keyno: 001

The World War 1914 to 1918

Edited in the Reich Archive

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The Military Operations on Land

Second Volume

Published by E. S. Mittler & Son

Berlin in the Year 1925

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The Liberation of East Prussia

With fourteen maps and eleven sketches

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EML

Published by E. S. Mittler & Son

Berlin in the year 1925

keyno: 003

Introduction to the Second Volume.

The German operations against Russia up to mid-September 1914 form the content of the present volume. Their most essential part is the battles of the 8th Army in East Prussia. This victorious struggle of a German minority against multiple Russian superior forces may well claim special interest from all sides. At its center is the victory at Tannenberg, which military history has nothing comparable to set beside. At the same time, these battles are almost the only ones that took place on German soil and thus affected German land and German compatriots more than all other theaters of war. For this reason, they deserve a broader space in a German work on the World War than other battles. It seemed justified to go into the details of the combat action here more closely than is possible in the other volumes of the complete work. The feelings of the German reader should be taken into account when the immediately visible result of the battles, "The Liberation of East Prussia," was chosen as the title.

The contribution of the allied Austro-Hungarian army could only be presented insofar as it seemed necessary for understanding the larger contexts, beyond that only in cases where imperial German troops (Landwehr corps) were involved in the battles.

The operations of the Russians could be described almost seamlessly based on the available material. The writings published by the Russian "Commission for the Study and Evaluation of the Experiences of the World War and the Civil War," which represent an official Russian work on the operations, became accessible to the Reichsarchiv before the completion of the work. This made it possible to complete the presentation in some respects.

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Introduction to the Second Volume.

The Historical Commission has entrusted General of the Infantry a. D.

Dr. phil. h. c. Hugo Freiherr von Freytag-Loringhoven in Weimar as well as

Privy Councillor Dr. Walter Goetz, Professor of History at the University of Leipzig, M. d. R., with the review of the second volume. The Reich Archive extends its special thanks to both reporters.

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Preliminary Remarks.

1. The loss figures generally require reservation. The attempt to determine even just the German losses accurately has almost universally failed due to a lack of suitable documentation. Whether reliable determinations are still possible today seems questionable.

2. For all place names of the former Russian Empire, the Russian designation prevailing at the start of the war has been used.

3. In the spelling, "jh" represents the Russian ж or Polish ż (= French j).

4. On the maps 1:100000 and 1:200000, the place names appearing in the representation are underlined in color.

5. For the abbreviations on the maps and sketches, unless explicitly noted otherwise, the following generally applies:

Infantry, Cavalry.

Corps numbers are given in Roman numerals, army, division, brigade, and regiment numbers in Arabic numerals, with divisions and brigades distinguished only by the size of the numerals. — A.O.K. = Army High Command, G. = Guard, Hgr. = Army Group, L. = Landwehr, R. = Reserve, s. = independent.

Here, the abbreviations in the military formations, in the personnel and troop directory, as well as the designation for the military formations.

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First Chapter.

The Agreements with Austria-Hungary.

(Map 1.)

While the execution of a campaign in the West was an exclusively German affair, on the Balkans it was an Austro-Hungarian matter, both Central Powers equally participated in a fight against Russia.

Germany's behavior towards Russia was clearly outlined in the event of war, since General Count Schlieffen, as Chief of the General Staff, had concluded in 1892 that in a war against both East and West simultaneously — and no other had since been considered — only against France was a quick victory possible and that the decision must therefore first be sought in the West. Thus, he could only leave the bare minimum of troops against the East. This weak troop deployment, together with the Austro-Hungarian army, was to conduct a holding action until strong German forces arrived from the West to bring the decision in the East as well.

From the Romanian northern border to the Baltic Sea at Memel, a 900 km long front measured in a straight line had to be protected against Russian superiority (for comparison, it should be noted that in the West the distance from the Swiss to the Luxembourg border is only 220, to Calais 500 km). Following the course of the border itself, the line to be covered in the East measured almost 1600 km. The defense on this stretch in Austria-Hungary could largely lean on the course of the Dniester and San and then again on the Carpathians, but thereby gave up the wide and fertile Galician foreland. In Germany, initially only the lake district of East Prussia, then further back the German part of the Vistula course offered natural protection. From the Galician northern border to Thorn, however, there remained a gap about 300 km wide, half as large again as in the West between Switzerland and Luxembourg. It fell into the territory of the enemy, who securely held the Vistula crossings with the fortified places of Ivangorod, Warsaw, and Nowogeorgiewsk. No mountain or river obstacle could stop the advance of the Russian masses here; in the wide spaces of the Polish plains, they were able to outmarch the numerically weaker defender from any position; just as the Niemen-San front, the German Vistula front could already be outflanked on Russian soil.

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of the Polish lowlands, they were able to march out the numerically weaker defender from any position; just as the Njemen-San front, the German Vistula front could already be bypassed on Russian soil. Thus, a pure defense in the East was not feasible. Only if it was possible to deliver effective blows to the Russian army before it was fully assembled and had grown into an overwhelming superiority, was there a prospect of carrying out the defense for a longer period. Otherwise, everything depended on a rapid and decisive victory over France. Once that was achieved, Count Schlieffen also wanted to go on the offensive in the East with full force.

For the weak German Eastern forces, an initial deployment in East Prussia was given to protect this most endangered German territory by the course of the border. Separated far from these forces by Russian territory, the Austro-Hungarian army could march in Galicia. However, Count Schlieffen believed that he could hardly count on an offensive of this army against Russia before the arrival of strong German forces from the West. Such an early Austro-Hungarian offensive was also not urgent, as the deployment of the Russian army could only proceed slowly. From it, an impact on the decisive battle against France was not to be feared at first. Thus, Count Schlieffen did not insist on reaching a firm conclusion with the Austro-Hungarian Chief of General Staff on the initial operations against Russia: The German victory over France was the prerequisite for the successful conduct of the campaign against Russia and thus also for the ultimate success of Austria-Hungary. The question of the cooperation of both armies against Russia only gained importance when strong German forces were free from the West. How the situation in the East would develop until then could not be foreseen beforehand.

Even in the first years of General v. Moltke's tenure, who was appointed successor to Count Schlieffen in 1906, these conditions did not change. Russia was temporarily weakened by the war against Japan and internal unrest, but it quickly recovered.

In the winter of 1908/09, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy faced a serious immediate war threat from the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, the Vienna government initiated an exchange of ideas with the Berlin government between the respective Chiefs of General Staff.

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The Exchange of Ideas between the Two Chiefs of General Staff in 1909.

The Chief of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff, since 1906 General of Infantry Baron Conrad von Hötzendorf, approached General von Moltke on January 1, 1909, to clarify what measures could arise for both powers from a military intervention by Russia against the Danube Monarchy. General von Conrad pointed out that Austria-Hungary would find itself in a difficult position in a war against Russia with Serbia and Montenegro at its back. He assumed at the time that "in all likelihood Russia (and France) would initially appear to wait peacefully and only then engage in hostile actions when the Monarchy was already forced into military intervention against Serbia and Montenegro and was engaged there with strong forces. — This brings the centrality to the forefront, first to deliver a rapid and decisive blow against Serbia, and then to draw the forces freed up against Russia." However, in such a case, one could hardly expect to be at the Russian border earlier than three months after mobilization. — As a result of his statements, General von Conrad concluded that only in the admittedly unlikely case of an "immediate main strike against Russia with very secondary treatment of the Balkan opponents" by the 22nd "mobilization day" could about 40 Austro-Hungarian divisions be assembled in Eastern Galicia to seize the offensive. In the much more likely case of a prior battle against Serbia, however, only about 30 infantry divisions would be ready against Russia at the same time, with 8—9 more only about two months later. In this case, it is "particularly dependent on the behavior planned by Germany, where the assembly of the 30 divisions is to take place and when the offensive is to begin."

General von Moltke stated in his response (dated January 21, 1909) that with the possible military intervention of Russia against Austria-Hungary, the "casus foederis" for Germany was given. "At the time when Russia mobilizes, Germany will also mobilize, namely its entire army. From this moment on, however, Germany must also reckon with a war against France, perhaps also against England. These circumstances are well known to the entire European diplomacy, and therein perhaps lies the assurance that none of the great powers will ignite the burden of war due to Serbian ambitions, which can set the roof of all Europe on fire. Therefore, it seems to me quite unlikely that Russia, for such considerations, will refrain from a military conflict with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy with Serbia."

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that Serbia will behave calmly seems to me quite likely." However, if "despite everything" a great war comes,

Germany would be forced to first strike against France,

against which General v. Moltke, like Count Schlieffen, considered a

quick decision possible. He stated that through such a

decision, effective assistance would ultimately be provided to the Danube Monarchy. In the east, Austria-Hungary would "itself"

be able to initially engage in the fight with only 30 divisions with a prospect of success,

especially if Romania joins its side. The

significant difficulties of Russian mobilization, the anticipated

slowness of Russian operations, the great difficulty

of making changes to the planned deployment, which would initially also

have to be carried out against Germany, make it seem likely

that a decisive decision on the western border will have already been made before the events on

the Austro-Hungarian border have matured into such."

General v. Conrad agreed with Moltke's view that Germany must deliver the main blow in a

two-front war first against France. He himself had reached the same solution in an

earlier study. In addition, he concluded in his letter: If Austria-Hungary were to

march against Russia from the outset, then, with the simultaneous

binding of parts of the Russian army through assumptions, about on

the 29th "mobilization day," 40 Austro-Hungarian divisions would meet 32½ to

34½ Russian divisions. Thus, in this, albeit unlikely case, an Austro-Hungarian offensive would be promising,

if only the 19½ divisions expected against East Prussia and the 3 in Warsaw

were "tied up" by German forces. However, if

Austria-Hungary, as is most likely, had previously deployed significant

forces in the Balkans, then against Russia

initially only 30, perhaps even only 28 (or even 27) Austro-Hungarian

divisions would be available. The prospects for engaging in combat

then did not appear as favorable to General v. Conrad as

General v. Moltke had feared. Therefore, he thought it might be more advantageous in such a

case to first wait for the arrival of German reinforcements

from the west. The Russians could reach the lower Vistula, perhaps even the area between Thorn and Posen

on the 35th mobilization day, while by waiting "already on the 35th mobilization

day strong German forces (at least 20 divisions, leaving then still

51 against France)" would appear in the east. To engage with these forces, it could then "purely spatially theoretically be a question of even considering the Austro-Hungarian deployment under occupation of the Carpathian passes up to the line Bartfeld—Neu-Sandez—Bochnia (35 km east of Krakow) — that is, far into West Galicia — to be relocated.

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Conrad's letters from January 1, 1909, made the marginal note: "Secondary opponents should be treated secondarily." The Danube monarchy also had to—similar to Germany between France and Russia—avoid committing to one side while the much greater danger threatened from the other. In this sense, the German Chief of Staff wrote at the end of his letter: "If war should come, I am of the opinion that the great goals must precede the small ones, so the overthrow of France and Russia must be at the forefront of all measures. If this great goal is achieved, then the Serbian issue for Austria will resolve itself."

Without going into these thoughts further, General v. Conrad now came forward on March 8 with a new request. He wrote that if war against Russia were to come from the outset, he would want to launch an offensive from Eastern Galicia between the 20th and 24th "mobilization days" between the Bug and Vistula. "If this is to be successful, and if Russia is not to be able to turn additional forces of its 1st and 2nd Army against Austria-Hungary, then the German offensive must also begin at the same time, with a main thrust against the Russian 2nd Army (Narew), thus establishing the coordination of joint action." Above all, the Austro-Hungarian Chief of Staff was again concerned with the question of how to proceed against Russia if strong Austro-Hungarian forces were initially committed against Serbia. He seemed to view the situation more favorably in this case as well, for he wrote: "With my firm aversion to any waiting and my conviction of the value of initiative, I also consider the forward deployment and the earliest possible offensive in this case." He further explained that under favorable circumstances, he could begin the offensive against the Russian 3rd Army with considerable superiority, which was then expected as the western wing of the Russian deployment between the Bug and Vistula. However, this offensive also required a simultaneous German attack with about 10 divisions from East Prussia against the Russian 2nd Army, thus against the Narew, "so that it would not be possible for the Russian 1st and 2nd Army to turn additional forces against the Austro-Hungarian Army. — If the 10 German divisions succeeded in defeating the Russian Narew Army" (then assumed to be 9½ divisions) "and if the 17-18 Austro-Hungarian divisions succeeded similarly against the Russian 3rd Army (9½ divisions), this would be a successful initiation of the campaign, in which the forces of the allies that could be spared from France and those to be drawn from the Balkans could then intervene."

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Support was expected. However, given the circumstances, a decision against France was impossible. After all, the Bosnian crisis had just reached its peak. In such a situation, one could not question the results of all previous negotiations but had to try to help as best as possible. Thus, General v. Moltke — albeit with a heavy heart — decided to make the commitment.

He wrote about it: An attack by weak German forces against the fortified Narew line would indeed face great difficulties and was also "threatened on the right flank by Warsaw, on the left by counterattacks from Lomsha. — Nevertheless, I will not hesitate to make the attack to support the simultaneous Austrian offensive. Your Excellencies can rely on this promise, which is well considered. The condition is that the movements of the allies are initiated simultaneously and carried out unconditionally. — Should the execution of the intentions be made impossible for one of the allies by the enemy, the fastest mutual notification is absolutely necessary, as the security of the individual depends entirely on the cooperation of both."

Shortly after the dispatch of this letter, the political situation suddenly changed at the end of March 1909: Serbia yielded, the danger of an imminent war, which had characterized the negotiations of the two chiefs of staff, was over. However, the agreements reached were still regarded by both sides as a basis for a possible jointly conducted war, although the conditions under which it was to be conducted changed in many respects in the following years. Thus, General v. Conrad wrote to General v. Moltke on April 10, that now, if war were to come, the "case would come to the fore that the monarchy would leave only the necessary forces against Serbia and Montenegro, but would assemble the main force against Russia. The latter was in line with the intention of a genuine offensive... This corresponded to the view always held by General v. Moltke.

The Balkan War of the winter of 1912/13 and its consequences, however, again highlighted the possibility that war might first come against Serbia, as Russia immediately intervened. The timely deployment of sufficient Austro-Hungarian forces against Russia was thus again called into question. Thus wrote General v. Conrad, who, after a one-year interruption, had just been reappointed to the head of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff, in January 1913 to General v. Moltke, he had always regarded the German troops intended for East Prussia as the minimum of that force which seems necessary to somewhat relieve the Austro-Hungarian main forces from Russian advances from the Vistula region and to prevent the withdrawal of Russian forces from the area north of Polesie to those south of it, thus against the Austro-Hungarian forces.

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The Correspondence from January 1913.

who, after a one-year interruption, had just been reappointed to the head of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff, in January 1913 to General v. Moltke¹), he had always seen in the German troops designated for East Prussia "the minimum of that force which seems necessary to somewhat relieve the Austro-Hungarian main forces against Russian advances from the Vistula area and to prevent the withdrawal of Russian forces from the area north of Polesie to those south of it, i.e., against the Austro-Hungarian forces."

Following this, he came forward with a new request: He wished that, to protect the Austro-Hungarian deployment routes Oderberg-Krakow-Tarnów in the event of war, stronger German infantry and especially cavalry units from Upper Silesia should advance into the area north of the upper Vistula. Then he elaborated on the overall situation: "Should ... initially come to an action of the monarchy against Serbia, the behavior of the monarchy would be determined by the moment in which Russia undertakes the first hostile act (thus already the mobilization). — If possible in time, all forces intended against Russia would still be directed against Russia, so that 40 divisions would be available there; however, if no longer possible in time, an attempt would be made to first deliver a decisive blow against Serbia, and then only to direct the forces freed up against Russia." The "involvement of this case" was completely clear to General v. Conrad, as his further explanations showed.

When this letter from Vienna was presented to General v. Moltke for response, he was also occupied with a memorandum written by Field Marshal Count v. Schlieffen immediately before his death²). It culminated in the bold demand that if it initially came only to war against the West, all of Germany's forces should first be concentrated there and no field troops should be left in the East at all.

General v. Moltke made use of the thoughts of this memorandum in his response to Vienna³) to once again explain to the allied Chief of General Staff that in the event of war, it was necessary to concentrate the forces against the main opponent, for Austria-Hungary, thus possibly against Russia. He wrote, a fragmentation of the forces carries more than ever a danger in itself,

¹) Received without a dispatch date on January 11, 1913.  
²) Count Schlieffen, meanwhile promoted to Field Marshal, died on January 4, 1913. The memorandum was handed over to General v. Moltke on February 8.  
³) Letter from February 10, 1913.

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Forces carry more than ever a danger within them, and continued: "If

Austria needs all its forces to carry out the fight against Russia, the same

applies to Germany in the fight against France. I would therefore advocate

deploying our troops prepared in the East in the West as well, if

consideration for Austria did not prevent me from doing so. In the

resolution of the conflict between Germany and France lies, in my

conviction, the focal point of the entire European war, and" (as stated in

the Schlieffen memorandum) "the fate of Austria will not be decided on

the Bug, but on the Seine."

Furthermore, General v. Moltke sought to accommodate the wishes of

General v. Conrad as much as possible by expressing the hope that it might

very soon be possible, after the opening of hostilities in the West, to deploy

additional second-line forces against Russia. For the requested advance

from Silesia, however, he only offered Landwehr and reserve units in the

strength of a corps (Landwehr corps) due to the unfavorable overall

German force situation, which had previously been intended for the

protection of the Upper Silesian industrial area, but were not very suitable

for use in the open field. Nevertheless, General v. Moltke was determined

to deploy them in the manner requested by the allies, as he expected a

favorable impact on the advance of the Austro-Hungarian offensive from

their actions.

With the correspondence from January/February 1913, the agreements

made between the General Staffs of the Central Powers for the event of

war essentially found their conclusion. Austria-Hungary wanted, as soon

as Russia mobilized, to deploy the bulk of its army against this country

and to march closely along the border in Eastern Galicia to advance into

Poland. Germany wanted to support this offensive: directly through the

advance of a corps from Silesia, indirectly by deploying 15 divisions in

East Prussia and binding the arriving Russian forces on this front with an

attack against the Narew. These agreements were calculated for the first

weeks of the war, during which close cooperation between the two allies —

apart from the advance from Silesia — was not yet in question. The main

thing remained to be emphasized, that if necessary, victories over France,

strong German forces could be deployed in the East, which could hardly

be foreseen in advance. A joint command against Russia, which might then be desired or even necessary, was dispensable for the first weeks of the war.

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Moltke's View on the Role of Austria-Hungary.

The command against Russia, which might become desirable or even necessary,

was dispensable for the first weeks of the war. The extremely delicate

and hardly satisfactorily solvable question of the supreme command in the East

was therefore not addressed in the peace negotiations between the two chiefs of staff.

As far as the position of the allied powers towards each other

seemed possible, the cooperation of the German and Austro-Hungarian

forces for the case of war was regulated. That nevertheless

differences of opinion remained in the basic views

is not surprising given the nature of the alliance relationship:

Thus, General v. Conrad never completely abandoned the idea

of possibly waging a war in the Balkans, regardless

of the considerable weakening of the forces available against Russia

and the resulting additional burden on Germany.

General v. Moltke, on the other hand, always considered the role of Austria-Hungary for

the beginning of the war only from the perspective that

the decision sought against France — on which ultimately

everything depended — should not be questioned by Russia's advance.

This danger grew with the increasing

strengthening of Russia and the year-by-year increasing

acceleration of its deployment. Moreover, the military situation

of Austria-Hungary had become more difficult due to Serbia's uncertain stance since 1913.

It became all the more important that in the event

of a war it was not distracted by its Balkan opponents, but

concentrated all its strength against Russia. Although

no decision was initially sought against

this country, the fight against Russia had to be conducted offensively. If General

v. Conrad delayed his deployment, as he had repeatedly indicated, or

limited himself to defense, then the Russians gained full freedom of action according to

General v. Moltke's view and had the

choice to attack Austria-Hungary or Germany with united force.

But on the German front, the forces here were smaller,

and ultimately it would also be clear to the Russians that not the direction towards

Vienna, but towards Berlin was decisive for the overall situation.

If the Russian masses advanced towards Berlin without much

delay, it would "spur France's resistance to the utmost, even after

severe defeats, and eventually force German

forces to retreat from the west to protect the capital."1). Whether it would still be possible to bring the decisive battle in the West to a victorious conclusion appeared extremely questionable.

1) Memorandum of General v. Moltke from Spring 1913.

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The Agreements with Austria-Hungary.

then it would still be possible to bring the decisive battle in the West to a victorious conclusion, appeared extremely questionable. General v. Moltke therefore considered it necessary to keep part of the German army in the East, as much as it would be missed in the West, because: "If Austria can count on the German troops preventing the Russian Njemen and Narew armies from marching south, it will likely be determined to conduct an energetic warfare."¹) It was the same thought that presumably led General v. Moltke in 1909 to agree to the attack of German divisions against the Narew, despite all concerns. Even if the feasibility of this attack became more questionable from year to year, the General could not bring himself to withdraw the promise once given. For Austria-Hungary's sake, it had to be attempted to carry out this offensive, if at all possible.

¹) Memorandum of General v. Moltke from Spring 1913.

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Second Chapter.

The Armaments and Strength Ratios up to Summer 1914.

Since the German-Austrian agreements of spring 1909, the strength ratios had shifted significantly not only in the West but even more in the East in favor of the Central Powers. This had not escaped the notice of the German and Austro-Hungarian General Staff.

It was known about the Russian army that it had fully recovered from the defeat in East Asia and its consequences. Supported by French money, encouraged and supervised by frequent visits from representatives of the allied army and, with favorable state finances, not least promoted by the ever-approving parliament, the Russian army had been extraordinarily strengthened in power and readiness. Due to the strict secrecy customary in Russia for military measures, the vast expanse of the territory, the sharp political surveillance of foreign traffic, and the extremely strict espionage laws, it was very difficult for the German General Staff to continuously form an accurate picture of this development, which was by no means complete at the outbreak of war.

The peace strength was estimated by the German General Staff for 1914 at 1,445,000 men, for the winter even a good third higher. The service time under the flag was longer than with the Central Powers and amounted to 3½, sometimes even 4¼ years. This compensated for the sluggishness of the replacement, of which in 1909 still 38% could neither read nor write, to a significant extent. The long active service time was followed by extensive exercises in the reserve and in the "Reichswehr" (Landwehr), to which, increasing annually, almost 900,000 men were to be called up for 6 weeks in 1914.

The mobilization seemed to be well prepared, the time required for the deployments was further shortened by large strategic railway constructions. Thus, the German General Staff emphasized in a memorandum from spring 1914 that "the war readiness of Russia in some points surpasses the war readiness of the other great powers, including Germany, namely: by eliminating the military weakness period in winter due to the retention of the oldest age group until the recruits are fully trained, — by frequent practical testing of all mobilization measures with the help of trial and test mobilizations, — by the possibility of extraordinary acceleration of mobilization with the help of the war preparation period".

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The Armaments and Force Ratios until Summer 1914.

raises several points about the war readiness of the other great powers including Germany, namely: through the elimination of the military weakness period in winter due to retention of the oldest year group until the completed training of recruits, — through frequent practical testing of all mobilization measures with the help of trial and test mobilizations, — through the possibility of extraordinary acceleration of mobilization with the help of the "war preparation period". Based on intelligence about measures during the Balkan Wars of 1912/13, the memorandum further explained that this "war preparation period" allowed, in times of political tension, "to assign supplementary personnel and horses to the troops before the start of actual mobilization" and to prepare these units to such an extent that they could ultimately be ready to march on the 1st or 2nd day of mobilization. The possibility had to be considered that the Russians might try to compensate for the Central Powers' head start in deployment in this way and thereby call into question an initial success for them.

In 1914, the German General Staff expected that Russia — without the 7½ Siberian and Turkestan corps, which might be tied down in the East but would in any case arrive late on the European theater of war — would initially deploy its army in the following strength¹):

Field forces: 30 Corps with 59 active Infantry Divisions and

12 active Rifle Brigades,

further 35 Reserve Divisions,

total of 100 Infantry Divisions²) and

35½ Cavalry and Cossack

Divisions

with a total strength of . . . . . . . . . . . 2,712,000 men,

further 40 Territorial (Landwehr) Divisions as well as

garrison troops and replacement troops of the active

army with a total strength of . . . . . . . 929,000 "

All in all (without Siberian and Turkestan

troops) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 3,641,000 men.

The stock of trained personnel was, however, far from exhausted with this.

¹) The actual strength is given on p. 25ff. and in the war organization, Appendix 1. — Further details see Vol. I, p. 33-40.  
²) In this calculation, 12 Rifle Brigades = 6 Divisions.

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The Growth of the Russian Army.

Regarding training, armament, and equipment, the Russian army was considered fully capable, although its active units lagged behind similar German units in artillery strength; however, they were far superior to the Austro-Hungarian in this regard.

The entire massive Russian army was imbued with a unified spirit. Even if revolutionary tendencies occasionally appeared, the Russian soldier was still considered loyal to his Tsar, willing, and reliable. He was taught that all his efforts were to serve one purpose. The most widespread Russian military journal, "Raswjedtschik," wrote about this at New Year 1914: "We are all well aware that we are preparing for a war on the Western Front, primarily against the Germans (Austria-Hungary and Germany). Therefore, we must base all our troop exercises on the assumption that we are waging war against the Germans; for example, one of the maneuvering parties must always be called the 'German.' Not only the troops, but the entire Russian people must become accustomed to the idea that we are preparing for a war of annihilation against the Germans and that the German states must be defeated, even if we lose hundreds of thousands of people in the process."

The Central Powers still expected the Russian advance primarily against Austria-Hungary. The German General Staff considered the likelihood of an early attack on East Prussia. Otherwise, it was considered possible, but not certain, that the Russians would wait until the completion of their deployment and only then, when fully assembled, proceed to a general attack. The area west of the Vistula, as was increasingly clear, would initially be abandoned. The fortifications of Warsaw and Iwangorod had been allowed to become obsolete and were ultimately intended for abandonment.

In the spring of 1914, the German General Staff calculated that Russia, fully utilizing the "war preparation period," had the possibility of deploying 63 infantry and reserve divisions and 22 cavalry divisions on its European border by the 18th day of mobilization.

General v. Moltke and General v. Conrad no longer counted on Romania as an ally since the spring of 1914. As a result, 8-10 divisions were lost for the Central Powers, but just as many enemy divisions were freed up.

1) Further details are provided in the comparative overview in Appendix 2.  
2) The memorandum states: "31½ corps, including 13 reserve divisions."

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The Armaments and Strength Ratios up to Summer 1914.

For the Central Powers, 8—10 divisions were lost, but just as many enemy divisions were freed. Austria-Hungary had lost its secure flank support for its advance against Russia and even saw itself compelled to prepare for the deployment of border guard troops against its ally in all cases.

Serbia emerged victorious from two wars in 1913. The enlargement of its territory by about two-thirds of its previous size and the population growth from three to over four million people meant a significant strengthening of power. This could only be temporarily diminished by the incorporation of resistant foreign ethnic groups associated with land acquisition, but not permanently questioned. The increase in the peacetime strength of the army from 30,000 men to about double was immediately undertaken.

Shortly before the World War, the German and Austro-Hungarian general staffs estimated the wartime strength of the Serbian army at 12 divisions with 285,000 men as an operational army and 115,000 men in reserve and occupation troops and militia, totaling 400,000 men.

For the defense of its own, often impassable mountainous terrain, this army was always regarded as a very noteworthy opponent. Now, victorious campaigns had raised the Serbs' confidence in their own abilities. They grew next to Romania to become the foremost military power in the Balkans. Their army could also gain significance in the attack, although it still seemed incomparable to the Russian one. Above all, it lacked the ability to adequately supplement armament and equipment through domestic production.

The much smaller Montenegrin army was a people's levy without long training periods. It was considered capable only for the defense of its mountains.

Thus, on the Balkan front, only an attack by at most 12 Serbian divisions was to be expected. A large part of them was stationed in the newly acquired territories and could from there, given the unfavorable traffic conditions of the country, even if immediately set in motion, probably only arrive at the border against the Danube Monarchy after several weeks.

1) Conrad IV, p. 301. There, deviating from the German calculation, only the infantry strengths, totaling 272,000 rifles, are indicated, not the total strengths. — Actual strength see B5, I, pp. 38—40.

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The Weakness of the Central Powers.

promised power, but failed. To what extent this was clear in Vienna

is uncertain. General v. Conrad, in any case, after the German

Kaisermanoeuvres in 1913, reported to his Emperor that the Austro-

Hungarian troop leadership and training were superior to the German in

most respects and was still of the opinion at the beginning of the war

that the peacetime training of the Austro-Hungarian army had given it a

"tactical skill" from which it was hoped that it would form an element of

superiority over the more cumbersome Russian masses"). The department

of the German General Staff responsible for dealing with Austria-Hungary

had written in a memorandum from 1913, the last before the war:

"The numerical strength, the intensity of training, the organization

and partly also the armament of the Austro-Hungarian army

still leave much to be desired. Superiority over the

anticipated opponents can only be hoped for from the excellent

officer corps, the growing leadership training, the more active

offensive spirit and the previously apparently good discipline." The

memorandum concluded with the statement that Austria-Hungary, if

it had to fight against Russia and in the Balkans simultaneously,

could not provide the urgently needed relief to the German forces in

East Prussia.

But Germany had also not strengthened its army by 1914 to the extent

that it could make additional forces available for the eastern theater

given the increasing needs of the western theater. Thus, it was

impossible for General v. Moltke, until the outbreak of war, to comply

with the repeated requests of General v. Conrad for the provision of

stronger forces in East Prussia. In 1914, no more could be provided

there in the event of war than in 1909. On the contrary, since the spring

of 1913, instead of two reserve corps, individual replacement divisions

had to be deployed there, which, although roughly equivalent to the

reserve divisions in composition and equipment, could only be ready

to march on the 11th day of mobilization. When General v. Conrad

visited Generaloberst v. Moltke in Karlsbad in May 1914, he had to

explain that he could only provide "12 divisions — perhaps a little more"

for East Prussia).

1) Conrad III, p. 720. — 2) Conrad IV, p. 488. — 3) See Vol. I, p. 11 ff. —   
4) Promoted on January 27, 1914. — 5) Conrad III, p. 669ff.

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The Armaments and Strength Ratios up to the Summer of 1914.

Thus, the strength ratio for the task to be solved in the East at the beginning of the war was quite unfavorable:

Russia could deploy about 100 infantry and reserve and 35 cavalry divisions, without the Siberian and Turkestan corps, against which the Central Powers as a whole had only 62½ infantry and reserve divisions (13 of which were German) and 12 cavalry divisions (1 of which was German). Meanwhile, Austria had to fend off about 12 Serbian divisions. With such an imbalance in numbers, it was doubly necessary to concentrate the available forces in the decisive direction: The Serbian army, limited in artillery and technical resources, could relatively easily prevent an incursion into Hungary at the Danube and Save, and an enemy offensive through the rugged mountains of Bosnia and Herzegovina would soon stall due to supply difficulties. Thus, it seemed very possible at the Ballan border to conduct a sustainable defense with inferior forces. The 8-9 divisions that General v. Conrad had reportedly planned for this purpose were already considered a very ample deployment by the German General Staff. The fewer forces Austria-Hungary stationed at its southern border, the stronger it could appear on the decisive battlefield. The 40 divisions planned for this since 1909 were always considered the minimum by the German General Staff that could and had to be made available against Russia. Since the further growth and increased attack readiness of the Russian forces, and especially since the loss of Romania, they were hardly sufficient. But even the latest Austro-Hungarian reinforcements brought no significant improvement in the number of forces available against Russia. At the Galician front, General v. Conrad had been able to count on 48 divisions, including the Romanians, against 40 Russian ones for the 29th "Mobilization Day" in 1909; in 1914, the ratio now had to be — without the Romanians — according to the pre-war calculations of the Vienna General Staff on the 30th Mobilization Day, 40 Austro-Hungarian against 60 Russian divisions!

However, this numerical imbalance was not expected from the start. If Austria-Hungary mobilized simultaneously with Russia, it could still count on sufficient superiority for an attack between the Bug and Vistula around the 20th Mobilization Day.

1) War Archive Vienna, Study by Lieutenant Colonel Kißling.

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The Prospects of the Austro-Hungarian Offensive.

General v. Moltke, like General v. Conrad, was convinced that it would be possible for the Austro-Hungarian army to achieve successes against a minority despite everything. However, the prerequisite for this was that the time advantage in the deployment of the armed forces was maintained, as each day would shift the numerical ratio in favor of the enemy. It was necessary to deliver some effective blows to the Russians before they were fully assembled; only if this succeeded could one hope to resist them for a longer period.

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Third Chapter.

The Austro-Hungarian Deployment Plan and the Start of the War.

(Map 1.)

General v. Moltke had in 1909 envisaged German reinforcements for the East — albeit with all reservations — in the most favorable case already by the 30th day of mobilization, later he is said to have occasionally spoken of the 40th day of mobilization. At the already mentioned meeting with General v. Conrad on May 12, 1914, in Karlsbad, the last before the war, the Generaloberst mentioned significantly later times1): He hoped with France "six weeks after the start of operations" (that would be about the 60th day of mobilization) "to be ready, or at least so far", that the main forces could be shifted to the East. More could not be said given the situation, as it did not depend solely on Germany whether these hopes would be fulfilled; the enemy spoke accordingly2). Thus, the prospects for the intervention of German reinforcements in the East were quite uncertain. It was not much different with the intended German advance from East Prussia against the Narew. It also depended, as General v. Moltke indicated in the concluding sentence of his 19093) commitment, on the opponent. Since their strength and readiness to attack had grown significantly in the meantime, there was no doubt that the prospects for the advance had correspondingly diminished. If the German troops in East Prussia achieved what General v. Conrad had set as the purpose of the Narew offensive, namely that they held the Russian forces deployed against East Prussia there, this had to be considered a satisfactory result given the balance of forces; only with particularly fortunate conduct of operations could more be expected.

Immediate German support in the East was therefore not to be expected at first. Only regarding Germany's goodwill to do what was possible, there could be no doubt after the repeated assurances of the German Chief of Staff.

1) Conrad III, p. 673. — 2) p. 7. — 3) p. 10.

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The Austro-Hungarian Deployment Plan and the Beginning of the War.

The Chief of General Staff, who had to decide between France and Russia — perhaps came to the conclusion that a deployment and especially the opening of a campaign in the Balkans was only possible if Russia's neutrality was assured.

General v. Conrad saw the situation, if Russia intervened in a Balkan war afterwards, as "possible"), but by no means hopeless. The composition of the forces designated in the "Balkan Case" against Serbia took this into account from the outset. These essentially consisted of a "Minimal Group" of 11²) infantry divisions, which also had to remain on the Balkan border in the "Russia Case", and a special "B-Staffel" with 11¹/³) infantry divisions, which were intended for Galicia in the "Russia Case", but were to be moved there only at the end of the entire deployment movement. They could be recalled from there as long as the offensive against Serbia had not yet begun, i.e., until about the 15th "mobilization day". This was to happen as soon as Russia undertook the "first hostile act (thus already the mobilization)". If this occurred by the fifth "mobilization day", General v. Conrad even considered it possible to redirect the B-Staffel to Galicia without impairing the deployment against Russia⁴). After the 15th "mobilization day", however, a change was no longer possible. It was best to bring the Balkan war to a decision, for which General v. Conrad estimated about two months, and until then manage with 30, perhaps even fewer divisions against Russia.

On June 28, 1914, the Austro-Hungarian heir to the throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, and his wife were assassinated in Sarajevo. It was a purely political crime, whose instigators were to be sought in Belgrade. Given the situation, it was hoped to settle accounts with Serbia alone. Four weeks after the murder, on July 23, the Serbian government was presented with a time-limited note, the Austro-Hungarian "ultimatum". On July 25, Serbia ordered mobilization and handed over to the Austro-Hungarian envoy a response that did not satisfy the Danube Monarchy.

1) Letter to General v. Moltke from January 1913, see p. 11.  
2) Including 2 independent mountain brigades and 4 Landsturm brigades, totaling 5 divisions.  
3) Including 1 Landsturm brigade, further 2 cavalry divisions.  
4) Conrad IV, p. 267.

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July 25th. — Austria-Hungary's Partial Mobilization against Serbia.

the Hungarian envoy an unsatisfactory response for the Danube Monarchy. On the same day, Emperor Franz Joseph ordered the partial mobilization for the "Balkan Case." It included, as planned, 1) three armies with 22 1/2 infantry divisions 2) and 3 cavalry divisions as well as parts of the fleet. However, to ensure even greater superiority and thus a rapid and decisive success, an additional 3 infantry divisions and 2 Landsturm brigades were mobilized, making a total of 26 1/2 infantry divisions against the 12 Serbian and about 4 Montenegrin. The more the situation escalated in the following days, the less secure Vienna felt about Russia's stance. General v. Conrad deemed it necessary to have clarity about Russia by August 4th, at the latest August 5th 3). On July 28th, war was declared on Serbia. Hostilities began; however, operations could not start until August 12th. General v. Conrad himself occasionally described the undertaking against Serbia, given Russia's unclear stance, as a "gamble" 4).

Meanwhile, reports from Russia about military preparations arrived. General v. Conrad now wished that Germany would promptly clarify Russia's stance through inquiries and representations in Petersburg; due to the Austro-Hungarian deployment, he needed this clarity by August 1st at the latest 5), which was the 5th "mobilization day" against Serbia. — Already on July 29th, he claimed to have received information from a communication of the Russian to the German ambassador in Vienna, stating that the southwestern military districts of Russia, Kiev, Odessa, Moscow, and Kazan, would be mobilized. "Russia was offended in its honor and compelled to take appropriate measures 6)." — Only July 30th brought full clarity 7): At noon, the Russian partial mobilization was officially confirmed from Berlin. It meant the deployment of about 55 infantry and reserve divisions. This was more than the total strength of the Austro-Hungarian army in such formations and twice as much as was still available from these, after deducting the forces already mobilized for the Balkans. "Now the decision for mobilization against Russia was made — but without the intention of attack — came to the forefront."

1) War Archive Vienna, Study of Lieutenant Colonel Kisling.  
2) Including 2 independent mountain brigades and 5 Landsturm brigades, counted as 3 1/2 divisions.  
3) Conrad IV, p. 132.  
4) Glenda, p. 72.  
5) Glenda, p. 139.  
6) Glenda, p. 142.  
7) Glenda, p. 275.

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The Austro-Hungarian Deployment Plan and the Beginning of the War.

without aggressive intent — into the foreground1).” On the evening of July 30, the general mobilization for Austria-Hungary was also requested from Emperor Franz Joseph. In doing so, Prime Minister Count Berchtold expected the march in Galicia to also lead to war with Russia. General v. Conrad reassured him by saying, “if the Russians do nothing to us, we need do nothing to them. The situation is not desperate if our own mobilization is ordered in time; initially, there would be 27½ of our own infantry divisions against about 33 Russian ones.” It was decided to carry out the campaign against Serbia. However, the general mobilization was only scheduled for August 1 for unknown reasons, the last permissible day considering the advancing deployment against Serbia.

During these events, reports about Russia's war preparations had accumulated at the German Great General Staff in Berlin to such an extent that the delay in the Austro-Hungarian general mobilization was seen as a serious danger. As General v. Conrad reports2), Generaloberst v. Moltke urged immediate total mobilization in a telegram received early in Vienna on July 31 and also envisaged the mobilization of the German army. On this day at 11:30 a.m., Emperor Franz Joseph ordered the general mobilization for army and navy. That Russia had already ordered general mobilization on July 30 was not yet known in Vienna on July 31; rather, it was still believed that Germany might succeed in preventing Russia from intervening in the Serbian war. Thus, Emperor Franz Joseph also telegraphed to the German Emperor in the early afternoon of this day: “... the ongoing action of my army against Serbia cannot be disturbed by Russia's threatening and provocative stance.”

It was already not understood at the German General Staff when General v. Conrad announced on the morning of July 31 that he intended to carry out the war against Serbia despite the Russian partial mobilization, and the attitude of the allied monarch was understood even less, for in Berlin, the Russian general mobilization was officially reported by the ambassador from Petersburg at 11:40 a.m. There was thus no longer any doubt about Russia's intentions.

1) Conrad IV, p. 275.  
2) Ibid., p. 152 — nothing has been found about this in the German records so far.

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July 30th. — Austria-Hungary's General Mobilization.

reported. There was thus no longer any doubt about Russia's intentions.

Therefore, the German Emperor replied at 4 p.m.

to Emperor Franz Joseph, saying it was "of utmost importance that Austria

deploys its main forces against Russia and does not become fragmented by simultaneous

offensive against Serbia. This is all the more important as a

large part of my army will be tied up by France. Serbia

plays a completely negligible role in the giant struggle in which we enter shoulder to shoulder,

requiring only the most necessary defensive

measures. Success in the war and thus the survival

of our monarchies can only be hoped for if we both face the new

powerful opponents with full force" ...

When this urgent warning arrived in Vienna on the evening of July 31,

it was believed to be a sudden change of mind by Germany,

which could not be explained, as nothing was yet known in Vienna

about the Russian general mobilization.

In fact, it was only learned due to a chain of unfortunate circumstances

on the morning of August 1. However, it was decided to now

turn the main force of the army against Russia.

While General v. Conrad initially expected that

it would suffice if he had clarity by the 5th, then by August 1,

he now had to determine that "great technical difficulties arise because

the transports to the south are already underway, which

could have been inhibited two days ago"). The start of the

normal deployment movement against Russia had to be delayed because the

completed railway material for the Balkan deployment was prepared

and now had to be redistributed. Thus, August 4 could only be determined as the

"First Mobilization Day against Russia"2).

Apparently, to compensate for this loss of time, General

v. Conrad now thought to halt the "B-Staffel" rolling south and

drive one of the remaining transports to Galicia. There was a

heated discussion with the head of the field railway system, who

explained that any attempt would lead to chaos. There was

no choice but to let the initiated transport movement proceed as planned3).

With the exception of a few units that were not yet

in motion, the "B-Staffel" had to be initially driven to the Serbian

border. It could then, starting from there, beginning on August 18, roll back north behind the rest of the transport movement.

1) Conrads IV, p. 192. — 2) Ibid., p. 302.  
3) War Archive Vienna, Study by Lieutenant Colonel Kisling. — Reichspost of  
August 13, 1919: Response to Nowak's "The Path to Catastrophe" from "mobilization-oriented sources based on official documents about the railway deployment".

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The Austro-Hungarian Deployment Plan and the Beginning of the War.

August 18, behind the remaining transport movement rolling north again").

Thus, on the Austro-Hungarian side, due to the late general mobilization and the already initiated Balkan deployment, a delay in readiness against Russia was to be expected. General v. Conrad explained the reasons in a letter he addressed to Generaloberst v. Moltke on August 1: "... We intended to conduct this war" (against Serbia) "in isolation without further complication. The endeavor of all powers to localize this war strengthened us in this... When Russia, by mobilizing its southern military districts, acted hostilely against the monarchy, we turned to Germany with the request to declare this action directed against us as unacceptable for Germany. At the same time, the mobilization of the rest of the army was ordered and its assembly in Galicia was envisaged. It was hoped that this measure, combined with the vigorous diplomatic pressure of the other powers, especially Germany, would deter Russia from its hostile action against the monarchy, thus giving it the opportunity to carry out the action against Serbia. We could and had to adhere even more to the idea of the offensive against Serbia in this situation, as we could expect that Russia would withdraw from the action against Serbia through a mere threat, without waging a war against us. ... From the diplomatic negotiations conducted at that time, it emerged, according to our understanding, that Germany — if we were attacked by Russia — would indeed fulfill its alliance obligation, but would prefer to avoid the great war. We therefore had to stick to our intention to continue the action against Serbia and to leave the protection against Russia, against which we alone could not open a war of aggression, to our forces assembling in Galicia, as well as to the German threat to Russia and the influence of the other powers."

This was at noon on July 31; and now, according to the existing preparations to clarify France's stance, at least 24 hours had to pass before mobilization itself could follow.

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August 1st. — The German Mobilization.

was on July 31st at noon; and now, according to the existing

preparations for clarifying France's stance, at least

24 hours had to pass before the mobilization itself could follow.

Thus, Emperor Wilhelm II ordered the general mobilization

for the army and navy only on August 1st at 5 p.m. Considering

the advanced time of day, only August 2nd could now be designated as

the "First Day of Mobilization."

Thus, the German mobilization began two days later

than the Russian general mobilization. Adding to this, as

mentioned, in Russia for the summer of 1914, extensive

conscription of training troops (almost 90,000 men for six

weeks) was already planned, that since July 27th a ban on horse

requisitioning existed, initially targeting riding horses, but

on the 28th was extended to all horses, and that since

July 26th from various parts of the Russian Empire, and not only

from those bordering Austria-Hungary, reports of war preparations

of all kinds were present and increased daily, it became

likely that the Russian mobilization was already initiated

to a large extent by a preceding "war preparation period"

before it was declared for the entire armed forces of the country on July 30th.

The Central Powers had to reckon that from the

time advantage in deployment, which was crucial against Russia,

Germany had lost at least two days, Austria-Hungary

probably even more.

On August 2nd, Colonel General v. Moltke shared details about the

German eastern deployment to Vienna. In response,

General v. Conrad also announced details about his final measures¹).

¹) Further details about the deployment are given in the description of operations,   
specifically about the German deployment on p. 45ff. (The German 8th Army), about   
the Austro-Hungarian on p. 247 (Austria-Hungary's offensive between San   
and Vistula). The correspondence mentioned here is also discussed in more detail at the latter point.

keyno: 039

Chapter Four. The Russian Deployment. (Map 1.)

In Russia, the "war preparation period" had already come into effect on July 26. In the following days, the question was whether only a partial mobilization against Austria-Hungary or the immediate general mobilization should be declared. From a political standpoint, partial mobilization was the given. However, it was allegedly not prepared and would have significantly disrupted a subsequent general mobilization. It also posed serious military dangers. On July 29, the order for general mobilization had already been signed by the Tsar, but was withdrawn immediately before its announcement and replaced by the order for partial mobilization. However, by the next afternoon, on July 30, Emperor Nicholas II finally ordered the general mobilization. July 31 was to be the first day of mobilization. In total, 114½ infantry divisions and 37½ cavalry divisions were mobilized2).

Russia had to consider cooperation with allied France both in deployment and in conducting operations. Since 1892, there had been firm military agreements between the two states for wartime, with regular meetings of the general staff chiefs. There was only one view that Germany would have to seek the decision in the West and therefore would leave only very few forces against Russia. It was clear that the defeat of the German armies under all circumstances was the first and main goal of the allied armies3). However, while France was particularly early and strong in urging the deployment of Russian forces against Germany, the Russian Chief of General Staff, General Schilinski, in the years leading up to the war, believed he could not avoid "the risk of failure on the Austrian front".

1) Dobrorolski, Mobilization.  
2) Independent brigades are counted as ½ division each, independent regiments as 1/3 brigade each. Reichswehr (Landwehr) units are not included in the numbers.  
3) Agreement of 1911, 1912, and 1913, Article 1 (Materials I, p. 697 ff.).

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The Russian Deployment.

to remain in defense against the German attack until the Asian corps arrived or the situation changed due to a French victory. For this, a retreat into the interior of the vast empire was planned.

To gain clarity about German intentions in time, the departure direction of the German II Army Corps (Stettin), the V (Posen), and VI (Breslau) was to be observed by agents. When clarity was gained on August 6 that Germany was indeed leaving only small forces in the East, the deployment plan for Austria remained in effect. It initially provided for the following distribution of forces west of the Vistula:

against Germany, two armies (1st and 2nd) with 30 infantry divisions and 9½ cavalry divisions, "at the expense of the readiness of the western wing of the forces designated against Austria-Hungary, the units ready for use at the East Prussian border as quickly as possible";

against Austria-Hungary, four armies (4th, 5th, 3rd, 8th) with 46½ infantry divisions and 18½ cavalry divisions;

held back two armies (6th near Petersburg, 7th at the Romanian border) with 14½ infantry divisions and 3 cavalry divisions.

In view of Romania's friendly stance, it was already ordered on July 29, at the outbreak of partial mobilization against Austria-Hungary, that the only active corps (VIII) from the 7th Army should immediately join the 8th Army. Thus, a total of 48½ infantry divisions were deployed against the Danube monarchy.

However, these orders only determined the European and ⅓ of the Caucasian troops. There were still ⅔ of the Caucasian, Turkestan, and Siberian troops available, but they could only be transported after the railways were freed up. It was therefore not necessary to decide in advance about their use.

1) Danilow, p. 160. — 2) Strategic Overview, p. 270 (Table A).  
3) Including reserve divisions. Rifle brigades are deployed as ½ infantry division, independent cavalry brigades as ½ cavalry division.  
4) Bichowitsch, p. 17.  
5) The formation of the 8th Army, which was formed by dividing the overstrength 3rd Army (order from July 29), was already prepared in peacetime, remains to be seen (cf. Bichowitsch, p. 37).  
6) Bichowitsch, p. 37.

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Distribution of Forces and Start of Operations.

Emperor Nicholas II appointed Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolayevich as the Supreme Commander of all land and naval forces<sup>1)</sup>. The Grand Duke was a staunch advocate of the pan-Russian idea, by birth and upbringing a pronounced enemy of the German Empire and a loyal friend of France. As far as we are informed, he had sound military judgment and probably surpassed the majority of Russian leaders in energy. Thus, he was a noteworthy opponent. General Januschkewitsch, since March 1914 the successor of General Shilinski as Chief of the General Staff, joined the Grand Duke as "Chief of the Field Staff." The Supreme Headquarters was located in Petersburg until August 12 and was then to be moved to Baranowitschi (a railway junction on the Brest-Litovsk—Minsk line). On the same day, the division into 2 army groups was to take place: The former Chief of the General Staff, most recently Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of the Warsaw Military District<sup>2)</sup>, General of Cavalry Shilinski, was to lead operations against Germany as Commander-in-Chief of the Northwestern Front, while the Commander-in-Chief of the Kiev Military District, General of Artillery Iwanow, was to lead operations against Austria-Hungary as Commander-in-Chief of the Southwestern Front.

The French had been promised the 15th day of mobilization (= August 14) as the point of readiness for an attack against East Prussia. Whether there was doubt about the feasibility of this promise or whether it was hoped to fill the period with the help of a prolonged "war preparation period" remains uncertain. In any case, the last head of the mobilization department of the Russian General Staff, General Dobrorolski<sup>3)</sup>, reported that the Russian army from Europe and the Caucasus could only complete the deployment on the 29th day of mobilization (= August 28); excluding some units arriving particularly late and the stage formations, then on the 21st day of mobilization (= August 20)<sup>4)</sup>. One day later, they were able to commence the attack. "Until then, however, the deployment was not to be disturbed by any measure, no matter how important it seemed, if victory was not to be jeopardized."

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The Russian Deployment.

can. "Until then, however, the deployment should not be disturbed by any measure, no matter how important it may seem, if one did not want to question the victory."

Meanwhile, France had already begun on August 1st1) to push for support through accelerated offensives, particularly desiring an advance towards Posen. Serbia was also to be prompted to a swift attack. Grand Duke Nicholas readily agreed to these wishes. On August 5th, he told the French ambassador Paleologue2) — in accordance with the earlier agreement of General Sliwinski — that he intended to attack Germany (East Prussia) immediately after the assembly, probably on August 14th. He also intended, once the operation against Austria-Hungary had succeeded, to advance through Poland towards Berlin.

On August 7th, the Russian Supreme Command decided, as there was no longer any doubt about the small strength of the German forces remaining in the East, to partially change the ordered deployment by weakening the 1st Army on the Northwest Front and already initiating the formation of a 9th and 10th Army near Warsaw, one of which was later to advance against Thorn—Posen, the other against Posen—Breslau3). Initially, three corps (two from the 1st and one from the 6th Army) were to be moved forward to Warsaw as an advance guard. At the same time, the Southwest Front was weakened by the XX Corps of the 4th Army, which joined the 1st Army. Thus, 46½ divisions of infantry were designated for the attack against Austria-Hungary, and 34 against Germany.

On August 8th and again on the 10th, instructions were given to the Northwest Front, and on the 12th to the Southwest Front, to prepare for an imminent attack. On August 13th, the Serbian Crown Prince was also urged to launch an immediate offensive4).

1) Sischowitsch, p. 31. — 2) Paleologue, p. 519/20. — 3) Sischowitsch, pp. 51—54. —  
4) Ibid., pp. 37—41.

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Second Part.

The Operations in East Prussia under Colonel General v. Prittwitz

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First Chapter.

Until the Beginning of Operations.

I. The Defense of the German East.

(Map 1.)

The German General Staff expected that the Russians would first turn against the German territory east of the Vistula. They wanted to try to hold it; however, for a longer period, this seemed feasible only under particularly favorable circumstances. The possibility that the enemy would eventually advance to the German Vistula line had to be seriously considered. However, they would probably not attack it frontally, but bypass it on Russian soil to the south. Then they would encounter the fortress of Posen. Here, however, the enemy had to be held at all costs until sufficient reinforcements arrived from the west to also go on the offensive in the east.

All available resources for fortification construction in the east were directed in the years before the war primarily to the fortress of Posen and the fortified Vistula-Nogat front; Thorn, Kulm, Graudenz, and Marienburg were to be expanded. This fortress front found support in the north from the Baltic Sea. Here, behind its left flank, the Danzig war harbor was fortified against the sea. In the south, the desired closure from the Vistula at Bromberg to Posen had to be abandoned due to high costs. Instead, in the event of war, a southward-directed flank was to be attached to the Vistula front over Bromberg to the west, behind Brahe and Netze, which then connected to the Warthe north of Posen. From here, a closure to the Oder was prepared. Further south along this river lay the outdated small fortress of Glogau and Breslau, which was to be expanded as an additional defense point only in the event of war. However, the whole thing was not intended as a position to be held for a long time, but primarily in the south, only as a fallback option. They wanted to go on the offensive at a suitable location as soon as possible and thereby seek a decision. The extensive bridgeheads of the Vistula line were intended to ensure the breakout over the river in a broad front.

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should ensure the breakthrough over the river on a broad front. The eastern railway network was thought to be further developed according to this viewpoint.

Thus, preparations were made to temporarily relinquish vast German lands east of the upper Oder, the fortress of Posen, and the lower Vistula until forces from the west could arrive.

The provinces of Silesia and Posen were initially the least threatened, thanks to their location. Nevertheless, it was necessary to allocate special forces here to protect the Upper Silesian coal and industrial area. Originally prepared for defense, they were eventually, as already mentioned¹), following a suggestion from Austria-Hungary, designated as "Landwehr Corps for advancing into Russia. This also secured the most vulnerable area most effectively.

The situation was difficult for the land east of the lower Vistula, the entire province of East Prussia, and about a third of West Prussia. This area, from Thorn to north of Memel, along an almost 600 km long border (longer than from Basel to Calais), was surrounded by Russian land from the south and east. With it, alongside its core German population, rich resources for warfare and food supply had to come into enemy hands. Also, to relieve the Austro-Hungarian ally, it was imperative to hold this area as long as possible. Yet, in this first phase of the war in the east, the available forces could not be recklessly risked. An attempt had to be made to preserve them for the later decision.

Thus, the defense of East Prussia became an extremely difficult task for the leadership, for which a satisfactory solution was not easy to find. However, the given circumstances forced the task to be set and demanded that an attempt be made to solve it.

The struggle of a German minority against the Russian armies attacking from both directions had often been the subject of exercises, war games, and general staff trips in peacetime. The task could not be solved by pure defense. The Russian superiority offered such extensive possibilities for outflanking that it could make any position untenable. Only through skillful exploitation of the inner line for bold and rapid attacks against a part of the enemy's superior forces could victory be expected in such a situation.

¹ p. 12.

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The Defense of East Prussia.

The exploitation of the inner line for bold and rapid attack against a part of the enemy's superiority was expected to bring victory in such a situation. The Masurian Lakes on either side of the Boyen Fortress (Lötzen) played a special role, as they separated the Russian armies advancing from the south and east, thereby giving the defender the opportunity to deal with one Russian army after another. To further widen the separating area, a series of light fortifications had already been established in peacetime, extending westward to Ortelsburg, which were at least intended to halt the incursion of Russian cavalry masses.

General Count Schlieffen, as Chief of the General Staff, had said in 1898 during the discussion of a task concerning the defense of East Prussia against an enemy superiority of three armies: "The German army, threatened from three sides, has nothing better to do than to attack the nearest opponent, defeat him, and then turn against one of the other two. If the Germans are held up in doubtful battles by a Russian army, the others gain time to flank and encircle their opponent and crush him with their superiority. Therefore, if the German commander did not believe he could achieve a complete victory, he did well to retreat behind the Vistula as best as he could and abandon the fulfillment of his task." In the same spirit, he expressed himself in 1901 regarding a similar task: "It would have been most pleasant to retreat behind the Vistula. The task forbade the latter. Therefore, it was decided to move forward." As a solution, he proposed waiting in a position behind the East Prussian lakes until the Russians approached closer and were separated by the fortifications and the chain of lakes, and then to attack the next opponent — at that time the Russian Njemen army advancing from the east. These thoughts were common among the officers trained in the General Staff. To put them into action required courage and determination, which could not be expected from every leader without further ado. How easily could he be hindered in execution by the thought that the army had to be preserved for later major decisions.

The Conradian idea of positioning oneself in the weaker forces in the 90 km wide space between the lakes on one side and the Haff or Königsberg on the other, and meanwhile attacking with the mass against the fortified Narew line, would have led to being too weak at both places. Only if the German leader in the East kept his limited forces together could he hope for success.

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The Deployment Instruction.

2. The German 8th Army.

(Support 1, p. 44, and War Organization, Appendix 1.)

For the defense of the German East, the 8th Army was designated in 1914.

In the deployment instruction prepared for it, it was stated: "The Commander-in-Chief is to conduct operations in the East at his own discretion." For the army, an "extensive deployment adapted to border protection" was initially set. For its use, the 8th Army must be more closely assembled. The use of railways was prepared for this purpose.

The army was assigned a "difficult task": the "securing of our eastern provinces against a Russian incursion," for which "only the overall situation after the readiness of the 8th Army can be decisive," as well as the "support of the offensive intended by Austria."

For this purpose, the Landwehr Corps was to advance immediately in connection with the Austro-Hungarian left wing and be led "relentlessly" forward. It was therefore independent in its operations. However, the High Command of the 8th Army, to which the corps remained subordinate, was to "exert its full influence" to ensure that the advance of the Landwehr Corps did not stall.

"The offensive intended by Austria" — it was then stated further — "will be most effectively supported if the 8th Army succeeds in binding as many forces as possible from the northern and western Russian army groups, thereby diverting them from the Austrian army and facilitating the first battle for it. If the Russians undertake an offensive against East Prussia, this may already be conducted with such strong forces that it results in a relief of the Austrian army. However, if the Russians initially remain waiting or explicitly defensive against Germany, then a Russian offensive into Russia by the 8th Army will bind strong Russian forces and prevent reinforcement of the army parts deployed against Austria. The general situation must be decisive for the direction of this offensive. If, even considering the Russian forces further north, an offensive in a southeasterly direction, perhaps past east of Warsaw, is possible, it should be noted that the Narew and its fortifications are an insurmountable obstacle for the 8th Army."

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The High Command of the German 8th Army.

offer wind-related obstacles. To what extent an offensive movement can be carried out must be determined by the overall situation ... Consistent action with the Austrian army is in any case to be sought by the commander of the 8th Army, also with regard to his main forces."

"If Russia deploys particularly strong forces against the 8th Army, this would not be disadvantageous for the overall situation. In the extreme case, Prussia must be abandoned east of the Vistula until the army can be reinforced by bringing in additional forces."

For the mobilization year 1914, the Kaiser appointed Generaloberst v. Prittwitz and Gaffron, previously General Inspector of the 1st Army Inspection in Danzig, as the commander of the German 8th Army. Joining him as Chief of Staff was Major General Count v. Waldersee, who had previously been in charge of the departments dealing with the German deployment as Quartermaster General in the Great General Staff. Lieutenant Colonel Hoffmann, a precise connoisseur of the Russian army, who had participated in the war in East Asia on the Japanese side, was appointed as the 1st General Staff Officer, the executor and advisor to the Chief for all operational and tactical matters. Major General Grünert was tasked as Quartermaster General with handling all matters not directly falling into the area of operations, but was also consulted by General v. Prittwitz in decisive decisions.

When Generaloberst v. Prittwitz was briefed in Berlin shortly before the outbreak of war about the task of the 8th Army, Generaloberst v. Moltke had, among other things, again pointed out that the 8th Army must not allow itself to be pushed away from the Vistula. If solving the task east of the Vistula was no longer possible, then at least the army must be preserved. However, Generaloberst v. Moltke did not expect the imminent occurrence of such an "extreme emergency" as a probability; rather, he expected that the knowledge available at the Great General Staff about the Russian army, that the small German forces, with skillful leadership, would be able to withstand a strong Russian superiority for a longer time. For this, however, they must not allow themselves to be pushed into defense, but must attack. In this sense, he instructed Count Waldersee, still on August 14, to have Lieutenant Colonel v. Dommes repeat: "If the Russians come, no defense, but offense, offense, offense."

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Until the Beginning of Operations.

For the 8th Army, initially only troops from the eastern provinces, including all those stationed east of the Vistula, were designated. These were 9 infantry and reserve divisions as well as Landwehr troops. 5 replacement divisions, which were also planned for the army, could only be ready on the 11th day of mobilization. By then, the remaining parts of the army would have completed their assembly in the staging area in western Poland.

The border defense was initially in the hands of the active border corps. As soon as these moved westward, they were later taken over by second-line troops. Under this protection, the following were to assemble:

The Landwehr Corps in Silesia and Posen, with one division each at the border opposite Tschenstochau and Kalisch,

the 6th Landwehr Brigade at Gnesen,

the 3rd Reserve Division at Hohensalza,

the 70th Landwehr Brigade at Göslershausen,

the XVII Army Corps (Danzig) at Deutsch-Eylau, with border defense units from Thorn to west of Soldau,

the XX Army Corps (Allenstein) at Allenstein, with border defense units subsequently to the XVII Army Corps south of Märgrabowa,

the I Reserve Corps at Nordenburg,

the I Army Corps (Königsberg) at Gumbinnen, with border defense units subsequently to the XX Army Corps to the Baltic Sea,

the 1st Cavalry Division east of Gumbinnen,

the 2nd Landwehr Brigade at Tilsit.

Additionally, the 8th Army's high command was in charge of the deputy general commands bordering Russia of the VI (Breslau), V (Posen), II (Stettin), XVII (Danzig), XX (Allenstein), and I (Königsberg) Army Corps, as well as the fortresses located in their areas. As long as these fortresses were not directly threatened, the field army could be reinforced from them. For this, the following were considered: from Posen, Thorn, and Königsberg about one division each, from Breslau and Graudenz about one mixed brigade each, all with strong heavy artillery, then some battalions from the fortifications of Kulm, Marienburg, and Danzig. The troops that could be deployed from the fortresses for use in the open field were capable of reaching their full strength only gradually.

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The Composition of the German 8th Army.

its full strength was only gradually reached. The timing depended on the provision of the Landsturm units designated for relief and was also influenced by the state of armament.

Of the mentioned troop formations, only the three active army corps, the I Reserve Corps, the 3rd Reserve Division, and the 1st Cavalry Division were equipped as full-fledged "field troops" for combat in open terrain. For all other formations, the equipment was initially tailored only for local use. They lacked machine guns, field kitchens, observation and telephone equipment, as well as light columns of field artillery, bridge trains, medical formations, and ammunition and supply columns. For the fortress troops, the provision of war maps mostly did not extend beyond the vicinity of the fortress itself. Procuring the missing items was only gradually achieved during the campaign. Until then, these troops partly suffered from a lack of essentials and, apart from their less favorable composition, also lagged in performance compared to other formations. Nevertheless, the same was required of all of them, given the small number of total forces, as from the active and reserve troops.

3. The Development of the Situation During the German Deployment.

(Source 1, p. 44.)

On August 1st at 6 p.m. (— 7 p.m. Russian time), the German ambassador Count Pourtalès delivered the declaration of war in Petersburg. Just two hours later, a small Russian Cossack detachment occupied the German post office in Klein-Szullainen (on the border south of Lötzen), another was turned away on August 2nd in the morning on German territory near Schöna (20 km southeast of Soldau) by German cuirassier posts. Both Russian detachments had crossed the border before they could be aware of the state of war. For the German troops, permission to cross the border against Russia had not yet been granted. The Supreme Army Command only granted it on the morning of August 2nd after receiving reports of the Russian border crossings.

The protection of the Upper Silesian industrial area was now advanced onto Russian soil. On August 3rd, Tschernau and Kalisch were occupied by the border protection of the German VI and V Army Corps.

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The View of Colonel General v. Prittwitz.

that it cannot be solved by standing still is clear. Where the army's thrusts will lead, cannot be foreseen at the moment and probably not in the coming days either...

This directive did not fully account for the bold aggressiveness of the Schlieffen conception. The task prioritized in Moltke's deployment instructions for the 8th Army, to protect the eastern provinces against a Russian invasion, was not mentioned in it; it had receded in favor of the viewpoint to "maintain the Vistula as a base." This should not be concluded that Colonel General v. Prittwitz and his Chief of Staff had rejected the protection of East Prussia and were already considering an early retreat behind the Vistula. That was not the case; rather, it was precisely Colonel General v. Prittwitz who caused the planned piercing of the dikes for the flooding of the Nogat lowlands, scheduled for the first days after mobilization preparations, to be postponed indefinitely. He wanted to try to carry out his task as the deployment instructions corresponded, but he had — not unjustified — doubts whether he could solve it with the available forces.

The deployment of the 8th Army's units proceeded without any disturbance from the enemy. The High Command emphatically pursued their reinforcement through parts of the fortress garrisons from Königsberg and from the Vistula line. The Russians had withdrawn their troops almost everywhere from the border. The feared early incursion of large enemy cavalry masses did not occur, although particularly good prospects would have been offered to it in the first days of mobilization in East Prussia. Later, such an undertaking became more hopeless and thus more unlikely from day to day. The Russian 4th Cavalry Division, which advanced alone against Bialla (30 km southwest of Lyck) on August 9, was repelled by the border guard of the XX Army Corps with the loss of 6 guns. On the other hand, there were costly raids by the population in Lichenstchau and to an even greater extent in Kalisch — possibly instigated by Russian agents — on German militia troops. Strict measures were the result.

On August 10, the deployment of the German forces initially available for the East was completed.

The bulk of the Austro-Hungarian army, under Archduke Friedrich of Austria with General v. Conrad as Chief of Staff, began their deployment in East Galicia, to proceed to the offensive between the Bug and Vistula on August 20 or 22; a left wing group was to set out from Krakow even earlier.

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Until the Start of Operations.

The Chief of the General Staff began their deployment in Eastern Galicia to advance offensively between the Bug and Vistula on August 20 or 22; a left-wing group was to start earlier from Krakow. As a representative of the Austro-Hungarian army, Field Marshal Lieutenant Count Stürgkh arrived at the German Supreme Army Command, while the German Lieutenant General Baron von Freytag-Loringhoven was at the Austro-Hungarian Army High Command1). The personal adjutant of General von Conrad, Captain in the General Staff Fleischmann von Theissruck, was present as a liaison officer at the headquarters of the German 8th Army.

The German Landwehr Corps closed in at Czestochowa and Kalisz to accompany the advance of the allies on the northern flank, starting on August 15.

On the Baltic Sea, Grand Admiral Prince Heinrich of Prussia took command. However, he had only insignificant forces at his disposal. Since the Russians held back completely, a threat to the German 8th Army from the sea was not initially considered. Likewise, given the overall situation in the East, no significant support for German land operations from the fleet could be expected.

The mobilization and deployment of the Russian army seemed to proceed according to plan. How far both had progressed could not be precisely determined.

The distribution of Russian forces seemed to correspond to previous assumptions: The larger part of the Russian army marched against the Austrian border east of the Vistula, while western Poland seemed to be cleared of stronger forces. Against East Prussia, since 1910, the start of a campaign was expected with the deployment of a Russian army with 5 corps, 7½ cavalry divisions, and 1 reserve division at the Narew, another with 4 corps, 2½ cavalry divisions, and 1 reserve division at the Niemen, as well as weaker forces north of this river. In total, this initially amounted to at least 20 infantry and about 10 cavalry divisions. According to calculations by the German General Staff from July 30, 1914, the two Russian armies could be operational in this strength by the Russian 16th mobilization day (August 15).

Meanwhile, however, the development of the situation in the West necessitated the originally planned for the East to be reconsidered. The 5 German replacement divisions initially intended for the East had to be deployed against France.

1) Corresponding to the German Supreme Army Command.

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The Expected Strength Ratios in East Prussia.

To deploy 5 German replacement divisions against France. Thus, it was to be expected that the strength ratios in the battle for East Prussia would initially be particularly unfavorable. They would initially face each other:

Germans:

6 active infantry divisions,

3 reserve divisions,

1½ Landwehr divisions (3 mixed brigades),

2½ fortress troop divisions (Landwehr and replacement troops from the eastern fortresses excluding Breslau and Posen),

together at most

13 infantry divisions (less than half active),

1 cavalry division.

Russians:

19 active infantry divisions (including 2 rifle brigades),

2 reserve divisions,

together at least

21 infantry divisions (nine-tenths active),

about 10 cavalry divisions.

In a comparison of the combat strength on both sides, the active German infantry divisions could be considered roughly equal to the Russian ones. However, while the Russian reserve divisions were equal to the Russian active divisions, the German reserve divisions and even more so the formations made up of Landwehr and fortress troops lagged far behind the German active divisions in combat strength. It was also to be considered that the Russian active and reserve troops were quite equal to the Germans in terms of armament and ammunition, equipment of men and horses, and other war equipment, but were significantly superior to our Landwehr and fortress troops. All in all, the Russian side had a probably double numerical superiority.

This had to become even greater with the arrival of further active corps from the interior and reserve divisions. On the German side, however, no increase in strength was to be expected for the foreseeable future.

If the German Supreme Army Command nevertheless took on the responsibility of opposing the Russian superiority with such small and partly not even fully effective forces, it was only brought to this by bitter necessity. To unite somewhat sufficient forces for the decision in the West was impossible without severely impairing the defense in the East.

For further details, see the schematic representation in the military organization, Appendix 1, and the comparative overview, Appendix 2.

1) Further details are provided by the schematic representation in the military organization, Appendix 1, and the comparative overview, Appendix 2.

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Until the Beginning of Operations.

Combining somewhat sufficient forces in the West was impossible without severely weakening the defense in the East. Nevertheless, Generaloberst v. Moltke could confidently rely on the better training of all German leaders and troops against Russia. The judgment that the Great General Staff had laid down in a memorandum during peacetime about the combat value of the Russians included, among other things, the following passages: "Russian army movements are slow and cumbersome. Quick exploitation of a favorable operational situation is not to be expected from the Russians. On the other hand, German leaders will be able to undertake movements in encounters with them that they would not allow themselves against an" (to be completed: "in leadership") "equivalent opponent. — With the tendency to stand still and wait, positional battles are preferred. Agility in encounter battles is low; a surprising, energetic attack easily pushes the Russians into defense. ... The marching performance of the generally poorly trained Russian troops is low compared to ours. ... A surprising counterattack will usually succeed with the assistance of leaders and troops. In firefights, the Russian infantry is inferior to ours."

This assessment of the enemy had been given by the Supreme Army Command to all higher staffs as a guideline. Only the rock-solid confidence of being superior to the enemy in military skill could give leaders and troops in the East the belief in success despite the disparity in numbers.

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Second Chapter.

The Decision to Attack the Njemen Army and the Battle at Stallupönen.

1. The Attack Decision of the High Command and the View of General v. François.

(Sketch 1, p. 44, and Sketch 2, p. 71.)

Colonel General v. Prittwitz and Major General Count v. Waldersee initially wanted to turn against the Russian army using the railway network, which first came within range. If it was the Narew Army, they could attack it without endangering their own rear connections. Such an attack, directed towards Pultusk, thus against the Narew, met the wishes of the Austrians and also covered their own eastern front. If the enemy did not attack here, they could make an air strike to then come against the Russian Njemen Army from behind the German forces. Therefore, they had to turn against the Njemen Army if it appeared first, while the Narew Army still held back. Such an attack exposed the right flank to the Narew Army; their advance brought the rear connections into very serious danger. If a quick and complete success was not achieved, the situation described by Count Schlieffen in 1898 could arise, where they would have to abandon their task and retreat behind the Vistula. Nevertheless, the commander of the 8th Army was determined to proceed against the Njemen Army if it appeared first on the scene.

That this case would occur was considered likely by the Army High Command of the 8th Army as early as August 9. Major General Count v. Waldersee reported at that time to the Supreme Army Command that the cautious behavior of the Russian cavalry against the East Prussian southern border, as well as the enemy's railway and bridge destructions in front of its left wing, made an advance from the Narew unlikely for the time being. He expected instead an advance from behind the Njemen Suwalki—Wirballen assumed Njemen or Wilna Army.

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The Decision to Attack the Njemen Army and the Battle at Stallupönen.

Suwalki—Wirballen assumed Njemen or Wilna Army. The commander-in-chief therefore wanted to prepare his army to "launch an attack from the area of the Angerapp north of Angerburg during the advance of the Wilna Army, utilizing the lake terrain," and later, after this enemy had been shaken off, to turn south depending on circumstances. However, the prerequisite for the attack against the Njemen Army was that a threat from the advance of strong Russian forces from the line Przasnysz—Ostrolenka was "excluded." Compared to Schlieffen's ideas, this prerequisite represented a certain weakening. The area of Lötzen, it was said — again entirely in the Schlieffen sense — should further form the pivot and support point for all upcoming operations in East Prussia.

Accordingly, the army high command moved the 3rd Reserve Division and the 6th Landwehr Brigade from the area south of Bromberg to Lötzen in the next few days, where they arrived on August 12 and 13. The fortress, whose facilities had to be expanded with field fortifications, as well as the 6th Landwehr Brigade, were placed under the command of the commander of the 3rd Reserve Division. In connection with the lakes to the north, the I Reserve Corps had to expand the Angerapp position.

Generaloberst v. Prittwitz refrained from deploying the entire army behind the lakes, as Graf Schlieffen had once recommended, but also from the particularly effective attack direction from there and the possibility of deploying the entire strength of the army for a decisive blow. Thus, the German forces remained distributed east of the Vistula as follows:

with the front to the south: 70th Landwehr Brigade, XVII Army Corps, XX Army Corps;

in the lake area near Lötzen: 3rd Reserve Division, 6th Landwehr Brigade;

with the front to the east: I Reserve Corps, I Army Corps, 1st Cavalry Division, 2nd Landwehr Brigade.

The border protection was still in the hands of the active army corps as before.

The army high command thought that if an attack against the Njemen Army were to occur soon, it would deploy the strongest possible forces for this, but also ensure its connections to the Vistula were sufficiently secured against the Narew Army. Therefore, in such a case, it saw alongside troops from the Vistula fortifications, which would be in division strength, the XVII Army Corps to be relieved, the entire active XX Army Corps and the 70th Landwehr Brigade to protect the southern border.

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The Intentions of Generaloberst v. Prittwitz.

They had to relieve the XVII Army Corps, the entire active XX Army Corps and the 70th Landwehr Brigade to protect the southern border. Only the XVII Army Corps was to be brought to the eastern front by rail. Furthermore, a new, albeit weak, division was to be formed from the main reserve of the Königsberg fortress (9th Landwehr Brigade) at Insterburg by adding replacement troop units of the I Army Corps. Including all reserve, replacement, and Landwehr troops and the main reserve from Thorn, 4 infantry divisions were planned for defense against the south, and about 9 infantry divisions and 1 cavalry division for the attack against the east.

The strike against the Njemen Army could not be carried out arbitrarily far to the east. Seeking out the enemy in his own country was forbidden, even with the greatest calm of leadership, due to the threat to the rear connections by the Narew Army. So one had to wait, like it or not, until the Njemen Army came within reach and accept all the disadvantages associated with such waiting. On the other hand, the blow should be able to annihilate the enemy, because only then would it be possible to turn with full force to the south against the Narew Army. It seemed most favorable to the command if it succeeded in letting the Russians run at the Angerapp and then, encompassing them from the south and north, to strike them before they came, the deeper the better, for there was not much time to lose in the situation of the 8th Army. These thoughts formed the basis for the further measures of the army command.

