

Campaign

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Zorndorf 1758

Frederick faces Holy Mother Russia



Simon Millar • Illustrated by Adam Hook

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Simon Millar • Illustrated by Adam Hook

Series editor Lee Johnson • Consultant editor David G Chandler

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Dedication

To Captain I.A.J. Turner, Irish Guards

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KEY TO MILITARY SYMBOLS

 ARMY GROUP	 ARMY	 CORPS	 DIVISION	 BRIGADE
 REGIMENT	 BATTALION	 COMPANY	 INFANTRY	 CAVALRY
 ARTILLERY	 ARMOUR	 MECHANIZED	 AIRBORNE	 SPECIAL FORCES

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ABOVE Elizabeth Petrovna, Czarina of Russia (1709–62). The daughter of Peter the Great, Elizabeth was committed to the war against Frederick of Prussia. (Georg Christoph Grooth/AKG)



LEFT Austrian prisoners are marched away after the battle of Leuthen on 5 December 1757. (Engraving after Menzel)

ORIGINS OF THE CAMPAIGN

After the victory at Kolin, pushing the Prussians out of Bohemia in the summer of 1757 and the cleverly waged campaign in the autumn that saw Lieutenant-General The Duke of Bevern's Prussians defeated at the battle of Breslau (22 November), Maria Theresa not unnaturally thought her fortunes were taking a turn for the better. Frederick however had other plans. His early autumn campaign was directed against the French and the Imperial *Reichsarmee* in the west. This culminated in the comprehensive victory at Rossbach (5 November), which effectively secured his western flank for the winter. Frederick, however, was still smarting from his defeat at the hands of Marshal Daun at Kolin and was now free to deal with the Austrians in the east and take his revenge. The defeat of Bevern at Breslau and the subsequent surrender of the city along with the capture of Schweidnitz had placed the Hapsburgs once again in control of Silesia. Frederick, never one to shirk a challenge, knew that he had to defeat the Austrian forces in Silesia and regain control of the province if he was to survive. His brilliant autumn campaign was crowned by the crushing defeat of the Austrians under Prince Charles of Lorraine at the Battle of Leuthen (5 December). With the victory at Leuthen Frederick had re-established his position as the pre-eminent military commander in Europe and with the recapture of Breslau on 21 December he had once again wrested the control of Silesia from the grip of Maria Theresa. The Prussian King established his headquarters in Breslau and settled down for the winter. Early during his stay in Breslau, Frederick convinced himself that, after the catastrophic defeat at Leuthen, Maria Theresa would be amenable to making peace. It was with this in mind that he wrote to the Empress making a formal offer of peace. It soon became clear however that the Empress was determined to continue the war.

The disaster at Leuthen had dismayed Maria Theresa for but a moment. Within weeks of the battle she was scheming to reverse the failure of the campaigns of 1757. Steps were taken immediately to equip the shattered army rallying in Bohemia and make it once again fit for service. In early 1758 Maria Theresa was formulating a coordinated plan of operations with her allies to put the disjointed offensives of the previous year behind them and achieve final victory.

In Russia the Czarina Elizabeth Petrovna had not succumbed to dropsy as had been expected. Indeed she had recovered and was more keen than ever to continue the prosecution of the war against Frederick. She was furious with Apraxin, who had failed so dismally the previous year after his narrow victory at Gross-Jägersdorf (30 August) and had him brought before a court martial. At the same time she dismissed her Chancellor, Bestuzhev, who had been scheming against Duke Peter's succession in the event of her death. General of Cavalry Villim Villimovitch

THE CENTRAL THEATRE, 1758



Fermor replaced Apraxin and Bestuzhev was superseded by Woronzow. After a lengthy correspondence with Maria Theresa it was agreed that the main Russian army should advance upon Posen, from where it could threaten Brandenburg and Silesia. Fermor embarked in January 1758 on a well-coordinated winter campaign. The Russian army of 72,000 men was divided into five columns and moved with remarkable speed in the January snow back into East Prussia meeting no opposition. The Prussian Major-General Lewaldt was away in the west blockading the Swedes, who were also part of the great coalition, in Stralsund.

Fermor's style was very different to that of Apraxin the previous year, for where the Russian army had passed before brandishing fire and sword, this time the people of East Prussia were treated with particular regard. Proclamations were read from the Czarina Elizabeth apologising for the ravages of the year before. Pastor Täge, the Lutheran pastor of Marienwerder, awoke one morning to find Cossacks and Kalmucks, with their lances and bows and arrows, moving through the village in the most exemplary order, a sight that, 'was at once alarming and majestic'. Täge would eventually campaign as a regimental chaplain. But what of Maria Theresa's ally in the west?

At the end of 1757 the French had been more inclined to withdraw from the war. D'Argenson, irresolution personified, was completely out

Maria Theresa with Chancellor Kaunitz; both were determined to prosecute the war against Frederick after the defeat at Leuthen. (Engraving after Menzel)

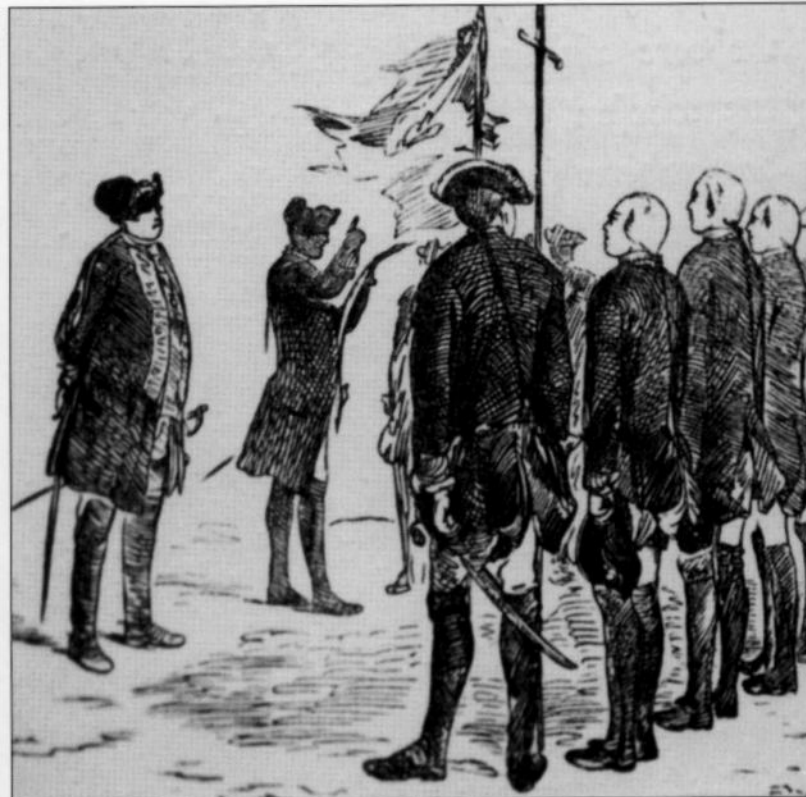


of his depth and had been the principal exponent of a withdrawal, but after his dismissal Bellisle was appointed as War Minister and would hear of nothing except perseverance. Louis XV and his mistress, Madame de Pompadour, who were both set on a vigorous prosecution of the war, backed the minister, especially as the King in particular felt that any other course would damage his prestige. He might have been better advised to furnish an auxiliary corps to Maria Theresa, but this would have meant tamely accepting the defeat at Rossbach and retiring from the war. Louis was not going to accept this humiliation and he resolved to continue the fight. The plan of operation however was more difficult to decide upon. The main concern for Austria and France was Hanover. The destruction of the Hanoverian army or, at the very least, the political muzzling of Hanover was a *sine qua non* for French and Imperial assistance to Austria in Saxony or Silesia. Kaunitz, the very shrewd and able Austrian Chancellor, had for a long time toyed with the idea of detaching Hanover from Frederick by a separate treaty. When George II was approached on the matter in early 1758, however, it was met with a blunt rebuff. Until this moment England and Hanover had followed separate paths in the war; George II had been very keen not to deploy English troops to continental Europe, using them instead to

The Russian army moves back into East Prussia in early 1758. (Engraving after Menzel)



fight the French in the colonies. The rejection by King George of the King of Denmark as the mediator of any treaty went a long way to restore Frederick's confidence in his ally. Frederick in the meantime had taken stock of his situation. If the operational costs of the war continued at the same level in 1758, he would be financially bankrupt and this in turn would, in all probability, force him to sue for peace. Frederick's dislike of being beholden to anyone had led him to decline English offers of financial assistance in the past. His attitude soon changed when he realised it would be easier to spend English gold rather than his own. After lengthy and intricate negotiations, England and Prussia signed a new treaty. Both parties agreed to make no separate peace or truce without consulting their ally and England put at the disposal of Frederick an annual subsidy of £670,000 for the maintenance and augmentation of his forces for the common cause. George also undertook to put before Parliament a petition to supply and maintain 50,000 troops for the defence of Hanover and western Germany. The Hanoverian forces in the west were now commanded by the very able Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, a cousin of George II, who launched an offensive in February and by the end of March had succeeded in turning the French out of Hanover and Brunswick. For the remainder of the war Frederick did not have to worry about his western flank.



**New recruits take their Oath of Allegiance to Frederick.
(Engraving after Menzel)**

Frederick's enemies in the eastern theatre were a different matter, however. The Austrians and the *Reichsarmee* alone mustered 150,000 men and the Russians and Swedes a further 98,000. The Austrians had also been making great efforts to reinforce their main army in Bohemia. After the debacle at Leuthen, Prince Charles of Lorraine was removed from command and replaced by Field Marshal Graf Daun as the commander of the Austrian forces in the field. When he took over his command on 12 March at Königgrätz the force mustered 50,000 regulars and 13,000 irregulars. The choice of Daun was a wise step for his military capacities were far superior to those of his predecessor and although he was hampered by the chief fault of all Austrian commanders of the time, a preference for defence, he was a good tactician, as he had shown at Kolin in the summer of 1757, and he had the confidence of his allies.

Frederick realised that the main aim of his armies needed to be the defeat of the Austrian forces. During the winter months he had achieved excellent results in refitting his army and training the new recruits into efficient soldiers, but he was still woefully short of troops in relation to his enemies and was able to muster only 135,000 men, many of whom could not be trusted completely as they were prisoners of war, forcibly recruited into the army. Never one to wait for the enemy to attack, Frederick reasoned that his best course of action would be to open the new campaigning season with an offensive into the heart of Maria Theresa's domains. His aim was to force a Leuthen-style battle and ultimate victory at the gates of Vienna and with this firmly in mind Frederick was once again the first to strike.

CHRONOLOGY

1756–63

The Seven Years War.

1756

- 16 January** England and Prussia sign the Convention of Westminster.
1 May France and Austria sign the Treaty of Versailles.
29 August Frederick invades Saxony.
9 September The Prussians occupy Dresden, the Saxon capital.
10 September Frederick begins the 'siege' of the Saxon camp at Pirna.
1 October Battle of Lobositz. Frederick wins a narrow tactical victory over the Austrians under Field Marshal Browne.
13 October The Saxons surrender at Pirna after an abortive rescue attempt by the Austrians.

1757

- January** Convention of St Petersburg.
18 April Prussian 'blitzkrieg' into Bohemia.
21 April Action at Reichenberg.
1 May Treaty of Versailles. A new treaty between France and Austria that agrees to the partition of Prussia.
6 May Battle of Prague. Frederick wins a hard-fought victory over the Austrians. Field Marshal Browne is mortally wounded.
29 May The bombardment of Prague begins.
18 June Battle of Kolin. The Austrians under Marshal Daun defeat Frederick.
20 June Bombardment and siege of Prague lifted.
30 June–22 July Prussians are ejected from Bohemia.
26 July The battle of Hastenbeck. The Hanoverians under the Duke of Cumberland are defeated by the French commanded by Marshal d'Estrees.
29 July Frederick rejoins the main army. He publicly humiliates his brother, Prince August William, by dismissing him from the army.
25 August Frederick leaves Lusatia to deal with the growing threat of the Franco-*Reichsarmee* in Thuringia.
30 August Russians defeat a small Prussian army at the **battle of Gross-Jägersdorf**.
7 September Frederick's favourite, Winterfeldt, surprised at the **battle of Moys**, is defeated and slain.
8 September Treaty of Kloster Zeven is signed between the Hanoverians and the French.
9 September Bevern withdraws into Silesia.
13–30 September The Prussians and the Franco-*Reichsarmee* march and counter-march in Thuringia.
12–24 October Frederick marches to deal with the Austrians under Hadik who are raiding Berlin.
24 October–3 November Frederick returns to deal with the Franco-*Reichsarmee*, which has finally advanced beyond Gotha towards Leipzig.
5 November Battle of Rossbach. Frederick decisively defeats the Franco-*Reichsarmee*.
13 November Frederick leaves Leipzig and marches to Silesia.
19 November Schweidnitz in Silesia falls to the Austrians.
22 November Battle of Breslau. Bevern is defeated by Prince Charles of Lorraine.
24 November Breslau surrenders.

- 28 November** Frederick arrives in Parchewitz.
- 2 December** Zieten arrives with the remnants of the Breslau army.
- 3 December** Parchewitz address by Frederick to his generals.
- 5 December Battle of Leuthen.** Frederick wins a crushing victory over the Austrians under Prince Charles of Lorraine.
- 21 December** Prussians recapture Breslau.

1758

- January** Fermor marches into East Prussia.
- 17 March** Frederick's headquarters are at Grüssau.
- 22 March** Prussian siege of Schweidnitz begins.
- 18 April** Schweidnitz capitulates.
- 25 April** The Prussian army concentrates at Neisse.
- 29 April** The Prussians advance into Moravia.
- 5 May** Frederick arrives outside Olmütz.
- 20 May** The Prussian siege train finally arrives at Olmütz.
- 31 May** Siege of Olmütz gets under way.
- 27 June** Marshall Daun offers battle at Klenowitz. Frederick makes his preparations accordingly.
- 28 June** Prussian convoy ambushed by Austrian troops at Domstadt.
- 30 June** Daun sidesteps Frederick and crosses the Morava River.
- 1 July** Austrians break the siege of Olmütz by establishing contact with the garrison.
- 2 July** Frederick abandons the siege and marches into Bohemia.
- 11 July** Russians leave Posen for the Oder River.
- 13 July** Frederick arrives at Königgrätz to find the magazine empty.
- 17 July** Frederick sets off for Glatz.
- 28 July** Russians enter Meseritz.
- 31 July** Dohna arrives at Frankfurt an der Oder.
- 2 August** Russians cross the border and occupy Königswalde.
- 4 August** Frederick reaches Nachod. The Olmütz campaign ends.
- 5 August** The Observation Corps arrives at Paradies.
- 11 August** Frederick begins his march to the Oder, leaving Margrave Karl of Brandenburg-Schwedt in charge of Prussian forces in Silesia.
- 12 August** Dohna advances to Zielenzig.
- 13 August** Rumyantsev and the Observation Corps cross the Warthe.
- 15 August** Russian and Prussian light cavalry clash outside Cüstrin.
- 16 August** The Russians invest Cüstrin and the siege begins. Frederick reaches Wartenburg.
- 21 August** Frederick arrives at Gorgast.
- 22 August** Frederick and Dohna unite at Manschow.
- 23 August** Frederick crosses the Oder at Alt-Güstebiese.
- 25 August Battle of Zorndorf.**

OPPOSING COMMANDERS

THE RUSSIANS

Empress Elizabeth Petrovna (Reigned 1741–61)

Elizabeth came to the throne when she seized power in St Petersburg on 25 November 1741 with the help of the Preobrazhenski Guards regiment. She had a strong legal title to the throne as the daughter of Peter the Great. Biron, Münnich and Ostermann along with other members of the old order were soon made to account for their excesses and were tried, convicted and all were sentenced to death. On 29 January 1742, the day of execution a secretary came up to the scaffold and announced, 'God and the Empress grant you life.' All those to be executed were banished to exile in the provinces. This act of clemency was typical of Elizabeth's benevolent character. Foreign officials at her court remarked at Elizabeth's attractive personality, her blonde hair with an almost English face and rounded figure. She was a very amorous individual and a degree of personal attraction almost certainly influenced her appointment of the likes of Petr Shuvalov, the great artillery reformer, and Field Marshal Buturlin to positions of importance. She was particularly attracted to James Keith, a Scottish Jacobite who, as a General in her service, resigned after rebuffing her overtures.

Elizabeth showed little interest in affairs of state. It is said that officials were able to persuade her to devote only one hour per week to meetings with her chancellor. Occasionally when her pride was hurt or she felt



Villim Villimovitch Fermor. Of Scots-German ancestry, Fermor initially showed enterprise with his campaign into East Prussia in early 1758. (SUV)



Petr Aleksandrovitch Rumyantsev (1725–96), shown at left gesturing with his cane, was a young General Officer during the Seven Years War. He came to fame during the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–74. (AKG)

Russia was under threat she demonstrated bursts of great energy. The vacuum left by this lack of public leadership was filled by Count Alexei Bestuzhev, who became her Foreign Minister in 1744. Luckily Bestuzhev was intelligent, had good judgement and a considerable knowledge of foreign affairs. He was however also haughty, debauched and treacherous.

In the early years of her reign Elizabeth was determined to undo the work of Anna and return Russia to what she believed to be the ideals of her father. The army, for example, was expected to follow the earlier drill regulations in force during the time of Peter the Great. The Prussian drill was to be abandoned. Such was the xenophobia during her reign that the majority of German officers left Russian service. Few Russians were sorry to see them go but, when the very able Keith left, his departure was thought to be a great blow. Elizabeth regarded Frederick with utter loathing, considered him to be the enemy of her dynasty and the illegal occupier of the Austrian province of Silesia.

General of Cavalry Villim Villimovitch Fermor (1702–71)

Fermor, like so many of Elizabeth's commanders, was certainly not of purely Russian descent. A Baltic Lutheran, of Scots-German ancestry, he had enjoyed the patronage of Münnich in his younger days. He preferred the company of the German officers in Russian service, which incurred the disdain of his brother Russian officers. Like the Russian officers he enjoyed luxury and his nights on campaign were spent in his Turkish tent, a huge affair made of dazzling white cloth, draped over a lattice framework with the interior hung with blue brocade. It was here that he entertained his officers at extravagant feasts with silver plate and gilded cups.

He was appointed to command after the inept Apraxin's withdrawal from East Prussia the year before. Fermor was considered to be technically competent with a firm grasp of military realities. He displayed an interest in tactics where his ideas were novel. At the same time he brought some order to the supply chain by insisting that commissariat officials must be present with the army on campaign to be effective. He reorganised the light cavalry and retained only the Don and Chuguevski Cossacks, the hussars and the Volga Kalmucks. The rank and file soldiers also benefited from his progressive attitude, reducing the weight of the load they had to carry and dispensing with the pigtail and powdered hair. Fermor repaid the faith shown in him with his well-conducted and opportunistic campaign of early 1758, when he marched the Russian army back into East Prussia to make good the failures of the previous year.

Major-General Petr Semenovitch Saltykov (1698–1772)

Saltykov was the least known of the Russian commanders in the Seven Years War. His early career had been spent at court and it was when he was



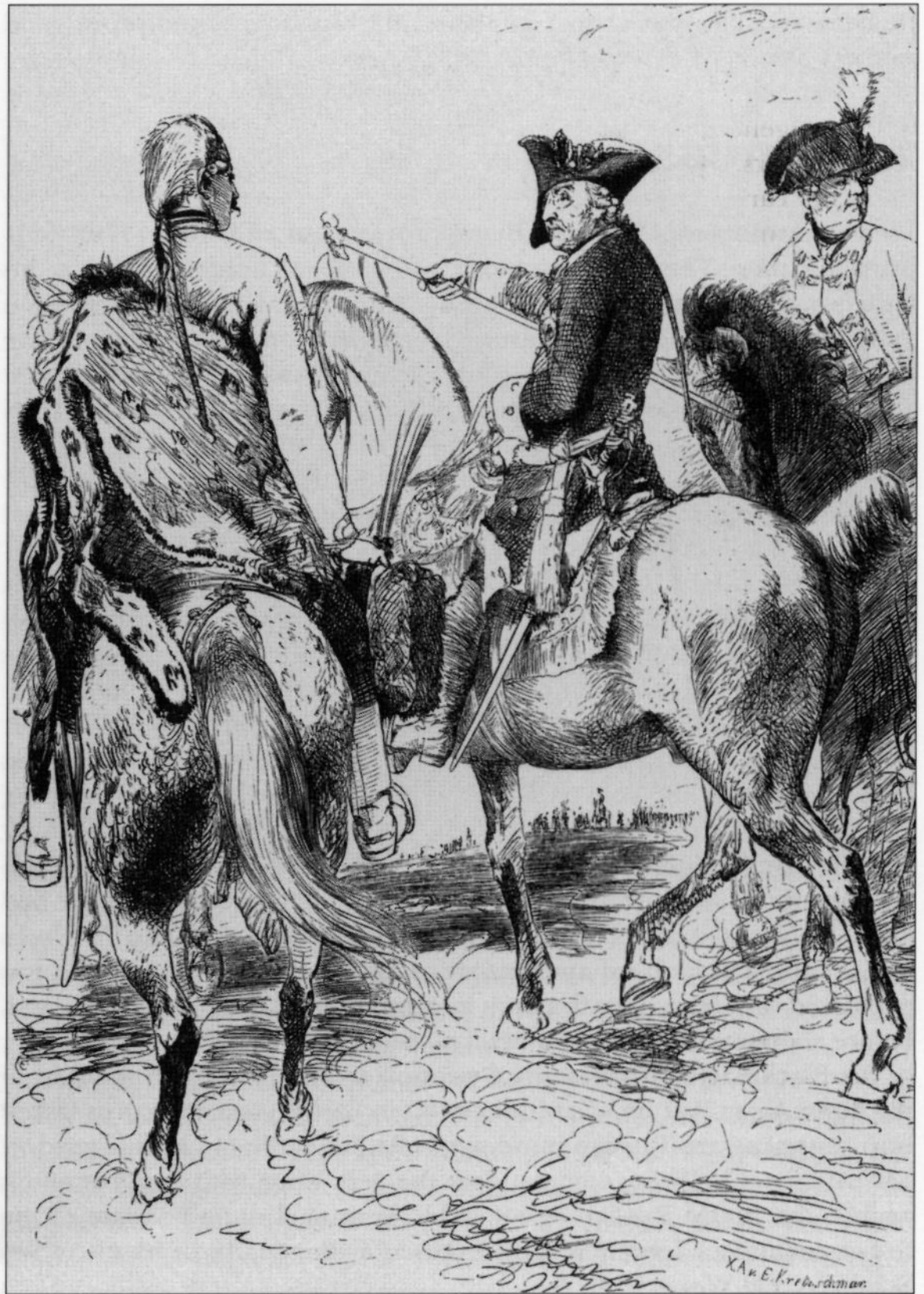
ABOVE **Petr Semenovitch Saltykov (1698–1772).** Saltykov was least known of the commanders, but considered a gentleman of good family and fair character. (Author's collection)





Gideon-Ernst Loudon (1717-90). Given independent command during the Olmütz campaign he came to prominence and would later prove to be one of the most effective Austrian commanders of the war. (ASKB)

RIGHT Frederick the Great, King of Prussia and Elector of Brandenburg (1712–86). The greatest commander of his age. Frederick, with the help of his Hanoverian allies, against the odds kept at bay the combined armies of Austria, Russia, France and Sweden. The battles won were not without risk and an enterprising and more confident enemy commander might have exposed his risk-taking and achieved a different result to the war. (Authors collection)



LEFT Leopold Graf Daun (1705–66) had defeated Frederick at Kolin (18 June 1757) and was the one true allied thorn in Frederick's side during the Seven Years War. (ASKB)

made Chamberlain to Elizabeth, which came with the military rank of Major-General, that he decided to take up the life of a soldier. His first campaign was under Marshal Lacy against the Swedes in 1742–43 and this was his only campaign before the Seven Years War. He was in his 60s at Zorndorf and commanded a brigade in the centre of the Russian army. Destined to take over from Fermor, he clearly didn't cut an impressive image. A group of military bureaucrats waiting to meet him were shocked to see his diminutive figure walking through the streets towards them wearing a shabby white militia coat. The army soon took him to its heart, however, as he displayed a genuine concern for the soldiers' welfare whilst nevertheless maintaining a comfortable way of life himself. He had an excellent rapport with the soldiers and enjoyed sharing jokes with them. As a commander he had the unusual habit for the period of carrying out personal reconnaissance of enemy positions. Even more eccentrically

he believed that, with proper guidance, the Cossacks would prove good soldiers.

THE PRUSSIANS

Lieutenant-General Christoph Burggraf und Graf zu Dohna (1702–62)

Born into an old East Prussian family with a strong military tradition, his father was a General of Infantry and a Minister, whilst his uncle was a Field Marshal. So it came as no surprise that the young Dohna joined the army at the age of 15 in 1717. His first regiment was Infanterie Regiment (IR) No.23 (Forcade) where he proved a promising officer. Promoted to Lieutenant only two years later, by 1720 he was a Staff Captain. He first commanded a company in 1722 at 20 years of age and a mere five years later was a Major. In 1729 he was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel and sent to command one of the battalions of IR No.3 (Anhalt-Dessau) garrisoned in Halle. In July 1740 he was promoted to Colonel and given command of IR No.22 (Moritz von Anhalt-Dessau). He commanded this regiment throughout the War of the Austrian Succession at the battles of Mollwitz (April 1741) and Hohenfriedberg (June 1745). In July he was promoted to Major-General and became the regimental Colonel, or *Inhaber*, of IR No.4 (Polentz). Only five months later, however, he was made *Inhaber* of IR No.23 (Blanckensee), the previous *Inhaber* having been killed at Soor (September 1745). In 1748, on the day that Lewaldt became the Commanding General in East Prussia, Dohna was made *Inhaber* for the last time, of IR No.16 (Flanss); the regiment his uncle had been *Inhaber* of in 1689. Frederick remarked that once again IR No.16 had a Dohna at its head and was garrisoned in Königsberg. Dohna was promoted to Lieutenant-General in January 1751 and two years later, before the autumnal manoeuvres, he was made a member of the Order of the Black Eagle with an annual pension of 500 Taler. With the start of the Seven Years War he was with Lewaldt in East Prussia, the corps tasked with observing any Russian movements. At the battle of Gross-Jägersdorf (30 August 1757) he commanded the left wing with ten battalions against the future Russian commander, Fermor. Dohna was one of the few commanders Frederick confided in after the deaths of his favourites Schwerin and Winterfeldt.

