



BATTLE OF RIVER LECH 1632

Liber Militum Tercios – Game Report



NOVEMBER 17, 2018
LOUDOUNS WARGAMERS

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Background

Back in April 2018 a discussion between two of the eventual players (both members of Loudoun's Regiment) led to a decision to take on a large battle using the Tercios rules with 15mm scale figures. As they were discussing this on the anniversary of the Battle of the River Lech, it was accepted that this was to be the scenario to be replayed.

Following months of planning, discussion and frantic figure painting; the addition of 4 more players, we were ready to go. The venue was the gaming room of Wiston Lodge, a beautiful old Victorian hunting lodge built in the 1850s at the foot of Tinto Hill in South Lanarkshire, Scotland.



Preparation

Breakdown of Forces

Averaging the forces from the historical texts to the nearest 100, amalgamating smaller units into single larger units and using multiple bases to represent larger regiments; the agreed breakdown was as follows:

Anti-Imperialist/Swedes

Historically 22,600 infantry, 14,800 horse and 72 cannons, became...

- 36 infantry bases
- 40 cavalry bases
- 26 artillery bases (sub divided into 3 categories, retaining the historical split)

See Appendix A

Imperialists

Historically 16,800 infantry, 5,400k horse and 20 cannons, became...

- 28 infantry bases
- 15 horse bases
- 10 artillery bases

See Appendix B

As the rules were designed around bases of 120x60mm (infantry) and 80x40mm (cavalry) the number of figures on each base could vary, this allowed players to resurrect previously based figs and or base as they felt fit as long as they retained the base size. So on the day infantry units varied from 20 figures to 36 figures per base and cavalry from 5 to 8 figures per base.



This meant that we approximately had 2300 figures on the table. A total of 64 infantry bases, 55 cavalry bases plus 36 cannons.

Labelling

This was, as it turned out, a masterstroke given the scale of the battle. Every unit on the table had a label, not just stating which historical unit it was but what type of unit and whether it was subject to any modifiers (Veteran, Large, etc). This meant that when any units met the players could quickly see what was engaging what and only need to go to the Tercios reference sheet to establish throws required.

Commanders/Players



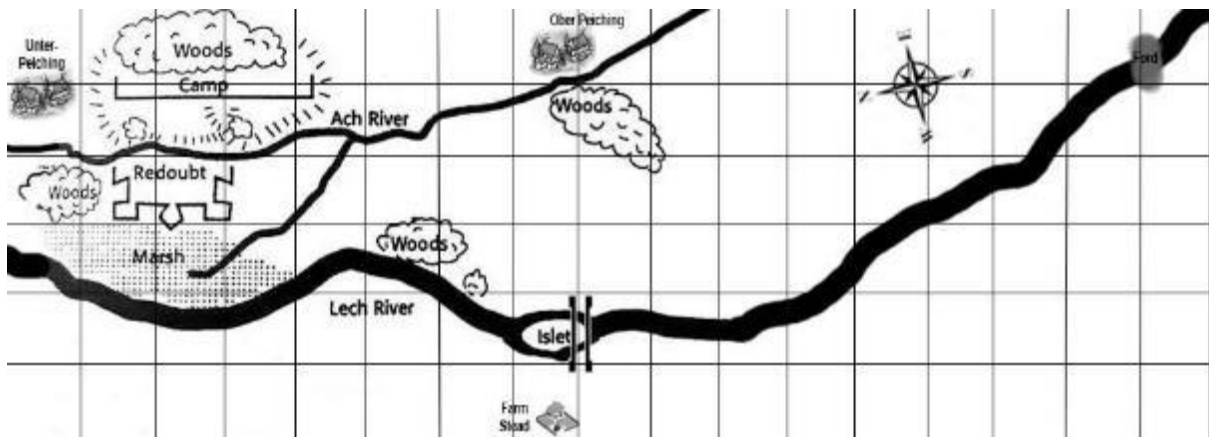
One Commander (and figure) per player. Usual Tercio rules being applied but the commanders were all Rank 4 and therefore had 2 Virtues and 2 Traits each.