The commanding general of the I Army Corps, Lieutenant General v. François, who was entrusted with border protection against the east, viewed the situation significantly differently than the army command. For more than a year, he had been dealing with the question of how he could repel the enemy at the start of the war as the commanding general in Königsberg. He considered the protection of the province of East Prussia against enemy incursions as his foremost task and had expressed on various occasions the idea that he would protect the province with his corps against such incursions. The instruction drawn up by the Great General Staff for covering the deployment of the 8th Army had now tasked him with taking the necessary measures to secure his corps district. General v. François had set himself the high goal of repelling the Russians despite the great extent of the border already in this. To this end, he wanted to confront the enemy wherever he appeared, to seek him out possibly in his own country.

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possible to seek in his own country. This corresponded to his low estimation of the Russians as well as his willingness to take responsibility. Additionally, the instruction from the General Staff, which corresponded to a suggestion already made by General v. François in peacetime, explicitly recommended short offensive thrusts across the border. Thus, "enemy locations near the border, e.g., Tauroggen and Mitau, and the border posts should be attacked as much as possible." Based on these considerations, General v. François was now determined to act. Reports of successes in the initial border skirmishes strengthened his conviction that he was on the right path. He had firm confidence that his I. Army Corps could also engage a significantly superior enemy.

This Army Corps was to assemble according to the deployment instructions at Gumbinnen in Insterburg. However, since General v. François was also in charge of the I. Reserve Corps, which was deploying at the Angerapp, as well as the 1st Cavalry Division and the 2nd Landwehr Brigade, he saw no reason to prevent deploying the majority of his own Army Corps for operations at the border. For August 9, he planned an attack with the bulk of the corps against the enemy at Wirballen. The troops were to be advanced from the assigned deployment area towards the border.

Generaloberst v. Prittwitz had already learned of this intention on August 6, the day before he took command. He could not approve of General v. François's intention, which went far beyond the scope of a border protection operation. The corps seemed exposed to a partial defeat with the progress of the Russian assembly. Through a battle of the I. Army Corps at Wirballen, the entire army could be drawn into unwanted paths before it was assembled. Generaloberst v. Prittwitz had therefore prohibited all commanding generals from making changes to the once-ordered deployment through the directive already mentioned¹) from August 6. On the evening of August 7, he also issued the special order to the I. Army Corps to "remain with the main force at the Angerapp" until further notice. To protect the area east of the Angerapp, the 1st Cavalry Division should be reinforced by small mixed detachments if necessary. On August 10, the commander-in-chief deemed it necessary to personally order General v. François again by telephone: "I absolutely forbid any forward movements of closed units towards the border over the Gumbinnen—Goldap line until further notice."

¹) p. 48.

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The Frictions with the I Army Corps.

“Advancements of closed units against the border over the line Gumbinnen—Goldap I forbid until further notice unconditionally.” Generaloberst v. Prittwitz, however, could not decide to resolve the existing differences of opinion through personal discussion with the Commanding General of the I Army Corps.

Despite the unmistakable instructions of the Commander-in-Chief, Lieutenant General v. François remained firm in his intentions. The deployment at the Angerapp and near Gumbinnen—Insterburg seemed to him to give up so much German land. Doubts also arose in him as to whether the Army High Command would later find the right time to transition from this deployment to attack. He wanted to pull forward what he considered the proper army leadership and therefore began to advance his entire corps to the line Goldap—Stallupönen for the protection of the border. He held back only one infantry regiment and artillery as the "main force." This advancement of the corps was not reported to the Army High Command and only became fully known to them on August 17.

By attempting to keep the actual situation secret from the High Command, General v. François put his Chief of Staff, Colonel Freiherr v. Schönberg, in a difficult position, as he was not only subordinate to the Commanding General but also to the Chief of Staff of the 8th Army and was therefore obliged to keep him informed about the situation of the corps. The relationship between the Commanding General and his Chief of Staff became extremely tense.

2. The Assembly at the Angerapp.

(Support 2, p. 71.)

At the Army High Command, the picture of the situation on the enemy side took on a firmer shape day by day, although their own reconnaissance means were small in relation to the vastness of the area (500 kilometers of border from Thorn to Memel) and the strength of the enemy cavalry.

Aerial reconnaissance, German refugees, and agents increasingly confirmed that western Poland was free from stronger enemy forces; only the 1st Rifle Brigade (peace station Lodz) seemed to still be located there.

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still located there. The troops from Warsaw were to depart eastward, the city being almost devoid of soldiers. The funds were said to have been transferred, the banks closed, and the railway administration relocated to Brest-Litovsk.

Also north of Warsaw, the initially quite strong Russian advance troops had been withdrawn everywhere behind the Narew-Bobr line, and the railway lines in front of their front had been destroyed. At Mlawa, the cavalry divisions 15 and 6, which had already been stationed in northern Poland in peacetime, were still present. To clarify the situation, the advance troops of the German 36th Infantry Division (XVII Army Corps) advanced against them on August 12 with the consent of the Army High Command, and on the 13th the entire division followed. The Russian cavalry already evaded the German advance troops and retreated over Ciechanow. The Germans occupied Mlawa. — Of the fortified places north of Warsaw, only Nowogeorgiewsk was initially reported to be occupied by troops. In Ostrolenka, troops and rolling stock were first identified on the evening of August 13. Lomsha seemed weakly occupied according to earlier reports, and fortifications were being worked on around Osowiec, which was important terrain for the cooperation of the Russian Narew and Njemen armies north of this fortress.

Overall, the Army High Command had the impression that a Russian advance from the Narew was not initially to be expected.

This view coincided with that of the Supreme Army Command. It assumed behind the Narew and Bobr: at Nowogeorgiewsk half of the Russian XXIII Corps, — at and southwest of Lomsha the XV, — around Osowiec the VI Corps, — in front of them the 15th, 6th, and 4th Cavalry Divisions, — in total thus 2½ corps and 3 cavalry divisions, all troops from northern Poland, of which at least one corps was initially bound as a security garrison for the fortresses. — Also in front of the East Prussian eastern front, the Supreme Army Command assumed only the Russian corps already stationed there in peacetime: the one around Olita to the south, in front of it the advance troops at Augustow, — the IV half-Russian around Olita to the south, in front of it the 5th Rifle Brigade, — the III and ½ XX at Kowno, further distributed along the entire front: the 2nd Cavalry Division from Suwalki, the 1st from Moscow, transported by rail to Suwalki, and the 3rd Cavalry Division stationed in peacetime along the Wirballen—Wilna line, in total thus 7¾ corps, 3 cavalry divisions.

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The Assessment of the Situation up to August 14.

The perception of the Supreme Army Command was known to the command of the 8th Army. However, based on the daily incoming reports, a somewhat different view had formed regarding the distribution of Russian forces on the Eastern Front: At Suwalki, in addition to the troops assumed by the Supreme Army Command in this area, the 3rd Cavalry Division, which was stationed further north in peacetime, was identified. In contrast, the 1st and 2nd Guard Cavalry Divisions from Petersburg appeared at Wirballen. From the radio traffic between the 3rd Cavalry Division and the III Corps and from movements to the south that had been observed, it seemed to indicate that the III Corps was also being moved south from Wilna. An aviator reported strong forces in bivouacs on the road Olita—Suwalki and west of Suwalki on August 11, which he — although also according to the army command's view rather high — estimated at 4 to 5 divisions. West of Olita, artillery unloadings were observed, north of the road from there to Kalwaria one to two cavalry divisions in bivouacs. In addition, agent reports and prisoner statements confirmed the assembly of strong forces around Suwalki and anticipated an imminent advance from there. From all this, the command gained the overall impression that the enemy was assembling strong forces in front of the southern part of the Eastern Front, around Suwalki. In contrast, further north, apart from the mentioned cavalry at Wirballen and border protection, no enemy troops seemed to be present. The aviators repeatedly reported that in and north of the line Wischtynjez—Mariampol up to beyond the railway line Wirballen—Wilna, as far as the population allowed insight, all places and roads were free. North of the Njemen, the previous border protection, parts of the XX Corps and the 1st Independent Cavalry Brigade, were still detected. Thus, the army command gained the picture that the Russian Njemen Army, with its northern wing, was assembling around Kalwaria to begin the advance against the Sengebiet.

This perception seemed to be confirmed when the enemy advanced in a broad front from the Suwalki area on the morning of August 14. Even early that morning, the commander-in-chief of the 8th Army had not been entirely sure whether he would indeed launch the first strike against the Njemen Army. He had also considered the possibility of having to deal with the Narew Army first. A report from the I Army Corps was decisive: While no changes had been detected at the Narew until then, this report indicated that stronger enemy forces had broken through the border east of Margrabowa in a 25 km width.

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reported that a stronger enemy had broken through east of Margrabowa over a width of 25 km. In front of the Wischtyniesz–Schirwindt line, however, everything was calm, and the roads leading from Kalwaria and Mariampol were continuously free of enemy infantry.

Immediately after this report was received, Generaloberst v. Prittwitz ordered at 9:15 a.m. the transport of the XVII Army Corps, prepared for several days, to the eastern front in the area of Insterburg. It was thus decided that the first move would be against the Njemen Army. Deploying the XX Army Corps in this direction was considered inadvisable due to the need to protect the southern border. The absence of the expected five replacement divisions was noticeable.

Against the Narew Army, instead of the XVII Army Corps, a mixed detachment from the fortresses of Thorn and Graudenz was to take over the protection of the border at Strasburg and Lautenburg. The 70th Landwehr Brigade was to occupy Soldau and Mlawa, and the Deputy General Command of the XVII Army Corps was to send two battalions from Danzig to Neidenburg. All these troops were placed under the command of Generalmajor v. Unger (Fritz). East of them, the XX Army Corps was to move into the area of Ortelsburg. It was responsible for covering the army against any Russian advance west of the lakes, while also keeping in mind the possibility of advancing eastward over Johannisburg for an attack.

On the eastern front, the 3rd Reserve Division, together with the 6th Landwehr Brigade, was to hold the line Aidsnicken–Lötzen between the lakes. While the enemy was engaged on the right flank, Generaloberst v. Prittwitz intended to prepare his main forces north of the lakes for an attack: here, the I Reserve Corps was initially to hold the Angerapp line as before. The XVII Army Corps was to be moved from its unloading stations at Insterburg to Darkehmen. The I Army Corps, with the 1st Cavalry Division remaining under its command, was to remain at Gumbinnen–Insterburg, with the main reserve from Königsberg assembled behind the left flank at Insterburg, while the 2nd Landwehr Brigade was to continue holding the Memel line.

This deployment could likely be completed by August 18. Although there was the possibility of adjusting it as needed, this was primarily tailored to the expected advance of the Russian masses south of the Rominten.

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August 14th. — The Order to Assemble at the Angerapp.

tailored. It was less appropriate if the Russian northern wing, as the Supreme Army Command had assumed, extended further north or was extended by newly arriving reinforcements. Since the only double-track railway leading from the interior of Russia to the East Prussian border ran from Vilna via Kovno to Wirballen, such a possibility could not be dismissed. After all, the two Petersburg Guard Cavalry Divisions had just arrived on this railway. However, the numerous reconnaissance results available to the Army High Command countered such concerns.

On the evening of August 14, Major General Count v. Waldersee reported to the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army that it was hardly doubtful that the Russian forces identified from south of Augustow to the Rominten Heath were the "Rennenkampf Army." The impression prevailed that a Russian advance against our lake line was being prepared. "As little as such an advance can be considered independent, it can, on the other hand, not be regarded as entirely unlikely according to the Russian ideas known here1). The capture of Mlawa by the XVII Army Corps and the repulsion of the enemy cavalry corps to Zjechanowo will have been the impetus for the advance. — This opens up the possibility for the 8th Army to launch a sudden strike against the flank of the Russian northern wing."

A request received at the High Command on the same evening from Vienna to advance southwards to reach Siedlce as soon as possible could not be considered in view of the situation described in front of the 8th Army's front. The Austro-Hungarian liaison officer replied to General v. Conrad in the sense of the High Command that an attack against the east would first be carried out, which "should take place in the very next few days. Only then can operations against Siedlce be initiated"2).

On the morning of August 15, it turned out that the enemy, who had advanced in a broad front from the Suwalki area on the morning of the 14th, had not crossed the Marggrabowa—Goldap railway, and soon after, reports came in that he voluntarily retreated back across the border.

1) Close connection to the Narew Army and concern about the Königsberg fortress, from which one therefore wanted to deviate.  
2) Conrad IV, C. 389.

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had, and soon after reports came that he voluntarily returned across the border. It was learned that it was the Russian 1st Cavalry Division, reinforced by parts of the 5th Rifle Brigade, that had undertaken a violent reconnaissance here.

By the evening of August 16, further reports came in that, together with the retreat of the enemy at Marggrabowa, could change the picture that had been made so far: In Warsaw, two regiments from the I Corps (from the area south of Petersburg) had arrived, Ostrolenka was fully occupied, south of Lomsha was about an infantry division. The deployment of the Narew Army seemed to begin. North of the Narew-Bobr course, however, everything was still free as before. At Augustow, not much enemy was expected, the troops were supposed to have moved north from there. The commander of the 3rd Reserve Division, Major General v. Morgen, reported early on August 16 that he assumed the southern wing of the Russian Njemen Army at Suwalki. Unfortunately, due to unfavorable weather, the air reconnaissance had no results on August 15 and 16, but there were other reports: East of the Rominten Heath, the Russians had made an advance across the border on August 16. In Wilkowischki, according to an intercepted Russian radio message, there were wounded from a regiment of the Russian 30th Infantry Division (IV Corps, Minsk). At Kibarty west of Wirballen, infantry of the 28th Infantry Division (XX Corps) was still detected on August 15. A few kilometers north of there, however, a battalion of the Russian 25th Infantry Division (III Corps) was repelled by the German border guard the next day. The two Russian Guard Cavalry Divisions were confirmed north of Wirballen. According to prisoner statements, the Guard Rifle Brigade was also expected here. Strong cavalry had ridden north from Schirwindt on August 16. Spillenken had been occupied by Russian cavalry.

After all, doubts could arise as to whether the Russian northern wing was really in front of the Rominten Heath and whether it might even be sought north of the Wirballen-Kowno area. In any case, troops of the III, IV, III, and XX Russian Corps had to be expected on the eastern front from Suwalki to Wirballen, as well as the 1st and 2nd Guard and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Cavalry Divisions, further north still with the 1st Independent Cavalry Brigade, in total with 4 corps and 5½ cavalry divisions. The Russians had not yet begun the advance. However, it might be imminent, because for the violent reconnaissance at Marggrabowa, according to captured Russian orders, the destruction of railways and bridges had been expressly forbidden.

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The Perception of the Situation on August 16.

Captured Russian orders had explicitly forbidden the destruction of railways and bridges.

If the enemy actually gathered his northern wing at or north of the Wirballen—Kowno railway, he stood directly opposite the German northern wing intended for encirclement, perhaps even surpassing it. The German attack could then only lead to a frontal battle, at best to a pushing back of the Njemen Army. If this army was considered a somewhat equal opponent, it would soon be on the heels of the German 8th Army again in such an outcome of the battle; the freedom of action needed against the Narew Army was not gained. Also, the German I Corps was initially alone in the area assigned to it between Insterburg and Gumbinnen, perhaps directly facing a superior enemy. — If the situation was viewed this way, it was now necessary to push the German left wing further north and strengthen it. There was still time for this. Between the lakes, one could make oneself significantly weaker, as well as behind the Angerapp. It would have been quite possible to prepare two active army corps for an attack on and north of the Königsberg—Kowno railway.

However, at the 8th Army's high command, the news received by the evening of August 16, regarding the enemy's extension northward, was assessed differently: On August 15, Count Waldersee had written to General v. Stein at the Great Headquarters that, despite the Russians' retreat from Marggrabowa, he still expected an imminent breakthrough south of the Rominten Heath. "Nothing better could happen to us." This perception remained at the army high command. Thus, it adhered to the once initiated deployment unchanged. On August 16, the army headquarters was moved closer to the front, to Bartenstein, for the upcoming battles.

3. The Beginning of Russian Operations Against Germany¹).

(Staffs 2, p. 71.)

The army group of the Northwest Front deployed against Germany, under General Schilinski as commander-in-chief with Lieutenant General Oranowski, his former chief of staff from Warsaw, as chief of staff, marched with the 1st Army on the Njemen, with the 2nd on the Narew.

¹) Continuation on p. 36.

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The Chief of General Staff marched with the 1st Army on the Njemen, with the 2nd on the Narew. The High Command arrived on August 13 from Warsaw in Wolkowysk (railway junction south of Grodno). On August 14, according to the promise given to the French¹), the attack was to begin.

The 1st Army (referred to by the Germans as the Njemen or Wilna Army) was under General of Cavalry v. Rennenkampf, previously Commander-in-Chief of the Wilna Military District, with Lieutenant General Mileant as Chief of Staff. It included:

3 Corps (III from Wilna, IV from Minsk, XX from Riga),

the 5th Rifle Brigade from Suwalki,

7 (Reserve) Infantry Divisions (53rd, 54th, 56th, 57th, 68th, 72nd, 73rd, all from the interior of the Reich)²);

in total:

13½ Infantry Divisions and

5½ Cavalry Divisions (1st and 2nd Guard Division from Petersburg, 1st from Moscow, 2nd from Suwalki, 3rd from Kowno, 1 independent Brigade from Riga).

From this army, three late-arriving Reserve Divisions (53rd, 54th, 68th) and the 1st independent Cavalry Brigade were to take over the protection of the coast and the land north of the Njemen as the "Riga-Schaulen Group," which until then had been exercised by the parts of the XX Corps stationed there in peacetime. With all other parts (10½ Infantry Divisions and 5 Cavalry Divisions), the 1st Army was to be assembled along the Njemen from Kowno to south of Olita.

The 2nd Army (referred to by the Germans as the Narew or Warsaw Army) under General of Cavalry Samjonow, previously Commander-in-Chief in Turkestan, with Major General Postowski as Chief of Staff, was to be formed from:

5 Corps (II from Grodno, VI from Bjelostok, XIII from Smolensk, XV and XXIII from Warsaw),

the 1st Rifle Brigade from Lodz,

4 (Reserve) Infantry Divisions (59th, 76th, 77th, 79th, all from the interior of the Reich)²);

in total:

14½ Infantry Divisions and

4 Cavalry Divisions (4th from Bjelostok, 5th from Samara on the Volga, 6th from Tjechanow, 15th from Plotzk).

¹) See p. 35.  
²) No Reserve Divisions were stationed in the border areas.

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The Russian Plan to Envelop the Germans on Both Sides.

The plan was not bad; the question is only whether it was feasible given the state of the Russian deployment. The Supreme Army Command rejected it.

General Schilinski now set August 17 for the advance of the 1st Army across the border. However, the 2nd Army was to move its left wing corps significantly further west for a deeper envelopment of the Angerapp and lake positions: the XIII Corps (formerly Bjelostok), as already mentioned, via Ostrolenka, the XV (formerly Lomsha) via Prasnysh, — and even further west of this the XXIII. This change meant a very strong leftward shift, with the corps having to cover up to 140 km on poor cross-connections behind the border in the road-poor country, so that they could not cross it before August 19. This gave the 1st Army the time advantage it needed for later cooperation with the 2nd Army, as it had the longer route and more difficult attack terrain.

The intentions of the army group were announced to the armies on August 13 through a "directive" for the attack: The enemy is in East Prussia with advance guards at the border, with the main forces behind the lake line. The task of the 1st and 2nd Army is: "to proceed to the decisive attack, to destroy the enemy, to cut him off from Königsberg and to block his way to the Vistula." He was to be enveloped simultaneously in the north and west.

For this, the 1st Army was to cross the border from the Wirballen—Suwalki line with the cavalry on the 16th, and the rest on August 17, advancing north of the Masurian Lakes towards Insterburg—Angerburg and "after crossing the Angerapp, deeply envelop the left flank of the Germans to cut them off from Königsberg." The cavalry of the army was to ride into the rear of the Germans, among other things, to prevent the continuation of the rolling railway material. Against Lötzen, "a sufficiently strong protective detachment was to be deployed, as a German attack was expected from there. A special order for the attack on Lötzen would follow.

The 2nd Army was to cross the border from the Augustow—Grajewo line with the II Corps and the cavalry on the 18th, and the rest on August 19, advancing against Lötzen—Ortelsburg. The II Corps, advancing from Augustow to the west, was to secure the extraordinarily important approach road to Grodno, whose occupation was not yet complete.

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were not yet completed" should be covered. The main forces were to turn over Rudczanny—Ortelsburg to Rastenburg—Seeburg "against the flank and rear of the lakes." In the attack, "the possibility of a threat from Allenstein must be kept in mind." For the advance, all previously available parts of the army were to be drawn in, except for the 3rd Guard Infantry Division at Grodno, the 1st Rifle Brigade, and the 79th Reserve Division expected on August 21 at Nowogeorgiewsk.

Meanwhile, on August 12 and 13, the mentioned German advance against Mlawa had taken place. It could be considered by the Russians as the beginning of a German attack, but at least it showed that the German right wing with strong forces stood considerably further west than previously assumed. Therefore, the commander-in-chief decided to extend the western wing of the 2nd Army accordingly. He designated the first arriving parts of the future 9th Army for this purpose. Thus, troops of the I Corps were brought forward via Warsaw on the route to Mlawa up to Ziechanów, the 5th Cavalry Division and the Guard Corps were to follow there. These forces were to be used by the army group command on the western wing of the 2nd Army in the direction of Soldau and were temporarily subordinated to this army. The Supreme Army Command was fully in agreement with this intention of further encirclement. The advance was expected to be determined, "that the decisions made are to be executed immediately" — but in the following days, the restrictive provision was made for the use of the Guard Corps that it should not be led beyond Ziechanów for the time being. The corps of the 2nd Army moved partly in very arduous marches westward into their new assembly areas, which they had to reach by August 18. By then, the I Corps at Ziechanów and the Guard Corps behind it at Nowogeorgiewsk were to be ready. On the left flank, the 1st Rifle Brigade, as well as newly arrived forces (5th and Caucasian Cavalry Division and a Turkestan Cossack Brigade) covered the area west of Nowogeorgiewsk to Plozk and Lodz.

Also, in the 1st Army, movements against the German border had been in full swing everywhere since August 14. On this day, the 1st Cavalry Division, along with parts of the 5th Rifle Brigade — perhaps only to fulfill the promise made to France, at least in form — made their advance for violent reconnaissance on Marggrabowa.

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The Situation in East Prussia on the Morning of August 17.

the 1st Cavalry Division with parts of the 5th Rifle Brigade — perhaps only to fulfill the promise given to France at least in form — made their advance for violent reconnaissance on Marggrabowa. On August 16, the cavalry of the northern wing crossed the border and occupied Schillehnen. The infantry reached from the assembly area at the Njemen with their beginnings directly to the border, which they were to cross the following day. Thus, on the evening of August 16, they were ready at the East Prussian eastern border:

For the advance north of the Rominten Heath:

A cavalry corps (1st and 2nd Guard Cavalry Division, as well as 2nd and 3rd Cavalry Division) under Lieutenant General Chan Hüsein Nachtschwarz at Schillehnen, followed by the 1st independent Cavalry Brigade,

XX Corps east of Schirwindt,

III Corps at Wirballen,

40th Infantry Division from IV Corps at Wischtmynez and southeast, —

in total: 5 infantry and 4½ cavalry divisions. Directly in front of the front, the German 1st Cavalry Division was known to be at Pillkallen and assumed the German I Army Corps with both divisions at Stallupönen; the remaining German forces were suspected behind the Angerapp and the lakes.

For the advance south of the Rominten Heath:

30th Infantry Division from IV Corps with the beginning east of the Rominten Heath,

5th Rifle Brigade and

1st Cavalry Division south of the heath, —

in total: 1½ infantry and 1 cavalry division.

On August 17, the corps were to reach the line Willuhnen (10 km east of Pillkallen) Stallupönen—Rowahlen with their main forces.

4. The Battle of the I Army Corps at Stallupönen.

(Gliese 2, p. 71, and Gliese 3, p. 77.) The German I Army Corps, reinforced by the 1st Cavalry Division and the 2nd Landwehr Brigade, stood around mid-August with its main forces not, as ordered and assumed by the Army High Command, between Gumbinnen and Insterburg, but with the 2nd Infantry Division at Goldap (3rd Infantry Brigade) and Tollmingkehmen (4th Infantry Brigade), with the 1st Infantry Division at and west of Stallupönen, with the 1st Cavalry Division at Pillkallen, with the 2nd Landwehr Brigade at Lüst.

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The Battle of Stallupönen.

not with his main force, as ordered and assumed by the Army High Command, between Gumbinnen and Insterburg, but with the 2nd Infantry Division at Goldap (3rd Infantry Brigade) and Tollmingkehmen (4th Infantry Brigade), with the 1st Infantry Division at and west of Stallupönen, with the 1st Cavalry Division at Pillkallen, with the 2nd Landwehr Brigade at Lüst. In Gumbinnen, only the heavy artillery was stationed, in Insterburg only the General Command. In front of the divisions, between Kowahlen (southeast of Goldap) and Bilderweitschen (northwest of Wirballen), individual battalions with cavalry and artillery were drawn close to the border. General v. François remained in this position even after the army order of August 14 made the intentions of the Army High Command for further operations known to him.

On the other hand, the Army High Command had learned through the clashes with the enemy on August 14 north of Marggrabowa and later at Bilderweitschen that, contrary to the explicit instructions of the Commander-in-Chief, individual closed units of the I Corps were stationed east of the Goldap—Gumbinnen line. Generaloberst v. Prittwitz had refrained from intervening because of this. However, General v. François had been able to conceal from the Army High Command that the entire corps was far outside the assigned area. He himself was seldom in Insterburg, instead seeking out his forward troops and making his arrangements on site personally. His confident and fresh manner also inspired the troops with initiative and confidence in victory. However, his chief of staff, whom he left behind in Insterburg, was thus sidelined; he often did not learn or only learned late what the commanding general had ordered at the front.

The apparent inactivity of the enemy and the unclear situation in front of the corps' front prompted General v. François to set up his own forceful reconnaissance for August 15. On this day, the commander of the 1st Infantry Brigade, Major General v. Strotka, with four battalions and a field artillery regiment, advanced over the border at Riddtayn. At the same time, a heavy field howitzer battery was supposed to target the local water tower, as it provided the Russians with a wide overview. The enemy advance troops evaded the attack, the targeting of the tower was unsuccessful, and in the evening the German troops were withdrawn again. They had once again identified Russian infantry of the 28th Division (XX Corps) and artillery.

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An advance planned for the same day by the 1st Cavalry Division, which had been reinforced by several battalions of infantry and artillery, against the Russian cavalry at Schirwindt was not carried out by the division commander, Lieutenant General Brecht, due to the reported strong enemy presence. General v. François, however, did not want to forgo a strike against the enemy cavalry, which had meanwhile also been detected at Schillehnen. There were no indications that a general Russian attack was imminent. The aerial reconnaissance, as already mentioned^1), had yielded no results on August 15 and 16. Thus, General v. François had once again ordered an operation by the 1st Cavalry Division for August 17. For this, the 2nd Landwehr Brigade from Tilsit had sent two companies by ship up the Njemen to Jurburg to get behind the Russian cavalry. They arrived there early on the 17th without having seen the enemy. At the same time, the 1st Infantry Division was also supposed to attempt to block the Russians' retreat by advancing from the south.

On August 16, General v. François had announced himself for the following morning at the 1st Infantry Division. At 10:30 PM, a report came in from this division stating that in the evening, Russian infantry with artillery had advanced from Wirballen to the southwest over the border and had set up outposts from northeast of Pillkallen to the western exit of Eydtkuhnen. A Russian battalion probing towards Bilderweitschen had been repelled there. — This report suggested the possibility of further local skirmishes at Stallupönen, but since everything was calm on the rest of the front, there was no reason to change the measures taken for August 17. Even with the initially affected 1st Infantry Division, the Russian advance was not considered significant. Thus, the corps remained with its two infantry divisions as before in the 60 km wide formation from Kowahlen to Bilderweitschen. The rear parts ("corps reserve") of the 1st Division, stationed 20 km deep, began the exercises scheduled for August 17 in the morning, and the staff of the 1st Field Artillery Brigade conducted a tactical exercise march.

Meanwhile, the Russians had begun their advance early on August 17 across the entire front from Suwalki to Schillehnen.

1) p. 62.

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The Battle at Stallupönen.

At noon, a new order from the army high command reached General v. François: Generaloberst v. Prittwitz had learned about the munitions requirements for the heavy artillery of the I Army Corps from the operation on August 15 against Kibarty—Wirballen and realized that General v. François had not only moved with advance troops but with a large part of his corps, contrary to the explicit orders of the army, leaving the assigned assembly area. To gain clarity, the commander-in-chief called the I Army Corps command in Insterburg early on August 17 and requested information about the deployment of the divisions. Only then did it become clear to him that the entire corps was close to the border. It was thus alone 40 km in front of the not yet fully assembled other corps. This called into question the previous operational plan of the army high command. If a battle occurred with the I Army Corps now, it would not be possible to assist it in time. Generaloberst v. Prittwitz therefore ordered the corps to immediately withdraw to the area of Gumbinnen and not to engage in any battle. If a battle was already underway, it should be broken off. With this order, the first general staff officer of the corps, Major v. Massow, sought out the commanding general. He found him around 2 p.m. with the staff of the 1st Infantry Division at the southern edge of Stallupönen. General v. François, who expected the intervention of his 2nd Infantry Division and thus victory in the next few hours, dismissed him under these circumstances. Major v. Massow reported to the army high command that General v. François was currently unable to execute the order, as the entire 1st Infantry Division was already engaged in battle. This was the first news the army high command received about the battle.

General v. François had meanwhile moved to the southern flank to the advancing troops of the 2nd Infantry Division, from whom he expected the decision of the day. When he arrived there, victory had been achieved: Even before the intervention of the 2nd Infantry Division, the 5th Grenadiers under Oberstlt. Wedel had advanced to the attack. The right wing of the 43rd Infantry Regiment had closed ranks. The enemy, simultaneously threatened by the advance from the south, retreated but could no longer escape the blow of the 4th Infantry Brigade led by Generalleutnant v. Falk under Generalmajor Boës. This blow completely collapsed the Russian southern flank. The German infantry continued the attack until darkness and reached the line Pitschlauen—Stallullen. Thus, the enemy was thrown south of the railway in the evening, with the Russian 27th Infantry Division (from the III Corps) retreating over the border with heavy losses.

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August 17th. — The Victory of the German Southern Wing.

in the evening south of the railway, the Russian 27th Infantry Division (from the III Corps) retreated with heavy losses across the border. They left several thousand prisoners in the hands of the victors.

On the northern wing of the 1st Infantry Division, the battle was less successful: On both sides of Bilderweitschen, the front gradually gave way to the strong Russian pressure. At Bilderweitschen itself, the commander of the III Battalion of the Infantry Regiment v. Boyen No. 41, Major Schmidt, with two companies and two batteries from the 1st East Prussian Field Artillery Regiment No. 16, held out against all Russian assaults until nightfall. Then he too had to retreat, leaving behind seven guns. The heroic resistance of the small group, however, gave the other troops the opportunity to reorganize northeast of Stallupönen. The enemy did not press further here.

Further north, the 1st Cavalry Division, missing an entire regiment¹) besides the dispatched reconnaissance squadrons, had to evade the overwhelming enemy force. The enemy seemed to be encircling on both sides of the Schorellenser Forest. The division commander, Lieutenant General Brecht, now saw his task as protecting the left flank of the 1st Army Corps and initially retreated to Streittalungen. In the afternoon, he left only security forces here; the division itself moved behind the wing of the 1st Infantry Division to Kattenau, where horse and rider found the rest they had lacked since the beginning of the war in the facilities of the remount depot. However, the enemy continued to expand westward on the northern wing. Russians (10 km west of Pillkallen) were reported to have occupied it in the evening.

General v. François immediately returned to the 1st Infantry Division after the victory on the right wing. He was impressed by the first major success achieved in the south. Here the enemy was defeated, their own losses were low, and the 3rd Infantry Brigade had not yet entered the battle. The commanding general and the commander of the 1st Infantry Division were convinced that it would be possible to turn the situation to their advantage on the northern wing the following day. Meanwhile, however, a new order from the army high command had arrived, stating that the battle should be broken off — "even if successful in arms." With a heavy heart, General v. François followed this instruction in the evening and withdrew during the night.

¹) The 5th Cuirassier Regiment was initially used in border protection with the XX Army Corps and had not yet arrived.

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the retreat. The enemy remained master of the battlefield. It was inevitable that he felt like the victor.

The I Army Corps had stood against three Russian infantry divisions on August 17 at Stallupönen with not quite three infantry brigades, as we know today: the 27th and 25th from the III and the 29th from the XX Corps. Of these, the southernmost, the 27th Infantry Division, was defeated at Görritten; their regiments suffered particularly heavily from the pursuing fire of the German artillery when crossing the border river and lost a total of 6600 men¹). This Russian division was hardly in question for the continuation of the battle on August 18. The 25th Infantry Division, fighting on both sides of the main road, had advanced to 4 km east of Stallupönen, its right wing had taken Bilderweitschen from the east. The 29th Infantry Division, also fighting, had reached Bilderweitschen with its left wing and Degesen with its right. These two Russian divisions were themselves in the full feeling of their first victory and were fully operational for August 18¹).

However, the Russians had also advanced east and north of the battlefield simultaneously without the German I Army Corps being aware. In the south, the Russian 1st Cavalry Division had reached the area of Marggrabowa, the 5th Rifle Brigade had come to Kowahlen. From the IV Corps, the 30th Infantry Division had been held up by the advance troops of the German 3rd Infantry Brigade stationed at Goldap; it reached Dubeningken in the evening. The Russian 40th Infantry Division, with its 1st Brigade, had engaged in combat against detachments of the German 4th Infantry Brigade left behind at Medlkehmen in the morning. While these withdrew to Tollmingkehmen, the Russians, following the order of their army command and the troops of the German General v. Falk, marched north to support the III Corps in the afternoon. Thus, the Russian 40th Division with the 1st Brigade reached Wischwillen in the evening, while on the southern flank of the German I Army Corps. Their 2nd Brigade was even further back at Dumbeln and Szittkehmen. North of the battlefield, the Russian cavalry corps of General Chan Hussein Nachitchwanski had reached as far as Pillkallen and westward, behind which the 28th Infantry Division (from the XX Corps) had reached Willuhnen.

¹) Radus-Sentowitsch in Öbornik, Issue 1, p. 88. — Of these, 3000 men alone were from Regiment 105.

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The Battle of Stallupönen.

On August 18, the commanding general of the Russian III Corps, General Jepantschin, wanted to continue the attack at Stallupönen to push the German troops south. He also had the troops of the neighboring corps involved in the battle at his disposal. According to his order issued the evening before at 9 o'clock, the attack was to begin on August 18 at 4 o'clock in the morning: the 40th, 27th, and 25th Infantry Divisions from the east against the line Kasluben (14 km south of Stallupönen)—Wischnawetschen—Görritten—Stallupönen, further from the north with the left wing on the road Degenen—Stallupönen the 29th Infantry Division, reinforced by a brigade of the 28th Infantry Division. — One cannot help but feel that such an attack, with partly very fresh forces, would have put the German I Army Corps in a rather difficult position, even if it was expected that the Russian 27th Infantry Division would not participate in the attack.

Even during the night, advance troops of the Russian 25th Infantry Division moved towards Stallupönen. They found no enemy anymore. When General v. Rennenkampf arrived in Wirballen early on August 18, he received reports of the German withdrawal. General v. François had reached the line Grauzhnen—Milluhnen—Nerfinn (about 10 km east of the battlefield) during the night without disturbance from the enemy. From here, he continued the march on Gumbinnen on August 18. Despite the retreat, he felt victorious against an enemy superior in numbers; the same feeling inspired the bulk of his troops. They had proven themselves in the first battle. However, the corps' losses on this single day of battle had exceeded 1200 men. The enemy's losses cannot be precisely stated but were many times those of the Germans.

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August 18th. — Intentions and Measures of the German Army High Command.

made it impossible. The circumstances increasingly urged rapid

action. To what extent this shift in the situation was realized by the High Command

at that time cannot be determined. Its decisions, as far as known so far, were initially not influenced.

In the thought that the enemy might immediately pursue the I Army Corps,

Generaloberst v. Prittwitz had ordered the other corps on the evening of August 17

to be ready to attack as soon as the XVII Army Corps was fully assembled. When

the enemy did not initially follow, this idea was set aside again.

They wanted to let the Russians continue to approach the Angerap.

However, Generaloberst v. Prittwitz kept the I Army Corps

at Gumbinnen and northwards. The 1st Cavalry Division and

the 2nd Landwehr Brigade, positioned behind the Inster at Kraupischken

and northwards, remained under General v. François. His

troops were thus 10 km ahead of the rest of the front. The intentions

behind this deployment are not known. It almost seems

as if they did not want to order General v. François to retreat again. Presumably, he sought to direct the operations

into the paths he deemed correct.

He continued to anticipate the Russians' intention to envelop his northern

flank. To have a powerful force at hand against this,

he wanted to move his southern, 2nd Infantry Division behind the left

flank. The High Command agreed with this intention

and provided him on the evening of August 18 with the main reserve from Königsberg, stationed south of Insterburg, for his right flank as reinforcement.

The information available to the Army High Command until then

suggested that the advance of the Russian Narew Army was also nearing its end. They simultaneously indicated

an extension of the western flank of this army through troop concentration

in the area previously reported free by the enemy around and west

of Warsaw: By August 15, all Germans and

Austrians were to have been expelled from Lodz, as troops were expected.

There was active military traffic around Warsaw, troops were arriving.

Parts of the Russian I Corps were reported to have marched from the area west of the city

towards Nowogeorgiewsk. Further east, the Russians

had already begun their advance on the Narew line. Airmen had

determined that on the morning of August 18, at least one Russian division

had advanced about 15 km from Ostrolenka to the west and another from Lomsha to the northwest

and then had gone to rest. Overall, this enemy was estimated at about two corps. In front of him was cavalry pushed closer to the border.

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The Battle of Gumbinnen.

Cavalry advanced closer to the border. These reports

made a rapid decision against the Njemen Army appear even more

necessary than before.

On the eastern front, the enemy had continued his advance,

on the northern flank only hesitantly due to the previous day's battle.

His foremost parts were established in the evening along the line Lyck–Goldap–

Grünhof (9 km west of Stallupönen). The army high command now

expected a total of five Russian corps: the II south of Marggrabowa, —

then an unknown one that had advanced over Filipowo, — the IV near

the Rominten Heath, — the III at Stallupönen, — the XX at and north of Schirwindt.

In front of these corps, the Russian cavalry corps was assumed to be west of Pillkallen.

Their outposts blocked the Gynmenis section.

On August 19, the German troops in the Angerapp position

also expected the enemy attack and continued the fortification work.

The commander-in-chief himself discussed the defense in the field with the commanding generals

of the I Reserve Corps and the XVII Army Corps.

At the I Army Corps, the planned movements

proceeded in the morning without disturbance by the enemy. Against the northern flank

of the 1st Infantry Division, however, a comprehensive Russian

attack seemed to be preparing from Mallwischken. As long as the 2nd Infantry

Division had not yet arrived behind this flank, the

1st Cavalry Division formed the only reserve there. Therefore, by order

of the army high command, the 2nd Landwehr Brigade was initially to

advance from Kraupischken to Mallwischken in the flank and rear of the encircling

enemy. — In front of the entire front of the I Army Corps, the enemy

slowly advanced. The high command was informed that he had occupied Augustównen

(southeast of Gumbinnen); this meant a threat to the I Army Corps also from the south!

However, General von Francois still assumed that the

enemy wanted to encircle from the north. He suspected at least 1½ Russian corps

(III and ½ XX), as well as 3 cavalry divisions, in front of his front, — perhaps the Guard Rifle Brigade

was also still opposite. So far, only artillery had engaged on the German side.

The next morning, General v. Francois intended to

launch the 2nd Infantry Division against the enemy's northern flank

over Mallwischken to Kattenau. He personally reported this intention and the situation

to the commander-in-chief of the border protection and informed the intelligence officers

of the high command in the same sense. He requested that the I Reserve Corps and the XVII Army Corps be deployed for the attack.

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August 19th. — The Decision to Attack.

To have the XVII Army Corps commence the attack. The situation is now particularly favorable. However, the commander-in-chief wanted to have a clearer view of the enemy south of the Rominten Heath. At 4:30 in the afternoon, the General Command of the I Army Corps reported to the Army High Command, which had meanwhile been moved forward to Ordenburg, once again about the situation and intentions. It indicated that the Russians might attack during the night.

At this time — on the afternoon of August 19th — the Army High Command had the following picture of the situation in front of the rest of the front:

The deployment of the army around Lomsha continued towards the East Prussian southern border. From Ostrolenka and Lomsha, the forward parts seemed to be advancing further in the general direction of Ortelsburg. However, an immediate threat did not yet seem to exist here. Nevertheless, it was questionable whether one could wait much longer at the Angerap. — The Russian II Corps had reached the area of Lyck. — No enemy had been identified at Marggrabowa and in the Rominten Heath, but the flyers had reported 1½ to 2 infantry divisions in the area south and east of Goldap, which seemed to be turning over Goldap towards Darkehmen, with strong cavalry at Wischtitenzylze. This gave the impression that there was a strong group at Gumbinnen, separate from the rest of the army, while other forces south of the heath were even further back. In this situation, the reports from the I Army Corps were decisive. The corps could not be left alone against the enemy again.

Thus, Generaloberst v. Prittwitz decided to advance with the remaining corps. This decision, which corresponded to the suggestion of General v. François, as is now established, was all the more appropriate to the situation, as the Russians would not have appeared at the Angerap on August 20th either, but at the earliest on the 21st. They took their time and were cautious. If the German 8th Army had remained standing longer, inexplicable days would have been lost, and eventually, the advance of the Russian Narew Army would probably have forced them to retreat before they could engage. — Generaloberst v. Prittwitz now wanted to first attack the Gumbinnen group of Russians, while securing himself against the enemy expected from Goldap through strong right-wing positioning. Only after the Gumbinnen group was defeated did he want to turn against the Goldap enemy.

To this end, the Army High Command ordered the XVII Army Corps at 4:30 in the afternoon to immediately advance in two columns against the line Walterkehmen—Perkallen—Plicken.

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to take the line Walterkehmen—Perkallen—Plicken. As the situation was assessed, this advance had to strike the part of the enemy facing the I Army Corps at Augustupönen from the most effective direction. The XVII Army Corps appeared strong enough to bring the decision here. All other forces were therefore detached to protect the flank of this Army Corps: The I Reserve Corps was to cover against the Goldap enemy, whose beginning was already assumed in the afternoon at Kleszowen. The 3rd Reserve Division was initially to advance only to Rutten (20 km northeast of Lötzen). Participation of the 6th Landwehr Brigade was waived; it was to continue defending the lake narrows.

2. The Advance of the Russian Njemen Army on August 18 and 19¹).

(Support 4, p. 80, and Map 2.)

The Russians had already learned of the German withdrawal from Stallupönen on the night of August 18. An immediate pursuit did not occur; the advance was ordered only for 8 a.m., partly also for a later hour²). However, only the northern wing of the army reached the goals set for this day: the cavalry corps of Ghans Hussein Mallwischken, followed by the 28th Infantry Division Rutschen. In all the troops that had been engaged in battle at Stallupönen the previous day, the aftereffects of the battle were so noticeable that they barely got beyond the railway line Pillkallen—Stallupönen—Pillupönen. The southern wing not involved in the battle (IV Corps with 5th Rifle Brigade and 1st Cavalry Division) even remained completely stationary, presumably to regroup.

On August 19, the army continued the advance on the entire front: The cavalry corps turned northwest against Kraupischken, behind it the 1st Independent Cavalry Brigade from Schillehnen advanced. From the XX Corps, the 28th Infantry Division advanced only a short distance west and southwest until it came into contact with the troops of the 1st German Infantry Division. All other parts of the army advanced a full day's march westward. The 29th Infantry Division from the XX Corps reached as far west as Kattenau.

¹) Connection to p. 69.  
²) In fact, the Russians are said to have started only after 2 p.m. (Strategic Overview I, p. 73).

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Situation and Intentions of the Russians on August 19.

Kattenau. From the III Corps, the 25th Infantry Division reached both sides of the railway west of Szittgupönen, the 27th, still suffering from the consequences of their defeat on August 17, only reached Warschlegen (east of Grünheichen). From the IV Corps, the 40th Infantry Division with three regiments reached the area of Soginten. — Spatially separated from these forces: a regiment of the 40th Infantry Division reached the western edge of the Rominten Heath, the 30th Infantry Division and the 5th Rifle Brigade Goldsap and Groß-Wronzen, subordinated to the IV Corps, the 1st Cavalry Division Gollubien. — The II Corps, under the Narew Army, reinforced by heavy artillery against Lößnig, remained at Lyck on August 19.

The German Army High Command's assessment that the enemy was divided into two groups by the Rominten Heath was largely correct, only the southern group was weaker than assumed by the Germans.

For August 20, General v. Rennenkampf ordered his army, considering the fatigue of the troops and the regulation of supplies, to advance only as far as possible without serious combat. — The decision on the place and time of the battle no longer depended on the Russian commander-in-chief. The German leader had seized the initiative. There had already been clashes at the front.

3. The Battles of the I Army Corps. (Map 2.)

By noon on August 19, the commander of the 2nd Landwehr Brigade, Colonel Freiherr v. Lupin, following the orders of the Army High Command, had his forces available at Kraupischken (2 battalions, 2 batteries) advance on Mallwischken. The small detachment encountered the Russian cavalry corps near Rauschen. A battle ensued. As the brigade lacked any ammunition columns, a shortage of ammunition occurred in the afternoon. Despite all bravery, the detachment had to retreat behind the Inster under significant losses (II Battalion Landwehr Regiment 4 alone lost 13 officers, 219 men). Meanwhile, sent for assistance by General v. François, the German 1st Cavalry Division approached through the Schwalder Forest. They took the enemy by surprise with their artillery in the evening, so effectively that he left 7 guns and otherwise disappeared into the darkness. The Landwehr Brigade could no longer benefit from this. Under the impression of this first unfortunate encounter with the enemy, the entire brigade withdrew from the front to the west during the night.

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The impression of this first unfortunate clash with the enemy caused

the entire brigade to withdraw from the front to the west during the night.

It was out of action for the following days.

In the late afternoon, parts of the Russian 28th Infantry Division

advanced in dense waves against the German 1st Infantry Division.

They came nowhere closer than 600 meters to the German position.

Then their attack succumbed to the defensive fire of the East Prussians.

General of Infantry v. François, who had set up his command post 4 km

north of Gumbinnen at Lindentug, expected the continuation of the Russian

attack against his entire front on August 20. Ready for defense were now:

The main reserve Königsberg (11 battalions, 6 squadrons, 9 batteries) under

Lieutenant General v. Böck and in the over 11 km wide front from the Rominthe

west of Augstupönen to Springen (on the Gumbinnen—Russen road). In front

of the middle of this extended position lay a wide peat bog. At Springen,

in a significantly narrower position, facing north, the 1st Infantry Division

under Lieutenant General v. Conta joined (12 battalions, 4 squadrons, 16 batteries).

Its left wing extended to Pakallnischen on the Gumbinnen—Mallwischken road.

Since General v. François expected the intervention of the XVII Army Corps

on his right wing early on August 20, he could now turn his full attention

to the northern wing, where he still expected the main focus of the Russian

attack. He ordered the 2nd Infantry Division, assembled in the evening at

Bibehlen, to move north through the eastern tip of the Taullinner Forest

during the night and to attack the Russians from the flank and rear from

Smaillen at 4 a.m. The 1st Cavalry Division was to support this attack,

the 2nd Landwehr Brigade, whose dispatch was still unknown to the general

command, was to continue to provide infantry protection. The advance of

the 2nd Infantry Division was soon to relieve the 1st Infantry Division as well.

Then it was to join the attack. Only the main reserve Königsberg, which

General v. François did not consider to have great offensive power due to

its composition and equipment, was to remain in its positions.

The commander of the 2nd Infantry Division, Lieutenant General

v. Fall, ordered the march of his division to be concealed by parts left behind.

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August 20th — The Victory of the I Army Corps.

conceal. The bivouac fires burned throughout the night, while the division itself marched over difficult field and forest paths for over 15 km through the moonless night. It reached its deployment areas in the morning fog. The difficult movement had been smoothly executed. At 4 a.m., the East Prussians launched their attack. The Russians were completely surprised. The Fusilier Regiment Graf Roon (East Prussian) No. 33 took Mallwischken in the first assault. The Eymenis River was forded. Behind this section, on the glacis-like ascending heights of Gerteheim, the Russians offered desperate resistance. The attackers had to wait for the artillery's effect. Thus, a brief halt occurred. But by 9 a.m., the infantry stormed the Russian position from the west and north. The commander of the East Prussian Fusilier Regiment, Colonel v. Fumetti, fell. The attack continued on Mingstimmen.

The 1st Infantry Division had already begun its artillery fire at 3:30 a.m. before the 2nd Infantry Division's attack to divert the enemy's attention from the encirclement. The Russians responded, but their fire soon subsided, and they seemed to be withdrawing forces under the pressure of the 2nd Infantry Division's attack. Lieutenant General v. Conta decided, therefore, to also go on the offensive at 5:30 a.m. He intended to lead it straight from his position in the general direction of the Russians. However, this direction did not correspond to the overall situation; the general command intervened and directed the course towards Rattenau. The division, which had previously faced north and was heavily echeloned to the left, complied with the order by pivoting the entire division front. However, hours passed before this already difficult movement was executed in continuous combat against the strongly resisting enemy; particularly fierce battles developed around the localities. After thorough artillery preparation, Bratupönen fell at 11 a.m. However, the right wing had not yet advanced at this time; it was still at Springen.

Following the 1st Infantry Division, the main reserve Königsberg under Lieutenant General Brodrück was in their previous positions, which had been under enemy artillery fire since early morning.

General v. François had the impression since the successful attack of his 2nd Infantry Division that the enemy was retreating. In this sense, he had already at 8:30 a.m. informed the XVII Army Corps, which was advancing south of the I since daybreak.

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informing that the south of the I. had been advancing since dawn.

He recommended the attack direction towards Szirgupönen. The main reserve

Königsberg, corresponding to the advance of this corps, concentrated its forces

more to the north.

At 12 noon, General v. François again regulated the attack

objectives of his divisions. He expected renewed enemy resistance

at Kattenau, where the Russians had entrenched the day before.

The main reserve Königsberg was also to participate in the attack,

north of the Stallupöner road under right echelon.

The 1st Infantry Division maintained the direction towards Kattenau, the 2nd

was to envelop to the north.

Meanwhile, setbacks had occurred at the front:

Immediately after the capture of Brakupönen by the 1st Infantry

Division, the Russians counterattacked here and retook the

place. The German infantry experienced retrograde

movements. These were facilitated by the simultaneous withdrawal

of individual batteries, which the artillery brigade commander

had wanted to consolidate for unified use. All these

movements were mistaken by the artillery of the 2nd Infantry Division for

a forward-moving Russian attack and were fired upon.

This caused a severe panic, which partially drove the infantry of the 1st Infantry

Division back north of Neidenburg. It spread to the

southern wing of the 2nd Infantry Division, where the enemy

simultaneously advanced from Mingstimmen. However, he did not follow through. The

vigorous intervention of all subordinate leaders and the commander of the 1st

Infantry Division, Lieutenant General v. Conta, who with his general

staff officer immediately rushed to the front line, as well as the signal "halt"

brought the retreating troops to a standstill. Already at

2:30 p.m., the brave East Prussian troops launched a new

attack. They reached at 3 p.m. the road leading from Gumbinnen to Kussen,

the left wing of the 2nd Infantry Division Radszen.

Here, however, the attack power waned due to the mixing of

units and the previous exertions and

battles. Around the same time, the attack of the main reserve

Königsberg was again repelled by Russian artillery fire.

General v. François postponed the continuation of the battle

to the next day and at 4 p.m. gave the order for

"Fechterschatz". 10 guns and about 6000 prisoners had been

captured so far, over 4000 of them by the 2nd Infantry Division.

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August 20th. — The Pursuit Ride of the 1st Cavalry Division.

From the 1st Cavalry Division, which was supposed to support the battle of the 2nd Infantry Division, there was no news. Lieutenant General Brecht had observed the retreat of the Russians in front of the 2nd Infantry Division on the morning of August 20th. He decided on an overtaking pursuit on the large road to Pillkallen, covered with stragglers and vehicles. Thus, the division was out of the fight for the 2nd Infantry Division west of Kattenau. It might have brought the decision there. So, Lieutenant General Brecht reached Pillkallen at 3 p.m., 12 km behind the Russian front, without encountering significant resistance. Here he turned south with the 2nd and 41st Cavalry Brigades and encountered a Russian unit consisting of infantry with machine guns and artillery at Schilleningken, which was retreating eastward. He had them fired upon and launched an attack with the 2nd Cavalry Brigade (12th Uhlans and 9th Jäger 3rd Pf.) supported by parts of the 41st Cavalry Brigade. The Russians fled. The commander of the Russian Infantry Regiment 111, 2 closed infantry companies, and the flag of Regiment 110, all from the 28th Infantry Division, fell into the hands of the German riders, while other parts escaped south. The battle noise at the I Army Corps had meanwhile subsided. It was not possible to establish a connection there. Thus, the cavalry division, after more than 50 km of march and battle, rested at Pillkallen in the evening.

4. The Battle of the XVII Army Corps. (Map 2.)

General of Cavalry v. Mackensen had his divisions set out immediately on the afternoon of August 19th after receiving the army order. They reached their deployment areas after a night march of over 25 km before dawn: the 35th Infantry Division at Pilkallen, the 36th south of it at Girnen.

The I Army Corps had reported at 8 p.m. that only weak enemy forces, at most one division, were south of the Stallupöner road; it expected that an attack by the XVII Army Corps on Girnen westward would press in the left enemy flank without difficulty. 1½ hours later, it viewed the situation as less favorable: The main reserve Königsberg expected the Russian attack for the night, so the Russian III Corps and the 40th Infantry Division from the IV Corps were to advance over Trakehnen and southward and presumably stand from Augstupönen to Walterkehmen behind the Rominte. This view of the I Army Corps coincided with reports that the enemy had advanced south of the Pissa in several columns and had occupied Walterkehmen.

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The perception of the I Army Corps aligned with reports that the enemy had advanced south of the Pissa in several columns and occupied Walterkehmen. However, the General Command of the XVII Army Corps was mistaken in this perception of the enemy when it learned during the night that the area of Walterkehmen was actually free of the enemy. It was now assumed, in accordance with the information received from the Army High Command, that the enemy's southern wing was advancing against the I Army Corps, thus towards the northwest, and that they would therefore strike it in the flank. Since no further orders for the cooperation of the two corps were received from the Army High Command by 1 a.m., General v. Mackensen decided to attack in a northeasterly direction at dawn on August 20 to quickly bring aid to the I Army Corps. The 35th Infantry Division was to advance with its right wing from Perballen to Jodszuhnen (east of Augstupönen), the 36th to support this attack via Walterkehmen and push south. At 4:15 a.m., the Army High Command announced that no further orders would come, expecting that the XVII Army Corps, whose intentions it was now informed of, would soon attack.

At dawn on August 20, General v. Mackensen moved to the heights not north of Girren. Both divisions launched their attack after a very short rest. Officers and men were exhausted to the point of collapse, but the sense of duty and the thought of the impending battle gave them new strength. — The 35th Infantry Division encountered almost no resistance and, advancing from section to section, reached the area north of Jodszuhnen by 9 a.m. The division commander, Lieutenant General Hennig, also moved there. Around the same time, a communications officer from the I Army Corps arrived at his northern, 87th Infantry Brigade, reporting that the I Army Corps was in a favorable advancing attack. General v. François assured himself of their success, provided the XVII Army Corps advanced on Szaugupönen to block the enemy's retreat. The brigade commander, Major General v. Hahn, took responsibility for this wish and turned his troops north against the Pissa.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant General v. Heineccius with his 36th Infantry Division had encountered the enemy. These were the outposts of the Russian 27th Infantry Division, which were retreating eastward while fighting.

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August 20th. — The Attack of the XVII Army Corps.

retreated. Behind them, movements were observed at Warschlegen and Ribinnen,

which were also directed eastward, but upon further advance at the pivot point from Bulsdehnen to Grün-

weitschen, stronger resistance was encountered. The General Command was

reported at 7:30 in the morning that it had succeeded in preventing the enemy from continuing

their withdrawal. — The division could not know

that it now faced strong forces from the Russian 27th and 40th Infantry

Divisions, which had been alerted early in the morning and were now ready for defense from north of

Mattischkehmen to south of Sobehnen.

General v. Mackensen had observed the rapid preparation of his divisions

from the area east of Perballen and later from the area west of Grün-

weitschen. Up to the pivot point, the attack of the

German troops had advanced smoothly over flat and clear terrain. Now the ridge east of the stream

limited the view. But behind it began a hilly and very unclear

terrain with numerous individual farms. What was happening there remained hidden from the

attacker. — General v. Mackensen had meanwhile received information

from General v. François about the retreat

of the enemy in front of the front of the I Army Corps and the call

to advance on Zirguplönen. This reinforced the impression at the

General Command, already formed by received reports and previous

own observations, that the enemy was in full

retreat and only offered resistance at pivot points behind the pivot point. The reports from the flyers did not contradict this

view. They had seen nothing of the enemy from the railway east of Gum-

binnen to the Rominten Heath except for wagon columns and abandoned

bivouac sites at 6:00 in the morning. Between 10 and 11:00, they reported

that the enemy's southern flank was apparently at Södinehlen (3 km

south of Zirguplönen); from there to the Rominten Heath, they had

only seen artillery at Mattischkehmen and a mixed detachment

(infantry regiment with artillery) at Soginten. Thus,

General v. Mackensen could direct his reserve (Infantry Regiment 129

from the 36th Infantry Division with artillery) to Soginten to

hit the flank and rear of the enemy. For this, the

35th Infantry Division was to provide an infantry regiment and artillery as a new

corps reserve, as there were simultaneous reports of the enemy's advance

from Goldap to the north, but the I Reserve Corps

was still about to be deployed.

The Infantry Regiment 129 unexpectedly encountered the enemy west of the pivot point

at Raszehlen. They were advance troops of the Russian 40th Infantry Division, who were pushed back eastward in stubborn fighting.

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40th Infantry Division, which was pushed back eastward in tough fighting. Further north, the troops of the 36th Infantry Division gradually gained the impression that they were facing a strong enemy in a prepared position. The attack on the places on the heights east of Schwentischke barely advanced despite the deployment of the last reserves.

North of the 36th Infantry Division, Lieutenant General Hennig had led his 70th Infantry Brigade against Mattischkehmen. Here too, they encountered stubborn resistance.

In the early afternoon hours, the corps' attack along the entire front came to a halt. Believing they were pursuing a retreating enemy, the troops were often surprised and partially severely shaken by the sudden onset of mass fire from the mostly invisible defender. To assist the rapidly advancing infantry, some batteries had moved openly into this critical position and now suffered heavily themselves. Parts of the rifle lines that had broken into the Russian lines in the first assault were unable to hold their ground there. Thus, the infantry remained at effective rifle range in the open field in front of the enemy position. They had been on the move for almost 24 hours, their ammunition was running low, and they suffered heavily under the fire of the entrenched Russian infantry as well as from machine guns and more distant batteries. It was not possible to locate and combat this artillery in the confusing terrain behind the Russian position. Thus, the losses increased; the loss of numerous officers and non-commissioned officers was particularly noticeable. — Then, probably first east of Grünweitschen, retrograde movements began around 3 p.m. They were soon brought to a halt by the leaders rushing forward. General v. Mackensen had now gradually gained the impression that he was facing a strong enemy and that his corps alone would no longer be able to carry out the attack. Since no help was in sight from the I Reserve Corps and I Army Corps for the time being, he ordered the line gained to be held and fortified.

Soon further setbacks occurred: The earlier, in a different situation, ordered withdrawal of batteries to the new corps reserve weakened the artillery firepower of the 35th Infantry Division. The rifle lines, largely deprived of their officers, had hardly been able to hold under enemy fire anyway. Now they began to retreat downwards from Grünweitschen. This movement spread mainly northward, where the attack of the 87th Infantry Brigade against rifle groups had already begun to falter.

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August 20th — The Setback at the XVII Army Corps.

The brigade against the rifle groups had already begun to falter. All means to bring the troops to a halt failed. General v. Mackensen himself rode forward with his staff to intervene, but could not stop the broad stream of those retreating. From the right wing of the 36th Infantry Division came reports of the approach of strong enemy columns. Thus, General v. Mackensen, under the impression of the events unfolding directly before his eyes, assumed that the Russians would not miss the opportunity to launch an attack themselves. He ordered the shaken troops of the XVII Army Corps, especially in the dark, to only be positioned behind a strong obstacle. The 87th Infantry Brigade had already continued its retreat behind the Romintre. Thus, General v. Mackensen ordered at 5 p.m. that the other parts of the corps also retreat behind this river course, which was then to be held.

However, the Russians did not exploit their success. They did not press forward anywhere. As soon as General v. Mackensen realized this, he attempted again to stop the retreat. This was only successful with the 36th Infantry Division, whose right wing and center remained in the positions gained at noon, while Lieutenant General v. Heineccius had moved his left wing to the heights north of Walterkehmen. The 35th Infantry Division gathered at Perkallen behind the Romintre.

A chain of unfortunate circumstances had led to well-trained troops, who later proved themselves everywhere, losing their footing at the first encounter with the enemy. The corps suffered heavily. The infantry alone was missing about 8000 men, a third of their total strength; 200 of their officers were dead and wounded. The Russians claimed to have taken 1000 prisoners and captured 12 guns¹).

5. The Battle of the I Reserve Corps.

(Map 2.)

The I Reserve Corps had entrenched at the Angerapp all day on August 19th. The army order to advance was a surprise; the troops were exhausted from the work; they were quickly supplied. Then the corps began the night march against the enemy, with the 1st Reserve Division from Buddern (11 km northeast of Angerburg) on Kleszowen, with the 36th Reserve Division to the north.

¹) Strategic Overview I, p. 75.

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burg) on Kleszowen, with the 36th Reserve Division to the north. Lieutenant General v. Below wanted to fulfill his mission to cover the flank of the XVII Army Corps by attacking the enemy assumed to be marching from Goldap to the north. During the advance, the situation changed: The report that the enemy had already reached Kleszowen proved false. He had only reached Goldap. Under these circumstances, the commander-in-chief instructed the I Reserve Corps during the night not to attack this enemy alone, but to wait until further forces in the north, at Gumbinnen, were free. The decision there was initially the most important.

After a night march on difficult country roads, which was no less strenuous than that of the active XVII Army Corps, and delayed by incoming refugee groups, the I Reserve Corps reached Kleszowen on August 20 around 8 a.m. with the 1st Reserve Division. It was to defend here against the Goldap enemy, with the 36th Reserve Division to the north at Friedrichsberg—Königsfelde. From the northeast, sounds echoed over; but from the direction of Goldap, there were no new reports. Since the corps had no aircraft assigned, they relied on their cavalry (6 reserve squadrons) for reconnaissance. However, Lieutenant General v. Below knew the 3rd Reserve Division was marching from Kutten to Bentheim to the right rear of his corps. Therefore, he had no hesitation in ordering his divisions to continue marching northeast at 7:30 a.m. to engage in the battle of the XVII Army Corps or to confront the Goldap enemy if he marched over Gawaiten or even further east to the north.

The army command was not in agreement with this intention of the I Reserve Corps. It had consistently received favorable reports in the morning about the state of the battle at Gumbinnen and did not consider the intervention of the I Reserve Corps necessary there. However, the command had received reports from its own aircraft that about two enemy corps were holding at Goldap and to the south. It therefore ordered the I Reserve Corps to remain at Kleszowen and Königsfelde. Consequently, Lieutenant General v. Below halted his corps at 10:30 a.m. The 1st Reserve Division had just reached Gawaiten with the vanguard, the 36th Königsfelde. The 3rd Reserve Division had also been held by the army command at Bentheim. There was no direct connection between it and the I Reserve Corps. In such a situation, the I Reserve Corps was completely surprised by an attack from the south: The Russian 30th Infantry Division of the IV Corps had set out early on August 20 in two columns from Goldap to Kleistowen and Gawaiten.

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August 20th — The Battle of the 1st Reserve Corps and the 3rd Reserve Division.

The Russian 30th Infantry Division of the IV Corps had set out early on August 20th in two columns from Goldap towards Kleistowen and Gawaiten. The Russian advance struck the end and the beginning of the 11 km long marching column of the German 1st Reserve Division resting between these two places on the flank. The division commander, Lieutenant General v. Förster, who was located west of Gawaiten, could only instruct the vanguard to hold this place. At the same time, the other troops of his division independently engaged in battle at Kleistowen, where they were. They immediately halted the Russian advance, then took the initiative to attack and gradually pushed the enemy back several kilometers throughout the day. Lieutenant General v. Förster was wounded but was able to retain command of his division.

Meanwhile, Major General Kruse had immediately deployed his 36th Reserve Division to Gawaiten. Here too, the Russians, who received reinforcements at noon from the Rominten Heath through the regiment of their 40th Infantry Division that had been diverted there, were pushed back in fierce fighting. By evening, the 1st Reserve Corps, after temporary setbacks, stood in two completely separate groups on the contested ground south of Kleistowen and east of Gawaiten. A unified command by the general staff was hardly possible. The leadership and troops of the Reserve Corps had proven themselves in this first battle in difficult circumstances through independent action and distinguished themselves. The corps felt victorious.

Only three hours from the battlefield, the 3rd Reserve Division had been stationed at Bentheim since 10 a.m. The army high command only released this last reserve when Lieutenant General v. Below reported in the afternoon that his entire corps was engaged in battle against a strong enemy. At 4 p.m., Generaloberst v. Prittwitz personally gave the division commander Lieutenant General 1) v. Morgen the order by telephone to advance into the rear of the Russians fighting at Kleistowen. However, he added a cautionary note: "It is important to me that the division emerges from this battle as unscathed as possible, to have it available for other tasks." General v. Morgen immediately set out; it became dark before he reached the enemy. Thus, the division, ready to strike the enemy flank, with the right wing near the Goldap River, south of Kleistowen, settled down to rest, planning to break through unexpectedly at dawn.

1) Meanwhile promoted.

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6. The Decision to Retreat.

The Army High Command had been in communication with the general commands all day and was continuously informed about the state of the battle. The successes of the I Army Corps and the rapid advance of the XVII Army Corps had created a confident mood of victory during the morning. It was dampened when it was learned that the attack of the I Army Corps had come to a halt, and when the first reports of setbacks at the XVII Army Corps arrived.

In the afternoon hours of August 20, the High Command had the following picture of the situation:

On the northern flank, the 2nd Landwehr Brigade had been withdrawn westward from the infantry. There was no news from the 1st Cavalry Division since it had set out in pursuit in the morning. Presumably, the more than threefold superior Russian cavalry dominated the situation in the north of both armies. Reinforcements could reach the Russian northern flank at any time by rail. Thus, despite the successes of the German 2nd Infantry Division, it seemed by no means certain that continuing the attack on this flank the following day would achieve a decision. In the center, one could no longer expect much from a new attack by the main reserve Königsberg and the XVII Army Corps. A victory seemed hardly to be hoped for on this day. When it was fully learned that the corps was retreating behind the Romintze, and the intelligence officers described the condition of the retreating troops in gloomy terms, doubts also arose with the commander-in-chief and his chief of staff as to whether it would be possible to continue the attack the next day with a prospect of success. It seemed that one had to be satisfied if the center held its positions. The I Reserve Corps and the 3rd Reserve Division on the southern flank also faced an opponent presumably of equal strength. It was expected that further Russian forces were on the march here. But even if the flank attack of the 3rd Reserve Division on the morning of August 21 on the southern flank brought full success, it could hardly have any impact on the Gumbinnen battlefront on the same day. Thus, a quick and decisive success against the Nejemen Army seemed not impossible, but by no means likely or even certain. Therefore, Generaloberst v. Prittwitz considered at 5 p.m. whether it would be necessary to break off the battle and retreat.

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August 20th. — The News of the Advance of the Narew Army.

5 p.m., whether it would not be necessary to break off the battle and retreat.

The conditions on the East Prussian southern front indeed urged a quick conclusion at Gumbinnen: From Russian radio messages it had been recognized that the I., VI., XIII., XV., XXIII. Corps and the 15th Cavalry Division belonged to the Narew Army. The forces previously observed at Lomsha and Ostrolenka had continued their advance on August 19 and 20 and reached the border from Friedrichshof to Chorzele. However, new enemy forces were also detected far east at Prasznysz. When Generaloberst v. Prittwitz personally inquired by telephone with the Chief of Staff of the XX Army Corps at 8 p.m., the Chief of Staff of the Corps, Colonel Hell, reported that the enemy was estimated to be 2 to 2½ Russian corps and 2 rifle brigades. The XX Army Corps did not expect any support. The main thing was to show at Gumbinnen, "here we will hold." To this end, the commanding General v. Scholtz wanted to shift his forces to Neidenburg to attack the Russian western flank. But at 7 p.m., the command received another message from Major General v. Unger, the leader of the fortress troops at Soldau: Flyers had recognized the advance of long columns on the Warsaw—Pultusk—Ziechanow road up to 10 km south of Mlawa at noon, as well as troops at Nasielsk. Here at least one more corps was advancing.

These reports overturned all previous calculations of the army command: The entire Narew Army now seemed to be in full advance, extending much further west than previously assumed. The German XX Army Corps and the fortress troops alone were not able to stop eight Russian divisions (including two rifle brigades). The condition already required in the report to the Supreme Army Command on August 9 for the attack against the Njemen Army, that a threat from the Prasznysz—Ostrolenka line must be excluded, was no longer fulfilled. The positioning of the army on the Vistula was in question. One could be pushed back to Königsberg. Generaloberst v. Prittwitz and Major General Count v. Waldersee recalled the warning that Generaloberst v. Moltke had given them precisely in this regard. Both were therefore immediately determined to break off the battle at Gumbinnen, whose successful outcome they already doubted, and to execute the retreat of the army to the west.

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execute. The Quartermaster General, Major General Grünert, and the

first General Staff officer, Lieutenant Colonel Hoffmann, had foreseen this

decision. They believed that the battle of Gumbinnen on August 21

could definitely be won and therefore had to be fought through; they

pointed out that when retreating, one would no longer pass the Narew

Army without a fight, as it had the much shorter route to the Vistula.

One would be in a very different position if the Njemen Army had been

defeated beforehand and thereby had freedom of movement.

Colonel General v. Prittwitz rejected these objections and

remained in agreement with his Chief of Staff on the decision to retreat.

He was further strengthened in his view by a somewhat later incoming

aviation report about numerous enemy troops at Stallupönen and the

march of a column from Schwöllmen to Pillkallen1). They were seen as

reinforcements for the Russian northern flank. It could have been the

Russian Guard Corps, which was expected in this area according to

agent reports.

Regarding the decision to retreat by Colonel General v. Prittwitz, it

should be noted: The German 8th Army had just now achieved what

must have been the highest goal of any operation of the German

minority, it had engaged the Russian armies in unison for battle. Would

a similarly favorable opportunity ever present itself again? — The goal

of the commander had to be victory over the Njemen Army. If he

achieved that, all other difficulties would be easier to resolve. Whether

the Narew Army would then advance further? If it did, its retreat was

as threatened as that of the German 8th Army. However, the latter had

the moral superiority of the victor on its side.

If Colonel General v. Prittwitz had believed in a victory for August

21, then he would probably have continued to fight, despite the threat

from the Narew Army. But both came together: in his view, the

uncertain outcome of the battle and the danger in the rear. Thus, the

decision to retreat, given the situation as the Army High Command

understood it at the time, is also not objectionable. The thought of

"breaking out of the encirclement" dominated the mood of the

Commander-in-Chief and his Chief of Staff on the evening of August 20

so completely that another, perhaps bolder decision, which considered less the dangers than the possibilities of success, found no room.

1) Presumably, this column was the German 1st Cavalry Division with its   
prisoners.

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having waited for the infantry regiment, only began the advance from Wirballen on August 21. Nothing could have prevented the German left wing from rolling up the Russian line of battle from the north on that day.

The Russian center (29th Infantry Division from the XX Corps and III Corps) had also suffered heavily; the 27th Infantry Division had already lost 6600 men since the battle of Stallupönen. The commander of the 40th Infantry Division from the IV Corps, which was adjacent to the south, reported "the continuously increasing flight of soldiers (Jews and a few Russians), who are completely healthy and lively." The Russian center might have been able to hold against a new German frontal attack on August 21 until it fell victim to the encirclement from the north; it could not attack itself.

On the southern flank, a complete German success was assured for August 21. The enemy had deployed almost all forces against the I Reserve Corps. Of them, the 119th Infantry Regiment had already turned to flight, and the others could only be held with difficulty by their officers. The Russian 1st Cavalry Division was more than 10 km south of Goldap and remained there on August 21. Thus, the attack of the German 3rd Reserve Division at dawn would have caught the enemy in flank and rear and probably led to the capture of a large part of the 3/4 Russian divisions fighting here in the angle between Goldaper Lake and Goldap River.

That General v. Rennenkampf correctly recognized the danger threatening his army on the evening of August 20 is highly unlikely. As far as we know, he did not want to give up the battle, "contrary to the advice of his entire staff to retreat to avoid an overwhelming defeat"¹). Fortune of war spared him from such a fate on August 21: On the night before this day, the German 8th Army began the retreat along the entire front.

It had not been easy to make it clear to the German troops on the victorious wings of the army that they should now retreat despite the successes achieved. General v. François had seen the decision of the high command emerging and had tried to prevent it. Major General Kruse, the commander of the 36th Reserve Division, did not want to move from Gawaiten until he saw at daylight himself that the neighboring 1st Reserve Division was also retreating.

¹) Knor, p. 88.

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August 20th. — The Breaking Off of the Battle.

even saw that the neighboring 1st Reserve Division was also retreating. Lieutenant General v. Morgen wanted to carry out his promising attack with his 3rd Reserve Division on August 21st despite the withdrawal order and only gave up this intention when he found that the neighboring division had moved out during the night.

Despite such delays, the Russians did not disturb the withdrawal anywhere. They were severely shaken by the previous battle and completely surprised when they recognized the changed situation on the morning of August 21st. But even now, the Russian leadership and troops remained so completely under the impression of the heavy fighting from the previous day that they initially did not even think of pursuing, and for the most part, were probably not even able to do so.

Thus, Gumbinnen can still be considered a German success. Unfortunately, it was not further expanded by continuing the attack, but even so, it was not fought in vain. Its effects only became apparent later and were of decisive importance for the success of further German operations.

However, the losses from the broken-off battle were severe and not easy to replace. According to the reports made at the time, they amounted to:

<table>

<tr><td></td><td>dead</td><td>wounded</td><td>missing</td><td>total</td></tr>

<tr><td>Officers</td><td>104</td><td>293</td><td>38</td><td>435</td></tr>

<tr><td>Non-commissioned officers and men</td><td>1146</td><td>6121</td><td>6905</td><td>14,172</td></tr>

<tr><td>Total</td><td>1250</td><td>6414</td><td>6943</td><td>14,607</td></tr>

</table>

At least ⅗ of these fell on the XVII Army Corps. — There is still no precise information on the Russian losses.

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The Recall of Colonel General v. Prittwitz.

the battle at Gumbinnen. In the evening, a message from General v. Francois had reached Coblenz from the Deputy General Command of the I Army Corps in Königsberg. According to it, the I Army Corps had achieved a complete victory: "Many prisoners, much material, enemy in retreat along the entire line. The battle will continue tomorrow." — And so the disappointment was greater when, during the night, the report from Colonel General v. Prittwitz followed: "As strong forces from Warsaw—Lomsha are advancing, I cannot exploit the situation in front of my line and will retreat to West Prussia during the night. As much rail transport as possible." This report was supplemented on the early morning of August 21 with further details about the course of the battle. It was determined that the attack had stalled along the entire front during the day. However, the commander had so far decided, based on the reports about the Warsaw enemy, to "initially retreat behind the Angerapp." This was in contradiction to the intention reported during the night. Since nothing had been reported about the severe setback at the XVII Army Corps until then, there was an impression in Coblenz that a promising battle had been abandoned. Thus, the Supreme Army Command inquired early on August 21 at the High Command: "His Majesty demands a clear statement of what is actually intended, whether an offensive is not possible."

