

CORBENY

L'AILETTE

CRAONNELLE

HURTEBISE

PLATEAU DE CRAONNE

LE MOULIN DE VAUCLAIR

OULCHE LA VALLÉE FOULON

# CRAONNE

1814-2014

L'ÉVÈNEMENT

Dear fellow re-enactors,

I'm pleased to hereby sending you the official invitation to the bicentennial anniversary of the Battle of Craonne on behalf of the Craonne Organizing Committee.

This event will take place during the weekend of **8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2014**.

## Historical context :

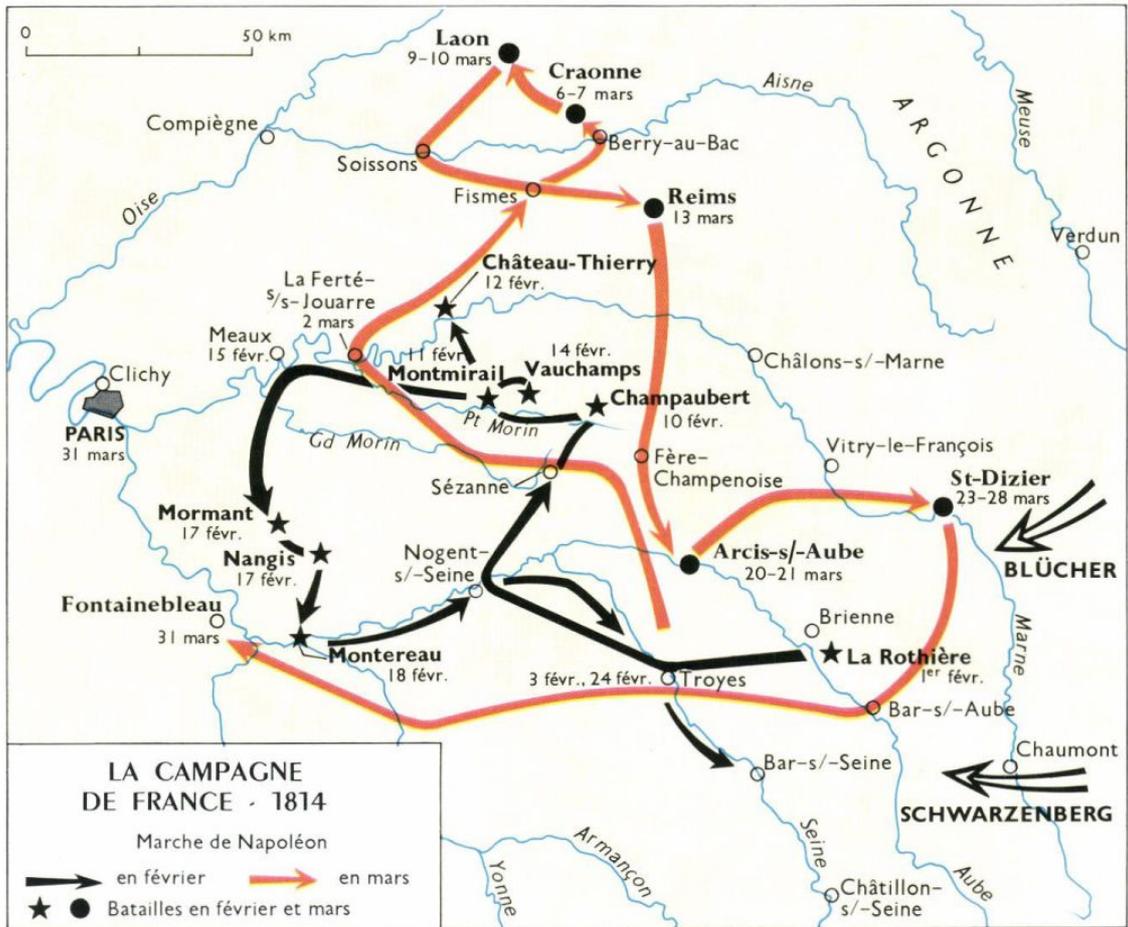
1814, Campaign of France. After the furious battle of Leipzig, the Allied army has managed to push the French Imperial army back into France's natural frontiers. The 1813 Freiheitskriege has brought the Prussians, Russians and Austrians onto French soil. Marshal Blücher leads the Silesian army, one of the 4 invading Allied armies, on the road to Paris. Blücher has sworn to put an end to Napoleon's hegemony now that he had the chance to do so.

Napoleon is recovering from his earlier losses suffered during the 1812 campaign and the 1813 campaign, but also from the Spanish mousetrap of the Peninsular war. He still have sufficient forces at hand however to sustain another campaign against the Allied coalition and the moral of his troops is good, since the French soldier is fighting for the defence of his home... back again. Napoleon has achieved a number of brilliant fighting combinations against Schwarzenberg and his Austrian army. Meanwhile Blücher rushes to Paris. Napoleon's marshals seem incapable of stopping him.

