Alphonse de Neuville’s The Spy and the Legacy of the Franco-Prussian War

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In the relatively peaceful period between the end of the first Napoleonic empire and 1870, military painting did not enjoy great popularity in France. Military painters had limited heroic material to draw on in this period, and although extensively patronized by both Louis-Philippe and Napoleon III, artists like Horace Vernet and Adolphe Yvon evoke little sympathy among the more progressive critics. In his Salon review of 1859, Paul Mantz referred to the ponderous documentary approach of Vernet as “the religion of the gaiter button,” and in the same year, Baudelaire wrote that since the visual impact of a real battle was unobtainable in painting, the only true military paintings possible were simple episodes of camp life. Indeed, in the middle years of the nineteenth century, the small paintings and prints of Nicolas Charlet and Auguste Raffet, both of whom specialized in anecdotal scenes of military camp life, generally attracted wider appreciation than battle paintings in the tradition of the Napoleonic era. However, the experience of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 not only revived the popularity of military painting in France, but also profoundly changed the manner in which the artists treated their subject matter. Many of the younger military painters after 1870 had been in active service during the war, and their work had the truth and immediacy of personal experience. Their major problem lay in depicting the events of a war which amounted to a string of humiliating defeats for the French. On the other hand, the human losses in the war and the cession of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany created such a nationalistic and vengeful climate in France that even paintings representing defeat were immensely popular with the Salon-going public throughout the remainder of the century. No military painter exploited this mood of resurgent nationalism better than Alphonse de Neuville. As the French sought to understand the causes of the great debacle of 1870, de Neuville showed them that at least the fault had not been with the common soldier. In the words of Alfred de Lossalot, de Neuville revealed to the country “by what heroic efforts our soldiers tried to ward off fate, and when we see them crushed by superior forces, at least we may think with him that they did not fall without glory.”

Alphonse-Marie de Neuville was born in 1835 into a wealthy family in the town of St.-Omer, Pas-de-Calais. De Neuville was an excellent student as a youth, and his family sent him to Paris to study law, intending him for an official career. He eventually rebelled against the wishes of his parents, abandoning the law to become a painter. Although his family were reconciled to this decision, young de Neuville’s earliest artistic efforts were not very successful. When he showed his sketches to Adolphe Yvon, he was advised to forget about art as a career. He eventually

entered the studio of François-Edouard Picot, a conservative member of the Institut des Beaux-Arts who specialized in religious paintings and large government commissions. De Neuville made his Salon debut in 1859, exhibiting a scene from the siege of Sebastopol during the Crimean War. This painting brought him a third-class medal. Two years later, he received a second-class medal for another Crimean War painting, and this time he caught the attention of Eugène Delacroix, who praised the work but also offered a critique of its shortcomings. It is probably this early encounter with the great master that has fostered the unsubstantiated suggestion that at one time de Neuville had been a student of Delacroix. De Neuville exhibited consistently in the Salons of the sixties, but his subjects, whether drawn from the Crimean War or from more recent conflicts of the Second Empire, were never based on any personal experience on the battlefield.

When the war with Prussia erupted in 1870, de Neuville immediately enlisted in the army, and later took part in the final defense of Paris at Le Bourget and Champigny. This experience provided the subject for the Bivouac devant Le Bourget which he submitted in 1872 to the first Salon held after the Franco-Prussian War. Favorably reviewed by the critics, this work also had great popular appeal to Parisians as a distinctly recognizable record of the recent war, although it was not a battle painting as such. In fact, scenes of actual combat between French and German soldiers were completely absent from the Salon of 1872. With negotiations for the emancipation of territories still occupied by the Germans reaching their most delicate stage, the French government ordered several works depicting the Franco-Prussian War to be withdrawn from the Salon just before it opened. The following year the government had no such scruples. Among the numerous paintings in the Salon which dealt with the war, de Neuville’s Les Dernières Cartouches (Figure 1) stood out as a sensation-ally popular favorite. It is no exaggeration to say that it remained the artist’s most celebrated work, as well as the most famous painting dealing with the Franco-Prussian War. Leading critics outdid themselves in patriotic praise of the painting; in de Neuville’s hometown of St.-Omer a book was published con-