The Army High Command replied that an offensive against the Njemen Army was no longer possible. It justified this response now also with the condition of the XVII Army Corps and provided details about orders and intentions: The I Reserve Corps should hold a fortified position at the Angerapp, the XVII Army Corps should retreat as far north as possible against the Vistula, the I Army Corps, if possible, should be transported by rail to Graudenz. In Coblenz, this report gave the impression that the 8th Army was in full retreat to the Vistula and in doing so was further splintering its already weak forces. Such a retreat had to end behind the Vistula.

The Supreme Army Command saw such a retreat behind the Vistula as such a severe disadvantage that Colonel General v. Moltke, as he had already stipulated in the instructions for the deployment of the 8th Army, could only give his consent in the "utmost emergency." Such a retreat was at best tolerable if strong assistance from the West was in sight.

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August 21st. — The Intervention of the Supreme Army Command.

was in close prospect in the West. However, on August 21st, there was no

thought of this. The effects of an evacuation of East Prussia were not

limited to this area. If the Russians advanced to the Vistula, as was to be

expected, they would tie down the German 8th Army there with minimal

forces and gain free rein against Posen and Silesia or against Austria-Hungary.

They could turn with overwhelming superiority against the allied army,

which was just about to launch an offensive east of the Vistula from Galicia.

The retreat of the 8th Army from East Prussia would have posed an almost

insoluble task for the Danube Monarchy and, in all likelihood, would have

resulted in the retreat of its army. Therefore, everything had to be done

to keep the 8th Army east of the Vistula.

There is no evidence that, besides the compelling reasons of major warfare,

cultural, economic, or purely local considerations influenced the decision

of the Supreme Army Command. Indeed, by abandoning the area east of

the Vistula, lasting German land and cities of ancient culture were left to

the power of Russian soldiers. Irreplaceable stocks of horses and cattle

and the entire harvest would have had to be abandoned, especially since

England's entry into the war made it economically no easy decision.

Nevertheless, it would have been made if the continuation of operations

had become necessary. But it was precisely this that demanded the holding

of East Prussia. This reason alone was decisive.

According to Generaloberst v. Moltke, it was only possible for the 8th Army

to continue holding east of the Vistula if it dared another battle there with

the aim of decisively defeating one of the two Russian armies. If this was

no longer possible against the Njemen Army, then it should be attempted

against the Narew Army. For this, however, the German forces had to be

more concentrated than seemed to be intended by the 8th Army's high

command according to its latest report. Generaloberst v. Moltke, who was

not directly under the impression of the events and the news from the

battlefield like the army high command, did not assess the operational

capability of the Russians so highly that he considered a battle against the

Narew Army, even with the Rennenkampf Army on the flank or rear,

impossible. He considered the Masurian Lakes as flank protection. In this

sense, the Quartermaster General, Lieutenant General v. Stein, initially

sought to influence his plan on the General Staff of the 8th Army by

especially suggesting an attack along the chain of lakes to the south

against the eastern flank of the Narew Army.

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The Recall of Generaloberst v. Prittwitz.

In the army headquarters at Bartenstein, further favorable news had meanwhile been received. The Narew Army had not advanced at all with its western wing during the day, and only slightly with the eastern wing. The Njemen Army only advanced in the afternoon, and then only slowly with advance troops. According to reports from the German troops, it must have suffered heavily. Thus, the corps of the 8th Army had managed to gain a good day's march distance from the enemy. The situation had developed much more favorably than one had dared to hope the previous evening.

However, the attack on the eastern wing of the Narew Army proposed by Lieutenant General v. Stein seemed unfeasible even under these favorable conditions. The distance from the Rennenkampf army was too small for that. However, Major General Count Waldersee and his first General Staff officer, Lieutenant Colonel Hoffmann, were now agreed to "unite the army in West Prussia on the right wing to advance against the left wing of the Narew Army." For this purpose, the I Army Corps was to be moved to Göbershausen (30 km east of Graudenz), the 3rd Reserve Division and the 6th Landwehr Brigade to Deutsch-Eylau, while the other corps continued their march westward.

Just before these intentions were presented to the commander-in-chief, Generaloberst v. Prittwitz was called to the telephone by the Supreme Army Command, where he first spoke with Lieutenant General v. Stein, then with Generaloberst v. Moltke himself. In this conversation, he mentioned no intentions of attack, but rather described the situation as extremely bleak, perhaps to lend more emphasis to his simultaneous request for reinforcements. Generaloberst v. Moltke finally said (according to his notes written down 5 days later): "If you have to retreat, your further task is definitely to hold the Vistula line." But even that, the army leader could not firmly promise: "How am I supposed to hold the Vistula with a handful of troops, it can be waded through anywhere."

This discussion led the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army to decide to make a change in the command of the 8th Army. Generaloberst v. Moltke had the impression that in its current composition, it was not up to the extraordinarily difficult situation brought about by the overwhelming Russian superiority in the east. He was reinforced in this view when the evening report of the High Command explicitly rejected the attack direction recommended by the Supreme Army Command against the eastern wing of the Narew Army, but mentioned nothing of any other intention to attack.

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August 21/22. — The Decision to Change the High Command.

Evening report of the High Command which explicitly rejected the attack direction recommended by the Supreme Army Command against the eastern flank of the Narew Army, but did not mention any other intention of attack. Finally, it was also reported that the High Command had departed from Bartenstein to Mühlhausen (east of Elbing) in the evening and, as the officer left behind reported, intended to continue to Drischau a day later. The stage inspection was to be relocated from there to Konitz. After all this, the Supreme Army Command had no more doubts that Generaloberst v. Prittwitz intended to withdraw his army behind the Vistula.

Generaloberst v. Moltke, however, in order to gain clarity about the overall situation, also had inquiries made with the XX Army Corps, which had to be best informed about the advance of the Narew Army. The corps reported very confidently on the evening of August 21 that it expected the Russian attack in a position on both sides of Gilgenburg only in two to three days and hoped to be able to transition to the attack from this position. It also estimated the enemy at only 2 to 2½ corps, thus weaker than the High Command had assumed. Its concerns therefore did not seem justified.

Nevertheless, it was not an easy decision for the Chief of the General Staff of the Field Army to propose to his Supreme War Lord the relocation of the High Command to the East. It was the first such case. The Supreme Army Command could not yet oversee the situation on the distant theater of war with the inadequate telephone connections at that time as it was mostly possible in later years with reliable communication. Also, the selection of suitable men for the independent position and the unusually difficult situation in the East was not easy. Generaloberst v. Moltke proposed to the Commander-in-Chief General of Infantry z. D. v. Beneckendorff and v. Hindenburg with Major General Ludendorff as Chief of the General Staff. On August 22 at noon, the Kaiser carried out their appointment; in the evening of that day, it was announced to the High Command of the 8th Army in Mühlhausen.

There, the hope for a favorable development of the situation had meanwhile further solidified: On the evening of August 21, while still in Bartenstein, during the telephone conversation that Generaloberst v. Prittwitz conducted, the report arrived that the 1st Cavalry Division had reassembled. The withdrawal order had not reached them on the evening of the Battle of Gumbinnen. When they resumed contact with their own troops the next day, they had still found the way to the west open and even brought back 500 prisoners.

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The Recall of Colonel General v. Prittwitz.

seeking contact with their own troops, but had found the way to the west

still free and now even brought back 500 prisoners. — On August 22,

the enemy in the south and east only began late and did not press

anywhere. The wing of the Narew Army did not extend beyond Mlawa

to the west. Thus, the idea had increasingly taken shape at the German

Army High Command to assemble the army on the right wing, to make

an offensive thrust from the Thorn—Allenstein line. In addition, the

proposal of the Supreme Army Command to tackle the eastern wing of

the Narew Army was now being seriously considered. Perhaps the

Narew Army could be enveloped on both sides! This idea was in the air

due to the similar training of all German senior leaders and general staff

officers. So, Colonel General v. Prittwitz also expressed the intention in

a report drafted on the night of August 21/22, "if the enemy pushes back

General v. Scholtz, under certain circumstances," to intervene with the

I Reserve Corps and the XVII Army Corps from the east, flanking them.

However, Colonel General v. Prittwitz and his chief of staff were no

longer to be called upon to put these intentions and ideas into action.

Whether they would have succeeded in shaping them into a "Tannenberg"

cannot be decided here. Since the retreat from Gumbinnen, the prestige

of the Army High Command had suffered significantly with some of the

subordinate higher command authorities. Thus, it must appear doubtful

whether it was still sufficient to forcefully assert the will of the leadership

in the highly tense situation with the commanding generals accustomed

to great independence — especially against that of the I Army Corps.

1) The idea was discussed not only at the Army High Command and the Supreme  
Army Command at that time, but also played a role independently in the  
considerations of the XX Army Corps.

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Part Three.

The Battle of Tannenberg.

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First Chapter.

The First Measures of the New High Command. The Battle at Lahna and Orlau.

1. At the Great Headquarters and on the Way to the Front. (Map 4.)

On the evening of August 21, Generaloberst v. Moltke sent an officer by car from Coblenz to the High Command of the 2nd Army to bring Major General Ludendorff, the Chief Quartermaster of this army, to the Great Headquarters. General Ludendorff was well known to Generaloberst v. Moltke, as he had served under him until spring 1913, for nine years, in the Great General Staff in the deployment department, lastly as its chief. In the war, he initially held the same position as Chief Quartermaster of the 2nd Army.

On the orders of his commander, he had attended the coup at Liège and, when everything was at stake, intervened decisively. His personal courage and unyielding will were primarily responsible for the fall of the fortress. This deed found its external recognition through the Order pour le mérite.

Generaloberst v. Moltke announced his new task to General Ludendorff in writing: "You will be faced with a difficult task, perhaps even more difficult than the storming of Liège. I know no other man in whom I would have such unconditional trust as in you. Perhaps you will still save the situation in the East..."

On August 22 at 6 p.m., General Ludendorff arrived in Coblenz.

In the meantime, Generaloberst v. Moltke had obtained more detailed information about the situation in East Prussia through direct inquiries with the commanding generals of the 8th Army. The special circumstances justified this unusual measure. It seemed particularly important to learn the opinion of the XX Army Corps, which stood directly opposite the advancing Narew Army.

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The First Measures of the New High Command.

which directly faced the advancing Narew Army. It had already been

heard on the evening of August 21¹) and again the next morning.

General of Artillery v. Scholz and his Chief of Staff, Colonel Hell,

continued to hope that from the defensive position at Gilgenburg they

could find an opportunity to attack: "General situation is perceived as

favorable; troops eager to engage the enemy." From this report and

further messages given by Colonel Hell over the telephone, the Supreme

Army Command inferred with joy and reassurance that a consistently

confident mood prevailed at the XX Army Corps, in contrast to the

Army High Command.

And it was the same with the other corps:

The commanding general of the I Reserve Corps, Lieutenant

General v. Below, felt victorious "over superior forces, certainly much

more artillery. Troops magnificent. At least 1000 prisoners." The corps

was in retreat from Nordenburg to Gerdauen on August 22. The enemy

did not follow. "Mood good."

The XVII Army Corps was further north at the same level.

With General of Cavalry v. Mackensen, the less confident mood that

had been expressed in reports to the Army High Command on the

evening of August 20 had dissipated. Outside enemy fire, they returned

in full order and with confidence in the troops surprisingly quickly.

The general reported that his corps had suffered very heavy losses,

especially in infantry, but did not feel defeated: "Mood good, but not

lifted by retreat." The enemy was still behind the Rominte and

entrenched there; only on August 22 had small Russian cavalry units

crossed the river.

General of Infantry v. Francois had the impression early on

August 22 that the previous battles had caused significant damage to

the Russian III and XX Corps and the enemy cavalry; the opponent

was not pressing forward, he had not yet occupied Summieren. The I

Army Corps felt victorious and was unweakened despite heavy losses.

It now aimed for the railway journey to Grawden. This travel goal

did not align with the view of Generaloberst v. Moltke. He inquired

again whether a withdrawal or diversion of the transport was desired.

General v. Francois declared a withdrawal impossible, it would

completely tear the corps apart. The objectives were already clearly

set for Graudenz (Goslershausen, Bischofswerder), but further advancement of the transports to Deutsch-Eylau and eastward was desired.

¹) p. 107.

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August 22nd. — The Measures of the Supreme Army Command.

Graudenz (Goslershausen, Bischofswerder) set, further forwarding of transports to Deutsch-Eylau and eastward is desired.

The confident reports of all general commands stood in sharp contrast to the view that Generaloberst v. Prittwitz himself had represented to the Supreme Army Command. Since the conversation with him on the evening of August 21st, the High Command had not been heard from.

On the evening of August 22nd, Generaloberst v. Moltke discussed the situation with General Ludendorff. In the organization of the 8th Army, two groups seemed to be forming: a Western Group (I. and reinforced XX. Army Corps, 3rd Reserve Division) and an Eastern Group (XVII. Army Corps, I. Reserve Corps, Main Reserve Königsberg, 1st Cavalry Division).

Generaloberst v. Moltke and the new Chief of Staff of the 8th Army agreed that under the given circumstances, the Western Group should primarily strike against the Russian Narew Army. For this, General Ludendorff demanded their reinforcement by all available forces of the Vistula fortresses. The fortresses should now, on the 21st day of mobilization, be able to provide more than had been made available to General v. Scholz so far. The I. Army Corps was to be unloaded close to the XX. Army Corps, at Deutsch-Eylau, while the reinforcement troops from the fortresses were to reach Goslershausen and Strasburg on August 23rd.

To what extent the Eastern Group was tied down by the Rennenkampf Army, whether it could be led sharply south behind the lakes against the eastern flank of the Narew Army or whether it was better to bring it to battle in a southwesterly direction with the rest of the army, was not yet clear. It seemed necessary to initially halt their retreat westward for August 23rd.

In any case, it was important that the sea area be blocked for the enemy and thus the separation of the two Russian armies be maintained as long as possible. It also had to be prevented that the previously eastward-directed barrier fortifications were opened from behind.

The Supreme Army Command gave the troops and fortresses in the east the corresponding orders directly on the evening of August 22nd. The previous High Command was believed to be in Dirschau and was informed of the arrival of the new commander-in-chief and his chief in Marienburg for noon on August 23rd.

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The First Measures of the New High Command.

At 9 PM, Major General Ludendorff departed from Coblenz, and at 4 AM, the new Commander-in-Chief boarded the special train in Hanover. General of the Infantry v. Hindenburg had retired from active service in 1911 after a long tenure in the General Staff as the commanding general of the IV Army Corps in Magdeburg and had since lived in Hanover. Since the Emperor had not previously made use of his services, the new assignment came as a surprise to him. He saw his Chief of Staff for the first time. General Ludendorff briefly explained the situation to him, then they went to sleep. Everything else had to be resolved in Marienburg.

2. The Arrival in Marienburg on August 23 and the Fundamental Orders for the Battle.

(Maps 1 and 4.)

On August 23 at 2 PM, General v. Hindenburg arrived in Marienburg with General Ludendorff. The staff of the High Command reported to their new superior. The mood was cheerfully subdued. A briefing on the situation took place immediately. Only now did it become apparent that the previous High Command had also planned a strike against the Narew Army. The views of Major General Grünert and Lieutenant Colonel Hoffmann were in complete agreement with those of their new superiors.

The situation in the East had further developed favorably. It presented the following picture:

Among the allies, the start of the offensive was expected in at most a week. The Chief of the Austro-Hungarian General Staff, General v. Conrad, had once again requested support through an advance over the Narew. It was not possible to comply with this request for the time being. — On the left flank of the Austrians, the German Landwehr Corps under General of the Infantry v. Woyrsch had advanced without resistance beyond Petrikau. It now anticipated a Russian advance on Warsaw. The area west of this city was free of stronger Russian forces. — From Thorn, a German detachment had occupied Wlozlawek.

The Russian Narew Army, to which, according to previous reports, the I, VI, XIII, XV, and XXIII Corps and the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 15th Cavalry Divisions seemed to belong, under General of Cavalry Samsonow, had on the evening of August 22 in a width of about 60 km reached the main road Soldau—Neidenburg—Ortelsburg and from there resumed its advance in a northwesterly direction on August 23.

1) p. 61.

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The Situation in East Prussia on August 23.

reached the main road Soldau—Neidenburg—Ortelsburg and had resumed its march in a northwesterly direction on August 23. On the western flank of this Russian army, strong cavalry was expected in the area around Rypin. At Soldau, the 22nd Infantry Division (I Corps) was identified. However, the center of the Narew Army had come so close from Neidenburg to the German XX Army Corps that General v. Scholtz was already expecting a battle for this day, but at the latest for August 24. On the other hand, the eastern flank of Samsonov's (VI Corps) seemed to be still lagging.

General v. Scholtz, whose army corps was reinforced by the 70th Landwehr Brigade and the fortress troops of Major General v. Unger (20th Landwehr Brigade from Thorn and troops of the Deputy 69th Infantry Brigade from Graudenz, together a weak division), had to abandon his initial intention to advance against the left flank of the Narew Army. Due to the breadth of the Russian advance, he had not succeeded in bringing his active troops, which had still been stationed at Ortelsburg, in time before the Russian western flank. Now the XX Army Corps, reinforced to 3½ infantry divisions, stood in a prepared position extending from 9 km southwest of Gilgenburg to 10 km north of Neidenburg. Behind the eastern flank of the position, the 3rd Reserve Division had almost completed its task at Allenstein. General v. Scholtz now saw his task, given the great Russian superiority also recognized at the XX Army Corps, primarily in defense. He had the 3rd Reserve Division at his disposal to be able to strike against the flank of the Russian attack from Allenstein. In the further course, he hoped that the I Army Corps would engage against one Russian flank, and the XVII Army Corps and the I Reserve Corps against the other. These plans also corresponded to the views of the Army High Command.

The transport of the I Army Corps, according to the initial orders of the High Command, secured against enemy interference, was to begin on August 24 at Wehlau and Königsberg. In an effort to expedite the transport and spare the troops long marches, the Corps Command had already begun the transport under the protection of the main reserve Königsberg on August 22 via the railway line to the west. In Insterburg, the loading had to be stopped the following morning due to enemy threat, soon thereafter due to a lack of empty trains, it was completely interrupted for about 12 hours.

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The First Measures of the New High Command.

due to a lack of empty trains, had been completely interrupted for about 12 hours: From the border areas, such a massive stream of refugees had poured onto the railways that the operational situation just behind the front had become extremely difficult, and the delivery of empty materials was significantly delayed. Thus, from the fighting troops of the corps, only the first parts (Grenadier Regiment 1) had been unloaded and were marching on Löbau; the last could not arrive in Bischofswerder and Deutsch-Eylau until the evening of August 25 at the earliest. — From the fortress of Thorn, a mixed brigade gathered under the commander of the 5th Landwehr Brigade, Lieutenant General v. Müllmann, near Strasburg and to the west.

East of the XX Army Corps, the fortifications at Ortelsburg had to be abandoned due to the Russian advance. In the fortifications of the Johannisburger Heide and up to the Spirdingsee, there were still Landsturm troops; they were instructed to retreat to Lötzen. There, the general command of the XX Army Corps, based on orders from Coblenz, had held back the 6th Landwehr Brigade, originally intended for transport, to secure the lake narrows against the west. — The enemy had reached Johannisburg with cavalry and probed from the east against the lake barriers. Here, intercepted Russian radio messages confirmed the approach of the Russian II Corps. Whether this corps would turn against the lake barriers or bypass the lake area to the north or south was not yet clear.

The retreat of the German eastern group had not been disturbed by the enemy in any way. The I Reserve Corps and the XVII Army Corps were located on and west of the main road Nordenburg—Insterburg, on their northern flank the completely exhausted 1st Cavalry Division, due to the efforts in border protection of the last battles. It had been reinforced the day before by the Jäger Battalion 2, previously used in border protection. "No rest day in three weeks; finally attack and thirty rides; too little water, no supplies, additional load consumed, horses exhausted, only half combat strength; transport necessary to gain a rest day," was the report of the only cavalry unit available to the army. But the situation did not allow the justified desire for rest to be fulfilled. At Nortitten, the main reserve Königsberg covered the loading of the I Army Corps, while other troops of the fortress occupied the Deime position, which was still under construction. In the extreme northern tip of East Prussia, Landsturm held a watch at Heilsberg and Mewe.

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The Situation in East Prussia on August 23.

The Russian Njemen Army under General v. Rennenkampf was still identified by aerial reconnaissance on the morning of August 22 with its main forces on the battlefield of the 20th. Only advance troops and patrol units had followed towards the Angerapp and Inster and had crossed the former at Darkehmen and Nemmersdorf.

Due to the preceding battles, the composition and strength of the Njemen Army had become partially known. It counted at least 3 corps, 1 rifle brigade, and 5½ cavalry divisions. Reinforcements were arriving behind them. It was primarily expected that the Russian Guard Corps, known to have departed for Wilna, was now assumed to be at Pillkallen, behind the northern flank of the army. East of the Inster, there was no enemy so far.

The intentions of the Russians became clear, if they could still be doubtful at all, from a Russian order that the German I Reserve Corps had captured at Gawaiten and now presented. According to this, the Russian 1st Army was to attack the enemy presumed to be behind the Angerapp, and the 2nd was to flank them. The waiting behavior of the Njemen Army did not correspond to this. It confirmed the peace view of the General Staff that the Russians were slow and cumbersome in their movements and did not understand how to quickly exploit a favorable operational situation. Thus, the hope grew that it might be possible to also lead the German eastern group against the Narew Army. And it had to be said with certainty that General v. Rennenkampf now, having found the Angerapp position unoccupied by his cavalry, had to see clearly. It could not be otherwise than that he would resume and advance westward as quickly as he could. An intercepted Russian radio message also indicated such an intention. It spoke of transitioning to attack and an attack order for the Russian IV Corps.

For the new commander-in-chief of the 8th Army and his chief of staff, the decision was clear from the start to exploit the separation of the Russian armies for a decisive blow against the Narew Army. This blow could only succeed as long as the Rennenkampf Army was still far enough separated from the Samsonow Army. Time was pressing, especially since several days — General Ludendorff estimated about three days — had to be accounted for the battle itself.

1) p. 98.  
2) It was an abridged version of the "Directive" of the Russian Army Group Command of the Northwestern Front from August 13 (p. 67).

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The First Measures of the New High Command.

General Ludendorff estimated about three days — had to be taken into account. Therefore, it was necessary to stop the Narew Army already near the border. With every step it gained ground northward, it approached the Njemen Army and restricted the freedom of movement of the German army between the two Russian ones. Thus, the troops of General v. Scholtz had to hold their position despite the enemy's superiority until the I Army Corps and reinforcements from the fortresses arrived; with these, everything had to be done to expedite their arrival for battle to the utmost. Therefore, the I Army Corps received orders to advance the unloaded troops immediately to the line Neumark—south of Löbau and to close up there. The advance should occur immediately after the unloading of the said troops.

If General Samsonow, as expected, attacked General v. Scholtz in the coming days, then the I Army Corps was intended to strike his west flank and perhaps also his rear. In this sense, General v. François was informed, who reported to the commander-in-chief while passing through Marienburg. It was determined that the I Army Corps could only engage in battle on August 26 at noon. The XX Army Corps was instructed to hold out accordingly with its forces, particularly to initially hold back the 3rd Reserve Division near Allenstein.

Since the Russian Narew Army, with 5 active corps and 4 cavalry divisions, was already superior to all German forces in East Prussia, the last man and the last gun had to be brought to battle from the German side. Whatever was still usable in the field from the garrison troops of the Vistula fortresses, especially the horse-drawn artillery of these fortresses, was to participate. For this, the border west of Soldau had to be stripped, despite the impending Russian cavalry raid there. The advancing fortress troops were to accompany the attack of the I Army Corps on the southern flank.

The question of how to further employ the Eastern Group was more difficult. A march directly west or even south, as had once been envisioned by Generaloberst v. Moltke for the entire 8th Army, was no longer conceivable given the current situation. However, they wanted to bring as strong parts as possible into battle against the Narew Army. How strong they would be depended on the march of the Njemen Army. This was to be fended off by weak forces.

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The Orders for August 24th.

In the south of the eastern front, the small fortress of Lötzen was to take over the blocking of the lake area; it itself was to be secured against an attack from the west by expanding positions on both sides of the Rhine. However, the 6th Landwehr Brigade could not be left at Lötzen for this purpose. The commander of the Boyen Fortress, Colonel Büße, had to manage with his own forces and the militia from the Johannisburg Heath. Thus, he had only 4½ battalions (more than half of which were militia), 1 squadron, and a number of older guns at his disposal, an extremely small force despite the natural strength of the positions; more could not be deployed for a secondary task.

In the north, the Pregel and Deime lines, as outposts of the Königsberg Fortress, restricted the advance of the Russian Njemen Army. These positions were still under construction. The main reserve of the fortress, designated for their occupation, initially still had to cover the loading of the I Army Corps; otherwise, it was available for its new task and was again subordinated to the governor of the fortress.

Between the lake area and the Pregel, a space of still 60 km remained free. Here, parts of the eastern group, especially the 1st Cavalry Division, probably had to remain to cover against the Russian Njemen Army. The XVII Army Corps was therefore to initially retreat behind the Alle on August 24th. From there, it could be redirected under the protection of a task depending on the situation, if possible against the right wing of the Narew Army. The I Reserve Corps was already deployed in this direction, and the 6th Landwehr Brigade was to move up to it. However, when the evening reports from the front indicated that the Njemen Army had again made only a very short march westward and had crossed the Darkehmen—Insterburg line (halfway between Gumbinnen—Insterburg) only with smaller cavalry detachments, the army command decided to give both corps of the eastern group a movement in a southern direction, towards Allenstein. The distance from the enemy, which was only a strong day's march, had to be extended by greater marching efforts, and a part of the XVII Army Corps was likely to be left behind at the Alle to conceal the turn to the southwest together with the 1st Cavalry Division and to hold back the advancing Russians. Accordingly, the I Reserve Corps received orders to gain as much ground as possible beyond Schippenbeil on August 24th, in order to advance beyond Seeburg on the 25th; the XVII Army Corps was given the continuation of the march from Friedland via Bartenstein on August 25th.

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The First Measures of the New High Command.

On August 25, the continuation of the march from Friedland via Bartenstein was anticipated. In the further course of the movements, the two corps had to strike the flank of the Narew Army.

These orders from General v. Hindenburg on the afternoon and evening of his arrival in Marienburg set almost all the forces available east of the Vistula, as far as they could be used in the open field, in motion for an attack on the Narew Army. By August 26, they were to be united "with the XX Army Corps for a comprehensive attack," as reported to the Supreme Army Command on the evening of the 23rd: 11 1/2 divisions of infantry were to advance for the decisive battle, 1 1/2 divisions (main reserve Königsberg with 2nd Landwehr Brigade) and the 1st Cavalry Division were to repel the Njemen Army.

And yet, the new High Command, even with the greatest boldness of the attack plan, did not neglect the necessary caution. At the same time, the question was considered of what should happen if the strike against the Narew Army failed. Even then, they wanted to try to hold their ground east of the Vistula; the river crossings were to be kept open for the intervention of forces expected later from the west. For this purpose, the General of Engineers was tasked with exploring a position along the general line Graudenz—Deutsch-Eylau—Elbing. Civilian workers were envisaged for the expansion.

The daily order, through which General v. Hindenburg announced to the troops the assumption of command, contained, true to the fundamental views of our army, only the simplest words: "We want to trust each other and jointly do our duty."

3. The Operations of the Russian Northwestern Front up to August 23.

(Map 1 and 4 and Sketch 5, p. 124.)

When the Russian 1st (Njemen) Army¹) recognized the German retreat early on August 21, it was initially assumed that the enemy would be encountered again at the latest in his fortified position behind the Angerapp.

¹) Continuation on p. 100.

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The Russian Njemen Army from August 21–23.

Angerapp encountered again. They had already received a sensitive blow from this enemy for the second time, who then disappeared the next morning. Caution seemed more appropriate than ever. Thus, General v. Rennenkampf wanted to let his exhausted, disorganized, and partially heavily thinned units rest, reorganize, and bring in reinforcements before attacking further. His foremost troops barely went beyond the battlefield on August 21. Even the strong cavalry of the northern flank only pushed weak parts up to Grünheide (20 km north of Insterburg), where they remained the following day. In an army order from August 22, it was still stated: "The enemy was repelled on the entire front on August 20. He retreated a few versts and is now digging in." Only during the course of August 22 did they realize that the Angerapp position had been vacated. General v. Rennenkampf now expected the Germans to retreat to the Vistula but suspected resistance from rearguards in a position assumed from peace reports behind the course of Deime–Alle–Onet and behind the lakes. He began the advance on August 23. Meanwhile, the army had been reinforced on the right flank by the 56th Reserve Division and the artillery brigade of the 73rd Reserve Division, which had been brought in from Wirballen. On the left flank, the army group command, apparently before it knew of the evacuation of the Angerapp position, had made the II Corps, previously belonging to the 2nd Army, available on August 22. The corps had been set to advance west over Arns and Johannisburg and now had to turn back to march on Angerburg.

Only by the evening of August 23 did the Russian army cavalry dare to advance with its main force in the north over the Inster, in the south it reached Angerburg, the beginnings of 7½ infantry divisions reached the line south of the Eichwald Förstels–Fischhaus–Darlehmen and south, the foremost parts of the II Corps up to about 20 km east of Lötzen. Behind these frontline troops, the other reserve divisions intended for the army were still far back: the 53rd and 54th at Schaullen, the 57th and 72nd only arrived by train at Wirballen. These four divisions could be brought to the army, while the 68th, 73rd, and 76th (the latter previously belonging to the 2nd Army) initially fell out as security garrisons from Riga, Kowno, and Grodno.

1) Radius-Gentowitsch in Cbornik, Issue 4, p. 82. — 2) 1 verst = about 1 km.  
3) The division itself remained as the garrison of Kowno.

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The First Measures of the New High Command.

In the 2nd (Narew) Army¹), the crossing of the border set for the infantry on August 19 was delayed due to the shift to the west. Only on the 20th did the VI and XIII Corps reach the border at Myschinje and Chorzele, while the XV was still 15 km northwest of Prasnyczh. From the XXIII Corps, the forward 2nd Infantry Division had only reached the area south of Sjechanow, the 3rd Guard Infantry Division was still held at Augustow for the security of Grodno, and the 1st Rifle Brigade was stationed as a security garrison in Nowogergiewsk. On the right flank was the 4th Cavalry Division, which was to establish a connection with the II Corps soon expected over Johannisburg and Arys, on the left at Malawa the 6th, and to the west the 15th Cavalry Division. Of the corps temporarily assigned to the army from the 9th Army, the I Corps had reached the area between Malawa and Sjechanow, the Guard Corps Nowogergiewsk and Warsaw. The advancing reserve divisions, lacking other garrison troops, were designated as security garrisons for the fortresses and were thus — perhaps also under the influence of the experiences from Liège — considered indispensable. Thus, these divisions were temporarily excluded from operations.

The advance of the Narew Army was to lead directly west of the lakes against the line Rastenburg—Seeburg to the north, into the rear of the enemy of the Njemen Army. In front of their own front, the German XX Army Corps was used, and it was suspected, after the advance of the XVII Army Corps on August 12/13 on Mlawa, that parts of this corps, especially since the fortress troops pushed into its place had the same regiment numbers as the active corps. The appearance of further forces from Thorn was expected. Moreover, the advance of the German Landwehr Corps, whose northern division reached Petrikau via Sjerads on August 20, had aroused anticipation of a German operation against Warsaw. Since this important place was declared a fortress, its extensive works were without protection and without garrison. The German advance would have led into the rear of the Narew Army and, above all, questioned the assembly of the 9th Army intended against Posen west of the Vistula. Under these circumstances, the two cavalry divisions previously used there seemed no longer sufficient to protect the assembly area. The Russian Supreme Army Command ordered the Guard Corps to halt.

¹) Connection to p. 68.

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The Russian Narew Army from August 19–22.

Hold the Guard Corps. In the following days, all

troops near and west of Warsaw were subordinated to it. Among them were two

infantry regiments from the I Corps, the 5th and the Caucasian

Cavalry Division already present, the Guard Cossack Brigade from

Petersburg and a Turkestan Cossack Brigade on the move,

as well as the garrisons for Warsaw, 59th, and 77th, and Novo-

georgiewsk, 79th Reserve Division. While the 2nd Army advanced to attack

northward, these 5 1/2 infantry divisions and

3 1/2 cavalry divisions were assigned a secondary task: the commanding

general of the Guard Corps, General Bespajrow, was to

cover between Warsaw and its Vistula crossings, clear the land up to the

line Plock—Lodz—Petrikau—Piliza course from the enemy and

prepare the later attack in the direction of Bromberg—Posen.

While the Guard Corps was thus completely excluded from the operations of General

Samsonow, its authority over the (weakened by two regiments) I Corps was simultaneously restricted,

so that the corps could only be advanced to the area of Soldau.

The main task of this corps was to cover the attack movement of the

2nd Army against Thorn; only if there was no danger from this side

should it be drawn into battle.

After these assignments and restrictions, the

forces with which General Samsonow could appear on the battlefield in the coming days

had melted down against the first approach. However, they were considered sufficient, in cooperation

with the Njemen Army, to prepare the downfall of the German forces, which had until then been assumed to be behind the lakes,

especially since these were now considered defeated after the battles of Stallupönen and Gumbinnen.

This view, that the 1st and 2nd Armies should suffice for the battle

in East Prussia, had some justification.

The withdrawal of the very strong security forces for western

Poland was, however, a voluntary renunciation of a surplus of forces

for the decision initially intended in East Prussia.

The Narew Army had advanced on August 21 and 22 in small marches,

with four corps in the front line and a front width of almost

80 km, not as ordered not west of the

lakes to the north, but in an almost northwesterly direction. This

direction seemed operationally particularly effective, also exerting attraction beyond the railway

to Allenstein. The high command was

in Ostrolenka. The Supreme Army Command and Army Group Command,

which had been in Bjelostok since August 19, urged haste. But the troops were already exhausted and inadequately supplied¹).

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The Advance of the Narew Army on August 23.

The troops were already exhausted and insufficiently supplied¹). Movements and supplies, command and communication were particularly difficult in the road-poor border area, especially on the right flank. In the army's advance area, only a single road led east of Chorzele, at Myszyniez, across the border, the only railway lay on the extreme left flank, and here also ran the only telegraph lines into Germany. This had to be particularly noticeable for the communication of the army high command with the general commands and among themselves given the wide front.

For August 23, General Samsonow had only ordered the center of his army to continue the march: the VI Corps and the 4th Cavalry Division were to remain, for unknown reasons, at Ortelsburg, the I Corps at Soldau, the 6th and 15th Cavalry Divisions to further reconnoiter on the western flank and interrupt the Allenstein—Deutsch-Eylau railway. Between the stationary flank corps, the XIII Corps, still a day's march back, was to advance against the front Jedwabno—Omulefskofen, the XV on Lufsken—Seelesen, the 2nd Infantry Division from the XXIII Corps to Roslau. Behind it, its other, the 3rd Guard Infantry Division, was to reach Mlawa and Rjechanow by rail. The 1st Rifle Brigade was still in Nowo-Georgiewsk.

The advance led to a clash with the enemy at the XV Corps on August 23. The commanding general, General Martos, had his corps only in the afternoon of that day advance from the line Grünfließ—Neidenburg—Pilgramsorf in four columns of brigade strength. On the right, the 8th Infantry Division was to advance over Orlau and Lahna, reaching Bolleinen and Bujaken, on the left, the 6th Infantry Division had Frankenau and Stottau as its target.

4. The Battle of the XX Army Corps at Lahna and Orlau on the Evening of August 23.

(Sketch 5, p. 124.)

The troops of General v. Scholtz, after eight days of extremely strenuous marches back and forth along the border, had been ready since August 22 in anticipation of the Russian advance for defense: on the western flank, south of Gilgenburg, the fortress troops of Major General v. Unger (10 battalions, 3 squadrons, 9 batteries from Thorn, Kulm, Graudenz, and Marienburg), — in the center the 41st Infantry Division along with half of the 70th Landwehr Brigade up to the Kowmattken Lake, — east of this lake over Frantenau (inclusive) and Lahna up to the source area of the Alle near Orlau the other half of the 70th Landwehr Brigade and the 37th Infantry Division.

¹) Sichowitsch in Sbornik, Issue 3, p. 114 ff.

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The First Measures of the New High Command.

Major General v. Unger (10 battalions, 3 squadrons, 9 batteries from Thorn, Kulm, Graudenz, and Marienburg), — in the middle the 41st Infantry Division along with half of the 70th Landwehr Brigade up to the Kowmattken Lake, — east of this lake over Frantenau (inclusive) and Lahna to the source area of the Alle near Orlau the other half of the 70th Landwehr Brigade and the 37th Infantry Division. The division only moved into this position on the morning of August 23, when reports from the enemy revealed their advance. Below Orlau, the Alle crossings up to Lansker Lake were secured by individual companies. 36 km north of Orlau, the 3rd Reserve Division arrived at Allenstein. — The extensive position of the reinforced XX Army Corps was high in its western half, offering a wide view into the open terrain and was protected by the Welle course and forward lowlands. In the east, however, the natural strength of the position was weaker. From Lahna, it ran behind the partially swampy Alle ground. Before this section, the villages of Lahna and Orlau were weakly occupied. Large lakes offered protection on the eastern flank, but the mighty forests east of the Neidenburg—Allenstein line remained a constant danger here.

The XX Army Corps was generally well informed about the enemy: In front of the western flank, he seemed to hold back, although he was strong here. He had only slightly advanced beyond Soldau. Near Neidenburg and eastward, however, the Russians seemed to be advancing closer during the course of August 23, especially by exploiting the large forests. General v. Scholtz had therefore sent all available forces to assist the 37th Infantry Division and instructed the 3rd Reserve Division to be ready for an advance east of Lansker Lake to the south on August 24.

In the afternoon hours, the Russian attack developed against the German positions east of Kowmattken Lake. At Frantenau, the Russians were repelled. At Lahna and Orlau, the situation remained unclear for a long time. After intense fighting, it seemed not to be going well there in the evening. Upon receiving the news that the enemy had advanced to the heights north of the Alle at Orlau, General v. Scholtz intended to retake them the next morning. The 3rd Reserve Division was to simultaneously advance over the ridges to the left corps flank. On the heights already captured by this division, it was possible to support the 37th Infantry Division, which had marched into the enemy's flank, as the evening brought the directive of the army high command, which agreed on "conserving forces and temporarily holding back the 3rd Reserve Division at Allenstein."

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The First Measures of the New High Command.

The lake again, while he remained inactive further west. —

When cannon thunder was heard again from 3:30 in the morning at the General Command,

General v. Scholtz began to doubt whether the withdrawal

had succeeded. However, he now had the 3rd Reserve Division advance on his own responsibility

towards Hohenstein to have it ready for an attack. Meanwhile, the 37th Infantry Division

could be withdrawn from the enemy undisturbed. The Russians only encountered

parts of the 75th Infantry Brigade at Frankenau, which could escape them

under the protection of their artillery. By 8 a.m.,

the withdrawing German security forces were in front. He also could no longer

endanger the withdrawal of the 37th Infantry Division, but

the threatening encirclement became increasingly noticeable. By 10 a.m., it was

known that a Russian regiment was advancing against Persing, an infantry

brigade against Kurken.

West of the Kownaten Lake, the enemy also advanced late on the morning of August 24.

Strong Russian cavalry, which wanted to ride north over Usbau around 9 a.m., was

dispersed by German artillery fire. Flyers reported about a cavalry division

marching on Usdau, another equally strong column marching

on Groß-Schläfken. An attack did not yet seem imminent here.

Meanwhile, the 37th Infantry Division continued its movements.

Large parts marched due to a misunderstanding

beyond the position intended by the General Command and

reached close to Hohenstein. Thus, the left wing of the

division was still not firmly established on the afternoon of August 24. On the other

hand, the enemy had barely advanced beyond the previous German position.

On the same day, intercepted Russian radio

messages confirmed the serious danger that had threatened the 37th Infantry Division.

They revealed that the entire Russian XIII Corps on August 24

had already wanted to reach the area behind the 37th Infantry Division by 9 a.m.

from Persing. Caught by the Russian XV Corps in

the south, by the XIII from the east, the German division

would have been in a dire situation in its old position early on August 24.

Thanks to timely evasion, it was able to escape

the threatening encirclement with tolerable own losses, in total about 1500 men,

after having given the enemy a strong lesson: The Russian 1st Brigade of the 8th Infantry Division had left 100 prisoners and 1 flag in the hands of the Vorcfschen Jäger at Orlau and had retreated five kilometers to Grünfließ during the night; we do not know their bloody losses.

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August 24th. — Results of the Battle at Lahna and Orlau.

The 8th Infantry Division had left 100 prisoners and

1 flag¹) in the hands of the Vorcfschen Jäger at Orlau and had retreated

five kilometers to Grünfließ during the night; we do not know their bloody losses.

The 2nd Brigade of the 6th Infantry Division had left 2900 men dead and wounded at

Frantenau. The Russians estimated their total losses at 4000 men²). — Thus, the

battle of Lahna and Orlau represents a German success.

The troops of the XX Army Corps, which here for the first time seriously clashed

with the enemy, proved themselves against double superiority.

¹) Flag of the regiment v. Diebitsch No. 29, in view of which on December 30,  
1812, the treaty of Tauroggen was concluded between the Prussian General v. Yorck and the Russian General v. Diebitsch.  
²) Knox p. 64. — Sischwitsch in Sbornik (Issue 3, p. 122) gives, probably too low,  
only 2500 men in total.  
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Second Chapter.

The Deployment for Battle.

I. In Anticipation of the Russian Attack.

On August 24, the High Command of the German 8th Army was moved from Marienburg behind the forming attack wing of the army to Riesenburg. The commander-in-chief arrived around noon with his close staff for a meeting at the headquarters of the XX Army Corps in Tannenberg.

General v. Scholtz and his chief of staff, Colonel Hell, did not yet have a clear picture of the events at the 37th Infantry Division, as is known today from the enemy's perspective. At the headquarters, as well as within the division itself, the predominant impression was of the difficult night retreat from an overwhelming enemy, and the situation was seen as serious. Although there was apparently no immediate threat to the eastern flank of the corps, according to the available reports, an encirclement by the enemy over Schwetzkowo towards Hohenstein was expected for August 25. This prospect led General v. Scholtz to decide to further refuse the left wing of the corps by withdrawing the position of the 41st and 37th Infantry Divisions to the Gilgenburg—Mühlen line. At the same time, he wanted to bring the 3rd Reserve Division to the left wing at Königlich Lichteinen. Then the Russians would have to extend their attack further and turn their backs on the advancing German eastern group. However, their intervention was by no means certain and was expected only after several days. Everything depended on the XX Army Corps holding out alone against the superior force for some time; it was, as General Ludendorff expressed it, the "unburned rock." Thus, General v. Hindenburg decided that the 3rd Reserve Division should not be brought so close yet, but rather remain more detached, north of Hohenstein and Soldau, and only align with General v. Scholtz's intentions. He expected that the XX Army Corps, in the now chosen position, could hold out until the intervention of the I Army Corps on August 26.

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The Situation of the German Western Group on August 24.

until the intervention of the I Army Corps on August 26. At the request

of the XX Army Corps, the foremost regiment of the I Army Corps

(Grenadier Regiment 1) that had arrived in Löbau was already made

available to him.

At the army headquarters in Riesenburg, the following picture of the

situation was obtained by the evening of August 24: The 5th Landwehr

Brigade had advanced from Strasburg to halfway to Lautenburg.

In its southern flank, enemy cavalry was reported at several points near

Rypin and south to the Vistula, partly moving north, and strong Russian

cavalry had also advanced directly in front of the brigade's front over

Gronau. The Landwehr was expected to deal with it during further

marching. Therefore, one could not place too much hope on the

intervention of the Landwehr Brigade in the expected battle.

In the transport of the I Army Corps, another delay had occurred.

The early withdrawal of the Königsberg main reserve, tasked with

covering the loadings, had necessitated multiple relocations of the

loadings. So far, apart from the regiment to be handed over to the

XX Army Corps, only one infantry regiment and one battery of each

division had been unloaded and advanced with the planned parts to

Neumark and Löbau. The troops also arrived in a tactically undesirable

order due to the loading from the retreat and the necessary relocation

of the loading points; the cavalry and the bulk of the artillery only

arrived at the end. Under these circumstances, the use of the closed

army corps could not be expected before noon on August 26. Until then,

the troops of General v. Scholz had to rely on themselves.

In front of their front, since the retreat of the 37th Infantry Division

and the fire attack on Russian cavalry at Usdau, there had been no more

clashes. However, the enemy seemed to be so closely assembled

everywhere that an attack against the entire front of the XX Army Corps

had to be expected on August 25, perhaps early in the morning at

Silgenburg, and in the afternoon at Mühlen and Hohenstein.

The reports available indicated that behind the line

Geeben (west of Usdau)—Kornanten Lake—southern end of the Great

Maransen Lake, 3½ Russian corps were ready. The Russian I Corps

as a special combat group at Usdau and Soldau, spatially separated from this group, the 2nd Infantry Division of the XXIII Corps west of Neidenburg (the other, the 3rd Guard Infantry Division, arriving at Mlawa), north of Neidenburg the XV, at Kurten the XIII Corps.

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The Orders for August 25.

spatially separated the 2nd Infantry Division from the XXIII Corps west of Neidenburg (the other, the 3rd Guard Infantry Division, arriving at Mlawa), north of Neidenburg the XV, at Kurten the XIII Corps. As long as the German I Army Corps and the 5th Landwehr Brigade had not arrived, 4½ German divisions, of which only 2 were active divisions and 1 reserve division, would have to withstand the assault of 7 active Russian infantry divisions. Considering the superiority of the Russian infantry divisions over the German reserve and Landwehr units in infantry, machine guns, and artillery, a battle against double superiority was expected. The concerns of the XX Army Corps, whether it could withstand such superiority, were therefore not unfounded. However, another retreat was impossible; there was then no room for a multi-day decisive battle. The Russian Njemen Army was meanwhile approaching, the union of both Russian armies could no longer be prevented. The decision that General Ludendorff gave to the Chief of Staff of the XX Army Corps in the evening by telephone was therefore: "The corps must hold its position to the last man"¹). The requests of the corps for rapid support by the I Army Corps should, as far as possible, be met.

The 5th Landwehr Brigade was subordinated to General v. François and was to reach Lautenburg by 10 a.m. on August 25. The unloaded parts of the I Army Corps were to arrive at the same time northeast of there at Wompierst and Rybno, to flank the expected Russian attack against General v. Scholz. For the morning of August 25, the commander-in-chief announced a meeting with General v. François.

While the beginning of the battle was expected in the western group, the situation had also escalated in the east by the evening of August 24. The 1st Cavalry Division screened north of Gerdauen the departure of the XVII Army Corps, the main reserve Königsberg still covered the loadings of the I Army Corps east of Wehlau. Meanwhile, the I Reserve Corps and the XVII Army Corps had reached the area southeast of Bartenstein and the Alle near Friedland-Allenburg marching west. From Lötzen, the 6th Landwehr Brigade had reached Rastenburg.

Against the German eastern group positioned at Allenstein seemed to now turn the part of the Russian Narew Army reported at Ortelsburg — as far as was known, the Russian VI Corps with the 4th Cavalry Division — from the south.

¹) Stephani, p. 16.

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The Deployment for Battle.

but now the part of the Russian Narew Army reported at Ortelsburg — as far as was known, the Russian VI Corps with the 4th Cavalry Division — was turning from the south. Two columns had been observed advancing on Bischofsburg on August 24, this town itself and Sensburg were already occupied by Russian cavalry. The Russian VI Corps thus separated from its army, it seemed to want to reach out to the Njemen Army immediately west of the lakes. This army had been observed between 9 and 10 a.m. with the beginnings of its main body from Darkehmen and advancing northwards, but by noon it seemed to be standing firm again just west of this line, marching east of the lakes on Angerburg.

Thus, there was the possibility of first dealing with the Russian VI Corps in the east. General v. Hindenburg was immediately determined to exploit it. The corps of the German eastern group had to be sharply turned south for this purpose. But what would become of them if racing and fighting continued briskly — and nothing could prevent that — or if the German western group failed to achieve success in the coming days? Such thoughts had to be set aside in favor of the unyielding will to victory. — Thus, the I Reserve Corps was ordered to set out at the earliest hour on August 25 and attack the enemy over Seeburg wherever it found him. However, it was to cover its back as much as possible to the west, towards Guttstadt. The 6th Landwehr Brigade was to move up to the corps. — The cooperation of the XVII Army Corps was also counted on for the battle, at least of its southern division. The other, northern one, was very far away anyway, and might also be used as a rear guard against the Russian Njemen Army. Extreme marching performances were required from the XVII Army Corps. On August 25, one division was to reach Bischofstein (50 km march), the other, deployed northeast of it, Groß-Schwansfeld (40 km march). — The 1st Cavalry Division, which had again¹) requested a rest day, was to cover the march of the two corps southwards at Gedauen.

At the headquarters of the German 8th Army, on the evening of August 24, the dangers and responsibilities assumed with the orders for both the western and eastern groups of the army were fully recognized. But no other way to victory was apparent.

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August 24 and 25.

Victories. Regarding the report that General Ludendorff personally delivered to the Supreme Army Command via telephone in the evening about the situation and intentions, it was recorded there, among other things, that the position of the XX Army Corps must be held, "since retreat has the same effect as defeat," and in conclusion: "The mood is determined, although a worse outcome is not excluded."

2. The Attack Order to the German Western Group for August 26.

(Map 5 and Sketch 6, p. 132.)

In the early morning of August 25, a communication from the Supreme Army Command arrived at the Army High Command, stating that a Landwehr Division under Lieutenant General Baron von der Goltz, which had previously been stationed in border protection in Northern Schleswig, was made available to the 8th Army. It would not arrive at the theater of war before August 27. Given the unclear situation on the right flank of the army, the High Command temporarily designated Strasburg and Neumarkt as railway destinations for the division.

At the front, the night from August 24 to 25 passed quietly, except for a reconnaissance advance by the Russian Infantry Regiment 93 (24th Infantry Division, I Corps) southwards to Gilgenburg, and the morning hours also brought no signs of the expected Russian attack. At the German Army High Command, there was a sense of relief, as the situation improved hour by hour with the arrival of General von Francois's troops.

The commander of the 8th Army was determined, if the enemy allowed him the time, to launch his own attack early on August 26. He wanted to stick to this timing for the attack, even if the I Army Corps might not have gathered all the fighting troops by then. Waiting longer was prohibited by the conditions in front of General von Scholtz's front, particularly the looming threat from the Russian Njemen Army in the rear. A multi-day battle had to be fought in the narrow space between two hostile armies. One could not start early enough.

The decision had to be sought against the Russian western wing near Usdau. If this wing was thrown, then the way to Neidenburg, into the flank and rear of the Russian corps extending far north against the German XX Army Corps, was open.

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August 25th. — The Intercepted Russian Radio Messages.

which provided information about the movements of the Narew Army. Thus, the German commander-in-chief learned the next intentions of both enemy armies just in the decisive hours for decisions and orders for battle. This encounter is all the more peculiar as these two Russian radio messages intercepted on the morning of August 25th are the only longer and at the same time important ones that, given undeciphered, could be read by the German receiving stations throughout the entire operational section from the beginning of the war until mid-September.

The radio message, through which General Samsonov gave an urgent order to the Russian XIII Corps on August 25th at 6 a.m., came to the knowledge of the German commander-in-chief in the following form, somewhat distorted by poor translation: "After the battle at the front of the XV Corps, the opposing corps retreated on August 24th) in the direction of Osterode. Near Gilgenburg after driving out the Landwehr brigade ........ The army3) continues to pursue the enemy, who is retreating towards Königsberg—Rastenburg. — The 2nd Army advances: line Allenstein—Osterode on August 25th, the main force of the corps occupies: XIII Corps line Simmenvorf—Kurken, XV Corps Nadrau—Paulsgut, XXIII Corps Mühlfalten—Gr.-Gardienen. — Separation strip for the advance of the corps: between XIII and XV line Mühlfalten—Schwedrich, between XV and XXIII line Neidenburg—Mittigwalde. The I Corps is to remain in the 5th district, securing the left flank of the army ........ To move the corps4) into the area Bischofsburg—Rothfließ, to secure the right wing. From the Rastenburg side, the 4th Cavalry Division, which is subordinate to the VI Corps, is to remain in Gensburg, reconnoitering the line Rastenburg—Bartenstein and Seeburg—Heilsberg. 6th and 15th Cavalry Division ....... Staff Ostrolenka."

This radio message strengthened the hope that on this day, August 25th, no further Russian attack was to be expected. However, the final goal for the day was determined to be the line Osterode—Allenstein, but specific marching targets were ordered for the "main force of the corps," which were still far from the mentioned line. The required marching performances barely exceeded 10 km, so that a further march in the afternoon — similar to August 23rd towards Lahna and Orlau — remained entirely possible.

1) Deciphering encrypted Russian radio messages was only successful a month later.  
2) The Russian date is given according to German reckoning.  
3) Apparently meant the Russian 1st Army.  
4) Apparently meant the VI Corps.

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Marching onward in the afternoon — similar to August 23 against Lahna and Orlau — remained entirely possible. But even then, it was only towards evening that clashes occurred. — The enemy's distribution of forces, as revealed by the radio message, corresponded in all essential points to what was already known or assumed at the Army High Command. Thus, the more precise knowledge of the enemy, obtained through the intercepted radio message, could no longer influence the decisions made. However, it was welcome as confirmation of the previous own assessment. As an indication that the measures taken were on the right track, it strengthened the Army High Command's confidence in victory.

In the morning at 8 o'clock, the Commander-in-Chief, with his staff, arrived at the command post of General v. Francois near Montow, 10 km south of Löbau. General v. Francois had already reported to the High Command early in the morning how few of his troops had arrived and requested permission to initially hold them behind the large forests at Kielpin and Hartowitz, 6 km back from the line ordered by the Army High Command. General v. Hindenburg had agreed to this not very significant change. He and his Chief of Staff knew General v. Francois from earlier1). The difficulties that had arisen during the Battle of Gumbinnen due to the General's behavior were still fresh in the memory of the High Command's staff. It was expected that General v. Francois would continue to try to assert his own views. In contrast, the new Commander-in-Chief was determined to enforce what he and his Chief of Staff had recognized as correct. During the discussion at the command post, General Ludendorff outlined the intentions of the Commander-in-Chief. General v. Francois expressed concerns about the early timing of the direction of his army corps' attack. After all, so far only 10 battalions of infantry (2½ of which were assigned to the XX Army Corps) had been unloaded, but no squadrons and only two batteries! And trains did not arrive regularly. Even if they were driven forward as far as possible from the morning of that day to Montow itself, it was already apparent, according to General v. François, that the sixth parts of the army corps could by no means be fully assembled for the attack early on August 26.

1) General v. Francois had been Chief of Staff of the IV Army Corps in Magdeburg under General v. Hindenburg and was also there besides the 1st General Staff leadership, when the then Captain Ludendorff was 2nd General Staff leadership.

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August 25th. — The Discussion with General v. François.

According to General v. François, it could already be foreseen that the sixth parts of the army corps would by no means be fully assembled for the attack on August 26th early. In particular, cavalry, artillery, and the also indispensable ammunition columns, even the light ones, would be missing. General v. François therefore believed he could not take responsibility for leading his army corps against the enemy in such an unfinished state, especially as the troops were exhausted by the previous heavy battles, the arduous retreat, and the strenuous train journey. General v. François did not want to lead the attack frontally on Usdau, but rather sweeping south, perhaps over Groß-Lauereie against the enemy's flank. With the attack direction proposed by General Ludendorff, as he emphasized, parts of the enemy would always remain in their own right flank. They would hinder the advance on Neidenburg.

Given the overall situation, the army high command considered it impossible to comply with these noteworthy objections of the commanding general. It was of the opinion that consideration for the XX. Army Corps and the threat from the Niemen Army did not allow the slightest delay. It had to be attacked early on August 26th, and everything should be done to make the I. Army Corps as strong as possible by then. An attempt should be made to accelerate the arrival of the transports, the XX. Army Corps was to support the attack with a detachment from the north on Usdau and later received instructions to assist the I. Army Corps by providing cavalry and light ammunition columns. But even the maneuver intended by General v. François over Groß-Lauereie was rejected by the high command: For this, the I. Army Corps would have had to move south on August 26th, and its attack could not have begun before August 27th. Meanwhile, the XX. Army Corps would have stood alone against the overwhelming enemy without any prospect of support. At the same time, the army's front extension would have become so large that success could also be questioned. Time and space seemed to forbid following General v. François's plan. The commander-in-chief and his chief of staff agreed that the attack should remain on Usdau early on August 26th. General v. Hindenburg took full responsibility for this decision for the early deployment of the I. Army Corps as well as for its attack direction.

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The Deployment for Battle.

To inform the XX Army Corps of the intentions for the following day, Quartermaster General Major Grünert was sent to General v. Scholtz. Since the expected enemy attack had not yet occurred, General v. Scholtz viewed the situation with confidence. He and his chief of staff were now primarily concerned with how they could defend against the ever-expanding encirclement of their left flank to the north for several days. Since the fortress troops standing west of the Great Damerau Lake were dispensable with the advance of the I Army Corps there, and would likely have to be withdrawn from the front in the further course, General v. Scholtz wanted to replace them with the regiment provided to him from the I Army Corps and use it to extend his northern flank behind the Drewenz section north of Mühlen. The 3rd Reserve Division could then be deployed as a disruptive force in the area of Reichenau. The Army High Command agreed to these shifts within the XX Army Corps, although the main focus was thereby shifted more to its left flank.

August 25 passed without a battle. However, this ended the anxious time of dependency on the opponent's actions.

The reports received by the German High Command by evening further supplemented the picture of the situation: South of the Strasburg—Lautenburg line, reconnaissance had identified only individual Russian cavalry detachments, spatially widely dispersed, some of them moving northeast. It might have been a cavalry division in total. From here, no serious threat seemed to be imminent. The previous security of the army flank by two Landwehr battalions near Strasburg had to suffice for the time being. The use of the Landwehr Division Goltz could still be reserved.

Through the advance of the 5th Landwehr Brigade (6 battalions, 1 squadron, 5 batteries under Lieutenant General v. Müllmann) and the I Army Corps, strong Russian cavalry had been pushed back from Lautenburg and northward into the area northwest of Soldau. In doing so, the Landwehr attacked and drove out parts of the Russian 15th Cavalry Division, which held Lautenburg. This initial success had to contribute to strengthening the confidence of the militia. The brigade was now stationed at Lautenburg.

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The Situation of the Western Group on the Evening of August 25.

The I Army Corps had begun with the 2nd Infantry Division at Kielpin, with the 1st at Rybno on the march road to rest. The railway now brought the trains with foot troops up to Rybno, despite the threat from the numerous Russian cavalry, up to 6 km from the Russian advance troops. However, the Army Corps was still missing three battalions of infantry, almost the entire cavalry (7 squadrons out of 8), more than half of the field artillery (13 batteries out of 24), the entire heavy artillery (4 batteries), and almost all ammunition columns. Such gaps could not be fully compensated by the trains rolling in at night. For the attack on the morning of August 26, the Army Corps still had to lack essential parts. Since every hour brought more parts to the battlefield, and it was initially only about the capture of enemy positions, this had to be accepted. The attack of the I Army Corps had to begin with overcoming the Welle section. Southeast of Tautschken, the enemy stood in the hilly terrain rising towards Seeben, directly opposite. Here, too, were the only bridges between Werry and Rumian Lake over the Welle, which could otherwise be forded in the dry August of 1914. The forest terrain on the western Welle bank excluded strong artillery use by the attacker. The advance had to be in sections and then over open field against Seeben, therefore it had to be difficult in daylight, even if, as the Army High Command and General Command unanimously assumed, there was only a weakly fortified position. Therefore, the I Army Corps had to take possession of the area of Seeben by a coup de main at dawn; only then could the attack be continued against the Russian main position recognized 6 km east of Seeben on the heights of Usdau.

At the XX Army Corps, the intended shifts proceeded without disturbance, but some were only completed late at night. The Grenadier Regiment 1 from the I Army Corps moved into the right wing section between Rumian Lake and Great Damerau Lake after strenuous marching back and forth. South of this lake stood the 41st Infantry Division (12 battalions, 2 squadrons, 13 batteries) up to west of Logdau, followed by the 37th Infantry Division (reinforced by parts of the fortress troops to 18 battalions, 6 squadrons, 18 batteries), its left wing secured the main road east of Mühlen. North of Mühlen stood the 70th Landwehr Brigade and fortress troops of General v. Unger (together 11 battalions, 7 squadrons, but only 4 batteries) ready to form the Drewenz section.

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The Deployment for Battle.

At Reichenau, behind the left flank, the 3rd Reserve Division had arrived as a reserve troop of the General Command. In front of the positions stood the cavalry of the fortress troops east of Mühlen, those of the 3rd Reserve Division at Wittigwalde, a bicycle unit at Grieslienen (northeast of Hohenstein).

On the enemy side, various movements back and forth were observed in front of the right corps wing during the day, which could perhaps be interpreted as a relief of outposts. At the same time, according to the information available at the XX Army Corps, a strong enemy group seemed to be forming around Usdau and, spatially separated from it, another north of Neidenburg. The Russian XV Corps was supposed to have reached Waplitz only at 7:30 in the afternoon. Movements were observed at the Russian XIII Corps on both sides of Lake Lansker to the north, behind Bimaws near Kursen and eastward. It seemed as if this Russian corps wanted to move further north. This offered the prospect of defeating the Russian XXIII and XV Corps west of the lakes on August 26, before the XIII arrived.

At the headquarters of the German 8th Army, the upcoming events were viewed with full confidence on the evening of August 25: from the early morning of August 26, the German attack was to dictate terms to the Russians. An air report about numerous Russian military trains, which rolled in close succession to the border stations Mlawa and Illowo in the evening, did indeed recall the concerns of General v. Francois that a strong enemy would be maintained on the right flank during the attack on Usdau, but they could no longer change the decision once made. The battle had to be dared even so. The arrival of Russian reinforcements was rather another reason not to postpone the German attack under any circumstances.

At 8:30 in the evening, General v. Hindenburg in Riesenburg gave the attack order for August 26. It read in its essential parts: "I Army Corps takes possession of the heights of Seeben with its left wing by 4:00 in the morning and attacks by 10:00 at the latest from Seeben and south, deeply echeloned to the right in the general direction of Usdau, Detachment Mühlmann remains subordinate. — Reinforced XX Army Corps holds its positions and supports the advance of the I Army Corps by attacking with its right wing in the direction of Groß-Grieben—Jankowitz. It remains otherwise ready to transition to the offensive across the entire front with a strong right wing. — The 3rd Reserve Division is to be moved to the area of Hohenstein in a timely manner beforehand."

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The Attack Order to the Western Group for August 26.

I. Army Corps by attacking its right wing towards Groß-

Grieben—Jankowitz. It is otherwise ready to transition to an attack along the entire

front with a strong right wing. — The

3rd Reserve Division is to be moved back to the area of Hohen-

stein in time.“

3. The Operations of the Russian Northwestern Front up to

August 26.

(Map 5 and Sketch 6, p. 132, and 7, p. 150.)

The commander-in-chief of the Russian Northwestern Front1), General

Schilinski, had not approved the turning of the Narew Army in a northwestern

direction until now and even on August 23 rejected the proposal of

General Samsonov to lead the army against Allenstein—Osterode instead of

Rastenburg—Seeburg2). On this day, however, he finally received the report that the Angerapp position

had been abandoned by the Germans. The simultaneous flight of the East Prussian

population gave the impression that a complete evacuation

of East Prussia was underway3). He was therefore no longer in doubt

that the German army was now in full retreat to the Vistula,

strong parts also seemed to be retreating to Königsberg. He now

ordered the Narew Army to attempt to shift the path to the Vistula, pressed by the Russian

Njemen Army. The

Narew Army apparently had only weak forces ahead of it. It was to

advance energetically against the Sensburg—Allenstein line and reach it

by August 25 at the latest. On its left flank, the army was to protect itself by echeloning and leave the I Corps at Soldau.

Whether the Njemen Army received a corresponding order to pursue

aggressively is not known. If both armies tackled the tasks assigned to them correctly,

the German Eastern Group could still find itself in a difficult situation.

The Njemen Army4) advanced — after two days of rest — in the four

days from August 23 to 26 about 80 km westward. It found the

Alle—Omnet line, where it had expected resistance again, free and

reached without a fight, with 9½ infantry divisions in the front line,

in the north before the Deime position, south of it to Allenburg, Gerdauen and Orengfurth.

1) Connection to p. 125. — 2) Sitschowitsch in Gbornie, Issue 3, p. 117. — 3) Danilow,  
p. 291. — 4) Connection to p. 121.

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The Deployment for Battle.

build and Orengfurth. The Germans had marched much faster. General of Cavalry v. Rennenkampf had refrained from pursuing them with uniformly deployed cavalry masses. By August 26, almost a third of his overwhelming army cavalry was trapped on the right flank between Haff and Pregel; otherwise, it had reached Friedland, the area southwest of Gerdauen, Bahnhof Korschen, and Rößel, distributed in front of the front.

The commander-in-chief of the Narew Army, General Samsnow, received the order from the army group to advance energetically against the line Gensburg—Allenstein on August 23 in East Prussia. At that time, he had no knowledge of the battle of his XV Corps at Orlau, Lahna, and Frantenau. He wanted to continue his advance in the same width as before against the line Sorquitten (west of Gensburg)—Allenstein—Hohenstein. On the right flank, the 4th Cavalry Division was to move to Gensburg, on the left the 6th and 15th Cavalry Divisions under unified command to Locken (15 km northeast of Osterode), to then proceed further against the line Heilsberg—Zinten, to block the retreat of the "defeated" enemy by the Njemen Army.

This great ride of the two cavalry divisions of the left flank came to nothing. They did not get beyond the area of Usbau and Lautenburg on August 24. The 6th had to turn back north of Usbau under German artillery fire. In the vicinity of this place, the Russian I Corps set up for defense. — The corps in the center also barely advanced. From the XXIII Corps, the 2nd Infantry Division made only a very short march, the 3rd Guard Infantry Division had not yet arrived. The XV Corps, after the preceding, particularly for the 6th Infantry Division very costly battle, no longer had the strength to go beyond Frantenau—Orlau, the XIII moved in the morning hours to support the XV to Orlau and Persing to the west and then, peculiarly, marched back the same 15 km long way to its starting points Omulefsport and Jedwabno in the afternoon. On the right army wing, VI Corps and 4th Cavalry Division had reached their objectives at Gensburg and southwest of it.

1) A brigade of the division had already suffered heavy losses earlier, on August 5, at Soldau.  
2) See p. 129.

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The Russian Narew Army on August 23 and 24.

On the same day, August 24, the High Command of the Army Group, which had already pointed out to the Narew Army its excessive front width and dispersion of forces, once again seriously urged them to keep the corps closer together to enable mutual support in battle. General Samsonow, who after the battle of the 23rd/24th had the impression that the German XX Corps had moved northwest towards Osterode, and also, considering the withdrawal of the Germans from the Angerapp, wanted to hold more against the Vistula, decided to concentrate all forces at his disposal to the west and to lead the army against Allenstein—Osterode (instead of as ordered against Sensburg—Allenstein). For this, the VI Corps was to advance towards Allenstein. The High Command of the Army Group now approved the change in the direction of advance, but now ordered that a corps with cavalry should continue to cover at Sensburg against the lake narrows of Lötzen; finally, it also agreed with Samsonow's counterproposal to leave the VI Corps at Bischofsburg. This kept it closer to the rest of the army. However, this retention of the VI Corps and the 4th Cavalry Division meant a new weakening of the attack army. This can probably only be explained by the fact that the Army Group suspected even stronger German forces at Lötzen.

Thus, General Samsonow now had only three corps of his army at his disposal. They were to make only a small march northwards on August 25, after the previous exertions and after the battles of the XV Corps, and — as was also known to the German High Command from the intercepted radio message — reach the line Gimmendorf—Kurten—Paulsgut—Gr.-Gavdien. However, due to a misunderstanding, the XV Corps did not carry out this short march either, but remained standing, as did the 2nd Infantry Division (from the XXIII Corps) now subordinated to it. Increasingly, the exhaustion of the troops and supply difficulties became noticeable. The XIII Corps had covered 250 km in 12 days from August 13 to 24, mostly on sandy roads, in the August heat, the XV Corps 215 km in 10 days from August 14 to 23 and then fought. The 5th Guards Infantry Division from the XXIII Corps was still behind. Under these circumstances, the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Postowski, as he had already explained to the English military attaché present at the High Command on August 24, regarded the continuation of the march as "an adventure".

1) Detailed in Tichowitsch in Sbornik, Issue 3, p. 128.  
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The Advance of the Russian Narew Army on August 26.

Cavalry divisions were to stop the expected German thrust against the flank of the army at any cost. Meanwhile, the center of the army was to continue the advance; there were only 2 1/2 corps left. They were to reach on August 26: the XXIII Corps (only the general command and 2nd Infantry Division, which continued to receive orders from the XV Corps) the line Hohenstein—Reichenau, the XV Corps Schönfelde (12 km north of Hohenstein)—Guslewosen, the XIII Kellaren (8 km south of Allenstein)—Darethen.

On the morning of August 26, the Russian I Corps1) stood with four infantry regiments at Usdau—Grallau and northwest of this line; south of it, two regiments were to advance on Heinrichsdorf. There, the 6th, at the border south of Lautenburg, was the 15th Cavalry Division. The 3rd Guards Infantry Division, parts of which had meanwhile been designated to support the 2nd Infantry Division, reached Soldau, the 1st Rifle Brigade was still rolling towards the border station Illowo.

The XV Corps (including the 2nd Infantry Division from the XXIII Corps) began the advance in five columns. It expected the first resistance in a fortified position at Nadrau and Paulsgut in the line, where on August 24 the German 37th Infantry Division had briefly entrenched and now advanced cavalry stood. From the general command of the XV Corps, starting from the west wing: the 2nd Infantry Division (from the XXIII Corps) in two columns of brigade strength from Lippau on both sides of the Kronnaten Lake towards Mühlen and south; parts of the 5th Guards Infantry Division were to follow the left column (2nd Brigade) later, the 6th Infantry Division (without the 8th Infantry Regiment) from Frantenu via Waplitz to Königsgut, the 8th Infantry Division, reinforced by an infantry regiment of the 6th Infantry Division, in two columns from Lahna via Nadrau to Hohenstein and from Orlau east of the Great Maransen Lake via Schlagmühle to Grieslienen.

The XIII Corps received the army order only on August 26 at 10 a.m. and therefore only began in the afternoon of that day. Each division marched west and south of the Lansker Lake towards Ardten.

1) Tichowitsch in Sbornik, Issue 3, p. 134ff. — 2 regiments of the corps were located in Warsaw.

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Third Chapter.

The Victory over the Flanks of the Narew Army on August 26 and 27.

I. The Battles of the German Western Group.

a. The Attack of the I and XX Army Corps on August 26 and the Army Order for August 27.

(Sketch 7, C. 150, and Map 5; the terrain is shown on Map 6.)

The attack of the right wing of the German 8th Army was directed against an enemy who had had two days to prepare for defense. The severe experiences that the XVII Army Corps had made against the Russians ready for defense in the Battle of Gumbinnen were on everyone's lips. From them, the correct new lesson had been drawn: first thorough artillery preparation — then only the execution of the infantry attack.

The attack was to begin on August 26.

According to the army order, the I Army Corps was to take the Russian positions on the heights of Seebern at 4 a.m. and attack further on Usdau by 10 a.m., where the main position was suspected. The XX Army Corps was to join this attack, starting from the right wing.

The Army High Command received a report from the I Army Corps at 5:30 a.m. that the attack was underway, albeit with insufficient forces; General v. François could therefore not vouch for its outcome. At 7 a.m., General v. Hindenburg, with his close staff, went to the prepared command post at the eastern exit of Löbau. He assumed that the I Army Corps had meanwhile reached the area of Seebern and was closing in for the attack on Usdau. In fact, however, the attack against Seebern had not yet begun at this time.

General v. François had been informed of the task of his army corps since the morning of August 25, but had only received the written army order for the attack during the night of August 25/26 at 11:45.

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August 26th — The Attack of the I Army Corps.

1145 received. He had then ordered that the 1st Infantry Division should

take possession of "the heights northwest of Seeben" at 4 a.m. and

attack Usdau further at 10 a.m., the 2nd Infantry Division should

advance at 7 a.m. from Kielpin via Groß-Roschlau to Groß-Tauersee, the

5th Landwehr Brigade at the same time from Lautenburg via Heinrichs-

dorf to the area north of Borchersdorf. These orders

corresponded to the army order, but given the

time found at the 1st Infantry Division, they were only feasible

if everything was prepared to ensure the timely deployment of the troops

for the early attack. Nothing had happened here.

General v. François was still of the opinion that his army

corps was not yet in a position to attack on the morning of August 26th.

The damage that a delay could cause seemed

insignificant to him compared to the risk of a hasty advance.

He was reinforced in this view by the fact that the

chief of staff of the XX Army Corps, Colonel Hell, replied to an inquiry

at night that the situation of the XX Army Corps did not justify a

hasty attack.

At the 1st Infantry Division, the night corps order was received

by telephone at 12:30 a.m. However, there were

such significant frictions and delays in transmission and execution

that the beginnings of the division finally reached the

Welle section at Lautschen and Juskity only at 9 a.m.

Due to the inactivity of the Russian advance troops, the deployment

was achieved here without losses. The division commander, Lieutenant General v. Conta,

wanted to conduct the attack over open field in broad daylight only after

sufficient artillery preparation. In total, he had only

four batteries available so far. The division was also initially completely on its own,

as the 2nd Infantry Division could, according to the

corps order, be at Groß-Roschlau at the earliest at 10 a.m.

Thus, Lieutenant General v. Conta decided to postpone the attack until the arrival

of further artillery. General v. François, who arrived shortly after 8 a.m.

in the front line east of Lautschen at the staff of the

1st Infantry Division, agreed with the intention of the division commander.

However, this also meant that the attack on Usdau had to be postponed.

General v. François therefore ordered the 2nd Infantry Division and the 5th Landwehr Brigade

not to cross Groß-Roschlau and Klein-Tauersee for the time being. He reported to the army command

at 8:15 that the attack on Usdau was delayed due to the late arrival of the troops.

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August 26th. — The Attack of the I Army Corps.

The arrival of the troops was delayed. Consequently, the Army High Command also postponed the start of the attack against Usdau for the I and XX Army Corps to 12:00 noon. When General v. Francois received this order, he surprised the Army High Command by reporting that not even Seeben and Groß-Koschlau were in his possession. Thus, the attack on Usdau had to be postponed even further.

Meanwhile, General v. Francois had decided to comply with the urging of the Army High Command and to launch the attack on Usdau at 1:00 p.m. His order began with the words: "By order of the Army High Command, the attack is to be carried out with the forces currently available." The 5th Landwehr Brigade, which had previously encountered little resistance at the Welle crossing east of Lautenburg, was to advance from Klein-Tauersee via Heinrichsdorf, and the 2nd Infantry Division was to advance over Groß-Koschlau to Groß-Tauersee. Meanwhile, the 1st Infantry Division, which had advanced over Seeben to Usdau, felt strong enough after the arrival of additional units to carry out the attack against the weakly occupied Seeben positions. After strong artillery preparation, they were taken at 12:30 p.m. The Russians (from the 1st Brigade of the 24th Infantry Division) had retreated to their main position. However, it was 3:00 p.m. before the German troops of Lieutenant General v. Conta were organized for the further attack and advanced on Usdau. There was still a distance of 9 km to cover in the attack over open field to the enemy position there. It seemed doubtful whether this attack could be completed in the few daylight hours remaining. The troops had been on the move since early morning in the scorching August heat. General v. Francois therefore decided to postpone the further attack to the next day and agreed that Lieutenant General v. Conta should order his troops at 3:45 p.m. on August 26th to advance only so far that the artillery units could begin against the Usdau main position at dawn on August 27th. Accordingly, the 2nd Infantry Division and the 5th Landwehr Brigade were also instructed by the General Command.

On the evening of August 26th, the 5th Landwehr Brigade was positioned around Heinrichsdorf, the 2nd Infantry Division, which had encountered little enemy resistance at several points, was positioned northward up to the Trallau station. The 1st Infantry Division had fought up to the heights west of Meischlis, with its northern flank reaching the area south of Groß-

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The Victory over the Flanks of the Narew Army.

Heights west of Meischlis, with their northern flank reaching the area south of Groß-

Grieben. Their Grenadier Regiment I had, after an advance

it had made from the north towards this place, returned to Wansen.

