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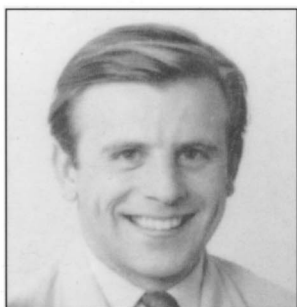
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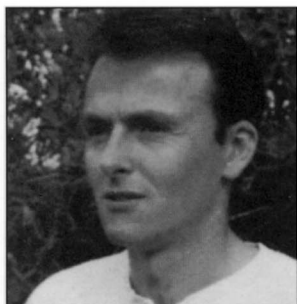
Prussia's Eagle resurgent



Simon Millar • Illustrated by Adam Hook



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Rosbach and Leuthen 1757

Prussia's Eagle resurgent



Simon Millar • Illustrated by Adam Hook

Series editor Lee Johnson • Consultant editor David G Chandler

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Dedication

To Alexander and Frederick

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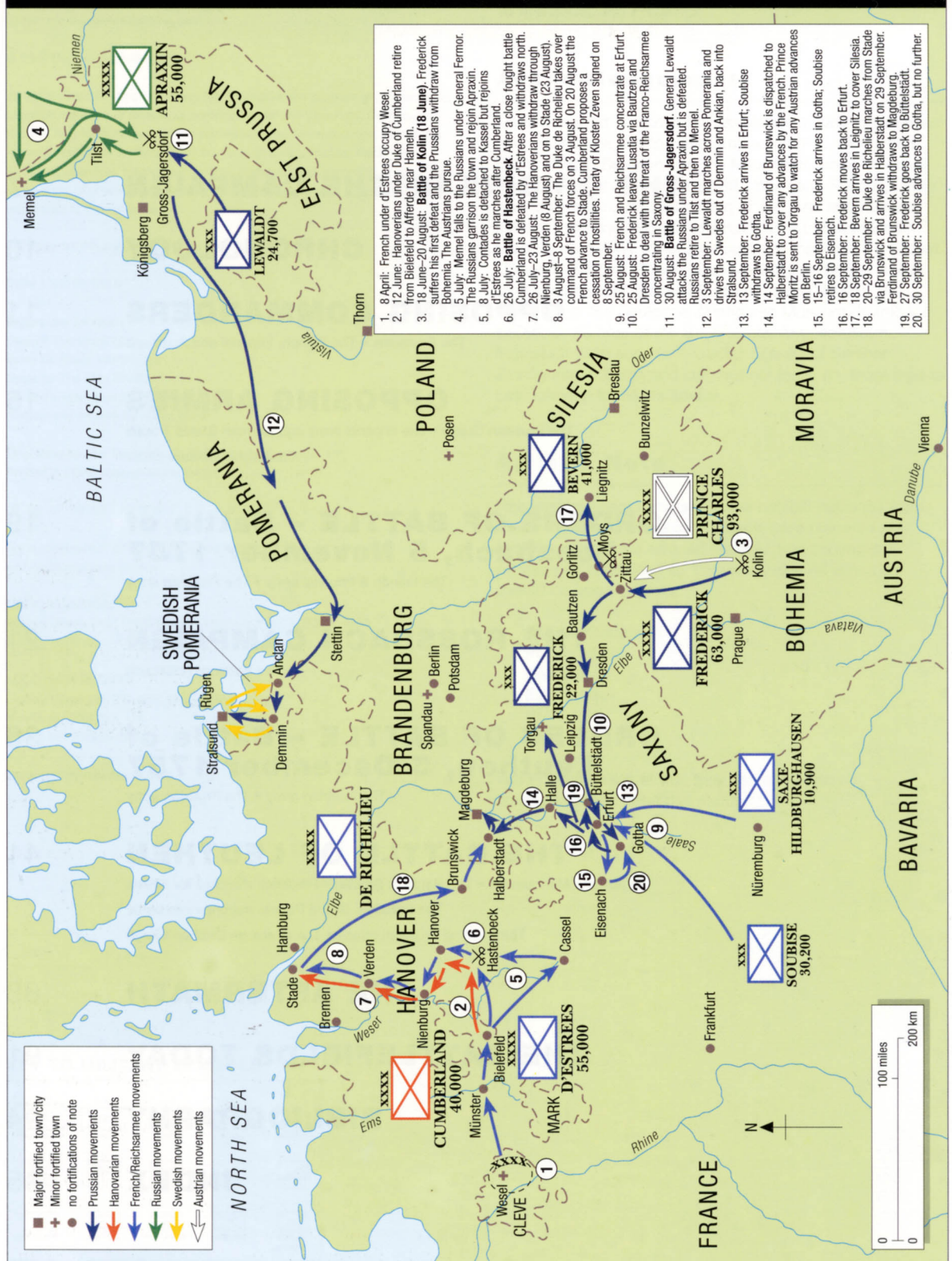
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INVASION OF HANOVER & PRUSSIA, APRIL-OCTOBER 1757



THE ORIGINS OF THE CAMPAIGN



Frederick II, King of Prussia and Elector of Brandenburg (1712–86) by Johann Georg Ziesenis. One of history's great military commanders, Frederick threw central Europe into upheaval in 1740 when he invaded Silesia, but through political skill and military brilliance managed to keep his enemies at bay. (AKG)

After his lightning spring campaign in 1757 and his defeat of the Austrian forces at Prague on 5 May, events and the control of them had slipped away from Frederick. His disciplined Prussian army had suffered its first defeat at Kolin on 18 June and had then been ignominiously pushed out of Bohemia, so that by August 1757 Frederick had lost all that he had gained earlier in the year. His greatest losses however had been his trusted lieutenant, Field Marshal Schwerin, at Prague and his army's reputation for invincibility at Kolin.

While the tide ran against him in Bohemia, events elsewhere in central Europe were taking a turn for the worse as well. In the east Frederick had left 25,000 men under the command of the aged Field Marshal Johann von Lewaldt to guard the eastern borders of his kingdom against the threat from Russia. In early June the Russian commander Field Marshal Apraxin advanced into East Prussia with a force of 55,000 and, splitting his force in two, sent General Fermor to capture the small fortress port of Memel. The port fell on 5 July and having left a small garrison, Fermor marched to rejoin Apraxin for the advance on the East Prussian capital, Königsberg. Their movements were so slow and apparently aimless that Lewaldt ventured to attack them at Gross-Jägersdorf on 30 August. Lewaldt was outnumbered nearly two to one but, interpreting Frederick's instructions in an aggressive light, committed his army. The Prussian attacks were not well coordinated and at one point Prussian battalions fired on each other. Lewaldt was forced to withdraw, but Apraxin was unable to follow up his success partly because, although beaten, the Prussians had still inflicted considerable damage on his army and secondly because the Russian supply train was in disarray. Apraxin withdrew to Tilsit and then to Memel, pleading lack of supplies. This enabled Lewaldt to confront the Swedes, who were encroaching into Pomerania from their base at Stralsund. He quickly forced them out of Anclan and Demmin and back into Stralsund and onto the island of Rügen. The true cause of Apraxin's lethargy had been political. The Tsarina Elizabeth was thought to be close to death and her successor was the pro-Prussian Grand Duke Peter of Schleswig-Holstein. Apraxin did not want to incur the future Tsar's displeasure by inflicting a defeat on Peter's hero.

In the west Prussia's fortunes were little better. The French were massing a force on the Rhine opposite Cleve and Mark. Although large on paper the force was overburdened with staff officers and an enormous baggage train. The small Prussian force could not hope to defend Mark and Cleve and withdrew before the French advance. On 8 April the French under Marshal d'Estrees occupied Wesel. The Duke of Cumberland had been appointed to command the Hanoverian forces gathered by George II for the defence of the Electorate of Hanover, but



Field Marshal James Keith (1696–1758). One of the most famous Jacobite exiles to serve a European monarch. After leaving Scotland he first entered Russian service before joining Frederick in 1747. He was awarded the Order of the Black Eagle in 1747. Keith was killed at Hochkirch in 1758. (Author's collection)

against so large a French force he had no choice but to withdraw. The Hanoverians concentrated at Bielefeld by 12 June and retired behind the River Weser. The French advanced very slowly, occupying Münster (1 June) and Rheda (14 June) and pushing on to Bielefeld (18 June). There they halted for a full month. Contades was sent with 20,000 men to occupy Cassel, while the main army prepared to march against Cumberland. Contades' move threatened the Hanoverian left flank and this stirred Cumberland into action. To protect Hanover he broke his camp at Afferda and marched upstream to Hastenbeck. It was here on 24 July that the two armies' advance guards met. Cumberland posted his Hanoverians in a strong position and d'Estrees attacked on 26 July. In a hard-fought battle in the centre and on the Hanoverian left the French gained the upper hand. It appeared that Cumberland's left would be cut off by the French General Chevert, when a counterattack by Breitenbach and the Hanoverian Guards threw back the French regiments of Chevert in disorder. This spread to the Swiss of de Anlazay, but the effort was too late as Cumberland had already given the order to retire. Breitenbach's success only served to secure an unmolested retreat. Cumberland's retreat order was given a little too soon but the success of Chevert had left him with very little choice, his position having been compromised.

The Hanoverians made no attempt to stand until they reached Nienburg on the River Weser. From there they moved to Verden on 8 August and on to Stade on 23 August.

The Duc de Richelieu had replaced d'Estrees on 3 August as a result of political infighting in Paris. This temporarily rendered the French army impotent. The effects of their victory however were tangible enough. Minden, Hanover and Hameln capitulated almost immediately and Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick came to terms with the victors and put his army at their disposal on 10 August. By 20 August the French were at Nienburg and they continued their advance towards Stade. Cumberland sent a message to Richelieu, which he received on 21 August, suggesting a suspension of hostilities between Hanover and France. This de Richelieu initially declined, but when faced with the prospect of a long siege and the likelihood that it would be raised by the English in any case, he accepted the mediation of the King of Denmark and the Treaty of Kloster Zeven was signed on 8 September. With the convention concluded, de Richelieu marched from Stade to Brunswick (20 September) and on to Halberstadt (29 September), where he intended to go into winter quarters. This greatly irritated the Austrians who urged him to do more to cooperate with General Soubise, who was commanding the French 'auxiliary corps' in the south. The Duke of Brunswick, who had been sent by Frederick to cover any French movements in the north, retired towards Magdeburg, thereby protecting Berlin.

In the meantime a Franco-Imperial force had been gathering in the south to threaten Frederick from Saxony. General Soubise set out with 22,000 men from Strasbourg at the beginning of August to affect a juncture with the Imperial force of Prince Joseph Saxe-Hildburghausen, which had been gathering at Nuremberg. This Imperial force consisted of a collection of detachments from the various Princes, Electors and Dukes of the Holy Roman Empire and numbered some 11,000 men. The meeting of the two armies was effected at Erfurt on 25 August. It

was here that General Broglie, sent by de Richelieu, arrived with 8,000 men to replace the 10,000 Württembergers and Bavarians who had gone to join the main Austrian army of Prince Charles of Lorraine. The combined Franco-Imperial force now consisted of 41,000 men, but Soubise and his colleague could not agree on a plan of action. Soubise was wary of marching to engage Frederick as the Imperial elements of the joint force were without proper transport, commissariat and other administrative services and he quite rightly saw potential disaster in taking such a disorganised force into the field. Soubise therefore displayed a strong desire to avoid the clash with the Prussians that Saxe-Hildburghausen so eagerly sought. Frederick was about to take the decision out of their hands and on 25 August in sunny weather, he marched to join Moritz of Anhalt-Dessau with 12,000 men, meeting him at Dresden on 30 August. With a combined force of 22,000 Frederick set out to deal with the threat to his western flank. The weather turned inclement and the British envoy, Mitchell, remarked that, 'the soldiers are greatly fatigued, as it has rained constantly since we left Dresden and the roads are extremely bad.' The powerful Prussian advance guard, commanded by the newly promoted Major-General Friedrich Wilhelm von Seydlitz, repeatedly pushed back the Austrian hussar brigade of Szecheny; on 7 September the little town of Pegau fell and on 13 September Seydlitz and Frederick, who was up with the advance guard, bluffed their way into the town of Erfurt. The townsfolk of Erfurt crowded around to kiss Frederick's coat tails and even his horse. Faced with this rapid advance of 170 miles (273km) in 13 days, Soubise retired from Erfurt to the hilly country around Eisenach where he halted on 15 September. On the same day the Prussians swept away the Franco-Imperial outpost at Gotha and Frederick, at the head of the Meinecke Dragoons, entered the town. He did not stay long in Gotha, leaving the next day, and on 17 September the allied commanders with a force of 9,000 arrived there on a reconnaissance. A 'deserter' sent in by Seydlitz to say that Frederick was on his way with the main army caused consternation among the allied commanders, who fled Gotha in some haste. It was also on 17 September that Frederick learnt of the capitulation of his Hanoverian allies at Kloster Zeven. This would allow the army of de Richelieu to help Soubise in central Germany. On 17 September Frederick despatched Ferdinand of Brunswick to cover his northern flank and warn of any approaching threat from de Richelieu. On the same day Moritz of Anhalt-Dessau was sent to defend the important bridge at Torgau and shield Berlin. At around the same time Frederick learnt that at the battle of Moys on 7 September, not only had a Prussian corps been attacked and destroyed by the Austrians, but that his great friend and confidant Winterfeldt had been killed at its head. The Franco-Imperial army in Thuringia remained frustratingly just out of Frederick's reach, so on 27 September an irritated Frederick withdrew from Erfurt to Büttelstädt; but this move did not entice the allies any further east than Gotha.



Lieutenant-General Friedrich Wilhelm von Seydlitz (1721-73). Seydlitz came to Frederick's notice at Kolin, where he handled his cavalry with skill and determination; something the other more senior Prussian cavalry commanders had singularly failed to do. Promoted out of turn to Major-General after Kolin he repaid Frederick's faith by destroying the Franco-Imperial cavalry at Rossbach. A notorious womanizer and lover of debauchery it is perhaps unsurprising he died relatively young in 1773. (Author's collection)

CHRONOLOGY

1756–63

The Seven Years War

1756

- 16 January** – England and Prussia sign the Convention of Westminster
- 1 May** – France and Austria sign the Treaty of Versailles
- 29 August** – Frederick invades Saxony
- 9 September** – The Prussians occupy Dresden, the Saxon capital
- 10 September** – Frederick begins the 'siege' of the Saxon camp at Pirna
- 1 October** – The battle of Lobositz
- 13 October** – The Saxons surrender at Pirna after an aborted rescue attempt by the Austrians

1757

- January** – Convention of St Petersburg
- 18 April** – Prussian 'blitzkrieg' into Bohemia
- 21 April** – Action at Reichenberg
- 1 May** – Treaty of Versailles. A new treaty between France and Austria that agrees to the partition of Prussia
- 6 May** – The battle of Prague
- 29 May** – The bombardment of Prague begins
- 18 June** – The battle of Kolin
- 20 June** – Bombardment and siege of Prague lifted
- 30 June–22 July** – Prussians are ejected from Bohemia
- 26 July** – The battle of Hastenbeck. The Hanoverians under the Duke of Cumberland are defeated by the French commanded by Marshal d'Estrees

- 29 July** – Frederick rejoins the main army and publicly humiliates his brother Prince August William by dismissing him from the army
- 25 August** – Frederick leaves Lusatia to deal with the growing threat of the Franco-Imperial army in Thuringia
- 30 August** – Russians defeat a small Prussian army at the battle of Gross-Jägersdorf
- 7 September** – Frederick's favourite, Winterfeldt, is surprised at the battle of Moys and defeated and slain
- 8 September** – Treaty of Kloster Zeven is signed between the Hanoverians and the French
- 9 September** – Bevern withdraws into Silesia
- 13–30 September** – The Prussians and the Franco-Imperial army march and counter-march in Thuringia
- 12–24 October** – Frederick goes to deal with the Austrians under Hadik who are raiding against Berlin
- 24 October–3 November** – Frederick returns to deal with the Franco-Imperial army that has finally advanced beyond Gotha towards Leipzig
- 5 November** – Battle of Rossbach
- 13 November** – Frederick leaves Leipzig and marches to Silesia
- 19 November** – Schweidnitz in Silesia falls to the Austrians
- 22 November** – Bevern is defeated outside Breslau by Prince Charles at the Battle of Breslau
- 24 November** – Breslau surrenders
- 28 November** – Frederick arrives in Parchwitz
- 2 December** – Zieten arrives with the remnants of the Breslau army.
- 3 December** – Parchwitz address by Frederick to his generals
- 5 December** – Battle of Leuthen

OPPOSING COMMANDERS



Major-General Karl Heinrich von Wedel (1712–82). Wedel came from an old Pomeranian family and joined the famous Potsdam Grenadiers in 1727. He fought through the Wars of Austrian Succession and was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel in 1751. On awarding him the *Pour le Mérite* in 1752, Frederick thanked him publicly for his loyalty, service to the crown and his friendship. Wedel was a reliable and tough soldier – if a little unimaginative – who could be trusted to get things done. It was with this in mind that Frederick appointed him to lead the assault against the Austrian left. He was promoted to Major-General on 2 December 1757. He became the *Inhaber* of IR26 in 1758 and in 1759 was promoted to Lieutenant-General. (Author's collection)

THE PRUSSIANS

Although the Prussian army had been defeated at Kolin and unceremoniously pushed out of Bohemia afterwards, the Prussian general officer still believed in his own abilities over those of his Austrian counterpart. There was a lot more respect for the Austrians, but the consensus was that Kolin had been an unlucky defeat for their King – the confidence of the Prussian commanders had not been shaken.

Frederick II, King of Prussia and Elector of Brandenburg (1712–86)

Frederick was 45 in 1757, the year of his first defeat and also possibly of his greatest campaign and victories. The victorious spring campaign where his 'blitzkrieg' into Bohemia had taken the Austrians completely by surprise had resulted in a victory at the battle of Prague (6 May) and the subsequent investment and siege of that city. The summer campaign had been an unmitigated disaster for Frederick. The battle of Kolin (18 June) 40 miles (64km) east of Prague had seen his army defeated for the first time, albeit in a hard-fought battle. The Prussians commanded by his less-able brother Augustus Wilhelm were then unceremoniously driven out of Bohemia and into Lusatia. Frederick now displayed the less attractive side of his nature when he blamed Augustus Wilhelm for the fortunes of his army and publicly humiliated him by dismissing him from his service. The reality was that as King and Commander he should have taken command of his army immediately it had become apparent that Augustus Wilhelm was out of his depth; instead he opined to his sister Wilhelmine that he could see no reason why France, Sweden and Russia had been so cruel as to pick a fight with him. Frederick however in due course replaced this self-pity with an iron resolution and determination to force a decision in battle. He realised that failure to reverse his fortunes before the campaigning season ended would see him lost. The manoeuvres in the late summer, autumn and early winter employed by Frederick show him at his very best. While for most of the time he had to react to the movements of his enemies, he was at all times seeking to bring them to battle and in the end for all their advantages the forces of France, Austria and the Holy Roman Empire fell prey to the strategic and tactical acumen of Frederick, who while operating on internal lines was able to defeat his rivals in detail. For the time being he rode his luck with the Russians. By the end of the year Frederick had re-established his military dominance in Europe.

Field Marshal James Keith of Inverugie (1694–1758)

James Keith was the youngest son of the 9th Earl Marischal and grew up in Scotland, living at Inverugie Castle near Peterhead. Although



Field Marshal Prince Charles of Lorraine. The younger brother of Maria Theresa's husband, Francis Stephen. He was a personable man and not without good qualities, but as field commander was never the match of Frederick and had seemingly learnt nothing from his disastrous defeat at Frederick's hands at Hohenfriedberg in 1745. Leuthen was to be his last active field command. (MSW)

Protestant the Keiths were staunch supporters of the Stuart claim to the British throne, but after the defeats at Sherrifmuir (1715) and Glenshiel (1719) James Keith went into exile. He entered Russian service in 1727 and arrived in Moscow in 1728. He fought in the Russian campaigns in Poland (1733), against the Ottoman Empire in the campaigns of Marshal Münnich (1735–39) and lastly against the Swedes in Finland (1741). Keith was instrumental in the development of the Russian army and ended his service as a full General in 1747, when he resigned having rebuffed the attentions of the Tsarina Elizabeth. Keith was unwilling to have her as a mistress and left Russia to take up service with Frederick the Great. Frederick was quick to notice James Keith's qualities and created him a Field Marshal on 18 September 1747 at the very start of his Prussian service. As the years passed Keith became one of Frederick's most trusted advisors and commanders. He fought in the opening battles of

the Seven Years War, most notably at Rossbach when he was Frederick's nominated Second in Command. He was given an independent command after Rossbach and so did not take part in the battle at Leuthen. By the spring of 1758 a lifetime of campaigning was taking a toll of Keith's health. In addition, too much port and brandy, taken as remedies, had brought on gout and a fever, and added to his lifelong battle with asthma. He did not take part in the Zorndorf campaign as he was recovering in Breslau, but rejoined Frederick in time for the Hochkirch campaign. Despite the warnings of Keith and others, Frederick managed to get himself into a trap at Hochkirch (14 October 1758) and it was only the Scotsman's heroism that saved Frederick from destruction. Keith however paid with his life. The Germans still consider Keith one of Prussia's great heroes. In Peterhead where a statue stands in his memory few realise they are looking upon one of Scotland's greatest sons and history's finest generals.

Major-General Friedrich Wilhelm Freiherr von Seydlitz (1721–73)

Friedrich Wilhelm Freiherr von Seydlitz-Kurzbach was born in Kalkar in the Prussian province of the Duchy of Cleve, the son of a Rittmeister in Cuirassier Regiment No.5. In 1734 he was appointed Page to the Markgraf of Brandenburg-Schwedt. His formative years of service with the 'Mad Markgraf' left him with a passion for living life to the full. He was an excellent horseman and smoking, drinking and womanising were just some of his other passions. After his time with the 'Mad Markgraf' Seydlitz took service with the Prussian cavalry. His early career included service in all the branches of the cavalry, firstly with the Natzmer Hussars during the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–45) as a Rittmeister, then as the Commanding Officer of the Württemberg Dragoons. Only five months later Frederick appointed him Commanding Officer of the regiment that was eventually to bear his name, the Rochow Cuirassiers. The opening campaign of the Seven Years War proved rather inauspicious for Seydlitz, when at the battle of Lobositz (1 October 1756) he managed to get his command stuck in the Morellenbach. He compounded his mistake at the battle of Prague (6 May) by again getting stuck, this time in the mud of the Moldau River. His moment

came however at Kolin on 18 June. He was at the head of his regiment, part of Krosigk's brigade, when Krosigk was killed as his command crashed into the Austrian right flank. Seydlitz took command in the heat of battle and continued with Krosigk's task, rolling up and almost destroying the Austrian flank and creating a battle-winning position. Unfortunately for the Prussians the other cavalry commanders performed badly. Seydlitz's actions brought him to Frederick's attention and he was awarded the *Pour le Mérite* and promoted Major-General out of turn. His style of command was admired by many, as were his cheerfulness and his insistence that his subordinates received their proper reward for their services. At Rossbach he was given command of all the available squadrons and famously greeted his generals as he rode up with, 'Gentlemen, I obey the King and you will obey me!' It was his handling of the cavalry that made the vital contribution to Frederick's victory and before the year was out he was promoted Lieutenant-General and awarded the Order of the Black Eagle. No other officer had risen so quickly yet few begrudged him his success.

THE FRENCH, IMPERIAL AND AUSTRIANS

The allied armies were very confident of defeating Frederick. The French had shown their prowess during the Silesian Wars, winning victories in most of their battles under the great Marshal Saxe. The confidence of the Austrians was high having inflicted a first defeat on Frederick at Kolin before driving him out of Bohemia altogether.

Field Marshal Prince Charles of Lorraine

Prince Charles was the younger brother of Maria Theresa's husband Francis Stephen. His first command was in 1741 when he took over command of the Austrian army from Field Marshal Neipperg after the defeat at Mollwitz. He was determined to reverse the defeat at Mollwitz and almost won the day at the small battle of Chotusitz in 1742. He mismanaged the siege of Prague later that year, and was again in command of the Austrian forces at the battle of Hohenfriedeberg in 1745, suffering a catastrophic defeat. The dispatch to Vienna complained bitterly, 'we have suffered a total defeat in one of the finest positions you could imagine'. Between the War of the Austrian Succession and the Seven Years War he was President of the Military Reform Commission and pushed through far-reaching changes in the structure and training of the Austrian army. He missed the first battles of the Seven Years War at Lobositz and Prague, but took command of the besieged forces inside Prague from the mortally wounded Field Marshal Browne. As a joint commander with Field Marshal Daun he oversaw the expulsion of Frederick from Bohemia after Kolin. Although he was a personally brave man and experienced as a military commander he suffered from a lack of self-confidence. This he tried to hide by drinking to excess and enjoying the company of dissolute

Field Marshal Joseph Friedrich Prince von Saxe-Hildburghausen. An intelligent and creative man he was unsuited to field command. His strengths lay in administration, which he demonstrated when given the task of reorganising the wild border districts of the Hapsburg Empire. Rossbach exposed his weakness in field command and he retired to his estates after the battle. He did not serve in the field again. (HGM)





Field Marshal Leopold Graf Daun (1705–66). An experienced and very able general and after the death of Field Marshal Browne, the Austrian commander most capable of causing Frederick difficulties on the battlefield. His first battle against Frederick as an army commander came at Kolin on 18 June 1757. Here he selected an excellent position and deployed his troops with skill, forcing Frederick to make mistakes and gaining Maria Theresa her first victory. After Kolin he became the advisor to Prince Charles of Lorraine. At Leuthen his advice was ignored with dire consequences for Austrian control of Silesia. (ASKB)

friends. As news of the debaucheries, which left him unfit for command during the day, filtered back to Vienna he began to lose the confidence of Maria Theresa and that of the public. Family ties protected him until early 1758, but with Nadasty being sacrificed after Leuthen to appease the pro-Lorraine faction, he was finally removed from field command. Leuthen was his last battle; he died in 1780.

Field Marshal Joseph Friedrich Prince von Saxe-Hildburghausen

His career in Austrian service began in 1735 when he was given a commission by the Emperor Charles VI to put down a rebellion in the Warasdin border district. He acted firmly and efficiently and through this experience soon realised that the Croats would be excellent soldiers if properly led. Maria Theresa found that she had a very able administrator within the ranks of her general officers and so he was given the task of reorganising the military border district. He made a third of the Croatian manpower available for campaigning each year if required, and commented that the border districts were a treasure of the Imperial crown and as such could never be bought or paid for in money. In January 1757 Maria Theresa appointed him to command the Imperial army (*Reichsarmee*), which finally concentrated in September of the same year. Although he was an intelligent and creative man – his eccentricity bordered on the extreme – he was totally unsuited to field command. The debacle at Rossbach was his last battle and in early 1758 he retired to his estates.

General Charles de Rohan, Prince de Soubise (1715–87)

He was born into one of the oldest families of France. During the war of Austrian Succession he was an Aide de Camp to Louis XV, and in 1757 he was the governor of Flanders and Hennegau. He commanded the French troops at the battle of Rossbach and having been utterly defeated alongside the Imperial army was sent to command the French forces in western Germany against Hanover and her allies. He won a victory at the battle of Lutterberg in 1758 in Hesse and was promoted Marshal. In 1759 he was due to command the army for the invasion of England, but by 1761 he was back in Germany as the Commander in Chief of the forces on the lower Rhine and lost at the battle of Vellinghausen. By 1762 he was in joint command with Marshal d'Estrees, a position he held until the end of the war. He was viewed as a timid and indecisive commander, who reputedly owed his high military appointment to the influence of Madame de Pompadour and Madame du Barry.

OPPOSING ARMIES



General Franz Leopold Graf Nadasty (1708–83). A Hungarian nobleman who was the outstanding light cavalry leader of his generation. He was a brave and selfless officer who was admired by the whole of the Austrian mounted arm. His raids into Prussian territory were daring and his reconnaissance always thorough. He suffered in less active roles, however; when tied to the right flank at Kolin he was lethargic and at Leuthen his command of the left wing was patchy. After the initial withdrawal of his forces he rallied them and helped secure the new position, saving the Austrian army from total collapse. After the battle he was sacrificed to appease the Lorraine faction at Court and did not receive an active command again. Maria Theresa lost her best cavalry commander to the vanities and jealousies of courtiers. (ASKB)

I am not going to discuss the uniforms, equipment or typical tactical formations of the combatants at Rossbach and Leuthen. These subjects are detailed admirably in the volumes on the Prussian and Austrian armies, by Philip Haythornthwaite, and the French Army, by René Chartrand, in Osprey's *Men-at-Arms* series. These are an excellent source of complimentary information and are well worth reading in conjunction with the *Campaign* series volumes on Frederick's battles.

I do intend, however, to look at the Prussian Guard, who took part in the storming of the churchyard at Leuthen, probably their most famous exploit in the Seven Years War. I will also examine the *Reichsarmee* (or Imperial Army) that fought at Rossbach and the Regiment Rot-Würzburg that fought so well at Leuthen. Finally I will consider Frederick's famous oblique order tactics.