taining several of the more grandiloquent newspaper reviews of the work. In contrast to the *Bivouac* of the previous year, here de Neuville isolated a handful of French soldiers during the battle of Sedan, making their last stand in a half-destroyed parlor in the village of Bazeilles. With its emphasis on dramatic narrative and gesture, this painting was the first example in de Neuville's work of what Emile Zola would characterize as "military genre painting." It also established de Neuville's reputation as the painter of the anonymous but valiant soldier, fighting against the insurmountable odds which the French steadfastly believed had accounted for their defeat.

Although de Neuville participated in only three more Salons during the 1870s, he quickly emerged as the preeminent French military painter both with the public and with the Salon critics. In his Salon review of 1874, Jules Castagnary skipped over the work of Edouard Detaille, but found de Neuville's *Combat sur une Voie Ferrée* (Figure 2) to have the frankness of a military report, and considered the artist "a rigorous spirit, who seeks emotion in precision and simplicity." The increasingly nationalistic tenor of Castagnary's criticism after the Franco-Prussian War may account in part for his appreciation of de Neuville, but his preference for de Neuville over Detaille and other contemporary military artists, like that of many other critics, was also due to de Neuville's concern for topographical detail. Even those who were not interested in military paintings were forced to admit that, through his gift for dramatizing the subject matter, de Neuville was extraordinarily popular with the general public. Writing of his *Attaque par le Feu d'une*


4. M. Alphonse de Neuville: *Son Tableau "Les Dernières Cartouches" au point de vue du sentiment patriotique* (St.-Omer, 1873).
3. De Neuville, Portrait de Paul Déroulède, inscribed and dated (lower right): à mon ami Paul Déroulède/Al. de Neuville/1877. Oil on canvas. Metz, Musée des Beaux-Arts (photo: Service photographique des Musées de Metz)

Maison Barricadée in the Salon of 1875, Emile Zola conceded that “women cry before his paintings, and men clench their fists.”

In 1877 de Neuville exhibited two paintings in the Salon. One was a battle scene from the Franco-Prussian War; the other was a full-length portrait of Paul Déroulède in his wartime uniform as a cavalry officer (Figure 3). Déroulède had established a highly successful career as a poet during the 1870s by appealing directly to the spirit of revanche—the desire for revenge against Germany and the recovery of the lost territories. First published in 1872, his intensely patriotic Chants du soldat went through a total of 129 editions by 1889. One edition appeared in 1888 illustrated with drawings and watercolors by Detaille and de Neuville. By the end of the 1870s, Déroulède had become the foremost spokesman of ultranationalism in France, and there is evidence to suggest that he was influencing his friend de Neuville in the same direction. De Neuville's work at this time began to take on a decidedly more anti-German tone, as can be seen in his book illustrations—graphically rendered scenes of Prussian brutality to accompany the texts of sensational novelettes. In an illustrated edition of Ernest L'Epiè's A Coup de fusil published in 1877, de Neuville included a scene of German cavalry devastating a French village (Figure 4). It is clear from the architecture of the houses and the costume of the woman lying wounded in the street that this is an Alsatian village, a fact which doubtless added further poignancy in the mind of the reader. In Jules Claretie’s novel Le Drapeau of 1879, an illustration by de Neuville shows a rabble of German troops attacking an

old French veteran who refuses to yield up the French flag (Figure 5). Such luridly illustrated novels were nothing new; indeed, there had been a torrent of them immediately following the war. However, it was only in the late 1870s that de Neuville was involved in such frankly inflammatory illustration.