The enemy was not facing the troops of the German I Army Corps with advanced detachments, but its main

forces seemed to be entrenched in the line Groß-Tauersee—Usdau.

At the General Command of the XX Army Corps, it was already

clear on the night of August 26, after the telephone conversation with the

I Army Corps, that the attack there would not begin as early

as ordered by the Army High Command. Therefore, an

order to advance the right wing on Groß-Grieben—

Jankowitz was initially not given. They waited.

Thus, the Army High Command had to come to terms with the delay

that had occurred at the I Army Corps.

The Russians remained quiet throughout the morning.

However, it became increasingly clear that between the enemy, who

was facing the German I Army Corps at Usdau, and the western

flank of the enemy reported in front of the XX Army Corps at Jankowitz

to Groß-Gardeinen, there was a large gap. This offered the possibility

to launch the attack of the XX Army Corps without waiting for the I Army

Corps, thereby facilitating its task. Therefore,

General v. Hindenburg ordered, as soon as he received the report

at 10 a.m. of the capture of Groß-Koschlaus and Seebens by the I Army

Corps, that the XX Army Corps should now "advance to attack

between the Great Damerau Lake and Mühlen Lake over the approximate

line Ganshorn²)—Thymaul with a strong right wing." An

immediate support of the I Army Corps by a partial advance of the

XX Army Corps on Usdau seemed no longer necessary to the High Command.

If it became necessary later, it could be conducted more effectively

from the area west of Ganshorn. While the right

flank of the XX Army Corps attacked, the left north of the Mühlen

Lake was initially to be held back, to follow later as a reserve.

When this army order reached the XX Army Corps, reports were already

present here, according to which on both sides of the Mühlen Lake, the advance of strong Russian forces against the positions of the 37th Infantry Division became noticeable.

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August 26th. — The Attack of the XX Army Corps.

Sees the advance of strong Russian forces against the positions of the

37th Infantry Division became noticeable. Since noon, Russian artillery

had been shelling the German trenches occupied by the Landwehr near Mühlen.

Further north and at Hohenstein, no enemy had been reported so far.

Thus, the 3rd Reserve Division received the order, according to the army command

of the evening of August 25th, to advance towards Hohenstein over the Orzewn section. Otherwise, for the

attack of the XX Army Corps, only its southern wing was initially considered.

General v. Scholz ordered the 41st Infantry Division to attack the line

Ganshorn—Groß-Gardienen, while the 37th was only to

participate in the attack with its southern, 75th Infantry Brigade. When

this order was given to the divisions at 2:45 p.m.,

General v. Scholz assumed that the I Army Corps might have reached Usdau by now. When the commander of the 41st Infantry Division,

Major General Sonntag, ordered his infantry to advance at 3:30 p.m. after artillery preparation, he believed Usdau was already in the possession

of the I Army Corps. It was about the time when General v. Francois

decided to call off the attack west of Usdau for that day.

The troops of the XX Army Corps were led into attack against the enemy for the first time on August 26th. They were probably

exhausted from the constant marches back and forth without sufficient rest and from

the ever-new entrenchment work of the past weeks, but otherwise fresh and confident. These active

troops were eager to finally be used in attack, instead of defense as before.

At 3:45 p.m., the right wing of the 41st Infantry

Division — 74th Infantry Brigade under Major General Reißer —

advanced from Heseelicht towards Ganshorn, and by evening had reached this target in uninterrupted advance. Further north, the 72nd Infantry

Brigade under Major General Schaer had joined the advance. Almost

without firing, but also with not insignificant own losses

(about 1200 men), the brave infantry of the 41st Division had partially broken the

enemy resistance in bayonet combat. The

enemy, however, as we know today, was not too strong.

The western column, the 2nd Brigade of the Russian 2nd Infantry Division, had caught them in the flank as they wanted to march north from Lippau east

past Gardienen. The Russian

artillery had barely started firing; the entire Russian brigade,

of which the 7th Regiment alone is said to have lost over 2800 men, was, severely shaken, retreating south of the Rownatten Lake by evening.

1) Tschowitsch in Sbornik, Issue 3, p. 134.

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constantly receiving further reinforcements, standing at Borchersdorf and about a division at Usdau, these in prepared positions.

Separated from this group, one assumed one to two Russian corps, the XXIII and XV, closely massed around Groß-Gardienen—Waplitz. How far the attack of the German XX Army Corps had advanced against them was not known. Nothing was yet known about the Russian attempt to attack at Mühlen, and it was believed that the 3rd Reserve Division was at Hohenstein. This wing was now also to be reinforced by the Landwehr Division Goltz, as had already been ordered during the day. Their first movements were expected on August 27 in Osterode.

East of the lakes, the Russian XIII Corps was assumed to be marching from Kurken and eastward towards Allenstein.

From the German eastern group, it was known that the XVII Army Corps and the I Reserve Corps were south of Bischofsstein in a hitherto favorable battle against the Russian VI Corps coming from Ortelsburg. On the other hand, the Russian Njemen Army had reached Drengfurth and Gerdauen behind the German eastern group with its southern wing.

Based on this assessment of the situation, the army order for August 27 was issued at 9 PM. Since the goal set by the army high command on August 26 had by no means been reached, an attack was to be launched on the entire front on August 27 at 4 AM with the greatest energy. From this day, the decision was expected; it was again to be sought against the Russian center, XXIII and XV Corps, before the Russian XIII Corps, assumed to be east of the lakes, could bring help to them. At the same time, the retreat to the south was to be relocated for these two corps, as planned from the beginning. For this, Usdau had to be taken above all.

Accordingly, General v. François received the order to attack strongly staggered to the right on Usdau on August 27. To secure a quick success here, the XX Army Corps was to support this attack directly from the north. "After the capture of Usdau," it continued, "it is important that the enemy be rolled up against the XX Army Corps from Usdau. For this, it is necessary that the I Army Corps also advance on Neidenburg with the strongest possible forces. Furthermore, the reinforced I Army Corps is responsible for flank protection against Borchersdorf."

General v. Scholtz was to continue his attack on August 27 "in the previous direction" and with the 3rd Reserve Division "holding Hohenstein towards Waplitz."

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The Army Order to the Western Group for August 27.

Regarding the overall situation, Major General Ludendorff reported to the Supreme Army Command on the evening of August 26 via telephone, concluding: "By human judgment, the attack will be successful."

Only after the army order reached the hands of the XX Army Corps at 10:30 in the evening did the Army High Command learn the actual situation there: That the right wing of the 41st Infantry Division had reached Ganshorn was welcome news, but that the 3rd Reserve Division had remained behind the Drewenz was not at all in line with the intentions of the High Command. Given the difficult situation at the front and the imminent approach of the Njemen Army, the general attack seemed to them the only salvation. By waiting for the 3rd Reserve Division, they seemed to have lost valuable time, likely missing a favorable opportunity.

The commanding general of the XX Army Corps, General of Artillery v. Scholtz, and his chief of staff, Colonel Hell, viewed the situation differently. After the enemy had occupied Hohenstein from the east on August 26, as reported to the General Command, and cavalry had advanced further north from Stabigotten via Wemitten to the west, they no longer considered an attack by the 3rd Reserve Division feasible. They rather expected that the Russian XXIII Corps had already turned west and anticipated the attack from two Russian corps at Mühlen and northwards on August 27. German troops at Mühlen consisted of the extreme left wing of the 37th Infantry Division, but north of that, only fortress troops remained, which were very weak in artillery. If the enemy succeeded here, the main forces of the XX Army Corps, attacking south of the eastward-stretched Mühlen Lake, could initially bring no help and were themselves seriously threatened in flank and rear. Additionally, they had to be weakened by the ordered detachments to support the attack on Usdau. The forces seemed insufficient for a simultaneous attack in the north. Such considerations made it seem more correct to them to remain on the northern flank in defense, but to shift the bulk of the troops further south to attack south of the Mühlen Lake with strong force. The 3rd Reserve Division was to move south behind the Drewenz to Klein-Pötzbruch to secure the flank of the general attack.

Only reluctantly did the Army High Command agree to this interpretation of the XX Army Corps.

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The Victory over the Flanks of the Narew Army.

encirclement of the XX Army Corps1). The hope of eliminating a significant part of the Russian Narew Army on August 27 south of Hohenstein in a double encirclement west of the lakes was thus lost. Everything now depended on the success at Usdau and the continuation of the attack on the right flank of the XX Army Corps.

b. The victory of the I Army Corps at Usdau and the battles of the XX Army Corps on August 27.

(Map 6.)

The night of August 26/27 passed completely quietly. Officers of the High Command were sent to all units — in even greater numbers than the day before — to ensure better communication.

The attack was to begin on August 27 at 4 a.m. The commander-in-chief wanted to be close to the decision and personally observe and regulate the cooperation of the I and XX Army Corps. He had a command post with a wide overview explored at the southern shore of the Great Damerau Lake. Just before departure, the I Army Corps reported that Usdau had been taken since 5 a.m., "pursuit in the general direction of Neidenburg." The 5th Landwehr Brigade had orders to cover against Soldau. This fully corresponded to the hopes and intentions of the High Command. General Ludendorff stated, "with this, the battle is won." His joy was great. However, upon arriving at the command post, it turned out that the report of the I Army Corps, as it had meanwhile also recognized itself, was based on an error2). Generaloberst3) v. Hindenburg could see from his position how strong German fire from light and heavy artillery was still on the elevated location of Usdau, only 7 km away.

General v. Francois had already given his orders for the attack on the evening of August 26, before the arrival of the army order. They fully aligned with the intentions of the Army High Command: The I Army Corps wanted to concentrate all its strength against Usdau, while the 5th Landwehr Brigade and the southern wing of the 2nd Infantry Division were initially to remain in defense.

1) General Ludendorff and Lieutenant Colonel v. Boehlberg (then in the General Staff of the High Command) believe that the measures of the XX Army Corps, which deviated from the army order, became known to the High Command only on the following day, August 27. Major General Hoffmann, however, believes they had already discussed the encirclement on the evening of August 26.  
2) The report came from the front of the 1st Infantry Division, where the recently taken Meischlitz was confused with Usdau.  
3) Promoted in the meantime.

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August 27th. — The Capture of Usdau by the I. Army Corps.

The I. Army Corps wanted to concentrate all its strength against Usdau, while the 5th Landwehr Brigade and the southern flank of the 2nd Infantry Division were initially to remain in defense. Against Usdau, the bulk of the 2nd and the 1st Infantry Division were positioned from the southwest and northwest. At 4 a.m., the artillery was to open fire, and at 5 a.m., the infantry was to advance. The XX Army Corps wanted to support the attack from the north, from Bergling, through a mixed detachment under Lieutenant General v. Schmettau.

However, the attack did not start as early as ordered on August 27th. While the preparation and opening of fire by the 2nd Infantry Division, which Lieutenant General v. Falt had moved closer to the enemy in the dark, proceeded punctually, the artillery of the 1st Infantry Division experienced significant delays. These were partly due to the fact that almost half of the batteries only arrived at the division after dark on August 26th. The delay was even greater with the detachment v. Schmettau of the XX Army Corps, which had to be newly formed during the night from individual battalions of the 41st and 37th Infantry Divisions (a total of 6 battalions, 2 squadrons, 2 batteries). It was 6 a.m. before they were assembled east of Bergling.

The Russians responded to the German artillery fire lively since 4 a.m., but soon after, Russian riflemen and columns were observed retreating from Usdau to the east by the cavalry of the 41st Infantry Division skirting east of Usdau. The German troops attacking this place initially learned nothing of this. Their infantry pushed the Russian advance troops further back in a wide-ranging attack, while the German artillery fire continued to lay with undiminished intensity on the Russian positions at the railway cut south of Usdau and on the place itself. Thus, the storming German infantry finally encountered only slight resistance when they entered the burning place from the west and north at 11 a.m. 200 prisoners from the Russian Infantry Regiment 85 still fell into their hands. — As soon as General v. François received the news of the capture of Usdau, he instructed the 1st Infantry Division to advance on Neidenburg.

While the fate of Usdau was being sealed, the Russian southern flank (2 regiments of the 22nd Infantry Division), perhaps with the deployment of newly arrived reinforcements (parts of the 3rd Guard Infantry Division and 1st Rifle Brigade), launched an attack. He was likely carrying out the order given to him for August 26th.

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Division and 1st Rifle Brigade), launched the attack. He presumably

carried out the order given to him as early as August 26th1). The Russian

thrust hit the German 5th Landwehr Brigade and the southern flank of

the 2nd Infantry Division. Due to the first erroneous report about the

capture of Usdau, the Landwehr Brigade had already been deployed early

in the morning at Borchersdorf by the General Command. At the same

time, the 2nd Infantry Division had received orders not to wait any longer

but to accelerate their attack. Thus, the German attack collided with the

Russian one and was partially hit in the flank. This led to a particularly

fierce battle on the southern flank of the German I Army Corps.

The 5th Landwehr Brigade under Lieutenant General v. Müllmann

had set out with the two Pomeranian Landwehr Regiments 2 and 9

from Heinrichsdorf via Ruttkowiz to attack Sturpjlen. West of this place,

their advance came to a halt under considerable losses, especially among

officers, in Russian infantry and artillery fire, while the brigade was

simultaneously harassed from the south by strong Russian cavalry. Their

situation seemed to become serious when simultaneously a setback

occurred north of them at the 2nd Infantry Division.

Lieutenant General v. Fall, the commander of the 2nd Infantry

Division, had the infantry of his left wing (4 battalions of the

4th Brigade) advance in the morning with the left shoulder on the main

road to Usdau. However, this attack soon stalled in the heavy enemy

defensive fire. South of the 4th Infantry Brigade, the 3rd Infantry Brigade,

reinforced to 8 battalions under Major General Mengelbier, staggered to

the right, took the direction from the area north of Heinrichsdorf towards

Groß-Tauersee. The Russian thrust hit this advance right in the flank. It

was supported by effective fire from concealed batteries. Thus, the riflemen

of the German 3rd Infantry Brigade only reached 2 km southwest of Groß-

Tauersee, on their southern flank, 2 assigned battalions of the Infantry

Regiment 45 were withdrawn by the enemy attack in the direction of

Sturpjlen and then joined the 5th Landwehr Brigade.

To assist the heavily struggling German infantry, the commander

of the 2nd Lithuanian Field Artillery Regiment No. 37, Lieutenant Colonel

v. der Lippe, advanced his batteries close behind and into the rifle line,

but could no longer prevent their gradual crumbling. They were finally

withdrawn under the cover of artillery to the forest edges east and north of Heinrichsdorf.

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August 27th. — The Battles of the I Army Corps.

The artillery was withdrawn to the forest edges east and north of Heinrichsdorf. (Some parts retreated significantly further!). However, the Russians did not advance anywhere.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant General v. Conta, after capturing Usdau, immediately began pursuing the enemy retreating along the main road to Soldau and turned against the parts of the Russian front still holding east of Usdau. Further east, the detachment v. Schmettau advanced.

The events at the 2nd Infantry Division reached the General Command in exaggerated form. At the same time, Lieutenant General v. Müllmann requested support. Additionally, Russian radio messages were intercepted, prompting General v. François to consider deploying the 3rd (Warsaw) Guard Infantry Division, perhaps even the entire XXIII Corps, against the front of his army corps. Aerial reconnaissance had also detected "apparently an infantry brigade" at Soldau that morning, with about twelve trains at the Illowo and Malwa stations, as well as the arrival of another train from Zichanow. Under these circumstances, General v. François no longer considered it possible to carry out the attack on Neidenburg before dealing with the Soldau enemy. He reported to the Army High Command at 11:20 a.m. that the I Army Corps, considering the situation on its right flank and at Soldau, had turned south and southeast to continue the attack in that direction.

This fact had to be accepted by the High Command. It was easier to do so, as it was now known that the enemy had already moved far eastward from the southern flank of the XX Army Corps during the night and that the German Eastern Group (XVII Army Corps and I Reserve Corps) had achieved a victory north of Bischofsburg on August 26th, which would likely enable their cooperation against the enemy of the XX Army Corps by the 28th. Thus, General v. François was ordered at 11:30 a.m.: "I Army Corps and Detachment v. Schmettau will drive the enemy towards Soldau—Klein-Roslau over the Neide."

1) A single battalion to Montowo.  
2) 33 km east of Allenstein (Map 5).  
3) The river is actually named "Soldau" from the Stottau mouth onwards.

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The enemy south of Usdau had timely evaded the threat to his flank and rear, so that it was not possible to capture significant parts. The advance of the German 1st Infantry Division, on the other hand, pushed the 2nd Infantry Division out of the front, but then came to a halt before Russian reception positions, which extended north of Borchersdorf from Nioßyn to Klenzau. Lieutenant General v. Conti immediately set his troops to a new attack. The Russian retreat had to be dammed at the breaches near Soldau. There, the fruits of the fierce battle were to be harvested. However, continuing the attack to that point would have required further, perhaps hard, battles. It was the third heavy day of fighting after Stallupönen and Gumbinnen, which the brave East Prussians had victoriously endured. The forces were exhausted after the great day's effort. Thus, General v. François set the goal in an order given at 3:45 p.m., "to gain a position from which we can hinder the retreat over Soldau." The cavalry of the 1st Infantry Division and the detachment v. Smettau were to unite behind the left wing of this detachment and be ready for pursuit.

The enemy had retreated south of Soldau before the German attack, only rearguards still held north of the place. The retreat is attributed by the Russians to the effect of the German artillery fire and is otherwise due to the at least indecisive command of General Artamanow. Behind the retreating enemy, the German 5th Landwehr Brigade reached Hohendorf in the evening with the foremost parts. The 1st Infantry Division came up to 1 km south of Borchersdorf, the detachment v. Smettau up to south of Klenzau and to Schönwiese; behind their eastern flank, 6 squadrons were united at Groß-Schläfken. The 2nd Infantry Division had gathered its troops after a heavy and costly battle behind the front of the 1st Division around Groß-Tauersee. General v. François, based on the reports available to him, expected for the following day, August 28, the possibility of a new Russian advance from Soldau, but at least anticipated stubborn resistance. The result of a reconnaissance by the fortress aviation detachment Graudenz, which vividly illuminated the actual situation at the enemy, is for General v. François — perhaps, as he frequently adjusted his position according to the advancing battle in the terrain — not at all, known to the Army High Command until 1:35 a.m.

1) Richowitsch in Gbornit, Issue 3, p. 137/38.

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August 27th — The Intentions of the XX Army Corps.

changed — not at all, only becoming known to the Army High Command at 1:35 at night.

The report stated: "Pilots saw at 5:30 in the afternoon north of Soldau several enemy batteries covered by our fire. — South of Soldau to Illowo dense columns in retreat. At Illowo apparently greater congestion or unchanged bivouac setup. Seven aircraft about to depart. Between Illowo and Mlawa few troops, who, as far as can be seen, are also retreating." — Unaware of these circumstances, General v. François ordered for the morning of August 28th that with daylight 6 heavy field howitzer batteries and 15 light batteries under the unified command of the commander of the 1st Field Artillery Brigade, Major General Moewes, should combat the Russian batteries identified at Soldau and that the entire infantry of the corps should be ready to attack at 6:00 in the morning.

General of Artillery v. Scholz had ordered the continuation of the attack south of Lake Mühlen for 4:00 in the morning on August 27th. However, the XX Army Corps felt left in the lurch by the I Army Corps remaining behind on August 26th and therefore considered caution necessary. It also seems that an oral instruction from the High Command, which Major General Grüner had delivered to General v. Scholz on the morning of August 26th, had an effect. According to this, the XX Army Corps was then supposed to "not storm the front, but wait for the arrival of the I Army Corps." Thus, the phrase "with greatest energy" included in the army order by the Army High Command found no real resonance in the order of the XX Army Corps. Rather, the 41st Infantry Division had received the order to attack "in accordance" with the I Army Corps reinforced by the v. Schmettau detachment; the attack of the 37th Infantry Division was to be supported by parts of the 20th Landwehr Brigade (under the Unger detachment) and by the 70th Landwehr Brigade. North of Lake Mühlen, the Drewenz section was to be held by the rest of the fortress troops, the 3rd Reserve Division from Reichenau was to move to the left corps wing to Klein-Röhrsdorf. This corps order, which "after the withdrawal of the forces assigned to the I Army Corps" was to lead to an attack south of Lake Mühlen with 28 battalions, 10 squadrons, and 31 batteries, remained in defense but was not executed subsequently. The commander of the 41st Infantry Division, Major General Sonntag, had at his disposal 10 battalions, 2 squadrons, and 13 batteries.

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The Victory over the Flanks of the Narew Army.

On Sunday, there were 10 battalions, 2 squadrons, 13 batteries. His troops had barely rested after the attack of the previous day, which continued into the darkness. On August 27, the troops resumed their advance at 4 a.m. on both sides of the Gardinien—Stottau road. No Russians were to be found far and wide. The situation of the 37th Infantry Division was unknown, but cannon fire echoed from Usdau behind their own division. Major General Sonntag anticipated the necessity of assisting there or with the 37th Division. Therefore, he initially did not continue the forward movement and reported this to the General Command, which agreed with the decision.

The attack also did not progress well with the 37th Infantry Division. Concerns about a Russian breakthrough at Mühlen had resurfaced. However, the General Command, based on the previous day's experiences, was not entirely sure whether the 3rd Reserve Division would carry out the order to advance to Klein-Pötzdorf. It initially seemed necessary to withdraw the parts of the 37th Division previously deployed at Mühlen and the 70th Landwehr Brigade, which was designated to support their attack. For the attack south of the lake, the 37th Division, including the 20th Landwehr Brigade, still had about 20 battalions and corresponding artillery available, despite the transfer of 4 battalions to the Schmettau detachment. The division commander, Lieutenant General v. Staabs, however, insisted, considering the situation at Mühlen, only on the attack of his southern, 75th Infantry Brigade. He suggested to the 73rd Infantry Brigade, still in the old defensive position north of the Laubener Lake, "to consider whether a bold undertaking on Thymau might be very promising." — The attack of the 75th Brigade was delayed due to late order transmission. The brigade reached the Konti-See—Seythen line almost without combat by 9 a.m. and opened fire on Russian positions at Januschkau. The 73rd Brigade reached Thymau without combat.

In fact, the 41st and 37th Infantry Divisions east of the Rowantken Lake at Stottau and Januschkau faced only the remnants of the Russian 2nd Infantry Division, which had been defeated the previous day, under Lieutenant General Mingin. The Russian troops had no combat strength left. The Stottau group, 2nd Brigade of the division, was reinforced by the III Battalion of the Deutsch Ordens Regiment Ar. 152 (from the 41st Infantry Division), which did not follow the order to hold, had and therefore advanced alone, prompting an immediate withdrawal to Neidenburg.

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August 27th. — The News of the Russian Breakthrough at Mühlen.

had therefore advanced alone, prompting an immediate withdrawal to Neidenburg. The other brigade of the Russian division attempted to initially respond to the German artillery fire at Januschkau, but soon felt threatened on its southern flank and by the appearance of German cavalry in its rear, and thus retreated eastward on the order of the division commander.

During these events south of Lake Mühlen, the Russian attack expected by General v. Scholz with some concern was preparing to the north:

The German defensive position extended here from the northwest end of Lake Mühlen behind the Drewenz valley, which is up to 40 m deep and largely forested, towards north-northwest. A series of smaller lakes provided some protection to the southern part of the position. On the other hand, the large forests in front of the line, especially the Jablonken forest in the north, obstructed visibility and offered the enemy the possibility of concealed deployment and approach. Thus, defending the extensive section was no easy task. Since 4 a.m., Russian fire had been on the German positions at Mühlen, soon extending northward. A further shift of forces from the XX Army Corps to the south, to the attack wing, was thus called into question, and the 3rd Reserve Division had meanwhile arrived at Klein-Piasken and Kirsteinsdorf. The Russian fire eventually also spread to the front of this division. An enemy radio message that became known at the army high command confirmed the attack intention of the Russian XV Corps on Mühlen.

General v. Scholz, despite this threat to his front, had not abandoned the idea of an attack south of Lake Mühlen. He had already directed the 37th Infantry Division at 8:30 a.m. towards the southern end of this lake, towards Waplitz, into the rear of the attacking enemy. However, the execution was delayed because the division, which had reached the area north of Lake Konti by 9 a.m., took a one-and-a-half-hour rest there. — Meanwhile, the 41st Infantry Division had prepared an advance into the rear of the Usdau enemy. The execution was halted when at 10:30 a.m. it became known to the division commander that the enemy had been observed retreating southeast from Usdau since about 7 a.m.

1) p. 159.

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The Victory over the Flanks of the Narew Army.

As far as can be determined today, the Army High Command was continuously informed about the situation and intentions of the XX Army Corps on the morning of August 27. The waiting behavior of the corps did not correspond to the views and wishes of the High Command, but it did not overlook the situation of the corps in detail to the extent that intervention seemed justified. At that time, it was still generally accepted in peacetime to issue orders but to leave the execution to the subordinates. Only in extreme emergencies, especially at higher command levels, was intervention considered permissible. Thus, the decision of the 41st Infantry Division to advance into the rear of the Usdau enemy was ultimately approved. Any action was better than further inactive waiting.

However, when the decision was made shortly after 11 a.m. with the capture of Usdau at this point, there could no longer be any doubt that General v. Scholtz had to attack on his southern flank not only with the 37th Infantry Division but with full force to come into the flank and rear of the Mühlen enemy. Thus, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg ordered at 11 a.m., simultaneously with the order for the withdrawal of the I Army Corps to the south: "XX Army Corps swings east of Lake Kowranten to the north to block the enemy's path to the south here."

Just as General v. Scholtz received this army order, which was to initiate the attack on his southern flank, he also received reports of a Russian breakthrough at Mühlen. German infantry and artillery retreated north of Mühlen. Significant local reserves were no longer available. The extent and impact of the breakthrough appeared so threatening that, in addition to half of the 3rd Reserve Division, the 37th Infantry Division was also called from its promising attack direction to counterattack against the flank of the enemy breakthrough.

Thus, the 41st Infantry Division remained solely available for the attack ordered by the Army High Command. At 12:15 p.m., its commander, Major General Sontag, received the order to march immediately on Waplitz. He had only 9 battalions at his disposal, with which he set out at 1:30 p.m. westward around Lake Kowranten. He was concerned about the enemy reported in the flank of his advance near Frantanu and Bujaken. It was also about the just arriving quartermaster of the Army High Command, Major General Grünert, who correctly identified the "remnants" of the Russians defeated the day before.

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The Measures of the XX Army Corps on August 27th in the Afternoon.

command, Major General Grünert, correctly referred to as the "remnants" of the Russians defeated the day before. However, these were assumed to be the entire XXIII Corps. It was an oppressively hot afternoon, the roads were deeply sandy, and the troops had not yet been supplied. Thus, they had to rest again for a longer period at Thorweken. Then Major General Sontag decided, considering the small strength of his division and the enemy at Frankenau, not to cross the line Januschkau—Sabipiße of the Mühlen Lake on this day. A corps order given at 6 o'clock in the evening at the urging of the High Command, "to advance beyond Warliß today with all available force," could not be executed for the same reason, as well as due to the advanced time of day. — Thus, the attack of the XX Army Corps was definitively halted for August 27th.

Meanwhile, it had become apparent that the news of the enemy breakthrough at Mühlen was false or at least exaggerated. In fact, only a small Russian detachment had advanced as far as Mühlen railway station. But movements of German reserves in this area, perhaps also some retrograde movements behind the front, had given rise to the rumor of a breakthrough. A telephone officer had passed it on as fact. — The general Russian infantry attack at and north of Mühlen actually only began around 4 o'clock in the afternoon. It collapsed everywhere under German defensive fire. Towards evening, the Russians lying close to the German front surrendered in large numbers. The brave West Prussians (Landwehr Regiment 5 and replacement battalions of the deputy 69th Infantry Brigade) took 1,000 prisoners from both divisions of the Russian XV Corps.

Although the Russian pressure against the Drewenz front decreased as a result, General v. Scholtz continued to view the area around Mühlen with concern as a particularly vulnerable point. At the same time, an enemy envelopment became noticeable in the north. Already in the early afternoon hours, there were reports about further outflanking movements by the enemy. Among other things, the approach of a Russian column of all arms was reported via Gilgenau (6 km northwest of Hohenstein)—Wittignwalde, far outflanking the 3rd Reserve Division. Radio messages from the Russian XIII Corps seemed to confirm the previous assumption that this corps had turned westward. Kalwa (farm 2 km south of Reichenau) in the rear of the 3rd Reserve Division was to be the target of its attack.

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The 3rd Reserve Division was to be the target of its attack. Although the unloading of the German Landwehr Division east of Osterode and Biesfellen had been underway since the morning, no reliable support seemed forthcoming. Thus, General v. Scholtz decided to use part of the 37th Infantry Division to support the Mühlen position, but to move the bulk of this division to defend behind the left flank of the 3rd Reserve Division. The execution of this movement was postponed to the early morning hours of August 28, with the entire division remaining west of Mühlen overnight.

The assumption that the Russian XIII Corps had swung against the northern flank of General v. Scholtz seemed to be confirmed again in the evening. At the 3rd Reserve Division, which had only had to fend off lighter Russian attacks from Ordnitz in the morning, the enemy also probed through the Jablonken Forest in the afternoon and appeared in the evening with riflemen on the heights east of Reichenau. The 3rd Reserve Division was ready for battle with 4½ battalions at the Drewenz section, 7½ battalions had timely bent back along the Kirsteinsdorf—Geierswalde road to face Reichenau.

Thus, by the evening of August 27, victory had only been achieved at the German I Army Corps. The XX Army Corps, with the sole exception of the 41st Infantry Division, was in defense against an assumed superior enemy, whose southern flank at Mühlen had already suffered significantly. However, the support of the German XX Army Corps by the advance of the I on Neidenburg had not yet materialized.

2. The Victory of the German Eastern Group at Groß-Bössau on August 26.

(Map 5, Sketch 8, p. 172, and Map 7.)

While the western group of the German 8th Army was fighting at Usdau and Mühlen, the corps of the eastern group had also come into battle. The Army High Command had given them the order on the evening of August 24¹ to advance south against the enemy advancing on Bischofsburg. It expected the clash already for the following day.

¹) p. 134.

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August 25th. — The Departure of the Eastern Group to the South.

for the following day. It did not happen, as the Russian VI Corps on August 25th had already stopped at Rothfließ (6 km north of Bischofsburg). This corps had the task of covering the right flank of the Narew Army at Bischofsburg. The 4th Cavalry Division in Sensburg was subordinated to the corps.

The German I Reserve Corps under Lieutenant General v. Below had completed a strenuous 30 km march by the evening of August 25th. As refugee crowds blocked the main roads, the troops had to divert to side roads. The corps, heavily fatigued, moved to rest in a broad front with both divisions one behind the other at Seeburg. The 6th Landwehr Brigade had moved up to it from the east as far as Lautern. — The XVII Army Corps under General of Cavalry v. Mackensen had an even harder time. To relieve the enemy, a particularly large marching effort had to be demanded from the group. Closer to the broad front of the advancing Russian Niemen Army, the stream of fleeing local inhabitants was even more noticeable than with the I Reserve Corps. With women and children, with belongings, wagons, and cattle, these unfortunate people, coming from the east, crossed the southward march of the corps. To keep it flowing, even harsh measures against their own nationals could not be avoided. Thus, the 36th Infantry Division marched from Friedland via Schippenbeil to the beginning at Bischofstein, which it only reached late after a 50 km march in the sweltering August heat. Behind it came the 35th Infantry Division, taking a more westerly route, via Bartenstein to the beginning at Groß Schwansfeld. The efforts of this division, which had to cover a few more kilometers than the 36th Infantry Division, and also on poor sandy roads to Bartenstein, taxed the troops to the utmost. But the news that it was no longer retreating, but advancing against another enemy, always gave new strength.

The completely exhausted 1st Cavalry Division, tasked with covering and concealing the departure, sought to reach the target ordered by the army high command, Gerdaunen west of the Omulef course via Allenburg, but was held up there by refugee columns and finally stopped 12 km west of Gerdaunen. Thus, it could hardly fulfill its task here on the northern flank of the German Eastern Group. The Russian reconnaissance units found no resistance at the Omulef and in the important traffic location Gerdaunen as early as August 25th.

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The Victory over the Wings of the Narew Army.

According to the orders of General v. Rennenkampf¹), which became known to the German High Command early on August 25, the Russian Niemen Army was supposed to reach Gerdauen with its southern wing (IV Corps) on August 26; south of this, however, the Russian II Corps was still expected, as was known from other intelligence. Colonel General v. Hindenburg therefore temporarily intended to leave not only the 1st Cavalry Division but also the rear Infantry Division of the XVII Army Corps under the joint command of General v. Mackensen to protect against the Niemen Army. However, as this army continued to remain far away, he decided in the course of the afternoon that both corps of the Eastern Group should advance with full force against the enemy stationed at Bischofsburg on August 26²). The 1st Cavalry Division remained alone against Rennenkampf's entire army.

During the course of the day, the general commands of both corps had also made contact with each other to coordinate joint action for August 26. Agreement was reached that the I Reserve Corps, including the 6th Landwehr Brigade, should attack west of the Great Lautern and Dadey Lakes, while the XVII Army Corps should attack east of there against the Russian right flank.

Lieutenant General v. Below accordingly intended to advance from Seeburg on August 26 in a broad front towards Wartenburg for the attack. He would then engage the enemy even if it wanted to continue marching westward from Bischofsburg to unite with its army. In view of his troops' exhaustion and to wait for the XVII Army Corps to arrive, he ordered the preparation for advance only for 10 a.m. By then, the 6th Landwehr Brigade stationed at Lautern should also join the corps.

General v. Mackensen assumed that the I Reserve Corps would already advance at 7 a.m. Therefore, despite the extraordinary marching achievements of the previous days, he wanted to set out at the earliest hour on August 26 as well, towards the enemy, to assist General v. Below. To this end, he intended to march east of the lakes in a column via Lautern to Bischofsburg.

¹) P. 136.  
²) The decision was made at 5:15 p.m. in a long-distance call with the first General Staff officer of the XVII Army Corps. The I Reserve Corps knew nothing about it. Lieutenant General v. Below may have already tried to influence the General Command of the XVII Army Corps in the same sense earlier, in any case in the evening when he, meanwhile overtaken by events, received army orders according to which one division of the XVII Army Corps should remain standing against General v. Rennenkampf.

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August 26 — The Battle at Groß-Bißlau.

for help. He wanted to march east of the lakes in a column via Lautern to Bischofsburg. He was fully aware of the dangers of this march, as the Russian Njemen Army was not considered defeated at the XVII Army Corps. The boldness of the Army High Command, which had also deployed the last infantry division to the south for a decisive action, was all the more admired.

On August 25, the Russian 4th Cavalry Division reported the march of stronger German forces through Rastenburg to the west. General Blagowieschtschenski, with his VI Corps, was positioned against these forces on the night of August 25/26 at Rothfließ (4th Infantry Division) and Bischofsburg (16th Infantry Division). A reconnaissance to the north was not indicated, so the next advance of the German XVII Army Corps remained hidden from the Russians. According to an order from General Samonow, General Blagowieschtschenski was to advance towards Allenstein on August 26 under cover against Rastenburg to join the army.

In the early morning hours of August 26, the German 6th Landwehr Brigade was marching north of the Great Lautern Lake to the west, while the vanguard of the German XVII Army Corps, crossing the marching column of the Landwehr Brigade, marched directly onto the northern flank of the Russian Corps' security. The first reports about the enemy were received by General v. Mackensen from the commander of the 6th Landwehr Brigade, Major General Krahmer, whom he met in Lautern. The leading 36th Infantry Division of his Army Corps had set out from Bischofstein after a short night's rest on August 26 and intended to take a march break at Lautern. There, its vanguard encountered the already deployed enemy 3 km south of the place at 6 a.m. The commander of the 36th Infantry Division, Lieutenant General v. Heineccius, decided, with the consent of the General Command, to conduct the battle delaying until the arrival of the rear division, especially since strong Russian cavalry was noticeably present on his eastern flank. General v. Mackensen deployed the rear, 35th Infantry Division of his corps further east towards Groß-Koellen.

By 10 a.m., aerial reports left no doubt that the enemy was only east of the lake chain: at Rothfließ-Bischofsburg on one side, at Ortelsburg on the other, there should be one Russian division each.

1) Backwards in Sbornik, Issue 3, p. 127  
2) Ibid., p. 150f.

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August 26th. — The Victory of the Eastern Group at Groß-Bössiau.

Russian division standing. Opposite the German 36th Infantry Division,

the enemy continued to move further east and thereby temporarily put

their left flank in a difficult position. General staff and division had the

impression of facing the entire Russian VI Corps. However, the German

35th Infantry Division had not yet arrived by noon. They had to rest

on the way. When they finally reached Groß-Koellen with the vanguard

after a 25 km march, they were so exhausted that they had to rest again.

Meanwhile, the I Reserve Corps, which initially had no enemy in front

of it, had only completed its deployment west of the Seenette in the line

Alt-Bierzighufen—Kirschdorf by 12:30 p.m. In agreement with General

v. Mackensen, General v. Below now wanted to continue the march south

with the mass of his corps to swing in against the rear parts of the enemy

south of the Daden Lake. Weaker forces were to — at the request of the

XVII Army Corps — strike the flank of the enemy opposite this army

corps at Groß-Bössiau.

The Russian 4th Infantry Division was completely surprised by the

approach of German forces from the north. Initially, they believed they

only had a flank guard of the Germans marching westward from Rastenburg

in front of them. The Russian division commander wanted to attack and

simultaneously pushed a detachment for cover over Groß-Bössiau to the

west. As a result, larger parts of the German I Reserve Corps were drawn

in. Finally, at Groß-Bössiau, the commander of the 36th Reserve Division,

Major General Krüger, attacked with the majority of his division and the

6th Landwehr Brigade. The 69th Reserve Brigade under Major General

v. Homeyer and the 6th Landwehr Brigade under Major General Krahmer

bore the main work of the day. At Klein-Bössiau, the enemy, with the

lake at their back, resisted to the utmost. In a heroic but particularly

officer-heavy costly assault, the Pomeranian Landwehr Regiments 34 and

49 took the village in the evening. Several hundred prisoners and some

guns were their spoils.

Meanwhile, the beginnings of the 1st Reserve Division at the southern

end of the Daden Lake had also repelled weaker enemy forces advancing

from the east. It was the beginning of the Russian 16th Infantry Division,

which, according to the army order, had been set in motion by General

Blagowjeschtschenski towards Wartenburg—Allenstein before knowing the

situation at Groß-Bössiau, but later turned north.

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The Victory over the Flanks of the Narew Army.

The Russian 4th Infantry Division had likely felt the threat to its western flank and rear from the German I Reserve Corps since the early afternoon hours. At the same time, its front facing the German XVII Army Corps suffered heavily under the unified fire of 88 German guns directed by the commander of the German 36th Field Artillery Brigade, Major General Handorff. Thus, the Russians began to retreat east of the lakes from 4 p.m.1), perhaps even a little earlier, along the entire line. The late infantry attack by the 36th Infantry Division of the XVII Army Corps encountered abandoned enemy positions. Therefore, the day's spoils primarily fell to the I Reserve Corps, which captured 1,700 prisoners, 8 machine guns, and 30 guns. The Russians report their losses as 5,300 men, 18 machine guns, but only 16 guns. Under the impression of the defeat of his 4th Infantry Division, General Blagoweschtschenski abandoned the march on Allenstein and retreated south with his entire corps via Bischofsburg. Whether the 4th Cavalry Division was involved in the fighting is not clearly known.

On the night of August 27, the German I Reserve Corps was positioned with a division each at Wartenburg and north of Lake Daey, while the XVII Army Corps with both divisions was side by side east of Groß-Bössau. They rejoiced in the victory but still had the impression that the enemy had managed to evade the major blow planned against him in time, and therefore anticipated renewed serious combat on August 27 against an enemy reinforced by forces reported further south. They prepared to attack an extensive position east of Bischofsburg, which, according to an aerial report from Raschgun (9 km south of Bischofsburg), extended to Sroquitten. General von Mackensen wanted to engage at the front, while Lieutenant General von Below turned again to the western flank.

Meanwhile, at the headquarters of the German 8th Army, a Russian radio message confirmed the advance of the Russian II Corps north of Lake Mauer, which had already been reported by the fortress of Lötzen. According to this radio message, the corps was to join hands with the Russian Narew Army. Parts of it had already been observed marching south west of the lake by 10 a.m. on August 26.

1) According to Russian reports, ordered only at 5 p.m. (Sichowitsch in Giorniti, Issue 3, p. 132).

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The Pursuit of the Eastern Group on August 27.

Thus, the extremely difficult situation of the Eastern Group was not concealed, which now wanted to advance far south through the eastern flank of the Narew Army marching on Allenstein, the Russian II Corps advancing southwest from Angerburg, and the southern flank of the Njemen Army arriving at Gerdauen, to attack a fortified position. It already required a will to victory borne by confidence in the superiority of the German troops to approve the intentions of the commanding generals for August 27 in view of these circumstances. Generaloberst v. Hindenburg and General Ludendorff did not hesitate to give their consent.

Meanwhile, the 1st Cavalry Division continued to cover the rear of the Eastern Group. On August 26, it had retreated to Schippenbeil before strong enemy cavalry and had received orders from the army command at noon to now delay any advance of the Russian II Corps on Rastenburg—Korschen, while the fortress of Königsberg¹) was entrusted with blocking the Alle line. At the same time, the fortress itself was to attract as many enemy forces as possible.

On August 27, the two corps of the German Eastern Group continued their offensive movement south over Wartenburg and Bischofsburg. The I Reserve Corps left the infantry of the 6th Landwehr Brigade, which was particularly worn out by marches and combat, and the XVII Army Corps a small mixed detachment, as immediate rear cover in the area of Lautern. Only gradually did it become apparent that the enemy no longer intended to resist south of Bischofsburg. He was in full retreat south to Ortelsburg.

Generaloberst v. Hindenburg and General Ludendorff had been waiting since taking command for the moment when it would be possible to deploy parts of the Eastern Group westward against the flank and rear of the Narew Army. But only in the early morning of August 27, when more detailed reports on the extent of the victory achieved at Groß-Bißau came in, did this plan gain prospects of realization. Meanwhile, however, the Russian Njemen Army had also approached. Time pressed for the rapid execution of the plan. The two corps of the Eastern Group were therefore already instructed at 7:30 in the morning, as soon as the Bischofsburg opponent was dealt with, to take the direction southwest towards Jedwabno with all available forces.

¹) When and on what basis this order, which represented a supplement to the mission for the 1st Cavalry Division, was given, could not be determined. It was received by the government on August 26.

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The Victory over the Flanks of the Narew Army.

was instructed at 7:30 in the morning, once the Bischofsburg opponent was dealt with, to take all available forces in the direction of southwest towards Jedwabno. When at noon the intelligence officer at the I Reserve Corps reported that the enemy seemed to be vacating the position south of Bischofsburg and that the I Reserve Corps was advancing with one division each towards Passenheim and eastwards, and at the same time the Allenstein post office reported the entry of the Russians into the city, the army command ordered the I Reserve Corps to reach Passenheim with a detachment by August 27, but to turn the main force westwards and prepare in the area of Patricken (9 km south of Wartenburg) for use on August 28 "against Allenstein or in a southern direction." General v. Below then moved his entire corps to the area of Patricken and asked the XVII Army Corps, in view of the fatigue of the troops of his reserve corps, to take over the dispatch of a detachment to Passenheim. — At the XVII Army Corps, the pursuit had only ended with darkness. The bulk of the corps had advanced only about 22 km after the exertions of the previous days, with the beginning to Mensguth, then small mixed detachments had been set on the enemy's trail. One of them (1 battalion, 1/2 squadron, 1 battery) reached far ahead of the corps front in the night of August 28 at 2:15 Passenheim. Meanwhile, the East Prussian wire connection to Lötzen had ceased on the eastern flank. After the aviation detachment had moved to the XX Army Corps, communication was only maintained by carrier pigeons. — Further north, the 1st Cavalry Division had not succeeded in preventing the enemy from reaching Rastenburg with the southernmost column of its II Corps by 11:00 a.m. on August 27. Lieutenant General Brecht faced strong Russian cavalry east of the Zaine and therefore remained west of this section. In the evening, he was at Bischofstein. The attempt by the Königsberg government to block the Alle line was also unsuccessful. Cavalry of the Njemen Army reached the crossings of Friedland and Allenburg before they were secured by Landsturm sent there. The fortress itself expected the Russian encirclement; its forces were fully engaged in defending the extensive Pregel and Deime positions. Thus, the land south of Bischofstein from Königsberg was open to the enemy for deployment. The weak Landsturm battalions distributed here in railway protection had no resistance strength. Russian cavalry roamed as early as August 27 to the outskirts of Heilsberg and to Preußisch-Eylau.

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The Victory over the Flanks of the Narew Army.

Regarding the advance of the Germans against Usdau, allegedly two to three divisions from the northwest direction and one division from Lautenburg, General Samsonow had already reported on the evening of August 26, as well as about the misfortune of his 2nd Infantry Division south of Mühlen1). However, he counted on the forces assembled at Usdau being sufficient to repel the German attack. Their northern flank was to be covered by the 2nd Infantry Division, which was ordered to face the front again2). What image the Russian high command had of the German forces at Mühlen and in the area of Hohenstein—Allenstein—Osterode is not known. It must be assumed, however, that it did not even remotely consider the presence of such strong German forces — four divisions in infantry strength — as actually stood at Mühlen and behind the Drewenz, and instead believed Allenstein to be occupied. Thus, General Samsonow was determined, despite the unfavorable outcome of the battles west of Usdau and south of Mühlen and despite the apparent serious threat to his left flank, to continue the attack of the XIII and XV Corps, later supported by the VI, against the line Allenstein—Osterode.

On the night of August 27, the Russian army high command ordered the XIII Corps to advance further on Allenstein together with the VI Corps and to consider supporting the XV Corps. This corps itself was to send four regiments, which was half of its infantry, to Mühlen to support the 2nd Infantry Division, to which parts of the 3rd Guards Infantry Division from Mlawa were also marching.

The Russian XIII Corps under General Klujew accordingly turned northward on August 27 with 1½ divisions against Allenstein, which it occupied at noon without a fight. Reports of German troops 15 km south of the city (probably I Reserve Corps at Patricken), which reached the eastern division of the corps, were not believed and not passed on: they must be parts of the expected own VI Corps from the east! However, the connection with this corps could not be established. A flyer sent to Wartenburg did not return. — To support the XV Corps, General Klujew sent the reinforced 2nd Brigade of his 1st Infantry Division to Hohenstein. The order received around 3 p.m., as General Klujew himself had requested, to march with the entire corps to support the XV at Hohenstein, could not be carried out that day due to the exhaustion of his troops.

1) p. 153/54. — 2) Knorr, p. 68.

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The Russian Movements on August 27.

As General Klujew himself had requested to march with the entire corps to support the XV. towards Hohenstein1), he could not carry it out on this day due to the exhaustion of his troops. He postponed the departure to the morning of August 28.

The commanding general of the Russian XV Corps, General Martos, moved two infantry regiments from his far right flank at Grieslienen to support the 2nd Infantry Division on the southern flank, one behind the center, and otherwise swung in the course of August 27 towards and against the now recognized fortified German Drewenz position. Thus, a brigade of the XIII and three brigades of the XV Corps advanced to attack. Parts of the XIII Corps brigade came, without encountering German troops, as far south as Reichenau into the flank of the German 3rd Reserve Division. However, the bulk of this brigade got lost in the Jablonken forest; panic ensued. Therefore, all its parts were called back to the northeast exit of the forest in the evening. — The attack of the XV Corps, still suffering from the aftermath of the losses of August 23, also advanced slowly against the front of the German position and ultimately failed in the course of the afternoon2). — The 1st Brigade of the 8th Infantry Division, designated to support the 2nd Infantry Division, did not fight at all on August 27. It was led south to Waplitz and remained there. The 2nd Infantry Division itself had lost so much ground in the unfortunate battle on August 26 that it did not act as a flank guard for the I Corps. It was initially incapable of any serious resistance3). However, as the Germans ceased their advance on this part of the front on the morning of August 27, the 1st Brigade of the division was able to reorganize for defense in the afternoon at Bujaken and Frantenau. The arriving commanding general of the XXIII Corps, General Kondratowitsch, moved parts of his 3rd Guard Infantry Division advancing from Malwa, as well as the known Regiment Kexholm with a battery, to Rontsen (south of Frantenau) and designated the scattered 2nd Brigades of the 2nd Division Reidenburg as a rallying point on August 26. This brigade largely regrouped during the night of August 28. The commanding general thus had five infantry regiments of his corps available for August 28 early in the line Bujaken—Reidenburg (two, perhaps even three more were with the I Corps, the light field howitzer detachment with the II Corps in front of Lötzen).

1) It is said to have been delayed due to misunderstandings (Sichowitsch in Sbornik, Vol. 3, p. 140). — 2) p. 167. — 3) p. 165.

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The Victory over the Flank of the Narew Army.

Infantry regiments of his corps (two, perhaps three more were with the I Corps, the light field howitzer division with the II Corps before Lötzen).

Meanwhile, the I Corps had been defeated at Usdau. The commander-in-chief of the Narew Army only received news of its retreat via Soldau to Mlawa on the evening of August 27. He had already made his arrangements for August 28. His VI Corps, from which he had received news at noon that it had retreated south of Bischofsburg, was now directed more eastward to Passenheim instead of Allenstein. The XIII Corps was to march to the aid of the XV at Hohenstein, and then both corps were to advance together under the unified command of General Martos "at dawn in the general direction of Gilgenburg—Lautenburg energetically, to catch the enemy in the flank and rear before the front of the XXIII and I Corps." These two corps were to hold their positions at all costs.

The report of the I Corps' retreat to Mlawa was then a severe disappointment. General Samsonow had believed he could rely on this flank holding. The commanding General Artamanow was relieved of his position. However, the decision to continue the attack on August 28 remained.

1) Sichowitßky in Sbornik, Issue 3, p. 145.

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Fourth Chapter.

The Encirclement of the Russian Center on August 28.

I. The Army Order for August 28.

(Map 6 and 7.)

When it was decided in the midday hours of August 27 that the German I Army Corps was bound in the direction of Soldau and thus initially excluded from the thrust into the enemy's flank at Neidenburg, the decision lay primarily with the XX Army Corps. On the return journey from his command post to the army headquarters in Löbau, the commander-in-chief therefore sought out General v. Scholz in Frögenau.

Between the perception of the XX Army Corps and that of the Army High Command, a certain divergence had developed in recent days¹): The Army High Command had always regarded the ruthless attack as the only way out of the difficult situation for this army corps. However, within the corps itself, under the immediate impression of the Russian attacks directed against its front, especially the uncertain situation at Mühlen and the threatening encirclement by the Russian XIII Corps in the north, there was more thought of holding off the enemy until the I Army Corps from the south or the eastern group would effectively act against its rear. This divergence of perception did not, as with the I Army Corps on August 25, come to an open confrontation; it remained unspoken but alive beneath the surface. Thus, the Army High Command was disappointed when the attack of the XX Army Corps did not get underway during the course of August 27. However, the commander-in-chief had personally pressed General v. Scholz in the afternoon that the 41st Infantry Division, which could only have a very inferior opponent in front of it, should reach Waplitz by the evening of August 27 and thereby block the Russians' path to the south. But even that did not succeed²).

Nevertheless, and despite the threatening enemy encirclement in the north near Reichenau, the Army High Command on the evening of August 27 looked forward to the continuation of the battle for the following day with full confidence.

¹) p. 163. — ²) p. 167.

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The Encirclement of the Russian Center on August 28.

Army corps attack the enemy at Allenstein. If they march south, they turn with the right wing to Stabigotten; XVII Army Corps is also to continue following the direction of Willenberg.” — In this new version of the order, the task for the I Reserve Corps: “move a strong brigade from Passenheim over Kurken—Schwedrich to Hohenstein” was omitted, presumably because the I Reserve Corps had reported that the XVII Army Corps was asked to take over the dispatch to Passenheim. But the XVII Army Corps also received no order for a dispatch “from Passenheim over Kurken—Schwedrich.” It can only be assumed that a mistake occurred in the amendment of the order1). This error was initially not noticed. Thus, the path between the lakes, which Generaloberst v. Hindenburg had wanted to block, remained open to the enemy on August 28.

2. The Attack of the Troops of General v. Scholz and the Landwehr Division Golz.

(Map 8.)

On the morning of August 28, there was dense fog. According to the army order, the attack of the XX Army Corps was to begin at 4 a.m. from the right wing. When the Army High Command inquired about the state of the battle at 5 a.m., it was reported, “there is still no sound of artillery, the Chief of the General Staff, Colonel Hell, believes that the troops are waiting for the fog to clear.” — Generaloberst v. Hindenburg wanted to direct the battle from Frögenau, where General v. Scholz was also located. He arrived there with his staff at 7 a.m. His command post was set up at the exit to Tannenberg next to that of General v. Scholz. Since 6 a.m., artillery noise was audible from the east, so the attack seemed to be underway. Since the XX Army Corps had its clear orders and had given its commands, there was no reason for the Army High Command to intervene in any way. One had to wait initially.

The General Command of the XX Army Corps, upon receiving the army order on the evening of August 27, had assumed at least three Russian divisions in front of its line from Mühlen to Reichenau.

1) The amended draft bears the note “Schwedrich” in the margin. Perhaps something else was to be discussed about it; but this did not happen.

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The Attack of the 41st Infantry Division.

at least three Russian divisions in front of his line.

Further south, it suspected the enemy identified at Bujaken

to be the Russian XXIII Corps. However, this corps was considered

so heavily beaten that it was not expected to have significant offensive power.

To align with the intentions of the Army High Command,

the 41st Infantry Division had received orders to

advance around Lake Mühlen towards Paulsgut,

to get behind the Russians, reaching the line

Lutten—Ganshorn (east of Mühlen) by 4 a.m. The division was to

“avoid the threat from Bujaken by marching in the

darkness” and “deploy a strong rearguard with artillery.”

As soon as its attack became noticeable at Paulsgut,

the troops deployed at the Drewenz front were to

launch an attack. They were all subordinated to the commander

of the 3rd Reserve Division for August 28. The 37th Infantry

Division was to be ready by 4 a.m. west of Reichenau in the line

Kittnau—Glanden and attack Colony Plattienen (on the

Höhensteiner road). No time was set for this attack; it depended,

like everything, on the progress of the attack by the

41st Infantry Division.

The 41st Infantry Division had received the corps order

issued on August 27 at 10:45 p.m. by 11:20 p.m. The mission

assigned to it was a daring undertaking, but

with thorough reconnaissance and preparation with fresh troops under

determined leadership, it could achieve a brilliant success and

decide the day. However, almost all these prerequisites were missing:

The troops were overstrained and tired, they had no time for preparation,

the situation with the enemy was quite unclear, and contact with them

no longer existed. Adamsheide, at the eastern end of Lake Mühlen, was

reported to be firmly occupied, and resistance was also expected at the Maranse

near Waplitz. Thus, Major General Sonntag had serious concerns about

this order from the General High Command. However, there had already been

disagreements with the superior command during the day.

The division had finally declared the previously mentioned order

at 6 p.m., “to advance over Waplitz today with all forces,” as impracticable.

After General Sonntag repeatedly expressed his concerns about the advance on Waplitz,

but considered further objections to the current order hopeless, he wanted to

try to make the best of it and hoped for good luck. He arranged for the morning of August 28 to command a total of 9 battalions, 2 squadrons, and 13 batteries.

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The Deployment of the Russian Center on August 28.

over 9 battalions, 2 squadrons, 13 batteries¹). With them, he wanted to reach the main road west of Wittmannsdorf between the enemy at Frantenaul—Bujaken and the one reported at Adamsheide, and break through to the north over Waplitz with the mass. A rear guard was to protect the flank and rear. However, in the dark night on unknown field paths, the assembly already suffered delays, parts lost their way.

In the dense fog, Major General Schaer led the vanguard against Waplitz. At the Maranse, a battle ensued, in which brave musketeers from the II Battalion of the Infantry Regiment Baron v. Süringten (4th Posen's) No. 59, supported by parts of the Masurian Pioneer Battalion No. 26, waded through the river west of Waplitz and advanced more than 1 km further north. But their success could not be recognized in time by the neighbors in the fog and therefore could not be exploited. The battle stood at the Maranse. The attack did not regain momentum here either, when east of the vanguard the 74th Infantry Brigade under Major General Reiser entered the fight. The enemy resistance increased more and more. Around 7 a.m., the fog cleared. The losses increased. The attackers also began to suffer from enemy artillery flanking fire from the east. Then suddenly from the south, from the direction of Frantenaul—Bujaken, Russian artillery fire hit their rear. Southwest of Wittmannsdorf, parts of the 74th Infantry Brigade and the artillery had to take the front to the south. They had a hard time against the enemy appearing on the heights south and east of Wittmannsdorf, but managed to repel his attacks. The attempt to hold out in this situation seemed hopeless to the division commander soon. So Major General Sonntag ordered the retreat to the starting position between Konti and Hynnaul Lake at 7:30 a.m. The 8 battalions and 6 batteries of the division, already encircled in a semicircle east of the Mühlen Lake, had to retreat through the only 2½ km wide opening between the Russians east of Wittmannsdorf and the southern tip of the lake. With relatively minor losses, they found their way west. Above all, the deployment of the II Battalion of the Teutonic Order Regiment Ar. 152 and the batteries of the 1st West Prussian Field Artillery Regiment No. 35, as well as the inactivity of the Russians was to thank for the fact that the battle did not end with the capture of significant parts of the division.

¹) 2 battalions and 2 squadrons were with the I Army Corps, 1 battalion had been tasked with clearing the battlefield from the 26th since early August 27 and had not yet returned.

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The Setback at the 41st Infantry Division.

It was thanks to the Russians that the battle did not end with the capture of significant parts of the division. However, the retreat cost them nearly 2400 men¹) in addition to 15 guns, more than half of whom were from the 59th Infantry Regiment, whose commander, Colonel Sonntag, found a hero's death. In the battles on August 26 and 28, the division had now lost almost ⅓ of its infantry overall. Since two battalions had also been transferred to the I Army Corps, the rest had only limited combat strength after the unfortunate battle.

At the General Command of the XX Army Corps in Frögenau, nothing was initially known about these events at the 41st Infantry Division. Only the cannon thunder echoed with increasing strength from the area of Waplitz. However, there was no noticeable impact on the Mühlen enemy. Thus, the General Command did not yet consider the time for an attack on the front to have come. They wanted to wait. Then, around 8:30 in the morning, Lieutenant General v. Morgen reported that he had ordered the attack for the troops under his command, and it was already underway. The General Command was initially not in agreement with the general's autonomy but had to accept the accomplished fact. Therefore, the 37th Infantry Division also received orders to immediately advance over Reichenau to attack.

On the attack front of Lieutenant General v. Morgen, on August 28, west of the Drewenz section: parts of the 37th Infantry Division to secure the Mühlen area (3 battalions, 3 batteries, including 2 battalions from the 147th Infantry Regiment and 2 heavy field howitzer batteries) at Thymau and Mühlen, — the Landwehr and fortress troops under Major General v. Unger (70th Landwehr Brigade east of Mühlen, north of which the troops of the Deputy 69th Infantry Brigade²), a total of 11 battalions, 7 squadrons, 5 batteries), — finally the 3rd Reserve Division at Klein-Piöbort, Kirsteinsdorf, and Geierswalde (12 battalions, 3 squadrons, 6 batteries). General v. Morgen had rather only the troops of Major General v. Unger and the 3rd Reserve Division (a total of 23 battalions, 10 squadrons, but only 11 batteries, none of them heavy) ready for the attack at 4 a.m. in the 8 km wide line from the northern tip of Lake Mühlen to Kirsteinsdorf.

¹) The Russians claim to have captured 1400 men, they themselves lost over 800 at Waplitz (Bidwitsch in Austrian Journal, Issue 3, p. 148).  
²) The troops of the 20th Landwehr Brigade were distributed with the 37th Infantry Division (4 battalions) and in border protection at Strasburg (2 battalions).

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The Encirclement of the Russian Center on August 28.

Major General v. Unger and the 3rd Reserve Division (a total of 23 battalions, 10 squadrons, but only 11 batteries, none heavy) were prepared for attack at 4 a.m. in the 8 km wide line from the northern tip of Lake Mühlen to Kirsteinsdorf. He intended to proceed according to the corps order as soon as the advance of the 41st Infantry Division on Paulsgut became noticeable.

In front of the 3rd Reserve Division, the Jablonken Forest had still been occupied by the Russians on the evening of August 27; however, it was found free again during the night. No reports about the Reichenau enemy were available by morning. Concerns about this opponent were completely dispelled since the 37th Infantry Division had reported at 7 a.m. that it was ready at Rittnau and Domtau (northwest of Geiserswalde). The fog had meanwhile lifted, but there was still no sign of the 41st Infantry Division's attack. On the other hand, the Goltz Landwehr Division had to be advancing from the north on Hohenstein since 5 a.m. Thus, General v. Morgen decided not to wait any longer but to exploit the currently favorable situation in the Jablonken Forest. At 7:20 a.m., he ordered the attack on the entire front from Lake Mühlen to north of Kirsteinsdorf on his own responsibility. The left wing brigade of his division (6th Reserve Infantry Brigade) was to pass through the Jablonken Forest, outflank the enemy position at Dröbnitz in the north, and thereby facilitate the heavy attack of the 5th Reserve Infantry Brigade against the Russian front. Only when the attack was underway did General v. Morgen report the already mentioned message to the general command.

With Major General v. Unger, the attack of Major General Breithaupt with his particularly weak 70th Landwehr Brigade in artillery stalled at the Drewenz section east of Mühlen. The replacement battalions of the Deputy 69th Infantry Brigade under Major General van Semmern reached the eastern edge of the large forest north of the road to Paulsgut by noon in a tough advance. At the 3rd Reserve Division itself, the 5th Reserve Infantry Brigade under Major General Hesse attacked Dröbnitz on the right wing. In a costly frontal battle, it captured the stubbornly defended location at 12:30 p.m. Immediate support from the 6th Reserve Infantry Brigade from the north was absent. This brigade, under Major General Krause, had reached the eastern edge of the Jablonken Forest by 10 a.m., but was pinned down here by the enemy, who stood on both sides of the Hohensteiner road near Schwentainen. In a sharp attack, the Pomeranian reserve troops threw the enemy back over Sauden to Hohenstein.

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The Attack of the 3rd Reserve Division and the Landwehr Division Goltz.

the Pomeranian reserve troops pushed the enemy back over Sauden to Hohenstein. At 12:30 noon, they entered the burning city. The Russian resistance in this area had increasingly weakened, as simultaneously from the north, German troops had approached Hohenstein to within 500 meters.

When the commander of the Landwehr Division, Lieutenant General Freiherr v. der Goltz, received the army order to advance via Manchengut to Hohenstein on the evening of August 27 in Biessellen (halfway between Osterode and Allenstein), only 7 battalions, 4 squadrons, and 1 battery of his troops were present. The arrival of the rest was delayed indefinitely due to a train collision. The division commander had information that Russian cavalry was south of Manchengut on his advance route and that a stronger enemy was in Hohenstein. He was also informed that a Russian division was in Allenstein. South of there, Russians were also supposed to be on the road to Hohenstein up to Darethin. Despite this flank threat, General v. der Goltz immediately decided to march on Hohenstein with his initially available, albeit very limited, forces; what was still missing, 5 battalions and 3 batteries, was to follow later from Biessellen.

After a 16 km march, the vanguard of the Landwehr Division reached the southern edge of the Kämmerer Forest north of Hohenstein around 9 a.m. The cannon thunder, which had been heard during the advance in the south, had subsided. Russian movements from Hohenstein to the east were observed. The enemy seemed to be retreating.

The division commander decided to attack. The Russians took up positions in and north of the Hohenstein—Mörten line for defense. Against them, 6½ battalions and 1 battery were deployed one after the other as they arrived; only ½ battalion was left by Lieutenant General Freiherr v. der Goltz as a security at the Kämmerer Forest in case the enemy at Allenstein advanced southwest. This enemy had only a 25 km march to Hohenstein, so if he had set out early in the morning, he could appear in the flank and rear of the Landwehr by noon. Therefore, there was perhaps little time to settle accounts with the enemy at Hohenstein. But the German attack, supported by only a single battery and without machine guns, soon stalled despite all the bravery of the Schleswig-Holstein and Hanseatic militia. The losses were felt. The commander of the Bremen Landwehr Regiment 75, Lieutenant Colonel v. Stwolinski, fell at the head of his troops.

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The Encirclement of the Russian Center on August 28.

v. Stwolinski, fell at the head of his troops. At 11:40 a.m., a report came in that the enemy had indeed already marched off from Allenstein to the southwest at 4:30 a.m., likely a corps, and immediately thereafter, Russian skirmish lines appeared at Grieslienen, behind the Landwehr! — In this extremely tense situation, shortly after 12:00 noon, the artillery of the German 6th Reserve Infantry Brigade provided the long-awaited fire support against the Mörtenser enemy from the most effective direction. Flanked from the west, the Russians gave up resistance and left five guns in the hands of the now advancing Landwehr.

By the early afternoon hours of August 28, the troops of Major General v. Unger, the 3rd Reserve Division, and the Landwehr Division Goltz had achieved victory west of Paulsgut, near Dröbnitz, Hohenstein, and Mörten, and were pursuing the retreating enemy. Only at the road crossing east of Mühlen, crucial for covering his retreat, did the enemy still offer stubborn resistance.

The German 37th Infantry Division (10 battalions, 2 squadrons, 12 batteries) under Lieutenant General v. Staabs had not yet entered the battle. Their deployment in the morning had already been delayed due to a night march on difficult paths, fog, and the exhaustion of the troops<sup>1</sup>). The division cavalry tasked with reconnaissance at Hohenstein was missing; the order had not reached them. Without news of the changed situation at Reichenau since the evening of August 27, Lieutenant General v. Staabs believed the enemy to be directly in front of him. Without further orders from the General Command (the order at 8:30 a.m.<sup>2</sup>) to attack via Reichenau was not reached) and without knowledge of the 3rd Reserve Division's attack, the regiments of the 37th Infantry Division finally deployed from their wide formation, crossed the stream west of Reichenau at 10:00 a.m., and advanced further towards the Drewenz section. Only at 11:20 a.m., when the situation was clarified by a report from the 3rd Reserve Division, was the march continued on

<sup>1</sup>) At the 73rd Infantry Brigade, the Landwehr Infantry Regiment 107 was in place of the active Infantry Regiment 71. The 75th Infantry Brigade had to make a detour to Lüben on the evening of August 27 to retrieve their baggage left for the counterattack on Mühlen.  
<sup>2</sup>) See p. 187.

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The Advance of the 37th Infantry Division.

When the 6th Reserve Infantry Brigade and the Landwehr Division Goltz shook hands at noon at Hohenstein, the beginning of the 37th Infantry Division had not yet crossed the forests of the Drewenz section.

3. The Battles of the I Army Corps and the Pursuit until Evening.

(Maps 7 and 8.)

At the Army High Command in Frögenau, the tension had been great in the morning hours: From the 41st Infantry Division, whose success was to signal the attack at the front, no news; at least it was delayed, whether it would still break through? — Why doesn't the XX Army Corps attack north of the Mühlen Lake? Does it want to wait even longer for the 41st Division? — Whether the enemy is perhaps already retreating and pressing south against this division? Or whether he is still standing, perhaps even attacking? — What will the Russians do in Allenstein? As long as Lieutenant General v. Below does not engage them, they have full freedom of movement to Hohenstein or to Rennenkampf. The latter question was clarified shortly after 8 a.m. by radio messages from the Russian XIII Corps: the Allenstein enemy was marching on Hohenstein, the Russian commanding general wanted to be at the start of his vanguard at Grieslienen, 5 km before Hohenstein, by noon. The longer the XX Army Corps waited to attack, the more the enemy strengthened. — And alongside all these questions, always the concern: what will Rennenkampf do? Must the situation not reveal itself to him? — What then, if he clearly sees that he has no significant German forces in front of him? The uncertainty became increasingly agonizing.

In this situation, the attack decision of Lieutenant General v. Morgen acted as the redeeming deed. But then, at 9 a.m., the long-awaited news from the 41st Infantry Division came and stated that the division had encountered strong enemy forces at Waplitz and had retreated, hoping to hold the heights south of the Mühlen Lake. The hopes that had just been awakened were significantly dampened: a sensitive setback had occurred, the enemy, whom they wanted to encircle, now had the way south to Neidenburg open. The I Army Corps, however, whose main task lay in this direction, was still fighting at Soldau. The situation was once again extremely tense.

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The Driving Back of the Russian Center on August 28.

General v. François allowed his troops a longer night's rest than was possible for the XX Army Corps. On August 28 at 6 a.m., they stood ready in dense fog at their camps to continue the attack southward on Soldau. However, General v. François had not lost sight of his original mission, the pursuit over Neidenburg. Since he no longer considered the enemy at Soldau as strong as the evening before, he had already directed the cavalry stationed at Groß-Schläffken (Ulan Regiment 8 and a battery of the 1st Infantry Division, along with two squadrons of the XX Army Corps) towards Neidenburg and had also prepared the entire 2nd Infantry Division for departure there. With the remaining forces, he initially wanted to push the enemy over the Soldau section, but then let the 1st Division follow the 2nd to Neidenburg.

When the Army High Command learned of General v. François's intentions at 7:30 a.m., long before receiving the bad news from the 41st Infantry Division, it had no objections but emphasized "the importance of the I Army Corps reaching Neidenburg, with cavalry Willenberg, as soon as possible." However, when the news of the 41st Infantry Division's retreat arrived, it was necessary to bring help to this division quickly. Thus, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg ordered at 9 a.m. that the 2nd Infantry Division "immediately march on Rontken" (southeast of the Rowanzker Lake) "to prevent a breakthrough by the enemy, and indeed by attack." The troops belonging to the XX Army Corps under Generalleutnant v. Schmettau were also to march there.

This order reached the I Army Corps when the 2nd Infantry Division had already begun its march eastward. All other troops, however, were engaged in the attack on Soldau. The enemy offered only rear-guard resistance here, and the mass had been able to continue their retreat undisturbed during the night. Thus, the 5th Landwehr Brigade, the 1st Infantry Division, and the detachment v. Schmettau pushed back the Russian rear guards, who were still north of the Soldau River, with ease during the morning hours. Only a few prisoners and abandoned guns fell into their hands. The bridges were destroyed. The Russians covered their retreat with long-range artillery fire. The continuation of the attack across the river was halted when flyers reported that the Russians had continued their retreat beyond Mlawa. At Soldau, the 5th Landwehr Brigade now remained as security. The detachment v. Schmettau, which had been halted somewhat earlier, and the 1st Infantry Division were set in motion towards Neidenburg.

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The Capture of Soldau by the I Army Corps.

v. Schmettau, which had been halted somewhat earlier, and the

1st Infantry Division were set in motion towards Neidenburg.

Meanwhile, further unfavorable reports had been received at the General Command of the XX Army Corps

and at the Army High Command regarding the situation with the 41st Infantry Division1). It seemed

that the division could not hold even at Wronow (between Kontin and

Thymau Lake), where it had initially retreated.

It was also expected that the Russian pressure in the south would increase

if the enemy — as was quite possible — was already fighting for its retreat.

Everything had to be done to close off the northern escape route by the large lakes again. Therefore,

Generaloberst v. Hindenburg ordered the I Army Corps at noon to

support the 41st Infantry Division, which was retreating from Wronow,

but to continue pursuing towards Lahn. The corps

could "earn the greatest merits for the army if it acted

according to these intentions. Everything depends on the I Army

Corps."

Around noon on August 28, the Army

High Command had the following picture of the situation at the front of the XX Army

Corps: The 41st Infantry Division was defeated, — the Landwehr

at Waplitz could not advance, — the connection to the 37th Infantry Division was

cut off, and its location was unknown. — The attack

of the 3rd Reserve Division, however, made good progress, and from the Landwehr

Division Goltz, a report had been received at 12:45 p.m. that

it was in attack just north of the Hohenstein—Mörken line. The approach

of the Allenstein enemy threatened it. However, the overall impression was

that the enemy was defeated. The attack of the XX Army

Corps now had to be pushed forward where it had previously been still,

and the movements of the I and XX Army Corps had to be coordinated

for the pursuit. Whether the I Army Corps could still

block at Lahn in time now seemed doubtful. It was now

to be directed onto the roads leading from Neidenburg to Nordostin (Jedwabno) and east

(Willenberg). On these, there was a prospect of overtaking the enemy, who was dependent on poor forest roads,

and also enclosing all rear parts of the enemy in the large circle.

1) They were at least greatly exaggerated.  
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The Encirclement of the Russian Center on August 28.

Thus, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg gave the order for pursuit on August 28 at 1:30 in the afternoon in Frögenau: "Enemy from Hohenstein—Waplitz in flight to the southeast. — I. Army Corps is to block his path and must march today with the 1st Infantry Division over Neidenburg to reach the 2nd Infantry Division Grünfließ, with cavalry, cyclists, and artillery Willenberg. (Perhaps the enemy who was in Allenstein is also trying to escape via Willenberg, as is the one defeated at Bischofsburg via Ortelsburg.) — XX. Army Corps pursues from the line Wronow—Hohenstein in the direction of Lahna—Kurten. — The pursuit is to be continued by the I. Army Corps tomorrow at the earliest hour in the general direction of Willenberg. — Detachment Soldau remains standing."

The I. Army Corps received this army order around 3:00 in the afternoon 7 km west of Neidenburg near Lissfaten. From here, Lieutenant General v. Falk with his 2nd Infantry Division was advancing in a broad front against an enemy who had made himself noticeable from the northeast. The Uhlan Regiment 8 (6 squadrons and 1 battery)<sup>1</sup> had crossed the Neide south of the city of Neidenburg, while the cavalry of the 2nd Infantry Division and the advancing foremost parts of the v. Schmettau detachment soon also advanced from the west against this city. The enemy (again assembled parts of the 2nd Brigade of the Russian 2nd Infantry Division and small parts of the 3rd Guard Infantry Division) did not engage in any serious battle at Neidenburg but retreated to the east.

General v. François, however, now did everything to achieve the pursuit objectives set by the army command still on August 28. After the morning attack on Soldau and a subsequent march of over 25 km in the August heat, Lieutenant General v. Schmettau with his detachment from the XX. Army Corps (6 battalions, 2 squadrons, and 3 batteries) only reached the area east of Neidenburg by evening. But the detachment felt capable of marching further north. Thus, General v. François sent them forward to Muschaken during the night, which they reached without encountering the enemy by 3:00 in the morning on August 29. Behind this detachment, the 1st Infantry Division, partially only by midnight, reached the area of Neidenburg.

Further north, the attack of the 2nd Infantry Division had meanwhile only progressed slowly.

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The Army Order for Pursuit.

meanwhile only slowly advanced. As we know today, apart from a still completely fresh Russian Guard Regiment with three batteries, only half of the 6th Cavalry Division faced them. But the German 2nd Infantry Division, after the previous exertions and battles, especially the setback on the morning of August 27, no longer had its old striking power. Cavalry and heavy artillery had been detached. Nevertheless, the division succeeded in pushing the enemy back everywhere during the afternoon and capturing the main road Neidenburg—Hohenstein by nightfall at Salusken and Ronken. The goal set by the Army High Command, Grünfließ, could not be reached; nor was it possible to establish contact with the 41st Infantry Division by nightfall.

General v. François had already arranged for the continuation of the pursuit for August 29. According to this, the v. Schmettau detachment was to reach the important road junction Willenberg far ahead on that day. The commanding general wanted to keep the two divisions of his own army corps closer together east of Neidenburg at first, in order to have sufficient forces at hand in the event of a Russian breakthrough attempt at this point. Therefore, the 1st Infantry Division was to advance only to Muschaken, the 2nd only to Grünfließ.

At the XX Army Corps, the concern that the 41st Infantry Division might not hold its position had already disappeared by noon on August 28. The enemy did not press forward, and it was assumed at the General Command at that time that he would now also retreat before the 41st Infantry Division.

At 1:37 p.m., General v. Scholz ordered the general pursuit based on the army order. The 41st Infantry Division was to follow the enemy to Orlau, the troops of Lieutenant General v. Morgen to advance on Kurten, the 37th Infantry Division, it was further stated, "turns against the Russian XIII Corps advancing from Allenstein and soon to be attacked in the rear and flank by the I Reserve Corps."

When the commander of the 41st Infantry Division, Major General Sonntag, received the pursuit order, the enemy was still temporarily strong in front of his front. His own division, however, was, apart from the heavy losses of the previous battles, due to hard marches and over-marches, exhausting readiness, after entrenchment activities and partially significant supply difficulties, so worn out that the general initially considered an advance to attack to be out of the question and reported this to the General Command accordingly.

