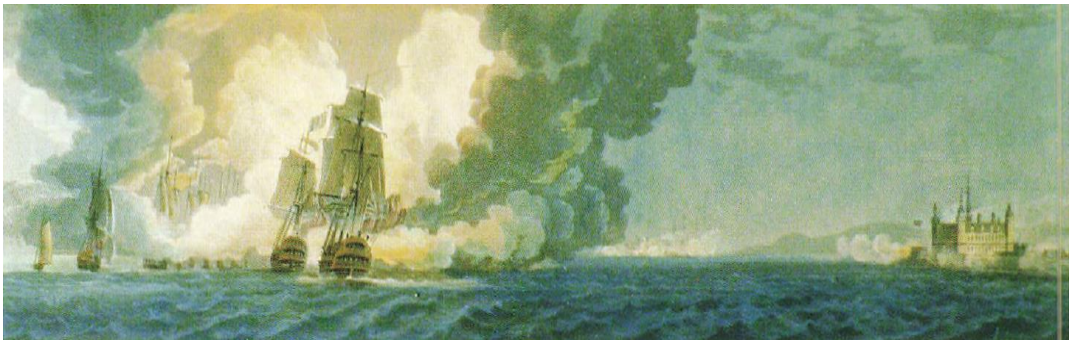
AT HIS DANISH MAJESTY'S SERVICE

The life of three brothers in Danish-Norwegian military service during the 18th century

Bruno Hugo Charles Stricker

AT HIS DANISH MAJESTY'S SERVICE

The life of three brothers in Danish-Norwegian military service during the 18th century



Bruno Hugo Charles Stricker

... "One by one, the other columns followed and penetrated with their bayonets every enemy soldier who crossed their path and chased the panicking Turks to the Dnjestr. Some of them plunged into the Dnjestr and drowned, others tried to form a defense line along the shore and even shot at us from the water. The massacre was complete and frightening. The whole entrenchment, the whole shore side towards Brahe and in the Dnjestr itself, everywhere were dead bodies in masses scattered all over the battle area. ..."

17 September 1769, Carl Alexander von Stricker

Acknowledgement

Parents and children are a family, but over the centuries and with an increasing number of generations, a family becomes a tribe. This holds especially true when people remain living in the same geographical area with marriages between family members and related families.

Being 8 generations away from Johan Stricker, I share only $[½]^8$ of my DNA with him, i.e. less than 0.4 percent. Of course, such a calculation is far too simple because there may be additional genetic links through maternal lines, but on a global scale it explains that Ulla de Stricker from Toronto and I, while only extremely distantly related, are members of the same tribe. And we both think that tribe histories are important. I always enjoyed meetings with unknown Danish members of my tribe as we shared the same stories.

I tried to write down the history for 3 of our joint ancestors from the Stricker tribe. Although I have some experience with editing in English thanks to my professional career, I am not a native speaker. Fortunately, I came to benefit from Ulla's skills. Her critical reading and editorial suggestions were indispensable, and I would like to thank her for them.

CONTENTS

Foreword

Carl Alexander von Stricker was a Danish officer. Born in 1731, he died in 1820 at the age of 89 years. He participated in 10 military campaigns throughout Europe. He fought with his brothers Johan Christian [1728-1809] and Ezechias Heinrich [1734-1814] in the French army in the Seven Years' War [1756-1763] against Frederick the Great of Prussia and his confederates, and with the Russian Army against the Ottomans in the Ukraine [1768-1773]. He is one of the few who participated in the two largest battles of the 18th century, i.e. on 1 August 1759 in Minden (a defeat) and on 1 August 1771 in Kahul (a victory).

In this book, we follow his life and the lives of his brothers in the context of his time. This was made possible by the fact that Carl Alexander wrote letters to the Danish War Office and made geographical maps and reports.

As a Dutch descendant of Carl Ludvig [von] Stricker, a Danish captain on a sailing ship, born on the east coast of India in 1798, I knew only that many members of my family in Denmark had been in the army during the period 1700-1870. No one in the Dutch branch of the Stricker family (as described in the *Nederlands Patriciaat*, 1997;80:381-99) could give details about what happened in the past, and hardly any Danish relatives were known to us personally.

Intrigued by this total lack of knowledge, I started gathering information from archives in Denmark during the many times that I spent a summer holiday there with my family. In this way, I was able to satisfy my curiosity to a certain extent. But the process was inefficient, sketchy, and incomplete. After 30 years, I had copies of letters, newspapers, and maps in dusty binders but realized that I lacked an overview and could only tell some anecdotes at best. Moreover, I had to decide what to do with this information, knowing that the binders would probably be thrown away after my death.

Therefore, I decided on a more systematic approach. Hereby, I developed a much better insight into what happened to the key people in this book. Casual glancing through unsorted handwritten letters in binders reveals little and does not give a proper overview. Putting in order and reading everything made it mandatory to process all material in a structured way. Also, it forced me to study the relevant background history and culture of the period. Single anecdotal letters became part of important military history of a violent century. Although it gave me a much better overall picture of the sequence of life events of these three brothers, it also showed me the limitations of the available material.

Notably, although many letters were sent to the Danish War Office during the Seven Years' War, these consisted mainly of requests for financial support. Although they also sent some maps, the brothers were remarkably silent about their military activities. For instance, two of them were wounded but these facts were hardly reported. Luckily, they signed all letters with a date and location and named their regiments. Thanks to the detailed description of the daily Seven Years' War campaigns prepared by the Kronoskaf Project (https://www.kronoskaf.com), I was able to determine in which battles they fought and what hardships they must have encountered. Also, given that they were present, they must have been aware of the atrocities of the French army in

Germany. Later in Ukraine, one of the brothers described the ruthlessness of the Russian and Ottoman soldiers.

Being alive after 10 physically straining and sometimes very violent campaigns probably means that a soldier caused injury or death to others. Indeed, the family story goes that Carl Alexander came back with the sabre and Koran of a dead Turkish officer. As I am unable to experience the circumstances in which they survived, however, it is better to abstain from moral judgements, leaving them to others.

One detail regarding names requires an explanation: Throughout this manuscript, the names 'Stricker' and 'von Stricker' are used. The prefix 'von' was used by Danish officers during a certain period of the 18th century regardless whether they were from noble families. This followed the formal Danish procedures as exemplified in the letters from the Danish War Office to the officers 'von Stricker'. As they sometimes signed with 'Stricker', I have simply used the names as I found them in the underlying documents. This may seem inconsistent, but it is preferable in my view and demonstrates the relative triviality of the prefix 'von'. Although the boys themselves talked about their brothers as 'Christian', 'Alexander', and 'Heinrich', I have used their full names 'Johan Christian', 'Carl Alexander', and 'Ezechias Heinrich' throughout to prevent confusion between Alexander the father and his son (and because brother Heinrich is known in my family only as Ezechias).

Illustrations in this book are derived from publicly accessible sources such as archives and museums, the Internet, and similar collections. Information from this non-commercial book can be cited freely under the reference *Stricker BHCh. At his Danish Majesty's service. The life of three brothers in Danish-Norwegian military service during the 18th century. 1st Edition 2024. Van der Leeden Verlag, Neuenhaus, Bundesrepublik Deutschland*.

Finally, going back in history, tracing one's own roots is a fascinating process, one I can strongly recommend to everyone.

CHAPTER 1

On War

Combat man-to-man is not a war. A fight between groups is a conflict but not a war unless it fulfills certain criteria and is formalized. Nevertheless, we intuitively know when to qualify violent events as a war rather than as a 'military operation'. And of course, many wars in ancient times were not formalized but labeled retrospectively as such. Therefore, the term war is occasionally used here even if there was not a formal declaration. This is in line with von Clausewitz who defined war as 'a duel on a larger scale'. War is an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will [1].

War is a mostly unwanted but important part of geopolitics. Even ambitious dictators prefer to conquer land or gain in power and wealth without going to war. In that sense, von Clausewitz was right when he stated that 'War is merely the continuation of policy by other means' [1]. War will always be among us, whatever idealists and optimistic politicians want us to believe. The statement that prostitution is the oldest profession can be questioned as warriors and mercenaries may also have carried out the earliest professional activities of humankind. Nevertheless, war can be seen as failed geopolitics, and numerous examples teach us that it is ubiquitous and global. The best way to stay out is to have an adequate defense, as was already defined by the Romans as '*Si vis pacem, para bellum*' or in English, 'if you want peace, prepare for war' [2]. Although sometimes expressed in romantic terms, such as the German 19th century 'frische und fröhliche Krieg', war is ugly, and a nice type of warfare does not exist. Despite this, there is always a limited group of military people, almost exclusively men, who enjoy the military process and consider the battle as a means to achieve their ambitions [3].

Here, we define war as organized violence by groups of people with the aim to conquer land or goods or to settle a conflict. The usual aim in war is to gain territory from the enemy or to regain previously lost areas. Of course, this is not always the case. For instance, and on a small scale, battles can satisfy a desire for revenge without a particular interest in taking the enemy's land ['an eye for an eye']. A good and fairly recent example was the regular fighting between tribes in Papua New Guinea until this was strictly forbidden by the Australian government in the second part of the 20th century. But mostly, armies fight to take ownership over the geographical area of their enemies. The norm for the vast majority of prehistoric and primitive societies was not peace but periodic warfare that, in proportion to their populations, was far more bloody and brutal than that of any modern society. Peaceful societies are the exception. About 90-95% of known societies engage in war. Those not doing so are almost universally either isolated nomadic groups (for whom flight is an option), groups of defeated refugees, or small enclaves under the protection of a larger modern state [4]. In ancient times, war campaigns were usually restricted by the season. Unless enough agricultural slaves were available, getting the harvest from the land was an important reason for temporarily postponing hostilities. Also, fighting mostly ceased during winters because of the cold and lack of food due to insufficient logistical capacity.

Large military encounters on battlefields are known to have occurred 2,000 years before Christ in the Middle East during the Babylonian and Assyrian cultures. Warfare often focused on taking military strongholds. The Romans built a system of wooden fortresses alongside the borders of their empire, and defensive walls such as the Hadrian wall were built. Similarly, the Viking empire built the Dannevirke wall as a defense against attacks from south of the river Eider. The military strongholds were important in maintaining troops spread over large geographical areas. There, they could gather, rest, and be fed and armed. Taking such a stronghold was difficult because of better knowledge about effective defensive measures.

Consequently, until the Middle Ages there was a strong increase in Europe of the number of castles and fortifications in places that were easy to defend. Examples are the French castle of Mornas near Montélimar and the Austrian castle of Salzburg; both are situated on top of a rock formation. Well-known fortified cities are those of Carcassonne and Constantinople. Basically, there were two forms of warfare in Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire – a dynamic and a static one – and these required different military skills. There were always great battles involving large armies, such as in 732 when the Franks and Aquitaines fought against the Muslims near Poitiers and in 1346 during the Hundred Years' War between England and France in Crécy. This dynamic type of warfare required experience with commanding large groups of soldiers and significant direct communicative skills on the part of the military leaders. Other campaigns focused on the siege of fortified cities. Such a campaign is a more static type of warfare requiring, for instance, knowledge of how to deal with the water surrounding the city and how to destroy the gates or get over the walls of the city. Neither of these two types prevailed; in today's warfare, dynamic operations with fast-moving mobilized artillery and motorized vehicles are most common. The traditional type of fortress is uncommon now but still exists in modern form.

To convey more fully the military standards with which the three Danish officers portrayed in this book had to comply, it is important to give a short history of warfare up to the start of the career of their father around 1720.

History of warfare up to 1720

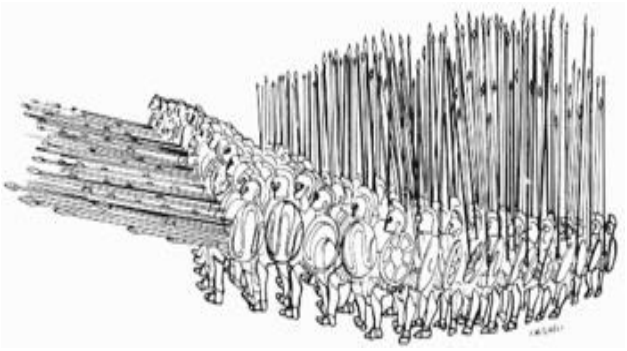
How people fought 10,000 years ago or even earlier is unknown. The scarcity of manuscripts from the period more than 500 years before Christ means that we can only speculate or make deductions from cave drawings, man-made stones, and knives made from rocks or bones. Some mass graves contain skeletons with signs of violence. From such human remains we may assume that fighting is probably as old as mankind. But we know nothing of the extent of fighting and little about the geographical areas involved. As stories told in oral history quickly vanished, details survived only after humans developed the ability to write them up in a comprehensible way. According to the British Library, full writing systems appear to have been invented independently several times in human history: In Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq), cuneiform was used between 3400 and 3300 BC, and shortly afterwards it was used in Egypt at around 3200 BC. But the information was engraved, and clay tablets are not a practical way of disseminating information. Nevertheless, we have some knowledge about the Assyrian empire between 2000 and 612 BC thanks to inscriptions and pictures engraved in stone.

Engraving depicting chariot fighter

From this we know that campaigns and wars were common and that the Medes and Persians made the Assyrian empire disappear. The discovery of papyrus as a means to store written information strongly improved the knowledge now available about military events. Most of the descriptions of such events in Europe and the Middle East date back to 800-500 before Christ (BC) in ancient Greek literature. Elements are found in Homer's Iliad and Odysseus as a mixture of myths and tales of violence with probably realistic depictions of the act of fighting itself [5]. Efforts to describe history by Herodotus [480-420 BC] included many interesting but non-verifiable stories including the violence of foreign populations such as the Scythians [6]. Although he registered many things based on oral histories from the past, they probably give a fair overall picture of the type of warfare common in that period. A remarkably detailed description of the largest part of the Peloponnesian War [431-404 BC] was made by Thucydides, a general in this conflict until he fell into disgrace [7]. In a concise and almost modern scientific style, he described what happened and what the reasons for the conflict were. Additional details about the period thereafter came from Xenophon who described the escape from Persia (with several thousands of hoplites) to the Black Sea [8]. Much later, Roman historians such as Polybius, Cicero, Livy, and Tacitus added much information about political and military events. Especially, the *Annales* and *Historiae* by Tacitus are well known but are mainly focused on politically important events [9]. Hence these books give few details about military tactics or strategy. The oldest book on military strategy was probably the one published by Sun Tzu [544-496 BC] even earlier than Herodotus' *Histories* [10]. This exemplifies our lack of knowledge about warfare in China, but the collection of terracotta sculptures representing the armies of the first emperor of China around 210 BC, Qin Shi Hung, demonstrates that war occurred in probably every human society on earth.

Combat

Although a fight between two men is not a war, personal combat has always been a fundamental element in war. War is the formalized fight between groups of men (or sometimes women). There is a difference between military strategy (how to win a war), military tactics (how to win a battle), and military techniques (how to win a fight). Although this distinction remains to some degree even now, all three underwent huge changes over time as a result of changes in the size of conflicts and in technical developments. However, some elements remained the same. For instance, not only in ancient times but also later in history, strength and physical ability were important determinants of successful fighting in a man-to-man encounter. Of course, armament, vigor, courage, perseverance, and skills in using weapons were important too. This may sound self-evident, but many of the warriors in ancient times were mobilized *ad hoc* from among untrained citizens only when danger arose and fighting was imminent (see Thucydides' descriptions of the ancient Greek city states) [7]. Although most laborers had more physical activities each day than modern humans have in their mechanized and computerized lives, few were trained to fight with the often heavy equipment. Most information from antiquity comes from Greek literature. Maybe with the exception of the Greek state of Sparta, where military training began for boys when they were young, most other Greek states did not have professional armies. Sparta could afford this only because the 'heloten' (captured prisoner-slaves), were forced to perform all agricultural activities. Male citizens of Sparta were well trained, a necessity because their number was small and an uprising of the numerous slaves was always an imminent risk. But in addition, they needed to excel in fighting tactics and discipline. In war, one fights in a group – preferably a united one. That means that each member must know the others' strengths and weaknesses. Regular training and exercising helps to get to know the others and to learn what to do under war conditions. Discipline is independent of the type of fighting. The ancient Greeks fought in the 8th century BC using the 'Phalanx' formation, a dense lineup 4-8 hoplite soldiers deep, with swords or lances.



Greek phalanx

Discipline was important in keeping the structure of the phalanx stable as long as possible during the fight (except during maneuvers). While the soldiers in front face the enemy directly, the

soldiers behind them are for replacement and building up pressure and density. Even cavalry stayed away from such dense rows. With the phalanx, much larger but less organized armies such as the Persian one could be beaten. In the battles of Plataea [479 BC] and Marathon [490 BC], the phalanx was decisive for victory. But there were also 'skirmishers', seemingly unstructured groups of archers and men throwing rocks and lances, that were complementary to the phalanxes ('psiloi and peltastai'). These warriors often preceded the phalanx because they were able to hit the enemy phalanx with rocks and arrows at greater distance [11]. Such groups had their leaders and their discipline. As far as history goes, small army groups always follow one leader who can be easily recognized by the group. Multiple such groups cluster into army brigades or divisions. With increasing numbers, a hierarchy was needed in the larger armies. This hierarchy and its ranks were indispensable for successful fighting, and these ranks could be distinguished by their clothing, later by their uniform. Couriers between such army groups were needed to coordinate military actions as much as possible. Physical training through heavy daylong marches and fighting, discipline, and good logistics gave armies such as the later Roman one an enormous advantage in their fights with invading enemies. The Roman Empire employed various military techniques against which the traditional inflexible Greek phalanxes were no longer the appropriate solution. Many of the Roman military tactics were described in the work 'De Re Militari' in which Vegetius focused on military organization and how to react to certain occasions in war. Vegetius explained how to fortify and organize a camp, how to train troops, how to handle undisciplined troops, how to handle a battle engagement, how to march, how to create a formation, and many other useful methods of promoting organization and valor in the legion [2]. Although these military abilities provided for a long-lasting hegemony, the dominance of the Western Roman Empire came to an end in the 4th-5th century. The Eastern Roman Empire remained and developed into Byzantium which continued its existence until the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

Armament and armor

In antiquity, weapons included swords, spears, axes, hammers, and thrown rocks used to create fatal wounds or crushing of bones. The bow and arrow were introduced at an early stage. All weapons had either sharp edges for cutting, sharp points for thrusting, or heavy heads for crushing. Although becoming more technically sophisticated over time (for instance, going from bronze to iron), such weaponry remained the mainstay of soldiers until the development of guns. This does not mean that there was a standstill in development. For instance, the quality of the bows increased, and the role of horses in the fight (for instance by the Huns) changed warfare enormously. The introduction of projectile weapons such as the scorpion and the ballista made a huge contribution to the success of the Roman Empire.

Even though the introduction of gunpowder completely changed warfare, knives remain a potential weapon in a man-to-man fight, but swords and spears have now completely disappeared. Personal protective gear developed over time from the relatively simple bronze helmet, leather and bronze breast plates, leg plates, and shields of the Spartan hoplites to the heavy iron armor of medieval knights; the latter limited movement but protected the soldiers from injury. Armor largely disappeared in the 17th century, but nowadays bullet-proof armored vests are used during wars.

On the left, a Greek hoplite with bronze helmet, breast and leg plates, and shield; on the right, medieval armor

Although most fighting was done on foot, horses were an important element in the armies of the Babylonian and Assyrian cultures. Thucydides refers to the cavalry of some of the bigger Greek city states such as Athens [7]. Later, especially the invading steppe nomads proved to be experienced horse riders with excellent and powerful horses. When organized, as the Huns and Mongols were, they were able to invade large geographical regions with an almost unstoppable cavalry. The cavalry of the Gothic army that defeated the Romans in Adrianople (Edime) in 378 was decisive. Other animals used, albeit less frequently, were elephants and dromedaries. A famous example is the Carthaginian commander Hannibal who used elephants in his war campaign in Italy against the Romans. In North America, the introduction of horses into warfare – before Columbus, horses were unknown – completely changed the performance in the many Indian-Indian wars of the 16th-17th century. Horses were used for cavalry but also to pull wagons. Therefore, the type of horse differed according to its function [12].

Important changes: The role of heavy cavalry and gunpowder

In Europe, soldiers on horses changed warfare. In antiquity, horses were used, but mainly for reconnaissance or covering retreats. However, according to Homer, the Trojans launched an attack with chariots on the fortified camp of the Greek troops [5], and chariots were used by the Assyrian Empire and the Egyptians. The role of horses changed dramatically with the introduction of the stirrup in the 8th century. Stirrups add much to the stability of the horse rider and make it easier to mount. This greater stability facilitated cavalry of heavily armored soldiers with lances to form lines several horses deep. A cavalry charge usually began with a trot and then turned into a gallop starting at approximately 250 meters from the enemy [12]. Such a charge

usually had a devastating effect on the opposing infantry. However, a disciplined infantry line of several rows with lances was often able to hold as most horses get scared when they are confronted with such dense collections of lances. That is why so-called 'war horses' were carefully selected from big, fast, strong, and calm horse types and were bred and trained for the battlefield. The different military functions led to different types of cavalry. The cuirassiers and lancers formed the heavy cavalry while dragoons and hussars were involved in reconnaissance, covering flanks and engaging in skirmishes with the enemy [12]. The confrontation with heavy cavalry increasingly led to block formations (carré) with lances and later bayonets. Although this was quite effective, it is a disadvantage that the soldiers in the back do not participate in the fight but act as a reserve. A second result of the dominance of heavy cavalry was the employment of the English long bow. During the Hundred Years' War – a series of three war periods between 1337 and 1453 – the high firing rate of the long bow proved to be important in stopping French heavy cavalry during the battle of Crécy in 1346. Against massed men in armor, massed longbows were murderously effective on many battlefields.

But by far the most revolutionary contribution to the battlefield was gunpowder. Gunpowder, a combination of sulfur, charcoal, and potassium nitrate was described in Chinese literature in the 11th century, but it was probably already in use in China in the year 142 [13]. Although now replaced by other more explosive substances and smokeless ones designed to prevent discovery by an enemy, traditional gunpowder was used for centuries to fire cannons and small arms. Gunpowder was mainly used in China for firearms as the type of warfare there consisted of irregular cavalry for which cannons were not useful. In Europe, the first cannon was made of bronze in Italy around 1325 and used to defend Florence. The first effective use of cannons was made by Charles VIII of France during the siege of Naples in 1494 when he easily destroyed the high walls of the city with cannon balls. Although breach-loading (loading in the back of the cannon) was common early on, the cannon tended to explode. Hence, until the mid-19th century, all cannons were muzzle-loaders (loaded via the open end of the barrel). Until the 19th century, there was enormous progress in gunnery. Apart from variations such as the howitzer and mortar, which fire their projectiles in a curve rather than straight, the quality of steel guns and explosives rose with the increased industrialization of Europe. A wide variety of small arms were developed, such as flint-lock and wheel-lock pistols and muskets [14].

Fortifications and siege techniques

As early as Greek antiquity, one way of defending a city was to build walls around it. Around the 5th century BC, most of the larger Greek cities were fortified. However, there were exceptions. For instance, Sparta did not have walls and relied completely on its professional army. Intuitively, one might choose a circular wall because that form creates the shortest length to defend. Indeed, the old fortification 'de Burcht' in Leiden had this form. However, the defense was more difficult than in a square castle with towers. In the latter, the towers gave extra strength to the entire structure and forced the attackers to either damage or climb over the walls between the towers from which the defenders were able to shoot at them with arrows. Also, these towers gave important coverage for the defenders and provided a useful area for storage. The Romans

chose this structure for their fortresses, and throughout the Middle Ages, all castles had the square form. However, the discovery of explosives introduced a complete change.

The 'Burcht' castle of Leiden in the Netherlands was built in the 11th century as a circular wall on top of a hill. Later castles such as the 'Gravensteen' in Ghent, Belgium, were mostly square with towers on each corner

Although walls were relatively expensive, they facilitated an easier defense with fewer soldiers, and as of the 13th and 14th centuries, many rich cities such as Florence, Venice, and Ghent could afford it. If the fortified city had enough food and water, it could withstand a sieging army until winter when campaigns almost always ended. If so, an alternative for exhausting the citizens by siege was to break through the walls or climb over them. Already in 429 BC, during the siege of Plataea, the besiegers tried to build a structure higher than the city wall. In response, the besieged made their city wall even taller [7]. Among the Greek cities, initiatives to build a city wall were seen as hostile acts. For instance, the prosperity of Athens depended to a large extent on its port, Piraeus. Therefore, its citizens intended to build long walls from Athens to the port to be able to defend this important route to open water during war. These 'long walls' were a great source of dispute with Sparta because it would jeopardize the balance of power between the two cities if Athens became easier to defend [7]. The importance of a city wall is shown by the inability to take Troy by force by a Greek army. Before the discovery of gunpowder, breaking through the walls was almost impossible when they were built with granite rock; but with battering rams, even heavy iron-framed wooden doors of the main gates could be destroyed. In the centuries before Christ, several projectile techniques were developed to take a city by force. These inventions, such as the ballista, were refined and described by the Romans [2].

They remained largely the same until the discovery of gunpowder and the development of cannons. This was the start of a race between larger, more powerful guns and heavier protective walls. By improving the type and quality of metal used to construct cannons and by introducing gun casting, these developed more penetrating power. Changing from bronze to iron, and later to steel, facilitated a much stronger ignition without exploding the cannon. Using round cannon balls leaving less space between ball and barrel, and later rifling the barrel, enabled much greater speed and impulse. Apart from massive iron cannon balls, projectiles filled with explosives were

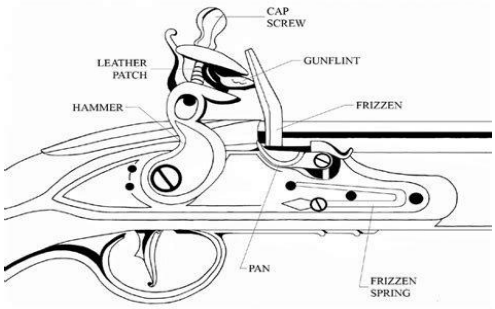
used to increase the damage where the target was hit. Also, projectiles with shrapnel were developed for use against enemy troops. While cannons shoot projectiles in a straight line, howitzers and mortars were developed to shoot their projectiles in high-arcing trajectories. In this way, the inside area of fortifications could be easily hit. The first use of the mortar in 1453 during the siege of Constantinople played a role in its fall [15]. Mortars were further developed during the 17th century. For instance, the Dutch general van Coehoorn developed a smaller and easier-to-handle mortar. But in addition, the discovery of gunpowder also allowed the undermining and blasting of the fortified walls of cities.

This smaller and more flexible type of mortar was developed and used by the Dutch military engineer and general Menno van Coehoorn

Important military developments during the 17th century

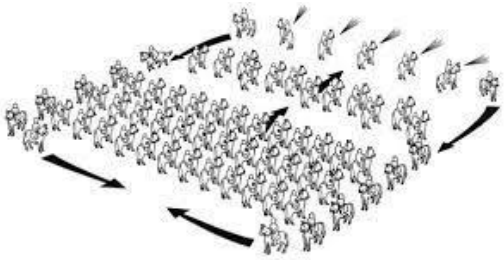
The 16th century brought important geopolitical changes with the growing power of Spain and the discoveries of the Americas. At the same time, more frequent religious strife between Catholics and Protestants as well as power conflicts between European countries caused much political turmoil and many military engagements. Starting in 1568 with a rebellion of Dutch counties against the Spanish king, the revolt of Bohemia in 1618 added to a huge European conflict that involved most large European states. This very bloody conflict ended with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, having caused a reduction of the size of the population by more than 60

percent in some parts of Germany such as the Palatinate, Silesia, and Pomerania [16]. After a short interbellum, an invasion of the Dutch Republic by France, supported by the bishopric of Münster, in 1672 was followed by the Nine Years' War [1689-1697], the War of the Spanish Succession [1701-1715], and the Great Northern War [1700-1721]. This succession of large military conflicts stimulated several developments in military technique and tactics. In particular, the development of cannons and smaller firearms allowed for much more firepower in sieges and on the battlegrounds. Pistols and lighter firearms increased the flexibility of infantry and cavalry. The introduction of the snaphance (replacing the match lock in which gun powder in the barrel was ignited with a match) with its flint lock greatly increased the firing rate of pistols and muskets even though they were still single shot loaders.



While earlier muskets used a match to ignite the gun powder in the barrel, the snaphance hit with a hammer-held flint against the iron frizzen whereafter sparks ignited the gun powder in the pan

There were also important developments in military tactics. During the early phase of the 80-year war between the later Dutch Republic and Spain [1568-1648], Maurice of Orange reorganized the army, introducing regular training and exercise. Until then, the main force in all armies were the pikemen who were drawn up in three or four large rectangles or squadrons twice as deep in formation as they were broad [17]. Smaller units of musketeers were attached to the corners of the rectangles or were deployed in the spaces in between the rectangles. Meanwhile cavalry went forward to shoot their pistols and move backwards to reload while a next row of cavalry went forward to shoot [this was known as the 'caracole']. This process on the battlefield was chaotic and inefficient.



Caracole by cavalry. After shooting, horsemen return from front to rear and reload

Maurice introduced the extended line infantry. With the usual rectangle formation, the rear did not participate in the fight. He restructured the infantry into a depth of 10 ranks, and the cavalry into 5 ranks. This produced more extended lines with a greater coverage of the battlefield and greater participation in the fight on the part of each soldier. The pikemen in the centre were flanked by musketeers, cavalry, and artillery [17].

A new military technique

The introduction by Maurice of Orange of the longer musketeer lines with organized reloading and shooting was an improvement. With faster reloading thanks to the snaphance, experienced soldiers could shoot up to three bullets per minute, and repeated volleys from a row of musketeers were an effective tool against cavalry. Of course, discipline was difficult to keep during the heat of the fight, especially if inexperienced soldiers slowed the rate of fire of the rest of the platoon. Usually, after a number of volleys, soldiers fired more individually as fast as they could and no longer in concert. The volleys were a sort of solution for the lack of precision of the muskets at that time. It was not easy to hit someone from 200 meters away unless one was very experienced with the weapon being used. All muskets were still hand-made, and the irregular smoothness of the cast barrels meant that the round bullets often followed an unpredictable course. In the absence of the ability to cast robust steel barrels, this deviation remained a limitation. Because standardization and consistency in manufacturing was not yet possible, there were no spare parts for repairing a damaged musket. Gunsmiths behind the lines had to make such parts themselves.

Musketeers were ordered to give their shots at the same time on command while the other ranks reloaded their guns [17]. In this way and in combination with the pikemen, a more effective defense with sustained gunfire against cavalry was possible. Later in the 17th century, the plug-in bayonet replaced the need for pikemen. During the concurrent Thirty Years' War [1618-1648], Swedish king Gustav II Adolph introduced several military improvements in armament and military tactics. He introduced a smaller pike that could be used as effectively in attack as in defense [17].

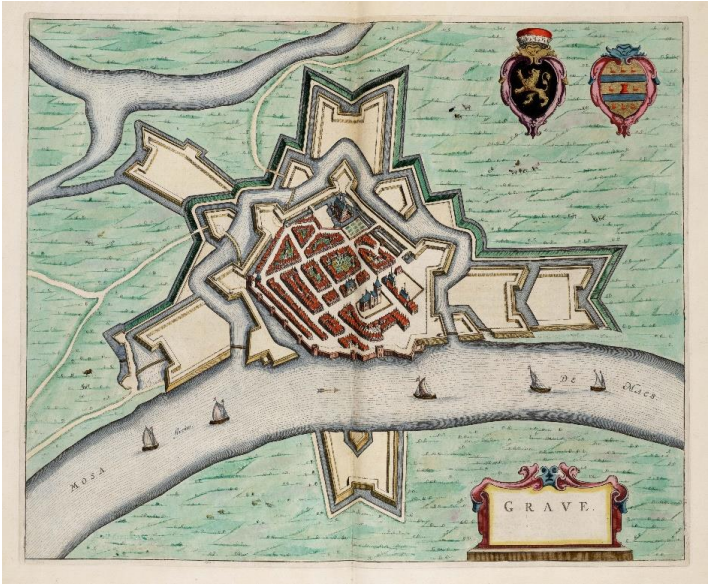
Musket bullets of different size. These were often made on site

He also introduced a lighter musket not requiring the use of a forked rest. It could be loaded and fired much more quickly than traditional muskets. Moreover, his cavalry largely skipped the caracole but attacked in charges with sabres to mow down the enemy infantry. Most revolutionary was his flexible use of cannons. Before that, artillery usually shot their cannon balls from a fixed position at the battlefield with several cannons in a row. Gustav II Adolph's artillery of 3-pounders, 80 of them, was completely flexible, so that individual cannons with their gunners could be moved to any spot where artillery support was required at that moment of the battle. This 'single cannon' use was new and added flexibility to support individual infantry regiments. In this way, he was able to coordinate a barrage of gunnery and musketry never seen before. What also contributed to his success was conscription. During the Thirty Years' War, most armies were still largely composed of mercenaries. For instance, the very rich Wallenstein, supreme commander of the armies of Emperor Ferdinand II, brought 50,000 of them with him for the invasion of the protestant states in Northern Germany. Such armies were composed of soldiers coming from all over Europe. In the Swedish army, however, soldiers in a military unit came from the same region and often knew each other. This contributed strongly to loyalty within the units.

While the Thirty Years' War was mainly characterized by large battles in combination with some sieges, the Eighty Years' War was a campaign dominated by sieges. Apart from being famous for restructuring the army of the Dutch Republic, Maurice of Orange and his half-brother Frederic Henry were experienced in the important engineering of a siege. Instead of trying to get over walls like in ancient times, undermining and exploding the walls became the most important way to take cities when they weren't conquered through a stratagem. Just as Troy was taken through the use of a giant wooden horse filled with Greek soldiers, the city of Breda was taken in 1590 by Maurice of Orange with the help of a ship with soldiers who were camouflaged with peat.

In response to the increasing use of explosives, the military techniques to fortify cities were strongly stimulated. The use of a wide ring with bastions, glacis, crownwork, ravelins, and

surrounding waters made it more difficult to undermine the inner walls of a city, especially because not every spot around the fortification could be kept under fire, thanks to the design of the wall structure. A highlight in siegecraft were the technical developments by Vauban, an important military engineer serving Louis XIV as general, and his Dutch opponent Menno van Coehoorn. The taking of Namen by Vauban in 1692 and its recapture in 1695 by van Coehoorn were among the most important military events of the Nine Years' War [1688-1697].



The city of Grave was fortified by Menno van Coehoorn after the Peace of Münster in 1648. Around the inner part with its bastions, the city is surrounded by a moat with ravelins and crownwork

References

1. Von Clausewitz C. On the nature of War. Book one, pp. 75-89. Princeton University Press. Princeton, New Jersey, 1976.
2. Flavius Vegetius Renatus. De re militari. The military institutions of the Romans. Ancient World Books 2018.
3. Van Creveld. Men, women and war. London: Cassell & Co., 2001.
4. Keeley LH. War before civilization. Oxford University Press, 1996.
5. Homeros. Ilias en Odyssea. Translation by F van Oldenburg Ermke. Kempische Boekhandel, 1959.
6. Herodotos. Historiën. Translation by O Damsté. Fibula-van Dishoeck, 1974.

7. Thucydides. The Peloponnesian War. Translation by MA Schwartz. Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, Haarlem, 1964.
8. Xenophon. Anabasis. Translation by G Koolschijn & N Matsier. Atheneum – Polak & van Gennip. Amsterdam, 2006.
9. Tacitus. The Annals & the Histories. Modern library paperback edition. New York, 2003.
10. Sun Tzu. The Art of Warfare – Translated by Ames RT with an Introduction and Commentary. New York: Ballantine, 1993.
11. Singor H. Grieken in oorlog. Veldtochten en veldslagen in het klassieke Griekenland. Amsterdam University Press/Salomé, 2006.
12. De Smet J. Horses in wartime Part 1: A short survey of important developments in warfare use of horses from the late mediaeval pPeriod until the end of the nineteenth century. Vlaams Diergeneesk Tijdschrift 2021;90:98-15.
13. History of Gunpowder. Wikipedia. History of gunpowder - Wikipedia
14. Peterson HL. The book of the gun. The Hamlyn Publishng Group, Feltham, 1963.
15. Gábor Ágoston. Guns for the Sultan: Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire. Cambridge University Press, 2005.
16. Wilson PH. Europe's tragedy. A new history of the Thirty Years War. Penguin Books Ltd, 2010.
17. Lee SJ. Military developments in the war. In: The thirty years war. Routledge, London and New York, 1991.

CHAPTER 2

Ancestry of the three brothers Stricker

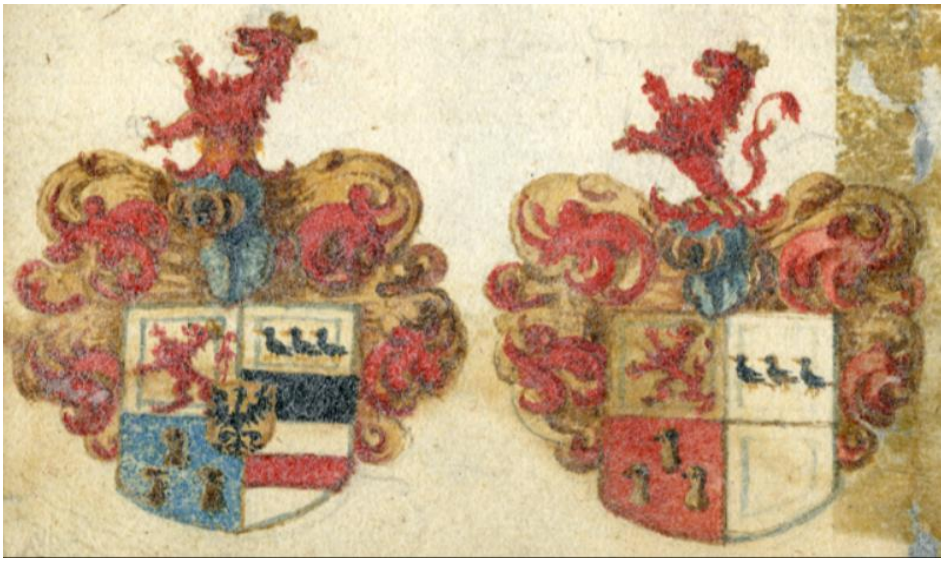
In 1804, major-general Carl Alexander von Stricker wrote in a letter: "*Nach meines Vaters Bericht soll mein Gross Vater ein Polnischer Edelmann gewesen sein, der sich eigentlich Strücker geschrieben und wegen einen unglücklichen Duel sein Vaterland und ganzes Vermögen verlassen müssen. Er war etliche 20 Jahre alt, wie er nach Rendsburg kam, und heyrathete eine Venten, Schwester zu meiner Mutter-Vater. Er starb in Rendsburg, da mein Vater 1 Jahr alt war.*" [1]. Or in current English: "According to my father, my grandfather was a Polish nobleman who had to leave his fatherland and properties behind because of an unfortunate duel. He was in his twenties when he came to Rendsburg and married a 'Vent', a sister of my mother's father. He died in Rendsburg when my father was one year old." This father died in 1702 at the age of 32 years, possibly by the plague or cholera. His name was Johann Stricker. In the same year, another son died. Consequently, Alexander Stricker and his mother Engelke Vendt (or Vendt) were the only survivors of this young family.

It is largely unknown how and why Johann Stricker came to Rendsburg. The few details cited above were hearsay. During the approximately 4 years that he lived in Rendsburg, he left no traces apart from the giving of birth names to his two sons, one of whom died early. And there is a notification that he was an 'Affuites Meister' which means that he was responsible for the undercarriage of the cannons in the Danish Artillery.

In the historical work of Hirsch about Danish officers [2], artillery major Alexander Stricker, the only surviving son of Johann Stricker and father of Carl Alexander, is described as the son of a 'Lithauer'. Lithuania had been a part of the Polish kingdom since 1569, and the Polish and Lithuanian nobles were united after the treaty of Horodlo in 1413. Consequently, any nobility would have to be registered in Polish or Lithuanian heraldry. Surprisingly, however, the three sons of Alexander, colonel Johan Christian [1728-1809], major-general Carl Alexander [1731-1820], and lieutenant-general Ezechias Heinrich [1734-1814] sealed their correspondence with a coat of arms of which the oldest one is shown in the upper left part of the picture below.

Seals from letters of the 3 brothers Stricker around 1780-1800

This seal is dated from a period around 1670 and is the correct coat of arms used by a family of imperial nobility with the name ‘de Stucker’ or ‘von Stücker’; it was registered in Vienna in 1638.



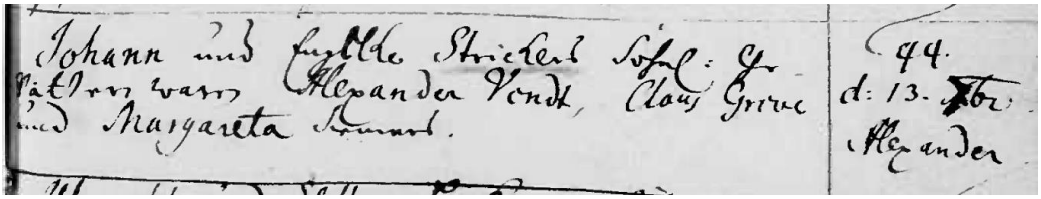
On the right, the coat of arms of Jean Baptiste and Melchior de Stucker before 1638. In that year, this coat of arms was adapted into the one on the left, with the German eagle (‘Reichsadler’) in the center.

The German eagle is clearly visible, and the coat of arms does not resemble any of the Lithuanian or Polish ones.

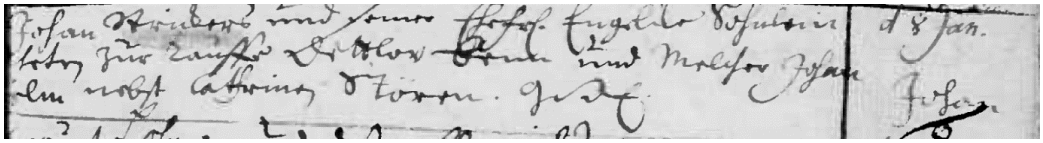
Stricker or de Stucker?

The statement *“der sich eigentlich Strücker geschrieben …”* means that Johann Stricker did not use his true family name but a name that phonetically resembled it. ‘Stricker’ was a common

name in Rendsburg and in the duchy of Holstein. This was documented in Otto Nobel's historical article [1]; he found more than 5 unrelated persons with the family name 'Stricker' in the duchy. This was not simply a registration error; Johann Stricker used this name on purpose as seen in the reports of the birth of his two sons to the authorities.



Baptized on 13 December 1700 in Marienkirche Rendsburg: Johann und Engelke Strickers Sohne: Gevätter waren Alexander Vendt, Claus Greve und Margareta Somers [?].



Baptized on 8 January 1702 in Marienkirche Rendsburg: Johan Strickers und seine Ehefrau Engelkes Sohnlein … zur Tauffe Detlev Brun [?] und Melchior Johan Holm [?] nebst Cathrina Storre.

On both occasions, the name 'Stricker' was used, so this must have been on purpose. As the name was common, the risk of discovery by legal authorities from other parts of the Holy Roman Empire was much lower. According to his grandson, he had to leave his country because of a duel, and he was probably a fugitive trying to stay away from the authorities. As Rendsburg was a suitable and well-known place for mercenaries, he could live there relatively free and unharmed until his death in 1702. In 1699, 8 of the 12 infantry regiments [approximately 10,000 soldiers] of the Danish army consisted of 4232 Danes and Norwegians, 4228 Germans (including those from Schleswig and Holstein), 108 Swedes, 340 men from western and southern Europe, and 687 men from eastern Europe [15]. Dueling was strictly forbidden by law in many countries, and especially if one of the participants was killed, the consequences were enormous. Because of the increasing popularity of dueling among young men, already in 1651 provisions were taken in France and other countries to discourage this trend.

"... These provisions, however, do not seem to have had the intended effect, for in 1679 Louis XIV found it necessary to issue the celebrated 'Edit des Duels' prescribing the death penalty for all principals, seconds, and thirds, with confiscation of some property. He ordained that gentlemen should be deprived of their letters of nobility and their coat of arms defaced and broken by the public executioner. He ruled that those who fell in a duel should be tried for contumacy and their bodies deprived of a Christian burial, being thrown into 'the common receptacle of nuisances'. The mere sending of a challenge was punished by exile and the confiscation of half of the offender's property …" [3].

Although this was French legislation, the influence of this 'Edit des Duels' within Europe was huge. The adjective 'unglücklichen Duel' suggests that his opponent was mortally wounded or handicapped. Hence, a common name resembling his own name was almost certainly used as a cover.

Consequently, the assumption is that Johann Stricker is the same person as Johannes Franciscus Josephus de Stucker, born in Brussels on 8 August 1670 as the son of lawyer Franciscus Josephus de Stucker [4]. Johann's grandfather Jean Baptiste de Stucker and his great-uncle Melchior had obtained the coat of arms shown above in 1638 because Lüttich at that time was part of the Holy Roman Empire of Emperor Ferdinand III. As the new part of Rendsburg was located in Holstein, a fief of the Danish king but formally a part of the Holy Roman Empire too, living there was not without risk (although the old part of Rendsburg was in Schleswig). One assumption is that Polish Lithuania-Latvia may have been confused with the Habsburg principality 'Lüttich' (*in German: 'Lettisch' versus 'Lüttichs')*. Changing 'Stücker' to 'Stricker' and Lüttichs to Lettisch/Lithaus are both phonetic changes easily made in an area where many people were still unable to read and write. This all helped Johann Stricker to avoid potential capital punishment. His disappearance also explains why the birth and death of all other siblings were registered, as was the registration at the University of Leuven of his three brothers, but not Johann's. He may have been declared dead by his family and forced to disappear as his name was scratched out in the Brussels genealogy issued by of Houwaert-de Grez [16].

But the next question is why someone living and dueling in Brussels during the Nine Years' War [1688-1697] shows up in Rendsburg, the second most important Danish fortress (only Copenhagen was larger). After all, he could have gone almost anywhere else in Europe. Apart from the possibility that he arrived in Rendsburg purely by coincidence, there is a much more likely route for arriving in Denmark if Johann de Stucker/Stricker entered military activities as a mercenary. Hiding in a foreign regiment makes sense for someone on the run who is trying to disappear. Shortly after the end of the Nine Years' War in 1697 with the Treaty of Rijswijk, the large majority of military troops returned to their homelands [8]. Possibly, via such a re-allocation to the biggest fortress of Schleswig-Holstein in Rendsburg, Johann de Stucker/Stricker arrived there 'etliche zwanziger Jahre alt' [1]. If so, he will have arrived with Duke Ferdinand William von Württemberg who was a general in Dutch service during the Nine Years' War. He was also in Danish service, and during this war, he directed the Danish regiments in the Spanish Netherlands [6,7]. During one of his visits to Brussels while he intended to leave the city, the gates had to be closed because of a murder [8]. In 1697, after hostilities with France ended, all foreign troops went back to their home countries. Probably, Danish troops were mainly re-allocated to Copenhagen, Rendsburg, and Fredericia. Johann de Stucker/Stricker may have slipped away by joining such Danish troops. After all, his father Franciscus Josephus was not only a lawyer but also one of the investigating magistrates of Brussels in these years. He would have immediately realized the consequences of his son's act. In 1698, Duke Ferdinand William fought against the Ottomans in Poland during the siege of Caminiec [9], and also here a Danish regiment participated. If Johann Stricker participated there, it might have been the source of the story that he came from Poland. Because of the tense situation between Denmark and the duchy of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorf [10] heralding the Great Northern War [1700-1720], the Danes

had to come back soon after this Polish campaign, and in September 1699, Duke Ferdinand William was made Commander-in-chief of the Danish army [11]. Rendsburg was in the Danish part of Holstein, and many returning Danish soldiers were billeted in the houses of citizens [12]. Notably, two regiments having fought in the Spanish Netherlands during the Nine Years' War under the command of Ferdinand William of Württemberg were: the Jutland Infantry Regiment and the Queen's Life Regiment [13]. These were both reassembled in Rendsburg during the period 1698-1700 [14]. It is highly plausible that Johann de Stucker from Brussels came to Rendsburg through this Danish military connection.

References

1. Nobel O. Slægtsbogsoptegnelser vedrørende Familierne Stricker og Kaalund. Personalhistorisk Tidsskrift 1912; pp.121-128.
2. Hirsch JCW, Hirsch K. Fortegnelse over danske og norske officerer (Officielt). Fortegnelse over danske og norske officerer med flere fra 1648-1814 samlet og udarbejdet fra 1888-1907 af oberstløjtnant J.C.W. Hirsch og premierløjtnant Kay Hirsch. Rigsarkivet, København.
3. Baldick R. The Duel, a history of dueling. Duels in France, pp. 60-61. Chapman & Hall, London, 1970.
4. Stricker WFO. Genealogie (de) Stucker. L'Intermediaire des genealogistes. 1991;5:260-66.
5. Sapherson CA. The Dutch army of William III. Partizan Press, 1997.
6. Torntoft P. William III and Denmark-Norway. The English Historical Review 1966;81 [no 318]:11-25.
7. von Pfister A. Ferdinand Wilhelm. Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie 1877, pp. 709-10.
8. Rapport de Bruxelles. Gazette de Rotterdam, 3 December 1696.
9. Anonymous. Opregte Haarlemsche Courant, 22 April 1699.
10. Anonymous. Geschichte des herzoglich Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorfischen Hofes und dessen vornehmsten Staatsbedienten unter der Regierung Herzog Friedrich IV und dessen Sohnes Herzog Carl Friederichs, mit geheime Anecdoten zur Erläuterung der Schleswig-Holsteinischen Historie besonders als der Nordischen Begebenheiten überhaupt. Frankfurt und Leipzig, 1774.
11. Anonymous. Nouvelles extraordinaires de divers endroits. Copenhagen, 29 September 1699.
12. Anonymous. Opregte Haarlemsche Courant, 12 May 1699.
13. Jahn JHF. Det danske Auxiliaircorps i engelsk tjeneste fra 1689 til 1697, pp. 30-32. 1840.
14. Schröder F. Rendsburg als Festung. Karl Wachholz Verlag, Neumünster, 1939.
15. Harbou HW, Tuxen AP, With CL. Den store Nordiske Krigs Historie, Part I. Det Nordiske Forlag. Copenhagen, 1899.
16. Houwaert. Inventaire analytique du fonds Houwaert-de Grez, Brussels. Genealogicum Belgicum, 1971.

CHAPTER 3

The Nine Years' War and the Danish Auxiliary Corps

As outlined in Chapter 2, Johan de Stucker came to Denmark from Brussels after participating in the Danish Auxiliary Corps which fought in the Spanish Netherlands during the Nine Years' War. The Great Northern War, starting three years later, was just another in a sequence of large military conflicts within Europe. Wars between Denmark and Sweden were not new, and after the 17th century most of them ended favorably for Sweden. It became more and more powerful while Denmark's power was in decline. This time, it was part of a large conflict following a century of violence and political unrest in Europe. Up to the Peace Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 – composed of the Treaty of Münster by Spain and the Dutch Republic and the Treaty of Osnabrück by France, Sweden, and the states of the Holy Roman Empire – the German states were strongly depopulated, and all involved European countries were tired of war.

But after 1648, a chain of new wars occurred between England and the Dutch Republic, Denmark and Sweden, and France and Spain. Apart from that, Ottoman forces repeatedly attacked areas belonging to Poland/Lithuania and Austria/Hungary, culminating in the siege of Vienna in 1683. Especially Louis XIV continuously sought to expand France at the expense of surrounding states. He took the duchy of Lotharingia in 1670, and he threatened the Holy Roman Empire states bordering the river Rhine. Conflicts with Spain in the War of Devolution [1667-1668] in which he took Franche-Comté and parts of the Spanish Netherlands were followed by an invasion of the Dutch Republic in 1672-1674. After the Treaty of Nijmegen in 1678, conflicts with Spain returned with peacemeal territorial gains in France until the Truce of Regensburg in 1784. Apart from its territorial expansion in Europe, colonies in North America, Africa, and Asia added to the power of France and gave it a reputation for brutality and arrogance. European apprehension at growing French power and influence forced many states to abandon their alliances with France.

Consequently, by the late 1680s, France became increasingly isolated in Europe. A strong opponent of Louis XIV was William III of Orange who made several fruitless efforts to convince the parliament of the Dutch Republic of the importance of forming a military alliance against France. However, in 1688 his chances changed when he was able to land with a Dutch army in England on the invitation of the protestant part of the parliament, the so-called 'Glorious Revolution'. As the new king of Britain and still 'stadhouder' (steward) and captain-general of the Dutch Republic, he was able to implement a 'Grand Alliance' against France made up of Britain, the Republic, the Holy Roman Empire, Spain, and Savoy in response to a war declaration in 1688 by Louis XIV.

The subsequent Nine Years' War from 1688-1697 consisted mainly of military operations in the Spanish Netherlands, the Rhineland, Savoy, and Catalonia. A Danish auxiliary corps under command of Duke Ferdinand William of Württemberg played a large role in campaigns in

England, Scotland, and Ireland in 1688-1690, and subsequently also in the Spanish Netherlands until 1697 [5]. Ferdinand William of Württemberg was not only a general in Dutch service but also marshal in Denmark, and he was in command of the invasion of Holstein-Gottorf in March 1700 during the start of the Great Northern War. Because most of the Danish troops in this campaign had fought in the Danish Auxiliary Corps, the vignette below describes its activities during the Nine Years' War. It clarifies not only the close temporal relationship between the Nine Years' War and the Great Northern War but also the adventurous path of Johan/Johann de Stucker/Stricker.

THE DANISH AUXILIARY CORPS

In the history of Denmark, there are several occasions when a military auxiliary corps was created, notably during the Nine Years' War and the War of the Spanish Succession [1], as well as during the Napoleontic wars [2]. Essentially, it consisted of a formal Danish army corps, fighting against the army of the nation of France, befriended since 1682. This sounds strange but was not uncommon at that time. Such an auxiliary corps was favorable for Denmark as Christian V had a debt of 11,000 kilograms (24,000 lbs) in gold at his death [6]. Reimbursements for the military activity helped him, and the corps gained experience. The main instigator of the Grand Alliance against Louis XIV, William III of Orange, made frequent use of foreign troops as a captain-general of the Dutch Republic but also later as king of England.

The English army had to be completely restructured by Dutch officers who trained the troops on the 'Dutch exercise', a strictly disciplined form of repetitive platoon fire. Consequently, the English expeditionary force in the Spanish Netherlands was small during the first three years of the war, but the huge English finances and power at sea was indeed very beneficial. Especially for the smaller German states, lending a part of their army was an important source of income so long as this was in line with the policies of the state. During the period 1689-1697, a Danish corps was sent by King Christian V to support the new English King William III who defeated the troops of the deposed Catholic King James II in the Battle of the Boyne in 1690; the Danish troops were commanded by Ferdinand William of Württemberg. Politically, this was counterintuitive as France usually supported Denmark against its natural enemy Sweden. The Danish Auxiliary Corps fell under British command. After fierce fighting with French expeditionary forces and Catholic English Jacobites, a peace treaty in October 1691 ended the fighting in Ireland.

The campaign in the Spanish Netherlands

After hostilities had settled in England and Ireland, the Danish Auxiliary Corps was transferred by boat via the Isles of Scilly to Flanders in the Spanish Netherlands, where it arrived in Ostend in February/March 1692 [1]. Since the start of the Nine Years' War in 1688, the Spanish Netherlands was one of the most important war zones. But campaigns in the Rhineland, Piedmont-Savoy, and Catalonia were important as well.

In the Spanish Netherlands, most fights consisted of sieges of the cities on the axis between Mons and Maastricht and involved mainly the cities Mons, Fleurus, Charleroi, Namur, Huy, and Liège [Lüttich]. But there were also military encounters around Ath, Halle, and Brussels with two large battles in Steenkerque in 1692 and Neerwinden in 1693. The duchy of Luxemburg was already French, and William III was afraid that above that line the remainder of the Spanish Netherlands would be swallowed by France.

Reinforcement by experienced troops was most wanted as Mons had been taken in 1691 after heavy fights by Duc de Bouffiers, and the very capable marshal Luxembourg was able to take Halle near Brussels later in 1691. From Ostende, the Corps was brought to Ghent as its main location. Its commander was Ferdinand William of Württemberg, but formally it was also here under English command. During the summer of 1692, after Namur was taken by the Marquis of Vauban after fierce fighting over the fortress under van Coehoorn in May and June, the Danish force of roughly 5,000 ‘foot and horse’ (infantry and cavalry) joined a relief army of the Grand Alliance which gathered in Leuven and was composed of 90 battalions of infantry, 218 squadrons of cavalry, and 130 cannons, all led by William III, who was not only king of England but also still the captain-general of the Dutch army, with the objective to relieve the siege of Namur. This army of approximately 80,000 men gathered around Halle. Marshal Luxembourg feared an attack on Namur and sent 20,000 men under Bouffiers for reinforcement. As a stratagem, William forced a captured French spy trusted by Luxembourg to write a letter that the army of the Alliance was busy provisioning on 3 August. In fact, a spearhead of 5,000 Danish, Dutch, German, and English troops with 16 cannons – which was supposed to be followed by the whole army – completely surprised the French army in Steenkerque. The spearhead under Württemberg included 1,000 Danish soldiers and 300 cavalry. Despite the surprise, they were too few. After taking the village of Steenkerque, the complete army of the Alliance was to follow, but

the army did not show up. Although a further support group of 8,000 soldiers under Count Nassau-Saarbrücken was successful, losses were huge and the large French army was not able to keep its position.

Battle at Steenkerque in August 1692

After the subsequent clash of the complete armies in the woods, a total of some 16,000 dead (8,000 French and 8,000 Alliance soldiers) and wounded was the final price of the battle. In total, the Danish Auxiliary Corps lost 712 and had 666 wounded soldiers during the battle of Steenkerque. When the Danish Corps was back in its winter quarters in Ghent, its size was approximately 4,500 foot and horse.

In the year 1693, the campaign started in March with the troops from the Alliance gathering near Leuven. When finished in May, the Danish Corps in this large army consisted of 5,347 infantry and 1,065 cavalry. The French army was larger than ever but at the same time, France suffered from an economic crisis. Both armies moved along the Mons-Maastricht line watching each other like boxers looking for a chance to attack. As Luxembourg moved in the direction of Liège, William III feared a siege there and tried to divert his attention by sending Württemberg with some 10,000 men towards West-Flanders as if that area would be attacked. However, Luxembourg was too experienced to respond and kept his army together. Instead, he attacked and took Huy. This was not an important city, but it was probably taken to force William to respond.

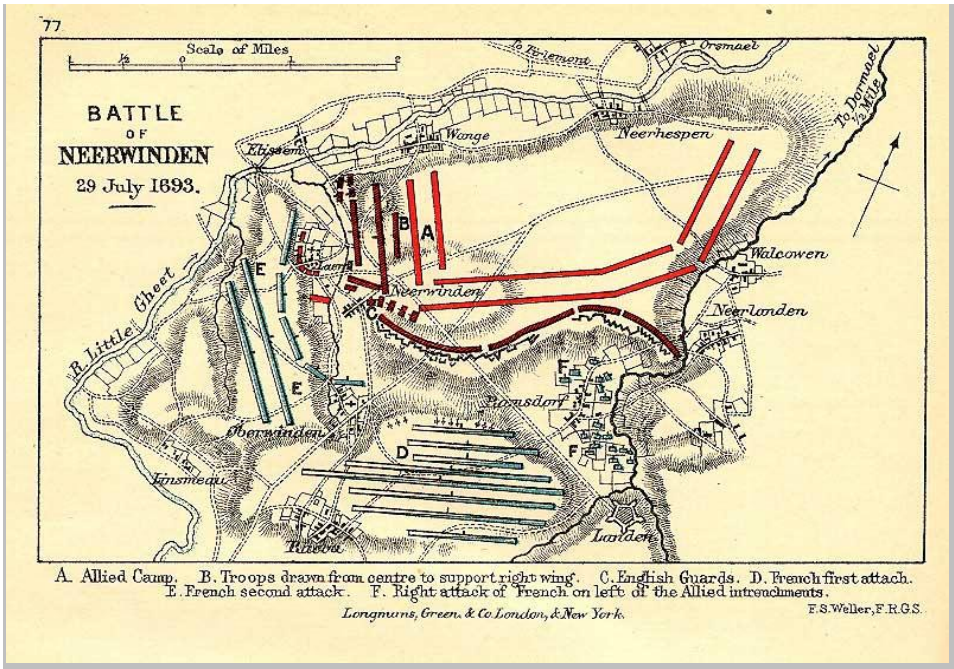
Indeed, William responded by sending 7,000 men, as reinforcement, to each of Maastricht and Liège. This was a strategic error as it weakened his already smaller army even further. Moving eastwards like Luxembourg, he located his army at Neerwinden, alongside the Little Gete River. This was a second strategic error as the army of Luxembourg was only one day's march away. For an army it makes sense to have a camp near a river because of the abundance of available water and wood. But as William's army was between the river and Luxembourg's army, it ran the risk of being crushed between them. To make things worse, William's army remained at this same unsafe place for 3-4 days.

Luxembourg realized that this was his chance to attack. Very quickly, he moved his army into the direction of Landen and Sint-Truiden. As many spies from both armies kept track of the enemy, the signal of the approaching army reached William quite early, but he did not respond to it. After a repeat of the signal that the French army came nearer, William and his generals mounted their horses and rode under cover of a squadron cavalry to one of the nearby hills for reconnaissance. To their astonishment, they noticed that parts of the French cavalry were already near Landen and Sint-Truiden, and parts of the infantry were further away.

Quickly, they considered three options. First, to attack immediately while only parts of the French army had arrived; but this option was dismissed as it would take time to organize an attack while there was not enough daytime left. Second, withdraw with the army over the river Little Gete'; but this was almost impossible to organize so soon because of the camp location and the fact that the number of bridges was too small for the entire army. Third, they considered that withdrawing would free the way for the French army into Brabant and the direction of Brussels and Leuven. They choose the third option to wait and see because the generals considered their position to be advantageous as compared to the one of an attacking army [3].

Immediate measures for defense were taken. For instance, an earthen wall 4 feet high (entrenchment) was made, and extra bridges were made over the 'Little Gete'. On the right flank around and between the villages Laar and Neerwinden, 6 battalions from Hanover, 6 from Brandenburg, and 5 from England were placed. Because of the stone houses and church, fences, and clay walls, these villages were a good defense. Alongside the wall, the remaining infantry battalions were located from Spanish and German on the right, followed by English, Scottish, Dutch, and Danish troops up to the village of Neerlanden. They had artillery behind them while cavalry was arrayed on their flanks. In this way, the long defense line was covered, but no reserve troops were available, and the defense line was too thin. Because Luxembourg's army was bigger, such a thin line was a serious disadvantage.

On 29 July 1693, at 0800 hours, Luxembourg opened the attack on the villages Laar and Neerwinden; it was performed by the French in a very energetic way but with great losses. At the same time, a smaller attack was made on Rumsdorp and Neerlanden. A fierce counter-attack by the army of the Alliance was able to push back the French and retake Laar. Up to two times, the villages were taken and retaken at great loss on the part of both armies. After throwing in an extra 12 battalions, the French again penetrated into Laar and Neerwinden. At the same time, they took Rumsdorp and attacked Neerlanden which was very well defended by Dutch and Danish troops.



After taking Laar and Neerwinden again, the French destroyed the walls and fences between the houses as much as possible before they were thrown out. At this point, his generals advised Luxembourg to break off the fight. But he decided otherwise and threw in an extra reserve from elite troops and his still huge number of cavalry. He focused the attack completely on the gap between Neerwinden and the earth wall. This time, the French army broke through the lines of the Alliance army, reaching the plain between the wall and the 'Little Gete'.

Although the deep hollow road through the plain from Neerwinden to Dormaal was a useful defense line, the plain was devoid of enough troops as William had taken many English and Scottish soldiers during the effort to throw the French out of the villages of Laar and Neerwinden. A huge fight ensued which must have been a horrible sight; French cavalry mowing down enemy soldiers and fierce counter-attacks led by William and his horsemen.

Nevertheless, the French cavalry attack led to a massive stampede of Alliance troops going for the bridges to escape from the plain over the river. Many Alliance troops drowned during this passage. Although the battle was a success for Luxembourg, the French losses were huge too, and the battle of Neerwinden was probably one of the bloodiest battles of the 17th century. Luckily for the Alliance, the French cavalry did not pursue the retreating army.

The retreat from Neerlanden by Dutch and Danish troops was performed expertly with disciplined coverage by musketeers. In the 3 Danish battalions participating in Neerwinden, there were 261 dead or captured soldiers and 80 wounded [1]. Being informed about the battle, the part of the Auxiliary Corps under Württemberg in West Flanders quickly withdrew to Brussels to defend the city in case of a French breakthrough. But the French attack had lost momentum, and supposedly this saved Liège a siege. However, in October 1693 the French were able to capture

Charleroi, and this meant that France now had the Mons-Charleroi-Namur-Huy line in the area best equipped to feed a large army. Hereafter, the French army took up residence in its winter quarters.

When in June 1694 the French army restarted its campaign, the tide had changed. France suffered from increasing economic problems and financial shortages while the Alliance was in a better position. Soon, its army would be bigger than the French one and able to invade France. The Alliance had garrisoned in Dixmuide in West Flanders, and the new field-marshal Duke of Holstein-Plön was able to retake Huy from France in the autumn of 1694. Early in 1695, marshal Luxembourg died; that was a great loss for the French army in the Spanish Netherlands. Marshal de Villeroi took over command and mobilized in May 1695.

During 1695, the armies marched and counter-marched in the Spanish Netherlands, without great battles, not only along the Mons-Charleroi-Namur-Huy-Liège line but also in the Dixmuide-Deinze-Nieuwpoort triangle. The larger army gave William III the ability to use the summer campaign to retake Namur. To try to distract attention from Namur, Villeroi on 11 August 1695 performed a heavy bombardment of Brussels with 25 mortars and 18 cannons [1]. This caused huge damage, but the siege of Namur continued, and the city was taken in September despite a brave defense effort by the French general Bouffiers. In the years 1696-1697, the military activity in the Spanish Netherlands was modest. While negotiations took place in secrecy, the Alliance was able to retake Deinze while the French army took Ath. The Danish Auxiliary Corps had its winter quarters mostly in Ghent, but during 1697 the corps also had quarters in Brussels [1].

In 1697, hostilities ended, and in the peace treaty of Rijswijk made on 20 September 1697, France lost most of the territories it had taken. Louis XIV had completely ruined his country and remained empty-handed. Although the Nine Years' War took place mainly in Europe, i.e. the Spanish Netherlands, Germany, Italy, and Spain, there were also fights and naval conflicts in North America between French and English colonists. As it was followed in 1702 by the War of the Spanish Succession and was preceded by military conflicts since 1672, it was considered by some as part of one big European conflict with France until the peace treaty of Utrecht in 1715.

Like most of the troops of the German states, the Danish Auxiliary Corps returned home. By the end of December, the Danish troops passed the Rhine and travelled back by foot in several weeks via Bocholt, Gronau, and Bentheim to Delmenhorst near Bremen. In January, a part passed the Elbe but because of Swedish objections against passing through the northern German territory Bremen-Verden, the other part of the corps had to travel back via Celle in Hanover [1]. The Jydske Regiment ended in Rendsburg where it was located during 1698-1700 until the start of the Great Northern War [4]. Out of 686 soldiers who had left Denmark in 1689, 435 returned; around 30 percent of them were not of Danish birth. This latter group included 63 women and 55 children. [1].

References

1. Jahn JHF. Det danske Auxilliaircorps i engelsk Tjeneste. Berlingske Bogtrykkeri. Copenhagen, 1840.
2. Wolter HC. Danish Infantry of the Line and Light Infantry 1803-1814 The Perry Achievement. https://www.chakoten.dk
3. Oosterman JT. De slag bij Neerwinden. De Tijdspiegel 1906;63:16-42.
4. Schröder F. Rendsburg als Festung. Karl Wacholtzer Verlag Neumünster, 1939.
5. Torntoft P. William III and Denmark-Norway. The English Historical Review 1966;81 [no 318]:11-25.
6. Streckfuss A. Geschiedenis der wereld 1889; Nieuwe geschiedenis, derde deel. 2de druk Zwolle Tjeenk Willink.

CHAPTER 4

Denmark and Rendsburg

Before being united in the 10th century by king Harald Bluetooth, the Vikings and their successors the Normans spread their violent influence over Europe. In 1397, the kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway were united in the Treaty of Kalmar, but in 1523 Sweden became independent. Since then, several Danish-Swedish wars led to a gradual loss of influence in the Baltic area, and Denmark lost Scania, the southern part of Sweden. By 1700, the Denmark-Norway monarchy was still an important nation with a large fleet. Denmark was influential because it ruled the entrance to the Sound, an important waterway between it and Sweden, although with the loss of the southern part of Sweden and the city of Helsingborg, the Sound could no longer be closed from both ends.

The trading ships sailing to and from the Baltic sea had to pay a toll near the castle of Kronborg. As this was one of the most important trading routes in Europe, the income brought power and prosperity. Along with agricultural self-sufficiency, its trading fleet made Denmark-Norway wealthy despite the absence of natural resources such as coal, iron, and minerals. Apart from the recurring Danish-Swedish conflicts, the duchies Schleswig and Holstein were a recurring source of tension. This was largely because Schleswig was a fief of the Danish king while Holstein was a fief of the German emperor. In 1460, however, in the proclamation of Ribe, the Danish King Christian I declared his intent to govern both duchies together ('up ewich ungedelt', forever undivided)]. This became a problem when the duchies were inherited by his sons after his death. With the gradual familial branching of the descendants, property conflicts arose between Danish kings and dukes of Holstein-Gottorf. Because Rendsburg was on the border between the two duchies, it was of military importance.

Rendsburg in Schleswig-Holstein is an old city that originated at the intersection of two trading routes, one north to south and one east to west, on an island in the river Eider. This river is the old historical border between the Frankish Empire and Denmark and thus the Nordic countries. According to historians, it was the place where in the 5th century the king of the Angles won a victory over the Saxons [1]. Because of its geographical position, the place was important not only economically but also militarily. Around 1100, the island was fortified, and the Reinholdsburg fortress was built by the Danish but the place Rendsburg itself was founded approximately in 1150 [2]. City status was granted around 1250 [3].

Although originally, agriculture and fishing were the key means of supporting the populations, more and more simple manufacturing took place over the centuries, and its products found their way along the two main trading routes. As early as 1200, the question whether Rendsburg belonged to Schleswig or Holstein was a continuous source of conflict. Whereas around 1250, a group of knights declared Rendsburg to belong to Holstein [3], as of the 15-16th century, Rendsburg was always Danish until it was lost to Prussia in 1864. During these centuries, it

played an important role in the extremely complex relationships between the duchies. The fact that the two duchies were united by the Treaty of Ribe in 1460 turned the geopolitical situation into a Gordian knot.

During the Thirty Years' War, Rendsburg was occupied by troops of the Holy Roman Empire from 1627 to 1629. After a Swedish occupation during 1644-1645, the importance of modern fortification was increasingly recognized, and between 1669 and 1673, the Danish general-major Henrik Ruse greatly enlarged the fortress with two large bastions, namely Schleswig in the northern part and Vinzier in the western part [4]. As of 1690, a further enlargement led by major-general Jobst Scholten made Rendsburg one of the strongest fortresses of Northern Europe [4]. For crownwork in the northern part of Rendsburg, the villages of Vinzier and Alt-

A map of Rendsburg, as drawn in 1643 by Johann Friedrich Camerer. In the center of the widened Eider river is Rendsburg, built on an island

Büdelsdorf were partly removed or destroyed. In the southern part of the city, a new large district, 'Neuwerk', was created with streets radiating around a central parade square with houses for officers and barracks for soldiers, a weapons arsenal, and food stores.

Rendsburg in 1720 was the most modern fortified city of northern Europe. Neuwerk was the part where later Alexander Stricker lived with his family

The grandparents of Alexander Stricker

When Alexander Stricker was born in Rendsburg in December 1700, he had two sets of grandparents who were all still alive. The grandparents from his father's side were probably unknown to Alexander's mother and her parents. Even if his father Johann revealed some details during the short period between arriving in Rendsburg and his death in 1702, the relatives were supposed to be Polish-Lithuanian. In fact, this was either a misinterpretation or a cover-up story as Johann Stricker had to escape from his country because of a duel. Or at least, this was his

story. It is clear, however, that there were differences between Johann and his three brothers who like their father and grandfather all studied law at the University of Leuven: Bernardus started in 1691, Joannes Theodorus in June 1700, and Franciscus Augustus in August 1705 [5]. Apparently, Johann was the only son not registered at the university; he may have chosen a more practical education. Of course, he may have been in a duel before reaching the age of enrollment in Leuven; it would then have happened around 1687 and before the Nine Years' War. But this is unlikely because he would have been younger than 17 years of age. Moreover, if he escaped by applying for service as a Danish mercenary, this must have occurred after 1692. Although the hostilities in the Spanish Netherlands started in 1688/1689, the Danish Auxiliary Corps arrived in the Spanish Netherlands only in February 1692 after an earlier campaign with William III in Ireland [6]. Part of the Danish Auxiliary Corps was located in Ghent, part in Brussels [7]. Campaigns around Namur, Huy, and Neerwinden were lost by the army of William III (of which 5-10% were Danes), but later Huy and Namur were retaken. In 1694 and 1695, there was fierce fighting in the areas around Brussels and a large part of the city was destroyed in 1695. At the end of hostilities in 1697, the Danish Auxiliary Corps returned to Denmark. Probably, Johan de Stucker/Johann Stricker came into Rendsburg with these returning troops.

Alexander's grandfather Franciscus Josephus de Stucker came from Brussels where he was a lawyer and investigating magistrate at the Council of Brabant. He was born on 21 August 1641 in Roermond and was seven years old when the Treaties of Westphalia and Münster were signed in 1648. His father Johan Baptista, great-grandfather of Alexander, was councillor at the Spanish part of the Court of Gelre in Roermond [8]. In 1669, Franciscus Josephus married Maria Francisca Daneels with whom he had 8 children. Of these, Johann Stricker [born in 1670 as Johannes Franciscus Josephus de Stucker] was the eldest child.

The father of Johann, Franciscus Josephus studied in Leuven (starting in January 1658 [5]). In 1663, he worked at the Court of Gelre. He tried to be appointed as a councillor there as a successor to his father who had died in 1663, but he did not succeed. He tried this again in 1665-1667, but once more without success. An appointment as a councillor with the Court of Flanders was likewise unsuccessful. As of 7 October 1664, he was living in Brusssels and was affiliated as lawyer to the sovereign Council of Brabant. He was also "conseiller en assesseur du prévot de l'hotel du roi et du drossart de Brabant" (Raedt Assesseur) until his death in 1707. His name is mentioned in "Histoire des Avocats au Souverain Conseil de Brabant II" [9]. He came into conflict in 1692 with the Attorney-General because he was carrying a sword in the city:

"*En 1692, monsieur de Stucker recut du procureur-général une sommation de payer l'amende de 50 florins prévue à l'ordonnance de 1685: il avait rencontré au moment qu'il se pavanait l'épée d'argent à la ceinture. L'avocat se défendit vigoureusement: il était assesseur du prévot de l'hotel chargé purement criminelle; comme telle il devait être à toute heure pret à monter à cheval pour accompagner les maréchaux dans leurs chevauchées. L'office de prévot est d'origine francaise: les Ducs de Bourgogne l'ont transplanté dans nos provinces, or, en France, le conseiller assesseur porte l'épée. Un avocat francais, plaident pour l'assesseur de la maréchaussée de Genlis, s'est un jour exprimé ainsi:* "*Il se sert des armes aussi bien que de la plume et fait connaitre à tout le pays qu'il n'a moins de courage que de l'esprit*". *Cependent*

ajouta monsieur de Stucker, dans l'exercise de la profession d'avocat, la besoin sera, il se conformera exactement aux ordonnances de la Cour. Au surplus, en sa qualité d'assesseur pareille à celle des auditeurs militaires et plus éminente que celle d'avocat il n'est pas soumis à la judicature du conseil" *[9].*

In short, Alexander's grandfather had accompanied the municipal police as an investigating magistrate. To this end, he carried a sword, which was strictly forbidden within the city walls. This made sense as at that time a war was going on. The Nine Years' War [1688-1697] brought much turmoil and military activities to the Spanish Netherlands, and only three years later, the Duke of Villeroi bombed the city and set it on fire. Franciscus Johannes vigorously defended himself by stating that he needed it for his function, partly going back to old Burgundian legislation. To his defense was stated that 'he was as capable with the word as with the sword'. Apparently, not only the dueling Johann Stricker but also his father seem to have been hot-tempered characters. But these were not the only cases of violence in this family, as Bernard Josephus, a younger brother of Johann, had been sentenced because he attacked a respectable citizen from behind for a minor reason and left the man lying on the ground, soaking in his blood [9].

Of course, this was all completely unknown to Johann's only surviving son Alexander. As he was 1-2 years old when his father died, the limited knowledge the boy had about his father must have come from his mother, grandparents Vent, and uncles.

The grandparents from his mother's side had a completely different background. Grandfather Alexander Vent was born in Rendsburg on 11 October 1640 where his father Joachim was a carpenter. He was educated in the same profession by his father, after which he spent some years in the atelier of a colleague of his father. Around 1659, he made a – more or less obligatory – study trip ('Grand Tour') of 3 years after which there was a two-year apprentice period with a master carpenter. After this, he had to successfully pass the 'master test'. Rapidly thereafter, the trainee had to marry before he could become a master carpenter himself. Indeed, Alexander Vent married Sunncke Benn on 16 October 1664, the year in which he ended his formal learning.

Since that time, his role in the city grew. Apart from being a senior master carpenter since 1682 [10] (which played an important role in the teaching and education of young pupils), he participated in the governance of the municipality of Rendsburg. In that period, he produced several chairs for the church that were usually ordered by the few citizens who could afford to buy their own church seat [10]. The huge enlargement of the city during the years 1692-1697 must have been a tremendous economic stimulus for the people living there. Not only did it bring work to masons and carpenters, but the feeding of the increasing population probably brought trade and traders from abroad and some prosperity to its inhabitants.

However, there were some local conflicts because the Danish king had allowed since 1692 that Jews could live and work in Rendsburg. Although this further stimulated the economy, it forced local traders to work together, and in 1701 the *Rendsburger Kramerkompagnie* was founded [1-3]. Alexander Vent was an important citizen of Rendsburg as he was one of the 16 *Deputierten* (a sort of city councillor) of Rendsburg [10]. With his wife Sunncke, Alexander had nine children,

born between 1665 and 1683: the three daughters Wibke, Engelke and Cathrina, and the six sons Hans, Jochim, Christian, Alexander, Claus, and Jürgen. Six of these children died, mostly young. Only Hans, Engelke, and Christian reached adulthood. Hans followed the professional career of his father. He too made a Grand Tour, a cultural aspect of that period in Europe which deserves a closer look.

Old Town hall of Rendsburg

The Grand Tour

Starting in the early 17th century, it became increasingly popular among noble families to send their young men on a so-called 'Kavaliers tour' or 'Grand Tour' through Europe. The idea was that this would expand and broaden their knowledge for which the basis was laid down in the Latin schools, and that it would bring them outside their comfort zone and force them to meet other people of high nobility, scientists, politicians, and military experts in gunnery, fortress building, strategy, and other important theoretical and practical abilities. Especially trips to France and Italy were popular in making it possible to learn the very important French language and become familiar with Italian culture. An example of such a 'Grand Tour' was the one undertaken by August Friedrich von Saksen, the later 'August der Starke', who made a journey of two years between May 1687 and April 1689. He travelled through France, Spain, Portugal, England, the Dutch Republic, Denmark, Sweden, and Austria, after which his father gave him the order to come back to Dresden. All this time, he was accompanied by many servants [11].

