

The Austro-Prussian War of 1866

Prussia's "Nightmare Scenario" - An alternate History



An Introduction to the Wargame Campaign

Over the past 15 years I have built up a large collection of 15mm figures covering the French, Prussian, Bavarian, Italian and Austrian armies of the later 19th Century. Recently I have wanted to wargame the Seven Weeks War of 1866. Finally, in late 2011 I began planning the wargame campaign and we started playing in the spring of 2012. The campaign took just over two and a half years to play to a conclusive result.

The main problem with recreating the campaign of 1866 is that historically the result is most probably a forgone conclusion due to the fact that the Austrians are hampered by an incompetent and unworkable command structure and that the players have 20:20 hindsight. Under these restrictions it is probably impossible for the Austrian players to even force a draw let alone win.

However, the Prussian General Staff studies for any war with Austria show that the Prussian General Staff perceived the threat from the Austria in a very different light. Three main factors affected their thinking:

1. Numbers: It was believed in Prussia that the Austrians, once fully mobilized, would not only have numerical parity with the Prussians but would probably outnumber Prussia during the early stages of any conflict.
2. Offensive Operations: It was believed that if it came to war the Austrians would naturally assume the offensive and strike either NW towards Berlin, or NE to towards Breslau in Silesia. It was also considered a possibility that the Austrian's might do both at once, with support from their Saxon and Bavarian allies.
3. Commanders: The man given the task of commanding the Austrian North Army, Field Marshal Benedek was, in the view of many Prussian officers, the "Austrian Blucher". Historically Benedek was a broken reed during the campaign, who had been promoted well beyond his ability and saddled with an incompetent staff. A Prussian General Staff assessment of Benedek noted that he was "No commander-in-chief nor strategist". However, prior to the war Benedek, nicknamed the "Lion of Solferino", was an international celebrity with an outstanding reputation as an aggressive commander. Von Moltke, considering the possibility of an Austrian attack, wrote that "The mere name Benedek means that he will come come quickly, dealing blows left and right".

As a result, the Prussians had to plan to meet the threat of a rapid Austrian advance under an aggressive commander. However, the Prussian high command could not imagine the level of incompetence amongst the Austrian commanders. It was as if the Austrian Emperor had deliberately chosen the worst possible generals to lead his largest Army.

For this campaign however I considered the possibility that an influential group of officers and officials in

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Vienna have convinced the Emperor to send his best men to command the army in Bohemia.

- The overall command of the Army has therefore been given to Archduke Albrecht. Although unpopular with many outside the military he is probably the most competent Austrian commander.
- Field Marshal Benedek has been named as Deputy Commander. He is a close personal friend of Archduke Albrecht and is popular with the soldiers, as well as being renowned for his courage and his outstanding performance at Solferino.
- General Franz John is North Army's Chief of Staff. He is a close friend of Archduke Albrecht and is considered one of the best military minds in the Austrian army. He is also a very competent staff officer.

It is therefore the “Prussian Nightmare” scenario that will form the basis of the campaign. Certain other factors will be adjusted by the umpire to balance the scenario in order to give both sides a fighting chance and to allow the players the chances to make their own decisions under new circumstances rather than simply following the course of historical events.

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Dramatis Personae

Austrian

Mark Kapalo	Field Marshal Archduke Albrecht – Commander of The North Army General Franz John – Chief of Staff of the Austrian North Army
Mark Rutkowski	Feldzeugmeister Ludwig von Benedek - Deputy Commander
Andrew Gibbs	Crown Prince Albert of Saxony – commander of the Saxon Army

Prussian

James Machin	Prussian Royal Headquarters - General von Moltke – Chief of Staff
Will Denham	Prince Frederich Charles – commanding the Prussian First Army
Ralph Baker	Crown Prince Frederich William – commanding the Prussian Second Army
Clive Dean	General von Herwarth – commanding the Prussian Army of the Elbe
Barrie Lovell	Campaign Umpire

A Note on Maps

The main map which we will use is the 1850 Perthes Geographicus Map of Bohemia. This was an authoritative map of the region and was well known at the time.

Interestingly, for such a detailed map, there is no scale shown on the map. However, after a bit of calculation and checking with satellite imagery I have found out that the distance between the two towns of Trautenau and Nachod is 14.96 miles as the crow flies. Both of these locations can be found to the North and Northeast of Josephstadt and Konnigratz. To keep things simple I have rounded this up to 15 miles. The real distance between these towns on the full sized map is 36mm (2.4mm to the mile) and this easily converts to 10 miles to one inch.

Obviously the armies would not just have relied on one map and in any case the main map is too large a scale to allow a detailed study of the terrain. Another useful source of mapping is here:

<http://lazarus.elte.hu/hun/digkonyv/topo/3felmeres.htm>

This is an online archive of early 20th century Austrian military maps cover pretty much the whole of central Europe. They are exceptionally detailed and are the closest we can get to 1866 mapping. They are well worth examining. I have no objection to players downloading or viewing these maps during the campaign. I will certainly be using them to plot the locations of contacts, battles etc and if players wish to use them to decide on a defensive position, or to reconnoitre a route then please feel free to do so. If you do use one of the maps in this way however, then please let me know which sheet you are using and what you are planning on doing with it.

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Events prior to 23rd June 1866

Austrian Plans

Rather than await a Prussian offensive in the Olmutz area Archduke Albrecht has ordered the army to advance west towards Konnigratz and Josephstadt, with a view to meeting any Prussian attack from a more central position. This movement is under way as the campaign opens, with the bulk of the Austrian North Army some 30-40 miles west of Olmutz.

Although the Austrian plans are not yet finalised (several options still being considered), it is felt at North Army HQ that a rapid offensive into Silesia may offer the best opportunity to force the Prussian Second Army away from the Elbe and First Armies and to defeat the Second Army in detail while it is this isolated. This plan would include a main offensive into Silesia, with two smaller forces to the west covering the line of the River Iser and protecting the left flank of the main army. The North Army Chief of Staff, General Franz John, is currently assessing the merits of the various options.

Fortunately for the Austrians an intelligence source in Silesia has recently managed to pass information to the Austrian General Staff indicating that the strength of the Prussian Second Army is approx 110,000 – 120,00 men¹.

At this stage it is likely that Crown Prince Albert of Saxony will be given command of the allied forces along the Iser.

The Austrian plan was been finalised on the 22nd June. It requires a defensive posture along the River Iser to hold the Prussian Elbe and First Armies (The Royal Saxon Corps, 1st Corps and 1st Light Cavalry Division, all under command of the Crown Prince of Saxony), while the bulk of the army is divided into two wings and a Reserve:

- The Left Wing (Gen Gablenz): 3rd, 4th and 10th Corps, 1st Reserve Cavalry Division
- The Right Wing (Gen Ramming): 6th and 8th Corps, 2nd and 3rd Reserve Cavalry Divisions
- The Reserve: 2nd Corps, 2nd Lt Cavalry Division, Army Artillery Reserve and Engineer Reserve

It is likely that FzM Benedek will be given command of one of the wings. The Reserve will assemble at Konnigratz and the two wings on Trateunau and Nachod respectively.

Once assembled the Left and Right wings will commence an advance towards Breslau with the aim of splitting the Prussian armies and defeating the Prussian Second Army.

Prussian Plans

The Prussian plan is relatively simple, and allowing for the Prussian staff's ability to carry out its orders, eminently feasible. The Prussian Elbe and First Armies are to advance into Bohemia and engage the Austrian forces on the Iser. The Second Army is to advance into Moravia and pin the main Austrian force in place while the Elbe and First Armies destroy the Austrian forces on the Iser. All three armies will then advance on the remaining Austrian forces driving them back into Moravia and destroying them in the vicinity of Olmutz. Once this has been achieved the main Prussian forces will advance on Vienna.

Umpire's Comments

Well, it appears that I will probably not have to add any fog of war to the campaign, as the early indications are that the players will manage that just fine on their own. The Austrians have already sacked a junior officer for incompetence (to protect the reputation of a senior officer) and a chance conversation between two of the opposing players during a shared car ride has given the Austrian C-in-C an idea of the strength of

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the Prussian Second Army. I accepted this as the results of good Austrian intelligence!

An initial look at the two opposing plans seems to indicate that the Austrian attack towards Silesia may in fact give the Austrians an advantage in the initial stages by turning the western flank of the Prussian Second Army before the First Army can intervene. There is a distinct possibility that the Prussian 1st Corps may be overwhelmed in the early stages. The situation in Western Bohemia is more difficult to gauge however, as the Austrian 1st Corps and 1st Light Cavalry Division are fairly isolated until they are reinforced by the arrival of the Saxon Corps. The Saxon corps may take 3-5 days to arrive however and the forward elements of the Prussian First Army are likely to contact the Austrian forces on the Iser before the Saxons arrive. The Prussian Elbe army appears to be placed too far to the west to effectively intervene in any combat along the Iser for at least 5-6 days.

However we will probably have a number of “come as you are” fights during the initial stages, as the armies move into their positions. It will be interesting to see how the commanders react to any information regarding the enemy and how they interpret the intelligence to determine precisely where the enemy is. The first commander to successfully do this will have a substantial advantage if he can concentrate his forces against a smaller part of the opposing army. Initially however, it seems as though the Austrians may have the edge in the planning stage.

From the collected letters of Major von Habsburg...



**Major Theodor Johan von Habsburg
Royal & Imperial Army general Staff
HQ North Army 1866**

Hohenstadt
22nd June 1866

My dear Bruno I hope this letter finds you in good health. I greatly enjoyed seeing you and your charming wife again last week in Vienna. Unfortunately I could not dally on the Danube any longer, despite the temptations of beautiful Vienna. The new Chief of Staff is a bit of a terror apparently and the easy going ways of the army in Italy do not appear to apply here. I do so hope this won't cause any unpleasantness.

Anyway, I arrived here at Hohenstadt a couple of days ago, only three days late as it happens. Fortunately some junior officer in the Plans Dept upset the CoS so my late arrival seems to have been overlooked. Ha Ha Ha!

There has indeed been a bit of a kerfuffle here regarding the plans for the campaign. The junior chap has been disciplined and sent off to God knows where for sending a draft plan to Archduke Albrecht without General John's permission. Well, that is the “official” version at least. Mind you the CoS does sound like a bit of a bastard eh? I'd better take care to keep out of his way Ha Ha Ha!

However, the tale does not end there. I have heard on the sly that the plan has had to be completely rewritten for the benefit of good old Field Marshal Benedek. Well, you know the old boy as well as I do from our time in Italy. A smashing chap to dine with, and there probably isn't a better man in the Army to lead a corps into the fray, but he isn't the smartest wolf in the pack when it comes to anything complicated. Tell him to attack somewhere and he's off like a windhund after a hare, but ask him to find the place on a map and work out how to march three corps to get there and he's completely lost.

Hohenstadt is a bit of a dump after Verona I must say. The beer is acceptable, but at least you can get a decent enough bottle of Tokay or Riesling. It's not the same as Italy, but we are at war so I suppose we all have to make the occasional sacrifice.

Well, I'll write as often as I can.

Yours

Theodor

23rd June 1866

Despite the previous damp weather the 23rd June dawned bright and dry. Across the region the opposing armies began to move.

From the Saxon border near Dresden, the Prussian Elbe Army (von Herwarth) began moving south along the west bank of the Elbe. Further east the Prussian First Army began probing south towards the line of the River Iser, with its initial objective the crossing over the Iser at Jung Bunzlau. With little in the way of intelligence regarding the enemy positions, both armies are advancing cautiously.

Prince Frederick Charles, commanding the Prussian First Army, had initially intended to push his cavalry forward to develop any enemy positions at an early stage², however, this plan was vigorously opposed by Lt-General Von Voigt-Rhettz (CoS) and HRH Prinz Albrecht (Commanding the Cavalry) on the grounds that:

1. Pushing the cavalry forwards without infantry support would expose the cavalry to defeat in detail should the enemy be firmly established on good ground.
2. Such a manoeuvre would most likely wear down the cavalry before any major contact was made with the enemy, thus reducing its effectiveness.
3. The cavalry should be conserved to provide a fresh, concentrated "mass de decision" on any potential battlefield.

The Prussian Second Army, concentrated in the Glatz region, also began marching south. The 1st Corps (von Bonin) is to advance towards Konnigratz to tie down as many enemy troops as possible, while the remaining three Corps advance on Hohenstadt to engage the main Austrian force believed to be near Olmutz. The Reserve Cavalry is to link the two parts of the army and hold a position whereby it can reinforce either flank as required.

The Austrians are also on the move. The two Wings of the main North Army are marching steadily north west towards their concentration areas, the roads between Hohenstadt and Reichenau being crowded with tens of thousands of troops, plus their artillery and trains. At this point North Army is spread out over some 50 miles in depth.

The Royal Saxon Army, is also marching to the north west³, via several routes, with the aim of concentrating around Jung Bunzlau, and linking up with the Austrian forces on the Iser. Once in position the whole force will be commanded by the Saxon Crown Prince. At the moment the Austrian forces at Turnau and Munchengraz look somewhat isolated as it will take several days for the Saxons to reinforce them. The Austrian 1st Corps is taking up defensive positions covering the crossings over the Iser between Munchengratz and Turnau, while Generalmajor Baron Edelsheim, commanding the 1st Light Cavalry Division, has pushed out a cavalry screen to the northwest between Hunerwasser and Gablonz. The Austrian forces are spread thinly along this area but the Austrian cavalry commander is an experienced and capable officer and the cavalry screen should provide some warning on the Prussian approach.

As an aside, Archduke Albrecht, Benedek and General Franz John arrived in Konnigratz by train during the day. Purely by coincidence Crown Prince Albert of Saxony arrived late in the afternoon, as his headquarters was accompanying his 2nd Division which was under orders to march via Konnigratz. The commanders of the two armies decided to take advantage of the opportunity to meet and discuss the campaign during the night. By all accounts it was a useful and constructive meeting which has clarified some issues regarding the conduct of the campaign.

2 Will, your player instructions did state that the cavalry divisions and brigades could not be used for reconnaissance but should usually follow behind the infantry. Nice try though!

3 There were a number of enquiries about using the railway to initially move the Saxons back towards Prague. This idea was dropped once it was explained how many wagons and trains were needed, and how long it would take to organise. It really was quicker just to start walking. The logistics of railway movement do actually make the Prussian mobilisation plans all the more impressive.

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Umpire Comments

Everything seems to be going smoothly for both sides at the moment (although it is only day one). The most interesting point so far is that until the two armies make contact they are effectively groping around in the dark. The Prussian Elbe and First Armies have a great advantage in numbers over the Austrian Iser forces, but a slow probing advance on a wide front encompassing an approach towards Prague might give the Iser Army time both to concentrate and to inflict a reverse or two on the Prussian First Army before the Elbe Army can link up.

In the east, it appears that the Prussian Second Army is marching south-east past the bulk of the North Army, which itself is marching north-west on a parallel course, with only the mountains separating them by a mere 10-15 miles! The possibility here is that the Prussian 1st Corps is marching straight towards no less than six Austrian corps and it may well be overwhelmed at an early stage, while the bulk of the Second Army is marching on Hohenstadt. It is of no help that von Bonin (commanding the 1st Corps) is one of the Prussian generals least suited to independent command (psychologically or professionally). On the other hand however, the eastern flank of the Second Army will be ideally placed to sever the Austrian LoC with Olmutz which will almost certainly curtail an Austrian push towards Breslau.

24th June 1866

The armies continue to move closer to each other. Although the commanders have their own plans both sides are essentially groping forwards in the dark, uncertain of where the enemy might be. The weather remains clear and dry, although there is a good possibility of rain in the next few days.

Operations in the west

In the west the Prussian Elbe Army is steadily closing in on Leitmeritz. The march has been slowed by the narrow roads and several defiles, in particular the Elbe crossing at Aussig. There has also been some confusion in the march orders. The 15th Division was supposed to have reached Lobositz by the evening of the 24th. However the commander, Generalleutnant von Canstein, found it necessary to point out to the Army commander that his division was ordered to bring up the rear behind the 16th Division all the way from Pirna and has therefore been unable to reach his objective within the desired time⁴.

Although the Elbe Army is not yet facing any enemy troops it is fast approaching the Austrian fortress of Theresienstadt⁵. In particular the 14th Division has arrived at Aujezd, on the north bank of the Elbe near Leitmeritz and only a few miles from the fortress. The fortress is garrisoned by seven infantry battalions, some artillery and number of garrison and fortress units. Although not a large force the fortress is quite extensive and should be able to withstand a direct assault. During the evening of the 24th the Burgomaster of Aujezd managed to send a message to the chief of Police at Leitmeritz, warning him of the presence of Prussian troops in his village. The Police chief, much to his credit, immediately sent a message warning the commandant of the fortress, Generalmajor Freiherr von Taxis. The garrison has been placed on alert while the fortress commander tries to find out more information about the enemy. At the moment he has ruled out any immediate offensive action due to the small size of the forces available and the lack of knowledge about the enemy strength.

Operations in the centre

The Prussian First Army has continued with its march towards Jung-Bunzlau, advancing on two main axes towards the Iser. During the late morning the leading Prussian formations encountered the forward Austrian cavalry patrols, which had been deployed during the previous afternoon and early evening.

The Prussian forces advancing south from Niemes encountered a number of Austrian patrols along the road, who were able to use the close, wooded country to advance close to the Prussians and observe their movements. Prussian attempts to drive the Austrian patrols off were hampered by the close terrain, uncertainty about the Austrian strength and the need to maintain contact with their supports. The Prussian commander, Generalleutnant von Fransecky (commanding the 4th Corps), decided not to risk any major engagement while in such a precarious position and slowed his rate of march, thus allowing the advance guard to conduct a limited reconnaissance while allowing his two divisions to close up. By mid afternoon Fransecky had pushed through Hunerwasser and continued his slow advance to Weisswasser, where he halted his two divisions for the night. A number of picquets were posted to guard against any surprise attack and he also despatched a report to the army commander appraising him of the situation. The following Corps (the 2nd Corps) halted along the road between Niemes and Hunerwasser. This corps also reported that they were under observation by enemy cavalry patrols during the afternoon.

Further to the east the left flank of the First Army also made contact with Edelsheim's cavalry. The 5th Division (von Timpling) first encountered the enemy outside Reichenberg but, having advanced as far as Tangenbruck, the divisional commander became concerned that the terrain favoured the defender and wary about a possible ambush, halted to await reinforcement. The Austrian cavalry were present in sufficient strength to prevent any further Prussian reconnaissance. During the late afternoon the Prussian 6th Division and 1st Cavalry Division arrived at Reichenberg, several miles behind the 5th Division.

4 The Division commander does have a good point. He was ordered to follow the 16th Division and was therefore somewhat surprised to receive the following order from General Von Herwarth on the evening of the 23rd: "Make every effort to reach Lobositz by tomorrow evening". Quite how he was supposed to overtake the 16th Division and Reserve artillery on a single road was not made clear.

5 Later to be used as a concentration camp in WW2.

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The Prussian 2nd Cavalry Division however was advancing about 5 or 6 miles east of the 5th Division and halted for the night at Tannwald, completely unaware of the presence of Austrian cavalry two or three miles distant. As night fell, the intervening ridges prevented either side from seeing each others camp-fires. Luckily for the Austrians however, a local farmer told a roving cavalry patrol that he had heard a rumour of Prussian soldiers near Tannwald.

By mid evening von Edelsheim had a reasonably clear picture of the Prussian positions and some idea of their strength. His report, telegraphed from the railway station at Turnau to the HQ at Konnigratz, gave the North Army commander his first real intelligence about the Prussian advance on the Iser.

Unfortunately for the Austrian forces on the Iser the Saxon Army was still some way off, with its components converging on the Iser from both Koniggratz and Kolin. The Saxon Crown Prince however, after leaving Konnigratz has pressed on towards Munchegratz with a small staff and escort, with the intention of meeting with Clam-Gallas and von Edelsheim as soon as possible.

Operations in the East

The Austrian North Army is continuing its concentration to the north east of Konnigratz. A glance at the map will show five Corps and three Cavalry Divisions wending their way northwest from Hohenstadt. The leading Corps (Gablentz, 10th Corps) had reached Neustadt by late afternoon, with the other formations strung out behind him. Although the concentration of the North Army will still take several days, the Prussian 1st Corps, currently at Trautenau, may well find itself in trouble when it runs into the leading elements of North Army.

The Austrian march has progressed quite smoothly, with only minor problems due to poor staff work⁶.

In addition, the Austrian commander has become worried about his right flank and the lack of any intelligence concerning the whereabouts of the Prussian Second Army. Accordingly the Austrian 2nd Light Cavalry Division has been ordered to carry out a manoeuvre to cover the right flank of the army by advancing via Mittelwalde north along the Neisse valley towards Glatz. The 2nd Corps has been ordered to support this manoeuvre by taking post closer to the Prussian border at Schildeberg.

The Prussian Second Army, less the 1st Corps at Trautenau and the Reserve Cavalry Corps at Braunau, has meanwhile concentrated along the Biele valley, south east of Glatz, and is poised to cross into Bohemia in the vicinity of Alestadt. Although the Austrian cavalry have heard reports of Prussian troops in Glatz, they are as yet unaware of the concentration of Prussian troops in the Biele valley, some seven or eight miles to the east and hidden by the mountains between the two valleys.

Umpire Comments

The Prussian Elbe Army is pretty much irrelevant at the present time, as it is still several day's march from any junction with the First Army, and may well have to deal with the fortress at Theresienstadt. The Austrians on the Iser have the advantage of knowing where the enemy is but their reinforcement, in the shape of the Saxon Army, is unlikely to be able to help for at least another 24-36 hours. The situation has been made worse by the Saxon commander's decision to split his corps march via separate routes towards Jung Bunzlau. This may result in his forces arriving piecemeal over two days. The cavalry, in particular, may be difficult to recall quickly.

The Austrian North Army is moving slowly but in a generally well coordinated manner (with the occasional hiccough here and there, but remarkably smoothly by Austrian standards). The Prussian 1st Corps is in a potentially precarious situation, but the bulk of the Prussian Second Army is now poised to descend on Hohenstadt with only the Austrian 2nd Corps in its path. The situation, where both armies appear to intend to attack their opponent's right flank, currently resembles a revolving door. It remains to be seen which Army

⁶ The bulk of North Army HQ has remained at Hohenstadt all day while awaiting orders to move to Konnigratz. These appear to have been overlooked in the movement of the Commander and his immediate staff to Konnigratz. Happily however, the telegraph link between the two locations does at least allow the HQ to communicate. Von Ramming (6th Corps) is less amused however. He had halted his corps at Wildensvert, **as ordered**, to allow the 8th Corps to pass in front of him before following on. Unbeknown to Ramming however, the 8th Corps had been ordered to alter its route via Hohenmauth and Konnigratz. No-one thought to inform von Ramming and he lost half a day's march.

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while make sense of the situation first and react accordingly. I feel that this may still go either way. There does seem to be a lack of a sense of urgency in the Second Army at the present time which is not Ralph's usual style. However, Ralph never does anything without a) a good reason and b) thinking it through first, so I expect that when Ralph actually launches the Second Army's attack it will move quickly. We shall see.

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25th June 1866

Events continue to accelerate and control of the armies starts to slip from their commander's respective grasp as we shall see.

The weather is overcast but cool and is ideal for the marching troops.

Operations in the West – The Prussian Elbe Army

The Elbe army, by now aware of the threat from the garrison at Theresienstadt, succeed in closing up to its objectives along the Elbe and by late afternoon the Prussians had linked up along the line Lobositz-Leitmeritz- Aujezd. Increasingly aware that his meagre and poorly trained force was likely to be considerably outnumbered by the enemy, the Theresienstadt commandant, GM von Taxis, had ordered his engineers to destroy the bridge at Leitmeritz. Unfortunately they were unable to do little more than destroy the central span before the advance guard of the Prussian 16th Division arrived and drove the Austrian engineers off, thus preventing any further damage to the bridge. By nightfall Prussian outposts were in position west of the fortress and along the northern bank of the Elbe.

Operations in the West – Events on the River Iser

Following the contact on the 24th between the Prussian advance guards and the cavalry of Edelsheim's Division, both armies began the day with the anticipation that operations were about to commence in earnest. Fortunately for the two Austrian commanders, Clam-Gallas and von Edelsheim, the intact telegraph links with Konnigratz ensured that fresh orders from Archduke Albrecht at Konnigratz were received in time for them to act upon them before they were overtaken by events.

In addition, new orders were despatched to the Saxon Crown Prince, urging him to concentrate his Corps on the Iser, in the vicinity of Jung Bunzlau, as rapidly as possible. A staff officer from Koniggratz, with fresh orders for the Crown Prince and the Saxon 2nd Division, caught up with the Crown Prince and his staff at Gitschin while he was at breakfast. After a hurried discussion, orders were despatched to the various Saxon formations, with instructions to march with all speed on the Iser. Fortunately Generalleutnant von Steiglitz, commanding the Saxon 2nd Division, having been alerted to the situation by the courier from Konnigratz, had immediately ordered his Division and the accompanying Corps troops to form up ready to march. Shortly after 6.30am the Crown Prince and his staff left for Munchengratz, arriving shortly after 10.00am

On the opposite side of the river Iser the Prussian commander, Prince Frederick Karl, took care to ensure that his divisions remained closed up in order to provide support the leading units in the event of a battle. This instruction, albeit a sensible precaution when considering he knew next to nothing of the Austrian dispositions, did however have the effect of delaying the movements of the leading Advance Guards, and consequently gave the Austrians time to deploy to meet the Prussian movements.

One event which could not have been foreseen by the Prince however, involved the orders despatched to the 2nd Cavalry Division, encamped near Tannwald. Fresh orders for the division to march on Jung Bunzlau via Eisenbrod and Munchengratz were never received by the divisional commander HRH Prince Albrecht. During the night the messenger mislaid his way in the dark after leaving Reichenberg. As he followed what he thought was the correct route the unfortunate officer strayed too close to the line of the Austrian cavalry screen. Surprised by a roving patrol of Austrian Hussars (ironically from the 10th Hussars, which bore the Honorary title "King of Prussia"), he fled across country to escape pursuit only for his horse to fall into a ditch in the dark, injuring both horse and rider. As a consequence, the Divisional Commander simply continued with his existing orders, and marched east towards Hechstetd, before turning south for Semile.

In Munchengratz Clam-Gallas, relieved to have been given clear instructions as to what course of action to take, despatched a Jager battalion to Turnau to reinforce von Edelsheim, and also despatched his reserve brigade (GM Poschacher) to march with all speed to Jung Bunzlau and defend the crossing at that point. The Brigades already in position guarding the crossings at Munchengratz, Podol, Brezina and Sichrow were likewise warned of the enemy's approach and were instructed to continue strengthening their defences. In addition, the arrival of the Crown Prince of Saxony at Munchengratz, with the news that the Saxon Army Corps was en route, gave fresh heart to the Austrian 1st Corps Staff. During the rest of the morning Count

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Clam-Gallas and his staff discussed the situation with Crown Prince Albert.

At Turnau, von Edelsheim had been ordered to hold the line of the Iser as long as possible and intended to engage the Prussian advance guard near Liebenau. He was up early riding forward to meet with the commander of the cavalry screening Turnau from the northwest. His reserve Brigade was ordered to be ready to move at short notice. Shortly before 9.00am the leading Prussian troops entered Liebenau.

Action at Liebenau - 25th June 1866



The battlefield at Liebenau (looking North)

At about 9.30 am the Advance Guard of the Prussian 5th Division (von Tumpling) advanced through Liebenau and climbed the plateau to the east, following the Podol-Munchengratz road. Following behind was the Prussian 6th Division.

Already deployed on the plateau was Wallis' Brigade from Edelsheim's 1st Light Cavalry Division. Fraticsevics' Brigade was hurrying up from Turnau, and would arrive shortly after 10.00am.

With orders to hold the line of the Iser for as long as possible von Edelsheim planned to use the favourable terrain to delay the Prussian advance near Liebenau for as long as possible.

As the Prussian Advance Guard, led by the 1st Uhlans, debouched onto the plateau an Austrian battery opened fire on the Prussian cavalry. The initial salvo struck the head of the column, killing the commanding Officer Lt Col von Treskow, and causing a number of casualties on the leading squadron. The Austrian battery, firing at a carefully measured range, continued with a rapid fire as the Prussian cavalry attempted to deploy into line. After a few minutes, the leading squadron broke and fled back down the road towards Liebenau, taking the rest of the regiment with it. It was felt by many that the death of Lt Col von Treskow was probably preferable to the shame of seeing his Regiment rout in its first action.

There then followed a lull as the Prussians, surprised by the accuracy and rapidity of the Austrian artillery fire, deployed cautiously into line below the plateau before advancing once again onto the high ground. Skilfully manoeuvring his two brigades von Edelsheim forced the Prussians to advance slowly until 2.00pm, when one of the leading Prussian Regiments (12th Grenadiers) was thrown into disorder by Austrian artillery fire. Immediately Wallis' brigade charged and drove the Prussians back, their fire being ineffective, inflicting some casualties and taking a number of prisoners.

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A second charge half an hour later by Fraticsevics' Brigade came close to capturing some Prussian guns but was halted with heavy casualties by the fire of the Prussian 18th Infantry Regiment.

Although the Austrian cavalry fought with determination the Prussian infantry rallied, the 12th grenadiers returning to the fray, and the effects of the needle gun's rapid fire soon began to be felt. By 3.30pm von Edelsheim's cavalry was at the end of its tether and, painfully aware that the Prussian strength was growing rapidly with the arrival of the 6th Division on the plateau, he broke of the action, retiring on Turnau.

The Prussian commander, von Tumpling, reorganised his forces and carefully reconnoitred the plateau to confirm that the enemy had indeed broken off the action and that his advance on Munchengratz was no longer threatened, before resuming his advance at 7.30pm.

Austrian Casualties: 600
Prussian casualties: 400 (including 200 captured)

Umpire's Note:

von Edelsheim's intention was to delay the Prussian advance for as long as possible, to gain time for the Austrian forces on the Iser crossings to further fortify their positions, and for the Saxons to close up to the river. Unopposed, von Tumpling's Advance Guard would probably have reached the bridge at Podol at about 1.00pm on the 25th.

Following the action at Liebenau the Prussian 5th and 6th Divisions pressed on towards the Iser crossing and Munchengratz, however by 8.30pm they had only just reached Wohrazentitz, near Turnau. With the continued presence of Austrian cavalry patrols near the river, no cavalry of their own to speak off (the 1st Uhlands were not fit to reconnoitre at the present time) and exhausted by the day's march and the fighting at Liebenau, the Prussians halted for the night.

Further to the south the Prussian advance on Jung Bunzlau was delayed by orders for the rearmost Corps to close up to the leading Corps before recommencing the advance on Jung Bunzlau. Generalleutnant von Fransecky, commanding the leading 4th Corps, was therefore compelled to await the arrival of the 2nd Corps before setting off with his own troops. The Advance Guard of the 7th Division subsequently arrived at the bridge over the Iser at Debr (just north of Jung Bunzlau) at 11.30am, only to find that the Austrian GM Poschacher's famed "Iron" Brigade had narrowly beaten them to it.⁷

Von Fransecky quickly determined that an assault would have to be made to secure a crossing in the face of the Austrian defenders. He sent a staff officer to report the situation to HRH Prince Frederick Karl, who was riding with the 3rd Division near Huhnerwasser. The Prince confirmed the order to attack with the 4th Corps, and at the same time to detach the corps cavalry to reconnoitre the west bank of the river south beyond Jung Bunzlau and to search for another crossing point.

As soon as he recognised the danger, GM Poschacher despatched an officer to Munchengratz with the news that the Prussians were about to attack. The message was received by the Crown Prince of Saxony who, having met with Clam-Gallas, was aware of the situation on the Iser. Concerned that if the Prussians seized the bridge the Iser line would be overthrown, Prince Albert ordered the Brigade at Munchengratz to set off immediately to support the Brigade at Jung Bunzlau, while he himself rode to the town to see the situation for himself.

Action at Jung Bunzlau - 25th June 1866

Generalmajor Poschacher, commanding the Austrian "Iron Brigade", ordered his Jägers to hold the bridge, supported by their brigade battery and a Horse Battery from the Corps Reserve, while he deployed the

⁷ HRH Prince Frederick Karl was concerned that his leading troops may encounter large enemy forces which could overwhelm them before the supporting Corps, spread out over a considerable distance, would be able to reinforce them. He therefore ordered the forces advancing on Jung Bunzlau to close up *prior* to advancing, so that the army would be in a position to concentrate quickly against any enemy force to its front. The delay imposed on the leading divisions however, meant that the 1st Army would have to fight for a crossing point at Debr, whereas an early advance by Franzecky's leading troops would have seized the bridge before the arrival of the enemy without a fight.

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remainder of his Brigade on higher ground a little further to the east. These two regiments were kept in concealed positions but close enough to support the Jägers to their front.



The battlefield at Jung Bunzlau (looking North)

Key to battlefield:

A: Prussian initial attack.

B: Jung Bunzlau

C: Road leading to unguarded bridges

D: Main road to Munchengratz

E: Road to Sobotka

The Prussians, their options limited due to the terrain, placed the combined artillery of the 4th Corps (six batteries) on high ground overlooking the river at a distance of some 600 yards. This position, although offering a good field of view, was limited in that the ground held by the enemy in the immediate vicinity of the bridge was masked by the buildings and trees adjacent to the river.

In the limited time available the Austrian Jägers had barricaded the bridge itself with several carts and farm equipment taken from the nearby village, and had deployed in skirmish order amongst the trees and bushes which line the banks of the river Iser.

The Prussians launched their first attack on the bridge at 2.00pm, advancing with a Brigade from the 7th Division. Closing on the river the Prussian infantry were met with a hail of accurate cannon and rifle fire which halted the initial advance. The Prussian infantry returned the fire as best they could from their exposed positions and for an hour and a half the combat continued.

At 2.30pm however the Crown Prince of Saxony arrived on the battlefield, with the welcome news that reinforcements were on their way. This gave fresh heart to the outnumbered Austrian troops.

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At about 3.30pm, Von Fransecky received reports that his cavalry had found two unguarded, and intact, bridges over the Iser about a mile south of Jung Bunzlau. One of the bridges however was a railway bridge and only usable by infantry. Having been ordered to concentrate his corps against the northern bridge, Fransecky was forced to send a report back to HRH Prince Frederick Karl, who had already instructed the 2nd Corps to stand ready to advance if a suitable crossing was found.

By 4.00pm the weight of the Prussian fire was beating down the Austrian troops holding the river banks, and the field and meadows on either bank were strewn with dead and wounded. Finally the Jäger could hold no longer and withdrew back towards the main Austrian position. The horse battery held its ground to the last moment firing case shot to cover the infantry's withdrawal but as the battery limbered up to move away it became the target for every Prussian rifleman within range. In a few moments the battery's horses, and substantial number of the gunners had been shot down and the battery wrecked.

Cheered by the imminent arrival of reinforcements the Austrians moved two regiments of infantry down from the high ground to replace the Jäger and artillery. They were not a moment too soon as the Prussians had seized upon the withdrawal of the Jäger to assault the bridge itself. The Prussian column stormed the bridge, clearing the barricade and, under a heavy fire, charging the defenders. The Austrian defenders refused to give ground however and the attack was thrown back with heavy losses amongst the Prussian infantry.

Shortly after 5.00pm however the Austrian reinforcements arrived and were directed on to Jung Bunzlau to defend against an anticipated attack from the south of the town, the Prussian cavalry at the bridges having been observed by an Austrian officer from the roof of the town hall. At about the same time, the Prussian 2nd Corps began moving from its positions near Weisswasser, across country towards the bridges south of Jung Bunzlau.

The situation at the bridges south of the town was quiet. The 4th Corps cavalry had seized the bridges and pushed forwards a number of outlying vedettes to guard against a surprise attack. By 6.30 pm the Austrians also had a regiment of cavalry on the outskirts of the town observing the enemy near the bridges.

Unknown to the combatants on either side however, the Saxon 1st Division was approaching the battlefield from the south. The Saxons had been on the march since the early hours, having received fresh orders at Nimburg to make for Jung Bunzlau with all speed. At about 4.30pm, the Saxons had halted at Bratronitz, about 8 miles south east of Jung Bunzlau. The division had covered a considerable distance during the day and the commander had intended to bivouac at Bratronitz for the night. However, what was originally thought to be the mutter of distant thunder was soon recognised as cannon fire. Realising that the Prussians might even now be gaining the Iser crossings at Jung Bunzlau, the Division commander despatched a staff officer to reconnoitre the approaches to the town and determine what was happening. The Division would rest for an hour while the reconnaissance was carried out and would then continue a forced march to the town.

At about 6.30pm the Saxon staff officer, by now aware that a battle was indeed taking place, arrived on the road leading into the town. On seeing a small cavalry patrol in unfamiliar uniforms nearby he continued cautiously, until the cavalry patrol fired several shots in his direction. The Saxon officer put his spurs to his horse and galloped towards the town, the patrol in pursuit. As he neared the town more horsemen appeared in front of him and he was immensely relieved to discover that these horsemen were indeed Austrian Hussars. The pursuing cavalry, now identified as Prussians, broke off their chase and withdrew.

The Saxon officer soon made his way to the Crown Prince and informed him of the whereabouts of his Division. Prince Albert ordered him to return to his commander and beg him to advance with all speed against the enemy held bridges. Fortunately Generalleutnant von Schimpff, commanding the Saxon 1st Division, had already roused his tired soldiers and got them once again on the march.

As the day drew to a close and dusk began to fall the Prussian 2nd Corps began to close up to the bridges, only to find that the Austrians now held the southern approaches to Jung Bunzlau and that more enemy troops (as yet unidentified as Saxons) were deploying on the high ground to the south east of the bridges. The failing light hid the fact that the Saxon troops were exhausted and straggling, with their artillery far to the rear, however news of the fresh arrivals was despatched to HRH Prince Frederick Karl who, after consultation with his Chief of Staff, issued orders for the cavalry to withdraw to the west bank, and for infantry of the 2nd Corps to hold the western ends of the bridges.

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Shortly after 8.30pm the Prussians had ceased their attacks and the firing died away.

Austrian Casualties: 600
Prussian Casualties: 800

The prompt action by GM Poschacher, combined with the intervention by the Saxon Crown Prince⁸, prevented the Prussians from establishing themselves on the eastern bank of the Iser at the northern crossing. The timely arrival of the Saxon 1st Division, just as the light began to fade, was also crucial in preventing the Prussians exploiting the bridge to the south of Jung Bunzlau. Unwilling to risk a night action against an enemy of unknown size and composition ordered his troops to withdraw to the east bank and hold the eastern ends of the crossings.

As the firing died down and both armies settled down for the night a silence fell along the Iser valley, broken only by the occasional shot fired by a nervous sentry.

Umpire's Note:

This was a battle where everything went wrong for the Prussians and despite the odds, everything came together for the Austrians. There were many occasions where the Austrians could have come unstuck but luck was with them. The Austrians did have the advantage of reaching the bridge first however. If the Prussians had pushed Fransecky's advance guard forward at first light, instead of waiting for the 2nd Corps to close up first, then Fransecky would have reached the bridges and seized them without a fight. Although the Prussian commander's caution is understandable in view of his limited knowledge of the Austrian forces in front of him, on this occasion it was the wrong decision and a bold move early in the day would have paid off handsomely. Mais, c'est la guerre....

Operations in the East

On the eastern flank events had moved much more slowly during the day.

Following its earlier orders the Prussian Second Army had halted for the day to rest and prepare for further operations on the 26th.

The main Austrian Army however continued with its concentration. As a result of the news that the Prussians were approaching the Iser Archduke Albrecht decided to accelerate his offensive into Silesia, advancing via the shortest route towards Glatz (instead of marching for Breslau via Leibau and Fryberg), presumably with the intention of seizing the initiative from the enemy.

To this end new orders were despatched to the 2nd Corps, 6th Corps, 10th Corps and the 2nd Reserve Cavalry Division to alter their march and direct it towards Glatz. At the same time the 2nd Light Cavalry division, already on Prussian territory in the Neisse valley, was ordered to advance on Glatz from the south. By the end of the day the leading Brigade of the Austrian 2nd Corps (Bde Thom) had arrived at Mittelwalde, with the remainder of the corps advancing via Schildberg.

In addition, Feldzeugmeister Benedek was instructed to join the 10th Corps and assume command of the attack on Glatz.

The remaining Austrian forces were not issued fresh orders and merely continued with their previous line of march. At this point it is not clear whether the 3rd and 4th Corps will take part in the advance on Glatz.

There is some indication however that the Austrian staff work left something to be desired. Orders for the 10th Corps, informing its commander that Benedek would be joining them during the day were despatched to the wrong location (Senftenberg instead of Neustadt), and were never received. In fact, Benedek's arrival at the

⁸ Much of the day's success was the result of the personal intervention of the Saxon Crown Prince, who successfully took command of a potentially disastrous situation and kept a cool head throughout. It has somewhat redeemed his initial poor march orders which scattered his Corps across the Bohemian countryside with the attendant communication problems.

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10th Corps came as something of a surprise to the corps commander.⁹

Towards the end of the day however, contact was established between the opposing forces. The Prussian 1st Corps, located at Trautenau, had pushed forward its cavalry patrols to Eypel. During the afternoon they encountered patrols from the 9th Uhlans, covering the advance of the Austrian 10th Corps. There was no fighting and both sides contented themselves with reporting the enemy patrols and subsequently observing each other.

South of Glatz, in the Neisse valley, the Austrian 2nd Light Cavalry Division had advanced as far north as Habelschwerdt, while its leading patrols pushed on towards Glatz. By late afternoon the patrols had made contact with the cavalry outposts of the Prussian 6th Corps, encamped outside Glatz. Again, there was no combat but the Prussians reacted quickly to reinforce their outposts and thus prevented the Austrian cavalry from advancing any further or from obtaining a clearer picture of the size of the Prussians opposing them.

In the adjacent valley the Prussian 5th Corps had sent a detachment of engineers to place an outpost on the Scneeberg mountain, and to observe with telescopes to the south for any enemy movement. Unfortunately the overcast weather conditions limited the usefulness of the telescopes and, having been unable to obtain a clear view of either Mittelwalde or Grulich, the detachment packed up and left during the afternoon, in order to complete their descent from the mountain before it became too dark. The Prussians also despatched a cavalry patrol to Altstadt, just over the border inside Austria. Although the patrol was able to find out that a strong body of troops was believed to be at Hohenstadt it did not learn that the Austrian 2nd Light Cavalry Division had already advanced into Silesia, or that the Austrian 2nd Corps was steadily filing along the road from Schildberg, following the cavalry towards Glatz¹⁰.

Umpire Comments

The first clashes occurred along the Iser today, and generally went in favour of the Austrians. This probably would not have been the case but for the personal intervention of the Crown Prince of Saxony who made several rapid but fortunately correct decisions which allowed the Austrians to hold their ground and prevent the Prussians from gaining a crossing at Jung Bunzlau. The Crown Prince has made up for initially dispersing his corps in all directions (except the right one) across southern Bohemia!

All is not well with North Army HQ at Konnigratz however. The split between the commanders at Konnigratz and the bulk of the HQ staff at Hohenstadt is now becoming unworkable. Archduke Albrecht is attempting to react to a changing situation but his immediate staff is unable to cope with the workload. Orders are being sent to the wrong place, while other commanders are not being informed of the changing plans or the fact that they are now under the direct command of Benedek. Unless Archduke Albrecht takes a firm grip of the situation quickly the attack into Silesia may well collapse simply due to the chaotic communications and poor staff work.

On the Prussian side it appears to be just another day at the office, although 1st Army is having its own command and control problems due to the distance from the HQ at Hunnerwasser and the formations on the left wing of the army.

9 One of the problems which hindered Austrian staff work during the day was the separation of Archduke Albrecht's personal staff (at Konnigratz) and the Army's main headquarters at Hohenstadt. Due to an oversight the orders for the main HQ to move to Konnigratz on the 24th were never actioned and the staff at Hohenstadt remained in situ. As a result the small staff at Konnigratz were simply overwhelmed by the workload, while the bulk of the junior staff and clerical support sat idle at Hohenstadt.

10 Several Prussian officials attempted to warn the garrison at Glatz of the Austrian advance, however they were easily caught by Austrian cavalry patrols and arrested.

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From the collected letters of Major von Habsburg...



Major Theodor Johan von Habsburg
Royal & Imperial Army general Staff
HQ North Army 1866

Konnigratz
25th June 1866

My dear Bruno I hope this letter finds you in good health. I am tolerably well but the Lord alone knows for how long. I am currently at Konnigratz with the Archduke and his personal staff. We have been here for three days and the army HQ is still at Hohenstadt.

We have few clerks, few maps, and not even a change of clothes! More importantly, we have no servants or cooks and have to dine at a local hostelry. This is all very well for the Archduke, they'll just put the bill on his tab, but mere mortals like myself have to pay up on the spot and most of my spare cash is in my bloody luggage at Hohenstadt!

The main staff was supposed to have been here yesterday but apparently no orders were issued so they just stayed put. The few staff officers we have here are being run ragged trying to do everything while the rest are sat idle in Hohenstadt. My God! It was never like this in Italy!

I also heard this evening that FML Benedek has been ordered to take charge of an attack into Prussian Silesia. A despatch to this effect was sent to von Gablenz with the 10th corps but some idiot sent the courier to where the 10th was two days ago! The courier told me that he spent 15 hours in the saddle trying to find the 10th but gave up in the end and came back to Konnigratz. Benedek set off regardless however, no doubt pleased to be going where the action is, rather than being expected sit here and do the thinking.

Some of the Saxon army marched through here a yesterday morning. Splendid looking chaps I have to say, and their Crown Prince seems a fine soldierly looking chap. The only problem is we don't know where the rest of their boys are. They were at Pardubitz a few days ago, but as to where they are now...well, it's anybody's guess. It is a bit worrying as we found out last night that the Prussians are almost on the Iser river, with only old Clam-Gallas "The Army Drum", (always being beaten d'you see Ha Ha Ha!) and his corps to hold them. It is to be hoped that the Saxons will be close enough to support him.

I think I shall retire tonight with a large glass of brandy and see if I can wake up with some enthusiasm for this enterprise tomorrow.

Theodor

26th June 1866

The weather is clear but cool.

Operations in the West – The Prussian Elbe Army

The Elbe Army, following its orders, screened the fortress at Theresienstadt by placing the 15th Division, supported by the 14th Cavalry Brigade, at Leitmeritz. The remainder of the army continued its march to the south east, with the intention of uniting with the 1st Army in the vicinity of Jung Bunzlau on the 27th.¹¹

Operations in the West – Events on the River Iser

Due to the presence of Austrian cavalry patrols on the west bank of the Iser near Munchengratz, the commander of the Prussian 1st Army was forced to direct his communications with the army's left wing via Zittau and Reichenberg. This delayed the delivery of orders to the 5th and 6th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Cavalry Division until about 8.00am on the morning of the 26th.

The 2nd Cavalry Division did not receive its orders until mid afternoon. The 2nd Cavalry Division commander however delayed his movement until midday, to wait in case fresh orders arrive and to allow his troops to rest, but also sent out patrols in the direction of Turnau, Rowensko and Lomnitz. He also dispatched a patrol to the west along the Iser to make contact with any friendly Prussian forces (the officer commanding the patrol was particularly instructed to find and report the Division's situation to the Cavalry Corps Commander Prinz Albrecht). At 10.00 am his patrol made contact with the Prussian forces near Turnau and reported to Prinz Albrecht that the 2nd Cavalry Division was at Semile and also that the bridge at Eisenbrod was unguarded (this was noted when the patrol passed through Eisenbrod).

The Prussian forces near Turnau, comprising the 5th, 6th and 1st Cavalry Division were halted between Leibenau and Turnau at first light awaiting orders. The 6th Division was ordered to attack the bridges at Turnau and seize a crossing, but by the time the orders were received (at 8.00 am) the Austrians had successfully fired both bridges and the 6th Division attack was halted while a detachment of cavalry were sent south along the Iser to search for another crossing.

Following the arrival of the patrol from the 2nd Cavalry Division the cavalry corps commander conferred with the two infantry division commanders. An officer from von Tumppling's staff was despatched to the army commander with details of the current situation. To ensure the despatch reached HRH Prince Frederick Karl safely, and as quickly as possible, the courier was instructed to find a quick route to Weisswasser and given a substantial escort from the Brandenburg Uhlan Regt. At the same time Prinz Albrecht instructed the cavalry staff officer to return to the 2nd Cavalry Division with orders for the 2nd division to secure the bridge at Eisenbrod. The 2nd Cavalry division was preparing to advance south from Semile just as the new order arrived and the 3rd Light Cavalry Brigade was therefore immediately despatched to secure the bridge at Eisenbrod.

The Prussian forces near Jung Bunzlau had remained in place during the morning, content to merely observe the enemy on the eastern bank and to prevent the Austrians from destroying the still intact bridges, while at the same time waiting for the corps and army reserve artillery to arrive from Niemes

At 3.00 pm the courier from HRH Prince Frederick Karl reached the Army commander near Jung Bunzlau. Orders were quickly despatched for the 3rd Corps, instructing the 6th Division to march at once for Eisenbrod to secure the crossing, while the 5th Division remained opposite Turnau to mask the withdrawal of the 6th Division.

At about the same time patrols reported that the enemy cavalry appeared to have withdrawn across the Iser to the east bank and that no enemy cavalry have been found along the west bank between Jung Bunzlau

¹¹ The intention to reach Jung Bunzlau by the 27th was a little optimistic as the terrain and road network prevented a direct march on Jung Bunzlau, instead the divisions were forced to take a more roundabout route in order to use the best roads.

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and Munchengratz. They also reported that the bridge at Bakow was apparently unguarded¹². The 3rd Heavy cavalry Brigade was subsequently ordered to seize the bridge at Bakow.

Following his return to Munchengratz during the evening of the 25th the Saxon commander, Crown Prince Albert, issued an order for his forces to be alert for further enemy attempts to force a crossing. He stressed the need to prepare bridges for destruction if possible, and for barricades to be erected on stone bridges. Wooden bridges were to be fired upon the enemy's approach, but in the event the Austrian forces were unable to guard every bridge and most of the bridges which could be burnt were simply set alight regardless.

The Saxon Division at Jung Bunzlau spent the morning taking up a defensive position on high ground overlooking the bridges south of Jung Bunzau, and sighting its batteries to be able to place fire on the bridges should the enemy attack. Due to the presence of Prussian picquets close by the western ends of the bridges the Saxons were however unable to approach or prepare the bridges for destruction.

By 10.00 am the leading brigade of the Saxon cavalry division arrived at Jung Bunzlau, followed at midday by the second Brigade. A squadron was detached to observe the Iser as far south as Neu Benatek and the now reunited Division took post just east of Jung Bunzlau, from where it could support either the Saxon infantry or its Austrian allies in Jung Bunzlau and to the north.

During the day the Austrian formations along the Iser attempted to carry out the orders to destroy the bridges to prevent their use by the enemy. By midday the following bridges had been either destroyed or were on fire:

- At Turnau both bridges had been set on fire.
- At Podol the road bridge had been successfully destroyed and the rail bridge was in flames.
- The Brezina bridge was on fire.
- The Sichrow bridge had been destroyed.
- The Munchengratz bridge had been blown up by the 1st Corps engineers.

Several attempts to burn the bridge at Loukow had failed and the troops had therefore removed some of the planking which had rendered the bridge unusable. Such efforts were temporary however and the bridge could easily be repaired within a short period of time. The bridges at, Kloster, Bakow, Bradlec and Zamost were still intact however, and those at Bakow and Zamost were unguarded.¹³

The bridges in the vicinity of Jung Bunzlau could not be destroyed, for the reason given above, however care was taken to emplace artillery in such a position as to be able to place fire on any attempt by the Prussians to storm these bridges.