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The Encirclement of the Russian Center on August 28.

Due to trench work and partly significant supply difficulties, the general was so affected that he initially considered an advance to attack impossible and reported this to the general command. He led his troops back in the evening according to another directive from the general command to bivouac 5 km west of their position.

In the section of Lieutenant General v. Morgen, the pursuit had been in full swing since noon. Only opposite Mühlen, at the most sensitive point for the Russian retreat, had the artillery-weak 70th Landwehr Brigade not yet advanced. The army high command kept urging here. The attack only gained momentum when the parts left behind by the 37th Infantry Division at Mühlen (3 battalions and 3 batteries)¹) were deployed. Under the simultaneous pressure of the replacement battalions of the deputy 69th Infantry Brigade from the north, the Russians retreated eastward at 3 p.m. A large number fell into German captivity. In pursuit, the Landwehr and replacement troops of Major General v. Unger reached Ganshorn and Paulsgut by evening.

At the 3rd Reserve Division, which had recorded its first major battle and full victory on August 28, Lieutenant General v. Morgen wanted to preempt the Russians withdrawing on the main road Hohenstein-Schwedrich. He deployed three battalions, three squadrons, and a battery from the west on Schwedrich-Kurten and gave the same target to the 5th Reserve Infantry Brigade, while the 6th Reserve Infantry Brigade was still tied up at Hohenstein. However, when a new order from the general command arrived after 6 p.m., stating that the division should now advance southwest to Orlau instead of east to Kurken, to cut off the retreat of the enemy still holding out according to the report of the 41st Infantry Division, the 5th Reserve Infantry Brigade turned south west of Kunschengut and reached the area north of Waplitz in the evening. Meanwhile, the mixed detachment sent ahead to Schwedrich had to turn back in the darkness before the Russian-held estate of Nadrau.

During these events, there were battles against a new enemy at Hohenstein.

Already around noon, when half of the Landwehr Division Goltz was still with the front facing south against the Hohenstein-Mörken road in attack, broad skirmish lines from the Russian XIII Corps had advanced southwest over Grieslienen.

¹) p. 187.

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The Afternoon Battles at Hohenstein.

with the front facing south against the road Hohenstein—Mörken in attack), broad lines of riflemen from the Russian XIII Corps had advanced southwest over Grieslienen. Just at this time, the 2nd Landwehr Battery had arrived at the southern edge of the Kammerei Forest after three-quarters of an hour of trot and gallop from Biessellen. The two light batteries of the division and three Landwehr battalions arriving one after the other on the road brought the new enemy to a halt and thereby covered the further attack against Hohenstein—Mörken from the rear. The half-division attacking here under Generalmajor v. Derxen had initially followed south of the Mispel Lake, but had to also face the Grieslien enemy by evening. Attempts to gain more ground to the east, where the Schwedicher road led through the narrow lakes, met with resistance. The attack power of the Landwehr was no longer sufficient to break it and thereby delay the enemy's further retreat. Mörken, through which the Landwehr had gone south in pursuit in the afternoon, was later reoccupied by the Russians behind them. West of this part of the Landwehr Division, the 6th Reserve Infantry Brigade had cleared Hohenstein of Russians in several hours of house-to-house fighting in the afternoon and captured 2000 prisoners. In the evening, the brigade was south of the city.

The Russian XIII Corps had not expected to encounter the enemy already west of Grieslienen during its advance. When it recognized the situation, it gradually moved superior forces northward into the Kammerei Forest, while only minor reinforcements arrived on the German side. Thus, an undecided back-and-forth forest battle developed in the afternoon hours, which ultimately ended in favor of the Russians because the German regimental commander in charge of this part of the battlefield, for unexplained reasons, attempted to withdraw his troops from the forest to reorganize them for new resistance west of the Amling Ground.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant General v. Staabs had also arrived with the beginning of the 37th Infantry Division around 3 p.m. west of Hohenstein. He expected that the enemy would already be pushed from the east by the I Reserve Corps and was determined to attack immediately with his active division. However, the troops of the 37th Infantry Division, exhausted from marches, arrived only gradually and mostly with such delay that by the evening of August 28th, only the artillery could be put into action.

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The Encirclement of the Russian Center on August 28.

On August 28, only the artillery could be active. Their fire forced the last parts of the Landwehr to evacuate the Kämmerer Forest. The 37th Infantry Division held Hohenstein and the heights west of the city in the evening. On their northern flank, parts of the Landwehr gathered, others had been driven north. The Russians held back, but there was also no sign of the expected intervention of the German I Reserve Corps.

4. The Advance of the German Eastern Group.

(Map 7.)

Since the occupation of Allenstein by the Russians, both telephone and motor vehicle connections between the Army High Command and the corps of the Eastern Group were extraordinarily difficult. Thus, the army order issued on the evening of August 27 had to be transmitted by the I Reserve Corps, which had received it in Wartenburg via telephone, to the XVII Army Corps. To immediately arrange what was necessary for the joint attack on Allenstein, the deputy chief of staff of the I Reserve Corps, Colonel Count v. Pösadowsky-Wehner, personally went to the corps headquarters of General v. Mackensen in Rauschung and there — according to the records made at the XVII Army Corps — presented the following as the will of the Army High Command: “XVII Army Corps and I Reserve Corps will jointly attack the enemy standing at Allenstein tomorrow. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that, with regard to the overall operation, the attack at least by the Reserve Corps occurs by 12 noon ... Detachment Passenheim is also desired to advance on Allenstein.”

The XVII Army Corps was until then in full pursuit on Jedwabno and eastward. Therefore, General v. Mackensen initially resisted the instruction transmitted by Count Pösadowsky, according to which the corps had to turn back to advance on Allenstein, with the utmost determination. He apparently only relented when Major Drechsel, who was assigned as liaison officer of the High Command to the I Reserve Corps, received the same order at 10:30 in the evening, albeit in the following more accurate version: “From the Army High Command 10° in the evening. I Reserve Corps and XVII Corps attack Allenstein and XVII pursue Ortelsburg. As early as possible. I Reserve Corps should not wait for XVII, but start. XVII will follow. Decision must fall tomorrow. — General Ludendorff.”

1) p. 183/84.  
2) A copy of this record is in the files of the High Command, to which it was apparently later submitted for clarification of the events. It bears the note of General Ludendorff: “Does not correspond to what is given here

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The Orders of the Army High Command.

following more accurate wording was transmitted: "From the Army High Command 10° in the evening. I. Reserve Corps and XVII. Corps attack Allenstein and XVII. pursue Ortelsburg. As early as possible. I. Reserve Corps should not wait for XVII., but start. XVII. will follow. Decision must be made tomorrow. — General Ludendorff." For reasons that can no longer be determined, the version presented by Count Pshadowsky ultimately became decisive for the orders of the XVII. Army Corps, whereby it was agreed that this corps would no longer be supported by the I. Reserve Corps on Allenstein. Thus, on August 28, the XVII. Army Corps moved with both divisions over Wartenburg and north, bypassing the I. Reserve Corps, towards Allenstein. The beginning of the forward-deployed southern division of the corps was to be 4 km west of Wartenburg at 12° noon. The pursuit detachments set to the south were withdrawn again, with the sole exception of those designated to move over Mensguth to Ortelsburg.

In the I. Reserve Corps, the urging of the Army High Command for an early departure had no effect. Lieutenant General v. Below wanted to await the arrival of the XVII. Army Corps to be able to conduct the attack together with it more powerfully. He set out with both divisions side by side on August 28 at 10° in the morning from the area south of Wartenburg, and could therefore only arrive in front of Allenstein around 2° in the afternoon.

At 10° in the morning, half an hour after the corps had begun its advance, the General Command received the report from an officer patrol of the Reserve Hussar Regiment No. 1 that only weak enemy forces were present at Allenstein. Lieutenant General v. Below was of the opinion that the enemy could only have marched south and decided accordingly to take a more southerly marching direction in accordance with the army order. Shortly thereafter, a flyer delivered an order from the Army High Command from the morning of the 28th, which, based on intercepted Russian radio messages¹), directed the I. Reserve Corps in the same direction. It was to "proceed ruthlessly on the shortest route to its positions-Griesslienen. Urgency required." However, for the XVII. Army Corps, this order contained — for reasons not clarified — no modifying instructions.

Meanwhile, General v. Maßen, unaware of the changed situation, remained on the march to Allenstein. At 12° noon, General v. Below, on his own initiative, made contact with him.

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The Displacement of the Russian Center on August 28.

General v. Below independently connected with him. He suggested to him to turn south again towards Passenheim, in order to relocate the enemy's retreat to the east according to the original idea. However, General v. Mackensen and his general staff were not in agreement with this, as the corps had just been recalled from its advance on Jedwabno, as they assumed at the instigation of the I. Reserve Corps: The XVII. Army Corps was now north of the I. Reserve Corps advancing on Allenstein and barely an hour and a half behind it. According to the proposal of the I. Reserve Corps, it would have had to proceed south again, once more behind the marching columns of this corps. However, General v. Mackensen feared that the corps, after the previous marches, would arrive too late for the great battle, which he assumed was near the lakes. He did not know the state of this battle, and so it seemed to him appropriate that the XVII. Army Corps should take the march direction to Stabigotten, as was planned in the army order of August 27 for the right wing of the forces set on Allenstein. Accordingly, General v. Mackensen, as the senior in service, demanded that the I. Reserve Corps clear the road Allenstein—Stabigotten initially up to Darethen for the XVII. Army Corps. Since the troops had to take a march rest anyway, he sent Captain Bartenwerfer from the general staff of his army corps by plane to the army high command to report his intentions and to clarify the situation, which had become doubtful to him since the appearance of Colonel Count v. Posałdowsky in Rauschung, at the most competent place.

Meanwhile, the army high command succeeded at 2 p.m. in establishing telephone communication from Frögenau with Major Drechsel, his liaison officer sent to the I. Reserve Corps, in Wartenburg. What he reported about the situation at this corps, we do not know. That the Kurlerne Enge remained unoccupied due to an oversight, however, remained unknown to the army high command. The Russian VI. Corps was supposed to be in full retreat from Ortelsburg to the border with its cavalry division. — At 2:30 p.m., the telephone connection to the XVII. Army Corps also succeeded. General v. Mackensen requested an immediate order, referring to the doubts and frictions that had arisen since the evening of August 27. Since Allenstein and now also Ortelsburg were free of the enemy, it offered the army high command the opportunity to block the enemy with the entire XVII. Army Corps together with the I. Army Corps positioned on Muschaken—Willenberg and on Grünfließ at the road Neidenburg—Jedwabno—Passenheim and again at the road Neidenburg—Willenberg—Ortelsburg, and thereby intercept everything that might escape from the tighter encirclement.

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The Advance of the Southern Group.

For the army high command, there is now the possibility to block the enemy with the entire XVII Army Corps together with the I Army Corps positioned on Muschaken-Willenberg and Grünfließ on the road Neidenburg-Jedwabno-Passenheim and again on the road Neidenburg-Willenberg-Ortelsburg, and thereby intercept everything that might escape from the tighter encirclement. Generaloberst von Hindenburg therefore ordered that the XVII Army Corps should "march as strong forces as possible to Jedwabno to intercept all Russian detachments coming out of the Allenstein-Hohenstein forest and what flees from the Russian XIII and XV Corps through the forest." At the same time, the main force should continue the pursuit southward; "Sharp pressure on Ortelsburg, cavalry direction Rudczanny-Johannisburg. Pursuit to the last breath. Great successes if pursued energetically. Forward."

Presumably shortly after issuing this order, Captain Bartenwerfer landed at Trögenau. The measures of General von Mackensen, which he sought to explain, primarily questioned the timely arrival of the I Reserve Corps on the battlefield, and it was precisely this that the army high command was eagerly awaiting. Despite the victory achieved, there was concern about the situation at Hohenstein. The Landwehr Division Goltz seemed seriously threatened there by the parts of the Russian XIII Corps advancing from Allenstein. The commander-in-chief was extremely displeased that General von Mackensen diverted the I Reserve Corps from its marching route, further delaying its engagement. Captain Bartenwerfer was tasked with ensuring that the I Reserve Corps intervened at Grieslienen without delay; the aim was the destruction of the enemy division marching on Hohenstein. Captain Bartenwerfer dropped the message board with a corresponding order at 4 p.m. over a marching column of the I Reserve Corps.

The I Reserve Corps had meanwhile continued its march on Stabigotten. The corps had only poor sandy roads available for this new advance direction. In the large forests east of Stabigotten, there was not even a continuous road connection to the west. Therefore, there was a justified reluctance to send significant parts of the corps through the pathless forest. There was no other choice but for the 1st Reserve Division to move from Stabigotten to Grieslienen, the 36th north of it to Darethen.

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The Deployment of the Russian Center on August 28.

to position the 36th north of it over Darethen. However, it became very

questionable whether it would still be possible to catch the Allenstein enemy

on the march in the flank. Lieutenant General v. Below

wanted to reach Grieslienen by evening. It did not succeed, as

Russian resistance and poor roads caused the 1st Reserve Division

unexpected delays. Thus, Lieutenant General v. Förster

reached the main road at Darethen only at nightfall. Here, new

nighttime battles unfolded. Only after midnight did the troops, rifles

in hand, find rest. North of the 1st lay the 36th Reserve Division, parts

of which had cleared Allenstein of the last Russians. However, the order

intercepted by Captain Bartenwerfer, that the corps should attack the

enemy marching on Hohenstein "today," finally

reached the General Command only at 8:30 p.m. It therefore only

influenced the orders for the following day.

At the XVII Army Corps, clarity about the situation had been

achieved since the order from the High Command on the afternoon of the 28th.

General v. Mackensen was certain that his task no longer lay in a westerly

direction, but again in pursuing southward. He

immediately turned his divisions back to the old direction and aimed

in numerous columns, using all forces, at Jedwabno and Ortelsburg:

Infantry on wagons, machine guns, cavalry, and

artillery hurried after the main body and reached, in uninterrupted

advance, partly only after midnight, Waplitz (south of Passenheim¹),

Grammen, and Ortelsburg. General v. Mackensen himself reached

Passenheim with the foremost pursuit detachments, while his

main body could not follow so far on deep sandy roads in the blazing August heat.

5. The Situation in the Evening and Preparations for Defense  
against the Russian Njemen Army.  
(Maps 7 and 9.)

While the battle against the Narew Army was still in full swing,

the attention of the German High Command was drawn by

new reports from the Njemen Army:

On August 28, at 4:10 p.m., the governor of

the fortress Königsberg reported that the Russian Njemen Army, with

the main forces, apparently with three corps, had resumed the advance westward.

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The Situation in the Evening.

resumed. Russian radio messages, according to which the southernmost

corps of this army, the Russian II Corps, was to begin the retreat to the

border to be transported by rail, seemed incredible under these circumstances.

A report from the German 1st Cavalry Division, stating that it was at Rissel

and had no enemy in front of it in the east, as well as the further content of

the report from the governor of Königsberg, that the enemy had so far only

crossed the Alle with cavalry, could not dispel the impression that Rennenkampf

had now recognized the situation and would rush to the aid of the Narew Army

with all its forces. To the German leadership, this seemed so self-evident that

there had been no explanation for General v. Rennenkampf's behavior for days.

Therefore, his imminent intervention in the battle was now expected with certainty.

The German Army High Command had been considering future operations

against the Rennenkampf army for several days. Reinforcements were in

prospect for these operations. The Supreme Army Command had first

promised three and then, on the night of August 27, two corps from the west.

— Since the evening of August 21, when Colonel General v. Prittwitz had

his telephone conversation with Colonel General v. Moltke, neither the

command of the 8th Army nor, as far as could be determined, any other

German authority had expressed this wish again. Rather, General Ludendorff,

when the reinforcements were promised, "emphasized that they were not

absolutely necessary; if they were needed in the west, the east could manage

on its own." On the other hand, the Austro-Hungarian Army High Command

had shown disappointment at the loss of the divisions originally intended for

East Prussia. The German Supreme Army Command was therefore eager,

given the still extremely serious situation in the east, to send reinforcements

there, which seemed dispensable in the west. The new corps could only be

brought in on the two major double-track routes, via Osterode-Allenstein

and through Elbing, due to the railway conditions. However, when they

would arrive was still uncertain.

1) p. 106.  
2) Hoffmann, p. 41. — See also Ludendorff I, p. 45.  
3) The Austro-Hungarian "Army High Command" corresponded to the German   
"Supreme Army Command."  
4) pp. 45 and 51.

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The Encirclement of the Russian Center on August 28.

overlooked. Until then, the 8th Army relied on its own forces.

Allenstein had to be covered, and the arrival of reinforcements also had to be concealed to the north.

It had to be considered that the Russian Njemen Army, since the Battle of Gumbinnen, was probably reinforced by reserve divisions and perhaps also by other troops, so that even with the detachment of parts against Königsberg and Lötzen, it could still continue the advance to support the Narew Army with at least three corps and probably all five cavalry divisions. It would likely take the general direction towards Allenstein. It had 70 km to march there, so it could attack Allenstein on August 30, starting on August 28. If one did not want to arrive too late, German forces had to be prepared here by August 29 at the latest.

In anticipation of the new task, the headquarters of the 8th Army was moved from Libau to Osterode on August 28. It seemed necessary to immediately withdraw troops from the battle against the Narew Army and assemble them at Allenstein and to the north against the new enemy, while other parts in the south concluded the battle against Samsonow.

The situation at the front seemed to allow such a measure. Since noon on August 28, the German 8th Army's high command increasingly came to the conclusion that the conclusion of the three-day battle had been reached: "As far as is now established, the Russian I Corps is in full flight over Mlava towards Warsaw, — Russian XXIII, XV, and XIII Corps scattered into the woods southeast of Hohenstein—Allenstein, — Russian VI Corps, of which one division was completely destroyed 1), in full flight over Ortelsburg," thus began the army order given by Generaloberst v. Hindenburg on August 28 at 5:30 p.m. at Tannenberg. It was to conclude the battle against the Narew Army. The German I and XX Army Corps with the 3rd Reserve Division were also to remain in pursuit to the east, while the Landwehr and fortress troops gathered behind the front. The I Reserve Corps was to be halted and, on the following day, together with the XVII Army Corps, which was still assumed to be in the Wartenburg area, to be prepared at Allenstein and Guttstadt behind the Alle against the Russian Njemen Army.

1) The Russian corps reported to its army on August 29 that two regiments of the 4th Division had only 400 men each (Sichowitzki in Sbornik, Issue 3, p. 142).

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The Army Order from the Afternoon of August 28.

The order was initially issued only to the I and XX Army Corps, but was still withheld for the two corps of the Eastern Group. Immediately after issuing the order, General von Hindenburg wanted to proceed to Mühlen to greet his victorious troops there. Heavy artillery, ammunition wagons, and vehicles from the train came rushing towards him east of Tannenberg on and beside the road: "The Russians are coming," was all that could be learned from them. The command's motor vehicles had to swerve to avoid being overrun. Gradually, it was possible to fend off the wild flight. Columns of prisoners advancing in the haze of the battlefield, framed by the flashing bayonets of their German escorts, provided the explanation. But the road forward was so hopelessly blocked that the commander-in-chief had to refrain from continuing and immediately proceed to the new headquarters in Osterode.

On the evening of August 28, the army command was in full awareness of the victory achieved in three heavy days of fighting (it was believed that the planned encirclement of the Russians had succeeded despite all frictions). It knew the German I Army Corps was at Neidenburg, its cavalry ahead at Willenberg. It was believed that the I Reserve Corps had meanwhile arrived, and it was not yet suspected that the Kurleerer Narrow remained open to the enemy and that the XVII Army Corps had withdrawn the Passive Division. Thus, General Ludendorff reported on August 28 at 9:30 p.m. by telephone personally to the Supreme Army Command: "Everything is fine. The encirclement of the Russian 2nd Army will succeed by human judgment. More definite and precise news cannot yet be given, as no reports from the army corps have yet reached the army command due to the great distances."

The orders for the deployment of the I Reserve Corps and XVII Army Corps at Allenstein had not yet been sent to them by 10 p.m. Reports on the conclusion of the battle north of Hohenstein were awaited. Then Major Drechsel, the intelligence officer with the I Reserve Corps, personally brought the clarification about the situation with this corps. It was still far back, the Kurleerer Narrow not blocked, the area from Jedwabno—Passenheim, as Major Drechsel assumed, had not yet been reached by the XVII Army Corps.

1) The records provide only very incomplete information on how the army command assessed the situation on the afternoon and evening of August 28. The information from those involved has not provided full clarity.

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The Encirclement of the Russian Center on August 28.

by the XVII Army Corps was by no means yet achieved. The enemy could therefore withdraw to the east unhindered. — The disappointment was great. — On the other hand, there were no new reports on Rennenkampf's continued march. He might still be taking his time. — Thus, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg decided to initially forego the provision at Allenstein and to use the I Reserve Corps against the Narew Army on August 29 as well. At 10 p.m., the corps were ordered to immediately continue the pursuit over Grieslienen to Hohenstein with one division, to advance with the other east of the lakes over Buttrienen to Jedwabno, and to push the cavalry forward to Ortelsburg. The further use of the XVII Army Corps was still reserved by the army command. Perhaps it would be urgently needed against Rennenkampf on August 29. The army corps was to await further orders on August 29 at 6 a.m. in its quarters, which were assumed to be at Wartenburg and south. On the other hand, the army command decided around midnight — despite the advance of the Njemen Army — to also deploy parts of the 1st Cavalry Division for pursuit to Ortelsburg. This division was, as far as the army command knew, the only troop unit¹) still standing against the Russian Njemen Army, but also the only cavalry unit available to the army. Generalleutnant Brecht had just been able to report a success over Russian cavalry at Rößel. He now received the order to deploy a cavalry brigade for the pursuit of the Narew Army to Ortelsburg at 3 a.m. on August 29, "Horsepower must not be spared." Only two cavalry brigades were to remain against the Njemen Army.

At midnight on August 28/29, General Ludendorff reported to the Supreme Army Command, again personally by telephone, a second evening report, from which the change in perception of the situation since the afternoon emerged and the deep disappointment that large parts of the enemy had escaped the intended encirclement west of the lakes. According to records at the Supreme Army Command, it was said: "The battle is won. Pursuit will continue tomorrow. An encirclement of the two Russian corps will probably no longer succeed." (The two corps presumably referred to the Russian XIII and XV.) The number of prisoners amounts to several thousand.

¹) That the I Reserve Corps had left the infantry of the 6th Landwehr Brigade south of Bischofstein was not yet known to the army command.

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The Night of August 29th.

amounted to several thousand. However, General Ludendorff thought that within two days he would be finished with the enemy in this part of the theater of war.

Soon after this report was sent, a Russian radio message in the early morning hours of August 29th brought further confirmation of the Niemen Army's advance. The following could be read from an order to General v. Rennenkampf: "In view of the heavy fighting being conducted by the 2nd Army, the Commander-in-Chief has ordered to send forward for support . . . . . . . and cavalry for joint operations towards . . . . . . . . ." This only confirmed previous expectations.

On the other hand, the German Supreme Army Command had definitively ordered during the same night of August 28/29 the assignment of the XI Army Corps, the Guard Reserve Corps, and the 8th Cavalry Division to the 8th Army. These reinforcements were expected in the first days of September. For protection and concealment of their unloading against the far westward-ranging cavalry of the Russian Niemen Army, only Landsturm battalions deployed for railway protection were available so far. As reinforcement, two Danzig replacement battalions were now moved forward to Braunsberg. The fortress of Königsberg was instructed to prevent the advance of the Niemen Army through powerful sorties.

Furthermore, the Army High Command calculated that from the morning of August 29th, the following forces would be ready for deployment against the Niemen Army: At Waplitz (south of Hohenstein) Landwehr and fortress troops with a strength of about 1½ divisions under Major General v. Unger, at Hohenstein the Landwehr Division Goltz, in the area east of Allenstein the XVII Army Corps, totaling 4½ divisions. However, at 6:30 AM on August 29th, it turned out that this calculation, as far as the XVII Army Corps was concerned, was incorrect: General v. Mackensen had marched so far south on the afternoon of August 28th that the army order of 10 PM had not even reached him. Also with the I Reserve Corps, both divisions had already been deployed against Hohenstein when the army order arrived. The Army High Command let these already initiated movements continue. The XVII Army Corps maintained the blockade in the east. The idea of using the corps later on the northern wing of the army was not yet abandoned, as its columns and trains were stationed there. The Army Corps should therefore advance no further than Passenheim and Ortelsburg to the south.

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The Encirclement of the Russian Center on August 28.

advance southward. If the I Army Corps simultaneously occupied Willenberg,

an encirclement of parts of the Narew Army still seemed achievable. On the other hand,

other forces had to be quickly withdrawn against the Njemen Army. At Hohenstein,

where the Landwehr Division Goltz was to gather anyway, the I Reserve Corps and the

37th Infantry Division from the XX Army Corps had to engage the enemy still standing

between them. Therefore, orders were given to these two corps to withdraw a division

each as soon as possible. General Ludendorff himself drove to Hohenstein on the morning

of August 29 to organize the troops there and, on behalf of the Supreme Commander,

to make the necessary arrangements on site.

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Fifth Chapter.

The Conclusion of the Battle, August 29 to 31.

I. The Events with the Russian Narew Army until the morning of August 29¹).

(Maps 8 and 9.)

When the commander-in-chief of the Narew Army realized in the morning hours of August 28 that a continuation of the attack was hopeless is uncertain. The high command left Neidenburg around 5 a.m. to proceed to the XV Corps. General Samsonow wanted to personally lead the attack of this corps and the XIII, as everything now depended on its outcome²). He initially took his position on the road to Jedwabno. There, General Samsonow informed the English military attaché, who had just arrived, that his I Corps, the 2nd Division, and the XV Corps were forced to retreat. He had also learned that the previous afternoon his right flank, the VI Corps, had retreated in disorder to southeast of Ortelsburg. He then ordered this corps to "hold Ortelsburg at all costs." The 4th Cavalry Division was to assist²). The commander-in-chief now considered the situation of his army extremely precarious and reported this to the army group at 8 a.m. He sent the staff of the high command back to Ostrolenka and proceeded himself with his chief of staff and some other officers on Cossack horses around 11 a.m.³) to the general command of the XV Corps on a hill west of the estate Nadrau (7 km southeast of Hohenstein). As the radio station of the army high command was simultaneously moved across the border with the staff, all communication with the army group command and the VI and I Corps ceased; it had never existed with the Njemen Army.

¹) Connection to p. 180. — ²) Rjchowitsch in Sbornik, Issue 3, pp. 145/46. — ³) Knorr, p. 73.

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The Conclusion of the Battle, August 29 to 31.

In the XV Corps, the situation had developed as follows: The XIII Corps advancing from Allenstein for support had not arrived in time to avert the defeat. However, the danger in which this corps itself was hovering might not have been apparent upon the arrival of General Samsnow in Nadarau.

From Hohenstein to Mühlen, the troops of General Martos, reinforced XV Corps, retreated in the afternoon after being defeated. The General had withdrawn the 2nd Brigade of the 8th Infantry Division from the front early in the morning due to the attack by the German 41st Infantry Division to support his left flank. Here, the 1st Brigades of the 8th and 2nd Infantry Divisions had already achieved full success south of Waplitz; however, it was not even locally exploited and could not change the overall situation. Instead, the advance of the German I Army Corps on Neidenburg during the afternoon also decisively shifted the situation on the southern flank of the Russian XV Corps in favor of the Russians.

At Neidenburg, General Kondratowitsch, the commanding general of the XXIII Corps, fortified. Under him were: the 1st Brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division, confident again since their success in the morning, at Frankenau, — the Guard Regiment Resyholm with a battery and half of the 6th Cavalry Division at Rontzeln, — parts of the 2nd Brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division, severely shaken in their halt, at Neidenburg. In the afternoon, the Rontzken group was attacked by the German 2nd Infantry Division but held its ground; however, the Neidenburg group retreated eastward after a brief fight before the cavalry of the German I Army Corps. Since General Kondratowitsch sensed the approach of this German Army Corps from Soldau, he feared for his flank and therefore also withdrew the two northern combat groups from Frankenau and Rontzken to the east. They spent the night at Orlau. The Neidenburg group, however, moved to Willenberg and Janowod, and the commanding general himself went to Chorzele. He had left the main road Neidenburg—Willenberg open for the Germans. He was soon relieved of his position for this¹.

These events at Neidenburg were initially unknown in Nadarau. Thus, the retreat of the XV Corps was initially directed over Dietrichsdorf to Neidenburg. But then General Samsonow, probably still on the evening of August 28, ordered the general retreat east past Neidenburg for the XV and XXIII Corps to Janow, and for the XIII to Chorzele.

¹) Sidowitsch in Gorint, Issue 3, p. 148.

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The Intentions of the Russian Narew Army for August 29.

Samsonow, probably still on the evening of August 28, ordered the general retreat east past Neidenburg for the XV and XXIII Corps to Janow, for the XIII to Chorzele. The 2nd Infantry Division and preceding parts of the XV and XIII Corps were to cover this march in the line Frantenau—Grünfließ—Bartschöfen, the I Corps "to relieve the XV Corps and the 2nd Infantry Division, which were encircled by the enemy," to attack Neidenburg.

The further direction of the retreat was entrusted by the commander-in-chief to General Martos and, when rumors of his death came, still on the evening of August 29 to General Klujew). Then he himself went to the 2nd Infantry Division at Orlau and sent the regiments united there back into the line Lahna—Radomin early in the morning, along with parts of both divisions of the XV Corps. General Samsonow personally urged these troops to hold their ground. Then he wanted to go to Janow to regain overall command of the army.

Meanwhile, the XV Corps was marching behind the advanced covering troops towards Muschaken. The XIII Corps had managed to escape the encirclement east of Hohenstein with the bulk of its troops during the night of August 28/29 and reached the beginning of Jablonken (southeast of Kurken) in the morning. However, the Russians did not yet suspect that at the same time the German I Army Corps from the west and the XVII from the north were advancing towards the area of Willenberg and thus about to block the last escape route.

2. The Pursuit Battles on August 29 and the Measures for August 30.

(Maps 9, 10, and 11.)

On the night of August 28/29, the battle over large stretches of the front had only concluded late. The Russians had remained exhausted, as far as the fear of their pursuers did not drive them up again. The German troops had been driven forward to the utmost by the will of the leaders and the hope of still reaching the fleeing enemy. But then they too had sunk into rest, dead tired from the exertions of three days of battle.

1) Zichowitsch in Sbornik, Issue 3, p. 146. — 2) Ibid., p. 152. — 3) Ibid., p. 154.

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The Conclusion of the Battle, August 29 to 31.

On the morning of August 29, the battle first revived at Hohenstein. Shortly after 6 a.m., Lieutenant General v. Staabs led his 37th Infantry Division against Mörken and the Rammen Forest to attack. The 6th Reserve Brigade (from the 3rd Reserve Division) under Major General Krause and the half of the Landwehr Division Goltz still southeast of Hohenstein under Major General v. Oertzen joined this attack on the southern flank. They drove the enemy south of Mörken, then turned against the road bridge of Schlag-Mühle, thus halting the Russian retreat. However, it was not until 2 p.m. that the 6th Reserve Infantry Brigade succeeded in taking the bridge itself and thus clearing the way for pursuit.

Meanwhile, the fate of the now completely encircled rearguards of the Russian XIII Corps was sealed at Mörken and Griesslienen: The I Reserve Corps had set out again after a night rest of only a few hours at 3 a.m. Lieutenant General v. Below led almost his entire corps along the Hohenstein road. The path between Großem Plautziger and Lankser Lake to Schwedrich remained clear. East of Lankser Lake, a weak flank detachment (2 battalions, 2 Landwehr squadrons, and 1 battery) was deployed. Lieutenant General v. Förster advanced with his 1st Reserve Division from Stabgotten to Griesslienen, followed, partly alongside, by the 36th Reserve Division under Major General Krug. Already at Griesslienen, larger enemy troops surrendered. South of the place, Russian infantry and artillery, which had the front against Hohenstein and offered welcome targets to the artillery of the German 1st Reserve Division entering the fire at 7 a.m., were surprised. The simultaneously besieged enemy from the west by the 37th Infantry Division suffered extraordinarily heavy losses in the crossfire of the German artillery, although mutual shelling of German troops also had to be accepted. Soon the Russians showed white flags. However, when they resumed the fight and shot two German parliamentarians, the German artillery also resumed its fire. Finally, over 8000 prisoners with seven guns surrendered at 10 a.m. An unmanageable number of vehicles, which the Russian corps had abandoned in its hasty retreat, was the further booty of the battle at this point.

By noon, it was possible, according to the order of the Army High Command, to gather the troops of the 37th Infantry Division.

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The Conclusion of the Battle, August 29 to 31.

followed Major General Sonntag. The division, after a preliminary march of 15 km, began to rest at 5 p.m. starting at Orlau.

General v. François saw his I Army Corps faced with a particularly difficult task. While it was supposed to quickly block the enemy's path along the 35 km road Neidenburg—Willenberg to the border, it also had to anticipate a Russian breakthrough attempt on Neidenburg, as the only major road south to Mlawa led through Neidenburg. General v. François accounted for these circumstances in his order for August 29 by initially positioning the 1st Infantry Division only on Muschaken, and the 2nd on Grünfließ.

When Lieutenant General v. Falk began the advance with the 2nd Infantry Division from Ronkitten in two columns in the morning, he soon encountered new resistance, against which the division gained ground only very slowly. Its commander saw no disadvantage in this. He wanted to give the German troops time on the main road to gain a lead and intended to coordinate his advance with that of the 41st Infantry Division from the XX Army Corps. However, it advanced even more slowly. Thus, the 2nd Infantry Division also reached the area north of Neidenburg fighting only by noon and followed the retreating enemy at least over Grünfließ. The commander of the Russian 2nd Infantry Division, Lieutenant General Mingin, was able to fulfill the covering task assigned to him¹) until the early afternoon hours. Then he withdrew his troops to Orlau.

The same Russian troops also held the German 1st Infantry Division north of Neidenburg for several hours. It had observed the enemy's advance from Orlau to Kadmim early in the morning and had to conclude from this that there were Russian breakthrough intentions. Lieutenant General v. Conta, whose troops had not yet advanced beyond Neidenburg at this time, deployed strong artillery north and northeast of the city. However, the enemy did not advance further here; rather, they were soon observed retreating southeast in the large forest east of Grünfließ. Accordingly, the German 1st Infantry Division gradually pushed parts eastwards along the Willenberg road up to Muschaken. Meanwhile, the division's mountainous

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The I and XVII Army Corps on August 29.

The Uhlan Regiment Count zu Dohna (East Prussian) No. 8, under its

commander Lieutenant Colonel Freiherr Schäffer v. Bernstein, together

with parts of the Dragoon Regiment 10 and the Field Artillery Regiment 1,

advancing south of the main road, captured Russian trains and made

5000 prisoners. The regiment remained in Groß-Pantheim. Furthermore,

Lieutenant Colonel Berring with the Mounted Jäger Regiment

No. 10 (from the 2nd Infantry Division) had already reached near

Willenberg by 3 p.m., after overtaking the troop detachment of the

XX Army Corps under Lieutenant General v. Schemtau.

After a morning break of only thirty years, they set off again from Muschaken

and reached Willenberg by 7 p.m. Since the departure

from the bivouac on the morning of August 28, his troops, apart

from the development into battle against Soldau and on the same day

also against Neidenburg, had covered a march distance of 65 km.

A Russian convoy with 1400 prisoners fell into the hands of the German pursuers

upon entering Willenberg.

In the afternoon, all concerns at the I Army Corps that the

enemy might break through to Neidenburg had vanished, but it was

now necessary to prevent him from breaking out over the main road to the south.

General v. François therefore pushed the 1st Infantry Division

further east in the evening hours. It had to occupy the road crossings

from Muschaken towards Willenberg.

Against this movement, which continued into the darkness, Russian detachments

from the north engaged in several places, and a fierce battle ensued at Pughal-

lowen. It ended with the

Grenadier Regiment Crown Prince (1st East Prussian) No. 1 capturing several thousand

prisoners, 6 guns, and 14 machine guns. Additionally,

the number of prisoners and captured items increased during the evening and night

for the 1st Infantry Division.

General v. Mackensen, the commanding general of the XVII Army Corps,

intended on August 29 to form a barrier with the 36th Infantry Division from

Passenheim to south of Jedwabno, utilizing the lakes,

to intercept the enemy driven south by the I and XX Army Corps.

East of this barrier, the 35th Infantry Division was to continue the

advance south, with the center on Willenberg, to capture

Russian detachments breaking through south of the 36th Infantry Division's

position. The eastern wing of the 35th Infantry Division

was to resume the pursuit of the Russian VI Corps.

These orders were based on the army command of August 28.

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The Conclusion of the Battle, August 29 to 31.

2:45 in the afternoon<sup>1)</sup>, the "pursuit to the last breath" was ordered south, as all later instructions from the Army High Command<sup>2)</sup> were only received by the General Command of the XVII Army Corps after the corps' movements had already overtaken them.

During the morning of August 29, it was recognized from aerial reports that the enemy had a more southern retreat direction than previously assumed by the corps. General v. Mackensen then turned the 35th Infantry Division south of the 36th to the west and ordered, since the situation of the German I Army Corps was not known in detail due to the difficult connection to the Army High Command, also considering advancing towards Neidenburg on August 30 to meet this corps. He had already reported this intention from Passenheim to the Army High Command at 11:10 in the morning.

The advance of the XVII Army Corps on August 29 led to the liberation of 400 German prisoners at Jedwabno. They came from the advance of the 59th Infantry Regiment of the 41st Infantry Division over the Marans<sup>che</sup> on the morning of August 28<sup>3)</sup>; equipped with Russian rifles, they soon rejoined the battle. The troops of the XVII Army Corps reached, during the course of the day, partly also late at night, without combat, but after very strenuous marches, the 24 km wide line Scheufelsdorf (southwest of Passenheim)—forest north of Kannwiesen (5 km northwest of Groß-Panth<sup>ein</sup>). The I Battalion of the 21st Infantry Regiment reached this point only after midnight but postponed the attack on the enemy-occupied town of Kannwiesen itself until dawn. Meanwhile, the Russian refugee stream moved undisturbed through the town to the east. — Far ahead of the front of the 36th Infantry Division, the Blücher Hussar Regiment No. 5 had reached the important road junction Kaltenborn in the middle of the large forest after capturing Russian trains.

The foremost parts of the German XVII and I Army Corps stood close to each other, without knowing it.

The ring around the Russians was closed. They had gradually been pushed further east from their originally southeastward retreat direction: The Russian XV Corps had already found Muschaken occupied by German troops, it had moved east over Wallendorf.

<sup>1)</sup> p. 201. — <sup>2)</sup> From August 28, 10:10 in the evening (p. 206) and from August 29, 6:30 in the morning (p. 207). — <sup>3)</sup> p. 187.

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The Situation on the Evening of August 29.

bogen. — On the morning of August 29, the XIII Corps had set out from Jablonken on the western shore of Lake Omulef heading south and thereby collided with the marching columns of the XV Corps at the Kommusin forestry. March disruptions and disorder were the result. On the evening of August 29, the remnants of the Russian XIII and XV Corps and three regiments of the XXIII Corps formed only a large, disordered mass striving southwest in the extensive forest area north of the Neidenburg—Willenberg road. Leadership and organization had ceased. Nevertheless, the possibility of a breakthrough through the thin network of German encirclement in the confusing forest terrain was not yet completely ruled out.

At the Army High Command of the German 8th Army, there was hope that despite everything, it would still be possible to capture large parts of the Narew Army, having gained more ground over the course of August 29. Only in the morning hours had Russian breakthrough attempts on Neidenburg been expected, but then it became clear that the enemy was turning east. The reported numbers of prisoners and booty had increased hour by hour and had risen to at least 10,000 prisoners by the evening. The Narew Army was largely destroyed or encircled in the large forest area. The task was to tighten the circle around the encircled parts, estimated at 20—30,000 men in the evening, on August 30 to force their capture. At the same time, as strong forces as possible had to be freed up against the Russian Njemen Army.

From the Rennenkampf Army, the cavalry had remained in brisk forward movement southwestward over the course of August 29. According to the available reports, it had reached Rößel and Bischofstein with the southern wing, further north a cavalry division seemed to be advancing over Heilsberg and Landsberg towards Wormditt. Only the two-brigade strong German 1st Cavalry Division had deviated to the infantry of the 6th Landwehr Brigade standing at Lautern. Guttstadt, Wormditt, Mehlsack, perhaps also Heilsberg and Binten, were still occupied by German Landsturm; two Danzig replacement battalions had reached Braunsberg. all that Colonel General v. Hindenburg initially had to oppose the Russian cavalry masses.

Behind the veil of the Russian cavalry, the entire Njemen Army, according to the radio message intercepted early in the morning, was now advancing at an accelerated pace; the suspicion that the Russian II Corps would not begin the retreat to the border seemed confirmed by a new Russian radio message.

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The Conclusion of the Battle, August 29 to 31.

the entire Njemen Army, after the radio message intercepted early in the morning, now advanced at an accelerated pace; the assumption that the Russian II Corps would not begin the retreat to the border seemed confirmed by a new Russian radio message. Further north, the Königsberg airship had detected smaller campfires, which it identified as cavalry, near Preußisch-Eylau and further west, the larger ones only in the line Friedland—Tapiau. The army command found it hard to believe that the corps of the Njemen Army were still so far back. Further reports were missing.

Against the Njemen Army, the 37th Infantry Division, the I Reserve Corps, the Landwehr Division Goltz, and the 6th Landwehr Brigade, which was to be reunited, were already available. During August 30, more forces had to be freed. The initial task was to cover the encirclement of the Narew Army and the indispensable railway Deutsch-Eylau—Allenstein for supplies and removal of loot. At the same time, the future battle against the Njemen Army had to be prepared. The further Rennenkampf advanced westward, the more decisively he could be met. The German army command expected his advance in the general direction of Allenstein and wanted to intercept the first impact in a position on both sides of this city. Then, in the further course of the battle, the remaining parts of the army and the incoming reinforcements could bring about the decision against the Russian flanks. The goal had to be not only to defeat this Russian army but to destroy it. For this, they would have to drive them towards Königsberg and the lagoon.

The army order for August 30 initially directed that the I Reserve Corps, together with the 37th Infantry Division and the 6th Landwehr Brigade, should begin the expansion of a position on both sides of Allenstein, front to the northeast. The Landwehr Division Goltz was then to block the lake line northeast of Osterode against Russian cavalry on August 31. The 1st Cavalry Division, not engaged with the enemy, was to retreat further south to Ortelsburg in case of further enemy advance.

These measures against the Russian Njemen Army were accompanied by orders to tighten the circle around the remnants of the Narew Army: The XVII Army Corps was to continue to block the eastern front, while the I Army Corps was to advance eastwards along the main road and north of it.

1) p. 207. — 2) p. 203.

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The Army Order for August 30.

Block the eastern front, while the I Army Corps was to advance eastward along the main road and north of it. The XX Army Corps was initially to cooperate with the 41st Infantry Division and 3rd Reserve Division, but then these divisions were also to be withdrawn and assembled at Kurken (3rd Reserve Division) and Butttrienen (41st Infantry Division). — The fortress troops and the 70th Landwehr Brigade were granted a day of rest at Waplitz (south of Hohenstein). The 5th Landwehr Brigade was to advance from Soldau to Mlawa in pursuit of the Russian I Army Corps, according to the request of its commander. This also most effectively secured against any attempts by this enemy to disrupt the German encirclement at Neidenburg. Although it was observed in the morning moving from Mlawa to the southeast in Altmarrk, in the evening an aircraft observed an infantry brigade and additionally advancing troops on the Mlawa—Neidenburg road, beginning at the German border. However, this movement was not considered significant. If necessary, the German troops resting at Waplitz were ready to support the I Army Corps.

After the orders were issued, important news about the Njemen Army arrived at the army headquarters on the night of August 30. The expectation that General v. Rennenkampf, following the instructions of the commander-in-chief of the Northwest Front, would finally hurry to the aid of the Narew Army, did not seem to be confirmed. The reports rather indicated that the bulk of the Russian Njemen Army was still turning against Königsberg. The Russian IV Corps, the second from the south in the front of the Njemen Army, was supposed to have marched from Friedland not southwest to Bartenstein, but west to Domnau. As further indicated by an intercepted radio message, this corps was to enclose the fortress in the south¹). North of it, the III and XX Corps had only advanced hesitantly to the Friedland—Gawaiten line. Another intercepted Russian radio message on the morning of August 30 even made it questionable whether Rennenkampf still had any intentions of attack.

¹) The report that the Russian IV Corps had marched from Friedland to Domnau, like the intercepted radio message about the enclosure of Königsberg in the south, was overtaken by events. In fact, the Russian II and IV Corps had advanced westward beyond Bartenstein by August 29.

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The Conclusion of the Battle, August 29 to 31.

The commanding general of the Russian II Corps was to "thoroughly destroy railways and telegraphs west of the Königsberg—Rastenburg line, including Nörschen and Rastenburg, during the retreat." Thus, only the cavalry of the Njemen Army seemed to be in question for an advance to the west. However, they alone no longer posed a serious threat to the victorious German troops.

The German Army High Command could focus all its attention on the remnants of the Narew Army. Favorable news came from there. On August 30 at 9 a.m., it was possible to report to the Supreme Army Command: "The success of the 8th Army is complete. The commanding general of the Russian XV Corps has been captured. The circle of pursuit is getting tighter. Already many prisoners, a larger number is hoped for."

Meanwhile, the troops had begun their movements to increasingly encircle the trapped Russians.

Around 10 a.m., a message arrived at the High Command in Osterode, dropped by an observation officer of the Field Aviation Unit 14 of the I Army Corps on the Neidenburg marketplace: A long column of all arms was advancing from Mlawa towards Neidenburg, its beginning at 9 a.m. only 6 km south of the city. The entire column was supposed to be about 36 km long! So at least an entire corps! — A telephone conversation with the General Command of the I Army Corps in Neidenburg was interrupted by Russian artillery shells hitting there. Thus, the connection to the I Army Corps was cut off for the time being.

The enemy defeated on August 26 and 27, perhaps reinforced by new forces, attacked again. — This impression was further reinforced by reports of strong Russian cavalry advancing against Lautenburg. They were supposed to have ambushed a German Landwehr detachment south of this place, near Zielun, and captured 11 guns; between Lautenburg and Strasburg, a Cossack squadron had occupied the Radzöc station. — In addition, shortly after the report from the I Army Corps, another report came from Field Aviation Unit 16 about a Russian advance on Ortelsburg. An infantry division from Myschyniec, a cavalry division from Friedrichshof, was observed advancing on the city. According to the timing of the report, the Russian troops could have already reached Ortelsburg. — There was no doubt anymore, on the Russian side, a large-scale relief attempt was in full swing!

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The Russian Relief Attempts on August 30.

Moreover, on the Russian side, a large-scale relief attempt was in full swing! A new severe crisis had unexpectedly broken out.

The victory achieved could no longer be questioned, but it seemed uncertain whether its fruits could be fully reaped. The simultaneous advance of Russian troops on Neidenburg and Ortelsburg seriously threatened the circle drawn by the I and XVII Army Corps around the remnants of the Narew Army. The fight against the encircled enemy was not yet over. Airmen had observed around 5 a.m. a Russian division marching from the area of Ortul to the east, at 5 a.m. fighting north of Muschaken, and at 8 a.m. Russian artillery fire near Gregersdorf. The German encirclement troops of the I Army Corps were spread over one and a half days' marches from Neidenburg to Willenberg, while those of the XVII Army Corps, as reported by General v. Mackensen at 8 a.m., were distributed almost as widely in the area of Willenberg—Ortelsburg—Passenheim—Jedwabno. The troops, due to the multi-day battles, must have been disorganized, weakened in number and combat strength. They were fully engaged by the encircled enemy as well as by guarding and accompanying the numerous prisoners. It therefore seemed questionable whether the I Army Corps, in particular, would be able to withstand the new strong enemy on its own.

At Neidenburg, at least one Russian corps had to be reckoned with, while at Ortelsburg the enemy was probably weaker. The advance on Neidenburg had the more threatening direction; through it, the I Army Corps might even be forced to retreat on August 30 to the northeast, to Jedwabno, to regroup and reorganize its forces for a new battle. On the other hand, this could develop into a favorable opportunity to intercept the Russians in the following days at Neidenburg through a comprehensive attack. Reinforcements were therefore primarily considered for a battle at Neidenburg. The XVII Army Corps had to help itself as best it could initially.

In this sense, the Army High Command immediately took strong measures. The deployment against the Njemen Army had to be postponed. All available forces were set in motion towards Neidenburg: the 5th Landwehr Brigade, which was already assumed to be advancing from Soldau to Mlawa, received the order to march on Neidenburg, and the Quartermaster General, Major General Grünert, had the fortress troops assembled around Waplit and the Landwehr Division Goltz at Hohenstein set in motion towards Guben.

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assembled fortress troops and the Landwehr Division Goltz at Hohenstein to march to Guben. The XX Army Corps received orders to turn the 41st Infantry Division, which had been marching from Olsau to the northeast, back south to support the I Army Corps. The 3rd Reserve Division, suspected to be in the area east of Kurten, was to follow via Jablonken. Apart from the troops of the I Army Corps, 4½ divisions were thus concentrated against the new enemy at Neidenburg. Additionally, the 35th Infantry Division of the XVII Army Corps was to ensure security behind the I Army Corps, in case it was forced to retreat to Jedwabno.

For the support of the XVII Army Corps itself, only the 37th Infantry Division was available, which was marching from Hohenstein to Allenstein. It received orders to advance on Schützendorf (south of Passenheim). However, Lieutenant General v. Staabs managed to convince the high command of the exhaustion of his troops, so that the high command agreed to postpone the march to the early morning of August 31.

By the time all these orders reached their destination, it was noon. No new information about the enemy at Neidenburg and Ortelsburg was available by then. There was no connection to the general command of the I Army Corps. The news of the initiated movements had to be delivered to it by an airplane. — The army high command had thus done everything to secure itself against setbacks and, moreover, to shape the situation at Neidenburg into a new annihilation strike. However, the intervention of the troops assigned to this task in the battle was not expected before the early morning of August 31. Until then, the I Army Corps had to rely on its own strength.

3. The Defense Against Russian Relief Attempts.  
(Maps 10 and 11.)

Since the departure of the I Army Corps from Solsau, General v. François had anticipated that the defeated Russian I Corps might revive or that a new enemy might appear from the south. Therefore, since the morning of August 29, the 1st Infantry Division had been tasked with reconnaissance and securing against the south and had occupied Janowob for this purpose. The fact that the entire cavalry had been sent to pursue Ortelsburg made reconnaissance difficult. — For August 30, General v. François initially planned the 2nd Infantry Division only up to Dorf—Wallendorf, and it was also to provide a regiment for the security of Neidenburg.

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August 30th. — The Battles of the I Army Corps at Neidenburg.

Dorf—Wallendorf was set up, and it was also supposed to provide a regiment for the security of Neidenburg. The 1st Infantry Division was to move southwards along the main road in accordance with the advance of the 2nd Infantry Division. When the air reconnaissance report came in on the evening of August 29th, indicating that a Russian column of all arms was advancing from Mlawa and had reached the Reich border south of Neidenburg, caution seemed advisable. Therefore, General v. Francois made the continuation of the pursuit objectives set in the army order of the evening of August 29th dependent on the results of the air reconnaissance directed at Mlawa.

On August 30th at 9:15 a.m., the expected air reconnaissance report was dropped on the Neidenburg marketplace: At least one Russian corps was advancing, and its vanguard was already directly in front of Neidenburg. The fact that the enemy suddenly appeared in such close proximity and strength was a surprise despite everything. General v. Francois did not consider the situation too serious. He did not estimate the attacking enemy's offensive power highly. He quickly decided on the most urgent orders: He wanted to continue the pursuit of the encircled Russians and simultaneously repel the new enemy. Officers in motor vehicles delivered the instructions: The forces still stationed at Neidenburg were to hold their ground south of the town, the 2nd Infantry Division was to turn south with all available units via Gregersdorf against the new enemy, and the 5th Landwehr Brigade, which might have already advanced on Mlawa, was to intervene at its own discretion either in the enemy's rear or against its flank at Kandien (south of Neidenburg). As soon as these urgent orders were given, General v. Francois moved his command post to the main road east of Gregersdorf to make further arrangements for the battle there.

The task that the I Army Corps initially had to solve entirely on its own was extraordinarily difficult: In front of it were the remnants of the Russian XIII and XV Corps, which were by no means defeated despite the increasing number of prisoners and booty, and in the rear, another enemy corps was advancing. The own troops, after four days of fighting, were dissolved into small detachments and, without suspecting the danger in the rear, in the full sense of victory, were moving through the large forest to the east, with the entire cavalry of the corps far ahead in this direction and unreachable. If the encirclement of the Russians was to be maintained, then only parts of both divisions of the corps could be deployed against the new enemy.

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The Conclusion of the Battle, August 29 to 31.

Maintaining the Russians, then parts of both divisions of the corps could be deployed against the new enemy. By the time they brought him to a standstill, Neidenburg could have long been taken. General v. François therefore anticipated the temporary loss of the city and sought to position his forces so that he could encircle the enemy there on August 31 from the east and west. It was only in the afternoon of August 30 that he learned that reinforcements from the army high command had also been assigned for this purpose.

From midday on August 30, it gradually became possible to assemble 7 battalions and 20 batteries (including 8 heavy field howitzer batteries) from both divisions of the corps against the new enemy on the heights southwest of Gregersdorf. General Lieutenant v. Falk commanded these troops. Meanwhile, the enemy south of Neidenburg was held back by two battalions and two batteries (from Infantry Regiments 41 and 45 and Field Artillery Regiments 16 and 57) under Major Schlimm. The Russians¹) proceeded very cautiously. They did not know how weak the Germans were here and developed an entire division or more under the protection of strong artillery. Thus, Major Schlimm, with his East Prussians, supported by the flanking fire of the artillery stationed at Gregersdorf, which was powerful for that time, could hold out until dusk. However, this averted any danger to the encirclement troops. Only when the small German detachment was outflanked and encircled from the west along the Neide did it retreat through Neidenburg to the north. In the darkness, parts of the Russian 3rd Guards Infantry Division occupied the city. — The intervention of the 5th Landwehr Brigade had not yet become noticeable. General Lieutenant v. Müllmann had just initiated the advance on Mlawa when he received orders from the army high command to assist at Neidenburg. It was already noon. Thus, the Landwehr could only reach the area of Groß-Roslau shortly before dusk. The attack across the Neide had to be postponed to the next morning.

The reinforcements assigned by the army high command also did not enter the battle on August 30: General Lieutenant Freiherr v. der Goltz had marched south with his Schleswig-Holstein Landwehr Division behind the fortress troops of Major General v. Unger, but then, to engage the enemy, he still moved west alongside them and reached Michalken.

¹) I Corps, 1/2 3rd Guards Infantry Division, 1st Rifle Brigade, and 1/2 59th Infantry (Reserve) Division.

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August 30 and 31. — The Battles of the I Army Corps at Neidenburg.

placed to the west of these and reached Michalken. The troops of Major General v. Unger had reached Frantanu, the 41st Infantry Division northeast of there to Geeslefen. The 3rd Reserve Division at Wuttrienen had received the order to advance so late that Lieutenant General v. Morgen postponed the start to early August 31.

On August 31, the enemy was to be attacked at Neidenburg from the west, north, and east. The Army High Command, through an order at 7:30 p.m., placed all units designated for the attack under General v. François and instructed the troops of Major General v. Unger and the 41st Infantry Division¹) that, unless General v. François ordered otherwise, they were to cross the line Lüttfinen (3 km northwest of Neidenburg) – Grünfließ at 5:30 a.m. The order further received, based on an evening report from aviators, although incorrect, that the enemy between Neidenburg and Mlawa was still weak, the addition that the Landwehr Division Goltz, the 41st Infantry Division, and the 3rd Reserve Division, if their deployment in battle was not necessary, should remain as far north of Neidenburg as possible.

Around 8:00 p.m., the order was sent from Osterode to the I Army Corps, but it did not reach General v. François until the morning of August 31. The direct connection between the Corps Command and the advancing reinforcements had already been established earlier. General v. François wanted to lead the attack with combined force. He issued the order for this, still without knowledge of the aforementioned army order, only on August 31 at 6:00 a.m.: The 5th Landwehr Brigade was to advance east over Saberau, the Landwehr Division Goltz and the fortress troops were to bypass Neidenburg to the west towards Kandien, the 41st Infantry Division was to take Neidenburg, the 3rd Reserve Division was to attack south over Grünfließ. The 2nd Infantry Division was then to join this division's attack from Gregersdorf.

When these instructions reached the troops, the 41st Infantry Division under Major General Sonntag, which, according to the Army High Command's order, had set out early, had reached Neidenburg, but no longer encountered the enemy. Only the 5th Landwehr Brigade, which had already reached the Neide near Saberau before dawn to cross the river here, was still able to engage. Lieutenant General v. Mühlmann recognized at dawn the enemy in full retreat on the main road to the border and took him under fire with his three heavy batteries.

¹) The Landwehr Division Goltz was believed to be further back.

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The enemy was in full retreat on the main road to the border and was fired upon by his three heavy batteries. His troops, given the difficult crossing conditions south of Saderau, were no longer able to confront the departing enemy without bridging equipment. However, the German artillery fire on the afternoon of August 30 and early August 31 had done its duty. The enemy left about 1000 prisoners and 350 dead in the hands of the victors. These were essentially the same Russian troops that had already been defeated on August 26, 27, and 28 at Seeben, Usdau, and Soldau.

Meanwhile, fighting had also taken place behind the German XVII Army Corps. General v. Mackensen had not been entirely without concerns since turning westward due to the situation at Ortelsburg. It was on the evening of August 29 that the first clash occurred there, without the army high command initially learning of it: The commander of the 35th Infantry Division, Lieutenant General Hennig, who had driven ahead of his troops to Ortelsburg, had only narrowly escaped capture by the Russian 4th Cavalry Division, which, according to the orders of its high command, intended to retake the city ahead of the VI Corps. However, when the German Infantry Regiment 176 and simultaneously the 1st Cavalry Brigade coming from the 1st Cavalry Division arrived in front of the city, the enemy had set the place on fire and retreated southwest again. Lieutenant General Hennig had re-entered the burning city with 1 1/2 battalions.

On the following day, August 30, the general command of the XVII Army Corps wanted to direct all its strength against the encircled Russians. However, when General v. Mackensen learned from the army high command at 11:20 a.m. that a "long column of all arms (infantry division)" was marching on Ortelsburg and had presumably already reached the city, he felt compelled to detach stronger forces against this enemy. He ordered his northern 36th Infantry Division to take the front to the east to attack the new enemy on August 31. The troops of the southern 35th Infantry Division were to maintain the blockade against the encircled Russians alone and secure the connection to the I Army Corps to the south.

1) p. 209.

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The Battles of the XVII Army Corps at Ortelsburg.

Meanwhile, at Ortelsburg, without the general command initially being aware, the battle had already resumed at 5:30 in the morning. Russian infantry and cavalry, likely each a division strong, had encircled the city from the east and north and also deployed heavy artillery (12cm howitzers). The weak German infantry, 1<sup>1/2</sup> battalions from the 9th West Prussian Infantry Regiment No. 176, without machine guns and artillery, defended against the enemy's superiority only with difficulty. The hope for intervention by the 1st Cavalry Brigade, which had ridden back 15 km north to Mensguth the previous evening, was not fulfilled. However, unexpected help came from the southwest from the I Army Corps. The Mounted Jäger Regiment No. 10 under Lieutenant Colonel Berrings (2 squadrons, 1 battery), which had been at the forefront of its corps' pursuit since early August 29, hurried from Willenberg to assist the beleaguered comrades of the XVII Army Corps and provided the first relief. Soon after, Major General v. Hahn, who had already advanced with a pursuit detachment of the 35th Infantry Division to just in front of Willenberg and now rushed back to Ortelsburg with 3 light field howitzer batteries, joined the battle. This initially secured the possession of the city. — At noon, the Russians abandoned the fight and withdrew to the southeast and east.

Just as at Neidenburg and Ortelsburg, the Russian advances were repelled at all other locations: between Strasburg and Lautenburg, the Radosz station had already been cleared by the Russians on the morning of August 30. Otherwise, the strong Russian cavalry had barely ventured to the border. Reports of the destruction of a German Landwehr detachment at Zielun<sup>1</sup>) turned out to be a wild rumor. This Landwehr detachment had repelled the Russian cavalry, albeit with heavy own losses, and no guns were lost. Since then, the Russian cavalry has not repeated attempts to disrupt the rear connections in this area.

Also, on the northern flank of the German 8th Army, the Russian cavalry divisions, which advanced over Seilsberg and Landsberg on August 30, had no success. The places on the Allenstein—Mehlsack—Königsberg railway were held everywhere by the German Landsturm and some replacement units united under the stage inspector, Lieutenant General v. Heuduck.

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The Conclusion of the Battle, August 29 to 31.

troops were held everywhere. A final push by the Russian 1st Cavalry

Division against Allenstein was repelled early on August 31 by parts of the

6th Landwehr Brigade. Then the Russian cavalry masses gradually withdrew

eastward, fighting and burning, and also destroyed all telegraph lines and

important railway facilities.

4. The Capture of the Encircled Russians and the

Result of the Victory.

(Map 11.)

While parts of the German I and XVII Army Corps repelled Russian

relief attempts at Neidenburg and Ortelsburg, the fate of the encircled

Russians was sealed in the large forest area between the two locations. The

ring that surrounded them was thin. Along the 50 km stretch from Muschaken

via Willenberg to Jedwabno, only 29 German battalions, weakened by previous

battles, stood in the confusing terrain. A determined and courageous leader

would have had to succeed in breaking the ring and escaping with large parts.

On the German side, such an attempt was seriously expected. It was never

undertaken with emphasis. Like hunted game, the Russian masses also

bounced off small German detachments and repeatedly veered eastward,

until finally, without ammunition and supplies, leaderless and completely

exhausted, they despaired of the possibility of escape and surrendered by

the thousands. Of the closed troop formations, only half of the 6th Cavalry

Division (the other half was with the I Corps) escaped the encirclement,

in addition to about 2000 men¹) from the XIII and XV Corps.

The mass of prisoners fell into the hands of the I Army Corps on the

main road Neidenburg—Willenberg. Already on August 29 and the following

night, over 7000 prisoners were taken here. Early on August 30, after weak

nighttime breakthrough attempts, 17000 Russians with 30 guns surrendered

to a single German battalion, the III Battalion of the East Prussian Infantry

Regiment Duke Karl of Mecklenburg-Strelitz No. 43. Among them were the

commanding general of the Russian XIII Corps, Lieutenant General Klujew,

and 8 other Russian generals. In the same area, the commanding general of the Russian XV Corps, General Martos, also fell into the hands of the troops of the 1st Infantry Division.

¹) Lichowitsch in Sbornik, Issue 3, p. 155.

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The Spoils of the I and XVII Army Corps.

XV Corps, General Martos, fell into the hands of the troops of the 1st Infantry Division. Another 11,000 Russians with 41 guns surrendered, also on the early morning of August 30, after slight resistance at Willenberg to the detachment of Lieutenant General v. Schmettau.

Meanwhile, the commander of the 1st Infantry Brigade, Major General v. Trotha, advanced north of the main road from Muschaken to the northeast with four battalions and four batteries, followed by the 3rd Infantry Brigade under Major General Mengelbier in two columns. In the afternoon, the 1st Infantry Brigade encountered a short but fierce battle with Russian units southwards at Malgaossen. In the dense forest terrain and thick dust, German troops also mistakenly fired upon each other. Major General v. Trotha and two battalion commanders fell. The commander of the 41st Infantry Regiment, Colonel Schönfeld, took over, wounded himself, the leadership and brought the costly battle to a conclusion. The already captured Russians had partially escaped but then fell into the hands of other German troops. — The German 3rd Infantry Brigade captured 2,500 prisoners.

What evaded the troops of the German I Army Corps to the east was the spoil of the XVII Army Corps. The Hussar Regiment No. 5 (36th Infantry Division) in Kaltenborn had to evade the advancing Russian masses early on August 30. The enemy turned from Kaltenborn to the southeast and now moved over Wallendorf towards the blocking units of the 35th Infantry Division. At Malgaossen, 1,000 men, including a general and 16 guns, fell into the hands of the III Battalion of the 21st Infantry Regiment. Its I Battalion had meanwhile diverted the stream of fleeing Russians at Kannwiesen 1) to the south since daybreak and also captured 1,000 prisoners and two batteries. When the commander of the 70th Infantry Brigade, Major General Schmidt v. Knobelsdorf, arrived here, he ordered the advance against the Russians now retreating over Saddek to Reuschwerder. Subsequently, more Russian masses surrendered at Saddek, so that the Pomeranian Infantry Regiment von Borcke Ar. 21 captured over 12,400 men, including three generals, and 69 guns on that day. Only insignificant Russian parts reached far to the east, but were also intercepted by German troops there.

On the evening of August 30, in the large encirclement ring, besides the prisoners, there were only scattered individuals who wandered around in the woods in smaller groups and surrendered in the following days.

1) p. 216.

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or wandered in smaller groups in the forests and surrendered in the following days. Some of them may have also escaped by night and fog. However, it cannot have been any significant parts.

The extent of the loot, and thus the full size of the success, only gradually became apparent. On the evening of August 30, General Ludendorff reported to the Supreme Army Command a total of only 30,000 to 40,000 prisoners, of whom 25,000 had already been dispatched. The rest were "close to Neidenburg, where an attack will take place tomorrow. Therefore, it is doubtful whether all can be retrieved." — The next day, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg was able to report to his Supreme War Lord: "Your Majesty, I most humbly report that today the ring around the largest part of the Russian army has closed. XIII, XV, and XXIII Corps are destroyed. There are now 60,000 prisoners, including the commanding generals of the XIII and XV Corps. The guns are still in the forests and are being gathered. The war booty, not yet fully assessed, is extraordinarily large . . . . ."

The total number of prisoners eventually grew to 92,000, including 13 generals and about 350 guns. The bloody losses can be estimated at about 50,000 men. Of the corps of the Russian center, XIII and XV were completely, and XXIII probably almost half destroyed. But the flanks, the Russian I and VI Corps, also suffered heavily and seemed, especially after the renewed retreat of August 30 and 31, so weakened in their fighting value that they no longer represented a worthy opponent. As long as these remnants of the Russian Narew Army were not reinforced, the German commander-in-chief could disregard them in his calculations for further operations.

5. The Russian Army Group of the Northwestern Front and the Njemen Army during the Battle¹).

(Map 1 and 10.)

The operations of the Russian Narew Army were conducted until August 27 in agreement with the Army Group Command of the Northwestern Front and the Supreme Army Command:

¹) Connection to p. 143/44.

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The Russian Northwestern Front on August 26.

The commander-in-chief of the Northwestern Front, General Shilinski, had anticipated four German groups in East Prussia on August 26: near Königsberg, he assumed at least one active corps, as he suspected, the I. (the replacement battalions of this corps belonged to the fortress garrison); — further forces seemed to be retreating from the Njemen Army via Friedland—Schippenbeil, perhaps also via Róssel, towards the Vistula; — further south of Allenstein, the German XX Army Corps was identified, which was assumed to join the forces withdrawing to the Vistula; — finally, according to reports from the Narew Army, a strong German group seemed to be forming on its western flank: including the XVII Army Corps, as well as parts of the XIX Army Corps and the I Reserve Corps).

General Shilinski wanted to intercept the German forces marching to the Vistula, of which, after the withdrawal of the I and XVII Army Corps and the I Reserve Corps, hardly anything remained, and the XX Army Corps, securing against Königsberg on one side, against the German group recognized in the western flank of the Narew Army on the other. Against the large fortress of Königsberg, with the extensive Deime-Pregel line in front, and, as assumed, with at least one active army corps as a garrison, two corps were initially considered necessary. However, this left the Njemen Army with only two corps for the pursuit against the Vistula. They proposed a forward direction as far north as possible and the line Elbing—Saalfeld as the target, while the Narew Army was to advance from the south with the strongest possible forces over Allenstein. The joint task of the 1st and 2nd Army is to push the Germans towards the sea and prevent them from withdrawing over the Vistula," it was said in the army group order of August 26. — The Russian Supreme Army Command approved these intentions. The Grand Duke did not want the advance of the Narew Army on Allenstein to suffer any delay, "as this does not align with the intention to deliver a decisive blow to the Germans and thereby conclude with East Prussia." He wanted to shift the focus of operations to the left bank of the Vistula as soon as possible, where the appearance of German troops at Sieradz, Petrikau, and Radom had raised concerns, but where the decisive thrust deep into Germany was mainly intended.

In these orders, the Russian leadership was fully aware of the danger in the western flank of the Narew Army. There was an "unquestionable superiority" of the Germans.

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“Undoubted superiority” of the Germans. The reinforcement of his I Corps at Usdau ordered by General Samsonow through the 3rd Guard Infantry Division, the 1st Rifle Brigade, and the 6th and 15th Cavalry Divisions seemed sufficient as flank protection.

In the Njemen Army, reconnaissance increasingly showed that the German forces, assumed to be defeated and retreating westward, had gained a very large lead. Reports from the Russian cavalry, which only reached parts west of Friedland on August 27, correctly stated that today the I Army Corps had marched off to Königsberg, the XVII over Friedland; the marching troops could not be reached, the enemy marched off so quickly.” It seems that under these circumstances and assuming that strong parts had already been shifted to the western flank of the Narew Army, a frontal pursuit was no longer promising: The advance of the Njemen Army was halted. General v. Rennenkampf now intended to also involve the other corps “in cooperation” in the encirclement of Königsberg. However, the Russian Supreme Command considered, just as it assumed the enemy did, to shift parts, perhaps even the bulk of the Njemen Army, by rail1). Thus, on August 27, it ordered the II Corps, the southernmost of the Njemen Army, to march back to Grajewo (south of Lyck) to travel by rail to Warsaw to the 9th Army. The attack prepared against Lötzen was abandoned since then. After the German commander, Colonel Busse, rejected the surrender demand sent to him on August 27, the artillery prepared against the fortress of the 2nd Army2) was returned to it by rail. The 1st Brigade of the 1st Guard Cavalry Division, which had fought on August 19 at Kraupischken and on the 26th at the Alle crossing near Friedland and apparently suffered heavily, was to be withdrawn to Kowno for replenishment.

Regarding the unfavorable battles of the Narew Army on August 26 (south of Mühlen and at Seeben—Heinrichsdorf) and the simultaneous defeat of the VI Corps at Groß-Bißau, the army group and the Supreme Command initially seemed to have learned nothing. Since General Samsonow moved his army headquarters from Ostrolenka to Neidenburg on that day, the wire communication worked only very imperfectly.

1) Strategic Overview, p. 75. — Jidowitsch, p. 54/55.  
2) Field Howitzer Section of the XXIII Corps and a heavy artillery section of the 2nd Army.

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The Russian Northwestern Front on August 26 and 27.

had advanced, the wire connection was only very incomplete. From an order given by the army group on August 27, it appears that on this day at least one German corps was assumed to be near Königsberg and three corps in the line Allenstein—Gilgenburg—Lautenburg. There is no longer any mention of the forces retreating against the Vistula. — Against three German corps, two of which were believed to have already been defeated at Gumbinnen and the third at Lahn and Orlau, General Samsonov had to appear strong enough with his five fresh active corps and three cavalry divisions alone. Thus, there were no reservations about continuing to unite all other available forces at Warsaw, in pursuit of the promises made to the French, to advance as soon as possible westward into the unprotected southern flank of the German Vistula front and against Posen.

By August 26, troops of the 9th Army had arrived at Warsaw and westward to Włocławek—Lods, with a strength of 1 3/4 corps and 2 1/2 cavalry divisions under the commanding general of the Guard Corps, General Besobrasow. These were: the Guard Corps with the Guard Rifle Brigade, two regiments of the I Corps, 1/2 of the 59th (Reserve) Infantry Division, 5th Cavalry Division, Caucasian Cavalry Division, and Guard Cossack Brigade1). However, the I Corps intended for the 9th Army had meanwhile been transferred to the 2nd Army, the advancing XVII, and the 4th Army (Army Group of the Southwestern Front). For this, the 9th Army was now to receive the II Corps from the 1st Army and the XXII from Finland from the 6th. Furthermore, from August 29, three more corps were to arrive for the newly forming 10th Army at Warsaw: the III Siberian, I Turkestan, and II Caucasian Corps. Thus, they were in the process of assembling two armies with over six corps at Warsaw for the advance westward. These Russian plans were disrupted by the unfavorable course of the first battles against the Austrians and Hungarians in southern Poland and soon after made impossible by the defeat of the Narew Army.

On the evening of August 27, the army group command of the Northwestern Front was informed that the Germans had attacked at Bischofsburg, Gilgenburg, and Soldau and that the Narew Army was "in a difficult situation." However, what further news the army group had at this time about the battles on August 26 and 27, we do not know.

1) = 3rd Brigade of the 1st Guard Cavalry Division. 2) See Fourth Part.

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The Conclusion of the Battle, August 29 to 31.

group at this time from the battles on August 26 and 27, we do not know.

General Gilinski decided to assist General Samsonow by advancing the Njemen Army. On the morning of August 28, he issued the following order¹) to General v. Rennenkampf: "The units that retreated from your front have been transported by rail to the front of the 2nd Army and are attacking at Bischofsburg, Gilgenburg, and Soldau. Allenstein is occupied by us. Assist the 2nd Army by advancing your left wing as far as possible against Bartenstein and your cavalry in the direction of Bischofsburg. The VI Corps has orders to advance from Szeparken" (halfway between Bischofsburg and Ortelsburg) "towards Passenheim." At the same time, the army was allowed to let the II Corps, if already directed westward, continue its march there. Thus, the transport of this corps to Warsaw was canceled. — When the orders of the army group reached the Njemen Army, the defeat of the 2nd Army at Hohenstein was just being completed. It was too late to turn it into a victory; however, with decisive measures, it might still have been possible to provide General Samsonow with relief for the retreat. But at this time, neither General Gilinski nor General v. Rennenkampf considered the situation of the Narew Army as serious as it actually became during the course of August 28.

Thus, the already not very urgent orders of the army group did not prompt the high command of the Njemen Army to act quickly. On the morning of August 28, the XX Corps, reinforced by a reserve division, including 1½ cavalry divisions, was located north of the Pregel, with the III and IV Corps (along with the 5th Rifle Brigade) at Wehlau, Allenburg, and Friedland. From the cavalry corps of Khan Hussein Nachitschewanski, the 1st Guards Cavalry Division had reached Domnau to the west, and the 2nd and 3rd Cavalry Divisions were at Schippenbeil. The 1st Cavalry Division was stationed at Korschen. Behind this cavalry, the II Corps, designated for rail transport to Warsaw, had received orders to retreat after having reached Rastenburg with the southern column the day before. It likely remained near Barten overnight. A brigade of the corps with artillery designated against Lötzen was still stationed east of the fortress. — Based on the army group's order, General v. Rennenkampf decided to advance westward with two corps and three cavalry divisions to outflank the Germans fighting against the Narew Army, while the remaining units were to cover this movement against Königsberg.

¹) Radus-Sentowitsch in Sbornik, Issue 4, p. 86.

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The Russian Northwestern Front on August 28 and 29.

General v. Rennenkampf, with two corps and three cavalry divisions, was to advance westward to outflank the Germans fighting against the Narew Army, while the remaining parts were to cover this movement against Königsberg. The objectives were set as Wornsditt for the cavalry corps (2 divisions), Seeburg—Bischofsburg for the 1st Cavalry Division, and the line Preußisch-Eylau—Bartenstein—Bischofstein for the IV and II Corps1). These were essentially reached during the course of August 29, but the 1st Cavalry Division only advanced as far as east of Bischofstein in the face of the opposing German cavalry.

Meanwhile, General Samsinow had reported in detail on the morning of August 28 about the defeat of his flank corps. Consequently, the High Command of the Northwestern Front ordered the army to retreat to Ortelsburg—Malwa2). Whether this order ever reached General Samsinow is uncertain. However, it seems that the army group only recognized the full extent of the danger on the night of August 29. Whether the journey undertaken by the commander-in-chief of the army group, General Schilinski, to the supreme army command in Baranowitschi on August 29 was related to this situation is unknown. The Njemen Army was now again ordered to "advance with two corps and cavalry in the general direction, given the fierce fighting at the front of the 2nd Army." Soon after, the army group also learned that the Narew Army was retreating to the border. Thus, it seemed too late for support from the Njemen Army, which was itself endangered. General Schilinski ordered the recently initiated movements of their infantry to be halted.

