



200 years of the Armed Forces Training Centre Thun
16./17.08.2019

Why Guillaume Henri Dufour is the title figure?

(Source: Schweizer Dufour Museum)

Biographical data in short

- 1787 Birth in Constance on 15 September 1887 as son of Benedict Dufour and Pernette Dufour (born. Valentin)
- 1789 Return of the family to Montrottier Castle in Annecy near Geneva
- 1807 Admission to the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris as 140th of 142 students
- 1809 Studies at the Ecole d'application in Metz (**fortress construction**)
- 1811 **Fixing works on Corfu, inclusion in the office of General**
- 1813 War wound and capture by English troops
- 1816 **Farewell from the French Army, return to Geneva**
- 1817 **Marriage with Suzanne Bonneton**
- 1818 Cantonal engineer of Geneva, construction of the orangery of the botanical garden
- 1819 Opening of the Federal Central Military School in Thun**
- 1820 Birth of daughter Annette, published on Memorial sur les travaux de guerre
- 1825 Trip to Paris, Project for a suspension bridge over the Saane in Freiburg
- 1827 **Appointment as Swiss Colonel**
- 1830 Napoleon III attends the military school in Thun, member of the Military Commission
- 1831 He demands that the alpine crossings should be **fortified**
- 1832 As the Quartermaster General, he is responsible for the work of triangulation, Director of the military school in Thun
- 1842 Election to the Grand Conseil in Geneva
- 1847 Election as Commander-in-Chief in the Sonderbund War
- 1849 Election to the National Council for the Canton of Berne
- 1864 Final report on the map series
- 1864 President of the International Congress for the Foundation of the Red Cross
- 1875 Death of Dufour after serious illness on 14 July

His work in short

(Source: Wikipedia)

Guillaume Henri Dufour (15 September 1787 – 14 July 1875) was a Swiss army officer, bridge engineer and topographer. He served under Napoleon I and held the office of General four times in career, with the first being in 1847 when he led the Swiss forces to victory against the Sonderbund. Dufour presided over the First Geneva Convention which established the International Red Cross. He was founder and president of the Swiss Federal Office of Topography from 1838 to 1865. The Dufourspitze (the highest mountain in Switzerland) in the Monte Rosa Massif is named after Dufour.

In 1819 he was involved in the founding of the first federal military school in Thun, where he taught as chief instructor of the genius until 1831, and from 1831 to 1834 was active as commander in the rank of colonel, teaching among others Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, the later French emperor Napoleon III, with whom he later remained friendly.

From 1831 he was head of the general staff department. In this function he was responsible for the organisation of the defence of Switzerland in the event of war. On 21 October 1847, the «Tagsatzung» appointed him General and thus Commander of the Federal Armed Forces, with the task of dissolving the Sonderbund. He managed this after a campaign lasting only four weeks and causing relatively few casualties (according to official figures: 150 dead / 400 injured), which ended with the surrender of the Sonderbund-cantons. Already during these clashes, Dufour respected strict attention to the observance of humanitarian principles in the hostilities. The traditional principle of General Dufour *„Il faut sortir de cette lutte non seulement victorieux, mais aussi sans reproche“* (One must not only emerge victorious from this battle, but also without rebuke).

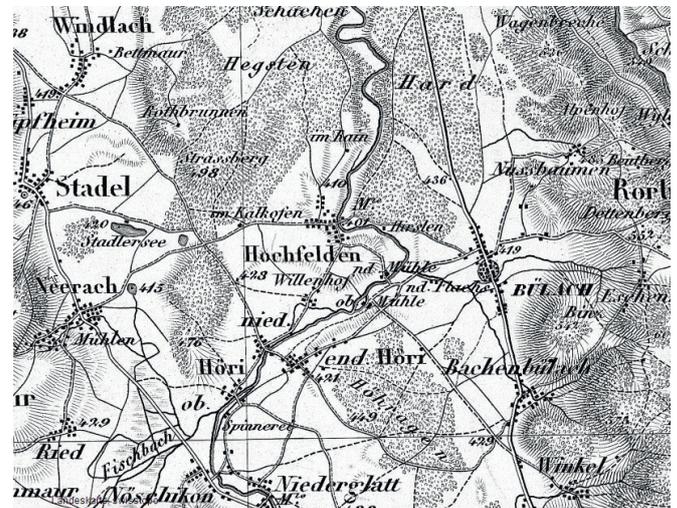
With his cautious approach in the Special Federal War, Dufour not only prevented the collapse of the Swiss Confederation through intervention by foreign powers, but also created a basis for reconciliation that enabled the divided cantons to agree on a common federal state as early as 1848. In 1849, 1856 and 1859, the United Federal Assembly again gave him supreme command of the Swiss Armed Forces in order to prevent attacks on Switzerland in the course of various disputes. Following the adoption of the Federal Constitution in 1848, he was the first General appointed by the Federal Assembly in the history of Switzerland.

Cartography

In 1832, Dufour was appointed Chief Quartermaster of the Military Supervisory Authority (until 1847) and «Directeur de la Carte» (until 1865). His tasks now included the management of the federal triangulation and national surveying. In 1837, Dufour set up the Federal Topographical Bureau in Carouge, which began its work at the beginning of 1838. Dufour's work began in the same year on the preparation of an improved topographical map of Switzerland to replace the Atlas Suisse. (official founding year). Later it became the Federal Office of Topography.

The basis for the new map series was the Bonaparte projection. Dufour used the rock Repère Pierre du Niton in the port of Geneva as the starting point for the elevation. The 13 km stretch between Walperswil BE and Sugiez FR formed the base or baseline for the map. It was measured in 1791, 1797 and 1834 (under Dufour) with electrodes and iron rods. The base end points of Walperswil and Sugiez were connected to a triangular network which for the first time covered the whole of Switzerland and connected the parts of the country north of the Alps with the southern parts.

Between 1845 and 1865, the 25 sheets of the "Dufour Map" were published at a scale of 1:100,000. This topographical map series, which was outstanding for this time, represented Switzerland geometrically correctly for the first time. The Dufour Map was produced parallel to the modern federal state of 1848. It symbolically brought the cantons together and for this reason also gained national importance.



Foundation of ICRC

Together with Henry Dunant, the doctors Théodore Maunoir and Louis Appia and the lawyer Gustave Moynier, he founded the Committee of Five in Geneva on February 9, 1863. Eight days later, the International Committee of the Assistance Societies for the Care of the Wounded was formed, and in 1876 the International Committee of the Red Cross. Although he was very positive about Dunant's book *A Memory of Solferino*, he initially had doubts about the viability of Dunant's proposals to establish voluntary wound care societies. Despite these doubts, his belief in the correctness of this idea led him to actively participate in the establishment of the International Committee and its work. His international reputation and military experience were of great use to the Committee in persuading foreign governments to support the idea of the Red Cross. After the founding of the International Committee, he was elected its first President in 1863.

Dufour chaired the diplomatic conference at which the first Geneva Convention was adopted in August 1864. It is said that, in response to a British participant's statement that he could not sign the Convention without a seal, he used his pocket knife to cut a button from the tunic for the delegate and presented the astonished delegate with the words "Here, Your Excellency, you have Her Majesty's coat of arms". In the same year, at the age of 77, he handed over the office of President of the International Committee to Gustave Moynier.

Both the use of a white cross on a red background as the Swiss national coat of arms - introduced in 1840 by the Swiss Constitution - as well as the use of the red cross on a white background, i.e. the colour reversal of the Swiss flag, as a symbol of the ICRC and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and as a protective sign of the Geneva Conventions, date back to Dufour.