

CAPSTONE PAPER

ATTACK AND DEFENSE AT THE 1704 SIEGE OF LANDAU: AN ANALYSIS

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the fortress, Lieutenant General Yrieix Masgonthier de Laubanie, was well-acquainted with siege-craft. He knew well the terrain in which his opponent would operate as well as the strong

as to secure the Allies' base in case of a French victory. In this role, the Margrave's forces besieged Ingolstadt as a diversion from the intentions of Marlborough and Eugen, although he actually believed that their actions were a diversion from his own siege efforts. After Blenheim, Prince Louis joined up with the combined Allied army to cross the Rhine and take charge of the siege of Landau. The siege gave the Margrave a crucial role in capturing this important objective of the campaign. Landau had been a dangerous threat, it was a fortress that he wanted to capture, and having command of the siege was a good opportunity to demonstrate a vigorous approach in support of his allies.

Some 14,000 Bavarian and French prisoners, including Tallard himself, were captured following Blenheim. Tallard's Army of Alsace was 60,000 strong at Blenheim and had taken some 20,000 casualties in the battle and lost several thousand to desertion. Maréchal Marsin commanded the remnants of approximately 16,000 as t

several reasons. First, it protected the retreating French army from an aggressive pursuit. Second, the siege and covering operation tied up large numbers of Allied troops, which in turn slowed down Marlborough's designs on the Moselle. Third, the need to protect the siege kept Prince Eugen from returning to Austria to fight Hungarian rebels. Fourth, the spirited defense demonstrated that French spirit remained strong after Blenheim. Fifth, it demonstrated that the French fortress system was a highly effective form of defense and served as an early signal that campaigning against the French fortresses would take time and consume a lot of resources. After the French defeats in the major battles of Blenheim and Ramilles, it became attractive and safer for armies to make use of the defensive power of the fortresses so as to avoid the risk of engaging major field forces in battle.⁷

communications and travel on the Rhine River to the east and north, and could be used for offensive operations as a supply depot and secure base.⁸ The area around Landau in 1704 was a rolling, inundated plain with low hills and occasional small farming villages in an area known for its abundant agriculture and quality wine.⁹

Landau's design, history, and strategic location shaped the outcome of the siege of 1704. Landau was a well-positioned chokepoint at the junction of what resembled a long wishbone in which Alsace and Lorraine form the two branches, each representing a natural route through the valleys on either side of the Vosges Mountains. Following the broad valley by land from Landau southwest to Metz requires a secure flank on the Moselle River into the drainage of the Saar and Moselle Rivers. The eastern flank through Alsace's narrow low ground is both protected and threatened by the Rhine. Anyone who held Landau would control the upper Rhine and thus access into and out of Germany.¹⁰ The Allies had to take Landau in order to push th

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powder improved, so did the effect of these weapons on slab-sided walls. The geometrically designed star-shaped fortress as built at Landau was crafted to remove the penetrating advantage of the attacker's guns by lowering the wall. This change sheltered the ramparts behind a low

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The investment efforts of the Allies to cover Landau ensured that no relief army could approach without risking a pitched battle with the armies of Marlborough and Eugen - something that after Blenheim, the French were both unwilling and unable to do in Central Europe during the fall of 1704.

The Allies tended to favour the methods of the famed Dutch military engineer Menno Van Coehoorn, who had the misfortune to die of a stroke in March of 1704 while en route to confer with Marlborough regarding the upcoming campaign to the Danube. One wonders if Coehoorn would have supported Marlborough's decisio

Vauban preferred to make use of ricochet firing techniques along the flank aspect of the walls to clear the covered way of defenders. Vauban's method included careful preparation and extensive use of trench works to protect the infantry in the advance towards the covered way. The Vauban attack was designed to protect the besiegers from casualties, rather than to end the siege quickly. His main contribution to the already well-established use of zigzag trenches was to include three rows of parallel trenches which could be used to cover masses of troops close to the fortress so that they could move into the zigzag saps quickly upon an assault. Vauban was concerned with protecting the attackers from unnecessary casualties even if it cost a little more time. One should note, however, that the shortest Landau siege was the 1703 one by the French, so Vauban's efficient methods did not necessarily mean a long siege. Conversely, Coehoorn's method fit well with the Allied desires for a vigorous prosecution of sieges, though a careful reading of Coehoorn indicates his awareness of the strength of flanking fire when used by defenders.²⁸ A disadvantage of the Coehoorn method is that it requires a substantial siege train

increasingly proscriptive and even rigid, much more than his more creative and flexible effort as presented in

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with supporting elements in order to achieve rapid breaches of the wall through carefully directed massed firepower. The other risk is that an attack following a breach could still lead to heavy casualties amongst the besiegers if the defender has not been sufficiently reduced or suppressed. On the other hand, a vigorous assault may well carry the day, so both methods could work as part of a well-executed plan of suppression and attack.