- General Tilly – Stew Simpson
- Johann Reichsgraf von Aldringen – Mark Goodwin
- Duke Maximilian I, Elector of Bavaria – Alistair Gray
- Bernard of Saxe Weimar – Neil Johnston
- King Gustav – Rab Taylor
- Johan Baner – Andrew Bennet

Come game day one side forgot to allocate any virtues or traits to their commanders, whilst the other side had done so. One player did use the ability to force an order change on several occasions upon the advancing Swedes but while seeking line of sight he found himself in the way of a cavalry assault, failed to evade and got stomped on! And Duke Maximilian was deceased Otherwise there was no Traits or Virtues used throughout the game.

The Table & Scenery

It was obvious from the start that we were needing a large table. However, how it was to be laid out did vary with several different and differing maps and accounts being available. So, with a general amalgamation of these, and a look at Google Earth to sort of guess the location of key points (particularly the hamlets), that would not have shifted in 386 years, led us to the following agreed map.



So, we were looking now to layout scenery to depict this and on a large scale, the eventual table being 18 feet by 6 feet. Scenery was pulled from all the players to best represent the above.



Deployment

The key debate was to where the battle would start from as this would determine the deployment. It was agreed that we would begin the game from the point where the smoke screen/fog has lifted and Tilly realises that Gustav through the night has built his bridge.

Imperialists

Imperialists could deploy anywhere east of the River Ach and its tributary. Occupying any earthwork as they saw fit.

Imperialists could also have between 3 cavalry units 'out on patrol', they were deployed anywhere beyond the Ach but with a random factor to acknowledge they are unaware of the bridge (with this they could still not be within one movement turn of the bridge (8") or they would have heard it). 6 areas were chosen and diced for per unit.



Anti-Imperialist/Swedes

Anti-Imperialist/Swedes could deploy anywhere West of the River Lech

To keep some random factor to when the bridge was discovered and what was deployed at the start...

Anti-Imperialist/Swedes could have an infantry bridge head, no more than approx. one movement turn from the bridge (4"), number of units to be variable between 2 and 5 - based on a dice roll – it turned out they were allowed 3 units of infantry.



Game Sequence

Each Game Turn

Planning Phase:

- Both sides remove Wear markers of their Commander units.
- Both sides place Orders Cards besides their Troop units, face down

Roll for Initiative

- The side who wins initiative chooses which side will go first.

Activation Sequence (repeated alternately between each side)

- Each Player of the active side Activates a Commander unit (optional).
- Each Player of the active side Activates a Troop unit. A player may decline to do anything BUT a unit must be Activated to retain same number of activations per alternating turn (3 in our game), therefore a player may get to activate two of his units in the Activation sequence to accommodate.
- This sequence is repeated alternately until there are no Troop units left to activate on both sides, regardless of Commanders that could still be activated. The game turn is then over.



Terrain and House Rules

Some clarity given the scenario and possible gaps in the Tercios rules, meaning some tweaks we looked to introduce.

River Crossings

This had some debate that still was on going to the point of the first activation roll. However, we stayed sticking to the Tercio rules for bridge crossing, which was still hindered as only a unit at a time will be going over, and likewise the bridgehead will initially hold up more coming across until they go on the attack/move. The issue was logic vs. lack of historical evidence vs. lack of column to line differences in Tercio rules, i.e. how could a regiment of a 1000 cross a make shift bridge quick enough to assault and be supported.



The River Lech, north of the Islet had no transit possible. The Lech was only to be crossed by infantry via the bridge or the actual ford in the south or directly adjacent to the bridge (ford rules apply) given men



were in the water constructing the bridge it is reasonable to assume infantry can wade through either side (rope tethers). Note these units also were declared disordered on leaving the river. Horse can ford the Lech anywhere south of the bridge, however they were also considered disordered on leaving the river.

