

EARLY MODERN WARFARE SOCIETY'S THIRTY YEARS' WAR ENCYCLOPEDIA

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Basta, Giorgio (b. La Rocca, near Taranto, Jan. 30, 1550-d. Prague, Nov. 20, 1607). Basta was an Imperial (Holy Roman Empire) general and a military theorist. He served in the French-Spanish hostilities of 1589-1593 and the Ottoman-Hapsburg Long War (1593-1606).

Basta's family was of Albanian or Greek ancestry, like many of the refugee stradiotti (soldiers) who fled to Italy following the Turkish conquest of the Peloponnese (Byzantine Morea). His earliest military experience was in the Spanish army, and he rose to prominence as a cavalry commander in Flanders and protégé of Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma, Spanish commander in the Netherlands. At the siege of Antwerp (1584-1585) his light cavalry controlled the countryside and prevented the re-victualling of the city, which was decisive. In 1590, he was appointed commissary-general of Parma's cavalry. He campaigned in support of the Catholic League in northern France (1591-1592) and served under Charles von Mansfeld (1593). He fought against French King Henry IV in Guise (1593) and was promoted to lieutenant general. After the death of his patron, Parma, he entered the service of



Giorgio Basta

Hapsburg Emperor Rudolph II as general of cavalry (February 25, 1598).

In the emperor's service Basta won fame in the reconquest of Transylvania (1599-1605), leading the Imperial armies against Sigismund Bathory, Prince of Transylvania, and his allies. He contended also against Michael the Brave, voivode of Wallachia (executed by Basta on August 18, 1601), and against Stephen Bocskay and Bethlen Gabor. Appointed Imperial commander in chief (January 20, 1602), Basta took the fortress of Khust (1603), for which he was created a count. He retired in 1605, and devoted himself to writing military treatises based upon his experience.

His first book was *Il maestro di campo generale* (1606). His most important work, *Il governo della cavalleria leggera* (1612), was an influential textbook on the organization, management, and employment of light cavalry; another work, *Del governo dell'artiglieria*, was published in 1610. His works were translated into other languages and widely read, and helped to inform European military practice and doctrine before, and during, the Thirty Years' War.

Giorgio Basta rose from obscure origins to high command in the Spanish and Imperial armies during a transitional period in the development of the military art. He was a resourceful general who, like Montecuccoli and Saxe, passed on in his writings lessons gleaned from decades of campaigning. He wrote an instructive manual on the art of command, and a practical guide to the employment of light cavalry, an arm often encountered but little understood by western European generals of his day. He is justly renowned as one of the greatest generals of his time.

Sources: Barbarich, E. "Un generale di cavaleria italo-albanese: Giorgio Basta." *Nuova antologia*, 63 (1928); Labarre de Raillicourt, Dominique. *Basta: comte d'Hust et du Saint-Empire*. Paris, 1968.

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Leopold William, Archduke of Austria (Jan. 5, 1614-Nov. 20, 1662). Leopold William was born at Wiener Neustadt [Graz] in Styria, the hereditary stronghold of the Austrian Hapsburgs.

He was the second son of Emperor Ferdinand II. He professed Holy Orders and was consecrated bishop of Passau

and Strasbourg (1625), Halberstädt (1626), Olmütz (1637), and Breslau (1655). He was also Hoch-und-deutschmeister (i.e., the grand master of the Teutonic Order). In 1639, aged 25 and with no military experience whatsoever, he was appointed Imperial generalissimo in the Bohemian theater. Fortunately, the brilliant and much-experienced Italian soldier Ottavio Piccolomini was appointed his "adlatus," a kind of elderly mentor (in reality, co-commander--for some reason, Piccolomini had trouble getting an important independent command under Ferdinand III).



