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HENRI IV AS MILITARY COMMANDER

by

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ABSTRACT

HENRI IV AS MILITARY COMMANDER

Terence W. Loveridge
Old Dominion University, 1999
Director: Dr. Annette Finley-Croswhite

Henri IV won the throne of France as a feat of arms in a time of great social, religious, economic and military transformation. Militarily, Henri has generally been regarded as a gallant, opportunistic and lucky cavalry commander whose remarkable sense of timing and flexible personal principles enabled him to play a major role in the ending of the Wars of Religion in France. Current debate over the "Military Revolution" of the sixteenth century and the "Revolution in Military Affairs" of the twentieth has renewed interest in both the characters and the techniques of warfare in transformation.

New approaches to military methodology therefore stimulate renewed interest in both the time and the techniques of Henri IV and makes this a particularly relevant moment to subject him to a re-assessment as a military commander. Viewed from the empathetic vantage point provided by comparable transformational periods, it becomes clear that Henri's military achievement rested not so much upon luck and opportunism as upon his outstanding ability as a military commander in a time of both civil war and asymmetrical warfare against Europe's only superpower, Spain.

Henri IV executed highly successful and sophisticated campaigns with weapons derived from emerging technology and tactics, techniques and procedures that were continually evolving. He was the model of the sixteenth-century practitioner of the holistic technique of battle, campaign, deterrence and information dominance that capitalized on the combination of the two major traditions of warfare in France: the chivalric tradition of leadership and arms and the more scientific method of the *condottiere*.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

. . .that incomparable man of war. . .
John Bennett Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603*[1]

. . .a brave man, indeed, who would charge sword in hand; but after all, an old graybeard pursuing women in the streets of Paris could only be an old fool.
Napoleon, *Napoleon: the Last Phase*[2]

When it comes to making war, which is the real calling of a great captain and king, he has no match in Christendom, nor has there been one for a long time.
Pietro Duado, Venetian ambassador to France, 1598.[3]

Truly he was the most inconsequent and the most un-Napoleonic of generals.
Sir Charles Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century*[4]

John Keegan and Andrew Wheatcroft, in establishing criteria for their *Who's Who of Military History,* offer a convenient five part categorization of the "most significant men of war": the great commanders "whose leadership won the most famous victories of the modern age", including the Napoleons and the Wellingtons; those who "laid the ground for the victory of others" like Moltke the Elder; the military thinkers like Clausewitz; the military technocrats of the Vauban-type; and the "heroes" exemplified by the outstanding aerial ace or cavalier.[5] The classification appears to offer only those in the first category eligibility for "Great Captain" status. Henri IV of France and of Navarre achieved the throne of France as a feat of arms in a key period of great social, religious, economic and military reformation and, indeed, has

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Style manual used is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations,* 6 ed., revised by John Grossman and Alice Bennet, (Chicago: University of Chicago,1996).

1 John Bennet Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon, 1959), 419.

2 Lord Rosebery, *Napoleon: the Last Phase* (London: Arthur L. Humphries, 1904), 187.

3 James C. Davis, ed., *Pursuit of Power: Venetian Ambassadors Reports on Spain, Turkey and France in the Age of Philip II, 1560-1600* (New York and London: Harper & Row, 1970), 268-9.

4 Sir Charles W.C. Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co, 1937), 505.

5 John Keegan and Andrew Wheatcroft, *Who's Who in Military History From 1453 to the Present Day* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), viii-ix.

been called one of the four great leaders of France of all time.[6] He should readily receive nomination to that first category, but as the remarks quoted above make evident, there is little consensus on Henri IV's position in military history.

Almost all of the written work and opinion on Henri IV focuses largely on his kingship. It emphasizes his role in ending of the civil and religious wars of France during the late sixteenth century and in his reconstruction of France in the early seventeenth. Yet he is one of the more recognizable military personalities of French history and held to be the foremost military figure of his day by many of his peers. His martial character and individual prowess is a staple in descriptions of him, as are his penchants for *le bon mot* and *la belle dame,* but little has specifically been said about his remarkable qualities as a military commander. This vacuum exists because his achievements as a commander occurred in a time that was until recently largely ignored by military historians as a period of "dull, difficult reading, full of complex intrigues, odd-sounding place names, and battles fought with exemplary skill to no purpose."[7] New approaches to military methodology rekindling an interest in both his time and his techniques makes this a particularly relevant time to subject Henri IV, the military commander, to a re-assessment. [8]

A calculated assessment of Henri as military commander throws light on the early modern world and also reveals some perceptions of intervening ages. Assessments by Henri's contemporaries of his military talent, political skills and personal acumen reveal much about sixteenth century attitudes toward leadership, war, battle, success, and the provision of support to causes and individuals. The military assessment made after Henri's death reveals much about attitudes and assumptions of Enlightenment and Napoleonic military and social historianship. Current understanding of the character of military maneuver techniques and the complex and sometimes chaotic dynamics of the sixteenth century throw many rationalistic assumptions and attitudes of these periods are into sharp contrast. This thesis will argue that the early

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6 Henri "remains together with Charlemagne, Joan of Arc and Saint Louis, one of France's heroes," who "typifies not France's mystical aspect, but its aspects of courage, good sense and gaiety" André Maurois, *A History of France,* 2d ed. ed. Henry L. Binse (New York : Farrar, Staus and Cudahy, 1956), 172.

7 Charles Fair, *From the Jaws of Victory* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), 141.

8 Frank Tallet, *War and Society in Early Modern Europe 1495-1715* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992) for the "rewriting the history of war" 1-13.

modern assessment of Henri as one of the "Great Captains" is valid despite the views of more recent military historians whose works have been focussed by the mechanistic interpretations of battle and warfare that followed the early modern era. This more modern view undermines the accomplishments of Henri IV, and of his contemporaries, by restricting command assessment to a linear logic resting upon overly narrow, battle and organization oriented criteria.

GREAT CAPTAINS: PATTERNS

"Social" history's identification of the wider field of vector forces acting on events has done much to enliven interest in early modern and "Renaissance" military development. This interest has been largely due to an ongoing debate over the concept and timing of what has been described as a "military revolution".[9] The debate has centered upon the source or sources of change: tactics; economics; fortresses; technology; army size and the political and social ramifications of each. Little has been said on military leadership during the period beyond the generally accepted view that Maurice of Orange and Gustavus Adolphus implemented visible structural changes within their armies. The timing of the "military revolution" itself is so widely argued that it leads to speculation that revolution exists in every specialist's particular field.[10] This lack of cross-pollination in analysis is particularly evident in the description of the same temporal event as being an "end" for a medievalist and a "beginning" for an early modernist. By implication, there exists revolution rather than adaptation.[11] Thus, the end of chivalry, the importance of firearms and the realignment of European fiefdoms and religion can be misconsidered in assessing the capabilities of sixteenth-century militaries. This focus on trends and the shying away from "great man" history leads to a view of the period as one in which leadership and command are an afterthought. Yet it was the choices of the commanders of the period in accepting, accelerating or being

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9 For overviews of the "military revolution" see John A. Lynn, "Clio in Arms: Role of the Military Variable in Shaping History," *Journal of Military History* 55 (January 1991): 83-95; Thomas Barker, Jeremy Black and Weston F. Cook with a response by Geoffrey Parker, "Geoffrey Parker's Military Revolution: Three reviews of the Second Edition," *Journal of Military History* 61 (April 1997): 347-54.

10 "When additional historians join in the debate, they are apt to attest to the plausible existence of one or more RMAs in their century no matter what their periods of expertise may be," Colin S. Gray, "RMAs and the Dimensions of Strategy," *Joint Force Quarterly* 17 (Autumn-Winter 1997-98): 51.

11 Bert S. Hall, *Weapons and Warfare in Renaissance Europe: Gunpowder, Technology, and Tactics* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 105-6.

overwhelmed by these processes that gave shape to European, and so global, military history.

Conversely, an interest in the specific assessment of command influence in such circumstances has been provoked by emergent uncertainty within modern systems. A general recognition of the interplaying eddies of our current multipolar political environment with its baffling economic restructuring leads late twentieth-century commentators to reach back toward pre-Westphalian Europe for analogy because "most of the wars of the twentieth century were like the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' religious struggles, brutal contests of grimly determined elites pursuing visions, based on claims of perceiving purposive patterns amid history's tangled, murky tides, and striving to ride them to destiny or control their flow."[12]

This general analogy finds further parallel in the perception of yet another "Revolution in Military Affairs" -- known within the military as "the RMA". The RMA is a response to new technology, weaponry, and information processing systems and military functions of the late twentieth century. Thus re-examination of the roles, procedures, techniques, command and control of military forces reveals the need for an integrated civil-military arena quite familiar to princes of the Renaissance.[13] While direct historical comparison has many pitfalls[14] some analogous pattern recognition permits a fuller understanding of military events in times of rapid social, political, religious and technological change.

"Pattern recognition" itself is a key concept in comprehension of the fluid dynamics of transition. In a field where one end exists in absolutely stability and the opposite in absolute chaos the net product of interactive forces influences movement from one end toward the other.[15] On a battlefield, for example, firepower is a factor in propelling a military body from the middle of the field either toward the ultimate stability of inaction or toward the ultimate disorder of panic and chaos. The effects of

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12 Roger Beaumont, *War, Chaos and History* (Westport and London: Praeger, 1994) 17 and Ken Booth, "Security and Emancipation," *Review of International Studies* 17, no.4 (1991): 313-326.

13 For an overview of the current perception of an RMA, see Eliot Cohen, "A Revolution in Warfare," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 2 (1996): 37-54.

14 As warned by Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers*, (New York: Free Press, Macmillan, 1986), 232-36; and Michael Howard, *Lessons of History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), 6-20.

15 Tom Czerwinski, *Coping with the Bounds: Speculations on Nonlimearity in Military Affairs* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1998), 41-58.

experience and protection counter or even cancel this propulsion. The relationship between such basic factors is essentially arithmetic or linear. The resolution of many such factors, as would be present on a battlefield or in any interactive situation, is complex but still cumulatively linear. The sum of the factors determines the net move toward one end of the field or the other.

There are, however, factors that exercise a disproportionate influence on results. Factors such as unpredictability of resources, inconsistency in expertise, influence of information dissemination, technological change, and influence of perception on the utility of action can have influences on the propulsion toward one end of the field that are not arithmetic. Their effects seem to depend upon a synergy of their own results with the effects of the other factors. These are "non-linear" effects and are familiar to analysts attempting to explain transitions within modern warfare. These factors were no less influential in the campaigns of the sixteenth century.

Linear analysis in science as well as in history assumes a Newtonian mechanistic basis to events that implies that if all of the parts of a problem are analyzed the whole becomes cumulatively available. There is cause and effect and it is proportional in that large changes have large effects and small changes proportionately smaller ones. Extrapolation, therefore, is tempting. Hierarchy, bureaucracy and manmade mechanical devices operate linearly.

Post Newtonian science with its access to high speed computer processing enables analysis of extremely complex, "non-linear" systems such as weather patterns, fluid dynamics and social systems. The best known example of this is the "sensitive dependence on initial conditions" or the 'Lorenz effect" whereby a butterfly's wings flapping in one part of the globe creates a storm in another. Nature insists that changes do not have proportional effects. Very small changes can have immensely disproportional effects -- the "for want of a nail" notion -- and so are "non-linear". The nonlinear whole is more than the sum of the parts because a form of synergy exists between those parts. Military organization and control mechanisms are linear constructs but warfare, combat and command are non-linear phenomena.[16]

Reductionist thought, appropriate for linear, man-made systems is therefore not geared toward nonlinear, complex interactive events such as warfare. After the

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[16] James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* (New York: Penguin, 1987) Lorenz's study, 9-32. "Want of a nail" analogy, 23.

sixteenth century a real effort was made to impose a linear pattern of reductionist organization and practice onto the battlefield. Commanders and historians largely reinforced this trend in post action description that was increasingly simplified by the adoption of linear tactics and the growth in the size of armies that eventually turned these "lines" into industrial warfare conventions that eventually resembled theater wide formal sieges.[17]

Henri IV and the commanders of his period had not yet been exposed to a Newtonian universe and thought neither in terms of linear progression or of a concept of "enemy lines" outside of the formal siege. Enigmatical currents, not machinery, propelled their events. God and religion still permeated all aspects of society and daily life. The syntax of the language could not yet even clearly express mechanistic alternatives.[18] The factor of "inspired leadership" therefore has an entirely different meaning in the twentieth century than in the sixteenth, but its results are parallel. Already by the Wars of Religion (1562-98) there was a developing science of military organization and drills and it was available from treatises, pamphlets and surprisingly widespread books but the arts of command and control remained intuitive. There were not, as of yet, operational doctrines, Lanchester square theorems, or staff college formulations to standardized problems. The test of sixteenth-century warfare was not the ability to select a solution from a series of appropriate tactical formations but it was to absorb and meld the inchoate science and the personal art into an intuitive whole that would respond to the pattern of events of the moment. Recent study confirms that this is not so very different to what occurs as modern commanders confront operational change. Experienced commanders operate with an intuition born of their education and modified by personal experience in order to reach rapid workable solutions to new problems. They "deliberate more than novices about the nature of the *situation,* whereas novices deliberate more than experts about which *response* to select."[19] Experience with the non-linear effects of interactions leads them to operate by recognizing the patterns in the holistic, complex, and chaotic battlefield where the "Great Captains" make their home.

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17 The First World War is often represented as a huge scale formal siege with trenches essentially surrounding the besieged Central Powers.

18 Karen Armstrong, *A History of God* (New York: Ballantine, 1994) 286-7.

19 Czerwuinski, 140-154.

Warfare is a social activity and nonlinear factors have similar effects in the complex phenomena of social change as they do in battle. Both the historian and the military theoretician operate with a sense of pattern recognition that enables at least empathy with if not understanding of the requirements for command in the early modern era. While the thoroughly dedicated form of *noblesse oblige* that was Henri IV's birthright may not be fully understood in the twentieth century, the challenge for military leadership and the measures taken in response to these challenges are familiar and provide a detectable pattern to Henri's military evolution. Given his times, he would more than likely have been under arms for the better part of his life but under no obligation to become a professional or even an expert in the art and science of military command. He was bred to command and educated to war. Fortunately for those who followed him, he loved the challenge of battle and war enough to become an expert in its sciences and he loved the fellowship of war enough to master the artistry of command. In order to achieve this, Henri IV had to comprehend and use the critical transitions of his time.

GREAT CAPTAINS: TRANSITION

Henri of Navarre was raised to be a chivalric warrior king and leader in a time of fundamental technological, social and military change. He was educated in the old school of the late medieval order of nobility that prized heroic leadership and the artistry of war fought for justice and power. His experience, however, was increasingly with the new order of the professional, *condottiere*-born school that valued technology and the scientific discipline of the formation. His education in soldiering was built upon the military function of a class whose templates were Caesar and Alexander. Exposure to the veteran modern captains like the ardent Huguenot La Noue, the zealous royalist Monluc and the professional adventurer Williams enhanced his understanding of the paradigms and patterns of modern warfare. Finally, lengthy and varied experience completed his personal pilgrimage to commander.

"Transition" is a concept readily recognizable to students and practitioners of warfare of both the sixteenth and late twentieth centuries. As noted, there exists a concurrence of military interest in the effects and consequences of change in a "Revolution in Military Affairs" in the twentieth century with historical interest in the aspects of a perceived "military revolution" of the sixteenth. A period of transition

makes assessment of command a relatively simple evaluation but results in a somewhat complex justification. Judgment of leadership during transition is relatively simple: the leader and the led either survive or do not. Explanations of the survival and the role of the leader in the process are more complex. Transition implies at least two states, a before and an after, and judgment is often made from the point of view of one of these states. Henri's detractors and supporters alike, therefore pigeonhole him as a feudal knight-warrior at the twilight of the Middle Ages, as a prince of foxes at a Machiavellian dawn, or as a swashbuckling commander of light cavalry in a backwater war of skirmish and siege. These views underestimate a king who commanded troops in some 200 battles, sieges, skirmishes and encounters, almost always against superior forces. It also lacks contextual appreciation of the early modern world in which he was so successful. Henri himself made assessment no easier since, unlike many of his contemporaries, he wrote no *Art of War* that could have placed a patent on his innovations and methods. Instead he left posterity with a picture of a *beau sabreur* calculated to satisfy specific requirements of his time and to establish himself in the pantheon of French kings. Henri of Navarre was Bourbon and Protestant attempting to succeed to a Valois and Catholic throne. His succession would always be contested by powerful coalitions at home and abroad. Henri needed to be perceived as a legitimate heir to the throne and this meant that he had to be capable of not only curing scrofula by touch but of defeating the enemies of the realm through personal power and effort. A straightforward reputation as a clever soldier with a scientific understanding of fire, maneuver and strategic ends and means could not engender the form of almost supernatural respect he needed to secure a throne. Instead, he needed to be perceived as a chivalric protector of his church and realm. He needed to be perceived as kingly: invincible on the battlefield; wise in the administration of power; devoted in faith; and caring in the hearts of his subjects.

Marked points of view on his character have also clouded the record of Henri as a campaigner, strategist and battlefield commander. His apparent inconstancy to confessional faith, wives and mistresses rendered his motivations suspect to the more ardent Protestants and Catholics. So too, later rationalist historians tended to respect a more calculating devotion to faith as *realpolitik* but questioned the immoderate devotion to romance. Despite this post-facto view of character by the end of the civil wars Henri commanded effective polyglot armies of Protestants and Catholics, Royalists and

rebels, dilettantes and professionals, mercenaries and auxiliaries on loan from sympathetic allies and adventurers drawn to his name. Their foes characterized them as Machiavellian *politiques*, but in point of fact, they were held together in a time of great uncertainty and complexity by the presence of Henri IV and the promise of transition to a future that he represented. His ability to read the patterns, to decipher and exploit the consistent thread of war that ran through the quilt of social, political and confessional transition, gave them confidence. They shared a faith in the military competence, the bloodline and in the persuasive, forgiving character of the man who would be king. This charismatic persona became the centerpiece message of what we would now call an "information campaign". Such an operation relied on continued military success. Henri therefore became his own talisman in order to ensure these continued successes.

Constant success required a creative approach to overcoming the limitations of resources and the inconsistency of sixteenth-century warfare. Such creativity made of Henri a maestro of the high tempo campaign, the *coup de main*, and the unconventional siege. It demanded artistry in putting military achievements to work on the higher plane of security of the realm, artistry that even Napoleon was ultimately unable to effect. Henri IV employed his military acumen to create from consistent battlefield victory a form of military deterrence. This deterrence, founded upon inevitable success, allowed him to complete a program of calculated clemency, information dominance and pacification that legitimized his dynasty and ended more than a generation of debilitating civil and social war. Henri's implementation of strategic deterrence in the form of a successful "war for peace" against the superpower of his age enables the claim that it was Spain's failure to achieve military success against Henri IV more than her Armada failure that reset the course of European history.

Henri's accomplishments as a soldier were therefore no mere sidebar to the story of sixteenth-century Europe. The transformations emerging from the Wars of Religion --political, social and military-- allowed Henri IV to function within the disorder of fractured traditional institutions and make the fissures work to his advantage. His education, background, experience, expectations and character conspired to produce a mastery of a profession of arms that was evolving at an accelerating rate yet which retained the traditional codes of a bygone era. The mastery of this dichotomy proved to be the primary instrument that set house of France in order, drew the "line in the sand"

for the house of Hapsburg and guaranteed independence for the House of Tudor and the Burghers of the Netherlands.

HENRI IV AS GREAT CAPTAIN

Henri IV already has a place in military history but in order to confer upon him a title of Great Captain it will be necessary to embark upon the assessment in stages. First, therefore, Chapter 2 will describe the military era within which Henri IV operated. Chapter 3 will describe the tactics, tactical organizations and methods of fighting that Henri mastered for the ever-changing battlefield. This talent provided the source of Henri's formidable battlefield reputation among his peers. This tactical prowess notwithstanding, these combat adventures provided or solidified the mature Henri's vision for France and Chapter 4 will describe his strategic efforts will demonstrate the consistency that gave form to his vision of monarchy and kingdom. Once the tactical mastery of the field and the strategic unity of vision are established, Chapter 5 will then describe the more controversial aspect of Henri's performance as a military commander, that of a campaigner. Henri's aptitude for this operational level of warfare will provide the final key to the overall military assessment of this Captain.

Henri of France and Navarre will therefore be shown to be not just a warrior king emerging from a confused internecine power struggle but will be revealed as a capable commander of a remarkably effective combined arms team. He will be seen as a charismatic leader of armies synthesized from the professional and the pedigreed. He will be shown to be an expert planner, strategist and campaigner in a time when warfare was a matter of communal, dynastic and social justice more than state policy. As such, he confronted issues that were essentially ideological and uncompromising and not subject to a rationalist calculus of military victory through conquest. Battle, siege, campaign, treaty, glory, and faith were all just elements of the larger campaign for the heart of France. Henri's creative artistry was to produce victory that satisfied. War was his canvas, battle his paint and command his brush. In producing a lasting victory with limited but adaptive resources, he became an identifiable prototype of a modern military commander whose success in maneuverist "non-linear" warfare transcends his age and marks him as a candidate for election as one of the "Great Captains".

CHAPTER II
PRECONDITIONS OF HENRI IV's WARS

COMPLEXITY, CHAOS AND HISTORY

The exploration of the military talent of Henri IV requires an appreciation of the role and influence of the leader in transitional and complex events. Current military and business analysts who accept the chaos theory principle that microsystem chaos can still render macrosystem simplicity will find the career of Henri IV comforting. Henri, through education and experience, proved a master of the chaotic battlefield. The larger arenas of warfare and society, within which battle functions, are subject to similar logarithms. Sixteenth century armies were not large, specialized, well staffed and drilled state entities. The assumption that a machine-like structure would compensate for the chaos of battle was not yet in evidence. Henri IV and his contemporaries would not and probably could not have recognized such a mechanical view of events. To them, armies and society functioned more like living organisms within an ecosystem controlled only by the supernatural. Like a perceptive Bismarck of some three centuries later, Henri would have agreed that "Man cannot create the current of events. He can only float with it and steer."[1] Henri's success lay in just that ability to steer along the currents of his time.

TRANSFORMATIONAL WARFARE

Between 1494 and 1559 the Valois monarchies engaged in what are generally considered the first of modern wars.[2] There was little superficially to differentiate between the French army that invaded Italy under Charles VIII in 1494 and that of Napoleon three centuries later.[3] It contained field artillery, gunpowder infantry, cavalry

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1 Bismarck quoted in Leonard W. Cowie, *Sixteenth Century Europe* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1977) 127.