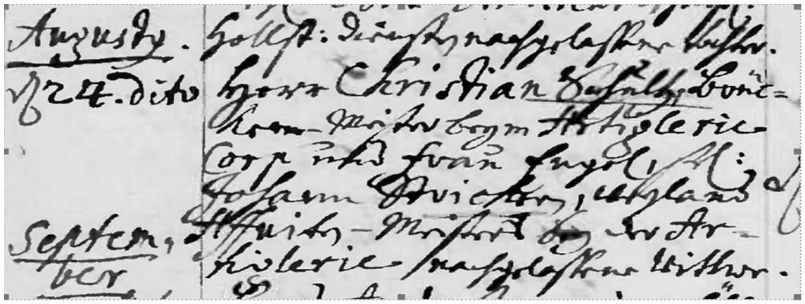
This practice made such tours very expensive. More and more during the century, such 'Grand Tours' were also made by the young men from rich families. But also at a lower level, such tours became important. For instance, as explained above, a 'master' title of craftmanship required an apprentice period within other workshops before the final test. Increasingly, also among such groups, a sort of 'Grand Tour' became a popular means of learning new techniques and styles. An example is the tour made by Alexander Vent's oldest son Hans, starting on 14 July 1688 [10]:

"Then, I departed, thanks to God's mercy, towards foreign territory. First, I went to Hamburg where I stayed until 12 July 1689. From there, I travelled to Lübeck and boarded from there a ship to Dantzig on 28 July where I arrived on 8 August. There, I stayed until 16 April 1690 after which I travelled to Königsberg where I stayed until 12 June, on which date I went back to Dantzig. From there, I travelled through Poland to Schlesien and arrived on 18 July 1690 in Breslau where I stayed until 28 June 1691. From there, I travelled to the kingdom Lignitz and came to work until 6 October 1693 with the organ builder Mathias Ulber where I learned how to build organs. From there, I travelled back through Breslau to the kingdom Brück and remained there until 20 February 1694. From there, I travelled through Neisse to Prague in Bohemia and remained there until 16 June 1694. From there, I travelled to Leipzig, and thereafter to the kingdom Mörseburg where I stayed until 2 March 1695. From there, I travelled to the county of Mansfeldt, in the city of Artern, and remained there until 2 December. From there, I returned to my fatherland. First to Erfurt, from there to Jall and Eisleben, subsequently also Magdeburg and Lüneburg, and arrived in Hamburg on 17 December. Thereafter, thanks to God's mercy, I arrived on 23 December 1695 in my birthplace Rendsburg in good health and well-being. For which I cannot praise the highest Lord enough. My journey lasted 7 years, 5 months, and 18 days."

The most important benefit of this trip was that Hans learned the art of building an organ of high quality, but apart from that, such a trip was very important for a young adult in teaching him to cope with other people and unexpected circumstances.

The surviving children Hans and Engelke had a brother Christian Vent. He was a general war commissioner in the duchy of Holstein-Gottorf. As Rendsburg was Danish, this position was politically complex because Holstein-Gottorf strived for constitutional autonomy with the help of Sweden; this status was temporarily attained after the Danish-Swedish War of 1657-1660 [12]. This political sensitivity, "the Gottorfer Frage", waxing and waning since the 15th century may have made life challenging in the society of that region.

For a long time, it was unknown how Johann Stricker earned a living during the short period between his arrival in Rendsburg and his death. But according to a note about the later marriage of his wife Engelke Vent with the military man Christian Schultz on 24 August 1719, Johann Stricker was 'Affuites-meister', a technical function in the Artillery with the responsibility to keep the undercarriages of the cannons up to standard. At that time, Rendsburg was a substantial military stronghold at the river Eider, bordering Schleswig and Holstein. As already alluded to in Chapter 1, after ending the Nine Years' War, the Dutch and Danish marshal Ferdinand William of



24 August 1719, Herr Christian Schultz, Brücken-meister beym Artilleriecorps und Frau Engel V: Johann Strickers, weyland Affuites-Meister bey der Artillerie nachgelassen Wittwe

Württemberg returned to Denmark [6,13]. The troops of the Danish Auxiliary Corps returned to Denmark via Bocholt, Gronau, Bentheim, and Delmenhorst and were allocated to the large Danish fortresses in Copenhagen and Rendsburg in January 1698 [7]. Consequently, Johann, who came from Brussels, probably returned with these troops as affuite meister. An important development in the Nine Years' War was the increasing use of movable heavy siege and lighter field artillery [16]. Thus, there was a need for carpenters and other craftsmen to construct undercarriages and repair transport wagons for the heavy guns. During one campaign, the transport of 100 cannons, 20 big mortars, and several smaller guns required 5,000 carriages and 40,000 soldiers for escort [16]. But the supply train used thousands of carriages that all had to be kept in good repair. The commander of Rendsburg von Schnitter in 1701 had been general quartermaster of the Danish Auxiliary Corps in the Spanish Netherlands [4]. Here, he needed craftsmen too as the Rendsburg fortress had 157 cannons and more than 1,000 supply carriages. As the number of returning soldiers was large, they had to be billeted in the houses of Rendsburg citizens who received around 1 Skilling per day for a billeted soldier [17]. In this way, Johann Stricker may have added to the finances of the family Vent although his yearly wage of 68 rigsdalers was modest. A lieutenant-general earned 3,000 rigsdalers per year; the incomes of members of the Danish Artillery Corps are given below.

Income per year of Danish Artillery personnel in 1699 [17]	
Lieutenant-colonel	433 rigsdalers and 42 skillings
Major, captain-engineer	353 rigsdalers and 57 skillings
Captain	250 rigsdalers and 90 skillings
1st Lieutenant	159 rigsdalers and 66 skillings
2nd Lieutenant, Ensign	136 rigsdalers and 84 skillings
Pyrotechnician	79 rigsdalers and 81 skillings
Craftsman master	68 rigsdalers and 42 skillings

Junior craftsman	45 rigsdalers and 60 killings

At that time, one rigsdaler was composed of 6 marks of 16 Skillings each. For context, one pound of veal cost 8 skillings, and one pound of lamb or pork some 5 skillings each [17]. In comparison to the salary earned by a farm worker or house servant, up to 10 rigsdalers per year, the income was respectable.

Alexander Stricker grew up in Rendsburg with his mother Engelke after his father and younger brother died in 1702. It is unclear whether his widowed mother worked to make a living or was financially supported by her father Alexander Vent and/or other relatives. As a 'master cabinet maker/carpenter' and one of the councillors of Rendsburg, he may have earned a satisfactory income in times during which the economy was flourishing. The years between 1695 and 1700 appear to have been boom times, judging by the huge expansion of the city and the fortress.

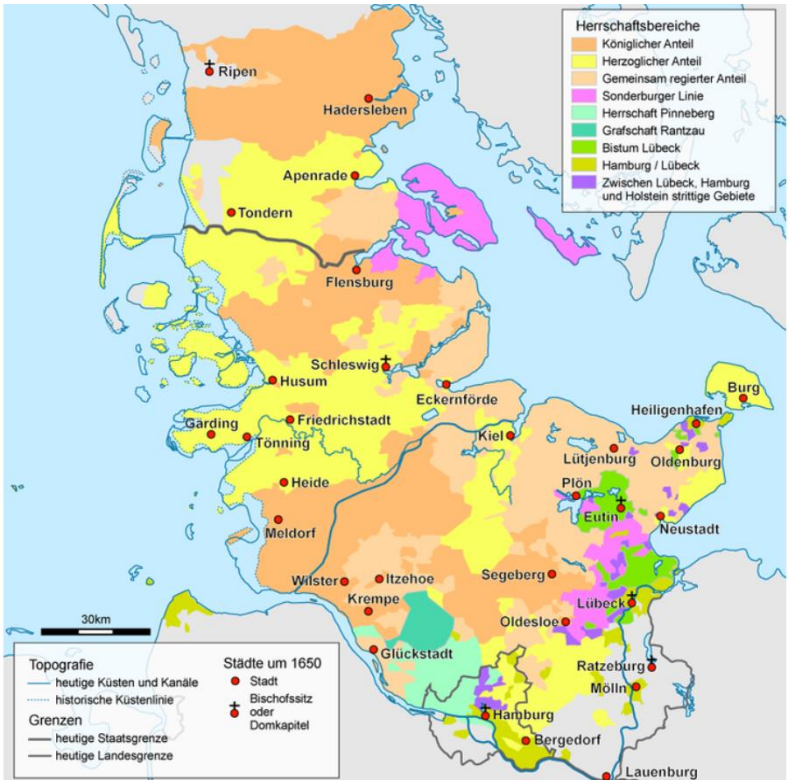
But in 1700, the Great Northern War started after a coalition by Frederick IV of Denmark, August II the Strong of Saxony-Poland-Lithunia, and Tsar Peter I of Russia took up arms against the young Swedish King Charles XII. In fact, an important reason for Denmark to participate were the aggravated conflicts with Holstein-Gottorf. These conflicts had been lingering on for a very long time, but due to the succession after the death of the more cautious duke Christian Albert, the tensions were intensified. His vigorous and energetic son Frederick IV of Holstein-Gottorf reinforced his fortresses and other defences. Early in the Great Northern War, the Danish army besieged the fortress of Tönning but was not able to take it because of a Swedish invasion around Copenhagen supported by naval coverage by Britain and the Dutch Republic. By August 1700, the Danes were forced to sign the Treaty of Traventhal and to leave the anti-Swedish coalition.

However, at the battle of Poltava in 1709, the young Swedish King Christian XII was defeated and had to escape with a small remnant of his army to the Ottoman empire where he was taken prisoner and kept in Istanbul. In 1714, he managed to escape and rode back on a horse within two weeks to Stralsund in Swedish Pomerania. After 1709, Denmark and Saxony rejoined the anti-Swedish coalition, but it took until 1720 to end the war with the killing of Christian XII in 1718 and defeat of the Swedish empire. Johann's son Alexander joined the army in 1719 [14,15], but he probably did not participate in the battles against the Swedes in Pomerania. His stepfather Schultz, an artillery captain lost 'beyde Aarschbacken' (his bottom) during the retaking of Stralsund by Sweden in 1715.

The 'Gottorfer Frage'

An important source of conflict in Northern Europe at that time was the so-called Gottorf question. Originally, around the 9th century, Canute the Great and Charles the Great had accepted the Eider river as the boundary between Denmark and the Holy Roman Empire. Consequently,

Schleswig was a fief of the Danish Crown, and Holstein a fief of the Holy Roman Empire. In practice, it meant that the Danish king ruled over Schleswig and Holstein as two duchies of which one as a formal part of the Holy Roman Empire. To guarantee unity, the Treaty of Ribe of 1460 stated that the two duchies should always remain united [12]. When Frederick I of Denmark died in 1533, however, the duchies were split into parts for his descendant sons, one of whom became king of Denmark. In the end, around 1650, the duchies were haphazardly split into a complex pattern of areas that were either ruled by the Danish king or by his relative the duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorf.



As can be understood from the depiction, the geographical dislocation was a challenge, especially due to the economic and cultural development. Despite being fiefs of the German emperor and Danish king, the dukes strived towards being sovereign. The German emperor showed little interest, but the area still caused political conflicts with Denmark, especially when members from the house of Gottorf married members from the Swedish royal family. As Sweden was very powerful at that time, this enabled the independence of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorf during 1657-1660 after one of the Danish-Swedish wars, but at the same time, it was a dangerous balancing act. After Sweden lost the Great Northern War in 1721, the independent position of the Gottorf dukes declined with Sweden's loss of power, and several of their portions of the duchies were taken over by Denmark against their will, notably the ones in Schleswig [12]. The political problems with Denmark remained and peaked in 1762 when Karl Peter Ulrich

von Holstein-Gottorf was crowned as tsar of the then great power Russia. Because he was a great admirer of Frederick the Great of Prussia, he suddenly ended hostilities with Prussia in the Seven Years' War [1756-1763] and planned an assault on Denmark together with Sweden. However, in June 1762, he was forced to abdicate and died under mysterious circumstances. His wife, Catherine the Great, had no interest in a war with Denmark, nor in the small remnants of the duchies, and in 1773, she relinquished her properties, after which Denmark attained sovereignty over Schleswig-Holstein while Holstein remained a German fief. This would not be the end of all troubles, however, as would become clear 75 years later in 1848.

References

1. Saxo Grammaticus, Gesta Danorum. Eds. J. Olrik and H. Raeder. Bd. 1. Copenhagen, 1931. Volume IV, 3, 8. See also Hoop, Geschichte Rendsburgs, p.. 19.
2. "Instante igitur aestate, Canutus rex contra Adolphum exercitum persuxit ad Egdoram in loco, qui Reinoldesburch dicitur". Arnold von Lübeck, Chronica Slavorum. Ed. Lappenberg XXI, VI, 11. See also Hoop, Geschichte Rendsburgs, p. 31.
3. Edward Hoop, Geschichte Rendsburgs, pp. 46-48.
4. Schröder F. Rendsburg als Festung. Karl Wacholtzer Verlag, Neumünster, 1939.
5. Reusens E, Wils J, Schillings A. Matricule de l'Université de Louvain, Vol 1-10. Brussels, 1903-1980.
6. Torntoft P. William III and Denmark-Norway. The English Historical Review 1966;81 [no 318]:11-25.
7. Jahn JHF. Det danske Auxilliaircorps i engelsk Tjeneste. Berlingske Bogtrykkeri, Copenhagen, 1840.
8. Keverling Buisman F. Procesgids van het Hof van Gelre en Zutphen. Uitgeverij Verloren, Hilversum, 2022.
9. Nauwelaers J. Histoire des Advocats au Souverain Conseil de Brabant II. 1947;67, no. 476.
10. Thomsen F. Die familie Vent in Schleswig-Holstein in drei Jahrhunderten. Heimatkundliches Jahrbuch für den Kreis Rendsburg, pp. 70-85, 1970.
11. Czok K. August der Starke und Kursachsen. Koehler & Amelang, Leipzig, 1988.
12. Lange U. Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins. Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart. Wachholtz Verlag, 2003.
13. Anonymous. Nouvelles extraordinaires de divers endroits, 29 September 1699.
14. Nobel O. Slægtsbogsoptegnelser vedrørende Familierne Stricker og Kaalund. Personalhistorisk Tidsskrift 1912; pp.121-128.
15. Hirsch JCW, Hirsch K. Fortegnelse over danske og norske officerer (Officielt), Fortegnelse over danske og norske officerer med flere fra 1648-1814 samlet og udarbejdet fra 1888-1907 af oberstløjtnant J.C.W. Hirsch og premierløjtnant Kay Hirsch. Rigsarkivet, København.
16. Hoffenaar J, van Hoof J, de Moor J. Vuur in beweging, 325 jaar veldartillerie 1677-2002. Institute of Military History of the Royal Dutch Army, the Hague, 2002.

17. Harbou HW, Tuxen AP, With CL. Den store Nordiske Krigs Historie, Part I. Det Nordiske Forlag, Copenhagen, 1899.

CHAPTER 5

Denmark and the Great Northern War

After Sweden left the Union of Kalmar in 1523, many wars between Denmark and Sweden were fought for hegemony in the Baltic area. Obviously, countries like Russia, Poland, and later Brandenburg/Prussia were often directly involved. Although still a prominent nation around 1523, Denmark-Norway gradually lost power and influence to Sweden, the winner in most of these conflicts. Especially after Denmark lost the counties in southern Sweden after the war of 1657-1660, its power declined despite the fact that it made several efforts during later conflicts to regain lost territory [1]. However, its military power was limited on a European scale.

Size of armies around 1710

State	*Population size [millions]*	*Size of army [thousands]*
Denmark-Norway	1.3	53
Sweden	1.1	100
Brandenburg-Prussia	0.5	40
Poland-Lithuania	11	100
Russia	15	170
England	4.7	87
Dutch Republic	1.5	120
France	18	360
Austria-Hungary	8	120
Spain	7	50
Ottoman Empire	18	50 [janissaries only]

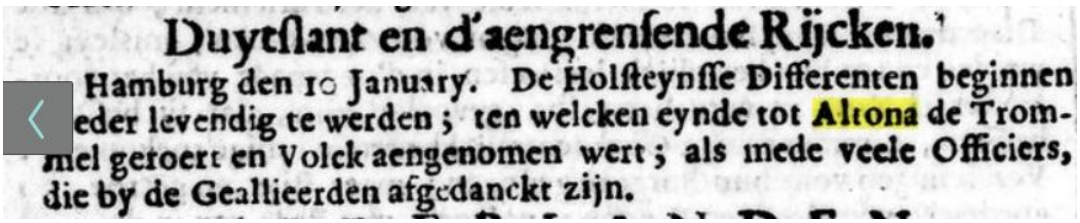
As noted in the previous chapter, there was a recurring source of political tension on a smaller scale. Although the border between Schleswig and Holstein was originally scarcely populated, the counts of Schauenburg were able to increase their influence in German Holstein but also in Danish Schleswig during the Middle Ages. At a time when there were no further descendants, the possessions went to the house of Oldenburg. Since the proclamation of Ribe in 1460, the descendants of the house of Oldenburg not only included the later Danish Christian I but also other members inherited parts of the twin duchies Schleswig and Holstein. As Holstein was a part of the Holy Roman Empire, the Danish king was subordinate to the German emperor while being at the same time, as duke of Schleswig, subordinate to himself as king of Denmark. While his cousins inherited other parts, this source of conflict lingered on for centuries [1]. The

patchwork of rights and responsibilities between the later Danish kings and the house of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorf was complex … often too complex.

In these conflicts, Denmark was usually the stronger, but with support from the increasing power of Sweden, the duchy became independent after the Copenhagen settlement in May 1658 [1]. A new conflict arose in 1667 with the death of Count Anton Günther von Oldenburg und Delmenhorst [2]. His property was inherited by both the Danish king and Duke Christian Albert of Holstein-Gottorf. However, the Duke of Holstein-Plön, another distant family member, claimed the legal rights, and this was indeed confirmed by the highest court of the Holy Roman Empire in Frankfurt. As this decision was likely to trigger another military conflict, the Duke of Holstein-Plön wisely sold this entitlement to the strongest party, Denmark, but the animosity and quarreling remained for decades until the Great Northern War. How conflicts were handled was influenced to a significant extent by the characters of the Danish kings and dukes of Holstein-Gottorf and by their ability to get along with each other. But the influence of their advisers had an impact as well.

These factors proved to be a problem when in 1695 Frederick IV of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorf became duke after his father Christian Albrecht had died. While his father had strived for sovereignty from Denmark through diplomatic means, young Frederick IV took a more hot-tempered approach. This was not completely unexpected because Denmark had invaded the duchy twice during his youth, and the family had to escape to Hamburg. However, there was no longer a need for an offensive approach because after the treaty of Altona in 1689, Denmark was forced to return all possessions to the duke and restore the sovereignty of the duchy [1]. Nevertheless, the young duke set about reinforcing the defenses of the duchy.

However, the conflict was aggravated when his cousin Frederick IV of Denmark became king in 1699. As the Nine Years' War had ended in 1697, many mercenaries returned to their homelands. These included soldiers from Denmark and Holstein but also military professionals from other countries. They were the subject of warm interest [3].


Duytſlant en d'aengrenſende Rijcken.

Hamburg den 10 January. De Holſteynſſe Differenten beginnen eder levendig te werden; ten welcken eynde tot Altona de Trom-mel geroert en Volck aengenomen wert; als mede veele Officiers, die by de Geallieerden afgedanckt zijn.

"Germany and bordering states. Hamburg, 10 January 1698. The 'Holstein differences' are reawakening. Drums are rolling up to Altona and soldiers are hired along with many officers who were fired by the Allied forces." [3]

Thus, tensions mounted during 1697-1700. The situation was made more dire by the fact that Frederick IV of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorf, who was married to the oldest sister of the new Swedish King Charles XII, asked his still powerful ally for support. He received it in the form of a contingent of Swedish soldiers for the reinforcement of the fortified city of Tönning. The so-called 'Holstein differences' were summarized with their long history in one of the large European journals [4]. In summary, the Treaty of Altona left some problems unresolved, and the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorf distrusted Denmark and questioned its compliance with the treaty. Within months this led to hostilities with Denmark and the outbreak of the Great Northern War in March 1700.

The Great Northern War

The Great Northern War (1700-1721) was a conflict in which a coalition led by Russia successfully contested the supremacy of the Swedish empire in Europe. The initial leaders of the anti-Swedish alliance were Peter I of Russia, Frederick IV of Denmark-Norway, and August II the Strong of Saxony-Poland-Lithuania. They expected that it would be easy to win because Charles XII of Sweden was a very young king at only 17 years of age.

The campaign of March-August 1700 and the first siege of Tönning

The Great Northern War started in the beginning of March 1700 when the king of Saxony, August II, invaded Livonia and captured Dünamunde, after which he continued with a siege of Riga. As soon as the Danish king Frederick IV was informed, he ordered Duke Ferdinand of Württemberg to start hostilities against Holstein-Gottorf. After some delay, the few parts of Holstein that were not already Danish were occupied, notably the Schleswig and Gottorf castles. Württemberg feared the reaction of Hanover, Sweden, and Celle and warned the king that the Danish redoubts bordering Lauenburg would not keep an enemy out. Therefore, he asked permission for a quick assault on the Gottorf redoubts and the taking of the fortress of Tönning.

On 6 April, two armies of a total of some 12,000 men left Rendsburg. A large part of these armies was composed of the Auxiliary Corps; it had experience at war. One under general Fuchs went to the village of Gross Rheide, the other one under Württemberg to the town of Treia. [5]. From there, Württemberg and Fuchs took Friedrichstadt and Husum in a couple of days after heavy fighting. Only by offering 1 ducat per unharmed prisoner were the generals able to prevent plundering and atrocities in the city by their soldiers. After taking Husum, the road to Ejderstedt and Tönning was open. On 21 April, the assault on Tönning started. The city was well fortified. There were some 3,100 soldiers to defend the city using 120 cannons and mortars. There was enough food and ammunition. From the sea, Danish frigates blocked the Eider river. Because the Danish government lacked financial resources, the city had to be taken as soon as possible.

As the city was too strong for a direct assault while a long siege was unwanted, Württemberg decided to perform a bombardment. The first days, the Danes did not bother too much about the light cannon fire from the city; they waited for their heavy artillery from Rendsburg to be installed. On 25 April, the duke opened the bombardment with 22 mortars and 14 heavy cannons.

Although the gunfire was responded to by the defenders, it caused severe damage after several days of continuous firing. On 2 and 3 May, shooting decreased; it stopped on 4 May. “In total, I have fired 4,000 cannon balls on the fortress”, the Duke of Württemberg wrote on 7 May to the Duke of Holstein-Plön; *“the fire balls caused no damage as the fires were rapidly extinguished. The city is well armed. They fired vigorously at us, the first day more than 1,200 shots of which many of high caliber. In total, we had 6 killed, among whom a lieutenant, and 15 wounded. They did not try a sortie to push us back.”* In other words, the bombardment was without results, and the resistance of the fortress was not weakened. During the subsequent days, it was decided to break into the city via the western part of the fortifications. With the creation of trenches, the Danes worked at undermining the west walls, redoubts and crownwork. While they made progress during these weeks, and were able to counter sorties from the fortress, on 1 June the message came in that Swedish and Lüneburg soldiers had invaded the southern parts of Holstein. Consequently, the siege had to end immediately to make it possible to counter this invasion.

The expectation was that the young and inexperienced King Charles XII would be an easy victim, but unexpectedly, he immediately reacted to the military threats of the alliance of Denmark, Saxony-Poland, and Russia. Charles XII decided to concentrate first on Denmark. He reacted swiftly with a landing of Swedish troops around Copenhagen on the Danish main island Zealand in July 1700. Here, he was supported by a fleet squadron of the maritime powers Britain and the Dutch Republic. In a way, this may be surprising because marshal von Württemberg had good connections with William III, and Danish soldiers had supported him in the past. But Holstein, too, had supported William III, and the Duke of Holstein-Plön had been first marshal of William’s army in the Spanish Netherlands. The most important reason for supporting the Swedish attack was that William knew a new war with France was imminent, and he did not want another military conflict up north [6]. Under pressure by the maritime powers and the defeat of the Danes around Copenhagen, the siege was ended, and Denmark left the coalition with Saxony-Poland and Russia in August 1700 with the Treaty of Traventhal [1,5].

The sieges of Stralsund and Tönning

After the defeat of Denmark, Charles victoriously attacked the Russians at Narva in November 1700 during a snow storm [5]. Thereafter, he attacked Poland and Saxony in Livonia and forced August II to retreat into Poland. Several proposals for peace by Poland were rejected by Charles XII. The difference between the two kings was large. While Charles XII was a sober and religious king, August II lived luxuriously and was a passionate womanizer. Determined to depose him, a stubborn Charles spent six years fighting him, despite several warnings by his advisors about the imminent Russian danger at his back. In 1706, after invading Saxony via Poland, Charles XII forced August II to relinquish his Polish crown and to break his Russian alliance in the Treaty of Altranstädt [2]. Charles, now 24 years old, had forced all of his foes into submission; that year saw a decisively devastating victory by Swedish forces over a combined army of Saxony and Russia at the Battle of Fraustadt. Russia was now the sole remaining hostile power.

In 1708/1709, however, the Swedes attacked Russia but were defeated at Poltava in July 1709. Charles XII escaped, with the help of Cossacks with less than 1,000 troops, to the Ottoman

Empire. Here he managed to arrange a war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia, defeating Russia. In the end, a treaty put an end to the conflict. He remained in Bender until 1714 when the Ottomans tried to capture and imprison him. On horseback he rode through eastern Europe to Stralsund within two weeks.

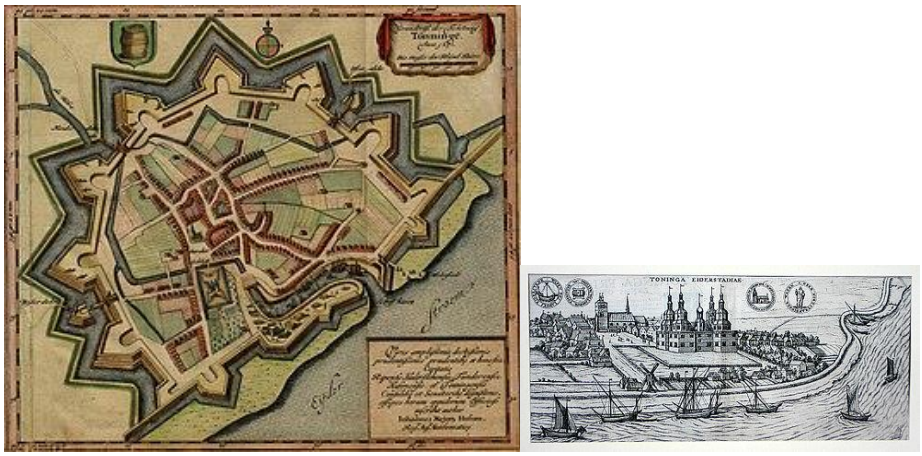
Denmark-Norway had been forced out of the Great Northern War by the Treaty of Traventhal in 1700, but had long planned on reopening hostilities with the goal of reconquering the lost provinces Scania, Halland, and Blekinge. After the Swedish defeat at Poltava in 1709, the Danes saw an opportunity and declared war on Sweden the same year. In late fall 1709, an enormous Danish fleet gathered in the Sound, and on November 2 it arrived at the village of Råå. The Danish invasion force consisted of 15,000 men. It was met with virtually no resistance from the Swedes. The Swedish army was in poor shape after Poltava, when several regiments had been completely annihilated. In the beginning of December, the Danes controlled almost all of central Scania, and the Danish army advanced quickly into Swedish territory. In January 1710, it defeated a smaller Swedish force in a skirmish outside Kristianstad. But in the subsequent battle of Helsingborg, they were defeated by the Swedish general Magnus Steinbock [7]. Hereafter, Denmark had to withdraw from Sweden again.

The other parties, Russia and Saxony-Poland-Lithuania, were more successful. Hanover and Prussia entered the alliance, hoping to get their share of the Swedish territories. In 1710, the Swedish army in Poland retreated to Swedish Pomerania, pursued by the coalition of Russia and Saxony-Poland. With the exception of Pomerania, Sweden had lost most territories outside the country itself.

Second part of the Great Northern War in the north of Germany

In 1711, Stralsund in Swedish Pomerania was besieged for the first time in the Great Northern War. Yet the town could not be taken due to the arrival of a Swedish relief army, led by general Magnus Stenbock. It secured the Pomeranian pocket before turning west to defeat an allied army in the Battle of Gadebusch [8]. While a Danish army moved into the region of Hamburg, a large Russian-Saxon force stood south of Stralsund. Stenbock could hardly attack this force with a frontal assault, but he hoped that by moving west towards Mecklenburg it could be encircled or scattered. Such a movement would also prevent the joining of the two allied forces. The Danish army came closer to the Russian-Saxon army and reached the little town of Gadebusch southwest of Wismar. At 1300 hours, the order to attack was given. While the artillery kept firing, the infantry marched towards the Danes, not firing until reaching a distance of twelve paces. A Danish cavalry counterattack was headed off by the infantry, supported by the constant artillery fire. To the north, the Swedish cavalry made a movement at the side and surprised the Danish cavalry on the Danish left wing. Meanwhile, heavy fighting was taking place on the Danish right wing where the elite of the Danish army, the royal guard, was positioned and supported by the bulk of the Saxon cavalry. But despite the numerical superiority of the allies, attacks by the Saxon cavalry were repelled. The two Danish guard regiments fought an intense battle with Swedish regiments. Eventually, the Danes lost the battle. After the battle, Stenbock went to Altona which was looted and set on fire [8].

But the roughly 16,000 men of Stenbock were no match for the coalition forces. The Russian and Saxon-Polish allies of Denmark sent 36,000 troops after Stenbock. Pursued by these coalition forces, Stenbock and his army were allowed by the minor duke Charles Frederick of Holstein-Gottorf to enter Tönning.

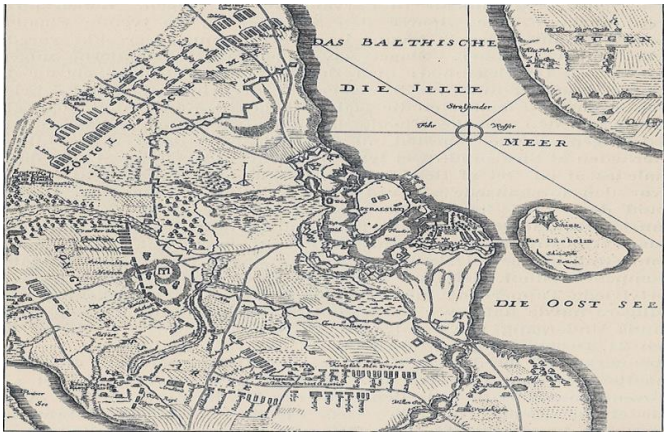


On the left the fortified city of Tönning in 1651; on the right an earlier bird's eye view of the settlement before fortification

He provided Stenbock with shelter and auxiliaries at his fortress of Tönning in anticipation of support by the maritime powers Britain and the Dutch Republic, expecting a recurrence of the help provided in July 1700. Yet, the maritime powers did not intervene, probably because the

concurrent War of the Spanish Succession [1701-1715] required their military focus. Quite soon, the trapped but still 9,000 strong force of Stenbock ran out of supplies. When the food situation deteriorated and 2,800 Swedes fell ill, Stenbock surrendered on 16 May 1713. The 1,600 strong Holstein garrison of the Tönning fortress held out until February 1714. Danish forces, per a royal occupation order of 13 March 1713, gained complete control over Holstein-Gottorf when the last Holsteiners loyal to Sweden were captured in 1715 [8].

In the meantime, Sweden's fortress of Stralsund was besieged in 1715 for the 4th time since 1711. On earlier occasions, the sieges had to be ended without taking the city. From 7 September 1711 up to January 1712, a combined army of Russia and Denmark had tried to take the city but in vain. The problem was not only that the fortifications were very modern and strong; the city could be resupplied with arms and food from the isle of Rügen which was still in Swedish hands while the Swedish fleet was abundantly present. After a second siege by Russia and Saxony from May until September 1712, and a third siege by Russia alone from June until October 1713, the fourth siege from July until December 1715 was successful. This time, the siege had great political impact because King Charles XII, who had spent some five years in Bender in the Ottoman Empire after the disastrous defeat at Poltava in 1709, was in Stralsund leading the defense. Although outnumbered by the joint forces of Prussia, Saxony, and Denmark, Stralsund did not give up, as might be expected from a fanatic warrior such as Charles XII.



Siege of Stralsund in 1715. To the left in the map are the Danish lines. During this siege, the stepfather of Alexander Stricker lost 'beyde Aarsbacken' (his bottom) after being hit by a cannon ball

But after attaining dominance at sea and occupying the island of Rügen, it was no longer possible to resupply the city. Daring sorties from the city headed by the king had some limited success but failed in the end due to a shortage of troops. Although he intended to lead the final defense himself, he was persuaded by his generals to escape to Sweden. Shortly before capitulation, the king managed to escape on 19 December in a small frigate from the frozen harbor after breaking the ice. During the night, he slipped through the Danish naval squadron

while being fired upon by cannons. He managed to escape to Sweden while Stralsund capitulated on 22 December 1715 [8].

After returning to Sweden, Charles XII initiated two campaigns in Norway, starting in February 1716, to force Denmark-Norway into a separate peace treaty. Furthermore, he attempted to halt Great Britain's access to the Baltic Sea. This resulted in a declaration of war on Sweden in 1717. The Norwegian campaigns were halted and the army withdrawn when Charles XII was shot dead while besieging the Norwegian fortress Frederiksten on 30 November 1718. It is still unclear whether it was an enemy shot or whether he was assassinated by one of his own men.

Skull of king Charles XII showing his head wound

The Great Northern War ended with the Treaty of Nystad in 1721. Sweden was impoverished and had lost almost all possessions outside Sweden with the exception of Finland (which was returned by Russia) and a piece of Swedish Pomerania. Bremen-Verden went to Hanover, and parts of Swedish Pomerania went to Brandenburg/Prussia. Denmark succeeded in taking Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorf with the exception of some minor parts.

Life in Rendsburg during the Great Northern War

As Rendsburg was among the most modern and strong fortresses of northern Europe, it was used to host large contingents of military troops. However, at that time, formal housing of armies was not a primary source of attention. Consequently, soldiers were commonly billeted in the houses of inhabitants of the city of Rendsburg. During the growth of Rendsburg since 1690, and especially after Danish troops returned in 1697 from the military theatres of the Nine Years' War, citizens increasingly hosted military personnel. Although there were some 20 barracks around 1700, this was not enough. [9]. The state delivered beds and 24 pounds of straw three times a year, but the citizens were obliged to deliver the bed clothes, covers, and towels for these barracks, apart from the same contribution to the soldiers they hosted in their homes. To accomplish this, they received an average reimbursement of 20 Lübeck schillings per month. However, this led to problems because the beds were not cleaned, and in 1715, a regulation stated that soldiers were not allowed to wear their boots in bed, burn holes in bed clothes, or cut towels [9]. As a result, several citizens had stopped their compliance with these obligations. On

the other hand, housing conditions were sometimes extremely poor. A summary of complaints was given by Schröder [9]:

'… a very dark house, moist and with a difficult to distinguish smell, so that anyone sleeping there complains about headaches.'

'… a bakery, with a basement below the house where the billeted soldiers reside, is so moist that water flows from the walls. In the middle is a well in which the pouring water is collected. If the well is not emptied every two days, the floor is inundated.'

'… this basement is so moist that they have to empty the floor each day from water.'

'… in the basement in the Main Street, when it storms and rains, they cannot protect themselves and their ammunition from smoke and rain.'

'… on the floor of the house where he is billeted, it rains, and water remains on the floor.'

'… basement is not only very dark and moist, but so low that a person cannot stand upright.'

'… A lack of light. Moreover, there is a space under the wall where the tanner prepares his leather skins, and when this is opened, people have to leave until the smell disappears …'

Although this stimulated further building of barracks, it was not enough to house the huge number of soldiers needing to be lodged. Billeting was so common and frequent that inhabitants built small lodges outside their house for the mandatory hosting of military personnel. An extra problem was that soldiers often brought their families along. For instance, a naval regiment with three companies of 95, 55, and 38 soldiers, respectively, were accompanied by 26, 7, and 15 women as well as 8, 8, and 15 children, respectively [9]. The large number of horses was another problem. Senior officers sometimes had more than 10 horses and, for instance, a lower ranked officer such as a captain of cavalry had 4 horses [9].

Rendsburg was forced in January 1713 to billet Russian and Saxony troops of the army that chased the Swedish army under marshal Magnus Stenbock. The city was completely unprepared when thousands of military men entered it in the expectation of receiving food and lodging. As the army was led by Peter the Great himself, refusal was not an option, and the huge parade square was full of soldiers in the bitter cold [9]. During the weeks thereafter, the Russians proved to be difficult and very demanding guests who stole from the locals and took their horses inside the houses if possible on several occasions. Luckily for the inhabitants, Magnus Stenbock surrendered in May 1713, after which the armies of Russia and Saxony returned home.

How was the situation in Rendsburg for the Vent family? The new fortifications were finished in 1700, but there were hardly any barracks ready for lodging soldiers. Johann Stricker probably came with the Danish corps; it had fought under Ferdinand William of Württemberg in 1697 in the Spanish Netherlands [10]. At that time, he was in his late twenties and served as 'affuites-meister'. Because there was no housing, he may have been billeted in the house of Alexander Vent in the Mühlenstrasse and may have fallen in love with the daughter Engelke. Or he may have met her after having business contact with the father because Stricker may have needed wood of high quality for his affuites, and Vent was a carpenter master and acquainted with the

local commodity resources in Rendsburg. As Johann was a witness at the birth of Hans Vent's first son early in 1700 [11], he must have had a close relationship with the family Vent. Because Alexander Stricker was born in December 1700, precisely nine months after the start of the Great Northern War, the conception may have happened on impulse because he was about to leave to join a military campaign. After all, the siege of Tönning in March 1700 will have required artillery for which Johann Stricker was partly responsible. Whether they were married is unknown, but the church register of the Christkirche in Rendsburg, in listing the marriage of Engelke Vendt to Christian Schulz on 24 August 1719, proves that she was the widow of Johann Stricker. This suggests that they were married, but no such registration could be found in the Maria church.

References

1. Lange U. Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins. Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart. Wachholtz Verlag, 2003.
2. Streckfuss A. Geschiedenis der wereld 1889; Nieuwe geschiedenis, derde deel. 2de druk Zwolle Tjeenk Willink.
3. Anonymous. Opregte Haarlemse Courant, 16 January 1698.
4. Editorial. Extraordinaire Haarlemse Donderdaegse Courant no 51; 16 May 1699.
5. Harbou HW, Tuxen AP, With CL. Den store Nordiske Krigs Historie, Part I. Det Nordiske Forlag, Copenhagen, 1899.
6. Torntoft P. William III and Denmark-Norway. The English Historical Review 1966;81 [no 318]:11-25.
7. Harbou HW, Tuxen AP, With CL. Den store Nordiske Krigs Historie, Part II. Det Nordiske Forlag, Copenhagen, 1899.
8. Harbou HW, Tuxen AP, With CL. Den store Nordiske Krigs Historie, Part III. Det Nordiske Forlag, Copenhagen, 1899.
9. Schröder F. Rendsburg als Festung. Karl Wacholtzer Verlag, Neumünster, 1939.
10. Jahn JHF. Det danske Auxilliaircorps i engelsk Tjeneste. Berlingske Bogtrykkeri, Copenhagen, 1840.
11. Thomsen F. Die familie Vent in Schleswig-Holstein in drei Jahrhunderten. Heimatkundliches Jahrbuch für den Kreis Rendsburg, pp. 70-85, 1970.

CHAPTER 6

The first interbellum [1721-1756]

After the end of the Great Northern War, Denmark entered a more stable political era. Although the former Swedish Scania was finally lost, its grip on Schleswig-Holstein increased, and Sweden was weakened. Although Denmark was no longer the powerful northern country that it was around 1600, a long period of peace followed, and it was not until 1788 that it was involved in a war again. But indirectly, it became involved in 1757 during the Seven Years' War because Danish officers such as the brothers Stricker were allowed by the king to apply for positions as volunteers in one of the active armies. There were no direct consequences for Denmark thanks to the diplomatic abilities of the minister of foreign affairs Johann Hartwig Ernst von Bernstorff. Therefore, the economy of Denmark could flourish for a long period until the wars with Great Britain during the Napoleonic period.

The period 1721-1800 was one of increasing population and prosperity in Schleswig-Holstein. Undoubtedly, this was at least to some extent explained by the fact that the 'Gottorfer Frage' was temporarily solved although there was a transient revival of the conflict in 1762 during the short reign of Peter von Holstein-Gottorf as emperor of Russia. Schleswig and the large majority of Holstein was now Danish. After Copenhagen, Altona, and Flensburg, Schleswig and Rendsburg were among the biggest cities of Denmark [1].

A nice 'snapshot' from an Englishman who made a Grand Tour through Europe and made several trips in all parts of the continent was published in 1756 [2]. One of these was a journey from Hamburg to Copenhagen:

"From Hamburg, a post-wagon sets out regularly on Mondays and Thursdays, at 1100 hours in the morning for Copenhagen. The fare for each passenger, in winter, is fifteen rigsdalers, in summer thirteen. There is also a post-wagon to Göteborg; the fare is five rigsdalers. The best currency for this journey is ducats, rigsdalers, and marks. The Hamburg money is current through the whole duchy of Holstein.

The road from Hamburg to Itzehoe, and from thence as far as Rendsburg, is through a charming country lined with villages and farmhouses, in a fertile soil, with fine cattle grazing on it. The peasants' houses are very neat, and surrounded with orchards, and they seem to live very happily. Leaving Hamburg, you come to Pinneberg, a small but agreeable village in Danish Holstein, and to the province of Stormarn, where the count of the Golden Lion has built a very pleasant estate. From thence, you proceed to Elmshorn, another village of Danish Holstein, belonging to the count of Rantzow. The next place you come to is Itzehoe. Itzehoe is a small but handsome town of Danish Holstein, situated on the little river Stör. It stands at the foot of a mountain that is defended by an old castle, and it has some trade by its river, which falls about seven miles below it into the Elbe. Between this place and Rendsburg, you pass through the

village of Hohenwestedt. Rendsburg, by others called Rheinholdsburg, is a town of Danish Holstein, situated on the river Eider. The town, though small, is well built, and reckoned one of the strongest in the country. It is divided by a bridge into the old and new towns. But the streets are narrow. The river Eider, surrounding it, forms two small lakes, one above and the other below it, abounding with fish. This river serves for a ditch to the town and is so wide as to render it inaccessible. Besides, it has good ramparts, with other fortifications in the modern way, lately much improved. This same river fills a small basin in the town, called 'the Port'. The river carries vessels of 50 tons, and after many twists it runs into the sea below Tönning. There is a particular church here for the service of the garrison. On one of the gates, close to which the Eider flows, the following inscription is engraved on stone: Eydera terminus sacri R. Imperii (the Eider ends the Holy Roman Empire). The principal trade of the inhabitants is brewing of beer, though they sell a great quantity of wood, and get money from passengers to and from Denmark. The neighbourhood abounds with corn and cattle. Between this town and Flensburg, there are marshes and heaths that are not easily passable."

How was living in Rendsburg, and what sort of life did Alexander Stricker and his family have?

When his father died, Alexander was only a young child, not even 2 years old. It is likely that his mother and he remained living with the grandparents Vent. As he was baptized in a Lutheran church, he was probably educated according to the religious principles of that time. Apparently, the fact that his father Johann came from a strongly Catholic family in Brussels did not play a role. Or maybe Johann had remained silent about this rather sensitive subject. Marriages between a Lutheran and a Catholic were formally allowed for Catholic soldiers if the child was baptized Lutheran [3]. It is unclear why Alexander made the choice of a military career but the fact that his father as well as his later stepfather Schultz had a military background may have played a role. Moreover, he lived in one of the most important fortresses of Denmark with numerous military activities all day, especially in the new expansion Rendsburg-Neuwerk with its parade square with barracks at the periphery, an arsenal, and other military buildings. Possibly, this aligned well with the vigorous and hot-tempered character he was described as having by later generations who had known him as a father and grandfather [4].

Most likely, his mother and he lived with her parents as they probably had a lack of financial resources since father Johann died in 1702. Her parents lived in Mühlenstrasse near the Marienkirche in the old part of the city. At that time, grandfather Alexander Vent was a respected master carpenter and citizen of Rendsburg. In 1708 and 1711, he is mentioned as one of the '16 Deputierten', a sort of city council of important citizens. Whether this means that he fared financially well is less certain because in 1698 he had taken out a high mortgage on his house [5]. After his death in 1716, his widow Sunncke had to take out an extra mortgage on the house in Mühlenstrasse and in 1718, it had to be transferred to the creditors. Afterwards, she was qualified as 'the poor widow' [5].

All in all, it looks as if the family was not in a very good position financially, and that may be the reason that in 1719 she married the pontoon master Schultz who probably had a handicap after his bottom was shot away in 1715 near Stralsund. It is likely that Alexander Stricker went to primary school, but it is unclear whether he also received secondary education. The military

academy was in Copenhagen, but he probably did not attend. Although the armies usually did not pay very well, military service could be a sort of 'job for life' with a secure income.

In June 1719, at the age of 18 years, he joined the artillery in Rendsburg where at that time the Danish king was duke of the part of Schleswig-Holstein that included Rendsburg. In 1727, Alexander married his niece Sophie Christine Vent while he studied mathematics at the university in Kiel [6]. Mathematics was a field of study often chosen by officers from technical units of the army such as the artillery. An artillery officer was not only supposed to know everything about the trajectory of projectiles but also know how to build a gun battery. However, he was not registered at the Christian-Albrechts University during the years that he lived in Kiel [7]. He likely took courses in artillery related mathematic techniques, a suitable education for an artillery officer at that time.

As the Great Northern War ended when he had been in active service for one year, he had probably not been involved in any campaigns. In Kiel, his niece and later wife Sophie Christine Vent was lady-in-waiting at the court of Holstein-Gottorf which had removed from Schleswig to Kiel after the Great Northern War. She was the daughter of Christian Vent, a war commissioner in the former duchy who was taken prisoner after the siege of Tönning in 1714. He married her in May 1727 [6]. In 1731, he became a non-commissioned officer (NCO) and pyrotechnician ('fireworker') in the artillery. At that time, the family lived in Rendsburg-Neuwerk [6] with its radiating street pattern centered by the parade square. Out of 17 pregnancies (!), only seven children were baptized and only four survived. There must have been financial reasons for delaying baptism to wait and see if the child survived the first couple of months. According to a family story, some children died before receiving a name [8], but three centuries later, it is very difficult to interpret the meaning of that. Maybe it was the inevitable consequence of a hard life with high infant mortality. Although Alexander was supposed to love his wife very much because he never remarried, one might question how he treated her. His wife died in 1744 at the age of 36 years during her 17th pregnancy; she must have been almost continuously pregnant during her marriage.

These paintings were photographed in the early 1860's by the famous Danish photographer Vilhelm Tillge. They were probably inherited by the granddaughter Anna Louise Gulstad [1774-1864] who was photographed by Tillge in the same period

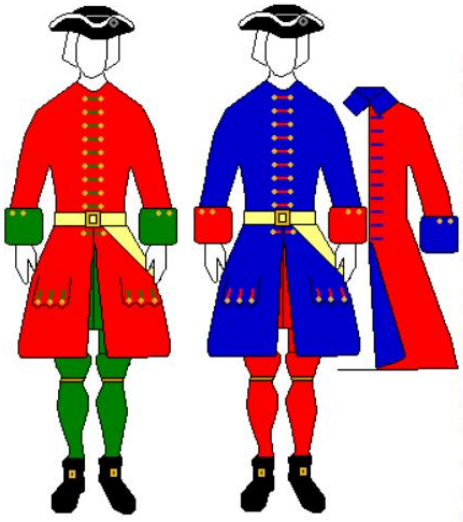
From what we know about Alexander, he might have had a difficult and easily angered character. In a letter to Louise Gulstad, a family member wrote that she should be happy with her nice grandfather rear-admiral Herbst, because her other grandfather (Alexander Stricker) was such a hot-tempered and combative type of man [4]. Indeed, he often wrote letters to the secretary of the Danish army to request promotion or to say that he felt passed over for a higher position. In July 1745, he wrote a letter to request a promotion to lieutenant and offered to pay 100 rigsdalers to the church. This might have been counter-productive as it was not until 1743, after 24 years in the Artillery, that he became 'stykjunker' (ensign) after years of being a 'feuerwercker' (pyrotechnician).

According to military records of 1741, he was classified as someone of average height but well-built, quick-witted, virtuous, and a quick learner with no more secondary education than 'Artillery Science'. Although the list consists of 'officers', the distinction between low-ranking officers and non-commissioned officers was not yet made at that time.

Danish Army in 1700

Although the kingdom of Denmark in 1700 was much larger than it is now, including Norway, Holstein, Greenland, and Iceland as well as some Caribbean and Indian colonies, it was not as powerful as countries like England, France, and Russia (especially France with its almost 20 million inhabitants). With its self-sufficiency and wealth, France was a continuously dangerous enemy within the European war theatre. Denmark was a country of modest prosperity, and the repeated conflicts with Sweden took a large toll. The fleet was relatively large and professional. The army numbered approximately 23,000 men, while a further 13,000 men were defending the

long border between Norway and Sweden [9]. (Norway had its own army.) Apart from enlisted soldiers, the different parts of the country delivered conscripts. As for the artillery, there were two Artillery Regiments, the Danish Artillery Regiment and the Holstein Artillery Regiment. The latter should not be confused with the Holstein artillery regiments of the independent parts of the Holstein-Gottorf duchy. The Danish Holstein Artillery Regiment in which Alexander Stricker served was composed of a staff, a fire company, an artisan company, six artillery companies in Holstein, and one in Oldenburg. Each of these artillery companies consisted of 61 men: a captain, a lieutenant, an ensign/cadet, three NCOs, two junior pyrotechnicians, two assistant miners, fourteen master gunners, thirty-six gun-handlers, and one drummer. In total, the Holstein Artillery Regiment had a strength of 462 officers and men. These numbers were much expanded during war. When the army was in the field, the guns attached to the infantry battalions were manned mostly by men withdrawn from the infantry, supported by one or two trained artillery men. The actual artillery companies manned the heavier cannons and mortars that formed the artillery reserve. In addition to the regular artillery companies, troops were attached to the various fortresses, predominantly 61 men for Rendsburg and 19 for Kronborg, but these numbers could be rapidly increased in case of a war [9]. The Holstein Artillery Regiment members wore a deep-blue coat, lined in red, with two rows of 11 buttons on the double-breasted coat. Leatherwork and belts were in natural buff.



Holstein Corps

Karsten Skjold Petersen has the following information:

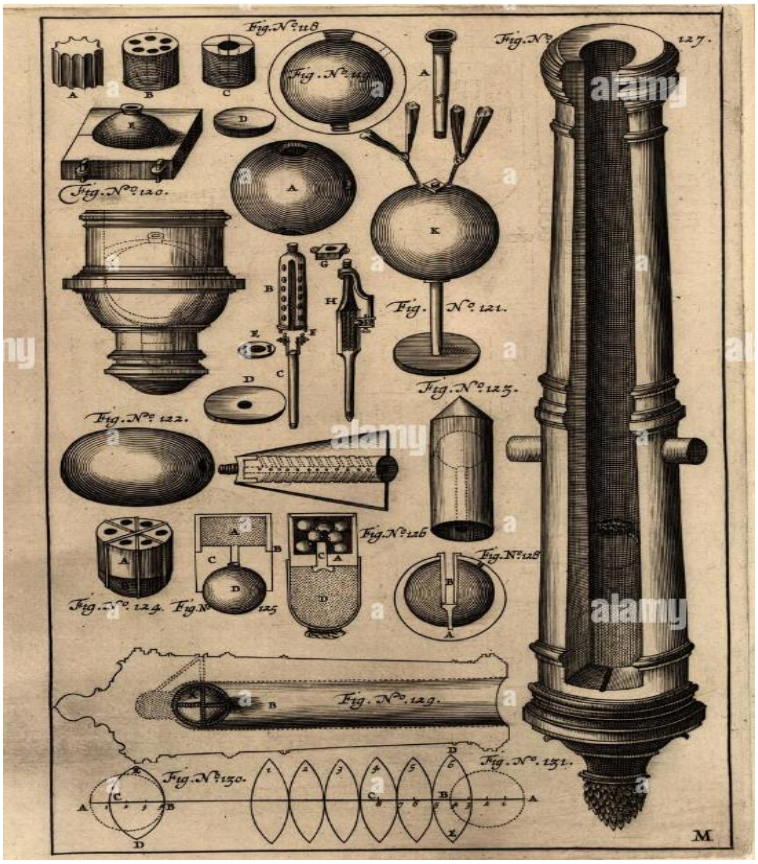
1684 Red coats with green facings, lining, breeches and stockings.
1701 Blue coat with red facings and stockings as well as a red raincoat with blue facings.
1709 Decision was made to have the same as the Danish artillery corps.

Höglund wrote that the Holstein corps had red coats with green facings and lining. This corresponds with the uniform regulation from 1691 which Snorrason described.

The drawing to the right was made by Worgewitz in 1728 and depicts a Danish artillery man. Note that the hat had yellow lace.

The guns were usually the regular smoothbore muzzle-loaded field guns. In the field, they were put on a wooden undercarriage with wheels while the cannons within the fortresses were often on a fixed affuit. Since the development of better steel and much stronger gun powder, the firing range and the weight of the cannon balls could be increased. However, the guns were still unrifled and therefore imprecise in their aim.

Mathematics was an important discipline at that time to help master the sometimes unpredictable movement of cannon balls. Probably, he studied the *Artis Magnae Artilleriae pars prima* by Kazimierz Siemienowicz, regarded as the most important standard work on artillery at that time [10]. This book was translated to German in 1676 and dealt with all important aspects of artillery, notably pyrotechnics and gun and projectile construction.



From Artis Magnae Artilleriae pars prima by Kazimierz Siemienowicz

In 1751, he was sentenced to 3 months imprisonment because he had travelled to Schleswig without permission and stealthily tried to enter the Rendsburg fortress [12]. He was also accused of criticizing the Artillery Commission, a claim he denied [13]. This led to a court case held in July 1752. According to a citizen of Rendsburg, he had discussed the commission with foreigners in a restaurant in Kropp, a village on the road between Rendsburg and the city of Schleswig. As the commission was secret, this was considered a serious offense. During his interrogation, he vigorously defended himself and stated that he did not say anything about the commission but that a lieutenant Demuth had done so. Demuth denied this, and a third person who was present

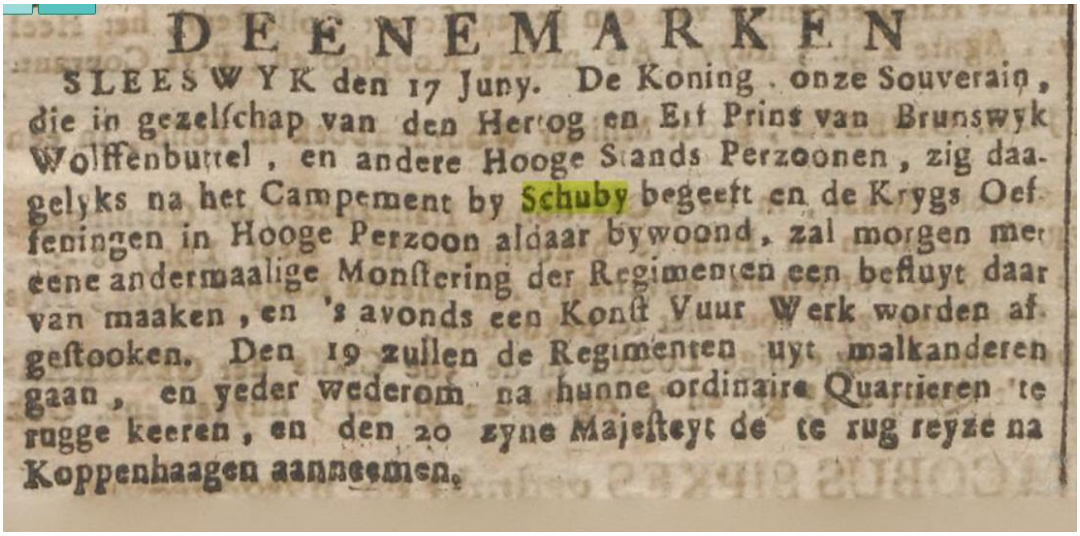
could not be interrogated because he was now in Dutch service. Consequently, a court decision was difficult, but Alexander was sentenced to prison from 7 August to 6 December 1751.

It is clear that this punishment made Alexander extremely angry, and he started to write letters in which he asked for all written reports of the process and the interrogations of all participants and witnesses [14]. The requests were denied, and therefore he subsequently complained in letters to the king because he found his sentence unjustified. In 1753, he was transferred to Oldenburg near Kiel. Early 1753, he complained to the king again about the false accusations and his transfer to Oldenburg in letters of January, March, and May [15-17]. Hereafter, the War Office replied that he should stop complaining and accept his transfer.

Despite all this, he was promoted to lieutenant in 1754 and received orders to build gun affuites in the fortress of Oldenburg [18]. In 1759, he came back to Rendsburg as a captain of artillery, after which he wrote several letters complaining that he had been passed over by others when applying for a company leadership despite his higher seniority, mathematical education, and poor economic circumstances [19]. In 1764, he was put in charge as captain of a company of craftsmen. He resigned as a major in 1781 at the age of 81 years [6]. It is remarkable how Alexander's career suddenly gained momentum. On the one hand he had to wait for 12 years before he was promoted to NCO, and he was still an ensign at the age of 50 years. Despite the 3 months of imprisonment in 1751, he progressed within 5 years to lieutenant and then to captain. Maybe his relationship with his new commander in Oldenburg worked out well.

During the years 1745 through 1749, his three sons were enrolled in the artillery as gunners, later as pyrotechnicians [6]. Johan Christian became ensign in 1751, and second lieutenant in 1756 [6]. He came into conflict with his company commander captain von Plessen because Johan Christian refused to marry his daughter despite making her pregnant [20]. The brother of the daughter, ensign von Plessen, challenged him to have a duel [21], but Johan Christian refused and defended himself with the argument that he was better able to serve the king as an officer while unmarried, that he would not be able to feed a family with his current payment but that he was willing to marry the mother of his child if he could take over the position of her father as a company commander [22]. Although he was the biological father of Otto Christian, born in 1754, he sent a request in 1755 to the War Office for serving in Norway [23], but this request was rejected. Overall, a father complaining about a lack of career perspective, and a son not complying with the usual rules, is not the best starting point for a military career. Nevertheless, the other 2 brothers performed well and the ambitious Carl Alexander wrote to the War Office with the request to act as an engineer [24].

A lucky step in his career occurred when the Danish king entered the retrenchment of Schuby on 20 June 1754 [6,25] and promoted him on the spot to 2nd lieutenant [6]. Together with his younger brother Ezechias, Carl Alexander travelled to France in 1757 where they joined the French



DEENEMARKEN

SLEESWYK den 17 Juny. De Koning, onze Souverain, die in gezelschap van den Hertog en Erf Prins van Brunswyk Wolffenbuttel, en andere Hooge Stands Perzoonen, zig daagelyks na het Campement by Schuby begeeft en de Krygs Oefeningen in Hooge Perzoon aldaar bywoond, zal morgen met eene andermaalige Monstering der Regimenten een besluyt daar van maaken, en 's avonds een Konst Vuur Werk worden afgestooken. Den 19 zullen de Regimenten uyt malkanderen gaan, en yeder wederom na hunne ordinaire Quartieren te rugge keeren, en den 20 zyne Majesteyt de te rug reyze na Koppenhaagen aannemen.

News of the visit of the Danish king to the entrenchment of Schuby near Schleswig [25]

army [6]. Such foreign military service usually boosts a career, especially during war. The Seven Years' War [1756-1763] was such a boost for the three sons of Alexander Stricker, making it possible for them to gain the war experience that was so badly needed in the Danish army.

References

1. Lange U. Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins. Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart. Wachholtz Verlag, 2003.
2. Nugent J. The Grand Tour. Or, a journey through the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and France. Browne London, 2nd edition 1756.
3. Colberg M. Personal communication. Erzbistum Hamburg, 2002.
4. Gulstad K. Erindringer om familien Gulstad. https://slaegtsbibliotek.dk
5. Thomsen F. Die familie Vent in Schleswig-Holstein in drei Jahrhunderten. Heimatkundliches Jahrbuch für den Kreis Rendsburg, pp. 70-85. 1970.
6. Nobel O. Slægtsbogsoptegnelser vedrørende Familierne Stricker og Kaalund. Personalhistorisk Tidsskrift 1912; pp.121-128.
7. Gundlach F. Das Album der Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel 1665-1865. Lipsius & Tischer Verlag, Kiel, 1915.
8. Thiim Stricker B. En kvindes liv i to verdensdele i første halvdel af 1800-tallet. Saxo, Denmark, 2018.
9. Sapherson CA. The Danish Army 1699-1715. Partizan Press, 1997.
10. Siemienowicz K. The great art of artillery. Jansson, Amsterdam, 1650.
11. Stricker A. Letter to the Danish War Office, 9 July 1745. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.

12. Court-martial Committee. Actum Rendsburg 26 July 1751. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
13. Stricker A. Letter to the Danish War Office, 26 March 1752. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
14. Stricker A. Letter to the Danish War Office, 26 February 1752. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
15. Stricker A. Letter to the Danish War Office, 24 January 1753. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
16. Stricker A. Letter to the Danish War Office, 18 March 1753. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
17. Stricker A. Letter to the Danish War Office, 26 May 1753. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
18. Danish War Office. Letter to A Stricker, 13 December 1755. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
19. Stricker A. Letter to the Danish War Office, 5 December 1759. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
20. von Plessen. Letter to the Danish War Office, 27 April 1757. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
21. Ensign von Plessen. Letter to the Danish War Office, 28 May 1757. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
22. Stricker JC. Letter to the Danish War Office, 5 May 1757. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
23. Stricker JC. Letter to the Danish War Office, 1 November 1755. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
24. Stricker CA. Letter to the Danish War Office, 3 July 1753. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
25. Anonymous. Opregte Groninger Courant, 25 June 1754.

CHAPTER 7

The Seven Years' War

Although this was sometimes said of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1715, a better candidate for the term 'first world war' is the Seven Years' War because fighting took place not only in Europe but also between France and Britain in India and North America [1-3,25]. It began as a conflict between Great Britain and France in 1754 when the British sought to expand into territory claimed by the French in North America. This war became known as the 'French and Indian War' [79], with the British and the French and their respective Native American allies fighting for control of territory.

At the same time, Prussia, a rising power having taken Silesia during the War of the Austrian Succession [1740-1748], struggled with Austria for dominance within and outside the Holy Roman Empire in central Europe. In 1756, the four greatest powers 'switched partners' so that Great Britain and Prussia were allied against France and Austria, later joined by Russia. Realizing that war was imminent, Prussia pre-emptively struck Saxony and quickly conquered it. The result caused uproar across Europe. Because of Austria's alliance with France to recapture Silesia, Prussia then formed an association with Britain.

Reluctantly, by following the Imperial Diet of the Holy Roman Empire which declared war on Prussia in January 1757, most of the states of the empire joined Austria's cause. The Anglo-Prussian alliance was joined by a few smaller German states within the empire (most notably the Electorate of Hanover but also Brunswick and Hesse-Kassel). The heaviest large-scale battles in the Seven Years' War took place in the German states bordering Prussia and Austria.

Europe at the start of the Seven Years' War [1756-1763]

Although Prussia with its relatively small but well-trained army won several important battles during 1757-1758, such as in Lobositz, Pirna, Rossbach, and Leuthen, several others were lost, especially during 1759-1760. Because King Frederick II's focus was against Austria, Russia was able to conquer the eastern part of Prussia with massive troops, but the army suffered in general from very poor logistics which halted its campaigns for many months. Despite its size, the French army was only occasionally successful but occupied Celle and Kassel, posing an increasing threat to Hanover. Very successful military movements by duke Frederick of Brunswick, however, kept it from taking significant parts of the German states, and it lost the great battle of Minden on 1 August 1759 to the Hanoverians.

France's interests were mainly the war with Britain on several continents. Hanover received funding from Britain but had hardly any British troops on its territory. After a large series of battles, especially Prussia and Austria were economically and militarily exhausted, but also France suffered. The war miraculously came to an end when the Russian empress died in January 1762 and was succeeded by Peter von Holstein-Gottorf (tsar Peter III), an admirer of Frederick the Great. He immediately stopped hostilities, gave back all conquered territory, and offered Frederick help by sending troops. Consequently, also France stepped out of the alliance against Prussia. On 15 February 1763, with the treaty of St. Hubertusberg, the Seven Years' War ended [1-3,25]. Only Britain gained from the Seven Years' War by attaining global hegemony. Within Europe, there was hardly any territorial gain for any of the warring states despite huge financial cost and loss of human resources. The only relative advantage for Prussia was that it kept Silesia and was now seen as one of the great powers. Austria had regained prestige after the poorly fought battles during 1740-1748.

The continental part of the Seven Years' War (in North America and India, war strategy and tactics were different) was fought as a so-called cabinet war in which disciplined regular armies were equipped and supplied by the state to conduct warfare on behalf of the sovereign's interests. Occupied enemy territories were regularly taxed and extorted for funds, but large-scale atrocities against civilian populations were rare compared with conflicts in the preceding century [80]. Military logistics was the decisive factor in many wars as armies had grown too large to support themselves on prolonged campaigns by foraging and plunder alone. Military supplies were stored in centralized facilities and distributed by baggage trains that were highly vulnerable to enemy raids. Armies were generally unable to sustain combat operations during winter and therefore established winter quarters in the cold season, resuming their campaigns with the return of spring.

The French interests and campaigns

The Seven Years' War was highly unpopular in France as the population never felt that the vital interest for the nation were involved [1]. Prussia fought for the most pressing of all motives, i.e. its survival [25]. Austria fought for revenge and the return of Silesia. England fought for its colonial expansion and vital maritime power. The gains for France were less clear. The usual aims of the preceding century, expansion of the northern and eastern frontiers, were not possible

now because of its alliance with the house of Habsburg. The integrity of the Austrian Netherlands had to be respected, and there was mostly modest interest in colonial expansion. Louis XV, great-grandson of Louis XIV, completely lacked his forefather's imperial ambitions and was generally seen as a weak monarch.

Although France – rich and self-supporting with the largest population of Europe – had a huge army, the country was a fortress of privilege and inequality with an enormous and cumbersome baggage of tradition. Its deep conservatism successfully resisted thorough reform [1]. The allies France, Austria, and Russia had almost no coordination between them. Apart from the fact that in this time period, sophisticated communication tools did not exist, the participants had completely different objectives. The main controversies were between France and Britain on a global scale, especially North America ('the French and Indian War') [79]. Added to that was the strong ambition of Austria to regain Silesia, lost after the War of the Austrian Succession.

In fact, the conflict between France and Britain had been ongoing since 1755 with the defeat of an expeditionary force from Virginia/Pennsylvania under major-general Edward Braddock while trying to take the French fort Duquesne [79]. Apparently, the well-organized European military tactics with armies in clearly recognizable uniforms did not work well in the wooded areas where a minority of French skirmishing colonists with the help of local Indian tribes caused great losses. These guerrilla-like ambushing techniques were actually a form of informal war. But shortly after the formal war declaration of 17 May 1756, the British had to give up the Mediterranean island of Minorca on 28 May, and on 29 August Prussia delivered a pre-emptive attack on Saxony [25]. Of course, there were also secondary ambitions. Russia, for instance, was interested in parts of the Baltic area and Poland. For Britain, keeping Hanover away from the French (but also from Prussia) was important for the British king who was also elector of Hanover.

Although France had a relatively limited interest in the European theatre, there was a desire to prevent Prussia from developing into a great power, and opposing the forces paid by Britain in Hanover was considered of political importance. Moreover, France felt responsible for Poland with which it had strong ties, and the alliance with Russia could prevent this country from taking parts of Poland. But there was not a great enthusiasm for the theatre in the western parts of Germany, and the vigor of the military activities was modest, to say the least. Although the French army was large, its quality was lower than in the early 18th and 19th centuries. The First Treaty of Versailles of 1 May 1756 stated that Austria would remain neutral in the event of an Anglo-French war and that France would not attack any of Austria's territory. Austria would not assist Great Britain in a colonial war. Another provision of the treaty stated that if either country were attacked, 24,000 troops from the other would be sent as aid. The idea was that if France attacked Hanover, then Prussia would attack France, thus allowing the Austrians to move into Silesia [3]. Britain was mainly interested in the colonial property of France in North America and its prosperous trade. Its relatively small army was kept away from the European theatre. Instead, it signed the Convention of Westminster according to which Prussia was subsidized by Britain to pay part of its war cost.

After Prussia's invasion of Saxony, France had to comply with the treaty to provide 24,000 troops to Austria. The intention was to gather an army of 50,000-100,000 men to take Hanover and the Prussian provinces Geldern and Wesel. The army was led by the French but included Austrian soldiers and soldiers from other German states. Prussia proposed Britain to defend Hanover with its 35,000 Hanoverian soldiers, supplemented with some 10,000 Prussian and 10,000 troops from Brunswick and Hesse-Kassel. This effort was largely paid by Britain.

In March 1757, the French army started to move. The estimated size was 100,000 French, Austrian, and German-allied men under the command of lieutenant-general Prince Soubise, after 27 April under marshal d'Estrées. This army crossed the river Rhine and approached Wesel. The joint forces of Hanover, Prussia, Brunswick, and Hesse-Kassel amounted to approximately 50,000 men but of these, a large Hanoverian corps still had to return from England. These troops were commanded by the Duke of Cumberland, son of king George II, with the order to protect the borders of Hanover but not to act aggressively ('observation army'). The British Parliament provided a subsidy of 200,000 pounds on 22 February 1757, followed by 1 million pounds in May [81]. The now larger French army was the consequence of the 2nd Treaty of Versailles which obliged France to field 105,000 men and subsidize 10,000 German allied troops. On 1 April 1757, the city of Kleve was occupied by Austrian troops, followed by Wesel on 8 April while the French took Moers [81]. On 29 April, Geldern was encircled. In the north, Embden and Bremen fell into the hands of the French army.

Carl Alexander and Ezechias Heinrich Stricker participated in the encirclement of Geldern from the beginning after their arrival in Metz in March 1757. It is not clear how the brothers Stricker travelled towards France when they left Rendsburg on 17 January 1757. By ship via Hamburg would probably be a convenient route, but it is most likely that they simply came by foot or horse. It is certainly possible to bridge the distance by foot from Rendsburg to Metz, the fortified city where they were enrolled in the French Löwendahl regiment on 14 March 1757. Probably they took the shortest route via Bremen, Cloppenburg, Lingen, or via Osnabrück and Münster to the Rhine. The oldest brother Johan Christian came later to France in 1759. Although in his letter 50 years later, Carl Alexander stated that he received double wages, the conditions for the two young men were apparently very poor as written in a letter of 27 March 1757 [6]:

"Your Highness was not able to receive the message that the Löwendahl regiment now received orders to march from here to Sedan on 30 March. And because hopefully my nomination for 2nd lieutenant has been submitted and lieutenant-colonel Baron von Bülow promised my brother to help him with the first-coming vacancy, we have to follow the orders of the regiment. Our utmost need forced us to borrow 10 Louis d'Or – corresponding to approximately 57 Danish rigsdalers – from Lieutenant von Preventlau which we have to pay back within 4 weeks."

Carl Alexander produced several reports for the Danish War Office from the military theatre of the Seven Years' War in the German states and received financial rewards for these reports up to a total of 4,000 rigsdalers [4]. That was important because he and his brothers suffered from an almost continuous shortage of money as they were not paid by the French Army but were supposed to be funded by their own Danish army. Carl Alexander acted as an engineer during the siege of Geldern in May 1757. His job was to deal with the water around the walls and to build

ramps around the city. His superior, lieutenant-general Count Beausobre, was so happy with his activities that he was mentioned in the Kölnische Zeitung [4]. Later, he was aide-de-camp to major-general count Gallifet in 1759, during which year he attended the siege of Münster under lieutenant-general d'Armantiers [4]. On 1 August 1759, he participated in the large battle of Minden, lost by the French army under Contades, who was thereafter replaced by field marshal de Broglie. After participating in several battles and sieges, Carl Alexander was called back to Denmark in 1762 because the Russian army approached Mecklenburg to restore the property and sovereignty of the Dukes of Holstein-Gottorf [2,3]. His brother, who followed a similar path of campaigning also returned, as well as the oldest brother Johan Christian, who had been allocated to the garrison of St. Omer for the intended invasion of Britain [73]. Luckily for him, the French fleet was beaten by the British on two occasions near Lagos and in Quiberon Bay [2,3], making an invasion impossible. During his travel to Denmark via Amsterdam, he wrote about the immense amount of military equipment near Calais along the coast [73]. In 1761, Johan Christian probably participated in the battles of Villinghausen and Warburg. In a letter from St. Omer, he wrote in 1761 that he was taken prisoner of war but was released. After being called back with his brothers to Denmark because of the looming war with Sweden and Russia, he complained about his pay in France and about the fact that his absence in Denmark had been disadvantageous for his career at home despite the fact that he was a prisoner of war and got wounded during the battle. Ezechias Heinrich participated in the battle of Warburg; his leg was wounded while the horse he rode on was shot [82].

THE FRENCH ARMY IN THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR

The Seven Years' War was a decisive event in the history of France of the ancien régime. The nation entered the conflict without enthusiasm, fought without distinction, and emerged from it without victory [1]. During this period, the army was much less professional and well-organized than during the wars led by Louis XIV and later by Napoleon.

The Seven Years' War was in fact a world war at three sites, namely Europe, North America and partly the Caribbean islands, and India. Although there were several maritime battles of importance, as well as campaigns during the 'French and Indian War' and the Third Carnatic War in India, the main French battles were in Germany [2]. As this was also where the three Danish brothers Stricker fought as officers for up to five years, the emphasis here is on this war theatre. Also, the war theatres between Austria, Russia, and Prussia are not discussed unless relevant in comparisons between armies.

In 1757, France fielded two armies in Germany. The army of the lower Rhine of 99,000 men was conducted by marshal d'Estrées who began his march towards Hanover, defended by the Duke of Cumberland [1]. Second, there was an auxiliary army of 24,000 men under command of the Prince of Soubise who fought against the Imperial Austrian-German army according to the French-Austrian Treaty of 1756.

Europe around the time of the Seven Years' War [1756-1763]

The field army did not exist during peacetime. Shortly before or at the opening of hostilities, it was composed of pre-existing or hastily created regiments. The court gave the army a name, selected a commander and an intendant, and provided a plan of campaign [1]. Once formed, it was not more than tentative and underwent frequent transformations dictated by the circumstances or by the whims of Versailles [1]. Every new campaign could reshuffle the composition of the army and replace its commander.

After the war, the army was largely dismantled, and some remaining troops would return to garrison duty. Consequently, there was no permanent military organization and staff, and the regiment was the most permanent military unit. This meant that the army was basically a large collection of heterogeneous regiments. These regiments were mainly French but there were also German and Swiss regiments [3].

The regiment was a sort of small society in itself, led by a colonel or brigadier. It was composed of battalions or squadrons as battle or training units. These units were divided into 17 companies, each led by a captain and a lieutenant or ensigns. Infantry companies had 40 to 80 soldiers of whom two were sergeants, cavalry companies had 30 to 75 horsemen [1]. In total, a battalion consisted of 685 men and one cannon, drawn by three horses, with 55 projectiles. Apart from that, the artillery was not a separate branch but part of the engineers department, the *Corps Royal d'Artillerie et de Génie* [1,3]. By eighteenth-century standards, the French armies were well supplied with artillery [1].

Supplying the army was largely in the hands of private enterprises, often with their headquarters in Paris. For instance, a company supplied bread to the whole army. The daily ration was 24 ounces, composed of two-thirds wheat and one-third rye. This private company fed 280,000 men for six years, had thousands of workers, a great number of wagons, and used 23,000 horses [1].

The army of the lower Rhine was supplied with meat by another company of similar structure. It distributed a quarter pound of meat to each soldier as his daily ration. This distribution was not only accomplished during the campaign months but also when the army was in winter quarters [1]. However, the supplying company did not handle transportation; a military transport did, with big food depots on the route followed by the army. In addition to the soldiers' food, hay and food for horses, clothes, and ammunition were transported.

Most food supplies came from the parts of France bordering Germany, such as Alsace and Champagne. A formal system of impositions, requisitions, and reimbursements facilitated deliveries from allied and neutral territories. This system had great difficulties, however, because reimbursement was not always certain and non-French suppliers were reluctant to run the risk of financial losses. For shortages or goods that were difficult to obtain, regiment commanders often forced the intendant to use local companies or markets but this was strongly opposed from the headquarters because of the high costs. However, an army and its horses must be fed, and these resources were widely used because the daily needs had to be transported from France over several hundreds of miles.

Especially during winters, there were failures and shortages of essential goods. The approximately 200,000 soldiers and supporting non-combatants required tremendous amounts of food and materials. An army of 100,000 men like the one at the lower Rhine consumed 200,000 pounds of flour each day, and its 75,000 horses required 70,000 tons of hay and 4,000,000 bushels of oats during a winter [1]. Bread was supplied by large field-bakeries every four days through convoys. As bread was edible up to nine days, field ovens were built up to three day marches from grain stores and two day marches from the army. These ovens were built of bricks. Suggestions to use transportable iron ovens were unacceptable to the bakers, who thus halted the advance of the army if there was not enough material to build these chains of ovens along the route of the army. In 1759, Contades had to stop his advance in Corbach for this reason [1].

Especially during campaigns, it was difficult for intendants to predict the routes of advance or retreat beforehand. Another problem was forage for the horses which had to be supplied in large amounts during campaigns. Hay and oats had to be supplied during the summer while in the winter quarters dry forage had to be provided. To prevent a shortage during winter, it was strictly prohibited to use dry forage during summer months. Therefore, during the winter of 1758-1759, 20,000 horses had to be brought back to France, hampering the mobility of the army. During the summer, green fodder was supposed to feed the horses but in practice, many areas were already denuded by the huge number of horses of the army corps that came first. When general Saint Germain made a forced march to join marshal de Broglie at the battle of Corbach in 1760, he had no choice but to leave his artillery behind because the horses had had no forage for nearly a week [1]. Often, the army of the lower Rhine had to obtain forage from areas up to 40 miles away. This was sometimes aggravated by waste or losses during a hasty retreat.

Moreover, several scandals revealed great losses in the supply chain from France by malversation and fraud. Although the supply of bread and meat was relatively satisfactory, the remainder was obsoletely organized. The important enemy Frederick of Brunswick's army was

smaller, and its supply was much better organized [1]. His army was richly funded from Britain and the Dutch Republic, and food and other supplies were more easily obtained locally.

In general, material and equipment was not supplied by private companies but by the military organization itself. Therefore, malversations and fraud were uncommon. The uniform of the companies was in part chosen by their captains. Shirts, trousers, shoes, and a hat were provided by the military organization, but for the remainder, the captain negotiated with merchants without much control. Therefore, there was a certain variation in type and quality of clothing. With cheaper clothing, captains could keep more money to themselves. Quite often, soldiers were underdressed and had no tents to sleep in during a campaign. As repairs mostly took place during winter, the longer campaigns and skipping of winter quartering led to increasing shortages. Contades complained about the absence of saddles and bits for the horses and clothing and tents for the soldiers, but in vain. Three thousand cavalry horses had to be sent back because there were no saddles in the winter of 1758. Some relief of shortages came from the wagons following each army, from which sutlers, various merchants, prostitutes, and craftsmen provided service against payment.

