

NEUE KAMPAGNE ZEITUNG

Issue 3

DOUBLE BLOW TO PRUSSIAN KING FREDERICK

2 SIEGE LOSSES IN RAPID SUCCESSION

Küstrin Falls to Russians on 29th May and then Breslau taken by Austrians a week later.

King Frederick must be wondering about the selection procedure for his garrison commanders. In the North, on the Polish side of the Oder, the strong Prussian fortress of Küstrin protected one of the eastern routes into Berlin itself. On the 18th May, a Russian Corps commanded by the veteran General Saltykov (pictured right) arrived outside the walls and proceeded to dig siege lines and position their mighty guns.



Plan of the Siege of Küstrin

Was it the excellent work of the Russian engineers in setting out their trenches and batteries? Did the Russian gunners excel themselves with their speed of loading and accuracy of fire? Was a deal struck?

Whatever it was, the guns had hardly started firing in earnest before the garrison capitulated and the road to Berlin lay open before the Russian army.

Second Disaster Within A Week

The Austrian forces under General Gideon Ernst Laudon had been pillaging the Silesian countryside around Breslau for several weeks,



stripping the area bare while pretending to lay siege to the city since their arrival in early May.

The Prussians had originally bolstered the garrison with elements from the field army. These regular troops were withdrawn from the city as the Austrians approached. Perhaps this was not the wisest move as events unfolded.

There was great talk about “dealings” between the besiegers and the garrison and by chance Laudon’s instructions to his negotiating officer have come into our hands.

“Offer ‘march out’ terms to regular troops of the garrison and wages to local troops (minus any pro Prussian officers) in return for immediate capitulation. Failing this an intense bombardment to follow, including use of field artillery, then a repeat of same offer making clear that any subsequent offer will not be so favourable.”

The regular troops did indeed leave the city soon after but the Austrians still busied themselves with their depredations of the local Silesian farmers and merchants.

However by the end of May they had sited their batteries and began the bombardment. This did not last long as the city surrendered on 5th June. Would it have fallen so soon if the regular troops had remained? We’ll probably never know.

Better Showing by Franco-Imperial Forces

After what can only be described as the debacle at Marburg, Prince Friedrich Saxe-Hildburghausen had a more lucid day and produced an altogether better performance when Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick followed up his former victory. The Reichs Armee and its reluctant (it must be said) French allies were forced to turn and try to repulse the advancing Anglo-Hannoverian army.

While falling back towards Frankfurt am Main, the defeated Franco-Imperial army from Marburg was engaged some 30 miles Northeast of that city, about midway between Frankfurt and Hersfeldt. It had been reinforced by two regiments of French cavalry (Chevaulegers and Dragoons) as well as small units of Imperial Dragoons and foot. Friedrich had found a reasonably defensible position behind the small river that flowed by the village of Unter Erwartung. He put the French cavalry brigade, under St Germain, on his left flank and his Imperial cavalry brigade on his right flank. Between these was placed (from left to right) the two Imperial infantry brigades (the right hand one partially in the wood) and then the remaining French battalion with its light gun covering the river bridge. Of great surprise (at the time) to all present was that the Duc de Richelieu joined this battalion to lead it personally. (However subsequent research by your correspondent has revealed documents that may shed light on this action.)

On the North side of the river, Ferdinand was busily deploying his troops. He put his Hannoverian Grenadier brigade and the light gun so recently captured from the French on his left. The Buffs were tasked with advancing into Unter Erwartung while the Highlanders (in the lead) and British Grenadiers were to swing round the right (West) of the village. His field gun was to advance to an advantageous position on the central hill while further to his right his cavalry brigade, led by the 2nd, Royal North British Dragoons, was deployed to sweep between the hills and past the East side of Ober Erwartung.

Another surprise awaited Saxe-Hildburghausen as a Hannoverian messenger, accompanied by some French officers taken at Marburg, was sent forward under a flag of truce across the bridge towards Richelieu! (Was it by chance that he was positioned at the FRONT of his troops in the ideal place to receive this emissary?)

It soon became apparent that the French were not going to take any aggressive action in the battle when they failed to open fire on the lead battalion of the Buffs as it approached the bridge within range of their artillery. Frantic notes were sent

back and forth between the Coalition commanders, and indeed between Ferdinand and Richelieu. A little later, on the western end of the field, similar exchanges were noted between the Anglo-Hannoverian brigadier and St Germain, followed by a stand-off by both parties.