2 Hugh Thomas, *A History of the World* (New York: Harper-Row, 1979), 217; and Michael Howard, *War in European History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 20.

3 Howard, *War in European History,* 19.

squadrons and a contemporary reporting press.[4] This resemblance was largely physical, for despite a tendency toward analytical prolepsis, the talent to employ this resource effectively would only evolve with experience.

Most fortresses and garrisons surrendered to Charles' bronze guns without contest.[5] After the notable use of artillery at the end of the Hundred Years' War, in the Spanish Reconquista and by the Turks at Constantinople this was not wholly unexpected but, significantly, this new development in artillery mobility and firepower added a renewed emphasis on battle in the open. There the mobility of the large guns was not yet competitive with infantry and cavalry. This pull toward battle was supported by the vestigial chivalric needs of the nobility.

It is in this evolution of battlefield forces that the transformation from infeudated organizations to modern armies is normally depicted. In simplified terms, the heavily armored medieval hosts of Agincourt and Crécy were somehow transformed into the well-drilled uniformed armies of the ancien régime and firepower replaces shock as the principle means of decision. The military revolution debate focuses largely on this process and consequently its assumptions play into any assessment of the military commanders who operated during this process.

The obvious technological differences between medieval and modern forces are often credited with sparking a revolution in the conduct of military operations and subsequently a revolution in state organization. The disagreement on the specific factors involved and in the time scale of such a revolution at the very least indicates that the process was a complex one. In fact, the operational innovations of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century were influenced by, and in turn influenced, the increasing use of two very obvious and important materials for the conduct of war and diplomacy-- gunpowder and ink.[6] Post-fifteenth century, there could be no successful European commander who could not master both.

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4 Cowie, 125. Also John Rigby Hale, "Armies, Navies and the Art of War," in *The New Cambridge Modern History: Vol III - The Counter-Reformation and the Price Revolution 1559-1610,* ed. R. B. Wernham (London: Cambridge Press, 1968), 171-2.

5 Christopher Duffy, *Siege Warfare: The Fortress in the Early Modern World 1494-1660* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1979), 9-11.

6 Mahinder S. Kingra, "The *Trace Italienne* and the Military Revolution During the Eighty Years' War, 1567-1648," *Journal of Military History* 57, (July 1993): 431-46.

GUNPOWDER ARMIES: FIRE AND SHOCK

The hand-held firearm fully replaced the bow during this period with relatively little fanfare and had little effect on tactics. The arquebus and musket merely replaced an existent system (primarily crossbows) with something more effective and ultimately efficient.[7] This efficiency made battle less dependent upon muscle, more impersonal and decidedly more lethal.[8] The potential for a large butcher's bill made the wastage of valuable forces in ill-considered contact a more likely occurrence and therefore discouraged the unplanned engagement.

The new weapons also required more collective training and drilling and therefore social acceptance was important in operational development. The heart of the armies of France were the men-at-arms (*gens d'armes*) provided through the voluntary contributions of her noble houses.[9] Nobility was therefore the core of French military power and as such it largely determined the readiness to adopt innovation. For instance, nobles were as loathe to being shot with ball as with arrow since neither was socially discriminating but because firearms had been in use for hunting for a generation they were readily accepted for noble use in warfare.[10]

The gendarmerie-based organization had already evolved in the late Middle Ages into a complex team that combined the shock action of cavalry with the firepower of infantry. France and Burgundy experienced a long period of coming to grips with the "missile defense" of the English longbow and the defensive-offensive pike array of the Swiss and their gendarmerie had subsequently been subsumed into a functional combined arms system incorporating French heavy cavalry, mercenary light cavalry and Swiss-German infantry. Just as the role of the tank in blitzkrieg is too often exaggerated, the genuine importance of the all arms combat team is too easily missed

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[7] Hall, 135-51; and David Eltis, *The Military Revolution in Sixteenth Century Europe* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1995), 16-17.

[8] The opposite view is often expressed, notably in Cowie, 134; and in Theodore Ayrault Dodge, *Gustavus Adolphus* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1895; reprint, New York: Dacca, 1998), 30-31 (page citations are to the reprint).

[9] Dennis E. Showalter, "Caste, Skill and Training: The Evolution of Cohesion in European Armies from the Middle Ages to the Sixteenth Century," *Journal of Military History* 75 (July 1993): 410 and 416.

[10] Hall, 97.

in the tendency to simplify the armored knight of the late Middle Ages.[11] The heavy cavalry, like the tank, had developed a specific role on a battlefield employing a variety of "weapon systems"[12]. The gendarmerie's role was to use its mobility and protection to provide the significant shock action, or even just the threat of such action, to destroy the opposition's cohesion.

> From classical antiquity, maintaining coherent formations was the essential precondition for coordinated effort in battle, for the simple reason that no means of communication existed to carry order farther than the voice of the officer who issued it...The tactical advantage of coherent formations was so basic to warfare that attempting to destroy coherence was often the chief goal of opposing battlefield commanders.[13]

The sophistication of this operational evolution in tactics was not matched by a similar advancement in organization, structure or training. Lacking a formal training system, this gendarmerie relied exclusively on socializing group norms and common education of the warrior class for its skills and cohesion.[14] While this provides a strong, socially cohesive, group it does not guarantee that the most recent of tactical developments is quickly absorbed. The structure of the heavy cavalry and the requirement for self-equipping guaranteed that the gens d'armes were provided from the wealthier social strata. This built-in social selectivity explains the over-representation of individual knightly actions in battle descriptions of the day. Such "Illiadisms" misrepresented what were in fact tightly controlled formation actions.[15] The large representation of nobility within the French gendarmerie could also present discipline problems in an inexperienced command that was more familiar with literary description of battle and tournament etiquette than with disciplined tactical forms. This idiosyncrasy was appreciated as the strength and the weakness of the French

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11 Paddy Griffith, *Forward into Battle: Fighting Tactics from Waterloo to the Near Future*, 2d ed. (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1992) for an explanation of the role of the tank in blitzkrieg, 106-108.

12 Weapon "system" in the military lexicon includes the weapon, the personnel manning it and the vehicle transporting it. For the "knight" this would include his horse, armor, weapons and retainers – his "lance" in early modern terms.

13 Hall, 12.

14 Ibid., 13.

15 The long-standing, and anachronistic, interest in the tournament also supported this perception. A parallel can be drawn to the contemporary novel and film that depicts heroic individual action rather than effective teamwork in depiction of war and warlike activities.

gendarmerie who "are so proud and fearsome that it is dangerous to attack them" but "it must also be very hard [for their leaders?] to restrain and control all of that frenzy and drive which makes them so bold." [16]

Armies made up of feudal levies disappeared as nobles provided funds for the provision of equipped and skilled forces rather than pull their own skilled workers from primary functions. The experiences of the Hundred Years War, Albigensian Crusades and the Jacquerie were too fresh in the collective conscious of the French nobility to want to train or equip their shire residents as soldiers and potential rebels.[17] Thus effective infantry and light cavalry were rented from the available European mercenary pool while the monarch provided the artillery train.

Experience reinforced evolution. At Ravenna in 1512 the French commander was killed leading his lance-armed force in a futile attempt to prevent Spanish infantry withdrawing. Soon afterward, the gendarmerie welcomed functional "wheel lock" handguns and arquebusiers were mounted on cavalry-reject horseflesh (argoleiters). Therefore, the gens d'armes quickly developed the capacity to radically alter the speed and shock variables of the battlefield.

INFORMATION ARMORY: PRINT AND PROMOTION

The other major technological influence on warfare was in the use of the printed medium in disseminating military knowledge and in influencing the perception of military operations. Leaders had access to the military ideas and knowledge of the most prominent of the classics and of the most prolific of their peers. Followers had access to description, assessment and even public policy statements of their leaders and heroes.[18] The very intellectual foundation of belief, followership and military artistry was

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16 Michele Suriano, Venetian Ambassador quoted Davis, *Pursuit of Power*, 188.

17 Ibid., 185; and in Frederic J. Baumgartner, *France in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1995), 56-7.

18 The "proto-journalistic medium" coverage of warfare is in the introduction to Claude de Seyssel, *The Monarchy of France*, trans. J.H. Hexter, ed. Donald R. Kelley (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 1.

now open to question and since no form of state confidentiality existed, all military techniques were available for wide public and professional consumption.[19]

The veterans of the Italian Wars carried back north with them much of the subtle influence of the modern professional soldiers of the Italian city-state. The condottieri had not only honed the skills of maneuver and deterrence into a high art form but captured much of this artistry in print. The condottieri were thoroughly crushed by massive gendarmerie forces at Fornovo as early as 1495 in the blood and iron techniques of attrition and annihilation. This "Western Way of War" worked so long as the state had sufficient resources as to afford substantial casualties without loss of cohesion.[20] The condottieri example of warfare, relying more on success through preservation of resources, became of vital importance to the veterans of the hard pressed factions of the Wars of Religion. [21]

Competing visions of warfare were heavily influenced by the revival of interest in the classics of antiquity. The printing press promoted military works of the likes of Caesar, Xenophon, Polybius, and Flavius Vegetius to the best-seller lists where they were joined by an increasing number of works by contemporary theorists such as Niccolo Machiavelli. The assumption of most authors was that the readership, being of noble extraction or of professional bent, would be familiar with the sounds, smells and dynamics of combat and merely needed to know the precise formations required to maintain cohesion and effectiveness. Machiavelli, of course, remains unique since he had little military experience but understood the post-feudal relationship of war to policy. For him the ideal military commander was the fox "capable of constantly devising new tactics and stratagems to deceive and overpower the enemy" whereas the chivalric credo continued to exist in the more leonine medieval attitudes of nobility who, by and large, equated command structure with loyalty and personal

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19 200 million books were printed in the sixteenth century. Printing is credited with both the resurgence of interest in chivalry and for the Reformation, Thomas, *History of the World,* 200 -201.

20 Victor Davis Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Ancient Greece* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989); and John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (New York: Vintage Random House, 1993). The "western way" also forms an assumption of Geoffrey Parker's *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

21 Desire for battle was still ever present in the civil wars but just was a less likely option. So that, for instance, "...for wanting the foundation of a long War, they were constrained to think how, as soon as they could, to bring it to the issue of a Battell." Enrico Davila, *The historie of the Civill Warres of France,* trans. by R. Raworth (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1980) 246.

performance.[22] Successful rulers, such as Henri IV, would therefore be required to balance the requirement for social legitimacy through the appeal to the traditional customs and codes of a chivalric knight with the need to seek military victory and political success through the realpolitik tenets of a Machiavelli. [23]

While the military manual was reborn during the early modern era, it was the ability of print to capture and distribute command experience that proved more influential. Such experience found a common point of departure in the classics. Sir Roger Williams, Blaise de Monluc, Michel de Montaigne, the Duke of Alva, among others all made extensive use of Julius Caesar's examples in their efforts. It was through his personal examples of warfare, and those of Xenophon, Sallust and Plutarch, that classical military thought was reborn. These works explained how to conduct a Parthian-like hit and run operation or how to shore up a disintegrating line. This cumulation of experience provided the generation of Henri IV with over thirty contemporary volumes of detailed instructions on the conduct of war. Almost all areas of interest were covered, from discipline, honneur and the raising of armies as found in Fourquevaux' s Instructions sur le faict de la Guerre and personal views on battles, fights, campaigns and leadership as in Monluc's commentaries. Henri IV, indicating his view as an experienced commander, preferred the situational description of the latter anti-chivalric work to the formulaic and dubbed Monluc's book "the soldier's breviary".[24] He also named his first acknowledged son César and the second, Alexandre.

WALL AND TRENCH: SECURITY AND SUPPLY

The perceived advantage of artillery over fortification was offset before the Italian wars had run their course. The portable firearm effectively blocked a breach

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22 Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Art of War,* ed., Ellis Farnesworth (New York: DaCapo, 1965), *xxv.*

23 Debate exists on the specific influence of the classics. See for instance Henry J. Webb *Elizabethan Military Science: The Books and the Practice* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), 3-4; and Donald A. Neill, "Ancestral Voices: The Influence of the Ancients on the Military Thought of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Journal of Military History* 62 (July 1998): 487-520.

24 Sieur de, Raymond de Beccarie de Pavie Fourquevaux, *Instructions sur le faict de la Guerre,* ed. G. Dickenson (London: University of London Athlone Press, 1954) contains an annex listing and describing 33 books available in French for sixteenth-century commanders. Henri's comment on Monluc is contained in Oliver Lyman Spaulding Jr., Hoffman Nickerson and John Womack Wright, *Warfare: A Study of Military Methods from the Earliest Times* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co, 1925; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1972), 581.

achieved by cannon and indeed made operating the cannon itself a risky venture.[25] Defeated forces could once again avoid destruction by withdrawal into fortresses and such fortresses could provide secure depots for armies more dependent than ever on foundries and powder mills.[26] So, after a brief experimental period of maneuver and battle, war reassumed its medieval pattern of raid and siege. The strategic targeting was somewhat different since it was applied against the centers of support to war rather than against the headquarters of noble clans. Thus the engines of industry, trade, transportation and capital had to be at least denied to an enemy if not co-opted for allied use. Conventional warfare, with its reliance on mercenaries and expendable technology, was becoming reliant on usable and continued wealth. The relationship between the lord and his financial base was now more important to sustainment of military effort than the perceived justice of his cause.[27]

The familiarity of the siege and raid pattern disguised important differences in tactical practice. Firstly, although the future was to be shaped by the adoption of a new system of scientific gunpowder-inspired fortification (*trace italienne),* it was the immediate technological response of earthen ramparts and handgun fire that returned primacy to the defense. Thus, in the words of the much-read Vegetius, early modern campaigners understood that it "is much better to overcome the enemy by famine, surprise or terror than by general actions, for in the latter instance fortune has often a greater share than valor."[28] Therefore, long before the construction of new European fortresses, the availability of a "combat multipliers" like a local strongpoint or earth-

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25 Marshall Strozzi was shot and killed by a firearm at 500 paces, in Blaise de Monluc *Military Memoires: The Hapsburg-Valois Wars and the French Wars of Religion,* ed., Ian Roy (Hamden, CN: Archon Books, 1972) 196. Hall, in *Weapons,* provides data on tests conducted in 1988-89 that revealed that "Guns of good workmanship from the sixteenth century shot better than guns "mass produced" as military firearms in the eighteenth century." 135-41.

26 Specifically, the strategic materials were now wool, flax, charcoal, leather, copper and saltpeter. John Rigby Hale, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe, 1420-1620* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1985) 214-15.

27 Charles Tilley, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1990* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 38-99.

28 Vegetius, *The Military Institutions of the Romans (De Re Militaria)* trans., John Clarke in *Roots of Strategy* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Pub, 1940; reprint, Harrisburg PA: Stackpole, 1985) 172 (page citation is to reprint edition).

walled dike became a critical factor requiring foresight and an executable strategy.[29] However, like most maxims this was easier written than done, for any siege ran the risk of lasting longer than an early modern army could be held together.[30] The brief ascendancy of battle at the beginning of the wars and the centrifugal pull of an anachronistic chivalry extended the belief that the issue should be settled quickly by a "decisive", and importantly, glorious battle, if only one could be arranged. Social, financial and logistic structures evolved to support this desired system of conquest and coercion.[31]

Therefore, a truly skilled campaigner endeavored to maneuver his opponent into an awkward position, such as against a barrier, from which he would be forced to fight at great disadvantage. Of course, he would concurrently attempt to avoid being placed into exactly that position himself. These conditions were most apparent in and around a siege where an attempted relief could bring about a major battle that could decide the "ownership" of the immediate area. This was most apparent Henri's campaigning strategy.

DEFINING MILITARY SUCCESS: THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

The consistent seeking of battle despite the high risk and apparent low return in utilitarian terms can be explained by the growth of personal glory through public recognition.[32] Battle was more the path to public reputation than political resolution. It was a marker and an indication to "sides" on how the cause was progressing.[33] Victory

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29 F. L. Taylor, *The Art of War in Italy 1494-1529* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1921; reprint, Westport CT: Greenwood, 1973), 20; Duffy, *Siege Warfare,* 8-22; Spaulding et al., 429-33; and for "the new siege warfare" Eltis, 76-98, (page citations are to reprint editions).

30 John A. Lynn in his survey in "The *trace italienne* and the Growth of Armies: The French Case," *Journal of Military History* 55 (July 1991) shows that sieges averaged 65 days (median of 61) and occupied a besieging force of about 27,300.

31 Geoffrey Parker, *Spain and the Netherlands 1559-1659: Ten Studies* (London: Fontana, 1990), 86-103.

32 Ellery Schalk, *From Valor to Pedigree: Ideas of Nobility in France in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986) 206-7; and Malcolm Vale, *War and Chivalry. Warfare and Aristocratic Culture in England, France and Burgundy at the End of the Middle Ages* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1981), 171.

33 Charles King, *Ending Civil Wars: Adephi Paper 308* (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), 66-68.

in battle was a religious, social, and political signal more than a militarily decisive event. Therefore victory was defined in quite a different context from that understood by later soldiers who saw victory defined in the linear, arithmetic of the battle of annihilation.[34]

The Italian wars ended with the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559. France, a kingdom of great potential, was nevertheless in poor financial position, awash in demobilized soldiery and inundated with reformist views of religion. The first order of business therefore was to be the strengthening of the domestic order. Unfortunately, King Henri II of France died in the same year. He might have been the strong monarch that Gallican France needed but it was his juvenile sons and Italian wife, Catherine de Medici, who were left to deal with the widening fissures in the French political, social, economic and military orders. It was the "fate of his whole house, ever to lose themselves and fall into confusion in the conflict of religious ideas with the power of the State, without being able to find the path that might have led them forth into safety."[35] The Valois inability to manage the currents of change eventually brought their cousin, Henri Bourbon, to the throne.

Henri, son of Antoine de Bourbon and a descendant of Saint Louis (Louis IX) of France, was born in Pau in 1553 as heir apparent to the small border kingdom of Navarre. This kingdom was insecurely nestled between France and Spain and provided one of their issues of contention. Thus while Henri was raised to be a noble and, as such, was expected to be educated in the skills of a *gen d'armes* he was also raised in a survivalist atmosphere of the unequal partner.

His grandfather insisted that Henri be raised in an overtly masculine and Spartan fashion that involved much physically demanding activity such as hunting, riding and arms training.[36] This insistence was appropriate for an heir who was to participate in what was considered the only suitable profession for a king -- command

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34 For example, this is equivalent to considering the purely "military" results of an Alamo or Dunkirk versus the political-cultural-social result.

35 Leopold von Ranke, *Civil Wars and Monarchy in France in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,* trans. M.D. Garvey (London: R. Bentley, 1852), 155. For a harsher, medically based view of the Valois failure, see Mark Hansen, *The Royal Facts of Life: Biology and Politics in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1980), 80-128.

36 Irene Mahony, *Royal Cousin, The Life of Henri IV of France* (New York: Doubleday, 1970) 2-10; Hesketh Pearson, *Henry of Navarre, The King Who Dared* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 3-6; and in Jacob Abbott, *Henry IV* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1901), 23-8.

in war.[37] Nevertheless, the humanist Renaissance court of Navarre did provide Henri with the characteristic background of a creative personality: he was raised as a firstborn; in a household replete with cultural stimulation; exposed to eminent figures; received an iconoclastic and a conventional education; and, while being marginalized from traditional French culture, was well immersed in the *zeitgeist* and spirit of his times.[38] He was thereby physically and psychologically prepared to exist in a dualistic world as both traditionalist noble and iconoclastic rebel.

PATTERNS OF POWER

The Navarrese court, through marriage and culture, was French. Henri, always distrusting of Habsburg Spain, was educated in the company of his royal Catholic cousins, the Valois, and the influential ultra-Catholic Lorraine family of Guise. These typical transnational gentry of their time, with their kingdoms and estates, formed the "networks of influence and patronage" that were the "units of early modern politics".[39] Certainly they perceived geopolitics in the European arena as an affair of family where "every child born to every prince anywhere in Europe was registered on the delicate seismographs that monitored the shifts in dynastic power. Every marriage was a diplomatic triumph or disaster."[40] These family networks were the core of military power.

The next level of power was over the wider family constituencies that included the estates and kingdoms that held some pattern of cultural, linguistic and communal identity--a pays. The pays was the source of soldiery, finance and support to military operations. Its first loyalty was to the protecting prince who drew his power from the wealth and manpower that these dominions provided.[41] So Navarre, Burgundy, and

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37 Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince,* trans. Luigi Ricci (New York and London: Mentor Penguin, 1980), 81; and Davis, *Pursuit of Power,* 268.

38 Dean Keith Simonton, "Creativity, Leadership and Chance" in *The Nature of Creativity: Contemporary Psychological Perspectives,* ed. Robert J. Sternberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 386-426.

39 David Kaiser, *Politics and War: European Conflict from Philip II to Hitler* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 3.

40 Michael Howard, *The Causes of War and other essays*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 14.

41 Ibid., "From the time of Thucydides until that of Louis XIV there was basically only one source of political and military power—control of territory, with all the resources in wealth and manpower that this provided." 16.

Lorraine were identifiable pays interrelated by language, culture and marriage ties to the "extended family" of greater France. Their courts, each unique, were foci of power, models for a way of life and repositories of administrative authority but beholden to the senior court of this military family nexus. The most senior court was that of the kings of France.[42] By the time Henri became Henri IV he could assume that his "France" existed as a more than just military entity for "it stands to reason that since your native tongue is French, you should be subjects of the King of France."[43]

Language notwithstanding, kingly effort had not brought into existence a real "French" army.[44] The military power of the state remained based upon the feudal call-up of the loyal houses of the realm. Rebellion flourished in the intramural dynamics between strong houses and weak throne. The key families with their networks of clients could easily engineer and support civil disobedience and rebellion. Within this contentious grouping young Henri Bourbon, who could shoot an arquebus from horseback, translate the military works of Caesar and hold his own in political discussion, was marked as having potential to constitute a realistic threat to the Valois throne.[45]

PATTERNS OF CONFLICT: CIVIL WAR

The weakness of a central religious and political authority set the conflict pattern for the early French civil wars. Three great families of mighty nobles vied to "protect" the sovereign by removing him from the influence of the others. Ardent Catholics, centered about the great soldier of Lorraine and French hero Francis Duke of Guise, controlled most of the Royalist forces and won the major engagements. The Protestant Huguenots were organized in the main about the House of Bourbon and the Admiral

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42 John Hexter, *Reappraisals in History: New Views on History and Society in Early Modern Europe*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979), 36-7.