Major-General Hans Wilhelm von Kanitz (1692–1775)

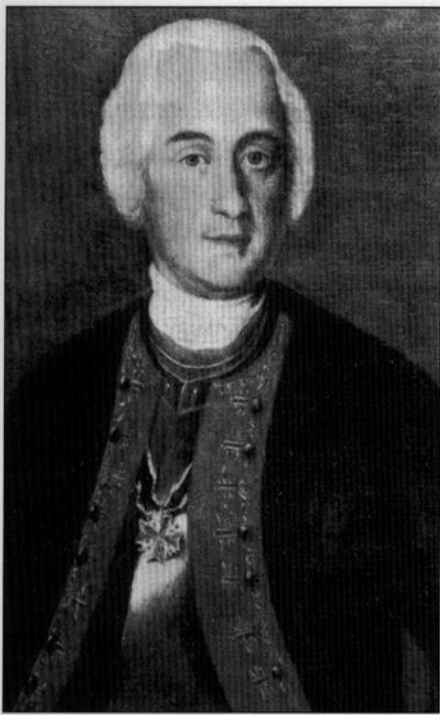
The Kanitz family were an old East Prussian family, with ancestors who were part of the *Deutsche Orden* (German Order), or Teutonic Knights, and had lived in Podangen, the birthplace of Hans Wilhelm, since 1491. Like many young boys from a military background the young Kanitz found himself in the army at the tender age of 12. He joined IR No.14 (Kanitz), his uncle Christoph Albrecht's regiment. His first campaign was as part of the Prussian corps of the great Duke of Marlborough's army. It was with this corps under the 'Alte Dessauer' that Kanitz gained his first combat experience at the battle of Blenheim in 1704. The remainder of the War of Spanish Succession was spent in Italy and afterwards in garrison duties in East Prussia. From April 1721, when he was made a Staff Captain, promotion came at fairly regular intervals. In September 1724 he was a Captain and company commander, in 1735 he was promoted to



Friedrich Wilhelm von Seydlitz (1721–73), urged time and again by Frederick to attack the Russian right wing at Zorndorf, famously reported, 'Tell the King that after the battle my head is at his disposal, but meantime I hope he will permit me to exercise it in his service!' (Author's collection)

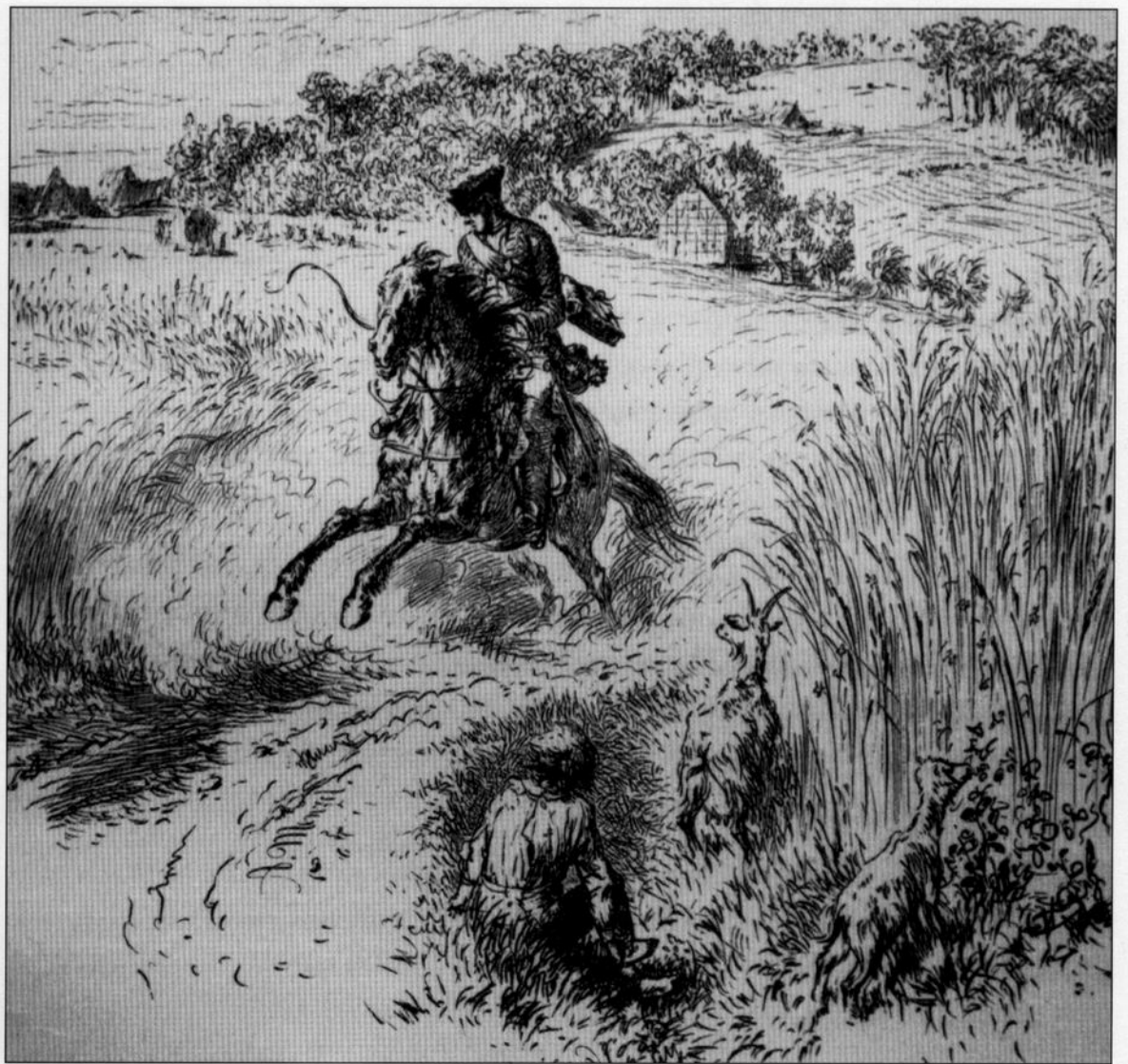


Christoph Burggraf und Graf zu Dohna-Schlodien (1702–62). (ASKB)



ABOVE Hans Wilhelm von Kanitz (1692–75). (ASKB)

RIGHT A Prussian courier riding with orders from Frederick to Dohna to concentrate for an attack on Fermor. Couriers were always at risk of death or capture, so it was never guaranteed that messages would reach their recipient and quite often two or three would be sent out, particularly if the message was very important. (Engraving after Menzel)



Major. At the start of the War of the Austrian Succession his regiment was in East Prussia and did not take part in the first battle at Mollwitz. Kanitz was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel in April 1741 and took command of one of the battalions. The regiment soon joined Frederick's army and fought in the second battle of the war at Chotusitz (17 May 1742) in Bohemia, where he was awarded the *Pour-le-Merite*. He was promoted to Colonel in January 1745 and commanded IR No.14 (Lewaldt) at the battle of Hohenfriedberg (4 June) where his regiment did an excellent job on the right wing. Six weeks after the battle, Kanitz was made commander of IR No.29 (Borcke). The years that followed were quiet for Kanitz but on 12 June 1750 he was promoted to Major-General and made *Inhaber* of IR No.2 (Schlichting). At the start of the Seven Years War he was one of Lewaldt's brigade commanders and took part in the battle of Gross-Jägersdorf (30 August 1757). He was a reliable and competent commander who did all that was asked of him and was given limited independent command by Frederick.

OPPOSING ARMIES

I refer those readers interested in the uniforms, organisation and tactical formations of the opposing forces at Zorndorf, to Osprey's admirable *Men-at-Arms* series. The volumes on *Frederick the Great's Army* by Philip Haythornthwaite and *The Russian Army of the Seven Years War* by Angus Konstam are a detailed and informative source well worth consulting in conjunction with this volume.

THE RUSSIAN ARMY

When Peter the Great died in 1725 the Russian army numbered nearly 200,000 men. Between his death and the start of the Seven Years War this figure had increased to some 331,222, not all of whom were regular army. The regular army consisted of only 172,200 soldiers and not all of these were available for active duty. The Imperial Guard remained in St Petersburg for the duration of the Seven Years War. In the middle years of the 18th century, as in the Napoleonic Wars 50 years later, infantry regiments were never up to full strength. In all the Russian army was able to put only around 130,000 men into the field.

Peter the Great had demanded that the nobility serve the crown in return for their lands and under his successor Anna Ivanova the working life of the nobleman was clearly laid out for him. He would undertake his education from the age of seven to 20 and then from 20 to 45 he was to serve in the army or civil service. There were two possible routes for the young nobleman who chose to join the army; he could be enrolled into the Corps of Cadets or he could join a regiment of his choice and work his way up through the ranks. Those families with influence at court more often than not chose to join the elite Guards regiments. Many a father put his son's name down at birth for a particular regiment. The result was that when the son eventually joined his regiment at 16 he was given the rank of Sergeant; a rank equal to that of a Lieutenant in the line regiments. In effect the new recruit immediately became an officer, with the result that the ability expected, indeed demanded by Peter the Great, of young officers to instruct their soldiers in their duties was lost. Also undermined was the junior officers' understanding and knowledge of their men that Peter the Great had expected. The majority of the officer corps was Russian but there was a smattering of nobles from the Baltic provinces. Their primary motivation was financial as, unlike the Russian nobility, they had no obligation to serve. The officers from the Baltic states were the descendants of German settlers and brought the qualities of attention to detail, energy, determination and a western outlook.

The rank and file soldier was recruited from the serfs in the ten provinces of Greater Russia. When an Imperial decree (*Ukase*) requiring



Prussian Fusilier Regt No.48 (Salmuth). This regiment was not at Zorndorf but was facing the Swedes in Pomerania. It does show the equipment common to the Prussian infantryman when on campaign. (Engraving after Menzel)

the raising of so many men was issued, it was the crown, nobility and other institutions that selected who should make up the quota. Service tended to be for life and so once the serf entered the army he was unlikely to see his home or family again. When the time came for him to be pensioned off, too old even for garrison service, he would find himself in either a monastery or given a small plot of land in a border province. The system for transporting recruits to their regiments was slow and recruits raised in 1756 did not reach their regiments until 1758. The patience, obedience and endurance of the Russian peasant made him steadfast, even obstinate, in battle. Deeply religious but with little or no education, the peasant combined a strong patriotism with an equally powerful suspicion of foreigners and strange places. Discipline was severe at times, with officers and NCO's regularly physically disciplining soldiers. It is interesting to note, however, that in 1756 out of a total of 128,000 men only 185 deserted the colours.

After the Great Northern War against Sweden (1700–21) Peter the Great had employed the Russian army in expanding his borders to the south between the Caspian Sea and Black Sea. Of all the army's 18th-century campaigns, these proved the biggest single drain on its manpower. Between 1722 and 1734 it is estimated that the campaigns in the southern provinces swallowed up some

130,000 soldiers. They died mostly of disease and it was only after the army withdrew in 1734 that it was able to return to the size it had been on Peter's death.

After Peter's death the Russian army went through a period of extensive 'Germanification' and foreigners were appointed to positions of influence and command. One such foreigner was Lieutenant-General James Keith, a Scottish Jacobite, who commanded the main field army. The most influential, however, was Burchard Christoph von Münnich, a German from Oldenburg. Münnich had served under the great Eugene of Savoy during the War of the Spanish Succession and then under Peter the Great. In 1731 he was appointed to the presidency of the Military Commission whose remit was to reform the army. This was expanded in 1736 to include the administration of the army. Münnich's reforms were farreaching and many. Some examples of the changes he oversaw included replacing the loose uniform of the Petrine period with a much tighter more western European coat, accompanied by tricorne, mitre caps and gaiters of a similarly western style. The hair of soldiers had previously been long and loose but now had to be plaited and powdered. He reduced the service of the rank and file from life to 25 years and improved their pay and conditions. He abolished a divisive pay structure that saw foreign officers paid more than their Russian comrades, for a compromise system under which all officers of the same rank received the same pay. Münnich believed that when in hostile Turkish territory, the army should manoeuvre

in large hollow squares with the artillery and baggage train protected in the centre. He even revived the practice of arming part of each battalion with pikes to help protect them against the more numerous Turkish cavalry. To help ensure the army was regularly and effectively supplied, Münnich established fortified depots on the Dniepr, Don and Bug rivers. His army's baggage train was 30,000 wagons and although this slowed the rate of advance it did mean that the army was properly provisioned, particularly in the inhospitable terrain of the Ukrainian steppe.

Peace did not last long and the Russian soldier was soon in action again against the Turks. It is interesting to note that the commander of the Russian forces at Zorndorf, General Fermor, published a *Disposition for the military arrangements and movements for a general battle against the Turks*, which demands that soldiers should attack the enemy, thereby gaining courage and the respect of the enemy. By the time of Zorndorf this principle seems to have been forgotten. The campaigns against the Turks started in 1736 and met with initial success; the Russians captured the fortress of Perekop on the Crimean isthmus and the strong fortress-city of Azov. After the capture of Ochakov and the subjection of the Crimea in 1737, the following year was one of disasters. The Turks implemented scorched-earth tactics and this combined with disease forced Münnich to abandon both his advance through Moldavia and Ochakov. The year 1739 proved more successful for the Russians and having marched through Moldavia, Münnich was forced to bring his operations to an end with the signing of a peace treaty between Austria and Turkey. Russia signed a peace treaty in 1740 returning most of Münnich's conquests to Turkey. The Russians did however retain Azov. In the same year Elizabeth Petrovna became Empress and Münnich's days of favour were over. Elizabeth had Münnich and other 'Germans' tried and exiled. Elizabeth would be grateful, however, for Münnich's reforms when the army faced Frederick and the Prussians during the Seven Years War.

Command and control in the Russian army was extremely ponderous and slow. The fact that every decision of importance required the agreement of a council of war before it was implemented exacerbated the situation. Maria Theresa of Austria largely delegated authority to her field commanders whereas the court in St Petersburg meddled constantly in the army's command. In 1756 the 'Council around the Imperial Court', a Russian equivalent of the Austrian *Hofkriegsrath*, was established as it was believed that the conduct, direction and provision of supplies for the soldiers and the conduct of the campaign could only be decided by a body presided over by the Empress Elizabeth. This effectively relegated the commander of the field army to nothing more than a government official. The copious correspondence, almost daily, to and from St Petersburg effectively paralysed Russian field commanders in their campaigns against the energetic Frederick. This also cost the Russians the potential fruits of their victories. The size of the Russian train also hampered operations against Frederick. Apraxin's army in 1757, for example, required a good third of its manpower to service the 6,000 wagons of its train. Russian speed of manoeuvre was, therefore, unlikely to trouble Frederick.

The principal arms of the Russian army were those common to their western European counterparts. The infantry consisted of three Guards regiments and 41 line regiments. The infantry regiments were identified by



Prussian IR No.7 (Bevern) fought as part of Kanitz's wing that veered off course when supporting Manteuffel's advance guard. (Print after Menzel)



Prussian IR No.14 (Lewaldt). As part of Dohna's wing this regiment took part in the afternoon attacks on the Observation Corps. (Print after Menzel)

the names of towns, cities or provinces. In 1756 only 29 of the line infantry regiments were placed on a war footing; the remainder acted as a pool of replacements. The Guards regiments did not leave St Petersburg.

At the start of the Seven Years War the infantry regiment was divided into three battalions, each consisting of four companies with 141 men per company. Each company was in turn broken down into four platoons and each platoon into two sections or *artels*. The first two companies in the regiment were of grenadiers. These companies were larger with 200 men each. Like their western counterparts, it was not unusual for one of a regiment's grenadier companies to be detached to a composite grenadier battalion, and in 1756 they were organised into four permanent battalions. In 1757 each grenadier battalion consisted of four companies.

Mirroring their Prussian counterparts each regiment also had two 3-pdr light cannon; by the time of Zorndorf this had been increased to four. The regimental complement of artillerymen was one NCO and 30 gunners. By the time of the Seven Years War there had been a decline in the use of 'shock action' so favoured by Peter the Great. The 'Germanification' of the infantry was very apparent in the regulations of 1731, which were very detailed when it came to close order drill for manoeuvring around the battlefield and the Prussian method of musketry, but made no mention of the Russian soldiers' traditional strength – the bayonet. One constant throughout the Seven Years War, however, was the tenacity of the Russian infantryman in battle.

As in the infantry, the regular Russian cavalry was split into Guards and line regiments and included the wide variety of troop types common to other armies. There were two Guards regiments, five cuirassiers, 26 dragoon regiments and three of horse grenadiers. As with their infantry comrades, not all the Russian cavalry were earmarked for active service. In fact only 14 regiments totalling about 7,000 sabres took part. The irregular cavalry consisted of the hussars, Cossacks and, in time of war, Asiatic horsemen such as Kalmucks. The regiments were all organised in the same way, with 5 squadrons each of two companies. The cuirassier regiments were 800 strong, dragoon and horse grenadier regiments 1,000 and the hussars 900–1,000. The Cossacks also normally had about 1,000 men per regiment or *pulk*. The shock action tactics of Peter the Great were being replaced by an emphasis on firing at the halt and trotting in the charge. However, the new regulations were not properly put into effect until after the war had started and for a long time both systems remained in use alongside each other. Drawing on the lessons of the campaign, alongside hard training, by the end of the war the Russian cavalry were at times more than a match for their Prussian opponents.

The artillery was the best trained and equipped in Europe. Shuvalov, the Grand Master of the Artillery, was the foremost exponent of artillery and military engineering of the time. He was a firm believer that officers of these branches should receive a scientific education. Schools were established with an instructional emphasis on mathematics. The field artillery was formed into brigades of 20 cannon. A heavy regiment was formed of 26 cannon under the title of Corps of Bombardiers. In all there were 233 cannon in five different calibres. Shuvalov was a great reformer and introduced the famous 'Shuvalov' howitzer known as the 'Unicorn'. It fired solid shot, case and explosive and incendiary shell. It

was far more accurate and had a greater range than the conventional artillery, which made it a lethal weapon on the battlefields against Prussia. The Artillery Regulations of 1759 had a wealth of new ideas concentrating on ammunition replenishment in the field, indirect fire and movement and most importantly they told the gunner that their first duty was to act to the profit of the infantry and cavalry.

The supply services of the Russian army were rudimentary to say the least and the medical services non-existent.

The Russian army that took to the field against Frederick the Great was in a period of transition but it retained the characteristic dogged determination of the Petrine army and quite literally fought the Prussian armies to a standstill when they met. Of all his opponents, the Russian army gave Frederick his greatest headaches.

THE PRUSSIAN ARMY

The Prussian infantry at Zorndorf consisted of 11 musketeer regiments, four fusilier regiments, each of two battalions, and nine composite grenadier battalions. The musketeer and fusilier regiments each had six companies per battalion, five musketeer or fusilier and one grenadier. The two regimental grenadier companies were combined into grenadier battalions of four companies. The cavalry at Zorndorf consisted of six cuirassier regiments, five dragoon and three hussar regiments. The cuirassier and dragoon cavalry regiments each consisted of five squadrons, while the hussars each had ten squadrons. A hussar regiment could also be split in two, each element of five squadrons being known as a battalion. Frederick had 193 cannon at Zorndorf, but this figure includes the two guns each musketeer and fusilier regiment deployed. The Prussian artillery was normally formed into 'Grand Batteries'. The cannon with the infantry were normally 3-pdrs and those with the artillery park 6-, 9- or 12-pdrs.

In the 1760s Frederick graded his regiments. Below is a list of those regiments that fought at Zorndorf: * is good and ** excellent. His own comments are in speech marks.

Infantry Regiments:

*IR No.2 (Kanitz)** – Hard fighting, especially for an East Prussian regiment.

IR No.4 (Rautter) – Knocked about at Gross-Jägersdorf and behaved badly at Zorndorf; Rautter, the Commander, was disgraced for his performance.

IR No.7 (Bevern) – Fought well at Kolin and Zorndorf and one that had 'done honour to the House of Brandenburg'.

IR No.11 (Below) – Fought well at Prague but did badly at Zorndorf and Maxen.

IR No.14 (Lewaldt) – Took heavy casualties at Gross-Jägersdorf and at Kunersdorf the following year.

IR No.16 (Dohna) – An East Prussian regiment that had heavy casualties at Zorndorf and Kunersdorf and was for some reason disliked by Frederick.

*IR No.18 (Prinz von Preussen)** – 'I owe my salvation to these regiments ... I could do anything with troops like these.' Fought well in all its battles, particularly at Zorndorf.

Grenadiers of IR No.27 (Kleist). The grenadiers did not fight at Zorndorf, but the parent regiment was part of Dohna's wing. The illustration shows the conspicuous mitre cap; the mounted officer could be the battalion commander, as officers did not wear mitre caps. Grenadier battalions did not carry colours. (Engraving after Menzel)



IR No.22 (Prinz Moritz) – This tough regiment was destroyed at Kolin and suffered heavy casualties at Zorndorf.

IR No.23 (Forcade) – ‘When I want to see real soldiers, I look out for this regiment.’ Did very well at Prague and was distinguished at Zorndorf.

IR No.25 (Kalckstein) – Fought exceptionally well at Kolin where it was effectively annihilated and had been rebuilt.

IR No.27 (Asseburg) – At Lobositz and Breslau the regiment was excellent. Frederick remarked, ‘... it has only ever known how to attack!’

IR No.37 (Kurssell) Fusilier – It suffered heavy casualties at Prague and at Zorndorf and Kunersdorf. Considered an unlucky regiment.

IR No.40 (Kreytzen) Fusilier – Did well at Zorndorf but saw relatively little action during the Seven Years War.

IR No.46 (Bülow) Fusilier – Was in the thick of fighting at Zorndorf and Kunersdorf but was captured at Landeshut. Removed from the establishment 1760–63.

*IR No. 49 (Diericke) Fusilier ** – Was in heavy fighting at Zorndorf and Kunersdorf where it was particularly distinguished.

Cavalry Regiments:

CR No.2 (Prinz von Preussen) – Did not do well at Kolin, where it was routed from the field of battle, but performed well at Zorndorf.

CR No.5 (Markgraf Friedrich) – Distinguished at Torgau, Kunersdorf and Liegnitz.

*CR No.8 (Seydlitz)*** – Fought exceptionally well at Kolin, Rossbach, Leuthen and Liegnitz.

*CR No.10 (Gendarmes)*** – Always brigaded with the Garde du Corps. Fought superbly at Rossbach, Zorndorf and Hochkirch.

CR No.11 (Leib-Karabiniers) – Fought very well at Zorndorf.

CR No.13 (Garde du Corps) – A socially prestigious unit that fought very well at Rossbach, Zorndorf and Hochkirch. Only three squadrons strong.

*DR No.1 (Normann)*** – Considered remarkable for the bravery it showed in all its campaigns, it fought particularly well at Kolin, Leuthen and Liegnitz.

*DR.No.4 (Czettritz)*** – This regiment was distinguished at Rossbach and Zorndorf.

DR No.6 (Schorlemer) – Known as the 'Porzellan-Regiment' it was in the thick of the fighting at Zorndorf and Kunersdorf.

DR No.7 (Plettenberg) – Did exceptionally well at Zorndorf.

DR No.8 (Alt-Platen) – Fought at both Gross-Jägersdorf and Zorndorf where it was distinguished in both battles.

*HR No.2 (Zieten)*** – Known as the 'Red Hussars' it was distinguished at Prague, Zorndorf, Hochkirch and Torgau.

HR No.3 (Warnery) – Fought very well at Prague and was distinguished at Liegnitz.

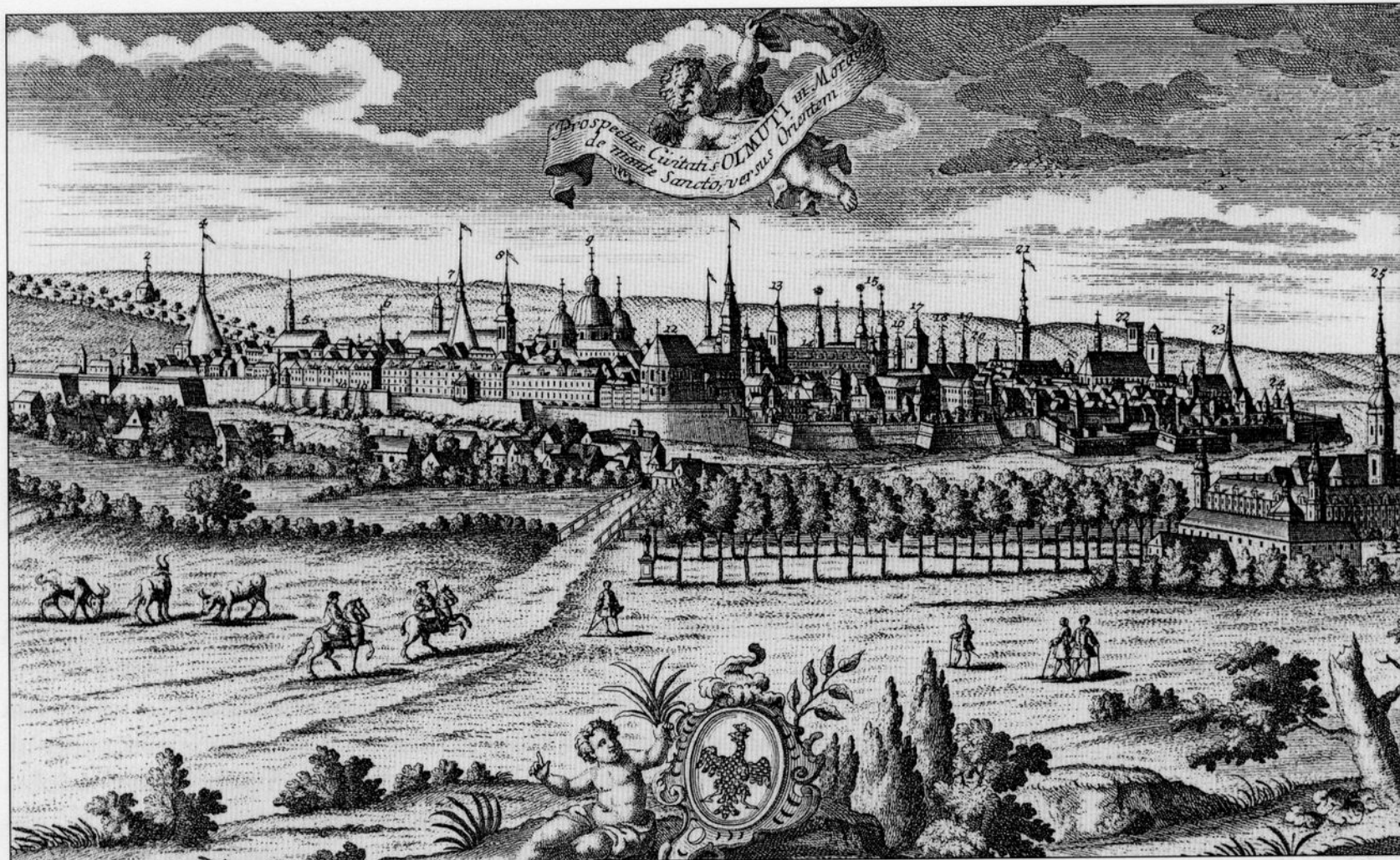
*HR No.5 (Ruesch)*** – Known as the 'Black Hussars', its badge was a Death's Head. This regiment was distinguished throughout the wars. The officers were very rich and the regiment as a whole fought with great ferocity.

THE CAMPAIGN TO ZORNDORF

In January 1758, while Frederick was making his plans for the forthcoming campaigning season, Fermor, the new commander of the Russian army, marched back into East Prussia. Fermor's quick winter campaign had caught the Prussians off their guard as Lewaldt, the local Prussian commander, was away in Pomerania dealing with the Swedes at Stralsund. By 22 January the Russians were entering the capital of East Prussia, Königsburg, and had not fought a single action. During the next six weeks the Russians moved their supplies forward and took firm control of the rest of the province. The Russian success raised allied spirits and gave cause for an optimism that had been hard to maintain after the defeat at Leuthen. The allies genuinely believed that a successful combined Russian, Austrian and Swedish operation was now possible. The first part of the plan required Fermor to march his army westwards across Poland to the Oder River, from where he could launch an attack against Berlin or Silesia. The problem that faced Fermor was that Poland possessed very few roads running east-west and the country was barely able to support its own population let alone an army of some 72,000 men.

THE OLMÜTZ CAMPAIGN

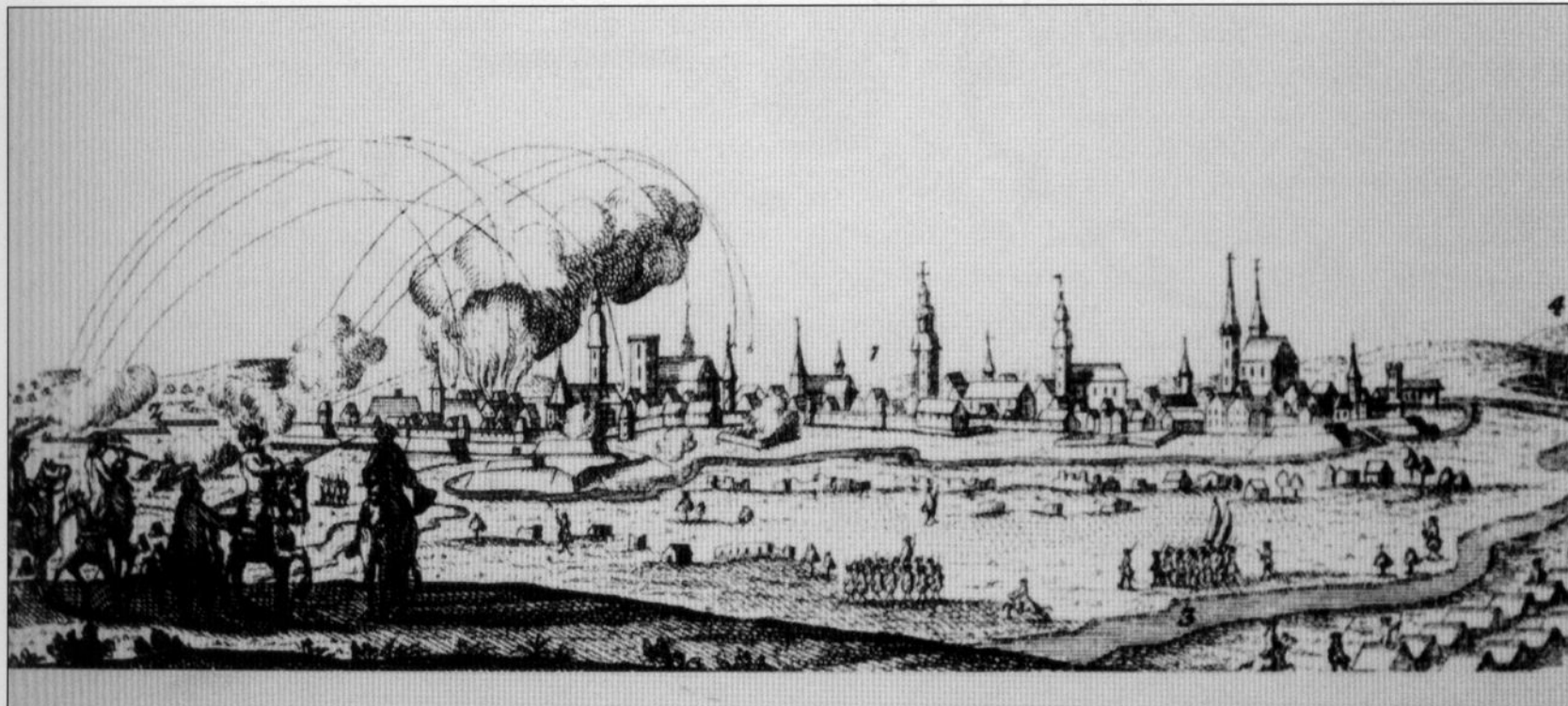
Having spent the winter refitting his army and turning the new recruits into efficient soldiers while the Russians overran East Prussia, Frederick showed not the slightest concern about the Russian threat and resolved to strike at the Austrians first. By the middle of March the majority of the Prussian army had concentrated at the fortress-town of Neisse in Silesia. The first task for his army would, however, be the capture of Schweidnitz, which had been blockaded all winter. On 22 March Lieutenant-General Tresckow was given the siege train and 10,000 soldiers and entrusted with converting the blockade into a formal siege. The siege began on 2 April. The Austrian commander, General Thürheim, inspired his garrison to a gallant defence and by 18 April the Prussian engineers had made no progress with nothing to show except the expenditure of large quantities of shot and powder. More importantly the patience of their King was wearing very thin and his already low regard for engineers and their art plumbed new depths. Frustrated with the stalemate Frederick ordered a premature assault on the Gallows Fort on 18 April, which to everyone's surprise was successful but only after stiff resistance by the Austrian garrison. When the fortress surrendered the garrison had been reduced from 8,000 to just 5,000 soldiers. Daun had tried to rescue the beleaguered garrison, but his advanced detachments under Loudon had been driven out of Silesia before he was ready, preventing any further attempt.