German mistreatment of innocent Alsatian civilians during the Franco-Prussian War was the subject of a full-scale painting de Neuville completed in 1878. In *De Montbéland à Strasbourg*, also referred to simply as *Les Otages*, he depicted the mayor, the priest, and the postman of a small village being led off as hostages to the German military governor in Strasbourg (Figure 6). De Neuville intended to show this work at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1878. Even under less sensitive circumstances, the French government might well have been apprehensive about allowing him to exhibit such a subject, but a world's fair, many of whose visitors would be German, presented special problems. As it turned out, none of the contemporary French military painters was represented at the Exposition. Chancellor Bismarck allowed German artists to exhibit there only on the condition that neither Germany nor France would permit the display of paintings which in any way recalled the events of the Franco-Prussian War.7 On its own initiative, the French government excluded such potentially controversial paintings not only from the

Exposition itself but also from the annual Salon which coincided with it. De Neuville was incensed by the whole affair, and sent the rather shallow letter of apology he had received from the government to the Paris newspapers for publication.8 The Goupil gallery subsequently mounted a private exhibition of these proscribed military paintings, and by all accounts it was an enormous success.9 As had happened six years before in the Salon of 1872, the extraordinary popularity of paintings depicting the

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7. In a dispatch sent to the Foreign Minister in March 1878, Ambassador Saint-Vallier related that in his conversation with the Chancellor, Bismarck had been adamant on this point, insisting on the establishment of a selection committee "qui, surtout, éliminerait avec une inflexible rigueur tous les tableaux rappelant des faits de la guerre franco-allemande, des portraits de généraux illustrés dans cette guerre, tout ce qui, en un mot, pourrait éveiller la juste susceptibilité ou évoquer les pénibles souvenirs du public français." France, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, *Documents diplomatiques de la République Française* (Paris, 1929–59) ser. 1, II, p. 266.


9. See Goupil et Cie., *Catalogue des tableaux militaires exclus du Salon et de l'Exposition Universelle, exposés dans la galerie de MM. Goupil et Cie* (Paris, 1878). According to *Le Figaro* (May 26, 1878), the crowds at the Goupil gallery were initially so large that many without advance invitations had to be turned away.
Franco-Prussian War excited shrill criticism of what many considered to be a timid and deferential decision on the part of the government.

At the beginning of the 1880s, de Neuville was at the height of his success not only in France but also in Britain and the United States. In France, much of this popularity was undoubtedly due to the fact that far from subsiding, chauvinist sentiment and animosity toward Germany were rapidly gaining strength. The nationalist element was all the more encouraged when Léon Gambetta, the renowned patriot of the Franco-Prussian War, formed a new government in November 1881. Soon after, a Commission for Military and National Education was established by the Ministry of Education, with Deroulede as its chairman. Along with Detaille, de Neuville was immediately appointed a member of this commission. In consultation with his artist friends, Deroulede developed ambitious plans for using paintings and sculpture in a program of national patriotic education, but when the Gambetta ministry fell after only a few months, the succeeding government categorically rejected the recommendations of Deroulede's commission. Deroulede resigned in protest and within days formed the Ligue des Patriotes, with an already existing ultranationalist journal, Le Drapeau, as its official organ. De Neuville was not only a founding member of the Ligue, but also served on its organizational board. His illustrations frequently appeared on the covers of Le Drapeau, and continued to do so long after his death in 1885. Soon after its foundation, de Neuville also designed a broadside for the Ligue des Patriotes (Figure 7). In the foreground, a franc-tireur shakes hands with a young gymnast who represents the youths the Ligue was organizing into patriotic rifle societies. In the background is a monument with the Janus-headed busts of Alsace and Lorraine; below them, the year 1870, and another year, clearly referring to the rescue of the lost provinces, symbolically obscured.