The Reichs Armee commander was obviously amazed and dismayed by this behaviour from the French. However he was slightly comforted by the fact that they did not leave the field and conformed to the Imperial alignments. He was further cheered when the French gunners withdrew from their piece and made no protest as Imperial troops crewed it.

Despite this set back, the Imperial commander tried to hold his position as best he could. The Imperial Foot brigades were sent towards the river line while the cavalry brigade swept forward to try to cross the river and outflank the Hannoverian left. The attentions of the light gun on this side of the field emptied a few saddles and the Grenadiers hurried to get in position. However two squadrons of dragoons managed to get across and gallop each side of the Hannoverian brigade, leaving the bemused Grenadiers and their gunners not knowing which way to face. The third Imperial squadron remained south of the stream, as it did for the duration of the day.

In the village the Buffs halted, awaiting developments but the Highlanders (with Keith's to the fore), swept between the village and the hill towards the stream, the two Grenadier battalions bringing up the rear. While to their right, in the centre of the battlefield, Ferdinand's field piece had unlimbered and deployed on the edge of the central hill, ready to open fire on the Reichs Armee infantry as it debouched from amidst and around the wood.

On the Hannoverian right, the cavalry brigade advanced past Ober Erwartung before halting short of the stream for discussions with the static French brigade as mentioned earlier.

If the Imperial troops manning the (previously French) light gun were ever trained as artillerymen is unknown but their first shot ploughed through both battalions of the Buffs as they waited in column in the village street on the north side of the bridge. This was too much for the second battalion, who broke and fled from the village. This put them in the path of the Imperial dragoons sweeping around the Northeast of Unter Erwartung.

The Buffs first battalion sought cover in the nearby buildings while the 2nd battalion managed to form square before the enemy cavalry could close.

In the centre, the much-vaunted British firepower was outclassed by a fine performance of disciplined musketry from the 2nd battalion of Regiment Cronegk. Obviously the Reichs Armee had undergone some intensive training since the Battle of Marburg and Keith's Highlanders took the brunt of it as they were comprehensively outshot. Whether Colonel Keith or the Imperial commander was more surprised by this is not known.

The Highland/Grenadier brigade was bunched up on the north bank of the river between the village and the hill and now also received the attentions of the light gun. With another crashing volley from Cronegk on Keith's, this brigade was taking the lion's share of Anglo-Hannoverian casualties and decided to fall back. The Royal Artillerymen on the hill tried to help their compatriots by engaging the Imperial troops but this was not very effectual and Cronegk stood firm under fire.

Neither squadron of the Imperial cavalry wished to tangle with the Buffs' square and both set off towards the central hill with the intent of taking the field gun from the rear. Ferdinand, positioned on this hill near the gun, saw the danger and sent urgent messages to recall his cavalry from the right flank. Meanwhile the gun pivoted round to face the new threat and thus relieved the pressure on the Imperial foot.

The Imperial cavalry didn't fancy charging into canister and found that the rear of the Highlander/Grenadier brigade was in reach and so spurred off in their direction. Maxwell's Grenadiers were the rearmost battalion and the dragoons' target. If they gave way, the dragoons would be rampaging through the rest of the brigade in no time. Maxwell's men, after a shaky start, had kept the Imperial cavalry at bay at Marburg, could they do it again?

