

Prussian Line Infantry Colours in the Campaign of 1866

Introduction

The colours carried by the Prussian Line Infantry during 1866 were not dissimilar to those carried by their forebears during the latter part of the Napoleonic Wars. Indeed, the system established for the post-1806 Prussian army remained more or less in place until the late 19th century.

Each Line Infantry Regiment's three battalions bore a colour, the colours generally remaining furled and protected inside an oilskin cover carried by the standard bearer (*Fahnenträger*) until battle. The battalion colour party (*Fahnensektion*) consisted of the standard bearer (a sergeant), and three NCOs. During the campaign colour parties suffered a number of casualties, as they became the target of enemy fire.

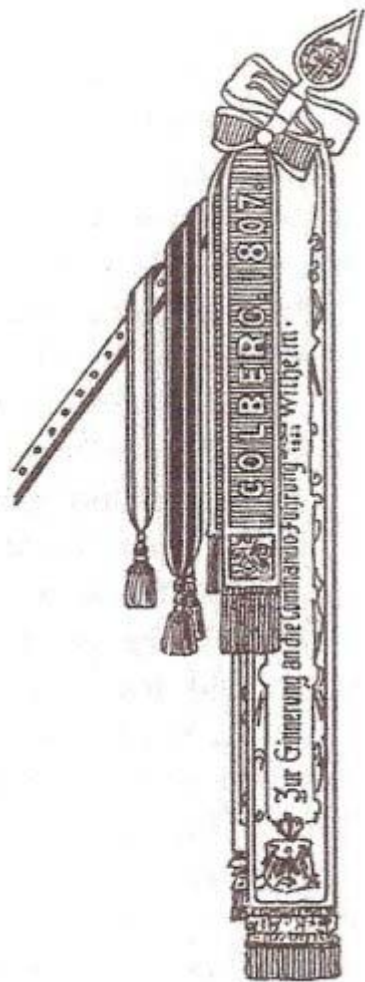
Description of the colours, streamers etc.

The colours carried by the Line Infantry regiments were made from silk, with the designs painted on in oils. They generally measured a little over 5 feet square. The flags were attached to the pole by nails, gilt or silver in colour. The colour of the poles was black for the Line Infantry regiments (although it should be noted that the colours for some of the Grenadier Regiment flagpoles changed between 1866 and 1870). The top of the pole was completed by a pear-shaped flat head of gilded brass, approximately 9½ inches high. This generally bore a cipher and crown or simplified Maltese cross.

The majority of the regiments bore colours issued in the latter part of the Napoleonic Wars, or in 1861. The older regiments, particularly the Grenadier regiments 1-12, carried remnants of flags dating in some cases from the 18th Century.

Unlike some other armies, campaign and battle honours were not painted onto the flag, but denoted by streamers. These were tied to the top of the pole, the oldest streamer at the top and so on down. The following streamers were carried by regiments during the 1866 Campaign:

Prussian National Streamer (*Banderole*) issued to the unit upon presentation of its flag, replaced by the relevant campaign streamer upon participation in its first campaign. Silver with three lengthwise stripes of black silk, black and silver tassels.



1813-15 Campaign Streamer Orange with white (outermost) then black edging, silver tassels.

Streamer denoting Military Badge of Honour (Militär-Ehrenzeichen) Black with black (outermost) then white edging, silver tassels. This was awarded for the campaigns of 1848-49.

1864 Campaign Streamer Black with one edge orange and black (latter outermost) and the other white and black (latter outermost), silver tassels.

Streamer awarded to regiments for the storming of Düppel 1864 Light blue with white (outermost) then black then white edging, silver tassels.

Streamer awarded to regiments for the storming of Alsen 1864 Light blue with orange, white and black and white (latter outermost) edging, silver tassels.

Some of these streamers bore crossed bronze swords, which denoted that they had been borne under enemy fire.

When the battalion's colour or its colour party had come under fire, or indeed the colour had been hit in battle, it was awarded a commemorative ring. Some poles could be decorated with several such rings. These were almost always silver, appeared just below the brass tip and were 1½ - 7" wide.

Once a regiment had been in existence for more than a century it was awarded a centenary band (*Säkular-Fahnenband*). This was basically another type of streamer, of black silk with silver braid edging and fringes, and silver lettering.