Lacking in the sources of the 1704 siege of Landau is any mention of Vauban's technique of ricochet fire using reduced powder so as to inflict maximum damage on the garrison. The description of massive bombardments such as the one which injured Laubanie seems to be more in line with a Coehoorn style of siege, though the besieger's use of parallel trenches was certainly a technique that Vauban promoted. One might question, though, if the Landau parallels and trench works were as efficient as they could have been.²⁹ The conduct of the siege at Landau thus displays a mix of tactics of the two engineers with Coehoorn's techniques as the dominant influence on the Allied siege methods. It is unclear if the apparent mixing of methods was intentional, but it is more likely that the Margrave lacked a strong engineer to provide technical support which led to trying a variety of techniques. In short, the Allied siege appeared to rely on the Margrave's past experience with Landau in 1702, rather than on coherent advice from a competent engineering corps. The Allies were short of both engineers and artillery so good technical support and advice was likely unavailable. As well the Margrave's earlier

targets. Vauban is not mentioned in Coehoorn's book - he prefers to refer to the "French style." According to Ostwald, *Vauban Under Siege*, 254-259, both sides used Vauban's three parallels method, but the most significant factor in successful siegecraft was that there was plenty of artillery, a factor even more important than how it was used. Figure 1 on page 9 shows crude parallels with several non-continuous ones, probably used to emplace batteries. Ostwald cites Lt. Col du Génie A. Allent, *Histoire du Corps Impérial du Génie Première Partie Depuis l'origine de la fortification moderne jusqu'à la fin du règne de Louis XIV*, Paris: Chez Magimel, Libraire pour l'Art militaire, 1805, 407, 416, and 589, in pointing out that less talent was needed to conduct a Coehoorn-style of attack as compared to the "skillful" Vauban methods.

²⁹ Of special interest is Laubanie's criticism of the poorly placed first parallel recorded in Augoyat, *Mémoires Inédits du Maréchal De Vauban*, 88-89.

campaign time and weather needed to take the fortresses on the Moselle and Saarlouis was fading, so he concurrently began operations against the Moselle fortresses as the Siege of Landau continued while Eugen remained in place to cover the siege. As November dragged on the prospect of relief became increasingly improbable, and the increased artillery fire damaged the locks on the river such that flooding could no longer be controlled by the garrison. When the covered way was taken, and an assault became likely, a wounded Laubanie held a council of war on November 23, whereupon he and his officers decided to beat the chamade to parley for terms of surrender. The fortress capitulated on November 25 and was occupied by the Imperials on November 28.

III. Why did the Siege of Landau take so long? Leaders and other Considerations

The 1704 siege of Landau provides a good example of the importance of siege craft in the War of the Spanish Succession. When one considers the context of 1704 and the tumultuous time after the defeat of the French and Bavarian armies at Blenheim, the English and Dutch-driven negotiations with Austria and her Hungarian rebels, English victories at sea and at Gibraltar, and French successes in Italy and Spain, Landau demonstrated to both sides something that they already knew - that siege operations were an effective means of delaying an attacker without the risk of a major battle. That Landau took so long to capitulate demonstrated that operational fortress defense was a strong and effective form of positional warfare in the early eighteenth century.³⁹

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of Landau might have been the talented engineer Louis Laparra des Fieux who like Laubanie was a well thought of contemporary of Vauban.⁴² However, if good engineers were in short supply, exceptional ones were even less common and Laparra was needed in Spain where he was eventually killed during the siege of Barcelona in 1706. Despite Laubanie's senior age of 63, he was a vigorous commander of the Armies in Alsace. He had a long record of service as a skilled administrator and governor of such diverse posts as Calais, Mons, and Neuf-Brisach with a distinguished record as an infantry officer. While Maréchal Tallard commanded the siege, General Laubanie had commanded the successful assault on the French Gate of Landau in 1703. After the siege as Landau's new governor he had then repaired and reinforced the fortress.⁴³ Laubanie was the logical choice to be its governor

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been obvious to the Margrave as it was to the French that his allies did not trust him.⁴⁵ Prince Louis seemed to be adverse to risk, and thus he was much more interested in achieving limited objectives than engaging in the large and risky pitched battles that Eugen and Marlborough sought. He certainly wanted to capture Landau, but it is also clear from his lack of enthusiasm for a renewed campaign in 1705 that he was not interested in further support to his allies for additional campaigns into France.⁴⁶ His commitments to providd .72 Tm [(4)-8.3.15789(e.957p5545(g)9.06272

to prevent further losses of that nature.⁴⁷ Subsequent sorties showed that his leadership methods and resulting decisions had been successful in encouraging much better spirit among the grenadiers, even though the casualties that the garrison had suffered were affecting morale.⁴⁸ After Laubanie was blinded as a result of wounds received during a bombardment on October 10, he continued to direct a vigorous defense for well over another month.⁴⁹ Laubanie's serious injury added to the friction of war that cannot hav

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that the Allies had expected to fight Villeroy at Landau, but their own rapid crossing of the Rhine forced the French commander to head even further south.⁵² Before retreating south, Villeroy had added troops to the garrison and dropped off plenty of stores to support the defenders. Thus the garrison of Landau was strong, recently reinforced, and well stocked with munitions and supplies prior to the arrival of the Allies.

When evaluating Baden's performance one must understand that Allies were unable to provide sufficient siege resources at the critical opening phase of the siege. Prince Louis had little in the way of siege equipment and engineers, and no money with which to obtain them. Marlborough's plan to link up with Eugen and have Baden prevent the French and Bavarian forces from invading Austria along the Danube, included leaving behind his siege train as it would have impeded rapid movement. In order to fight the decisive battle that he was seeking, Marlborough had decided that the ability to manoeuvre his forces was more important than the ability to conduct sieges. Marlborough had lost Baron Menno Van Coehoorn earlier in the year to a stroke, and thus he was lacking the counsel of one of the great military engineers of the age. In other words, a side effect of the great victory of Blenheim was that the delay that occurred at Landau contributed to Marlborough not having the army's heavy siege train and engineers

