (The Disasters of War) (c. 1810–1815).12 It is unknown if the artist wanted to publish the etchings; they were first printed in 1863, about four decades after his death, by the Fine Arts Academy of San Fernando. If the earliest prints were seen by the Bonaparte King, he surely would have been arrested and killed for being a rebellious Spanish nationalist. Nonetheless, he created these illustrations without reference to any specific location or person. That choice renders the scenes more haunting, as if the figures are the ghosts of the civilian casualties.

Although Goya’s Romantic style already shone through his earlier series of satirical prints, Los Caprichos (1790s), the nightmarish Desastres series demonstrates a more advanced form of Romanticism. The first half of the series illustrates Napoleon’s soldiers attacking, torturing, and raping Spanish men and women. Three prints, Las mugeres dan valor (The women give courage), Y son fieras (And are like wild beasts), and Que valor! (What valor?), present women as active and heroic figures, similar to Géricault’s Mameluke. In Las mugeres, two women fight off men by hitting them and stabbing them with daggers. Only one figure has a face visible to the audience; the woman on the left looks deranged with eyes wide open and mouth agape in terror as she stabs her attacker. Next to her, another woman fends off a man who grasps a chunk of her hair and pushes her down. Y son fieras presents more than four women armed and protecting themselves from the French soldiers in a chaotic fight. In the foreground, a lunging woman holds a child behind her back with her left hand and stabs a man with a spear in her right. In a comparable display of female bravery, a woman stands atop a pile of dead bodies and fires a cannon in Que valor! Apart from some religious and mythological representations, artistic depictions of women engaged in battle are rare; however, Goya corrected the traditional war narrative in this series. He promotes them as individuals who fought, without men, during war and faced the same struggles as soldiers.

No se puede mirar (One cannot look at this) (no. 26) presents the Spanish civilian as religious martyrs for the nationalist cause.13 This print illustrates the moment before a group of men and women are executed. The figures are all weeping or dead, aside from the man kneeling in the foreground, begging the bayonets creeping from the right to be spared. However, that figure is one of the least prominent of the print; the limp woman totally illuminated in a white outfit and arms extended outward and appears Christ-like.14 She leans back on another person whose head nestles in the other’s neck. The figure on her left holds his face in his hand, a recognizable gesture of intense fear and despair. These three subjects, along with the three figures hugging each other tightly together, only one of their weeping faces visible, and the two kneeling men, bring together a complete understanding of what gruesome future the group faces.

The most shocking Desastres plates are Goya’s demonstrations of torture and dismemberment which possibly address guerrilla warfare Spain used against the French army. Fuerte cosa es! (This is too much!), Por que? (Why?), and Tampoco (Not [in this case] either) each depict at least one soldier who gazes at the dying men hanging from trees. Fuerte cosa es y Por que? also display soldiers actively tearing apart and killing the men while the Frenchman of Tam poco leans on a table, looking up at the dead man with a grin across his face. Plate thirty-nine, Grande hazaña! Con Muertos! (Great deeds! Against the dead!) is perhaps the most gruesome of the series. Hung upon a tree are three bodies: one at the back hung by his feet and head hitting the ground. A second body’s arms are tied behind him around the tree trunk and head bobs downwards. The final body is maimed—its legs are tied, bent around a branch, head spiked next to its knees, and arms cut from the torso bound at its wrists and hung under the head. Despite their graphic nature, the compositions are well-balanced, and figures beautifully rendered with care. As Goya states in the title, No se puede mirar, it is excruciatingly difficult to look at this scene. Yet, Goya wants the audience to look and remember the terror helpless civilians faced.

