

= Johann Heinrich von Schmitt =

Heinrich Schmitt (1743 ? 11 November 1805) was a lieutenant field marshal in the Habsburg military during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars .

He developed a sound military reputation as a surveyor , map @-@ maker , and strategist during Austria 's wars with the Ottoman Empire , He served on the Quartermaster 's staff during the War of the First Coalition . As a major general , he was one of Archduke Charles trusted advisers during the War of the Second Coalition campaign in southwestern Germany .

In 1799 , his reputation was tarnished by the assassination of the French delegates to the Congress of Rastatt in 1799 , and he retired the following year . When war broke out again in 1805 , he was recalled from retirement and assigned to the combined Russian @-@ Austrian forces on the Danube . On 11 November , Schmitt was killed by friendly fire at the Battle of Dürenstein .

= = Family and education = =

Heinrich Schmitt was born in 1743 , the son of Johann Sebastian von Schmitt , a captain of cavalry in the Imperial Cuirassier Regiment Graf Cordova . Schmitt may have been born in Pest (Budapest) in Hungary , or , as other sources claim , in Bavaria . In 1742 ? 43 , his father 's regiment participated in the Battle of Sahay , and then in the Siege of Prague , followed by duty in Bavaria and the Rhineland in 1743 . His father died in 1752 ? it is unclear where ? and on 25 June 1758 , at the age of 14 years , Schmitt enrolled in the Imperial School of Engineering in Gumpendorf . There he received a thorough technical training in engineering and the extensive education provided for officers on all other major subjects , particularly those pertaining to war and science .

After three years , on 15 November 1761 , Schmitt received a commission as ensign , or Fähnrich , in the Infantry Regiment No. 15 Pallavicini . During his assignment with this regiment , he saw service in the last years of the Seven Years ' War (1765 ? 1763) in the Bohemian theater . The lack of accurate maps had hampered the conduct of the Seven Years ' War and , in 1764 , Schmitt was assigned to a project to improve the map @-@ making capacity of the military . The idea of the scientific soldier , or a soldier educated in the specifics of military operations , led to an investment in the training and education of officers . The development of map making , and Carlos Pallavicini was at the forefront of this movement . On 1 February 1769 , after proving himself capable in this assignment , he was promoted to first lieutenant and transferred to the reorganized Quartermaster 's staff .

= = Military career = =

From 1769 to 1778 , Schmitt was assigned to the Turkish border areas , and was especially active in Temesvar , in the Banat , bordering the Ottoman Empire . In 1778 , he was promoted to captain and mobilized against Prussia during the short War of the Bavarian Succession , after which he transferred back to the Balkan border areas , where he stayed until 1782 . His thorough knowledge of the country guaranteed him map @-@ making and intelligence assignments in Turkish @-@ occupied Bosnia to gather information in preparation for an upcoming new war against Turkey . In particular , he developed material on the Turk 's military situation . His work on the development of intelligence of Turkish strength in Osijek and Alt Gradiska satisfied his superiors and when the war actually broke out in 1787 , he was assigned to the General Staff of the Slavonian Corps . He participated in the storming of the fortress at ?abac , in Serbia , on 24 April 1788 . Emperor Joseph II promoted him personally to major on 14 May 1788 . In 1789 , Schmitt fought at the Siege of Belgrade , and on 23 February 1790 , he was promoted to lieutenant colonel . In March 1790 , he transferred to Bohemia , under command of Field Marshal Ernst Gideon von Laudon , for anticipated action against the Kingdom of Prussia . When this war came to naught , he was transferred to the Austrian Netherlands in 1791 , to help contain a local uprising .

= = = Service in the French Revolutionary Wars = = =

At the outbreak of the War of the First Coalition against France in April 1792 , Schmitt was a staff officer in the main Imperial army in the Austrian Netherlands . He distinguished himself in the defense of the pass of the Croix @-@ aux @-@ Bois (14 September 1792) and in the battles of Raismes and Vicoigne on (both on May 8 , 1793) . On 3 September 1793 , after his promotion to colonel , he served under Field Marshal Friedrich Josias Prinz von Sachsen @-@ Coburg @-@ Saalfeld . In the autumn of 1794 , Schmitt organized the retreat of the main Imperial Army , now under the command of Coburg 's successor , Feldzeugmeister Count Clerfayt from their untenable positions in the Austrian Netherlands eastward to the Rhine .

In the campaign of 1795 , still serving under Field Marshal Count Clerfayt , he was appointed to the staff of Archduke Charles by Emperor Francis II in April 1796 . Schmitt , now a colonel , was at the Battle of Amberg (24 August 1796) , fought in the victory at the Battle of Würzburg (2 September 1796) , and on 6 September 1796 , was promoted to Major General . At this time , he became Archduke Charles ' primary adviser , and served as his Chief of the Quartermaster General Staff .