Although the French army did not produce its own weapons, production of small arms was entrusted to the Manufactures Royales, a group of enterprises centered around the cities of Charleville and Saint Etienne [1]. Although they were still smoothbore flintlocks, several improvements were introduced between 1700 and 1780. All muskets were handmade with a production rate from the two weapon producing cities of approximately 23,000 per year, enough to fulfil military requirements. Inspectors checked each weapon before release. As there was no standardization in production yet, a damaged weapon had to be repaired by professional weapon masters dispatched to the armies. The infantry used the model 1754 musket, a weapon weighing eleven pounds and firing a .69 inch caliber ball. A well-trained soldier was able to fire three shots per minute. The guns were inaccurate but useful for mass salvos. Cavalrymen carried a short musket, a pair of pistols, and a saber.

Although the French artillery was generously supplied with field cannons, many field pieces were obsolete. While the Austrian army had three-pounders weighing only 430 pounds, and Prussia had three-pounders of 450 pounds, the French artillery had four-pounders weighing 1,000 pounds. Every displacement had to be made with horses, and the guns were often lost during a rapid retreat because of their impractical size. It was estimated that transporting 400 large field pieces and their support would require 2,400 vehicles and 9,600 horses. Unfortunately, the artillery high command was not very open to changing that, but a minor improvement was that each infantry battalion received a light four-pounder. Usually, the army kept a stock of two hundred rounds for each cannon and sixty rounds for each musket, apart from the sixty rounds each soldier already kept in his cartridge box.

The captain was responsible for the payment of the soldiers. At that time, the main currency was the 24-ounce gold Louis d'or, representing 20 livres with each livre equivalent to 20 sols. During a campaign, a captain de fuseliers received 5 livres per day. A lieutenant received 45 sols per day and a sergeant 15 sols. Finally, the simple fusilier earned 5½ sols per day [3].

Battles of the French army in Germany

During 1756, the French army was mainly engaged in the invasion of Minorca which was conquered by Duke de Richelieu in June. The French campaign in Germany started in March 1757 with two armies. First, the army of the lower Rhine of 99,000 men was led by marshal d'Estrées who started his march in the direction of Hanover, opposed by the Duke of Cumberland. The second and smaller army was led by the Prince of Soubise and was meant as an auxiliary corps of 24,000 men to support the military campaign of Austria.

In July 1757, d'Estrées crossed the Weser river and defeated Cumberland's army at Hastenbeck. Marshal Richelieu replaced him and penetrated further into Hanover, forcing Cumberland to sign the capitulation of the abbey Kloster-Zeven in September. However, this success was quickly followed by a decisive victory for Prussia at Rossbach against a combined French-Austrian army in November 1757.

Frederick of Brunswick, the talented successor of Cumberland, broke the agreement of Kloster-Zeven and recommenced military activities. He forced the French army under the Count of Clermont back over the river Rhine and defeated it at Krefeld in June 1758. Clermont was replaced by general Contades who was able to drive Ferdinand back across the Rhine in cooperation with Soubise, commander of the French Army of the upper Rhine. Soubise penetrated into Hanover and won a small engagement in October at Sonderhausen, but in November, the French armies withdrew to winter quarters behind the Rhine, Meuse, and Neckar rivers.

After restarting the campaign in April 1759, Contades commanded both armies although the smaller one was led primarily by de Broglie. After a victory in April by de Broglie at Bergen, Ferdinand of Brunswick defeated Contades in August at the more important battle of Minden on the Weser. Hereafter, the French army was obliged to abandon Hesse and Westphalia.

After reopening of the campaign in May 1760, de Broglie had replaced Contades. He won a battle in Corbach in July and was able to occupy Hesse that year. For 1761, joint operations were planned for armies under de Broglie and Soubise, but because the two commanders were unable to cooperate, the army was defeated at Villinghausen in July 1761. This lack of cooperation prevented any successes during the rest of this year and led to another change of command in 1762. During that year, the larger army of the upper Rhine was commanded by both Soubise and d'Estrées while the army of the lower Rhine was commanded by the prince of Condé. However, in that year Russia and Sweden ended their participation in the Alliance, and the French armies had increasing difficulties keeping Hesse. The signing of a preliminary peace treaty saved them from further defeats.

Battles by the French army of the lower Rhine in Europe during the Seven Years' War [1757-1763]

Battle	Date	Opponents	Victory	Deaths/Troops France	Deaths/Troops Prussia/Hanover
Hastenbeck	26 July 1757	Hanover; France	France	1,200/63,000	1,200/36,000
Rossbach	5 November 1757	Prussia; France/Austria	Prussia	8,000/41,000	541/21,000
Krefeld	23 June 1758	Hanover; France	Hanover	8,200/50,000	1,800/32,000
Bergen	13 April 1759	Hanover; France	France	500/28,000	415/35,000
Minden	1 August 1759	Hanover; France	Hanover	7,100/60,000	2,760/43,000
Corbach	10 July 1760	Britain; Hanover; France	France	800/12,000	1,000/20,000
Warburg	1 August 1760	Hanover; France	Hanover	3,000/35,000	1,200/30,000
Villinghausen	15 July 1761	Hanover; France	Hanover	5,000/100,000	1,600/60,000
Lutterberg	23 July 1762	Brunswick; France-Saxony	France	600/42,000	4,000/14,000

The campaigns

1757

When the two boys Carl Alexander Stricker and Ezechias Heinrich Stricker left Rendsburg in the beginning of 1757, they had no military experience. They were only 26 and 23 years of age, respectively. They had been affiliated to the Holstein artillery for a few years as gunners. Later, they were promoted to a pyrotechnical function dealing with the storage and use of gunpowder. Although listed at that time as 'officer', the function would now be ranked as NCO or sergeant. Not unusual at that time, they had started in the regiment where their father was an ensign. In this way, a father could still add to the education of the sons and keep an eye on them. As their mother was dead and there were hardly any surviving siblings, they had only their father and an older brother, who was an ensign in the Schleswig-Holstein infantry. In 1754, Carl Alexander was promoted to 2nd lieutenant during a visit of the king in 1754 to the redoubt Schuby [4]. Consequently, he had at 23 years the same rank as his 54-year-old father who advanced to lieutenant in the same year.

According to their later statement, their participation in France was with the king's permission. For ambitious young men, there was much to gain from foreign service. Denmark had its last war 25 years earlier, and the military experience had largely gone although there had always been volunteers in the other European wars and the wars against the Ottoman empire, often motivated by the desire for adventure, honor, and other rewards [5]. It is more difficult to make a career during peacetime, and it requires other abilities or a helpful social network. According to a letter from 1804, the later general-major Carl Alexander wrote that he received double payment [4]. The brothers Carl Alexander and Ezechias Heinrich applied for this foreign adventure together.

Traveling to France at that time was done by boat or foot or on horseback. As they had to travel to Metz, the trip was probably on foot as horses were the army's property and probably had to remain in Rendsburg. It is unclear whether they traveled together or as part of a larger group of Danish volunteers. Probably, they wore civilian clothes because they would have to wear a French regimental uniform once they had arrived. The travel likely followed the route via Neumünster to Altona and Hamburg where the river Elbe was crossed. From there, they probably passed Bremen-Verden towards either Lingen, Gronau, Bentheim, or Osnabrück. From there they went on to Düsseldorf and Cologne to France or went via the principality Lüttich. These were usual trading routes where lodging and food could be obtained easily. The brothers left Rendsburg on 17 January and arrived early March in Metz, in time for the French campaign starting at the end of April.

At that time, France did not have a clear plan for the campaign. Despite military and diplomatic exchange with Vienna more than once, there was no concrete planning of military cooperation between France and Austria at that time. In February, marshal d'Estrées received only the broad order to take the Prussian possessions in Westphalia and wait to see whether Hanover remained neutral, in which case he was allowed to invade Hesse-Kassel. If this all went well, they could be in winter quarters there and prepare for a siege of Magdeburg [3]. In March 1757, d'Estrées commanded 107 battalions and 127 cavalry squadrons located in Flanders, Lorraine, and around Metz [3]. This army was organized in five army corps, departing from Longwy, Sedan, Maubeuge, Valenciennes, and Lille and heading towards Neuss and Düsseldorf where they gathered around 15 April 1757. Traveling was on foot with one day of rest for every 5 days of walking. Every soldier received seven rations of bread and three rations of meat and were entitled to a place to sleep, a fire, and light free of charge.

On 27 March 1757, Carl Alexander wrote to the Danish War Office [6]:

"Every day now, around 1-2 regiments depart to Sedan, and the field artillery from here has been put on big boats for transportation on the Moselle river. The regiment 'Guarde la Rhine' and artillery battalion here in garrison left yesterday. The regiment 'Champagne' will depart tomorrow. We will depart on 30 March, and the Swiss infantry regiment will depart on 1 April to Sedan. The daily routine here in the garrison is quite relaxed, because there is one march every 3-4 weeks, and we have nothing to do with the company because the exercises are done by the sergeants and company majors. Moreover, it cannot be expected from an officer to know his duties until the commander of a battalion explains the tasks. Marches are done on the rhythm of a drum which works very well but may probably cause chaos in a large army without distance between the companies because drummers will not keep the same rhythm. There are three march types: 1. Straight forward; 2. Side wards; 3. Standstill, and three types of walking: 1. 'petit pas' with every step around 1 foot; 2. 'pas ordinair'; 3. 'pas redoublé' with every step around 2 feet. With the 'petit pas' and the 'pas ordinaire' the soldiers take one step per second while with the 'pas redoublé' they take two steps per second. In this way, the soldiers get used to walk at different speeds when the circumstances require a certain rate of progression during pursuit of the enemy or during retreat. The fortifications here in Metz are very nice and strong. However, many soldiers are needed for defense because the walls, bastions, and crownworks are numerous

and extensive. The artillery here is not so easy to use as the Danish one. Apart from the iron mortars we use here, I wonder whether their heavy cannons are as easy to transport as ours. Time will tell, given the poorer quality of the roads in France."

Apparently, the Danish War Office was pleased with his letter as it reacted on 16 April 1757 as follows [7]:
"We received your letter of 27 March about the marching of the French army and also of the fortifications there. We notice with pleasure the diligence with which you recognize and describe professional military facts. We encourage you to notify us of changes and other relevant events during your coming military activities."

According to Waddington [3], the French regiments largely consisted of young and enthusiastic but inexperienced soldiers. They often came from rural areas and were commanded by their local officers who were mostly sons of rural nobility. On 30 March 1757, the two brothers departed with their regiment for the journey of 150 km on foot to Sedan. Financially, they were certainly not in a good position [6]:

"Your gracious Sir, I have to beg with utmost humbleness, hoping that your Royal Highness would mercifully agree with the in our earlier messages requested 320 rigsdalers. The highest Lord will have the mercy to let us relate to Your Majesty our urgent needs. So that my brother and I can be saved from our urgent misery, captain von Lohnschild has lent us a small infantry shelter under which we can stay but we have neither a mattress to sleep on nor a blanket to cover us. Our marches during the campaign we do by foot. And I will not receive any payment during the coming 2½ months, of which more than 2 months payment will be withheld for expenses. How long my brother will be without payment, I do not know. God knows what our fate will be."

Although they later received payment by money order sent from the Danish War Office to financial agents in Wesel, Cologne, or Frankfurt, they were regularly in desperate financial circumstances, and their letters were extremely polite. This can be seen in the start of a letter of 2 January 1758 which is cited in the original German form and style below [8]:

"Hochgebohrener Graf, Höchstgebietender Herr Ober-Kriegs-Secretair, Gnädiger Herr,

Mit eintrit dieses neues Jahres erinnern mir die viele Wohltaten so ich und meine gantze Familie durch Eur. Excellence gnädigen Vorsorge genoßen, Gnädiger Herr ! Mein unvermögen läßet mir nichts weiter zu, als dem Allmächtigen Gott zu bitten Er wollen Höchst Dieselben nebst Dero hohen Familie mit seinen Segen überschütten und Ihnen nicht allein dieses sondern noch viele folgende Jahren mit vollkommener Gesundheit selbstwehlenden Wohlergehen zum Wohl unseres gantzen Vaterlands, erleben laßen."

This was the style of writing letters at that time, but it shows how dependent these volunteer officers were under the unfavorable circumstances of the Seven Years' War.

The brothers had been enrolled in the Löwendahl regiment which was originally founded by a Danish-born officer with a track record of successful campaigning in the Austrian Netherlands during the War of the Austrian Succession [1740-1748] when he took Bergen op Zoom [9]. They completely relied on money from the Danish kingdom which arrived irregularly in Wesel and

later in Frankfurt. Although bread and meat were provided, there were many additional costs for equipment, clothing, and lodging.

Luckily, the brothers' plea for financial support was answered around mid-April from Copenhagen; they would receive 200 rigsdalers to cover their expenses [7].

In early March, it became clear that a completely neutral attitude on the part of Hanover was not likely in that free passage from France to Prussia would not go without trouble. In February, French hussars had noticed that Prussia had withdrawn its garrison from Wesel (this was confirmed by a newspaper at the end of March [10]) and that Dutch heavy artillery [11] had been removed too (at that time, the Dutch Republic had fortresses in so-called barrier cities along the Rhine such as Wesel, Orsoy, Rees, and Emmerich). French spies said that the fortifications in the bishopric Cologne had already received Hanoverian attention. Furthermore, Hanoverian troops had returned from Britain, and troops from Hesse had strengthened the so-called 'observation army' of the Duke of Cumberland up to a size of some 50,000 men [3].

The first aim was to take the Prussian possessions Geldern and Wesel. This meant that the army first had to move on foot to Neuss and Düsseldorf, a distance of around 300 kilometers. On 2 May 1757, the newspapers reported that marshal d'Estrées had passed through Liège on 25 April and that general Beausobre would travel to Geldern to command the siege [12]. The army groups gathered around Neuss and Düsseldorf on the left side of the river Rhine. From Düsseldorf, it was a further 60 kilometers to Geldern. Geldern was the ancient capital of the duchy of Gelre, a part of the Burgundian Circle. As such, it had been part of the Spanish Netherlands except for the period between 1578 and 1587 when it was in the hands of the Dutch Republic. In 1703, during the War of the Spanish Succession, the city was bombed and taken by Prussia. After the treaty of Utrecht in 1715, Geldern was part of Prussia.

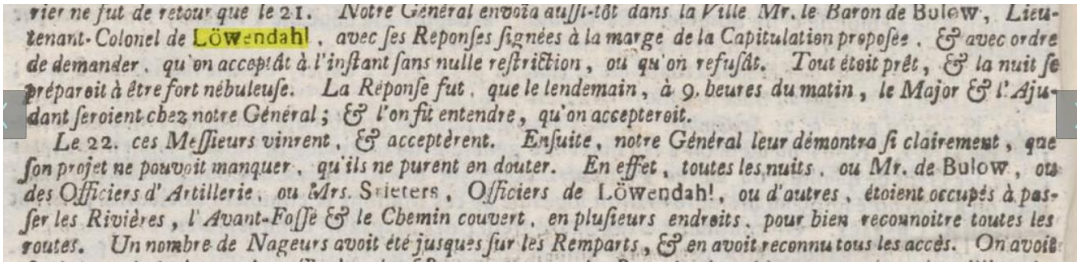
In early April, it was clear that Geldern was inundated [13]. On 6 April, Kalkar and Wesel were occupied, and an Austrian contingent of 2,400 men had entered Emmerich [14]. However, these troops were disciplined and behaved well [15]. Around this time, the entire duchy of Kleve and county of Mark was occupied by French and Austrian troops. Only Geldern – at that time completely surrounded by water – was still in Prussian hands [16]. On 24 April, two battalions of the Löwendahl regiment passed through Cologne where they were billeted in the city, two soldiers per house [17]. On 27 April, the commander of the siege of Geldern, general Beausobre, traveled from Liège to Geldern [18]. Early in May, the siege started, but as it was adequately provided with food and ammunition, it could defend itself well. Therefore, the original plan for an active siege was changed to a more passive siege with encirclement and blockade by a brigade of seven battalions [3] while some 3,000 men were directed to Münster, a city that refused permission for the French Army to enter. After a few months, Geldern surrendered, and on 23 August, the siege of Geldern ended by capitulation. The garrison of 800 men was allowed to leave and travel to Prussia [19].

The regiment Löwendahl played an important role in the siege of Geldern. Carl Alexander and Ezechias Heinrich were lieutenants in the regiment. Carl Alexander mentioned in a letter of 1804 that he was made aide-de-camp to general Beausobre on 12 May 1757 and that he acted as

engineer to build redoubts and communication bridges around the city [4]. The French army had a shortage of engineers at that time, probably partly explained by the fact that these functions were unusual careers for nobility and regarded with a certain disdain [1]. However, it was a potential path for a military career for the middle class. The bourgeoisie was considered incapable of holding high ranks in infantry or cavalry; these ranks were historically allocated to the nobility. Carl Alexander performed such activities with his brother Ezechias who wrote [82]:

"On 13 May, we arrived at Geldern. On 21 August, the garrison surrendered the fortress by capitulation. We fought under the command of Count de Beausobre. I served as an engineer and resided at the headquarters."

General de Beausobre gratefully mentioned their activities in the 'Kölner Zeitung' [4]. Unfortunately, this newspaper could not be found anymore. However, in another newspaper, the course of the capitulation is extensively described [20]. To convince the major and adjudant of the defenders, Beausobre explains the activities of the officers of the Löwendahl regiment in an effort to conquer the city and let it give up the resistance. Apparently, that worked well. Because the plural form 'Mrs. Srieters' in this newspaper paragraph suggests that it concerns two officers with the same family name, it should probably be read as 'Mrs. Strickers'.



vier ne fut de retour que le 21. Notre Général envoïa auſſi-tôt dans la Ville Mr. le Baron de Bulow, Lieutenant-Colonel de Löwendahl, avec ſes Reponſes ſignées à la marge de la Capitulation propoſée, & avec ordre de demander, qu'on acceptât à l'inſtant ſans nulle reſtriction, ou qu'on refuſât. Tout étoit prêt, & la nuit ſe préparoit à être fort nébuleuſe. La Réponſe fut, que le lendemain, à 9. heures du matin, le Major & l'Adjudant ſeroient chez notre Général; & l'on fit entendre, qu'on accepteroit.

Le 22. ces Meſſieurs vinrent, & acceptèrent. Enſuite, notre Général leur démontra ſi clairement, que ſon projet ne pouvoit manquer, qu'ils ne purent en douter. En effet, toutes les nuits, ou Mr. de Bulow, ou des Officiers d'Artillerie, ou Mrs. Srieters, Officiers de Löwendahl, ou d'autres, étoient occupés à paſſer les Rivières, l'Avant-Foſſe & le Chemin couvert, en pluſieurs endroits, pour bien reconnoître toutes les routes. Un nombre de Nageurs avoit été juſques ſur les Remparts, & en avoit reconnu tous les accès. On avoit

Statement by general Beausobre on the capitulation of Geldern on 22/23 August 1757 [20]

In September 1757, The Danish War Office reacted positively to the letters from the subordinates [21]:

"The messages we received from you have been read to his Majesty the King, and I can tell you that these fell on good ground and that he was satisfied with the conduct of your brother and you. The geographical map of Geldern which you sent us was nice. Hereby, I would like to take the opportunity to advise you to be careful not to do something which might raise the dismay of your commander general von Beausobre. The king allows general von Beausobre to keep you with him, in line with the request we received through you. However, his majesty considers the 400 rigsdalers yearly as a lot of money. But if you would like to take your brother with you, you have the permission of the King to do so. "

That being said, the military situation changed after Geldern surrendered. Beausobre became governor and apparently, Carl Alexander went elsewhere and did not become Beausobre's aide-

de-camp. Simultaneously with the blockade of Geldern, the French Army had expanded its occupied territory further in the period between May and July 1757. In April, the city of Münster had refused entrance of French troops, but on 23 April, marshal Beauvau was allowed to enter the city. At the same time, Lippstadt was evacuated by Hanover and thereafter occupied by general Saint-Germain [3]. Around early May, apart from the blockade of Geldern and the occupation of Wesel, around Münster and Haltern there were 8 battalions under Beauvau, 10 battalions and 4 squadrons under Saint-Germain above the river Lippe, while the duchy of Berg was occupied by 8 battalions and 10 squadrons. Then, there were 34 battalions and 6 squadrons on the east side of the Rhine while the rest of the army was on the left side of the Rhine between Wesel and Cologne. The Hanoverian arm under Cumberland remained at a certain distance while observing the French army and occupied Bielefeld.

The supply chain of the French army was far from optimal. Although bread and meat were mostly available, prices of goods delivered by local authorities were in general too high. Housing of soldiers and food for the horses caused problems. Although the general attitude in France was a lack of enthusiasm, and Louis XV showed only modest interest, the attitude of Versailles towards marshal d'Estrées was a critical one. There was impatience with his cautious approach despite the considerable size of his army. Versailles wanted success and did not want to wait for it too long.

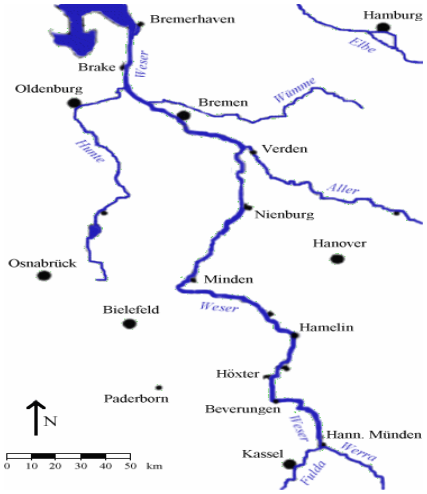
One problem was that commanders in the field had to explain in daily letters what they intended to do, but often received commands from the inner circle around Louis XV. Especially, Madame de Pompadour often aired her opinions despite a lack of military strategy expertise [1,3]. After the success of the Prussians against Austria in Prague in early May 1757 [25], the pressure on d'Estrées increased further. A formal request to general Sporcken to pass through Hanover was denied. Therefore, around 21 May, the French army started moving from Wesel to Münster.

The Duke of Cumberland had taken advantage of the French lack of activities and occupied Paderborn with 20,000 men and 24 cannons on 20 May. However, his situation was not favorable because he had far fewer troops, and the reinforcements with soldiers from Hanover and Hesse in British service had not yet arrived. Moreover, there was the chance that the Duke of Brunswick would withdraw his troops to join the armies of Frederick the Great. D'Estrées anticipated not to be able to leave Münster before 1 June. He thought he might encounter the main forces of Hanover around 6-7 June, but until 14 June nothing happened except that there were daily problems with the movement and progress of his army, rains, and shortage of food.

Although the French made slow progress, d'Estrées had a larger army of 86 battalions and 84 squadrons of a total of 61,000 men and 190 cannons. Because he became more and more uncomfortable, Cumberland decided to withdraw to Herford and pass the Weser. Although the original plan was to observe but avoid a fight, it was clear from Sporcken's answer that neutrality would not be kept and that a conflict could not be avoided. Cumberland's very chaotic withdrawal took place during the night of 13 June. D'Estrées did not take advantage of that chaos by pursuing the Hanoverian army and did not establish his army in Bielefeld until 18 June.

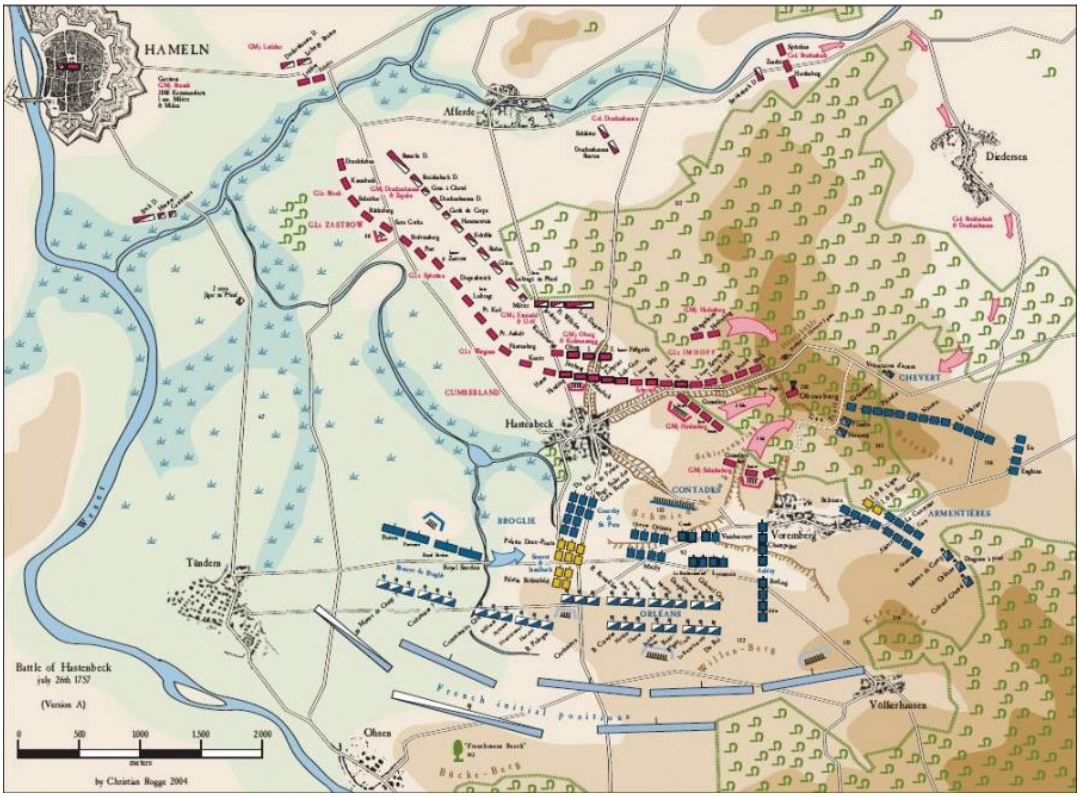
This delayed response was partly explained by his cautious and hesitant approach but it was not much appreciated by his officers or by Versailles. The disappointment was communicated by officers in the army to the relevant circles in Versailles and triggered the later replacement of d'Estrées by Duke de Richelieu. But Cumberland, too, was criticized because his retreat before being attacked was seen as a sign of weakness. Lower ranking officers who had also fought with the Prussians took a dim view of the army of Hanover and its commander [3]. Cumberland had earned himself the nickname 'butcher' after the bloody defeat of the Jacobite uprising in Scotland in 1746, but he had a poor track record as commander of the allied forces against France in the War of the Austrian Succession.

During the rest of June, little activity took place, but d'Estrées used this time to restore discipline and to secure resupply. During this month, Emden in the North was taken on 3 July 1757, and Hamburg was occupied by the corps of general d'Armentières. During the same period, Kassel was taken on 15 July by the French without resistance.



Important cities and rivers in upper Germany

During the night of 7 July, a strong French advance guard crossed the river Weser. While the river Weser normally cannot easily be crossed, during the summer the water level drops down to a low of 80 centimeters (2.6 feet) between Minden and Hameln, making it possible for infantry and cavalry to cross. The French advance troops then marched to the north and established a bridgehead at Höxter. The main army crossed the Weser on 16 July, leaving Cumberland no choice but to deploy his troops south of Hameln and to engage d'Estrées. The armies finally met on the morning of 25 July at the village of Hastenbeck. The commander of the French right flank, general de Chevert, was ordered to engage Hanoverian troops at the village of Voremberg but failed to drive them out. As French troops under general de Broglie were still crossing the Weser near Hameln, d'Estrées decided to postpone the battle until all his troops were up.



Battle order near Hastenbeck

The next day saw the Hanoverian army holding on a line from Hameln to Voremberg. Their right flank was anchored on the Hamel river and Hastenbach creek. The center of the Hanoverian front was deployed north of the town of Hastenbeck, and an artillery battery was situated on high ground behind the town. The Hanoverian left consisted of two entrenched batteries, with grenadier battalions protecting the guns. The left flank was anchored on the Obensburg heights. Cumberland made the mistake of assuming the hill to be impassable to troops and deployed only three *jäger* companies on its summit, effectively leaving the Hanoverian left flank unprotected.

Four French brigades quickly overwhelmed the small *jäger force* (light infantry). The Duke of Cumberland, seeing his position threatened from the rear, ordered his reserves and the grenadier battalions protecting the guns to recapture the Obensburg. However, use of these grenadier battalions in the counterattack on the Obensburg meant that they were no longer available in the center when the main French attacks went in against the Hanoverian center.

The main French attack consisted of general d'Armentières' attack against Voremberg with five brigades of infantry plus four regiments of dismounted dragoons. At the same time, the French center assaulted the battery immediately north of it. The Hanoverian grand battery was able to repulse several of the French attacks, but eventually the guns were overrun. When the Hanoverian reserve infantry arrived on the Obensburg, they were able to turn the tide

momentarily, but as Cumberland had begun to withdraw his army, they were unable to maintain the now-isolated position for long. At this point, Cumberland had probably made a fatal mistake and withdrew too early. D'Estrées then thought that he had lost the battle and seriously considered withdrawing his army. But when he saw that Cumberland was withdrawing, he immediately seized the initiative, and the tide turned. The battle was finally won by the French army under d'Estrées. Not aware of this victory yet, Louis XV had him replaced by Richelieu.

The foreign regiments in French service, Löwendahl and Anhalt (Bentheim)

The regiment Löwendahl was founded on 1 September 1743 by Ulrich Friedrich Woldemar, count of Lövendal [1700-1755], a grandson of Ulrik Fredrik Gyldenløve who was the natural son of the Danish King Frederick III. After being governor in Estonia, he served in the French army. In France, he was known as the maréchal de Löwendahl. During the War of the Austrian Succession, the regiment first served in Flanders in 1744. On 11 May 1745, it was at the Battle of Fontenoy. In 1746, it took part in the siege of Namur. In 1747, it was at the siege of Bergen op Zoom. In 1748, it took part in the siege and capture of Maastricht [9]. The regiment counted two battalions.

In 1757, the regiment joined the French army of the lower Rhine. On May 5, the regiment was assigned to the blockade of Geldern. It finally took its winter quarters in the front line in the area of Bremen.

At the end of January 1758, the regiment was assigned to the army that Louis XV planned to send to Bohemia for joint operations with the Austrian army. However, when Ferdinand of Brunswick launched his winter offensive in February, the regiment retreated to the Rhine with the rest of the French army. From March 30 to April 4, it was in the second line of Clermont's army in the camp of Wesel on the lower Rhine. By July, it had been transferred to Soubise's army, assembling near Friedberg in Hesse.

In June 1759, during the French offensive in the western part of Germany, the regiment was part of the main army under the command of Marquis de Contades and was deployed in the second line of the infantry centre. On August 1, during the Battle of Minden, the regiment garrisoned Minden, occupying the ramparts and the 3 bridgeheads.

Soldier of the infantry regiment Löwendahl in 1760

On the eve of the Seven Years' War, the regiment Bentheim counted two battalions. In 1759/1760, the regiment was renamed Anhalt. On 18 January 1760, when the German infantry was reorganised, the regiment was increased to three battalions by the incorporation of the first battalion of the disbanded Löwendahl infantry.

Soldier of the regiment Löwenthal

During the Seven Years' War, the regiment ranked 46th and was under the command of Frédéric-Charles, Comte de Bentheim, until 1759. On 21 December 1762, the regiment was reduced to two battalions.

From 30 March to 4 April, it was in the second line of Clermont's army in the camp of Wesel on the lower Rhine. By July, it had been transferred to the army of Soubise assembling near Friedberg in Hesse. In the morning of 27 September, the regiment entered Kassel to prevent its capture by an Allied army under the command of general von Oberg.

Ensign in the Anhalt Infantry in 1760

On Tuesday 2 January 1759, the Nassau Prince Louis infantry regiment presented itself before the Sachsenhausen Gate of Frankfurt and was admitted as previously agreed. As soon as it had entered the town, the regiment ordered the town guard to deposit arms and to admit 5 other regiments. These regiments then seized the artillery on the walls and all the other gates, easily capturing the city of Frankfurt. This very important town remained under French control for the last four years of the war. On 13 April, the regiment took part in the battle of Bergen where it formed part of the reserve of the left wing deployed in regimental columns behind the Wartberg hill.

In June, during the French offensive, the regiment was part of the main army under the command of Contades where it was deployed in the second line, on the right wing of the infantry centre. On 1 August, the regiment took part in the battle of Minden where it was deployed in the second line of the infantry right wing under the command of the Comte de Saint-German. As part of the Anhalt brigade, it covered the retreat of the defeated French army but was driven back by Prussian dragoons. On 8 August, the regiment distinguished itself at the combat of Einbeck while covering the retreat of the main army. During this fight, Ezechias Heinrich Stricker lost 20 out of 30 men; 8 were killed and 12 wounded.

On 18 January 1760, the regiment was increased to three battalions by the incorporation of the first battalion of the disbanded Löwendahl infantry. By the end of January, the regiment had taken its winter quarters in the front line of the French army. By mid-March, the regiment was billeted in Nauheim (present-day Bad Nauheim), in the front line of the French army. By 23 May, the regiment was part of the right reserve of the front line of de Broglie's army, placed under the command of Prince Xavier. In the night of July 7 to 8, Glaubitz left with the Anhalt brigade for Amöneburg to cover Marburg and the convoys coming from Giessen. On 14 July, Glaubitz's detachment (Anhalt infantry (3 battalions), Royal Bavière infantry (3 battalions), Bercheny hussars, and some light troops) marched from Marburg towards Ziegenhain, encamping at Vasbeck for the night. On 16 July, it was attacked by surprise by the Prince of Brunswick at Emsdorf where the regiment occupied the centre of Glaubitz's positions. The regiment was forced to surrender as prisoners of war. Johan Christian von Stricker was one of them. During the campaigns of 1761 and 1762, the regiment assumed garrison duties.

Despite seemingly having the advantage towards the end of the battle, Cumberland's retreat and the French blowback were disastrous for Hanover. Within a short time, discipline had collapsed, and Cumberland's army headed northwards in total disorder, chased by the French Army under Richelieu. Cumberland hoped that the British Navy might bring him reinforcements and supplies that would allow him to regroup and counterattack, but the British mounted an expedition to Rochefort instead, despite suggestions that it should be sent to aid Cumberland.

By September 1757, Cumberland and his forces had retreated to the fortified town of Stade on the North Sea coast. George II gave him discretionary powers to negotiate a separate peace. By treaty, Denmark was obliged to send troops to defend the duchy of Bremen-Verden if it were threatened by a foreign power. As he was eager not to be militarily involved, King Chistian V attempted to arrange an agreement between the two commanders. Richelieu, not believing his army was in any condition to attack the abbey Kloster Zeven, was receptive to the proposal, as was Cumberland who was not optimistic about his own prospects.

Surrounded by the army of Duke de Richelieu, Cumberland agreed on 8 September to the Convention of Kloster Zeven, under which his army was to be disbanded. The national contingents from Brunswick and Hesse, Gotha, and Bückeburg would return to their homelands. Half the Hanoverian force would be interned at Stade, while the remainder was to withdraw across the river Elbe. Most of Hanover would be under French occupation, except for a demilitarized zone. The French would evacuate the duchy of Bremen, provided the British withdrew their ships from the river Weser. Although this meeting indeed led to a freeze of hostilities, both participants were unhappy with the results. Cumberland did not want to sign a

formal surrender as Richelieu demanded. For Versailles, even a capitulation by a second-class nation like Hanover was considered shameful. That it was refused was considered an even more serious disgrace for which Richelieu would have to pay a price later [3].

On Cumberland's return to London, he was treated badly by his father, despite the fact that he had previously been given permission to negotiate such an agreement. When they met, George II remarked "Here is my son who has ruined me and disgraced himself".

In early November, the regiment Löwendahl returned to Cologne [22]. Apparently, the position of the brothers Carl Alexander and Ezechias Heinrich was better than before. They received credits for their role in the siege of Geldern, and their financial situation had improved after receiving money from Denmark. In November 1757, they wrote from Geldern [23]:

"The day before yesterday, I received the very welcome message that a money order arrived at Wesel for my brother and me at the office of Mr. Adam Waltmann. My brother immediately travelled to Wesel and received the graciously given 400 rigsdalers from your Royal Highness. We would like to express our utmost gratitude to the noble king of Denmark, to whom we owe so much."

Elsewhere in Silesia, Frederick the Great defeated the Imperial German army and a French army at Rossbach on 8 November 1757. As neither Britain nor Prussia liked the convention of Kloster Zeven, this agreement was quickly disavowed. But also Louis XV was very displeased with the convention, and Richelieu was withdrawn and replaced by the Count of Clermont. Meanwhile, it seemed that no further military action was expected for 1757, and the French army was about to move to its winter quarters. Carl Alexander and Ezechias Heinrich Stricker wrote from Geldern in November 1757 [23]:

"I have notified your highness in my previous letter that we would have moved to Braunschweig around 4-5 December. This will probably be by the end of December because Mr. Count de Saint Simon has not arrived here yet, and our departure depends on him."

1758

Early in 1758, the two brothers were in the French winter quarters in Osterrode in the Harz highlands, around 30 km northeast of Göttingen. On 2 January, Carl Alexander wrote [8]:

"Currently, I am in Osterrode because Mr. general Count de Beausobre has his quarters here now. We went here as quickly as possible to protect this area, which consists of only mountains, trees and snow, against the invasion of a Prussian corps commanded by prince Heinrich. However, we did not yet perceive even the slightest activity of the enemy, how much did I wish we would have.

Mr. marshal Richelieu now decided to let the army go into its winter quarters with the exception of a small corps of light troops that will observe the Hanoverians and trouble them. Whether we will remain here or not, we do not yet know. It would require a large number of troops to defend this area, which we do not have. Because this is a very open landscape without barriers or rivers

to halt the enemy. We just received the message that Breslau, which recently surrendered to Austria, has been reconquered by Prussia."

It seems that the brothers were in Osterrode only for a short period because on 14 January 1758, Ezechias wrote from Minden am Weser [24]:

"Your highness asked us to inform about the messages we received. Herewith, I include information which I received from someone. Our regiment has received orders to march to Celle in which area we will be encamped on 19 January."

The information in question were two transcribed letters with descriptions of the fights between Prussia on the one hand and Austria, Sweden and Russia on the other hand [24]:

"Berlin, 18 December 1757,

Now that the golden hours in our country become more visible and almost every day new messages arrive, the following information comes forward. Of the aforementioned 25,000 prisoners, instead of 4,000 prisoners, 5,000 were brought in last time. Also, the number of cannons has increased to 400 and the number of vehicles to 4,000. A message from yesterday says that they, the Austrians, have no more cannons now as well as no more vehicles. All villages within two miles are full of wounded soldiers. According to later information, provided by the king's adjutant, that the real enemy's losses of death, prisoners, wounded, and deserters arriving in South-Bohemian Budweiss (currently České Budějovice in the Czech Republic) amount to more than 50,000 men after this battle. Imprisoned Austrian officers assure us that they lost 22,000 men in the first battle with Prince von Braunschweig-Bevern. There are 10,000 men in Breslau. On several occasions, they asked for a free and unharmed retreat but in vain. There seem to be 1,500 Austrians in the fortress of Schweidnitz, but these are under attack by our troops. It is said that the Prussian king slept with his troops on straw during the night before the battle and had said "Children, you have fought like lions". The soldiers had answered that they did not want to be brave but only followed their brave king and that they would fight the Austrians as long as they were still alive.

From Pomerania we heard that the 5 postillions dressed as hussars while leaving a forest encountered 300 Swedes on which they fired 5 shots. They wounded one man. The remaining Swedes fled to a garrison of 800 Swedes who subsequently went on the run too. All Swedes who were taken prisoner uniformly state that they were made to believe by their generals that Prussia was their ally. All in all, there are intriguing stories about their military operations. They expected to obtain Pomerania without heavy fighting and now they are in great fear. From Russia we heard that Bestacheff was sent to Siberia.

Someone intercepted the letter from Prince Carl von Lothringen addressed to the empress: Your imperial highness should be informed by me most modestly that 5 December will be the most fateful day of my life, the day during which your army was so completely defeated. I do not believe that we can still bring together 30,000 men while the enemy is still attacking.

When the two commanders Carl von Daun and Franz Leopold von Nádasdy after the battle in a grand strategy meeting during their retreat had to decide what to do, someone picked up that the

decision was made that without a further 50,000 soldiers from the empress, the Prussians could not be stopped."

This letter was a highly colored description and in fact some sort of propaganda. Apparently, it didn't bother Ezechias Heinrich that it gave a very positive view of the Prussian enemy; he simply extended the information he had to the Danish War Office. The numbers in this first transcribed letter were also highly exaggerated. The battle of Breslau on 22 November was considered a victory for the Austrians who had four times as many soldiers there. Although the Prussian army fought well, it had to withdraw. Both sides lost approximately 6,000 men. However, shortly thereafter Frederick the Great crushed the Austrians on 5 December 1757 at Leuthen. The last paragraph in the letter refers to this Austrian defeat.

The second transcribed letter that Ezechias sent to the Danish War Office read as follows [24]:

"Extract from letter from Berlin dated 24 December 1757

Now with the large and extraordinary victory of our king – about which I wrote in my previous letter – Breslau is again in our possession and there are no more Austrian troops fighting in Silesia. Friday, the courier arrived with these messages. The king had already made preparations for a storm rush, and 6,000 soldiers from our army had volunteered. However, the king first sent a trumpeter to persuade the Austrians to surrender, which they did, and afterwards they handed over all ammunition and financial reserves to the king. The latter is said to amount to five tons of gold. Apart from the large number of prisoners at the occupation of Breslau, we obtained 10,000 healthy and 5,000 wounded regular soldiers, 14 generals, and 250 officers from the best part of the Austrian Artillery and brought them to Breslau in great hurry. These are now in our hands; one of them is a general and the ruler of Lichtenstein. All this has cost us no more than 28 men who were killed in the fight at Breslau. An engineer named 'Linzinger' from the army of the Duke of Bevern who went over to the Austrians was caught in Breslau. General Ziethen is still searching for scattered Austrian troops, and the number of prisoners is increasing day by day. We are supposed to have gathered 40,000 Austrian prisoners after the surrender of the Austrian occupying force in Breslau. In Schweidnitz, approximately 2,000 men are imprisoned so that they cannot escape from us. The king is said to be extremely pleased and energetic. They have sent the glorious news via an Estafette, which was also yesterday extended from here by post. Our soldiers must have been inspired by an unbelievable degree of courage. All contributions taken by general Ziethen from Bohemia and Moravia are shared among the soldiers. Up till now, nobody knows where Prince Carl von Daun and his army are. The enemy is so scattered that they are unable to form a corps again. This victory is unprecedented, and the consequences will make it even larger. Prince Heinrich and his corps will join with the army of general Earl Marichal Keith, and it is assumed that they will either encounter the Russian army or go after the French army on their flight for the Duke of Brunswick. In Pomerania, the Swedes seem to be encircled by marshal von Lehwald, and maybe we will soon hear from Pomerania the same as what happened at Pirna. From all that is happening now, we can clearly see that God is with us. On 19 December, at 2100 hours, Breslau went over to our side, and on 20 December, the king travelled inside. Imprisoned generals are:
General-lieutenants von Sprecker, von Stahrenberg, von Beck, von Volkersdorff, von Braun, and

von Keule. General-majors: von Busnick, von Haller, von Wolff, von Murtiz, von Gernnung, von Laseij, von Becklin, and von Meijer."

The presence of French troops in Hanover was a potential direct threat to Prussia but also disadvantageous for Britain. The fact that King George II was also elector of Hanover was probably not the most important factor. More important was that France should not be too powerful on the continent and threaten its stability. At first, William Pitt thought that transferring troops from Hanover and Hesse – at that time as mercenaries in Britain – would be enough to stop the French army. But during 1757 it became clear that this had failed after the battle of Hastenbeck and the chasing of Cumberland by the French army to the North Sea coast. In April 1758, An Anglo-Prussian convention guaranteed a yearly subsidy of 670,000 British pounds for Prussia. And although Pitt was against sending British troops to participate, this viewpoint was abandoned when he sent 9,000 British soldiers to reinforce the Hanoverian army. Directed by the British, the Hanoverians began to reform the 'observation army' and selected Ferdinand of Brunswick-Lüneburg (Wolfenbüttel) as its new commander. Ferdinand was the brother-in-law of Frederick the Great. He had experience as a Prussian officer since 1740 and took part in the War of the Austrian Succession before leading part of the invasion of Saxony and Bohemia in 1756. He participated successfully in the battle of Rossbach.

That France occupied Hanover so easily during 1757 was to be expected. Nevertheless, the loss of territory was seen as disgraceful for the British commander Cumberland, and it was partly because his defense lacked energy and vigor. However, his original instruction was to avoid a battle and only observe the French enemy. Moreover, the French army was much larger, and this of course played a role.

During these months, the French army extorted enormous amounts of money and food from the inhabitants of the cities and farmers of the occupied territories of Hesse, Braunschweig, and Hanover. French troops plundered and committed various atrocities as well as sexual harassments. Although the atrocities were considered less severe than during the Thirty Years' War of 1618-1648, a description by Schowart, the city auditor of Celle, makes clear that the occupation by the French army was far from pleasant [84]. People were imprisoned and tortured without reason. Richelieu himself gathered enough valuables to build a palace in Paris [25]. The French wanted the formal surrender of Hanover, but this was refused by Britain, especially after the defeat of the French and Imperial German army at the battle of Rossbach by Frederick the Great on 5 November 1757.

During 1758, it was demonstrated that the size of an army was not the only important factor. Ferdinand of Brunswick was an able strategist and commander who with a smaller army was able to throw the French forces out of Hanover and Westphalia during 1758. In late 1757, he joined with a small contingent of Prussian troops and revived the fighting spirit of the Hanoverian troops and their confederates from Hesse-Kassel and Braunschweig. Ferdinand almost immediately attacked the French army. During November and December 1757, he pushed Richelieu back from the area adjacent to Bremen-Verden towards Celle after taking Harburg and Lüneburg where also the two Danish Strickers participated. Celle proved to be a 'bridge too far',

and Ferdinand had to withdraw before being encircled by French troops. Winter campaigns were very uncommon at that time but could be very successful. The freezing cold, however, led to a temporary standstill. It probably also cooled the enthusiasm that Carl Alexander Stricker had expressed earlier in his letter to the Danish War Office about his desire to find and fight the enemy [8].

At the end of 1757, Richelieu was ordered back to France and replaced by Count Clermont, a grandson of the famous marshal Condé who fought under Louis XIV. Clermont had been successful during the War of the Austrian Succession and was one of the favorites of Madame de Pompadour. Clermont found a highly disorganized army. There was widespread loss of discipline, and civilians were robbed and maltreated. There was a shortage of almost everything to feed and lodge the army. He wrote to Versailles [3]:

"I found Your Majesty's army split in three groups. The first group above ground consists of thieves and looters, the second group below ground is lost, and the third group is in hospital. Please tell me whether I should send back the first group or just wait until this group has been absorbed into one of the other two groups."

But he did not have the time to change anything as Ferdinand of Brunswick opened hostilities again in February 1758 and took a large part of the Weser, pushing towards the city of Hanover. Wherever his spearheads of troops appeared, the French army withdrew. This withdrawal occurred in such a hurry that most sick soldiers and several cannons and much baggage were left behind. The commander of Bremen, general Saint-Germain, was forced to withdraw his troops and left many sick soldiers behind. The retreat quickly turned into a disorderly rout. Ezechias Stricker wrote [82]:

"Anno 1758, on 24 February, the retreat from Hanover started. We were part of the Division of lieutenant-general Count Saint-Germain. I lost my horse and equipment."

According to Clermont, his army was in a miserable state and already in the spring of 1758, it was thrown out of Hanover and had to retreat behind the river Rhine. Meanwhile, Ferdinand took the cities of Hoya, Celle, Hanover, and Braunschweig. The French withdrawal turned into a disgraceful chaos, and many French became victims of the vengeful Hanoverian farmers. Within only eight days, Ferdinand of Brunswick completely cleared Niedersachsen of the French army except for 4,000 French soldiers in Minden who surrendered one day later. All French withdrew to Wesel where they passed the Rhine [3,28].

How miserable the situation was around that time can be seen in a letter from Ezechias Stricker to the Danish War Office dated 21 April 1758 [26]:

"The many fatalities force me to beg your Highness one more time to help me out of my highest need. After a march of two days from Bremen, the packhorse that I shared with lieutenant von Grünen was not only injured but exhausted by the continuous marching. Therefore, we had to let our equipment be carried by a riding horse; after a further 5 days of marching, it was injured too but had to keep going until Münster. Because nobody there was willing to treat the horse before 4 April, we continued our travel to Geldern to have the horse treated there. The other horse was so

completely ruined that I will not have it back before 6 April. Consequently, I am now without a horse on which to follow my regiment. Therefore, I was forced to send my belongings by post to a man in Geldern whom I know, and I kept nothing more than what I have now. However, these things did not arrive there, and I received from my brother the message that everything was lost. The absence since 2 March from my regiment because of my current illness, as well as the circumstances mentioned above, have cost me so much money that I am not able to buy new equipment. I am respectfully begging your highness to ask the king for a preliminary deposit of 150 rigsdalers in order for me to be able to buy the most urgently needed equipment."

Luckily for him, he received the 150 rigsdalers one day after he had sent the request. In a letter of 26 April from Geldern, he gratefully acknowledged the receipt, apologizing for his earlier letter [27]. He also included a geographical map of the fortified city of Wesel. At the same time, his brother Carl Alexander was located 200 kilometers away in Koblenz; on 28 April he wrote from that city to the Danish War Office [28]:

"On 25 April, the merchant Abraham Waltmann from Wesel wrote me that he had received orders to pay 150 rigsdalers each to my younger brother and me. Dear sir, this is another proof of the utmost care that we receive from you and it gives us trust. What makes us deserve this care? I don't know. With this, you brought us back again into a favorable position so that the fatigue and hardships of the forthcoming campaign will be bearable. My brother's health is still poor. He wrote me that he will come here to let himself be treated and cured here because none of the medicines he received there have helped him. And I was forced, after my fever had vanished, to take my medicines three more times to experience the desired effect. This caused so much heated blood, however, that I am now having fever again and therefore unable to follow my regiment the coming ten days."

The successful campaign gave Ferdinand a reputation in Britain as a talented general and helped boost support for British involvement in the German war. From June 1758, following the capture of Emden, more British troops arrived on the continent and were immediately added to Ferdinand's forces. The number of British troops was further increased throughout the war.

French high command

While France had more soldiers, the Hanoverian army was well organized with a flexible command structure. Also, there was enough British funding and supplies, and food was more easily generated from the area for the Hanoverian army than for the French one. However, there was another large problem in the French armies. The command structure had been highly centralized since Louis XIV. This meant in practice that there was great reluctance to operate outside the orders from Versailles, where apart from Louis XV, an inner circle of high officers criticized their own initiatives unless they led to great successes.

In theory, the army commander was free to act as he wished, and the court provided only the means and objectives of the battle campaign [1]. In practice, every detail was registered and tracked on the map and in log books. Correspondence with the court took much of an army

commander's time. These letters were often ridiculously detailed but nevertheless followed by a sometimes even more detailed response from Versailles. Moreover, the army commander was so unsure of his authority and so afraid of alienating powerful interests at court that he seldom took action against incompetent or disloyal subordinates. If he did, such persons followed alternative correspondence lines with the court to gossip and complain. The army camp was like the court, a seat of intrigues, jealousies, and bad faith [1].

Able commanders, victors at Hastenbeck (d'Estrées) and Kloster Zeven (Richelieu) were withdrawn and replaced. This perverse system was largely caused by the fact that France had a large pool of high ranking officers from the nobility. The number of generals was disproportionally higher than in the other armies. They had mediocre talent and no battle experience, but they were eager to receive a command from Versailles. As stated by Delbrück: "Die Hofgeneralen des Spanischen Erbfolge Krieges und des Siebenjährigen Krieges, die mit Frau von Maintenon und Frau von Pompidour über ihre Kriegspläne correspondieren und fortwährend gegen einander intrigieren, ermangeln der grosser kriegerischen Entschlossenheit, die zuletzt in der Heerführung die entscheidende Eigenschaft ist." [29].

Ferdinand followed up his success in driving the French back by crossing the Rhine himself as part of a fresh offensive. This caused alarm in France, as it was feared that a naval landing by a large number of British reinforcements was intended to be co-ordinated with Ferdinand's advance. However, the destination of the landing proved to be St. Malo on the French coast rather than somewhere in the Austrian Netherlands. In spite of this, Ferdinand still posed a significant threat, and it was believed he intended to attack the Austrian Netherlands.

On 12 June 1758, he fought an indecisive battle at Rheinberg, eight days before the subsequent encounter at Krefeld. Before this latter encounter, Ferdinand had driven the French, under command of Count Clermont, across the Rhine. Because Ferdinand now threatened the French border, Clermont was supposed to stop him and chose a 13-feet high old walled canal he thought was easy to defend. Ferdinand took the initiative to attack the entrenched French forces on Clermont's right flank while in fact he also made a wide flanking march, crossing the channel unseen by the French and suddenly appearing from the woods on Clermont's left flank. Clermont was too late with reinforcements, and his defense was crushed. Thanks to general Saint-Germain, a complete defeat was prevented, and the French army was able to retreat in a relatively disciplined manner.

After the battle, Ferdinand continued and took Roermond by surrender and even sent troops until the gates of Brussels and the duchy of Brabant and bishopric of Luik were put to ransom [25]. Subsequently, Ferdinand besieged Düsseldorf which surrendered after six days. Unfortunately for the confederate army, the French had thrown most ammunition and stocks in the Rhine [25]. In France, everybody was shocked by the disastrous situation that had developed in such a short time. The confederate troops on the other hand, especially the Prussian subset, were astonished by the lack of discipline in the French army in which marching soldiers carried muskets with bayonets with bread or meat on top and officers brought one or more of their ladies with them. Hair powder was as important as ammunition.

Clermont was called back by Versailles. Fresh troops were brought in until Contades had up to 80,000 men against Ferdinand, whose army suffered from poor provisioning and exhaustion. He decided to withdraw back to the east side of the Rhine near Rees. As the Rhine was swollen due to continuous rain, he had only one bridge available, and it was attacked. Ferdinand's general von Imhoff was able, with a relatively small corps of 3,000 men, to ambush a French group of 6,500 soldiers who were unfamiliar with the local terrain. This saved Ferdinand's army from being locked at the left side of the Rhine. He received enforcement by a corps of 8,850 British soldiers and pulled back his troops for recovery behind the river Lippe in easy-to-defend positions. He left Kleve and Düsseldorf which were immediately reoccupied by the French army.

Meanwhile, Soubise was ordered to occupy Hesse-Kassel. On 28 April 1758, Carl Alexander Stricker wrote from Koblenz [28]:

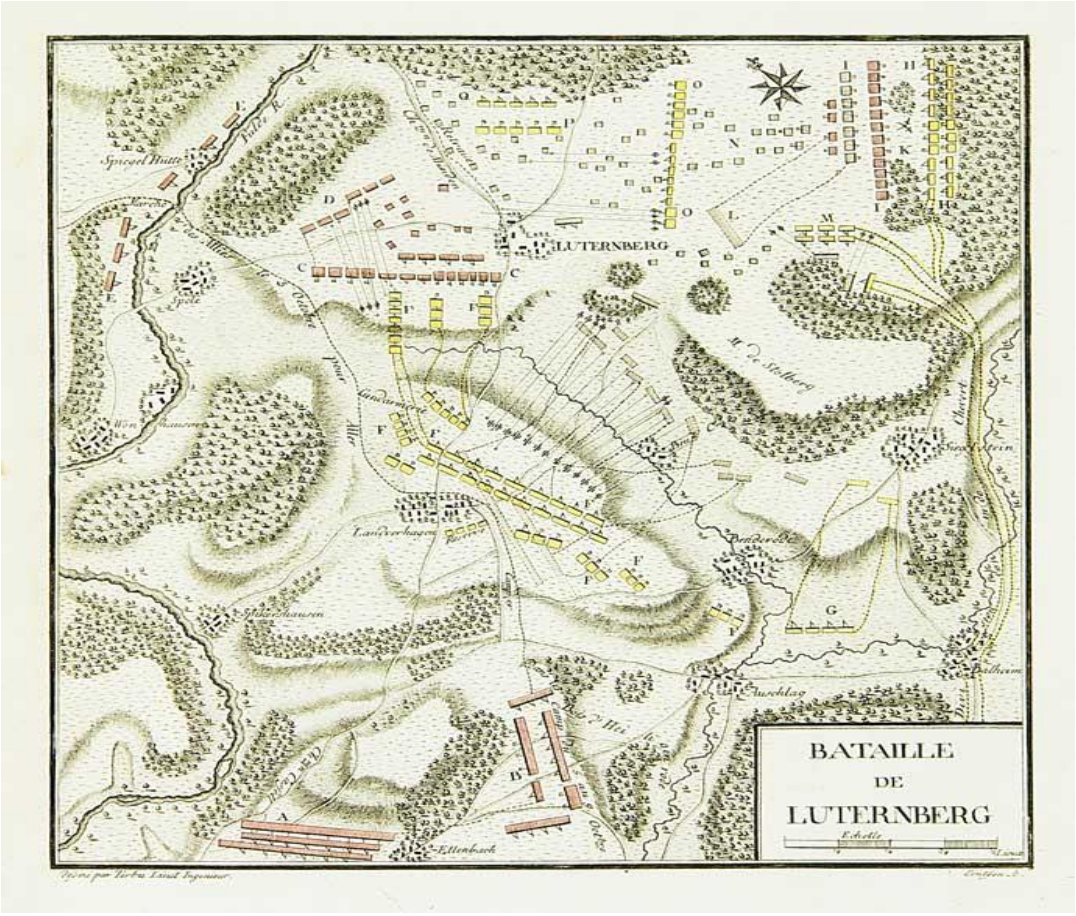
"Most troops have already passed the Rhine, among which the Löwendahl Regiment, and will use their camp in the surroundings of Hanau to wait for the troops that will join later. Here, we will gather and be reinforced by up to 24,000 men and be brought under the command of Prince de Soubise. Then, we will join with the German imperial army which is currently encamped in Bayreuth."

Emil Hünten, Kunsthalle Kiel. Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick during the Battle of Krefeld, 1758

Despite the complete and successful cleaning up of Niedersachsen and Westphalia, there were still French troops in Hesse-Kassel and Thüringen. Important cities were Kassel and Minden. Instead of directly attacking France, for which the Hanoverian army was completely undermanned and underpowered, the expectation was that Ferdinand would be able to retake Hesse-Kassel and release it from French troops. Ezechias Stricker, who had been promoted to first lieutenant by the Danish king on 1 May 1758, wrote [82]:

"On 26 September, I was attacked by the enemy in Minden in Hanover. My brother Alexander had to take over my dangerous post for one hour so that I could take some food".

Although the overall picture was that the larger French army was not able to cope with the smaller and more flexible Hanoverian one, there was also an occasional success in 1758. Shortly after the fight in Minden, there was a military encounter in Lutterberg near Kassel. This battle took place on 10 October 1758 when a larger force of 42,000 soldiers under command of Prince de Soubise clashed with a much smaller Hanoverian/Prussian force of approximately 14,000 soldiers under general von Oberg.



After several cavalry charges, the Hanoverians were forced to pull back. Ezechias Heinrich Stricker wrote about this battle [82]:

"On 10 October, we fought a battle near Luternberg, which Mr. general-lieutenant Prince Soubise won from the combined Hanoverian army under command of Mr. general-lieutenant von Oberg. I was ordered to chase the enemy."

Apparently, the effort to follow and beat the enemy was not very successful. Although Soubise was promoted to marshal, he was replaced by Marquis de Contades because his superiors found his efforts to pursue the retreating Hanoverians inadequate. In the meantime, Ferdinand prevented a further advance of the French army. Both armies went into their winter quarters, the French between the Maas and Rhine rivers and the confederate army of Ferdinand around Münster. Subsequently, the French army withdrew completely from Hesse.

1759

Despite the fact that most military actions against Hanover by the French army during 1758 had little or no success, a large army of around 80,000 men was assembled during the spring of 1759 to pick up the offensive. In the summer of 1758, it was decided in Versailles that the conquered territory would be looted. The minister of war, Belle-Isle, wrote to marshal Contades [25]:

"I am not aware of any other source for our urgent needs than the money that we can squeeze out of these enemy lands. And apart from money, these have to provide us with everything we need for our maintenance, i.e. hay, straw, oats, bread, corn, cattle, horses, and yes, even humans to fill our foreign regiments. Until the end of September 1758, it will be necessary to turn all areas in front of our lines into a desert so that it is impossible for the enemy to approach us unseen during winter."

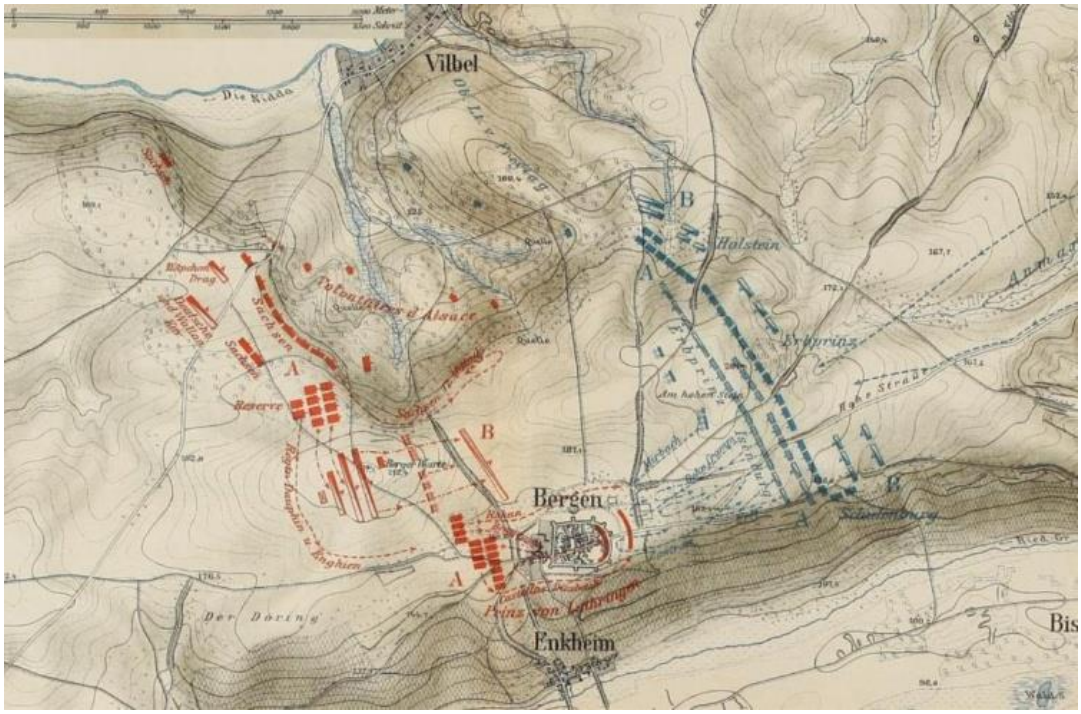
On 5 October 1758, he further specified these orders [25]:

"You have to change Westphalia into a desert completely. In the fertile areas around the Lippe and Paderborn, you have to burn down everything down to its roots."

The army was commanded by the marshals Contades and de Broglie; Contades commanded the larger army of the lower Rhine and de Broglie the smaller army of the upper Rhine. From the beginning, there was a competition between the two marshals. The army of Ferdinand of Brunswick counted only some 35,000 men. With his much smaller army, Ferdinand tried to hit where and when possible, and he was an important potential threat to the French communication lines and even worse, their provision lines.

In the first three months of 1759, however, few activities were launched apart from redefining strategy and tactics and replenishing of the army, now dispersed mainly in winter quarters behind the Rhine, Meuse, and Neckar [3]. The large majority of the army gathered around April 1759 along the line from Wesel to Koblenz with the largest party of around 66,000 men to the north commanded by Contades and around 31,000 men to the south around Frankfurt am Main commanded by de Broglie.

Forced to act to prevent the impending invasion of Hanover and despite his much smaller army, Ferdinand of Brunswick decided to fight the armies one by one. On 13 April 1759, he fiercely attacked the French army under de Broglie at Bergen near Frankfurt in the area Hesse-Kassel with a combined force of 3 corps, led by himself, Prince Johann Casimir of Ysenburg, and the Duke of Holstein-Gottorf. As the first to arrive, Ferdinand feared to lose momentum because the French had not yet fully deployed; he therefore ordered an immediate attack without waiting for the others. The town of Vilbel had been seized, as had the Am Hohen Stein mountain. The initial allied attack was successful, driving the French infantry from the hedges and orchards that they occupied and back into the town. Then de Broglie began to bring in reinforcements which turned the tide against the allies, driving them back. At ten o'clock, Prince Ysenburg's division arrived. Ysenburg was able to drive the French troops back into Bergen. But de Broglie immediately counterattacked with more fresh regiments that he had brought in from his reserve, disrupting the allies and driving them back once more. Ysenburg himself was killed while trying to rally his men. It was with difficulty that Ferdinand himself was able to restore order to his troops.



Battle at Bergen

At this point, the battle began to cool down. As de Broglie brought his reserve and his cavalry forward, Ferdinand was able to assess the size of his opponent's army. Furthermore, the French artillery was finding its range and forcing the allied army back up the Am Hohen Stein. As the Holstein-Gottorf division finally made it onto the field, preparations for another attack were abandoned, and the battle turned into an artillery duel that lasted until nightfall when the allies withdrew. Although it was a clear French victory, de Broglie did not aggressively pursue

Ferdinand, who was able to slip away with his army back toward Minden. Although the French won, both sides had some 3,000-4,000 deaths.

Around June 1759, there were 136 battalions infantry, 124 squadrons cavalry, and around 6,000 light troops, in total approximately 90,000 soldiers, along the Rhine. According to Contades, the spirit and nourishment were very good since an improved food provision in the winter quarters had been achieved [3].

Coming to battle meant that the French armies would again have to enter into the heavily wooded area between the Rhine and the Weser in the areas of Westphalia and Hesse. The start was uneventful. By May, Ferdinand was back in Westphalia. As Contades moved towards the Lahn tributary valley, the elongation of his army facilitated some small-scale attacks against French troops on the right side of the Rhine near Düsseldorf. Ferdinand knew that he had to attack, but during July both sides hesitated. For days, the French were located around Meerhof and the Hanoverians near Büren while each army observed the other one.

Having a much smaller but more flexible army, Ferdinand found it safer to move further to the north and went from Büren to Dissen. After a 5-day delay there, he moved in the direction of Osnabrück to join forces with von Wangenheim who had left some reinforcement troops in Münster. From this position, it was easier to defend Münster and Lippstadt, the two cities not in French occupied territory. Ferdinand was eager to strike, but Contades was cautious. Criticized by his brother-in-law Frederick the Great, Ferdinand explained that Contades put forward a corps on his right to outflank Ferdinand's left but kept its length short to prevent it from being cut.

However, the northwest move towards Osnabrück was not without the risk of being cut off from the Weser and the rest of Hanover.

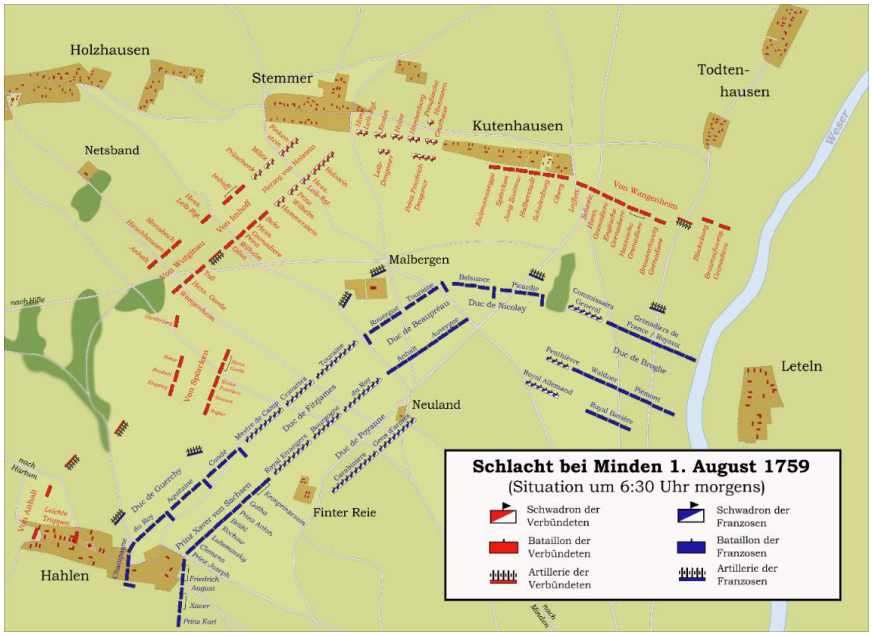
Ferdinand was alarmed when he heard about a large French continent near Melle, Hille, and Lübbecke and sent von Wangenheim with a considerable force to chase them away. But it was too late because on 10 July 1759, de Broglie was able to occupy Minden again. Here, he found big Hanoverian stores which had not been taken away or destroyed. Minden was a highly important center for the provision of the French army, and without that it would be more difficult to conquer all of the Hanover territory. Ferdinand considered two options. First, he could go back and reinforce Münster but would then be cut off. The second and better option was to cross the Weser and secure Nienburg with its important military stores. On 4 July, Ferdinand occupied Stolzenau and thereafter Ovenstadt, north of Minden, hoping to be able to split the French army on both sides of the Weser. The French felt comfortable with their position, and for the rest of July, both armies restricted themselves to mutual observation. The large French army had enough water from the Weser, and there was plenty of food and beer. The French spirit was high, but Contades complained about the noise in the camps during the nights [3]. As the political pressure on both army commanders grew from their respective backgrounds, it was clear that something was going to happen [3,25].

This resulted in one of the largest battles of the 18th century. Contades had 80 battalions, 81 squadrons, and 170 cannons with a total of around 54,000 soldiers while Ferdinand had 46 battalions, 61 squadrons, and 187 cannons with a total of approximately 42,000 soldiers [3]. On 1 August 1759, the two armies opposed each other on a triangular battlefield along the line Hahlen-Stemmer-Kutenhausen-Leteln, an area of approximately 12 square kilometers. The French position was easy to defend, but the plan of attack was discovered by the Hanoverians

Battle of Minden on 1 August 1759

The order of battle shows a quarter circle of the French army with the walled city of Minden in the back. In response to approaching Hanoverian troops from Todtenhausen, de Broglie opened fire. In the center of the line facing north-west, Contades had placed cavalry surrounded by infantry. This was a bit awkward and very uncommon, and it proved to be a mistake. Two lines composed of six English infantry regiments and three Hanoverian infantry battalions from the division von Sporcken under command of generals Waldegrave and Kingsley left the woods between Hartum and Holzhausen and marched towards the enemy, but something completely unexpected happened. They had been ordered to "advance *on* the beating of drums" (i.e. advance when the signal drums began to beat), but misunderstood this to mean to "advance *to* the beating of drums" (i.e. advance immediately while beating drums.). Since the French cavalry was still in its ranks and the infantry was still in line while the defensive 'hollow square' had not yet been developed, it was assumed by all that the six leading British regiments were doomed. But the soldiers stoically continued their route. A vigorous charge by the first line of 11 squadrons of French cavalry had no appreciable effect.

Despite being under constant artillery fire, the six regiments (soon supported by two Hanoverian battalions), maintaining fierce discipline and closed ranks, drove off repeated cavalry charges with musket fire and inflicted serious casualties on the French. A cavalry charge by the second French line of squadrons had no effect. The final line of 2,000 elite cavalry managed to halt the flanks of the enemy infantry, but it rolled on like a waltz into the French lines.



Order of battle at Minden on 1 August 1759. Alexander and Ezechias Stricker were located on the right as aide-de-camps of Duke de Broglie

Contades reportedly said bitterly, “I have seen what I never thought to be possible – a single line of infantry break through three lines of cavalry, ranked in order of battle, and tumble them to ruin!” [30]. Supported by the well-served British and Hanoverian artillery, the entire allied line eventually advanced against the French army and sent it fleeing from the field. The only French troops capable of mounting any significant resistance were those of de Broglie; he formed a fighting rearguard. Luckily for Contades, a repeated order to attack the retreating French army given by Ferdinand to the British cavalry commander Lord George Sackville was denied. Sackville, hesitant and asking for more detailed instructions, lost too much time for any further successful engagement. This prevented a further devastating effect on the already heavily damaged French army. Sackville was sent back to Britain, court-martialed, and banned from participating in further military activities.

In August 1759, Lieutenant Hugh Montgomery of the 12th Regiment of Foot wrote with much English stoicism to his mother [31]:

“Dear madam – The pursuit of the enemy, who have retired with the greatest precipitation, prevents me from giving you so exact an account of the late most glorious victory over the French army as I would, had I almost any leisure, however here goes as much as I can.

We marched from camp between 4 and 5 o’clock in the morning, about seven drew up in a valley, from thence marched about three hundred yards, when an eighteen pound ball came gently rolling up to us. Now began the most disagreeable march that I ever had in my life, for we advanced more than a quarter of a mile through a most furious fire from a most infernal battery of eighteen-pounders, which was at first upon our front, but as we proceeded, bore upon our flank, and at last upon our rear. It might be imagined that this cannonade would render the regiments incapable of bearing the shock of unhurt troops drawn up long before on ground of their own choosing, but firmness and resolution will surmount almost any difficulty. When we got within about 100 yards of the enemy, a large body of French cavalry galloped boldly down upon us; these aproached our men by reserving their fire until they came within thirty yards, immediately ruined, but not without receiving some injury from them, for they rode down two companies on the right of our regiment, wounded three officers, took one of them prisoner with our artillery lieutenant, and whipped off the tumbrels. This cost them dear for it forced many of them into our rear, on whom the men faced about and five of them did not return. These visitants being thus dismissed, without giving us a moment’s time to recover the unavoidable disorder, down came upon us like lightning the glory of France in the persons of the Gens d’Armes. These we almost immediately dispersed without receiving hardly any mischief from the harmless creatures. We now discovered a large body of infantry consisting of seventeen regiments moving down directly on our flank in column, a very ugly situation; but Stewart’s regiment and ours wheeled, and showed them a front, which is a thing not to be expected from troops already twice attacked, but this must be placed to the credit of general Waldegrave and his aide-de-camp. We engaged this corps for about ten minutes, killed them a good many, and as the song says, ‘the rest then ran away’'.

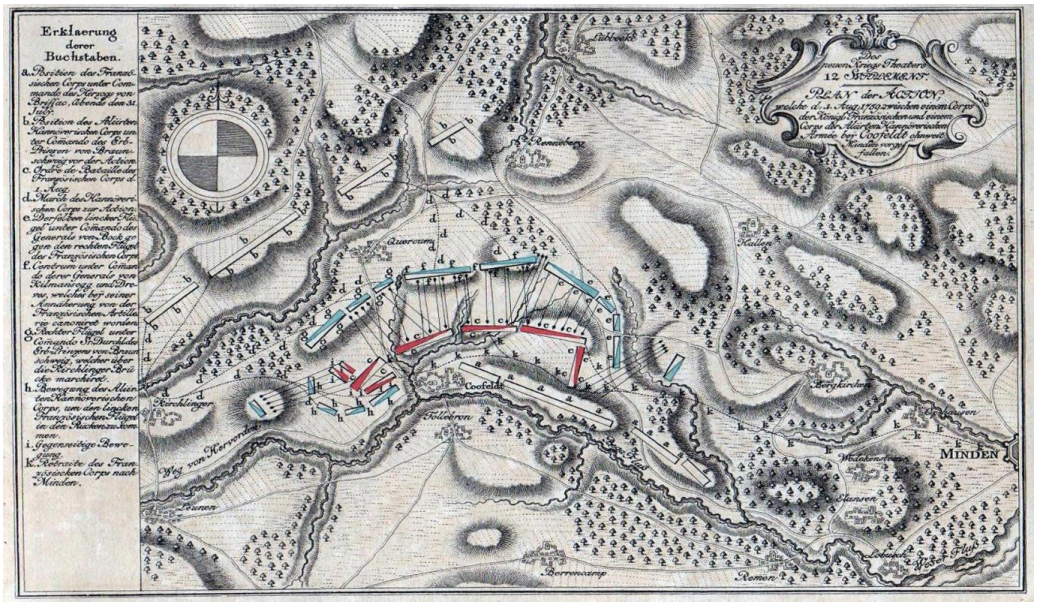
The next who made their appearance were some regiments of the Grenadiers of France, as fine and terrible looking fellows as I ever saw. They stood us a tug, notwithstanding we beat them off to a distance, where they galded us much, they having rifled barrels, and our muskets would not reach them. To remedy this we advanced, they took the hint, and ran away. Now we were in hopes that we had done enough for one day’s work, and that they would not disturb us more, but soon after a very large body of fresh infantry, the last resource of Contades, made the final

attempt on us. With them we had a long but not very brisk engagement, at last made them retire almost out of reach, when the three English regiments of the rear line came up, and gave them one fire, which sent them off for good and all. But what is wonderful to tell, we ourselves after all this success at the very same time also retired, but indeed we did not then know that victory was ours. However we rallied, but all that could now be mustered was about 13 files private with our colonel and four other officers one of which I was so fortunate to be. With this remnant we returned again to the charge, but to our unspeakable joy no opponents could be found. It is astonishing that this victory was gained by six English regiments of foot, without their grenadiers, unsupported by cavalry or cannon, not even their own battalion guns, in the face of a dreadful battery so near as to tear them with grape-shot, against forty battalions and thirty-six squadrons, which is directly the quantity of the enemy falling to their share.

It is true that two Hanoverian regiments were engaged on the left of the English, but so inconsiderably as to lose only 50 men between them. On the left of the army the grenadiers, who now form a separate body, withstood a furious cannonade. Of the English there was only killed one captain and one sergeant; some Prussian dragoons were engaged and did good service. Our artillery, stationed in different places, also behaved well, but the grand attack on which depended the fate of the day fell to the lot of the six English regiments on foot. From this account the prince might be accused of misconduct for trusting the issue of so great an event to so small a body, but this affair you will have soon enough explained to the disadvantage of a great man whose easy part, had it been properly acted, must have occasioned to France one of the greatest overthrows it ever met with. The sufferings of our regiment will give you the best notion of the smartness of the action. We actually fought that day not more than 480 private and 27 officers, of the first 302 were killed and wounded, and of the latter 18. Three lieutenants were killed on the spot, the rest are only wounded, and all of them are in a good way except two. Of the officers who escaped there are only four who cannot show some marks of the enemy's good intentions, and as perhaps you may be desirous to know any little risks that I might have run, I will mention those of which I was sensible. At the beginning of the action I was almost knocked off my legs by my three right hand men, who were killed and driven against me by a cannon ball, the same ball also killed two men close to Ward, whose post was in the rear of my platoon, and in this place I will assure you that he behaved with the greatest bravery, which I suppose you will make known to his father and friends. Some time after I received from a spent ball just such a rap on my collar-bone as I have frequently from that once most dreadful weapon, your crooked-headed stick; it just welled and grew red enough to convince the neighbours that I was not fibbing when I mentioned it. I got another of these also on one of my legs, which gave me about as much pain, as would a tap of Miss Mathews's fan. The last and greatest misfortune of all fell to the share of my poor old coat for a musket ball entered into the right skirt of it and made three holes. I had almost forgot to tell you that my spontoon was shot through a little below my hand; this disabled it, but a French one now does duty in its room. The consequences of this affair are very great, we found by the papers, that the world began to give us up, and the French had swallowed us up in their imaginations. We have now pursued them above 100 miles with the advanced armies of the hereditary prince, Wangenheim, and Urff in our front, of whose success in taking prisoners and baggage, and receiving deserters, Francis Joy will give you a better account than I can at present. They are now entrenching themselves at Kassel, and you may depend on it they will not show us their faces again during this campaign.

I have the pleasure of being able to tell you that Captain Rainey is well; he is at present in advance with the grenadiers plundering French baggage and taking prisoners. I would venture to give him forty ducats for his share of prize money.