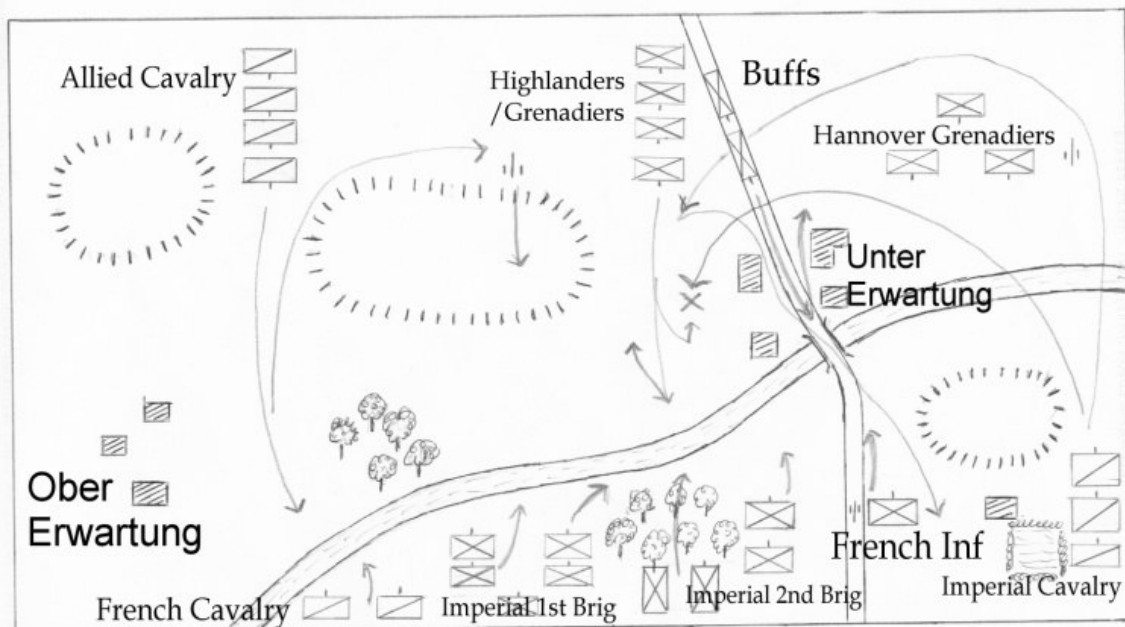
The horsemen closed in and Maxwell got his men to about face just in time but could not get a volley off before the dragoons were amongst them. For a moment the melee stood in doubt as the Grenadiers (though more numerous) tried to hold off the charging cavalry. The discipline, training and sheer determination of Maxwell's men carried the day and the Imperial cavalry were all but destroyed.

This left the remaining squadron in serious trouble. It was within arc and range of the artillery, faced and flanked by infantry and with three squadrons of enemy cavalry closing in. They broke ranks and fled over the bridge to safety.

With the threat to their rear removed, Ferdinand's troops now returned to the task of pushing the Coalition forces back. The Hannoverian Grenadiers at last got across the river as evening drew on; but it was obvious that Saxe-Hilburghausen was now happy to yield the field of battle to Ferdinand. The Hannoverians had the nominal victory but the coalition forces could withdraw, having inflicted slightly greater casualties on the Hannoverians and secured a safe retreat.

Prince Ferdinand was again able to pen a victory report (which we have managed to come by –see below) but gained less easily and at greater cost.

It is interesting to note that, as at Marburg, the Anglo/Hannoverian cavalry brigade again did nothing but ride around the battlefield, neither charging nor being charged and in fact not even having a shot fired at them! (I have heard that they are being called the "Hotspurs" by their colleagues, particularly the gunners; as they just race around looking flash, are always somewhere else when stout defence is required, seem to be looking the wrong way when attacks go in and they never get a result or even dirty.)



To The C-I-C of the Anglo-Hannoverian forces

Sir

It is my duty to report to you the events of the day, Thursday 2nd June. Following your orders my forces continued their advance, pursuing the enemy southwards. Just after noon we came upon their full force deployed in a defensive position holding the line of a small river by the village of Unter Erwartung. Their left was held by the French cavalry, the centre by the combined Imperial and French infantry and the right by the Imperial cavalry. My plan of action was to pin the bulk of the enemy with my centre and right, whilst the left would advance and block their line of retreat. This key manoeuvre was allocated to the Hannoverian Grenadier brigade, supported by a light artillery battery. The 5th brigade (The Buffs), with the 4th brigade (Highlanders and Grenadiers) covering their flank were to advance straight down the road. The Foot battery were to occupy a central position and the cavalry were allocated the right flank.

