

Cockpit of Europe



Historical Commentary

Chanson Grivoise sur la Prise de Berg Op Zoom

*S'ti là qu'à pincé Berg Op Zoom,
S'ti là qu'à pincé Berg Op Zoom
Est un vrai moule à Tedeum
Est un vrai moule à Tedeum
Vantez qu'cest un fier vivant, pisque
Pour vaincre il se fichoit du risque*

*Spinola près de Lowendal,
Spinola près de Lowendal,
Est un sacré Héros de bal,
Est un sacré Héros de bal,
L'un mollit devant la pucelle,
Et l'autre fait dans son lit chez elle.*

*Spendant pourtant le gouverneur,
Spendant pourtant le gouverneur,
Quid' Berg Op Zoom étoit l'soutneu,
Quid' Berg Op Zoom étoit l'soutneu,
Voulant faire l'fendant, mais zeste
Lowendal lui ficha son reste.*

*Ti en sa pequié rien que son nom
Ti en sa pequié rien que son nom
Fait autant d'effet que l'canon,
Fait autant d'effet que l'canon,
C'est qu'dans c'te famille l'courage,
Est l'plus fort que leux héritage.*

*Le Roi qu'a vraiment l'cœur royal,
Le Roi qu'a vraiment l'cœur royal,
Tout d'suite vous l'fait Maréchal
Tout d'suite vous l'fait Maréchal
Dam' vis-avis d'un Roi qui pense,
Et l'merite d'la récompense*

*Louis, en gloire et connoisseur,
Louis, en gloire et connoisseur,
Car c'te Déesse là est sa sœur,
Car c'te Déesse là est sa sœur,
On doit les nommer dans l'histoire,
Les deux jumeaux de la Victoire.*

*J'nai rien, mais c'est assez pour le Roi,
J'nai rien, mais c'est assez pour le Roi,
Qu'un seul regard de notre Roi,
Qu'un seul regard de notre Roi,
Quand l'soleil donne sur une plante,
Ses rayons la rendent vivante.*

*Dans c'te chanson n'ya guerre d'esprit,
Dans c'te chanson n'ya guerre d'esprit,
Mais l'cœur sait bien ce qu'il dit,
Mais l'cœur sait bien ce qu'il dit,
Et puis souvent tel qui nou gouaille
En bieau s'til' ne fait rien qui vaille*

THE WAR IN FLANDERS

PRELUDE

*King Louis will stay with his hands in his pockets unless a
Protestant is chosen Emperor*

Frederick the Great (paraphrase)

The term "War of the Austrian Succession" actually blankets a number of interrelated conflicts throughout the 1740's that involved most of the states of Europe. More specifically, it covers those campaigns directly influenced by the succession of the Austrian Habsburg princess Maria-Theresa and her husband Francis Stephen to the throne of the Holy Roman Empire. For convenience, the war is generally assumed to begin in 1741 with Frederick of Prussia's invasion of Silesia (also called the First Silesian War), and to end in 1748 with the general peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, which terminated all hostilities in Europe.

Voltaire, that cynical epitome of French Rationalism, once quipped, "the Holy Roman Empire is neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire". Nevertheless, at least two positive statements can be made about that historical oddity (the Empire, that is). First, it was the last vestige of Charlemagne's attempt to reconstitute the Roman Empire in the West. As such it carried with it all the dreams, legends, and faded glory of an almost-forgotten golden age, as seen through the eyes of the barbarian German *fæderatii* who dominated that age's final centuries. Second, for hundreds of years the Empire was the greatest unifying fact of Central Europe. While the physical resources commanded by the office of Emperor were slight, whoever wore the diadem was entitled to claim the leadership of the German people.

The fact that the Emperor had to hold his own against a set of unruly princes as a "first among equals" made his position weaker than it might have been, but even the powerful French monarchs had had the same problem. The latter, by doing away with a host of internal tariffs and special town privileges, by doing away with religious diversity, by forcing the aristocracy to depend on the Royal Court for a living, and by fostering a strong national identity, had succeeded in forging a more or less unified state. The Emperors had done none of these things. But then, none of the Emperors had had a Cardinal Richelieu or Mazarin at his right hand.

In the early 1700's, Charles VI, the then Holy Roman Emperor and head of the Austrian branch of the powerful Habsburg dynasty, was bothered. The succession of the Austrian branch of the House of Habsburg was going to pass to his daughter, Maria-Theresa. That was fine, as far as most of the Habsburg possessions went, but a woman could not hold the office of Emperor in her own person. In fact, there was some question as to whether the office could be passed through the female line at all. Especially since the post was not hereditary in the first place. A contender from among the eight other Electors of the Empire, or any other German prince, for that matter, might, given sufficient backing, successfully challenge the centuries-long tradition of Habsburg rule.

The nine current Electors of the German Empire were as follows:

- ❑ The King of Bohemia (as “the King of Germany’s Cupbearer”) Francis Stephen, Duke of Tuscany and husband of Maria-Theresa of the House of Habsburg.
- ❑ The Count Palatine and Duke of Saxony (as “Archmarshal of the Empire”).
- ❑ The Margrave of Brandenburg (as “Archchamberlain of the Empire”) Frederick II, King of Prussia.
- ❑ The Count Palatine of the Rhine (as “Archsteward of the Empire”). The Counts Palatine of the Rhine lost their office in the Thirty Years War because they supported the Protestant side, but it was restored as a new office in 1648.
- ❑ The Duke of Bavaria, Charles Albert VI (as “Archsteward of the Empire”). Bavaria was banned for supporting the French in the War of the Spanish Succession but later had its privilege restored. However, the Count Palatine of the Rhine continued to hold the title of Archsteward, leading to incessant arguments that last until the Counts of the Rhine-Palatinate became Dukes of Bavaria in 1777.
- ❑ The Duke of Brunswick-Luneburg or Hanover (as “Archtreasurer of the Empire”), George Augustus II, King of Great Britain and Ireland. He took the title of Archtreasurer from Bavaria in 1708 when the latter was banned.
- ❑ The Archbishop of Mainz (as “Archchancellor for Germany”).
- ❑ The Archbishop of Trier (as “Archchancellor for Gaul”).
- ❑ The Archbishop of Cologne (as “Archchancellor for Italy”).

The purpose of the Electors was to vote for a King of Germany, who would then be elevated by the Pope to the throne of the Emperor of the West. German kingship had always been elective. In the early days, German kings were usually chosen when circumstances required great unity among the tribes – for example, when Arminius was elected King to lead the tribes against the Romans. Even when the king became a permanent institution, this elective quality gave the lesser territorial rulers under his sway much greater freedom than elsewhere in Medieval Europe.

The Empire also had a strong religious quality. The Popes elevated the King of the Germans to the position of Emperor as defenders of the Faith. This was how Charlemagne had been made Emperor in 800 AD, after he took the Pope’s side against the people of Rome. However, the Reformation gravely weakened this religious element, with greater and greater autonomy being granted to the lesser states within the Empire, first to the Protestant princes who insisted on it, and then to the Catholic princes who wanted to keep pace with the Protestants.

By this point, the Popes were no longer essential to the elevation of the Emperor. Since the Habsburgs had held a virtual monopoly on the office since 1483, it had become sufficient for the Electors to rubber-stamp them as kings (in exchange for concessions, of course). Their elevation to

emperor was then automatic. Except that there was nothing to stop any German prince who could prove his suitability being elected King and thus Emperor as well.

Charles VI of Austria devoted years of his life to finding and promoting a solution to this problem. What he came up with was the Pragmatic Sanction of 1713. Essentially, the other European states were to agree to recognise his daughter’s right to continue the Habsburg Imperial “tradition” and combine to defend it if need be. After all, their daughters might need a favour themselves some day. He would find Maria-Theresa an acceptable husband to fulfill the requirement for a male office holder. If sufficient states agreed to the Sanction, the remainder would think twice about attacking Austria. The idea received a mixed welcome from the Courts of Europe.



On the 19th of October 1740, Charles VI died, at the end of a disastrous war against the Turks, in which his enemies the Bourbons of France had given aid to the Paynim. Maria Theresa inherited the Habsburg dynasty as Queen of Hungary. This attractive 23-year-old now held sway over a vast patchwork of territories from the Channel coast to the Carpathians. “Hungary” was a blanket term for their Eastern provinces, but the Austro-Habsburgs as princes also owned Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia in Central Europe, Austria and the Tyrol amongst the Alps, much of the Po Valley and the Ligurian coast in Italy, plus Belgium – then known as the Austrian Netherlands.

The Habsburgs had until only recently also owned Spain, with all her dominions and colonies. But such a state of affairs could not have lasted. The great Emperor, Charles V, had retired to a monastery at the end of his life. He was not the first Emperor in history to do so. Ruling such a conglomerate, without even the help of a common language or culture, must have been exhausting work. After his day, the Habsburg family broke in two. Then the War of the Spanish Succession put the rival Bourbons on the throne of Spain, with the proviso that France and Spain were never to be united. Some of the lands in Italy, plus Belgium, which had been Spanish possessions, were made over to the Austrian branch as well.

Charles Albert of Bavaria, as the son-in-law of Charles VI’s brother Joseph, felt he had just as much right to rule the Empire as the Queen of Hungary’s husband, and said so. (An additional spur to his ambition might have been the desire to score off the Rhine-Palatinate over the Archsteward question). His stand split the South German (Catholic) voting bloc, which normally lined up behind the Habsburgs without a murmur. Too weak to contest the issue alone, Bavaria turned to France for military aid.

France had in theory accepted the Pragmatic Sanction, but the Bourbons and Habsburgs were hereditary enemies. The dynamic Maréchal de Belle-Isle (M. Fouquet – grandson of that Fouquet who, in “*The Man in the Iron Mask*”, was undone by d’Artagnan) led a boisterous war party in France with support from his bureaucrat brother. They saw a chance to fatally weaken the Habsburgs and readily offered aid to Bavaria. By claiming that aid to Bavaria was aid to a third party and that France was merely providing auxiliaries for Charles Albert, France and Austria would not technically be at war. This idea

of a “Military Advisory Command Bavaria” was not a new ploy by any means. “Auxiliary armies” were common devices in this period. Within France, the only obstacle to war might have been Cardinal Fleury, King Louis XV’s pacific chief minister, but Fleury was old and feeble, and the young Louis was feeling his oats. 40,000 Frenchmen, under de Belle-Isle himself, would augment Bavaria’s tiny army of 10,000.

Then, on December 16th, 1740, to the surprise of Europe and for no apparent reason, the 28-year-old King Frederick II of Prussia invaded Silesia. In his capacity as Elector of Brandenburg, he offered a vote for Francis Stephen if he was allowed to keep the province – in a word, blackmail! To his closest associates Frederick admitted his chief desire was merely to be talked about. King Louis spoke for the remainder of Europe: “the man’s mad”. No-one believed that Prussia would survive the Austrian counterblow, but at Mollwitz, on April 10th, 1741, Frederick’s untried army won a shocking victory. With Austria shaken, the French moved against them too, entering the war in alliance with Prussia.

The price paid for Prussia’s alliance was France’s countenancing of the transfer of the key duchies of Julich and Berg to Prussia, a deal which did not sit well with the British King, George II, who coveted the same lands in his capacity as Elector of Hanover. (And George planned to vote for Charles Albert, too!).

Austria was having a hard time of it. The Hungarians were mutinous, and even after their new Queen made a dramatic personal appeal to her nobles, they did not meet their troop quotas. The Austrian army, with a paper strength double that of Prussia’s, was thus effectively the same size, while at the same time it was forced to defend a huge tract of territory against multiple enemies. To make matter worse, the army was still recuperating from its rough handling by the Turks. To bolster Austrian resolve (and to pique France), Britain and Holland declared their support for the Pragmatic Sanction and entered the fray as her auxiliaries. Actually, Britain only extended her naval activities – she was already at war with Spain over Mr. Jenkin’s lost ear – and Holland did nothing, for fear of a French invasion. Well, actually, Holland very kindly continued to supply France with naval stores and luxury items.

On June 7th, 1741, France declared war on Austria. While King Frederick was regrouping in Silesia, Maréchal de Belle-Isle led a Franco-Bavarian army all the way into Bohemia in a bid to place Charles Albert on that kingdom’s throne and garner a second electoral vote for France’s protégé. Prague was stormed by de Belle-Isle thanks to a brilliant play by one of his subordinates, Général Maurice, Comte de Saxe. Then, a triumphant Charles Albert was proclaimed Emperor (January 24th, 1742). In response to this, and to Bavarian aggression in general, the Austrians counterattacked through Upper Austria and overran Bavaria itself.

In February of 1742, the dovish British Treasurer, Robert Walpole, lost control of Parliament and a war party took over under Lord Carteret. Now British efforts on Austria’s behalf would be intensified. (King George still voted for Charles Albert).

That same winter a Franco-Spanish army landed in central Italy and moved north through the Papal lands to the Po Valley.



King Louis XV, le Bien-Aimé – Louis the Well-Beloved – (b.1710, ruled 1715-1774)

Louis has been described as an indolent monarch who had great potential, but never used it. He displayed flashes of kingship on the battlefield, but preferred women and the chase as his “active” pursuits. At other times he was sunk in lethargy. A large part of the problem lay in his upbringing. Orphaned at

age five, he had been a pawn between the powerful Duc d’Orleans and the even more powerful Madame de Maintenon. To keep him out of their hair, his education was entrusted to the Jesuits. A common tag of that order was “give us the child until age five, and we will give you the man”. As a result, Louis grew into a deeply religious person, but his religion cast back to a Medieval-seeming superstition.

A pious king would have been a good thing, but in order to keep him under control, the factions at Court saw to it that he received an education from them as well. Thus Louis was constantly going off on a tangent. His latest mistress would encourage his martial ardour; Louis would go to the war. Tired of camp life, Louis would return to the fleshpots of Paris. Remorse for his conduct with another mistress would send her to a convent and him back to the war. And so on.

Up until 1744, France was in effect governed by Cardinal Fleury, a man who took office at the age of 70 and died at the age of 90. Until his death, he acted as mentor to Louis XV and was a restraining influence on him. In general, the government throughout this period was feeble but predictable. There was no attempt to “do great things” as in the time of Louis XIV. Under the Regent, domestic affairs had been somewhat unsettled by Court intrigue until Fleury stepped in. With the death of the latter, it was generally felt that the reins had been loosened, and that it was time for Louis to prove himself a true king. Men of greater daring and ambition, like the de Belle-Isle brothers and the visionary d’Argenson, came to the fore.

In this new period, Louis allowed himself to be counselled primarily by the Duke of Noailles. The latter has been described as a farsighted and able man, and he proved so in the realms of both politics and strategy. But Louis had to be driven to greatness by his associates, who wanted him to behave like his great-grandfather the Sun King. Thinking he was copying his ancestor’s grand manner, he rarely informed his ministers of his plans, nor kept himself informed of theirs. In consequence, each government department ran itself in isolation from all the others, their ministers jockeying for the King’s ear (the last man to talk to him usually getting what he wanted). As Foreign Minister d’Argenson said:

“never have the Ministers been so deeply at variance as now. If they are in harmony it is by chance... Such ministerial jealousy... would be an advantage to a Prince who should administer, overrule all others, and make plans freely on his own account. But, instead... what reigns is a vacuum”.

Louis took the field in Flanders every year from 1744 to 1748, but after contracting a near-fatal illness in the summer of ’44, did not make a habit of prolonged stays at the front. In general, he let his marshals conduct affairs as they sought fit, with only minor, yet still irritating, interference – the summer campaign generally could not open until he had arrived in camp, for example.

An older and even lazier Louis took yet less interest in the campaigns of the Seven Years War. In fact, his former mistress and close friend, Mme de Pompadour, had a greater influence on that war than he did. He had little interest in domestic affairs either, and under his rule, taxation and the costs of bureaucracy rose tremendously, despite efforts at reform, while the aristocracy gained back some of the strength they had lost under Louis XIV. Although he was not the author of the phrase “après moi, le déluge”, it aptly describes his reign. Only a general prosperity among the common people held back the revolution that was to come with the next king.

Queen Elisabeth of Spain, known to diplomatic circles as either “The Farnese” or “The Spanish Bitch”, desired a duchy for her son Don Phillip. After all, his brothers each had one.

Somewhere in northern or central Italy would be nice. Tuscany perhaps – such splendid lighting. The “Gallispanns” had taken advantage of a momentary weakness on the part of the Royal Navy, whose squadron commander in the Med felt intimidated by the forces arrayed against him. This weakness quickly disappeared. After the initial invasion of Italy ran into difficulties, the Gallispanns were forced to carve a land passage over the Alps, incurring the wrath of the Savoyards and their ruler, Charles Emmanuel of Sardinia.

Short of funds and overextended, despite winning another victory at Chotusitz in the summer of '42, King Frederick failed in his follow-on bid to take the Kingdom of Bohemia and so concluded a peace with Maria Theresa that gave him control of Silesia. (The Bohemians were supposed to rally to their “Prussian liberators” – an oxymoron if ever there was one – but didn't, of course). This left the French exposed in Prague, and they were forced to conduct a fighting withdrawal during the winter of '42-'43, breaking contact with the Austrians in a dramatic forced march over the snow-clad Topler Mountains, back to the safety of French-held lands on the Rhine. Although touted as a great feat of arms for de Belle-Isle, this was in fact a disaster, as the artillery and baggage trains were abandoned, along with most of the horses.



The year 1743 saw the organisation of the Army of the Pragmatic Sanction to defend Maria-Theresa's rights. The army assembled in Holland under the command of King George II. That summer, the Allied army meandered down the Rhine and up the Main, looking to stay out of trouble. George did not want to antagonise Frederick by demonstrating too close to the Brandenburg lands, of which some of the Rhine duchies formed a part, and he certainly did not want to engage a French army in combat. This was simply a show of support for the Austrians while the Allies negotiated with the Bavarians.

The King's minister, Lord Carteret, was trying to broker a deal between Austria and Bavaria – as well as roping in Charles Emmanuel with the bribe of Piacenza and part of Milan – to help the Austrians drive the Bourbons out of Italy. Formed by this Treaty of Worms, the subsequent Worms Alliance proved fatally flawed due to the conflicting interests of the participants, but it did hold out hope for an eventual peace.

Meanwhile, Prussia, alarmed by Austria's resurgence, began preparing for the Second Silesian War. Louis of France, with a discredited Cardinal Fleury now on his deathbed, embarked on an ill-advised personal diplomatic effort known as the Second Family Compact. This promised Spain all the assistance she required for the reconquest of Gibraltar, Minorca, and Italy.

Then, on the 27th of June 1743, the Army of the Pragmatic Sanction blundered into a waiting French army under the Duc de Noailles, as the former was returning down the Main River. Saved from defeat by the impetuosity of King Louis' nephew, the Duc de Grammont (you know you have command problems when the bulk of your general officers are surnamed

Bourbon), by the unruliness of the French soldiers, and by some quick thinking and hard fighting on its own behalf, the Army of the Pragmatic Sanction retired to the Netherlands to claim an undeserved victory. The French retired over the Rhine, likewise claiming a great triumph. But Dettingen was enough of an insult for Louis XV to declare war upon England.

THE YEAR OF 1744

An active theatre of operations from 1744 to 1748, Flanders saw the employment of armies far larger than those deployed in the other theatres of this war, indeed, armies larger than those of any previous war. The campaign in Flanders involved the forces of France, Holland, Britain, Austria, Hanover, Hesse (and other minor German states), Bavaria, and even Russia! Of this list however, the four major were Austria, the United Provinces (Holland), Britain, and France.

That war did not come to the Low Countries until 1744 was mainly because the French were still pretending to be the auxiliaries of the Elector of Bavaria. Their top decision-makers, led by Maréchal de Belle-Isle, were fixated on attacking Austria directly. Then came Dettingen.

On the 17th of March 1744, France declared war on Great Britain. The “stain” of Dettingen was not the only reason. At Dettingen the Dutch (20,000 of them) appeared in arms against France. This was really too much – those republican burghers must be taught a lesson! In any case, Maréchal de Belle-Isle's grand scheme of carrying the war to the Austrian heartland had proven to be beyond the capabilities of *l'Armée du Roi*. Then again, the Allies were steadily building up their strength in the Netherlands, possibly with a view to marching on Paris itself! (Actually, more in fear of a repetition of the campaigns of Louis XIV).