The Ach was completely fordable by all units but was considered difficult terrain, it also offered Protected feature to units adjacent when attacked by Assault

(Courage (+) when in melee). This did raise a debate later in the gain regards retreating, does terrain effect retreat? Given failure to fully retreat following defeat incurs an extra Wear point, but what if the terrain slows the retreat beforehand. Common sense was applied and at the stage in the game it wasn't going to matter.



Other Terrain

There was a reasonable amount of terrain featured on the map/table which had to have predetermined consequences to movement etc.

Forest/Woods

Forest/Woods, had Very Difficult, Covered and Hidden features (as per the rules) but the 'Very Difficult' only applied to entering the woods and not leaving them, i.e. if deployed in the woods at the start you were free to move out unhindered?

Marsh

Marsh, either Very Difficult or Difficult – there was no references to them being traversed in the texts and as it turned out no units were near them in the game either.

Buildings

Buildings, we were not involving occupying of them, so they were simply in our game as impassable and effecting line of site.



Battle Morale

We had previously been looking at applying the following. When a unit is destroyed or forced from the field, all units within command distance and having line of sight to the sides and rear of the unit must carry out an order check. Failure will mean the unit becomes Disordered. If there is a commander present a +1 modifier will apply.

However, we completely missed out applying this addendum to the rules, and in subsequent discussion think it may be too much i.e. why would a veteran pike unit care if a raw light cavalry unit got destroyed.

Cannon

All Light and Medium cannon on the table we had assumed to have carthorses and therefore could be limbered and moved. Limbered was shown by the cannon positioned pointing away from the enemy.



All Heavy cannon were to be in situ throughout the battle, though they could be turned under a Ready Order. All the heavy cannons were considered Large Batteries and could therefore fire twice per turn (more representative of them than purely increased range).

Caracole

When horse wished to attack as Caracole and approach in column to the enemy then the rules were as per Tercio, however to clarify we could reform to the rear of the other caracoling units, each unit must however do the discipline check before reform. i.e. following units can only caracole if proceeding unit is successful in their discipline check, otherwise the Caracole retirement part fails and they will be in the way of the next unit - this is only if the horse are separate units having separate order cards of course.

Also Caracole reforming on the rear is only if there is room (3") to either flank to allow the proceeding unit to complete the move otherwise they will remain in the way.

The Battle

All setup had been completed in about three hours on the Friday night; table laid out and troops deployed.

The Battle Day One

First roll for Activation was at 9am on the Saturday morning. The Imperials got to move first!

It wasn't long before engagements began, all the Swedish Heavy cannon were within range of something and duly began firing (initially with little success. All other units on both sides used the turn to move their units.

By the second game turn the Imperialist Scouts were in contact with the Swedes, both at the bridge and at the ford crossing. In the case of the latter the Swedes engaged immediately only to be 'evaded' by the Croat light Cavalry, which they succeeded in doing for the next few turns, finally getting crushed around turn 4 or 5; must to the relief of the irate Swedish command.



It was obvious to the Swedish command that they could not solely rely on the bridge to get the infantry across and began funnelling troops either side as per the conditions applied. Fortunately, the 3-unit infantry bridge head of Hand staved of the assaults of the Imperialists to allow enough forces across to push forward.

Duke Maximilian I, Elector of Bavaria, successfully employed his Schemer trait, forcing advancing troops to change their orders – however his luck ran out by turn 4 or 5 when he failed to evade when a regiment of modern cavalry charged the unit directly behind him.

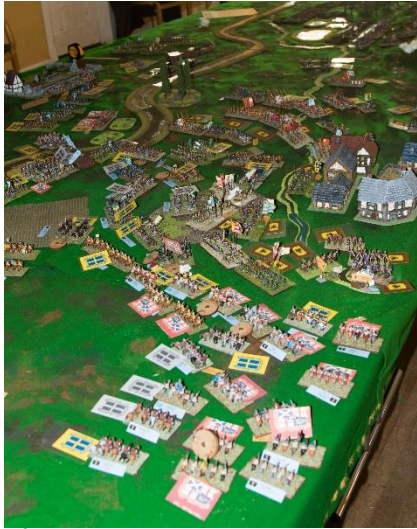
The Swedish cannon kept up a steady barrage on the flanks of the reinforcing Imperialist units, making them weary by the time they made contact with the Swedish infantry in the centre.