Although Goya’s and Géricault’s national affiliations differ, both artists focus on the negative effects of the Napoleonic War. As Romantic artists, they depict grotesque experiences which reflect their life as either a Spanish or French citizen. They emphasized individual suffering and anguish, including dismemberment, fear, and sacrifice. The artists also included the unseen factions—women and non-Europeans—who fought heroically. These prints were not necessarily seen by the public until years after the artists died; however, their own illustrations of war clearly represent a closer idea of how civilians and soldiers perceived war.
Francisco de Goya  
(Spanish, 1746-1828)  

*Not [in this case] either*  
(Tampoco) from the series  
The Disasters of War (Los Desastres de la Guerra)  
1810-1820/1863  
etching with aquatint  
$14\frac{5}{8} \times 17\frac{5}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$ in.  
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston  
BE1979.32

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Francisco de Goya  
(Spanish, 1746-1828)  

*Great deeds! Against the dead!*  
(Grande hazaña! Con muertes!)  
from the series The Disasters of War (Los Desastres de la Guerra)  
1810-1820/1863  
etching with aquatint  
$6 \times 8$ in.  
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston  
BE1979.61
Francisco de Goya
(Spanish, 1746-1828)
With or without reason
(Con razón ó sin ella) from
the series The Disasters of War
(Los Desastres de la Guerra)
1810-1820/1863
etching with aquatint
6 × 8 in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer
Foundation, Houston
BE.1979.14

Francisco de Goya
(Spanish, 1746-1828)
This is what you were born for
(Para eso habeis nacido) from
the series Disasters of War
(Desastres de la Guerra)
1810-1820/1863
etching with aquatint
6 ¾ × 9 ¼ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer
Foundation, Houston
BE.1979.34


6. Clifton, “Return from Russia,” in *The Plains of Mars*, 90. This campaign resulted in the loss of about one million lives during war and retreat.


10. The invasion is also referred as the May Uprisings or Dos de Mayos.


14. This figure resembles a pietà, a religious subject in which a dead Christ is cradled in Mary’s arms, a frequent motif in Christian art.
Selected Prints
Two different classes of soldiers appear in one of famed German Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer’s woodcuts. The figure on horseback represents a medieval cavalry force while the soldier following behind him on foot embodies the new infantry, the Landsknecht. Landsknecht were German mercenary pikemen of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. At the height of their success, the Landsknecht were recognized as the most effective foot soldiers in the world. As they became more integrated into the German military, these new infantrymen began to replace more traditionally used cavalry forces due to their large numbers and strategic battle formations. Although the Landsknecht did not have the same stature and standing as the knightly soldiers, they enjoyed more social mobility and the possibility of financial gain. These opportunities emerged because Landsknecht came from all walks of life; they drew their soldiers from the German peasantry, artisans, nobles, and even criminals. The military offered them a chance to break out of their set social circles and rise through the ranks of the German military.¹

Dürer depicts the two types of warriors, the new Landsknecht and older cavalry whom Dürer identifies as a knight, working together towards a common goal in his print *The Knight on Horseback and the Landsknecht* (1498). The rider gestures with his left hand for the soldier to follow him quickly; this composition evokes a sense of partnership despite their different statuses. The knight on horseback is not clad in armor for combat, but rather wears more embellished clothing, an overcoat with fur lining and hairnet. The only item on his person that indicates that he is a warrior is the long, heavy broadsword at his hip. Additionally, the rider’s horse is richly outfitted with decorative stirrups and a headpiece that is ornamented with large ostrich feathers. Meanwhile, the Landsknecht is dressed in a metal breastplate, carries a halberd (a combination spear and battle-ax), and has a sword at his side. He is also clothed in the distinctive uniform of the Landsknecht: ostrich feather on the hat, slashed sleeves, and tights (with codpiece).²

The Knight and Landsknecht are riding through a wooded area and are framed by trees and shrubbery. The background of the image features a characteristically German castle. The castle is situated on top of several hills and surrounded by mountains. At the base of the hill on which the castle is located is a lake. This type of background is often featured in many of Dürer’s prints. While the setting in the image is not specified, it represents a distinct Germanic landscape that was commonly used among German artists during the Renaissance.³

— Melissa Casale '19

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2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
Hendrick Goltzius
(Dutch, 1558-1617)

Allegory of War

1578

engraving

7 ¾ × 14 ½ in.