THE PRUSSIAN GUARD

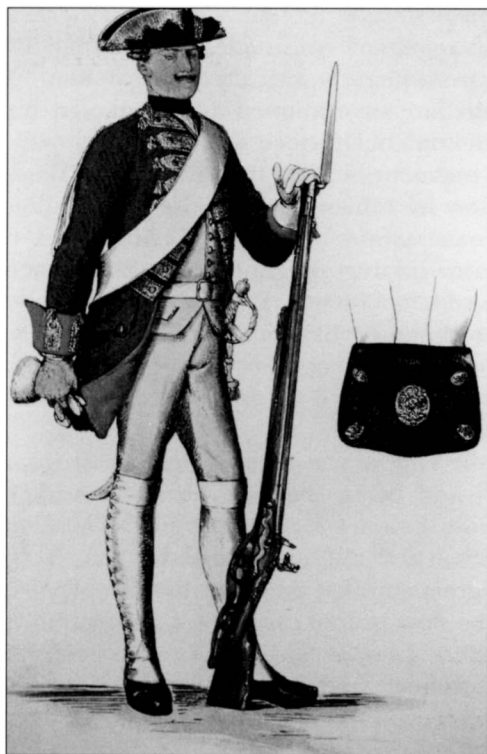
Of all the infantry regiments in Frederick's army the most prestigious was Infantry Regiment No. 15 'Garde'. In 1731 Frederick was appointed to the recently vacated position of *Inhaber* (colonel-proprietor) of the old Regiment von Goltz. The regiment consisted of two battalions and Frederick established his headquarters with the first battalion at Neu-Ruppin – the second battalion was stationed at Nauen. On his accession to the throne in 1740 Frederick formed the Guard regiment. The first battalion of his own regiment became the First or *Leib Garde* Battalion. The second battalion in Nauen became the II Battalion Garde and was raised from five companies of Infantry Regiment No. 6 (Potsdam Grenadiers) and from Infantry Regiment No. 34 (Prince Ferdinand of Prussia) a new third battalion was raised at the same time. They were always known as the II and III Battalion Garde respectively. Frederick however did not break up the Potsdam Grenadiers in their entirety; he kept Infantry Regiment No. 6 as the Grenadier Garde Battalion in memory of his father.

The Prussian Guard were the elite of the infantry and, apart from performing the smartest drill and being the best turned out, they were socially the most prestigious infantry regiment to join. The First Battalion was quartered in Potsdam and, although disliked by the rest of the garrison, everyone was in agreement that they were most impressive on parade as Lossow writes: 'The slow, serious measure of their advance was almost unbroken by a drum beat or music. The occasion was profoundly moving. Far distant from any theatrical presentation, it held a dignity of its own, which overcame any other sentiment through sheer impressiveness of the spectacle.'

Although their parade ground drill was impressive these were far from 'toy' soldiers – all three battalions of the Guard regiment took a full and active part in all of Frederick's campaigns. They proved time and again that they were as tough and resilient in battle as they were smart on parade. At Mollwitz the First Battalion performed magnificently and Frederick remarked that he owed them his thanks for their part in his victory. At Kolin the First Battalion was attacked on two occasions by Austrian cavalry – on each occasion having been ridden down by the cavalry, they re-formed and marched off with colours flying and drums and fifes playing in true Guards fashion. The II and III Battalions fought with distinction at Soor in the Silesian Wars and at Leuthen were the only guards battalions present. The two battalions attacked the village of Leuthen, chased away the Austrians, captured seven cannon and after a long struggle finally overcame the Imperial Regiment Rot-Würzburg who were defending the churchyard. For their bravery at Leuthen the two battalions won six *Pour le Mérite* between them.

THE IMPERIAL ARMY AND GERMAN STATES TROOPS

Musketeer of 1st Battalion IR15 (Garde) the elite of the Prussian infantry. This was the only battalion not to fight at Leuthen. At Kolin they had performed superbly, fighting off two Austrian cavalry attacks single-handed. (Print after Menzel)



The Holy Roman Empire was made up of ten regions or *Kreis*, each obligated to contribute to the Empire's defence should it be threatened with attack. Within the ten regions were 2,000 component states, but only 300 were under obligation to provide men or money. The Imperial, or *Reichs*, army was supposed to muster 84,000 infantry and 36,000 cavalry in the event of a call to arms, but in reality the numbers were far smaller, most particularly in the cavalry.

The army, which encountered Frederick at Rossbach, had been called to the colours in September of that year. Command had been given to an Austrian Field Marshal, Joseph Prince von Saxe-Hildburghausen. In addition to the minor states, Austria was also required to supply manpower. On this occasion, however, all Austria provided was two cuirassier and two hussar regiments. From the outset the Holy Roman Empire's better troops were not sent to the *Reichsarmee*. This was exacerbated when the 6,000-strong Württemberg contingent were ordered to join the Austrians in Silesia. Command of the army proved a nightmare for Saxe-Hildburghausen. All orders had to be approved by Vienna and when he tried to re-organise the army he had 25 Imperial generals strenuously opposing him. Of the junior officers, the younger ones showed some ability, but the older captains and field officers were not really of any use.

The infantry rank and file did no peacetime training and required a lot of work to get them fit for service. The fact that in some regiments only 10 per cent of men had weapons in working order did not help matters – the Cologne Regiment mustered with no weapons whatsoever. Of the rest of the infantrymen's equipment, the cartridge boxes were too small, tents were almost non-existent and

some regiments did not even have blankets. The infantry wore either white or blue uniforms in the Austrian or Prussian style. Apart from the Pfalz Cuirassiers the cavalry were in as parlous a state as the infantry, indeed Saxe-Hildburghausen remarked that the cavalry 'knew no manoeuvres and could hardly understand simple commands'. The cavalry wore white, except the Württemberg Dragoons, who wore blue. The artillery was in no better condition. There were too many different calibres of weapons, ammunition carts were a luxury and there was no central control. Vienna refused Saxe-Hildburghausen's request to appoint an officer to fulfil this role. The artillery on the whole wore blue, but three *Oberrheinisch* states wore green. Having painted a bleak picture of the state of the Imperial army of the period it is interesting to note that observers at Rossbach point out that the Imperial district regiments were well turned out. Perhaps they had recently been re-equipped. Their appearance did not help their performance at Rossbach, however. The French commander, General Prince Soubise classified the regiments as follows: *Good* – Darmstadt, Münster (Nagel and Elberfeld), Bayern (the *Kreis* regiment), Salzburg, Mainz and Blue-Würzburg. *Middling* – Württemberg, Pfalz-Effern, Nassau-Weilburg, Paderborn and Cologne. *Useless* – Trier, Varell, Ferentheil, Cronegg, Pfalz-Zweibrücken, Baden-Durlach, Baden-Baden and Fürstenberg.

Interestingly the regiments classified as 'good' by Soubise were, on the whole, made up of contingents from only one area. Those considered useless had contingents from several areas, e.g. Baden-Baden had contingents of men from 42 different minor states in two battalions.

Würzburg was also part of the Holy Roman Empire and her soldiers were therefore technically Imperial troops. The Würzburg contingent consisted of two regiments each of two battalions; they had been raised by the Prince Bishop of Würzburg, a staunch opponent of Prussia, who paid for one battalion himself while the other was paid for by Austria. They wore white uniforms in the Austrian style with either red or blue collars, cuffs and lapels, which gave them their distinctive names of *Rot* (Red) or *Blau* (Blue) Würzburg. The musketeers wore the tricorne with white lace while the grenadiers wore the bearskin cap, with a white-laced red or blue bag. All their other equipment was Austrian in origin. After intense recruiting Blau-Würzburg served with the Imperial army and put up a creditable display at Rossbach. Rot-Würzburg had been raised from three peacetime units and served with the Austrians in Silesia, gaining great distinction at Leuthen for their defence of the churchyard.



Grenadier of 3rd Battalion IR15 (Garde). The 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the regiment both served at Leuthen, and the battle was very much 'their day'. Their famous attack on the Catholic church was immortalised in art by Carl Röchling. The uniform of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions was essentially the same, the difference being that the colour of the back of the mitre was red for 2nd Battalion and yellow for 3rd battalion. (Print after Menzel)

FREDERICK'S OBLIQUE ORDER

During the Seven Years War, Frederick was constantly ranged against coalitions who attacked him on several fronts at once and his strategy and tactics reflected this predicament. Faced with numerous threats and invariably weaker in numbers, Frederick could not afford to wage a long drawn-out campaign against a single opponent. Similarly, tactically he could ill-afford to fight gruelling battles of attrition. It was Frederick himself who stated: 'Our battles must be quick and lively.' The oblique order was Frederick's means of achieving this. In the eighteenth century the typical army deployment, as used by most of Frederick's opponents, was essentially linear in nature – infantry in the centre with cavalry on the

wings. Frederick's introduction of the oblique order allowed him to engineer a tactical situation that gave him a distinct advantage over these linear formations. The key to Frederick's success was a detailed and accurate reconnaissance, in person, of his enemy's deployment. Based on this he would decide which of his opponent's flanks to strike. Having made this decision, Frederick would manoeuvre his army to allow his centre to attack the enemy wing frontally while his own opposing wing actually outflanked the enemy line to strike it in the flank and the rear. The other wing of his army would be 'refused'; stepped back in echelon effectively opposite the enemy centre. These manoeuvres would ideally take place in dead ground whenever possible. If things went according to plan, when he attacked Frederick would effectively have two-thirds of his army engaged against roughly one-third of his opponents. Frederick would have the advantage of surprise and psychological edge as the enemy's wing would be struck frontally and in the flank simultaneously. The effects of trying to face this attack from two directions would, on most occasions, cause severe disorganisation in the ranks of the enemy wing, allowing the Prussians to 'roll up' the enemy line. Frederick's refused flank will have prevented the enemy's centre and other flank from coming into action swiftly enough to play any significant part in events and the battle is effectively won. At Kolin Frederick failed to outflank the Austrian line properly and suffered the consequences. At Leuthen these tactics were executed to brilliant perfection.

ORDERS OF BATTLE, BATTLE OF ROSSBACH, 5 NOVEMBER 1757

Army Organisation at Rossbach

The Order of Battle for the French and Imperial army (*Reichsarmee*) at Rossbach is laid out in the column formation they used to try to turn the Prussian flank. The French army of the period named their brigades after the senior regiment, e.g. GM Marquis de Custrine commanding Brigade St Chaumont. The Imperial army did not follow the practice.

THE FRENCH & IMPERIAL ARMY

Joint Commanders in Chief

Field Marshal (FM) Joseph Friedrich

Prince von Saxe-Hildburghausen

General Prince de Soubise

FIRST COLUMN/LINE (In Order of March):

Major General (GM) Ludwig Freiherr von Brettlach
(Austrian)

Brettlach Cuirassier Regiment – 7 sqns

GM Prinz von Hohenzollern (Imperial)

Kurpfalz Cuirassier Regiment – 3 sqns

Hohenzollern Cuirassier Regiment – 4 sqns

Württemberg Dragoon Regiment – 2 sqns

Lieutenant General (GL) Chevalier de Nicolay

GM Marquis de Crillon – Brigade Piemont (French)

Piemont Infantry Regiment – 4 bns

GM Marquis de Custrine – Brigade St Chamont
(French)

St. Chamont Infantry Regiment – 2 bns

Brissac Infantry Regiment – 2 bns

GL Comte de Montboissier

GM de Planta (2 brigades)

Brigade Royal-Roussillon (French)

Deux-Ponts Infantry Regiment – 2 bns

Royal Roussillon Infantry Regiment – 2 bns

Brigade Reding (Swiss)

Reding Infantry Regiment – 2 bns

Planta Infantry Regiment – 2 bns

GL Comte Mailly

GM le Rougrave (2 brigades)

Brigade La Reine (French)

La Reine Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns

Bourbon-Busset Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns

Fitz-James Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns

Brigade Bourbon (French)

Beauvilliers Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns

Rougrave Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns

Bourbon Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns

FRENCH RESERVE ARTILLERY COLUMN

Royal Artillerie Infantry Regiment – 2 bns

33 Cannon

Second Column/Line

GM Ludwig Freiherr von Brettlach (Austrian)

Trautmannsdorf Cuirassier Regiment – 7 sqns

GM Prinz von Hohenzollern (Imperial)

Bayreuth Cuirassier Regiment – 5 sqns

Ansbach Dragoon Regiment – 5 sqns

GL Comte de Lorges

GM Marquis de Rougé (2 brigades)

Brigade Mailly (French)

Mailly Infantry Regiment – 4 bns

Brigade La Marck (French)

La Marck Infantry Regiment – 2 bns

Royal-Pologne – 1 bn

St Germain Infantry Regiment – 1 bn

GM Comte Bauer (2 brigades)

Brigade Castellás (Swiss)

Castellás Infantry Regiment – 2 bns

Salis infantry Regiment – 2 bns

Brigade Wittmer (Swiss)

Wittmer Infantry Regiment – 2 bns

Diesbach Infantry Regiment – 2 bns

RESERVE CORPS COLUMN/LINE

GL Herzog von Broglie

GL Marquis de Boulpry

GM Chevalier d'Milly

Brigade Penthievre

Penthievre Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns

Saluces Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns

Lameth Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns

GM Comte d'Orli

Brigade Poitou

Poitou Infantry Regiment – 2 bns

Provence Infantry Regiment – 2 bns

GM Prince Camille

Brigade Rohan-Montbazou

Rohan-Montbazou Infantry Regiment – 2 bns

Beauvois Infantry Regiment – 2 bns

GL Marquis de la Chétardie

GM Marquis de Castries

Brigade Lusignan

Lusignan Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns

Escars Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns

IMPERIAL (*Reichsarmee*) COLUMN/LINE

GL Prinz von Hessen-Darmstadt

GL Baron Drachsdorff

GM Graf von Hohenstein

Würzburg Infantry Regiment (Blue) – 2 bns

GM Baron Rojenfeld

Hessen-Darmstadt Infantry Regiment – 1 bn

GM von Barel

Barel Infantry Regiment – 2 bns
 Kur-Trier Infantry Regiment – 2 bns
 12 Cannon

GM von Ferentheil

Kronegk Infantry Regiment – 2 bns
 Ferentheil Infantry Regiment – 2 bns

RESERVE FORMATIONS**Corps of GL Comte de Saint-Germain****Brigade Condé**

Condé Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns
 Bezons Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns
 St Jal Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns

Brigade Touraine

Condé Infantry Regiment – 2 sqns
 Touraine Infantry Regiment – 2 sqns

Brigade La Marine

La Marine Infantry Regiment – 4 bns

Brigade Poly

Poly Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns
 Grammont Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns
 Montcalm Cavalry Regiment – 2 sqns

Corps of GM von Loudon

Austrian Hussars – 2 sqns
 Croat Light Infantry – 2 sqns
 Austrian Hussars – 1 sqn
 Szecheny Hussars (Austrian) – 6 sqns; not engaged
 Volontaires de Saarbrücken Hussars (French) – 2 sqns;
 not engaged
 Apchon Dragoon Regiment (French) – 4 sqns; not
 engaged

THE PRUSSIAN ARMY

Commander in Chief

King Frederick II of Prussia

Second in Command

FM The Honourable James Keith**CAVALRY****GM Friedrich Wilhelm von Seydlitz****GM Friedrich Wilhelm von Seydlitz**

7th Cuirassiers Driesen – 5 sqns
 3rd Cuirassiers Leib – 5 sqns
 4th Dragoons Czetrtritz – 5 sqns

GM Freiherr von Schönaich

13th Cuirassiers Garde du Corps – 3 sqns
 10th Cuirassiers Gendarmes – 5 sqns
 8th Cuirassiers Seydlitz – 5 sqns
 3rd Dragoons Meinicke – 5 sqns

FIRST LINE INFANTRY**General of Infantry (Gdl) Moritz Fürst von Anhalt-Dessau****Right Wing****GL Ferdinand Prinz von Braunschweig****GM von Itzenplitz**

Kremzow Grenadier Bn – 1 bn
 Heyden Grenadier Bn – 1 bn
 Regiment No. 19 Markgraf Karl – 2 bns
 Wedell Grenadier Bn – 1 bn

GM von Retzow

Regiment No. 26 Meyerinck – 2 bns
 Regiment No. 15 Garde – 2 bns

Left Wing**GL Heinrich Prinz von Preussen****GM von Geist**

Regiment No. 6 Garde Grenadier – 1 bn
 Regiment No. 13 Itzenplitz – 2 bns
 Regiment No. 23 Forcade – 2 bns

GM von Oldenburg

Regiment No. 9 Jung-Kleist – 2 bns
 Regiment No. 5 Alt-Braunschweig – 2 bns
 Jung-Billerbeck Grenadier Bn – 1 bn
 Lubath Grenadier Bn – 1 bn

SECOND LINE INFANTRY**GL von Forcade**

25 Cannon

GM von Usseburg

Regiment No. 1 Winterfeldt – 2 bns
 Regiment No. 24 Goltz – 2 bns

GM von Grabow

Regiment No. 21 Hülsen – 1 bn
 Börnstädt Grenadier Bn – 1 bn

RESERVE

1st Hussars Székely – 10 sqns
 7th Hussars Seydlitz – 2 sqns
 Frei Battalion Mayr – 1 bn

Notes:

1. The approximate size for each force was:

Prussian:

Infantry: 27 battalions (16,600 men);
 Cavalry: 45 squadrons (5,400);
 Artillery: 79 cannon
 Total: 22,000

French:

Infantry: 49 battalions;
 Cavalry: 40 squadrons;
 Artillery: 32 cannon
 Total: 30,200

Imperial/Austrian:

Infantry: 14 battalions;
 Cavalry: 42 squadrons;
 Artillery: 13 cannon
 Total: 10,900

2. Losses for each side were approximately as follows:

Prussia: 548
France: 6,600
Imperial: 3,552

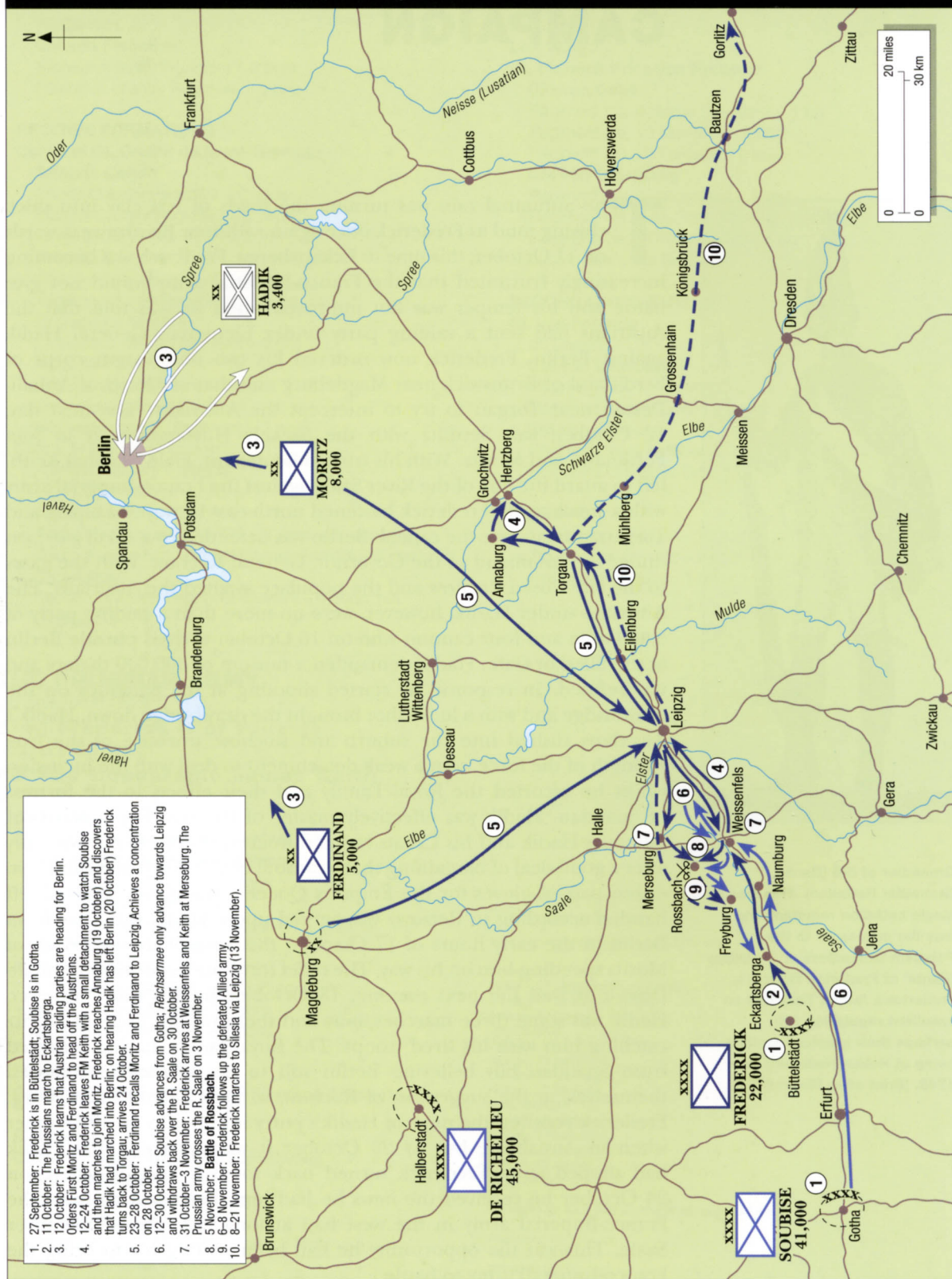
THE ROSSBACH CAMPAIGN



Grenadier of IR6 (Garde Grenadier Battalion). This was a single battalion regiment and was the successor to the Potsdam Grenadiers or 'Potsdam Giants' of Frederick William I, Frederick's father. They had an excellent reputation with perhaps their greatest exploits being at Hohenfriedeberg in 1745. (Print after Menzel)

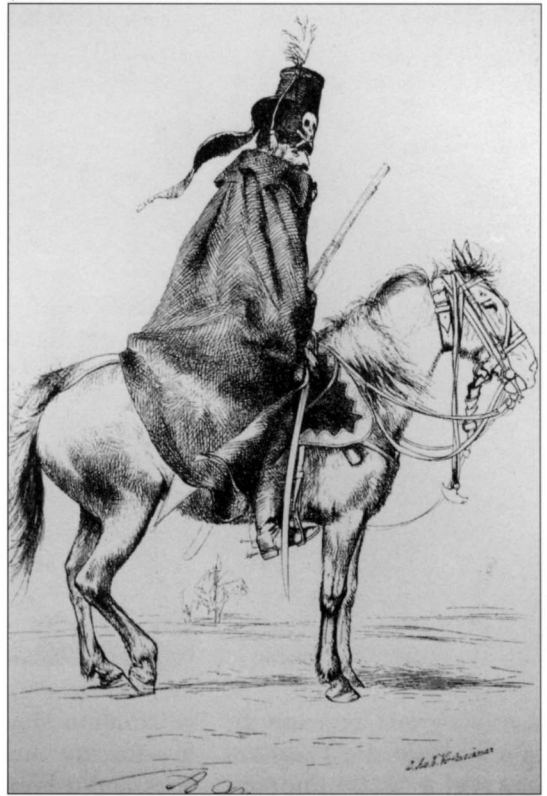
The autumnal rain was turning the roads of red clay into thick cloying mud as Frederick once again withdrew his army eastwards on 11 October, this time to Eckartsberga. Frederick was becoming increasingly frustrated that the Franco-Imperial army would not give battle and his temper was not improved when he was told that the Austrians had sent a raiding party under Lieutenant-General Hadik against Berlin. Frederick now ordered his two observation corps of Ferdinand of Brunswick near Magdeburg and that of Moritz of Anhalt-Dessau near Torgau to try to intercept the Austrians. The next day, 12 October, saw Seydlitz with the Székely Hussars march to join Ferdinand and Moritz. With his trusted lieutenant, Field Marshal Keith, left to guard the line of the River Saale against the Franco-Imperial army with a small corps, Frederick hastened north-east by way of Leipzig and Torgau to try to save the capital. Berlin was defended by a small garrison under the command of the Governor, General Rochow. With the gates to the city closed Rochow and the populace awaited the Austrians. The Austrians under Hadik, however, were no more than a raiding party of 3,400 men and four cannon who on 16 October arrived outside Berlin at the Silesian Gate. Hadik demanded a ransom of 300,000 thalers and was refused. In response he started shooting at the palisades on the drawbridge and with a lucky shot brought the drawbridge down. Hadik's Austrians rushed into the suburb and Rochow, unaware of the true strength of the force, sent a weak detachment to deal with the incursion whilst he escorted the Royal Family and their effects to the fortress of Spandau. Hadik was effectively master of the city. For upwards of 12 hours Hadik and his Croats roamed freely in Berlin and it was only after a good deal of bargaining that a ransom of 225,000 thalers and 'two dozen pair of gloves for the Empress Queen' (the gloves were all left handed according to Retzow) was agreed upon. Hadik withdrew from Berlin in the early hours of 17 October; the news of the approach of Moritz speeding him on his way. The relief force under Moritz of Anhalt-Dessau arrived the next evening, 18 October; by this time, however, Hadik was some three marches away and there was no hope of Moritz catching him with his tired troops. The Royal family, having returned from Spandau but believing Berlin still to be vulnerable, removed themselves, at the suggestion of Rochow, to the safety of Magdeburg. Frederick received the news of Hadik's entry into Berlin on 19 October when in Annaburg, but by 20 October it was apparent that Hadik had slipped away. Frederick turned back towards Torgau, where on 24 October he received the news he had long been waiting for – the Franco-Imperial army in the west had at long last crossed the River Saale. This was the opportunity he had been waiting for to bring the Franco-Imperial army to battle.

THE ROAD TO ROSSBACH, OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 1757

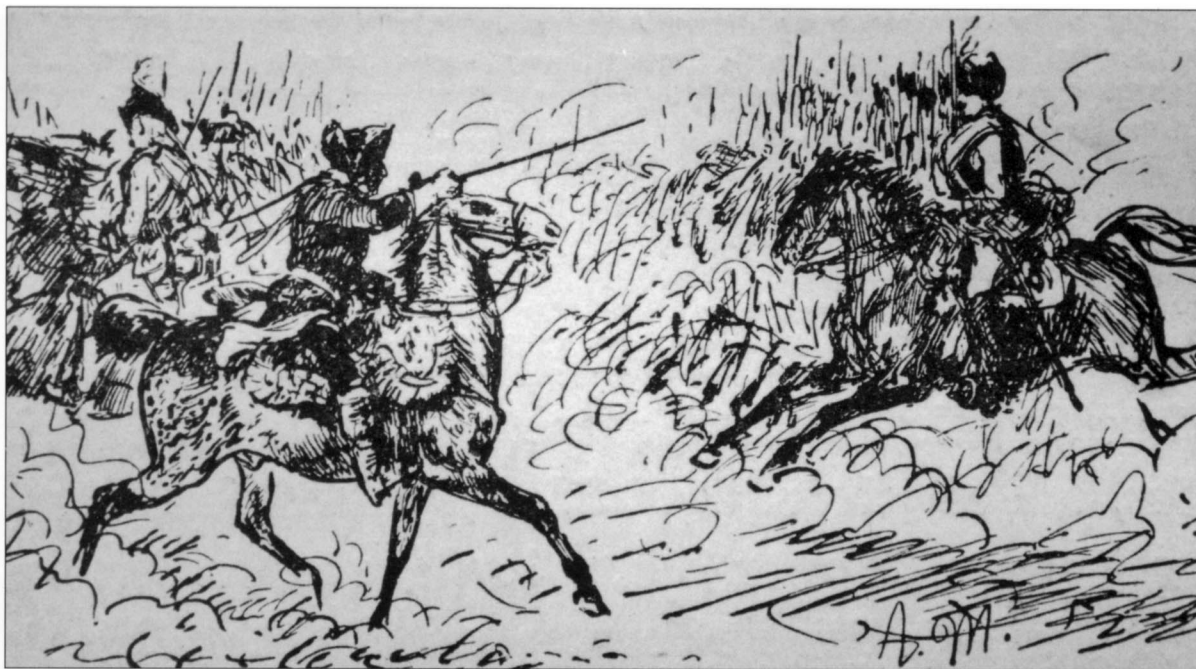


Frederick immediately sent word for Ferdinand and Moritz to rejoin him. He continued his march to Leipzig, where on 28 October the army was reunited. Moritz had reached Leipzig from Berlin in only 5 ½ days and Ferdinand had taken only three from Magdeburg. Frederick now had with him 31 battalions and 45 squadrons, approximately 20,000–25,000 men. Frederick and his army were in high spirits and full of confidence, as Mitchell the English envoy to Frederick recalls: 'they [the corps of Ferdinand and Moritz] had marched upwards of 25 English miles a day for three or five days, and at the moment they arrived they desired to be led again against the enemy'. It was during his four-day stay in Leipzig that Frederick concluded that his fortunes were beginning to improve. He received word from Prussia that Apraxin was retiring back into the vastness of Russia and Lewaldt had dealt with the Swedish threat. The most heartening news for Frederick, however, must have been that brought by the Hanoverian General, Graf von der Schulenburg. Although dressed as a country parson, in his capacity as a delegate from King George II he informed Frederick officially, 'that the Hanoverians and Majesty of England have resolved to renounce the Convention of Kloster Zeven; to bring their poor Stade Army into the field again; and do now request him, King Friedrich, to grant them Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick to be General of the same.' The only dark clouds on the horizon were gathering over Silesia.

