Patterns of Insurrection

In the last decade of the eighteenth century there were risings in the western provinces of France against the authority of the revolutionary government in Paris. They were spread over seven years, with periods of uneasy peace, from 10 March, 1793, to 18 February, 1800. The risings in Brittany had characteristics of their own. Brittany, before the Revolution, was a semi-autonomous province bound to the French crown by the treaty of 1532. The Bretons, who had rebelled in 1675 against a new form of taxation, stamped paper, were not going to put up with the conscription of their young men, decreed by the National Convention on 23 February, 1793, and, being an intensely religious people, they stood by their refractory or non-juring priests who refused to submit to the Civil Constitution of the clergy (12 July, 1790).

The age-old antagonism between town and country was given fresh vigour as townspeople were mostly republican in sympathy and the National Guard was recruited among them. New landowners who had acquired biens nationaux, the property of the church or of émigrés, also were objects of hatred. It would be hopeless to attempt to draw a parallel between the Vendéens or Breton risings and the Wexford rising, but they had points in common, such as spectacular successes in the capture of towns, and these risings generated unusual leaders. Fathers John and Michael Murphy have their counterparts in Cathelineau, a mason turned carrier, and Stofflet, a gamekeeper, in Vendée, and in Cadoudal, a notary’s clerk, and Guillelmet and Mercier, both small farmers, in Brittany. The greatest difference between these risings is that Brittany, France’s Celtic Catholic bulwark, received more help from Protestant England than Ireland did from Republican France. It had taken generals such as Hoche, Marceau and Humbert to break the Vendéens in 1795, and in 1800, one of the men who were to force Cadoudal to come to terms was an Irishman, Oliver Harty, major-general in the armies of the French Republic, one and indivisible.

An Irish Officer in the French Service

Oliver Harty was born on 2 December, 1746, at Aney or Knockainey in the barony of Small County in Co. Limerick. He was the son of Thomas Harty and Margaret Shee. He joined the regiment of Clare (later Berwick) as a cadet on 16 September, 1762, when under sixteen. He served in the Ile de France (Mauritius)
and the Ile Bourbon (Réunion) in 1771 and 1772, and was promoted sub-lieutenant on 20 July, 1774, a slow start in what was to be a reasonably successful career. He was second-captain of grenadiers and a knight of Saint Louis at the time of the Revolution. A lieutenant-colonel of the regiment of Berwick on 25 July, 1791, he was promoted colonel on 13 December, 1792, and major-general on 15 May, 1793. Harty had undoubtedly embraced the new ideas. When serving under Major-General Kellermann in Alsace in 1791, he denounced the ‘incivism’ of most of the officers of the regiment when they emigrated, preserved the colours and the regimental crest and prevented most of the regiment from going over to the enemy. He then volunteered for service in Santo Domingo, where he avenged Governor Rouxel de Blanchelande’s defeat at Les Platos, and was appointed provisional governor of the southern province. Having fallen foul of Commissioner Polverel, he was accused in his turn of incivism, imprisoned for seventy days and sent back to France, which he only reached with an impaired health after being captured and imprisoned by the British in Bermuda, from which he managed to escape to Charleston. Back in France, his conduct was vindicated, his rank was restored to him (18 May, 1795) and he was employed in the armée des Côtes de Cherbourg, in the armée des Côtes de l'Océan, was for a short time commandant of Mortagne in Normandy and took part in the Bantry Bay expedition, in which he commanded the Foreign Brigade (the skeleton regiments of Lee, O'Meara, Feredut and Lachâtre). After Rear-Admiral Bouvet had left the bay in a hurry, Harty, as senior general officer present, presided over ‘a sort of council of war’ on the Indomptable with generals Humbert and Chérin and other officers, including Adjutant-Général Smith, better known as Wolfe Tone. Weather conditions being hopeless, the decision was taken to leave the bay and Harty narrowly escaped drowning when returning to his ship, L'Étoile. The defeat of Commodore Bompard’s squadron off the coast of Donegal on 12 October, 1798, put an end to French attempts to land in Ireland and the left wing of the Armée d'Angleterre under General Kilmaine was stationed in Normandy, Brittany and Vendée. Harty was appointed commandant of the Morbihan sub-division, with headquarters in Vannes, and took over there from Colonel Bonte in the last decade of Thermidor year seven of the Republic (8-17 August, 1799). He was fifty-three years old at the time, a handsome man slightly over five feet ten, fair-haired, blue-eyed with an aquiline nose. He was a modest man but not lacking in assurance. To quote him: ‘As to my abilities, allow me to say they are solely military ... My successful record warrants that I can usefully serve the Nation.’ He definitely was a fighting general, not a political creature, though he enjoyed the goodwill of Lieutenant-General Henry Clarke.

The Terrain

The first division of the Armée d'Angleterre occupied the thirteenth military division (or district) which covered the four départements of Côtes-du-Nord, Finistère, Ille-et-Vilaine and Morbihan, or most of the former province of Brittany. The gulf known in Breton as Mor Bihan (Little Sea) gave its name to the département which occupies most of that part of Lower Brittany known as Bro Erec. Its area is 2,738 square miles and there is a fair-sized coastline with the Quiberon peninsula, a very vulnerable point, and such deep indentations as the estuaries of the Blavet, Etel, Crach and Penerf rivers, to say nothing of the gulf of Morbihan, studded with islands, the largest of which are Arz, Ile-aux-Moines, Boëdic, Tascon and Gavrinis, famous for its tumulus. Off the coast, there are the islands of Groix, Belle-Ile-en-Mer, Houat and Hoedic, which had to be heavily garrisoned at the time, as the threat of further British landings could not be neglected. About one-quarter of the area of Morbihan is unproductive heath dotted with several large forests, and after the unsuccessful Chouan attack on Vannes in October, 1799, Harty could point out that not only were there sixteen...
were an organized force with their own hierarchy. Harty had referred to them as brigands, or, with more restraint, as malcontents, but they were an organized force with their own hierarchy. Harty had to deal with eight legions of the Catholic and Royal army under Major-General Georges Cadoudal, Knight of Saint Louis. His top-ranking officers held commissions dated from Edinburgh and signed by H.R.H. the Count of Artois. A legion would nominally be the equivalent of a republican demi-brigade, viz. about 3,000 men. Each parish supplied a company of varying strength. There is almost general agreement that Cadoudal had 18,500 foot and a more doubtful 200 horse. Whenever higher figures are given, the reason often is that civilian authorities increased the numbers of the enemy to get the government to send more troops to Brittany. Thus Cadoudal has been credited with 30,000 troops. That seems improbable, even taking into account the fact that a lot of recruiting had been going on. Harty reported that Chouan 'embaucheurs' (recruiters) were active. How willing the recruits were is a matter open to debate. Parents would encourage their sons to join and then would go and complain to the authorities. On 3 December, 1799, Harty estimated there were between twelve and fifteen thousand Chouans in Morbihan, which seems an underestimation.

Cadoudal was a formidable adversary. Though of peasant stock, he had experience in irregular warfare. And he had experience too. He had joined the émigrés at Quiberon in June, 1795, and as the republicans were bottling up the troops on the peninsula, Cadoudal, under the orders of the Chevalier de Tinténiac, had sailed with 'the red army', three thousand five hundred Chouans and a hundred men of Loyal Emigrant, from Quiberon to Suscinio Bay (ten and a half miles south of Vannes). They were to have taken the republicans in the rear but had been sent on a wild goose chase to Saint-Brieuc. Tinténiac had been killed and Cadoudal had brought his 'red army' back to Morbihan. The red coats supplied by the British had given this army its name. In June, 1796, Cadoudal had submitted to General Hoche. His Chouans were officially disarmed, though few weapons were handed in. Cadoudal exercised almost absolute power over his followers. Harty could of course have had deserters shot in the territory he controlled. Cadoudal could issue orders forbidding 'any young man under forty' to get married (and thus avoid being enrolled in a Chouan legion) and did so on 13 November, 1799.