The band presented by Queen Augusta was red in its upper part, followed by green and then red at the bottom, with gold embroidery to the sides and fringes at the ends, as well as carrying the Prussian arms and Saxe-Weimar arms. The Colberg band was a battle honour issued by the Hohenzollern royal family, commemorating the 1807 siege. This was of royal blue silk with gold

Fig. 1. Method of attaching streamers to the flagpole.

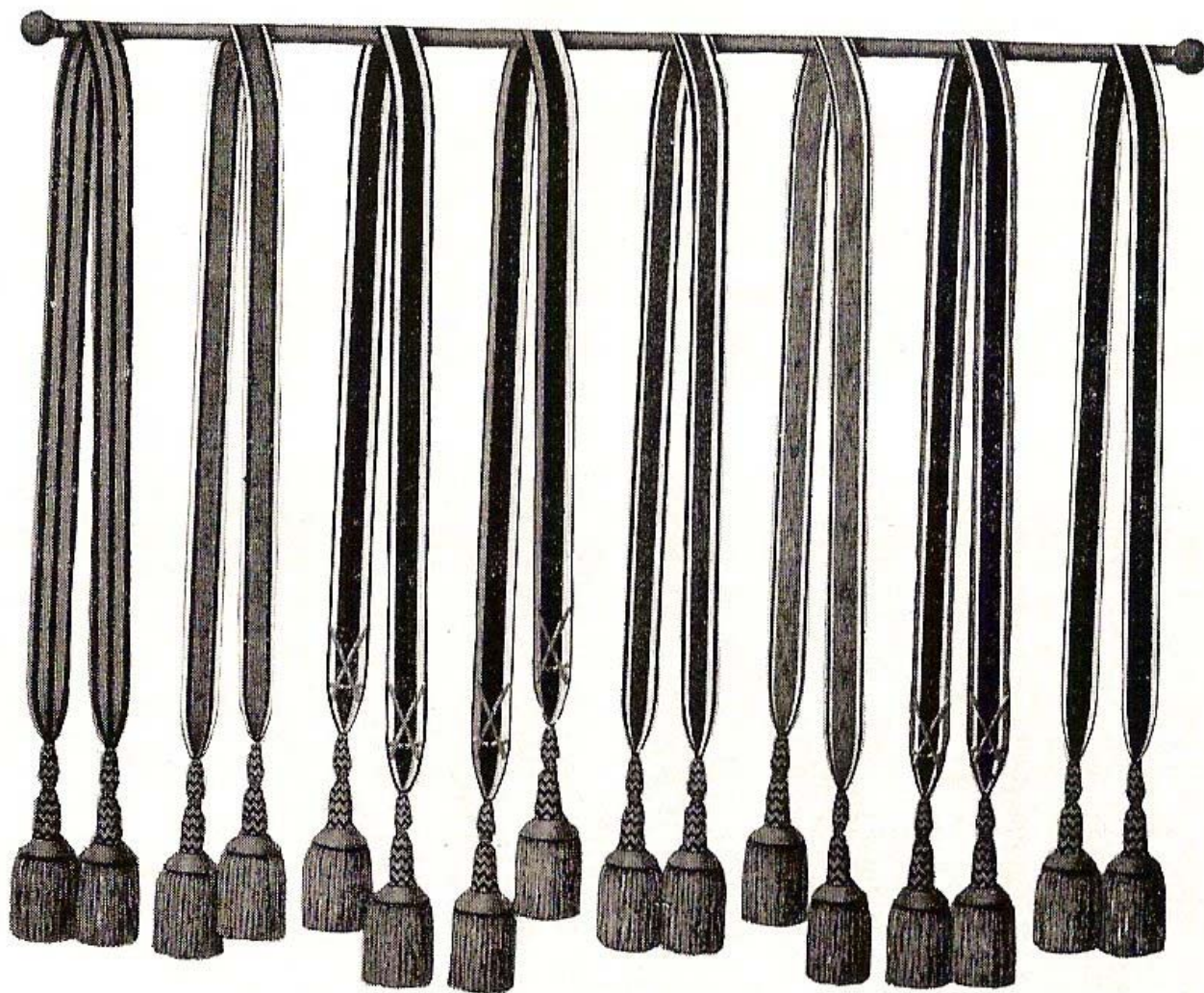


Fig. 2. Campaign Streamers (from left to right: Banderole; 1813/15 Streamer; Militär-Ehrenzeichen Streamer (with Swords) for 1848/49; 1864 Streamer with Swords; Düppel Streamer; Alsen Streamer).