Before hostilities commenced I ordered forward officers under a flag of truce, to negotiate with the French commanders. Officers captured at Marburg were released, under parole, and my officers attempted to discover the French intentions. Our offers of safe passage back to their depots were refused and the results of the negotiation were that the French would not attack my troops if we did not :

- 1 attack them
- 2 attack the Imperial forces
- 3 cross the river

Obviously such terms were not acceptable and I decided to join action. The enemy position was a strong one, as later events were to show, but their initial move frankly surprised me. All the Imperial cavalry crossed the river, ignoring the fire of the Grenadiers and their attached artillery and moved around my left flank. This immediately halted the grenadiers' advance as they assumed defensive formations against the impending cavalry attack. Meanwhile in the centre the 5th Brigade was subject to short range artillery fire and had to take cover in the village. On their right the 4th Brigade advanced to the river line, but were confronted by massed battalions of the Imperial infantry. Previously, these have been considered as something akin to militia, but their concentrated musketry forced the retreat of Keith's battalion with heavy losses. On my right the cavalry made little progress against their French opposite numbers, refusing to attack in such a disadvantageous position.

The Imperial cavalry continued their advance, ignoring the Hannoverian grenadiers and moving to the rear of the village. From this position they threatened not only the rear of the 4th Brigade, but also the artillery on the hill. I personally led the Hannoverian squadrons to oppose this threat. Before these could intervene the first Imperial cavalry regiment had charged Maxwell's Grenadiers. This proved their undoing for I am pleased to report that Colonel Maxwell handled his men most gallantly. Though the cavalry were amongst them, their courage and determination saw off the enemy leaving a ruin of dead men and horses. The second unit were by now almost completely surrounded and fled in disorder through the village and over the bridge to attempt to reform in the rear of their forces.

With matters now resolved the attack was resumed, but with more emphasis on the left flank. The Hannoverian grenadiers crossed the river and formed up, supported by the 5th Brigade and the Hannoverian cavalry. However, further advance was prevented by night falling. Picquets later reported that the enemy had fallen back further along their lines of communication.

Tonight we will attend to the wounded and in the morning bury the dead (far too many I fear).

Ferdinand

[later] A rider from the British cavalry reported that as light failed the French cavalry seemed to be falling back along a different line to the Imperial forces. This report is as yet uncorroborated.

As mentioned in the battle report, we also managed to get a glimpse of the despatch from Versailles to the Duc de Richelieu.

The first part was in cipher which we could not decode but the second part was in plain words as the message was meant to be crystal clear;-

"One other thing. The French court is of the opinion that the French war effort would be best served if the noble Duc was to appear on the field of battle rather than in the bed of his lover. Furthermore could it stress its belief to Richelieu that the duty of any supreme commander is to lead his soldiers into battle whilst leaving mundane matters such as troop dispositions, movements and orders to subordinates? It would improve the morale of the troops and the Court if the Commander in Chief was to die heroically amidst the bayonets of our enemies rather than to expire exhausted between the thighs of his mistress."

Need we say more?

SNIPPETS

Your correspondent observed, whilst on his morning constitutional the other day, a gentleman, of martial bearing, supervising the conveyance of a large crate into the establishment containing the Russian representation within the city. Intrigued as to what the crate might contain, further enquiries were made. The answer obtained surprised your correspondent mightily. Rather than containing yet another consignment of clothes for the Imperial Household, it did in fact contain a large number of books. What is more, they were all copies of the same book. A close examination of the case revealed the name of that distinguished publishing house "Colophon and Verso". Your correspondent immediately repaired to their establishment and discovered that someone had purchased the entire stock of Captain Von Tarlenheim's new book. Staff were unable to say who the customer was, other than "he spoke with a foreign accent".

Life cannot be easy for the representatives of the "Danubian dragon". They have been observed of late scuttling around the city in groups of four, or even five. Individuals have been overhead to mutter "remember what we were told, always concentrate, never operate alone"

On the other hand, the French representation delight in solo activity; well almost. It is rumoured that one of the younger attaches has been extremely attentive to the eldest daughter of the under-secretary of the War Office. Rather than incurring the wrath of other members of the cabinet the under secretary has been the butt of several quite severe jibes. One was the suggestion

that the young man in question be presented with a pair of spectacles, as the object of his affection was celebrating her 39th summer, of considerable girth and addicted to particularly pungent cheese.