Archduke Leopold William

The archduke and Piccolomini campaigned with mixed success during 1639-1642, but lost badly at Wolfenbüttel (June 19, 1641) to a combined Swedish-French army under Königsmarck and Guébriant and were decisively defeated by Torstensson at Breitenfeld II (Nov. 2, 1642). In the aftermath of Breitenfeld II the archduke resigned and retired to his Passau bishopric, and Piccolomini returned to Spanish service (where indeed his talents were more appreciated). After Gallas' ignominious defeat at Jankau (1645), Leopold William was recalled to command as generalissimo, with Gallas as adlatus. The archduke served creditably in this capacity during 1645-1646.

In 1647, the archduke was appointed stadtholder of the (Spanish) Netherlands and, together, with the duke of Lorraine, campaigned against the French. However, in a prodigious feat of arms, the French, led by the Prince of Condé, destroyed the archduke's army at Lens on Aug. 20, 1648. This was the last important event in the theater and did much to induce the emperor to negotiate seriously to end the war. Lens in fact was the last significant event in the archduke's public life, although he remained as governor of the Spanish Netherlands until 1656. He died at Vienna in 1662.

Sources: Avancini, R. P. Nicc. *Leopoldi Guglielmi archiducis Austriae, principis bello et pace incltyti virtutes et gesta*. Antwerp, 1665; Schreiber, Renate. *Erzherzog Leopold Wilhelm – Bischof und Feldherr, Statthalter und Kunstsammler. Studien zu seiner Biographie*. Ph.D. diss., Univ. Wien, 2001.

Torstensson, Lennart, Count of Ortola (Aug. 17, 1603-Apr. 7, 1651). Swedish field marshal Torstensson was born at Torstena, near Wenersborg, in Sweden. At age 15 he entered the royal household as a page and accompanied King Gustav Adolph on his campaigns. He was present at Riga (1621) and served in the Polish campaigns, until their conclusion in 1629. He was promoted successively to ensign (1624), captain (1626), lieutenant colonel (1627), and in 1628 to colonel of the Norrland Regiment.

After the Treaty of Altmärk (1629), which effectively ended the Polish War, Gustav Adolph reorganized and modernized his field artillery. Torstensson, working with foreign advisers, was principally responsible for the advances, which were important in the coming campaigns in Germany. The most significant progress was made in improving the artillery's mobility.



Lennart Torstensson

As general of artillery Torstensson, directed the Swedish artillery brilliantly in the battles of Breitenfeld I (Sept. 7, 1631) and the Lech (Apr. 5-6, 1632). In the unsuccessful attack on Wallenstein's fortified camp at the Alte Veste, near Nuremberg (Aug. 24, 1632), he was captured by the Bavarians while attempting to cover the retreat of his guns in difficult terrain. Imprisoned at Ingolstadt, he was not ransomed and released (on the intervention finally of Wallenstein) until 1633. In the meantime, he had contracted a severe case of arthritis from which he never recovered, and he lived out his life in occasionally incapacitating pain.

Rejoining the field army, he served under Field Marshal Johan Banér as a cavalry commander and was distinguished at Wittstock (Sept. 24, 1636). He was master-general of the Ordnance (1636-1640), member of the Reichsrat, and promoted to field marshal (1641). After Banér's death he was appointed to succeed him as commander in chief of the Swedish army in Germany (1641).

Having reorganized the army, which was in a parlous state, he took the field, invading Silesia and annihilating an Imperial army led by Prince Franz Albert von Sachsen-Lauenberg at Schweidnitz (May 31, 1642). Torstensson followed up by invading Moravia

and taking Olmütz (June 14), which remained in Swedish hands until the end of the war. Compelled to fall back on the approach of the main Imperial army under the Archduke Leopold William, Torstensson was nonetheless able to protect the important fortress of Gross-Glogau and win the stunning victory of Breitenfeld II (Nov. 2, 1642).