Overall the fighting in the centre was fairly brutal with both sides destroying and losing units on a fairly regular basis.



Day one came to a close at 10.30pm with only an hour break to eat earlier (no idea when), we were no half way through turn 6 and the Swedish flank attack had reached the Ach and the defensive Imperialist lines.

The Battle Day Two



9.30am start from mid-way through turn 6 saw continued carnage in the centre with more units being removed from the table. The mass Swedish cavalry assault on the flank repeatedly battered the stoic Imperialist pike but with an incredible piece of dicing one unit of Swedish Modern Cavalry destroyed not one but two Classic squadrons of pike in a single assault order. Despite trying to plug the gap with some horse units the writing was on the wall and the hamlet of Oberpeiching was ready to be taken.

The centre was also slowly moving in favour of the Swedes with pike on pike fights in the woods the Saxons assaulting through the woods finally prevailed and were through facing the hamlet.

Eventually the Imperialists managed to bring their cannon down to the river and face off against the Swedish Guns and destroyed most of them. But it was too late, the Swedes had inflicted enough damage on the reinforcing units that they fell rapidly on reaching the carnage in the centre.



Again the dice fell the swedes way, the devastation of an Imperialist regiment in the centre by a depleted/spent blue German regiment, following on from a mass assault by the green brigade meant the lines were being drawn around the hamlet. And an inevitability was coming over the battle, it was now 2pm and as time would only mean more Swedish troops crossing the river it was decided to call it a day (weekend).



As the old saying goes...the victor gets to write the history.

Conclusion

The Battle

On the battle itself it very much followed that of the historical battle, certainly from the Swedish side; a frontal attack in combination with the deployment of a large part of the army for the flanking movement. The Imperialists fared much better as they didn't lose their overall command (despite losing Duke Maximilian I, Elector of Bavaria around turn 4) and there was no early call for a retreat. So, though we stopped on turn 9 after roughly 16 hours of game time, it was estimated even with very bad luck on the dice that the Swedes would have prevailed but probably at a much heavier cost than in 1632.



This was our 'take' of representing the battle and given the variety in the accounts it could be played again but with very different parameters re-assessing the accounts. For instance, one account mentions two bridges, several mention the 'feint' flank attack to the north at the marshes to varying degrees, so was the river fordable here? Then there is the 5000 Bavarians guarding the bridge at Augsburg a mere 9 miles to the south, how close were they to the ford, could they have fell on the flanking Swedes from the rear? Another day maybe.

The Rules/Gaming

The fact that we had 6 players with a mix of experience of either Tercios or other games meant that some aspects were brought to the game that previously had simply been missed – and thoroughly added to the carnage.

- Pike have a double increase in melee if fighting horse, simply for having pike!
- And this one really irritated me for having missed before, but an increase does not mean an extra dice, it depends on the modifier table and as in an assault can mean to extra dice for one increase.
- And the counter to the pike advantage over horse – if an infantry unit fails to inflict any damage on an attacking cavalry unit it is simply destroyed!

And there were several questions to be resolved before our next encounter

- If opposing units are in the woods, can they see each other?
- If a unit suffers a defeat and retreats, does terrain still hinder the retreat movement (not block but slow it down so it does not complete the distance) – especially a shameful defeat where a further distance is expected. The example is if say the terrain wasn't there, they would meet another unit

and fail the retreat movement and incur an extra wear point, but because the terrain slowed their retreat, they did not reach the other unit and deemed the retreat completed.