In 1798, Cadoudal had been deputed to England to lay before the Count of Artois the wishes and grievances of the royalists. It was still hoped that the count could be prevailed on to land in France and lead the royalist armies. Then, on 15 September, 1799, royalist leaders met at the Chateau de la Jonchère near Pouancé in Anjou (Maine-et-Loire) to consider reopening hostilities. Some leaders were irresolute. Cadoudal's determination brought the question to a decision: on 15 October, 1799, the Catholic and royal army would strike.

A Hostile Country

The first thing that would strike a newcomer to Morbihan was the fact that there might be a republican administration and republican troops but the writ of the republic did not run far outside Vannes. Harty, reporting that the stage-coach from Nantes to Lorient had been held up near La Roche-Bernard by fifty brigands, pointed out that 'the Chouan hordes have so many friends, so many spies, in the country that they will always be warned in time of the movements of the troops that are seeking them,' besides which they had the means of scattering and hiding in the houses of the country people 'who either out of fear or by design often give them a safe asylum.' If the Chouans were informed of the moves of the republicans, the surprise was not true. 'The inhabitants are so apathetic or illdisposed that one cannot draw from them the slightest notion. They will not admit the protection they give the murderers because most of them are their neighbours'.
Harty's Troops

Harty's force was small compared with Cadoudal's. Shortly before the Chouan attack on Vannes, it comprised 7,722 men (4,387 infantry, 955 artillery and 380 cavalry) as well as with troops stationed at other locations. Orders issued on the thirteenth military division show that it was out of the case that a man or a small party should be allowed out of a town. Men leaving hospital were to wait until they could join a column.286

Routine in Vannes

The first thing Harty did when he arrived in Vannes was to ask for four or five hundred men and he did not want conscripts unless they were well trained. He also reported that the people of Morbihan were disaffected.286 His reports show that he was kept busy. There were futile incidents and more alarming ones, too. A small band of Chouans attacked the town of Guer (thirty-six miles north-east of Vannes) in an unsettled area and the national guards had not done their duty. Fifteen Chouans attacked the gendarmerie barracks at Rochefort-en-Terre (twenty-one miles east of Vannes).287 A party of 16 men were assisting in collecting taxes near Caden (almost twenty-two miles east of Vannes). They were attacked by two hundred Chouans and eight soldiers were reported missing.288 A flying column of thirty-four men of the 58th and five gendarmes, under Captain Jounay, left Malestroit (twenty-two miles north-east of Vannes) and got involved with a large party of Chouans. After a fight that lasted three quarters of an hour, the republicans had to retreat the Malestroit.289 On 29 September, Harty was unpleasantly reminded that the gulf of Morbihan lay within his province. A sergeant and two privates of the 81st were kept by armed men disguised as sailors at the ferry of Saint-Armel (five miles south-east of Vannes) at the mouth of the gulf of Morbihan. troopers.290

On 1 October, Taponier arrived with four hundred men and finally everyone was marched off to Muzillac (fourteen and a half miles south-east of Vannes) and the Abbaye de Prieures where the Chouans were supposed to have hidden arms. No arms were found, and Taponier had once more interfered with Harty's plans.290
Religion played an important part in the revolt as the royalists fought to preserve the old order.

where the ambush had taken place with a party of gendarmes, cavalry and infantry. Two other parties were sent to the right and to the left of the road and Colonel Bonet searched the whole area with infantry and chasseurs until the following day.  

The Ides of October

On 15 October, 1799, the Chouans struck. There had been a recent royalist uprising in south-west France. It had lasted from 4 to 20 August, but it did not shake the government as the risings in western France did. Bourmont captured Le Mans on 15 October. Nantes fell to Chatillon and Andigné on the 20th. Naturally those cities were quickly evacuated, but republicans had suffered a bad blow and arms, ammunition, stores and funds were seized by the victorious royalists. Meanwhile, Harty was reporting that seven young men of the Josselin flying column had been disarmed and gaoled for insubordination (Josselin is twenty-six miles north-east of Vannes). One hundred young men at Arradon and Baden (respectively three and three-quarters and eight miles south-west of Vannes) were said to be about to join the Chouans, and Harty sent parties to scour the countryside and prevent them from doing so. No doubt alarmed by what was happening in Morbihan, General Michaud, temporary c-in-c. of the armée d'Angleterre, had suggested to the Minister for War that two battalions of the 52nd, occupying Belle-Île with part of the 82nd, should be brought back to the mainland. 'For several years, they have been sunk in boredom . . . and burn to measure their strength against the enemy.' These troops would be replaced by the 81st, weakened by two expeditions to Ireland and recently brought up to a strength of 1,500 men with conscripts who needed training.  

The minister not only approved this measure, but informed the new commander of the armée d'Angleterre, General Hédouville, that he was sending him three demi-brigades withdrawn from Holland, the 22nd, 51st and 72nd.  

Harty had already ordered part of the 52nd in Lorient and Quiberon to come to Vannes, and three companies of the 82nd on Belle-Île to Quiberon, that on 22 October before any ministerial decision had been taken.  

Isolated as he was in Morbihan, it was just as well that he was not afraid of acting on his own initiative.

The Attack on Vannes

On 26 October, between 5 and 6 a.m., Vannes was attacked by Cadoudal's Chouans whose strength is not known. They were men of the 2nd., or Auray, legion. They tried to enter the town by the Rennes and Auray 'barriery' (where dues on goods entering the town were paid). At the Auray gate, they hoped to use the method that had been successful at Nantes, that of charging in a body, but the garrison was called to arms and repulsed the Chouans, who fled, losing three or four men whose bodies were found in fields near the Auray road. Not a man of the garrison was wounded, only an unfortunate exciseman at the Rennes gate was 'horribly maltreated with bayonets'.  

A captain and two gendarmes effected a reconnaissance and came under the fire of a group of sixty men who formed the advance guard of a large band. Harty commented on the fact that the brigands fired very badly, as twenty shots were fired at the gendarmes at short range without hitting them. The Chouans that had attacked the Auray gate split up into several bands, watched by parties of troops, as they were expected to return to the charge, but at this point the three companies of the 52nd from Lorient appeared and the Chouans vanished. Harty feared lest they should attack small garrisons and he was withdrawing them, except those along the coast, and concentrating them in the main towns. The largest of these garrisons was forty-nine men and the smallest fourteen.  

Harty's report is very factual and he sounds unperturbed. Patently Cadoudal had failed to catch the defenders napping and when the drums had beaten for action, he knew his enterprise was hopeless. Authors with Chouan sympathies say that the attack on Vannes was a feint. Is it because it failed? None of the other Chouan attacks or raids were feints. The fighting spirit that Harty had instilled in his troops seems to be the answer. In a recent book,
M. Chiappe, a great admirer of Cadoudal, wrote: 'The fight at Vannes was a failure. Although Georges attacked simultaneously by the Auray, Rennes and Nantes roads, Major Surville's infantry and Captain Michelet's gendarmes were not taken by surprise. In the face of an opposition that only cannon could have broken down, Georges limited his attempt to an exchange of musketry and withdrew his men before retiring to Callac. That seems a proper appreciation of what happened at Vannes. One of the consequences of this attack was that on 1 November, General Michaud had martial law declared in Vannes. His letter to General Taponier sheds light on the state of communications in Brittany. 'I have had no news from you for a long time. I am very surprised at your silence and worried by it."

