



THE BATTLE OF LÜTZEN
16 NOVEMBER 1632



Origins of The Thirty Years War

The reformation and counter reformation left the Holy Roman Empire and Northern Europe split between Protestants and Catholics, defined by the Peace of Augsburg, 1555.

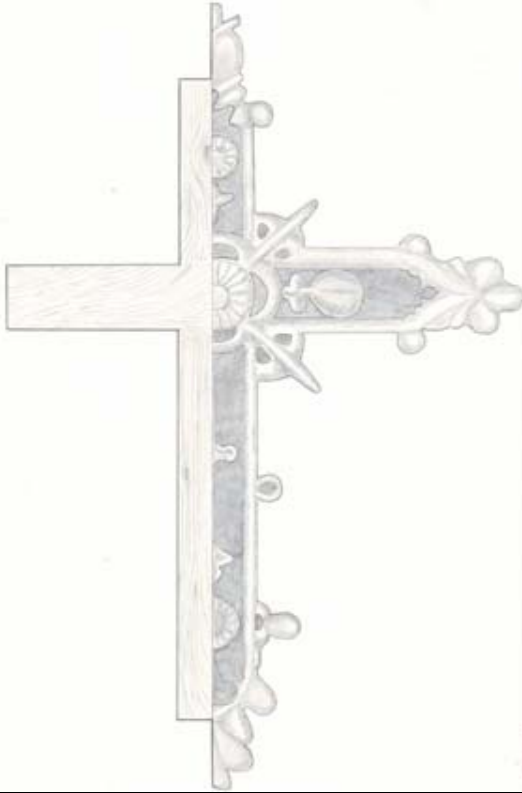
Underlying religious and political tensions sparked the outbreak of the Thirty Years War, which played out the various factional interests.

The trigger for this vast conflict, was the death of King Matthias, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Bohemia without an heir. The succession passed to Ferdinand II of Austria, but was contested by the Bohemian nobility, who threw representatives of Ferdinand out of a window in 1618 in the defenestration of Prague. Such an insult could only lead to conflict.



Defenestration of
Prague, 1618

Origins of The Thirty Years War



Religion

Protestant vs Catholic
Protestant League
(Lutheran and Calvinist)
vs. Catholic League.



Power

Struggle for succession within
the Holy Roman Empire
mixed with opportunism from
royal powers outside the Empire.



Dynasty

Habsburg (Austria & Spain)
vs
Oldenburg (Denmark)
Vasa (Sweden)
Bourbon (France).



The Bohemian Phase 1618 -1621



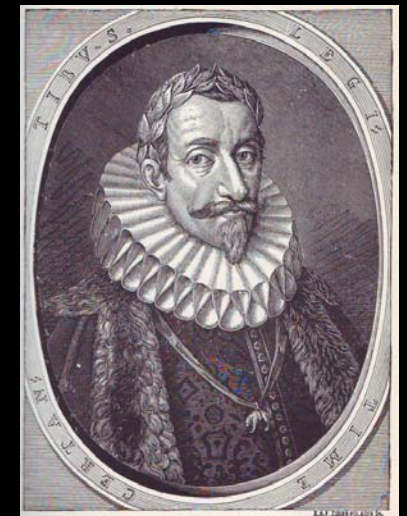
Protestant Bohemian nobles rose up in revolt against their Habsburg rulers, and offered the crown of Bohemia to Frederick V, Elector of Palatinate and the leader of the Protestant League, thus deposing Ferdinand of Styria, the staunchly Catholic successor.

The rebellion fared well initially. Frederick I became King of Bohemia on 26 August 1619. Two days after Ferdinand II became the Holy Roman Emperor, thus being able to draw on vast diplomatic and military resources.

The rebellion was crushed by a joint army of the Austrian Imperialists and the Catholic League, led by Tilly at the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620, and Frederick fled Bohemia, known hereafter as the Winter King, due to his short reign.



Frederick I of Bohemia



Ferdinand II, Holy Roman Emperor



The Palatinate Phase 1621 -1624



Ferdinand II placed the defeated Frederick I under the Imperial ban, making him an outlaw in 1620. The Protestant Union soon collapsed. The Upper Palatinate, Frederick's last possession was defended by Mansfeld, but eventually captured by Tilly in 1621.

Frederick attempted to recover his lands by raising 3 armies, including Mansfeld's force, but they were defeated in turn by Tilly and Spanish troops in the Battles of Wimpfen and Höchst in 1622.

Maximilian I, Elector of Bavaria was made Elector Palatinate; giving a considerable increase in Catholic influence within the Holy Roman Empire. Another attempt was made by Frederick to regain power by rallying the Protestants, but his army was crushed at the Battle of Stadtlohn in 1623.



Ernst von Mansfeld



Count von Tilly

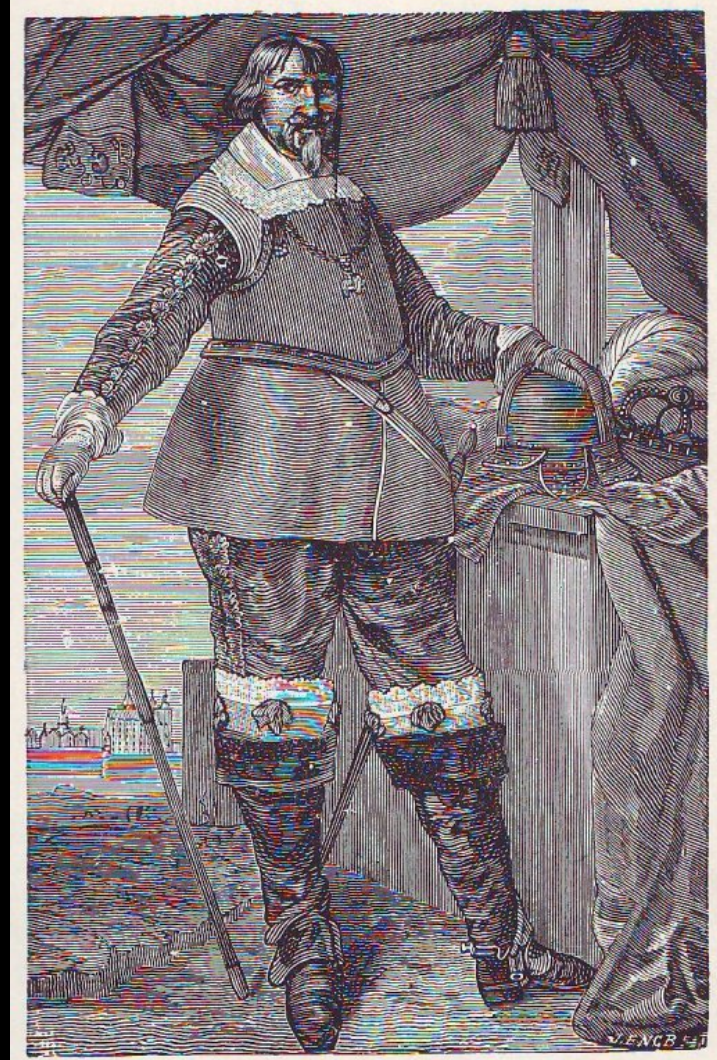


The Danish Phase 1625 -1629



The success of the Habsburg forces focused the remaining Protestant powers outside the Holy Roman Empire on their defeat. But who to ask? Danish entry to the war was set at a lower price than that of Sweden, so Christian IV of Denmark and Duke of Holstein led his troops into conflict, subsidised by England and the Dutch.

Wallenstein raised an army of mercenaries, with its costs charged to Ferdinand II. In conjunction with the Catholic League army under Tilly, they inflicted a series of defeats upon the Danes before crushing their army at the Battle of Lutter in 1626. Christian IV left mainland Europe after losing the Battle of Wolgast in 1628, and signing the Peace of Lübeck in 1629.

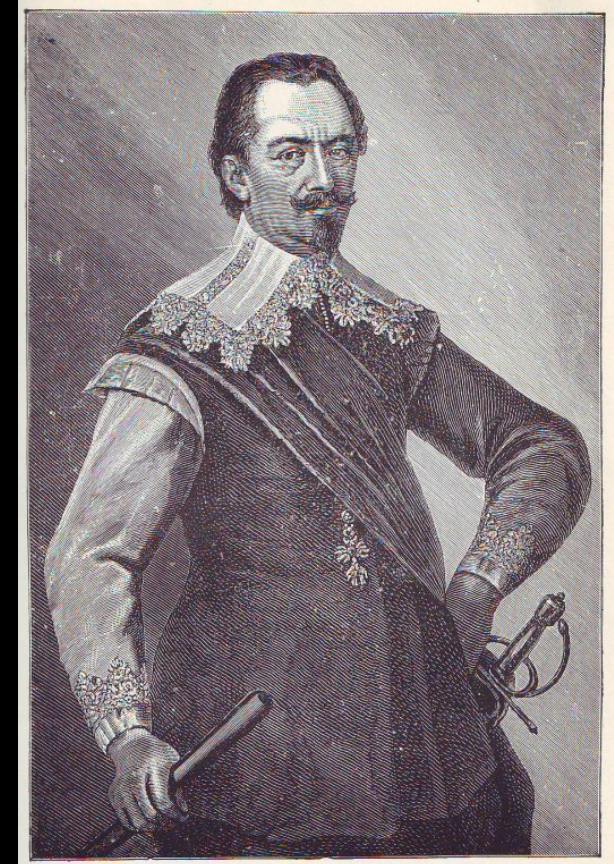


Christian IV of Denmark

Bellum se ipsum alet

“War feeds itself / Der Krieg ernährt den Krieg” became a principle of the Thirty Years War. Occupied territories were expected to provide both food, goods and money (*Kontributionsbezirke*) to pay for the troops settled in their lands. This resulted in a terrible price being levied on the lands concerned.