Meanwhile, on August 29, the encirclement of 2½ corps of the Narew Army by German troops with the occupation of Willenberg was completed. This situation was reported to the army group of the Northwestern Front on the night of August 30, as German troops from Neidenburg had reached the area of Janow. The Njemen Army, which was just about to withdraw its IV and II Corps according to the last received order, now received another order to proceed. This time, however, only cavalry was to be used. The directive was: "General Samsinow had on August 28 with the XIII, XV Corps and parts of the XXIII Corps engaged in heavy fighting at Hohenstein—Neidenburg; where these troops were located on the evening of August 29 is unknown."

1) Radus-Sentowitsch in Sbornik, Issue 4, p. 86/87.  
2) Bischofstein in Sbornik, Issue 3, p. 145/46.

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The Conclusion of the Battle, August 29 to 31.

the XXIII Corps heavy fighting at Hohenstein—Neidenburg; where

these troops were on the evening of August 29 is unknown.

The I Corps is in the area of Mlawa, the VI near Ortelsburg, parts

of the XXIII near Prasnycz, a small detachment in Chorzele. On

August 29 at 3 p.m., the enemy cavalry occupied Jägersdorf

and Janow, thereby interrupting the connection of General

Samsonow with Chorzele. The army group has ordered that the

I Corps, the VI, and parts of the XXIII advance against Willenberg—Neidenburg

to assist General Samsonow and cover his flank and

rear. General v. Rennenkampf has set a reconnaissance

advance of the cavalry in the area of Allenstein—Passenheim

to clarify the situation and assist General Samsonow."

At the same time, the commanding generals of the VI and

XXIII Corps and the newly appointed of the I received orders to advance,

for the VI Corps it was added that General Blagowjejtsehinski

would be court-martialed if he did not actively assist.

But already in the course of the morning of August 30, General

Shilinski gave up all hope of rescuing the encircled parts of the Narew Army.

The forces ordered for relief were now finally

recalled. This order reached the once deployed troops

only late: From the Njemen Army, Lieutenant General

Chay Husein Nachtychtomanski attempted with the 2nd and 3rd Cavalry

Division on August 30 and 31 — albeit unsuccessfully — to break the

resistance of the German militia at Wormditt; during this, the

commander of the 3rd Cavalry Division, Lieutenant General Belgard, fell.

Only around noon on August 31 did the Russians retreat eastward here.

The 1st Cavalry Division¹) under Lieutenant General Gurko advanced

on the night of August 30 to 31 up to 6 km before Allenstein, but then

after a brief skirmish also turned back. The IV and II Corps had

meanwhile already been withdrawn to the line Friedland—Schippenbeil—Rößel.

Bridges and railways were to be destroyed during the retreat.

From the corps of the Narew Army, the VI was now to advance

to Willenberg²). It was to take in the returning parts of the

XIII, XV, and XXIII Corps and then retreat itself to Myschyniec.

The parts of the XV and

XXIII Corps gathered at Chorzele were to advance on Prasnycz, the I Corps to retreat to Mlawa.

¹) Gurko, p. 51 ff.   
²) Tichowitsch, p. 96.

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The Russian Northwestern Front on August 30 and 31.

retreat. Before these instructions arrived, the VI Corps, along with the 4th Cavalry Division, had already abandoned the attack on Ortelsburg by noon. The parts of the XXIII Corps advancing north turned back long before reaching the border, and the Russian cavalry west of Soldau also retreated that day. It is reported from the Russian side²) that the I Corps, which received the order to retreat only on the evening of August 31, retreated "without reason in disorder" due to private alarming news about the defeat of the XIII and XV Corps; in fact, it began its retreat from Neidenburg just in time on the night of August 30/31 to avoid the encirclement intended for it.

When General Shilinski finally recognized the full extent of the defeat on August 31, he withdrew the remnants of the 2nd Army behind the Narew, with its I Corps moving towards the fortress of Nowogeorgiewsk. Besides this and the VI Corps, the 1st Rifle Brigade, and the three cavalry divisions, only about half of the XXIII and insignificant parts of the XIII and XV Corps, especially from the XX and its cover, escaped capture. — The commander-in-chief himself was missing: General Samsonov did not want to survive the downfall of the army entrusted to him by Karren. Thus, he took his own life in the forest southwest of Willenberg during the retreat. One cannot deny his leadership courage and determination. The task he was given was beyond his strength.

¹) Jidowitch, p. 96/97.  
²) According to a record made by the Northwestern Front Army Group.

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Sixth Chapter.

Reflections on the Battle.

Strength Ratios and Losses, Effects of the German Victory.

At Tannenberg, the German Order of Knights was defeated by the united Poles and Lithuanians more than 500 years ago, on July 15, 1410. Now, the great German victory was to erase the memory of the time of German weakness. Following a proposal by General Ludendorff, the battles from August 23–31, 1914, were named the "Battle of Tannenberg."

The victory at Tannenberg was achieved against superior forces:

The commander-in-chief of the Russian Northwestern Front had more than double the superiority in forces against the German 8th Army during the days of the battle:

In contrast, the German 8th Army east of the Vistula had only:

With such a balance of forces, it would have been easily possible for the Russian leadership, after the withdrawal of the forces necessary for covering against Königsberg and Libau, as well as lesser security garrisons for Warsaw and the other fortresses in Poland, to unite such an overwhelming superiority against the German 8th Army that all the skill of leadership and troops could hardly have compensated for it.

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The Strength Ratios at Tannenberg.

garrisons1) for Warsaw and the other fortresses in Poland —, to unite such an overwhelming force against the German 8th Army that all the skill of leadership and troops could hardly have compensated for it. The German 8th Army would then, in all likelihood, have been pushed back against the Vistula. If it had tried to fight through the battle, a skillful Russian leadership could probably have prepared a similar fate for it as eventually befell the Narew Army itself. The Russian leadership refrained from such an exploitation of their superiority. They considered the German 8th Army defeated since Gumbinnen and since the evacuation of the Angerapp position and focused their attention more, than the situation warranted, on future operations against the German Vistula line. Neither Grand Duke Nicholas as Supreme Commander nor General Gilinski as Commander of the Northwest Front believed in a new major decisive battle east of the Vistula. They underestimated the enemy, felt secure in their confidence in their large numbers, and dispersed their forces for secondary tasks. — Thus General Samsonov stood alone at Tannenberg.

The Russians were not only superior to the German 8th Army in total numbers on the East Prussian theater of war, but also in the number that General Samsonov deployed in the battle itself: Five Russian corps, a rifle brigade, three cavalry divisions — all active troops — engaged here in their first battle2). On the German side, only three army corps of active troops could be opposed to them. Of these, the I Corps had lost about 3000 men in border skirmishes at Stallupönen and Gumbinnen, but the gaps had since been filled, while the XVII Corps had been missing over 7000 men of its infantry since the Gumbinnen battle. On the German side, one corps and one division of reserve troops were available for the battle, of which the I Reserve Corps had already bled on August 20. It was missing about 2000 men. The total number of German field troops amounted to 4½ corps. All others were Landwehr and non-mobile replacement troops, inadequately equipped for use in open fields. But dire necessity forced them to be deployed shoulder to shoulder with the field troops. They reached an infantry total strength of three divisions, but had little or no machine guns and only very limited artillery.

1) These had to be taken from the field troops initially, as in the border area — except for some units of fortress artillery and auxiliary weapons — no free troops were available.  
2) Only the 4th and 6th Cavalry Divisions had suffered losses in border skirmishes at the beginning of August.

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Observations on the Battle.

reached a total strength of three divisions in infantry, but had few or no machine guns and only very limited artillery. — In terms of units, there were thus 16¾ Russian infantry and 3 cavalry divisions, all active, against 12 divisions of German infantry, of which only half were active. Since the German divisions were ¼ inferior to the Russian ones¹) and this numerical inferiority was only compensated for in the active German infantry divisions through superior artillery numbers, while this was not the case with the reserve divisions and especially not with the Landwehr and replacement troops, it becomes clear that the Russians were superior on the battlefield in infantry, cavalry, and machine guns, and only inferior in artillery.

The total forces opposing each other were:

German Russian

Infantry . . . . 153 Batt. = 144000 175 Batt. = 175000

Cavalry . . . 58 Squad. = 9000 99 Squad. = 16000

Total . . . . . 153000 191000

Machine guns . . . . . . . 296 384

Artillery pieces . . . . . . . 728 612

For a proper assessment of the strength ratios in the air, we lack knowledge of Russian capabilities. As far as we are informed, it must be assumed that the Russians were probably inferior in aircraft. They had no airships at their disposal. This undoubtedly resulted in disadvantages for reconnaissance on the Russian side. However, in assessing this, one should not apply the standards of later war years, when both German and enemy leadership relied almost exclusively on aerial reconnaissance results.

Thus, the force ratio on the battlefield itself by no means provides the explanation for the Russians' defeat, and certainly not for such a collapse as the Narew Army ultimately experienced. Various other reasons were the cause. They are only to be found in small part in the army leadership. Junior leaders and troops failed precisely at particularly important positions, on both flanks. To relieve France, the advance was rushed and undertaken partly with incomplete units. They were not able to cope with the resulting frictions.

¹) Cf. the overview in Appendix 2.

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The Leadership.

They were not prepared for the friction. Thus, the supply failed partially completely. The complaints of the troops about this and the suggestions of the army leader were not heard. Misjudging the situation, the higher command wanted to grant a rest day only in the Allenstein—Osterode line. Thus, it became disastrous for the army that General Samsonov held firmly to the decision to attack with the right wing to the utmost. The already inevitable defeat thus became the downfall for half of his army. While on the Russian side they were occupied with far-reaching plans and thereby wasted precious time for the immediate and scattered their superiority, the German leadership, since General v. Hindenburg had taken command, initially saw only one goal, to decisively strike the Narew Army. For this, however, the last man and the last gun were brought in. Landwehr and non-mobile reserve troops were led into the field battle. They could not be strong enough for the decision and thus weakened themselves at all other points to the utmost. Thus, apart from the fortresses of Königsberg and Lötzen, a single cavalry division and some Landsturm battalions were all that remained against the entire Russian Njemen Army. Only because the German leadership took such a risk did they succeed in appearing in the battle itself with at least approximately equal overall strength. At the focal points of the battle, however, they even managed to secure numerical superiority.

Even though the goal of decisively defeating the Narew Army was established, the "how" remained initially open. Everything was uncertain. When General Ludendorff was occasionally asked whether it was true that he had already presented a precisely developed plan for the battle to General v. Hindenburg during the first nightly lecture while traveling by train from Hanover to East Prussia, he smilingly rejected this view: "There is no truth in that; the situation was still far too unclear and uncertain. I merely made the suggestion to General v. Hindenburg to conduct the next operation against the Russian Narew Army. From the beginning, however, there was a firm will in us to deliver a devastating blow to this army. Beyond that, no disposition could be made. It was merely a matter of ordering and doing what was appropriate from case to case. From this view, the course of the battle developed quite naturally. My then nightly lecture was only of short duration. We both soon retired to rest to gather strength for the difficult days that lay ahead of us."

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Reflections on the Battle.

The idea of the double envelopment arose naturally from the situation

the new leaders encountered on August 23. Whether this idea was

feasible depended on the Russian Njemen Army and, since the corps of

the German Eastern Group marched south, on the outcome of their

battle against the local enemy. Thus, the Army High Command could

initially only strive for the destruction of Samsonov's army through an

attack from the west. However, time and resources were insufficient to

use the most effective means for this, the envelopment with a strong

southern wing, possibly via Soldau. Therefore, General Major Ludendorff

proposed the attack against the front at Usdau and further towards

Neidenburg. The battle began with a "breakthrough"; the attack on

Usdau was also intended to simultaneously cut off the Russian center

and northern wing from their rear connections. Only from the afternoon

of August 27 did the opportunity arise to conduct their encirclement

with the cooperation of the Eastern Group. This opportunity was

immediately seized, and the encirclement, despite multiple frictions and

misunderstandings within the own army and despite new threats from

outside, was brought to a brilliant conclusion in further four-day battles.

A series of spatially and temporally separated and initially more or less

independently conducted victorious skirmishes, in which fighting took

place with the front in all directions, was ultimately shaped by the hand

of the upper leadership into a great final success. The success of such

an undertaking, overcoming all opposing difficulties, would not have

been conceivable without the understanding initiative of all involved

sub-leaders and the incomparable achievements of the troops. This will

be discussed at a later point in this book.

The entire six-day battle was fought under constant threat to the

German right wing from Warsaw and the left by the Russian Njemen

Army. They only needed to advance, and the battle would have had to

be abandoned — perhaps with great own losses. This dangerous

situation has weighed heavily on the German leadership and repeatedly

raised doubts about whether stronger forces should be withdrawn from

the battle to cover against Rennenkampf.

After Leipzig, Metz, and Sedan, Tannenberg stands as the

largest encirclement battle known to world history. It was

conducted, in contrast to these, against a numerically superior enemy, while simultaneously both flanks were threatened by further superior forces.

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The Magnitude of the Victory.

defeated a superior enemy1), while at the same time both

flanks were threatened by further superior forces. Military

history has no example of a similar achievement to

show — at Cannae, the threat from the rear was missing.

The magnitude of the success is best characterized by

a comparison of the mutual losses and the extent of the

booty. The total losses amounted, including the battle at

Gumbinnen and Orlau on August 23, as far as they have been determined so far:

on the German side, a total of about 12,000 men, on the Russian side, one must

reckon with more than ten times that number.

While on the German side only about 7% of the strength of the

fighting troops were lost, the losses on the Russian side rose to

about 75%. In addition, about 350 guns fell as booty, as well as an

abundant, but no longer ascertainable number of horses, machine

guns, field kitchens, and other vehicles of all kinds into the hands

of the victors. This booty made it possible to significantly improve

the field equipment, especially of the German Landwehr and reserve

troops, and thereby increase their combat value. Also, the relatively

very low German losses of officers and men could be replenished

to a large extent quickly. — Thus, the 8th Army stood after the Battle

of Tannenberg in proud awareness of the incomparable victory achieved

and in the secure feeling of its superiority over the enemy, ready in full

strength for new deeds.

Different on the Russian side: The army leader dead, his staff fled

on foot across the border, two commanding generals captured,

the other three relieved of their positions, of five corps only 2½ escaped

the encirclement, but they too were defeated and severely weakened in

their combat strength by heavy losses. However, these losses could not

be replaced as quickly given their extent and the then still unfavorable

Russian supply conditions as on the German side. The

Russian Narew Army was eliminated for a long time; what weighed

even more heavily: under the overwhelming impression of the immense

defeat, the not too great confidence in victory, which was already not very high, dwindled.

1) Leipzig, October 16–19, 1813: 276,000 allies defeated 150,000 French,  
but did not dare to go all out against Napoleon: they left the remnants of his army the  
way back west open. — Metz, August 14–18, 1870: 240,000 Germans defeated 200,000  
French and enclosed them in the fortress. — Sedan, September 1, 1870: 188,000  
Germans defeated 120,000 French, enclosed them, and forced them to surrender the next day.

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\* Reflections on the Battle.

from leaders and troops, and thus every spirit of enterprise on the Russian

side diminished more and more. And this condition was not limited to the defeated

Narew Army, but spread to all Russian

units that had German troops as opponents.

For East Prussia, the worst was initially averted. In

Germany, the victory dispelled the fear of the Russian "steamroller,"

which had weighed heavily on Berlin and

the eastern provinces since the retreat from Gumbinnen. In some places, however, there was also

a tendency to overestimate the significance of the incomparable victory. Its

immediate effect remained confined to the East Prussian theater of war.

Of the ten armies that the Russians had deployed, only one was

dealt with. The enormous numerical disparity in the East continued to exist,

and at the front of the allies, the situation had meanwhile

not developed well. Thus, there was little time to grant the victorious troops the

well-deserved rest.

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Part Four.

The Battle

at the Masurian Lakes and the

Fights on the Galician Front

until mid-September 1914.

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First Chapter.

The Galician Front and the Overall Situation in the East until Early September.

I. Austria-Hungary's Offensive between Bug and Vistula¹).

(Map 1 and Sketch 9, p. 267.)

The Austro-Hungarian Chief of General Staff assumed that the Russians would march against Bukovina and Galicia in a wide arc, from the Romanian border to the Vistula, but would initially leave the area west of this river free. In detail, he assumed the following distribution of forces according to the calculations made in peacetime²):

up to the Russian

20th Mobilization Day 30th Mobilization Day

(= August 19) (= August 29)

south of the Dniester . . . . . . 4 Inf. Div. 8 Inf. Div.

in Podolia near Proskurov . . . . . . 10 " 16 "

in Volhynia near Rovno . . . . . . 7 " 12 "

between Bug and Vistula . . . . . . 14 " 24 "

total . . . . . . 35 Inf. Div. 60 Inf. Div.

In contrast, the Austro-Hungarian army, as agreed with the German Chief of General Staff, was to march into Eastern Galicia to attack the enemy, taking advantage of its earlier readiness, before it was fully assembled. According to the deployment plan, a total of four armies, starting from the right flank 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 1st, were to be deployed against Russia. After deducting the "Minimal Group" intended for the Balkans in this case, 40¹/₂ infantry divisions, including fortress garrisons and any border protection against Romania, were still available, along with 8¹/₂ divisions³) and 11 cavalry divisions. — General

¹) Connection to p. 30.  
²) War Archive Vienna, Study of Lieutenant Colonel Ribling.  
³) 2 divisions and 3 brigades, including 1 brigade garrison of Przemysl; another brigade, trained for land warfare as the garrison of the naval base Pola, is not included.

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The Galician Front and the Overall Situation in the East until Early September.

v. Conrad wanted to execute the deployment in the spring of 1914 directly at the border that bulged far to the northeast. The main focus was to be in the center, near Lemberg, where the 3rd and 4th Armies were to assemble with a total of 26 divisions. From this deployment, he wanted to start the offensive with an attack of the left wing between the Bug and Vistula rivers to the north, initially to create space here and to prevent a Russian encirclement from Poland. General v. Conrad then hoped, with a favorable further course of operations, to be able to swing east with the two armies of the left wing, in conjunction with the two armies of his right wing, to throw the Russians advancing in Volhynia and Podolia and push them southward.

After the murder of Sarajevo, General v. Conrad was no longer sure whether the necessary time advantage for the deployment close to the border could be achieved. Due to "the dubious attitude of Romania and the prospect that we would be forced by diplomatic action to fully deploy against Serbia, which could then trigger Russia's intervention"(1), he was prompted to move the Galician deployment back to the Dniester-San line during the month of July. Simultaneously with this retreat, the deployment was shifted more to the left. The right wing was to stand near Stanislau, almost 150 km from the Romanian border, the left at the mouth of the San into the Vistula. This resulted in a total front width of 270 km. A pronounced focus in the distribution of forces was no longer recognizable. The Galician capital Lemberg remained, only occupied by advance troops, in front of the front. It was to be fortified in the field during mobilization.

General v. Conrad informed the German Chief of General Staff of this final deployment plan, after the latter had informed him of details about the German eastern deployment through a letter dated August 2.

In the letter from Generaloberst v. Moltke, it was stated that initially 4 1/2 army corps, 3 Landwehr brigades, and 1 cavalry division would march near and east of Thorn, — furthermore 1 corps of 24 battalions [Landwehrkorps1) 2)] against Tschenstochau and Kalisch.

1) Conrad IV, p. 71.

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The Galician Front and the Overall Situation in the East until Early September.

together: 870 battalions, 350 squadrons, and 350 batteries);

— additionally

1 cavalry division and

44 infantry battalions [this involved 2½ divisions of Landsturm²)] as a special army group near Krakow. This group was to cross the border on August 17 and advance shoulder to shoulder with the German Landwehr Corps against the Vistula north of the San estuary.

For the main forces to be assembled between Stanislau and the San estuary, it was stated: "From this assembly, the offensive will begin — depending on the deployment and behavior of the Russian forces — in an easterly direction (in the unlikely event that the mass of the Russians marched against the Galician eastern border) on the 20th, in a northerly direction on August 22 from the left flank. To support this offensive of the Austro-Hungarian army, it is desired in all cases that the offensive of the 4½ army corps of Generaloberst v. Prittwitz proceed in the direction over Siedlce." ... — That was much further than the 1909 promoted offensive "against the Narew"³).

General v. Conrad repeated this new demand in a letter dated August 15⁴) and finally concluded that "only then can success be considered if these German forces also unite with ours between the Bug and Vistula to strike." It was no longer a "binding" of Russian forces, as demanded and promised in 1909, or a "relief," as was still presented as the goal of German support in January 1913, but it aimed at immediate cooperation on the battlefield, with General v. Conrad continuing to envision the subordination of the German 8th Army under Austro-Hungarian command as a desirable solution⁵).

The execution of the offensive "over Siedlce" seems to have been definitely expected by General v. Conrad⁶). However, for such an offensive, a German commitment was never given and could not be given at all in view of the expected strength ratios at the start of the war on the East Prussian front.

¹) Further details on the combat value of Austro-Hungarian units can be found in the comparative compilation in Appendix 2.  
²) The explanations in parentheses were not given in the letter itself.  
³) See p. 8ff.  
⁴) Conrad IV, p. 210.  
⁵) Ibid., p. 261.  
⁶) Ibid., p. 282.

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August 1914. — The Demand for the German Offensive over Siedlce.

in view of the expected strength ratios at the start of the war on the East Prussian front — not given at all1).

According to the German view, the forces in East Prussia had fulfilled their task towards the allies if, as General v. Conrad demanded in 1909, they prevented the Russian 1st and 2nd Armies from "turning further forces against the Austro-Hungarian Army." If it was possible to achieve more, then it was self-evident that it would be done. The instructions for the German 8th Army2) fully took this into account.

Emperor Franz Joseph had transferred the supreme command over all land forces3) and the fleet of Austria-Hungary to General of Infantry Archduke Friedrich of Austria. He was assisted by the Chief of General Staff, General of Infantry Baron Conrad v. Hötzendorf, as the actual leader of land operations. The Austro-Hungarian Supreme Army Command, called Army High Command4), arrived at the fortress of Przemyśl on August 17th5).

Against Serbia, two armies (5th and 6th) were to remain under the command of Field Marshal Potiorek, while the units of the "B-Staffel," initially also assembled there as the 2nd Army, were to follow the remaining forces to Galicia from August 18th. To what extent they would remain united there as the 2nd Army or be distributed to other armies was not yet decided.

1) General v. Conrad mentions in his memoirs (Volume IV, p. 87ff.) a discussion with the then Quartermaster General in the Great General Staff, Major General Count v. Waldersee, who was in Vienna in January 1913 on behalf of General v. Moltke. Count Waldersee reportedly spoke of a deployment in East Prussia "with the tendency of an offensive directed at Warsaw with the right wing." This promise, as General v. Conrad further reports, "took into account his demand for an offensive in the general direction of Siedlce." — Count Waldersee stated that there must be a misunderstanding. He said the offensive with the right wing on Warsaw was intended for a much later point in the war. That he had promised such an offensive for the start of the war was unthinkable, as he was in no way authorized to do so and considered an attack deep into enemy territory before the arrival of significant reinforcements from the west to be completely out of the question. There was complete agreement between General v. Moltke and him on this.  
2) E. 43. — 3) See organizational chart in Appendix 1.  
4) The German "Army High Commands" corresponded to the "Army Commands" at the head of the individual armies.  
5) See p. 50 for German and Austro-Hungarian liaison officers.  
6) p. 26.

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The Galician Front and the Overall Situation in the East until Early September.

Even without the 2nd Army, the Field Marshal retained 2 more infantry divisions against Serbia than were designated for the "minimal case" against Serbia. His "minimum task" was to repel a Serbian incursion, but it was also noted as "desirable" that a successful strike against Serbia was now of utmost importance. The hope was to induce Bulgaria to join in. If that succeeded, more forces would later be freed against Russia.

Under this perspective, an offensive against Serbia began on August 12, for which General v. Conrad gradually made available 3 divisions of the 2nd Army intended for transport. The operation ended in failure. The departure of the 3 divisions of the 2nd Army to the north was delayed far beyond August 18 and finally began only on August 30; one of the divisions even remained entirely in the Balkans. — But even from the other troops of the 2nd Army, the VII Corps was only transported to Galicia from August 22 onwards.

The consequence of these events was a further delay and weakening of the advance against Russia, where instead of 40½, only 37½ infantry divisions were eventually deployed. The fact that Landsturm units were preferred in the first line could not compensate for this shortfall.

The armies deployed against Russia were directly subordinate to the Army High Command. The place of the 2nd Army, which was to form the right wing, was temporarily taken by the army group formed from parts of the future 2nd and 3rd Armies under General of Infantry Kövess von Kövessháza. This army group was joined on the left by: the 3rd Army under General of Cavalry Ritter v. Brudermann, — the 4th under General of Infantry Ritter v. Auffenberg, the 1st under General of Cavalry Dankl — and finally, east of Kratau, an army group under General of Cavalry Ritter Kummer von Falkenfeld, which had already entered Russian territory with parts.

Even before this advance behind the Dniester and San was completed, the armies were further moved against and across the border on the western flank by an order from August 18. The right wing, army group Kövess and 3rd Army, now advanced with its mass into the area east and north of Lemberg to hold the area around this city.

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August 20th — The Execution of the Deployment in Galicia.

its mass advanced to the area east and north of Lemberg to hold the area around this city. The 4th and 1st Armies, designated for the attack, were to reach the line Zlienyów (50 km northwest of Lemberg)–Tanev–and San course to the Vistula by August 21st, with the army group v. Kummer on the extreme left wing to reach the Vistula west of Krasnik as quickly as possible. The German Landwehr Corps followed to the left rear.

By August 20th, the armies had achieved the following strengths:

Army Group Kövess and 3rd Army:

4 Corps Commands,

13½ Infantry Divisions,

5 Landsturm Brigades,

1 March Brigade,

6 Cavalry Divisions.

4th and 1st Army and Army Group Kummer:

5 Corps Commands,

17 Infantry Divisions,

2 Landsturm Divisions,

4 Landsturm Brigades,

2 March Brigades,

4 Cavalry Divisions,

Polish Legion¹).

Occupation Troops (Przemysl): 1 Landsturm Brigade.

The following forces were still expected:

The Army Command of the 2nd Army, 3 Corps Commands, 7 Infantry Divisions, 4 Landsturm Brigades, 10 March Brigades, 12 individual March Regiments, 1 Cavalry Division. These missing troops were intended with few exceptions for the 2nd (for this by far the largest part) and 3rd Army.

General v. Conrad already knew from the German 8th Army that its advance from East Prussia to the south, given the strength of the Russians, would only be possible after a success over the Russian Anger Army. On August 21st, he also learned that the reinforcements expected for East Prussia, "5 Reserve Divisions"²), had not arrived, and at the same time, that Generaloberst v. Prittwitz had broken off the battle at Gumbinnen the day before.

¹) The Legion was supposed to be the rallying point for Russian Poles who wanted to fight on the Austrian side, but it actually consisted almost exclusively of Austrian Poles.  
²) See p. 249.

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had broken off the battle. Thus, the prospect of a German advance beyond Siedlce seemed to have moved into the distant future.

The conditions for the Austro-Hungarian offensive against Russia had turned out to be much less favorable than General v. Conrad had hoped and based his earlier calculations on. Nevertheless, he held firmly to the intention of attacking. According to his view, the attack corresponded more than the defense to the special characteristics of the Austro-Hungarian troops. He hoped that their "tactical skill... would form a moment of superiority over the cumbersome Russian masses"). He wanted to attack the enemy, "so that the victorious advance of the German armies against France would not be disturbed, so that the German Eastern Army would not be isolated and exposed to a blow, finally so that Russia would not have the time to fully unite its superiority, then to use it with overwhelming force and to prepare a catastrophic defeat for the Imperial and Royal armies, which seemed quite possible if they remained in passive waiting").

The initially envisaged time for the attack, August 20 or 22 (letter to General v. Moltke from August 4)), could not be met by General v. Conrad, as the assembly of his armies had not progressed far enough. They first had to close ranks and should simultaneously, especially on the western flank, gradually advance a little further. General v. Conrad believed that the general offensive of all armies could probably not begin before August 27.

On August 21, the Austro-Hungarian Chief of General Staff wrote to Generaloberst v. Prittwitz: "We have significant Russian forces against us between the Vistula and Bug as well as east of the Bug, against which we will proceed in about a week, unless their offensive leads us to decisive battle earlier." This case occurred. The Russians seemed to be moving and began to cross the Galician eastern border. Based on the results, especially of aerial reconnaissance, General v. Conrad now assumed that east of the Struths only stronger cavalry with little infantry was initially to be expected. On the other hand, about 3 corps were reported advancing over Tarnopol and in Brody, and between Bug and Vistula, the flyers had already identified 12-16 Russian infantry divisions on August 27. General v. Conrad assumed further strong forces behind them around Brest-Litovsk.

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August 1914. — The Russian Advance against Galicia.

On the Austro-Hungarian side, initially 23 infantry divisions (17 active divisions, 2 German Landwehr, and 2 Austrian Landsturm divisions, as well as 4 individual Landsturm brigades) were advancing west of the train, including the German Landwehr Corps. On the right flank, the 3rd Army was to follow them as an attached flank to the north to take over the protection against the Russian forces expected from the east. It was reinforced on August 23 by the mass of the Kövess Army Group and was to deliver a decisive blow against the enemy if they advanced further via Tarnopol and Brody.

Since the Russians had meanwhile begun their advance along their entire front, it led to consequential battles in the following days.

On the Russian side, they had obtained precise knowledge of the then Austro-Hungarian deployment in 1907 and again in 1912. The Russian operational plan was based on this. The Army Group of the Southwestern Front marched against Austria-Hungary, under General Ivanov as commander-in-chief with General Alexeyev as chief of staff. General Ivanov had a total of four armies, which were comprehensively deployed east of the Vistula against Eastern Galicia, against whose northern border the 4th Army under General Baron Salzau at Lublin and the 5th under General Plehwe on both sides of the Bug, between Cholm and Kowel, — against the eastern border the 3rd under General Ruzki at Dubno and the 8th under General Brusilov at Proskurov with a special group south of the Dniester. The 46½ divisions deployed against Galicia were considered sufficient to deal with the Austro-Hungarian army, especially since it was known that significant parts of this army had initially marched against Serbia. The Army Group of the Southwestern Front was to defeat the enemy with the aim of "taking hasty forces south over the Dniester or west to Krakow." To this end, the 4th Army was to advance directly south to Przemysl, the 5th to the east alongside it, while the 3rd and 8th turned from the east against Lemberg and south. There was no knowledge of the change in the Austro-Hungarian deployment that General v. Conrad had made immediately before the outbreak of war.

The Russian advance could be launched in full strength around August 28, if the completion of the deployment was not awaited, just as with the Northwestern Front possibly as early as August 22.

1) Conrad IV, p. 491. — 2) Connection on p. 36. — 3) Lutomsky, p. 21. — 4) Jachowitsch, p. 9/10. — 5) Strategic Overview, p. 11. — 6) p. 35.

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did not wait, just as with the Northwest Front possibly already on August 22. At France's urging, however, the Supreme Army Command then prompted not only the Northwest Front but also the Southwest Front to attack even earlier. The Austro-Hungarian attack was expected between the Bug and Vistula. But precisely the Russian armies (4th and 5th) designated for this were numerically, especially after the loss of the XX Corps, the weakest there, as the majority of the troops had been sent from the General Government of Warsaw against Germany, and were the last to complete their deployment. Thus, the 3rd and 8th Armies in the east were now to advance as quickly as possible to push their enemy army in the rear²). — On August 18, the army group of the Southwest Front, starting from the left wing, began with the 8th, on August 19 with the 3rd Army; on August 20, both armies crossed the border. Only on August 23 did the 5th and 4th Armies advance from the north.

The strength of the Russian armies at the beginning of these movements is not precisely known. According to the modified deployment plan³), the following were initially determined:

for the 8th Army 4 active corps = 9 infantry divisions,

" " 3rd, " 5 " = 10 "

" " 5th, " 4 " = 8 "

" " 4th, " 3 " = 6½ "

in addition to some reserve divisions for each army, so that the Southwest Front was to count a total of 46½ infantry divisions as well as 18½ cavalry and Cossack divisions. However, it is certain that at this location at the beginning of operations, significant parts were still missing. Thus, the 4th Army initially did not have a single reserve division, and most of these divisions were also missing. A rough calculation based on our current knowledge of the Russian deployment shows that on August 20, no more than about 32 infantry⁴) and 15 cavalry divisions could be available against the armies of the Danube Monarchy. In particular, the Russian 4th Army initially had at most 6½ infantry divisions available.

The forward movement of the Austro-Hungarian western wing, where the 1st Army had immediately started with 9 infantry divisions and 1 Landsturm brigade, led to the three-day battle of Krasnik.

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August 23—30. — The Beginning of the Austro-Hungarian Offensive.

krasnik. Here, on August 25, the victory over the Russian 4th Army was achieved.

Meanwhile, General v. Conrad had decided, in view of the clearly recognized general Russian advance, to immediately launch an "offensive seeking decision between the Vistula and Bug" with everything he had at hand, while defending against the northeast and east. However, this defense was also to be conducted offensively. On August 25, he ordered the 1st and 4th Armies to attack northward, the 3rd to advance on Stotschow to "decisively defeat as strong enemy forces as possible"(2), and the 2nd to support the 3rd.

This concentric attack, begun with around 40 infantry divisions(3) from a front over 200 km long, led to individual battles at three spatially distant locations. At each of them, about a third of the total forces initially available in Galicia entered the fight.

East of Lemberg, where General v. Brudermann led his 3rd Army, reinforced to 10 divisions (9½ active), into attack, fierce battles occurred on August 26 and the following days, during which the 3rd Army had to retreat with heavy losses. Even the intervention of reinforcements arriving gradually, especially the 2nd Army coming from the Balkans, could not change the outcome. The Russians proved superior in numbers and, particularly the Kiev troops, also in combat leadership and artillery use(4). Here, the Austrians eventually counted on 20 Russian infantry divisions. The Austro-Hungarian forces were, especially in the south, outflanked and threatened with encirclement. Their struggle ended on August 30, after five days of fighting, with the retreat to Lemberg. It was around the time when the last two expected divisions of the 2nd Army at the Balkan front had just begun loading.

Meanwhile, the Austro-Hungarian armies attacking northward had driven the Russians back in continuous battles: 60 km south of Cholm, the commander of the 4th Army, General v. Auffenberg, sought, undeterred by all difficulties, to annihilate the mass of the Russian 5th Army through encirclement on both sides.

1) Conrad IV, p. 507, but without blocking the words there.  
2) Ibid., p. 517.  
3) Including 2 divisions and 10 brigades of Landsturm = 7 divisions calculated.  
4) 9½ more divisions (including 2 divisions of German Landwehr and 5 brigades of Landsturm), which were still in transit or far off on the flanks, are not included.  
4) Communication from the War Archives Vienna, Study by Lieutenant Colonel v. Foly.  
World War. Vol. II.

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pressed: 60 km south of Cholm, the commander of the 4th Army, General v. Auffenberg, sought to destroy the mass of the Russian 5th Army through a double envelopment, undeterred by all difficulties. However, his right wing was already forced to detach parts for rear cover against the Russians now advancing from the east. A gap of about 80 km in width had formed between the western wing of the 4th and the eastern wing of the 1st Army. However, the attack south of Lublin by the 1st Army had gradually stalled. The decisive turn hoped for from the intervention of the Kummer army group advancing from the west had not materialized. Although the Russians were still in the minority in terms of divisions before this army, the number of fighters on the Austro-Hungarian side had noticeably dwindled due to futile, insufficiently artillery-supported attacks.

Thus, on August 31, the Austro-Hungarian 4th and 1st Armies stood from south of Cholm to near Josefow on the Vistula with about 22 divisions over a 150 km front width in two spatially widely separated groups, without having achieved a decision, facing Russian forces that had gradually strengthened. Meanwhile, the Austro-Hungarian 4th Army was seriously endangered by the retreat of the 3rd Army. In terms of reinforcements, however, apart from the mentioned two infantry divisions of the 2nd Army, only a single Landsturm brigade was to be expected, as well as the German Landwehr Corps (2 divisions) advancing on the left wing against the Vistula, which had not yet entered the battle. General v. Conrad could no longer hope for the deployment of further forces from the Serbian front. In Vienna, strong currents were noticeable that prevented any further weakening of the Balkan front, although there, with 13½ divisions (including only 3 Landsturm brigades) against 11½ enemy divisions, superiority was still maintained. Thus, General v. Conrad had to rely even more on German assistance than before. Due to the absence of the 5 reserve divisions promised for East Prussia, he had already inquired on August 21. Now he also considered it urgent that the German 8th Army continue the expected advance over the Narew to Siedlce northward. The victory at Tannenberg seemed to offer the possibility for this.

1) War Archive Vienna, Information from Lieutenant Colonel Glaise v. Horstenau.

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End of August.

2. The Request for German Support.

The German Supreme Army Command was kept informed about the events on the Galician front by the Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal Lieutenant Count Stürgkh, who was present at the Great Headquarters, and the German General at the Austro-Hungarian Army High Command, Lieutenant General Baron von Freytag-Loringhoven.

Regarding the situation on the Galician front, General von Freytag reported on August 26, based on the information he received: "... Success of the 1st Army on August 23 at Krasnik completed today. Seven divisions are retreating hastily to Lublin. ... " According to other reports, there were said to be eight divisions, 5000 prisoners, and 60 guns captured. On August 28, General von Conrad reported: "Our 1st and 4th Armies, after battles at Krasnik and Tomaschow, are advancing between the Vistula and Bug with stubborn fighting, while our other two armies are engaged in fierce combat east of Lemberg against a superior enemy. — It is urgently desired that strong German forces occupy the area of Siedlce and Lukow, as always expected here, so that we can hold the success at Lublin and provide support to our armies fighting east of Lemberg. There are also signs of a strengthened German proposal for an advance from Warsaw."

The German Supreme Army Command was not in a position to help immediately upon receiving this message. However, it had reinforced the army in East Prussia with two army corps, a Landwehr division, and a cavalry division, bringing it to the strength promised to the allies. The new forces, however, had only partially arrived in the East by August 28; the battle against the Russian Narew Army was still in full swing. Although there was justified hope of victory, since the first blow against the Russian Niemen Army at Gumbinnen had not succeeded, it was now very unlikely that they could turn south immediately after dealing with the Narew Army. On the other hand, the German Supreme Army Command, after receiving the Austro-Hungarian victory report a few days earlier and especially considering the strength of the Russian forces deployed against East Prussia, did not view the situation of the allies as particularly threatening. A report based on communications from the Austro-Hungarian Army High Command, by General von Freytag on August 20, had shown that by the end of August, 45 infantry divisions would be assembled on the allied side of the Galician front, compared to 34 Russian divisions that had been identified in combat, as General von Conrad had reported.

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Early September. — The Request for German Support.

After receiving knowledge of East Prussia, it was hoped that after the

German victories in France and East Prussia, immediate support by German

troops in Galicia would now also be possible. Thus, General v. Conrad

telegraphed to the German Supreme Army Command on September 1:

Despite the success of the 1st and 4th Army, the situation is extremely

critical, as the remaining forces are "pushed back by a vastly superior

enemy, severely weakened in combat, still holding the northern wing of

Lemberg, and highly endangered by Russian advances along the Dniester.

He only expects two more divisions and therefore urgently requests a

decisive change in the situation with the deployment of fresh German

forces, if possible at least two army corps, direction Pischemysl."

A report received on September 2 from Captain v. Fleischmann,

the liaison officer with the German 8th Army, brought a new disappointment.

The report stated: General v. Hindenburg now wants to initially break off

the race battle. "Thus, again — apparently triggered by a misunderstood

imperial telegram after the victory in East Prussia — the view has taken

hold that the favorite province of East Prussia must first be completely

cleared of the enemy. . . . However, the weak Russian Niemen Army

would retreat "without resistance in a timely manner" before the arrival

of the German Army. Such thought processes corresponded entirely to the

view that the Austro-Hungarian Army High Command had also formed

about the German conduct of the war in the East, since Generaloberst

v. Prittwitz had not immediately advanced south in mid-August, but first

against the Niemen Army. The leading military positions of Austria-Hungary,

especially General v. Conrad himself, harbored the suspicion and openly

expressed it among themselves even then, that the German Army Command

was conducting the war in the East based on self-serving considerations

and thereby neglecting the common cause, thought processes that had not

even remotely occurred to the German leadership at that time and were

therefore neither understood nor considered.

On September 3, Archduke Friedrich, as the supreme commander of the

Austro-Hungarian Army, addressed the German Emperor directly: "In

fulfillment of our alliance obligations, we have, by abandoning East Galicia,

thus guided only by operational considerations, seized the offensive in the

agreed direction between the Bug and Vistula and thereby drawn the

overwhelming power of Russia onto us, with which our armies are engaged,

but stubbornly striving for success, which was also granted to them in the bloody battles of Krasnik, Samostje¹), and Komarow, albeit at the expense of the eastern army groups, which could therefore only be weaker and were pushed by the superior enemy.

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but stubbornly strive for success, which was also granted to them in the bloody battles of Krasnik, Samostje¹), and Komarow here, albeit at the expense of the eastern army groups, which therefore could only be weaker and were pushed back by the superior enemy. We have found it difficult that the agreed German offensive over the lower Narew, towards Siedlce, did not take place. If the great goal of defeating Russia is to be achieved, I consider a vigorously conducted German offensive with strong forces in the direction of Siedlce to be decisive, but also urgent; apart from that, it seems to me that after the brilliant and decisive German successes in France, the moment has come in which the powerful support of the Austro-Hungarian operations by German troops, promised under this condition, must be realized ..."

The seriousness of the situation on the Galician front was highlighted by the simultaneous reports of the German general at the Austro-Hungarian army high command: The fortified city of Lemberg had to be abandoned and the 2nd and 3rd armies were withdrawn further west, behind the Grodeker lakes. If the intended thrust of the 4th army to the south did not succeed, General v. Conrad wanted to withdraw all armies to the fortress of Przemysl and the San. Lieutenant General v. Freytag remarked that, in his opinion, "due to a strong loss of business strength, a transition to a firmer defense seems advisable." The allied Danube monarchy was also in a difficult position on other fronts: After no success had been achieved against the Serbs, there was the possibility that they would now go on the offensive themselves. The Romanians were not trusted, the Tsar was said to have offered them Bukovina. That Turkey was now increasingly leaning towards the side of the Allies could bring only slight relief in such a situation. The Austro-Hungarian chief of staff wished for their intervention over the Black Sea against Odessa as well as in the Caucasus.

For the German supreme army command, however, the decisive question remained what could be done on their part to support the allied empire. It was not only Austro-Hungarian concerns that were decided in Galicia, but equally German ones. A Russian advance on Vienna also threatened Silesia, gave the Western powers new hope, and thus strengthened their resistance. Nevertheless, the view of Count Schlieffen still held full validity: even the fate of Austria would not be decided on the Bug, but on the Seine.

¹) West of Komarow.

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full validity: even the fate of Austria would not be decided on the Bug, but on the Seine. However, the decision had not yet been made there. The transfer of the two corps to East Prussia had already proven to be probably premature. All the more, the Supreme Army Command could not think of further weakening the Western Army.

But even an advance from East Prussia to Siedlce was not yet possible despite the victory at Tannenberg. The Russian Narew Army had been decisively defeated, and what had escaped to Poland was so weakened by the defeat that the way to Warsaw, but also east past it, was open as long as the Russians did not bring in new troops. The resistance at the Narew Line, built in peacetime, might not have been too stubborn under these circumstances. However, in further advances, the major military sites of Nowogeorgiewsk and Warsaw on the western flank, the heavily fortified Osowiec and Brest-Litovsk, as well as four double-track railways leading from the interior of Russia in the east, were commanded. And in the rear, the Rennenkampf army was simultaneously defeated, reinforced by new forces and therefore numerically superior to the German 8th Army — even after the arrival of the German corps rolling in from the west. This Russian army only needed to advance, then the operation over the Narew would collapse. However, keeping the Russian Njemen Army in check and simultaneously conducting a far-reaching offensive to the south in other areas exceeded the strength of the victors of Tannenberg.

Thus, the next goal of the German operations in the east could only be the destruction of the Njemen Army; only then did an advance far to the south, towards the allies, have a prospect of success. The German Supreme Army Command and the command of the 8th Army were already in agreement on this view. In this sense, the Austro-Hungarian Army Command was also answered. The armies of the Danube Monarchy had to rely on their own strength and the German Landwehr Corps for the time being. In doing so, there was full confidence in the victories of the allied 1st and 4th Armies and the further operational intentions of General v. Conrad. The unfavorable view of General v. Freytag regarding the condition of the Austro-Hungarian troops receded into the background, especially since the Battle of Tannenberg had just proven what could be achieved against Russian troops even with minorities.

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had just proven what could be achieved against Russian troops even with minorities.

3. The Russian Supreme Command until Early September.

(Map 1 and Sketch 9, p. 267.)

The Russian Supreme Command, as mentioned, had pursued a threefold goal from the outset. On one hand, it wanted to overthrow Austria-Hungary's army, simultaneously conquer East Prussia, and also prepare an attack "deep into Germany." For this attack, they wished to gain control of the Vistula front Danzig—Thorn before the German western armies could intervene in the east. The need to quickly achieve a decisive success increased with the victories of the Germans in France. Thus, the Grand Duke repeatedly urged both the army group of the Northwest Front and that of the Southwest Front to act swiftly and decisively.

For the attack against Germany on the left bank of the Vistula, the 9th Army gathered near Warsaw, and the deployment of the 10th was to follow. The Supreme Command held on to the determination of the Warsaw forces against Germany as long as possible. However, as they gradually advanced the army division Kummer, they gained the impression that the Austro-Hungarian deployment was more shifted to the west compared to the plan of 1912, and this circumstance, along with the approach of the German Landwehr Corps, raised concerns for the western flank of the Southwest Front. Nevertheless, the Chief of the General Staff sharply rejected on August 22, a day before the 4th Army east of the Vistula began its attack southward, using parts of the 9th Army arriving in Warsaw for their protection. This army was to maintain its offensive task against Germany. Forces that had previously been designated for the left wing of the Southwest Front, especially the III Caucasian Corps, were moved to the area of Ivangorod.

Soon, however, they found themselves compelled to release parts of the 9th Army for other purposes: The I Corps had to be transferred to the 2nd Army for cover against Thorn, and the XVIII on August 25 was diverted to the 4th Army to repel the Austro-Hungarian attack southward. Corps following from the Asian territories of the Empire were to cover the shortfall. At this time, they also hoped to quickly finish in East Prussia.

1) Reference p. 36. — 2) Tichowitsch, p. 50.  
3) Notes of the Quartermaster General Danilow (Tichowitsch, p. 55).  
4) Tichowitsch, p. 50. — 5) pp. 68 and 122.

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End of August. — The Decision to Carry Out the Attack Against Galicia.

To quickly complete East Prussia. Since August 26, the Supreme Command

had been considering the (already mentioned) idea of moving the bulk of the

1st Army by rail via Warsaw to the western Vistula bank. Even on August 28,

General Quartermaster Danilow responded in this sense to the objections of the

Northwest Front: "It is impossible to leave nine corps on the right Vistula bank

while the entire weight of further operations lies on the left bank." The news of

the unfavorable situation at the 2nd Army initially ended this idea. The Supreme

Command did not assume on August 29 either that a disaster of decisive

importance could occur there\*).

At the same time, the difficult situation between the Vistula and Bug,

where the 4th and 5th Armies were pressed by a superior enemy, ruled out

further holding back of strong forces near Warsaw. It was considered to

launch these units, whose vanguard of the 2nd Guards Infantry Division

had already reached Petrikau, to attack on the left Vistula bank southwards,

via Radom. The Northwest Front reported on August 28 that 48 battalions

would be available for this. The Supreme Command then, probably due to

the urgent situation on the Galician front, refrained from this particularly

effective operational attack direction. Essentially, only cavalry advanced

on Radom. To quickly assist the 4th Army, the transport of the 1st Guards

Infantry Division by rail to Ivangorod began on August 29, and the next day

the 9th Army was subordinated to the Southwest Front group, except for a

remnant of 1 3/4 cavalry divisions, and the advancing XXII Corps was also

assigned there\*).

The devastating news of the complete collapse of the 2nd Army then

forced the abandonment of the plan for an advance "deep into Germany"

for the time being and also to initially forgo the conquest of East Prussia.

It was not possible to continue the attack against Germany desired by

France.

On September 2, the Supreme Commander Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolajewitsch held a meeting in Bjelostok with the Commander-in-Chief of the Northwest Front, General Sihliniski.

1) p. 232.  
2) Minutes of the Russian Supreme Command from August 26 (Strategic Overview,  
p. 75, Sischowitsch, p. 55).  
3) Sischowitsch, p. 54.  
4) Conversation of Danilow with the Northwest Front (Sischowitsch, p. 57).  
5) Sischowitsch, pp. 57 and 149/50.

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Nikolaevich<sup>1)</sup> in Bjelostok had a meeting with the Commander-in-Chief of the Northwestern Front, General Sihliniski<sup>2)</sup>. They now expected a German attack against the Narew with the aim of "joining hands with the Austrians and then launching a joint attack against the Brest-Litovsk—Bjelostok—Grodno front." To preempt this enemy operation, it was deemed necessary "to first deal with the Austrian army by delivering a strong blow near Lublin." To cover this plan against the German army in East Prussia, the XXII Corps was reassigned to the Northwestern Front. It joined the 10th Army advancing towards Warsaw, which was now to be inserted between the 1st and 2nd Armies. Based on these intentions and the distribution of forces, the operations were then continued.

<sup>1)</sup> There are reports from credible German eyewitnesses that the Grand Duke stayed with the High Command of the 1st Army in Sitsberburg from August 28 to September 9. On the other hand, it is hard to believe that the Supreme Commander would have left his headquarters during this particularly important time for directing overall operations to be at a location recognized as a secondary theater of war with the commander of a single army. The Russians deny the Grand Duke's stay in Sitsberburg (Military Weekly 1922, No. 22), and thus the German reports may be based on a case of mistaken identity.  
<sup>2)</sup> Sihowitsch, p. 59. — His statements about the outcome of the meeting are partly unclear.

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Second Chapter. The Battle of the Masurian Lakes. I. The German Operational Plan. (Map 12.)

On August 31, the last day of the Battle of Tannenberg, the German Supreme Army Command gave the 8th Army the following new directive: "First, the task of the 8th Army will be to clear East Prussia of Rennenkampf's army. Pursuit of the now defeated enemy with dispensable parts in the direction of Warsaw is desirable with regard to the movement of the Russians from Warsaw to Silesia. Further movement of the 8th Army is, if the situation in East Prussia permits, envisaged in the direction of Warsaw."

This "cleansing of East Prussia" was not meant purely locally. It was not enough to chase the enemy across the border; he had to be, if possible, destroyed, or at least so defeated that the German 8th Army gained full freedom of movement for further operations. This was also how Generaloberst von Hindenburg and Generalmajor Ludendorff understood the task. To achieve this result, it was necessary, given the strength of the Russian Njemen Army, to bring in all available forces. The troops rolling in from the west1), the Guard Reserve Corps (this, unlike other reserve corps, with an active division and otherwise in its strength completely equal to an active corps), the XI Army Corps, and the 8th Cavalry Division brought a reinforcement for the army by almost half. The arrival of these units had to be awaited.

The days of waiting benefited the other parts of the army, which, after a six-day battle, urgently needed rest and replacement of personnel and equipment. A short pause was also indispensable to transfer the ever-increasing numbers of prisoners and to prepare the army for its new task.

1) See war organization in Appendix 1.

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Early September. — The German Forces.

At the beginning of September, the German 8th Army was positioned as follows:

35th Reserve Division (main reserve Thorn²), consisting of Landwehr), main reserve Graudenz³) (a brigade) and

70th Landwehr Brigade north of Mlawa and near Neidenburg,

I Army Corps and 3rd Reserve Division from Neidenburg to Willenberg,

XVII Army Corps around Ortelsburg,

XX Army Corps with one division each north of Neidenburg and near Allenstein,

Landwehr Division Goltz near Mühlen,

I Reserve Corps with assigned 6th Landwehr Brigade near Allenstein and Guttstadt,

1st Cavalry Division in front of the eastern front of the army, main reserve Königsberg (one division) and 2nd Landwehr Brigade in the Deim position.

Behind the front of the army, since September 2nd, the following were unloaded:

XI Army Corps near Allenstein and Osterode,

Guard Reserve Corps near Elbing and east,

8th Cavalry Division (only from September 4th) near Mohrungen, Wormditt and west.

Additionally, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg decided to also bring in the main reserve Posen (a strong brigade) for the upcoming battles.

Thus, the German leader in East Prussia could count on a total of 18½ infantry divisions (including 9 active divisions, 4 reserve divisions, and otherwise Landwehr and replacement troops) and two cavalry divisions.

The enemy was assumed to have the following strength and distribution:

In western Poland, only weak forces, in total an infantry brigade, about one cavalry division (probably the 5th) and parts of the border guard. Intelligence reports about reinforcements of these troops and about the intention of a Russian incursion into the province of Posen kept coming in. However, the army high command considered such an undertaking unlikely since the Battle of Tannenberg.

From the Russian 2nd (Narew) Army, only the I and VI Corps, the 1st Rifle Brigade, the 4th, 6th, and 15th Cavalry Divisions as well as individual elements of the XIII, XV, and XXIII Corps that had escaped capture were in question.

¹) Order of battle see Appendix 1.  
²) The previously united detachment under General v. Unger (½ main reserve Thorn and main reserve Graudenz) had meanwhile been dissolved.

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as well as individual parts of the XIII, XV, and XXIII Corps that escaped capture. These remnants of the army had been in full retreat southward against the fortified Narew line since August 31. After suffering a heavy defeat, they initially could not possess any significant offensive power.

The Russian 1st (Njemen) Army, on the other hand, was to be regarded as a fully capable opponent. In recent days, newly formed reserve divisions, rolling into the deployment area after the old troops, had been identified. By early September, reports of three such divisions were available, so that the army as a whole comprised at least 11½ infantry and 5½ cavalry divisions: II, III, IV, XX Corps, 5th Rifle Brigade, 53rd, 56th, 57th Reserve Division, 1st Guard, 2nd Guard, 1st, 2nd, 3rd Cavalry Division, 1 independent Cavalry Brigade.

The presence and arrival of further Russian forces were expected. The Germans primarily considered the Guard Corps, which had already been accepted by the Njemen Army on August 20/21, then apparently transferred to Warsaw, but had not yet been felt at the front. Furthermore, the XXII Corps from Finland, which had wanted to move southwest via Petersburg for several days, was also considered, as well as the XVIII Corps from Petersburg and further reserve divisions. According to the German Supreme Army Command, five more were expected in addition to the three previously reported. According to intelligence reports, it was assumed that these and possibly other reinforcements would primarily serve the formation of a reserve army at Grodno. Overall, excluding the remnants of the Narew Army, a probable Russian strength of twenty infantry divisions was estimated, which had to be fought on the East Prussian front.

Thus, the numerical ratio was no longer as unfavorable as before, but it still had to be considered that over ¼ of the German forces consisted of Landwehr, which could not be fully counted for field warfare, and that the Russian infantry divisions were ⅓ stronger than the German ones. Also, since facing Rennenkampf's army in the Battle of Gumbinnen, the German troops had no greater amplitude immediately behind them; only the cut-off corps had suffered little so far. However, the Russian Njemen Army could have compensated for the losses of Gumbinnen after more than three weeks of rest.

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Early September. — The Perception of the Enemy.

In detail, the situation in front of the German 8th Army's front was as follows: The defeated Russian Narew Army had so far only been followed by cavalry. The 1st Cavalry Brigade (from the 1st Cavalry Division) had reached Myschlinje. At Lößn, where all positions had remained in German hands during the Battle of Tannenberg, the enemy had held back since their unsuccessful surrender demand on August 27. In the early days of September, German Landsturm from the fortress had reoccupied the barriers in the Johannisburg Heath and driven back positions of the Russian 16th Infantry Division (VI Corps) from retreat. Nikolaiken was also back in German possession. Enemy from the Russian 43rd Infantry Division (from II Corps) was still observing east of Lößn. — The German 1st Cavalry Division (without 1st Brigade) faced far superior Russian cavalry at Lautern, while Russian reconnaissance units were skirting around Bischofstein into their rear towards Wartenburg. There, on the orders of the Army High Command, the I Reserve Corps had advanced a detachment. — North of Guttstadt over Wormditt—Mehlsack—Zinten to south of Königsberg, only a few battalions of stage and fortress troops, mostly Landsturm, were stationed for concealment. The strong Russian cavalry had retreated everywhere to the east since August 31. — The governor of the Königsberg fortress, Lieutenant General v. Pappritz, had launched a successful advance over the Deime on September 1, but had since held back his forces more on the orders of the Army High Command, in accordance with the overall situation. The enemy was in the forest area of the Frisching and on the east bank of the Deime.

The task was to attack the Russian Njemen Army. Since the defeat of the Narew Army, it had retreated to the area northwest of the Masurian Lakes and was now four strong day marches in front of the German 8th Army's front. General v. Rennenkampf appeared to be preparing for stubborn defense. His position found secure support in the north at the Rautische Haff. The southern flank was bent back and protected by the Mauer Lake on the flank. What Russian forces were still east or south of the Masurian Lakes or advancing was beyond the knowledge of the German command. To decisively strike an enemy in such a position, as General v. Rennenkampf had taken, from a frontal approach was particularly difficult.

See pp. 119 and 232.

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Any encirclement of the northern flank was out of the question. If one wanted to gain the flank here, one first had to penetrate deeply between the Pregel and the lagoon. Only then could one turn south. However, the road conditions from the Tapiau—Labiau line were extremely unfavorable, and the Pregel had to halt the exploitation of success. Here, too, one encountered the already far-advanced Russian northern flank, not the depth of the Russian rear connections. The defeated enemy would have been pushed back in the direction of these.

The situation of the Russian army was much more unfavorable if it was possible to encircle their southern flank. It was already somewhat set back. If one advanced here, one would cut the rear connections of the Russians and could push them north against the Njemen. This solution promised a decisive success. One could swing out over Lötzen or also south of the lakes, while the enemy was tied down in the front by attack. Such an operation seems simple today, yet it required particularly bold daring. In view of the opponent, the German leader had to divide his forces.

The Russians could exploit this situation for a blow: The emergence of the German encircling wing from the narrows of Ailolaiten and Lötzen and its further advance in the difficult lake terrain east of these narrows could only be delayed with inferior forces; but if the Germans swung south of the great lakes over Johannisburg, their path would become even longer, the time of separation from the parts deployed against the Russian front even longer. At the same time, however, the danger grew that significant parts of the encircling troops would be attacked by new Russian forces from the Lomsha—Ostrow—Grodno line and withdrawn from the decision. Viewed from this perspective, the decision-seeking German southern flank could not be strong enough.

On the other hand, the parts deployed north of the great lakes were expected to face the Russian superiority alone for several days. From Lötzen to the area east of Angerburg is 25 km, a full day's march, from Johannisburg to Goldap almost 100 km. Even if the advance on these long stretches suffered no significant delay by the enemy, several days had to come for the army command: If General v. Rennenkampf forced the separation of the German army and himself advanced north of the lakes with full force, he could bring the victorious army into a bad situation. Given everything known about Russian warfare, their behavior in the East Asian war, and General v. Rennenkampf's previous actions in East Prussia, and especially after the recent destruction of the Narew Army, it was not very likely that the Njemen Army would now decide to launch an early and effective counterattack from its strong position, with the fortress of Königsberg on its northern flank, at the right moment; but it remained possible.

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bring. According to everything known about the Russian conduct of war, their behavior in the East Asian War, and the previous activities of General v. Rennenkampf in East Prussia, and especially after the recent destruction of the Narew Army, it was not very likely that the Njemen Army would now decide to step out of their strong position, with the fortress Königsberg on the northern flank, at the right moment for an early and effective counterattack; but it remained possible. Thus, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg — after withdrawing small forces for the protection of the flank against the south — deployed about 1/3 of the army for encirclement and 2/3 against the front of the Russian position. He intended not only to tie down the enemy here but also to attack.

2. The Advance and the Initial Battles up to September 8.

(Map 12 and 13.)

On September 3, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg in Allenstein gave the order to advance.

On the southern flank, the main reserve Graudenz, the 35th Reserve Division, the 70th Landwehr Brigade, and the Landwehr Division Goltz were to protect the more than 150 km long border stretch from Thorn exclusively to Chorslebe. For this purpose, Malwa, which had just been taken by the 35th Reserve Division on that day, September 3, or Soldau through the Government Thorn, was to be expanded into a base for an army corps. Furthermore, the flank protection was to be carried out offensively by pursuing the enemy defeated at Tannenberg. In this way, they wanted to accommodate, as far as possible, the Austro-Hungarian wishes. At Myschince, the 3rd Reserve Division was to take over the cover. However, it was not intended to permanently fix all these forces on the southern border. They were to follow the encircling wing of the army advancing eastward in the further course and also be ready to be brought to other locations with parts from Soldau via Ortelsburg on the railway. Landsturm was then to take their place.

On September 5, the six corps of the 8th Army were to be ready to advance in the line: area east of Ortelsburg—Bischofsburg—Heilsberg—area east of Mehlsack. It was intended to position the right wing of the I Army Corps on Nidlainen, the XVII Army Corps on Bößen to be deployed.

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to deploy. The forces designated for the encirclement were to join against the front north of the lakes with the XX Army Corps, the XI Army Corps, the I Reserve Corps with the 6th Landwehr Brigade, and on the northern flank the Guard Reserve Corps. The main reserve Königsberg was to be kept ready for use south of the fortress at Domnau. As soon as the railways were free from transports from the west, the Pösener main reserve was also to be brought there. Further north, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg wanted to be in defense. The attacked front was already very wide in relation to the available forces. — The 1st Cavalry Brigade was to continue independently reconnoitering south of the lakes over Rudzanny. The 1st Cavalry Division (without the 1st Brigade) was to obscure the advance of the right army wing, with the 8th Cavalry Division moving up to it after unloading.

While all previous reports from the enemy had only indicated defense and fires and destroyed bridges marked the path of his retreat, this picture changed after the issuance of the army order on the evening of September 3: The Königsberg government reported Russian preparations for bridge strikes over Pregel and Deime, enemy forces were advancing from Allenburg to the northwest. The government expected a Russian attack. An intercepted radio message also made the enemy's transition to attack seem not excluded.

The army high command began to pay more serious attention to this possibility and even temporarily considered on September 4 that a battle could occur west of the lakes. The corps were instructed to close ranks during the transition to rest to be ready for battle at any time. They prepared to, if necessary, lead the XVII, and even the I Army Corps, north on the west side of the lakes. Only the 3rd Reserve Division remained available for use east of the lakes. On September 4, it received the order to advance from Myschinje towards the town of Johannisburg, which had meanwhile been reoccupied by Landsturm. The 1st Cavalry Brigade was subordinated to the division.

By September 5, all parts of the army had reached the objectives assigned to them in the army order of the 3rd, partly — in accordance with later instructions from the army high command — had even surpassed them.

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September 3–5. — The Possibility of a Russian Attack.

according to the army high command — already exceeded. Then a new enemy appeared from the southern flank, especially from Lomsha: The militia in Johannisburg reported on September 5 in the morning the advance of a long column from Kolno to the north and also enemy troops just east of Johannisburg on the road to Bialla. Residents had reported that "three Russian army corps" were gathering at Kolno, and Russian troops were supposed to be in Arys and Lyck. A verification of these perhaps exaggerated reports by reconnaissance could not be carried out immediately due to the weather.

However, there was no sign of any action by the Rennenkampf army for the time being; they seemed to continue to behave cautiously. On the evening of September 4, flyers had identified the Russian positions in the line: lakes west of Angerburg—Gerdauen—Allenburg in all details. The Russian cavalry retreated to these positions without a fight, even behind the front at Angerburg. The enemy's main forces still seemed to be standing between the lakes and the Pregel and were being further reinforced here. According to residents' reports, a long column of all arms was supposed to have marched from Lyck to Angerburg in recent days, while at the Deime the last active Russian division (28th from the XX Corps) seemed to be relieved by the 53rd Reserve Division advancing from Tilsit.

By September 5, however, the German troops had already advanced so close to the lake line that it had to be decided whether, in view of the superior enemy in the front and the new enemy on the flank, the separation of their own army should be risked. Since it offered the most effective means to decisively defeat the Njemen army, the army high command did not hesitate to accept the risks associated with it.

Colonel General v. Hindenburg deployed the 3rd Reserve Division (including the 1st Cavalry Brigade) and the southern division of the I Army Corps (1st Infantry Division) east of the lakes, the other division of this corps (2nd Infantry Division) on the crossing of Niborkallen and also subordinated the 3rd Reserve Division to the commanding general of the I Army Corps. To what extent these three divisions strong combat group would be withdrawn by the enemy in the south could not yet be foreseen. The goal remained to turn their entire force sharply north east of the lakes.

The XVII Army Corps was to continue advancing against Lötzen on September 6, to move through the fortress to the east or also, if General v. Rennenkampf still went on the offensive, to attack west of the lakes to be further advanced northward.

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to be continued north of the lakes. The remaining corps were to reach the line Rastenburg—Preußisch-Eylau, while east of the railway Preußisch-Eylau—Königsberg parts of the fortress garrison were to cover the unloading of the main reserve from Posen. However, the bulk of the Königsberg forces seemed to be tied up near the fortress itself due to the possibility of a Russian attack. For the army cavalry, the space between the enemy position and the advancing own army had become increasingly narrow. If there was no longer a battle west of the lakes, then the 1st Cavalry Division was to follow the XVII Army Corps via Lötzen to ride into the enemy's flank once this corps had opened the way. By then, the 8th Cavalry Division could also be on the move, which was now only gathering at its foremost unloading point Mchrungen. From here it had almost 140 km to cover to Lötzen.

The news of the Russians advancing from Kolno had turned out to be false by the evening of September 5th. Aerial reconnaissance revealed early on September 6th that everything was calm at the Narew as well. Only smaller camps east of Prasnysz and those of one division each at Ostrolenka and Lomsha had been identified. On the other hand, troops seemed to have arrived at the border station Grajewo, advancing west over Schtschutschin—Bialla towards Johannisburg. Overall, it was likely at least one division, with one brigade still at Grajewo itself. South of this advance and east to Lyk and Arys, all roads were reported clear. Larger Russian formations were thus not initially advancing against the German encircling wing. It was hoped to still be able to bring it into full strength north for deployment. However, it was necessary to push new forces from the west. The army command had to further weaken the southern front. The 70th Landwehr Brigade was to move to Myschyniec, the Landwehr Division Gold to gather its troops by rail and march to Rudczanny and follow the southern wing of the army via Johannisburg.

Meanwhile, at Johannisburg on the evening of September 5th, the first contact with the new enemy had occurred. — On September 6th, the Russians attacked the place and, in parallel, the parts of the I Army Corps advanced there, including the 1st Cavalry Brigade and Landsturm, to retreat. The vanguard of the 1st Infantry Division under Major General Paschen restored the situation on the evening of September 6th: "Enemy of all arms of unknown strength, including 8 heavy, 11 light guns," as the I Army Corps reported in the evening, "was retreating eastwards to Bialla."

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September 5–7. — The Advance of the German Southern Wing.

“shooter” was, as the I Army Corps reported in the evening, retreating eastward to Bialla. General v. Francois had assigned the 3rd Reserve Division advancing south of Johannisburg for September 7. A favorable further development on this battlefield seemed secured. Further north, the 2nd Infantry Division had reached Niktolainen and begun constructing a crossing1). The XVII Army Corps, marching in a column, had reached the beginning of Rhein, with its cavalry extending beyond to Kulla Bridge (10 km south of Lötzen).

As the enemy in the north remained calm, a battle west of the lakes was no longer expected. Thus, the march through the lake area was planned for the coming days. If the enemy east of Lötzen seemed weak, he had already been in front of the fortress for two weeks, having had time to fortify thoroughly. Flyers had identified fortifications at the narrows west of Arys, then from Pammen (24 km southeast of Lötzen) to Goldapgar Lake, and between this and Mauer Lake. Resistance was expected along this extensive line. To overcome it, all available forces east of the lakes were to cooperate. Therefore, the army command ordered the 3rd Reserve Division to advance north over Bialla–Drygallen on September 7. The I Army Corps was to proceed on Arys–Widminnen, facilitating the XVII by advancing parts into the area southeast and south of Lötzen. Additionally, this corps was to gain the heights 6 km northeast of Lötzen; further action was expected only when the I Army Corps and the 3rd Reserve Division had reached the same level.

On September 7, Lieutenant General v. Morgen with his 3rd Reserve Division unexpectedly struck the enemy's flank at Bialla at noon, whom the vanguard of the 1st Infantry Division had hindered the day before and now attacked again with advanced parts from Johannisburg. Parts of the Russian 1st and 3rd Finnish Rifle Brigade (from the XXII Corps) were thrown northeast after a short battle, 400 prisoners and 8 guns fell into the hands of the 3rd Reserve Division, which rested at Bialla after the day's exertions. — From the I Army Corps, the 1st Infantry Division advanced in the evening to the well-known troop training grounds south of Arys against the enemy, but had to postpone the attack to the next day due to the onset of darkness.

1) The two bridges present there in peacetime had to be blown up during the German retreat in August.

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Arÿs on the enemy, had to postpone the attack due to the onset of darkness to the next day, while the 2nd Infantry Division reached the area north of Arÿs without a fight behind this enemy. — The XVII Army Corps also arrived without a fight, to the area south and east of Lötzen.

A significant step towards success was achieved: The encirclement group had the lake narrows behind them; the only enemy that had previously shown itself in their flank was thrown back. In front of them, however, there seemed to be only a weak enemy, perhaps just a single brigade of the Russian 43rd Infantry Division. It was urgent to take advantage of the favorable situation and reunite the army, now spread over 140 km of front width, for decisive battle. Concerns about the rear and flank of the advance had to take a back seat. Everything was quiet at the Narew, and the entire Russian XXII Corps seemed to be unloaded at Grajewo. Thus, stronger Russian forces were expected to appear from this direction, but they probably came too late to change the decision. Therefore, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg did not want to leave anything against them from the five German divisions set for encirclement; the goal of these German forces lay in the north, and they were to advance there as fully and as quickly as possible, so that the enemy had no time to reconsider. The Landwehr Division Goltz advancing over Rudzanny had to take on the security against the Grajewo enemy alone. At worst, it could also retreat northward in the further course of the operation and base itself on Arÿs.

On September 8, the I Army Corps was to advance with the 3rd Reserve Division against the railway line Lyck—Lötzen towards Neu-Jucha and westward, while the XVII Army Corps was to turn north from Lötzen. This would successively flank and make untenable the Russian defensive positions east of the lakes; the way for the army cavalry was also cleared. The 1st Cavalry Division (without the 1st Brigade located with the 3rd Reserve Division) was subordinated to the XVII Army Corps for September 8, which had to lead it early over Lötzen. The division was to deeply disrupt the railway Marggrabowa—Goldap in the enemy's rear, and otherwise primarily "immobilize" the Russian columns and trains. The still far-off 8th Cavalry Division was also to assist in this task with some advance squadrons, the division itself to reach Rhein by September 8.

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September 6–8. — The Advance of the German Northern Wing.

To tie up reserves there so that they could not be moved south against the German

attack wing.

Thus, the German corps were to close north of the lakes on September 7

in the line Rastenburg—Friedland. In the army order for

that day it said: "Should the enemy take the offensive, the

corps are to hold the line reached." For their own safety and to

tie up the Russian reserves, more troops for the northern

wing would have been urgently desired. Apart from the main reserve from Posen,

no significant reinforcements were available. The

army command considered bringing in parts from the East Prussian eastern front.

But everything there was in flux to the east, the flank

was getting longer every day, there was nothing free. The government of

Königsberg was ordered to push stronger forces than before for use south of the Pregel.

But no more than at most 1–2 brigades could be counted on.

So the army command resorted to a ruse: On the morning of September 7, it had the Königsberg radio station

openly give the following radio message: "General Command Guard

Corps, hurry, urgent. — Guard Corps closes hard west of

Labiau by tomorrow. — Unloaded parts of the V Army Corps . . ." (followed by a

series of random letters) "... Army Command." This radio

message was overheard by the enemy and immediately passed on.

On September 7, the German corps reached their marching goals north of the lakes

without coming into contact with the enemy.

For September 8, the army command ordered to approach the enemy

and take their positions. In the south,

immediately north of Lake Mauer, where it was necessary to support the attack of the

encircling group, it was to be tackled only when

this group itself was close enough; before that, it could only reveal the intention

and cause the enemy to strengthen their southern wing.

Just north, the protruding corner of the Russian position at

Gerdauen was to form a suitable attack point. On the other hand, at

Rastenburg, given the own limited forces and the strong Russian reserves reported there,

restraint seemed advisable.

Accordingly, the army command held back the southernmost, XX Army Corps for September 8.

Its right wing division (41st) was to stand ready at Rastenburg to

follow the XVII Army Corps via Löben or also to be used in a northern

direction, the other was to initially cover the flank of the

attack on Gerdauen. Against this place, the XI Army

Corps and the I Reserve Corps (including the 6th Landwehr Brigade), in total 4½ divisions were deployed.

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4 1/2 divisions were deployed. They were to advance by noon on September 8, taking the Russian positions up to a line about 6 km from the Omulef. From there, the commanding general of the XI Army Corps, General of Infantry v. Plüskow, was to direct the further offensive movement for both corps so that the artillery battle against the main Russian position could begin early on September 9. The northern flank of this attack was to be covered by echeloning along the Gerdauen—Friedland road. The Guard Reserve Corps, with the main reserve Posen (9 battalions, 1 squadron, 8 batteries) advancing from their unloading points, was ordered on September 8, "in anticipation of an enemy attack," to halt on both sides of Friedland on the road leading from Gerdauen via Friedland to Tapiau, and to attack on both sides of Allenburg only on September 9.

These movements were carried out as planned on September 8, with Russian advance troops retreating to the main position without significant resistance. Favorable reports on the advance of the I Army Corps on the outer flank of the encirclement, while the XVII Army Corps faced strong enemy forces directly, made it no longer seem expedient to push the 41st Infantry Division over Löben. The entire XX Army Corps therefore received orders in the morning to advance further north of the lakes, thereby directly supporting the XVII Army Corps. As a result, the encirclement group and the corps advancing north of the lakes came so close with their inner flanks during the course of September 8 that the attack on the entire front of the army could be uniformly organized for September 9.

3. The Attack on September 9 and 10.

(Maps 12, 13, and 14.)

The army command had been moved from Allenstein to Rößel on September 7 to be able to direct the cooperation of encirclement and frontal attack from close proximity. When Generaloberst v. Hindenburg issued the order for the general attack on September 9 in the afternoon of September 8, he had the following picture of the situation:

On the East Prussian southern front, German troops from the 35th Reserve Division and the 70th Landwehr Brigade were positioned along the Mlawa—Chorzele—Myszyniec road on Russian territory. In front of them was reconnaissance that found the terrain up to the Narew free of the enemy.

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The Attack Order for September 9.

Reconnaissance found the terrain up to the Narew free from the enemy.

According to agent reports, troops were supposed to have been transported

from Warsaw by rail to the east. However, the Russian Guard Corps,

previously suspected near Warsaw, had to be assumed to be in front of the

German Landwehr Corps in southern Poland according to a report. Thus,

no disturbance was expected from the Narew for the time being.

A threat to the German encircling wing from

the south and east, however, became increasingly apparent: reports of

the assembly of Russian troops at Schtschutschin and Grajewo were

available from aviators. There, it initially seemed to involve only weaker

forces, individual brigades or regiments. While the parts of the 1st and

3rd Finnish Rifle Brigade defeated at Bialla had retreated to the northeast,

aviators now observed new opponents from Lyk marching northwest

towards Neu-Jucha. At least the Russian XXII Corps from Finland

(consisting of 4 rifle brigades of 8 battalions each) had to be assumed

in the southeastern corner of East Prussia, but probably also other new

Russian forces. In front of the encircling group's front, however, only

the Russian 43rd Infantry Division (from the II Corps) was detected

on September 8, now with both brigades.