The attack on Vannes was duly reported in Le Moniteur and it is to be hoped that Harty's sense of humour did not fail him when he read the following account: The town of Vannes... has again given splendid proofs of its devotion to the sacred cause of liberty. On the 26th of last month, towards seven o'clock in the morning, the Chouans, divided into two columns, attacked the town. The column coming by the Lorient road was about 1,000 strong, the one which was attacking by the Rennes road was far more numerous. The central administration and the municipal administration... had the alarm sounded. The citizens of the town, the gendarmes and the troops of the line, everyone rushed to arms... These republicans advanced against the enemy and had soon put the brigands to flight, several of whom were left dead on the field. The Republic has only to regret, on this glorious day, the loss of one of its friends, Citizen Lepelletier, who received two bayonet thrusts and a sword cut. He leaves a widow and a large number of children who will have some rights to national charity. Great tribute is to be paid to the zeal and generous devotion of the administrators, of all public functionaries and to all the national guards of Vannes. They were well supported by General Harty..."

**Morbihan at War**

The same day, 26 October, at 4 a.m., three hundred Chouans of the fourth legion, under Colonel Louis de Sol de Grisolles, a former naval officer, captured La Roche-Bernard. A soldier and a civilian were killed, the town-major was wounded. The garrison of 70 men were disarmed and received passports to return home as prisoners of the royal army of Brittany. Only two returned to their unit (the 81st) and three were arrested at Muzillac. The Chouans seized public funds and the arms of the garrison and the flying column and plundered a draper's shop. Harty considered that the garrison was to blame for being taken by surprise, as the town was captured in five minutes." The safety of La Roche-Bernard was a particular headache for Harty. The town is in the south-eastern part of Morbihan, on the southern bank of the Vilaine. It is twenty-five and a half miles from Vannes and forty-three and a half from Nantes. General Grigny, the commandant of Loire-Atlantique, was a hard-pressed man, and Harty had to supply escorts for convays from La Roche-Bernard to Nantes, and while his men were marching eighty-seven miles to Nantes and back they were not keeping down the Chouannerie in Morbihan. Harty however had some small successes. On the night of 25-26 October, he had sent Captain Amiot with 75 men from Auray and Major Penant with 70 from Vannes to Grand-Champ (ten miles N.N.W. of Vannes). At Plumergat (three and three quarter miles E.S.E. of Grand-Champ). Amiot had dispersed a band of Chouans, after an exchange of musketry that lasted for several hours, without losing a man. Penant had dispersed a gathering of Chouans at Le Moustoir near Meucon (five miles north of Vannes)."

At 2 a.m. on 27 October, Major General Pierre Mercier, known as Mercier-la-Vendée, who commanded the third, or Vannes, legion, and the Chevalier de Saint-Regeant, colonel of the 5th legion, with 700 men, captured Saint-Brieuc in Cotes-du-Nord. It was unkindly rumoured that the republican general Casabianca slept through the attack. Among other booty, the Chouans took sixty horses away with them to mount their cavalry.

Harty was tireless. He went on withdrawing small garrisons and concentrating them in Vannes, Ploemel, Auray and Hennebont and issued orders..."
presence felt. He had taken fifteen prisoners, who were threatened and struck as they were marched through the village. Cadoual offered to enrol them. 'Their refusal . . . was however not general.' The men he freed had to undertake not to serve against him for a year 'under penalty of being hanged'. Guillemin was resplendent with a white sash, white plumes in his hat and the ribbon of a grand cross of Saint Louis, which he was not entitled to wear. Cadoual was more modestly clad in a brown coat and was armed with a double-barrelled musket. On 7 November, seven wounded men of the 77th arrived in Vannes and were sent to hospital. A cartload of lead also arrived from Pontivy, with an escort of fifty men. The driver would have gone on to Nantes, but Harty gave him the choice of either going on by boat or waiting in Vannes till he could supply a proper escort. That was another aspect of the war. Harty had no means of fighting Chouans, but he had means of fighting them. He kept press gang men to carry despatches, and of course from them. Although a feeling of grim humour crept into his report 'We would in the long run mount a good cavalry for the Chouans, at the expense of ours.',\(^{39}\) Meanwhile, Sol de Grissoles had captured Redon, in Ille-et-Vilaine. The commandant, Captain Gely, had to surrender. The arsenal was plundered and it contained a large quantity of stores, including twenty-five 'milliers' (twelve tons) of gunpowder. The town had been taken on 10 November, and General Gency, the commandant of Ille-et-Vilaine, was only able to recapture it on the 14th. This fresh Chouan success would effect Harty, as Redon is close to the Morbihan border. The arms and powder seized by the Chouans would sooner or later be used against Harty's men, as Sol de Grissoles was active in south-eastern Morbihan. For the next few days there was patrol activity on the coast. On 23 and 24 November, patrols from Carnac (eight miles from Auray) exchanged shots with parties of Chouans. On the 24th, it was reported that fifty sailors, from the 'Marine Sarzeau', were being used in a campaign in Brittany.\(^{40}\) Such a report had to be investigated and Harty had to send two columns to the Rhuis peninsula, but they found nothing untoward happening. On the 26th, shots were exchanged between a republican vessel and Chouans on the Ille-aux-Moines. Again, Harty had to send out a patrol, only fifteen men, though, and all they found on the island was a royalist captain, dead-drunk.\(^{41}\)

On 26 November, 1,017 men belonging to the 'artillerie de marine' (gunners serving as infantry with nothing naval about them) with six guns, thirteen caissons and a cart, on their way from Brest to Nantes, arrived in Vannes. The local administration being unable to supply the necessary draught-horses, five hundred men were sent off in different directions on 27th. Two companies set off in the direction of Grand-Champ and were attacked by 2,000 Chouans within half a league of Vannes. They lost thirteen men, one killed and three wounded. Nine scouts were taken prisoner, but later freed after they had been disarmed . . . and given money. Such are the facts as given in Harty's report on 27 November. There is a more detailed account of what happened by Le Galliac de Grand-Champ, a second lieutenant of artillery. The two companies were under captains Raimbault and Husson; they were guided by two gendarmes who did not know the area. The enemy was about three thousand strong (three columns of between 800 and 1,000 men), and the nine prisoners were cut off by thirty or so horsemen, the embryo Chouan cavalry. If General Harty, who commanded in Vannes, had sought information and had reconnoitred the enemy positions, he would have known that Grand-Champ had always been the headquarters of the insurgents, and that he could not send only two hundred men there. But it seems he knew nothing of those things and even the movements of the enemy; he had, however, all possible means to achieve this end. The garrison of Vannes at that time numbered 1,200 men, including 150 cavalry, chasseurs or mounted gunners, and a volunteer company of light infantry; it could therefore make frequent sorties and have perfect knowledge of the places of refuge, positions and strength of the rebels.\(^{42}\) With due respect to the disgruntled Le Gallic, Harty was constantly on the alert. Everybody knew that Grand-Champ and most of the territory north of the Loc (or Loc'h) and Arz rivers were a Chouan preserve. Until he was reinforced by the 22nd demi-brigade in January, 1801, Harty simply could not undertake an operation of some importance or send out more than a limited number of patrols. When there was trouble at Caden early in September and a small party of sixteen men were attacked by two hundred Chouans, this is how General Schilt reported Harty's action to the Minister for War: 'General Harty, in order to give orders to the artillerie de marine. In his report of 30 November, he wrote: 'A column of artillerie de marine that I had column of 120 men under Major Lamartinière: it was impossible for him to form a larger one, considering how destitute of troops his subdivision is.'\(^{43}\) Furthermore, Harty had no authority to give orders to the artillerie de marine. In his report of 30 November, he wrote: 'A column of artillerie de marine that I had ordered to remain in Auray, in obedience to orders given by the general commanding the division, arrived in Vannes on the 28th to continue its journey to Nantes.'\(^{44}\)