King Louis XV also wished to re-demonstrate France's greatness to the world and win his spurs on the field of honour. Cardinal Fleury had died. The normally indolent Louis was surrounded by courtiers who compared him in flattering terms to his great-grandfather the Sun King, and who urged him to take up the reins of government. *Le Roi* was all the more eager due to the encouragement of his latest mistress, Mme. la Duchesse de Châteauroux. She painted a glowing portrait of the glories to be won in a great campaign – the King riding through a cloud of petals down a street thronged with cheering subjects, etc. etc.

It is unclear to what extent la belle mademoiselle spoke from her heart and how much was due to Court intrigue. There were grave divisions amongst Louis' Ministers as to what course should be taken, and the ladies of the Court traditionally served their part as sounding boards, spies, and *agents provocateurs*.

There was a large clique in French political circles who saw Austria as the great hereditary enemy (after being surrounded for decades by Habsburg-owned countries this is not surprising). The way to weaken Austria was to fool about with the minor states of Germany and Italy, Bavaria being a case in point. More and more, however, a second clique was gaining influence. These men believed that Britain – not Austria – was the true enemy of France, especially after Dettingen. Discredited by his failure in Germany, de Belle-Isle and his supporters were supplanted by the rival clique, led by Maréchal

de Noailles and the French Minister of Marine, the Marquis de Maurepas, who advocated a strategy directed against the other half of the Alliance – the Maritime Powers. From the marquis' perspective, French colonialism and overseas trade could only make further advances at the expense of Britain and Holland.

Maréchal de Noailles, Louis' most trusted military counsellor, agreed with de Maurepas – as long as the plan was backed up with a land advance somewhere. The Low Countries were the lynchpin – *le pont d'appui* – of the Alliance. They were vulnerable to attack, politically divided, and bridged the gap, both politically and geographically, between the Austrian colossus and implacable Britain. It was also a safe enough area for the French king to learn the art of war – not too far from Paris – and the Court could easily travel between the seat of war and the seat of fashionable society as the whim took them.

However, thanks to the Second Family Compact, the efforts in Italy would have to be intensified as well. A Treaty of Fontainebleau was signed between Spain and France, mainly so that de Maurepas could acquire the 58 sail of the Spanish Fleet, that promised a greater degree of French support for Spanish designs than she could afford to give.

However, with the Maritime Powers crippled, France's trade would bloom. Austria would have to find another paymaster. The Spanish would get Gibraltar and Minorca back. Don Phillip would have his duchy and The Farnese would stop bitching. As for Bavaria, well, the French were paying through the nose to prop up an ally that insisted on falling down at the slightest provocation. Let them fend for themselves – dead or alive, they still made a handy buffer zone.

There was also the fact that the French were critically short of money and could not hope to support Bavaria as Britain did Austria. De Noailles suggested the King demand extraordinary contributions from his subjects, but the latter pointed out that the government was still paying off the debts incurred by his great-grandfather through that very same "solution".

One question still remained. What to do about Austria? One stipulation of the Allied Treaty of Worms was that the Army of the Pragmatic Sanction would be kept in being and used against the Spanish in Italy. De Maurepas saw that by an attack in Flanders, by a simultaneous cross-Channel invasion, and with Prussian assistance, he could keep the Austrian presence south of the Alps to a minimum, making it easier to support Spanish ambitions there and thus get hold of those 58 sail. This in turn would make an invasion of Britain more likely to succeed.

Talks had been going forward with that most unnatural of allies, the King of Prussia – despite his pullout from the game in 1742. Although not signed until June 5th, the Treaty of Paris was a virtual certainty when France's spring offensive opened. The French promised to protect Frederick's western possessions, drawing off the threat from Hanover with their attack in the Low Countries. They also reaffirmed Frederick's claim to the duchies of Jülich and Berg. In exchange, the Prussians would keep Austria busy in Bohemia. France would recognise any gains they might happen to achieve while there.

The amphibious component of this grand scheme, dubbed the Descent on England, was to be led by the new rising star, Général de Saxe, accompanied by a representative of the old British dynasty, Charles Francis Edward Stuart. Unlike the later



Adrien Maurice, Duc de Noailles, puis Comte d'Ayen, et Pair de France, Marquis de Montclar, Comte de La Motte-Tilly et de Nogent-le-Roy, Vicomte de Carlux, Maréchal de France (1678-1766)

Head of one of the greatest feudal houses of France and a confidant of Louis XIV. This, coupled with his marriage to a niece of Madame Maintenon placed him at the pinnacle of Court life. He entered the Army at fourteen and fought in many campaigns. An excellent strategist and theoretical tactician, he was liable to lose control in the heat of battle. He was the perfect courtier, with a reputation for an un-courtier-like frankness of speech. In 1700, he played an instrumental diplomatic role in the crowning of Phillip V (Louis' XIV's grandson) as King of Spain. Later he became the chief counsellor of Louis XV. In 1743 his reputation was tarnished by the French defeat at Dettingen, although he retained the confidence of the King. His enemies angled to have him appointed commander of the invasion of the Netherlands, to get him away from the King and in hopes that another Dettingen would occur. Noailles foiled this plot by inviting Louis to accompany him as commander-in-chief. After de Saxe took command in the Netherlands, de Noailles concentrated on the political and advisory side of things, although he did agree to serve under his former protégé at Tournai, despite an intense jealousy.

"45", this plan was central to the coming campaign against the Maritime Powers. But it was not a French plan. It had a life of its own. It derived from talks between Charles Stuart's father, James, and Cardinal Tencin, Louis XV's new "first minister", who owed his cardinal's hat to the good word of the exiled royal Stuarts.

The simultaneous land advance into *les Pays-Bas* – the Austrian Netherlands – by Maréchal de Noailles, would drive back the Army of the Pragmatic Sanction and prevent the English contingent from reinforcing their homeland and the Austrians from siphoning off troops to the Po Valley. The French had excellent intelligence on how many troops remained in the British Isles. They also knew that the Royal Navy was stretched to the limit around the globe. Finally, the French held the Jacobite wild card – although here, they were overly optimistic as to the potential response. Ultimately, the audacious attempt at regime change would turn this conflict into one of "total war".

First conceived as a personal landing by the Young Pretender, without troops, the Descent had by the winter of '43 turned into a massive effort designed to wipe out the memory of Dettingen. The plan was for the Atlantic Fleet, based at Brest, led by Admiral le Comte de Roquefeuil (a man almost 80 years old), to sortie up the Channel, engage any British ships it might encounter, and clear a zone for the invasion flotilla to cross in safety. The invasion force was based at Dunkirk, a former English pirate base sufficiently close to the Frontier that the Allies would assume the assembled troops were simply guarding the site. The ships to be used were mainly merchant charters, supposedly assembled for some sort of trading expedition. On the 20th of January 1744, 12,000 men would sail across the Channel, round the Kentish coast, and land at Malden.

Orders for shipping went out in November 1743 (war with Britain was in fact decided upon as early as this), and a personal invitation to Charles Stuart in December. Charles, having eluded his British watchdogs in Rome, whence the Jacobite Court had been exiled, arrived in Paris toward the end of January 1744, and was favourably received at Versailles. In February and March of 1744, final preparations were made.

On the other side of the water, the British Home squadrons, although considered decrepit in Parliament's view, had just been placed under command of Admiral Sir John Norris. Like his French counterpart, he too was in his 80's. Unlike de Roquefeuil, Norris was very energetic, and a capable officer. Due to delays on the French side, the British admiral was given a little extra time to prepare.

The French Atlantic Fleet sailed on February 8th. On the 12th, Norris learned that they were at sea. He himself was off the French coast near Dunkirk, eyeing the French preparations there. By the 6th of March, the opponents were close by each other: 15 French and 19 British ships. One the 7th, a gale blew up and scattered them. The Royal Navy had 18 ships damaged, including 5 completely out of action and 1 sunk. The French suffered several dismastings and the loss of their admiral (to a heart attack). The worst was reserved for the invasion flotilla. Although de Saxe was able to off-load his men safely, they lost most of their equipment and many of the ships were driven aground, swamped, or picked off by Norris' ships.

[It is interesting that both de Saxe and de Noailles both insisted to King Louis' civilian bureaucrats that an army of 30,000 men would be required to ensure that "Mass be sung in London". Typically, the bureaucrats gave them a third of the required amount.]

The failure of this attempt, the groundwork of which had been laid on the part of the Jacobites as early as 1739, had a major impact on the policies of the participants. For the British it led to complacency over their ability to defend England. The French were discouraged from pursuing a naval expedition, and instead focused on the land campaign. Although now at war with England and refusing to expel Charles Stuart from France – this was the technical reason for the state of war despite the fact that he arrived in the country after war had been declared – their manner toward that Prince became decidedly cool. The Jacobites in Britain despaired of ever receiving the foreign backing necessary to make a coup successful. For Charles though, his frustration drove him on to make his famous gamble the following year.

De Saxe was unconcerned. Mistrusting the plan from the start, he had encouraged Charles partly out of sympathy for his youthful desire to win his spurs and partly with the cynical design of confusing the English. Now the wily German was happy to assist his patron de Noailles with what was left of the invasion force. For de Maurepas, the results were disastrous, especially since the Mediterranean squadron had also failed to perform its tasks and had run away at the Battle of Toulon. No longer a player at Court, the Marquis retired to the Ministry of Marine and henceforth confined himself to naval matters. De Noailles, ever cautious in his dealings, retained his monarch's confidence and continued to command the drive into Flanders.



Sir George Wade, Fieldmarshal (1673-1748)

Irish by birth. Gazetted Ensign 10th of Foot, 1690, age 17. Fought in the Nine Years War (War of the League of Augsburg): Flanders, Portugal, Spain. Commanded 3rd brigade at Almanza (1707). Brigadier 1708. On Retired List by 1711 as a 38-year-old Major General. In 1715 was helpful in suppressing a Jacobite

Rising in the West Country (his real forte was internal security). In 1718 he was the Government hatchetman who arrested the Swedish Ambassador as part of the "uncovering" of the Swedish Plot. It was said that he could lend an air of respectability to the most odious or outrageous proceedings by his calm air and his charming urbaneness. MP for Bath in 1723. In 1724 was sent to the Highlands to report on ways of opening the country up to pacification and he is best known for the system of roads designed on his recommendations, some of which routes are still in use. He also proposed the formation of the Black Watch.

Made Lieutenant General and became C-in-C Scotland for 1740-43. He also commanded the British contingent of the Army of the Pragmatic Sanction (and was that army's nominal chief) in Flanders 1743-44 but did not get on with the Allied generals. Promoted to Field Marshal 1745. He declined to replace General Cope after the disaster at Prestonpans and was instead made temporary C-in-C England. During the Jacobite Rising he performed dismally in contemporary eyes, but he was already a sick old man, under attack in Parliament due to allegations brought in by the Allied generals in order to hide their own shortcomings.

A good administrator, but not suited for the pressures of a large allied command, due to a lack of forcefulness.

By April of 1744, the Frontier seethed with activity. The French had concentrated an estimated 120,000 men on their borders. 62,000 were encamped between the Scheldt and the Sambre, in two groups. 47 battalions and 70 squadrons were with the King and Maréchal de Noailles, tasked with reducing the Barrier Forts. 33 battalions and 47 squadrons were with Général de Saxe as a *corps d'observation*, screening the King's forces. (As might be expected, the massive royal entourage was exceedingly annoying to de Noailles, but at least de Saxe's personal operatic troupe provided entertainment).

Elsewhere, the French kept to a defensive strategy, with 17,000 men between the Moselle and the Meuse to deal with the unlikely event of an attack through Luxembourg, and a further 57,000 under the Duc de Coigny on the Rhine, protecting Alsace. Maréchal Condé (not the great marshal, but a reasonably able descendent) successfully crossed the Maritime Alps to support the Family Compact. On the 17th of May, de Noailles' men, having concentrated at Lille, marched on Menin. The fortress was invested on the 28th or 29th of May, and surrendered "disgracefully" on the 5th of June.

For their part, the Allies were painfully slow to respond. Given a paper strength of 64,000 in their field army and a further 20,000 Dutch troops (in 55 battalions) garrisoning the Barrier, plus additional forces in Holland, they seemed to match the French. In fact, none of the "friendly" parties could meet their quotas without severely straining their resources. The British contributed 22,000 men and left only 7,000 to protect their islands. The 16,000 Hanoverians in Flanders were that many

fewer to defend the Electorate against Prussian designs. The Dutch had to strip their other garrisons to produce the 20,000 men required of them. And the Austrians lent only a token force – a Walloon regiment of 4 battalions (de Ligne's), plus 8 *frei-korps* and hussar squadrons, to cover the whole of Belgium and Luxembourg. At a low estimate the Allied field army was short 10,000 men. The British sent over a further 5,000, but this delayed the opening of operations due to contrary winds which kept them and the British contingent's commander, General Wade, in Harwich for far too long.

[As an example of the practices of the time, the numbers of expeditionary troops voted by the British Parliament increased from 16,000 in '43 to 20,000 in '44, and up to 25,000 in '45, but the overall strength of the Army did not change at all.]

More crippling than an understrength army were the divergent aims of the Allies. They had found cooperation under a commander lacking the personality of a Marlborough virtually impossible. The Dutch only provided field troops because the British twisted their arm over clauses in the Treaty of Utrecht. For the Austrians, led this year by the Netherlands' own military governor, *Herzog* (Duke) AreMBERG, the province was of secondary importance. Their contingent was simply a show of support designed to keep British gold flowing into Austrian coffers.

As the French campaign got underway, the variegated elements of the Army of the Pragmatic Sanction were still in cantonments. They did not concentrate at Brussels until the middle of May, and once concentrated, proceeded to do nothing with great dispatch until mid-June. The French besieged and took Ypres (15th to 24th June) and the small fort of Knock (or Knokke) which covered the Nieuport-Ypres Canal – the latter in a single day (29th June). Furnes fell two weeks later.

The Dutch, concerned for the remaining Barrier Forts, and the Austrians, concerned for Brussels, advocated a cordon-style defence, discounting any notion of offensive action. The vociferous Dutch peace party even went so far as to seek a deal with the French, but they were arrogantly rebuffed. The English argued incessantly for an Allied offensive: cross the Scheldt to the west of Brussels, then strike south to confront the French, or if the enemy proved too strong, turn their flank with a march down the Sambre toward the Frontier. The arguments raged throughout the early part of the summer.

The delays were exacerbated by diplomatic negotiations between the respective rulers. The British asked for Maria-Theresa's brother, Charles of Lorraine (whose reputation stood artificially high after his relief of Prague in 1742) to lead his army against the French in Flanders. Charles was in favour of thus obtaining more *gloire* – besides, it was his province – but the empress vetoed the idea, mistrusting British motives and disapproving of their "informal command practices". Instead, she ordered him to strike at Alsace and if practical, Lorraine beyond. Maria-Theresa desperately wanted the latter back in the family holdings.

[Some historians are of the opinion that Charles was intending a deliberate diversion of French strength. This may have been what he told the British, but it seems clear that the overriding issue was Maria-Theresa's desire to kick the French in the pants instead of slapping their face.]



Hermann Maurice (Moritz von Sachsen), Comte de Saxe et de Semigallie (Courland), Maréchal de France (1696-1750)

"One of the first geniuses for war I have ever known" – Chevalier Folard

"[He] could give lessons to any general in Europe" – Frederick the Great

Maurice de Saxe was an illegitimate son of the Elector of Saxony, Frederick Augustus I (later King Augustus II of Poland). Sent by his father to serve against the French in 1709, he served under Prince Eugene of Savoy. In 1711 he was made Graf von Sachsen (Comte de Saxe), and in 1714 he married a fifteen-year-old heiress by his mother's arrangement. The couple divorced in 1721. His father bought him a German regiment in the French service in 1719, where he made a name for himself as an innovator, particularly in musketry, when not partaking of the great debauch that was the French Regency.

Anna Ivanovna, duchess of Courland (later Empress of Russia), secured his election as Duke of Courland in 1726, although assuming the post required a military campaign against the Lithuanians, primarily financed by a number of women, most of whom were or wished to be his lovers. He was expelled from his duchy by a Russian clique in 1727, so as to prevent him from marrying the Duchess of Courland, which would have kept Courland out of the Russians' pockets. Frustrated, he returned to Paris.

In 1732 he wrote *Mes Rêveries*, an original treatise on war (published after his death) while recovering from overindulgence, and then served with distinction in the French army against his own half brother, King August III of Poland, in the War of the Polish Succession (1733-38). In 1734 he distinguished himself at the siege of Phillipsburg, for which he was made a Lieutenant-Général in 1736.

After France joined with Prussia in attacking Austria in 1741, he participated in the invasion of Bohemia and captured Prague for the army in a daring coup (November '41). In 1744 he was made the commander of the proposed Descent on England. When that failed, he served under his sponsor and mentor the Duc de Noailles in the invasion of Flanders. When the latter left with the King to deal with the Austrians, de Saxe took command of the remaining forces and gained fame by holding a position at Courtrai for three months against an Allied army twice as large as his own. For this he was made Maréchal de France (this would have occurred sooner but for his Lutheran faith) and given command of the Flanders theatre for 1745. After narrowly defeating the Allied army at Fontenoy (May 11, 1745) he captured Tournai, then Brussels and Antwerp in a brilliant winter campaign ('45-'46). After reducing Flanders and Brabant, he encountered the Allies at Roucoux (October 11, 1746) and defeated them in the largest pitched battle of the war.

In January 1747 he was made Maréchal-Général de France. That year he began the invasion of Holland, then defeated the Allies again at Lawfeld (July 2, 1747) and laid siege to Maastricht in the Spring of 1748, taking it in time for the signing of a general peace accord. After the war, he retired to château of Chambord (given by the King in reward for his services), where he died, reputedly of a "surfeit de femmes" – he is supposed to have expired after "interviewing" a troop of eight actresses. His grandson was the father of the novelist George Sand.

With the French now threatening both the British supply dumps at Oostende and the British line of communications to Brussels, which ran along the Bruges-Ghent Canal, something had to be done. General Wade pleaded to be allowed to cross the Scheldt and at least screen Ghent, but his “allies” refused to budge. Technically, Wade, by virtue of his commanding the largest contingent, could do as he pleased with the army, but, old and sick, he was unable to alter the views of the Dutch/Austrian bloc. In any case, Aremberg did not have the money to support even his own troops in an advance (despite massive British subsidies, the Austrian war chest was proving a bottomless pit) and was reluctant to feed his men with forced contributions from what were ostensibly Imperial citizens.

[Camp rumour had it that Aremberg, owning land in Brabant, was more concerned for his investments than strategic necessities, but the lack of money for the Austrian forces in the Netherlands may have been deliberate policy on the Empress' part.]

The Dutch position was more complicated. First, the Republic was riven with demagoguery, each politician garnering support with promises of tax cuts and exemptions from military service. In addition, a pro-French party kept the pot stirred, alternately stimulating fear of French economic reprisals and hope of a peaceful settlement. Before hostilities began, the French Ambassador had made a point of heading over to The Hague to browbeat the assembled Estates before taking up a military command in de Noailles army. The Dutch would remain technically at peace with France until 1747, continuing to supply her with naval stores, in addition to various civilian imports that became unobtainable after Louisburg fell to American militiamen in 1745.

A pro-French attitude was not confined to the burghers of Amsterdam. Many of the Dutch garrison troops fraternised openly with their besiegers – that is why a tough nut like Ypres (a supposedly impregnable place set on an island in the middle of a swampy lake) fell so quickly. In fact, the insubordination and indiscipline of the Dutch rank and file *and* their officers threatened to infect the rest of the army – the more so because of the general state of inactivity.

The odds were evened for the Allies on June 30th, when Charles of Lorraine and an army of 80,000 crossed the Rhine and trundled into Alsace. Maréchal de Coigny and his 57,000 were caught napping. The Duc d’Harcourt, with 26 battalions and 23 squadrons was sent racing down to help him, followed at a more leisurely pace by de Noailles, Louis, and more of the French Army. This left de Saxe with about 35,000 men (35 battalions and 55 squadrons) to protect the French gains, which he proceeded to do by digging in at Courtrai.

The French had known the blow was coming, but had hoped that their covering army in Luxembourg under de Coigny would be able to deal with the problem. *Großherzog* (Archduke) Charles moved to take Worms, de Coigny moved to intercept, Charles marched away, and de Coigny was left with the Austrian army between him and his base. A mass of Croatian *pandours* rampaged unchecked through the once-peaceful valleys of *Lotharingia*.

