

The Franco-Prussian War

6

Outbreak and Opening Battles

K.OF SWEDEN
AND NORWAY

**UNITED
KINGDOM**

RUSSIAN EMPIRE

Boundary of
North German
Confederation

K.OF
DENMARK

K.OF
HOLLAND

K.OF PRUSSIA

K.OF
BELGIUM

**FRENCH
EMPIRE**

**AUSTRO-
HUNGARIAN
EMPIRE**

LUXEMBOURG

WÜRTTEMBERG

BADEN

BAVARIA

SWISS

K.OF ITALY

PAPAL
STATE

ROMANIA

SERBIA

P.OF MONTENEGRO

OTTOMAN EMPIRE

K.OF
PORTUGAL

K.OF SPAIN

Gibraltar

BRITISH POSSESSIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

K.OF GREECE

K.OF MOROCCO

Algeria
(FRENCH)

BEYLIK OF
TUNIS

Malta

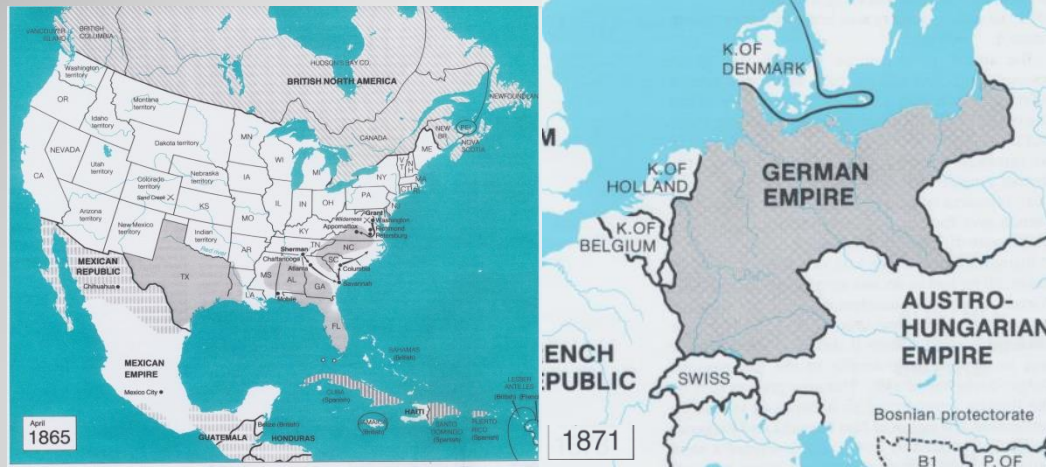
Suez Canal

VICEROYALTY OF
EGYPT

19 July
1870



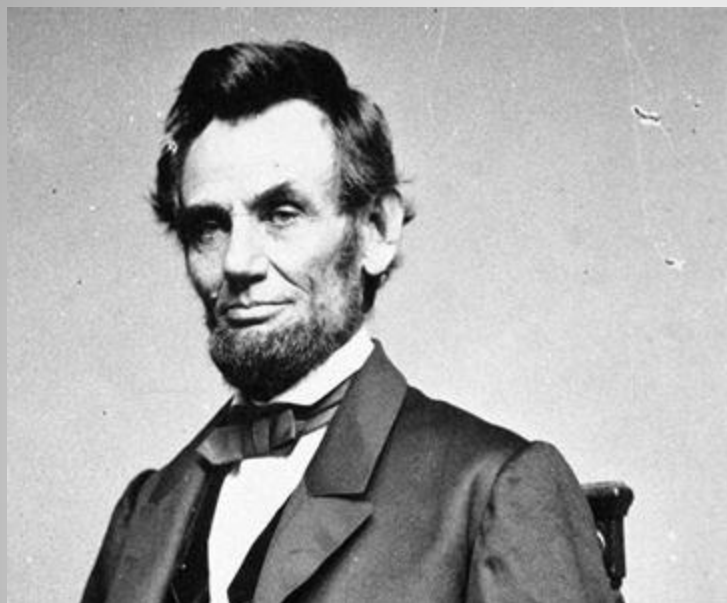
BUILDING NEW NATIONS? THE UNITED STATES AND GERMANY



When we recognize that in 1860 only a truncated nationalism existed among Americans despite the eighty-year history of the Union, then the American Civil War suddenly fits well into a comparison with Bismarck's nation-building efforts of those years. The Civil War, in short, was a struggle not to save a failed union but to create a nation that had not yet been born.

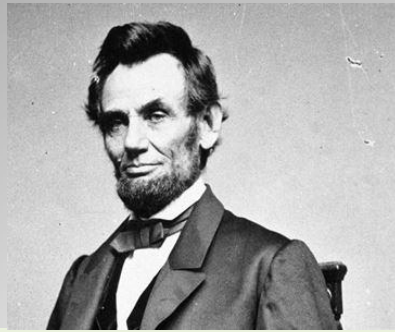
The American Civil War and the German Wars of Unification: The Problem of Comparison

CARL N. DEGLER



LINCOLN AND BISMARCK

—Both were 6' 4," both were Shakespeare fans.



LINCOLN AND BISMARCK

- Both were willing to use “blood and iron” without reluctance.
- Both used war to create (or strengthen) new nations.
- Both implemented modernizing and economic development measures, as part of constructing new nations.
- Both were shrewd and manipulative politicians, maneuvering the other side to fire the first shot.
- Both played fast and loose with legality/constitutionality, to gain their ends.

[BUT—Lincoln did so with confidence that legality and the Constitution would survive the current crisis. Bismarck had no great love for either, accepting both when he had to.]

Lincoln’s core belief was faith in democracy.

Bismarck’s core belief was opposition to democracy.

COMPARISONS: THE EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN WARS OF THE 1860S

The similarities and differences on both sides of the Atlantic are revealing.

—The Industrial Revolution meant that entirely new developments (railroads, telegraph lines, new weapons) combined with older ways of doing things (linear tactics, mounted couriers, reliance on horses and wagons).

—Mass armies of citizen-soldiers needed to be raised, trained and motivated.

—The American Civil War took four years to be resolved; the European wars took months.



Why?



The scale of operations in America was far greater than in Europe, and the lack in the U.S. of a large standing army meant that no quick victory was possible there.

In contrast, the campaigns conducted on both sides were similar in scale. Most covered about 100 miles, from the time when an army marched out to accomplish a goal to the time when success or failure ended the campaign.

Scale: Differences and Similarities



Washington DC to New Orleans: 965 miles

Washington DC to Richmond: 97 miles

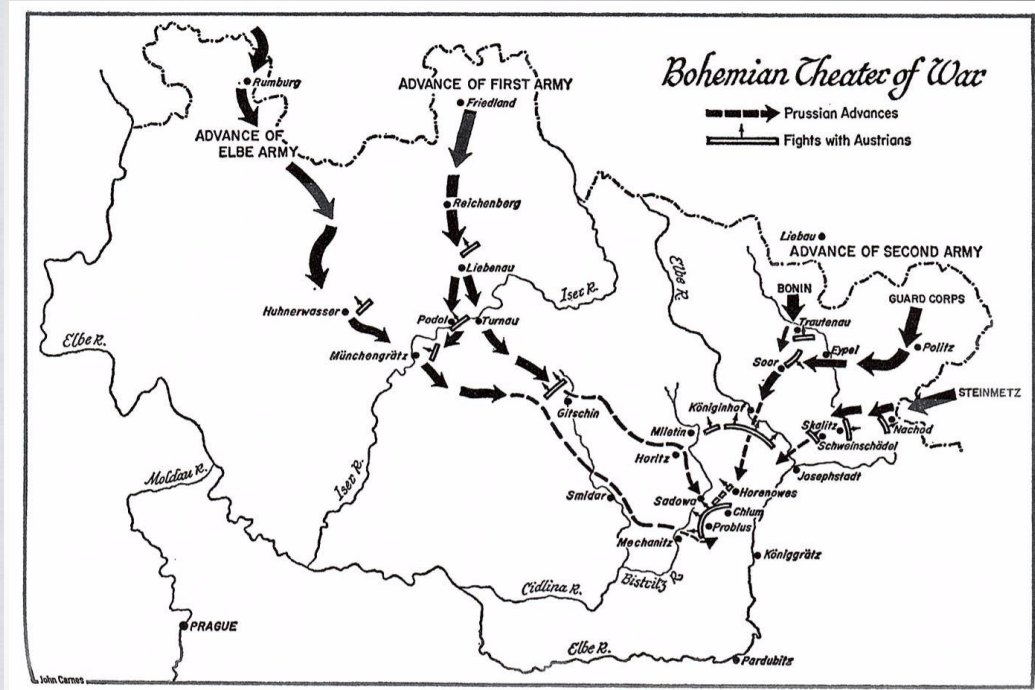
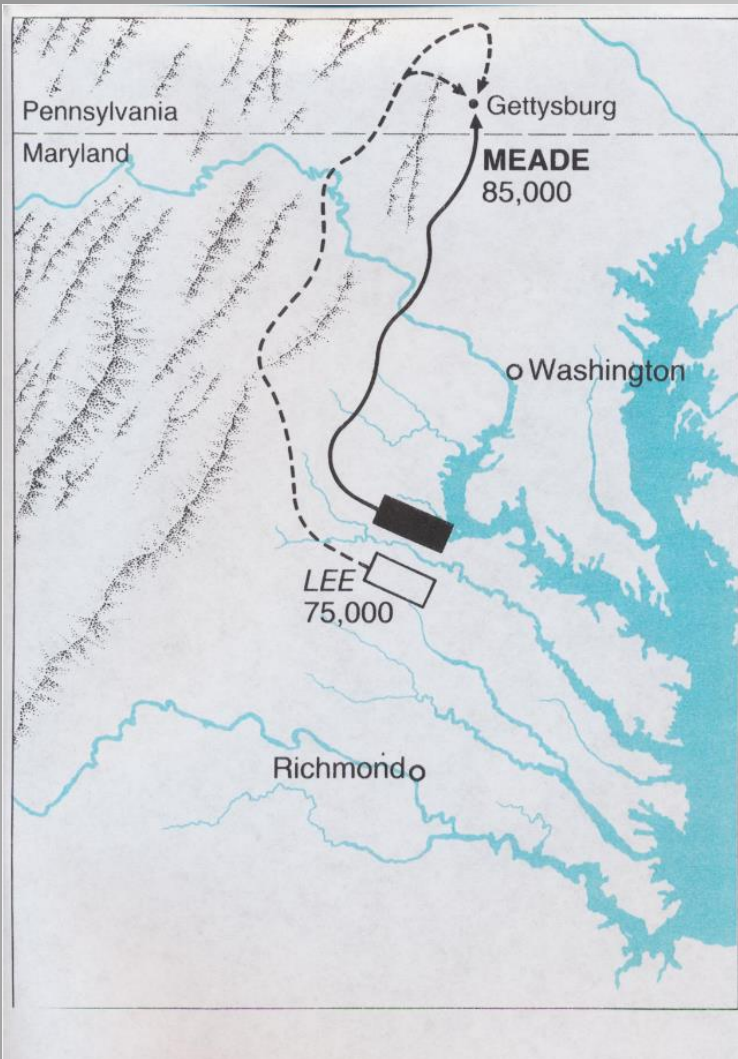
Chattanooga to Atlanta: 104 miles

Berlin to Paris: 546 miles

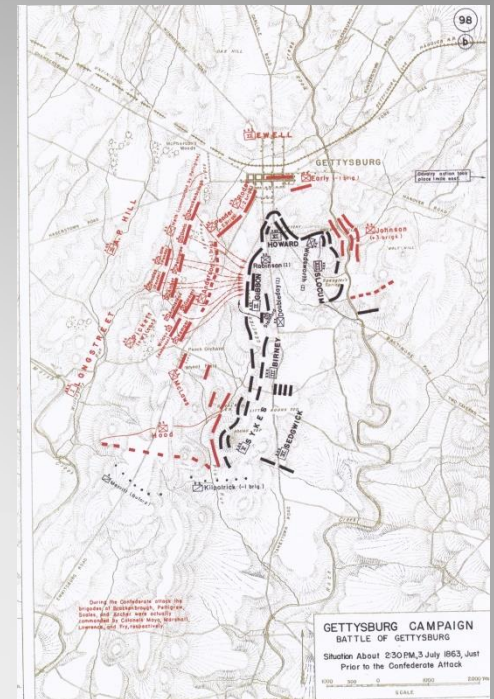
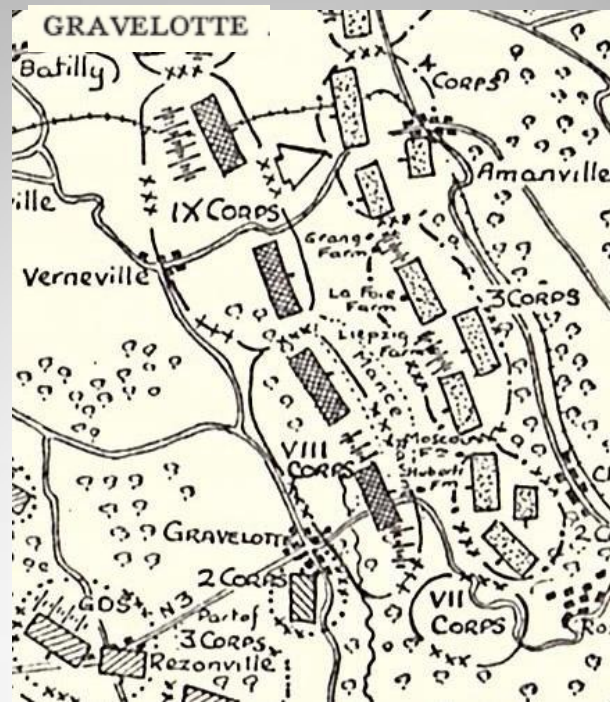
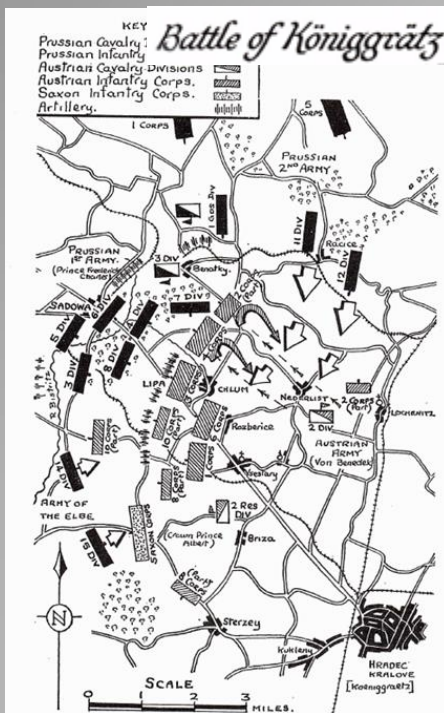
Saarbrücken to Metz to Sedan: 105 miles

Saarbrücken to Paris: 211 miles

The scale of operations in America was far greater than in Europe, and the lack in the U.S. of a large standing army meant that no quick victory was possible there.



In contrast, the campaigns conducted on both sides were similar in scale. Most covered about 100 miles, from the time when an army marched out to accomplish a goal to the time when success or failure ended the campaign.



Battles can be compared as well. European armies were larger than those in America:

Königgrätz: Aus. 271,000 Prus. 278,000

Gravelotte: Ger. 187,000 French 113,000

Gettysburg: Union 95,000 Conf. 71,000

STRATEGY - "the overall planning of military operations."

TACTICS - "the technique or science of securing those objectives designated by strategy: specifically, the art of deploying and directing troops against the enemy."

STRATEGY = fight the right battle.

TACTICS = fight the battle right.

TACTICS: Fighting the Battles

There are similarities between European and American major battles, in the way they were fought...

Königgrätz = Gettysburg done right.

Woerth = Antietam done right.

Spicheren = Fredericksburg done right.

Mars-la-Tour = Antietam done...well, like Antietam!

ON WAR

Indexed Edition

Edited and Translated by

MICHAEL HOWARD *and* PETER PARET

Introductory Essays by PETER PARET,
MICHAEL HOWARD, *and* BERNARD BRODIE;
with a Commentary by BERNARD BRODIE

Carl Philipp Gottfried von Clausewitz



Portrait while in Prussian service, by Karl Wilhelm Wach

Born	1 June 1780 Burg bei Magdeburg, Prussia (now Germany)
Died	16 November 1831 (aged 51) Breslau, Prussia (now Wrocław, Poland)
Allegiance	 Prussia  Russian Empire (1812–1813)
Service/branch	Prussian Cavalry Officer Army
Years of service	1792–1831
Rank	Major-General
Unit	Russian-German Legion (III Corps)
Commands held	<i>Kriegsakademie</i>
Battles/wars	French Revolutionary Wars <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Siege of Mainz Napoleonic Wars <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Battle of Jena–Auerstedt• Battle of Borodino• Battle of Ligny• Battle of Wavre

THE NATURE OF WAR: CLAUSEWITZ'S TRINITY

THE ELEMENTS OF THE TRINITY

Clausewitz's trinity comprises three specific elements. The identity of those elements is readily evident to anyone who actually reads the first paragraph of his description: It is “composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason....”

This set of elements is usually labeled

“emotion / chance / reason”;

sometimes

“violence / chance & probability / rational calculation”;

or, even more abstractly,

“irrationality / nonrationality / rationality.”

CLASH OF OPPOSITES: THE DIALECTIC OF BATTLE

Life.....Death

Reason.....Emotion

Offense.....Defense

Rational Planning.....Accident, coincidence, chance, luck

Tactical success.....Strategic/operational failure

Experienced veterans...Inexperienced novices

Heroism.....Cowardice

Victory.....Defeat

DEFINITIONS

STRATEGY - "the overall planning of military operations."

