

## = Battle of Schellenberg =

The Battle of Schellenberg , also known as the Battle of Donauwörth , was fought on 2 July 1704 during the War of the Spanish Succession . The engagement was part of the Duke of Marlborough 's campaign to save the Habsburg capital of Vienna from a threatened advance by King Louis XIV 's Franco @-@ Bavarian forces ranged in southern Germany . Marlborough had commenced his 250 @-@ mile ( 400 km ) march from Bedburg , near Cologne , on 19 May ; within five weeks he had linked his forces with those of the Margrave of Baden , before continuing on to the river Danube . Once in southern Germany , the Allies ' task was to induce Max Emanuel , the Elector of Bavaria , to abandon his allegiance to Louis XIV and rejoin the Grand Alliance ; but to force the issue , the Allies first needed to secure a fortified bridgehead and magazine on the Danube , through which their supplies could cross to the south of the river into the heart of the Elector 's lands . For this purpose , Marlborough selected the town of Donauwörth .

Once the Elector and his co @-@ commander , Marshal Marsin , knew of the Allies ' objective , they dispatched Count d 'Arco with an advance force of 12 @,@ 000 men from their main camp at Dillingen to strengthen and hold the Schellenberg heights above the town . Rejecting a protracted siege , Marlborough decided in favour of a quick assault , before the position could be made impregnable . After two failed attempts to storm the barricades , the Allied commanders , acting in unison , finally managed to overwhelm the defenders . It had taken just two hours to secure the bridgehead over the river in a hard fought contest , but following the victory , momentum was lost to indecision . The deliberate devastation of the Elector 's lands in Bavaria failed to bring Max Emanuel to battle or persuade him back into the Imperial fold . Only when Marshal Tallard arrived with reinforcements to strengthen the Elector 's forces , and Prince Eugene of Savoy arrived from the Rhine to bolster the Allies , was the stage finally set for the decisive action at the Battle of Blenheim the following month .

## = = Background = =

The Battle of Schellenberg was part of the Grand Alliance 's campaign of 1704 to prevent the Franco @-@ Bavarian army from threatening Vienna , the capital of Habsburg Austria . The campaign began in earnest on 19 May when the Duke of Marlborough began his 250 @-@ mile ( 400 km ) march from Bedburg near Cologne towards the Elector of Bavaria 's and Marshal Marsin 's Franco @-@ Bavarian army on the Danube . Marlborough had initially deceived the French commanders ? Marshal Villeroi in the Spanish Netherlands and Marshal Tallard along the Rhine ? into thinking his target was Alsace or the Moselle farther to the north . However , when the Elector was notified on 5 June of Marlborough 's march from the Low Countries , he had correctly predicted that it was his principality of Bavaria that was the Allies ' real target .

Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I was keen to lure the Elector back into the Imperial fold after he had switched allegiance to fight for King Louis XIV before the war . Given this duplicity , Marlborough thought the best way to secure Bavaria for the Alliance was to negotiate from a position of strength by invading the Elector 's territories , hoping to persuade him to change sides before he could be reinforced . By 22 June Marlborough 's army had linked up with elements of the Margrave of Baden 's Imperial forces at Launsheim ; by the end of June their combined strength totalled nearly 80 @,@ 000 men ( see map on right ) . The Franco @-@ Bavarian army camped at Ulm were numerically inferior to the Allies , and a large part of the Elector 's troops were scattered about garrisons in his territories as far as Munich and the Tyrolese frontier , but his position was far from desperate : if he could hold out for a month , Tallard would arrive from the Rhine with French reinforcements .

Once the Allies had combined their forces , the Elector and Marsin moved their 40 @,@ 000 troops into the entrenched camp between Dillingen and Lauingen on the north bank of the Danube . The Allied commanders ? unwilling to attack such a strong position rendered impregnable by redoubts and inundations ? passed round Dillingen to the north through Balmershofen and Armerdingen in the direction of Donauwörth . If captured , the bridgehead at Donauwörth ( overlooked by the Schellenberg ) would offer new communications with the friendly states in central Germany by way

of Nördlingen and Nuremberg , as well as providing a good crossing @-@ place over the Danube for re @-@ supply when the Allies were south of the river .