Wallenstein, had a large mercenary army of up to 100,000 to keep in the field for the Holy Roman Emperor. He made many enemies as he exacted his toll in keeping this army together. He was rewarded the principality of Duchy of Sagan and the Duchies of Mecklenburg for his effort, but alienated the traditional rulers of the Holy Roman Empire in the process, as they were horrified that a parvenu could ascend so high.



Albrecht von Wallenstein

Casus belli for Swedish entry into war

Wallenstein attempted to build a fleet with Spanish help to master the Baltic seas. This raised a threat to Denmark and Sweden, who overcame their traditional enmity to face the Imperial threat.

The final casus belli was the Edict of Restitution. Catholics had urged the Holy Roman Emperor to take advantage of their relative strength during the war by restoring lands to the position of the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, in practice returning vast tracts of lands claimed by Protestants back to Catholicism. The Edict enshrined this principal, thus ensuring a Protestant reaction, led by John George of Saxony.

The Diet of Regensburg , 1630, failed to reach agreement between the Imperial Electors and the Emperor, but led to the dismissal of Wallenstein.



Copy of the Edict of Restitution



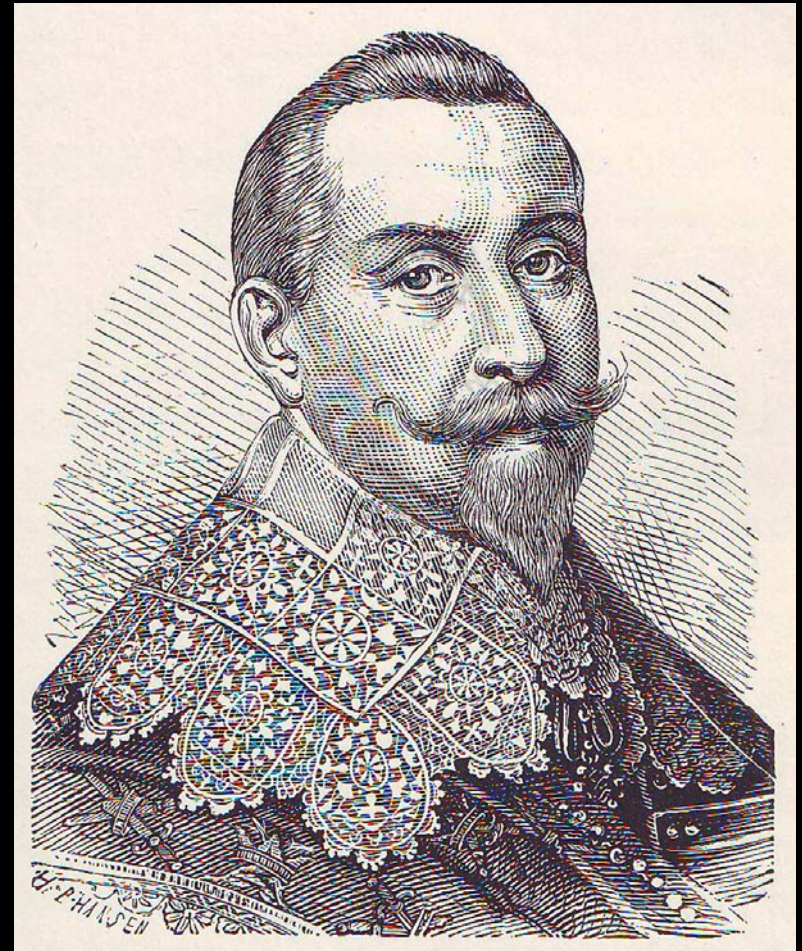
The Lion of the North



Gustavus Adolphus and Sweden entered the war on 26 June 1630 by invading Pomerania. The Swedes swiftly captured the port of Stralsund, and used this as their base.

Gustavus Adolphus had fought the Poles for many years to secure his throne, and had built a small, highly professional army in the process.

The Swedes cleared the northern coasts before attempting to descend lower into Germany and take the war directly to the Emperor. They invaded Mecklenburg in 1631.



Gustavus Adolphus
of Sweden



Siege of Magdeburg



Magdeburg declared for Gustaphus Adolphus after being re-Catholicized as a result of the Edict of Restitution. The city was surrounded by Tilly and von Pappenheim. The Swedes made slow progress through Germany to relieve the city.



Sack of Magdeburg



News of the Swedish advance spurred Tilly on, and the Imperialist troops bombarded the city before storming it on 20 May 1631. The city fell and endured a two day sack.

"I consider it cost the city more than 20,000 souls, and most certainly no greater horrors and divine justice have been seen since the Destruction of Jerusalem. All our soldiers have become rich men."

von Pappenheim

'Never was such a victory since the storming of Troy or of Jerusalem. I am sorry that you and the ladies of the court were not there to enjoy the spectacle'.

Tilly to the Emperor Ferdinand II





Magdeburg to Breintenfeld



The news of the sack of Magdeburg sent shockwaves through Europe, and rallied the Protestant cause. Gustavus Adolphus marched his army to Berlin to intimidate his father in law, the Elector of Brandenburg into an alliance. Once signed, with fresh troops and money, the Swedes began the advance again as his opponent Tilly failed to take advantage of the moment.



John George,
Elector of Saxony

John George of Saxony declared for the Swedes. The Imperialists failed to prevent the Swedish and Saxon army joining forces at Düben on September 5th 1631.

Tilly moved to storm Leipzig, but Gustavus Adolphus moved the joint army to confront the Imperialists at Breitenfeld on 17th September 1631.



Breitenfeld 1631



During a hard fought battle, the Imperialist cavalry broke the left flank of the Protestants, scattering the Saxon army and pursuing them off the field. Meanwhile on the right flank, the Swedes broke through Pappenheim's men. The Swedish and Finnish cavalry then swept down on the Imperialist infantry, engaged with the Swedish infantry. The Imperialists were shattered, losing about 50% of their men in an overwhelming victory for Gustavus's army.



Breitenfeld 1631



Medal struck to celebrate the victory of Gustavus Adolphus and his army at the Battle of Breitenfeld.



Order of Battle



The result of Breitenfeld highlights the differences in military practice between the Swedes and the Imperialists & Catholic League.

Habsburg Spain and Austria

Order of Battle

Cavalry on flanks, infantry in centre in one or two lines formed in Tercios. Artillery grouped across the infantry line, or on high ground.

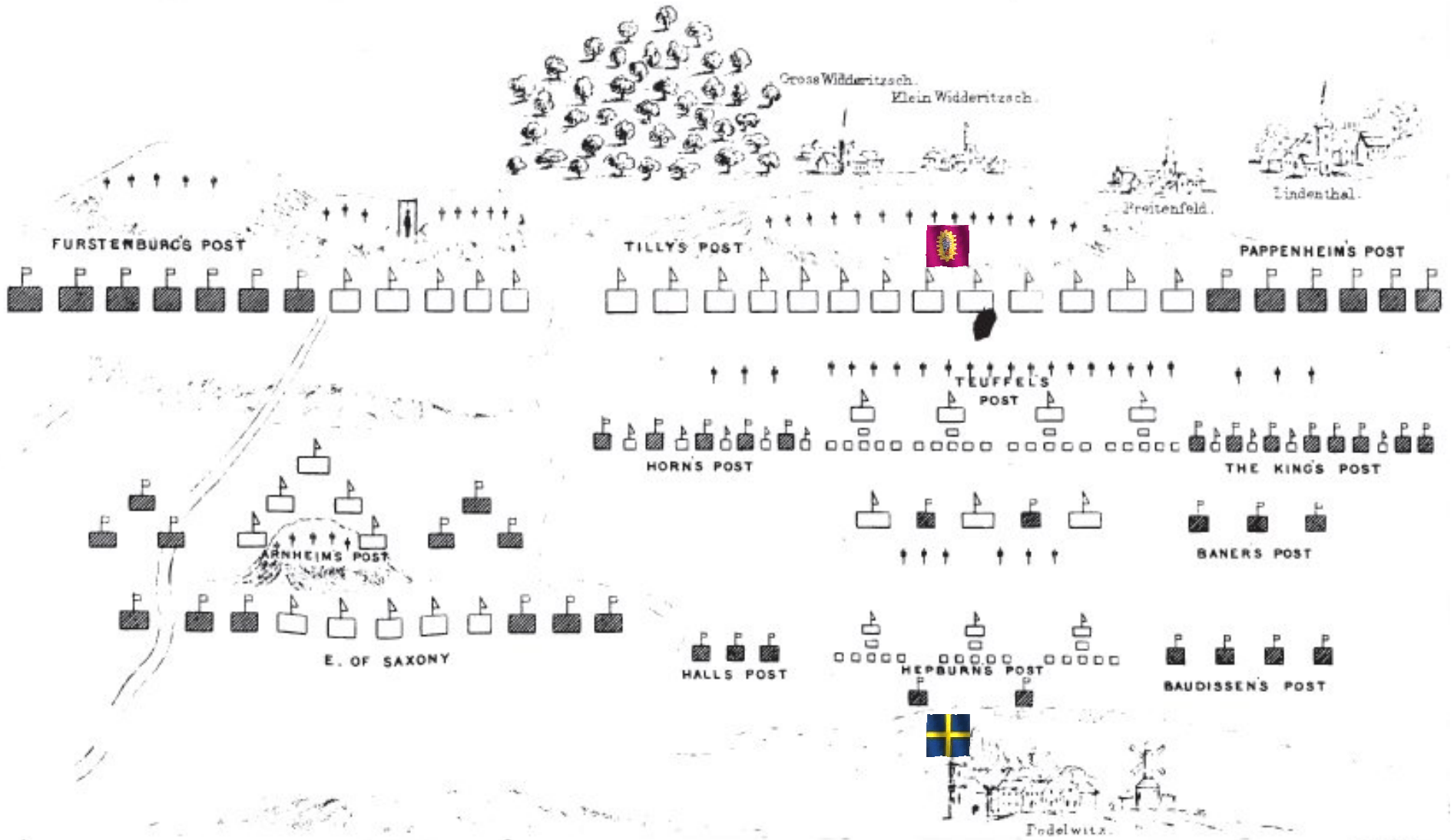
Swedes

Order of Battle

Some cavalry on flanks interspersed by musketeers. infantry in centre in two lines, with cavalry reserve between the two lines. Heavy artillery grouped in the centre, lighter artillery pieces attached to infantry regiments.