about Marlborough's aims after 1704 to have "opened

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present to support the Margrave's meagre resources. The limited siege equipment and few engineers available were needed by General Thüngen at the Siege of Ulm. Fortunately, the garrison at Ulm did not hold out for long and thus a major siege was unnecessary.⁵³ In that regard it is worth considering that the defenders of Ulm had managed to achieve honourable terms of capitulation after only a few days of resistance - Ulm's brief fight had hardly distinguished its garrison or leadership and in fact that garrison's token effort and surrender of munitions and cannon contributed directly to the siege at Landau. Ulm was certainly in an untenable position given its situation as a hospital for Blenheim casualties, low provisions and lack of support, but a slightly longer delay would have prevented General Thüngen from supporting the Landau siege with those captured cannon.⁵⁴ Though capturing Ulm provided some resources needed at Landau, it had taken away some of the scarce engineers and artillery of the tiny Imperial siege train which in turn had prevented a timely start to the Landau siege. An additional point to consider is that captured cannon and powder do not include the trained artillery crews

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communication and supply necessary to both move and support a large army, particularly its heavy equipment such as cannon. Landau, along with the other fortresses along the Rhine such as Philippsburg would protect that waterway from any French designs in Holland and succour Allied designs in Strasbourg and Metz. Capturing the Mosel fortresses such as Trèves, Trarbach and nearby Saarlouis were important objectives. Trèves fell easily, Trarbach put up a better fight, but the time and resources needed to take Saarlouis faded with the end of the campaign season.⁵⁶ Marlborough ended the 1704 campaign season in control of the major rivers that would allow him to invade France, and probably more importantly, to hinder river-based attacks upon his allies.

Marlborough became increasingly impatient with the slow pace of the Landau siege and its effect upon the operational and strategic initiative. In order to regain that initiative, Marlborough chose to engage in concurrent activity - Eugen would continue to cover the siege by holding on the Lauter, and Marlborough moved to attack the Moselle fortresses. In that regard, Marlborough found it necessary to divide his forces from Landau. There were likely four good reasons for that decision. First, the Margrave had sufficient manpower resources to invest and besiege the fortress, even if he was lacking in some siege resources, he certainly had sufficient infantry. Second, concern over any possibility of Villeroy rallying a relief force made it important to cover the siege by placing blocking forces along the Lauter.⁵⁷ Third, large armies consume huge quantities of forage, food, firewood, and water, and thus it would hinder the siege to have all of the army present. The need for adequate food and shelter would thus have made it

56 *Journal de la Campagne de 1704*, t. 1, p. 100.

57 *Journal de la Campagne de 1704*, t. 1, p. 100.

58 *Journal de la Campagne de 1704*, t. 1, p. 100.

necessary to disperse the attacking force to avoid consuming all of the local resources and limiting the deposits of the large quantities of waste that such consumption would produce. Fourth, the huge numbers of men sleeping in tents and in billets in the damp conditions and fighting in the wet weather at Landau would have been at risk of illness. With the benefit of hindsight, one can see that the dispersion of the Allied force made good operational sense.

IV. The Division in the Allied Approach

Despite the obvious desire to finish off Landau and move on to the next objective it is likely that the personal agendas of key Allied commanders were distracted from concluding the siege quickly. The historiography demonstrates significant disagreements between Louis of Baden on the one hand, and both Marlborough and Eugen on the other hand about the conduct of the entire campaign, and especially about who should be in command.⁵⁸ Prince Louis used his foot injury as a reason for his lack of vigour, but he was more likely envious of his allied co-commanders.⁵⁹ Given Marlborough's prolific writings, it seems apparent that he was well aware of the need to at least influence if not manage the message about the war for his audience. Most of the histories cite Marlborough's correspondence, which in the tradition of *Caesar's Commentaries* makes the enemy appear great and thus enhances the glory of the victory. From his writings it is clear that Marlborough did not enjoy the same rapport with Prince Louis of Baden that he enjoyed with Eugen of Savoy. There were several reasons for the poor relationship, some of which have already been discussed, but there always seemed to be a

⁵⁸ Braubach, *Prinz Eugen*, vol. II, 50-51. See also Coxe, *Memoirs of John*, 361-362.

⁵⁹ William Coxe, *Memoirs of John Duke of Marlborough with his Original Correspondence Collected from the Family Records at Blenheim and other Authentic Sources* (Second Edition, Volume 1, (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, & Brown, 1820), 358. The Margrave of Baden had suffered a contusion to his foot at the battle of Schellenberg at Donauworth.

concern that the Margrave was less aggressive than his allies Marlborough and Eugen needed him to be. In particular his overtures to the Elector of Bavaria prior to the Danube Campaign made his conduct appear suspicious to both Marlborough and Count Johann Wenzel Wratislaw, a diplomat of the Austrian emperor.⁶⁰ The Margrave favoured going on the defensive to make a diversion and merely observe on the Danube, rather than actively supporting Austria should the Elector not be amenable to changing sides.⁶¹ To be fair, the Margrave's cautious sentiments were more in line with those of London and the Hague, both of which wanted to see success on the Moselle before an aggressive campaign against Bavaria.⁶² The Dutch and English were being risk adverse without recognizing that a campaign against Bavaria was a necessary part of a vigorous defense of the Alliance. A passive defensive strategy of sitting in Dutch fortresses would have provided the French and Bavarians with full initiative to attack Vienna. In order to defend the Austrians, the Allies needed to adopt an aggressive and therefore potentially risky strategy that changed the dynamics of the war. If the Danube campaign transferred the initiative to the Allies, then Landau blunted that initiative. One might well wonder if the cost in time and manpower of taking Landau repaid its value to the besiegers, especially since the invasion of France from Central Europe planned for 1705 never happened.