Not everything was quite as straightforward in the Franco-Imperial army. With Frederick marching to Berlin, Saxe-Hildburghausen saw an opportunity to launch an offensive but encountered opposition from his French colleague, who quite rightly had little confidence in the military capabilities of the Imperial troops. At first de Soubise would not entertain any ideas of attack, but was eventually persuaded to advance against the Prussian rearguard of Field Marshal Keith. Keith was no fool and fell back before the advancing French forces to Leipzig, which he reached on 23 October. Frederick arrived in Leipzig on 26 October and waited only four days before advancing out against the Franco-Imperialist army. As Frederick advanced from Leipzig on 30 October so the allies withdrew across the River Saale, but not before a brisk skirmish with the Prussian advance guard had helped them on their way. Frederick encamped that night on the field of the famous Thirty Years War battle of Lützen. The Franco-Imperial army however lingered on the western side of the River Saale and this suited Frederick's purpose very well. Having made up his mind to attack the Allies, there were three points at which Frederick could cross the Saale. They were all defended; that in the north at Halle by de Broglie with his force of some 15,000, while de Soubise himself was near Merseburg and Saxe-Hildburghausen was watching the bridge at Weissenfels. Frederick decided to force the River Saale at two points: the main army would cross upstream at Weissenfels and Keith would cross downstream at Merseburg. Frederick arrived outside Weissenfels on 31 October at daybreak and immediately



A trooper of the Prussian 5th 'Death's Head' Hussars on vedette duty in the depths of winter. This was a thankless but vital task; the cavalry vedettes provided a protective screen around the armies of the period – a kind of 18th-century early warning system. (Print after Menzel)



sent his grenadiers and the *Frei* battalion Mayr to break down the town gates. While the Prussians were forcing their way into the town the garrison of 4,000 Imperial troops and a French battalion or two were mustering in the town square and deciding as to their course of action. Now was the time for the Franco-Imperialists to show resolution, but this they failed to do and as a cannonade rained down from the heavy guns Frederick had positioned on the bluff next to the ducal palace they retired across the River Saale, burning the covered bridge as they went. Some 300 of the garrison were trapped by the burning bridge, however, and captured by the Prussians. While Frederick was watching the bridge in Weissenfels burn, two enemy artillery officers were watching the royal party from cover. One of them hastened back to his superior the Duc de Crillon to report that it would be possible for a marksman to shoot the King of Prussia. The Duc de Crillon having breakfast after the early morning activity, handed the officer a glass of wine and remarked that he was there to observe the burning of the bridge, not to kill a general who was making a reconnaissance, let alone the sacred person of a king. Once it became clear the bridge had been totally destroyed, Frederick immediately set about finding an alternative. Over the next few days he ranged up and down the east bank of the Saale to find his crossing place and this he duly did about a mile further downstream and a pontoon bridge was thrown over the river forthwith. On 3 November his infantry and artillery made an unopposed crossing, while the cavalry waded across the river nearby. The Prussian advance guard, accompanied by Frederick, marched to the village of Braunsdorf. Frederick was unable to make out much of the allied position as night was fast approaching, however he was able to deduce from the watch fires of the Franco-Imperial army in the area of the village of Mûchelin that they were facing north expecting the Prussians to advance from Halle.

Frederick watches and corrects the dressing in a lively sketch of Prussian cuirassiers practising manoeuvres. (Menzel/Author's collection)

Field Marshal Keith had been ordered to cross the River Saale at Merseburg but he too found the bridge burnt before him. This time however General de Soubise was planning to dispute the passage, having placed batteries on the far bank. Ferdinand of Brunswick was now sent to Halle to see if the bridge was still intact, this too had been destroyed and again the French, this time under de Broglie, were planning to dispute the crossing. In the end, however, when news reached the two French commanders of Frederick's successful crossing of the River Saale near Weissenfels, they withdrew and reunited with the Imperial troops at Mûchelin. After rebuilding the bridge at Merseburg, Keith also crossed the river unopposed on 3 November. At around 7.00pm that same evening the Prussian army was reunited. At around 2.00am the next morning, with a full moon shining Frederick rode out with the majority of his cavalry to the north-east slopes of the Schortau heights to conduct a reconnaissance of the Franco-Imperial lines. By the moonlight Frederick realised his enemies had redeployed along a line north-south, their army facing east. Reports put the allied strength at 60,000 men, nearly three times the size of his own force. They were also in a good position and so Frederick halted the advance of his army. The Prussians took up a position behind the Leiha-Bach with their right flank resting on Bedra and the left on Rossbach. For the moment Frederick put his plan to attack the Franco-Imperial army on hold. The allies for their part mistook this inactivity by Frederick as a lack of nerve and the musicians in the army blared a fanfare as if they had won a victory. Saxe-Hildburghausen was also encouraged by this inactivity and made a bold plan to advance south-east, turning Frederick's left flank to get into the Prussian rear. Their communications would be cut and, if they were not driven into the river then at least Frederick would be forced to retreat back across the River Saale. Saxe-Hildburghausen directed that the turning movement would begin the next day, 5 November.



This French Nassau-Saarbrücken hussar regiment was at Rossbach, but was not engaged in the fighting. In the middle years of the 18th century hussars became very fashionable and, partly as a result, their dress more and more extravagant. (Print after Knötel/PH)

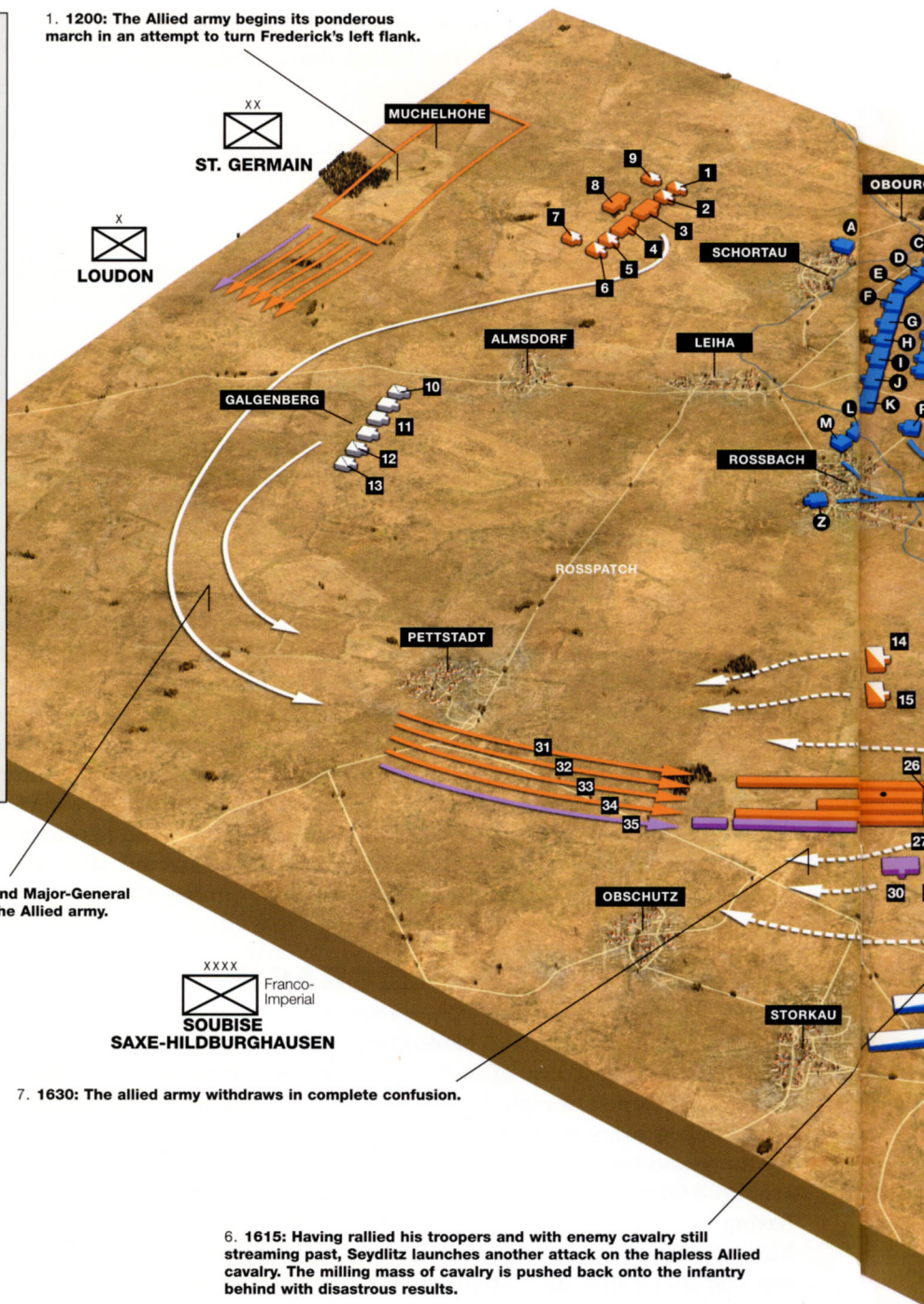
THE BATTLE OF ROSSBACH

As dawn broke on Saturday 5 November, the Prussian *Frei* battalion Mayr awoke to find the corps of St Germain astride the Schortau Heights. Behind this screen of eight battalions and 13 squadrons the remainder of the allied army spent several hours deploying into three columns for the grand turning movement planned by Saxe-Hildburghausen. At around 8.00am Frederick made his way to the attic of the Herrenhaus, having been alerted to the commotion in the allied camp, to see for himself what was going on. Having observed the allied army Frederick was convinced that they would in due course make for Freiburg and their 'bread cupboard'. At the same time a body of French, mostly horse under St Germain came out in the area of Schortau-Almsdorf and with a certain amount of prancing and manoeuvring and firing made as if to attack Rossbach; Frederick saw it for the pretence it was. Having ordered his men to stand to and satisfied that there was little of significance happening, he retired to his headquarters elsewhere in the building. It was around midday when the Franco-Imperial army finally got under way; however, the careful arrangements and rapid movement vital to success were conspicuous by their absence, indeed no cavalry screen was

ALLIES

- 1 Montcalm Regt of Horse (2 sqns)
- 2 Grammont Regt of Horse (2 sqns)
- 3 Touraine IR (2 bns)
- 4 Conde IR (2 bns)
- 5 St. Jal Regt of Horse (2 sqns)
- 6 Bezons Regt of Horse (2 sqns)
- 7 Conde Regt of Horse (2 sqns)
- 8 La Marine IR (4 bns)
- 9 Poly Regt of Horse (2 sqns)
- 10 Hussars (1 sqn)
- 11 Croats (3 bns)
- 12 Hussars (1 sqn)
- 13 Hussars (1 sqn)
- 14 La Reine Regt of Horse (2 sqns)
- 15 Bourbon-Bussett Regt of Horse (2 sqns)
- 16 Bourbon & Rougrave Regts of Horse (2 sqns each)
- 17 FitzJames & Beauvilliers Regts of Horse (2 sqns each)
- 18 Reichsarmee Cavalry (19 sqns)
- 19 Trautmannsdorf Cuirassiers (7 sqns)
- 20 Bretlach Cuirassiers (7 sqns)
- 21 Reserve Cavalry (10 sqns)
- 22 Piemont IR (4 bns)
- 23 Poitou IR (2 bns)
- 24 Maily IR (4 bns)
- 25 St. Chamont IR (2 bns)
- 26 Provence IR (2 bns)
- 27 La Marck IR (2 bns)
- 28 Blau-Würzburg IR (2 bns)
- 29 Hessen-Darmstadt IR (2 bns)
- 30 Kur-Trier IR (2 bns)
- 31 Army 1st Line
- 32 Reserve Artillery
- 33 Reserve Corps
- 34 Army 2nd Line
- 35 Reichsarmee

1. 1200: The Allied army begins its ponderous march in an attempt to turn Frederick's left flank.



8. 1645: Lieutenant-General St. Germain and Major-General Loudon arrive to cover the withdrawal of the Allied army.

7. 1630: The allied army withdraws in complete confusion.

6. 1615: Having rallied his troopers and with enemy cavalry still streaming past, Seydlitz launches another attack on the hapless Allied cavalry. The milling mass of cavalry is pushed back onto the infantry behind with disastrous results.

THE BATTLE OF ROSSBACH

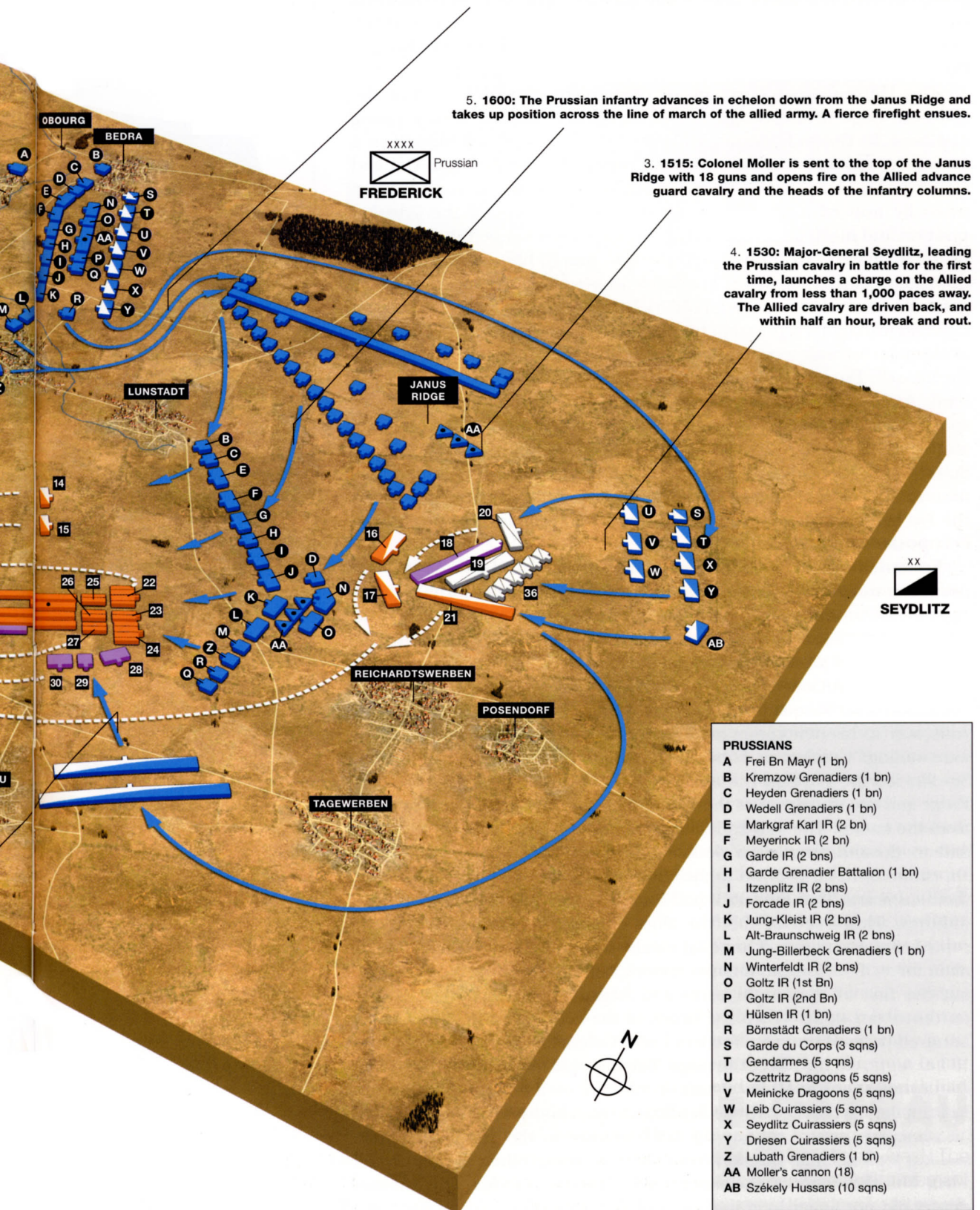
5 November 1757, viewed from the south, showing the attempted flank march by the French and Imperial (*Reichsarmee*) under Field Marshal Soubise and Field Marshal Prince Saxe-Hildburghausen, and the countermarch by King Frederick II's Prussians.

2. 1415: The Prussians become aware of the movement of the Allied army and within two minutes are on the march.

5. 1600: The Prussian infantry advances in echelon down from the Janus Ridge and takes up position across the line of march of the allied army. A fierce firefight ensues.

3. 1515: Colonel Moller is sent to the top of the Janus Ridge with 18 guns and opens fire on the Allied advance guard cavalry and the heads of the infantry columns.

4. 1530: Major-General Seydlitz, leading the Prussian cavalry in battle for the first time, launches a charge on the Allied cavalry from less than 1,000 paces away. The Allied cavalry are driven back, and within half an hour, break and rout.



posted or reconnaissance parties sent forward. The allies were heading for disaster and as one observer with the allies put it: 'No general will permit himself to be taken in flank with his eyes open; and the King of Prussia is the unlikelyest you could try it with!'

The Herrenhaus was set in an open plain of arable land at the southern edge of the village and of Frederick's staff officers, a young *Capitaine des Guides* Friedrich Wilhelm Gaudi, had posted himself in a garret. A number of bricks had been removed from the west wall and Gaudi had a clear view of what was happening. It was around 2.00pm when he noticed a number of allied generals observing the Prussian position and more importantly that the allies had changed the direction of their march. In rather a little too much haste Gaudi rushed downstairs and burst in on Frederick who was having lunch with his generals. Somewhat annoyed, Frederick did not at first believe his young *Capitaine* who had a reputation for exaggerating and dismissed his report as alarmist, but was persuaded to once again climb the stairs and observe for himself. Frederick saw that the allies were indeed trying to turn his flank. At 2.30pm the order was given for the army to march. Acting with speed and decision Frederick decided to head off the allied army and attack them from the line of march. Within minutes of the order to march being given the infantry were striking camp, the cavalry mounting up and by 3.00pm the army was moving. The exception being the *Frei* battalion Mayr and the light horse who remained in position to occupy the corps of St Germain.

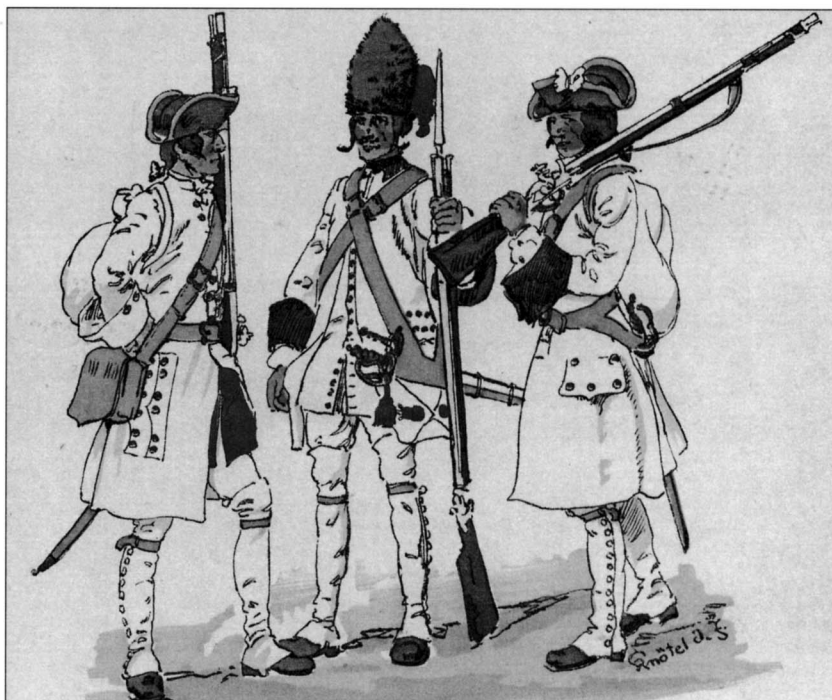
Frederick's plan entailed marching his army clockwise to the north-east using the Janus Ridge to screen their movement, turning to the right to face south and then performing a final turn to bring the army into line across the head of the advancing allied columns. The cavalry would lead the way and provide his left wing. Frederick now turned to his recently promoted Major-General Friedrich Wilhelm von Seydlitz, giving him the command of all 38 squadrons of cavalry. Seydlitz having received his orders rode over to his new command and addressed the cavalry generals who were waiting: 'Gentlemen, I obey the king, and you will obey me!' With that Seydlitz led the Prussian horse at a gallop off to the left, using the Janus Ridge and five squadrons of the Székely Hussars to conceal his movement from the enemy. The well-drilled Prussian infantry knew exactly what they had to do and were soon doubling in the wake of the cavalry. This appeared to simply confirm to the observing troops of St Germain's corps their suspicions that Frederick had lost his nerve and was attempting to withdraw. Heartened by this, the allies continued their march uninterrupted, the Austrian and Imperial cavalry some 2,000 paces ahead of the main force. The Prussian infantry moving behind the Janus Ridge carried out the first of their right turns and began marching up the ridge's north-western slope. When the heads of the columns were within a few hundred paces of the crest, Frederick sent Colonel Moller with a battery of 18 heavy guns to the top of the ridge. The time was now nearly 3.15pm and the ground shook as Moller's guns opened fire on the allied columns. On hearing the start of the barrage Seydlitz wheeled his squadrons by the right into line, his cavalry continuing their advance in this formation, while looking for a suitable position from which to launch their assault on the allies. This they found at the eastern end of the Janus Ridge. The Prussian cavalry did not linger long in their position. With the allied cavalry some



This illustration of a musketeer of the Franconian Kreis infantry Regiment 'Kroneck' accurately depicts the uniform of an Imperial regiment. Note it is not nearly as close-fitting as that of the Prussian infantryman. (Gerhard Bauer/Author's collection)



ABOVE A Fusilier of the French Swiss Regiment 'Diesbach'. The Swiss were the most reliable of the foreign infantry regiments in the French army. At Rossbach they put up the only serious resistance to the Prussian advance as the Franco-Imperial army withdrew from the field. (Gerhard Bauer/Author's collection)



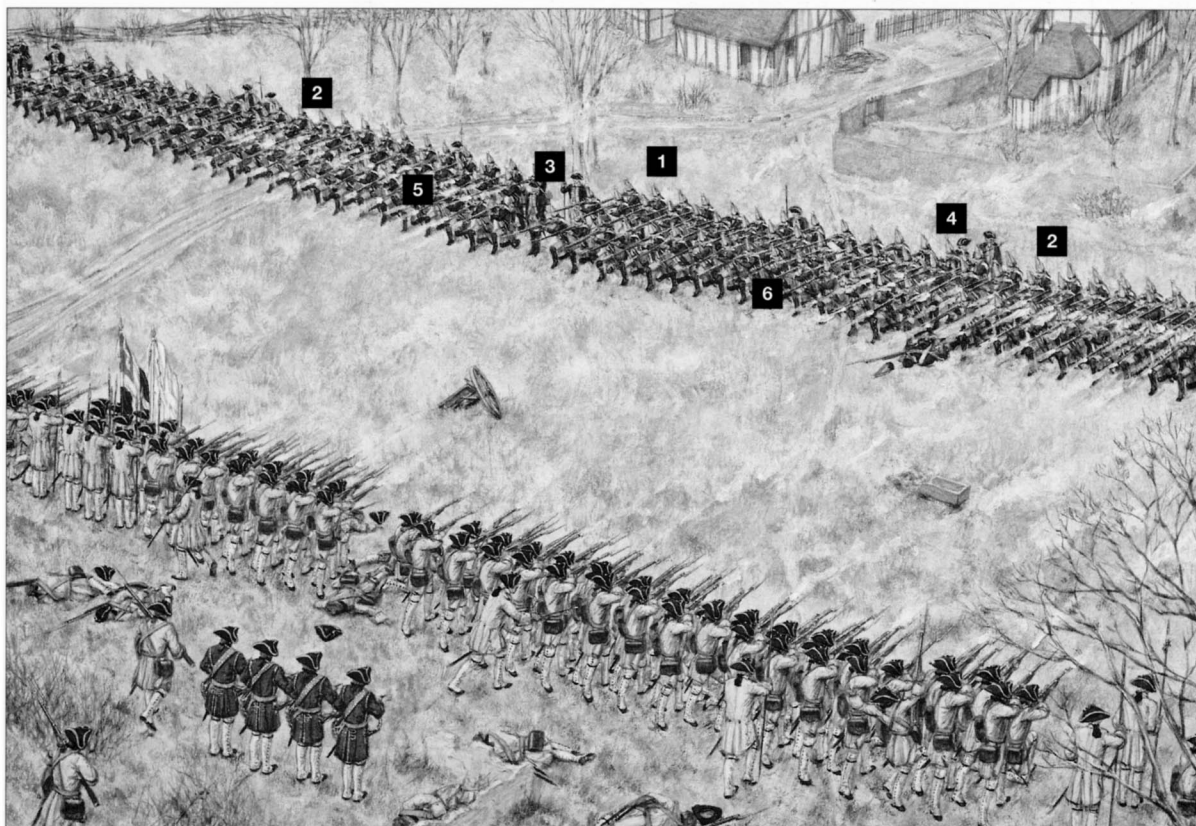
ABOVE, RIGHT An illustration of private soldiers of three of the French regiments in the Seven Years War. 'Piémont' on the right of the group was the only one of these three at Rossbach and fought well, but was unable to match the disciplined, relentless volleys of the Prussians. (Print after Knotel/MMB)

1,000 paces away the order was given for the trumpets to sound the command '*Marsch, Marsch!*' and with Seydlitz at their head they swept down upon the allies. The allied commander, de Broglie, tried to redeploy his cavalry into line to meet the threat, but without success; only the two Austrian cuirassier regiments of Bretlach and Trautmannsdorf were in a fit state to receive the Prussians. The Austrian cuirassiers put up gallant resistance, which temporarily checked Seydlitz's charge. Although unable to form properly to meet the Prussian attack, the Austrian Szecheny Hussars and three supporting Imperial cavalry regiments – the Kurpfalz Cuirassiers, Hohenzollern Cuirassiers and Württemberg Dragoons – fiercely resisted Seydlitz's first line. This enabled 24 squadrons of French cavalry to move up in support of the Imperial cavalry near Reichardtswerben. Within a few minutes, however, the whole mass of allied cavalry was being forced back by the onslaught of the Prussian troopers. General Prince de Soubise joined the fray with another 16 squadrons of French cavalry to try to halt the retreat of the hard-pressed allied horsemen. However, his presence went almost unnoticed as Seydlitz committed the 18 squadrons of his second line. These units crashed into the allies in an attack that swept around both flanks of the Austrian and Imperial cavalry and the 16 newly arrived squadrons of French cavalry. Within half an hour the allied cavalry were being tumbled back as far as the sunken road between Reichardtswerben and Tagewerben and, with Prussian cavalry all around them, they broke in rout.

With plenty of work still to be done, Seydlitz displayed that rare quality in cavalry commanders: control. Rather than pursuing the shattered allied cavalry, he ordered the trumpeters to sound '*Re-form*'. Having rallied his command he led them to a new position in a hollow near Tagewerben and with steam rising from both horses and troopers after their exertions, awaited further orders.







THE FRENCH AND PRUSSIAN FIRING LINES AT ROSSBACH (pages 30–31)

The rapid advance of the Prussian infantry over and down the Janus Ridge enabled them to form line and block the advancing columns of the Franco-Imperial army. Out of 27 Prussian battalions at Rossbach only seven were actively engaged. One of these was the Grenadier Battalion of Jung-Billerbeck (1).

Each musketeer regiment included two battalions and each battalion a grenadier company. The grenadier companies of two musketeer regiments were often brigaded together to form a grenadier battalion of four companies. Each company included two platoons (2). In the case of Grenadier Battalion Jung-Billerbeck the companies came from IR No. 5 (Alt-Braunschweig) and IR No. 20 (Bornstedt). The preferred formation was a three-deep line, however, as the Seven Years War progressed Frederick was sometimes forced to adopt a two-deep formation to allow him to extend his infantry line. Each infantryman occupied an area roughly, 2ft wide and 2ft 2in. deep; sufficient space to allow him to perform the drills necessary to load and fire his weapon in battle. With the private soldiers drawn up in three ranks, the officers and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) took up positions around the unit. On the right and left of each platoon was a lieutenant and behind him a NCO (3). Four NCOs were stationed behind the rear rank with a Lieutenant behind them (4). The officers and NCOs had three important

tasks; to maintain the unit's direction and to keep it aligned with other battalions/companies, to control the fire and to ensure the men did not run away. The NCOs' halberds or *Kurzgewehre* were not simply for display and were a tool for imposing discipline. The NCOs stood with them leveled across the backs of the rear rank to prevent men from fleeing, and ultimately could be used as a weapon against any troops that did attempt to run. This ideal theoretical positioning of officers and NCOs was not always possible as a result of casualties.