TACTICS - "the technique or science of securing those objectives designated by strategy: specifically, the art of deploying and directing troops against the enemy."

PRINCIPLES OF WAR

OBJECTIVE - "every military operation should be directed toward a clearly defined, decisive and attainable objective."

OFFENSIVE - "seize, retain and exploit the initiative."

MASS - "concentrate combat power at the decisive place and time."

ECONOMY OF FORCE - "allocate minimum essential combat power to secondary efforts."

MANEUVER - "place the enemy in a position of disadvantage through the flexible application of combat power."

UNITY OF COMMAND - "for every objective, there should be unity of effort."

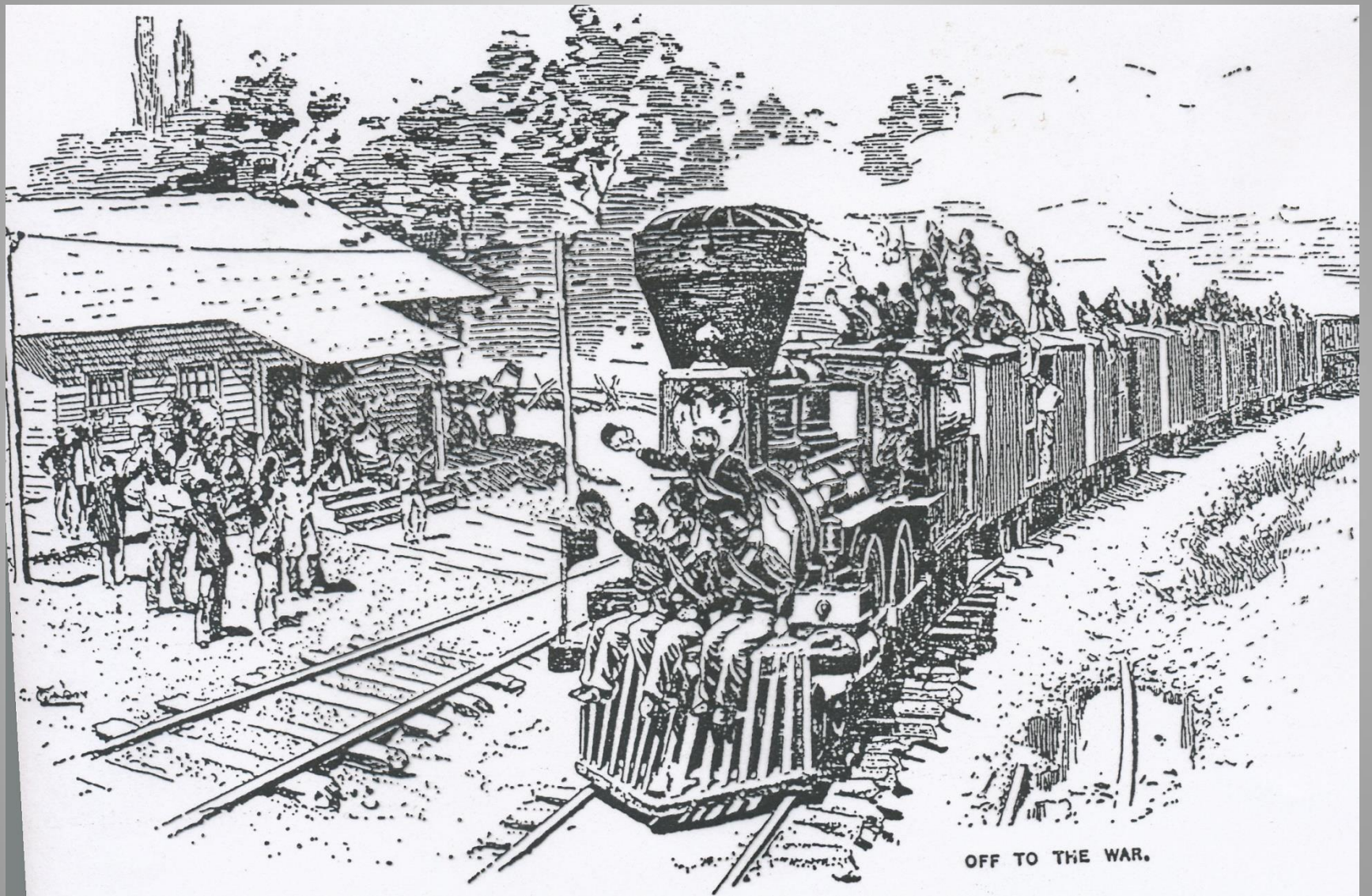
SECURITY - "never permit the enemy to acquire an unexpected advantage."

SURPRISE - "strike the enemy at a time or place and in a manner for which he is unprepared."

SIMPLICITY - "prepare clear, uncomplicated plans and clear concise orders to ensure thorough understanding."

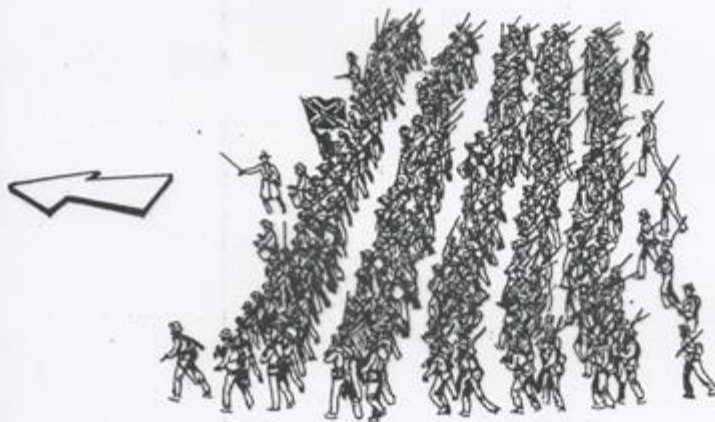
SOME CLASSIC BATTLES: Marathon, Issus, Cannae, Zama, Hastings, Agincourt, Blenheim, Leuthen, Austerlitz, Waterloo, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Metz, Tannenberg, France 1940, D-Day, Battle of the Bulge, Inchon, Suez 1973, Falklands 1982.



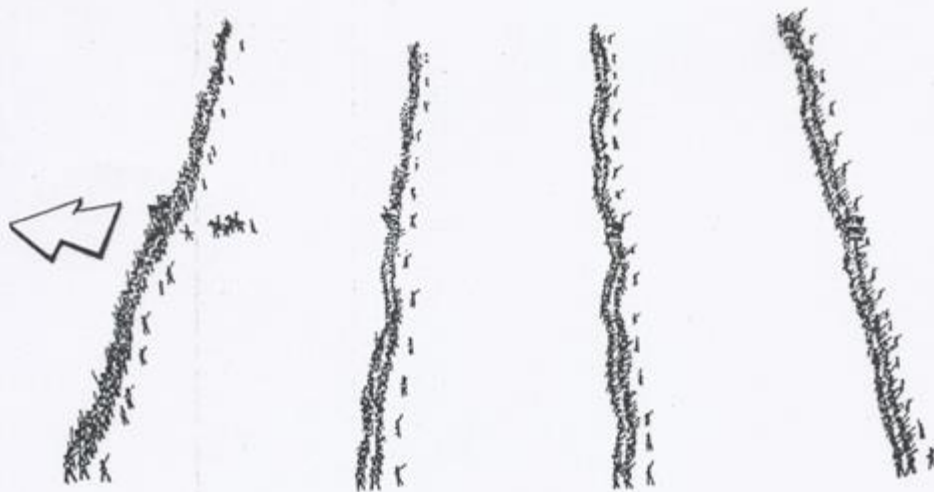


OFF TO THE WAR.

The Infantry Firefight



Regiment in Massed Column



Brigade Attack in Successive Lines

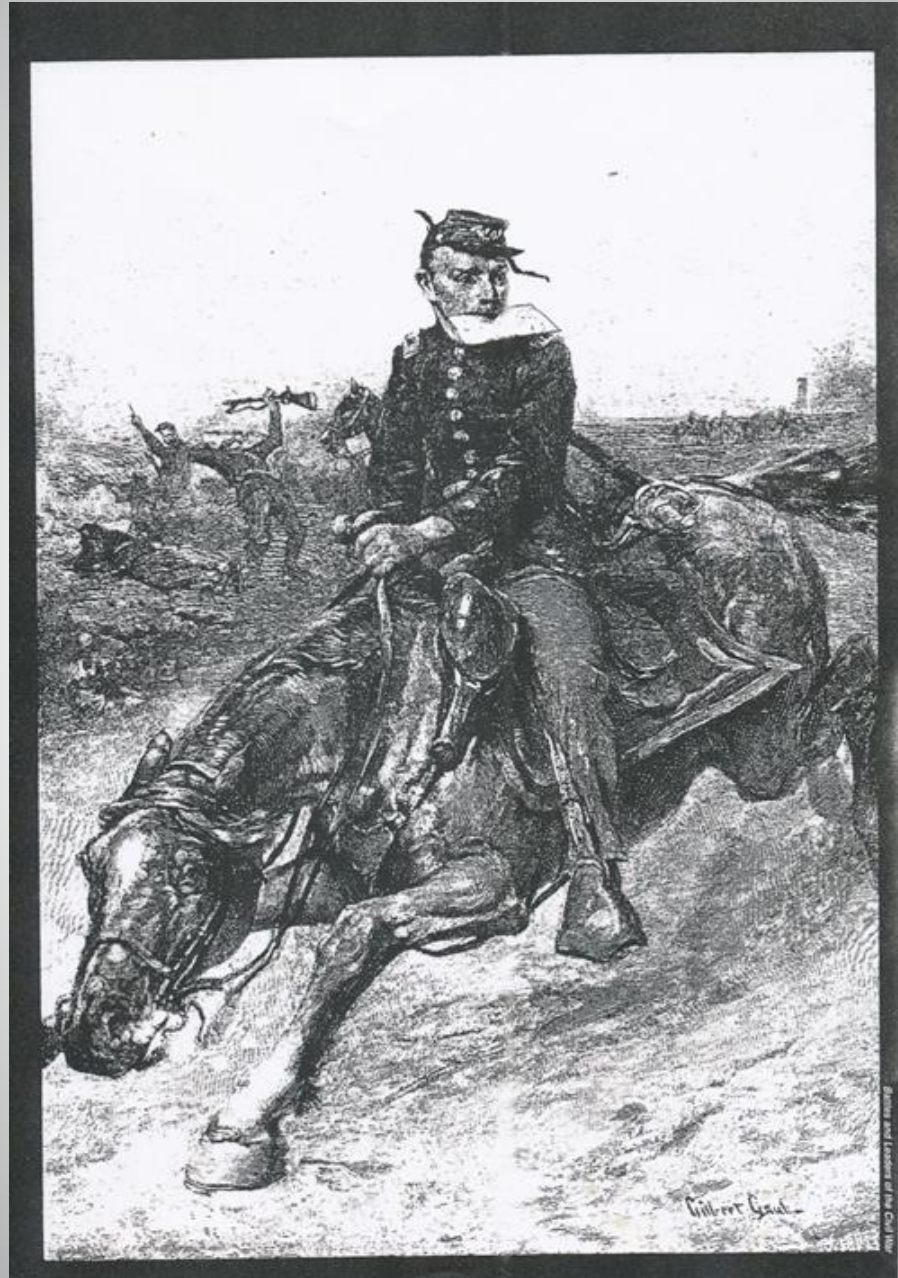
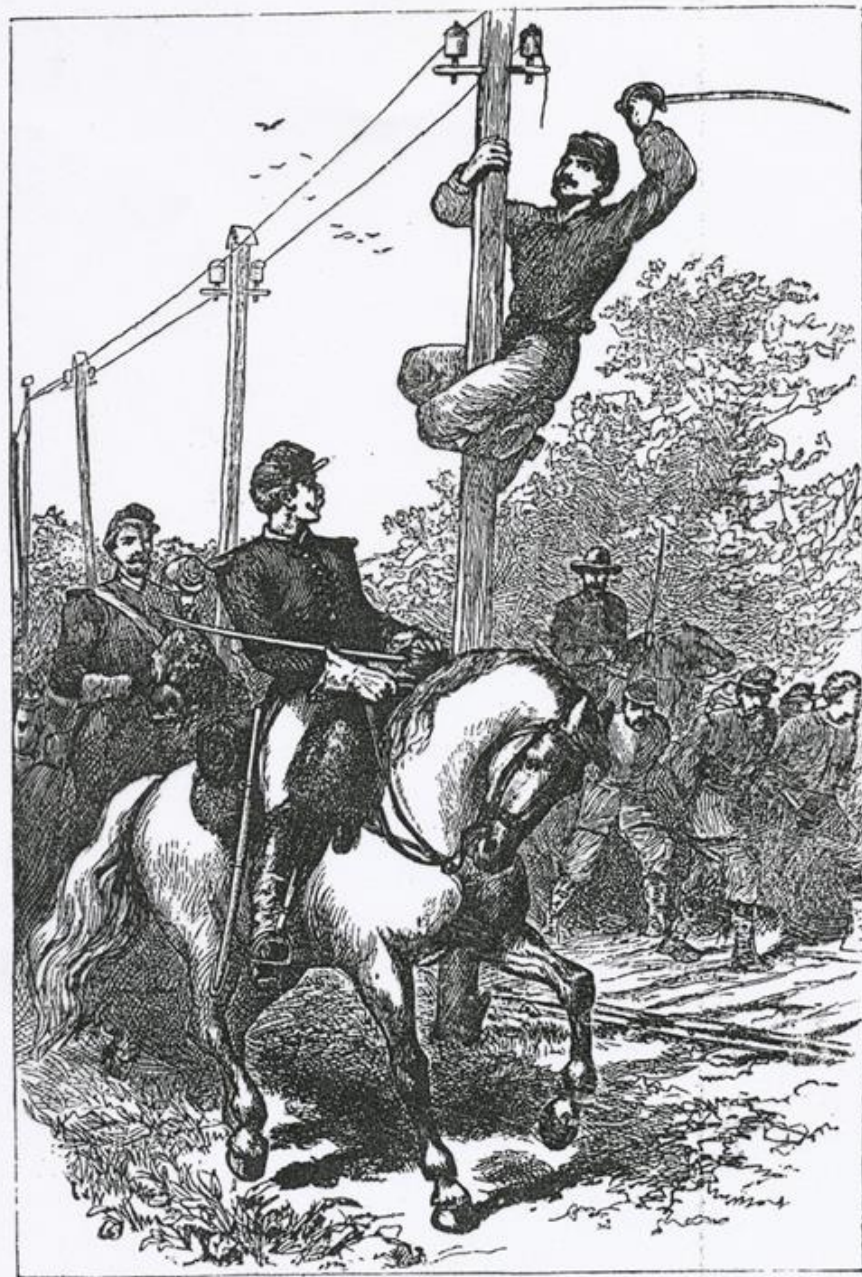


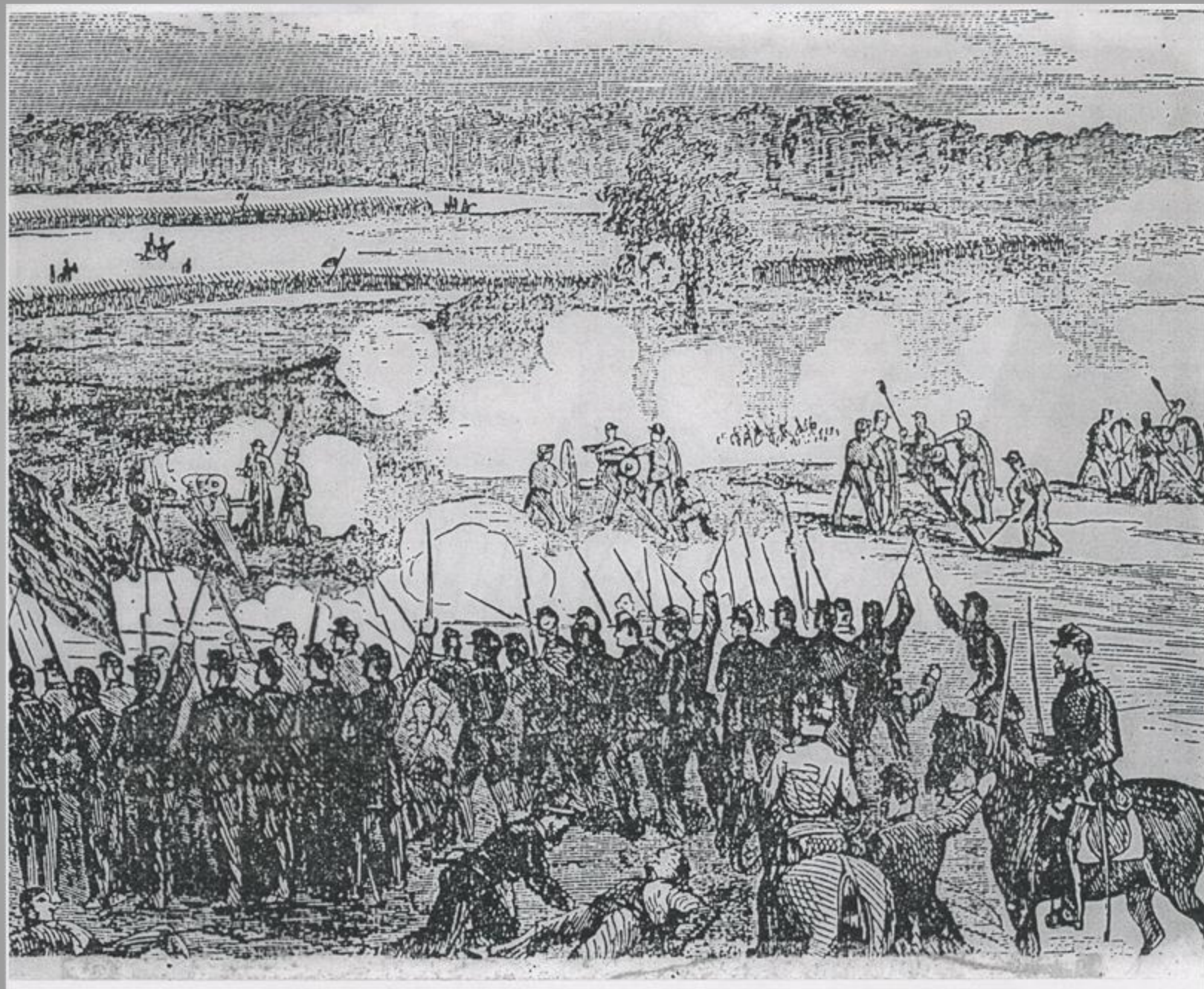
Illustration of a Union soldier on a horse during the American Civil War.