Also during the morning von Edelesheim had withdrawn the last of his cavalry patrols back across the Iser and had reunited his division at Turnau. Having received reports the previous evening of enemy cavalry near Hochstadt on the 24th, von Edelsheim also despatched patrols to scout the area north of Turnau in the direction of Eisenbrod and Semile. During the early afternoon they encountered enemy patrols from the Prussian 2nd Cavalry Division which was at Semile. By evening they had confirmed the presence of the enemy at both Semile and Eisenbrod.

During the late afternoon and early evening the Prussian 3rd Heavy Cavalry Brigade (comprising two cavalry regiments supported by a horse battery) secured the bridge at Bakow. Due to the position of the bridge on the western side of the town itself, the commander of the Brigade, Generalmajor von der Glotz, considered it too dangerous to deploy his brigade on the east bank. Any attempt to hold the bridgehead with a town at his back risked the destruction of his cavalry or the loss of his guns should he be attacked and forced to withdraw in the dark. He therefore established some outposts to cover the eastern approaches to the town (and to prevent any of the inhabitants from leaving) and placed a squadron on the edge of the town to

12 This bridge had in fact been overlooked by the Saxons and Austrians and was both unguarded and intact.

13 The Saxon Crown Prince had issued orders for all bridges between Jung Bunzlau and Eisenbrod to be destroyed. However there were no less than 16 bridges over the 25 miles of river between these two points. The task of destroying all of these would have taken careful planning and considerable engineer support to achieve under favourable circumstances. That the Austrians managed to destroy as many as they did in a few hours must be considered fortunate.

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support the outposts. The remainder of the brigade were posted on the west bank of the Iser with orders to be mounted and ready to cross at first light. A despatch was sent to the Army HQ to inform them of the situation.

During the evening a Saxon officer from the 1st Division staff, en route to Munchengratz, was captured by a Prussian outpost near Bakow. Other officers making their way to Munchengratz from Jung Bunzlau either avoided the Prussian outposts or were warned of their presence by local inhabitants. By late evening the Crown Prince of Saxony was aware that the bridge at Bakow was in enemy hands.

Operations in the East

As a result of the staff problems which had occurred at Koniggratz Archduke Albrecht decided to return to the main HQ at Hohenstadt, leaving Benedek in command of the left wing of the North Army. The forward Headquarters returned to Hohenstadt by train, arriving in the early afternoon. Orders were also issued to prepare a train to move the Headquarters from Hohenstadt to Wildenschwert on the 27th (trains to be made ready at Hohenstadt on the 26th).

Benedek, having taken command of the 10th Corps and the 1st Reserve Cavalry Division, was informed of the presence of Prussian cavalry at Eypel and instructed his cavalry division (1st Reserve Cavalry Division) to drive the enemy north of the town to cover the assembly of the Austrian 3rd, 4th and 10th Corps around Nimmersatt.

In the meantime Von Bonin, commanding the Prussian 1st Corps at Trautenau had taken up a defensive position just south of Trautenau in anticipation of an attack. Although the Austrian cavalry screen pushed the Prussian cavalry back on the main position he was relieved to discover that the anticipated attack did not materialise and that the Austrian cavalry appeared content to observe his position. However, later reports of Austrian cavalry patrols reconnoitring to the east of the Aupa during the afternoon convinced von Bonin that the enemy was threatening his left flank and communications with Glatz. He therefore decided to fall back during the night and to take up a shorter line closer to Trautenau, where his cavalry could cover the Aupa valley and the crossing at Parschnitz.

By early afternoon however, the Austrian 10th Corps had taken up positions north of Nimmersatt and Benedek had been informed of both the enemy position at Trautenau and the arrival of his own 4th Corps. Believing that the enemy at Trautenau were unsupported Benedek ordered the cavalry to screen to the east of Eypel and to reconnoitre a route around the right flank of the Prussian position at Trautenau. At the same time orders were issued to the 10th and 4th Corps to prepare for an attack on the enemy on the following day. To Benedek's relief the road selected for the flank march, from Georgengrund to Weigelsdorf, was unguarded by the Prussians. Benedek therefore proposed to attack the enemy at Trautenau with the 4th Corps, supported by the Cavalry Division, while the 10th Corps carried out a flank march via Weigelsdorf and debouched into the enemy's rear.

By mid-evening Benedek had concentrated the 10th and 4th Corps and set them in motion for the attack at dawn on the 27th and as night fell, accompanied by intermittent light showers, the soldiers trudged off into the darkness.

At Glatz the Prussian 6th Corps took up a defensive position at first light, in expectation of an Austrian attack. The Guard Corps and Reserve Cavalry Corps had also been ordered to march to Glatz to reinforce the 6th Corps. The Army HQ also moved to Glatz, the intention of HRH Crown Prince Frederick William being to take personal control should a battle develop on the 26th. The Prussian 5th Corps remained at Wilhelmstahl, observing the border with Austria.

The commander of the Austrian 2nd Light Cavalry Division, had no intention of making an attack on Glatz and had been ordered to retire on the 2nd Corps (which was currently in the process of concentrating at Habelschwert where Thom's Brigade had taken up positions). As at Trautenau, the Austrian cavalry were content to observe the enemy, noting strength of the Prussian 6th Corps and the arrival of the Prussian Guard Corps from the east.

The Austrian Reserve was also forming up at Koniggratz, further to the west. The 8th Corps, the 2nd and 3rd

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Reserve cavalry Divisions and the Army Artillery Reserve began to assemble around Koniggratz, however all of these formations were disorganised and required time to rest. The 6th Corps remained at Solhnitz (approx 5 miles north of Reichenau).

Movement of the Prussian Royal HQ

Early on the 26th Von Moltke and the Prussian Royal HQ prepared to move from Berlin to Breslau. The Military Rail Transport department assembled several trains at Berlin during the day, while the initial staff transport and administrative staff departed during the early afternoon. The Royal HQ (including the King and Von Moltke) departed Berlin at 4.00 pm and travelled through the night, arriving at Breslau in the early hours of the 27th.

Umpire Comments

The events of the day have been most interesting from a historical point of view. Regardless of what the players have been doing three major factors have become apparent to me.

Terrain

Despite the players having free rein to decide on their own plans and manoeuvre appropriately, the armies are in fact moving along pretty much the same routes used by their historical counterparts. It is obvious that the terrain itself dictates the routes used and that until the 20th century at least, armies were almost completely tied to the road (and rail) networks. The concept of using strategic maps marked out in hexes allowing gamers to manoeuvre freely look pretty much discredited to me now. The use of period or contemporary maps does seem to be the way ahead as regards future wargame campaigns prior to WW2.

The Defence of the River Iser

It has become apparent that the forces allocated by the Austrians to defend the line of the Iser were insufficient, both historically and in this recreation of the campaign. At the present point in game time the commander of the Prussian Army is starting to believe that he is facing three enemy corps rather than the two that are actually opposing him. However, the Austrian 1st Corps and Saxon are spread painfully thin to try and cover some 15-20 miles of river. The line of the Iser to the north east (via Eisenbrod and Semile) is only covered by a handful of cavalry patrols, while the Iser south towards Prague is patrolled by a single Saxon Squadron.

The length of the river line means that the defenders are either spread so thinly that they can offer no more than a token resistance to a concentrated attack, or that if the defenders are concentrated to afford a stronger defence, then the enemy will be able to avoid the defenders and cross the Iser with little interference elsewhere. It is my opinion that a minimum of three Corps, plus a cavalry division, would be needed to defend the line between Jung Bunzlau and Semile for more than 24-36 hours.

Historically, Benedek's plan to hold the Iser was fatally flawed in that the resources allocated to carry out the task were inadequate. The troops deployed on the Iser would have been better used near the main army from where they could have been supported.

Bridges

The River Iser has a great number of bridges, both road and rail) along its length. Research has suggested that most of these are of wooden construction (or at least wooden decking on stone piers) and the railway bridges would be quite substantial structures to support the weight of a train. To guarantee the destruction of even a small number of these would require considerable engineer resources and adequate planning and preparation time. The Austrians on the Iser have none of these, and the fact that they have been able to destroy a number of the bridges is more by luck than judgement.

27th June 1866

The weather is overcast. Light showers overnight gave way to a steady drizzle and mist at about 4.00 am, with heavier rain at intervals throughout the day.

Operations in the West – The Prussian Elbe Army

With no enemy in front of him, and knowing that he had to make contact with the 1st Army, General von Herwarth instructed his forces to continue their advance on the Iser, although in compliance with an earlier request from the Prussian 1st Army, his forces were now directed on Alt Bunzlau rather than Jung Bunzlau.

The Elbe army therefore continued to push south east from Melnik, advancing down the east bank of the Elbe. The 16th Division, accompanied by the Army HQ and the 14th Cavalry Bde, marched to Hlawenetz, reaching that place at about 3.00 pm. Cavalry patrols were pushed forward to reconnoitre the crossing over the Iser near Neu Benetek, where they encountered the cavalry picquets from the Saxon cavalry Division¹⁴.

The 14th Division marched to Alt Bunzlau where it bivouacked for the night.

The 15th Division, less the 30th Brigade, remained at Leitmeritz where it could mask the fortress at Theresienstadt. The 30th Brigade was ordered to march to Melnick, where it joined the 7th and 8th Corps' Artillery and the Reserve Cavalry Brigade.

Operations in the West – Events on the River Iser

To the north of Turnau the Prussian 1st Cavalry and 6th Divisions marched through the night to Eisenbrod, arriving in the early hours, the soldiers dropping with fatigue. Both divisions crossed the Iser and took up positions south of the town before settling down to rest, covered by the outpost line of the 3rd Light Cavalry Brigade.

At about 10.00am the Prussian 5th Division arrived and, accompanied by the 3rd Light Cavalry Brigade advanced south towards Turnau, halting at the village of Hamstein shortly after midday.¹⁵

Needless to say, despite the bad weather and poor visibility the Austrians did not fail to notice the withdrawal of the Prussian 5th Division during the morning. Patrols from Edelsheim's cavalry probed north around Eisenbrod, occasionally clashing with the Prussian cavalry outposts, and by midday Edelsheim was aware that the Prussians were now over the river in strength and that a strong force of Prussian infantry was marching south towards Turnau. Although reinforced at Turnau by two brigades from the 1st Corps it was far from certain that Edelsheim would be able to hold Turnau if attacked in force.

The Battle of Bakow

Determined to capitalise on seizure of the bridge at Bakow the Prussians intended to reinforce the bridgehead at that point and to place a strong force over the river during the course of the day. The 4th Corps (Fransecky) was ordered to Bakow at first light, with the intention of throwing the 7th and 8th Divisions across the river, and following them with the 2nd Corps later in the day. However in the hurry to issue the relevant orders some mistakes were made.¹⁶

The commander of the Reserve Artillery and Bridging Train, Maj-General Von Lengsfeld, was horrified to discover that he was to turn his columns around and march for Eisenbrod, a distance of some 25 miles as

14 Shortly after contact was made the Saxon cavalry received the order to retire on Sobotka, as a result of the Battle of Bakow.

15 The commander of the 5th Division felt that it was best to wait in a strong position until the 6th Division and the rest of the cavalry were in a position to support him before continuing his advance on Turnau.

16 The orders as issued bore little resemblance to the situation, mixing up the order of march and referring to the wrong divisions etc. Fortunately Fransecky was an able commander and was able to make sense of his commander's intention and get his troops moving on time. From the umpire's point of view this highlights the dangers of despatching orders without first reading that what you have ordered makes sense before sending it to the umpire!

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the crow flies, almost double that distance by road. An irate von Lengsfeld rode to Army HQ for an explanation of his orders only to discover that his orders should have directed his march to Bakow. This contusion resulted in the artillery and bridging trains setting off much later than intended¹⁷.

The orders issued to the 4th Corps (Fransecky) were evidently the result of misunderstandings and incorrect assumptions and made little sense to Fransecky other than to indicate that he should reinforce the cavalry at Bakow as quickly as possible to secure the bridgehead. Fortunately Fransecky was able to despatch the 8th Division to march at first light while the 7th Division remained in situ until the arrival of the 2nd Corps to take over its positions.

Fortunately for the Prussians however, the enemy were equally slow off the mark that morning. The Crown Prince of Saxony, while appreciating the threat posed by the bridgehead at Bakow, did not show any real sense of urgency and as a result his troops did not begin moving until well after dawn, allowing the Prussian 4th Corps to reach Bakow in time to reinforce the cavalry brigade already there.

The 8th Div Advance Guard arrived at Bakow at 6.00am and immediately took up a position on the east bank of the Iser, supported by the 3rd Heavy Cavalry Brigade.



The battlefield at Bakow

(looking to the north along the line of the River Iser - the town of Bakow is can be seen to the left of the railway junction)

The main body of the 8th Division arrived at 7.00 am, at about the same time as the leading Saxon troops (advancing from Jung Bunzlau and Munchengratz). Realising the seriousness of the situation, the Saxons attacked immediately. The Prussian 3rd Heavy Cavalry Brigade charged the Saxon lines and drove the leading troops back through the village of Trencin. The cavalry pursued the withdrawing Saxons through the town. A counter attack by the Saxon 3rd Brigade at 8.30am succeeded in capturing a Prussian Horse Battery

¹⁷ Von Lengsfeld's trouble were not yet over. The bridging train was ordered to lead the way to Bakow, in order to construct further bridges at Bakow if required, with the Army Artillery following behind. When the head of the column arrived at the Iser near Bakow the battle was in full swing. The bridging train completely blocked the road (which was bordered by high ground on the right and a marshy stream on the left) and the artillery was trapped at the rear of the column, unable to advance or intervene in the fighting.

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near Trencin and advanced on Bakow.

At about the same time the Austrian Poschacher Brigade arrived from Jung Bunzlau, having handed over its positions to Brigade Leinginhem. Although only ordered to march to Munchengratz Poschacher marched his brigade to the sound of the guns, arriving just in time to catch the disordered Prussian Cavalry Brigade as it reformed near Trencin. A brisk fire from the Austrian troops forced the cavalry to retire closer to Bakow.

By 9 o'clock the Saxon 3rd Brigade had advanced to within several hundred yards of the bridge over the Iser, driving back the Prussian 72nd Regiment in disorder. The Prussians quickly sent fresh troops into action and halted the Saxon advance, a fierce fire fight developing in the wood between Bakow and the Iser.

In an attempt to relieve the pressure on their infantry holding the line at Bakow the Prussians attacked with all their available cavalry. The 3rd Cavalry Brigade, supported by the 6th Uhlans, charged Poschacher's Austrian infantry. Poschacher's "Iron Brigade" lived up to its reputation and, standing firm, it shattered the Prussian cavalry with controlled volley fire and cannister shot from the attached batteries. The surviving cavalry withdrew, the 6th Uhlans losing their regimental colour when the standard bearer was shot in hand to hand fighting with some Austrian Jagers. During the charges the Prussian Cavalry Commander, Gen von der Glotz was killed.¹⁸

This was to be the high point of the Allied attack however. While the Austrians repulsed the Prussian cavalry, the Saxon 3rd Brigade was being ground down in the fire fight at Bakow. The Prussians were therefore able to reinforce their line and drove off the Saxons, recapturing their original positions. The Saxon line was reinforced by Poschacher's Austrians but, despite heavy casualties on both sides, the Allies were unable to break the Prussian line. The fight went on for another hour with neither side being able to make any headway.

At 10 o'clock, the Saxon cavalry Division arrived from Jung-Bunzlau, and at about 10.30 am the Saxon Crown Prince ordered a withdrawal covered by the cavalry, correctly assuming that the battered Prussians would be in no shape to follow up, particularly following the destruction of their cavalry.

Despite the ferocity of the fighting the casualties for both sides were relatively light. Austrian and Saxon losses amounted to about 1,400 killed and wounded, while Prussian casualties came to just over 1,200 killed and wounded.

Umpire Notes:

The action at Bakow was a close run thing indeed, although it has to be said that had the Saxons began moving at first light they would probably have beaten the Prussians to the bridge. The Allies came very close to beating the Prussians but an appalling run of luck on the dice by the Austrian player allowed the Prussian player to seize the initiative, rally and reinforce his line. The sacrifice of the Prussian cavalry also bought the Prussians time which they needed to sort themselves out. Once the fighting came down to close range the superiority of the Needle gun became apparent.

The Prussians however were in no shape to follow up the withdrawing Saxons and Austrians, who were able to slip away in the rain.

Following the Allied withdrawal from Bakow the Saxon Crown Prince realised that the line of the Iser was fatally compromised and that to attempt to hold it any longer would lead to defeat in detail. After a brief discussion with his Divisional Commanders and GM Poschacher he issued orders for a general withdrawal on Sobotka where it was thought the army would be able to find a good defensive position to oppose any Prussian advance. Further orders were sent to Count Clam-Gallas and Baron von Edelsheim, informing them of the situation, and instructing them to hold Turnau as long as possible before retiring towards Gitschin and covering the right flank of the position at Sobotka. The trains and artillery reserves were instructed to march for Sobotka with all speed.

As the Allies withdrew from Bakow the Prussian 7th and 8th Divisions secured the bridgehead and awaited the

¹⁸ Following the death of Gen von der Glotz, the Colonel of the 2nd Kurassier Regiment, Oberst von Schaevenbach took command of the Brigade. Less than an hour later he too was killed by an Austrian shell.

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arrival of the 2nd Corps. The destruction of the Prussian cavalry during the battle meant that no pursuit could be organised.

During the afternoon however, the 2nd Corps discovered that the enemy picquets covering the bridges at Jung-Bunzlau and Debr were no longer visible. A cautious reconnaissance reported that the enemy had indeed withdrawn and this was subsequently confirmed by a delegation from the town council of Jung-Bunzlau who requested that the town be spared bombardment as there were no longer any troops present. Seizing the opportunity General Von Schmidt ordered his two divisions to secure the crossings.

Operations in the East

The activities of the opposing armies in the east during the 27th can be broken down into three main events:

- The Battle of Trautenau
- The advance of the Austrian 6th Corps
- The Cavalry Skirmish at Glatz

The Battle of Trautenau

Throughout the night the Austrian 10th and 4th Corps took up their positions. The night was dark, with intermittent showers. At Trautenau General von Bonin, fearing an attack which would threaten his communications east towards the Second Army, used the cover of the night to withdraw his troops into positions nearer to the town. This movement placed his corps closer to its line of communications, made good use of the defensive possibilities of the high ground to the south of Trautenau and also shortened his line. The night was dark and overcast, with intermittent showers and both armies were able to carry out their manoeuvres undetected by the enemy.



The battlefield at Trautenau (looking east)

The initial Prussian line is shown in blue, with the Austrian 4th Corps attacking from the south and the 10th Corps arriving behind the Prussian flank as shown

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As dawn broke the countryside was covered in fine mist and drizzle. The Austrian 4th Corps, advancing on Trautenau from the south discovered that the enemy had apparently vanished. Benedek, concerned that the enemy may have escaped, ordered the 4th Corps to advance in the hope that the enemy may still be brought to battle. At about the same time Gablenz, unable to hear any firing from the direction in which the main attack was to develop, began a cautious advance with the leading brigade of the 10th Corps.

In the event it was the 10th Corps, falling on the enemy's right flank, which first made contact with the Prussians. The Austrians pressed forward and the 24th Infantry Regiment quickly stormed Trautenau, driving out the defending Prussians by 6.00 am. The Prussians soon rallied however and held firmly to the heights above the town.



The 10th Corps attacks the Prussian right flank - about 6.00 am

By 6.30 am, the fighting was extending to the east as the Austrian 4th Corps closed with the enemy. The poor weather, which severely hampered visibility, concealed the approach of the Austrian columns, while at the same time preventing the Austrians from being able to determine the Prussian positions until they were almost on top of them.

Once the Prussians had recovered from the initial surprise caused by Gablenz's flank attack they quickly rallied. With the heights firmly held by Prussian infantry a counter attack by the Prussian 45th Regiment, supported by the Corps Reserve Artillery, was launched against Trautenau. Taken by surprise and shaken by the heavy fire, the Austrian 24th Regiment was quickly driven back and, apart from a few houses at the western edge of the town which were stoutly held by men from the 12th Feldjäger Battalion, the Prussians regained control of the town.

At 8 o'clock the fighting was general along the line, with fierce fighting around the heights south of the town and also for possession of the woods further east adjacent to the River Aupa.

By now the two Austrian Corps had made contact with each other and Benedek, determined to inflict a defeat on the enemy and with the knowledge that the Austrian 3rd Corps was en route to join him, organised fresh attacks against the Prussian lines. During the fighting the Prussian infantry proved dangerous foes and the needle gun took a heavy toll of the Austrians. However, as the fighting swung to and fro across the battlefield the Prussians found that the Austrians were also capable of striking hard at their enemies and casualties mounted on both sides.

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At 9 o'clock, with the 10th Corps now almost fully assembled on the battlefield, Gablenz launched a second assault against Trautenau. The 13th Regiment stormed the western end of the town and in a sharp fight drove the defenders almost to the eastern edge of the town. The Prussians recovered long enough to halt the Austrian advance and the fighting in the town settled into a firefight across the town square, with neither side being able to make any headway. At about the same time, on the other side of the battlefield, the Austrian Colonel Poeckh, observing the Prussian line wavering, led his brigade forward at the double and drove the enemy from their positions. At his moment of triumph however Colonel Poeckh was struck by a Prussian bullet and forced to retire from the field¹⁹.

The fighting continued with unabated fury for the possession of the crucial high ground. Von Bonin, the Prussian commander had realised that he was heavily outnumbered but determined to hold his position for as long as he could, this decision being confirmed by the arrival of fresh orders from the 2nd Army HQ which required him to remain at Trautenau. By about 11.00am however it was becoming apparent that the Prussians may simply be overwhelmed by the Austrian numbers. Both armies were tiring and casualties had been heavy on both sides, however the Austrian 3rd Corps was deploying onto the battlefield and would soon be in a position to join the fighting.

Although Von Bonin was unaware of the arrival of fresh Austrian reinforcements, he did realise that the Austrian advance was closing, albeit slowly, on the the single bridge at Patschkau. With the bridges at Trautenau either in Austrian hands or under fire, the only escape route for the Prussian corps was across the bridge at Patschkau. Von Bonin therefore gave orders to commence a withdrawal in that direction. Making use of the ground and woods to conceal their intentions the Prussian began withdrawing. However the Prussian regiments fighting on the heights outside Trautenau were unable to disengage due to the close proximity of the enemy. Here the Austrians had seized several batteries of Prussian artillery and compelled the Prussian infantry to withdraw almost to the edge of the heights. The Prussians remaining in the town were withdrawn in an attempt to disengage those still on the heights but were themselves compelled to withdraw towards Patschkau, leaving those on the heights unsupported.



The Austrian 4th Corps fights its way towards the bridge at Patschkau

The final stage in the drama took place at about 12 o'clock. Having finally seized the town, the Austrians

¹⁹ Oberst Poeckh was initially reported killed during the battle however, against all medical opinion, he eventually recovered from his wound but took no further part in the war.

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were able to advance from there up onto the heights taking the Prussian defenders in the rear. At the same time the Austrians attacking the heights from the south and west made a final charge which overwhelmed the defenders. The Prussian infantry, who had been fighting for almost seven hours, exhausted and running low on ammunition and with their retreat cut off, were forced to surrender. Their opponents, equally exhausted, were in no position to pursue the retreating Prussians.

The Austrian 3rd Corps had by now become entangled with the 4th Corps and by the time the columns were reorganised the Prussians had reached the far side of the Aupa at Patschkau and were withdrawing to the north-east behind a covering force provided by Von Bredow's cavalry brigade. Most of the remaining infantry were able to make good their escape but a several artillery batteries had to be abandoned as they could not be safely withdrawn in time.

Casualties

The battle was hard fought, with both sides suffering heavy casualties. Austrian losses amounted to 5760 killed and wounded, 720 missing or made prisoners of war. A number of guns were damaged by enemy fire but none lost to the enemy. Several batteries were overrun by the enemy but were recaptured before the enemy were able to remove them. One Regimental colour from the 51st Regiment was taken by the enemy but was subsequently recovered when the Prussian 45th Regiment surrendered.

Prussian losses amounted to 4680 killed and wounded, with a further 5040 prisoners of war taken by the enemy. In addition, 40 guns were taken by the enemy or abandoned. Nine Regimental colours were taken by the enemy (41st Regiment -1, 4th & 5th Grenadier Regiments, 45th Regiment – 3 each)

Umpire Notes:

The battle was hard fought and bloody. Both sides fought well, with the exception of the Austrian 1st Reserve Cavalry Division which manoeuvred poorly and played little part in the battle (although in fairness the Division had not been allowed to rest in the days prior to the battle). The battle swung to and fro across the crucial high ground, with the Austrian numbers compensating to a great extent for the effectiveness of the Prussian needle gun. The defensive terrain however did give the Prussians an advantage and forced the Austrians to attack head on in most cases.

The Austrian plan to use the 10th Corps to attack the Prussian flank at Trautenau while the 4th Corps attacked and pinned the enemy from the front, succeeded in taking the enemy by surprise. However the earlier withdrawal by the cautious von Bonin meant that the Prussians were in a far better position to deal with the flank attack than if they had remained in their original positions. This was bad luck for the Austrians, who really deserved better for their recognition of the fact that the Prussians were isolated and unsupported, and the careful reconnaissance and execution of their plan. The Austrians did however win the battle, the Prussians being forced from the battlefield and leaving most of a division and almost half their guns in the enemy's hands²⁰, and Benedek will almost certainly acquire a new nickname as the "Lion of Trautenau"!

It should be noted however that the Prussian officers commanding the troops who surrendered declined to share their misfortune and made good their escape on horseback. I think their future promotion prospects are looking a bit bleak at the moment. However, as one of the 1st Corps staff officers said after the original Battle of Trautenau in 1866: "We can't ALL be heroes!"

The Advance of the Austrian 6th Corps

During the night of 26th-27th June FmL Baron Von Ramming received orders to march into Silesia with the aim of seizing Glatz. It was assumed at the 6th Corps HQ that this was to be in conjunction with some of the other Corps of North Army however Ramming was unaware that three Corps were currently engaged at Trautenau, and that the 2nd Corps was halted at Habelschwert, some 7-8 miles south of Glatz, but he was determined to get his Corps into action and set off without querying whether or not he was to be supported.

During the afternoon the 6th Corps crossed the border into Silesia near Giesshubel, and by late afternoon

²⁰ In terms of manpower the Prussian 1st Corps lost 32% of its fighting strength as casualties or prisoners of war. Austrian casualties amounted to about 10% of the troops involved.

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the main body of the corps had reached Reineez, about 12 miles from Glatz. where it bivouacked. Anxious to reconnoitre the route towards Glatz, and to discover the whereabouts of any enemy in the vicinity, Ramming despatched several cavalry patrols to the east. During the evening the patrols pushed forward as far as crossroads at Neuheid, where they encountered the outlying picquets of the 2nd Army Reserve Cavalry Corps.²¹ In the persistent drizzle and failing light the Austrian cavalry withdrew to Wahlsfurth and reported the presence of the enemy to Von Ramming. The Prussian cavalry commander likewise reported the Austrian patrols to the Army HQ.

Cavalry Actions near Glatz

At the Prussian 2nd Army HQ the Crown Prince was determined to learn what was behind the enemy cavalry screen to the south of Glatz. The cavalry of both the 6th Corps and Guards Corps was therefore instructed to make a reconnaissance in force to the south, with the intention of taking prisoners and locating any other enemy forces in the vicinity. Both the Guard and 6th Corps were stood to arms in case of an enemy attack.

At about 6.00 am the Cavalry of the Prussian Guard Corps began to advance south from their positions, with the intention of carrying out a reconnaissance so the south of Glatz. At the same time strong patrols from the 6th Corps cavalry began advancing south through Soritsch.

The Austrian cavalry initially held their ground and there was a number of small skirmishes as both sides manoeuvred for position. Fearing that the cavalry advance was a prelude to a larger attack, the Austrian cavalry commander, Generalmajor Prinz Thurn und Taxis, ordered his division to fall back on the 2nd Corps, which he was expecting to reach Hebelschwert during the day.

Once it became apparent to the Prussians that there would be no attack on Glatz that day the 6th and Guard Corps were stood down and the Reserve cavalry Corps was ordered to Schwedeldorf, some 5 miles to the west of Glatz to cover the main road to the west.

By midday the Austrian cavalry had fallen back to Habelschwert where they joined the 2nd Corps which was by now arriving at that town. The main body of the Prussian cavalry had halted once it was apparent the enemy was falling back and, fearing a possible trap, had only followed up with a number of small patrols. Fortunately for the Prussians two daring young cavalry officers led their patrols close to the Austrian lines and managed to discover the arrival of the Austrian 2nd Corps. One of the patrols, from a Guard cavalry regiment was discovered and surprised by Austrian cavalry. In the ensuing skirmish, several of the patrol were captured (including the officer) but an nco and some troopers escaped to carry the information back to the 2nd Army. The other patrol, from the 1st Silesian Hussars, included an nco who knew the area and he led the patrol along a little used track around the west of the Austrian position from where the officer was able to observe the 2nd Corps taking up its positions.

The information gained by the patrols was sent on to Army headquarters and by early evening the Crown Prince knew that the Austrians were at Habelschwert in strength.

21 The Prussian Reserve Cavalry Corps had been ordered to Schwedeldorf earlier in the day.

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From the collected letters of Major von Habsburg...



Major Theodor Johan von Habsburg
Royal & Imperial Army general Staff
HQ North Army 1866

Wildenschwert
27th June 1866

My dear Bruno

Well, who would have thought it? The Lion of Solferino has done it again! Benedek has beaten the Prussians at some place called Trautenau. The enemy were caught with their pants down and given a sound thrashing, thousands of prisoners taken, dozens of cannon captured and the rest of them running for the Silesian border as fast as their legs can carry them.

I have to say the old boy has done us proud. Even his nibs the Archduke has been seen walking around with a grin like Viennese harlot who has just discovered she hasn't got the clap after all. Ha ha ha!

It would even appear that the Saxons and old Clam-Gallas are giving a good account of themselves on the Iser, having given the Prussians another bloody nose before slipping away intact.

Well, yesterday I returned to Hohenstadt, where I was reunited with my baggage – after a bath and a change of underclothes I felt like a new man I can tell you. However, as you can see we have moved again and I am now at Wildenschwert, a dreary little town halfway between Hohenstadt and Koniggratz. It looks as though we shall be staying here for a while however as we are close to the main road, and the railway and telegraph lines.

Yours as ever

Johan

28th June 1866

The weather remained overcast with a steady drizzle and rain throughout the region.

Operations in the West – The Prussian Elbe Army

The Elbe Army continued to close up to the Iser river. Army HQ and the 16th Division remained at Hlawenetz to rest while sending patrols to the river Iser in the vicinity of Neu Benatek. Contact was finally made with cavalry patrols from the 1st Army (2nd Corps) who were themselves reconnoitring to the south. The Commander of the Elbe Army thus learned of the fighting along the Iser and that 1st Army had secured crossings over the Iser to the north of the Elbe Army. During the day the 8th Corps Artillery was instructed to join the 16th Division at Hlawetz.

The 14th Division remained at Alt Bunzlau while sending a detachment south to secure a crossing over the Elbe at Brandeis. Cavalry patrols were despatched to reconnoitre in the direction of Prague.

The 15th Division, less the 30th Brigade, remained at Leitmeritz. The 30th Brigade was ordered to march to Neu Benatek in concert with the 7th Corps Artillery and the Reserve Cavalry Brigade, reaching its destination in the early evening.

Unknown to the Prussians however, the garrison at Theresienstadt had received instructions from HQ North Army to examine the possibilities of an attack of the Prussian position at Leitmeritz²². During the day several officers from the Garrison conducted a reconnaissance of the Prussian position on the south bank of the Elbe at Eisendurfel, opposite Leitmeritz. The patrol was observed by the Prussian pickets on the south bank and was engaged with rifle fire. They patrol beat a hasty retreat to a safe distance. A subsequent attempt by the Prussians to push one of their picquets forward to engage the patrol was abandoned when the picket came under fire from two of the fortress guns, the Austrian patrol withdrawing under the cover of the fire.

Operations in the West – Operations on the Iser

The day passed quietly on the Iser, with no fighting as the opposing armies rested following the combats during the 25th-27th June.

At Turnau Clam-Gallas consolidated his position, with three Brigades holding the high ground to the north of the town. The 1st Light Cavalry Division maintained a screen of outposts observing the roads to Eisenbrod and Semile, as well as screening the Prussian forces at Hamstein.

Further to the south east, the Saxon Crown Prince took up a defensive position at Sobotka, with his two Divisions forming a line from Sobotka to Unter Bautzen, with the Austrian Brigades of Poschacher and Leiningen forming the right flank. The Saxon Cavalry Division was posted to form a strong screen west of the position and covering the roads to Munchengratz and Jung Bunzlau. Once in position the troops were allowed to rest. Throughout the previous night and into the morning the Trains of the Austrian 1st Corps arrived and began to resupply the Austrian Brigades, as well as sending supplies forwards to the Austrian forces at Turnau.

The Prussian forces at Eisenbrod (the 6th Division and 1st cavalry Division) were ordered to rest after their exertions of the previous two days. The 5th Division, at Hamstein with part of the 2nd Cavalry Division, was ordered to await the arrival of the remainder of the 2nd Cavalry Division and then to advance on Turnau. The 5th Division subsequently advanced at 1.00pm (following the arrival of the last of the Cavalry Division from Semile) but halted at Weselz once contact was made with the Austrian cavalry outposts near Turnau. It soon became apparent to von Tumbling (commanding the 5th Division) that the Austrians were present at Turnau in some strength and that he had no discernible advantage in numbers, cavalry or terrain, nor could he rely on the 6th or 1st cavalry Divisions for support at the present time.

Instructing the cavalry to place outposts to observe the enemy von Tumbling withdrew to Hamstein with his

²² The telegraph lines leading to the fortress were intact, the Prussians having neglected to cut them. The Fortress Commander was therefore able to remain in communication with North Army HQ via the telegraph offices at Prag and Pardubitz.

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division and the rest of the cavalry, where he could at least cover the forces assembling at Eisenbrod until such time as they could advance to support him.

At Bakow, the Prussian 7th and 8th Divisions remained in situ, resting and tending to the casualties and dead after the battle of the 27th. They were joined by 1st Army HQ, the Reserve Artillery and the Bridging Train. Reconnaissance patrols were despatched towards Munchengratz²³ and to the east along the Gitschin road to determine in which direction the Austro-Saxon forces had withdrawn. It soon became apparent from the state of the roads that the enemy had withdrawn towards Sobotka, however strong Saxon cavalry outposts prevented the Prussians from learning much more and at 1st Army Headquarters there was some uncertainty as to whether the enemy intended to stand at Sobotka or whether the Saxon cavalry were merely covering a retreat further to the east.

The Prussian 2nd Corps also carried out a reconnaissance around Jung Bunzlau, during which the Corps made contact with both the outposts of the 7th and 8th Divisions at Bakow, and lead forward cavalry patrols of the Elbe Army near Neu Benatek. Having established that there were no enemy forces in the vicinity of Jung Bunzlau the 2nd Corps set off for Nimburg towards noon, reaching that town by 7.00pm.

Operations in the East

At this time neither of the Army Commanders was fully aware of the enemy's dispositions or intentions. To recap the situation:

1. The Austrians had massed three Corps (3rd, 4th and 10th) under Benedek and had soundly beaten the isolated Prussian 1st Corps at Trautenau on the 27th. The Austrian 2nd Corps was at Habelschwert, a few miles south of Glatz and aware of the presence of the Prussian 6th and Guards Corps at the fortress town. The Austrian 6th Corps under von Ramming had been ordered to attack Glatz from the west in support of the 2nd Corps. It was intended that the 2nd Corps fight a defensive battle at Habelschwert where it could take advantage of the good defensive terrain but retire on Mittelwalde if pressed. Neither North Army HQ or the 2nd Corps was aware of the presence of the Prussian 5th Corps half a day's march away at Wilhelmstahl in the adjacent valley to the east. In addition, Archduke Albrecht was becoming concerned with the situation facing his western flank on the Iser river.
2. The commander of the Prussian 2nd Army, on the other hand, was operating very much in the dark. With no knowledge of the whereabouts of the Prussian 1st Army, the Crown Prince was forced to simply follow the orders received from Royal HQ. In addition, by 6.30 am 2nd Army HQ was aware that the 1st Corps had been defeated at Trautenau and that at least two enemy corps were in that vicinity, and also that one enemy corps was located at Habelschwert. The presence of the Austrian 6th Corps to the west of Glatz was not confirmed, although there had been reports of Austrian cavalry patrols west of Glatz during the evening of the 27th. Despite his uncertainty as to what was happening on the western flank of his army, the Crown Prince had determined to seize the initiative with an attack on what he perceived to be the isolated Austrian 2nd Corps.

At North Army HQ Archduke Albrecht issued orders for the 3rd Reserve Cavalry Division and the Army Artillery Reserve to move west towards Chlumetz, where they could support the Austrian and Saxon forces on the Iser. The 2nd Reserve Cavalry Division was despatched to the east with orders to join von Ramming in operations against Glatz.

Operations in the East – Glatz

On the evening of 27th the Prussian Crown Prince issued orders for an attack on the Austrian force (2nd Corps) at Habelschwert, some miles to the south of Glatz. As yet still unaware of the disaster which had befallen the Prussian 1st Corps at Trautenau, the Crown Prince ordered the Guards and 6th Corps to attack the enemy at Habelschwert. At the same time the Prussian 5th Corps (von Steinmetz), which was bivouacked in the adjacent valley, would cross the intervening hills via a road which would place it in the rear of the Austrian position at Habelschwert. With a strong attack to pin the enemy at Habelschwert while Von

²³ It was discovered that Austrian Engineers had disabled the equipment in the telegraph office at Munchengratz, and had cut the lines east of the town.

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Steinmetz manoeuvred against their rear the chances of a victory seemed good. However, on receipt of these orders the 6th Corps Commander, Gen von Mutius, was concerned that by advancing to the south he would leave the right flank of the army uncovered if the enemy attacked from the west. It was therefore determined that he would follow his orders but might manoeuvre at his discretion if attacked from the west. The Prussian Reserve Cavalry Corps would be placed under the command of the 6th Corps during the day. The freedom for von Mutius to act independently would prove to be crucial during the day

The Action at Glatz

The Austrian 6th Corps began its advance shortly after dawn, probing forwards along the main road to Glatz. Near Nuehaid they encountered the outposts of the Prussian 2nd Army Reserve cavalry Corps. Not wishing to engage the enemy unsupported the Prussian cavalry commander send word of the enemy's approach to the nearby Prussian 6th Corps and fell back to high ground behind Schwedeldorf, where the cavalry took post to wait for the support of the Prussian 6th Corps.



The battlefield near Glatz (looking north)

Glatz is to the east, while the two roads in the west lead to Reineez. The Prussians deployed on the high ground in the centre.

Von Ramming, pressing forwards, soon reached Schwedeldorf and began to deploy on open ground to the north of the village. Both sides soon made out the enemy through the rain and opened fire with artillery and skirmishers at about 8.30 am.

Von Mutius, the 70 year old commander of the Prussian 6th Corps was aware of the need to protect the flank of the army at Glatz but being unsure of the numbers of enemy facing him elected to advance cautiously until he could find the main enemy line. The Reserve Cavalry Corps was ordered to swing round onto the right flank to both cover the flank of the 6th Corps and threaten any enemy advance towards Glatz.

The Austrians quickly deployed the two leading brigades and reinforced their line with the Corps Artillery and for a while the Austrians pounded the Prussian infantry at long range, to which the Prussian needle gun could not reply. Austrian Jagers also deployed in a small wood at the eastern end of Schwedeldorf and opened fire on the nearest Prussian infantry, the 10th Grenadier Regiment. The Prussian Grenadiers quickly advanced and stormed the wood. After a brief fight the Austrian Jagers were pushed back into the village

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where they attempted to make a stand. Heavily outnumbered by the three battalions of Prussian Grenadiers the Jagers were shattered and driven from the village, allowing the Prussian to advance onto the flank of the Austrian line outside the village. Seizing the opportunity the Prussian commander threw several regiments forward into the Austrian fire. For a while the lines disappeared in the smoke as the firing became general.

By 9.30 am both sides were hotly engaged, with the Prussians edging closer to bring their needle guns into effective range. Suddenly the Prussian artillery redoubled its fire dismounting a number of Austrian cannon and silencing several batteries. The Austrian line began to waver and the Prussian infantry surged forward and began to pour rifle fire into the shaken enemy. The sudden reverse was too much for the Austrian infantry, who began to retire in disorder at about 10.00am.

Von Ramming, still uncertain how many Prussians opposed him, and with what appeared to be fresh enemy forces now threatening his left flank, decided not to risk further defeat but to fall back to better ground near Waldorf where the terrain would favour the defender. Ramming accordingly despatched his two rearmost brigades to Waldorf to take up fresh positions, at the same time instructing his Corps artillery to go with them.

By this time the Prussians were somewhat disordered by their sudden success and their advance faltered. Von Ramming was able to take advantage of this and quickly withdrew his leading brigades, reforming them near Engeldorf, to cover the withdrawal of the remainder of the corps.

At about 10.30 the Prussian commander realised that the enemy were withdrawing. Considering that he had achieved his intention of protect the left flank of the position at Glatz, and unwilling to risk a further advance against an enemy of still unknown size and intention, Von Mutius rallied his forces and took up a defensive position on the high ground above Schwedeldorf.

By 11.00 am the action was over and the Austrian had withdrawn, followed cautiously by a few Prussian cavalry patrols from the Reserve Cavalry Corps. However, the sound of gunfire could be heard growing louder towards the south in the direction of Habelschwert, where the Guards Corps was heavily engaged.

Austrian casualties amounted to about 550 killed and missing, with a number of guns and a Rocket battery destroyed. Prussian casualties mounted to 360 killed and wounded.

The Battle of Habelschwert

Accompanied by the Crown Prince the Prussian Guards Corps marched at first light. Arriving on a line from the village of Melling to Raumnitz the two Guards Division deployed and at 9.30 am began to advance on Habelschwert, along the eastern bank of the River Neisse. To the North could be heard the rumble of gunfire from the action outside Glatz.

The Prussian plan had been to launch an attack against the Habelschwert position with two Corps, supported on the right by the Reserve Cavalry Corps. The Guards Corps was to attack the Austrian positions on the east bank near Plomnitz while the 6th Corps advanced on Habelschwert on the opposite bank. However, shortly after 9.30 a message was received from General von Mutius informing the Crown Prince that the enemy was attacking in strength and that he had been forced to move his corps to the west to meet them.

Realising that more than half of his planned attacking force was no longer available, the Crown Prince now had to decide on his course of action. Knowing that the 5th Corps should be in a position behind the enemy by mid or late afternoon, he could not risk allowing the enemy to escape or manoeuvre. At the same time he could not commit the whole of the Guards Corps to an attack while his own flank and rear was potentially at risk should the 6th Corps be beaten. The Crown Prince therefore decided to pin the enemy in place by making a flank attack via Plomnitz with part of the Guard Corps, while waiting for news of the situation facing the 6th Corps, and for von Steinmetz to get into position. If events took a turn for the worse he would then have the option of breaking off the Guards' attack and still have half of the Corps fresh and available to cover a withdrawal.

The Prussian attack commenced at about 10.00am, with the leading brigades from the two Guards Division moving forward towards Plomnitz and Weissbrodt on the east bank of the Neisse. The attack was initially

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held by the Austrian Brigade of GM Herzog (Duke of) Wurttemberg, but by 11.00am the brigade was suffering heavy casualties and being pushed back. Several spirited charges²⁴ by the two brigades of the Austrian 2nd Light Cavalry Division temporarily relieved the pressure against Wurttemberg's brigade and gained time of the infantry to fall back from the vicinity of Plomnitz and to reform their line closer to Weissbrodt.



The battlefield at Habelschwert, looking west and showing the initial Austrian positions. The Prussian Guards Corps attacked from the North, from the direction of Alt-Waltersdorf. The River Neisse runs from left to right through the centre of the battlefield.

During this period the commander of the 2nd Corps, FML Graf Thun-Hohenstädt, altered the facing of his corps to meet the threat against his right. As part of this movement he redeployed his corps artillery on high ground west of the Neisse in such a manner as to allow his guns to sweep the ground on the far bank with fire. By 12.30 the Austrian line was re-established and the massed guns were directing a telling fire on the Prussian Guards as they attempted to press past Plomnitz towards Weissbrodt²⁵. In addition an additional brigade (von Saffran) was shifted to the right flank on the eastern bank (via a bridge approximately a mile south of Weissbrodt) of the river to support the cavalry and the 4th Brigade. The Corps Commander also crossed to the east bank of the Neisse to oversee the battle at first hand.

At about 1.00pm the Prussian assaulted the bridges at Habelschwert and Weissbrodt, the attacks collapsing in the face of heavy Austrian artillery fire. The CO of the Prussian 1st Foot Guards Regiment was killed close by the bridge at Habelschwert.

The Prussians kept up their attacks despite the losses but the sustained flanking fire from the massed Austrian batteries began to slow the Prussian infantry and threw them into disorder. Sensing the moment had come Prinz Thurn und Taxis, commanding the Austrian cavalry, ordered a charge against the faltering

²⁴ One of the charges captured the colours of the 1st Battalion of the Prussian 1st Guard Grenadier Regiment.

²⁵ At one point almost 60 guns, supported by a rocket battery, were firing on the Prussian infantry, inflicting substantial casualties. The Prussian 3rd Foot Guards Regiment suffered severely under this punishing fire.

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Prussian Guards. At 1.30 pm the cavalry advanced across the open ground in front of Weissbrodt and swept the Prussian 3rd Foots Guards and 3rd Guard Grenadiers back towards Plomnitz with heavy losses. The CO of the Austrian 12th Hussars was badly wounded during the charge.

The Prussian Crown Prince had by now been informed of the repulse of the Austrians west of Glatz by the 6th Corps (although he was still as yet unaware of the location of the 5th Corps under von Steimnetz). At 1.30 pm he therefore ordered von Mutius to despatch the Reserve Cavalry Corps with all speed to attack the Austrian left flank near Alt Weistritz. The cavalry was to be followed as quickly as possible by the infantry of the 6th Corps. At the same time those parts of the Guard Corps which had been held back in reserve were brought forward and thrown into the attack.

The Prussians quickly rallied after the Austrian cavalry charges and once the enemy cavalry fell back the Guards once more advanced and the struggle for the bridges at Weissbrodt and Habelschwert resumed. The northern outskirts of Habelschwert The intensity of the fighting was such that the fire of individual batteries could not be distinguished amongst the continual roar of cannon.

Despite the intensity of the Prussian attacks the Austrian commander remained confident that he would be able to hold his ground. However, at about 2.15pm an Officer and Sergeant Major from the Corps Park Battalion and Transport Squadrons arrived with the serious news that an ammunition column from the corps trains (located near Mittelwalde) had been attacked by enemy cavalry attacked just south of Ober Langenau. The attack occurred at about 1.30pm. The enemy had quickly dispersed or captured the train drivers and escort. The two survivors, being mounted, were able to fight their way clear and make good their escape. Some 15 minutes later another wounded officer from the ammunition column arrived (having feigned death and then making his escape on a stray horse). This officer brought the news that a column of enemy troops had reached the bridge over the Neisse south of Ober Langenau²⁶.

The news that the Prussians had cut the road south to Mittelwalde came as a severe shock to the Austrians, and there was some disbelief amongst the staff. It was even suggested that it may just be a cavalry patrol. In any event a staff officer was immediately despatched south along the road to ascertain the true situation. The officer soon returned, bearing the dreadful news that a column of Prussian infantry was advancing up the road and would arrive within the hour. Concerned at the threat to his trains at Mittelwalde Graf Thun-Hohenstädt also despatched an officer to inform them of the situation and to get them moving back to the south²⁷.

Graf Thun-Hohenstädt, a mediocre officer under normal circumstances, fortunately rose to the occasion. Informing Prinz Thurn und Taxis, commanding the cavalry, of the approach of the enemy he immediately began to disengage his troops with the intention of withdrawing west across the mountains towards Freidrichsgrund and Langenbruck, at which point he felt he should be able to rally his corps and either move south to fall back on his line of communication at Mittelwalde or continue west into Bohemia and rejoin the main army Wildenschwert.

Unfortunately for the Austrian commander his corps was spread across a front of several miles, with troops on both sides of the River Neisse. While the orders for the withdrawal were still being sent out, the arrival of the Prussian advance guard a short while later threw the Austrians into disorder. As the Austrian Brigade of GM von Saffran retired on the bridge south of Weissbrodt, the leading regiment of the Prussian Advanced Guard quickly deployed and took up a position covering the bridge. A attempt by the Austrian 64th Infantry regiment (Brigade Saffran) to storm the bridge and drive the Prussians back failed with heavy casualties in the face of intense fire. A charge by an Austrian Uhlan Regiment on the west bank was also driven back. Realising that the Austrian forces on the east bank of the Neisse were trapped the Austrian Cavalry Commander Prinz Thurn und Taxis immediately ordered his cavalry to retire down the road on the east bank towards Bad Langenau (where there was known to be a bridge) in the hope that the Prussian may not have secured the crossing there. He announced his plan to Graf Thun-Hohenstädt and suggested that the Corps

26 The Prussians were in fact the Advanced Guard of von Steimetz's 5th Corps. Having reached Ebersdorf as ordered, and hearing the sound of the guns to the north, von Steimetz immediately ordered his leading Division (the 9th Division) to advance to the support of the Crown Prince. His other Division and the Corps Troops were instructed to close up to the Neisse at Ebersdorf as quickly as possible and block the road to Mittelwalde and cover the rear of the 9th Division to its north. It was during these events that the cavalry of the Advanced Guard attacked the Austrian ammunition column.

27 This officer was captured by the enemy shortly afterwards and never managed to reach the Corps Train.

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Commander accompanied him with as many troops as he could salvage from the forces on the east bank of the river. Reluctantly the Graf agreed.

On the east bank of the river the Austrian forces lost cohesion and despite several desperate attempts to hold off the Prussians the Austrian line collapsed. By 4.00pm the Austrian cavalry had broken contact and were moving south as quickly as possible to reach the hoped for bridge at Bad Langenau. At the same time those Austrians who had been unable to make good their escape were overwhelmed by the Prussians, with many of them throwing down their weapons and surrendering. The Austrian 64th Regiment fought a gallant last stand on the river bank against von Steinmetz's Advanced Guard and gained sufficient time for the Austrian cavalry and several infantry battalions to make their escape to the south before being overwhelmed.

At 3.00 pm, on the west bank of the river the Austrians still held Hableschwert and Weisbrodt. The Austrian gun line filled the gap between the two villages and still swept the Prussian lines with a heavy fire as the infantry regiments began to disengage. Sensing that the Austrians were beginning to break the Prussians once again attempted to seize the bridge at Weisbrodt. The Prussian 2nd Guard Grenadier regiment stormed the bridge and gained a foothold on the west bank, only to be flayed by the close range fire of several batteries and the defenders of the nearby village. The Grenadiers, to their credit, held their ground for almost three quarters of an hour under intense fire but were unable to make any headway and eventually the fell back across the river.

At 3.30 the Prussian Reserve Cavalry Corps arrived on the heights to the northwest of Hableschwert, having ridden hard from their earlier position near Glatz. As they reached the crest overlooking the town they could see the battlefield spread before them, with the Austrian Brigade of GM Henriquez retiring on the bridge at Alt Weistriz. After a short period to rest the horses the Cavalry advanced and managed to prevent the Austrian rearguard (the 27th Infantry Regiment) from reaching the bridge. Realising that escape was impossible the 27th subsequently surrendered.

The Austrian situation on the west bank quickly deteriorated and, as news of the retreat and the arrival of the Prussians behind them spread the soldiers began to panic. The retreat to the west commenced as ordered but instead of an orderly movement it soon became a rush for the road to safety. That the retreat did not become a rout was due solely to the Corps Artillery commander, Oberst Schindler, who took command of the troops on the west bank. Using some of his reserve batteries to maintain their fire on the Prussians while others fell back he was able to keep up a continuous fire whilst leapfrogging backwards. The infantry were able to fall back under cover of this fire and the Prussians were reluctant to advance again into the fire having suffered heavily for several hours. Once the Austrians reached the Freidrichsgrund road the valley narrowed to a defile and Oberst Schindler was able to form a rearguard which would be able to cover the retreat without being outflanked.

