Andre Massena Doc written by Ocolius




ANDRE MASSENA
MARECHAL DE L'EMPIRE
Helvetie
Ligurie

The Spoiled Child of Victory.

André Masséna was born on 6 May 1758 in Nice, in the County of Nice, then part of the Kingdom of Sardinia, the son of Jules César Masséna (1731–1764) and Catherine Fabre
He was baptized Andrea Massena the same day at the Cathedral of Saint Reparata by Canon Ignazio Cacciardi. His father's family, originally from Piedmont, had lived for at least three centuries in the Vésubie valley and owned land in Levens, a town in the hinterland of Nice. His father, after serving in the army for seven years,became a wine merchant on his return home in 1754. That same year he married Catherine Fabre, daughter of a contractor and shipowner from Toulon, with whom he had six children. He died from tuberculosis in 1764 and his widow, who quickly remarried, entrusted their children to the care of her first husband's relatives; André, the eldest of three sons, was then six years old.

Masséna spent his childhood in the family home in Levens and revealed himself early on a turbulent boy. When he was not yet ten years old, his grandmother, anxious to compensate for his lack of education, tried to make him a baker, but Masséna did not appreciate this career any more than he did working in his uncle's soap factory, where he remained until the age of 14. Giving up on becoming a craftsman, he preferred to run away and became a cabin boy aboard a merchant ship.

(Fluid intelligence)

He sailed in the Mediterranean Sea and on an extended voyage to French Guiana In 1775, at the age of 17, Masséna definitively gave up sailing and, on the advice of his uncle Marcel, who was already serving in the unit as a non-commissioned officer, enlisted in the Royal Italian Regiment stationed in Toulon.
Social Engineering: Influence Building

Benefiting from his good physical condition, Masséna learned the profession of arms while his uncle took care of his education. Appointed corporal on 1 September 1776, he was successively promoted to sergeant on 18 April 1777, to quartermaster on 14 February 1783, and finally to adjutant at the age of 26 on 4 September 1784 This was the highest rank a non-nobleman could achieve in the French Royal Army.
(Fluid intelligence): Learning Ability
Social Engineering: Influence Building Leadership

On 13 April of the same year, Masséna was received as an apprentice in the Toulon masonic lodge Les Élèves de Minerve. His progression within the hierarchy of the lodge was rapid and he became its master of ceremonies on 15 August. On 27 September 1787, the Grand Orient de France created the lodge La Parfaite Amitié within the Royal Italian Regiment itself, of which Masséna became the president.

In 1788, following the restructuring of the Royal Italian, Masséna was sent to Antibes where he joined the corps of Royal Chasseurs of Provence. He stood out as a competent non-commissioned officer; with

further advancement blocked, Masséna requested the following year to be transferred to the gendarmerie, but his request was rejected despite the recommendations of his commanding officer. He finally left his regiment on 3 August 1789, in the early days of the French Revolution, to settle in Antibes. There he married Marie Rosalie Lamare, daughter of a master surgeon, on 10 August With little wealth, Masséna opened up a grocery store and, without much success, engaged in smuggling for about two years. During this time he became an active member of local revolutionary circles. With the establishment of the National Guard in French cities, Masséna was appointed instructor of the Antibes unit due to his military experience. He showed great efficiency in this post and was soon elected instructor captain of the 2nd volunteer battalion of Var on 14 September 1791. He became second lieutenant-colonel on 1 February 1792 and first lieutenant-colonel on 1 August.

(Social Engineering): Influence Building Seduction
Manipulation:Direct

Masséna took part in the first Piedmontese campaign in the armies of the Republic. His battalion was assigned to the Army of the Var commanded by General Jacques Bernard d'Anselme, in a brigade that also included the 3rd Var Battalion, the 1st Hérault Battalion and a squadron of dragoons. Masséna quickly built a reputation as a leader who cared about discipline and the upkeep of his unit. General d'Anselme entered the city of Nice on 29 September 1792 at the head of the French troops occupying the County of Nice; shortly afterwards, Masséna's battalion, integrated into General Brunet's column, occupied the Principality of Monaco in October The exactions committed by the French army angered the local population,
Psychological Warfare: Inducement

and Masséna had to participate in the suppression of the barbet movement that resisted the French occupation of the County of Nice As a native of the region and knowing it perfectly, he was particularly appreciated by his superiors, who also cited the good conduct of his battalion as an example.
(Social Engineering):Charisma