Eventually, after a pointless assault on a French defensive position at Wissemburg in which 3,000 men died, and with

John Dalrymple, 2nd Earl of Stair (1673-1747)

A Scotsman, he began a military career in the Netherlands, but on his father's death returned home. In 1707 he was elected as one of the original Scottish peers in the new Parliament of Great Britain. After becoming an assistant to the Duke of Marlborough in Flanders, in 1709 he was sent as envoy to King Augustus II of Poland. Also fought under Marlborough in the War of the Spanish Succession. Made General in 1710, but fell out of favour when his patron did. At the accession of George I, he was sent as envoy to Paris. From 1715 to 1720 he built up a counter-espionage network that effectively thwarted the intrigues of the Jacobites. He was vice admiral of Scotland from 1720 to 1733, but he lost the office because of his opposition to Robert Walpole's Excise Bill.

After Walpole fell from office in 1742, Lord Stair was made a Field Marshal. He commanded the Army of the Pragmatic Sanction in 1743, but resigned because King George, after ignoring his advice, claimed a brilliant victory for what was at best a French ambush. Stair protested in writing, in a manner obviously intended for publication. However, his standing recovered in 1745 and he was again attached to the Army of the Pragmatic Sanction as advisor to the Duke of Cumberland. He also assisted King George in dealing with the Jacobite Rising.

Lord Stair then got into trouble politically, supporting the opposition to Lord Newcastle, a party known as the Patriots (Little Englanders). However, he died before any fall from grace.

Stair was probably the greatest British diplomat of his age. He had a genius for intrigue. He was less impressive as a soldier. He is said to have lacked patience, tact, and strategic insight, which is strange, given his reputation as diplomat and spymaster.

word of a new invasion of Bohemia by the Prussians, the Austrians withdrew, pursued half-heartedly by the French, who retook Metz and Freiburg. At this point the Gallispan cause was stricken by the near-fatal illness of the King (possibly smallpox, but universally put down to overindulgence). Offensive operations ceased, and though he recovered, earning the sobriquet “Louis Bien-Aimé” – Louis the Well-Beloved – the campaigning season was officially over. The King was back in Paris by November, determined on a life of religion and contemplation. He even sent his mistress de Châteauroux away. Tragically, she was to die soon after, and Louis was to lose his last spur to military greatness. De Noailles remained in service, but under a cloud.

[Großherzog Karl von Lothringen was not actually the Archduke of Lorraine. The duchy had been awarded to the ex-king of Poland, Stanislaus Leczinski, in his capacity as King Louis' father-in-law, after the War of the Polish Succession. Its previous owner had been Maria-Theresa's husband Francis, now the Duke of Tuscany – that duchy being taken from the Spanish and awarded to him in compensation for his loss. A typically British compromise, this shuffle was a contributing cause of the present war, having engendered bad feelings all around.]

Back in Flanders, de Saxe had contented himself with entrenching behind the Lys, his flanks anchored by the fortresses of Menin and Courtrai. Here he was to garner fresh laurels by defying a stronger Allied army (now 71 battalions and 115 squadrons) for a full three months. The Dutch simply refused to participate in an assault on a fortress that had cost “two millions of money” and 20,000 Dutch lives the last time it was besieged, in the War of the Spanish Succession.

On July 31st, General Wade finally crossed the Scheldt. By this time, the influential Lord Stair had arrived from England, full of new and risky ideas (he was bristling with energy, but his grasp of strategy was not strong) for a move against Orchies, where the army could encamp, threaten a number of French fortifications, and send raiding parties into Picardy. If de Saxe did not shift, then the Allies could dust off a hoary 1742 *Drang nach Paris* scenario, originally advocated by the now idle Aremberg.

The idea of an overwhelming blow against the French capital was very popular amongst the British politicians and senior commanders – as payback for the attempt on London. It was, given the general circumstances, and the limitations of military technology, logistics, and command control, quite impractical. For the record, the plan called for 60 battalions and 110 squadrons to do the job, leaving only 11 battalions and 4-5 squadrons as a screen. If necessary, the army could winter in Rouen at the expense of the French burgers and peasantry (*sure* it could).

[Incidentally, a French army in London, even if successful in the short term, would most likely have been isolated and forced to capitulate. The French had been counting on a general uprising of “loyalist” Englishmen to assist them. The ‘45 would show that such a fifth column did not exist.]

For weeks the Allied Army remained encamped on the enemy side of the Scheldt, waiting for a siege train that never materialised. As can be inferred from the Dutch and Austrian attitudes toward the campaign, this was deliberate obstructionism on their part – the equipage was duly shipped from the Woolwich armouries, in England, to Antwerp, but the Dutch refused to contribute to the cost of transporting it to the front. General Wade did march the bulk of the army down to Lille, but without siege guns it was a waste of time. De Saxe, secure on the Lys, did not even trouble to move (although he did reinforce Lille’s strength to 12 battalions and 3 squadrons).

By now, de Saxe’s light troops had had their way with the Allied magazines, both armies had scoured the countryside of fodder for miles around, and the unruly mercenaries in the Dutch army were getting out of hand. Finally, harassed by enemy raiding parties, and threatened by a force of 14,000 Frenchmen in his rear, Wade ordered a retreat (September 28th). At this point the Dutch and Austrians panicked and demanded an instant assault on Courtrai! Wade simply stated that he would retreat with or without his allies (the two forces were encamped separately, since if they had camped together, the soldiers would have come to blows very quickly).

General Wade did propose an attack on the isolated enemy column that de Saxe had incautiously pushed forward. Forced by the nature of his command to hold a council of war, he was unable to pursue the enemy in time:

“Twenty-four hours’ delay ruined all: the enemy decamped. As your lordship knows, I am by his Majesty’s command to submit my opinion to the judgement of a council of war. I can’t be assured what will be our further proceedings.” – Wade to Lord Carteret, quoted in Skrine, p.115.

De Saxe was now pursuing them. Fortunately, the Austrian commander at Oostende, General Chanclos, pushed forward a column (perhaps only by coincidence) whose mere presence caused the French to fear a renewed offensive. The latter retired on Courtrai. In the first week of October, the Allies went into winter quarters – the British to Ghent, the Dutch and Austrians to Brussels. Aremberg and the Dutch generals were content. Wade resigned in disgust and left for home to face questions in Parliament generated by his allies’ insinuations against him. Général de Saxe was rewarded with a marshal’s baton.

THE YEAR OF 1745

On the 20th of January 1745, the ersatz-Emperor Charles Albert VII died. He was 47. With his death the European political situation altered. France, formerly Bavaria’s ally, now had an opportunity to recognise Maria-Theresa, and disengage from hostilities against the Pragmatic Alliance. Charles’ heir waived all claims to the title of Emperor. Austria, on her part, was willing for peace, but there was a growing belief in Britain that the continuation of the war could only lead to a weakened France, and was therefore desirable. Apart from this, sheer inertia played a part. As Voltaire commented: “the war continued, because it had commenced”.

Both Britain and France suffered from a lack of clear policy at this time – Louis “flip-flopped” repeatedly from force of habit, while the British Parliament was split on party lines. A new French Foreign Minister, the Marquis d’Argenson, wished to pursue peace, but at the same time dreamt of uniting the Italians with a great campaign against Austria. The increasingly influential Maréchal de Saxe, however, wanted to campaign where there was a chance of real conquests; he also felt that a strong hand would impress the British more than conciliation.

Across the Channel, George II and Lord Carteret wanted to prosecute a vigorous land campaign, but the King, after the Pragmatic Army’s “fiasco” in 1743, and despite his personal bravery on that occasion, was unpopular. Most Ministers wanted to pull out of the war altogether. This led to Carteret’s resignation at the end of 1744. His replacement was the filial combination of Henry Pelham and Lord Newcastle. They favoured a less ambitious project – the defence of Holland. The Pelhams did one other notable thing. They brought in Lord Anson to take charge of the Royal Navy.

50,000 Allied troops were assembled for the new campaigning season, to be commanded by the Duke of Cumberland (in an effort to get around the “first among equals” rigor mortis that had plagued the Allies before). The force comprised 12,000 British foot with 20 squadrons, 8,000 Hanoverians, 22,000 Dutch (they should have contributed 46,000, but the rest were involved in garrison duties), 2,000 Austrians at Brussels, and an estimated 80 guns.

The French under Maréchal de Saxe, who now commanded the theatre, had 76,000 men in Hainault as their main force. This consisted of 89 battalions, soon augmented by a further 54, for a total of 143 battalions, heavily fleshed out with militia & gendarmerie, plus 160 squadrons and up to 260 guns in some estimates (though this undoubtedly includes fortress artillery as well).

The French campaign of 1745 opened with the siege of yet another Barrier fort – Tournai (May 8th). The French dispositions for this operation were 18,000 at Tournai (27 battalions & 17 squadrons), 52,000 in the covering force, and 6,000 guarding the latter at the bridges over the Scheldt and its tributary the Escaut.

In February of 1745, General Ligonier, who commanded the British contingent over the winter, had warned his government that the Dutch and Austrians would do nothing but garrison their fortifications, thus giving the French a free hand. He advocated a concentrated effort to end the war in a single campaign. In keeping with his personality and the advice of his other British generals, Cumberland concurred and sought a decisive battle. As expected, the Dutch and Austrians held back, allowing the French, with their superior numbers, to take the initiative.

Based at Brussels, the Duke was expected by the Allied governments to defend all of Flanders and Brabant, *and* conduct offensive operations against a force twice his size. This he attempted to do. 10,000 men were assigned to guard the Bruges Canal, while the bulk of his army was set to besiege Maubeuge and Landrecies, then enter France via the Sambre river valley, using the Meuse as a line of communication.

Allied preparations were complete by May 2nd, and on May 3rd, Cumberland left Soignes and marched via Cambron, Marlbois, and Leuse. On the 9th his army was at Brissoel. Because of the French siege of Tournai, however, Cumberland paused to relieve the place. The battle of Fontenoy was the result.

Fontenoy – 11th of May 1745

“For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful”

A British Guardsman in the front rank at Fontenoy

The siege of Tournai was prosecuted primarily in order to draw the Allies into battle on de Saxe’s own terms (or, if they would not move, to at least improve the French strategic position). The city lies between the Escaut (a branch of the Scheldt) and the Lys, close to the French border. As one of the few remaining Barrier fortresses, this was a critical position and furthermore contained some 7,000 Dutch troops.

The Allies had originally been in doubt as to which fortress would be targeted by the French, and Mons was wrongly deemed the first choice. By the time the Allies got sorted out, the siege of Tournai was already well advanced and de Saxe had deployed the bulk of his army to cover the operation.

All the approaches to Tournai were guarded. Alerted by advanced posts at the various crossings on the Scheldt and Escaut rivers, he could swiftly orientate his army to face any threat. In the event, the Allies came up from the East – the central approach from Mons. Both sides had roughly 50,000 men. However, for the Allies, this was most of their available field strength, while for the French, over 100,000 more (garrisons, besieging troops, and especially militia) were available to replace any losses.

Upon the Allied approach, de Saxe left a smallish force to mask Tournai, and established a position facing the enemy, with his right flank resting on the Scheldt and his left screened by a

thick wood called the Bois de Barri. In accordance with his own opinion that French troops were useless on the defence, but with the hard fact that attacking at one to one odds was not a suitable option, de Saxe constructed a number of redoubts and had the villages along his front turned into strongpoints.

The French right was protected by a dug-in battery of six 12-lbers on the far bank of the Escaut and a redoubt constructed around the village of Antoing. The left was protected by another strong redoubt concealed behind the wood, and the wood itself thinned extensively to provide fields of fire; the lumber was then used to construct abatis around the wood’s perimeter for the protection of a mass of skirmishers.

In the center, the French line bent back at a sharp angle just at the village of Fontenoy. Here, houses were demolished and artillery pieces set up in elevated positions on the rubble. The churchyard was made into a strongpoint. By the river, the village of Antoing was similarly protected; the defence aided by the presence of a Medieval motte and bailey castle. Apart from the village, this area, and also the more open right of the line, was also covered by redoubts and batteries of 4- and 6-lber guns with interlocking fire zones.

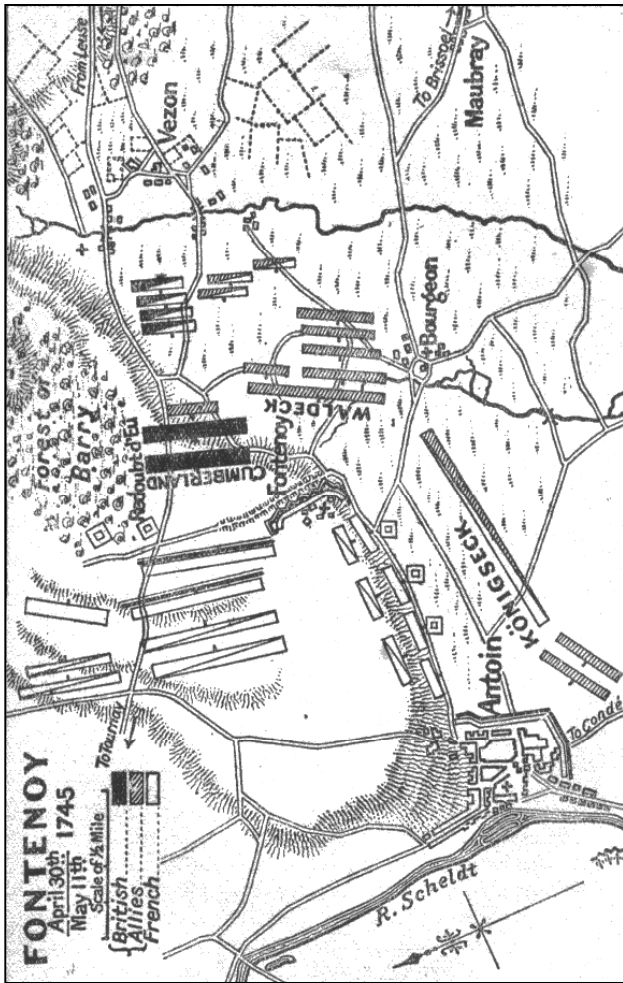
On the day of battle, most of the French formations were to be concealed by a gentle reverse slope and by a sunken road that ran along the crest of the plateau above Fontenoy. The only place that was not well defended was the gap between Fontenoy and the Bois de Barri – exactly where Cumberland was to punch through. De Saxe confessed that he had not thought any force would try such a rash act, but both Cumberland and the more experienced Austrian Count von Königsegge saw that it was the only practical choice – other than not fighting at all, which was simply unthinkable.

The day before the battle, the Army of the Pragmatic Sanction, camped beyond the hamlet of Vezon, on the other side of the valley from the French. Its leaders – Cumberland, Königsegge, and the young *Prins* van Waldeck (in charge of the Dutch) conducted a reconnaissance of the French position. This was made difficult by the presence of large numbers of enemy piquets scattered about the valley – some of them in Vezon itself.

The Allied generals thus had little information to work with. It was apparent, however, that the area between the wood and Fontenoy offered the best hope of success. They did discuss the possibility of sending a large body of horse around the Bois de Barri to strike the French left. However, such a force would have been beyond direct control; furthermore, the hussars who conducted a reconnaissance of that flank came under intense fire from the wood, which suggested that the entire area was heavily defended. Young Waldeck rashly promised to aid the main attack with a simultaneous assault on the Fontenoy-Antoing angle; he did not see fit to go and examine his sector.

Whatever the difficulties, the Allies were convinced that an attack must be tried, and at 2am on the 11th their army marched out of camp, drove in the French piquets, and by 6.30am had arrived at the bottom of the gentle slope leading to the French lines.

[The following is taken from Fortescue’s British Campaigns in Flanders, pp. 144-151. This author’s comments in brackets.]



At two o'clock on the following morning the British began to move out of their camp upon Vezon, the cavalry leading. The advance took much time, for there were many narrow lanes to be traversed before the force could debouch upon the slope, and, when the slope was passed, it was still necessary to defile through the village of Vezon. Cumberland's order of attack was simple. Brigadier Ingoldsby, with the Twelfth and Thirteenth Foot, the Forty-second Highlanders, a Hanoverian battalion, and three six-pounder cannon, was to assault the Redoubt d'Eu on the right flank of the line of the British advance, and to carry it with the bayonet. The remainder of the infantry was simply to march up across the thousand yards of open ground between it and Fontenoy and sweep the enemy out of their entrenchments.

[The Austrian light troops having at 4am reported the existence of the Redoubt d'Eu behind the Barri Wood, Cumberland ordered Ingoldsby – also accompanied by Austrian light troops – to clear the wood (choc full of the *Arquebusiers de Grassin*) and storm the redoubt because of the risk of flanking fire. And, in fact, the continued fire from this position was felt to have made the difference between success and ultimate failure. Some accounts report Ingoldsby starting to clear the wood soon after 4am, while others have him refusing to leave the safety of the covered way that formed his start line. What is certain, however, is that he refused to take on the fort without artillery support. It was 9am before a battery arrived to assist him (probably the seven 6-lbers mentioned below). The attack never progressed beyond some skirmishing by the Austrians and the Black Watch, and was called off. Instead, the latter and another

British regiment were sent to help the Dutch with their second assault (q.v.) about the time that the main body of the British were forming square in the midst of the French camp. Skrine suggests that Ingoldsby was an alcoholic who was having one of his bad days and simply could not grasp what he was supposed to be doing. In his subsequent court-martial Ingoldsby was censured to the point of disgrace but not executed; it would appear that neither the Duke's ungrammatical written instructions nor verbal orders were themselves altogether clear.]

Before five o'clock the advanced squadrons of the British horse, fifteen in all, under General Campbell had passed through Vezon and deployed in the plain beyond, to cover the formation of the infantry for the attack. The French batteries in Fontenoy and the redoubt at once opened fire on them, but the cavalry endured the fire for an hour unmoved, until at length a shot carried away General Campbell's leg. The gallant veteran, who had fought at Malplaquet and was now seventy-eight years of age, was carried dying from the field, full of lamentation that he could take no further part in the action. No one but himself seems to have known for what purpose his squadrons had been brought forward, and accordingly after his fall they were withdrawn. The infantry then moved up to the front, where General Ligonier proceeded to form them in two lines, without further interruption, to use his own simple words, than a lively and murderous cannonade from the French. Cumberland meanwhile ordered up seven six-pounders to the right of the British front, which quickly came into action. Conspicuous before the French front rode an officer on a white horse, and the English gunners at once began to lay wagers who should kill him. The second or third shot brought the white charger to the ground, and his rider was carried, shattered and dying, to the rear. He was Count Grammont, the gallant but thoughtless officer who had spoiled the combinations of Noailles at Dettingen. Then, turning to their more legitimate work, the gunners quickly made their presence felt among the French field-batteries but the round shot never ceased to plough into the scarlet ranks of the British from Fontenoy and from the Redoubt d'Eu. Ligonier's two lines of infantry were soon formed, with the cavalry in two more lines in their rear and the General presently sent word to Cumberland that he was ready to advance as soon as Waldeck should lead his Dutch against Fontenoy. The name of the aide-de-camp who carded this message should not be omitted, for he was Captain Jeffery Amherst of the First Guards.

[What the cavalry was doing, in accordance with custom, was screening the infantry as it deployed, a process that took hours to accomplish. When Campbell was killed, some of the horse panicked and the whole body was withdrawn. This forced General Ligonier, who commanded the British infantry, to use successive formed battalions to screen the next battalion's deployment – hence the casualties among the foot.

Thereupon the Dutch and Austrians, in the centre and left, advanced against Fontenoy and Anthoin, but flinching from the fire in front, and above all from that in their flank from the battery on the other side of the Scheldt, soon shrank back under cover and could not be induced to move forward again. Worst of all, the Dutch cavalry was smitten with panic, galloped back on to the top of some of the British squadrons, and fled away wildly to Hal crying out that all was lost. Things therefore went ill on the Allied left and meanwhile on the right there was enacted a blunder still more fatal. For Ingoldsby, misconceiving his instructions, hesitated to make his attack on the Redoubt d'Eu, and despite repeated orders from Cumberland never delivered it at all. Cumberland, however, was impatient. Without further delay he placed himself at the head of the British, who were standing as Ligonier had arrayed them, in most beautiful order. In the first line, counting from right to left, stood a battalion of the First Guards, another of the Scots Guards, and another of the Coldstream, the First, Twenty-first, Thirty-first, Eighth, Twenty-fifth, Thirty-third, and Nineteenth; in the second line the Buffs occupied the post of honour on the right, and next to them

came in succession the Twenty-third, Thirty-second, Eleventh, Twenty-eighth, Thirty-fourth, and Twentieth. Certain Hanoverian battalions joined them on the extreme left. The drums beat, the men shouldered arms, and the detachments harnessed themselves to the two light field-guns that accompanied each battalion. Ingoldsby saw what was going forward and aligned his battalions with them on the right. Then the word was given to advance, and the two lines moved off with the slow and measured step for which they were famous in Europe.

