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Coehoorn's New Method at Namur, 1695.

Introduction

Year after year Louis XIV's armies thrust through Brabant in the eastern part of the Spanish Netherlands, the biggest theatre of the Nine Years' War (1689-97). These thrusts followed the general line of the rivers Sambre and Meuse. Namur, 'the rampart of Brabant', nestled strategically at their confluence.¹ Its capture by the French in 1692 and re-capture by the Allies three years later constituted the defining events of the war. It was the greatest success won by William of Orange, stadholder of the United Provinces, King William III of England, Scotland and Ireland, and linchpin of the Grand Alliance against Louis XIV.²

The 1695 siege was a drama in two acts. After capturing the town the Allies had still to prise the French out of the château looming overhead atop a craggy plateau. Taken at its broadest, this was the biggest operation of the war. Towards the end of August when Marshal Villeroi marched to relieve Namur a quarter of a million men stood within two hours' march of the town, if one counts attackers, defenders, the army covering the siege, and the army trying to break through.³

This paper will evaluate the second act in the context of Allied siegecraft up to the mid-1690s with particular attention to three interrelated issues.

The first is the tension between 'efficiency' and 'vigour'.⁴ There were 'two ways' to take the covered way, that calloused outer skin of Baroque fortification: sapping or storming.⁵ Sapping was 'best, surest and cheapest in

human life' insisted admirers of Vauban, even if such caution cost a few days more. ⁶ Saps were dug up the glacis to within grenade-throwing distance of, perhaps, three salient angles on the covered way, a small party of grenadiers stormed the angles, other waves followed in graduated increments and all the while a larger body within musket shot drove off counter-attacks. ⁷ From the salient the attackers could then burrow along the crest of the glacis and thus render the adjacent stretches of covered way untenable. A prudent governor capitulated once the besieger had taken the covered way and was thereby in a position to point his battering guns at the base of the main ramparts.

Alternatively a massed attack over open ground by thousands of storm troops could cut corners and save time. ⁸ Critics of Vauban's methods, Allied and French, dismissed his 'precise balancing of casualties, delays and costs' and lauded 'vigour'. ⁹

This 'fundamental rift' between saving time and saving lives has also been represented as a conflict of codes between the macho 'heroism' of the warrior aristocrat and the 'technique' of the bourgeois engineer but it was not so simple. ¹⁰ The technical direction of sieges was often divided between the commander of the artillery and the engineer-in-chief in a quarrelsome relationship in which gunner officers tended to be more 'heroic' than their engineering counterparts. ¹¹

The equation of time lost and lives saved by sapping up the glacis could be misleading. Methodical delay could cost dearly in death through sickness and privation. Even Vauban would accelerate the attack if the defences were

poor or undermanned or when time was really short, for instance when it was dangerously late in the campaigning season: his third attack on the covered way of Charleroi in 1693 cost 600 casualties. ¹² French critics of Vauban lauded the Dutchman Menno Von Coehoorn as his antithesis. Yet senior English and Dutch officers grumbled that Coehoorn was also too cautious, ‘more nice than wise’, and unduly squeamish about the human cost of a storm. ¹³

A second issue to be explored is the emergence of a ‘new method’ heavily reliant on ‘great fire from cannon & bombs’ for capturing ‘places or at least speeding their capture & saving lives’.¹⁴ The ‘prodigious’ number of artillery pieces struck Feuquières as what was really ‘different’ about this ‘new method’ as used at Namur in 1695. ¹⁵ We can see this escalation before and during the war so that by the War of the Spanish Succession up to 300 guns