The Foreign Office announced that the recent incursion by Swedish cavalry right up to the gates of the city was "purely accidental". Swedish diplomatic sources have assured locals that the cavalry were operating in a "shepherding" role, anxious that our light cavalry did not get lost. Local businessmen were not convinced, several proposed a punitive expedition against the marauders. The farming community was similarly alarmed. "Do you know what these Swedes mean by 'shepherding'? They have funny ways with sheep," said an agricultural spokesman. Others, more pragmatic, pointed out that the trade with the Baltic nations kept a number of local people employed and that hasty actions were not always the best policy. The Cabinet has issued a strong message to our garrison commander demanding action. (Apparently when this incident was reported to his Majesty, he was heard to remark "Are we at war with Sweden then?".)

In Vienna, the various Coalition partners are keen that their fellows should dine together, however no such ensemble has yet occurred. The problem seems to be that each is insistent that the other comes to them. The city is ringing with invitations and counter proposals; "You must come and join me", "No, you must come to me", seems to be the order of the day.

Colophon and Verso
(Established 1648)

Booksellers and Stationers
To the Royal Court

Are pleased to inform their numerous
customers that the new printing of

Captain FRITZ VON TARLENHEIM'S
Classic

"A Topographical Atlas
illustrating travels in the
Eastern Lands"

is now available after stocks of the 1st edition sold
out in the matter of a few days.

(Please note that this is an improved and
corrected edition)

SOMETHING TO CHEER FRITZ BUT DISMAY SAXONS ?

Leipzig Falls

After the setbacks of the two previous weeks, at last a siege has gone King Frederick's way. After a dreadful three-week bombardment by the massed Prussian siege guns and with no signs of assistance from any of their so-called friends and allies, the gallant city was taken and occupied by the jubilant General Hautchamory on June 12th.

The Saxon Elector managed to escape and it is believed he made his way to the last Saxon held city of Erfurt. Presumably the Prussians will move to invest this city and so complete the job of annexing the land Frederick so covets.

Not such a Jolly Jaunt

The previous siege of Dresden seems to have been a terrible affair. The bombardment and subsequent fires have devastated that once fine city as this excerpt from an eyewitness report (that escaped the Prussian censor) from Dresden reveals.

"The fire was raging terribly in the city and the suburbs. Many of the foremost streets were burning from end to end, and wherever you looked you could see houses crashing down. The Prussians noticed that officers were observing their movements through telescopes from the tower of the Kreuzkirche, and were reporting the information by signals. The Prussian guns fired at the tower. It flared up and collapsed, causing a wide conflagration."

We may probably assume that the situation was much the same in Leipzig.

We are in receipt of another communication that also evaded the Prussian authorities.

SAXONY'S TEARS.

Inevitably a few stooges and toadies have crawled out of the woodwork, in your columns, to lickspittle around the Prussian aggressors. There is, regrettably, always such dross in any nation. More representative we suggest is this piece of verse which is appearing on the walls of Saxon buildings flyposted at night. Although drawn from a well known children's rhyme it sums up the current situation admirably:

*There was a little nutcase,
Nothing did he care,
But to bombard Dresden and to lord it there.
The King of Prussia's army came to trample me,
No notice did he take of my known neutrality.*

A Saxon Patriot

Where is the Coalition ?

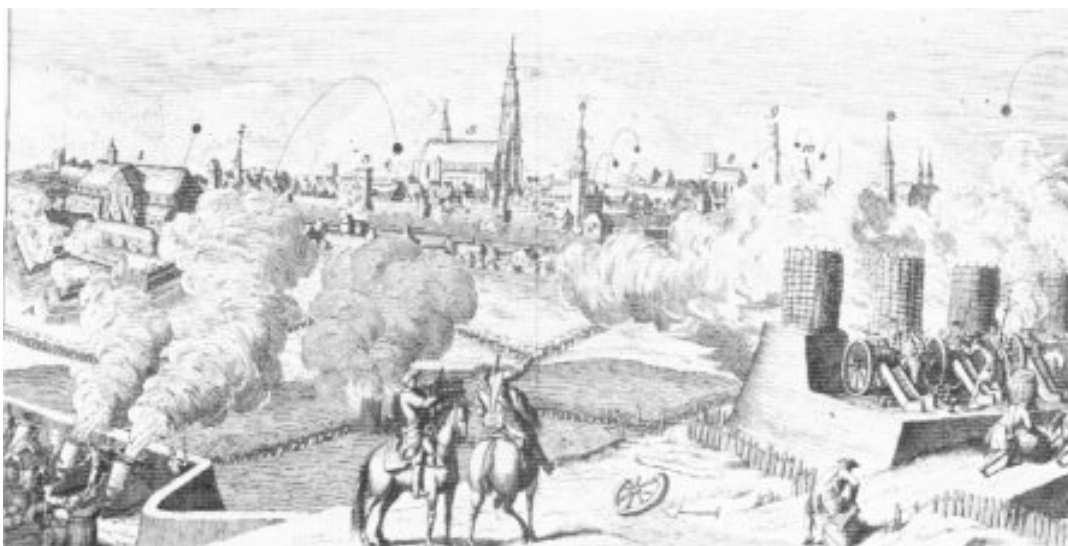
Apart from the token skirmish at Pirna (see # 1) there has been no material aid from any Coalition member to help the ruler and people of Saxony. However the Austrian Kanzellor Prince von Kaunitz has issued the following statement;-