ON THE SKIRMISH LINE.







IN THE VAN.



Column at full distance, forward into line of battle.



440. A column being by company, at full distance, right in front, and at a halt, when the colonel shall wish to form it forward into line, he will conform to what is prescribed Nos. 414 and 415, and then command:

1. *Forward into line.* 2. *By company, left half wheel.* 3. **MARCH** (or *double quick—MARCH*).

441. At the first command, the captain of the leading company will add—*guide right*, put the company in march, halt it three paces from the markers, and align it against the latter by the right.

442. At the command *march*, all the other companies will wheel to the left on fixed pivots; and, at the instant the colonel shall judge, according to the direction of the line of battle, that the companies have sufficiently wheeled, he will command:

4. *Forward.* 5. **MARCH.** 6. *Guide right.*

443. At the fifth command, the companies, ceasing to wheel, will

march straight forward; and at the sixth, the men bows toward the right. The right guide of the second who is nearest to the line of battle, will march straight forward; each succeeding right guide will follow the file immediately behind him at the cessation of the wheel.

444. The second company having arrived opposite the file of the first, its captain will cause it to turn to the right in order to approach the line of battle; and when its right flank is at three paces from that line, the captain will command:

1. *Second company.* 2. **HALT.**

445. At the second command, the company will not yet in line with the guide will come into it proper; the captain will place himself on the line of battle, so as to be to one of the three files on the left of the company; as he is assured on the direction by the lieutenant-colonel, having placed himself accurately on the line of battle, he will command:

3. *Right—DRESS.*

446. At the instant that the guide of the second company ceases to turn to the right, the guide of the third, ceasing to turn to the right, will march straight forward; when he shall arrive opposite to the left of the second company, he will cause the company to turn to the right, in order to approach the line of battle, halt it at three paces from that line, and then command: *Right*, as prescribed for the second company.

447. Each following company will execute what has been prescribed for the third, as the preceding company shall have done, in order to approach the line of battle.

448. The formation ended, the colonel will command:

Guides—POSTS.

449. The colonel and lieutenant-colonel will observe the formation, what is prescribed for them on the right in order to approach the line of battle.

450. A column left in front, will form itself forward into line of battle, according to the same principles, and by inverse order.

451. When a column by company at full distance and in march, shall arrive behind the right of the line of battle, to form into battle, the colonel and lieutenant-colonel will command: *Forward*, as prescribed Nos. 414 and 415.

452. The head of the column having arrived at a distance from the two markers established on the line, he will command:

1. *Forward into line.* 2. *By company, left half wheel.* (or *double quick—MARCH*).

453. At the first command, the captain of the first company will add—*guide right*, and caution it to march forward; the captains of the other companies will command: *Forward*, and caution it to march forward; and when the first company is at three paces from the line, the captain will command: *Right*.

ch company will wheel to the right on the side of each will place himself on its left as to pass; and when the colonel shall judge the sufficiently wheeled, he will command:

1. **5. MARCH.** 6. *Guide right.*

mand, the companies ceasing to wheel will l; at the sixth, the men will touch elbows

of the second company will march straight npany shall arrive at the point where it ; each succeeding right guide will follow ; and ore him at the cessation of the wheel, and of this file until this company shall turn upon the line; this guide will then march

pany having arrived opposite to the left in will cause it to turn to the right; the himself so as to arrive squarely upon the he shall be at three paces from that line, id:

ond company. 2. **HALT.**

mand, the company will halt; the files guide will come into it promptly, the left on the line of battle, and as soon as he is by the lieutenant-colonel, the captain will e right.

company will conform to what has just econd.

ded, the colonel will command:

Guides—Posts.

e in march, and the colonel shall wish to the first company, and that the angle ew positions be a right angle, he will placed on the new direction, before the by that company, and will command:

a first company. 2. *By company, right half rch (or double quick—MARCH).*

and, the captains will move rapidly be- spective companies; the captain of the and: 1. *Right turn*; 2. *Quick time*; the npanies will caution them to wheel to

narch, the first company will turn to the inciples prescribed in the school of the ain will halt it at three paces from the ear will promptly come into line. The pany by the right.

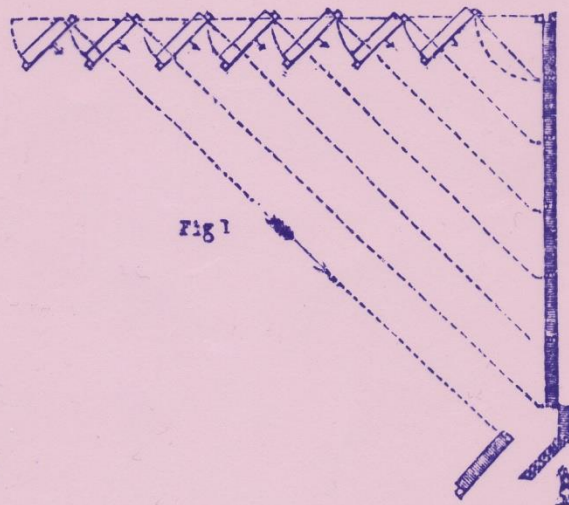
757. Each of the other companies will wheel to the right on a fixed pivot; the left guides will place themselves on the left of their respective companies, and when the colonel shall judge they have wheeled sufficiently, he will command:

4. *Forward.* 5. **MARCH.** 6. *Guide right.*

758. These commands will be executed as indicated No. 746 and following.

759. The colonel will cause the battalion to change front forward on the eighth company according to the same principles and by inverse means.

Change of front perpendicularly to the rear.



COMPARING THE AMERICAN AND GERMAN WARS, 1861—1871

**The Campaign of Königgrätz,
a Study of the Austro-
Prussian Conflict in the
Light of the American Civil
War**



ARTHUR LOCKWOOD 1853-1905 WAGNER

ON THE ROAD
TO
TOTAL WAR
The American Civil War
and the
German Wars of Unification,
1861-1871

**Stig Förster
and Jörg Nagler,**
Editors

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Pairs of articles on the same theme from the two viewpoints
allow the reader to draw comparisons and spot parallels.

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The American Civil War and the German Wars of Unification: The Problem of Comparison

CARL N. DEGLER

Except for Annette Becker's essay (Chapter 31), my obligation seems to be the only one that is unabashedly comparative in conception. By that very fact, my anxiety level along with my responsibility are considerably raised since it seems I am expected to provide the fundamental justification for this Conference! (It is only fair to the organizers of the conference for me to admit that their suggestion was only that I would keep the conferees from making "premature comparisons.") Yet, behind the project stands the implication that there is a sound reason for bringing these two military activities into historical comparison. It is true that they happen to occur in a narrow time frame. Yet a common time frame is hardly a sufficient basis for comparison. For, if it were, why not include the Taiping Rebellion in China, which was both contemporaneous, occurring between 1850 and 1864, and much more costly in loss of life—always a good historical measure for significance, after all—than the American Civil War and all three of the German Wars of Unification taken together. It has been reliably estimated that more than 30 million people perished before the Taipings were put down.¹

Moreover, the Chinese struggle, like the American Civil War, was a rebellion, whereas the German wars were said to be conflicts to create a new Empire rather than to disrupt or change an established one. Furthermore, the official name of the American conflict is the War of the Rebellion, a title which, on the face of it, seems to make it have more in common with the Chinese struggle than with the three German wars, especially when this conference places the latter under the rubric of Wars of Unification. Don't be alarmed; I am not going to make a case for including the Taiping Rebellion in this Conference. I do intend the reference to serve, however, as a way of suggesting at least one of the problems inherent in historical comparison. The Chinese war, aside from its being a rebellion, actually had little in common

1 S. Y. Teng, *The Taiping Rebellion and the Western Powers* (London, 1971), 411.

The American Civil War and the German Wars of Unification: Some Parting Shots

ROGER CHICKERING

The story is probably apocryphal that Helmuth von Moltke, the chief of the Prussian general staff, once characterized the American Civil War as an affair of "two armed mobs chasing each other around the country, from which nothing could be learned."¹ Such sentiments were nonetheless rife among Prussia's military leaders in the early 1860s; and the performance of the armies that these soldiers thereupon led against Denmark, Austria, and France only encouraged their belief that the wars waged almost simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic were not comparable phenomena. The present volume of essays leaves no doubt that the Prussian soldiers were mistaken and that historians can compare the German Wars of Unification and the American Civil War with insight and profit. Employing the idea of total war to frame this comparison has thrown light on both the differences and similarities in the conflicts. It has also, however, raised difficulties of its own.

As Carl N. Degler's essay (Chapter 3) makes clear, the simultaneity of these conflicts was not fortuitous. The wars on both sides of the Atlantic were instances of momentous civil strife, facets of the great mid-century political convulsions that Robert Binkley has characterized, in a wonderful but long-neglected book, as the "crisis of the federated polity."² The wars sealed the consolidation of new forms of rule, which were more unitary and centralized than the German Confederation (*Bund*) had provided in central Europe or the antebellum constitution, at least as construed by Southern observers, had foreseen in the United States. The tensions that undermined these looser federations reflected in both cases painful adjustments that accompanied the transition to industrial capitalism.

1 The story was first reported in J. F. C. Fuller, *War and Western Civilization, 1832-1932* (London, 1932), 99. See also Jay Luvaas, *The Military Legacy of the Civil War: The European Inheritance* (Chicago, 1959), 126.

2 Robert C. Binkley, *Realism and Nationalism, 1852-1871* (New York, 1935).



FROM ENEMIES TO ALLIES:

Austria and Prussia were allies in 1864, enemies in 1866;

Saxony fought the Prussians in 1866 and fought with them against France in 1870.

—*The reason is one of the basic concepts of international relations:*

“France has no friends, only interests.” — Charles de Gaulle

“America has no permanent friends or enemies, only interests.” — Henry

Kissinger United States Secretary of State

K.OF SWEDEN
AND NORWAY

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KINGDOM**

RUSSIAN EMPIRE

Boundary of
North German
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OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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Gibraltar

BRITISH POSSESSIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

K.OF GREECE

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BEYLIK OF
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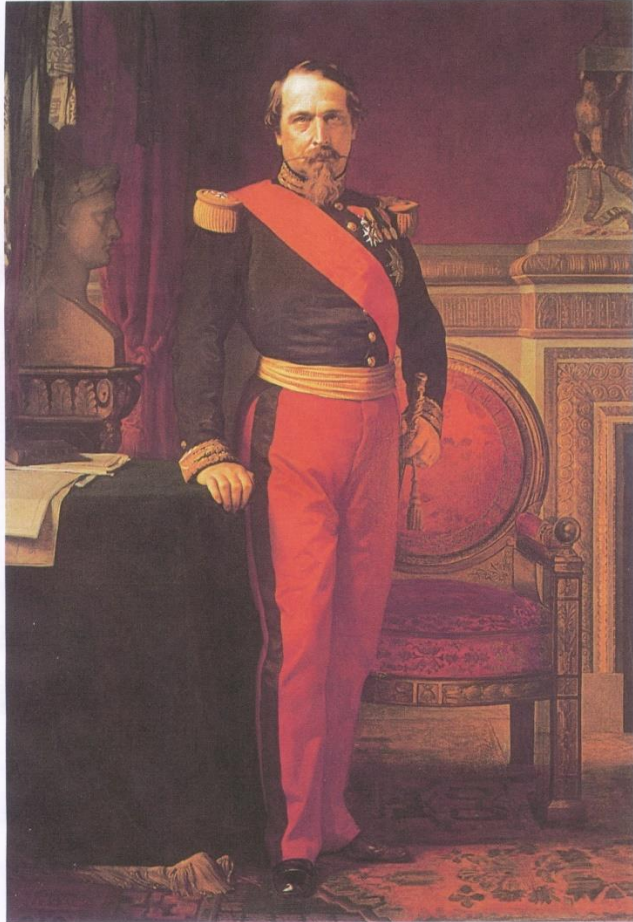
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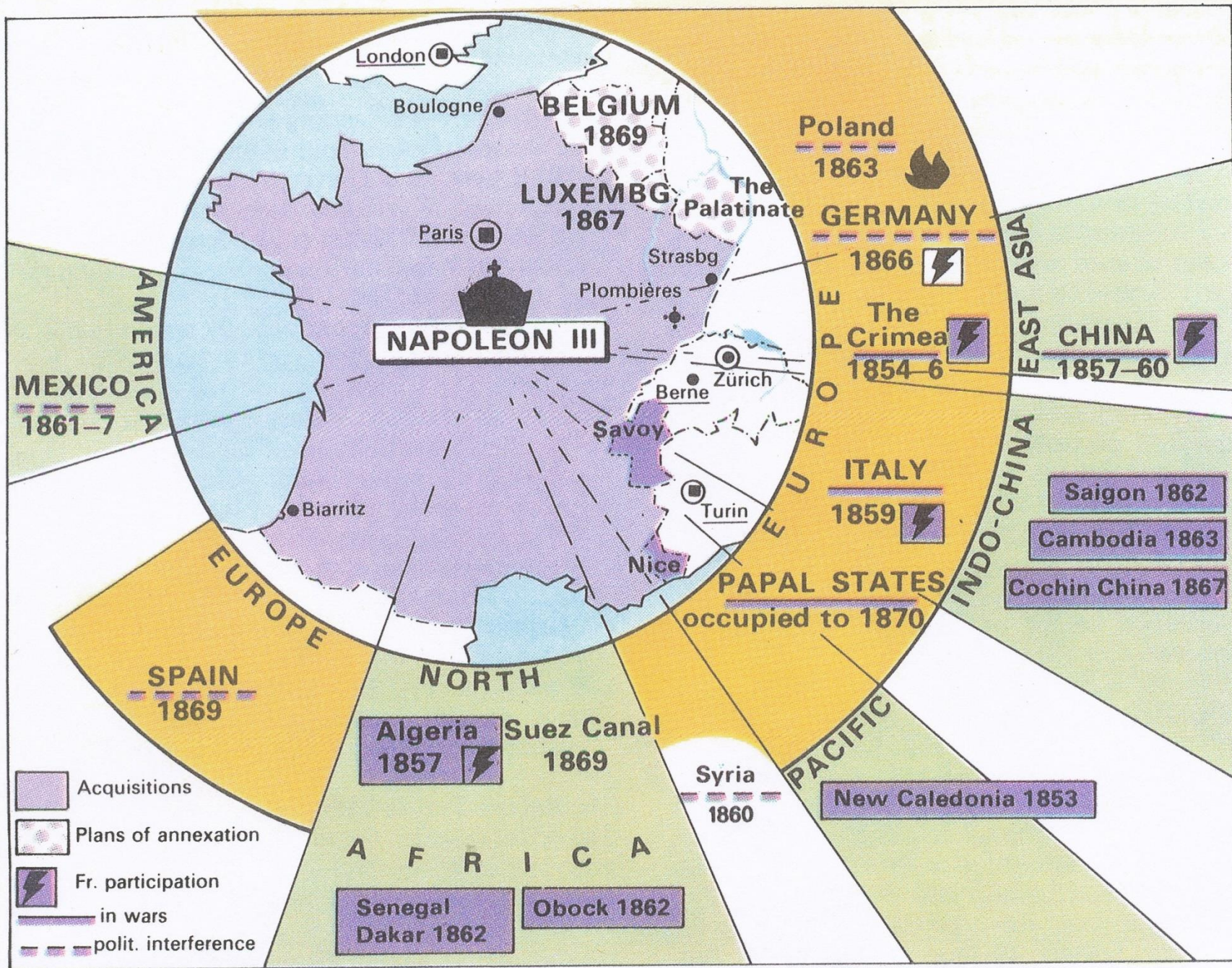
Suez Canal

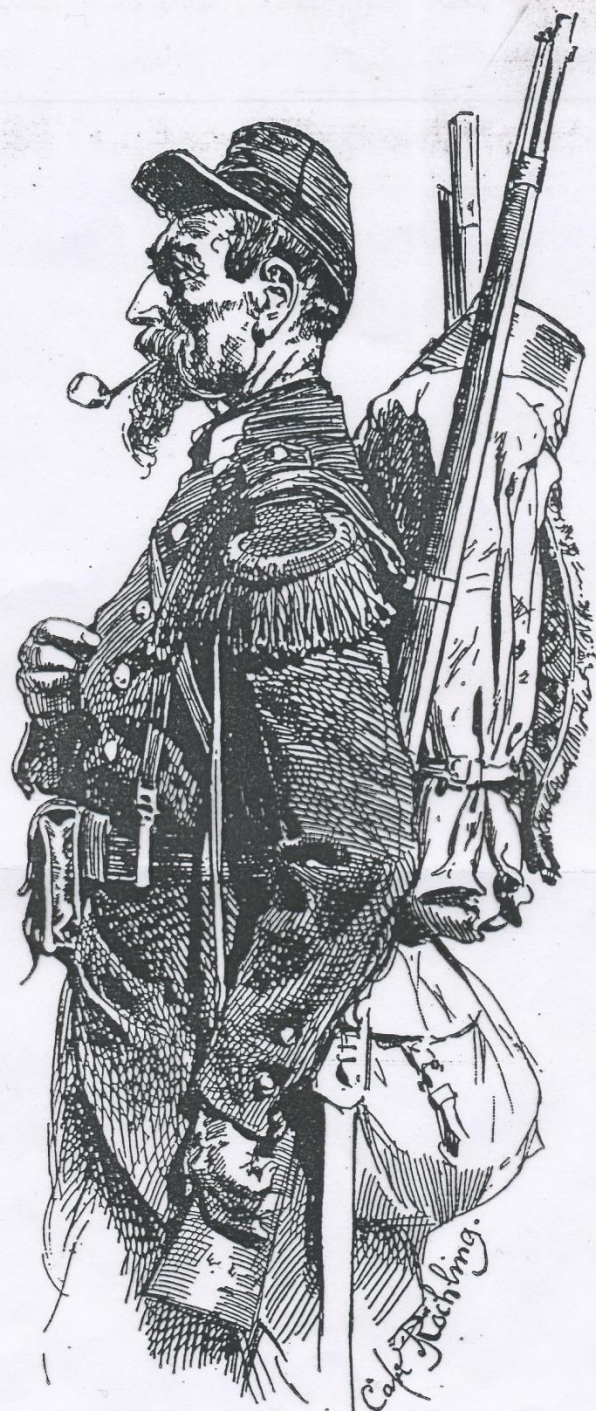
VICEROYALTY OF
EGYPT

19 July
1870









- 1: Line Infantryman
- 2: Sous-lieutenant of Infantry
- 3: Chasseur à Pied, campaign dress



Cuirassier



Fantassin de Ligne



Garde National



Tirailleur Algérien
(Turcos)





Französische Truppen.
Artillerist.