Not all of the Austrian troops received the order to retreat and many of the defenders still holding out in Hableschwert and Weisbrodt remained ignorant of the withdrawal until too late. Most of these subsequently surrendered.

By 5.00 pm the fighting was over. The Prussian Guards Corps was in possession of the battlefield and the Austrians were retreating two directions, the cavalry to the south and the artillery and infantry to the west.

As the Austrian cavalry galloped south for the bridge at Bad Langenau von Steinmetz's Prussians on the west bank were able observe their movement but were unable to prevent it. Realising their likely destination and knowing that the 9th Division (now fully engaged near Weissbrodt) would be unable to turn around and reach Bad Langenau before the enemy, Von Steinmetz sent an officer back to his 10th Division at Ebersdorf ordering the division to advance quickly and secure the crossing at Bad Langenau. The Austrian cavalry won the race to Bad Langenau and quickly crossed to the west bank, the leading squadron capturing the messenger from Von Steinmetz with the order for the 10th Division who had been unable to pass through the village before the Austrians arrived. Realising that the road to the south was blocked at Ebersdorf, and that it would not be long before the enemy would be coming south down the road from the direction of Hableschwert, Prinz Thurn und Taxis turned west along the Lichtenwalde road hoping to reach Burenwalde, at which point he could either march south towards Mittelwalde or continue west into Bohemia.

Casualties

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The butcher's bill, while not as high as that at Trautenau, was still substantial and an indicator of the severity of the fighting.

Austrian losses were 4,560 killed, wounded and missing, with 13,320 captured by the Prussians, 58% of the troops engaged. In addition 24 guns were lost, damaged or abandoned, while the colours of the 27th, 40th, 57th and 64th regiments were captured.

By the end of the day, although the 2nd Light Cavalry Division was more or less intact (having taken remarkably few casualties from enemy fire), the 2nd Corps was reduced to three brigades, each with a single regiment of infantry, a weak battalion of Jagers and a Field Battery. The Corps Artillery managed to withdraw almost intact due to the skill and courage of the Chief of Artillery Oberst Schindler.

Prussian Losses amounted to 3,840 killed, wounded and missing, with the heaviest casualties being amongst the 3rds Foot Guards Regiment and the 1st and 3rd Guard Grenadier Regiments. Prussian losses amounted to 14% of the troops engaged.

Umpire Comment

The Battle of Habelschwert was carefully planned by both sides and each had good reason to expect a victory. The Prussian plan began to unravel when Ramming's 6th Corps engaged the Prussian 6th Corps near Glatz, forcing the Prussian Guard Corps to attack alone. Had both Corps been available to attack as hoped it is probable that the Austrians would have been overwhelmed and completely destroyed. The Austrians, for their part, could have expected to have held on against the Prussian Guards but for the timely intervention of the Prussian 5th Corps.

Following the battle the Prussians needed time to reorganise before any pursuit could take place. The sudden collapse and rapid Austrian withdrawal, particularly that of the Austrian Cavalry, took the Prussians by surprise. The Prussian Guard Corps was also in a state of some considerable confusion due to the heavy casualties, the exhaustion of the troops who had been fighting since 10.00am and the fact that the various brigades and regiments were badly intermingled, making the task of organising a pursuit even more difficult. By the time a pursuit was launched after the Austrian forces retreating to the west along the Freidrichsgrund road, the Austrians had reached the defile, where a defiant rearguard was able to hold off the pursuers until the light began to fail. The nature of the terrain in the defile prevented the tired Prussians from being able to overtake or outflank the enemy.

By early evening the Austrian column under Oberst Schindler had reached Freidrichsgrund, where it halted to rest for the night. Similarly the Cavalry column under Prinz Thurn und Taxis had reached Burenwalde, although the infantry accompanying the column were straggling badly due to the forced pace. A despatch was sent at 7.00pm to Wildenschwert, to inform North Army HQ of the defeat and informing HQ of the intention to make for Mittelwalde and from there to retire towards Grulich. At the same time several staff officers, each accompanied by a small escort, were sent north along the valley to seek any enemy forces which might be in pursuit and also in the hope of finding any Austrian forces which had been fortunate enough to escape the battlefield via the road to the west. Shortly before 10.00pm one of the patrols made contact with Schindler's column at Langenbruch.

The Prussian 1st Corps

Following its defeat at Trautenau the 1st Corps had withdrawn, covered by the cavalry, to Adersbach. Due to the fact that its line of communication had been compromised by the enemy's capture of Trautenau, the Corps trains were redirected to Friedland, from where it was anticipated that the corps would be able to replenish its rations and munitions. Throughout the 28th the corps remained at Adersbach, covered by strong cavalry patrols to the west.

Umpire's Comments

Reading through the correspondence for the 28th and subsequent orders for the 29th it is becoming apparent that the Austrians are doing rather better than their historical counterparts despite the losses at

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Habelschwert.

The Austrian high command appears to have the better grasp of the present situation and the positions of the enemy armies (and in particular the Prussian forces grouped around Glatz) and are preparing to take the fight to the enemy by striking deeper into Silesia in the direction of Glatz, while maintaining the defence of the Iser line as long as possible. The central position occupied by the Austrian forces, coupled with the determined defence of the Iser line by the Saxon commander and the immobility of the Prussian 2nd Army, still allows them the opportunity to mass against isolated or separate Prussian Corps.

The Prussians on the other hand, while conforming to Moltke's overall plan, are still unable to identify the mass of the Austrian forces on the Iser and appear to be concerned that the Iser forces are withdrawing on Prague (which may even divert the Army of the Elbe away from its operations with the 1st Army). The Prussian inability to locate the Austrian forces with any degree of accuracy is partially due to the failure of the Prussians to maintain contact with the enemy following the various combats. However this was a feature of the historical campaign and as such reflects well on the model we are using for the campaign (eg poor reconnaissance by the respective cavalry forces, post-battle fatigue, confusion etc) and does not necessarily reflect badly on the players.

The Prussian 1st Army is currently extended along a front of 35 miles from Nimburg in the south to Eisenbrod in the north and is potentially vulnerable to a counter attack in the centre. In the east the 2nd Army is still tied down around Glatz, while the 1st Corps is still in retreat following the battle at Trautenau, and is either ignoring or unaware of the threat posed by Benedek and his force of three Corps preparing to advance into Silesia to the northwest of Glatz.

The inactivity of the Prussian 2nd Army has allowed the enemy to conceal their movements to a great degree and this may yet cause the Prussians real problems, however it seems that following the Battle of Habelschwert the commander of the 2nd Army is determined to retain the initiative and is preparing to move west into Bohemia in pursuit of the defeated Austrians.

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Overnight the rain eased, finally ceasing during the early hours of the 29th. The skies remained overcast however.

Events on the Iser – Austrian activity

At HQ North Army Archduke Albrecht was satisfied with the efforts of the Crown Prince of Saxony to hold the enemy on the line of the Iser river²⁸. It was therefore decided to take advantage of these circumstances and to secretly reinforce the Allied forces on the Iser. It was the Archduke's intention to seize the initiative and to possibly inflict a sharp defeat on the enemy to set the enemy back on his heels while the main Austrian forces continued with their offensive operations in the east.

Accordingly the 8th Corps was ordered from its present position at Konnigratz to Neu Bidschow (approximately 13 miles south of Gitschin), while the 3rd Reserve Cavalry Division and the Army Reserve Artillery and Engineers were directed to Chlumetz (the cavalry being instructed to send patrols out to the west towards Podiebrad and north west to Konigstadt!).

Events on the Iser – Prussian Elbe Army

Von Herwarth's Elbe Army, having closed up on the Iser and established communications with the 1st Army, intended to move east following the line of the Elbe. Moltke, with the Royal HQ at Breslau, was becoming increasingly concerned that the 1st and Elbe Armies were still unable to locate the main Austrian forces on the Iser. It was suspected that the enemy had in fact withdrawn to Prague leaving only covering forces on the Iser. Moltke therefore despatched a telegram to Von Herwarth instructing him to reconnoitre Prague and the immediate vicinity²⁹.

At dawn the Elbe Army began moving eastwards to cross the Iser and Elbe, with the intention of concentrating near Koln (and subsequently advancing on Pardubitz). Unfortunately the telegram from Royal HQ was not received by Von Herwarth until almost 6.30 am.

Rather than realign his entire army Von Herwarth sent fresh orders to the 30th Brigade and the Reserve Cavalry Brigade instructing them to reconnoitre towards Prague. Generalmajor von Glasenapp, the officer commanding the two detached brigades, was somewhat dismayed when the new orders reached him at 8.30 am. His troops had already been on the march for three and a half hours and had covered more than 8 miles en route to Nimburg. The new orders required him to march on Prague via Alt Bunzlau. Von Glasenapp soon realised that there was no direct route towards Alt Bunzlau from his present position and regretfully he turned his forces around and began to retrace his steps to Alt Benatek, arriving back at his starting position at about 1.00 pm³⁰. After a short rest von Glasenapp pushed on towards Alt Bunzlau, reaching the town at about 5.00 pm³¹ where they halted for the day having covered some 26 miles. Several cavalry patrols were pushed forwards across the Elbe in the direction of Prague but reported no contact with the enemy.

By late afternoon the bulk of the Elbe Army was marching east along both banks of the Elbe. The 14th Division had reached Sadska, while the 16th Division, accompanied by the 14th cavalry Brigade and the Army HQ, had arrived at Nimburg where they were joined by the 7th Corps Reserve Artillery. It was here that Von Herwarth learned that the 1st Army's 2nd Corps was ahead of them on the Podiebrod road³².

28 The Austrians were as yet unaware of the Prussian Elbe Army closing rapidly on the Elbe and threatening the left flank of the Austrian central position.

29 At the same time the Prussian 1st Army was instructed to make every effort to locate and identify any enemy forces on the eastern side of the Iser.

30 Accompanying von Glasenapp force was the 7th Corps Reserve Artillery. The artillery was directed to continue with its current orders while the infantry and cavalry marched to Prague. There was an hour's delay while the infantry and cavalry turned around and the artillery (marching at the rear of the column) was pulled off the road to make room before resuming its march to Nimburg at about 9.30 am.

31 On arriving at Alt Bunzlau von Glasenapp learned that the 14th Division had already crossed the Elbe and marched east via Brandeis during the morning.

32 Unfortunately for von Herwarth the 2nd Corps trains and the 3rd Heavy Cavalry Brigade were also trying to use the Podiebrad road through Nimburg and a considerable traffic jam built up in and around the town during the late

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Unfortunately the arrival of the 16th Division at Nimburg coincided with the arrival of the 2nd Corps Trains and the 3rd Heavy Cavalry Brigade (en route to rejoin the 2nd Corps). Unable to advance through Nimburg or along the congested roads the frustrated von Herwarth penned a brusque and insubordinate despatch to the commander of the 1st Army. Fortunately the Army Chief of Staff was able to persuade the irate von Herwarth to allow him to modify the tone of the despatch³³.

Further away to the west the detached 15th Division, under von Canstein, disengaged from the fortress position at Theresienstadt and began its march south east to rejoin the rest of the army. The fortress garrison were soon aware that the enemy had withdrawn his artillery from their positions near the fortress and sent out patrols to see what was happening. Although the Prussians had left a cavalry detachment to screen their movements the Austrians advanced with several battalions from the garrison and the Prussian cavalry were soon forced to retire by the Austrian rifle fire.

The Elbe army's situation was also made worse by the need to redirect the army's trains away from the Austrian fortress at Theresienstadt several days earlier. The rapid movement of the Army's divisions south east towards the Iser and Elbe rivers³⁴ placed them far ahead of the trains, themselves struggling to catch up via a different route. As a result by the end of the 29th the army had almost exhausted the stocks of food at hand, and required a period of rest to either allow the troops time to forage and requisition food or to allow the trains to catch up. The situation was briefly made known to Royal HQ and permission subsequently given for the Elbe Army to rest and reorganise.

Events on the Iser – The Prussian First Army

On the right flank of the 1st Army the Prussian 2nd Corps received orders to continue its movement to the east from Nimburg, heading for Podiebrad and Chlumec. At about 10.00 am the Prussian advance guard of the 3rd Division encountered several strong Austrian cavalry patrols (from the Austrian 3rd Reserve Cavalry Division at Chlumec). Despite their own lack of cavalry the Prussian advance guard pushed forwards as far as the high ground near the village of Dlouhopolsko, where they could observe the strength of the enemy cavalry screen. The Prussian advance guard halted while the rest of the Division closed up at which point the whole division advanced to the village of Dlouhopolsko. Unable to reconnoitre much further due to the strength of the enemy cavalry screen (and a lack of Prussian cavalry) the Prussian 3rd Division halted for the day and waited for the 4th Division to close up.

While the Prussians were advancing on the Chlumec road the Austrian 8th Corps marched for Neu Bidschow, arriving there at about 2.30 pm. At the same time the Reserve Artillery (under the command of the able Archduke William) was marching to Chlumec with instructions to take up a bivouac position west of the town. Upon arriving at Chlumec at about 11.00 am however the Archduke found the 3rd Reserve Cavalry Division deployed on the western outskirts of the town and from the commander of the cavalry he learned of the Prussian advance from Podiebrad. This took the Artillery Commander by surprise, as he had no idea the enemy were so close and believed that he was simply moving to a new bivouac area.

The Archduke had noticed that there was only one bridge over the Cidlina River which ran south past the eastern side of the town, and that the road ran through the centre of Chlumec with no means of bypassing the town unless the Reserve Engineers could build several new bridges along the river south of the town itself. The Archduke also realised that it would be impossible to move his 16 batteries and all their ancillary vehicles across the river and through the town with any speed. A sudden advance by the Prussians, who were only about five miles away, might well overtake him before he could get his guns into position. The ground east of Chlumec however offered a good position for his guns, with open fields of fire over the river from the high ground above the villages of Kladrub and Lucitz. He therefore chose to deploy some of batteries east of Chlumec covering the approaches to the river and the Chlumec bridge. He also instructed his staff to set the engineers to work assisting the gunners to emplace their batteries while he rode forward to examine the ground for himself, accompanied by the Cavalry Commander.

afternoon.

33 For the details of this despatch refer to Appendix 2

34 Having made no contact with the enemy, other than at Theresienstadt, the component formations of the Elbe Army were advancing much faster than those of the 1st Army, who were having to fight their way forwards against stiff resistance.

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During his discussion with Graf Condovoe (commanding the 3rd Reserve Cavalry Division), Archduke William also learned that the 8th Corps was taking up a position five miles away at Nue Bidschow. The two officers agreed that, in the event of the enemy forcing a fight at Chlumec during the afternoon or evening, the cavalry would retire and support the artillery, however they both realised that without infantry support their position was severely compromised. At about 2.00 pm therefore an officer was sent to find the 8th Corps with the request that the corps send a brigade to Chlumec to support the artillery and that the rest of the Corps march to Chlumec with all speed in the event of a Prussian attack. It was stressed that the Reserve Artillery urgently needed infantry to reinforce the position and to protect the guns. The commander of the 8th Corps, Archduke Leopold, although not a particularly able officer, was conceited enough to consider that his honour would certainly be impugned if the artillery was to be lost while his corps stood idle a mere five miles away. The Brigade of Generalmajor Fragnern was therefore ordered to Chlumetz, arriving there at about 6.00 pm.

On the left flank of the 1st Army the Prussians were ordered to issue a summons to surrender to the Austrian forces at Turnau³⁵, while preparing to attack the Turnau position if the surrender demand was rejected. In the event the orders for the Prussians were not received until after the deadline for the surrender demand had expired (the orders arrived at about 7.15 am, the deadline had expired at 7.00 am). Von Tumpling, commanding the 5th Division, was somewhat scathing in his opinion of the surrender demand and, according to at least one eye witness, screwed up the document and threw it away. However von Tumpling was keen to attack and waited until the arrival of the 6th Division and the remainder of the Reserve Cavalry Corps from Eisenbrod.

The 6th Division and the cavalry arrived at Hamstein at about 8.00 am and the two divisions and the Cavalry Corps advanced from Hamstein and deployed, the manoeuvre being slowed by the dense terrain.

The Austrian forces at Turnau had not wasted the previous day, preparing several of the villages for defence and felling trees to form an abatis on the approaches to the villages and at several nearby bridges. In addition, the Saxon Crown Prince had ordered Poschacher's Brigade to march to Rowensko to hold that town to ensure the 1st Corp's line of retreat remained open should it become necessary to withdraw. Poschacher was instructed to take the reserve artillery attached to his brigade (plus the Corps Rocket battery) with him. It took little persuading for the 1st Corps Artillery Commander, Oberst Weisser, to accompany Poschacher with the remainder of the 1st Corps Artillery.

As soon as the Prussians began forming up the Austrian cavalry outposts reported the movement and by 9.00am the 1st Corps and von Edelsheim's Light Cavalry were deployed to receive any attack. At about the same time Poschacher arrived with his Brigade and the Corps artillery under Oberst Weisser.

The Battle of Turnau

The Prussian commanders had received orders from the commander of the 1st Army to march in the direction of Turnau and to direct the two infantry divisions (5th & 6th) against the enemy positions at Chlomek, while the Army Cavalry Corps was to cut the road leading east from Turnau (between the villages of Waldstein and Kadiwanoiz). The initial Prussian movement, commencing at 9.30 am, was slowed by the difficult terrain and the Prussian infantry were unable to close with the enemy until almost 10.30. The steep slopes and thick woods also hindered the cavalry's march and the Prussians found the Austrians ready and waiting for them.

The battle commenced at about 10.30 am, as the carefully sited Austrian guns opened fire on the enemy as they debouched from the nearby woods. The cannonade continued for about an hour as the Prussians manoeuvred into position. On the Austrian right flank von Edelesheim's cavalry presented a firm front and the Prussians approached cautiously under the artillery fire. Shortly after 11.30 am Duke Wilhelm von Mecklenburg-Schwerin (commanding the 2nd Light Brigade of the Prussian 2nd Cavalry Division) was killed by an Austrian shell, command of the brigade falling to Lt Colonel von Redern³⁶ of the 2nd Guard Dragoons.

At 12.00am (midday) the two Prussian infantry divisions moved out of the cover of the woods to the north of Chlomek and, crossing the stream flowing down the centre of the valley, began ascending the slopes

35 The gist of the surrender demand was that the Prussians were advancing both north and south of the Turnau position and that the Austrians were both outnumbered and cut off and advised surrendering.

36 Lt Colonel von Redern was himself injured by an Austrian shell a few minutes after taking command of the brigade. He was succeeded by Lt Col von Kalkreuth of the 3rd Hussars.

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towards Chlomek and Bela. The advancing Prussians were swept by fire from the Austrian positions on the heights above but pressed onwards. The commander of the 8th Grenadier Regiment, Oberst von Berger, was wounded leading his regiment forward. For a while the Prussians pressed forwards into the enemy fire, with several battalions reaching the edges of the two villages, before being whelmed by the Austrian fire and falling back. Rallying on the banks of the stream at the foot of the slopes the Prussians surged forward again. The Prussian 48th Regiment reached Chlomek but after a brief struggle was thrown back down the slopes by the men of von Kalik's Brigade. However the slopes leading up to the village of Bela were not so steep and the village quickly fell to the Prussians, exposing the Austrian left flank in the vicinity of Piret's Brigade.

By 1.00 pm fighting was general along the line. While the infantry struggled for control of the crucial heights and villages the cavalry on the opposite flank were also engaged. The forward Austrian cavalry Brigade, that of Oberst Appel charged the Prussian 2nd Light Brigade. In the ensuing melee Oberst Appel was badly wounded³⁷. The difficult nature of the terrain in which the cavalry were engaged prevented any rapid movements and severely constricted the directions in which the cavalry could manoeuvre. Whilst the Austrians had the advantage of the high ground, there was insufficient room for more than a single brigade to attack the enemy, while the Prussians were similarly restricted to attacking with a single brigade at a time. Those units not engaged were thus compelled to halt under heavy artillery fire for extended periods while awaiting an opportunity to advance and charge. Despite this the Prussians managed to gain the upper hand in the melee and drive Appel's Brigade back.

The villages of Chlomek and Bela were fiercely contested. The defenders of Chlomek held on despite mounting casualties and the Austrian 29th Jager Battalion stormed and recaptured Bela. In such close range fighting the needle gun in the hands of well trained Prussian infantry came into its own and despite the courage displayed by the Austrians they were gradually forced back. At 1.30 pm the Prussians once again seized Bela, the Austrian defenders falling back towards Turnau, and shortly before 2.00 pm the Prussian 18th regiment finally succeeded in driving von Kalik's gallant troops from Chlomek.

At about 1.30 pm the Austrian commander, Count Clam-Gallas, considered that his troops had done all they could do to hold the position at Turnau and that in accordance with his orders he proposed to withdraw to the east while the option was still open to him³⁸. He despatched an aide to the Saxon Crown Prince at Sobotka informing him that his forces were "withdrawing in disorder"³⁹ and issued orders for his forces to withdraw along the Gitschin road as far as Gitschin itself, covered by von Edelsheim's cavalry and Poschacher's brigade which was holding a firm position at Rowensko.

There was a further hour's fighting before the Austrian's succeeded in breaking contact and retiring. The survivors of the fighting at Bela and Chlomek (the Brigades of von Kalik and Piret) were driven back on Turnau. The survivors of Piret's Brigade fell back through Turnau and, crossing the stream south of the town, turned south east along the forest tracks⁴⁰. Von Kalik was not so fortunate. Caught outside the town near the village of Waldstein the Austrian 35th Infantry Regiment was overwhelmed by the enemy and the brigade artillery battery was captured.

The Prussian infantry of the 5th and 6th Division's, in some disorder after the fighting around Bela and Chlomek, meanwhile pressed forward to Turnau to clear the town and secure the Iser bridges. By the time this had been successfully carried out the Austrians had made good their escape from the vicinity of the town.

At about 2.30 pm a final attempt by the Prussian cavalry to open the way to the Gitschin road was halted by

37 When the Austrians were forced to fall back and rally Oberst Appel was captured by the enemy. He subsequently died of his wounds whilst in captivity, despite the efforts of the Prussian military surgeons. He was succeeded by Oberst Nicolaus Graf Pejacsevich von Veröcze (9th Hussars).

38 At about 11.00 am Clam-Gallas received a dispatch from the Saxon Crown Prince informing him of the Prussian approach to Sobotka (and the likelihood of an engagement at that location) and advising Clam-Gallas that if forced to retreat the army was to retire on Gitschin and rally there (the trains and transport at Sobotka had already been ordered to commence moving to Gitschin).

39 The description of the withdrawal being in "disorder" was perhaps a bit melodramatic and may reflect more on Clam-Gallas' state of mind rather than the state of his corps. There is also the suspicion that he was not entirely sober during the battle.

40 Piret's Brigade withdrew into the hills south east of Turnau where it became lost. During the early evening it was found by a Saxon cavalry patrol who guided it to the Saxon Corps at Sobotka.

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Von Edelsheim's cavalry. Following the death of Oberst Appel, his battered brigade had fallen back behind that of Oberst Fraticsevics, to rally and reorganise. Oberst Nicolaus Graf Pejacsevich von Veröcze (commanding officer of the 9th Hussars) took command of the Brigade.

Perceiving the Austrians to be withdrawing the commander of the 2nd Cavalry Division, General Von Weyhern, determined to take advantage of the retreat of Appel's Brigade. He therefore decided that the moment was right to launch a fresh attack to try and drive the enemy off the high ground and to open the route to the Gitschin road. As the terrain prevented any fresh troops being moved forward Lt Col von Kalkreuth, now commanding the exhausted Prussian 2nd Light Cavalry Brigade, was ordered to make another attack. Rallying his Brigade he led them forward onto the ridge to their front. At this moment they were counter-charged by Fraticsevics Brigade. The tired Prussians were no match for the fresh and eager Austrian Hussars and were quickly broken, the jubilant Austrians even capturing 180 Prussian prisoners.

By 3.00 pm the fighting was over. The Prussians had seized Turnau and driven the enemy from a strong position. The Austrians however had managed to extricate themselves from a potentially disastrous situation and withdrew in reasonable order, despite the loss of almost 3,000 prisoners taken by the enemy.

Prussian losses amounted to 1,260 killed and seriously wounded, with 180 prisoners lost from the 2nd Cavalry Division.

The Action at Sobotka

In the centre of the 1st Army the Prussian 4th Corps had been ordered to advance towards Sobotka and Gitschin, with the army artillery reserve following behind. The leading division (the 7th) set off at 6 am, and by 7am encountered the patrols from the Saxon Cavalry Division which were probing towards the Iser with the intention of locating any Prussian movements. At the same time the Saxon 1st Division had been ordered forward from its position at Sobotka and Unter Bautzen to secure the road junction at Wohrubetz. Pressed by the Prussian advanced guard the Saxon cavalry fell back on the 1st Division and both formations took up a position around the villages of Prepci and Ober Bautzen. By 9am the Prussian 7th Division had closed up between Zuntow and Solec and General Fransecky had sent word for the 8th Division to come forward in support.

The Army Commander HRH Prince Frederick Charles was accompanying the 8th Division. On learning of the Saxon activity he and the commander of the 8th Division, General von Horn, rode forward to see the situation for themselves. At 9.30 am the 8th Division was ordered forward to form on the right of the 7th Division in preparation for an attack on the Saxons forces. As the Prussians deployed it could be seen that the Saxons were withdrawing their infantry behind their cavalry screen. The Prussian commanders came to the assumption that the enemy did not actually intend to fight but was content to merely delay the Prussian advance. As the enemy retired the Prussians followed to the high ground above Ober Bautzen. From their position on the heights the Prussians could see the enemy cavalry reforming a short distance away, behind a small river, interspersed with several small lakes and ponds. The position was potentially a strong one but appeared to be held by only a token force consisting of the Saxon cavalry and several battalions of infantry.

At about 12.30 pm the order to advance was given and at 1.00pm the Prussians moved off to attack. It took a while for the Prussian infantry to close up to the enemy but by 2.00 pm the leading elements of the 8th Division were engaging the enemy close to where the road to Sobotka crossed the river at the southern end of a small lake. The tree line and small copses along the river were stoutly defended by a battalion of Saxon Jagers, supported by a brigade of infantry and a battery, but by 2.30 pm they have been driven back from the river and the Prussian 71st Regiment had crossed to the east bank and was advancing on the village of Wosek. At the same time several battalions of Prussians had advanced and crossed the river near Unter Bautzen and were advancing on Wosek from the southwest. The 7th Division was also making some progress and was crossing the river further north at Wostowitz.

As the Prussians approached Wosek however they were surprised to find that the village was defended, with artillery and light infantry covering the southern approaches to the village. The bridge over a small watercourse to the south of the village was blocked by an abatis and swept with cannister fire from a nearby battery. The Prussian infantry made several attempts to storm Wosek but were driven back each time, the 72nd Regiment suffering heavy casualties in the process. By 3.00pm the Prussian attack against Wosek had

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stalled.

Suddenly, at 3.15 pm, a Prussian cavalry regiment reconnoitring on the left flank of the 7th Division near Wostowitz, came under fire from the woods to the north of the village and a mass of Austrian infantry debouched from the woods and commenced a hot fire into the flank of the cavalry. The cavalry broke and tumbled back towards the river leaving the flank of the 7th Division uncovered.



The battlefield at Sobotka - looking to the north

It had been the intention of the Saxon Crown Prince to fight a delaying action at Sobotka since the evening of the 27th and he had reconnoitred the ground carefully on the 28th. He had earlier advanced his 1st Division and the cavalry to Ober Bautzen (with the intention of advancing further west if the circumstances permitted) but had been forced to retire following the advance of the enemy. He therefore fell back on his selected positions near Sobotka, carefully deploying his main line of defence running north from Wosek, leaving only a single infantry brigade and the cavalry to delay the enemy. The rest of his forces were carefully concealed from observation. In addition the Austrian Brigade of GM Graf Leiningen was concealed in the woods above the village of Wostowitz, with instructions to remain concealed in the hope that the brigade would be able to fall on the enemy's flank at an opportune moment. In the event the Prussian cavalry almost rode into the hidden Austrians. Realising that his position had been discovered GM Leiningen ordered his leading regiment to attack.

General Fransecky, commanding the 7th Division, was fortunately equal to the challenge and quickly began withdrawing his leading regiments before the Austrian attack could make itself felt. However, at 3.30 pm he received orders from Prince Frederick Charles to break off the action and fall back to Ober Bautzen. The army commander had decided that the Saxon position was too strong to break by a frontal assault without the risk of heavy casualties and that the Austrians presented a very real threat to his left flank. It was also still impossible to determine the actual strength of the foe they were engaging.

The Prussian 8th Division withdrew under the protection of a sharp attack by the leading units which dissuaded the Saxons from following too closely. In the event however, Crown Prince Albert was more than satisfied at seeing the enemy withdraw and declined to pursue. He had succeeded in holding his position and, for the first time in the campaign, the allies had inflicted heavier casualties on the enemy than they

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themselves had received, albeit only by a small margin. In addition, Prince Albert had also received news of the battle at Turnau and had thus learned of the Austrian withdrawal on Gitschin.

By 4.00 pm the Prussians had withdrawn to the heights around Ober Bautzen, where they were joined by the artillery of the Reserve.

Saxon Casualties during the action amounted to about 600 killed and wounded, while the Prussians lost slightly above 700 killed and wounded. The majority of the Prussian losses were suffered by the 71st and 72nd Regiments.

Operations in the East

Following the Battle of Habelschwert and the action west of Glatz on the 28th, Crown Prince Frederick decided to follow up his success with an advance into Bohemia, with the fortress of Koniggratz as his first objective. Accordingly he issued the following orders:

1. The Guard Corps and the Reserve Cavalry Corps would hold their present position at Habelschwert to reorganise and to clear the battlefield. Prisoners would be escorted to the fortress at Glatz. Once reorganised the Guard Corps and Cavalry would move to Solhritz.
2. The 5th Corps (von Steinmetz) would follow the retreating Austrians in the direction of Burenwalde and Marienthal.
3. The 6th Corps (von Mutius) would reorganise and concentrate at Wahlsfurth before advancing west towards Reineez (and subsequently on to Dobruschka).
4. The 1st Corps would retire on Braunau.

It was evidently the Crown Prince's intention that these manoeuvres would seize the initiative and place his army in a position to strike at Koniggratz. In addition, by taking the offensive he hoped to relieve the pressure on the 1st Corps by diverting the enemy to deal with the threat to Koniggratz.

Benedek's Advance to Friedland and the encirclement of the Prussian 1st Corps

During the night Benedek issued orders for the three Austrian Corps to march East to Friedland, with the intention of then turning south east towards Glatz. The Prussian 1st Corps was believed to probably be in the vicinity of Adersbach but this was not certain. The march was to be led by the Cavalry Division (via Adersbach), followed closely by the 4th Corps, while the 3rd Corps swung to the south and to approach Friedland from the south. The 10th Corps would follow the 4th Corps and act as a reserve.

Although the exact position of the Prussian 1st Corps was unknown to Benedek his orders gave no indication that he expected any major action during the 29th, other than instructions for his cavalry to report any sizeable enemy formations as quickly as possible.

In the event however, the leading Austrian cavalry patrols quickly made contact with the Prussians near Adersbach,

During the night of the 28th the commander of the Prussian 1st Corps, von Bonin, ordered his corps to continue to resume its retreat in the direction of Friedland, commencing at first light. Although his corps had reorganised following the battle at Trautenau, the necessity to redirect his trains to Friedland meant that his troops had been unable to replenish their ammunition and had not received any rations, other than those which could be obtained via requisition in the immediate vicinity of Adersbach. The few contacts with enemy patrols during the 28th (reported by the cavalry screen) gave no indication that the Austrians intended to follow up their victory and von Bonin probably felt secure enough to continue on towards Friedland in relative safety.

The roads between Trautenau and Friedland follow narrow valleys, twisting and turning between the steep and frequently wooded hills. In such circumstances the troops are required to march in long columns on a narrow front. As a result the leading Austrian cavalry patrols soon made contact with the Prussian rearguard, however the narrow defiles prevented the Austrians from overtaking their enemy or outflanking him. The Prussian rearguard was therefore able to put on a bold face and successfully kept their pursuers at bay

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throughout the morning.

The head of the Prussian column reached Friedland at about 9.30 am, only to find their trains had arrived the night before and were now clogging the narrow streets with wagons. Orders were issued to clear the main streets and bridges to allow the troops to cross, Orders were also sent to the 1st Division to prepare to defend the town to allow the trains to vacate the town.

By 2.00 pm, the bulk of the Prussian Corps had cleared the town and crossed to the east bank of the river, taking up positions to cover the passage of the trains. By now however von Bonin was aware that the enemy was right behind him and he determined to get his trains on the move to Braunau (and eventually Glatz) while holding the enemy at bay during the afternoon.

At about the same time, having been informed of the enemy's activity by his cavalry commanders, Benedek himself arrived on the heights to the west of Friedland (near the village of Rosenau). After observing the Prussian activities for some while he realised that his present manoeuvre offered the opportunity to trap and destroy the enemy at Friedland. In addition, the road leading north from Friedland was narrow and constricted by a defile north of the town which would make any retreat in that direction almost impossible unless the enemy abandoned his trains. He therefore issued orders to his forces as follows:

1. The Cavalry was to immediately send a brigade to seize the bridge at Halbstadt, and hold it until the arrival of the 3rd Corps.
2. The remainder of the cavalry and the 4th Corps (the leading brigade of which was just arriving at Benedek's position) would demonstrate against the enemy to convince them that a major attack was imminent and to prevent them from moving off.
3. The 3rd Corps was ordered to march on Halbstadt with all haste and to prevent the enemy escaping south towards Braunau. Once the corps had crossed the river at Halbstadt it was to attack north towards Friedland. The sound of this attack was to be the signal for the 4th Corps to attack Friedland from the west.
4. The 10th Corps was to remain in reserve but to be prepared to march in support of either of the other two corps at short notice if required. In the event the 10th Corps closed up and halted at Merkelsdorf.

Benedek himself thought that he might be able to pin the enemy at Friedland, but that a decision would not be reached until the following morning, when he would be able to bring all three corps into action against the Prussians.

Von Bonin however realised that he could not stay at Friedland. He immediately ordered the trains to keep moving south to Braunau, and despatched the 2nd Division (which had suffered the most losses at Trautenau) to escort the trains and cover their movements. By 2.30 pm however, the Prussians could see the Austrian cavalry moving south towards Halbstadt on the opposite bank of the Rivet Steine. Shortly afterwards the leading elements of the Austrian 4th Corps could be seen forming up and pushing a skirmish line towards the western outskirts of Friedland. By 3.00 pm skirmishing had broken out between the Prussian rearguard at Friedland and the Jagers of the Austrian 4th Corps.

The Austrian cavalry (Schindlocker's Brigade) reached Halbstadt just ahead of the Prussian infantry of the 2nd Division and made several attempts to drive back the Prussians but were badly cut up by rifle fire and were forced to retire at about 4.30pm.

Up to this point the Prussian commander still felt he might make good his escape, but his hopes were dashed with the arrival of the Austrian 3rd Corps, whose leading Brigade arrived near Halbstadt just after the Austrian cavalry retired. By 6.00 pm the Prussian 2nd Division soon found itself outnumbered and, tired, hungry and low on ammunition it was forced to withdraw, leaving the Braunau road in Austrian hands.

Hearing the firing in the direction of Halbstadt Benedek ordered the 4th Corps to attack and the fighting intensified. Heavily outnumbered the Prussians were gradually driven in. A number of ammunition caissons were ransacked by the Prussian infantry seeking to replenish their ammunition, but the circumstances had prevented any orderly distribution of ammunition. In contrast, the Austrian infantry, advancing under the eyes of the Lion of Solferino and anticipating another victory, rushed forwards despite their casualties and threw themselves on the enemy.

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Shortly after 6.30 pm the Prussian commander General von Bonin was severely wounded and was carried to the village of Neudorf. By 8.00 pm the Prussians had been forced back into position between the villages of Neudorf, Weisen, Grenzdorf and Ruppertsdorf. Most of the trains had either been captured or abandoned along the road between Friedland and Halbstadt.

The fighting died down at last light, the Austrians either resting on their arms or withdrawing to more tenable positions, with the expectation of renewing the combat in the morning.

During the evening the Prussian commanders held a council of war under the direction of the Chief of Staff, Colonel Von Borries⁴¹. In the absence of von Bonin, who was too badly injured to take part in the discussion, Generalleutnant von Grossman took command of the corps. By now it was apparent to all concerned that the 1st Corps was trapped. The roads to the north and south were blocked by the enemy, and the only routes east were several narrow tracks over the Soitzberg mountain and adjacent ridges. These tracks would be difficult to negotiate after two days of rain and in the dark and in any case the tracks would be impassable for the artillery and transport. Losses during the afternoon amounted to almost 3,000 killed and wounded and the corps was consequently reduced to little more than 15,000 men. In addition a number of cannon had been lost during the latter part of the fighting, and only 50 guns remained in service (many of the batteries were low on ammunition). Although the enemy had been made to pay dearly for their success, it was apparent that the enemy had a considerable advantage in numbers⁴² and was felt that the 1st corps could not resume the fight in the morning with any expectation of success. Accordingly several reliable officers were despatched during the night to try and carry news of the situation to the Headquarters of the 2nd Army at Glatz and it was decided that an officer would contact the enemy under a flag of truce to seek terms for the surrender of the 1st Corps at first light on the 30th. During the night the corps staff officers burned their papers to prevent them from falling into Austrian hands.

It was apparent to the Austrians however that the Prussians had taken a beating and were now trapped between the 3rd and 4th Corps, with little or no hope of breaking out. Following a discussion with his staff Bendeck decided to send an officer under a flag of truce to offer surrender terms to the Prussians. Shortly before midnight the officer, accompanied by an escort carrying torches and a white flag, approached the Prussian lines near Neudorf.

Operations near Glatz

While the Guards Corps and Cavalry reorganised and cleared the battlefield at Habelschwert the 5th and 6th Corps resumed the advance.

At about 5.30 am the 5th Corps advanced west on two routes towards the towns of Burenwalde (9th Division) and Marienthal (10th Division). The 10th Division reached Marienthal to find that the Austrian 2nd Light Cavalry Division had passed through the town during the early hours of the morning. Fearing that he might be cut off from Mittelwalde Prinz Thurn und Taxis roused his troops during the early hours and marched for Mittelwalde with all speed. By the time the Prussians seized Marienthal the Austrians had slipped past into the hills around Mittlewalde, leaving only a few patrols on the hills around Freiwalde to cover their withdrawal. During the afternoon the tired Austrians reached Grulich where they were reunited with their trains.

The Prussian 9th Division occupied the town of Burenwalde at about 6.30 am, surprising a squadron of Austrian Uhlans from the remnants of the 2nd Corps which was preparing to march south from Friedrichsgrund and Langenbruck. Warned of the Prussian presence the Austrian commanders realised that the route through Burenwalde to Mittelwalde was blocked. Exhausted, low on food and ammunition, and now threatened with pursuit by the enemy, the only hope for the 2nd Corps was to march west back into Bohemia where it might be able to retire unmolested on the fortresses at Konnigratz and Josephstadt⁴³. At Oberst Schindler's suggestion the Austrian column crossed the River Adler at Friedrichsgrund and, re-entering

41 General von Bonin was in no condition to take part in the council.

42 The Austrians had slightly more than 50,000 troops on the field (3rd Corps, 4th Corps and 1st Reserve Cavalry Division), with another 24,000 of the 10th Corps in reserve. The Austrians also had almost 200 cannon either on the field or in reserve. Austrian losses during the day amounted to slightly more than 5,000 killed and wounded.

43 The two fortresses were only 25 miles away as the crow flies and it was to be hoped that the Corps would be able to rest and reorganise while replenishing its supplies from the fortresses.

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Bohemia, struck out for the town of Sohlritz, en route for Konnigratz.

The Prussian 6th Corps had received orders to advance west as far as Reineez. Owing to the fact that the corps had been divided into its two divisions on the previous day, with the 12th Division being sent to Habelschwert to reinforce the Guards Corps, the Corps was to advance with the 11th Division until such time as the 12th Division caught up. The 2nd Army HQ was to accompany the 11th Division during the day.

Following the action on the 28th GM von Ramming, commanding the Austrian 6th Corps had withdrawn to the vicinity of Hartau and Ruckers, from where he was able to post his forces in a defensive position, with detachments covering the two roads which led east towards Glatz. The thickly wooded hills east of his position would force any attacker to advance along the roads and would prevent any outflanking movement.

During the morning the Prussian 11th Division advanced as far as Wahlsfurth, where it halted to await the arrival of the 12th Division. By about 9.30 am the 12th Division had closed up and at 10.00am the 11th Division resumed the advance, with its Advance Guard moving along the road towards Waldorf. At about 11.00 am the leading troops encountered detachments of Austrian Uhlans, who fell back after firing a few shots. The Prussians attempted to deploy but found that they were unable to manoeuvre in the densely forested hills. An attempt to advance either side of the road was countered by Austrian Jagers. After an exchange of fire which last about an hour the Austrians withdrew a short distance to a point where the road had been blocked by hastily felled trees. The Prussians attempted to drive back the Austrians but, unable to manoeuvre effectively or to bring up reinforcements or artillery, they were forced to call off their attack by about 3.00 pm although sporadic firing continued between the outposts for some while afterwards.

While the Prussians fell back to reorganise and seek a way around the Austrian position the Austrian outposts retired, falling back on the main body of the corps between . During the afternoon von Ramming was reinforced by the Austrian 2nd Reserve Cavalry Division.

Umpire's Comment

The Prussian organisation certainly appears to allow a greater flexibility and a more responsive Command and Control on the battlefield. Those Prussian formations which are operating as individual Divisions with no overall Corps Command structure are noticeably less effective than those operating with a Corps Commander. It is therefore obvious why the Prussians did not repeat this experiment in 1870. However, both systems are more effective than the Austrian command system, which has the corps commander directly controlling 4-5 brigades with no intervening Division level commanders. In game turns this means that Prussian units often receive a dice roll modifier of 2, 3 or 4 on their manoeuvre dice rolls. The Austrian on the other hand, usually only have a modifier of 1 or 2 (possibly 3 if the commander is one of the few exceptional leaders). This gives the Prussians a substantial advantage when manoeuvring and realistically reflects the capabilities demonstrated by the Prussians during the war.

The Prussian infantry fire is also very effective and can usually be relied upon to inflict overwhelming casualties on the Austrians. This represents the shock effect of such effective fire quite realistically and is proving to be a major headache for the Austrian players.

It must also be admitted that the Prussian players do seem to consistently achieve better dice scores than their Austrian opponents, however it has not saved the Prussians at Freidland...

30th June 1866

Overnight the skies cleared and the day promised to be fine.

Operations in the West

The military activity in the west centred on the Austro-Saxon withdrawal to Gitschin, where it was intended to make a stand against the Prussians. At the same time the Prussian 1st Army was trying to reorganise following the actions at Sobotka and Turnau, however the Prussian movements were hampered by any firm knowledge of the whereabouts of the enemy and his strength.

The Prussian Elbe Army, having outrun its supplies was forced to spend the day resting while its line of communication was re-established and the trans caught up.

Saxon and Austrian movements

The Austro-Saxon forces had managed to hold the line of the Iser against the Prussian 1st Army for a week, however following the loss of the position at Turnau on the 29th it was apparent to the Saxon Crown Prince that the Iser position was by now irretrievably lost. With the Austrian 1st Corps already retiring on Gitschin, Prince Albert issued orders for the Saxon Corps to withdraw from its position at Sobotka and to join the Austrians at Gitschin, where he intended to take up a defensive position.

The Saxon withdrawal from Sobotka was skilfully carried out. The Saxons positions, which had been carefully selected to take advantage of the terrain to conceal the troops from the enemy's observation, allowed the bulk of the Saxon troops to withdraw unobserved by the enemy. The withdrawal began at first light, covered by a screen from the Saxon cavalry division. Although the Prussians were only a short distance away at Ober Bautzen a lack of cavalry prevented the Prussians from detecting the Saxon movements until late in the morning. As the Saxon cavalry screen began to pull back the movement was finally observed by the Prussians and at about midday several cavalry patrols advanced cautiously from Ober Bautzen (by which time the leading Saxon division was nearing Gitschin).

The Austrian 1st Corps had withdrawn to Gitschin on the previous day following the battle at Turnau. During the morning it had taken up positions to the north of the town. By early afternoon the Saxon Corps was also arriving at Gitschin and taking up positions.

The Prussian 1st Army

Following the battle of Turnau the Prussian 3rd Corps and Reserve Cavalry Corps remained in the vicinity of Turnau to reorganise and clear the wounded and dead from the battlefield. The two infantry Divisions remained close to Turnau and the Cavalry Corps took up positions at Rowensko and established a cavalry screen to the east and south east of that town. Several patrols were pushed out in the direction of Gitschin but these were halted by vedettes from von Edelsheim's cavalry division which was covering the Austrian 1st Corps at Gitschin.

The Prussian 2nd Corps initially remained at Dlouhopolsko awaiting the arrival of the 3rd Heavy Brigade. It was hoped that the arrival of the cavalry would offset the Austrian advantage in cavalry and allow the Prussian to resume their advance. The cavalry brigade duly arrived at Dlouhopolsko at about 11.00 am and after a short rest, at about midday, the cavalry advanced with the 3rd Division in support.

The Austrian cavalry fell back in the face of such a strong advance as far as Loucitz, at which point they withdrew into the woods on the western approaches to Chlumec. The Prussian cavalry, supported by the 3rd Division's advanced guard, followed the enemy into the woods and shortly after 1.00pm arrived on the outskirts of Chlumec. It was soon apparent that the Austrian cavalry had withdrawn from the town and were retiring towards the village of Neustadl. The infantry of the Advanced Guard quickly moved up and secured the bridge over the Cidlina River, taking up a position with its right flank in the village of Kladrub and its left resting on the railway embankment to the north.

The 2nd Corps commander, Lt General von Schmidt, arrived at about the same time and after a brief

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reconnaissance had determined that the enemy were occupying a position along low a ridge to the east of Chlumec. Despite the presence of the enemy cavalry, the Austrians seemed to be lacking in infantry and had strengthened what seemed to von Schmidt to be a somewhat weak position on the ridge with earthworks. Several batteries had been noted in the earthworks.

Von Schmidt, having received orders to advance on Koniggratz via Chlumec, felt confident that the enemy force opposing him was merely a rearguard. This belief was reinforced by the determined efforts of the enemy cavalry to delay him on the previous day compared to the speed with which the enemy cavalry had fallen back before the Prussian advance today, and the seeming lack of enemy infantry to defend the crossing at Chlumec. Convinced that the enemy had withdrawn, and that their rearguard was trying to delay him before making good their own escape, Von Schmidt therefore decided on an attack to force the enemy out of their position and to open the road to Koniggratz. With the Advanced Guard already deployed the rest of the 3rd Division was ordered to cross and form up on the left of the railway embankment. The 4th Division and the Reserve artillery were ordered to come up as quickly as possible. At 2.00 pm the leading elements of the 4th Division reached the outskirts of Chlumec, and the 3rd Division was given the order to attack.

Von Schmidt however had gravely misinterpreted the intention of the enemy and underestimated both the Austrian numbers and the quality of the Austrian commander. At 5.00 am that morning Archduke William had received orders from Archduke Albrecht warning him that the enemy were likely to attack and that he was to make every effort to draw them onto his guns and to hold his ground. The 3rd Reserve Cavalry Division and Fragnern's Brigade from the 8th Corps were to provide immediate support, while the remainder of the 8th Corps was to move from Neu Bidschow to a position north east of Chlumec from where, if the opportunity arose, it would be able to throw itself on the enemy's left flank. Archduke William had spent most of the morning ensuring that the earthworks prepared for the artillery⁴⁴ by the army engineers were as ready as possible, and had instructed the cavalry commander, Generalmajor Graf Condenhove, to keep the bulk of his heavy cavalry behind the villages of Neustadl and Pisek, where they would be concealed from view and also able to cover the road east to Koniggratz⁴⁵. The Brigade of Generalmajor Fragnern was deployed behind the artillery positions, ready to march to where it might be needed most to support the guns, while the Jager Battalion was deployed to hold Neustadl. At about 1.00 pm the Archduke received word that the 8th Corps was near Miklosrb, about 2 miles north east of Chlumec. The 8th Corps was instructed to hold itself in readiness for the enemy's anticipated attack, with instructions to direct its advance towards Chlumec when ordered to do so. The Corps commander, Archduke Leopold, rode forward to join Archduke William in order to observe the ground and then returned to his corps as the Prussian attack commenced.

The Battle of Chlumec

As the Prussian 3rd Division moved into the attack it soon came under a heavy and accurate fire from the Austrian gun line. The single Prussian battery attached to the Advanced Guard open fire in reply but was soon silenced and forced to retire. One of the first Prussian shots however killed Archduke William's horse and wounded an ADC. The Archduke himself was fortunately unhurt but somewhat shaken by the near miss.

Still believing he was engaging the Austrian rearguard von Schmidt attacked the northern end of the Austrian gun line near Neustadl with the bulk of the division while the Advance Guard attempted to turn the southern end of the line. The Prussian infantry advanced steadfastly into the storm of shot and shell but failed to make much headway until 3.00pm when, after almost an hour of fighting, the Prussian 14th Regiment drove the Austrian 5th Jager Battalion from the village of Neustadl. At this moment the leading Prussian troops were astonished to find Condenhove's cavalry division formed behind Neustadl and to see a further eight batteries of the Austrian Reserve Artillery formed on the reverse slopes of the ridge behind the gun line. At the same time the Prussian 2nd Grenadier stormed the northernmost emplacements on the ridge and overran the two nearest Austrian batteries, albeit at the cost of heavy casualties, only to be driven back by fire from other nearby batteries.

44 The Army Artillery Reserve comprised 12 batteries of Field Artillery and 4 batteries of Horse Artillery. Eight of the Field Batteries were positioned in the front line, while the remaining four Field Batteries and the Horse Artillery were held in reserve. In addition to being protected by fieldworks, the forward batteries had also set out range markers at measured distance from the artillery positions.

45 Graf Coudenhove had withdrawn the bulk of the heavy cavalry from the screen during the morning. By the time the Prussians reached Chlumec, the cavalry vedettes consisted only of two regiments of Uhlans.

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North of Neustadl the Prussian 42nd Regiment advanced to flank the Austrian line only to be halted by the accurate fire of an Austrian horse battery and the appearance of a brigade of Austrian cavalry from behind the village of Pisek. As the Prussian infantry fell back and reformed they were charged by Windischgratz's cavalry brigade (3rd Reserve Cavalry Division) who, despite a hail of rifle fire, compelled the Prussians to fall retire yet again. At about the same time Archduke William, judging that the time was right to commit the 8th Corps to an attack on the Prussian left flanks, sent an aide to Archduke Leopold with instructions to advance and to direct his attack towards Chlumec with the intention of outflanking the Prussians from the north⁴⁶.



The battlefield at Chlumec - looking to the south

The Prussian situation was desperate and the attack began to falter. Von Schmidt ordered the 4th Division, the half of which was still filing through the narrow streets of Chlumec, to come up in support as quickly as possible. The leading brigade (the 7th Bde) hurried forward to reinforce the 3rd Division.

Between 3.00pm and 3.30pm there was a brief lull as the Prussians reorganised and prepared to launch another attack. Windischgratz's cavalry brigade, having prevented the Prussians from outflanking the position at Neustadl, had fallen back to its original position. To the dismay of the Prussians however by 3.45pm the leading bridge of the Austrian 8th Corps could be observed marching towards Chlumec and taking up positions on the Prussian left flank.

