

# Perspectives in Military History

49<sup>th</sup> Annual Lecture Series

## “The European Battlefield in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Napoleon III and Military Leadership During the Second French Empire”

**Dr. Frederick C. Schneid**

Author, Professor of History at High Point University

On June 24, 1859, the decisive clash of Napoleon III's Italian campaign took place at Solferino. More than 250,000 soldiers from France, Austria, and Piedmont fought over a ten-mile front. In this lecture, Dr. Frederick Schneid of High Point University will discuss the international coalition which fought the battle, as well as how the conduct of the battle at the operational level reflected the changing nature of warfare in the Industrial Age. The talk will also cover how tactical level traditions of leadership established during the First French Empire remained sacrosanct.

Napoleon III took the French throne at the end of 1852, but the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century political and military rule of Napoleon I was not far from the new leader's mind. The Second French Empire (1852-1859) formed alongside Napoleon III's coup d'état and with it the 'Bonapartist' agenda or 'Napoleonic Idea' was reinstated. Its principles established the emperor as supreme, the representative of the great Napoleon I, and the leader of the free peoples of Europe. This idea resulted in Napoleon III's plan to influence political events in Italy by fostering Italian nationalism to reunify the country through the dissolution of the European Alliance. The French Army allied with the Piedmont region of Italy in 1859 to drive the repressive Hapsburg rulers out of the peninsula. Thus, Solferino offers a fascinating insight into the evolution of warfare during the nineteenth century.

Dr. Frederick Schneid is the chair of High Point University's history department, as well as a professor. Schneid's research concentrates on the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Era, and general military history, leading him to publish widely on the subject: *Napoleon's Italian Campaigns, 1805-1815* (2002), *Napoleon's Conquest of Europe: The War of the Third Coalition 1805* (2005), and *The Napoleonic Wars-Essential Bibliography Series* (2012). His most recent book, *The French-Piedmontese Campaign of 1859* (2014), is published in both English and Italian and drew considerable acclaim at the International Book Fair in Turin, Italy. Schneid's writing appears in articles for the *Journal of Military History*, the *Journal of Strategic Studies*, and the *Consortium on Revolutionary Europe*. He is also on the Board of Directors of the Consortium on the Revolutionary Era, and serves as the Southern Regional Director of the Society for Military History. Dr. Schneid received his Ph.D. from Purdue University, and resides with his family in Greensboro, North Carolina.

**DATE: Wednesday, October 21, 2015**

**TIME: Doors open at 6:30 PM and the talk begins at 7:15 PM**

**PLACE: USAHEC, Visitor and Education Center, Multi-Purpose Room**

**For updates and any last-minute changes in “Perspectives” meeting times and places, please check the USAHEC homepage: [www.USAHEC.org](http://www.USAHEC.org) or call the Information Desk: (717) 245-3972.**