43 Henri IV to Savoy in 1601, quoted in John Rigby Hale, *The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance* (New York: Athenum, 1994), 34.

44 André Corvisier, *Armies and Societies in Europe 1494-1789*, trans. Abigail T. Siddall (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1979), 48-50; and Baumgartner, 56-9 and 153-7.

45 Mahoney, for the strong impression made on Catherine de Medici and her seer Nostradamus, 23-25.

Gaspard de Coligny (Duke of Châtillon). They could claim victory in the early wars despite loss of the battles because they consistently retained the right to exist.

The noble families' cartel on armed force during the first wars (1562-3, 1567-8) tends to camouflage the key underlying precondition of the wars. This dynamic condition was, if not religious belief, then "religion" in a sixteenth-century sense that equates approximately to the more modern concept of personal value and security.[46] Social security had existed in the concept of a "Gallican" church, where even papal authority gave way to the triad of "one king, one faith, one law". This meant that heresy and treachery (*lèse majesté*) were one and the same.[47] However new interpretations of "faith" shook the foundation of social order and made religious affiliation the apparent focus of domestic policy. Significantly, the threat to the social order was such that there always existed one area of agreement between Catholic and Reformer and that was in the widespread vigilance against anarchy.

The Venetian Ambassador described this social insecurity and opportunistic warlordism in 1572, "There is a difference between a *cause* and an *occasion*. The *cause* is the principle which results in making of plans, while the *occasion* is the opportunity to put them into execution." He saw the Guise-Châtillon competition and the nobility's appetite for oligarchy as "causes" and religious heat and Valois weakness as the occasion for action.[48]

The ability to assemble clients, lesser nobles and mercenaries in support of a cause for a fiscally definable period resulted in episodic civil war characterized by occasional grand scale formal battle. Each war ended with an issue of an edict of toleration that satisfied none of the parties since they were unenforceable without the consensus of the key lords. The King was neither able to win them to his cause nor to coerce them militarily.

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46 See for example Ken Booth's "Security and Emancipation," *Review of International Affairs* 17, no. 4 (1991): 313-326 for redefining 'security"; and Mack P. Holt, *The French Wars of Religion 1562-1629* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), for the thesis of "body of beliefs" 1-7.

47 Kathleen A. Parrow, *From Defense to Resistance: Justification of Violence during the French Wars of Religion,* Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 83.6 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1993), especially 21-23.

48 Davis, *Pursuit of Power,* 220-221.

THE CHANGING PATTERN OF THE CIVIL WARS

By the third war in the series (1568-70) the interaction of these dynamics gave a new shape to the pattern of conflict. Firstly, the diminution of French power drew her neighbors into the wars more and more. French faith became a European issue. England, Spain, the German states and the Netherlands had supported factions in the earlier wars for reasons related to religious and personal connections resulting from the complicated but functional system of royal intermarriages. Now, however, the advantageous resolution of the French problem became a foreign policy objective of the powers of Europe. The military expertise, doctrines and technology of Europe were made available to the battlefields of France.

Secondly, this third war broadened and deepened the involvement of the French population. Despite being beaten in battle, Coligny had led a sweeping show of force from Gascony to Burgundy that gathered sufficient support to guarantee Huguenot survival. The decentralized Royal army proved neither able to deter Coligny, nor prevent invasions by foreign armies from the Netherlands and Germany. This "security dilemma" released the latent fear, confusion and resentment of hitherto uninvolved regions of the country and resulted in a substantial increase in potential for social disorder and *les petites guerres.*[49]

This type of complex, chaotic situation produces a loss of legitimacy in traditional, failing organizations and results in the calling forth of charismatic leadership. Instability and fear provides fertile ground for "transformational" or visionary leadership that links an old order with the new. [50] A detailed picture of the ideal type of military commander and his role in this atmosphere is captured in the literary works of the day. Montaigne's essays offer much specific guidance to his contemporaries on what to take from the character and actions of Caesar and Alexander. Montaigne also provided grist to the English theater and Shakespeare furnished working examples of idealized

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49 See Holt, 69-75; and for a more detailed study James B. Wood, *The King's Army: Warfare, Soldiers and Society during the Wars of Religion in France 1562-1576* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

50 Bernard Bass, *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations* (London: MacMillan, 1985), 37 and Maj. Kevin J. Donohue and Maj. Leonard Wong "Understanding Transformational Leadership," *Military Review*, LXXIV (Aug 94): 27.

military commanders and their techniques.[51] The model commander is presented in the heroic, but far from simple, ruler in *Henry V* and in almost all respects this model's appeal to diverse and differently motivated groups describes better Montaigne's friend Henri IV, the Renaissance prince, than his distant Tudor cousin.[52] While it cannot be confirmed that Shakespeare deliberately used Henri IV as his model, as he had done before, he is describing the archetypal Great Captain as understood by the sixteenth-century audience.[53] Thus he depicts him as of noble birth yet capable of association with soldiers of all social strata, educated in war, and capable of operating on the levels of idealism, patriotism, opportunism and ruthlessness.

The third war marked a significant change in the leadership of the causes and the armies. There had been a large number of key casualties: Francois of Guise assassinated; Montmorency killed; Louis Condé murdered; and soon after, Coligny assassinated. The torch was passed to the generation of teenaged commanders created by this war: the brothers of the king, Henri and François Valois; Henri of Guise; Henri of Condé; and Henri of Navarre. These were the commanders who knew little of "peace". Each needed to become a source of both religious and patron security for their family group, for their *pays*, for France and finally for Europe. They were all nobles and therefore would pursue their claims with military means. Thus the fifteen year old Henri of Navarre, a successful factional military commander, emerged as a champion for the Bourbons and the Huguenots.

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[51] John Mackinnon Robertson, *Montaigne and Shakespeare and other essays on cognate questions* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1971), for links between the *Henry V* campfire speech, and Henri IV through Montaigne's essay "Of the Disadvatages of Greatness". See William Shakespeare, *The Life of Henry V,* New Folger Shakespeare Library, eds. Barbara Mowat and Paul Werstine, (New York: Washington Square Press, 1995), Act IV, Scene 1 (all subsequent references are to this edition); and Michel de Montaigne, *Complete Essays of Montaigne,* trans. Donald A. Frame (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1957), 699-703.

[52] Michael Neill, "*Henry V*: A Modern Perspective," in Shakespeare, *The Life of Henry V,* 245-278.

[53] Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, produced about 1593, takes place in the court of Navarre and the characters have names based upon those of the advisors to Henri IV.

CHAPTER III
HENRI IV AS BATTLEFIELD COMMANDER

The level or perspective of war that deals with actual battle is the tactical. This, then, constitutes the "art and science of winning engagements and battles".[1] Henri of Navarre had a formidable reputation as a tactical commander and on the basis of this reputation solidified his leadership of the Bourbons, the Huguenots and eventually, the French. Although he commanded from the front in some five key battles and in some 200 lesser engagements and skirmishes, the picture of the impetuous cavalier always riding toward the thick of the fray is an incomplete one and ignores his evident battlefield preparation. Henri's haphazard dress and light spirit belied a methodical and calculated approach to battle. In this, as in his other endeavors he played both the noble cavalier and the professional soldier.

SCHOOL OF WAR: THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGNS

This duality was a continuance of attitude and technique established in the Italian wars. Confronted with the French gendarmerie system and lacking a heavy cavalry capability, the Spanish adapted their tactical system to one capable of matching the French model. Under Gonzalo de Córdoba, an innovative veteran of the Reconquista, the Spanish forces took on a shape that would enable them to dominate the land warfare of Europe for the next century. The French gendarme elite retained its character of armored dash and elan, but their Spanish counterparts adapted professional formations of pike and arquebusier to the formidable *tercios* that provided the standard against which European forces were to be judged.[2] Thus the major engagements of the period reflected both innovative and evolutionary attempts to achieve a tactical superiority over the competing tactical system.

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[1] United States Marine Corps, *Warfighting: The U.S. Marine Corps Book of Strategy* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 28-9. Compare UK definition: "...level at which battles and engagements are fought." In United Kingdom, *British Defence Doctrine: Joint Warfare Publication (JWP) 0-01* (United Kingdom: Ministry of Defence, 1996), 1.10.

[2] Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567-1659: The Logistics of Spanish Victory and Defeat in the Low Countries' Wars*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) is the foundation work. Also see Spaulding et al., 427-429.

Table 1. The Thirty Years Process: Tactical Enhancements of the Italian Wars

Date	Engagement	Participants	Development
1495	Fornavo	French-Venetian League	Use of gendarmerie and Swiss pikes so superior to their counterparts as to make Venetian tactical and professional advantage near meaningless.
1496-8	Gonzalo's Fabian campaign	French/Swiss vs Spanish	Use of logistic raiding strategy to force French withdrawal.
1502	Barletta	French/Swiss vs Spanish	Use of sword and buckler-pike combination to defeat pikes.
1503	Cerignola	French/Swiss vs Spanish	First use of small arms fire to singularly destroy attack against prepared position.
1503	Garigliano River	French vs Spanish	Use of morale as weapon. Gonzalo isolates and attacks French in miserable weather rendering gendarmerie useless.
1508	Brescia	French vs Spanish/ Papal	French employ 15 days of rapid maneuver over 120 miles and arquebus volley fire.
1512	Ravenna	French vs Spanish/ Venetians	Use of enfilade artillery fire and gendarmerie assault to destroy a Cerignola-type position. Beginning of intense casualty rates.
1513	Novara	French/ Venetian vs Swiss	Pike assault delivered so rapidly as to prevent coordination of all arms response.
1515	Marigiano	French vs Swiss	Use of artillery in cooperation with gendarmerie to shatter Swiss pike squares.
1522	Bicocca	French/Swiss vs Spanish coalition	Cerignola formula repeated. Swiss destroyed by failure to coordinate with artillery.
1525	Sesia	French vs Spanish	Mounted arquebusiers used as dragoons to pursue and harass French.
1525	Pavia	French/Swiss vs Spanish	Use of arquebusiers in light infantry role fatally disrupts cohesion of French gendarmerie.

Sources: Taylor, *The Art of War in Italy;* Archer Jones, *The Art of War in the Western World* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 182-199; Spaulding, 416-429, Hall, 164-190; and Hans Delbruck, *The Dawn Of Modern Warfare: History of the Art of War* Vol IV, trans. Walter J. Renfroe Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1990), 73-99.

These trial and error tactics reflected the beginnings of a complex paper-scissors-stone game wherein each weapon system defeated another but was in turn defeated by yet others. Thus shot from behind pikes overmatched cavalry, pikes were shot apart by artillery, and cavalry overran artillery. Innovation in the employment and deployment of weapon systems became a standard in tactical solution. For example, Blaise de Monluc, an ardent admirer of Gonzalo, serving in a Gascon pike square believed he had conjured a neat trick at Cérisoles as late as 1544 when he placed arquebusiers behind the first rank of pikemen with orders to shoot down the enemy's first rank. Remarkably, the enemy pike square adopted exactly the same tactical surprise and both squares suffered equally.[3]

The veterans of these campaigns provided the core expertise of the armies of the Wars of Religion but they also stand accused of providing much of the non-religious motivation for rank, power, booty and adventure.

THE TACTICAL ENVIRONMENT

An army of the Wars of Religion seldom retained a consistent composition from engagement to engagement. Its size remained unreliable and so proved an inconsistent means to achieving an objective.[4] However, a rising class of professionals was needed to serve the guns and master other technological improvements, and the Wars of Religion did provide steady employment and therefore an impetus toward individual expertise and social advancement.[5]

Success in combat provided an avenue of success for all of these parties. This was especially true for the ardent Huguenots who began the wars without an organized army and lost the initial major battles. These defeats, constant lack of funding and the requirement to maintain constant pressure across a wide zone of operations resulted in the civil wars taking on much of the character of a guerrilla war. This parsimonious hit and run *petite guerre* became known as war *à la Huguenot.* Historically, a force incapable of matching opposing conventional forces will evolve a

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[3] Monluc, 116.

[4] Overviews of sixteenth-century armies are best found in Spaulding and Delbruck.

[5] Sir John Smythe disagreed in his 1590 book *Certain Discourses Military*, ed., John R. Hale (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1964), while Corvisier finds the impetus more class-based, 45-46.

more flexible response battle technique in order to survive.[6] Sixteenth- century commanders may not have known the ancient prescription, "with smaller force against them conduct dynamic actions; with larger force against them, conduct ensnaring actions"[7] but they were very familiar with Caesar's difficulty in coming to grips with the Eburones and with Roman problems in general in dealing with Parthian tactics. In these cases the "western way of war" had been unhinged by a foe that refused to be fixed in annihilative battle and instead used exhaustion to wear down an opponent.[8] The Huguenots therefore developed organizations and tactics suited to their situation of operating with a smaller gendarmerie and few infantry. Absorbing the Italian lessons and aware of the Parthian example they substituted firepower for pike and so could not readily hold ground but at least they had a formidable hitting capability and could outrun countermoves. These firepower requirements and lack of sizable infantry bodies resulted in the development of relatively small, drilled battalions of the type that were later to make Maurice of Nassau famous. His formations were made possible by the tactical validation of the Huguenot captains.[9]

Huguenot horsemen needed to be able to function in several modes and therefore could not be used as exclusively heavy gendarmes. Besides, they seldom had available sufficient horses for lancers.[10] The requirement to move, inflict maxim damage and move again as well as to conduct reconnaissance and screening led them toward the developments of the pistol equipped German mercenary light cavalry (*reiters*). These had first made a devastating appearance at St. Quentin (1557) at the

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6 "Guerrilla warfare" is "a type of warfare characterized by irregular forces fighting small-scale, limited actions, generally in conjunction with a larger political-military strategy, against orthodox military forces." Robert B. Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History,* Vol 1 (New York: Doubleday, 1975), xi.

7 Sun-Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. J.H. Huang (New York: Quill-William Morrow, 1993), 70. This work was written approximately 500 B.C. and not translated into French until 1772 but compare "...enemy advances, we retreat; enemy halts, we harass; enemy tires, we attack; enemy retreats, we pursue..." from Mao Zedung, quoted in Klaus Knorr, "Unconventional Warfare: Strategy and Tactics in Internal Strife," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 341: Special issue (May 1962): 55.

8 Julius Caesar, *War Commentaries of Caesar,* trans. Rex Warner (New York and London: Mentor Classic, New American Library and New English Library, 1960), Book 5, 103-4. This book should have special significance to the French since these battles occurred between the Meuse and Rhine.

9 John A. Lynn, "Tactical Evolution in the French Army 1560-1660," *French Historical Studies* 14, no. 2 (1985): 179.

10 Ronald S. Love, "All the King's Horsemen: The Equestrian Army of Henry IV," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 22, no. 3 (1991): 513-14.

end of the Habsburg-Valois Wars and had become *de rigeur* as light cavalry.[11] The evolution was not linear for the complex *caracole* of firing a pistol and then attempting to wheel away provided some false starts in tactical development, but it did reveal a requirement for adaptive specialization. Huguenot parsimony caused a hybridization of *reiter* technique and gendarme role. Unable to maintain both a specialist lance equipped assault force and a pistol equipped infantry-defeating light cavalry force, the Huguenot horsemen became adept at being both. The widely read works of the veteran La Noue reveal the dedication and discussion devoted to solving the tactical problems and paradoxes associated with this mis-matching of differently equipped forces.[12]

Evolution of Huguenot horse tactics from the efforts of Gaspard de Coligny until the advent of Henri of Navarre produced a doctrine of pistol and sabers that presaged the cavalry techniques of Gustavus Adolphus and Oliver Cromwell.[13] Henri's support to the evolution of a light cavalry provided service to financially exhausted nobles who could not afford the full equipment of a *gendarme* and so produced the *chevaux-légers* who provided him with reliable eyes on the enemy, and enhanced foraging.[14] In order to defeat opposition infantry and artillery, the Huguenot mounted force were *pistoleers* and *argoletiers* (*arquebus à cheval*). Once they broke an opposing formation they resorted to sabers. This presented a tactical problem that took experience and leadership to resolve. La Noue and others noted that despite the theoretical superiority of pistol over lance, lancer-gendarmes tended to carry a charge home and disperse pistoleers. The solution required that the Huguenots charge in solid bodies about eight ranks deep, stirrup to stirrup, and either fire at point blank range or immediately follow arquebusier volleys into the charge.[15] The density of the squadron charge would inevitably split lance equipped opponents since fighting with the lance required few, well spaced lines (*en haye*). Thus, the function of Huguenot

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11 Baumgartner, 194.

12 The work of Noue was translated throughout Europe after 1597 to the point wherein it appears as a standard reference in almost all contemporary works. See François de la Noue, *Discours Politiques et Militaires*, introduction and notes by F.E. Sutcliffe (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1967); and Webb, 119.

13 Hall, 194.

14 Love, 520.

15 Detail remains in dispute. Lynn's contention in "Tactical Evolution", 81, that Henri's cavalry fired their pistols during the charge is disputed by Love, 517 n 17.

horse, like that of the knight or the tank, was to use its speed and shock to shatter the cohesion of the opponent. Since the opposing Royalist forces were focused almost entirely on the gendarmerie, then this would be the primary target of the Huguenot effort. Essentially, if the gendarmerie could be broken, then the Royalist force was beaten, but the dense charge required timing, coordination and leadership.

Henri of Navarre eventually carried these Huguenot developments into his Royalist forces. His designs for battle rested upon his ability to employ all of the capabilities of infantry, artillery and cavalry units under his control, but it would be as a commander and innovator of the new mounted forces that he would be best known. "It is Henry IV of France who as a general may lay claim to the fame of correctly understanding and fully exploiting the new force". [16]

EVOLUTION OF A BATTLEFIELD COMMANDER: BASSE-NAVARRE TO CAHORS

Henri IV understood the "combined arms synthesis" that emerged in his operational lifetime.[17] He learned to use the capabilities of each arm to offset the strength and weakness of the others. While his education and background provided him with the potential for innovation and success on the battlefield, it was ultimately his experience that gave him consistency in his victories. It provided him with that "special talent for recognizing in the military theories and practices of other commanders what would work or not work on the battlefield, and what had promise but needed some alteration to become effective."[18]

Henri experienced independent command as early as 1568 when, as a keen fourteen-year old, his mother dispatched him to either pacify the region of Basse-Navarre or rescue a Protestant noble trapped in his chateau.[19] Either way, his pursuit actions so near to Spain and Navarese disputed territories marked him as a danger to the empire of Philip II. This also introduced the young prince to the intricacies and tactics of "low-intensity" or irregular warfare known as *la petite guerre.*

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16 Delbruck, 136. A major theme of this work is the evolution of "cavalry" 117-145. The evolution of Henri IV as a commander of a unique all-arms mounted army is the major theme of Love.

17 Jones, Chap 3.

18 Love, 533.

19 Accounts vary, see David Buisseret, *Henry IV King of France* (London: Unwin Hyman Ltd, 1989), 6; and George Slocombe, *The White Plumed Henry, King of France* (New York: Cosmopolitan, 1931), 57.

The next year and a half were spent apprenticing at the side of his uncle Condé and his mentor Admiral Coligny at *la grande guerre*. He became familiar with war as practiced by its two deans: the Admiral and his chief opponent the Duc de Guise. At Jarnac and at Moncontour Henri witnessed Protestant defeat brought on by lack of reconnaissance and forethought and morale plummet when Coligny chose to remove both he and his cousin, the Prince of Condé, from the zone of battle.[20] He saw Huguenot cavalry fail to match the Royalists in line versus line action. Importantly, he took part in the two great Coligny-inspired successful measures of the early wars. He participated in the regrouping of the "new model" Protestant cavalry that was successful at Arnay-le-Duc in 1570 and in the great Coligny march across France that saved the cause despite battlefield failure.[21] Henri thus saw both how and when to win battles. He also witnessed first hand the human cost of war. He afterward became known for his attempts to leaven the effects of war by implementing the code of conduct set out by Coligny. This code tried to limit the "collateral damage" of war upon civilians.[22] As he gained in confidence and experience he also became more overtly magnanimous in victory. This quality of Caesarian *clemencia* played an important role in the enhancement of his reputation and eventual legitimacy as sovereign. A survey of commanders in 326 land battles notes that the victor tends to have exhibited more years of experience, has longer "winning streaks", and a tendency to take the offensive. The general winning the most engagements tends to be more sparing of lives.[23] So although "cynic" is a word often used in describing Henri, and regardless of whether he was consciously playing a role, magnanimity is seen to be a characteristic of a victor and one well worth publicizing.

Henri's first significant battle undertaken at personal initiative and completely under his own control took place in 1580 at Cahors in southwestern France. This tactical action foreshadowed Henri's style and provided a glimpse of his ability to

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20 Eltis, 18.

21 Noue, 778-9. Despite this minor success the Protestant cause did not claim a legitimate battlefield victory until Coutras in 1587.

22 Coligny published Articles for the conduct of soldiers in 1551. Hale, *War and Society*, 169.

23 Dean Keith Simonton, "Land Battles, Generals, and Armies: Individual and Situational Determinants of Victory and Casualties," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 38, no 1 (1980): 118.

adapt to specific circumstances.[24] Henri, as would become characteristic, personally supervised the emplacement of petards to blow holes in the town defenses then, pike in hand, led the infantry charge (which in actuality was a crawling assault through the hole blown). He fought in house-to-house combat for more than four days against increasingly superior forces. This type of operation has always been one of the most difficult. Combat effectiveness is undermined by the inability to see the battlefield, by the inability to provide timely local reinforcement and by the constant stress of attack from unforeseen quarters. Casualties are usually significantly higher in urban battle so leaders must place themselves at even more at risk to ensure progress.[25]

Henri was ultimately successful because despite his precipitate attempt at a *coup de main* he had had the foresight to arrange reinforcements beforehand. They arrived just in time to salvage his operation and guarantee success. As will be discussed later, the action at Cahors may have had significant impact on Henri's campaigning and approach to the conduct of sieges.

COUTRAS: A HUGUENOT TACTICAL DOCTRINE EMERGES

Henri's first major battle was the one that earned him his reputation as a soldier not to be underestimated. The Battle of Coutras, October 1587, shaped European events for the remainder of the century.