Frederick was delighted with the turn of events. With the fall of Schweidnitz, not only had he secured his lines of communications but had also tricked the Austrians into believing he might strike into Bohemia, when his real intention was to march into Moravia. To strengthen the deception Frederick conducted a reconnaissance in person of the area around Glatz, knowing that his movements would be reported immediately by the Austrian cavalry vedettes and infantry picquets. The Prussian army of 55,000 was concentrated around Neisse and shortly after returning on 25 April Frederick had it on the move. It marched southward in two columns over the Silesian foothills into Moravia and arrived at the border town of Troppau on 29 April. Frederick knew that if his invasion of Moravia were successful he would be able to threaten Vienna itself and, at the same time, draw the Austrian army away from the Oder River and any potential union with the Russians.

The two Prussian columns continued their advance into Moravia and on 3 May, having marched across the upland watersheds of the Black Sea and the Baltic, they emerged in the spring sunshine onto the plain north of Olmütz. The Prussians found the road open and with no opposition reported in the area they continued their advance to Olmütz. Frederick was as confident as he had ever been and, having crossed the March River, the columns united on 5 May in front of Olmütz itself. Over the next days the 8,500-man Austrian garrison watched as the Prussian camps sprang up around the city as the investment began. Frederick had passed through Olmütz during the War of the Austrian Succession and would have noted the relatively poor defences. This might have coloured his judgement, before he left Neisse, of the task that lay ahead of him. When he arrived in front of Olmutz, however, he found the Austrians had considerably

A view of Olmütz by F.B. Werner from about 1750. Olmütz was considered to be one of the most agreeably beautiful cities in the Austrian lands. (AKG)



An engraving of the Prussian bombardment of Olmütz. Frederick disliked sieges and although this one was entrusted to his capable lieutenant, Keith, it did not prove successful. (Author's collection)

improved the fortifications of the city. The defences were now first class and required a formal siege. The problem for Frederick was that his siege train was still two weeks' march away and would not catch up with the main army until 20 May.

In the meantime the Austrians under Marshal Daun had not been idle. Frederick's move against Olmütz created great alarm in Vienna, the Austrian court convinced that the Prussians would bypass the city and march on Vienna. Daun, deep in the Bohemian countryside and realising that Frederick had managed to side-step him, marched towards Olmütz and took post at Leutomischel near the Bohemian–Moravian border on 5 May. He remained here for some time using his light troops, the Croats, to harass the Prussian lines of communication. This was a task they carried out with great skill and energy. Daun remained in the area of Leutomischel for two weeks and it was not until prodded by Vienna at the end of May that he moved up to Gewitsch. Here he was only two days' march away from Olmütz. The morale of the Austrian army was greatly improved, firstly by moving into the pleasant and fertile province of Moravia and secondly because Daun stayed on the offensive, manoeuvring in an attempt to goad the Prussians to attack him on ground of his choosing. At the very least his aim was to distract the Prussian siege effort and prevent a rapid advance of the siege-works. Daun had been given complete freedom of action by Maria Theresa to decide how best Olmütz could be relieved.

The Prussian siege artillery did finally arrive on 20 May and the first trenches were only opened eight days later. Siege craft was not a particular Prussian strength and it was not until 31 May that the siege finally got under way. Having had to wait for nearly a month to start the siege proper Frederick was not pleased when, as the first rounds were fired, it became perfectly clear that the engineers had sited the batteries too far from the walls of the city to be effective. With the Prussian batteries opening fire on the city, Marschall, the Austrian Commander, issued a proclamation saying that there would be no talk of capitulation and that such talk was treason, punishable by death. He was also energetic in his defence, launching two successful sorties against the Prussian siege lines. Lieutenant-Colonel



Alfson, the commander of the Austrian artillery, was able to dominate the Prussian artillery throughout the siege and fired some 67,000 rounds from his cannon and mortars. A successful siege is all about steady progress and this requires expertise, skill and patience. The Prussian engineers did not possess a great deal of the first two and Frederick certainly did not possess any of the third and he compounded the problem by perpetually meddling with his engineers' plans. This combination ensured the siege was not properly managed and as the weeks passed by, the Prussians consumed more of their supplies than they had allowed for. It was becoming clear that supplies would soon be insufficient to enable the army to remain in Moravia, let alone continue the siege. It was calculated that the supplies would last till the middle of June at best. At the beginning of June Frederick ordered a large supply convoy of some 3,000 wagons to concentrate in Silesia, prepared to re-supply the army in Moravia. The wagon train, escorted by 8,000 men (infantry and cavalry), recruits and convalescents, finally started out from Neisse on 21 June. Word of the wagon train soon reached the Austrian camp and Daun resolved to take action, knowing that a successful strike at the wagon train could break the siege. The two generals chosen by Daun, Loudon and Siskovics, successfully ambushed the supply train just as it was about to complete the last stage of its long journey. On 28 June Loudon made the first effort with 4,000 men when his force intercepted the unwieldy train between Bautsch and Guntersdorf. Initially the Austrians had the upper hand, but Siskovics failed to arrive and the Prussian officer commanding the column, Colonel Mosel, was able to thrust aside Loudon's troops and straggle into Neudorf. In Neudorf the Prussians found Zieten with 3,000 men to escort the wagons, but the column had been so badly shaken by their experience that they needed a day to compose themselves before setting

Plan of the Prussian siege lines at Olmütz. (Author's collection)

out again on 30 June. This delay enabled Siskovics to retrace his steps and as the supply column was nearing the Domstadt Pass, he assailed it with 5,000 troops from the left. Loudon joined in, attacking from the right, and the Prussian escort was driven off, managing to take 200 wagons with them. The remainder were forced into a laager and after a stubborn fight fell into Loudon's hands. The Austrians had lost over 1,000 men but they had achieved their aim. Zieten had evaded capture and escaped to Troppau but was now separated from Frederick. The Prussians lost 4,000 in the engagements but more importantly, there would be no re-supply for Frederick's army outside Olmütz. At the same time the Austrians were finding routes through the hills and before long the main army was bearing down on Olmütz in several columns. On 1 July Daun made contact with the garrison in Olmütz, effectively ending the siege. Frederick raised the siege on 2 July and, with the aim of marching on Vienna and bringing the war to Maria Theresa's doorstep thwarted, Frederick now had to extricate the Prussian army from enemy-controlled Moravia. His decision to retreat was no doubt influenced by intelligence that the Russian army was on the move from their camps on the Vistula.

Ever the general to ensure the enemy danced to his tune, on 2 July Frederick moved his army northwest into Bohemia with Keith leading one column and Frederick the other. He could not retrace his steps into Silesia

This picture illustrates an episode when Frederick encountered an Austrian Pandour (Croat) operating in Moravia. Frederick is reputed to have berated the Pandour with 'You, you! – Yes, you, I hope you have no powder in the pan!' Frederick disliked intensely the apparent sneaking around indulged in by light troops. (Print after Röchling)





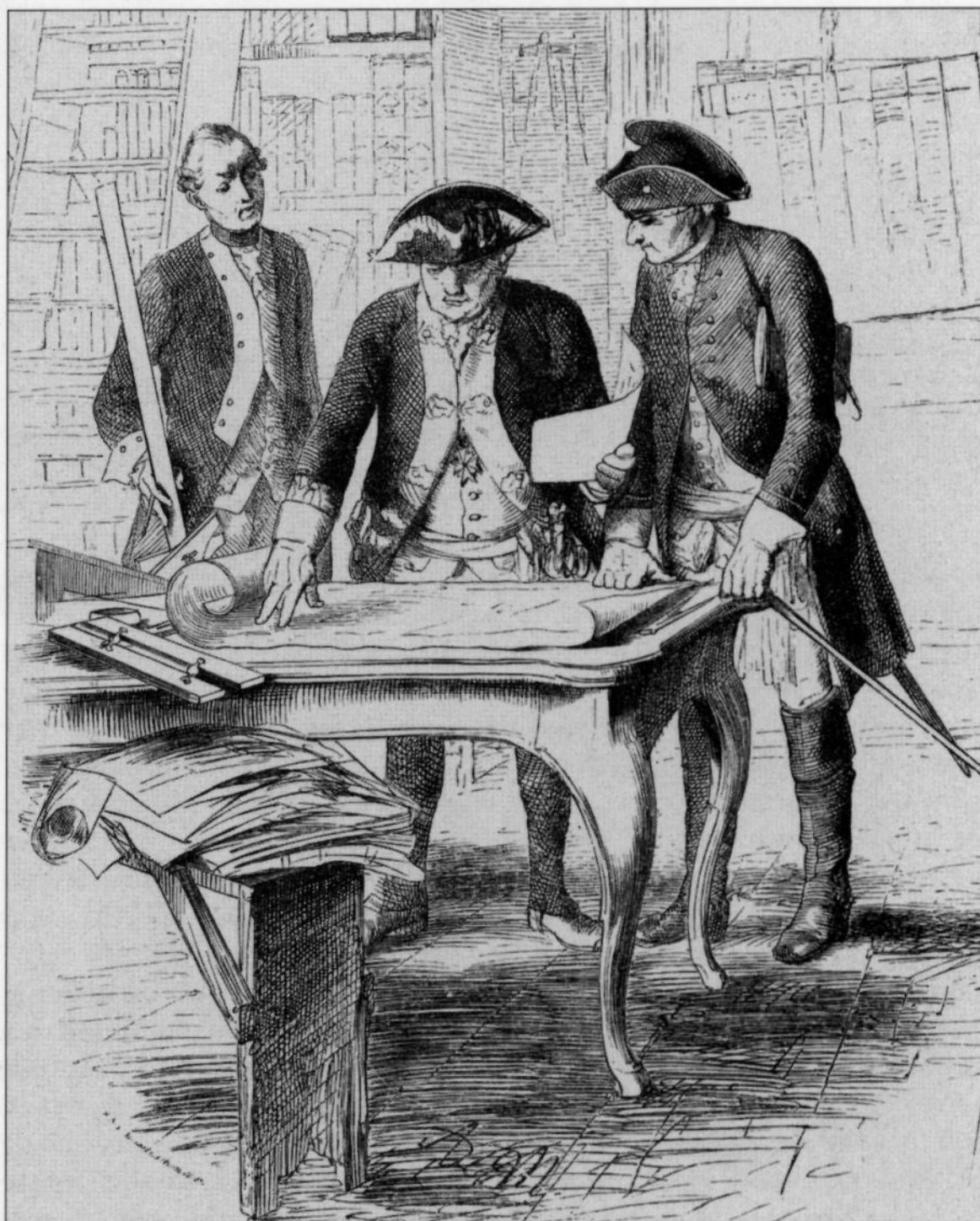
The Pandour, shamed by Frederick, lowered his musket and stood behind the tree till the King had passed. (Engraving after Menzel)

as the route was crawling with Austrian light troops supported by Daun's field army. Frederick was making for the Austrian magazine at Königgrätz and, although Daun did not start his pursuit till 7 July he once again reacted swiftly, dispatching Loudon and some light troops to beat Frederick to the town. When Frederick arrived in the town on 14 July he found the majority of the stores either destroyed or carried off by Loudon's light troops. The Prussians lingered at Königgrätz for ten days, during which time Daun was able to catch up. The Austrian general had improved the town's defences earlier in the year and, probably wisely, was not inclined to attack Frederick. When on 25 July Frederick heard that the Russians were nearing the Oder, he decided to evacuate Königgrätz. At this point Daun should have at least made an effort to bring Frederick to battle. The Austrians were watching the three main roads to Silesia, but Frederick tricked them and took a difficult route via Skanitz, Nachod and Grüssau, reaching Landeshut on 9 August. Frederick left Landeshut on 11 August with 15,000 men, pushing across Lusatia to the aid of the hard-pressed Lieutenant-General Dohna on the Oder. Daun's actions continued to leave much to be desired and, failing to pursue Frederick, he should at least have dealt with the 40,000 Prussians remaining in Silesia under General Keith. Daun instead turned his attentions towards the Prussians in Saxony under Prince Henry. Initially the Austrians and the Imperial army, now commanded by the Prince of Zweibrücken, hatched a plan to encircle and crush Prince Henry. This came to nothing when Zweibrücken got cold feet and Daun wasted time holding a review for Count Haugwitz. In the meantime Frederick marched, unhindered, against his new enemy.

THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE INTO PRUSSIA

While Frederick had been conducting the unsuccessful siege of Olmütz the Russians under Fermor had begun their move to the Oder. The conquest of East Prussia, undefended and geographically isolated from the rest of Prussia, had been relatively easy. The remainder of the Prussian state was a more difficult proposition as it stretched across northern central Europe and down to the Austrian provinces of Moravia and Bohemia. The rivers tended to flow southeast to northwest and would be of little use for the Russians, indeed they provided the Prussians with natural lines of defence. By far the most daunting in their path would be the Oder. Not only did its course run almost completely through Prussian territory but it was studded with a series of fortresses; on the Baltic coast was the port of Stettin and upstream the towns and cities of Cüstrin, Glogau and Breslau.

The Russians under Fermor were still on the banks of the Vistula River in mid-May, with Fermor displaying the same indecision that had characterised his predecessor Apraxin. The delay was, however, also due



An Engineer officer (centre) discusses the position of artillery batteries with an artillery officer (right). Frederick inherited a small but well-run Engineer Corps in 1740 but after the excesses of their commander, Walrave, who was imprisoned (1748), and the conversion of the Pioneer Regiment (1758) to infantry, any Prussian engineering excellence started to wither on the vine. (Engraving after Menzel)

RUSSIAN AND PRUSSIAN MOVEMENTS TO AUGUST 1758



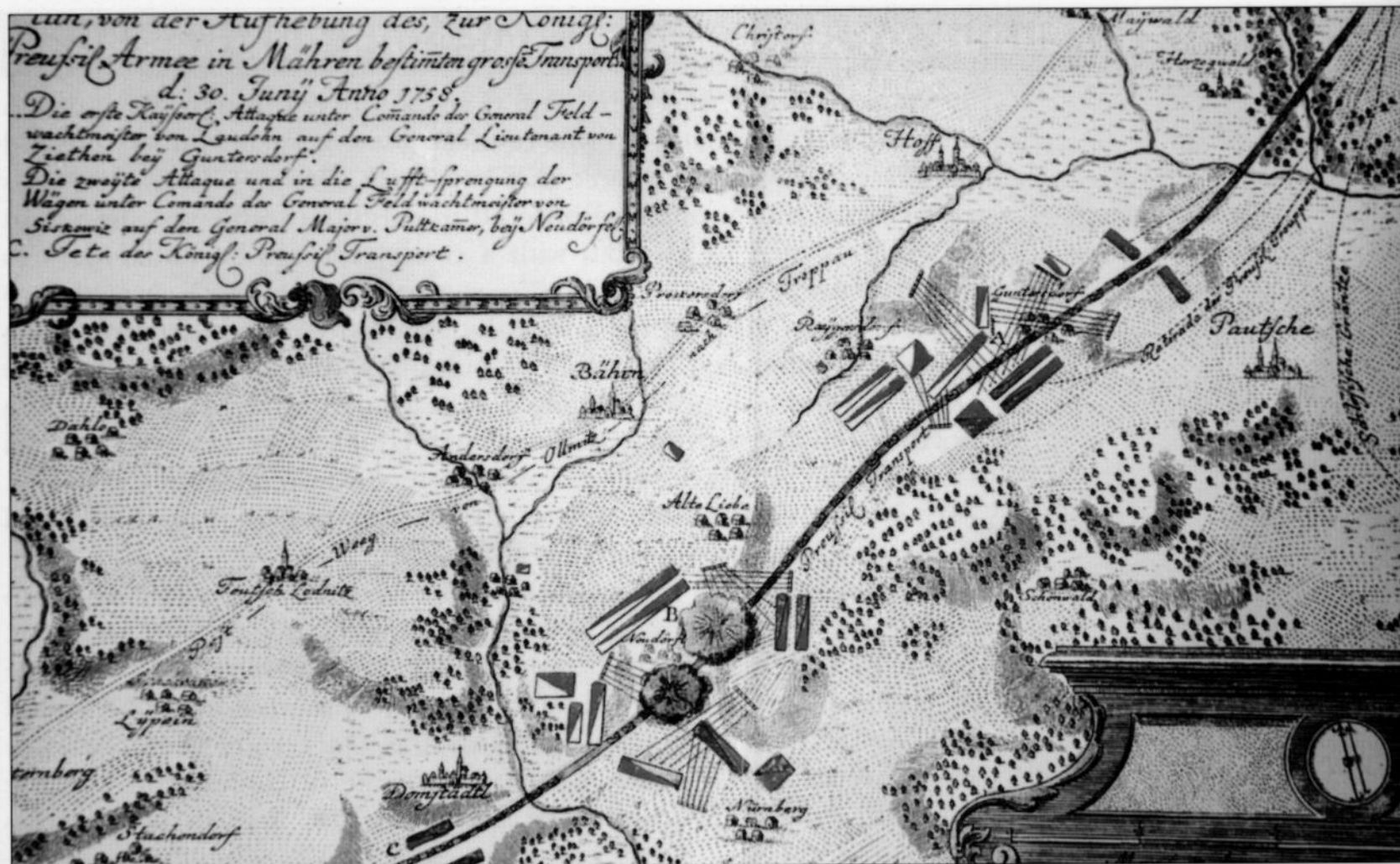
to other factors; the melting winter snows and spring rains were swelling the rivers, making them almost impassable and at the same time turning the bad Polish roads into a complete quagmire. With the onset of good weather the roads began to harden under the hot sun and become very dusty. Dust and sun sapped the Russian soldiers' strength as they marched westwards. Another reason for the delay was the failure of Czarina Elizabeth's Conference to decide upon a strategy. After months of indecision whether to join with the Swedes or the Austrians, they voted to combine with the Austrians and Fermor was instructed to march westwards as soon as the roads became passable. With May drawing to a close Fermor was ready. He had split his army into three corps; Fermor himself was at Dirschau with Saltykov, Browne upriver at Marienwerder and Golitsyn at Thorn. On 29 May the three columns set off towards their objective – Posen on the Warthe – Golitsyn moving west along the Vistula until he reached Bromberg. From there he would march southwest to Posen. Fermor (with Saltykov) and Browne, having crossed the Vistula, would move west in two columns on a parallel course as far as Bromberg and then, like Golitsyn, move southwest to Posen.

Fermor expected the concentration at Posen to be complete by 1 July; he would establish a forward operating base and wait for further instructions from St Petersburg. The advance through Poland was uneventful. Fermor and Browne rendezvoused at Tuchel on 14 June and Fermor reorganised the force into two corps. General Rumyantsev was given command of one and ordered to continue south-west, he would be accompanied by Demiku with a cavalry force, who had orders to patrol actively in Pomerania. No sooner had Demiku crossed into Pomerania on 20 June for a week-long raid, than he started pillaging from the populace. This drew a quick response from the Prussian General Platen, who was stationed with a small force of cavalry in the northeast of the province. Before Platen could arrive however Demiku skipped back across the border and rejoined Rumyantsev at Czarnikau. Fermor and Golitsyn did indeed concentrate at Posen on 1 July and Rumyantsev arrived downstream at Wronke.

Fermor rested his army, procured the necessary supplies and began examining the problems of advancing down the Warthe to Landsberg. Before he had finalised any plans a directive arrived from the Conference in St Petersburg. As Frederick was involved at Olmütz, it might be a good idea for Fermor to continue towards the Oder somewhere between Frankfurt an der Oder and Glogau to operate in conjunction with the Austrian army. This plan would also place the Russian army across



Prussian Miners. When the Pioneer Regiment was converted to infantry, its two companies of miners were retained. Recruited from the mining districts of the monarchy, the soldiers returned home during peacetime. (Engraving after Menzel)



Frederick's lines of communication. Fermor was also told that a new body of men, the Observation Corps, would be joining him. The plan rested on firstly the Observation Corps joining the main army and secondly a workable plan being drawn up with the Austrians. The Russian army marched out of its encampments around Posen on 11 July along the road to Meseritz, a town on the Obra River and importantly only a day's march from the Prussian border. As the Russian army neared Prussian territory so they gave more thought to the security of their huge wagon train and this slowed them considerably. They finally arrived at Meseritz on the 28 July; Rumyantsev entered Schwerin on the same day. To the Russians' great surprise they encountered no opposition and on 2 August with Demiku's cavalry acting as a screen they crossed over into Prussia proper. The main army occupied the town of Königswalde and Rumyantsev the town of Hammer. At this point the Russians once again halted, this time to wait for the Observation Corps, under its new commander Browne, to arrive from Posen. On 5 August after a gruelling march the *ad hoc* Observation Corps of dismounted dragoons, militia and garrison troops finally arrived at Paradies. They were disorganised and half starved and Fermor concluded that before they could move again, let alone face the enemy, they would need to rest and replenish their strength. To this end he moved the main army across the Warthe River to Landsberg and moved Rumyantsev's corps south to cover the Observation Corps. This was a precarious position for the Russians as Fermor now had his force divided by the Warthe River. An attack on Rumyantsev and the Observation Corps would very likely see them driven into the river if defeated. Lady Luck was smiling on the Russians for there was no attack and on 13 August Rumyantsev's corps and the Observation Corps crossed the Warthe to join Fermor with the main army at Landsberg.

Plan of the attack on the convoy taking provisions to the Prussians at Olmütz. (Author's collection)

RIGHT On 30 June 1758 Field Marshal Daun sidestepped Frederick and, executing a passage of the Morava in three columns, established contact with the garrison in Olmütz, breaking the siege. Prussian hussars can be seen skirmishing with Austrian cuirassiers while Austrian infantry appear on the right of the picture. (AKG)



The Prussians meanwhile were suffering from anxiety and indecision. General Dohna, the commander of the Prussian forces, had been at Wriesen when he learnt that the Russians had left Posen and were marching west. He decided to move down the Oder towards Frankfurt an der Oder with his 18 battalions and 31 squadrons. He arrived there on 31 July to receive a message from Frederick that reinforcements were on the way in the form of Major-General Hans Sigismund von Zieten with ten squadrons of cuirassiers, Major-General Kurszell was due to arrive at any moment from Glogau with a further nine battalions of infantry and that Frederick himself would be with him soon with yet more men. More

The Austrians under Siskovics and Loudon attacked and destroyed the Prussian convoy near Domstadt. The Prussians lost 2,400 casualties, 12 cannon and over 3,000 wagons. (Engraving after Menzel)





OPPOSITE, TOP **A generic picture showing the layout of lines of an encampment. The infantry, when not assisting in digging siege lines, would live in this environment. (Author's collection)**

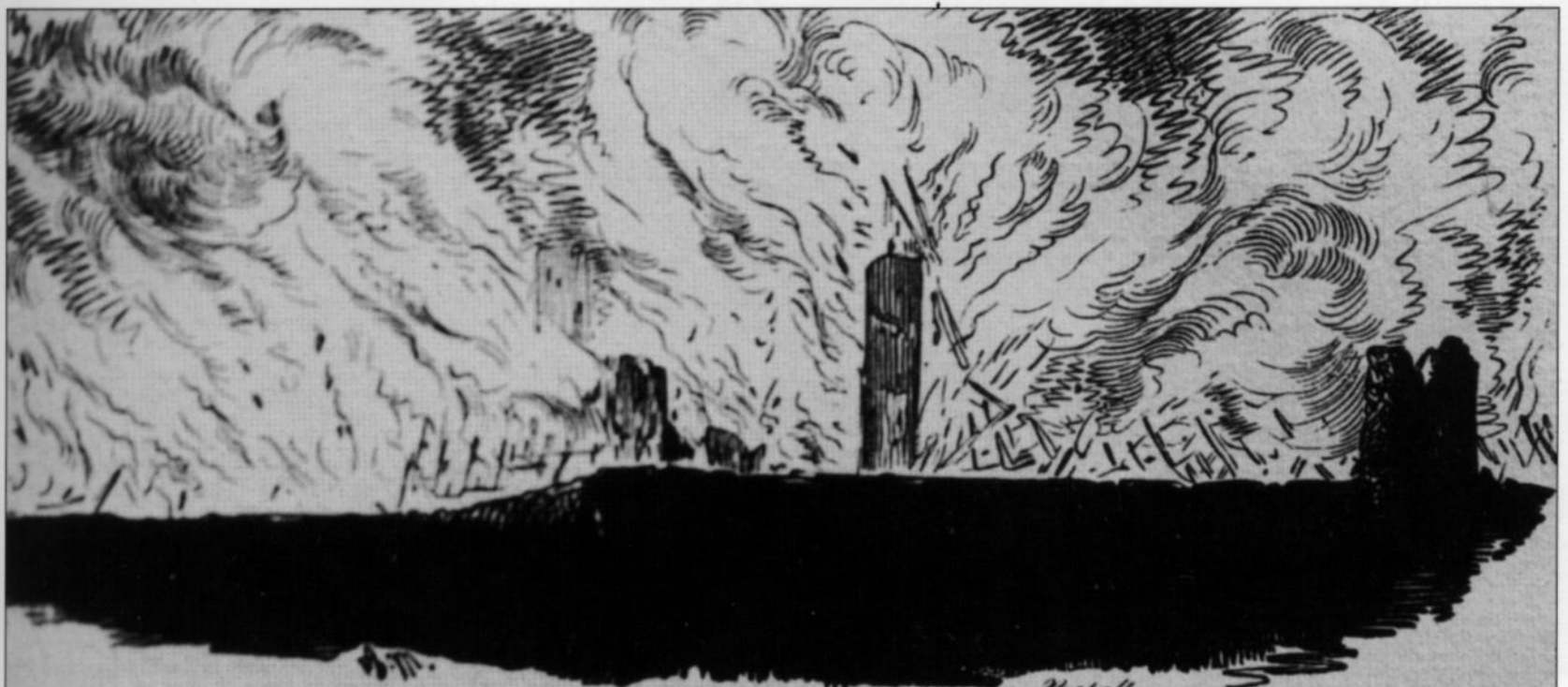
OPPOSITE, BOTTOM **Prussian grenadiers on the march to Cüstrin. (Engraving after Menzel)**

importantly he was told to attack the Russians at the earliest opportunity and this put Dohna in a quandary for he had been at Gross-Jägersdorf the year previously and had seen Lewaldt severely mauled by the Russians after he had launched an attack with inferior numbers. Not wanting to repeat the mistake, Dohna did, however, post his cavalry and light infantry between Zielenzig and Reppen under the command of General of Cavalry Malachowski. He kept his infantry and artillery in Frankfurt an der Oder so that the Russians could not cross the river at this point. The screen under Malachowski retired as the Russians advanced but only as far as Reppen. Still Dohna did not carry out Frederick's orders to close with the Russians and it was not until he received word that the Russians were taking stores and money from Zielenzig that he stirred from Frankfurt. On 12 August Dohna crossed the Oder River with his whole command, including the reinforcements, and advanced towards Zielenzig, only to find that the Russians under Rumyantsev and the Observation Corps had eluded him by crossing the Warthe.