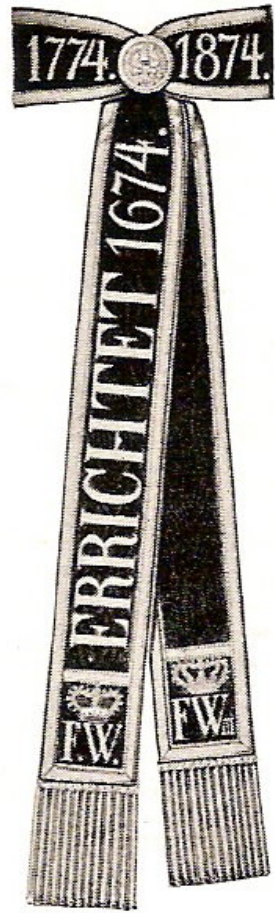


Fig 3.1. Centenary Band.

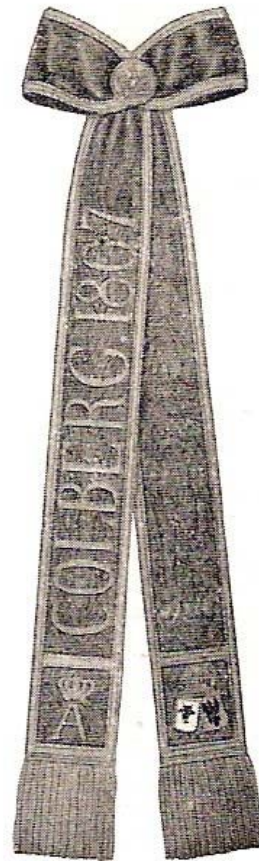


Fig 3.2. Colberg Band.



Fig 3.3. Queen Augusta Band.

embroidery along the edges, and gold fringes with a gold inscription. The King of Saxony awarded a band to the Füsilier Battalion of Infantry Regiment Nr 24, for their role in suppressing a rebellion in Dresden in 1849 (this was also awarded to the 2nd and Füsilier Battalions of the Kaiser Alexander Guard Grenadier Regiment Nr 1). This was white with white (outermost) and green edging, with a gold inscription and tassels and fringes.

The physical condition of the colours in 1866

Since silk does not generally age very well, particularly when painted over, the state of many of the older colours, even those issued less than four decades before the war, was generally very poor. Some of the older Grenadier regiments had virtually bare poles. This state of existence was officially recognised by King Friedrich Wilhelm III, who ordered that flags issued after 1808 constituted a reminder of the victory over the French during the War of Liberation 1813-15, and thus should not be replaced by newer versions.

This particular aspect of Prussian infantry colours caused us some headache when designing the flags to accompany our range of figures. If we were strictly historically accurate, then a large number of the Line Infantry regiments should not receive any flags, and many of the other regiments should carry little more than shreds. However, aware that some gamers sometimes like to bend the historical rules, for wargaming is as much an aesthetic pastime as anything else, we have decided to produce pristine flags, each battalion carrying its historical counterpart with the important caveat that the table below should be consulted to determine the actual condition of the colour in question in 1866. Gamers can then decide whether they wish their units to carry pristine flags, or suitably tatter (or even remove) their flags to present a historically accurate appearance.

Overview table for Prussian Line Infantry colours 1866

<i>Regiment</i>	<i>Flag Type</i>	<i>Issue date</i>	<i>1866 condition</i>	<i>Streamers & Bands</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1/GR1	Pre-1807 A	1769	Destroyed	1813; SF	
2/GR1	Pre-1807 A	1769	Destroyed	1813; SF	
F/GR1	1810	1815	Destroyed	1813; SF	
1/GR2	Pre-1807 B	1810	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs; SF	+ G
2/GR2	Pre-1807 B	1810	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs; SF	+ G