The Royalists had cause for concern in the success being enjoyed by Navarre in his raiding strategy in eastern and southeastern France. Further concern was raised when it became apparent that he would attempt to repeat the Coligny maneuver of swinging across southern France to connect to Protestant forces in Germany. Several Royalist armies had already dissolved in pursuit of Navarre without ever bringing him to combat. More than a year later Henri reflected on this time,

> It would be a much shorter task to inquire of you what leaders France has still remaining, after those that have marched against me. In four years I have seen ten armies, ten royal lieutenants, having behind them the forces and the support of the foremost kingdom of Christendom. . . that of these ten armies I have, in point of fact, had to

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24 Maximilien de Bethune, duc de Sully, *Memoires of the Duke of Sully, Prime Minister to Henry the Great, Revised and Corrected in Four Volumes,* 2d ed., trans. Mrs Lennox from the edition of L'Beluse (London: Henry G Bohn, 1856), Book 5.

25 For an example of the concern with which the military has typically placed on such operations, see Mark Hewish and Rupert Pengelley, "Warfare in the Global City: The demands of modern military operations in urban terrain," *Jane's International Defense Review* 31 (July 1998): 32-43.

> do with only one, which I fought and defeated...But in the case of all the others I had scarcely any trouble: they almost melted away before reaching me, and I heard of their dissipation as soon as I learned of their approach.[26]

What Henri understood was the increasing frustration of the Royalists in forcing him to decisive battle.[27] A major impetus in irregular warfare is the desire to force a battlefield decision on an illusive foe before that foe can escape. In the early modern case that situation also had to take into account the natural dissipation of an army of gentlemen volunteers and mercenaries. Thus it was this impetus to force battle that drove the Duc de Joyeuse towards Coutras as it did Custer toward the Little Big Horn and France toward Dien Bien Phu.

Joyeuse, anxious for combat, glory and the eradication of heretics, launched his force of 2,800 horse and 4,800 foot toward the King of Navarre with uncharacteristic speed and surprising cohesion. He found the Huguenots en route to link up with the contingent from Germany. Henri, with his core force of about 1,250 horse and 4,380 foot, was in the process of crossing the Y of two rivers when both forces stumbled into a meeting engagement.[28] Henri, if staying true to Huguenot doctrine, should have continued to move away from Joyeuse in the hope of preserving at least the hard cadre of the Protestant army. His three pieces of artillery were already across the rivers and his cavalry soon would be. Fighting the Royalists would appear to be a gamble, for not only did they have a large contingent of well-armed and equipped gendarmes, but also Joyeuse took no heretics prisoner.

If Henri's decision to fight was a gamble it was one based on a sound understanding of the game and its players. Instead of hastening the retreat and abandoning his slow moving but veteran infantry he turned to face the Royalists and instituted several timely ad hoc measures that would have proven disastrous with less experience troops.[29] Henri had not sought battle but now he correctly foresaw the

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26 Henri IV to the assembly at Blois, quoted in Henry M. Baird, *The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1886), 138.

27 Henri himself was not invulnerable to this frustration when he could not force battle upon the Spanish in 1590-2.

28 There remains great variation in reported numbers involved in sixteenth-century battles. Unless otherwise cited, battle statistics, strengths, and commander are from Fr von Kausler, *Atlas: Plus Mémorables Batailles, Combats et Sieges, Temps Anciens, du Moyen Age et de l'Age Moderne en 200 feuilles,* XII Livraison (Karlsruhe and Fribourg: B. Hercher, 1831).

29 Henri's forces were composed of his better troops, the lessor having been left in garrison to protect the Protestant hinterland. Oman, 471.

situation as an opportunity to make Henri of Navarre and his forces an even greater factor in the shaping of France than as mere raiders. A solid conventional battlefield victory, or even a strong draw, would be an effective deterrent to further Royalist aggression.

Henri's design for battle was to take advantage of his forces style and skills by moving inside his opponent's decision cycle. That is, he could adjust his forces more rapidly than Joyeuse could readjust in turn. Napoleon referred to this as "*On s'engage, et alors on voit*".[30] In order to achieve this Henri had to be thoroughly familiar with the capabilities of the officers he faced and of the commanders he led.[31] He knew his opponent and his opponents' troops well. Armed with that knowledge, he took some valuable and irreplaceable time to see for himself the roll of the ground and the shape of the approaching formation so that he could determine the Royalists likely intent. So although both commanders had the same amount of time to prepare, Henri spent his available time personally altering his subordinates' dispositions to allow his Huguenots to fight, as they knew best. Joyeuse, pushing hard on the trail of the Huguenots and believing that he needed to attack before Henri dispersed, used his time to sort his straggled order of march into a hasty assault line.

Lacking a decent pike array, Henri positioned his Huguenot arquebus infantry on his flanks with only their nimbleness and scrub to protect them (hence the term *les enfants perdus*). He is credited with insisting that the arquebusiers fire from multiple ranks and for controlled point blank fire only.[32] In adapting this Huguenot ambush tactic from Coligny's day to formal battle, he anticipated the military reforms of the Dutch movement by several years. The artillery was ordered onto a slight knoll from where it could engage the traditional linear assault in enfilade.[33]

Eventually, Joyeuse sorted his force into the expected assault formation with his *gens d'armes* spread into a two deep *en haye* formation. This was meant to

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30 "You engage, and then you wait and see."

31 Compare, for instance, the results of R. E. Lee's attack at Chancellorsville against Hooker, a general he understood well, and against Grant, one whom he did not know, the following year on the same ground in the Wilderness.

32 Oman, 474, seems to take this from the *Mémoires* of D'Aubigné, a participant in the action. Lynn Montrose, *War Through the Ages*, 3d ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1960) agrees, 240.

33 Although few in number and very vulnerable, the guns could inflict horrendous damage if left in enfilade which meant that the cannonballs would traverse almost the entire opposing line end to end rather than just a few files front to rear.

enable the best use of the lance and to allow every noble a forward role in the attack. Henri formed his cavalry into four tight boxes, six deep, pistols and swords at the ready for the first time in a large-scale action.[34]

The well placed Protestant artillery disrupted the Catholic host by sending balls plowing and bouncing through lines of gendarmes and through the infantry behind them, inflicting as many as 100 casualties on the stationary lines in a mere three volleys.[35] The Royalist artillery was ineffective. Spurred by the desire to end the cannon fire, the gendarmerie launched itself against the center of the Huguenot force. As La Noue and others had noted previously and Henri now relied on, the *en haye* charge became irregular because of the length of the line and the distance covered. It lost crucial momentum. The flanking volleys from the Protestant arquebusiers then further disrupted the line's cohesion. Henri, timing his move precisely, led his compact squadrons of horsemen directly into the Catholic gendarmes at the moment when chaos reigned and order had not yet been re-imposed. The fractured elements of the gendarmerie, unable to use their lances, were then slaughtered piecemeal by the still formed units of Protestants. Hundreds of ardent and key Catholic nobles were killed, including Joyeuse, and many more captured. The remainder fled leaving the immobile infantry and artillery to their fate. Henri gave generous terms to these abandoned groups and arranged for suitable funerals for the dead. His forces suffered very few casualties.

Henri is often quoted as stating that the Huguenots had now demonstrated that they could win a battle. His other claim that day was on the House of Bourbon, for he had successfully led his family group, the Prince of Condé, the Count of Soissons, and the Prince of Conti, into a successful enterprise. So, in fact, it was Henri of Navarre who had demonstrated that at least one heir to the throne could win a battle and at a time when such a victory would unite the Bourbons under one leader and upset the power calculations of the great monarchs of Europe.

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34 Love, 516-18 and Davila, 646.

35 Davila, 645-6.

ARQUES TO IVRY: THE ROYALIST COMBINED ARMS DOCTRINE

Henri had revealed at Coutras another Napoleonic characteristic that allowed him to dictate events on the field. Napoleon described it as a "gift of being able to see at a glance the possibilities offered by the terrain...One can call it the *coup d'oeil* and it is inborn in great generals."[36] Henri had redeployed his forces to better ground and into better formations immediately before the Royalist assault. His "eye" would become known. The words of Sully echo those of Napoleon, "...there is nothing more necessary for the general of an army than an exact and piercing sight, which shortens distances and prevents confusion. I never knew a general that possessed this quality in an equal degree with the King of Navarre."[37] This tactical "eye" carried over from Henri IV's battles and into his kingship. As another contemporary noted, "Never was there a commander who was better than he at choosing the field of battle, ordering his troops and knowing where to attack at just the right moment to win the day. This ability especially has made him win many battles and saved in a lot of risky ventures."[38]

By 1589 Henri was King of France. His army now consisted of almost equal parts veteran Huguenot, inherited Royalist and mercenary. Uncertain support for him as monarch and general war weariness depleted his force to the point that he abandoned his siege of Paris. He withdrew not southward into Protestant lands but northwestward toward friendly Dieppe and Elizabeth I, his fickle ally and financier.

His enemies were consolidated under the banner of the Catholic League. Philip II of Spain financing of the League allowed the senior surviving member of the clan Guise, the Duc de Mayenne, to purse Henri into Normandy.

Mayenne suffered through a series of Huguenot controlled skirmishes near Dieppe but was unable to either bring the wily Henri to battle or to bottle him up in the town. Mayenne, like Joyeuse at Coutras, feared that his slippery enemy would escape before he could be compelled to a decision. Therefore, despite the fact that Henri had prepared all the four crossing points of the River Bethune below Dieppe, Mayenne

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36 Napoleon *Mémoires,* quoted in Philip J. Haythornthwaite, James R. Arnold, Ian Castle, Guy C. Demsey Jr., Tim Hicks, J. David Markham, Peter Tsouras and Andrew Uffindell, *Napoleon: The Final Verdict* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1998), 296.

37 Sully, Book 2, 179.

38 Pietro Duardo, Venetian Ambassador quoted in Davis, *Pursuit of Power*, 270.

decided to force the issue by an assault crossing through the defile at Arques. He knew that Henri would have to fight him there, retire into Dieppe and be besieged, abandon the northern coast or even abandon the country.

Thus Mayenne's concept of operations accepted the disadvantage of fighting on a narrow front of 400 yards where only a part of his strength of 18,000 could be brought to bear because eventually the Royalist defense in the defile would be overcome by sheer force. In an age where muscular power dominated, this was as good a plan as any. However, the king had more than sheer muscle to call upon. He intended to use his capacity for "shot" to orchestrate the equivalent of a Huguenot guerrilla ambush writ large. The central zone of an ambush is where all fire is concentrated and so with good reason is termed "the killing ground". Henri employed almost his entire combat strength of 6,200 against those elements of the Leaguer force that were able to penetrate the defile. He could therefore pen them into the defile while his well-sited arquebus and cannon decimated their ranks.

Henri, like Leonidas at Thermopylae, was almost undone by treachery. Leaguer mercenaries captured his first line of trenches through a surrender ruse and with a little coordinated effort could have forced the defile and broken free of Henri's defined "killing ground". Henri was forward enough to apply his famous *coup d'oeil* and to countering the foe's success before they could take advantage of it.

His *chevaux-légers* provided a rapid reaction force that at Arques fought beside the infantry and met the Leaguer assault with a series of rapid counter-assaults that presented them with an impression of unremitting melee. Such chaos prevented Leaguer coordinated action entirely until the morning mist had lifted sufficiently for Henri's well-sited artillery to scythe the milling and reforming Leaguers packed into the defile. Mayenne's stalled drive became a retreat and provided the king with another incredible victory. Henri's artillery actually pursued and harassed Mayenne's force in a tactic that would not become standard for over a generation.[39] This battle not only enhanced Henri's prestige but provided the time needed to raise more volunteers and receive troops and support from England. It also shook the morale of the League.

Henri's actions in this "classic defense of a defile" added to accusations of him

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[39] Davila, the artillery expertise and initiative was provided by a Norman ex-pirate, 852.

becoming too personally and dangerously involved in the process of battle.[40] The "correct" position of the leader or commander on the battlefield has been the subject of much ink-spilling.[41] The inclination is to want the commander in a central delegating position where he can monitor and control larger, more complex organizations. Yet as late as the Second World War, tactical commanders were demonstrating that free-flow or low force to space ratio situations were so fluid and dynamic that the value of forward personal presence was still a prerequisite to success.[42] The effects of combat, stress and cohesion support the requirement for positive, robust leadership and the perception of shared risk in the implementation of team combat. [43]There were therefore sound tactical reasons for Henri's personal participation in the line of battle.

There were also personal reasons. Henri's ascension to the leadership of the Protestants and to the French throne had come about through the death by unnatural causes of other candidates. He himself was the object of uncounted assassination attempts. To lead, in peace or in war, was a considerable risk. Henri's battlefield conduct was calculated to inspire the trust and respect of his followers who were suspicious of his survivalist tendencies. He had abjured his faith in order to save his life and so, time and again, had to demonstrate that he was ready to risk all, not just his casual freedom. Similarly, nobles followed the chevalier not the crown and as men of the sword they needed to be continually reminded that he was one of them and their leader. Henri, the sovereign without a kingdom, a wife or wealth, stated that it was the only coin with which he could pay them.[44]

The volunteer portions of the army frequently dispersed and subordinate commanders were untrustworthy in their commitment to an entire campaign.[45] Henri, like Alexander the Great before him, was therefore required to be always forward:

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40 Sully, Book 5, 272, Oman, 466-69.

41 For example, Jones *Art of War,* 181-2, Hanson, *Western Way of War,* 108-9, for an overview of the position and representation of the commander and Baumgartner, 255 for views during these wars.

42 Richard D. Hooker Jr. ed., *Maneuver Warfare: An Anthology* (Novato, CA: Presidio, 1993.). Especially relevant is Part 3, "The Historical Basis of Maneuver Warfare," 271-405.

43 S.L.A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire* (Glouster, MA: Peter Smith, 1978), 177.

44 He justified himself on many occasions. See Davila, 1078 and Pietro Duardo, Venetian Ambassador, in Davis, *Pursuit of Power,* 269-70. Duardo's verdict was "When you consider the necessity, and balance it carefully against the dangers, you have to give him great credit for doing what he does."

45 Oman, for one, seems not to think logistics and politics can be held up as an excuse for failing to prosecute the war on a steadier basis, 469.

deploying his pike-phalanx; seeing the opposition; picking the decisive point; and leading his body of mounted companions forward at just the right moment. Such synchronization was still a very personal art. Like Alexander, he would personally maintain the momentum of the chosen course of action or else risk a failure to press home the attack. This style also met the general expectations of leadership and chivalry rooted in the literary and military education of the nobles of the sword and this expectation could not be ignored. [46] According to Monluc in his "soldier's breviary",

> If, captains, you shall do the same, and yourselves first put your hands to the work, you will make everyone follow your example, very shame will push and force them on; and if the chief do not go in person or at least some eminent man, the rest will go very lamely on and murmur when a man sends them to slaughter. And if you covet honour, you must sometimes tempt danger as much as the meanest soldier under your command.[47]

After Arques Henri moved against Paris. Panic within the city forced Mayenne again to attempt a decisive engagement.

Henri and Mayenne met on the open and flat fields of Ivry, southwest of Paris, six months after Arques in March 1590. Mayenne again had the much larger force[48] and although his lance and pennant army may have appeared anachronistic, he opened the battle with a well-coordinated and effective assault on Henri's artillery. Henri had obviously intended Mayenne to assault first. Of 32 set piece battles of the sixteenth century the force that attacked first won only five.[49] This is likely because the momentary lack of cohesion created by the initial assault within the attacking force is only offset if the assault breaks the cohesion of the defense. Henri with his impeccable *coup d'oeil* had selected terrain that was unlikely to allow this. It compressed the Leaguer assault foiled the traditional tactic of employing the light

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46 Sully emphasized the striking parallel between Alexander's style during the assault into the Indian city of Oxydraceae and Henri's in extricating his advanced guard from a tight spot in 1592. Sully, Book IV, 263. Montaigne's essays of Caesar and Alexander were published just before the War of the Three Henris when leadership was being judged. See, Montaigne, 556-563, and 569-574.

47 Monluc, 215. Compare these attributes to those advocated by Shakespeare's Henry V in his vow to share death with his men and not be ransomed and in his "band of brothers" speech in Act IV, Scene 1 and to Henri's "white plume" speech at Ivry to his squadron, "...if you run my risks, I also run yours. I will conquer or die with you..." quoted and translated in M. François Guizot and Madame Guizot de Witt, *The History of France from the earliest times to 1848*, trans. Robert Black (New York: Crowell, 1885), 379.

48 Estimates vary considerably but all accounts agree that the Leaguer force was much larger.

49 Hall, 214.

cavalry and *reiters* in sequence and the two groups interfered with one another.[50] Henri's arquebusier groups, placed where they could not be seen until at point blank range in imitation of the Spanish at Pavia, ruined any chance of the gendarmerie's reestablishing cohesion before Henri's mounted forces delivered the *coup de grâce.* Henri had forbidden use of the *caracole* and had trimmed his squadrons into smaller more maneuverable elements capable of dealing with both lancers and *reiters.*[51] Here, Henri anticipated the reforms of Gustavus Adolphus, who thirty years later would reorganize his cavalry into smaller, hard charging compact tactical units that could crack open less dense formations with saber and pistol.[52] So the momentum of his massed assault carried it entirely through the reiters and the lancers.

He had, once again, systematically deprived his opponent of the ability to react as an organization. His "all-arms team" succeeded and proved "a remedy which for the need thereof in the difference of Arms, having often been consulted and approved of, did this day give proof how considerable it was in effect."[53]

Mayenne abandoned his guns and infantry. Henri was magnanimous to the captured French and Swiss but because of the treachery at Arques, he annihilated the other mercenaries. Both moves cemented his reputation for clemency and justice.

After 1590 Henri's major battles with the Leaguers were essentially complete and he turned his attention to the army of Spain. It was against this institution that he would win his reputation as Great Captain for he faced the Spanish Army under its most capable commander, Alexander Farnese, the Duke of Parma and "... to be engaged in a war against Parma – an accomplished strategist with the most experienced and largest army of his day – was the sternest test the sixteenth century had to offer".[54] It was Parma who would define Henri for historians as a maneuverist but these later operational developments were conducted in the sphere between Henri of Navarre the tactical commander and Henri Bourbon the strategist. Therefore to fully assess Henri's command abilities, he must be first assesses as a strategist.

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50 Apparently their formation marshal was near-sighted. Oman, 498.

51 Von Kausler, 769-773, Davila, 892-3, Love 518-9.

52 Hall, 194.

53 Davila, 893.

54 Mark Greengrass, *France in the Age of Henry IV,* 2d ed. (London and New York: Longman, 1995), 74.

Table 2. The Tactical Enhancements of Henri of France and Navarre.

Date	Engagement	Participants	Development
1576	Cahours: assault on a defended town	Henri vs local Catholic town	Use of petard, infantry assault through a built-up area and timely commitment of reserves
1585-7	South-west campaign of skirmish and siege	Henri and Huguenot forces vs Catholic garrisons	Use of raids, mobility and dispersion to prevent Royalist incursion and to debilitate Royal field armies.
1587	Coutras	Henri and Huguenot cadre vs Joyeuse and Royalist army	Use of ground, firepower cavalry *en bloc* to shatter gendarmerie. Infantry employment reflected organization and style formalized by Maurice of Nassau a decade later.
1589	Arques	Henri and Huguenot-Royalist force vs Leaguer army	Use of entrenchments to establish firepower "killing area". Use of argoleiters as rapidly deployable reserve. Foreshadowed techniques of Gustavus Adolphus in use of "field" artillery in the pursuit.
1590	Ivry	Henri and Huguenot-Royalist force vs Leaguer field army	Coutras technique but with deliberately formed and organized cavalry in the style later made common by Adolphus. Results of battle demonstrate outstanding use of "public relations".
1590-1	Paris	Henri and Huguenot-Royalist force vs Parma and the Army of Flanders	Henri fails to force battle and thus allows lifting of siege of Paris but develops technique of battle *en détail* from raiding techniques. His army savages Parma's withdrawal to the Netherlands for a propaganda coup.
1591	Rouen	Henri and Huguenot-Royalist force vs Parma and the Army of Flanders and Leaguers	Again, battle *en détail*. Maneuvers across northeastern France demonstrate League's vulnerability to Henri's "information-warfare" techniques and ultimate inability of Spain to prevent Henri's fast moving forces from developing operations of their choosing.
1595	Fontaine-Française	Henri and Royalist force vs Spanish-Leaguer army from Italy	Ultimate victory for Henri's deterrence and maneuver techniques. Argoletier and cavalry skirmishes and presence of the formidable Henri sufficient to defeat major infantry-heavy force
1598	Amiens	Henri and Royalist force vs Spanish	Personal presence of and rapid action by Henri despite desertion by Huguenots and *parlement* is decisive in preventing Spanish from acting.
1601	Savoy	Henri vs Savoyards	Rapid deployment and skillful use of artillery demonstrates emerging French technique.

Sources: Jones, *The Art of War*, 189-209, Spaulding, 443-459, Love 511-33, and Delbruck, 73-99.

CHAPTER IV
HENRI BOURBON AS STRATEGIC COMMANDER

"Strategy" is a term that requires definition. The Clausewitzian "use of engagement for the purpose of war" or the Jominian "art of bringing the greatest part of the forces of an army upon the important point of the theater of war" tend to define strategy in terms of victory through battle.[1] These definitions are more appropriate for the description of the campaigning level of war of the next chapter. André Beaufre's "the art of dialectics of wills that use force to resolve their conflict" [2] is useful but the focus on overt force lacks the holistic perception of war in the sixteenth century and now again in the twentieth. Current definitions view strategy as operating more in uncertain dimensions where "war" intermingles freely with "peace". At its higher end it concerns national or monarchical policy objectives and at its lower, the application of military force to obtain these objectives. Thus strategy consists of the application of all resources -- economic, diplomatic, political, psychological, technological and military to obtain specific policy goals. For purposes of the dynastic and developing sixteenth century, strategy could employ a very modern definition such as "the art of winning wars" and that art includes more than the use of force.[3]

"Military strategy" is a sub-set of strategy and is specifically aimed at depleting the enemy's military resources through either employing combat to destroy the opposition armed forces or through the logistical method of depriving the foe of supplies, weapons and recruits. Militarily, there are two strategies for implementing these methods: through raiding and through persisting conquest. "Raiding" consists of influencing strategic goals through transitory presence whereas "persisting conquest" requires the strength and ability to capture and hold specific areas. Both of these methods can use either a combat method or a logistical method of defeating the foe.

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1 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 177; Antoine Jomini, *A Summary of the Art of War*, ed. Brig. Gen. J. D. Hittle in *Roots of Strategy* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole, 1985), 554.

2 Quoted in Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge: Belknap, Harvard University, 1987), 241.

3 Definition from United States Marine Corps, *Warfighting*, 28. Compare to United Kingdom, *JWP 0-01*, "Grand Strategy is the application of national resources to achieve national policy objectives," 1-8.