The Margrave sought limited objectives along the Rhine that included taking Landau while avoiding risks against the Elector of Bavaria. Eugen and Marlborough took a much more strategically aggressive approach with the clear aim of removing Bavaria from the war so as to



⁶⁰ Churchill, *Marlborough*, 785-786. Marlborough and Count Wratislaw were concerned enough by Baden's delays

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Austria, and the English and Dutch attempts to accommodate the rebels in negotiations, yet

ability to continue a resolute defense; Laubanie himself was wounded in the bombardment on 11 October, and several key officers and engineers had also been killed or wounded.⁶⁷ By November the siege was taking its toll on the defenders as the trenches reached the fortress and more officers critical to the defense were killed or injured. There were few breaks from the constant pounding of artillery and these were usually due to the effect of rain on the powder. The siege journal entries for November 13-14 are illustrative:

Du 13.

L'artillerie des ennemis fit moins de feu qu'à l'ordinaire, apparemment à cause de la pluie qui dura presque tout le jour, et dont ils avaient eu le bonheur de n'être point incommodés depuis quarante-cinq jours qu'ils canonnaient la place.

Du 13 - au 14.

Les ennemis, à la faveur d'un grand feu de leur artillerie qui dura toute la nuit, comblèrent de sacs à terre et de fascines le fossé gauche de la demi-lune pour s'y faire un passage. On les incommoda autant qu'on put par le

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Casualties mounted, and when the Allies managed to

in the fashion of Coehoorn. One might consider that the French defenders of Landau were highly effective at delaying and inflicting casualties upon the enemy. Christopher Duffy claims by the time that Landau surrendered on November 25, 1704, it had inflicted 9,322 casualties and even though this figure probably indicates both killed and wounded, it represents heavy damage to the attackers in excess of 10 percent casualties.⁷⁰ The defenders are variously listed as having taken casualties of 2,600 to 5,000 killed, wounded, and sick from a garrison counted as from 5,000 to 7,000 troops.⁷¹ It is not clear in most sources how these numbers are broken down, or what happened to those who were too sick or injured to travel. Many contemporary accounts emphasize the numbers killed and the length of the siege.⁷² Regardless of the precise casualty

⁷⁰ John Lynn, "The French Case," in *The Military Revolution Debate* 193. Lynn's dates for the 1704 siege do not stand up to scrutiny as the contemporary accounts put the end of the siege at November 25 instead of November 11 - this could be a typographical error of writing the 11 twice. John Le Neve, *The Lives and Characters of the most Illustrious Persons who died in the year* 1714, (London: S. Holt for Andrew Bell, in Cornhill, E. Curll and G. Pemberton in Fleet Street, 1714), 188, puts the surrender of Landau at September 24, 1704 - he is out by two whole months. The evidence is clear that the garrison capitulated on November 25 and left on November 26, but it seems to be a matter of what one means by taken and surrendered - Winston Churchill, *Marlborough His Life and Times*, Book 1, 903, 905, puts the fortress on his map as taken, probably meaning occupied, on November 28.

⁷¹ Christopher Duffy, *The Fortress in the Age of Vauban*, 47. Unfortunately Duffy does not directly cite a source for that number, but he does include Emile Heuser's work in his bibliography which appears to be the source of the figure that arises from the *Verdun Gazette*. See also Michel Gondinet, *Un Héros Ou Un* 86-87, who rounds the number of allied casualties at about 10,000 citing the German historian Emile Heuser, *Die Belagerung von Landau* (Landau, Pfalz: Phillip Stoeppel, 1913). Gondinet also cites the precise 9,322 number quoting Prince Louis of Baden in the *Verdun Gazette*. Duffy's number also appears to originate from Heuser citing the *Verdun Gazette*, as he does not indicate use either of the monograph by Michel Gondinet, or of the *Verdun Gazette*. Michel Gondinet at page 111, points out that the high casualties made "La prise de Landau, conclut-il, fut pour les Allies une victoire à la Pyrrhus." Gondinet also laments that the figure does not break down into killed and wounded as casualties includes both. Lediard, *The Life of John Duke of Marlborough* Vol. 1, (1736), 462, claims a garrison of 7,000 and 3,400 survivors, and the besiegers with 2,000 killed and about double that figure wounded. See also Lynn, "The French Case," 193, 195-196, citing Gaston Bodart, provides round numbers for casualties at Landau, claiming 5,000 attackers and 3,000 defenders. It is not clear if the casualty numbers represent killed and wounded or merely those killed. The French and German accounts tend to indicate Heuser's higher numbers which, like Gondinet's, appear to originate from the *Gazette de Verdun*.

⁷² The defender's casualties are listed in round numbers by Lynn, "The trace italienne," 193, at 3,000 and by Godinet citing Heuser in *Un Héros Ou 10* at 5,000 including both killed and wounded. Braubach, *Prinz Eugen von Savoyen*, 81, 475-476, cites correspondence between the Comte de Philipp Ludwig Wenzel Von Sinzendorf and Eugen indicating that Laubanie's garrison had 5,000 soldiers which would make the defense even more remarkable with only 1,600 casud and 7(0)-7.(0690794a)-2.64358(u) i oing theasithd. Sig 306.4971(b)JTJ 203.1922.64358(r)-17.0728(s)2.71431()-

figures, it was obvious that the French had performed much better at defending Landau than they had at fighting the pitched battle at Blenheim. All sides recognized the fortress's strategic importance owing to its location on a transportation route between the Rhine and Moselle rivers. On the tactical level, the towered bastion was intended to put heavy fire along the ditch between the scarp and the counterscarp, while still sweeping the glacis. The tower bastion's lower guns were well-protected from enemy fire and would represent a nasty surprise to anyone who appeared in the arc of fire of the cannon that this emplacement sheltered.

