

Notes On Napoleonic Bavarian Flags

Bavaria fought both with and against France during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars and its constantly changing flags reflect its fortunes during those wars.

The Wittelsbach rulers started the wars as Dukes and Electors of the Holy Roman Empire and ended them as Kings of an independent Bavaria – hence the split into two sets of flag designs, Ducal and Royal.

Which flags were carried by which regiments at any specific time seems not to be known in most cases – at least that is what my sources say. They also say that even the earliest types of flag were still in use after Bavaria sided with the Allies against France in 1813-14.

Bavaria is certainly a place where tradition matters so it may simply be that regiments kept their flags, unless actually lost in battle, and only then, or when newly raised, did new designs get issued. I don't know but that seems as good a guess as any.

For this reason I have no realistic estimate of what the frequency of any one design was and so I have put roughly the same number of each type or variant on the sheets. If anybody can advise me of better information on which designs were or were not common at different times, I'd be grateful and would re-work the sheet designs. Similarly, if anyone wants specific designs in greater proportion then just e-mail me and I'll see what I can do.

The flags on all sheets in the range are labelled as in the list below :

Ducal Bavaria

LA - 1788 Leibfahne
RA - 1788 Regimentsfahne
LB - 1800-03 Leibfahne
RB - 1800-03 Regimentsfahne
RC - 1800-03 Alt Reg'fahne
LC - 1803 Leibfahne
RF - 1803 Regimentsfahne

Royal Bavaria

LD - 1806 Leibfahne
RD - 1806 Regimentsfahne
LE - 1808 Leibfahne
LF - 1808 Alternate Leibfahne
RE - 1808 Regimentsfahne
RF - 1813 Regimentsfahne

- LA & RA are the flags used at the start of the Rev. War in 1792 with the horrendously complex arms of Pfalz-Bayern
- LB & RB come some time between 1800 & 1803 and show only the arms of Bavaria
- RC is a variant of RB with only 2 rows of lozenges in the border – there is also one with 4 rows but I felt that was going a bit far
- LC was supposedly introduced to be used by units raised in Protestant states incorporated into Bavaria – it no longer has the Virgin on it
- RF (in two variants – there were probably more) was issued in 1803, possibly to newly raised units. The same design (possibly even the same flags ?) were issued again in 1813 to units that had lost their colours in the retreat from Russia
- LD & RD are the first designs for the Kingdom. They are just variants of LC & RB with the Ducal cap replaced by a crown
- LE & RE hark back to some elements of the 1788 design but set against an ermine mantle, as on the 1800-1806 designs
- LF is a variant of LE, without the lozengy border

Appropriate pairings would be : LA & RA; LB & RB, RC or RF; LD & RD, LE or LF & RE or RF

Up to 1801 one Leibfahne and 1 Regimentsfahne were carried per regiment. In 1801 two of each and in 1803 one Leib & three Reg. From 1804 onwards it was back to one of each, the Leib. carried by 1st Bn and the Regt. by the 2nd.