= = Prelude = =

= = = Schellenberg 's defences = = =

The Schellenberg heights dominate the skyline to the northeast of Donauwörth ? the walled town on the confluence of the Wörnitz and Danube rivers . With one flank of the hill protected by dense , impenetrable trees of the Boschberg wood , and the river Wörnitz and marshes protecting its southern and western quarters , the Schellenberg heights offer a commanding position for any defender . However , its oval shaped summit was flat and open , and its 70 @-@ year @-@ old defences , including an old fort built by the Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus during the Thirty Years ' War , were neglected and in a dilapidated state . When the unexpected attack took place the bastions , the curtain , and the ditch were fairly complete along the long eastern face from the shore of the Danube to the wooded hilltop , but in the shorter section from the wood to the fort ? the angle where Marlborough 's attack was delivered ? the earthwork had been more hastily made up of fascines of brushwood thinly covered with soil . The western section of the lines ran steeply downhill from the fort to the city walls . Here , there was little to show in terms of defences , but to compensate the line could be protected by a flanking fire from the town . ( See ' Schellenberg ' map below . )

In 1703 Marshal Villars had advised the Elector to fortify his towns , " ... and above all the Schellenberg , that fort above Donauwörth , the importance of which the great Gustavus taught us . " The Elector , whose relationship with Villars had since collapsed , had initially ignored the advice to repair the decaying defences , but once it was realised that Donauwörth was to be attacked , Count d 'Arco , a Piedmontese officer , was despatched from the camp at Dillingen with orders to strengthen and hold the position . D 'Arco was entrusted with 12 @,@ 000 men , most of whom were drawn from Bavaria 's best units including the Elector 's Guards and the regiment of the Prince Electoral , led by veteran officers . In total , the garrison defending the Schellenberg consisted of 16 Bavarian and seven French infantry battalions , six squadrons of French and three squadrons of Bavarian dragoons , supported by 16 guns . In addition , Donauwörth was held by a French battalion and two battalions of Bavarian militia .

= = = Initial manoeuvres = = =

On the night of 1 ? 2 July , the Allies were camped at Armerdingen , 15 miles ( 24 km ) from Donauwörth . It was here when Marlborough received an urgent message from Baron Moltenburg , Prince Eugene 's Adjutant @-@ General , that Marshal Tallard was marching with 35 @,@ 000 troops through the Black Forest to reinforce the Franco @-@ Bavarian army . This news convinced Marlborough that he did not have time for a protracted siege and , despite protestations from Baden ? arguing that a direct assault would incur severe casualties ? the Duke planned for an outright assault on the position . D 'Arco knew of the whereabouts of the Allied camp at Armerdingen , and was confident he had at least a full day and night to prepare his defences .

At 03 : 00 on 2 July the Allied advance guard began to break camp for the march towards Donauwörth and the Schellenberg heights . Marlborough personally oversaw the advance of the initial assault force of 5 @,@ 850 @-@ foot , drawn up in groups of approximately 130 men from each battalion under his command . The Dutch General Johan Wijnand van Goor would lead this vanguard . Behind these stormers came 12 @,@ 000 Allied infantry in two echelons , each of eight battalions ( English , Dutch , Hanoverian and Hessian ) under Major General Henry Withers and Count Horn , supported by Henry Lumley 's and Graf Reynard van Hompesch 's 35 squadrons of British and Dutch cavalry and dragoons . Baden , whose wing of the army marched behind Marlborough 's , would hold a brigade of Imperial grenadiers ready for action when the opportunity

came as there was insufficient room in front of the Schellenberg for them to fully deploy . In all , the Allies were deploying 22 @, @ 000 men in the operation .