With his health already beginning to fail, de Neuville exhibited in the annual Salon for the last time in 1881. The two works he entered both dealt with the Franco-Prussian War, but in very different ways. The larger of the two, Le Cimetière de Saint-Privat, was a lavishly orchestrated battle painting which depicted the heroism of a group of French soldiers vastly outnumbered by the enemy. Generally, however, the critics took greater notice of the smaller painting, Un Porteur de Détèches (A Dispatch Carrier), also referred to simply as L'Espion (The Spy). The version in the Metropolitan Museum (Figure 8) is signed and dated 1880; however, as was his custom with other major paintings, de Neuville seems to have produced at least two versions of this subject. Since one Salon review at the time described the painting as being dated 1881 and having slightly different dimensions from the one that appears in the Metropolitan Museum,

now in the Metropolitan Museum, it is probable that de Neuville had already sold the earlier version to an American agent when he entered the other in the Salon. In any case, a smaller version of the painting appeared in a sale of works owned by his widow, which took place in 1898. According to de Neuville’s description in the Salon catalogue, this scene depicts a French noncommissioned officer disguised as a peasant, who, while attempting to get into the besieged fortress at Metz with vital dispatches, is captured by a Prussian patrol, taken before their commanding officers, and searched. The catalogue entry notes that when such disguised messengers were discovered by the Germans, they were immediately shot. In his hyperbolic Salon review, Charles Bigot provided a more dramatic description of the scene:

A poor devil suspected of carrying some dispatch is brought before a group of Prussian officers who are finishing their lunch in front of the door of an inn. They have reached the stage of coffee and cigars. The poor man in the blouse is searched from head to toe by two strapping German soldiers, while half a dozen officers of all ranks and ages keep staring at him, watching to see if

12. The dimensions of the version exhibited at the Salon of 1881 are given by Georges Lafenestre in his *Livre d’or du Salon de peinture et de sculpture* (Paris, 1881) p. 70, as “H.1m50.—L.2m.” Charles Sterling and Margareta M. Salinger, *French Paintings. A Catalogue of the Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art: II. XIX Century* (New York, 1966) p. 192, cite Lafenestre as having described a painting with “smaller dimensions” than the one in the Museum. The reference to Mme de Neuville’s version was made by Charles Revillion in *Recherches sur les peintres de la Ville de Saint-Omer* (St.-Omer, 1904).
thralled by the subject matter to care very much about technique. However, by the beginning of the 1880s, there were a few critics whose profound distaste for resurgent nationalism in France alienated them from the distinctly anti-German flavor of The Spy. Generally hostile to official art of any sort, Joris Huysmans condemned the painting as a "black mediocrity," but at the same time conceded that, judging from the cries of delight of the women visiting the Salon, de Neuville would once again enjoy an enormous success. What bothered Huysmans more than anything else was the obvious contrast between the noble visage of the French prisoner and the arrogance and barbarity of his captors; he maintained that the behavior and appearance of the soldiers were not unique to the Prussians but were characteristic of militarism everywhere.14 It is certainly true that in this work de Neu-


any muscle of his face or any movement of his eyes will betray him. His game-bag lies on the ground before him. He stands there, calm, impassive. It would be a very clever person who could say whether or not he carries any compromising dispatch, and whether in five minutes he will have to be released or whether he will be shot. However, his mustache, like his virile appearance, indicates an old soldier who has already stared death in the face and who does not fear it. This entire scene—the courier, the German soldiers, the Prussian officers who look on, the remains of the meal still on the table, the people of the inn who watch from the door, anxious and praying for their poor compatriot—this entire scene has an extraordinary truthfulness and lifelike intensity. Here is the work of a genuine artist. The painting is still a little bungled and heavy, the color still displeasing. Well, so much the worse for my eyes! I am caught, moved as if facing reality itself; I can only marvel.13

Critics often spoke of de Neuville’s roughness of execution, but like Bigot they were usually too en-