This is the time that Napoleon chooses to make his last attempt to save Paris. He turns his back to Schwarzenberg's army and manoeuvres smoothly against Blücher's exposed flank. But Soissons fails to deny its access to the Silesian army, and Marmont and Mortier fail to recover the city by force. Napoleon needs to reassess his strategy. He turns swiftly the Silesian army's left flank, forces his way at Berry-au-Bac and pins down the Russian-Prussian army of Blücher on the plateau of Craonne. Napoleon's 37.000 troops strikes Vorontsov's corps on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March 1814. Napoleon's aim is to pin the Allies in a frontal attack while launching [Marshal Ney](#) in a flanking manoeuvre. The coordination of the combined French movements is poorly timed. Consequently Ney not only suffers heavy casualties, but the Allies manage to extricate themselves from a sticky situation. Craonne costs Blücher 5.000 casualties, while Napoleon loses some 5.400 men.

It's winter and the soldiers of the Silesian army are suffering from the cold amid a hostile country. They know that Napoleon is out there, with a small army of poorly trained Marie-Louises, but with a solid reputation and a winning mood. He's ready to strike anytime, anywhere...

It will cost the Allies one more month and several battles before entering Paris on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 1814.



## Invitation :

The Craonne Organizing Committee aims at remembering this page of history by re-enacting it and commemorating the soldiers of all nations who fought in Craonne for the sake of their leaders. Since 2011, the Craonne event is gaining increasing interest from the re-enactment society. The 2014 bicentennial anniversary of the battle will be celebrated in the same spirit of the previous editions, based on the principles of Living History, or living the history by experience.

**Your regiment is invited to attend this event. Please fill-in and return the enclosed registration document to the attention of [gontransoumoy@yahoo.fr](mailto:gontransoumoy@yahoo.fr) after having carefully read and subscribed to the recommendations below.** We thank you in advance for your support and attendance to the bicentennial anniversary of the Battle of Craonne.

### Programme :

Friday 7/03/2014 : participants arrival as from 16 :00h

Saturday 8/03/2014 : Living History day

- Morning : winter drill and scouting patrols
- Noon : skirmishing combats around Hurtebise
- Afternoon : battle in the fields of Craonne
- Evening : rear-guard combat at Vieux Craonne
- Night : guard pickets and night patrols

Sunday 9/03/2014 : commemoration day

- Morning : demonstration battle on the hill of the Plateau de Californie
- Noon : inauguration of a bicentennial memorial and cocktail offered by the Mayor at the town hall
- 14:00 : dismantling of the camp

### Participation conditions and recommendations :

A retribution of 50€ per soldier as a compensation for the travelling costs will be remitted to each regiment after the event on the basis of a presence list.

The organization will provide the gun powder, straw, wood and drinkable water for the weekend. The participants will have to provide for their own food. A small commerce of food and beverage will be run by the regimental vivandieres as they were running 200 years ago.

The invited regiments that want to attend the Craonne event shall be properly insured for the liability of their members. **The sole registration to the event will serve as sufficient proof of declaration in good faith that the regiment complies with this condition.** The participants undertake – and each regimental responsible will provide that his men individually undertakes – to strictly comply with all

best practice security measures when manipulating fire arms and bladed weapons as reasonable accountable fellow re-enactors would, during the entire weekend.

The participants to the bicentennial anniversary of Craonne **undertake to show all the due respect for a place that serves as sanctuary for the casualties of both the battle of Craonne and World War 1**. Craonne today is still listed as « red zone », meaning that thousands of soldiers' corpses and tons of unexploded shells and ammunition remain buried under the surface. Let's honour these braves that fought and died for the defence of the ideals of their time.

The participants undertake to observe a **military discipline** that goes along with the military passion we all share in re-enacting a 19th century army in campaign. **Every regiment will recognize the authority of the chain of command that will be assigned to it by the organization and undertakes to obey to its orders in good fellowship.**

The Craonne Organizing Committee strongly recommends to comply with the 1814 dress code. Each regiment will be representing Russian, Prussian or German units and will avoid any anachronism with the re-enacted period and event, either in its outfit or in its behaviour.

Eventually, may we insist on a prudent approach when evaluating your regiment's strength when registering, to avoid overestimating the aggregated Allied forces in the setup of the scenarios for the weekend. Please, only register for a realistic number of men, you are pretty confident that will show up. Only the participants that will satisfy the above conditions will be allowed to participate to the Craonne event.

The Craonne Organizing Committee wishes to thank you for your interest and support for the commemoration of the Battle of Craonne. If today Craonne's sacrifices aren't forgotten, its thanks to you ! ... and then perhaps, these sacrifices were not vain. Let us meet in Craonne on the 8th and 9th of Mars 2014 ! We count on you !

Craonne Organizing Committee.





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## REGISTRATION DOCUMENT BICENTENNIAL OF CRAONNE 2014

Please, fill-in this registration file and return it to the attention of : [gontransoumoy@yahoo.fr](mailto:gontransoumoy@yahoo.fr)

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**Regiment's name :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact person/responsible :**

Name & surname : \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address : \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number : \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of participants :**

Infantry men in arms : \_\_\_\_\_

Mounted cavalry men : \_\_\_\_\_

Other : \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the officer/under-officer in charge : \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of tents (size) :** \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby formally declare on behalf of the regiment I represent, that the regiment complies with the insurance and security undertakings for its members as explicitly recommended in the Craonne event invitation.**

**Name, date & signature :** \_\_\_\_\_