Contrary to my expectations and in spite of many interruptions I now wrote you a long letter, this paper I have carried this week past in my pocket for the purpose, but could not attempt it before. We marched into this camp yesterday evening, and shall quit it early in the morning. I wrote you a note just informing you that I was well the day after the battle; I hope you will receive it in due time. Be pleased to give my most affectionate duty to my uncles and aunts ...



A very important point of resistance of Minden was the stronghold near Coofeldt (currently Gohfeld, a part of Bad Oeynhausen), defended by the French general Duke de Brissac with a large contingent of around 2,000 French soldiers. The most important route of army provisions went via Bielefeld and Herford to Coofeldt over the river Werra through the Porta Westphalica, a valley between two mountain ridges with the Weser in the middle. Of course, the French were completely aware of the importance of this route. But even more so, Ferdinand of Brunswick realized its importance and allocated a corps of 10,000 soldiers to take the stronghold on 1 August. As a consequence, there was no route back, and the following days between 2 and 4 August were passed with a chaotic retreat of the French army during the night 1-2 August over the Weser. This dreadful experience was attended by Ezechias Heinrich Stricker who wrote [82]:

"In 1759, on the 1st August, I participated in the battle of Prussian Minden (*) under marshal Marquis de Contades against the allied forces under his highness Prince Ferdinand von Braunschweig, which battle we lost. At night, we had to pass the Weser river and pull back through Hanover, during which I lost a part of my equipment."

** Between 1648 and 1873, Minden was a Prussian fortified city.*

The situation of the French army was far from favorable. At the right side of the Weser, cut off from provisions, it had to struggle with a defeated army southwards in the direction of Kassel which was still in French hands. The fear was that Ferdinand would further strike the French army now being at the enemy side of the Weser with a potential threat from Prussian troops. Here, they were cut off from the French supply stores, and the army was discouraged and hungry. The best option was to follow the Weser southwards towards Kassel and to cross the river somewhere near Hameln or Oldendorf. Luckily for the French army, Ferdinand and his confederates made no efforts to chase the withdrawing army. Although this facilitated the withdrawal to the south, the French army progressed only slowly. De Broglie insisted on increasing the speed, but this was very difficult under the given circumstances. Around 7 August, the French army passed Einbeck knowing that 400,000 bread rations were waiting for them in Göttingen. Although there were no great military encounters, the French army was followed by 'jäger' forces. These mounted skirmishing troops were comparable to 'dragoons', and there were regular clashes with the French rearguard under general Beaupréau [3]. Ezechias Heinrich Stricker was in this rearguard and wrote [82]:

"During 1759, on 8 August, I came with the Grande Armée and was involved in the encounter near Einbeck where I lost 8 dead and 13 wounded out of 30 of my men."

The further retreat to Kassel of the 'Grande Armée' was relatively uneventful, but in the other areas of Westphalia the situation was chaotic. Ferdinand followed at a distance and occupied the areas where the French retreated to cities such as Bielefeld, Paderborn, and Hervorden. However, a sudden coup to take Münster by the English colonel Boyd failed [3]. All in all, the French army lost 7,000 of its soldiers in the battle of Minden, as against 2,800 lost by the allied Hanoverian forces.

While the victory was extensively celebrated in Britain, it led to a scandal in France. The French army abandoned Kassel, and Contades had to travel to Marburg to explain to marshal d'Estrées his failure to win in Minden. The general opinion in France was against Contades. He was supposed to have employed too many troops, he did not choose the right area for the battle, he failed to take preparatory measures for withdrawal in case of a defeat, he had not prevented the breaking of his communication lines with the Corps of lieutenant-general d'Armentières, and he had crossed to the right side of the Weser after destroying his food stores and equipment in Minden. Consequently, Contades was dismissed from his position and replaced by de Broglie whose role in the battle of Minden was also criticized but to a lesser extent than Contades' was [3].

D'Estrées found an army in a deeply miserable state. Of the originally 100,000 men, no more than some 50,000 remained. The rest had deserted or were sick or otherwise lost. Officers and soldiers were undisciplined and mostly without clear orders. Food was scarce and expensive if delivered at all. Most French troops withdrew behind the river Lahn and around Frankfurt while the confederates took Marburg. Münster was still in French hands and was surrounded in a sort of blockade/siege by confederate troops under von Imhoff. A corps under d'Armentières was sent to relieve the blockade. Carl Alexander Stricker wrote [4]:

"Because general de Beausobre remained in Geldern as governor, I served during 1759 as aide-de-camp to major-general Count Gallifet. He allowed me to participate in the military activities around Münster under the command of lieutenant-general d'Armentières."

However, the overall picture was very disappointing for the French throne. Despite having a much larger army, the French were completely thrown out of Hanover and Hesse-Kassel. This meant that these territories could not serve as a bargaining chip during negotiations with Britain. The French had lost Quebec and much territory in North America, and in addition lost sea battles at Lagos and Quiberon Bay [2].

But the British victories were not shared by Prussia which only shortly after the battle of Minden had received an almost fatal blow during the battle at Künersdorf [32]. Around this village some 5 kilometers east of Frankfurt am Oder, a heavy battle took place on 12 August 1759 between Frederick II the Great and a joint Russian/Austrian army.

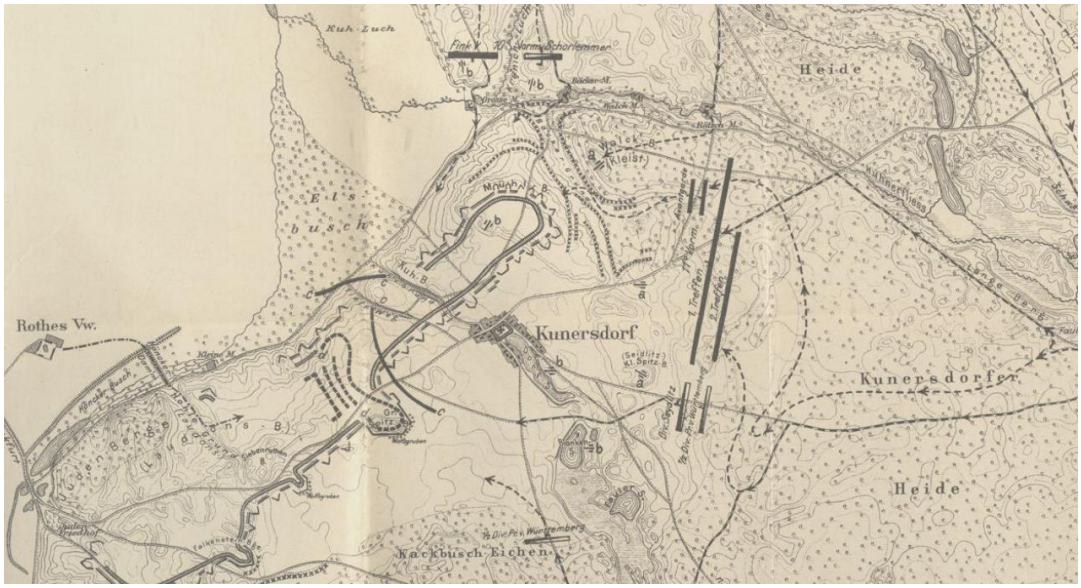
After the defeat of a Prussian corps commanded by von Wedel on 23 July near Kay (currently Kije in western Poland), the Russian army took position near Paltzig while von Wedel retreated across the river Oder. In the south, Frederick II tried to prevent the Russian and Austrian armies to join with each other. To that end, he tried to block the Austrian marshal von Daun. However, the latter was able to send a part of his corps under von Loudon to the north to join with the Russian army commanded by marshal Saltykow [32]. In great haste, Frederick II travelled to the north too and left his army under the command of his brother.

On 29 July, he took over command from the Prince of Württemberg near Sagan (currently Zagan, Poland) with a corps of 21 infantry battalions and 35 cavalry squadrons. Meanwhile, the Austrian corps under von Loudon with 24,000 men joined with the Russian corps under Saltykow with 55,000 men on 5 August 1759 with the aim to invade the central part of Brandenburg and to take Berlin. Together, they had 84 infantry battalions, 60 grenadier companies, 98 cavalry squadrons and 212 cannons. After joining with the corps of von Wedel, the total army of Frederick II consisted of 63 infantry battalions, 110 cavalry squadrons, and 160 cannons, totaling approximately 49,500 men.

On 11 August, the Prussians passed the Oder for an attack on the combined Russian/Austrian army. While from the north, a corps under command of Finck was approaching the Trettinger Höhe near the Mühlberg hill, the main force of the Prussian army started at 0200 hours with a march in a large half circle around the hill in an effort to circumvent the positions of Saltykow and approach through the forests east of Künersdorf. At dawn, Frederick II discovered while leaving the forest that he was facing the fortified southeast front of the Russians instead of being able to attack them from behind. Consequently, he had to reposition his lines and thereby lost precious time. The area around Künersdorf had myriad small rivers and to the northwest, an earth elevation of 20 meters ran from southwest to northeast with the Mühlberg on top. Between the Elsbusch, northwest of the Mühlberg, and Künersdorf was the Kuhgrund, a sort of ditch which Frederick did not notice.

At 1130 hours Frederick II started a cannonade of one hour against the left wing of the Russians. After a successful storm, the Prussians were able to take the Mühlberg. At this point, several

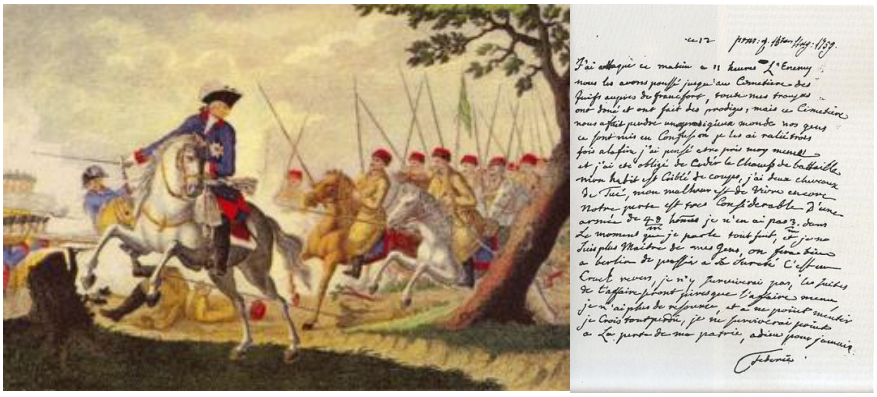
officers advised Frederick II to halt and wait because they expected that the enemy might withdraw. However, the king insisted on continuing the efforts to beat the Russian/Austrian army despite the fact that he was outnumbered. He tried to make use of his earlier tactics of the so-called ‘schiefe Schlachtordnung’ (oblique order) in which the temporary formation of a dense



Battlefield of Künersdorf on 12 August 1759 with the Mühlberg hill to the north [32]

spearhead within a line is able to punch through the enemy lines. However, this maneuver got stuck in the Kuhgrund with heavy Prussian losses. A subsequent charge of the Russian and Austrian cavalry created a panicked rout away from the battle area, especially after the Prussian cavalry was driven back without being able to come to the support of its infantry. Twice, Frederick’s horse was shot, and a bullet ricocheted on his tobacco box without injuring him. With 19,000 men lost and only 3,000 men left, Frederick had to withdraw from the battlefield. Hesitating too long, he was almost caught but saved by a cavalry captain and brought back to the troops which then withdrew over the Oder river [32].

Around the same time, Torgau capitulated to the Swedes, and Berlin was threatened. Frederick II was desperate because he was convinced that everything was lost and considered committing suicide. Indeed, the war could have been won if the Russians and Austrians had crossed the Oder to finish the remnants of the Prussian army. Instead, nothing happened because marshal Saltykow found that they had done enough and that the Austrian army should take the initiative because it had kept the largest part of its army under von Daun in Silesia. Furthermore, disagreements with the Austrians over logistics and supplies resulted in the Russians



Just before being caught by Cossacks, Frederick II escaped from the battlefield with the help of a cavalry captain. In complete despair because he thought the war was lost, he wrote a letter considering suicide ('adieu pour jamais')

withdrawing east again while the Austrian army withdrew to Silesia and Sachsen. Meanwhile, Frederick had resupplied, and within some weeks his army was rebuilt to approximately 35,000 soldiers. In a letter to his brother Heinrich, Frederick called this form of luck "the miracle of the House of Brandenburg", luck which would repeat itself later with the death of Tsarina Elisabeth in January 1762 [32]. During the summer months while Prussia was licking its wounds, the army of the German empire had conquered most of Sachsen. An effort to retake these areas brought a confrontation in the battle of Maxen where a Prussian army was beaten by von Daun [3,25].

Meanwhile, the French planned to invade Britain during 1759 by accumulating troops near the mouth of the Loire and concentrating their Brest and Toulon fleets. However, two defeats at sea prevented this. In August, the Mediterranean fleet under La Clue-Sabran was scattered by a larger British fleet under Boscawen during the battle of Lagos. In the battle of Quiberon Bay on 20 November, the British admiral Hawke with 23 ships of the line caught the French Brest fleet with 21 ships of the line under marshal de Conflans and sank, captured, or forced many of them aground, putting an end to the French plans [2].

1760

The geopolitical outlook of the Confederates Prussia, Hanover, Brunswick, Hesse-Kassel, and Britain within Europe was far from positive. In the colonies in America and India, France was losing ground and influence to Britain, but on the continent it would be just a matter of time before the combined powers of Russia, France, and Austria prevailed with their much larger armies [3,25]. Apart from the complex logistics of provisioning large armies and moving on the battlefields with the poor communication abilities at that time, the lack of cooperation between the large armies played an important role here. Finishing the war in August 1759 by crushing Frederick's army and taking Berlin would have been easy, but this chance was ignored by mutual irritation between Saltykow and von Daun. Saltykow said that he had won two battles and that it was now the turn of the Austrians to win two.

In the west, Ferdinand of Brunswick had to send a substantial part of his army to support the decimated Prussian army. Consequently, he had to follow a more defensive strategy in Westphalia and Hesse. Meanwhile, the ambition of the French was to retake Hanover and Hesse, leaving the fight with Prussia to Russia and Austria.

Although the financial resources probably remained limited, a somewhat more stable funding of the three brothers Stricker had been set up via payments through the merchant Gottlieb Käuffelin in Frankfurt am Main [35]:

"To lieutenant von Stricker of the acquired Holsteinischen Regiment. His Majesty was so generous to give you a payment of 150 rigsdalers. You can obtain this from Mr. Gottlieb Käuffelin in Franckfurt am Maijn who received orders to pay you this sum in March in Ehrenbreitstein after showing him this correspondence."

Gottlieb Käuffelin was a respected citizen of Frankfurt am Main and registered as an agent of the Kur-Pfalz region in the State Almanac [36]. Apparently, he functioned as a financially trusted party for the Danish War Office. The banking system of today was non-existent at that time. Payment was by correspondence like this one, commonly used between trusted parties. Of course, Käuffelin received a separate letter from the Danish War Office by post or special couriers as there were more Danish officers serving in the French army. For instance, on 2 April 1760, the Danish War Office sent another payment of 302 rigsdalers to 1st lieutenant Ezechias Hinrich and of 200 rigsdalers to his older brother 2nd lieutenant Johan Christian von Stricker, but also a payment of 200 rigsdalers to a 1st lieutenant von Pogrell [37]. In a letter from the Danish War Office of 2 August, apart from 300 rigsdalers for captain Carl Alexander von Stricker [38], the same amount was promised to be obtainable from Gottlieb Käuffelin by captain de Biellardt from Strasbourg, lieutenants Rützhaub and Hey, captain von Hefselberg from Hanover, and lieutenant Georg Friederich Louis [38].

Although Carl Alexander later wrote that he received double payment [4], this was probably not enough to live on during these war years. Life during a campaign in enemy countries was surely much more expensive than the regular daily non-combatant military life in Denmark. Although basic food was mostly provided, it had to be bought locally during a shortage. Even if available at all, food for so many hungry soldiers became expensive. On the other hand, it is likely that the armies simply took whatever they could get.

But equipment, too, was a challenge. For instance, the regiment captains usually paid for a part of the uniform [1]. The muskets were provided (some 25,000 were produced each year in St. Etienne and Charleville [1]). But the extra costs for an aide-de-camp officer may have been higher than usual. This led to a constant shortage of money, and a regular request for support from Copenhagen. On 29 July 1760, Carl Alexander Stricker wrote a very urgent plea for financial support [39]. He emphasized that foreign volunteers were financially in a very unfavorable position, especially during campaigns. He had already borrowed money from his brothers who were themselves in a desperate position. He stated that he wanted to continue participating in these campaigns. He requested an amount of 500 rigsdalers and said that he had

to stop participation if he would not receive further financial support from Copenhagen [39]. In response, the Danish War Office wrote on 12 August [40]:

"His Majesty agreed that you will receive a sum of 300 rigsdalers which will be paid on receipt by Gottlieb Käuffelin in Frankfurt. I hope that this takes away some of your money problems. I will do my best to get permission for another 200 rigsdalers in due course."

Indeed, this war commissioner kept his word as on 20 September 1760, a message was sent via the same route that Carl Alexander could obtain from Käuffelin an extra 200 rigsdalers. His brother Johan Christian received a payment of the same amount [41]. So, Carl Alexander's letter – writing in an extremely polite style without loss of the utmost urgency of its contents – had apparently been effective. It is likely that his role of aide-de-camp of field marshal de Broglie was helpful here. After all, a Danish captain and volunteer without any financial resources begging for money within his regiment would probably not be considered as an advertisement for the Danish kingdom. Especially Carl Alexander Stricker was relatively successful in getting reimbursement from Copenhagen, also thanks to his regular production of geographical maps and reports of battles [4]:

"On 5 September 1759, His Majesty the king of Denmark promoted me to Captain in his Life Regiment and gave me 400 rigsdalers for my conduct during both campaigns and for the reports that I submitted. Overall, in each out of six campaigns I received awards of 100, 200, or 300 rigsdalers from the king for my submitted maps and reports. Altogether 4,000 rigsdalers, apart from my doubled regular salary."

During 1760, the German regiments in the French army were reorganized.

"On 1 March 1760, it was decided by the French high command that the 2nd battalion Löwenthal would be incorporated in the regiment La Marck and the 1st battalion in the regiment Anhalt. At the same time, the ranks of second lieutenant and second captain would be reformed. This took place on 6 April, when I was placed as lieutenant reformée in the Regiment La Marck in the company under the command of captain von Grandjean."

Uniform of an officer in the regiment La Marck [34]

By the end of January 1760, the regiment La Marck had taken its winter quarters in the third line of the French army along the Rhine and the Main. By mid March, the regiment was billeted in Bacharach, still in the third line. By May 23, the regiment was part of the second line of de

Broglie's Army. Both brothers Carl Alexander and Ezechias made favorable steps in their military careers in 1760. Carl Alexander wrote in his letter of 1804 [4]:

"On 20 August 1759, because of the death of general Count Gallifet, I started as aide-de-camp of lieutenant-general Marquis du Mesnil, who commanded a cavalry division. But because he remained in Frankfurt as Governor, I started in 1760 as aide-de-camp with field-marshal de Broglie."

Marshal Victor-François Duke de Broglie

But also Ezechias made such a career. Ezechias Stricker wrote [82]:

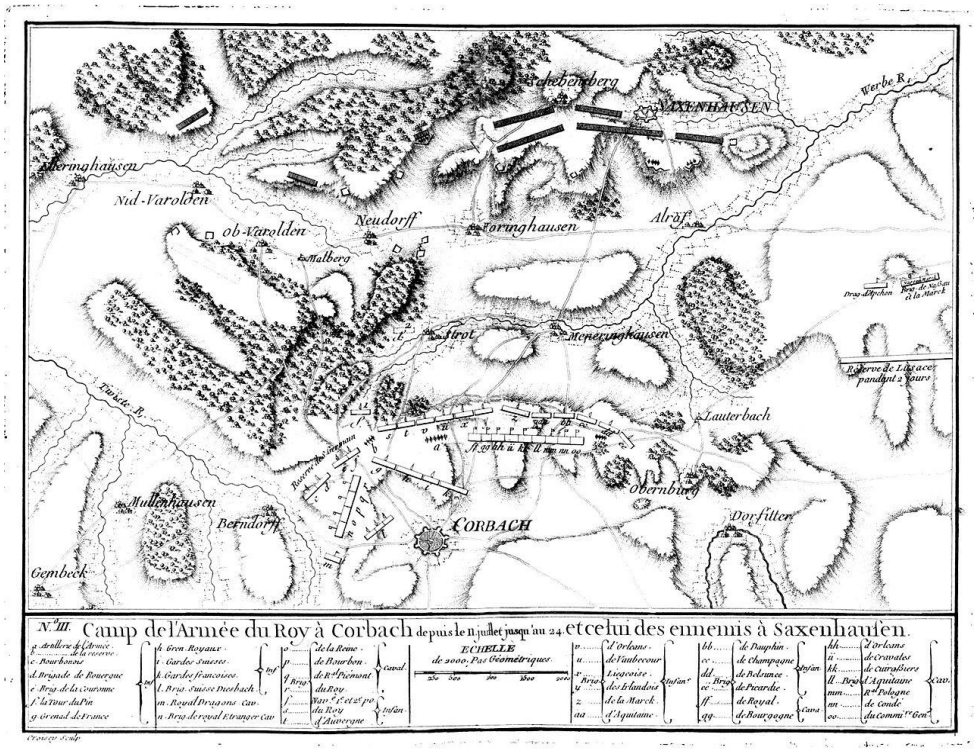
"On 11 June 1760, I started as aide-de-camp with his Highness lieutenant-general Count de Ségur and participated further in his military campaign."

On 16 June 1760, the French army of the lower Rhine, under the command of Count Saint-Germain, had passed the Rhine to support the main army of de Broglie in its offensive in Hesse. By the end of June, de Broglie had already seized Marburg. On 4 July, he instructed Saint-Germain to quit Dortmund and to march towards Corbach to join with the French main army. Ferdinand of Brunswick was informed of Broglie's maneuvers on 8 July [42]. He attached the hereditary prince of Brunswick to the vanguard and ordered general von Luckner to occupy the hills of Sachsenhausen and Corbach while Ferdinand followed them with his main army. In the morning of 9 July, Ferdinand encamped near Wildungen, sending general Kielmansegg to Frankenberg. The same day, the French main army passed the Eder river at Frankenberg and

Clausen's Brigade marched on Corbach to observe the movements of the Confederates [3,25,42]. Clausen came into contact with Luckner's Corps.

De Broglie ordered their immediate dislodgement and sent an infantry brigade to support Clausen and to guard the narrow gorges on the plain of Corbach. However, the French could not mount an attack before nightfall. Meanwhile, part of the army of the lower Rhine under Saint-Germain had reached Fritzlar Abbey. De Broglie ordered Saint-Germain to quicken the pace. Clausen's Brigade took position in the woods to the left of Corbach, and de Broglie personally led 6 brigades towards Corbach to support Saint-Germain's attack. On 10 July, the corps of Ferdinand of Brunswick and of the hereditary prince resumed their march. The hereditary prince at the head of the vanguard of the Allied army had already made a junction with Kielmansegg's Corps. Ferdinand sent forward 6 squadrons of British and Hessian dragoons and a British light artillery brigade with 9 cannons to reinforce the hereditary prince before the combat. Furthermore, a detachment of 6 battalions was following closely [3,25,42].

During the night, the corps of the hereditary prince advanced from Sachsenhausen in two columns. The right column, consisting of 7 battalions and 7 squadrons under Lieutenant-General Count Kielmansegg, marched on the road leading to Corbach by way of Höringhausen and reached the forest east of Corbach. The left column, consisting of 7 battalions and 4 squadrons, advanced by way of Meineringhausen and occupied the hills south of that forest up to the watchtower, where Luckner's detachment was already posted. The artillery (12 field artillery pieces) took position near the watchtower.



Battle of Corbach with the regiment La Marck [Z]

Overall, the hereditary prince commanded 17 battalions and 13 squadrons, excluding hussars and jägers, who were deployed in front of the new positions. He reached the hills near Corbach. The front of the positions of the hereditary prince was quite strong. However, there were forests on both flanks, blocking the line of sight. Furthermore, since they were sparse, these forests did not offer any suitable protection. In addition, from the Galgenberg, east of Corbach, a ridge stretched northeast, hiding from view any movement from Corbach against the right wing of the Allies. On 10 July at daybreak, the Allied hussars and jägers engaged in skirmishes with French hussars near Corbach. The French hussars discovered a column of Allied infantry.

In the morning, the hereditary prince received a message from Duke Ferdinand, informing him that he had set off from his camp near Wildungen with the main army during the night and was marching towards Sachsenhausen. Ferdinand instructed him to hold the hills near Corbach to cover the deployment of the main army at Sachsenhausen. Ferdinand also told him that he had sent forward 6 cavalry squadrons and 9 artillery pieces and that 6 battalions were following behind. Initially, the prince had only a vague idea of the real size of the force opposing him. So far, only outposts had been reported to him, but they seemed to be constantly reinforced.

When the French began to extend northwards by way of Corbach, he ordered von Kielmansegg to occupy the western edge of the forest, east of Corbach, with 8 battalions. At 1000 hours, Clausen reported that a considerable Allied force could be seen on the hills near Corbach. De Broglie went to the highest building of Corbach to observe the Allied dispositions and saw them emerging from a forest. At about the same time, Saint-Germain personally reached the Galgenberg and informed de Broglie that only 2 of his brigades and parts of his light troops were already in position. His cavalry could not join before 1500 hours, and the rest of his troops could not arrive before the next day. De Broglie instructed Saint-Germain to support the Volontaires de Flandre with his 2 infantry brigades. Soon afterward, the Royal-Suédois and Castellas infantry brigades arrived with a few pieces [3,25,42].

Kielmansegg's wing soon came under heavy fire from French light troops having appeared in the woods on the other side of a small forest valley. He managed to drive them back. Marshal de Broglie could now from his observation post on the Galgenberg, east of Corbach, see the corps of the prince deployed on the hills of Corbach,. He immediately ordered 10 squadrons as well as 2 infantry brigades with 8 heavy artillery pieces to advance towards Corbach. From what he could see, de Broglie considered that the Allied corps deployed on the hills was not particularly strong, and he decided to attack its right wing. To carry out this attack, further forces were now sent out from de Broglie's main army to Corbach. Two infantry brigades then entered the forest and advanced against the right wing of the Confederates.

Meanwhile, to the left of these 2 brigades, 2 other infantry brigades swung even further north and advanced against Kielmansegg's battalions. A forest battle ensued where the French engaged with superior forces. But when a Confederate reinforcement marching from Sachsenhausen approached the battlefield, the French attack staggered. Inaccurate reports on the strength of the Allied troops arriving from Sachsenhausen led de Broglie to believe that the entire Allied army was nearby [3,25,42].

Under these circumstances, carrying out the attack seemed hopeless to him, and he decided to disengage. Most of the French brigades already engaged had received orders to retreat when de Broglie realised that the enemy reinforcement was in fact minor. He immediately ordered a resumption of the attack, and Saint-Germain advanced once more with two of his brigades into

the woods and advanced against the flank and rear of the Allies. Meanwhile, the French launched a frontal attack on Kielmansegg's positions at the western edge of the forest with two recently arrived brigades, supported by 24 artillery pieces, while the right wing of the Allies could oppose them with only 14 field pieces. Kielmansegg's troops were unable to sustain the enveloping attack against their right wing. Around midday, the Allied units were driven into the woods, and being surrounded on their right wing and pushed back in the forest, began to give way in disorder. Similarly, the Confederate troops deployed along the western edge of the forest could no longer resist the forces hurled at them. They retreated, abandoning the artillery of the right wing, whose carriages and carts had been shot to pieces; most of its horses had been killed. A strong corps of 24 French cavalry squadrons then started to appear on the battlefield. The position of the Allies had now become untenable, and Duke Ferdinand, who had personally reached the battlefield, issued orders to retire towards the main body of the army deployed near Sachsenhausen. The charge of the French cavalry on retiring troops near the Wartberg watchtower hill threatened to turn the retreat into a rout, and the 7 field pieces planted nearby were in danger of being lost.

So hard were Allied units pressed that the hereditary prince only extricated them by putting himself at the head of 3 British dragoon squadrons and leading them to a desperate charge against the French cavalry. This cavalry combat bought time for the Allied infantry to resume its retreat in two groups via Höringhausen and Meineringhausen towards Sachsenhausen. The 1st dragoon guards, having gone into this charge with 90 men, returned with only 24. The prince had received an unpleasant reverse, and the French had secured their first objective, the junction of the armies of Saint-Germain and de Broglie, with success [3,25,42].

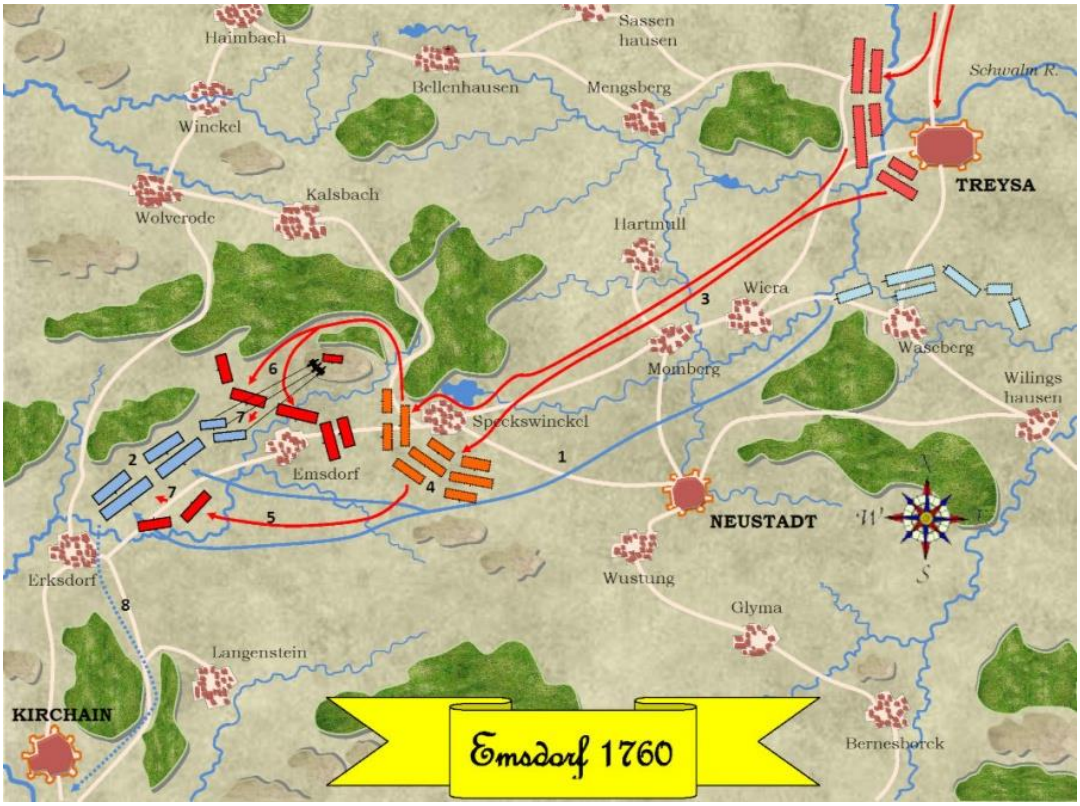
Ezechias participated in the fight around Corbach with the regiment La Marck as can be seen in the picture above [regiment 'Z']. He summarized this in an understated tone [82]:

"On 10 July 1760, I participated in the fights around Corbach; they were won by marshal Duke de Broglie over the hereditary prince of Brunswick."

On 15 July, Dillenburg castle surrendered to the French but on the next day, the hereditary prince surprised and captured a French brigade at Emsdorf. However, he was unable to capture the food and equipment depots and the bakery at Marburg [3,54]. One day earlier, Ferdinand of Brunswick was informed that a large French brigade of 6 battalions under major-general Baron von Glaubitz was on its way from Marburg to Ziegenhain to cover the French food and equipment stores in Marburg. Ferdinand ordered the prince to take command of a corps of 6 battalions and to attack this brigade, take the food and equipment stores, and destroy the important field bakery. On the morning of 15 July, the prince marched rapidly southward, being joined on the way by Luckner's hussars and British cavalry. He discovered that the French brigade was encamped farther to the west, near the village of Emsdorf. Because his own troops were exhausted by a long march, the prince halted for the night at Treysa. The Confederate army now had an occasion to take its revenge for the defeat at Corbach five days earlier.

From Speckswinkel, the Hatzbach stream flowed west, in a deep valley through a forest north of Erksdorf [54]. A tract of open land, traversed by a few hedges, gently sloped from the Hatzbach to Erksdorf. A forest extended to the north and west of Emsdorf towards the Hatzbach. To the

north of the French camp, between Emsdorf and Erksdorf, several streams ran through a swampy valley. To the south of the camp was an open piece of land. The French were posted at the mouth of the Hatzbach valley, fronting to the northeast, astride of the two roads that lead from Kirchhain to Wolverode and to Treysa. Their right lay in back of the village of Erksdorf and their left in front of the village of Emsdorf, resting in a forest some 5 km long extending to Allendorf. The camp extended about 4 kilometers. The German regiment Anhalt occupied the centre of the camp [3,54]. There were very few advanced posts to guard the approach to the camp. Johan Christian Stricker was lieutenant in this regiment. French cavalry was encamped on the right wing to the south of Erksdorf while other regiments were posted to the west of this village and on the left wing.



Geographical depiction of the battle at Emsdorf [54]

On the morning of 16 July 1760, the hereditary prince advanced from Treysa and moved forward, with some of his mounted troops only, to reconnoiter the French position. The prince and general Luckner entered the forest, but found no French sentries. They moved forward through the grain fields to within 1 kilometer of the French camp but saw neither sentries, patrols, nor guards. Furthermore, the village of Erksdorf itself, though within less than 2 kilometers of the camp, was not occupied. They returned satisfied with what they had seen. Around the same time, the French commander, unaware of the enemy, sent one battalion to Marburg where it would be assigned to guarding depots. He intended to resume his march towards Jesberg around noon, after distributing provisions to his troops [3,54].

Meanwhile, the prince waited at Speckswinkel for his infantry to join him. His infantry had marched 11 km from Treysa through the villages of Wiera and Momberg before reaching Speckswinkel around noon, only 2 kilometers from the French right wing. The prince decided to approach the French camp through the forest north of Emsdorf, thus moving around the French left wing. He also decided on a cavalry attack on the French right wing at Erksdorf. He posted a detachment of infantry and cavalry under command of von Luckner with 3 guns, in a hollow near Speckswinkel, 1.5 kilometers before Erksdorf. The detachment was instructed to attack the French right wing at Erksdorf as soon as musket fire could be heard coming from the French left wing. Then, taking the 5 remaining battalions with some light troops and 11 guns, the prince made a wide detour through the woods up to Burgholz, west of Emsdorf, to move around the French positions. The few French outposts in the forest between Burgholz and Emsdorf were captured before they could alert the camp.

Meanwhile, bread arrived at the camp of von Glaubitz. Around 1400 hours, the Confederate troops opened fire on the French positions [54]. The French were completely surprised during the bread distribution and rushed to their arms in waistcoats. They initially thought that it was a simple skirmish with casual Confederate troops but soon realised that they were facing a much larger force. Their right flank was immediately attacked, but the French regiment managed to retreat, narrowly avoiding encirclement. It lost 300 men and all its guns in this first engagement.

During this combat, the regiment Anhalt had formed to the southeast of Emsdorf, but Confederate cannon fire disorganised its ranks. French hussars tried to stop the advancing cavalry but were routed. French light troops and part of the Anhalt regiment then opened fire on the enemy cavalry, but they were charged in flank and rear. In this action, Anhalt lost its two cannons. Surrounded by Confederate troops, von Glaubitz ordered the retreat. The entire French force abandoned its camp and retreated through the woods in their rear towards Langenstein.

Here, von Glaubitz managed to assemble a rearguard that momentarily held the pursuing Confederates in check at the edge of the woods to the northeast of Langenstein, while the rest of his force fled [3,54]. Confederate infantry hurried on beyond them to bar their way over the river Ohm to the west, while their cavalry stationed itself across the road to Amöneburg, and charging full upon them thrust them back from that side. With some difficulty the French repelled the attack and turned about to the southeast toward a wood not far away, hoping to pass through it and so to escape to the south. The Confederate infantry could not keep pace with the pursuit after it reached Langenstein but reached the Ohm River and took possession of the stone bridge near Kirchhain.

On arriving at the southern edge of the wood, the French found every outlet blocked by the prince’s mounted troops. Therefore, they turned back through the wood again, trying to reach Niederklein, southeast of Kirchhain. The French infantry came out of the woods north and west of Niederklein, hoping that marshy ground would protect them from further pursuit. However, it had not marched over the plain for more than 1,5 km before the Confederate cavalry was upon them again and crashed into their middle, cutting them down by scores and capturing an entire battalion [54].

The hereditary prince, still close at their heels with his cavalry, thereupon surrounded them and summoned them to surrender. Von Glaubitz surrendered, no longer counting on further resistance from his exhausted troops. The French camp had been surprised at noon, and the last fragment of their force capitulated at 1900 hours, brave but unable to shake off the persistent

enemy that had hunted them for nearly 30 kilometers [3,54]. Overall, the Confederates lost 162 killed, 152 wounded, and 6 missing. The French lost 7 officers and more than 500 men killed, 34 officers and 577 men wounded, 300 men missing. Furthermore, a large number had been taken prisoners: 177 officers and 2,482 privates, including major-general von Glaubitz and brigadier Prince Erdmann von Anhalt-Cöthen. Johan Christian Stricker was wounded during this battle and taken prisoner; he was released during 1761.

Emsdorf, 16th July, 1760

From July 24, Broglie successfully maneuvred to force Ferdinand of Brunswick out of his advantageous positions, and his main army marched to Volkmarsen while de Muy marched downstream along the Diemel to the town of Warburg, and Stainville's Corps besieged the fortress of Ziegenhain.

Broglie's maneuvres aimed at cutting the Confederates off from Paderborn and Lippstadt. Reacting to these moves, Ferdinand sent the hereditary prince with 10 grenadier battalions and 8 squadrons and general Spörcken's corps to Körbecke to secure the passage of the river Diemel. Together, the two joint forces amounted to 23 battalions and 22 squadrons, with 26 heavy guns, in total some 14,578 men on the day of battle, not including Confederate troops already posted at the Diemel passage at the town of Liebenau.

On 30 July, moving towards Kassel, de Broglie marched to the town of Zierenberg [3,43]. In this way, he moved away leaving de Muy's corps dangerously isolated at Warburg. The prince reconnoitered de Muy's position and recommended that his own corps should turn its left flank, using the heights of Daseburg and Dössel to cover the march and seizing the unoccupied district of Heinsberg near Warburg, while Ferdinand with the main army would advance against its front. As soon as Ferdinand was informed of the situation, he agreed and prepared his army. The prince wanted to make his flanking march during the night. However, Ferdinand decided to cross the

Diemel with his entire army and ordered the prince and Spörcken to wait until his army had crossed the river before setting off from their present positions.

Ferdinand's general plan of attack was that Spörcken's corps and the prince should advance westward in two columns from Körbecke and form up in three lines between the watchtower and Papenheim, so as to fall on de Muy's left flank and rear, while Ferdinand crossing the Diemel at Liebenau should attack his centre and right [3,43]. As the Confederate camp between Liebenau and Körbecke lay about 13 kilometers from de Muy's, and as Ferdinand's camp lay between Imminghausen and Calden, some 24 kilometers to the south of the Diemel from Liebenau, the operation called for extreme quiet and precision. On July 30, Confederate troops occupied the Desenberg hill, and in the evening Ferdinand's main army set off from its camp near Calden and crossed the Diemel between Trendelburg and Liebenau during the night. They arrived near Körbecke later than at the appointed hour, however, because passage of the Diemel had caused much delay. Ferdinand then bent southward, at his best speed, to support the prince who, after much anxious waiting, decided to begin the flanking march without waiting for the entire army to have completed the crossing.

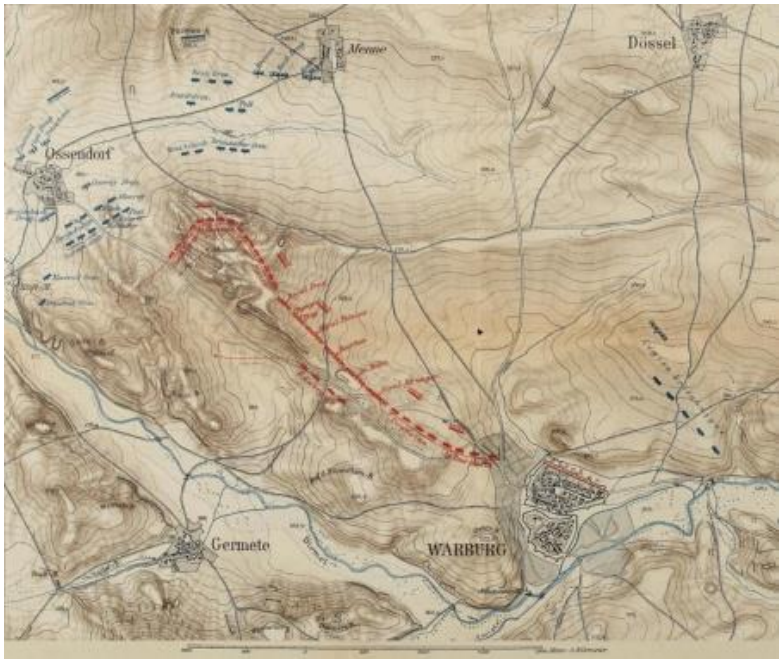
They marched from Körbecke unnoticed in two columns, hidden by a thick fog, for more than an hour. Just before the fog formed, the prince had seen the first troops of Ferdinand appear on a mountaintop on the right. The prince's right column made a long detour north of the village of Grosseneder and marched across the woods near Nörde. Here, he moved in three lines towards the hills at the rear of the French positions. The left column marched via Körbecke, Lütgeneder, and Hohenwepel, north of Menne.

With these dispositions, the prince was outflanking the French on their left and threatening their rear. On 31 July, he launched an attack on the right wing of de Muy, who knew that Confederate troops were posted nearby and was worried about the dense fog preventing him from observing the vicinity. He sent lieutenant-general Marquis de Castries forward to reconnoiter. When during the morning the fog lifted, Castries found himself facing Confederate troops near the Desenberg hill. He engaged them and momentarily drove them back to Rösebeck, seizing the Desenberg in front of the French positions from where he could see many columns (Ferdinand's main army) advancing from the Diemel river, but he did not notice the two columns making a flank march. De Muy, who had joined Castries on the Desenberg, hurried back to deploy his troops in order of battle. For his part, Castries retired with his detachment to move closer to the French camp, leaving only his rearguard to occupy the Desenberg [3,43].

General de Muy, with de Broglie's rearguard of 18,000 foot and horse, occupied a high ridge across a bend on the north bank of the Diemel, facing northeast, with his back to the river with two bridges across it, southwest of Warburg and at Germete. De Muy's right flank leaned on Warburg and his left flank at the village of Ossendorf, some 3 kilometers to the northwest. To the left of the French rear rose a strongly protruding circular hill. Between this hill and the river lies the somewhat higher, narrow Heinsberg, where an old watchtower stood, while the village of Papenheim lay in front of the French left wing.

The positions of the French offered a clear view to the east and northeast to the high, conical Desenberg southwest of Daseburg and to the range of hills extending from there to the northwest. In fact, de Muy's corps occupied an untoward position with woods to the north of its front, obscuring the Confederate position. The watchtower on the Heinsberg loomed over its camp; from it, all moves could be observed. Its right was anchored on the weakly fortified town of Warburg; its left was dominated by heights; to its rear was a river with steep banks. It had only two bridges that were half blocked by his baggage and mobile hospital; and for a retreat there was nothing but the mountain passes from where it had flowed. The water in the Diemel was quite low at that time of the year, and passage was possible in several places.

De Muy, who expected an attack from the east, deployed his corps facing in this direction. He placed 4 infantry brigades on the heights of Menne. Two other brigades were placed on the right close to Warburg. The centre was occupied with the cavalry facing a very extensive plain. One brigade formed a reserve on a small hill behind the left of the cavalry. The artillery was disposed in 5 batteries in front of the line on the big hill east of Ossendorf. Around noon, the right column of the Confederates appeared and began to form near Ossendorf, facing southeast. At the same time, the left column became visible near Menne and began to march between this village and Ossendorf. As both columns deployed, their cavalry formed a third line behind the two infantry lines. The heavy artillery took position in part west of Menne and in part near Ossendorf [3,43].



Battle of Warburg on 31 July 1759

At 1330 hours, the hereditary prince, having posted his artillery on the outskirts of Ossendorf and Papenheim, opened fire as the signal for attack. The two British grenadier battalions, marching under lieutenant-colonel Beckwith at the head of the right column, went through Ossendorf and

advanced on the road leading from Ossendorf to the Diemel river. The success of the Confederates' attack depended on the capture of the Heinsberg in front of Ossendorf and in rear of the French position. De Muy realised too late that his left wing was in serious danger as the Confederates were heading for the Heinsberg, and he sent a brigade to seize it before them. Noting this, the British colonel Beckwith with 10 grenadiers ran forward, keeping out of sight of the French, to reach the hill earlier. The prince himself with 30 more men hurried after him; and with this handful of men, they occupied the crest of the hill. French infantry arriving on the scene a little later found itself greeted by sharp fire, and, being unable to see the numbers opposed to it, halted for 10 minutes to allow its second battalion to come up. The delay gave time for an entire battalion of British grenadiers to join Beckwith's little party; and then two battalions of French infantry attacked in earnest.The combat between French and British, at odds of two against one, became most fierce and protracted [3,43].

However, the disparity of numbers was too great, and the British – after a gallant struggle – were beginning to give way until further reinforcement redressed the balance of the fight. They were soon joined by the prince, who had 2 artillery pieces brought there with great difficulty. At 1400 hours, seeing the attack on the French left flank, Castries retired and sent troops into Warburg to occupy the town. He then marched with the rest of his detachment to support the French left. After his departure, British troops threw the French out of Warburg and plundered the town.

Meanwhile, De Muy ordered his left wing brigades to form in two lines, and the engagement began. A furious battle broke out around the watchtower and on the slopes of the Heinsberg. However, the Hanoverian units following the British grenadiers, which had initially been delayed near Ossendorf while maneuvering around the artillery, also joined the fight. Castries and de Ségur launched five successive attacks on the Confederate positions with the greatest courage and, notwithstanding their superiority, forced them to give way several times. As aide-de-camp of lieutenant-general de Ségur, Ezechias Heinrich Stricker participated in these attacks and wrote [82]:

"On 31 July, I participated in the fight near Warburg under the command of his highness lieutenant-general Marquis de Muy where we were beaten by his highness the Duke of Brunswick. I was severely wounded in my left leg, and my horse was killed."

The combined attacks of the Hanoverians and Hessians forced the French left wing to withdraw, and the French brigades were driven back. Numerous runaways rushed down the slopes towards the Diemel river. British dragoons were then let loose upon the broken French battalions, killing many soldiers and taking many prisoners. De Muy saw that his positions had become untenable and ordered the two brigades of the right infantry wing to retire across the Diemel river and take position on the heights south of Germete. He also ordered his cavalry to follow his infantry right wing [3,43].

In the meantime, after desperate but fruitless efforts, it had been found that the infantry of Ferdinand's Army could not hope to arrive in time to take part in the action. Ferdinand therefore ordered to advance with the 22 squadrons of British cavalry, followed by 2 British light artillery brigades. They advanced towards the battlefield at the top of their speed for more than 8

kilometers. De Muy's attention was suddenly called to the advance of troops upon his front. Granby's cavalry, after two hours of trotting, was finally within sight of the French positions.

Granby at once turned them upon the cavalry of de Muy's right wing. The pace was checked for a brief moment as the squadrons formed in two lines for the attack. The largest part of the French cavalry was already retiring. Only 12 squadrons opposed the British cavalry. The British cavalry went into gallop, and the lines came thundering on. De Muy sent forward 2 cavalry brigades to protect the right flank of his infantry. One French squadron turned and fled without awaiting the shock, but the other one plunged gallantly down on the British flank and overthrew it. But the remaining British cavalry quickly came up to liberate their comrades and forced the French to withdraw in the greatest disorder.

Part of the numerically superior British cavalry pursued the fleeing French squadrons while another part wheeled round upon the flank and rear of the French infantry, which retired towards the Diemel. After 4 hours of combat, some of the Confederate battalions attacked towards the French bridges on the Diemel. The French cavalry, dragoons, and the left wing infantry began to withdraw over the bridges. The two bridges being half blocked by baggage, the rest of the retreating troops were forced to pass the river at fords or to swim across it, although two French brigades were formed on the heights in front of the bridges to cover the retreat.

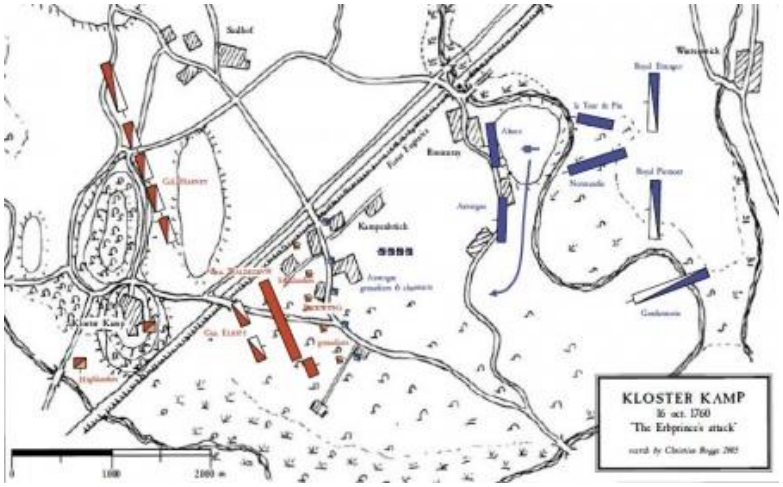
De Muy aimed to defend the line of the Diemel, but 2 British light artillery brigades came down to the river at a gallop, detached the guns on the elevation west of Warburg, and shot on the fugitives so destructively that they were prevented from re-forming. Duke Ferdinand authorised British troops to cross the Diemel and to pursue the French up to Welda. General de Muy tried to assemble the rest of his corps on the hills south of the Diemel and then retired unmolested to Volkmarsen, 10 kilometers south of Warburg. De Broglie, at the head of the main army, had been delayed by the thick fog and took full responsibility for this defeat [3,43].

During this action, the French lost 1,600 men (killed and wounded); 78 officers and 2,100 men were taken prisoner, while 28 ammunition wagons and 12 artillery pieces were lost. The Confederates lost 66 officers and 1,173 men of whom 800 were British, including 590 men from the British cavalry. For Ferdinand, the victory effectively opened the way for his retreat to Westphalia.

On 22 September 1760, during the campaign in Westphalia, Ferdinand's objective was to prepare an offensive on the lower Rhine with the aim to take the fortress of Wesel [3,44]. On the same day, a powerful train of siege artillery, under the count of Lippe-Bückeburg, marched away from Geismar for Wesel. On 25 September, the prince followed from Warburg with 15,000 men to cover the siege of Wesel. A few days later, Ferdinand sent reinforcements of 12 battalions and 4 cavalry regiments to the prince. On 30 September, the prince appeared in front of Wesel. The French commander prepared the town to resist attack, destroying the bridge across the Rhine at the mouth of the Lippe. The prince decided that the town could not be taken by storm and prepared for a formal siege. Heavy siege artillery was brought down from Holland with bridging equipment. Crossings were established above and below the town, and the army moved to the west bank to block any advancing French forces.

Meanwhile, lieutenant-general de Castries was marching with a relief force, despite the dreadful state of the roads, along a route 80 kilometers further to the south of the prince's force, and on 12 October, he crossed the Rhine at Cologne. Castries had assembled a corps of 32 battalions and 38 squadrons at Neuss and marched to Moers on 14 October. Ezechias Stricker participated in this campaign. The vanguard of de Castries reached Rheinberg, forcing a Confederate advanced post to withdraw. When the prince heard of the approach of a French relief force, he decided to attack it. Accordingly, he left a few battalions in the trenches and marched to the enemy despite his numerical inferiority with 21 battalions and 22 squadrons. On October 15, the prince encamped at Ossenberg on the left bank of the Rhine. The same day, de Castries took a strong position behind the Eugene Canal running from Geldern to Rheinberg [3,44].

In the morning of 15 October, leaving 3 battalions and 4 squadrons towards Rheinberg visibly in front of the French right, the prince marched in dead silence towards the abbey Kloster Kamp with his main force of 18 battalions and 20 squadrons. Castries had taken up a position behind the Eugene Canal, facing northwest, with his right resting on Rheinberg, and with the abbey of Kloster Kamp, on the opposite side of the canal, before his left front. Immediately before his left, but on his own side of the canal, stood the village of Kampenbrück, consisting of several scattered houses with gardens, ditches, and hedges. In front and to the left (western) side of Kampenbrück was a morass covered by sparse and stunted trees. Paths had been cut to a bridge that connected the village with the abbey on the other side of the canal. Across this bridge lay the prince's only route to penetrating into the French camp; and de Castries had been careful to guard the passage by posting no less than 2,000 irregular troops in and about the abbey. The only possible chance for the prince was a surprise attack [3,44].



On 16 October, the Confederate vanguard reached a French outpost 2 kilometers north of Kloster Kamp. Despite strict orders for silence, they fired on this post; it was soon taken. This sporadic fire did not alarm the French troops who believed that it was simply a patrol. The Confederate

army managed to reach the bridge over the Eugene canal uneventfully, thus cutting off a French corps in the abbey from the French main body.

Lieutenant-general Count Philippe-Henri de Ségur

This isolated corps was then attacked and made the decision, despite the darkness, to assemble and retire towards Geldern. While the muskets were still crackling loudly around the abbey walls, the prince moved silently on with British grenadiers entering into the woods towards the village of Kampenbrück until a French alarm was given. Hereafter, the French left wing straightened out, but the darkness of the night prevented it from taking any other precautions. The prince resumed his march so stealthily that he had passed the canal, and an infantry brigade had seized the village of Kampenbrück, before the French were aware of his presence. But a French soldier posted in the thickets in front of Kampenbrück came into contact with British grenadiers. A captain of infantry then shouted “Here is the enemy!” before falling, pierced by several bayonets. This was reported, and de Ségur immediately rushed to the spot with an infantry battalion and advanced into the village where he was wounded and captured [3,44,51]. Later, Ezechias Stricker, aide-de-camp to de Ségur, wrote [82]:

“On 16 October 1760, I was involved in the fighting around Kampenbrück at the lower Rhine under command of his highness lieutenant-general Marquis de Castries; we won it from the Hereditary Prince of Brunswick. My horse was shot dead under me and my commanding general

de Ségur was wounded and taken prisoner."


De marſch wierd wel geëxecuteerd, onze Troupen zyn in dezelfde ordre en ſtandvaſtigheyd met welke zy gevogten hadden geretireerd; de Luytenant Generaal de Segur en verſcheyden andere Franſche Officieren en Gemeenen als Krygsgevangen, en een Vaandel beneevens eenige Stukken Geſchut, als blyken van hun getoonde couduite, met zig voerende. Ons verlies beloopt op omtrent duyzend Man. De Vyandeu heb-

B E K E N T M

De Gecommitteerde Raad M. BENNEMA en in qlté, præſent

Schuure met het Regt van Beklemminge van 42 Graaſen, by Jooſ

Lieutenant-general de Ségur was taken prisoner at Kloster Kamp as reported in the 'Opregte Groninger Courant' of 24 October 1760 [51]

De Castries immediately issued orders to deploy 4 battalions of infantry along the canal, their extreme left anchored on the marsh near Kampenbrück. He then led a further infantry brigade to the left wing as support; it took positions in the hedges and houses where these 2 brigades sustained repeated attacks.

With the advance of the Confederates stopped, Castries now had to figure out how to force them to withdraw their troops. An infantry brigade that just arrived was ordered to advance on the right through a wide opening ending in Kloster Kamp where the Confederates could be attacked in the rear. The guns of this brigade then opened fire on the left flank of the enemy, and a fierce combat ensued. The Confederates brought up reserve troops, and the fight swayed furiously back and forth until daylight.

At daybreak, a further eight French battalions arrived from the right while a corps in Rheinberg was ordered to leave 200 men in the town and to march to the battle area with the rest of the corps. The reserves of the Confederates were promptly and repeatedly ordered forward, but through some mistake they did not show up. The original two French infantry brigades had suffered heavily while repulsing the many attacks, and two further brigades were thrown in to give support. One of them entered into the hedges to stop the head of the Confederate column, but the small remaining force of British and Hanoverians fought desperately on [3,44].

As the action lasted over three hours without a definite outcome, de Castries went personally to the battle area to make the brigades charge at the point of the bayonet. The prince himself fell wounded from his horse. After a deadly combat lasting until noon, the Confederates, unable to drive the French out of their positions, were forced to retire to the town of Alpen. The French broke their ranks with loud cries of enthusiasm for the pursuit and entered into the heath near Kampenbrück despite orders given to them to keep their position. Then, British cavalry jumped down upon them, charging and breaking up 2 battalions completely and driving the survivors back, in confusion, into the hedges. Subsequently, a French infantry brigade fired on the British cavalry and stopped it, and French cavalry now came forward in overwhelming numbers and drove back the British squadrons. However, the charge of the British cavalry had given the

infantry time to retreat in good order and finally, the Confederate reserve appeared to cover the retiring troops. By noon, the battle of Kloster Kamp was over.

The Confederates lost approximately 1,600 killed and wounded soldiers while another 1,600 were taken prisoner. The prince had his horse killed under him and received a slight wound in a leg. Although the battle was considered a French victory, their losses were higher and amounted to approximately 2,000 soldiers. Furthermore, lieutenant-general de Ségur and brigadier-general de Wangen and 300 men were taken prisoner. The struggle was unusually lengthy and murderous, and the fire of the British was so rapid and deadly that 3 French brigades were almost wiped out of existence [3,44].

At the end of the campaign of 1760, the Confederates were leaving the French in possession of Hesse and the important cities Göttingen and Münden, which gave them easy access into Hanover and Brunswick. De Broglie deployed his right wing alongside the river Werra, leaving Göttingen in front of this wing. He also placed troops along the Werra, the Fulda, the Eder, and some smaller rivers. He deployed the first line of his left wing from Siegen to Siegburg, 26 km from Cologne, to link it with the Reserve of the Lower Rhine. Some of de Broglie's light troops were sent towards the borders of the duchy of Westphalia and of the county of Waldeck. The rest of his forces were quartered between the Lahn, the Rhine, and the Main rivers. Around December, the army went into its winter quarters. This meant that some troops went back to France because the logistics were easier and the provisioning cheaper. The year 1760 had been a heavy one for Ezechias Stricker who was severely wounded and had two horses shot from under him. But he was rewarded [82]:

"On 1 December, we arrived in Metz in order to remain in winter quarters in France. On 24 December, his highness the king of Denmark promoted me to Captain in his army."

1761

At the beginning of 1761, Ferdinand of Brunswick had launched a sudden and unexpected attack on the French winter quarters in Hesse. He successfully destroyed or took many supplies of the French army of Duke de Broglie, thus delaying the opening of the campaign. However, the Confederates failed to make any significant territorial gains in Hesse, and by the end of March, they were back to their initial winter quarters.

For months, both armies showed little activity, but the French strengthened their positions near Wesel and their positions in Hesse. Meanwhile, the Confederates strengthened the fortifications of Hameln, Münster, and Lippstadt. The Court of Versailles had decided that in 1761, it was time to make a massive effort and to finish the war by use of an overwhelming force. The army of the Rhine was increased to 100,000 men under Prince de Soubise, and that of the Main to 60,000 men under de Broglie.

Soubise was to advance from the Rhine against Ferdinand early in May and force him out of Westphalia and the cities of Münster and Lippstadt, while the Confederates would still be weakened and exhausted by the winter's campaign. Soubise's task in fact was simply to keep Ferdinand's army in motion until de Broglie's troops were refreshed and ready to advance either

to Hanover or to Hameln on the Weser. When Broglie thus occupied the attention of Ferdinand, Soubise would find himself with a free hand in an open field.

The weak points of the plan was that the two French armies were to act independently and that the stronger of them was entrusted to Soubise, an incompetent commander but a favorite of Madame de Pompadour. In any case, the outlook for Ferdinand was gloomy since at the very most he could field approximately 93,000 men against 160,000 on the French side.

On 13 April 1761, Ferdinand, selecting the least exhausted of his troops, sent a corps under the hereditary prince to the west of Münster to watch Soubise and was able within 10 weeks to render both his army and his transport fit to take the field. Soubise's army was known to be encumbered by a vast train of baggage. For instance, one cavalry squadron with a strength of 140 men travelled with no fewer than 1,200 horses attached to it. Due to this knowledge, all horse forage around Münster was destroyed, and every step was taken to frustrate the French in their advance to the east. On 21 April, a large store of hay, which the French had collected at Wesel, took fire. About 1,250,000 man rations were lost, and 33 soldiers were killed in the fire.

Payment

As Johan Christian wrote in one of his letters [61], campaigning is very expensive. Indeed, almost all letters from the brothers in the Royal Archives in Copenhagen are requests for money. It is clear from these letters that the financial situation of the three brothers was awful at times. One would have expected letters about the campaigns, military strategy, weaponry, and personal experiences such as being wounded or imprisoned. In fact, such letters are scarce despite the fact that mortality during the battles was high, often between 10 and 20 percent [3,25]. The three brothers fought in these battles, were wounded and imprisoned, and suffered from recurrent infectious diseases. Maybe they wrote about that in letters to their father, but no such letters have survived. Apparently, the shortage of money was so acute and substantial that writing about their needs to the Danish War Office was the absolute priority.

How and where did they get their payment? According to Carl Alexander, he received a double salary when he went to France [4]. However, Johan Christian came back at the end of 1761 and tried to obtain the 228 rigsdalers that were promised to him for two years of military service [74]. This suggests that their ordinary payment was kept in Denmark. Apparently, the Danish War Office counted on some daily allowance and food from the French army. On request, the three brothers irregularly received amounts between 200 and 400 rigsdalers, or sometimes Dutch guilders, during those years to compensate for extremely difficult conditions. Carl Alexander also received financial rewards for reports and geographical maps of fortified cities such as Wesel [4]. This took place via money orders that could be submitted to financial agents in Cologne, Frankfurt, or Wesel. Nevertheless, it is clear from their letters that they were almost continuously short of money.

The Danish *rigsdaler* used in the 18th century was a common currency shared with the silver reichsthalers of Norway, the free city of Hamburg, and Schleswig-Holstein. It consisted of the reichsthaler specie (*rigsdaler specie*) worth 120 *skillings* in Denmark and Norway, and the lower-valued *rigsdaler courant* worth 80% of specie or 96 *skillings* (both units worth 60 and 48 *schellingen*, respectively, in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein). In 1770, the Hamburg

Bank equated 9¼ reichsthalers specie to a Cologne mark of fine silver, hence a *rigsdaler specie* contained 25.28 grams of silver. But during their stay in Metz and other French cities such as St. Omer, the 3 Danish brothers had to use French currency. The French Louis d'Or weighed around 8.16 grams, 0.24 troy ounce gold. One hundred silver rigsdalers was approximately equivalent to 20 Louis d'Or. One Louis d'Or was worths 24 livres, and each livre was equal to 20 sols/sous [62]. Two Louis d'Or were equivalent in value to the gold pistole, the Spanish coin recognized throughout Europe as the standard unit of currency in international trade.

In the French army, the payment of officers varied per regiment, but an average infantry captain earned 5 livres per day during war campaigns while a lieutenant received some 45 sols, so a bit more than 2 livres per day [3]. It is likely that they received less during time spent in winter quarters. During that period, the higher ranking officers (mostly nobility) often went home. Apparently, however, the 3 brothers remained in France as Denmark was too far away. Maybe they received some payment from their regiments and free bread and meat. A more luxurious meal in a restaurant would cost approximately 1 livre and a loaf of bread between 2 and 10 sols.

Their equipment represented a larger expense. As officers, they needed a horse, a saddle, and spurs but also a shelter, blankets, and clothing. A horse would cost around 100 livres [62], approximately 4 to 5 Louis d'Or, but a good riding horse was probably more expensive. Part of the clothing and uniform was paid by the regiment [3]. Also, a musket or pistol was provided by the French army from its weapons factories. As an infantry lieutenant, Johan Christian was probably paid during a campaign, but the other brothers were aides-de-camp. The latter position was a sort of honorable function and attractive for a young officer because they could learn much about strategy and tactics being so close to the highest leaders. But letters from the Danish War Office [21] and from the father [63] suggest that the function involved relatively high expenses. However, payment did not follow the traditional regiment route in which the commander of a regiment received a total sum to pay his subordinates. It was known that payment in the French army was poor and irregular, as were the logistics of food distribution [1].

A French Louis d'Or

The following letter by Carl Alexander of 15 August 1760 puts the issue of payments and cost of daily living into perspective [83]:

"Royal Highness, high-commanding lieutenant-general and war commissioner,

With gratitude, I received on 2 August the message that his royal highness gave me a payment of 300 rigsdalers. I have immediately arranged that his excellency Count von Schmettow will be paid back the 122 rigsdalers that I recently borrowed. However, from the enclosed cost account registration, you can see that it is impossible to live on the money that I was blessed to receive. Because after paying all debts, I have only 27 guilders left (in the area, Dutch guilders were a common currency). With that amount, I can pay my expenses for only 8 days because everything here in the army is extremely expensive. Also, I will try to borrow some money from my brother, so that I can stay another 4-5 weeks in the army corps. Thereafter, I may be forced to leave the army and sell my horse. At the same time, my brother may also no longer be able to continue the campaign unless his royal highness saves us from this fate. Therefore, I would like to ask you most humbly to propose to the king that he support me with a further payment of 200 rigsdalers and that I receive the money order as soon as possible.

Specification of my expenses since 6 April 1760 [all given in guilders]

6 April	
Horse shoeing	*0.36*
Oats	*0.15*
Flooring for horse	*0.16*
Fat for horse hoofs	*0.08*
Shoe wax	*0.06*
8-13 April	
Washing	*0.36*
Letter postage	*0.11*
From 14 until 21 April stationed	
in Caub; expenses including horse	*26.15*
24 April-4 May	
Washing	*1.09*
Horse shoeing	*0.36*
Drummer gratuity	*1.-*

Regiments contribution	*0.08*
Horse hat	*0.12*
Dish broken	*0.09*
From 5 April until 5 May for	
eating and drinking	*14.32*
From 6 until 8 May	
travel to Coblentz	*3.18*
9-10 May	
Washing	*0.40*
Powder 18	*0.10*
Mirror	*0.08*
Horse shoeing	*0.18*
Letter postage	*1.32*
Coat from Frankfurt	*1.08*
Sweat cloth	*0.30*
Soap	*0.06*
for eating and drinking	*1.14*
12-17 May	
Travel to Frankfurt	
Expenses plus horse	*1.48*
Lodging, stable, food	*3.78*
1 pound snuff tobacco	*0.50*
Letter postage	*0.40*
Hair pommade	*0.08*
gunpowder/lead	*0.39*
Toothbrush	*0.05*
Flint	*0.02*

19 May		
	Clock repaired	*4.45*
	Knife sharpening	*0.02*
	Washing	*1.06*
	Horse shoeing	*0.04*
	Tin can and shoe wax	*0.14*
24-31 May		
	Washing	*0.86*
	Feeding bag horses	*0.42*
	Blacksmith horses	*2.26*
	Forage	*0.30*
	Lock	*0.10*
	Powder ½ pound	*0.05*
	Lodging, stable, food	*16.85*
	Letter postage	*0.30*
4-14 June		
	Parchment	*0.20*
	Letter postage	*0.93*
	Washing	*0.90*
	Horse shoeing	*0.22*
	Grass for horses	*0.06*
	Flint	*0.02*
	Oil	*0.03*
	Toothbrush	*0.12*
	Powder 1 pound	*0.10*
	Horn	*0.02*
	Saddler's work	*7.40*

16-26 June		
	Washing	*0.86*
	Paper	*0.14*
	Quill pen	*0.10*
	Razorblade sharpening	*0.12*
	Powder 1 pound	*0.10*
	Leather spur	*0.03*
	Powder bag	*0.16*
	Letter postage	*0.36*
	Food	*1.09*
	Tape	*0.10*
27-29 June		
	Travel from Frankfurt	
	to Giessen with lodging	*1.54*
	Giessen to Neustadt	*0.44*
	Forage	*1.44*
2-6 July		
	Letter postage	*0.32*
	Washing	*0.98*
	Saddle girth	*0.28*
	Horse shoeing	*0.54*
	Pistol loader	*0.46*
	eating/drinking	*5.42*
	Forage	*1.30*
8-14 July		
	Washing	*1.59*
	Letter postage	*0.64*
	Knife	*1.50*

Horse shoeing	*3.30*
16-31 July	
Feathers	*0.06*
Gloves	*0.36*
Wine can	*0.30*
Washing	*0.99*
Hair pomade	*0.08*
Letter postage	*0.26*
Map of Hesse	*4.30*
Medicine for horses	*0.52*
Eating	*5.35*
Cotton yarn	*0.04*
1-15 August	
Hay	*1.42*
Oats	*9.72*
Pig fat	*0.16*
Boots repaired	*0.03*
Snuff tobacco	*1.-*
Letter postage	*0.58*
Washing	*1.72*
Powder 18	*0.24*
Eating/drinking	*3.34*
Expenses in Kassel	*1.53*
Hair pomade	*0.10*
Wine	*0.04*
Brandy	*0.24*
Tea, ¼ pound	*0.45*
Sugar	*1.-*

Horse shoeing	*1.44*
Saddler	*0.53*
½ pound wax	*0.40*
Sum of all ordinary expenses	*176.79*
Expenses for equipment since 1 May 1760	
Tunic, waistcoat, Sartoni	
with gold rim	*86.38*
Leather wax	*1.15*
Inner shoes	*2.30*
Slippers	*1.20*
Old iron sword	*22.-*
Pair of socks	*2.40*
Pair of pistols	*11.30*
Sword holder	*5.30*
Insect net	*4.08*
Hair bag	*0.30*
4 boot cuffs	*1.24*
Horse with saddle	*137.-*
Summer waistcoat	
with gold rim	*20.20*
Map of	
Germany	*2.45*
Further clothing	*5.38*
Bear skin blanket	*12.40*
snuff tobacco box	*1.22*
2 old pistols, stick,	
coat bag	*8.30*

Horse spurs	*1.20*
Total expenses equipment	*329.40*
Expenses of servant Conrad who I hired on 8 April 1760	
Pocket money	*1.22*
Red shirt/trousers	*27.19*
Shoes	*6.-*
Hat with tresses	*8.-*
2 shirts plus tailor	*2.54*
nightcap and snuff	
clothes	*0.44*
leather leg caps	*4.40*
2 collars	*3.18*
reserve shoes/repair	*2.32*
Pair of socks	*1.16*
Other clothing	*10.06*
Eating/drinking 4½	
months	*27.21*
Prepayment	*27.39*
Total expenses servant	
Conrad	*123.71*
Expenses groomsman	
Christoph	*72.13*
Overall summary expenses	
Daily expenses	
6 Apr-15 Aug 1760	*176.19*
Equipment	*329.40*
Servant Conrad	*123.11*

Groomsman *72.13*

Total expenses *701.23*

Available from payment August 1759 [300 rigsdalers]

cash money *13.30*

sold small

horse/saddle *84.-*

sold old uniform *2.-*

sold old brass sword *2.-*

Affiliation Anhalt

regiment *15.07*

Payment 7 August 1760

300 rigsdalers minus costs *612,-*

Total *728,37*

minus *701,23*

Remaining: 27,14 guilders

Camp Niederlistingen

15 August 1760

Captain CA Stricker"

On 23 April, Soubise reached Düsseldorf but found his army in very poor shape. For instance, 23 battalions returning from Hesse were not in a condition to march at the beginning of May, and of 19 battalions from Broglie's army arriving on the Lower-Rhine, only one brigade was in good condition. Furthermore, 40 battalions from France had not yet arrived and lacked artillery. Ezechias Heinrich Stricker was physically in poor condition and suffered from a complete lack of financial resources. Via his father in Rendsburg – who wrote an accompanying letter

expressing his worries and fear about the condition of his son [45] – Ezechias Heinrich wrote on 30 March 1761 from Metz [46]:

"Your highness, I never earlier encountered the situation of bitter needs and utmost misery in which I am now. I am begging your higness with humbleness to support me and to help me out of this. My brothers and I are no longer able to stay in the tavern where we already have a debt of two months, and credit is not provided here. And the few friends who still have some money are not able to lend us anything more because they lost almost all of it during their imprisonment.

We are approaching a situation of great disgrace. The 300 rigsdalers that his highness the king of Denmark very kindly allocated on 17 January of this year have not been transferred to Mr. Käuffelin in Frankfurt, who returned our money order with protest. With the consequence that I had to gather again the 25 Louis d'Or that I had taken on this money order and had already sent to pay several debts in Geldern. Therefore, it was not possible to avoid the horrible circumstances in which I am now. And since I received a strict order from my regiment to join but was unable to get permission to do so, I was forced to submit a request for being dismissed and leaving the regiment La Marck. Moreover, my general Marquis de Ségur has also sent me an order to move to Acken on 14 April in the function of aide-de-camp to participate in the army of Soubise at the lower Rhine. It is not possible for me to follow this order, and I am forced to abandon this order to prevent losing my activities here because I am completely without money.

Therefore, I am not able to leave here until I have paid my debts and until I am able to buy a horse and equipment. Herewith, your highness is now aware of my urgent needs and sad situation, and I humbly beg his majesty for help to release me from misery. Your highness will not experience that I am in this miserable situation by misbehavior. Since I have not been paid by my regiment for a year, and therefore did not receive more than the 302 rigsdalers that your highness so kindly sent me on 28 April last year and with which I made such an eventful campaign.

Your highness, I am begging you again humbly to send me the 300 rigsdalers you promised me on 17 January as soon as possible, so that I can pay my debts. And I hope that his majesty in his utmost kindness is willing to provide me with another 300 rigsdalers to buy the badly needed equipment and horse, considering that if I would have to leave the regiment before the campaign and not depart for the battle fields, I would be considered a coward and regarded as redundant, and I would not dare anymore to show myself among others."

It is remarkable that the letter says nothing about his situation of the preceding years. Ezechias had been in the rearguard at Einbeck where his platoon lost 20 dead and wounded out of his 30 soldiers during 1759, and twice in 1760, the horse he was riding on was shot dead; his left leg was so severely injured that he suffered from it for the rest of his life. Yet, he does not even mention this. He regularly suffered from a lack of food and had infectious diseases with high fever on numerous occasions, but his letters are mainly about the lack of financial resources. Apparently, money was an absolute top priority. A letter from his brother of 14 April 1761 shed some light on this [47]:

"... and the payment with which you blessed me has not arrived, as Mr. Gottlieb Käuffelin from Frankfurt answered that he did not yet receive orders to pay us the money. As a result, we were forced to make debts, and now my youngest brother Ezechias of the Danish Artillery Corps and I run the risk of being brought to the Bastille in Paris to be imprisoned. My brother Carl Alexander of His Majesty's Life Regiment has recently left from here to his general Dumesnil of

the army of the Prince de Soubise in Cologne and had to borrow 150 rigsdalers from a Jewish merchant at an interest rate of 60 percent …"

At the same time, the oldest brother Johan Christian wrote:

"… In the afternoon when I came back, the order had arrived that our regiment has to march on 25 May to St. Omer in Flanders, so 8 days from now. This worries me very much because of my debts as in France, an officer is arrested at the city gates and imprisoned until he pays."

It is clear that the father was very worried about his three sons, who apart from one daughter were the only descendants remaining alive from his 17 children [52]. From the letters he received from his sons, it was clear that not only Ezechias was broke. For instance, Ezechias wrote about his oldest brother Johan Christian of the regiment Anhalt, who had been taken prisoner during the battle of Emsdorf on 16 July 1760 [56]:

"… Could you, my dearest father, explain my needs to his highness and ask him to propose to the Danish king a financial settlement so that I can pay back my debts to Christian. You can imagine easily that he lost everything during his imprisonment after the last campaign, and he wears only a coat because he has no more money left. He does everything to help us. It hurts me very much that I have to take his last money from him."

Apologizing for his persistence, the father wrote to the king again on 2 May 1761 and included the letters from his sons [48]:

"… and we are very grateful for all help we received from his majesty but forgive me please when I repeat the urgent need of my sons. And the youngest suffered already so much. He is completely without money since 1 August last year, and the last time he received money from you was in April last year…"

Although such letters never led to a direct relief due to the slow communication lines from France to Denmark, the urgency was clear, and a response from the War Commissioner came on 28 April with a written copy of the orders given to Gottlieb Käuffelin [49]. The strong advice was to show it and immediately demand the money. Moreover, an extra financial allowance of 600 rigsdalers was immediately provided, i.e. 200 for each of the brothers for the relief of their uncomfortable situation. Ezechias was now able to participate as aide-de-camp in the campaign against Frederick of Brunswick, which he gratefully acknowledged in his letter from Metz to the Danish War Office on 16 May 1761 [53], and to his brother Christian on 18 May. Johan Christian was now able to march with the regiment Anhalt to St. Omer for garrison duties without being imprisoned in the Bastille [58].

The army of Soubise remained motionless behind the Rhine until early June against the wish of Versailles. He decided to conduct operations between the Lippe and the Ruhr in order to keep in contact with de Broglie. There was no strategic need to divert from the plans of Versailles, but it was suspected that he feared to fight the very capable Ferdinand and the hereditary prince without a colleague to share the risk and responsibility. Towards the end of April, Ferdinand marched on Paderborn and the river Diemel with the main Confederate army. By early May, Broglie's army at the river Main and in Hesse consisted of 87 battalions, 78 squadrons, and a few thousand light troops while the army of Soubise counted 112 battalions and 119 squadrons totaling 100,000 men at the Rhine between Wesel and Koblenz. The watchful immobility of both armies did not mean that nothing happened. For instance, there were several skirmishes and raids during April and May around Göttingen, where French troops advanced towards Uslar and

Möhringen but were intercepted by the corps of the Confederate general Luckner. On 14 May, the Hereditary Prince marched with a corps of approximately 16,000 men from Münster towards the Rhine to observe Soubise's motions, and during these days he attacked French outposts near Rees and Wesel.

Meanwhile, the first division and the dragoons of the army of Prince de Soubise marched forward and encamped near Rees, the second division near Düsseldorf, and the third one near Wesel where Soubise had established his headquarters. Similarly, the main preparations for battle by de Broglie were made near Kassel. The main Confederate army concentrated in Paderborn and near Warburg. At the end of May, heavy rains made the roads unusable [3].

On 11 June 1761, a French corps passed the Rhine and marched northwards to Broich on the left bank of the Ruhr. Also, French cavalry passed the Rhine, as did another French corps from Rees, establishing itself on the right bank. Meanwhile, half of Soubise's army passed the Rhine at Wesel and moved towards Möllen under his personal command. The same day, the main Confederate army was deployed around Paderborn and Osnabrück with a British brigade between Soest and Hamm. To the southeast, Luckner at Eimbeck and Spörcken at Warburg observed the army of de Broglie.

On 13 June, Soubise went into action. A force of 55 battalions and 69 squadrons coming from Wesel passed the Lippe in 4 columns and encamped between Hiesfeld and Holten (currently Oberhausen). Meanwhile, a French corps of 31 battalions and 18 squadrons passed the Ruhr in 2 columns and encamped at Essen where Soubise's army joined while a detachment of French troops were sent upstream along the left bank of the Emscher to cover the left flank of the army. On 17 June, Soubise threw bridges across the Emscher to gain access to the heights above Dortmund while the entire army assembled near Dortmund until the delayed French convoys had arrived.