Thus a strategy of raiding can be directed to combat the forces of an opponent or to attack his resources. [4]

Henri of Navarre represented the sixteenth-century master of the "raiding" strategy while as Henri IV he exemplified a "persisting strategy" monarch.

THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

The pre-modern state era was characterized by the lack of a state monopoly on violence. The post-modern era has similarly been characterized. These periods invite comparison in their idea of "security" as being more of a personal and communal concept than that of the intervening inter-state period.[5] As a result, rather than dealing with an organized, bureaucratic polity, strategy must take into account the "network" of interests of political, economic, religious and security groups. In the France of Henri Bourbon this was represented in the system of patronage that formed the basis of personal power and influence. No leader unable to master the patronage system could hope to secure France.

Henri's tactical ability to "see" time and space relationships on the battlefield and to anticipate an opponent's moves had its broader, deeper parallels in the maneuvers of the French power elite for he was attempting to win a country composed of several overlapping networks of power. It was "the hearts of the French, rather than their crown, that this good prince sought to conquer." [6] Some of these hearts beat in the chests of traditional, conservative elites such as nobles and clergy while others in those of emerging elites of merchants and those of office-holding status. These groups were in constant and sometimes violent tension.

The security of clientage and patterns of partisanship was ruptured in the late sixteenth-century environment. Religious belief, patron affiliation, economic necessity and family loyalty were no longer necessarily compatible. The uncertainty of the survival of the social contract between patron and client was put at further risk by

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4 Archer Jones, *Elements of Military Strategy: An Historical Approach* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), xiv-xv.

5 For example, Charles A. Kupchen, "Reviving the West," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no.3 (1996): 92-104 and Edward N. Luttwak, "Toward Post-Heroic Warfare," *Foreign Affairs*. 74, no. 3 (1995): 110-114.

6 Sully, Book IV, 299.

changes in population, environment and business.[7] This propelled attempts by clients to steer a middle course and to situate themselves tactically to take advantage of or avoid the local troubles. These non-aligned elements waxed or waned with each war and until the availability of the battle-tested, overtly reasonable and accommodating Henri of Navarre, had no leader to call their own.[8]

The patterns of affiliation quickly involved religious and political support from across the European community. Huguenots agitated with England, France's oldest enemy while Catholics sought the support of Spain, France's newest threat. Both sides employed Protestant and Catholic mercenaries from Germany and Switzerland. [9] As the wars developed this epidemic character they also harbored a particularly damaging endemic quality. Great events of empire, dynasty and great family alignments were played out against a backdrop of communal apprehension and uncertainty that were the monkey's paw gifts of Renaissance and Reformation. The interaction of humanism and ideology they represented created a complex of suspicious communities that exhibited "extreme anxiety" about a future in which,

> a new kind of society, based on science and technology, was beginning to emerge that would shortly conquer the world. Yet God seemed unable to alleviate these fears and provide the consolation. . . and the Reformers, who had sought to allay these religious anxieties, seem ultimately to have made matters worse.[10]

Significantly for the future of the wars in general, there were almost constant local actions anywhere rival elements bordered. These *petites guerres* were not conducted under specific direction but were inspired at communal level and as such, frequently undermined the authority of the political elite.[11] Unlike formal, chivalry-

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7 See Roland Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), 244. Influences of population and environment in Peter Burke, ed., *The New Cambridge Modern History XIII Companion Volume* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 15-114.

8 Nicolai Rubinstein, "The history of the word politicus," in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early Modern Europe,* ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 41-56.

9Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War* (New York: Free Press-Macmillan, 1973), "A civil war was most likely to develop into an international war when one side in the civil war had ideological, racial or other links with an outside nation," 247.

10 Armstrong, 286.

11 J.H. Salmon, "Peasant Revolt in Viverais 1575-1580," *French Historical Studies* XI, no. 1 (1979), 1-26.

constrained war between Christian lords, the *bellum hostile,* these were treated as crusades and class-conflicts, savage *guerres mortelles,* fought without constraint or mercy and under no particular discipline.[12] This crosscurrent of ethnic, cultural, class and economic roots of violence provided a wide sense of personal insecurity.[13] Too often this led to the violent cycle inherent in *les petites guerres*: coercion, assassination, massacre and revenge. The results of this fragmentation of authority and radicalization of ideology were as apparent in sixteenth-century France as in any number of modern-day "failing states" such as Yugoslavia or Haiti.

The underlying legalistic principle and potential salvation of the Wars of Religion lay in the reality that the conflicts were private wars between lords of the same sovereign (*guerre couverte).* Therefore, there existed a possibility of ending communal and political violence if a general acceptance of this principle could allow all factions to use the lack of the sovereign's approval as a reason for not fighting.[14] Unfortunately, the Valois monarchy too soon lost physical control of the kingdom and forfeited decision-making authority to the over-mighty lords. A royal monopoly on the use of force had not been possible, and France had lost even the ability to act as a fully functional member of the early modern international community.[15]

Henri's real enemy therefore was the fear of the future.[16] His strategic weapon could not be force or war, as understood by conventional strategists, but it would be what has termed "anti-war".[17] This "anti-war" involved the strategic use of military, economic and informational power to reduce violence associated with change. "Anti-

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12 War types from Robert C. Stacy, "Age of Chivalry", in *The Laws of War: Constraints on Warfare in the Western World,* ed. Michael Howard, George J. Andreopoulos and Mark R. Shulman, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994) 34-39.

13 See Holt, *The French Wars of Religion,* for the engine of religion; Henry Heller, *Iron and Blood: Civil Wars in Sixteenth Century France* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991) for a Marxist counterpoise. Baumgartner, *France in the Sixteenth Century*; and Robin Briggs, *Early Modern France 1560-1715* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) provide the sociopolitical view.

14 The modern parallel to the role of leadership in resolving the "security dilemma " of participants and in the advantage of a change to obviously new leadership when seeking accommodation is explained in King, 50-52, 60-64 and 73-75.

15 Pauline H. Baker and Angeli E. Weller *An Analytical Model of Internal Conflict and State Collapse: Manual for Practitioners* (Washington: Fund for Peace, 1998) provide these criteria for failing states, 19-23.

16 David A. Lake and Donald Rothchild, *Ethnic Fears and Global Engagement: The International Spread and Management of Ethnic Conflict* (University of California: Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, 1996), 6.

17 Alvin Toffler and Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti-War* (New York: Warner, 1995), 3.

war" is the war not fought. Paradoxically, it sometimes requires fighting the lesser war to prevent the larger catastrophe.

Henri Bourbon's anti-war had to be fought as cheaply as possible. The distinct gravitational pull of the powerful lords toward oligarchy (and in some areas the opposite pull toward "republicanism") occurred during a period of transition that threatened the exclusive noble "function" as the arm of the state.[18] The security of the entire patronage system that held together the layers of society from aristocrat to fieldworker provided the political-military character of France. [19]

"Nobles of the sword" had provided the military leadership and the fighting elements of the kingdom but power was shifting from nobility of "arms and tenure of land", to "clientage and control of wealth".[20] Therefore forces were being provided more and more through hiring of mercenaries.[21] The associated expense of the modern tools of war and the primitive logistical capacity available set the limits of tactical and operational feasibility. Money and the promise of success were becoming the only glues that would hold forces together. Limited resources could neither be frittered away in profitless siege nor thrown away in desperate battle. The mark of success in the late sixteenth century, like in the late twentieth, was victory with the least expenditure of effort and the absolute minimum of casualties.[22] As such, the maintenance of a large number of fortified towns and chateaux helped secure areas at the lowest possible price in men and materiel. Besieging these outposts was in itself a time and resource consuming activity that depleted the surrounding countryside and made the besieger vulnerable to surprise, to lack of resources and to attrition of unsatisfied soldiery. Siege was required but typically only against positions of great importance. Otherwise the effort had to be against those that could be taken quickly and at minimum expense to the attacker. Negotiation and persuasion were as important in these efforts as combat power. Henri's wit, charm, confidence and

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18 For the evolution of the nobility during this period, see Schalk 90-123 and 206-7.

19 This system is described in brief in Kaiser, 2-3, and 7. A more detailed analysis is provided in Baumgartner, *France...* 117-207.

20 Hexter, 18-19; and also in Herbert H. Rowan, *The King's State: Proprietary Dynasticism in Early Modern France* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1980) as a change from "eminent domain" or the use of land to "useful domain" or the use of the products of the land, 29.

21 Baumgartner, *France...* 151-161 summarizes the issues of the nobles and their role in the crisis.

constant impression of success were to be weapons as important as his Swiss mercenaries in the taking of towns and in the arranging of financing.[23]

Henri not only had to preserve his armies from combat casualties, from strength wastage and from dissipating morale but also had to master the ability to provide a form of continual finance for their campaigns. War was a test of the individual's ability to orchestrate a financial and logistic effort to keep an army together for the duration of a campaign. Henri always seemed to be constantly operating on a shoestring while his enemies, financed by Spain, always managed to raise and equip formidable armies. After each of his major battlefield victories, even Ivry, Henri faced a mutinous mercenary core of his army expecting pay. Such contingencies made strategic planning an iconoclastic art. Henri remarked, "I have often had desires but never yet have found a fit opportunity to form designs."[24]

Since the ability to generate investment was directly related to the prestige of the supplicant he had to produce results continually. Battlefield victory was thereby directly related to prestige and profit more than to the combat strategy of annihilation of opposing forces. "Investors", whether monarchs like Elizabeth and Philip or bankers like the Venetians, expected a return of some type: economic; social; diplomatic or religious. It was well understood that this was all part and parcel of the skills required of a great Captain.[25] No early modern commander or even a single kingdom could yet pay for a campaign without significant contributions from outside the realm. Even Philip's Spain went bankrupt three times in attempting to pay for wars.[26] The money raising effort had therefore to be transnational and the resulting give and take helped shape early modern states and, interestingly, helped give rise to

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22 Jones *Elements of Military Strategy,* strategy of "least effort" is primarily explained 221-2.

23 The cost of maintaining an army more than tripled between 1500 and 1630 in Parker, *The Army of Flanders,* 134.

24 Henri to Sully after Ivry in Sully Bk 4, 235. Any perception of the logistical efforts required for warfare until the modern era was rare according to Edwin Luttwak, "Logistics and the Aristocratic Idea of War," in *Feeding Mars. Logistics in Western Warfare from the Middle Ages to the Present,* ed. John A. Lynn (Boulder: Westview, 1993), 3-7.

25 "Others...have not only been obliged to discipline their armies, but even to raise them out of the earth, as it were, before they could face an enemy; these certainly deserve a much greater degree of approbation than those who have commanded veteran and well-disciplined armies..." Machiavelli, *The Art of War,* 207.

26 Henri likewise learned and eventually patriated financial dependency to Lyon from Italy and thereby gave France "enormous advantage in the wars to come." Tilley, 87.

a common codification of warfare to which commanders seeking legitimacy had to adhere.[27]

It is difficult to assess Henri as a military commander without surveying his full strategic abilities. The levels of war are inter-related and in Henri's case, inter-related in one ruler and commander. His tactical and operational decisions were underpinned (or at least should have been underpinned) by his strategic overview and perception of his grand plan. Henri's successes had to be measured against his ability to achieve his policies. For this, he had to maintain a power base and an army. A costly battlefield victory or sickly siege could cost him a war that he could not afford to lose but only victory and consistent success would keep attracting support to his colors. The strategy of "the least effort" therefore returned in Henri's time but without smothering the desire for victory through glorious battle. This human frailty would not only make a sustained strategy difficult but also alter the perception of events for succeeding generations.[28] Henri of Navarre understood that viewpoint. Although he won his battles, he used these victories to shore up support for his legitimacy, his credibility and his creditability rather than to annihilate opposing forces. Indeed, He spent a great deal of his time attempting to reduce casualties since any Frenchmen involved in battle, on either side, were his subjects and might be induced to join his cause. Henri's approach to siege is instructive in revealing his attitude toward the ultimate strategy of the wars.

HENRI AND SIEGE: MEANS TO AN END

Henri of Navarre was more than familiar with siegework. He was "the man who was known to have made the most effective use of the petard, if he did not actually invent the device."[29] This explosive entry device is exactly what one would expect of the king who took Cahors. It shortens a siege. Nevertheless, Henri's early experience

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27 Hale, *War and Society*, 169.

28 Commander's reputations are made in the conduct of battle, not in the avoidance of it. However, the lack of appreciation of the nature of this kind of war and the cost of unrelated battlefield victories explains both the fall of Napoleon and the failure of the west in Indochina. A recent book explains this through the story of a US veteran meeting a North Vietnamese contemporary and commenting that the United States had won all of the battles in their war. The North Vietnamese agreed but noted that this fact was irrelevant. See Harry G. Summers Jr., *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (New York: Dell, 1984), i.

29 Duffy, 111.

at Cahors and LaRochelle seems to have given him a healthy respect for assaulting towns. For most of his military career he preferred to snatch towns by daring, by guile and by suitable assignments of cash and honors. This policy made sense for the urban landscape had altered strategic thought and military capability,

> ...we must confesse Alexander, Caesar, Scipio, and Haniball, to be the worthiest and famoust warriers that euer were: notwithstanding, assure your selfe had they knowne Artillerie, they would neuer haue battered Townes with Rammes, nor haue conquered Countries so easilie, had they been fortified as Germanie, France, and the Low Countries...[30]

Even so, Henri is associated with many sieges. Most were not conducted in a classic close encirclement style because he lacked both the forces and the temperament for that approach. Occasionally, if free to act and with a capable engineer like Claude de Chastillon to assist, and if the target was not too big, like Falaise in 1590 or Chartres in 1591, Henri would conduct a formal siege. Chartres was the site of one of his more famous *bon mots* when the fortress was offered up "by divine law and by civil law" Henri quipped and "by Canon (cannon) law".[31] Formal siege was less of an option for larger centers such as Paris or Rouen or when Henri would not forgo his army's freedom of action. In these cases, blockade or quarantine in the style of Sarajevo in the 1990's was more his style. He normally would begin such a blockade with an attempt at a *coup de main.* For Paris, this involved the calculated attempts to grab key faubergs and Seine crossings to strangle the city. Once the excitement of the gamble wore off Henri lacked the stomach for sustained pressure against his own subjects and undercut his military effort by allowing the starving to leave Paris and even some convoys to enter.[32] For this he was directly criticized on strategic grounds by both Elizabeth I and by his Catholic wife, Margueritte.[33]

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30 Sir Roger Williams, *The Works of Sir Roger Williams,* ed. J.X. Evans (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon, 1972), 33. Sir Roger conducted the sieges of Paris and Rouen with Henri IV.

31 Duffy, 112; and Pearson, 66 and 95.

32 Pierre de L'Estoile, *The Paris of Henry of Navarre: Selections from his Memoires-Journaux,* trans. Nancy L. Roelker (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 193.

33 Lord Russell, *Henry of Navarre: Henry IV of France* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 98; and R.B. Wernham, "Elizabethan War Aims and Strategy," in *Elizabethan Government and Society: Essays presented to Sir John Neale,* eds. S.T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield and C.H. Williams (London: Athlone Press, 1961), 354.

If Henri's conduct of these blockade-sieges are seen as just another application of the "*On s'engage, et alors on voit*" technique then the sieges make coherent strategic sense. His military tool was his highly mobile, firepower intensive army. Its Swiss and mercenary infantry were expensive and its core component, his horsemen, were unreliable since they needed frequent time off to solve parochial problems. Static siege encouraged absenteeism. Henri had to use his mercenaries, especially his British contingents paid for by Elizabeth, for the siege role and this left him responsive and vulnerable to Elizabethan strategic influence.[34] His "equestrian army" was better equipped physically and psychologically for the sudden *coup de main* that allowed,

> the King without money, without being prop'd up by Confederates, without friends...[took] more places and Forts than there were dayes in the year, and now fiercely and resolutely threatened the City of Paris itself, even in the face of the Army of the League.[35]

The threat to centers of commerce and Leaguer support drew out efforts of relief. Henri's army, imitating Caesar's but with a more deadly mobility, used this tendency to defeat and demoralize his foes. His force became increasingly argoletier heavy and so capable of acting as either infantry or cavalry that operated at lessened expense.[36] In 1590-1 he surprised relief forces at Laon, Noyon, La Fère and harassed almost into immobility the armies sent to relieve Paris and Rouen.

During his raiding phase, he used these tactics to whittle down the forces sent against him and thereby won further extensions of Huguenot liberty. After assuming the throne of France he became more concerned with persisting strategy and hence fought to set conditions for the surrender of towns intact. Once a relief was publicly defeated and hope of succor removed, the towns usually fell promptly. This enabled trade to continue often on the day of the capture and tax revenue became hypothetically available. Henri employed suasion more and more in lieu of force, but suasion made up of equal parts respect for ability to reward and fear of his ability to

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34 Sir Thomas Conigsby, *Journal of the Siege of Rouen 1591,* in the Camden Miscellany, vol 1, ed. John Gough Nichols (Great Britain: Camden Society, 1847; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1968), 40-45; and Sully Book IV, 262-263.

35 Davila, 889.

36 Love, 523. For reasons why monarchs cannot employ totally effective and efficient forces see Jones, *Art of War* for discussion on the efficacy of men-at-arms versus knights and economic force composition, 630-634.

strike.[37] He acted to remove the causes for dispute and war and to reinforce the traditional roles of client and patron. Just as battlefield victory was balanced by generous terms to the vanquished, so besieged Leaguer towns were surrendered to cash and status rather than powder and pike (in another of his quips *vendu* rather than *rendu*). The army was thereby preserved against both operational and administrative casualties.

STRATEGIC SITUATION

After 1572, the Wars of Religion increasingly threatened the relations between the states of Europe, even those of the same confessional faith. The spread of Calvinism dragged Spain into the interminable wars of the Dutch revolt that would last until 1648. Interference from Protestant England and Huguenot France constantly threatened to tip the balance in favor of the rebels and the factions within France became proxies in the larger struggle.

The Habsburg-Valois Wars had confirmed the Spain of Philip II as the one great power. The geocenter of the European Spanish Empire was, significantly, France (Figure 1). The routes from Spain to her rich possessions in Italy and the Netherlands were by open sea along French coasts and through French lands. The only land route from Spanish Italy to the Spanish Netherlands was the Spanish Road that ran from Milan through allied Savoy, over the Alps and along France's fortified northeast border into the Netherlands.[38]

So long as France was entirely preoccupied with her Wars of Religion she at least could not threaten Spanish policies.[39] Philip of Spain was instrumental in ensuring that France remained a social system in which war was endemic. He balanced support, monies, marriages and troops among the factions to deprive

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37 See S. Annette Finley-Croswhite, *Henry IV and the Towns: The Pursuit of Legitimacy in French Urban Society 1589-1610* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

38 This remarkable 700-mile road was the primary means of shuttling Spanish forces between the two main theaters of war. It contained a chain of magazines and enabled a fully equipped field army of 30,000 combatants to move from one theater to the other in about five to seven weeks-- barring interference from France or lack of cooperation from allies. See Parker, *The Army of Flanders,* 80-105.

39 Philip's strategic views are discussed in several sources but well presented in brief in Felipe Fermandez-Armesto *The Spanish Armada: The Experience of War in 1588* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 74-75.

France of any form of cohesion that would allow it to inhibit Spanish policies. He became the generous supporter of the Guise faction and the Catholic League.[40]

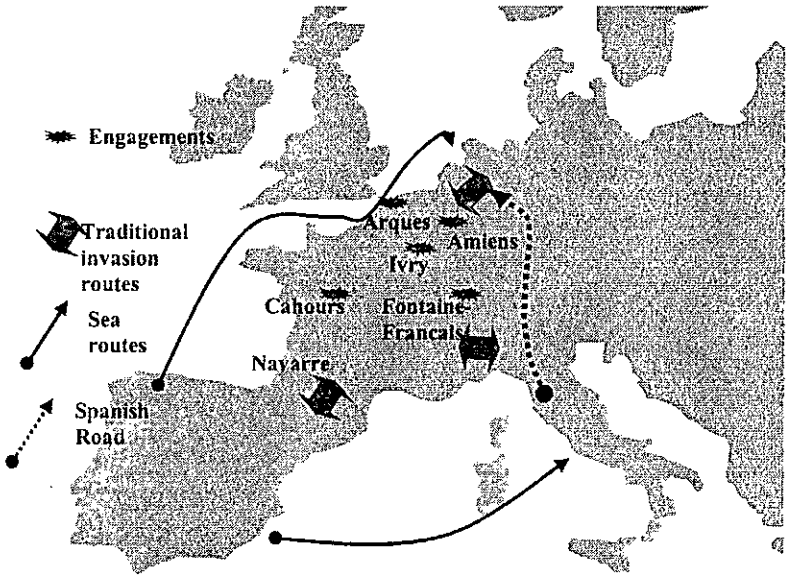

Figure 1: Strategic Situation of France and Spain.
Map constructed on Microsoft Powerpoint 4.

Therefore although Spain was not yet at war with France she was certainly at war in France. Her weapon had been money but was now to include her professional army with its adaptable and formidable *tercios* that were upgraded every few years through education and experience.[41]

EVOLUTION OF A STRATEGIST: CIVIL WAR TO KINGSHIP

The complexity of events stands in contrast to the stark simplicity of Henri's strategic policy. As King of Navarre he followed a primary policy of acting as the "guardian of society."[42] As such, he sought the stability of France as one cultural

40 Between 1582 and 1585 the Duke of Guise had received at least 350,000 Spanish ecus. Philip even attempted to negotiate similar arrangement with Henri of Navarre. See Baumgartner, 221-3; and Joan Davis, "Neither Politique nor Patriot? Henri, duc de Montmorency and Philip II 1582-1589," *Historical Journal* 34, no. 3 (1991): 539-566.

41 Thomas, *History of the World,* 220;and Fernando Gonzalez de Leon, "Doctors of the Military Discipline," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27, no. 1 (1996): 61-85.

42 Rowan, 5.

entity.[43] He was exposed to continual war, savage massacre and threat of treason and assassination all of his adult life. Despite his *gallant* image and readiness with a quip, his actions were almost always serious and aimed at consolidation of state and maintenance of central order. His concern during the first phases of the wars was for the security of Navarrè and the primarily Protestant population of southern France.