On 8 June 1793, Masséna took part in an assault on the Col de Tende. Despite an initial success, he and his men came up against the defensive camp of Pérus, held by the Austro-Sardinians, and had to retreat in disorder. This setback did not hamper Masséna's career, who had the support of the new commander-in-chief of the army, General Dumerbion, a friend of the family. He received command of the Fougasse camp, on the Col de Turini, and proceeded to execute an arrest warrant against General Dortoman [fr], whose management of the troops was called into question On 17 August, he was named chef de brigade of the 51st Infantry Regiment, but Dumerbion refused to let him take up his assignment and Masséna therefore remained at the Fougasse camp five days later, on 22
August, he learned of his promotion to general of brigade He resisted Sardinian assaults on 7 and 12 September and then, after his transfer to the left wing of the Army of Italy, captured Utelle on 14 November. He soon afterwards requested leave to rest with his relatives at Antibes.
Counteraction: Tactical Response

This interlude did not last long: on 14 December, Masséna was detached to the corps carrying out the Siege of Toulon under Dugommier's order. From his arrival, replacing General La Poype at short notice,

he personally led a column in an assault on Fort Lartigue, which he captured in the first charge. Masséna then turned the fort's large-calibre cannons against the British fleet in the Toulon harbour, which, combined with the fall of Fort l'Éguillette - in which an officer named Napoleon Bonaparte distinguished himself - precipitated the withdrawal of the British squadron. As a reward for his services, Masséna was promoted to general of division on a provisional basis on 20 December 1793 and appointed governor of Toulon two days later.
Social Engineering: Influence Building

Masséna then returned to the Army of Italy in January 1794 and obtained command of its right wing. In late March, in accordance with Dumerbion's orders, he launched an offensive in the Genoa sector which took him as far as Garessio on 19 April and then to Colle Ardente, which he captured at the same time as the mille Fourches camp.
Strategy:Fortitude
In conjunction with General Macquard, commanding the central division, he seized the fort of Saorgio on 29 April and then the Col de Tende on 8 May, opening the way into Piedmont for the Army of Italy. According to Jean-Jacques Prévost, "the execution of the campaign plan (initiated by Bonaparte) ensured by Masséna's brilliant tactical mastery and the effective reorganization of the field artillery due to Bonaparte were the essential factors of this success". Masséna was confirmed in his rank of general of division on 29 August 1794. At the same time, judging his force to be stretched too thin, he decided to fall back with his men to Ormea for fear of an offensive return by the Austrians. On 21 September, he defeated with 18,000 soldiers the 8,000 Austrians of General Wallis at the Battle of Dego. Due to an illness, Masséna left his post on 22 December and his division was entrusted to General Sérurier.

Social Engineering: Influence Building Charisma
Adversity Capacity:Stress Tolerance Mental Fortitude
Strategy: Fortitude

Returning to the army in April 1795, Masséna was placed at the head of the 1st division of the right wing of the Army of Italy The Italian front then saw little activity but, at the end of June, the Austro-Sardinians went on the offensive and forced the French to retreat to Borghetto, reconquering the ground lost the previous year.Driven out of Melogno on 25 June, Masséna retreated but still managed to maintain discipline among his troops.
Adversity Capacity: Cognitive Discipline
Strategy Logistics

Following this setback, commander-in-chief Kellermann was replaced by Schérer, who decided, after consulting Masséna, to launch an offensive as winter approached.
The main maneuver in the center was entrusted to Masséna, who commanded the Laharpe and Charlet divisions for the occasion, to which was added a reserve contingent. At the Battle of Loano on 23 November, he pushed back the enemy positions as far as Mount Settepani, not without suffering heavy losses, before falling back south towards Finale, on the Mediterranean coast. His forces thus bypassed Loano and the Austrian army of General Wallis positioned on the road to Finale, which finally retreated to Savona, abandoning a large part of its artillery and baggage to the French. Masséna's decisive contribution

to the victory earned him the congratulations of General Schérer, and representative on mission François Joseph Ritter, wrote to the authorities: "Masséna has done wonders"

Tactics: Boldness Variety
Strategy Flexibility

Part II:Under Bonaparte's orders in Italy

"Comrades, in front of you are 4,000 young men belonging to the richest families of Vienna; they have come with post-horses as far as Bassano: I recommend them to you."

General Masséna's proclamation to his troops before the Battle of Rivoli.

Masséna, then aged 37 and with an already well-established reputation, seemed poised to succeed Schérer in the command of the Army of Italy.
Cystralized intelligence: Experience

It was thus with skepticism that he received the appointment to this post of General Napoleon Bonaparte, ten years his junior, better known for his influential connections in Parisian circles than for his experience on the battlefield. Initially hostile to the newcomer, Masséna and the other divisional commanders were, however, very quickly won over by the Bonaparte's determination, energy and sense of command

(Strategy Forecasting)
At the start of the campaign, in April 1796, Masséna had under his command the Laharpe (8,500 men) and Meynier (9,500 men) divisions.