Riding far ahead of the army Marlborough personally examined the enemy position , observing through his telescope preparations for a camp on the far side of the river in expectation of the arrival of the Elector 's main force the following day . There was , therefore , no time to be lost . Although the Duke had 12 hours of light remaining in the day his men were still struggling in the mud , miles away behind the river Wörnitz , and they could not hope to launch the attack before about 18 : 00 , leaving just two hours before nightfall . As the Allies marched , work on the defences of Donauwörth and the Schellenberg were proceeding in earnest . With the aid of French engineer officers d 'Arco started to repair and strengthen the two miles ( 3 @. @ 2 km ) of old entrenchments that connected the fort of Gustavus with the Danube on one side , and the town walls on the other . A French commander in Bavarian service and chronicler of the period , Colonel Jean Martin de la Colonie , later wrote ? " The time left to us was too short to complete this satisfactorily . "

The Allied cavalry began to appear at about 08 : 00 , five miles ( 8 km ) or six miles ( 9 @. @ 7 km ) away on d 'Arco 's left front to the north @-@ west , followed by the infantry . By 10 : 00 Marlborough 's Quartermaster @-@ General , William Cadogan , began to mark out land for an encampment within sight of the Schellenberg ? short of the Wörnitz ? to give the impression they were intending a leisurely siege . Count d 'Arco watched Cadogan 's preparations and , falling for the deception , left the supervision of the still incomplete defences to lunch with the French commander of Donauwörth , Colonel DuBordet , safe in the belief that he had the rest of the day and night to finish the defences . However , the columns marched purposefully onwards , and by mid @-@ afternoon they had crossed the river Wörnitz at Ebermorgen , intent on launching an immediate assault . The Allies were spotted by the Bavarian outposts who , after setting fire to Berg and surrounding hamlets , rushed off to sound the alarm . General d 'Arco , rudely interrupted from his lunch , rushed up the Schellenberg and called his men to arms .

= = Battle = =

= = = Marlborough 's first assault = = =

Although Marlborough knew a frontal attack on the Schellenberg would be costly , he was convinced that it was the only way of securing the speedy capture of the town : unless he captured the summit by nightfall , it would never be taken ? the defences would be too strong , and the main Franco @-@ Bavarian army , which was hastening from Dillingen towards Donauwörth , would arrive to defend the position . A female dragoon , Christian Welsh ( she had disguised her true sex ) remembered , " Our vanguard did not come into sight of the enemy entrenchments til the afternoon ; however , not to give the Bavarians time to make themselves yet stronger , the duke ordered the Dutch General Goor ... to attack as soon as possible . " At about 17 : 00 , as a preliminary to the attack , Marlborough 's artillery commander , Colonel Holcroft Blood , pounded the enemy from a position near Berg ; each salvo was countered by d 'Arco 's guns from Gustavus 's fort and from just outside the Boschberg wood .

General d 'Arco now ordered de la Colonie 's French grenadiers into reserve on top of the Heights ( above the breastworks manned by the Bavarians ) , ready to plug any gaps in their defences at the appropriate time . However , due to the flatness of the summit this position offered his men limited protection from the Allied guns . This exposure was noted by Colonel Blood who , sighting his artillery upon the summit , was able to inflict serious casualties upon de la Colonie 's men . De la Colonie later recorded ? " They concentrated their fire upon us , and with their first discharge carried off Count de la Bastide ... so that my coat was covered with brains and blood . " Notwithstanding this barrage , and despite losing five officers and 80 grenadiers before firing a shot , de la Colonie insisted his French regiment stayed at their post , determined as he was to maintain discipline and ensure his troops would be in good order when called into action .

There was just enough time before nightfall to storm the position on its north side ( mainly up the

steepest part of the slope immediately north of Gustavus 's fort ) , but not enough time to develop simultaneous attacks from other sides . The attack went in around 18 : 00 , led by the advanced guard of the ' forlorn hope ' . This force of 80 English grenadiers from the 1st English Foot Guards , led by Viscount Mordaunt and Colonel Richard Munden , was designed to draw the enemy fire and thus enable the Allied commanders to discern the defensive strong points . The main force followed closely behind . " The rapidity of their movements , together with their loud yells , were truly alarming " , recalled la Colonie , who , in order to drown out the shouts and hurrahs , ordered his drummer to beat charge " so as to drown them with their noise , lest they should have a bad effect upon our people . "