In the following year, Torstensson again pushed into Moravia, relieving Olmütz, and threatening Vienna. He was unable, however, to bring the Imperial army under Gallas to battle. Abruptly, he was recalled north to fight the Danes, who had hoped to take advantage of the German imbroglio to consolidate their position in the Baltic littoral. Moving with astonishing speed, he overran mainland Denmark, except for the fortresses of Glückstadt and Krempe. Gallas followed Torstensson north into Holstein, moving slowly, and arriving in July 1644. Gallas assumed that he had trapped the Swedish army behind the Eider, but Torstensson completely outmaneuvered him and destroyed his army in a series of combats.

Torstensson subsequently conquered much of Saxony and again invaded Imperial lands. In the process he won a great victory at Jankau (Feb. 24, 1645). But, despite his extraordinary success, he was unable to compel the emperor to sue for peace, and in August he fell back into Bohemia. He was now very sick with gout and was obliged to leave his army and return to Sweden. Gustavus Wrangel assumed command and went into winter quarters in Thuringia.

Torstensson was raised to the rank of count and appointed governor-general of West Gothland by Queen Christina (Feb. 4, 1647). He died in Stockholm in 1651. Although many consider the mercurial and dangerously ambitious Johan Banér the most talented of Gustav Adolph's pupils, it is difficult to know why, considering Torstensson's amazing record of success. Torstensson not only saved the Swedish army from dissolution and restored its prestige but also won successive campaigns that forced Denmark to sue for peace, destroyed Gallas' Imperial army, and compelled Saxon neutrality. But, although he won several battles of annihilation (one benchmark of a commander's greatness), he was not able ultimately to force the emperor to sue for peace. Torstensson's success was due to his formidable capabilities as an organizer and the speed and single-mindedness of his movements. He and Chancellor Oxenstierna, more than any others, were responsible for the establishment of Swedish predominance in the Baltic and Sweden's great power status in the latter part of the 17th century.

Sources: De Peyster, John Watts. *The History of the Life of Leonard Torstenson*. Poughkeepsie, N.Y.: Platt & Schram, 1855; Tingsten, Lars Herman. *Fältmarskalkarna Johan Banér och Lennart Torstensson såson härförare*. Stockholm: Militarlitteraturforeningens forlag, 1932.

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Gall, Peter (?-1626). Col. and inhaber of a hussar regiment of Croats and Hungarians that was raised in 1626 and served with Wallenstein's army at Dessau Bridge (Apr. 25, 1626) and Lutter am Barenberge (Aug. 27, 1626). He DOW received at Lutter, and his regiment returned to Bohemia, where it was disbanded (Feb. 24, 1627).

Wallis, Richard, Freiherr von (1583-1632). Col. of Irish descent in Imperial service; MWIA at Lützen (1632), he died subsequently at Magdeburg.

Wallis, whose name in Austrian service was a corruption of Walsh, emigrated to the Empire in 1612. His Irish ancestral family was the Walshes of Carrickmines ("the little plain of rocks"), a village in County Dublin. It appears that he was the second son and namesake of Richard Walsh of Carrickmines, "who is stated in an inquisition to have died in 1620, but according to the pedigree of a noble Austrian family, the Counts von Wallis, who claim descent from his second son, he did not die until some years later (Ball, 1902, 100-01)."

His marriage to the Bohemian Countess Barbara Schlick von Weisskirchen und Bassano undoubtedly assured his rise in the Imperial hierarchy. In the 1620s, he was *kammererherr* (Imperial chamberlain), oberst, and governor of Szatmár. Mortally wounded at Lützen, he died at Magdeburg. His second son was GM Olivier, freiherr von Wallis (1600-1667), colonel-proprietor of IR Wallis and Imperial chancellor.

Sources: Ball, Francis Elrington. "The Castle of Carrickmines and its History." *J. Roy. Soc. of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 31 (1901), 195-203; _____. *A History of the County Dublin*. Dublin, 1902; Worthington, David. *Scots in the Habsburg Service, 1618-1648*. Brill, 2003.