Sarah Campbell Blaffer
Foundation, Houston

BE1997.33
Hendrick Goltzius (Dutch, 1558-1617)

Allegory of War

In 1572, the city of Haarlem was placed under siege by Spanish troops and consequently devastated by those same troops after the city surrendered. As a result of the destruction that befell Haarlem, many citizens were radicalized in support of the Dutch Revolt, including artist Hendrick Goltzius. In the years that followed the siege, Goltzius designed a large allegorical engraving to show the tumultuous state of conflict, using a troupe of well-known personifications to act out the ravages of war in his *Allegory of War* (1578).¹

This print presents a complex picture of personifications and symbols, many influenced by classical antiquity, that come together to convey the destructive nature of war. War (*Bellum*) is dressed in armor and riding in a chariot, similar to how Mars, the god of war, is often depicted in antiquity. The chariot is being led by Fury (*Furor*), who drags War along with the chariot’s reigns gripped in his teeth. In front of War and his chariot is Arrogance (*Arrog[n]tia*), seen on horseback and playing her trumpet of glory. She leads a band of female personifications: Ambition (*Ambitio*), Insult (*Contumelia*), Contempt (*Despectio*), Sins of the People (*Peccata Populi*), Divine Punishment (*Punitive Dei*), Rebellion (*Rebellio*), and Injury (*Iniuria*), each representing causes of warfare. Behind the chariot is a succession of horrible consequences: Servitude (*Servitas*), weighed down by the burden on her shoulders, Plague (*Pestis*) holding a bow and flaming arrows, and between them is Plunder (*Praeda*), holding a banner with the image of a wolf. These horrors progress from the mouth of Hell, which is represented in the traditional medieval fashion, with sharp teeth and filled with flames. Their progression from the fire enforces the concept that war can be Hell on Earth.²

On the opposite end of the composition, two standard bearers march amongst the precession holding banners that depict the city’s military calculations: Civic Munitions’s (*Munitia civitatum*) banner displays cannons situated behind a fortification; Calculation of Costs’ (*Computatio sumptus*) depicts a ledger with numbers. The inclusion of the standard bearers and their banners express the city’s mistaken confidence in its ability to defend itself. Descending from the hillside above the chariot are Old Testament biblical heroes outfitted in armor and carrying weaponry. On the edge of the hill, cannons (*Machine*) drawn by teams of horses lead the procession. Musketeers and mounted cavalry follow them, with a battalion of pikemen, labeled as Drill (*Exercitus*), taking the rear.³

Victory (*Victoria*) is seen hovering over the scene on a cloud in the upper center, while Flames (*Flamma*) engulf the sky behind the advancing army. The Latin verses the upper left corner state the danger of war’s folly: “This painted picture teaches that you groups who would lead the Moors into impious wars are dealing with raging Bellona and the cruel conjunctions of Mars.” Amongst the confusion and complexity of Goltzius’ print comes the clarity that war brings about obliteration and desolation, not simply glory or renown.⁴

— Melissa Casale ’19

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² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 52-3.
In 1508, Elector Prince Fredrich the Wise of Saxony and his younger brother Duke Johann the Constant staged an extravagant tournament in Wittenberg. The Second Tournament with Lances, Staves, and Swords (1509) was one of three woodcuts that Lucas Cranach the Elder, a renowned German Renaissance artist, was commissioned to create to commemorate the extravagant games.¹

Tournaments were lavish affairs, lasting several days and often were held in conjunction with feasts, weddings or religious celebrations. Even though the battles and fights were staged, they would often have harmful and even deadly results. For instance, King Henry II of France died as a result of a jousting accident after he was hit in the head with a lance. The danger involved with competing in a tournament allowed for the combat to seem more real and offer more of a challenge to those competing. Knights seized the opportunity to win fame, glory, and prizes outside of wartime, and European nobility were drawn to the plentiful and charming entertainment of the tournaments.²

Cranach’s Second Tournament depicts a sense of disorder and excessive ornament typical of such spectacles. It showcases either a mêlée, where two groups of knights fight in an enclosed space, or two instances of combat taking place at the same time. The composition is filled with over two-dozen knights dressed in costly armor, with helmets topped with majestic plumes. Horses are outfitted in elaborate caparisons, some featuring classically inspired nudes and mythological figures including centaurs and satyr. A knight stands out at the center of the composition, his horse running, or rearing, as he looks down at a defeated competitor who leans back in his saddle on his collapsed horse. At either side of the composition, groups of knights await their turn to join the artificial battle, while in the back left others fight with staves and swords.³