[The Dutch began their assault at 9am, pretty much when the British sent word that they were ready, although the latter did not move right away, as they were waiting for the Bois de Barri to be cleared. The former advanced in two dense columns with the cavalry in the centre. The left column was tasked with taking Antoin, and the right sent against Fontenoy and its associated redoubts. Although the right column managed to get converged grenadier units within musket shot of the French lines, they were forced to seek shelter in the burnt-out rubble of the *Hameau de Fontenoy* – that is, right in the middle of the kill zone. For the left column, the fire from the far bank of the Scheldt was particularly galling, as it raked their lines from end to end. Balked and fearing a cavalry attack, their commander, General Cronström, ordered his troops to form square. (General Cronström was in his eighties by now; he was commandant of Bergen op Zoom when it surrendered in 1747 – which it did mainly because he had refused to believe the French could assault the place).

The Dutch commander, the Prince of Waldeck, was young (24 or 25 years old) and energetic, but inexperienced. During the recce of the night before, he had lightly undertaken to deal with the French right, probably without much thought for what it was going to entail. Cumberland, of the same age and even more pugnacious, seems also not to have cared much about the methods he would use. After all, they were only attacking Frenchmen. The third member of the high command, Count Königsegg, was a wise old bird. He was the one who suggested the cavalry flanking movement. He also tried to dissuade the young hotheads from conducting a mindless frontal assault, and in fact, from fighting a strategically pointless battle at all, but without much success. Königsegg commanded the Austrian contingent, but since this consisted of 6 squadrons and two free companies, his main role was to act as Cumberland's second in command. He was 73 years old, suffered from excruciating gout, but was still game enough to ride into battle. This was to be his last year of campaigning.]

Forward tramped the ranks of scarlet, silent and stately as if on parade. Full half a mile of ground was to be traversed before they could close with the invisible enemy that awaited them in the entrenchments over the crest of the slope, and the way was marked clearly by the red flashes and puffs of white smoke that leaped from Fontenoy and the Redoubt d'Eu on either flank. The shot plunged fiercely and more fiercely into the serried lines as they advanced into that murderous cross-fire, but the gaping ranks were quietly closed, the perfect order was never lost, the stately step was never hurried. Only the Hanoverians in the second line, finding that they were cramped for space, dropped back quietly and decorously, and marched on in third line behind the British. Silent and inexorable the scarlet lines strode on. They came abreast of village and redoubt, and the shot which had hitherto swept away files now swept away ranks. Then the first line passed beyond redoubt and village, and the French cannon took it in reverse. The gaps grew wider and more frequent, the front grew narrower as the men closed up, but still the proud battalions advanced, strewing the sward behind them with scarlet, like some mass of red blossom that floats down a lazy stream and sheds its petals as it goes.



Prince William Augustus Welf, Duke of Cumberland (1721-1765)

Third (2nd surviving) son of George II (and thus not the heir to the throne). He was originally intended for a career in the Navy, but he did not take to the life. (He served as a volunteer in a fleet sent to deal with the Spanish off Cape Ferrol and they encountered a terrible gale). He was gazetted to the 1st Guards and from that point on devoted his life to soldiering. Created a Duke in 1726. Made Colonel of the Coldstream Guards in

1740. Made Major General in 1742. Wounded at Dettingen, while serving under his father (and against the latter's wishes).

In 1744 he was refused the leadership of the Army of the Pragmatic Sanction on the grounds of inexperience. However, after the fiasco of the '44 campaign he was made the King's Captain-General for 1745. It was hoped a prince of the blood could coerce agreement at the councils of war. Bashed the French at Fontenoy, but was forced to retire from the field, his army in tatters. Later in the year he was recalled to lead the anti-Jacobite forces. After pacifying Scotland he returned to Flanders and resumed his command. In 1747 he lost the battle of Lawfeld, though heavy losses were inflicted on the French.

Cumberland was made C-in-C Hanover at the start of the Seven Years War. However, he was defeated at Hastenbeck and signed a capitulation to the French (the Convention of Kloster-Zeven – 1757) for which he was dismissed. Disgraced, he retired to Windsor Castle after resigning all his offices. Later he went into politics under his brother George III. By the time of his death his popularity had returned (he helped get rid of some of the King's advisors).

Horace Walpole wrote that Cumberland enjoyed war for its own sake, as well as women and gaming, but despised money, fame, and politics. The Duke was said to be a dutiful son, steadfast in both his loves and his hates, and honest. He was accounted physically brave, in an age where such an attribute was commonplace, but he was also seen as a martinet and he was callous of his men's lives. However, while they lived, he took good care of them, and dispensed an evenhanded justice. His officers had less reason to like him. They expected to be treated as gentlemen, no slow-witted recruits. His bravery was beyond question, but as the record shows, he was not a successful commander.

At last the crest of the ridge was gained and the ranks of the French battalions came suddenly into view little more than a hundred yards distant, their coats alone visible behind the breastwork. Next to the forest of Barry, and exposed to the extreme right of the British, a line of red showed the presence of the Swiss Guards, next to them stood a line of blue, the four battalions of the French Guards, and next to the Guards a line of white, the regiments of Courtin, Aubeterre, and of the King, the choicest battalions of the French Army. Closer and closer came the British, still with arms shouldered, always silent, always with the same slow, measured tread, till they had advanced to within fifty yards of the French. Then at length Lord Charles Hay of the First Guards stepped forward with flask in hand, and doffing his hat drank politely to his enemies. "I hope, gentlemen" he shouted, "that you are going to wait for us to-day and not swim the Scheldt as you swam the Main at Dettingen. Men of the King's company", he continued, turning round to his own people, "these are the French Guards, and I hope you are going to beat them to-day" and the English Guards answered with a cheer. The French officers hurried to the front, for the appearance of the British was a surprise to them, and called for a cheer in reply. But only a halfhearted murmur came from the French ranks, which quickly died away and gave place to a few sharp words of command for the British were now within thirty yards. "For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful," murmured an English

Guardsman as he looked down the barrels of the French muskets, but before his comrades round him had done laughing the French Guards had fired and the turn of the British had come at last.

For despite of that deadly march through the crossfire of the French batteries to the muzzles of the French muskets, the scarlet ranks still glared unbroken through the smoke; and now the British muskets, so long shouldered, were levelled, and with crash upon crash the volleys rang out from end to end of the line, first the First Guards, then the Coldstreams, then the Scots, and so through brigade after brigade, two battalions loading while the third fired, a ceaseless, rolling, infernal fire. Down dropped the whole of the French front rank, blue coats, red coats and white, before the storm. Nineteen officers and six hundred men of the French and Swiss Guards fell at the first discharge; regiment Courtin [Courten] was crushed out of existence; regiment Aubeterre, striving hard to stem the tide, was swept aside by a single imperious volley which laid half of its men on the ground. The British infantry were perfectly in hand; their officers could be seen coolly tapping the muskets of the men with their canes so that every discharge might be low and deadly; while the battalion-guns also poured in round after round of grape with terrible effect. The first French line was utterly shattered and broken. Even while the British were advancing, Saxe had brought up additional troops to meet them and had posted regiments Couronne and Soissonois in rear of the King's regiment, and the Brigade Royal in rear of the French Guards; but all alike went down before the irresistible volleys. The red-coats continued their triumphant advance for full three hundred yards into the heart of the French camp, and old Ligonier's heart leaped within him, for he thought that the battle was won.

Saxe for his part thought little differently from Ligonier; but though half dead with dropsy, reduced to suck a bullet to assuage his intolerable thirst, so weak that he could not ride but was carried about the field in a wicker litter, the gallant German never for a moment lost his head. Sending a message to the French King, who with the Dauphin was watching the action from a windmill in the rear [Gallows Hill], to retire across the Scheldt without delay, he strove to gain time to rally his infantry. On the first repulse of the French Guards Cumberland had detached two battalions to help the Dutch by a flanking attack on Fontenoy. Seeing that this movement must be checked at all hazards, Saxe headed these troops back by a charge of cavalry; whereupon one of the battalions extended itself along the left flank of the British. Partly in this way, partly owing to the incessant play of the French artillery on both flanks, the two British lines assumed the form of two huge oblong columns which gradually became welded into one. The change was not untimely, for now the first line of the French cavalry, which had been posted in rear of the forest of Barry, came down upon the British at full gallop, only to reel back shivered to fragments by the same terrible fire. Then the second line tried its fortune, but met with no better fate. Finally, the Household Cavalry, the famous *Maison du Roi*, burning with all the ardour of Dettingen unavenged, was launched against the scarlet columns and like its predecessors, came flying back, a mob of riderless horses and uncontrollable men, decimated, shattered and repulsed by the never-ending fire. It was like charging two flaming fortresses rather than two columns of infantry.

Nevertheless some time was hereby gained for the broken French infantry to re-form. The British, once arrived within the French camp, came to a halt, and looked at last to see how the Dutch were faring on their left. As has already been told, Waldeck's attack had been a total failure, and the British unsupported and always under a cross-fire of artillery, fell back to the crest of the ridge and were re-formed for a second attack. Waldeck undertook to make another attempt on Fontenoy, and Cumberland, in reliance upon his help, again advanced at the head of the British. But meanwhile Saxe had brought forward his reserves from Ramecroix, and among them the Irish brigade, to meet him, while artillery had also been brought up from the French right to play upon the British front. The French Guards and the rest of the troops of the French first line had also been rallied, and the task of the British was well-nigh desperate. The Irish brigade which consisted of six battalions, was made up not of Irish only but of Scots and English

also, desperate characters who went into action with a rope round their necks, and would fight like devils. Yet, even in this second attack the British carried their advance as far as in the first, the perfection of their fire-discipline enabling them to beat back even the Irish brigade for a time. [According to Irish accounts, it was their assault that defeated the British]. But their losses had been frightfully heavy; the Dutch would not move one foot to the attack of Fontenoy, and the cannonade in front added to that in the flanks became unendurable. The French infantry likewise closed round on them in superior numbers on both flanks, and it became apparent that there was nothing for it but a retreat.

[Ingoldsby's two battalions arrived to help the Dutch about 8.00am, and went straight into the assault without waiting for their allies. They too were repulsed, though the 43rd Highlanders did break in to the village for a time. At 8.15am the Dutch, having reformed, went in again, but although they also took several buildings, were unable to oust the French from the fortified churchyard and had to retire. They attacked again at 11am but the corps was spent and made no gains at all. Even before this third attack, the cavalry, under intense fire from the guns across the river, broke and routed from the field, only stopping to plunder their own baggage train.

All this time, the British, as described above, were chewing their way into the heart of the French position, between Fontenoy and the Barri Wood. As a caveat to the legend of Lord Hay's taunt, the French were supposedly so insulted that they refused to fire until the British had done so – the legend is probably false, but it captures the spirit of the age perfectly. The French are famed for their gallantry, but only an Englishman would be eccentric enough to toast his enemies in this manner.

By 1pm, Cumberland, in the thick of the fighting and unable to control events, had decided to withdraw, and sent to Prince Waldeck to tell him so. That worthy was busy ordering yet another assault, this time with his own regiment, which had been in reserve, but without support from other units it could do nothing. It was at this time, that the French commander, Count Löwendahl, arrived with some reserves of his own from the "ponts de tête" – bridgeheads – that covered the other approaches to Tournai, and, with the rallied Irish Brigade, began to drive the Anglo-Hanoverians back.

Cumberland was not the only one mixing it up with the rankers. King Louis himself, and the Dauphin, were at one point separated by the whole of the British wing; de Saxe ranged up and down the line from Antoing to the Barri Redoubt, dodging cannon shot and scarlet tunics as he strained to rally every reserve on hand; even his rival Richelieu displayed great gallantry, charging home with the *Maison du Roi*.]

Ligonier sent back two battalions to secure the roads leading through Vezon, and the retreat then began in perfectly good order. The French Household Cavalry made a furious charge upon the rear of the column as it faced about, but found to its cost that the infernal fire was not yet quenched. The three battalions of Guards and a battalion of Hanoverians turned sternly about to meet them, and gave them a few parting volleys, which wholly extinguished one regiment and brought down every officer of another. A few British squadrons, the Blues conspicuous among them, pushed forward, in spite of heavy losses, though the cross-fire to lend what help they could, and the remnant of the heroic battalions retired, facing about in succession at every hundred yards, as steadily and proudly as they had advanced.

The Irish charged the British right flank while the French horse charged their front – and all the while the guns kept playing on them as Cumberland’s column was slowly squeezed around the sunken road at the top of the ridge. Fortunately by this point, most of the French cannon were reduced to firing blank cartridges.

By 2pm, the Allied foot was safely away into Vezon, and their cavalry was able to launch a final charge of its own to spoil any pursuit. The French were too exhausted in any case. It took until 7pm for Cumberland’s column to reach the safety of the fortress of Ath, followed by the Dutch at 9pm (although the latter continued on to La Catoine).

In all, the British suffered around 4,000 casualties, the Hanoverians 2,000, and the Dutch 4,000 (so much for their “weak and ineffectual assistance” that British propagandists claimed). The 12th and 23rd of foot each lost over 300; the 21st and 31st over 250 apiece. The British horse lost 300 men and 600 horses. Only three British generals were unwounded (through no fault of their own) – Cumberland, Ligonier, and Skelton. The French lost at least 7,000 men, and may have had up to 10,000 casualties.

The battle was not a decisive Allied loss, but it was a loss. Ingoldsby was court-martialled for his dilatoriness, but was only found guilty of an “error of judgement”. That error, however, is cited as preventing the Allies from sweeping the left flank of the French completely away and forcing them to retire from the field. However, in other accounts of the summer’s campaign, much is made of the skill and daring of the *Arquebusiers de Grassin* whom held the wood. This was a body of over a thousand men – supposedly bootblacks and other Parisian scum – that performed exceptionally well throughout the war. Ingoldsby’s brigade may in fact have lacked the strength to deal with them. In a similar situation at the affair of Melle, fought later in the summer, an equivalent British force was mauled by the *Grassins*.

Cumberland gained a great reputation from this battle (it’s amazing what you can accomplish with a good spin-doctor), but the final verdict, especially given his later conduct of affairs, was that he got lucky. His was the sort of temperament that *would* bull its way straight through a scrimmage – but once there he was unable to take advantage of the situation by, for example, detaching battalions to clean out the redoubts.

Overall, the Allied command and control was poor. Well, it was a multinational force. But the lack of coordination between Ingoldsby, Cumberland (stuck at the head of his block of infantry), and Waldeck on the left led to a series of unsupported assaults. Artillery support was lacking because the civilian teamsters ran away with the horses and limbers. Even so, the French did not feel sufficiently fit to actively pursue their enemies. They were, however, able to prosecute the siege of Tournai unmolested (aided by treachery from within), and by June 22nd, the citadel had capitulated. This reverse encouraged Bonnie Prince Charlie to proceed with his own affairs in Scotland that summer, and that event, in turn, allowed de Saxe to conquer the whole of Belgium.

After Fontenoy and Elsewhere

After Fontenoy, the Allies retreated to Ath, then to Lessins, pulling out their garrisons enroute. Without hope of relief,

Tournai surrendered on May 22nd, the citadel on June 19th. During the course of the summer, Ghent, Bruges, Oudenarde, Dendermonde, Oostende, and Nieupoort followed. The whole of Maritime Flanders was in French hands.

Cumberland decided to hold Mons and simultaneously cover Ghent by retiring the bulk of the Anglo-Hanoverians over the Scheldt, and to cover Brussels by sending the Austro-Dutch back over the Dendre. He was still trying to do everything at once; besides, the various nationalities under his command were at daggers drawn and needed to be kept apart. This led to the Allied army’s defeat in detail. When Ghent fell to Löwendahl’s mere 5,000 besiegers, Cumberland lost the garrison, plus 2 battalions put in to strengthen it, plus 4 more battalions sent to relieve it. He also lost his main supply depot, as orders had not been given to move it.

After the fall of Ghent, the Allies retreated to Vilvorde, still attempting to cover both Brussels and Antwerp at the same time. This was August, and a force had to be readied for England to deal with the Jacobites. De Saxe, meanwhile, simply followed on, threatening here and there, and mopping up fortresses. Oostende fell the same month, forcing the British to reroute their line of communication to Antwerp. Through September and October, 15 British battalions were sent home (after waiting for weeks for favourable winds) and eventually only a couple of British battalions and some squadrons of horse were left in the country. As the weather turned sour, both sides went into winter quarters.

Elsewhere the British seized the fortress of Louisburg, on Cape Breton – an impromptu affair by local American militia backed up at the last minute by the Royal Navy. In Italy, the Gallispan pushed on remorselessly, threatening both Milan and Turin, and inflicting a salutary defeat on the House of Savoy at Bassignana. Further north, Maria-Theresa’s husband, Francis Stephen, was proclaimed Emperor Francis I (13th September). Frederick of Prussia, after soundly trouncing an Allied-Austrian-Saxon combination in two major summer battles (Hohenfreiburg on the 4th of June; Soor on September 30th) was still unable to make a significant dent in the Hapsburg war effort. He managed to make a deal with George II (in the latter’s capacity as Elector of Hanover) that enraged Maria-Theresa, but a third Prussian victory at Kesseldorf (15th December) forced the Austrians back to the peace table.

At year’s end, Prussia made a final peace (the Treaty of Dresden). Saxony quit the war as Bavaria had done before, Austria recognised Prussia’s conquest of Silesia, and Prussia recognised the new Emperor. France and Britain were now the main antagonists in northern Europe.

THE YEAR OF 1746

The Treaty of Dresden, made between Austria and Prussia at the end of 1745, and the withdrawal of Bavaria from the contest that same autumn, meant that France was now, apart from the dubious support of Spain, on her own. With no real desires beyond an honourable peace, she was confronted by two nations out for blood. For Austria, however, Italy was the key theatre, while the British of course pressed for greater efforts in Flanders. France was not interested making permanent gains in the former lands. Strategically, therefore,

she held the advantage in being able to concentrate her efforts in the “decisive” theatre.

Although the Jacobite Rising was to be put down in time for the main campaigning season, a large number of British troops were still required for internal security and could not be made available. (The Hessians and the few British reinforcements returned from Britain could not arrive before mid-July, and even then there were no horses to be had; the Hessians even lacked powder). Also, by the time the summer season opened, the French had stolen a march on the Allies with a daring winter blitz against Brussels.

De Saxe, who applied effective maskirovka – pretending to have reverted to his former sybaritic lifestyle and then to have fallen ill in consequence – superbly orchestrated this operation. (It was partly true in any case, but the marshal remained master of himself still). Allied supineness also helped. An unseasonable and prolonged thaw made it appear that no operations would be practicable, but in late January 1746, a brutal cold set in. On the 28th, de Saxe moved 22,000 men (42 battalions, 105 squadrons, and 5 companies of irregulars) from Ghent to Brussels in two days, across four frozen rivers. Despite horrific conditions, de Saxe pressed the siege of the city, which contained a garrison of 12,000 men. The place held out until the French made two breaches, then capitulated. The fall of the provincial capital without a relief effort at least being attempted by General Ligonier at Breda or *Prins Waldeck* at Malines did nothing for Allied relations. De Saxe returned to Paris in triumph to push for the humbling of Holland; his forces continued with mopping up operations in what remained of Austrian Flanders and Brabant.

The French war effort had, after the disgrace of de Maurepas and his cronies, been for the past year or so directed by the Marquis d’Argenson. This was a man curiously ahead of his time in some ways; a visionary fixated on establishing the nationhood of Italy in order to hem Austria in, he was too much of a dreamer to deal with the practicalities of daily diplomacy. For d’Argenson, Austria, not Britain, was the main target. Thus, he vetoed any moves into Germany for fear of chasing the smaller states into the enemy’s arms, and focused his attention on the far side of the Alps. In agreement with de Saxe’s views, the Low Countries would remain active. But, while the latter wanted to launch an attack against the Dutch, d’Argenson hoped to wean them away from the Alliance and thus forbade an invasion of the United Provinces.