Message To Saxons

The strategic situation makes it impossible to come to your aid, in the short term, without risk of losing the entire campaign. Be assured that whatever befalls you, at the hands of the aggressors, a full restoration of your sovereignty and the removal of every last Prussian from your lands will be high on our list of peace conditions when the "Plunderer of Potsdam" is brought to reason!

Kaunitz

One wonders if the Saxons will take much comfort from that.



Prussian Siege Batteries in Action

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir

Following your kindness in printing in your last issue the letter from my son who is currently serving with His Majesty's forces, I crave your indulgence again. I enclose Fritz's latest letter in the hope that it may serve to stiffen the resolve of those in our society who carp at any activity which causes "trade to suffer". Like any father I am proud of my son; he knows what is right and has stood against Austrian aggression. Prussia needs many more like him

Franz Meyer

Father

The weather continues fair, though the rivers have risen due to last of the snow melting in the mountains. My friend Lothar was called before the Feldwebel two days ago; he was on report for not wearing the correct belt on picket duty. Fortunately, the Captain (Herr Waldstein's son), intervened and Lothar escaped a beating. Feldwebel Stinck was not amused and said that once we get to P..... standards would be imposed regardless of certain officers.

The locals continue to welcome us, some of them have invited us back in the autumn to help with the harvest. One of the artillery officers was killed last week when a gun rolled out of control. He was showing some new recruits how the French army arranged their batteries. Some of the ladies from L..... had come to watch and he became distracted by a parasol.

In the company we are all betting on when we will drive the Austrians into the Danube. The day of decision cannot be far off, our officers declare that only the speed of the Austrian retreat is stopping us catching them. We heard what may have been artillery (or possibly thunder) towards the east yesterday and cavalry scouts said they had killed two Croats whilst on patrol.

The supply situation has improved considerably. Captain Waldstein said that the problem had been caused by employing wagon drivers who were blind and drunk. I cannot agree with him as the ones I have seen have been for the most part sober and have been very good at seeing the road back to the depot. Tell mother not to worry I am in good health and in the company of as fine a body of stout fellows as you could wish. Everyone says that with His Majesty in command we must prevail. May God watch over you both

Your son

Fritz

Sir

I feel that I must set the record straight regarding the ridiculous allegations against the late Herr Stumpf. It does not display the manners of a gentleman to attack the character of so noble a soldier, especially when he is unable to defend himself. Normally I would not condone the public denunciation of a "professional" man, but in Herr Kutundsow's case I will make an exception. In his communication Herr Kutundsow describes himself as "Surgeon Extraordinaire"; this far I agree with him. I had the misfortune to go on campaign with this "surgeon" in 1745, never did I witness a more shambolic individual. He had no experience of soldiering (despite having assured the Colonel, the late, lamented Colonel Stumpf to the contrary). More soldiers were lost due to his "kind ministrations" than through enemy action. Our regiment had the worst sickness record in the army and Surgeon Kutundsow blamed the "unseasonably cool weather".

His appearance in the mess was a disgrace and his financial arrangements there caused considerable friction. Even now the mess steward is awaiting the 125 thalers due for wine consumed by the aforesaid surgeon "extraordinaire". Under his control the medicinal spirit consumption quadrupled, only to drop back to a lower level with his successor.

