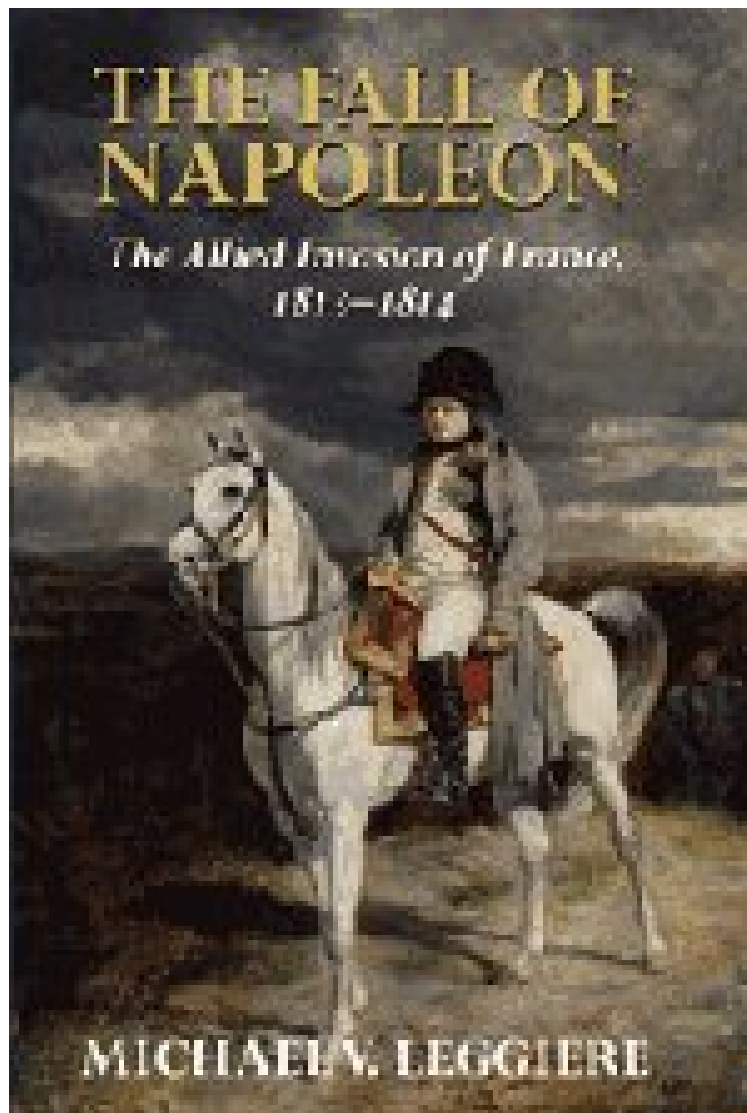


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## **The Fall of Napoleon: Volume 1, The Allied Invasion of France, 1813-1814 (Cambridge Military Histories) (v. 1)**

*Michael V. Leggiere*

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**Michael V. Leggiere : The Fall of Napoleon: Volume 1, The Allied Invasion of France, 1813-1814 (Cambridge Military Histories) (v. 1)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Fall of Napoleon: Volume 1, The Allied Invasion of France, 1813-1814 (Cambridge Military Histories) (v. 1):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Tough writing style but lots of information  
By Nicholas Roberts  
I had a really hard time getting through this book. The author's writing style was just not conclusive with my reading style. The book did not have the best maps to follow what was going on and there was little sense of flow with the story. This is more of a Napoleonic technical manual in the sense that there are few quotations and visual descriptions to help the reader get into the story. The author is very critical of Napoleon's marshals and the Allied generals to the point where you feel that this campaign was being run by a bunch of bone heads. That is the bad part. This is the good. The book has tons of information that you cannot find anywhere else. It goes over all the campaigns in France up until Napoleon took command. So it covers, in extensive detail, a short period in time that you will find nowhere else. The book also did a great job going over the war efforts of the various nations and the diplomatic problems facing them. This is where the book is particularly valuable. It provides lots of information that you can find nowhere else, however it is not an easy read.