Von Schmidt had by now realised that he was not merely engaging a rearguard, but he still believed that he had a chance to drive the Austrians back before their flank march could take effect. He therefore ordered his 8th Brigade to hold the position at Chlumec and ordered the 7th Brigade forward to reinforce the 3rd Division. The battered 3rd Division was ordered to brace itself for one last attack which it was hoped would break

⁴⁶ The Austrian Horse Artillery battery had taken up a position close by a bridge across the Bistritz river. The road which crossed the river at this point led directly to Mlikosrb, where Archduke Leopold was waiting with the bulk of the 8th Corps. This was the shortest and quickest route for a courier to travel between Archduke William and the 8th Corps. It had not occurred to either of the Austrian commanders that the Prussians could advance so swiftly that they might cut this line of communication. Had the Prussian 42nd Regiment overthrown the Austrian battery or repulsed Windischgratz's cavalry it is probable that the orders for the 8th Corps attack would have been delayed or might even not reached their destination. C'est la Guerre indeed!

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through the Austrian line near Neustadl.

At 4.00 pm the Prussian renewed their attack on the Austrian positions near Neustadl, advancing into a heavy fire from the remaining artillery. However, the Austrians had brought forward the remaining batteries of the reserve artillery and the cannon swept the line of the Prussian attack with a storm of shot and cannister fire. Despite the staggering casualties the Prussians continued to advance, to the surprise and admiration of the Austrians. The 49th Regiment carried a battery position near Neustadl but was unable to advance further. The 14th Regiment, deployed out of its position in Neustdal and advance up the ridge in support of the 49th, but was halted before it could reach the enemy artillery. The Prussian infantry however directed their rifle fire against the Austrian artillery crews and many of the artillerists were cut down by the small arms fire as they served their pieces. The bravery shown by the soldiers of both armies was nothing less than astonishing as it seemed that all were determined to die before giving ground to the enemy. Just before 4.30pm an Austrian battery was silenced by small arms fire and the the 14th Regiment advanced and overran the battery. This was to be the high point of the Prussian advance however.

The ridge line was by now shrouded in thick smoke from the discharge of dozens of cannon and hundreds of needle guns. Some way to the rear of the Austrian line General Condenhove (3rd Reserve Cavalry Division) watched the advance of the Prussian infantry. Through the gaps in the smoke however he observed the Prussian infantry had inadvertently exposed their flank to his cavalry. With no time to lose Condenhove placed himself at the head of GM von Mungen's heavy cavalry brigade⁴⁷ and shortly after 4.30pm ordered the charge. Sweeping through the smoke the Austrian cavalry crashed into the left flank of the Prussian 14th Regiment, overrunning it in a matter of moments and continuing to advance into the flank of the adjacent 49th Regiment. Taken by surprise, and unable to bring their rifles to fire to the flank, the Prussian infantry regiments dissolved under the shock of the cavalry charge and began retreating towards Chlumec.

Pausing to rally his disordered cavalry Graf Condenhove led them through the debris strewn gun emplacements and formed them to pursue the retreating enemy.

By 5.00pm the leading Prussian troops were withdrawing in disorder, although the 8th Brigade had deployed and was holding Chlumec securely against the attack by the 8th Corps.

As the mass of Prussians began falling back across the open ground towards Chlumec Windischgratz's cavalry charged and captured two Prussian batteries. An attempt by the Prussian 3rd Heavy Cavalry Brigade to halt the Austrian cavalry failed and the Prussian cavalry fell back on Chlumec. The 7th Brigade quickly changed facing and prepared to cover the retreat of the battered remnants of the 3rd Division.

Observing the Prussian withdrawal Graf Condenhove appeared to have the bit between his teeth. Flushed with the success of his earlier charge he led von Mungen's Brigade forward once again, and charged the lines of the Prussian 7th Brigade. This time however the Prussian infantry were able to bring their needle guns to bear and their rapid fire forced the Austrian cavalry to turn away. Graf Condenhove, charging with drawn sword at the head of his cavalry, was killed by one of the first volleys.

General von Schmidt, concerned at the threat to his left flank and believing that his battered corps would be unable to hold Chlumec, issued orders to retire to his previous position at Dlouhopolsko, where it was felt that he would be in a position to receive support from either the 4th Corps or elements of the Elbe Army.

The Austrians, having held their ground against a determined enemy remained in position, the Archduke contenting himself with posting cavalry patrols to provide warning against any further attack while the artillery ammunition was replenished.

Austrian casualties numbered about 900 killed and wounded, with 20 guns put out of action. Prussian losses in killed, wounded and prisoners exceeded 4,700, with 20 guns lost to the enemy.

The Prussian 4th Corps at Sobotka

During the morning, as has been described, the Saxon Army Corps skilfully withdrew from its positions

⁴⁷ Von Mungen's Brigade numbered slightly more than 2,000 men, divided between two regiments of Kurassiers and a regiment of Uhlans

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around Sobotka and retired on Gitschin. The presence of the Saxon cavalry, which formed the rearguard, prevented the Prussians from determining that the enemy had broken contact and withdrawn until late in the morning⁴⁸. As soon as the Saxon withdrawal was confirmed however Prince Frederick Charles issued new orders to the 1st Army to reflect the changing situation:

1. The 2nd Corps was instructed to alter its line of march via Neu Bidschow and thence east on towards Konniggratz⁴⁹.
2. The 4th Corps (7th and 8th Divisions), supported by the Army Artillery Reserve, was to cautiously follow the Saxon forces in the direction of Gitschin⁵⁰.

The advance guard of 4th Corps set off at about 2.30 pm. There was some skirmishing between the Prussian Advance Guard and Saxon cavalry patrols and by late afternoon it was apparent to General von Fransecky, commanding the Corps, that the Saxons had halted at Gitschin and taken up positions which seemed to indicate that they intended to make another fight of it at that place. Realising that it would be mid-evening by the time his corps would have closed up and the Reserve Artillery arrived, Fransecky posted his advance guard at Woharitz, and rode back to report the situation to Prince Frederick Charles.

The Elbe Army

As a result of the supply situation and the somewhat muddled deployment of the Elbe Army (following the redirecting of the trains away from Theresienstadt and the splitting of the 15th Division into two widely separated parts), the Elbe Army spent the day consolidating its positions, requisitioning urgently needed food supplies and waiting for the Army's trains to catch up⁵¹.

The 14th Division reached the town of Kolin during the afternoon, where it bivouacked. During the late afternoon the faint sound of gunfire was heard away to the north east. Initially the soldiers believed it to be thunder, but as the sound grew in duration and volume it became apparent that a battle was taking place (this was the battle of Chlumec, where over 200 canon were engaged at the height of the battle).

The 16th Division, the 14th Cavalry Brigade and the 7th Corps Artillery remained at Nimburg, as did the Army Headquarters.

The 30th Brigade (15th Division) remained at Alt Bunzlau, along with the Reserve Cavalry Brigade. During the afternoon the remainder of the 15th Division arrived at Alt Bunzlau from Melnik. The Division was visited by General von Herwarth during the afternoon.

The 8th Corps Artillery remained at Celakowitz.

Operations in the East

Benedek's Triumph – the capitulation of the Prussian 1st Corps

At about 3.00 am Benedek's emissary returned from the Prussian lines, bearing the news that that he had met with the Commanding General and the Chief of Staff of the Prussian Corps and that they have agreed to discuss terms and will send a delegation to Friedland at 6.00 am. Shortly after 6.00 am a delegation from the Prussian Corps, consisting of Generalleutnant von Grossman (acting Corps Commander) and Colonel Von Borries, approached the Austrian lines near Freidland under a flag of truce.

Generalleutnant von Grossman confirmed that the Corps Commander, General von Bonin, was seriously wounded and unable to attend, and that he had assumed command of the Corps in his stead. He

48 Once again a lack of cavalry hampered the Prussian attempts to reconnoitre the enemy positions.

49 The 2nd Corps received its new orders at about 5.00 pm, just as the Corps was commencing its withdrawal from the lost battle at Chlumec.

50 The wording of the orders, which specifically stated that the corps was to "cautiously follow" the enemy, was possibly an indication of the effectiveness of the Saxon Crown Prince's defence of the Iser line and it's affect on the Prussian Commander.

51 The Army trains were being established to move the supplies forward to Nimburg and it was expected that the line of communication should be re-established by 2nd July.

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announced that the present unfortunate circumstances compelled him to accept Austrian terms of surrender, as further resistance would only lead to more bloodshed with little additional gain for either side. Von Grossman however requested that his troops be allowed to collect their wounded and dead as soon as possible and that his troops be fed as they had been on short rations since the day before Trautenau. The Prussian Chief of Staff placed himself at the Austrian disposal to effect an orderly surrender and to deal with the casualties.

With the threat of a further battle thus averted Benedek was free to resume his advance on Glatz. However, the advance was hampered by the need to disarm the Prussians, to collect the casualties and to clear the roads south of Friedland, which were clogged with the transport of the Prussian 1st Corps. The Austrian 4th Corps was assigned the task of disarming the Prussians (assisted by the 3rd Corps until midday), while the 1st Reserve Cavalry Division and 10th Corps marched on Wunschelburg and Scharfeneck respectively. The leading elements of these formations arrived at the destinations late in the afternoon. Benedek and his staff accompanied the 10th Corps.

The 4th Corps spent the better part of the day disarming the prisoners and organising the collection of the casualties (of both sides), and trying to clear the roads, and was still at Friedland at nightfall.

In addition, the clogged nature of the roads, and the limited routes available to the various corps trains had resulted in considerable traffic jams along the roads leading back towards Trautenau, with the result that the Corps were unable to be resupplied with rations during the day. Most of the regiments had not been issued fresh rations since the day after the battle at Trautenau and many soldiers had not had a hot meal since the evening of the 28th June.

A Prussian courier, despatched from the 2nd Army HQ at Glatz with orders for the 1st Corps, approached the outlying Austrian picquets at about 5.00 am. This officer, alerted to the situation by the numbers of Prussian stragglers and casualties on the roads near Braunau⁵², approached the enemy picquets cautiously. Although challenged he was able to avoid capture, but after several fruitless attempts to reach the 1st Corps the officer reluctantly decided to return to Glatz with the news that the line of communication to the 1st Corps was severed.

Operations in the East – events around Glatz and the Prussian advance into Bohemia

Following the failed attempt to force the Austrian position near Waldorf the commander of the Prussian 2nd Army issued orders for an outflanking manoeuvre on the following day, with the intention of marching round the Austrian right, seizing the town of Reineez and cutting the enemy's line of communication. To this end the 11th Division was ordered to march at dawn for Reineez, while the 12th Division was to demonstrate against the Austrian position to fix the enemy in place. HRH Crown Prince Frederick William would accompany the 11th Division so as to be able to direct the flanking manoeuvre personally.

The terrain to the south of the Austrian position was rough and broken, comprising steep hills covered in dense forest⁵³. The roads, such as they were, consisted of narrow tracks and forced the Prussian 11th Division to advance in a narrow column. With no easily identifiable landmarks for use in navigation, the Prussian column moved slowly with frequent pauses while the commander of the advance guard determined his location. The 12th Division advanced at first light and made contact with the Austrians but were unable to bring up the whole division until late morning, the movement again being hampered by the narrow roads and dense woods. When the division finally cleared the defile near Waldorf the corps commander, Von Mitius, was disconcerted to discover that the Austrians had withdrawn to a strong position near Ruckers.

During the morning von Ramming, commanding the Austrian 6th Corps, received a despatch from North Army HQ, warning him of the fact that the 2nd Corps was no longer in any position to cover his southern flank and that, as a consequence, it would be prudent to reconnoitre a defensive position further west in case his flank

52 A small number of Prussian soldiers were able to make good their escape during the hours of darkness, taking the road to Glatz via Braunau. Many of the walking wounded were also attempting to make good their escape in this way. During the afternoon of the 30th most of the exhausted Prussians were overtaken and captured by the advancing Austrians in the vicinity of Braunau and Scharfeneck.

53 The severity of the terrain may be judged by the fact that the present Czech Army has its Mountain and Winter Warfare School and Training Area in the vicinity of Reineez.

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was compromised and he was compelled to withdraw⁵⁴. Having been reinforced by the 2nd Reserve Cavalry Division, von Ramming was able to extend a line of cavalry vedettes to the south to watch for any enemy approach from that direction. In addition, at 9.00am, von Ramming also received a despatch from FzM Benedek, which informed him of the events near Friedland. By this means von Ramming understood that neither the 2nd Corps nor the forces under Benedek's command would be able to assist him should the enemy attack him today.

At about the same time that Benedek's despatch arrived the Austrian cavalry patrols discovered the head of the Prussian 11th Division column winding its way through the hills near Biebersdorf, and by 11.00am von Ramming knew that the enemy was intent on turning the flank of his present position. He had already determined that there was no suitable alternate position east of Reineez, and therefore he should fall back to the south west of that town, from where he would be able to cover the road east towards Glatz and also his own line of communication west towards Giesshubel. If necessary he would be able to deploy his corps near Giesshubel.

By 11.30 von Ramming had issued orders to begin falling back on Reineez, his infantry brigades withdrawing in good order. At midday, with no sign of the 11th Division approaching, von Mitius ordered the 12th Division to advance. The 12th Division advanced cautiously, being engaged by the well sited Austrian artillery, which itself fell back before the Prussian advance covered by some Jagers and the heavy regiments of the Reserve Cavalry.

During the afternoon, von Ramming successfully withdrew his Corps to Reineez⁵⁵, with some skirmishing between his rearguard and the Prussian 12th Division, however von Mitius was unable to bring his forces up quickly enough to force the enemy to stand and fight. In addition, the 11th Division was still wending its way towards Reineez. An occasional muttering of cannon fire could be heard echoing faintly through the wooded valleys, but the direction of the firing could not be determined due to the faintness of the sound and the echoes which appeared to come from several directions at the same time, much to the Crown Prince's mounting frustration.

Eventually the 11th Division reached Bad Reineez, from where the advance guard was able to make contact with the leading troops from the 12th Division which by now had advanced as far as Reineez. Von Ramming however, had made good his escape, leaving a rearguard on the wooded heights beyond Reineez covering the rest of the 6th Corps as it retired on Giesshubel. Despite the apparent severity of the Austrian artillery fire casualties amongst the Prussian 12th Division were light, less than 150 killed and wounded. At the same time the Prussians were rarely able to close within effective Needlegun range or to bring their artillery forward, and Austrian casualties were therefore of a similar number, with those of the wounded who were unable to keep up with the rearguard being captured by the enemy

Crown Prince Frederick William, although disappointed at the failure of his manoeuvre, was able to console himself that he had at least forced the enemy to give way without incurring the casualties to have been expected in a major action. The Prussian 6th Corps, having once more been on the move since the early hours of the morning halted for the day at Reineez⁵⁶.

Although the manoeuvre against the Austrian 6th Corps had failed to produce the desired result the Guards Corps, 5th Corps and Reserve Cavalry Corps had made some progress to the south, where all three Corps had crossed the border into Bohemia. It was the Crown Prince's intention to maintain the pressure on the enemy by advancing into Bohemia towards Koniggratz, in the hope that the Austrians would react to this movement by withdrawing some of the forces engaged against the Prussian 1st Corps. These two infantry corps were therefore instructed to direct their manoeuvre towards Reichenau with their movements being covered by the Reserve Cavalry Corps.

By nightfall the Cavalry had reached Reichenau, and pushed its vedettes out towards Sohlritz where the

54 A sound assessment of the situation by Field Marshal Archduke Albrecht, which undoubtedly warned von Ramming of the threat to his flank in the nick of time!

55 During this movement Ramming received a further despatch from Benedek informing him of the surrender of the Prussian 1st Corps and that Benedek expected to be in a position to advance in support of the 6th Corps on 1st July.

56 The Prussian 6th Corps had last had a rest day on the 25th June. By the evening of the 30th the troops were exhausted having been under arms before dawn on most days, and during which time the corps had fought one action, and spend the following two days marching and skirmishing.

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Prussian patrols encountered some exhausted stragglers from the Austrian 2nd Corps. A number of the stragglers were taken prisoner and confirmed that they had been told to make for Koniggratz⁵⁷.

The Guards Corps departed its bivouac at dawn, marching via Langenbruck and halting for the day between the villages of Katscher and Rampusch, about 5 miles east of Reichenau. The 5th Corps had been ordered to leave the 10th Division at Marienthal, with picquets to the south in the direction of Mittelwalde, while the 9th Division advanced west towards Rockitnitz, reaching that town at about midday. As a result of these manoeuvres the Prussians would be able to concentrate the bulk of two infantry Corps at Reichenau on the 1st July.

By late evening however Crown Prince Frederick William was aware that a disaster had befallen the 1st Corps, and that rumours of an Austrian invasion of Silesia at Freidland were circulating in Glatz.

Operations in the East – Austrian Operations

During the day the North Army HQ moved to Koniggratz.

Following the defeat of the Austrian 2nd Corps, Archduke Albrecht issued fresh orders for the 2nd Corps:

1. The column under command of Oberst Schindler was instructed to retire on Konningratz with all speed, where it was intended that the soldiers could rest briefly (and be supplied from the fortress magazines) before being moved by rail to Hohenstadt.
2. The commander of the 2nd Corps, Graf Thun-Hohenstadt, was ordered to move to Koniggratz with his staff (via rail) and to resume command of his corps.
3. Auersperg's Brigade was to be temporarily attached to the 2nd Light Cavalry Division and to remain at Grulich under command of Prinz Thurn und Taxis, drawing its supplies from Hohenstadt. The remaining trains of the 2nd Corps (which had escaped from Mittelwalde) were to set off for Koniggratz to rejoin the bulk of the Corps.

By the evening of the 30th the 2nd Corps commander and his staff had arrived at Hohenstadt and were arranging rail transport to Koniggratz for the 1st July. The trains had departed Grulich for Konningratz. Oberst Schindler's column had reached Grosse Petrowitz, several miles south east of Hohenbruck. This column was expected to reach Konningratz on the 1st July.

In addition to the above, orders were sent to the fortresses at Olmutz, Koniggratz and Josephstadt, requesting the immediate despatch of replacement guns, carriages and limbers to replace those lost by the 2nd Corps at Habelschwert. The magazines were also ordered to provide replacement rifles as required. A further despatch was sent to the War Ministry in Vienna requesting additional field artillery and infantry replacements.

The Austrian commander, Archduke Albrecht, was at this time reasonably satisfied with the situation facing him. To his knowledge the Crown Prince of Saxony had fought a determined delaying action along the Iser and, having been reinforced with the 8th Corps, a reserve cavalry division and the Artillery Reserve, could be expected to give a good account of himself for the time being and to hold the Prussians north west of the Elbe. This would give time for Benedek, with the 3rd, 4th and 10th Corps under command, to deal with the Prussian 1st Corps and then to turn towards Glatz⁵⁸. It was also expected that Von Ramming's 6th Corps would be able to hold its ground near Glatz until Benedek arrived. With the Prussian 1st Corps out of the way, Archduke Albrecht was reasonably optimistic that Benedek would be strong enough to inflict a serious defeat on the Prussian 2nd Army. The Archduke was however unaware of the Prussian advance towards Reichenau, which would soon be in a position to threaten Koniggratz from the east.

During the evening news of Benedek's success at Friedland, and the victory at Chlumec reached the Headquarters of the North Army.

57 One young Austrian officer managed to avoid capture by the Prussian cavalry patrols and, after acquiring a horse from a nearby farm, set off after Schindler's column with the news that the Prussians were at Sohlritz.

58 News of the surrender of the Prussian 1st Corps arrived at North Army HQ during the afternoon.

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Konniggratz
30th June 1866



Major Theodor Johan von Habsburg
Royal & Imperial Army general Staff
HQ North Army 1866

My dear Bruno

Well, can you believe it? Old Benedek has done it AGAIN! He's given the Prussian 1st Corps a damn fine beating at Friedland while at Chlumec Archduke William has done the same to another lot!

I am quite overcome with emotion I can tell you. General Franz John has been walking round grinning like a village idiot and even the Archduke has been seen smirking behind his spectacles. Needless to say the drink is flowing freely tonight.

All we need now is a victory from the Saxon chappie and the beastly Prussians may well have to throw in the towel. Everyone seems to think that it is nearly all over and that the Prussians will cave in now that they have had a sufficiently bloody nose. I certainly hope so – can you just imagine how splendid it will be after all this to stroll across the Maria-Theresien-Platz in a smart new uniform adorned with a smart new medal? The ladies will simply be beside themselves and are bound to throw themselves at the new heroes! Ha,ha, ha!

The thought quite makes up for being back in dreary old Konniggratz!

Until next time.

Yours as ever

Johan

Umpire's Comment

A day of surprises which seems to have restored Austrian confidence and vindicated the Austrian strategy, although it must be admitted that a substantial part of the Austrian success has derived from the lack of co-ordination amongst the Prussian forces. It does appear however that Archduke Albrecht seems to be very much in control of the situation, with Crown Prince Albert and FZM Benedek both carrying out their tasks effectively. In particular his timely warning to the 6th Corps that their right flank may be vulnerable allowed von Ramming to take the appropriate action and avoid a potentially disadvantageous fight at Reineez during the afternoon.

On the Prussian side, the Elbe Army, having had the farthest to march and hampered by the re-routing of its supply line, has still not been able to concentrate with the 1st Army. The 1st Army is fighting a series of uncoordinated battles against an enemy force which is choosing the time and place to fight. To compound the problem the 1st Army has failed to concentrate its corps against any single enemy force and they are thus fighting with no advantage of numbers. The Prussian 2nd Army, aware that something is amiss with the 1st Corps, is trying to regain the initiative by advancing into Bohemia in the direction of Konniggratz. However, the news of the capitulation of the 1st Corps and the possibility that a large enemy force is within a day's march of Glatz may have some effect on the Prussian advance on Konniggratz.

Also of interest is the fact that following the surrender of the Prussian 1st Corps and the heavy casualties inflicted on the 2nd Corps at Chlumec, Prussian losses have exceeded those of the Austro-Saxon armies for the first time during the campaign. At the present rate of attrition both armies will cease to be an effective fighting force by the end of July.

Combined Losses	Losses	Guns
Austrian & Saxon	39,000	80
Prussian	42,020	132

It will be interesting to see how both Moltke and his commanders react to the day's events.

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1st July 1866

The skies remain clear and the weather outlook is fine.

Operations outside Bohemia

The Prussian Army of the Main under command of Lt Gen Von Falckestein is conducting operations against the Kingdom of Hanover and Austria's various southern German Allies (Bavaria, Wurtemberg etc forming the VII and VIII Corps). As yet these operations are having no effect on operations in Bohemia.

Northern Italy. The Italians are manoeuvring cautiously against the Austrian Southern Army which is comfortably ensconced in the famous "Quadrilateral". The Austrians are confident of being able to hold any Italian attack at the present time.

Prussian Internal Politics

One other potential problem facing von Moltke is the internal political situation in Prussia. The anti-war movement with the Prussian Parliament is becoming more vociferous as the days go by without a victory. The news of the defeats at Friedland and Chlumec are likely to exacerbate the situation and the absence of both the King and Bismark from Berlin may encourage more support for the anti-war party. Both the King and Bismark will be putting pressure on Von Moltke to regain the initiative quickly.

Prussian Intentions

Von Moltke, increasingly frustrated at his Field Commander's apparent inability to locate the main enemy army or to identify its centre of gravity, and disturbed at the news coming out of Silesia concerning the destruction of the Prussian 1st Corps, sent a telegram to the three Army commanders⁵⁹:

- 1st Army is directed to take up suitable defensive positions that will enable it to engage the enemy forces in its area of operation with the greatest advantage. The Feldmarshal is aware of the present status and condition of the 1st Army and recognizes that HRH Prinz Fredrich Karl will have to protect his forces while attempting to play for enough time to enable Elbe Army to move up with the 1st Reserve Corps and exploit any opportunity to flank or take the enemy facing your Army in the rear.
- The Feldmarshal directs 2nd Army to investigate and determine the validity of the many rumours of Austrian forces operating in the area of Braunau and Freidland. Any substantiated reports will be immediately forward to the Royal Army HQ. The 2nd Army is authorized to take advantage of any opportunities presented by the Austrian forces in its area of operation. 1st & Elbe Army will need at least 48 hours to stabilize their present situation before being able to transition back to offensive operations
- Elbe Army is to continue to conduct its present operation until it can initiate a coordinated advance with the newly arrived Prussian 1st Reserve Corps that recently detrained at Zittau.

Events in the West

The Elbe Army

The Prussian Elbe Army, having reorganised its line of communications and at last being able to re-establish its trains and supplies, found itself having to advance in order to concentrate against a possible threat from the direction of Chlumec. Von Herwarth, concerned that his scattered forces may also have to face an attack anywhere between Nimburg and Kolin, or to have to change direction and march in support of the 1st Army at short notice, determined to concentrate the 16th and 14th Divisions at Kolin.⁶⁰ By midday the head of the 16th Division arrived at Kolin, where the 14th Division, which had arrived the previous day, was preparing a

⁵⁹ The telegram was received at the respective army headquarters during the morning of the 1st July.

⁶⁰ Also included were the 14th Cavalry Bde, and the 7th and 8th Corps Artillery Reserves.

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defensive position on the east bank of the Elbe.

The 8th Corps Artillery was delayed in its march to Kolin, halting at Pinow, but was expected to arrive on the 2nd. The 15th Division remained at Alt Bunzlau to rest and replenish its supplies.

In addition to the forces already allocated the Elbe Army was also instructed to take command of the 1st Reserve Corps⁶¹, which was assembling by rail at Zittau. Orders were despatched to the Reserve Corps with instructions to march for Nimburg as soon as the corps had fully assembled.

The Prussian 1st Army and operations around Gitschin and Chlumec

The Prussian 1st Army had been in almost constant contact with the enemy since its arrival on the Iser and although it had managed to push the enemy back on Gitschin the tenacious defence led by the Crown Prince of Saxony had ensured that the Prussians had been roughly handled on several occasions. The initial impetuous Prussian advances had now assumed a more cautious aspect.

By nightfall on the 30th June Prince Frederick Charles was aware that the Saxons had linked up with the Austrian 1st Corps at Gitschin, and that it was likely that the enemy would be preparing to fight another delaying action from a strong defensive position. At about the same time news of the Prussian defeat at Chlumec reached the 1st Army HQ, with the threat of fresh enemy forces approaching from the south.

Nevertheless, the Prince decided to try and force the enemy position at Gitschin and issued orders for the 4th Corps (7th and 8th Divisions) to prepare an attack. Orders were also sent to the cavalry Corps (less the 2nd Division which still required a period of rest) and the 3rd Corps (5th and 6th Divisions) to close up from Turnau and to take post on the left of the 4th Corps. The cavalry was instructed to reconnoitre the enemy positions and to seek an open flank to the north of Gitschin. Once all the Prussian forces had closed up the signal to attack would be given.

However, following the receipt of the telegram from Royal Headquarters (which instructed the 1st Army to assume a defensive stance until the Elbe Army was close enough for both armies to co-operate with each other) the Prince issued fresh orders cancelling the planned attack and for the two corps, supported by the cavalry, to observe the enemy and reconnoitre his positions with the intention of manoeuvring the enemy out of his position by turning his flank to the north of Gitschin.

Meanwhile Crown Prince Albert of Saxony had been preparing his defence of the Gitschin position. Following the arrival of the Saxon Corps on the previous afternoon he had deployed them to defend the vicinity of Gitschin, with an outpost in the village of Woksitz, west of the town. The Austrians meanwhile had taken up positions on a line extending north from Gitschin to Diletz and Eisenstadt. It was soon apparent however that the Prussians had followed him from Sobotka and Prince Albert therefore assumed, correctly as it turned out, that they would soon be joined by the enemy forces from the vicinity of Turnau, and that the greatest threat would be on his right flank.

Prince Albert therefore issued orders for the Saxon Corps to hold the position around Gitschin. The Austrian 1st Corps was ordered to place a brigade at Diletz-Eisenstadt (supported by the Corps artillery on the high ground south of Diletz, a brigade to be placed in reserve at Robous, and the remainder of the Corps deployed between Soberuz and Drewenitz to cover the right flank. The Saxon Cavalry division was tasked with screening the front of the Gitschin position, with particular attention to observing the roads to the south west to provide warning of any enemy advance from that direction. The Austrian 1st Light Cavalry Division was deployed in open ground behind Eisenstadt, with strong outposts covering the front of the Austrian position and extending to the north-east, from where they could observe any enemy movements in that direction.

Prince Albert did not however intend to remain at Gitschin any longer than necessary, merely long enough to delay the enemy and to hopefully inflict a sharp reverse on him before making good his escape. He therefore also issued instructions for a withdrawal to Wostrumer, on the River Jamorka, should the Gitschin position

61 The 1st Reserve Corps comprised two Divisions of Landwehr infantry, a Division of Landwehr cavalry and 9 batteries of Landwehr artillery. It had been destined for occupation duties in Saxony but the situation in Saxony was such that the troops were not required and were subsequently forwarded to the field army.

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be compromised. Engineer officers were despatched to reconnoitre the routes to be taken to Wostrumer and the trains were despatched at the earliest opportunity.

In the event, the battle expected by Prince Albert did not materialise. During the latter part of the morning the Prussian Cavalry and 3rd Corps approached on the Turnau road and made contact with the Prussian 4th Corps on their right, and by early afternoon both Prussian Corps and the Cavalry Division were concentrated and formed for battle. However the Austro-Saxon cavalry screen, ably supported by well sited batteries, prevented the Prussians from pressing their reconnaissance too close to the main Austrian and Saxon positions. Attempts by the Prussian cavalry to probe around to the north of the Austrian positions at Eisenstadt were foiled by Von Edelshiem's cavalry brigades and although intermittent skirmishing continued throughout the late afternoon and into the early evening, there were no further troop movements and as darkness fell the armies settled down to rest on their arms, with only the occasional shot from the forward outposts to disturb the night.

Further south the Prussian 2nd Corps remained at Dlouhopolsko, where it reorganised following the battle at Chlumec. Concerned that the enemy might attack the isolated 2nd Corps Prince Frederick Charles issued orders for the Corps to hold its present position and await the arrival of the Elbe Army, but to fall back on Podiebrod if pressed.

At Chlumec the Austrian forces under Archduke William (the 8th Corps, 2nd Reserve Cavalry and the Artillery Reserve) also remained in situ, however Archduke Albrecht, at Koniggratz, was concerned that this position would be exposed if the Saxons and Austrian 1st Corps retired from Gitschin, or if fresh enemy forces were concentrated at Chlumec.⁶² The Austrian forces at Chlumec were therefore ordered hold their positions as long as possible but to despatch engineers to reconnoitre and begin the preparation of a fresh position at Roudnitz, about eight and a half miles east of Chlumec. The Reserve Artillery and Corps trains were also ordered to withdraw as soon as the ammunition supplies were replenished and the troops had been provisioned.

There was no contact between the opposing forces in the vicinity of Chlumec. Both armies established their own line of outposts to cover their positions but little was done in the way of reconnaissance to find out what the enemy was doing.

Events in the East

The Prussian 2nd Army

Crown Prince Frederick William was by now becoming increasingly concerned about the situation regarding the 1st Corps. As yet there had been confirmation of its fate, only rumour and conjecture. In addition, the 6th Corps, currently located at Reineez, was badly in need of rest, and was therefore limited in its course of action. To this end, the 6th Corps was ordered to rest at Reineez, but to maintain communications with Glatz, so as to avoid being taken unawares should the enemy advance on Glatz from the north.

Couriers were also despatched to establish what had befallen the 1st Corps⁶³ In the event, one of the Prussian couriers encountered an Austrian cavalry picquet and was killed, his despatch to the 1st Corps being discovered inside the officers jacket. The other staff officer, travelling by a different route through Frankenstein and Reichenbach, discovered the fate of the 1st Corps and was able to reconnoitre the vicinity of Braunau, where by late afternoon he learned of the Austrian advance south from Friedland. Returning to the telegraph office in the railway station at Reichbach the resourceful officer was able to send a telegram to the fortress at Glatz, informing the Fortress commander of the true situation and requesting that the news be forwarded to 2nd Army Headquarters. An officer from the fortress staff was subsequently despatched to find the 2nd Army HQ at Reineez and to convey the telegram to the Army Commander. However, in order to avoid contact with the Austrian cavalry patrols which had by now cut the main road west from Glatz, the officer was compelled to detour to the south. The officer arrived at 2nd Army HQ at about 11.00 pm, having successfully

62 In his despatch to Archduke William (commanding at Chlumec), Albrecht also warned that the enemy forces which had been reported near Theresienstadt might be moving in the direction of Chlumec. These forces were of course the formations of the Elbe Army, which were currently assembling in the vicinity of Kolin and Alt Bunzlau

63 Better late than never...

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evaded the Austrian patrols, and handed over the telegram⁶⁴.

At the same time the Guard Corps and 5th Corps, supported by the Reserve Cavalry Corps, were ordered to push on towards Koniggratz.⁶⁵

The Cavalry Corps reached Tynist at about 11.00 am, and patrols advanced as far as Hohenbruck during the afternoon. At about midday, a train carrying Graf Thun-Hohenstadt (commanding the Austrian 2nd Corps) and his immediate staff was halted by Prussian cavalry at the station at Tynist, where the unfortunate Graf Thun was taken prisoner. Learning that the Austrians had been travelling by train from Hohenstadt, the Prussian cavalry cut the telegraph lines leading south from Tynist.

The Guard Corps assembled during the afternoon at Wamberg and Castolowitz., while the 5th Corps closed up on Senftenberg.

The Austrian North Army

By the morning of July 1st the situation facing the North Army was a curious one. In the west, despite the best efforts of the Crown Prince of Saxony, the Prussian armies were closing on the Elbe and the fortresses of Koniggratz and Josephstadt, while in the East Benedek was poised to strike towards Glatz and the right flank of the Prussian 2nd Army, which was spread over 40 miles of rough terrain from Reineez, to Hohenbruck and Senftenberg.

Archduke Albrecht felt that under these circumstances, if the Austrians forces west of Koniggratz could hold on for a few days more, it might be possible for the forces opposing the Prussian 2nd Army to inflict a further defeat on the enemy near Glatz. Orders were therefore issued for Benedek to press his attack towards the south, while von Ramming's 6th Corps would cover the fortresses of Josephstadt and Koniggratz from its position near Giesshubel. In addition, the 2nd Light Cavalry Division, supported by Auersperg's Brigade of the 2nd Corps, was to resume its advance on Glatz along the Neisse valley.

It had been the intention of Archduke Albrecht to ride out and observe the 6th Corps' situation for himself, however the news that Prussian cavalry had been observed at Sohlritz gave cause for concern regarding both his personal safety and that of the 6th Corps.

The Archduke therefore contented himself with riding to Josephstadt (returning to Koniggratz later in the day) and a message was sent to von Ramming informing him of the situation and charging him to detach a squadron to investigate the reports of enemy cavalry at Sohlritz. At the same time he was to begin preparations to retire on Josephstadt. The corps trains were therefore ordered to retire to Neustadt. By the time that the Austrian cavalry patrols arrived in the Prussian cavalry had long since departed, however the trains of the Prussian Guard Corps were discovered in the vicinity of Reichenau.

Meanwhile at Koniggratz the exhausted remnants of the 2nd Corps under Oberst Schindler had finally arrived. The troops were immediately placed into camp under the guns of the fortress and rations distributed.

Further south the 2nd Light Cavalry Division, accompanied by Auersperg's Brigade, advanced once again into the Neisse valley. By evening the cavalry division had reached Ober Langenau, while Auersperg's Brigade had halted at Mittlewalde. During the course of the evening the Austrian cavalry Commander learned of the passage of the Prussian 5th Corps through the hills to the west.

Benedek's Advance on Glatz

In the early hours of the 1st July Benedek issued orders for his three corps to advance on Glatz. However, following the efforts of the past few days, it was felt that the troops needed a period of rest before commencing the next march. In addition, the 4th Corps was still heavily involved with clearing the battlefield at Freidland and accounting for the prisoners.

64 The telegram read: "*For COS HQ 2nd Army & Commandant Glatz Fortress. Urgent. 1st Corps defeated and surrendered. Enemy moving south from Braunau in strength towards Glatz. Reichenbach. 8.00pm. 1st July 1866.*"

65 The Crown Prince was concerned that any sudden change of orders, or withdrawing the forces advancing towards Koniggratz, might be detrimental to the morale of the troops. With hindsight this might have been a mistake.

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Benedek therefore ordered the cavalry to resume the advance as soon as possible to reconnoitre the route towards Glatz, with the three infantry Corps receiving orders to march at midday, allowing them to rest during the morning and to issue rations to the hungry troops.

As luck would have it, at about 4.30 am, a Prussian officer and his escort riding north along the road from Glatz encountered an outpost from the Austrian 1st Cavalry Division. In the semi-darkness of early dawn the Austrians challenged the approaching horsemen and, receiving no response, opened fire as the Prussians turned to escape. Several Prussians were killed or wounded, including an officer who was unhorsed. When called upon to surrender the officer shot and killed one of the cavalry, whereupon he was cut down and killed. At the time it was assumed that the Prussians were making a reconnaissance, and it was not until several hours later that the dead officer was searched and documents discovered which confirmed that the Prussian officer was a courier seeking the Prussian 1st Corps HQ with a despatch for von Bonin. The captured despatch was therefore sent to Benedek, giving him valuable information regarding the positions and intentions of the Prussian 2nd Army⁶⁶.

To: *Ist corps – General Von Bonin*

Situation

2nd Army are in a dispersed situation, due to the actions of the enemy and the difficulty of the terrain. VI corps under the direct command of Army command is at Reineez, but is unable to continue its advance this day. Also due to the threat to the fortress of Glatz, this corps will remain in place. The situation for I corps is unknown. V Corps and Guard Corps will continue to advance to the west to threaten Konnigratz and thus draw Austrian forces upon them. There will also be a detrimental effect on the morale of these troops if a withdrawal is ordered. Due to this situation the Guard Corps commander will assume temporary control of the V Corps and the Reserve Cavalry Corps.

Instructions:

I Corps are to attempt to regroup in any form around Glatz. All units will attempt to form here

Signed *Crown Prince Frederick Wilhelm – Officer Commanding II Army*

Location *II Army HQ Reineez 23.20 1st July 1866*

As a result of this information, and having decided that the intelligence was genuine and not a *ruse de guerre* Benedek reviewed his instructions to his forces, with the intention of closing on the isolated Prussian 6th Corps and overwhelming it as quickly as possible. Fresh orders were despatched at 10.30 am, although the cavalry division had already commenced its advance towards Glatz in accordance with its original orders.

During the afternoon the Austrians continued to advance, the 10th Corps following the bulk of the cavalry in the direction of Glatz. By late afternoon, both formations had closed up in the vicinity of Neuhaid-Wallisurth, cutting the line of communication between the Prussian 6th Corps and the Glatz fortress. Cavalry patrols extended east to the outskirts of Glatz (where they were observed by the fortress garrison) and west as far as Waldorf. A number of Prussian administrative personnel and wagons were captured at this time. The Austrian cavalry patrols which advanced west to Waldorf also encountered Prussian outposts along the road and by evening the Commander of the Prussian 2nd Army was aware that the enemy was now between himself and Glatz.

To the west, the advance of the 3rd and 4th Corps was hindered by the terrain in the hills, where the narrow roads wound through the densely wooded slopes, and which forced the troops to advance in narrow columns. By nightfall the leading brigade of the 3rd Corps had cleared the defile at Friedrichsberg, about 3-4 miles from Reineez, and taken up a position near the village, while the remainder of the corps was forced to halt along the road from Friedrichsberg to Carlsberg. The 4th Corps, having detached a brigade to manage the prisoners and continue clearing the battlefield at Friedland⁶⁷, advanced as far as Wunschelburg.

66 This little incident gave the umpire a chance to roll a few dice to determine what happened. The Austrians were very lucky indeed.

67 Oberst v. Traunsteinburg's Brigade

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In addition to the task of leading the advance and reconnoitring the roads towards Glatz and Reineez, the Commander of the cavalry Division was also instructed to prepare a “raiding party” to destroy a railway bridge at Wartha, some 5-6 miles east of Glatz. The Cavalry commander, Feldmarschal-leutnant Prinz Schleswig-Holstein, was somewhat puzzled at this request, which he felt fell far outside his remit as a cavalry commander and wrote to FzM Benedek declining to carry out this order.⁶⁸ Benedek did not insist.

By early evening Benedek had received the reports from his forces confirming their locations, and at 8.00pm he issued orders for an attack on the following morning on the Prussian forces which he believed were still located at Reineez. There had been no word from Von Ramming's 6th Corps and, conscious of the personal differences between himself and Von Ramming, Benedek could only hope that Ramming would march to the sound of the guns⁶⁹.

68 See Appendices for details.

69 Von Ramming had in fact informed North Army HQ of Benedek's request that the 6th Corps attack Reineez on the 2nd, and was subsequently instructed to cooperate with Benedek's plans but to remain under the direct command of HQ North Army.

2nd July 1866

The skies remain clear and the weather is fine.

General Situation in Bohemia

Overnight von Moltke received the reports from the three Prussian armies and, as the gravity of the situation facing the 2nd Army became clear⁷⁰, he issued new orders for the Prussian forces in Bohemia.

1. The 1st Army was directed to cease its present operations and to bypass Gitschin to the north, with the aim of moving closer to Glatz and establishing contact with the 2nd Army. The enemy position at Gitschin was to be screened in order to mask the movement of the rest of the army.
2. The 2nd Army was directed to fall back towards Glatz and take up a defensive posture from which it could hold its position until reinforced by the 1st Army. In addition, the 2nd Army was instructed to take command of the 1st Reserve Corps, which had assembled at Zittau and was preparing to march south to Bohemia. The Reserve Corps was ordered to entrain immediately for Frankenstein, near Glatz. The closest railhead was the Fortress at Neisse.
3. The Elbe Army was directed to relinquish command of the Reserve Corps with immediate effect and to carry out offensive operations in keeping with its existing orders.
4. In the case of both the 1st and Elbe Armies, reconnaissance and screening of the enemy positions were to be continued with the intention of convincing the Austrians that both armies were still conducting operations in their present positions, and to conceal the movement of troops to support the 2nd Army.

At Koniggratz, Archduke Albrecht was also concerned about the situation. Although aware that Benedek was preparing to fall on the isolated Prussian 6th Corps, and with von Ramming's 6th Austrian corps moving to support him, the Archduke was also concerned that Prussian forces were closing on Koniggratz from the east, and that the forces under the Crown Prince of Saxony at Gitschin were likely to be engaged by superior enemy forces at any moment. In addition, although the Austrian commander knew of the existence of the Prussian Elbe Army, its present location was not known, although it was suspected that it was supporting the 1st Army.

Events in the west

Elbe Army

The Elbe Army continued to assemble along the Elbe at Kolin. Although he had received the telegram from Royal Headquarters detailing the present situation, Von Herwarth had determined, for better or ill, that the day was too advanced to change the orders for his army without risking more confusion and delay. He therefore continued as planned.

By late afternoon the bulk of the Elbe Army was concentrated at Kolin, with its forces divided between both banks of the Elbe. The 15th Division, accompanied by the Army's Reserve Cavalry Brigade, was encamped between Kluk and Wosecek, to the west of Kolin. It was expected that this division would close up with the main body of the army on the 3rd July.

Prussian 1st Army

At the Headquarters of the 1st Army the news concerning the 2nd Army's situation was received with some incredulity, and no little surprise. Orders were immediately despatched halting any offensive operations in the vicinity of Gitschin, and warning the corps concerned to make the appropriate preparations for a night march

⁷⁰ Having issued his orders Moltke wrote to a friend: *"It goes without saying that 2nd Army's actions over the next 48 hours will make or break us. Just in case send me the latest copy of each of the Berlin News Paper's 'Help Wanted' adds, because I might be looking for a new job if Bismarck and the King fire me."* Correspondance to the Umpire...

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that evening.

The 3rd Corps and 1st Division of the Cavalry Corps, were ordered to maintain their positions until nightfall whereupon these Corps were to withdraw in the direction of Rowensko, prior to turning to the north east to march around the north of Gitschin. The troops were ordered to set camp fires as though settling down for the night in an attempt to conceal their movements. The 3rd Corps would set off first, followed by the cavalry. The 4th Corps was instructed to cover these movements and act as a rearguard, following on after the Cavalry Corps.

The 2nd Division of the Cavalry Corps, which was resting at Rowensko, remained in position to cover the movement from the vicinity of Gitschin and to protect the crossing points until the arrival of the main body.

It should be noted however that despite the urgency of the situation and the lack of time for planning and issuing orders, the requirements of redeploying such large force from one direction to another was carefully considered. The Bridging Train, which was currently at Sobotka, was ordered to march immediately for Rowensko via a direct route between the two places, and once in position to establish two bridges across the water obstacles south of the town in order to supplement the permanent bridges on the roads and to facilitate the rapid crossing of the rivers by the following forces as they came up. The Bridging Train duly departed Sobotka at 1.30 pm that afternoon and arrived near Rowensko at 6.30 pm. A reconnaissance party had been despatched to Rowensko prior to the departure of the main column and as the column arrived it was directed to the points selected for the bridges. Construction of the bridges began at about 7.00 pm.

The Army Reserve Artillery was also ordered to march on Rowensko, departing mid-afternoon. The head of the Artillery column arriving shortly after the engineers began the construction of the bridges. By 10.00pm the Artillery had crossed the river and halted in open ground just south of Rowensko.

The 5th Division of the 3rd Corps set off at 9.00 pm, followed an hour later by the 6th Division. The corps made good time and arrived at Rowensko at 11.00pm, at which point the corps continued north towards Tuhan, where it turned east in the direction of Lomnitz and Neu Paka. At 5.00 am the Corps halted at Lomnitz. The Cavalry Corps had followed behind the 3rd Corps as far as Rowensko, where the 2nd Cavalry Division rejoined the Corps. The cavalry continued as far as Tuhan, where it halted.

Finally, the two divisions of the 4th Corps withdrew their outposts and withdrew from Gitschin via the Sobotka road, the last troops leaving at 3.00 am, before turning north near Woharitz and marching on Rowensko via Aujezd. The corps reached Rowensko at 8.00 am, where it halted⁷¹.

The 2nd Corps at Dlouhopolsko was ordered to march immediately north via Konigsstadt and Liban to join the rest of the Army via Gitschin, however this order was not received until 5.30pm (although the courier was able to confirm the route via Liban was clear of any enemy forces). The Corps artillery was ordered to march immediately, with the remainder of the Corps following as soon as possible thereafter. The Cavalry Brigade would provide a rearguard. The Corps subsequently conducted a night march and by dawn had reached a point just south of Liban, where it halted.

Throughout the day the Austro-Saxon forces at Gitschin remained in situ, strengthening their positions where possible and screening their front with a series of outposts and cavalry patrols. Prince Albert was content to hold his position without provoking a Prussian attack, all the while preparing a fresh defensive position at Wostrumer. Saxon and Austrian staff officers spent the day ensuring that preparations for any subsequent withdrawal were as complete as possible in case a rapid withdrawal was required.

71 The withdrawal of the Prussian forces from Gitschin was a complicated manoeuvre, however it was well planned and in the event went remarkably well. The departure of the Bridging Train and Artillery well before the main body meant that the crossings near Rowensko were established and the Artillery clear of the crossing points before the arrival of the main body. In addition, the staggered departure times for the various divisions allowed the columns to get clear of Gitschin without any major problems and no traffic jams. By the time the 4th Corps arrived at Rowensko the 3rd Corps and cavalry Corps were well clear of the town. *Umpire's Comment: It took a couple of hours for me to plot the movements on the maps, but once the troops began moving it soon became apparent that everything was going smoothly and according to plan. To withdraw three Corps from the vicinity of the enemy, cross a water obstacle and wheel them through 90 degrees sending them off in another direction, and all in the space of 21 hours from the initial issue of orders is no mean feat. Well done Will!*

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Due to the fact that the Prussians maintained their outpost line until darkness, the Austro-Saxons remained unaware that the enemy intended to withdraw that night. Following the onset of darkness the allied outposts could hear the sound of movement from the Prussian lines, but were unable to discern any activity. It was reported variously that the Prussians were redeploying or else that Prussian reinforcements had arrived.

Further south, at Chlumetz, Archduke William was also unaware of the withdrawal of the enemy from Dlouhopolsko. The Prussian movement was concealed by darkness and what little noise that was heard by Austrian cavalry patrols went either unreported or was either assumed to be the arrival of reinforcements or a simple redeployment. Like Crown Prince Albert, Archduke William was content to hold his position with no sign of an impending enemy attack.

Events in the East

Crown Prince Frederick William, commanding the Prussian 2nd Army, had issued orders for the cavalry Corps, the Guard Corps and the 5th Corps to continue their advance on Koniggratz, as he felt that any change of orders at this point would most likely cause confusion and add to the problems facing the 2nd Army. The 6th Corps however, which had spent the previous day resting at Reineez, was ordered to take up positions to defend itself should the enemy attack from the direction of Glatz. The Corps engineers were ordered to support the 11th Division in the preparation of defensive positions. The Corps cavalry was also deployed in a screen facing west along the road south from Reineez towards Grenzendorf. The 6th Corps began moving at dawn and by 5.45 am was taking up its new positions. The Crown Prince and his immediate staff accompanied the 6th Corps headquarters to the vicinity of Ruckers.

Benedek's forces were also on the move at an early hour. Benedek still hoped to find the Prussians at Reineez and had ordered the 10th and 3rd Austrian Corps to advance on Reineez and to engage the enemy. The 1st Reserve Cavalry Division was to screen the advance of the 10th Corps (while also leaving a regiment to secure the road to Glatz at Neuhaid). The 4th Corps had been given orders to march with all speed to join the 3rd and 10th Corps.

At about 6.00 am the head of the Austrian column debouching from the Waldorf defile was observed by the Prussian forces near Ruckers. These troops were the leading elements of the 1st Reserve Cavalry Division and they were soon taken under fire by the Prussian artillery, who engaged any cavalry who approached too closely. The Austrian cavalry soon gave way to make room for the leading brigade and some artillery of the 10th Corps which, by 7.00am had formed up near Waldorf. Benedek himself had by now arrived to observe the situation at first hand. At about the same time the Prussian cavalry screen to the west made observed Austrian cavalry patrols approaching Grenzendorf and moving towards Reineez.⁷²

The Battle of Reineez

As Benedek looked out from the Waldorf defile and saw the enemy before him he could scarcely believe his luck. Not only was the Prussian 6th Corps still at Reineez but it was obviously preparing to make a stand. As the opposing artillery began a desultory bombardment Benedek rapidly issued new orders:

1. The 10th Corps was to develop the enemy position and pin the Prussians in place.
2. Couriers were despatched to the 3rd Corps with orders for the corps to advance immediately on Reineez. The attack by the 3rd Corps would be the signal for the 10th Corps to join the attack, advancing via Ruckers.
3. The 4th Corps was ordered to advance with all speed towards Althaid and to await further orders concerning its participation in the battle.