13. "Un pauvre diable souffrin de porter quelque dépêche est amené devant un groupe d’officiers prussiens qui achèvent de déjeuner devant la porte d’une auberge. Ils en sont au café et aux cigares. Le pauvre homme en blouse est fouillé de la tête aux pieds par deux gros soldats allemands, tandis qu’une demi-douzaine d’officiers de tout rang et de toute âge ne cessent de le dévisager, épiant si quelque muscle de son visage ou quelque mouvement de ses yeux le trahira. Sa carnassière git à terre devant lui. Il est là, calme, impassible. Bien habilé qui pourrait dire s’il porte ou non quelque dépêche compromettante et si dans cinq minutes il faudra le relâcher ou s’il sera fusillé. Sa moustache pourtant, aussi bien que son allure mâle, indiquent un ancien soldat qui a déjà vu la mort en face et qui ne la craint pas. Toute cette scène, l’émisairie, les soldats allemands, les officiers prussiens qui regardent, les restes du repas encore sur la table, les gens de l’hôtel qui observent par la porte, inquiets et faisant des voeux pour leur pauvre compatriote, toute cette scène est d’une vérité, d’une intensité de vie extraordinaires. Voilà l’œuvre d’une artiste véritable. La peinture est toujours un peu maconnée et lourde, la couleur toujours dépélasante; ma foi, tant pis pour mes yeux! Je suis pris, ému comme en face de la réalité même; je ne sais plus qu’admirer." Charles Bigot, "La Peinture en 1881," Revue Politique et Littéraire 23 (June 4, 1881) p. 712.

14. "Je ne saurais blâmer M. de Neuville d’avoir, dans cette toile comme dans l’autre du reste, infligé à ses galonnés de Prusse une morgue ridicule, car l’épaulette influe souvent sur la cervelle et n’en laisse plus jaillir que des fleurs de férocity ou de sottise; seulement, il faut bien le dire, ces allures et ces mines de soudards ne sont pas spéciales aux Prussiens; elles appartiennent, sans distinction, au militarisme de tous les peuples. Comme peinture, l’Espion est d’une noire médiocrité; mais, si j’en juge par les cris d’allégresse que poussent les dames, M. de Neuville est assuré d’un grand succès auprès de ce public féminin si débonnairement apprécié par l’indulgent Schopenhauer." Joris Huysmans, "Le Salon officiel de 1881," in L’Art Moderne (Paris, 1883) p. 173.
ville exaggerated the features of some of the Germans—for example, the officer seated on the far left—to the point of caricature. On other occasions, however, he produced some remarkably candid likenesses of German soldiers, such as his not unsympathetic sketch, dated 1874, of a German trooper from a dragoon regiment, shown off duty and wearing his recently awarded Iron Cross (Figure 9).

Like his fellow military painters Detaille and Meissonier, de Neuville was scrupulous in the accurate rendering of details in uniforms and insignia. Thus each of the seated officers in The Spy can be identified by rank and regiment. The mounted hussars that have captured the prisoner are members of the famous First Leib-Husaren Regiment, nicknamed the Totenkopfhusaren after the death's-head badge on their busbies. De Neuville was extremely fond of horses and, as can be seen in this painting, showed considerable talent for the rendering of horse and rider. French and German cavalrymen were a common subject in the artist's sketches and painted studies; a small painting in the Metropolitan Museum depicting the trumpeter of a French dragoon regiment (Figure 10) is a typical example.

Besides being rigorously accurate in details of military dress, de Neuville also attempted whenever possible to make sketches in the field, often traveling to battle sites in eastern France to do so. During the 1870s, he was sometimes accompanied on these trips by his friend Detaille, with whom he collaborated in panoramas depicting the battles of Champigny and Rezonville. On one such occasion, his assiduous sketching in the area around Villersexel, near the Swiss and German borders, resulted in his being arrested and briefly held as a German spy; once his identity became known, he was hurriedly released by the embarrassed local authorities. Eugène Montrosier, a friend and biographer of de Neuville, wrote in some detail about a journey that de Neuville made to the German-occupied portion of Alsace-Lorraine in the 1870s. It was during this trip that the artist apparently gathered much of the topical material which later went into both the Cimetière de Saint-Privat and The Spy. Despite the fact that he had been unable to obtain official permission from the German authorities to visit the battlefields around Metz, de Neuville went into the area at his own risk, first spending a few days in Metz, where he sketched the portraits of several German soldiers. From there, he proceeded to Ste.-Marie-aux-Chênes, the village named in the Salon catalogue as the site of the incident in The Spy. Here he took lodgings in a small inn, from which he made sketching forays to St.-Privat and other places in the area. (Both St.-Privat and Ste.-Marie-aux-Chênes were located just across the German border, a short distance west of Metz.)