North of the lakes, the enemy remained calm in their fortified

position as before. The strong reserves at Insterburg (a corps) and along

the roads from there to the front were again detected by aviators on

September 8. Agents had observed the approach of two more reserve

divisions (54th and 55th) near Tilsit in recent days. Therefore, the

possibility was still strongly considered that the enemy, perhaps after

the arrival of these reinforcements, might transition to an attack with

their northern wing. The most effective countermeasure was the rapid

execution of the German attack on the southern wing. For this, the

army command wanted to utilize everything at hand. The defense

against the threat from Schtschutschin and Lyk had to take a back seat

and was to be left to the Landwehr Division Goltz.

Thus, for September 9, the 3rd Reserve Division, which was assumed

not at Drygallen but already at Klaussen, was set on Neu-Jucha, where

it was to meet the enemy reported advancing from Lyk. The I Army

Corps was to visibly continue the attack movement north of the Goldap

Geg-Sea. General v. François was now given command of the army

cavalry (2/3 1st and 8th Cavalry Division). It was to be under the

command of the commander of the 1st Cavalry Division, Lieutenant General Brecht, to be united into a cavalry corps at Widminnen on September 9 and advance on Goldap.

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Division, Lieutenant General Brecht, was to be united into a cavalry corps on September 9 at Widminnen and advance on Goldap. On both sides of Lake Mauer, the attack of the XVII and XX Army Corps had to be coordinated and mutual artillery support across the lake ensured. The XVII Army Corps was to continue the attack northward against Pößlitten and as soon as possible bring heavy artillery into position so that it could catch the opponent of the XX Army Corps at Angerburg in the rear, while the XX Army Corps was to flank the enemy positions west of Pößlitten with two 10-cm cannon batteries assigned to it from the Groß-Steinkort peninsula during the night of September 9. This corps was also to continue the attack on September 9 with a strong right wing. Against the corner of Gerdauen, the XI Army Corps and I Reserve Corps were to open the artillery battle early on the 9th, but the infantry was to advance on the strong enemy position only after extensive artillery preparation. There was no rush with the attack here; it seemed sufficient to prevent the enemy from shifting reserves against the German encircling wing. The assault was therefore scheduled for the 3rd day of attack, early on September 11.

Further north, the Guard Reserve Corps (with the main reserve Posen) was now to participate in the attack at Allenburg, but also always be ready to repel an enemy advance on its left wing through strong echeloning to the left and strong terrain reinforcements. Subsequently, the fortress of Königsberg was to advance its forces sent south (about 5 battalions, 2 squadrons, 10 batteries) between the forest area of Frisching and the Pregel against Tapiau and subordinate them to the Guard Reserve Corps. The main forces of the fortress, however, remained behind the Deime in anticipation of a Russian attack. To reinforce the northern wing, the army command finally decided to also draw half of the 35th Reserve Division (20th Landwehr Brigade) from the East Prussian southern front.

On the southern front, September 9 brought a surprise: The Russian Narew Army advanced again. In total, at least two corps and several cavalry divisions were available to it. The airmen had so far identified two columns of brigade size marching from Prasnycz northward as well as a cavalry brigade, 3rd Division with infantry, advancing from the south on Myszyniec. Despite this new threat to its own rear, the German army command stuck to the transport of the 1/2 35th Reserve Division to the west.

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September 9th. — The Attack of the German Southern Flank.

In response to this new threat to its own rear, the German Army High Command maintained the transport of the 1/2 35th Reserve Division to the west. Thus, only three weak German Landwehr brigades remained against the Russian superiority on the southern front. — Also on the southern flank of East Prussia, stronger enemy forces were reported early on September 9th than previously: one brigade, according to another report 3 to 4, arrived from the south at Schtschutschin; 1 to 2 brigades were stationed at Grajewo and additional troops at Lyck. A unified Russian advance against the rear of the German encirclement became more and more apparent.

Meanwhile, the 3rd Reserve Division (with the 1st Cavalry Brigade) under Lieutenant General v. Morgen had turned north early on September 9th, against the enemy who had marched from Lyck to Klaussen the previous afternoon. To attack him from the most effective direction, the division chose the route east of the Klaussen lakes. The Army High Command had intended to support them with the Landwehr Division Goltz advancing from Johannisburg via Arys. However, since Lieutenant General Freiherr v. der Goltz had already set his division marching east to Bialla, the High Command maintained this advance direction and instructed the general to retrace the march in stages so that the division could still turn north to Arys under strong enemy pressure from the south and cover the rear of the encirclement by opening the local narrows. The Landwehr Division reached Bialla that day, but the enemy in the south did not advance further. — Meanwhile, the attack of the 3rd Reserve Division, after removing Russian positions, came to a halt in the evening before Neuendorf and Thalussen. The enemy blocked the roads to Lyck here. With rifles in hand, friend and foe remained facing each other at a distance of about 100 meters. Lieutenant General v. Morgen intended to continue the attack at dawn on September 10th.

General of Infantry v. François led his I Army Corps north on September 9th on both sides of the Widminner Lake and then pulled the two cavalry divisions out to the east. The enemy, the Russian 1st Cavalry Division and parts of three different regiments of the 43rd Infantry Division, offered no lasting resistance in the face of the German superiority. In the evening, the cavalry corps Brecht, with the 1st Cavalry Division, held the narrows of Neu-Jucha, with the 8th controlling the area east of the Gablitz Lake, while the I Army Corps had advanced deep into the flank of the enemy, who was positioned at Kruglanken opposite the XVII Army Corps.

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the flank of the enemy had advanced, which stood opposite the XVII Army Corps at Kruglanken.

The XVII Army Corps had a difficult day of battle. Its attack front was spanned by the Russian positions in an arc. They had to be broken through. General v. Mackensen wanted to lead the decisive attack in a northerly direction to cooperate with the XX Army Corps, and in doing so, penetrate the enemy position west of the Goldapher Lake near Wiesental, where a weakness was believed to have been identified, and at Pötsfßen. The 35th Infantry Division assigned to Kruglanken was therefore instructed not to advance further east after taking the local Russian positions, but to let strong forces follow behind the 36th Infantry Division, which was leaning north. The attack was to break out early in the morning in an easterly as well as northerly direction after strong artillery preparation. However, the enemy showed unexpected ability and astonishing strength, even launching several counterattacks at Kruglanken. The troops of the German 35th Infantry Division under Lieutenant General Hennig had a difficult position here against concealed enemy batteries. In the afternoon, the arrival of the I Army Corps from the south gave them relief, and the enemy began to retreat eastward. It was only with the onset of darkness that the Russian positions at Kruglanken could be captured. — To the north, Lieutenant General v. Heineccius led his 36th Infantry Division into the attack. The 69th Infantry Brigade, assigned to Wiesental under Major General v. Engelbrechten, encountered stronger resistance there than expected. On the other hand, the commander of the 3rd West Prussian Infantry Regiment No. 129, Colonel Breßler, believed he had identified a weakness in the enemy position east of Pötsfßen from the left flank of the brigade and therefore pressed his entire regiment against the eastern edge of this place on his own responsibility. Bur- and Infantry Brigade, especially the 4th East Prussian Grenadier Regiment King Friedrich I. Ar. 5, took the 129ers, effectively supported by parts of the 3rd West Prussian Field Artillery Regiment No. 36, at 5° in the afternoon, the positions of Pötsfßen with the bayonet. 1000 prisoners and two batteries fell into the hands of the attackers. The German regiments advanced in pursuit up to 4 km north of Pötsfßen, while the right wing regiment of the division was still stuck in front of Wiesental in the evening after taking a position.

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Sept. 9 — The Attack of the XVII Army Corps and the Advance of the Northern Wing.

North of the Mauer Lake, the XX Army Corps was supposed to assist the XVII. It had the order to attack the enemy east of the Rjesauser Lake with its strongest right wing. General of Artillery v. Scholtz had the 41st Infantry Division advance towards this enemy under enemy artillery fire, while holding back the 37th Infantry Division on the left to protect the flank against the northeast. The corps had the impression that although there were only a few, there were particularly well-hidden Russian batteries opposite. It was not possible to suppress their fire. Therefore, in the afternoon, when favorable news about the advance of the I and XVII Army Corps was received, the commanding general deemed it appropriate to continue fighting defensively. He also obtained the agreement of the army high command to this decision and halted the forward movement of his army corps. Thus, the previously intense artillery battle on this front gradually subsided, the infantry remained in the line Pristanien—Rjesauser Lake, only the I Battalion of the 1st Posen Infantry Regiment No. 18 had already advanced beyond it. This battalion reached the road junction and the Fuchsberg north of Pristanien without significant combat. However, far ahead of the front and without artillery support, it soon suffered so much from enemy fire that it had to retreat in the evening.

At the XI Army Corps and the I Reserve Corps, early on the morning of September 9, reports of the evacuation of enemy positions, which had also surfaced the day before, prompted the sub-commanders to advance their infantry beyond the initially ordered line. However, this movement was soon halted from above, as the reports at the commanding general of the I Reserve Corps, General of Infantry v. Below, as well as at the army high command, were not believed. This cautioned for prudence. But the troops themselves had meanwhile gained the impression that the enemy was holding back, and so the forward movement was stopped. West of Nordenburg, the Russians even tried to create space through a strong advance. Parts of the 38th Infantry Division from the XI Army Corps under Major General v. Berjen repelled them. Otherwise, on this day in the area around Gerdauen, there was only artillery combat, which also here did not bring any German superiority and gradually subsided in the afternoon.

The Guard Reserve Corps also encountered strong artillery resistance. Its infantry worked its way north of the Alle, where the Guard Reserve Infantry Brigade under Major General Freiherr v. Langermann and Erlencamp advanced, albeit with considerable losses, up to close to the Russian positions.

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The Battle of the Masurian Lakes.

At the Army High Command, where at this time there were unfavorable reports from the southern front¹) and also concerns about the 3rd Reserve Division, the news of the evacuation of the fortified Russian position was felt primarily as a relief from a difficult, highly tense situation. At least the troops were spared the losses that a heavy frontal attack against the strong enemy position would have cost. However, the situation was not yet considered clear enough, even after the report from the 1st Reserve Corps, to decide to commit everything to a relentless pursuit. In view of the strong reserves of the enemy, it seemed as if the flanking maneuver set on Benheim was still in place. Thus, at 7 a.m., the Army High Command initially set only short-term goals for the frontal pursuit and urged the corps to be cautious: The XX Army Corps was to advance with the right wing north of Angerburg, with the left past the Nordwburger Lake "step by step" and by sending a detachment to Angerburg itself, open the narrow passage of Ognowen for the XVII Army Corps. The XI Army Corps was also to "attack cautiously, not to run headlong into it." It was given the line Nordwburg—Klonvfen (10 km east of Gerdauen) as a target. The 1st Reserve Corps was instructed to advance with the main forces north of the Insterburg railway, up to Klonvfen-Friedrichsdalwe (9 km north of Gerdauen), but not to go beyond this line initially. It was rather to "dig in immediately in the gained position. Caution advised, as setbacks are to be expected from the area of Insterburg and west." Following the 1st Reserve Corps, the Guard Reserve Corps was to advance, but its left wing was to "remain strongly held back in anticipation of the enemy attack." Before the Army High Command issued further orders, it wanted to await the results of the ongoing aerial reconnaissance.

Meanwhile, serious concerns had arisen due to the situation of the 3rd Reserve Division west of Lye: At 6:18 a.m., General v. der Goltz, commander of the Landwehr Division, reported from Johannisburg: "3rd Reserve Division has urgently requested assistance over Andreaswalde." Whether this will still be possible today is questionable due to the great distance and the reports about the enemy near Schtschutschin. However, I set out at dawn and will rush to the aid of the 3rd Reserve Division with the utmost exertion of the troops.

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September 10th. — The Initiation of the Pursuit.

to rush to the aid of the 3rd Reserve Division's troops under extreme tension." It was not the style of the commander of the 3rd Reserve Division to seek outside help when he could handle the enemy alone. The General Command of the I Army Corps, to which Lieutenant General v. Morgen was subordinate, had not yet received any report on the outcome of his battle on September 9th. The 1st Cavalry Division, tasked with establishing contact with the 3rd Reserve Division, reported at 7 a.m. from the area 6 km north of Neujucha: "Position and situation of the 3rd Reserve Division cannot be determined, despite radio inquiries to the 1st Cavalry Brigade and numerous liaison patrols and cars. 1st Cavalry Brigade back to Andreaswalde at night." The 1st Cavalry Division wanted to continue riding north at 9 a.m. into the rear of the Russian army. However, it was the only troop the Army High Command had at hand to bring the now urgently needed help to the 3rd Reserve Division. So it was decided to turn the 1st Cavalry Division from its successfully reached advance direction. At 9:15 a.m., it received the order to ride south immediately to help the 3rd Reserve Division, "Urgency required." — 1½ hours after the departure of this order, the following message, sent at 8:30 a.m., from Lieutenant General v. Morgen arrived: "Have defeated a far superior enemy after heavy fighting. The enemy is fleeing past Lyck in panic back to the border. General v. Morgen only wants to send cavalry after him, but continue the march with his division over Lyck to the north to engage in the decisive battle. This message relieved the Army High Command of concern for the 3rd Reserve Division as well as the threat from Lyck, but the 1st Cavalry Division was out of hand and could not be reached again by radio for the next few hours.

Meanwhile, the Army High Command had been waiting with great tension for further news, especially on the results of aerial reconnaissance, since the report from the I Reserve Corps about the evacuation of the enemy position. They were sparse and initially brought no clarification: The Königsberg airship Z. 4 had detected wind of the same extent as before at night, particularly great appreciation. The aircraft assigned for morning reconnaissance by the Army High Command's aviation department had to return due to engine defects. No conclusions could be drawn from the enemy radio traffic; the Russians had been using almost exclusively ciphered radio messages for several days, also changing the call signs several times. Also, no reports came from the general commands that could further clarify the situation.

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There were no reports from the general commands that could further clarify the situation. Finally, at 10:35 a.m., an aerial report from Königsberg brought clarity: The Russian division previously observed at Muldszen (18 km east of Allenburg) had moved out except for one battalion, north of the Pregel everything was free of enemies to the east up to Taplacken, its positions unoccupied, east of Taplacken long columns marched east towards Insterburg. However, there was still about one corps there. 40 minutes after this report from Königsberg, the flyers of the XI Army Corps also reported the enemy's departure to the east.

There was no longer any doubt that General v. Rennenkampf was in full retreat. Thus, the battle was won. However, the major blow intended by the German leadership, which was supposed to bring about the downfall of the Russian army, did not succeed. Only vigorous pursuit could still harm the enemy and secure the freedom of movement that the German 8th Army urgently needed for an operation to support the Austrians and Hungarians.

4. The Pursuit.

(Map 14 and Sketch 10, p. 313.)

The pursuit had to focus primarily from the south against the Russian retreat routes. These ran via Goldap, Gumbinnen, and Lissit to the east. The main road and double-track railway from Insterburg via Gumbinnen to Kowno was the most important and efficient connection of the Russian Njemen Army. If it was blocked, the Russians would be pushed against the Njemen and over it to Schaulen. The goal for the next few days had to be to reach the Gumbinnen-Kowno road from the south. On September 10th at noon, this movement was initiated by individual orders: The Cavalry Corps Brecht, to which the 1st Cavalry Brigade previously assigned to the 3rd Reserve Division had to be directed, could not initially maintain an order to advance on Goldap. The 3rd Reserve Division was ordered to proceed to Marggrabowa. The I Army Corps was to turn instead of Bentheim, more to the east, against the line Goldap-Kleszowen, the XVII received the direction to Darteyhmen.

However, these movements could only be initiated to a large extent on September 10th due to the already advanced time of day, but not yet carried out: Thus, the 3rd Reserve Division, although the enemy had already withdrawn in front of it on the night of September 10th, after the exertions and battles of the last few days, only reached 6 km north of Lyck, while the vanguard of the Landwehr Division Goltz approached this city from the south.

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September 10th.

had moved, after the exertions and battles of the last few days, only up to 6 km north of Lyck, while the beginnings of the Landwehr Division Goltz approached this city from the south. The 1st Cavalry Division also came, after its far southward march to support the 3rd Reserve Division, only halfway to Lyck—Marggrabowa.

From the 8th Cavalry Division advancing on Goldap, the right wing column, 38th Cavalry Brigade, encountered resistance at Kowahlen, which it could not break. However, the bulk of the division, the 23rd (1st Royal Saxon) and the 40th (3rd Royal Saxon) Cavalry Brigade, under the division commander Major General Count v. d. Schulenburg, drove out the enemy holding south of the city of Goldap, took the city filled with Russian supplies, and captured 600 prisoners. Thus, the roads over Goldap to Suwalki and Wischtjyniez were blocked for the enemy.

The I Army Corps, whose advance towards Goldap was particularly important, had already exhausted its day's performance in a march purely northward when the new order arrived. Its 1st Infantry Division had reached the area of Benkheim and east by evening. The entire 2nd Infantry Division, however, had been deployed northeast against an enemy who, it seemed, was trying to resist the XVII Army Corps north of Rutten to Wischtjyniez. 500 prisoners from the Russian 72nd Infantry (Reserve) Division and 32 guns fell into the hands of the division of Lieutenant General v. Falk. In the evening, this division moved north of Kutten to rest. Overall, General v. François reported a capture of 50-60 guns and several thousand prisoners on this day.

The XVII Army Corps had only set out after the heavy fighting of the previous day when the I Army Corps was at about the same level with it. It now pursued the retreating enemy northward alongside the 2nd Infantry Division and advanced by evening with the 35th Infantry Division at Bentheim, where the infantry shot down three Russian aircraft, far ahead of the front of this division of the I Corps. The 36th Infantry Division reached the area north of Buddern and thus connected with the XX Army Corps advancing north of the lakes.

Meanwhile, since noon on September 10th, all forces north of the lakes had been deployed for further pursuit. In front of the XX Army Corps, the enemy had held out longer in the morning to cover its retreat than at Gerdauen. At 11 a.m., General v. Scholz had given the order for a planned attack for his corps, but soon thereafter the enemy withdrew here as well.

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The Pursuit Order for September 11.

It was reported that it seemed questionable whether Rennen­kampf could still be decisively fought. For the time being, 60-70 guns and several thousand prisoners had been brought in. "The pursuit will continue very vigorously tomorrow, and we hope to significantly increase the spoils of victory." Accordingly, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg set far-reaching pursuit goals for September 11, to inflict as heavy losses as possible on the retreating enemy by deploying all forces. At 5 a.m., the corps were to set out and reach the line Filipow—Gumbinnen—area north of Insterburg during the day: The cavalry corps Brecht, now directly subordinated to the army high command, was deployed east of the Rominten Heath, in the direction of Mariampol—Willowitschi, deep into the enemy's rear. The 3rd Reserve Division was to reach Filipow to protect the flank. In the center, Generaloberst v. Hindenburg wanted to lead five corps side by side against the 50 km wide line Mehlsakern (I. Army Corps)—Tollmingkehmen (XVII. Army Corps)—Walterkehmen (XX. Army Corps)—Gumbinnen (XI. Army Corps)—Dwarischken east of Insterburg (I. Reserve Corps). On the northern flank, the Guard Reserve Corps, to which the entire main reserve Königsberg was now subordinated, was to advance not south of the Usztrawischken Forest, but north of the Pregel.

These far-reaching pursuit orders of the army high command were only partially executed on September 11:

From the cavalry corps Brecht, the 1st Cavalry Division, whose command Generalleutnant Brecht himself had retained, advanced 24 km forward without being significantly held up by the enemy and reached Filipow. The 8th Cavalry Division under Generalmajor Graf v. d. Schulenburg had already been attacked in Goldap at 2 a.m. by Russian troops, who advanced with great superiority from the northwest and north against the city. The Saxon Guard Cavalry Regiment repelled them at the Goldap River; its commander, Major Graf zur Lippe, died a hero's death. The cavalry managed to hold the important place until the Russians withdrew at 9 a.m. and the beginning of the German I. Army Corps (1st Infantry Division) entered the city from the south. After the night battle, the cavalry division could only resume its advance at noon. It reached Dubeningken in the evening, 12 km north of Filipow, only slightly held up by Russian rearguards. Thus, the cavalry corps was reunited, but for the time being still stood south, not east of the Rominten Heath.

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The Pursuit on September 11.

now still quite possible, especially in connection with an attack conducted behind this front to the south or southeast against the German encirclement. This view prompted the army high command to decide to halt the overtaking pursuit and to turn with everything against the enemy assumed to be around Darkehmen. Thus, just 20 minutes after the telephone conversation with the XI Army Corps, new orders were issued to the corps: The I Army Corps was to turn towards Gawaiten (north of Goldap), the XVII towards Darkehmen, and the XX to engage in the battle of the XI Army Corps. But then, shortly thereafter, at 9:15 a.m., a radio message from the I Army Corps to the 1st Cavalry Brigade was overheard, stating that the enemy was retreating everywhere, and the 1st Cavalry Brigade was to occupy Stallupönen today. This raised doubts again about abandoning the effective pursuit direction of the I Army Corps under all circumstances. Perhaps the battle directed northwards could be managed without the immediate involvement of this corps. Therefore, the order for the I Army Corps was amended: it was to be left to them to proceed from Goldap northeast to Tollmingkehmen or Gawaiten.

When General v. Francois received the first order to turn towards Gawaiten at 1 p.m.¹) during the rest in Goldap, he could not decide to follow it immediately. He waited and sent the 1st Infantry Division to continue towards Tollmingkehmen, while he, in view of the serious battle at the XVII Army Corps, deployed the 2nd Infantry Division towards Gawaiten. The 1st Division reached Tollmingkehmen with the foremost parts without a fight by midnight, while the 2nd encountered an enemy ready for defense south of Gawaiten. Their artillery opened fire against him in the evening. However, the division commander, Lieutenant General v. Falk, postponed the attack to the next morning due to the advanced hour of the day.

At the XVII Army Corps, all parts had already turned northward upon receiving the order to turn. The 35th Infantry Division advanced in the evening to Kleszowen, but the 36th faced such strong resistance from the enemy entrenched east and north of Szabienen until nightfall that both parts remained lying opposite each other with rifles in hand. General v. Mackensen planned to continue the attack here the following day.

Meanwhile, after a two-hour rest, the XX Army Corps followed and reached the western bank of the Angerapp south of Darkehmen and at this town in the evening.

¹) v. Francois, p. 266; according to other records, not until 2 p.m.

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followed by the XX Army Corps, which reached the western bank of the Angerapp south of Darkehmen and at this small town in the evening, spanning 10 km. It was thus positioned behind the enemy, against whom the XVII Army Corps fought up to Nuntelwerden. General v. Scholtz urged the southern 41st Infantry Division to cross the river that evening. However, due to the depth of the water and the Russian occupation on the east bank, this was no longer possible.

Even before the XI Army Corps, the enemy gradually gave up resistance throughout the morning. A Russian attack seems not to have taken place here at all. How the mutual understanding, particularly emphasized in the evening report of the XI Army Corps, came about could not be clarified. While the southern 38th Infantry Division of the corps under Lieutenant General Wagner slowly advanced west of Trempen against constant enemy resistance, the commanding general was able to lead the 22nd Infantry Division under Major General Dieffenbach further towards the Angerapp in the afternoon without significant delay. The division continued the pursuit tirelessly until midnight and reached up to 2 km west of the Angerapp crossing at Nemmersdorf, while the 8th Infantry Division, without connection to the general command, had gone to rest west of Trempen at 5 p.m. and thus remained over 15 km behind the front of the neighboring divisions.

In front of the I Reserve Corps, the enemy — unlike before the southern corps — offered virtually no resistance. After the first German cannon shots, their rear guards vacated the field. The penetration to support the XI Army Corps was also unnecessary. Thus, General v. Below could continue the pursuit towards Insterburg, his last peacetime location, almost without interruption. There, the Russian army leader was supposed to have set up his headquarters, and Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolayevich was also expected to be present. The hope of capturing him spurred the steps of the reserve and militia men. By evening, the 1st Reserve Division reached the Angerapp near Judtschen, the 36th Reserve Division immediately behind the withdrawing Russians at Insterburg. Their vanguard advanced another 10 km beyond the city, while the active infantry regiment 54 belonging to the division broke through the Russian rear guards at Angerapp and Inster on the extreme left flank and captured 300 prisoners.

The Guard Reserve Corps was delayed for a long time by the bridge crossing over the Pregel, as its entire bridging equipment had previously been installed at Omet and Alle.

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The State of the Pursuit on the Evening of September 11.

held up the Pregel for a long time, as all its bridge equipment had still been installed at

Omet and Alle. The corps found no enemy north of the Pregel

and advanced with its foremost parts halfway to

Norditten—Insterburg. Further north, the main reserve Posen followed in echelon to the left rear, and the main reserve Königsberg had advanced over Labiau.

At the army headquarters, there was soon no doubt after the

alarming report of the XI Army Corps that the enemy was only fighting for retreat. However, it was not

possible to immediately reverse the ordered turning of the I and XVII Army Corps

to the north. The commanding generals of both corps knew anyway that the pursuit

in a northeasterly direction should be resumed as soon as the situation allowed. Since the XVII Army Corps was already pinned by the enemy on its

flank, the army commander ultimately diverted only a single

German division, the 2nd Infantry Division from the I Army Corps, significantly

from its direction. The 1st was, instead of heading for Mehlsheim, marching 10 km

east to Tollmingkehmen, the original target of the XVII Army Corps. As far as the overtaking pursuit on this day

suffered a delay and loss of strength, this was less due to

the German units than to those of the enemy, who

had advanced with strong forces over Narethemen to the south to

avert the impending danger.

On the evening of September 11, the German I, XVII, XX,

and XI Army Corps stood from Tollmingkehmen over Gawaiten—Szabienen—

Darethemen to Nemmersdorf around the enemy mass concentrated south and east of Darethemen. Had this situation been known to the German high command relocated to Arendburg during the day, or to the involved general commands,

one would have attempted, despite the exhaustion of the troops fighting for four or more days, to close the ring around part of these Russians by an immediate

night march using the last reserves. However, since this knowledge of the situation was lacking due to the difficulty of

communication, the continuation of the pursuit the next day, but then in a northeasterly direction, was the given course. If the enemy

still stood unexpectedly, the I Army Corps had to overtake him. At the same time, sharp pressure on the front was all the more

necessary, as the pursuit could not be continued far.

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The Battle of the Masurian Lakes.

Conditions on the Galician battlefield pushed for a conclusion in East Prussia.

Generaloberst v. Hindenburg ordered the pursuit to continue ruthlessly and with all forces on September 12. The troops were to set out by 4 a.m. at the latest. Behind the enemy, the cavalry corps was assigned the direction towards Schätz, between the Rowno railway and the Njemen river: "The main thing is to gain the major roads over Wirballen and Schwindt to block the enemy's path. The effect against enemy troops now takes precedence over that against trains." Unfortunately, the 1st Cavalry Brigade was unavailable for this major task, as the army command had already assumed it was marching on Stallupönen according to the radio message from the 1st Army Corps1) and therefore subordinated it to this corps. The 3rd Reserve Division was to occupy Suwalki, "a further advance of the division to the east is not intended." The five corps positioned at the front were to continue pursuing in a total width of 40 km, with the center (XX Army Corps) on Stallupönen, while on the left flank the Guard Reserve Corps received the direction towards Lissit.

Even on September 12, it was not possible, especially for the right wing, to achieve the goals set by the army command:

From the cavalry corps, Lieutenant General Brecht led his 1st Cavalry Division (without the 1st Brigade), advancing only to Wischnay, east of the Rominten Heath, without encountering the enemy. The 8th Cavalry Division experienced multiple delays while crossing the heath due to the enemy and finally encountered renewed resistance northeast of Wischnyniez, which it could no longer break. Thus, on the evening of September 12, the cavalry corps was still a full day's march away from the main road near Wilkowischki. However, it had already exerted an effect. The Russians reported that the 8th Cavalry Division, "despite the immediate proximity of three Russian cavalry divisions, broke out of the Rominten Heath"; "as if startled, it pressed against our columns, which were retreating in chaotic disorder, and spread panic"2).

The 3rd Reserve Division took Suwalki after a brief skirmish. The 1st Cavalry Brigade had rejoined it, as it could not find connection to the 1st Army Corps.

The direction for the 1st Army Corps on September 12 was given over Pillupönen to Milkowischki.

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The Pursuit on September 12.

Pillupönen to Milkowischki given. General v. François, who had only radio contact with the army headquarters, viewed the situation differently than the high command. He reported that his corps was not in a position to carry out the received order, as it could no longer advance on the poor roads. However, during the course of September 11, the general also gained the impression that it was necessary to first deal with the enemy, who was in front of his 2nd Infantry Division and the XVII Army Corps. He therefore wanted to deploy only the 1st Infantry Division against the Russian retreat route, and further west than ordered, to target Stallupönen, while the 2nd Infantry Division was initially to throw the enemy at Gawaiten. The army high command could not agree with these intentions. They were incompatible with its understanding of the situation and the orders given to the other corps. Generaloberst v. Hindenburg insisted on carrying out the army order. Thus, on September 12, the I Army Corps set out in the assigned direction to the northeast, albeit significantly later than ordered, with the 2nd Infantry Division only at 9 a.m., after it had already initiated the attack against the enemy at Gawaiten. Meanwhile, the Russians pushed into the gap that had formed between the 1st and 2nd Infantry Divisions, occupied Tollmingkehmen, and held it until the evening. Some of them broke through to the east here, while others simultaneously escaped north of Pillupönen, still under fire from the artillery of the 1st Division, across the border. In the evening, only half of the 1st Infantry Division of the I Army Corps was at Pillupönen, while the other half of the division was still facing Tollmingkehmen with the opposite front. However, General v. François had advanced the 2nd Infantry Division south of this place to the east, towards Wischtinjez.

In front of the XVII Army Corps, the enemy had already begun the retreat to the northeast during the night. The artillery of the 35th Infantry Division hit them at dawn on September 12 near Nieszowen. However, the corps did not move until 8 a.m., after the fighting that had been interrupted and resumed since September 8, instead of at 4 a.m. In engagements against enemy rearguards, the 35th Infantry Division reached Tollmingkehmen in the evening after a 24 km march, which was stormed by the 141st Infantry Regiment. 3000 prisoners and 8 guns were captured by the division during the day. The 36th Infantry Division reached south of Walterkehmen.

The XX Army Corps also encountered no more resistance and reached late in the night beyond Walterkehmen, where 1000 prisoners were taken, and beyond Trakehnen.

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The Conclusion of the Pursuit on September 13 and 14.

The booty of 10,000 prisoners and about 80 guns could then still increase. Everything had to be attempted to incapacitate the Rennenkampf army for as long as possible, and to continue the pursuit on September 13 under extreme exertion of forces. At the same time, the future organization of the Eastern forces had to be considered, on the one hand to support the Austrians and Hungarians, and on the other to protect East Prussia, and therefore everything that was somehow dispensable at the front had to be withdrawn. Thus, the cavalry corps was again directed towards Mariampol—Schipt, and was to halt the pursuit only at the Njemen River. The I Army Corps was to advance on Suwalki and Willkowischti and remain in this area later. The XVII and XX Army Corps were to continue the pursuit only with advance guards, the XI from Stallupönen to Schirwindt, the I Reserve Corps to Schaki.

But even on September 13, the cavalry corps did not advance as desired: enemy, rain, and softened clay soil delayed movements. 12 km south of Willkowischti, both divisions finally stopped in the evening before new Russian resistance. — To the left of the cavalry, the I Army Corps reached the area south of Wirballen. Its northern, 1st Infantry Division was able to bring the Russians withdrawing here on the main road in two and three marching columns under effective fire, while the beginnings of the XI Army Corps pressed them from Stallupönen. There, 2000 prisoners were taken in house-to-house fighting. In the evening, the foremost troops of the XI Army Corps stood before Wirballen and north. The I Reserve Corps had reached the area northeast of Pillkallen without a fight. For the XVII and XX Army Corps, there was no more room in the front line.

Even on September 14, the pursuit continued for a short distance. The cavalry corps, now led by the Bavarian higher cavalry commander No. 3, General of Cavalry Ritter von Frommel, who had arrived from the western theater of war, reached the main road between Mariampol and Willkowischti in the fight against Russian rearguards. The 8th Cavalry Division captured 400 prisoners and seized 4 guns. The I Army Corps fought its way to Willkowischti and east, the XI to Schirwindt, the I Reserve Corps to Schaki and south of Jurburg. An attempt to intercept some Russian detachments left behind at Njemen was unsuccessful. With the evening of September 14, the pursuit essentially came to an end.

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essentially concluded. Only individual parts of the army advanced further. The I Army Corps occupied Mariampol on September 16.

5. The Events Behind the Army<sup>1)</sup>.

(Map 14.)

While the bulk of the German 8th Army was pursuing eastward, further battles had also taken place at the southern border of East Prussia and near Łyk:

On September 9, half of the 35th Reserve Division was transferred to Königsberg. Thus, along the entire southern border, apart from individual Landsturm units, which could not be considered for serious combat, there were only 18 battalions, 6 squadrons, and 8 batteries: The main reserve Graudenz, which had extended eastward to Neidenburg, and the 5th Landwehr Brigade (from the 35th Reserve Division) were subordinated to the Governor of the Graudenz Fortress, Lieutenant General v. Zastrow. The 5th Landwehr Brigade moved northward from Mława to Janowo to confront the enemy reported from Przasnysz. Further east, the Deputy Commanding General of the XX Army Corps, General of Cavalry Count v. Schlieffen, fortified. Under him, the 70th Landwehr Brigade secured Myszyniec.

The enemy reached only as far as Myszyniec on September 9, within range of the German troops. It seemed to be a cavalry division, but at least 4 infantry battalions and 4 batteries were reported. Major General Breithaupt, who had only a little more than 3 battalions and 2 batteries of his 70th Landwehr Brigade at his disposal on site, evaded the Russian encirclement set against him after the first artillery shots and then marched back 33 km to Ortelsburg throughout the night.

The news of the retreat of the Breithaupt Brigade reached the Army High Command early on September 10. At that time, there was simultaneous concern for the 3rd Reserve Division, and it was not yet known that the army was retreating in a race. A further unfavorable development of the situation on the southern front, despite the low combat value of the Russian Narew Army, posed serious dangers. Therefore, there was great displeasure over the retreat of the 70th Landwehr Brigade. Colonel General v. Hindenburg arranged for it to be brought back to the border. But soon after, when there was no longer any doubt about the withdrawal of the Njemen Army, they could dispense with half of the 35th Reserve Division at Königsberg.

1) Connection to p. 285.

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September 9–16.

Since there was no longer any doubt about the Njemen Army, they could do without half of the 35th Reserve Division at Königsberg. It was immediately sent back to the southern front at Soldau.

Meanwhile, the situation had already cleared up there: The enemy did advance to the border on September 10, but only crossed it at Myschliniez, and even there only with small cavalry detachments. Otherwise, they remained in place and entrenched. However, the German Army High Command ordered, despite the weakness of their own troops, on September 12, the Governor of Graudenz and the Deputy Commanding General of the XX Army Corps to attack the enemy located north of the Narew, to deliver a decisive blow. — To this end, General v. Saffron and General Count Schlieffen had their weak Landwehr troops advance to attack across the border from the Soldau—Willenberg line on September 14. The enemy offered resistance, especially at Chorzele, but retreated across the entire front on September 15. The German troops reached Biechanow and Prasnyisch by September 18. This success boosted the morale of the four German Landwehr brigades deployed here; they believed they had achieved it solely through their attack. They could not know that the Russians were retreating on higher orders.

Simultaneously with the Russian operation against the southern Prussian southern front, the advancing parts of the III Russian Corps from the south and other Russian troops from the east made progress against Lyck. Here, Lieutenant General Baron v. der Goltz with his Landwehr Division withstood the Russian attack from three sides on September 12. On the 13th, supported by parts of the Lötzen garrison, he relieved pressure on the enemy's west flank with a thrust. On the same day, the enemy abandoned the attack here as well and retreated across the border. These were the last Russians who had stood on German soil. An advance by the 3rd Reserve Division from Suwalki prompted them to leave Augustow to the German pursuers on September 16.

6. The Operations of the Russians¹).

(Maps 12 and 14 and Sketch 10, p. 313.)

On the northwestern front, the collapse of the 2nd Army required special measures. It was expected that the Germans would continue to attack. They could turn against the 1st Army standing from the Curonian Lagoon to the Masurian Lakes or against the Narew, and also with new forces, whose arrival from the French front the Russian press had already reported on August 30, from the west towards the area of Warsaw.

¹) Connection to p. 237 and 266.  
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standing at the Masurian Lakes 1st Army to turn or against the Narew, also with new forces, whose arrival from the French front the Russian press already reported on August 30), from the west towards the area of Warsaw. The commander-in-chief of the Northwest Front, General Shilinski, had given the 1st Army the order on August 31 to defend itself stubbornly north of the Masurian Lakes, the 2nd Army wanted to retreat with its left wing to Lomsha). This meant an immediate abandonment of the area around Warsaw. At the aforementioned meeting in Bjelostok) the Grand Duke rejected this. To protect the decisive operation in Galicia against an impact from East Prussia, sufficient forces had to be kept ready for defense at Warsaw and on the Narew. The advancing 10th Army (XXII Corps from Finland, III Siberian, I Turkestan and II Caucasian) was to be inserted into the gap between the 1st and 2nd Armies. On the other hand, a special Warsaw detachment (2 infantry and 1 3/4 cavalry divisions from the 2nd and 9th Armies) was formed on the western flank of the 2nd Army. Initially, they wanted to limit themselves to pure defense. Around mid-September, however, General Shilinski hoped, the 2nd Army would be operational again and the XXII and the III Siberian Corps would be ready. Then he wanted to resume the attack along the entire line. The Supreme Army Command had doubts whether the Germans would remain calm for so long.

For the defense, the Warsaw detachment, the 2nd and 10th Armies had the course of the Vistula with the fortresses of Warsaw and Nowogeorgiewsk and then the fortified Narew-Bobr line clearly outlined.

Regarding how the Russian 1st Army should behave against the expected German attack, there had been an exchange of ideas between the army group and the army high command on August 31). General Mileant, the chief of staff of the 1st Army, had suggested retreating to the line Insterburg-Goldap to threaten the Germans from the north if they advanced through the lake area. The chief of staff of the army group, General Oranowski, had agreed with this plan. General v. Rennenkampf, however, had rejected it. He feared further retreats would have an unfavorable moral effect. He felt strong enough to repel the German advance where he now stood.

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The Russian 1st Army at the Beginning of September.

To repel the advance where it now stood. Thus, the 1st Army remained in its naturally strong position behind Deime, Alle, Omule, and leaning against the Masurian Lakes. With all means of field fortification available in the country, the position was reinforced. It was to be held "as far as possible," as the army group command ordered on September 5 in view of the German advance. However, they did not expect a breakthrough by the Germans over Lötzen, nor the bold venture of outflanking around the southern shore of the lakes.

At the beginning of September, General v. Rennenkampf had a total of 16½ infantry divisions, of which 8½ were active, the rest reserve divisions, and 5½ cavalry divisions under his command. This strength did not increase until the decisive days of battle. However, they did not dare to bring all field troops from the fortresses, although "Reichswehr" troops should have been available by then. Therefore, only parts, mainly artillery, from the 68th Reserve Division from Riga, the 73rd from Kowno, and the 76th from Grodno were brought to the front. The army group prohibited the deployment of heavy fortress artillery from Kowno on September 4; such artillery was not brought from other fortresses either, as far as we know.

Thus, at the beginning of the battles at the front, General v. Rennenkampf had only 14 infantry divisions, of which he deployed 8½ north of the lakes in the front, starting from the right: the newly formed XXVI (Reserve) Corps with the 53rd and 56th Reserve Divisions, the 1st independent cavalry brigade and artillery of the 73rd Reserve Division at the Deime front, — the III Corps with the 25th and 27th Infantry Divisions at Allenburg, — the IV Corps with the 40th and 50th Infantry Divisions, the 5th Rifle Brigade and the 57th Reserve Division at Gerdauen, — the II Corps with the 26th Infantry Division at Angerburg. The other division of this corps, the 43rd, as well as the infantry regiment and the entire artillery of the 76th Reserve Division, were to protect the flank south of the lakes. An infantry regiment (169th) was advanced south to Arns. More than four divisions stood as reserves behind the front, most of them behind the northern wing, where German operations over the lagoon or from the sea were feared.

1) Where German aircraft reportedly saw entire divisions marching eastward over several days, these observations could only confirm that no larger enemy units were present, but probably only troops, which, however, were much more numerous on the enemy side than on the German side.

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the lagoon or from the sea as feared. Thus, behind the already heavily

fortified Deime front, the XX Corps (28th and 29th Infantry Divisions)

was also held in reserve. At Gilft, parts of the 68th Reserve Division

were stationed. The High Command of the Northwest Front even wanted

to have an entire infantry division and a cavalry brigade ready there.

The 54th Reserve Division was at Insterburg¹), the 72nd at Darkehmen.

There is no evidence that General v. Rennenkampf considered using these

strong reserves for a decisive strike, as was deemed possible by the Germans.

The army cavalry was gradually withdrawn behind the front. These were:

½ 1.²) Guard Cavalry Division, the 2nd and 3rd Cavalry Divisions united

under General Chan Hussein into a corps, and the 2nd Guard Cavalry

Division. The 1st Cavalry Division was intended for the transition to the

10th Army but initially remained in the southern flank of the 1st Army

south of Goldap.

The beginnings of the new 10th Army gradually arrived south of the

1st Army, first the XXII Corps assigned to Lyck and the III Siberian

destined for Grajewo. The XXII Corps was to advance a vanguard

against Johannisburg, while the III Siberian had to initially detach its

foremost division, the 8th Siberian Rifle Division, to occupy the Narew

positions Ossowjez and Lomsha.

On September 7, the Northwest Front army group received the first

surprising news that a German infantry division and a cavalry brigade

were advancing eastward along the East Prussian southern border. They

recognized the strong and wide German encircling movement and

thereupon ordered the advance of the available parts of the 10th Army

from Lyck and Lomsha towards Arzys and Johannisburg, and the 2nd

Army against Myszyniec-Hortkiele. Meanwhile, on the evening of the

same September 7, the vanguard of the XXII Corps (parts of the 1st and

3rd Finnish Rifle Brigade) had already arrived at Bialla and was partly

thrown back towards Grajewo, partly northward³). On the same day,

the German radio message about the unloading of the Guard Corps and

V Army Corps at Königsberg was intercepted, and increased German

activity was noticed at the Deime. Thus, the Northwest Front army

group was uncertain on September 8: General v. Rennenkampf, who

himself considered his position secure until then, was to retreat to

Gumbinnen if necessary, and the corps of the 10th Army "in case of

advance of significant enemy forces" to Augustow and Grajewo.

¹) See footnote p. 307.  
²) The 1st Brigade of the division was sent back to Rowno (p. 232).  
³) p. 277. — Strategic Overview, p. 219.  
⁴) Strategic Overview, p. 211.

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3/4 others, who had suffered less or had not yet fought at all, stayed behind.

The advance of the 2nd Army reached Myschinez on September 9, where the VI Corps and the 4th Cavalry Division unsuccessfully attempted to eliminate the German 70th Landwehr Brigade¹), and reached Chorzele.

The situation for the 1st Army was becoming increasingly tense. A serious threat on the southern flank became apparent. The 10th Army had not yet provided the hoped-for relief. The Germans shifted north over Arzys and Löbeln. The weak southern flank of the 1st Army found itself pressured by superior forces. The Russian front north of the lakes had not yet been seriously attacked, and the reserves as well as the numerous cavalry remained untouched. Thus, General v. Rennenkampf believed he could hold out even without the help of the 10th Army.

On September 8, he ordered that from the right wing, the 29th Infantry Division of the XX Corps and the 54th Reserve Division should move south to defend against the impending encirclement at Darkehmen and the 72nd Reserve Division stationed there. On September 9, he had the rest of the XX Corps (28th Infantry Division) follow and positioned the Cavalry Corps of the Chans and the 2nd Guard Cavalry Division at Goldap. These measures came too late to prevent the collapse of the 43rd Infantry Division at Prössisch Eylau on the evening of September 9. However, for September 10, 4 infantry and 3 cavalry divisions were newly available for deployment at a location where previously only 1¼ infantry and 1 cavalry division had faced the German superiority. The situation was still by no means hopeless. But General v. Rennenkampf was unwilling to continue the fight. On the afternoon of September 9, he issued the order to retreat for the front north of the lakes. This order came as a surprise to the troops at the front. Nevertheless, the movement was undertaken in good order during the night of September 10. The northern wing, which had received the order as early as 5 p.m., and the center soon marched off, while the southern wing had to hold along Nordenburg and Angerburg. Here, the commanding general of the Russian IV Corps, General Aliew, created space through vigorous counterattacks on his own initiative.

¹) See p. 304.

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September 8–10. — The Initiation of the Russian Retreat.

On September 10, with the successful disengagement from the enemy, the danger seemed eliminated, especially since General v. Rennenkampf assumed the XXII Corps at this time in the advance against the rear of the German encirclement. He even considered advancing again with this corps on the southern flank. The consternation was all the greater at the headquarters of the 1st Army in Insterburg, as well as at the army group in Bjelostok, when on the night of September 11, the capture of Goldap by the Germans was reported. The experiences of Tannenberg were alarming. The withdrawal of the recently reinforced southern flank of the army was extremely endangered. Over Darkehmen, 2½ divisions of the IV Corps had to retreat on September 11. South of them were still the II and XX Corps with a total of 6 divisions. The II was to make room to the south through counterattacks, the XX to retake Goldap. This did not succeed, but the defensive measures halted the overtaking pursuit of the Germans. In the evening, they reached as far as Gawaiten and Tollmingkehmen. The route to the east was blocked for the Russian masses still standing in and south of the Darkehmen—Tollmingkehmen line. Any hope for help from the XXII Corps had vanished. Thus, the six divisions of the Russian southern flank escaped the impending capture by marching north-east at night. Parts of the XX Corps also seem to have escaped through Tollmingkehmen between the 1st and 2nd Divisions of the German I Army Corps on September 12.

The Russian army cavalry, numbering a total of four divisions on the southern flank, did not support the army's retreat as expected. The 1st Cavalry Division fought at Lake Widminner on September 9, but then General Gurko, following an earlier order, moved south to the 10th Army. The 2nd Guards Cavalry Division under Lieutenant General Rauch engaged the German XVII Army Corps north of Possessern early on September 10, and by the evening of the same day, its forward parts were driven out of Goldap by the German 8th Cavalry Division. Meanwhile, the Khan's cavalry corps, without fighting, reached the area south of the Rominten Heath. Only from September 11 did the three remaining cavalry divisions effectively take over the protection of the army flank in the Rominten Heath and halt the advance of the German cavalry corps. However, one must not have been satisfied with the performance of Lieutenant General Khan Hussein, as he was relieved of his command.

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mandos relieved. Nevertheless, it was possible, under the protection of the army cavalry, to lead the mass of Russian troops in numerous, closely marching columns to Wirballen and north of the border.

Heavily shaken and severely weakened in their combat strength, the 1st Army finally escaped with the bulk of its forces, albeit with considerable loss of guns and other equipment. However, it needed so much rest for reorganization that it retreated behind the Njemen without being pressured.

During these events, the army group command had changed its intentions twice1). The attack order for the 10th and 2nd Army was revoked on September 9, when the 10th Army reported it was not yet in a position to attack. Since the 1st Army was also retreating, the 10th was now to retreat to Augustowo and Grajewo, while the 2nd Army was to remain standing. When General v. Rennenkampf temporarily considered attacking again with the southern flank, the order to attack was given again to the 10th and 2nd Army on the night of September 11, but by the 12th it was finally converted back into a retreat order, as the 1st Army was no longer expected to attack. These rapidly following counter-orders led to nothing unified happening. The XXII Corps withdrew the southern 3rd Reserve Division on the night of September 10, then the III Siberian Corps advanced against Lyck, but retreated again on the 13th; the 2nd Army remained inactive at the border for two days. The German pursuit was only disturbed insofar as the 1st Cavalry Division was temporarily withdrawn from the decisive pursuit direction. If the Russian army group of the Northwest Front had ruthlessly deployed all its subordinate forces to cooperate with General v. Rennenkampf, it could have posed far greater difficulties for the German pursuit.

Regarding the blame for the new defeat, there were sharp disagreements among the higher Russian command authorities: General v. Rennenkampf relieved his chief of staff, General Mileant, of his position on September 11. This general was then ordered to the headquarters of the army group, which then requested the dismissal of General v. Rennenkampf from the Supreme Army Command on September 12. However, this did not happen, but instead, the commander of the army group, General Ghinski, was finally relieved of his position and replaced by General Russki, the previous victorious leader of the 3rd Army.

1) Sichowitsch, pp. 112, 113, 115, and 119.

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finally relieved the commander-in-chief of the army group, General Ghinski, of his position and replaced him with General Russki, the previous victorious leader of the 3rd Army. Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich confessed to the Tsar: "I openly admit that I did not understand how to oversee the execution of my orders, therefore I lay my guilty head at Your Majesty's feet").

7. Reflections on the Battle.

The enormous numbers of prisoners and booty from the Battle of Tannenberg have led to the subsequent victory over the Russian Njemen Army often not receiving the attention it deserves, both for the audacity of the battle plan and the magnitude of the success.

As at Tannenberg, the speed and strength of the German movements shattered the Russian operational plan at the Masurian Lakes. Just as then, victory was achieved against superior forces, against superior forces on the East Prussian theater of war as a whole, as well as on the battlefield itself.

On both the German and Russian sides, part of the troops were weakened by previous losses. Therefore, the respective troop strengths cannot be compared; only the number of available units and guns can be set against each other.

The Russians had at their disposal up to the decisive days of fighting in East Prussia and along the East Prussian border at least 389 battalions, 288 squadrons, 1492 guns, while the Germans, including replacement and reserve troops, had only 232 battalions, 124 squadrons, 1212 guns.

Again, everything that could be reached was brought up on the German side for the battle itself. On the long and extremely threatened southern flank, against the Russian Narew Army, which itself counted only about 83 battalions, 97 squadrons, and 372 guns without fortress garrisons, only 24 reserve and replacement battalions, 10 squadrons, 78 guns remained. In the days when the decision was made, these numbers on the German side even decreased by a quarter. To defend against the Russian 10th Army, which by September 10th had grown to a strength of 72 battalions, 38 squadrons, and 252 guns, no more than 24 reserve and Landwehr battalions, 15 squadrons, and 60 guns were deployed in total.

1) Suchomlinow, p. 62.

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As we know the respective forces and their distribution today, it is by no means certain that the German attack would have progressed much further after September 10 if General v. Rennenkampf had held his ground. After all, 1 1/4 Russian infantry divisions and 1 cavalry division had caused considerable difficulties for the German I and XVII Army Corps for days. However, reserves were completely lacking on the German side. The Russian leadership could not overlook all this. It would have required an outstanding personality to fight the battle to the last against the victors of Tannenberg, even though the Germans directly threatened the retreat routes.

The outcome of the battle did not quite meet the hopes placed on the encirclement. This could not be otherwise if the opponent retreated prematurely. The German leader had no means at his disposal to force him to fight through the battle. Even earlier and sharper attacks at the front could not have prevented the Russians from breaking off the fight by night march as soon as they wanted. It is assumed that such attacks would have at least partially tied up the Russian reserves in the north permanently and thereby increased the prospects of the overtaking pursuit. The hesitation with the frontal attack was not due to a misunderstanding of this effect, but to the weakness of the German attack front and its combat means. Russian countermeasures and a series of unfortunate incidents further impaired the outcome of the pursuit, such as on September 10 the dispatch of the 1st Cavalry Division to the south and the turning of the entire 2nd Infantry Division to the west, then on September 11 the alarming news from the XI Army Corps, for the 12th the differing view of the I Army Corps — and finally the weakness and overexertion of the German army cavalry, in which the 1st Cavalry Brigade also failed in the decisive days. Given the previous achievements and in view of the more than double superiority of the enemy cavalry, the recovery of the enemy was an extremely difficult task for the German riders. It was not undertaken in vain to solve it, even if the highest goal, the relocation of the enemy retreat, was not achieved.

All in all, the success of the battle was still great: 45,000 prisoners, 150 guns counted as booty. The Russians¹) report their total losses at 100,000 men (70,000 dead and wounded, 30,000 prisoners).

1) Korolkov, p. 3.

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The Result.

their total losses to 100,000 men (70,000 dead and wounded, 30,000 prisoners). What returned crossed the border in disorder and dissolution, had to be led back behind the Njemen and required a longer time and rest to restore combat strength. This result is contrasted by a total German loss of about 9,000 men. The XVII Army Corps bore the brunt with about 1,500 men; the XI Army Corps also suffered significant losses in the pursuit battles.

The magnitude of the previous successes in East Prussia is most clearly shown by the mutual loss figures. A loss of about 37,000 men for the German 8th Army is opposed by a total Russian loss of about 250,000 men (over 1/3 of the fighting troops), of which about 145,000 were prisoners; over 500 guns (more than 1/4 of the stock) were taken from them. The Russian army group of the Northwest Front had been decisively defeated in all its parts since the Battle of the Masurian Lakes: The 1st Army was no longer combat-ready for the next few weeks, the assembly of the 10th Army was thrown into confusion, the remnants of the 2nd had suffered another blow. All armies of this front had experienced the superior leadership and combat capability of German troops from their own experience. Confidence and assurance of victory were severely shaken. The way into Russia was open to the victorious German army.

1) According to Jachowitsch, p. 127, the Russians are said to have lost a total of 245,000 men, of which 135,000 were prisoners; according to Krodloff, p. 4, they were missing — notwithstanding the corps captured at Tannenberg — a total of even 316,000 men from the target strength (435,000 instead of 751,000 men).

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Third Chapter.

The Sufferings of East Prussia.

Vast areas of the core German province of East Prussia suffered greatly

under the military events of the summer of 1914. The situation of the province

meant that it was more exposed to enemy incursions than other parts of the country.

Even the peacetime expansion of the country's fortifications in the east showed

that the responsible authorities of the Reich anticipated the possibility of a

Russian advance up to the Vistula. The line of this river had been increasingly

strengthened, especially in the years leading up to the war; the facilities in East

Prussia itself had to take a back seat. This was particularly discussed in 1913

when the use of the "defense contribution" funds was addressed and had led to

concern in East Prussia at that time. General von Heeringen, as Minister of War,

had tried to counteract this with a decree of July 1, 1913. After that, "no thought

was given to abandoning German territory either in East Prussia or any other

part of the fatherland." The Minister of War spoke not only for reasons of

secrecy. The intentions he announced corresponded entirely to the instructions

laid down by the General Staff for the forces in the east. Whether such intentions

could be implemented in a war against two fronts in every case, that remained

to be seen.

What should happen if the enemy nevertheless invaded the country was

essentially only discussed from purely military perspectives before the war.

A repatriation of economic assets, insofar as it did not concern military,

immediately necessary for warfare, or state property, was not considered.

The question of whether and how it would be possible to secure the extensive

and, in the event of a long war, also vital surplus stocks of the country's

livestock and harvests, therefore, did not come up for discussion. Such

important peacetime measures belonged to the area of general war preparations,

on which, however, due to the stance of our policy and the difficulties of a collaboration among the involved independent higher Reich authorities, did not progress beyond preliminary discussions by the time of the war.

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The Sufferings of East Prussia.

withdrawn, the state coffers and all important documents secured. However, the district administrators and local leaders had to remain at their posts even in the event of an enemy incursion and ensure that the burdens of war were alleviated for the residents as much as possible.

The outbreak of war coincided with the harvest season. Thus, the mobilization, which required the immediate conscription of the militia for all threatened border areas, deprived agriculture of the bulk of its most capable workers just at the moment when they were most urgently needed. In the province of East Prussia, this loss is estimated at 130,000 harvest workers. However, it was still valuable that at least the present farm workers from Russia felt no urge to leave. Help was brought in from everywhere. In addition to women and children, about 10,000 urban workers and students from higher schools actively participated. Thus, it was possible, favored by the weather, to bring in the grain harvest largely successfully. However, threshing could initially only be done to a barely significant extent.

The Chamber of Agriculture had already issued a call to dispose of surplus livestock at the end of July¹), and in the first days after the outbreak of war, the desire arose from the population to bring valuable horse and livestock, especially breeding animals, to safety in the interior of the Reich. It was not until August 15 that it was possible to free up individual train cars for this purpose. Meanwhile, the start of military operations had already made itself felt significantly.

The overwhelming Russian cavalry masses had indeed missed the time when they could have significantly disrupted mobilization or harvest; their operations had been limited to the outermost border areas. But the appearance of the first Russian troops on German soil was enough to create the impression among the population and authorities that something terrible was to be expected from this enemy. Peaceful citizens were shot, district administrators, local leaders, and other respected persons were arrested, mistreated, and in some cases taken away as hostages, buildings were set on fire. Thus, since the early days of August, a flight of the population, especially from the initially affected eastern border areas, had begun.

¹) East Prussian War Journals 3, p. 57.

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The Impact of the Outbreak of War. — The Flight of the Population.

This flight movement soon took on an ever larger scale. Initially, it affected the administrative district of Gumbinnen, corresponding to the course of military events, the entry area of the Russian Njemen Army. North and south of it, the population remained, as they were not immediately pressured; later, however, their path was already blocked. On August 20, during the Battle of Gumbinnen, the refugee crowds waited behind the fighting German front for victory to return to their homes. But when the German troops unexpectedly began their retreat on the night of August 21, the sad procession of refugees also set in motion. Military necessities forced it to be kept in flow, as it threatened to clog all paths and endanger the operations themselves. Now, however, the movement swept everything it touched like an avalanche and swelled to an ever larger mass. This mass eventually rolled forward and slowly wiped the marching columns of the troops further and soon flooded the southern part of the Königsberg administrative district.

The retreat from Gumbinnen had already caused a desperate mood among the entire population of East Prussia, which was heightened to complete panic by two military orders necessarily associated with the decision to retreat:

The Army High Command believed that the flooding of the Angerapp lowlands, planned for the first days of mobilization, could no longer be postponed and issued corresponding instructions. Although they did not come to execution, as the situation was soon seen as more favorable and the stage inspector, Lieutenant General v. Heuduck, again pointed out the severe consequences, they nevertheless caused enormous unrest, especially in the affected area.

Another measure, however, could no longer be postponed: Given the extent and forms the war against the Central Powers had taken, the Army High Command was clear that what could still be saved for the nourishment of the army and homeland had to be saved. So it was a duty to secure the rich livestock and harvest supplies as completely and early as possible.

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to secure. Everything left behind fell into the enemy's hands and was thus lost anyway; the Russians would either use it themselves or, if they had to retreat, take it with them or destroy it. Thus, on August 22, the supply inspection ordered, based on a directive from the army high command, the withdrawal of livestock and harvest supplies behind the Vistula. However, the railways were fully occupied at this time. A comprehensive removal via the otherwise suitable and then also used waterway, both inland via the Lagoon and Nogat, as well as across the Bay of Gdańsk, could not be arranged quickly. Despite all opposing considerations and the expected losses, the land route was essentially chosen. For this, the livestock present in the districts east of the Vistula was first to be gathered at collection points and then immediately moved to the western riverbank from the Vistula lowlands.

Such measures were not foreseen by the authorities and the population and therefore came as a complete surprise. They caused the already ongoing flight of the population to grow immeasurably. Only a few could escape in the trains available for refugees; the majority, especially the rural population, had to use the roads.

Everyone abandoned house and home. The entire setup, the harvest, the mass of livestock was left unattended. Only the essentials could be taken on the wagons; some of the livestock was driven along. Thus, endless lines of wagons, people, and animals moved westward on all roads. Mostly older men — the others were at the front —, women and children, all shared the same fate, subsisting on what they had taken with them and camping at night in already abandoned places or in the open. Without much complaint, the brave East Prussians accepted their hard fate. Fortunately, warm and dry August weather made the weeks-long life on the road somewhat bearable! Similar refugee misery had not been seen in German lands for over 180 years. Back then, about 20,000 Salzburgers, driven from house and home by religious intolerance, sought the new homeland offered to them, especially in East Prussia. Now their descendants again formed part of the approximately half a million East Prussian refugees, who this time, in the midst of war, faced a completely uncertain fate.

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The Behavior of the Russians.

also corresponded to the opinion of the Russian Supreme Command, which issued an order of similar content on September 5. The corps of the Narew Army also issued announcements in the same sense. They were supplemented by numerous other general and individual orders. Among other things, the neighboring localities were held responsible for damage to railways and telegraphs and threatened with burning down, and the male population with shooting. The use of motor vehicles and bicycles as well as any traffic at night was prohibited. A particularly sharp decree was directed against foresters, who were seen as secret supporters of the German army. According to an order issued by the Russian VI Corps, they were even to be shot without further ado.

The Russians have in numerous cases assumed the involvement of the population with weapons in hand or through scouting services and treason, where thorough investigation would have shown that this was not the case. The statements of the suspects and any German witnesses were not believed, and often the ignorance of the foreign language made the defense of the accused more difficult. However, the punishments were ruthlessly carried out. Numerous homes have been, as stated in an official Russian report, "burned down and completely destroyed." Thus, Nemmau, a small town of 2000 inhabitants, was handed over to the flames after a German cavalry patrol had entered the Russian-occupied place and fired. — The village of Abischwangen (district Pr.-Eylau) was burned down, about 40 completely innocent residents were summarily shot after a German patrol had fired on a Russian motor vehicle there. — For similar reasons, numerous houses in Ortelsburg have been set on fire¹). — Regarding the fate of the border town of Wizimbirk (1300 inhabitants), a participating Russian soldier wrote: "Looted in the village and in the town; everything that was not food or money was handed over to the flames and complete destruction." — The town of Bartenstein (7000 inhabitants) was "destroyed and burned" by the Russian 5th Rifle Brigade. Similar cases can be found in other places, especially from estates and individual farms, near which patrol skirmishes have taken place, in large numbers.

¹) The Russian General Blagoveshchensky justified his excessive and early army order by reporting that the Germans had set Ortelsburg on fire so that he could not hold it there (Sichowitsch in Sbornik, Issue 3, p. 142). There is no truth in this account.

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The Sufferings of East Prussia.

Individual farms, near which patrol clashes have occurred, are cited in large numbers. — In Santoppen (Rößel district), the ringing of the church bell at a funeral was seen as a signal agreed upon with the enemy; 20 people were shot because of this. — Almost universally, anyone caught on a bicycle was summarily killed, as they were suspected of espionage.

With such severity of the procedure, it was particularly aggravating that the Russian soldiers, when executing the courts-martial, often showed unnecessary work or destructive rage. While the Russian is generally rightly considered good-natured and has shown himself to be simple, in surprisingly many cases the beast in man also emerged. Numerous are the cases where people were deliberately burned in the ignited houses; the bodies of those shot were left unburied; during the removal and treatment of prisoners, brutal cruelty was often used, or Asian customs were transferred to German cultural land, as a captain of the 16th Hussar Regiment, who publicly flogged 31 residents in Heinrichswalde (Niederung district, east of Königsberg).

Apart from the previously described courts-martial, the population also suffered severely from looting, robbery, and acts of violence of all kinds, especially against women and girls, less so in times of stronger movement, as the invading troops, less from the fighting troops than from Tainas, columns, and staging formations. The behavior of the Russian Guard Cavalry is generally given an extremely favorable testimony. There have been fewer complaints about the line troops from the western governments than about those from the interior of the empire, against whom even Russian officers occasionally warned the German population. According to all reports, the Cossacks fare particularly poorly, of whom there were at most two regiments in each Russian corps and one in each cavalry division. Perhaps the whip (Nagaika) belonging to the official equipment of the Cossacks has made these poorly disciplined and inherently harmless, steppe-dwelling children appear in such an unfavorable light, or other mounted troops have been regarded as "Cossacks" due to the uniformity of the Russian uniforms.

To prevent excesses, a strict alcohol ban was already enacted in Russia with the mobilization, which was later enforced with the utmost ruthlessness. The Russian officers, with various exceptions, have been keen to prevent acts of violence and have done so emphatically, and with weapons in hand, intervened against their own soldiers, having looting punished with knout lashes.

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Acts of Violence and Looting.

with weapons in hand, intervened against their own soldiers, having looting punished with knout lashes. But even for the officers themselves, it was sometimes difficult to assert themselves against unruly troops, and they could not be everywhere. Thus, in villages and on individual farms, there were more riots, including not a few of truly malicious work, than in the cities, where the present command posts generally ensured stricter discipline. They were also committed to maintaining order by cooperating with any remaining German officials. Where these were absent, they appointed deputies.

Complaints about looting in more or less large scale have been made almost everywhere. They were particularly severe where the residents had fled and left their belongings unguarded. In the uninhabited buildings, passing groups of refugees or troops might have already sought shelter, perhaps not leaving everything as they found it; shady characters from the local population had begun to loot. Then the Russians came, who systematically cleared entire buildings. According to numerous consistent reports from various circles, Polish Jews, who supplied the troops with provisions, played a major role, often being instigators. "They arrange" — as the reports say — "for the soldiers to break into the homes and loot. For little money, the Jews then bought the goods." Long convoys with stolen household goods, valuables of all kinds, agricultural machinery, and livestock were thus taken across the border.

However, a description of the behavior of the Russian troops would be incomplete if it were not mentioned that they often showed a very human side, striving to live in harmony with the remaining population and occasionally actually helping them. For example, they are said to have provided for the supply of the remaining German population in Wehlau, Johannisburg, and Neidenburg and supported the German refugees at the Alle crossing near Friedland.

The immediate damage from the combat operations naturally cannot be attributed to the Russians alone. These damages were also significant. Part of the first Russian incursions specifically targeted railway disruptions. During the advance, the foremost Russian reconnaissance units frequently set fire to barns and haystacks to indicate how far they had come.

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the foremost Russian reconnaissance units often set fire to barns and

straw stacks to indicate how far they had come. —

The impact of the fighting itself claimed entire towns. Gerdauen

(3000 inhabitants) and Hohenstein (2500 inhabitants) were almost completely

burned down. Neidenburg, where allegedly residents participated in the fighting,

was set on fire by the Russians. Soldau, Ortelsburg,

and many other towns suffered more or less severely from the fighting. Since in rural areas all rooms and storages were immediately

filled with hay and straw after the harvest, almost every

artillery bombardment resulted in major fire damage. Numerous villages,

especially the village of Mühlen on the battlefield of Tannenberg, and such

in front of the eastern front of Lötzen were almost completely incinerated, a large number

of estates and farms were destroyed. Nevertheless, the combat

damage of these first weeks of war does not compare to what — with more

numerous and effective artillery and with longer duration of

battles in the same area — was destroyed later in the war.

New sufferings and new damages were brought by the Russian retreat:

As long as the Russians hoped to keep the occupied land as a prize of victory,

they took some considerations that later fell away. As

expected, they deported the entire able-bodied population,

including all men from 16 to 45 years of age, to Russia, while other residents were taken as hostages. In

some cases, even the residents of entire villages, regardless of

age and gender, including elderly women and infants,

were ruthlessly and senselessly deported. Many deportees,

who could no longer be taken along in the hasty flight,

were simply shot. Moreover, the Russians aimed to

destroy everything that could be of use to the German war effort in the future,

especially all bridges, railway, telegraph, and telephone

installations, as well as household institutions, factories, and supplies of all kinds.

Naturally, overzealousness and joy in destruction also caused

damage that cannot be explained by reasons of warfare.

In some areas, such as the districts of Lyck and Marggrabowa, it is said that

there was even a general order to burn down all dwellings

during the retreat. These measures had no impact on the German

pursuit, as the destructions were nowhere so lasting due to the shortness

of time and lack of preparation

that they could have stopped the pursuers. The burning down of villages, however, was militarily completely ineffective in the warm season and in the war of movement.

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The Battle Damages. — Summary.

However, the villages were militarily completely ineffective in the warm season and in the war of movement. So here only the damage to the population remained. — Only where the Russians were in a great hurry — especially during the retreat of the VI Corps after August 26 and that of the Njemen army after the battle at the Masurian Lakes — was the country largely spared the suffering of Russian retreat actions.

Where the Russians had withdrawn, the population awoke as if from a heavy dream; they received the advancing German troops with joyful emotion and deep gratitude. Only now could one somewhat overlook the damage that had been done. It was hardly behind the first stories and reports. However, if one considers the destruction and suffering that are infinitely inseparably connected with the warfare of today's armies, it also becomes apparent that, beyond that, the excesses of the Russians may not have been quite as numerous, at least not as widespread, as was initially reported. For example, of the four district administrators reported as abducted, only the one from Lyck was actually taken to Russia.

But even so, the country and its unfortunate population had suffered severely enough under the horrors of the war. As far as can be determined, the following losses occurred in the four weeks of the Russian invasion in August/September 1914:

1620 civilians were killed,

433 wounded,

over 10000 abducted.

Of a total of 2500000 inhabitants east of the Vistula, more than 800000 suddenly left home and farm; of these, about 400000 fled across the Vistula and found temporary shelter there. More than 100000 families lost all their belongings. In terms of animals, the total loss, including the later Russian invasions, where the loss can only have been minor, was:

135000 horses (total stock east of the Vistula about 600000),

250000 cattle (total stock east of the Vistula about 1400000),

200000 pigs.

1) For a clear distinction of the damages and losses from the first Russian invasion described here and those from later invasions, the documents are often lacking. The figures given here are based on the information in the East Prussian war booklets and in the parliamentary material.

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The Sufferings of East Prussia.

From the area entered by the enemy, only 20,000 horses and 86,000 cattle are said to have been saved; about 300,000 cattle were brought to the western bank of the Vistula in total.

How extensive the building damage was is the least precisely determinable, as here the destructions of later incursions and battles can no longer be distinguished from those of August and September. The total damage amounted to 34,000 buildings. If only half is attributed to the first incursion, which seems small, it amounts to about 17,000.

Such an impact of the enemy incursion in East Prussia forces one to consider to what extent it could have been mitigated despite inadequate fortifications. There is no question that with systematic peace preparations, the orderly evacuation of essential assets, especially the mass of the population by rail, ship, and road, would have been possible. Timely evacuation of the male population of conscription age or close to it could have been carried out even without peace preparations. However, every effort should have been made to restrict the flight of the local population as much as possible. It had to be clear that with the withdrawal of the population, everything left behind fell into the hands of the advancing enemy as ownerless property. Who can say whether he would ever have returned it as a victor, or allowed the population to return?

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Fourth Chapter.

The Battle of Lemberg and the Evacuation of Eastern Galicia.

The Battle of the German Landwehr Corps at Tarnawka.

(Sketch 9, p. 267, and Sketch 11, p. 337.) While Generaloberst v. Hindenburg and Generalmajor Ludendorff defeated the Rennenkampf army in East Prussia to secure the necessary freedom of movement for the advance over the Narew, the fierce struggle for decision continued without interruption on the Austro-Hungarian front in Galicia. With skill, General v. Conrad held firmly to his intention1) to defeat the previously victorious enemy group at Lemberg with the mass of troops deployed against Russia, while a newly formed army group from weaker parts of the 4th Army under General of Infantry Archduke Josef Ferdinand and the 1st Army, along with the army group Kummer under its command, tied down the enemy in the north by continuing the attack. Here, including the German Landwehr Corps, a total of 18½ infantry divisions2) and 4 cavalry divisions were left, while 29½ infantry divisions2) and 7 cavalry divisions were deployed to achieve victory at Lemberg. The 2nd and 3rd Armies — the latter had, after the unfortunate battles east of Lemberg, been commanded by General of Infantry Boroevic v. Bojna as successor to General v. Brudermann — were to slow down the enemy behind the Great Ezer in a strong natural position. General v. Auffenberg was to strike from the northwest with the previously victorious 4th Army from the north into the flank. However, this army also wanted to keep the possibility of retreat to the west open at all times. This led to the boldly conceived, though ruthlessly executed, probably promising, but nevertheless extremely difficult operation in the face of the enemy into significantly different paths.

1) p. 260. 2) In the northern group, 2 divisions and 4 brigades (these also counted as 2 divisions) are included in the Landsturm, and in the Lemberg group, 9 brigades (= 4½ divisions) are included. The marching brigades, however, are not taken into account.

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The Battle of Lemberg and the Evacuation of Eastern Galicia

essentially different paths. The attack of the 4th Army was initially set so far west that this army itself was caught in the flank without hitting the enemy's flank in turn. Thus, the army of General v. Auffenberg was also pushed into defense and finally entered the battle, facing east, shoulder to shoulder with the 3rd Army. This army and the 2nd were now supposed to attack the enemy, who—correctly recognized—was pursuing parts northward. This attack was ordered on the evening of September 7 and began on the 8th. However, the troops of the 2nd and 3rd Armies were worn out from the previous unfortunate battles. Therefore, in the following days, only the extreme right wing, where the commander of the 2nd Army, General v. Böhm-Ermolli, still had new forces to deploy from the Serbian front, gained some ground.

Meanwhile, in Poland, the resistance of the Russians at Cholm—Lublin had increasingly strengthened1). The Austro-Hungarian front was also forced into defense here from pursuit and attack over time. The enemy, besides the reserve troops that had since arrived, deployed three completely fresh active corps in his 4th Army into battle, the III Caucasian Corps originally intended for the 3rd Army, as well as the Guard Corps and the XVIII from the 9th Army2). The mass, which had grown to 15 infantry divisions, was divided, and the command of the 9th Army was inserted on the western wing of the 4th Army. The Russians pressed sharply against the army group of the Archduke as well as against the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army and penetrated with strong forces into the gap that had arisen between them by the withdrawal of the 4th Army. The Austro-Hungarian front in the north began to waver. As their last reserve, the German Landwehr Corps was deployed.

The German Landwehr Corps under General of Infantry v. Woyrsch, with Lieutenant Colonel Heye as Chief of Staff, consisted of 34 battalions, 12 squadrons, 12 batteries3), then 1/3 replacement troops, all other Landwehr from Silesia and Posen. The infantry of the corps had only eight machine guns in total and not a single field kitchen. The field artillery was equipped only with the most necessary telephone equipment, and their crews belonged to a considerable extent even to the Landsturm. The corps had only a single aircraft, and medical formations were almost entirely absent.

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Early September. — The German Landwehr Corps.

With this formation, which was not very suitable for a long march into enemy territory and especially for the fight against well-equipped active troops, General v. Woyrsch set out from Tschenstochau and Kalisch on August 15. Unconcerned about enemy troop concentrations¹) on the uncovered northern flank of the long advance and without regard to the numerous Russian cavalry that swarmed around the corps and harassed the baggage and trains, he proceeded southwards towards Radom, as per his orders, to assist the allies. The high command of the German 8th Army and the Supreme Army Command had also unhesitatingly agreed to the use of the corps on the eastern bank of the Vistula and its subordination to Austro-Hungarian command.

On September 3 and 4, the Landwehr Corps crossed the Vistula at Josefow, but was not, as initially planned, deployed for an attack on the Austro-Hungarian western flank, but was instead drawn under pressure of the situation to the area east of Krasnik, behind the center of the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army. Since the 18th Landwehr Brigade and some other units of the corps had been held at the Vistula by the army commander, General Dankl, General v. Woyrsch initially had only 25 battalions, 12 squadrons, and 9 batteries at his disposal. — The brave soldiers had marched almost 400 km from the German border in 24 days when they were integrated into the already wavering front on September 7 under the Austro-Hungarian X Corps (from Central Galicia) and the V (from Western Hungary). In broad daylight, the 4th Landwehr Division under Lieutenant General v. Wegerer relieved the exhausted Hungarian 37th Infantry Division and the Austrian 36th Landsturm Brigade in battle, broke through the previous line in the first impetuous assault, and captured more than 1000 prisoners. They encountered parts of the Russian Grenadier Corps and the 82nd Reserve Division. The Austrian 36th Landsturm Brigade was subordinated to General v. Woyrsch, but the German 3rd Landwehr Division was held by the Hungarian command of the 1st Army for other use.

After strong preparation by far superior artillery, the evening of September 8 brought heavy Russian counterattacks. Troops from the Guard Corps and the Grenadier Corps flowed against the section of the German Landwehr, just as parts of the infantry, which had no field kitchens, had gone back to cook.

¹) Russian 2nd Guard Infantry Division, whose vanguard reached Petrikau on August 29 (75 km northeast of Tschenstochau) (Bischofshut, p. 129).  
²) Gradually, 3½ cavalry divisions along with 3 infantry regiments in the area of Radom.

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The Battle of Lemberg and the Evacuation of Eastern Galicia.

to completely halt the western wing1), when the collapse of the Austro-

Hungarian 1st Army brought them an unexpected victory. The

great goal of encircling the armies of the Danube Monarchy on both sides

was not achieved. The Russian forces were unfavorably positioned for

an overwhelming pursuit and had to be redeployed. Only the cavalry

massed under General Nowikow west of the Vistula at Radom, consisting

of 3½ divisions with 3 infantry regiments, could have threatened the

retreat of the Austro-Hungarian army; but they held back.