Meanwhile, Ferdinand of Brunswick concentrated his forces near Paderborn and decided that it was time for him to initiate a campaign if he wanted to avoid the junction of the two French armies. On 26 June, de Broglie had completed the concentration of his army of 50,000 men at Kassel while Spörcken gradually withdrew before the French army. On 28 June, Soubise marched to Werl and de Broglie to Breuna, hoping to make a junction. However, Ferdinand reached Werl before Soubise who then repositioned his army with his right anchored on the heights along the Ruhr and his left by Unna. The next day, Ferdinand marched in 9 columns, including the 2 columns under the command of the prince, towards the French positions.

The Confederates encamped within 2 kilometers of Soubise's army between Unna and the Ruhr. Nothing but a ravine separated the right flank of the Confederates from the French left, but the French army was so well posted that Ferdinand changed his mind and resolved to turn its position instead and marched in 4 columns to Hamm in an attempt to turn the left flank of the French army. However, bad weather delayed the artillery, and Ferdinand abandoned his project. He nevertheless resumed his march behind the French positions [3]. In the morning of 3 July, after 36 hours of continuous march, Ferdinand appeared in the plain of Dortmund behind Soubise's right wing, threatening Soubise's line of communication. The latter immediately abandoned his position, and the Confederates, too tired by their long march, could not follow.

Meanwhile, de Broglie was now threatening Ferdinand's communication with Bielefeld. On 4 July, the Confederate army marched towards Soubise's strong camp, but Soubise withdrew behind Werl. On 6 July at daybreak, Ferdinand advanced in 6 columns to attack Soubise, but he

found the latter's positions near Werl too strong and returned. On 7 July, Soubise encamped at Soest where Broglie's vanguard made a junction with his army. Ferdinand marched to Illingen. His left was now between the Lippe and the Asse near the village of Vellinghausen.

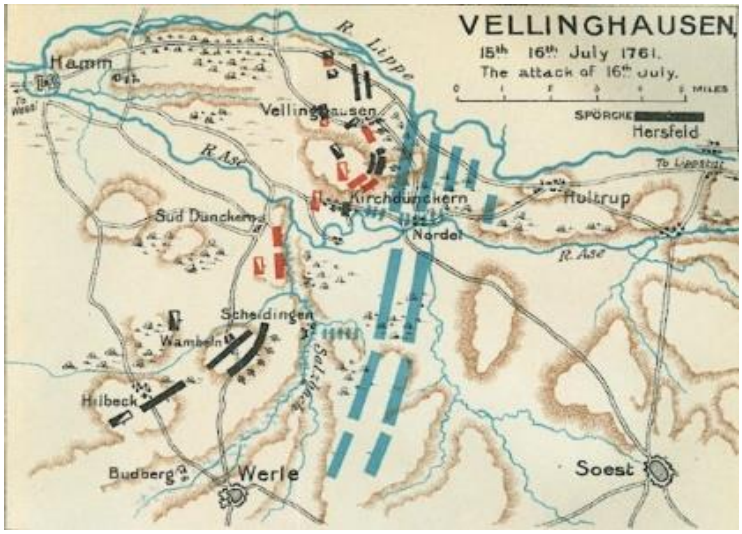
The same day, de Broglie's main body made a junction with Soubise's army at Soest. The joint strength of the two French armies was approximately 100,000 men. Ferdinand's force, after the arrival of Spörcken who had made his way to him from the Diemel, amounted to no more than 60,000 men. Even with such odds against him, however, Ferdinand refused to cross to the north bank of the Lippe and abandon Lippstadt, as the French commanders had hoped. He was determined that they fight him for Lippstadt. On 10 July, Ferdinand placed his right flank at Hilbeck and his centre at Illingen. The British corps under Granby was placed at Vellinghausen, while Spörcken with 8,000 men was at Herzfeld on the left bank of the Lippe to observe a corps of Saxons in the vicinity of Paderborn.

On 12 July, the French made an attempt to reconnoiter British positions. As de Broglie was withdrawing after his reconnaissance, Ferdinand appeared on the heights with 14 battalions and some cavalry. After consulting Contades, de Broglie resolved to launch an attack on the following day. On 13 July, Soubise initially marched forward, but the planned French attack was postponed because the generals feared that Ferdinand would again cross the Lippe. On 14 July, Ferdinand was informed of the position of Soubise's new camp which stretched towards the convent of Paradiese and Soest, its left flank reaching around 6 kilometers away to the heights of Ruhne. Ferdinand then sent reinforcements to the prince posted at the extremity of his right wing [3,50].

After several days of deliberations, de Broglie and Soubise had finally agreed on a plan of attack. Despite this, the two French marshals fought a totally uncoordinated battle at Vellinghausen, where they were separately repulsed by Ferdinand on 15 and 16 July. Vellinghausen was a poor little village near the south (left) bank of the river Lippe. It was located approximately 10 kilometers to the north of Soest. Ferdinand's positions extended over several kilometers, looking eastward. General von Spörcken, with about 8,000 men, was left on the north bank of the Lippe at Herzfeld to watch Prince Xavier of Saxony, who lay with a corps in the vicinity of Paderborn.

The Confederates' main army was encamped on the south bank of the Lippe, with its left resting on the river; from there, the left wing extended to the village of Kirch-Dinker on the Ahse, a branch of the Lippe impassable except by bridges. Vellinghausen, Ferdinand's headquarters, lay midway between the Ahse and the Lippe at the foot of a hill called the Dinkerberg. From the Lippe to Vellinghausen, the ground was occupied by 7 battalions and 5 squadrons of German troops. From Vellinghausen to Kirch-Dinker, the heights were held by Granby's British corps, consisting of 2 battalions of British grenadiers and 8 Confederate cavalry squadrons together with a regiment of Hanoverian artillery. From the Ahse, the position was extended to the right along a similar line of heights by the villages of Süddinker and Wambeln to the rear of Werl at Budberg, the whole of the front being covered by a marshy stream called the Salzbach. From the Ahse to Wambeln, the ground was occupied by 10 German battalions and British cavalry. Further to the right were several British and 2 German battalions, some British light batteries and 2 brigades of Hessian artillery. The extreme right from Wambeln to Hillbeck was held by the prince's corps of 25 battalions and 24 squadrons of Germans [3,50].

The centre of the Confederate positions was between the rivers Lippe and Ahse, and the right wing extended to the south of the Ahse. In front of these positions, Ferdinand had various little villages: Kirch-Dinker, Scheidingen, Wambeln and others. Ferdinand had thrown up earthworks in most of them, taking advantage of swampy ground, rough terrain, and woods. The river Salzbach was almost impossible to pass. The only passage by which the French could cross it was near the village of Scheidingen, where an old redoubt blocked the way. The weak point of the position was its right flank which, though more or less protected by a small brook running into the Ahse and the marshy ground bordering it, could be circumvented relatively easy.



Battle field at Vellinghausen

Ferdinand's position was strong but dangerous since he had no retreat should he be pushed back into the angle where Ahse and Lippe meet, and into the little town of Hamm where his depot was.

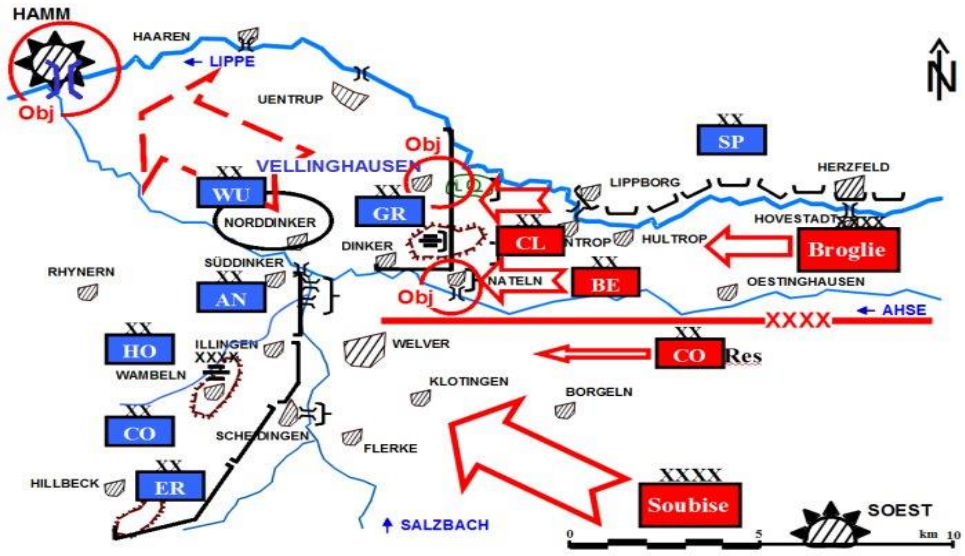
On 15 July, de Broglie moved towards Oestinghausen in three columns of which the right one was supposed to attack Vellinghausen and the left one was to proceed along the river Ahse and attack the castle of Nateln. The centre, consisting of the main body of the army under Duke de Broglie, was supposed to support the attacks of the 2 other columns.

The approach was noticed but was considered to be in an early phase by the Confederate troops when around 1800 hours de Broglie suddenly attacked. This came as a complete surprise. The French easily occupied the Nateln castle while the right column attacked the woods of Vellinghausen, dislodging one of Granby's outposts. Granby's corps of 10 battalions and 6 squadrons, which was in camp near Vellinghausen, had only just time to seize its arms before the French guns opened fire on them. The British first put up a vigorous resistance to the assault but were finally pushed back into the village of Vellinghausen where they were charged anew.

When Ferdinand was informed of the French attack, he immediately gave orders to Granby to hold his positions at all costs, and a Confederate corps of 7 battalions and 5 squadrons was instructed to march to the road from Lippstadt to Hamm to cover the line of retreat and support

Granby. Ferdinand also sent an order to the Prince of Anhalt to pass the Ahse with his corps of 10 battalons and 6 squadrons and join the Confederate troops while a further corps of 9 battalions and 7 squadrons was ordered to replace the Prince of Anhalt's troops between Illingen and Hohenover.

Spörcken, who was encamped at Hertzfeld on the right bank of the Lippe, received orders to send 6 battalions and 6 squadrons to reinforce Granby. Meanwhile, the right French column drove the Confederates back beyond Vellinghausen, but Granby managed to contain the French attack until support appeared, and the French were then forced to take refuge into the woods. After the appearance of reinforcements from de Broglie's central column, the attack on Vellinghausen was renewed. The battle went back and forth, but at 2200 hours, the French troops were masters of the villages of Vellinghausen and Nateln [3,50].



During 15 July, Soubise had not yet moved towards Scheidingen because the agreed time for the collaborative attack of Soubise and de Broglie had been the early hours of 16 July.

Consequently, de Broglie's advance on 15 July had been premature. He later stated that his only intention had been to reconnoiter the outposts of the Confederates. However, he had been encouraged by his unexpected success to bring forward more troops to hold the ground that he had gained. He stated that he had urged Soubise to speed up his campaign. Had de Broglie really pushed through his attack, he might have been successful because the Confederates were too weak to stop him and were short of ammunition. If de Broglie had continued and conquered the Dinkerberg, he might have forced Ferdinand to withdraw. Instead he halted.

Meanwhile, during the night, skirmishing continued between the Lippe and the Ahse, and the road to Hamm was full of wagons going and returning with loads of ammunition. Prince Anhalt's corps, together with the British corps, was streaming across the Ahse to reinforce Granby while the troops of the prince were covering the ground thus left vacant. Next morning, at about 0400 hours, de Broglie, having warned Soubise overnight, deployed his columns and

launched a new assault on Ferdinand's left wing which had been considerably strengthened overnight. There were so many hedges and ditches that in many places, the troops were unable to see each other. The Confederates' artillery opened fire on the village of Vellinghausen.

De Broglie, considering that he was not strong enough to sustain the attack alone, informed Soubise that he intended to retreat to his initial positions at Oestinghausen. Soubise had just begun to move to force the passage of the Salzbach towards Scheidingen, making himself master of the bridge and village of Scheidingen, and launching a brigade against 3 Allied battalions. Soubise now feared having to engage the Confederates alone. Henceforth, he recalled his columns and withdrew his troops although he had enormous numerical superiority over the forces of his opponent.

Meanwhile de Broglie was waiting anxiously for Soubise's attack on the Confederates' centre and right flank. However, at that time Soubise had already decided to withdraw. After a brief stop, the fire opened again on the Confederate left flank as de Broglie demonstrated reviving energy. Two French batteries were moved towards a hill opposite the Dinkerberg, from which they might have made a mess of Granby's corps. However, the arrival of fresh Confederate troops brought important reinforcement. Ferdinand ordered that Vellinghausen and the hill should be taken at all costs, and fresh troops advanced forward to storm it.

The French were so exhausted that they did not even remain for the attack. They broke and fled, abandoning their dead, their wounded, and several guns. Disheartened by his failure and by the apathy of Soubise, de Broglie stopped the attack and retreated. Light troops followed the retreating French, but the retreat was made in good order in a difficult terrain which prevented any attack of the Confederate cavalry. The total Confederate losses thus amounted to 311 killed, 1,011 wounded, and 192 prisoners. The French losses were around 5,500 men, 2,000 of them prisoners. Although in fact the Confederate victory was not very important, it was of moral value and was received with enthusiasm in Britain as the French army of 100,000 men lost from an army of only 60,000 British-Hanoverian-Hessian soldiers. It changed Soubise and de Broglie into sworn enemies, each bitterly reproaching the other for the loss of the battle [3,50].

Carl Alexander and Ezechias Heinrich Stricker fought in the battle of Vellinghausen but in different armies as Carl Alexander was aide-de-camp of marshal de Broglie [4] while Ezechias was in the army of Soubise as aide-de-camp of lieutenant-general de Ségur. As Ezechias wrote:

"On 16 July 1761, in the battle of Vellinghausen under the command of marshal Prince de Soubise and marshal Duke de Broglie, we were beaten by the Confederates under command of his highness Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick."

In hindsight, de Broglie attacked too early but did not exploit his success and was not well supported by Soubise. After this battle, they followed different paths. On 27 July, de Broglie marched to Paderborn while Soubise went to Herdringen near Arnsberg with the rest of his army to cover Hesse. Meanwhile, an order arrived from the French court instructing the generals to keep the armies united and to attack the Confederates once more. On 28 July, Soubise was still at Herdringen. De Broglie encountered several skirmishing activities and wrote to Soubise to ask him for an additional reinforcement of 10,000 men. The same day, Soubise, who had received fresh instructions from Versailles, wrote to de Broglie to inform him that the court required the return of the 30,000 men that he had previously sent him as reinforcement.

On 29 July, de Broglie marched from Paderborn in 4 columns to Driburg (currently Bad Driburg). On 30 July, the main Confederate army marched in 4 columns and entrenched at Büren at the junction of the Alme and Aften, thereby separating the 2 French armies. The prince was still at Ruhne to observe Soubise's army. De Broglie encamped near Lichtenau with a detachment on the Weser, opposite Hameln. He then launched diversionary offensives on Hanover and Hameln. He also rejected Soubise's request for the return of the reinforcements.

Meanwhile, Soubise was still at Herdringen. On 1 August, Ferdinand intended to threaten French communication with Hesse and tried to maneuver to surprise the French troops while the prince remained on the heights of the Ruhr. De Broglie renewed his request to Soubise to send him a reinforcement of 10,000 men to cover Kassel and his communications with Giessen from where he got his provisions. On 3 August, Soubise planned to make a diversion on Münster. He sent his vanguard to Iserlohn to secure the passage of the Ruhr. On 9 August, Soubise finally sent the reinforcement of 10,000 men destined to the army of de Broglie for its progress into Hanover. Between September and November 1761, de Broglie made two more efforts to conquer Hanover, but none of these was a great success. Soubise progressed towards the north and was slightly more successful, but in November the French army withdrew into its winter quarters.

So ended this most arduous campaign, in which, though overmatched by two to one, Ferdinand had won a victory on the battlefield and lost little or no territory. The exertion demanded from his troops by incessant and severe marches took a heavy toll on their efficiency, and the more so since many of the men had been already much weakened by the winter campaign in Hesse. The loss of soldiers was in fact appalling, amounting to no fewer than 25,000 out of 95,000 men. Some had been killed in action, considerably more had deserted, still more had been mutilated, and fully one-half had died of hardship and disease.

It was only at such a price that Ferdinand could make one army do the work of two. And the task would have been beyond even his ability had not one of the commanders matched against him been utterly incompetent and the other hampered by constant interference from Versailles. Apparently, although they were formally affiliated with the foreign and mainly German regiments Löwenthal (until 1760) and La Marck, Ezechias and Carl Alexander served as aides-de-camp during the last years of their military campaigns. Both arrived in March 1757, followed by their older brother Johan Christian in November 1759 who left again for Denmark in October 1761 [4]. Ezechias left in early November 1761 for Denmark because he was ordered to do so. He was accompanied by his brother Carl Alexander. Because the French army was in winter quarters, that was not a problem, but they received orders to be back in May 1762 [73]. Johan Christian, too, received orders from the Danish War Commissioner but travelled from St. Omer in Flanders via Calais, Amsterdam, and Hamburg and arrived in Copenhagen on 24 October 1761 [55].

During the summer campaign of 1761, Ezechias Stricker became ill again and had to return to Wesel for medical treatment. Later, he wrote [82]:

"On 5 September 1761, I had to leave the army and go to Wesel because of high fever. On 27 September, I ended my participation in the regiment La Marck and formally notified lieutenant-general Count de la Marck that I would leave his regiment. On 3 October, his highness the king of Denmark ordered me to come back, an order which I received on 28 October. On 2 November, I asked lieutenant-general Marquis de Ségur to be dismissed as his aide-de-camp and left the French Army. On 29 December, I arrived at my corps in Copenhagen."

This travel was delayed by Ezechias' prolonged illness, and maybe that is the reason why he was accompanied by his brother Carl Alexander who wrote [57]:

"We take the liberty to herewith notify Your Higness that my brother from the artillery and I, immediately after receiving your order on 3 November, have left the army and sold our equipment. Because we found out that Mr. von Holten as well as the young cornet Fabritius were ready for travelling too, Mr. von Holten, my brother, and I together took up 300 rigsdalers to allow us to travel when the weather is favorable. The latter is needed because Mr. von Holten and my brother are not yet completely recovered from their illness, and travelling is difficult for them during this time of the year …"

Ezechias Heinrich and Carl Alexander arrived in Rendsburg on 30 November 1761. Already on 9 December, Carl Alexander wrote a letter to the War Commissioner to show his gratitude for the 300 rigsdalers of travelling money and to ask whether he could be employed again in the Danish army for a couple of months [59]. Meanwhile, on 21 December, his brother Ezechias asked for an extra 14 days of sick leave because he had not yet recovered [60]. Johan Christian had returned via a different route in October 1761 and wrote when he came to Denmark [73]:

"… When I left the garrison near Calais, all preparations were made for the continuation of the war with Britain, and the entire sea coast between Ostende and Boulogne was covered with gun batteries and cannons. An army of 26,000 men was gathered in the surroundings. The majority of us assumed that this was for an intended invasion of England or Ireland. For transport, some 400-500 flat vessels were gathered in the ports of Boulogne, Grafelin, and Dunkirk, and they were working on the rigging and sails of 40 warships of which some were ready for sailing. Despite these activities from the French side, I found out when I was in Holland that they prepared a visit from the French war minister to the Hague on 20 December in order for him to travel from there to England for peace negotiations. This is what I heard from an aide-de-camp of marshal Duke de Broglie, who would participate in the preparation."

1762

During the winter of 1761-1762, the French army of the Rhine took its quarters along the river from Kleve to Cologne. Meanwhile, the French army of the Main extended from north of Trier, northeast to Kassel and from Kassel southeast to Langensalza. The Confederates' winter quarters stretched from Münster to Halberstadt. For the oncoming campaign season, the French had decided to throw their principal strength into the army of the upper Rhine which was accordingly increased to 114 battalions, 110 squadrons, and several thousand light troops, all told some 80,000 men. The Army of the Lower Rhine was reduced proportionately to 52 battalions, 40 squadrons, and 3,000 light troops, all in all some 30,000 men.

While French troops were less numerous than in the previous years, they still remained numerically superior to Ferdinand's army. However, French plans had been altered by the death of Empress Elisabeth of Russia and by the withdrawal of Russian troops from the coalition. The change of government in Britain and the reopening of negotiations had given the court of Versailles hope for a satisfactory conclusion to this long and exhausting war. Versailles was satisfied to hold the ground already gained without attempt at further conquest. Provisions were very difficult to find in the area surrounding the French winter quarters. This forced the army to disperse its encampments far and wide and to move the cavalry and parts of the infantry far to

the rear. The army of the upper Rhine was deployed from Würzburg on its right, through Kassel in its centre, and Cologne and the Rhine on its left. Ferdinand, though still outmatched by the armies opposed to him, was relatively stronger in numbers than in any previous year, having a nominal total of more than 100,000 men ready for the field.

Winter quarters were not disturbed during the early months of 1762, the country having been so much devastated that neither side could move, due to lack of forage, until the green grain fields had grown high. Although there were some introductory skirmishes early 1762, the French campaign started in May 1762, but Ferdinand took most of the intitiatives. The defeat at Wilhelmsthal on 22 June completely ruined the plans of the French commanders. They adopted a defensive strategy for the rest of the campaign even though their strong position at Göttingen would have allowed them to take the offensive in this area.

For his part, Ferdinand hesitated to exploit his recent success by extending his operations to the Main river. Indeed, his communications with his left wing was seriously threatened by the French occupation of Göttingen. He then decided to closely follow the French army of the upper Rhine and to take advantage of any mistakes to attack it. Soubise and d'Estrées, for their part, now relied on the eventual success of the operations of Prince de Condé against the hereditary prince on the lower Rhine. Meanwhile, they recalled Prince Xavier who joined them at Lutterberg to guard the passage of the Fulda. In his retreat, Prince Xavier lost his baggage, his mobile hospital, and his medicines; it was all captured near Volkmarshausen.

Over the months of June and July, Ferdinand of Brunswick took Kassel and was able to throw the French army out of Hesse. Efforts to retake Kassel and the lost territory by the French were without success, and as of November 1762, the French started moving the troops from Germany ahead of peace negotiations. After the events in of Russia, Sweden's withdrawal, and Prussia's two victories against Austria, Louis XV became convinced that Austria would be unable to re-conquer Silesia without financial and material subsidies that Louis was no longer willing to provide. He therefore made peace with Frederick II and evacuated Prussia's Rhineland territories, ending France's involvement in the war in Germany [2,3]. Having their hands free, the Prussians defeated Austria, and on 15 February 1763, the peace treaty of Hubertusburg ended the Seven Years' War.

A very important and unexpected event during the Seven Years' War was the unexpected death of Tsarina Elisabeth on 4 January 1762. Her successor Peter von Holstein-Gottorf was a great admirer of the Prussian king, Frederick II; he immediately stopped the war and gave back all Prussian possessions. This was formalized in the Treaty of St. Petersburg on 5 May 1762. It was the intention of the new tsar to retake his former possessions in Schleswig-Holstein. Of course, this alarmed Denmark, and all Danish officers fighting abroad were ordered to come back to their homeland. According to Carl Alexander, he was ordered to come back in the autumn of 1762 because of the threat of a Danish-Russian war [4]. It is unclear whether he was confusing this with the autumn of 1761 when his brothers were ordered back and he accompanied his sick brother. As he signed letters to the Danish War Office on 16 April 1762 from Lübeck [64], and on 21 May [65] and 18 June 1762 [66] from the headquarters in the district of Segeberg, he was in Denmark during spring and summer. The three brothers had permission to go to Denmark in October 1761 but had to be back in France by May 1762. Maybe Carl Alexander indeed returned for a short period, but it seems more likely that he confused the two years when looking back on this period in 1804 or that he considered their formal dismissal after May 1762 as the endpoint of

his career in the French army [4]. Anyhow, the order to return to France was probably overruled by the Danish king in view of the growing political tension with Russia.

Father Alexander Stricker must have been very happy to have all three sons back and alive in Denmark. After all, the mortality rate during the Seven Years' War was high in all armies. Apart from direct killing, the conditions were often horrible, and infectious diseases took a large toll. From the scarce personal letters, one gets the impression that it was a 'warm family'. The brothers all closed their letters with a tender greeting to their younger and only living sister. Also, they did everything they could to help each other during the campaigns. To express his gratitude, the father wrote a letter to the Danish War Office during a family meeting in Segeberg (currently Bad Segeberg) that was signed by all family members [67]. The fact that they returned as captains probably added pride to his happiness. Apparently, participating in an active war may be good for a military career provided one stays alive, and it seems that father Alexander was an ambitious man.

Although all three brothers suffered from repeated illnesses, only his son Ezechias Heinrich had been very ill and came home to Rendsburg not yet recovered; he had to ask for two extra weeks of rest [60]. Although it is unclear from which disease he suffered, the repeated high fever was an indication that it was an infectious cause. After coming back to Denmark, he was affiliated as an ensign ('stykjunker') in the Kronborg fortress on 7 April 1762 [70]. It is unclear why a captain with 5 years of war experience in active service would be installed as an officer of much lower rank. Possibly it was because he was not fully recovered and needed to get used to the current state of the Danish artillery. He was engaged with the transport and installation of cannons in Eckernförde and Rendsburg [71]:

"Herewith, I report to your highness that I arrived in Eckernförde on 8 July and that I received the eight 6-pound cannons from the Heiliger. On 10 July, they were transported to Rendsburg with undercarriage, tools, and attachments to complete the full equipment with missing parts. By order of major Bielefeldt, the remaining 4 undercarriages with additional equipment have been handed over in Eckernförde to the ensign Rameyer until the cannons from Friedrichswerk are sent. On 16 July, I arrived in Hockelsdorff with these 8 cannons, where major von Dilleben took them for his division, 6 pieces in the first and 2 pieces in the second brigade while I was enrolled as an ensign/lieutenant with pyrotechnicians Heiliger and Schröder in the fourth division. I would appreciate it when your highness can inform this commanding officer that our king has promoted me to captain in the Danish artillery. Also, I would like to respectfully propose that I be allocated to activities that are more compatible with this function and receive payment accordingly, instead of my current ensign salary …"

Apparently, he was not satisfied with such work and asked for activities more in line with his position for good reasons. On 9 August 1762, he again complained that although he was promoted to captain by the Danish king in 1760, he had to follow orders from a lieutenant despite his higher rank and war experience [68]:

"Can your highness permit me to explain how here on a daily basis the artillery exercises are commanded in the following order: a captain for inspection; 2. a lieutenant; 3. an ensign. However, on 4 August it was ordered that for the exercise of tomorrow, the following officers were in command: 1. captain Brügmann; 2. lieutenant Berg, and 3. captain Stricker. This means that I have to act as an ensign and follow the orders of lieutenant Berg. May I again respectfully

ask you for activities that are compatible with my rank as a captain of artillery and concordant payment. …"

During the summer of 1762, Ezechias was treated in Oldesloh (currently Bad Oldesloe) with milk and medicines [68]. A high milk intake per day for several weeks was considered to be a favorable remedy for a variety of chronic illnesses [69]. Apparently, the arguments in his letters were persuasive; he was given more responsible activities in the autumn of 1762 as well as the payment of a captain [70]. What probably helped is that in July 1762 he met the former French lieutenant-general Saint-Germain [71], who had been one of the more able French

Claude Louis de Saint-Germain [1707-1778]

commanders during the Seven Years' War [3]. Saint-Germain fell victim to court intrigues, professional jealousy, and hostile criticism. He resigned in 1760 and accepted an appointment as field-marshal by the Danish king and was charged in 1762 with the reorganization of the Danish army [72]. Undoubtedly, the five years in the French army, his knowledge of the French language, and his function as aide-de-camp were advantageous. Also, Ezechias had fought under Saint-German around Bremen and during the retreat after the battle of Minden. Under the leadership of Saint-Germain, Ezechias worked on a reorganization plan of the Danish artillery and the implementation and foundation of the Danish artillery corps on 18 January 1764 [70]. Before this date, the artillery was not a separate branch but part of the engineer corps of the quartermaster.

Meanwhile, the two other brothers were back in their Danish regiments. Johan Christian wrote to the Danish War Office that he had received orders from the regiment Anhalt to return to France [75]. However, after a delay, a subsequent letter arrived stating that there was no longer a need for their return [76]. The letter finished:

"If you later participate in a campaign against us, I promise to take you as a prisoner to enjoy the pleasure to meet you again."

In February 1762, Johan Christian tried to get paid the salary he was due, 114 rigsdalers per year over the two-year period in French service between November 1759 and November 1761 [74]. Colonel von Rantzow intended to keep the 228 rigsdalers in the regiment's account because of earlier payments by the Danish War Office and because someone else had to take over his duties while he was in France. Johan Christian protested and included a copy of the original document which he received in November 1759 plus a confirmation letter from Copenhagen that officers in foreign service would still receive their regular salary at home [77]. Another point he raised was his rank, and he pointed to his courageous behavior during the battle of Emsdorf on 16 July 1760 [74]:

"… In 1755, I had served in the Holstein national regiment as ensign for 5 years, and I was nominated as first lieutenant by my commander major-general von Windtz. Because I travelled abroad, I had to leave the usual career path according to which I could have been a captain now. Because of imprisonment I lost the opportunity to distinguish myself. Moreover, because of this and the campaigns abroad I cannot use the recommendations from my French superiors here in Denmark. After my time in prison, my commander Prince von Anhalt took me back in his regiment where I commanded a company. I took position behind a natural bastion and stopped 4 squadrons of British dragoons so that it was easier for the infantry brigade to withdraw to the village nearby. Also, I volunteered several times to cover the flanks of the brigade and participated in the rearguard where I was shot in the leg with an enemy pistol…"

He is likely referring to the events described by an anonymous contributor to a history database [54]:

"French hussars tried to stop the advancing Confederate allied cavalry but were routed. French light troops and part of Anhalt infantry then opened fire on the victorious enemy cavalry, but they were charged in flank and rear by the British 15th Light Horse regiment. In this action, Anhalt infantry lost its 2 cannons. Surrounded by Confederate troops, Glaubitz ordered the retreat. The entire French force abandoned its camp and retreated through the woods in their rear towards Langenstein. Here Glaubitz managed to assemble a rearguard which momentarily held the pursuing enemy in check at the edge of the woods to the northeast of Langenstein, while the rest of his force fled. The 15th Light Horse, pressing on along their flank, stationed itself across the road to Amöneburg, and charging full upon them headed them back from that side. With some difficulty the French repelled the attack, and turning about to southeastward made for a forest not far away, hoping to pass through it and so to escape to the south. Glaubitz's infantry came out of the woods north and west of Nieder-Klein, trusting that some marshy ground, which lay in the way of the prince's cavalry, would protect them from further pursuit. However, it had not marched over the plain for more than 1.5 kilometers before Luckner's hussars and the 15th Light Horse were upon them again. For the second time, they crashed single-handed into the midst of them, cutting them down by scores and capturing an entire battalion. With great difficulty the remnant of the French beat back their pursuers and continued the retreat: half of them had been killed or captured, or had collapsed, unable to march farther, but the rest struggled gallantly on. Reaching an open wooded area, they again halted and re-formed for action. The hereditary prince, still close at their heels with his cavalry, thereupon surrounded them and summoned them to surrender. At 1900 hours, major-general Glaubitz, despairing of further resistance in the exhausted state of his troops, was obliged to yield." [54].

Apparently, the well-documented request by Johan Christian von Stricker was honored quickly, and on 9 October 1762, he expressed his gratitude in a letter from Schleswig [78].

Carl Alexander was easily re-enrolled in the Danish army. His clear ambition made him ask on 9 December 1761 in Rendsburg for a function to get acquainted again with the procedures of the army he left in 1757 [59]. On 1 April 1762, he advanced to the position of 'captain-engineer' and aide-de-camp of major von Dilleben [64]. He was further nominated as first adjutant of lieutenant-general Count von Schmettow in June 1762 [66]; however, this request was denied.

References

1. Kennett L. The French armies in the Seven Years' War. A study in military organization and administration. Duke University Press, Durham, 1967.
2. Marston D. The Seven Years' War. Osprey Publishing, 2001.
3. Waddington R. La guerre de sept ans [5 parts]. Paris, 1894-1907.
4. Nobel O. Slægtsbogsoptegnelser vedrørende Familierne Stricker og Kaalund. Personalhistorisk Tidsskrift 1912; pp.121-128.
5. Amburger E. Die Dänischen Offiziere in Russlands Heer und Flotte unter Katharina II. Personalhistorisk Tidsskrift 1936; pp.172-202.
6. Stricker CA. Letter to the Danish War Office, 27 March 1757. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
7. Danish War Office. Letter to CA Stricker, 16 April 1757. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
8. Stricker CA. Letter to the Danish War Office, 2 January 1758. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
9. Menges, Franz. Löwendahl, Woldemar Graf von, in: Neue Deutsche Biographie 15 (1987), pp. 89-90 (Online version at http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd137855117.htm).
10. Anonymous. Nouvelles extraordinaires de divers endroits 12 April 1757.
11. Anonymous. Opregte Groninger Courant 8 March 1757.
12. Anonymous. Leydse Courant, 2 May 1757.
13. Anonymous. Opregte Haarlemsche Courant, 2 April 1757.
14. Anonymous. Amsterdamsche Courant; 9 April 1757.
15. Anonymous. Opregte Haarlemsche Courant 9 April 1757.
16. Anonymous. Opregte Groninger Courant 12 April 1757.
17. Anonymous. Amsterdamsche Courant 30 April 1757.
18. Anonymous. Amsterdamsche Courant 3 May 1757.
19. Anonymous. Opregte Haarlemsche Courant, 27 August 1757.
20. Anonymous. Nouvelles extraordinaires de divers endroits, 9 September 1757.
21. Danish War Office. Letter to CA Stricker, September 1757. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
22. Anonymous. Amsterdamsche Courant, 8 November 1757.
23. Stricker CA. Letter to the Danish War Office, November 1757. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
24. Stricker EH. Letter to the Danish War Office, 14 January 1758. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
25. Von Archenholz JW. Geschichte des Siebenjährigen Krieges in Deutschland. Nach den neuesten geschichtlichen Forschungergebnissen umgearbeitet von Max von Duvernoy.

Neudruck der Ausgabe Leipzig 1911, erweitert durch den Aufsatz 'Gemälde der preussischen Armee vor und im siebenjährigen Kriege'. Biblio Verlag, Osnabrück, 1982.
26. Stricker EH. Letter to the Danish War Office, 21 April 1758. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
27. Stricker EH. Letter to the Danish War Office, 26 April 1758. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
28. Stricker CA. Letter to the Danish War Office, 28 April 1758. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
29. Delbrück H. Geschichte des Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte. Part IV, pp. 301-2. Berlin, 1900-1920.
30. Stenzel GAH. Geschichte des Preussischen Staats; 1854. Theil 1756 bis 1763.
31. Wylly HC. *History of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry*, I:48-49.
32. Von Eberhardt M. Die Schlacht von Kunersdorf am 12. August 1759. Militär-Wochenblatt 1903;9:389-420. Mittler, Berlin, 1903.
33. Anonymous. Die Schlacht Bei Kunersdorf, Unweit Frankfurt An Der Oder Zwischen Den Vereinten Russischen Und Kaiserlichen Truppen, Unter Den Befehlen Der Generale Soltikow Und Laudon, Und Den Königlich Preussischen Unter Dem Commando Des Königs. Drucke des 18. Jahrhunderts Projekt: Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachraum erschienenen Drucke des 18. Jahrhunderts (VD18). urn:nbn:de:bsz:14-db-id3624339929; http://digital.slub-dresden.de/id362433992; oai:de:slub-dresden:db:id-362433992.
34. Rogge C. The French & Allied Armies in Germany during the Seven Years War, Frankfurt, 2006.
35. Danish War Office. Letter to lieutenant von Stricker, 25 March 1760. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
36. Barrentrapp BF. Genealogisch-Schematisches Staats-Handbuch für das Jahr MDCCXXXXVII. Gegenwartige Staat von Franckfurt am Main, nach dem Alphabet eingerichtet. Auschuss Löblicher Burgerschafft von 51 Personen. Franckfurt 1747.
37. Danish War Office. Letter to lieutenants Ezechias Hinrich and Johan Christian von Stricker, 26 April 1760. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
38. Danish War Office. Letter to Captain von Stricker, 2 August 1760. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
39. Stricker CA. Letter to the Danish War Office, 29 July 1760. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
40. Danish War Office. Letter to Captain von Stricker, 12 August 1760. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
41. Danish War Office. Letter to Captain von Stricker, 20 September 1760. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
42. Anonymous. Combat of Corbach. Project Seven Years' War. https:kronoskaf.com.
43. Anonymous. Battle of Warburg. Project Seven Years' War. https:kronoskaf.com.
44. Anonymous. Battle of Clostercamp. Project Seven Years' War. https:kronoskaf.com.
45. Stricker A. Letter to the Danish War Office, 18 April 1761. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
46. Stricker EH. Letter to the Danish War Office, 30 March 1761. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.

47. Stricker JC. Letter to the Danish War Office, 14 April 1761. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
48. Stricker A. Letter to the Danish War Office, 2 May 1761. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
49. Danish War Office. Letter to CA Stricker, 21 April 1761. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
50. Anonymous. Combat of Vellinghausen. Project Seven Years' War. https:kronoskaf.com.
51. Anonymous. Opregte Groninger Courant, 24 October 1760.
52. Stricker BHC, Stricker WFO. History and family tree of the Dutch-Danish family Stricker/Stucker. Stichting Voorzorg, Rotterdam, 2023.
53. Stricker EH. Letter to Danish War Office, 16 May 1761. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
54. Anonymous. Engagement of Emsdorf. Project Seven Years' War. https:kronoskaf.com.
55. Hirsch JCW, Hirsch K. Fortegnelse over danske og norske officerer (Officielt), Fortegnelse over danske og norske officerer med flere fra 1648-1814 samlet og udarbejdet fra 1888-1907 af oberstløjtnant J.C.W. Hirsch og premierløjtnant Kay Hirsch. Rigsarkivet, København.
56. Stricker EH. Letter to his father Alexander Stricker, 16 May 1761. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
57. Stricker CA. Letter to the Danish War Office, 17 November 1761. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
58. Stricker JC. Letter to the Danish War Office, 18 May 1761. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
59. Stricker CA. Letter to the Danish War Office, 9 December 1761. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
60. Stricker CA. Letter to the Danish War Office, 21 December 1761. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
61. Stricker JC. Letter to his father Alexander Stricker, 16 May 1761. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
62. Anonymous. Louis d'Or and Livre. Wikipedia.
63. Stricker A. Letter to the Danish War Office, 10 June 1761. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
64. Stricker CA. Letter to the Danish War Office, 16 April 1762. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
65. Stricker CA. Letter to the Danish War Office, 21 May 1762. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
66. Stricker CA. Letter to the Danish War Office, 18 June 1762. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
67. Stricker A, Stricker JC, Stricker CA, Stricker EH, Herbst ALD. Letter to the Danish War Office, 21 May 1762. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
68. Stricker EH. Letter to the Danish War Office, 9 August 1762. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
69. Fokker AP. Over de melkkuur. Wetenschappelijke mededelingen. Ned Tijdssch Geneeskunde 1866;11:481-2.
70. Liebe PI, Borgstrøm E. Biografiske oplysninger om faste artilleriofficerer af linien, tjenstgørende i perioden 1764 til 1889 i Danmark, i Holsten (indtil 1864) og i Norge (indtil 1814). Bind 4. Copenhagen.
71. Stricker EH. Letter to the Danish War Office, 24 July 1762. Royal Archives. Copenhagen.

72. Anonymous. Claude-Louis, Count de Saint-Germain. Brittanica, 2023.
73. Stricker JC. Letter to the Danish War Office, 2 January 1762. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
74. Stricker JC. Letter to the Danish War Office, 24 February 1762. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
75. Stricker JC. Letter to the Danish War Office, 22 April 1762. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
76. Lichtenstein. Lettre à JC Stricker. Wesel, 26 March 1762.
77. Braëm JA, Wodroff CD. Letter to lieutenant-colonel von Rantzow. 20 February 1762.
78. Stricker JC. Letter to the Danish War Office, 9 October 1762. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
79. Borneman WR. The French and Indian War: Deciding the fate of North America. Harper Perennial, 2007.
80. Clark C. Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947. Belknap Press, 2006.
81. Anonymous. Opregte Haarlemsche Courant, 31 December 1757.
82. Stricker EH. Summary of life events in his Bible.
83. Stricker CA. Letter to the Danish War Office, 15 August 1760.
84. Mastnak J, Tänzer M-A. Celle im Siebenjährigen Krieg. Das Tagebuch des Garnizonsauditeurs Johann Philipp Schowart. Arbeitskreis Militärgeschichte, Bomann-Museum, Band I. Celle, 2010.

CHAPTER 8

The second interbellum [1761-1769]

When the three brothers returned to Denmark from France at the end of the campaign of 1761 in Germany during the Seven Years' War, the political tension between Denmark and Russia was increasing. Although the brothers were supposed to return in May 1762 to France, the threatening war with Russia forced them to remain. A key solution to this impending Danish-Russian conflict came from the Danish minister of foreign affairs Count Johann Hartwig Ernst von Bernstorff [1,2].

Bernstorff was the first of a series of family members who served in this important function. In Danish service since 1732, he was the successor of Johann Sigismund Schulin as of 1754. A friendly attitude towards Sweden was an important point of Bernstorff's diplomacy as he was fully aware of the continuous threat of Sweden to Norway and the bond between Sweden and Gottorf. He condemned every war that was not strictly defensive because he knew that he was representing a small power despite its large territory. Therefore, he always preferred negotiation over military conflict.

The first difficult problem Bernstorff faced when he started in 1754 was the impending Seven Years' War [4]. He was determined to keep Denmark out of the conflict at any cost, and he succeeded in doing so despite the fact that Denmark was bordered by the armies of the three important warring states Britain/Hanover, Prussia, and France. He initiated the 'Convention of Kloster Zeven' in September 1757. In May 1758, Bernstorff made a treaty with France to keep a Danish army of 24,000 men in Holstein till the end of the war to defend the free cities Hamburg and Lübeck and the Gottorf part of Holstein while France and Austria convinced Russia not to enter any of the southern parts of Denmark.

von Bernstorff, a dynasty of ministers of foreign affairs

The noble family von Bernstorff originates from Mecklenburg where the family owned land and several estates. The first known members of the family go back to 1300-1400. Several members played important political roles in Denmark, Great Britain, Hanover, and Prussia.

Johann Hartwig Ernst von Bernstorff

Born on 13 May 1712, deceased on 18 February 1772

He was the grandson of Andreas Gottlieb von Bernstorff, who was a minister in the cabinet of George I of Great Britain who was also elector of Hanover. Johann Hartwig Ernst was in Danish service as of 1732 and started as minister of foreign affairs under King Frederick V in 1754. He was a cautious and intelligent statesman who had to move within a framework of a continuously changing geopolitical reality. His great achievement was that he succeeded in remaining neutral during the Seven Years' War with favorable economic consequences for the Danish society. Also, he was able to solve the 'Gottorfer Frage'. He actively promoted Danish trade as chairman of the Commerce Council. He also promoted the German culture in Copenhagen. After the death of Frederick V in 1766, his influence declined. The increasing problems around the mental state of the young king Christian VII forced Bernstorff as chairman of the Privy Council to keep the king away from state affairs. He was dismissed by Struensee in 1770 after which he removed to Hamburg.

Andreas Peter von Bernstorff

Born on 28 August 1735, deceased on 21 June 1797

He was the nephew of Johann Hartwig Ernst von Bernstorff. Starting in Danish service in 1759 [2], he was mainly engaged in the promotion of Danish trade and was a member of the Commerce Council chaired by his uncle. Although also dismissed by Struensee, he came back as minister of foreign affairs in 1773 after the death of Struensee. In that year, he was able to formalize the decisions of his uncle in the Treaty of Zarskoje Selo with Russia. In this treaty, the alliance with respect to Sweden between Denmark and Russia was described. This treaty backfired when Sweden declared war on Russia in 1788. Political troubles with the king's stepmother, his half-brother, and the Danish politician Ove Høegh-Guldberg made him resign in 1780. However, on the initiative of the young Crown Prince who had great trust in him, he was reinstalled after 1784. Andreas Peter shared the cautious and intelligent approach of his uncle. He introduced the defensive 'armed neutrality' policy during the American Independence War which gave an enormous stimulus to Denmark's trade globally, making Denmark prosperous. He introduced several important administrative and agricultural improvements.

Christian Günther von Bernstorff

Born on 3 April 1769, deceased on 28 March 1835

He was the son of Andreas Peter and started in Danish service in 1787. He held several diplomatic posts in European countries [1,2]. After his father's death in 1797, he became secretary of state and then in 1800 minister of foreign affairs. This was a difficult period in which Denmark changed from the defensive 'armed neutrality' to an offensive one with a convoy system of armed ships to protect merchant vessels. Although a clever diplomat, he was not able to foresee the consequences of the 'League of Armed Neutrality' with Russia, Sweden, and Prussia and the subsequent war with Great Britain. After the unfavorable course of the war, he resigned in 1810 as minister and resumed his function as Danish envoy in Vienna where he participated in the Congress of Vienna in 1815 during which the loss of Norway was formalized. In 1818, he went into Prussian service. Here, he made an important contribution to the German customs system.

The course of the war changed everything. The death of Empress Elisabeth of Russia on 5 January 1762 saved Prussia from defeat (the second "miracle of the house of Brandenburg"; the first one was after the battle of Kunersdorf in 1759) and completely turned the tide. Austria hastily withdrew its guarantee to Denmark in order not to offend the new emperor of Russia, Tsar Peter III of Holstein-Gottorf. One of Peter's first acts on ascending the throne was to declare war against Denmark. The coolness and firmness of Bernstorff saved the situation. He protested that the king of Denmark was bound to defend not only Denmark but also the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein so long as there was a sword in Denmark and a drop of blood in the veins of the Danish people. He rejected the insulting ultimatum of the Russian emperor and placed the French general Saint-Germain at the head of the well-equipped Danish army in which the three brothers Stricker participated. Johan Christian was captain of infantry, while Ezechias Heinrich was captain in the recently founded artillery corps. As the Russians were already in Swedish Pomerania, most Danish troops were in Mecklenburg. Carl Alexander was captain-engineer and became the aide-de-camp of the Danish lieutenant-general Count von Schmettau [3].

But just as the Russian and Danish armies had come within striking distance, Peter III was overthrown by his wife Sophie Auguste Friederike von Anhalt-Zerbst, the later Russian Empress Catherine II. Bernstorff knew that she was not much interested in the small remaining parts of Gottorf in Holstein. Bernstorff was one of the first to recognize that France was powerless after the Seven Years' War, and in 1763 he changed his alliance with France for one with Russia. This resulted in a treaty of April 1765 with Russia about Sweden. Catherine II relinquished Gottorf but received the counties Oldenburg and Delmenhorst instead.

References

1. Redersborg E. Bernstorff - Bernstorf - Schloss Bernstorf: Eine Familie und ihr Einfluss auf eine Region in Nordwestmecklenburg. CW Nordwest Media, 2013.
2. Hornemann J. Andreas Peter Bernstorff: Ein europäischer Staatsmann des Revolutionszeitalters: Kunst der Reform-Politik des Ausgleichs. Wachholz, 2021.
3. Nobel O. Slægtsbogsoptegnelser vedrørende Familierne Stricker og Kaalund. Personalhistorisk Tidsskrift 1912; pp. xx-xx.
4. Marston D. The Seven Years' War. Osprey Publishing, 2001.

CHAPTER 9

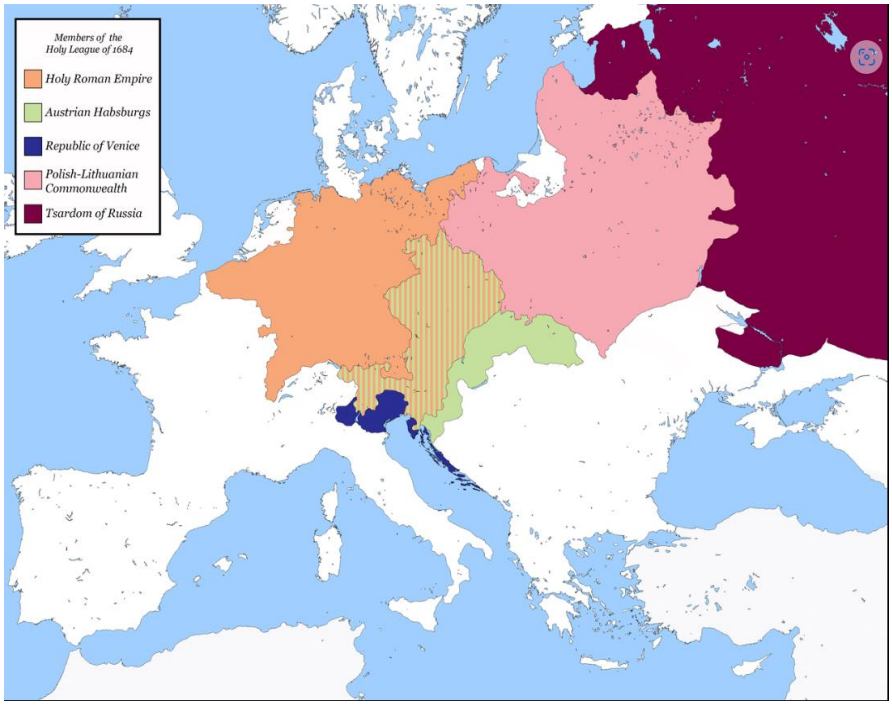
The Russian-Ottoman War [1768-1773]

Just as in geophysics the continuous drift of tectonic plates produces a never ending series of irregular earthquakes, in geopolitics waxing and waning tensions between states and cultures are a never ending cause of irregular wars. Often, such instability arises when one state or culture expands strongly while the adjacent state or culture is in decline. A good example is the mounting number of conflicts between Russia and the Ottoman Empire, a political entity encompassing today's Turkey and large parts of the Middle East, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, and Ukraine. Modern Russia was founded around the Grand Duchy of Moscow in the late 15th century and the Tsardom of Russia in 1547. After a troublesome period, in 1613 the Romanovs came to power, and since then Russia expanded enormously to the east where it was unopposed. Russia even crossed to Alaska and the west coast of Canada around 1760 while the other European countries had their focus on Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Expansion to the north, west, and south was much more difficult for Russia. To the north meant war with Sweden while expansion to the west was difficult because of usually powerful states such as Poland-Lithuania and the Holy Roman Empire. Expansion to the south became easier when the Ottoman Empire was in decline, but that took many centuries after reaching its peak with the conquering of the invincible Byzantine city Constantinople (now Istanbul) in 1453 [1]. However, the finishing off of the once large Byzantine Empire, the successor of the former Eastern Roman Empire, was not a guarantee for peace. The Ottoman Empire went to war regularly in the Balkans against Austria, Hungary, and Poland. And to the north, it faced Poland-Lithuania and an increasingly powerful and ambitious Russia.

Between the 16th and 20th century, twelve wars were fought between the Russian and the Ottoman/Turkish Empire (the two terms are used interchangeably). It was one of the longest series of military conflicts in European history. Except for the war of 1710-1711, as well as the Crimean War which is often treated as a separate event, the conflicts ended disastrously for the Ottoman Empire, already undergoing a long period of decline. At the same time, it demonstrated the rise of Russia as a European power after the modernization efforts of Peter the Great in the early 18th century. Carl Alexander von Stricker participated in the sixth of these twelve wars; we will not further discuss the later wars.

During the years 1568-1570, 'Ivan the Terrible' invaded and conquered Kazan and Astrakhan. In this first Russian-Ottoman conflict, the Ottoman Sultan Selim II tried to drive the Russian army out of the lower part of the river Volga in Astrakhan in 1569. This Ottoman expedition was an almost complete failure; the Ottoman fleet was destroyed in the Sea of Azov [2]. After the settlement of the conflict, the Crimean Khanate persisted in its resistance but was defeated by Russia in 1572. Almost a century later, after the war between Russia and Poland-Lithuania [1654-1667], the east bank of the river Dnjepr was taken by Russia. As of 1654 the region tentatively came under Russian control, when local Cossack leaders swore allegiance to the

Russian monarchy in exchange for military protection. Under Russian rule, the east bank part of Ukraine initially enjoyed a degree of autonomy within the Tsardom, but this was gradually withdrawn throughout the 18th century. West of the Dnjepr, the Ottoman Empire, in the course of the Polish-Ottoman War [1672-1676], spread its rule over the remainder of Ukraine with the support of hetman (chief) Doroshenko. However, his pro-Ottoman policy caused disapproval among many Ukranian Cossacks. In 1676, Russian troops captured Chigirin south of Kyiv and overthrew Doroshenko. In 1677, the Ottoman army tried to retake Chigirin but was defeated. In 1678, the Ottoman army was finally able to take Chigirin after a bloody assault, but here the Ottoman expansion to the northeast was stopped. In 1681, the new Russian-Ottoman border was established on the river Dnjepr.



The ambitious and violent expansion of the Ottoman Empire led to a large coalition after it almost took Vienna in 1683 during a two-month siege. This coalition of the Holy League included the important European states bordering the Ottoman Empire. Russia joined the league in 1686. During the war, the Russian army organized campaigns in the Crimean peninsula in 1687-1689. In view of the impending Great Northern War with Sweden, the Russian government signed the Treaty of Constantinople with the Ottoman Empire in 1700. Thus, Russia managed to access the Sea of Azov.

The Great Northern War of 1700-1721 was at first dominated by the talented warrior King Charles XII with his small but well-disciplined Swedish army as a response to a secret treaty between Denmark, Poland/Saxony, and Russia. However, Charles XII lost too much time and too many resources in Poland and Saxony in a sort of personal vendetta with August II of Saxony. When he finally turned his army towards Russia, he rapidly lost momentum in this enormous

territory during winter. However, after the Russians had defeated the Swedes and the Ukrainian Cossacks led by Mazepa in Poltava in 1709, Charles was able to persuade the Ottoman Sultan to declare war on Russia on 20 November 1710. Peter the Great's campaign in the area of the river Pruth ended very unsuccessfully for Russia. The Russian army, led by the tsar himself, was surrounded by a superior Turkish-Tatar army and was forced to agree to unfavorable peace conditions under which it returned the previously captured Azov area to the Ottoman Empire.

It would be wrong to attribute all territorial aggression to the Ottomans as also the Russians had the ambition to enlarge their country. During the late 17th century, the neighboring empire Persia, which had been one of the greatest rivals of the Ottoman Empire, was in serious decline. Taking advantage of the situation, Russia conquered parts of today's Dagestan, Azerbaijan, and northern Iran during 1722-1723, while the Ottomans took parts of contemporary Armenia and east Anatolia as well as western Iran. Now that Russia and the Ottoman Empire bordered each other along a large territory in the Caucasus, the risk of frictions increased. Later, parts of Iran were given back as part of a Russian-Iranian alliance against Turkey, as Persia was at war with the Ottoman Empire. In the meantime, Russia was also supporting the accession to the Polish throne by August III. Russia entered into another war with the Ottoman Empire in 1736 after invasions by Crimean Tatars. The Russian army launched an invasion of the Crimean peninsula, burned the capital of the Crimean Khanate, and captured Azov.

Geopolitical map of Europe in 1768, the first year of the sixth Russian-Ottoman war

Austria entered the war against the Ottoman Empire in July 1737 but was defeated several times. In 1739, the Russian army crossed the Dnjepr and occupied the fortresses of Khotin and Jassy. However, Austria was again defeated by the Ottoman Empire and signed a separate peace at Belgrade. Because of the threat of a Swedish invasion, Russia was forced to sign the Treaty of Niš on 3 October 1739 in which they gave up their claim on Crimea and Moldavia but were allowed to build a port at Azov without fortifications and without the right to have a fleet in the Black Sea. The map illustrates the geopolitical situation in 1768, before the start of the sixth war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire..

Political situation in Russia and its relation with Denmark

During many geopolitical conflicts in which Denmark was involved, Russia had been an ally. However, when on 5 January 1762 Empress Elizabeth of Russia suddenly died, there was an acute change of the situation. Peter von Holstein-Gottorf, a grandson of Peter the Great of Russia, was the heir to the throne of his aunt Elizabeth. The new tsar was a great admirer of the Prussian king Frederick II the Great. Although he had been in Russia since 1742, his new role as a tsar of Russia made it possible to re-inflame the old 'Gottorfer Frage'. This prolonged conflict between the duke of Holstein-Gottorf and Denmark was largely resolved in 1721 at the end of the Great Northern War, but it had left only small parts of Holstein and an area around Kiel to the duchy. Now a war between Denmark and Russia was imminent, especially after Russia immediately stopped all military activities against Prussia during early 1762, followed by a peace treaty on 5 May 1762. Subsequently, Peter focused on making alliances with Sweden and with England to ensure that they would not interfere on behalf of Denmark while Russian forces gathered at Kolberg in Russian-occupied Pomerania. Alarmed at the Russian troops concentrating near the borders, unable to find any allies to resist Russian aggression, and short of money to fund a war, the government of Denmark threatened in late June to invade the free city of Hamburg in northern Germany to force a loan from it. Peter considered this to be a good reason to prepare for open warfare against Denmark [2]. In June 1762, 40,000 Russian troops assembled in Pomerania under General Rumyantsev, preparing to face 27,000 Danish troops under the French general Count Saint-Germain in case the Russian-Danish freedom conference (scheduled for 1 July 1762 in Berlin under the patronage of Frederick II) failed to resolve the issue. According to Carl Alexander Stricker, this imminent conflict with Russia was the reason why he and his brothers had to resign from the French army [6].

Indeed, when they arrived in Copenhagen in December 1761, they were on leave and were supposed to return to France during the spring of 1762. However, with the war now likely, the Danish War Office in May 1762 ordered them to resign from French service. It is probable that they did not bother too much about this because their 5 years of fighting in Germany had been very tough with many hardships. But shortly before the conference, Emperor Peter III lost his throne, and the conference did not occur. Peter III was accused of planning an unpatriotic war by his wife and influential court circles, and he was killed under mysterious circumstances. His niece and wife Sophie von Anhalt Zerbst became the reigning empress. She was later known as Catherine the Great. Although she was also directly related to the house of Holstein-Gottorf, she let go of the claims because her interests were of a much larger scale. Hence, the conflict dissipated, and the relationship between Denmark and Russia improved. Under her long reign, inspired by the ideas of the Enlightenment, Russia experienced a renaissance of culture and sciences, leading to the founding of many new cities, universities, and theatres, along with large-scale immigration from the rest of Europe and the recognition of Russia as one of the great powers of Europe. During her reign, Catherine extended the area of the Russian empire by some 520,000 square kilometers, absorbing New Russia, Crimea, the North Caucasus, right-bank Ukraine, White Russia, Lithuania, and Courland at the expense, mainly, of two powers, the Ottoman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth [2].

Danish volunteers in the Russian army

As was the case with the French, Austrian, and Prussian armies in the Seven Years' War, foreign volunteers participated for a time in the hostilities involving Russia during the eighteenth century. As Amberger described in his analysis [3], especially the wars with the Ottoman Empire were an ideal playing field for such people; they had a desire for adventures and personal ambitions to improve their abilities as warriors, but in some cases their commanding officers urged or even ordered them to volunteer. The fight against muslims was still sacrosanct, although less important than in the days during which Europe was threatened by the Ottomans and Vienna had almost been captured. There was a lower chance that due to a changing political situation, the volunteers had to be called back here, because the Ottoman Empire was far enough away from the European center with its regularly changing geopolitical situation [3]. Peter the Great had started with inviting and enticing foreigners to come to Russia and had always tried to keep them for longer periods with attractive offers. But in the field of war tactics and strategy, there was in reality not much to learn in Russia. The European war theatres with its many conflicts such as the Nine Years' War and the War of the Spanish Succession were far more attractive for ambitious and capable volunteer warriors in terms of becoming famous, rich, and experienced [3]. Of course, there were many men for whom it was simply a matter of earning a living. But many from higher socioeconomic classes went to war with other intentions. Since it had been decided in Frankfurt in 1521 that only the hereditary representatives of member duchies, counties, and principalities of the Holy Roman Empire had the right to vote during the Imperial Diet in Frankfurt, a large number of their younger brothers had to switch to other activities [4].

As for Denmark, the first occasion during which volunteers were sent east was in 1737. During the reign of Empress Anna of Russia, Danish officers had volunteered in the fighting with the Austrian Habsburgs and the Russians against the Ottomans in Hungary [1737-1739]. In that period, captain Andreas Hauch (later a Danish general) is mentioned with distinction. Two years later, colonel Jobst Conrad Römeling is mentioned as a Danish officer in the Austrian imperial army during this war [3,5]. Römeling came from Norway but had previously been in Dutch and English service during the War of the Spanish Succession [5]. By coincidence, he was also later Carl Alexander Stricker's father-in-law [6]. At the same time, other Danish officers joined the Russian forces where they participated in the successful campaign of field marshal Count von Münnich. In 1737, captain von Osten was appointed in May; first lieutenant von Raben was appointed in December, and thereafter cavalry captain Gustav Adolf Güldenöhr was appointed [3]. They all arrived with a letter of recommendation from the Danish king.

During the Seven Years' War, there were Danish officers in Prussian, French, and Russian service. Under Rumyantsev, there was a Danish first lieutenant Röder, who fought in Russian service with distinction. He had been in Russia since 1753 but left in 1762 because he did not want to fight against his own fatherland [3].

During the reign of Catherine II, the stream of ambitious young men increased again. The louder the sound of the fame of Catherine the Great throughout Europe became, the more attractive

Russian service seemed to be. When in 1768 the Ottoman Empire declared war at a very unfavorable moment for Russia, at that time engaged in the Polish War of the Bar Confederation of Polish-Lithuanian nobles [1768-1772], it created an attractive playing field for vigorous young men. From several countries, volunteers appeared to participate in the fighting under the Russian flag: Englishmen, Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Prussians, Swedes, Austrians, people from Sardinia, and many from German territories. Frederick the Great himself in January 1769 selected six of his officers for participation in this Russian-Ottoman conflict; one was Prince von Anhalt-Dessau. During the next campaign, he sent six other officers to Russia, among whom was his nephew Prince Wilhelm Adolph von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel who died in 1770 during hisservice [3].

Shortly after having served in Prussia, several Danish officers were referred to the Russian government as volunteers. In a letter to the Russian state chancellor and foreign minister Count Panin, the Danish foreign minister Bernstorff recommended them and wrote that they could be appointed according to their rank in Denmark or higher. The Russian minister was soon able to react to this: Catherine II would appoint all recommended officers and would treat the request as a priority. When they returned home, the officers would keep the rank and payment they attained in Russia. On 10 March 1769, general Hauch sent Bernstorff a list on which he especially recommended captain Stricker because he had experience as field engineer, quartermaster, and aide-de-camp [3]. The original copy of this list was enclosed by the Russian envoy Filosofov in a message of 14 March to St. Petersburg. It listed aides-de-camp von Düring and von Gähler, the cavalry officer major von Moltke, first lieutenant von Rohweder, second lieutenant von Düring, artillery officers major Brüggeman and second lieutenant Heyliger, infantry officers major von Blücher, and captains von Pentz, Stricker, Munthe af Morgenstierne, Kaltenborn, Pogrell, Lepel, and Conradi. Aide-de-camp von Düring had already been in Russian service during 1763-1768 as a major, after he had participated in the Prussian army during the Seven Years' War. These officers started their travel almost immediately when the Russian response had arrived. They travelled on land through Sweden to Stockholm where they boarded a ship to Reval in Estonia. From there, they again travelled over land to St. Petersburg where they arrived on 25 April. A few days later, captain Röder arrived; he had been in Russian service earlier. In St. Petersburg, ambassador Scheel showed his compatriots around and introduced them first to the vice-president of the War College Count Tschernyschev and subsequently to the empress herself on her birthday. They were received very courteously. Von Düring and von Gähler were even invited to the table of the empress. A few days later, the Danish officers were allocated to their regiments. Von Düring, Gähler, Stricker, Brüggeman, Moltke, Blücher, Morgenstierne, Lepel, Pentz, Conradi, and the younger Düring were allocated to the 1st army of Prince Golitsyn (Gallitzin), while Pogrell, Kaltenborn, Röder, Rohweder, and Heyliger were allocated to the 2nd army of Rumyantsev. Moltke arrived later at the end of May, and on 13 June appeared a new face, the well known aide-de-camp von Falkenskjold. His removal from the Danish court was the wish of Bernstorff, so his travelling had a political background [3]. After him came captain Count von Schmettau and lieutenant-colonel Adeler. Von Schmettau, Falkenskjold, and Stricker had fought in the French army during the Seven Years' War, and Schmettau and Stricker knew each other well. In August, the Danish major d'Angelly arrived. At that time, there were 21

Danish officers in Russian service. The Danish authorities were satisfied with this number, and European journals made mention of the officers sent to Russia [7].

Apart from Pogrell, who was ill and stayed in Moscow, all Danish officers arrived at their regiments in good shape. They immediately participated in the ongoing military operations, especially those by Golizyn against Cochzim, and in the subsequent weeks Count Tschernyschev gave a very flattering account of their activities to ambassador Scheel; this account appeared in European newspapers [8]. Several officers advanced to a higher rank. Near Bender, von Moltke's hand was injured, forcing him to travel home in the next spring to be treated.

At the end of the campaign of 1769, the financial situation of several of the Danish officers became worrying. Unless they were from prosperous families, they apparently could not live on their Russian payment only, especially as in Russia wages were paid very irregularly. First, Schmettau and d'Angelly asked their ambassador for financial support; d'Angelly even asked for one full year of salary [3]. Then, Düring and Falkenskjold tried to support the others. Lepel brought forward that he had no more rubles left, that he could no longer pay his servant, and that he could no longer participate in the campaign of next year. It took until March the following year until ambassador Scheel was finally able to send him 200 rubles.

The campaign of 1770 brought the Russian army a series of shining victories. The commander of the 1st army, Rumyantsev, defeated the Ottoman army at the Larga river and in Kagul. On both occasions, Falkenskjold was there. The first time, he was the first to enter a deserted enemy redoubt and shouted 'Hurray Katharina!'. After the battle at Larga, he was the first Danish officer to receivethe recently introduced Order of St. George 4th class; seven of his colleagues received it later. The military activities of the 2nd army under the command of general Count Pjotr Panin concentrated around the fortress of Bender. Here, Düring participated. He commanded the cavalry vanguard and later a corps with which he helped to cut a sudden thrust from the fortress. Kaltenborn repeatedly distinguished himself until he received a serious head wound. When it was time to storm the fortress, also Morgenstierne appeared. Ahead of a grenadier company, the other two headed by Count Ysenburg and the Knight of the German Order von Stein, Morgenstierne opened the storm assault on 18 September. Ysenburg was injured and Stein killed. The Order of St. George 4th class were the rewards for Düring and Morgenstierne. Also Blücher received the reward. It was the last major fight during 1770. Soon the Danish officers lost a colleague; Conradi died around this time, but it is unclear how and whether he was able to return to his fatherland. Schmettau became ill and had to ask for his dismissal as a colonel. Falkenskjold went back to St. Petersburg because of a fever. There, he was called back to Copenhagen by Struensee. As soon as Catherine II perceived that Falkenskjold played a role in Danish politics, she no longer paid attention to him (but a relatively unimportant English volunteer received a box with diamond inlays and a recommandation letter for his king [3]). During the autumn and winter, also Brüggeman and Gähler received the Order of St. George 4th class after some delay. Düring moved to Warsaw where he seconded the Russian ambassador Casper von Saldern.

Early in 1771, military activities were taken up again with the successful campaigns of general Weismann in the Danube area. Here, the Danish officers encountered many opportunities to

distinguish themselves. The recently advanced lieutenant-colonel Stricker was the only Danish staff officer in Weismann's corps and was highly esteemed. In May, Blücher took the message to St. Petersburg that the Russian army had crossed the Danube for the second time. He also received the Order of St. George 4th class. Morgenstierne, having had to travel home in order to let his wound be treated, in addition received 500 rubles from the Russian government. D'Angelly, who had been dismissed from Danish service in May and transferred to Russian service, received as reimbursement a prominent position for his son and an estate with a mansion in Livonia for his wife. At the same time, the recovered von Moltke asked for a renewed positon in the Russian army. This request was granted. With a travelling fee of 100 rubles, he travelled in the middle of June 1771 to the Army of Rumyantsev. Shortly before, Falkenskjold had reappeared in St. Petersburg, but this time with a diplomatic mission, i.e. to appease the empress with respect to the regime of Struensee and to ask for Russian support regarding some nautical affairs in the Mediterranean. Although he had pretended he would join the Russian campaign afterwards, he immediately returned to Denmark after his failed diplomatic mission [3].

In August, Stricker was the eighth and last Danish officer during this war to receive the Russian Order of St. George 4th class for his outstanding military achievements. In December 1771, Pentz returned to Copenhagen. Also, Lepel and Rohweder left Russia. Some Danish officers had their winter quarters in St Petersburg. But in January, all colonels were ordered to go back to their regiments, and most Danish officers participated in the campaign of 1772. Kaltenborn had recovered. Düring remained in Poland and arrived later, in the middle of August, in St. Petersburg, to prepare the return of von Saldern and the sending of an envoy replacing him. There were no military activities during the autumn while negotiations between Russia and the Ottoman Empire took place in Fokschany and Bucharest. As a consequence, the Danes started leaving for their winter quarters early. First Gähler, and then in November and December Moltke, Dorgelo, and Stricker (according to Stricker's own report, he stayed during winter in the area) went home with Danish and Russian messages. Moltke took a recommendation letter with him from Count Panin to help him in getting assigned to a regiment at home. Because he was a lieutenant-colonel in Denmark, like Düring, the War Office did not want to create a precedent since an earlier similar request by Düring had been rejected. Another sad story reached Copenhagen: the younger Düring was killed by his servant while being treated for an illness in Poland. Again, there were several complaints about the low and irregular payment. Pogrell, who had been mobilized on the Crimea, came to St. Petersburg completely without resources but was helped by ambassador Numsen. Carrying a letter of recommendation from a Russian prince to the Danish king, he arrived in Copenhagen shortly after colonel Adler in February 1773. He was followed by Kaltenborn. The number of Danish officers was now substantially reduced. Morgenstierne had not gone back, and Düring was no longer active in any military role. Heyliger no longer participated in the 1773 campaign. In May 1773, Brüggemann and Röder left Danish service and joined the Russian army where they later advanced to the rank of general. Pogrell travelled several times as a courier between Copenhagen and St. Petersburg with letters. Only Blücher participated in the remaining campaigns.

The administrative and other affairs related to the Danish officers kept the Danish ambassador in St. Petersburg busy for quite some time. Not until June 1774 did he receive permission for

dismissal of Kaltenborn, Stricker, and Morgenstierne. Apparently, the Russian military authorities had still counted on their return from Denmark. At the same time, the payment of the Order of St. George pension for Morgenstierne was made. The year 1774 brought an awkward end to the position of d'Angelly. He had been born in France and was accused of having released Russian state secrets to Versailles. Although he denied the accusations, he was dismissed, lost his Order of St. George, and had to leave Russia. He later appeared as an officer in French and Dutch Service during the revolutionary wars and then as a newspaper publisher in Denmark [3]. Some participants reported about the campaigns. An extensive report was made by Stricker; it is more or less similar to reports by some other authors such as von Falkenskjold. As a foreigner, he was able to make valuable observations of the Russian army and its commanders. Stricker's second report is a tribute to general Weismann who was considered an excellent commander. In an addendum, a description is given about other armies and their strategies and tactics. Falkenskjold described the campaign of Golizyn against Cochzim and strongly criticized the Russian commanders, including Golizyn but also Rumyantsev*. An exception is the quartermaster general von Bauer who was favored by Falkenskjold**. Falkenskjold also mentioned the name of the Prussian volunteer Victor Amadeus Graf Henckel von Donnersmarck and his diary about the campaign of 1769. Falkenskjold had given him the geographical maps***. He considered Henckel a good observer and professional. Henckel gave an excerpt of his diary to the Prussian king Frederick II.

*This seems somewhat surprising because Rumyantsev was considered to be a very successful military commander who had leading roles in the battles of Gross-Jägersdorf and Kunersdorf in the Seven Years' War and successfully besieged Kolberg. In the Russian-Ottoman campaign of 1771 he was also very successful.

**In his description, Stricker wrote with a touch of malicious irony that Falkenskjold entered a completely deserted fortress and shouted 'Hurray for Catherine'. Then he put small papers with 'Bauer' on it in the empty cannons. Consequently, Bauer was credited for taking the fortress and submitted a request for the Russian Order of St. George because of Falkenskjold's bravery. (See page 205.)

***In a letter of 8 April 1791 to his brother Ezechias, Carl Alexander writes that the geographical Cochzim battle area maps he had sent to general Hauch were given to Gohler and withheld by the latter for Falkenskjold who could present them to the court in Copenhagen [9]. If this is true, Henckel might have used Stricker's drawings in his report to Frederick the Great.

The campaign of 1769

The Russian-Ottoman war followed on troubles within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, indirectly endangering the stability of the Ottoman Empire and its ally, the Khanate of Crimea. The true power behind the Polish throne was Russia itself. The Polish king Poniatowski was a former lover of Empress Catherine II and had to obey the Russian leadership as communicated by ambassador Repnin who had forcefully passed a treaty between Poland and

Russia. The treaty was disadvantageous to Poland geopolitically, challenged the political supremacy of Poland's Catholic church, prevented reforms, and allowed occupation of Warsaw by Russian troops. Rising unrest led to the massive revolt of the Bar Confederation, an alliance of nobility, Roman Catholics, and peasant rebels in the fortified town Bar near the Ottoman border [2]. While the Russian army heavily outnumbered the Polish confederates and defeated them several times in direct battles in Podolia, a former part of Poland that is now a part of Ukraine, bands of rebels waged low-level guerrilla war throughout southern Poland.

On 20 June 1768, the Russian Army captured the fortress of Bar, but when one band of surviving confederates fled to the Ottoman border, pursuing Russian Cossacks clashed with Ottoman janissary garrison troops. Such Polish revolts troubled Russia throughout the war and made it impossible for Catherine II to keep control of Poland. The direct 'casus belli' was that during the summer of 1768, Sultan Mustafa III received reports that there had been a massacre by Russian Cossacks in the town of Balta. Upon the outbreak of the war, the Ottomans seemed to have the upper hand as Russia was suffering from financial strain as a consequence of its involvement in the Seven Years' War. The Ottomans dominated the Black Sea, giving it the advantage of shorter supply lines. The Ottomans were in addition able to use troops from their vassal state, the Khanate of Crimea, to fight the Russians. However, the Ottoman Empire faced internal division, rebellion, and corruption, all compounded by the re-emergence of a unified Persian leadership. One clear advantage for the Ottomans was superior numbers as the Ottoman army was three times the size of its Russian counterpart [2].

On 19 June 1769, Carl Alexander Stricker arrived from St. Petersburg at the headquarters of Prince Alexander Mikhailovich Golitsyn (Gallitzin), field marshal of the Russian army. Golitsyn had fought with some success in the Seven Years' War but was not considered a military genius. During the battle at Kunersdorf, he had commanded the left flank; it was almost decimated, but because in the end the Russians under command of Saltykov won, Golitsyn too was decorated. At the start of the war in 1768, Golitsyn had been entrusted with the command of an army, with which he moved toward Cochzim (currently Khotyn, Ukraine). However, he did not dare make an assault on the city and withdrew to Deraschneij in Podolia to re-supply his troops and strengthen his rearguard. At that moment, Carl Alexander arrived [10]:

"Anno 1769, on 8/19 June, I arrived in Deraschneij, Podolia at the headquarters of Prince Golitsyn, field marshal of the imperial Russian army. The army corps had its camp scattered around this area after its return from the expedition to Cochzim. On the same day, the second line of the reserve corps of Metzeburg had removed and was now camped at Szarafka. On 20 June, the message came in that two small corps of Confederates had been defeated in Poland but that there were 150,000 Ottomans at and around Cochzim and that a corps of 4,000 Tatars had crossed the Dnjestr. Later, it was found out that the latter message was false and that there could not have been more than 50,000 Ottomans around Cochzim. On 21 June, I was appointed captain in the staff of the general quartermaster."*

* the Julian and Gregorian calendars differ by 11 days

Prince Alexander Mikhailovich Golitsyn [1718-1783]

The general quartermaster was apart from the infantry and cavalry. It was responsible for the logistics and the transportation of the army. It handled more than lodging, food, clothing, and weapons. For instance, the artillery fell under the responsibility of the general quartermaster, and so did reconnaissance. Apart from being an experienced field engineer, which was important for the siege and taking of fortresses, Carl Alexander was a good cartographer who was responsible for the cartography of Norway later at the end of the 18th century.

"On 22 June, the headquarters moved to Szarafka. The first part went into the camp which had just been left by the second part. Lieutenant-general Stoffeln positioned with his reserve corps on the right near Scalofsce. Lieutenant-general Saltykov with the cavalry was positioned on the heights on the left side of the camp. The 2nd part went to Ormolimetz. There, I received information about the size of the army which consisted of 30 regiments in 2 battalions with 18,500 men. Furthermore, there were 10 battalions grenadiers of 3,000 men. As for the cavalry, there were 14 regiments of 5 squadrons each with 5,600 men, 4 regiments of hussars of 5

squadrons each with 1,000 men, 6,000 Don Cossacks, 2,000 other Cossacks, and 1,000 jäger, all in all a total army size of 37,100 men. General Count Rumyantsev was encamped near Grilow, not far from Bender with 10,000 men of regular troops and 20,000 Cossacks."*

** Currently Tighina near Tiraspol, Transnistria.*

The two armies were composed of different ethnic and cultural groups, a logical consequence of empires encompassing large geographical areas. Apart from soldiers from Russia and areas like Armenia or Kazachstan, a large part of the army consisted of Cossacks from different parts of Ukraine. And as outlined above, there were many officers from European countries, and German principalities, duchies, etc. The Ottoman army was composed of soldiers from Turkey but also from other parts of the empire. Also, there were many Tatars from the Crimea Khanate (mainly of Turkish ethnicity) and janitschars or janissaries. Janissaries began as an elite corps made up through a system of child enslavement, often after killing the parents. Young boys with Christian parents in Balkan countries were taken, enslaved, subjected to forced circumcision and conversion to Islam, and subsequently incorporated into the Ottoman army. They were feared for their fighting power, thanks to internal cohesion by strict discipline and order.

"On 23 June, the headquarters moved to Ormolimetz. The 2nd group and both reserve corps were moved forward and encamped on the heights, split into the 2nd infantry line, and the cavalry on the left. The next day, the remainder joined and lined along the earlier troops having arrived the day before. In this way, the whole army had now gathered. The headquarters moved further to Chemolenski. On 25 June, we went to Ternava to prepare for the encampment by the army the next day. The next days we went to Jardi in which area all villages were completely deserted and parts probably set on fire and burnt out. Nevertheless, we prepared the encampment for the army the next day. On 30 June, the general staff left Tschernakowitz. Lieutenant-general von Stoffeln, who had been far ahead, was attacked at Caminieck** by 5,000 Ottomans. However, these Ottomans had to withdraw with the loss of around 300 killed while we took 8 prisoners. On 1 July, we prepared an encampment at Tschernakowitz and moved further to Ustia and from there ¼ mile ahead to explore the passage of the Dnjestr near Samuschie. On 2 July, lieutenant-general Rönnekamp encamped at Kaminieck. On 4 July, the reserve troops arrived at Ustia and encamped on the heights bordering the Dnjestr opposing Samuschie. The pontoons and artillery arrived around 0830 hours and the construction of a bridge was immediately started. It consisted of approximately 70 pontoons and was ready for use around 0330 hours the following night. However, the army encamped at Tschernakowitz while lieutenant-general Rönnekamp had moved with 4 infantry regiments, 2 curassier cavalry regiments, and several Cossacks towards Kaminieck where he encamped at Dolshock.*

On 5 July, Prince Prosorofsky's corps went over the Dnjestr at daybreak and positioned itself ½ mile further towards the river Pruth, but their outposts moved further 1 mile toward the river. After passage of some light troops around 1000 hours, some infantry passed to build up a spearhead. Thereafter, the cavalry of the reserve corps, and subsequently the complete corps of lieutenant-general Stoffeln, as well as 30 heavy cannons passed the Dnjestr and positioned itself directly on the right side of the pontoon bridge. On 6 July, Cossacks took the heights bordering the Pruth, and the complete army passed the Dnjestr and encamped directly left near the pontoon bridge. However, the heavy baggage remained on the left border of the Dnjestr near Urtia in a wagon fort, covered by 3,000 men, while the reserve corps moved forward in the

encampment that I had marked for them at Sosalentz and the day thereafter at Saduby at the other side of the mountains. The army remained at the heights on this side of the mountains near Sastawna. On 8 July, the reserve corps passed the narrow Stan gorge and encamped at the other side of the small river Hukio. This gorge is famous because general Münnig had defeated 150,000 Ottomans at its entrance during a previous war. One day later, the army passed the gorge and encamped at Ravanzow. On 10 July, the army moved towards the village Sankofski which was kept in front of the left flank of the army. The reserve corps occupying the same heights had to remove a quarter mile further towards Cochzim."

