



The Holy Roman Empire



After suffering a defeat in the Thirty Years War the Imperial army was substantially reduced. Some units were sent to the Turkish border, other supported the Spanish army fighting in Italy and the Netherlands. In total 9 infantry regiments, 9 cuirassier regiments and 1 dragoons regiment remained in service, plus the permanent Turkish border defense. Thanks to such a solution the Empire kept many experienced soldiers and officers that in case of a new conflict would become the core of a new army. When in 1656 the decision was made to send an expeditionary corps to Poland, the existing units were at its core. Of course joining the anti-Swedish coalition in 1657 led to a substantial increase of the Imperial army. 12 infantry regiments, 10 cuirassier regiments and 2 dragoons regiments took part in the Polish campaign alone, in addition more regiments fought (besides the Polish contingent) in the Swedish Pomerania and in Denmark.

On the battlefield Imperial commanders can count on strong and well led infantry regiments supported by artillery. Cavalry includes cuirassiers equipped similarly to Swedish and Brandenburg reiters. There are many veterans of the “old” regiments that fought in the Thirty Years War among them. Dragoons play an important role supporting cavalry raids and securing supply lines.

The orders from Vienna are clear: avoid pitched battles and preserve the strength of Imperial soldiers. Regiments fighting away from their place of formation suffer due to desertions that can substantially weaken units during the campaign. Reconnaissance is also clearly not working well as the army lacks light cavalry that was not sent to the Polish front.