The Action at Kerboulard

On 28 November, a small British squadron under Captain Keats appeared off Penlan Head (one and a quarter miles south of Biliers and two and three quarter miles from Muzillac) at the mouth of the Vilañne. A large number of Chouans had gathered in the area: the better part of four Chouan legions. Figures of 10,000 and 15,000 have been put forward, but, were they halved, we might be nearer the truth, as otherwise the Chouans would not have lost the opportunity of trying to wipe Harty off the face of the earth. On the 29th, they were attacked with only two thousand men. Signals were exchanged, and early on the 29th the firing ashore of arms, supplies and money began. A French corvette, La Réolaise, was a short distance away in the mouth of the Vilañne and her captain was probably the first person to be informed of what was going on, when an American, who was on board one of the
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Morbihan: the roads shown are those on Cassini's map (circa 1810).

British ships, deserted. On the evening of 29 November, Harty was informed that 1,500 to 1,800 rebels had assembled at Muzillac and that a British squadron had landed 4,000 muskets, three pieces of cannon and howitzers, powder and money. Sixty carts had been laden and some were already making their way inland. Harty wanted to reinforce his meagre forces with 1,500 men of the artillerie de marine, but he was told that they had been ordered to Nantes by the Minister of Marine. Their commanding officer was willing to accompany Harty to Muzillac as soon as he had sufficient horses, as he could not divide his force, but he would put his men at Harty's disposal if the British had landed. Harty resolved to march alone and leave the artillerie de marine to hold Vannes in his absence. At 3 a.m. on 30 November, all available troops were assembled and the artillerie de marine commander suffered a change of heart and agreed to let Harty with Lemoine, the former comes.

...
beaten but not enough. Some people were dissatisfied. The deputies of Morbihan wrote to the Minister for War. They had heard a garbled account of what had happened at Penlan, brigades had been, met at Kerboulard by two battalions of artillerie de marine. We are being kept in ignorance of the reasons that prevented their being pursed.

The battle of Kerboulard never ought to have taken place. General Hédouville had been communicating with royalist leaders through the agency of Madame Turpin de Crissé. At her chateau de la Roché, near Angrie (Maine-et-Loire), a suspension of arms was agreed on. It was to last till 5 January, 1800. Even Cadoudal accepted this suspension. Some letters of Hédouville to Taponier and Harty relating to this suspension, were intercepted by Cadoudal's men. Cadoudal wrote to Harty: 'I have the honour of forwarding to you a parcel intercepted by one of my parties near Plœrmél. Had I had it two days earlier, the French blood that was shed at Elven might have been spared. I am awaiting a letter from you before giving the chiefs of my legions the order to suspend hostilities...'

Harty answered him with great dignity:

Sir, I have received your letter to-day as well as the despatches intercepted by one of your parties near Plœrmél. Just as you do, I regret not having been apprised two days earlier of the suspension of arms in the western départements. The French blood that was shed the day before yesterday near Elven would doubtless have been spared. May it be the last in this intestine war, the whole weight of which is borne by Frenchmen... I invite you to give your subordinates the necessary orders promptly, as I shall send them mine so that the suspension of hostilities may be religiously observed by both sides.

Religiously observed... a nice expression under the pen of a republican general!

As far as Harty was concerned, nothing much had changed. The suspension of arms was ill-observed in the Plœrmél-Josselin area. Advanced posts were harassed by Chouans. Men travelling alone or in small parties were disarmed; sometimes they even had their clothes taken from them. There were raids on towns in outlying parts of Morbihan; houses belonging to republicans were plundered in Mauron and Gourin. Chouans prevented people from taking their grain to public markets. Chouans prevented people from taking their grain to public markets. In fact, on 1 December, General Hédouville even ordered General Taponier to withdraw from Morbihan and from Coetquidan and send to Brest two hundred grenadiers from the 58th, 71st, 81st and 82nd demi-brigades. The 81st and 82nd and the first battalion of the 58th were in Harty's command and his already insufficient forces would thus be weakened. An extract from Harty's report on the battle of Kerboulard was published in the press and it was accompanied by a letter from Hédouville to the Minister for War, a reassuring letter about the exaggerated reports concerning the Penlan landing, and which ended with the words 'the most difficult point is not to beat the rebels but to find them'.

Citizen Guillou, the government commissioner in Pontivy read that and wrote to the minister, accusing Harty of being guilty of not reporting the facts correctly to Hédouville. It was widely known that 60,000 muskets had been landed and more were being landed every day, and that Harty could not leave Vannes without seeing rebels. He knew perfectly well there were rebels everywhere. Muzzillac was occupied by them, as was La Roche-Bernard.

The Civilian Authorities

The central administrations of Morbihan and various municipal administrations (county and town councils) caused Harty a lot of trouble. They complained of him to General Taponier and to the Minister for War. Whenever Harty withdrew small garrisons to larger towns, there were protests from local authorities, who failed to realise that Harty was only obeying orders. The Minister for War had advocated quartering troops only at main points along roads and, as the Chouans generally assembled in bands of from three to four hundred men, forming flying columns of the same strength.

The behaviour of the central administration was quite inconsequent. At a month's interval they could write to General Taponier complaining that small garrisons were being abandoned, which enabled rebels to revolte at will, and to the Minister for War that the forces of the Republic should be less scattered.

When the 52nd was withdrawn from Belle-Ile, the central administration passed a resolution inviting and requiring General Harty to use the troops from the Elven division of the territory which had been committed to his care, and to withdraw from Lorient the troops not belonging to the national guard or artillery 'so as to oppose to the rebels an important force proportioned to their mass'. What was Harty to do? It would be unthinkible that he should reduce the garrison of Lorient. Whatever local authorities might feel about their safety and the preservation of their houses and belongings, the defence of Lorient and Brest had priority everthing else. In fact, on 1 December, General Hédouville even ordered General Taponier to withdraw from Morbihan and from Coetquidan and send to Brest two hundred grenadiers from the 58th, 71st, 81st and 82nd demi-brigades. The 81st and 82nd and the first battalion of the 58th were in Harty's command and his already insufficient forces would thus be weakened. An extract from Harty's report on the battle of Kerboulard was published in the press and it was accompanied by a letter from Hédouville to the Minister for War, a reassuring letter about the exaggerated reports concerning the Penlan landing, and which ended with the words 'the most difficult point is not to beat the rebels but to find them'.

Citizen Guillou, the government commissioner in Pontivy read that and wrote to the minister, accusing Harty of being guilty of not reporting the facts correctly to Hédouville. It was widely known that 60,000 muskets had been landed and more were being landed every day, and that Harty could not leave Vannes without seeing rebels. He knew perfectly well there were rebels everywhere. Muzzillac was occupied by them, as was La Roche-Bernard.

A Trick of Fate

As a result of complaints against Harty, Lieutenant-General Laborolière, the new commander of the first division and the 13th military division in Rennes, relieved Harty of his command. At the Archives Nationales there is a register of correspondence, which seems to have gone unnoticed and which gives a short summary of letters and orders and the following extracts are quite clear:

Letter No. 7, dated 13 January, 1800, to General Houdetot. Orders to go and command in Morbihan, &c.

Letter No. 8, dated 13 January, 1800 to General Harty, to relinquish the command of Morbihan and take that of the arrondissement of Lorient.

