

# BREAD AND BEEF!

## Battle of Domstadt

30<sup>th</sup> of June 1758

( Seven Years War 1756 – 63)

### Background

In the year 1757 the Prussian and Austrian armies had lost large numbers of men to battle and disease and both prepared for the coming campaign in 1758. With the Russians preparing to attack into East Prussia from the east, Frederick needed to force Austria to come to terms. His plan was to move into Moravia via Silesia and attack the fortress of Olmutz which, once taken, he would then move on to threaten Vienna and then backtrack to take the territory of Moravia.

His army arrived in front of Olmutz on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 1758 but did not have sufficient heavy artillery to breach the walls and, as the fortress was well stocked with men and provisions, he had to wait for his heavy guns to come up and they did not arrive until the 29<sup>th</sup> of May. The Austrian commander of the relieving force, Marshal Daun was in no hurry to attack the Prussians and used his light troops to attack the small Prussian supply convoys causing problems for Frederick.

To overcome this annoyance to his supply system Frederick secretly organised a massive convoy, so large it was impossible to hide. The Austrians planned to attack the convoy and force the Prussians to lift the siege of Olmutz.

### The Convoy

Frederick collected 4,000 wagons packed with food, ammunition and gun powder, together with 2,500 head of cattle, supported by 11,000 men and 1,341 cavalry.

### The Battle

The convoy started from Bautsch on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June, supported by 8 Battalions and a force of cavalry under Zeitzen, the famous hussar general. An Austrian force attacked the column shortly after it left Bautsch but after an exchange of fire the Austrian force retreated, as it was not large enough to be effective. A force of Austrians which was supposed to support the attack became lost and halted south of the battle, taking no part but not exposing itself to the Prussians.

The Prussians spent a day repairing the wagons that had been damaged, eventually setting off on their march on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, heading for Olmutz on the road passing through Altliebe, Neudorfel and Domstadt.

The Austrians waited in ambush south of the road and after 250 wagons had passed through Domstadt they attacked the main convoy from the south, catching the Prussians unprepared.

As the battle developed the Austrians pressed their attack and in the confusion the Prussians had difficulty in organising a coherent defence. Zeitzen brought his cavalry up in support but an Austrian force attacked from the north, catching the Prussian on two fronts and after some resistance the battle ended with the Prussian cavalry escaping, but not the infantry.

### The Aftermath

The Prussians lost 3,000 wagons with their provisions, most of the 2,500 cattle, 12 heavy guns and a large number of prisoners. The Prussian casualties amounted to between 2,300 and 2,700 men. The Austrians losing just 680 men.