In the stands are men and women of the court whose attendances and attentiveness emphasize the spectacle of the occasion. Hanging on the front of the grandstand is a tapestry depicting Samson tearing a lion apart with his bare hands and is meant to embody valor and physical prowess for the competitors. The fictive tapestry is decorated with heraldic arms of the Saxon rulers, as were most of Cranach’s prints of this period; further armorial shields are held by two figures in the grandstand, most likely Friedrich and Johann, whom Cranach often portrayed.⁴

— Melissa Casale ’19

² Ibid.
³ Ibid., 149.
⁴ Ibid., 149.
Lucas Cranach the Elder
(German, 1472-1553)
The Second Tournament with Lances, Staves, and Swords
(The Second Tournament with the Tapestry of Samson and the Lion)
1509
woodcut
11 ⅜ × 16 ¾ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BE1998.4
Jacques Callot (French, 1592-1635)
The Miseries and Misfortunes of War

Jacques Callot’s *The Miseries and Misfortunes of War* (1633) is one of the most famous print series of early modern Europe, displaying the carnage and barbarity of warfare. The prints were inspired by the destruction Callot witnessed in his native home of Lorraine, located in northern France, during the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648). What was initially a string of religious disputes between Protestants and Catholics erupted into a larger conflict between the Habsburgs of the Holy Roman Empire and the French kings, the Bourbons, for dominance in Europe. Lorraine eventually sided with the Habsburgs; in 1633 the French army invaded Lorraine, and in the following years the territory was ravaged by marauding troops, many of them mercenaries with no allegiance.¹

The series consists of eighteen prints including a title page indicating that Callot’s friend Israël Henriet published the etchings in Paris in 1633. Each individual print has its own title and inscription located at the bottom describing the scene. The first narrative print depicts the *Recruitment of Troops* and suggests the exciting anticipation of war. The subsequent prints in the series portray soldiers wreaking havoc on the lives of ordinary people. Prints four through eight depict the mayhem the soldiers cause; the captions describe them as “inhuman hearts,” “maddened avaricious demons,” “good-for-nothing enemies of glory,” and “enemies of heaven.” The soldiers are pictured murdering, raping, torturing, and stealing the peasants’ goods. The series follows the crimes committed by the soldiers, as prints nine through seventeen focus on the radical punishments administered by the military to corrupt soldiers. Soldiers are tortured and executed in a number of gruesome ways: strappado (where a person’s arms are tied behind their back and made to fall before being stopped with an abrupt jerk, resulting in the dislocation of the shoulders), firing squad, burning at the stake, and breaking on the wheel (a torture method used for public executions where a large wooden spiked wheel was dropped onto a prisoner in order to break their bones before they were secured to the wheel itself and left to die).²

One scene from the series, *The Hanging* (print eleven), shows almost two dozen executed men hanging from the boughs of a tree. The verse below the image in the lower margin declares: “Finally these infamous and abandoned thieves, hanging from this tree like wretched fruit, show that crime (horrible and black species) is itself the instrument of shame and vengeance and that it is the fate of corrupt men to experience the justice of heaven sooner or later.”³ Soldiers stand below the executed men, guarding those awaiting their fate while numerous priests provide the men their last rights. The entire scene is morbid and acts as a reminder of the consequences that will befall combatants that forget their principles and descend into anarchy. Although Callot’s series does not depict specific historical events, it does focus on particular problems that are generated in virtually any war. As Jules Lieure commented long ago, “This work will always be in fashion, because it is universal, lived by all times and in all lands.”⁴

— Melissa Casale ’19

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TOP
Jacques Callot
(French, 1592-1635)
The Peasants Avenge Themselves
1633
etching
3 ¼ × 7 ¼ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BE:1996.17.17

BOTTOM
Jacques Callot
(French, 1592-1635)
Recruitment of Troops
1633
etching
3 ¼ × 7 ¼ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BE:1996.17.2
Jacques Callot (French, 1592-1635)

*The Stake*
1633
etching
3 ¼ × 7 ¼ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BE.1996.17.13

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Jacques Callot (French, 1592-1635)

*The Hanging*
1633
etching
3 ¼ × 7 ¼ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BE.1996.17.11
Jacques Callot
(French, 1592-1635)

_Dying Soldiers by the Roadside_
1633
etching
3 ¼ × 7 ¼ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer
Foundation, Houston
BF1996.17.16

_The Wheel_
1633
etching
3 ¼ × 7 ¼ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer
Foundation, Houston
BF1996.17.14
Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet  
(French, 1792-1845)  
*Soldier at a Print-seller’s Stand  
(Seriez-vous Sensible?)*  
1823  
lithograph  
6 ⁷⁄₈ × 7 ⁷⁄₈ in.  
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston  
BE1999.9
Nicholas-Toussaint Charlet (French, 1792-1845)
Soldier at a Print-Seller’s Stand (Seriez-vous sensible?)