10. De Neuville, A Cavalryman (Dragon à Cheval), signed and dated (lower left): A de Neuville 1884. Oil on canvas, 18⅞ × 15 in. (46 × 38.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Maria DeWitt Jesup, from the collection of her husband, Morris K. Jesup, 15.30.20

15. I am grateful to Helmut Nickel, Curator of Arms and Armor at the Metropolitan Museum, for his helpful remarks regarding the ranks and regiments of the German military represented in this painting and in Figure 9.


17. The full account of this trip is furnished by Eugène Montrosier in Les Peintres militaires, contenant les biographies de MM. de Neuville, Detaille, Berne-Bellecour, Dupray, Jazet, Courturier, Sergeant, Chaperon, Protai, Médiard et Walker (Paris, 1881) p. 15.
Before leaving Ste.-Marie-aux-Chênes, Neuville was involved in an incident which seems supremely ironic in view of the subject of *The Spy*. Working in a sensitive border area without the knowledge or permission of the German authorities, he must have appeared all the more suspicious given his habit of interviewing local inhabitants about their recollections of the war. Just as in the earlier incident outside Villersexel, the local police were soon on his trail, and if Montrosier’s account is accurate, de Neuville escaped from his lodgings early one morning just before they arrived to arrest him and confiscate his work. Had de Neuville not slipped out of Ste.-Marie-aux-Chênes when he did, he might well have been caught in a situation not unlike that of the unfortunate dispatch carrier whom he subsequently painted. The description in the Salon catalogue specifically refers to the event depicted in *The Spy* as having taken place in September 1870. If the incident actually occurred, and if de Neuville had not known about it already, he almost certainly would have learned of it while staying in Ste.-Marie-aux-Chênes. Considering the artist’s tendency to stress authentic landscape and architectural detail in his works, one is indeed tempted to wonder if the inn at the sign of the double cross of Lorraine depicted in *The Spy* did not represent the one in which de Neuville himself stayed during his visit.

Although it had been anticipated to an extent by *De Montbéliard à Strasbourg* and various graphic works, *The Spy* was the first instance in a full-scale painting where de Neuville developed the theme of the solitary French patriot at the mercy of his German captors. In the few remaining years of his career, he executed no more of the animated battle scenes which had established his career in the 1870s. He concentrated instead on more isolated and psychologically intense subjects, in which German troops were often cast in the role of the oppressor or captor. Although it was never exhibited in the Salon, de Neuville’s *Capture Difficile* of 1884 (Figure 11) depicts a theme similar to that of *The Spy*. Here a severely battered franc-tireur has been captured and is being led off in bondage by German hussars. Barely visible in the background is a third horse, which carries the body of one of their fallen comrades. In his running exegesis of a selection of de Neuville’s paintings and drawings published soon after the artist’s death, the inveterate *revanchiste* Jules Richard singled out this work, along with *The Spy*, for special emphasis. To Richard, both paintings epitomized German barbarity and lack of respect for the conventions of war, since to him it was clear that in both the summary execution of the prisoner was imminent. Letting his vivid imagination embellish the story of the captured franc-tireur even further, Richard suggested to his readers that the only reason this old volunteer had not already been killed was that he would be dragged, before his execution, from village to village as an example to the rest of the population.18 Although no death’s-head insignia is visible, the saddle blanket of the rider leading the captive is very similar to that of the hussar featured in *The Spy*; indeed, the physical


characteristics of these two hussars are so similar as to suggest a common model. 19