A battalion of four companies would have eight platoons and fire was by platoons. The Duke of Marlborough had introduced the practice of platoon firing, during the War of Spanish Succession and, through constant practice, the Prussian infantry had developed it to near perfection. Exceptionally well-trained platoons were also able to fire by half platoons (5). Platoon firing allowed a unit to maintain a constant rolling fire and the unit had a reserve of muskets loaded at all times. The platoons fired in sequence, progressing from the flanks inwards to the centre. To allow all three ranks to fire together, the front rank would kneel, the second rank would take an 8in. pace to the right and the third rank a pace a further 14in. to the right. This formation was known as 'locking-on' (6). Three words of command immediately preceded the volley – 'Ready!' ('*Fertig!*'), 'Present!' ('*Schlag an!*') and 'Fire' ('*Feuer!*'). (Adam Hook)



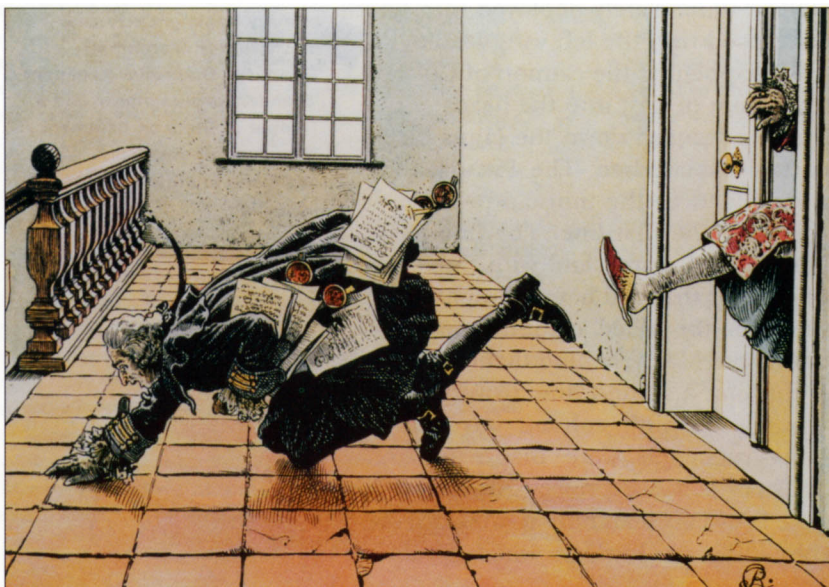
While the Prussian and allied cavalry had been involved in their swirling melee the infantry of both sides had continued their respective movements. The Prussian infantry, arriving at the crest of the Janus Ridge to the right of Moller's battery, immediately deployed into line and with the right wing refused advanced with the left wing leading in echelon of battalions. While this was happening the cannon of Colonel Moller continued to pour a steady stream of shot into the heads of the allied columns. The Prussian infantry advanced down the Janus Ridge and wheeled into a line just short of Tagewerben. The Prussian line formed a dog-leg that had been extended by the unusual practice of deploying the second line infantry with the first line. The line faced south-west, square across the allied line of march and with them was Colonel Moller with his battery of 18 guns that had been brought down from the Janus Ridge. At the head of the allied columns were the French infantry regiments of Piémont and Mailly, behind them were the regiments of Poitou and Rohan, forming a second line. Covering the right flank of the allies and forming the fifth column was that of the Imperial infantry; the leading regiments were Blau-Würzburg, Hessen-Darmstadt and Kur-Trier. There is a story, not attributed, that Saxe-Hildburghausen, on seeing the Prussians marching down from the Janus Ridge, whispered to Soubise, 'We are lost!' to which Soubise replied, 'Courage.'

Uniforms of some of the Imperial regiments at Rossbach. Left to right: Non-Commissioned Officer Infantry Regiment 'Varell', Officer Infantry Regiment 'Kroneck', Musketeer IR 'Ferentheil', Trooper of Cuirassier Regiment 'Brandenburg-Bayreuth' and a Trooper of Dragoon Regiment 'Brandenburg-Anspach'. (Wolfgang Friedrich/Author's collection)

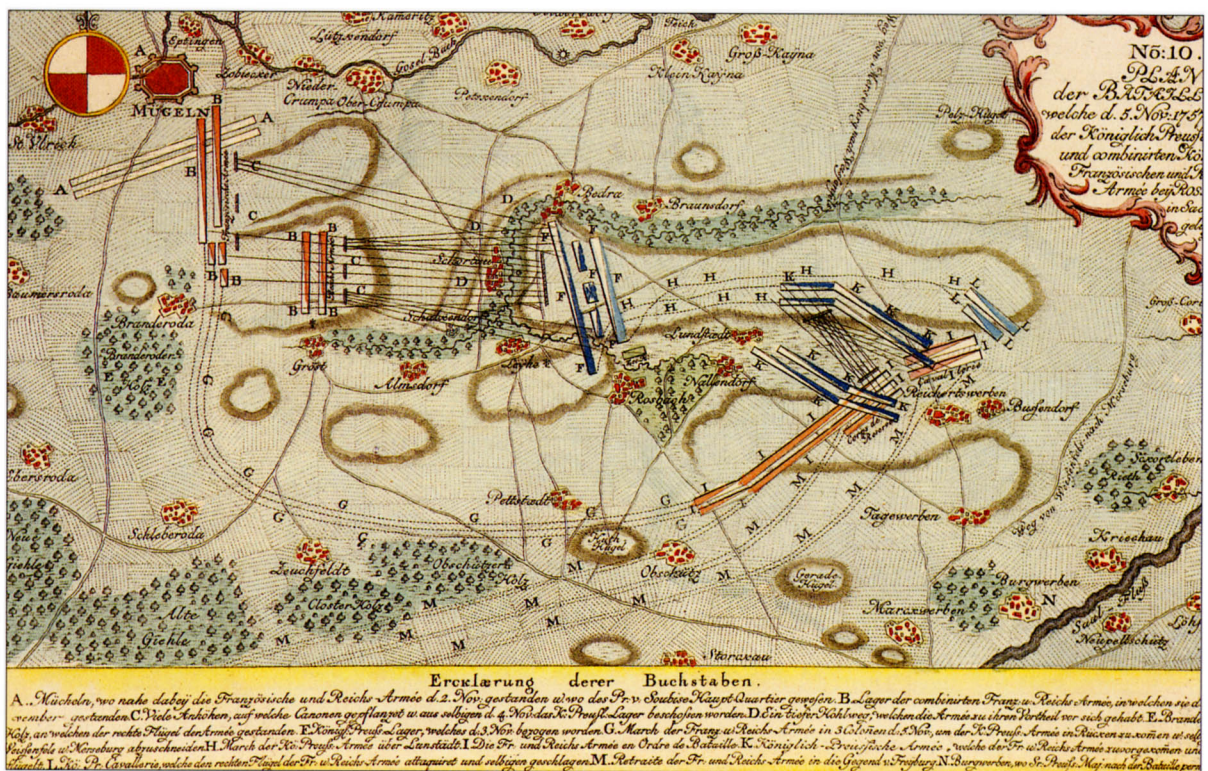


Typically predatory behaviour by the Prussian 1st Hussars, looting the French baggage after bluffing the Franco-Imperial army out of Gotha on 15 September. (Print after Knötel)

With colours flying and drums beating the allied infantry advanced against the well-drilled and steady Prussians. Only seven Prussian battalions were engaged in the ensuing firefight, which lasted only a few minutes. The leading regiments of Piémont and Mailly advanced bravely through the artillery fire of Colonel Moller's cannon to within 40 paces of the Prussian line, where they were met with a crashing volley that shredded their ranks. The fire was continuous as the Prussian line kept up their well disciplined volleys by platoons. The French infantry did their best to return fire and for some minutes stood their ground, but fate was to deal them a cruel blow. Having re-formed his cavalry, from his vantage point near Tagewerben Seydlitz was watching the firefight between the two lines of infantry as the allied cavalry still streamed past him. Once again he led his



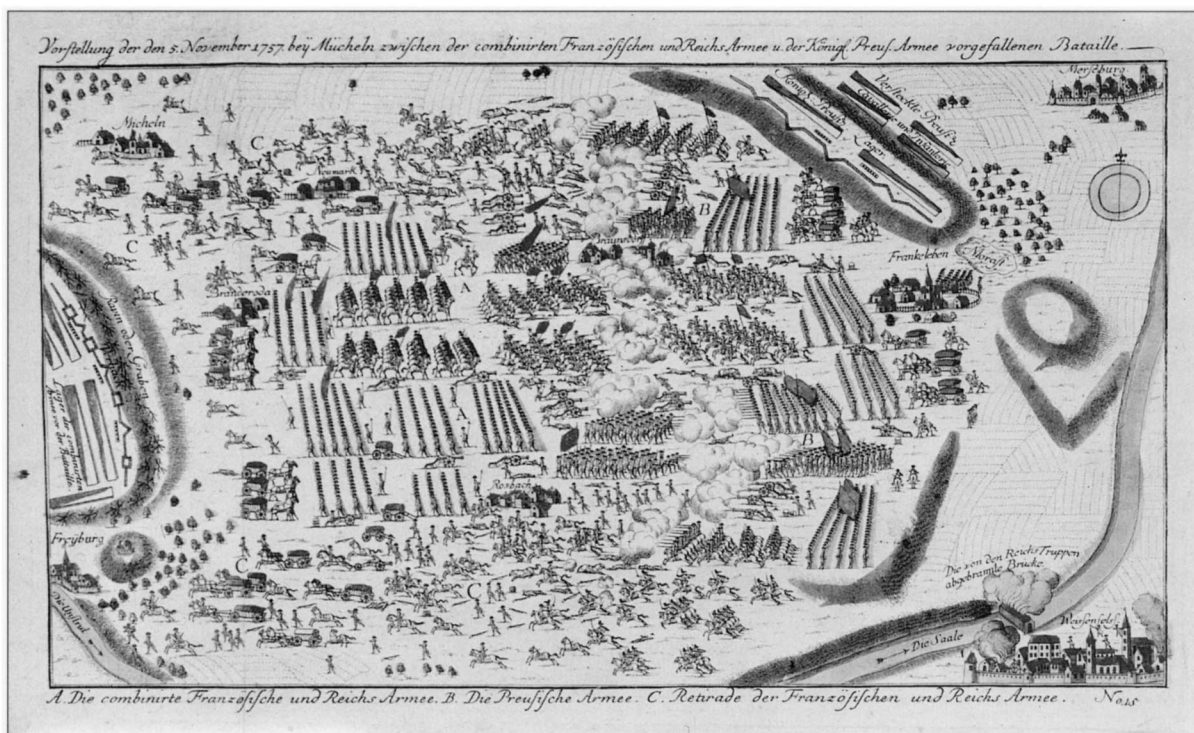
On 12 October 1757, in Regensburg, the Imperial Diet voted to issue a 'Ban of the Reich' on Frederick summoning him to the Diet to answer for his actions. The hapless lawyer Dr Aprill was sent to deliver the Ban and summons to the Prussian Ambassador, Freiherr von Plotho. Dr Aprill was thrown down the stairs for his trouble and failed to deliver the Ban. (Print after Knötel)



troopers into action with the Garde du Corps and Gendarmes leading. Yet again they swept through the allied cavalry and all was confusion as the milling mass of horsemen crashed into the infantry behind. The Imperial regiments did their best, but were swept up in the melee. With the disciplined fire of the Prussian infantry raking their front and chaos behind them the regiments of Piémont and Mailly finally gave way. The time was now 4.30pm and disaster had befallen the allies, now nothing more than a disorganised mob in flight from the battlefield. The stage was set for the Prussian cavalry to apply the coup de grace and turn the flight into a headlong rout. In this they were frustrated, however, by the four battalions of the Swiss regiments of Planta and Diesbach who formed square and fought off the pursuing Prussians. The cavalry regiments of La Reine and Bourbon-Busset on the left of the allied columns also tried to intervene and win a little respite for the fugitives but with little effect. However, the two Swiss regiments were like rocks in the swirling sea of fugitives and Prussians as they steadily carried out a fighting retreat. Frederick is said to have remarked, 'What is this red brick wall that my artillery cannot manage to bring down?' and, being told it was the French Swiss infantry, he silently saluted them by doffing his hat as they marched off the field with colours flying and drums beating. By 5.00pm the battlefield was shrouded in darkness, the Swiss regiments and St Germain's corps the only allied troops to leave the field in good order, acting as a rearguard and covering the retreat.

Frederick and his army had possession of the field of battle and the king set off to spend the night in the castle of Burgwerben. On arriving at the castle, however, he found it full of wounded French officers and rather than disturb these gentlemen he settled down for the night in a

A near contemporary map of the battle of Rossbach. (AKG)



BELOW **Friedrich Wilhelm von Seydlitz** takes command of the massed regiments of the Prussian cavalry at Rossbach with the instruction to his officers, 'Gentlemen, I obey the King and you will obey me!' (Author's collection)

servants' room in a house nearby. Frederick made no attempt to pursue the vanquished Franco-Imperial army – he was quite content with the advantage he had gained, and with good reason. Firstly as he wrote to his sister, Wilhelmine, on the evening of the battle: 'I can now die in peace, because the reputation and honour of my nation have been saved,' and secondly he had triumphed with only 22,000 men against 36,000 French and 10,000–12,000 Imperialists. He had inflicted on his



LEFT A charming, but inaccurate, contemporary illustration of the Battle of Rossbach. (AKG)

RIGHT The Prussian cavalry crash into the Allied cavalry at the start of the battle of Rossbach. (Engraving after Menzel)



enemies some 3,000 killed and wounded, 5,000 prisoners and captured 67 cannon, whereas he had suffered no more than 550 casualties.

The Imperial forces were shattered by the defeat and Saxe-Hildeburghausen having crossed the River Saale at Naumberg continued to Bamberg where he resigned his command of the Imperial troops and returned home. The Imperial regiments melted away and returned to their homes. The following year saw the Imperial regiments raised again, a little better equipped and trained and with a different commander. The French army retreated towards Freiburg and having crossed the River Unstrut there, burnt the bridge behind them. They continued their retreat on to Langensalza, which they reached on 7 November – some 55 miles (89km) from the battlefield. The French commander, General Prince de Soubise, rode with a small party to Nordhausen, 80 miles (129km) from Rossbach and during the retreat placards were put up in villages, giving notice that Nordhausen and Heiligenstadt were rallying points.

For Frederick the battle had two results. It gave heart and encouragement to his Hanoverian allies and had a correspondingly disheartening effect on the French. Of more immediate concern to Frederick, the victory at Rossbach gave him the opportunity to confront the threat in Silesia and settle a score with the Austrians. Rossbach was the first step in restoring the reputation of Prussian arms to the pre-eminence they had held before the defeat at Kolin. A victory over the Austrians in Silesia would complete the process.

ORDERS OF BATTLE, BATTLE OF LEUTHEN, 5 DECEMBER 1757

THE AUSTRIAN ARMY

Joint Army Commanders:

FM Prince Charles of Lorraine

FM Leopold Graf von Daun

CAVALRY WINGS

General of Cavalry (GdK) Graf Lucchese

Lieutenant General (FmL) Graf Trautmannsdorf

Anhalt-Zerbst Cuirassiers – 6 sqns (A-Z)

Serbelloni Cuirassiers – 6 sqns (SER)

FmL Benedict Graf von Daun

Württemberg Dragoons – 6 sqns (WUR)

Benedict Daun Dragoons – 6 sqns (BDN)

FmL Freiherr von Wollwarth

Stampach Cuirassiers – 6 sqns (STM)

Löwenstein Cuirassiers – 6 sqns (LOW)

FmL Marquis de Spada

Erzherzog Leopold Cuirassiers – 6 sqns (ERL)

Lucchese Cuirassiers – 6 sqns (LUC)

Erzherzog Joseph Dragoons – 6 sqns (ERJ)

GdK Johann Baptist Graf Serbelloni

FmL Prinz von Hohenzollern

Anspach-Bayreuth Cuirassiers – 6 sqns (A-B)

Gelhay Cuirassiers – 6 sqns (GEL)

FmL Graf Kolowrat

Birkenfeld Cuirassiers – 6 sqns (BIR)

Kolowrat Dragoons – 6 sqns (KOL)

FmL Freiherr Buccow

Kalckreuth Cuirassiers – 6 sqns (KAL)

Erzherzog Ferdinand Cuirassiers – 6 sqns (ERF)

Batthyany Dragoons – 6 sqns (BAT)

FmL Graf von Starhemberg

Schmerzing Cuirassiers – 6 sqns (SCH)

O'Donnell Cuirassiers – 6 sqns (ODO)

INFANTRY WINGS

General of Infantry (FzM) Freiherr von Kheul

FmL Freiherr von Angren

Joseph Esterházy (H) Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (JES)

Alt-Wolfenbüttel Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (A-W)

FmL Graf Macquire

Puebla Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (PUE)

Leopold Daun Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (LDA)

Arenberg Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (ARN)

FmL W. Graf von Starhemberg

Kolowrat Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (KOL)

Baden-Durlach Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (B-D)

Pallavicini Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (PAL)

Wallis Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (WAL)

Waldeck Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (WAD)

Lothringen Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (LOT)

FmL Freiherr von Andlau

Botta Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (BOT)

Neipperg Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (NEI)

Kaiser Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (KAI)

FzM Graf Colloredo

FmL Graf Puebla

Erzherzog Karl Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (ERK)

Hildeburghausen Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (HIL)

Moltke Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (MOL)

FmL Graf d'Arberg

Kheul Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (KHE)

Nicholas Esterházy (H) Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (NES)

Thurheim Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (THU)

FmL Graf Wied

Harrach Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (HAR)

L. Wolfenbüttel Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (L-W)

Gaisruck Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (GAI)

Baden-Baden Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (B-B)

FmL Freiherr Haller

Harsch Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (HAS)

Bethlen Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (BET)

Browne Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (BRO)

Deutschmeister Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (DEU)

Rot-Würzburg (*Reichsarmee*) Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (R-W)

RESERVE ORGANISATIONS

Left Wing: GdK Graf Nadasty

FmL Freiherr Forgách

Haller (H) Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (HAL)

Joseph Pálffy (H) Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (JPA)

A. Batthyány (H) Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (ABA)

Forgách (H) Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (FOR)

Clerici Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (CLE)

Luzan Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (LUZ)

Macquire Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (MAC)

Leopold Pálffy (H) Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (LPA)

H. Daun Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (HAD)

FmL Graf Spiznass (Württemberg)

Leib Garde Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (LGD)

Roeder Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (ROE)

Truchess Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (TRU)

Spiznass Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (SPI)

Prinz Louis Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (PRL)

Klettenberg Grenadier Battalion – 1 bn (KLE)

Pless Grenadier Battalion – 1 bn (PLE)

Georgi Grenadier Battalion – 1 bn (GEO)

General (GFM) Graf d'Aix (Bavarian)

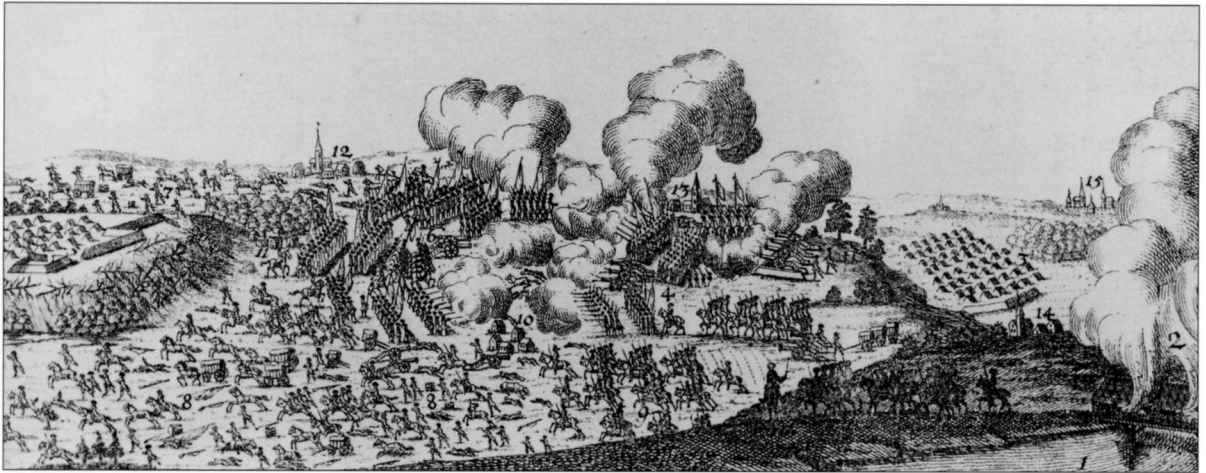
Leib Garde Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (LGD)

Kurprinz Preysing Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (KPP)

Erzherzog Clemens Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (ERC)

Morawitzky Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (MOR)

Minucci Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (MIN)



FmL Graf Nostitz

Prinz Albert (Saxon) Chevauxlegers – 4 sqns (PRA)
 Prinz Karl (Saxon) Chevauxlegers – 4 sqns (PRK)
 Graf Brühl (Saxon) Chevauxlegers – 4 sqns (GRB)
 Nadasty Hussars – 5 sqns (NAD)
 Dessewffy Hussars – 5 sqns (DES)

FmL Graf O'Donnell

Saxe-Gotha Dragoons – 6 sqns (S-G)
 Jung-Modena Dragoons – 6 sqns (J-M)
 Zweibrücken Dragoons – 6 sqns (ZWI)
 Hessen-Darmstadt Dragoons – 6 sqns (H-D)

RIGHT WING: FmL Herzog von Arenberg

Mercy Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (MER)
 Haller (H) Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (HAL)
 de Ligne Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (LIG)
 d'Arberg Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (ARB)
 Andlau Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (AND)
 Saxe-Gotha Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (S-G)
 Los-Rios Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (L-R)
 Königsegg Infantry Regiment – 1 bn (KON)

Independent Units

Artillery:

3 x 12-pdr Cannon batteries
 10 x 6-pdr Cannon batteries
 Gradiskaner Grenzer Regiment – 2 bns (GRD)
 Szluiner Grenzer Regiment – 2 bns (SZE)
 Banalisten Grenzer Regiment – 2 bns (BNL)

THE PRUSSIAN ARMY

Commander in Chief

King Frederick II of Prussia

Second in Command

General of Infantry (GdI) Moritz Fürst von Anhalt-Dessau

ADVANCE GUARD

Lieutenant-General (GL) Prinz von Württemberg

Seydlitz Hussars – 9 sqns (H7)

A stylized illustration of the battle of Rossbach. The two infantry lines are exchanging fire, while in the foreground the Franco-Imperial army begins to give way. (AKG)

Werner Hussars – 10 sqns (H6)

Warnery Hussars – 6 sqns (H3)

Württemberg Dragoons – 5 sqns (D12)

Székelly Hussars – 5 sqns (H1)

INDEPENDENT COMMAND

GM von Wedel

Regiment No. 26 Meyerinck – 2 bns (26)

Regiment No. 13 Itzenplitz – 1 bn (II/13)

INFANTRY WINGS

GL Prinz Ferdinand of Brunswick

GM Prinz Braunschweig

Regiment No. 19 Markgraf Karl – 2 bns (19)

Regiment No. 15 Garde – 2 bns (II/15 & III/15)

Kremzow Grenadier Bn – 1 bn (17/22)

GM von Kahlden

Regiment No. 30 Kannacher – 2 bns (30)

Regiment No. 10 Pannwitz – 2 bns (10)

Regiment No. 6 Garde Grenadier – 1 bn (6)

GL von Retzow

GM von Münchow

Regiment No. 8 Geist – 2 bns (8)

Regiment No. 1 Winterfeldt – 2 bns (1)

GM von Geist

Regiment No. 23 Forcade – 2 bns (23)

Regiment No. 5 Alt-Braunschweig – 2 bns (5)

Hacke Grenadier Bn – 1 bn (3/6)

Schenkendorff Grenadier Bn – 1 bn (35/36)

GL von Forcade

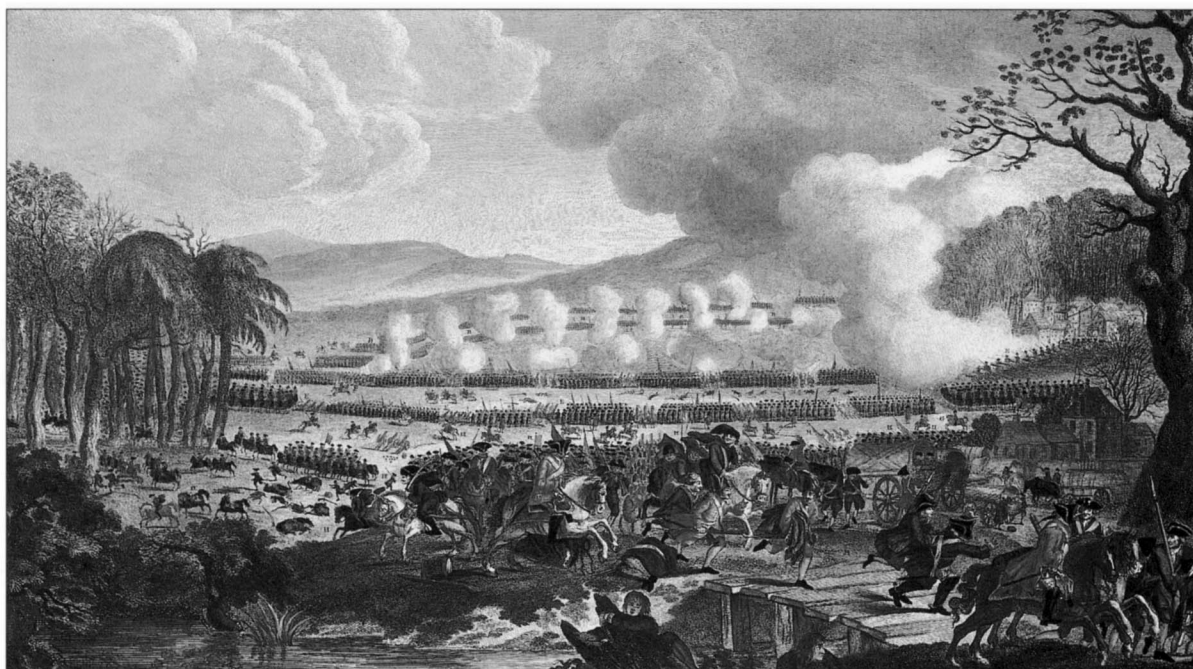
GM von Oldenburg

Regiment No. 25 Kalckstein – 2 bns (25)

Regiment No. 34 Prinz Ferdinand – 2 bns (34)

Regiment No. 35 Prinz Henry – 1bn (35)

Kahlden Grenadier Bn – 1 bn (Stgb 1)



Like many of the contemporary illustrations of battle this one of Rossbach is woefully inaccurate. Frederick is the tiny figure mounted near a tree in left background. (ASKB)

GM von Bülow

Regiment No. 18 Pinz von Preussen – 1 bn (18)
 Regiment No. 36 Münchow – 1 bn (36)
 Regiment No. 39 Jung-Braunschweig – 1 bn (39)
 Regiment No. 46 Alt-Württemberg – 1 bn (46)
 Plötz Grenadier Bn – 1 bn (Stgb 6)

CAVALRY WINGS

GL von Driesen

GM von Krockow (Jung)

1st Cuirassiers Krockow – 5 sqns (C1)
 11th Cuirassiers Leib-Karabiniers – 5 sqns (C11)

GM von Bredow

9th Cuirassiers Schönaich – 5 sqns (C9)
 12th Cuirassiers Kyau – 5 sqns (C12)
 4th Cuirassiers Gessler – 5 sqns (C4)

GL von Zieten

GM von Lentlus

13th Cuirassiers Garde du Corps – 3 sqns (C13)
 10th Cuirassiers Gendarmes – 5 sqns (C10)

GM von Krockow (Alt)

11th Dragoons Stechow – 5 sqns (D11)
 2nd Dragoons Jung-Krockow – 5 sqns (D2)

GM von Schmettau

6th Cuirassiers Jung-Schönaich – 5 sqns (C6)
 8th Cuirassiers Seydlitz – 5 sqns (C8)
 5th Cuirassiers Markgraf Friedrich – 5 sqns (C5)

UNATTACHED UNITS

Unruh Grenadier Bn – 1 bn (45/48)
 Diringshofen Grenadier Bn – 1 bn (21/27)
 Kleist Grenadier Bn – 1 bn (4/16)
 Regiment No. 37 Kurszell – 1 bn (37)
 Zieten Hussars – 10 sqns (H2)
 Puttkammer Hussars – 10 sqns (H4)
 Le Noble Freikorps – 1bn (FB1)
 Kalben Freikorps – 1 bn (FB3)
 Angelelli Freikorps – 1 bn (FB4)
 Fuss Jäger Corps – 1 bn (JzF)

Artillery:

10 x 12-pdr Cannon batteries
 2 x 6-pdr Cannon batteries
 3 x bombard Cannon batteries

Notes:

1. The approximate size for each force was:

Prussian: Infantry: 49 battalions (29,900);

Cavalry: 129 squadrons (9,800);

Artillery: 71 cannon

Austrian: Infantry: 85 battalions;

Cavalry: 125 squadrons;

Artillery: 50 cannon

2. The abbreviation in parentheses is used to identify the unit on the map on p.62 *The Prussian Flank March and Opening Attack*, e.g. Lothringen Infantry Regiment = LOT, and Regiment No 23. Forcade = 23.