French artists such as Horace Vernet (1789-1863) and Theodore Géricault (1791-1824) often sympathetically treated the veteran soldier of the Napoleonic Wars as another casualty of war and change in government. Under the Restoration of the Bourbon Monarchy, soldiers who fought under Napoleon’s Grande Armée were forced to retire or were cut to part-time status in favor of having Royalists in the new, smaller military. Loyal Bonapartists aimed nonetheless to honor the Napoleonic veteran who was stripped of his position. Rather than addressing the unfortunate side of the veteran’s life, as Vernet had, others depicted the old soldiers as pleasant storytellers who entertain audieces with tales of battle. Through lithography and prints, the proper Bonapartist soldier was a popular subject for the lower classes as well as for the wealthy who often commissioned these prints.

Nicholas-Toussaint Charlet’s lithograph Soldier at a Print-seller’s Stand (Seriez-vous sensible?) depicts the soldier not on the battlefront, but in the public sphere reminiscing about war. A French soldier, dressed in the uniform of the imperial light cavalry, expressively gestures his hands while speaking towards a woman carrying a child and a toy hoop in her arms. Beside the soldier are two young children in tattered clothes; they look up towards him, intensely listening to the conversation. The boy to the left of the maid, most likely in her care, is better dressed and obviously of a higher class than the children on the right. The young boy also wears military accessories—including a small sword and sabretache, a flat satchel used by cavalrymen—which mimicks the soldier’s own accoutrement. On the far left are two men at a doorway; one looks away from the scene while the other leans on the doorframe, interested in what the soldier has to say. In addition to the main subject, the wall subtly adds to the story through references to Vernet and Géricault, two artists popular for their depictions of Napoleonic veterans and war. Charlet includes small, barely legible signatures at the bottom of two of the prints pinned on the wall. One of the boys on the right points to a battle scene with “H. Vernet” written at the bottom while “Gericault” is found on a piece depicting a soldier on a horse, one of Géricault’s preferred subjects.

“Seriez-vous sensible?” can be translated both as “Are you sensitive?” and “Are you compassionate?” As many of the figures are looking towards the solider, it seems that the answer is yes, these people recognize the problems veterans face. Yet, the question then shifts towards the woman, due to the small print of Cupid above the soldier’s raise right hand who points his bow and arrow at her. It is possible that the question is if the maid wishes to accept the soldier’s advances through the Cupid motif. Sexualizing the soldier was a common practice at this time; artists often reemphasizes the idea of a proud and successful man despite the terrible consequences of war. Soldier at a Print-seller’s Stand shows the veteran as an active and positive member of society, reminding the public of French victories and prowess.

Charlet, the son of a Republican soldier, educated by Bonapartist schools and artists and a veteran of the Clichy Barricade of 1814, sought to continue the idea of a powerful and respectable soldier. He frequently referenced the Napoleonic military in his work to promote sympathy towards their current circumstances. Charlet juxtaposed images of soldiers regaling their battle stories with the reality of their lives under the Bourbon Restoration. The veteran often suffered in poverty and was forced to find new work in a failing post-war economy. While the viewer would want the soldier to be as joyful as the figure in Charlet’s print, the veterans experienced hardship and incredible loss under a new government.