[One can see why d’Argenson is blamed for prolonging the war. The key theatre was Flanders, and that’s where the bulk of French men and materiel went. But the main effort in 1746 was made in Italy, where the French had few men and could not effectively reinforce what they did have.]

Although the general peace feelers made as part of this strategy petered out in May, not to be revived until October, de Saxe was still restricted to a rather boring series of siege operations designed to lure the Allies out, or if they would not bite, to make *les Pays-Bas* a de facto French province. (Perhaps in the back of the marshal’s mind was the desire for a province or even a kingdom of his own, as he had once briefly held in Courland). The upshot was the taking of Antwerp by the beginning of June. Although the city had been closed to general trade for years (under Dutch management the Scheldt had been



Louis François de Bourbon, Prince de Conti (1717–76)

The grandson of François Louis de Conti, a man whose mockery of Louis XIV caused his own exile and who competed without success for the Polish throne. Louis François served under de Belle-Isle in Bavaria, and in 1744 commanded the Army of Piedmont. He campaigned in Germany in 1745, and joined de Saxe in 1746. Resigned his commission in 1747 at the suggestion of the King – the alternative being a duel with de Saxe. Like his grandfather, he became a candidate for the Polish throne. In later life, he lost his influence at Court through the active dislike of Mme de Pompadour. In opposition to King Louis, he supported Parlement against René-Nicolas de Maupeou, and later still he opposed the reforms of A. R. J. Turgot. He was a writer and a friend of Jean Jacques Rousseau. His son who fought in the Seven Years War.

allowed to silt up in order to kill the great rival of Amsterdam) it could be made to live again in French hands. More importantly for the immediate future, the British were forced to switch their port of entry to Willemstadt and their base of operations to Breda.

Elsewhere, things were not as rosy for the French. The Jacobite Cause had been given its death knell on the 27th of April on Culloden Moor. In Italy, the French position became unhinged and a revitalised Austrian army drove their demoralised forces from Pavia. And something even more serious had occurred – Russia and Austria had concluded a defensive alliance against Prussia.

By mid-summer, after lengthy wrangling over command and control issues on both sides, the general campaign commenced. The French had 200,000 men and the Allies 90,000. The numbers speak for themselves. The Allies, concentrated at Terhayden, north of Breda (50,000 Austrians, Hessians, and Hanoverians, but only 6 battalions of British), were for the first time under an Austrian commander – Charles of Lorraine. Cumberland was still busy in Scotland; besides, the Austrians had at last brought a substantial force into the theatre, requiring a leader of somewhat higher prestige.

De Saxe remained at Antwerp, covering lesser operations by the princes de Conti and de Coigny (de Conti was related to the King and demanded his own piece of *la gloire*). De Saxe had about 100,000 men and the two princes 30,000 each (de Conti had 40 battalions and 50 squadrons to play with). The great marshal determined the overall course of operations – a “bloodless” progression up the Meuse via Mons (a thorn in the French side), Charleroi, Namur, and Liège, as far as the *point d’appui* of Maastricht. (The campaign was bloodless in the sense of being a series of finely articulated sieges rather than a search for a glory-reaping battle).

Now the French were poised to dominate the Bishopric of Liège. At this point they paused. For one thing, de Saxe had moved out to challenge Charles of Lorraine at the Méhaigne River but had not been supported by Conti, who shamelessly continued his own accumulation of fame. This brought on the famous showdown between the two that almost came to a duel (a very dangerous thing, duelling with a relative of the King). To avert disaster the King was appealed to. Louis wisely supported de Saxe and the Prince de Conti retired from the campaign, never to serve in the field again.

Archduke Charles could do little to stop the French, despite a mending of fences with the Maritime Powers. Apart from a general feeling of Allied *ennui*, French diplomacy had scared the Dutch so badly that they were prepared to seek a separate peace. Fortunately for the Allied war effort, they first sought advice from their partners the British. Now the trick for the latter became, how to placate the Dutch while continuing the war – Lord Newcastle had recently come to power promising a military solution, and at the same time he had hopes of detaching the Spanish from the Gallispan fold. Although the peace discussions that this situation led to did not open at Breda until October, there was thus little incentive for the Allies to conduct aggressive operations.

Their army did make a feeble thrust at Antwerp, but de Saxe's position was deemed impregnable. As mentioned above, the French then challenged the Allies to no effect. Once de Conti had been put in his place, de Saxe appointed the Prince de Clermont (formerly the actual commander of the main army) to begin operations against Namur, and detached the ever-dependable Count Löwendahl to take Huy. De Saxe himself kept the most interesting job – bamboozling the Allied relief forces. For two months he rewrote the book on the practical application of ruses, feints, and stratagems. The marshal, denied the opportunity of invading Holland, had no interest in actually engaging the enemy, only in appearing to want to.

On the 17th of July, the Allies broke camp and marched to protect Namur. De Saxe followed after a short delay, moving parallel to the Dyle between Arschoot and Louvain. Charles moved on, through Peer and Hasselt; on the 27th he was at Borchlœn, ahead of the French. However, on August 1st, as Charles was crossing the Méhaigne, Charleroi fell, releasing de Conti's forces. De Saxe was still at Louvain, with detachments at Tirlemont and Gembloux. Charles continued his march to Masy on the Orneau, and then faced northeast between there and Mehaigne, covering Namur. De Saxe now moved up. Both armies entrenched within a long musket shot of each other.

The Allies were outnumbered three to two and confined in an area with limited supplies. But, if they moved again they could – probably would – lose Namur. General Ligonier wanted a cavalry dash to Malines but was overruled by Charles. The latter hoped for a decisive battle on the well-omened and exceedingly suitable ground of Ramillies. It was not to be. De Saxe merely shifted his position to the northeast, sent detachments to Huy, and cut the Allies line of communications with Liège and Maastricht. This forced the Allies to retreat across the Meuse, so they could retire on Maastricht in safety. Saxe let them go, redeploying along the Jaar from Warem to Tongres. The Allies were forced to recross to the enemy bank of the Meuse for lack of forage, but de Saxe simply withdrew, confident they could not follow.

On September 10th, Namur surrendered, and on the 21st, the citadel capitulated. Here too, de Saxe played the artist, even ordering a cessation of the bombardment and allowing hunger to do his job for him (“look Ma, no hands”). On the 17th of September, the Allies advanced again and offered battle. De Saxe retired to an immensely strong position located between Tongres and the Demer River. The Allies dug in opposite him. However, the fall of Namur released de Clermont's corps, which moved up to join de Saxe. The Allies were now outnumbered two to one. In almost everyone's opinion, the



Prince Charles Alexander of Lorraine (1712-1780)

Maria-Theresa's brother-in-law (younger brother of Francis Stephen). 1742 appointed to command the relief of Prague against French besiegers. Was successful in this, but his reputation was unduly enhanced. Defeated at Chotusitz. Married Maria Theresa's sister in 1744. The couple were

appointed co-regents of the Austrian Netherlands the same year. Maria Anna died in childbirth in 1746. Not on active campaign in 1744. In 1745 he was defeated by the Prussians at Soor. In 1746 he commanded Army of the Pragmatic Sanction and lost the battle of Roucoux. (His appointment may have had something to do with his tactfulness when dealing with a mixed command).

Fought against Prussia again in the Seven Years War, and again performed poorly, compared to other Austrian commanders such as Field Marshal Daun. In peace he did much to revitalise the Austrian Netherlands (with a view to exchanging it with Bavaria). Described as bold and active, Charles lacked that third Napoleonic requirement for command – he was not “lucky”.

season was now too far advanced and preparations were begun for entering winter quarters.

But Vienna insisted on a counter-stroke. The Allied army came down once more along the right bank of the Meuse and deployed for battle in a cul-de-sac between the River Jaar and Liège, with the Meuse at their backs. Their army was split in two by broken terrain and overly stretched in an effort to secure their flanks. This was just too good an opportunity to throw away. The Honourable John Fortescue, in his *British Campaigns in Flanders* (pp. 162-165), explains what happened next.

Roucoux – 11th of October 1746

“The castle of Namur surrendered after a miserable defence of but eleven days; Clermont's corps was released for operations in the field, and the Allies were forced to fall back for the protection of Liège. Accordingly, on the 7th of October they crossed the Jaar, not without annoyance from the enemy, and took up a new position, which gave them indeed possession of Liège, but placed them between the Meuse in their rear, and an army of nearly twice their strength on the Jaar before their front.

Now at last Saxe resolved to strike a blow. On the 10th of October he crossed the Jaar with evident intention of an attack, and the Allied army received orders to be ready for action before the following dawn.

The Allies position faced very nearly due west, the army being drawn up astride of the two paved roads leading into Liège from Tongres and St. Trond. Their extreme right rested on the Jarr and was covered by the villages of Slin, Fexhe, and Enick, all of which were strongly entrenched and occupied by the Austrians. South of Enick extended an open plain from that village to the village of Liers, and in this plain was posted the Hanoverian infantry and four British battalions, the Eighth, Nineteenth, Thirty-third, and Forty-third Foot, with the Hessian infantry on their left, in rear of Liers. The Hanoverian cavalry prolonged the line southward to the village of Varoux, and the Sixth and Seventh Dragoons and Scots Greys continued it to the village of Roucoux, from which point Dutch troops carried it on to the village of Ance, which formed the extreme left of the position. Ligonier did not like the situation, for he did not see how the turning of the left flank could be prevented if, as would certainly be the case, the French should seriously attempt it. Archduke Charles, knowing that, if his right were turned, his retreat to Maestricht would be cut off, had taken care to hold the right flank in real strength and dared not weaken it; but the

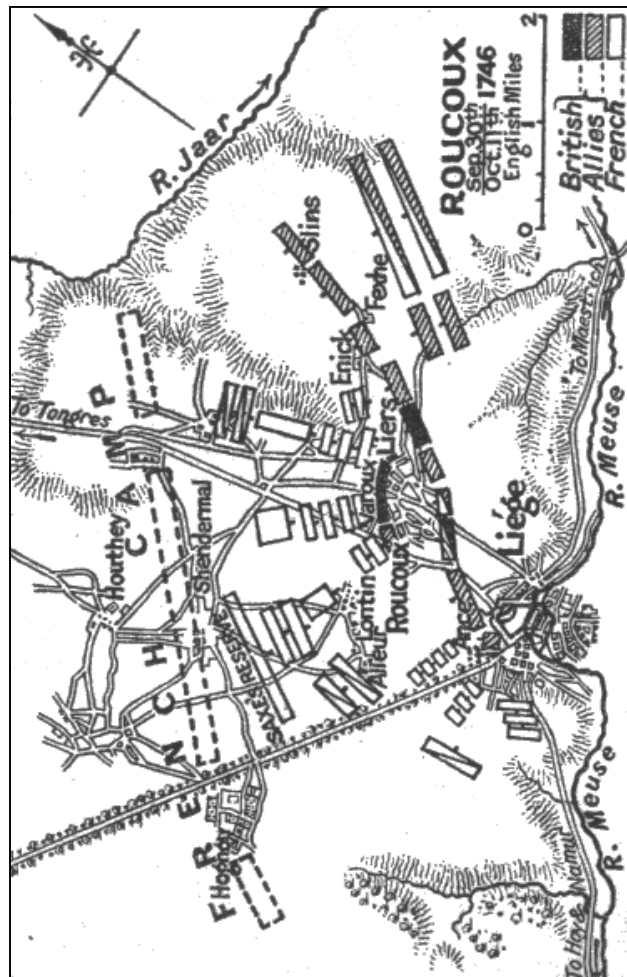
position, with the Meuse in its rear was perilously shallow, while the convergence of two ravines from the Jaar and Mehaigne into its centre allowed of but one narrow way of communication between the right and the left of the army...

The morning of the 11th of October opened with bad news for the Allies. The French had been admitted into Liège by the inhabitants behind the backs of the Dutch, so that the Prince of Waldeck, who commanded on the left, was obliged to withdraw eight battalions from Roucoux and post them en potence on his left flank, with his cavalry in support. Thus the defence of Roucoux, as well as of Liers and Varoux, was left to eight battalions of British, Hanoverians, and Hessians only. This made the outlook for the Allied left the worse since it was evident that the brunt of the French attack would fall upon it. Saxe gave Großherzog Karl little time for reflection. He had one hundred and twenty thousand men against eighty thousand, and he knew that of the eighty thousand at least one-third were tied to the Austrian entrenchments about the Jaar. He opened the action by a furious assault upon the Dutch on the left wing, his infantry being formed in dense columns, so that the attack could be renewed continually by fresh troops. Simultaneously fifty-five battalions in three similar columns were launched upon Liers, Varoux, and Roucoux. Outmatched though they were, Dutch, Germans, and British all fought splendidly and repelled more than one attack. But, to use Ligonier's words, as soon as two French brigades had been repulsed in each village, a third brigade ran in and the eight battalions, though they still held Liers, were forced to withdraw both from Roucoux and Varoux. Being rallied, however, by Ligonier, they advanced again and recaptured both villages and the Nineteenth and Forty-third took up a position in a hollow road which they held to the last. The Dutch now began to retire across the rear of the position from the left, in good order despite of heavy losses, while Ligonier checked the enemy in the plain with the British cavalry. When the Dutch had passed, he ordered his own men to retreat in the same direction, still covering the movement with the cavalry and with the Thirteenth and Twenty-sixth Foot, which had been sent to the field from the garrison of Maastricht. The Austrians formed a rear-guard in turn when the British and their German comrades had passed; and thus the whole army filed off, unpursued and in perfect order, and crossed the Meuse in safety on the following morning.

The action may be looked upon as a fortunate escape for the Allies, since it was impossible, humanly speaking, that it could have issued favourably for them. Archduke Charles, in seeking to cover both Liège and Maastricht, had attempted too much. His army thus occupied too wide a front, the villages in the Centre were too weakly held, there was hardly anywhere a second line of infantry and the left flank could not be sustained against so superior an enemy. The total loss of the Allies was about five thousand men which was sufficiently severe considering that but a third of the army was engaged."

Maurice's plan depended on the two Allied wings being unable to mutually assist each other, and on the Dutch (as the weak link), being routed first – then the British could be encircled. To everyone's surprise, the Dutch resisted vigorously. The plan was also hampered by the weather, which prohibited a general attack until mid-afternoon. Forced by the Dutch to engage the Allied right in a (admittedly winnable) battle of attrition, de Saxe had to do something to hold the Austrians in place so they could not cover the inevitable British withdrawal. Unfortunately, he chose a man named Clermont-Gallerande, who was secretly jealous of him. The latter took two hours to "dress" his assaulting forces and the Allies got away.

The French suffered 3,750 casualties, of which a third were fatal. The Allies actually suffered closer to 7,000 casualties (1,600 dead). This was the largest battle of the century to date, with over 200,000 men packed into an area of about five square miles. By contrast with other theatres, the casualty rates were quite low, but this is only because over half the men were never



engaged. At the point of contact, on the Allied left, the multiple assaults on stoutly held villages and breastworks had a murderous impact on the participants.

After Roucoux and Elsewhere

At this point, both sides went into winter quarters. The French let the Allies go – they had not routed the enemy, and were themselves exhausted. By this action, Maurice de Saxe was made Maréchal-Général of the King's Armies, and awarded the great chateau of Chambord in the Loire Valley.

Elsewhere, the British had launched an inept raid on the French entrepôt at Lorient. As its name indicates, this was the main depot for convoys to the colonies. Six British battalions – the 1st, 15th, 28th, 30th, 39th, and the 43rd Black Watch – led by General St. Clair, landed unopposed. The next day they were fired upon and plundered a local village in reprisal before laying siege to Lorient. Offered amazingly good terms by the Governor of the French East India Company, the British refused to accept them and formally invested the post. After a few days of this, the besiegers, having suffered 100 losses, took to their ships and left. The Rhine remained quiet, but a Piedmontese army had crossed the Alps and invaded Provence; and the Gallispan effort in the Po Valley was on its last legs.

THE YEAR OF 1747

At the beginning of 1747, the dreamy ideologue d'Argenson was sacked. His two years at the helm of French foreign policy had, in the main, proved to be a disaster. His replacement was the competent, levelheaded Marquis de Puisieulx. French policy took a new tack. The goal was Peace With Honour and a return to the status quo. For the post-war future, France was to disentangle itself from Spain and keep Prussia at arms length. Austria, very delicately, was to be approached with an olive branch. (Ironically, as the French approached Britain's old ally, the British approached Spain). The Maritime Powers, both now and for the future, remained the greatest threat, and the first step in dealing with them was to be the cowing, and, if necessary, the destruction of Holland.

Meeting at The Hague in the spring, the representatives of the Allies planned to take the offensive once again, with the Austrians pledging 60,000 men and the British contributing 4 cavalry and 14 infantry regiments – a total of 110 battalions, 160 squadrons, and 220 guns, plus irregular forces. Broken down, the paper strengths came to 8,000 British, 18,000 Hanoverians, 6,000 Hessians, 60,000 Austrians, and 40,000 Dutch and Bavarians: 132,000 men in all. There was, inevitably, a shortfall, and the Allies actually took the field with 100,000, plus 26,000 garrison troops. The doughty Duke of Cumberland was to command.

At the same time, a general war-weariness pervaded the courts of Europe – even in Spain, where a new monarch wished to distance himself from the “unsound” policies of his predecessor. The bottom line was that no-one had sufficient money to produce a decisive victory. Even the British economy, secured by deficit spending formulæ, was suffering. The war was winding down, but each side hoped to do something to alter the balance and improve their bargaining position at the peace talks.

The campaigning season opened late due to atrocious weather, but the French, as usual, moved first and quickly seized Sluys (Ecluse) and Cadsand (Sas-de-Gand), thus gaining complete control of the south bank of the Scheldt. On the 17th of April, the French had bluntly announced to the Dutch Estates that Holland's blatant support of Powers inimical to France would no longer be tolerated. And de Saxe's army, 136,000 strong, surged into the Lands of the Generality (the borderlands of Belgium and Holland).

The first effect of the French declaration of war was to shatter the decrepit Oligarchy that pinned the seven United Provinces together. Their hold on power had been contingent on the argument that they alone could keep the French wolf at bay. In 1744, the French aim had been to appear to be threatening the Netherlands, so as to draw England into full conflict – thus they had accepted the curious “armed neutrality” of the Dutch. In 1747, however, with de Saxe's army on the Scheldt, the French decided they were in a position to do more than merely threaten.

With this act, the mass of the Dutch people, conscious that their nation had become the laughingstock of Europe and disgusted with their leaders, rose in revolt, choosing the House of Orange once again to lead them out of the mess. A British squadron

was requested to defend the Scheldt, the populace of the great towns took to the streets in revolution, and William IV of Orange was proclaimed Stadtholder, Captain-General, and Admiral of the Province. These titles were traditional forms, held by the original Saviour of Holland, William the Silent. What was revolutionary was that all the provinces at once submitted to this new scion of Orange, giving William IV more power than any Stadtholder had previously held. Unfortunately, William was not up to the task. Neither was the exhausted nation really capable of putting forth the effort that the British, most of all, desired.

The verdict is still out on British meddling in Dutch politics. On the one hand, they were quick to respond to the call for help – perhaps too quick. On the other hand, they appeared reluctant to provide “guidance” to the vacillating Prince of Orange at a critical time. It would seem that the Revolution was spontaneous, and that the British were just happy it had occurred.

Before the French offensive, the Allies had hoped to retake Antwerp. Now, while Dutch nationalists battled the French in Zeeland and her Estates scrambled to raise the additional 30,000 men newly authorized by the Prince of Orange, the Duke of Cumberland was forced to attempt the futile task of bringing Maréchal-Général de Saxe to battle on Allied terms.

The French army was safely encamped between Louvain and Malines. Throwing strategy to the winds, Cumberland came barreling down via Tilburg, arriving on the Groot Neth, between Heranthout and Lierre, on May 26th. De Saxe simply extended his entrenchments and stood pat. His position was deemed impregnable and his supply lines secure – despite the commitments of the Austrians, the Allied army was much weaker than the French, being 40,000 men below strength.

De Saxe saw no reason to hurry. He was aware that peace was in the wind, and confident that, come what may, any Allied blows could be resisted easily. When their bolt was shot, he would be free to tackle Maastricht or Bergen op Zoom, as the whimsy took him. After three weeks of observation, from only a musket shot away, Cumberland was in despair. Then he heard that a detached corps of 30,000 men, under the Prince de Clermont, was operating in the neighbourhood of Tongres, not far from the battlefield of Raucoux.