Coming next, **Nördlingen 1634 - 2019**

Appendix A – Swedish order of Battle

Anti-Imperialist/Swedes

Title	Unit	Nat	Str	FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE GAME		
				Bases	Tercio Type	Veteran
Hand	Infantry	Swedes	1800	3	Modern Squadron	Yes
Haufer	Infantry	Finnish	300	1	Modern Squadron	Yes
Royal Guard Coy	Infantry	Mixed	?		Musket Company	Yes
N. Brahe	Infantry	German	1400	2	Modern Squadron	
Winckel	Infantry	German	1000	1	Modern Squadron	
Thurn	Infantry	German	600	1	Modern Squadron	Yes
Baner	Infantry	German	900	1	Modern Squadron	Yes
B. Sax-Weimer	Infantry	German	1500	2	Modern Squadron	Yes
Burt	Infantry	German	1100	2	Modern Squadron	
Chemnitz	Infantry	German	300	1	Modern Squadron	
Forbes	Infantry	German	600	1	Modern Squadron	
Horn	Infantry	German	400	1	Modern Squadron	Yes
Kagge	Infantry	German	900	1	Modern Squadron	Yes
Kanoffsky	Infantry	German	400	1	Modern Squadron	
Liebenstein	Infantry	German	500	1	Modern Squadron	
Mitcheffall	Infantry	German	700	1	Modern Squadron	
Mitzlaff	Infantry	German	700	1	Modern Squadron	
Monro of Fowles	Infantry	German	700	1	Modern Squadron	
Riese	Infantry	German	800	1	Modern Squadron	
Schaffalitsky	Infantry	German	500	1	Modern Squadron	
R.						
Schlammersdorf	Infantry	German	1900	3	Modern Squadron	
T.						
Schlammersdorf	Infantry	German	600	1	Modern Squadron	
Schneidwinds	Infantry	German	1100	2	Modern Squadron	Yes
Truchsess	Infantry	German	600	1	Modern Squadron	
Wildenstein	Infantry	German	700	1	Modern Squadron	
Hepburn	Infantry	Scottish	1200	2	Modern Squadron	Yes
Mackay	Infantry	Scottish	500	1	Modern Squadron	Yes
Spens	Infantry	Scottish	600	1	Modern Squadron	Yes
				36		
Stenbrock	CR	Swedes	450	1	Modern Cavalry	Yes
Soop	CR	Swedes	400	1	Modern Cavalry	Yes
Silversparre	Sqd	Swedes	300	1	Light Cavalry	Yes
Sack	Sqd	Swedes	300	1	Light Cavalry	Yes
Sperreuter	Sqd	Swedes	150	1	Light Cavalry	Yes
Stalhansk	CR	Finnish	300	1	Modern Cavalry	

Tiesenhausen	Sqd	Livonia	300	1	Light Cavalry	
Dornhoff	Sqd	Kurland	300	1	Light Cavalry	
Baudissin	CR	German	800	2	Modern Cavalry	
Berghofer	CR	German	400	1	Modern Cavalry	
B. Sax-Weimar	CR	German	600	2	Modern Cavalry	
Courville	CR	German	400	1	Modern Cavalry	
E. Sax-Weimar	CR	German	600	2	Modern Cavalry	
Horn	CR	German	400	1	Modern Cavalry	Yes
Kuchtitzky	CR	German	300	1	Modern Cavalry	
Baden	CR	German	300	1	Modern Cavalry	
Monro of Fowles	CR	German	300	1	Modern Cavalry	
Schonberg	Sqd	German	300	1	Light Cavalry	
Solms	CR	German	600	2	Modern Cavalry	
Sperreuter	CR	German	700	2	Modern Cavalry	
Streiff	Sqd	German	300	1	Light Cavalry	Yes
Tott	CR	German	800	2	Modern Cavalry	
Truchsess	CR	German	500	1	Modern Cavalry	
Uslar	CR	German	800	2	Modern Cavalry	
Wedel	CR	German	400	1	Modern Cavalry	Yes
W. Sax-Weimar	CR	German	1400	3	Modern Cavalry	
Ohm	CR	German	500	1	Modern Cavalry	
Du Menys	DR	German	400	1	Dragoons	Yes
Taupadel	DR	German	1300	3	Dragoons	Yes
				40		
Demi-Cannon		Swedes	18	6	Heavy Cannon	Yes
Quartercannon		Swedes	18	7	Medium Cannon	Yes
Falconets		Swedes	36	13	Light Cannon	Yes
				26		