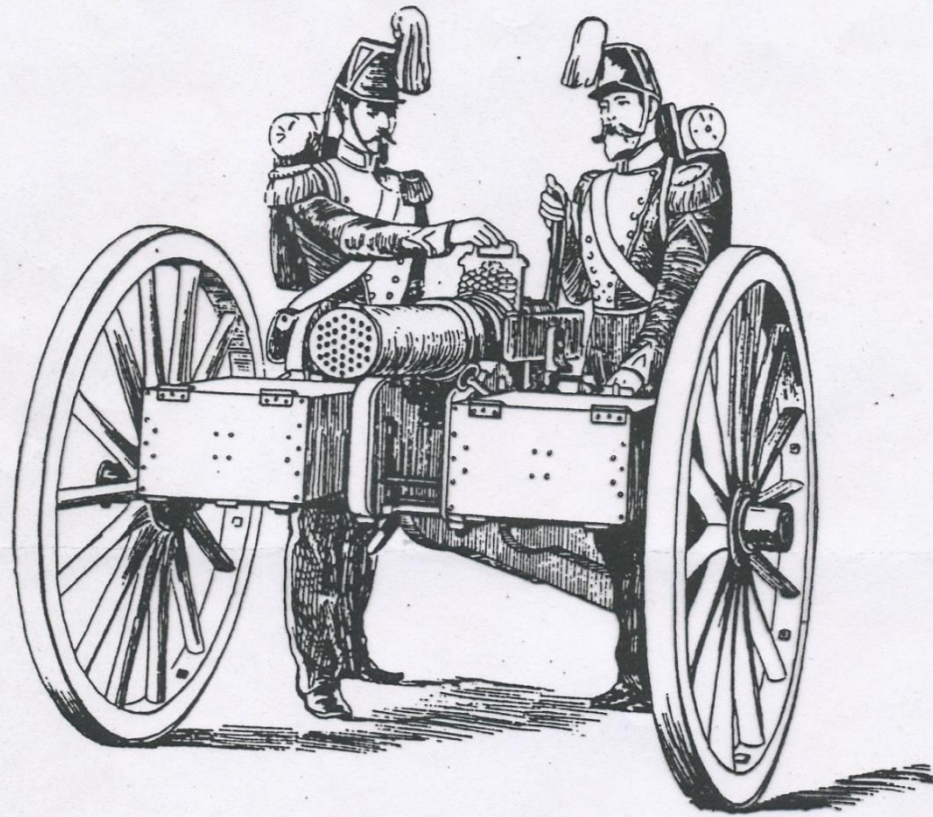
Reitender Jäger.
Moussardes, Linien-Infanterist.

Turko.

Cuirassier. Dragoner.



One great asset of the French was the effective range of their rifle, the chassepot (upper), which was twice that of the German needle gun



Französische Mitrailleuse



Französische Kavallerie im Angriff



Jäger prussien



Fantassin bavaois



Fantassin prussien



Ulan prussien



Kübel

Preussische Truppen.

Dragoner.
Kürassier.

Husar.

Landwehr-Infanterie. Pionier.
Ulan.

Reitende Artillerie.
Jäger. Musketier der Linien-Inf.



Süddeutsche Truppen.

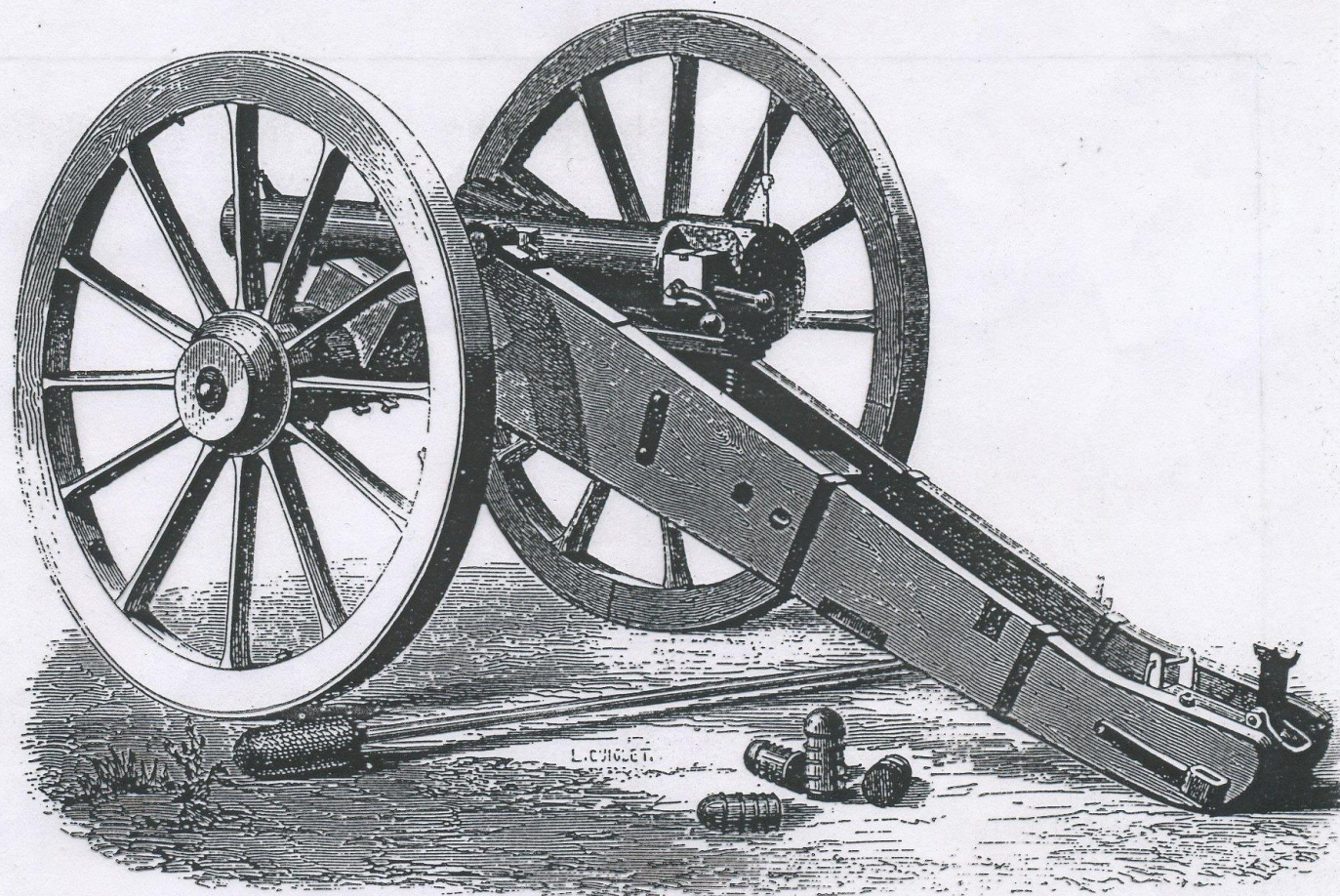
Württemberg.
Reiter.
Artillerist.

Infanterist.

Bayern.
Artillerist.
Infanterist.

Chevauleger.
Kürassier.

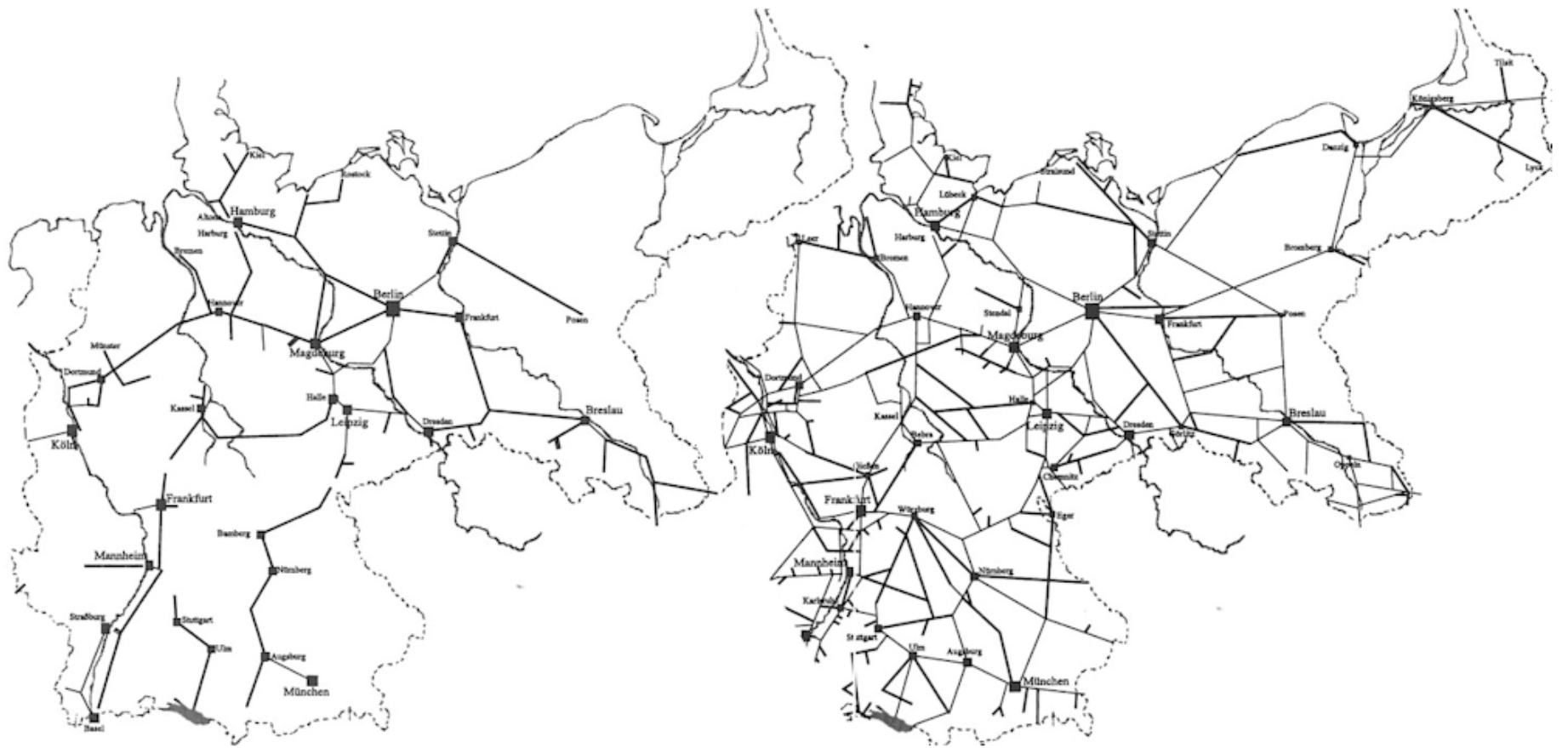
A contemporary French
print of Krupp's breech-
loading field gun. Despite
breech defects, this was
the mainstay of the
Prussian army in
1870-1



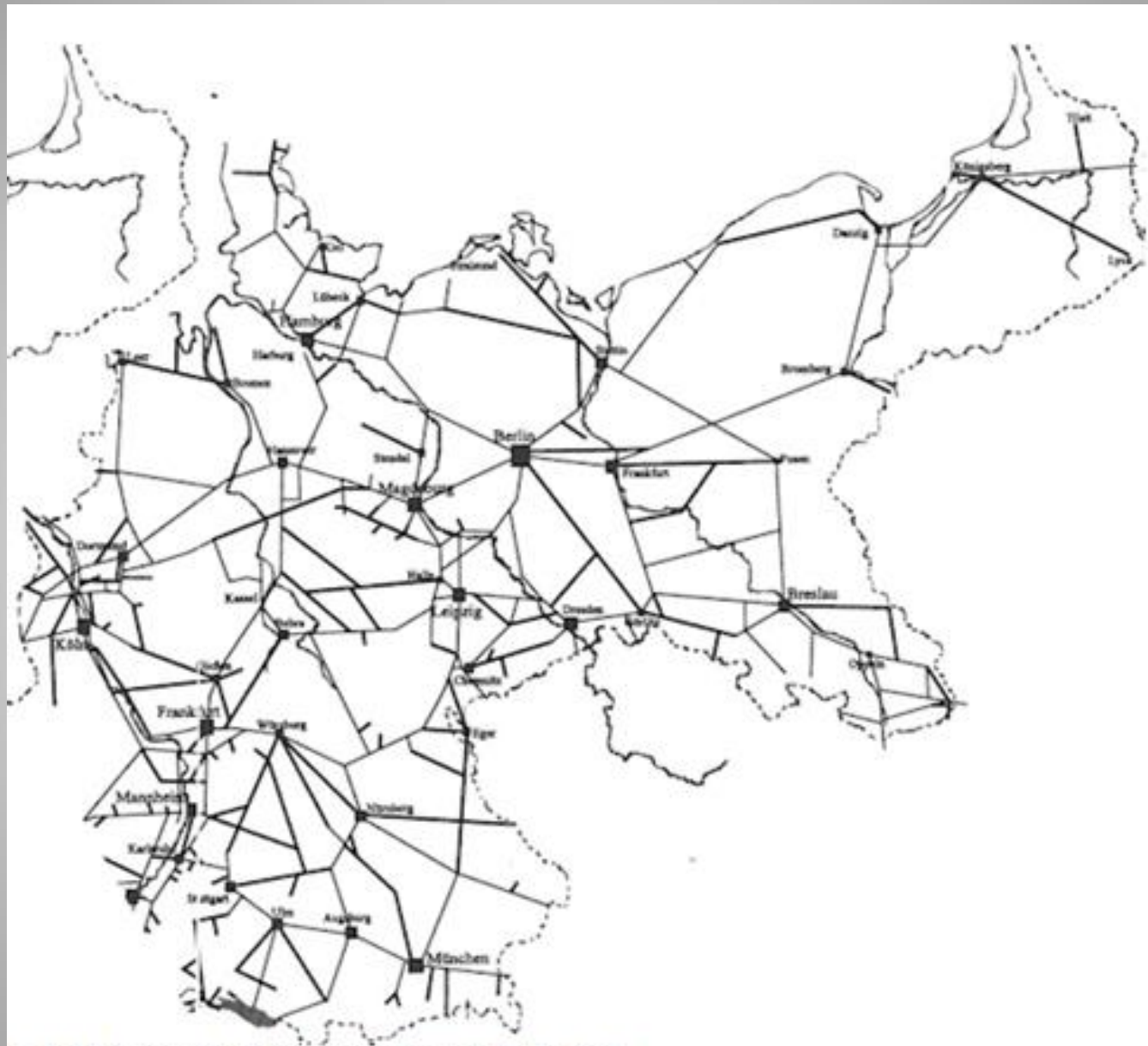




Einrücken der Landwehr zum Bataillon.



Above left the 'German' rail network in 1850, before unification and above right in 1870.



in 1850, before unification and above right in 1870.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN: The “Liberal Empire,” 1870

In 1870 Napoleon III had ruled France for a generation. Now, aging and in poor health (painful kidney stones), he wanted to liberalize the government so that his young son would inherit a stable realm.

- More freedom of the press.
- Political opposition allowed in the French parliament (Chamber of Deputies).
- Gradual move toward a constitutional monarchy, resembling Victorian Britain.

BUT—His government was now subject to mass popular emotion, and in 1870 this was to bring it to destruction.



Do nations go to war because of insults to their honor?

The Ems Telegram and its supposed insult formed an excuse for a more deeply-rooted cause of war: the realization that a powerful German state (the North German Confederation dominated by Prussia) threatened traditional French military and political predominance in Europe's balance of power.



The outburst of popular fury in Paris fully supported the government's declaration of war on July 19, and in Germany public opinion fully accepted the challenge.