FREDERICK MARCHES TO THE ODER

Frederick never hesitated in striking at his enemies in the campaigning season. He was never too squeamish to sacrifice a few hundred lives to win an advantage over an enemy. In August 1758 Frederick was a powerhouse of determination and energy, hastening north to Dohna's assistance in the realisation that not only did Fermor's advance have to be checked promptly but a decisive victory also had to be achieved. The Prussians left Landshut on 11 August with 17 battalions and 38 squadrons. It was high summer and the weather was blisteringly hot, but Frederick's desire to concentrate with Dohna as soon as possible gave the army little rest. Throughout the army soldiers became ill and many died of heat exhaustion. Frederick's initial objective was Tschicherzig, a small town on the Oder, but when he reached there on 16 August he was told that there were no Russians south of the Warthe River. His original plan to join forces with Dohna at Tschicherzig therefore had to be amended and he sent word

BELOW **The Russian bombardment of Cüstrin sets fire to the town. (Engraving after Menzel)**





to Dohna that they should unite at Gorgast a few miles west of the fortress town of Cüstrin. Dohna had left Frankfurt on 13 August and on reaching Gorgast he sent reinforcements of four battalions and 16 squadrons of cavalry under General Schorlemer on to Cüstrin. Frederick's one fear was that the Russians would reach Cüstrin before him and that the city would fall. The Prussian army arrived at Crossen on 18 August, crossed over the Oder and, footsore, boldly pressed on to Frankfurt, arriving on 20 August. Frederick's weary troops marched into Gorgast on 21 August and, without waiting to rest, Frederick rode out to Cüstrin to inspect the city and its defences, which were under Russian bombardment.

The Russian plan for dealing with Cüstrin had been put into effect even as the Observation Corps crossed the Warthe River. Saltykov's and Golitsyn's troops and a siege train would advance quickly on the city. Rumyantsev would advance his corps northwest to the area around Stargard and pursue its operations against Stettin and Colberg. Fermor left Browne with the dishevelled Observation Corps in the area of Landsberg, while the corps cavalry was distributed amongst other parts of the army. On 15 August Russian and Prussian light cavalry clashed outside Cüstrin with the Prussian horsemen having to withdraw into the outskirts of the fortress. They were followed up by Fermor's infantry, which cut all land access between the Warthe and Oder rivers.

An illustration of IR No.27 (Kleist) marching in the hot summer sun of 1758. Frederick's marches to confront his enemies were always conducted with an energy not matched by his opponents. This is a far more realistic illustration than the leisurely picture by Menzel. (Print after Röchling)

Cüstrin besieged by the Russians

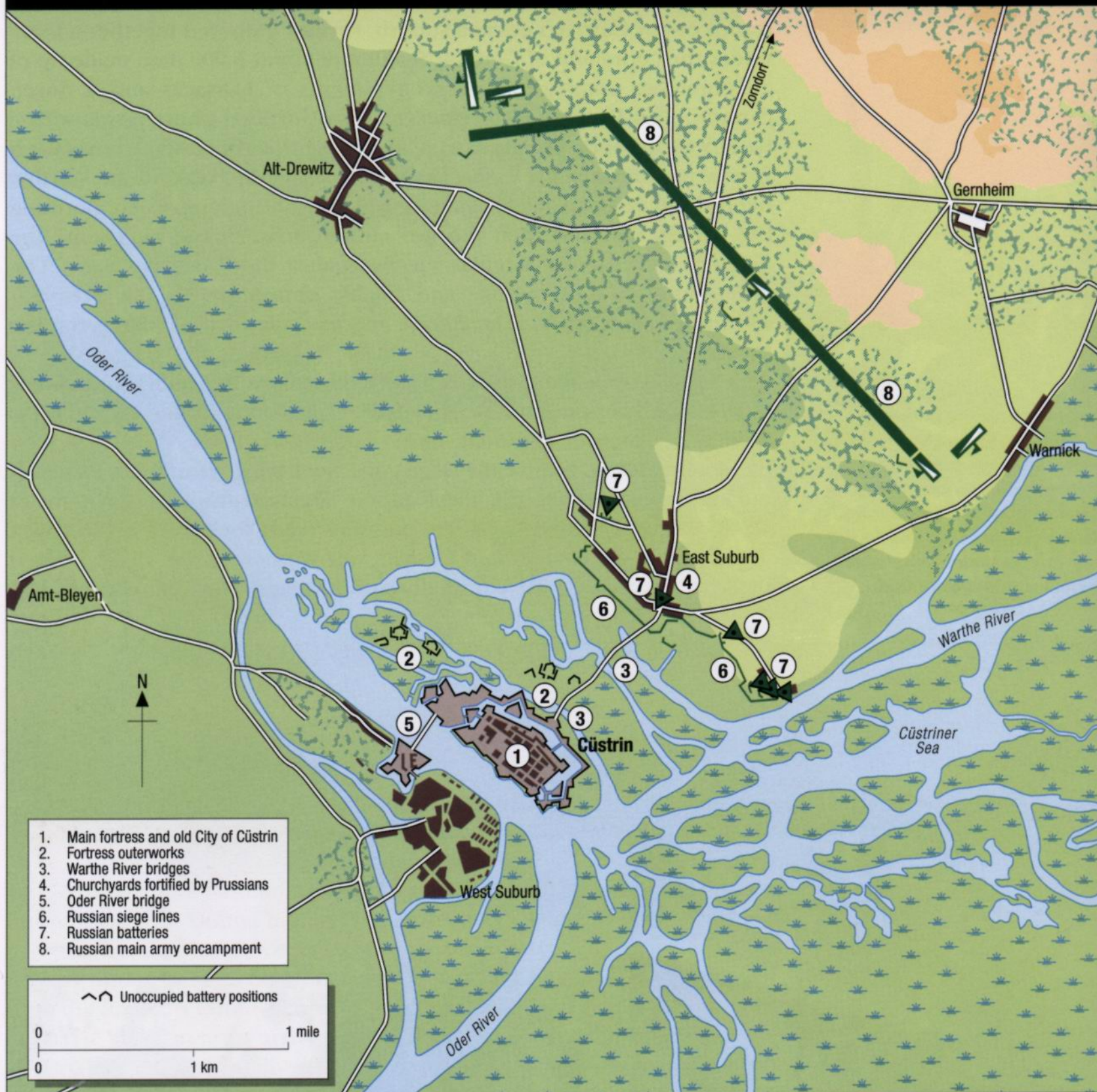
The first task for the Russians on 15 August was to clear the Prussian troops out of Cüstrin's eastern suburb. Fermor gathered together a force under the command of General Stofflen of about 5,000 men made up of 20 grenadier companies, several regiments of Cossacks and a dozen cannon. The Prussian defenders held two fortified churchyards with a battery in support. The Russian plan was for the grenadiers to execute a frontal assault while the Cossacks sneaked along the banks of the Warthe, behind the defenders. The plan went well, with the grenadiers storming the battery first and then the two churchyards. At the same time the Cossacks were having singular success against the Prussian cavalry. The fight was brief but intense and finally, outnumbered, the Prussians withdrew across the Warthe Bridge and into the fortress, damaging the bridge as they went.

The Russian army carried out siege operations in a different manner to western European armies. They first stormed the ground required for their siege batteries and then, under cover of darkness, constructed the battery position to receive the siege guns. So, having cleared the Prussians out of the eastern suburb, the Russians laboured through the night of 15/16 August to have five battery positions ready for their guns by dawn. The Prussian commandant of Cüstrin, von Wuthenow, had been ordered by Frederick to hold the city at all costs. Although the initial actions had

Frederick tells the people of Cüstrin that he had been unable to come sooner and that he wishes the misfortune of the siege had not befallen the city. He asks for patience and he will help rebuild their homes again. (Hermann Emil Pohle/AKG)



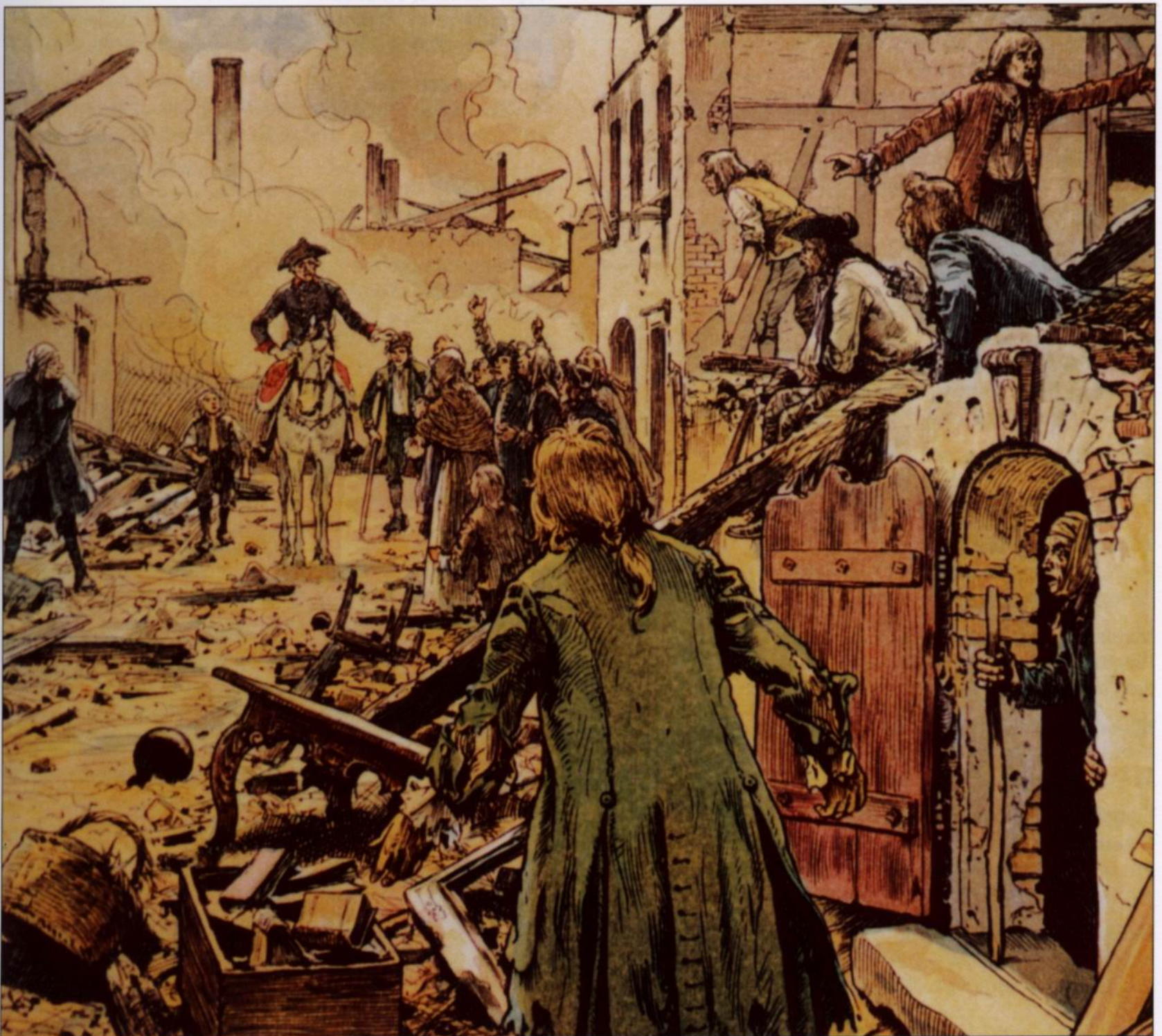
THE SIEGE OF CÜSTRIN, AUGUST 1758



revealed a lack of planning, von Wuthenow did manage to get enough cannon mounted and manned to counter-battery the Russian guns. In the end he was able to fire six shots for every one of the Russians'. He had 2,000 men inside the city and could call upon Dohna at Gorgast if required. Von Wuthenow was confident he would be able to hold the city. The bombardment of Cüstrin started in the early hours of 16 August and some inadequately stored hay was quickly set alight. Before long the city was ablaze and the fire was so hot that the gunners had to leave their posts until the fire abated. On their return they saw the city had been almost completely incinerated. Fermor then opened up an ineffective bombardment on the city walls. The Russians did not have a proper siege train and the mortars and much-heralded Unicorns they did have were of

too small a calibre to open a breach for an infantry assault. The Oder River restricted Fermor's approach operations and more importantly communications with the friendly western bank remained open. Desperate for some sort of success, Fermor ordered his artillery to attempt to destroy the bridges across the Oder. This was a disaster and wasted more shot. The reality was that to have any chance of reducing the city the Russians needed the one thing they did not have – a proper siege train. By 19 August Russian supplies were running very low. Captured Prussian soldiers and deserters told Fermor that Frederick was marching to relieve Cüstrin with up to 40,000 men and Fermor decided to make crossing the Oder as difficult as possible. Rumyantsev was ordered to increase his force at Schwedt and destroy all the bridges and boats between Schwedt and Cüstrin. At the same time the Observation Corps was ordered up from Landsberg. The siege lines were converted into a defensive position should the Prussians attack from the city. On 21 August Frederick arrived opposite Cüstrin on the west bank of the Oder and the Russian siege came to an end.

Frederick surveys the scene of destruction wrought by the Russian bombardment of Cüstrin.
(Print after Röchling)



ORDERS OF BATTLE, ZORNDORF, 25 AUGUST 1758

THE RUSSIAN ARMY

Army Commander:

General of Cavalry Villim Villimovitch Fermor

CAVALRY WINGS

Major-General T. Demiku

Archangel Dragoons – 3 sqns (ARC)

Kazan Cuirassiers – 3 sqns (KAZ)

3rd Cuirassiers – 5 sqns (3C)

Imperial Crown Prince Cuirassiers – 5 sqns (ICP)

Moldau Hussars – 5 sqns (MOL)

Gruzin Hussars – 5 sqns (GRU)

Horvath Hussars – 10 sqns (HOR)

Major-General Gaugreben

Tobolsk Dragoons – 3 sqns (TOB)

Novotroisk Cuirassiers – 3 sqns (NSK)

Kargopol Mounted Grenadiers – 3 sqns (KAR)

INFANTRY CORPS

Lieutenant-General Petr Semenovitch Saltykov

Major-General Dolgoruki

Butyrskii Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (BUT)

Susdal Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (SUS)

Major-General Uvarov

Schusselburg Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (SCH)

Tchernikov Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (TCH)

Major-General Leonitev

Kexholm Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (KEX)

Ladoga Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (LAD)

Major-General Liubomirski

Rostov Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (ROS)

3rd Grenadier Regiment – 2 bns (3GR)

Major-General Panin

1st Grenadier Regiment – 2 bns (1GR)

St Petersburg Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (STP)

Lieutenant-General Galitzin

Major-General Diez

Smolensk Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (SMO)

4th Grenadier Regiment – 2 bns (4GR)

Major-General Manteuffel

Neva Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (NEV)

2nd Grenadier Regiment – 2 bns (2GR)

Major-General Sievers

Murmansk Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (MUR)

Ryazan Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (RYS)

Major-General Kokoschkin

Kasan Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (KAS)

Troitsk Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (TRO)

Major-General Leontyev

Novgorod Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (NOV)

Voronezh Infantry Regiment – 2 bns (VOR)

Lieutenant-General T. Browne

Major-General Thiessen

4th Observation Corps Musketeer Regiment – 3 bns (4 MR)

5th Observation Corps Musketeer Regiment – 3 bns (5 MR)

Major-General Fast

1st Observation Corps Musketeer Regiment – 3 bns (1 MR)

3rd Observation Corps Musketeer Regiment – 3 bns (3 MR)

Independent Units

Cossacks – 7 regts (COS)

Serbian Hussars – 5 sqns (SER)

Dismounted Dragoons – 1 bn (DD)

Combined Grenadiers – 6 bns (CGB)

Observation Corps Grenadiers – 2 bns (OCG)

Artillery:

Howitzers – 1 bty

12-pdr Cannon – 2 btys

8-pdr Cannon – 3 btys

6-pdr Cannon – 3 btys

Shuvalov Howitzer – 5 btys

Unicorn Howitzer – 4 btys

THE PRUSSIAN ARMY

Commander in Chief

King Frederick II

Second in Command

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

CAVALRY WINGS

Lieutenant-General Friedrich Wilhelm von Seydlitz

Major-General Lentulus

8th Cuirassiers Seydlitz – 5 sqns (C8)

10th Cuirassiers Gendarmes – 5 sqns (C10)

13th Cuirassiers Garde du Corps – 3 sqns (C13)

Major-General Malachowsky

2nd Hussars Zieten – 10 sqns (H2)

3rd Hussars Malachowsky – 10 sqns (H3)

Lieutenant-General von Schorlemer

Major-General Hans Sigismund von Zieten

2nd Cuirassiers Prinz von Preussen – 5 sqns (C2)

5th Cuirassiers Markgraf Friedrich – 5 sqns (C5)

Major-General von Bredow

11th Cuirassiers Leib-Karabiniers – 5 sqns (C11)

1st Dragoons Normann – 5 sqns (D1)

Major-General Marschall

6th Dragoons Schorlemer – 10 sqns (D6)

7th Dragoons Plettenberg – 5 sqns (D7)

8th Dragoons Alt-Platen – 5 sqns (D8)

INFANTRY WINGS

Lieutenant-General Manteuffel

Major-General Kahlden

Grenadier Battalion Kremzow – 1 bn (17/22)

Grenadier Battalion Petersdorff – 1 bn (11/14)

Grenadier Battalion Kleist – 1 bn (4/16)

Grenadier Battalion Alt-Billerbeck – 1 bn (8/46)

Major-General Kurszell

Infantry Regiment No. 2 Kanitz – 2 bns (2)

Grenadier Battalion Burgsdorf – 1 bn (38/43)

Standing Grenadier Battalion Lossow – 1 bn (Sgb 4)

Lieutenant-General Kanitz

Major-General Flemming

Infantry Regiment No.22 Furst Moritz – 2 bns (22)

Infantry Regiment No.37 Kurssell (Fusilier) – 2 bns (37)

Infantry Regiment No.46 Bülow (Fusilier) – 2 bns (46)

Major-General Diericke

Infantry Regiment No.16 Dohna – 2 bns (16)

Infantry Regiment No.7 Bevern – 2 bns (7)

Major-General Rautter

Infantry Regiment No.4 Rautter – 1 bn (4)

Infantry Regiment No.11 Below – 1 bn (11)

Garrison Gren Battalion Plötz – 1 bn (gar6/gar8)

Grenadier Battalion Manstein – 1 bn (2/gar2)

Lieutenant-General Dohna

Major-General Braunschweig

Infantry Regiment No.18 Prinz von Preussen – 2 bns (18)

Infantry Regiment No.23 Forcade – 2 bns (23)

Grenadier Battalion Wedell – 1 bn (1/23)

Major-General Gablenz

Infantry Regiment No.40 Alt-Kreytzen (Fusilier) – 2 bns (40)

Infantry Regiment No.49 Diericke (Fusilier) – 2 bns (49)

Major-General Bülow

Infantry Regiment No.14 Lewaldt – 2 bns (14)

Infantry Regiment No.25 Kalckstein – 2bns (25)

Infantry Regiment No.27 Asseburg – 2 bns (27)

Independent Units

4th Dragoons Czettritz – 5 sqns (D4)

5th Hussars Reusch (Black Hussars) – 10 sqns (H5)

Artillery:

6-pdr Cannon – 7 btys

12-pdr Cannon – 11 btys

24-pdr Cannon – 1 bty

NOTES:

1. The approximate size for each force was:

Prussian: Infantry – 38 battalions

Cavalry – 88 squadrons

Artillery – 193 cannon (including battalion pieces)

Russian: Infantry – 61 battalions

Cavalry – 50 squadrons

Artillery – 136 cannon (including battalion pieces)

2. The approximate losses were:

Prussian: 12,797 and 26 cannon

Russian: 18,500

THE BATTLE OF ZORNDORF

Frederick and Dohna united on 22 August giving Frederick in the region of 37,000 troops. Frederick was incensed at the destruction of Cüstrin and this anger also permeated the army with Hülsen reporting that, 'The demon of war seemed to have taken possession of the entire army and every man longed for action.' The destruction of Cüstrin did not, however, deflect Frederick from his main aim of crossing the Oder and getting to grips with the Russians. Frederick was also aware that there was another sizeable Russian force under Rumyantsev at Schwedt. The Prussians had seen Cossack patrols on both sides of the river between Cüstrin and Schwedt and while the Prussians maintained a cannonade across the river into the Russian siege lines and the local militia demonstrated around Schwedt, a search was conducted for a suitable crossing point downstream between the two towns. To Frederick's great relief it became clear that, apart from Cossack patrols, no significant force linked Fermor and Rumyantsev. Frederick aimed to take advantage of the division of the Russian forces by crossing the Oder at Alt-Güstebiese some 20 miles downstream from Cüstrin. He immediately sent Lieutenant-

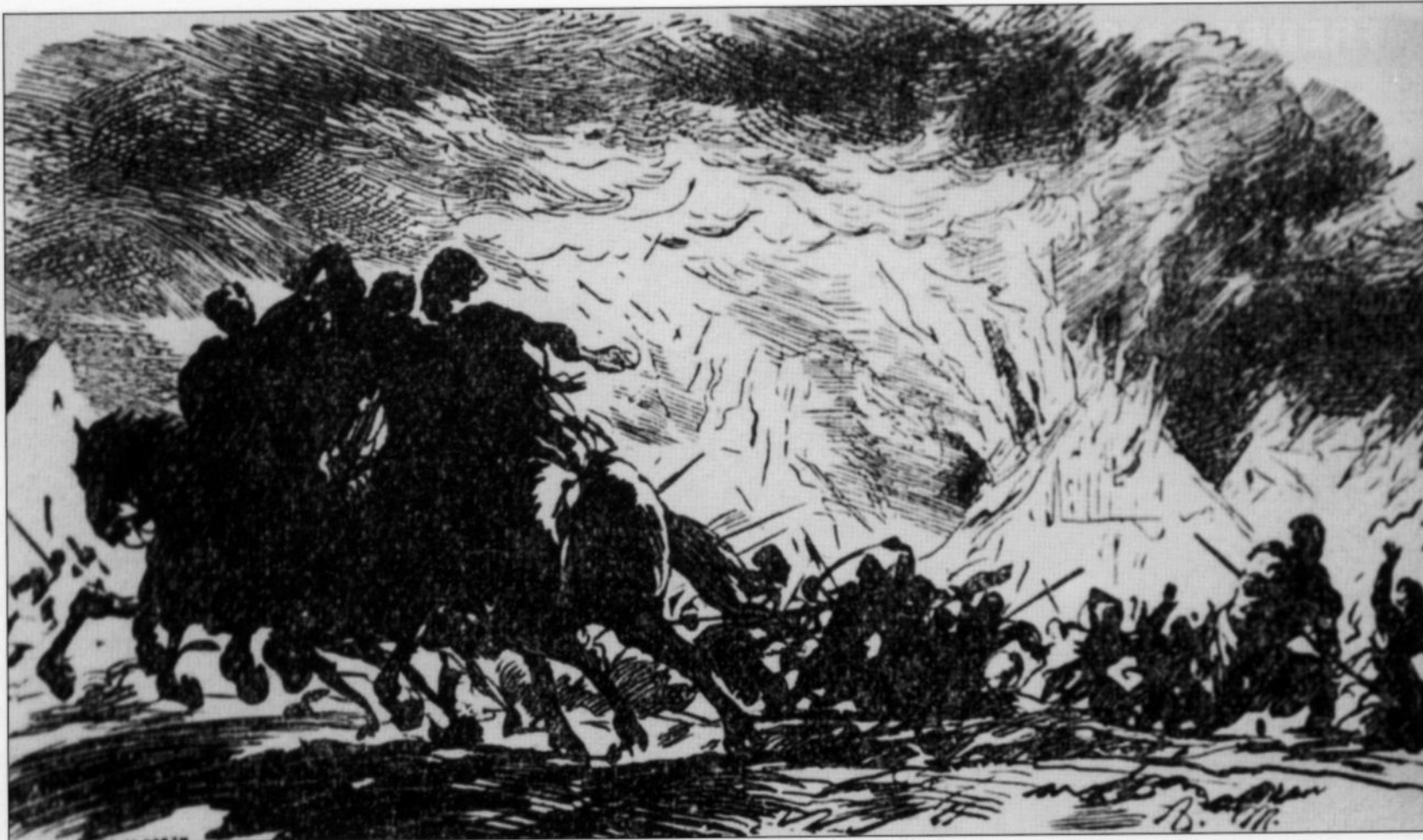
The Mietzel River in the area of the Neudammer Mühle (Mill). (Author)



FREDERICK'S MARCH TO ZORNDORF, 22-25 AUGUST 1758



General Kanitz to the crossing site with the pontoon train, two regiments of infantry and some hussars as local protection. While Kanitz was erecting a pontoon bridge during the night, the Prussians successfully pushed an assault force of grenadiers and some hussars across the river in any boat that could be found. The Cossacks detected the crossing but made no attempt to interfere with the bridgehead. The next day, 23 August, the Prussian army hurried up from Cüstrin and by midday was crossing the river. The weather was extremely hot and the strain of marching in these conditions was beginning to tell; soldiers such as Lieutenant Prittwitz commented that they, '... had to eat their bread on the march and satisfy their thirst from whatever puddle they came across.' The troops from Silesia were particularly affected; they had been on the road for nearly two weeks and still their King had not finished marching. The Prussian infantry, however, were resilient and, crossing the pontoon bridge at Alt-Gustebiese, they continued eastwards to Clossow. The advance guard, having secured Zellin, continued on to Darmietzel cutting Fermor's line



of communication with Rumyantsev. Frederick had achieved the almost impossible, marching 25,000 infantry, 10,500 cavalry and 193 cannon around the Russian right flank and successfully crossing the Oder River without any opposition from the Russians. He pressed on, splitting the Russian forces and placing his army squarely between them.

When Fermor received reports that Frederick was crossing the Oder he was incredulous but reports from reconnaissance patrols of the Serbian Hussars on 23 August confirmed his worst fears – Frederick was across the Oder, astride his line of communication with Rumyantsev and marching southeast towards him. To his credit Fermor now reacted swiftly. His first task was to move the army and its train back to Landsberg. The Russian artillery and supply train was not the most manoeuvrable of beasts and so orders were issued for the army to break camp on 23 August and march across country to Zorndorf and on to Quartschen where it would be in a position to escort the train and protect it from any Prussian threat. The plan was for the supply train to split into two with the heavier elements following the road to Tamsel and on to Klein-Kammin where an entrenched camp (*wagenberg*) would be formed. The lighter part of the train, carrying the payroll, commissary and cooking implements, would move with the main army. At the same time the Observation Corps was ordered to move from its rest area around Landsberg and Gross-Kammin and join up with the main army at Quartschen.

Frederick manoeuvres between the Russian forces

Rumyantsev, downriver at Schwedt, was blissfully unaware of unfolding events until the evening of 24 August, by which time it was too late for him to react. He was in effect completely isolated and unable to unite with Fermor.

As the Prussians approached the battlefield the Cossacks torched the village of Zorndorf. (Engraving after Menzel)

A Prussian hussar battles with a dismounted Cossack before the main battle. (Engraving after Menzel)



The 24th of August was like any other day for the Prussian army and the infantry in particular; the heat was oppressive, but before they stepped off in four columns Frederick allowed them to rest and it was not until 2.00pm that the main army moved off. The army marched with the sun glinting on the musket barrels and the suffocating dust returned. It was not until the late afternoon that the Prussian army arrived in the area of Darmietzel and the Prussian cavalry screen soon contacted the Cossack patrols along the Mietzel River. The Mietzel was not in itself a major obstacle but it was fringed with marshy banks and woods where the ground under foot was very soggy. Frederick was once again in luck for, apart from the Cossack patrols, the river was unguarded. The Prussian advance guard of eight infantry battalions and two dragoon regiments was able to push on to the Neudammer Mühle (Mill) where there was a bridge. A small party of Cossacks was brushed aside as they tried to destroy the bridge and the advance guard crossed immediately and formed a bridgehead. By the evening the remainder of the army had caught up and encamped on the north bank, erecting a pontoon bridge to maintain communication with



the vanguard and speed any future deployment. There were (and still are) extensive woodlands south of the river that would have masked the size and precise position of the Russian army from Frederick.

A 19th-century map of the Prussian flank march and the battle of Zorndorf. (Author's collection)

Frederick's plan

Frederick was about to meet the Russians in battle for the first time and it is interesting that he formulated his plan without a proper reconnaissance. There are no surviving records of the orders issued and it is difficult to deduce from his subsequent actions what information he did know and what his intentions were. Cavalry patrols would have provided certain intelligence and this would have been supplemented with local knowledge from the townspeople. In essence, however, they would have told him little more than he already knew – that the Russians were present in force between Quartschen and Zicher. Frederick was essentially limited to three options: the first was to try a frontal assault, which would require crossing the Mietzel at Darmietzel where the bridge had been destroyed. The Darmietzel woods would complicate the deployment and disorder his troops. Once order was restored on leaving the woods there would be the Hofe-Bruch with its marshes to cross before being able to assault the Russian line. This would almost certainly be waiting on the heights above and beyond Quartschen.



The Zabern-Grund about halfway between the Prussian and Russian positions. This illustrates the awkwardness of the land for Seydlitz's cavalry. (Author's photo)

The second option would be to approach from the west through Kutzdorf. This would bypass the Hofe-Bruch obstacle but any attempt at crossing the Mietzel could be directly opposed by the Russians. Even a successful assault across the river would still run into problems for there was the Drewitzer Wood, which like the Darmietzel Wood was very wet under foot. This western approach would also allow the Russians to withdraw towards Landsberg probably without disruption.