3 To differentiate between Prussian grenadier battalions and musketeer regiments that had been split, grenadiers are indicated 4/16 while musketeer battalions are 11/15 (2nd Bn., Regt No. 15).

4. The (Reichsarmee) next to Rot-Würzburg indicates that it is not an Austrian regiment but one from the Imperial or Reichsarmee. The sister regiment, Blau-Würzburg fought at Rossbach. Those units in the Austrian order of battle with an (H) after their regimental name are Hungarian units.

5. Losses for each side were approximately as follows:

Austria: 23,000, 46 colours, 131 cannon

Prussia: 6,382

THE BATTLE OF LEUTHEN

After the battle of Rossbach the Prussian army pursued the defeated Franco-Imperial army for only a few days in a rather desultory fashion, Frederick's attention was turning to the growing problem in Silesia ...

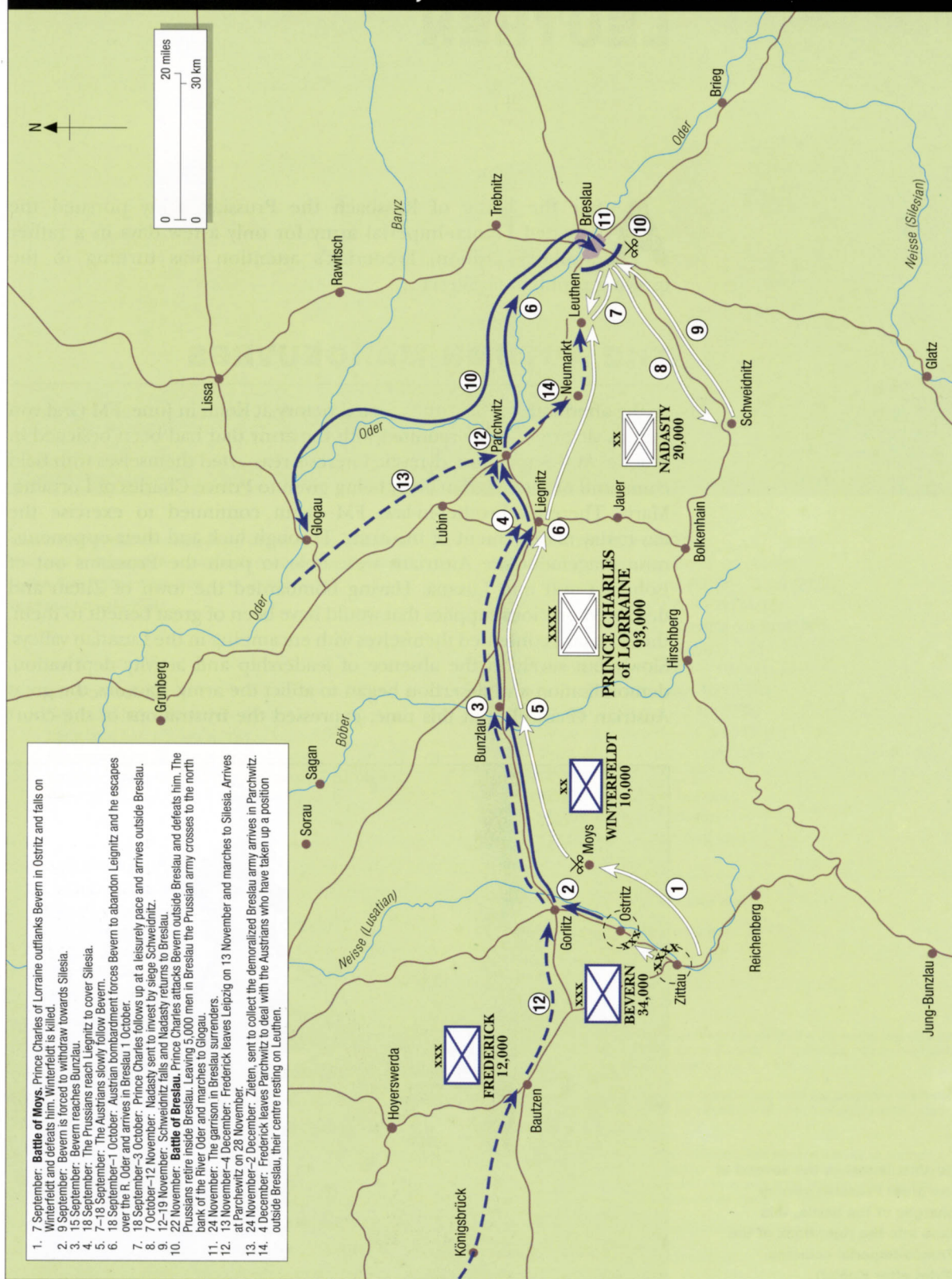
THE AUTUMN MANOEUVRES

In the aftermath of their unexpected victory at Kolin in June, FM Graf von Daun's victorious army reunited with the army that had been besieged in Prague. At this juncture, dynastic interests reasserted themselves with field command of the Austrian army being given to Prince Charles of Lorraine, Maria Theresa's brother-in-law. FM Daun continued to exercise the day-to-day management of the army. Through luck and their opponents' mismanagement the Austrians were able to push the Prussians out of Bohemia and into Lusatia. Having bombarded the town of Zittau and destroyed precious supplies that would have been of great benefit to them, the Austrians contented themselves with encamping in the Lusatian valleys. Slowly but surely in the absence of leadership and activity deprivation, demoralisation and desertion began to afflict the army. Kaunitz, the great Austrian Chancellor at this time, expressed the frustrations of the court



Seydlitz launches the second of the great Prussian cavalry charges of the battle, this time into the right flank of the Franco-Imperial columns. (Print after Knötel)

THE CAMPAIGN IN SILESIA, SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER 1757



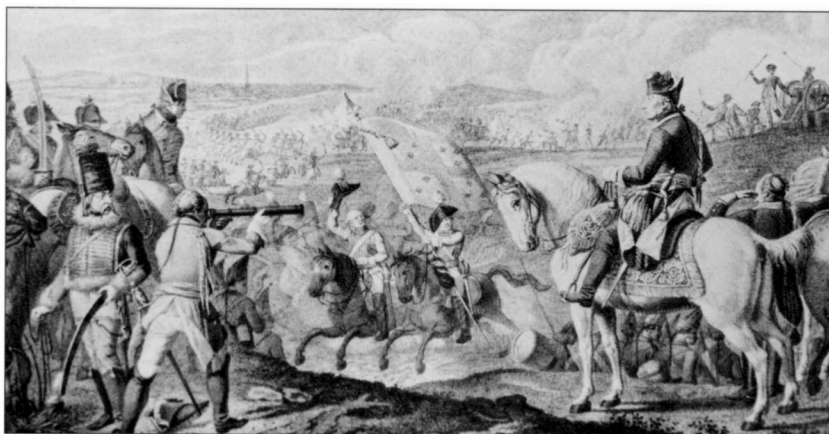
Having swept through the Allied cavalry the Prussian cuirassiers smash into the French infantry behind. The Allied columns rapidly began to disintegrate. (Print after Knötel)



when he remarked that the only way to get the campaign moving again would be to recall Prince Charles – the Emperor said that the recall of his brother would be viewed as a personal dishonour. Once again the direction of the Austrian forces in the field would be decided by dynastic interests and pride, rather than ability. It was this return of the characteristic Austrian lethargy that allowed Frederick to take a calculated risk and leave Lusatia in August. He appointed Lieutenant-General Augustus Wilhelm Duke of Brunswick-Bevern to command the 43,000 troops left in Bautzen, to watch the Austrians in Lusatia and Bohemia. Even the Austrians recognised this as an opportunity and roused themselves into action. For some time Maria Theresa had been frustrated by her army's inactivity and it had been decided to send a corps into Silesia to attempt the recovery of that province. The size and composition of the force had not been settled, however. With Frederick on the move there were two choices – either to follow him into Thuringia and attempt to trap him between the Austrian and the Franco-Imperial forces (a policy that potentially could reap great benefits) or to fall on the forces left with Bevern. It was this second course of action that they decided upon and



ABOVE Raked in their front by disciplined volleys from the Prussian infantry and with the Prussian cavalry wreaking havoc in their rear the Franco-Imperial infantry gave way, transformed into a disorganised mob. Rossbach was a shock for the Imperial army and exposed serious shortcomings. (AKG)



LEFT Frederick watches the collapse of the Franco-Imperial army from the Janus Ridge as a captured French colour is paraded before him. (Engraving after Schadows/Author's collection)

Lorraine and Daun moved down the Lusatian Neisse. Bevern held a strong position at Ostritz, however, and they hesitated to attack. There was another Prussian force that was more vulnerable to attack. Bevern had despatched Winterfeldt with 10,000 men to Moys, on the eastern bank of the Lusatian Neisse to cover his left flank and protect his communications with Silesia. On 7 September Lorraine sent a small corps under Nadasty against Winterfeldt and they defeated him completely. Winterfeldt had positioned his force on the Jäckelsberg Hill. The Austrian grenadiers were launched up the hill in daylight, and having achieved complete surprise then set off in search of plunder. This left only three fusilier battalions to fight off the vigorous Prussian counter-attack made by Winterfeldt at the head of the Prussian regiments IR17 (Manteuffel) and IR32 (Tresckow). A great firefight ensued and the Austrian de Ligne Regiment was fired on by their comrades in the Platz Regiment from behind and the Prussians to their front. In due course however the Prussians were finally pushed down



An incident at the end of the battle when the kettledrums of a French cavalry regiment were captured by Prussian cuirassiers. (Author's collection)

the hill and out of Moys, their gallant commander, Winterfeldt, dead on the field.

With Winterfeldt's defeat Bevern's position at Ostritz became untenable and on 9 September he started to withdraw north-east towards Bunzlau, where he arrived on 15 September. He was followed by the main body of the Austrian forces, while General Marschall and Lieutenant-General Hadik were left in Lusatia with a small corps. To keep them occupied Vienna ordered Hadik to conduct a raid against Berlin, which was virtually undefended. Bevern continued his withdrawal into Silesia and arrived at Liegnitz on 18 September, but this forced him to sacrifice his communications with Frederick. If Prince Charles of Lorraine had shown any determination in pressing on over the rain-sodden roads or handled his cavalry with any skill he might easily have prevented Bevern from withdrawing into Silesia. However, the cautious and unenterprising Austrian general completely failed to anticipate Bevern's movements. When a bombardment forced Bevern from his position at Liegnitz, he was able to cross the River Oder at Dieban after a forced march and arrived in Breslau on 1 October quite unmolested. The Austrians followed up slowly and on their arrival found Bevern deployed practically under the guns of the city, with the Lohe Brook and several fortified villages to his front. Prince Charles was full of optimism and proposed an attack; Daun objected, pointing out that even if the attack was successful, the Prussians would merely withdraw into the city. The Austrians would



The Swiss infantry regiment Diesbach proved more defiant than most, putting up stout resistance and performing a disciplined fighting retreat from the field at the end of the battle. Frederick was prompted to ask 'what is this red brick wall'. (Gerhard Bauer/Author's collection)

not be able to take the city without their long-range siege guns. It was therefore decided to send Nadasty with 20,000 men to besiege the important Prussian fortress of Schweidnitz, while the main army continued to watch Bevern around Breslau.

Nadasty's siege of Schweidnitz began on 26 October. Nadasty, the dashing Hussar officer and Austrian cavalry commander, was hardly the obvious choice to conduct a siege and he steadfastly refused to dirty himself in the trenches. Nadasty was, however, a decisive commander and by 12 November he was bored with the tedium of the siege and decided upon a daylight assault of the fortress. As the assault of Redoubt No. 36 and the Bogenfort went in General von Riebentisch, the Prussian commander, was on the ramparts and being an ex-Austrian officer greeted many of his acquaintances very politely. He soon realised the Austrians meant business when they lowered their muskets and some of the Saxons in the garrison are reputed to have helped the Austrians over the ramparts. The fortress yielded with relatively little resistance: 6,000 prisoners were taken and more importantly the Austrians controlled the key to southern Silesia. By 19 November Nadasty had rejoined Lorraine and Daun and when an

attack against Bevern was again suggested Daun and Lorraine, who had received news of Frederick's victory at Rossbach, did not dismiss it. There could be little doubt that Frederick would now march to assist Bevern, and if the Austrians hoped to remain in Silesia during the winter they had to gain control of Breslau. On 22 November the Austrians launched their attack on Bevern.

THE BATTLE OF BRESLAU

Bevern's position was a strong one; on his right he had the River Oder and the ground was marshy where the Lohe flowed into it. A series of fortified villages, Pilsnitz on the right, Klein Mochbern and Schmiedefeldt in the centre, Grabschen and Kleinburg on the left and the line of the Lohe to the front all helped to strengthen his position. The one drawback was that to defend this line, Bevern had stretched his forces very thinly. The battle started at 8.30am on 22 November with a heavy cannonade, as Nadasty launched the first attack against the village of Kleinburg on the extreme left of the Prussian line. At first Nadasty was successful and carried the village, but a determined counterattack saw him driven out and his attack brought to a standstill. At 9.30am the next phase began when the Austrian batteries elsewhere along their front started a concentrated bombardment of the villages of Pilsnitz, Schmiedefeldt, Höfchen, Klein Mochbern and Grabschen. Under cover of this fire the Austrians laid three bridges across the River Lohe north-west of Schmiedefeldt and another four between the villages of Klein Mochbern and Grabschen. In the north on the Austrian left, Feldzeugmeister (FzM) von Khuel was meeting stiff resistance from the Prussians under von Brandes in the village of Pilsnitz. In the centre

A rather over dramatised depiction of the flight of the Franco-Imperial army at the end of the battle. (Engraving after Menzel)



however events were going well for the Austrians. The first attack across the Lohe was made by Daun leading Sprecher's combined grenadier battalions (35 companies) against the ten battalions of von Schultze. This attack was closely followed by that of Feldmarschalleutnant (FmL) von Starhemberg over the bridge against Höfchen and those of the corps of FmL Graf Wied and FmL Freiherr von Andlau across the River Lohe against the villages of Klein Mochbern and Grabschen respectively. The Prussians in the centre put up a fierce resistance, but in the end Wied's corps successfully stormed the Prussian battery at Klein

Looking down from the top of the Janus Ridge, with the eastern edge of Lunstädt on the right. The right wing of the Prussian infantry was formed up along the line of the road, facing away from us. (Author's collection)





Uniforms of some of the Imperial regiments at Leuthen. Left to right: Bavarian – Officer Leib Infantry Regiment, Private Preysing Infantry Regiment, Pioneer of Kurprinz Infantry Regiment. Württemberg – Officer Infantry Regiment von Roeder and Private of Prinz Louis Infantry Regiment. (Wolfgang Friedrich/Author's collection)

Mochbern and pushed on to Grabschen, this threatened the rear of the villages of Schmiedefeldt and Höfchen, which were being attacked frontally by d'Arberg. The combined attack slowly drove back the Prussian centre on Klein Gandau, forcing Bevern's right wing to fall back to avoid being encircled; indeed some of the Austrian cavalry under Lucchese did ride down several Prussian battalions as they retired. The only saving grace for Bevern was that Nadasty's attack on the right had not been very successful. If his left had given way it is probable he would have been cut off from his line of retreat to Breslau. As darkness fell, Bevern ordered a withdrawal and, leaving 6,000 killed or wounded on the field, the Prussians marched through the night. Bevern now decided to abandon Breslau. Leaving a garrison of 5,000 men behind them, the remainder tramped through the silent streets of the city, crossed the River Oder and turned north towards Glogau. While on a reconnaissance Bevern himself was captured by the Austrians. Speculation was rife that he had allowed himself to be captured, fearing the wrath of his master at having been pushed out of a strong position outside Breslau. His defeated and dejected army marched on to Glogau, unmolested by the Austrians, to face the Royal anger. The Austrians invested Breslau and on 24 November, General Lestewitz surrendered the city. The majority of the garrison were Silesian and gladly took service with the Austrians. In 1740 the Silesian population had been

The Prussian infantry march through the ever-worsening weather towards Silesia. Frederick's swift march to Silesia after the victory at Rossbach was a masterpiece of strategic manoeuvre, but took place amid dreadful weather. (Engraving after Menzel)



indifferent to the Austrian cause, but now after 17 years of Prussian rule the re-establishment of Austrian governance was decidedly popular.

The defeat of Bevern, the fall of Breslau and the capture of Schweidnitz earlier in the month had given the Austrians control of Silesia and, for the first time since the province had fallen to Frederick in 1740, they were in a position to retain it. If they were to succeed in this, however, the Austrian commanders knew they must defeat Frederick when he marched against them as he inevitably would.

FREDERICK MARCHES FOR SILESIA

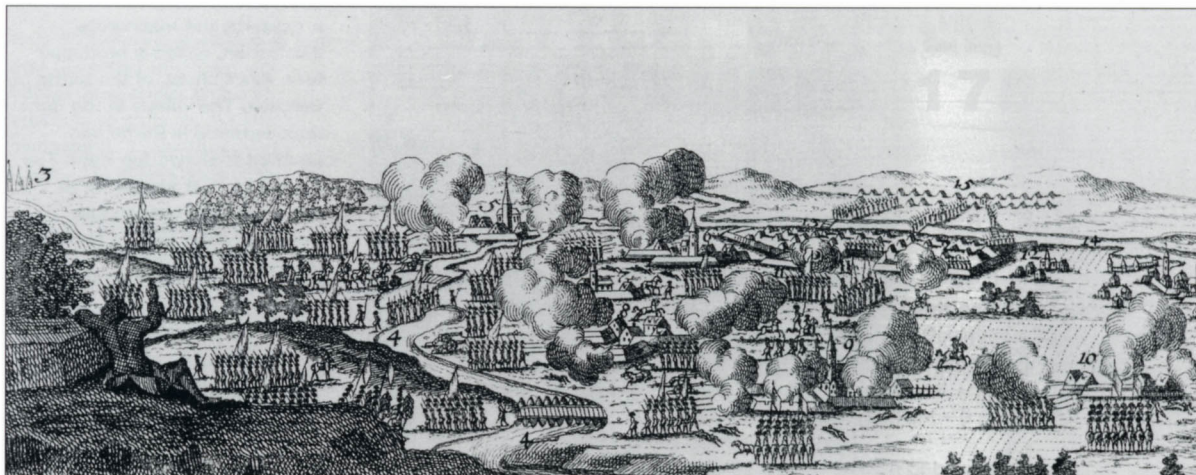
Now that he had dealt with the threat in the west Frederick turned his attention to Silesia.

On 13 November Frederick began his march east, leaving his brother Prince Henry to guard Saxony and Marshal Keith with 9,000 men to make a diversionary attack into Bohemia. Keith's expedition attracted the attention of the Austrian General Marschall, who moved out of Lusatia to shadow the Prussian movements. Frederick left Leipzig on 13 November with 13,000 men and marched via Torgau to Mühlberg. When he arrived in Grossenhayn on 18 November he was told of the fall of Schweidnitz. At Bautzen on 21 November he learnt that the route to Silesia via Görlitz was open – onward he marched, determined to link up with Bevern before further disaster befell his lieutenant. The march continued via Weissenberg, the Prussian army crossing the River Queiss at Naumberg on 24 November where Frederick was told of the defeat of Bevern outside Breslau and his subsequent capture by Croats. He also learnt that the defeated army had crossed the River Oder and were marching to Glogau. Before Frederick continued on his way, he sent word that the Breslau army was to rendezvous with him at Parchwitz on 2 December. General Kyau was in command of this force, but Frederick soon gave orders for Zieten to take command. The Prussian army left Naumberg on 26 November and while at Lobedau Frederick was told of



the fall of Breslau. For Frederick the dark storm clouds were piling up on the horizon and he was more determined than ever to have a reckoning with the Austrians now outside Breslau. He is said to have remarked that, 'I would attack them, if they stood on the Zobtenberg, if they stood on the steeples of Breslau.' The Austrian commanders, with upwards of 80,000 men in and around Breslau, were astonished that Frederick was determined to take the fight to them. 'Will he beat us out of Silesia with his *Potsdamsche Wacht-Parade*?¹ they asked incredulously. There was a small garrison in Liegnitz which Frederick brushed aside as he marched towards his rendezvous with Zieten. The weary Prussians arrived in Parchwitz on 28 November having marched 180 English miles (290km) in 15 days. Zieten arrived as expected on 2 December, with the demoralised survivors of Bevern's army. After their failure, the officers of the defeated army were dreading facing the wrath of their king. Frederick however was not interested in apportioning blame – he desired only to defeat Prince Charles of Lorraine's Austrians, and to do this he needed all his troops in good heart. He gathered them together, gave them wine and reminded them of their past battles and victories. The rank and file of the defeated army were given extra rations and regaled with tales of the victory at Rossbach. Although the force Frederick had now gathered numbered a mere 35,000, these were all men from exclusively native Prussian territories. Frederick finally formulated his plan on 3 December and gathered together all the

A plan of the battle of Breslau with Prussian positions marked in blue and those of the Austrians in red. It was vital for the Austrians to capture Breslau if they hoped to over-winter in Silesia. (AKG)



A stylised illustration of the battle of Breslau. Bevern's Prussians were evicted from a strong position and fearing his master's wrath, he allowed himself to be captured a few days later. After the victory at Kolin, Breslau was the high-water mark of Austrian fortunes in 1757. (AKG)

materiel he would need for the forthcoming confrontation including bridging equipment and ten thick-barrelled 12-pdr fortress guns, brought from Glogau by Zieten and known as *Brummers*.

Determined to impress on his officers the importance of what was at stake he summoned all his general officers, regimental and battalion commanders to his headquarters. It was the evening of 3 December and Frederick was about to deliver his famous Parchwitz Address.

The Parchwitz Address

When his officers paraded before their King on that Saturday evening they would have been struck by the theatre of it all. Before them stood Frederick with a weariness about him that was exaggerated in his weak voice. These effects were further amplified by his unkempt appearance and shabby uniform. When Frederick spoke it was in German – unusual as he normally spoke French – to ensure his words were clearly



Frederick gathers his senior officers together to deliver the Parchwitz Address. He linked their own fortunes to the survival of the Prussian state and emphasised the dire consequences of defeat. Gathered in front of him are, right to left: Major-General Lentulus, Major-General Fouqué, Lieutenant-General Moritz von Anhalt-Dessau, Lieutenant-General Zieten and Major-General Schmettau. (Print after Knötel)



A dramatic but inaccurate illustration, possibly produced for a news sheet, of the battle of Leuthen. The village in the right middleground is Borne and Leuthen is shown top right. The Prussians thus appear to be attacking the Austrian line frontally rather than in the flank. (AKG)

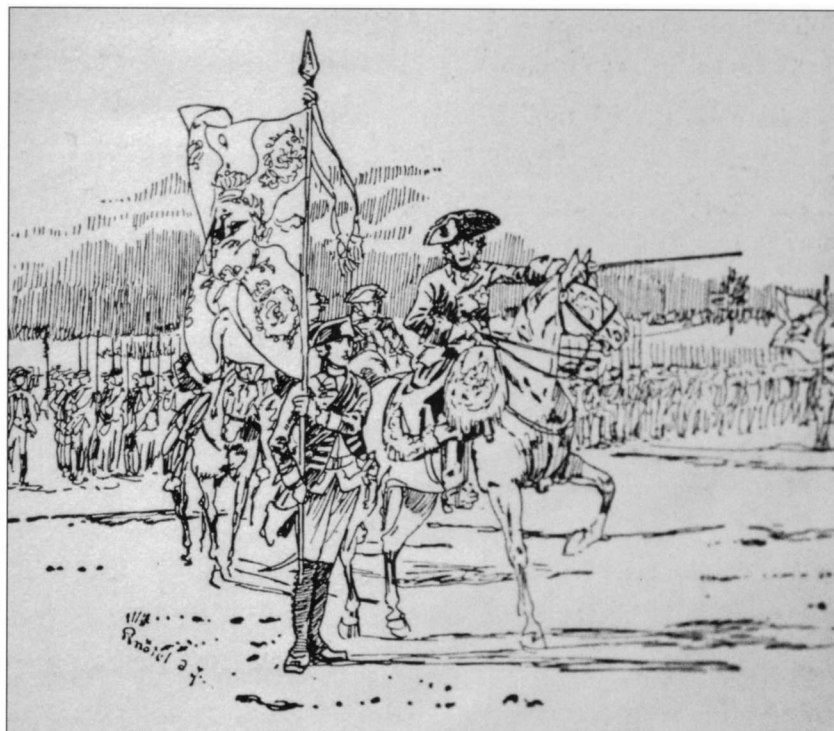
understood. There are two versions of the address. That given here was recorded by Prince Ferdinand, and is reputedly the more accurate:

The enemy hold the same entrenched camp of Breslau which my troops defended so honourably. I am marching to attack this position. I have no need to explain my conduct or why I am determined on this measure. I fully recognise the dangers attached to this enterprise, but in my present situation I must conquer or die. If we go under, all is lost. Bear in mind, gentlemen, that we shall be fighting for our glory, the preservation of our homes, and for our wives and children. Those who think as I do can rest assured that, if they are killed, I will look after their families. If anybody prefers to take his leave, he can have it now, but he will cease to have any claim on my benevolence.

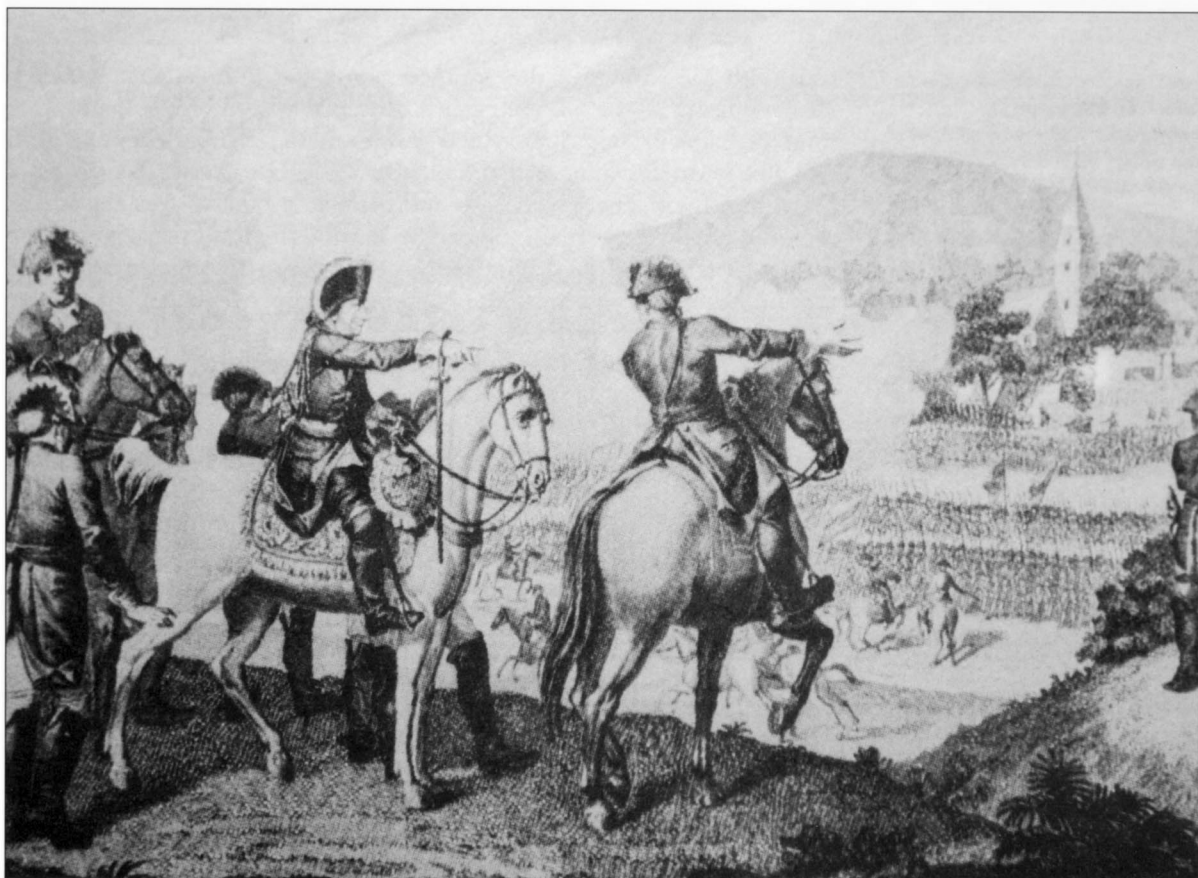
With that, the officers returned to their regiments and passed the word down the chain of command, old warriors shook each other by the hand and promised to stand by one another loyally. The younger soldiers swore not to shrink from their task but go straight at the enemy regardless of the opposition.