PLAN OF THE BATTLE OF LEIPSIC, (Breitenfeld)

SEPT^R 7TH 1631.



EXPLANATION

↑↑↑ Artillery.

☐ Infantry.

☐ Cavalry.

H. Adlard sc.

From 'History of Gustavus Adolphus and the Thirty Years War', B Chapman, 1856.



Tactics



Habsburg Spain and Austria

Infantry, formed into Tercios (Squares of Pikemen 10 ranks deep, with blocks of musketeers in corners). An unwieldy formation, but difficult to stop.

Cavalry, engaged by the caracole; front line firing pistols, then wheeling behind the next rank and reloading.

Artillery, heavy guns only with larger barrels than Swedish guns. Slower rate of fire.

Swedes

Infantry, formed into regimental lines six deep, with pikemen in the centre, flanked by a greater number of musketeers. Lighter guns and cartridges, with ball and powder ensured a greater rate of fire.

Cavalry, engaged directly with the sword in close combat.

Artillery, lighter 'Regimental' guns introduced, placed with the infantry, with heavier guns. Emphasis on rate of fire.



Breintenfled to Rain



Swedish troops now swept into the heartlands of the Holy Roman Empire, occupying the Palatinate. Attempts at a general peace were made between Gustavus Adolphus and the Catholic Princes in the Empire, with all but Maximilian I agreeing to terms. The army of the Catholic League was reduced in size and influence.

Gustavus Adolphus moved onto Bavaria, causing Tilly and his army to stand and fight the Swedes at the Battle of Rain, 15 April, 1632. Tilly was mortally wounded and his troops retreated. He died shortly after.

Wallenstein was recalled in the service of the Emperor as *Generalissimo* of an army of 70,000 mercenaries. He captured Bohemia, and rejoined with the remainder of Tilly's men.



Maximilian I,
Elector of Bavaria



Battle of Rain, 1632



Rain to Lützen



Gustavus Adolphus moved his troops back to Nürnberg. He was followed by Wallenstein's men, who built a large fortified camp and settled in for a seige. Attempts by the Swedes to draw the Imperialists out into battle failed, and an unsuccessful attempt to storm their camp took place at the battle of Alte Veste, on 1 August, 1632.

In mid September, the Swedes broke camp and headed north, with Wallenstein's men following shortly after to attack Saxony. The Swedes moved to prevent this. Wallenstein occupied Leipzig, between the Swedes and the sea. Gustavus Adolphus and his men retreated northwards, close to Leipzig.

Wallenstein detached Pappenheim's force, and the Swedes closed in on the remainder of the Imperialists at Lützen on 15 November, 1632.



Graf zu Pappenheim



Eve of Lützen



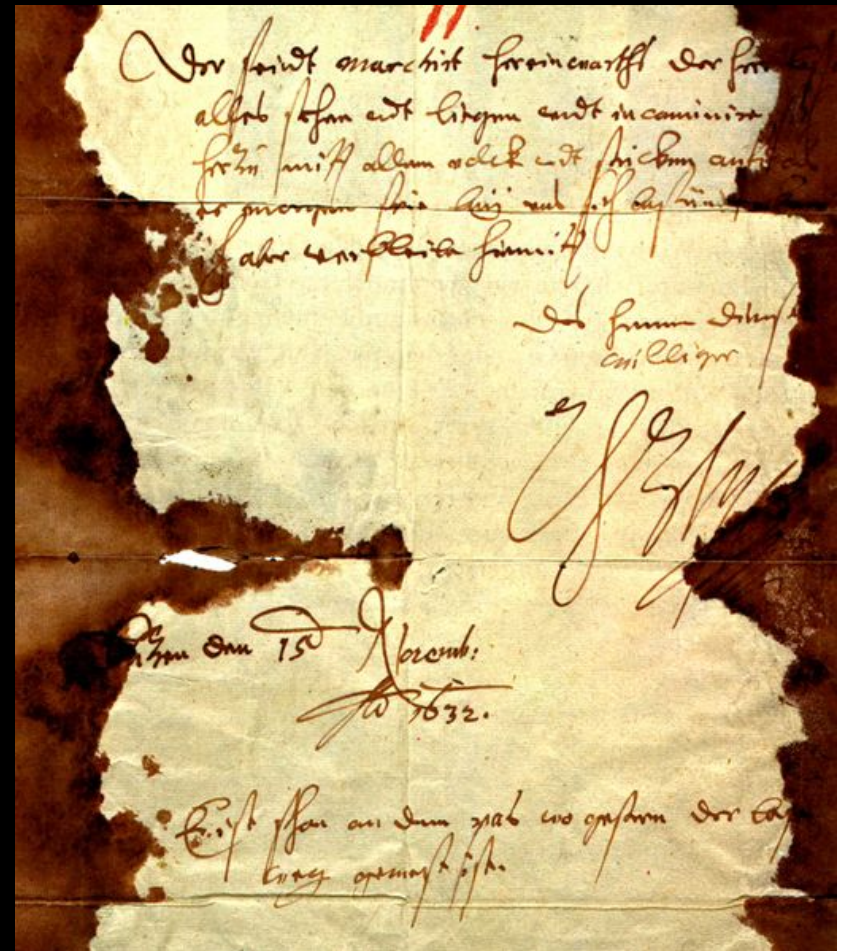
Wallenstein, badly outnumbered, issued an urgent recall to Pappenheim's force.

'The enemy is marching towards us. Your honour shall drop everything, and route himself hereto with all troops and guns, to be with us by early morning.'

The postscript mentions the Swedes crossing the river Rippach.

'[The enemy] is already at the pass where yesterday the road was bad'

Pappenheim received the letter at midnight and began to move towards the battlefield with a cavalry by 2 am, with infantry and artillery to follow.



The letter carried into battle by Pappenheim is soaked in his blood



“Fight then my dear friends”!



A heavy fog covered the battlefield on the morning of 16th November.

Gustavus Adolphus made a short speech to his Swedish troops.

“There you have the enemy in front of you. He is not on a mountain or behind entrenchments this time, but on the open plain. You know how eagerly he has sought to avoid fighting, and that he is only fighting now because he cannot escape us. Fight then my dear friends, for God, your country and your King.”





"Jesu! Jesu! Jesu!"



"I will reward you all, and bravely: but if you flinch from the fight, you well know that not a man of you will ever see Sweden again"

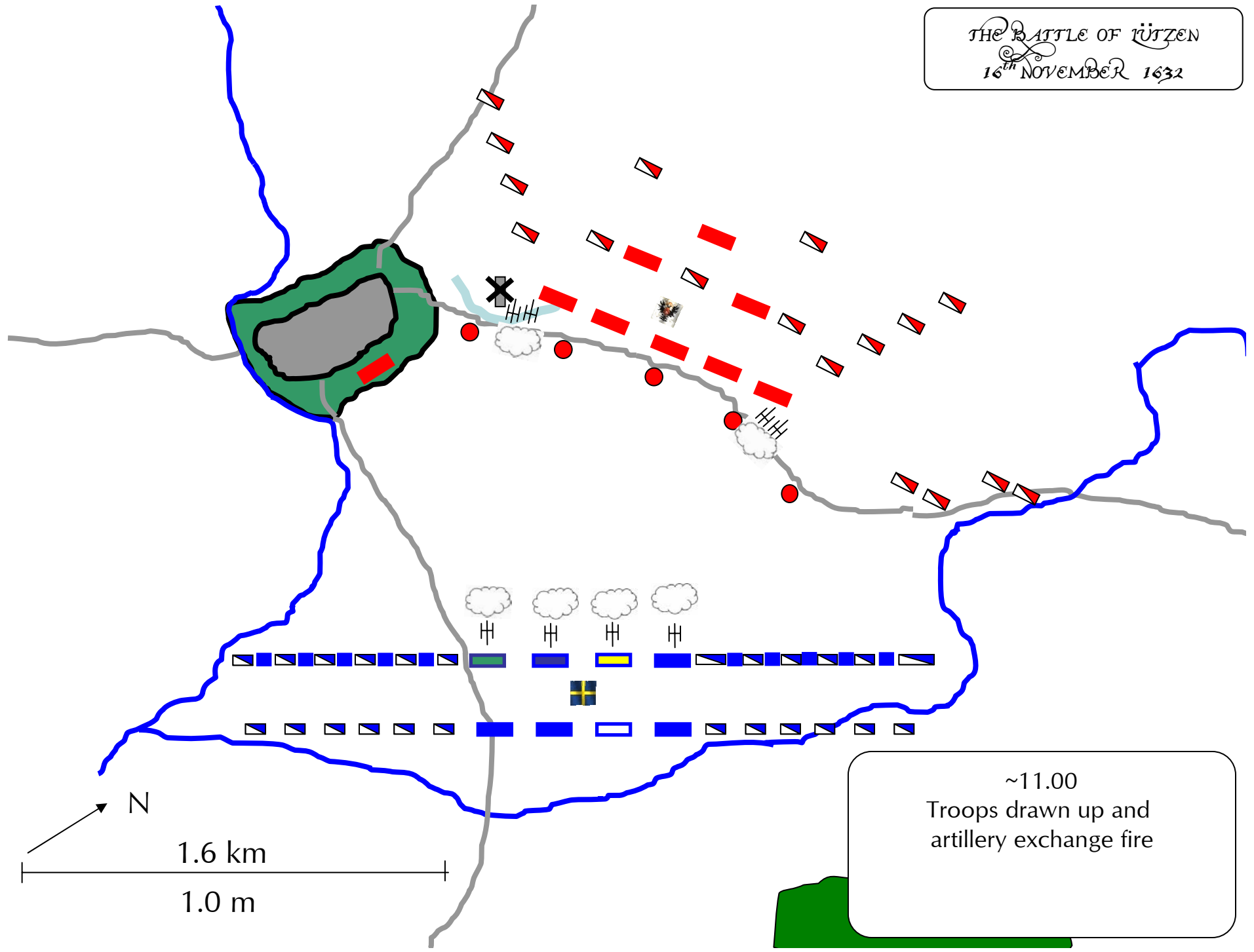
He waved his sword over his head, and cried,

"Jesu! Jesu! Jesu! help us to strive today to the honour of thy Holy Name."

and the advance to the battlefield across the Flossgraben began.