After a meeting with Bonaparte on 10 April, during which the commander-in-chief informed him of his intentions, Masséna fought at the Battle of Montenotte where he launched a successful offensive on the Colle di Cadibona, cutting the Austro-Sardinian formation in two.
He then pursued the Austrians retreating to Acqui
(Divergent Thinking Lateral Thinking)
(Tactics): Creativity
Planning Acclimation

On 14 April, his troops captured the village of Dego after fierce combat and engaged in all sorts of excesses, in defiance of discipline. Indeed, when Vukassovich's Austrian corps attacked the next day, it came as a total surprise
the French soldiers had to evacuate the village and Masséna himself, finding himself in bed with a mistress, had to flee in his nightshirt. The general nevertheless managed to regroup his forces and to retake Dego at the end of the day, though not without suffering significant losses.

(Adversity Capacity: Composure
Emotional Intelligence: Management
Psychological Warfare: Reinforcements)
Counteraction: Tactical Response

The French troops soon won a series of victories that led the Kingdom of Sardinia to request an armistice, while the Austrians retreated hastily across Northern Italy

(Strategy Flexibility Strategy Fortitude Planning Coverage>Psychological Warfare:Demoralisation)

Having crossed the Po at Piacenza, Bonaparte caught up with the Austrian rearguard at Lodi, on the banks of the river Adda. At the Battle of Lodi, the bridge separating the two banks was taken at a rapid pace by an infantry column led by Masséna and a handful of generals (Dallemagne, Lannes, Berthier and Cervoni). The Austrians, shaken by this vigorous action and the deployment of the French cavalry, abandoned the field.
Psychological Warfare: Demoralization
Strategy:Building
Field Crafting: Trap Setting

Masséna was awarded a sabre of honour for his conduct during this battle. Bonaparte entered Milan on 16 May. Despite the enthusiastic reception of the population, he demanded the payment of a contribution of 20 million gold pounds and allowed his soldiers to engage in looting,
Psychological Warfare:Abusing Insecurities

which led a week later to anti-French revolts in Binasco and Pavia On 21 May, the commander-in-chief decided to resume his advance and the vanguard commanded by Masséna reached Brescia on 27 May and then Verona on 1 June. In this phase of the campaign, marked by numerous attempts by the Austrians to lift the Siege of Mantua, Masséna was constantly on the front line, which earned him the esteem of Bonaparte, who said of him on 14 August: "active, tireless, has audacity, coup d'œil and promptitude in making decisions".

Social Engineering: Influence Building Charisma
At the moment when Bonaparte prepared to confront Wurmser's imperial army, Masséna's division had 12,000 soldiers. Faced with an Austrian thrust from the north, Masséna retreated to Castelnuovo and then headed towards Lonato, where his division took part, on 3 August, in the battle that resulted in the defeat of Quasdanovich's Austrian corps.

(Strategy Fortitude)

Two days later he commanded the left wing of the French army at the Battle of Castiglione, fought by Bonaparte against Wurmser. Early in the day, his troops feigned a retreat, leading Wurmser to rush into this "gap" in order to link up with Quasdanovich, who was now far away. However, a premature attack by Sérurier's division on his rear caused him to interrupt his movement; Bonaparte then unleashed a general attack and launched Masséna and Augereau against the Austrian center, while the positions of the Imperials on both of their wings were taken, leading to Wurmser's retreat.
(Tactical Synergy)
(Planning Versatility)
(Strategy Complexity)

A month later, Wurmser returned to the offensive in order to relieve the fortress of Mantua, still besieged by the French. Bonaparte immediately sent his forces to intercept him: the Masséna division defeated the Austrian general Davidovich at the Battle of Rovereto on 4 September, occupied Trento on the 5th
(Strategy Fortitude)

and set off after Wurmser, who tried by all possible means to reach Mantua At the Battle of Bassano on 8 September, the Imperial rearguard was cut to pieces by the Masséna and Augereau divisions, which did not prevent Wurmser from reaching Mantua on 15 September. At this point, Masséna's division numbered no more than 5,300 men, compared to around 10,000 at the beginning of the month. Shortly afterwards, a powerful Austrian army commanded by General Alvinczi arrived in the Italian theatre: Masséna, greatly outnumbered, retreated successively to Vicenza and then Verona, before attempting a counter-offensive against Alvinczi that was defeated at Caldiero on 12 November Modifying his strategy,
(Strategy Flexibility)

Bonaparte decided to strike the Austrian rear at the Battle of Arcole. On 15 November, Masséna captured the town of Porcile, covering Augereau's manoeuvre which was directed towards Arcole. However, despite the determination of their soldiers, the French were unable to hold on to the Alpone and retreated to the Adige. On 17 November, however, the clashes resumed and this time turned to the advantage of the Army of Italy: Masséna recaptured Ronco and Arcole which, combined with the pressure from Augereau's troops, forced Alvinczi to retreat.

(Strategy Fortitude)