F/GR2	Pre-1807 B	1816	Partially destroyed	1813; SF	
1/GR3	1808L	1810	Destroyed	1813; SF	
2/GR3	1810	1810	Destroyed	1813; SF	
F/GR3	Pre-1807 A	1817	Destroyed	1813; SF	
1/GR4	1808L	1812	Destroyed	1813; SF	
2/GR4	1810	1812	Destroyed	1813; SF	
F/GR4	1810	1812	Destroyed	1813; SF	
1/GR5	Pre-1807 B	1773	Destroyed	1813; SF	
2/GR5	Pre-1807 B	1773	Destroyed	1813; SF	
F/GR5	Pre-1807 B	1815	Destroyed	1813; SF	
1/GR6	Pre-1807 B	1773	Destroyed	1813	+ Sk
2/GR6	Pre-1807 B	1773	Destroyed	1813	+ Sk, Schw
F/GR6	Pre-1807 B	1773	Destroyed	1813	
1/GR7	Pre-1807 C	1798	Destroyed	1813; QA	+ Sk
2/GR7	Pre-1807 C	1798	Destroyed	1813	+ Sk
F/GR7	Pre-1807 C	1823	Destroyed	1813	+ N
1/GR8	1808L	1808	Destroyed	1813; CB; 1864s; DK	
2/GR8	1810*	1808	Destroyed	1813; CB; 1864s; DK	
F/GR8	1810*	1808	Destroyed	1813; 1864s; DK	
1/GR9	1810*	1813	Mostly destroyed	1813; CB	
2/GR9	1810*	1808	Mostly destroyed	1813; CB	
F/GR9	1810*	1816	Mostly destroyed	1813; CB	
1/GR10	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; 1864	
2/GR10	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; 1864	
F/GR10	1810	1823	Mostly destroyed	1813; 1864	
1/GR11	Pre-1807 A	1809	Destroyed	1813	
2/GR11	Pre-1807 A	1809	Destroyed	1813	

F/GR11	Pre-1807 A	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813	
1/GR12	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs	
2/GR12	1810	1815	Partially destroyed	1813; MEZs	
F/GR12	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs	
1/IR13	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; 1864s; DK; AK	
2/IR13	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; 1864s; DK; AK	+ Z
F/IR13	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; 1864s; DK; AK	
1/IR14	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813	
2/IR14	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813	
F/IR14	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813	+ K
1/IR15	1810	1815	Destroyed	1813; MEZs; 1864s	+ Ki
2/IR15	1810	1815	Partially destroyed	1813; MEZs; 1864s; AK	+ De
F/IR15	1810	1815	Partially destroyed	1813; MEZs; 1864s; AK	
1/IR16	1810	1815	Partially destroyed	1813	
2/IR16	1810	1815	Partially destroyed	1813	
F/IR16	1810	1815	Partially destroyed	1813	
1/IR17	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs	
2/IR17	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs	
F/IR17	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs	
1/IR18	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; 1864s; DK	
2/IR18	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; 1864s; DK	
F/IR18	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; 1864s; DK	
1/IR19	1810	1815	Destroyed	1813	+ Ki
2/IR19	1810	1815	Destroyed	1813	
F/IR19	1810	1815	Destroyed	1813	+ Ki
1/IR20	1810	1816	Partially destroyed	1813; MEZs	
2/IR20	1810	1816	Partially destroyed	1813; MEZs	

F/IR20	1810	1816	Partially destroyed	1813; MEZs	
1/IR21	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813	
2/IR21	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813	
F/IR21	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813	
1/IR22	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813	
2/IR22	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813	
F/IR22	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813	
1/IR23	1810	1815	Partially destroyed	1813	
2/IR23	1810	1815	Partially destroyed	1813	
F/IR23	1810	1816	Partially destroyed	1813	
1/IR24	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs, 1864s; AK	
2/IR24	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs; DB; 1864s; DK; AK	
F/IR24	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs; 1864s; DK; AK	
1/IR25	1810	1816	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs	
2/IR25	1810	1816	Mostly destroyed	1813	+ La
F/IR25	1810	1815	Partially destroyed	1813; MEZs	
1/IR26	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs	+ K
2/IR26	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813	+ K
F/IR26	1810	1815	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs	+ K
1/IR27	1810	1816	Partially destroyed	1813	+ K
2/IR27	1810	1816	Mostly destroyed	1813	+ K
F/IR27	1810	1816	Partially destroyed	1813; MEZs	+ K
1/IR28	1810	1816	Partially destroyed	1813; MEZs	
2/IR28	1810	1816	Partially destroyed	1813; MEZs	+ K
F/IR28	1810	1816	Partially destroyed	1813; MEZs	+ Mgr, K
1/IR29	1810	1816	Mostly destroyed	1813	+ K
2/IR29	1810	1816	Mostly destroyed	1813	