By the end of November, the siege cannon were doing significant damage to the fortress and its defenders. The trenches were close and a practicable breach would soon be made. Landau and its garrison had fought a good fight, but no one could have been asked to suffer more for a fortress that was clearly lost - the Allies were too strong and well-positioned, and so there would be no relief for Landau in November of 1704.⁷³ As well, heavy casualties, damaged cannon, lowered stocks of munitions, and deteriorating morale made the decision to surrender the fortress and save the remaining garrison clear.⁷⁴ Can the example of the 1704 Siege of Landau help explain whether during the eighteenth century the attack was stronger than the

Landau garrison started with approximately 7,000 troops and marched out with 3,400 after having inflicted 2,000 killed and 4,000 wounded on the besiegers. See also Augoyat, *Mémoires Inédits du Maréchal De Vauvan sur Landau*, which claims in the siege journal that the defenders' casualties were "Au 5 novembre, 53^e jour de siège, la force des bataillons était réduite à 180 hommes présents sous les armes. Il sortit de la place environ 2,400 hommes, et il y resta 600 blessés ou malades." It puts the garrison strength at 5,000. It should be recognized that casualty figures for ordinary soldiers are often incomplete and few differentiate between killed, wounded, and sick. Lediard, *Life of John*, Vol. 1, (1736), 310-311, mentions sickness among the French troops after Blenheim, with 150 being buried in one week at Ulm. One also wonders about the rates of desertion which is occasionally mentioned. Consider the comments of Churchill, *Marlborough*, 895, 902, regarding sickness and desertion of the French troops in the retreat to the Rhine, and on illness to both allied soldiers and horses during the siege.

⁷³ Gondinet, *Un Héros Ou l'Échec* 65. Gondinet cites Heuser in arguing that Laubanie always hoped that Villeroy would return to save Landau. The morale in the fortress fell when it became obvious by the middle of November that relief was not coming.

⁷⁴ Augoyat, *Mémoires Inédits du Maréchal De Vauvan* 163-164.

It is the same in marshy ground, where you cannot hope to gain much depth. All this is just a question of degree, but attacks surrounded

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records that the breaks in the rain were usually quickly exploited while little was done by the besieger during rainy weather, which is mainly recorded as occurring in September.⁸¹ □

□ A critical problem for any attacker of Landau was to secure the sources for food and shelter for the large army. For the most part, small local villages and farms would have been the sources for both of those operational needs.⁸² Such a situation underlines the need to maintain a good relationship with the local people. If there are no farmers, then there are no crops and even worse, a hostile civilian population can wreck havoc on an unwelcome military force. Landau receives a lot of rain in the autumn and enjoys warm, sunny weather in the summer months. The weather and terrain conditions are excellent for growing the grapes which were and remain an important crop in this agricultural area. At one point during the Landau siege Marlborough sent Laubanie a basket of local grapes to which Laubanie responded in kind with a basket of oranges and lemons.⁸³ The presentation of such gifts 53536(i)-2.53536(l)-2.53536(e)3.15789()

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simply did not mesh well with the more aggressive styles of Marlborough and Eugen.

Regardless, his cautious conduct in 1704 and 1705 lends credence to the idea that his objectives, such as Landau, were regional in nature and that the Alliance was useful for him to achieve regional security from threats to Imperial interests. Unfortunately for the Margrave, he had undertaken a mission without adequate siege artillery and few engineers against a resourceful opponent, a situation similar to that of the 1702 siege. With hindsight, one can see that such a situation had to contribute to the length of the siege. Engineers were necessary to organize the trench works and give advice on proper use of artillery, which was a critical force in suppressing the defenders and breaching the walls. As well, Prince Louis' efforts were overshadowed by the arrival on site of the King of Prussia's

Therefore, Landau's defense did have an important effect upon the war. The steadiness of

Tallard and the Elector of Bavaria had been able to attack Vienna, the War of the Spanish Succession may well have ended early on with a major Bourbon Empire in place encompassing most of Europe. Even if France did end the war with its chosen heir on the Spanish throne, under the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht that heir had to renounce claims to the French throne just as the French heirs had to renounce claims to the Spanish throne; if at the end Austria was not the victor in the war, at least it did not lose as it could have in 1704.⁹⁰

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who would sit on the Spanish throne was severely limited by the French strategy of fortress defense.