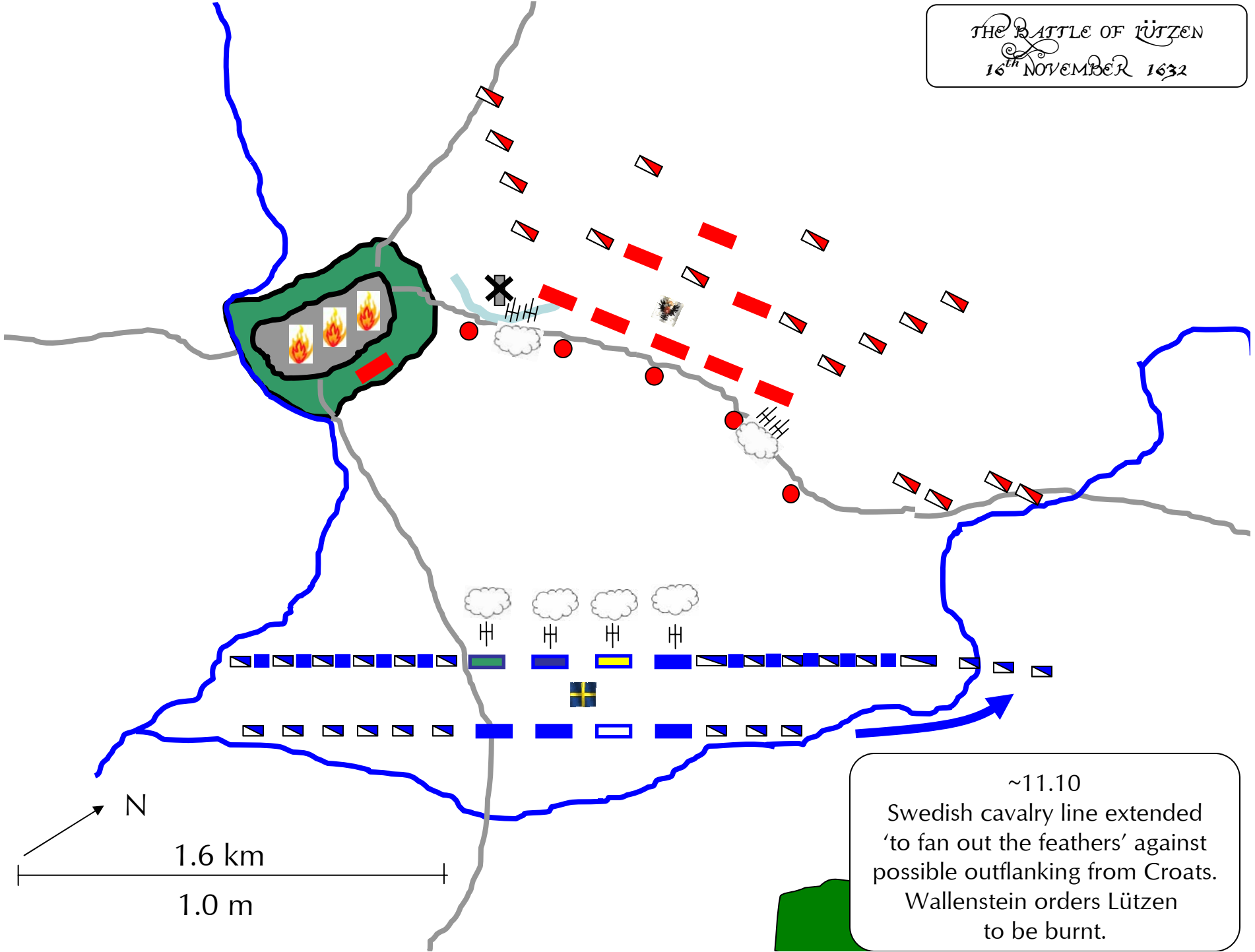


THE BATTLE OF LÜTZEN
16th NOVEMBER 1632



~11.00
Troops drawn up and
artillery exchange fire

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16th NOVEMBER 1632





“Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott”!



The Swedish and German troops sang Luther's hymn, 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott' (A mighty fortress is our God), a version of the 46th Psalm; the *Marseillaise* of the Protestant Reformation.

The troops then sang Gustavus Adolphus battle hymn, 'Verzage nicht du Hauflein klein' (O little flock, fear not the foe), Altenburg's hymn written after the battle of Breitenfeld, 1631.

They now advanced forwards in one long line of battle.





Action on the Swedish right



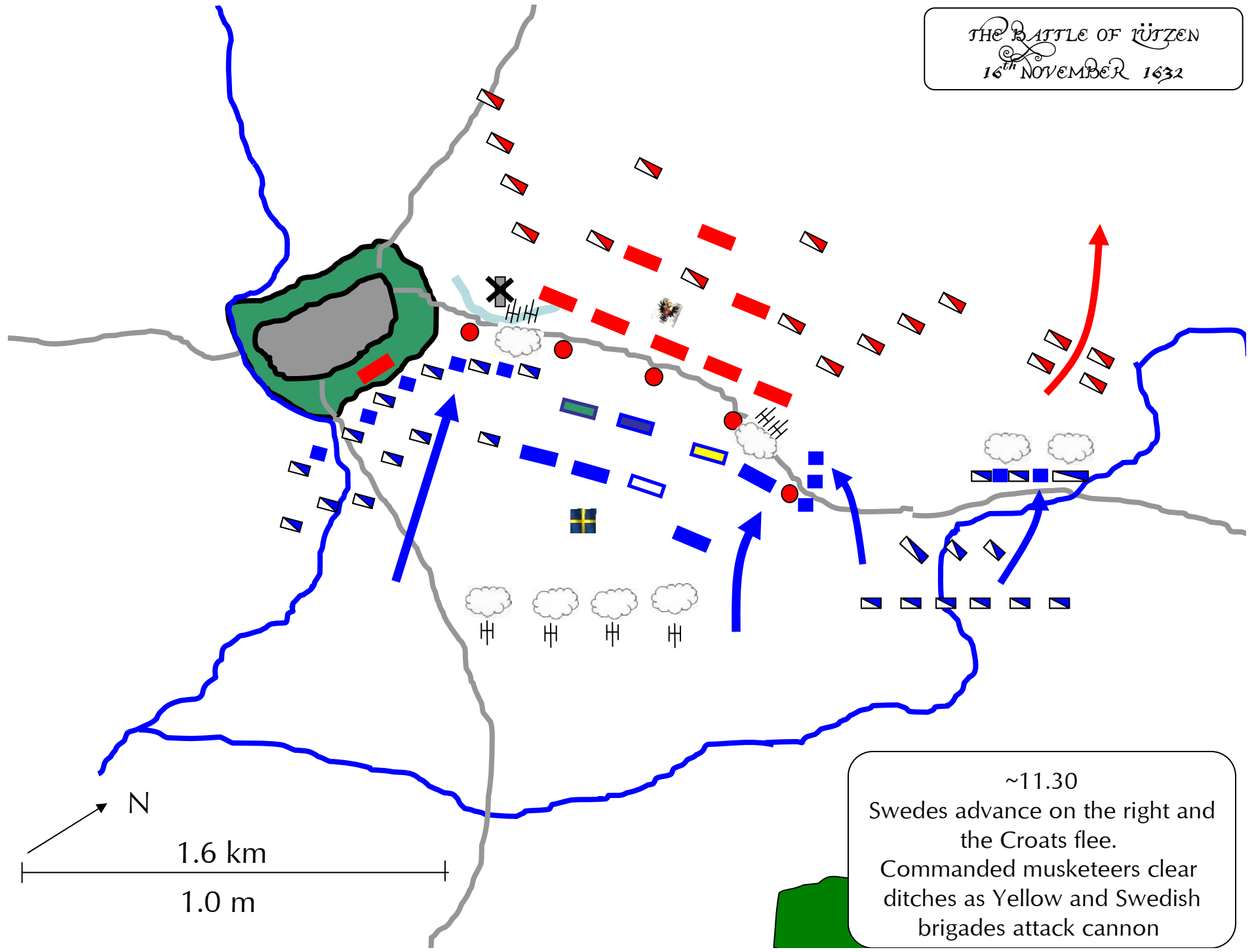
Gustavus Adolphus led the right wing and soon scattered the Croat light horsemen opposing them, who were no match for the veteran cavalry interspersed with musketeers facing them.

Gustavus called out to his men to charge the Imperial Cuirassiers, wearing black armour behind the Croats.

'As for those fellows I care not for them,' sais the King : 'but charge me those blacke fellows soundly, for they are the men that will undoe us.'