Benedek also hoped that Von Ramming's 6th Corps would put in an appearance, but this could not be certain. Unknown to Benedek however, Von Ramming's advance guard was even at that moment approaching the heights west of Grenzendorf, south of Reineez. Aware of the need to support Benedek, Von Ramming was also concerned with the reports of the enemy advancing towards Koniggratz. He had left GM Von Zaitschek at Geisshubel with a brigade of the 2nd Reserve Cavalry Division, supported by Jonak's Infantry Brigade to cover his rear and right flank, while the rest of his command advanced cautiously towards Reineez. Von

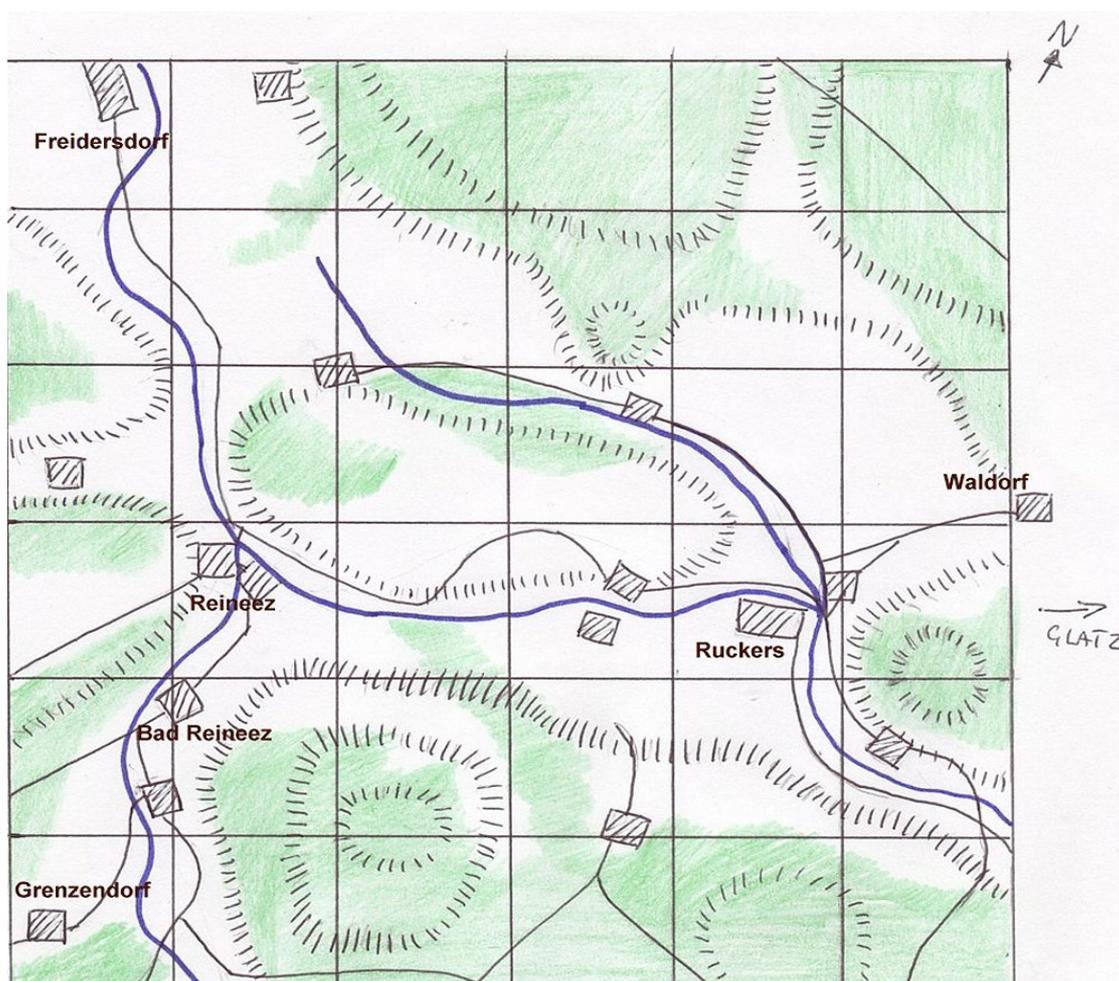
72 These patrols were the leading elements of Von Ramming 6th Corps which was advancing from Geisshubel.

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Ramming did not wish to commit his corps to action until he was more certain of the situation facing him.

Map of the battlefield at Reineez

By 8.30 am firing between the Prussians at Ruckers and the advancing 10th Corps was general along the line. An initial Austrian attack by the 10th Regiment of Mondl's Brigade was halted by a hail of fire from the Prussian line, the Austrian advance collapsing in disorder with heavy casualties. The firing could be heard by Von Ramming and he rode forward to join the leading brigade, which began to deploy facing the Prussian cavalry screen at Grenzendorf. The sound of the firing at Ruckers, which was growing louder by the minute, finally convinced Von Ramming that Benedek had indeed launched his attack. Ramming therefore issued orders to advance on Grenzendorf and to block the road south from Reineez. The Prussian 23rd Infantry Regiment, supported by the 6th Jagers, a Regiment of Hussars and a battery, were detached to oppose Ramming's advance.



The battlefield at Reineez

From 9.00 am until shortly after 10 o'clock, the Prussians held their ground with dogged determination. Near Ruckers the 10th Grenadier and 50th Infantry regiments defended their positions tenaciously, inflicting heavy casualties on the infantry of the Austrian 10th Corps.

By 1030 however, the increase in the sound of firing, and the sight of smoke from behind the ridge between Ruckers and Reineez, alerted Benedek to the arrival of his 3rd Corps on the battlefield and he hastened to order Von Gablenz, the 10th Corps commander, to press his attack.

South of Reineez, near the village of Bad Reineez, a determined attack by the Prussian 23rd Regiment

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pushed back the Austrian skirmish line from the 6th Jager Battalion and overran a battery before being halted by the deployment of fresh Austrian troops.



The battle of Reineez - The Austrian attack at Ruckers

Between 11.00am and 11.30 am the Austrian attacks closed in around the Prussian positions. The Prussians gave ground but grudgingly, even counter attacking when the opportunity presented itself, but the weight of Austrian numbers began to tell and the Prussians found themselves being compelled to contract their lines.

By now Crown Prince Frederick William was painfully aware of the gravity of his situation. He had at first thought that the road south through Grenzendorf from Reineez was only threatened by enemy cavalry patrols, and that these could be easily held by the troops in the vicinity. It was even possible that he might be able to extricate the 6th Corps along that road. In the event however, the unexpected arrival of Von Ramming's Corps soon closed off that option.

The 2nd Army staff, and General Von Mutius, commanding the Prussian 6th Corps, begged the Prince to make his escape while there was still a chance⁷³. The Prince indicated his willingness, both as a soldier and a Prussian Prince, to share the fate of his soldiers come what may. However General Von Blumenthal, his Chief of Staff, a personal friend of the Crown Prince and a trusted confidant, reminded the Crown Prince of his responsibility to the remainder of his Army. Von Blumenthal pointed out that the Cavalry Corps and the Guards and 5th Corps were still in the field and amounted to 50,000 troops and almost 200 guns.

At about midday the Austrian 10th Corps managed to outflank the Prussian position near Ruckers by advancing round to the south of the village while, at the same time, Austrian Jagers seized a position in the woods on the ridge above Ruckers and began pouring a hot fire into the Prussian left flank. With their position rapidly becoming untenable, the Prussians began to retire along the ridge towards Reineez.

Just to the north of Reineez itself the Austrians had reached the outskirts of the town and gained a foothold

⁷³ By this time the roads leading south and west from Reineez and Ruckers had been closed by the presence of the enemy and the only route still open to the Prince was a narrow road leading south through the rugged, densely wooded heights to the south of Reineez and Ruckers. The flanking manoeuvre by the Austrian 10th Corps around Ruckers was soon to close even this avenue of escape.

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on the wooded ridge to the north-east of the town. A sharp counter attack by the Prussian infantry regained control of the woods temporarily but the Austrian infantry rallied and stormed the wood a second time.

At about the same time Von Ramming's infantry, supported by the Heavy Cavalry Brigade of Prinz Solms, succeeded in securing the road south from Grenzendorf. The gallant Prussian 23rd Infantry Regiment, which had held off the enemy for almost two and a half hours, was compelled to retire. Seizing the opportunity Von Ramming ordered his 9th Regiment to advance into Bad Reineez, a move which effectively pierced the Prussian line south of Reineez. The remaining Prussian troops clung to their positions in and about Grenzendorf but it was obvious to all that there could be no escape to the south.



The battle of Reineez - Von Ramming cuts the road south of Bad Reineez

By now most of the Prussian batteries had been in action almost continually for three or four hours, and many of them were either running low on ammunition or had expended their munitions entirely. As the Prussian artillery fire slackened appreciably, the Austrians sensed victory close at hand and redoubled their efforts.

At 12.30 pm Von Gablenz led his 10th Corps forward in yet another assault on the ridge above Ruckers. The Brigades of Generals Wimpffen and von Knebel were pushed forward in dense masses against the weakening Prussian line. The Prussian 10th Grenadier Regiment had taken up positions around a small hamlet to the west of Ruckers. No less than seven Austrian battalions advanced against the Prussian Grenadiers and stormed the hamlet⁷⁴. The Prussian infantry stood their ground but, low on ammunition and outnumbered almost three to one, they were finally driven from the hamlet by the Austrian bayonets.

As the Austrian advance onto the ridge continued the Crown Prince's staff made one last plea for him to make his escape from what was now a certain defeat. However, from their position on the ridge near Reineez, it could be seen that a strong body of Austrian cavalry⁷⁵ was already moving into position on the southern flank of the advancing 10th Corps and that this movement would close off the route through the southern hills within minutes. Benedek's trap had finally closed on the Crown Prince. Bowing to the inevitable, at about 1.00pm, the Crown Prince gave orders to cease fire and request a meeting with the

⁷⁴ The 16th Jager Battalion, the 13th and 3rd Infantry Regiments, totalling almost six and half thousand men.

⁷⁵ A Brigade from the Austrian 1st Reserve Cavalry Division.

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enemy commander.

Austrian casualties during the battle amounted to slightly more than 2,500 killed and wounded. Prussian losses amounted to 2,700 killed and wounded, with 17, 640 soldiers being taken prisoner. No less than 56 Prussian cannon fell into Austrian hands.

During the afternoon the Austrian 4th Corps arrived from Wunschelburg and, finding that it was not required at Reineez, halted for the day in the vicinity of Neuhaid, where it deployed facing east towards Glatz.

Events near Koniggratz

Unaware of the events occurring at Reineez the remainder of the Prussian 2nd Army, the Cavalry Corps, the Guards Corps and the 5th Corps, continued to press closer to Koniggratz.

The elements of the Austrian 2nd Corps at Koniggratz were roused early in the day and instructed to take up positions covering the crossings along the west bank of the Elbe, for several miles north and south of the fortress, with the intention of preventing any Prussian crossing of the river at these points. These detachments were only able to form a weak screen, but fortunately they were not put to the test as the enemy made no attempt to close up to the Elbe, but merely contented themselves with probing towards the fortress and the river with small cavalry patrols.

In accordance with their orders the Cavalry Corps and Guards Corps advanced to Swinarek and Hohenbruck respectively, with the Guard Corps leaving a division at Tynist to maintain communications with the 5th Corps. The 5th Corps advanced from Senftenberg to Castolowitz, from where communications were established with the Guards Corps. The cavalry corps pushed a screen of mounted patrols towards Koniggratz, but there was little activity apart from several minor skirmishes on the outskirts of the fortress.

The Encirclement of the 2nd Army

The Second Army forces near Koniggratz however were to suffer one final misfortune before the day ended. In the Neisse valley south of Glatz the Austrian 2nd Light Cavalry Division, supported by Auersperg's Brigade, continued their advance north towards the fortress. Aware that the Prussian 5th Corps had recently passed through the vicinity the Austrian cavalry advanced cautiously but encountered nothing stronger than some Prussian supply trains. By late afternoon the main body of the division had halted near Habelschwerdt and had pushed forward a cavalry screen as far as Glatz. Several of the Austrian patrols made contact with the outposts of the Austrian 4th Corps and 1st Cavalry Division near Neuhaid. Although it was not yet realised, the Austrian forces had encircled the remnants of the 2nd Army, cutting their lines of communication between their positions and the fortress at Glatz. The fortress commander was somewhat dismayed to observe Austrian cavalry patrols watering their horses along the Neisse near the fortress and even more perturbed to observe the ring of camp fires to the west and south which sprang up as darkness began falling during the evening.

Umpire's Comment

A disastrous day for the Prussians! The Prussian 2nd Army has taken a pounding and, with the loss of its commander, has been thrown into confusion. The Austrians are now poised with Benedek intent on finishing off the 2nd Army. It may well be possible to trap and destroy it in the valleys and defiles west of the Neisse valley, after which they will have the option of either advancing into Silesia or turning on the Prussian forces west of Koniggratz.

Interestingly however, the situation does somewhat resemble the historical Prussian "worst case" scenario, when it was considered that Benedek would probably attack when the Prussian 2nd Army was traversing the mountain defiles into Bohemia and was at its most vulnerable. Moltke's nightmare indeed, and in hindsight it has to be accepted that it was the historical incompetence of Benedek and his senior staff which gave the Prussian their greatest advantage. No amount of courage shown by the Austrian soldiers could overcome such a handicap.

The Prussians however are really under pressure at this point and total disaster is staring them in the face.

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The cumulative effect of the major Prussian defeats at Trautenau, Friedland, Sobotka and Reineez far outweigh the Austrian defeats at Bakow and Habelschwert. In addition, although the Austrians have in fact suffered higher battlefield casualties this has been offset by the destruction of two Prussian Corps and the capture of almost 40,000 Prussian prisoners of war, including the Crown prince and his staff. One more Prussian defeat will tip the balance irrevocably against Prussia.

On a slightly brighter note, the commander of the Prussian 1st Army has pulled off a remarkable achievement, having managed to break contact with the enemy at Gitschin, and to withdraw his forces back towards Turnau before turning them through 90 degrees to bypass Gitschin to the north. His orders were remarkably clear and well thought out and the move went very smoothly - for once I could not find anything wrong to throw a spanner into the works! It will be interesting to see how the Saxon Crown Prince reacts when he discovers that the best part of 70,000 Prussians have slipped away from him unnoticed overnight.

In addition the Prussian Elbe Army is now poised to enter the fray. It has the advantage that the Austrians are as yet unaware of its presence on the River Elbe near Kolin.

3rd July 1866

The skies remain clear and fine however the weather is becoming increasingly hotter.

General Prussian Situation

The Prussian Elbe Army is currently manoeuvring along the line of the Elbe, moving east in the general direction of Pardubitz, while the 1st Army is manoeuvring east via Rowensko and Neu Paka in the direction of Koniginhof.

The remaining elements of the Prussian 2nd army, unaware of the events of the 2nd July and now reduced to the Guards Corps, the 5th Corps and Cavalry Corps, have remained in their positions while the senior commanders attempt to re-establish communications with their army headquarters and Glatz.

At the Prussian Royal Headquarters there is considerable unease at the situation facing the 2nd Army, and Moltke is under increasing pressure from the King and Bismark to retrieve the situation with all speed. Moltke therefore decides to move the Headquarters forward to Wartha, near Glatz, where he hoped to be in a position to take charge of the various elements of the 2nd Army and the 1st Reserve Corps.

General Austrian Situation

The Austrians appear to have everything under control. Benedek has seized the initiative near Glatz and soundly defeated the Prussian 2nd Army while to the west Crown Prince Albert of Saxony appears to be successfully holding the Prussian 1st Army in check.

Archduke Albrecht at Koniggratz, although pleased with Benedek's performance to date, is concerned that the Prussian Elbe Army has still not been located and is worried that the Prussian 1st Army may yet strike a blow against the Allied forces at Gitschin.

However the Prussians are now reacting to the threat posed by Benedek and, as yet unknown to Archduke Albrecht, the Prussian Elbe Army is poised to enter the fray.

The Prussian Elbe Army

The Elbe Army commenced moving early in the day, with the intention of advancing East on both banks of the River Elbe. The 14th and 15th Divisions were to advance along the north bank towards Brech, The 16th Division, along with the Army HQ was to advance along the south bank towards Prelouc, where it was to establish contact with the 14th Division.

In addition the 14th Division despatched a number of cavalry patrols in the direction of Chlumetz and Pardubitz. The patrols sent towards Pardubitz returned with the news that the roads were clear of the enemy, however the patrols sent to reconnoitre the area of Chlumetz discovered the Austrian positions on the high ground east of Chlumetz. These positions were still held by Archduke William's Artillery Reserve, supported by the 8th Corps and 3rd Reserve Cavalry Division. The presence of the Prussian patrols did not go unnoticed however and the outlying Austrian picquets prevented the Prussian cavalry from approaching too closely and alerted Archduke William to their presence. The Prussian patrols subsequently withdrew when several squadrons of Austrian cavalry were observed forming up and moving in their direction.

Concerned at the appearance of the Prussian cavalry from the south⁷⁶, Archduke William ordered a reconnaissance to the south towards Elbeteinitz and Sanun. Several Austrian patrols, scouting through the thick woods which covered much of the country to the south of the Austrian positions, soon made contact with Prussian picquets north of the main road between Elbeteinitz and Brech. Other patrols reported heavy

⁷⁶ A despatch from HQ North Army earlier that day had warned Archduke William to remain alert to the threat of an enemy attack but concluded that the "indications are they will be directed against the Saxons". However, shortly after midday he received a despatch from the Saxon Corps informing him that the Prussians had withdrawn from Gitschin. These two apparently contradictory messages simply increased William's disquiet at the approach of the Prussians from the south.

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dust clouds to the south, in the vicinity of Elbeteinitz, Kladrub and Senun⁷⁷. By early evening Archduke William was aware that the enemy had most probably bypassed his position to the south, although he was as yet uncertain of their strength or intentions. More importantly the Austrian patrols failed to discover that the leading elements of the Elbe Army had in fact reached Brech by mid-afternoon, and even as late as mid-evening it was believed that the Prussians were between Elbeteinitz and Senun. At about the same time the outposts at Chlumetz reported that the Prussian force at Dlouhopolsko was still in position but showing no sign of any forward movement⁷⁸.

The advance guards of the Prussian 14th and 16th Divisions reached their respective destinations at about 2.00 pm, with the remainder of the formations closing up as best they could in the heat. The 15th Division however was delayed in crossing the Elbe at Kolin, due to the need to wait while the various elements of the 16th Division and the 8th Corps Artillery cleared the roads leading to the Elbe bridge. By midday however the division was crossing the Elbe and the advance guard reached Elbeteinitz by late afternoon.

The reports of the enemy positions at Chlumetz were received at Elbe Army headquarters at about 2.30 pm. The news that the enemy were at last in sight spurred von Herwarth into action. The initial reports informed him that the main Austrian position was facing west, towards Chlumetz, and von Herwarth quickly came to the conclusion that the 14th and 16th Divisions would soon be in a position to attack into the enemy's rear from the direction of Brech, supported by the 15th Division advancing from the direction of Kladrub via Aujezd. Von Herwarth quickly issued a warning order⁷⁹ to his three divisions and set off to reconnoitre the route of his intended attack.

During the late afternoon the Austrian cavalry patrols maintained a close watch on the road between Elbeteinitz and Senun while the bulk of the Prussian forces closed up and rested. The 15th Division however had barely reached Elbeteinitz when it received the warning order from Elbe army HQ which instructed the Division to make immediately for Kladrub. The weary troops set off once again and finally reached Kladrub at 6.00 pm.

Unfortunately for Archduke William his cavalry picquets were concentrated to cover the roads leading north from Elbeteinitz, Kladrub and Senun. Although dust clouds had been observed east of Senun during the late afternoon, these had not been thoroughly investigated and the information was not received by Archduke William. He remained ignorant therefore of the fact that the Prussians were at Brech. The 8th Corps (less one Brigade which remained at Neustadl) and a brigade of the 3rd Cavalry Division were ordered to redeploy to cover the southern flank of the gun line near Neustadl. The cavalry were sent to Stit and the remainder of the 8th Corps took up positions between Klamos and Cheischt. It was some consolation to the Archduke that that at least the enemy at Dlouhopolsko appeared to be staying put⁸⁰.

General von Herwarth, with several of his staff and an escort from the Westphalian Uhlan Regiment No5⁸¹, set off from Prelouc and rode through Brech before turning north towards Soprc and Wapno, from which vantage point he was able to observe, in the distance, the Austrian bivouacs and artillery park east of Neustadl⁸². Satisfied that everything was in order von Herwarth returned to Brech, where he met with his Division commanders and confirmed his orders for the attack on the following morning. Each Division, with any supporting arms, would set off for its assembly area where, after posting picquets, it would rest until the following morning. The Prussian forces were then to form up and commence their attack at 6.00 am.

77 The dust clouds were of course raised by the Prussian forces marching along the north bank of the Elbe.

78 At this time the Prussian 2nd Corps had not yet received the order to withdraw and thus gave the appearance of remaining in position.

79 Each Division was ordered to continue with its intended movements during the afternoon but once in position to rest and prepare for a further advance during the evening which would place the Prussian forces in a position to attack at dawn on the following day. The 14th and 16th Divisions would march to Wapno and assemble there, while the 15th Division would form up at Aujezd. The 14th Cavalry Brigade was ordered to march on Zarawitz, from where it would advance to cut the roads running east to Pardubitz and Koniggratz before turning west to support the right flank of Elbe Army's attack.

80 By this time the Prussian 2nd Corps was preparing to move off to the north west. It is interesting to speculate what might have occurred if the 2nd Corps has also advanced against the Chlumetz position at this point.

81 From the 14th Cavalry Brigade

82 The Austrian 8th Corps and cavalry had not yet commenced re-deploying at this time and it appeared to von Herwarth that the enemy had yet to react to the Prussian movements. This apparent inactivity by the enemy probably convinced von Herwarth that his planned attack was the correct course of action.

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The Prussian forces began moving at about 8.00 pm, however the advance guards of the Prussian 15th Division soon clashed with the Austrian cavalry patrols on the road to Aujezd and scattered along the edges of the neighbouring woods. The Austrians were quickly forced to give way as the Prussian infantry closed within rifle range and messengers were sent back to warn of the Prussian advance. As the light failed however the Austrian cavalry fell back on the main positions near Stit, Klamos and Wiklek, while the 15th Division halted at Aujezd.

The advance of the Prussian 14th Division from Brech, and that of the 16th Division from Prelouc (via Brech), went unnoticed by the Austrians however, and concealed by the gathering darkness the Prussian columns halted for the night east of Wapno.

During the late afternoon and evening however Von Herwarth received no less than three despatches from the Headquarters of the 1st Army, containing details of 1st Army's movements to disengage at Gitschin and to by-pass that place in order to march to the support of the 2nd Army. The despatches had been delayed by the fact that both the 1st and Elbe Armies Headquarters were on the move and the lines of communication therefore disrupted, albeit temporarily. By the time Von Herwarth discovered that the 1st Army would be unable to support him the soldiers of the Elbe Army were already moving into their positions to attack at dawn on the following day. One of the despatches claimed that there were elements of two Austrian Corps at Chlumetz, which gave Von Herwarth great cause for concern as he had received no firm intelligence of the enemy forces opposing him⁸³. Realising that it was too late to change his plans Von Herwarth settled down to wait for first light and to see what the new day would bring.

Archduke William was relieved that the Prussians had not attacked (although he was somewhat uncertain as to their exact locations and intentions) but he was concerned that the enemy to his south might be waiting for the Prussian force at Dlouhopolsko to advance in support. Concerned by the threat to the Reserve Artillery which was still in its positions facing Chlumetz, he therefore determined to withdraw to the proposed position at Roudnitz and sent despatches to both North Army HQ and Crown Prince Albert of Saxony to inform them of his intentions.

At 11.00 pm orders were issued to the Reserve Artillery to move out for Roudnitz as soon as possible, escorted by Generalmajor Fragnern's Brigade (8th Corps) and Graf Erbach-Fürstenau's cavalry Brigade (3rd Reserve Cavalry Division). The remainder of the 8th Corps and the Cavalry Division would form a rearguard to protect the withdrawal of the artillery before following them.

It soon became apparent however that to organise such a move in darkness would require some time in order to bring the guns out of battery and to form them up ready to march. The Division of Horse Artillery (four batteries) was therefore instructed to take post near Neustadl, while the remainder of the artillery was to form by division as quickly as possible in preparation for moving. Fortunately the Reserve Trains and Artillery Park Squadrons had been despatched to Roudnitz on the 1st July and the road was therefore clear for the movement of the artillery⁸⁴. Even so, it was to be almost 4.00 am on the following morning before the last of the artillery began to move.

To cover the movements of the artillery the Cavalry Brigade was withdrawn from Stit and placed closer to Neustadl, with the division of Horse Artillery, while the 8th Corps remained in position around Klamos and Cheischt.

Prussian 1st Army

It was Prince Frederick Karl's intention to expedite his march towards Glatz as quickly as possible, however it was felt necessary to allow the Army a period of rest following their exertions during the previous night and, taking into account the rising temperature during the day, to set off again in the afternoon with the intention of covering as much ground as possible in the remaining daylight. As a result most of the army were to remain

83 At this point in time Von Herwarth was under the impression that there might be as many as four Austrian and Saxon Corps between Gitschin and Chlumec, and he reported this in his evening despatch to Royal HQ. He was also worried by the possibility that without the support of the 1st Army the enemy might attack into the gap between the two Prussian Armies and cut the Elbe Army's Line of Communication.

84 Refer to the events of 1st July for details.

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halted until until late in the afternoon.

Early on in the day, the Austrian and Saxon outposts reported that the Prussian positions opposite Gitschin had been abandoned. At about 7.30 am Crown Prince Albert issued orders for the cavalry to send out patrols to ascertain the direction in which the enemy had withdrawn. At the same time the Saxon and 1st Austrian Corps were both instructed to be ready to move at short notice.

Further south, the Prussian 2nd Corps, having had no contact with the 1st Army HQ since the previous day prepared to set off from Liban en route for Gitschin. The Corps had formed up and the advance guard was about to depart when a courier arrived from 1st Army HQ. The new orders instructed the Corps to resume its march at 3.00 pm, and to direct its march to Rowensko via Sobotka, Woharitz and Aujezd. This route caused some confusion, as marching via Woharitz would both take the corps very close to Gitschin and also add several miles to the distance to be covered. The staff officer who carried the despatch confirmed that Gitschin was still held by the enemy, and that the shortest route would be to bypass Woharitz to the northwest, marching directly from Sobotka to Aujezd and thence to Rowensko. General von Schmidt therefore instructed his corps to stand down and to resume its march at 3.00 pm. This decision was to have unexpected consequences later in the day.

By early afternoon the Saxon and Austrian cavalry patrols had determined that the Prussians had withdrawn towards Rowensko and that the immediate vicinity of Gitschin was clear of the enemy. Determined to seize the initiative Crown Prince Albert issued fresh orders at 2.30pm for his forces to make a reconnaissance in strength as follows:

1. The Saxon Cavalry Division was to advance on Rowensko, having detached patrols to reconnoitre the roads west towards Unter Bautzen and Rowensko and as far as the Iser at Jung Bunzlau.
2. The Austrian 1st Light Cavalry Division was to also advance on Rowensko, while sending strong patrols to the north east in the direction of Neu Paka and Koningenhof⁸⁵.
3. 1st Austrian Corps was to prepare to advance towards Rowensko but to leave one Brigade as a rearguard at Gitschin.
4. The Saxon Corps was also to detach one brigade to maintain its position at Gitschin, a second brigade to advance and cover the approach to Sobotka, and the remainder of the corps to advance on Rowensko in support of the cavalry.

The Saxon and Austrian movements began during the latter half of the afternoon and the cavalry soon made contact with the Prussian rearguard at Rowensko. By this time however the Prussian rearguard, consisting of the 8th Division, had crossed the river and reassembled on the northern bank. The temporary bridges had also been disconnected from the south bank and the pontoons and materials were being assembled on the banks in preparation for loading onto the transport wagons.

On the approach of the enemy cavalry the Prussian engineers redoubled their efforts to move the bridging train, assisted by infantry soldiers from the 8th Division. The remainder of the 8th Division, supported by several batteries from the Reserve Artillery, took up a defensive position to cover the bridges and the river banks.

The Prussian 7th Division, which had actually set off for Neu Paka by this time, was ordered to take up a defensive position to the north of Rowensko and await the movement of the bridging train and Reserve Artillery.

Throughout the early evening the Prussian bridging train, followed by the Reserve artillery, marched north from Rowensko, covered by the 4th Corps. At the same time the Austrian and Saxon cavalry maintained a close watch on the Prussian movements from the high ground to the east of Rowensko, as any attempts to close with the Prussian rearguard was quickly discouraged with small arms and artillery fire.

⁸⁵ Crown Prince Albert was evidently still concerned about the security of his right flank. In the event von Edelsheim left one cavalry brigade at Gitschin to patrol to the north east while taking the other two Brigades towards Rowensko.

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By the onset of darkness the Prussian rearguard had halted on the heights above Zlabek while the bridging train and artillery pressed on towards Lomnitz and Neu Paka. The infantry of the Saxon 2nd Division⁸⁶ occupied Rowensko at about the same time.

To the west of Gitschin Saxon cavalry patrols reconnoitred the road to Sobotka, supported by Von Carlowitz's Brigade from the Saxon 1st Division. At about 6.00 pm, near the village of Lawitz⁸⁷, the Saxon Cavalry clashed with the advance guard of the Prussian 2nd Corps, which was marching on Sobotka. Heavily outnumbered the Saxon cavalry soon withdrew to a safe distance from which they could observe the Prussian movements.

The Prussian commander, Von Schmidt, wary of advancing unprepared against an unknown enemy so soon after his defeat under similar circumstances at Chlumetz, ordered his advance guard to hold its position and instructed the remainder of his his corps to close up as quickly as possible. Reports of dust clouds to the east, in the direction of Samsul on the Gitschin road⁸⁸, convinced von Schmidt that he might well be attacked and he issued orders for his corps to take up positions south from Lawitz towards the high ground between Markwar and Neulitz. By nightfall, although the Saxon camp fires could be seen in the direction of Samsul, it was apparent that the enemy were not about to attack. However several hours had been lost while the 2nd Corps deployed. Rather than risk the confusion of issuing fresh orders for a night march Von Schmidt decided to remain in situ and resume his march in daylight on the following morning. A staff officer, despatched with a report to HQ 1st Army, was forced to return to the 2nd Corps when it was found that the enemy were in possession of the river crossings at Rowensko.

Events in the East - Benedek and the Prussian 2nd Army

Following the battle at Reineez on the previous day, the Austrian forces under Benedek were elated but exhausted. Buoyed by their very success the Austrian troops had been pushed hard for the previous seven days, marching almost constantly and fighting no less than three major actions. The cavalry division in particular was in a parlous state, with their mounts almost in a state of collapse and needing rest and attention as a matter of some urgency. Despite this however, morale amongst the soldiers was high. Benedek was cheered to the echo whenever he appeared amongst the troops and it was felt by many that as long as they had the "Lion of Solferino" at their head they would beat the Prussians.

The Austrian Quartermasters' staff, hardly the most efficient at the best of times, had almost completely collapsed under the strain of trying to supply Benedek's corps along the winding and roundabout route leading back towards Trautenau. The troops were hungry and tired, and the supply trains were either empty or lagging far behind. Perhaps even more importantly, stocks of ammunition were insufficient to replenish the munitions which had been fired off in the recent battles. In some desperation Austrian supply officers set about scouring the vicinity of Reineez for stocks of food and fodder to requisition.

Of all the Austrian formations in the vicinity of Reineez that morning only Von Ramming's 6th Corps could be considered to be fully effective, having enjoyed a short and secure line of communication with the fortresses at Koniggratz and Josephstadt.

At 8.00 am, following reports from the various Corps commanders and their staffs, Benedek issued fresh orders to his forces as follows:

1. The 3rd, 4th and 10th Corps were to remain in situ and rest.
2. The 1st Reserve Cavalry Division was also to halt but to endeavour to send out patrols to the south and south west of Reineez.
3. The Quartermaster's Staffs were to make every effort to find sufficient food to feed the army and to bring up fresh supplies of ammunition.

In addition, Benedek announced his intention to march again early on the following morning, the 4th July.

86 Boxberg's Brigade of the 2nd Division

87 Several miles south east of Sobotka, on the road to Liban.

88 Von Carlowitz's Saxon Brigade, which subsequently halted at Samsul.

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Orders were also given that the Prussian prisoners of war were to be paroled, however it was not yet certain how this was to be done or who was to carry out the orders⁸⁹.

One other problem facing Benedek was the knotty problem of the 6th Corps. Benedek and Von Ramming were not on the best of terms and whilst Benedek wanted the 6th Corps under his direct command, Von Ramming had no intention of being subordinated to Benedek and made it clear to the Feldzeugmeister that he was operating under the direct command of the Archduke. In an attempt to clarify the situation Benedek wrote directly to Archduke Albrecht at Koniggratz with the request that Von Ramming be placed under his command⁹⁰.

For his part Archduke Albrecht managed to come up with a typically Austrian compromise, which would probably satisfy no-one and only exacerbate any potential friction. A message was sent to Benedek and Von Ramming confirming that the 6th Corps was to be placed under Benedek's command to operate against the enemy forces to the east of Koniggratz. At the same time, the 6th Corps and 2nd Reserve Cavalry Division was instructed to form the Army Reserve, in the event that either Crown Prince Albert of Saxony or Archduke William required reinforcements to the west of Koniggratz. The final paragraph in the relevant orders to Benedek did little to clarify how the 6th Corps was to be used:

Therefore in the forthcoming manoeuvres I order that 6th Corps, with 2nd Reserve Cavalry under command are to form the Reserve. They may be manoeuvred at your command (and) committed at need to secure success with the provision that they may be withdrawn if required.

Von Ramming's opinion of this order is not known but no doubt the old saying "Order, plus counter-order equals disorder" crossed his mind.

By early evening it was apparent to Benedek that his forces would need more time to reorganise before they would be in a fit state to continue their attack on the Prussian 2nd Army. He therefore issued new orders postponing any further movements until the 5th of July and detailing the removal of the Prussian prisoners to Josephstadt. In addition the respective Corps Quartermaster Staffs were given instructions regarding changes in the Line of Communication in order to shorten the supply lines from Josephstadt. It was hoped that the trains would be in a position to act on the new routes by the 5th July.

Meanwhile, to the east of Koniggratz, the remnants of the Prussian 2nd Army were in a state of some confusion. Having received no word from Army Headquarters since the previous day and uncertain as to the commanders intentions for his Corps Prinz August von Württemberg (commanding the Guards Corps) issued orders for both the Guards Corps and the Cavalry Corps to remain in situ while the situation was clarified. Officers and cavalry patrols were despatched towards Reineez to try and regain contact with 2nd Army HQ, as well as to the 5th Corps to inform General Von Steinmetz of the situation.

By late afternoon it was apparent that not only had a disaster befallen the Prussian 6th Corps but also that the line of communication to Glatz had most probably been cut by the Austrians in the Neisse valley. The Guards Corps Chief of Staff Lieutenant Colonel von Dannenberg, an astute and able officer, quickly realised the danger to the Guards and 5th Corps and convinced Prinz August of the need to retire with all haste to re-establish communications with Glatz.

To this end orders were issued for the 5th Corps to march immediately with all speed to seize the crossing over the Adler River at Langenbruck, and to secure the defiles leading to the Neisse Valley and Habelschwert. This movement would also cover the withdrawal of the Guards Corps and the cavalry in the event that the enemy attack from the direction of the Neisse. The Guards Corps and the cavalry would in turn commence their withdrawal from the vicinity of Koniggratz at first light on the 4th July and, marching via Reichenau would follow the path taken by the 5th Corps⁹¹.

89 In the event this proved to be too difficult to arrange and the POWs were therefore escorted to the fortress at Josephstadt.

90 Not being one to beat about the bush, and encouraged by his success at Reineez, Benedek also asked for the recently arrived 2nd Light Cavalry Division to be placed at his disposal.

91 The Cavalry Corps was instructed to maintain its outposts near Koniggratz for as long as possible to conceal the withdrawal on the 4th.

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Prinz August, a methodical but unimaginative officer, considered it prudent to concentrate both corps as far as possible to be able to bring their full strength to bear in the event of a battle. Once the two corps were close enough to support each other they would debouch into the Neisse valley and turn north towards Glatz. However, should the road to Glatz be blocked then the Neisse valley offered several alternative routes which would allow the Prussians to by pass Glatz to the east. At the very least by the time the Prussian forces reached the Neisse they could expect to have a clearer understanding of the situation.

The Prussian 1st Reserve Corps

As has already been mentioned, the Prussian 1st Reserve Corps, comprising two Landwehr Divisions, a Landwehr cavalry Division and a Reserve Artillery regiment, had recently arrived at Zittau. Following the receipt of orders to move to the support of the 2nd Army by rail, and having received no administrative instructions from Royal Headquarters the Corps Commander appealed to the senior Railway Transport Officer in Gorlitz for assistance. Fortunately several of the locomotives and some of the rolling stock suitable for the transport of infantry was still available for use at short notice. After much hard work by the Reichsbahn staff the first trains carrying the advance guard of the corps would be ready to depart for the railhead at Neisse by mid-morning on the 4th July. The remainder of the corps would follow over the next few days.

Umpire's Comments

The day has seen considerable movement by both armies west of Koniggratz and it is possible that these manoeuvres, combined with the current uncertainty about their opponents intentions, may result in some unexpected encounter battles.

The Prussians are currently at the nadir of their fortune - one more defeat will in fact encourage the Prussian Parliament to demand an armistice and seek an end to the war, effectively ending the campaign. Moltke is extremely concerned about the fate of the 2nd Army, and is under pressure from the King and Bismark to produce a victory before the Prussian Parliament effectively compels the King to seek terms. The announcements in Vienna of the defeat of the Prussian 6th Corps and the capture of the Prussian Crown Prince have only added to Moltke's problems.

The Austrians have had an extraordinary run of success over the past few days, due mostly to Benedek being in the right place at the right time, but also a little luck and the inactivity of the Prussian 2nd Army⁹².

By the end of day however, the movements of the Prussian 1st and Elbe Armies have, albeit unintentionally, levered the Austrians out of their carefully prepared positions at Chlumetz and Gitschin. The Prussians now have an opportunity to engage their enemy under circumstances in which the Austrians will no longer benefit from their prepared positions and in which the superior Prussian command and control may well give them the advantage. It remains to be seen whether the Prussians will recognise their opportunity and seize the chance to reverse their fortunes.

⁹² However, it should be recognised that the commander of the 2nd Army had been operating very much in the dark, with little or no information on the activities of either the 1st or Elbe Armies.

4th July 1866

The weather remains hot, the heat having a tiring effect on the troops on the march.

General Situation

The Austrian North Army Headquarters, concerned at the reports of the Prussian movements to the north of the position at Gitschin, and also that of the outflanking manoeuvre carried out by the Prussian Elbe Army, ordered its forces west of the Elbe to retire closer to Konniggratz. Orders were also issued for Benedek to break off his attack on the Prussian 2nd Army and to march on the 5th July towards Josephstadt. It is the Austrian commander's intention to strike at the Prussian 1st Army while it is on the march, and it is hoped that Benedek's arrival in front of the 1st Army will take the enemy by surprise⁹³.

Von Moltke on the other hand, although deeply concerned about the situation facing the 2nd Army and the fortress at Glatz, has ordered the 1st Army to march on Glatz while the Elbe Army has been ordered to advance on Hohenmouth and Zwittau, swinging south of Koniggratz, in order to strike at the rear of the Austrian position and the enemy lines of communication/⁹⁴.

Prisoners of War

Following the destruction of the Prussian 1st and 6th Corps, the Austrians have the better part of 40,000 Prussian prisoners of war converging on Josephstadt. The bulk of the heavy material (artillery, trains, caissons etc) have necessarily been left in situ on the battlefield, although the bulk of it has been concentrated at suitable points for later disposal. The enemy's small arms have also been collected and are being transported to Josephstadt for disposal, rather than being left on the battlefield.

The sheer numbers of prisoners has caused problems, however the capture of the Prussian trains has at least meant that the prisoners can receive basic rations from their own supplies rather than draw on the already precarious Austrian trains. The prisoners are being moved in three main groups:

1. Those captured at Trautenau on the 27th June. These have reached Josephstadt and are currently under guard outside the fortress.
2. The remaining elements of the 1st Corps captured at Friedland on the 29th June. These will arrive at Josephstadt on the 4th June.
3. The Prussian Crown Prince and 2nd Army Staff, plus the remainder of the 6th Corps captured at Reineez on the 2nd July. These will depart Reineez on the 4th July and are expected to arrive at Josephstadt on the 5th. they are under escort of a regiment from the Austrian 3rd Corps.

However, Benedek is by now concerned at the numbers of troops detached to escort the PoWs.

Events in the West

The Prussian 1st Army and Crown Prince Albert

During the night Archduke Albrecht at Koniggratz received reports of the Prussian movements to the north and south of the Austrian positions at Gitschin and near Chlumec. The Archduke, concerned at the threat to his forces west of Koniggratz, gave orders for them to retire to positions closer to Koniggratz. At the same time however he determined that the Prussian 1st Army was trying to flank the Gitschin position and was likely to advance on Trautenau, into the gap between the Austrian 1st and Saxon Corps and those at Reineez under Benedek. it was felt at North Army Headquarters that such a move by the Prussians might present North Army with an opportunity to strike at the enemy while he was still on the march. The 6th Corps

⁹³ It did...

⁹⁴ It is the umpire's opinion that the proposed manoeuvre by the Elbe Army is a mistake. It is likely to remove the 50,000 troops of the Elbe Army from the vicinity of Koniggratz at the point where the crucial battles of the campaign will most likely be fought. However, it remains to be seen what the Elbe Army does on the morning of the 4th prior to the receipt of any fresh orders from Royal HQ.

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(Ramming) was ordered to march to Koniggratz with all speed, accompanied by the 2nd Reserve Cavalry Division, while Benedek was instructed to set off for Trautenau on the 5th July. The 6th Corps duly set for Koniggratz, reaching the town of Libritz, some five miles east of Koniggratz, by the end of the day.

At same time Prussian 1st Army continued to follow its orders and pushed on towards Arnau and Koniginhof as fast as possible. To mitigate the effects of the hot weather the troops were ordered to set off in the early hours of the morning and to halt at 11.00am to rest, resuming their march in the late afternoon⁹⁵. The leading Prussian Divisions made good time during the cooler hours of the morning and despite some congestion on the narrow roads the Prussian 5th and 6th Divisions had reached Koniginhof by the late afternoon. The Cavalry Corps, following closely behind, soon found that the congestion on the roads prevented it from overtaking the infantry and it would have to remain behind them. The slower pace however reduced the strain on their mounts due to the heat and in any case the Cavalry Corps was able to close up to Koniginhof by the early evening.

Further west, the 4th Corps, the Reserve Artillery and the Bridging Train set off in the early hours, with the 7th Division ordered to remain in situ until 6.00 am, to protect the movement of the Artillery and Bridging train. The army commander remained with the 7th Corps during the day to keep a watchful eye on the situation in case the enemy attacked. However, apart from a few cavalry patrols which observed his troops from a wary distance, the enemy did not interfere with these movements and by evening the 8th Division had reached the vicinity of Arnau, while the 7th Division formed the rearguard at Neu Paka. The Artillery and Train was between the two divisions. No doubt the commander, Prince Frederick Charles, breathed a sigh of relief at having thus far extricated his army from its positions at Gitschin and Roweknsow without further trouble.

Meanwhile at Lawitz, near Sobotka, the Prussian 2nd Corps had formed up before dawn in the expectation of an attack by the Saxon troops it had encountered the previous evening. As it grew light it appeared that the Saxons had disappeared, much to Von Schmidt's surprise and relief. After confirming that the enemy had indeed withdrawn⁹⁶ Von Schmidt began to issue orders to resume his march. Before he could do so however, at about 7.30 am, a courier arrived from 1st Army headquarters. The courier informed Von Schmidt that the vicinity of Rowensko was occupied by the enemy and that his new orders required him to march via Munchengrätz and Turnau to re-establish contact with 1st Army HQ. Unaware that the enemy was in fact withdrawing from Rowensko Von Schmidt set off for Munchengrätz. Fortunately, on arriving at Sobotka, it was discovered that there was in fact a shorter direct route to Turnau, which skirted Munchengrätz to the east of the town. The courier from 1st Army was sent back with a report on the situation and the 2nd Corps continued towards Turnau, arriving there during the evening.

At Gitschin however, Crown Prince Albert was concerned about the enemy's movement around his right flank. Realising that in following up the Prussian withdrawal to Rowensko he had divided his forces and spread them somewhat thinly, he gave orders for them to concentrate once more at Gitschin. By about 6.00 am most of the troops which had followed the Prussians were once more marching back towards Gitschin. At about the same time however the Crown Prince received a despatch from Koniggratz which confirmed his fears about the enemy movement to his north and which also apprised him of the situation facing Archduke William further south near Chlumec. The despatch also directed the Crown Prince to retire his forces to the reconnoitred position nearer to Koniggratz.

The Crown Prince therefore revised his plans and by the time the new orders were ready for despatch the first troops for whom they were intended were beginning to arrive at Gitschin. The troops were able to rest for a short period while the staff made the necessary arrangements for the move and by late morning the bulk of the Crown Prince's forces were on the road, with the cavalry of the Saxon Corps and Von Edelsheim's Division covering the Gitschin position until the rest of the army was clear of the town.

The forces under the command of Prince Albert now withdrew to the previously reconnoitred positions at Wostrumer. The Austrians, marching via Aujezd and Mlasowitz, took up positions in the vicinity of Lhota-Sarowa while the Saxon Corps retired through Aulibitz to Wostrumer. Both Corps took up positions behind the Jaworka River, leaving only a few infantry and the cavalry outposts on the west bank. The two cavalry divisions, having covered the movements of the two infantry Corps, then set out a screen of outposts. The

⁹⁵ 1st Army commander is the only one to have taken the hot weather into account when planning his marches.

⁹⁶ A reconnaissance patrol confirmed from local inhabitants that the Saxons had withdrawn in the direction Gitschin.

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Saxon outposts deployed to the west of Wostrumer, observing the Gitschin road and placing outlying picquets to observe the roads in the direction of Neu Bidschow and Roudnitz. The Austrian cavalry posted its picquets in an arc covering the front of the position at Lhota-Sarowa, and also to the north and as far to the east as Miletin. The trains relocated to Horitz, where they had excellent communications with both Josephstadt and Koniggratz.

Throughout the day the Austrian and Prussian cavalry patrols were busy in the space between the advancing Prussian 1st Army and the withdrawing Austro-Saxon forces. The position of the Prussian cavalry behind the leading infantry Corps however hampered the deployment of the cavalry and the task of reconnaissance fell to the few squadrons which were directly attached to the leading Prussian infantry divisions⁹⁷. These light cavalry squadrons were less efficient in this role than their Austrian counterparts and were also outnumbered. As a result, not only did the Austrian cavalry prevent the enemy from learning about the Austrian movements, the Austrian cavalry were able to observe and report the Prussian movements.

The Battle of Wapno

The soldiers of the Prussian Elbe Army had snatched a few hours sleep, resting on their arms, after reaching their forming up points during the previous evening. The air remained warm overnight and the clear skies of dawn promised another hot day. At 4.30 am the troops were roused and formed into their columns ready for the advance to commence at 6.00 am.

A few Austrian cavalry picquets observed the Prussian preparations at Aujezd, sending messengers galloping back with the news that the Prussians were on the move. By 6.00 am the Austrians had stood to arms in their positions between Klamos and Cheischt. By about 6.30 the Prussian columns were closing on the Austrian positions and the Austrian artillery commenced firing, although initially with little effect.



The battle of Wapno - Von Rothkirch's Brigade drive the Prussians from the wood

⁹⁷ The Prussian Cavalry Corps did throw out a number of patrols to the south of their route as flank protection, but these remained close to the main body and merely kept the Austrian cavalry at arms length but without preventing the enemy from observing their march.

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Shortly after 6.30 am it became apparent to the Austrians that the Prussians might well be able to turn their left flank at Cheischt by sending their columns through the woods which covered the high ground beyond the village to the south east. GM Von Rothkirch, commanding the brigade on the extreme left of the Austrian position ordered his 71st Regiment to oppose the Prussian advance. The 71st promptly advanced at the double and reached the woods before the Prussian were able to gain a foothold on the ridge, at which point the commander ordered an advance with fixed bayonets to drive back the Prussians. Observing the apparent success of the 71st Von Rothkirch led his other regiment, the 25th, into the attack in support of the 71st.

The rapid advance of the two Austrian regiments initially took the Prussians⁹⁸ by surprise and quickly carried the wood and driving the Prussians back on their supports. However, after falling back several hundred yards the Prussian infantry rallied and began pouring a rapid fire into the Austrian masses.

The fighting around the woods raged for about three quarters of an hour but the Austrians, unable to stand against the rapid needle gun fire and with more Prussian columns advancing on their flanks, were forced to give ground and retired towards Cheischt.



The battle of Wapno - the Austrian 71st Regiment struggles to hold the Prussian attacks

By now it was apparent that Von Rothkirch's brigade was heavily outnumbered⁹⁹ and the Austrian infantry were steadily driven back beyond Cheischt. To their credit the gallant Austrian soldiers retired steadily in good order but the outcome could not be in doubt. Shortly before 8.00 am the Prussians seized Cheischt, although they were unable to advance beyond the village due to the concentrated fire of the Austrian 8th Corps artillery reserve which was deployed nearby and swept the ground in front of the village with canister fire.

At the same time, on the opposite flank, the Prussian 15th Division was advancing steadily towards Neustadl, despite opposition from Prince Windischgratz and Von Mungen's Heavy Cavalry Brigade, which was ably supported by accurate fire from the Horse Artillery Division detached from the Army Artillery Reserve.

Shortly after 8.00 am Archduke William, increasingly concerned at the threat to his line of retreat posed by the Prussian advance at Cheischt, ordered his forces to retire to new positions on the line Neustadl - Karanitz, where it was anticipated that the Austrian infantry would be able to take up positions along the line of the railway track. At about the same time however, Von Herwarth urged his commanders to speed their advance to take advantage of the apparent confusion in the enemy lines.

⁹⁸ The 14th Division.

⁹⁹ Elements of both the 14th and 16th Prussian Divisions were now engaged with von Rothkirch's brigade.

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Both the Prussian 14th and 16th Divisions pressed forward at the double, outflanking Cheischt on either side and forcing the withdrawal of the Austrian 8th Corps' artillery reserve. This advance also broke Von Rothkirch's 25th regiment which collapsed under an assault by six Prussian battalions. The 71st Regiment was also forced to retire but rallied and succeeded in reforming to the south of Karanitz. Von Rothkirch placed himself at the head of the regiment and led it into Karanitz with the intention of making a last stand at the village.

Also at about this time the leading brigade of the Prussian 15th Division was able to bring Von Mengen's cavalry brigade under a heavy small arms fire, which threw the cavalry into disorder, despite the support of the Horse Artillery. A short while later the artillery was compelled to retire by a further Prussian advance, the heavy cavalry remaining in place under a galling fire to cover the withdrawal of the guns.

By 9.00 am the Austrians were retiring along the entire line, closely pursued by the enemy. The Prussian infantry, encouraged by the sight of a retreating enemy and urged on by their officers advanced rapidly. Prussian Jagers began engaging the defenders of Karanitz and no less than five batteries of the slow moving Austrian artillery were overrun and taken by the swift advance of the Prussian infantry, the Prussian 69th regiment even succeeding in pressing forwards to the railway line. Von Mengen's cavalry brigade retired slowly in the face of heavy fire, with men and horses falling at every step. Amongst the casualties was Prince Windischgratz, who was mortally wounded¹⁰⁰. By 9.30 am the Austrians had been driven from the vicinity of Neustadl and were withdrawing down the Roudnitz road to the east.

Shortly after 9.30 the Prussian 16th and 17th Regiments assaulted the village of Karanitz where, after a short but stiff fight, they drove the Austrian defenders, the gallant 71st Regiment, out of the village and beyond the railway line where, once again the depleted 71st rallied and once again stood to arms.

Until now, the bulk of the Austrian forces had not yet been engaged. The brunt of the fighting had been borne by Von Rothkirch's Brigade, the cavalry and the artillery. As the Prussians pressed forwards however Archduke Williams was compelled to order his remaining two Brigades¹⁰¹ into action to hold the railway line. By now however it was obvious to the Archduke that he would be unable to hold on for much longer. He felt that he had gained sufficient time for the Artillery Reserve and detached brigades to reach the new position at Roudnitz and therefore issued orders for his forces to hold their positions as long as possible but to retire on the Roudnitz road as the situation permitted.

Unfortunately for the Archduke the sudden collapse of GM Schulz's brigade, holding the right flank of the Austrian line, compromised his position. Schulz's brigade had endured a stiff fight with several Prussian regiments but had collapsed under the punishing fire of the needle gun. The Austrians initially retired in good order along the Roudnitz road, but became increasingly disordered as they encountered other Austrian troops and began pushing their way through. The withdrawal risked turning into a rout.