* Currently Tjernivtsi.

** Currently Kamjanets.

Carl Alexander Stricker had to make regular reconnaissance tours on horseback in the unknown territories, a very dangerous activity for which he was mostly accompanied by up to 200 Cossacks on horseback. These reconnaissance tours were not only indispensable to ascertain the position of the enemy but also for the preparation of travelling routes of the army for which space and water are a primary requirements for encampment. His description shows the dangers he encountered.

"The same evening, I drove with general quartermaster Gakowsky up to ¾ mile near to Cochzim to observe the Ottoman-Turkish encampment bordering the Dnjestr. We found out that the Ottomans were busy with major foraging in a village that we had passed on our right side, when we were suddenly almost cut off from our way back by a group of some 200 horse riders

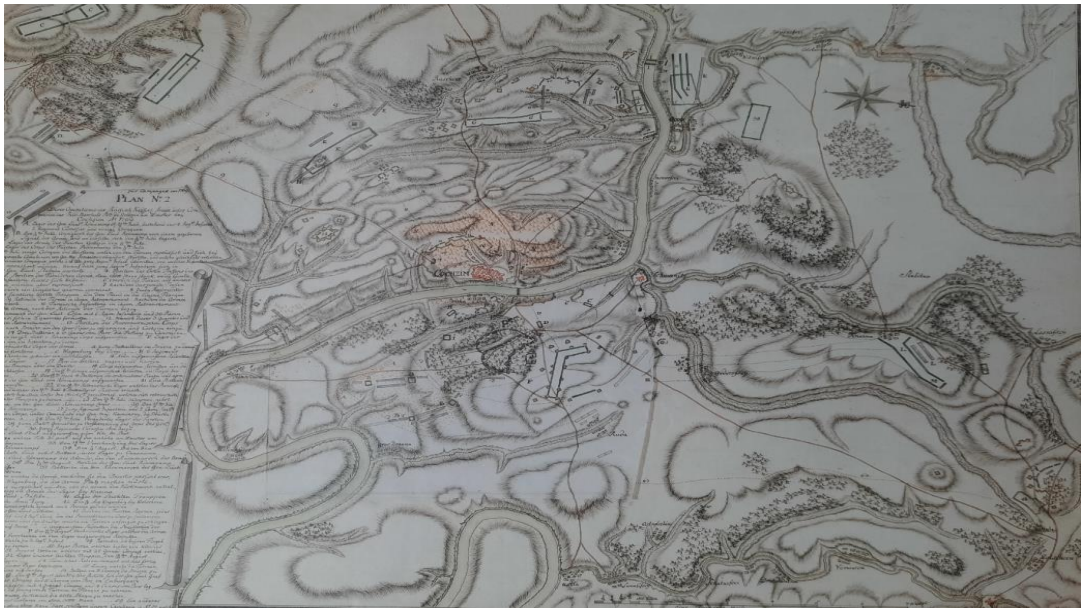
Fortress of Cochzim [Khotyn] at the Dnjestr; Russian troops gathered at the opposite river side

galloping only 400 yards behind us and trying to catch us. Apart from that, a corps of around 2,000 Tatars approached from our right trying to occupy the bridge we had to pass. Our escort of 300 Cossacks was able to take one Turkish officer and one janissar prisoner, after which we were so lucky as to safely reach our foreposts after a horse gallop of almost 1½ hours.

On our way back, we saw another big encampment near the river Pruth. According to our prisoners, it comprised around 30,000 Tatars while there were approximately 20,000 janissars in Cochzim. Thanks to the reconnaissance of yesterday, we knew that the Tatar cavalry encampment was around 6 kilometers ahead of our right wing near the Pruth.

Therefore, the Prosorofsky corps moved forward and arrived at 0800 hours at the heights where a fierce skirmishing ensued because the Ottomans came forward with large groups. The army split itself in three columns and marched uphill towards the occupied heights. Our cavalry kept back fully armed while the baggage was covered in a wagon fort. However, as soon as our well-disciplined army arrived at the mountain, several thousand Tatars appeared from the adjacent valley and attacked our right wing.

We drove them back with heavy shrapnel and musket fire, but a part continued fighting uphill. However, the largest part of them moved alongside the edge of the mountain, and large groups of them spread throughout the valleys. At first sight, my estimate was that their whole corps was not larger than 15,000 men, but our prisoners held that the total size was around 30,000 soldiers. Overall, it is very difficult to make a valid estimate of these troops because they are very unstructured and go around like a swarm of honeybees. We moved our artillery forward battery-wise and kept them under constant fire until noon and early afternoon when lieutenant-general Stoffeln appeared with the reserve corps and attacked their right wing. At the same time, the Prosorofsky corps attacked their left flank after which the Turkish troops started to withdraw. Meanwhile, the army started to move and passed the swampy river in the valley.



The area around Cochzim (center), a fortified town on the right side of the Dnjester

When we arrived at the mountain, the Turkish troops had regrouped there, but when the army kept moving, they fled into the direction of Cochzim. Having arrived on the mountain to let the

light troops pass down into the next valley where also the army went afterwards, we encamped near Tzetlane and a day later to Baskifsce. On the left, our light troops skirmished with the enemy. With rockets, a signal was sent to lieutenant-general Rönnekamp to end the fight with the reserve corps and position his corps in front of Cochzim.

On 13 July, during the early daybreak, the Ottomans appeared in very large numbers on the mountain opposing our location. A valley with a river was between their position and ours. During the night, we had constructed 4 bridges over it. Already at 0400 hours in the morning, some of our light troops were skirmishing with them up to the mountain base. As support, 2 regiments infantry and 6 12-pound cannons went over to support these Cossacks and hussars.

Shortly after the first troops arrived at the slope of the mountain, a corps of several hundred Turks attacked the Cossacks before our left wing so fiercely and energetically that they turned around and galloped into a column of two regiments of cavalry just arriving. Panicking, these regiments under major-general Ismelow also turned around and overran, in great chaos, a complete grenadier company right then arriving in the front line with two regiments infantry.

These infantry regiments immediately formed a front where possible and opened fire on the Turkish mob. At the same time, two of our battalions on the left flank returned and shot at the Turks from the other side. While this undoubtedly meant that our troops partly shot at each other, this heavy musket fire at the almost-encircled Turks forced them to retire immediately. The reserve corps under Stoffeln was ordered to retake the lower hill on our left flank to safeguard the forward march of our army.

However, when they approached, they were attacked by some 5,000 Ottoman horsemen trying to take advantage of a gap of more than 100 meters between the reserve corps and returning troops from Prince Repnin that were able to build up an infantry front. During this action, we shot a horse from a Pasha who was urged by another Turk to withdraw by foot but refused and continued fighting on foot. As he refused to be taken prisoner, he was mowed down ruthlessly by our sabres. Finally, the first part of the army passed the valley and positioned itself on the mountain thereafter. Here, we discovered the complete Ottoman-Turkish army on the opposing mountain with a fairly large valley between armies. The Turkish cavalry dominated the right flank of the valley while the left flank consisted of mainly infantry. Meanwhile, many very strong horsemen parties populated the slopes of the mountain and remaining areas in the valley, actively searching out where they could mow down our avant-garde.*

This alarming situation forced us to issue a very strong cannon fire wherever we could hit them. They also gave cannon fire on us, but their cannon balls went high over our heads. We estimated their army at approximately 40-50,000 men. At 1000 hours, the Turks made another attack, this time on our right flank, but with the support of our light troops we were able to push them back. Around 1230 hours, the second part of our army was finally able to pass the previous valley and to catch up with us. Now, we were able to form a prolonged carré by joining of the army and the reserve corps.

Immediately, two regiments infantry as well as several light troops were sent to attack the left wing of the enemy. Subsequently, the whole army moved forward in carré form after which the

Ottomans rushed backwards to their retrenchment while their cavalry remained 'en bataille' covering the road to Bender."

* An Ottoman title comparable to a Lord.

The Russian troops continued their march through the valley, and when they were approximately 3 kilometers away from the Ottoman encampment, the army halted around 1 kilometer before Cochzim with the Münnig entrenchment amidst their left wing. The Prosorofsky corps positioned itself on a nearby hill. Later during the evening, the Russians observed that the Turkish cavalry withdrew on the road to Bender. Russian light troops followed them and took a large part of their baggage. On this day, the Ottomans had lost at least 3-400 men while the Russians lost around 200 of their men.

On 14 July, lieutenant-general Essen marched with 6 regiments infantry and 30 medium-sized cannons towards the Turkish entrenchment. When they had passed the valley, they formed three carrés with 2 regiments and 10 cannons each. Subsequently, they moved forward towards the enemy entrenchment while the Prosorofsky corps attacked from the right. During this attack, the Turks rapidly left the entrenchment and went inside the Cochzim fortress. Cossacks immediately entered the entrenchment and captured a large number of tents, buffaloes, oxen, and camels, as well as many artillery wagons. Several thousand cannon balls and bombs of all sizes, barrels with gunpowder, and building materials were left behind because they could not be carried after

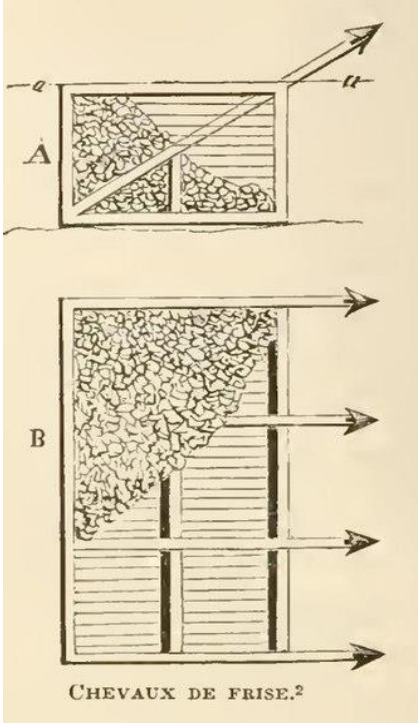
Geographical map drawn by Carl Alexander Stricker. In the left upper quadrant is the fortified town Cochzim, on the right the small fortress Schwanietz. C: Corps of Prince Golitsyn; D: Corps of Prince Prosorofsky; F: light troops to protect infantry; E.-H: later positions of the Russian army in July 1769.

withdrawal. The light troops encamped below Cochzim to protect the infantry. That same night, 3 batteries were set up, each with 10 cannons from the artillery park, only one of which could see and shoot directly at the town. The two others shot indirectly at the city. On 15 July, the Russians started to bomb the city from all three batteries. At the same time, lieutenant-general Rönnekamp opened fire on the city from the other side with 2 further batteries that he had built during the previous night. However, because our heaviest artillery consisted of just 12-pound cannons and there were no specific siege artillery, the fire was without success, also because only 5 to 6 cannons could hit the town. The other cannons all shot over the town because it is located at the foot of a mountain and 2 of the batteries were not placed in the right position.

Therefore, the gunfire was discontinued around noon. The army moved further towards its left wing and encamped nearer to the Dnjestr so that its right wing moved a bit further than its left wing had done during the previous day. In this position, the Russian troops were now able to cover the bridges. The communication lines with Podolia were now guaranteed, and the army could only be attacked via its right wing. Two battlions were put in position near the Dnjestr to prevent the enemy from attacking the bridges and taking away the baggage train of the army.

"On 16 July, the garrison made a sortie around noon with 600 men on the central artillery battery but were driven back with a loss of 100 of their men. In the evening, the detachment of Cochzim was withdrawn and the entrenchment emptied. The message arrived that the Vizier was on his way from Bender and that a corps of approximately 60,000 Tatars was sent ahead. The Prosorofsky corps marched alongside the Dnjestr around 1 mile in the direction of Bender to observe, but also to encircle the garrison of Cochzim further. At the same time, patrols were made towards Jassy and Bender for reconnaissance of the enemy. A corps of 6 regiments carabiniers was placed ¼ mile from our right flank to occupy the entrance of Cochzim further. Today, we also marked and prepared 4 redoubts on our right wing and 5 redoubts on a hill behind our camp. The artillery wagons and cars were parked behind the left wing of the army. On 17 July, we sang the 'Te Deum Laudamus' and fired our guns. Also, the pontoons arrived, and we constructed two bridges of the river Dnjestr next to our left wing.

The next day, we continued working on the construction of the redoubts to make it easier to enclose the city, and on 19 July lieutenant-general Rönnekamp's corps brought the city under heavy fire from 2 batteries of 12 howitzers or cannons and 3 pieces of 12-pounders. This gunfire had to be slowed the day thereafter to prevent a shortage as each piece had hardly more than 90 shots left. During the night, we shot with heated red-hot cannon balls on the city. On 21 July, a further 5 regiments of infantry marched towards the entrenchment and took position in front of Cochzim, covered by a fence of 'Spanish riders' behind and a redoubt on both wings. From a prisoner from Cochzim, we heard that they were expecting the arrival of a Pasha. The garrison made a sortie from Cochzim with approximately 2,000 men, but they were repulsed before being massacred.



'Spanish riders' ('chevaux de frise') are a defense fence; the drawing depicts them from the side (A) and from above (B). They were often used during a siege to protect sieging troops from an attack from behind

On 23 July, a further 7 grenadier battalions marched towards the entrenchment to have extra troops available in case the defenders intended a new sortie from the fortress. We finished all redoubts and occupied them with artillery and infantry. During the subsequent four days, we kept up a slow-paced but constant gunfire with cannons and howitzers. There were daily skirmishes between our troops and the garrison during which from our side we had some 12 to 16 dead and wounded each day. On 27 July, both pontoon bridges tore loose because the river water had risen very high. Also, it was assumed that Polish Confederate troops had thrown trees in the river upstream to damage the bridges. Because of the high water, we constructed only one new pontoon bridge. Also, we made covers and entrenchments for four batteries of general Rönnekamp, and for one jäger battery in Brahe. On 29 July, I was ordered to the corps of Rönnekamp to organize their encampment and guide them in case of an emergency retreat. This corps consisted of Carabiniers from Moscow and Ingria [area near St. Petersburg]. All in all 4 infantry regiments and 16 cannons from our reserve. On this day, the only pontoon bridge tore loose again and went downstream. On 30 July, the staff was withdrawn from Cochzim because we received the message that around 60,000 Tatars had arrived not far from Lipschany."

The Prosorofsky corps withdrew towards Lipschany, and lieutenant-general Brushe was ordered to support them with 4 regiments of infantry. The next day, Rönnekamp's corps was ordered to prepare for moving because an enemy army of 80,000 Ottomans was reported to approach

Cochzim. On 1 August, lieutenant-colonel Xernitschef marched with 2 battalions towards Bender and encamped opposite the village Babschin at the Dnjestr to prevent the Tatars from crossing there. They were supported by a corps of light troops while lieutenant-general Brushe was ordered to support the Prosorofsky corps with 8 battalions. Rönnekamp was ordered to send 3 cannons and 3 grenadier companies to the village Rinschuck, located around 6 kilometers south of Cochzim down the Dnjestr, to be able to attack the Tatars in case they moved up alongside the river to Cochzim. The vanguard of the Prosorofsky corps had several skirmishes with the Tatars and had to withdraw somewhat until enforcements from the army arrived with up to a total of 15 battalions. They positioned ½ mile from Cochzim on the road to Jassy. At each side of their wings, a redoubt was built.

Ottoman fortifications

The style and art of war differed between European countries and the Ottoman empire. Notably, until the Nine Years' War, a campaign was often conducted as a series of sieges of strongly fortified cities. With the French field marshal Vauban and the Dutch lieutenant-general van Coehoorn, the quality of fortification reached its zenith. In the east, wars were fought mainly by loose troops and often poorly organized horsemen who used changing encampments. If an army was able to take their forage, they often had to withdraw. Twenty years after his Russian campaign, Carl Alexander wrote to his brother Ezechias on 8 April 1791 [9]:

"When I particiated in the Russian-Turkish War, only Bender and Ouakow were sufficiently fortified although they were not of great value because they were fortified according to the old Dutch style. Besides these two, Cochzim had a city wall with 4-5 towers. Behind the wall was some earth to enable soldiers to patrol and reach the embrasures and wall baskets. Brailow was somewhat less well fortified but in the same style. However, it had a protected lane around it. Ackerman had also a city wall but a small and unprotected lane around it. Ismael and Gallas were surrounded by some sort of entrenchment, composed of a curved breastwork without any reasonable defense ability and with one meaningless redoubt in the middle.

All these breastworks were weak and produced in great hurry. Around these enforcements, there were further defense lines without clear structure and fortified with redoubts in which 30-40 thousand men encamped to defend the fortifications. This situation also existed in Kilia. Tultschy had a strongly walled tower with 6-8 small cannons. In front of it was a very well-built redoubt surrounded by a deep ditch. Isatschij had 4 strong towers and city wall, and around this a strong entrenchment with well-placed redoubts behind which more than 30,000 men were always encamped. In the castle and entrenchment we captured more than 80 18- and 24-pound cannons, besides some enormous 'Schlangen' and stone mortars of enormous size and caliber. Also, we captured many 4- and 12-pound cannons.*

Tultschy and Jassy were completely demolished. Jassy had no fortifications at all. The town is approximately half a mile long and not very wide and is situated at a small river. When this town was fortified, it would not have been more than a small defense line as described above. What adds to that is that all Turkish artillerists are Jews and Armenians, who already lose all courage when they hear an approaching projectile at far distance, and forget all professional principles and experience. Taking all this together, it will not be difficult for you to solve the puzzle how it is possible that the Russians so easily conquered Turkish fortifications with a storm assault. The

only siege artillery we had consisted of 8 pieces of 18-pound cannons, and these caused us a lot of trouble and did not come further than Cochzim.

I do not have to explain how difficult it is to transport such a heavy artillery train over a distance of 200 miles, because you already know this from your own experience. And therefore, we rolled all these nice heavy cannons that we captured in Isatchi into the Danube because we could not take them with us. A fortress such as Rendsburg, and even Wesel, which has a large number of breastworks, has been constructed in such a way that when one conquers one part, some 14-17 other parts have to be conquered too. I would never advise to take such a fortress by a storm assault alone. Instead, one must shoot and destroy some breastworks and keep the flanks under a constant fire with shrapnel. A subsequent well-organized storm assault will rarely fail. It is important to note that in the spearhead of such an assault one has to put 100, sometimes only 30-40 very determined and brave soldiers. Then, the others follow them automatically. The first group should be properly awarded. It is rare that such an organized assault is as dangerous as anticipated by fear. And if the assault fails, it is mostly by giving up too easily or giving wrong commands. And even if one loses a few thousand men, the loss is less than that caused by illness, desertion, etc. Of course, the situation is completely different if a fortress is well-designed, provided with enough food and ammunition, and is well-defended by a strong garrison. Then, a storm assault must wait until one is near enough and a substantial part of the breastworks has been destroyed

** A sort of cannon with a long barrel*

On 4 August, the Tatars came closer. According to prisoners and spies, their corps was indeed very large with its size of 80,000 men. Moreover, there were 30,000 janissaries in Jassy, and the Grand Vizier was approaching with approximately 150,000 men. The next day, the arriving Ottomans attacked the Prosorofsky corps but were pushed back with huge losses. Because approximately 35,000 Tatars now came marching forward without artillery, the six regiments infantry, sent to support Prince Prosorofsky, returned to their encampment and the prince withdrew with his light troops during the night.

On 6 August, Rönnekamp crossed the Dnjestr with 2 regiments infantry and positioned on the hill behind the encampment. Two regiments cavalry and 2 regiments infantry remained on this side of the river to cover the bridges and baggage. The next day Rönnekamp was reinforced with 2 battalions grenadiers and 2 regiments curassier cavalry. In addition, redoubts were made. On 9 August, the Ottomans approached Cochzim further until they were around 4 miles away.

"Our baggage was sent to Ocop across the Dnjestr in a wagon fort, but our tents were kept here. We heard from spies that the enemy intended to cross the Dnjestr to attack our wagon fort, and we therefore decided to cross the river again with the army. However, we discovered that the Turks were already preparing an offensive line on a nearby hilltop with batteries to bring our encampment under cannon fire. Therefore, we decided to once again pass the river the same night. At 1900 hours the cavalry started crossing the bridge, followed by the heavy artillery and the complete army. Thereafter, the reserve corps of Stoffeln followed while Rönnekamp formed the rearguard to defend the retreat of the army. At 0300 hours during the night, the army had

largely passed but we kept covering their route. At 0500 hours, we were still between the 2 defensive redoubts and the bridge with our rearguard when the first Turks showed up on top of the hill and drove back the 300 Cossacks there, but we remained at our position until 0700 hours because at that time the complete army except us had passed back over the Dnjestr. Then, Rönnekamp ordered his heavy artillery over the bridge and withdrew both wings of our corps for a well-performed retreat over the bridge. Immediately when we withdrew from the reinforced position, the Turks came downhill in huge numbers. Luckily, immediate heavy cannon fire from our troops on the other side of the river kept them somewhat away from us."

At 0800 hours, the complete rearguard of the corps with the exception of the Ingria regiment had also crossed the bridge with lieutenant-general Rönnekamp as the last man. Now the pressure built up on this remaining regiment, but it defended itself fiercely with intense musket and shrapnel fire. It was supported by the Russian heavy battery on the hill near Ocop. Due to this barrage, the Ottomans withdrew somewhat at 0900 hours after which the regiment withdrew over the bridge. At 1100 hours Carl Alexander's men started to dismantle the bridge. He did not lose any of his men, but the Ingria regiment had some casualties. However, the enemy suffered great losses due to heavy Russan artillery fire.

On 14 August, the army moved in 4 columns to Kneina while the reserve corps with its light troops encamped the same night at Gross Dranka. A day later, the heavy baggage arrived. The message came in that the enemy had passed the Dnjestr one mile below Cochzim and destroyed everything around. The wagon fort moved to Dolshock. On 17 August, approximately 6,000 Tatars crossed the Dnjestr between Schwanietz and Cochzim and another group of 7,000 Tatars near the village of Babschin, ¾ mile below Cochzim. Generals Soltikow and Repnin with 4 regiments infantry and 2 regiments cavalry each were sent to support the Prosorofsky corps and pushed back the Tatars who lost 60 of their men. During other efforts to cross the river, the Tatars were similarly driven back. On 5 August, the message came in that the Ottomans had started to build a bridge below Cochzim. Therefore, the army moved forward until Gavrielowski and made bivouac.

"During settlement, 3,000 Turkish horsemen came over but were driven back by our hussars and Cossacks, as well as by our cannon fire. Two battalions jäger and one regiment infantry already occupied the forest between Cochzim and our camp. The next days, the Turkish troops continued with the bridge, and 2,000 of them crossed it to our side. The Turks attacked the jäger in the forest, and several of them breached into the battalion and mowed down eight of them. Because the jäger had shot all their bullets, they made a counter-attack with bayonets and drove the Turkish soldiers back. Then, they retreated deeper into the forest. An infantry regiment was immediately ordered to support the jäger and remove the enemy from the forest. Hereafter, the invaders withdrew back over the Dnjestr again. We constructed redoubts around our camp and cut two parts from the forest in front of us, occupied by three regiments infantry and 20 grenadier companies, respectively."

On 28 August, it was observed from Schwanietz that the bridge was ready, and major-general Kaminsky received orders to destroy it. At 2200 hours, the Danish volunteer Count von Schmettau marched with 200 jäger and 2 grenadier companies in one column alongside the left side of the valley to Brahe up to the shore of the Dnjestr. Major-general Kaminsky and captain Stricker went with 2 battalions infantry to Brahe while 5 cannon were placed on a hill 700 meters

before Brahe. An enemy patrol on horses was seen to withdraw. From there, the bridge was clearly visible (see map above), and it was concluded that it was not yet even half finished. Therefore, they again withdrew into the forest. The next day, Kaminsky went again to the bridge with his troops, but the enemy was still working on it.

"They had built 3 pillars with pieces of canvas connected. We found around 150 Turks on this side of the river near Brahe. As soon as they saw us, they jumped into the river and swam away from us, but we moved in and mortally wounded 8 of them with our bayonets. Then, we destroyed the pillars, canvas, and some building material in one of their small boats. While we did this, the Turks from the other side of the Dnjestr fired at us with their muskets and from their stronghold, they put up a strong artillery barrage. We lost one man."

On 31 August, the enemy bridge was finished. A large number of enemy soldiers came over the bridge but remained near the shore where they kept busy with gathering crops from the land. In Schwanietz a box with gun powder, grenades, and an ignition system was launched in the Dnjestr to blow up the bridge. At 0100 hours, it exploded near the bridge but did not damage it. The enemy put 60 flags alongside the valley on this side of the Dnjestr to Brahe but did not move further.

"We tried to fire at them from our redoubts, but our cannons did not reach that far. However, they shot 2 cannon balls in the middle of our camp."

The same evening at 2200 hours, 4,000 grenadiers and infantry marched towards the river to attack the new Turkish entrenchment and set the bridge on fire. These troops under command of Prince Repnin moved in four squares towards the enemy. Around midnight, these squares clashed with the Turkish troops.

"We attacked them with bayonets without firing although the enemy opened fire at a distance of 1,500 meters. When we arrived, they turned around, and many of them threw themselves into the Dnjestr to escape. Only two of our grenadier companies were able to reach the bridge. Although they managed to set it on fire, it was hardly damaged because of a lack of proper material to ignite and because of the many skirmishes with Ottoman troops under the bridge. The enemy lost approximately 1,800 men, we only 100 of ours."

On 3 September, another 4 cannon balls hit the camp. Behind the forest, light troops skirmished with Turkish foragers. A courier brought the message that Prince Golitsyn was recalled and that Count Rumyantsev would take over the command while Count Panin would take over the command of Rumyantsev's current corps. Every day now, Turkish troops appeared on our side of the Dnjestr for foraging but remained some 2 miles away. There were skirmishes on a daily basis, and it was discovered on 7 September by general Elmt in the forest in front of the camp that the Ottomans were preparing an ambush. Therefore, at 2100 hours general Soltikow left with 20 grenadier companies and 10 cannons from the artillery park and positioned his men at the far side of the forest at just over 3 kilometers away from the army camp. Then, colonel Arschefsky marched with 4 grenadier companies and 4 cannons via the jäger post to the other end of the forest in order to attack the retreating foraging Ottomans in the flank. The next morning, these Russian troops were waiting in ambush.

"At 0630 hours, a corps of approximately 3,000 Tatars appeared from an open area between the forests, followed by a second corps of 10,000 men. Both corps proceeded slowly and in battle order alongside the forest, surrounded by the usual scattered groups of loose troops. As soon as they became aware of our Cossacks, hussars, and cavalry, they split up. One part attacked the Cossacks and hussars and drove them completely back. Another part attacked our cavalry which turned around immediately and withdrew between the redoubts near the army square. When the pursuing Ottoman horsemen ran into the fire between the redoubts, they halted and withdrew after which our cavalry turned around for the second time and chased the Turks away until the edge of the forest."

Between the army squares, cavalry squadrons were placed. Around 0800 hours, a strong artillery barrage and musket fire were heard from behind the forest. The forest was occupied by 3 regiments infantry and 2 battalions jäger under the command of lieutenant-general Count Brushe. Soltikow immediately sent an adjutant to find out what was happening; he reported back that the forest was full of Ottomans who were attacking the open areas. Soltikow immediately sent 3 grenadier companies via a route through the forest to attack the enemy in the back. Soltikow followed with 3 other companies. Captain Stricker received the order to reconnoiter what the intentions of the enemy were. He wrote:

"When I arrived, I saw that a very large corps of Turkish cavalry appeared of 15-18,000 horsemen of whom some 4,000 started to move towards the forest. I immediately reported this to the highest commanding officer general Kaminsky. He ordered me to tell all 14 grenadier companies and artillery to withdraw immediately while the 2 companies on the left wing followed Soltikow. Because general Kaminsky on the right wing at the outer edge of the forest had the 8 cannons from the battery park with him, he decided that it would be safer to return with the heavy artillery and remaining grenadier companies around the forest because it was now full of Ottoman warriors. Hereby, he marched over to the left around the battle area where the cavalry had prepared an ambush and arrived at the open area where Soltikow was.

During our forced march, we were encircled by the Turks from all sides; they attacked us from the front and behind, and from the forest. Despite this, we arrived relatively unharmed but found out that the Turks had driven our troops out of the forest with their sabers in hand to mow down every Russian soldier. Lieutenant-general Count Brushe, who had commanded the Russian troops in the forest, gathered some of the scattered troops and tried to compose some sort of resistance stronghold. As soon as general Soltikow had arrived with 6 grenadier companies on the small open area in the forest near the camp, Danish volunteer Count von Schmettau ordered the Moromsche grenadier company to take up their muskets with bayonets and follow him, and marched inside the forest. His initiative was immediately followed by several other Russian companies and luckily, we were able to retake the forest."

The estimated 10,000 janissaries in the forest were completely surprised by this attack from behind. The counterattack lasted from 0800 until 1600 hours, and during this period the Russian soldiers were under continuous musket and cannon fire. Another Turkish corps of 12-20,000 men was approaching alongside the shore of the Dnjestr between Cochzim and Schwanietz and threatened to attack the army squares, but it was driven back by heavy cannon fire from our redoubts and the battery of the right wing. The loss of the Russian army on this day was 600 soldiers, but the Ottomans lost approximately 2,000 of their men.

"The attack of the janissaries on the open area in the forest before the army camp was so powerful that our troops left 8 cannons behind. We were able to retake four of these but the other four were removed by the Ottomans. Captain Baron Fersen, who was closely following Count von Schmettau with 3 companies, was able to retake these. However, he was forced to form a square because the janissaries encircled his troops which immobilized him for 1½ hours until the arrival of support. When colonel Archefsky, who had defended himself with a square of 4 cannons, 4 grenadier companies, and 2 battalions jäger, came close the two squares joined with each other. After a further rescue by 8 grenadier companies from the army, the whole army of general Soltikow attacked the Turks from all sides so that around 0400 hours at night the Ottomans had been routed from the forest. The powerful attacks by the Turkish troops show that if we had not prepared the ambush in the forest, from which we were able to counter-attack unexpectedly from the back and cause panic, it would have cost us much blood and effort to get them out of the forest again. If they had populated the forest, they could have easily attacked the army camp. If Count von Schmettau had not made the rapid counter-attack, our position would have become dangerous."

A corps of Tatars was on its way towards the Russian wagon fort near Caminieck but withdrew like all other troops after the Turkish defeat in the forest. The Turkish plan was quite well prepared. If they had been able to attack from the forest, they would have had to cover only 700 meters to reach the army squares which had been diluted to defense lines only 2 men deep. They would have been overwhelmed, and the cavalry squadrons would have been encircled and massacred. The Russian troops were relieved after their victory. They sang the 'Te Deum Laudamus' and fired celebratory cannon shots. In response, the Turks shot some cannon balls from Cochzim but missed.

On 15 September, it was discovered that the Ottomans were building an artillery battery near Schwanietz at a distance of around half a kilometer. A few shots with a 12-pounder were fired at them from Schwanietz; one hit the target. Thereafter, the building activities stopped. The next day, the Ottomans sent their foraging troops over the Dnjestr under a protective coverage of around 6,000 men taking their usual route around the forest. They were attacked by Cossacks and hussars while a support force of 3 regiments infantry and the complete cavalry, totaling up to 70 squadrons, were sent out to push them back. However, the Turkish troops withdrew again over the Dnjestr without resistance. The Russians lost only 3 officers and some soldiers while the enemy lost 100 men due to Russian artillery.

According to a prisoner, the Grand Vizier had attended their sortie in order to reconnoiter the Russian army camp. The quick withdrawal may have been explained also by the fact that the Dnjestr had swollen due to heavy rain and the flowing stream later destroyed the bridge. Because there was no other passage left, the Ottoman army started transporting troops between the shores using large boats. It was discovered that the enemy had planned to attack the army camp during the early morning hours. The Grand Vizier had ordered his troops to come to our side of the Dnjestr over the bridge the previous evening. When he had gathered 15,000 men he tried to speed up the river crossing with boats.

Therefore, the Russian general staff decided to attack the enemy the same night. Each corps, battalion, and regiment received clear instruction as to the objective and the place and time to attack all Turkish troops on our side of the Dnjestr until Brahe, a village directly opposite

Cochzim at the other side of the Dnjestr. The complete cavalry and light troops went out and formed a cordon from the left flank of the army camp until Gross Dranka. Colonel Succatin marched with 10 grenadier companies of 100 men each from the right flank of the camp to the area behind the Turkish left wing, halfway between Cochzim and Schwanietz. Colonel Kaskin went with 10 grenadier companies alongside the forest while colonel Weissmann went with 2 battalions grenadiers and 2 battalions jäger through the forest alongside the valley. The remainder went around the forest and straight into the direction of Brahe with Prince Repnin and volunteers von Schmettau, Stein, and Stricker. All these troops marched up to a distance of approximately 1,500 meters from the Turkish camp and halted in order to give all columns enough time to reach their positions.

"At 2115 hours, all columns started their march towards the enemy. Colonel Kaskin, who commanded the 2nd assault column, arrived as the first at an entrenchment, and despite heavy fire his troops overran the fortification and mowed down every living soul inside with their bayonets. One by one, the other columns followed and penetrated every enemy soldier who crossed their path and chased the panicking Turks to the Dnjestr. A part of them plunged into the Dnjestr and drowned, another part tried to form a defense line along the shore and even shot at us from the water. The massacre was complete and frightening. The whole entrenchment, the whole shore side towards Brahe and in the Dnjestr itself, everywhere were dead bodies in masses scattered all over the battle area. It was impossible to count all bodies, but we crudely estimated the Turkish losses at approximately 4,000 dead while we lost around 700 of our men. We captured 160 flags and banners, of which the flag of the Pasha was beautiful with big heavy silver handles. We also captured 2 heavy cannons, a 12-pounder and an 8-pounder, but they were too heavy for transport. Colonel Kaskin was wounded on his right side. Our soldiers plundered the whole area and looted everything from the dead Ottomans."

On 18 September, the remaining Turkish cavalry and Janissaries on our side of the river had taken the road along the shore of the Dnjestr downstream and crossed the Schmotritsch to escape, but the Russians sent a large group of Cossacks and hussars who caught up during the night to finish them off. At the same moment, a large battery of 28 cannons between Schwanietz and Cochzim was built with 800 laborers and 600 men covering the construction from enemy attacks. With this battery, the Russians could easily reach the Turkish camp with their artillery. A corps of 1,000 Turks passed the river Schmotritsch but was driven back by hussars.

At dawn on the next day, the Ottomans came to the shore to observe the battery, opposite to them, that the Russians had built during the night. Immediately, the battery started an artillery barrage from all cannons to strafe the Turkish positions. In great panic, the Turkish soldiers broke up their camp and moved away. The Russians observed an intensified movement towards the town. When the morning fog had lifted, the camp as well as the town were empty, but there was increased activity in a large Turkish camp behind the town. In Brahe, there were still around 600 janissaries left. A section of 150 jäger and 50 grenadiers from Schwanietz were sent to encircle them. At first, they defended themselves, but when they were attacked from all around, the majority tried to escape by jumping into the Dnjestr. Many of them were killed by Russian bayonets, but 16 Ottomans were taken prisoner including the deputy Aga of the janissaries. He was an educated common-sense man who confirmed that during the afternoon of 17 September, approximately 15,000 men had crossed the Dnjestr to attack the Russian camp the following day. The Grand Vizier had indeed been over but was not satisfied with the slow passage and returned

to speed it up, after which the bridge broke. The 15,000 Turkish men who had already been transferred had been elite soldiers of whom the large majority had been killed or drowned. A Pasha with several thousand horsemen had withdrawn along the riverside. With the attack on Brahe, the Russians captured 10 flags and two large and two small cannons. On the same day, the Prosorofsky corps caught up with approximately 3,000 Turkish soldiers near Bonowitz; they withdrew, still fighting, to Uritschy where they let themselves be imprisoned with only 328 men and a Pasha. The others were mowed down or captured. In the afternoon, the Russians observed that the big encampment was broken up and that large groups took the road to Bender. The town seemed to be empty. Therefore, the Russians intended to prepare rafts to go over the river, but due to a lack of wood this was not possible.

"On 20 September, Falkenskjold and I noticed that on the opposite side of the river and below the demolished bridge, there was an unmanned raft. Adjutant Falkenskjold gave 10 rubles to two Cossacks to swim to the other side and bring the raft here. Thereafter, we requested the commanding officer of the battery, lieutenant-general Olitz, to give us 30 grenadiers with whom we could pass the river and find a way to enter Cochzim and occupy the town. However, they did not allow us to obtain this honor. Instead, lieutenant-general Elmt embarked with approximtely 50 grenadiers and went over with two boats of 25 men each. After he had explored the area around the city wall, he approached the city and ordered several grenadiers to climb over the wall to open the main town gate. Thereafter, the general marched with his troops inside the town and took it into possession. I went over with the third transport and found 180 cannons and mortars on the wall, of which more than 100 pieces were of very good metal and many were very long and of huge size and thickness. There were plenty of cannon balls and an enormous quantity of gun powder, as well as other stockpiles. Many stores were filled with all kinds of merchandise that we could use, but there were no provisions or food left. Some 50 diseased men and women, including children, had been left behind by the Turkish army too. In this way we conquered Cochzim, something which we had not even hoped to do shortly before.

Note! Of the 4 cannons which were taken from us in the forest during the day of the battle, of which it was reported that the wheels and guns were destroyed, we found two cannons undamaged in the camp, and the other two were left later on their way back and were recaptured by us."

From 20 to 22 September, the Russian army was transporting a garrison for Cochzim over the Dnjestr with boats and rafts, composed of colonel Weissmann and 3 regiments infantry. Hussars brought 328 prisoners from Ustitschy as well as 18 flags and banners, and one Pasha. In the evening of 21 September, 14 battalions grenadiers of 4 companies, as well as 2 battalions of 5 companies, each company counting a strength of 110 men, marched out of the camp and settled themselves on our side of the Dnjestr near Cochzim. In addition, there were 2 battalions jäger, 2 regiments riflemen, 10 squadrons hussars, and 4,000 Cossacks. Apart from 58 regiment guns, there were 6 pieces of 12-pound cannons, 4 pieces of Einhörner, and 2 Schuvalow guns from the artillery park commanded by lieutenant-general von Elmt.

On 22 September, the Russians started to transport this army corps across the Dnjestr in rafts and other floating platforms. However, the Cossacks had to swim over. On 24 September, the whole army marched back via Janschin towards the winter quarters in Podolia. The 3rd grenadier regiments remained in Cochzim as a garrison.

A corps under command of general von Elmts received an order to conquer the Moldau area. His corps was composed of 14 battalions, each battalion of 4 grenadier companies, 1 regiment infantry, 2 regiments riflemen (the Astrakhan and Novgorod). Furthermore, he had 2 battalions jäger, 10 squadrons hussars, and 4,000 Cossacks. From the artillery park, the corps received 12 cannons and 58 Einhörner guns. The infantry was split into 3 groups, commanded by colonels Burman, Arschefsky, and Igelstroem and directed by major general Prince Golitsyn, the light troops and jäger by Prince Prosorofsky. On 23 September, the Cossacks crossed the Dnjestr near Schwanietz; one part was ordered to Lipschany to find a place where they could pass the river Pruth. The next day, Prince Prosorofsky went with all light troops to Lipschany and reported back that a passage across the Pruth had been found at the village Krive and that he had sent out cavalry parties towards Bender. On 25 September, the column of colonel Igelstroem had passed the Dnjestr. While the artillery was transported across the river, heavy and continuous rains strongly complicated the passage. Afterwards, they camped about 3 kilometers away from Cochzim. The other columns went over the river one day later, partly near Schwanietz.

"On 27 September, colonel Igelstroem was ordered to move to the village Kriva near to the Pruth with 4 battalions and some jäger in order to find boats and rafts to transport troops across the river. Because I was affiliated with captain Hansen and 1 lieutenant to the general quartermaster staff of the corps von Elmt, I accompanied Igelstroem to reconnoiter the road and choose the best place for an encampment."

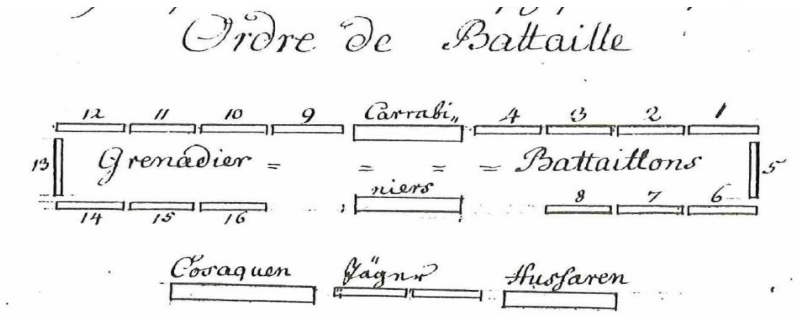
The next day, the tide of the Pruth was no more than ½ of a man's height. Hence, colonel Igelstroem received the order to cross the Pruth with his column and made a camp near the village Coslowa 2 kilometers further while Prince Prosorofsky also crossed the Pruth and made a camp between the villages Pollenesche and Coslowa. General von Elmt marched from his encampment near Cochzim to Kriva in two columns with the Astrakhan riflemen regiment, half of the artillery, and 4 battalions of colonel Arschefsky. Two battalions were allocated to safeguard the baggage and as a rearguard at the Dnjestr. The road was very mountainous with many valleys and mountain passes. Therefore, the travel was very arduous, and the corps did not arrive until 2100 hours after a march of 36 kilometers.

"Our problem was that we did not have any auxiliary material or tools such as a pontoon bridge, and we had no proper pioneer corps with us. The country was completely burnt down and devastated, and there were no bushes or trees to improve the quality of the roads. Therefore, I had no tools to improve the transportation."

Prince Prosorofsky reported that the enemy did not cross the river Pruth during his retreat. He heard this from a Polish former prisoner of the Tatars as well as from native inhabitants. The parties that had been sent out had not encountered any enemy troops but had taken 40 wagons with fruits and 150 sheep. Von Elmt ordered Prosorofsky to let the area at our side of the Pruth be patrolled by 450 Cossacks, and to send 250 men to the river Serret. If possible, they had to cross it and go to Bucharest and tell the Gospodar (a reigning prince) there to send an envoy to general von Elmt.

On 29 September, the corps crossed the Pruth at two different places and made a camp 3 kilometers further near the village Poltinesche. Prosorofsky reported from the village that some of his men had taken 35 wagons of fruit from some Ottomans, but there were no further

indications of enemy presence in the area. Only the party of 150 Cossacks that had been sent out to Bender had encountered any enemy soldiers, around 300. As more appeared, they had to withdraw after skirmishes. Near Cabor, they discovered in a forest two Polish noblemen who had been prisoners of the Tatars as well as 12 Confederate soldiers who had deserted. Prosorofsky was ordered to send two parties via different routes to Jassy where they had to try to take the town. On 30 September, Cossacks brought in a further 7 Confederate soldiers who had deserted from the Turkish army and joined the Russians voluntarily. They reported that the Grand Vizier had his camp 6 kilometers from Jassy and that he had 500 soldiers in Jassy itself. In the afternoon, the battalions of colonel Igelstroem were ordered back from their camp near Koslowa and positioned close to the rest of the corps. A place to gather everybody for an 'ordre de bataille' was created in case of an emergency.



'Ordre de bataille' on 30 September 1769 of the corps of von Elmt

In the afternoon, the 2 battalions of colonel Arschefsky arrived; they had formed the rearguard. Prince Prosorofsky marched towards Kevuschany and the day thereafter to Batuschany. On 1 October, the corps marched away in 2 columns to Milaschefsky. The jäger and 4 battalions of Igelstroem marched ahead as vanguard. The road was mountainous, but the area was much more fertile than where they had been earlier. In front of the new encampment was the river Podagra and the river Baschnau. The march went over 30 kilometers.

Prosorofsky reported that he arrived in Batuschany and found the town completely empty. However, soon several farmers appeared to sell meat and fruit. At the same time, he had received the message from the bishop of Jassy that there were 3 parties in the city, those of seraskers (commanders) Ramillier, Abascha, and Bascha with 300 horsemen. The Grand Vizier was near Riboi Machilow or Gautipei, but the bishop was not aware of the size or strength of the troops and knew nothing about the Tatars. It was rumoured that Ramillier would have his winter quarters in Bucharest, that Abascha would remain in Jassy, and that the Vizier would go to Isatschij in a few days. From a spy, Prosorofsky had heard that the Khan had gone back to Kanschany in his own land with his complete army.

On 2 October, the corps marched in the same composition as above. There were many valleys and gorges to pass, which made the march very difficult in view of the heavy rain. Therefore, the corps arrived very late at its new camp at the right slope of the river Schiska after a march of 11 kilometers. The following day, the corps marched to Batuschany where it camped 1.5 kilometers from the town. The general himself took quarters in the town where many boyars came to meet

and compliment him and put themselves under imperial protection. The next day, the general went with his staff and adjutants to the St. Nicolai monastery for a church mass with approximately 20 important boyars who paid him homage after the mass. During the 'Te Deum', followed by celebratory cannon shots, the boyars accompanied the general and his staff back to his quarters.

The following day, general von Elmt left Batuschany with the jäger and 4 battalions of colonel Igelstroem while general Golitsyn was ordered to stay with the rest of the corps. Prosorofsky had beent sent to Jassy via Lastrojet one day earlier. Von Elmt's march went in one column between two mountains which were partly covered by forests, partly by grain fields. On their way, the general met two eminent boyars from Jassy who came to bring over compliments in the name of the nobility of Jassy. Prosorofsky reported that the parties he had sent out to Jassy had arrived in town and had killed 80 Ottoman soldiers while 7 had been taken prisoner. Among the latter group was a Frenchman named Raffin who claimed to be a consul. The corps had marched over 30 kilometers.

On 6 October, the corps marched to the village Malajést. Because of the heavy rainfall and mountainous road, the march was very tiring. The corps did not arrive until 2130 hours in the evening in the camp and had walked 40 kilometers. Prince Prosorofsky reported when he arrived in Jassy that he was received well by the bishop and the boyars. He also reported that he had found 500 Tschetswerts (approx. 200 liters each) flour and 200 Tschetswerts barley that had been left behind by the enemy. During their flight, the Ottomans had thrown all bread in the Pruth and had destroyed all bridges behind them. Also, he reported that the Grand Vizier as well as the Tatar Khan had moved to Isatschij and that the the Tatars from Butjaen were fleeing to the river Danube with all their belongings because they feared an attack by the Russian troops. Moreover, the garrison of Bender was fleeing to the Danube, even though this had been forbidden on pain of being sentenced to death. General von Elmt ordered Prosorofsky to make the required preparation for his ceremonial entry into Jassy.

On 7 October, general von Elmt made his ceremonial entry in Jassy, first with 200 Cossacks on horse, followed by a regiment of hussars with a music corps and the carriage of general von Elmt preceded by two hussars. The carriage was followed by another regiment of hussars. Shortly before entering the town, the most eminent boyars came forward to welcome the general. They joined the carriage and remained there during the entry of the town. With the boyars, the banner and the music corps of Jassy preceded the Russian corps. The procession went through the city to the cathedral in front of which the bishop waited, with the complete clergy, for the arrival of the general to guide him inside.

Subsequently, the bishop conducted the church mass after which the 'Te Deum' was sung while the cannons fired. Thereafter, the bishop blessed the clergy, boyars, and others, and took the general with him to the monastery for a meal. After lunch, the general went with the same ceremonial procedures to the castle of the Gospodar where his quarters had been prepared. Here, the general was received by a priest with the cross and brought to the castle chapel for the Vespers, after which he was brought to his apartment to receive again the compliments from the most eminent boyars and let them kiss his hand while sitting in a large armchair with a roof meant to illustrate heaven. The battalions that appeared later in the afternoon were encamped in the close vicinity of the town.

"While I returned with general von Elmt to the army shortly thereafter, I do not know details of what then happened in the Moldau area. The command was transferred to lieutenant-general Stoffeln. During the winter, I was continuously engaged to find and compose march routes back to the army for the scattered Russian troops. Also, I made several large reconnaissance tours to scout the areas for future raids and enemy activity. As an overall conclusion respecting the campaign, I address some important considerations.

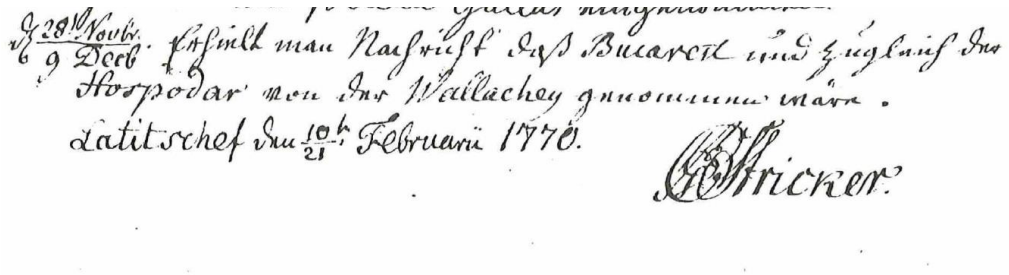
At the beginning of this campaign, the army consisted almost completely of recruits while hardly one-tenth were experienced soldiers. Consequently, when only a slight view of the enemy was encountered or a tentative message of adverse activities got reported, the whole army became nervous and frightened, panicking in terror. Maybe this was partly explained by a lack of trust in the commanding officer lieutenant-general Prince Golitsyn who had failed to take Cochzim during an earlier campaign. However, he had instructions from St. Petersburg not to run risks and endanger the army. Because if the army had been defeated, it would have been impossible to create a new army at short notice. This was mainly due to the shortage of experienced officers. Because although the Russian soldier is often good and obedient, he is useless without German or other foreign officers.

Anyone who wants to judge the movements of the army, tactics, and military events during this campaign must take the circumstances into account. Without besieging and taking Cochzim, the army did not dare continue further in enemy territory. We had no materials and special artillery for a siege, and this was not the fault of the commanding general. Moreover, the Russian army has no support from craftsmen companies and no bakeries, or other auxiliary services. In every regiment, officers as well as soldiers had to bake their own bread and make and repair their own clothes, shoes, carriages, and other tools. High ranking or rich officers could pay for a servant to organize that work, but these daily activities kept the ordinary Russian soldier so busy that there was little time left for exercise. Consequently, too much time was lost because the inexperienced soldiers did not practice the many tactical movements of their regiment. Therefore, the Russian army has poor skills in marching, collaborative movements, exercises, and other important military activities.

Although there are very capable officers in the Russian army, their number is relatively low for such a large army. Although indispensable, the German and other foreign officers are subject to some sort of virulent hatred which is very common among Russian soldiers and officers. All these limitations are important if someone wants to criticize the campaign. I know very well that the commanding general has been blamed, and I agree that many military actions were too slow, too cautious, and not thought through. But if we take into consideration what I just mentioned, some of the mistakes that were made can to some extent be explained by the poor conditions and circumstances of the army. In addition, many Russian officers were poor, hungry, and often ill, and they lost their courage because of it. When there is a shortage of everything and there are no tools and technical support, it is understandable that they blamed their generals."

On 24 November, the army moved again towards its permanent winter quarters. The first part was composed of the light troops alongside the Dnjestr, the right wing of this line towards Scala, the left wing towards Bartzlawel. The 2nd line was composed of infantry, the right wing to Satanow, the left wing to Barr. The 3rd line was also infantry, the right wing to Odziowiss, the left wing to Deraschney until Latitschef. The 4th line was also infantry, the right wing to Basilia,

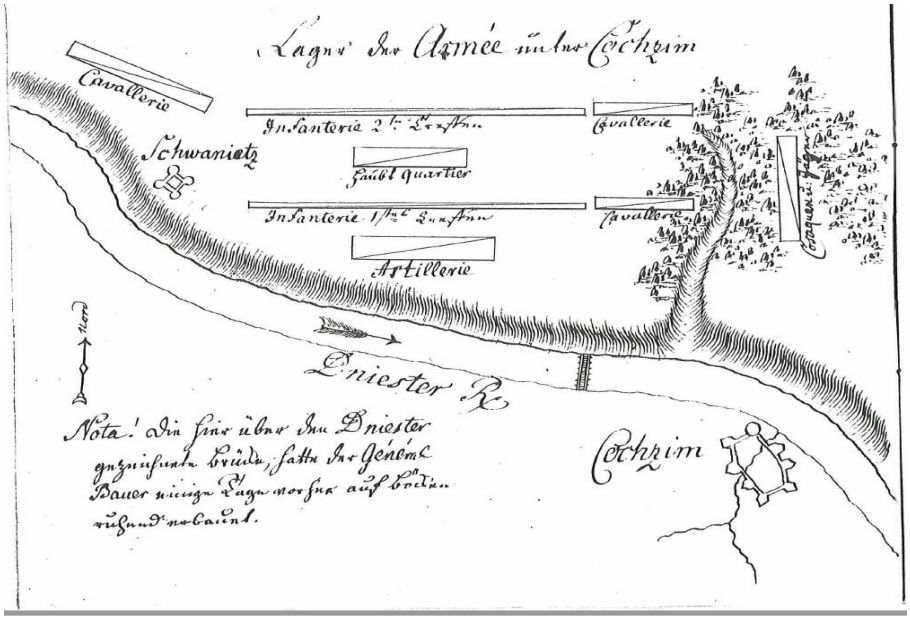
the left wing to Latitschef. The 5th line consisted of cavalry, the right wing to Krasilow, the left wing to Milnick. The headquarters were in Latitschef. On 29 November, the message was received that lieutenant-colonel Fabritian had marched towards Gallas at the river Danube with 2 battalions jäger, 2 grenadier companies, 2 squadrons hussars, and approximately 1,000 Cossacks. Not far from this town, he clashed with a Turkish corps of 8,000 men; he defeated them, killed the Pasha, and conquered Gallas. On 9 December the message arrived that Bucharest had been taken and that the principality of Walachia had been captured.



The campaign of 1770

Since November 1769, the Russan army had been in its winter quarters in Podolia, a southeastern part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, around the town of Latitschef where the headquarters of field marshal Count von Rumyantsev were located. In February 1770, general quartermaster Bauer arrived there. His staff officers were immediately sent into the Moldau area to reconnoiter the roads. A geographical map was made and future marching routes defined. The first objective was to indicate where the different regiments and corps had been located during the winter months, and how and in which order they should be gathered and brought to a large encampment near Cochzim again. General Bauer ordered the construction of 28 portable bridges which are indispensible in every army. At the same time, it was decided in which order the army would have its encampments.

On 6 April 1770, the parts of the army that were furthest away in Podolia started to march first, with the aim of gathering themselves according to their own regiments and corps in order to travel to Cochzim in 5 columns and arrive on the same day. On 11 April, the headquarters moved from Latitschef to Derasna. Field marshal Rumyantsev remained with an escort of a squadron hussars in Latitschef and arrived later on 13 May 1770. Between 13 and 19 May, the headquarters moved via Michel Poll, Germolinnetz, and Tilna to Balin. Here, the message came in that a corps of Tatars had appeared near Lipschany. Three regiments cavalry were sent forward across the Dnjestr to expel the Tatars with the support of Russian troops already in place.



Encampment of the Russian army near Cochzim on 23 May 1770

The next day, field marshal Rumyantsev joined the headquarters. Another message arrived, saying that the plague reigned in the area of the Moldau and that in Forschany, Baluschany, and Jassy 40 men died from it every day. On 22 May, the headquarters went to Dolschock but the general staff of the quartermaster went to Cochzim to mark and build up the encampment. On 23 May, the complete army arrived in 4 columns at the encampment near Cochzim at the Dnjestr, the right wing near Schwanietz, the left wing in a forest in a second line.

The encampment was placed in two lines.

1st Line	2nd Line
5 Squadrons Siberi	6 Squadrons Resan
5 Squadrons Imperial Highness	5 Squadrons Astrakhan
2 Battalions 1st Grenadier Regiment	1 Battalion Lieven Grenadier
2 Battalions Nisegorod	2 Battalions Rostow Regiment
2 Battalions Novgorod	2 Battalions Smolensk
2 Battalions Caposche	2 Battalions 2nd Moscow
2 Battalions Kabartinskij	1 Battalion Karbaskowa
Artillery Park; Note ! Camped	Bataillon Wiborg
600 steps from the first encounter	2 Battalions Karkutsch
2 Battalions 3rd Grenadier Regiment	2 Battalion Abscheron
2 Battalions Butherij	2 Battalions Gerroslaw
2 Battalions 1st Moscow	2 Battalions St. Petersburg Grenadiers
2 Battalions 2nd Muromokij	1 Battalion Grenadiers Pr. Menzikow
2 Battalions Astrakhan	1 Battalion Nebusch
2 Battalions 4th Grenadier Regiment	1 Battalion Woronzow
5 Squadrons Novotroitsk	5 Squadrons Kiow
5 Squadrons Nichegorodsky	

"All in all, including the 3 cavalry regiments that had been sent out earlier, the army consisted of 29,300 men among whom were 4,500 cavalry. The corps of Prince Repnin in the Moldau area comprised a strength of approximately 8,000 men. Above, I have drawn the map of the encampment and summed up the composition of the army. I am not aware of the number of Cossacks, but there were certainly more than 6,000 of them."

On 24 May, the staff of the general quartermaster went to Lipschany, but before leaving they set up a camp at 2 kilometers from Cochzim. After one day of rest, the army crossed the Dnjestr over 2 bridges built from undercarriages and one near Schwanietz on pontoons and went to this new encampment. The day thereafter, the headquarters followed, but the baggage was delayed and arrived bit by bit. The heavy rains had made the roads so useless that it was almost impossible to transport the baggage wagons.

On 5 May, the army marched in 7 columns to Tanrifu, 3 from the left wing, 3 from the right wing and one in the center. The first column from the right was formed by the brigade of major-general von Grotenhielm. Hereafter came the battalion of leutenant-colonel Arschefsky, followed by the one of von Beutling. After these battalions followed the cavalry regiments Resan, Novotroitsk, Imperial Highness, and Tweer, and closing with Astrakhan.

The second column was formed by the brigade of major-general von Weissman with the battery park and closed by the brigade of general Gulowitz. It contained the regiment Muromokij, then Butherij, battery parks 1 and 2, regiment 1st Moscow, and Astrakhan. The third coumn was formed by the brigade of major-general Grabowitzkij, artillery parks 3 and 4, a battalion jäger, and the brigade of general Suggalin. It was composed of the regiment Novgorod, then the 1st grenadier regiment, then regiments Curint and von Wiborg. The fourth column was composed of artillery parks 5 and 6. The fifth column at the left wing was composed of the brigade of major-general Kurzel, artillery parks 7 and 8, and closed by the brigade of colonel Soltikow. It included the regiment Geroslaw, the 3rd grenadier regiment of park 7, the reserve battalion von Woronzow of park 8, the regiment Smolensk and the 2nd Moscow. The sixth colmn was formed by the brigade of major-general von Koesikow and artillery parks 9 and 10 and closed by the brigade of Igelstroem. It included Abscheron, then St. Petersburg, Cabor, and Cabertin. Finally, the seventh column was formed by the brigade of major-general Geraskow, and the cavalry regiments of major-general von Glabow. It included the battalion of lieutenant-colonel Bojetschew, then of Lieven, Nebusch, and Mentzikow. Hereafter followed the cavalry regiments Siberi, Nischegorod, Kiow, Tobolik and Moscow.

"The equipment of the headquarters followed the fourth column in the center of the march, directly after the cannons and gunpowder wagons. The equipment of each regiment follows its own regiment in each of the 7 columns. The structure of the march had been defined beforehand in a general plan by the quartermaster staff. Every battalion had 2 cannons and 2 gunpowder carts in front while the rest of the gunpowder carts came behind the regiment. The carts carrying the tents and equipment, the 'Spanish ryders', grenades, and cannon balls accompanied the companies according to a parallel route in such a way that the left wing columns keep them on their right and the right wing columns keep them on their left.

The commanding officers must take care that the density of the head of their column is equal to the remainder and that every soldier keeps the same distance during marching. When arriving in the encampment, the cannons are moved 60 meters ahead of every battalion and aligned with the large artillery park. The large equipment of the army does not participate in the marching of the army but is parked behind the lines in a protected place. The battalions of Mentzikow and Beutling were placed in the wing brigades but had to be at their respective encampment after the march in the division square. Therefore, before the march started, artillery parks 2 and 10 had to be allocated to 1 and 9 to prevent obstructing the whole movement.

All commanders received the precise orders of the 'Ordre de Bataille' *from the general quartermaster staff. As soon as the first cannon shot is given, all columns are ready to move. At the second shot, the regiments on the right wing of the first line move to the left and those of the second line to the right. In this way, after the third shot, the battalion's grenadiers can move; the*

commanding officer should carefully monitor their distance from each other. The wings form their fronts at the same moment. If then the 2 lines are too far apart, each battalion can return in an organized way to one common front. After arrival, most of the artillery parks are centered within the army square."

On 6 May, the army marched in this order to Lipschany, and 2 days later to Pereritte where it met the 3 cavalry regiments that had been sent out from Podolia three weeks earlier to halt the violent activities of the Tatars. On 10 May, the army marched to Lapatnuk. Here, a courier brought the message that lieutenant-general von Stoffeln had died in Jassy the night before, possibly from the plague. Scouts from the Russian vanguard reported that there were 20,000 Tatars in Zuccora. Every day now, messages came in from Prince Repnin that the Turkish army tried to surround his troops. On 11 May, the army marched further to Rakowitz near the river Pruth, and the next day to Stephanefsoij. On 15 May, general quartermaster Bauer went from Tabor up to Navarinzi to explore the area and the terrain condition with a corps of 1 battalion jäger, 3 battalions grenadiers, 2 squadrons riflemen, and some 1,500 Cossacks.

"The next day, we were with the Bauer corps between very steep valleys that had no roads and were impossible to get across. As the staff officers of his corps, we were sent in all directions to find gorges through which to escape from this gigantic labyrinth, hoping not to be ambushed. We were able to take some Tatar prisoners from a camp opposite of Riboi Mahilow. They told us that there was a corps of 50,000 Turkish troops and Tatars."

On 17 June 1770, the army arrived in Navarinzi, but the quartermaster staff arrived near Iswora. The Russian vanguard reported that approximately 1,000 Tatars had shown up 8 kilometers from there. As soon as Cossacks went after them, they immediately withdrew towards Bender. The next day, general Bauer went with his corps to Zuccora and received reinforcements, after which his corps consisted of:

1 Battalion grenadiers Beutling

1 Battalion jäger

1 Battalion grenadiers Arschefsky

14 Heavy cannons from the artillery park

1 Battalion grenadiers Woronzow

1 Battalion grenadiers Nebusch

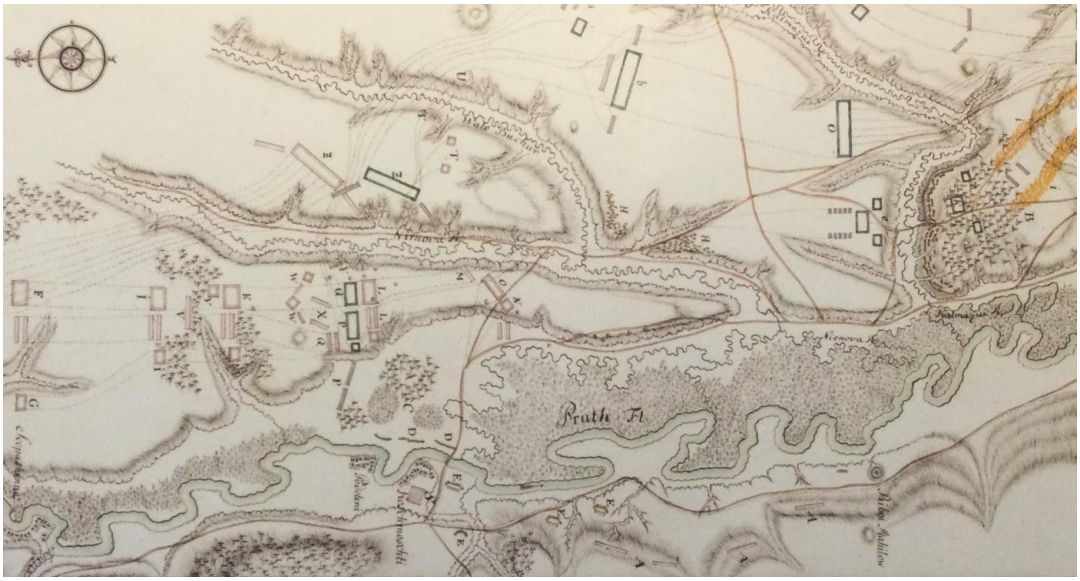
1 Battalion Prince Menzikow

12 Squadrons riflemen on horse

1,800 Cossacks

On 20 June, the army moved forward to Zuccora, but general Bauer's corps went with a forced march over 16 kilometers towards the heights of Macarest. From there, they could see the Turkish encampment opposite Riboi Mahilow aside the Pruth. Its strength was estimated at

around 20,000 men with a large number of cannons and mortars. Prince Repnin had his camp on the other side of the Pruth and had placed two battalions on both wings to attack the Turkish army which was busy building bridges over the Pruth and trying to get across. However, an effort to cross the bridge was prevented by heavy cannon fire by the Repnin corps. The same night, general Bauer received further reinforcements from the army with 640 men and 6 cannons from the artillery park. The next day, the prince of Brunswick arrived in the army with several Prussian volunteers.



The Pruth river. In the right lower quadrant, Riboi Mahilow with 'A' indicating the Repnin corps 'B' in the right upper quadrant and 'C' in the left lower quadrant represent large Ottoman/Tatar forces. 'D' were Ottoman batteries, and on the other side of the Pruth, 'E' were artillery batteries of Prince Repnin's corps

On 21 June, the army moved to and encamped on the heights of Macarest. In the meantime, general Bauer advanced to the heights of Coschmeschli, opposite Scoposhenne.

"As soon as our corps had moved some 8 kilometers forward, the Turkish army noticed our advancement. They immediately broke down their camp and withdrew. Then, they sent a vanguard of approximately 15,000 men after which general Bauer immediately reacted by ordering a square of 700 of our men on our right flank. We moved forward to confront the enemy. Between our corps and the square he ordered our cavalry while the Cossacks were sent forward to herald our attack. At about 8 kilometers before the Turkish encampment, we encountered their first scouts. While we continued, they withdrew further under continuous skirmishing with our Cossacks. We continued in good disciplined order until we finally struck their vanguard. But

after only 2 cannon shots, they withdrew as soon as they could. We followed them at our highest possible speed but were unable to keep up with them. Finally in the evening, we rapidly moved forward two 12-pound cannons with which we were able to fire on them while they passed the gorge near Nirnova until they had completely vanished. Thus, we reached our objective to provide Prince Repnin with enough freedom to join with us. To this end, we sent him pontoons to help him crossing the Pruth and approach the enemy in the flank. Unfortunately, the pontoons arrived too late, so Repnin could only transport few of his light troops during the night. Nevertheless, they were able to take all enemy pontoons, 2 mortars, and several wagons with fresh food for the Turkish army."

On 22 June 1770, the Repnin corps crossed the Pruth and joined with the Bauer corps. The Turkish army had a vanguard of 5,000 men on an opposite mountain slope from which hordes of Ottomans swarmed around both Russian corps. The main army remained at a distance of around 7 kilometers away. A few days, everything remained quiet. We found out that the enemy camp consisted of approximately 10,000 men. On 25 June, field marshal Count Rumyantsev came over to the Bauer corps to reconnoiter the enemy himself. The following day, general Bauer took 3 battalions grenadiers and all light troops and marched towards the slope on which the camp of the Turkish vanguard was to reconnaiter the situation. Carl Alexander Stricker wrote:

"While we advanced, the Tatar outposts withdrew without causing trouble, and we went back to our encampment in good order after our reconnaissance without being attacked or followed. However, as soon as we came back, we noticed that a strong column from the enemy camp was marching in our direction, and at 1400 hours this force encircled both the Repnin and Bauer corps and attacked us from all sides and killed many soldiers in our front lines. We immediately sent forward battalions and cannons to all sides to try to push them back. Because several thousand Ottoman troops passed us to march to the main army 7 kilometers further, Count Rumyantsev sent the 4th grenadier regiment and some cavalry after them up to the forest after which this enemy column turned around and attacked us in the back.

Because there were now Russian soldiers everywhere around to receive them with shrapnel and musket fire, they pulled back and gathered themselves in the evening because they were nowhere able to penetrate and break up our lines. Thereafter, they returned to their camp. We estimated their strength at around 8,000 men. We had 30 men injured or dead. The Ottomans must also have lost many men due to our heavy musket and cannon fire. However, because they take back their dead bodies, it is impossible to know their precise losses. Nevertheless their losses must have been at least twice ours.

General Bauer, who had travelled to the main army to report on the aforementioned military action, intended to return to his corps. When he was almost back home, his life was saved when an Arab soldier was about to mow him down with his sabre. Almost at the moment that Bauer would have been hit, a hussar officer was splitting the Arab's skull with one big blow with his sabre. During this attack, one Cossack stood out with an action that was as brilliant as heroic. This Cossack had an old horse of poor quality on which he rode some 250 meters in front of us when suddenly a strong and well-dressed Arab on a beautiful stallion horse jumped forward after him. The Cossack immediately tried to escape at a fairly high speed but was rapidly caught by

the Arab. When the Cossack decided that the moment was there, he turned his horse around in a split second and completely penetrated the Arab with his pike and then pushed him dead fom his horse."

On 27 June, the army marched towards the location of the Bauer corps and made an encampment nearby on the lower slope near the Nirnova. General Bauer received 2 battalions as a reinforcement. Because it had been decided to attack the enemy the same day, lieutenant-general Prince Repnin left his camp before daybreak but left his tents in position so that the enemy would not discover that he had left. Repnin marched to the left in a big circle in order to be able to approach the enemy on its right flank. Meanwhile, however, Count Rumyantsev changed his plans and postponed the attack to the next morning. However, this order was not executed until finally on 28 June, the signal for the march was given. Consequently, by this hesitation, the Ottomans had enough time to bring their baggage and artillery into safety.

At dawn, the army started marching and gave signals with rockets to the Bauer corps. Bauer signalled with a cannon shot to alarm major-general Podjamkin and Prince Repnin, who passed the Pruth. The Pasha, being aware that the Russians had started moving, broke up his encampment before his retreat would be cut off and moved in good order towards Falschij.

During their pursuit, the Russian light troops continuously skirmished with the reargard of the Turkish army. Two regiments hussars that had advanced somewhat too far were encircled by the Turkish troops and had to break out. Because they were chased at high speed, they would have suffered a large defeat if lieutenant-colonel Farbritian had not quickly advanced with his infantry to help them by pushing back the Ottomans with cannon fire. The losses on this day were moderate, maybe 300 men on each side. One of the sons of the Tatar Khan was among those killed. The Russians took several Turkish prisoners, including a Pasha, and collected the remnants of a 12-pound cannon that had been blown up. The enemy withdrew close to 43 kilometers, and it could not be determined how far away and where his encampment was. The army camped in the vicinity of Antibes, a village that had been burnt out. On 29 June, the army moved further to Huus. General Bauer moved with his corps to the heights between the Lapurna and Simir. The next day, the general quartermaster staff went forward close to 27 kilometers with a cover of 100 Cossacks to reconnoiter the area ahead. The pikemen who had also given cover returned to the army. On 1 July, the quartermaster staff of General Bauer's corps crossed the Surma and moved 21 kilometers forward.

"From the enemy, we heard and observed nothing whatsoever. The assumption was that the Turkish army had withdrawn to Ismael at the river Danube. On 2 July, I explored the area up to the river Serret. We received an urgent message from major-general Podjamkin that a strong Turkish corps at the other side of the Pruth was marching forward, and therefore he asked for help. The strength of our troops in that area was: Repnin's corps of 10 battalions infantry, 2 battalions jäger, and 2 regiments hussars; major-general Podjamkin had 5 battalions infantry and 2,000 Cossacks; general quartermaster Bauer had 8 battalions grenadiers, 1 battalion jäger, and 12 squadrons riflemen on horses. Every staff officer can take up to 50 Cossacks to cover him during his reconnaissances."

On 3 July, general Bauer marched until the Serret while the army crossed the Lapurna and the next day the Surma and encamped near the Trajanic wall between the Surma and Serret. The large baggage crossed the Pruth. General Bauer reconnoitered with several of his staff officers 15 kilometers forward and discovered 5,000 Turkish soldiers. The Russian army constructed 3 bridges across the Pruth behind the army so that in case of an emergency the large baggage train could come across rapidly. On 10 June, a Turkish encampment was discovered close to 27 kilometers further on the other side of the Pruth. This Turkish corps had already set on fire 9 villages surrounding them up to a distance of 10 kilometers from Falschij where major-general Podjamkin was camping. Had the Bauer corps moved there 2 days earlier, they could have saved these villages from destruction. On 11 July, general Bauer and prince Repnin marched 9 kilometers further and crossed the Zijanka. The army crossed the Kietza and made a camp opposite Falschij.

"In the early evening, several thousands of Turkish soldiers crossed the Larga and skirmished with our outposts. At the same time, the Ottomans built a camp behind the Larga for approximately 20,000 men. On 12 July, the Repnin corps moved towards the Bauer corps. The Turkish soldiers drove back our light troops with several cannon shots and skirmished with them the whole day. On 13 July, general Bauer reported himself sick and gave over his command to Prince Repnin. Because the army was without forage and had to wait for a convoy, general Bauer proceded without orders to continue. Therefore, field marshal Count Rumyantsev sent him an explicit order to remain in his camp where a courier would meet him; he was forbidden to move one step further. This irritated general Bauer who subsequently reported that he was sick and handed over his command. The reason why general Bauer so vigorously wanted to move forward, I do not know. Either he intended to push back the Ottomans across the Danube before the Grand Vizier arrived with reinforcements, or he did not want to give them enough time to release their complete army from the 'cul-de-sac' between Faltschij and Talpush. Such considerations general Bauer must have had."

On 14 July, the Tatars made some efforts to attack the Repnin corps and the Bauer corps but were repelled by the Russian cannon and musket fire. The next day, the army crossed the Zijanka. General Bauer's corps positioned itself in front of the right wing of the army, Repnin's corps in front of the left wing. Major-general Podjamkin crossed the Pruth and took position at the left wing of the Repnin corps, 4 kilometers away alongside the Larga.

"Today, the Turks made several very brisk attacks on the army and the additional corps with some 15,000 horsemen. They killed several of our men in front of the camp and one officer in a tent. They were all around but got driven back by heavy shrapnel from our side. General Bauer, who had taken up command again, collected light troops and cavalry and pursued them until the Larga but was not able to catch up with them. Under cover of 1 regiment pikemen, general quartermaster lieutenant Braun arrived from Panin's corps and reported that the 2nd Russian army had already arrived near Bender. On 16 July, we officers from the general quartermaster staff reconnoitered the encampment of the enemy and the roads that were most appropriate for an approach. At 1500 hours, around 20,000 Turkish cavalry crossed the Lara and attacked the army and the different corps and killed or injured many of our soldiers in the front line. At 1800

hours, there was also some infantry coming over with 3 small cannons attacking the Bauer corps. The cavalry of the enemy gathered at the shore of the Pruth to circumvent our right wing to attack our cavalry and baggage train. To counter this, general Bauer sent 2 battalions from his square and sent major-general Weissmann to the same area to support our cavalry there. The cavalry of the Bauer corps was supported by the cavalry of the army and was commanded by lieutenant-colonel Angelij who tried to mow down the enemy with 6 squadrons. Because of the very strong resistance of the enemy who surrounded them, Angelij halted and ordered lieutenant-colonel Geltschaninow with his 6 squadrons from the 2nd line to turn to the right to oppose the encircling Ottomans. Because these 12 squadrons riflemen on horses were surrounded by more than 12,000 Turks, they could not move and had to defend themselves for 2 hours with musket fire."

Finally, general Weismann advanced with his infantry and attacked the cavalry of the enemy in the back. In so doing, he relieved the sitution of our cavalry, but only late in the evening around 2200 hours after which the Turkish cavalry withdrew. Because the Turkish rifles were much better than the Russian ones and had a larger range, the Russians lost several horses and men, all in all 7 killed and 41 injured in cavalry and infantry together. Nevertheless, it was decided to march and attack the enemy camp the same night. However, because the Russian troops were very tired when they returned in the encampment, the attack was postponed to the following night.

"On 17 July, everything was quiet. I rode out with 4 Cossacks accompanied by lieutenant-colonel Muromzow to reconnoiter the roads more precisely. Because I was riding far ahead, I was almost cut off from the rest by several Tatars. I was warned by colonel Muromzow who was left behind on a hilltop with a Cossack; this Cossack gave a signal to one of the Cossacks I had put on a nearby hill who then signalled the two remaining Cossacks that accompanied me."

At 1400 hours, the large baggage of the army returned in bits and pieces and was arranged in a wagon fortress. Only the tents remained until dark. In the beginning of the night, general Bauer and the complete army broke down their tent camp and sent the tents to the wagon fortress. Immediately thereafter, general Bauer marched away and made 8 bridges across the river Larga.

"How dangerous it is to march during the night on an unknown road through a valley can be demonstrated with the following anecdote. General Bauer had ordered me to guide his corps, and when we had joined with the Repnin corps, he then ordered me to move his corps over the slope of a mountain on our left side to a valley. Because I did not know this valley and because marching through valleys is dangerous anyhow, I declined. Over and alongside the mountain sides, I would guide his corps, but through the unknown valley I would not.

But whatever I said, general Bauer did not change his mind, and he ordered lieutenant-colonel Nefejef to guide his corps through the valley. However, Nefejef did not notice in the dark of night that the valley was curved. Instead of a direct approach towards the Larga by keeping the mountain on his right side, he moved to the right and marched with the corps parallel to the Larga. Because my impression was that our march lasted too long, I recognized from the position of the mountains of which the tops were slightly visible in the light of some stars that we were

heading in the wrong direction. I reported this twice to general Bauer, the second time saying that we were headed by the devil to the Turkish camp and that we had to return immediately.

However, because he had two other experienced officers with him, as well several Cossacks who knew the area well, he answered me calmly that I should not worry. Moreover, a young and capable officer in whom general Bauer had great trust had convinced him that when the corps marched through the valley, it would not be discovered by the enemy. When we finally arrived at the slope above the Turkish camp, we could see their fires in the valley below. There, I halted the head of the column, rode back and showed general Bauer the fires below. Then, he railed that I had to bring him back to the right track or he would have me arrested! I replied that there was no other choice than going back the same way and that I had told him that often enough. I took the head of both columns and guided them back. However, because we now had a steep mountain on one side and the swampy shore of the Larga on the other side with limited space in between, turning around and marching back was impossible without making noise and causing a lot of discomfort, disorder, and unrest from which a vigilant enemy could have taken advantage.