The Battle of Lawfeld (Val) – 2nd of July 1747

Breaking camp on the 15th of June, the Allies reached the Demer on the 26th. Despite a delay of three days, de Saxe, with a picked body of 12,000, swiftly outmarched them, arriving in the neighbourhood of Tongres on the 1st of July – his army at one point covered 50 miles in two days, an unheardof feat. Cumberland's plan had been to occupy de Saxe's old camp of the year before, on the Heights of Herderen between Bilsen and Tongres, forcing de Clermont to attack him. Instead, the Allies met the French advancing in two columns toward them, from that position. De Saxe had joined with de Clermont just in time. Stunned, Cumberland ordered his troops to deploy for battle, allowing the French to reoccupy their old camp. Even so, had the Allies ordered their lines with more dispatch, the French might have suffered a repulse, as many of their units were still on the march. (Cumberland blamed his rearguard, composed of irregulars under the “inept” Austrian General Batthyanyi).

225,000 men were now concentrated within a 25-square-mile area. This would be the largest battle of the war, though only a portion of the armies actually engaged one another. The following account of the battle of Lawfeld, sometimes called the battle of Val, is taken from *the Gentlemen's Magazine Vol. XVII 1747* (p. 315 onward).

"The Relation of the Action at the Village of Val, between the left Wing of the Allied Army, and the French, the 2d of July. N.S.

The 30th ult. The army march'd by the left in 3 columns towards Lonaken, and encamp'd that night between that place and Ghenck; at the same time the different detachments under Count Daun, and the Prince of Wolfenbuttle, with Gen. Baroniai's corps, passed Bilsen, and encamp'd at the Grande Commanderie; the corps of the Comte de C'ermont, not having retired behind Tongres, but occupying still the high ground from Tongres to Tongrebergh, notwithstanding the approach of our army, made it evident that they design'd to sustain that corps with their whole force, and, if possible, to gain the camp of Bilsen.

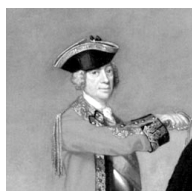
[The Grand Commanderie was a key vantage point; ironically it was not the best position to command from in this battle, being too far forward and to the West of the main action.]

This position of the French army made the intercepting the corps Ciermont impracticable; it was resolved therefore by his R.H. the Duke, in concert with Marshal Bathiani and Pr. Waldeck (after having reconnoitred the country towards the Jaar that morning) to take possession of the camp of Bilsen, extending the left to Millen; for that purpose the whole army had orders to march by break of day the 1st of July, N.S. His R.H. and P. Waldeck remained all that night at the Commanderie, and the Marshal at Bilsen, in order to lose no time the next morning in making the necessary dispositions for the arrival of the army.

On the 1st of July his R.H. was on horseback by break of day, in order to reconnoitre; about 4 o'clock he perceived the enemy's cavalry in motion in two columns, stretching towards their right, which we immediately concluded was with a design to gain the heights of Millen and Herdeeren, and if they found it possible, to fall on the head of our columns, which were then in march from their camp, inclining that way: Before six their irregulars, who flanked the march of their columns, were skirmishing with our advanced Hussars and Lycanians [Croations].

The instant that the columns of the enemy appeared, his R.H. sent orders to Sir John Ligonier to advance with the left wing of cavalry as fast as possible, and to the foot to press their march; at the same time he order'd the P. of Wolfenbuttle to occupy the villages of Grote and Klein Spawe, with the infantry of the corps de reserve, and to form his cavalry on the plain between those villages and the Grande Commanderie. These precautions being taken for maintaining our post at Bilsen, his R.H. was desirous of forming our cavalry time enough on the heights of Herdeeren for the reception of the enemy; but before our cavalry could arrive, the enemy had already occupied those heights, and presented 3 lines of cavalry on the descent of the hill, with their irregulars both horse and foot, before them; this made it immediately necessary to alter the design'd position of the left, since we were no longer masters of those heights; accordingly it was unanimously agreed to extend the left to Wirle, the right still occupying Bilsen, as in the former position.

As soon as the left wing of cavalry came up, it was formed in the plain below Herdeeren, in order to check the enemy's advancing, and give our infantry time to come who were behind them. This motion was executed with great spirit by our cavalry under Sir J. Ligonier, who, on the arrival of the infantry countermarch'd by his left, on the right flank of the infantry, thro' the plain, in order to take up his ground in order of battle, near the village of Wirle, covering the flank of his march with 8 squadrons, who made always a front to the hill of Herdeeren.



Jean, 1st Earl Ligonier, Lieutenant-General (1680-1770)

French Huguenot from the south of France. Family driven out by the persecutions of Louis XIV.

Commissioned in the British Army in 1703. May have been created a British Earl in 1705. Fought under Marlborough.

His own regiment, Ligonier's Horse, was a model of efficiency. A brilliant cavalry commander, but sometimes too dashing. Ligonier commanded the British contingent in Flanders in 1745, under Cumberland and Lord Stair. Little scope for independent action at Fontenoy, where he commanded the British Foot under Cumberland. He went to England with the first 10 battalions sent to put down the Jacobite Rising, after initially advising the King that they would not be needed. Tasked with establishing a cordon to block the approaches to London, he fell ill and had to be replaced by Cumberland, resulting in General Hawley suffering a defeat at Falkirk instead of Sweet William.

He was active at both Roucoux and Lawfeld. He was taken prisoner by the French at Lawfeld (1747) after leading the Allied cavalry in a sweep deep into the French lines, but treated kindly and eventually repatriated. Ligonier acted on numerous occasions with energy, skill, and dispatch, more than once turning the tide on the battlefields of Flanders.

This whole day was spent in forming the army, and it was determined to receive the enemy's attack if they thought fit to bring on a general action, as by advancing they would in some degree give up the advantage of their ground above us. In consequence of this resolution, the villages of the Grande Commanderie, and the two Spawes, were filled with the infantry of the corps de reserve, and a part of Count Daun's detachment, whilst the rest made a flank towards Bilsen, where there was a strong post with cannon, in order to prevent the enemy's coming round us. The left wing took post in the village of Vlitinghem, (where his R.H. posted the brigade of British foot guards,) and the hamlet of Val: The lines of infantry extended behind the villages, having the left wing of cavalry in a line with the infantry, and the imperial cavalry formed in two lines before the Klein Spawe. Whilst we were employ'd in forming the army, which was completed between 4 and 5 in the afternoon, the enemy kept constantly skirmishing with the irregulars in the plain, and advancing more cavalry on the side of the hill of Herdeeren: This was done to mask the march of their infantry, which kept moving on to our left, under cover of the hill on the other side.

The corps of irregulars, under the command of Gen. Tripps, which had cover'd the march of the army from Lier, was now join'd, and order'd to the left, in order to cover the flank, and watch the motions of the enemy that way: The Dutch cavalry was order'd to be form'd in the rear of the left of their own infantry, and the right of the Hessian, as that was judg'd the weakest part of the line of battle.

This evening we cannonaded the enemy very smartly from a hill in the front of the village of Val, and some shots were exchanged likewise on the right; but it grew so late, that it was plain the enemy did not mean to bring on a general action at that time. His R.H. the Duke, accompanied by the other generals, after having rode several times from right to left, and taken all the measures that could be thought of for the security of the situation, order'd the army to remain under arms all night.

At day-break on the 2d, his R.H. with the Marshal and P. Waldeck, visited the lines, and made some alteration in the former dispositions by advancing the front line of the left, in a line with the village of Val, and bringing up the second nearer to sustain it; the village was occupied by the regiments of late Crauford's, Pulteney's, Dejean's and Freudeman's Hanoverians (with artillery.) The foot-guards were

likewise retired from the village of Vlitingbem, and made a flank from the right of the Hessian grenadiers, towards the Bavarians of the center, fronting the village of Vlitingbem, which we burnt, in order to prevent the enemy's making use of it to annoy us.

The enemy, during the night, had brought more squadrons upon the hill of Herdeeren, and we could perceive they had thrown up some works upon the brow of the hill; but the greatest part of their infantry, which filed off towards our left, kept marching on the right flank of their cavalry. Several batteries of the English artillery were placed along our front, in order to rake the enemy as they should come down the hills.

[De Saxe's plan was to strike at Lawfeld in the center-left of the Allied line, and then swing the bulk of his cavalry and infantry around the Allied left, which although it extended toward Maastricht, did not reach it. This dangerous gap would allow him to cut the Allies off from the fortress and destroy them. Mindful of the mistakes of Roucoux, he began the assault early (10am), despite a soaking rain and muddy ground.]

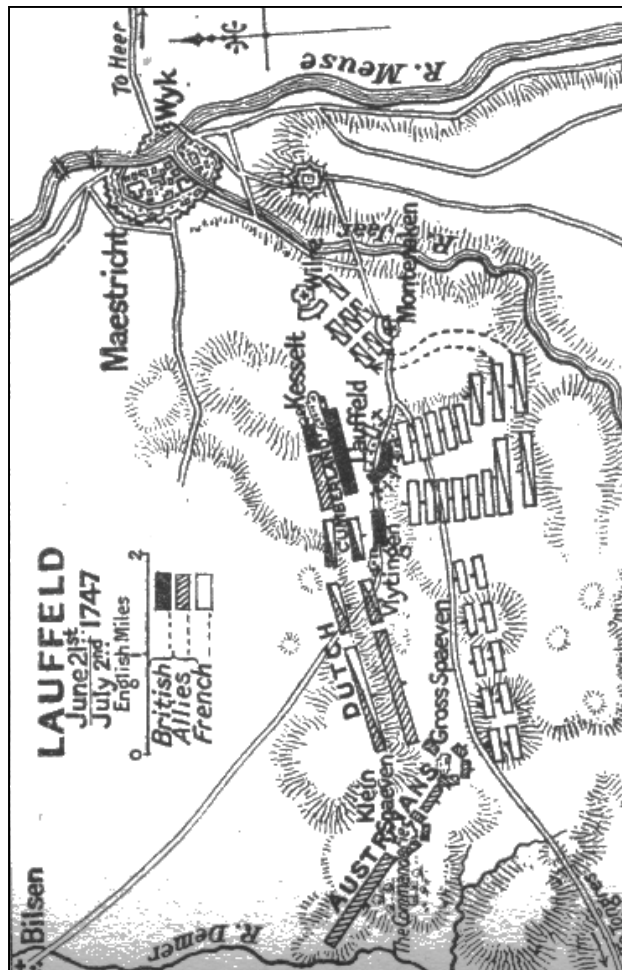
At 8 o'clock we could not perceive that they made any motion towards our front, which made us suspect that they were concealing the motion of their infantry and amusing us with these corps of cavalry, in hopes to call us off from Maastricht, by pouring down a large column of infantry upon the left; orders were therefore given to the irregulars to watch, with the utmost attention, the enemy's motions towards the Meuse.

His R.H. with the generals, being return'd to the Commanderie, in order to concert what measures should be taken in case the enemy should not chuse to advance upon us, Sir S. (J?) Ligonier sent Lieut. Col. Forbes to acquaint the Duke, that by the motions of the enemy they appear'd to be forming to attack the left wing, and that he had order'd all to arms. His R.H. immediately went thither, the Marshal and P. Waldeck going at the same time to prepare their respective corps. No sooner were the batteries of the left wing all fix'd for the reception of the enemy, than their infantry appeared coming down into the plain, thro' a valley between the hills which leads from Rempst, formed in a vast column of 9 or 10 battalions in front, and as many deep, of their best corps, bearing directly at the village of Val, in and about which, almost the whole of the action was, which lasted near 5 hours. Our batteries continued firing the whole time the enemy was advancing, as well upon their foot as the squadrons of horse that supported the right and left flanks of their columns.

At 10 o'clock the cannonading of the enemy's side began against the village, with the field pieces that they brought with their infantry, (the second shot of which kill'd his R.H.'s German aid de camp the Baron Ziggefaer) which was immediately followed by the attack of their first brigades. These were soon dispers'd, with prodigious loss, as were the second, third, and fourth divisions.

Overpowere'd by the constant supply of fresh troops, the regiments in Val were obliged to give way; but being sustain'd by the regiments of Wolfe, Charles Howard, Conway and Hauss, return'd to their charge, and recover'd their post. The brigades of Navarre, La Marque, Irish, Monaco, Royal des Vaisseaux, and several others, were entirely ruin'd. The enemy kept still pouring on fresh lines of foot, so that the village was lost and regained of both sides several times. The battalions of the British and Hanoverian infantry enter'd the village four or five different times each, though the French but once, as they never could be rallied, and were always supplied with fresh brigades.

The instant that the enemy made the first general discharge of small arms at the village, his R.H. order'd onne of his aides de camp to go immediately to Marshal Bathiani, to inform him that the left was attack'd, that the enemy appear'd determin'd to make his whole effort upon Val, and therefore desired he would be attentive to support him speedily and effectually. The Marshal returned for answer that he was doing his utmost for that purpose, and had order'd away directly from the right, the 9 battalions of the left wing which had been detached with



Count Daun, and the 5 that were with the corps de reserve; and would likewise support him much further as was possible. Besides the infantry, part of the squadrons of Count Daun's corps were ordered to join the left; the part of Daun's detachment arrived time enough to go into the village and do great execution, but the 5 of the corps de reserve did not arrive till later, as they were posted further on the right.

About 12 o'clock affairs went on so well, that his R.H. ordered the whole left wing to advance upon the enemy, whose infantry gave way so fast, that they were obliged to put cavalry behind them, and on their flanks, to drive them on with their swords. The center began likewise to advance upon P. Waldeck (who was at the head of his corps the whole day) and his R.H. desired the Marshal to advance as his ground would allow him, towards Herdeeren, and to annoy the enemy's flank; which he did, driving the enemy out of the village of Elcht, which was in the front of the hill of Herdeeren, where they had taken post the night before. The right wing could not however advance so fast as the left, because, had they inclined towards the front of the village of Vlitinghem, they would have exposed their flank to that corps which the enemy had on Herdeeren, which was very considerable, joined to a large battery of 18 pounders; and it was necessary to be very attentive to Bilsen, lest the enemy should come round our right flank; however they kept moving on, and prevented the enemy from detaching any more troops from their left to the right.

[De Saxe had assumed, by the firing of Lawfeld, that the Allies had abandoned the village. So they had, but Field Marshal Ligonier persuaded Cumberland to reoccupy it in the nick of time. The French put in five separate assaults on the complex of villages in this sector – as noted, with fresh troops each time.

The plan of drawing the Allies to the center was working, but at too high a cost. Finally, the villages were taken, around 2pm, and de Saxe set the decisive flanking action in motion.]

The enemy began now to advance more infantry of their reserve from Rempst, all inclining to Val, and part of their cavalry of the right inclined to the center, in order to keep up the foot; when by the misconduct of some squadrons (Dutch) in the center, who perceived the foot before them prest hard upon and giving way, instead of remedying which by sustaining them, they went to the right about, and overthrew the five battalions of the corps de reserve which were coming from the right towards Val. His R.H. rode immediately to the head of the cavalry, and endeavour'd, with the assistance of the Dutch Major Gen. Cannenberg (who did all that man could do) to rally them but in vain, the enemy's squadrons had already enter'd with them, compleated the confusion there, and divided the army: His R.H. with difficulty rejoin'd the left wing, whose right flank, and the right flank of the village they sustained, was now exposed to two fires.

[The Dutch overrode one British battalion, but another gave them a volley and drove them off. The disruption of the Allied relief column allowed the French to finally take the village.]

Though his R.H. had desired more infantry from the right wing before this, and 6 more battalions were in march to join him, yet this unexpected break so disconcerted all precautions that could be taken, that it was time to think of making good the retreat to Maestricht; however the cavalry of the left, and some squadrons of the Imperialists, under the command of Major Gen. Bournonville, (who distinguished themselves extremely) which had begun to advance, led on by Sir J. Ligonier, were already advanced so far as to be on the point of charging the French cavalry, which they did with so much success, that they overthrew all before them, but too eager in the pursuit of the enemy, receiv'd a sharp fire from the foot which they had posted in a hollow way and some hedges to favour the flight of their horse, by which they suffered a good deal; they dispersed however that foot, and some fresh squadrons which the enemy sent down upon them; but it was all in vain whilst the army was cut in two: His R.H. therefore called them off, and sent word to the Marshal that he should retire towards Maestricht, and would move towards Velt Wesel, and Lonaken, to favour his retreat. This done, he retired the left wing slowly and in good order, bringing off all the heavy field artillery, tho' they were advanced before the village of Val. The small cannon that we lost, it was impossible to bring off, as many of them had the wheels broke, and others were too far advanced at the time we began to retire. The enemy cannonaded us in the retreat, but attempted nothing further, seeing the good order we retir'd in, and knowing how greatly they had already suffered.

[Ligonier saved the day here, as he had done many times before. Stationed in reserve with the Cavalry Corps, as Comte d'Estreés swept round with the mass of the French horse, on his own initiative Ligonier ordered a charge that threw them back in confusion. Reforming his men, Ligonier ordered a second charge, this time to cover the Allied retreat, and penetrated deep into the enemy mass. He was unhorsed and taken prisoner, but the damage had been done. The Allies had been given the time they needed to escape.]

The left wing got to Maestricht about five o'clock, and the Dutch and right wing by 7. The enemy seemed to have a mind to attack Pr. Wolfenbuttle, who made the rear guard, but after exchanging some small shot, found it too difficult and retired.

It is impossible to commend too much the behaviour of the generals of both horse and foot. Sir J. Ligonier, who charged at the head of the British dragoons with that skill and spirit, that he has shewed on so many occasions, and in which he was so well seconded, had the misfortune to have his horse killed in the second charge of the cavalry, and was made prisoner. Major Gen. Count d'Yssenbourg, who led the

Hessian cavalry, is wounded and taken; Major Gen. Bland is wounded in the arm, but will do well.

[On being presented to King Louis, Ligonier was introduced by de Saxe thus: "Sire, I present to your Majesty a man who has defeated all my plans by a single glorious action." His status as a Huguenot was glossed over by his comment that he had gone into exile as a child.]

Lord Albemarle did all that could be expected from an officer, as the behaviour of the British infantry sufficiently shews: The behaviour of Major Gen. Howard, the Brigadiers Price, Houghton and Mordaunt, who were all in the village with their brigades, wants no words to set it off.

Gen. Sommerfeldt, Lieut. Gen. Druchleben, Major Gen. Zastrow, and the rest of the Hanoverian officers did honour to their corps.

The P. of Hesse rallied his infantry several times with the greatest intrepidity and coolness.

It would be unjust to the rest, to say that any corps of the king's royal or electoral troops did better than the others, tho' some were put to a severer tryal; in short, the enemy must do us the justice to own, that their success was dearly bought.

[The Dutch did not perform particularly well on this occasion; the Bavarians in the centre, who had been hired to the Dutch in an effort to restore their Elector's fortunes, and had only recently arrived, picked up stakes and marched off to Maastricht as the French approached. As at Roucoux, casualties were concentrated at the point of impact.]

Our loss of killed, wounded, and missing, amounts to 4000, odd hundred, and that of the enemy not less than 10,000, amongst which are reckon'd four Lieut. Generals. We have taken above 60 officers and 700 men; amongst the officers are Brig. Marquis de Blondel, and the fourth brother to my Lord Dillon, who commanded the regiment of that name.

We have taken from the enemy 5 standards, and 7 pair of colours. We have lost 4 of the former, but the Hanoverians 1 pair of colours."

Lawfeld had been the bloodiest battle of this theatre. Although the overall casualties were less than some of the Italian battles, the proportional casualties among the units actually engaged were dreadful.



Ulric Frederic Waldemar de Löwendahl, Comte du St. Empire, Chevalier des Ordres du Roi, Maréchal de France (no dates)

Grandson of a natural son of King Frederick III of Denmark, Löwendahl joined the Danish Army at thirteen and served all over Europe. In 1736 he went to Russia, abandoning his wife and family and eloping with a Polish countess. One of many military adventurers under

Empress Anne, he was dismissed when Elisabeth came to the throne. Löwendahl chose France as his next roost. He was a siege expert, generally skipping the preliminaries of parallels and zigzags, and battering fortresses into submission with massed artillery fire. Intelligent, and an accomplished linguist. Physically impressive as well, and quite ruthless in pursuit of his object, although his portrait makes him look like everyone's favourite uncle.