2. In 1822, Théodore Géricault was commissioned by Antoine-Vincent Arnault to make two lithographs for Arnault’s Vie politique et militaire de Napoléon (1822–26). For more information on Géricault’s Bonapartist prints, see Leslie M. Scattone, “March in the Desert (Marche dans le desert)” and “Crossing of Mount St. Bernard (Passage du Mont St. Bernard)” in James Clifton and Leslie M. Scattone, The Plains of Mars: European War Prints; 1500-1825, from the Collection of the Sarah Blaffer Foundation (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2009), 87-89.
Theodore Falckeyesen (Swiss, 1768-1814), after Benjamin West (American, 1738-1820)

_The Death of General Wolfe_

To improve nationalist sentiment during times of war in the eighteenth century, artists commemorated key military figures through paintings and prints. General James Wolfe’s military prowess during the Siege of Quebec fueled British pride for colonial expansion. Numerous artists including George Romney (1734-1802), Edward Penny (1714-1791), and James Barry (1741-1806) depicted his dying moment to remind the public of his sacrifice for British success in North America. Wolfe secured British control in French Quebec during the Seven Year’s War (1756-1763). However, he was wounded and died shortly after the battle ended on 13 September 1758. This event became a symbol for British nationalism, martyrdom, and was a popular theme for patriotic propaganda.

Benjamin West’s painting _The Death of General Wolfe_ invites a comparison of the General’s death to that of a Pietà, Lamentation, or Deposition of Christ. Similar to the powerful and sorrowful depiction of Christ’s body supported by the Virgin Mary and his followers, at the center of West’s composition Wolfe lies collapsed in the arms of three devoted soldiers. The lighting in this triangular structure highlights the General and a British flag at the apex. The subject is flanked by two groups of soldiers who represent England’s accompanying nations. The leftmost group stares at the dying General, and on the right two men clasp their hands in prayer. Wolfe’s right hand is bandaged, and one man holds a cloth to his chest, referring to the multiple injuries he received during battle. He also was wounded at the groin, but it is not acknowledged. In the background battle reaches its climax as a young man carries a flag, to inform Wolfe of victory. Although the General did not die until after the end of the battle, West included the battle scene during this mortal collapse to present death as a grand gesture of dedication to one’s country. The artist was criticized for his historical inaccuracies, but he responded, “The same truth the pen of historian should govern the pencil of the artist… I want to mark the date, the place, and the parties engaged in the event.” The purpose of the composition is to celebrate Wolfe as Britain’s martyr during the Seven Year’s War. His death represents sacrifice and the turning point that ultimately caused France to cede Canada to England.

Unlike the paintings by other artists, West’s scene depicts Wolfe’s final moments surrounded by thirteen figures and an active battle in the background, rather than the few soldiers who were present during the actual event. Each person represents the various groups who fought with the British, known through William Wollett’s _Key to Accompany The Death of General Wolfe_, published in 1776. Wollett, who first reproduced West’s painting in print, sketched the faces and included the soldiers’ names above. The seated Native American on the lower right may, at first, seem out of place in this scene; however, West used this figure to symbolize the American theater during the Seven Year’s War. Celebrated for his colonial American history paintings, West typically included Native Americans in his paintings to serve as allegory and symbolism.

Wolfe was treated as a martyr and as a strong leader by not just the British, but by other European nations as well. The print from this collection is Swiss printmaker Theodore Falckeyesen’s (1768-1814) reproduction of Woollett’s engraving of West’s painting. It is possible that Falckeyesen’s aim was to capitalize on the print’s popularity outside of Britain even though Woollett’s print was already incredibly successful. Print reproduction was a common practice outside Britain as the Engraver’s Act of 1735 (also known as the Hogarth Act) prohibited imitations of prints within the country, though the Act did not cover foreign nations. Despite the legal restrictions on engraving within Britain, Falckeyesen’s print secured General Wolfe’s position as a martyr and successful military leader throughout Europe.

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2. A Pietà is a popular Christian motif, often used in sculpture, that depicts Jesus dying in Mary’s arms. Christ’s Deposition is the subject in many Renaissance paintings including Raphael and Caravaggio in which Jesus is carried by his disciples.
3. Montagna, 75-76.
5. William Wollett, _Key to Accompany The Death of General Wolfe_, 1776, engraving, 7 ¾ x 8 ¾ in., British Museum, London.
Theodore Falckeyesen  
(Swiss, 1768-1814)  
*The Death of General Wolfe*  
c. 1780-1790  
etching and engraving  
16 ¾ × 23 ¼ in.  
Sarah Campbell Blaffer  
Foundation, Houston  
BF.2000.14


Francisco de Goya (Spanish, 1746-1828)