IX. The Siege of Landau - Revolution or Evolution?

Landau can serve as a useful case study as to the merits of the “Revolution vs. Evolution” debate and its implications for early mo

The revolution in military affairs point of view that relates to Landau, as a fortress of the latest style of the *trace italienne*, is mainly articulated in the writings of Geoffrey Parker. Parker defends the opinion that revolutions in military affairs have provided the innovative changes that have led in turn to a dominant Western way of fighting wars. Parker argues that technological changes contributed to dramatic growth in size of armies, changes in tactics and strategy, and an increased effect of warfare upon society.⁹⁶ Parker responds to several of the criticisms of his thesis, including first, the concern over whether a development that occurs over centuries can be

⁹⁶ Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800*, (Cambridge, Ma: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3.

thesis that the *trace italienne* was the main technological innovation that led to an increase in army size. He uses the French example to make his case and in so doing discusses seven variables in the formula of siege warfare, to which one might add uncontrolled variables such as weather that could affect the outcome of a siege. He dissects Parker's argument using seven variables and argues that population size, wealth, and expansionist ambitions also played a significant role in the size of the French military forces.⁹⁸

John A. Lynn helpfully notes many of the reforms and technological improvements that the French army received during the reign of Louis XIV. However, his main focus is upon the difficulties of feeding, clothing, equipping and paying that army which were challenges not limited to the French.⁹⁹ One recognizes that supply of and support for the fortresses were critical features in maintaining their longevity in the face of sieges. Landau had been well-stocked and vigorously defended, but it was isolated from any further aid or relief. Its only hope was to hold out longer than its besiegers who would have also been in need of supplies and shelter in the course of the operation. Given the wet conditions at Landau it is possible that some casualties on both sides were due to disease.¹⁰⁰ Although Landau of 1704 represented tome hman817(p)-0.956417(m)-3.493(

considering whether or not evolutionary improvements such as tower bastions were significant on their own, or merely one of several features that contributed to a convergence of natural and human factors that protected this fortress for longer than expected, and perhaps for longer than necessary.

IX. Conclusion

The war of position and fortification was a key element of the War of the Spanish Succession and thus the situation in Northern Europe in the summer and fall of 1704 provides a good example of the importance of the fortress in that war.¹⁰¹ Landau in the fall of 1704 held a well-motivated French garrison led by Lieutenant General Laubanie. At the time of the 1704 siege Landau was a well-designed and carefully-sited trace italienne fortress which was state-of-the-art for its day. As a skilled and experienced commander, Laubanie was well acquainted with the strategic situation and the importance of buying time to permit the Army of Alsace to escape. He started with a well-garrisoned and fully equipped fortress, and a solid understanding of the finer points of siege warfare. For example, Laubanie made use of the covering fire on the ditches provided by the second system design and he was also very clever about moving around his cannon and firing positions in anticipation of attacks. His use of mines at likely points of attack and ordering of aggressive sorties disrupted the trench works of the besiegers. These tactical choices were all techniques taken directly from his mentor Vauban's writings on defense. Laubanie defended his fortress in an aggressive fashion, and made use of sorties and the wet terrain to make the attacker's progress both slow and dangerous; only the failure of the damaged locks that took away Laubanie's control over flooding the ditches allowed the Imperials to take

¹⁰¹ See Lynn, *Giant of the Grand Siècle* 549-533, for a discussion of the role of the fortress in positional warfare.

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the covered way and thus prepare a breach in the ramparts. With functioning locks, the siege may well have lasted into December; the Margrave certainly was concerned about the possibility of Laubanie flooding the ditches during an assault.¹⁰² The commander and defenders of Landau

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of the war. Another consideration affecting the progress of the operation was Marlborough's need to secure his internal lines by withdrawing forces from the siege to prepare for taking control of suitable winter quarters along the river Moselle. As the siege dragged on it became obvious that any additional campaigning would be only to secure winter quarters, and so Marlborough's attention shifted from protection of the siege to preparation for the next campaign season. A rejuvenated campaign meant building political and economic support for the war in London and the Hague, and ensuring that the winter quarters were well located in places suitable both for ease of supply and for tactical flexibility of movement when the season commenced again. Though England's numbers of troops were small relative to the continental powers, its major contribution was the money that parliament provided to pay a large share of the expenses of the war. Successes such as Blenheim encouraged support back home, but long sieges were costly and lacked the rapid glory of cavalry charges and security of decisive combat. In that respect, Landau became one of many sieges that contributed to the weariness of what became a long war that would ultimately result in Britain seeking a separate peace with France and abandoning its allies, yet ultimately denying France the growth that it desired and costing it a tremendous amount of human and financial resources. The siege of Landau should also alert

