



Armies of Bismarck's Wars: The Army of Prussia- History, Uniforms and Equipment, 1860-1867

Bruce Basset Powell

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On July 3rd, 1866 a Prussian army overwhelmed and defeated an Austrian army near the fortress city of Königgrätz in a bloody battle that lasted all day. At a stroke, the foremost power in Germany and central Europe had been reduced to a second rate player. The event caused anxiety and alarm in the capitals of the western world. How was an upstart country like Prussia able to upset the balance of power in Europe? Only sixteen years before it had been put in its place by Austria with the treaty of Olmütz. Its performance as an Austrian ally had been less than stellar in the 2nd Schleswig War of 1864 despite its defeat of the Danes at Düppel. Yet within five years a Prussian led army would humble France and a Prussian King would be crowned Emperor of a united Germany. The history of the world would be changed forever.

The story of this army is the subject of a new book by Bruce Bassett-Powell *The Armies of Bismarck's Wars – Prussia 1860-1867*. He chronicles its growth from the end of the Napoleonic Wars to the reforms of the eighteen sixties followed by a full account of the wars against Denmark in 1864 and Austria in 1866. He shows how the confluence of three men's lives; King William I, Helmuth von Moltke and Otto von Bismarck provided the essential ingredients that created this victorious army. The growth and influence of the General Staff is examined along with the recruitment and training of officers and men. He fully describes the organization of the army and the fledgling navy as well as the weapons with which they fought. In particular he gives a detailed account of their dress and accoutrements accompanied by 24 full page color illustrations depicting over 70 uniforms.

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