The Prussians set off from Parchwitz at 4.00 o'clock on the morning of Sunday 4 December in four columns with an advance guard. Frederick

RIGHT Frederick gives one of the *Frei Corporals* of IR26 precise instructions about where the attack is to go in. In the king's own words, '... go directly at them ...' (Author's collection)



BELOW Frederick directs the attack on Leuthen village having successfully swept the Austrians out of Sagschütz. The hill in the background appears to be artistic licence – no such high ground exists. (Engraving after Dähling)





Frederick arrives to order the attack on Sagschütz. So determined was Frederick that the attack should succeed that he personally directed the deployment of the lead battalions and placed Moritz of Anhalt-Dessau in overall command of the infantry assault. (ASKB)

rode with the cavalry of the advance guard, the Puttkamer and Zieten Hussars. It was as the advance guard neared the town of Neumarkt, that some peasants in their Sunday best gave Frederick the unbelievable news that the town still contained the enemy's field bakery and his stocks of bread and flour. There were also approximately 1,000 Croats still in the area and engineers were on the heights beyond the town marking out the site for a camp. Frederick immediately sent a regiment of hussars to circle around Neumarkt and on to the Pfaffendorfer-Berg heights beyond. The other regiment was ordered to capture the field bakery and clear the Croats out of the town. Having dismounted and acquired some axes from nearby farmhouses, the hussars broke down the gates and set about the startled Croats with their sabres and carbines. The Croats fled in a hurry and finding their escape route across the heights in Prussian hands, scattered in all directions, suffering 120 killed and 569 taken prisoner. When Frederick arrived on the Pfaffendorfer-Berg heights he was shown where the pegs had been planted to mark out a camp. This lent credence to reports Frederick had received indicating that the Austrians were abandoning their entrenched position outside Breslau. Frederick returned to Neumarkt and set up his headquarters in a house on a corner of the town square. That evening Frederick learnt that the Austrians had indeed abandoned their trenches, crossed the River Lohe and the Schweidnitzer-Wasser and were encamped in open ground on the near side. Their right wing was resting on the village of Nipperrn, their left in the area of Gohlau and the centre lay behind the villages of Frobeltwitz and Leuthen.

Frederick realised that if he attacked early the next day, he would catch the Austrians before they had time to prepare any defences. In



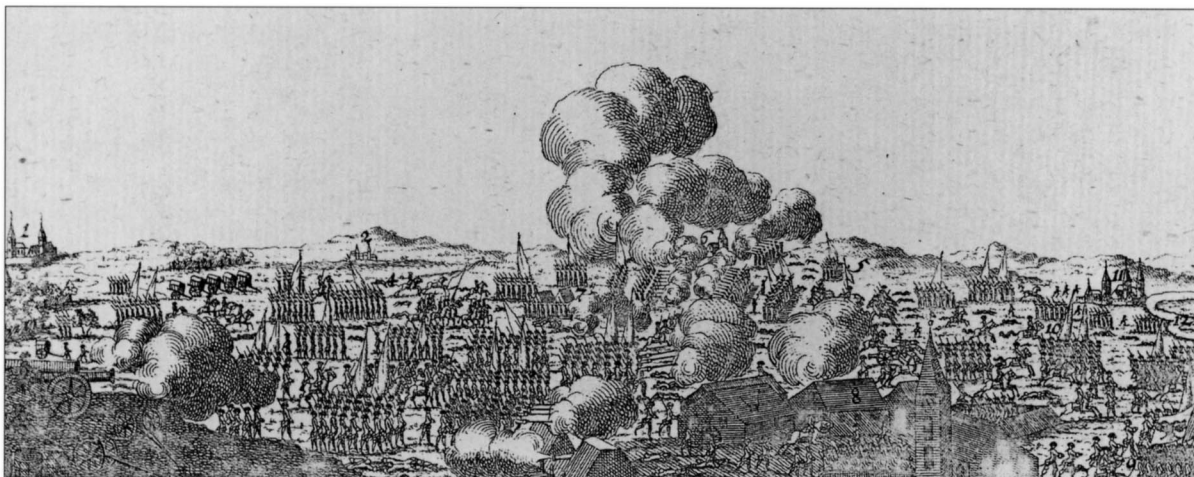
addition the ground was well known to Frederick and his army as the area of Leuthen had been the site of the Prussian army autumn manoeuvres in the years before war. Movement would also be easier as a cold snap had frozen the ground hard overnight.

THE POTSDAM GUARD PARADE MARCHES INTO BATTLE

The Prussian army had reveille at 4.00am on Monday 5 December and rose in silence. The weather was fine, with a clear star-studded sky above the mist, but it was cold and soldiers clapped their hands to keep warm as the army broke camp and formed itself into columns of march. The march began some time between 5.00am and 6.00am, the drummers did not beat the *Generalmarsch* for fear of the sound carrying to the Austrians.

Frederick was with the advance guard of three *Frei* battalions, the *Fussjäger*, all the army's hussars and nine battalions of infantry. The Prussians advanced cautiously through the mist and it was not until the sun had risen into a cloudless blue sky that they neared the village of Borne. Just short of the village Frederick halted and then just with his hussars pressed forward towards a line of cavalry visible through the mist. It proved to be Lieutenant-General Nostitz with the three regiments of Saxon Chevauxleger who did so well at Kolin, a mixed corps of Croats and two regiments of Austrian Hussars. Nostitz was an

The Potsdamer Wachtparade at Leuthen. The grenadiers of Regiment No. 22 Moritz von Anhalt-Dessau advance as part of the composite Kremzow Grenadier Battalion towards Sagschütz. (Print after Rochling)



A stylised illustration of the Battle of Leuthen. Like so many pictures drawn at the time almost all the incidents in the battle are put into one composition. (AKG)

excellent officer whose conduct at Kolin had also been exceptional. He had made preparations to conduct an orderly withdrawal if his force came under pressure, but was unaware of the size of the force that faced him. The mist may have concealed the Prussian numbers, but in any case his order to withdraw came too late. The Austrian hussars managed to get away, but the first line of Prussian hussars, some 30 squadrons strong, overtook the brave Saxon regiments before they could get through Borne. They lost 600 men taken prisoner, but were eventually able to disengage and return to the main position, joining Nadasty's corps on the left of the line. Three of the best cavalry regiments in the Austrian army had been bested, however, and with Nostitz's screen swept away the Austrians were effectively blind. Frederick was now able to



Frederick directs the battle accompanied by various aides-de-camp. The infantry attack on Sagschütz was so successful that Frederick was obliged to send a succession of messages to Major-General Wedel telling him to slow his advance as he was in danger of pressing too far ahead. (AKG)

An impressive diorama of the advance by the 3rd Battalion of the Guard on the village of Leuthen. This diorama is in the *Deutsche Zinnfigurenmuseum ob der Plassenburg* in Kulmbach. (DZM)



examine the Austrian positions in detail. It was now nearing 9.00am, the sun shone down upon an open landscape with a light covering of snow. Frederick left the three *Frei* battalions and the *Füßjäger* in Borne and rode on with Moritz of Anhalt-Dessau and a detachment of hussars through Gross-Heidau to observe the Austrian line from the Schönberg.

Prince Charles of Lorraine and Marshal Daun meanwhile advanced their troops from their encampment, 1,000–2,000 paces to the west, into their battle positions. The Austrian position was on roughly a north–south axis astride the main route to Breslau. The deployment was very conventional in style, the infantry arrayed in the centre in two lines, with the cavalry on the flanks also in two lines. The bulk of the right wing was mostly behind the Zettel Busch; with Croats stationed in the wood. The reserve corps of the combined grenadier battalions was ordered to hold the village of Nippeln. In the centre were the villages of Frobeltwitz and Leuthen, but running on an east–west axis they were unsuitable as defensive positions. In the centre the Austrian artillery was spread equally along the front and, already outgunned, this further undermined their ability to concentrate their fire against the enemy. The left wing rested on the hamlet of Sagschütz and the entire Austrian line was some $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles (9km) from north to south. This was extraordinarily long and was a result of previous experience of



This dramatic reconstruction of the defence of the Catholic church by the Imperial regiment Rot-Würzburg at Leuthen is also part of the spectacular diorama in the Zinnfigurenmuseum. However, in reality the churchyard is considerably smaller. (DZM)

Frederick's tactics. The Austrian commanders expected Frederick to try to turn one or the other of their flanks and so they lengthened their line by deploying in three ranks rather than four as was more usual. Daun again formed a mobile reserve as he had at Kolin earlier in the year, where it had shown its worth. The reserve consisted of three German, one Hungarian and four Dutch-Walloon battalions led by Lieutenant-General Karl Leopold d'Arenberg, a highly respected Austrian general.

After passing through Gross-Heidau the King turned south to ride up onto the Schönberg some 1½ miles (2.5km) from the Austrian line, from where he easily identified the centre of the Austrian position to the north of Leuthen. The village itself partially obscured the Austrian positions to the south and Nadasty's corps would certainly have been out of sight. Frederick knew this ground well. Essentially it was a vast expanse of almost flat arable farmland, with isolated patches of woodland and small villages dotted about the plain. There were few obstacles to movement, the most notable being the Zettel Busch in the north near Nippern, the woods of the Leuthener Busch and Rathener Busch to the east and north-east of Leuthen and the ditches and boggy ground to the south of Sagschütz. There were numerous small 'bergs', which stretched down the western side of the field from Borne to Lobetinz. The word berg however is misleading as these were really no more than rises in the ground – they did however allow movement in dead ground.

Frederick having observed the Austrian line determined to attack the enemy's left flank. The army was to march some three miles (5km) south to Lobetinz where it would then conduct a left wheel and array itself in a position diagonally opposite the Austrian left flank. Frederick used his



Carl Röchling's famous painting of the Prussian Guard storming the churchyard at Leuthen. The church was stoutly defended by the Rot-Würzburg infantry regiment, demonstrating that when supported and bravely led the Imperial regiments were formidable opponents. (AKG)

time in the late morning in persuading the Austrians that the attack would come in the centre. Firstly he arrayed the cavalry of the advance guard in line east of Borne, in full view of the Austrian line. At around 11.00am the deception was further strengthened by the main part of the army marching onto the field through Borne in the crowded formation of column of wings. Some of the troops were temporarily deployed into line to suggest they were going to march directly against the centre of the Austrian position. Frederick also conducted numerous marches and counter-marches on his left flank and General Lucchese, the Austrian commander of the cavalry in the north, was convinced that he was about to be attacked. He sent an officer to seek out Prince Charles and FM Daun to inform them and to ask for the mobile reserve. Both officers were at the windmill, which was on a low hill to the north of Leuthen – they hesitated as they were still unsure of Prussian intentions. Towards noon they finally agreed to the redeployment of the eight battalions of the reserve to the north. Lieutenant General d'Arenberg accordingly marched his force north with all possible speed and took up position on the far right wing in the area of Nipporn. Marshal Daun rode off to the right wing to have a look for himself and it is probably now, in the absence of Daun's sensible council that Prince Charles agreed to the movement of a second reinforcement to the right. This time it was some of Serbelloni's left-wing cavalry, who swung east of Leuthen and then trotted north to join Lucchese. The move of the Austrian reserve, even before battle had commenced would prove to be disastrous.

FREDERICK'S FLANK MARCH

At about 10.30am the Prussian army had halted in its march formation of wings. It now began to wheel off to the right 'by lines'. Marching 'by wings' allowed speedy movement for an approach march, but now the Prussian army had to form line of battle. The first step was for the wings



The 2nd Battalion of the Guard storms the main gate of the churchyard under heavy fire from the defenders of the Rot-Würzburg regiment. This was one of the points at which the Prussians eventually broke in. (SPGB)

to right wheel into columns 'by lines'. As they wheeled right the four columns 'of wings' would divide into two creating the conventional two lines for the forthcoming battle. With this manoeuvre complete the right wing of the army was at the head of both new columns 'of lines', the centre followed and the left wing was at the rear. When the army reached its battle positions the columns 'of lines' would left wheel into line and the army would be deployed ready for battle

At Leuthen Frederick split the advance guard infantry, six of the battalions went with Zieten's right wing, giving him a mixed force similar to that employed at Mollwitz in 1740. The remaining three battalions led the march of the infantry of the centre and to them would fall the honour of opening the attack.

The Prussian flank march would take them due south on an axis Borne-Kol-Wusting, parallel to the Austrians some 1 ½ miles (2.5km) to the east. Frederick chose this axis to keep his manoeuvres well away from the Austrians and so avoid the confusions of Prague and Kolin earlier in the year. The ground rose and fell with the low heights of the various 'bergs', the Schmiedeberg, Schleierberg, Sophienberg and the Wachberg. These low heights effectively screened the Prussian army as it marched south. With Frederick and Prince Moritz and their escort of 25 squadrons riding south in full view of the Austrians along the 'Bergs', the Austrians may well have assumed that the Prussians were declining the offer of battle and marching away. In the course of a campaign there would be numerous occasions on which armies would face each other and one side or the other would choose not to give battle. During the Seven Years War Frederick was usually outnumbered and would not

Captain Mollendorf, the future Field Marshal, leads the Prussian Garde as they break in to the churchyard. This picture wrongly shows Mollendorf leading men of the 1st Battalion, but only 2nd and 3rd Battalions fought at Leuthen. (Engraving by Menzel)



commit to a battle unless he considered the circumstances favourable. At around midday on 5 December 1757 it was quite reasonable for the Austrian High Command to think that Frederick was once again marching off in frustration to try again another day.

As the Prussian lines reached the high ground behind Lobetin in the early afternoon they turned and marched south-east towards Schriegwitz. Once the right wing of Zieten passed beyond this village, the whole army turned into line and halted. They were now opposite the Austrian left wing and Nadasty, who had been watching the latter stages of the Prussian manoeuvres, correctly concluded that his position would be the focus of their attack. He sent urgent messages to Prince Charles and Daun but his observations and pleas were ignored.

THE OPENING PRUSSIAN ATTACK

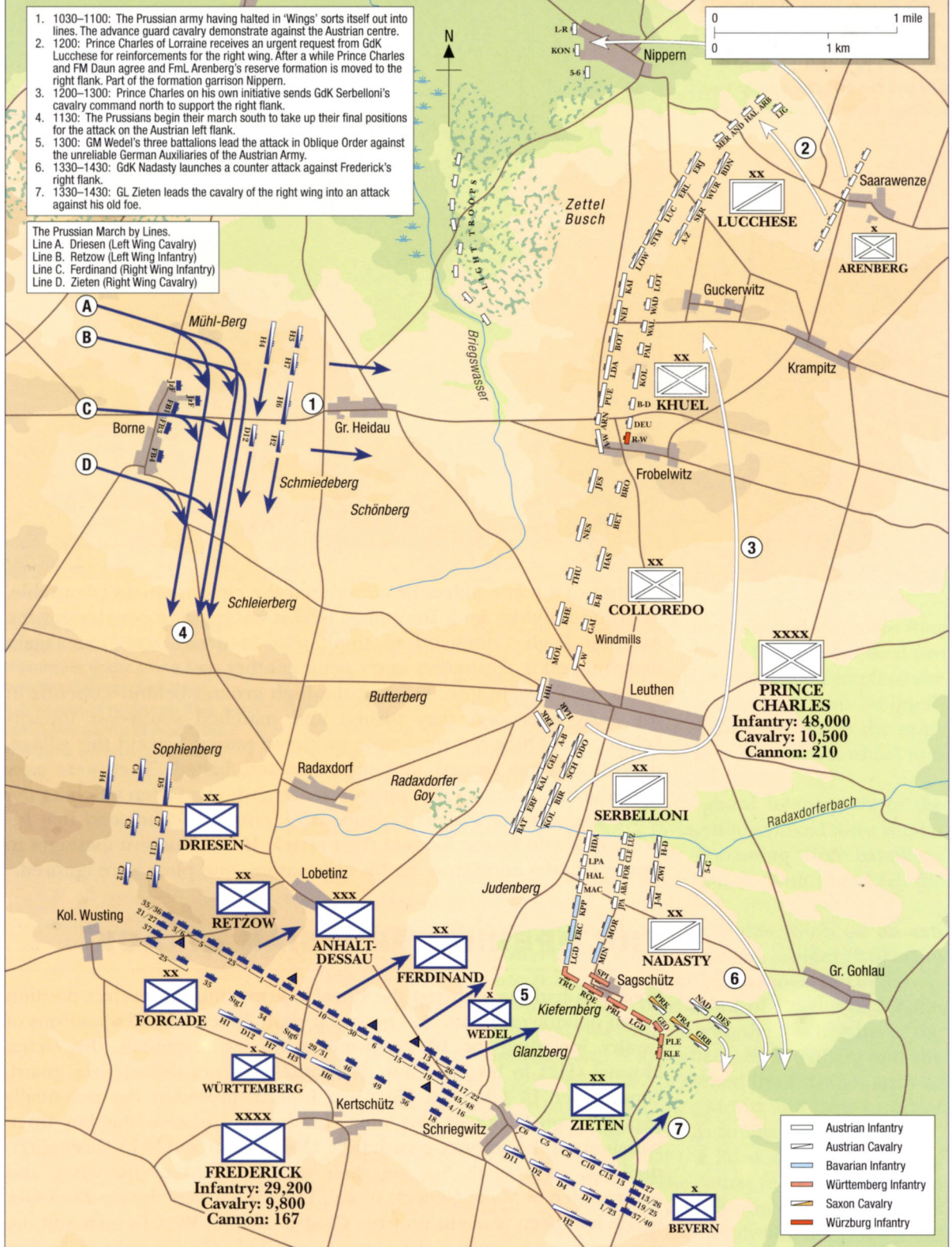
Frederick had manoeuvred the Prussian army into the perfect position for an oblique order attack. On the far right Zieten had 53 squadrons of cavalry, including the 10 squadrons of his own regiment, the Zieten Hussars (H2) in his third line. Six battalions from the advance guard, commanded by GM Karl Fürst von Bevern, protected the potentially exposed right flank of this wing. In the centre were the last three battalions of the advance guard, IR26 (Meyerinck) and IR13 (Itzenplitz), deployed in a small line on their own in front of the army and commanded by Major-General Wedel. To their left were the ten *Brummers*, which had been brought up from Glogau. Behind Wedel's men and the guns were the infantry of the centre in two lines. On the right of the first

LEUTHEN – THE FLANK MARCH AND OPENING ATTACK

- 1030–1100: The Prussian army having halted in 'Wings' sorts itself out into lines. The advance guard cavalry demonstrate against the Austrian centre.
- 1200: Prince Charles of Lorraine receives an urgent request from GdK Lucchese for reinforcements for the right wing. After a while Prince Charles and FM Daun agree and FmL Arenberg's reserve formation is moved to the right flank. Part of the formation garrison Nipperrn.
- 1200–1300: Prince Charles on his own initiative sends GdK Serbelloni's cavalry command north to support the right flank.
- 1130: The Prussians begin their march south to take up their final positions for the attack on the Austrian left flank.
- 1300: GM Wedel's three battalions lead the attack in Oblique Order against the unreliable German Auxiliaries of the Austrian Army.
- 1330–1430: GdK Nadasty launches a counter attack against Frederick's right flank.
- 1330–1430: GL Zieten leads the cavalry of the right wing into an attack against his old foe.

The Prussian March by Lines.

Line A. Driesen (Left Wing Cavalry)
Line B. Retzow (Left Wing Infantry)
Line C. Ferdinand (Right Wing Infantry)
Line D. Zieten (Right Wing Cavalry)





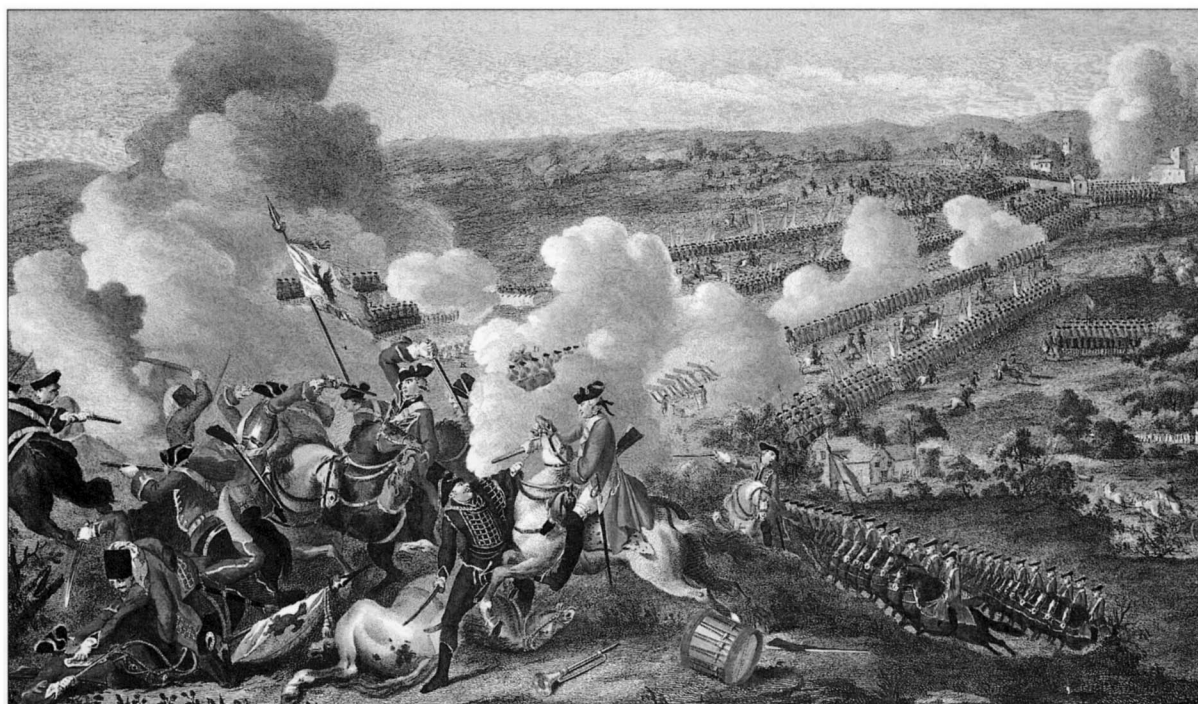
line were the excellent regiments of IR15 (Garde), IR19 (Markgraf Karl) and Grenadier Battalion 17/22 (Kremzow). Immediately behind the grenadiers were deployed in turn Grenadier Battalions 45/48 (Unruh) and 4/16 (Kleist) and behind them was the first battalion of IR18 (Prinz von Preussen) forming the right of the second line. All these battalions were excellent troops and could be relied upon to perform well. To help with the command and control and ensure that the attack was delivered with force, Frederick personally positioned the lead battalions for the attack and Moritz of Anhalt-Dessau was placed in overall command of the infantry. The first line of infantry, including those mentioned above, was 20 battalions strong. The line would attack in echelon from right to left with each battalion marching 50 paces behind the battalion to its right. Grenadier Battalion 35/36 (Schenckendorff), on the extreme left of the line, would thus march nearly 1,000 paces behind the battalion (17/22) on the right of the line, and would come into action 15 minutes later. On the left, as on the right, battalions were deployed between the first and second lines. In this case Grenadier Battalion 21/27 (Diringshofen) and a battalion of IR37 (Kurszell) were deployed directly behind Grenadier Battalion 35/36. The second line consisted of only 11 battalions and although more widely spaced than the first line, would also attack in echelon. The left-wing cavalry, commanded by Lieutenant-General Driesen, consisted of 50 squadrons, including the 10 squadrons of the Puttkamer Hussars (H4) from the advance guard and like the Zieten Hussars on the right they made up a third line. Driesen was part of the refused left wing of the army, positioned behind the Sophienberg, and was given orders to attack when the right opportunity presented itself.

The 3rd Battalion Garde finally succeeds in breaking into the churchyard at one of the breaches created by the Prussian artillery. A memorial cross now stands at this spot. (Print after Rochling)

RIGHT The Imperial regiment continued to fight on after the Prussians had broken into the churchyard. Ultimately only four officers and 33 men escaped, but they carried their regimental colours with them. (Author's collection)

BELOW A fantastic diorama of the latter stages of the battle in the *Bayerisches Armeemuseum* in Ingolstadt. We are looking down on the second Austrian line with Leuthen in the top left of the picture. In the foreground the Bavarian infantry is reeling back with the Prussian infantry close behind. (BAI)





A picture depicting the cavalry clash between Lucchese and Driesen. The milling mass of horsemen eventually rolled back onto the right of the Austrian line. This precipitated a general withdrawal of the Austrian army. (ASKB)

The hussars of the advance guard consisting of 5 squadrons of dragoons and 25 of hussars and commanded by Lieutenant-General Eugen Prince von Württemberg were stationed in the centre behind the second line. This deployment was unusual but meant that, should the attack of the infantry in the centre be successful, cavalry would be on hand to exploit this.

With the army ready, Frederick double-checked the deployments and then rode up to the leading battalion of IR26 and spoke to the colour bearers Barsewisch and Unruh, *Fahnenjunker* of the colonels company. He made sure they knew exactly the direction of the attack: 'Ensigns of the Life Company, take heed! You must march against the abatis, but don't advance so quickly that the army cannot keep up with you.' Pointing out the position of the enemy he ended by saying, 'It's a case of do or die! You've got the enemy in front, and all our army behind. There is no space to retreat, and the only way to go forward is to beat the enemy.' While he was briefing them Prince Moritz rode up and reminded Frederick that there were only a few hours of daylight left. The Prussian attack began just after 1.00pm as, with drums and fifes playing and under a clear azure-blue winter sky, Wedel's three leading assault battalions advanced towards the Austrians. The point of attack was the line of troops defending the Austrian left on the Kiefernberg just to the south of Sagschütz. As luck would have it this was where Nadasty had placed the Protestant Württemberg regiments and to their right the Imperial regiments from Bavaria. These regiments were not bad soldiers but they had not faced an attack by Prussian troops before and were deemed to be a little unreliable. As the Prussian IR26 and IR13 approached a drainage ditch, cannon shot tore through their ranks causing heavy casualties, and their battalion pieces deployed and opened fire, destroying two of the enemy cannon. The Württemberg regiments of Truchsess, Roeder and Prinz Louis bore the

PRUSSIANS

Left Wing

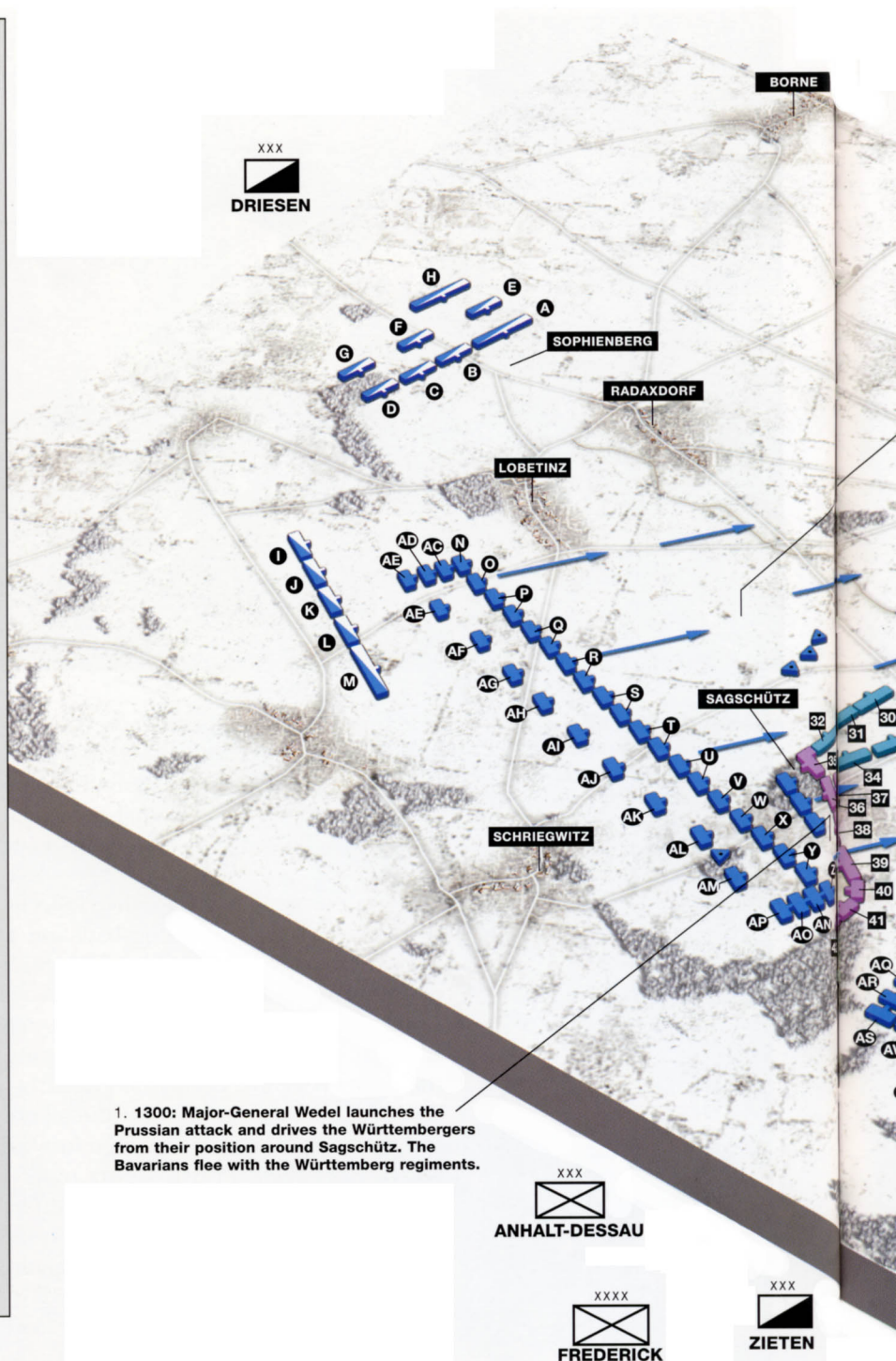
- A Bayreuth Dragoons (10 sqns)
- B Driesen Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- C Leib Karabiner (5 sqns)
- D Krockow Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- E Gessler Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- F Schönaich Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- G Kyau Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- H Puttkammer Hussars (10 sqns)