When I finally arrived at the place where we had to construct the bridges, I halted the columns and first guided the jäger battalion through the swamp and across the Larga and placed it at the foot of the mountains to cover the place where the bridges would be built. Thereafter, we constructed the bridges and guided the spearhead of the corps over the river. Subsequently, I commanded the jäger battalion up the slope of the mountains. Then, general Bauer came over the bridges with the complete corps, followed by the jäger battalion of Prince Repnin, and all gathered on the mountain slope.

Immediately thereafter, the Russian forces marched towards the hill where the outposts of the Tatars were located and pushed these troops backwards. Then, the 3 corps continued until they could vaguely distinguish in the dawn that the Turkish camp was only some 3½ kilometers further ahead. Immediately, Prince Repnin fired two 12-pound cannon shots on the camp but was unable to reach it. After his corps had advanced around 1 kilometer toward the Ottoman camp on 18 July, the Turkish army left their camp in large groups while we marched forward and kept them under continuous cannon fire. Because the valley we approached was full of Turkish soldiers, Repnin moved forward to a place from where he could reach most of the valley with his artillery and try to keep them under control. General Bauer then sent the jäger battalion into the valley and ordered his main battery of 6 heavy cannons to proceed to a distance of 40 meters from the enemy entrenchment.

When we opened fire, the Turkish soldiers left the entrenchment after the first shots with shrapnel, but they also had a redoubt armed with several cannons behind the entrenchment on a small slope. When the Turks withdrew to their left wing, a large crowd of Cossacks, hussars, and cavalry from the Repnin and Bauer corps invaded the entrenchment while loudly shouting 'Vivat Catherine'. They were directly followed by a large mob of marketeers and salesmen, locals, as well as several officers. Lieutenant-colonel von Falkenskjold followed these crowds and discovered the deserted redoubt behind the entrenchment. He rode inside the empty redoubt and himself shouted 'Vivat Catherine', after which he put pieces of paper with the name 'general Bauer' on it in the ignition holes of the cannons. He did this to prevent the Cossacks of the

Repnin corps, who were the first to enter the entrenchment, from claiming the victory for their corps alone. He obtained a testimony from general Bauer that he, von Falkenskjold, had been the first to enter the entrenchment and the first to shout 'Vivat Catherine', for which act he later was given the prestigious Russian Order of St. George 4th class."

Prince Repnin and major-general Podjamkin went with their troops through the entrenchment and further through the enemy camp to the left wing. However, general Bauer remained outside the enemy camp and marched alongside the defense line to keep his corps in an orderly structure because the complete cavalry of the enemy was still in the back and on their flanks. The army followed the Bauer corps constantly at a distance of around 1½ kilometers to support the attack. And because the Tatars and Turks attacked the left flank of the main army square in large numbers, 2 Russian regiments were ordered to clean up the valley and cover this left army flank. Already at 0700 hours in the morning the Russian troops defeated the right wing of the Turkish encampment. Whereafter lieutenant-general Plömönikow, who had marched forward with his troops during the night, crossed the Larga and invaded the left wing of the enemy camp with 2 squares. Until now, the Turkish troops fled away but here were the janissaries who defended themselves desperately. After a heavy artillery barrage and gun fire, they finally had to give way. The cavalry of Plömönikow under command of lieutenant-colonel Angelij chased them and mowed them down in large numbers.

"At 0830 hours, the Russians had completely conquered the enemy camp. The combined forces of cavalry and light troops pursued the enemy and chopped many of them in small pieces. We took everything from the camp, all tents, many metal tools and plates, coffee, rice, sugar, biscuits, pickled fruits, many valuables, furniture, 30 small cannons, and 2 flags. We lost approximately 50 of our men, but the Ottomans lost more than 600 men. Although the Tatars on the other heights behind the right wing of the camp were all on horse, they did not interfere with the fights. The complete army of the enemy retreated in great haste and already at 0900 hours in the morning, they had crossed the river Senestie and positioned themselves on the mountain behind; our cavalry did not dare follow them there."

However, after several hours the enemy troops lost their nerve, and at 1800 hours in the evening a report came that up to 16 kilometers away, Russian scouts found only 2 small enemy posts. On that day, the Ottoman army was estimated at approximately 80,000 men while the Russian army counted only some 27,000 men. The Russian main square consisted of 28 battalions infantry, 9 regiments cavalry, 4 regiments Cossacks and Arnauts (Arabian volunteers). Lieutenant-general Plömönikow had 10 battalions infantry, 3 squadrons cavalry, and 1 regiment hussars. Prince Repnin had 12 battalions grenadiers, 4 battalions riflemen, 3 regiments hussars, 2 regiments Cossacks, and 1 battalion jäger. Major-general Podjamkin had 3 battalions grenadiers, 2 battalions riflemen and 1 regiment hussars. General Bauer had 7 battalions grenadiers, 1 battalion jäger, and 12 squadrons cavalry. The Turkish entrenchment was composed only of a relatively low earth wall next to a small trench.

On 19 July, major-general Bauer marched 11 kilometers forward and crossed the river Schenestin, and moved further to Gretschanij at the small pond Kahul the next day. On 21 July, the army followed and crossed the Schenestin, then followed the Kahul for 9 kilometers and

made a camp near Petricij. There were still some agricultural areas that were not burned down, but they were without any form of harvest. The army had a shortage of most types of food, and several regiments were completely without flour or bread. On 23 July, Prince Repnin and general Bauer crossed the Kahul, moved some 16 kilometers forward and made a camp on the left shore of the river near Gretschanij roughly 64 kilometers west from the Danube. From here, they could see the encampment of the enemy some 16 kilometers to the west. This Russian corps moved away from the Pruth with its march and endangered its right wing at the small pond Kahul; the shore was very steep and skewed and surrounded by deep valleys.

On 24 July, the army marched 14 kilometers further alongside the Saltschij up to the village Staiman. From there, an even larger encampment was discovered on the other side of the Saltschij. This Tatar camp was located there with the goal of circumventing us and attacking our convoys from behind. Prince Repnin and general Bauer were attacked early in the afternoon by approximately 10,000 Turkish soldiers. Therefore, that same day the army moved 8 kilometers further alongside the Saltschij in order to come closer and to be able to support the two corps ahead.

The shortage of food and bread was so severe that soldiers were dying from starvation. For this reason, the army did not dare move further until the convoys had arrived and the army could be fed again. Two convoys with flour were on their way and expected soon. To safequard both convoys and keep the Tatars under control, the following troops were allocated and sent forward to meet the convoys: major-general Podjamkin with 4 regiments cavalry, major-general Podguritschanij with 2 regiments hussars, colonel Prince Wolgonskij with 2 regiments cavalry, brigadier Gudowitsch with all pikemen, 1 battalion jäger, and 9 regiments Cossacks.

On 26 July, it was discovered that the Tatars kept moving behind the Russian left wing and behind the back of the Russian encampment alongside the Saltschij. However, it was unclear whether they made this movement to cover Kilia, or to attain a better position to make an assault on the Russian forage convoys. But the next day, it was observed that the enemy camp at the Kahul had grown larger. The interpretation was that the Grand Vizier himself had arrived or that he at least had sent a reinforcement. At 0900 hours in the morning, there were 4 cannon shots from inside the enemy camp, and in the afternoon 50 more cannon shots followed.

From this, the Russians concluded that the Grand Vizier must have crossed the Danube. At the same time, a corps of Tatars had crossed the river Saltschij and went directly towards our convoys. However, the Russian troops received them so vigorously that they had to withdraw quickly. On 28 July, the army marched to the right and camped near the Kahul where the Repnin corps had just left. Repnin marched forward and camped before the left wing of the army. The next day, 2,000 Turks crossed the river in the afternoon and skirmished with the outfront posts. They probably came to reconnoiter and immediately set a village on fire next to the Kahul. The next day, they tried it again but to no avail. The Russian convoy with 6 days of flour for the army arrived uneventfully.

On 31 July, more than 50,000 horsemen of the cavalry came forward up to 3-4 kilometers in front of the camp. They occupied all heights, hills and slopes in the area, and at 1400 hours in the

afternoon they had completely taken up their positions. During their approach, the Russians observed that they broke up their old camp and in the evening, they built a new camp at a distance of 10 kilometers on a hill where for the last 3 days, a small Turkish corps had been constructing an entrenchment on which they continued working the whole night. Later, the Russians heard from prisoners that the army of the Grand Vizier had marched forward in order to attack the next day.

During the night, the Turkish troops made a huge bonfire with an abundance of musket fire throughout their camp. Later, prisoners said that bonfire was a sign that all Turkish troops had arrived in the camp and that everything was ready for the attack. When the Russians had reconnoitered the new camp, and all cavalry had withdrawn, the War Council immediately met and decided to attack the Turkish army the next day.

"Five staff officers and 3 captains from the general quartermaster staff received orders to reconnoiter the new enemy camp and the road network around it. Around 2000 hours in the evening, our report was sent to general Bauer. He made a plan for the attack and at 2100 hours submitted it to field marshal Count von Rumyantsev. Rumyantsev approved the plan after which staff officers worked out the details of battle orders and instructions; these were sent to all commanding officers at 2300 hours. We, the 5 staff officers, were each supposed to guide a corps towards the battle area. Major-general Bauer guided the Bauer corps, major Hansen the Plömönikow corps, I guided the main army square, lieutenant-colonel Nefejef the Repnin corps, and major Potapow the Count Brushe Corps. The remaining staff officers were shared between us. In the beginning of the evening, our baggage was sent to the wagon fort. This was used as a signal to abandon our camp, so that the enemy would not discover our departure in the darkness.

On 1 August 1770, at 0100 hours, the complete army started its march towards the former Roman Trajan's Wall. General Bauer and his corps and lieutenant-general Plömönikow with his division followed the mountain ridge forward, passed the Trajan's Wall, and halted. However, the main army square moved towards but halted 2 kilometers before the wall. Because there were two other staff officers who had reconnoitered this area and thought we were marching in the wrong direction, and even colonel Muromzow thought so, field marshal Count Rumyantsev adressed me seriously and asked where I was guiding him. These different opinions scared me considerably, because our existence and human lives and even the well-being of the complete army is endangered if it is guided in the wrong direction.

Nevertheless, I did not change our route (which was based on the position of the stars in the sky) and answered him that I could not follow a different path. When his highness gave explicit orders to let the army be guided by someone else, I could no longer be held responsible if the army moved in the wrong direction. However, no one else volunteered to take over my task. During the dark night in an open area without trees, hills, roads or any other landmark, only the stars in the sky guided me. In combination with the already covered distance, it was possible to find the correct direction, and when dawn came at 0430 hours, the corps and main army were almost precisely at the planned position. I proposed to Count Rumyantsev that because we were so near to Trajan's Wall, it was necessary that we passed it before the Ottomans occupied it. Because the wall is 7 feet high and has a ditch on both sides, it would be difficult to pass when the Turkish

army was behind it (this was also written in the plan of attack). His highness also marched forward up to 800 meters from the wall. However, Prince Repnin and Count Brushe were still very far away and lagged behind with the marching of their corps. The field marshal now sent an order to these 2 corps to hurry up, now that he was still in a position to support them if needed! However, none of them required assistance yet as long as the main army had not yet passed the wall. I found it urgent to pass the wall and reminded him several times, but his highness stuck to his decision while focusing on the appearance of Repnin and Brushe who were still far behind (although according to the plan of attack, they had to pass the Trajanic Wall the same night). However, because his army became restless, his highness finally asked me:

"Mais pourquoi ne veulent-ils pas marcher?"

I immediately responded: "Votre Excellence! C'est qu'ils (Repnin and Brushe) veulent que Vous partagez la Gloire avec eux. Il (Rumyantsev) en fut piqués, il sentit mes pensées, et il ordanna a l'instant qu'on marcha Tambour battant."

On the left the Pruth, in the middle from left to right the old Roman Trajan's Wall that the Russian army had to pass (center of the picture)

Thereafter, the army passed the wall in good order and without danger. Here, the army got into a critical position. In front was the artillery of the enemy entrenchment and behind us the wall. Approximately 1,000 meters in front of our main square, the ground was somewhat hilly. On the slopes, no less than 50,000 horsemen were advancing. We immediately stopped and sent them an artillery barrage. Within 4 minutes, they changed position and largely moved alongside a valley, hereby bypassing our left flank and back and surrounding us from all sides. Because our last defense line was 100 meters in front of the wall, we could not use this wall because of our artillery. Hence, the Turkish soldiers hid behind it and killed many of us while our shrapnel and

gunfire only hit the wall itself or went over it. Field marshal Rumyantsev ordered 200 volunteers to climb the wall and shoot at the Turkish cavalry behind it. Because this did not help, a further 400 men with 2 small cannons were sent. Also, several platoons infantry were sent to the right wing to support our cavalry which was under heavy pressure there.

While these fights took place, general Bauer and general Plömönikow had advanced further. Repnin and Brushe were now approaching, and after the army had cleared its rear, the Russian armies joined forces. Because it was not advisable to march further but also not a good idea to halt under the bombardment of a complete enemy entrenchment, field marshal Rumyantsev ordered his main square to make a movement towards the left as if he intended to march through the valley to the left wing. This was partly to be able to cover this enemy area towards the army's rear but also to keep the army moving. The Turkish cavalry at our back probably concluded from our manouver that we intended to cut them off and withdrew as fast as they could alongside the mountain ridge back to their encampment. During the manouver, several thousand janissaries came forward from the entrenchment to support their cavalry which encircled the army and Russian corps. Now that the valley was cleared of the enemy, the army marched again to the right towards the entrenchment on the hill. However, as soon as we arrived there, many janissaries swarmed up from the valley and invaded the corps of general Plömönikow in front of us on our right flank. Probably, they had escaped our attention because the continuous artillery barrage during our march had left a gap filled with smoke behind which they had been invisible for us in the valley.

In the corner where the janissaries invaded, they mowed down the artillerists and drove them away from their battery, attacked the 4th grenadier and Astrakhan regiment in the flank of which, within a moment, 500 men were sabered down. The complete square turned into chaos. A part of the troops from the front and the whole left flank clustered together and defended themselves with bayonets and rifle fire. Instead of moving forward to support the infantry square, the 6 squadrons cavalry that had followed the square withdrew, rounded the left wing of the square, and came near to the enemy entrenchment. The complete right flank of the square and its back line, including the gunpowder wagons and grenade and cannon ball wagons, turned into such a panicked chaos that everyone turned around to move backwards in great haste. They were immediately followed and overtaken by janissaries running wildly and jumping with their sabres in hand. This stampede of fighting and fleeing Russians as well as 3 horse-wagons with gunpowder and grenades clashed at full speed into our main square which caused a terrible disarray and large gaps of 50-100 meters in our front defense line. This chaos was aggravated because at the same moment, an enemy bomb or mortar grenade caused an explosion in a gunpowder cart on our right flank and killed many of our men.

Immediately when Count Rumyantsev saw the Plömönikow corps waver while quickly approaching him in large numbers, he gave orders to now march forward with the main square and move to the right. However, this decision could only bring more chaos in such a large human machinery; that proved itself later on. Most dangerous were the grenade and gunpowder wagons which, because the horses had gone wild and were without riders, came at full speed and clashed behind the galloping horses into the human square and broke our defense lines.

A close-up of the north-to-south passage of Trajan's Wall at dawn on 1 August 1770. The army with marshal Rumyantsev was led through the dark night by Carl Alexander Stricker until 'H' and passed the Wall until 'M' where they came under heavy attacks from Ottomans. Bauer and Plömönikow went from 'G' to hill 'F' where Bauer attacked the entrenchment. Repnin and Brushe passed to 'N' and later to 'Y'

And because the janissaries and Russian soldiers were now intermingled while the janissaries attacked with great vigor, we fired with large salvos shrapnel without distinction between friend and foe. Despite this disastrous situation, field marshal Count Rumyantsev remained undaunted and gave his clear orders with great steadfastness. He even rode his horse to the 1st grenadier regiment which was positioned at the right flank and said with a firm manly voice: 'Children, remember what I have taught you and be brave'. This act worked out very well indeed in that this regiment moved to the left and advanced more than 100 meters and caught the main Turkish thrust. At the same time, the cavalry received orders to mow down all Turks with their swords without taking prisoners. In combination with large amounts of shrapnel and intense rifle fire, the majority could be killed. The terror among the fleeing soldiers of the Plömönikow corps was so great that even when they already had entered into our square, they kept on running away further, and many of them had to be stopped by slapping them in the face. At the culmination of these awful hostilities, when the chaotic mob of Russian soldiers from the Plömönikow corps ran towards us, a young man named major von Osten came ahead in full gallop, rode to field marshal Rumyantsev and reported that the Turks had invaded the square. The field marshal

immediately asked: 'Who has sent you here?' to which the young man answered: 'Nobody, I just wanted to tell you.' Rumyantsev responded: 'How dare you leave your regiment now? Go back immediately to your regiment!' This confirmed the consistency and firmness of Count Rumyantsev. Finally, we were able to gather again the soldiers who had run away, and we let them march forward again in square form to restore structure and discipline, and to let them take again their places in the artillery. This was done with the support of the main square and cavalry.

Our luck was that the large majority of the janissaries and Turkish cavalry stayed behind in the encirclement of the Plömönikow corps in order to destroy it completely. If they had let them escape and if they had attacked our main square, in combination with the support of their cavalry, our main square would have been completely defeated and lost. In my opinion, it was a big mistake of the field marshal to order the square to march forward and to the right at this critical moment.

Now that the Plömönikow corps was united and structured again, both this corps and the main square marched forward again up to 800 meters from the enemy entrenchment and gave an artillery barrage with all batteries. In response, the Ottomans shot at us with their cannons from the entrenchment. This gunfire had lasted less than 7 minutes when general Bauer was able to invade the entrenchment from behind the left enemy wing and appeared on the hill. Hereafter, Plömönikow marched further forward, as well as Repnin and Brushe. Now that Bauer entered the entrenchment, the fighting spirit of the enemy declined, and the Turks started to flee more and more, especially after a battalion of Count Brushe invaded the entrenchment from the right. After that, a competition started between generals Bauer and Brushe as to which one of them was the first to conquer the complete entrenchment by raising the Russian flag. As soon as the enemy started to flee in large numbers, the light troops and complete cavalry was sent after them, and during this pursuit for up to 10 kilometers, many of them were killed."

At 0900 hours, the Russian army had completely conquered the enemy entrenchment. In the afternoon, general Bauer marched 7 kilometers further. The Russian soldiers took all available loot from the entrenchment and enemy camp with tents and all baggage, more than 100 artillery pieces, 4-pound and 8-pound cannons and 60 pieces of smaller calibre. The Russians captured many flags and banners plus an enormous amount of consumables such as rice, sugar, biscuits, barley, coffee, homemade foods, and much more. They took also copper and silver cutlery, tools and devices for sieging, lead, bullets, and cannon balls, and a large amount of gunpowder. The roads that the Turkish army had followed to the entrenchment were filled up to 6 kilometers away with ammunition and gunpowder wagons which the enemy was still bringing up to the camp when the battle started.

That day, the Russian army lost more than 1,000 of its men, but the Turkish army lost at least 3,000. They withdrew towards a fortress at the river Danube. The Russian army consisted of 15,000 men infantry, 2,000 men cavalry and hussars, and approximately 2,000 Cossacks. The remainder of the army had been kept behind to safeguard the forage and baggage wagon fort. The Turkish army in the entrenchment consisted of approximately 90,000 men, and at the other side of the river Saltschij was a corps of Tatars with a strength of approximately 60,000 men.

Battle of Kahul on 1 August 1770

"Without doubt, we must have had a lot of luck during the battle because our army was small and in a miserable state. For 12 days, our soldiers had received only 1 pound instead of 2½ pounds of bread each day. And several regiments had not received any bread at all during several days. Therefore, our hungry soldiers were sometimes too weak and apathetic to put up a vigorous defense during the physically exhausting fights with so many well-fed Turkish soldiers.

Moreover, the two squares of Repnin and Brushe fought poorly; they hardly came into action. The square of Plömönikow received the main blow because it marched forward too fast during the artillery barrage without paying attention to what happened in the valley below. As a consequence, our main square of only 8,000 men was hardly more than observers and had to react according to the circumstances. Field marshal Count Rumyantsev himself made the mistake I just mentioned above but made also the error of ordering the 1st grenadier regiment to march forward from the attacked right flank for more than 100 meters without cover for the increasing gap in its flank; this created an opening for an enemy attack. Probably, the rapidly changing situation gave little alternative but actually, it should have been the task of the square commander general Olitz to fill this gap for which the square had a small reserve available.

At the moment that general Bauer passed the valley near the left wing of the Turkish camp to invade the enemy entrenchment, the Turkish cavalry attacked his hussars and cavalry and invaded his square. Thanks to the fearless attitude of general Weissmann, Bauer's corps was saved from destruction. All in all, this battle showed clearly how little can be achieved with an undisciplined army such as the Turkish one despite personal bravery, vigor, and courage. Despite some of our mistakes and our great losses, the Ottomans were unable to exploit their numerical superiority.

Apart from that, there is a minor thing I would like to address: general Bauer never eats on the day of a battle. His reasons are that a bullet will pass through and leave the body more easily

when the gut is empty. As a consequence, he looks as pale as a dead body on such a battle day. However, everybody knows how an energetic and healthy-looking commanding officer during a battle inspires a common soldier. The Bauer method should be strongly dicouraged because most soldiers get worried if their commanding officer is pale and apathetic by a lack of energy from lack of food and may even think he is scared. This day 1 August 1770 was a remarkable day for me! On 1 August 1759, I was aide-de-camp of Count Gallifet in the French army and participated in the decisive battle of Minden. Then, I was fighting in the stronger army but was defeated and had to withdraw. Now and on the same date, I was fighting in the weaker army but won. Both battles were decisive and ended the campaign."

After the battle, the Russian main army consisted of 18 battalions infantry and 3 regiments cavalry; the Bauer corps comprised 7 battalions grenadiers, 1 battalion jäger, 12 squadrons cavalry, and 2 regiments hussars; the Plömönikow corps consisted of 10 battalions infantry, 3 squadrons cavalry, and 1 regiment hussars; Prince Repnin's corps consisted of 7 battalions grenadiers, 2 battalions riflemen, 1 battalion jäger, and 5 squadrons cavalry; Count Brushe's corps comprised 10 battalions infantry and 3 squadrons cavalry.

On 2 August, general Bauer marched 7 kilometers forward up to around 16 kilometers from the Danube. A message arrived that the enemy crossed the Danube near Cartal to Isatschij in great haste and that there were only few Ottomans left at the north side of the river. At the same time, it was communicated that several thousand Tatars had seperated from the Turkish army and had moved with a huge number of cattle upstream alongside the river Jalpusch. General Bauer reported this to Count Rumyantsev and requested that the army send out a corps to cut off the road to Ismael. Brigadier Igelstroem was sent with 2 regiments infantry downwards to intercept the Tatar troops at the Jalpusch, but because the communication and decision making had proceded too slowly, the Turks and Tatars safely arrived in Ismael. The same evening, general Bauer and his quartermaster staff rode up to 5 kilometers ahead to reconnoiter the area. He ordered a battalion to follow with a 12-pound cannon so that he could give signal shots from different places to confuse the enemy and give the impression of an abundant Russian presence in the area. On 3 August, general Bauer continued his reconnaisance alongside the Kahul and passed the Kahul lake and Cartal lake directly towards Cartal at the Danube where the Turkish army was crossing towards Isatschij.

"Around 1400 hours in the afternoon, we discovered from a mountain top the embarkment of the Turkish army, and it looked as if the area on the shore near Cartal was completely covered with baggage and people. General Bauer split his corps and gave major-general Weissmann 4 battalions to form an infantry square. And hereafter, we advanced around 1600 hours in the afternoon in a ravine behind an old wall. From here, general Bauer sent forward the battalion of jäger as well as the hussars and Cossacks. At their arrival, the still remaining Turks went on their knees and begged for mercy. More than 2,000 Turkish soldiers surrendered without resistance and were taken prisoner. Immediately, several 12-pound cannons were brought to the shore of the Danube to shoot at the crossing boats. One ship with 30-40 men was hit and

destroyed. However, a frigate in the middle of the river, there to cover the crossing of troops, was out of the reach of our cannons.

We captured approximately 3,000 ox carts and a large number of camels, horses, oxen, mules, and sheep. There seemed to be also 5 mules loaded with money for the Turkish Pasha, but it is unclear where that money went. Several thousand Turkish soldiers jumped into the river when we arrived, and the last of them simply mowed down the first to get more space. Several thousand wagons were driven into the Danube which caused a huge loss of valuables. We also captured several thousand barrels with barley, flour, biscuits, coffee, refreshments of all sorts, and many valuables along with a substantial amount of gunpowder, lead bullets, etc. Everything was given to our soldiers. Had we arrived one day earlier, our loot and the number of prisoners would have been much higher.

After we had sent back the prisoners and the captured wagons and goods to the army, except for what was given to our soldiers, the light troops remained behind. However, the infantry was gathered in a new encampment. The Turkish army had made a small camp near Isatschij. On 4 August, Prince Repnin went with his corps towards Ismael. Our Cossacks again found great treasures at the Danube. Very few people were observed in Ismael, and Greeks coming from the city said that they had to travel 3-4 miles for food. On 7 August, general Bauer left for another camp. At Cartal, there was still a piece of the bridge left of approximately 300 meters across the Danube towards Isatschij. General Bauer ordered this last part to be destroyed.

In the evening, we received the message that Ismael had been taken by Prince Repnin. An enemy corps of approximately 20,000 men had gathered there and was defeated and on the run. The Russians killed 700 men and captured 200 prisoners. Also, the Repnin corps had looted large quantities of crops and many cattle. On 8 August, the Turkish army broke up a part of their right wing near Isatschij. Several Turkish merchant ships sailed across the Danube up to Brailow. On 9 August, general Bauer rode to the headquarters of the army. The Turkish army destroyed a remaining part of the bridge near Isatschij on its side of the river. From Greek deserters, we heard that the Turks were strengthening their side of the river with ramparts and artillery batteries.

On 16 August, the army marched to the left and encamped at the Jalpusch, approximately 53 kilometers from the Danube. The next day, the Bauer corps under the command of general Weismann also turned left and encamped near the Donau delta at the village Nou. Tekeleij and his hussars and Cossacks; the jäger battalion and a further group of 350 men remained at the Cartal lake. Prince Repnin marched towards Kilia and reported that there were some 18,000 Turkish soldiers in the neigbourhood. On 21 August, our Cossacks took 3 ships with grain and other foods near Renne at the Danube. They had approximately 18,000 bushels of wheat, many cheeses, and other forage to bring it to Brailow.

On 1 September, the Turkish garrison capitulated and was allowed to cross the Danube in freedom. On 3 September, we sang the 'Te Deum' because of the conquering of Kilia. On 23 September, brigadier Igelstroem moved with his brigade from Kilia to Ackermann with the intention to take it if possible and to march further to Bender if Count Panin required his

support. On 30 September, Prince Cantimir brought as a courier the message that Bender had been taken with a storm assault on 27 September, even without destroying the city wall. On 1 October, brigadier Igelstroem arrived at Ackermann. Two days later, 7 Turkish galleys tried to land on the island in front of Renne. However, they were forced by our cannon fire to leave quickly. On 3 October, general Bauer returned from Bender and announced my promotion to lieutenant-colonel on the basis of my contribution to the decisive battle of 1 August 1770.

On 6 October, Ackermann surrendered to brigadier Igelstroem. On 8 October, general Bauer travelled to St. Petersburg, and major-general Weissmann took over the command of the Bauer corps until it joined the main army. He took over the command in Ismael. On 10 October, I received orders to make a reconnaiscance of the road via Sarokko to Podolia, and if possible, to guide the army alongside this route into their winter quarters. On 11 October, I left and arrived 9 days later in Sarokko where I joined the army with my findings.

On 7 November, Count Rumyantsev received a message that major-general Glabow had made a storm assault on the fortress of Brailow but that the attack had been cut off with great losses and that the rest of the corps had withdrawn 16 kilometers. The complete corps had counted 6,000 men, of whom only 1,500 remained. On 12 November, a Turkish envoy of the Grand Vizier arrived into the camp and travelled back the day thereafter. On 17 November, Brailow was left by the Turkish army and subsequently occupied by the Russians.

Between 21 and 27 November, the army, including the headquarters, the artillery, the 1st and 3rd grenadier regiment, the grenadier battalion von Ruthenfeld, and the Corinth infantry regiment travelled via Faltschij, Stanilesti, Huss, Riboi Mahilow, Kuschmeschti, and Tchijschij to Kuwasti, a distance of approximately 96 kilometers. Here, we received the message that general Weissmann had sent from Ismael 300 jäger across the Danube to attack the Turkish encampment of 3,000 men near Tultschy. At their arrival, the Turkish army had left the camp in a hurry and had withdrawn. The encampment with all its supplies had fallen into the hands of the jäger corps which burnt everything they could not take back with them. On 29 October, we arrived at Jashy. Here, we received the message that Bucharest had gone into Russian hands."

In January 1771, the Russian troops had taken Krailow and had conquered the whole district until the river Danube. On 14 March 1771, the message arrived that also Gurgivo had surrendered 2 days before, after a Russian storm assault on the double entrenchment during which it had beaten 6,000 Ottomans, partly by killing them, partly by driving them into the Danube.

In Poland, the winter quarters now included 7 regiments infantry and 4 regiments cavalry. The headquarters were still in Jassy, as were 2 battalions of the 1st grenadier regiment. Further into Poland were 9 regiments infantry, 4 regiments cavalry, 6 regiments Cossacks, and an army of 5,000 men. The other troops of the army were all in the Moldau region, in Wallacheij, and alongside the Danube.

"Because I followed the headquarters during the march of the army to its winter quarters, I am unaware of the details of this operation for the other corps and army parts. Now that Bender and Kilia had surrendered, it was decided that the army should go to its winter quarters in Podolia

because it was impossible to supply them with forage and other provisions in the Moldau region and in Wallacheij; the poor roads and heavy winter weather would preclude transporting food and clothing. After coming to this conclusion, general quartermaster Bauer had travelled to St Petersburg.

However, when major-general Weissmann had arrived with his corps in Ismael, thanks to his cleverness and vigilance, many buried grain stores were discovered and protected by guards. Then, he changed his plans and was able to come through the winter while providing his complete corps with bread every day. In the spring he requested only some flour and cattle.

He believed that if all commanding officers of the corps were to take the same strategic measures to actively search for such buried grain stores and have them guarded, they would find so many stores that the complete army, with only some extra provisions during the winter, could have remained in their camps in the Moldau area and in Wallacheij. In reaction to this opinion, Count Rumyantsev asked general Weissmann whether he really thought that he could organize bread for the 50,000 men between the Pruth and the Black Sea and from Bender up to the Danube for a period of up to 2½ months.

In this way, Rumyantsev could leave his troops where they were and have them ready for action again in the following year's campaign. The intelligent and active but cautious general Weissmann responded that if the right measures were immediately taken, that would indeed be possible. Hereafter, field marshal Count Rumyantsev gave Weismann full command over the complete cordon of Russian troops located from Bender via Kilia to Ackermann and from alongside the Danube to the Pruth, in all around 50,000 men. And he kept his word in that he provided these troops with bread for up to 3 months. All the while, Count Rumyantsev complained bitterly about the shortcomings of some other commanding officers who refused to come to his support.

Elsewhere, I have described the major activities and campaigns of general Weismann in Ismael towards the other side of the Danube during the year 1771, including a geographical map. I could do this because I guided his corps during these campaigns as the only officer of the general quartermaster staff. It seems he did not accept one of the other staff officers. General Weissmann was a small and corpulent man, serious and silent, talking little when in company with others. He was a sensible and reasonable man who, during command, remained quiet during dangerous situations and gave his orders calmly as if he were sitting in a cafe. He silently and carefully listened to all objections and arguments, but disobedience or negligence were strictly punished. Unforeseen mistakes, on the other hand, he forgave.

He was 48-50 years of age, and after the campaign of 1771, he advanced to lieutenant-general and was awarded the Order of St. George 2nd class and received a knighthood from Alexander Nefskij. He also received from the empress an estate worth approximately 60,000 rubles in Latvia and was naturalized as a baronet. The empress gave him in addition, as a remembrance, one of the 12-pound cannons that he had takenduring a campaign. It was placed on his estate and rendered in his new coat of arms. He had served in the army since his youth as a subaltern in the fortifications corps. Once during a dinner where I sat at a table with field marshal Count

Rumyantsev, shortly before I travelled back to Denmark, Rumyantsev said: 'General Weissmann was the only real general under my command in the army.'

Carl Alexander von Stricker

St. Petersburg, 31 January 1772

Knight of the Order of St. George 4th class and

lieutenant-colonel in the imperial Russian army"

Comments about my campaigns with the Imperial Russian Army against the Ottomans in the years from 1769 to 1772

"Because the field marshals Prince von Golitsyn and Count von Rumyantsev were accused of many mistakes and failures, I would like to add the following comments because completely ignoring them might be wrongly explained to my disadvantage.

Before embarking on a formal critical appraisal, the following considerations are important. An officer who did not really participate in the general quartermaster staff or was not really in direct contact with the commanding officer who had to have complete trust in him would never know all elements and circumstances. Consequently, such an officer would not be able to produce a sound and sensible and independent judgement of the activities and movements of an army. A judgement cannot be based on incidents: a general may have made the best preparations only to have them endangered by jealousy, human emotions, protest, trickery, and bad luck.

Conversely, poorly planned and executed measures can yield a favourable outcome. In both situations, a judgment based on the start of the chain of events would not be valid. I think that it is disgraceful for an officer to come to a decisive judgement and disapproval without complete knowledge of what happened and under what circumstances. Therefore, I restrict myself to relating the circumstances and events described in my reports; I mention only the composition of the army, the hurdles that had to be overcome, and what could have added to its fighting abilities – thus, the reader will have enough background information for an individual appraisal.

The shortage of capable Russian officers was a particular problem because without foreign, and especially German officers, it was not possible to field an effective Russian army. And this situation will persist so long as the Russian soldiers and officers do not take service in a foreign army to learn more about war. Russia itself has not been involved in enough wars to educate a sufficient number of experienced officers itself. Most Russians remain in the army until they have

The Russian Order of St. George of Carl Alexander Stricker

Carl Alexander Stricker had a very successful career in the Russian army. Arrived in July 1769 as a captain, he was promoted to lieutenant-colonel after the battle of Kahul in August 1770. Because of courageous leadership on 9 June 1771 during the battle of Tultschy, he received the Russian Order of St. George 4th class. This order was awarded only after bravery in battle. The order is associated with a knighthood.

Order of St. George Order 4th class

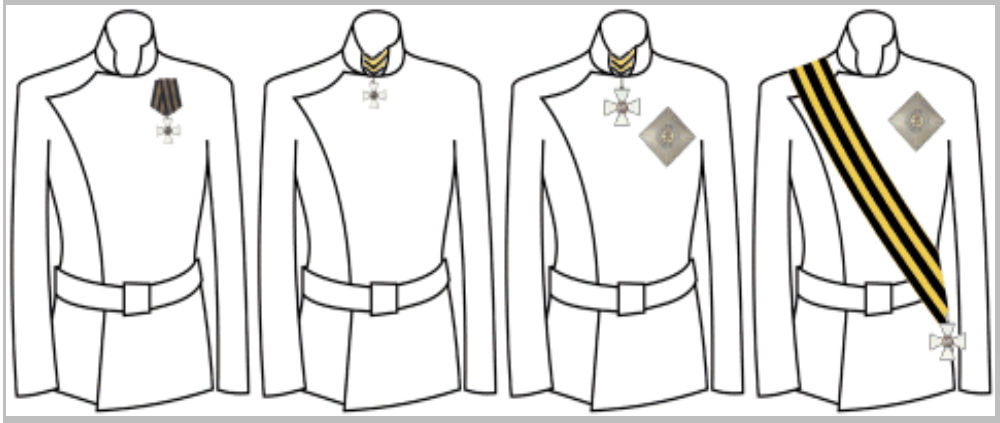
The **Order of Saint George** (Russian: Орден «Святого Георгия») is the highest purely military distinction bestowed by the Russian Federation. Originally established 26 November 1769 by Empress Catherine the Great, it was revived on 8 August 2000 by Decree 1463 of the President of Russia. The award criteria were amended on 7 September 2010 by Presidential Decree 1099 [11].

Statute of the Order

The Order of Saint George is awarded to top and senior military officers for the conduct of military operations to protect the Fatherland in the case of attack by an external enemy that resulted in the complete defeat of the enemy, for the execution of combat and other operations in other states aimed at restoring international peace and security, for being a model of military science with feats that exemplify military prowess; it is given as well to those who previously received state awards of the Russian Federation for distinction in combat.

Description of the Order (as provided by Wikipedia)

The Order of Saint George is divided into four classesto Fourth to First, awarded sequentially. These four classes are individually identified by the size and placement of the two principal insignia of the order, the cross and the star.



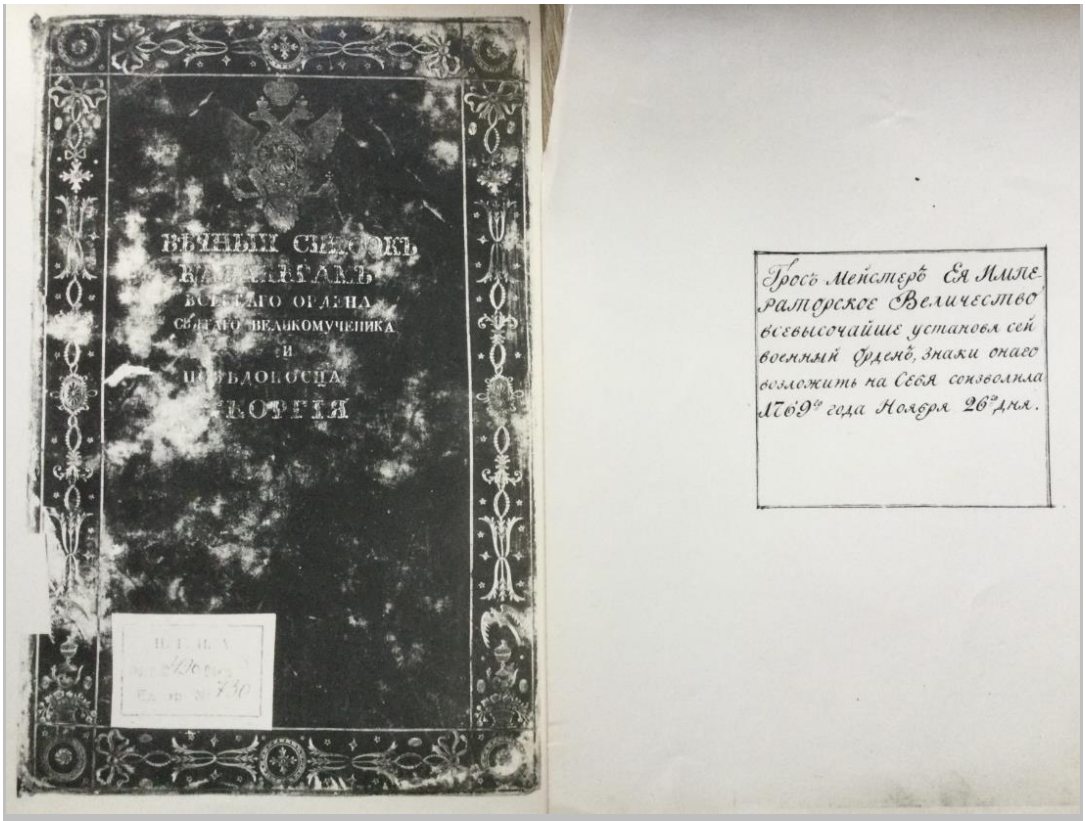
Cross: A white enamelled cross pattée with a central medallion bearing the image of St. George on horseback slaying the dragon. The cross measures 6 centimeters across in the case of the order first class; it is worn on a striped sash in the colours of St. George (orange and black). Likewise, the order second class is 6 centimeters across; it is worn on a 4.5 centimeter wide ribbon, also in the colours of St George. The third class order is 5 centimeters across; it is worn around the neck but from a 2.4 centimeter wide ribbon in the same colours. The fourth class order is a 4 centimeter wide cross worn on the left side of the chest, hanging from a pentagonal mount covered with a 2.4 centimeter wide ribbon of St. George.

Star: A four-pointed silver covered star with a gold central medallion engraved with "SG" and topped by a crown and surrounded by a black enamelled band bearing the motto of the order "For Service and Bravery" ("*Za Sluzhbu i Khrabrost"*). The star is worn on the left side of the chest for first and second classes.

Ribbon: The ribbon of the Order of St. George is orange with three black stripes, commonly called "George's Ribbon". It symbolises fire and gunpowder: the Russian "colors of military glory", and it is also thought to be derived from the colours of the original Russian imperial coat of arms (black eagle on a golden background). It was subsequently associated to the colors of the National Guard of Russia.

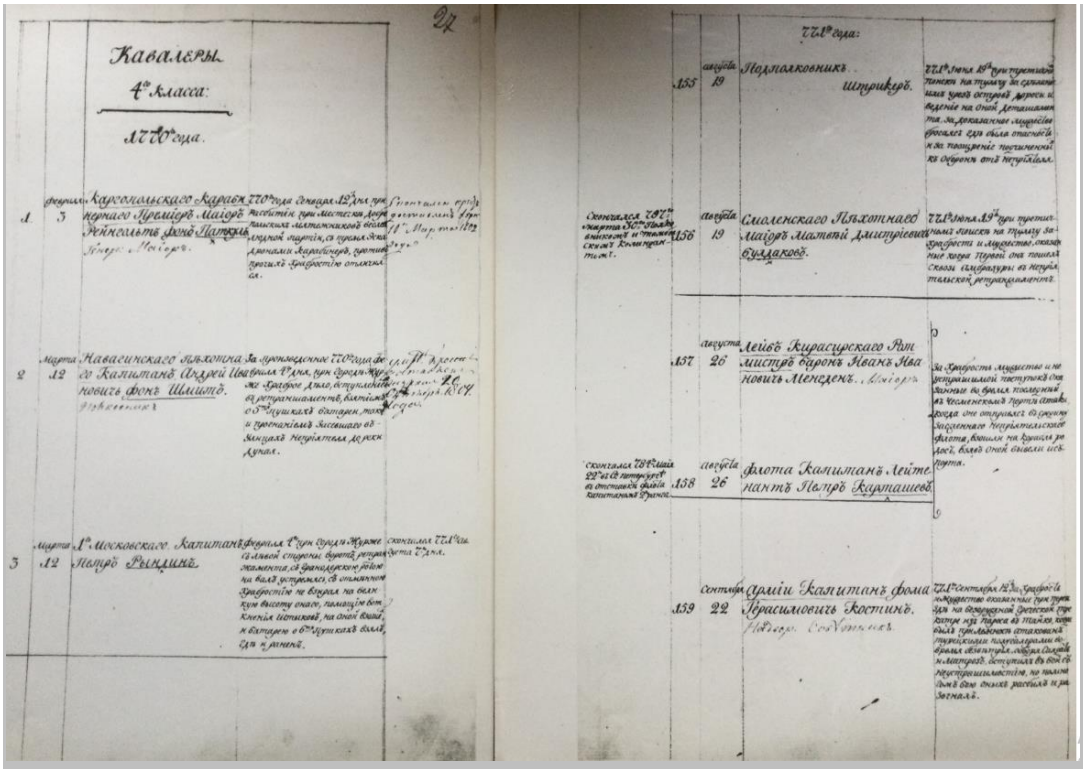
The Order of St. George 4th class and knighthood of Carl Alexander Stricker

For his courageous behavior during the battle of Tultschy on 9 June 1771, Carl Alexander Stricker was awarded the Order of St. George 4th class. After further fighting during the summer of 1771, he was also nominated for the Order of St. George 3rd class, but this was rejected. Instead, he received 500 rubles which he considered disgraceful [6].



Eternal list of cavaliers (knights) of the military order of the chosen sacred martyr and messenger of victory Georgius (left side of picture)

Grandmaster her imperial highness has instituted this military order, of which she has taken the pleasure to award herself the characteristics on 26 November 1769 (right side of picture)



Photograph of the original list of receivers of the St George Order 4th Class

To our Colonel Stricker

Because of the act of bravery performed by you on 9 June 1771, during the third attack on Tulcea, when you pushed your way through the island, performed an important task, and demonstrated your courage by facing a dangerous situation and by inspiring your subordinates in defense against the enemy, you are endowed with the honor of the 4th class.

a title of captain or major, after which they prefer to leave service and reside on their estates or find a job in a governmental function. Many colonels and even generals who had served at the imperial court since their childhood were placed from there into their field regiment as generals although they had never seen soldiers exercising and had never read books about military tactics and strategy. Colonel Ungarn had switched some of the officers of his cavalry regiment with some from the artillery. All such switches were made without taking into account technical abilities and experience but were at that time common in Russia, a situation working to the disadvantage of an army.

Moreover, the many very poor roads along which the Russian soldier had to travel, and the many useless movements during exercise mean that the soldier is inexperienced in marches and maneuvers even though these are core activities of an effective army. The officer is poorly paid which leads to shortage, suffering, and hunger in a devastated and ruined area. This means that

the officers lose their energy and courage while the common man no longer has trust in the officers from his own country. The foreign officers, in whom he has trust and whom he follows obediently, are there only in low numbers. All these limitations made field marshal Prince Golitsyn cautious during all his campaigns and therefore, the army had no trust in him.

Russian and foreign officers

Although there were exceptions, there was a general shortage of capable and experienced Russian officers, and the Russian campaigns would have been less successful without the help of many volunteers from the western European areas such as the many German principalities and duchies, Prussia, France, Denmark, and Savoy. Carl Alexander Stricker noted that the Russian soldiers were good but that their officers were not trusted by their subordinates and were not always easy to work with. In a letter to his brother Ezechias Heinrich, he wrote:

"... had the Russian army had capable officers, then they could have taken Constantinople already during the second year of the war. The English admiral (I think his name was Grey) asked for 6 war ships so that he could bomb Seraillie and conquer Constantinople. However, the Russian admiral did not want to give permission. That this request should have been granted, I proved later at Isatchi. There, the sailable Danube is 800 steps wide and was covered by more than 60 heavy cannons. We had some galleasses and boats lying in Ismael, and Count Rumyantsev wanted to have this flotilla in Gallas to use it there. But because they had to pass the frightening batteries of French artillery of Isatchi, they pretended that this was completely impossible.

I argued that when the flotilla was anchored near Isatchi, lifting its anchors at high tide and incoming wind, it would pass the town without danger. I was ridiculed. I asked general Weissman to give me 100 grenadiers and 6 large boats; with them I intended to pass Isatchi during daylight because I knew the Turkish artillerists by heart. Although he did not want me to take this risk, he gave me permission in the end. Hence, during the night I entered the Danube with a boat through a small channel ¼ mile from Isatchi and hid my ship. At 1000 hours in the morning, in bright sunlight, we entered the Danube and sailed with the tide past Isatchi. As soon as I showed myself, everyone ran to the batteries, and the whole encampment of 30,000 men came into action. Immediately, they started to shoot at us with cannons. When I came nearer, they started to shoot at us with muskets, and now and then we heard bullets whistling around us.

As soon as I noticed this, I ordered my grenadiers to fire back at the artillery batteries so that the artillerists encountered a musket barrage from our side. And when I came close to the fortress, I ordered my tambour to play 'en marche'. Out of approximately 1,000 cannon balls, only one went closely over the vanguard boat and hit the shore only 20 steps further, just as I again entered a small channel. We were already some 2,000 steps away from the batteries. After my report, the order came that the whole flotilla should follow the procedure I had proposed. The Russian naval officer would have preferred to hang me but he had to obey. But they were so lucky to pass Isatchi without loss of men or ships, and they had passed almost all batteries before these started to fire ..."

The first campaign to Cochzim, without heavy artillery, failed because of mistakes and accidents. In the spring thereafter, it was clear that the army had suffered a lot and lost size. At that time, there was a sort of generalised anxiety in the army, and panic when there were only minor signs of the enemy or reports of such. All requirements for the army had to be obtained from Russia through Poland over land over a distance of 200-300 miles. These transports and convoys had to be accompanied by guards against the Confederate troops in Poland because the roads were dangerous, and this weakened and fatigued the army. Even forage and other consumables had to come partly from Ukraine because Poland could not deliver everything. At that time, it was almost impossible to travel with a large transport convoy with specialized heavy siege artillery. And because the army needed its troops, protecting the transports from Russia became too burdensome.

Because the first effort to take Cochzim had failed, it was almost impossible to conquer the fortress without heavy siege artillery, but the army could not bypass Cochzim without taking it because it would then remain a potential threat of the enemy in their back. These were all reasons why the military operations during the first campaign started so slowly. The Turkish army, despite its enormous number of soldiers, was not able to stop an organized corps of Russian troops and had to withdraw on all occasions. Nevertheless, their numerous cavalry made them very dangerous because they kept our army encircled all the time and were always a threat to our foragers and convoys. All this forced our army to again cross over the Dnjestr. And had we not stopped the Turkish army at the bridge on 17 September 1769, our army would certainly have been forced to withdraw all the way to Polonne in Podolia. Thereby, the war might have taken a completely different course.

The only way to prevent this disaster, instead of crossing back over the Dnjestr, would have been for the army to have marched directly towards the Turkish camp near Cochzim to take away their storage and destroy the camp. Then, the enemy would have been forced to leave and travel home as the garrison could have been made to surrender due to a shortage of food and resulting starvation. However, given the state and situation of both armies at that time, this would have been a very hazardous operation. Because the Turkish army was still full of bravado, it protected itself behind the cannons on the wall of Cochzim, and our troops were still unaware of its strong points. The enemy army had more than 200,000 men and our army had shrunk to approximately 27,000 men. On top of this, the generals had no trust in their troops and vice versa, possibly not without reason, the troops had no trust in their generals and were dispirited. However, the army was so lucky to learn from these experiences. The generals as well as the general quartermaster staff gained skills during this campaign, and the Russian soldier learned the tactical advantage of his bayonet. These experiences, and the fact that Cochzim had fallen in our hands, made it possible to take some more risks during the following campaign. Also, the troops had more trust in their new general Count Rumyantsev who indeed on all occasions showed more tenacity and determination.

The new general quartermaster Bauer was a higly experienced, persistent, and gifted man who had few equals in his profession. All war operations in this campaign were planned and excuted

with caution, tactical and logistical intelligence, and energy as he involved his staff in discussions. This was recognized by the Russian troops, and it gave them more trust and courage. Nevertheless, all these changes in the operations completely changed the momentum, and the army still had difficulty obtaining enough forage and other needs in a countryside that was completely devastated and exhausted. In addition, it was challenged to protect its convoys and baggage against such a numerous enemy cavalry. These problems became worse and almost unsurmountable with the further advancement into enemy territory because large parts of Poland, the Moldau area, and Wallacheij were completely destroyed and burnt.

Because the Russian officer is poorly paid, and consequently is always short of money, the army is not followed by merchants and sutlers; their financial (but of course also physical) risk is too high in following troops without enough money. Every regiment and officer had to bring what they needed for the complete campaign. Whether a rope, needles, horse irons, etc., everything had to be brought along for the duration of the entire campaign because it could not be procured anywhere without the usual merchant trail. The huge baggage train and its protection complicated the campaign through enemy territory. A single mistake, by which either the baggage or a convoy might have been lost, could have destroyed the army similarly to what Russia's Tsar Peter I had experienced in Riboi Mahilow at the Pruth in 1711. I already mentioned that the Turkish army is never able to withstand an organized regular infantry regiment. On the other hand, because our cavalry was so weak, even our creative cavalry manouvers had hardly any effect at all because of their overwhelming numbers of experienced horsemen. Therefore, the only way to defeat them is to march directly to their camps and stores and conquer these. This worked well because there were almost no substantial fortresses to give them protection. This forced them to leave the areas and go back to their homeland. This approach has been followed with caution and without substantial losses during the campaigns of 1770 and later, during which the Moldau area and Wallacheij were conquered, as described in my reports.

From the following summary, those who are unfamiliar with the Turkish army can get a general idea about its structure. In the Turkish army, there were only some 10,000 janissaries as infantry soldiers. The rest of the army consisted of cavalry. The janissaries are well-paid and mainly serve to defend the fortresses and strongholds. The cavalry or so-called 'Spahij' are troops that, without payment, travel to the battlefield with their own horses, weaponry, and servants. It starts with a letter that goes out throughout the whole empire, that everybody who is a genuine and faithful muslim should go to war to defend the religion and fatherland. Then, every Pasha or governor gathers as many men as he is ordered to bring in the letter. Each person takes with him as much money as he thinks necessary for travelling and maintenance during the fighting, as well as for travelling back. The Turkish government gives them nothing, except a tent, forage, and flour or bread for themselves, their horses, and servants. This holds as of the moment of gathering until they disperse again after the campaign. It is not obligatory to serve more than one campaign. Every Spahij takes at least two horses with him, but sometimes also 10 to 12 horses, and several servants who must fight during the battle to support their Spahij.

Consequently, every man in the Turkish army is a soldier. That not all servants are as courageous as their lords is understandable, and this unwillingness to fight brings chaos to the troops on regular occasions. If one horse sees that another horse flees, it wants to flee too. Thus, the Spahij is sometimes forced to flee against his will because his servant and two horses have run away. On the defeated Spahij, our troops almost always found 500-8000 rubles worth of gold because many of them sell everything they have at home and bring their complete property in bars of gold, and they hope to compensate any losses by looting. Most of them come from the inner part of the empire, so they have to make a very long journey to reach the place where their army gathers the troops. Therefore, they keep half of their money for travelling home. As long as they still have that amount available and have not yet suffered from food shortage or hunger, they can be full of bravado up to the point of insanity.

However, as soon as more than half of their remaining money has gone, they lose their courage and only think about going back home. Groups of such men cluster and leave the army to go back home, during which activity they plunder and burn down everything they pass to compensate for their losses regardless whether they rob the enemy or their own people. Hence, the best way to approach the Turkish enemy is to act cautiously and defensively in the early part of the campaign until 'the first flames have extinguished again'. In this way, when they suffer their first shortages and fall back, it is much easier to finish with them because they are then looking only for a means to withdraw honorably.

The janissaries have no bayonets and fight man to man without structure, equipped only with a rifle and sabre. Therefore, they are of little value in an open battlefield, and they poorly defend their entrenchments. But if they had better artillerists, they might have been valuable because they have enough personal courage and bravado. The whole Turkish military organisation is structured in such a way that it is useless during battlefield operations: Every Pasha leads his own people and makes attacks and manouvers as best he can without communication with the other Pashas. So if one attains a small advancement, he is not supported by others to exploit it. These groups are of very different size because every Vizier and Pasha comes with a group proportional to the size of his government, varying from 600 to 4,000 men. There are Pashas of one, two, and three 'horse bands' to equal somewhat with the major-general, lieutenant-general, and general in our army. A Vizier is usually Pasha of 3 'horse bands'. The authority of a Pasha, or Aga, is comparable to a colonel in our army and so extensive that he can kill a subordinate without being punished. However, there are also examples of groups of subordinates killing their Pasha. Overall, the Turkish soldier is well-fed and well-built, lives a sober life, and is full of courage and energy.

The Russian soldier is generally considered to be a soldier who does not readily withdraw but remains where he is, prepared to be mowed down, selling his skin dearly. Therefore, it will cost every other army much blood to defeat a Russian army in a regular battle, as also the king of Prussia found out during the Seven Years' War. But because the Russian army is dependent on a very large baggage train, and for the abovementioned reasons is not good at marching and manouvering, a smaller well-organised army can deal with it. For instance, an army can fatigue the Russian army by marching and maneuvering and then either taking or destroying their

baggage train. Thereafter, the Russian army may be forced to halt and withdraw, and due to its large number of light troops it may be difficult to achieve refurbishment of their army by their convoys. For the siege of well-fortified cities that can not be directly approached from the sea or a river, the Russian army is not well-equipped; the very large baggage train needed for many poorly disciplined light and irregular troops plundering and burning down everything in an area should then also include heavy siege artillery.

Some important remarks pertain to general Weissmann. When one studies the crossing of the Danube and the manouvers by him at the other side of the river in the light of current European military tactics and strategy, it seems as if he acted as a desperate man who took too many risks with his small corps. This view was put forth by jealous colleagues in an effort to have him blamed and punished. That those who took the final decisions had a different view is demonstrated by the many awards and honors he received from the empress herself. To let the reader decide independently, the following paragraphs are important.

As explained earlier, it is clear that the Turkish army is dangerous only when one remains inactive and awaits what is going to happen. Not only do they encircle an army or corps completely and endanger every rescue from outside, but they are also able to shoot a person from a distance with their very good rifles, and they change position continuously. By keeping our army under pressure, they tired out our troops. As soon as a group of a thousand or more skirmishing Turkish soldiers encircle a camp or corps, everybody has to take a defensive position, and the cavalry must remain prepared.

General Weismann had approximately 50,000 men under his command; most were light troops. With that number, he had to cover and defend the complete distance from Bender alongside the Black Sea and the river Danube until Ackermann at the Pruth, and Kilia and Isatchi, a distance of more than 80 miles of waterways with much shipping activity. Therefore, he could not keep in one place more than 4,000 men at best. General Weismann himself was positioned with around 4,000 men at Ismael; 1,000 were elsewhere but could be mobilized within a couple of hours. At a distance of 15 kilometers from Ismael there was an encampment of approximately 30,000 Turkish soldiers near Tultschy, and 18 kilometers further, also at the Danube near Isatschij, was a Turkish corps of approximately 15,000 men. Another 25 kilometers further was the Grand Vizier with an army of around 20,000 men near Babadach. Near Tultschy, the Ottomans had a frigate with 20 cannons, and 70 ships with which they could transport approximately 20,000 men across the Danube within 6 hours during a dark night. Every transport ship had 3-4 cannons and could cover its own landing. General Weissmann did not have enough men to prevent these landings.

Indeed, the Turkish troops crossed almost every night with their boats, attacking single posts and small groups of Russian soldiers during their raids and causing repeated damage. And had the Turkish army positioned itself again at our side of the Donau, they would have cut off the left wing of our army. Then, the army would have had to withdraw from Wallacheij, and all gained territory would have been lost again. And this would probably have repeated itself every year.

To prevent these problems, there was no other solution than crossing the Danube and destroying the encampment and stores of the Vizier. Because general Weismann was well aware of his own strength and that of the Turkish army, he made the following estimation: In case his attack failed, he would have to return with a minor to moderate loss. But he considered the chance of winning to be relatively high and thought it worth taking the risk. Subsequent events proved him right.

It has been suggested that he took too many risks when he marched to Babadach, leaving Isatschij and its Turkish camp behind him while these troops could have cut him off or could have taken his boats. This last possibility was foreseen, and the general had sent the boats back and kept them under surveillance. Were this first possibility to happen and the Turkish army to attack him in the back, they would have done what they always do and encircle the army square. As this rarely works against disciplined infantry with bayonets, he would have penetrated into Babadach anyhow and would have destroyed the stores and other warehouses besides the encampment. This means that the Turks would have had to leave Isatschij and the area around it up to Babadach because of food shortages, as indeed happened after the raid of general Weismann on Babadach.

It would have been completely different if general Weismann had attacked the Turkish corps in Isatschij first, before marching to Babadach; Isatschij was surrounded by strong walls and high towers and was well-equipped with artillery. The area around the fortress was covered with several redoubts, a strong entrenchment, and many heavy cannons. To conquer all this, if possible at all, would have cost much time and many soldiers while the Vizier came to the rescue within 5-6 hours with his corps in Babadach. The Russian corps was too small to combine an attack on Isatschij and Babadach. Destroying the Turkish warehouses was the key to success. Because general Weissmann marched immediately to Babadach, surprised the Vizier, defeated his corps, and took the camp, stores and warehouses and its contents, the Turkish army immediately had to leave the whole area and go home.

Copenhagen, 30 March 1773

C.A. von Stricker

Grenadier captain of the Danish king"

References

1. Howard DA. A history of the Ottoman Empire. Cambridge University Press, 2017.
2. Pares B. A history of Russia. J and J Gray, Edinburgh, 1947.
3. Amburger E. Die Dänische Offiziere in Russlands Heer und Flotte unter Katharina II. Personalhistorisk Tidsskrift 1936; pp.172-202.
4. Wilson PH. Europe's tragedy: A new history of the Thirty Year War. Penguin Books (UK), 2009.
5. Hirsch JCW, Hirsch K. Fortegnelse over danske og norske officerer (Officielt), Fortegnelse over danske og norske officerer med flere fra 1648-1814 samlet og udarbejdet fra 1888-1907 af oberstløjtnant J.C.W. Hirsch og premierløjtnant Kay Hirsch. Rigsarkivet, København.
6. Nobel O. Slægtsbogsoptegnelser vedrørende Familierne Stricker og Kaalund. Personalhistorisk Tidsskrift 1912; pp.121-128.
7. Anonymous. Nouvelles extraordinaires de divers endroits. 31 March 1769. Delpher. Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Den Haag.
8. Anonymous. Oprechte Donderdagse Haarlemse Courant. 14 December 1769. Delpher. Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Den Haag.
9. Stricker CA. Letter to his brother Ezechias Heinrich of 8 April 1791. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
10. Stricker CA. Journal von der zweyten Expedition der Russisch Kayserlichen Armee unter Commando des Herrn Feld Marchals Printz Gallizin unter Cochzin in Ao 1769. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
11. Stricker CA. Journal von die Campagne der Russisch Kayserlichen Armee unter Commando des Herrn Feld Marchals Grafen von Romantzow in Ao 1770. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
12. Stricker CA. Beylage zu meinen bey der Russisch Kayserlichen Armee geführten Journals in den Campagnen wieder die Türken von Ao 1769 bis Ao 1772. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
13. Anonymous. Order of St. George. Military Wiki. Order of St. George | Military Wiki | Fandom

CHAPTER 10

The third interbellum [1773-1788]

When Carl Alexander Stricker returned from Russia in February 1773, he was formally still in Russian service [1]. As the military campaign had ended early during 1772 in negotiations between Russia and the Ottomans, there was time enough to travel to Copenhagen and be back for the campaign of 1773. During the winter, many higher ranking officers went to St. Petersburg, but Stricker had spent the winter in the successful corps of general Weissmann, and after years of heavy fighting, he must have been happy to see his country again. Before he left, he had been decorated with the prestigious Order of St. George 4th class and received a knighthood. Moreover, one year earlier he had received a rapid promotion from captain to lieutenant-colonel. Despite this, he remained in Denmark like many of his colleagues. It took the Danish envoy until June 1774 to get formal dismissal for Morgenstierne, Kaltenborn, and Stricker from the Russian authorities [1].

In the absence of personal letters, we know nothing about the considerations making Carl Alexander remain in Denmark in 1773. Two of his colleagues, Brüggemann and Röder, went into Russian service where they ended their careers as generals [1]. Remaining in Russia and becoming naturalised would have meant being taken into Russian nobility [2]. In fact, this was the case with his superior general Weismann who received an estate in Baltic Livonia [3]. But Stricker was 41 years of age and still unmarried and had spent 8 years in active service in the two greatest military conflicts of the 18th century and might have thought that it was time for settling down. Also, from his reports one may conclude that he found the Russian society quite poorly organized. And it is clear from his letters that he still felt offended by the fact that instead of the proposed Order of St. George 3rd class for his courageous actions in 1771 in Tultschy, he had received just 500 rubles [2].

During his absence, Denmark had gone through a very unstable period politically. Since the death of King Frederick V in 1766, his son Christian VII was king of Denmark-Norway. But the 17-year-old new king was mentally ill. In an absolute monarchy such as Denmark, that was a greater problem than in a constitutional one such as Britain. Although intelligent, he had been kept out of all governmental affairs by the Privy Council chaired by Count Johann Hartwig Ernst von Bernstorff. During his adolescence, he worried his surroundings by excessive alcohol use, violence, and sexual abuse during nightly tours through Copenhagen with his court marshal Count Holck. Although being married to his cousin Caroline Mathilde of Great Britain, sister of King George III, Christian VII paid no attention to his wife but started a relationship with a well-known Danish prostitute. On 28 January 1769 his only son was born, the later Crown Prince Frederick.

At his court, many people were fed up with his erratic behavior. He rapidly developed severe symptoms of mental illness such as stupor, self-mutilation, and hallucinations. As he had been

scheduled for a ‘Grand Tour’ through Europe from May 1768 until January 1769, the most important symptoms of his condition could be kept out of sight. Added to the group of travelling dignitaries and servants was physician Johann Friedrich Struensee from Altona, aged 31. This talented man was inspired by the enlightenment and seemed to have a favorable effect on the young king whose behavior became less extreme and more mature [4]. Members of the Privy Council Bernstorff and Schimmelmann were quite happy with that, and not only did Struensee remain the personal physician of the king, but he also received the position of ‘State Councilor’. In an absolute monarchy such as Denmark-Norway, all important decisions had to be signed by the king, even if he was insane.

King Christian VII

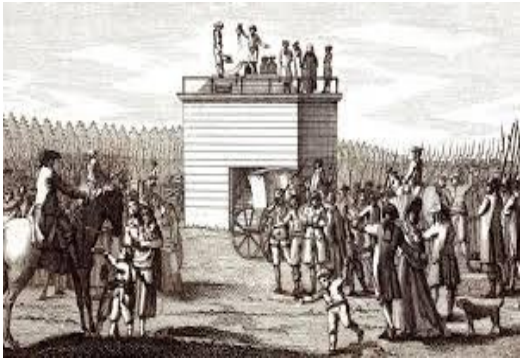
The king’s physician Struensee

Struensee must have soon realized that his strong personal influence on the king gave him a very important role. And the unhappy young queen, who initially disliked Struensee, later enjoyed the wise and maybe tender care of Struensee, older by 10 years. At first, Struensee kept a low profile as he began to control politics. However, as the royal court and government spent the summer of 1770 in Schleswig-Holstein, his power grew as during the year, the king sank into a condition of mental stupor.

In December 1770, Struensee was able to abolish the Privy Council and to put himself into a powerful position. It became his official duty to present reports from the various departments of state to the king. Struensee dictated whatever answers he pleased. Next, he dismissed all department heads and abolished the Norwegian viceroyship. Henceforth, the cabinet with himself in control became the one supreme authority in the state. Struensee held absolute sway for almost thirteen months, between 18 December 1770 and 16 January 1772. During that time, he issued more than 1,000 cabinet orders. Struensee saw many national habits as prejudices that should be eliminated and certainly accomplished good things such as the end of capital punishment, torture, slave trade in the colonies, and forced labor.

But he did not speak Danish, and to ensure obedience, he dismissed entire staffs of public departments without pensions or compensation and substituted his own nominees. The new

officials were in many cases inexperienced men who knew little or nothing of the country that they were supposed to govern. At first, lower class and middle class opinion was in his favor. What incensed the people most against him was the way in which he put the king completely out of control; outside a very narrow group at court, nobody seemed to believe that Christian VII was really insane. That opinion was strengthened by a cabinet order of 14 July 1771 giving Struensee authority to issue royal ordinances even without the royal signature. In January 1772, he was arrested and sentenced to decapitation while the queen was first imprisoned in Kronborg Castle and subsequently exiled to Celle in Hanover [4].



Execution of Struensee on 28 April 1772

When Carl Alexander Stricker returned in February 1773, the old administration had largely reestablished itself. His former colleague in Russian service, colonel von Falkenskjold, had been temporarily appointed as minister of Defense by Struensee and had fallen into disgrace. After being imprisoned in Norway, he published a description of the episode from his point of view [4]. Although he was later rehabilitated, he remained living abroad and no longer played a substantial role in Danish politics. Carl Alexander Stricker was appointed to the quartermaster staff in Norway on 29 April 1773 and advanced to lieutenant-colonel in January 1774 [5]. As he was very experienced in cartography, he had been asked to implement the topographic registration of Norway. There was a need for reliable and precise military geographical maps, especially of the areas bordering Sweden [6]. This was important because Sweden was a continuous threat for Denmark in its ambition to conquer Norway. Although some maps had been made since 1661, they were of varying quality, and the majority of Norway had not been covered.

Heinrich Wilhelm von Huth [1717-1806]

The initiative for the mapping came from lieutenant-general Heinrich Wilhelm von Huth [1717-1806], commander of the artillery and engineer corps. He had served in the Hanoverian army during the Seven Years' War but was in Danish service since 1766. Because of his short stature but highly esteemed capabilities, Frederick the Great said of him: "Ein kleiner Huth aber ein grosser Kopf".

Map of the Norwegian-Swedish border near Karrestad made by Carl Alexander Stricker

It was not always easy for Stricker to work under von Huth. While Stricker, as director, was responsible for the actual cartography, Huth gave strict instructions and interfered with even the smallest details [6]. Cooperation with financial direktor major Clason was not uneventful either.

But apparently some sort of cooperation was achieved, and Stricker was often travelling for inspection and was directly involved in the daily activities of mapping. Consequently, many of these old maps were drawn by him and were later used in the Theatre War.

'Gjetemyren Gaarde' in former Kristiania

On 12 November 1774, he married Margreta Charlotte von Römeling in Kristiania. She was a daughter of major-general Jost Conrad von Römeling who had volunteered for service abroad during earlier wars with the Ottoman empire [1]. During these years, Carl Alexander Stricker and his family lived in the estate Gjetemyren on the outskirts of Kristiania [currently Oslo].

In the spring of 1786, Stricker resigned as director and quartermaster and became colonel of infantry and commander of the 1st Oppland regiment of Norway. He moved with his family to Stange in Hedmark.

The brothers of Carl Alexander remained in Denmark during the period 1773-1788. Ezechias Heinrich was major of artillery since 1774 and had various positions in this period in Rendsburg, Denmark, and Norway. Johan Christian was major of infantry and lived in Copenhagen [5].

References

1. Amburger E. Die Dänischen Offiziere in Russlands Heer und Flotte unter Katharina II. Personalhistorisk Tidsskrift, 1936;172-202.
2. Nobel O. Slægtsbogsoptegnelser vedrørende Familierne Stricker og Kaalund. Personalhistorisk Tidsskrift, 1912; 32:121-29.
3. Stricker CA. Beylage zu meinen bey der Russisch Kayserlichen Armee geführten Journals in den Campagnen wieder die Türken von Ao 1769 bis Ao 1772. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.

4. Falkenskjold SO. Authentische und hochstmerkwürdige Aufklärungen über die Geschichte der Grafen Struensee und Brandt. Germanien 1788.
5. Hirsch JCW, Hirsch K. Fortegnelse over danske og norske officerer med flere fra 1648-1814 samlet og udarbejdet fra 1888-1907 af oberstløjtnant J.C.W. Hirsch og premierløjtnant Kay Hirsch. National Archives, Copenhagen.
6. De Seue CM. Historisk Beretning om Norges Geografiske Opmaaling fra dens Stiftelse i 1773 indtil Udgangen af 1876. Grøndahl & Sønner, Kristiania, 1878.

CHAPTER 11

Theatre war [1788-1789]

The ‘Theatre War’ (known in Denmark and Norway as ‘Tyttebærkrigen’, elsewhere as ‘Cranberry War’) was undoubtedly the least significant of the long series of Danish-Swedish wars. Over the centuries, conflicts between Denmark and Sweden centered around the slowly shifting power balance in the Baltic Sea and bordering countries, the loss of parts of southern Sweden such as Scania, the loss of Norway, and the continuous troubles in the Schleswig and Holstein duchies. However, in the period between 1721 and 1788, there were no substantial conflicts except for the transient threat of a Russian invasion in 1762.

The short war in September 1788 was the direct consequence of the Treaty of Tsarskoye Selo in 1773 with Russia, in which the kingdom of Denmark-Norway had committed itself to assistance with 12,000 men, six ships of the line, and three frigates if Russia were attacked. The short war between Denmark and Sweden was part of the Russian-Swedish war between June 1788 and August 1790 and was one out of three simultaneous wars in Europe, the other two being the Russian-Turkish war [1787-1792] and the Austrian-Turkish war [1788-1791].

The initiative for the Russian-Swedish war came from Sweden’s King Gustave III who thought that an attack on St. Petersburg would destabilize the Russian empire and distract it from its military emphasis on the south against the Ottoman empire. Gustave III took the initiative for purely political reasons. Although an autocrat since 1772, he could not start a war without permission of the parliament, but the unpopular king counted on support from the opposition. His objective was vague, and one might ask why he started the war as the past had clearly shown that a small country like Sweden was never a match for a big empire like Russia.

Gustave III counted on support from Great Britain, the Dutch Republic, and Prussia, but to no avail. Although these European powers had observed the successful territorial gains by Russia in Ukraine and Crimea with growing discomfort, Gustave III was mistaken in expecting them to help Sweden. War was far from popular, even less so in the eastern part of Sweden (Finland). Even senior military leaders voiced their opposition to the plans to go to war. Especially amongst the officers of the army, unrest spread widely.

In 1788, a head tailor of the Royal Swedish Opera received an order to sew a number of Russian military uniforms that later were used in an exchange of gunfire at Puumala, a Swedish outpost on the Russian-Swedish border, on 27 June 1788. The staged attack, which caused outrage in Stockholm, was to convince the parliament and to provide Gustav with an excuse to declare a “defensive war” on Russia. Nowadays, we call such an event ‘a false flag operation’. This event was important since Gustave III did not have the constitutional right to start an offensive war, and the parliament had already made clear that its acceptance would not be forthcoming. The Swedes initially planned a naval assault on St. Petersburg. One Swedish army was to advance through Finland; a second army, accompanied by the Swedish coastal flotilla, was to advance

along the Finnish coast into the Gulf of Finland. A third army sailed with the Swedish battlefleet in order to land at Oranienbaum to advance on St. Petersburg. The goal was to instigate a regime change in Russia and depose Empress Catherine II [1].

The Swedish open sea fleet sailed from Karlskrona on 9 June 1788 and met a Russian naval squadron near the Estonian west coast. After chasing the Russians down, they demanded that the Russians render honours to the Swedes, hoping for a refusal. The Russian rear-admiral was so diplomatic as to render honors to the Swedish commander but not to the Swedish flag; for this, Russia had an exemption from previous treaties. In this way, he managed to defuse the threatening situation and continue towards Copenhagen. The Swedes had lost their chance to provoke the Russians into war.

However, on 7 July the Swedish fleet was notified that a state of war with Russia was in effect, and on 8 July it surprised two unprepared Russian frigates which were promptly captured together with their crew of 450 men. Subsequently, the Swedish fleet met a Russian fleet and fought a naval engagement in the battle of Hogland in which neither side managed to gain advantage. Upon return to the naval support base Sveaborg to repair and resupply the Swedish fleet, it was discovered that Sveaborg had been stocked only with the coastal fleet in mind, which amongst other things meant that it did not store ammunition for the heavy cannons of the open sea fleet and lacked suitable stocks of equipment required to repair large sailing ships.

The coastal fleet's Stockholm squadron departed for Finland on 25 June, carrying over 9,000 troops. It arrived in Sveaborg on 2 July and started constructing an encampment near Helsinki. The coastal fleet's Sveaborg squadron had been ready for action since mid-June. On 26 July, it departed for Frederikshamn, carrying 6,000 men, while a unit of 4,000 men advanced on land. The Swedish coastal fleet clashed briefly with a group of Russian small ships outside Frederikshamn on 28 July and forced them to sail within the protection of the fortifications.

Initial Swedish landing attempts began on 2 August, but bad weather prevented the main force from landing, and a Russian counterattack forced the 300-man Swedish landing party to return to its ships. On 3 August, landings were successful, some 10 kilometers southeast of the town, and by the evening Swedish forces were advancing towards Frederikshamn. However, strong Russian resistance in the early hours of 4 August convinced the Swedish landing force to return to its ships. Attempts to swiftly capture Frederikshamn ended in total failure for several reasons, one of the most glaring being the increasing unrest against the king amongst the officers.

Attempts by the Savolax brigade of 1,700 men to storm Nyslott (Savonlinna, Finland) by surprise on 2 July ended in a siege that, given the besiegers' total lack of siege artillery, caused the Swedish advance to bog down. The siege had to be abandoned on 21 August. A Swedish army of 4,000 men were to support the coastal fleet's capture of Frederikshamn and crossed the border on 18 July, reaching its staging ground just north of Frederikshamn on 20 July. When the failure at Frederikshamn became apparent, the Swedish troops were pulled back to the border. The war being perceived as illegal because it did not have the support of the parliament, along with its lack of success, contributed to rising unrest.

On 9 August, a group of officers pleaded for peace with Russia. King Gustav III's position, surrounded by rebellious officers, was greatly improved when news of a threat of war from Denmark-Norway became known, and he could head back to Sweden on 25 August without being accused of deserting his troops [1].

During 1787, Gustave III had – completely unexpectedly – visited Copenhagen to talk about the Danish-Russian alliance that had existed since 1773. Danish diplomats thus became aware of potentially adverse plans of Sweden against Russia. Because Sweden was militarily stronger than Denmark and was interested in Norway, the alliance with Russia was appreciated because it kept Swedish troops in the eastern Baltic area and Finland. During the summer of 1788, the Danish crown prince travelled to Norway to strengthen the alliance within the Denmark-Norway kingdom. Several large military parades were planned in Frederikstad and Trondheim. He was accompanied by general Count Carl von Hesse.

It was already known that Sweden wanted Norway, and military preparations were made, but timely defensive measures by Denmark had temporarily deterred a potential invasion [3]. After a month of travelling, they heard that Gustave III had attacked Russia. In a letter to the experienced minister of foreign affairs Bernstorff, Carl proposed to attack Sweden with the complete Norwegian army of 40,000 men and at sea with the complete Danish-Norwegian fleet [4,5]. Bernstorff was well aware of the opposition of Great Britain and Prussia against a military conflict in the Scandinavian area. Therefore, he proposed to form a Russian auxiliary corps of 10,000 Norwegian soldiers. In this way, there would not be a direct Danish-Swedish conflict. The soldiers were to support Russia.

Carl von Hesse was in a hurry. He had to make a battle plan for his Russian auxiliary corps but was shocked by the deplorable state of his troops. Despite preparations during the preceding year, there was a shortage of almost everything including basics such as clothing, arms, ammunition, and food. His plan followed 4 lines of attack. First, a naval flotilla would operate alongside the west coast of Sweden between Helsingborg and Frederikstad under command of rear-admiral Arenfeldt. Second, major-general von Krogh would attack the Swedish region Jämtland from the Norwegian region Trøndelag with 1,650 men and would spread the rumor that their target was Stockholm itself. The third line of attack would come from the small city of Kongsvinger towards Swedish Karlstad. The fourth and main attack would cross the Iddefjord to Sweden and try to conquer Strömstad and Uddevalla and possibly Göteborg as winter quarters if the conflict still continued. Carl von Hesse had 10,500 men for this main attack.

Norwegian soldiers, clothing, food, and weapons

In 1788, the Norwegian army consisted of professional soldiers and officers and conscripts. The professional soldiers were organized in two regiments, one from Sønnafjells and one from Nordafjells. Apart from these there were professional garrison companies of 150 men for cities such as Bergen, Trondheim, Kristiansand, Kongsvinger and Fredriksvern.

The artillery was composed of professionals. The large majority of the soldiers during the main attack were conscripts from small rural villages and remote areas. They were registered as conscripts for 14 years and were in active service for 15 days each year. The formal conscription did not involve individuals but farms. One big farm had to deliver one conscript, two smaller farms also one conscript, and 4 small farms could deliver one conscript together.

The Akershus National Regiment

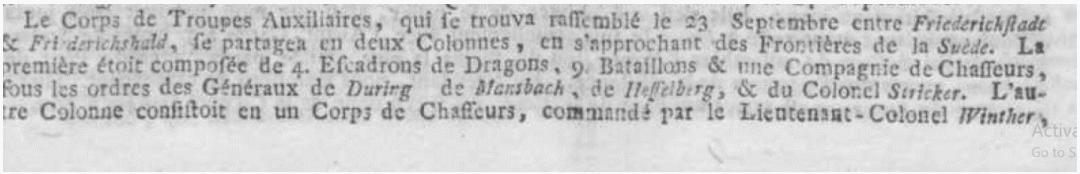
Norwegian soldiers wore a red woolen coat over a waistcoat with buttons, with a shirt below. On their heads, they had a two-sided felt hat. Over light trousers, they wore high boots with legs up to the thigh. The uniform for the parade was the same as for the battlefield. Conscripts were supposed to keep the same uniform for two years. During the campaign, it became clear during long marches on muddy roads and in heavy autumn rains that the boots were of poor quality. Although the woolen clothes gave warmth even when wet, the wear and tear was high.