After Lawfeld and Elsewhere

De Saxe had hoped to avoid a confrontation, but his King had demanded the siege of Maastricht be attempted. On the Allied side, Cumberland was even less pleased with the results of the combat, but the Dutch were more hopeful – Maastricht would not be laid under siege this year. After the battle, the Allies crossed the Meuse and regrouped at Heer, east of Maastricht.

At this point, de Saxe, presumably with Louis' acquiescence (the King was with him at the time) offered to negotiate a peace treaty directly with Cumberland, using the good offices of the captured Ligonier. During the lengthy discussions that ensued, the French methodically began mopping up the remaining Allied garrisons in Dutch Brabant, and the tigerish Count Löwendahl marched away with 30,000 men to besiege and eventually storm Bergen-op-Zoom. (Löwendahl had not been at Lawfeld, but camped halfway down the road to Brussels).

If any fortress could be considered impregnable, Bergen op Zoom was it. Garrisoned by a mere 4,000 men, it was designed by the "Dutch Vauban", Menno van Cœhorn. Surrounded by marshland that could be flooded on demand, the firmer areas bristling with hidden counter-mines, easily supplied and reinforced by sea, this position was widely expected to be de Saxe's fatal stumbling block. The governor, 86-year-old *Algemeen* (General) Cronström, declared "Bergen-op-Zoom is a virgin, and she shall die like the daughter of the brave old Roman Virginius before she shall be polluted and ravished from us by the faithless Gaul". But de Saxe's plans were sound. Cumberland was faced with an impossible dilemma – to stay and protect Maastricht would result in the loss of the Western gate to Holland; to fly to Bergen's defence would mean the capitulation of the Eastern gate.

Meanwhile, Count Löwendahl set about overcoming the many obstacles the fortress presented. He allocated 12,000 men to prosecute the siege and withheld the remaining 18,000 as an army of observation. As was his wont, he made good use of prolonged bombardments, his sappers inching forward against repeated sorties by the more energetic members of the garrison. On September 16th, at 4.30am, the French stormed the entrenchments and swept into the town. Despite a vigorous counterattack by the 64th Highlanders, some Swiss, and two battalions of the Dutch "Scotch Brigade", the French were soon masters of the entire place. General Cronström fled and 2,000 of the garrison surrendered.

The subsequent sack was brutal. The French were exasperated by the garrison's unusual defiance. An estimated 2,000 civilians died. This put King Louis in a quandary, as all Europe was appalled by the atrocity. De Saxe told him "there is no middle course... either you must hang him or make him Marshal of France". Löwendahl was one of four new marshals created this year (the others were the Comte de Laval, the Duc de Clermont-Tonnerre, and the Marquis de Mothe-Houdancourt).

Elsewhere, events (as usual) were not going so smoothly for the French. At sea, their navy had suffered two unmitigated disasters – off Cape Ortegal and near Ouessant Island. The first, engineered by the canny Admiral Anson, destroyed a French attempt to relieve Cape Breton and taught them to fear the Royal Navy as never before. The second was the work of

the dashing Admiral Hawke. It destroyed what remained of the French Navy. As he put it, "they took a great deal of drubbing". Over half the crews in the French Navy were now languishing in English prisons and it was said that the British had more French ships in their ports than the French did in their own. As early as 1746, the English had already begun to systematically ravage the French sugar islands in the West Indies, and put a chokehold on their overseas trade routes. Only in India were the French making headway, but at this time, India's value was not appreciated.

In Italy, a Genoese revolt against their Austrian occupiers regained the initiative for the Gallispanis; simultaneously, the French were able to drive the Allied forces out of Provence and begin a counterattack of their own. But the gallant Maréchal de Belle-Isle died with 3,700 of his countrymen in the bloodbath of Assietta and a stalemate ensued. At great cost, the Austrians crushed the Genoese revolt, but they too were unwilling to put forth any greater efforts.

The fall of Bergen-op-Zoom ended the campaigning season for 1747. The French now had an Awful Warning they could dangle in front of those unwilling to negotiate. Although the Dutch behaved as though they were incensed, the British were fed up with their ally's inability to pull her own weight. Everywhere, the talk was of peace. Even the mighty Austrian Army was proving unable to meet the challenge. Some of their *grenzers* mutinied and went home. The Dutch could expect to field no more than 10,000 men. The merchants of London feared a market crash. The French appeared to be in better shape, but their economy was severely dislocated due to wartime exactions, luxuries were non-existent due to the British "blockade", and the need to make good their losses with militiamen starved farms and shops of essential manpower.

The last year of the war dawned with the French in unquestioned ascendancy, at least in the Low Countries. With negotiations picking up steam, Maréchal-Général de Saxe was resolved to keep hammering the Allies without respite, in order to attain the best results possible for his sovereign. Besides, at the end of this war, he would no doubt have to retire to a life of boredom on his estates – why not make the most of it? His opponent, the Duke of Cumberland, was forced to disperse his scanty resources to cover both Breda and Maastricht. Despite their promises, the Austrians again did not deliver, and notwithstanding their revolt, the Dutch were still not energised. Things were so desperate that the Maritime Powers actually hired a Russian corps of 37,000 men (for 2,000,000 Thalers). Naturally, Britain and Holland each factored the whole corps' strength into their own troop estimates!

In the spring of 1748, the French laid siege to Maastricht, in a pincer move between Löwendahl and de Saxe. They had 115,000 men against 35,000 – the latter figure including the town's garrison. The city was invested on the 9th of April. With the siege guns clearly audible 20 miles away in the conference room at Aix-la-Chapelle, peace was only a matter of time. As the garrison of the doomed fortress struck, on April 30th the diplomats reached an agreement that would put an end to ten years of war and lay the groundwork for many more.

CONCLUSION

Without dulling de Saxe's lustre, the French victory rested in large measure on the fact that the Allies had neither common plans nor any commander of genius to develop such plans (or to give solid unity of any kind). Then again, Bonnie Prince Charlie aided the French with his doomed Rising. This event sent the British Army scurrying home; they were the only Allied contingent truly committed to a vigorous prosecution of the war.

Historically, the French outperformed their own expectations and could, if they had wanted, have made Belgium into a province of France, as the Republic was eventually to do. This indeed may have been the dream of de Saxe, but if so, the bureaucrats at Versailles overruled him. In other theatres, notably at sea, the French in general suffered a reversal of fortune.

The war proved unsatisfactory all round. The French populace referred to the results of Aix-la-Chapelle as "this stupid peace". And even though Britain, Sardinia (the House of Savoy), and Prussia did fairly well by it, they were not content. The War of the Austrian Succession was followed after only eight quiet years by the tremendous Seven Years War – sometimes called the first world war. The relationship between the two conflicts is similar to our Great War's relationship to World War II. A terrible, pointless bloodletting (500,000 dead at a conservative estimate – not total casualties, just the dead) followed at an interval by an even greater slaughter that finally brought a measure of peace and stability, while sowing the seeds for yet greater conflicts.

A Note on Dates: the maps in the text above are dated 11 days prior to the dates given in the text. This is because they use the Old Style Julian calendar (as instituted by Julius Caesar), as opposed to the New Style, or Gregorian, calendar. Pope Gregory XIII introduced the latter into the Catholic lands in 1582. An assumption the Julian calendar made was that each year was exactly 365.25 days long. This is not quite correct, and by the 16th Century, the calendar was 10 days out. Gregory fixed this problem, but because of the religious divisions of the times, the calendar was adopted piecemeal. Protestant England did not adopt it until 1752, by Act of Parliament, by which time the error had grown to 11 days. By the same Act, the English adopted January 1st as New Year's Day, instead of the Medieval choice of March 25th (the Feast of the Annunciation). The rest of Europe (including Scotland) had been using the Roman date of January 1st for decades – in some places for 170 years. Historians generally qualify dates during this period as OS or NS, for Old or New Style, and by 173x/173y for all dates lying in the first quarter of the year.

THE ARMIES



The full flowering of the stereotypical "Army of the Age of Reason", as evinced by Frederick the Great's army in the Seven Years War, did not occur until after the War of the Austrian Succession. On the contrary, there had been a decline in standards since the "Marlburian Age" of the first two decades of the 18th Century. Thus military science (or art, if you prefer) was in a state of

flux during the current conflict. Indeed, the shortcomings exposed in the War of the Austrian Succession led directly to many of the well-known reforms of the latter part of the century.

Because of their relatively compact size, and the limited political objectives of the time, armies of this period did not move on a "broad front", sweeping all before them. Instead, columns of men would march on strategic locations to threaten the enemy's position, or attempt to intercept the enemy before he could do the same. The wastage of manpower, whether from desertion, exhaustion, disease, or battle, was a major issue for commanders of this period. On an extended or forced march, even willing soldiers might be left behind, too exhausted to continue. Even on a normal day's march men would go on the hunt for food or loot, or simply decide they deserved a rest. Some men made a career of deserting and signing up with another unit in order to receive the enlistment bounties. In general, units were discouraged from foraging on their own, and tended to march together in huge columns to reduce the chance of desertion.

Strategic thought was influenced by the nature of the frequent conflicts in the Po Valley and the Low Countries, where towns and fortifications were seized as bargaining chips, and battles were reserved as a final arbitration. The expense of maintaining an army in an age where National Debt was a novel concept, meant that often the posturing of opposing forces was sufficient to cause one side or the other to yield (rather like male peacocks). On many occasions, the victorious side in a battle would let their opponents get away, partly from a sense of chivalry and because the commanders on both sides came from the same social class, and partly because taking huge numbers of prisoners could wreck an army's own logistical infrastructure.

This limiting of war, which was partly based on economics, partly on parity of force between the "superpowers" – France and Austria – and partly on the mindset of the Enlightenment itself, extended into the political and social realms as well as the purely military. The period did see the beginnings of the mobilisation of the nation-state and a drift toward a more intense form of warfare, but only to a degree. The semi-feudal social structure of most nations prevented the expansion of war in an economic sense, and neither the infrastructure nor the attitude existed for Total War.

In general, war was left to the nobility and increasingly, to the professional, although the populace could occasionally be coerced into defending the “homeland” where this was synonymous with their own valley. Since one of the main goals of both the nobility and the professional soldier was (and is) the preservation their class, wars tended to drag on, petering out inconclusively much of the time.

That said, there were an awful lot of battles during the Ancien Régime, and most of them were exceedingly bloody. Campaigning conditions were brutal: poor communications, poor logistic nets, poor medical facilities, and a caste system which labelled the bottom rungs of humanity as expendable, ensured high casualties from disease and starvation, not to mention from the thousands of bullets fired enmasse at a distance of 30 paces or less.



This was the Age of Reason, but men still balked at fighting if the omens were unfavourable, and their fashionable, foppish leaders consulted astrologers or sought the advice of their mistresses before setting out on campaign. Regiments serving together refused to support each other out of a sense of superiority and men from different contingents engaged in drunken

brawls over insinuations of cowardice or the presence of “foreign” lice in their billets. Officers on both sides challenged one another to duels over ill-favoured glances or disparaging coughs, while their senior commanders schemed, formed cabals, and backstabbed each other in their reports. It’s a wonder the war didn’t last twenty years instead of ten.

Command. By this time, command and control had evolved from the rather simple 40-day feudal levy with all forces under the command of one man for as long as the beer held out, and had begun to transcend the cumbersome and wasteful Condottieri system beloved by the likes of Wallenstein. Armies were now standing bodies, admittedly in many cases clinging desperately to the cherished vestiges of those earlier systems. As such, they could campaign year-round (though they preferred not to), and could be expected to carry out the government’s will more or less as desired. The increasing size and permanence of the army as an institution led directly to an increase in the size and permanence of government bureaucracy, particularly with regard to the collection of taxes.

These conflicts are often termed “cabinet wars”. Kings and princes set the overall objectives, aided by their councillors, who, of course, each had their own agendas. A rudimentary staff then marshalled the forces required. Most nations had developed some form of war office (in England’s case a handful of superannuated clerks) as a clearinghouse for requests and orders. Various boards of control were established to oversee such things as training, victualling, and finances – the British Army relied on the Army Board for the gathering of reinforcements and operational direction, on the Ordnance Board for supplies and quartering, and ultimately on Parliament for money and strategic direction.

Officers. An hierarchy of aristocratic general and field officers set out to accomplish specific aims based on their Sovereign’s wishes. Once these men were given their orders, they would be left to accomplish their tasks as best they saw fit (unless the King or one of his numerous commissars accompanied them). Within the parameters of a particular theatre, the overall commander had a tremendous amount of discretion over the conduct of affairs – especially if he was also a sovereign prince. He could even negotiate directly with the representatives of foreign powers – sometimes to his discredit, as happened to the Duke of Cumberland.

Given the slow nature of communications, any new directives from the rear would probably be out of date. A good general was one able to think on his feet and alter the plan to suit the changing conditions before he was told to; a poor general would proceed blindly with a plan that no longer had any meaning, or wait to see if My Liege had changed his mind again. The British, of course, had Parliament to deal with as well.

For day-to-day planning, the commander could rely on a staff of experienced soldiers. Below the generals was a layer of mid-grade officers who supposedly worked together harmoniously but were often more interested in playing politics or making their fortunes. That sort of thing was harder to control when an officer of sufficient nobility could simply take the family regiment home, or write a letter to a relative at Court and have his superior reprimanded.

Like the rank and file, the officer corps was primarily staffed with middle-aged lieutenants, captains, and majors, who had spent years serving at their current rank and had little prospect of rising higher. Maréchal de Saxe’s opinions (bearing in mind that the French Army was particularly top-heavy with gilded lilies) are revealing:

According to the fashion of the present times, a man of quality thinks himself very ill used, if the court does not present him with a regiment at the age of eighteen or twenty; this extravagant partiality destroys all manner of emulation amongst the officers of inferior birth, who thereby become in a great measure excluded from any chance of succeeding to the like preferments, and consequently to the only posts of importance, the glory attending which would atone for the toils and sufferings of a tedious life to which they cheerfully submit in hopes of acquiring reputation and a future recompense.

Nevertheless, I would not be understood to argue that princes and other persons of illustrious originals should be denied all marks of preference and distinction, but only that some regard should be had to their abilities, and the privileges of birth required to be supported by those of merit. If properly qualified therefore, they might be allowed to purchase regiments of such of the gentry, as had been rendered incapable of service by age or infirmities, which permission would at the same time prove a recompense for both. But they are notwithstanding by no means to be entitled to the liberty of selling again to another, because that of purchasing at unseasonable years is an indulgence sufficient. Their regiments, therefore, as often as they become vacant, ought to be afterward disposed of in recompensing long service and conspicuous merit.

Soldiers. The Lace Wars were fought primarily with long-service professionals comprising standing armies that, in some cases, had been in existence for up to a hundred years or more. Unlike our own times, the average age of a soldier was between his late thirties and early forties, and many of these men were still privates and corporals after a decade or more of service.

(As an exception, the French had a tendency to recruit younger and younger men over the century).

To be fully trained in his art, a soldier typically required two years service. “Three-year-olds” with light combat experience were believed to be at an optimum of efficiency and morale. After his training, the soldier was encouraged to make the service his lifetime career – that is, until he was incapable of performing. Knowing no other trade, many men did just that, even though they might hop, skip, and jump between various regiments or even armies. Others took the opportunity to head home before they were supposed to.

De Saxe had this to say about the recruitment of the soldiers in his day:

Troops are raised either by voluntary engagement, or by capitulation; sometimes too by compulsion, but most commonly by artifice. When you recruit men by capitulation, it is barbarous as well as unjust to recede from it; they being free at the time of their contracting themselves, it becomes contrary to all laws both divine and human not to fulfill the promises made to them, their dependence upon which was what alone induced them to accede to the obligation. Neither is the service benefited by those unlawful proceedings, for sensible of the hardship imposed upon them, they seize the first opportunity to leave it; and can one, after having first cancelled all engagements by a breach of faith, proceed afterwards against them with any degree of justice for the crime of desertion? Nevertheless, severe examples are sometimes necessary for the support of good discipline, although in the execution they are attended with an appearance of cruelty; but concerning the grievance of which I am speaking, as there are many soldiers in the beginning of a campaign, whose time of service is expired, the captains, desirous to keep their companies complete, detain them by force, which is the occasion of it.

The method of raising troops by artifice, is likewise altogether scandalous and unwarrantable; such, among other instances, as that of secretly putting money into a man’s pocket, and afterward challenging him for a soldier. That of raising them by compulsion is still more so: it creates a general ravage, from which there is no exemption of person, but by force of money, and is founded upon the most unjustifiable principles.

Organisation. In armies with a proprietorial basis, smaller regiments were the norm. If a new formation had to be created, it was more lucrative for the Crown to commission the raising of a new regiment than to create a second battalion – colonelships being more expensive to purchase. This is why the regiments in the British Army were so often single battalions. In armies where the bureaucracy of the State had greater influence, regiments were larger: Austrian regiments of “German” composition were three battalions strong; those of “foreign content” were four battalions. The French Army, a mix of State-run and proprietorial, had regiments of variable strength, but these were normally grouped into brigades of four “native” or six “foreign” battalions.

New kinds of formations were also raised over the first half of the 18th Century – particularly experimental “light” units. “Free companies” were also generated on a contract basis. This counterbalanced the fact that most governments saved money during peacetime by reducing their regular regiments to cadres. This cadre system meant that units were often understrength when they entered a war, and at a disadvantage vis á vis a prepared aggressor. On the flip side, it only took a few veterans to make an effective unit out of a horde of recruits.

Equipment. While armies varied in the quality of their materiel, they were more or less similarly equipped, apart from the exotic national units like Highlanders and hussars. De Saxe’s opinions give an indication of the annoyances of a soldier’s dress:

Our dress is not only expensive, but inconvenient, no part of it being made to answer the end required. The love of appearance prevails over the regard due to health, which is one of the grand points demanding our attention.



In the field, the hair is a filthy ornament for a soldier, and after once the rainy season is set in, his head can hardly be ever dry. His clothes don’t serve to cover his body, and in regard to his feet, they with stockings and shoes rot in a manner together, not having wherewithal to change; and provided he has, it can be of little signification, because presently afterward, he must be in the same condition again; thus, as may be naturally supposed, he is soon sent to

the hospital. White garters are only fit for a review, and spoil in washing; they are also inconvenient, hurtful, of no real use, and very expensive. The hat soon loses its shape, is not strong enough to resist the rains and hard usage of a campaign, but presently wears out; and if a man, overpowered perhaps by fatigue, lies down, it falls off his head, so that sleeping with it uncovered and exposed to dews or bad weather, he is the day following in a fever.

I would have a soldier wear his hair short, and be furnished with a small wig either grey or black and made of Spanish lambskin, which he should put on in bad weather. This wig will resemble the natural head of hair so well, as to render it almost impossible to distinguish the difference, will fit extremely well, when properly made, cost but about twenty pence, and last during his whole life. It will be also very warm, prevent colds and fluxes, and give quite a good air. Instead of the hat, I would recommend a helmet made after the Roman model, which will be no heavier, be far from inconvenient, protect the head against the stroke of a saber, and appear extremely ornamental. In regard to his clothing, he should have a waistcoat somewhat larger than common with a small one under it in the nature of a short doublet and a Turkish cloak with a hood to it. These cloaks cover a man completely and don’t contain above two ells and a half of cloth; consequently, are both light and cheap. The head and neck will be effectually secured from the weather, and the body, when laid down, kept dry, because they are not made to fit tight and, when wet, are dried again the first moment of fair weather.

It is far otherwise with a coat, for when wet, the soldier not only feels it to the skin, but is reduced to the disagreeable necessity of drying it upon his back; it is therefore no longer surprising to see so many diseases in an army. Those who have the strongest constitutions, perhaps escape them the longest, but they must at length submit to a calamity which is unavoidable. If, to the distresses already enumerated, we add the duties they are obliged to do, particularly those, whose burdens are increased by what they carry for their sick comrades; for the dead, wounded, and deserted, one ought not to wonder that the battalions are reduced at the end of a campaign to one hundred men....

For the tools of the trade, infantrymen carried blackpowder muzzleloading muskets of .69 to .75 calibre, 12” to 18” bayonets (mostly for moral effect), cartridge pouches slung over one shoulder or hung on a waistbelt, sometimes holding as few as 8 or 9 rounds per man, a counterbalancing “hanger” or short sword, which was generally useless except for drunken brawls in garrison, and a pack with the soldier’s remaining kit – about 60 pounds or so, as it ever has been. Grenadiers were

normally better uniformed and equipped, although whether they still used “grenadoes” depended on the country.