The Prussians assaulted the railway line at several points, suffering heavily from the defender's fire but as the Prussian gained ground and closed upon their opponents the superiority of the needle gun over the Austrian muzzle loaders soon became apparent. For half an hour the fighting swayed back and forth along the line of the railway, as the Austrian commanders desperately tried to simultaneously hold a line and to retire their units. The Prussian infantry were worthy opponents however. If they were driven back by their enemy they quickly rallied and returned to the fight, giving the Austrians little or no time to rest or rally.

By 10 o'clock the Prussians had seized the line of the railway, and had driven the Austrians back to the Roudnitz road. However, the Prussian divisions had become intermingled during their headlong advance and the confusion of the close range fighting and were unable to take immediate advantage of the situation.

The Austrians made the most of the opportunity to retire. The collapse of Schulz's regiments had not quite become a rout but it had disordered the movement of the troops along the Roudnitz road. Observing that it would only take one more enemy attack to cut the road and throw the entire withdrawal into confusion, Archduke William gave instructions for those of his his troops who were still west of Karanitz to cross the

¹⁰⁰The Prince was carried from the field and taken to Roudnitz, however the wound was to prove mortal and he died two weeks later at Konggratz.

¹⁰¹Those of GM Schulz and Oberst Von Kreysern.

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Bistritz river near Kositz, and from there to may their way to Roudnitz via Boharna. Those troops east of Karanitz were to retire immediately along the Roudnitz road.

Fortunately for the Austrians the confusion and disorder amongst the enemy allowed them to make good their escape across the Bistritz, although the movement was not as orderly as it might have been and many of the regiments and squadrons resembled armed mobs rather than formed bodies. It was not a rout, but was not far from it. By a curious coincidence however, the last formed Austrian unit to cross the Bistritz, having covered the withdrawal of the rest of the army, was the 71st Regiment which had been the first to engage the enemy and had fought almost continuously for three hours. Although the battle of Wapno was unlikely to be remembered as a glorious victory for Austrian arms, the day would long be remembered in the 71st for the regiment's gallant stand against a superior enemy. The Regiment crossed the Bistritz in good order, with flags flying, bayonets fixed and drums beating under the eye of Archduke William himself.

Of the Austrian forces engaged during the battle only a small portion, the two regiments of Oberst Von Kreysern¹⁰², were able to retire along the Rouditz road as intended. However, this small force was able to retire in good order, accompanied by Erzherzog Leopold and Oberst Von Kreysern himself.

Prussian casualties during the battle amounted to 1,800 killed and wounded, while the Austrian losses were 1,980, including the loss or abandonment of 40 cannon.

The Pursuit from Wapno and the Battle of Roudnitz

The Prussian commander, Von Herwarth, was both pleased with his success and relieved that the enemy had not been present in such large numbers as was at first thought. He believed therefore that some of the enemy must have already withdrawn, probably in the direction of Koniggratz. Still concerned that he may yet be outnumbered Von Herwarth determined to launch an immediate pursuit of the retreating enemy, reasoning that a vigorous pursuit would both retain the initiative and prevent the enemy from rallying. It might also bring the supposed "missing" enemy corps to battle while the Prussians still had the advantage.

Orders were therefore issued for the Elbe army to set off immediately in pursuit of the enemy. The two cavalry brigades, neither of which had played a great part in the battle and were therefore still fresh, were given orders to follow up the enemy and to either break up any rearguards or to fix them in position if this was not possible. The infantry divisions were ordered to follow up the cavalry and to bring the enemy to battle. A brief report was also despatched to Royal HQ appraising it of the situation.

The distance between the battlefield at Wapno and the prepared position at Roudnitz was only about five or six miles. The Austrian Reserve Artillery and its escorts were taking up their positions at Roudnitz at about the same time that Archduke William retired from the battlefield. By midday, the rest of the Austrian forces from Wapno were rallying at the Roudnitz position, a number of wounded and exhausted troops having been left on the road to be taken by the pursuing Prussians.

The Prussian cavalry had quickly caught up with the Austrian rearguards but, without infantry support, had been unable to make any impression on the enemy, although the Horse Artillery battery attached to the Reserve Cavalry Brigade and commanded by Captain Caspari did bring the enemy under fire on several occasions.

The reader may recall at this point that on the 1st July, following the Battle of Chlumec, the Army Engineer Reserve was ordered to Roudnitz to reconnoitre and prepare another defensive position. This location was selected for several reasons, notably for its excellent fields of fire and the protection offered by the Bistritz river and a area of marshy ground to the north of the Chlumec road.

Oberst Von Pidoll, the senior officer of Engineers had not been idle. With three battalions of engineers to hand, and with some additional manpower provided by troops from the bridging squadrons, he had carefully sited a number of artillery positions, connected by a line of rifle pits. The engineers had worked from dawn to dusk during the preceding days and by the morning of the 4th July the position at Roudnitz comprised as follows:

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1. The hamlet of Hontile (on the east bank of the Bistritz opposite Boharna) had been barricaded against assault and an emplaced battery position dug on the road to the south of the hamlet, with a field of fire across the river towards Boharna.

2. The extended village of Roudnitz had been barricaded along its western and southern side, and an extended gun line had been emplaced extending south from Rodnitz towards Syrowatka, with a good field of fire to the west along the Chlumec road. A second artillery battery had been emplaced on the western end of Rounditz, with a field of fire to the south west across the marsh towards the Chlumec road. This battery was placed so as to be able to give enfilade fire against an enemy advancing against the main position south of Roudnitz.

3. A further battery position was sited on the northern edge of Syrowatka, to cover the southern flank of the main battery position south of Rodnitz.

4. A smaller battery position had also been constructed on the high ground north of Roudnitz, although any guns placed here would be firing at long range and therefore less effective.

The main battery positions were also provided with rifle pits for the benefit of the infantry tasked with protecting the guns.¹⁰³

In addition Von Pidoll had reconnoitred the banks of the Bistritz and determined that although the river was fordable by cavalry and infantry at Boharna, the river presented a considerable obstacle to all arms further south and in particular at the point where the river bent to the west in the direction of Chlumec, and where the low lying ground was marshy. The marsh, although it might be traversed with difficulty by infantry, was considered impassable to artillery and cavalry. All things considered, Von Pidoll felt that the Roudnitz position was strong enough to allow the Archduke to hold against the Prussians, however it had been assumed that the troops would have had the time to occupy the position before the arrival of the enemy. Although the early despatch of the main body of the Reserve Artillery from Chlumec meant that some of the guns and their escorting infantry and cavalry did arrive in time to take up the positions as directed by Von Pidoll, the bulk of the Archduke's forces arrived at Roudnitz in considerable disorder, and with the enemy hard on their heels.

The engagement at Roudnitz began at about 12.30 pm, shortly after the Austrian Reserve Artillery and its escorts had taken up positions in the fieldworks south of Roudnitz. On the Chlumec road Von Kreysern's two regiments, the 21st and 32nd, were retiring in good order but the Prussian 14th Cavalry Brigade was manoeuvring against their flank while the columns of the Prussian 14th Division rushed forwards as quickly as possible astride the road.

To the north of the Bistritz the Prussian 15th Division was also pressing forward towards Boharna, as the Prussian reserve Cavalry Brigade had been unable to make any heady against the steadfast rearguard under GM Graf Von Rothkirch and composed of the Austrian 71st regiment, supported by the 3rd Uhlans and a battery. The Uhlans declined to charge when requested by Von Rothkirch, so he personally led the 71st Regiment forward against the enemy where it was engaged by the Prussian 40th Fusilier and 65th Infantry Regiments. At the same time the remainder of the Austrian troops who had taken the route to Boharna, took advantage of the time gained by the stand of the 71st to quickly cross the Bistritz and take up positions on the eastern bank under the direction of Archduke William. The Austrians, shaken by the defeat at Wapno and the subsequent retreat nonetheless rallied and prepared to hold their ground once more.

Von Rothkirch met with initial success, forcing the Prussian Fusiliers to give ground but the weight of the enemy began to tell against the Austrians. By about 1.00 pm the 71st was engaged against no less than six Prussian battalions supported by a battery.

Back on the Chlumetz road the Prussian 14th Cavalry Brigade charged the Austrian rearguard but failed to press their attack against a determined stand by the enemy. As the cavalry withdrew however the 27th Brigade, leading the Prussian advance, assaulted the Austrian line. Due to the narrow space on the road,

¹⁰³Archduke William and Oberst Von Pidoll were responsible for the excellently prepared and sited artillery positions and defensive works used by the Austrians at the battle of Koniggratz. It is only natural to assume that, with several days preparation and the better part of three thousand engineers to do the work, they would have done something similar at Roudnitz.

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and the need to advance quickly the Prussian 16th and 56th Infantry Regiments advanced in field columns, The Austrian infantry opened fire and the Prussians fell into disorder as their formations were swept by Austrian fire.



The battle of Roudnitz - view of the battlefield (looking North) and showing the initial positions at the start of the battle

By 2.00 pm at Boharna, the Austrian 71st regiment was still clinging grimly to its position on the road above the village, however it had suffered heavily in the exchange of fire and now barely mustered a third of the soldiers who had formed its ranks at dawn. Despite the losses however it checked a third attack by the Prussians and drove them back. Taking advantage of the momentary respite Von Rothkirch led his men back to Boharna where the weary soldiers once again took up their positions for a short while before falling back across the Bitritz and leaving the village of Boharna to the enemy, who siezed it shortly before 2.30 pm.

At about the same time the Prussian cavalry on the Chlumetz road launched another charge against the mass of Austrian cavalry which could be seen manoeuvring on the flank of the Austrian defences south of Roudnitz¹⁰⁴. As the Prussians advanced they were fired on by an Austrian battery which caused the leading squadrons to fall into disorder and halt, little more than 200 yards from the Austrian cavalry. Graf Erbach-Furstenau observed the enemy's confusion and ordered the charge to be sounded, confident that his heavy cavalry, with the advantage of both numbers and weight of horseflesh¹⁰⁵ would easily check the enemy's advance. To his horror and shame however, the Austrian cavalry itself fell into disorder, with several of the squadrons failing to press home their charge or to support the leading squadrons. After a short melee, the Austrians retired, leaving the enemy cavalry holding the ground. The failure of the Austrian cavalry did however produce one result, it gained time for the remainder of Von Kreysern's brigade to withdraw into the main Austrian positions at Roudnitz and uncovered the main Austrian gun line, which now had a clear field of fire into the enemy.

¹⁰⁴ The Austrian cavalry was in fact the heavy Brigade led by Oberst Graf Erbach-Furstenau, which had been detached to escort the Reserve Artillery from the position near Chlumetz.

¹⁰⁵ The Prussian 14th Cavalry Brigade was composed of only two regiments, one each of Hussars and Uhlans.

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Until this point the Prussians had not been able to clearly observe the Austrian positions south of Roudnitz. They could obviously see that the enemy had taken up a covered position but the combination of dust and gun smoke prevented them from ascertaining precisely what was in front of them. It came as a shock therefore when at 2.30 pm no less than 64 guns of the Austrian Artillery Reserve opened fire. The ground in front of the Austrian line was swept by shot and shell¹⁰⁶. The cannon fire also concealed that fact that the Austrian forces were rapidly weakening. Despite the gallantry of the Austrian rearguards the Prussian fire was inflicting heavy casualties amongst their opponents and at least one Austrian regiment was running out of ammunition, having been engaged heavily at both Wapno and the present action without having time to replenish its munitions.



The Austrian Reserve Artillery in position south of Roudnitz

Riding along the line from Boharna towards Roudnitz Archduke William could see that many of his soldiers were exhausted, the artillery low on ammunition and the cavalry almost spent. It was little comfort to think that the Prussians were in a similar state, as it was obvious that the enemy had the advantage of numbers and their fire was increasingly effective as they closed with the Austrians. The Archduke also knew that there were no other Austrian forces in a position to either assist him or to bar the road to Koniggratz.

Two miles away however, south of the Bistritz and close by the village of Obcdowitz, the commander of the Elbe Army watched with mounting frustration as the Austrian artillery fire increased in intensity. In the distance, in the direction of Koniggratz, several dark masses could be observed through the dust and smoke although it was not possible to identify them. General Von Herwarth was convinced that these must be fresh enemy forces, or at least those who had escaped from Chlumetz before he had launched his initial attack that morning. The enemy had appeared determined to make a stand at Roudnitz and it was now apparent that he was well dug in, with a strong artillery and what appeared to be fresh reserves held back from the front line¹⁰⁷.

While both sides paused, the Austrians trying to rally their infantry and to order their lines while the Prussians bought up their artillery to engage the main Austrian position, a furious Graf Erbach-Furstenau rode through the ranks of his brigade berating his troopers for their cowardice in the face of the Prussian cavalry.

¹⁰⁶ The sound of the gunfire was heard at Koniggratz, where Archduke Albrecht was alerted to the fact that an engagement was taking place. Initially the bombardment had little effect, the smoke and dust concealing the fact that most of the shot missed their targets. As the gunners settled to their work however Prussian casualties began to mount up.

¹⁰⁷ These "dark masses" were in fact the trains and parks of the Austrian 8th Corps, the Reserve Artillery and the Engineer Park. They were forming up and preparing to withdraw to Koniggratz in the expectation that the Austrian position at Roudnitz would be compelled to give way.

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Determined to recover his honour he placed himself at the head of his brigade and, at about 3.00 pm, led it forward against the Prussian cavalry to his front. The Prussian 14th Cavalry Brigade had by now received some attention from the Austrian artillery and although somewhat disordered it counter-charged. The two bodies of cavalry met. This time it seemed that neither side was prepared to give way. The melee surged back and forth, squadrons retired, reformed and charged again. For almost 15 minutes the struggle continued until finally the Prussian cavalry gave way and retired.¹⁰⁸

Sadly Graf Erbach-Furstenau was not to see the result of his charge, being killed at the head of his brigade early in the melee¹⁰⁹.

The defeat of the Prussian cavalry appeared to convince Von Herwarth that the enemy were in a stronger position than was actually the case and, in any case, a frontal attack against the Austrian gun line with tired troops would most likely incur heavy casualties while running the risk of an enemy counter attack with potentially fresh troops. At about 3.30 pm therefore Von Herwarth gave the order to break of the action and fall back.

Archduke William was more than a little relieved when it became apparent that the Prussians had ceased attacking and were in fact retiring. With his troops exhausted, the Archduke made no attempt to follow up the enemy and the Austrians contented themselves with sending the occasional shell or round shot after the Prussians. By a little after 4.00 pm the firing had more or less ceased, although a cloud of dust and smoke hung in the still, hot air.

At 4.30 pm, accompanied by a small staff and with an escort of Uhlans, Archduke Albrecht arrived from Koniggratz.

Austrian losses at Roudnitz amounted to 1,080 killed and wounded. Prussian losses came to 540 killed and wounded.

Totals losses for the day amounted to:

Austrian	3,060 killed and wounded, 40 cannon lost or taken by the enemy.
Prussian	2,340 killed and wounded.

Following the cessation of the combat at Roundnitz the Prussians withdrew. Von Herwarth intended to place his outposts at Kratenau but, on discovering that the village was within range of the Austrian guns near Roudnitz, ordered a further withdrawal. The 16th Division therefore took up positions between Tresiker and Obcdowitz, while the 14th Division was posted to the rear of the 16th Division near Karanitz.. The 15th Division remained north of the Bistritz at Babitz.

At Roudnitz the Austrians maintained their positions, which were inspected by Archduke Albrecht, accompanied by Archduke William. It was soon apparent that the Austrians had suffered greater casualties than the enemy during the day. Although the Austrians had fought well it was by now apparent that the enemy had greater numbers. Archduke William voiced his opinion that he might be able to hold his ground at Roudnitz but that it was unlikely that the enemy would simply attempt another frontal assault. William therefore considered it probable that the Prussians would attempt to outflank his position, most probably by way of the southern flank, in the same manner as at Wapno. He also stated his intention of removing his trains to Koniggratz, where they could be protected by the guns of the fortress.

After some discussion, at about 5.30 pm, Archduke Albrecht consented for the trains to retire to Koniggratz, and also gave orders for the Army Artillery Reserve to also retire to a position closer to Koniggratz, although it was to remain on the west bank of the Elbe. The guns were to move as soon as Archduke William felt able to do so, and the withdrawal was to be covered by the 8th Corps and the Cavalry Division, which were to remain at Roudnitz until the Artillery had reached the new location. Oberst Von Pidoll was given the task of

¹⁰⁸ This was a most surprising incident during the wargame - for those familiar with the Fire & Fury rules the opposing die rolls in the melee resulted in no less than three drawn "A Desperate Struggle" results before the fourth die roll gave victory (just!) to the Prussians.

¹⁰⁹ Oberst Ritter Von Baertung (8th Kurassier Regiment) subsequently took command of the Brigade.

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reconnoitring the new position. A despatch was also sent to Crown Prince Albert of Saxony, giving him permission to retire Koniggratz if he felt it necessary.

Events in the East - Benedek and the Prussian 2nd Army

Unaware of the locations of the Prussians to the south, and having received fresh orders regarding the employment of his forces against the Prussian 1st Army, Benedek spent the day resting and reorganising his forces and trains. The prisoners were escorted to Josephstadt. At the same time the respective corps received a warning order to prepare to march early on the 5th July.

Benedek had also been informed that Prinz Thurn und Taxis' 2nd Light Cavalry Division was to come under his command and confirmation of this order was also sent to the Prinz. No mention of Oberst Graf Auersperg's Brigade, currently under command of the 2nd Light Cavalry Division, was made. The Prinz, assuming that separate instructions would be forthcoming for Graf Auersperg, simply recommended that, as Auersperg's troops were relatively weak and unlikely to be supported he would be best retiring to Mittelwalde for the time being.

In contrast to Benedek's enforced inactivity the Prussians were making every effort to retire from the vicinity of Koniggratz. Von Steinmetz' 5th Corps, having set off the previous evening, marched through night with only a short rest, and by early morning had reached Langenbruck, where it halted to await the arrival of the Guard Corps and Cavalry.

As ordered, the Guards Corps and Cavalry Reserve began withdrawing after the 5th Corps at first light on the 4th, the Cavalry Corps falling back behind a screen of cavalry. By nightfall the Guards Corps had reached a point between the villages of Maska and Rampusch, some five miles behind Von Steinmetz. The Cavalry formed a rearguard at Reichenau.

During the day Von Steinmetz had despatched cavalry patrols to scout towards Glatz and the Neisse valley. The patrols towards Glatz confirmed that a battle had taken place at Reineez, and that the Prussians had been defeated. They also reported that the enemy was present at Reineez in strength with cavalry patrols scouting to the south of Reineez. The patrols to the Neisse valley however reported that although the road to Glatz was held by the enemy at Habelschwert, it appeared that the enemy was only a small force of several battalions¹¹⁰. It was considered most likely that this force was responsible for the loss of communication with the trains. Late in the afternoon Von Steinmetz despatched a courier to Prinz August with the news of the enemy.

However, despite the current worrying situation in which Prinz August found himself, events were moving elsewhere. Throughout the day Royal Headquarters had completed its move from Breslau to the fortress at Neisse although, of necessity, some of the numerous "hangers-on" which had accompanied the King and his staff had been forced to remain behind due to a lack of rail transport. By early evening Von Moltke had established telegraph contact with the fortress at Glatz and was relieved to learn that the enemy had made no movement against the fortress or the road east towards Warthe. At about the same time the first trains carrying the men of the 1st Guard Landwehr Brigade arrived from Zittau, accompanied by Generalleutnant von der Mülbe, commanding the 1st reserve Corps. The arrival of these troops was welcome news for Von Moltke and the King insisted on riding to the station to meet the troops as they formed up.

¹¹⁰ This was the brigade of Oberst Graf Auersperg, detached from the 2nd Corps to the 2nd Light Cavalry Division following the battle of Habelschwert. It comprised three battalions of the 8th regiment and a battalion of Jagers, and numbered about 4,200 men.

5th July 1866

General Situation

The 5th July dawned bright and clear, promising another hot day ahead.

Von Moltke and the Prussian Royal HQ remained at Neisse, waiting to see how the day developed and hoping for some good news. Moltke had issued instructions to his forces to continue with their previous orders with the aim of concentrating the First and Second Armies near Glatz as follows:

1. The First Army was to continue moving east with all speed to make contact with the fortress at Glatz and to relieve the pressure on the Second Army.
2. The Elbe Army was to avoid becoming engaged against a superior enemy force in the vicinity of Koniggratz and was to manoeuvre south of that fortress towards Czaslau and Hohenmauth, to draw the enemy's attention away from Glatz and to disengage the First and Second Armies.
3. The 1st Reserve Corps, in the absence of any information regarding the whereabouts of the forces of the Second Army, was to concentrate at Neisse and establish contact with the garrison at Glatz.

The Prussian First Army was on the move in the early hours of the morning, commencing during the hours of darkness to make the most of the cooler temperatures. The early movement also went unnoticed by the Austrian cavalry picquets until after the sun had risen. The 2nd Corps, which had arrived at Turnau, was given orders to halt at that town and to await instructions for a railway move towards Glatz.¹¹¹

The Elbe Army, apart from minor adjustments in its dispositions to improve its security, remained in the positions it held the previous evening. Following the army's exertions during the two previous days Von Herwarth felt it necessary to allow the troops a day's rest before continuing the march. In addition a halt would allow him time to examine the ground and observe any enemy activity which might indicate an attack on his position. His instructions from Von Moltke were quite clear but von Herwarth felt that it was a case of "more haste, less speed" and that a delay was necessary while he put his forces in order, rearranged his lines of communications and decided how best to proceed taking into consideration the enemy forces likely to be arrayed against him.

At Rampusch Prinz August, commanding the Prussian Guards Corps, had decided to make a concerted attempt to regain contact with Glatz, before the enemy could manoeuvre against him. Aware of the small Austrian forces at Habelschwert he ordered the 5th Corps to attack and drive the enemy from the town, thus either opening the road to Glatz or allowing the Prussian forces to cross the Neisse valley and gain contact with the fortress at Neisse. The Guards Corps was instructed to march to Langenbruck, from where it could support the 5th Corps, while the Cavalry Corps was to follow up behind the Guards Corps and to concentrate with them at Langenbruck.

At Koniggratz however Archduke Albrecht and his staff had spent half the night examining the reports of the Prussian movements during the 4th. It was now considered likely that that the Prussian First Army was intending to attack southwards from the vicinity of Neu Paka and Koniginhof with the intention of striking the Austrian 1st Corps and Saxon Corps from the flank and rear. The activity of the remnants of the Prussian 2nd Army was giving some cause for concern. Although it was now known that strong enemy forces had occupied the area around Hohenbruck, these forces now appeared to have withdrawn, and there was some concern over their location and intentions. It was felt that these forces had three courses of action open to them:

1. To move to the south east to continue to disrupt communications south from Koniggratz.
2. To retire east through Reichenau and to break contact with the Austrian forces in the vicinity of

¹¹¹ It was not known to First Army HQ at the time but the rail line through Turnau to the north was unsuitable for such a move, being a single track branch line with no yards or loading facilities. The Nearest railway capable of carrying such traffic was the line between Zittau and Neisse. However, all available rolling stock was currently being used to move the 1st Reserve Corps to Neisse.

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Koniggratz.

3. To concentrate at Reichenau and to attack north to strike Benedek in the flank and effect a junction with the First Army.

Archduke Albrecht argued forcefully that the third course was most likely and decided that he would adapt his strategy to take advantage of his central position and make use of his interior lines of communication to defeat the three enemy armies in detail. To this end the the Crown Prince of Saxony was ordered to retire on Koniggratz and take up a strong position and form a bridgehead on the west bank of the Elbe. The 8th Corps, the Reserve Artillery and the 3rd Reserve Cavalry Division were to cross the Elbe at Koniggratz and take up positions to the east of the fortress, from where they could concentrate with the 6th Corps to either support the fortress or to defend the eastern approaches against the Prussian Second Army.

Benedek was instructed to continue his movement against the Prussian First Army, with the aim of concentrating his three corps in the vicinity of Koniginhof , pending any instructions to the contrary in the light of fresh intelligence.

Unfortunately, due to a staff error, the orders for North Army HQ were not despatched until 8.00 am on the 5th which caused some delay in the movements of the Austrian forces in the vicinity of Koniggratz. Benedek however, had earlier issued orders that his corps were to be ready to move at first light on the 5th and his leading troops set off shortly after dawn.

A glance at the situation map will show the positions of both armies at this point. The Austrians were reorganising around Koniggratz, while the Prussian Elbe Army remained stationary, albeit with some justification, west of Roudnitz. The Prussian Second Army was taking the completely opposite course of action to that which Archduke Albrecht believed to be the case, and was in fact withdrawing to the east in the direction of Habelschwert.

Events however hinged on the activities of the Prussian First Army and the forces under Benedek. The Prussian First Army, unaware of Benedek advancing towards them, was advancing on a narrow front towards Glatz and converging on the road from Nachod towards Reineez and through the defiles to Glatz. Benedek, on the other hand, had a good idea that the First Army was probably either heading in his direction, or else marching across his front heading towards Josephstadt or Koniggratz and it was highly likely that he may well have the advantage of both numbers and surprise in any initial clash.

Events in the west - The Prussian Elbe Army and Austrian movements in the vicinity of Koniggratz

Following the battles at Wapno and Roudnitz Archduke Albrecht had given Archduke William permission to withdraw the Army Artillery Reserve closer to Koniggratz, covered by the 8th Corps and 3rd Reserve Cavalry Division. To this end, the artillery began to retire during the night of the 4th-5th July, while the 8th Corps and Cavalry remained at Roudnitz.

To the north of Roudnitz, at Wostrumer, Crown Prince Albert of Saxony had received intelligence of the actions at Wapno and Roudnitz and had been given instructions to withdraw closer to Koniggratz if he felt the situation warranted such a move. However, the Crown Prince believed that Archduke William was likely to remain on the west bank of the Elbe and therefore issued orders to cover the north west approach to Koniggratz while at the same time drawing closer to Archduke William to support him in the event of a further Prussian attack. To this end the Saxon Corps was to move from its present positions around Wostrumer and to march to Nechanitz, from where it would be in a position to protect Archduke William's flank and to offer support if necessary. The Austrian 1st Corps and 1st Light Cavalry Division was ordered to hold the line of the Jaworka River until the Saxons were clear of Wostrumer and then to retire south east via Horitz and Sadowa before taking up a position in the vicinity of Wsestar and Rosnitz.

In the event however, these orders were superseded by a further despatch from HQ North Army at 9.30 am which informed him that Archduke William was withdrawing on Koniggratz and that the Crown Prince was directed to withdraw the forces under his command to the Elbe crossings north of Koniggratz. The trains were to be withdrawn east of the Elbe and the two Corps were to form a bridgehead on the west bank centred on Lochemitz and Preilmeritz. Prince Albert was also informed that the forces under the command of

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Archduke William were expected to cross to the east bank of the Elbe during the day. The Crown Prince therefore issued fresh orders for a withdrawal towards Koniggratz, with the Austrian Corps directed to retire on Lochemitz while the Saxons marched to Preilmeritz. These movements were completed by the late afternoon.

At about 8.30 am Archduke Albrecht rode out from Koniggratz and met with Archduke William near the fortress, where he issued fresh orders for the deployment of the forces under William's command. They were to cross the Elbe at Koniggratz and to take up new positions to the east of the fortress. It was Archduke Albrecht's intention to concentrate the 8th and 6th Corps, the Reserve Artillery and the 2nd and 3rd Reserve Cavalry Divisions to form a strong reserve to deal with any Prussian advance east of the fortress.

The Army Artillery Reserve subsequently crossed the Elbe and took up positions east of Koniggratz at Skalitz and Aujezd.

The 8th Corps and Cavalry began to withdraw from Roudnitz at about midday and, unmolested by the Elbe Army, crossed the Elbe in the vicinity of Koniggratz and took up positions at Slatina and Cernikow respectively. The Army Engineers took up a position at Pouchow.

Shortly after midday the Prussian Elbe Army's outposts reported that the Austrians were vacating the position at Roudnitz. The Commander of the Elbe Army despatched a report outlining his situation to Royal HQ and 1st Army but remained in situ.

Benedek's Advance to the west and the battle of Nachod

On the 4th July Benedek had issued orders for his forces to commence moving west on the 5th, to concentrate around Roth Kosteletz and to seek out the Prussian 1st Army.

The Austrian forces had been ordered to move at first light and the 1st Reserve Cavalry Division set off at 5.00 am, advancing along the road from Reineez, via Lewin, towards Nachod, closely followed by the 3rd Corps. The 10th Corps was ordered to advance behind the 3rd Corps as far as Lewin and then to make for Trubijow, while the 4th Corps was to march from Neuhaid to Hronow, via Friederichsberg¹¹².

The leading elements of the Prussian 1st Army, the 5th and 6th Divisions, however had set off at 2.00 am, to make the most of the cooler hours of darkness, and by 7.00 am the advance guard of the 5th Division had reached Nachod, having captured a number of Austrian supply wagons en route¹¹³. The remainder of the 1st Army trailed behind along the same route.

Shortly after 7.00 am, as they marched out of Nachod, the leading Prussian troops encountered Austrian cavalry patrols approaching along the defile from the east. The Austrian cavalry, Uhlans from the 1st Reserve Cavalry Division, retired before the advancing Prussians and when the Prussian advance guard cleared the Nachod defile and arrived at the village of Schlanei, they discovered the Austrian cavalry Division drawn up by the village of Sakisch. More Austrian cavalry patrols could be seen on the high ground overlooking the valley. The time was now 8.00 am.

General Von Tumpling, commanding the Prussian 5th Division, immediately sent a despatch to 1st Army Headquarters to inform them of the situation and promptly began to deploy his forces around Schlanei, confident that the 6th Division, currently on the road behind his own division, would come to his assistance in a short while. As the Prussians deployed heavy dust clouds could be seen to the east, heralding the arrival of the Austrian 3rd Corps. It was by now apparent to Von Tumpling that he would be unable to brush the enemy aside and resume his march. He sent word for the 6th Division to come up with all speed as it appeared a fight was about to start.

At 9.30 am, Benedek arrived at Sakisch, having been appraised of the enemy's approach by the Commander of the cavalry division. Having thus found the enemy he determined to fight and issued orders

¹¹² The 4th Corps was still missing Oberst v. Traunsteinburg's Brigade which was detached on prisoner escort duties. The Brigade was located at Josephstadt awaiting new orders.

¹¹³ These were part of the various trains supplying Benedek's three Corps. Taken by surprise the Austrian train soldiers fled into the countryside on the approach of the Prussians.

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as follows:

1. The 3rd Corps was to immediately hold a position at Sakisch and block the enemy's advance.
2. The 1st reserve Cavalry Division was to screen the deployment of the 3rd Corps and then to move to the north west in the direction of Roth Kosteletz to block the road and harass the enemy.
3. The 10th Corps was to march as far as Lewin and to then advance directly on Nachod, bypassing the 3rd Corps to the south.
4. The 4th Corps was ordered to advance immediately to Dobroschow and form a reserve.
5. The 2nd Light Cavalry Division was ordered towards Bohemia Cerna, near Dobroschow.

Benedek's intention was that once the 4th and 10th Corps were in position, then the whole army would commence an attack on the Prussians at Schlanei, with the aim of overwhelming them frontally and cutting their line of communication at Nachod.

The 3rd Corps and Cavalry began to deploy immediately¹¹⁴. The orders for the 10th Corps were received by Von Gablenz at 10.45 am at Lewin, whereupon he immediately directed his leading Brigade west towards Nachod via Bohemia Cerna and Dobroschow.

Unfortunately however, the 4th Corps was marching north west towards Friedrichsberg and was not on the Reineez road. The courier with the orders for the Corps therefore rode on towards Neuhaid, while the corps continued on its way to the north west. The orders were not received by the 4th Corps until much later in the day, by which time the situation had changed substantially.

At about the same time the report from Von Tumbling arrived at 1st Army HQ at Koniginhof. Prince Frederick Charles, despite some misgivings about the situation¹¹⁵ but acutely aware of the need to press on and make contact with Glatz, issued orders for the 5th and 6th Divisions to await the arrival of the Cavalry Corps and then to attack and destroy the enemy to their front. The 4th Corps, comprising the 7th & 8th Divisions, and the Army Artillery Reserve, was to march with all speed to close up with the leading divisions and to support the attack. The Prince himself set off immediately with his staff to join Von Tumbling and to see the situation for himself.

One problem, as yet unforeseen by the Prussians, was that of fatigue. The distance between Koniginhof and Nachod was about 17 miles. The 5th and 6th Divisions had already marched thus far and had been on the march since the early hours of the morning. The Reserve artillery and the two divisions of the 4th Corps, now in the vicinity of Koniginhof had already covered ten miles or more, and were now ordered to continue and cover the better part of another 20 miles during the hottest part of the day. With the exception of the 3rd Corps' Divisions, the Army had not had a day's rest since 28th June, and the artillery horses in particular were feeling the strain in the heat. There was a real risk that, even if the troops arrived in time, they might not be in any condition to fight.

By 10.00 am the Prussian 6th Division had arrived near Schlanei and was deploying in support of the 5th Division. Its commander joined Von Tumbling at Schlanei to discuss the situation¹¹⁶.

At about 10.30 am the bulk of the Austrian 3rd Corps had arrived near Sakisch and was deploying. Shortly after this Von Tumbling received his orders to attack and also learned that the Cavalry had just arrived at Nachod and would be ordered to support him.

114 Unfortunately Benedek failed to closely supervise the deployment of FML Ernst 3rd Corps at Sakisch. Ernst's poor initial deployment and handling of his corps was to cost him dearly and come close to losing the battle.

115 The whole of the Prussian 1st Army was marching along the same route and was essentially confined to one or two roads due to the nature of the terrain and the intended direction of the march. This meant that in the event of an encounter battle the leading divisions would be forced to fight on their own for some time before they could be reinforced, as the following divisions would take much longer to arrive than if they had been able to advance by parallel roads. Instead they would have to close up from the rear.

116 The 6th Division had force marched the last several miles and arrived in a fatigued condition. The 5th Division however, having had a chance to rest at Schlanei, was still fresh.

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The battlefield near Nachod - looking north. The Prussians approached along the road through the defile on the left of the picture

At 11.00 am the Prussians commenced their attack. The Austrian 1st Reserve Cavalry Division had covered the deployment of the 3rd Corps but this delayed its movement so that the cavalry had not had time to march for the Roth-Kosteletz road and was therefore forced to redeploy on the right of the 3rd Corps, near the village of Cerna. As the Prussians advanced however, and much to Benedek's surprise, the Austrian right wing under FML Ernst, comprising the cavalry division and two brigades of the 3rd Corps, advanced immediately against the enemy

The Prussian infantry of the 5th and 6th Divisions advanced aggressively and quickly engaged the Austrian lines. The Prussian needle gun fire proved as deadly as expected and the Austrian infantry soon began suffering heavy casualties, while an Austrian battery was overrun by Prussian infantry near Sakisch before the guns could even open fire. One Austrian Regiment, the 52nd, launched a bayonet charge against the Prussians of the 6th Division, only for the attack to fail under the rapid fire of the enemy infantry.

Riding up to FML Ernst, Benedek berated him for not only commencing his attack too soon but also for failing to employ his artillery from the start. The two officers exchanged angry words for several minutes, with Ernst claiming that he had been given authority to attack¹¹⁷. Worried that Ernst's actions might compromise his plan, Benedek immediately sent word to Von Gablenz to get his Corps moving and into action as quickly as possible.

¹¹⁷ Ernst claimed that he had been given authority to attack and that he was not specifically instructed to fight a defensive battle, however Benedek's orders clearly stated that the 3rd Corps was to *"Block enemy from moving east from current position. Once your corps is in position, if you can attack on favourable terms do so to destroy/disperse them before they can entrench. If unable to do so, when 10th Corps attacks, that will be your signal to also advance."* It would appear that the 3rd Corps' immediate advance was therefore down to a simple misunderstanding of orders written in haste.

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At about 11.30 am, Prince Frederick and his staff arrived at Von Tumpling's location near Schlanei.

The Prussian attack drove deep into the 3rd Corps along the line of the Schlanei - Sakisch road, coming close to splitting the Austrian corps in two. Heavy fighting developed on the high ground to the north east of Schlanei and along the small river near the village. The Austrians were fighting hard to hold the Prussian advance and the Prussian 9th Brigade was thrown back from Sakisch by Prochaska's brigade, and Benedek himself ordered his last reserve, the 62nd Infantry Regiment, into a counter attack. The 62nd advanced at the double with fixed bayonets but the attacking battalions crumpled under the weight of fire directed at them and the attack failed.

Elsewhere the Austrian cavalry brigade of GM Schindlocker charged the enemy and forced the Prussian 64th Regiment to retire. The Austrian cavalry, while attempting to follow up, was itself forced to retire by well directed rifle fire.

Realising that the 3rd Corps was in danger of being split in two, Benedek sent couriers to both the 10th and 4th Corps with orders to hurry towards the battlefield with all speed. In addition, Von Gablenz was ordered to send a brigade to directly support the 3rd Corps at Sakisch.

At about this time however the steadily increasing rumble of the gunfire was heard by Feldmarschal-leutnant Graf Festetics and the staff of the Austrian 4th Corps at Friedrichsberg, several miles away to the east. In the absence of any fresh orders Festetics, an uninspired but energetic Hussar officer and an old comrade of Benedek's, and his capable chief of staff Colonel Mollinari, decided that Benedek must already be engaged and that they ought to march to the sound of the guns. The Corps was ordered to continue its march westwards while a staff officer was sent off to see what was happening.

By about 12.30pm the Prussian Cavalry Corps had arrived on the field and was deploying near Schlanei, although it was not yet clear where it would be committed to battle. The fighting was heavy along the line but the Prussian infantry seemed to be gaining the upper hand and Prince Frederick was concerned to keep the cavalry intact until it could be used en masse to sweep the Austrian infantry off the road at Sakisch and open the road to Glatz. On the heights north of Schlanei and Sakisch the fighting swayed to and fro, although the Prussians seemed to have the advantage.

At 1.30 pm the Prussians launched a fresh attack along their front. A Prussian attack towards Georgsdorf by the 8th Grenadier Regiment was held by the soldiers of the Austrian 33rd and 34th Jager battalions, but the Austrian 78th Regiment was forced to give way under the Prussian rifle fire. To the north of Schlanei and Sakisch Schindlocker's cavalry was suffering heavy casualties in trying to drive back the Prussians, the Austrian infantry were too busy fighting their own battles to help the cavalry which suffered accordingly.¹¹⁸

Fortunately for the Austrians however, shortly after 1.15pm the head of the leading brigade of the 4th Corps arrived near Gudowa. At about the same time Wimpffen's Brigade of the 10th Corps arrived on the road to Lewin.

The reinforcements immediately put fresh heart into the soldiers of the 3rd Corps. The Austrian 46th Regiment advanced and overran two Prussian batteries, driving off a third and forcing the Prussian 48th Regiment to withdraw. At the same time a fresh Austrian attack near Sakisch by the 49th Regiment pushed back the Prussian 35th Fusilier Regiment, and by 2.00pm for several crucial minutes the Austrian regained the initiative.

Prince Frederick suddenly found Austrian infantry advancing within 150 yards of his position and, with enemy bullets falling around him and his staff, he was forced to retire to a fresh position nearer to Schlanei. The success of the Austrian attacks also compelled the enemy to withdraw several of their leading units in order to reorganise their line.

Between 2.00pm and 3.00pm the fighting continued unabated. The Prussian Cavalry Corps advanced

¹¹⁸ By late afternoon Schindlocker's brigade, decimated by the Prussian fire, had ceased to exist. The brigade had not broken, but the troopers remaining with the colours simply dwindled away to the point where regiments were reduced to the strength of a single squadron or less.

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towards Sakisch but now found its way opposed by increasing numbers of Austrians arriving from the 10th Corps however, and Austrian attack on the Prussian left flank faltered, leaving the Prussians in control of the high ground to the north.

By 3.30pm the Austrians had succeeded in reinforcing their line with fresh troops from the 4th and 10th Corps, allowing the battered 3rd Corps some respite. The 3rd Corps had suffered heavily under the Prussian needle gun fire but had stubbornly clung to its positions around Cerna, Sakisch and Georgsdorf.

At about this time the Prussian commander realised that his troops were tiring while at the same time the enemy was growing stronger. He immediately ordered a halt to any further attacks and gave instructions for the 5th and 6th Divisions to hold the high ground north of Schlanei and to form a fresh line east of Schlanei itself, supported by the cavalry. Staff officers were sent to inform the Reserve Artillery and the 7th and 8th Divisions of the situation and ordering them to hurry.

Benedek was by now aware of the parlous state of the 3rd Corps and realised that the battle still hung in the balance. He urgently needed more fresh troops if he was to be able to overwhelm the indefatigable Prussian infantry and therefore ordered Von Gablenz to abandon his intention of attacking Nachod in the enemy's rear and to bring up the remainder of his corps onto the battlefield with all speed.

Between 3.30pm and 4.30pm there was a lull in the battle as the Prussians established their new positions and managed to establish a fresh gun line closer to Cerna. By now the Prussian 6th Division had been reduced to about 7,000 effectives and 24 guns. The Austrians also took the opportunity to establish tow guns lines near Gudowa and Sakisch.



About 4.00 pm - the Prussian cavalry deploys to support the infantry and hold the line

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At 4.30pm the fresh Austrian artillery opened fire and swept the Prussian lines with shot and shell. The Prussian Cavalry, by now forced to hold a position in the front line to make up for a lack of infantry in the 5th Division, was fearfully exposed to the Austrian fire and began to lose men and horses in increasing numbers.

Shortly after 5.00pm the Austrian had almost 100 guns in action, with a further 60 still held in reserve. To oppose these the Prussians were able to field about 70 guns. The increasingly heavy Austrian fire was soon tearing gaps in the Prussian line and forcing the Prussian batteries to retire to new positions, while the Prussian infantry and cavalry could do little in reply except grit their teeth and hold on. In the face of such fire the Prussian 6th Division began withdrawing to positions further to the west.



Late afternoon - the Austrian 10th and 4th Corps mass for their attack

It was about this time that an officer from the Prussian 8th Division arrived at the Prince Frederick's headquarters with the news that the head of division's advance guard had reached Nachod but that the troops were exhausted having been on the move in the intense heat since long before dawn. It would be at least 6.00pm before the 8th Division could reach the battlefield. Realising that he was losing the battle and fearing being trapped in the Nachod defile the Prince gave orders to retreat to fresh positions west of Nachod. The 8th Division, to include the Reserve Artillery and 7th Division, was to take up a position near Wysokow while the troops engaged at Schlanej would retire through Nachod and once clear of the defile would concentrate with the 7th and 8th Divisions. The 5th and 6th Divisions were to retire immediately covered by the Cavalry.

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The order to retreat caused some confusion in the Prussian lines and as the 6th Division began to withdraw, and also for the first time in the campaign, increasing numbers of Prussian soldiers were observed to be leaving the ranks under the pretext of assisting wounded comrades to the rear.

As if to underline the effectiveness of the Austrian artillery fire the Prussian 2nd Heavy Cavalry Brigade lost heavily, including its commanding officer General Von Pfuell, killed by an Austrian shell. At the same time Benedek began his counter attack, with strong columns of the 10th and 4th Corps forming up to attack well outside the range of the Prussian needle gun and covered by the Austrian artillery fire.

At 5.30pm the Austrians began to advance. To their surprise the Prussians noted that the enemy were advancing with bands playing. Determined to avenge the fate of Schindlocker's brigade the officer commanding the Austrian 1st Cavalry Division, Prinz Schleswig-Holstein, directly led his remaining brigade (Prinz Solms) forward in support of the 4th Corps. As the Austrian infantry advanced onto the high ground west of Cerna ground and attached the Prussian line the Austrian cavalry charged. Busy with the Austrian infantry to their front and unable to see the cavalry through the smoke, the Prussian 12th Regiment was taken by surprise. Despite inflicting heavy casualties on the charging cavalry the 12th regiment broke and fled, leaving a gap in the Prussian line. The Austrian cavalry swept into the gap, riding down the Prussian 3rd Jager Battalion which was rallying to the rear of the 12th Regiment. The Prussian 6th Division's line buckled and the commander, general Von Manstein ordered a withdrawal to a fresh line north of Schlanei.

South and east of Schlanei the infantry and remaining guns of the 5th Division began falling back towards the Nachod road. The Prussian cavalry, left in position to cover the withdrawal, undertook several charges to buy some time to hold the line and to try and drive back the Austrian columns. The Prussian 1st Light Cavalry Brigade, comprising three regiments of Guard Uhlans and Dragoons, charged home but lost heavily to enemy fire and despite their efforts were unable to break the Austrians. The cavalry withdrew, having lost over a quarter of its strength and leaving its commander, Von Rheinbaben behind as a prisoner of war.

By half past six the Prussian line at Schlanei comprised two cavalry brigades and the remnants of the 8th Grenadier Regiment. The remainder of the Prussian forces were retiring towards the Nachod road. As the Austrians advanced the remnants of the Prussian 6th Division under von Manstein made a gallant stand on the banks of the Metuje River, to allow the guns and stragglers to cross. Attacked by Austrian infantry and the Cavalry of Solms' Brigade the Prussians were driven across the river after a short but stiff fight, during which the Austrian cavalry charged repeatedly with heavy losses.

Between 6.30pm and 7.00pm the Prussian 2nd Heavy and 2nd Light Cavalry Brigades distinguished themselves by charging repeatedly to cover the withdrawal of the 5th Division. The Prussian cavalry suffered heavy losses during their charges but managed to gain time for the greater part of the 5th Division's infantry and artillery to cross the Metuje and take the Nachod road. At about this time the Prussian Prince Frederick left the battlefield for Nachod, from where he intended to find the 8th Division and supervise its deployment and to arrange for the arrival of the troops withdrawing from the battlefield.

However, by 7.30pm the Austrians had taken Schlanei, and were crossing the Metuje river. This movement cut off the bulk of the 6th Corps, preventing them from retreating towards Nachod. The 6th Division was therefore compelled to retire northwards toward Hronow, and from there west towards Roth Kostolets. The remaining Prussian forces were able to withdraw into the Nachod defile, covered by the 3rd Light Cavalry Brigade, supported by some Jagers and several horse batteries, where the narrow defile prevented any effective Austrian pursuit.

By 8.00pm the battle was over and Benedek had closed the eastern end of the Nachod defile.

Both armies had fought well, the cavalry on both sides distinguishing itself in its devotion to duty and willingness to sacrifice itself.

As might be expected in such a hotly contested action casualties were heavy on both sides.

The Prussian 5th and 6th Divisions lost 4,740 killed and wounded, most of whom fell into Austrian hands, and left 24 of its guns in Austrian hands. The Prussian cavalry lost 900 men and lost 8 guns to the enemy. Total Prussian losses amounted to 5,640 killed and wounded, and the loss of 32 guns.

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The brunt of the Austrian losses were borne by the 3rd Corps and 1st Reserve cavalry Division, which had held the Prussian attacks until reinforcements were able to take over the battle. Losses in the 3rd Corps amounted to 4,200 killed and wounded, with 900 casualties in the Cavalry Division. The total loss came to 5,100 killed and wounded. A number of guns were destroyed or damaged but none lost to the enemy.

Casualties in the 4th and 10th Corps were almost negligible, amounting to somewhat less than 400 killed and wounded.

The Prussian 2nd Army

The 5th Corps was on the march towards Habelschwert by 3.00am, arriving before the town shortly before 6.00am. The Prussian Advance Guard found little Austrian activity in the town and attacked immediately, taking Oberst Graf Auersperg's detachment by surprise. The defenders, three battalions of the 8th regiment and a battalion of Jagers put up little resistance and were either dispersed or taken prisoner within the hour. Graf Auersperg was captured trying to rally his troops and fight their way south towards Mittelwalde.

Von Steinmetz, upon learning that the Austrian 2nd Light Cavalry Division lay to his north on the Glatz road, immediately took steps to place troops covering both the road to Glatz and south towards Mittelwalde and sent word to Prinz August that he had secured Habelschwert¹¹⁹. During the afternoon a cavalry patrol from the 5th Corps reconnoitred the road to Glatz and discovered that, apart from two transport squadrons and herd of cattle from the 2nd Light cavalry Division train, there were no enemy troops between the 5th Corps and Glatz. This news was relayed to Von Steinmetz and the patrol continued on to Glatz where they established contact with the garrison.

By evening both Von Moltke and Prinz August were aware that the 2nd Army had re-established communication with Glatz and Royal HQ.

Umpire's Comments

By the end of the 5th July game turn it was apparent that although the Prussian Armies still had plenty of fight left in them their position was such that there was little point in continuing the campaign.

The military situation in the game is such that, much like the real war, one side has reached a point where outside events will force an armistice followed by terms. In the real war, the issue was decided at Koniggratz even though it dragged on for a further 5 weeks.

In our campaign, the outcome has instead been decided by a series of battles, which have led to much the same result. As the issue is no longer in doubt and based on the circumstance detailed below I have therefore decided to terminate the game at this point.

¹¹⁹ Prinz Thun and Taxis had in fact received orders from Benedek and HQ North Army to support the movement west to intercept the Prussian 1st Army, and had set off towards Reineez shortly after dawn. Unfortunately for Graf Auersperg no-one had thought to either inform him of this decision or to warn him that the Prussian 2nd Army might be retiring towards him.

The end of the Campaign The Military and Political Situation on July 6th 1866

The Political Situation

Following the series of defeats which included the destruction of two Corps of the Prussian 2nd Army (including the capture of its commander, the Crown Prince, and staff), public and political pressure within Prussia forces the King and Bismark to return to Berlin.

In addition, the news of the defeat of the 2nd Army and the capture of the Crown Prince has been loudly proclaimed in the Austrian newspapers and the news has been swiftly carried to the other European powers via telegraph. Once the news reached Prussia there were riots and protest in the streets of Berlin and a number of other Prussian towns.

Napoleon III has announced a partial mobilisation on the Rhine, ostensibly to protect her eastern border, but really to bring pressure to bear against Prussia to end the war. France's objective in this case being to ensure that neither Prussia nor Austria becomes too powerful and keeping them in balance.

The Prussian Parliament, which was opposed to the war in the first place, is now in open revolt and has passed a motion of no confidence in Bismark and his foreign policies, and is threatening further sanctions unless Bismark resigns and Prussia seeks immediate terms to end the war.

Bismark and his foreign policy is discredited and he is forced to resign.

Prussian forces in western Germany have been ordered to cease operations against Austria's German allies and to withdraw to Prussian territory to help restore order, freeing the Bavarian army to reinforce its allies in Bohemia.

On the evening of 6th July Prussia requests an armistice so that terms to end the war can be established.

Austria is victorious!

The Military Situation

The military situation certainly has Prussia on the back foot, and although the Prussian army still has plenty of fight left in it, the Austrians currently have the advantage. To summarise the situation:

- The Prussian 1st Army has been marching towards Glatz with the aim of a junction with the 2nd Army. However, during the 5th July, the 1st Army suffered a defeat at Nachod, where it was opposed by three Austrian Corps, which have now blocked the defile at Nachod and are preventing the 1st Army moving directly towards Glatz. The 1st Army however is currently spread across Bohemia between Turnau and Nachod, with the 2nd Corps halted at Turnau and several days march from the rest of the army.
- The Prussian 2nd Army, having lost its commander in chief and two of its Corps, has managed to withdraw into the Neisse valley and re-establish communications with Glatz. Von Moltke himself has moved to the fortress at Neisse and has reinforced the 2nd Army with a Corps of Landwehr, however it will take several days before the 2nd Army can resume offensive operations.
- The Elbe Army, having forced the enemy away from Chlumec and back towards Koniggratz, is halted some miles west of the fortress, pending an advance to the south of Koniggratz. It is currently opposed by three enemy corps (two Austrian and one Saxon) in the immediate vicinity of Koniggratz.
- The Austrian North Army however is currently concentrated around Koniggratz and Josephstadt and has the advantage of a central position with interior lines. Having fought a successful delaying action from the line of the River Iser back to Chlumec and Gitschin the Austrians and their Saxon allies have now taken up a central position around Koniggratz. The Austrians have four Corps and three

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Cavalry Divisions in this area under the direct command of Archduke Albrecht.