Whether Henri IV was a devout Protestant or Catholic, or a Machiavellian opportunist will likely never be established to everyone's satisfaction. What can be established was his genuine dedication to an apparently consistent political-military strategic policy of support to the institution of the "natural order" of a France. During his earliest campaigns along the disputed Spanish frontier and into the cannon's mouth at Cahors, he fought to establish himself as the legitimate and capable protector of his kingdom and of his faith. Cahors was taken when a promised dowry was not produced after his marriage to Marguerite Valois. Ambitious lords were thereby given fair warning that Navarre was not to be dismissed lightly despite any apparent irresolution inferred from Henri's abjuration after Saint Bartholomew's Day. This fight for legitimacy continued throughout his life and it provides the significant pattern for his strategic actions.

His military strategy initially had to be based on raiding. The Protestants had secure bases from which to operate and had developed the mobility for campaigns *à la Huguenot.* The targets were primary military aimed at depleting Royalist military strength and morale. Royalist forces could not operate for any length of time in Henri's areas of control without finding their lines of communication cut and their forces harried by constant hit and run actions. Thus sieges against the Protestants were high-risk propositions while Huguenot moves against Royalists were more *coups des mains* that degenerated into blockades. The success of this guerrilla style strategy established Henri as sufficient enough threat to Royalist factions to warrant action by a formed field army.

The first major set piece battle between the Royalists and Henri's forces consequently occurred as a result of the misfiring of King Henri III's strategy to deal with the more powerful lords of his realm. He dispatched the Duc de Guise to protect the eastern approaches of France from an invasion of Protestant mercenaries and

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43 Greengrass, 256-7.

concurrently dispatched a force to prevent Henri of Navarre from joining the invasion. All of the great lords should therefore have been preoccupied in debilitating *guerre á la Huguenot.*

Unfortunately for Henri Valois, he underestimated the commanders. Guise found and defeated the Protestant forces in the east and gained immediate Catholic popularity, and Anne de Joyeuse, who had already worn out two armies trying to find the *Béarnais*, finally cornered Henri at Coutras and was crushed. Navarre was now an immediate threat to the structure of Catholic Europe[44].

Ironically, Henri's political-military policy was to maintain Henri Valois on the throne of France. It was a choice made simple by belief in hereditary right and by the unpalatable alternative of the powerful Spanish-sponsored Guise of Lorraine. Navarre was too close to Spain and too far from Paris for any other option. Henri had produced sheaves of letters and policy statements to this effect. He was so effective at letter campaigns that Catherine de Medici became suspicious of his influence.[45] Henri's conduct in these times can be explained by his desire not to press his in-laws, the Valois, if it strengthened the Guise. Henri was a great protector of the throne.

The Protestants needed leadership, protection and heroism. Coligny and Condé had been assassinated and only the *Béarnais* could give them a figure of stature around which they could rally. The Huguenot aristocracy appreciated a figure that could offset Dutch-like republican tendencies in the Midi. Henri needed an army, and the Huguenot force was mobile, dedicated and innovative. This mutual support was nourished because Henri had learned, perhaps during his enforced stay at the court of the Valois, that popular support is a major condition of a successful strategy.

STRATEGIC POLICY OF KING HENRI IV OF FRANCE

Once he had become the king of France Henri's political-military strategy remained one of unity. The difference now was that it was to be stability under his

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44 Coutras influence in European designs is explained in Garrett Mattingly, *The Armada* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), 146-50.

45 See letter to Henri III, "whilst recognizing the connection between my fortunes and those of your majesty. . . " and ". . . Henry III. and the queen-mother were very much struck with this intelligent energy on the part of the King of Navarre and with the influence he acquired over all that portion of the French noblesse and burgesses which had not fanatically enlisted beneath the banner of the League." in Guizot and Guizot de Witt, 328-9.

banner. It is at this stage that a coherent sense of a grand strategy of Gallicanism can be detected. Henri had not ambitiously striven for the crown, it had fallen to him along with the call to duty as Great Protector of France. As such, he would continue to repair rather than rebuild the regime. He was not consistently successful and often seemed distracted by immediate events and the love of charging and romancing, but in the long term, he remained consistent.[46]

In 1584, the deaths of the Valois heir Duke D'Anjou (Alencon) and the Dutch leader William the Silent provided Philip's Spain with the opportunity to resolve both the power structures of Europe and the Reformation in her favor. An invading Armada was to resolve English interference, the Spanish army was to subdue the Netherlands and France was to be engineered into impotence. In December 1584 Philip inaugurated the Treaty of Joinville with Guise whereby Spain promised to finance the League in exchange for strategic Cambrai and a vow to keep Navarre off the French throne. The Spanish Ambassador Don Bernadino de Mendoza, a former cavalry officer and agent self-described as a man who brought down kingdoms, was in Paris providing overt support to Guise against the Valois.[47] The War of the Three Henris and the Wars of the League were thereby conflicts to determine the future direction for Europe.[48] Once the Armada campaign foundered, Philip altered his main effort from the "enterprise of England" to the "enterprise of France" because a re-invigorated France had become the issue of greater importance.[49]

Henri now altered his strategy from one of raiding to one of persistance. It was a strategy of conquering the French rather than France. He reinforced this overall aim by unifying the large number of holdout fortresses under the Bourbon banner and by

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46 The notion of a call to duty as a legitimate protector can be seen in Seyssel,. Also see Machiavelli, *Prince,* Chapters 2 and 3; and King, *Ending Civil Wars* 29-53. Support to a long-term consistency may be found in the introduction to Finley-Croswhite; and in the articles in Patrice Marcilloux, ed. *Laon, 1594: Henri IV, la Ligue et la Ville* (Laon: Axona, Mémoires et Documents sur L'Aisne, Série in-8°, 1996).

47 Mendoza published a military text almost as popular as La Noue's. For the complete picture of the activities of this amazing soldier's time as a diplomat see De Lamar Jensen, *Diplomacy and Dogmatism: Bernado de Mendoza and the French Catholic League* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).

48 R.B. Mowat, *A History of European Diplomacy 1451-1789* (New York: Archon Books, 1971), 75.

49 See Wernham, "War Aims", 340-47; Mattingly, *Armada*, 397-401; and Fernandez-Armesto, 268-275.

thwarting development of Spanish operations at any point that they could be reached. To achieve this his personal character became a prime weapon. Victory was well publicized, perhaps even manufactured to the point where historians still cannot separate perception and fact.[50] Guise, the League and Spanish pretensions to the throne were all undermined by Henri's energetic actions on and off the battlefield. The effort was synchronized in back rooms in Papal Rome, Castile, Venice and within garrison armories all across France.[51] While none of these campaigns could achieve success on its own, a failure of any of them could have disastrous effects.

The gradual change in the composition of the French army reflected Henri's successes in achieving unity. Slowly it evolved from ardent anti-Catholic Huguenot through re-aligned Catholic noble to eventual apolitical and almost non-religious professional. By 1593 and Henri's return to the Catholic faith, it contained few purely religious leanings and lent credence to the picture of an irreligious and Machiavellian Henri. To war-wearied contemporaries it was much preferable to continued chaos. For those still strongly attached to a head-of-the-church monarchy, Henri orchestrated his final abjuration with the same sense of timing that had swept the Leaguers from the battlefield. His hearts and minds campaign culminated in an unopposed entry into Paris, a city that had resisted his forces for four years. [52]

Henri's eventual consolidation of France extended outward to link the enemies of Spain in a strategic alliance that indicated his ultimate understanding of what would become geo-politics. Even the canny Elizabeth of England, after years of frustration at the actions of her ally, came to acknowledge him as a master statesman-strategist.[53]

The Wars of Religion were concluded by Henri's declaration of war on Spain in 1595. The central enemy was thus publicly declared and any who fought with it were traitors. When Spanish plans for an invasion through Picardy were uncovered[54] the

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50 Seyssel, introduction, 1; Greengrass, 254-59; and especially, Daniele Thomas, *Henri IV: Images d'un Roi entre réalité et mythe* (Paris: P. Heracles, 1995).

51 Anne Blanchard, Philipe Contamine, André Corvisier, Jean Meyer, Michel Mollat du Jourdin, *Histoire Militaire De La France: 1- Des origines à 1715 sous la direction de Philipe Contamine* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992-1994), 326.

52 For the complete account of Henri's masterful campaign of abjuration see Michael Wolfe, *The Conversion of Henry IV: Politics, Power and Religious Belief in Early Modern France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

53 Slocombe, 129.

54 Greengrass, 160

will of France was readily coalesced into a war against Philip of Spain.[55] The decisive action of the war had already been taken for Henri had constructed instead the alliance so feared by Philip: England, the Netherlands and France. By 1595, the Guise had joined the king and the Pope had granted him absolution.

Henri had demonstrated his power to resist Spain and to prevent Philip from implementing his policies freely across the European community. Spain acknowledged Henri's sway in Europe and made peace with him despite his years of heresy. The Treaty of Vervins of May 1598 reinstituted Cateau-Cambresis and became the basis of the European peace of the Twelve Years Truce of 1609. It restored the status quo of 1559 and therefore officially ended the Wars of Religion and acknowledged France's return to a position of European power. Henri remarked "I have just achieved by a stroke of my pen more exploits than would have been possible in a long war with the best swords in my kingdom."[56]

Henri continued to demonstrate a unity of political and military strategy. He created a professional defense establishment under Sully that included standardizing of cannon, a fortress and armories program, and the professionalization of regiments. This program promised to allow the implementing of a defense policy that had impact on European affairs.[57] Secondly, he sponsored a French navy capable of projecting French interests into the Mediterranean and toward his Italian allies.[58] Thirdly, his continued development of a stable force structure allowed machinations with the Netherlands, England, Italian cities, German states, Switzerland and even the Ottomans to further inhibit Spanish domination.

Finally, the results of the small war with Savoy in 1600-01demonstrate Henri's comprehensive political-military approach to strategic issues. A well-prepared and cannon-equipped French force moved rapidly against Savoy's fortresses and won the short sharp war. A papal peace settlement proved amicable and contemporaries critiqued the incredibly soft terms that bargained away key geographic areas for fiscal

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55 Sully quoted in Greengrass , 238.

56 Letter to ministers quoted in Pearson, 137.

57 Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers : Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Random House, 1987), 37-38.

58 David J. Buisseret, "The French Mediterranean Fleet under Henri IV," *The Mariner's Mirror* 1 (1964): 297-306.

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In the long term, Henri lost no allies as a result of the treaty but did neutralize Savoy. The orchestration of the Grand Design as a multinational show of force against Spain a decade later would also be consistent with his view of least effort victories.[60]

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[59] Henri's advantage over Spain rested in his threat to Spanish communication. See Parker, *The Spanish Road,* 247-8. The paradoxical logic of strategy states that if France were seen to be too well prepared then she would invite attack from Spain who would act out of self-interest and fear. See Luttwak, *Strategy,* 197.

[60] See Greengrass, Chapter 9 and Buisseret, *Henry IV,* Chapter 12 for summary of this last complex period of Henri's machinations.

CHAPTER V

HENRI NAVARRE-BOURBON AS OPERATIONAL COMMANDER

Between the strategic level of conducting war and the tactical level of winning battles exists the operational level of campaigning. It is the level at which battles and engagements are used to achieve strategic objectives.[1] This operational level of war is the level at which campaigns are planned and executed and is the level that separates the Great Captains from the tactically sound soldiers and the strategically competent policymakers.[2] This, unfortunately, leads to two analytic problems: a confusion of campaign strategy with strategy in general and a descriptive historical bias in favor of the military fire and maneuver campaigns of post-Enlightenment Europe.

Neither his peers nor posterity criticize Henri's capabilities as a tactician. His ability as king-strategist is normally only questioned when the term is applied in its campaigning sense rather than in its grander sense. In the age of rationalist warfare that followed the early modern period, military operations and engagements were assessed with mathematical precision and under the assumption that the function of a campaign was to bring about decisive battle. This approach sought to impose regimented discipline and order upon a purely military performance. Warfare, so dissected and rendered into a series of processes within a mechanistic universe, became seen as more of a science than an art.[3] The increasing size and centralization of armies, the increasing ability of academies and colleges to produce like-thinking officers all conspired to reduce warfare to a chess-like game with well-dressed pieces. Even the national armies of the post-Napoleonic period by and large still saw war as the application of purely military power to the solution of political policy problems.[4]

During this period Henri IV was too often depicted as the *Vert Galant* whose only effective use of victory was to impress a mistress. This results not only from the

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1 For the concept of operational level and its relationships to the other levels see United States Marine Corps, *Warfighting*, 27-30.

2 Especially since the view of Clausewitz was operational rather than truly strategic. He defined strategy as "the use of engagements for the object of the war", (original italicized). See Clausewitz, 128.

3 See John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: Viking Press, 1976), 54-62.

4 E.g. The case that sets precedent for modern civil-military lines of authority in the rationalist realm is that of Moltke and Bismarck that occurred, interestingly enough, while also laying siege to Paris in 1871.

critical views of the new science of military orthodoxy but also from the written records. These included a considerable amount of bias and disinformation that was a product of civil war propaganda, information control and ideological tracts. "Exaggeration of the power of the pen is par-for-the-course with intellectuals in general. But exaggerating the power of the sword is what happens when intellectuals lean over backward to prove that they are tough-minded men of affairs." [5] Henri insisted on playing the role of personable and natural king rather than that of a Machiavellian *politique,* and as such, he seldom explained his side of events and his actions. He never produced a true military text or memoir and seemed to revel as much in his reputation as conqueror of ladies as well as of France.[6]

A lack of a formalized military system and of a stated clear force-oriented strategy led analysts in the centuries following to dismiss Henri and his wars as a series of skirmishes, sieges and massacres that led to national exhaustion, eventual compromise and ultimately absolutism. While some credit is apportioned to Henri for his mastery of battle and some for his grand strategies as the healing monarch of France, very little credit is accorded him for the remarkable campaigns that he conducted. These mobile, fluid campaigns for the hearts and minds of France connected the battles, the sieges and the strategies to ultimate victory. Post World War, and especially post-Cold War military experience with revolutionary warfare and the Revolution in Military Affairs, have better exposed Henri's skills as an operational commander.

OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT : GUNPOWDER, COMMUNICATION AND LOGISTICS

The influence of gunpowder weaponry and improving organization on battle and siege has been explained. Even so, the lack of utility of battle and improved technology of weapon and information systems had an even more fundamental influence on operations than on battle. The unreliability of semi-skilled forces on the battlefield was magnified geometrically across the spectrum of an entire campaign.

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[5] See , Thomas, *Henri IV* for the uses of the image of Henri IV through history. Quote is from E. Harris Harbison, "Machiavelli's *Prince* and More's *Utopia,"* in *Facets of the Renaissance,* ed. William Henry Werkmeister (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 40.

[6] His combination of persuasion and suasion were applicable to both and apparently approached similar success rates.

The actions of Henri IV in his campaigns, like those of his battlefield performance, were not inspired by rational or formal military appreciation of what was required. Rather, his performance was intuitive and born of the experience, education and the osmosis of his court life, his growing military abilities and his understanding of his subjects. This intuitive style is not as frowned upon as perhaps it was in a more mechanistic era. Intuition based upon solid experience and situational understanding is commonly advocated for rapid decision making in modern operations.

Commanders from Gustavus to Napoleon have received great attention as the fathers of modern warfare primarily because of their capability to bring about conditions for decisive battle. This was a requirement if war was to be made to pay for war. For the profit of conquest to more than offset the price of warfare then wars need be short. Short wars need rapid decision and that was achieved through combat. The campaigning of an enlightened, industrial Europe was consequently based upon a combat strategy. Victory was achieved through attrition and annihilation of military forces and the aim of campaigning was to maneuver those forces to bring strength against strength. However, as noted in the previous chapters, battle had a different value to sixteenth-century commanders. Availability of fortresses and the lack of means to raise sufficient forces for wide or simultaneous campaigns made decisive battle of annihilation almost impossible. The Great Captains of the era, Henri of Navarre, the Duke of Parma, and Gonzalo of Cordoba understood that battle was but one tool in a larger armory, one that seldom achieved the required strategic impact.[7] Battle was one form of intimidation that threatened to undermine confidence and deprive the loser of resources and support. It occurred only under the most contrived of circumstances and was part of the overall campaign process rather than its aim. Where possible the "least effort" approach of Caesar and Vegetius that sought to win through "hunger rather than by steel" underlay the plan for campaign.[8]

To this end Henri, "a king without a crown" who "maketh war without money" had learned to employ not only guns and men in battle but he had also learned how to inspire and cajole troops, financiers, nobles, distrusting allies and unsure confessional

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7 Jones, *Art of War*, 206-7.

8 Quote is Julius Caesar's. Xenophon, less often read, also advocated, "attacking where the enemy is weakest, even if the point be some way distant". These "least effort" approaches are quoted in

supporters.[9] He used his birthright, his body, his wit, his slender resources and especially his string of military successes to project an aura of inevitability about his campaigns. Eventually, he became victory personified and thus it could be told how, "Men never forgot, to their dying day, how Henry, from a window in the Porte St. Denis, saluted his departing enemies, and called after them, "Commend me to your master, but never come back again." The hautiness of the Spaniard was no proof against such tactics as these."[10]

For Henri IV, war could not be made to pay directly for war because his object was consolidation of a people rather than the functioning of a military machine. The best he could manage was to pledge his debts against the future revenues of taxed areas that were consolidated into his realm. War, several years of bad crops and rising communal independence had rendered France incapable of sustaining serious campaigns. Therefore he had to strive constantly to keep his armies not only whole against his opponents, but also whole against lack of pay, disease, mutiny, inconstancy, and depression. Unlike an Adolphus, a Napoleon or an Eisenhower he had no expectation of sufficient forces to operate contiguously throughout a theater. Thus his military strategy had to be logistic, but calculated to maneuver his relatively small, but agile, forces in such a way as to employ them rapidly and selectively against enemy vulnerability. This maneuverist approach to operations constitutes a "warfighting philosophy that seeks to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a series of rapid, violent, and unexpected actions which create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which he cannot cope."[11] Ideally by "taking the initiative, and applying constant and unacceptable pressure at the times and places the enemy least expects -- rather than attempting to hold ground for its own sake." [12] Henri's army paralyzed the

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Jones, *Art of War,* 82. The other widely read text, that of Vegetius, concurs, stating "...overcome by famine, surprise or terror than by general actions" in Vegetius, 172.

9 Quote from Sir Henry Unton ambassador from Elizabeth I to Henri IV, in R.B. Wernham, *After the Armada: Elizabethan England and the Struggle for Western Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 368.

10 Roger Bigelow Merriman, *The Rise of the Spanish Empire in the Old World and the New*, vol IV, *Philip the Prudent* (New York: Cooper Square, 1962), 644.

11 USMC *Warfighting,* 75-6. Original is emphasized in Italics.

12 United Kingdom, *JWP 0-01,* 4.8. Compare this doctrine to the description of the king as having "a shrewd sense of the importance of sustaining a military initiative and keeping the enemy insecure and nervous. ", in Greengrass, 75.

enemy into inaction or forced him into high risk, expensive efforts that produced opportunistic combat situations. Ultimately, this led to a surrender of forces that found themselves drained of will, depleted of resources or, in their increasingly desperate efforts to come to grips with their nimble foe, trapped against an obstacle. Henri only accepted major battle when the cost of victory would be offset by strategic gain and, for him, the gain was measured not in terms of geographic features but of prestige and hearts and minds won over. Even before he became king, he understood the true need of France,

> We have all done and suffered enough evil. . . What will happen to the noblesse, what to the cities, what to the proud citizens, what to the peasants, what to the clergy? Confusion, disorder, wretchedness everywhere, that is the fruit of war. And what is the remedy? None other than peace. Peace which shall reestablish order in the heart of the Kingdom...I call upon all to join me, who have this holy wish for peace.[13]

While military operations needed a core of increasingly professional soldiers to serve this generation of populist beau ideal commanders the structure of the social order needed nobility on both sides of the conflict. This ensured retention of a recognizable order, exemplified by socially comfortable, noble class values that dominated the actions and decisions of the commanders.[14] Despite the consistent veneer of chivalry, it is evident that the professional, calculating mix of scientific method and social organization was producing a recognizably modern art of command and the organizational foundations of the European military order that was to be formalized by Gustavus Adolphus and Maurice of Nassau.[15]

Less obviously, Henri maintained an edge in "information" over his foes through better knowledge of people, technology, events and terrain. A campaign, even more so than a battle, is information dependent. Information gathered provides the means to operate more quickly than an opponent can. The corporate entity that was the Spanish Empire understood this requirement to the point that Philip II was usually aware of developments in foreign affairs before the ambassadors of the countries involved.

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13 Henri of Navarre's manifesto of 4 March, 1589, delivered en route to join Henri Valois lay siege to Paris quoted in Henry Dwight Sedgwick, *Henry of Navarre* (Indianapolis: Bobs-Merrill, 1930), 187.

14 Indeed, the social-class system of officer and enlisted existed in most armies until well into the twentieth century.

15 Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: Free Press, Macmillan, 1991), 97.

Unfortunately for the Spanish, Philip's ability to process the information and use it in a timely manner was flawed and thus an adept foe such as Henri IV was frequently presented with windows of opportunity to act within Spain's decision cycle.[16] Fortunately for France Henri's information gathering system was at least as effective as Philip's and more effective than the League's. Henri's ability to use his system was only impeded by lack of resources and trust. The battles for secrets, for influence and for advantage were constant. Through its Leaguer connections, Spain's service had access to the royal diplomatic code of Henri III (which many of Henri IV's ministers still used). Henri's partisans in Béarn had also broken this code.[17] In this "heyday of the intercepting of letters" Henri actually undermined Spain's effectiveness by conducting correspondence with Philip II who believed he was in contact with a Leaguist. This "seemed to indicate that, for the time being at least, the French king believed that the wisest way to deal with Philip was to try to make a fool of him."[18] Philip was not the only victim of Henri's campaign of character assassination. Pope Sixtus excommunicated Henri in 1585 only to find Henri's "*Tu quoque*" ex-communicating the pope in turn affixed to the Vatican door![19]

A prime requirement for a wholly effective maneuverist campaign of the type that Henri implemented is decentralization of command. Decentralization requires innate trust in subordinates but trust was an unsure commodity. It was a period wherein "conspiracy, insurrection and assassination were weapons as normal as fleets and armies, in which no diplomatic conferences were entered except to assist a military ruse, and no ambassadors sent between opposing sides except for espionage and subversion, nobody was quite able to believe in compromise and common sense, in common interest and a common code"[20]. Thus Henri was always reluctant to allow subordinates free reign in campaigning and, as in battle, he had to make things happen

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16 Geoffrey Parker, "Philip II, Knowledge and Power," *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History* 11, no.1 (1998): 104-111

17 See Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (New York: Dover, 1995) for the use and breaking of ciphers, 214-216.