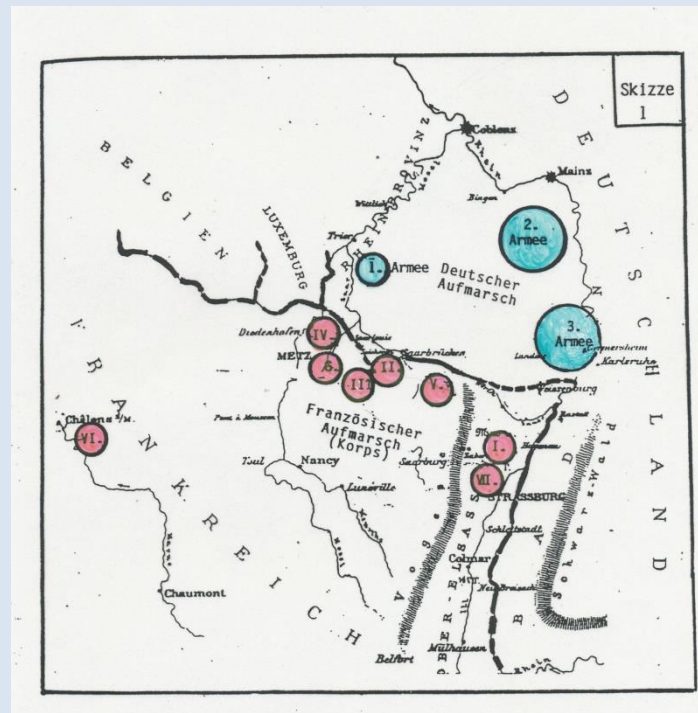
Rival French and German nationalism led to this war.

MOBILIZING THE ARMIES

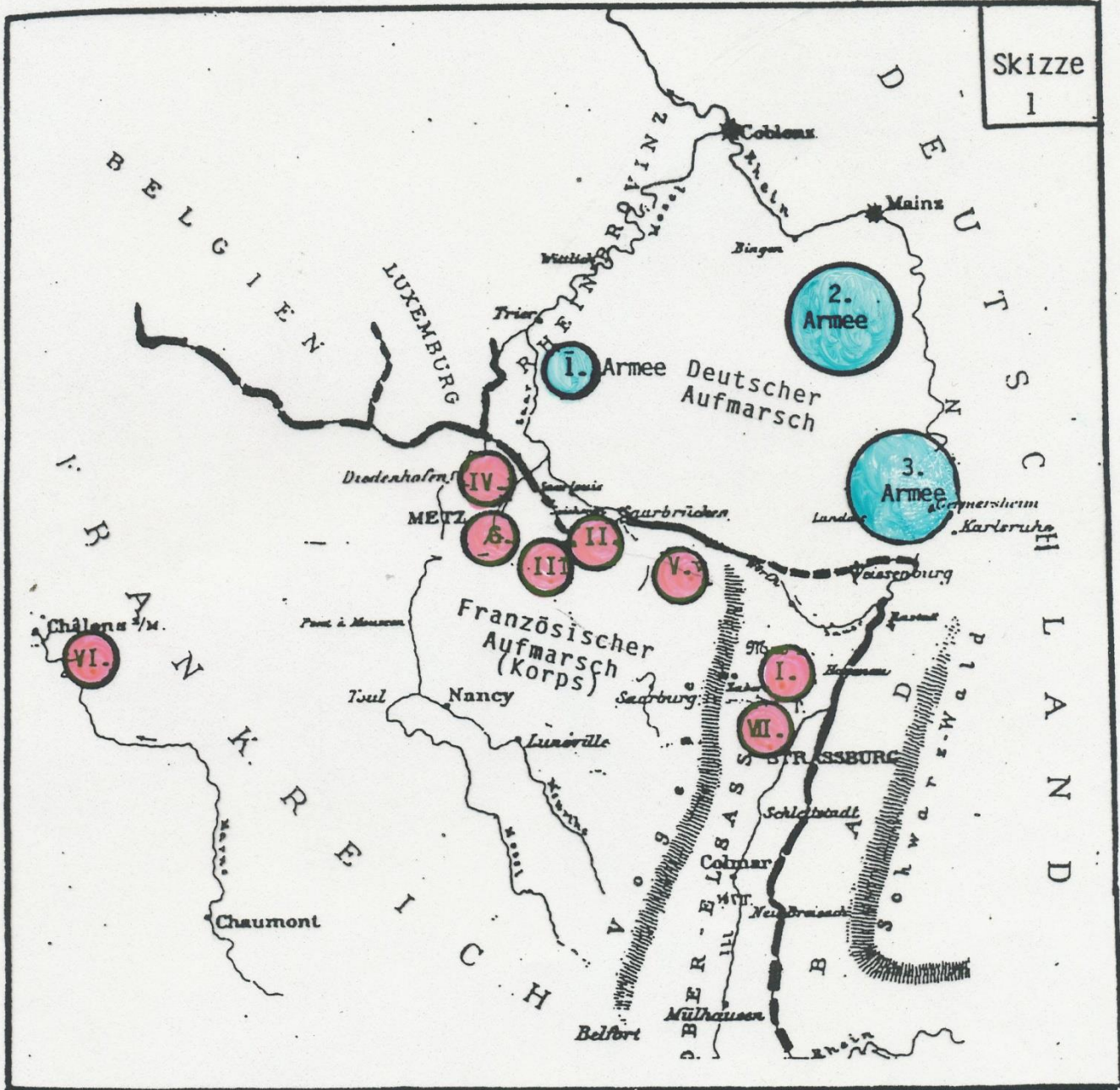
The French military leaders assured the Emperor and government that they were ready for war. In fact, French mobilization was even more haphazard and chaotic than in the past.

In contrast, Prussian mobilization under Field Marshal Moltke's guidance was an order of magnitude more efficient, setting new standards for the future of all armies.

In early August, the French could assemble 400,000 well-trained and experienced regulars to face the Germans' 1,000,000 well-trained regulars and "good enough" reservists.



Skizze
1

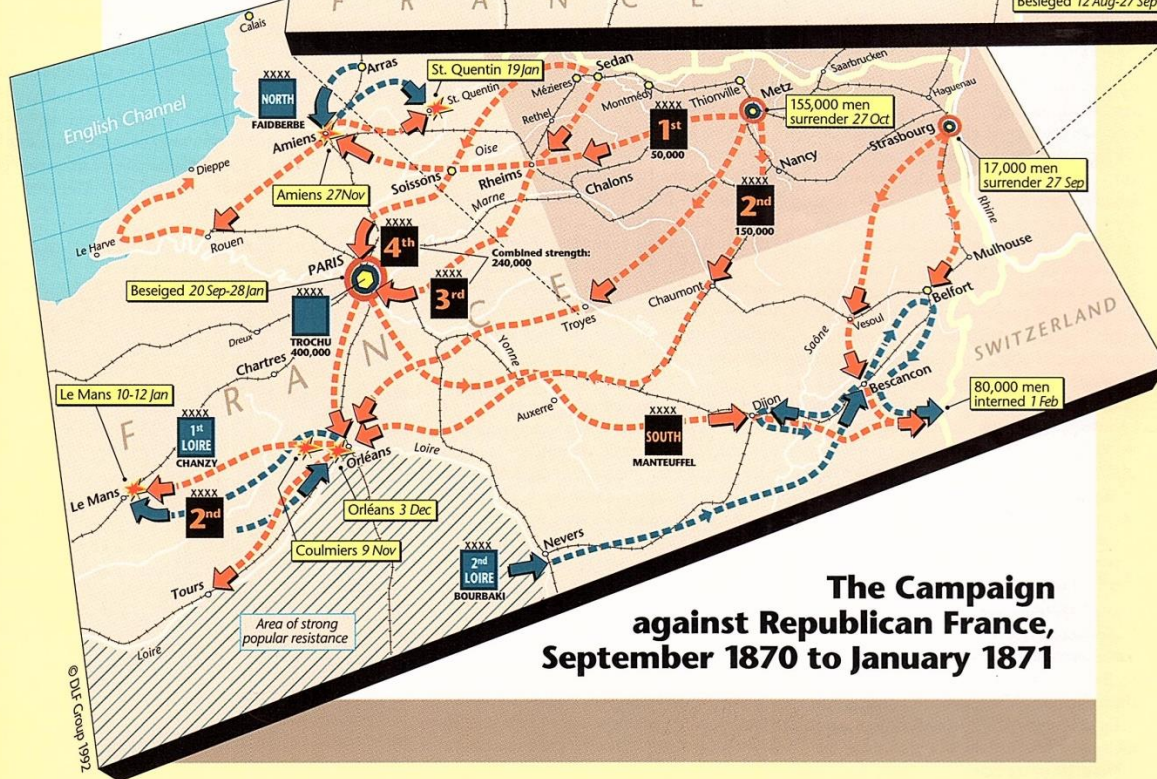
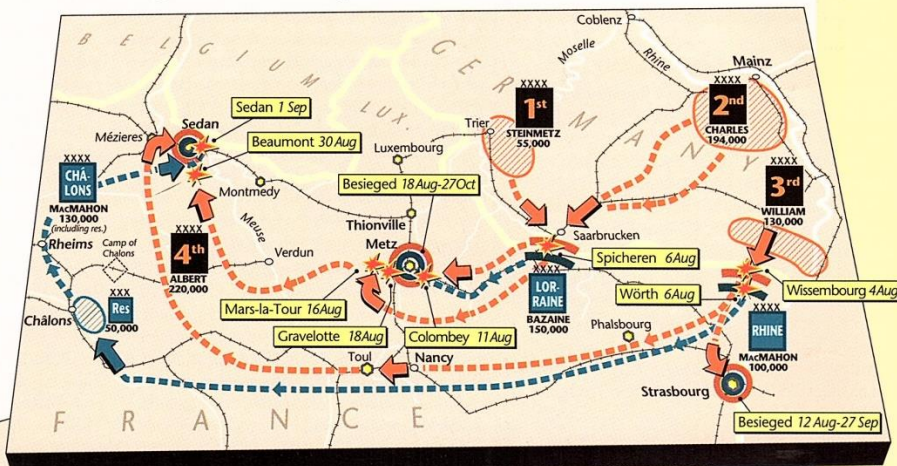


THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR, 1870-1871

The Campaign against Imperial France, 3 August to 1 September, 1870

KEY

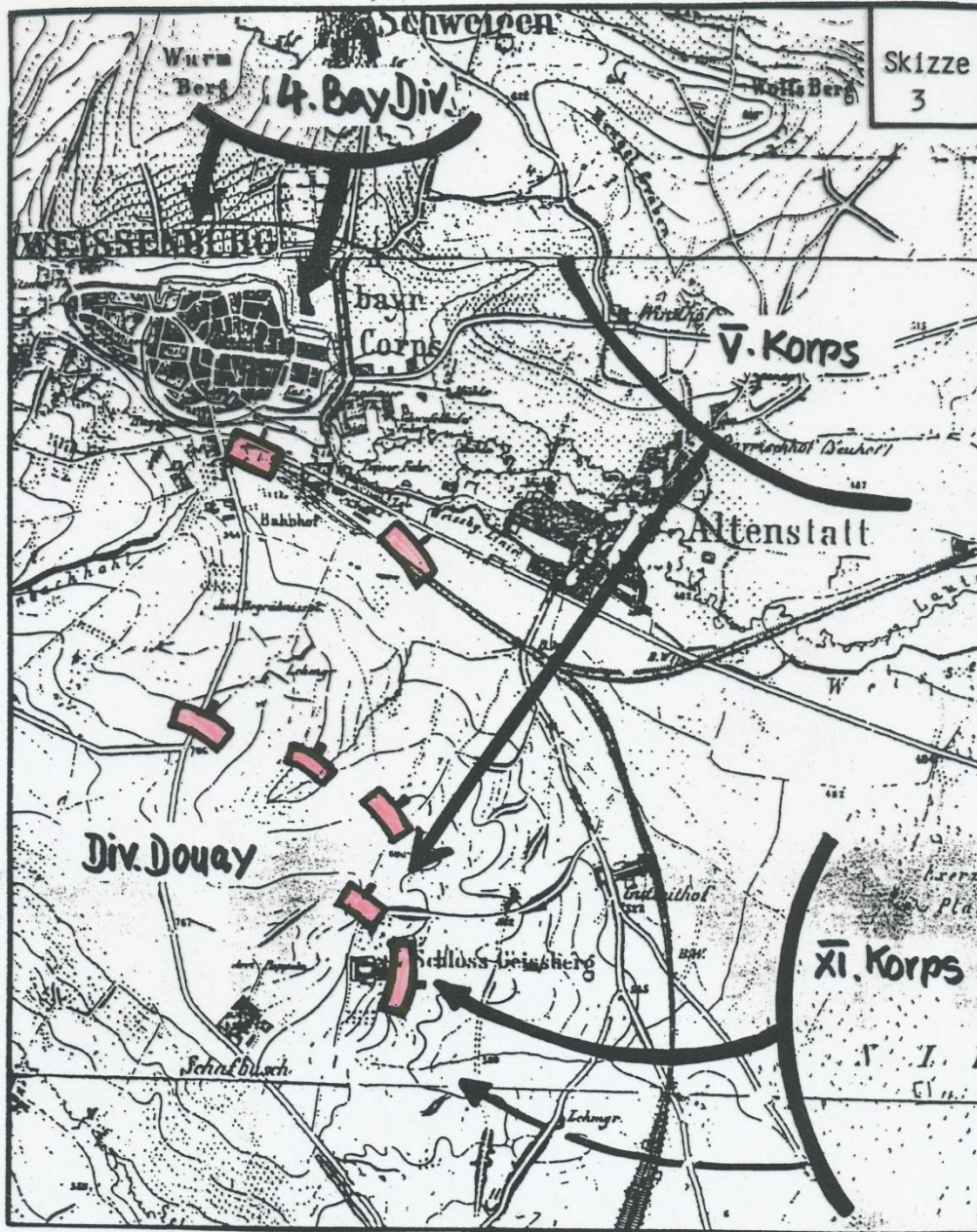
- Prussian forces/movements
- French forces/movements
- Major battle/siege
- Major raillines