Appendix B – Imperialist Order of Battle

Imperialists

Title	Unit	Nat	Str	FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE GAME		
				Bases	Tercio Type	Veteran
Alt-Tilly	Infantry	Wurburg	1600	3	Classic Foot Squadron	Yes
Beck	Infantry	Walloon	2300	4	Classic Foot Squadron	Yes
Comargo	Infantry	High German	1600	3	Classic Foot Squadron	
Conteras	Infantry	German	1000	2	Classic Foot Squadron	
Fahrenbach	Infantry	High German	1000	2	Classic Foot Squadron	
Merode	Infantry	Walloon	700	2	Classic Foot Squadron	
Pappenhiem	Infantry	High German	2000	4	Classic Foot Squadron	Yes
Reinach	Infantry	High German	1000	2	Classic Foot Squadron	
Wahl	Infantry	High German	3300	6	Classic Foot Squadron	
(Units of less than 500 assumed merged in above)						
				28		
O H Fugger	Croats	Croatian	600	2	Croat Light Cavalry	
Bucquoy	KUR	Walloon	200	1	Cuirassier	
Billehe	KUR	High German	700	2	Cuirassier	
Cronberg	KUR	High German	1100	2	Cuirassiers	Yes
Linkshart	DR	High German	200	1	Dragoons	
Hasslang	CR	High German	200	1	Modern Cavalry	
J Fugger	CR	Low German	400	1	Modern Cavalry	
D ' Espagne	CR	Low German	600	1	Modern Cavalry	
Merode	CR	Low German	400	1	Modern Cavalry	
Blankhart	CR	Low German	400	1	Modern Cavalry	
Cratz	CR	High German	200	1	Modern Cavalry	
Merode	ARK	Walloon	200	1	Arquebusier	
				15		
Demi-Cannon		Unknown	2	2	Heavy Cannon	Yes
Other Cannon		Unknown	18	8	Medium Cannon	Yes
				10		

Appendix C - Europe's Tragedy-Peter H Wilson

The king marched from Mainz, collecting Horn and other units to enter Nuremberg where he was hailed as the avenging 'lion of midnight' two weeks later on 31 March. Within a week he had captured Donauwörth, the success marred by the indiscriminate massacre of surrendering Catholic soldiers and welcoming Protestant burghers. Further reinforcements gave him 37,000 men and 72 cannon – sufficient to attack Bavaria. Gustavus faced the dilemma confronting all invaders. The Danube cut the electorate in two, with only a few bridges at Ingolstadt, Kehlheim, the great imperial city of Regensburg, and finally at Straubing and Passau further east. He could not attack both north and south without dividing his army, and so he decided to invade the southern side since this contained the rich capital of Munich. This necessitated crossing the Lech that flowed from the Upper Bavarian mountains down the Swabian frontier to join the Danube between Donauwörth and Ingolstadt. The main bridge at Augsburg was still held by 5,000 Bavarians, while others secured the other crossing at Rain where the Lech joined the Danube. Tilly and Aldringen had entrenched 21,000 men and 20 guns on the firm ground south of Rain. The Lech divided into a series of parallel, fast-flowing streams each 60 to 80 metres wide. Heavy spring rain and melting mountain snow had swollen them to a depth of at least 4 metres, while most of the Bavarian bank consisted of semi-submerged woods or marsh. Crossing this obstacle was to be one of Gustavus's greatest achievements.

The only practical route lay five kilometres south of Rain where there was an island separated from the western bank by a deep channel, but from which it was possible to ford to the eastern side. Gustavus drew up on the open ground directly opposite Tilly's camp on 14 April and began an artillery bombardment suggesting he would try to cross here. Meanwhile, other troops moved into the woods opposite the island and bridged the channel. Musketeers collected on the island the next morning.