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. A Important Study of the Time from after Napoleon's Defeat at Leipzig October 1813 through January, 1814  
By David M. Dougherty  
This is a heavy and important tome covering the operations in Germany, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland and Eastern France from both the Allied and French sides for the crucial four month period following the Battle of the Nations at Leipzig in October, 1813 to the end of January, 1814, when the Allied armies reached the plateau of Langres. From that point, all roads led to Paris, and the Allied armies had forced their way through the French border defenses and most of the traditionally difficult terrain. The author presents the invasion of France from the issuing of the Frankfurt Proposals by the Allies (Austria, Prussia, Russia Britain) wherein Napoleon's France would be reduced to its natural boundaries -- proposals that Napoleon unwisely rejected. The Allies then began conducting a coalition campaign under the overall command of the Austrian Schwarzenberg, but heavily influenced by Gneisenau, the Prussian Chief of Staff and Alexander, the Tsar of Russia. The work presents the campaign in its military aspects, but equally importantly with all its diplomatic maneuvering and conflicts. From the French side the author presents Napoleon's actions (mostly in Paris), and the separate frontier commands of Marshals Victor, MacDonald and Marmont and their difficulties in delaying the advance of the overwhelmingly numerically superior allied forces. Looking at a map and considering the relative sizes of the opposing forces, it is difficult to understand why the Allies couldn't march into Paris in a six-weeks campaign after Leipzig. The author clearly demonstrates why that wasn't possible. The discussions among the leaders of the various allied contingents concerning the proper strategy and movements in the campaign took over a month, and this was a critical month needed by Napoleon to rebuild his forces. In the event, Schwarzenberg led the main army across the Rhine at Basel, Switzerland, and invaded Alsace and Lorraine confronting Victor, the Prussian Bluecher crossed the middle Rhine at several places from Mannheim to Kaub against Marmont, and in Holland a third force of Russians and Prussians under Buelow and Benckendorff fought their way into Arnhem, then to Grave and into Belgium against MacDonald. All of these campaigns are presented in detail from both sides, perhaps even in a little too much detail for the casual reader, as the narrative goes down into the capture of fortresses defended by a few hundred men and skirmishes by even fewer. Nonetheless, if the reader is able to maintain his balance and a good overview of the situation, this book provides a wealth of information the reader can use to good effect. One is carried along, for example, in a discussion of Victor's state of mind while attempting to save those troops under his command for future battles while responding to Napoleon's demands and orders that were impossible to fulfill or execute. The author includes copies of some of the critical communications in the Appendix. It is clear from the author's discussion that the French marshals suffered from the lack of Napoleon's presence and each attempted independently to do what was best. They were often at odds with each other, and this lack of coordination (which was fatal) was clearly Napoleon's fault. By 1814, none of the active marshals remaining were skilled at handling independent commands, and that lack of expertise showed dramatically. On the allied side, Schwarzenberg was slow and indecisive, but his was the campaign to lose. All the allied commanders still feared Napoleon's genius, and were afraid he might show up unexpectedly on their fronts with powerful forces like he had done in the past. This time, however, France was slow to fill out its levees, and Napoleon possessed precious little to work with. The National morale was ebbing, people were tired of war, and the revolutionary spirit was almost gone. Even the citizenry in the areas the Allies occupied failed to provide much resistance, and by January, 1814, it was clear that France was no longer capable of matching the Allies in military manpower. Not that everything was rosy for the Allies, however. Every mile further into France lengthened their supply lines and exposed allied detachments to attacks in their flanks and rear. As a result, the Allies accepted a French delegation to discuss terms in January, but the French wanted to start from the Frankfurt Proposals whereas Alexander, in particular, wanted France pushed back to its pre-1792 boundaries. That this negotiation took place at all when Napoleon's situation was desperate is an indication of the high regard still being held among the Allies for French martial prowess. The book ends on the Protocols of Langres, the negotiations being suspended, and the Allies preparing for their march on Paris. Frankly, I was sorry it ended there, and I was looking forward to reading further until Napoleon was forced from power. But alas, that is in Volume II. This is a very fine work, and I recommend that all individuals interested in the Napoleonic wars buy and read this book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars  
By Glyn Hargreaves  
Excellent book.

This book tells the story of the invasion of France at the twilight of Napoleon's empire. With over a million men under arms throughout central Europe, Coalition forces poured over the Rhine River to invade France between late November 1813 and early January 1814. Three principle army groups drove across the great German landmark, smashing the exhausted French forces that attempted to defend the eastern frontier. In less than a month, French forces ingloriously retreated from the Rhine to the Marne; Allied forces were within one week of reaching Paris. This book provides the first complete, English-language study of the invasion of France along a front that extended from Holland to Switzerland.

"Leggiere has made a significant contribution to Cambridge's 'Military Histories' series. His book belongs in every military history collection, especially those that concentrate on the Napoleonic era." - Library Journal  
"The Fall of Napoleon is already a major work on the subject, and there's every reason to believe Volume 2 will be just as good." - [www.europeanhistory.about.com](http://www.europeanhistory.about.com)  
"...Leggiere has set the bar quite high." - Ralph Ashby, H-France  
About the Author  
Dr Michael V. Leggiere is an Associate Professor of History at the University of North Texas. His book, *Napoleon and Berlin: The Franco-Prussian War in North Germany, 1813* (2002), won the Société Napoléonienne Internationale's 2002 Literary Award. In 2005, he received the Société Napoléonienne Internationale Legion of Merit Award for Outstanding Contributions to Napoleonic Studies.