On our return to barracks Herr Kutundsow was called before the Colonel and advised that his services were no longer required. In reply he blustered that he had never had a chance, they were all against him and they would not recognize true talent if they fell over it. Colonel Stumpf replied that he would ensure that Herr Kutundsow would never work for the Prussian state again and if he was still within the precincts of the barracks in one hour he would be persuaded to leave at bayonet point.

The final stage in the sorry tale of our proud regiment's association with this "surgeon extraordinaire" was the disappearance of the regimental "widows and orphans fund", coincidentally on the same day as Herr Kutundsow departed the service. The army tried to find the "gentleman" to see if he could assist in the tracing of the money, but he was reported as having "left for foreign parts".

Some claimed that the abysmal health record of the French army in the late 1740's was due in no small part to a foreign "surgeon extraordinaire", but I have no direct evidence to support this; although a surgeon called Roger Hackandmend did serve with the Toulouse regiment on their disastrous campaign in the Low Countries.

I trust the above has set the record straight and late Colonel Stumpf be accorded the honour due to him. If your august journal could supply the postal address of the "surgeon extraordinaire" to the appropriate authorities I am sure they would relish the opportunity to discuss his service with the Army.

Yours etc

Adjutant Rutger Seitz 14th Infantry Regiment

Letters (continued)

From Doktor Alzheimer von Zimmer

Dear Sir,

My advertisement in your last (dare I say excellent) [*of course you may – Ed*] issue has aroused a great deal of interest and enquiries in such a short time. It seems that your readers are just the sort of people in need of my facilities and services.

I would also like to add that the inmates (sorry – residents) find your journal fascinating and even stimulating reading. Why on the very day of receiving the last issue, I heard a heated debate over dinner about the outcome at the recent altercation at Marburg reported therein. Let me tell you that some of the words used to describe the performance of Prince Saxe-Hildburghausen and the Duc de Richelieu were definitely “barrack room” and not to be repeated here!

Petr Borrovitch (of Russian extract I believe) and his friend Janoslav Browne are a couple of our most senior residents (we like to call them the “Old Guard”) and were discussing the relative merits of the combatants, their deployments and performance on the day. Soon pepper pots, salt-cellars, wine glasses and napkins were gathered from the surrounding tables to illustrate one point or another. However, as you will have gathered from my advertisement, I do have a ready supply of model soldiers available for just such an occasion as this.

The dinner tables were rapidly cleared and then quickly reset to mimic the battlefield. Petr and Jan set to in fine style and proceeded to “prove” that had the French properly defended the riverbank and the Reichs Armees pushed on, then the Anglo-Hannoverians could have been humbled.

However it was not to be and the history books will remain unaltered, much to the shame of Prince Saxe-Hildburghausen and the Duc de Richelieu.

Yours

Dr A von Zimmer

Ed – I wonder what those two splendid gentlemen will think of the outcome of the “rematch” at Unter Erwartung and whether they will replay that one as well. Perhaps the good Doktor will let us know

CLASSIFIED ADVERTS

Business Opportunity

I have discovered a way of disguising left over carcasses as food. Require investment/franchisees. Also need a catchy name for product.
Apply R McDonald, Hamburg

Free to Collector – Builders’ Rubble and Hardcore. Varied types and very extensive supplies.

Apply Prussian Commandant, Dresden

Wanted Maps of Bavaria with a Little Eater & Happy Chef guide. (with optional French Menu preferred)

Apply Box 193 (Hannover)

Situations Vacant

Laundrymaster/mistress to Royal Personage. Must be willing to travel. Duties are expected to be very light but may be required to walk the dogs.

Apply Box 207 (Potsdam)

Colophon and Verso (Established 1648)

Booksellers and Stationers
To the Royal Court

are pleased to announce the first releases in their new “Slim Volume” series of small, pocket-sized books of limited page count.

- 1) **Swedish Military Aggression**
by Sven Vyllythåppon.
- 2) **Avoiding Capture**
by Baron Friedrich Wilhelm Seydlitz
- 3) **Great Commanders in Today’s Reichs Armees**
by Owen Leigh, Joe King
- 4) **Building Coalitions – Agreeing A Common Aim**
by Prince von Kaunitz
- 5) **Pre-emptive Prussian Pacifism**
by Howard Toby Leeve

The publishers would welcome ideas for further titles to extend this growing range