The third and final route was from the east, crossing the Mietzel at the Neudammer Mühle and pushing on through the Zicher woods and out into the open country between Batzlow and Wilkersdorf. In many respects Frederick had already positioned his army for this option, with the capture of the Neudammer Mühle and the establishing of the bridgehead across the Mietzel. It was this third option that Frederick chose.

At 9.00pm at the evening *Parole*, Frederick gathered his senior commanders and gave them the outline of his plan for the next day's battle. The main body of infantry, artillery and some light cavalry would cross the Mietzel at the Neudammer Mühle and the pontoon bridge while the remainder of the cavalry would proceed further upstream to Kerstenbrück and use the bridge there. Once across the Mietzel the main army would move through the woods screened by the light cavalry and, having exited the woods in the area of Batzlow, reunite with the remainder of the cavalry. There has been speculation that Frederick gave instructions for the Russians to be cut down without mercy, but this is highly unlikely. Frederick was a typical king of the Age of Reason and wholesale slaughter would not have met with his approval. Nevertheless, the Prussian army marched into battle the next day, as they did at Hohenfriedeberg, believing this to be the King's intent.

The Russians were also busy during the night of 24 August re-thinking their plan. Fermor had learned of Frederick's move to the Neudammer



Mühle from his Cossack patrols and in response to this shifted the army's position so that it was in two lines facing north along the Hofe-Bruch. To secure the flanks several battalions were placed between the lines at each end, facing out east and west. The light train was also positioned between the two lines, with a guard. Fermor clearly had not conducted his own appreciation of the ground as the new Russian position presumed Frederick was going to attempt a frontal assault at first light. A sense of unease must have overcome Fermor during the night for in the very early hours of the morning he ordered the army to move south a few hundred yards up onto the high ground above Darmietzel and the Hofe-Bruch. The Russians remained in this position for the remainder of the night until dawn, with regiments taking it in turn to sleep.

After giving his orders and the *Parole*, Frederick retired to a small room in the Neudammer Mühle and snatched a few hours rest. By midnight he was up and about again and having a cup of coffee when two forestry officials were presented to him. One of the officials was detailed to show the cavalry the way to Kerstenbrück and across the Mietzel at that point. The second official, named Zöllner, was told that he would guide the King with his army through the woods of the Zicher-Heide in a wide arc around the eastern flank of the Russian position to Batzlow. Frederick left the building to be greeted by his generals and returning their greeting, offered his congratulations that the battle was already won. It was 3.30am as the Prussian army moved off in their columns with their King up with the advance guard. The manoeuvre through the woods was uneventful and at around 5.00am, as night gave way to the new day of 25 August, the Prussian columns emerged from the Zicher Woods near Batzlow. As the sun rose in the east heralding another hot dry day there was no sign of the Russian army but as Frederick scanned the surrounding fields with his telescope he saw smoke rising from the nearby villages, indicating the handiwork of the

Looking across the Zabern-Grund towards the battlefield. The Prussian IR No.2 (Kanitz) advanced across the green field from right to left, just below the line of trees, and were facing the Russian 1st Grenadier Regiment, whose right was in the cornfield. (Author)

Cossacks. To his left he would also have spotted the huge Russian *wagenberg* silhouetted against the skyline on the sandy bluffs overlooking the Warthe River near Klein-Kammin.

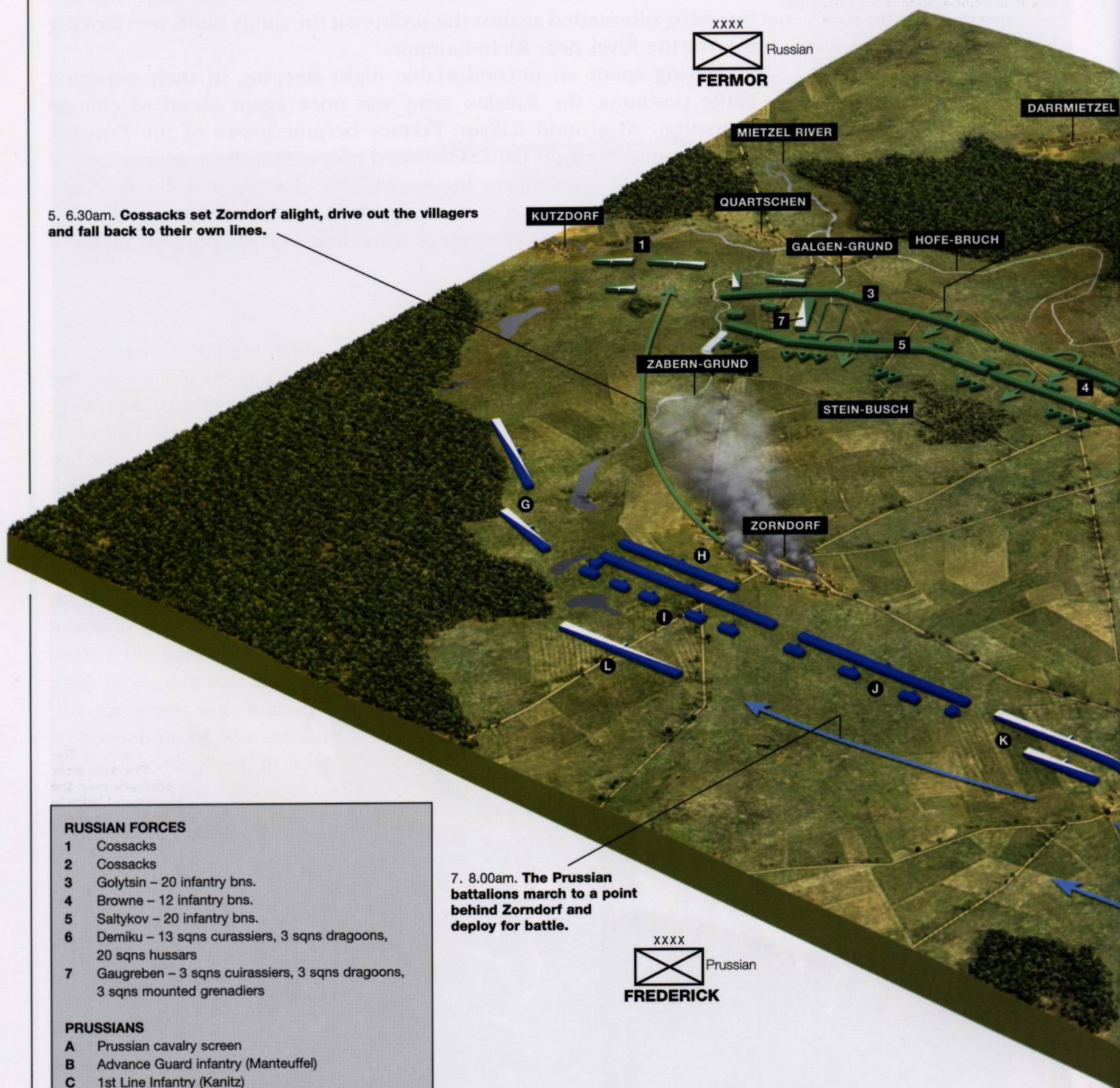
Having spent an uncomfortable night sleeping in their expected battle positions, the Russian army was once again about to change formation. At around 6.00am Fermor became aware of the Prussian move around his right flank. He issued orders that the army was to face about in place. This meant the second line now became the first line for the battle. This was a very complicated manoeuvre requiring each regiment to march its companies into their correct position and not surprisingly took some time.

Across the fields to Zorndorf

Frederick was deciding on his next move while Fermor realigned his army. He rode into Batzlow with his staff to try to get a better idea of the Russian position and to his frustration came away without a clear picture. It is likely that had he gone to Wilkersdorf the picture might have been clearer, but Cossacks were swarming over the plain and any further reconnaissance was potentially perilous. The time had come for Frederick to throw caution to the wind, for had he done so it is likely he would have caught the Russians redeploying and the first troops the Prussians would

After a dogged fight with the solid Russian line and attacked by Gaugreben's Russian cavalry, the Prussian infantry finally gave way. Trying to stem the retreat, Frederick grabs the colour of Fusilier IR No.46 (Bülow) to little avail. (Röchling/AKG)





RUSSIAN FORCES

- 1 Cossacks
- 2 Cossacks
- 3 Golytsin – 20 infantry bns.
- 4 Browne – 12 infantry bns.
- 5 Saltykov – 20 infantry bns.
- 6 Demiku – 13 sqns cuirassiers, 3 sqns dragoons, 20 sqns hussars
- 7 Gaugreben – 3 sqns cuirassiers, 3 sqns dragoons, 3 sqns mounted grenadiers

PRUSSIANS

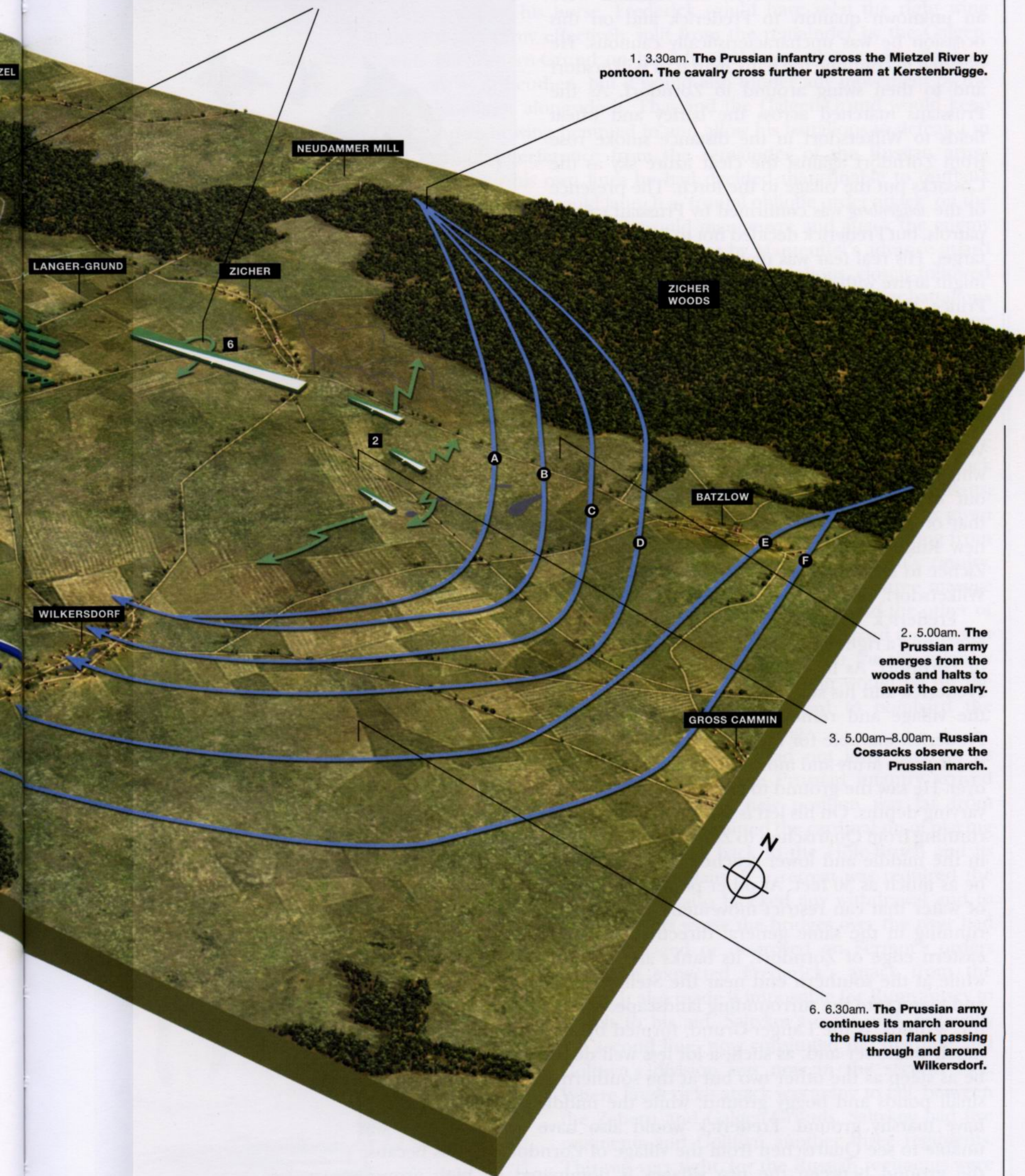
- A Prussian cavalry screen
- B Advance Guard infantry (Manteuffel)
- C 1st Line Infantry (Kanitz)
- D 2nd Line Infantry (Dohna)
- E 1st Line Cavalry
- F 2nd Line Cavalry
- G Seydlitz – 13 sqns cuirassiers, 20 sqns hussars
- H Manteuffel – 8 infantry bns
- I Kanitz – 15 infantry bns
- J Dohna – 15 infantry bns
- K Schorlemer – 15 sqns cuirassiers, 10 hussars
- L Marschall – 15 sqns dragoons

THE PRUSSIAN FLANK MARCH

25 August 1758, 3.00am–8.00am, viewed from the south-east showing Frederick's outflanking manoeuvre that forced Fermor to face his army about.

4. 6.00am. Fermor realizes that Frederick is marching past his right flank and orders his army to face about in place.

1. 3.30am. The Prussian infantry cross the Mietzel River by pontoon. The cavalry cross further upstream at Kerstenbrügge.



2. 5.00am. The Prussian army emerges from the woods and halts to await the cavalry.

3. 5.00am–8.00am. Russian Cossacks observe the Prussian march.

6. 6.30am. The Prussian army continues its march around the Russian flank passing through and around Wilkersdorf.

have contacted would have been the disorganised Observation Corps. However, the Russians were an unknown quantity to Frederick and on this occasion he was uncharacteristically cautious. He decided to continue the flank march to Wilkersdorf and to then swing around to Zorndorf. As the Prussians marched across the barley and wheat fields to Wilkersdorf in the distance smoke rose from Zorndorf against the clear azure sky as the Cossacks put the village to the torch. The presence of the *wagenberg* was confirmed by Prussian cavalry patrols, but Frederick decided not to attack this soft target. His real fear was that at any time a courier might arrive with the news that Daun had defeated Prince Henry in Saxony. The Russian army was prepared to give battle and he intended to deal with Fermor once and for all, before turning his attentions once again to the Austrian threat.

As the dusty and sweat-darkened blue Prussian infantry columns passed through and around Wilkersdorf the infantry of the Russian left (east) wing slowly came into view. The west wing remained out of sight. The only Russian movement was that of Demiku's seven cavalry regiments on the new Russian left wing moving from in front of Zicher to some high ground between Zicher and Wilkersdorf.

Frederick let his columns continue past Wilkersdorf and then, executing a right turn, march into a position south of the burning village of Zorndorf. As his army took up its initial positions at about 8.00am, Frederick and his staff rode up onto the higher ground to the north of the village and reined in about 1,500 yards from the Russian line. Frederick was able for the first time to view the right (western) wing of the Russian army and more importantly the ground he was about to fight over. He saw the ground to his front split by three 'grunds' or hollows of varying depths. On his left is the Zabern-Grund, the largest and steepest, running from Quartschen to Zorndorf. The slopes are steep, particularly in the middle and lower reaches, where at times the vertical drop can be as much as 30 feet. At other points there are ponds and large pools of water that can restrict movement. To the east is the Galgen-Grund, running in the same general direction from Quartschen towards the eastern edge of Zorndorf; its banks are steepest at the northern end while at the southern end near the Stein-Busch the slopes are shallow and blend into the surrounding landscape. Moving east again the last of the 'grunds' is the Langer-Grund, formed by the Hofe-Bruch, which is much shallower and, as such, a lot less well defined. Its slopes may not be as steep as the other two but at the southern end it is broken up by small ponds and boggy ground; while the middle and northern ends have marshy ground. Frederick would also have noted that he was unable to see Quartschen from the village of Zorndorf. This is because the ground between the two villages is dominated by high ground on which is the Stein-Busch, situated between the Galgen and Langer-



Seydlitz leads his cavalry in their attack on the Russian right wing. (Author's collection)

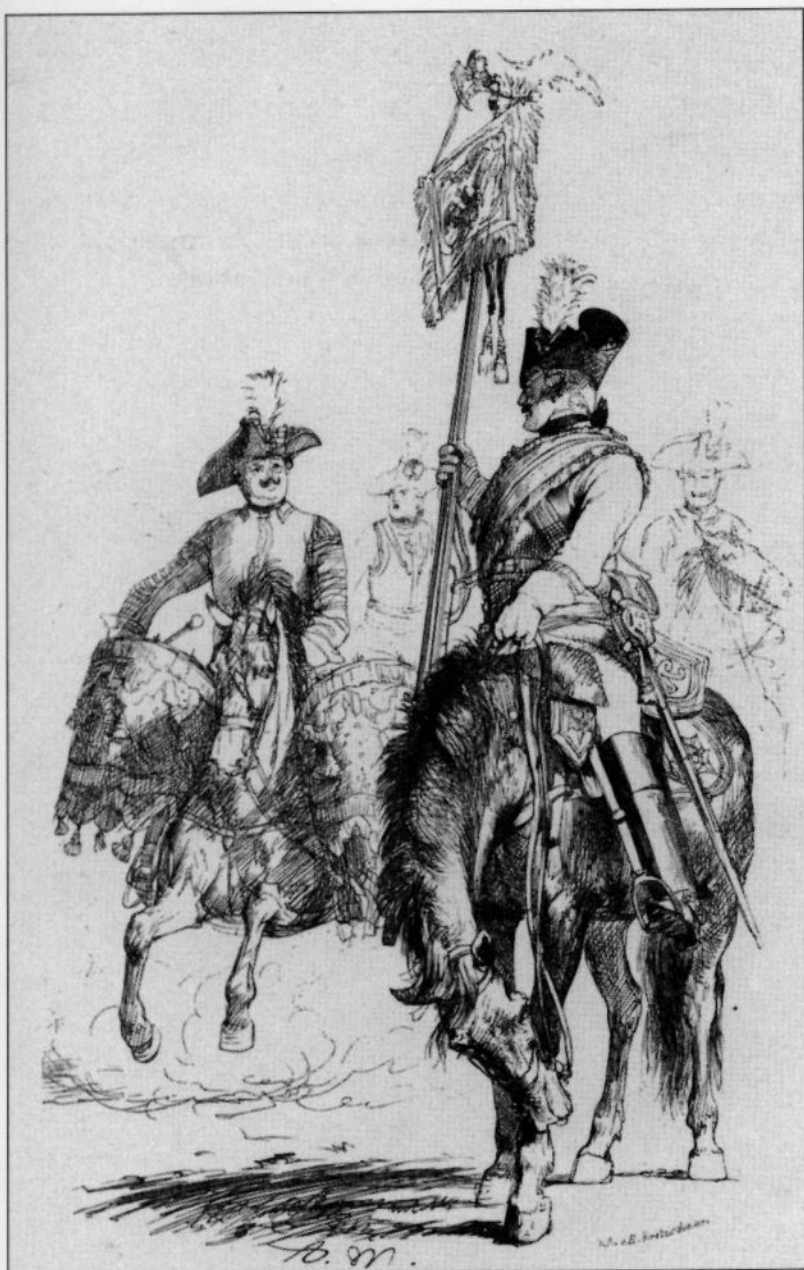
Grunds. To the east of the Langer-Grund the fields are much more open and rolling.

Sitting astride his horse, Frederick would have seen the right wing of the Russian army effectively split from the remainder by the Galgen-Grund. The Zabern-Grund on his left would not allow a wide flanking movement as at Leuthen, but it would also hinder any movement by the Russian battalions alongside it. That and the Galgen-Grund would keep the Russian right wing hemmed in and allow his battalions to defeat it in detail without interference from the remainder of the Russian army. Turning back to his own lines he had decided that, unable to outflank Fermor's position, he would launch a 'frontal oblique order attack' on the Russian right wing, whereby he would manoeuvre and attack the enemy head on. The attack would be carried out by Manteuffel's advance guard of two musketeer battalions and six grenadier battalions, closely followed by Kanitz and his wing of nine musketeer battalions, four fusilier battalions and two grenadier battalions. Dohna would supply the refused wing with ten musketeer battalions, four fusilier battalions and one grenadier battalion. Frederick placed Seydlitz with three cuirassier regiments, one dragoon regiment and two hussar regiments to the left of Zorndorf on the western side of the Zabern-Grund with the intention of being able to exploit any opening around Quartschen. Marschall would be in the centre with his three dragoon regiments ready to support the infantry's attack

and Schorlemer, with three cuirassier regiments, one dragoon and one hussar regiment, was given the task of protecting the Prussian right wing from the potential threat posed by Demiku's cavalry. The artillery was broken down into three massive batteries; two of them (one of 20 and the other of 40 cannon) were deployed to bombard the Russian right (west) wing in preparation for the infantry attack. The third of 50 cannon would be on the Prussian right wing, deployed to bombard the Russian centre and east wing.

The Russian army had not long been in its new position when the Prussian infantry arrived at Zorndorf. Their new position was far from desirable and committed the cardinal sin of placing the army with its back to the Hofe-Bruch and its marshy flood plain. If a retreat was required the Mietzel River also blocked any withdrawal and to make matters worse the bridges over the river had been damaged or destroyed on Fermor's orders when he expected Frederick's attack from the north. It also made it impossible for Rumyantsev to march to his aid. Saltykov's command, originally the second line, now constituted the first line and Golitsyn's division was now in the second line. Where Frederick's attack was going to fall, between the Zabern and Galgen-Grunds, Saltykov had five regiments and Golitsyn another three regiments. This was very tight, for the Russian regiments were two battalions strong and the limited frontage

A standard-bearer of the elite cavalry regiment Cuirassier Regiment No.13 (Garde du Corps) carrying the vexillum talks to a Kettledrummer. (Engraving after Menzel)







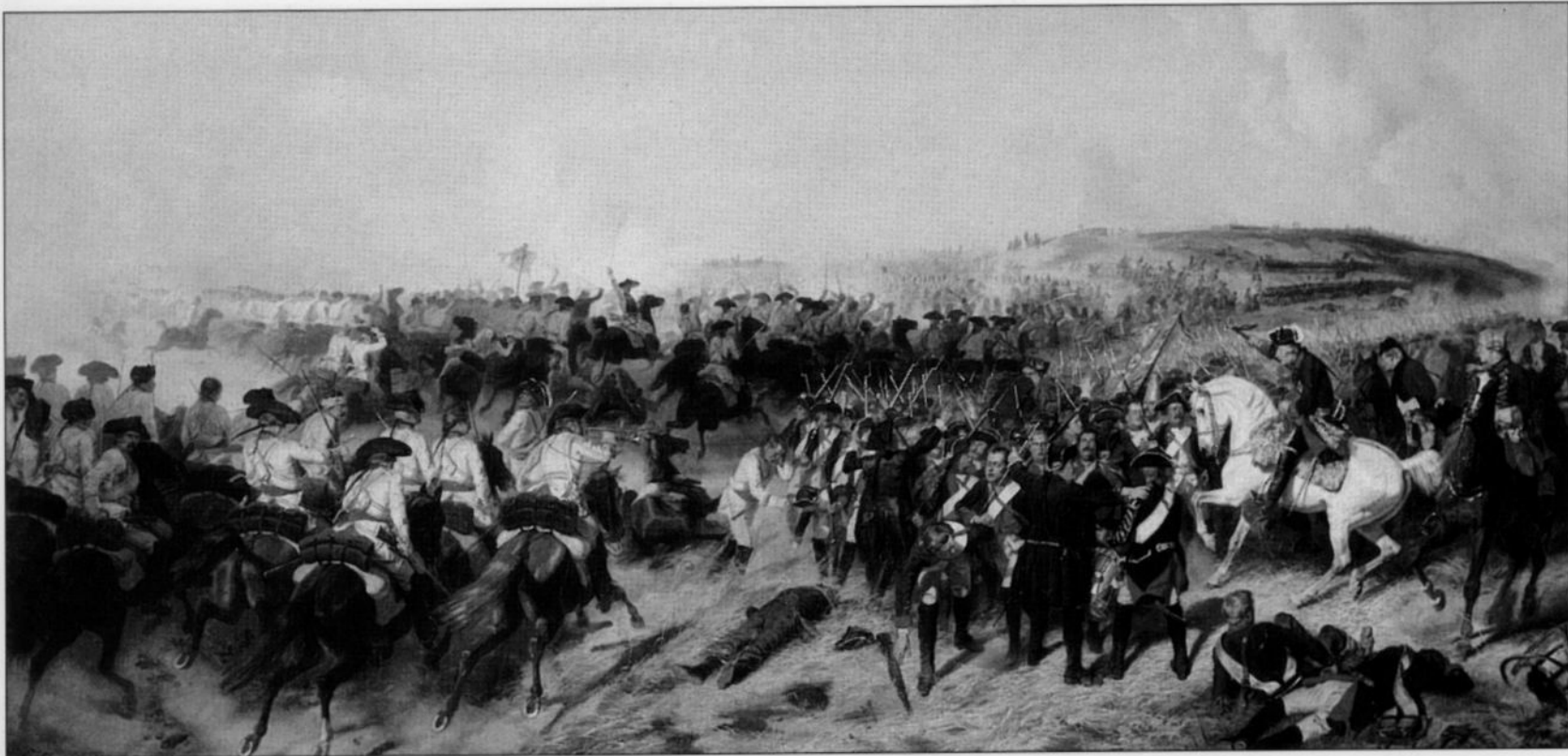


RUSSIAN COSSACKS AND KALMUCKS BURN ZORNDORF

(pages 56–57)

As the Prussian army carried out its flank march, the Cossacks and Kalmucks of the Russian cavalry screen torched the village of Zorndorf. The Kalmucks (1), or Kalmyks, were one of many groups of Asiatics that fought for Russia during the 18th century and were the remnants of the Tartar Golden Horde. They came from the Astrakhan Steppes, and Bruce in his *Memoirs of Peter Henry Bruce, Esq.* described them: 'As to their persons, they are of low stature and generally bow legged, occasioned by their being on horseback. Or sitting with their legs [cross legged] below them. Their faces are broad and flat, with a flat nose and little black eyes, distant from each other like the Chinese. They are of an olive colour, and their faces full of wrinkles, with very little or no beard. They shave their heads, leaving only a tuft of hair on the crown'. Pastor Täge of Marienwerder awoke one morning to find a mixed force of Cossacks and Kalmucks passing through the town and described them thus, 'proceeding down the streets with their long beards and grim faces, and armed with bows and arrows and other weapons. The sight was at once alarming and majestic. They rode through the town in silence and good order...and we were actually less afraid of the Cossacks than some other armies we had seen pass through Marienwerder. They gave us not the slightest cause for complaint, since they were maintained in exemplary discipline'. The Kalmucks wore traditional clothes of embroidered silk tunics (*kaftans*) (2) and fur-trimmed silk

caps (3) with pointed Turkish boots. They were armed with bows, swords and daggers and the occasional musket (4) and surviving examples can be seen in the Russian Museum, St Petersburg. Fermor had 500 Kalmucks with his army. The Cossacks are by far the most famous of the Russian irregular cavalry although Fermor found that many of them were unreliable and not particularly good at their job, and so sent the majority home in early 1758. He did, however, retain the Chuguevski and Don Cossacks, the latter illustrated here wearing the traditional kaftan (5). Colours for the kaftan varied but the most popular seem to have been brown, tan, dark blue, grey and cream. Each Cossack was responsible for providing his own pony, equipment and weapons. The traditional Cossack weapons were a light lance, sabre, dagger, pistols and some muskets (6). The lance carried by the 'rank and file' Cossack was made of pine and 18ft long. Properly led by strong officers the Cossacks could maintain the strictest discipline but nevertheless on the field of battle did not always live up to their reputation. They did stick, cloyingly, to the flanks of enemy cavalry, skirmishing and picking off individuals. Their reconnaissance could be exceptional but they demonstrated on numerous occasions that gold helped them see far more. C.F. Masson wrote, 'Taken as a whole the Cossacks are more handsome, tall, active and agile than the Russians, and individually more brave ... they are more open, proud and outspoken ... their cast of features is less uniform than the Russians, and does not show the deformities ... that are imprinted as a result of slavery.' (Adam Hook)



The Garde du Corps thunder past Frederick as they follow Seydlitz into the Russian line, which was exhausted after pursuing Manteuffel. (Hunten/AKG)

between the two 'grunds' made it very difficult to deploy properly. To add to the mass, Gaugreben's three cavalry regiments were between the lines along with the light baggage train. Only in the centre and on the left or eastern flank were the Russian commanders able to achieve the correct alignment as laid down in 18th-century manuals. The 14 battalions of the Observation Corps, however, still had the problem of the Langer-Grund's marshy ground. Fermor had combined all the grenadier companies into composite grenadier battalions, as per Russian tactical doctrine, and had placed them between the first and second line to act as a reserve, able to block any penetration of the first line if required. Demiku's cavalry extended the Russian position beyond the Langer-Grund and was the only force in a position to react effectively to Prussian movements. The Russian artillery was grouped into six batteries and placed at roughly even intervals in front of the first line. Fermor was going to have to stand and fight in place.