As the centuries of plundering to feed soldiers were long ago, an organization was required to feed the army. According to a predefined nutritional guideline, every soldier should receive a daily ration of 1 ounce of butter, 1.5 ounces of pork meat, half an ounce of tobacco, and 10 fluid ounces of liquor. Every eighth day, he should receive 5 herrings, one quart of peas, one quart of porridge, one pound of cheese, one pound of salted beef, and salt. Although bread and beer are not mentioned, these remained important elements of a soldier's daily diet. This forage had to be organized by tradesmen who accompanied the army. A soldier received 8 schillings per day; 1.4 pounds of bread or half a pound of meat cost 2 shillings.

Every soldier had a smoothbore rifle or musket with a snaphance for firing, and a bayonet with a total weight of 5 kg. Shots were fired at a maximum rate of 3 per minute by experienced soldiers but were only effective up to a distance of 100 meters. The artillery used medium-sized 6-pound cannons firing iron balls. Smaller and more flexible were so-called amusettes, small flexible cannons firing iron balls of one pound.

Carl Alexander von Stricker was the commander of the 5th infantry brigade with 3 battalions totalling 1,180 men [3].

The summer of 1788 had been very warm, but the autumn was rainy. On 23 September, the 'Russian auxiliary army' was ready. The headquarters and main forces moved from Frederikstad to the farm Ystehede at the Norwegian side of the Iddefjord where the night was spent. Although soaking wet, tired, and hungry, the vanguard of the main force crossed the Iddefjord during the night. In the evening of 24 September, the whole army had crossed to Swedish Krogstrand [3].



Le Corps de Troupes Auxiliaires, qui ſe trouva raſſemblé le 23 Septembre entre *Friederichſtadt* & *Friederichshald*, ſe partagea en deux Colonnes, en s'approchant des Frontières de la *Suède*. La première étoit compoſée de 4. Eſcadrons de Dragons, 9. Bataillons & une Compagnie de Chaſſeurs, ſous les ordres des Généraux de *During* de *Mansbach*, de *Heſſelberg*, & du Colonel *Stricker*. L'autre Colonne conſiſtoit en un Corps de Chaſſeurs, commandé par le Lieutenant-Colonel *Winther*,

The start of the campaign on 23 September 1788 was published in foreign newspapers [8]

Carl von Hesse knew that the Swedish commander Hierta had encamped his troops in Svinesund. These would be attacked by Norwegian soldiers from the north over a pontoon bridge to keep them engaged while the main force was further south and could cut off Hierta's withdrawal. But there were no Swedish soldiers in Svinesund, and Carl von Hesse could move southwards without meeting resistance until he reached Vättland where Swedish soldiers were encountered near the Skee church. The Swedish commander colonel Tranefeldt positioned his few soldiers to be clearly visible, assuming that the Norwegians expected many more lines behind the visible one. To buy more time, Tranefeldt sent an officer forward to the Norwegian headquarters to ask for an explanation for the presence of Norwegian soldiers on Swedish territory.

Carl von Hesse gave him the preprinted declaration about the troops as an 'auxiliary Russian corps'. But he also demanded that the Swedes immediately surrender their troops, given the Norwegian numerical superiority. However, a heavy rain completely prevented an attack as everything, including the gun powder, was soaked. Taking advantage of this, the Swedish commander sent another officer to ask for a clarification of some points in the Norwegian declaration. After some exchanges to and fro, von Hesse lost his patience, saying that he would attack if they did not surrender.

The Swedes withdrew southwards without a fight. The first potential hurdle were old fortifications north of Kvistrum. But to the surprise of the Norwegians, they were able to simply pass them and the river and occupy the village at the end of September. Carl von Hesse concluded that they had given up Kvistrum and moved further to the south in the direction of Uddevalla. But then in the local inn, two Norwegian officers found a torn-up letter that the

Swedish colonel Tranefeldt had received from general Hierta while staying in the inn. They pieced together the letter; it not only gave information about the Swedish troops in Kvistrum but also indicated that the Sweden's King Gustave III was in Karlstad and on his way to Göteborg to boost the morale of the local Swedish army there.

Carl von Hesse was not too alarmed and was hoping that Tranefeldt had already withdrawn further south because no resistance had been experienced. Suddenly, colonel Tranefeldt showed up at the Norwegian headquarters. Instead of taking him prisoner, Carl von Hesse talked to him during the afternoon and let him go after advising him to surrender. He probably assumed that the Swedish troops would withdraw to the south again, given the fact that they had made no effort to use the existing fortifications.

Swedish defense lines in the center of the picture [A-D] were circumvented and encicled by Danish-Norwegian troops

However, the Swedish corps had not used the fortifications north of the bridge over the river and the old entrenchment south of the bridge but had made a defense line with 900 men and 6 small cannons around the road near a pass, 1 kilometer further to the south. With two battalions, the Norwegians rapidly encircled this Swedish point of resistance while the dragoons were about to attack alongside the road.

At 1700 hours, the Norwegian artillery opened fire, but their small cannons caused little damage. After a Swedish salvo killing a few Norwegian soldiers, the Norwegians responded with musket fire. After a battle of approximately one hour, the encircled Swedish troops asked for a cease fire and surrendered. Swedish officers were instructed to come to the inn in Kvistrum where they received compliments for their bravery. If they swore not to take up arms against Denmark-

Norway or Russia, they were free to go home. The battle of Kvistrum was a small one. Despite the participation of approximately 8,000 soldiers, only 4 Norwegians and 5 Swedish soldiers were killed. This received attention from European newspapers. The easy surrender by the Swedish troops was later investigated by a military research committee [6].

Dauoiſes, de beaucoup ſupérieures aux Forces, qu'on y a raſſemblées dans le premier moment, y ont d'abord pénétré fort avant; & nous avons reçu la fâcheuſe Nouvelle, qu'un Détachement de 650. Hommes, qui étoit poſté au Pont de *Quiſtrum*, ſous les ordres du Colonel de *Tranefeldt*, a été obligé à ſe rendre Priſonnier de Guerre au Prince de *Heſſe*, après un Combat, dans lequel il y a eu quelques tués de part & d'autre. Cependant ce Prince a rendu le témoignage le plus honorable à la valeur de nos Troupes; &, en laiſſant l'épée aux Officiers, il a fait remettre tous les Priſonniers en liberté, à condition de ne plus ſervir dans la Guerre préſente, ni contre le *Danemarc*, ni contre la *Ruſſie*. Malgré l'eſpoir, que donnent les Négociations appuyées par deux Puiſſances ... prêtes à s'armer pour la *Suède*, celle-ci

Nouvelles extraordinaires de divers endroits of 31 October 1788 [5]

Battle at Kvistrum

In the meantime, the British ambassador contacted Gustave III in Karlstad to emphasize that Britain did not want a Scandinavian conflict and would support Sweden. The important free trade with the Baltic Sea area would be endangered if the Russian position were strengthened at the expense of the Swedish one. Prussia and the Dutch Republic endorsed this. Moreover, the fear that Prussia might want to invade Holstein caused a tense atmosphere in Denmark. Gustave III

had hoped to win the battle against Norway and take this kingdom from Denmark to compensate for his defeat in Finland and hurried to the south towards Göteborg. On 1 October, the Norwegian army occupied Uddevalla without meeting resistance.

On 4 October, Gustave III arrived in Göteborg which inspired the defenders of the town who heard that Britain and Prussia would support Sweden. One day earlier, Carl von Hesse received a letter from the British ambassador warning him about this threat to Denmark. The ambassador offered him to mediate a cease fire, an offer which Carl denied. For the time being, the Norwegian army moved further towards Göteborg, reaching Bohus castle and the town Kungälv as its most southern point on 8 October. As the fortifications of Göteborg were in a very poor state and the garrison was small, it might have been easy to conquer despite the absence of siege artillery. However, within a week, the garrison increased from 800 to 6,000 men, and in the days thereafter a cease fire on land followed negotiations between both countries under British pressure.

As the cease fire did not include the navy, 25 Norwegian transport ships for foraging in Uddevalla were captured by Sweden, as were two outgoing ships with loot from Kvistrum. On 19 October, the Norwegians withdrew to the north from Kungälv. Rain kept coming down in large quantities during the weeks of withdrawal. Finally, the army crossed the Svinesund river on 12 november. Although received with salute shots and cheers in the Norwegian town of Halden, there were few reasons for a celebration. Apart from an easy campaign and a battle with few human losses, no Swedish territory was acquired, and up to 1,500 Norwegian soldiers became ill and died on the way back due to the bad weather and maybe due to the poor clothing and the unbalanced diet or food shortages. The origin of the Norwegian name 'Tyttebærkrigen' or 'Cranberry war' is unclear. It has been explained by the color of the uniforms as well as by the suggestion that hungry soldiers ate them because they did not have enough to eat.

Elsewhere, the term 'Theatre War' is used. The term 'war theatre' was widely used for a battlefield in past centuries; possibly, the switching of words in the term 'theatre war' was a way to ridicule a battle with 8,000 soldiers and fewer than 10 killed. After the cease fire, a formal peace treaty was signed on 9 July 1789; the Russian-Swedish war continued until 1790.

References

1. Russo-Swedish war. Russo-Swedish War (1788–1790) - Wikipedia
2. Oakley, Stewart P. *War and Peace in the Baltic, 1560-1790, pp.156-157*. London, New York: Routledge, 1992.
3. Blangstrup C. Begivenhederne i Norden i efteraaret 1788. En historisk Skitse. Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag (F. Hegel & Søn). Copenhagen, 1889.
4. Apenes, Georg & Tore Dyrhaug: *Tyttebærkrigen: det norske felttog i Sverige 1788.* 1988, ISBN 82-03-15519-7.
5. Store Norske Leksikon. Tyttebærkrigen – Store norske leksikon (snl.no)
6. Anonymous. *Nouvelles extraordinaires de divers endroits. 31 October 1788.*
7. Anonymous. *Nouvelles extraordinaires de divers endroits. 27 January 1789.*
8. Anonymous. *Supplement aux Nouvelles extraordinaires de divers endroits. 21 October 1788.*

CHAPTER 12

The fourth interbellum [1789-1801]

Despite the country's declining political power, the economy of Denmark grew strongly during the last decades of the 18th century [1]. The ambitions to dominate in the Baltic Sea had long been given up, and after the loss of southern Sweden, it was no longer possible to close the Sound completely between Elsinore and Helsingborg. But the problems with Gottorf were solved, Sweden was weak and controlled by the alliance with Russia, and Denmark was kept out of the War of the Austrian Succession and the Seven Years' War. This long period without wars fed the economic expansion. Although Denmark did not have commodities or other natural resources apart from agriculture, it had a large merchant fleet and a relatively strong navy.

Because it was located in the periphery of Europe, it was somewhat easier to stay out of the wars occurring so frequently in Europe's center, notably in the German states, Austria, Poland, and France. Moreover, for a weak power it makes sense to have a low profile while others fight. Of course, any country with a large merchant fleet inevitably had to deal with a country such as Great Britain. The Danish navy was strong and professional but not a match for the navies of the great powers Britain and France because of its smaller size.

For Denmark, the second part of the eighteenth century is known as 'The Period of Flourishing Trade', referring to the fact that international trade and navigation thrived under the neutral Danish flag [1]. First, it meant taking over trade that warring states were no longer able to conduct themselves. Second, it meant importation of overseas products on behalf of the countries at war prior to re-exportation to a European market. The Danish government adhered to a principle of neutrality ('free ship/free cargo'), yet in practice it realized the necessity of bowing to superior powers, especially the British naval power.

Thus, during the Seven Years' War, the Danish state had to abide by the British 'Rule of 1756' that neutral ships were not allowed to call on colonial harbors where they would not be allowed in peacetime. However, during the American War of Independence, when Britain was in an overstretched situation, a more aggressive policy of neutrality was carried out. During the last decade of the 18th century, enormous amounts of money were earned in the trade in Bengal [2] and the Dutch-Indies [3]. This increasinly dismayed Great Britain. Henceforth, Russia took the initiative in 1780 to create a league of armed neutrality with Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Portugal to protect the shipping of all neutral countries. Denmark feared that this might provoke Britain and would certainly prevent the Danish state from selfishly pursuing its own commerce and shipping interests. Nonetheless, as an ally of Russia, it had to join. However, the government used the league to make Britain agree on a convention on contraband favoring the Danish state at the expense of Russia and Sweden, and moreover, it informed the British government that it had only joined the league reluctantly and that it would never invoke the league in case of future Anglo-Danish trade and maritime disputes [1].

After the American War of Independence, however, during which Denmark had introduced the convoy system, Britain followed a more aggressive approach towards Danish ships and convoys. The minister of foreign affairs Andreas Peter von Bernstorff was aware of this development but counted on diplomacy to handle individual events [4]. Like the minister of finance Schimmelmann, his focus was on the flourishing trade as long as no conflicts arose with Great Britain or France. The convoy system itself was not the problem as this was easily explained by the high number of privateers on merchant routes. The problem was that the British navy demanded unopposed access to Danish ships, and the crown prince and regent considered this a disgrace and a violation of the rights of the Danish crown [4].

During this prosperous era, there were several important socio-economic developments regarding land and agricultural reforms and other changes such as a reform of the school system. However, the tension between the Danish and German political factions intensified. Denmark-Norway was in fact a composite state in which there was friction between the Danes and less prosperous Norwegians. At the Danish court, German was the working language. Most officers in the army were born in one of the German member states of the Holy Roman Empire, and the king himself was of the house of Oldenburg. All letters and reports from the three brothers Stricker were in German, although at least one later report from Carl Alexander was written in Danish [but in fact a translated summary by Ezechias Heinrich of the Russian canpaign of 1769 at Cochzim]. Several high ranking Danish officials never learned the Danish language, such as minister of foreign affairs Johann Hartwig Ernst von Bernstorff and artillery general von Huth.

The difference between a Danish and a German faction, or the 'reformers' and their opposition, was particularly evident in the debates regarding of socio-economic matters like reforms of the school system and agricultural system. The *de facto* ruler at the Danish court was Crown Prince Regent Frederick. Among his closest advisers were Ernst Schimmelmann, finance minister, and foreign affairs minister Andreas Peter Bernstorff. Johan Ludvig Reventlow's older brother was head of the exchequer; Johan Ludvig Reventlow drafted the most reforms. Together, these advisers and their wives formed the 'reform circle' [5]. The friction between the Danish and German political factions would increase during the subsequent decades until it culminated in the two Danish-German wars of 1848-1851 and 1864.

What happened to the Stricker brothers' careers during this period? Johan Christian was lieutenant-colonel and later colonel of infantry in the King's Life Regiment and retired in 1800. Per the population census of 1787 and 1801, he lived in the Rosenborg quarter of Copenhagen [11]. His brother Carl Alexander became major-general and commander of the 1st Akershus Regiment in March 1789 after a reform of the Danish-Norwegian army following the Theatre War.

Carl Alexander moved back to Kristiania where he lived in the old city center. He was extremely interested in astronomy and built his own observatory. Some anecdotes about him can be found in the writings of Norwegian socialite and author Conradine Dunker [1780-1866]. She was born in Kristiania and wrote an interesting book about her youth there [6].

Kristiania [Oslo] in the last decade of the 18th century. In the background, the Akershus fortress

Conradine Dunker describes one of the first parties she attended during her youth in Kristiania:

"Ball in Mangelsgaarden 1796

Bielefeldt had an inheritance from his father-in-law doctor Gesenius. He came back from Copenhagen to compete with Bernt Anker in putting on glittering hospitality and balls. He had bought the estate of general Mangelens, which was really a beautiful mansion. The ball was given because of the engagement of the young Niels Anker to the only daughter of his excellence general Wackenitz.

We arrived there by carriage and had to stay a long time in the yard because of the many other long carriages. Many facades were covered by colored lights. At that time, I was just 16 years old, and all the luxury I saw was new to me. But there must be something Mohammedan in my character, because such things never awakened a sense of admiration in me. However, what attracted my attention and caught my eye was visible on the chest of an old, thin, honorable man in the uniform of a general. It was the Russian Order of St. George. There were many blue and white medals, sashes and stars, but only the Order of St. George caught my attention. Battle of Minden, brave Frenchmen, Chevalier d'Eon, Duke de Broglie, Nivernais, I did not see it. The old man was general Stricker. I was staring at him and the Order of St. George when the music started. A young officer came to invite me for the first dance. At the same time a tall lady smiled at me and patted me lightly on the cheek and said: 'Do you wish to dance with my son, you hussy?'. This lady was the wife of general Stricker of whom they said that she often drank too much."

That this seems to be more than rumor follows from Conradine's observation during the dinner after dancing:

"... At my other side I had chamberlain Kaalund who was engaged to the youngest Miss Stricker. Frederik Schmidt did not like him and used to call him Kaalhund. In front of me sat Jesse Anker who had her mother Mrs. Stricker beside her at the table. He served her wine, and she served herself even more while she got more and more excited and talked too much about uncomfortable things."*

MANGELSGAARDEN.

Conradine Birgitte Dunker [1780-1866]

*A nickname meaning 'cabbage dog' [Kaalhund'], sounding the same as the real name Kaalund.

Coradine Dunker was a so-called socialite. She had a huge social network in Norway and was very influential. Fourteen years later, she wrote of the old general when she was around 30 years old:

"... At that time, there were still some of the original inhabitants. Such as general Stricker, an amiable man of high age, who lived in the old town in the house that father built. I saw him when I visited his daughter. He received the Russian Order of St. George. He amuses himself by growing potatoes, and I did not know whether to laugh or cry when I heard his servant say: 'Herr General, here is a man who wants to buy a quarter bushel potatoes.' ..."

If his main hobby was astronomy, growing potatoes may have had other reasons. According to Gulstad, he may have preferred the garden over the house as his wife was quite dominant and often drank too much alcohol [7]. Interestingly, his brother Ezechias too had a garden at Kronborg where he grew his own vegetables. Given the relative poverty during their youth and the continuous lack of resources during their military campaigns, they might have learned early how to feed themselves under difficult circumstances.

During this period, also the youngest brother Ezechias Heinrich Stricker lived in Kristania. Conradine Dunker remembers the following from her youth:

"... Maybe you can remember, dear brother, a general Stricker, brother of the one mentioned above. He lived in Frau Münch's garden, behind us, with whose children we sometimes played. I was eight years old then, Henry was six, and you were four. I do not know why you were at the Strickers with us. He had come with his family from Rendsburg and became commander of the artillery corps in Kristiania. The children spoke half German and half Danish, but we understood each other well. In this family, there was also a Miss Lobedantz who did not understand Danish. Near the Akershus fortress was a big garden where the town hall now stands. This garden was full of trees with delicious fruits, apples, pears, plums, and cherries. It was at the disposal of the artillery, and we went there with the Stricker children to fill our stomachs and pockets with those wonderful fruits."

The Stricker children with whom Conradine played in 1788, when she was eight years old, must have been one or more of the following [8]: Anna Louise [1774-1864], Margrethe Catharine [1777-1838], Alexander Friederich [1779-1805], and Charlotte Elisabeth [1782-1869]. At that time, Conradine Dunker was probably not aware of the fact that Miss Lobedantz was the mother of a natural son of the artillery commander who grew up with the name Christian Hendrik Delv but whose name was changed into 'Stricker' in 1811 [8]. Ezechias Heinrich was commander of the artillery corps in Kristiania and served under general von Huth. In April 1792, he became colonel and commander of Frederiksstad (picture below). Shortly thereafter in December 1793, Ezechias Heinrich moved to Kronborg castle as its new commander [9,10].

Frederiksstad

Kronborg castle

References

1. Feldbæk O. Eighteenth-Century Danish Neutrality. Its Diplomacy, Economics and Law. Scand J History 1983;8:1.
2. Feldbæk O. The Danish trade in Bengal 1777-1808. An interim account. Scand Economic History Rev 1964;12:26-60.
3. Feldbæk O. Dutch Batavia trade via Copenhagen 1795-1807. A study of colonial trade and neutrality. Scand Economic History Rev. 1973;21:43-75.
4. Feldbæk O. The battle of Copenhagen 1801. Pen & Swords Books Limited. Barnsley, 2002.
5. Dyrmann K. Political sociability at the Brahetrolleborg estate in Denmark, 1789-1790. Scand J History 2021;46:510-30.
6. Dunker CB. Gamle Dage: Erindringer og Tidsbilleder. 1871.
7. Gulstad AFK. Erindringer om familien Gulstad. https://slaegtsbibliotek.dk/
8. Stricker BHC, Stricker WFO. History and family tree of the Dutch-Danish family Stricker/Stucker. https://slaegtsbibliotek.dk/.
9. Hirsch JCW, Hirsch K. Fortegnelse over danske og norske officerer med flere fra 1648-1814 samlet og udarbejdet fra 1888-1907 af oberstløjtnant J.C.W. Hirsch og premierløjtnant Kay Hirsch. National Archives, Copenhagen.
10. Liebe PI, Borgstrøm E. Biografiske oplysninger om faste Artilleriofficerer af Linien tjenstgørende i perioden 1764 til 1889 i Danmark, i Holsten (indtil 1864) og i Norge (indtil 1814). Hærens Arkiv. Bind 4. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
11. Anonymous. Population censuses 1787 and 1801. Dansk Demografisk Database. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.

CHAPTER 13

The Danish-English wars of 1801 and 1807-1814

Of the numerous conflicts between Sweden and Denmark-Norway during the preceding centuries, the Kalmar war [1611-1613] was a sort of turning point. It was the last war in which Sweden was defeated. Thereafter, not every war was a success for Sweden but in most subsequent conflicts, Denmark gradually lost its power. With its abundance of iron, Sweden had an important resource for a weapons industry which Denmark missed. Denmark had a predominantly agricultural structure but earned significant money from the customs tolls charged to ships passing through the Sound with its 1.7 million ships passages between 1497 and 1857 [1]. The alternative route via the Great Belt was more dangerous and took more time. With the exploding sea trade between the western European countries and the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea, the Sound toll was the main source of income for the Danish kingdom. Of the British, French, Dutch and other passages, 50 percent were from the Dutch Republic. Tolls had to be paid in the harbour of Elsinore, often by more than 100 ships per day, near the entrance of the Sound. This entrance was guarded by the powerful fortress of Kronborg. After the Danish loss of Helsingborg, Sweden had tried to obtain half of the tolls or a toll-free passage on several occasions but without much success.

But during the 18th century, another highly important economic resource came forward: its merchant fleet. During the period 1721-1801, Denmark was not involved in a war with the exception of the small Theatre War in 1788. During most of this period, Russia protected Denmark against the eager wish of Sweden to take Norway, and the other large powers such as Britain and the Dutch Republic did not want a Scandinavian war. In this politically quiet period, trade and shipping under the Danish flag experienced a boom such as had never been seen before while the Danish government kept a very low profile [2].

Of course, there were ups and downs. For instance, during the Seven Years' War, Britain was in a strong military position and able to set very restrictive limits on how Danish merchants and ship owners could make the most of what was then a highly profitable international trade. But during the American War of Independence, Britain had been overstretched, and Denmark had been able to press Britain into making concessions. During the revolutionary wars in 1793, trade and shipping under the Danish flag was carried out under great risk but with huge profits [2]. Between 1772 and 1807, the Asiatic trade with Denmark alone amounted to 135 million rigsdalers while the income of the kingdom of Denmark itself was only 6 million in 1772 and 9 million in 1800 [2]. Many Danish ships or foreign ships under Danish flag carried cargo but were owned by people from belligerent countries. The latter was a recipe for trouble.

While there was some sort of balance in naval power between Britain and Denmark around 1600, in 1801 the British navy had almost 200 ships of the line and strongly outnumbered the Danish one. Feldbæk compared the relationship between a large power like Britain and a small one like

Denmark with an orbital system in which the gravity of the large one changed with the political situation [2]. The freedom of the small power fluctuated accordingly. During the century, Danish politics struggled with the question of how to address the potential risks arising from their large trade volume. But economic interests prevailed. Where problems arose with Britain, an approach of defensive neutrality was followed. This meant that Denmark maintained the principle of complete freedom without subjecting it to discussion and regulation but then quietly dropped it when a conflict made that necessary. This usually worked well because Britain was often permissive out of fear of forcing Denmark into the French camp, and there was no formal international legislation. The 'Mare Liberum' work by Hugo de Grotius, written centuries earlier, was in support of free trade [3].

But the great powers could do what they wanted. Therefore, minister of foreign affairs A.F. Bernstorff discreetly communicated to the traders that no help could be expected if things went wrong. To stay away from dangerous political waters, Denmark had kept out of alliances with other neutral countries with similar problems. But in 1797, the very experienced A.F. Bernstorff died. His successor and son Christian Bernstorff was an experienced diplomat but had less influence on Crown Prince Frederick who was the *de facto* regent in place of his insane father King Christian VII.

1798-1800

After Bernstorff senior died, there was a shift in policy. Moreover, the shipping convoy system was reintroduced; it had worked well during the days of the American War of Independence [2]. Although it was communicated that this was done against French and North African raiders in the Mediterranean, it was clear to Britain what the intent was. The convoy system itself was not the problem to the British navy, rather it was the fact that Danish war ships refused to allow British officers to board the Danish merchant ships and check their contents. Under pressure of the traders and ship-owners with support from minister of finance Schimmelmann, and thanks to the importance of the honor of Denmark for the crown prince, this new convoy policy was more offensive than the earlier ones. But it seemed to work well after a large convoy from Java was successfully brought to Copenhagen in 1798.

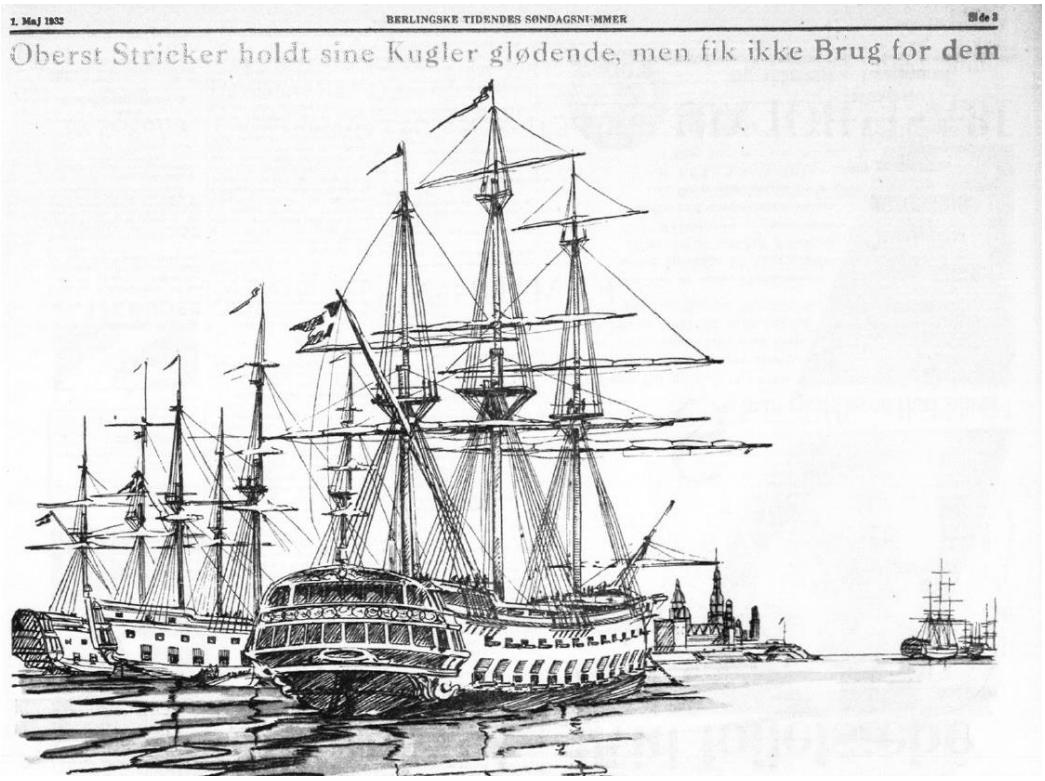
But it was clear that it was just a matter of time before the first conflict would take place. Indeed, on 2 December 1798, the Danish frigate 'Triton' retook a merchant ship from British privateers near Gibraltar. This led to diplomatic disputes but had no further consequences. After a second incident in December 1799 in Gibraltar with the Danish frigate 'Havfrue' where 2 British sailors were wounded, similarly nothing happened. But in July 1800 things went wrong. The Danish frigate 'Freya', guiding a convoy of six merchant ships from Kristiansand to the Mediterranean, was halted in the English channel by 4 British frigates. After a battle of half an hour and 5 dead and 9 wounded on both sides, captain Krabbe had to strike the Danish flag [2]. This time, Britain decided to send a diplomat with an ultimatum to cease the convoys for now until some sort of agreement with the Danes could be reached. The ultimatum was not too aggressive because

Britain was almost isolated after a French victory over Austria. Also, the British might have got wind of the secret negotiations about the League of Armed Neutrality which Denmark asked Russia to implement after the 'Havfrue' incident. On 4 August, ambassador Lord Whitworth embarked with the ultimatum for Copenhagen. A British naval squadron would accompany his visit.

On a fair day in August 1800, a courier on horse galloped over the bridge to the Kronborg fortress and asked to see commander Colonel Ezechias Heinrich von Stricker. Denmark was in a relatively quiet period, and most people were unaware of the growing political tensions. There were large numbers of trading ships, and many foreign captains were coming and going in the Sound toll office in Elsinore. The courier gave Stricker a sealed envelope from the crown prince and went away. Despite regular mail contact, this urgent delivery was ominous. In his letter, dated 10 August, the crown prince put three questions. First, to what extent was he able to secure the fortress against an unexpected assault? Second, whether and how could he prevent the passage of the Sound by an enemy naval force if he had the cooperation of a Danish naval squadron? Third, could he please provide an overview of all current shortcomings of the fortress and its garrison? [4].

During the preceding century, Kronborg had been enlarged and strongly reinforced. The strength of the walls and crownwork was completely up to standard, and the batteries were well equipped with modern and powerful artillery. But as the heavy 36-pound cannons had a maximum reach of around 1,500 meters, they could not cover the narrowest passage of the Sound of 4 kilometers [2]. Therefore, everybody knew that the fortress alone could not prevent the passage of an enemy fleet unless it collaborated closely with a strong Danish naval squadron. As a powerful unsinkable anchor point at the end of a naval defense line, the fortress was of huge importance, and it was a very important and difficult-to-destroy outpost for the government in Copenhagen keeping an eye on the strength and movements of an enemy.

Within a week, colonel Stricker gave a detailed answer to all questions. They made clear that there were still many shortcomings. A week later, in the afternoon of 17 August, a battalion of 8 companies musketeers of the Sjælland Infantry Regiment arrived from Copenhagen. On the same day, 100 artillerymen arrived, as well as a squadron hussars. The next day, another 8 companies musketeers of Prince Frederick's Regiment arrived. Furthermore, the Sjælland Jäger Corps – which was already in Elsinore – was encamped in the surroundings of the fortress together with hussars as an extra defense against enemy landing troops. While during peacetime most cannons were stored, the large majority of the batteries were now placed on their undercarriages. Notably, the sea batteries 5-10, the crownwork, the Dronningen bastion with 3 cannons, the North bastion with 3 cannons, and the Princess bastion with 4 cannons. At the same time, Stricker negotiated with the magistrate of Elsinore about the immediate delivery of enough forage, such as butter, cheese, beer, brandy, and tobacco. Flour was already present in huge quantities, and in the cellars a large oven produced enough bread for the complete garrison [4].



An artist's rendition of war ships opposite the Kronborg fortress on 20 August 1800 [4]

On 20 August, guards reported the appearance of a large British fleet at the entrance of the harbor; there were 9 ships of the line, 5 gun brigs, and 4 bomb vessels. This was the fleet of admiral Dickson which was kept under continuous surveillance by coast guards which immediately reported everything to Stricker since they anchored a few kilometers away at Hammermøllen.

Couriers on horse travelled to and from Copenhagen several times per day with details about the fleet's positions. The main British force consisted of the Monarch (74 cannons), Ardent (64 cannons), Polyphemus (64 cannons), Vetran (64 cannons), Glatton (50 cannons), and Isis and Romney (both 50 cannons). They were opposed by 4 Danish war ships forming a defense line 500 meters from the toll office, but these were not a match for the large British fire power. The crown prince immediately sent orders how to counter a landing force. Count Shack, commanding the jäger corps and a squadron hussars, was to throw a small force back into the sea. If the force were too large, they could withdraw to Fredensborg where the rougher terrain was easier to defend.

Several attempts were made by the British to land on the shore with small boats for the purpose of reconnoitering the Danish defences. Guards chased away such armed boat crews during a

bright night near Hammermøllen and Grønnehave. One night, a patrol from the fortress even discovered a boat with armed British marines trying to land on the shore between the Princess bastion and the 13th sea battery. In all these instances, the British troops withdrew without taking up the fight. The tension was high, and many people expected a formal declaration of war. The craftsmen were working almost feverishly day and night to strengthen the batteries with sandbags for which the sand had to come from Grønnehave.

The diplomatic play lasted a long time, and the military authorities were kept completely uninformed about it. None of the almost daily letters sent to Stricker by the crown prince said anything about the political situation. They contained only orders and questions pertaining to the military. Stricker acted on the basis of the likelihood that he would have to counter a large British attack with numerous heavy guns and a landing by marines. An important weapon in a fight carried out with wooden sailing ships were red-hot cannon balls to set the ships on fire. Stricker had too few ovens and immediately ordered the construction of many more near the outer walls. And wherever he could get more artillerymen, he put them to work to produce ammunition for the cannons.

By the end of August, the artillery corps reported to the crown prince that all batteries at Kronborg were ready for action. But the crown prince replied that things were fine for now, which gave Stricker the impression that the political situation was improving. Nevertheless, all fleet movements were precisely registered and reported to Copenhagen almost every hour. Apart from the war ships at the Sound entrance, several English ships cruised further north in the Kattegat, and a large part of the fleet was hidden behind the Swedish peninsula Kullen. Stricker received much help from the Elsinore ferry which patrolled day and night with 4 men north and south of the fortress. A painful incident with some English officers who felt insulted by a Danish guard near Marienlyst while boarding was exploited by the English consul Fenwick to aggravate the problems. But this incident was too trivial and remained without consequences.

On 7 September, the British fleet suddenly lifted anchors at 1530 hours and sailed north. The admiral's ship gave 17 salute shots with its guns, and fortress guns returned the salute. Within a few days everything was back to normal, and the infantry regiments went back to Copenhagen. What actually happened was known only by a few insiders. After the 'Havfrue' incident, Bernstorff had sent an experienced envoy to St. Petersburg to propose that Russia take the initiative to create a 'League of Armed Neutrality', something that had been done earlier by Catherine the Great in 1780. Denmark usually stayed out of such initiatives, but this time it might save the convoy system from British aggression.

Bernstorff was waiting for an answer from St. Petersburg in early September. The British knew this, and on 11 August the skilled diplomat Lord Whitworth landed in Denmark on the 'Andromeda' near Hellebæk and immediately went to Copenhagen to present the ultimatum with the message that a large British battle group was on its way. Indeed, it arrived on 20 August as mentioned above. Denmark had to give up the convoy system by a deadline a few days ahead. Denmark was not completely unprepared. After the 'Freya' incident, the Defense Board had ordered the navy dockyard to prepare the 6 most modern ships of the line with a further 7 to follow. Despite round-the-clock work, only 4 ships opposed the British armada. Moreover, the

wall fortresses around Copenhagen had not been prepared for a war when the ultimatum came. The threatening British bomb vessels could approach Copenhagen without risk. So, Denmark agreed to abandon the convoy system pending further negotiations [2]. The British accepted this, but Bernstorff counted on the assumed probability that such negotiations would have a different outcome as soon as Britain had to deal with not only Denmark but also with the war fleets of Russia, Sweden, and Prussia.

Stricker was ordered to prepare a plan for similar situations in the future. Before he started on that, he demanded with urgency that the old Renaissance castle within the fortress be closed for foreign visitors. He was irritated by the many British captains and officers nosing around as 'tourists' in the fortress. There would be a loss of the entrance fee of 150 rigsdalers, but he considered it very important to keep out future spies [4].

In October 1800, Stricker submitted a detailed plan for reinforcement of the fortress by such means as replacing the wall batteries and increasing their number and adding traverses, covers, and ammunition stores. But no reaction from Copenhagen followed. On 3 December, Stricker was alarmed by the arrival of the British frigates 'Latona' (38 cannons) and 'Desirée' (36 cannons). A short time earlier, another British frigate had anchored, and there were rumors circulating in Elsinore that an expedition was prepared by the British navy similar to the one made in August. As Stricker assumed that the government in Copenhagen was aware of this, he asked for timely reinforcements to be prepared against an assault as he was again as defenseless as before August 1800. Count Shack, too, felt uncomfortable. In a letter to Stricker he wrote: "In this way the situation of the previous night resembles the report from Hamburg where the experience was that the British always attack unexpectedly when possible. Destruction and conquest of Kronborg may be their most important aim next year – even more important than Copenhagen as soon as weather and wind are favorable during the coming long winter nights."

The fact that the secretary of the admiralty never responded made Stricker feel uncomfortable. Therefore, he wrote a long letter with his arguments directed personally to the crown prince. Later in December, he received the following response:

> *"My dear Colonel,*
>
> *I am approving all preparations you need to make. As for the reinforcements, enlargements, and improvements you may wait until next spring when the merchant shipping increases again. In the meantime, I am busy preparing everything you need for the defense of your fortress.*
>
> *Yours faithfully,*
>
> *Frederick"*

Nothing happened during the rest of 1800, as if the government of the country had fallen asleep. This suddenly changed shortly before Christmas. Indeed, Denmark had entered the League of

Armed Neutrality and felt confident that it would not be bothered again by Britain, but that move backfired. Whereas Denmark hoped for support in negotiations from Russia and the other countries, Russia used the league for its own political purpose.

Early in December 1800 came the news that the tsar had placed an embargo on all British ships in Russian ports. The Danish government received a note from the tsar that he foresaw a British attack on the members of the League in the spring of 1801 [2]. Denmark had promised 8 ships of the line and 2 frigates to the league; these ships were being prepared. Bernstorff was in for a shock on 27 December 1800 when the British envoy stated that if Denmark did not agree to leave the league, war would ensue. The Defense Board had hardly made any progress. Copenhagen was still defenseless even though the weaknesses had already been clearly defined in the plan of 1784 [2]. Several months of potentially precious preparation time had been lost.

1801

On 12 February 1801, Stricker finally received orders to enlarge the sea batteries [5]. The magistrate of Elsinore had to give his full support, and craftsmen from Copenhagen would be sent to help accomplish the task of strengthening the fortress. On 6 March, the crown prince visited Kronborg and Elsinore after a meeting with the Swedish king in Helsingborg. He was received with great enthusiasm by the local residents [5]. Under ideal circumstances, Kronborg's defense would combine with wall batteries in Swedish Helsingborg to cover the narrowest part of the Sound, a distance of 4 kilometers. After all, Sweden was also a member of the League of Armed Neutrality. But Denmark had not insisted out of fear that Sweden would demand a reduction of the Sound toll for Swedish ships or even a part of the revenues [2].

Anyhow, the improvements of Kronborg were belated, and a month later, the British fleet approached Danish waters. Although the Defense Plan of 1784 had recommended building the fortresses Trekroner, Stubben, and Prøvesten near the entrance to Copenhagen, work had been done only on the Trekroner fort, and it was half-finished. However, slightly south of Copenhagen on the island of Amager, a start was made with Stricker's battery on 12 January. This battery was built by a nephew of the commander of Kronborg, the artillery engineer Justus Alexander Stricker, with six 36-pounders and two mortars, and was ready for use on 2 April [2]. In Copenhagen, only the floating fleet battery No. 1 with 24 pieces of 24-pound cannons was finished. Instead of the batteries, all energy went into preparing a defense line of old and new ships anchored far enough from the shore to prevent British bomb vessels from destroying the harbor and navy dockyard and the yet unfinished 8 battle ships in the Kronløbet channel.

The so-called 'emergency plan for the King's Deep channel' consisted of a line of various Danish ships, old and new, small and large, to form one closed line far enough off the city to keep the British bomb vessels out of reach of it. The Danish ships had to be in a fixed position with enough anchors, and the gaps between the larger ships of the line and the frigates were filled with gun barges, gun boats, and artillery platforms. This defense line was deployed between te

fortress Trekroner and the southernmost ship ‘Prøvestenen’. Together with the ‘Jylland’ and ‘Wageren’, old battle ships were fitted with two additional keels and put aground as an improvised fortress. The entrance to the harbor in the north was blocked by two old battleships, ‘Elefanten’ and ‘Mars’.

Although this naval defense line looked quite impressive, it was clear from the beginning that the Danish defense was not a match for the British naval force for three important reasons. First, the British outnumbered the Danish navy in terms of ships and guns. Second, the Danish line consisted mostly of anchored ships while the British ships were maneuverable. On a fixed ship, a so-called broadside – a one-sided full salvo with all cannons – will always hit the same spot while a sailing ship can maneuver away from it. As soon as one or more ships have been destroyed in such a mooring line, the rest of the ships can be destroyed by raking fire (firing a broadside shot through the length axis of a ship). Third, the crews of the British ships were well-trained professionals. This is important because they could attain a much higher firing rate than the Danish volunteers, only recently trained, who might easily lose their nerve.

Passing Kronborg and attacking Copenhagen

When the British fleet arrived near the Swedish peninsula Kullen, on 22 March 1801, the prime objective of the British admiralty was clear: to take or destroy the Danish fleet. If after an ultimatum of 48 hours there had not been a surrender, this could be done by bombardment or threat of bombardment of the city. For their next moves, admiral Parker and rear-admiral Nelson had to wait for further orders. A still open question was whether they would attack Copenhagen via the Great Belt or via the Sound. An advantage of the Great Belt would be that they could circumvent Kronborg’s cannons and would have a good position for further attacking the Russian fleet in Reval and the Swedish one in Karlskrona. Additional orders from the British admiralty, which Parker received later by ship, were clear that further action against Russia was expected. But a negative point was that the Great Belt was difficult to navigate, and few British captains had experience with it.

This time, Parker took the final decision to enter the Sound and sent a letter to its commander colonel Stricker in the morning of 28 March asking whether he would shoot at the fleet when it passed. Stricker did not react until noon with a letter in which he stated that he had to send a courier on horse to Copenhagen for consultation. As Parker knew that the Danes had an optical telegraph, it was clear to him that Stricker tried to delay the whole process. Therefore, he ordered Nelson to move his bomb vessels closer to the fortress [2]. The whole next day passed until finally at midnight a letter was brought from Stricker that he could not allow such a large naval power to pass unless it made clear what its intentions were.

During the night, the wind changed to the favorable direction west-north-west. At 0500 hours, the British fleet prepared and sailed away. At 0700 hours on 30 March, the leading British ship ‘Monarch’ received the first shots from Kronborg which missed the ship. As the range of a 36-pounder is around 1.6 kilometers, most of the fleet passed out of range by sailing nearer to the Swedish coast at Helsingborg where there were no batteries. As mortars have double that range,

it is not entirely clear why Kronborg did not use them (or maybe it did not have them), but the shooting continued while the line of ships passed. Although the advantages of a fortress are that it does not sink and will not easily burn, it is a sitting duck, and a line of maneuverable battle ships giving broadsides with their one-sided 40 cannons can shoot a fortress to pieces. Especially if bomb ships having mortars with explosive projectiles are used, the damage can be great. However, the damage to parts of the fortress and the town was modest [5]. There were only 2 dead and 3 wounded [2,5].

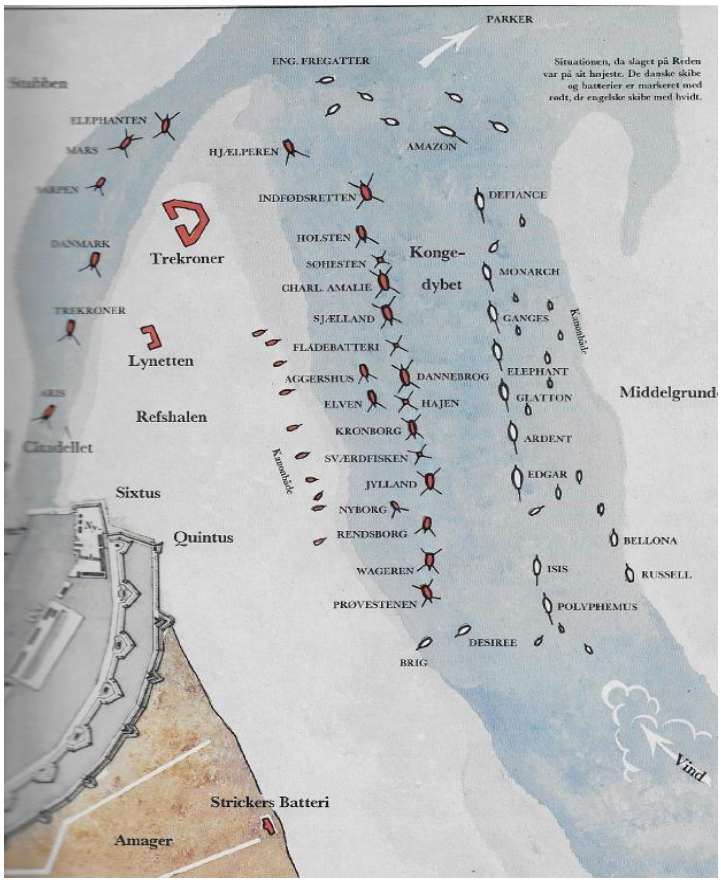
The British fleet passing Kronborg on 30 March 1801 Engraved by John William Edy

At 0900 hours, Parker's and Nelson's divisions had passed Kronborg. Later during the day, Parker anchored near Vedbæk and Nelson near Taarbæk. From there they could see the Danish fortifications which looked formidable. Parker's first move was to reconnoiter the Danish defenses to reach a final decision on how the attack should be launched. The moment they were anchored, the British began their observation of the Danish defense line and made preparations to sound the waters of the Hollander Deep where the Danes had removed all sea marks. With twelve barrels as buoys, anchored with bar shot, the Middle Ground shoal was marked [2].

Then they made a reconnaissance with a small boat along the Danish defense line. The next day, Parker made a second reconnaissance with the artillery officers. Their conclusion was that bombing Holmen's dockyards would be feasible only if the Danish defense line was defeated and demolished. On 1 April, Parker's entire division weighed anchor and headed south where it anchored with Nelson's division. The entire fleet was now north of the Middle Ground shoal from where Nelson completed his sounding and marking of the Hollander Deep.

In the evening of 1 April, the ships in Nelson's division lay closely together, anchored south of the Middle Ground shoal, within range of the mortars of Stricker's battery. Stricker asked for approval to have his commanding officer open fire. Colonel Mecklenburg, however, was not prepared to issue such an order. He thought the British fleet would probably continue to the Baltic Sea. And if a battle were to ensue, he did not want to reveal the presence of the battery prior to the battle, as it was defenseless against an amphibious attack. However, he contacted the crown prince who ordered Stricker's battery to open fire on Nelson's division. Three shells were fired from the battery's mortars. From his post, Mecklenburg concluded that the mortars did not have sufficient range and ordered them to cease firing. But from the sea it looked completely different. On board the Danish ship 'Hajen', lieutenant Müller saw three shells land right in the

middle of the British ships. On board the British ‘Elephant’, there was great consternation when the mortars opened fire and equal astonishment when they ceased. The British ships were now very vulnerable. They were not able to see a target, and at night in uncharted waters it was very dangerous to move the division. They were static targets for the mortars of Stricker’s battery, but colonel Mecklenburg was in command. And his decision was to cease fire [2].



Geographical overview of the battle area at Copenhagen on 1 April 1801

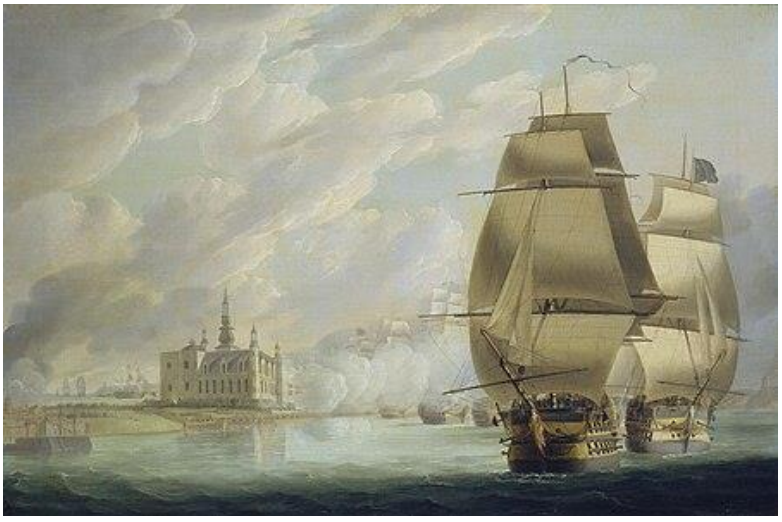
On 2 April the British squadron moved the attack up into the King’s Deep. The ‘Edgar’ of captain Murray, a 74-gunner, initiated the attack and sailed into the opening between the Danish defense line and the Middle Ground shoal. At 1030 hours, the Danish block ship ‘Prøvestenen’ opened fire on the ‘Edgar’ with the heavy 36-pounders from its lower deck. There was immediate disaster, the ‘Bellona’ and “Russell” running aground and the ‘Agamemnon’ failing to gain her proper position in the line. After the ‘Edgar’ came the ‘Ardent’, the ‘Ganges’, the ‘Elephant’, and the ‘Monarch’, each sailing to its dedicated opponent where they anchored and

War ship types opposing the Danish naval defense

Ship of the line

A *ship of the line* was a heavy type of warship designed for the naval tactic known as the line of battle, which involved two columns of opposing warships maneuvering to fire with the cannons along their broadsides. It was the late successor of the carrack with a high front and back castle and the subsequent galleon with a castle only in the back.

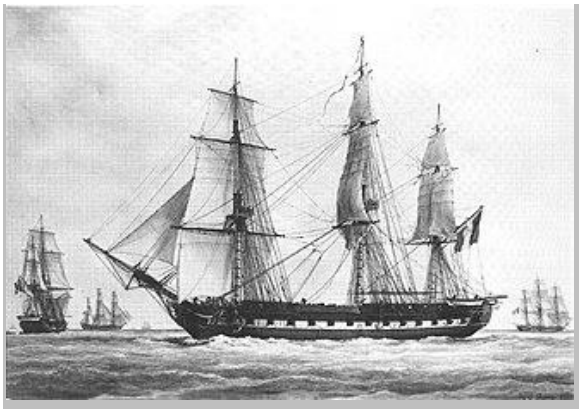
In conflicts where opposing ships of the line were both able to fire from their broadsides, the opponent with more cannons firing – and therefore more firepower – typically had an advantage. The typical large type had 74 cannons on 3 gun decks with the heaviest 36-pounders on the lowest deck for stability and 24-pounders on the upper decks.



Nelson's ship of the line 'Monarch' passing Kronborg on 30 March 1801

Frigate

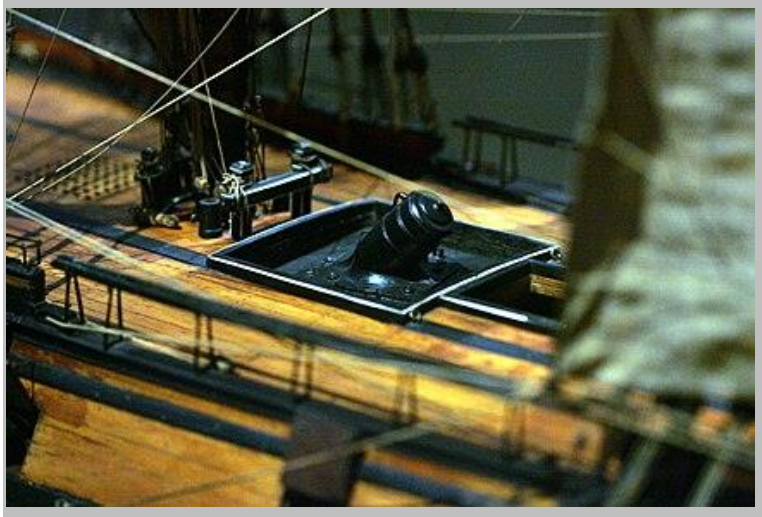
The designation frigate in the 17th to early 18th centuries was given to a full-rigged ship built for speed and maneuverability and intended to be used in scouting, escort, and patrol roles. This type of vessel possessed only one armed deck, with an unarmed deck below it used for berthing the crew. The frigates were fast but much more lightly armed than the ships of the line.



A one-gundeck frigate

Bomb vessels

A bomb vessel was a type of wooden sailing warship, but its primary armament was not composed of cannons (although bomb vessels carried a few cannons for self-defense). It had large mortars, up to 13 inches, mounted forward near the bow and elevated to a high angle, thus projecting their fire in a ballistic arc. This gave them a larger range than 36-pound cannons, of more than 4 kilometers. Explosive shells or incendiary bombs were employed rather than solid shot. Bomb vessels were specialized ships designed for bombarding fixed positions on land.



Bomb vessel with a mounted mortar

On a gundeck during battle

The Danish ships were anchored, and each of them was being shot at by a British opponent ship of the line or frigate at a distance of approximately 500 meters. The many Danish volunteers must have thought they had entered hell. During a gun fight of up to 4 hours they had to defend their ship against an experienced British crew that usually kept up a higher firing rate. While there were no safe places on the ships, being on a lower gun deck is horrifying. After the first shots with 36-pounders using cannon balls with a diameter of over 6 inches, a combination of heat, smoke, and the smell of ignition takes away sight and breath. A single shot creates a temporary vacuum in the area around the cannon, sucking away the oxygen. The noise of the roaring guns in full action is deafening.

Volunteers had to be careful not to be hit by the recoiling guns which can easily break every bone of a human body, especially as they soon got tired after hours of fighting. Cleaning the barrel, refilling it with powder and with the heavy ball is exhausting and dangerous. Many gunners were decapitated and shot to pieces by direct hits. Amidst all this, they heard the feverish commands of their artillery officers, the scary cracking sound of their increasingly destroyed ship, the screaming of the wounded and of those who had to be amputated by the surgeon while 4 men pushed the non-anesthetized patient to the deck floor.

opened fire. Nelson took the remaining ships into battle and was soon engaged with the Danish ships and floating batteries. The southernmost ship 'Prøvestenen' had exchanged fire with almost all British ships of the line as well as its opponent 'Polyphemos' and the dangerously positioned 'Désiree' which could give raking fire. But the 'Désiree' itself was under potential fire from the mortars of Stricker's battery.

Shortly after the first broadside shots, a thick blanket of smoke started to cover the King's Deep, and while the British positioned, the smoke gave some cover to the Danish line but made it difficult to see the enemy. The northern part of the defense line was not yet in action; the heaviest fight was in the southern part where the British had 496 guns against 244 Danish ones, and in the middle part of the line with 352 British guns against 202 Danish ones [2]. The British had a higher firing rate and were more accurate, and it would only be matter of time before the Danes would have to give up. The objective of the British was to punch a hole in the Danish line as soon as possible, and much of the fire of the 4 large battle ships in the center ('Monarch', 'Glatton', 'Elephant', and 'Ganges') concentrated on the fleet commander's ship 'Dannebrog'.

Very rapidly the gun decks were filled with killed and wounded Danish gunners, and the 'Dannebrog' was shot afire with incendiary bombs. Commander Fischer had to remove to the 'Holsten', and at 1630 hours the 'Dannebrog' exploded. Nevertheless, after three hours of cannonade on either side, the battle was still undecided. Seeing this and finding that ships he sent to reinforce Nelson were making slow progress against the wind, Sir Hyde Parker signalled "discontinue the action" to the fleet as a whole.

Each ship was obliged to obey the signal without waiting for the signal to be repeated from Nelson's flagship, the 'Elephant'. For the ships to have obeyed the signal would have been virtual suicide: placed opposite their opponents, they could not withdraw until the enemy's fire had been silenced. Withdrawal would have meant ceasing fire and sending the men to make sail, presenting each ship's stern to the enemy's guns and to a raking fire that would have redoubled when the Danes saw the British retreat. It would have involved appalling casualties and damage and would have allowed the Danes to claim a victory. It would have destroyed British prestige in northern Europe.

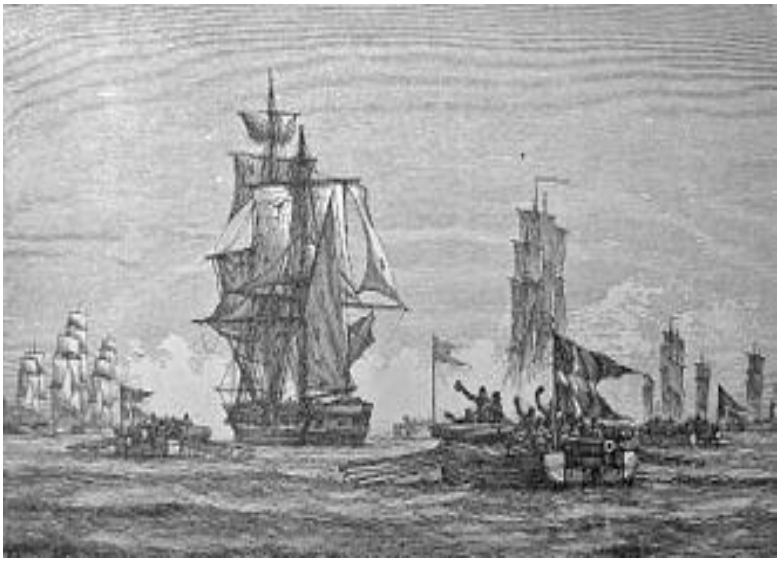
It is said that at this point of the battle, Nelson put his telescope to his blind eye, saying 'I really do not see the signal!' and 'a man with only one eye has the right to be blind sometimes'. He kept his own signal flying for closer action, and the ships of the line all obeyed him and ignored the commander-in-chief. It was 1230 hours when Nelson decided to ignore the signal, and the cannonade continued for another hour or so. By then it was apparent that the British had won the battle as more and more of the Danish ships ceased fire or surrendered, such as the 'Aggershus', 'Nyborg', Rendsburg', and 'Sjælland'. By about 1400 hours, the bombardment slackened, and Nelson sent in a flag of truce, suggesting that hostilities should cease. In no other way could the lives of many Danes on board the floating batteries be saved; he had threatened to set them on fire. While this was pure blackmail, he claimed to do this for humanitarian reasons as if the Danish government would be to blame if it did not accept his proposal for their capitulation.

Firing died away, and at 1515 hours, Nelson's flagship hoisted a flag of truce. The battle was over.

However, the objectives of Nelson were far from fulfilled. Although it was clear that the British were winning, enough resistance was still possible, and the fortress Trekroner was still intact. But realizing the desperate situation, the crown prince accepted the proposal of a cease fire. What followed were several days of tense negotiations. The British ultimatum posed a withdrawal from the League of Armed Neutrality or else a bombardment of Copenhagen. However, withdrawal from the league would mean war with Russia and Sweden and the loss of Norway and Schleswig-Holstein. Several times, the ultimatum deadline had to be extended at the last minute.

Meanwhile, the British sailors entered the defeated Danish ships and took everything they needed after which the ships were set on fire. In this way, they cleared the path for the 7 bomb vessels that were then put in a position to set Copenhagen on fire with their 13-inch mortars having a range of more than 4 kilometers. The burning Danish ships gave the residents of Copenhagen a grim outlook on their future. At long last, a settlement was made in which the British took the Danish ships while the political issue about withdrawal from the league was suspended. But political events would soon change everything after the death of Tsar Paul on 8 April 1801 as his successor and son Tsar Alexander wanted to leave the league. He started negotiations with Britain in which he agreed to their convoy system conditions. During the battle of 2 April, the Danish losses were greater than the British ones. The Danes fought very bravely but with many inexperienced volunteers. The fact that the British hulls were mostly undamaged indicated that the Danes often aimed their shots too high.

After 1801, the position of Denmark within Europe became more and more difficult. Although it received back its colonies, the relationship with Britain remained tense even though Denmark complied strictly with the terms it accepted in 1801. The dominating role of Napoleon grew larger after the defeat of Austria in Austerlitz in 1805 and of Prussia in Jena in 1806. Napoleon declared a blockade of the continent and a cessation of economic involvement with Britain. In 1807, France and Russia agreed to force the remaining maritime countries, Denmark, Sweden, and Portugal to join the blockade against Britain in the Tilsit Treaty of 7 July [2]. Britain was aware of this. Around that time, Denmark received an ultimatum from France as well as Britain but refused twice. Therefore, the British navy landed around Copenhagen on 16 August 1807 while most of the Danish troops were in Holstein as a barrier against the French threat. This time, the city was bombarded with Congreve rockets and set on fire. Thereafter, the entire Danish fleet was taken away and sailed to Britain. Despite being ordered, major-general Ezechias Heinrich Stricker refused to surrender Kronborg to the British but this had no further consequences.



Danish gunboats attacking British warships during the 'Gunboat War' [1807-1814]

As a consequence of this British attack, Denmark declared war on Britain and joined forces with Napoleon. Apart from the foundation of an auxiliary corps fighting with Napoleon, Danish-British naval hostilities took place as the so-called 'Gunboat War' [1807-1814]. When British sailing ships came too near to the Danish or Norwegian coast during a period of light or no winds, they were attacked by large rowing boats with cannons. The natural son of Ezechias, Christian Henrik Stricker, was a lieutenant on such a gunboat and awarded the Order of Dannebrog after a courageous action against a British warship. In 1811, Ezechias Heinrich Stricker asked the crown prince for permission to retire. He was 77 years old and had been some 62 years in active military service. The request was granted, and he resigned as a lieutenant-general, commander of the Dannebrog, and was allowed to live in a nice rural cottage near Fredensborg Castle. His oldest brother Johan Christian had retired in 1799 as colonel of infantry in the crown prince's Life Regiment, and his brother Carl Alexander had retired in 1801 as major-general of infantry. With Ezechias' retirement, the military career of the three brothers ended after more than half a century of service to their beloved kingdom of Denmark.

References

1. Sound Toll Registers Online. www.soundtoll.nl
2. Feldbæk O. The battle of Copenhagen 1801. Pen & Swords Books Limited. Barnsley, 2002.
3. Grotius H. Mare Liberum, sive de jure quod Batavis competit ad Indicana commercia dissertatio. Leiden, 1609.

4. Smith O. Kronborg was in danger in August 1800. Colonel Stricker kept his cannon balls red-hot but did not need to use them. Berlingske Tidende newspaper, Sunday Edition, 1 May 1932.
5. Meyer C. Frivillige og pressede fra Helsingør og deres deltagelse i Slaget på Reden. Helsingør Kommunes Museer Årbog 2013;29-56.

CHAPTER 14

Epilogue

The reader will probably have the same thought as the author: 'It's nice to know all this, but who were these men and how did they perceive their life and role in society?' The problem is that no letters were ever found in which they wrote about personal thoughts and expectations. My distant relative Birgit Thiim Stricker from Sønderborg made an admirable effort to describe the familial situation around lieutenant-general Ezechias Heinrich Stricker during the early decades of the 19th century in the context of the Danish culture of that period [1]. She acknowledged the absence of personal letters as an important limitation. Luckily, there is some indirect evidence from which to get an idea of the more personal aspects of their life.

From the vantage point of the wealth and ease of today's society, it seems they must have had a difficult life. However, it is important to emphasize that they may not have experienced their life as such. Within certain limitations of extreme circumstances, there is nothing so personal as how someone perceives his own life for better or for worse. They grew up in a family where 4 children stayed alive out of 17 pregnancies and where the mother died at the age of 36 years [2]. It is likely that such events made a huge impression on the young boys. For instance, the oldest boy Johan Christian had lost 2 younger sisters when he was 6 years old. When his mother died in 1743, he had already lost 4 younger sisters and one brother, but these were just the baptized children with a name. The remaining 8 children had no name and probably died within 2 months of being born, before being baptized. So in total, the 15-year-old Johan Christian had suffered the loss of 13 siblings and his mother. Father Alexander had to educate his four children alone as he never married again. Because his mother was still alive and living in Rendsburg too, it is likely that she helped him.

Probably, the boys entered the army after primary school as there were not many other possibilities for schooling in the region [3]. Particularly after the second half of the seventeenth century, when armed forces grew exponentially, armies typically ranked as the largest single employers within states. Thus, soldiers constituted the most numerous unified labor force within Europe [4]. Given that their father and grandfather had been employed by the Holstein artillery corps, the choice of a military career made sense. The fact that they lived in Rendsburg-Neuwerk near the huge parade grounds with regular military exercises of young men in colorful uniforms may have added to the boys' enthusiastic attitude towards military service. And for a capable and ambitious young man, an army offered prospects for a career and a lifelong salaried job.

A peculiar fact is that father Alexander did not enter military service before his 19th birthday, relatively late. Possibly, his mother kept her only son away from the army because the Great Northern War lingered on. Also, the billeting of Russian soldiers in Rendsburg in 1715 before and after the second siege of Tönning had been a traumatizing experience for civilians. But the poverty of the Vent family forced it to sell the home and to obtain more income. Moreover, her

marriage to the probably handicapped pontoon captain Schultz in 1719 may have added not only income but also a family member with a positive attitude towards military service."

Alexander proved to be an ambitious ensign who struggled for a higher rank and wage but without success. And time was not on his side as after the Great Northern War, Denmark enjoyed a long period of peace. During a war, an army's high mortality rate guarantees rapid progress to higher ranks by capable officers provided they stay alive. The higher ranks are more difficult to attain during peacetime unless one has good relations with those in charge, especially, if these contacts were in Copenhagen rather than in peripheral Holstein where they lived. In his letters to the Danish War Office, he often complained about being passed over for higher ranks. The accusation that he criticized the Rendsburg Artillery Commission – which he strongly denied – even led to a formal court case in 1751. According to his granddaughter, he was hot-tempered and aggressive [5]. He may have shared this character trait with his grandfather in Brussels, who was convicted for carrying a sword within the city walls [6].

Although the court case of father Alexander did not lead to a clear conclusion, his temporary imprisonment and the angry letters he wrote were probably not helpful for a military career. A problem arose when the oldest son Johan Christian had a child with the daughter of his superior, captain von Plessen. The father was furious, especially because Johan Christian refused to marry his daughter when the child was born in 1754. The von Plessens were a powerful German noble family with roots in Denmark, and a conflict like this was clearly disadvantageous. These troubles may have stimulated the boys to volunteer in the French army during the Seven Years' War in order to escape from this 'dead end' situation. Such volunteering initiatives were appreciated by the War Office, and it guaranteed that returning soldiers would receive in Denmark the rank they attained during foreign campaigns.

Despite problems like these, one gets the impression that the relationships within this small family of survivors were good. In the scarce personal letters from France, Christian, Alexander, and Heinrich (the names they used themselves) always gave their dearest regards to their little sister Dortgen. It is also clear from those letters that the brothers helped each other during the French campaign as much as they could. After arriving back in Denmark in late 1761, the whole family spent a well-deserved sort of vacation in Segeberg. When in 1762 the threat of war with Russia abruptly ceased with the death of Tsar Peter, there was no further need to go back to France. Consequently, they were relatively high ranking officers coming back to the Danish army to find a new place after 5 years abroad. This fresh start was not always easy. For instance, Ezechias Heinrich had to start at Kronborg as a simple ensign while he already had the rank of a captain. But the boys picked up their military life in Denmark quite soon and with success, probably much helped by their war experience.

We know nothing about the character of these boys, but it is likely that Carl Alexander may have shared the ambitious and hot-tempered character of his father. His life story shows a great technical interest. He learned how to make very detailed geographical maps. He was also an astronomer, and to watch the stars, he built his own observatory in Oslo. Carl Alexander probably took the initiative to volunteer with his brother Ezechias Heinrich for service in the French army during the Seven Years' War. Before that, he applied in 1753 for an engineering

function without success. Apparently, he taught himself many skills as an aide-de-camp of several French marshals such as Duke de Broglie. His assiduous reporting back to the Danish War Office was appreciated. But he also had disputes with his supreme commanders on at least two occasions during the Russian campaign (probably with good reasons). Also later in life, during the large geographical registration of Norway as well as during the Danish-Swedish war of 1788, he had conflicts with his superiors [7,8]. In his letter of 1804, he alluded to the many enemies in his life which suggests that he did not master diplomacy [2]. His malicious description of the easy way in which the disgraced colonel von Falkenskjold received his Order of St. George 4th class gives away his own frustration over not receiving the 3rd class himself. It suggests that maybe his ambitions made him prone to conflicts.

All three boys enjoyed a successful military career, but there must have been some uncomfortable episodes in their lives. For instance, Johan Christian had a natural son. He must have felt responsible for the boy and the mother, who later died unmarried. In a letter to his father Alexander from France, Johan Christian tells him how his money might go to the mother and his son if he were killed during combat [9]. The son, Otto Christian Stricker [1754-1819], later applied for Danish colonial service and ended up as a lieutenant-colonel and military commander of Tranquebar on the east coast of India. It is unclear how good the relationship was between Otto and his father. When Otto sent his young sons Detlef and Frederik to Copenhagen for education, they were raised at Kronborg by their great-uncle Ezechias Heinrich. Apparently, they did not stay with their own grandfather Johan Christian in Copenhagen, where he was registered in the population census of 1787 as a major of infantry in the Royal Norwegian Life Regiment [10]. However, according to the population census of 1801, one of Otto's sons stayed with his grandfather Johan Christian [10]. This suggests that the relationship was good or had improved. In 1801, also Justus Alexander and Carl Christian, the two sons of Carl Alexander, were living in Copenhagen with their uncle Johan Christian. During their lives, the three brothers helped not only each other but also their children.

Carl Alexander Stricker was married to a somewhat dominant daughter of major-general Römeling. According to the famous Norwegian socialite Conradine Dunker, she seems to have had an alcohol problem [11]. That she liked alcohol is also alluded to in the history of the Gulstad family [5]. Carl Alexander was fond of his garden where he grew potatoes and harvested other produce. According to this family, he liked the garden because his wife dominated the house. However, also his brother Ezechias Heinrich grew his own produce and was annoyed when his vegetable garden was destroyed in 1801. It seems possible that the boys learned how to grow their own food at a young age for economic reasons in times of food shortage.

Conradine Dunker's book *Gamle Dage* indirectly refers to another important point that should not be overlooked. She tells her brother how they played around 1788 near the fortress in the center of what is now Oslo with the Stricker children. Their father was Ezechias Heinrich who was the artillery commander of Oslo, and they came from Holstein and spoke half German, half Danish [11]. Although Denmark-Norway could avoid religious tensions because the inhabitants were all Lutheran, there were political tensions between Denmark and Norway on the one hand, as well as between the German- and Danish speaking parts of Denmark on the other hand. At that

time, the higher ranking officers communicated in German. For instance, it was said that general von Huth, commander of the Danish artillery corps, never spoke Danish at all. Interestingly, the rapport about the siege of Cochzim by Carl Alexander was summarized by his brother Ezechias Heinrich in Danish and subsequently archived. As Danish nationalism increasingly pushed back German cultural influences at the end of the 18th century, he may have sensed this shift in the power balance.

Ezechias Heinrich, too, must have been a source of social discomfort. He was accompanied during many years by a Miss Elisabeth Lobedantz who gave birth to two of his children while he was still married. He met her while he was artillery commander in Rendsburg, and she accompanied the family as some sort of assistant. However, it soon became clear that her presence had reasons other than professional ones. Although it is difficult now to appreciate how negatively such things were judged in 18th century Lutheran Denmark, it is likely that the disgraceful situation was simply not mentioned. Of course, silence did not mean that impropriety did not happen; the crown prince himself was married 'on the side' to a Danish courtisan. After the death of Ezechias Heinrich in 1814, Miss Lobedantz followed her daughter Frederikke Stricker to Tranquebar and took all of Ezechias Heinrich's personal belongings with her. As a consequence, the children from his formal marriage with Fredericia Christiane Herbst were left empty-handed and did not even have a picture of their father [5]. In the Gulstad family, Miss Lobedantz was referred to as 'the woman whose name we never mentioned' [5]. It is interesting to see how families can drift apart. In Tranquebar, Miss Lobedantz was registered as Mrs Stricker although it was known that she was never formally married to Ezechias Heinrich Stricker, not even after his first wife's death in 1806. In Tranquebar, however, she was accepted as an established member of the small Danish community [1].

In a letter written in 1804 by Carl Alexander von Stricker, published in the genealogical journal Personalhistorisk Tidsskrift in 1912 [2], the natural children of his brothers are not listed at all. The Danish genealogist Lengnick distinguished between the family 'v. Stricker' (descendants of Carl Alexander von Stricker and of Ezechias Heinrich von Stricker by marriage) and the family 'Stricker II' (descendants of the adopted natural children Otto Christian Stricker, Christian Heinrich Stricker, and Frederikke Johanne Stricker). It suggests that these branches were considered 'second rate' Strickers.

References

1. Thiim Stricker B. En kvindes liv i to verdensdele. Printed by Saxo, Denmark 2018.
2. Nobel O. Slægtsbogsoptegnelser vedrørende Familierne Stricker og Kaalund. Personalhistorisk Tidsskrift 1912;32:121-129.
3. Lange U. Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins. Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart. Wachholtz Verlag, Neumünster, 2003.
4. Tallett F. Soldiers in Western Europe 1500-1790. In: Fighting for a living: A comparative study of military labor 1500-2000. Amsterdam University Press, 2013.
5. Gulstad K. Erindringer om familien Gulstad. Slægtsforskernes Bibliotek: http://bibliotek.dis-danmark.dk.

6. Nauwelaers J. Histoire des Avocats au Souverain Conseil de Brabant II. 1947;67; no. 476.
7. De Seue CM. Historisk Beretning om Norges Geografiske Opmaaling fra dens Stiftelse i 1773 indtil Udgangen af 1876. Grøndahl & Søn, Kristiania, 1878.
8. Blangstrup C. Begivenhederne i Norden i efteraaret 1788. En historisk Skitse. Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag (F. Hegel & Søn). Copenhagen, 1889.
9. Stricker JC. Letter to the Danish War Office, 18 May 1761. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
10. Anonymous. Population censuses 1787 and 1801. Dansk Demografisk Database. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.
11. Dunker CB. Gamle Dage: Erindringer og Tidsbilleder. 1871.

Military history of Johan Christian Stricker

Born on 16 March 1728, buried in Elsinore on 4 April 1809.

5 June 1745, joined the Danish army

22 September 1751, ensign in the Holstein regiment

12 May 1756, 2nd lieutenant

1 October 1760, 1st lieutenant

22 September 1762, captain

29 September 1764, captain in the Norwegian Life Regiment

2 October 1774, major of infantry

31 July 1790, lieutenant-colonel in King's Life Regiment

29 December 1797, colonel in King's Life Regiment

Retired in 1799

Johan Chistian Stricker was in French service from November 1759 until November 1761 [1,3].

He was unmarried but had a natural son with Christiane Eleonore baroness von Plessen, baptized on 25 March 1728, deceased on 31 December 1797 [2].

Military history of Carl Alexander Stricker

Born in Rendsburg on 19 January 1731, deceased in Copenhagen on 10 February 1820.

20 June 1746, joined the Danish army

23 May 1753, junior pyrotechnician

1 May 1754, senior pyrotechnician

29 June 1754, 2nd lieutenant

3 May 1758, 1st lieutenant

5 September 1759, captain in King's Life Regiment

29 April 1773, lieutenant-colonel

17 March 1786, colonel

11 December 1789, major-general

Carl Alexander Stricker was in French service from March 1757 until 1761/1762. He participated until 1760 in the regiment Löwenthal and therafter as aide-de-camp to general Count Beausobre, major-general Count Gallifet, lieutenant-general Marquis du Mesnil, and field marshal de Broglie. Back in Denmark, he commanded the 2nd grenadier company. Subsequently, he was placed as field engineer with general Count von Schmettow in Mecklenburg. During 1769-1772, he was in Russian service as lieutenant-colonel and active during the Russian campaigns against the Ottoman empire, for which he was awarded a knighthood and the Order of St. George 4th class. After coming back, he was general quartermaster and directed the geographical registration of Norway. As of 1786, he commanded a Norwegian infantry regiment and participated during the Danish-Swedish war. Carl Alexander participated in 10 military campaigns [1,3].

Carl Alexander Stricker was married to Margreta Charlotte von Römeling, born on 14 July 1743, deceased on 8 November 1802. They had 6 children [2].

Military history of Ezechias Heinrich Stricker

Born in Rendsburg on 8 August 1734, deceased in Fredensborg on 27 March 1814.

24 June 1749, joined the Danish army

1751, junior pyrotechnician

5 May 1756, pyrotechnician

April 1757, 2nd lieutenant (regiment Löwenthal)

3 May 1758, 1st lieutenant

24 December 1760, title of captain

23 June 1762, functional captain of artillery

6 February 1772, title of major

2 January 1777, functional major of artillery

6 February 1783, title of lieutenant-colonel

25 February 1785, functional lieutenant-colonel

4 August 1788, colonel

18 September 1801, major-general

6 April 1809, lieutenant-general

Ezechias Heinrich Stricker was in French service from March 1757 until 1761/1762. He participated until 1760 in the regiment Löwenthal and therafter as aide-de-camp to lieutenant-general Marquis de Segur. From April 1762 until January 1764, he served in Kronborg fortress, after which he participated during St. Germain's leadership in the preparations for the new artillery plan, through the implementation of which the artillery corps was established on 18 January 1764, as well as in the work on the subsequent organization of the corps as a company commander between 18 January 1764 and 1 January 1777. From 2 January 1777 until 24 February 1785, he was commander of the artillery detachment in Holstein with a garrison in Rendsburg. From 25 February until 3 August 1788, he was commander of the artillery detachment in Norway and of the 11th artillery company with a garrison in Oslo. In the former capacity, he took the initiative to establish the first NCO school for the artillery detachment in Norway on 14 October 1785. Between 4 August 1788 and 12 April 1792, he was commander of (second-in-command of) the artillery corps, commander of the artillery in Denmark and of the Life Company (1st artillery company), and superintendent of the Artillery Cadet Institute. From 13 April 1792 until 26 December 1793, he was commander in the Frederikstad fortress in Norway. Between 27 December 1793 and 5 April 1809, he was commander at the Kronborg fortress and as such received the crown prince's recognition for his resolute behavior on 30 March 180l when he immediately opened fire on the English fleet as it entered the Sound strait [4].

Ezechias Heinrich Stricker was married to Frederica Christiane (von) Herbst, born on 4 April 1745, deceased on 19 March 1806. They had 7 children. Ezechias Heinrich also had 2 children from Elisabeth Lobedantz; they were adopted by him in 1811 [2].

References

1. Nobel O. Slægtsbogsoptegnelser vedrørende Familierne Stricker og Kaalund. Personalhistorisk Tidsskrift 1912;32:121-129.
2. Stricker BHC, Stricker WFO. History and family tree of the Dutch-Danish family Stricker/Stucker. https://slaegtsbibliotek.dk/

3. Hirsch JCW, Hirsch K. Fortegnelse over danske og norske officerer med flere fra 1648-1814 samlet og udarbejdet fra 1888-1907 af oberstløjtnant J.C.W. Hirsch og premierløjtnant Kay Hirsch. National Archives, Copenhagen.
4. Liebe PI, Borgstrøm E. Biografiske oplysninger om faste Artilleriofficerer af Linien tjenstgørende i perioden 1764 til 1889 i Danmark, i Holsten (indtil 1864) og i Norge (indtil 1814). Hærens Arkiv. Bind 4. Royal Archives, Copenhagen.