It is impossible to twist the meaning of those two letters; Harty had been superseded. That is further confirmed by:

Letter No. 28, dated 17 January, 1800, to the Administration Centrale du Morbihan in answer to a letter from them, giving them fresh hope and announcing the arrival of General Houdetot, according to their wish (my italics).

Naturally the arrondissement of Lorient was a minor command, there being three such sub-districts in Morbihan. What probably happened was that a party of Chouans held up Laborolière's courier, the worst day's work they ever did, and the glorious irony of it all is that the general who won the Battle of Grand-Champ ought not to have been on the field at all. General Laborolière may not have been too proud of the part he played and wished to make amends. There is a letter of his to General Clarke which cannot be explained otherwise. 'I hear you are interested in Harty. Send him to me... I shall look after him.' It might be proper to point out here that after Grand-Champ, General Brune considered that Harty was the only officer that might be promoted, adding, which spoilt it somewhat, 'because of his long service.'

Peace or War?

On 11 January, 1800, at Candé (Maine-et-Loire), General Hédouville signed a convention tending to a complete disarming and disbanding of the royalist legions. Among the other signatories were Bourmont, Autichamp, Suzannet, Andigné, MacCurtain de Kainlis, and Challet. Finally there was a complete agreement. Neither Cadoudal nor his second-in-command, Mercier, had signed the convention and were not included in any suspension of hostilities, which would therefore be resumed on 21 January. To complicate matters, the First Committee of the Legislature had sent a short questionnaire to the garrisons regarding the state of the royalists' arms and the defences. The following is the first reply from the garrisons of Morbihan:

Ploermel. Had I had it two days earlier, the French blood that was shed at Elven might have been spared. I am awaiting a letter from you before giving the chiefs of my legions the order to suspend hostilities...'

But the French blood that was shed at Elven would doubtless have been spared. May it be the last in this intestine war, the whole weight of which is borne by Frenchmen... I invite you to give your subordinates the necessary orders promptly, as I shall send them mine so that the suspension of hostilities may be religiously observed by both sides.

Religiously observed... a nice expression under the pen of a republican general!

As far as Harty was concerned, nothing much had changed. The suspension of arms was ill-observed in the Plœrmél-Josselin area. Advanced posts were harassed by Chouans. Men travelling alone or in small parties were disarmed; sometimes they even had their clothes taken from them. There were raids on towns in outlying parts of Morbihan; houses belonging to republicans were plundered in Mauron and Gourin. Chouans prevented people from taking their grain to public markets and requisitioned it for themselves, like war.

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rebellion. A proclamation to the troops signed by Bonaparte did not mince matters: "Good citizens have laid down their arms. There only remains brigands, émigrés and mercenaries of England and, on 14 January, a decree changed the name of the armée d'Angleterre to that of western army, and the tough Jacobin, Brune, was put at its head. On 16 January, the constitution was suspended in the four départements of the former province of Brittany. On 20 January, Brune took command of the army at Angers, with Hédouville as his lieutenant, and left for Morbihan on the 24th."

The Battle of Grand-Champ, 25 January, 1800

First one must remember that Harty was almost entirely cut off from the rest of the republican forces. Communications were generally intercepted, which explains why he dutifully waited until 22 January before taking the field. He obviously did not receive a message from Hédouville instructing him to consider the truce broken by the rebels. Had he received orders from General Brune, he would not have marched out of Vannes on the 22nd, but waited until the 27th when seven columns were to close in on the Chouans at Grand-Champ. Harty had been reinforced, however, by the 22nd demi-brigade and it had taken an unconscionable time to reach Vannes, which it did at last on 10 January. It was on its way from Nantes when it was held up at the Vilaine, in the La Roche-Bernard area, the Chouans having astutely removed every boat they could find and made them fast on the north bank of the river, and taking potshots at any republican who appeared on the south bank. Hédouville even contemplated sending 1,200 men with two pieces of cannon and a howitzer to help the 22nd to force their way across the river. Although it was not in any way a crack unit, the 22nd would enable Harty to take the offensive with some chance of success. The second battalion, especially, had fought in Holland in General Vandamme's division and had seen some hard fighting at Bergen on 2 October, 1799. Later, it had contributed to drive the British from all their positions as far as Egmond. It would not be particularly impressed by undisciplined Chouan legions. The 22nd demi-brigade brought Harty's strength to about 7,000 men on the mainland. An undated note attached to a letter of Brune, dated 26 January, gives 8,554 troops in Morbihan, including 250 chasseurs of the 2nd and 21st regiments and 830 artillery, but Brune counted in the 1,600 men of the 60th demi-brigade, which only arrived with him, and omitted the 81st (on Belle-île) and the first battalion of the 58th. Anyhow, when Harty left Vannes, he had 2,000 men of the 22nd demi-brigade (out of 2,377, four companies having remained in Vannes), one grenadier company of the 81st, viz. 44 men, 45 men of the 2nd chasseurs-à-cheval, 25 gendarmes and an unspecified number of gunners (probably twenty or so) with two pieces of cannon. He was joined at Grand-Champ by the first battalion of the 52nd demi-brigade (998 men), which he had ordered from Auray. His force therefore amounted to 3,112 men, excluding gunners and unattached officers. Those are Harty's figures and all are far from the four to five thousand men so generously allotted to him by Julien Guillemin or the five to six thousand by Georges de Cadoudal.

The battle of Grand Champ is a strange little battle, as Harty fought it facing his base. The Chouans were between him and Vannes, and Cadoudal obviously took this risk knowing how few men were left in Vannes. Like many minor battles, it has its obscure points. Its name has not been settled yet. It is known as Grand-Champ by the republicans but the royalists called it the battle of Pont du Loc. It is also known as the battle of Plandren, strangely enough, as Harty never was within three and a
half miles of Pouldern. The only contemporary and reliable account of what happened is Harvey's report to Brune, dated from Vannes, 29 January, 1800. There are accounts by Jean Rohu, who commanded the 2nd Chouan legion, and Julien Guillomet, who was only thirteen years old when he witnessed his father's attack from a safe distance. Cited from Farquhar, an authority on the chouannerie in Morbihan, judged Guillomet's account unscientific though he placed him far above Rohu whose Memoirs are rather suggestions than anything else.