*Tristes presentimientos de lo que ha de aconse* (Sad presentiments of what must come to pass), plate 1 of *Los Desastres de la Guerra* (Disasters of War)
c. 1810-15, first edition 1863
etching with aquatint
6 3/4 x 8 3/4 in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston
BE.1979.9
Fransisco de Goya (Spanish, 1746-1828)  
*Tristes presentimientos de lo que ha de aconter* (Sad presentiments of what must come to pass), plate 1 of *Los Desastres de la Guerra* (Disasters of War)

The Spanish War of Independence (1808–1814), also referred to as the Peninsular War, is considered one of the most destructive events caused by the Napoleonic Wars (1800–1815). Though originally a French ally during Napoleon’s reign in France, Spain revolted in early May 1808 once the French invaded Madrid. To take control of the country, the French Emperor crowned his younger brother Joseph Bonaparte as the king of Spain, forcing King Ferdinand VII to abdicate. Portugal, who Napoleon also invaded, and Great Britain allied with Spain to fight against Napoleon’s Grand Armée in the Iberian Peninsula. Though ending in victory, Spain’s population faced incredible losses, torture, and anguish. Over the six years, Spanish casualties, alone, numbered more than 100,000, a figure which includes thousands of volunteer soldiers and civilians. The dozens of battles and sieges devastated Spain and instigated nation-wide terror.

Francisco de Goya (1746–1828) documented the pain and suffering the Spanish felt through his *Los Desastres de la Guerra* (The Disasters of War) series. Despite the imaginative nature of these prints, the deep emotions played out in the scenes are easily felt. The series’ first print, *Tristes presentimientos de lo que ha de aconter* (Sad presentiments of what must come to pass), depicts a disheveled and starved man kneeling with his arms spread to either side, as if a crucifixion, shrouded by a dark background. The figure’s head looks like a skull; he has no hair, his eyes are barely visible, and his cheekbones are defined so that there is little reference to flesh. As in Goya’s other prints, the artist does not identify this person in order to create a universal sense of despair and the inevitable effects of war on society. As an early Romantic artist, Goya’s non-commissioned work challenged reason and reacted against worldly norms. His prints consider war as death and destruction, in marked contrast to the celebration of warfare as a noble sacrifice in nationalist British and French prints. *Los Desastres* focuses exclusively on the terror of war. This specific print is the first of the series of over eighty prints about the despair Spain experienced in the Spanish War of Independence. Following this print are scenes of men hung from trees and tortured (*Tampoco* and *Grande hazaña! Con Muertos*), women fighting French soldiers while carrying children (*Y son fieras*), and disease and death (*Para eso habeis nacido*). It is a truly gruesome sequence, but an invaluable means of conveying the horrific impact of war on civilians.

Before the Spanish War of Independence, Goya was the official court painter for the Spanish throne, commissioned to work for the king and his associates. Goya’s personal stance straddled between Spanish nationalism and the ability to survive during revolution. Although these compositions can be understood as imaginary, the artist would have been liable for treason if his *Los Desastres* etchings were found during Joseph Bonaparte’s reign. Even after Bonaparte’s dethroning, the series continued to depict the economic downfall and famine which followed the war under King Ferdinand VIII. Therefore, it is possible that Goya never meant for his *Los Desastres* etchings were found during Joseph Bonaparte’s reign. Nevertheless, this series is an important articulation of the psychological effect war on an artist. Goya, though employed by the royal court, empathized with the emotional and physical struggle Spain endured during the Spanish War of Independence.


Jean-Pierre-Marie Jazet (French, 1788-1871),
after Horace Vernet (French, 1789-1869)

Le Soldat de Waterloo (The Waterloo Soldier)

Bonapartists memorialized Napoleon and his reign as Emperor, even well into the Bourbon Restoration in the 1810s. Artists including Théodore Géricault (1791-1824) and Horace Vernet (1789-1863) were commissioned by wealthy individuals to create images of not just Napoleon, but also of the Grande Armée. Paintings and prints include numerous depictions of both French victory and defeat. One of the most popular of these subjects is the Battle of Waterloo of 1815 in which France suffered its final defeat, ending the Napoleonic Wars.