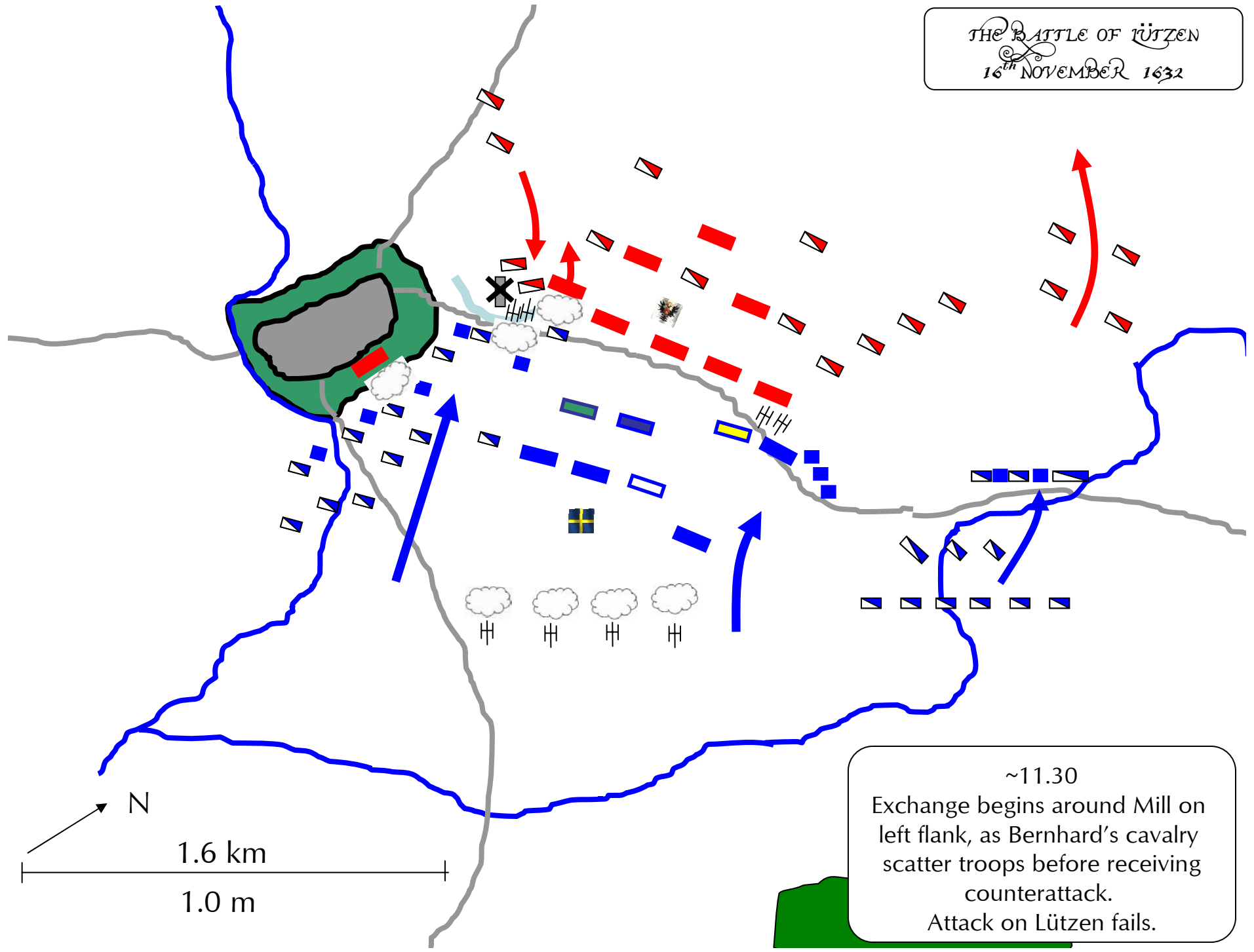


THE BATTLE OF LÜTZEN
16th NOVEMBER 1632



~11.30
Swedes advance on the right and
the Croats flee.
Commanded musketeers clear
ditches as Yellow and Swedish
brigades attack cannon

THE BATTLE OF LÜTZEN
16th NOVEMBER 1632



~11.30
Exchange begins around Mill on left flank, as Bernhard's cavalry scatter troops before receiving counterattack.
Attack on Lützen fails.



Pappenheim falls



At midday, Pappenheim and his cavalry arrived on the battlefield. Wallenstein ordered him to counterattack on the Imperialist left flank, where the Swedes were still pressing hard.

He led his men directly into the Swedish cavalry, who gave a volley. Pappenheim was severely wounded and the Imperialist counterattack stalled.

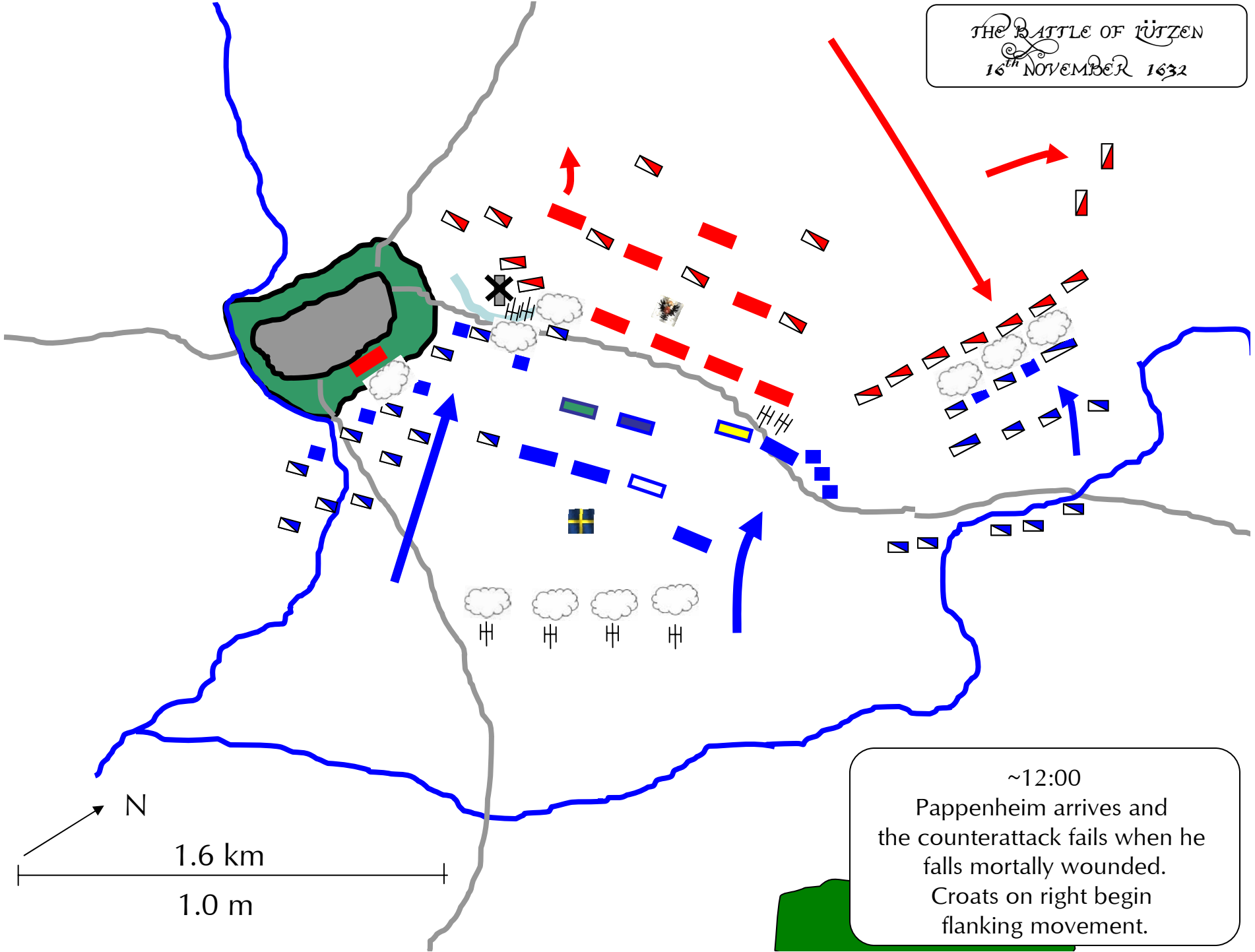
His personal trumpeter recalled the count was hit by a falconet round and 3 musket balls, disclaiming 'Ach my brothers, may God have mercy on you! Will not one of you still loyally fight for the Emperor?'

He died in the coach that took him from the battlefield, still bearing the orders for his recall issued by Wallenstein the night before.



Graf zu Pappenheim

THE BATTLE OF LÜTZEN
16TH NOVEMBER 1632



~12:00
Pappenheim arrives and
the counterattack fails when he
falls mortally wounded.
Croats on right begin
flanking movement.



Gustavus falls



Leading a counter charge in a confused action on their left flank, Imperialist troops fired 'at a man of consequence' leading a squadron before them.