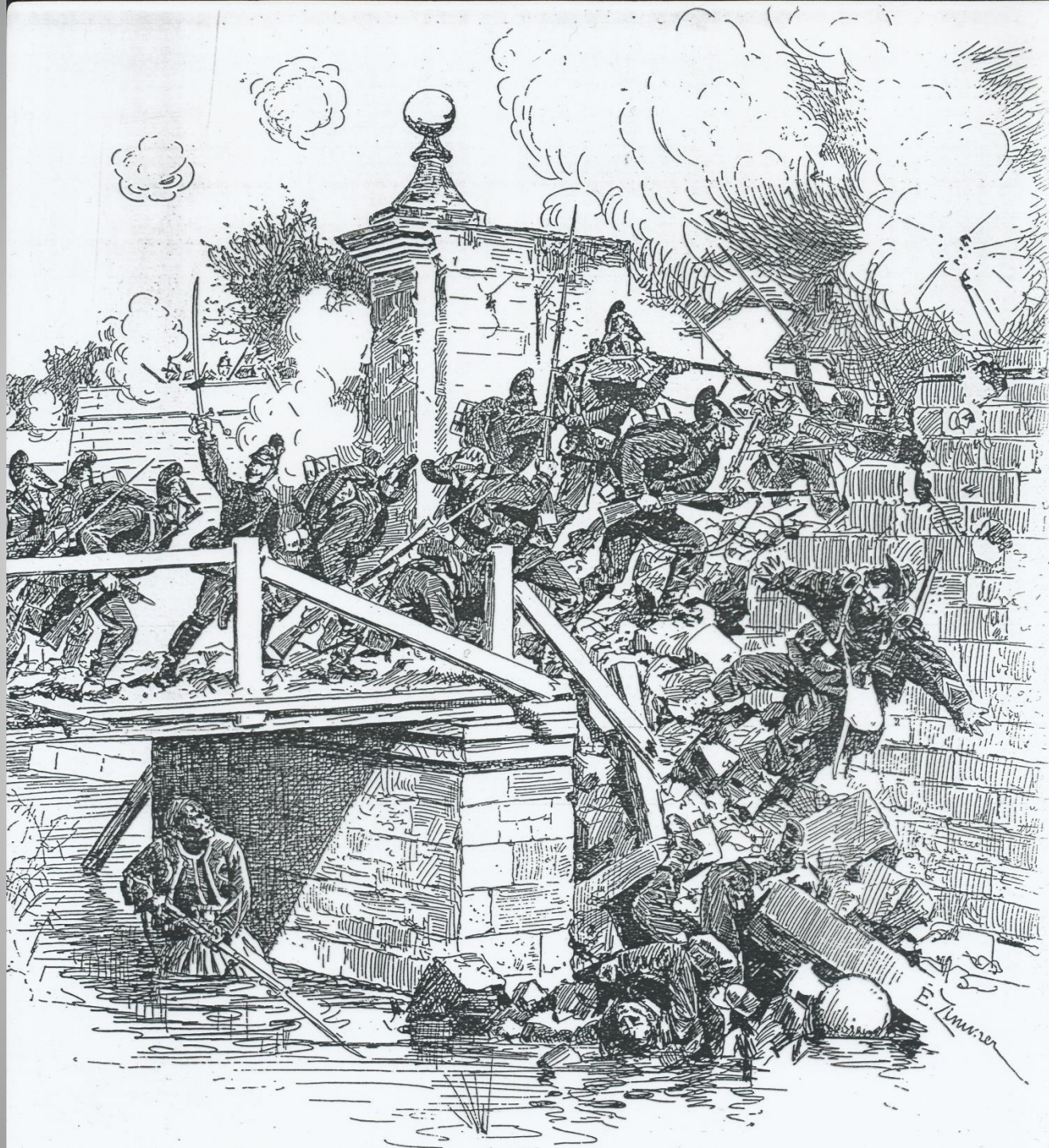


The Campaign against Republican France, September 1870 to January 1871



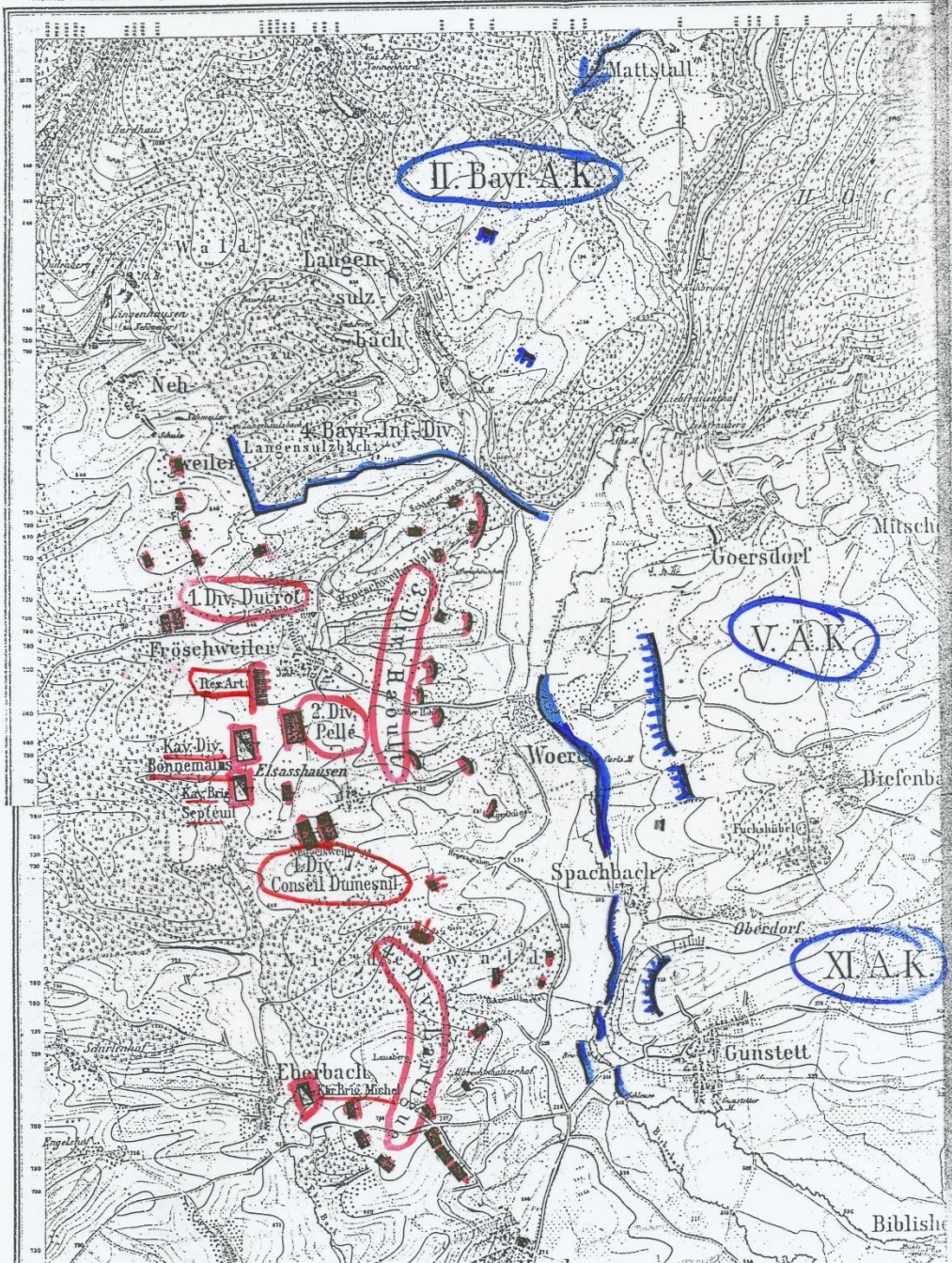
Das Gefecht bei Weissenburg 8.00 - 14.00 Uhr
am 4. August 1870

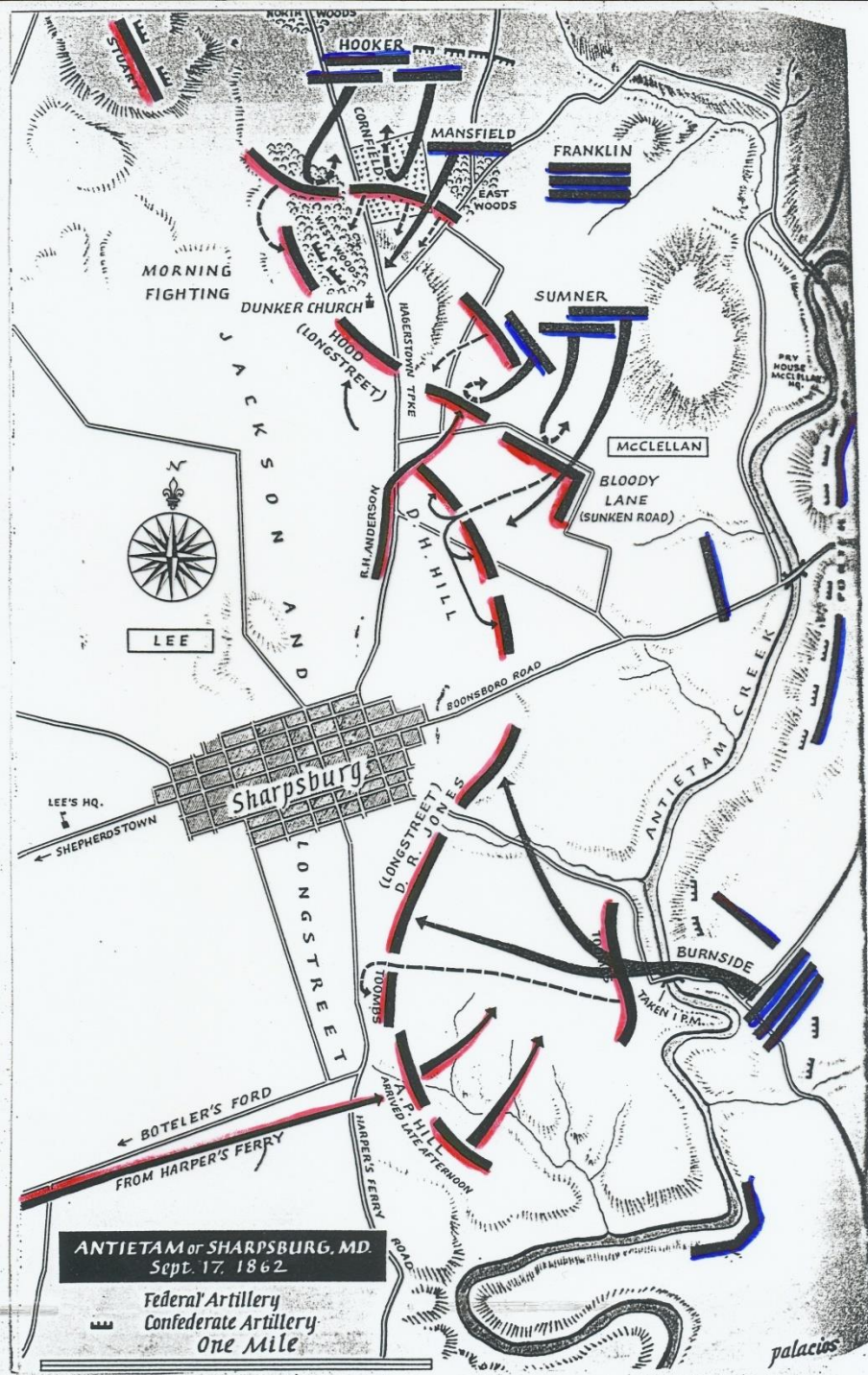




Stellung bei Beginn der Schlacht.

Moltkes Militärische Werke IV.3.





ANTIETAM or SHARPSBURG, MD.
 Sept. 17, 1862

Federal Artillery
 Confederate Artillery
 One Mile

palacios



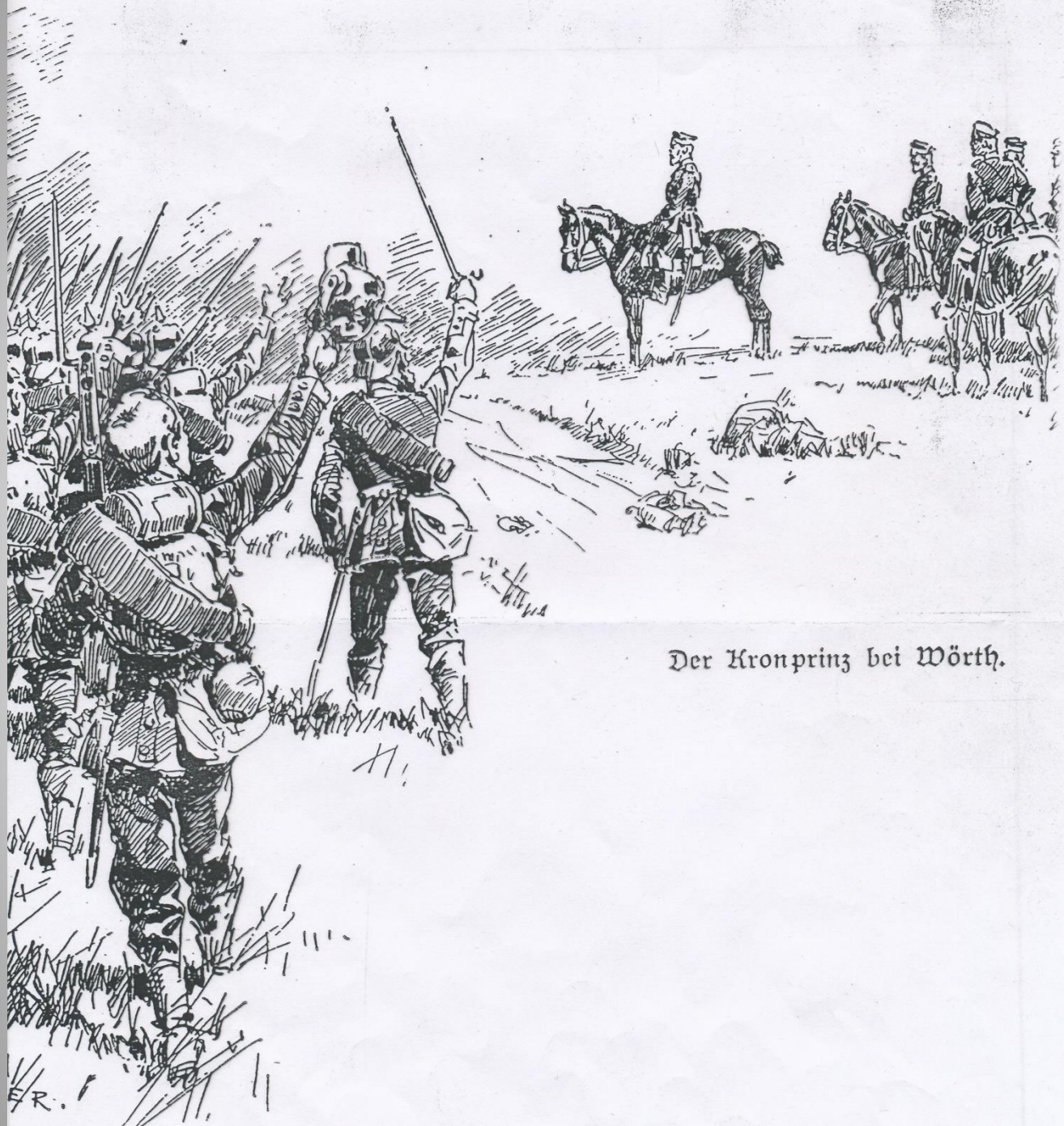
Kronprinz Friedrich Wilhelm von Preußen



Mac Mahon.



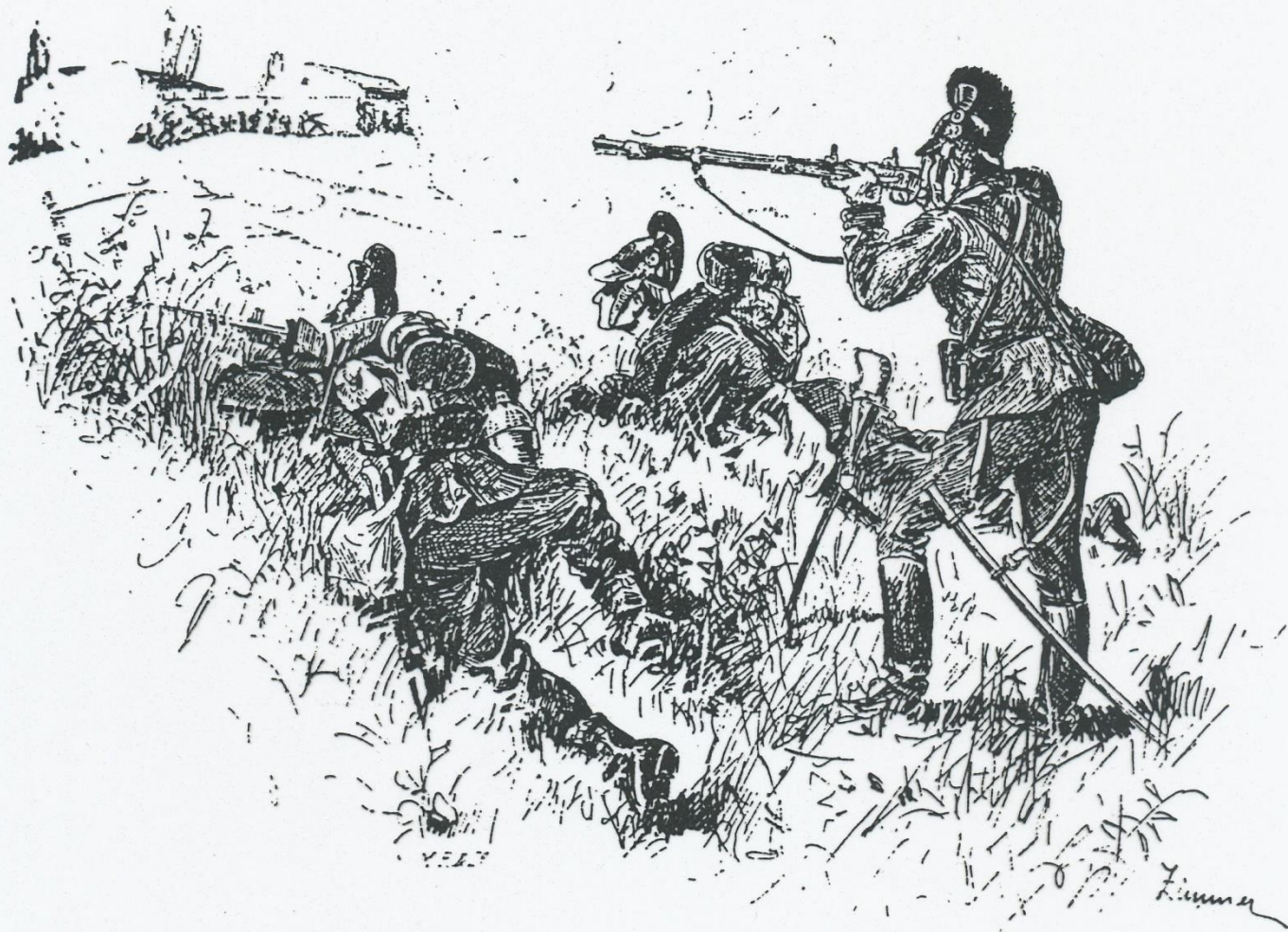
Mac Mahon bei Wörth.



Der Kronprinz bei Wörth.



Generalleutnant von Kirchbach
Kommandierender General des V.Korps



Bayerische Infanterie im Angriff



Generalleutnant von Kirchbach
Kommandierender General des V.Korps



General der Infanterie Ritter von Hartmann
Kommandierender General des II. Bayer. Korps



General der Infanterie Frhr.von und zu der Tann
Kommandierender General des I.Bayer.Korps





Infanterie des I. Bayer. Korps im Angriff
auf den Fröschweiler Wald



In den Hopfen vor Fröschweiler.