'Now Lord, I am in Thy Keeping'

The Prussian deployment was complete by 9.00am and soon afterwards the cannonade started. The Prussian artillery batteries on the left were soon discovered to be out of effective range of the Russian line. Colonel Moller, Frederick's artillery commander, ordered the guns to move forward a further 600 paces and from this second position the Prussian cannonballs easily reached into the mass of Russian infantry, cavalry and light baggage train. The move meant, however, that the Russian guns were able to range onto the Prussian batteries and their shot was soon falling amongst the blue-coated gunners. Soon both the Russian and Prussian gunners were sweating from the heat of the day and the servicing of their guns, firing blindly as the rolling clouds of smoke and dust blotted out the sun. The noise was tremendous and to civilians standing miles away it 'appeared that the ground was shaking in response to a continuous peal of thunder'. Towards 11.00am the artillery fire began to wane, the Prussian fire had been heavy and sustained and seemed to be more disruptive than destructive. The cavalry and light baggage train had particularly felt the

This tactical map illustrates the Battle of Zorndorf on August 25, 1758, between the Prussian and Russian armies. The map shows the following details:

- Geography:** The Mielzel River flows from the top left towards the bottom center. Key locations include Zorndorf, Wilkendorf, Kutzdorf, and various villages and estates like Zicher, Langer Grund, and Hofe-Bruch.
- Prussian Army (Blue):** Led by King Frederick II, the Prussian army is positioned in the center and left. It includes units such as the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th, 48th, 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, 55th, 56th, 57th, 58th, 59th, 60th, 61st, 62nd, 63rd, 64th, 65th, 66th, 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th, 71st, 72nd, 73rd, 74th, 75th, 76th, 77th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 81st, 82nd, 83rd, 84th, 85th, 86th, 87th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 91st, 92nd, 93rd, 94th, 95th, 96th, 97th, 98th, 99th, 100th, 101st, 102nd, 103rd, 104th, 105th, 106th, 107th, 108th, 109th, 110th, 111th, 112th, 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, 118th, 119th, 120th, 121st, 122nd, 123rd, 124th, 125th, 126th, 127th, 128th, 129th, 130th, 131st, 132nd, 133rd, 134th, 135th, 136th, 137th, 138th, 139th, 140th, 141st, 142nd, 143rd, 144th, 145th, 146th, 147th, 148th, 149th, 150th, 151st, 152nd, 153rd, 154th, 155th, 156th, 157th, 158th, 159th, 160th, 161st, 162nd, 163rd, 164th, 165th, 166th, 167th, 168th, 169th, 170th, 171st, 172nd, 173rd, 174th, 175th, 176th, 177th, 178th, 179th, 180th, 181st, 182nd, 183rd, 184th, 185th, 186th, 187th, 188th, 189th, 190th, 191st, 192nd, 193rd, 194th, 195th, 196th, 197th, 198th, 199th, 200th, 201st, 202nd, 203rd, 204th, 205th, 206th, 207th, 208th, 209th, 210th, 211st, 212th, 213th, 214th, 215th, 216th, 217th, 218th, 219th, 220th, 221st, 222nd, 223rd, 224th, 225th, 226th, 227th, 228th, 229th, 230th, 231st, 232nd, 233rd, 234th, 235th, 236th, 237th, 238th, 239th, 240th, 241st, 242nd, 243rd, 244th, 245th, 246th, 247th, 248th, 249th, 250th, 251st, 252nd, 253rd, 254th, 255th, 256th, 257th, 258th, 259th, 260th, 261st, 262nd, 263rd, 264th, 265th, 266th, 267th, 268th, 269th, 270th, 271st, 272nd, 273rd, 274th, 275th, 276th, 277th, 278th, 279th, 280th, 281st, 282nd, 283rd, 284th, 285th, 286th, 287th, 288th, 289th, 290th, 291st, 292nd, 293rd, 294th, 295th, 296th, 297th, 298th, 299th, 300th, 301st, 302nd, 303rd, 304th, 305th, 306th, 307th, 308th, 309th, 310th, 311st, 312th, 313th, 314th, 315th, 316th, 317th, 318th, 319th, 320th, 321st, 322nd, 323rd, 324th, 325th, 326th, 327th, 328th, 329th, 330th, 331st, 332nd, 333rd, 334th, 335th, 336th, 337th, 338th, 339th, 340th, 341st, 342nd, 343rd, 344th, 345th, 346th, 347th, 348th, 349th, 350th, 351st, 352nd, 353rd, 354th, 355th, 356th, 357th, 358th, 359th, 360th, 361st, 362nd, 363rd, 364th, 365th, 366th, 367th, 368th, 369th, 370th, 371st, 372nd, 373rd, 374th, 375th, 376th, 377th, 378th, 379th, 380th, 381st, 382nd, 383rd, 384th, 385th, 386th, 387th, 388th, 389th, 390th, 391st, 392nd, 393rd, 394th, 395th, 396th, 397th, 398th, 399th, 400th, 401st, 402nd, 403rd, 404th, 405th, 406th, 407th, 408th, 409th, 410th, 411st, 412th, 413th, 414th, 415th, 416th, 417th, 418th, 419th, 420th, 421st, 422nd, 423rd, 424th, 425th, 426th, 427th, 428th, 429th, 430th, 431st, 432nd, 433rd, 434th, 435th, 436th, 437th, 438th, 439th, 440th, 441st, 442nd, 443rd, 444th, 445th, 446th, 447th, 448th, 449th, 450th, 451st, 452nd, 453rd, 454th, 455th, 456th, 457th, 458th, 459th, 460th, 461st, 462nd, 463rd, 464th, 465th, 466th, 467th, 468th, 469th, 470th, 471st, 472nd, 473rd, 474th, 475th, 476th, 477th, 478th, 479th, 480th, 481st, 482nd, 483rd, 484th, 485th, 486th, 487th, 488th, 489th, 490th, 491st, 492nd, 493rd, 494th, 495th, 496th, 497th, 498th, 499th, 500th, 501st, 502nd, 503rd, 504th, 505th, 506th, 507th, 508th, 509th, 510th, 511st, 512th, 513th, 514th, 515th, 516th, 517th, 518th, 519th, 520th, 521st, 522nd, 523rd, 524th, 525th, 526th, 527th, 528th, 529th, 530th, 531st, 532nd, 533rd, 534th, 535th, 536th, 537th, 538th, 539th, 540th, 541st, 542nd, 543rd, 544th, 545th, 546th, 547th, 548th, 549th, 550th, 551st, 552nd, 553rd, 554th, 555th, 556th, 557th, 558th, 559th, 560th, 561st, 562nd, 563rd, 564th, 565th, 566th, 567th, 568th, 569th, 570th, 571st, 572nd, 573rd, 574th, 575th, 576th, 577th, 578th, 579th, 580th, 581st, 582nd, 583rd, 584th, 585th, 586th, 587th, 588th, 589th, 590th, 591st, 592nd, 593rd, 594th, 595th, 596th, 597th, 598th, 599th, 600th, 601st, 602nd, 603rd, 604th, 605th, 606th, 607th, 608th, 609th, 610th, 611st, 612th, 613th, 614th, 615th, 616th, 617th, 618th, 619th, 620th, 621st, 622nd, 623rd, 624th, 625th, 626th, 627th, 628th, 629th, 630th, 631st, 632nd, 633rd, 634th, 635th, 636th, 637th, 638th, 639th, 640th, 641st, 642nd, 643rd, 644th, 645th, 646th, 647th, 648th, 649th, 650th, 651st, 652nd, 653rd, 654th, 655th,



Seydlitz's cuirassiers cut their way through some Russian grenadiers. (Engraving after Menzel)

effects of the fire and a panic amongst these elements added to the confusion. The Russian artillery had achieved very little against the Prussians.

It was not long after 11.00am, as the smoke and dust began to clear and the bright sun was able to shine down on the battlefield again, that the Prussian infantry moved forward. As they stepped off, the woodwind section of one of the regiments was playing the plaintive Hymn '*Ich bin ja, Heer, in deiner Macht!*' Not recognising it, Frederick was told it was, 'Now Lord, I am in Thy Keeping'. He repeated these words himself with some emotion and listened as the music gradually receded into the distance. The musketeer regiment No.2 (Kanitz) anchored its left flank on the Zabern-Grund and provided the dressing for the rest of Manteuffel's attack force. The 20-strong battery was pushed forward with the assaulting infantry and, on reaching the Fuchsberg, poured a murderous fire of canister into the Russian 3rd and 1st Grenadiers. As the Prussian infantry moved through the forward battery they received the same in kind from the Russian guns. The advancing Prussian line soon disappeared from view, swallowed up by the dust and smoke from the artillery fire, and it was around 11.15am that the Prussian infantry re-emerged from the smoke, this time only around 40 paces from the red lines of Russian infantry. The Prussian infantry now came into their own; as both sides exchanged volley fire at this deadly range their greater weight of fire out-shot the Russians. The Russian infantry, hampered by a lack of cartridges, was forced to make a fierce bayonet attack and grenadier against grenadier soon saw casualties mounting, but the Russians were forced back.

The devastating Russian artillery fire and the fierce bayonet attack by the 3rd and 1st Grenadiers had caused enormous casualties in Manteuffel's command as well and he was unable to maintain the advance without support. The Prussian plan now needed Kanitz to move up with his fresh



battalions and take over the assault and drive the Russian first line into the second line and baggage wagons. The Russians, however, were the first to react and three regiments from the second line, Novgorod, Ryazan and Voronezh along with the St Petersburg Regiment, arrived first and re-established the first line. For Manteuffel's battalions this was potentially disastrous; the exhausted blue-coated battalions began to reel under the new onslaught, their line began to buckle but, through their iron discipline, it held. The casualties mounted and, with the line shortening as the files closed inwards to fill the gaps, a hole opened between the left-hand company of IR.2 and the Zabern-Grund. The Novgorod and St Petersburg regiments quickly exploited the gap and turned the Prussian left flank; disaster was at hand for the Prussians. Kanitz's battalions were needed more urgently than ever, but they were nowhere to be seen.

Kanitz had started off following Manteuffel northward as Frederick had planned. However, as he advanced further towards the Russian line a gap opened up between himself and Dohna. He was expecting Dohna to cover his right flank, which was now becoming more and more exposed and vulnerable to an attack from the Russian centre. Kanitz realised that Dohna was too far away to support him should the Russians move against his right flank and so, contrary to Frederick's orders, Kanitz began to extend his own right flank towards the Stein-Busch. As the infantry battalions of Kanitz's first line inclined to the right, so the second line battalions had to move forward to plug the gaps and maintain a continuous front. The result was that there were no battalions to support Manteuffel, who was left outnumbered. Frederick's plan of a concentrated assault on the isolated Russian right wing deteriorated into a weak frontal attack, stretching from the Stein-Busch in the Russian centre to the Zabern-Grund, and ground to

Looking east towards the Stein-Busch from the ground occupied by Manteuffel's Advance Guard. Kanitz was drawn across this ground to the Stein-Busch. (Author)

a halt. Dohna had the role of commanding the refused wing and as such he was tasked to follow the attack force, Kanitz, and cover his exposed flank while at the same time providing a reserve. Initially, as the Prussian infantry advanced away from Zorndorf, Dohna followed the plan but for some reason, probably because he did not fully understand Frederick's plan of attack, he drifted eastward away from the main attack. Frederick's plan began to unravel; he sent repeated orders to Seydlitz to charge the Russian right flank to ease the pressure on Manteuffel and each time they were ignored. Eventually Seydlitz sent an ADC with the reply: 'Tell the king that after the battle my head is at his disposal, but meantime I hope he will permit me to exercise it in his service!' Seydlitz was waiting for the right moment and it had not yet arrived.

Disaster was about to strike Manteuffel's command. As his line contracted a gap opened up between his left wing and the protection of the Zabern-Grund. This was what the Russian commander, Gaugreben, was waiting for. Within minutes his three cavalry regiments, the Kargopol Mounted Grenadiers, Tobolsk Dragoons and Novotroisk Cuirassiers, along with the Serbian Hussars were pouring around the exposed flank and crashing into the front, flank and rear of the shrinking Prussian line. Not surprisingly, after brief resistance Manteuffel's devastated troops broke and ran headlong into the line formed by Kanitz's troops. The Russian artillery batteries now poured canister and round shot into the centre and left of Kanitz's line. To add to their discomfort the 5th Musketeer Regiment of the Observation Corps even managed to wheel to their right and volley fire into the exposed Prussian right flank; Kanitz's shattered regiments began to waver. The end was close; sensing the moment had come, the Russians launched a general counterattack with the bayonet. This was the last straw

**The Stein-Busch as it is today,
very much smaller than in 1758.
(Author)**



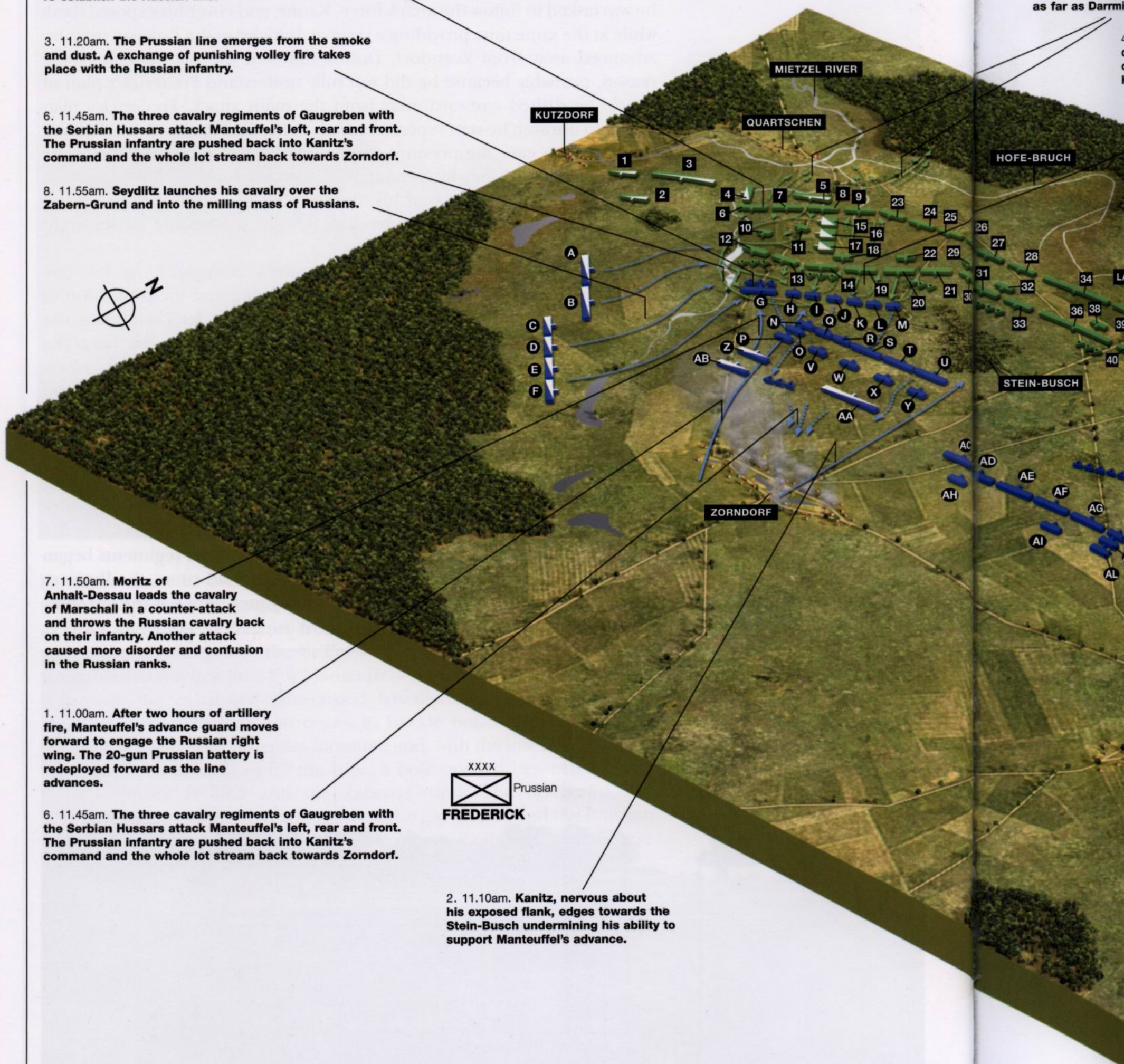
5. 11.35am. Russian second line regiments of Novgorod, Voronezh, Ryazan and St Petersburg re-establish the Russian line.

3. 11.20am. The Prussian line emerges from the smoke and dust. A exchange of punishing volley fire takes place with the Russian infantry.

6. 11.45am. The three cavalry regiments of Gaugreben with the Serbian Hussars attack Manteuffel's left, rear and front. The Prussian infantry are pushed back into Kanitz's command and the whole lot stream back towards Zorndorf.

8. 11.55am. Seydlitz launches his cavalry over the Zabern-Grund and into the milling mass of Russians.

9. 12.00pm. The back through the as far as Darm



7. 11.50am. Moritz of Anhalt-Dessau leads the cavalry of Marschall in a counter-attack and throws the Russian cavalry back on their infantry. Another attack caused more disorder and confusion in the Russian ranks.

1. 11.00am. After two hours of artillery fire, Manteuffel's advance guard moves forward to engage the Russian right wing. The 20-gun Prussian battery is redeployed forward as the line advances.

6. 11.45am. The three cavalry regiments of Gaugreben with the Serbian Hussars attack Manteuffel's left, rear and front. The Prussian infantry are pushed back into Kanitz's command and the whole lot stream back towards Zorndorf.

XXXX
Prussian
FREDERICK

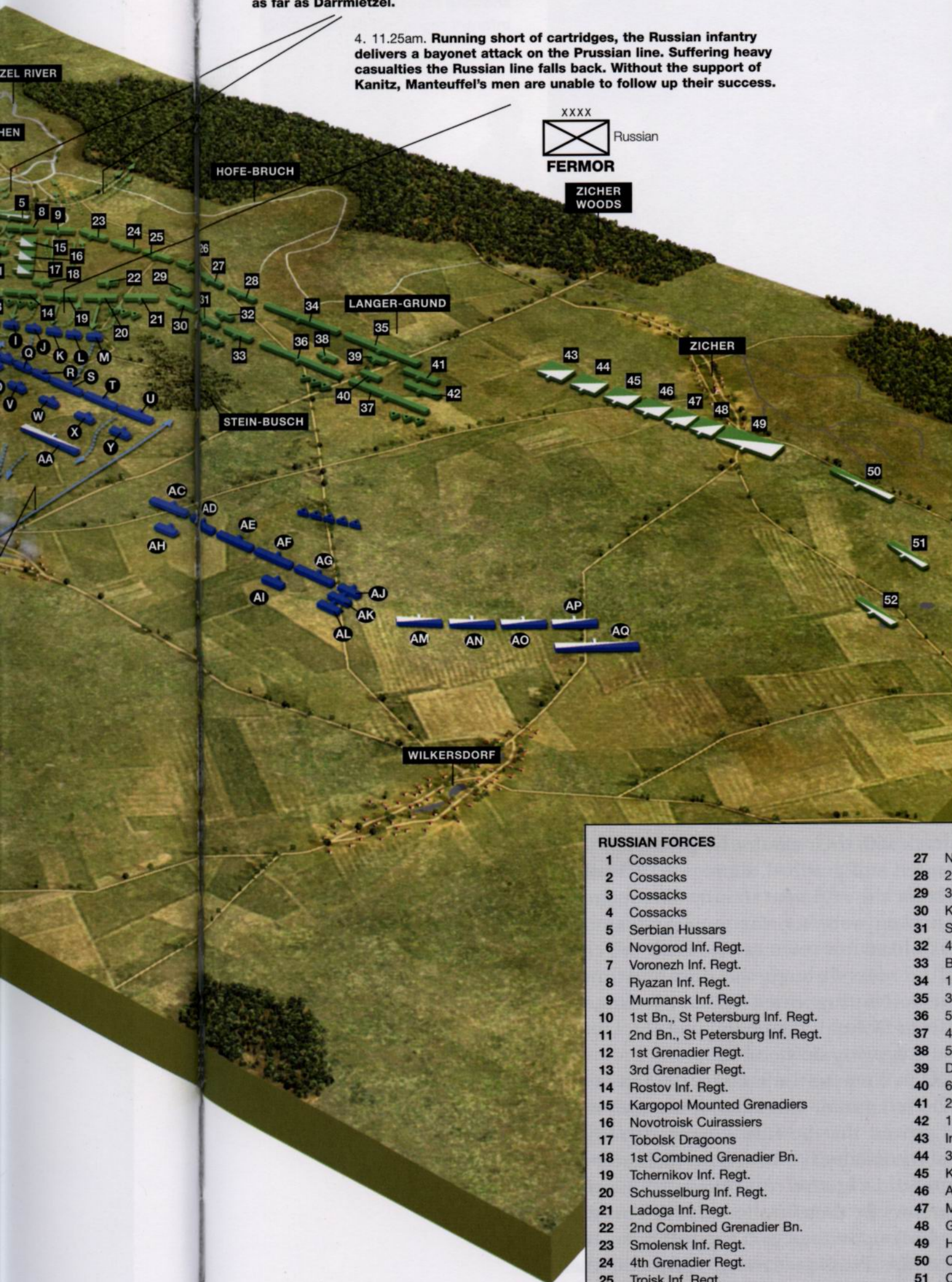
2. 11.10am. Kanitz, nervous about his exposed flank, edges towards the Stein-Busch undermining his ability to support Manteuffel's advance.

MANTEUFFEL'S ATTACK, RUSSIAN COUNTER-ATTACK

25 August 1758, 11.00am–12.30pm, viewed from the south-east showing the initial morning attack by the Prussian advance guard and Left Wing, and the Russian response.

9. 12.00pm. The Russian right wing disintegrates and swarms back through the light baggage towards Quartschen and even as far as Darmietzel.

4. 11.25am. Running short of cartridges, the Russian infantry delivers a bayonet attack on the Prussian line. Suffering heavy casualties the Russian line falls back. Without the support of Kanitz, Manteuffel's men are unable to follow up their success.



PRUSSIANS

A Zieten Hussars
B Malachowsky Hussars
C Seydlitz Cuirassiers
D Gendarmes
E Garde du Corps
F Czettritz Dragoons
G Kanitz Inf. Regt.
H Burgsdorf Gren. Bn.
I Lossow Standing Gren. Bn.
J Alt-Billerbeck Gren. Bn.
K Petersdorf Gren. Bn.
L Kleist Gren. Bn.
M Kremzow Gren. Bn.
N Plötz Garrison Gren. Bn.
O 1st Bn., Prince Möritz Inf. Regt.
P 2nd Bn., Prince Möritz Inf. Regt.
Q Manstein Gren. Bn.
R 1st Bn., Rautter Inf. Regt.
S Below Inf. Regt.
T Dohna Inf. Regt.
U Bevern Inf. Regt.
V 2nd Bn., Kurssell Fusilier Regt.
W 1st Bn., Kurssell Fusilier Regt.
X 2nd Bn., Bülow Fusilier Regt.
Y 1st Bn., Bülow Fusilier Regt.
Z Alt-Platen Dragoons
AA Schorlemer Dragoons
AB Plettenberg Dragoons
AC Lewaldt Inf. Regt.
AD Asseburg Inf. Regt.
AE Kalckstein Inf. Regt.
AF Prinz von Preussen Inf. Regt.
AG Forcade Inf. Regt.
AH 2nd Bn., Diericke Fusilier Regt.
AI 1st Bn., Diericke Fusilier Regt.
AJ Wedell Gren. Bn.
AK 1st Bn., Alt-Kreytzen Fusilier Regt.
AL 2nd Bn., Alt-Kreytzen Fusilier Regt.
AM Markgraf Friedrich Cuirassiers
AN Prinz von Preussen Cuirassiers
AO Leib-Karabiners
AP Normann Dragoons
AQ Reusch 'Black' Dragoons

RUSSIAN FORCES

1 Cossacks
2 Cossacks
3 Cossacks
4 Cossacks
5 Serbian Hussars
6 Novgorod Inf. Regt.
7 Voronezh Inf. Regt.
8 Ryazan Inf. Regt.
9 Murmansk Inf. Regt.
10 1st Bn., St Petersburg Inf. Regt.
11 2nd Bn., St Petersburg Inf. Regt.
12 1st Grenadier Regt.
13 3rd Grenadier Regt.
14 Rostov Inf. Regt.
15 Kargopol Mounted Grenadiers
16 Novotroisk Cuirassiers
17 Tobolsk Dragoons
18 1st Combined Grenadier Bn.
19 Tchernikov Inf. Regt.
20 Schusselburg Inf. Regt.
21 Ladoga Inf. Regt.
22 2nd Combined Grenadier Bn.
23 Smolensk Inf. Regt.
24 4th Grenadier Regt.
25 Troisk Inf. Regt.
26 Kasan Inf. Regt.
27 Neva Inf. Regt.
28 2nd Grenadier Regt.
29 3rd Combined Grenadier Bn.
30 Kexholm Inf. Regt.
31 Susdal Inf. Regt.
32 4th Combined Gren. Bn.
33 Butyrskii Inf. Regt.
34 1st Observation Corps Musketeer Regt.
35 3rd Observation Corps Musketeer Regt.
36 5th Observation Corps Musketeer Regt.
37 4th Observation Corps Musketeer Regt.
38 5th Combined Gren. Bn.
39 Dismounted Dragoons
40 6th Combined Gren. Bn.
41 2nd/1st Grenadiers of the Observation Corps
42 1st/1st Grenadiers of the Observation Corps
43 Imperial Crown Prince Cuirassiers
44 3rd Cuirassiers
45 Kasan Cuirassiers
46 Archangel Dragoons
47 Moldau Hussars
48 Gruzin Hussars
49 Horvath Hussars
50 Cossacks
51 Cossacks
52 Cossacks

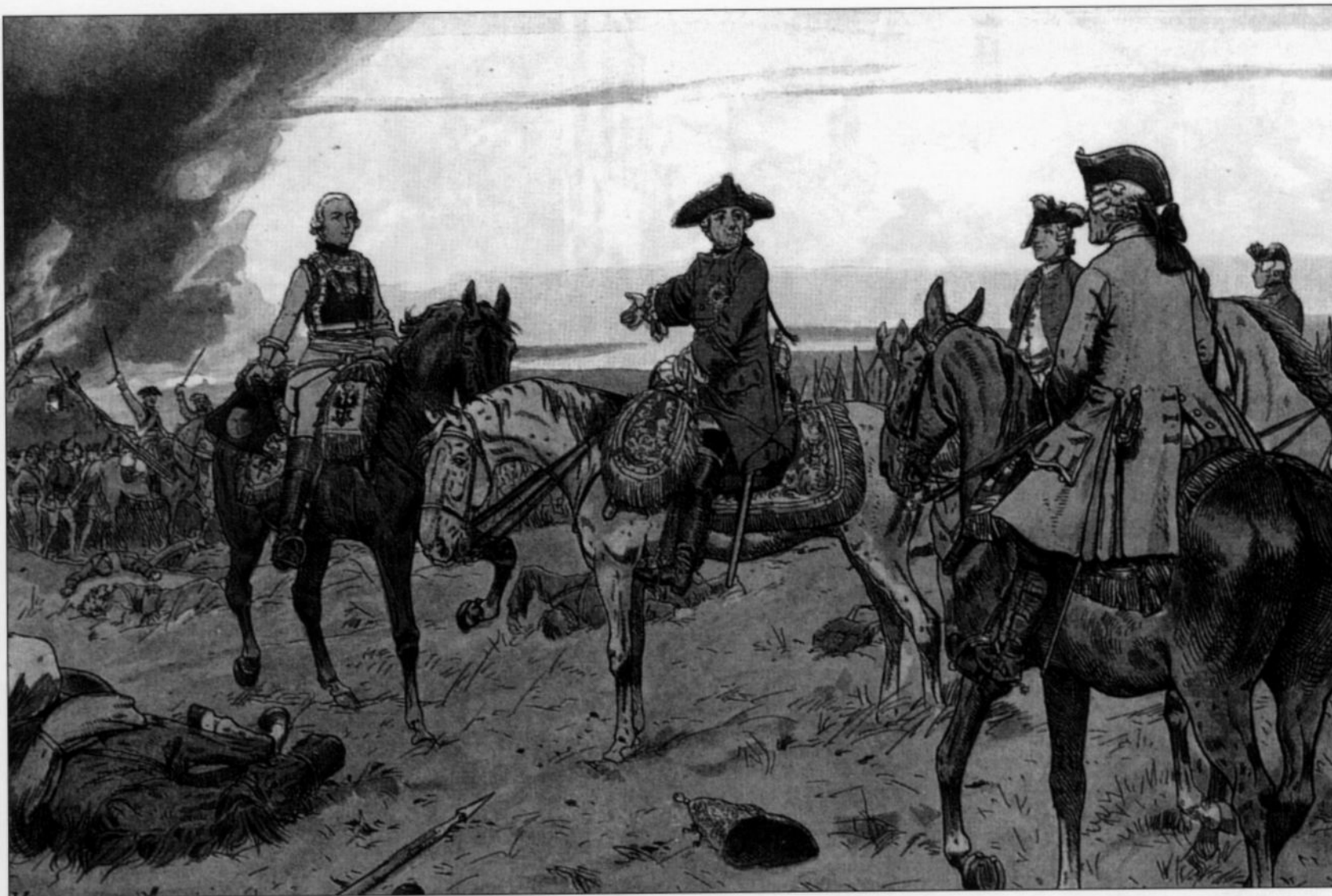


A detail of Hunten's picture showing Frederick rallying an infantry regiment. (Hunten/AKG)

and the Prussian left wing collapsed into a disordered mob as the infantry routed, streaming past Zorndorf, some as far as Wilkersdorf, while the Prussian battery on the Fuchsberg was overrun.