Centre

- I Székely Hussars (10 sqns)
- J Württemberg Dragoons (5 sqns)
- K Seydlitz Hussars (10 sqns)
- L Warnery Hussars (10 sqns)
- M Werner Hussars (10 sqns)
- N Schenkendorf Grenadiers (1 bn)
- O Hacke Grenadiers (1 bn)
- P Alt-Braunschweig IR (2 bns)
- Q Forcade IR (2 bns)
- R Winterfeldt IR (2 bns)
- S Geist IR (2 bns)
- T Pannwitz IR (2 bns)
- U Kannacher IR (2 bns)
- V Garde Grenadier Battalion (1 bn)
- W 3rd Bn Garde (1 bn)
- X 2nd Bn Garde (1 bn)
- Y Markgraf Karl IR (2 bns)
- Z Kremzow Grenadier Battalion (1bn)
- AA 1st Bn Itzenplitz
- AB Meyerinck IR (2 bns)
- AC Diringshoven Grenadier Battalion (1 bn)
- AD Kurszell IR (1 bn)
- AE Kalkstein IR (2 bns)
- AF Prince Heinrich IR (1 bn)
- AG Standing Grenadier Battalion (1 bn)
- AH Prince Ferdinand IR (1 bn)
- AI Standing Grenadier Battalion (1 bn)
- AJ Österreich Grenadier Battalion (1 bn)
- AK Alt-Württemberg IR (1 bn)
- AL Jung-Braunschweig IR (1 bn)
- AM Münchow IR (1 bn)
- AN Unruth Grenadier Battalion (1 bn)
- AO Kleist Grenadier Battalion (1 bn)
- AP Prinz von Preussen IR (1 bn)

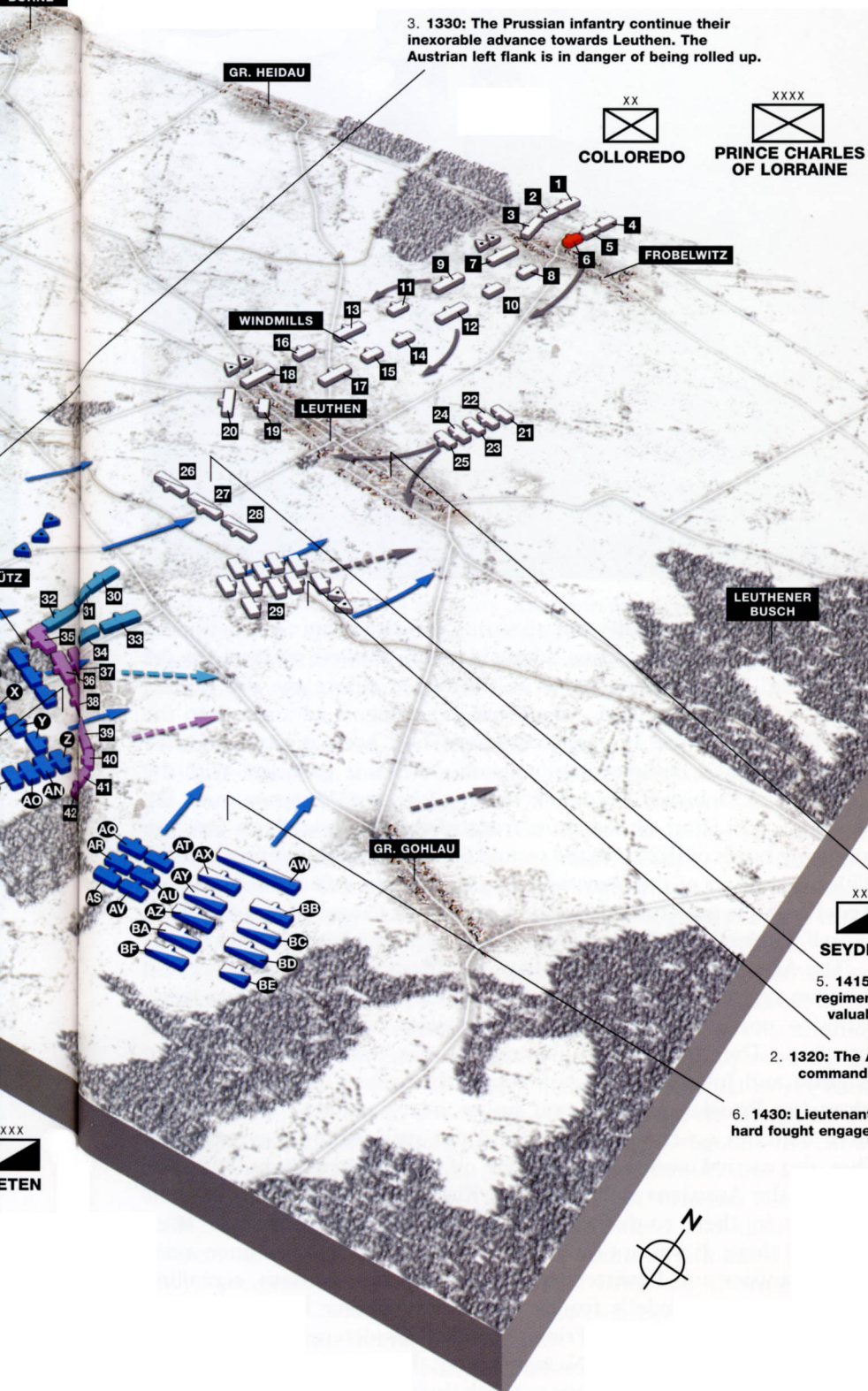
Right Wing

- AQ 2nd Bn Itzenplitz (1 bn)
- AR Börnstadt Grenadier Battalion (1 bn)
- AS Wedell Grenadier Battalion (1 bn)
- AT Asseburg IR (1 bn)
- AU Heyden Grenadier Battalion (1 bn)
- AV Manteuffel Grenadier Battalion (1 bn)
- AW Zieten Hussars (10 sqns)
- AX Markgraf Friedrich Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- AY Schönaich Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- AZ Czettritz Dragoons (5 sqns)
- BA Stechow Dragoons (5 sqns)
- BB Jung-Krockow Dragoons (5 sqns)
- BC Seydlitz Cuirassiers
- BD Gendarmes (5 sqns)
- BE Garde du Korps (3 sqns)
- BF Normann Dragoons (5 sqns)



LEUTHEN – DEFEAT OF THE AUSTRIAN LEFT WING

5 December 1757, viewed from the south, showing the advance of the Prussian right wing and the defeat of the Austrian left wing.



3. 1330: The Prussian infantry continue their inexorable advance towards Leuthen. The Austrian left flank is in danger of being rolled up.



COLLOREDO

PRINCE CHARLES
OF LORRAINE

AUSTRIANS

Right Wing

- 1 Puebla IR (2 bns)
- 2 Arenberg IR (1 bn)
- 3 Alt-Wolfenbüttel IR (2 bns)
- 4 Baden-Durlach IR (2 bns)
- 5 Deutschmeister IR (2 bns)
- 6 Rot-Würzburg IR (1 bn)
- 7 Joseph Esterhazy IR (2 bns)
- 8 Browne IR (1 bn)
- 9 Nicholas Esterhazy IR (2 bns)
- 10 Bethlen IR (1 bn)
- 11 Thurheim IR (1 bn)
- 12 Harsch IR (2 bns)
- 13 Khuel IR (2 bns)
- 14 Baden-Baden IR (1 bn)
- 15 Gaisruck IR (1 bn)
- 16 Moltke IR (1 bn)
- 17 L. Wolfenbüttel (2 bn)
- 18 Hiller IR (2 bns)
- 19 Harrach IR (2 bns)
- 20 Erzherzog Karl IR (2 bns)
- 21 d'Arberg IR (1 bn)
- 22 Haller (1 bn)
- 23 Andlau IR (1 bn)
- 24 Mercy IR (1 bn)
- 25 Ligne IR (1 bn)

Centre

- 26 Batthyany Dragoons (5 sqns)
- 27 Kalkreuth Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- 28 Erzherzog Ferdinand Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- 29 Nadasty's infantry (9 bns)

Left Wing

- 30 Kurprinz Preysing IR (2 bns)
- 31 Clemens IR (2 bns)
- 32 Bavarian Leibgarde (2 bns)
- 33 Morawitzky IR (2 bns)
- 34 Minucci IR (2 bns)
- 35 Truchsess IR (2 bns)
- 36 Roeder IR (2 bns)
- 37 Spiznass IR (2 bns)
- 38 Prinz Louis IR (2 bns)
- 39 Württemberg Leibgarde (2 bns)
- 40 Georgi IR (1 bn)
- 41 Pless IR (1 bn)
- 42 Klettenberg IR (1 bn)



SEYDLITZ

4. 1400: The Austrians are still in the process of taking up a new position facing south to meet the Prussian threat.

5. 1415: Major-General Buccow with his three cavalry regiments stands firm against the Prussians and buys valuable time for the Austrians. The battalions of de Ligne and d'Arberg assist him.

2. 1320: The Austrian and Hungarian battalions of Nadasty's command withdraw towards Leuthen. They make a brief stand on the Kirchberg.

6. 1430: Lieutenant-General Zieten, having defeated Nadasty in a hard fought engagement, advances in support of the main attack. Bevern joins the main infantry attack.





Frederick with Zieten at the end of the day. Having met with success against his old adversary, Nadasty, in the early stages of the battle, Zieten had the tables turned on him as the battle came to a close. Nadasty's check of Zieten's pursuit allowed the Austrians to get away largely unmolested. (AKG)

brunt of the attack and they put up strong resistance, but after delivering a final volley at the Prussians advancing with levelled muskets up the Kiefenberg, they lost their nerve and retreated before the determined assault of Wedel's vanguard – the Prussian regiments advanced into the gap. The line of the Imperial regiments had been pierced and the Württemberg and Bavarian regiments on either side gave way. With the breakthrough achieved Frederick sent up the ten *Brummers* onto the Glanzberg, just short of Sagschütz from where they could fire over the advancing heads of IR26 into the second line of Nadasty's infantry beyond. With the support of the *Brummers* and the Prussian infantry behind him, Wedel began to push towards Leuthen and was in danger of overstretching himself. Frederick sent a succession of adjutants to tell him to slow down.

The Austrian left wing had collapsed and with the Württemberg and Bavarian regiments withdrawing towards the Kirchberg the two heavy batteries north of the village of Sagschütz also withdrew in that direction. The first line of Austrian troops, the regiments Haller, Maguire and Johann Palffy, now found themselves outflanked by the advancing Prussian infantry and under heavy artillery fire from the three batteries on the Judenberg and not surprisingly they gave way. They also carried away the second-line infantry in their flight. For a few minutes the Austrians rallied on the Kirchberg, immediately to their rear, but in their confusion they masked the guns that had been deployed there. It was not long before the Prussian cannon once again rained canister and howitzer shells down on the Austrians, signalling a new attack by Wedel's troops and the grenadier battalion 17/22 (Kremzow), brought up by Prince Moritz. This determined attack was too much for the infantry of Nadasty's wing; they broke and fled towards Leuthen, allowing the Prussians to bring their artillery batteries forward

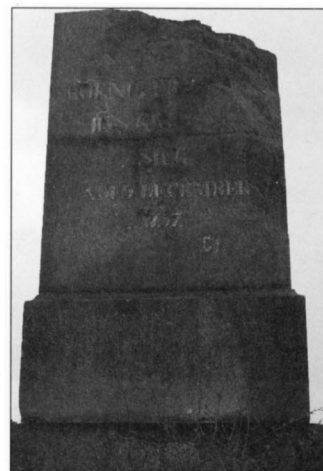


from the Judenberg to support the *Brummers*, which had already redeployed to the Kirchberg. With this heavy artillery support the Prussian infantry continued their advance unchecked towards Leuthen, intending to roll up the Austrian line from the left.

The cavalry battle on the left wing

Whilst the Prussian infantry had been advancing so successfully against the Austrian left wing, the cavalry of Zieten and Nadasty had clashed to the east of Sagschütz. Unlike the rest of the battlefield this area was cluttered with ditches, marshes, copses and ponds – far from ideal cavalry country. The three Saxon cavalry regiments under Lieutenant-General Nostitz had joined the left wing after their clash at Borne in the early morning and, with Nadasty's cavalry, now attacked Zieten's right flank. Far from sweeping into an exposed flank, however, the Austrian and Saxon cavalry were stopped in their tracks by the disciplined fire of Karl Fürst von Bevern's infantry. The bravery of Nostitz was his undoing for, having being wounded 14 times, he was finally captured by the Prussian infantry. A series of cavalry melees now ensued as regiment clashed with regiment in attack and counter-attack. At one point the Prussian 2nd Dragoons (Jung-Krokow) and 11th Dragoons (Stechow) found themselves attacked from behind by the Nadasty and Dessewffy Hussars, who had worked their way around the Prussian flank. For a while the Prussian regiments were hard pressed and their brigade commander, Major-General Krockow was wounded and taken prisoner. They were rescued when the Prussian 1st Dragoons (Normann) and 4th Dragoons (Czettritz) saw off the Austrian cavalry. However, as at Kolin the Austrians did not give in easily. The Saxe-Gotha Dragoons in their red coats now took up the fight, returning time and again to the attack and being severely mauled for their bravery. The culmination of

Leuthen from the Schönberg. It is clear that Frederick would not have been able to see the extent of the Austrian left wing beyond the village as the troops would have been in dead ground. (Authors collection)



The battered German VI Army Corps monument on the Schönberg to Frederick's victory at Leuthen. This was erected before World War II but has suffered in the intervening years. (Author's collection)







THE INITIAL PRUSSIAN ATTACK ON THE ALLIED LEFT WING AT LEUTHEN (pages 70–71)

The Württemberg infantry in the Allied army were not bad soldiers, but their Protestant background made them more sympathetic to Frederick than troops from the Catholic states of the Holy Roman Empire. In addition these were 'green' troops, untested in battle. It is therefore all the more surprising that the Austrian commanders placed them on the left of a very extended line of battle, knowing as they did that Frederick's preferred tactic was to attack one or other of his enemies' flanks.

Prussian IR No. 26 (Meyerinck) (1) advanced form Sagschütz and encountered the Württemberg Infantry Regiment Roeder as it neared the willow lined Kiefenberg. *Frei-Korporals* Barsewisch and Unruh are carrying the colours of the 1st Battalion of IR 26. Prussian Musketeer battalions carried four colours in all. The first battalion carried the *Leib fahne* (Kings Colour) (2) and an *Ordinaire fahne* (Regimental Colour) (3) while the second battalion carried two *Ordinaire fahne*. Gathered around the colours is the colour party of NCOs armed with halberds (4) whose role is to protect the colours. It was considered a great

dishonour for a regiment to allow its colours to be captured.

After the initial volley, which did little to slow the Prussian advance, some of the Württemberg troops began to slip away (5). The unit's officer is not present and while the NCO (6) is holding the platoon to their task of engaging the advancing Prussian regiment, there is little he can do alone to prevent men slipping away from the rear ranks. Like his Prussian counterparts the NCO carries a halberd and a cane, the latter used to deliver a sharp blow should his orders need reinforcing. The Württemberg infantry wore uniforms very similar to those of the Prussians and with a similar tight-fitting cut. The standard equipment of most soldiers of the period was very similar. A calfskin bag was carried over the right shoulder (7) containing a spare shirt, spare gaiters, wax for shoes and moustache, brush, looking glass and cleaning equipment. Resting on top of this is the metal canteen for water, while the crossbelt over the left shoulder carries the cartridge pouch (8). The wooden cartouche box inside the pouch was open at the top and drilled with holes for between 60 and 80 cartridges. The cartridge was blue paper tube, stuffed with black powder and with a lead musket ball at one end. (Adam Hook)

The Catholic church in Leuthen. The Prussian Garde attacked across the road and the memorial cross, which stands at the point where the Prussians broke in, can be seen just beyond the car. The other point of entry was the gates by the crucifixion. (Author's collection)



the combat came when GM Lentulus with the eight squadrons of his command (Prussian 13th Cuirassiers (Garde du Corps) and 10th Cuirassiers (Gendarmes)) fought ten squadrons of dragoons from FmL O'Donnell's command, five squadrons each of Jung-Modena and Saxe-Gotha. Nadasty had summoned O'Donnell to fill the gap left by the Württembergers and Bavarians, but by the time they arrived Nadasty had also lost the Austrian hussars and the Saxon Chevauxlegers. As soon as O'Donnell arrived he attacked with energy and drive and forced the Prussian cavalry back, giving the Austrian cavalry the breathing space to re-form. He was disappointed to find, however, that they were no longer interested in returning to the fray.

Lentulus led his Prussian cuirassiers forward again and this time captured 15 cannon and almost destroyed the Jung-Modena Dragoons; O'Donnell, practically unconscious from a sword cut to the head, was captured during the engagement. Around 2.30pm, having withdrawn his cavalry north of the Rathener Busch, Nadasty was re-forming his infantry. The Württembergers were still falling back, however, and had not yet re-formed. Unprotected, they were set upon by Zieten's Hussars (H2) and cut up, with 2,000 captured.

THE ATTACK ON LEUTHEN VILLAGE



ABOVE The memorial cross against the south wall.
(Author's collection)

BELOW One of the turrets from inside the churchyard. To fire over the wall, as illustrated in so many pictures, the defenders would have to have made earthen firing steps.
(Author's collection)

Disaster was looming for the Austrians – not only was their army facing west, but having sent their reserves north, there were no units available with which to plug the gap. Prince Charles despatched messengers all across the battlefield as he sought to restore his line. His first action was to order the remaining left-wing cavalry to turn south and face the Prussian threat. The commander, General of Cavalry Serbelloni, had faced a similar task at Kolin some six months before and had saved the Austrian army. On this winter's day in Silesia however he reverted to type and withdrew his cavalry through Leuthen to safety. This left Lieutenant-General Buccow with the Kalckreuth and Erzherzog Ferdinand Cuirassiers, five squadrons of carabinieri and the Batthyányi Dragoons. Buccow was made of sterner stuff than his senior Serbelloni and, observing that there were nearly 6,000 Prussian infantry advancing against him supported by artillery, knew that he had to show a bold front to gain time for the Austrian line to re-form. He held his command firm in the face of the ordeal of intense artillery fire and even advanced the Batthyányi Dragoons some distance towards the enemy. In the end mounting casualties and the odds against him forced him to withdraw his command. Buccow's actions did allow d'Arenberg to force-march his reserve from the far right of the Austrian line, near Nippern some four miles (6.5km) away, in just over an hour. The battalions had to leave their 3-pdr regimental cannon behind and arrived at their new position in some disorder and not a little out of breath. The first battalion to arrive was that of de Ligne, which tried to form a line in front of the eastern end of Leuthen. At the same time the single battalion of the Andlau Regiment, with houses preventing it from forming up properly,





deployed behind de Ligne, but in such a panic that it opened fire into the backs of its comrades. The Mercy Regiment ran away swiftly and only the two Dutch battalions of de Ligne and d'Arberg stood their ground under intense artillery fire. The bravery of these regiments mirrored that of Botta at Kolin – on this occasion however bravery was not enough. Their ranks were shredded by Prussian heavy cannon firing canister and the first line of Prussian infantry firing disciplined volleys from 100 paces away. Finally the decimated battalions withdrew through Leuthen to the site of the windmill on the north side of the village. Here they saw Prince Charles and Marshal Daun were forming a new, more substantial line to the north of Leuthen. The first to arrive were the brigades of Macquire and Angern from the right-wing first line, closely followed by all the infantry of the second line. The time was now 3.00pm and the Austrians had managed to consolidate their position to the north of Leuthen in a line some two miles (3km) long. Some units had become disorganised and lost formation in the rush to get into position, and in some places the ranks were 100 deep. Although this was not ideal at least they were now in a position to face the advancing Prussian infantry.

The whole of the Prussian infantry now formed up to the south of Leuthen in two lines and in the watery sunlight of a late winter day launched themselves into the assault at 3.30pm. The village of Leuthen had not been prepared for defence, but it ran for approximately

Sagschütz, seen here from the south, remains largely unchanged today. The Württembergers were deployed from left to right roughly in the position of the ploughed field. (Author's collection)



**The ground between Sagschütz and Striegwitz. The high ground of the Glanzberg can be clearly seen in the left distance.
(Author's collection)**

1 ½ miles (2.5km) on an east–west axis across the front of the new Austrian line. As such it formed a barrier that the Prussians would have to overcome before they could get to grips with the Austrians properly. Undaunted the Prussians threw themselves into the attack and after being repulsed on numerous occasions managed to break in to the village at a number of points. Thereafter they found themselves engaged in costly close-quarter fighting among the rows of houses and interconnecting enclosure walls and farm buildings. The regiments leading the attack, IR15 (II & III bns), IR6 (Guard Grenadier), IR19 (Markgraf Karl), IR10 (Pannwitz) and IR36 (Munchow), came from the right of the Prussian line and bore the brunt of the fighting. The strongpoint of the Austrian defence in the village was the Catholic church garrisoned by the excellent Imperial regiment of Rot-Würzburg. The church was ideal for defence; it stood on its own with a churchyard wall surrounding it with round turrets in each of the four corners. The Prussian regiment that launched the initial, unsuccessful attack on the church was IR10. A series of attacks were repeatedly repulsed and the regiment suffered the majority of its 710 casualties at this time. Soon after IR10 had been withdrawn from the attacks on the church, II and III Battalions of IR15 (Guard) were sent against the position. They also found their initial attacks repulsed by the determined Würzburgers. The attacks by IR15 continued for more than half an hour, and eventually the II Battalion managed to force their way into the churchyard by way of a side gate, while III Battalion broke in through a breach in the southern wall made by the Prussian heavy artillery. Time was running out for the brave Würzburgers, yet they fought on with spirit until finally five officers



and 33 men with four colours fought their way back to the main Austrian position. The assaults by II and III Battalions of IR15 had cost them dearly – nearly 510 casualties between them. The capture of the church broke the back of Austrian resistance in Leuthen and, while the Prussians replenished their exhausted supply of cartridges, the Austrian infantry in the village made good their escape and re-formed behind the village on the main position. The new position was on good defensible ground and when the Prussian infantry renewed their advance they found themselves stopped in their tracks by heavy musketry from the line of a sunken road on the northern edge of the village.

Things were not all going the Prussians' way. On the left of their line, they were taking heavy casualties from the Austrian cannon concentrated on high ground near the windmill hill. The left wing, commanded by Lieutenant-General Retzow, had been supplying reinforcements for the right wing and finally the last six battalions of the weakened left wing could take no more and began to fall back, only rallying in acute embarrassment when the son of Lieutenant-General Retzow brought up the last battalion of the second line. The danger was very real and Frederick, remembering how the Austrians retrieved dire situations time and again at Kolin, brought up the *Brummers* to join the heavy battery of the left wing on the Butterberg.

This was an excellent position as it enfiladed the massed ranks of the Austrians behind Leuthen and soon they were sending round shot and canister crashing into the Austrian line. The Austrian infantry however stood their ground in the fading light and around 4.00pm Frederick realised that, although he had driven the Austrians back and had captured Leuthen, he had not yet won the day.

Having evicted the Austrians and their allies from their position on the left wing, the Prussian infantry marched north towards Leuthen in the distance. Leuthen is one mile (1.5km) in this picture; the Catholic church is on the right. (Authors collection)

PRUSSIANS

- A Main infantry line (45 bns)
- B Zieten's cavalry (53 sqns)

Left Wing

- C Bayreuth Dragoons (10 sqns)
- D Driesen Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- E Leib Karabiners (5 sqns)
- F Krockow Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- G Gessler Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- H Schönaich Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- I Kyau Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- J Puttkammer Hussars (10 sqns)

Centre

- K Székely Hussars (10 sqns)
- L Württemberg Dragoons (5 sqns)
- M Seydlitz Hussars (10 sqns)
- N Warnery Hussars (10 sqns)
- O Werner Hussars (10 sqns)

9. 1650: The Prussian cavalry crash into Lucchese's command. The left flank regiments manage to veer away behind their own infantry. Others manage to make a fight of it.

8. 1635: Lieutenant-General Driesen observes Lucchese's movement and sends a warning order to his regiments to prepare to charge.

10. 1700: Major-General Württemberg brings up his cavalry and they too crash into the remains of Lucchese's command.

4. 1600: Frederick orders up his 'Brummers' to support his left wing, which is shaky and taking heavy casualties from accurate Austrian artillery fire.



RETZOW



FERDINAND

3. The Prussian Garde (II & III Bns), IR 10 (Pannwitz) and IR 19 (Markgraf Karl) assault the church defended by IR Rot-Würzburg and are repeatedly thrown back.



FREDERICK

LEUTHEN – THE FINAL PRUSSIAN ATTACK

5 December 1757, viewed from the south, showing the advance of Lieutenant-General Lucchese's cavalry, Lieutenant-General Driesen's counterattack and the final Prussian infantry attack on Leuthen.

7. 1630: Lieutenant-General Lucchese advances with his cavalry aiming to assault the exposed left wing of the Prussian infantry as it attacks Leuthen.

XX
LUCCHESE

XX
KHUEL

11. 1710: A milling mass of Prussian and Austrian cavalry swirl into the Austrian line.

GR. HEIDAU

5. 1605: The III Bn Garde finally manage to break into the churchyard. The IR Rot-Würzburg fight on and four officers and 33 men retire with their colours.

1. 1500: The Austrians have consolidated their new line facing south. In some places the infantry are 100 men deep.

FROBELWITZ

WINDMILLS

XXXX
PRINCE CHARLES
OF LORRAINE

XX
COLLOREDO

AUSTRIANS

Right Wing

- 1 Lucchese's cavalry (45 sqns)
- 2 New main Austrian position (51 bns)
- 3 Württemberg Dragoons (5 sqns)
- 4 Serbelloni Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- 5 Benedict Daun Dragoons (5 sqns)
- 6 Anhalt-Zerbst Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- 7 Löwenstein Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- 8 Stampach Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- 9 Lucchese Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- 10 Erzherzog Leopold Cuirassiers (5 sqns)
- 11 Erzherzog Joseph Cuirassiers (5 sqns)

Centre

- 12 Harrach IR (2 bns)
- 13 Haller IR (1 bn)
- 14 Mercy IR (1 bn)
- 15 Andlau IR (1bn)
- 16 d' Arberg IR (1 bn)
- 17 de Ligne IR (1 bn)
- 18 Rot-Würzburg (1 bn)

Left Wing

- 19 Nadasty's cavalry (40 sqns)

XX
NADASTY

6. 1610: Frederick has gained Leuthen, but the Austrian infantry are not yet defeated.

12. 1715 onwards: The Austrian line crumbles; the Prussian infantry on the right press home their attack.

2. 1530: The Prussians launch their assault on Leuthen. Initially they gain access to Leuthen but are met by stiff resistance as they fight amongst houses and gardens.

XX
ZIETEN





Lucchese's death ride

While the fighting had been raging on the southern flank and in and around Leuthen, the cavalry of the Austrian right wing under General of Cavalry Lucchese (65 sqns) and those of the Prussian left under Lieutenant-General von Driesen (55 sqns) had watched events unfold. With the infantry of both sides heavily engaged around Leuthen, the two cavalry wings were the only forces of either side yet to be committed. Lucchese decided to move his command to the low ground to the southeast of Gross Heidau. The Prussians under Driesen were still positioned behind the Sophienberg, where they had deployed at the start of the battle. From his position Lucchese would have been able to see the Prussian batteries on the Butterberg, wreaking havoc on the Austrian infantry and the apparently unsupported left flank of the Prussian infantry extending to the west of Leuthen. The Prussian guns and infantry were simply irresistible targets for any cavalry and no doubt Lucchese thought the moment had come for a battle-winning strike on the exposed Prussian flank. The cavalry of the Austrian right were given the order to advance at 4.30pm and Lucchese led them in an anti-clockwise sweep towards ideal targets. The cuirassiers in their white coats and black metal breastplates and the dragoons in green and red coats, swords glinting in the late afternoon sunlight advanced at a walk towards the Prussian flank, their confidence and expectations high, with the memories of their successes at Kolin fresh in their minds.