- To the northeast of Koniggratz, between Nachod and Reineez, FzM Benedek with a further three Corps and two cavalry Divisions, has successfully engaged and defeated the Prussian 2nd army. He has now turned against the Prussian 1st Army and halted its advance at Nachod.

The Austrian army is therefore now in a position to engage any of the Prussian Armies from its central position, while the three Prussian armies are dispersed and unable to co-ordinate their operations.

Moltke's "nightmare scenario" indeed...

A note on the Political Issues

Although the players were primarily concerned with the military campaign the two Commander's in Chief were both aware that outside event might interfere with their plans. To simulate this I borrowed a mechanism from the Strategy & Tactics magazine (issue 167) which includes a game based on the war of 1866. This game mechanism uses what is termed the "National Will" of the respective sides. The National Will is a numerical value which covers the political will to wage war, and public support for the war and it rises and falls according to military success/failure and other external events. Should one of the country's National Will value fall to 1 or less, then that country has deemed to have suffered a collapse of morale and is forced to seek terms.

The Austrian defeat of the Prussian 2nd Army was the deciding factor, as can be seen by the table shown below. Although the Prussians started with the higher national will value, the loss of the Prussian 1st and 6th Corps, coupled with the battles of Chlumec and Nachod, tipped the balance irrevocably in Austria's favour.

Event & date	The National Will Table					
	Austria	Total		Prussia	Total	
Start of campaign 22 nd June 1866		14	Average		17	High
Battle of Jung Bunzlau 25 th June	1	15	High	-1	16	High
Battle of Trautenau 27 th June	3	18	High	-3	13	Average
Battle of Bakow 27 th June	-1	17	High	1	14	Average
Battle of Habelschwert 28 th June	-3	14	Average	3	17	High
Action at Sobotka 28 th June	1	15	High	-1	16	High
Battle of Friedland and Surrender of Prussian 1 st Corps 30 th June	6	20	High	-6	10	Average
Battle of Chlumec 30 th June	3	20	High	-3	7	Average
Battle of Reineez and surrender of Prussian 6 th Corps 2 nd July	6	20	High	-6	1	Low
Battle of Wapno 4 th July	-1	19	High	1	2	Low
Battle of Roudnitz 4 th July	1	20	High	-1	1	Low
Battle of Nachod 5 th July	3	23	High	-3	-2	Low

Postscript - From a conversation with Oberst-Leutnant von Habsburg of the General Staff



Major Theodor Johan von Habsburg
Royal & Imperial Army general Staff
HQ North Army 1866

Well of course we were lucky my dear chap! Things could very well have turned out quite differently, but then even the great Napoleon supposedly said that he preferred a lucky general to a good one.

For example, if we had left old Clam-Gallas in charge on the Iser we should probably have been bundled back to Koniggratz in short order. Clam is a nice chap of course, and great fun at the dinner table, but a bit long in the tooth for this game. We were fortunate indeed that Crown Prince Albert turned out to be such a good chap to have around in a tight spot. Of course, tipping up mob handed with the entire Saxon army was a great help as well. He kept his forces well in hand and held off the Prussians in fine style.

Benedek - well, we were lucky to have dragged him away from Italy of course. It was just as well he was an old friend of Archduke Albrecht and couldn't really say "no" when invited to join us. Mind you, when the Emperor says "Jump" Benedek is just the sort to leap to attention and merely ask "How high your Majesty?".

Also, don't forget the FeldzugMeister's leadership at Solferino - he certainly knocked the enemy back on their collective arse on that day. So Albrecht's idea to put him at the head of several corps and point him in the direction of the enemy and let him go was a good idea. However, it has to be said that his handling of the corps at his disposal did very nearly come unstuck when his trains ran afoul of each other and got stuck on the roads from Trautenau and down and round through Friedland. I believe that after Friedland his troops were tired and short of supplies and were only kept on the march because of his reputation and the prospect of another victory. After Reineez however, especially after the capture of the Prussian Crown Prince, I am reliably informed that he could have asked his troops to do anything.

Incidentally, I met Crown Prince Frederich when he was invited, along with his chief of staff, to dine with the Archduke and his staff at Koniggratz shortly before he returned to Prussia. A most convivial chap but he seemed to hold rather a poor opinion of certain senior members of the Prussian General Staff. At the mere mention of some chap called Moltke he turned pale and gave such a start as to break the stem of the wine glass in his hand.

And of course there is Archduke Ernst. He came close to losing the battle at Nachod before the 4th and 10th Corps arrived. I gather that there was some misunderstanding about his orders but instead of waiting for the right moment Ernst attacked immediately, without even bothering to deploy his artillery. It goes without saying that his gallant lads took a bit of a pasting before help arrived. Benedek was furious but you know how the old boy is with the nobility. Anyway, I believe that Ernst is to be promoted upstairs and made Inspector of Field Catering or some such. He won't be let loose commanding troops in the field again.

You know at the start of the war we did get off to a bit of a shaky start. There was an awful kerfuffle with the Army staff running to and fro between Hohenstadt and Koniggratz, and some huge traffic jams along the roads up from Olmutz. We even lost Graf Thun-Hohenstädt¹²⁰ and some of his staff after the battle at Habelschwert. Yes, really lost him - nobody knew where he had disappeared to. Apparently he took a train from Hohenstadt and was picked up by the Prussians when the train stopped at a station. It was quite a mystery until the Prussians gave him back after the war.

It has to be said however that we were also lucky in battle. I probably shouldn't say this but we came damn close to losing the Army's Reserve Artillery at Wapno and Roudnitz. In the first instance the Prussians gave us time to set out our defences and bring up the 8th Corps in support - if that Prussian General, Von Schmidt was it, had moved a bit faster he might well have caught our guns on the road. A couple of days later the

¹²⁰ Commanding the Austrian 2nd Corps, and captured by Prussian Cavalry when his train was stopped en route to Koniggratz

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enemy came close to catching them again. It was only the appearance of the Prussian cavalry patrols on our flank that tipped us off that something was up.

And don't forget the enemy. By all accounts the Prussian infantry manoeuvred better than our boys and were absolutely bloody lethal at close range with that needlegun of theirs. Fortunately for us their artillery wasn't up to much and had a habit of retiring when running short on ammunition. However, some of my chums have told me that the Prussian soldier fought like the very devil, which makes our victory even more remarkable.

How did I do? Well actually I had a good war all things considered and came out of it very well. Being on the Headquarters staff I was certainly in the thick of things, but able to get by quite comfortably most of the time, with regular meals and a comfortable bed at the end of the day. Any idiot can be uncomfortable in the field eh?

Anyway, I have received a promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel, I've been awarded another medal and have accepted a comfortable job at the War Department in Vienna, where I shall have the time and resources to enjoy the fruits of our victory, or until such time as His Majesty requires his army to take the field again.

Another? Very kind of you my dear chap...I think this calls for a glass of Tokay...Prost!

Thoughts on the campaign and some conclusions

Firstly, I set up the campaign to generate tabletop battles in order to use the large 15mm Austrian and Prussian armies in our collection. In this respect the campaign succeeded admirably, generating no less than 14 tabletop battles. The tabletop battles were surprisingly intense games, with the players having to plan and think like their historical counterparts, and frequently being forced to react to unexpected events or circumstances.

Secondly, there were to be no hard and fast rules for the campaign. Once I had the player's orders in for a turn I worked out how far their troops would march that day, based on average rates of march, and then free-played the rest of the events based on what was most likely to happen, my own knowledge of the period (backed up by some excellent reference material) and my own experience of how real armies work and what can go wrong. Where necessary dice were used to decide whether or not a particular course of action was followed.

Finally, I wanted to take the role playing aspect of the game a bit further with the use of contemporary (or as near as possible) maps and staff work. This required the players to plot their moves using a map and pair of compasses, while writing their orders in a contemporary manner, which included the use of the correct forms of address to the various senior commanders, minor royals and members of the nobility which filled the senior positions in the respective armies.

It has to be said that the players threw themselves into this aspect of the game with great enthusiasm and this contributed greatly to the historical flavour of the game. Some of their orders set me to thinking and sent me off to the reference material to find historical examples or similar circumstances but in many cases I learned something about the history which I was able to apply to the game.

The players also produced some excellent sets of orders, which made my life a lot easier when plotting the movements and working out what was happening, even if the same could not be said of some of the reports passed on to their senior commanders.

I did however find it interesting that the result of the campaign was that which had been predicted by most of the military professionals, and not a few amateur pundits, at the start of the war. It has also been interesting to consider the course of European history might have been changed if Austria had actually won and what lessons the armies concerned might have learned.

Prussia does not unite Germany

Most importantly Austria would have remained the pre-eminent military power in Europe and her position as leader of German Bund strengthened. Bismark's plan for Prussia to become the strongest of the German states would have been postponed if not actually considered a failure.

The Needle-gun versus *Stosstaktik*

It is most likely that the Austrian army would have looked at the lessons to be learned from the war and, just as in 1859, would have drawn all the wrong conclusions. They would probably have considered their own tactical system, including the clumsy *Stosstaktik*, to be superior to that of the Prussians:

- In fact, during the tabletop battles we found repeatedly that the Prussian Divisional and Corps organisation was superior to that of the Austrian system, allowing the Prussian commanders better command and control of their formations when compared to their Austrian counterparts. The Prussians were usually able to react faster, and to manoeuvre more efficiently than the Austrians.
- The Austrian *Stosstaktik* assaults *could* be successful, providing that the attacks were supported by artillery fire or cavalry, and if the Prussians were already disordered. Attacks against steady, fresh Prussian infantry were usually repulsed with heavy casualties from the Prussian needle-gun fire.
- Austrian losses in the tabletop battles were usually higher than those of the Prussians, and usually due to the Prussian use of the Needle-gun. On a number of occasions Austrian regiments assaulted in a Regimental *Masse* and this invariably resulted in heavy casualties. The Prussian casualties however were generally the result of a combination of well directed Austrian artillery fire and

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defensive fire from the Austrian infantry.

For details of losses during the campaign see the table below.

Date and Event	Austrian			Saxon			Prussian		
	Casualties	Guns Lost	POWs	Casualties	Guns Lost	POWs	Casualties	Guns Lost	POWs
Action at Liebenau - 25 th June	600	0	0	0	0	0	400	0	200
Battle of Jung Bunzlau - 25 th June	600	0	0	0	0	0	800	0	0
Battle of Trautenau - 27 th June	5,760	8	720	0	0	0	4,680	40	5,040
Battle of Bakow - 27 th June	720	0	0	720	4	0	1,260	8	0
Action at Glatz - 28 th June	540	16	0	0	0	0	360	0	0
Battle of Habelschwert - 28 th June	4,560	24	13,320	0	0	0	3,840	0	0
Battle of Turnau - 29 th June	1,800	8	2,880	0	0	0	1,260	0	180
Battle of Friedland - 29 th June	5,280	0	0	0	0	0	2,700	64	15,840
Action at Sobotka - 29 th June	0	0	0	600	0	0	720	0	0
Battle of Chlumec - 30 th June	900	20	0	0	0	0	4,020	20	720
Battle of Reineez - 2 nd July	2,520	0	0	0	0	0	2,700	56	17,640
Battle of Wapno - 4 th July	1,980	40	0	0	0	0	1,800	0	0
Battle of Roudnitz - 4 th July	1,080	0	0	0	0	0	540	0	0
Battle of Nachod - 5 th July	5,100	28					5,640	32	
Totals	26,340	116	16,920	1,320	4	0	25,080	188	39,620

Combined Losses	Losses	Guns
Austrian & Saxon	44,580	120
Prussian	64,700	188

Total Losses 109,280 308

So how did the Austrians win? Essentially by being stronger at the point of contact on the battlefield. In the four major battles, Trautenau, Friedland, Reineez and Nachod, the Austrians had the advantage of numbers, usually in the region of three to one. It did not matter how well the Prussian infantry fought, there were always more Austrians to take their place. Weight of numbers decided these battles. This is not to say however that the Austrians were lucky to have the numbers - it was intentional and the Austrian players had planned to be stronger at the crucial points and, to be honest, had no intention whatsoever of taking the Prussians on in a fair fight if it could be avoided.

The Prussians, on the other hand, always seemed to be a bit overconfident in the needle gun and their superior command and control. It failed when they encountered greater numbers.

The Austrians also made use of prepared positions to force the Prussians to attack on unfavourable ground, the battle of Chlumec being a good example, while at Gitschin the sight of the enemy occupying what appeared to be an excellent defensive position made the Prussian 1st Army pause to consider just how to deal with the situation.

Prussian Artillery Doctrine

The Prussian breech-loading artillery failed to have much impact on battlefield during the campaign, however this was due to the correct use of the prevalent Prussian artillery doctrine, in particular the relegation of the artillery to the rear of marching columns, the tendency to keep Reserve Artillery in reserve and the failure to

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mass the artillery early enough in the battles. These problems were identified by the Prussian Army after the real war and steps taken to ensure that the artillery's performance had improved by 1870.

During our campaign however the Austrian artillery performed well, and as a consequence the Austrians would most probably have kept their efficient rifled muzzle loading guns for the time being.

The Cavalry - Reconnaissance and the lack thereof...

The campaign was designed to try and allow the cavalry to be used historically. Modern wargamers would be more likely to use their cavalry in an unhistorical manner in order to avoid the mistakes made in the real campaign.

Historically the cavalry on both sides did not live up to expectations, although it has to be said that the Austrian cavalry did perform better in the reconnaissance role. This was reflected in the campaign where the Austrian light cavalry divisions were able to provide reasonable cavalry screens, while the Reserve Divisions were limited in a great degree to using the attached Uhlan regiments for patrolling and reconnaissance.

The Prussian cavalry were rather more limited and were generally tied to following behind the infantry or scouting just in front of the line of march. Most of the reports generated by Prussian cavalry patrols were from the divisional cavalry regiments, scouting ahead of the Divisional advance guards.

Historically the Prussians made better use of staff officers to carry out reconnaissance missions. The Prussian players were informed that they could do this, but only one of the Prussian players chose to use this option during the course of the campaign.

As a result, once the armies came into contact with each other the Austrians generally had a better idea of where the enemy were.

Once the cavalry deployed onto the battlefield however they quickly reverted to type. The cavalry of both sides were regularly committed to battlefield charges, sometimes successfully, more often not. Some of the orders given to the cavalry were a foretaste of those given to the French cavalry in 1870 - "We must sacrifice a Regiment to save the infantry!"

Von Moltke, the Prussian General Staff and the "Kesselschlact" strategy versus the Napoleonic Strategy of the Central Position

By 1866 Von Moltke had developed his theory of the "Kesselschlact" or "cauldron battle", whereby an army would commence a campaign on a broad front in order speed up its mobilisation and deployment and to subsequently locate and envelop an enemy, whereupon the enemy army would be encircled and forced to fight regardless. This was the strategy successfully used by the Prussians in 1866 and it led directly to the increased influence of the Prussian General Staff and the German plans for the opening campaign of the Great War in 1914.

The antithesis of the "Kesselschlact" was the Napoleonic Strategy of the Central Position, whereby the army would concentrate to fight and would take up a central position between the desperate parts of the enemy army, striking at them in succession to defeat them in detail.

In our wargame campaign the Austrians successfully made use of the Napoleonic strategy to hold off the Prussian 1st and Elbe Armies while striking at the Prussian 2nd Army. Once the 2nd Army had been defeated then the Austrians turned on the Prussian 1st Army.

Such a success would no doubt have been seen by the military experts and strategists as a vindication of the Napoleonic Strategy, and the "Kesselschlact" concept might well have been ignored or forgotten.

Von Moltke himself would most probably have been seen as the architect of the Prussian defeat and might well have been forced to retire. Although the Prussian General Staff may well have been reduced in influence as a result of Von Moltke's fall from favour, it is still likely that the professional Prussian Staff would have carried out its usual thorough and effective analysis of the campaign and would probably have identified

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areas where improvements were necessary (eg artillery doctrine, cavalry doctrine).

Appendix 1

Excerpt from Interview with Prince Fredrick Charles by Rev. Comte Vendre-Sur



The Prince, despite his many years' service to the Prussian Crown, at one of its most turbulent times, has never written his memoirs. The Rev Vendre-Sur was granted an exclusive interview some years later with the reclusive Prince, which has not been published, until now!

Your Highness, the Campaign of '66, you rarely speak of it. Why?

'The Campaign of 1866, was, yes, a failure. It hurt, and that is why I have never published pointless memoirs, which only serve to glorify the winners. What would they say, I won some battles, I lost some battles, most of all, I wasted lives.

Instead, I have concentrated on founding and funding charities to look after widows, orphans and injured and destitute from my commands. I have sold several of my larger properties, most of the family art works, and have retired here, to this modestly comfortable villa near the border with Luxembourg, where I can concentrate on collecting my prize orchid collection.' (See June 1873 illustrated tour in 'Bonjour' Magazine, hardly modest – Ed)

But, your highness, why do you feel the Campaign of 1866 failed?

'It failed, from my viewpoint, for some very simple reasons.

Firstly, The Austrians chose their ground carefully. They fought well, mostly river crossings or heavily defended and emplaced positions; our forces were smashing themselves against them, in what was frequently bloody and, maybe even, suicidal, assaults. Our losses were immense.

They tenaciously held their ground, and forced us to fight for every inch of our advance. For thirteen days of my advance, then redeployment, they made us split our forces, so instead of both armies concentrating quickly on a single objective of Koeniggratz, each force was on their own. I was delayed crossing the Iser, at the heights of Gitschen, and at Neu Paka. They were also able to muster equal or superior forces to face us on many occasions, where our reconnaissance often failed and we simply blundered into their traps.

Secondly, our artillery was always out gunned, it was often in the wrong place in the column of march, and needed to be used more aggressively. All forces, but especially the artillery and the Reserve Artillery suffered horribly from the heat and the night marches we had to engage in.

Thirdly, I wish we could have found a faster, uncontested route to Glanz from Turnau, but my forces marched tens of miles a day, in blistering heat, and were still able to put up an amazing fight. This was after having been set one objective, and then, despite our best efforts to reach it, we were reassigned to march across country to try and relieve Glatz. Even with our best efforts, at that last battle at Nachod, we could not break through.

Lastly, shortly before the campaign, the Guards Corps was removed from my command for no apparent reason. To this day I know not why. An extra Corps on my front would have enabled a breakthrough much easier.'

What of the battles?

'They were bloody. The Austrians fought well. They deserved to beat us...'

(The interview then changes subject to the Prince's charitable works, and the efforts he has made to collect orchids)

Appendix 2

Excerpts from Crown Prince Albert's memoir of the 1866 campaign



Following the Prussian invasion of Saxony a Corps consisting of two infantry Divisions¹²¹ and a cavalry division made their way towards Koniggratz where a junction was made and an Austrian Corps consisting of two infantry and a cavalry division came under my command. We proceeded to the line of the River Iser where we took positions on the South bank, the Saxon Cavalry Corps were sent to the left flank to the Elbe valley and Prague, but were subsequently recalled with the advent of Prussian troops in some considerable strength on the opposite bank of the Iser

Orders had been given to destroy all the bridges but sadly this was not completed, and the Prussians established a foothold to the South of Jung Bunzlau. A counter attack was launched, which caused casualties to both sides but did not succeed in driving the Prussians back.

The Austrian Corps was simultaneously facing large numbers of Prussians and we were obliged to conduct a fighting retreat.

At Wostowitz, just outside of Sobotka we found a strong defensive position and an ideal site to ambush the leading Prussian units as they crossed a river, however the ambush was sprung a little too early, and although we were successful in halting the Prussian advance, and indeed making them very wary about following us up they were able to bring overwhelming strength in terms of artillery and infantry obliging us to retire on Jicin, where we again held positions based on a river line.

(On the 3rd July) Our cavalry showed the Prussians apparently in retreat in front of both the Saxon Corps to the South of Jicin and the Austrian Corps to their right flank.

The Austrian Corps had performed well, retiring from overwhelming Prussian numbers but fighting successful rearguard actions around Rowensko, causing considerable problems for the Prussians.

I gave orders to follow up the Prussian retreat, but shortly afterwards received intelligence that the Prussians were manoeuvring in such a way that we could be cut off. We retired, on advice, initially to the river line at Wostrumer, and then on to the area to the North of Koniggratz. We received information there that hostilities had ceased.

Albert
Crown Prince of Saxony

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The Austrian 1st Corps in fact comprised 5 Infantry Brigades. The Austrians did not use a Divisional organisation at this time.

Appendix 3

Report from Feldzugmeister Benedek to Headquarters North Army



Left Wing of the Army of the North
Sakisch near Nachod
July 7, 930 am

Your Excellency,

I have just returned from Nachod where I have been observing the Prussians forming up and moving North, a most wonderful sight. As always they move under the watchful eyes of Prinz Schleswig-Holstein's cuirassiers of the first Reserve Cavalry Division. Our trains have reached us and the men of the 3,4,10 Corps, 1st and 2nd Reserve Cavalry are enjoying a well needed rest but remain fully vigilant to respond to any Prussian actions not in accordance to the announced armistice.

This will provide me an opportunity to send to you my initial observations of our conduct of the war over the last 3 weeks. Unfortunately Colonel von Puffi und Mutter, that ass of an aide of mine, loss my daily log in the Steine River when we were marching hard for Reineez, so my account may be short on details but I feel my overall account is accurate.

Preparations. I believe the initial intent to mass and take the war to the Prussians was the correct approach. We could gain nothing by sitting and allowing them unhindered crossing of the mountains. We had to hit them before they could concentrate south of the mountains. By having the Saxons and our forces delay the enemy as far west of Koniggratz as possible to give me an opportunity to strike north was the right concept of having a shield and sword. The attempt by the Prussians to assemble on the battlefield was flawed from the beginning and is an example of what so-called Soldiers who read too much and fight too little can do.

That being said the Prussians did move much faster than we anticipated and in doing so pre-empted the efforts in the west. But I must allow the Archduke and yourself to describe those heroic and valiant actions. I will limit myself to those of the Left Wing.

I do believe we dissipated our forces too much in the east. Instead of having (the) 2nd Corps and the 2nd Light Cavalry Division operate separately from me, we should have combined from the beginning to achieve a decisive force. I am afraid they were wasted in a secondary effort of no great import.

Movement North. The movement north to Trautenau by the Left Wing was executed well and rapidly. This enabled us to catch the 1st Prussian Corps in an isolated position and force them from the field at Trautenau, followed shortly by their surrender at Friedland. This battle set the tone for the rest of our operations - hard marching followed by violent attacks wherever we could find the enemy. The Grand Army of Napoleon could do no better!

Movement South. We were able to follow the trail of the enemy enabled by the capture of his messengers. While I fully expected to face the entire Prussian Second Army at Reineez, the intercepted messages established that yet another isolate Prussian corps and an army headquarters was there. Again hard marching and violent attacks enabled us to overwhelm them and capture the Prussian Crown Prince. In this battle the actions of the 6th Corps in closing off the Prussian routes to the south was most beneficial in securing our victory.

Movement West. After the battle at Reineez the Left Wing was hindered by more prisoners and a lack of food and fodder. My men had marched scores of kilometres, fought three major

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actions in four days and were in need of rest. That limited our ability to further exploit our victory. However, upon receiving your orders to move west we assembled the troops and moved off rapidly. As we neared Nachod we unexpectedly confronted the Prussians, who we anticipated meeting much further north and not moving directly upon us. We responded quickly but the 3rd Corps was deployed badly and this created some tense moments for us, but the rapid movement by the 4th and 10th Corps enabled us to hold.

Specific Observations

Infantry: Overall our infantry moved and fought exceptionally well and outperformed and out fought our enemy. The much lauded “needle gun” was not a factor and I see no need to change our tactics at this time. Victory is proof enough for that!

Cavalry: Our cavalry was good at finding the enemy but had no opportunity to be decisive. But outside of that I found their usefulness somewhat limited. I considered at one time a strategic raid to destroy the bridge at Wartha to cut the Prussian lines of communication to be informed that our cavalry were not equipped to do so. Apparently they do not study their art! Have they not seen the cavalry action in the American Burgerkrieg¹²²? We must study this further, after all the American war was more than a bunch of armed rabbles chasing each other across a continent. Maybe not much more than that, but still worthy of study.

Trains: Operated well enough till they became overstretched after Friedland. The narrow roads and congested routes made problems inevitable, but luckily the shortness of the campaign prevent any serious problems with food, fodder or the appearance of the usual soldier diseases.

Personnel. I will send up at a latter post a detailed list of officers and soldiers for awards. But I would like to strongly recommend Feldmarschal-Leutnant Erzherzog Festetics, Feldmarschal-Leutnant von Gablenz, and Feldmarshal-Leutnant Prinz Schleswig-Holstein for the Commander's Cross of the Military Order of Maria Theresa. Feldmarschal-leutenant Baron Ramming for the Knight's Cross of the Military Order of Maria Theresa.

Feldmarshal-Leutenant Erzherzog Ernst should be thanked for his service and placed 'ausser Dienst'. His actions at Nachod threatened the entire command and he displayed an inability to effectively command his troops.

I will follow this initial report up with a more detailed summary and study when time permits. I expect we shall fully review the campaign latter in Vienna.

I remain in Sakish until the Prussians depart and will await further orders.

Respectfully,

FzM Benedek

¹²² Benedek is of course referring to the recent civil war in the United States of America. The Austrian army did indeed send military attaches to observe the war, one of whom, Leutnant Ross - an officer of Hussars, was present at Gettysburg with General Lee's army.

Appendix 4

Commentary on campaign by the Commander of the Prussian Second Army



Thoughts on Strategy

The orders given to 2nd Army by Prussian High Command were to occupy as many of the enemy forces as possible, whilst threatening Konnigraz and Austrian forces to the south. These were the orders:

“Second Army (HRH Crown Prince Frederick Wilhelm). During Phase I the 2nd Prussian Army major mission is to engage and pin the Austrian North Army in place, thus preventing it from aiding or supporting the other Austrian forces operating in Bohemia. To accomplish this mission, 2nd Army will endeavour to advance along two axes2nd Army Commander will rely upon his own first-hand knowledge of the local enemy situation and use his own discretion to gauge the speed of this advance. If necessary, he is authorized to take up defensive positions, along either axis of advance, in order to facilitate and successfully complete this portion of the 2nd Army's overall participation in the Phase I operation”

HRH believes that these instructions were carried out both in intention and in reality to the letter. The key point of the initial strategy was to determine with the four Corps of the Army whether to advance with equal strength down to of the mountain roads or whether to mass three Corps on a single axis. The two axes of advance were from Trautenau and Glatz. In the event due to the initial deployment areas of the Corps and the fact that one Corps was weaker than the others (6th Corps), it was decided that three Corps would deploy to Glatz (6th Corps, 5th Corps and the Guard Corps and then attack Austrian forces to the south towards Langdeck and Wilhelmsthal. The Corps (1st Corps) assigned to Trautenau was to remain on the defensive. It was intended that the eastern attack from Glatz would be the main thrust towards the enemy. This proved to be the crucial decision for 2nd Army as once committed the terrain would make it hard to change the axis of advance. In retrospect

25th-26th June During these two days the 2nd Army established at Trautenau a defensive position with 1st Corps, whilst the rest of the army advanced south from Glatz towards the Austrian line of communications through Landeck and Wilhelmstahl. The only reports of the enemy were small cavalry patrols. At this point 2nd Army was quite confident in its dispositions, however no concrete information was received as to the location of friendly or enemy forces. Valiant attempts by engineer officers to climb the mountain ranges around them to observe the enemy met with disappointing success due to the mist in the top ridges

27th June This would prove to be the crucial day for 2nd Army. The Corps deployed around Trautenau was surprised and defeated by an Austrian force of three corps. This attack occurred during a misty morning and the Corps lost 10,000 casualties in terms of losses and prisoners. From this point 2nd Army never regained control of this corps and it was destroyed two days later at Freidland. The 1st Corps led by General Bonin failed absolutely in its attempts to hold a defensive position and this failure must be placed at this general's door. However since the unfortunate death of the General there is no need to extend the criticism of him. Worryingly the bulk of the army had to return northwards to meet an enemy thrust towards Glatz.

28th June The main thrust from Glatz was able on this day to inflict a defeat on the Austrian forces. At Habelschwert the Guard Corps and V Corps were able to manoeuvre from the south and north to outflank the Austrian forces. Despite heavy casualties from Austrian artillery fire the Guards Corps was able to take the town. This victory cost the Austrians 18,000 casualties. At this point 2nd Army had lost a Corps but had inflicted similar losses on the enemy and the morale of 2nd Army was relatively good. The Guard Corps performed admirably and the conduct of Von Steinmetz in riding to the sound of the guns secured the victory against the 2nd Austrian Corps. However Steinmetz was unable to secure the complete defeat of the Austrian force due to the lack of skilled use of the cavalry. 2nd Army received this dispatch on the 28th from army command and therefore continued its attack.

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“2nd Prussian Army will continue to pursue their current offensive operations in and around the town of Habelschwert. Feldmarshal von Moltke expects you to take all necessary steps to provide and position your forces to allow 2nd Army forces to maintain pressure on this enemy Corps and any other Austrian forces in the immediate area, for at least the next 36 hours”

Given clear instructions the advance continued with 2nd Army believing they had lost 1st Corps but destroyed and enemy one in return, therefore morale was high

29th -30th June 2nd Army now pursued the enemy after the victory of the 28th as a move to the north to try and rescue the remnants of the Corps at Trautenau were deemed to be impracticable given the lack of intelligence of the enemy location and strength, the difficulty of the terrain and the effect of morale on retreating. However the movements of the day forced a division upon the army as one Corps in the north was held up in a defile at Reineez by Austrian forces, whilst the Guard Corps and V Corps were able to advance unimpeded towards Langenbruck. This caused an unfortunate division of the army.

1st July- 5th July Reineez was taken on this day, however as a consequence the Austrians were able to surround this Corps with the 2nd Army commander at Reineez with a force of three Corps. The other corps of 2nd Army were unable to come to the support of the surrounded force. Although the enemy were held for some time the destruction of the Corps at Reineez meant the effective fighting end of 2nd Army with the capture of its commander. 2nd Army was now forced to begin a retreat on Glatz and was not able to play an effective part in the remainder of the campaign. HRH refused to leave his Corps and was captured at Reineez

Comments

The initial decision to split the army into a three Corps attack down one axis was in retrospect a mistake but one determined by the orders of Von Moltke as shown. Communication between 2nd Army and high command was poor. 2nd Army received no change of orders throughout the campaign and was given very limited information as regards the disposition of friendly troops as described above. The last correspondence sent by Moltke was on the 28th June at 7.00 a.m. and was received later in the day. This was the second correspondence received by HRH during the campaign. The record shows that HRH sent 13 dispatches to Royal HQ and this correspondence ended only upon the capture of HRH on 2nd July at Reineez. HRH believes that 2nd Army was placed in a position in which they faced superior forces and where there was little attempt to co-ordinate its attacks with 1st Army, therefore he wishes it to be placed on record that he takes no blame for the defeat of Prussian forces. The valour of 2nd Army can be clearly shown by the issue on record that of 40,000 Austrian casualties 31,000 were inflicted by 2nd Army and the three heaviest engagements of the war in terms of casualties on both sides were fought by 2nd Army. HRH believes that his troops won honour glory and gained death or imprisonment for the glory of Prussian arms. His own capture shows his support for his troops to the last where others may have failed in their duty.

Appendix 5

Extract from Feldmarshal Helmuth von Moltke - Memoirs of the 1866 Campaign Against Austria



Once the Kaiser had made the decision to go to war with Austria in mid-June 1866, my duties were quite clear. It only remained to determine how best to devise a plan that could quickly mobilize the Prussian Army and focus its weight on defeating the main Austrian forces in Bohemia and Moravia.

From the very beginning, it was recognized that the quickest means for the Austrians to force a decision would be to mount an operation in the direction of Berlin from the line Prag-Pardubitz, at the same time mounting a smaller operation via Trautenau towards Breslau in Silesia. This would make the most use of good roads north towards Berlin. Such an operation would force the main Prussian Army to defend against a possible thrust towards Berlin which would in turn uncover Breslau and leave Silesia vulnerable.

Notwithstanding these overarching strategic factors, the Kaiser and Bismarck expressed the need to plan for the contingency that Austrian's might reverse the plan and launch their main thrust towards Breslau, with a secondary attack towards Berlin itself.

It was ultimately this latter contingency that drove me to the decision to divide the Prussian Forces into three separate armies that could provide for either of these contingencies without sacrificing the Prussian Army's ability to take on offensive operations of its own. These armies were;

The Elbe Army (46,000) under General Karl Herwarth von Bittenfeld base at Dresden.

The First Army (93,000) under HRH Prince Frederick Karl (AKA the "Red Prince") base at Gorlitz.

The Second Army (115,000) under HRH Crown Prince Frederick Wilhelm base at Neisse.

Regarding the enemies' intention and plans, it was known at the time that the Austrian North Army had been mobilizing at the fortress town of Olmutz in Moravia. The bulk of the army was believed to be in the vicinity of Olmutz. However, it was also known that a detached force (called the Iser Army) had been formed on the line of the River Iser between Turnau and Prag (Prague). The size or precise location of these two forces was not known when combat operation actually began.

The final strategic plan that evolved from this information and the overall strategic situation was quite simple. It was my intention to advance quickly into Bohemia with the Elbe and 1st Armies in order to gain a 'Central Position' (located NE of Prag) which would place these forces between the two (2) known Austrian Armies (i.e. the Iser & North), thus allowing our forces to concentrate on each separately and defeat each Army in turn, which I believed would set the conditions for a successful advance on Vienna. The Prussian 2nd Army would facilitate these operation by advancing into Moravia in order to engage the Austrian North Army pinning it and thus preventing it from interfering or rendering assistance to the Army of the Iser.

The general Scheme of Manoeuvre for conducting this strategic operations was divided into three (3) separate Phases.

Phase I: The Initial Advance & Securing of the Central Position.

Phase II: Which will begin once the Austrian Iser Army has been defeated (and is in retreat towards Moravia) covered the pursuit operations conducted by the combined Elbe & 1st Army against the defeated Austrian Armies.

Phase III: Was defeat of the Austrian North Army and the combined Prussian Army advance upon Vienna.

As the senior Prussian Army Commander, I believed that the successful coordination of our three widely separated Armies in this campaign, depended upon and would be best achieved via the use of *Auftragstaktiks* (i.e. *directive control*). By which the Army Field Commanders (i.e. Elbe, 1st & 2nd Armies) would be given general orders that would provide them with the flexibility to enable them to exploit opportunities as they occurred within their respective areas of operation. This would also enable them to use

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their own initiative to exploit any immediate opportunity or situation presented. It was my intent that these orders only provide the level of detail necessary for each Army commander to understand his role and missions and roles of his adjacent Army commanders, leaving the details of how he will accomplish these tasks up to him (the commander on the ground). Commanding in this way, would enable the entire Prussian force to act quicker and more decisively than the enemy could, thus keeping him off balanced and speeding up his defeat.

The overall timing of this operation was 'event driven' (i.e. Phases 1, 2 & 3) and not tied to any particular time table. Thus, Army Commanders will be able to gage their own progress and the progress of the adjacent Prussian Armies by the completion of these events within the sequence of the entire strategic operation. Thus, allowing them to maintain synchronization by adapting to the immediate situation.

INITIAL PRUSSIAN OPERATIONS (from start of operations through 25 June 1866)

Initial Prussian operations during the first days of the campaign appeared to be going as planned. All three (3) Prussian Armies advanced into enemy territory without encountering any major Austrian resistance. However, from the 25th of June 1866 onward, I began to suspect that the Austrian Army of the Iser may have already begun retreating (i.e. east of Prag), before we could cut it off and concentrate the combined combat power of the Elbe and 1st Prussian Armies against it. Regardless of these suspicions, there was no immediate or apparent reason to deviate from the current plan.

PRUSSIAN OPERATIONS (26 June to 29 June 1866)

While Prussian operations in the west (with Elbe & 1st Army) were proceeding for the most part on a manageable course, those of 2nd Prussian Army were just beginning to show signs of going awry by the end of the day on 29 June 1866. From the reports coming into the Royal Prussian HQ, it was clear that the bulk of the 2nd Prussian Army was south of Glatz, close to Habelschwert and had engaged several major formation of the Austrian Army of the North over the last two days. Nothing that indicated any major problems. What was not readily appreciated by me at the time, was the significance of rumours circulating after 27 June that first appeared in the local Newspaper that reported the Austrian Government had announced a great victory at Trautenau on 27th June. It seemed unlikely, based upon the reports I had in hand, that there was any substance to these rumours. However, events occurring over the next few days would definitely prove otherwise.

PRUSSIAN OPERATIONS (30 June to 1 July 1866)

By the end of the day on 30 June it was becoming quite clear to the Royal Prussian HQ that there was some substance behind the initial rumours being reported. Several additional rumours start circulating via the local civil administration that the Austrian had crossed into Silesia, in force (approx. 100,000 Soldiers), in the vicinity of Freidland (approx 45 miles south west of Breslau) which was substantiated by the Glatz Fortress Commander report that same day. In addition, a very disturbing rumor arrived at the Royal HQ indicating that "a Prussian Corps had capitulated after being defeated near Friedland". The only information I had available from 2nd Prussian Army Commander at this time, stated that "There is a dangerous threat to Glatz, but the fortress will hold for some time. VI Corps is within a day's march of the fortress. However there are no major Austrian forces in front of Second Army." It was now quite obvious that 2nd Prussian Army's situation was becoming very dangerous, but not unmanageable. They were in fact still performing the mission to engage the bulk of the Austrian Army of the North until the bulk of the rest of the Prussian Army arrived on its western flank. However, it was now imperative that they focus on delaying the Austrians forces, without risking any further losses. The Elbe and 1st Army Commanders were both directed to hasten their marches eastward to assist 2nd Prussian Army at all cost. It wasn't long after issuing these orders that contact was lost with 2nd Army HQ, now making the situation critical.

PRUSSIAN OPERATIONS (2 July to end of campaign 1866)

From the point in time that we first lost contact with the 2nd Prussian Army until to the announcement of the present armistice, my only motive and actions as Prussian Army Commander was to rush all available Prussian forces to aide of the 2nd Army and Glatz fortress commanders. Apparently, these lasts acts of desperation were obviously too little, too late.

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EPILOGUE

Looking back in retrospect over this series of events, it seems to me that the 'lack of situational awareness' on my part and that of 2nd Army Commander during several critical phase of the campaign was probably the single root cause for our overall failure. More timely and accurate intelligence around Glatz during the period of 26-28 June 1866 would have probably enabled the Prussian Army react and forestall the disaster that befell us in that area of operation. However, now all of that is History.

Appendix 6

Memories of my time on the Elbe or Actions of the Prussian Army of the Elbe in the war of 1866

By General Von Herwarth



It has been said that General Herwarth's determination to preserve his command and his lack of urgency contributed heavily to the defeat of Prussia in 1866. However I believe that there was little The Army of the Elbe could have done to change the outcome of the war given it's peripheral role on the right flank of Prussia's advance. Von Moltke's first mistake was evident to me from our first orders. The initial advance would not put us in 'the central position' as was the intention since the central position was at Konnigratz. The second mistake of The high command was to assume that the Austrian's would sit and wait while we unveiled our plans. However My orders were clear and I was determined to carry them through to the best of my ability.

The Army of the Elbe advanced as ordered on 22nd June following the course of the Elbe river. The enemy were noticeable by their absence and my first contact with them was at the fortress of Theresienstadt which we reached on the 25th June. The fortress was beyond my resources to capture and the enemy showed no signs of retreat or capitulation. Given that the Elbe army had the longest distance to march given it's position on the extreme right flank I felt there was no time to invest this fortress and left one division to screen it. Concern that the enemy may sally out once we moved on led me to move my LOC further east and gave time for a day's rest on 27th.

I ordered my forces to Alt Bunzlau where I hoped I would be in a position to either turn the left flank of the enemy opposing 1st army or intercept any enemy approaching from Prague. However as I had almost no information on the location of the enemy. Most of my army rested here on 27th while the screen at Theresienstadt began to catch up. The enemy cavalry screen was encountered and rapidly withdrew East.

By the 28th June the situation had become very confusing with little information from Royal HQ on the location of the enemy and what was sent was confusing and did not tally with what information I had. Royal HQ seemed to think that the enemy were in the region of Prague to the West of my position whilst all my information pointed to the enemy being East of me! I knew 1st Army were engaging strong enemy forces to the north east of my position and determined to continue in the direction of Nimburg with the intention of outflanking the enemy.

On the 29th Elbe army continued following the course of the Elbe and I informed HRH Frederick Charles of my intention to pass through Nimburg specifically requesting that it be kept free of 1st Army troops. HRH decided to ignore my request leading to an immense snarl up in that town and delaying my advance on the enemy flank. I composed a message to the Crown Prince on the subject but my Chief of Staff advised that sending it may prejudice my career in the future.

On the 29th I also received very confusing information from Von Moltke. Royal HQ for some unknown reason felt that the enemy were in the region of Prague or retreating that way!! I was ordered to waste precious time in reconnaissance in that direction. The elements of my corps were now dispersed over a large area and my supply resources were stretched to breaking point in trying to keep all brigades supplied.

Despite my desire to March East as quickly as possible to outflank the enemy I believed to be just North of the Elbe I had to spend precious time regathering my army at Kolin as some elements were still at Alt Bunzlau checking for a non-existent enemy threat from Prague! It was 2nd July before Elbe Army was gathered at Kolin ready for further operations by which time the enemy had rebuffed 1st Army and escaped from my intended outflanking manoeuvre. My troops had still not encountered the enemy and the overwhelming feelings were of frustration. The next two days were to show what Elbe Army could have achieved given the opportunity and support!

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On the morning of 3rd July I still had no contact with the enemy but continued with my orders by following the Elbe East using it as a screen to protect my LOC. I informed Royal HQ of my intention and asked 1st Army for their support on my north flank and news of the enemy location and intent. I was aware that 2nd Army was in trouble around Glatz and that 1st Army had been ordered to shift North in an effort to reach Glatz potentially leaving my small army isolated and vulnerable.

I made many efforts to explain to Von Moltke that the quickest way to Glatz was via Konnigratz and that we were in an excellent position to outflank and sweep away the enemy facing us if 1st Army was committed to a march east.

By 3pm on the 3rd Elbe army had reached a position at Prelouc where we were to the flank and rear of the enemy forces defending the ridge at Chlumec. I knew that if 1st Army attacked frontally, pinning the enemy, we could descend on their flank and rear with a strong possibility of destroying their forces and driving the remains north thus opening the route to Konnigratz! I sent urgent messages to both Royal HQ and 1st Army urging them to commit troops to support my attack. All in vain. In fact neither command responded to my request of the previous 2 days or offered any useful information on the enemy positions or movements! The response from HRH Fredrick Carl was that his troops had suffered "*heavy casualties (in excess of 2000)*" 3 days previously. This may say something of his nervous disposition but I would hardly call 2000 heavy losses!!

The opportunity was too good to miss whether we were supported or not so I ordered my forces north across the Elbe to occupy the heights around Wapno ready for an attack at dawn on the 4th. My report to Royal HQ stated, "I will prosecute my attack tomorrow in the hope of support from 1st Army and to the glory of the Fatherland".

Unfortunately the enemy detected our approach that evening and was able to make new dispositions and reorganise his forces to oppose us as there was no pressure from any other Prussian force. The course of the battle of Wapno is a matter of record, the Prussian Army of the Elbe swept down on the enemy and threw them back in disorder. Despite their opportunity to reorganise their defence and withdraw much of their force East, the Austrians were thrown back in confusion with the loss of 50 artillery pieces and 10,000 men for the loss of 2000 brave Prussians. By midday the enemy were in full retreat and we followed in immediate pursuit until exhaustion and failing light brought an end to our efforts.

Over the course of the following days Elbe Army attempted to reach Konnigratz or outflank the enemy positions but the enemy were occupying pre-planned and constructed defences and were supplied with overwhelming numbers of artillery. I believe that in the days between 3rd July and the armistice Elbe Army confronted 2 enemy corps plus reserve artillery and cavalry formations. The behaviour of my troops was exemplary and brought nothing but glory to the reputation of the Prussian army. In the end our efforts were all for nought as matters on other parts of the campaign arena dashed the hopes of the Prussian people

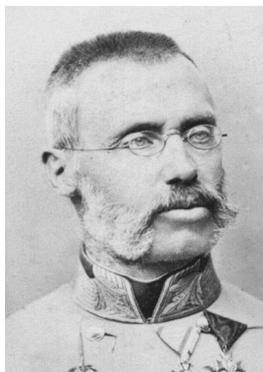
Of my own efforts in this war I leave the reader to be the Judge.

My outlook on the faults of this campaign are that the Prussian High Command danced to the tune of the Austrian flute when it should have stuck to the rhythm of our Prussian drums. Attack the enemy where you find them has always been my motto!

What might have been if Elbe Army had not been sent on a wild goose chase after shadows around Prague and had arrived on the enemy flank 2 days earlier in a position to support the attack of 1st Army?

Appendix 7

From a letter by Sir George Hamilton Seymour, Ambassador of the British Empire to the Austro-Hungarian Empire to his cousin, Major Alfred Seymour, March 1868.



My dearest cousin,

I have this evening been fortunate enough to take dinner with His Excellency Archduke Albrecht, victor of the late war with the Kingdom of Prussia. As I know your personal and professional interest in this matter I am composing this immediately upon my return home lest I forget some detail.

His Excellency was most forth coming in his praise for conduct of the troops and many of the officers. He first recalled the diligence of Von Benedek and General John in carrying out the tedious task of completing the staff work necessary to ensure his vision of the campaign was carried out by the corps commanders. He said to me "Early on in the planning I determined we must go on the offensive, seize the initiative and hold on to it like death!! Clearly we could not be strong everywhere, however we were most fortunate that the Crown Prince of Saxony is

a most excellent soldier and staunch ally. The Saxon army, with our First Corps and First Light Cavalry Division were at all times out-numbered, never less than three to two and more often times facing more than double their strength. They fought with skill and courage and it has to be said most clearly that the battles they fought allowed us to secure victory over the Prussian Second Army".

He intimated that there was one noticeable failure, but that officer since retired, was known to be out of his depth, and it was unfortunate that no replacement could be secured before the outbreak of hostilities. However for all that occurred, the situation with 2nd Corps caused the enemy to become over confident. While his staff were somewhat despondent when 2nd Corps received its setback advancing on Glatz, their resistance caused the Prussian Guard Corps many casualties and it played no further decisive role in the campaign. The vigour of the 2nd Light Cavalry ensured Albrecht was kept informed of the enemies movements and was able to counter them effectively.

Albrecht's timely commitment of Ramming's 6th Corps towards Glatz preserved von Benedek's freedom of movement and allowed him to first eliminate first the Prussian 1st Corps and subsequently capture the Crown Prince of Prussia. In addition the Army Reserve under Archduke William to counter the Prussian Elbe Army secured the Saxon southern flank at a crucial time.

The Archduke stated that this early victory left him in no doubt that his plan would succeed.

At this point the Archduke suggested that possibly 2nd Corps defeat was actually to the advantage of the Austrian Army, the Prussian 2nd Army taking itself further from the ground where the decisive action was to be fought, allowing the Austrians to choose their ground at their leisure.

On the Elbe front the Crown Prince of Saxony with 1st Corps and 21st Light Cavalry under command performed admirably. Their resistance when attacked, rapid manoeuvring and elan when attacking reduced the Prussian Army to inertia and indecision on more than one occasion. At every turn their probing advances were repulsed and any assault against fixed positions was smashed.

During this period of skilfully planned and well executed fighting withdrawal the Prussian Elbe Army, previously dragging its heels as it paraded past Thierienstadt began to approach the area of operations. Constantly under observation the hopeless Prussian cavalry failed utterly to screen the clumsy manoeuvring of their columns, which crashed in to the rear of the 1st Army, tangling their columns and rendering themselves impotent for days.

During this period the Prussians tried to outflank the Saxon and Austrian line to the south. The Archduke had however discerned the Prussians intent

"I knew what they would do, it was obvious. They had probed the Elbe front along most of its length, throwing

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their troops into ill conceived and utterly hopeless assaults for day after day. They had probed to the north of our lines, but to march around this flank would have taken them days to achieve. It had to be to the south. The strength of force they could send would not be sufficient, I was sure to overwhelm the Army Reserve which I had dispatched. Indeed Archduke William had selected a most excellent place to accept battle. Once again the Prussians impetuous assault was checked and turned to cowardly rout!"

The Archduke at this point turned to discussing the situation regarding supplying the army and dealing with the ever increasing numbers of Prussian prisoners. He felt that the careful provisioning of the magazines in the principal fortresses was of great benefit "Our troops could eat well at all times, while the Prussians must starve!"

With the ever cautious Elbe Army inching its way forwards and First Army checked the Archduke noted that the time had come for him to deal the decisive blow to the Prussian Second Army. Von Benedek was ordered to assemble and prepare for a grand sweeping manoeuvre around the northern flank of the Prussians. Pressing eastwards from Glatz, the Prussians had once more split their forces, and once again this fatal error was their downfall. Their advance checked once again by the "most excellent" von Ramming, the Corps under von Benedek fell upon them like avenging angels.

"von Benedek, an excellent commander of men, followed my orders to the letter and as a result by the days end the Crown Prince of Prussia and his staff were guests within the walls of the Josephstadt fortress. Was not able to meet with our guests at this time as it seemed that the Prussian First Army had started to once again become active"

The Archduke kindly gave me his thoughts on the progress of the war up to that point

"My plan was working, our Generals and Marshals were on the whole performing with professionalism and expertise The enemy, while fighting gallantly were poorly directed and the news from Berlin made us feel that we were only a hairs breadth from the final victory. However we must not be lax I told my officers, or there will be mistakes. Now at this time there were some Prussian troops milling about the gates of Konnigratz, where we let them be for the while, they could do nothing there and at least we could keep an eye on them while our Corps rested."

"News from the Crown Prince of Saxony was encouraging, he reported that the enemy were withdrawing northwards while simultaneously the Elbe Army was advancing in the south. At that time I believed the Prussians were finally attempting an envelopment from the north. This would give us a few days and I determined we should pause in our operations, gather ourselves for the final battle. I ordered the Army Reserve and 6th Corps to assemble at Konnigratz and requested the Crown Prince of Saxon to come to that place also. If there was no one to out-flank the Prussians marching would gain them nothing and only tire their troops further"

The Archduke and I retired to his study for brandy and cigars and he produced a map and proceeded with his instruction. I must say he was enjoying himself immensely and I believe he never tires of recounting his brilliant victory

"I ordered von Benedek was ordered to march north west where his Corps should fall upon the flank and rear of the Prussians as they turned south around the flank of where they believed the Saxons should be. At this time the Elbe army was static, though the Prussians near Konnigratz had withdrawn south and east. We on the other hand were manoeuvring with three Corps and attendant Cavalry divisions while assembling five Corps, four Cavalry Divisions and our Artillery Reserve ready for a crushing offensive. Our central position meant we could move against any enemy concentration with ease and rapidity, while they would be in no position to respond. Where we would march would be determined in the next 24 hours, but my preference would be to smash the Elbe Army with once decisive blow."

"von Benedek now reported encountering the enemy further east than we supposed they would be. Unperturbed he declared he would beat these first before continuing with his task, and he of course did so! Little did we know that this was First Army turning tail and running! Those remnant troops of Second Army once milling about the gates of Konnigratz had it is now known were also beginning a humiliating retreat to Glatz. The Prussian commander, what was his name again?Moltke, that was it, well he imagined he

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could assemble at Glatz and continue from there. A foolish notion really, had he made it Benedek could have easily isolated them while the Elbe Army would be defeated, surrounded and captured.”