As Frederick watched the calamity from the second battery, thoughts of Kolin must have run through his mind. Once again Frederick displayed his courage and determination. Issuing orders that Marschall and Seydlitz were to counter-attack with their cavalry, he personally tried to stem the retreat. He dismounted and grabbed the regimental colour of IR 46 (Bülow) and called out for the regiment to rally. The regiment and the remainder of the left wing were too far gone and ignored their King's call. In reality it is unlikely his voice carried over the chaos around him even if he could be seen through the dust and smoke. Frederick was left clutching the colour, supported by a single battalion of IR 49 (Diericke) detached from Dohna's command and the battery. Gaugreben's Russian cavalry were bearing down on them.

Marschall had been reluctant to come to the infantry's aid as he did not understand Frederick's order to counter-attack and it was only when Fürst Moritz of Anhalt-Dessau arrived that he fully comprehended his orders. Moritz took command of the cavalry, 6th Dragoons (Schorlemer), 7th Dragoons (Plettenberg) and 8th Dragoons (Alt-Platen), and leading them through the retreating infantry he then crashed into the pursuing Russian cavalry and threw them back upon their own supporting infantry. Moritz of Anhalt-Dessau rallied the Prussian cavalry, re-formed them and again charged into the disorganised Russian infantry and cavalry, spreading more chaos and disaster. But where was Seydlitz?



Seydlitz, wearing the uniform of his own regiment, 8th Cuirassiers, greets Frederick after his cavalry wing's successful action. Russian prisoners can be seen in the background. (Print after Röchling)

He had conducted a reconnaissance earlier, which revealed that the northern parts of the Zabern-Grund were pretty well impassable to cavalry. Towards the southern end there were several places where his command could operate, but once on the other side they would have to re-form. The Russian cavalry streaming past him in pursuit of the Prussian infantry was exactly the opportunity he had been waiting for. The 2nd Hussars (Zieten) and 3rd Hussars (Malachowsky) crossed together at the northernmost point. The 8th Cuirassiers (Seydlitz) and 10th Cuirassiers (Gendarmes) crossed in the centre, while 13th Cuirassiers (Garde du Corps) and 4th Dragoons (Czettritz) crossed further south. Seydlitz had them formed into regimental columns on a three-squadron frontage and led them into the fray. The Russians' attention had been fixed on the retreating infantry and then the cavalry charges of Moritz of Anhalt-Dessau. As Seydlitz erupted out of the Zabern-Grund into their front and flank they did not know what hit them. Complete surprise had been achieved and the Russian infantry dissolved into small knots of men trying to defend themselves and re-form their line. Struck in the rear by 2nd Hussars, the Russian infantry and remnants of Gaugreben's cavalry fled. Only the 1st and 3rd Grenadier Regiments were able to act as a rearguard as the fugitives from the Russian right wing routed, the majority heading for the protection of the Galgen-Grund with the formed units beyond. Some scrambled over the Zabern-Grund and headed for the safety of the Drewitzer woods. Many plundered the light baggage train on their way to Quartschen, opening the casks of brandy, threatening those officers who attempted to rally them and heading for the Darmietzel woods. The victorious but disordered Prussian cavalry pursued as far as the Galgen-Grund, where they found the far bank



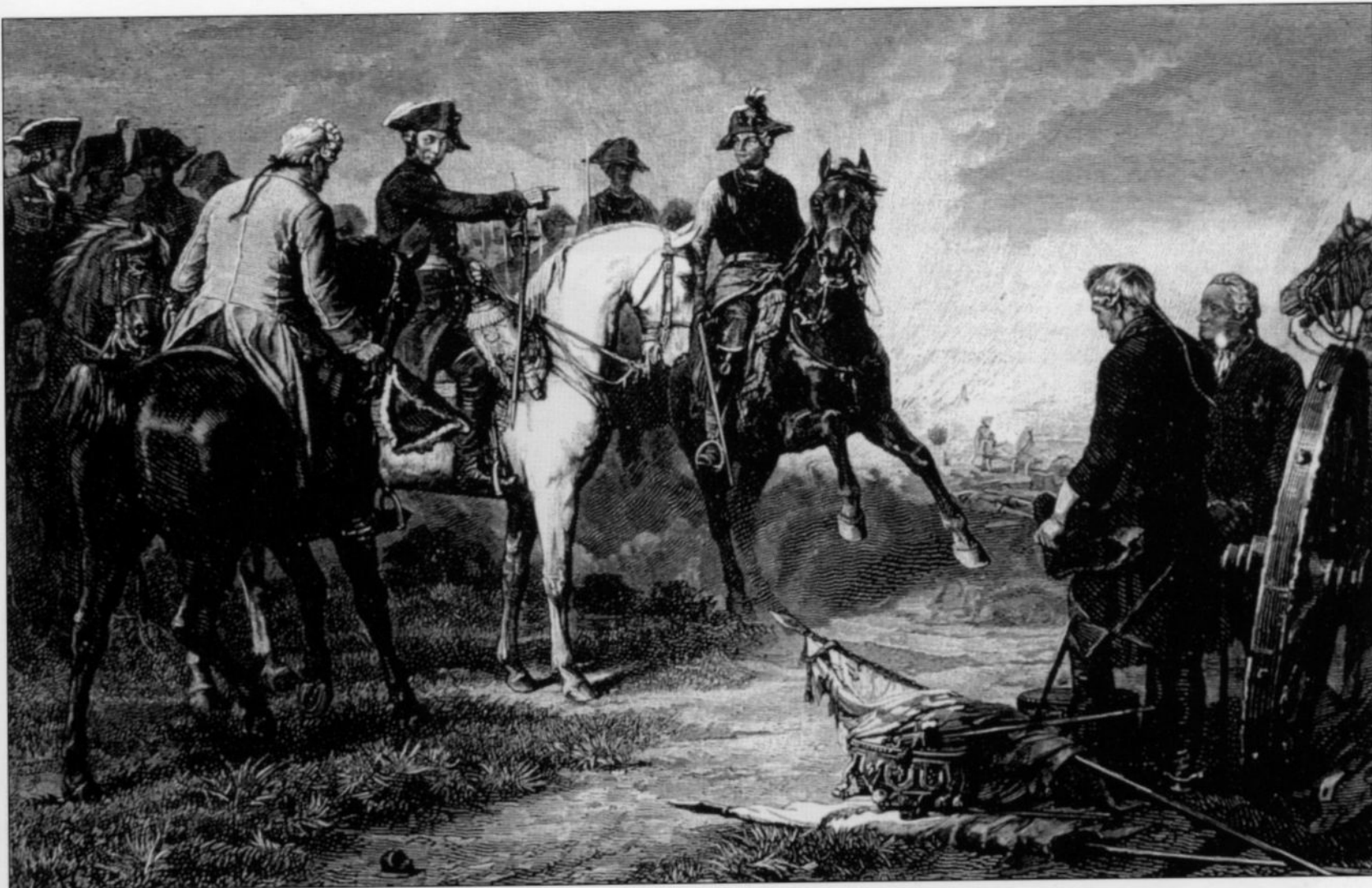




THE KARGOPOL MOUNTED GRENADIERS ATTACKS MANTEUFFEL'S ADVANCE GUARD (pages 68–69)

In the initial stages of the attack of the Prussian Advance Guard, Manteuffel used the Zabern-Grund to protect his flank. As the attack progressed casualties mounted, however, and the line shrank as soldiers closed up on the centre. Major-General Gaugreben's three cavalry regiments on the Russian right wing exploited these gaps. One of these regiments, the Kargopol Mounted Grenadiers (1), was formally a Dragoon regiment, one of three converted to Horse Grenadiers in 1756. These new Horse Grenadier regiments consisted of five squadrons of grenadiers and supporting regimental artillery. Horse Grenadiers were uniformed in the same way as Grenadier squadrons in the Dragoon regiments. They wore a light blue uniform (2) similar to that of the dragoons and the mitre cap (3) with the regimental crest on the frontplate, which was the most obvious difference from line cavalry regiments who wore tricorner. The mitre cap resembled that worn by the infantry grenadiers but by 1761 it had been replaced by a tricorne similar to that issued to cuirassiers. In addition to the standard Dragoon equipment, Horse Grenadiers carried a fuse holder (4), grenade box (5) and a waistbelt cartridge box (6). Gaugreben's cavalry attack had some initial success against Manteuffel's infantry and pursued them as they retired, threatening to crush Frederick's left wing. A timely counter-attack by Lieutenant-General von Seydlitz turned the tables, routed the Russian cavalry and restored Frederick's left wing. Manteuffel's advance guard was made up of eight battalions of infantry, six of them

grenadier battalions. Grenadier Battalion Kremzow (17/22) shown here (7) had an excellent reputation. At the battle of Prague the year before they were the only battalion that did not open fire, but pressed home the attack with the bayonet. The battalion was from Pomerania and some Prussians considered soldiers from this area to be the best infantry in the world. In common with other commanders of this period, Frederick would often form grenadier battalions from the grenadier companies of musketeer and fusilier regiments. This would provide him with battalions of particularly aggressive and reliable troops – ideal assault troops. The grenadier companies of two regiments would combine into a battalion of four companies of approximately 700 officers and men. The separation from the parent regiment could create difficulties, particularly after a costly action, as it hindered the battalion's ability to replace losses. This would sometimes lead to several battalions being banded together in 'combined grenadier battalions'. Contrary to popular belief the grenadiers in the Prussian army were not always the tallest men in a regiment. They were selected for their reliability and robustness and thus were normally the more experienced members of a unit. The Grenadiers were expected to present as daunting and formidable a spectacle as possible to the enemy and as such were actively encouraged not to be too amiable or jovial. In common with other grenadiers they wore the tall mitre caps (8), which had originated in the 17th century and were designed not to obstruct the throwing arm when using grenades in combat, a practice abandoned by the time of the Seven Years War. (Adam Hook)



Frederick greets Seydlitz and remarks to his staff that, 'Without his composure the outlook would have been bad for us.' (ASKB)

lined with steady Russian infantry and artillery. They withdrew to Zorndorf to re-form and await further instructions. As the smoke and dust cleared, the ground between the Zabern-Grund and Galgen-Grund was heaped with dead and wounded, blue and red coats intermingled. Artillery pieces, abandoned in the fighting, were littered across the area. Neither side could recover their guns because of the Russian artillery on the Galgen-Grund and Prussian cavalry at Zorndorf respectively.

Frederick's original plan was in ruins and it was now nearly 12.00pm with the only sound being the aimless artillery duel between the batteries of Browne's Observation Corps and the large Prussian battery on the right. Frederick took stock of what had happened. Due either to incompetence or a misunderstanding, his commanders had failed to properly execute his plan, which had slipped from his grasp. The 23 battalions launched at the Russian right wing were wrecked and 20 cannon were out of action.

His left wing was a shambles and if it had not been for the timely intervention of Moritz of Anhalt-Dessau and Seydlitz with the superior Prussian cavalry, the battle would have been over with potentially disastrous consequences for Frederick. Beyond Zorndorf were the only forces left to Frederick. Dohna still had fresh infantry, but they amounted to less than half the original strength, he could only hope that some of Kanitz's and Manteuffel's battalions would rally. The cavalry of Marschall and Seydlitz were blown, but after some rest would be able to continue, while Schorlemer's cavalry on the far right were still unused.

For the Russians the situation was definitely no better and probably worse. The right flank brigades of Uvarov, Liubomirski, Leontyev, Panin and Sievers had been decimated with 18 out of 20 battalions routed. Gaugreben's three cavalry regiments had been scattered along with the

10. 3.30pm. Dohna's infantry are ready to advance against the Russian line. After some initial successes they are repulsed.

8. 3.20pm. Seydlitz once again launches his cavalry in a timely attack this time on Browne's and Manteuffel's infantry. The Russians are forced back onto the Hofe-Bruch.



MIETZEL RIVER

KUTZDORF

QUARTSCHEN

HOFE-BRUCH

STEIN-BUSCH

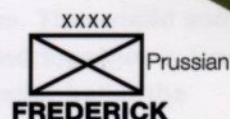
ZORNDORF

RUSSIAN FORCES

- 1 Smolensk Inf. Regt.
- 2 4th Grenadier Regt.
- 3 Troisk Inf. Regt.
- 4 Kasan Inf. Regt.
- 5 Neva Inf. Regt.
- 6 2nd Grenadier Regt.
- 7, 8, 9, 10 Mixed remnants of the Russian Right Wing
- 11 Ladoga Inf. Regt.
- 12 Kexholm Inf. Regt.
- 13 Susdal Inf. Regt.
- 14 Butyrskii Inf. Regt.
- 15 4th Combined Gren. Bn.
- 16 1st Observation Corps Musketeer Regt.
- 17 3rd Observation Corps Musketeer Regt.
- 18 5th Observation Corps Musketeer Regt.
- 19 4th Observation Corps Musketeer Regt.
- 20 5th Combined Gren. Bn.
- 21 6th Combined Gren. Bn.
- 22 Dismounted Dragoons
- 23 2nd/1st Grenadiers of the Observation Corps
- 24 1st/1st Grenadiers of the Observation Corps
- 25 Imperial Crown Prince Cuirassiers
- 26 3rd Cuirassiers
- 27 Kasan Cuirassiers
- 28 Archangel Dragoons
- 29 Moldau Hussars
- 30 Gruzin Hussars
- 31 Horvath Hussars

PRUSSIANS

- A Zieten Hussars
- B Malachowsky Hussars
- C Seydlitz Cuirassiers
- D Gendarmes
- E Czettitz Dragoons
- F Garde du Corps
- G Schorlemer Dragoons
- H Manteuffel's and Kanitz's battalions rallying
- I Lewaldt Inf. Regt.
- J Asseburg Inf. Regt.
- K Kalckstein Inf. Regt.
- L Prinz von Preussen Inf. Regt.
- M Forcade Inf. Regt.
- N Wedell Gren. Bn.
- O 2nd Bn., Diericke Fusilier Regt.
- P 1st Bn., Diericke Fusilier Regt.
- Q 1st Bn., Alt-Kreytzen Fusilier Regt.
- R 2nd Bn., Alt-Kreytzen Fusilier Regt.
- S Alt-Platen Dragoons
- T Plettenberg Dragoons
- U Markgraf Friedrich Cuirassiers
- V Prinz von Preussen Cuirassiers
- W Leib-Karabiners
- X Normann Dragoons
- Y Reusch 'Black' Dragoons



THE BATTLE WITH THE RUSSIAN OBSERVATION CORPS

25 August 1758, 1.00pm–3.30pm, viewed from the south-east showing the struggle in the afternoon between the Russian Observation corps and the Prussian Right Wing.

7. 3.15pm. The Russian Manteuffel advances his brigade of two regiments (Neva and 2nd Grenadier Regt.) in support of Browne's Observation Corps as they resume their advance on Dohna's newly disordered regiments.



9. The Prussian cavalry withdraw and the Russian Observation Corps resumes its original position.

2. 3.00pm. The Observation Corps advances to deal with the isolated Prussian battery.

1. 1.00pm. Frederick pushes forward the large battery on the right wing. The 2nd Battalion, Alt-Kreytzen Fusilier Regiment is sent to support it. It commences firing and causes great casualties amongst the Russian infantry.

5. 3.10pm. A counter-attack by Schorlemer's squadrons drives the Russian cavalry off. They rally near Zicher.

3. 3.05pm. Demiku's cavalry sweeps down on Dohna's redeploying infantry. The Horvath Hussars attack the battery and 2nd Battalion Alt-Kreytzen Fusiliers.

6. 3.15pm. The two dragoon regiments veer north and drive off the Horvath Hussars from around the battery.

4. 3.05pm. The Alt-Platen and Plettenberg Dragoons, moving to support Schorlemer, move past Manteuffel's and Kanitz's troops. Thinking they are under attack from Russian cavalry Manteuffel's and Kanitz's men retreat in great haste towards Wilkersdorf.

Serbian Hussars and 15 cannon lost. To cap it all the light baggage had been looted by Russian fugitives as they fled from Seydlitz's cavalry and many of the wagons that remained were immobilised near Quartschen. Unknown to the Russian army in general, its command structure was in disarray. Fermor had been missing since the Prussian infantry attacks began. He was to say after the battle that he had been in Quartschen having a wound treated, but there were others who claimed they saw him in Kutzdorf or in Furstenfelde, both several miles from Quartschen and not where he should have been, which was on the field of battle organising the Russian counterattack. The attack that did go in had nothing to do with him. The remainder of the Russian army, the left wing, was arrayed in its original positions, between the Galgen-Grund and the Langer-Grund. Half of these regiments formed the new right wing and centre with the rallied survivors of the smashed right wing. The Observation Corps became the left wing. The Russians still had in the region of 40 battalions, including some combined grenadier battalions, and the seven cavalry regiments of the left-wing cavalry under Demiku were still standing below Zicher. Along the front of the new Russian line was plenty of artillery.



Like all the best field commanders in history, Frederick moved all over the battlefield seeing for himself what was going on and issuing orders direct to regiments if necessary. (Engraving after Menzel)

'May God have mercy on us!'

By 1.00pm Frederick was ready to renew the battle. To the east of the Stein-Busch where it was only a few hundred yards from the Russian line, he moved forward his right-wing battery and a battalion of IR 40 (Alt-Kreytzen) to provide protection. The cannon that had survived the battle on the left wing were once again brought into action against the units of the Russian right wing who had rallied but were still very unsteady. Frederick ruled out another attack against the Russian right wing for two reasons. Firstly the ground between the Galgen-Grund and Stein-Busch severely restricted the troops' ability to manoeuvre, presenting the Russian artillery with a perfect target. Secondly, the Stein-Busch, although probably passable, would disorder advancing troops exposing them to the danger of a Russian counter-attack as they tried to re-form on the far side. Frederick concluded that the right wing would have to make the next attack. His plan was simple, Dohna's infantry would advance northwest, its right flank resting on the Langer-Grund, and attempt to take the Observation Corps in the flank. As the infantry advanced Schorlemer's cavalry, reinforced by two regiments from Marschall's command, 7th and 8th Dragoons, would drive away Demiku's cavalry exposing the Russian left wing for the infantry. The artillery on the right wing would pummel the Observation Corps, softening it up for the infantry assault. Dohna's exposed right flank would have to be protected and to do this Frederick gathered the survivors of Manteuffel's and Kanitz's left-wing commands into an improvised force. Seydlitz's victorious cavalry would provide the reserve.

Gathering his forces for the next attack would take time and the Russians acted first. The battery to the east of the Stein-Busch was doing terrible execution amongst the Observation Corps, whose regiments were

Looking from the area of the Stein-Busch towards Dohna's initial position. Zorndorf is out of the picture to the right. (Author)



suffering where they stood. Browne needed to silence the battery and ordered a frontal attack at about 3.00pm. As the Observation Corps advanced they should have taken severe casualties. Instead the Horvath Hussars overran the battery and the infantry battalion assigned to protect it. Demiku had supported the advance of the Observation Corps on his own initiative, and the rest of his cavalry, the Crown Prince Cuirassiers, 3rd Cuirassiers, Archangel Dragoons, the Moldovian Hussars and the Gruzin Hussars, swept on to assail Dohna's infantry positioned on the Langer-Grund. Taken by surprise, the Prussian infantry were at first bested but in the end were able to make their disciplined firepower tell. At the same time the Russian cavalry were counter-attacked by Schorlemer's cavalry and driven off in the direction of Zicher where they rallied. The two dragoon regiments sent to reinforce Schorlemer, moving at speed, raised a large cloud of dust that the rallying but still shaken regiments of Manteuffel and Kanitz mistook for Russian cavalry and promptly retreated in great haste towards Wilkersdorf. Once their error was revealed they sheepishly returned to their task of forming a flank guard. In the meantime the two dragoon regiments, having seen Schorlemer's attack go in, increased their pace and veered off to attack the Horvath Hussars still gathered around the captured battery and infantry battalion. The Hussars did not hang around and immediately started to retreat, receiving a parting volley from the IR 40 to speed them on their way. With the situation on the right wing once again stable Frederick could think about putting his plan into action. However, Demiku's cavalry had caused a good deal of chaos among Dohna's troops, who had been caught as they were trying to redeploy. The Russian cavalry had been sent packing, but Dohna's infantry remained vulnerable to an attack by Browne's Observation Corps, who at this stage also had the four battalions of the Russian Manteuffel's brigade under his command. Browne started to advance once again to deal with the artillery battery and its protective infantry battalion and this time it looked as if his gamble might pay off. Once again however Seydlitz was there to retrieve the situation, launching his cuirassiers, dragoons and hussars in another



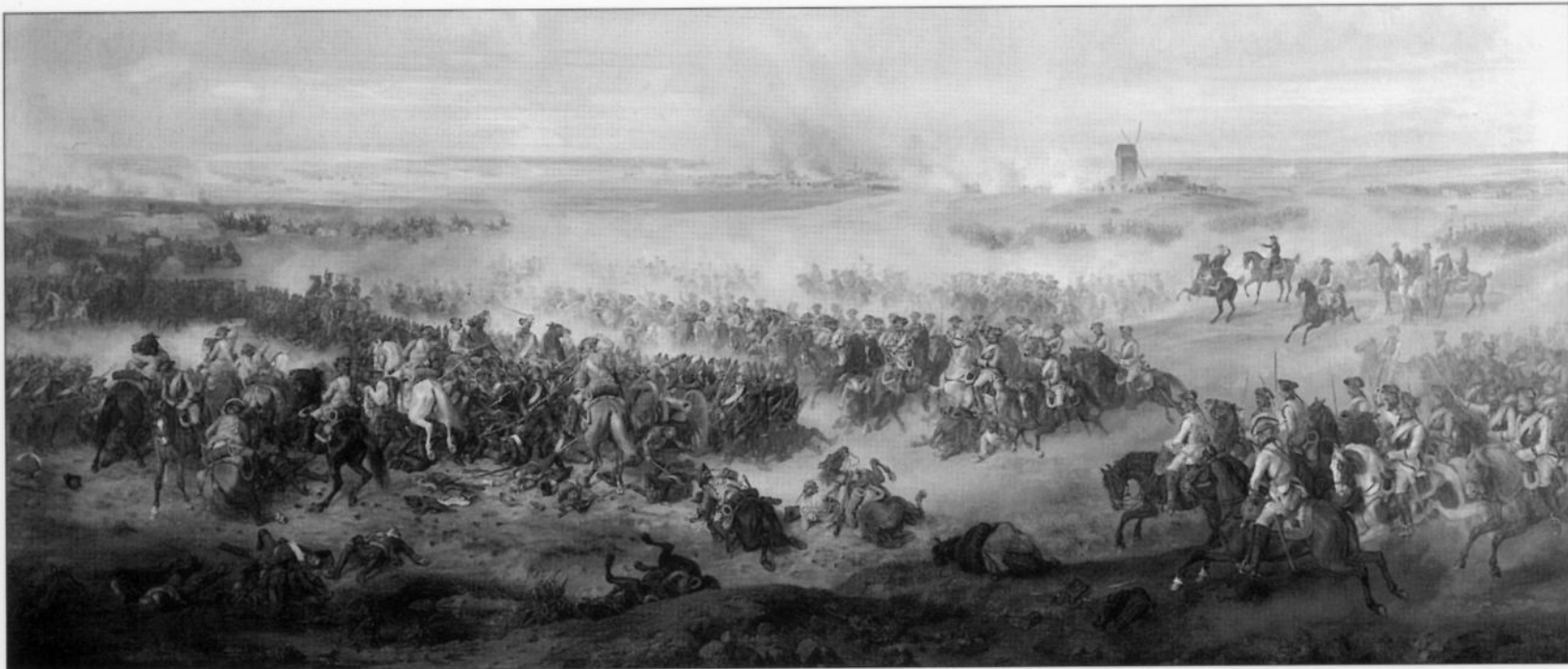




LIEUTENANT-GENERAL DOHNA'S INFANTRY ATTACK THE RUSSIAN OBSERVATION CORPS (pages 76–77)

Around 4.30pm Lieutenant-General Dohna launched his second and final attack on the Russian Observation Corps. His troops advanced with the support of the left wing artillery but the Russian Observation Corps nevertheless fought with great determination. Here Prussian Infantry Regiment 18 (Prinz von Preussen) (1) marches, with ranks neatly dressed, towards the line of red-clad Russian infantry in the distance. The fire of the Russian guns is already having an effect, but this is nothing to what is to come. When the two lines of infantry met, the fighting was confused, prolonged and brutal. The ferocity of the hand-to-hand fighting with bayonet, musket and sword was like nothing either side had encountered before. Neither Prussian nor Russian gave or expected quarter. The *Inhaber* (Colonel) of Prinz von Preussen was Frederick's younger brother, Friedrich Wilhelm. The regiment was recruited from the Altmark in Brandenburg and its garrison towns were Spandau and Nauen. It wore the dark blue coat characteristic of Prussian line infantry but faced in Rose Pink. The lining of the regiment's coats was also Rose Pink for all ranks, unlike other infantry regiments whose coats were lined red. The Prussian musket (2) had an elaborately carved stock, brass furniture and a barrel and lock that were crudely worked but made of resilient Swedish iron. It was thought to be the largest and heaviest musket in Europe, but durable. The 1740 model was a shortened version of the original 1713 pattern. The most important modification, however, was the replacement of the wooden ramrod with a steel one. The

Prussians were the first European army to adopt the steel ramrod. Ulrich Bräker, a soldier in IR 13 (Itzenplitz), gives us a fascinating insight in his book, *Der arme Mann im Tockenburg* into what the soldier was expected to carry on campaign (3). Apart from the cartridge pouch hanging from one shoulder, he was, '... laden down like a donkey ... Over the other shoulder was the knapsack, full of laundry and the like, as well as the bread bag which was stuffed with bread and other food. In addition everyone had to carry some item of field equipment: a communal water flask, a kettle, an axe and so forth, all hanging on straps ... To crown it all we were squeezed by our tight uniforms, and the heat was so appalling that I seemed to be walking on hot coals. I opened my shirt to let in a little air, and the steam rose up as if from a boiling kettle'. Officers (4) carried the Spontoon, a steel headed pike about 8ft long, which although unwieldy was useful for maintaining the dressing in the ranks and imposing discipline. In contrast to the glamorous and lavish uniforms of the Austrian and French general officers of the period, the Prussian officer of Colonel or General rank (5) wore the same uniform as the subaltern (4), except for a hat plume that was often not worn in battle. The Russian Observation Corps (6) was established by Shuvalov with men drawn from the Land Militia, recruits and regiments that had not been mobilized. During the hot summer months the Russian soldier discarded his green coat, wearing only the red long-sleeved vest for campaigning. Instead of the shoes standard to other infantry formations, the regiments of the Observation Corps wore dragoon boots of black leather. (Adam Hook)



Frederick watches his cuirassiers crash into the Russian line. (Albrecht Adam/AKG)

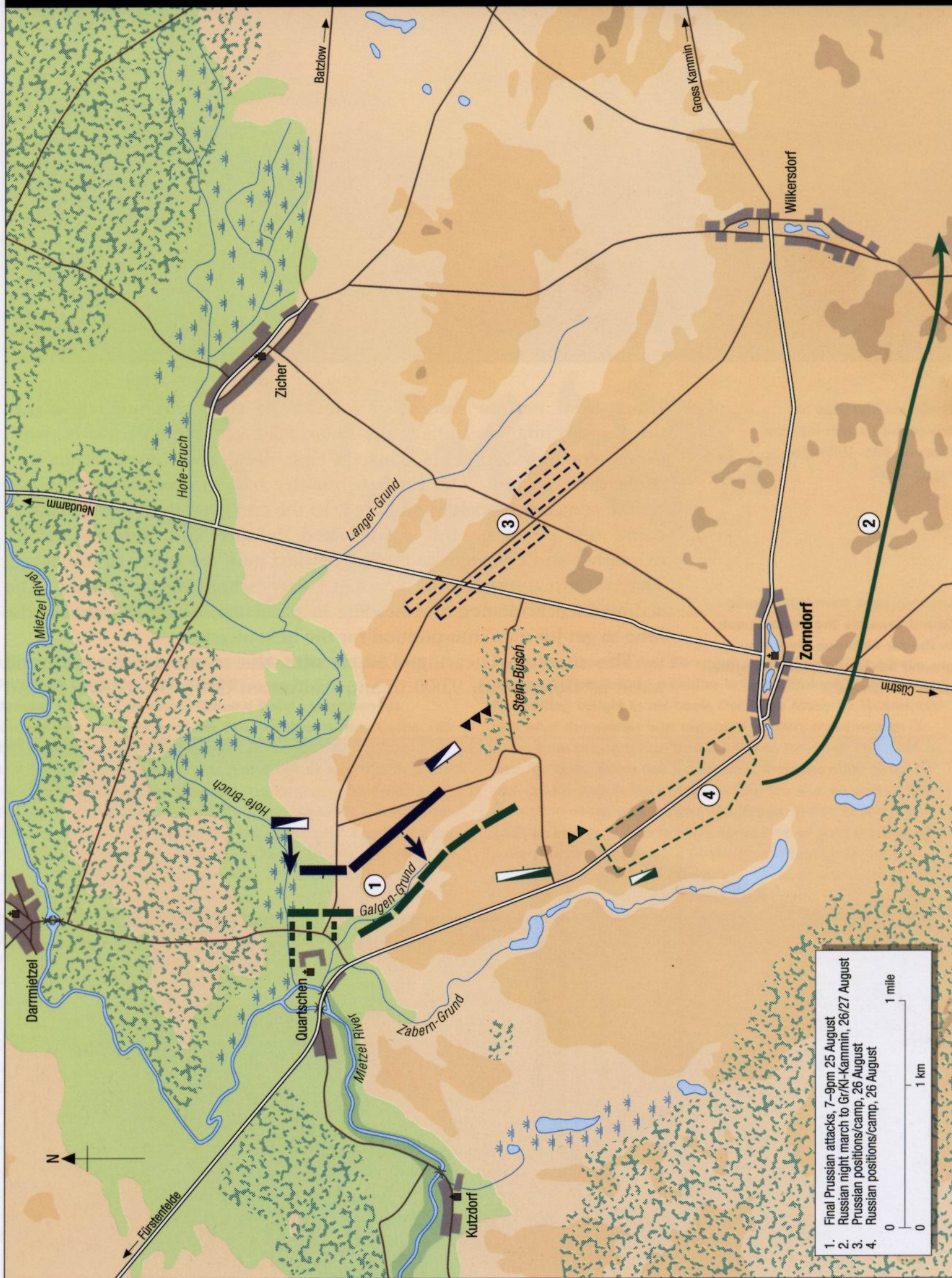
attack from west to east, this time around the Stein-Busch and into the Russian infantry. Initially the Russian infantry reeled back, but with nowhere to go except into the marshy Hofe-Bruch and complete ruin, they stood their ground. The Russian infantry had to continually close up on the centre as casualties mounted. In the end even the Prussian cavalry could not penetrate this tight-packed defence and with his cavalry exhausted and casualties mounting Seydlitz gave the order to disengage. They withdrew towards the Prussian battery where they re-formed. The actions of Schorlemer, and Seydlitz in particular, bought Frederick the time to get his men into position for the next attack.