Cavalrymen carried a brace of pistols, carbine (or musket for dragoons), and sword. The class of horse dictated the size and quality of their mounts (lighter, faster horses for dragoons and hussars) and the shape and size of their weapons (long straight blades for the cuirassiers, curved sabres for the hussars).

Improvements were considered all the time, sometimes leading to a decided advantage on the battlefield. The Prussians, for example, had metal ramrods at the start of the war; allowing them to fire faster with greater confidence (though apparently the ramrods frequently bent). France used wooden ramrods until 1746. The Prussians, again, had shorter greatcoats than other armies did, which was *not* an advantage in bad weather, except that their tents had floors.



Tactics. Combat was linear, and very rigid. Battle deployments tended to be highly ritualised, mainly in an effort to maximise combat power; also in emulation of the texts of the Ancients. A textbook deployment would be two parallel lines, one behind the other, each with cavalry (and perhaps light infantry or grenadiers) on the flanks. The flanks were anchored

on natural features, the lines strengthened with earthworks and fortified villages, and screened by piquets in front. Light artillery was dispersed to support the infantry; heavier guns would be grouped in batteries with interlocking fire zones. Behind the main body lay the reserve – the bulk of the cavalry and elite infantry formations (or alternatively the unreliable elements).

The fighting unit was the brigade, typically consisting of four battalions of foot or three regiments of horse, commanded by a brigadier. A number of brigades would be grouped into a “wing”, under a lieutenant general or equivalent. A wing might encompass both lines, or each line could have its own set of wings. The cavalry might be grouped into its own wing, or kept under the command of a predominantly infantry wing.

Ideally, the second line, deployed close behind the first, was tasked with feeding brigades forward to relieve tired formations, which could then rest up in the second line. The second line also prevented enemy breakthroughs and flanking movements. The reserve echelon was kept for emergencies, or if all went well, to deliver the coup de grâce.

The infantry marched in line (sometimes for more than a mile or two) at a stately pace before halting well within musket range. The opposing lines then traded volleys of musket fire until one side had had enough and either edged away or broke and ran.

“Cold steel” was universally deemed the surest way to break an enemy line, but opinions varied as to when it should be used. Sometimes, the initial advance was converted into a rush without any firing at all on the part of the attackers, and sometimes it was a matter of gauging whether the enemy had taken enough fire. Hand-to-hand combat was rare, except when firing in confined spaces such as redoubts and villages. The

defender could also make bayonet counter-charges if the attacker seemed to be flagging.

Most cavalry was also drawn up in line and used in charges with the sword. Some formations, like the Prussians, almost began at the gallop, while others, like the Austrians, walked forward sedately, gradually increasing their speed. In both cases the object was to put the horses (and riders) in a position where they would be forced to close with the enemy instead of shying off.

Light cavalry and infantry, in which the grenadier companies were included, was used to screen and harass the enemy, or to hold broken ground, where formed units would be too restricted. Again, the performance of these units varied with the country in question. Undoubtedly the best were the Austrians, who, like the French of the Revolution, simply swamped the opposition with numbers.

As indicated above, the artillery, though more mobile (in general) tended to be emplaced. Lighter pieces could be moved, but anything heavier than a 3-lber battalion gun required a great deal of effort to reposition, by which point the tactical situation would no doubt have changed. Part of the problem was that transport was often a separate (even civilian) branch and might simply have left the battlefield when things got hot. In many cases, too, infantrymen were required to assist the gunners.

For more information, see Appendix C, or read Dr. Duffy's books, quoted in the bibliography. De Saxe's quotes above are taken from the same source as Appendix C.

THE FRENCH ROYAL ARMY

Louis XIV bequeathed to his great-grandson Louis XV one of the mightiest armies the western world had ever seen. It was a curious blend of the progressive and the feudal. Weapons; equipment; uniforms – all were standardised. Efforts were made to practice large-scale manoeuvres on a regular basis. On at least one occasion during the Flanders Campaign, it is recorded that storming parties carried out dress rehearsals on full-scale mock-ups of the sections of the fortress they were to assault. Very modern indeed. A formidable artillery train was established, strictly under army control. On paper the medical services were among the best in Europe.

But the regiments were still the property of feudal magnates owing individual fealty to the King, jealous of their privileges and envious of their rivals. A regiment might be the best-dressed formation in the army, and yet be no better than a rabble off the square (or on it, for that matter). Or its men might be ferocious fighters, but much given to looting. Among the international clique that was the European officer corps, the French were considered dauntless in the attack, but lacking tenacity in defence. Army wisdom said that the men always knew when they were beaten and would never fight to the bitter end.

Under Maréchal de Saxe, the Army was allowed every indulgence. To what extent this was due to the marshal's own temperament or a simple bowing to necessity is not clear. But at least de Saxe made his men fight, and fight well. He could afford the licence; his successors could not, and by the Seven Years War, the rot had set in good and proper.

Line Infantry. The line infantry was divided into home and foreign regiments (Régiments Étrangere), of which there were about 140 by the war's end (very few new regiments were raised during the war). Men were supposed to be enrolled into the regiments belonging to their country or province of origin, except for the Alsatians, who could join French, German, or Swiss units. Walloon and Lotharingian units were treated as native French. Each regiment had from one to four battalions (later standardised into two battalions for most and four battalions for the more senior and/or larger – Régiment d'Irlandois had six).

Brigades were invariably composed of four battalions for native French and six battalions for foreign; regiments were not normally split. Thus the Irish regiment also constituted a brigade, as did large home regiments such as Picardie, while some brigades would be composed of regiments of three and one, and so forth. Foreign and native regiments rarely brigaded together.

Generally, battalions averaged 500 effectives prior to battle. After a battle the unit might be as weak as one whose strength after Roucoux is listed at one officer and four men! Battalions were divided into twelve companies of fusiliers of 42 men each, and one of 48 grenadiers. Not only were the grenadiers often detached to form assault battalions, they were also required to act as skirmishers.

The Horse. In 1740, there were 57 regiments of line horse (including six régiments étrangere), three hussar regiments, and fifteen dragoon. These numbers remained fairly constant throughout the war, except for the hussars, which were expanded to seven regiments.

The “chevaux-légère” (line) regiments were organised into two squadrons apiece, with each squadron being divided into four companies of 32 men. Exceptions were Colonel Général (the senior regiment) with three squadrons, and Les Carabiniers du Roi, with ten squadrons of 120 men.

[One regiment, Royal-Cravattes – Royal Croatians – originated the use of the cravatte as a fashion statement.]

The dragoons were given lighter horses than the line, and organised as mounted infantry. Thus regiments consisted of five companies each, and could number up to 1000 men in all. They were also equipped with muskets rather than carbines, and dressed in a similar fashion to the infantry, with concessions to the needs of the horses. They were equipped to fight with swords on horseback as well.

The hussars naturally attracted the wilder and more dashing spirits, and the regiments were used as scouts and skirmishers. The men were dressed and equipped in typical hussar fashion, and the units were quite large, with 7 squadrons apiece.

The Guards. There were a variety of foot guard units, but only Les Gardes Françaises and Suisses served in action. Apart from fancier uniforms, they were equipped as line troops. The French Guards consisted of six battalions, and the Swiss of three.

As with the foot, the king's mounted guard included a number of ceremonial units, but, since Louis took the field in person, so did his Maison du Roi. All its members were of noble stock, excepting the Grenadiers à Cheval, who, being commoners

were treated as mounted infantry and wore black stocks in contrast to the white cravats of the nobility. The Maison were the only true heavy cavalry in the French army.

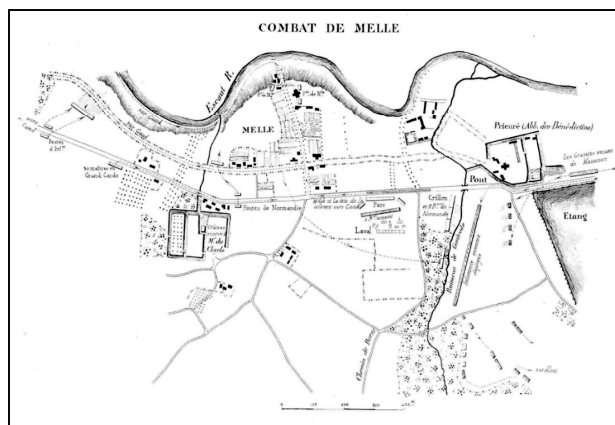
The Garde du Corps consisted of four squadrons (companies) of 336 men and formed the King's Escort. Sister units were Les Gens'd'armes du Roi, consisting of a single squadron of 300 men, Les Chevaux-légères du Roi the same, and La Gendarmerie de France. Also known as La Gendarmerie du Roi et des Princes, this unit consisted of sixteen companies (ten of gendarmes and six of chevaux-légère) of 175 men each. The men were dressed in red and mounted on the best blacks available. This unit was not technically part of the Guard; its nearest equivalent would be the British Royals – neither line nor Household.

Les Mousquetaires de la Garde fought at Fontenoy and Lawfeld. They consisted of two companies of 300 men, one mounted on grey horses, the other on blacks. The musketeers were a separate class of horsemen, neither chevaux-légère, nor dragoon, nor cuirassier.

The Artillery et al. The Régiment Royal-Artillerie dated from 1670, ranking as the 46th regiment of the infantry of line. In 1720 it was organised into five battalions. Dépôts were at Grenoble, Besançon, Metz, Strasbourg, and Fère. The first three locations also fielded 100 man fusilier companies (as “train guards”). Each artillery battalion had eight companies of 90 men each. Five companies were gunners who served both the battalion guns and the field pieces (with help from the infantry); two companies were called bombardiers and were responsible for the mortars and howitzers. Each battalion also had a company of sappers and labourers.

By the 1730's the ordnance had been reduced to five calibres, of which only three were field pieces: 4-lbers, 9-lbers, and 12-lbers. However, standardisation was still not complete when war broke out. In particular, the gun carriages remained atrociously awkward and heavy and batteries could only be moved about the battlefield with great difficulty.

There were 226 engineer officers in 1741. The arm, a branch of the artillery, was well-respected and a path of choice for the career officer. The Engineer Corps had two sapper companies of its own, and its own labourers. Contrary to what might be expected, labourers were supposed to be of “above average intelligence”, as they might have to take over from the gunners or sappers.



THE ANGLO HANOVERIANS

Britain was beginning her inexorable rise to the top. Already she matched France in economic terms (pre-Industrial Revolution at that), despite having far less land and a much smaller population. An aggressive mercantilist spirit was developing, as was a sense of superiority over their Continental neighbours. Despite the party politics, that, as always, proved a drag on operations, plus a stock market slump and rising inflation that contributed to an increasing war-weariness, more than any other nation, the British were willing to fight to the death for paramouncy, particularly when their main enemy was France.

Britain and Hanover were ruled by the same man – George Augustus Welf, Elector of Hanover and King of Great Britain and Ireland. His Hanoverian army was the third largest and one of the best in Germany. Its artillery arm was excellent, its infantry and cavalry staunch and well drilled. His British army was little bigger than that of Hanover's, but was justly feared. For a long time, they were seen as auxiliaries of Hanover, rather than a national army in their own right. The British had a reputation for ferocity matched only by the *grenzers* of the Hungarian frontier. Their arrogant disdain for all foreigners produced tremendous feats of arms. The infantry's penchant for devastating firepower was made manifest at Dettingen and especially at Fontenoy, where "the square" was compared to a walking artillery battery. Typically, however, discipline had to be enforced with an iron hand.

Unlike the later decades of the 18th Century, relations between the English and Hanoverians were not always of the best, especially in Flanders. The Hanoverians were seen as the pampered favourites of the King, while at the same time setting a "low" standard of discipline; the British were seen as rank amateurs and mere auxiliaries of George's "true army".

Hanover. King George was keenly interested in military matters, and lavished a great deal of attention on his Hanoverian troops, particularly as there was no Parliament to hold him back. The Hanoverian Army in 1740 consisted of one regiment of Foot Guards (two battalions), 18 regiments of line infantry (each of one battalion), plus a 19th forming, five troops of Horse Guards, seven regiments of heavy cavalry, four regiments of dragoons, and an artillery regiment.

Hanoverian regiments were named after their *inhabers* or colonel-proprietors, but were uniformed and equipped by the State. In fact, the *inhabers* were much under George's thumb. When von Druchtleben attempted to change his regiment's facings, George reminded him, "never forget who owns *you!*" As the war progressed, there was some expansion and much reorganisation, though quite often it was merely a change of commanders. One regiment, von Bourdon's, was disbanded when its colonel defected to the French in 1745. By that point it had three battalions, all of which were subsequently converted into new regiments.

Infantry battalions consisted of seven "centre" companies and a grenadier company (often detached to form converged grenadier battalions). The centre companies had 114 men and the grenadiers 55. Total strength, with staff, would be 870 on paper.

Although the cavalry was divided into two classes, in practice there was no difference between them. The Leibgarde and Horse Grenadiers were one squadron apiece (3 and 2 troops, respectively). The heavies had two squadrons of three troops, and the dragoons four squadrons of two troops. A troop consisted of 56 men. The dragoons had eight grenadiers per troop, who, like the foot, were often detached to form special units. As to equipment, the dragoons carried muskets rather than carbines, and grenadiers carried grenades. As noted, however, all horse were normally employed in the charge, not in a dismounted role.

The Hanoverian artillery had been completely overhauled by its inheritor, General Brückmann, during the 1730's. Unlike the French artillery, this programme was complete by the time war broke out. The guns were somewhat heavy, but well made. There were only three calibres: 3-lber, 6-lber, and 12-lber. Brückmann also experimented with breechloading rifled artillery. There were six gunner companies (138 men) and one of sappers and miners (62 men). The gunner companies sent detachments to man the battalion guns of the infantry (the dragoons had also had battalion guns, but these were phased out in 1744) and served the heavier pieces that were directly under HQ control.

England. At this time, British units were generally thought of as English, even though a high proportion of the officers and men were Scots or Irish. At its peak, the infantry mustered 83 regiments, but this includes guards, colonial and garrison units, as well as the emergency "regulars" raised for The '45. Only 61 were line infantry, nearly always of a single battalion.

Each battalion had ten companies of 75 men each, for a paper total of 750 (usually down to 300-500 in practice). One company was grenadiers, capable, as usual, of being grouped into special assault or skirmish units. Three regiments (7th, 21st, 23rd) were Fuzileers, originally equipped with fusils for the protection of the artillery. They were still considered elite units, and had Royal status. All such regiments, of which there were several others, wore "royal blue" facings.

The six most senior regiments constituted the Old Corps, dating back to the time of Charles II and James II. The next six were the Young Corps. The 32nd was originally a marine unit. Similarly, the 44th to 53rd were marine regiments that did not serve in Flanders (neither did a large number of regiments on garrison duty at Gibraltar, Minorca, and in the New World). One regiment on the list, the 41st, was actually a scattered set of "companies of invalids".

The 43rd was the Royal Highland Regiment (the Black Watch), formed from loyal Highlanders. The 64th was a similar unit formed in 1745, but less successfully. These units wore traditional Highland dress, with standard red tunics and basic kit plus personal weapons. Naturally, their bandsmen consisted of pipers rather than the usual drums, fifes, and oboes.

The Foot Guards consisted of three regiments. The first had three battalions and the others two, although during the war, additional battalions were raised. These units tended to be oversized and over-officered, as service in the Guards was seen as an essential steppingstone to high command. Additionally, the extra officers were treated as a pool of experienced ADCs.

There were four types of cavalry, but all were used in the same manner. Horse and Dragoons were the older varieties; Dragoon Guards and Light Dragoons the new ones. The horse were descended from Cromwell's Ironsides, but they no longer wore the cuirass (few units in Europe did). Each of the seven regiments consisted of eight troops of 68 men. Blacks were the mount of choice, except for the Scots Greys and the 11th (who used brown horses).

The last time the dragoons were used dismounted was in 1704. Since that date they had been used as regular horse, although they still retained a "mounted infantry" appearance, including musket, and received lower pay. There were 14 regiments, organised as the horse. There were no grenadiers.

The dragoon guards were a classic example of Parliamentary penny-pinching. In 1747 the first three regiments of horse were classified as dragoons, in order to lower their pay scale, but as a sop to their pride were titled "dragoon guards". The remaining horse were placed on the Irish Establishment, which had the same effect without a sop to anyone's pride.

The light dragoons were formed late in the war, by converting the 15th Cumberland's or Kingston's Light Horse. Light dragoons were sorely needed, as the British were dependent on their allies for units capable of scouting and harassment duties. They were unique in having a curved sabre and plumes in their hats, as well as an extra-short carbine.

The cavalry of the Guard consisted of four Horse Guard troops and two attendant Horse Grenadier troops. Half of these units were disbanded in 1747. The "Scotch Troop" of grenadiers survived, but lost its title. This is where the expression "Scotched" derives from.

The Royal Regiment of Artillery was formed in 1716, after the Jacobite Rising of the previous year had demonstrated the need for a unified arm. To be perfectly accurate, the regiment did not come under the Army at all, being run by the Ordnance Board. In 1741 the regiment had ten companies of 90 men. In the same year, the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich was established. The cadet class became the senior company.

Like the foot, with its administrative regiments and fighting battalions, the artillery was, on campaign, broken up into "brigades" that varied with the task at hand. Heavy weapons were grouped into batteries and placed at the disposal of the senior commanders, while other gunners were sent to serve the battalion guns of the infantry. Line battalions had two such pieces, and guards battalions six. The British battalion gunners were famous for the rate of fire they could achieve.

As to engineers and the like, the British had neglected this area of military science and were generally forced to rely on their allies. Like the artillery, engineers were seconded from the Ordnance Board. The infantry did its own sapping and general labour.

THE DUTCH

To a great extent, the war in Flanders was a defence of the United Provinces against French aggression. To a great extent also, it was conducted in spite of the Dutch. The United Provinces refused to declare war on the French until it was almost over. Their garrisons in the Barrier Fortresses

fraternised with their French besiegers, and repeatedly capitulated with only token resistance. Their substantial army fought in a lacklustre manner, and their generals prevaricated and argued with their British opposites. They delayed sending vital equipment and supplies to the field army while ensuring prompt delivery of vital naval stores to their French customers.

The Dutch Army had been bled white in the War of the Spanish Succession and fleshed out with regiments of mercenaries accustomed to doing as they pleased. The Dutch Oligarchs had no desire to take the war to the French, for fear the latter would invade their homeland. Most of their generals had no desire to see action either – excepting the fire-eating and inexperienced 25-year-old Prince Waldeck.

Infantry. The Dutch foot was divided into the usual types: line, guard, grenadiers, plus marines, and had German, Walloon, Swiss, and "Scotch" units, as well as national infantry. In general, regiments consisted of a single battalion of 812 men. The Swiss regiments had three battalions. The Gardes te Vœt grew to three battalions, each of 1000 men. The Gardes Zwitzers came as a cadre from Saxon service and grew to two battalions of 1000 men.

Line regiments were named for their colonels, province of origin, or a combination of the two (the Walloons). There was no strict precedence and colonels came and went with great frequency. Often too, the same family owned more than one regiment. To compound matters, the Dutch forces, more than the other allies, suffered from dissolution and amalgamation as the war progressed. A normal battalion usually had a grenadier company and a file of pioneers – again, often detached for service in combined units.



Cavalry. The Dutch horse was in sad shape. There were only 19 weak regiments, and no new forces were raised during the war. As usual, there were guards, heavies, and dragoons, but the latter two functioned in the same way. There was no light horse at all. Line regiments had three to four troops of 75 men each. The Gardes te Paarde began the war with four squadrons of two troops of 80 men each. The Gardes Dragoners had five squadrons of two companies of 75 men each. Mounts tended to be blacks, and big horses were preferred, although armour was not worn.

Artillery et al. Artillerymen were equipped as line infantry. A distinction was made between Canoniers and Bombardiers; the latter served the siege guns, mortars, and howitzers. Although the artillery arm was quite large, it had not been modernised, and a multiplicity of calibres existed. Doctrine was as in other armies, with the heavier pieces massed in relatively immobile batteries and gunners sent to serve the infantry guns. 2&1/2-lber or 3-lber battalion guns were used, or alternatively, 2&1/2-lb Coehorn mortars. Sappers and pioneers were offshoots of the