Covered by a smoke screen of burning wet straw mixed with gunpowder, 334 Finns, motivated by the promise of five months' extra pay, rowed across to the Bavarian bank. Pre-fabricated bridge sections were then floated across and secured, enabling the rest of the army to start crossing covered by the fire of additional batteries concealed in the woods on the western bank and on the island.

Tilly despatched troops as soon as he learned of the crossing and a fierce fight developed south of the Liga encampment. Unknown to Tilly, however, 2,000 elite Swedish cavalry had forded the Lech two kilometres further south and arrived as the fighting reached its climax at 4 p.m. Aldringen was temporarily blinded by a small cannonball striking a glancing blow, while Tilly's right thigh was shattered by a 3-pound ball and he lost consciousness, dying two weeks later. Command devolved to the personally brave but inexperienced Bavarian elector, who ordered a retreat. Both sides had lost about 2,000 men, but the retreat led to a further 1,000 Bavarians and imperial troops being captured.

Appendix D - THE ASTOUNDING PASSAGE OF THE LECH

Gustavus Adolphus The Northern Hurricane

by Sir George MacMunn

The arrival of the Imperial forces, which were also the forces of the League, on the banks of the Lech brings the campaign to the next great struggle between the Swedish and the Catholic forces, one of the most brilliant military successes in history, and also to the ringing to evensong of the career of the veteran Imperial leader.

The River Lech, which rises in the Tyrol, after washing the walls of Landsburg and Augsburg, runs with great force and swiftness through broken marshy banks into the Danube, close to the town of Rain. Tilly's right flank rested on the Danube itself, and his left in the town of Rain. Redoubts had been built all along the low-lying river bank and joined by entrenchments. Heavy guns were planted along the front at intervals, and the whole of the fords up to Augsburg were in Imperial hands, the bridges had been destroyed and the towns occupied. Close behind the position ran the small stream of the Ach, and behind the Ach heavy forests, in which hidden Tilly's army lay.

On both banks lay a marshy plain, which was in front of the Catholic position, though in modern time this has been drained by the canalisation of the Lech. To attack the combined forces of Bavaria and the League, who now lay behind it, meant the crossing of the rapid river and the threading of the marshy ground both before and after the passage of the river.

To the Imperialists it seemed inconceivable that the Swedes should attack them on such a front embodying so strong a line of redoubts behind so difficult and so marshy a river. Not so the King. Assembling his forces south of the Danube at Nordheim, he there held a conference. All his principal commanders, including Marshal Horn, saw no possible chance of success in a direct assault and an attempt to cross the not-very-approachable Lech, but Gustavus did not at all relish the alternative of a detour to the south of Augsburg. On April 3rd he carried out a daring personal reconnaissance, exposing very freely, and even carrying on a conversation with an Imperialist sentry somewhat after this fashion

" Good morning, Mein Herr. Where is old Tilly?

" Thank you, Herr Tilly is in his quarters at Rain. Where is the King, comrade ? "

" Oh, he's in his quarters too ! "

Why, you don't say the King gives you quarters

'Oh, yes, indeed. Come over to us, and you shall have fine quarters.'" And the King rode away, laughing heartily.

The prime object of the King's personal reconnaissance was to see whether the Lech could be crossed at all and if so by what nature of bridge. The river was running fiercely, swollen by melting snow, and would be forty or fifty yards wide. He had learned that the Bavarians with the Elector himself, were on the Imperialist's right, posted on the top of gentle slopes which ran down to the marsh on the right bank of the Lech, and were themselves among the thick woods that crowned the slopes. Tilly with the troops of the League was on the Imperial left, holding the town of Rain.

As the result of his reconnaissance, Gustavus had formed the conclusion that the river could be crossed in the teeth of the defenders, and had decided that he would make the attempt whether his generals liked it or not. He cut short their deliberations, which took place again after his reconnaissance, saying, " What ! Shall we who have crossed not only the Baltic, but also the Oder, the Rhine and the Danube, turn back from the Lech, a stream which can scarcely be dignified with the name of a river? " The generals ceased their objections, but perhaps the King himself alone had confidence in his daring plans.