Looking west from the Langer-Grund towards the Stein-Busch in the far distance, over the ground advanced over by Dohna. (Author's photo)

The time was nearing 3.30pm with the summer afternoon still warm as Dohna with 9,000 infantry advanced down the Langer-Grund



THE FINAL PRUSSIAN ATTACKS



1. Final Prussian attacks, 7-9pm 25 August
2. Russian night march to Gr/KI-Kammin, 26/27 August
3. Prussian positions/camp, 26 August
4. Russian positions/camp, 26 August

0 1 mile
0 1 km



intending to swing west into the Observation Corps. The initial attack did not go as planned and was repulsed. Luckily, however, Schorlemer was on hand with his cavalry to cover the withdrawal and prevent Demiku from launching an attack. As Dohna re-formed his infantry for another try, the artillery on the left wing was moved to a position just to the northwest of the Stein-Busch from where it was able to bring fire down on the Russian line. An hour passed after Dohna's initial assault and repulse before he was ready to try again. This time as Dohna advanced he had the support of the left-wing artillery. The assault was prolonged, confusion reigned and commanders had very little control over their men. The fighting was brutal with a ferocity not seen before in the war. Neither side gave quarter, troops striking out at each other with bayonets, musket butts and swords or grappling together as their lifeblood ebbed from their veins. Contrary to expectations, the Observation Corps gave a very good account of

The Langer-Grund as it heads north towards the Hofe-Bruch. Demiku's cavalry were on the right of the picture. (Author's photo)

The Prussian Black Hussars throw Russian infantry and Cossacks back into the Hofe-Bruch. (Engraving after Menzel)





themselves, as did the grenadier battalions and the Russian artillery, as ever. Finally, the Observation Corps did break and flee, the Russian gunners, staying to fight their guns, were cut down. Now the fact that Fermor had allowed the army to deploy with the Hofe-Bruch at its back could be seen for the mistake it was; the majority of the Observation Corps fled to their death in the marshes of the Hofe-Bruch. Other fugitives sought refuge in Quartschen and came across the light baggage train, which was looted for the second time that day. It was nearly 6.00pm and with the Russian line north of the Stein-Busch disintegrating the time had come for the Prussian cavalry to deliver the coup de grace. No attack came, however. The exhausted infantry were trying to re-organise while the horses of the cavalry were spent and the gunners shattered from their exertions.

During the afternoon Fermor had returned to the field and started preparing a new Russian line, this time on the west bank of the Galgen-Grund. Fermor adopted a position running north-south with the only infantry available to him, the relatively unscathed brigades of Kokoschkin (Troitsk and Kazan Musketeer Regts), Diez (4th Grenadier Regiment and Smolensk Musketeer Regt) and Leontiev (Kexholm and Ladoga Musketeer Regt). Some six regiments in all, they were deployed between the Fuchsberg and Quartschen. To support the line any cannon that had escaped the attention of the Prussians were gathered together in two batteries, the first on the Fuchsberg and the second in front of Quartschen. The remnants of the Russian cavalry were placed behind the Zabern-Grund while the Cossacks swarmed across the battlefield in their customary round of looting.

Looking south down the Galgen-Grund from near Quartschen and close to the Hofe-Bruch. (Author's photo)



Frederick realises how close he has come to being defeated by the Russians, whom he had dismissed as 'of no cause for concern'. The Russians would prove to be his most stubborn battlefield opponents and some of the most ferocious fighters his soldiers would have to face. (Engraving after Menzel)

'Lads, don't shout victory yet!'

The Russian tenacity had angered and frustrated Frederick, who was determined to drive them from the field. To do this he gathered together whatever was left of the infantry of the original advance guard on the left wing and supported them with 5th Hussars (Reusch). The battery near the Stein-Busch provided the artillery support. Frederick gave the order to advance at 7.00pm and the disheartened Prussians once again launched themselves at their most formidable enemy to date. Not surprisingly after a short advance with Russian cannonballs ploughing through their ranks the infantry on the left of the line turned and fled back to Zicher. The infantry on the right got no further than the light baggage train and fell apart to loot what they could and returned to the rear to enjoy their spoils. The Reusch Hussars managed to get into Quartschen from the north and promptly decided to plunder the wagons in the village. A shock awaited the commander on his return to the Prussian lines as Frederick had him arrested! A few regiments made it to the Galgen-Grund, notably 2nd Cuirassiers (Prince von Preussen), but they too were repulsed, this time by Russian counterattacks. The time was now 8.00pm and both armies were spent and their will to fight exhausted. As the sun set on one of Frederick's most bloody battles to date, both armies drew apart. Fermor moved his troops to Zorndorf with the intention of uniting with the *wagenberg* at Klein-Kammin. During the night the occasional clash along the Galgen-Grund flared, however, and Fermor found it impossible to make a clean break. He allowed his army to rest at Zorndorf for the night. Frederick remained determined to capture Quartschen, which was eventually achieved. This became the right wing of his new line and the cavalry positioned between the Stein-Busch and Wilkersdorf held his left. Zicher was the rallying point for individual Prussians to rejoin their colours and as midnight approached each army occupied roughly the position held by the other at the start of the day.

The battle of Zorndorf had come to an inconclusive end. Both sides were exhausted and neither had the remaining strength to seek a decisive advantage. Of the two armies the Prussians were probably in marginally better shape but, having fought their most difficult battle since Kolin in the summer of 1757, were unwilling to suffer any more casualties. The Russians had proved themselves tough opponents and, determined to remain on the field, denied Frederick the opportunity to claim a victory.

AFTERMATH

At daybreak on 26 August Fermor sent a messenger to Frederick requesting a truce for three days so that the wounded on both sides could receive aid and the dead could be recovered. Dohna was in command of the line where the message was delivered and responded that, '... it was customary for the victor to take charge of burying all the slain,' and that it was surprising for such a request to come from Fermor. Frederick was much more concerned as to how he would be able to keep the battle going and carried out a reconnaissance that morning. The reconnaissance revealed that the Russians had been drawn up facing east with their back to the Zabern-Grund. As Frederick rode across the front of his army towards Zorndorf the Russian hussars and Cossacks gave way but as he neared the village a discharge of canister spattered around him. This signalled a more general bombardment that caused a certain amount of talk in both armies about renewing the battle. The Prussians eventually took up positions between Quartschen and the little Hapfuhl rise and this manoeuvre attracted yet more Russian fire. In reality, however, there was little chance of either side renewing the attack as both found their stocks of all types of ammunition very low. On the Prussian side infantry, cavalry and artillery were all exhausted from the previous day's exertions. As the summer sun reached its zenith Frederick finally ruled out any idea of attacking Fermor again and withdrew his troops into camp, leaving the artillery to respond to the Russian cannon fire as necessary.



Prussian hussars survey the debris of battle after the Russians had marched away. (Engraving after Menzel)



After a battle the commissariat was particularly important in making sure rations were delivered to soldiers who quite often went into battle without having a meal first. They would rectify this as soon as possible afterwards. (Print after Knötel)

Throughout the remainder of the day there were desultory exchanges of artillery fire, causing approximately 100 casualties on each side, and the odd skirmish between the two cavalry forces. Frederick knew the Russian *wagenberg* was at Klein-Kammin and it is surprising that he did not take the opportunity to destroy it, particularly as he lay between it and the main army. Destruction of the *wagenberg* with all its powder and food stocks would have forced Fermor to withdraw more quickly towards Landsberg. There is the suggestion, however, that Frederick thought the destruction of the *wagenberg* to be of no consequence, convinced as he was that Fermor was a matter of hours away from withdrawing. Frederick withdrew his cavalry to the north side of the Langer-Grund to stop the useless skirmishing with the Cossacks and in doing so gave Fermor the chance to re-establish contact with the *wagenberg*.

At about midnight on 26/27 August and amid the rain of a heavy summer thunderstorm, Fermor assembled his remaining troops into two columns and marched away, passing underneath the very noses of Prussian cavalry vedettes above Wilkersdorf. It was not until 5.00am that the Prussians became aware that the Russian army was on the move as the tail end snaked its way to the south of the charred village of Zorndorf, arriving at the *wagenberg* at about 9.00am on 27 August.

Frederick followed up with his army and found the Russians having their breakfast at Klein-Kammin. The *wagenberg* was made up of narrow *flèches*, each one bristling with artillery. Frederick conducted a reconnaissance to see if there was any opportunity to attack and case shot once again sprayed around him. Observing the Prussian army arrive, the Russians immediately fortified their position between Klein-Kammin and Gross-Kammin and once again Frederick made the decision not to attack. He gave orders for his army to take up position around Tamsel. Fermor remained in his position near Klein-Kammin until 31 August and then started his retreat to Landsberg, where he linked up with Rumyantsev. Fermor considered that he had won the battle and wrote to St Petersburg in a tone such that *Te Deums* were celebrated in St Petersburg, Paris and Vienna in the next three weeks.

On 19 September with the difficulties of re-supply becoming acute, Fermor left Landsberg and, shadowed by Dohna with 17,000 men, headed eastwards. The port of Danzig had not acquiesced to Russian demands for free access and so, to retrieve something from the debacle of the campaign, Fermor ordered Major-General Palmbach with 15,000 men to capture the city. Danzig was defended by 700 soldiers of the militia under the command of an old and grey Colonel Heyde. The Russian siege was not well executed with severe consequences for the Russian forces in the west. Supporting the operation was a squadron of ships but they kept so far offshore that their fire had no effect. The land troops had no plan of



Frederick's next campaign was against his old adversary, Daun, and would lead to another defeat at his hands at Hochkirch on 14 October 1758. (Print after Röchling)

the fortress, no proper siege artillery and were also short of ammunition. The ammunition shortage was so dire that the Russians were in the embarrassing position of having to wait for the garrison to fire, so that they could pick up the cannonballs and fire them back! Palmbach, with all diligence, did his best to capture the city but withdrew on 1 November without success and rejoined Fermor. A successful capture of Danzig might have enabled the Russians to spend the winter in enemy territory but instead Fermor found himself retreating deeper into Poland and winter quarters.

Frederick was desperate to march to the aid of his brother, Prince Henry, in Saxony, who was threatened by the Austrians under Marshal Daun and the Imperial army or *Reichsarmee* under their new commander, Field Marshal Friedrich Prince of Zweibrücken. The news of the Russian withdrawal from Klein-Kammin reached Frederick on 1 September. Although the Russians were in relatively good order, only retreating as far as Landsberg and retaining the capacity to resume the advance, Frederick could delay his departure for Saxony no longer. He left Dohna in charge of the forces beyond the Oder with 17,000 men and orders to shadow and shepherd Fermor eastwards. On 2 September Frederick set off with the remainder of the army to join his brother.

While Frederick had been engaged against the Russians, the 60,000 men of the Austrian army and the *Reichsarmee* of 40,000 men had gathered in Saxony with the intention of threatening the Brandenburg heartland and Berlin. To counter this threat the Prussians had only the 21,000 troops under Prince Henry and the 24,000 men of Markgraf Karl of Brandenburg-Schwedt. The Austrian and Imperial commanders devised a grand plan to encircle Prince Henry's small army and crush it before assistance could arrive. Frederick detached 15,000–16,000 men from the Oder army and marched south with all possible speed, covering an average of 20 miles per day for five days. Luckily for the Prussians the Imperial commander, Zweibrücken, got cold feet about the whole plan and Daun decided to hold a review in honour of Graf Haugwitz. By 11 September Frederick had

Frederick's next campaign was against his old adversary, Daun, and would lead to another defeat at his hands at Hochkirch on 14 October 1758. (Print after Röchling)

Frederick's next campaign was against his old adversary, Daun, and would lead to another defeat at his hands at Hochkirch on 14 October 1758. (Print after Röchling)

united with his forces in Saxony, his timely arrival thwarting a belated strike against Prince Henry by Daun, who had received repeated orders from Vienna urging him to give battle. The Austrian and Imperial armies could only watch from their tented encampment on the west bank of the Elbe as Frederick marched into Dresden from the north. Frederick chose to place his headquarters in the village of Schönfeld on the east bank of the Elbe, directly across the river from the Austrian position at Stolpen. Daun had settled his army among the marshes, ponds, woods and ravines of the tangled country southeast of Dresden. The Austrian position stretched from Pirna on the left to Bautzen on their right. Frederick decided that a direct assault against the Austrian encampment was out of the question and the Prussians were too slow to ambush the Austrian General Loudon who was roaming the country with a force of light troops as he had done in Moravia at Olmütz. Frederick decided, therefore, to put indirect pressure on the Austrian army by threatening both their principal supply route from Bohemia through Zittau and the secondary route from Silesia via Bautzen. Frederick was also concerned about General Harsch's Austrian corps, which was threatening the fortress of Neisse. Frederick wanted to push the Austrians back into Bohemia and put himself between Daun and Harsch.

Frederick had his army on the move on 26 September and on the following day he detached Lieutenant-General Retzow with 9,000 men to march on ahead to Bautzen and Weissenberg. Pushing Retzow ahead had the added bonus of forcing Loudon to withdraw from Bautzen. Daun, thinking that the Prussian manoeuvres were directed against his magazines at Zittau, left his positions around Stolpen on 5 October. Instead of withdrawing into Bohemia as Frederick hoped, however, he moved parallel to the Prussians via Neustadt and on 7 October took up another position some 30 miles further east at Kittlitz. Daun had hoped to cut Frederick's lines of communications with Silesia; a dangerous plan to undertake in such close proximity to the Prussian army. So well planned and detailed was General Lacy's staff work, however, that the move was virtually completed before Frederick was aware of it.

At Kittlitz Daun could cover both the road to Silesia via Görlitz and the other to Bohemia running through Zittau. On the right of the Austrian position was a dominating feature known as the Stromberg and, anticipating a Prussian attempt to seize this vital ground, Daun placed artillery and four companies of grenadiers on it. Frederick ordered Retzow to attack and seize the Stromberg. When the mist cleared at 11.00am, revealing the strength of the Austrian position, Retzow did not attack and Frederick placed him under open arrest. Resuming his march, Frederick arrived at Bautzen on 7 October with 30,000 troops and, increasingly anxious about Neisse, moved on to Hochkirch on 10 October. Frederick was still pursuing his plan to push across Daun's front, gain his flank and interpose himself between Daun and Harsch in Silesia. Frederick planned to stay in Hochkirch for only a few days to allow his commissariat to catch up with vital provisions, enabling him to continue his eastward march. In the end he was halted in Hochkirch for three days, giving Daun the opportunity to strike a blow at Frederick that for once he did not miss. On 14 October Daun launched a series of well-coordinated attacks against Frederick's very temporary position at Hochkirch and gained his second victory over the King of Prussia.

Did Frederick win the battle of Zorndorf?

This question has proved as complex as the battle itself. Other battles in the Seven Years War such as Kolin, Rossbach and Leuthen had a quite clear result with no dispute about who was the victor and who the vanquished. The result of Zorndorf was much less clearcut. The convention of the period normally considered the victor to be the side that retained possession of the field of battle. At Zorndorf, however, both the Russians and the Prussians remained on the field, each claiming the honour of victory. The Russians were the first to withdraw but they were far from a beaten army. They marched away in good order two days after the main battle had ended and full of fight. This alone does not justify Frederick claiming victory. A straightforward numerical analysis shows Prussian losses totalled nearly 13,000 killed, wounded and missing, 26 cannon and eight regimental colours lost. Frederick started the battle with 37,000 men and incurred about 35 per cent losses. Fermor began the battle with 43,000 men and although his casualties were initially thought to be 16,000, with more than half coming from the Observation Corps, over the years this figure has been amended to 19,000. This puts Russian casualties at about 45 per cent. The Prussians claim to have captured around 100 Russian guns, yet Russian sources claim losses of only around 30.

Although Zorndorf was not tactically decisive, there is little doubt it had a strategic impact. As autumn drifted by, the deteriorating weather would increasingly tax the Russian supply chain and return the Polish roads to an impassable quagmire. Having failed to capture Cüstrin and with no hope of taking the fortress of Colberg, time ran out for Fermor and he was forced to withdraw further into Poland for the winter. His decision was reinforced by the inability of his Swedish and Austrian allies to give him any practical assistance.

The Russian campaign had reached its high water mark in August 1758. Ultimately Fermor would have had to withdraw into East Prussia that autumn. Frederick, however, was determined to teach the Russians a lesson and had written to his brother, Prince Henry, before the battle (10 August) saying that, 'he intended to give the Russians a good whipping'. Without doubt the battle certainly went some way to doing this but Frederick remained disappointed that he failed to destroy the invader from the east. The battle appeared to be an opportunity for a resounding Prussian victory. The Russians had taken up a poor position and Frederick displayed all his customary skill as a commander, both before and during the battle. What Frederick had underestimated were the tenacity and steadfastness of the Russian soldier. The sheer doggedness and determination of the Russian soldier not to be beaten was a clear indication to Frederick that if there was any weakness in the Russian army, it did not lay with the rank and file soldier but with the high command. At the strategic level the campaign of 1758 demonstrated that Russia could project her power into the main theatre of war. Although in purely numerical terms it could be said that Frederick achieved a victory, when the strategic situation is taken into account and particularly the fact that Zorndorf was a battle Frederick probably need not have fought, one must see the battle and campaign overall as a draw. In 1759 the Russians would be back.

THE BATTLEFIELD TODAY

I visited the battlefield of Zorndorf with a brother officer and friend from my regiment, Captain Al Turner, over the weekend 5–7 July and we were lucky enough to have very hot and sunny weather for our visit. To be quite honest Zorndorf, like Kolin, Rossbach and Leuthen, is not the sort of battlefield you can visit easily, you really need your own transport. As we had the use of my car, getting there and driving around was all very easy – indeed we were back in Berlin for the Saturday night. Making the visit using public transport would be fine while in Germany but once you cross the border into Poland and are deposited at Cüstrin, modern-day Kostrzyn, railway station I fear that unless you speak Polish well, the rest of the journey might prove frustrating. Hiring a car is the easy option for a relaxed trip. Do be sure, however, to tell the car hire company that you intend to go to Poland as you will need to take out extra insurance. If you don't and they realise you have gone east the car will be reported as stolen; you will need to show your insurance details to the border guards anyway. If you visit in the summer, not only is the weather more pleasant but you also get a far better feel for conditions on the day of the battle. Having donned your sunglasses head east out of Berlin along either the A12 Autobahn (motorway) or the more leisurely Route 1/5 to the border at Kostrzyn. Although we started on the Autobahn, we rapidly opted for the cross-country route. Turning off at Furstenwalde, we took great pleasure in driving along some beautiful, tree-lined country roads with the fields of golden wheat swaying in the breeze. As we neared the border the villages still had the look of the old communist regime – grey, rundown and



The modern main road through Zorndorf. (Author's photo)



**Zorndorf village centre. Some of the buildings are relatively modern but overall the village is not that much bigger today than on the day of the battle.
(Author's photo)**

uninviting. The German government is spending a lot of money in the former East Germany but it seems the money has not made it this far as yet.

The border area is a peculiar place; far more so than other international borders. When one appreciates something of the history of the area it makes a little more sense. In the immediate aftermath of World War II those Germans living in areas of Pomerania, West Prussia and Silesia on the east side of the Oder who had not already fled before the Red Army were, in modern parlance, 'ethnically cleansed' from their homes. For example, Germans living in Breslau, modern-day Wrocław in Silesia, were moved out of their homes to make way for Poles from Lvov, modern-day Lviv, who had in turn been displaced by ethnic Russians. The enormous upheaval of World War II did not end with the firing of the last bullet. It is almost as if the ghosts of the past have not yet settled.

Kostrzyn is a great disappointment, nothing really remaining of the old city besieged by Fermor. The city was originally built in the 13th century on the site of a fishing village at the confluence of the Oder and Warthe rivers. Frederick was imprisoned there for three months in 1730 when he was just 18 by his father, the overbearing Frederick William, after the failed attempt to escape from his father's court. His close companion von Katte had been with Frederick when they were stopped and it was from a window in his cell that Frederick was forced to witness the execution of his friend. Frederick is said to have remarked, when he learnt how little his father had allocated as a budget for his upkeep, that he preferred Cüstrin to Potsdam. Considering his poor relationship with his father and the severe austerity of the court at Potsdam, his remark is unsurprising. Cüstrin had always been an important river depot and in the Seven Years War its use became more military than civilian. Although the city was destroyed by fire during the Russian siege in August 1758, the fortress itself was untouched. The city was rebuilt after the war at a cost of 700,000 thalers and remained untouched by future wars. The Russians returned in 1945, however, and this time successfully besieged and captured the city.

Modern-day Kostrzyn is built completely on the east bank of the Oder and bears no resemblance to the old city.

On leaving Kostrzyn we took the road north, Route 118, which passes through the old eastern suburbs. Sadly but unsurprisingly there is nothing left of the old buildings. For some 4km (2.5 miles) the road travels through a forest that was there at the time of the battle.

Apart from a railway line out towards Kresnica (Wilkersdorf) running north to Cychry (Zicher) the battlefield is still largely untouched. Like Leuthen and Kolin it is a gem. I would strongly recommend a visit before the influx of EU euros funds a rash of road construction etc.

On leaving the forest the first village one arrives at is Sarbinowo (Zorndorf). It is still very small with the bulk of the old village on the left of the road. Driving around this part it is very easy to imagine the Cossacks and Bashkirs riding through, torching the houses as they went. The 118 runs northwest from Sarbinowo towards Chwarszczany (Quartschen). Stopping in a parking place, one can easily take a look at the Zabern-Grund, which is on your left. It is an impressive obstacle and it is easy to see why the Prussians and Russians used it to anchor their respective flanks. What is more impressive is that Seydlitz launched his cavalry over it. Since the war the Russians have erected a sign commemorating the battle, which has a heavy Russian bias. What is more interesting is the track that leads from the road onto the Langer-Grund and the open country out towards the Stein-Busch. On leaving the trees that line the track you are looking from the Prussian viewpoint over the killing ground of the attack of Manteuffel's advance guard. What is very striking is the openness of the battlefield. Yet like any piece of ground the dips and folds create an array of dead ground that would have been utilised by both sides. On the hot summer's day when we visited the wheat had not been harvested and stood much as it would have when the Prussians advanced through it for the Russians only cut down the wheat immediately in front of their positions.

**We are standing at the kink in the Russian line looking south over the ground that Manteuffel's advance guard attacked over.
(Author's photo)**





From the Stein-Busch looking west towards the Prussian left wing. Note the dip in the ground that leads into the Galgren-Grund. (Author's photo)

Further down the road we arrived at Chwarszczany (Quartschen), which also remains very small. Getting the light baggage train into the hamlet must have been a logistician's nightmare. Driving out from Quartschen you can approach the Russian positions from the rear. The dead ground behind the Russian positions running down to the Hofe-Bruch would have been ideal for moving troops in cover. The drawback to the Russian position is that behind you there is the swampy and boggy ground of the Hofe-Bruch's flood plain. Looking at the ground, we were convinced that if Frederick had gained the upper hand and forced the Russians to withdraw, they would have been routed and destroyed on the Hofe-Bruch.

We next went in search of Frederick's crossing point over the Mietzel where the pontoon was erected. The Mietzel today is a sluggish river, around 30ft wide and quite deep. It would not have taken long to throw a pontoon bridge or two across. The wood the other side of the Mietzel, which the Prussian army moved through, is fairly dense and one can see why a guide was needed. Our next stop was the high ground just south of Cychry (Zicher) where Demiku had his cavalry. Standing looking over towards Batzlow to the east and Wilkersdorf to the south it is clear that Demiku would have been aware of the Prussian turning movement. From this position the area of the Stein-Busch sits on slightly more dominant ground and when you arrive at the Stein-Busch itself this impression is reinforced. Today there is a collection of smallholdings known as Suchlica on the site. The scrubby bushes have gone on the whole and an orchard now takes up a lot of the area and farmland has encroached as well. Even looking at the area today it is easy to imagine Kanitz getting disordered in the Stein-Busch. However, when the Prussian artillery moved up to the position for Dohna's attack they would have had excellent fields of fire and would have been able to adjust their fire as the attack went in. Having surveyed the battlefield for one last time from the Stein-Busch we headed back to Berlin.

We drove back along the country road Route 1 to Munchberg and then Route 5 into Berlin, a fascinating journey for the general military historian and the World War II enthusiast in particular. It was interesting to cross the Oder and see in the distance the Seelow Heights, site of the first battle in

A description of the famous 'Russian victory' put up by the communist regime. It is located on the side of the road to Quartschen and you will need to speak Russian or German to crack it. (Author's photo)



Brandenburg as the Red Army launched its assault on the German capital in April 1945. There is a small museum in Seelow itself that has a modest collection of vehicles and weapons, including a T-34. Behind the museum on the side of the hill is a small graveyard and a memorial to the Soviet dead.

If you do visit Zorndorf, I recommend you stay in Berlin. The battlefield is close enough to make a day trip easily achievable. It also allows you to sample some of the sights, restaurants and nightlife of Berlin itself. The old East Berlin has a thriving nightlife and is very much good *craic* now. If you look carefully the scarred buildings from the 1945 battle for the city remain, but these are slowly being restored. There are too many museums to list, all full of interesting exhibits and not just covering Frederick the Great. The *Deutsches Historisches Museum* on Unter Den Linden is well worth a visit I am told, although sadly it was closed when we visited. For those of you interested in *Zinnfiguren* (Flat toy soldiers) and books there is a wonderful shop called *Berliner Zinnfiguren* on Kneesebeckstrasse, which is well worth a visit – the temptation to spend money is very difficult to resist.

Further afield there is the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp near Oranienburg to the north of Berlin. A chilling place, Sachsenhausen is a poignant reminder of the suffering and deprivations of the Russian POWs who made up the majority of its inmates, along with some British airmen shot down over Berlin and SOE operatives captured in France or the Low Countries.

On a more cultural note Potsdam is a lovely place to visit. The town centre is being restored and slowly regaining the grandeur and splendour of Frederick's era. Schloss Sanssouci situated in Park Sanssouci is worth a visit. Frederick had little love for his wife, Elizabeth Christine, or of living in Berlin and in 1744 he ordered the construction of a residence where he could live 'without cares', *sans souci*. The gardens are particularly beautiful and stretch down to the Neues Palais, built between 1763 and 1769 to celebrate the end of the Seven Years War.

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