As the range closed the Allies became easy targets for the Franco @-@ Bavarian musket- and grape @-@ shot ; the confusion exacerbated by fizzing hand @-@ grenades thrown down the slope by the defenders . To aid their assault , each Allied soldier carried a bundle of fascines ( earlier cut from the Boschberg wood ) , with which to bridge the ditches in front of the breastworks to speed their passage . However , the fascines were mistakenly thrown into a dry gully ? formed by the recent summer rains ? instead of the Bavarians ' defensive trench about 45 m ( 50 yards ) farther on . Nevertheless , the Allies continued to push forward , joining battle with the Bavarians in savage hand @-@ to @-@ hand fighting . Behind the defences the Elector 's Guards and la Colonie 's men bore the brunt of the attack so that , " The little parapet which separates the two forces became the scene of the bloodiest struggle that could be conceived . " But the assault failed to penetrate the defences , and the Allies were forced to fall back to their lines . General Johan Wijnand van Goor , a favourite of Marlborough who had led the attack , numbered among the Allied fatalities .

= = = Marlborough 's second assault = = =

The second assault proved no more successful . The red @-@ coated English and the blue @-@ coated Dutch advanced side by side in perfect order for a second attempt . Requiring from them another concerted effort their general officers personally led the men from the front into a second torrent of musket @-@ shot and grenades . Again the Allies left many dead and wounded at the enemy palisade including Marshal Count von Limburg Styrum who had led the second assault . With broken ranks , and in confusion , the attacking troops fell once more back down the hill . With the Allies repulsed for a second time the exultant Bavarian grenadiers , with bayonets fixed , poured over their breastworks to pursue the attackers and drive them to defeat . But English guardsmen , aided by Lumley 's dismounted cavalymen , prevented a total rout , compelling the Bavarians back behind their defences .

= = = Baden 's assault = = =

At this moment , having failed twice to make a breakthrough , Marlborough received intelligence that the defences linking the town walls with the breastwork on the hill were now sparsely manned ( Marlborough 's unsuccessful attacks had drawn d 'Arco 's men away from other parts of the stronghold , leaving his left flank almost defenceless and highly vulnerable ) . The other Allied commander , the Margrave of Baden ( who had entered the battle half an hour after Marlborough ) , also noticed this opportunity and was soon hurrying with his grenadiers from the hamlet of Berg , and across the Kaibach stream to assault the position .

Critically , Donauwörth 's garrison commander had withdrawn his men inside the town , locked the gates , and could now only offer scattered shots from its walls . Baden 's Imperial troops ( now supported by eight of Marlborough 's reserve battalions ) , easily breached these weakened defences , defeated the two battalions of infantry and a handful of cavalry still defending the area , and were able to form up at the foot of the Schellenberg , interposing themselves between d 'Arco and the town . Noticing the danger d 'Arco hurried to the rear to summon his dismounted French dragoons ( held back in the lee of the hill ) in an attempt to stem the advancing Imperialists marching up the glaxis . However , three companies of Baden 's grenadiers confronted them with concentrated volleys , forcing the cavalry to retire . This action subsequently left d 'Arco out of

position and out of contact with his main force fiercely resisting on the crest of the hill . The Franco @-@ Bavarian commander headed for the town and , according to de la Colonie ? " ... had some difficulty in entering owing to the hesitation of the commandant to open the gates . "