The Prussian general, Driesen, had ridden forward onto the Sophienberg at the head of his cavalry. From here he could see the advance of the Austrian cavalry and sent orders back for his command to

The Choral after Leuthen. It was traditional in the 18th century to give thanks to God for a victory and Leuthen was no exception. (AKG)



After the battle Frederick was making his way to Lissa in search of somewhere to sleep for the night when darkness fell. He came across a poor tavern in Saara and Frederick asked the innkeeper if he was on the Breslau road. The innkeeper, lantern in one hand and holding Frederick's stirrup leather in the other, guided the royal party towards Lissa. (Engraving after Haas)

move north at a fast trot to bring them to a position from which they could attack the enemy flank. To ensure they understood their orders, Driesen summoned his regimental commanders to his position on the Sophienberg and pointed out the glittering array of enemy cavalry as it moved across their front from left to right. They returned to their regiments and with the Austrians still short of the Butterberg the Prussians crashed into their flank. The Austrians had been taken completely off their guard; Lucchese had apparently been unaware of Driesen's command behind the Sophienberg when he issued his orders. In any case the effects of the Prussian cavalry charge were devastating. A few of the Austrian cavalry regiments on the far left managed to veer off to the east and sought refuge behind the new line of infantry. The majority, however, were caught in the open. The melee was fast and furious, Lucchese was killed in the opening moments of the combat and the Kolowrat Dragoons were repeatedly stopped from deploying by a series of charges by the Prussian Puttkamer Hussars, who had worked their way around behind the Austrian second line. Three of the four regiments in this second line, the Serbelloni and Anhalt-Zerbst Cuirassiers and the Benedict Daun Dragoons, managed to turn to face the charge and engaged the Prussians with determination. The joy of the Prussian second-line cuirassiers at the apparent destruction of the Austrians was short-lived as they rapidly had to rescue the famous ten-squadron regiment of Bayreuth Dragoons. The Prussians had achieved surprise but, with the Austrian and Prussian cavalry practically equal in numbers, the melee remained in the balance. Lieutenant-







DRIESEN'S CHARGE SMASHES INTO LUCCHESI'S AUSTRIAN CAVALRY (pages 82–83)

With the left flank of the Prussian infantry exposed as they attacked the village of Leuthen and the re-formed Austrian line behind, Austrian General of Cavalry Lucchese saw an opportunity to launch a decisive charge against the Prussian infantry's exposed flank. As he led his glittering squadrons forward Lucchese was unaware that the regiments of Lieutenant General Driesen's cavalry wing were concealed behind the Sophienberg on their flank. Driesen, atop the Sophienberg, sent orders back for his troops to move north to allow them to attack Lucchese's flank. He summoned his regimental commanders to the top of the hill to ensure they clearly understood their orders. He then launched his cuirassiers at the Austrians with disastrous consequences for Lucchese's command. The Prussian attack was devastating and General Lucchese was killed in the opening moments of the cavalry battle. The Austrian regiment of Anhalt-Zerbst (1) was one of the regiments in the Austrian second line that managed to turn to face the Prussian charge and are here seen engaging the Prussian Regiment Driesen (2). The Anhalt-Zerbst Cuirassiers were a very good Austrian regiment and although Leuthen was not a good day for them, they made up for it later in the year at the battle of Hochkirch in October where they fought with great distinction. A few of the Austrian cavalry regiments on the left of Lucchese's command managed to veer away and seek refuge behind the new Austrian infantry line behind the

village of Leuthen itself. Although the Prussians had achieved surprise, the struggle remained in the balance until the Prince von Württemberg led his 30 squadrons of Prussian light cavalry into the melee, tipping the balance in the Prussian favour. The whirling mass of cavalry now swept back towards the Austrian infantry deployed behind Leuthen. This proved too much for them and they turned and ran throwing their weapons aside. The scene does clearly demonstrate the similarities between the uniforms and equipment of both sides. The black tricorn hat (3) worn by both Austrians and Prussians had protective iron strips inside the crown, the Austrian model having been copied from that of the Prussians. Another common feature was the breastplate (4). The Austrian cuirass was shaped from a piece of wrought iron, which was then lacquered or painted black. It weighed no less than 32lb and due to its weight was worn only in action. Even cavalry vedettes (sentries) were not obliged to wear them during the day. The Prussian cuirass weighed 25lb and was similarly lacquered or painted black. The one exception was the cuirasses of the Garde du Corps, which were polished bare metal. The Austrian cuirass also had a back plate or plastron but these were not used on campaign and kept in store for use in the event of another war with the Turks. The cuirassier sword was known as the *palasch* (5) and the Austrian version was 36in. long. The longer Prussian sword (42in.) was designed so that a trooper could cut down to the navel of a standing infantryman, without having to bend in the saddle. (Adam Hook)

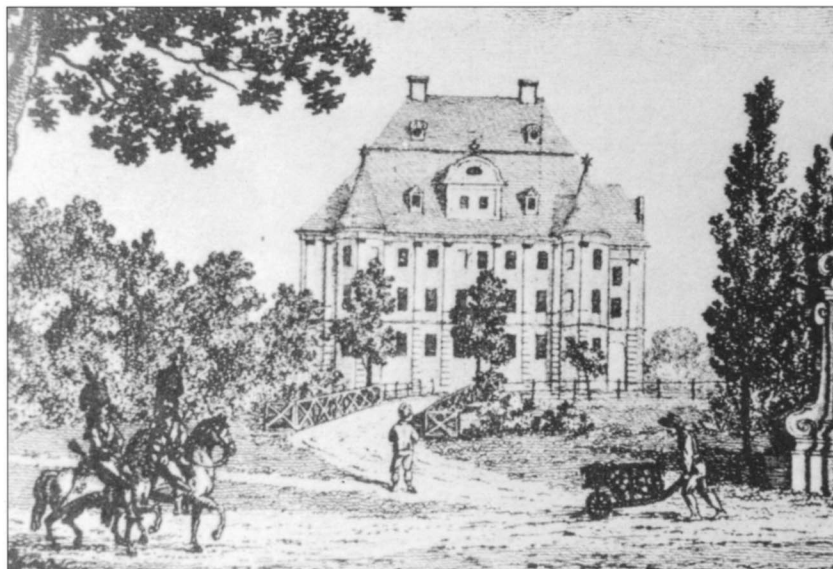


General Eugen Prince von Württemberg led his 30 squadrons of light cavalry out from behind the Prussian infantry and threw them into the fight, tipping the balance in the Prussian favour. As the sun dipped below the horizon the swirling melee of cavalry swept down on the Austrian infantry to the north of Leuthen and they cast aside their weapons and ran. The Prussian right-wing infantry now swept forward with musket butt and bayonet.

Arriving at Schloss Lissa
Frederick found it full of Austrian officers. He asked if there was room for him too, but the courteous Austrian officers escorted him to the best room and then departed. (Print after Knötel)

The end of the battle

With the Prussian *Frei* Battalions and the Jäger advancing from Borne, the scene around the windmill resembled a massacre. Not all the Austrian regiments fled the scene, those that stood their ground, most notably Wallis and Baden-Durlach, were ridden down by the 11th Cuirassiers (Leib Karabiniers) and the Bayreuth Dragoons. The Austrian gunners of the great battery fought to the last, bayoneted and clubbed down by the Schenckendorff Grenadier Battalion. As darkness fell the Austrians disengaged while various counterattacks were launched to cover the retreat. The enterprising Colonel Ludwig Caraccioli di S. Eramo managed to re-form three squadrons of the Stampach Cuirassiers and the Benedict Daun Dragoons from Lucchese's command. In one attack he threw back Driesen's left wing as it attempted close on the rear of the defenceless Austrians. Prince Charles sent the reliable Colonel Karl Amadei with the



The Schloss at Lissa was the home of Baron Mudrach, who saw the royal party arriving and made them very welcome. (Author's collection)

Hungarian regiment Nicholas Esterhazy to cover the retreat of General Stampach's division. Amadei's infantry were able to see off some Prussian light cavalry that were threatening five regiments of Austrian horse as they struggled through boggy ground. General Stampach was determined to reach the bridge at Lissa as soon as possible but was persuaded to stay by Amadei, who pointed out that such a move would place the whole army in great danger. Amadei and Caraccioli were greatly assisted by Nadasty, who had managed to rally his command in the woods of the Leuthener Busch and the Rathener Busch. He deployed five or six battalions of his infantry with their regimental guns in the woods, with his main force of cavalry as a screen in front of the position. He sent two squadrons forward to skirmish with the Prussians and the dragoons of Zieten's second line took the bait and charged into the trap. The Austrian cavalry moved aside and the Prussian cavalry found themselves caught in a crossfire from the woods. The dragoons tumbled back in haste as Nadasty brought up his 12-pdr cannon to remind the Prussians to keep their distance. Zieten had no infantry with which to attack the Austrians in the woods and an inconclusive artillery duel began, continuing until the main Austrian army had crossed the bridges over the Lissa. Nadasty was also able to withdraw successfully, but due to the realignment of the two armies large numbers of Austrians did fall into Prussian hands as prisoners of war, although their army was conducting a reasonably effective fighting retreat.

As the gloom deepened towards 6.00pm, Frederick was determined to seize the bridge at Lissa, some five miles (8km) from the battlefield, and so prevent the enemy from forming a new battle line behind the Schweidnitzerwasser. While he was on the Breslau highway he was joined by Zieten and some hussars and at the isolated hamlet of Saara he encountered a very garrulous innkeeper who ambled along by his stirrups with a lantern. As he was approaching Lissa with the Seydlitz Cuirassiers and the hussars, there was a volley of 50 or 60 muskets discharged at short range. The hidden enemy had aimed too low in the darkness and did no damage. Frederick however waited for 30 minutes until three battalions of grenadiers caught up with him before entering

the town. They were again fired upon by Austrian infantry in the houses around the town square and by some on the far bank of the Schwiednitzerwasser. The Prussians managed to surprise a party of Austrians who were trying to set fire to the wooden bridge. The snow had started falling again as the grenadier battalions seized the bridge and brought their battalion pieces into action, speeding the retreating Austrians on their way.

Frederick in the meantime had turned to the castle of Lissa with the intention of staying the night. Baron Mudrach, lord of this handsome building whose old moat and defences had been turned into flower beds, saw the Royal party arriving and made them very welcome. However, as at Rossbach Frederick found the castle crowded with Austrian officers whom he greeted warmly, 'Good evening, gentlemen, is there room for me?' The Austrian officers bowing low, escorted him to the best room and then made off as best they could to rejoin their battered and shaken comrades. That night Frederick gathered together Moritz of Anhalt-Dessau, Driesen, Zieten, Retzow, Wedel and his younger brother Ferdinand, giving them the parole and the orders for the next day. He ended by saying, 'This day will transmit the glory of your name and our Nation to all posterity.'

The whole army was following in Frederick's footsteps to Lissa and as the snow continued to fall they marched in silence, reflecting on the events of the day and their own survival. Then suddenly above the muffled tramp of marching feet a grenadier broke into song, a solemn tenor intoning the Prussian soldiers' most familiar hymn, *Nun danket alle Gott*. Almost as one the men stirred from their own private reflections and 25,000 voices swelled in thanks to God for their victory:

'Nun danket alle Gott
Mit Herzen, Mund und Händen,
Der grosse Dinge thut
An uns und allen Enden.'

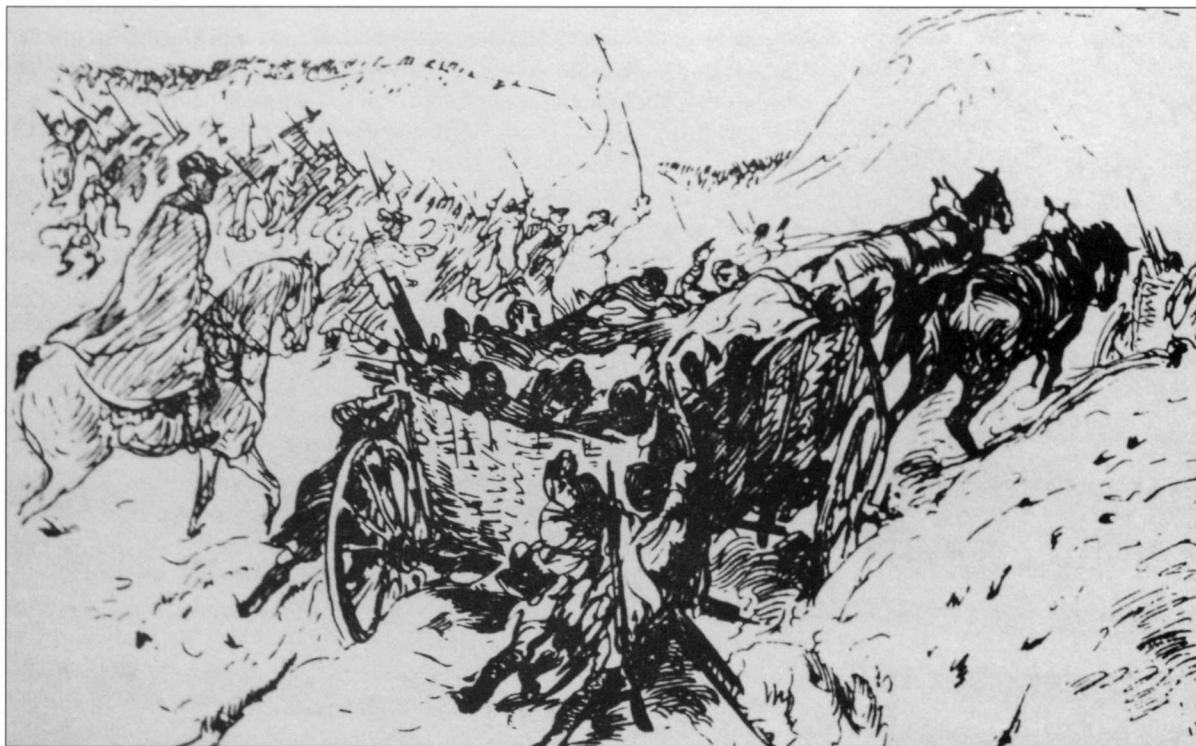
'Now thank God, one and all
With hearts, with voice, with hands,
Who wonders great hath done
To us and to all lands.'

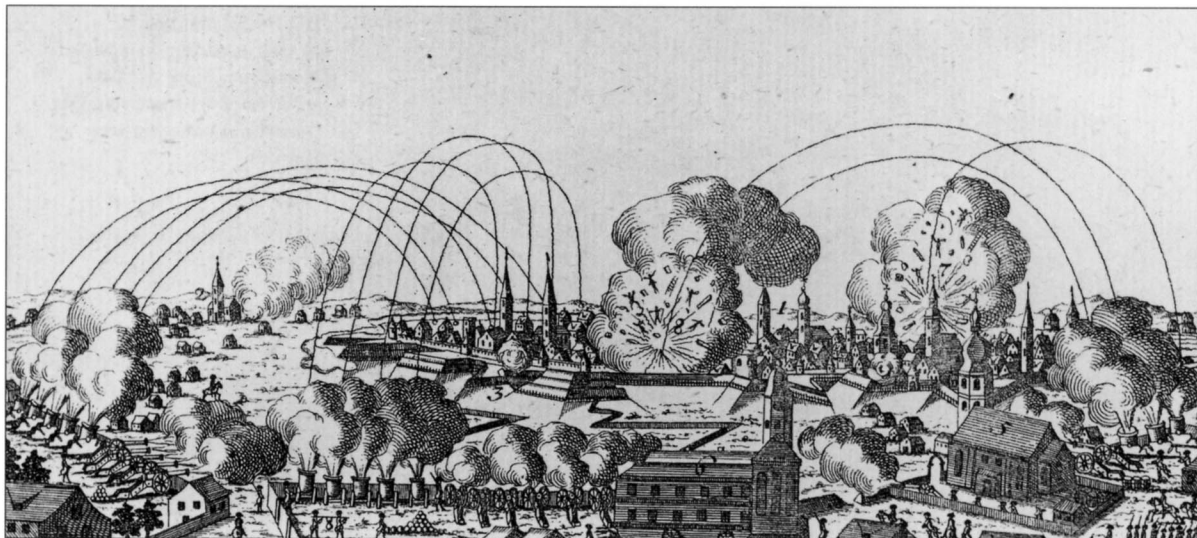
THE AFTERMATH

In the stillness of dawn the day after the battle it became clear that the snow had continued to fall overnight and in the morning the dead formed countless little snow hills. The Prussian casualties amounted to 1,175 officers and men killed and 5,207 wounded making a total of 6,382, some 20 per cent of their total. For the Austrians the battle was a disaster. Their losses were 3,000 officers and men killed, 6,000–7,000 wounded and in the region of 12,000 taken prisoner in the confusion at the end. This was 33 per cent of their total. They also lost 46 regimental colours and 131 cannon and to cap it all a further 10,000 men were captured during the pursuit.

Leaving behind burial parties, Frederick pushed on after the retreating and demoralised Austrians the day after the battle. The Prussians' first act on crossing the Schweidnitzerwasser was to round up nearly 400 carts and wagons and yet more prisoners. The pursuit proper of Prince Charles and Marshal Daun did not begin until 7 December, when Zieten was despatched with a force of 63 squadrons and 11 battalions. Prince Charles and Marshal Daun in the meantime were in the village of Gräbschen on the other side of the River Lohe. There was

The dispirited Austrian army during their painful retreat across the mountains into Bohemia. (Engraving after Menzel)



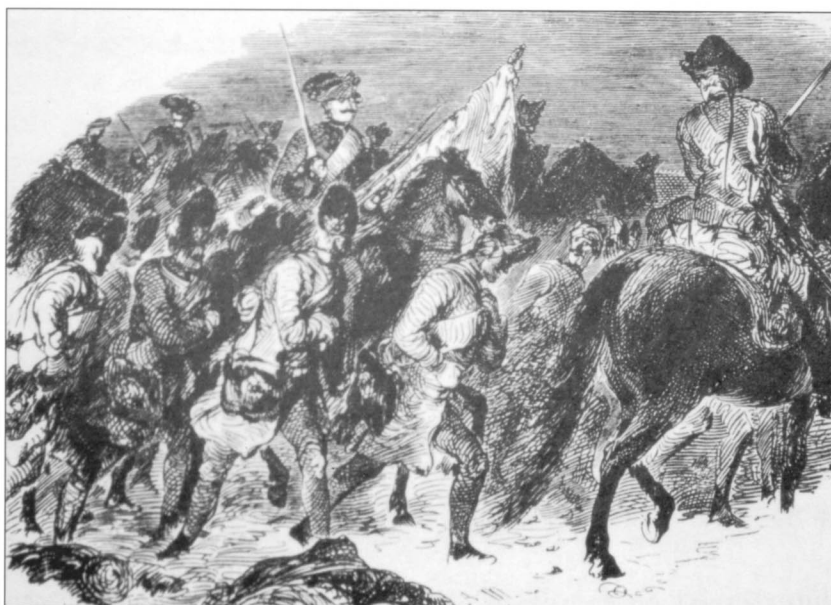


In the aftermath of Leuthen, the large but dispirited Austrian garrison of Breslau surrendered the city to Frederick after only a brief bombardment. Breslau was to be Frederick's winter headquarters. (AKG)

little conversation, each absorbed with his own thoughts. Prince Charles could not believe what had happened and was looking for scapegoats; Daun as the advisor no doubt had thoughts of, 'I told you so,' – the Croats who had accompanied them fell to shooting pigeons. The Austrian army meanwhile had spent the night in woods and farm buildings scattered across a wide area. It was not until the sun rose the next day that, in dribs and drabs, they began to trickle in.

Once roused from his self-pity, Prince Charles decided to garrison Breslau with 17,000 men, and taking the remainder of the army he marched in a circuitous route south-west for Schweidnitz. Zieten was in pursuit and on 8 December was checked at the Kleine-Lohe by a strong Austrian rearguard. Frederick wrote to him the next day expressing the need for urgency, '... in these circumstances one day of exhaustion will be repaid by one hundred of repose later on.' Zieten did not take the king's words to heart and soon after, Lieutenant-General Fouqué was sent to take over command of the pursuing force. By 22/23 December Prince Charles and the Austrians were driven out of Silesia into Bohemia. In the Silesian-Bohemian hills the weather was dreadful: heavy rains, deep mud, snow and ice and cold cutting winds. Prince Charles wrote to his brother, the Emperor, that the army was more than a little dilapidated, without linen or clothes. It was in a truly pitiable condition and because the enemy were so close it always had to encamp without tents. This misery continued for the Austrian army for a further ten days until they arrived at Königgrätz. Over the period of Christmas out of a total of 37,000 rank and file, 22,000 were very sick.

While the Austrians were being harried out of Silesia Frederick turned his attention to the twin problem of Breslau and Schweidnitz. After a short, but intense bombardment the demoralised garrison in the city of Breslau surrendered on 20 December and on 21 December the Austrians marched out of the Schweidnitzer Gate in what seemed like an endless column; hardly surprising when one considers there were upwards of 17,000 troops in all. Frederick decided to delay besieging Schweidnitz until the following year. With the Austrians driven back into Bohemia the Prussians finally went into winter quarters across Silesia



The Prussians took 22,000 prisoners as a result of Leuthen. Here Austrian grenadiers are marching into captivity. (Engraving after Menzel)

and southern Saxony. Frederick himself was tired and in need of rest – the year of 1757 had taken its toll of his health – and so he established himself in Breslau and remained there until late March 1758. Apart from attending an occasional Ball and receiving visitors Frederick spent a lot of time on his own in the silence of his room.

As the New Year of 1758 began Frederick felt confident that, after their disaster at Leuthen, the Austrians would be responsive to peace overtures. He wrote to Maria Theresa formally proposing peace and there is little doubt Frederick sincerely desired it; but he was to be disappointed, for although Maria Theresa was discouraged by Leuthen, especially after the success of Kolin in the high summer, she was determined to fight on. No doubt her resolve was strengthened by news that Madame de Pompadour in Paris was full of fight, and that Tsarina Anna was still alive and determined to see Frederick beaten. The Russian commander Apraxin was dismissed after his lacklustre campaign in the late summer and early autumn and replaced by Fermor. On 16 January 1758, Fermor crossed the border into East Prussia with 30,000 men, capturing Königsberg on 22 January.

The Prussians were unable to secure the peace they wanted. The Austrian and Imperial army had 150,000 men at their disposal and the Swedes and Russians a further 98,000. In addition great efforts were being made to coordinate their attacks on Frederick in the next campaigning season. With a mere 135,000 men – and many of those forcibly pressed prisoners – Frederick was to face crises far more acute in 1758 than those that had confronted him in 1757.

THE BATTLEFIELDS TODAY

When writing a book for the Campaign series, visiting the battlefield itself can be both informative and rewarding. Whenever possible I attempt to visit the battlefield at the same time of year as the engagement was fought; it can give one a very good 'feel' for the ground. Unfortunately I was only able to visit Rossbach and Leuthen in March but it was still pretty wintry at that time of the year so the conditions were not totally dissimilar. On the way from Munster I stopped at Büttelstädt to see one of the villages where Frederick waited impatiently for his chance to engage the Franco-Imperial army. It is still a very small village and only Frederick's headquarters would have been located there, the rest of the army being scattered in farms and villages nearby. I confess that as I approached Rossbach my heart sank as I saw all the ugly housing developments and factory buildings erected by the former communist rulers. **Rossbach** is situated in Saxony-Anhalt (Sachsen-Anhalt) in the south-east of the province between Merseburg and Halle and nearly four miles (6.5km) north-west of Weissenfels. Rossbach is still very much a village and apart from some more obvious modern houses, much the same size as it was when Frederick visited in 1757. Of the other two villages of Reichartswerben and Tagewerben, the former is much larger, while the latter is still very compact. Unfortunately, there is a huge gravel pit right in the middle of the battlefield. Although it does not greatly disrupt viewing the battlefield, it has changed the lie of the land. However, from the high ground to the west of Rossbach occupied by St. Germain, you get a very good view over the battlefield and he would have clearly seen the Prussians marching over the Janus Ridge to intercept the Franco-Imperial army. Indeed, with the aid of a telescope, St. Germain should have been able to follow the course of the battle over towards Reichartswerben. The Janus Ridge remains a prominent feature today, although a road now runs along the top of the ridge with a factory at the eastern end. From the ridge one can clearly see the position taken up by the Prussian infantry after they marched down the slopes. Seydlitz encountered the leading cavalry regiments of the allied army to the north-east of Reichartswerben and sadly this area has been disturbed by another gravel pit. The ground where the bulk of the fighting took place has not been too badly disturbed over the years and it is possible to visualise the deployment of each army's forward line. The Franco-Imperial army's right flank was very exposed. There is little to disrupt the monotony of the landscape apart from a few trees lining the road and the ground over which Seydlitz launched his second charge was very open – perfect cavalry country. It is also clear he was hidden in dead ground until he launched his attack.

There is a diorama of the battle in the village of Reichartswerben, but regrettably it was not open when I visited. Braunsbedra is the modern town made up of Bedra and Braunsdorf.



One of the streets in modern Leuthen running away from the Catholic church. If one mentally blanks out the telegraph poles it is possible to picture the village of the time of the battle. (Author's collection)



The church in Rossbach. Unlike the field of Leuthen, Rossbach has suffered to some degree from development in the intervening years. Several large gravel pits scar the battlefield today. (Author's collection)

Leaving Rossbach I drove east to the town of Görlitz where Frederick stayed on his way to Leuthen and the German government are spending a fortune on repairing the old buildings that pack the town centre. The bridge where Frederick's army crossed has gone, but the foundations remain on each bank.

The battlefield at **Leuthen** is a real gem and virtually untouched. Leuthen (modern day Lutynia) is a little bigger than in 1757, but not by much. The windmills on the heights north of the village are gone and my first stop was on the Schönberg where there is a rather battered memorial raised by the German VI Army Corps before World War II to Frederick's victory at Leuthen. The first thing that strikes one are the 'swells' in the ground – the battlefield rises and falls rather like waves and there are the small 'bergs' repeatedly mentioned in account of the battle. From the Schönberg there is an excellent view of Leuthen and the first line of the Austrian position north of the village. The Austrian second line would have been in dead ground. The windmills would have been clearly visible and so would Prince Charles and his entourage. The far right of the Austrian position would have been hidden from view and I doubt Frederick would have had a clear view of the Austrian left. He would certainly have been able to see some troops beyond Leuthen but the village and the lie of the ground would have obscured much of Nadasty's command. Riding south along the tops of the ridges with his escort Frederick would have got a better feel for the full extent of the Austrian line.

Whether the Prussian flank march to the Austrian left did in fact take place in dead ground has been a matter of some debate. Viewing the route of the march from the site of the windmills north of Leuthen and with the aid of a pair of binoculars and a 1:50,000 map, the ground suggests strongly that it did. The rolling terrain provides a lot of dead



The old Town Hall in Görlitz, an important city sitting astride the River Oder. Frederick would almost certainly have visited the Town Hall as he passed through Görlitz on his way to Leuthen. The city suffered terrible pollution damage during the years of communist rule, but is now being returned to its former glory. (Author's collection)

ground and although the 'bergs' are not very high, they reinforce the effect.

Although it is slightly larger than in 1757 the layout is still very much on an east-west axis. The church so stoutly defended by the Rot-Würzburg Regiment and stormed by the Prussian Guard remains with its walled churchyard, complete with circular turrets. There are probably more houses in front of the church now than at the time of the battle and today there is a primary school alongside the wall at the point where Röchling placed the gate in his panoramic view. Outside the churchyard behind a wrought-iron fence against the southern wall there is a memorial. It is thought that this is the point at which the wall was breached by cannon fire. Opposite the memorial the road heads south towards Sagschütz and one is struck by how open the ground out towards Radaxdorf and Lobetinz is, the folds in the ground are not nearly so deceiving here. The Prussian infantry marched behind Radaxdorf and Lobetinz and so were still in dead ground to the first line of Serbelloni's cavalry and the infantry of Nadasty. Sagschütz is a small collection of houses and farm buildings, very much as I imagine it appeared at the time.

If one enjoys visiting battlefields, Leuthen is an excellent candidate as it has remained largely unchanged since the battle. Visiting in the summer will make the walking far more enjoyable; in wintry conditions it is quite bleak. I would also recommend bringing your own picnic as places to buy food and drink are few and far between.

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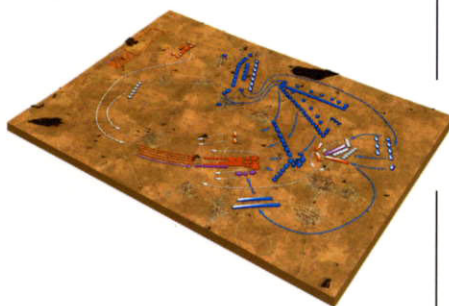
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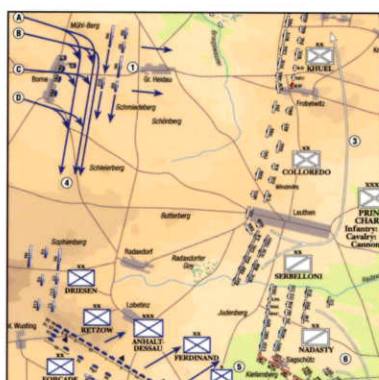
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