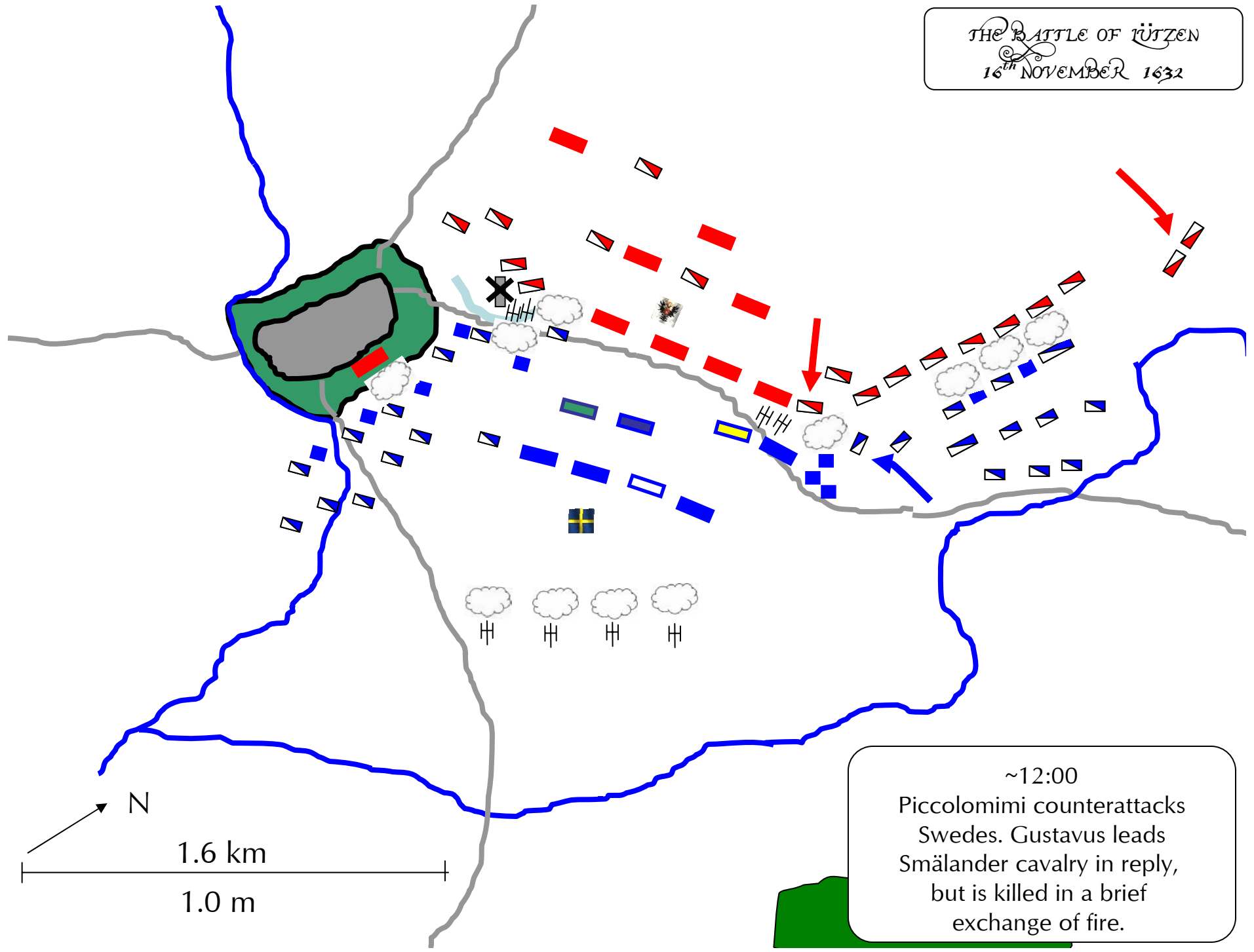
Gustavus Adolphus was hit in the left arm and fell to the ground. Soon after he was run through by sabres, then killed by a shot in his back from Imperialist cuirassiers at close range.

The white horse of Gustavus Adolphus fled to the rear, covered in blood. This was the first sign to the Swedish army of their King's apparent fate.



Fall of Gustavus Adolphus
by Carl Wahlbo

THE BATTLE OF LÜTZEN
16th NOVEMBER 1632



~12:00
Piccolomini counterattacks
Swedes. Gustavus leads
Smålander cavalry in reply,
but is killed in a brief
exchange of fire.

N
1.6 km
1.0 m



DEATH OF GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS AT LUTZEN.



Swedish central attack



The Yellow and Blue brigades of Swedish veterans attacked the Imperialist centre.

'to go boldly at the enemy and not take any heed of their numbers, nor to fire any salvoes until the Imperialist musketeers had fired themselves.'

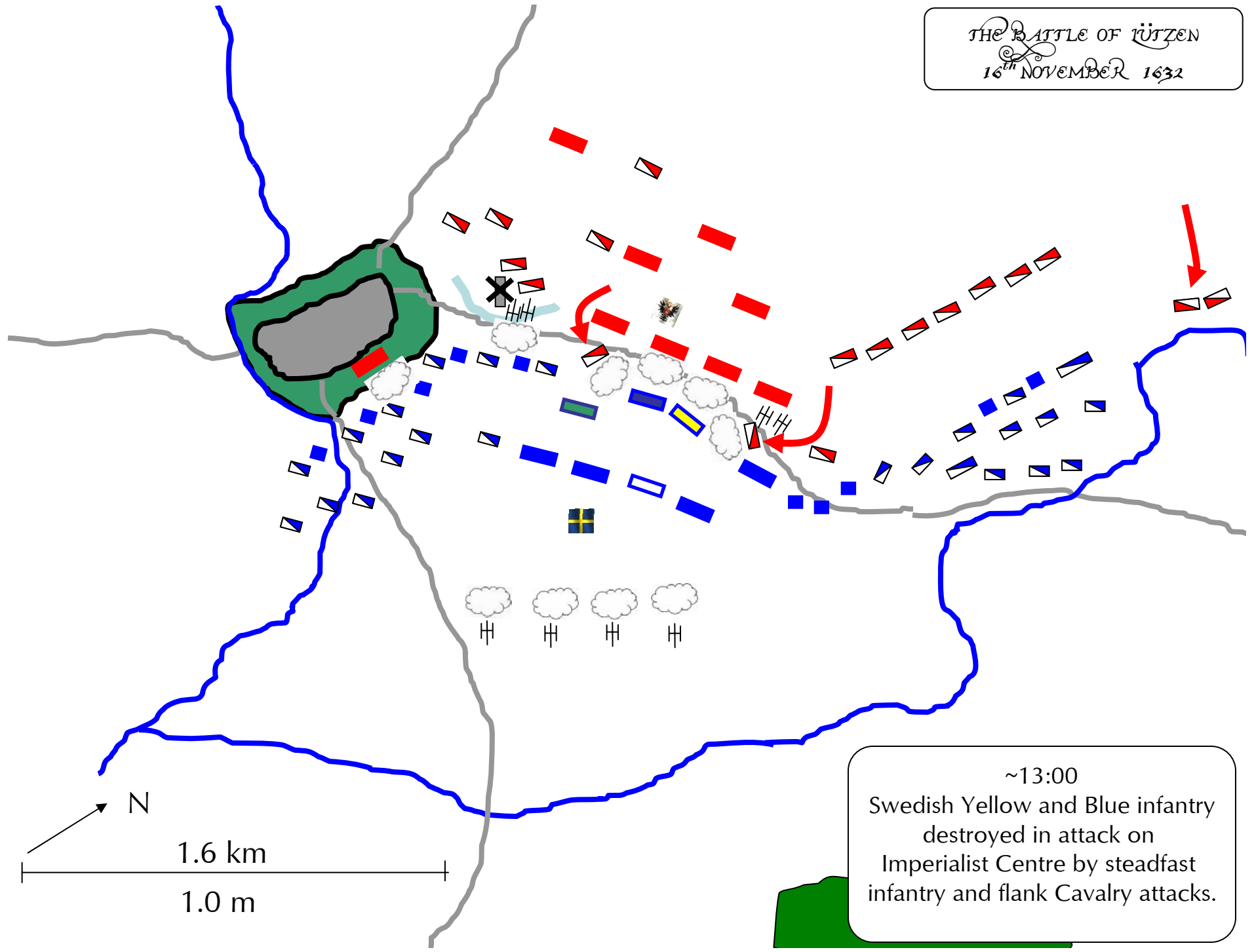
Good to their word, the Swedes closed in, but the veteran Imperialists facing them held their nerve until they opened at point blank range which decimated the Swedes.

Cavalry flanking attacks by the Imperialists soon followed and the Swedish Yellow and Blue brigades ceased to exist as fighting units.



These 2 brigades were of the flower of the Army; old souldiers of 7 or 8 yeers service of whom the King had there placed, for that he most relied upon them...there dear bodies now covered the same ground, which living they had defended. These were old beaten souldiers, indeed, but it was so long since they had last been beaten, they had by this time forgotten how to runne away. Watts, Swedish Intelligencer 1633