18 Merriman, 645.

19 Pearson, 35.

20 Ibid., 177-8.

personally.[21] He was "confirmed more then ever in his old conceit, that where he was not himself in person, businesses went on either carelessly or unfortunately".[22] Again this meant that Henri exposed himself to additional risk in reconnaissance, in positioning his forces and in seeing for himself that his intent was being carried out. It also occupied a great deal of his valuable time and one individual, even as energetic and competent one as Henri, or even his spiritual successor Napoleon, could not supervise everywhere at once. Henri's divided attention and lack of trustworthy subordinates, for instance, cost him dearly when the Duke of Parma gained Yvetot and the Royalist armory in the Rouen campaign in 1591 and again when the Spanish snatched Amiens in 1596. Only Henri's magnificent ability to counter-punch more rapidly than Spain could react restored both situations. The climate of the times notwithstanding, Henri, again like Napoleon, allowed himself to rob subordinates of their initiative and confidence to act. Henri was apt to perform every command function, including that of leading assault elements and an immediate reserve when a subordinate came to grief. Biron, for example, is often quoted to the effect that at Ivry, the king did his job of leading the assault while Biron was left to do the king's task of leading the reserve. Perhaps it is understandable then that it is Biron (senior or junior) that is one of the most frequent subjects rescued through Henri's personal involvement.

The use of information as military or diplomatic intelligence was only one dimension of its importance. Information is not only gathered, but dispersed. The availability of information about the wars, the causes, the personalities and the events from the mass press shaped perceptions of the early modern wars and the Reformation in what a later century would call the "CNN" factor. The weapon of propaganda in the published idea became evident in treatises on the rights and obligations of monarchy, in character assassination and in the construction of hero-celebrities.[23] A form of "public opinion" became the center of gravity of the increasingly "civil" Wars of Religion.[24]

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21 La Noue was one of the few exceptions to this rule and, in fact, was killed on an expedition separate from the effort of the king.

22 Davila, Book 15, 1446.

23 Dr. Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: War Propaganda from the Ancient World to the Nuclear Age* (Glascow: Patrick Stevens Ltd, 1990), 75-86; and Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 92-6.

24 The center of gravity is a term derived from Clausewitz, "the hub of all power and movement on which everything depends...the point at which all our energies should be directed." For detailed discussion of center of gravity see Clausewitz, *On War*. 595-6.

Henri IV was one who was prepared to master the new arts of communication and to use them to connect his strategy and his battles. The international celebrity that attended his tactical victories enhanced Henri's prestige. His image on prints in Venice sold as those of sports heroes on cards do today.[25] This prestige became invaluable when used to further specific campaign aims, such as establishing his regal legitimacy and his role as the great protector. His ability to acquire, process and use available information in a relatively rapid manner was vital to his campaigning style. Present supportive campaign strategies, labeled "information operations", are based on the premise that dominance of information systems provides an overwhelming advantage in military campaigning and economical success in battle. [26] Such measures include the uses of military and civil intelligence, psychological warfare, selective destruction and public information. While modern theorists focus upon the explosion of electronic or digital information means available to society and its forces, it can be appreciated that the arrival of the common press and the Renaissance had a similar quantum effect on attitudes and society in the sixteenth century. Not only did the availability of print make both the Reformation and Counter-Reformation possible, it also made war a spectator sport. The Wars of Religion set new standards for intensified publication efforts to influence attitudes through pamphleteering.[27] These information systems were highly influential means to ends. They were used to establish credibility and legitimacy, to gain wide public support, and to exploit opportunities presented by opponents. For not only had commanders to be proficient and Christian, they had to be seen to be so.

Spanish ambassador Bernardo de Mendoza and Pierre L'Estoile chronicle the battle for the hearts and minds of Parisians fought between the supporters of Henri IV and the League. Their efforts represent an archetypal information operation whose results were that Mayenne was painted as a disaster suffering from a critical wane in popularity after his battlefield defeats while Henri was depicted as a successful patron

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25 Venice would be the first unallied state to acknowledge Henri as king. Slocombe, 165-6.

26 Information operations open a new and much described area of military endeavor. See Martin C. Libicki, *What is Information Warfare?* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1995). Current views emphasizing electronic means rather than print are summarized well in "The Future of Warfare," *The Economist*, 8 March 1997: 23-26.

27 Buisseret, *Henry IV*, 83-5; Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind*, 83-85.

capable of protecting those who sided with him, regardless of faith.[28] He remained fully apprised of all that transpired within Paris and within the planning cadre of the League to the point where his machinations interfered with the execution of Spanish-League campaigns. Mayenne was reduced to violent action against the dictatorial committee known as the Sixteen after Ivry. His subsequent inability to resume timely military operations in support of the Spanish demonstrate the relationship of battle, campaigning and information-related warfare. Conversely, Henri IV played a cool hand in laying a somewhat intermittent siege to Paris while enabling his agents to contrast his majesty, his generosity and magnanimity with the designs of the foreign-controlled League.[29]

OPERATIONAL SITUATION: KEY TERRAIN, SIEGE AND COHESION

The campaigns of Henri of Navarre took place across a geographic area characterized by new urban centers, now capable of enhanced communication with each other and organized toward the means for a money-based economy. An additional dimension was therefore added to the traditional siege. The agricultural and seigneural power base of the town in question became secondary to these more modern characteristics. The coincidence of strategic geographic location and strategic economic function established the overall importance of towns, and by extension, regions. Henri understood the emerging superiority of the "useful domain" of products and finances over the "eminent domain" of land.[30] Thus the Normandy coastal towns, and the frontier garrison towns such as Cambrai, Amiens, and Rouen along the easily penetrated frontier were known to be key terrain and played major parts in both Philip of Spain's and Henri's campaign planning.

Skirmish and siege characterize the Wars of Religion. Neither of these activities could be decisive, for as noted, these wars were not about capturing territory but about capturing belief. These brush fire engagements and urban assaults have more in

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28 Consider similar results in the formation of public opinion today for candidates such as Vice-President Quayle. See L'Estoile; and De Lamar Jensen, for complete picture of the efforts of information control, manipulation and suasion within Paris. Also Garrett Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy* for a synoptic overview and context 173-77.

29 Henri demonstrated increasing use of possessive pronouns "my army", "my kingdom", etc. and wrote letters to the leaders of Paris accusing them of resisting reason and duty in siding with foreign Spain. He was already "nationalizing" the debate. Rowan, 50-51.

common with a raiding strategy of a guerrilla campaign than with a combat strategy attempt at conquest. The skirmish, *petite guerre*, was opportunistic and seldom related to any purely military goal except that of the disruption of enemy cohesion and morale. None of Henri's sieges of Paris, for instance, were mounted in sufficient strength to force an assault into the city. However, all achieved the desired effect of reducing the city's capacity to function by reducing key faubergs, blocking bridges and isolating the city from its logistic, military and moral sources of support. This increased Paris' grudging respect for Henri while degrading faith in her own leadership. This created just the situation that would occasion a precipitate and disastrous reaction from Henri's foes to regain public confidence. Henri's campaign theme, therefore, remained unchanged from his battlefield technique of "*On s'engage, et alors on voit*" and from the methodology of *petite guerre* perfected in his years as a Huguenot guerrilla.

These type of campaigns should not be assessed in terms of conventional military force attempts to link battles to strategic aims but rather as an attempt by unconventional forces to establish moral ascendancy over an enemy through the seizure of the initiative and the control of events.[31] Herein lay the consistent themes to Henri's actions. They were all directed by the requirement to win the public opinion campaign, especially the battle for the leadership elite. Thus his Caesarian practice of strength with clemency, his image and information control and his nationalizing of the war effort were all links in a grand strategy of social stability and national unity. This effort was undoubtedly an intuitive rather than a deliberate one but it was a campaigning theme that stemmed directly from Henri's sense of self as the legitimate protector and guardian for a consolidated France and as such it was highly dependent on Henri's personality.

EVOLUTION OF A CAMPAIGNER

As noted, Henri had learned much about campaigning, the utility of battle and the warrior's code of conduct from Coligny. As a result he campaigned in such a manner as to limit massacre and deprivation because they offended his ingrained

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30 Ibid., 29.

31 Knorr, 54-55. A French tradition for this type of warfare existed in the campaigns of du Guesclin, the Breton High Constable of France at the end of the Hundred Years War who, in less than five years, almost eliminated English presence in France without fighting a major battle. Asprey, 81-82.

chivalric character and because association with such antagonistic actions blocked the path to the high ground of moral victory and provided his foes with propaganda.

Henri's exploits as a guerrilla leader and at Cahors and his well-publicized "good governing" at Nérac established his competency as battle commander and ruler. This was a critical beginning for as Montaigne observed, "We could not possibly draw from the justice of your cause such strong arguments to confirm or subdue your subjects as we do from the news of the prospering of your campaigns."[32]

As noted in Chapter 4, his consolidation of power included the clear enunciation of his policy and support for the established social order in widely distributed letters and manifestos that underscored his efforts to stabilize France through overt moral support to the Valois and their guarantees of minority rights. This campaign in the "War of the Pamphlets" proved remarkably successful.[33]

Swords supplemented pamphlets by 1587 as Henri Valois' failed strategy resulted in battle at Coutras and Auneau (demonstrating that when battle was "decisive" it was usually in a negative sense). Here begins the serious criticism of Henri of Navarre as campaigner. He is severely criticized for his lack of action after the upset victory at Coutras. It is assumed that with the Valois king functioning in a power vacuum Navarre should have moved as quickly as his reputation suggested to threaten Paris. Coligny would have done so to secure another edict of toleration. Instead, in an often-told version of events, he took the 22 captured colors of Joyeuse's army to his mistress and dallied until the moment was lost. While the selection and maintenance of mistresses may have provided some form of personal strategy of the King of Navarre, other more relevant circumstances exist to explain this apparently cavalier behavior.[34]

Campaign execution depended on the state of the army and upon the willingness of its subordinate leadership to continue the campaign. Henri's force was

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32 Quoted in Donald A. Frame, *Montaigne: A Biography* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1965), 285.

33 For examples, see Henri IV, *Recueil des lettres missive de Henri IV,* vol 2, eds and comps. Jules Berger de Xivery and Jules Guadet (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1843-56), for February, 1585 to Henri Valois, 10-11; and March, 1585 to Walsingham, 15-17; to Elizabeth I, 7-19; and his declaration of defensive war against "des Ligueurs" and their design for "la ruine totale de cest Estat" (while still supporting his rightful king) that was issued less than three months before Coutras on 14 July, 1587, 294-97.

34 The familial connections of Henri's primary, publicized mistresses would likely indicate a sense of campaigning not unlike that of his military life. While the heart is not tactical, the selection of which of its choices to advertise is.

inexperienced in victory and Henri Valois was reported as moving toward the Loire and a position from which to threaten Huguenot France.[35] There was inevitable disagreement over the next action required. Many nobles wished to return to their parishes, others to continue on in hopes of gaining more loot while yet others wished to disassociate from the untrustworthy abjurist, Henri of Navarre. The professional element of the army, relieved at surviving such a lopsided battle was is no mood to try to repeat the performance until sufficiently paid.[36]

There are additional explanations for Henri's unusual lack of aggressiveness that lend support to the view that Henri was deliberately avoiding undercutting his Valois cousin. Henri's move toward Pau was no rush toward his mistress. He spent time hunting and with Montaigne, a moderate Catholic and long-term friend. Montaigne was received at Henri III's court shortly thereafter but not before experiencing life-threatening travel and arrest.[37] The remaining two Henris, Valois and Guise, were left to conclude their power struggle uninterrupted by Navarre. The year 1588 ended with the assassination of Guise, the revolt of Paris and an alliance between Valois and Navarre against the League and Spain. When Henri III was in turn assassinated he appointed his blood kin and confirmed loyal subject Henri of Navarre as his successor.

Henri IV promptly issued a manifesto that guaranteed political, civil and religious rights that "continued the law of land".[38] This contract with his realm convinced some of the gendarmerie to give Henri Bourbon a chance. He inherited the professionals of the Royalist army, Royalist clients and their clientele and while there were not enough of them to capture Paris there were enough to draw the League into defeat at Arques and Ivry. Each victory increased Henri's resources and magnified his image as unbeatable.

THE EXPERIENCED CAMPAIGNER: PARIS TO ROUEN

The destruction of the Leaguer field armies precipitated direct Spanish involvement in the wars and set the stage for the classic maneuver campaign of the

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35 Henri IV, "Sommaire Historique" in *Missives*, Vol 2, iv.

36 Both Sully and d'Aubigné believed that the king was drawn away by his libido. See Sully, Book II, 179; and Oman, 479.

37 Several others who provide a "peace-feeler" link through the essayist Montaigne have challenged D'Aubigné and Sully's version. See Mattingly, *The Armada*, 158-63; Pearson, 42-3; Slocombe, Chap X; and Frame, *Montaigne*, 269-73.

38 Guizot and Guizot de Witt, 365-6.

century. Philip of Spain's grand scheme had foundered in the English Channel and at Coutras, Arques and Ivry and had only achieved a level of success in the Low Countries. Here his nephew, the Duke of Parma, an adept, scientific commander, was given overall command in the Spanish Netherlands. He had established an early reputation as a dashing and audacious commander here when as a cavalryman he had crushed and routed a Dutch infantry force at Gembloux in 1577. Parma knew his Dutch foes as well as Henri knew his Leaguer opponents. He too used this knowledge to engineer a dual campaign of military skill, personal suasion and timely concessions to offset much of the damage caused by his predecessors' terror-tactics.[39] Parma's campaigns were slow and steady affairs calculated to never exceed his means. Like Henri, he was forever balancing the requirements to maintain an army with those of his mission. As such, he became an engineering expert in siege warfare and the crossing of protected rivers. By 1585 Parma had secured the southern half of the Netherlands but found him too often distracted by his commander-in-chief's preoccupation with the wider issues of Europe. His final campaigns were initially disrupted by preparations for the armada and then in 1589 by Philip's alteration of Spain's main effort from the Enterprise of England to the Enterprise of France. Parma was ordered to rescue the League.[40]

By the early summer of 1590, Henri's blockade of Paris had severely reduced its food supply and capitulation had become a real possibility despite the best efforts of Philip's agents within its walls.[41] While the citizens of Paris ate their horses and ground up bones for nutrition, Henri's forces captured St Denis and conducted attacks on the outlying forts. Parma marched south to relieve the siege.

In Parma, Henri discovered a foe not prepared to allow him his usual freedom of action. Both commanders were experienced and wise enough to attempt to bring about battle under their own terms. Henri, anticipating another firepower, shock and maneuver fight rode forth with his equestrian army to savage Parma's relief effort. Instead he found the old lion fully prepared to fight a conventional infantry battle behind

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39 H.A. Lloyd, *The Rouen Campaign 1590-1592: Politics, Warfare and the Early Modern State* (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon, 1973), 170-71.

40 See especially Parker, *Spain and the Netherlands,* 35-37; and *Philip II*, 3d ed. (Chicago: Open Court, 1996), 182-3; and *The Army of Flanders*), 243-6.

41 Paris would lose 13,000 to siege conditions that year. Hale, *War and Society*, 193.

well-constructed entrenchments with some 14,000 troops. Each time Parma moved it was in defensive array and each time he halted it was behind fortifications. Parma never attacked and fought in the Roman style expected of a professional who had absorbed the classics.[42] Henri had moved beyond classic doctrines and was developing the expertise at fire and maneuver that would fundamentally change modern battle but Parma understood the powerful mounted threat all too well.[43] He retained complete control over his subordinates and so few fell victims to Henri's maneuver groups. His response to Henri's mobility was to present him with "a solid body so firm and impenetrable that wherever it may go, it shall bring an enemy to a stand like a mobile bastion..."[44] His progress was therefore excessively slow. Maintaining his formation he could manage only a few miles a day but it was sufficient. Henri, victor of the defense of Arques, knew better than to attack prepared fortifications with a mounted force. Inevitably, Parma reached a point whereby he could provide some relief to Paris and claim the tactical victory. He even left troops to help garrison Paris. It was not enough. In his absence, the Netherlands erupted into full revolt and he could not sustain his army indefinitely in its entrenchments. Accepting his mission as completed, he withdrew.

This movement allowed the versatile king to snatch a strategic victory from a tactical disappointment. Henri declared that if the enemy wished to avoid battle *en gros* then he would give it to them *en détail.* Parma's force was harassed along its whole route by argoleiters and by roadblocks that forced it onto secondary routes. Reports on exact casualties are contradictory and vary from a few hundred to many thousands.[45] The effect of this effort was stunning to contemporaries even if glossed over by historians looking for decisive battle. It was a clear victory of information control.[46] Henri

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42 Compare Parma's moving box to that in Xenophon's *Anabasis or Expedition of Cyrus*, trans. J.S. Watson (Philadelphia: David McKay, 1896), Bk III Chap 11; and the Roman derived hollow square, in Machiavelli, *Art of War,* Bk II.

43 Parma's classical training would have included comparison of his Roman techniques with those of Henri's Parthian. Rome never did beat Parthia in battle.

44 A maxim of Count Raimondo Montecuccoli, a contemporary quoted in Jones, *Art of War,* 260.

45 Hale, *War and Society...* for instance note that in the following year Parma's army would lose 50% of its strength to all causes campaigning under similar conditions. Unhappy or defeated armies suffered, in particular, a high desertion rate.

46 "After all, guerrilla warfare is essentially information warfare -- a contest of military hide-and-seek and political allegiance. In this sort of war, obtaining information about the enemy and controlling the political debate are essential." Michael J. Mazarr, "The Revolution in Military Affairs: A Framework for

declared that he had chased Parma out of "my kingdom".[47] Despite Parma's achievement of his mission to sustain Paris, morally and physically, he was reprimanded for appearing defeated.[48] Henri controlled the public perception of the campaign and had shaped its course. Recruits flocked to join the victor.[49]

By 1591 Henri, gaining little from his ongoing quarantine of Paris, moved on to capturing prizes more within his reach. He dispersed most of his army to its home regions to rest and repair. During the Paris siege, the last real Leaguer pretender died and the League began its fracturing into a French League and a Spanish League. Henri recognized that Spain was now the true center of opposition. Thus his campaigns would now be twofold: in order to hold his throne he would have to defeat Spanish influence with Pope and Leaguer and to do this he would have to demonstrate that he could withstand the pressure of Spain's militarily power. Leaguer support to Spain was weakened by Philip's unwise attempt to connect his daughter to the French throne. Henri's final abjuration thus could be made to be the decisive engagement of the campaign for France. Henri's declaration of war against Spain completed the process of unifying France on an anti-Spanish basis. In 1590 Pope Sixtus died, allowing Henri and the Gallican church to open a "Vatican front" against Spain. In order for these campaigns to prosper Henri had to continue to demonstrate that he could protect his domain against Spanish power in the field.

By November 1591 Henri, with English help, was campaigning in Normandy in order to maintain his lifeline to England and Elizabeth. The geography of northeastern France provides lowland from the Spanish Netherlands to Rouen while the terrain southward rises as a minor barrier. Fortresses such as Amiens and Cambrai block easy access between this vulnerable lowland and the heart of the Paris region while Rouen sits at the mouth of the Seine as a vulnerable outpost of either France or

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Defense Planning," *Fifth Annual Strategy Conference* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 1994), 11

47 Henri IV, *Missives,* Vol 3, 309.

48 Love, 528.

49 Jones, *Art of War*, equates Henri's campaign artistry to the of Caesar's almost bloodless campaign against Pompey's generals in Spain and to the similar Fabian campaigns of Gonzalo in Italy, 207-9.

Spain.[50] It is supportable from either England or the Low Countries but the Somme valley and several smaller rivers provide excellent opportunity for action against armies attempting to cross the lowland. Two of the major battles of Henri's career, Arques and Ivry, had been fought in this arena for just this reason. Thus Henri was forced to move against Rouen, the major Leaguer holdout in strategic Normandy, by his worried English ally and by a pressing need for the revenues that the capture of Leaguer materiel could provide.

Parma was again sent to relieve the siege. He was less confidant of this move than he had been the year before. Both his army and his reputation had been depleted. He was prepared to abandon his traditional caution to succor Rouen even if it meant commitment to battle. While battle itself was materially indecisive, the prestige of Spain and hence the ability to control the succession to the French throne was at stake. The Spanish Ambassador on the other hand saw the obverse of the same coin. He wrote "the relief of Rouen is too risky for it, owing to the danger of a battle."[51] Parma, knowing he would have to face the maneuverist French king again demanded reinforcements, including 9,000 cavalry.

Henri's methods continued to mature and to synthesize firepower and mobility. His campaigns became affairs of rapid movement, of *coup de main* and dislocation of his enemies. His engagements were shaped into running fights wherein his army would both figuratively and literally ride circles about his enemy. This appears as an almost quantum leap in the concept of fire and maneuver.[52]

Henri's initial assaults on Rouen achieved no success and drew criticism for his choice of assault point.[53] He would like to have taken Rouen, but not at the expense of having to ruin it to do so.[54] Besides, once word was received that Parma was en route from the Netherlands Henri admitted to his ally that the siege had indeed been bait

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50 The "gastronomic keys" to Paris were Chartres, Rouen and the Marne while the "military keys" were Orleans and the Loire and Amiens and the Somme. Edward Armstrong, *French Wars of Religion: Their Political Aspects,* 2d ed. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1971), 117.

51 Lloyd, 173, and 175.

52 The "real secret of mobility as it was understood by the Great Captains...They moved faster because they could place their trust in the superior hitting power of relatively small forces," Marshall, 67.

53 By Sir Thomas Baskerville and by the Czech observer, Charles Zentin, who faulted his coordination and choice of assault on the fortress rather than the town. See Wernham, *After the Armada,* 365-6.

54 He refused to batter the town in order to take it. See Lloyd, 167.

again after all.[55] Leaving his infantry to maintain the siege, he turned to meet Parma on ground of his own choosing. The fox and the lion faced each other again.

Parma still moved with exceeding caution, always in defensive array. This campaign was unusual in that it was conducted in winter and so the moves could not even occur every day. Mayenne was to have supported this hedgehog advance with a screen of Leaguers but was late. The "information operation" within Paris had culminated in a delaying insurrection.