“And so here we are my friend, Austria once again its rightful place leading the family of European nations to peace and prosperity, Prussia beaten, France cowed and Russia impotent. We have regained territories in the east and Italy, while the free trade agreement between our great nations is now strengthening England and Austria both.”

So, dear cousin went my evening with Archduke Albrecht, the victorious. There is of course much more to share with you and I look forwards to doing so upon my return.

Yours sincerely

George

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Appendix 8

Senior Officer Casualties

Date	Austrian & Saxon	Prussian
25 th June	Action at Liebenau	Action at Liebenau Lt Col von Treskow (1 st Uhlans) - Killed
27 th June	Battle of Trautenau Oberst Poeckh (Brigade Commander) - Wounded	Action at Bakow Gen von der Glotz (3rd Cavalry Brigade) - Killed Oberst von Schaevenbach (9 th Uhlans) - Killed
28 th June	Battle of Habelschwert Oberst Freiherr von Marburg (12 th Hussars) - wounded	Battle of Habelschwert Oberst von Kessel (1 st Foot Guards) - Killed
29 th June	Battle of Turnau Oberst Appel (Brigade Commander) - Mortally wounded	Battle of Turnau Gen von Mecklenburg Schwerin (2 nd Lt Cav Bde) – Killed Oberst von Berger (8 th Grenadier Regt) - Wounded Lt Col von Redern (2 nd Guard Dragoons) - Killed
29 th June	Battle of Friedland	Battle of Friedland General von Bonin (Commander 1 st Corps - Wounded)
30 th June	Battle of Chlumec Graf Condenhove (3 rd Reserve Cavalry Division - Killed)	Battle of Chlumec
2nd July	Battle of Reineez	Battle of Reineez Crown Prince Frederick Wilhelm of Prussia - captured along with his staff Gen Von Mutius (Commander - 6th Corps) - captured
4th July	Battle of Wapno GM Prinz Windischratz (3rd Reserve Cavalry Division - Mortally Wounded)	Battle of Wapno
4th July	Battle of Roudnitz Oberst Graf ErbachFurstenau - 2nd Kurassier Regt (Acting CO of Brigade of 3rd Reserve Cavalry Division - Killed)	
5th July	Battle of Nachod	Battle of Nachod Maj Gen Von Pfuel (2nd Heavy Cavalry Brigade) - killed Maj Gen Von Rheinbaben (1st Light cavalry Brigade) - captured

Appendix 9

General von Herwarth and “That despatch”

On the 28th June General von Herwarth sent the following despatch to the HQ 1st Army, requesting that the roads around Nimburg be kept clear for the Elbe Army:

It is my intention to march on Nimberg and Sazka following routes both North and South of the Elbe tomorrow. A Corps sized formation will march on Nimburg from Neu Benatek and cross the bridges over the Elbe from North to South. I would appreciate 1st Army avoiding any of its corps using Nimberg and its bridges.

I note your intention to send II Corps to Nimberg and would request that they skirt to the north of the town heading East. My concern is to avoid attempting to use the same roads and lines of communication and reduce the possibility of confusion and delay.

*Signed General Herwarth
1927hrs, 28th June 1866 Hlawenetz near Neu Benatek*

The despatch was received at HQ 1st Army (at Bakow) the following morning (29th June), however the 1st Army's 2nd Corps was already at Nimburg (having arrived there on the 28th) and therefore little could be done to accommodate the Elbe Army's request. When informed of the request HRH Prince Frederick Karl, commanding the 1st Army, simply made a comment to the effect “mais, c'est la guerre”. It should be noted that at the time the 1st Army was fully engaged at both Sobotka and Turnau and thus little attention could be spared for the problems of the Elbe Army.

Later that day the leading elements of the Elbe Army arrived at Nimburg, to find the roads clogged with the 2nd Corps' trains and the 3rd Heavy Cavalry Brigade (en route to rejoin the 2nd Corps). Unable to advance through Nimburg or along the congested roads a frustrated and irate von Herwarth penned a brusque despatch to the commander of the 1st Army.

*To: 1st Army - vicinity of Bakow north of Jung Bunzlau
Evening 29th June*

Situation:

Dear Sir

I'm not sure whether you just don't bother to read the reports I send you or whether you just feel it is best to ignore them and not bother to reply! Whichever you have decided I sincerely hope you can read and reply to this message.

I indicated my intention to support you by marching via Nimberg and clearly asked that 1st Army avoid any of its corps using Nimberg and its bridges. Unfortunately I am now prevented from passing through Nimberg by the trains of your II Corps that are clogging the town. I would appreciate this situation being resolved tomorrow.

Your use of the same roads and lines of communication has now caused the confusion and delay of which I warned. Consequently I will need to rest and reorganise my troops in the area of Nimberg tomorrow before moving to Kolin on the following day where I will spend another day allowing my trains to catch up and resupply my troops.

Signed General Herwarth

Location, date and time of issue 2100hrs, 29th June 1866 Nimberg (delayed behind II corps of 1st Army)

The Elbe Army's Chief of staff, Oberst Von Schlotheim, was horrified at the choice of words and pointed out

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to von Herwarth that it would be unwise to send the despatch to Prince Frederch Charles in its present form as it would most likley be considered both insubordinate and insulting to His Royal Highness. Even if the Prince were to ignore the tone of the despatch, the 1st Army Chief of Staff, Lt General von Voights-Rhetz, would certainly take offence and if the matter should reach the ears of the King then von Herwarth might well find his position very difficult. Von Schlotheim stated that he could not in all conscience allow the despatch to be sent in its present form, and that if Von Herwarth insisted and went against his advice then he would have no choice but to distance himself from it and leave the responsibility solely with the Army Commander.

Oberst Von Schlotheim urged von Herwarth to reconsider his choice of words and pointed out that officers of the 2nd Corps trains have informed him that the 2nd Corps was already at Nimburg on the 28th, before the original despatch requesting the roads be kept clear was sent. A much revised and more respectful despatch was subsequently drafted for despatch to HQ 1st Army.

*To: 1st Army - vicinity of Bakow north of Jung Bunzlau
Evening 29th June*

Situation:

Your Highness

I sincerely hope you can reply to this message and indicate your intentions for the next two days.

It was my intention to support you by marching via Nimberg. Unfortunately my troops have been prevented from passing through Nimberg by the trains of the II Corps of First Army that are clogging the town. I would appreciate it if this situation could be resolved tomorrow. Can I request that the roads along the north and south banks of the Elbe be reserved for use of the Elbe Army so that I can move on your right flank

An unfortunate situation has arisen with our close proximity and an unintended use of the same roads and lines of communication has now caused the confusion and delay of which I was concerned. Consequently I will need to rest and reorganise my troops in the area of Nimberg tomorrow before moving to Kolin on the following day. I will then spend another day allowing my trains to catch up and resupply my troops.

Part of my force is also searching for enemy troops in the area of Prague.

Signed General Herwarth

Location, date and time of issue 2100hrs, 29th June 1866 Nimberg

Appendix 10

Benedek's Cavalry “Raid”

During the morning of 1st July FML Prinz Schleswig-Holstein received the following instructions from FzM Benedek.

*1st Reserve Cavalry-concentrate your reconnaissance efforts in the Reineez-Walddorf area. Find the enemies dispositions, especially any weakness that we can exploit. As earlier directed, **prepare a raiding force equipped with enough provisions to ride to Wartha north-east of Glatz and with enough powder to destroy the railroad bridge there.** It is the only remaining Prussian line of supply and its destruction could put a significant limit on their operations. Remember the spirit of our ancestors fighting against the same enemy in the Silesian Wars! Ride hard, strike fast and disappear into the Nacht und Nebel.*

The Prince had been expecting some form of task requiring his cavalry to advance against the enemy but he was somewhat surprised by the nature of this task. It may be surmised that the inspiration for the “cavalry raid” possibly originated in the fertile mind of a staff officer, rather than coming from Benedek himself.

However, the Prince sent the following reply to Benedek:

*To: FzM Benedek
Travelling with the 10th Corps*

Your Excellency

I have today, 1st July, received instructions (issued at 10.30 am this morning) to send a detachment to blow up a railway bridge. At the present time my division is fully engaged in reconnoitring the roads in the direction of Glatz.

I regret to announce that it is my understanding that such jobs as the destruction of bridges are the responsibility of the Army's Corps of Engineers, and not that of the heavy cavalry, whose “raison' d'etre” is to wield “les armes blanche” against His Royal and Imperial Majesty's enemy's on the battlefield.

I also wish to inform you that my Division does not have any engineers on its staff, nor do I carry any loose powder in my train, having been informed by the officers commanding my horse batteries that the artillery has not used loose powder since before the Wars with Napoleon. Therefore without the necessary expertise or wherewithal for such a task I feel unable to countenance any such mission.

With the likelihood of an engagement on the morrow and having had only one day's rest for my mounts since the campaign opened I consider it my duty to conserve my cavalry's strength for the battlefield and I therefore propose that I would be both ill-advised and negligent in my duties were I to weaken my Division by any such detachments as this wild goose chase on the eve of battle.

Your servant etc

*FML Prinz Schleswig-Holstein
On the road to Glatz
Midday, 1st July 1866*

Benedek accepted the letter with apparent good grace, and did not raise the subject again with the Prince. Benedek however was widely known to prefer men of action and courage to those who professed a technical knowledge of warfare, or regarded the study of warfare from books as part of their profession.

Appendix 11

Notes on the Orders of Battle

At the start of the campaign the armies were organised for use with a variation of the well known Fire & Fury rules, using the standard figure scale of one base of models representing 200 men and one artillery base representing 8 guns.

During the course of the game, which actually took just over two and a half years to play, we moved over to using a playtest version of the Age of Valor rules, themselves a variation of Col Bill Grey's Age of Eagles rules for the Napoleonic Wars. These used the following scales; each stand represented 240 Light Infantry, 360 other infantry, 180 horse or 6 to 8 cannon.

These rules allowed us to fight much larger battles in a reasonable time while still using the familiar F&F mechanisms.

It was a simple matter to convert the existing F&F units sizes to the new scales and this was done as the campaign progressed.

The orders of battle, including details of senior officers etc, given in the appendices are based on those found in standard works such as the Prussian General Staff History of the War of 1866, Q Barry's "Road to Koniggratz" and other readily available sources such as the Nafziger index.

The orders of battle presented here were intended purely for this wargame campaign and are not intended to be a definitive listing.

The following orders of battle are given:

Appendix 12	Order of Battle - Prussian 1st Army
Appendix 13	Order of Battle - Prussian 2nd Army
Appendix 14	Order of Battle - Prussian Elbe Army
Appendix 15	Order of Battle - Austrian North Army
Appendix 16	Order of Battle - Royal Saxon Army

Appendix 13

Order of Battle of the Prussian 1st Army

First Army

HRH Prince Frederick Karl, General der Kavalerie

Chief of Staff: Lt-General Von Voigt-Rhetz
 Commandant of Artillery: Maj-General Von Lengsfeld

Army Troops

Ist Army Artillery Reserve: Maj-General Von Lengsfeld

2nd Foot & Horse Battalions, 4th (Magdeburg) Artillery Regiment	3 Field Artillery Stands
Column Battalion, 4th (Magdeburg) Artillery Regiment	3 Horse Artillery Stands
2nd Foot & Horse Battalions, 3rd (Brandenburg) Artillery Regiment	3 Field Artillery Stands
Column Battalion, 3rd (Brandenburg) Artillery Regiment	3 Horse Artillery Stands
Pontoon Bridging Column	

2nd Corps

Generalleutenant von Schmidt

Chief of Staff: Maj-General Von Kameke
 Commandant of Artillery: Maj-General Hurrelbrink

3rd Division: Generalleutnant von Werder

5th Brigade: Generalmajor von Januschowsky		
2nd Grenadier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
42nd Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
6th Brigade: Generalmajor von Winterfeld		
14th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
54th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
Pommeranian Jäger Battalion #2	Crack	5/3/2
Blücher Hussar Regiment #5	Crack Lt Cav	3/2/-
1st Foot Battalion, 2nd (Pomeranian) Artillery Regiment	2 Field Artillery Stand	
	1 12 pdr Stand	
2nd Pioneer Battalion		

4th Division: Generalleutnant von Herwarth

7th Brigade: Generalmajor von Schlabrendorf		
9th Grenadier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
49th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
8th Brigade: Generalmajor von Hanneken		
21st Infantry Regiment		
61st Infantry Regiment		
Pomeranian Uhlán Regiment #4	Veteran Lt Cav	3/-/2
3rd Foot Battalion, 2nd (Pommeranian) Artillery Regiment	2 Field Artillery Stand	
	1 12 pdr Stand	

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Corps Troops

3rd Heavy Cavalry Brigade: Generalmajor von der Glotz	
Königin Cuirassier Regiment #2	Crack Hy Cav 6/4/2
2nd Pomeranian Hussar Regiment #9	
2nd Horse Battery, 2nd (Pomeranian) Artillery Regiment	1 Horse Artillery Stand
Corps Reserve Artillery: Oberst Puttkammer	
2nd Foot Battalion, 2nd (Pomeranian) Artillery Regiment	3 Artillery Stands
Column Battalion, 2nd (Pomeranian) Artillery Regiment	

3rd Corps: no commanding officer

5th Division: Generalleutnant von Tümpling (E)

9th Brigade: Generalmajor von Schimmelmann	
8th Grenadier Regiment	Crack 15/10/6
48th Infantry Regiment	Veteran 15/11/8
10th Brigade: Generalmajor von Kamiensky	
12th Grenadier Regiment	Crack 15/10/6
18th Infantry Regiment	Veteran 15/11/8
1st Brandenburg Uhlán Regiment #3	Veteran Lt Cav 3/-/2
1st Foot Battalion, 3rd Artillery Regiment	2 Field Artillery Stand 1 12 pdr Stand

6th Division: Generalleutnant von Manstein (E)

11th Brigade: Generalmajor von Gersdorf	
35th Fusilier Regiment	Crack 15/10/6
60th Infantry Regiment	Veteran 15/11/8
12th Brigade: Generalmajor von Kotze	
24th Infantry Regiment	Veteran 15/11/8
64th Infantry Regiment	Veteran 15/11/8
Brandenburg Dragoon Regiment #2	Veteran Lt Cav 4/3/2
3rd (Brandenburg) Jäger Battalion	Crack 5/3/2
3rd Foot Battalion, 3rd Artillery Regiment	2 Field Artillery Stand 1 12 pdr Stand

4th Corps: Generalleutnant von Fransecky

7th Division: Generalleutnant von Fransecky (E)

13th Brigade: Generalmajor von Schwarzhoff	
26th Infantry Regiment	Veteran 15/11/8
66th Infantry Regiment	Veteran 15/11/8
14th Brigade: Generalmajor von Gordon	
27th Infantry Regiment	Veteran 15/11/8
67th Infantry Regiment	Veteran 15/11/8
Magdeburg Hussar Regiment #10	Crack Lt Cav 3/2/-
4th Pioneer Battalion with light bridging train	
1st Foot Battalion, 4th Artillery Regiment	2 Field Artillery Stands 1 12 pdr Stand

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8th Division: Generalleutnant von Horn

15th Brigade: Generalmajor von Bose		
31st Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
71st Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
16th Brigade: Generalmajor von Schmidt		
72nd Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
4th (Magdeburg) Jäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
Thuringian Uhlan Regiment #6	Veteran Lt Cav	3/-/2
3rd Foot Battalion, 4th Artillery Regiment	2 Field Artillery Stand	
	1 12 pdr Stand	

Army Cavalry Corps: HRH Prinz Albrecht, General der Kavallerie

1st Cavalry Division: Generalmajor von Albensleben

2nd Heavy Brigade: Generalmajor von Pfuel		
Brandenburg Cuirassier Regiment #6	Crack Hy Armd Cav	6/4/2
Magdeburg Cuirassier Regiment #7		
1st Horse Battery, Guard Artillery Regiment	1 Horse Artillery Stand	
1st Light Brigade: Generalmajor von Rheinbaben		
1st Guard Dragon Regiment	Crack Lt Cav	9/6/4
1st Guard Uhlan Regiment		
2nd Guard Uhlan Regiment		
2nd Horse Battery, Guard Artillery Regiment	1 Horse Artillery Stand	

2nd Cavalry Division: Generalmajor Hann von Weyhern

2nd Light Brigade: Generalmajor Duke Wilhelm von Mecklenburg Schwerin		
2nd Guard Dragoon Regiment	Crack Lt Cav	9/6/4
Brandenburg Hussar Regiment #3		
2nd Brandenburg Uhlan Regiment #II		
1st Horse Battery, 2nd Artillery Regiment	1 Horse Artillery Stand	
3rd Light Brigade: Generalmajor Graf Groeben	Crack Lt Cav	5/3/2
Neumark Dragoon Regiment #3		
Thuringian Hussar Regiment #12		
3rd Horse Battery, 2nd Artillery Regiment		

Cavalry Corps Reserve Artillery

4th Horse Battery, 2nd Artillery Regiment	1 Horse Artillery Stand
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Appendix 14

Order of Battle of the Prussian 2nd Army

Second Army: HRH Crown Prince Frederick William of Prussia

Chief of Staff: Maj-General Von Blumenthal
 Commandant of Artillery: Maj-General Von Jacobi

Ist Corps: General von Bonin (P)

Chief of Staff: Colonel Von Borries
 Commandant of Artillery: Colonel Von Knothe

Ist Division: Generalleutnant von Grossman

Ist Brigade: Generalmajor von Pape		
1st Grenadier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
41st Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
2nd Brigade: Generalmajor von Barnekow		
3rd Grenadier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
43rd Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
Lithuanian Dragoon Regiment #1	Veteran Lt Cav	4/3/2
Ist (East Prussian) Jäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
Ist Foot Battalion, Ist Artillery Regiment	2 Field Artillery Stands	
	1 12 pdr Stand	

2nd Division: Generalleutnant von Clausewitz

3rd Brigade: Generalmajor von Malotki		
4th Grenadier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
44th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
4th Brigade: Generalmajor von Buddenbrock		
5th Grenadier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
45th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
Ist Leibhussar Regiment #1	Crack Lt Cav	3/2/-
Ist Pioneer Battalion		
3rd Foot Battalion, Ist Artillery Regiment	2 Field Artillery Stands	
	1 12 pdr Stand	

Corps Troops

Corps Cavalry Reserve Brigade: Oberst von Bredow (E)		
East Prussian Cuirassier Regiment #3 (4)(625)	Veteran Lt Cav	9/7/5
East Prussian Uhlan Regiment #8 (4)(625)		
Lithuanian Uhlan Regiment #12 (4)(625)		
3rd Horse Battery, Ist Artillery Regiment	1 Horse Artillery Stand	
Corps Reserve Artillery:		
2nd Foot and Horse Battalion, Ist Artillery Regiment	3 Field, 2 Horse Artillery Stands	
Column Battalion, Ist Artillery Regiment		
Pontoon Column		

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5th Corps: General von Steinmetz

Chief of Staff: Colonel Von Wittich
Commandant of Artillery: Colonel Von Kraewel

9th Division: Generalleutnant von Kleist

17th Brigade: Generalmajor von Löwenfeld		
37th Fusilier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
58th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
18th Brigade: Generalmajor von Horn		
7th Grenadier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
5th (Silesian) Jäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
1st Silesian Dragoon Regiment #4	Veteran Lt Cav	4/3/2
1st Foot Battalion, 5th Artillery (Silesian) Regiment	2 Field Artillery Stand	
	1 12 pdr Stand	

10th Division: Generalleutnant von Kirchbach

19th Brigade: Generalmajor von Tiedemann		
6th Grenadier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
46th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
20th Brigade: Generalmajor Wittich		
47th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
52nd Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
5th Pioneer Battalion		
West Prussian Uhlán Regiment #1	Veteran Lt Cav	3/-/2
3rd Foot Battalion, 5th Artillery (Silesian) Regiment	2 Field Artillery Stands	
	1 12 pdr Stand	

Corps Troops

Corps Reserve Artillery:		
3rd & Horse Foot Battalion, 5th Artillery (Silesian) Regiment	2 Field, 2 Horse Artillery Stands	
	1 12 pdr Stand	
Pontoon Column		

6th Corps: General von Mitius

Chief of Staff: Colonel Von Sperling
Commandant of Artillery: Maj-General Herkt

11th Division: Generalleutnant von Zastrow

21st Brigade: Generalmajor von Hanefeldt		
10th Grenadier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
50th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
22nd Brigade: Generalmajor von Hoffman		
38th Fusilier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
51st Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
6th (Silesian) Pioneer Battalion		
2nd Silesian Dragoon Regiment #8	Veteran Lt Cav	3/-/2
2nd Foot Battalion, 6th Artillery Regiment	3 Field Artillery Stands	

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12th Division: Generalleutnant von Prondzinsky

Combined Brigade: Generalmajor von Kranach		
22nd Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
23rd Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
2nd Silesian Hussar Regiment #6	Crack Lt Cav	5/3/2
6th (Silesian) Jäger Battalion (I,026)		
1st Foot Battalion, 6th Artillery Regiment	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Corps Troops

Reserve Cavalry:		
1st Silesian Hussar Regiment #4	Crack Lt Cav	3/2/-
Reserve Artillery, 6 th artillery Regiment	2 Horse Artillery Stand	
	1 12 pdr Stand	

2nd Army Reserve Cavalry Corps: Generalmajor von Hartmann

Cuirassier Brigade: Generalmajor von Schoen		
West Prussian Cuirassier Regiment #5	Crack Hy Armd Cav	6/4/2
Silesian Cuirassier Regiment #1		
Light Brigade: Generalmajor von Witzleben		
Posen Uhlan Regiment #10	Veteran Lt Cav	6/5/3
2nd Leibhussar Regiment #2		
2nd Horse Battery, 5th Artillery Regiment	1 Horse Artillery Stand	
Landwehr Brigade: Generalmajor von Frankenberg		
2nd Landwehr Hussar Regiment	Green Lt Cav	6/5/4
1st Landwehr Uhlan Regiment		
3rd Horse Battery, 5th Artillery Regiment	1 Horse Artillery Stand	

Guard Corps: Prinz August von Württemberg

Chief of Staff:	Colonel Von Dannenberg
Commandant of Artillery:	Maj-General Von Colomier

1st Guard Division: Generalleutnant Hiller von Gärtringen

1st Guard Brigade: Oberst von Oberritz		
1st Guard Infantry Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
3rd Guard Infantry Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
2nd Guard Brigade: Generalmajor von Albensleben		
2nd Guard Infantry Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
Guard Fusilier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
Guard Hussar Regiment	Crack Lt Cav	3/2/-
Guard Jäger Battalion	Crack	6/4/2
1st Foot Battalion, Guard Artillery Regiment	2 Field Artillery Stand	
	1 12 pdr Stand	

2nd Guard Division: Generalleutnant von Plonski

3rd Guard Brigade: Generalmajor von Budritzki		
1st Guard Grenadier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
3rd Guard Grenadier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
4th Brigade: Generalmajor von Loen		
2nd Guard Grenadier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6

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4th Guard Grenadier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
3rd Guard Ulan Regiment	Crack Lt Cav	3/2/-
Guard Schützen Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
3rd Foot Battalion, Guard Artillery Regiment	2 Field Artillery Stand	
	1 12 pdr Stand	

Guard Corps Troops

Ist Heavy Brigade: Generalmajor HRH Prinz Albrecht Garde du Corps	Crack Armd Hy Cav	6/4/2
Guard Cuirassier Regiment		
2nd Horse, Battery, Guard Artillery Regiment	1 Horse Artillery Stand	
Guard Corps Reserve Artillery:		
2nd Foot Battalion, Guard Artillery Regiment	3 Field Artillery Stands	
4th Horse Battery, Guard Artillery Regiment	1 Horse Artillery Stand	

Appendix 15

Order of Battle of the Prussian Elbe Army

Army of the Elbe: General Herwarth von Bittenfeld

Chief of Staff: Colonel Von Schlotheim
 Commandant of Artillery: Colonel Von Rozynski

14th Division: Generalleutnant Graf Münster

27th Brigade: Generalmajor von Schwarzkoppen		
16th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
56th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
28th Brigade: Generalmajor von Hiller		
17th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
57th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
Westphalian Dragoon Regiment #7	Veteran Lt Cav	3/-/2
7th Jäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
2/,3/7th Pioneer Battalion & light bridging train		
1st Foot Battalion 7th (Westphalian) Artillery Regiment	2 Field Artillery Stand	
	1 12 pdr Stand	

15th Division: Generalleutnant von Canstein

29th Brigade: Generalmajor von Stückradt		
40th Fusilier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
65th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
30th Brigade: Generalmajor von Glasenapp		
28th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
68th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
Leib-Hussar Regiment #7	Crack Lt Cav	4/3/2
8th (Rhenish) Pioneer Battalion		
3rd Foot Battalion, 8th (Rhenish) Artillery Regiment	2 Field Artillery Stands	
	1 12 pdr Stand	

16th Division: Generalleutnant von Etzel

31st Brigade: Generalmajor von Schöler		
29th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
69th Infantry Regiment	Veteran	15/11/8
Fusilier Brigade: Oberst Wegerer		
33rd Fusilier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
34th Fusilier Regiment	Crack	15/10/6
8th (Rhenish) Jäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
Det/1st Foot Battalion, 8th (Rhenish) Artillery Regiment	2 Field Artillery Stand	

Army Troops

14th Cavalry Brigade: Generalmajor Graf Glotz		
Westphalian Uhlán Regiment #5	Crack Lt Cav	7/5/3
2nd Westphalian Hussar Regiment #II		
Reserve Cavalry Brigade: Generalmajor von Kotze		
Rhenish Cuirassier Regiment #8	Crack Hy Cav	6/4/2
Rhenish Uhlán Regiment #7		
1st Horse Battery, 8th (Rhenish) Artillery Regiment	1 Horse Artillery Stand	

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Reserve Artillery 7th Corps:
2nd Foot Bn & Horse Artillery Bn, 7th (Rhenish) Artillery Regiment 3 Field, 1 Horse Artillery Stands

Reserve Artillery 8th Corps:
2nd Foot Bn & Horse Artillery Bn, 8th (Rhenish) Artillery Regiment 3 Field, 2 Horse Artillery Stands

Munitions Columns:
Column Battalion/8th (Rhenish) Artillery Regiment, Munition Columns/7th (Rhenish) Artillery Regt

Ist Reserve Corps: Generalleutnant von der Mülbe

Guard Landwehr Division: General von Rosenberg

1st Guard Landwehr Brigade:
1st Guard Landwehr Regiment Veteran 12/9/6
2nd Guard Landwehr Regiment Veteran 12/9/6

2nd Guard Landwehr Brigade:
1st Guard Grenadier Landwehr Regiment Veteran 12/9/6
2nd Guard Grenadier Landwehr Regiment Veteran 12/9/6

Reserve Artillery Batteries 1 Field Artillery Stand

Combined Landwehr Division: General von Bentheim

1st Landwehr Brigade:
9th Landwehr Regiment Green 12/10/7
21st Landwehr Regiment Green 12/10/7

2nd Landwehr Brigade:
13th Landwehr Regiment Green 12/10/7
15th Landwehr Regiment Green 12/10/7

Reserve Artillery Batteries 1 Field Artillery Stand

Landwehr Cavalry Division:: Generalmajor Graf Dohna

1st Landwehr Cavalry Brigade: Generalmajor von Rohr
1st Landwehr Hussar Regiment Green 6/5/4
Landwehr Ulan Regiment Lt Cavalry

2nd Landwehr Cavalry Brigade: Oberst von Krosigk
5th Landwehr Hussar Regiment Green 5/4/3
Pommeranian Heavy Landwehr Reiter Regiment Lt Cavalry

3rd Landwehr Cavalry Brigade: Oberst Freiherr von Wittenhorst-Sonsfeld
2nd Landwehr Dragoon Regiment Green 6/5/4
3rd Landwehr Ulan Regiment Lt Cavalry

Corps Troops

1st Reserve Corps Artillery: Oberst Von Buelow
Elms Ist, 2nd & 3rd Reserve Artillery Regiments 2 Field Artillery Stands
1 12 Pdr Stand

Ist & 2nd Reserve Pioneer Companies

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Appendix 15

Order of Battle of the Austrian North Army

Commander-in-Chief: Field Marshal Archduke Albrecht

Deputy Commander: Feldzeugmeister Ludwig von Benedek
Chief of Staff: General Franz John

Ist Corps: General der Kavallerie Graf Clam-Gallas (P)

Deputy Commanding General GM. Leopold Graf Gondrecourt
Chief of Artillery Obst. Weisser

Brigade (“Iron Brigade”): Generalmajor Poschacher (E)

18th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
30th Infantry Regiment (Matini)	Crack	16/11/7
34th Infantry Regiment (König Wilhelm von Preussen)	Crack	16/11/7
4pdr Foot Battery #5/I	1 Field battery (RA)	

Brigade: Generalmajor Ritter von Kalik
(Attached from 3rd Corps)

22nd Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
35th Infantry Regiment (Khevenhüller)	Veteran	16/12/8
72nd Infantry Regiment (Ramming)	Veteran	14/11/7
4pdr Foot Battery #3/I	1 Field battery (RA)	

Brigade: Generalmajor Piret

29th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
18th Infantry Regiment (Constantin)	Veteran	16/12/8
45th Infantry Regiment (Sigismund)	Veteran	15/11/8
4pdr Foot Battery #6/I	1 Field battery (RA)	

Brigade: Generalmajor Ringelsheim

26th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	6/4/2
42nd Infantry Regiment (Hanover)	Veteran	15/11/8
73rd Infantry Regiment (Herzog Wilhelm von Württemberg)	Veteran	15/11/8
4pdr Foot Battery #2/I	1 Field battery (RA)	

Brigade: Generalmajor Graf Leiningen

32nd Jäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
33rd Infantry Regiment (Gyulai)	Veteran	16/12/8
38th Infantry Regiment (Haugwitz)	Veteran	17/13/9
4pdr Foot Battery #4/I	1 Field battery (RA)	

Corps Troops

Nikolaus Hussar Regiment #2	Crack Lt Cav	4/3/2
4pdr Horse Batteries 7/I & 8/I	2 Horse Artillery Stands	
8pdr Foot Batteries 9/I & 10/I	2 Field Artillery Stands	
Rocket Battery #11/I	1 Rocket Artillery Stand	

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I/2nd Pioneer Battalion
IIIth War Bridging Squadron

I/Ist Park Battalion
I31st & I32nd Park Squadrons
33rd, 34th, 35th & 36th Transport Squadrons
I Cattle Depot

Ist Light Cavalry Division: Generalmajor Baron Edelsheim (E)

Brigade: Oberst Appel	Veteran Lt Cav	10/8/5
2nd Dragoon Regiment (Windischgrätz)		
9th Hussar Regiment (Liechtgenstein)		
4pdr Horse Battery #4/XI	1 Horse Artillery Stand	
Brigade: Oberst Wallis	Crack Lt Cav	9/6/4
1st Dragoon Regiment (Savoy)		
0th Hussar Regiment (König von Preussen)		
4pdr Horse Battery #5/XI	1 Horse Artillery Stand	
Brigade: Oberst Fraticsevics	Crack Lt Cav	9/6/4
5th Hussar Regiment (Radetzky)		
8th Hussar Regiment (Hesse-Kassel)		
4pdr Horse Battery #6/XI	1 Horse Artillery Stand	

Attached:
73rd, 74th & 75th Transport Squadrons
I Cattle Depot

2nd Corps: Feldmarschal-leutnant Graf Thun-Hohenstädt

Deputy Commanding General GM. Freiherr Philippović von Philippsberg
Chief of Artillery Obst. Schindler

Brigade: Oberst Thom

2nd Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	6/4/2
40th Infantry Regiment (Rossbach)	Veteran	16/12/8
69th Infantry Regiment (Jellachich)	Veteran	15/11/8
4pdr Foot Battery #1/II	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Generalmajor Henriquez

9th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	6/4/2
14th Infantry Regiment (Hesse)	Veteran	16/12/8
27th Infantry Regiment (Belgium)	Veteran	15/11/8
4pdr Foot Battery #2/II	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Generalmajor von Saffran

11th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
64th Infantry Regiment (Saxe-Weimar)	Veteran	14/11/17
80th Infantry Regiment (Holstein)	Veteran	16/11/7
4pdr Foot Battery #3/II	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Generalmajor Herzog Württemberg

20th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
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13th Infantry Regiment (Hartung)	Veteran	16/12/8
57th Infantry Regiment (Mecklenburg)	Veteran	17/13/9
4pdr Foot Battery #4/III	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Corps Troops

Imperial Uhlan Regiment #6	Veteran Lt Cav	3/-/2
4pdr Horse Batteries #7/II & 8/II	2 Horse Artillery Stands	
8pdr Foot Batteries #9/II & 10/II	2 Field Artillery Stands	
4pdr Foot Battery #5/II	1 Field Artillery Stand	
Rocket Battery #II/II	1 Rocket Battery Stand	
2/2nd Pioneer Battalion		
II2th War Bridging Squadron		
I/2nd Park Battalion		
I33rd & I34th Park Squadrons		
40th, 41st & 42nd Transport Squadrons		
I Cattle Depot		

3rd Corps: Feldmarschal-leutnant Erzherzog Ernst

Brigade: Generalmajor Appiano

4th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
46th Infantry Regiment (Meiningen)	Veteran	14/11/7
62nd Infantry Regiment (Erzherzog Heinrich)	Veteran	15/11/8
4pdr Foot Battery #2/III	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Oberst Benedek

1st Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
52nd Infantry Regiment (Erzherzog Franz Karl)	Veteran	17/13/9
78th Infantry Regiment (Sokceviés)	Veteran	15/11/8
4pdr Foot Battery #4/III	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Oberst Manger von Kirchberg

3rd Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
44th Infantry Regiment (Erzherzog Albrecht)	Veteran	16/12/8
49th Infantry Regiment (Hess)	Veteran	15/11/8
4pdr Foot Battery #5	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Oberst Baron Prochaska

Combined Jäger Battalion #33 & #34	Crack	9/6/4
Romanisch Banat Grenz Regiment #13	Veteran	15/11/8
4th Bns 55th & 56th Infantry Regiments (Gondrecourt & Baron Gorizutti)	Green	9/8/5
4pdr Foot Battery #6	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Corps Troops

Graf Mensdorf Uhlan Regiment #9	Veteran Lt Cav	2/-/-
4pdr Horse Batteries #7,#8	2 Horse Artillery Stands	
8pdr Foot Batteries #9,10	2 Field Artillery Stands	

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4/2nd Pioneer Battalion
II3th War Bridging Squadron
I/8th Park Battalion
I35th & I36th Park Squadrons
44th, 45th, 46th, & 47th Transport Squadrons
I Cattle Depot

4th Corps: Feldmarschal-leutnant Graf Festetics

Brigade: Generalmajor von Brandenstein

27th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	6/4/2
I2th Infantry Regiment (Erzherzog Wilhelm)	Veteran	15/11/8
60th Infantry Regiment (Michael)	Veteran	16/12/8
4pdr Foot Battery #1/IV	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Oberst Fleischacker

I3th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
I/,2/,3/6th Infantry Regiment (Coronini)	Veteran	16/12/8
I/,2/,3/6th Infantry Regiment (Czarina of Russia)	Veteran	15/11/8
4pdr Foot Battery #2/IV	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Oberst Poeckh

8th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
37th Infantry Regiment (Erzherzog Josef)	Veteran	15/11/8
51st Infantry Regiment (Erzherzog Karl Ferdinand)	Veteran	14/11/7
4pdr Foot Battery #3/IV	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Generalmajor Erzherzog Josef

30th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
I/,2/,3/67th Infantry Regiment (Schmerling)	Veteran	16/12/8
I/,2/,3/68th Infantry Regiment (Steininger)	Veteran	16/12/8
4pdr Foot Battery #4/IV	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Corps Troops

7th Hussar Regiment (Prinz von Preussen)	Crack Lt Cav	4/3/2
4pdr Horse Batteries #7,8/IV	2 Horse Artillery Stands	
8pdr Foot Batteries #9,10/IV	2 Field Artillery Stands	
4pdr Foot Battery #5/IV	1 Field Artillery Stand	
Rocket Battery #II/IV	1 Rocket Artillery Stand	
Medical: (286)		
I/5th Pioneer Battalion		
II5th War Bridging Squadron		
I/4th Park Battalion		
I37th & I40th Park Squadrons		
53rd, 55th, 56th & 57th Transport Squadrons		
I Cattle Depot		

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6th Corps: Feldmarschal-leutnant Baron Ramming

Deputy Commanding General GM. Kochmeister
Chief of Artillery Obst. Hofmann von Donnersberg

Brigade: Oberst von Waldstätten

6th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
9th Infantry Regiment (Hartmann)	Veteran	16/12/8
79th Infantry Regiment (Frank)	Green	16/13/9
4pdr Foot Battery #1/X	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Oberst Hertwegk

25th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
41st Infantry Regiment (Baron Kellner)	Veteran	13/10/7
56th Infantry Regiment (Gorizutti)	Veteran	17/13/9
4pdr Foot Battery #2/X	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Generalmajor von Rosenzweig

17th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
4th Infantry Regiment (Deutschmeister)	Crack	15/10/6
55th Infantry Regiment (Gondrecourt)	Veteran	16/12/8
4pdr Foot Battery #3/X	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Oberst Jonak

14th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	6/4/2
20th Infantry Regiment (Erbprinz von Preussen)	Veteran	15/10/6
6th Infantry Regiment (Wasa)	Veteran	(16/12/8)
4pdr Foot Battery #4/X	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Corps Troops

10th Uhlán Regiment	Veteran Lt Cav	3/-/2
4pdr Horse Batteries #7,8/X	2 Horse Artillery Stands	
8pdr Foot Batteries #9,10/X	2 Field Artillery Stands	
4pdr Foot Battery #5/X	2 Field Artillery Stands	
2/5th Pioneer Battalion		
II6th War Bridging Squadron		
I/10th Park Battalion		
I41st & I42nd Park Squadrons		
58th, 62nd, 63rd & 64th Transport Squadrons		
I Cattle Depot		

8th Corps: Erzherzog Leopold

Deputy Commanding General GM. Weber
Chief of Artillery Obst. Angerer

Brigade: Generalmajor Fragnern

5th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
I5th Infantry Regiment (Nassau)	Veteran	16/12/8

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77th Infantry Regiment (Erzherzog von Toscana)	Veteran	15/11/8
4pdr Foot Battery #1/IX	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Generalmajor Schulz

31st Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
8th Infantry Regiment (Gerstner)	Veteran	15/11/8
74th Infantry Regiment (Nobili)	Veteran	15/11/8
4pdr Foot Battery #2/IX	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Oberst von Kreysern

24th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
21st Infantry Regiment (Reischach)	Veteran	15/11/8
32nd Infantry Regiment (Este)	Veteran	15/11/8
4pdr Foot Battery #4/IX	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: General Graf Rothkirch

25th Infantry Regiment (Mamula)	Veteran	15/11/8
71st Infantry Regiment (Leopold von Toscani)	Veteran	20/15/10
4pdr Foot Battery #3/IX	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Corps Troops

Erzharzog Karl Uhlan Regiment #3	Veteran Lt Cav	4/3/2
4pdr Horse Batteries #7,8/IX	2 Horse Artillery Stands	
8pdr Foot Batteries #9,10/IX	2 Field Artillery Stands	
4pdr Foot Battery #5/IX	1 Field Artillery Stand	
3/2nd Pioneer Battalion		
114th War Bridging Squadron		
I/9th Park Battalion		
I43rd & I44th Park Squadrons		
65th, 66th, 67th, & 68th Transport Squadrons		
I Cattle Depot		

10th Corps: Feldmarschal-leutnant von Gablenz (E)

Deputy Commanding General GM. Freiherr von Koller
Chief of Artillery Obst. Eisler

Brigade: Oberst Mondl

I2th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
I0th Infantry Regiment (Mazuchelli)	Veteran	16/12/8
24th Infantry Regiment (Parma)	Veteran	10/8/5
4pdr Foot Battery #1/III	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Oberst Grivicics

I6th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
2nd Infantry Regiment (Alexander)	Veteran	12/9/6
23rd Infantry Regiment (Airoldi)	Veteran	15/11/8
4pdr Foot Battery #2/III	1 Field Artillery Stand	

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Brigade: Generalmajor von Knebel

28th Feldjäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
1st Infantry Regiment (Kaiser Franz Josef)	Crack	16/11/7
3rd Infantry Regiment (Erzherzog Karl)	Veteran	15/11/8
4pdr Foot Battery #3/III	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Generalmajor Wimpffen

13th Infantry Regiment (Bamberg)	Veteran	15/11/8
58th Infantry Regiment (4 bns) (Erzherzog Stefan)	Veteran	21/16/10
4pdr Foot Battery #4/III	1 Field Artillery Stand	

Corps Troops

9th Uhlán Regiment (Graf Mensdorff)	Veteran Lt Cav	3/-/2
4pdr Horse Batteries #7,8/III	2 Horse Artillery Stands	
8pdr Foot Batteries #9,10/III	2 Field Artillery Stands	
4pdr Foot Battery #5/III	Horse Artillery Stand	
3/5th Pioneer Battalion		
117th War Bridging Squadron		
I/3rd Park Battalion		
I45th & I46th Park Squadrons		
69th, 70th, 71st, & 72nd Transport Squadrons		
I Cattle Depot		

2nd Light Cavalry Division: Generalmajor Prinz Thurn und Taxis

Brigade: Oberst Graf Bellegarde

4th Hussar Regiment(Cseh)	Crack Lt Cav	9/6/4
12th Hussar Regiment(Haller)		
4pdr Horse Battery #2/XI	1 Horse Artillery Stand	

Brigade: Generalmajor Westphalen

6th Hussar Regiment(Württemberg)	Crack Lt Cav	9/6/4
11th Hussar Regiment(Palfy)		
4pdr Horse Battery #3/XI	1 Horse Artillery Stand	

77th & 78th Transport Squadrons
I Cattle Depot

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1st Reserve Cavalry Division: Feldmarschal-leutnant Prinz Schleswig-Holstein

Brigade: Generalmajor Prinz Solms

4th Cuirassier Regiment (Ferdinand)	Crack Hy Cav 11/7/5
6th Cuirassier Regiment (Hesse)	
8th Uhlán Regiment (Kaiser Max)	
4pdr Horse Battery #5/VI	1 Horse Artillery Stand

Brigade: Generalmajor Schindlöcker

9th Cuirassier Regiment (Stadion)	Crack Hy Cav 11/7/5
11th Cuirassier Regiment (Kaiser Franz Josef)(718)	
4th Uhlán Regiment (Kaiser Franz Josef)(766)	
4pdr Horse Battery #6/VI	1 Horse Artillery Stand

Attached:

79th & 80th Transport Squadrons
I Cattle Depot

2nd Reserve Cavalry Division: Generalmajor von Zaitschek

Brigade: Generalmajor Boxberg

3rd Cuirassier Regiment (King of Saxony)	Crack Hy Cav 11/7/5
7th Cuirassier Regiment (Braunschweig)	
2nd Uhlán Regiment (Schwarzenberg)	
4pdr Horse Battery #4/XI	

Brigade: Generalmajor Graf Soltyk

1st Cuirassier Regiment (Kaiser Franz Josef)	Crack Hy Cav 11/7/5
5th Cuirassier Regiment (Nicolas)	
5th Uhlán Regiment (Walmoden)	
4pdr Horse Battery #5/XI	

Attached:

81st & 82nd Transport Squadrons
I Cattle Depot

3rd Reserve Cavalry Division: Generalmajmor Graf Condenhove

Brigade: Generalmajor Prinz Windischgrätz

2nd Cuirassier Regiment (Wrangel)	Crack Hy Cav 12/8/5
8th Cuirassier Regiment (Prinz Karl von Preussen)	
3rd Uhlán Regiment (Erzherzot Karl Ludwig)	
4pdr Horse Battery #2/XII	

Brigade: Generalmajor von Mengen

10th Cuirassier Regiment (King of Bavaria)	Crack Hy Cav 11/7/5
12th Cuirassier Regiment (Neipperg)	
11th Uhlán Regiment (Alexander)	
4pdr Horse Battery #3/XII	

Attached:

83rd & 84th Transport Squadrons I Cattle Depot

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Army Artillery Reserve Director of Artillery FML. Archduke William

4pdr Horse Batteries 2,3,4/VI	3 Horse Artillery Stands
4pdr Horse Battery 6/XII (I9I)	1 Horse Artillery Stands
8pdr Foot Batteries 7,8,9,I0/VI	4 Field Artillery Stands
8pdr Foot Batteries 7,8,9,I0/XI	4 Field Artillery Stands
8pdr Foot Batteries 7,8,9,I0/XII	4 Field Artillery Stands
Engineer Support - Colonel Von Pidoll	

Ist Pioneer Battalion (834)
6th Pioneer Battalion (829)
I07-I10th War Bridging Squadrons/Ist Pioneer Bn
I19-I12nd War Bridging Squadrons/6th Pioneer Bn
Ist Engineer Regiment (827)

Army Munition Park
2/Ist Park Company
2/2nd Park Company
2/3rd Park Company
2/4th Park Company
2/8th Park Company
2/9th Park Company
2/I0th Park Company
I/6th Park Company
I/I1th Park Company
I/I2th Park Company
I53rd - I7Ist Park Squadrons (I9 total)
Column Provisions Magazine with 27th, 28th, 3Ist & 32nd War Transport Squadrons
4 Cattle Depots

Austrian Fortress Garrisons

Theresienstadt

Generalmajor Freiherr von Taxis

4th Battalions of the following regiments:

4/I1th Infantry Regiment (Kronprinz Albrecht von Sachsen)	Green 5/4/3
4/28th Infantry Regiment (Benedek)	Green 5/4/3
4/34th Infantry Regiment (King of Prussia)	Green 5/4/3
4/42nd Infantry Regiment (King of Hanover)	Green 5/4/3
4/45th Infantry Regiment (Sigismund)	Green 5/4/3
4/62nd Infantry Regiment (Heinrich)	Green 5/4/3
4/73rd Infantry Regiment (Duke of Württemberg)	Green 5/4/3

4pdr Foot Battery #I/VI	1 Field Artillery Stand
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I4/4th Bn, Ist Engineer Regiment
2/I & 5/I Artillery Fortress Companies
I/,4/,5/XII Artillery Fortress Companies
Det/6th Pioneer Battalion
Royal Saxon Pioneer Depot
22nd Peacetime Transport Squadron

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Josephstadt

Generalmajor Tomas

4th Battalions of the following regiments:

4/35th Infantry Regiment (Khevenhüller)	Green	5/4/3
4/36th Infantry Regiment (Degenfeld)	Green	5/4/3
4/38th Infantry Regiment (Haugwitz)	Green	5/4/3
4/72nd Infantry Regiment (Ramming)	Green	5/4/3
4/75th Infantry Regiment (Crenneville)	Green	5/4/3

4pdr Foot Battery #I/XI

1 Field Artillery Stand

4/1st Engineer Regiment
I2/1st Engineer Regiment
I/,2/,5/II Fortress Artillery Companies
5/V Fortress Artillery Company

Königgratz

Generalmajor Thomas (in Josephstadt)

4th Battalions of the following regiments:

4/10th Infantry Regiment (Mazzuchelli)	Green	5/4/3
4/18th Infantry Regiment (Constantin)	Green	5/4/3
4/23rd Infantry Regiment (Airoldi)	Green	5/4/3

I2th Coy, 1st Engineering Regiment
I/IV Fortress Artillery Company
I39th Peacetime Transport Squadron

Olmütz

Brigade: Generalmajor von Medl

4th Battalions of the following regiments:

4/1st Infantry Regiment (Kaiser Franz Josef)	Green	5/4/3
4/13th Infantry Regiment (Bamberg)	Green	5/4/3
4/25th Infantry Regiment (Mamula)	Green	5/4/3
4/51st Infantry Regiment (Carl Ferdinand)	Green	5/4/3
4/61st Infantry Regiment (Grossfürst Thronfolger)	Green	5/4/3

6/,7/,8/2nd Bn, 1st Engineer Regiment
Det. Depot/1st Pioneer Battalion

Brigade: Generalmajor Böheim

4th Battalions of the following regiments:

4/12th Infantry Regiment (Wilhelm)	Green	5/4/3
4/26th Infantry Regiment (Michael)	Green	5/4/3
4/51st Infantry Regiment (Grueber)	Green	5/4/3
4/60th Infantry Regiment (Wasa)	Green	5/4/3
4/68th Infantry Regiment (Steininger)	Green	5/4/3

4pdr Foot Battery #6/IX (I58)

1 Field Artillery Stand

4/,5/IX Fortress Artillery Companies

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I/,3/,4/,5/,6/X Fortress Artillery Companies
Det. I/XII Artillery Company

Krakau (Cracow)

Brigade: Generalmajor Ritter von Braisach

4th Battalions of the following regiments: Green 20/16/12
 4/2nd Infantry Regiment (Czar Alexander of Russia)
 4/32nd Infantry Regiment (Ferdinand d'Este)
 4/37th Infantry Regiment (Josef)
 4/41st Infantry Regiment (Kellner)
 1st Uhlan Regiment (Grünne) Veteran Lt Cav 5/4/3

4pdr Foot Battery #I/VII 1 Field Artillery Stand

Brigade: Generalmajor von Trentinglia

4th Battalions of the following regiments: Green 30/24/18
 4/24th Infantry Regiment (Kronprinz von Preussen)
 4/27th Infantry Regiment (Herzog von Parma)
 4/40th Infantry Regiment (Roszbach)
 4/57th Infantry Regiment (Mecklenburg-Schwerin)
 4/64th Infantry Regiment (Sachsen-Weimar)
 4/67th Infantry Regiment (von Schmerling)

4pdr Foot Battery #6/IV 1 Field Artillery Stand

2/,3/,4/,5/IV Fortress Artillery Companies
9/,10/,11/3rd Bn, 1st Engineering Regiment
11th Transportation Depot (106)
11th & 48th Peactime Transportation Squadrons

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Appendix 16

Order of Battle Royal Saxon Army

Royal Saxon Army Corps

Commanding General: HRH Crown Prince Albert of Saxony (E)

Chief of Staff: Generalmajor von Fabrice

Chief of Artillery: Generalmajor Schmalz

1st Division: Generalleutnant von Schimpff

2nd Brigade: Generalmajor von Carlowitz

2nd Jäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
5 th , 6 th , 7 th & 8 th Infantry Battalions	Veteran	19/15/10

3rd Brigade: Generalmajor Oberst von Hake

3rd Jäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
9 th , 10 th , 11 th & 12 th Infantry Battalions	Veteran	19/15/10

Detachment from 2nd & 3rd Reiter Regiments (4 sqns) Crack Lt Cav 2/-/-

Divisional Artillery: 2 Field Artillery Stands

2nd Division: Generalleutnant von Steiglitz

1st Brigade: Oberst von Boxberg

1st Jäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
1st, 2 nd , 3 rd & 4 th Infantry Battalions	Veteran	19/15/10

4th Brigade: Oberst von Hausen

4th Jäger Battalion	Crack	5/3/2
13 th , 14 th , 15 th & 16 th Infantry Battalions	Veteran	19/15/10

Detachment from Guard Cavalry & 1st Reiter Regiments (4 sqns) Crack Lt Cav 2/-/-

Divisional Artillery: 2 Field Artillery Stands

Cavalry Division: Generalleutnant von Fritsch

1st Brigade: Generalleutnant Prinz Georg von Saxony

Guard Reiter Regiment	Crack Lt Cav	5/3/2
1st Reiter Regiment		

2nd Brigade: Generalmajor von Biedermann

2nd Reiter Regiment	Crack Lt Cav	5/3/2
3rd Reiter Regiment		

Divisional Artillery: 12pdr Horse Battery "Zenker" 1 Horse Artillery Stand

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Corps Troops

Corps Reserve Artillery

3 Field Artillery Stands

1st & 2nd Munitions Column

1st Artillery Park Column

2nd Artillery Park Column

Pioneer Park

Pontoon Park

Provisions Column