= = = Breakthrough = = =

Aware that Imperial troops had breached the Schellenberg 's defences Marlborough launched a third assault . This time the attackers formed a broader front , requiring d 'Arco 's men to spread their fire , thus reducing the deadly effectiveness of their musketry and grenades . But the defenders , including la Colonie , ( unaware that the Imperialists had penetrated their left flank , and that d 'Arco had retreated to Donauwörth ) , were still confident in their ability to repel the enemy ? " We remained steady at our post ; our fire was regular as ever , and kept our opponents in check . " It was not long , however , before the Franco @-@ Bavarian forces fighting on the hill became conscious of Baden 's infantry approaching from the direction of the town . Many of the officers , including de la Colonie , initially thought that the advancing troops were reinforcements from DuBordet 's garrison in Donauwörth , but it soon became apparent that they were in fact Baden 's troops . " They [ Baden 's Imperial grenadiers ] arrived within gunshot of our flank about 7 : 30 in the evening , without our being aware of the possibility of such a thing . " Wrote de la Colonie . " So occupied were we in defence of our own particular post ... " After establishing themselves at the summit of the Heights on the Allied right , Baden 's men now fired upon the surprised defenders of the Schellenberg , compelling them to re @-@ align in order to meet this unexpected threat . Consequently , Marlborough 's assaulting troops on the Allied left , supported by a fresh echelon of dismounted English dragoons , were able to scramble over the now weakly defended breastwork and push the defenders back to the crown of the hill . The enemy at last fell into confusion .

The outnumbered defenders of the Schellenberg had resisted the Allied assaults for two hours , but now under pressure from both Baden 's and Marlborough 's forces , their stalwart defence was over . As panic spread through the Franco @-@ Bavarian army , Marlborough unleashed 35 squadrons of cavalry and dragoons to pursue the fleeing troops , ruthlessly cutting down the enemy soldiers to the shouts of " Kill , kill and destroy ! " There was no easy escape route . A pontoon bridge over the Danube had collapsed under their weight , and many of d 'Arco 's troops , most of whom could not swim , drowned trying to cross the fast @-@ flowing river . Many others who had been cut off on the northern shore of the Danube ran for their lives amongst the reed @-@ beds , vainly endeavouring to avoid the Allied sabres . Others headed for the village of Zirgesheim , straining to escape to the wooded hills beyond . Only to the west could Marlborough detect a few Franco @-@ Bavarian battalions crossing the Danube by Donauwörth 's bridge in tolerable order , before darkness descended over the battlefield .

= = Aftermath = =

De la Colonie was one of the few to escape , but the Elector of Bavaria had lost many of his best troops which was to have a profound effect on the ability of the Franco @-@ Bavarian forces to face the Allies in the rest of the campaign . Very few of the men who had defended the Schellenberg rejoined the Elector 's and Marsin 's army . Included amongst this number , however , were the Comte d 'Arco and his second @-@ in @-@ command , the Marquis de Maffei , both of whom later defended Lutzingen at the Battle of Blenheim . Of the 22 @,@ 000 Allied troops engaged , over 5 @,@ 000 had become casualties , overwhelming the hospitals that Marlborough had set up in Nördlingen . Amongst the Allied fatalities were six lieutenant @-@ generals , four major @-@ generals , and 28 brigadiers , colonels and lieutenant @-@ colonels , reflecting the exposed positions of senior officers as they led their men forward in the assaults . No other action in the War of the Spanish Succession claimed so many lives of senior officers .

The victory produced the usual spoils of war . As well as capturing all the guns on the Schellenberg the Allies captured all the regimental colours ( apart from de la Colonie 's Grenadiers Rouge Régiment ) , their ammunition , baggage and other rich booty . But the large casualty figures caused

some consternation throughout the Grand Alliance . Although the Dutch cast a victory medal showing Baden on the obverse and a Latin inscription on the other side , there was no mention of the Duke of Marlborough . The Emperor , though , wrote personally to the Duke : " Nothing can be more glorious than the celerity and vigour with which ... you forced the camp of the enemy at Donauwörth " . With the town abandoned that night by Colonel DuBordet , the Elector , who had arrived within sight of the battle with reinforcements only to see the flight and massacre of his best troops , drew his garrisons out of Neuburg and Ratisbon , and fell back behind the river Lech near Augsburg .

= = = Devastation of Bavaria = = =

Marlborough had won his bridgehead over the Danube , and had put himself between the French and Vienna ; yet the battle was followed by a curious , dragging anti @-@ climax . The Duke was determined to lure the Elector into battle before Tallard arrived with reinforcements , but since the battle on the Schellenberg neither Allied commander could agree on their next move , resulting in a protracted siege of Rain . Due to the initial lack of heavy guns and ammunition ( promised by the Empire but not delivered on time ) the town did not fall until 16 July . Nevertheless , Marlborough promptly occupied Neuburg which , together with Donauwörth and Rain , provided the Allies with enough fortified bridges across the Danube and Lech rivers to manoeuvre with ease .