So, on 22 January, Harvey left Vannes with his small force on what was intended to be no more than a foray in enemy territory. He was acting on out-of-date instructions, a letter from the chief of staff, which he had received on 20 January, ordering him to requisition the cattle and grain stored by the Chouans at Grand-Champ, and collect taxes. Harvey marched to Pont du Loc, where his advanced guard of cavalry came upon eight Chouans. Eighteen voluteers company and shot them. Having left the first and second battalions of the 22nd to guard that important position, Harvey made his way to Grand-Champ with the third battalion and a piece of cannon. Soon after, the first battalion of the 52nd entered the town and Harvey posted it at the Chateau des Penhouet, almost a mile north of Grand-Champ, on the Loc. Danger lay elsewhere, but especially north of the Loc, where Guillomet's stronghold was. The Chouans had always had their hidden bases in the forests of Camors, Saint-Bily and others in the area. All the inhabitants had fled with some of their cattle, but Harvey was able to send a large company to Vannes on 23 January. The figure of ninety cartloads has been advanced. Up to now, Harvey's mission had been quite successful. He also reconnoitred the area and sent scouts to find out the movements of the generals who were to co-operate with him. On 25 January, after ascertaining that no other republican column from a neighbouring département had appeared in Morbihan, and assuming that the Chouans had intercepted their instructions, Harvey decided to act independently. Having heard that the enemy was assembling at Pouldern (about seven and a quarter miles east of Grand-Champ) when he had been stored, he determined to march on the town. Consequently, he sent off a second small convoy of seventeen cartloads of grain and cattle, escorted by the first company of the first battalion of the 52nd. That must have been about 5 a.m. Then Harvey was about to begin his move on Pouldern when, at 7 a.m., there was an attack by Chouans on the edge of Pont du Loc and, on his right, in the direction of Meuny, Harvey heard the sound of brisk firing: the convoy had been attacked somewhere south of Talhouet. In his report, Harvey did not mention any outposts but, naturally enough, had sent out pickets to ensure that he would not be attacked without due warning. According to royalist sources, he had occupied Camzon, on the Loc and slightly over a mile east of Pont du Loc, and Talhouet. Unfortunately, Julien Guillomet, who gives this information, also states that Harvey had quartered too many at Lomaria, which is not correct. It was still dark and the weather was misty, which enabled Guillomet to surprise the small post of Kercadio, on the northern bank of the Loc and only a couple of hundred yards from Camzon. Five men of the company of the 22nd that was occupying those posts were killed. While Guillomet was attacking Camzon with two battalions, Gomez, with two other battalions, took the republicans on their right flank. Julien Guillomet's account is very circumstantial: 'Gomez took post in two fields belonging to M. Berthois, a justice of the peace in Vannes ...' The republican company was undoubtedly winged out, and not defeated as Guillomet believes. When he stated that 47 republicans were killed and 94 taken prisoner. There were 42 or 43 prisoners.

At this point, Harvey intervened, accompanied by his aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Jacques Semery, and Guillomet and Gomez, who are said by royalist sources to have carried all before them and to have beaten back the republicans beyond the Vannes road, for some reason simply withdrew beyond the Loc and sulked there for the rest of the battle. Julien Guillomet, who stands up for his father, wrote that he was angered at not having been supported in his attack. By then, it was 10 a.m. The fighting was, however, and in any case, Harvey had had a bullet through his hat. Semery had had his clothes riddled with bullets. The royalist colonel had also exposed himself and he had had bullets through his hat and coat. Semery had been a sergeant-major in Lee's regiment of the Foreign Brigade and there is here a pleasing conjunction of two brave men, the Irishman who was a general in the French army and the Frenchman who had served in an Irish or nominally Irish regiment.

Farther south, stirring things had been happening. As the Chouans moved westwards, the crack battalion of Edouard de la Haye Saint-Hilaire had run into the Chouans in the mist. It had not been difficult for eight hundred Chouans to capture the convoy, as the escort only numbered one hundred and ten men. Seventeen men, among them the elderly lieutenant in command of the company, were killed or taken prisoner. A quartermaster-treasurer of the 14th demi-brigade was among them. Sixty men managed to escape to Vannes; a party of thirty-one men of the 52nd and one of the 22nd escaped through the woods and barricaded themselves in the Château de Guern or Guernic (about a mile west of Meuny). These thirty-two men, two of whom were wounded, put up a fine resistance. In true revolutionary style, they elected Corporal Sterling as their leader, though a sergeant was present. They swore to die on the spot if necessary. They made loopholes in the walls. They refused to surrender even to save the life of their lieutenant, who was, later, shot by the Chouans. The attack had attempted three times to set fire to the chateau. And there is a slight inconsistency in Colonel Fery's report. He first stated that the fusillade lasted for five hours. He then gave the impression that the Chouans attempted to parley with the 'Thirty-two', after which he wrote: The firmness with which the soldiers defended themselves and the night which fell made the brigands abandon the chateau.' Some Chouans may have remained round Guernic, but Saint-Hilaire and most of his men rejoined Cadoudal in the afternoon.

The Thirty-two were in fact besieged for five hours, which was long enough, and if their behaviour was slightly magnified later on, the reason is understandable. They were keeping 800 or more Chouans busy, while Cadoudal was impatiently waiting for Saint-Hilaire to join him before attacking Harvey, so the latter was able to deal at his leisure with Messrs. Guillomet and Gomez.

On hearing firing in the south, Harvey sent off a few chasseurs to reconnoitre the strength of the enemy and four companies of the 52nd to assist the escort, not wishing to delay the execution of his intended attack on Pouldern. Then he saw enemy columns arriving from the cast and deploying on the heights of the landes (marsh) of Buzo and Parcon. The centre of the enemy line was opposite Locqueltas, the left extending towards Grand-Champ and the right towards Monterblanc (over four miles east of the main road). Harvey was cautious. While the enemy was not in full strength, he was not going to withdraw the troops from Pont du Loc, where another attack might be expected, so he sent off successively the rest of the 52nd, the third battalion of the 22nd and a piece of cannon. As the enemy line was extending and as the troops opposed it were suffering considerably from a multitude of tirailleurs in a ravine and in ditches at the base of the heights and behind hedges, Harvey abandoned his position at Pont du Loc and moved forward with his second gun and the first and second battalions of the 22nd. The enemy was by then occupying 'an immense area' and continued to deploy towards Grand-Champ to take the republicans in their right flank. Cadoudal had his demons: he planned to take the republicans. He was in the centre of the line with Jean Rohu and the 2nd (Auray) legion on his right there were two battalions of the 3rd (Vannes) legion under Jacques Audran and Jacques
A contemporary version of the arrest of Cadoudal, March, 1804.

Duchemin. The third battalion, under Gambert, was farther south, near Meucon, to prevent reinforcements from reaching Harty. Saint-Hilaire's battalion should have been on the left of the line, near the Burgo chapel, and Sol de Grisolles's fourth legion should have been on the right, but we know where Saint-Hilaire was and Sol de Grisolles, who had a long distance to march, had been embroiled with General Grigny, who was marching from Muzillac to the Rhuys peninsula, and had not yet joined Cadoudal. Harty has been criticised for being so far from Vannes, with no line of retreat, and for spreading his forces over too large an area, whereas, on the contrary, it would seem that, apart from some outposts, he had cleverly concentrated his best troops at Grand-Champ and Pont du Loc, the comparatively central position of Pont du Loc enabling him to dispatch troops in the direction of any Chouan attack. Sageret wrote: 'It does not seem that General Harty realized the critical situation in which he was.' An impartial historian would no doubt dispute such a statement. Harty was fully aware that his mission to revictual Vannes was fraught with danger and had taken steps not to be caught unawares and to have permanently the best striking force he could muster. And up to this moment his action had been vindicated. His outpost at Camzou had suffered the fate of many outposts, though Harty did not yet realize the fact, and Guillecom's surprise attack had failed in consequence of the resistance put up by the men of the 22nd. Cadoudal was hampered by the fact that he had not assembled the tactical superiority of at least three to one that he had hoped to achieve and it would be easy to criticise his tactics. He had been unable to ensure that his forces would have assembled by zero hour. He had not foreseen that the whole of Saint-Hilaire's battalion would stray after a single republican company and that Sol de Grisolles would not turn up in time. Guillecom's conduct will remain for ever unexplained.