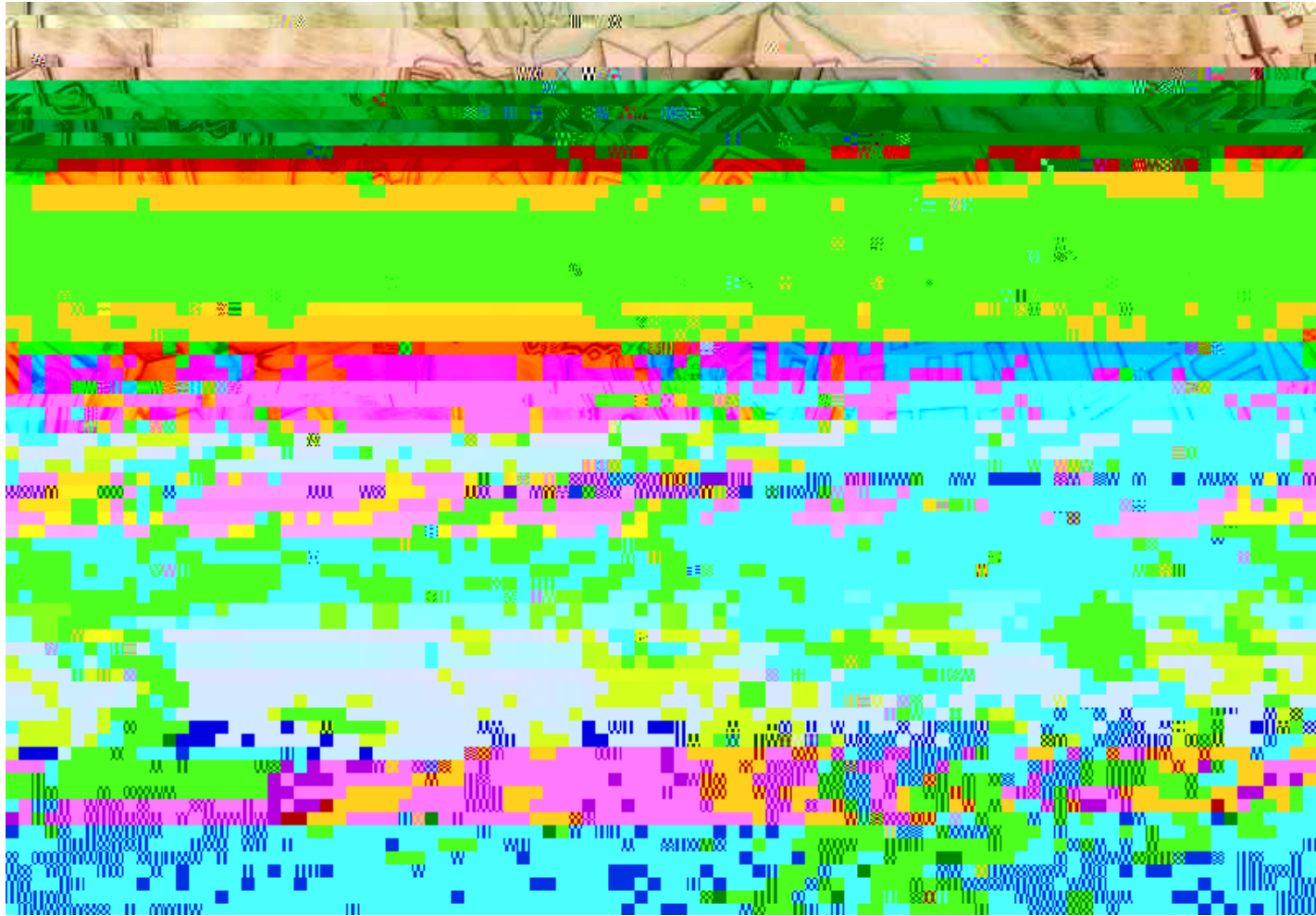
The strong defense of Landau made an important contribution to preventing any vigorous pursuit of the defeated French army, even if one had been desired. It also delayed reaction to Allied difficulties in Hungary and Italy, and provided a slow and agonizing end to the central European campaign season of 1704. The siege also suggested that there could be strategic implications for future campaigns in the war since this operational level siege had proven so costly in terms of time, manpower and resources against that well-defended *trace italienne*. In general terms active defense of fortresses worked for the French while pitched battles against the like of Marlborough and Eugen had not. The 1704 Siege of Landau demonstrated that an active defense could prolong a siege to the point where the delay could affect operational goals and even have strategic effects. Landau had capitulated, not to revolutionary tactics or wonder weapons, but rather because it had fulfilled its mission for that campaign and there remained neither need nor ability to carry on the fight. Even more significantly, Landau signalled the beginning of a change in strategy for King Louis XIV that would increasingly value the defense

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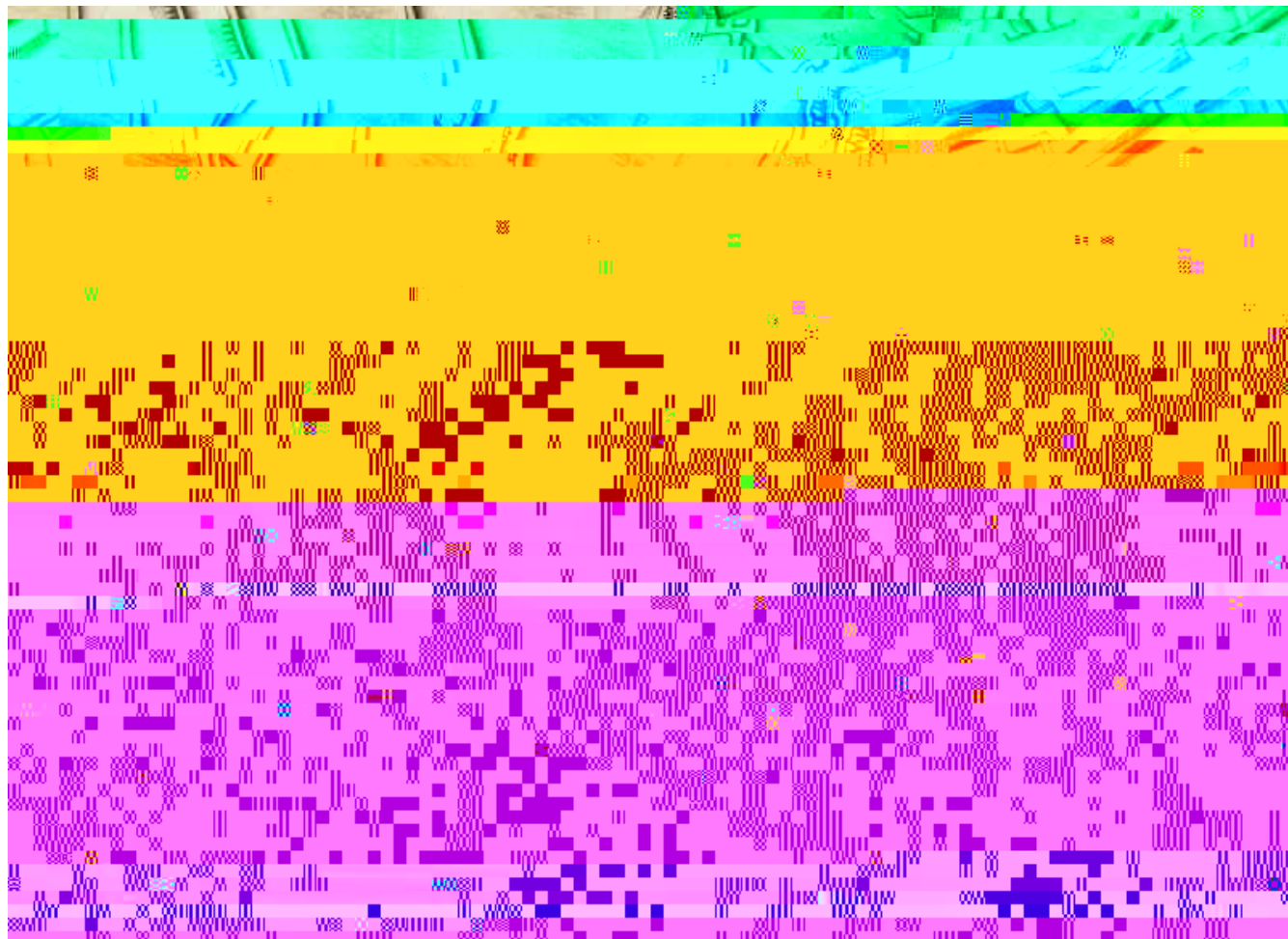
Appendix A –Enlarged map scale bar and index of Landau under siege in 1704