Although the extent of such executions and reprisals by the Germans during the Franco-Prussian War may be open to question, the French public was made well aware of these real or imagined crimes by the huge volume of sensational accounts about the war published during the 1870s and 1880s. Until the appearance of de Neuville's Spy, however, even implied mistreatment of French soldiers or civilians had never figured in military paintings exhibited in the Salons. The 1880s saw a rapid change in this situation. Shortly after de Neuville's death in 1885, anti-German sentiment in France reached its most fevered pitch of any time during the late nineteenth century. The deterioration of Franco-German relations was exacerbated by harsh new German measures in their sector of Alsace-Lorraine and, on the French side, by the saber rattling of General Boulanger and Dérouléde's Ligue des Patriotes. A new generation of young military painters, undoubtedly encouraged by the popularity of de Neuville's later works, filled the annual Salons with paintings of prisoners and hostages based on the war. Many of these works would never have been permitted into the Salons of the 1870s, but the government seldom censored clearly anti-German subjects in the 1880s. Paul-Emile Boutigny's Les Otages in the Salon of 1886 was identical in subject to de Neuville's earlier De Montbéliard à Strasbourg, with essentially the same group of figures represented. Also in the 1886 Salon, Jules Daubeil's Colonne de Prisonniers—Sedan 1870 (Figure 12) revived the painful memory of that last great battle which sealed the fate of Napoleon III's armies. More specifically, however, it shows German soldiers cruelly tearing a French prisoner away from his wife, as other prisoners register a futile protest. It is interesting to compare this with a work by the German military painter Anton von Werner, which was completed in the same year. Von Werner, who was director of the Berlin Art Academy, enjoyed a success in Germany comparable to that of de Neuville in France, although in von Werner's case it was won by celebrating the victorious exploits of the German armies during the war. In contrast to Daubeil's painting, von Werner's French prisoner of war is permitted a touching final embrace, while a German soldier fondly cradles the prisoner's infant a few steps away (Figure 13).


19. For another version of this subject, also dated 1884, see Philippe Chabert, Alphonse De Neuville: L'Epopee de la défaite, Collection: Peintres témoins de l'histoire (Paris, 1979) fig. 47; in this painting the positions of all the figures are reversed and the leading hussar's head is turned sharply left in the direction of his prisoner.
Writing about the differences between French and German artists in their treatment of the Franco-Prussian War, the German critic Otto Roese warned in 1885 that "it would be imprudent to ignore that our adversaries have drawn from their defeats an artistic advantage more powerful, more brilliant, than we Germans have known how to obtain with victories which are perhaps unprecedented in history." The numerous eulogies and tributes to de Neuville in *Le Drapeau* and other nationalist publications at the time of his death reflect the French belief that he had contributed more to the emotional cause of revanche than any other military painter of the period. The popularity of his paintings and the extensive circulation of reproductions based on these paintings gave de Neuville enormous visibility; as Roese suggested, French popular pride in his openly chauvinistic work had no parallel in German military art. Thus it is not surprising that when he died in 1885, de Neuville was given a full military funeral, with the participation of several detachments of the regular army. His pallbearers included Déroulède, Detaille, Meissonier, and Bouguereau. Early in 1888 Detaille organized a committee to sponsor a sculptural memorial to de Neuville. This monument, by the sculptor Francis de Saint-Vidal, was erected in the center of the Place Wagram in Paris (Figure 14) and inaugurated with great pomp in November 1889. The ceremony, presided over by Director of Fine Arts Gustave Larroumet, again included a host of military platoons and speeches by political leaders and several of the artist's friends. The monument to de Neuville and to his role in reviving the patriotic pride of the French nation no longer exists. Ironically enough, it was removed from the Place Wagram and melted down for scrap by the German troops that occupied Paris during World War II.


22. For a full account of these ceremonies, see *Le Monde Illustré* (Nov. 25, 1889) p. 323.