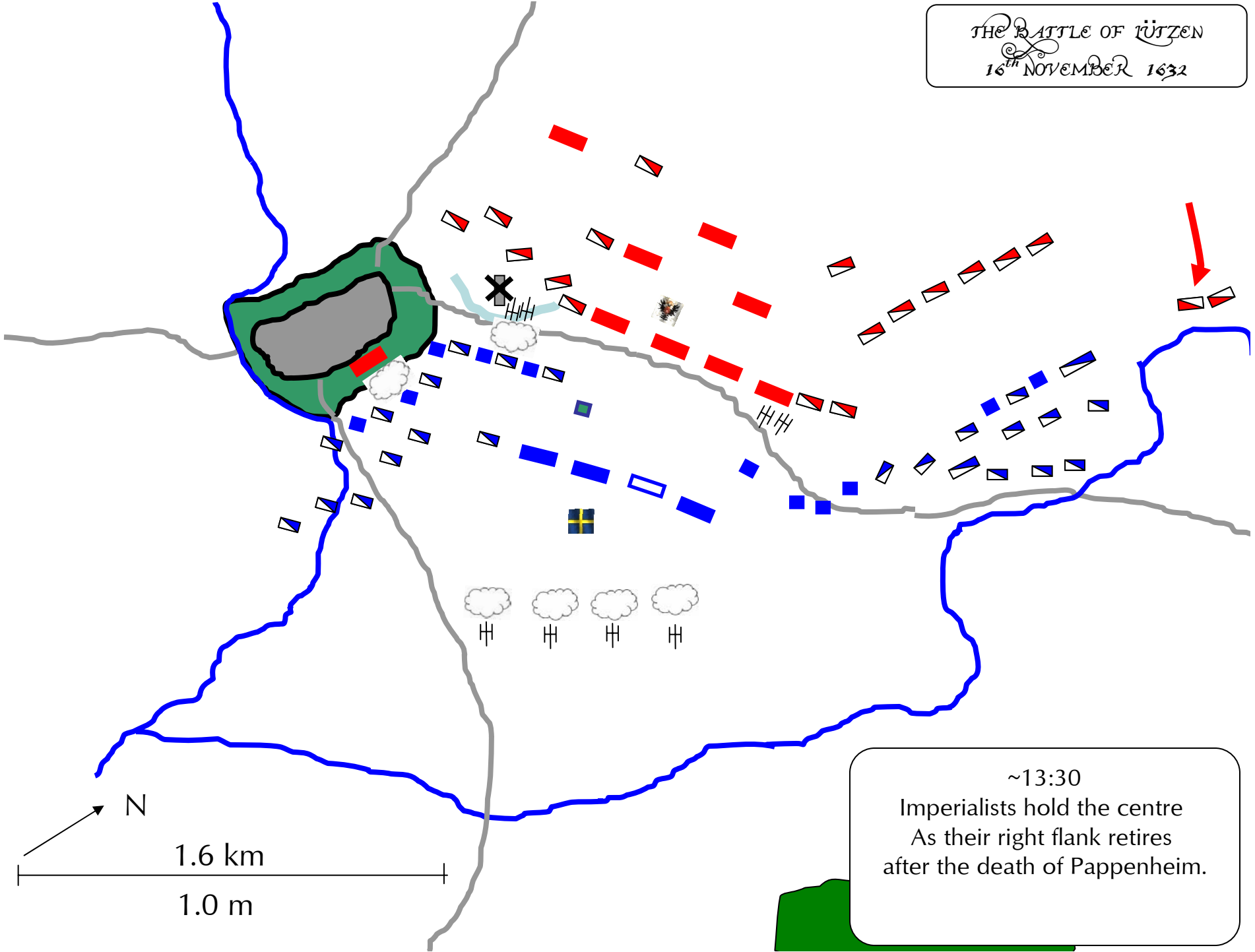
THE BATTLE OF LÜTZEN
16th NOVEMBER 1632



~13:00
Swedish Yellow and Blue infantry
destroyed in attack on
Imperialist Centre by steadfast
infantry and flank Cavalry attacks.



THE BATTLE OF LÜTZEN
16th NOVEMBER 1632



~13:30
Imperialists hold the centre
As their right flank retires
after the death of Pappenheim.



Berhardt attacks the left



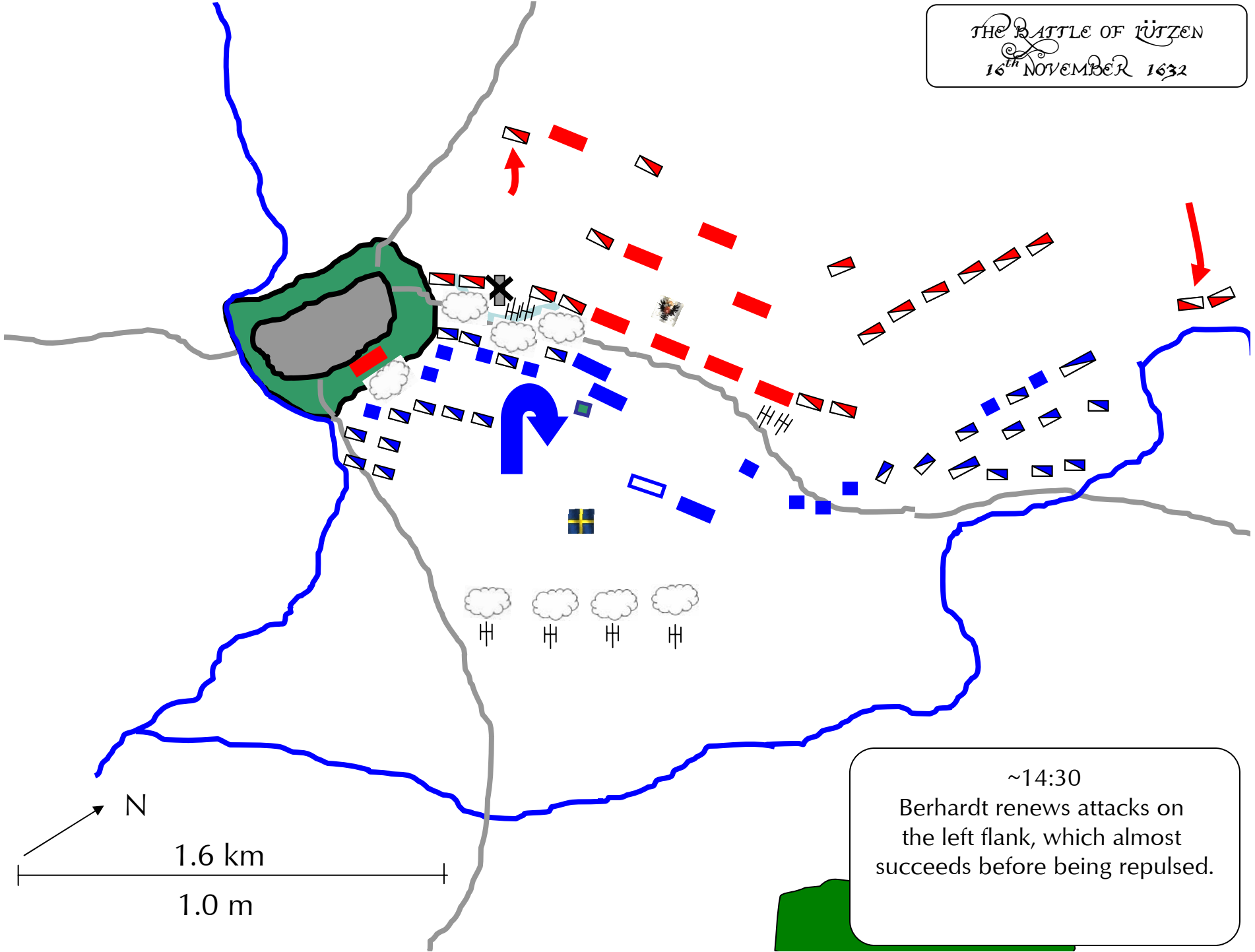
The battle had reached stalemate in the centre, and the attack by the Swedish right wing had petered out following the death of Gustavus Adolphus and Pappenheim.

Prince Berhardt renewed the attack on the left flank, with a view to capturing the area surrounding Lützen and the windmills atop the hill.

The Swedes pushed the Imperialist cavalry back, with Wallenstein acting to rally his men. A counterattack prevailed, and the Swedes retired.



THE BATTLE OF LÜTZEN
16th NOVEMBER 1632



~14:30
Berhardt renews attacks on the left flank, which almost succeeds before being repulsed.



Crisis for the Swedes



After being repulsed on the left and centre, and having suffered the loss of their King, the Swedes began slowly retiring back in confusion.

The King's Chaplain, Fabricus, sensing the urgency of the position began rallying men on the right flank by singing Lutheran hymns.

On the extreme right flank, a wheeling attacking by Croat horsemen was repulsed with loss by Swedish cavalry.

Kynphausen pushed the infantry reserve into the front line in the centre as the King's body was recovered.

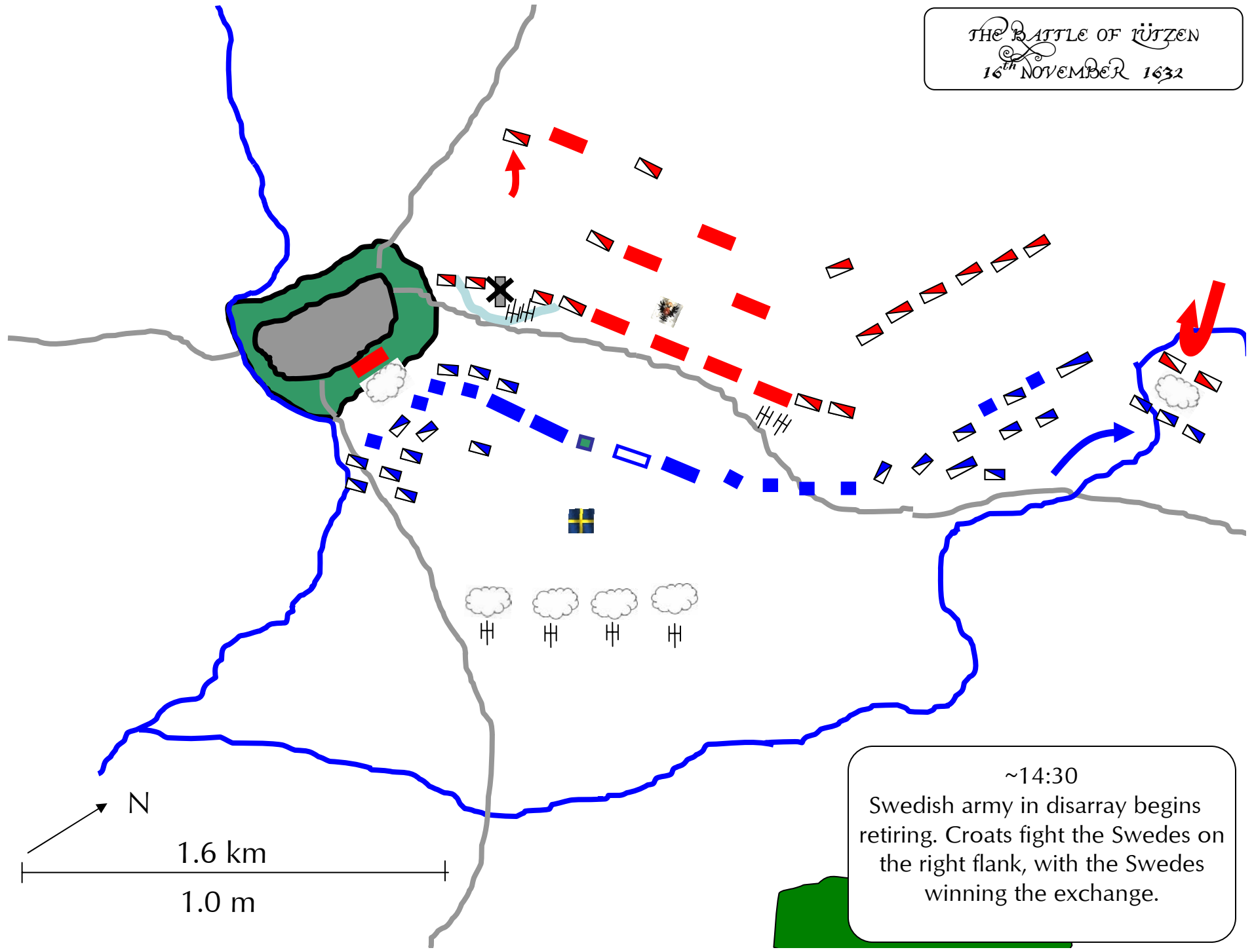


Bernhardt of
Saxe-Weimar

'Retreat! The time for that is past.
It is vengeance now!