Jean-Pierre-Marie Jazet’s aquatint Le Soldat de Waterloo (1821), reproducing Vernet’s painting of the same title, depicts a wounded French soldier resting after a long and arduous battle. Trees bent by strong gusts of wind frame the casualties—corpses and a dead horse—on the hillside behind the central figure. Scattered around the central figure are uniform remnants, weaponry, and what seems to be a partially buried cannon in the lower right corner of the image. The soldier holds a shovel that digs into the ground to the left of a dead soldier. Under the mound on which he sits is a head face down with a hand grasping a French grenadier’s cap; this sole surviving man has buried his fellow soldiers.

It is likely that the Waterloo Soldier is Lord Byron’s character Childe Harold from his poem “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage” (1812). Byron was a well-known and often problematic poet known for his critique of humanity and his Romantic perspective on the world. Harold, a traveler who left his family and home, finds himself in a war-torn land and contemplates the results and purpose of war:

*And Harold stands upon this place of skulls,*  
*The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo!*  
*How in an hour the power which gave annuls*  
*Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too!*  
*In ‘pride of place’ here last the eagle flew,*  
*Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain,*  
*Pierced by the shaft of banded nations through:*  
*Ambition’s life and labours all were vain;*  
*He wears the shattered links of the world’s broken chain.*  

Fit retribution! Gaul may champ the bit,  
*And foam in fetters, but is Earth more free?*  
*Did nations combat to make ONE submit;*  

Or league to teach all kings true sovereignty?  
*What shall reviving thraldom again be*  
*The patched-up idol of enlightened days?*  
*Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we*  
*Pay the Wolf homage? proffering lovely gaze*  
*And servile knees to thrones? No; PROVE before ye praise!*  

Among the numerous correlations between the aquatint and the poem is the illuminated cross staked in the mound in the background, a reference to Byron’s name for Waterloo, “the grave of France.” The scene reminds the viewer of the many lives lost throughout the Napoleonic Wars as well as the problems they faced during the following Bourbon Restoration. The soldier holds a similar pose to figures in other historic prints which represent melancholia; however, his facial expressions suggest anger as well as contemplation of what he will face, and possibly, the questions asked in stanza XIV of the poem. The problems caused by the French defeat at Waterloo were twofold: first, the political and social equalities fought for since 1789 were now eliminated. Napoleon’s failure meant that the Bourbon Restoration, the revival of an absolutist monarchy, would remove Revolutionary France’s constitution aimed towards social equalities. Secondly, because soldiers were either forced into early retirement or faced salary restrictions under the Restoration, their decade-long careers were lost. The new government stripped soldiers’ titles and pay because they fought for Napoleon and survived. This print, whether or not it is a reference to Byron’s poem, resonated with the neglected veterans of the Napoleonic Wars and reminded the viewer of the Restoration’s negative effects in France.

Jazet trained as a printmaker from a young age under his uncle. He became noted as a reproduction engraver in 1817, reproducing works by French painters Antoine-Jean Gros (1771-1835) and Horace Vernet, a notable Bonapartist. Vernet’s original painting was rejected by the Paris Salon of 1822, which was under the Royalist control. While Vernet responded by displaying his forty-five paintings of the soldier’s life in his own studio as a public salon, Jazet’s larger print brought the expressive scene to a wider, more sympathetic audience.
Jean-Pierre-Marie Jazet
(French, 1788-1871)

Le Soldat de Waterloo
1821
aquatint
20 ⅜ × 23 ⅞ in.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer
Foundation, Houston
BE:1999.38

1. Nina Anthanasoglo-Kallmyer, “Sad Cincinnatus: Le Soldat Laboureur as an Image of the Napoleonic Veteran after the Empire,” *Arts Magazine* 60, no. 9 (1986): 74. Vernet’s painting was commissioned by the duc d’Orléans, who would become King Louis-Philippe in 1830.


3. Richard Holloyd, “The Bourbon Army, 1815-1830,” *The Historical Journal* 14, no. 3 (1971), 529. The new financial and political situation called for downsizing the army and the royalists were favored to serve to limit the possibility of revolt.


THE PLAINS OF MARS

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COVER IMAGE: Théodore Géricault, Mameluke Defending a Wounded Trumpeter,
1818, lithograph, 13 ½ x 11 in., Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation, Houston