F/IR29	1810	1816	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs	
1/IR30	1810	1816	Partially destroyed	1813; MEZs	
2/IR30	1810	1816	Mostly destroyed	1813	+ H
F/IR30	1810	1816	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs	
1/IR31	1810	1816	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs	
2/IR31	1810	1816	Mostly destroyed	1813	
F/IR31	1810	1816	Mostly destroyed	1813; MEZs	+ K, B
1/IR32	1820	1825	Good		
2/IR32	1820	1825	Partially destroyed		
F/IR32	1828	1843	Good		
1/FR33	1810	1816	Good		
2/FR33	1820	1827	Good		+ Hu
3/FR33	1828	1861	Good		
1/FR34	1815L1	1816	Partially destroyed		
2/FR34	1815L2	1820	Partially destroyed		
3/FR34	1828	1861	Good		
1/FR35	1820	1826	Mostly destroyed	1864s; DK; AK	+ K
2/FR35	1820	1826	Mostly destroyed	1864s; DK; AK	
3/FR35	1828	1861	Good	1864s; DK; AK	
1/FR36	1820	1826	Good		+ Ü
2/FR36	1820	1826	Good		
3/FR36	1828	1861	Good		
1/FR37	1820	1828	Good		+ N, Sk
2/FR37	1820	1828	Good		+ N
3/FR37	1828	1861	Good		+ Sk
1/FR38	1820	1828	Good	MEZs	
2/FR38	1820	1828	Good		

3/FR38	1828	1861	Good	
1/FR39	1828	1829	Good	
2/FR39	1828	1829	Good	
3/FR39	1828	1861	Good	
1/FR40	1828	1829	Good	
2/FR40	1828	1829	Good	
3/FR40	1828	1861	Good	+ K
1/IR41	1828	1861	Good	+ K
2/IR41	1828	1861	Good	+ K
F/IR41	1828	1861	Good	
1/IR42	1828	1861	Good	
2/IR42	1828	1861	Good	+ K
F/IR42	1828	1861	Good	+ G
1/IR43	1828	1861	Good	+ T
2/IR43	1828	1861	Good	
F/IR43	1828	1861	Good	+ T
1/IR44	1828	1861	Good	
2/IR44	1828	1861	Good	+ K
F/IR44	1828	1861	Good	
1/IR45	1828	1861	Good	+ T
2/IR45	1828	1861	Good	+ T
F/IR45	1828	1861	Good	
1/IR46	1828	1861	Good	
2/IR46	1828	1861	Good	+ Schw
F/IR46	1828	1861	Good	+ N
1/IR47	1828	1861	Good	+ Sk
2/IR47	1828	1861	Good	+ ?

F/IR47	1828	1861	Good		+ Sk
1/IR48	1828	1861	Good	1864s	+ K
2/IR48	1828	1861	Good	1864s	+ G
F/IR48	1828	1861	Good	1864s	+ G
1/IR49	1828	1861	Good		+ K
2/IR49	1828	1861	Good		+ K
F/IR49	1828	1861	Good		
1/IR50	1828	1861	Good	1864s	
2/IR50	1828	1861	Good	1864s	
F/IR50	1828	1861	Good	1864s	+ K
1/IR51	1828	1861	Good		+ K
2/IR51	1828	1861	Good		+ Sk, K
F/IR51	1828	1861	Good		+ K
1/IR52	1828	1861	Good	1864s	+ Sk
2/IR52	1828	1861	Good	1864s	+ N
F/IR52	1828	1861	Good	1864s	
1/IR53	1828	1861	Good	1864s; DK; AK	+ Z, Ki
2/IR53	1828	1861	Good	1864s; DK; AK	+ Ki
F/IR53	1828	1861	Good	1864s; DK; AK	+ Z, Ge
1/IR54	1828	1861	Good		+ G, K
2/IR54	1828	1861	Good		+ K
F/IR54	1828	1861	Good		+ K
1/IR55	1828	1861	Good	1864s; DK; AK	+ Ki, A, Taub
2/IR55	1828	1861	Good	1864s; AK	
F/IR55	1828	1861	Good	1864s; AK	+ A
1/IR56	1828	1861	Good		+ K
2/IR56	1828	1861	Good		+ Mgr, K