Bernhardt to Kynphausen.

THE BATTLE OF LÜTZEN
16th NOVEMBER 1632





Pause



From 3:00 until 3:30 both sides reorganised, preparing themselves for the final onslaught.

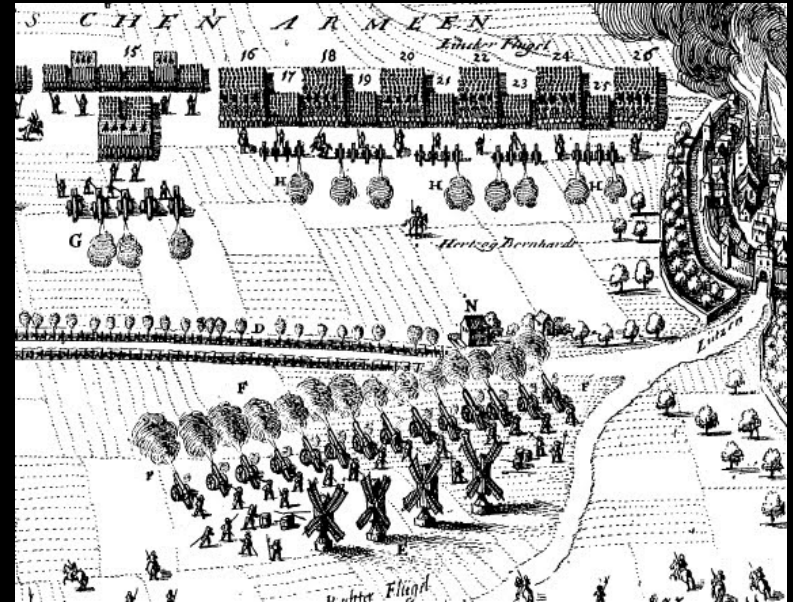
The Swedes prepared to attack again.

‘When the word was given for a new Charge: “alas Camarade” (said the poore soldiers one to another) “must we fall on againe!”

“Come says tother” (embracing him)

“Courage if wee must, lets doe it bravely, and make a day of it”.

Watts Swedish Intelligencer 1633





Battle rejoined and won



The Swedes advanced once more onto the Imperialists line. By now, both sides had suffered many losses.

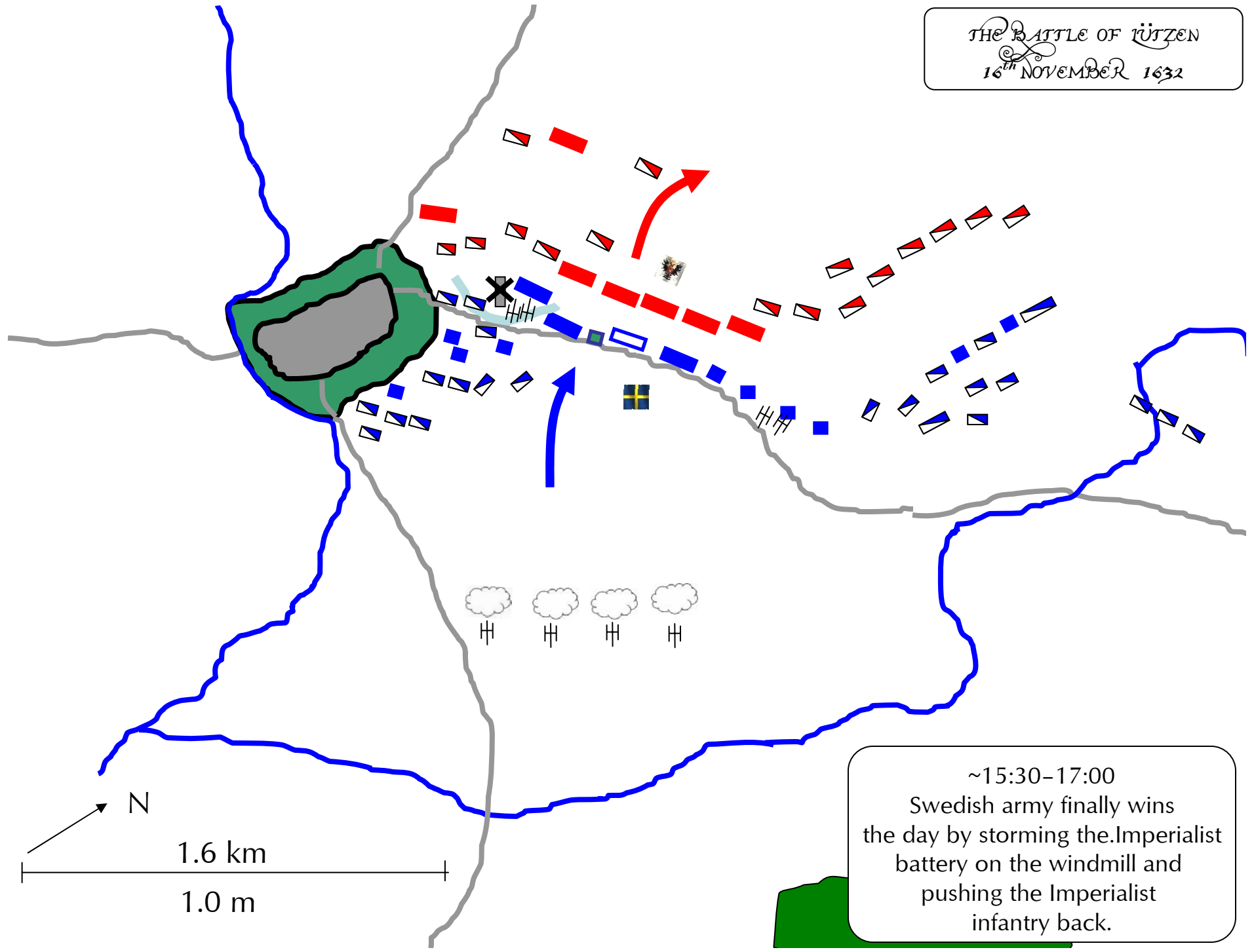
'A fatal earnestness was seen and heard on both sides' as quarter was either asked, nor given as the battle settled to push of pike in the centre.



Nearly all the Imperial commanders were wounded during this final stage of the battle as eventually the Swedes managed to push through and take the guns by the windmill as night fell.

The Imperialists retreated during the night and the battle had been won by the Swedes at great cost.

THE BATTLE OF LÜTZEN
16th NOVEMBER 1632



~15:30-17:00
Swedish army finally wins
the day by storming the Imperialist
battery on the windmill and
pushing the Imperialist
infantry back.



Battle of Lützen - Casualties



Imperialists

4,000 foot and horse
all 26 guns

~21% of total engaged

Swedes & Protestant
Germans

5,000 foot and horse

~26% of total engaged



Euge Serve Fidelis



Medal struck in the memory of Gustavus Adolphus, killed at the Battle of Lützen, 1632. Inscribed with Euge Serve Fidelis (Well done faithful servant), Vel Mortuum Fugiant (Even They Flee Death).

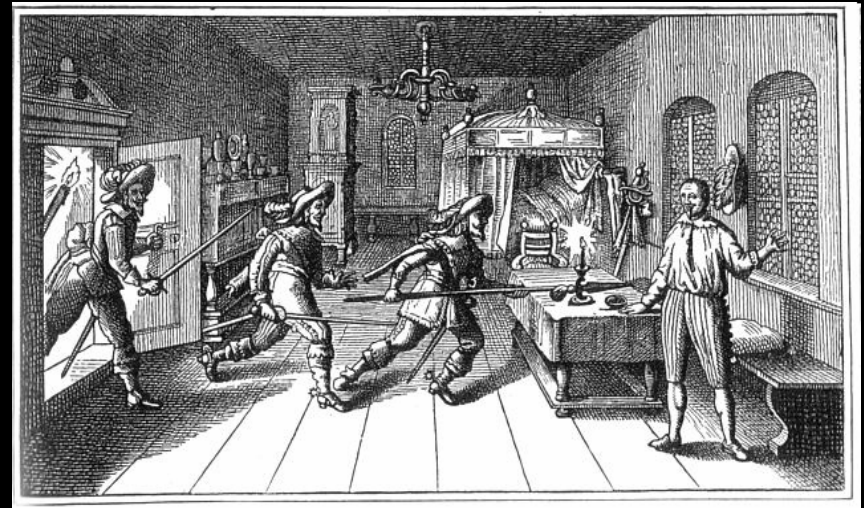


Aftermath



Wallenstein withdrew his army to Leipzig, then back into winter quarters in Bohemia.

The Swedes had successfully driven the Imperialists out of Saxony at the loss of their King and many of their best troops.



Assassination of Wallenstein, 1634

Wallenstein failed to renew the initiative against the Swedes in 1633 and after intrigue was killed on the order of Ferdinand II in February 1634.

The Swedish army and the Imperialists, reinforced by Spanish troops met again on the field of Nördlingen 1634, with the Swedes being crushed. The war now entered a new phase; between France and Spain, ending in 1648.

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