The trust the Archduke placed in Schmitt was briefly interrupted in 1799 when he was connected , by rumor , to the 29 April assassination of the French delegates to the Congress of Rastatt . The assassination occurred as the delegation was leaving the city , and reportedly was committed by soldiers of the 11th Hussars Szekeley . The official investigation into the assassination placed enormous pressure on Schmitt , to such an extent that he briefly resigned as Charles ' Chief of Staff , but he was quickly reinstated . On 1 March 1800 , Schmitt was promoted to Lieutenant Field Marshal , but later in that year , the Archduke was himself replaced as commander @-@ in @-@ chief by Field Marshal Pál Kray . Although Schmitt remained on Kray 's staff , he again requested retirement , claiming he was tired and could no longer cope with the stress of the job . In reality , he and Kray 's Quartermaster General , Major General Johann Gabriel Chasteler de Courcelles , seldom saw eye @-@ to @-@ eye on any of the main issues facing the army and Kray relied more on Chasteler than on Schmitt . His request was initially refused , but on 19 August 1800 , Emperor Francis I approved the petition when Kray seconded it . Schmitt went first to Vienna and then Hostitz at Kromeriz , near Brno . There he lived with his old friend Ferdinand Ritter von Geißlern until 1805 .

= = = Recall to active duty = = =

During the War of the Third Coalition in 1805 ? 1806 , Schmitt returned from retirement to active service . Equipped with a glowing letter of endorsement from Emperor Francis II to the Russian Infantry General Mikhail Illarionovich Kutuzov (1745 ? 1813) , Schmitt arrived at the Russian headquarters and was appointed Chief of the Quartermaster General Staff of the Allied Army . Schmitt met with the Russian forces at the great abbey by Melk , on the Danube , and he and the commanders concocted a plan to encircle Édouard Mortier 's French force near Dürenstein . To do so , they drew not only on their own military experience , but called upon a captain from the region , to use his geographic and local knowledge .

= = = Death at Dürenstein = = =

Édouard Mortier had marched from Passau and Linz toward Vienna , traveling on the north bank of Danube . His newly created VIII Corps , known as Corps Mortier , consisted of three divisions , which were stretched 56 kilometers (35 mi) apart along the river between Marbach and Dürenstein . This over @-@ extension left his Corps ' northern flank unprotected , against Napoleon 's specific instructions . Schmitt 's plan capitalized on this mistake . On 11 November 1805 , Kutuzov 's column trapped one of Mortier 's divisions , under command of Honoré Théodore Maxime Gazan de la Peyrière . The Russians used a ruse to entice Gazan into an attack on a small force , and then trapped him between two columns . The French were surrounded at the front and rear by the Russians , caught on the flood plain at Dürenstein . They could neither move forward nor backward . A second French division arrived in mid @-@ afternoon and attacked the Russians in the flank , but were themselves surprised when Schmitt led an additional Russian column out of the mountains .

Gazan 's division lost over 40 percent of its men , colors , and several guns . The battle lasted well into the night . In its waning moments , the French were evacuating across the Danube in a flotilla of boats . In the dark confusion , Schmitt was shot , probably by Russian musketry , in a field between the Waldstein and Heudürngraben . Wilhelm von Kotzebue , a German in Russian service , later reported that the column came through the forest road and entered the main road on the river 's edge ; they immediately entered the cross @-@ fire between Dupont 's forward posts of Dragoons and the Dokhtoruv 's Russians . He fell by Wadstein , and was buried on the battlefield with the dead of his Russian column . Although his burial site has never been found , a monument for him was erected in a park in nearby Krems in 1811 .

= = Assessment and legacy = =

A key member of the Imperial Staff , Schmitt was the most experienced Austrian leader , called out of retirement for this specific task of organizing the Austro @-@ Russian retreat . He had wide experience as a leader : From the summer of 1796 until his retirement in 1800 , he had been Chief of the Quartermaster General Staff of the Army , of the Lower Rhine , the Rhine , and the Army of Germany , and a trusted member of Archduke Charles ' staff . Consequently , he had organized a variety of maneuvers and battle plans under different terrain . The military historian Digby Smith hypothesizes that Schmitt , an experienced officer and sound tactician , would have been more effective at the Battle of Austerlitz , at least more effective than his replacement , Franz von Weyrother , as Chief of the Quartermaster General Staff of the Allied Army . After Schmitt 's death , Weyrother , the architect of the Austrian defeat at Hohenlinden , developed the general battle plan of the Allied action at Austerlitz . In the long run , it was unlikely that Schmitt 's plan would have changed the overall outcome ? Austerlitz was arguably one of Napoleon 's finest battles ? but his battle plan would no doubt have been an improvement over the one the Allies used .

Schmitt never married . He was known for his bright intellect , his composure , and his innate courage . Heinrich Schmitt was , in his time , recognized as one of the best and most distinguished officers of the Imperial Austrian army .