The Allied commanders now marched to Friedberg , watching their enemy across the river Lech in Augsburg , at the same time preventing them from entering Bavaria or drawing from it any supplies . But the transfer of Bavaria from the party of the Two Crowns to the Grand Alliance was the prime concern to the Allies . As the Elector sat behind his defences at Augsburg Marlborough sent his troops deep into Bavaria on raids of destruction , burning buildings and destroying crops , trying to lure the Bavarian commander into battle or convince him to change his allegiance back to Emperor Leopold I. The Emperor had offered a full pardon , as well as subsidies and restoration of all his territories , with additional lands of Pfalz @-@ Neuburg and Burgau if he returned to the Imperial fold , but negotiations between the parties were making little headway .

The spoliation of Bavaria led to entreaties from the Elector 's wife , Theresa Kunegunda Sobieska , for him to divest himself of the French alliance . Although the Elector wavered somewhat in his allegiance to Louis XIV , his resolve to continue fighting against Leopold I and the Grand Alliance was stiffened when news arrived that Tallard 's reinforcements ? some 35 @,@ 000 men ? would soon be in Bavaria . Marlborough now intensified the policy of devastating the Elector 's territory . On 16 July the Duke wrote to his friend Heinsius , the Grand Pensionary of Holland , " We are advancing into the heart of Bavaria to destroy the country and oblige the Elector one way or the other to a compliance " . The policy compelled the Elector to send 8 @,@ 000 troops from Augsburg to defend his own property , reserving only a fraction of his army to join the French under Marsin and Tallard . But although Marlborough thought it a necessary strategy to secure success , it was of doubtful morality . The Duke himself confessed his reservations to his wife , Sarah , " This is so uneasy to my nature that nothing but an absolute necessity would have obliged me to consent to it . For these poor people suffer only for their master 's ambition . " Accounts differ as to the actual amounts of damage done . De La Colonie thought that reports of the devastation were perhaps exaggerated for propaganda purposes ; yet Christian Davies serving with Hay 's Dragoons wrote , " The allies sent parties on every hand to ravage the country ... We spared nothing , killing , burning or otherwise destroying whatever we could not carry off . " To Historian David Chandler , Marlborough must bear the full responsibility for the destruction , for although he undoubtedly found it hard to stomach it was taken under Baden 's , and the Emperor 's protests .

The failure of the Empire to provide an effective siege train had , up to this point , robbed the Allies of victory ? neither Munich nor Ulm could be taken , and the Elector had neither been defeated nor compelled to change allegiance . Prince Eugene had become increasingly worried that no decisive action had followed the victory on the Schellenberg , writing to the Duke of Savoy , " ... I cannot admire their performances . They have been counting on the Elector coming to terms ... they have amused themselves with ... burning a few villages instead of ... marching straight upon the enemy . "

Tallard arrived in Augsburg with French reinforcements on 5 August . Eugene , shadowing Tallard , was also heading south with 18 000 men , but he had been forced to leave behind 12 000 troops guarding the Lines of Stollhofen with which to prevent Villeroi bringing further French reinforcements to the Danube . Moreover , the Elector had at last sent orders to the large Bavarian contingents on the Tyrolese border to rejoin the main army . For the Allies , therefore , time was short : they must defeat the French and their allies at once , or all south Germany would be lost .

On 7 August the three Allied commanders ? Marlborough , Baden and Eugene ? met to decide their strategy . To give themselves another major crossing over the Danube a plan by Baden to besiege the city of Ingolstadt with a force of 15 000 men was agreed to , despite leaving the Allied army numerically inferior . This army , totalling 52 000 men and now without the commander who led the Imperial troops on the Schellenberg , would meet the Franco - Bavarian forces , numbering 56 000 men , in and around the small village of Blindheim . The engagement , fought on 13 August 1704 , would become known in German as the Battle of Höchstädt , and in English , as the Battle of Blenheim .

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