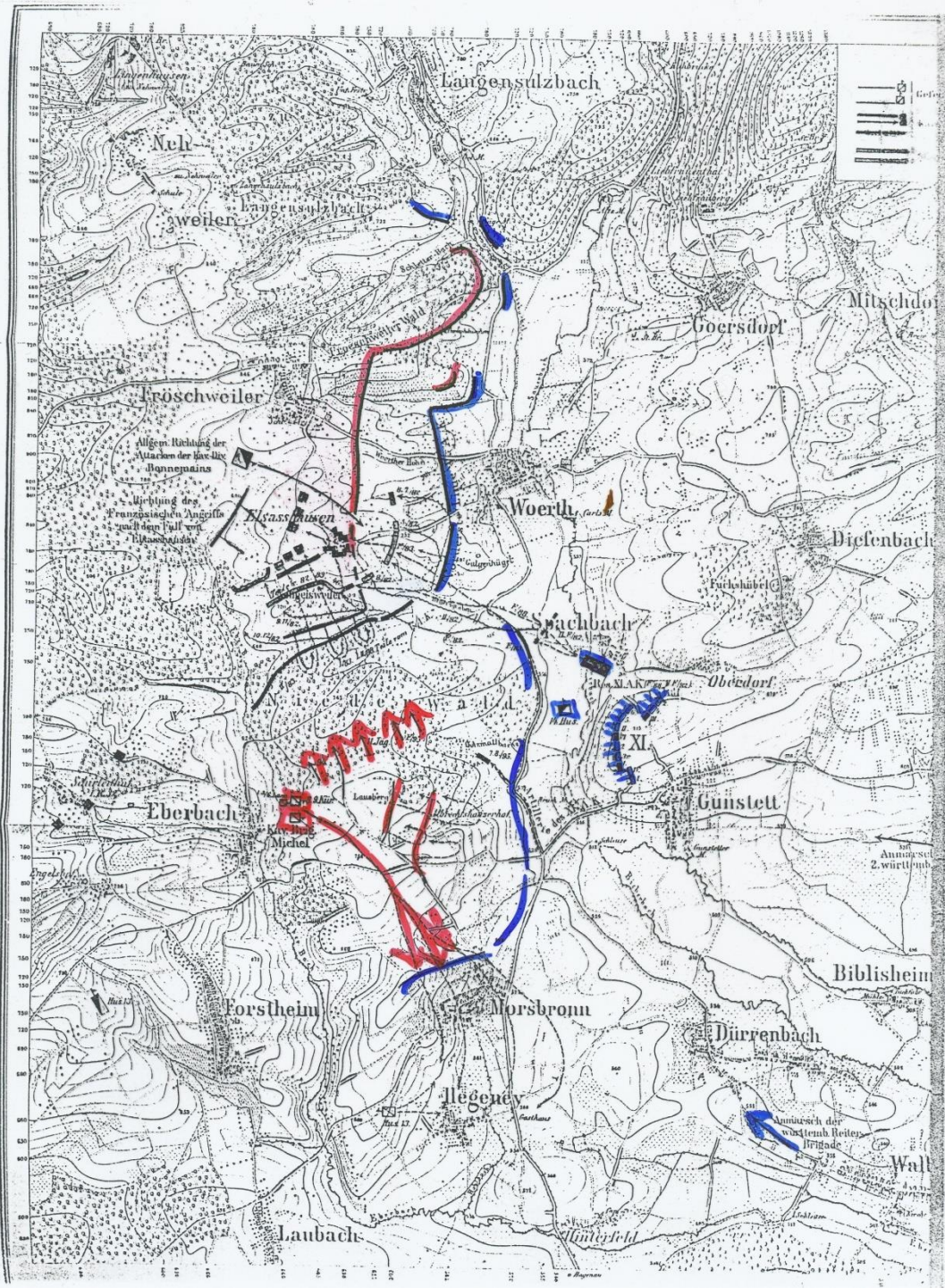


Generalleutnant von Bose
Kommandierender General des XI. Korps



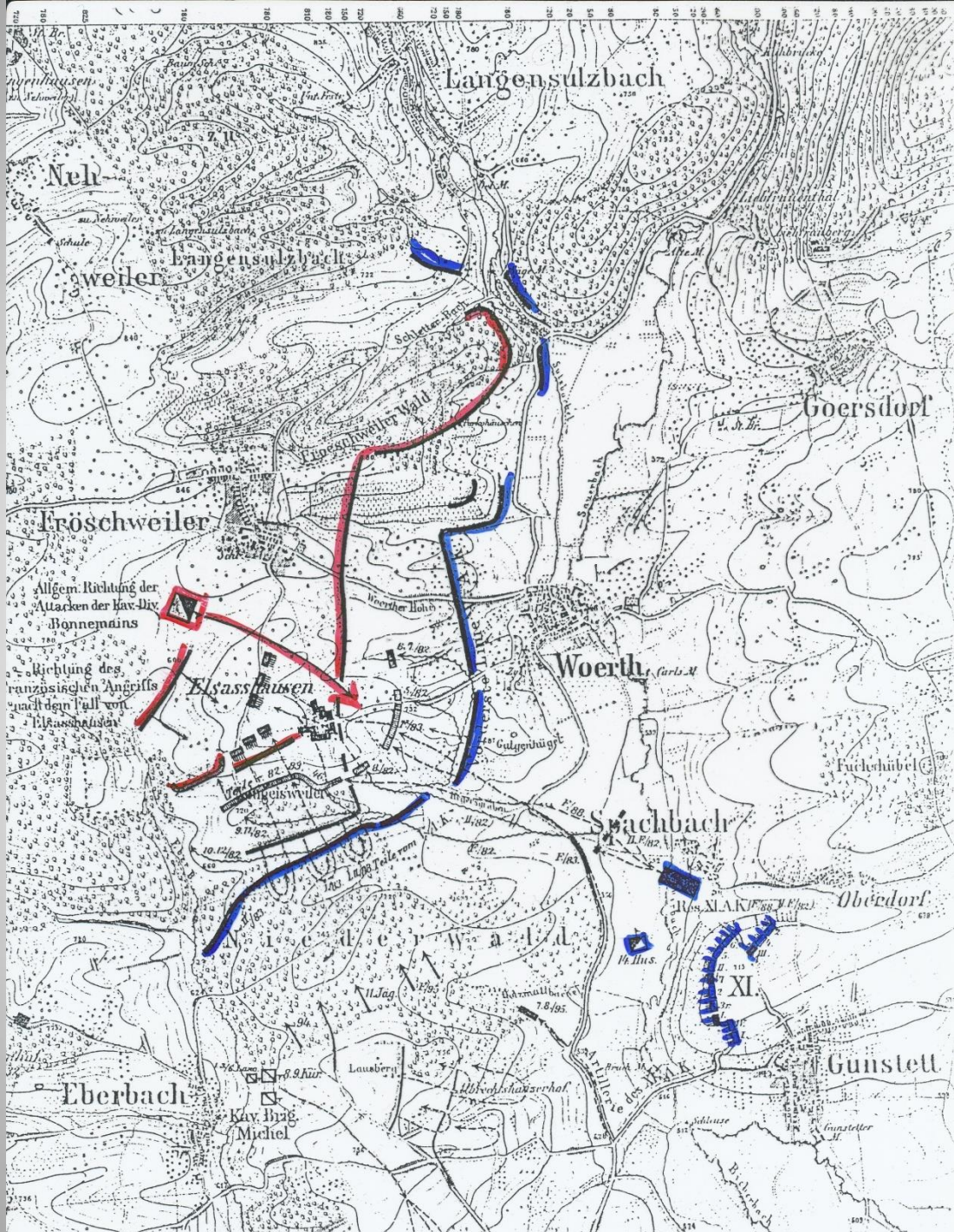
Flörner.

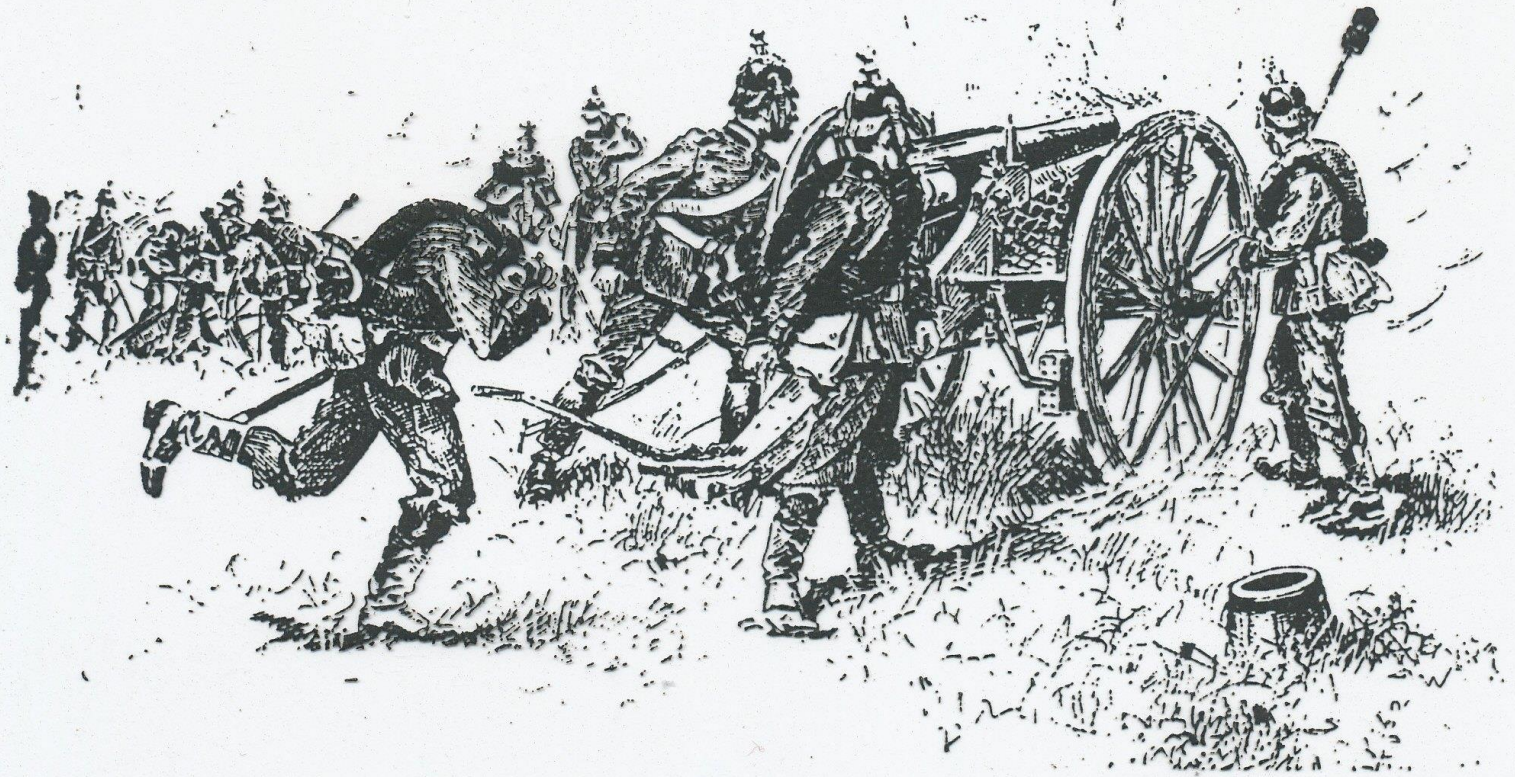
Französische Truppen im Angriff
bei Wörth





Preussische Infanterie stürmt die
Höhen westlich Wörth



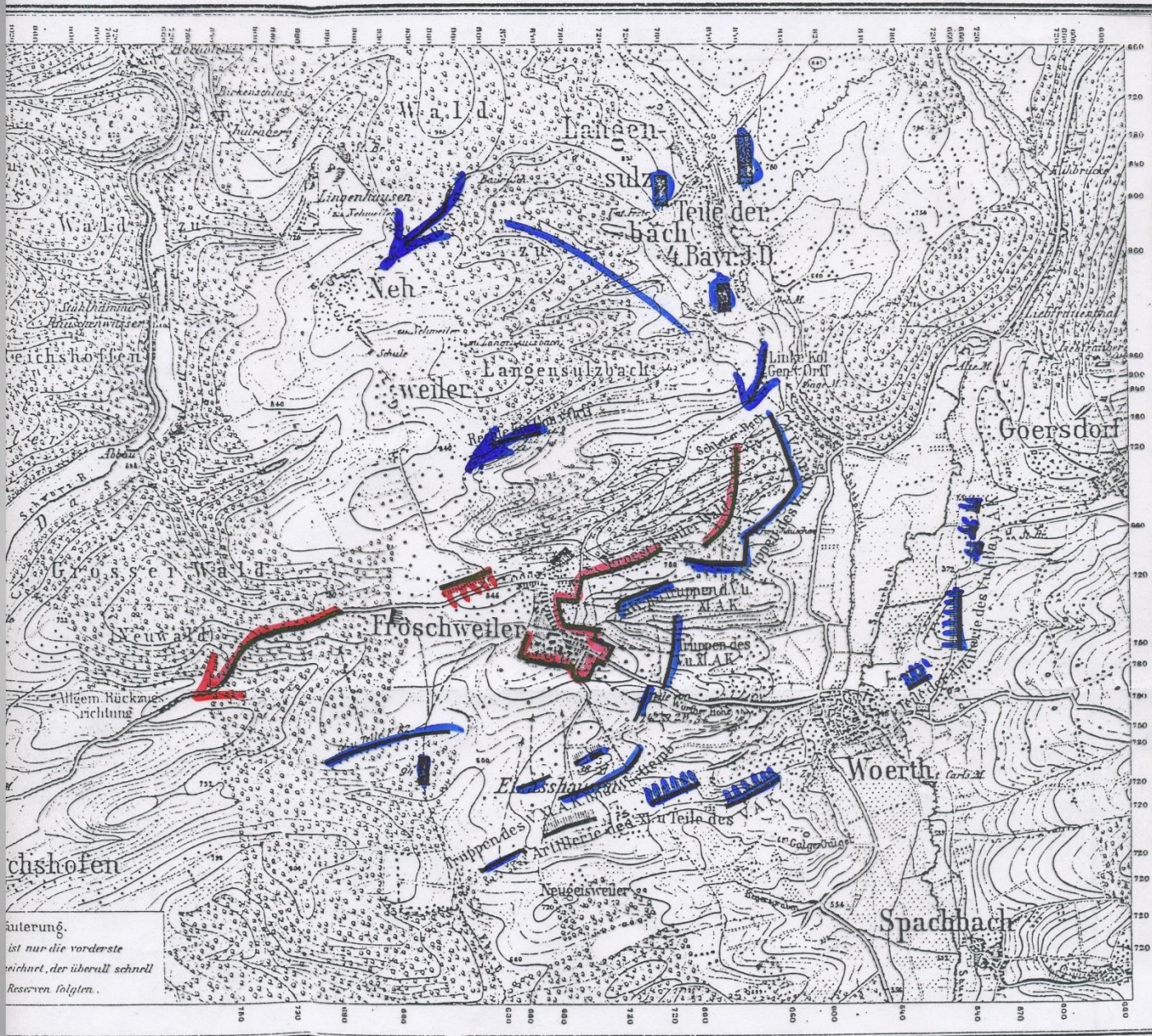


Artillerie des V.preussischen Korps
bei Elsaßhausen

Sturm auf Fröschweiler.

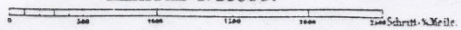
erke IV, 3.

Karte 45.



S. Mittler & Sohn, Berlin, Kochstr. 68-71.

Maaßstab 1: 25000.



Geogr. lith. Anst. u. Steindr. v. C. L. Keller, Berlin S.

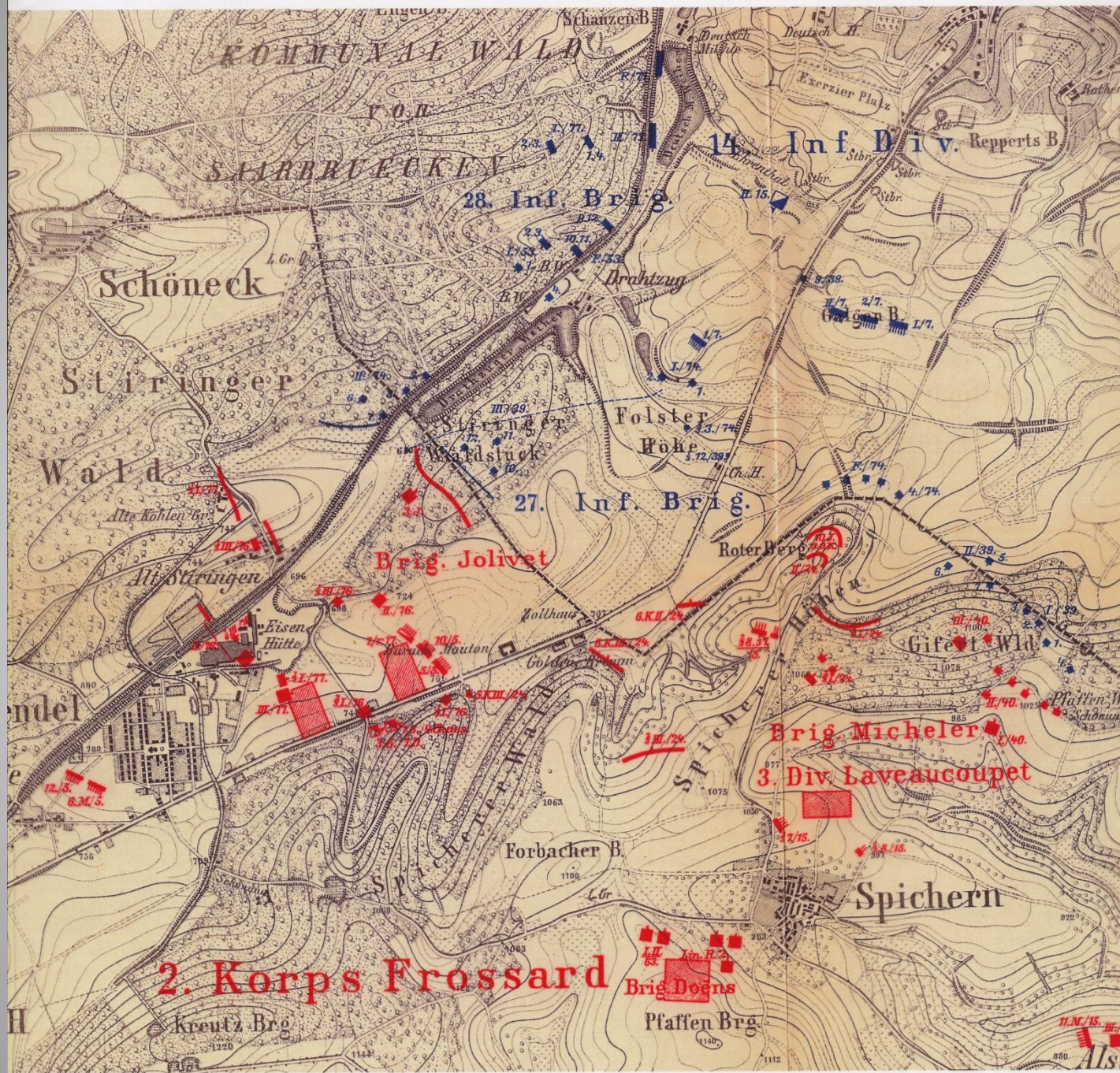


General Frossard, 2 Corps (63)



CULVER

Steinmetz



KOMMUNAL WALD
VON
SAARBRÜCKEN

Schöneck

Stiringen

Wald

Alt Stiringen

Endel

2. Korps Frossard

Kreutz Brg

Brig. Jolivet

28. Inf. Brig.

27. Inf. Brig.

Brig. Doens

Pfaffen Brg

14. Inf. Div. Repperts B

Folster Höhe

Roter Berg

Brig. Micheler
3. Div. Laveaucoupet

Spichern

Gifert Wald

Als



C. Röchling





Die 77 er erstürmen die Goldene Bremm.