So we have Cadoudal, undecided and anxiously waiting for Saint-Hilaire and Sol de Grisolles to arrive, which they both did between twelve noon and one o'clock. Saint-Hilaire's men had fruitlessly expended most of their ammunition, and if Sol de Grisolles had arrived, most of his men had not, and were already weary after a march of over eighteen miles. Sol de Grisolles has been very unfairly treated by Georges de Cadoudal, who stated mistakenly that earlier in the day Sol had taken post behind the 2nd legion and that he and his officers refused to advance when given the order to do so. They had heard that the Vendean leaders had laid down their arms and they were 'weary of war.' So, shortly after 10 a.m., 'eight thousand Chouans, on the heights of the heaths, formed a half-moon in very good battle order.' As the threat against his right wing seemed serious, Harty sent the first battalion of the 22nd towards the enemy left, with orders to charge it and outflank it. He himself proceeded to the centre, where the second battalion had just arrived and where the enemy's firing was the hottest. When he judged that his right was in contact with the enemy's left by the movement they made when closing up, he ordered a charge in the centre along the highroad, in spite of the fire of two enemy four-pounders. Led by the Chasseurs-a-cheval and the gendarmes, the infantry (the first battalion of
The battle was not over yet. The republican cavalry and infantry pursued Chouans for a league or so. The leaders of the insurgents had not thought to stop their fleeing men and make them face the republicans, but all to no purpose. They fled towards Saint-Nolff (between Vannes and Elven) and Monterblanc, but saved their two guns. By then, it was 4 p.m. The fighting had lasted about five and a half hours. Harty's mixed battalions had course for the bridge over the Loc, preceding an enemy column. There were twelve of them, but only four, who were on horseback, managed to escape. They were pursuèd and seen to join the column, which then broke up and dispersed. That was the end of Guillelmet's last feeble attempt to take part in the fighting. Harty's men were dead tired when they returned to Vannes at 7 p.m. Harty estimated the enemy losses at four hundred men. That figure is accepted by everyone. One thousand muskets had been thrown away or destroyed.

Again, royalists have their views as to what happened in the latter stages of the battle. Here is the gist of what Sageret has to say, often quoting the Chouans' duel is a legend. It sounds like an afterthought. 'Citizen Le Louer and Rohu. Harty's act of intelligent despair (Harty's charge) succeeded. His seventy chasseurs and grenadiers charged through the royalist lines. The Chouans scattered to fight the horsemen who galloped about while they were fired at from every side (Le Louer). Then the main body of republicans forced their way like a wedge through the Chouans and reached the heights. There they were greeted by brisk, but ineffective, firing. Cadoudal's two guns fired ineffectively and were soon withdrawn. The haunts of Mecon and Parcarré became lists where thousands of small fights took place. It was then that the deserters of the 2nd chasseurs (the Chouan cavalry) fought their former comrades. They knew one another and one could hear them challenging one another by name (Rohu). It is no doubt here that must be placed the collective duel, probably embellished by legend, between eighty Royal grenadiers and eighty Republican grenadiers whom M. de Cadoulad alone mentions. 'Embellished by legend . . . Sageret is absolutely right, in fact this duel is a legend. It sounds like an attempt to evoke the heroic past of Brittany, the fight of the Thirty, in which thirty Breton Knights, under Jean de Beaumanoir, fought John Bramborough's thirty Knights in 1351. Le Louer asserts that the republicans were fleeing in disorderly fashion, like herds of cattle, and that they were continually harassed on their return towards the gates of Vannes. Rohu asserts that only weariness prevented his men from pursuing the republicans for long.

Here Harty's report was tampered with. He had written: 'Several leaders were killed, and some important ones, if the gold braid they were covered with is a mark of notoriety among them.' That was drawn to the Committee of Public Safety had accepted his ideas. 'Attack, attack unceasingly became a tactical leitmotif. Bernadotte, when Minister for War, had seen fit to give the following instructions to the c-in-c of the Armée d'Angleterre: 'In the event of a frontal attack, do not waste time skirmishing, charge immediately — fire and进来—' Harty's charge was tacitly sound and it was successful. Furia Françoise — with a dash of Furia Irlandaise — carried the day. Royalist accounts are, of course, utterly different. There are tales of unwillingness to fight, of epic Chouan charges which seem to have led to nothing, and finally of a prancing-upon-beaten Harty leading his break through in sheer desperation. It is generally admitted that the Vannes legion was unwarlike. 'A large number of peasants, forcibly recruited, and almost demoralized beforehand, men of Audran's, Jacques Duchemin's and de Sola's, fled . . . throwing away and breaking their weapons. 'The men were the doubtful factor rather than their officers, whom Julien Guillelmet blames. According to him, Cadoulad ordered Audran and Duchemin 'to advance and attack the enemy's right (sic! Of course it could only be Harty's left) with their battalions'. He was not obeyed. Those two battalions held their positions all day, without firing a shot. An attack by Rohu's legion at Talhouet is said to have been successful. The three battalions of Auray advanced on Pont du Loc on either side of the road, in the face of enemy opposition, they charged with fixed bayonets and dispersed them and the Chouans surrendered. Harty had not General Gency brought reinforcements from Locminé and restored the battle for the Republicans. This is sheer utter nonsense. General Gency was miles away at the time. Undoubtedly, Rohu was an active adversary, and Harty had been worried by the firing kept up by Rohu's men, but such silly trends finally cloud with suspicion the bravery and determination of the Chouans who fought at Grand-Champ. There was one bayonet charge that was successful and the republicans drove that one through the royalist line.
February, 1800, printed extracts from a letter of General Brune announcing that Harty had beaten the Chouans at Grand-Champ. Harty's bravery — and the state of his hat — were given full publicity in an extract from a 'Letter from Vannes', of 27 January: 'Major General Oliver Harty defeated the Chouans on the 25th instant between Grand-Champ, Pont du Loc and Meucou. They had considerable forces, those under General Harty were greatly inferior in number. It was a particularly sharp action. General Harty had his hat pierced by a bullet and was personally in great danger. His aide-de-camp had his clothes riddled with bullets. The general's example greatly contributed to ensure the success of this important battle and the complete rout of the Chouans.' A decree of 6 February announced promotions and awards. The first to be mentioned were the Thirty-two. Corporal Sterling was promoted to lieutenant. The other sub-lieutenants, Sergeant Marchand and two corporals, Hédé and Bonnier, were awarded muskets of honour. They, as well as twenty-seven fusiliers of the 52nd and one of the 22nd, were individually mentioned in Brune's order of the day of 6 February. Sub-Lieutenant Demailler was promoted lieutenant. The other officers mentioned in Harty's report were praised and promised promotion. In Le Moniteur of 20 February, Citizen Harty, major-general employed in the western army, was also given his due by the Minister for War, General Alexandre Berthier:

The battle of Grand-Champ, Citizen General, will be mentioned among those where Republican valour, led by a capable commander, triumphed gloriously over a numerically superior enemy. The success of this expedition is due to the dispositions you took, and you gave on this occasion the example of your devotion to your country. The government is apprised of it, and I am pleased to have been instructed to convey to you the expression of its commendation. Continue, Citizen General, to merit its esteem, and you may count on the gratitude of the Nation, for having contributed by your distinguished conduct to restore peace and quiet in the western départements. Citizen Semery also received a flattering letter. He was commended for the courage he had shown, which had contributed to the success of the battle of Grand-Champ.

Was Grand Champ Really A Victory?