The spot that he had selected lay a mile above Rain, where the river swept round in a bend towards the Swedish side between that town and Theirhauppen. Here the King saw that he could dominate with a converging fire of artillery and musketry the ground within the bend on the Imperialist side.

While the King was carrying out his reconnaissance, he moved his divisions down towards the Lech, during which the enemy's artillery opened freely and disclosed their positions. To conceal his actual intentions, Gustavus had recourse to what we are perhaps inclined to imagine to be a modern invention—that of a smoke screen. Fires were lit all along the bank and fed with damp rushes, so that the clouds of smoke enveloped long portions of the valley of the Lech. Under this, seventy-two Swedish cannon were brought into action to dominate the bend, and on the night of April 6th the work was entirely finished. The first plans for a floating bridge were found impossible, from the force of the current, and finally trestles heavily weighed were prepared in a village half a mile from the bank.

As the bridge was nearly completed a forlorn hope of 300 Finnish soldiers, stimulated by an offer of ten dollars apiece, were put across to entrench a hasty bridge-head. This successfully achieved, Gustavus, who had sent cavalry to attempt a ford a little higher up, led his infantry, followed closely by some light artillery, across on the morning of the 5th.

Now was to come that portion of the task which the Swedish generals had contemplated so anxiously—the threadings of the marshy ground on the far bank and the deployment to advance against the redoubts and trenches waiting for them on the gentle slopes that rose from the river. The cannonade since the previous day had been incessant, and with the fires still caused heavy palls of smoke to envelop both positions. But Tilly had by now realised the point at which his adversary was crossing, and concentrated the greater portion of his guns to meet it, and commenced felling abattis on the front of his entrenched position. The Finnish infantry having established themselves, the first reinforcements set to work to increase the bridge-head defences, and this, together with the fact that a steeper bank on the Imperialist's side gave some protection, enabled the infantry to deploy without severe loss. It was not, however, till four in the afternoon of the 5th that the King had enough men ready to lead them forward. In the meantime, the party of cavalry sent to explore the ford got over and led the whole of the Swedish cavalry across, who now appeared, threatening the Imperialist left.

Tilly then brought his masses of infantry down to attack the deploying Swedes. But the King had posted rangel's musketeers along the bank among the osiers, and their fire wrought heavy losses among Tilly's infantry, while the Imperial cavalry were heavily charged whenever they emerged from the woods.

THE DEATH OF TILLY

More of the Swedish infantry filed across the bridge during the night of the 6th, and deployed to their right, while the Imperial troops formed up in masses outside their woods, and on the 7th the mass of the Swedish artillery also filed across. Again and again the Imperialist infantry endeavoured to drive the Swedes back on the marshes of the Lech. Then came the finale to what need not have been a decisive engagement at that stage. Tilly himself, leading forward the masses of infantry in one of the attacks, was struck on the thigh by a three-pounder shot from a falconet, and was carried off the field fainting from the intense agony. His second-in-command, Count Altringer, at once took command, but he too was struck on the temple by a grazing bullet and had to be carried off the field. That was the end of the counter-attack from the Imperialist position, which not only had a fair prospect of driving the Swedes to confusion in their daring enterprise, but still had behind it the impregnable position on the edge of the woods. The command now fell to Maximilian, in whose qualities as a leader no one had any confidence. The Bavarian troops, secure behind their redoubts and in their woods, had not been heavily engaged. Holding a council of war that night, Maximilian, advised, it is said, by Tilly, who would not have been in a state to give good advice, decided to withdraw, and by morning the troops of the Elector were well on the road to Neuburg. The League troops, who had borne the brunt of the fighting, extricated themselves as best they could, the Swedes bivouacking on the slopes up which they had fought.

Appendix E – The River Lech Now