F/IR56	1828	1861	Good		+ K
1/IR57	1828	1861	Good		+ K
2/IR57	1828	1861	Good		
F/IR57	1828	1861	Good		+ ?
1/IR58	1828	1861	Good		
2/IR58	1828	1861	Good		
F/IR58	1828	1861	Good		
1/IR59	1828	1861	Good		
2/IR59	1828	1861	Good		+ Ü
F/IR59	1828	1861	Good		
1/IR60	1828	1861	Good	1864s; DK; AK	+ K
2/IR60	1828	1861	Good	1864s; AK	+ K
F/IR60	1828	1861	Good	1864s; DK; AK	
1/IR61	1828	1861	Good		
2/IR61	1828	1861	Good		
F/IR61	1828	1861	Good		
1/IR62	1828	1861	Good		
2/IR62	1828	1861	Good		
F/IR62	1828	1861	Good		
1/IR63	1828	1861	Good		
2/IR63	1828	1861	Good		
F/IR63	1828	1861	Good		
1/IR64	1828	1861	Good	1864s; DK; AK	
2/IR64	1828	1861	Good	1864s; AK	
F/IR64	1828	1861	Good	1864s; DK; AK	
1/IR65	1828	1861	Good		
2/IR65	1828	1861	Good		+ K

F/IR65	1828	1861	Good	
1/IR66	1828	1861	Good	+ K
2/IR66	1828	1861	Good	+ K
F/IR66	1828	1861	Good	+ K
1/IR67	1828	1861	Good	+ K
2/IR67	1828	1861	Good	+ K
F/IR67	1828	1861	Good	+ Mgr, K
1/IR68	1828	1861	Good	+ K
2/IR68	1828	1861	Good	+ K
F/IR68	1828	1861	Good	+ K
1/IR69	1828	1861	Good	
2/IR69	1828	1861	Good	
F/IR69	1828	1861	Good	+ K
1/IR70	1828	1861	Good	
2/IR70	1828	1861	Good	
F/IR70	1828	1861	Good	
1/IR71	1828	1861	Good	+ K
2/IR71	1828	1861	Good	+ K, B
F/IR71	1828	1861	Good	+ K, B
1/IR72	1828	1861	Good	+ K
2/IR72	1828	1861	Good	
F/IR72	1828	1861	Good	

Key to the table:

Regiment: 1/GR1, 2/GR1 = 1st/2nd Battalion, Grenadier Regiment Nr 1, F/GR1 = Füsilier Battalion, Grenadier Regiment Nr 1. IR = Infantry Regiment.

Streamers & Bands: 1813 = 1813-15 Campaign Streamer; 1864(s) = 1864 Campaign Streamer (s = with Swords); AK = Streamer awarded for the storming of Alsen 1864; CB = Colberg Band; DB = Dresden Band; DK = Streamer awarded for the storming of the Düppel Forts 1864; MEZs = *Militär-Ehrenzeichen* Band with Swords; QA = Queen Augusta Band; SF = Centenary Band.

Flag types: Pre-1807 types A, B & C = patterns essentially identical to colours carried during the Seven Years War; 1808L = 1808 *Leibfahne*; 1810 = 1810 pattern Line Infantry flag; 1810* = pattern very similar to standard 1810 pattern Line Infantry flag, but with some aspects unique to Grenadier Regiment Nrs 8 & 9; 1815L1 & 1815L2 = colours unique to Infantry Regiment Nr 34, although not dissimilar in pattern to 1808 *Leibfahne* carried by some of the Grenadier regiments; 1820 = 1820 pattern Line Infantry flag; 1828 = 1828 pattern Line Infantry flag. See our range of flag sheets for images.

Notes: + denotes colour damaged during the campaign by enemy fire, followed by letters denoting action or battle in which damage occurred. Key to these are as follows (the number in brackets denotes number of colours that suffered damage during a particular action, possibly interesting indicators towards the intensity of fighting):

A	Aschaffenburg	West Germany (2)
B	Blumenau	Bohemia (3)
De	Dermbach	West Germany (1)
G	Gitschin	Bohemia (6)
Ge	Gerchsheim	West Germany (1)
H	Helmstadt	West Germany (1)
Hu	Hühnerwasser	Bohemia (1)
K	Königgrätz	Bohemia (48)
Ki	Kissingen	West Germany (6)
La	Langensalza	West Germany (1)
Mgr	Münchengrätz	Bohemia (3)
N	Nachod	Bohemia (5)
Schw	Schweinschädel	Bohemia (2)
Sk	Skalitz	Bohemia (10)
T	Trautenau	Bohemia (4)

Taub Tauberbischofsheim West Germany (1)
U Üttingen West Germany (2)
Z Zella West Germany (3)

Further reading

Researching the subject was extremely time-consuming, and no easy matter. The following sources were consulted:

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