The official Russian war report judges2) the overall course

of the operations so far: "In general, the sense of obligation

to our allies influenced all measures of our

supreme command to such an extent that it even sacrificed

essential prerequisites for the strategic success of the operations.

It began the attack with incomplete units,

overstrained the troops, pursued two goals simultaneously, and thus

failed to give their exertion a direction recognized as

most important by the supreme command."

The failed offensive operation brought the army of the Danube Monarchy

heavy and irreplaceable losses. "The best army that old

Austria had brought to the enemy in its many centuries of existence

— and that was the one of 1914 despite all weaknesses — was

thus prematurely reduced to slag"3). Although the Russians

also suffered extremely heavy losses4), and the Austro-Hungarian press report

of September 14 reported that "so far 40,000 captured Russians have been

deported to the interior of the monarchy and over 300 guns captured in battle."

But what did that mean compared to their own losses: The flower of the officer corps

and the best of the troops were covered by the grass. A large part of the already very scarce

artillery equipment was lost. The Russians reported: "About 250,000

Austrians killed or wounded, more than 100,000 captured, over

400 guns captured." The army was shaken to its core.

At the supreme command, belief in victory had given way to

gloomy pessimism. That the enemy also suffered extremely heavy

losses, which hampered their pursuit, was overshadowed by the impression that their own army had suffered severely in its combat strength.

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The mood was subdued in light of the impression that the army's combat strength had suffered severely. Without German assistance, it was considered incapable of even pure defense.

Given such an outcome of the initial offensive, the retrospective observer is prompted to question whether this offensive was justified at all, or whether greater restraint, perhaps defense in the Carpathians and at the San, would have been more advantageous.

The decision to attack between the Bug and Vistula was made in accordance with the unanimous opinion of the German and Austro-Hungarian general staff chiefs and was carefully considered in peacetime. Given the situation at the start of the war, it was entirely justified from both the German and Austro-Hungarian perspectives to disrupt the assembly of Russian masses and preempt their attack, even if, as was intended by the Germans, the initial strategy in the East was to remain largely defensive. The numerical ratio, according to the deployment plans of both sides, was initially not unfavorable for Austria-Hungary and thus supported the offensive.

However, the war situation had developed differently by the start of operations than had been anticipated. The claim, made during the events and repeatedly since, that the Russians were ready earlier and stronger than calculated in peacetime is incorrect. But the Russian armies, urged by France, commenced their attack before completing their assembly, while on the Austro-Hungarian side, perhaps due to the delay in deployment, but certainly due to the preceding deployment of the 2nd Army against Serbia, valuable time was lost. There was also an inability to fully commit the planned number of divisions against Russia, and the reduced number was still held at the Serbian front until the end of August. Under these circumstances, switching to defense at the last moment was difficult. Neither the training of the army nor the education of its leaders was prepared for defending the vast spaces of the Galician theater of war, which had not been prepared for in peacetime.

Such a change in decision would have been disastrous in its impact on the overall situation: Defense would have helped only temporarily, not in the long run. The Russian pressure on the Austrian front would have steadily increased, the victory at the Battle of the Marne might have been possible, and the German Eastern Front, despite Tannenberg, would have been pushed into defense. In the East, it would likely have resulted in an overall situation from which one could have only freed oneself with strong assistance from the Western Front, given the meanwhile further grown Russian masses. Everything depended on this assistance.

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The Justification of the Austro-Hungarian Offensive.

In view of the now further grown Russian masses, it could only have been freed again by strong help from the Western Front. Everything depended on this help. If it failed, as was the case after the Battle of the Marne, then there was hardly any prospect in the East of a rescue against the now fully assembled, overwhelming Russian superiority. Only if the Russian armies were attacked and defeated individually, as soon as they could be grasped, could it be prevented that they eventually grew into the "steamroller" that was expected by the Western powers to be unleashed on us from the East.

The numerical ratio on the Galician front, despite the failure of some Austro-Hungarian divisions, was still much more favorable than General v. Conrad had expected before the war. He had calculated at the time that by the Russian 30th mobilization day (= August 29) 60 enemy infantry divisions would be standing against him; in fact, by September 11, there were at most 51 divisions, including Landsturm and German Landwehr (but excluding the march brigades), at least 47½ divisions stood against them on the Austro-Hungarian side. But even so, the Russian side had a considerable superiority in cavalry and, which weighed particularly heavily, also in artillery. In total, the following stood against each other:

Battalions Squadrons Guns

Austrians and Hungarians and German Landwehr Corps 804½ 398 2140

Russians 823½ 690 3060

But this numerical superiority of the Russians only gradually emerged¹). Thus, the decision to attack between the Bug and Vistula did not necessarily have to lead to the severe setback that actually occurred. If the Austro-Hungarian leadership had succeeded in concentrating the mass of their forces early at one point for a decisive blow, the prospects of success would probably have been significantly greater. But even as the deployment actually took place, it was not foreseeable that the Austro-Hungarian western wing, despite its initial superiority (in numbers²), would be denied a decisive success, and that it would not be able to hold the initial success achieved. The situation was different with the decision to also move east of Lemberg to attack.

¹) According to Dragomirov, p. 177/78, there would have been only 38½ divisions by September 3 (capture of Lemberg). — ²) p. 256.

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To transition to an attack. Here, the numerous tributaries of the Dniester coming from the north favored the defense, and given the overall situation, especially with the delayed arrival and partial failure of the 2nd Army, greater restraint was advised. However, a mistaken assessment of the enemy led to an undertaking at this point that could hardly end well.

The Austro-Hungarian Army High Command saw the absence of the German offensive at Sjedlez as the decisive reason for their own defeat. Apart from the fact that such an offensive could not be carried out without prior reckoning with the Russian Njemen Army, it should also be pointed out that the purpose of the offensive against the Narew agreed upon in 1909: to keep the Russian 1st and 2nd Armies away from the Galician theater of war, was fully achieved by the German 8th Army in East Prussia, despite the retreat from Gumbinnen. By September 10, it had attracted and tied down Russian forces amounting to 36 1/2 infantry divisions. If General v. Conrad expected even further influence from it, that was more than Germany could achieve given the balance of forces in the East.

Despite all this, it should not be overlooked that the army of the Danube Monarchy fought bravely in the August and September battles of 1914, deploying all its strength. Its significant inferiority, especially in artillery — the ratio was about 2:3 — greatly increased the difficulties of its task. The outstanding contribution made by the officer corps and the German troops, but also by the Hungarians and many others, in overcoming these challenges in attack and defense, should be expressly recognized here.

1) See p. 8ff.

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Fifth Part.

The achievements of the troop and their leaders. The result of the previous battles.

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The Achievements of the Troops and Their Leaders.

Everyone willingly gave their best at that time. Many members of the furlough status, matured by their own responsibility in their profession, became a model of selfless dedication to the greater whole for their younger comrades. The troops of the 8th Army, officers as well as soldiers, were filled with the best spirit. Their resolute seriousness was perhaps the surest guarantee that they would achieve the almost superhuman, which had to be demanded of them, — that they would also overcome setbacks, should they occur, through their healthy inner strength. It was a magnificent troop that took over the watch in the East in those August days of 1914; strong faith in God, true loyalty to the warlord, and passionate love for the homeland inspired them.

The efficiency of German troops and leaders, not superiority in numbers, gave us victory at Tannenberg and the Masurian Lakes!

The venture of confronting the vastly superior enemy in the East with only minorities has proven justified. The view laid down by the Great General Staff before the war regarding the higher combat value of German troops has been fully confirmed. That it also applied to German reserve troops with their limited artillery in the fight against Russian active troops was not easy to foresee.

The awareness of their own inner superiority could not be shaken even by individual setbacks. They occurred in the first battles with almost all units. However, where a strong leadership intervened and the conditions were not particularly unfavorable, they could be immediately compensated, as with parts of the I Army Corps on August 20 and 27, and with those of the I Reserve Corps on August 20. Even the XVII Army Corps, despite the very severe shock and heavy losses on these days, was already back in the hands of its leaders and soon fully combat-ready. Only in a single Landwehr brigade did the repercussions of a setback last longer.

Reserve and Landwehr units and fortress troops, despite their less favorable composition1), competed with the active army corps in the fight against the same enemy. Even in the Landwehr, the result of thorough peacetime training was still firmly established, and they performed repeatedly better than expected. The battles of the 5th Landwehr Brigade on August 26 and 27, the attack of the 6th Landwehr Brigade on August 26, the Landwehr Division Golz on August 28, and the Landwehr Corps at Tarnawka are glorious chapters for the German Landwehr.

1) See the overview in Appendix 2.

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Moral Seriousness and Efficiency of the German Troops. — March Achievements.

5th Landwehr Brigade on August 26 and 27, the attack of the 6th Landwehr

Brigade on the 26th, the Landwehr Division Golz on the 28th, and the Landwehr

Corps at Tarnawka are pages of glory for the German Landwehr.

To reach the enemy, extraordinary marching achievements had to be demanded

from almost all units. After the first days, when the small number of less resilient

had fallen out, the marching losses stopped; the troops had become hardened like steel.

Thus, they often performed with the dedication of their last strength what was demanded,

just as they had practiced and learned so often in peacetime in hard training.

Often dead tired and barely supplied, the troops marched on dusty country roads or

on deep sandy paths, in the scorching midday heat of August or — as before the

Battle of Sumbinnen — through the pitch-black night, to reach the enemy.

And when they finally were there, they gathered their last strength for the attack.

Whoever had just sunk down from exhaustion pulled themselves together again;

duty demanded it, they wanted to — and it worked.

Now, on the Russian side, the misfortune of the Narew Army is partly excused

by saying that their troops had come to the enemy exhausted from excessively long marches

and poorly supplied. This view cannot be maintained, as far as marching efforts are concerned,

when comparing what German and Russian troops achieved in this regard at that time:

The greatest marches on the Russian side were made by the XIII Corps with 340 km in

15 days (August 13-27 from Bielostok to Allenstein) and the XV with

250 km in 14 days (August 14-27 from south of Lomsha to Hohenstein).

In contrast, the German XVII Army Corps, quite apart from the preceding movements

in border protection (e.g., at the capture of Mlawa on August 13), covered 310 km in only

12 days (August 19-29 from Darethmen to the Battle of Sumbinnen and from there to

south of Willenberg), consisting almost entirely of reserve troops and Landwehr.

Another German reserve corps covered 230 km in the same time (from

the Angerapp to the Battle of Sumbinnen and from there to east of Schippenstein).

In this marching time, both German corps faced the heavy, and for the XVII Army Corps

also unfortunate, battle day before Gumbinnen (August 20) and the victorious engagement

at Groß-Bössau (August 26), while the Russians, except for parts of the XV Corps, who fought

at Lahna and Orlau (August 23/24), made an advance without combat.

Great marching achievements were also made by the German XX Army Corps, whose troops initially advanced far to the east to protect the southern border and then had to be brought back to the west.

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The Achievements of the Troops and Their Leaders.

assigned, whose troops initially advanced far to the east to protect the southern border and then had to be brought back to the west. Parts of them, who fought against Usdau and Soldau from August 27 to 30 under General v. Schmettau, then reached Willenberg as the first German troops on the 31st after a forced march of 60 km during the pursuit. — The I Army Corps was in motion almost continuously from the beginning of the border battles on August 10 until the conclusion of the pursuit on September 14. In these 36 days, it had no fewer than 23 days of combat, including Stallupönen, Gumbinnen, Usdau, and Neidenburg, as well as a rail transport, from which it partly entered the battle directly from the railway cars. Nevertheless, it carried out the overtaking pursuit relentlessly at Tannenberg and at the Masurian Lakes, swinging widely on the outer flank.

The Russians could repeatedly send new troops into battle; on the German side, the same divisions had to be led against the enemy again even after heavy losses. They marched and fought alternately against the east and the south, sometimes against this, sometimes against that enemy. This was only possible with formations that were so agile and in the hands of their leaders as the German troops of 1914, and even with these only because everyone, from the highest leader to the last man, had the great cause exclusively in mind.

The losses were heavy, yet small compared to those of the enemy. They amounted, as already mentioned¹), in East Prussia up to September 15, to a total of about 37,000 men. In the first encounters with the enemy and in battles without full victory, the losses were naturally particularly large. In the victorious battle of Tannenberg, in which 11½ divisions fought for six days, only about 12,000 men were lost in total, thus fewer than in the battle of Gumbinnen, where 7 divisions fought for only one day but lost about 14,000 men. Relatively even higher losses are shown by the battles of the Landwehr Corps ending with a retreat: 2 divisions lost over 8,000 men in two days of combat in total.

All branches of the armed forces contributed to the great successes.

¹) p. 317.

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losses, for example, during the attack of the 6th Landwehr Brigade on August 26, accounted for about 10% of the total losses of this brigade.

After the losses and experiences of the first battles, the German infantry applied a more cautious attack procedure. This also brought the German artillery into full effect. Conditions were more favorable for them than for the infantry. Although the shooting skills of the Russian artillery, trained according to the French model, were quite good and certainly equal to the German ones. On the German side, the indispensable equipment for firing from concealed positions, such as observation and telephone equipment, was not particularly abundant, especially in the reserve and Landwehr batteries, but they had superiority in the total number of guns and especially in heavy guns: Of the 612 guns of the Russian units involved in the Battle of Tannenberg, only 48 were 12 cm and 16 were 15 cm howitzers, — of the 728 German ones, however, 120 were heavy (15 cm) howitzers, and among the German light guns, there were another 120 light (10.5 cm) howitzers. At Gumbinnen, the artillery superiority of the German side was even greater, but at the Masurian Lakes, it was less. In this latter battle, it was also balanced to a significant extent by the skillful integration of the enemy standing in fortified positions; only on the decisive wing east of Lötzen could the German command bring their artillery superiority to bear. — The well-aimed shooting of individual German batteries, as well as the uniformly directed fire of larger artillery units, contributed significantly to the decision everywhere, sometimes even almost alone. On August 19, the mounted detachment of the 1st Cavalry Division drove off the entire Russian cavalry corps. On August 30, near Neidenburg, German artillery fire alone prevented the development of the Russians and thus their attack. At the XVII Army Corps on August 26 near Groß-Bössau and at the I on August 27 before Usdau, the tenacity of the infantry paved the way so that they could finally penetrate the enemy positions without great losses. But such a procedure took time, which also benefited the enemy: at Groß-Bössau as at Usdau, he could withdraw his main forces without waiting for the storm of our infantry.

In cavalry, the Russians were far superior. They also had the advantage that this weapon was organized into permanent formations (cavalry divisions) even in peacetime.

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Artillery and Cavalry.

Units (cavalry divisions) were structured. Thus, the 1st Cavalry Division—initially the only higher German cavalry unit in the East—was faced with an extremely difficult task. The division did everything to meet it. But their forces had already been extremely strained by smaller skirmishes, reconnaissance, and security tasks in the border area before the Battle of Gumbinnen. Moreover, the division itself was missing an entire regiment (Cuirassier Regiment 5, in border protection with the XX Army Corps). The multitude of tasks had therefore been distributed among only 20 squadrons. In view of the vastly superior enemy and under the command of a commanding general who, himself ruthlessly active, also demanded the utmost from the cavalry, the three weeks of border protection had taken their toll on horse and rider, especially the best of them, almost to exhaustion. And then came the days from August 19 to 21, during which the division, apart from smaller skirmishes and the attack at Pillkallen, covered 190 km as a closed unit. However, this exhausted their strength. They could only be partially regained by the end of the battle at the Masurian Lakes. The 8th Cavalry Division, which arrived late, was not much better off after the previous efforts in the West. This was one reason why both divisions were unable to fully realize the hopes tied to their pursuit after the battle at the Masurian Lakes.

On the Tannenberg battlefield, the German 8th Army relied on the individual cavalry regiments of the infantry divisions. The way was clear for the enemy riders. However, the Russians did not understand how to take advantage of this favorable situation. Thus, their cavalry neither intervened in the battle of the other arms nor accomplished anything significant in solving independent tasks or in reconnaissance of their strength. They failed everywhere to prevent the reconnaissance of the German divisional cavalry. Even German reserve and landwehr riders were able to significantly support the command with timely and reliable reports. Above all, it was granted to the two cavalry regiments of the I Army Corps to brilliantly solve a task corresponding to the nature of the weapon in the overtaking pursuit on August 29 and 30.

Airships and aircraft, the latter still in the early stages of their development, were already more significant for reconnaissance at that time than the cavalry, for they could see into the depth of the enemy's force grouping.

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the cavalry, as they could see deep into the enemy's force grouping. Their reports therefore became increasingly decisive for assessing the overall operational situation as well as for reconnaissance on the battlefield itself. The German air forces were probably superior to the Russians in number, but certainly in skill. The enemy's counteraction was minimal. Only the Posen airship Z. 5 and one aircraft fell victim to enemy fire. Nevertheless, due to their relatively small number compared to the expanse of the theater of war and the then still significant dependence on weather, the air forces could not provide such a seamless spatial and temporal picture of the enemy as became standard in later years of the war. Erroneous reports were also made, while others did not receive the attention they deserved, reaching the troops late or not at all. Despite such difficulties inherently associated with the emergence of a new means of warfare, the German command was decisively supported, especially by the aviators, and kept accurately informed about the overall situation almost without interruption. We know little about Russian aerial reconnaissance; it seems to have failed. At Tannenberg, a Russian aircraft was shot down from the ground, which was supposed to establish the connection between the Russian VI and XIII Corps on August 27; from the battle at the Masurian Lakes, the shooting down of three Russian aircraft by German infantry (on September 10 south of Darkehmen) is reported.

The pioneers could not always receive a task corresponding to their nature during the days of the mobile war. As far as they were given one, they solved it. Moreover, they attacked alongside the infantry and took full part in their successes and merits.

Command and communication transmission on the German side often encountered difficulties that were not expected in their own country. There was no reliable dependence on the existing wire lines, as officials and equipment, out of concern for the Russians, had been withdrawn early in many cases according to existing instructions. In particular, the connection of the high command to the corps of the eastern group suffered during the Tannenberg battle under these conditions. The then equipment of the command authorities with communication means was too limited to fill gaps quickly.

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Air Forces, Pioneers, and Communication Means. — Medical Service and Supply.

Quickly filling gaps. It was added that traffic with motor vehicles was also hindered. The stream of refugees often held them up for hours and forced them to take long detours. Nevertheless, the connection on the German side, thanks to the tireless efforts of all involved, was rarely interrupted for more than half a day. — The situation was probably worse for the Russians, who were fighting in enemy territory. They have therefore often tried to help themselves with radio messages, but often omitted encryption, especially with the XIII Corps during the Battle of Tannenberg, because the correct cipher key was missing. As a result, German radio stations were able to intercept and bring important Russian radio messages to the attention of the German leadership in some cases.

The supply and evacuation of the wounded as well as the supply of ammunition and provisions were carried out smoothly on the German side, a good performance during the army's two-time front change from east to south and then back to east. As far as is known, only one division, the 41st, temporarily complained about the absence of provisions, especially about a multi-day shortage of bread. Other units, such as the XVII Army Corps, had to manage for almost 14 days without their own supply train. — The Russian supply worked poorly. They see this as a significant reason for their defeats. Parts of the Narew Army, according to Russian prisoner letters, have not received bread or warm provisions since the 18th, others since August 21st, and have only lived on hardtack and field crops.

The achievements of the German troops, their successes even in fighting against superior enemy forces, formed the solid foundation on which the leadership could build their victories. Despite occasional disagreements and frictions, the high command was supported by its subordinates in such an exemplary manner, as was only possible with a unified understanding of the principles of warfare. This was common to all higher leaders and their general staff officers.

The commanding generals and independently commanding leaders have fully demonstrated their skills and influence for the benefit of the great cause. Without their understanding and self-initiated cooperation, without their willing readiness to help where it was needed, a Tannenberg would have been impossible.

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to cooperate, without their willing readiness to help where necessary, a Tannenberg would have been impossible.

That the victory of Tannenberg took on such immense proportions is primarily the merit of the German Army High Command. The commander-in-chief, who gladly took on the responsibility, and his chief of staff, who made the proposals, share in this.

Certainly, the deficiencies in the opponent's leadership, especially in the Battle of Tannenberg, made the task easier for the German High Command. The immense success would hardly have been possible without the mistakes and failures of the Russians. It could not be achieved again at the Masurian Lakes, where the enemy awaited the attack in fortified positions and behaved cautiously.

The interception of Russian radio messages benefited the German leadership, although in some cases it led to misdirection and concerns that were unfounded. It should also not be overlooked that the precise knowledge of the enemy's far superior strength on August 24, just before the start of the German attack at Tannenberg, could become a danger and, with less determined leadership, could easily shake the decision to battle. On the whole, however, the German leadership regarded the intercepted radio messages as highly welcome intelligence. The Army High Command was thereby temporarily, and especially at the beginning of the Battle of Tannenberg, informed of the enemy's intentions in a way that is rare in war. However, the decisive decisions and orders for the battle were made, according to the unanimous recollection of all involved, independently of the radio messages that became known on the morning of August 25. It is not to be assumed that the course of the battle would have been different without these radio messages. At the Masurian Lakes, the radio messages were missing, and yet the German leadership did not relent here, perhaps even went to work more vigorously.

The High Command of the 8th Army was a unified whole, especially since General v. Hindenburg took command with General Ludendorff as chief of staff. In this high staff, each individual worked in an exemplary manner at the place assigned to him for success. All subordinate leaders, however, felt a strong and determined will above them.

This will manifested itself based on accurate judgment of what was possible and appropriate caution where danger threatened; it manifested itself in the consolidation of even the last forces at the decisive point and in an unremitting drive for action that also captivated the indifferent and resistant.

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The Leadership. — The Result of the Previous Battles.

was reflected in the consolidation of even the last forces at the decisive point and in an unrelenting drive for action, which also captivated the indifferent and reluctant. Otherwise, this leadership knew no fixed rules: whether breakthrough or encirclement, it was indifferent to it, — as long as the goal was achieved. Every recognized opportunity was immediately seized and exploited with all means. Only in this way was it possible to turn things for the better in East Prussia despite the overwhelming enemy superiority.

On the eastern theater of war, despite the victory of the Russians in Galicia, the success was on the side of the Central Powers. However, it was only a defensive success. More than that had never been expected before the intervention of significant parts of the German Western Army. The Russians had not succeeded in crushing the Eastern Front of the Central Powers under the pressure of their masses. The northern wing of the Russian attack front was shattered, and thus the possibility arose, despite the lack of support from the West, to bring aid to the allies. The hope of the Russians for an easy and quick victory was destroyed; they had suffered heavier losses not only in East Prussia but also in Galicia. Instead of 1.7 million, by mid-September they had only 1.1 million fighters at the extreme front. So they had to prepare for another tough struggle. However, this meant a significant advantage for the Central Powers, as German leadership and German troops had shown themselves superior in a way that astonished both friend and foe alike. The high esteem in which Generaloberst v. Hindenburg and his soldiers were held had to replace the missing battalions in the East in the future.

The weak German forces had achieved tremendous feats: they had not only drawn the overwhelming enemy upon themselves and thereby relieved the front of the allies beyond expectations, but also cleansed German land of the Russian invaders through unparalleled successes:

East Prussia was liberated!

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Appendices.

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Appendix 1.

Military Formations.

Preliminary Note.

The military formations reflect the composition of the armies for a specific point in time or period; earlier or later deviations in the composition are indicated. All parts added later are highlighted by special script.

The following abbreviations, which may not be immediately understandable, were used:

A.K. = Army Corps

Abt. = Division

Drag.R. = Dragoon Regiment

Erg./147 = Replacement Battalion Infantry Regiment No. 147

F.A.R. = Field Artillery Regiment

Füs.R. = Fusilier Regiment

G.R. = Guard Regiment

Geb.Brig. = Mountain Brigade

Gr.R. = Grenadier Regiment

Hus.R. = Hussar Regiment

Inf.R. = Infantry Regiment

Jäg.B. = Jäger Battalion

Jäg.R. z. Pf. = Mounted Jäger Regiment

K.R. = Cuirassier Regiment

Ldst.R. = Landsturm

Ldsch. = Landwehr

M.G.A. = Machine Gun Division

Pi.1 = Pioneer Battalion No. 1

1./Pi.1 = 1st Company Pioneer Battalion No. 1

II.Pi.2 = II. Pioneer Battalion No. 2

R./F.A.R.1 = Mounted Division Field Artillery Regiment No. 1

Reit. = Rider

reit. = riding

Res. = Reserve

S.-L. = Schütte-Lanz Airship

selbst. = independent

Stellu. = Acting

U.Z. = Uhlan Regiment

Z. = Zeppelin Airship

1./1 = 1st Company, Squadron or Battery Regiment No. 1

I./Rei.1 = I. Battalion Reserve Regiment No. 1

In the case of the German foot artillery, unless otherwise expressly noted, it refers to battalions and batteries equipped with heavy field howitzers.

In calculating the number of existing divisions, independent brigades are counted as 1/2 division.

A comparative overview of the combat value of German, Austro-Hungarian, and Russian troop formations is provided in Appendix 2.

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Order of Battle.

The German 8th Army

on August 26, 1914, 1st day of the Battle of Tannenberg¹).

9 Inf. and Res. Div., 4 Div. Det. and Replacement Troops, 1 Cav. Div. = 158 Batl., 78 Squadrons

140 Batteries (= 774 Guns²).

Strengthened by early September to:

13 Inf. and Res. Div., 5½ Div. Landwehr and Replacement Troops, 2 Cav. Div. = 229 Batl., 119 Squadrons

219 Batteries (= 1194 Guns).

Additionally, Landwehr Corps with 2 Landwehr Div. = 34 Batl., 12 Squadrons, 12 Batteries

(= 72 Guns).

Army High Command 8.

Commander-in-Chief: Generaloberst v. Beneckendorff and v. Hindenburg (until 22. 8. General-

oberst v. Prittwitz and Gaffron)

Chief of Gen. Staff: Genmaj. Ludendorff (until 22. 8. Genmaj. Count v. Waldersee)

1st Gen. Staff Officer: Lt. Col. Hoffmann

Quartermaster General: Genmaj. Grünert

Gen. of Engineers: Genmaj. Resten.

Air Forces.

Field Flying Det. 16

Fortress Flying Det. 4 (Posen)

Airships: "S.L." in Liegnitz (at the disposal of the Austro-Hungarian Army), Z. 5 in

Posen (shot down at Malwa end of August)

Further air forces at the army corps, etc.

I. Army Corps.

24 Batl., 8 Squadrons, 32 Batteries (= 176 Guns)

Commanding General: General of Infantry v. François

Chief of Gen. Staff: Colonel Baron Schmidt von Schmidtseck

1st Inf. Div.: Lt. Gen. v. Conta

1st Inf. Brig.: Genmaj. v. Trotha, Gr.R. 1, J.R. 41

2nd Inf. Brig.: Genmaj. Päschen, Gr.R. 3, J.R. 43

11th R.B.

2nd Field Art. Brig.: Genmaj. Medwes, F.A.R. 16 and 52

2nd Inf. Div.: Lt. Gen. v. Fabe

3rd Inf. Brig.: Genmaj. Mengelbier, Gr.R. 4, J.R. 44

4th Inf. Brig.: Genmaj. Döbß, Fusil. R. 33, Gr.R. 45

12th R.B.

2nd Field Art. Brig.: Genmaj. Fouquet, F.A.R. 11 and 37

Foot Artillery: 1./1. additionally assigned 11./Res. 15 (from Thorn since 25. 8.)

Engineers: 1., 2., 3./Pi. 1 distributed among the divisions

Air Forces: Field Flying Det. 14.

¹) Schematic representation of an army corps, a reserve corps, and a cavalry division on p. 364/65.  
²) Only the parts of the fortress detachments usable in the open field (main reserve and horse-drawn foot artillery) are included.

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The German 8th Army.

XVII Army Corps.

24 Batt., 8 Squadrons, 28 Batteries (= 160 Guns)

Commanding General: General of Cavalry v. Mackensen

Chief of General Staff: Lt. Col. v. Dundler

35th Infantry Division: Lt. Gen. Hennig

70th Infantry Brigade: Maj. Gen. Schmidt v. Knobelsdorf, J.R. 21 and 61

87th Infantry Brigade: Maj. Gen. v. Hahn, J.R. 141 and 176¹)

Jäger Regiment 4, Pf. 4

35th Field Artillery Brigade: Maj. Gen. Uhden, F.A.R. 71 and 81

36th Infantry Division: Lt. Gen. v. Heineccius

69th Infantry Brigade: Maj. Gen. v. Engelbrechten, J.R. 129 and 175

71st Infantry Brigade: Col. v. Dewitz, Gr.R. 5, J.R. 128

Hussar Regiment 5

36th Field Artillery Brigade: Maj. Gen. Hahndorff, F.A.R. 36 and 72

Foot Artillery: 1./11 — from 19 to 21. 8. also 1./Resf. 1 from

Pioneers: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd/Pi. 17 distributed among the divisions

Reconnaissance Forces: Field Flying Detachment 17.

¹) Also until 21. 8. Jäger Battalion 2 1. 1. Cavalry Division.

XX Army Corps.

25 Batt.¹), 8 Squadrons, 28 Batteries (= 160 Guns)

Commanding General: General of Artillery v. Scholz

Chief of General Staff: Col. Hell

37th Infantry Division: Lt. Gen. v. Staabs

73rd Infantry Brigade: Maj. Gen. Wilhelmi, J.R. 147 and 151, Jäger Battalion 11

75th Infantry Brigade: Maj. Gen. v. Bockmann, J.R. 146 and 150

Dragoon Regiment 11

37th Field Artillery Brigade: Maj. Gen. Buchholz, F.A.R. 73 and 82

41st Infantry Division: Maj. Gen. Sonntag

72nd Infantry Brigade: Maj. Gen. Schaer, J.R. 18 and 59

74th Infantry Brigade: Maj. Gen. Reiser, J.R. 148 and 152

Dragoon Regiment 16

41st Field Artillery Brigade: Maj. Gen. Neugebauer, F.A.R. 35 and 79

Foot Artillery: II./5 — from 1. 9. also assigned 1/2 II./2.

10 cm Cannon) from Thorn

Pioneers: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd/Pi. 26 distributed among the divisions

Reconnaissance Forces: Field Flying Detachment 15, also Fortress Flying Detachment.

¹) Jäger Battalion 1 assigned to the 8th Cavalry Division on 8. 9.  
²) On 1. 9. as Field Flying Detachment 37 to the 1st Reserve Corps

I Reserve Corps.

26 Batt., 6 Squadrons, 16 Batteries (= 88 Guns)

Commanding General: Lieutenant General v. Below (Otto)

Chief of General Staff: temporarily Col. Count v. Posaadowsky-Wehner

1st Reserve Division: Lt. Gen. v. Förster

1st Reserve Infantry Brigade: Maj. Gen. Barre, Reserve J.R. 1 and 3

2nd Reserve Infantry Brigade: Maj. Gen. Lick, Reserve J.R. 18 and 59, Reserve Jäger Battalion 1

Reserve Uhlan Regiment 1

Reserve Field Artillery Regiment 1

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Military Formations.

36th Reserve Division: Major General Krüge

69th Reserve Infantry Brigade: Major General v. Homeyer, Reserve Infantry Regiment 21 and 61, Reserve Jäger 5

70th Reserve Infantry Brigade: Major General Dett, Infantry Regiment 54 and Reserve Infantry Regiment 5

Reserve Hussars Regiment 1

Reserve Field Artillery Regiment 36

Foot Artillery: assigned I./Reserve 4 from Königsberg — from September 1

1/2 II./2nd G.Res. (2 Batteries 10 cm guns) from Thorn, — from September 3

1/2 II./Reserve 17 from Marienburg

Pioneers: 4th and I. Reserve/II. Pioneer Battalion 2 distributed among the divisions

Air Forces: from September 1, Field Flying Detachment 37.

3rd Reserve Division.

12 Battalions, 3 Squadrons, 6 Batteries (= 36 Guns)

Commander: Lieutenant General v. Morgen

5th Reserve Infantry Brigade: Major General Heise, Reserve Infantry Regiment 2 and 9

6th Reserve Infantry Brigade: Major General Krause, Reserve Infantry Regiment 34 and 49

Reserve Dragoons Regiment 5

Reserve Field Artillery Regiment 3

Pioneers: 2nd Reserve/II. Pioneer Battalion 2.

Higher Landwehr Commander No. 1 (Landwehr Division Goltz)

12 Battalions, 4 Squadrons, 4 Batteries (= 20 Guns)

(arriving from August 27)

Commander: Lieutenant General Baron v. der Goltz

33rd Landwehr Brigade: Major General v. Oertzen, Landwehr Infantry Regiment 75 and 76

34th Landwehr Brigade: Lieutenant General v. Pressentin, Landwehr Infantry Regiment 31 and 84

Landwehr Cavalry Regiment (4 Squadrons from Guard and IX Army Corps)

Field Artillery: 1st and 2nd Landwehr Batteries from IX Army Corps

Foot Artillery: assigned 1/2 I./Reserve 17 from Graudenz.

6th Landwehr Brigade.

6 Battalions, 3 Squadrons, 2 Batteries (= 12 Guns)

Commander: Major General Krahmer

Landwehr Infantry Regiment 34 and 49

Cavalry: 3 Landwehr Squadrons from II Army Corps

Field Artillery: 2 Light Batteries from II Army Corps.

70th Landwehr Brigade.

6 Battalions, 6 Squadrons, 2 Batteries (= 12 Guns)

Commander: Major General Breithaupt

Landwehr Infantry Regiment 5 and 18

Machine Guns: assigned 1 Fusilier Detachment, 1 Replacement Company from Graudenz

Cavalry: 5 Landwehr and 12 Light Squadrons from XVII and XX Army Corps

Field Artillery: 2 Light Batteries from XVII Army Corps.

1st Cavalry Division.

1 Battalion, 24 Squadrons, 3 Batteries (= 12 Guns)

Commander: Lieutenant General Brecht

1st Cavalry Brigade: Colonel v. Glasenapp, Cuirassiers Regiment 3, Dragoons Regiment 1

2nd Cavalry Brigade: Major General Baron v. Kap-herr, Uhlans Regiment 12, Jäger Regiment 9, Pf. 9

41st Cavalry Brigade: Major General v. Hofmann, Cuirassiers Regiment 5, Uhlans Regiment 4

assigned: 3rd Detachment 2 from XVII Army Corps (since August 21)

Machine Gun Detachment 5

Field Artillery: Reserve/Field Artillery Regiment 1.

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The German 8th Army.

From the Fortress Thorn.

12 Battalions, 3 Squadrons, 8 Batteries (= 38 Guns)

1st Reserve Division (Main Reserve): General v. Schmettau

5th Landwehr Brigade: General v. Mülmann, Landwehr Infantry Regiments 2 and 9

20th Landwehr Brigade: General v. Herzberg, Landwehr Infantry Regiments 19 and 107

Machine Guns: Reserve Machine Gun Detachment 4, 4 Fortress Companies

Heavy Reserve Cavalry Regiment 3

Field Artillery: Replacement Detachments 35 and 81 (= 4 Batteries, including 1 mounted)

Foot Artillery: 3/1, Reserve 11, 4, Reserve 15 (10 cm Cannon)

Pioneers: 1 Reserve/II. Pioneer Battalion 17

From the Fortresses Kulm, Graudenz, and Marienburg.

6 Battalions, 1 Squadron, 4 Batteries (= 22 Guns)

Fortress Reserve Graudenz: Major General v. Unger (Fritz)

Deputy Brigade: Major General van Semmern, 6 Replacement Battalions (from Grenadier Regiment 5, Fusilier Infantry Regiments 59, 129, 141, 175)

Machine Guns: Fortress Machine Gun Detachments 3 and 4

Cavalry: 1 Replacement Squadron from XVII. Army Corps

Field Artillery: 1 Replacement Detachment 72 and ½ 73 (together 3 Batteries)

Foot Artillery: 1/Reserve 17

Pioneers: 1 Reserve/Pioneer Battalion 26

Air Forces: Fortress Flying Detachment 6.

Fortress Königsberg

Governor: Lieutenant General v. Pappritz

Chief of General Staff: Lieutenant Colonel Nebbel

Main Reserve: General Brodrück, 11 Battalions, 6 Squadrons, 9 Batteries (= 46 Guns)

Replacement Brigade: Colonel Weide, Replacement Regiments 1 and 2 (5 Replacement Battalions, from Grenadier Regiment 4, Fusilier Infantry Regiments 41, 44, 45)

9th Landwehr Brigade: General Clausius, Landwehr Infantry Regiments 24 and 48

Machine Guns: 3 Replacement Companies from I and XX. Army Corps

Cavalry: 3 Replacement Squadrons from I. Army Corps (Squadrons from Uhlan Regiments 8, 12, and 13)

Field Artillery: 2 Replacement Detachments from I Army Corps (6 Batteries of Regiments 1, 37, 52, including 2 light field howitzer batteries)

Foot Artillery: 1/II. Reserve 1 and 1 Battery 10 cm Cannon from II./Reserve 4

Pioneers: 4/II. Pioneer Battalion 1

Other Garrison: 16½ Battalions, 3½ Squadrons, 57 Batteries

Infantry: 1st Landwehr Brigade (Landwehr Infantry Regiments 3, III./Landwehr Infantry Regiment 4, additional 3 Battalions)

13½ Replacement Battalions from active, Reserve and Landwehr Regiments, from I and XX. Army Corps

Machine Guns: Reserve Machine Gun Section A. 1, 17 Replacement and Fortress Machine Gun Companies

Cavalry: 3 Replacement and Landwehr Squadrons from I. Army Corps

Field Artillery: 4 Replacement Batteries from I and XX. Army Corps

Foot Artillery: 1st Guard Reserve Regiment, Reserve Regiments 1 and 4 (without 1./4) and Batteries of the Main Reserve), 68 Battalions and 53 Batteries with various Guns

8 Batteries Landwehr, Replacement and Landsturm

Pioneers: 2 Battalions and 6 Companies Landwehr, Replacement and Landsturm

Air Forces: Fortress Flying Detachment 5, Airship Z. 4.

Additionally assigned to the Fortress Königsberg:

2nd Landwehr Brigade: Colonel Baron v. Lupin, 5 Battalions, 2 Squadrons, 2 Batteries (= 12 Guns)

Landwehr Infantry Regiments 4 and 33

2nd Landwehr Squadron from I. Army Corps

Field Artillery: 2 Landwehr Batteries from I. Army Corps

1) Assigned to the I Reserve Corps.

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Military Formations.

Fort Boyen (Lötzen).

4½ Battalions, 1 Squadron, 8 Batteries.

Commander: Colonel Busse

Infantry: Replacement/R.R. 147, IV./Ldw. 18 and 2½ Battalions Ldst.

Machine Guns: 11 Fortress Detachments and Troops

Cavalry: Replacement Squadron Drag. R. 11

Field Artillery: 2 Ldw. Batteries from XX. A.K.

Foot Artillery: 6 unassigned Batteries.

Pioneers: 1 Fortress Battalion Detachment.

Air Forces: 1 XX. Army Corps.

From the Army's Line of Communication Inspection (on 30th and 31st August

called upon): Line of Communication Inspector General v. Heuduck with R.

Troops (5 Battalions, 1 Squadron, 1 Field Battery).

In the early days of September, arrived in East Prussia

Guard Reserve Corps.

26 Battalions, 6 Squadrons, 28 Batteries (= 160 Guns)

Commanding General: General of Artillery v. Gallwitz

Chief of General Staff: Colonel v. Bartenwerffer

3rd Guard Infantry Division: Lieutenant General v. Bonin

5th Guard Infantry Brigade: Major General v. Below, 5th G. R. z. F., G. Gr. R. 5

6th Guard Infantry Brigade: Major General v. Friedeburg, G. Fus. R., Lehr-Inf. R.

G. Res. Ul. R.

3rd Guard Field Artillery Brigade: Major General Count v. Schweinitz and Krain Baron.

5th and 6th G. F. A. R.

1st Guard Reserve Division: Major General Albrecht

Guard Reserve Infantry Brigade: Major General Baron v. Langermann and Erlenc

2nd Guard Reserve R., Guard Reserve Jäger B.

15th Reserve Infantry Brigade: Major General v. Below, Reserve I. R. 64 and 93, G. Res.

Guard Reserve Dragoon Regiment.

Guard Reserve Field Artillery Brigade: Colonel Mertens, 1st and 3rd Guard Reserve F. A. R.

Foot Artillery: II./1. G.

Pioneers: 1st, 2nd and 3rd/Pi. 28 distributed among the divisions.

XI. Army Corps.

24 Battalions, 6 Squadrons, 30 Batteries (= 168 Guns)

Commanding General: General of Infantry v. Plüskow

Chief of General Staff: Colonel v. Sauberzweig

22nd Infantry Division: Major General Dieffenbach

43rd Infantry Brigade: Major General v. Hülsen, I. R. 82 and 83

44th Infantry Brigade: Major General Nordbeck, I. R. 32 and 167

1st Half-Regiment/Cuirassier 6

22nd Field Artillery Brigade: Major General Gronau, F. A. R. 11 and 47.

38th Infantry Division: Lieutenant General Wagner

76th Infantry Brigade: Major General v. Versen, I. R. 71 and 95

83rd Infantry Brigade: Major General Baron v. Hanstein, I. R. 94 and 96

2nd Half-Regiment/Cuirassier 6

38th Field Artillery Brigade: Major General Krahmer, F. A. R. 19 and 55

Foot Artillery: I./18, also assigned 1./II./Res. 17 from Marienf

Pioneers: 1st, 2nd and 3rd/Pi. 11 distributed among the divisions

Air Forces: Field Flying Detachment 28.

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The German 8th Army.

8th Cavalry Division.

0 Battalions¹), 24 Squadrons, 3 Batteries (= 12 Guns)

Commander: Major General Count von der Schulenburg

23rd Cav. Brig.: Major General von der Decken, Guard Cavalry R., Ul. R. 1

38th Cav. Brig.: Major General Weinschenck, Jäger R. z. Pf. 2 and 6

40th Cav. Brig.: Lt. Col. Baron von Friesen, Carabinier R., Ul. R. 21

Machine Gun Detachment 8

Field Artillery: R/F. A. R. 12.

From the Fortress Posen.

9 Battalions, 1 Squadron, 8 Batteries (= 36 Guns)

Main Reserve: Major General Count von Bredow

19th Ldw. Inf. Brig.: Major General von Schauroth, Ldw. I. R 47, 72 and

Machine Guns: Res. M. G. Detachment 5, 2 Fortress M. G. Detachments

Cavalry: Replacement Squadron Jäger R. z. Pf. 1

Field Artillery: 2 Replacement Batteries from F. A. R. 17 and 56

Foot Artillery: 1½/Res. 5 (10 cm guns), II./Res. 6

Pioneers: 2nd Res./Pi. 1, 2nd Res./Pi. 26.

¹) Assigned on 8.9.: Jäg. B. 1 from XX Army Corps.

Arriving mid-September:

Higher Cavalry Commander No. 3.

Commander: General of Cavalry Ritter von Frommel

Chief of General Staff: Lt. Col. von Meiß

(1st and 8th Cav. Div. see above.)

Additionally subordinated to the Army High Command:

Landwehr Corps.

34 Battalions, 12 Squadrons, 12 Batteries (= 72 Guns)

(from early September from the Austro-Hungarian 1st Army

Commanding General: General of Infantry von Woyrsch

Chief of General Staff: Lt. Col. Heye

3rd Ldw. Div.: Lt. Gen. Baron von König

17th Ldw. Brig.: Lt. Gen. von Grumbkow, Ldw. J. R. 6 and 7

18th Ldw. Brig.: Major General Neven du Mont, Ldw. J. R. 37 and 46

1st Replacement Brig.: Lt. Gen. Rieß von Scheurnschloß, 5 Replacement Battalions from F.

20, 77

Anti-Aircraft R. 1 (3 Ldw., 1 Replacement Squadron)

Field Art. R. 1; Replacement Detachment 20 and 412) (2 Batteries each), 2 Light Batteries.

4th Ldw. Div.: Lt. Gen. von Wegerer

22nd Ldw. Brig.: Major General Sachs, Ldw. J. R. 11 and 51

23rd Ldw. Brig.: Colonel von Mutius, Ldw. J. R. 22 and 23

21st Replacement Brig.: Lt. Gen. von Busse, 5 Replacement Battalions from F. 21, 22, 23

Anti-Aircraft R. 2 (3 Ldw., 1 Replacement Squadron), Field Art. R. 4 (Light

Field Art. R. 1); Replacement Detachment 6²) and 57 (2 Batteries each), 2 Light Batteries.

Foot Artillery: none

Pioneers: 2 Replacement Companies from Battalions 5 and 6 (distributed to the divisions

Air Forces: 1 Aircraft from the Fortress Posen.

²) Each Field Artillery Regiment only 1 light ammunition column.

²) At Replacement Detachment 41 and 6 each 1 Battery light field howitzers.

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Military Formations.

Deputy General Commands of:

VI. Army Corps in Breslau with fortresses Breslau and Glatz

V. Army Corps in Posen with fortresses Glogau and Posen

II. Army Corps in Stettin with fortress Swinemünde

XVII. Army Corps in Danzig with fortresses Thorn, Kulm, Graudenz, Marienburg, Danzig

XX. Army Corps in Allenstein with fortress Boyen (Lötzen)

I. Army Corps in Königsberg with fortresses Königsberg and Pillau.

Schematic representation of German troop formations.

I. Army Corps.

(24 Battalions, 8 Squadrons, 28 Batteries)

2nd Infantry Division (12 Battalions, 4 Squadrons, 12 Batteries)

4th Infantry Brigade 3rd Infantry Brigade

Fusilier Regiment 33 Grenadier Regiment 4

Infantry Regiment 45 Infantry Regiment 44

Jäger Regiment on Horse 10

1st Infantry Division (12 Battalions, 4 Squadrons, 12 Batteries)

2nd Infantry Brigade 1st Infantry Brigade

Grenadier Regiment 3 Grenadier Regiment 1

Infantry Regiment 43 Infantry Regiment 41

Uhlan Regiment 8

2nd Field Artillery Brigade

Field Artillery Regiment 37 Field Artillery Regiment 1

I)2) I)2)

1st Field Artillery Brigade

Field Artillery Regiment 52 Field Artillery Regiment 16

I)2) I)2)

Medical

Company 2 Div. Br. Tr. 24) 2nd and 3rd/Pi. 1

Medical

Company 1 and 3 Div. Br. Tr. 14) 1st/Pi. 1

Field Flying Detachment 145) Telephone Detachment 1

Dummy Bg./Pi. 1 I./Fusilier Artillery Regiment 16)

4 Infantry, 9 Field Artillery, 8 Foot Artillery Ammunition Columns (Total ammunition supply with the troops and columns for each rifle 370, machine gun 8000, each field cannon 398, 1st field howitzer 273, heavy field howitzer 432 rounds).

7 Transport and Provision Columns (Supply with the troops and columns for ample 4 days for man and horse).

12 Field Hospitals, 2 Horse Depots, 2 Field Bakery Columns.

Corps Bridge Train (130 m Column Bridge).

1) Company with 6 machine guns — 2) Battery with 6 7.7 cm field cannons, with each detachment 1 light ammunition column — 3) Battery with 6 10.5 cm light field howitzers, with each detachment 1 light ammunition column — 4) 35 m Column Bridge — 5) 6 Aircraft — 6) 4 15 cm heavy field howitzers, with the battalion 1 light ammunition column.

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The German 8th Army.

I. Reserve Corps.

(26 Battalions, 6 Squadrons, 12 Batteries.)

36th Reserve Division (13 Battalions, 3 Squadrons, 6 Batteries.)

70th Reserve Infantry Brigade.

Infantry Regiment 54

Reserve Infantry Regiment 5

69th Reserve Infantry Brigade.

Reserve Infantry Regiment 21

Reserve Infantry Regiment 61

Reserve Jäger Battalion 2¹)

1st Reserve Division (13 Battalions, 3 Squadrons, 6 Batteries.)

72nd Reserve Infantry Brigade.

Reserve Infantry Regiment 18

Reserve Infantry Regiment 59

Reserve Jäger Battalion 12¹)

1st Reserve Infantry Brigade.

Reserve Infantry Regiment 1

Reserve Infantry Regiment 3

Reserve Hussar Regiment 1

Reserve Field Artillery Regiment 36

Reserve Field Artillery Regiment 1

Reserve Medical Company 15

Reserve Division Bridge (Tr. 36¹) 1st Reserve/II. Engineer 2

Reserve Medical Company 1

Reserve Division Bridge (Tr. 14¹) 4th/II. Engineer 2

Reserve Telegraph Battalion 1

2 Infantry, 5 Field Artillery Ammunition Columns, 7 Supply Columns, 4 Field Hospitals, 1 Horse Depot, 2 Field Bakery Columns.

1) Company with 6 Machine Guns. — 2) Only isolated divisions had Jäger Battalions. — 3) Batteries with 6 7.7 cm field guns, each detachment with 1 light ammunition column. — 4) = 35 m column bridge.

1st Cavalry Division¹).

(1 Battalion5), 24 Squadrons, 3 Batteries.)

41st Cavalry Brigade.

Cuirassier Regiment 5

Uhlan Regiment 4

2nd Cavalry Brigade.

Uhlan Regiment 12

Jäger Regiment on Horseback 9

1st Cavalry Brigade.

Cuirassier Regiment 3

Dragoon Regiment 1

Signal Battalion Engineer Battalion Reserve/Field Artillery Regiment 1 Machine Gun Detachment 5 Jäger Battalion 25)

1st Cavalry Motor Vehicle Column.

1) The division is assigned for ammunition and supply replenishment and medical facilities to assist the army. — 2) Including 1 heavy, 2 light radio stations. — 3) 3 Batteries with 4 7.7 cm field guns, each detachment with 1 light ammunition column. — 4) Company or detachment with 6 machine guns. — 5) Attached to 1st Machine Gun Detachment and 1 Cyclist Company, as well as a Jäger Motor Vehicle Column for transporting infantry.

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Military Formations.

The Austro-Hungarian Army<sup>1)</sup>

in August/September 1914.

Supreme Command:

Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria, King of Hungary

Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy: General of Infantry Archduke Friedrich of Austria

Chief of the General Staff: General of Infantry Baron Conrad von Hötzendorf.

Against Russia.

Total strength deployed by September 10:

37 1/2 Inf. Div., 2 Div. and 13 Brig., 11 Cav. Div. = 770 1/2 Batl., 386 Squadrons

363 Batt. (= 2068 Guns)

since early Sept. German Landwehr Corps (see p. 363) = 2 Inf. Div. = 34 Batl.

12 Squadrons, 12 Batt. (= 72 Guns)

Total: 48 Inf. Div., 11 Cav. Div. = 804 1/2 Batl., 398 Squadrons, 375 Batt.

(= 2140 Guns)

1st Army.

9 Inf. Div., 4 Brig., 2 Cav. Div.

= 184 Batl., 77 1/2 Squadrons, 82 Batt. (= 468 Guns)

Army Commander: General of Cavalry Dankl

Chief of Gen. Staff: Major General von Kochanowski

I Corps: 5th, 12th, and 46th Inf. Div., 1st March Brig.

II Corps: 3rd, 8th, and 25th Inf. Div., 5th March Brig.

IX Corps: 2nd, 24th, and 45th Inf. Div., 10th March Brig.

Imperial and Royal 1st Landsturm Brigade

Polish Legion (= 3 Batl.)

3rd and 9th Cavalry Division.

<sup>1)</sup> Schematic representation of individual units see p. 369.  
<sup>2)</sup> At the end of August, the parts marked with <sup>2)</sup> joined the 1st and 3rd Army to

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The Austro-Hungarian Army.

2nd Army.

7 Inf. Div., 4 Lfst. Brig., 2 Cav. Div.

= 145 1/4 Batt., 67 3/4 Squadrons, 64 Batteries (= 368 Guns)

Part of the army formed the Kövess Army Group until August 23 (see below).

Army Commander: General of Cavalry v. Böhm-Ermolli ¹)

Chief of Gen. Staff: Genmaj. v. Meenfessy

IV Corps ¹): 31 ¹) and 32 ¹) Inf. Div., 4th March Brig.

VII Corps ¹): 17 ¹), and 34 ¹) Inf. Div., 7. ¹) March Brig.

20th, 38th, and 43rd Infantry Division

35th, 40th, 102nd, and 103rd Landsturm Brigade

1st and 5th Cavalry Division.

3rd Army.

12 1/2 Inf. Div., 4 Lfst. Brig., 4 Cav. Div.

= 249 1/4 Batt., 141 Squadrons, 114 Batteries (= 644 Guns)

Part of the army belonged to the Kövess Army Group until August 23, another

from the end of August partly to the 4th Army, partly to the Archduke Josef

Ferdinand Army Group

Army Commander: General of Cavalry Ritter v. Brudermann, from September 5

Gen. of Inf. Boroevic v. Bojna

Chief of Gen. Staff: Genmaj. Pfeffer

III Corps: 6th, 22nd, and 28th Inf. Div., 3rd March Brig.

XI Corps ¹): 11 ¹), 13 ¹), and 30th Inf. Div., 11th March Brig.

XII Corps: 16th, 18th, 35th Inf. Div., 12th March Brig.

XIV Corps ¹): 3 ¹), 8 ¹), 15 ¹) Inf. Div., 88th Landeschütz Brig., 14th March Brig.

23 ¹), 41 ¹) Inf. Div., 23rd and 41st Honved March Brigade

93rd, 97th, 105th, and 108th Landsturm Brigade

2 ¹), 42 ¹), and 112 ¹) Cavalry Division

4th Army ²).

9 Inf. Div., 2 Cav. Div. = 147 Batt., 71 1/2 Squadrons, 77 Batteries (= 438 Guns)

Army Commander: General of Infantry Ritter v. Auffenberg

Chief of Gen. Staff: Genmaj. Rudolf Kraus

II Corps: 4th, 15th, and 25th Inf. Div., 2nd March Brig.

V Corps: 15th, 27th, and 39th Inf. Div., 6th March Brig.

IX Corps: 10th and 26th Inf. Div., 9th March Brig.

X Corps (formed anew in early September): 19th Inf. Div.

6th and 10th ¹) Cavalry Division

Kummer Army Group.

2 1/4 Lfst. Div., 1 Cav. Div. = 45 Batt., 28 Squadrons, 20 Batteries (= 150 Guns)

(Instead of early September to the 1st Army)

Army Commander: General of Infantry Ritter Kummer v. Falkenfeld

95th and 106th Landsturm Division (by expanding the two brigades of the same

number)

100th Landsturm Brigade

7th Cavalry Division

¹) The units marked with ¹) came from the Serbian theater of war (from  
IV Corps only the Corps HQ from there).  
²) At the end of August, the parts of the 1st and 3rd Army marked with ²) moved to  
the 4th Army.

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Military Formations.

Assigned from the beginning of September:

German Landwehr Corps: 34 Batt., 12 Squadrons, 12 Batteries (= 72 Guns)

(For more details see military formation of the German 8th Army p. 363).

Fortress garrisons and stage troops

are not included in the above strengths. Only the 111th Landsturm Brigade in Przemyśl belonged to them from field troops.

Formed from contributions of the above-mentioned armies:

Army group of Gen. of Inf. Kövess v. Kövesshaza; dissolved on August 23 and distributed to the 2nd and 3rd Army

(III Corps: 6th, 22nd, and 28th Inf. Div.)

(XII Corps: 16th, 35th, and 38th Inf. Div.)

(111th and 43rd Inf. Brig.)

(35th, 40th, and 105th Landsturm Brig.)

(1st, 5th, and 8th Cav. Div.)

Army group of Gen. of Inf. Archduke Josef Ferdinand of Austria; formed at the beginning of September from parts of the 4th Army

(II Corps: 4th and 13th Inf. Div.)

(8th Inf. Div.)

(9th Cav. Div.)

Against Serbia.

12 Inf. Div., 3 Landsturm Brig. and march formations

(= 207 Batt. 1), 27½ Squadrons, 106 Batteries (= 628 Guns)

High Command of the Balkan Forces: Field Marshal Potiorek

Chief of Gen. Staff: Genmaj. Bóltz

5th Army.

Army Commander: General of Infantry Liborius Ritter v. Frank

Chief of Gen. Staff: Genmaj. Csesnicics

VIII Corps: 9th and 21st Inf. Div.

XIII Corps: 36th and 42nd Inf. Div.

13th Infantry and 11th Mountain Brigade

104th Landsturm Brigade.

6th Army.

Army Commander: simultaneously High Commander of the Balkan Forces

XV Corps: 1st and 48th Inf. Div.

XVI Corps: 18th and 47th Inf. Div., 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 13th Mountain Brig.

40th Infantry Division

109th Landsturm Brigade.

Danube Flotilla:

6 armored screw steamers with a total of 24 guns.

1) Conrad IV, Note 9 deviates from this for the 5th and 6th Army for the 12th and  
217 Batt. listed.  
2) In these strengths, the garrison of the naval port of Pola (112th Landsturm Brig.)  
is not included.

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The Austro-Hungarian Army.  
Schematic Representation of Austro-Hungarian Troop Formations.

Cavalry Division

(24 Squadrons, 3 Battalions)

Cav. Brigade

Regiment

Regiment

Cav. Brigade

Regiment

Regiment

Machine Gun Sections Mounted Art. Section

Ammunition Columns

Medical Units

Trains

Infantry Division

(14 Battalions, 2 Squadrons, 7 Batteries¹)

Inf. Brigade | Inf. Brigade

F.R. | F.R.

Field Artillery Brigade²)

Field Howitzer Div. Field Cannon Regt.

Field Div. Tel. Section⁶)

Ammunition Columns (Total ammunition

equipment⁵) with troops and

columns per rifle 346, Machine

Gun 10,856, each field cannon 492,

light field howitzer 366, heavy field howitzer 353

rounds)

Medical Units

Trains

¹) Average strength. The number of battalions varied from 12 to 18, and

batteries from 7 to 9. — ²) Each battalion had 2 machine guns; Landwehr and march

battalions had no machine guns. — ³) Additionally, each corps had 2 batteries of

4 heavy field howitzers of 15 cm. — ⁴) Battery of 6 7.65 cm field cannons. — ⁵) Battery

of 6 10.4 cm light field howitzers. — ⁶) Engineers and other auxiliary troops were

with the corps. — ⁷) Section of 2 machine guns each. — ⁸) Battery of 4 7.65 cm field

cannons. — ⁹) According to Conrad IV, p. 921 and 938.

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Military Formations.

The Russian Army

in August/September 1914¹).

Supreme Command:

Emperor Nicholas II of Russia.

Supreme Army Command.

Commander-in-Chief of all Russian Land and Naval Forces: General of Cavalry

Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich of Russia

Chief of the General Staff: Lieutenant General Januschevich.

Army Group of the Northwest Front.

on August 26, 1914, 1st day of the Battle of Tannenberg²).

22 Inf. Div., 11½ Cav. Div. = 354 Batl., 331 Squadrons, 198 Batteries (= 1428 Guns)

strengthened by September 10 to:

34½ Inf. Div., 11¼ Cav. Div. = 562 Batl., 389 Squadrons, 268 Batteries (= 1986 Guns)

Commander: General of Cavalry Shilinski (from September 16 by Gen. of Inf. Russki)

Chief of Staff: Lt. Gen. Danowski.

1st Army.

9½ Inf. Div., 5½ Cav. Div. = 156 Batl., 140 Squadrons, 90 Batteries (= 648 Guns)

Commander: General of Cavalry v. Rennenkampf

Chief of Staff: Lt. Gen. Mileant (from September 11 by Major General Bajow)

II Corps (previously with the 2nd Army): Gen. of Cav. Scheidemann (from August 31 by

Lt. Gen. Tjufjajew)

26th and 43rd Inf. Div.

III Corps: Gen. of Inf. Jepantschin

25th and 27th Inf. Div.

IV Corps: Gen. of Art. Aliew

30th and 40th Inf. Div.

XX Corps (originally assigned to the 4th Army): Gen. of Inf. Smirnow

28th and 29th Inf. Div.

5th Rifle Brigade

56th Infantry (Reserve) Division along with 73rd Art. (Res.) Brig.

1st Guard Cavalry Division³): Lt. Gen. Kasnakow

1st Brig.: Chevalier-G. R., Leib-G. Reit. R.

2nd: Leib-G. Kür. R. of the Emperor, Leib-G. Kür. R. of Empress Marie

2nd Guard Cavalry Division: Lt. Gen. Rauch

1st Brig.: Leib-G. Dr. R. zu Pf., Leib-G. Uhl. R. of the Empress

2nd: Leib-G. Drag. R., Leib-G. Hus. R. of the Emperor

¹) The structure of the individual troop units is derived from the schematic  
representation on pp. 375/76. Deviations are only recorded for the Northwest Front.  
²) Parts added after August 26 are marked by different print.  
³) 3rd Brigade of the 1st Guard Cav. Div. see 9th Army.

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The Russian Army.

1. Cavalry Division (joined the 10th Army on 7.9.): Genlt. Romeiko-Gurko

2. " " Senlt. Chan Hussein Nachtischewanski

3. " " Senlt. Belgard

1. Independent Cavalry Brigade: Drag. R. 19., Hus. R. 16, 3rd mounted battery.

Army troops: 1st heavy artillery brigade (3 detachments of 2 batteries each), aviation detachment.

Border guard: 16 companies and 16 squadrons distributed among the corps.

Reinforcements until September 10:

7 Infantry Divisions, including fortress garrisons and subsequently arrived divisions.

cavalry = 112 battalions, 50 squadrons, 38 batteries (= 300 guns)

XXVI. (Reserve) Corps: Gen. of Inf. Gernrgroß

53rd Inf. (Res.) Div. (56th Inf. (Res.) Div. see above)

54, 57, 68, 72, 73, 76. Infantry (Reserve) Division.

2nd Army.

10½ Infantry Divisions, 3 Cavalry Divisions = 166 battalions, 111 squadrons, 88 batteries (= 636 guns)

Commander-in-Chief: General of Cavalry Samsonow (fell on 30.8.; successor

Gen. of Cav. Scheidemann, previously II Corps)

Chief of Staff: Genmaj. Postnowski

I Corps: Gen. of Inf. Artamanow (from 28.8. Genlt. Duschkewitsch)

22nd and 24th Inf. Div.)

VI Corps: Genlt. Blagowjeschtschenski (from 12.9. Genlt. Balujew)

4th and 16th Inf. Div.

XIII Corps (destroyed at Tannenberg): Genlt. Klujew

1st and 36th Inf. Div.

XV Corps (destroyed at Tannenberg): Gen. of Inf. Martos

6th and 8th Inf. Div.

XXIII Corps (half destroyed at Tannenberg): Gen. of Inf. Kondratowitsch

3rd Guards Inf. Div.

1st Brigade: Leib-G. R. Lithuania and Kexholm

2nd " Leib-G. R. St. Petersburg and Volhynia

2nd Inf. Div.

1st Rifle Brigade

4th Cavalry Division: Genlt. Tolpygo

6th " " Ropp

15th " " Liubmirow (with the 2nd Brigade as Cossack Regi-

the 3rd Ural Cossack R.)

Army troops: 2nd heavy artillery brigade (3 detachments of 2 batteries each), aviation detachment.

Border guard: 23 companies and 23 squadrons distributed among the corps.

Reinforcements until September 10:

3 Infantry Divisions, including fortress garrisons and subsequently arrived divisions.

cavalry = 56 battalions, 32 squadrons, 18 batteries (= 144 guns)

59.?), 77.?) and 79. Infantry (Reserve) Division.

1) By the end of August, one regiment from each division near Warsaw.  
2) From 5.9. at Dept. Warsaw, see p. 372.

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Military Formations.

9th Army1).

In formation, transferred to the Southwestern Front at the end of August; to

2 Inf. Div., 3 Cav. Div. = 32 Battalions, 80 Squadrons, 20 Batteries (= 144 Guns)

Commander-in-Chief: General of Infantry Leschizki

Chief of Staff: Genlt. Suljewitsch

Guard Corps: Gen. of Cav. Desfossarow

1st and 2nd Guard Inf. Div.

(I Corps transferred to the 2nd Army, two regiments remained with

the 9th Army near Warsaw until the end of August)

(XVIII Corps transferred to the Southwestern Front on 25.8.)

5th Cavalry Division: Genlt. Moritz

Caucasian Cavalry Division2): Genlt. Charpentier

3rd Brigade of the 1st Guard Cavalry Division2)

Turkestan Cossack Brigade.

1) See also p. 374.

2) Transferred to the Warsaw Detachment on 5 September.

10th Army.

Status as of 10 September:

4½ Inf. Div., 1 Cav. Div. = 72 Battalions, 38 Squadrons, 33 Batteries (= 252 Guns)

Commander-in-Chief: General of Infantry Flug

Chief of Staff: Genlt. Markow

XXII Corps: Genlt. Baron v. den Brinken

1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Finnish Rifle Brigades

III Siberian Corps: Gen. of Inf. Radkewitsch

7th and 8th Siberian Rifle Div.

I Turkestan Corps: Gen. of Inf. Jerofejew

1st Turk. Rifle Brig. (2nd and 3rd Turk. Rifle Brig. still en route)

(II Caucasian Corps still en route)

(1st Cavalry Division: Genlt. Romeiko-Gurko, from the 1st Army)

(4th Independent Cavalry Brigade still en route).

1) Strength: 7½ Inf. Div., 1½ Cav. Div. = 120 Battalions, 62 Squadrons

(= 426 Guns)

Warsaw Detachment.

Formed on 5 September from parts of the 2nd and 9th Army.

2 Inf. Div., 1¾ Cav. Div.

Commander-in-Chief: General of Infantry Olchowski

XXVII (Reserve) Corps:

(59th and 77th Inf. (Res.) Div. from the 2nd Army)

(Caucasian Cavalry Division: Genlt. Charpentier, from the 9th Army)

(3rd Brigade of the 1st Guard Cavalry Division from the 9th Army)

(1st Astrakhan Cossack Regt. from the 9th Army, Guard Corps).

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The Russian Army.

Army Group of the Southwestern Front.

As of September 10:

51 Inf. Div., 21 Cav. Div. = 823½ Batt., 690 Squadrons, 417 Batteries (= 3060 Guns)

Commander-in-Chief: General of Artillery Ivanov

Chief of Staff: Lt. Gen. Alexeyev.

3rd Army.

11 Inf. Div., 4 Cav. Div.

= (excluding border guard) 176 Batt., 129 Squadrons, 93 Batteries (= 672 Guns)

Commander-in-Chief: General of Infantry Russki

Chief of Staff: Lt. Gen. Dragomirov

IX Corps: 5th and 42nd Inf. Div.

X Corps: 9th and 31st Inf. Div.

XI Corps: 11th and 32nd Inf. Div.

XXI Corps: 33rd and 44th Inf. Div.

(III Caucasian Corps transferred to 4th Army)

58th, 69th, 78th Infantry (Reserve) Division

9th, 10th, 11th Cavalry Division

3rd Caucasian Cossack Division

Army Troops: 4th Heavy Artillery Brigade

Border Guard: Details unknown.

4th Army.

10 Inf. Div., 2½ Cav. Div. = 163½ Batt., 108 Squadrons, 84 Batteries (= 606 Guns)

Commander-in-Chief: General of Infantry Ewert (until 4.9. Gen. of Inf. Baron Sievers)

Chief of Staff: Maj. Gen. Sutor

Guard Corps (formerly 9th Army): 1st and 2nd Guard Inf. Div.

Grenadier Corps: 1st and 2nd Gren. Div.

(XIV Corps1))

XVI Corps: 4th and 47th Inf. Div.

III Caucasian Corps (formerly assigned to 3rd Army): 21st and 52nd Inf. Div.

(2nd Rifle Brigade1))

3rd Don Cossack and Ural Cossack Division (2nd Call-up)

Army Troops: 3rd Heavy Artillery Brigade

Border Guard: 13th Company and 14 Squadrons.

1) Only until 3.9., then to 9th Army.

5th Army.

11 Inf. Div., 5 Cav. Div. = 180 Batt., 174 Squadrons, 95 Batteries (= 684 Guns)

Commander-in-Chief: General of Cavalry Plehwe

Chief of Staff: Maj. Gen. Müller

V Corps: 7th and 10th Inf. Div.

XVII Corps: 3rd and 35th Inf. Div.

XIX Corps: 17th and 38th Inf. Div.

XXV Corps: 3rd and 46th Inf. Div.

61st, 70th, and 81st1) Infantry (Reserve) Division

(55th Infantry (Reserve) Division2))

1st and 2nd (assembled) Cavalry Division

1) Security garrison of Brest-Litovsk.  
2) Probably initially intended as a security garrison in Mostow or  
Litovsk, then transferred from there to the Northwestern Front.  
3) = 2nd and 5th independent Cav. Brig.

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Military Formations.

1st Don Cossack Division

4th and 5th Don Cossack Division (2nd Call-up)

Army troops: 5th Heavy Artillery Brigade

Border Guard: 17 Companies and 17 Squadrons

8th Army.

12 Infantry Divisions, 5 Cavalry Divisions

= (excluding Border Guard) 192 Battalions, 155 Squadrons, 90 Batteries (= 684 Guns)

Commander-in-Chief: General of Cavalry Brussilow

Chief of Staff: Major General Lomnowsti

VII Corps: 13th and 34th Infantry Divisions

VIII Corps: 13th and 19th Infantry Divisions

XII Corps: 12th and 19th Infantry Divisions

XXIV Corps: 48th and 49th Infantry Divisions

3rd, 64th, and 71st Infantry (Reserve) Division

12th Cavalry Division

2nd Composite Cossack Division

1st and 2nd Kuban and 1st Terek Cossack Division (2nd Call-up)

Border Guard: Details unknown.

9th Army.

(By the end of August on the Northwestern Front.)

7 Infantry Divisions, 4½ Cavalry Divisions = 112 Battalions, 124 Squadrons, 55 Batteries (= 414 Guns)

Commander-in-Chief: General of Infantry Letschizki

Chief of Staff: Lieutenant General Suljenwitsch

XIV Corps: 18th and 45th Infantry Divisions

XVIII Corps: 23rd and 37th Infantry Divisions

Guard and 2nd Rifle Brigade

75th, 79th, and 80th Infantry (Reserve) Division

5th, 8th, 13th, and 14th Cavalry Division

Turkestan Cossack Brigade.

1) Until September 3 with the 4th Army. — 2) Garrison of Iwangorod.

Additionally available:

Remnants of the original 6th Army near Petersburg.

4 Infantry Divisions, 1 Cavalry Division = 64 Battalions, 36 Squadrons, 26 Batteries (= 204 Guns)

Commander-in-Chief: General of Artillery van der Vliet

Chief of Staff: Lieutenant General Prince Tengalitschew

(XVIII Corps to the 9th Army)

50th Infantry Division

60th, 74th, and 84th Infantry (Reserve) Division

Orenburg Cossack Division (2nd Call-up).

Remnants of the original 7th Army near Odessa.

3 Infantry Divisions, ½ Cavalry Division = 48 Battalions, 21 Squadrons, 18 Batteries (= 144 Guns)

Commander-in-Chief: General of Artillery Mititin

Chief of Staff: Lieutenant General Wassiljew

62nd, 63rd, and 64th Infantry (Reserve) Division

Crimean Cavalry Regiment and 7th Don Cossack Regiment.

Also outside army association.

19 Infantry Divisions, 4½ Cavalry Divisions = 310 Battalions, 173 Squadrons, 162 Batteries (= 1176 Guns)

1st Caucasian Corps on the Asia Minor border

II Turkestan, I, II, IV, and V Siberian Corps, 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th Siberian Rifle Division, 1st and 2nd Taufas, 6th Turkestan Rifle Brigade

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The Russian Army.

11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th Siberian Rifle Division, 1st and 2nd Taufas, 6th Turkestan Rifle Brigade

55th1) and 66th Infantry (Reserve) Division

18 individual Cossack (Plastun) Battalions

1st and 2nd Taufas, 1 1/2 Turkestan Cossack Division

Trans-Caspian, Siberian, and Transbaikal Cossack and Ussuri Cavalry Brigade

2 Siberian / Heavy Artillery Brigades.

1) See 5th Army.

Schematic Representation of Russian Troop Units.

XV Corps.

8th Inf. Div.1)

2nd Brig. | 1st Brig. | 2nd Brig. | 1st Brig.

Inf. Regt. 31 | Inf. Regt. 29 | Inf. Regt. 23 | Inf. Regt. 21

1/2 | 1/2 | 1/2 | 1/2

Inf. Regt. 32 | Inf. Regt. 30 | Inf. Regt. 24 | Inf. Regt. 22

1/2 | 1/2 | 1/2 | 1/2

21st Don Cossack Regt. (II. Call-up)3).

8th Art. Brig. | 6th Art. Brig.

4) | 5)

Signal Det. | Bridge Part | Eng. Comp. | Signal Det. | Bridge Part | Eng. Comp.

Signal Det. | Tel. Comp. | 15th Flying Det. 6) | Eng. Comp. | 15th Field Howitzer Det.7)

Mun. Col. consolidated with the army. (Total ammunition supply with the troops and their columns8)9) for each rifle about 300, Majch. Rifles about 20,000, for each field gun 412 rounds; further unknown.)

Division and Corps Supply Transport9) (Supply with the troops and the columns should be available for 12 days as intended.)

Medical and Veterinary Formations, 2 Field Bakery Col.8), Engineer Part8).

1) Numbers of the infantry regiments correspond to the division number, so 1st Infantry Division — 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division — 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th Regiment, etc. All infantry divisions except those over 52 are reserve divisions. Reserve divisions and Siberian rifle divisions have the same structure as old infantry divisions. — 2) Majch. Rifles. — 3) Until the arrival of the Don Cossack Regt. II. Call-up. End of August 1914, depending on whether they are there. Those or squadrons of the border axis perform the service of the corps cavalry. — 4) 2 Field Bakery Col. — 5) Each Art. Brig. 3 Det. with 6 1/2 cm guns, initially only 2 Det. available. — 6) Each Det. 3, with 6 1/2 cm guns. — 7) Each Det. 3, with 6 1/2 cm guns. — 8) Usually exists before the war with the army. — 9) Set up for maneuvers, in the stage with the army. — 10) For each field gun about 1000, 1 field howitzer about 610, heavy field howitzer 610 rounds.

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Military Formations.

1. Rifle Brigade¹).

Rifle Regt. 3

|-2) ▪▪▪

Rifle Regt. 4

|-2) ▪▪▪

Rifle Regt. 1

|-2) ▪▪▪

Rifle Regt. 2

|-2) ▪▪▪

1. Rifle Art. Det.³)

||||

4)

Medical and Supply Trains

¹) The 2nd Brigade includes Regiments 5, 6, 7, 8 etc. — ²) 8 Machine Guns. — ³) Each Battery with 8 7.62 cm guns. — ⁴) Light Ammunition Column.

1. Cavalry Division¹).

2nd Brigade.

1st Horse Regt.

▧▧▧▧

1st Don Cossack Regt.

▧▧▧▧

Mounted M. G. Command²)

┬

1st Brigade.

1st Life Dragoon Regt.

▧▧▧▧

1st Uhlan Regt.

▧▧▧▧

Mounted Sapper Command

▧

1st Mounted Art. Det.³)

┴┴

¹) The 2nd Division includes in its 1st Brigade the 2nd Dragoon and 2nd Uhlan Regt., in its 2nd Brigade the 2nd Horse and 2nd Don Cossack Regt., and so on each Division 4 Regiments with the same number. — ²) 8 Machine Guns. — ³) Each Battery with 6 7.62 cm guns.

1. Heavy Artillery Brigade.

III. Det.¹)

⚔⚔⚔

II. Det.¹)

⚔⚔⚔

I. Det.¹)

⚔⚔⚔

¹) 2 Batteries with 4 15 cm howitzers and 1 Battery with 4 10.67 cm guns.

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Appendix 2.

Comparison of the Combat Value of German, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian Troop Units.

(See special supplement.)

Appendix 3.

Source Reference.

The presentation is based on the files in the Reichsarchiv as well as the information from the leading personalities involved and their staff. Where other sources had to be used, this is specifically noted. The following list includes all major publications that have source value. In the presentation, they are only referred to by the keyword highlighted in bold in this list.

Some of the publications of the Russian military history commission (Radsus-Senotwitsch, The first offensive of the Russian 1st Army to East Prussia in August and September 1914, — The Russian Air Fleet during the War 1914—1917, Hobrine, Issues 5 and 6), which might provide new insights, were not available by the time this volume went to press.

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high. Edw. Cmdr. 1 under Edw. Divisions

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