In his report of 29 January, 1800, to the First Consul, General Brune gave a very nuancé version of the battle: 'On 25 January, General Harty fought (a combat) the Chouans near Grand-Champ. His forces were not adequate. Had he been able to receive my instructions, he would have awaited my arrival to end everything at one blow, but my couriers were captured. It is a fine opportunity lost. Georges had all his troops in battle order... and Brune went on to express his fear that Cadoudal who had 'greatly suffered' would fall back on 'hedge warfare' as the self-confidence of his troops had suffered and would no longer enable him to risk pitched battles. However, in a report to the Minister for War, written the same day, Brune wrote: 'General Harty defeated (a battue) the Chouans at Grand-Champ on the 25th and General Gency did them much harm at Elven... It is difficult to know whether the use of the word combatte instead of battue in the first letter was a slip or was intentional. It is obvious, though, that no blame lies attached to
Harty who, with his paltry forces, had inflicted a definite setback on Cadoulad. Possibly the proper view is General Bonaparte's: The battle of Grand-Champ was not decisive enough. It could not have been otherwise. The odds against Harty were too great, and a total defeat could not be inflicted on Chouans, who would melt into the landscape and mingle with the country people if things went against them. Today, a historian, worthy of the name, who had to give a short and definite answer to the question 'Was Grand-Champ a defeat or a victory?' would not hesitate. Professor Jean Tulard, the director of the Institut Napoléon, when summing up the situation, wrote: 'Cadoulad, beaten at Plaudren by General Harty, sued for peace in February.' No further comment seems necessary. Cadoulad knew he had been beaten. The Breton royalists had had enough, avouë't'h! and, after Grand-Champ, the balance in manpower favoured the republicans. On 4 February, Cadoulad met General Brune near Théix and, on 14 February, peace was signed at the Château de Beauregard near Vannes. There were mental reserves behind General Harty's part, of course. Only broken or useless muskets were handed over to the republicans and most of the Chouans' weapons were hidden away, but Brune had been right about 'hedge warfare' or 'highway warfare', as Harty expressed it. The Catholic and Royal Army was an army only in name and could never rise again above guerrilla warfare. The indomitable Chouan leader shortly afterwards returned to England and plotted against the First Consul, whom he intended to kidnap or murder. On the night of 23-24 August, 1803, he landed in Normandy and went into hiding in Paris. It was sheen hour - the man who had regained supreme over the Morbihan backlands was literally trapped in Paris, with Fouché's police on the look-out for him. He was captured on 9 March, 1804, and guillotined on 25 June, 1804. A melancholy end for an undoubtedly great man, who had resorted to conspiracy because an elderly Irish gentleman had out-generalled him on the field of Grand-Champ.

REFERENCES
1. Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre (SHAT), Directoire d'Histoire de l'Armée Publique. Généraux division, No. 893, 2ème série. Harty only applied for French nationality in 1816, when he was seventy. For information concerning his behaviour at Landau, Wissembourg, and in Santo Domingo, see Oliver Harty, *Aux citoyens représentants . . .* and 'Renseignements exigés par l'arrestation Public', *Bibliothèque Nationale, 4 L 121 1171 (1) and (2). See also present author's 'Défet al les Plutons' in *Ir. Studi*, xii, pp. 103-4.
3. Another Irish major-general, Richard O'Shea,
61. Le Gallic de Keruzoret, Réflexions sur une affaire publique touchant les guerres qui se produisirent entre les Chouans et les Constituants, in Chassé, iii, pp. 468-470.

62. Schilt to Minister for War, 5 September, 1799, (SHAT, BS-58).

63. Deputies of Morbihan to Minister for War, 30 November, 1799, (SHAT, BS-62). The arrival of this column brought the total strength of the artillerie de marine to 1,800 men.

64. Sageret, p.469.

65. Le Gallic de Keruzoret gives the following figures: 1,500 artillerie de marine, 150 men of the 32nd demi-brigade (40 chasseurs à cheval and 30 mounted gunners) (Chassé, iii, p. 469).

66. Harty’s report of 30 November, 1799, (SHAT, BS-62). On 3 December, Harty stated that two hundred Chouans had been wounded, but that the number of their dead was still a secret. Harty to Hédouville, 3 December, 1799, (SHAT, BS-61).


68. Deputies of Morbihan to Minister for War, 10 December, 1799, (SHAT, BS-62).

69. Harty to Hédouville, 3 December, 1799, (SHAT, BS-61).

70. A report by Citizen Guilemot, 29 November, 1799, (SHAT, BS-64). This report of 30 November, 1799, (SHAT, BS-62). On 3 December, Harty stated that two hundred Chouans had been wounded, but that the number of their dead was still a secret. Harty to Hédouville, 3 December, 1799, (SHAT, BS-61).


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74. Harty's report of 30 November, 1799, (SHAT, BS-62). On 3 December, Harty stated that two hundred Chouans had been wounded, but that the number of their dead was still a secret. Harty to Hédouville, 3 December, 1799, (SHAT, BS-61).

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79. Extraits du journal d’ordre et de correspondance communiqué le 24 Juillet 1800 au ministre de la Guerre, dans le voyage de Rennes au rectangle de Rennes et du Général Lepinsse (AF IV 1790, 3 (ii) f. 12 v, i). General Hédouville had appointed Lieutenant-General Lepinsse to communicate with the 52nd demi-brigade and be his deputy, communications between Angers and Nantes and Morbihan being uncertain. General Lepinsse, having been elected senator, orders subsequent to his departure could only emanate from General Labeurcoire.

80. Laborde to Clarke, Rennes, 31 January, 1800, (AF IV 1950, f. 2 r and v).

81. Brune to the First Consul, Vannes, 14 February, 1800, (AF IV 1950, f. 41 v). When Brune divided his forces into two army corps, under General Hédouville and General Debelle (Hoch's brother-in-law), Harty was put in charge of the reserve in Vannes. This reserve consisted of the 6th light demi-brigade (three battalions with a strength of 2,220 men), the 22d (2,168 men) and the 6th (1,890 men), or a total of 6,336 men, a suitable command for a major general (AF IV 1790, i. f. 6 v). Previously there had been a temporary roushade which had not been so favourable to Harty. He only commanded the 52nd demi-brigade and all detached light infantry and troops. General Debelle's correspondence, 30 January, 1800, (SHAT, BS-65). General Bernadotte, Brune's successor, considered that Harty was too old for his great age, but that he only commanded the 52nd demi-brigade and all detached light infantry and troops. He was only fit to command a town in the interior or inspect depots. Bernadotte to the First Consul, 26 July, 1800, (AF IV 1950, f. 220 r).

82. Since 28 December, 1799, Le Moniteur had been the official gazette and all the proclamations and decrees mentioned are to be found in No. 99 (30 December), p. 391, No. 109 (9 January), p. 431, No. 116 (16 January), p. 461, No. 118 (19 January), p. 468, and No. 122 (22 January, 1800).

83. Hédouville to Minister for War, Angers, 13 January, 1800, (SHAT, BS-64).

84. Hédouville to Clarke, Angers, 6 January, 1800, and 12 January (AF IV 1950, f. 50 v and 3 r) v).

85. Brune to the First Consul, Redon, 26 January, 1800, (AF IV 1950, f. 125 v). A report by Citizen Didier, an aide-de-camp of Bonaparte, dated 3 February, 1800, gives 8,091 infantry and 192 cavalry (AF IV 1790, f. 31 i. f. 30 v). The numbers refer to the main body of troops at Pont du Chicot (cf. the opening sentence of the current report in Le Moniteur. No. 135. p.538).


87. AF IV 1950, f. 31 i. f 14 r. An edited version of his report was printed in Le Moniteur de 7 February, 1800, No. 138, p.547. A summary of operations by Colonel Bonet of the 81st demi-brigade and reports by Bonet and Colonel Féry of the 52nd had already been published on the 6th (no.135, f.530).


89. Le Moniteur, 10 January, 1800, No. 151, p.603.

90. Le Moniteur, 20 February, 1800, No. 151, p.603.

91. AF IV 1950, f. 26 r. v.

92. SHAT, BS-65. A list had already been published in the Moniteur de 7 February, 1800, No. 138, p.547.


94. Jean Tulard, La Paix et la Guerre, (Paris, 1985), pp.146-6, severely criticized Adolphe Thiers for making Gency take part in the grand battle of La Chouannerie (p.225). Count de Martel was also the first to publish Brune's report (complete but for three and a half paragraphs), pp.129-137.


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