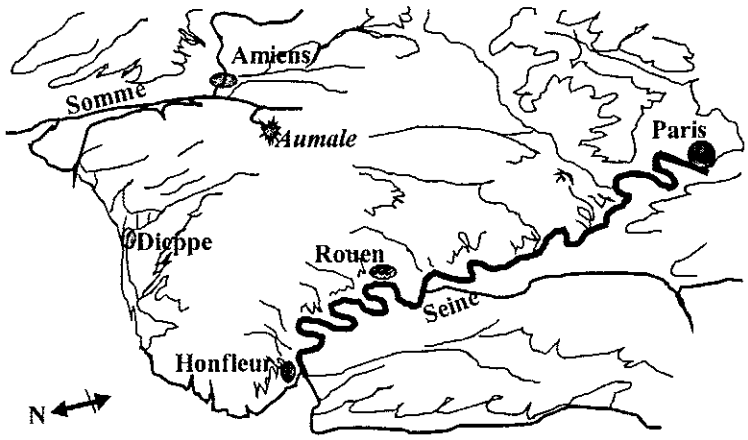

Figure 2. Normandy Theater: Rouen Campaign.
Map drawn in Microsoft Powerpoint 4.0 by author.

Henri confronted the eleven corps of the Spanish-Leaguer host[56] with his specialized corps of 7,000 cavalry and argoleiters. He set this force to harassing Parma's large defensive block of soldiery so that it could only maintain a snail's pace of three to four miles a day. He wanted his army to force this unwieldy block onto secondary routes and to eat or destroy all the food and fodder in its path so that the

55 First confirmed by Henri before the siege when he proposed a decisive engagement somewhere along the littoral, Lloyd, 112, subsequently confessed to Elizabeth's representative in March, 1592. Wernham, *After the Armada,* 387.

56 Variously reported but numbering by most sources about 19,000 Spanish and Swiss infantry, 2,000 Leaguer infantry, 4,000 Spanish cavalry, and 2400 Leaguer cavalry.

winter could take its toll. He watched Parma's actions closely so that any mis-step or vulnerability could immediately be transformed into a bloody nose for Spain. Parma consistently refused battle so long as it distracted him from the relief of Rouen. Henri announced that his cautious enemy "comes in fear". [57]

Henri's aggressive reconnaissance did finally result in an engagement as Parma's force attempted to cross the small River Bresle where the Aumale valley rises from the Somme. Henri came forward to examine Parma's dispositions in person and to draw Parma's cavalry onto a prepared hedgehog in a traditional horseman's tactic.[58] The availability of a large number of argoleiters added a new potential for rapid destruction to this ambush technique and made pursuit and impetuous rush even more risky. [59] Henri's horse soldiers pushed away the Leaguer light cavalry and approached Parma's crossing point. The Spanish cavalry sortied from the moving box of the defense and entered into a grand cavalry melee that encompassed the king of France. Henri was never as rash for rash's sake as his critics contend and this fight at Aumale stands as an example.[60] He was hard-pressed and in the thick of the fight not because of his love of adrenaline but because his usually competent intelligence had been unable to determine exactly what the wily Parma's line of advance was to be and because Henri's well-laid plan had been upset.[61] The standard procedure in Henri's reconnaissances-in-force involved the positioning of arquebusiers in defensive array behind the cavalry to permit a covered withdrawal and to severely punish enemy horse that pursued.[62] Unfortunately for Henri, a subordinate altered the positions he had selected and so he had to improvise from horseback. He led the rear-guard himself and was slightly wounded. Parma's comment that Henri had conducted a magnificent fighting withdrawal but should not have gotten himself into a position whereby he had to conduct one. These words must have haunted the Duke in the weeks that followed.

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57 Henri IV correspondence quoted in Love, 528.

58 Parthians being the main example but also certain Gauls as previously noted by Caesar and Kurds as noted by Xenophon.

59 As would be witnessed in its evolution through the Sioux destruction of the Fetterman command at Fort Phil Kearney in 1866 to the destruction of British armor by Africa Corps tanks and anti-tank guns working in concert in 1941-2.

60 Both sides heavily propagandized the fight at Aumale, Lloyd, 179, ft 27.

61 Both the Duke and the King were under-informed about each other's strengths and intentions despite a flurry of information gathering activities. See Lloyd, 177 and 183.

The fight at Aumale is also the source of the great controversy over Henri's status as an opportunistic cavalry commander. Parma stood accused by his Leaguer allies of not making sufficient effort to capture the king under such apparently favorable circumstances. Parma remarked that he had believed himself confronted by a captain of irregular cavalry rather than a king. This excuse for Parma's caution has been taken as a verdict on the limits of Henri's military ability.[63] In fact, the reverse is true. Parma's respect for Henri's capabilities is evident in his caution and in his strict reliance on the defensive formation. Parma, in no way underestimated Henri, but considered him a worthy enough adversary to take especial precautions. Even so, three weeks after Aumale, Henri at the head of 4,500 horsemen smashed Parma's over-extended vanguard and chased it for three miles. Both Parma and Mayenne came within an ace of capture. Such actions bred an unhealthy respect for Henri's capabilities among his less than fully united foes.

Parma continued his advance "with the army always in order of battle, never moving unless the weather was favorable, and all the ground in front well reconnoitered, and halting each afternoon in time to allow of his camping ground being entrenched". [64] Parma maintained his focus on Rouen. He could not afford to be drawn into a Parthian engagement with Henri, for given his reputation and that of the Army of Flanders, even the smallest of successes for the king would enhance his reputation in the European community and support his efforts to consolidate France. Parma's resolute combat avoidance and inexorable advance and the inability to force Rouen to capitulate made this the winter of Henri's discontent. Finally, Parma's movement toward Rouen ended when its garrison sortied and broke the siege on its own.[65]

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62 Love, 523-4 and 530-31.

63 Interestingly, although cavalry commander infers "mere" it can be seen as an accolade. Note Ardant du Picq's assertion "Great cavalry general's are rare" in his classic *Battle Studies: Ancient and Modern Battle,* trans. from 8 ed., Colonel John N. Greely and Major Robert C. Cotton (1920; reprinted in *Roots of Strategy*, Harrisburg PA: Stackpole 1987), Book 2, 209. Page citation is to the reprint.

64 Davila, quoted in Oman, 517.

65 Again, Biron was left in charge. Henri did appreciate a good subordinate when he found one though. The commander of the Rouen garrison was given a prestigious position in Henri's new order once he abandoned the League for the Royalist cause two years later.

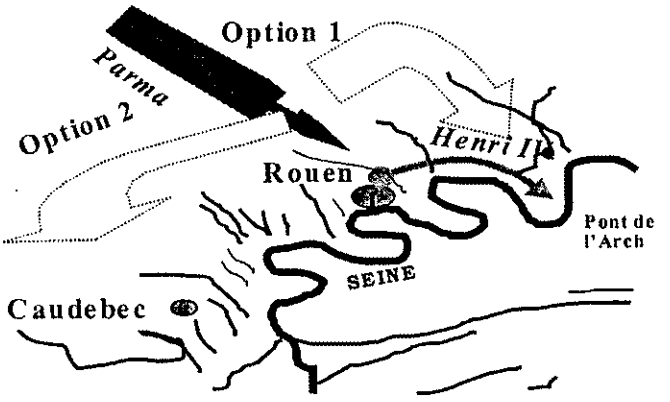

Figure 3. Parma's Options to either force battle on Henri IV (1) or to clear the Seine (2).
Map drawn in Microsoft Powerpoint 4.0 by author.

Parma's Leaguer allies continued into Rouen without him. They had been convinced by the interplay between Philip and Henri's information campaigns that once let in, the Spanish would never leave. Parma, believing his mission accomplished, turned back to capture a Royalist stronghold to his rear.

Henri quickly re-invested Rouen but with only the surviving infantry contingents, some arquebusiers and a few Dutch ships because his gendarmerie, seeing no further prospect of immediate action, had again dispersed.

Parma reacted to this opportunity and, having for the first time the mounted advantage, pushed rapidly back toward Rouen. Henri's covering forces were swept out of the way and his main force was obliged to step away from Rouen and into the loop formed by the Seine at Pont de l'Arche and Gouy. The Duke appeared to have pinned the king into a very difficult position wherein he could finally be destroyed. Parma seriously considered pursuing Henri into the loop but his Leaguer allies were more concerned with opening the Seine toward the sea ports and capturing the Royalist armory at Caudebec. The next decision was key. Henri had always functioned superbly when cornered and his unconventional forces had never been pinned down long enough to be destroyed. To pursue him into that wooded lowland was the high-risk

choice of another Coutras or Arques, whereas to relieve the stress on the Leaguer forts appeared to be the low risk-high reward option. Parma turned toward Caudebec.

Now it was Henri of Navarre's turn to up-tempo the campaign and to begin the turn inside the old veteran's decision cycle. His dispersed mobile forces flocked back to him and were put to harassing the Spanish cantonments and blocking the avenues of approach. Parma in losing the operational tempo that he had established in order to carry out the siege on Caudebec had seriously underestimated his opponent's recuperative abilities. Henri with an army of over 25,000 cut across Parma's line of communication and began pressing him into the bend of the Seine at Caudebec. He was about to achieve the "goal of every sixteenth century general -- confronting an enemy with the choice of hopeless battle or ultimate capitulation".[66] Parma, himself wounded, tried to block Henri's approach with his Leaguer cavalry but the fast moving Royalist forces, again personally led by their king, drove in the outposts and drew tight the drawstring of the bag. Parma had been pushed into exactly the situation for which he had criticized Henri.

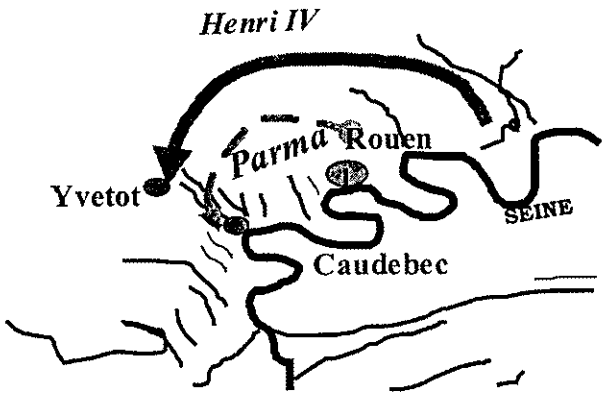

Figure 4: Henri IV severs Parma's lines of communication and pins him against the Seine. Map drawn in Microsoft Powerpoint 4.0 by author.

66 Jones, *Art of War*, 209.

Yet while the fox had cornered the old lion, he too had underestimated his opponent. Twenty years of campaigning in the inundated Low Countries had given Parma's army a profound understanding of water obstacles. Under cover of distracting maneuvers and night, Parma's engineers constructed a remarkable pontoon bridge that allowed the army to withdraw over the Seine and speed march to Paris and safety. The weather, all fog and rain, prevented Henri from maintaining sufficient eyes on the river to catch the operation before it achieved success and deprived him of sufficient mobility to catch the Spanish en route to Paris. Interestingly, the king's English contingent warned the Royalist force that Parma was escaping across the river well before the operation succeeded but rear-guard operations conducted by Parma's son convinced them otherwise.[67]

The two wily commanders had demonstrated the highest skills of operational warfare of the sixteenth century. Neither made irrecoverable mistakes and neither threw away their precious military resources in gambles. Their circumspection, comprehension of ends and means and tactical maturity balanced each other perfectly. Both claimed victory and historians have disputed the issue ever since. Parma died in 1592 sure of his tactical success but aware of the overall strategic disaster befalling Spain in the Netherlands as a result of his absences. Henri claimed victory and with better cause. Few Spanish troops remained on French soil, the League was on its last legs and he still had yet to be bested in the field. He claimed again to have chased the Spanish out of his kingdom.

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[67] Perhaps because the English had served in the Low Countries and many like Sir Roger Williams had served with Parma. This was not the only allied discrepancy. See Wernham, *After the Armada*, 393-4 n 14, and Lloyd, 186-7.

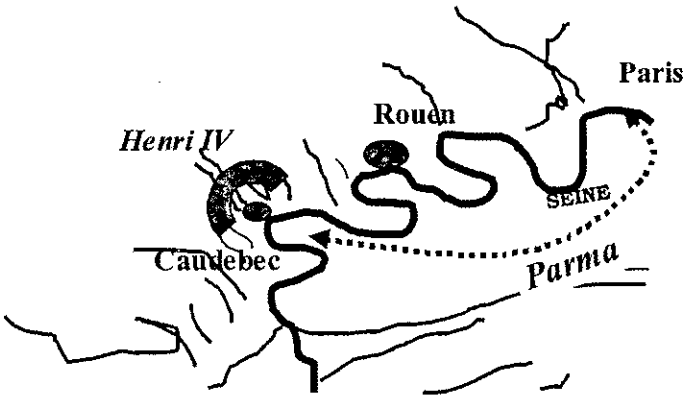

Figure 5: Parma escapes across a pontoon bridge and speeds to Paris.
Map drawn in Microsoft Powerpoint 4.0 by author.

KING CAMPAIGNER: WAR WITH SPAIN

There was no commander of the stature of Parma left to contest Henri's performance when Henri declared war on Spain. Thus his last open field campaign provided a demonstration of the maneuverist king at the top of his game in a campaign of vital significance to France, to Spain and to Europe.

Henri's favorite campaign took place against a mixed force of Leaguers and Spaniards in 1595 commanded by the Spanish governor of Milan, Luis de Velasco and the Duc de Mayenne. The Spanish-Leaguer force attempted to enter France through her back door from Italy in Franch-Compte. It was intercepted near the village of Fontaine-Française by royal cavalry and argoleiters. Henri's move toward this threat was criticized since it appeared to leave the vitals of France open to invasion along the more traditional routes used by Parma in the early 90's. Henri, however, remained very aware of that the strength of his claim to kingship lay in his ability to demonstrate Spanish impotence in French affairs. The Spanish army remained the central engine of Spanish influence in France and so it was this army that had to be his target no matter from where it appeared.

This slight battle near the Spanish Road established that what had begun before Paris and Rouen had been more influential in the shaping of modern Europe than the repulse of the 1588 Armada. It was the presence of Henri IV and his combat teams that decided the issue before real battle was joined. Velasco and Mayenne were thoroughly intimidated once they perceived that the unbeatable king commanded these hard-hitting mounted groups in person. The infantry-heavy Spanish still expected some type of decisive battle of attrition but Henri now had free reign to implement the archtypical battle of maneuver. He struck not at the hard "surfaces" of the enemy's pikes but at the "gaps" in his forces.[68] His target was not the enemy soldier but the enemy commander. The fundamentals of war *à la Huguenot* were translated to the running battle.

The constant, chaotic character of the actions and the presence of the king, confounded Velasco and convinced him that he was being drawn into a devastating envelopment. Despite Leaguer pleas, he withdrew from France. Mayenne, dispirited, withdrew from active participation in the war and Henri consolidated the formerly troublesome area.[69] The battle had been another close personal call for Henri who had been forced to commit his personal retinue to combat yet again to pull a subordinate's chestnuts from the fire.[70] Nevertheless he was immensely pleased with the outcome and rated it with Coutras, Ivry and Arques as his greatest triumphs.

His confidence in his own military capability was at an all time high and might have led to a type of Napoleonic over-reach if sufficient resources had been available. However, his absolution victory in the Vatican and the institution of a more centralized war effort were offset by Spain stealing a march on Henri's legacy by capturing the access points to north-eastern France. Spanish armies, still effective and efficient, had captured Cambrai in 1595 and Calais in 1596 but it was the brilliant manner of their

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68 For an overview of the concept of 'surfaces" and "gaps", see USMC *Warfighting,* 95-6.

69 Henri Drouot, *Mayenne et La Bourgogne: Etude sur la Ligue (1587-1596),* Vol 2 *(* Paris: Auguste Picard, 1937), , 422-24; Henri to his sister and to M. Harambure, in Henri IV, *Lettres d"Amour et de Guerre du Roi Henri IV,* ed. And comp. André Lamandé (Pau: L'Imprimerie Graphique Marrimpouey Successeurs, 1928. Reprint, Lys, Arudy: Éditions D'Utovie, 1987) 149-151; and Davila, Book 14, 1348-1353.

70 Biron again, an irony of Henri's military career, for within a few years he would be forced to order Biron executed for treason.

capture of the depot city of Amiens by *coup de main* in 1597 that threatened, for the last time, the throne of Henri IV.[71]

For once, the king found himself reacting to an enemy's initiative and produced, at great cost, a campaign to recapture these access points. Amiens especially was critical to the future security of the northeast and to his crown. Henri acknowledged his reversion from king-strategist to king-campaigner in the coming fight with his famous remark "so much for the king of France, it is time again for the king of Navarre".

Loss at Amiens could still have derailed Henri's monarchy for it was not only central to the frontier defense of France and a key depot, but it was also a key trading center and a psychological center of recidivist Leaguers. Henri overcame desertion by his Huguenots and a power play of the *Parlement* in the campaign to win back Amiens. He was not at his best during this phase of the war for his kingly plate was now full. However, he remained able to understand the flow of the transitions occurring in his society and the deep relationship between peace, war and campaign success. He knew that Amiens was crucial to the perception of France and Europe even if his opponents only saw its geographic value. It was central to defense of the heartland and it was his launch area for offensive operations into the Low Countries.

Henri was conscious of die-hard Leaguist opinion that he was constrained as a king by a cheaply earned reputation as a "civil war" commander who had not defeated Parma outright and by his lenient policy that allowed key burgers like those at Amiens to limit his strategic capabilities.[72] He pulled out all stops to mount an off-season expedition against the Spanish garrison before Philip and ungainly Spain could consolidate or reinforce. He recaptured the town within the year with great fanfare and then turned its recapture to his advantage by using overt loyalty and patriotism to reconfigure both the town's urban power base and the financial mechanisms of the state. The *Parlement* of Paris would find disappointing its monarch much more difficult in future.[73]

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71 For a complete description of the happenings in the pro-League city Amiens before and after the war and the kingdom-wide impact of Henri's approach to this strategic city, see Finley-Croswhite, especially Chapter 2.

72 Davila, Book 15, 1447 supports these "popular rumors".

73 Greengrass, 129-131

Henri IV proved to be an extremely capable campaigner despite criticism of the match of his battlefield successes to his assumed strategy. Just as it is almost impossible to fault the tactical performance of a commander who never lost a battle, so it is as difficult to fault a campaign commander who never ended a campaign in a worse strategic position than that in which he began. Henri's tactical expertise and reputation were such a profound influence in his campaigning that his opponents, even the great Duke of Parma, were severely restricted in their courses of action. This limitation allowed Henri to dominate affairs and to set the tempo of his campaigns to the point whereby no opponent could stay the course with him.

CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

Henri of Navarre was educated in both traditions of warfare in France: the chivalric tradition of leadership and arms and the more scientific method of the *condottiere*. He proved capable of synthesizing the values and style of the old, almost feudal, school of nobility that prized heroic leaders and the artistry of war with the new, scientific school of war that valued technology and formation discipline.

His mastery of the early modern battlefield and his retention of chivalric character bound to him his soldiers, noble, professional and confessional and provided a basis for the political acumen and statesmanship that would similarly bind the Bourbons, the Huguenots and eventually France. This remarkable achievement occurred in the face of the paradox of civil war where the requirements of keeping an effective force together were directly opposed to the requirements for uniting a realm. Henri's military experience was accumulated in an age of wherein armies consisted of purchased expertise and required plunder for pay. War was meant to pay for war. Similarly, religious-ethnic-cultural xenophobia and communal massacre were both endemic and epidemic. The resulting acts of licentious soldiery and the vengeful actions of zealots were not conductive to securing a willing dominion. Henri's superb coordination skills for combat and his dynamic, intuitive campaigning ability were specific tools that were employed in attaining Henri's higher level strategic vision of consolidating his realm. The characteristics he demonstrated for his military success were directly related to those that he needed to secure a future for France. His charismatic, chivalric and technologically proficient leadership was exactly the type needed for his time.

It has been shown that Henri's success would not have been particularly lasting had it not been tempered by his Navarese ability to "make do". Henri, reputedly indefatigable, nevertheless expended a tremendous amount of time and effort in making his military means capable of achieving his strategic ends. His armies were "high-tech" valuable resources that could not be easily replaced if dissipated in careless battle, enfeebled in extended siege or disaffected by lack of progress. They were expensive and required constant encouragement, moral and fiscal, to stay in the field.

Despite Henri's pose as a dashing cavalier, he proved a capable organizer, administrator and manager for his complex enterprises.

Henri's education, experience and character made him a soldier for his age. He was socially and militarily positioned to provide his subjects with a relatively secure future

The rediscovery of the importance of pattern recognition in battlefield and campaign success provides some access to the reasons for the continued success of Henri IV. He orchestrated the evolving tactical systems available to him into a force capable of exceedingly rapid maneuver and significant striking power. In this evolution he anticipated the now famous reforms of both Maurice of Nassau and Gustavus Adolphus. His personal ability to employ his forces as effective combat teams ensured a Bourbon throne and earned him a strong personal reputation for battlefield dominance. He used this reputation as a form of deterrence that provided both a security guarantee for his subjects and a king's stick to balance the carrot of his calculated clemency.

Henri's techniques of maneuver warfare in a time of siegecraft are instructive to both practitioners of modern mobile warfare and to the historian wishing to see beyond the strictures of formalized battle. His dualistic abilities to meld tactical innovation and social manipulation overcame the paradox of rapid technical change and reactionary social ideology to produce a war-ending combination. His abilities may not have been unique, but they provide an outstanding example of the practice of a form of holistic warfare that was to become rare in the centuries of discretely military, rationalized campaigns that followed. Henri's campaigning effectiveness can be measured by the fact that his supporting information manipulation efforts are still bearing fruit some four hundred years later.

Henri's strategic vision was founded upon a clear understanding of the requirements for security and consolidation. The program he employed was evolutionary and opportunistic rather than planned, but nevertheless was always directed at reinforcing the throne. As he became Henri IV, King of France and Navarre, he ensured that he was always perceived as kingly, legitimate and militarily indestructible. This perception was presented in print, propaganda, diplomacy, manifesto and abjuration in a comprehensive campaign for information dominance.

The king who thus mastered the sword and the pen ended debilitating civil and social war that had raged for almost all of his life. He displayed sufficient kingly strategic insight to enable him to grapple both with the savage little wars of peace and often concurrently, with an asymmetrical war against Spain, the greatest power in Europe. He re-established the French frontiers, French society, French law and French religion that successfully blocked Spanish domination of Europe and not inconsequentially therefore ensured that the struggles for Dutch independence and English sovereignty could ultimately prove successful.

Although analogy between Henri and his times and the late twentieth century may be too often strained there are sufficient social and military parallels to provide a keen appreciation of one who mastered military art and science in an era of constant change, of rapid evolution and in a complex arena of intramural and international strife. It also becomes apparent that only a Great Captain could emerge from such apparent chaos having never been bested in war, beaten in battle or bettered in campaign.

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