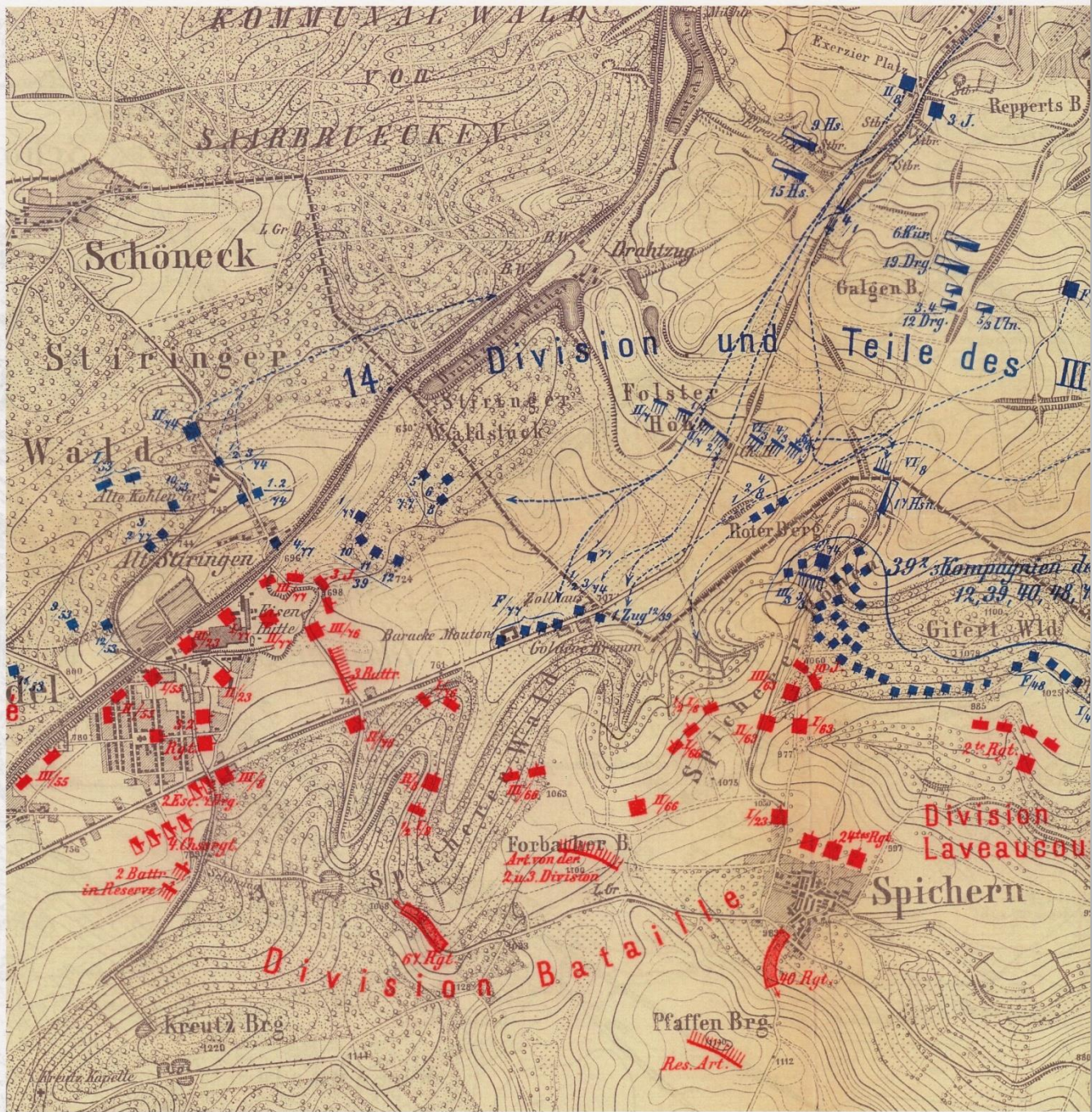
Mit Genehmigung der Photoar. Gesellschaft, Berlin.

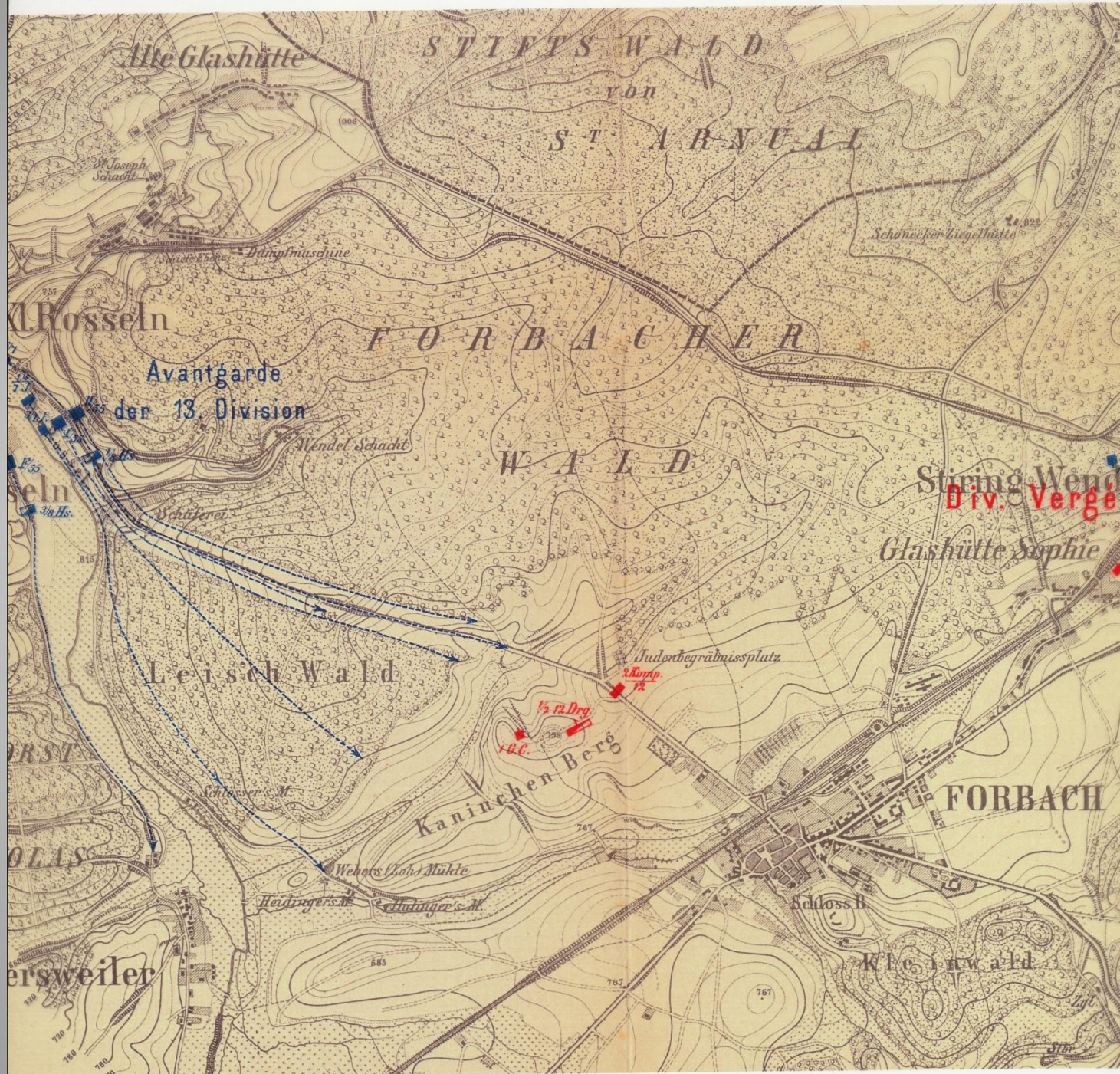
Photographiedruck W. Sommer, Berlin-Schöneberg.

Sturm auf den Spicherer Berg, 6. August 1870.



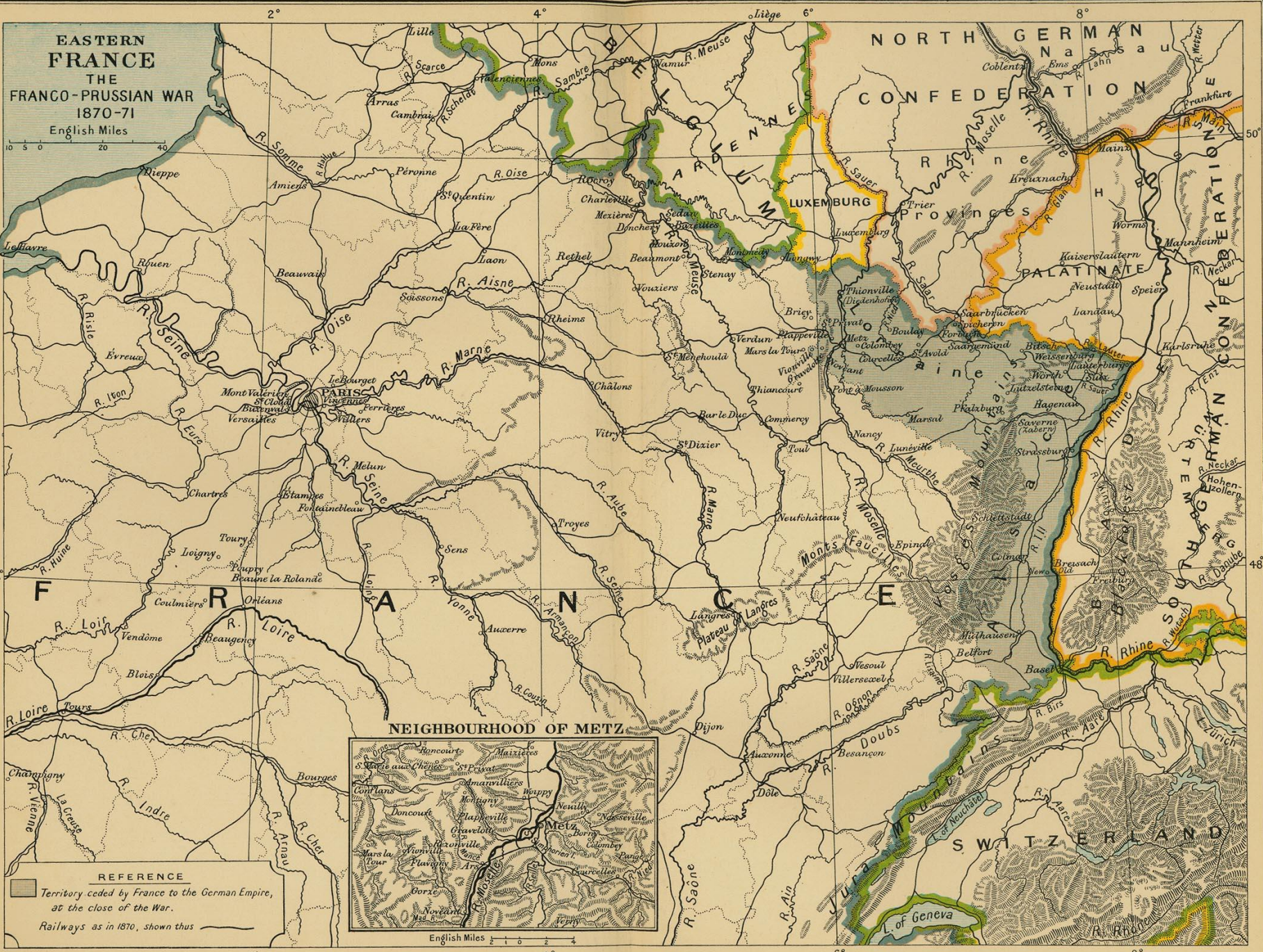
Ankunft der Brandenburger Artillerie auf dem Roten Berg.







***Marshal Bazaine, 3 Corps, then C-in-C,
Army of the Rhine***



EASTERN FRANCE
THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR
1870-71
 English Miles

10 5 0 20 40

48°

48°

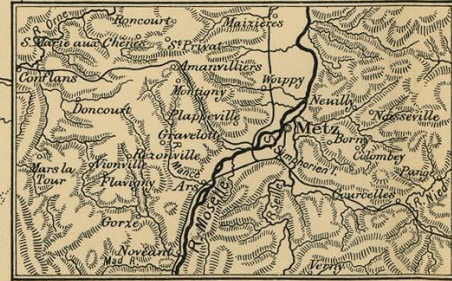
2°

4°

6°

8°

NEIGHBOURHOOD OF METZ



English Miles 1 2 3 4

REFERENCE
 Territory ceded by France to the German Empire, at the close of the War.
 Railways as in 1870, shown thus

2°

4°

6°

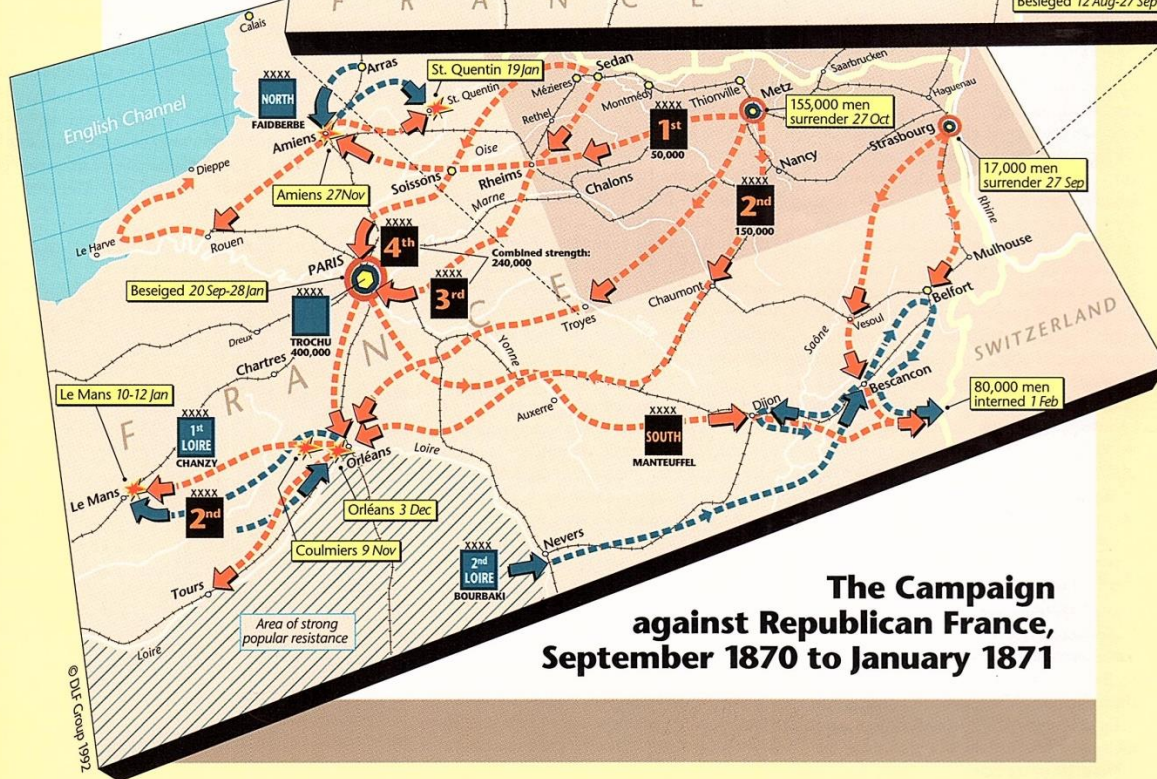
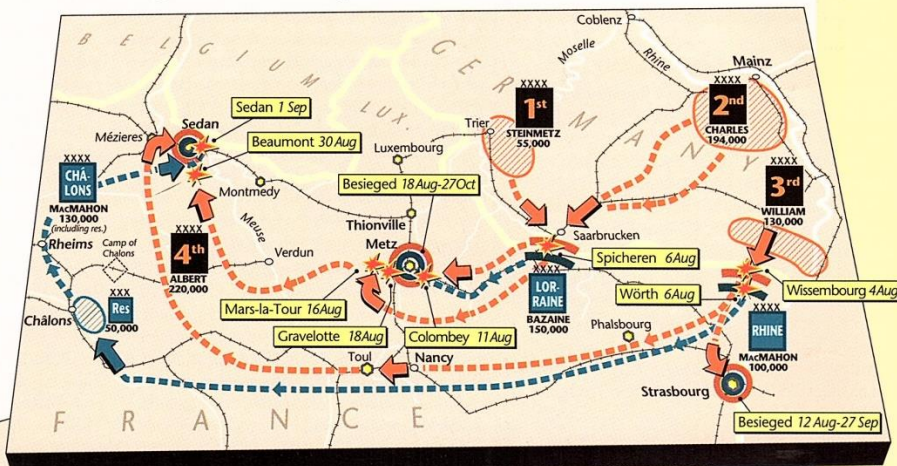
8°

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- Major raillines



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