Appendix B - Southern trench works, showing several parallels, saps, and emplaced batteries.



Appendix C – Enlarged detail of trench works at the French Gate. Note the heavy damage to the bastions, ravelins, and scarp from artillery fire and mines.

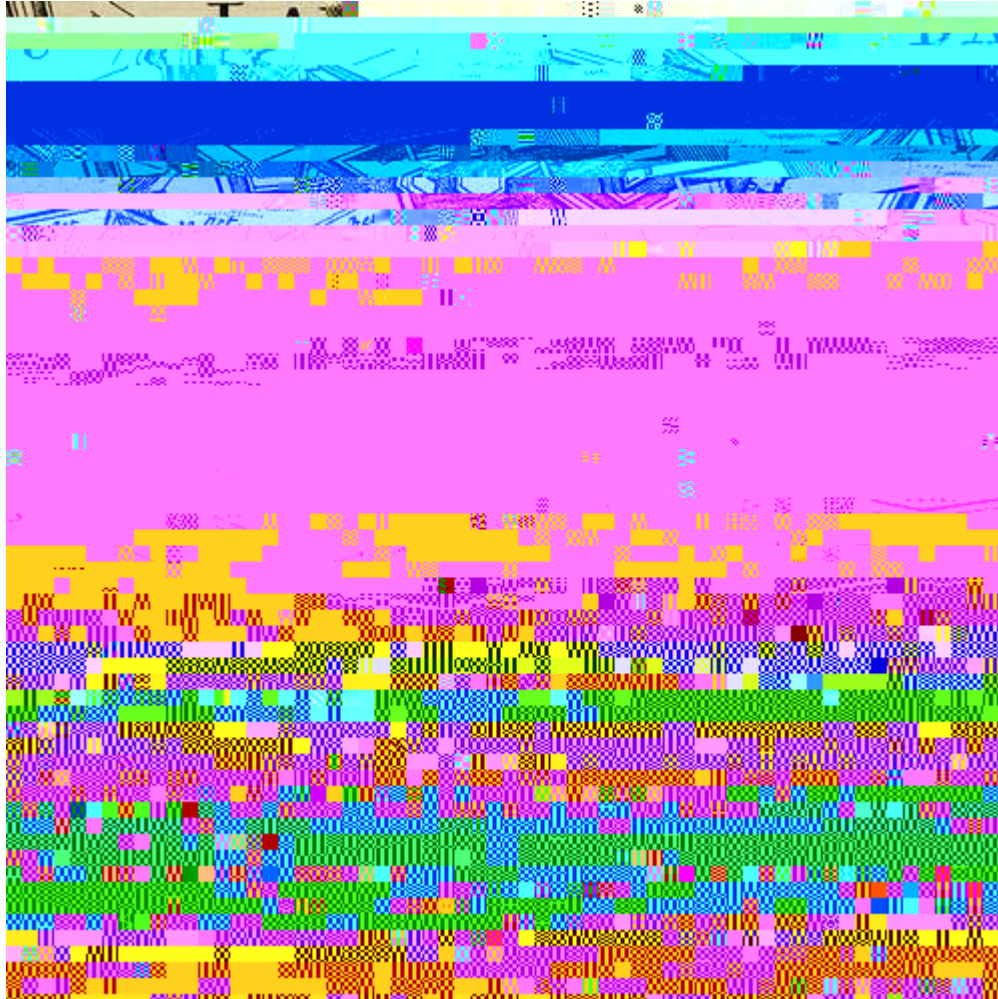


Appendix D - Enlarged south-western trench works and battery locations.



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Appendix G – Enlarged map from Appendix F showing Imperial trench progress with dates. Note how the progress slowed in October as the trenches came closer to the fortress's French Gate, which is indicated by the path from the covered way to the ravelin through the tenaille to the rampart.



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