Table 1

Luxembourg	1684	76
Mons	1691	130
Namur	1692	127
Charleroi	1693	149

Number of Artillery Pieces : French Sieges

were normally deployed in the bigger sieges. ¹⁶Moreover, the aims of artillery grew more ambitious. Guns had always been used to knock breaches in ramparts and persuade defenders to keep their heads down while the

besiegers dug their approach trenches. In the 1670s Germans first massed mortars not just to sweep defenders from the covered way but to cast fire bombs and combustible 'carcasses' into civilian buildings.¹⁷ Now gunfire and mortar bombardment could, proponents hoped, reduce systematic trench warfare, digging, to a subordinate role. A biography of Menno von Coehoorn penned by his son has his father making similar claims before Namur: 'non-stop bombardment and shelling would destroy this large garrison' and, he added as a seeming afterthought, 'cover those digging the approaches'.¹⁸ Childs claims that incessant heavy fire from guns and mortars killed, wounded, and demoralized so many men in the château of Namur that they were, in effect, 'bombarded into surrender'.¹⁹ But were they really? Just how important were shot and bomb in determining the outcome of this operation?

This siege made the reputation of Menno von Coehoorn as an expert practitioner of the new method. A later frontispiece portrait in one of his works on fortification shows him pointing towards an enemy fort or town and the accompanying caption reads 'Ignibus hic aderit': 'He will get there by firepower'.²⁰ But did firepower really win the château of Namur for Coehoorn? Moreover, what credit is due to William III and to Max Emanuel Elector of Bavaria? One or both men were present and active throughout the entire siege.

Context

I have chosen a number of Allied sieges for comparative purposes because, among other reasons, one of the three main actors at the siege of

Namur's château –William, Max Emanuel and Coehoorn–was present at all of them. The actual siege of the château, excluding the covering and relieving armies, does not stand out as an exceptionally big operation.

Table 2

		Besiegers' artillery pieces	Besiegers (thousands)	Defenders (thousands)	Capitulation after (days)
Mainz 1689	²¹	131	60	9	47
Bonn 1689	²²	280	60	8	24
Limerick 1690	²³	32	25	10	<i>n/a</i>
Huy 1694	²⁴	83	23.8	1.5	9
Namur (town) 1695	²⁵	150	50	13	24
Namur (château) 1695	²⁶	210	27	8	21

Allied Sieges: Some Comparisons

Table 2 shows, for instance, that Charles of Lorraine had far more men to besiege Mainz. We are told that the artillery 'never stopped firing', did a 'world of damage' and inflicted 'quite heavy' casualties on the besieged.²⁷ Such anecdotal evidence surely exaggerates the destructive impact of Allied artillery because statistics corroborate competing claims that the garrison 'hardly suffered' from the artillery fire. ²⁸The garrison of Mainz had numbered up to 9,000 men at the outset and 6,690 marched out after the capitulation. ²⁹ Many of the casualties had fallen sick and, of those killed or wounded, up to 1,000 fell in man-to-man fighting. The guns did what they

always did; raze towers, batter bastions, and dismount enemy guns while mortar fire kept enemy heads down.³⁰ Meanwhile the attackers took fairly light casualties as they sapped towards the covered way fronting five of the fourteen main salients: just 206 in the six nights of digging that brought the approaches to within 150 paces of the covered way.³¹ When the saps had snaked up to the crest of the glacis over 5,000 men, in distinct attacks, stormed the covered way on 6 September. ³² The Imperialist attack secured only footholds on the glacis while the other attack led by the Elector of Bavaria punched through the double palisade and dug in at a salient angle of the covered way itself. The 2,000 casualties made this 'one of the bloodiest actions ever seen'. ³³ The storm was so bloody because the columns 'marched openly' and the Bavarian columns from quite a distance away. Moreover, the storm troops spent two whole hours exposed to withering fire on top of the glacis before winning the fire fight over the defenders and setting about building lodgements on the glacis. ³⁴ The French governor of Mainz then capitulated. ³⁵ D'Uxelles justified his capitulation by pointing out that the existing scale of stores was no longer adequate because nothing like the weight and intensity of the besieger's artillery fire had been seen before. War minister Louvois was convinced and thereafter doubled the supply of gunpowder for such garrisons. ³⁶

Meanwhile at Bonn, Friedrich I, Elector of Brandenburg quickly captured a redoubt on the opposite bank of the Rhine to the city. ³⁷ From there he hoped to shoot and bomb the French into surrender. His gunners opened fire with

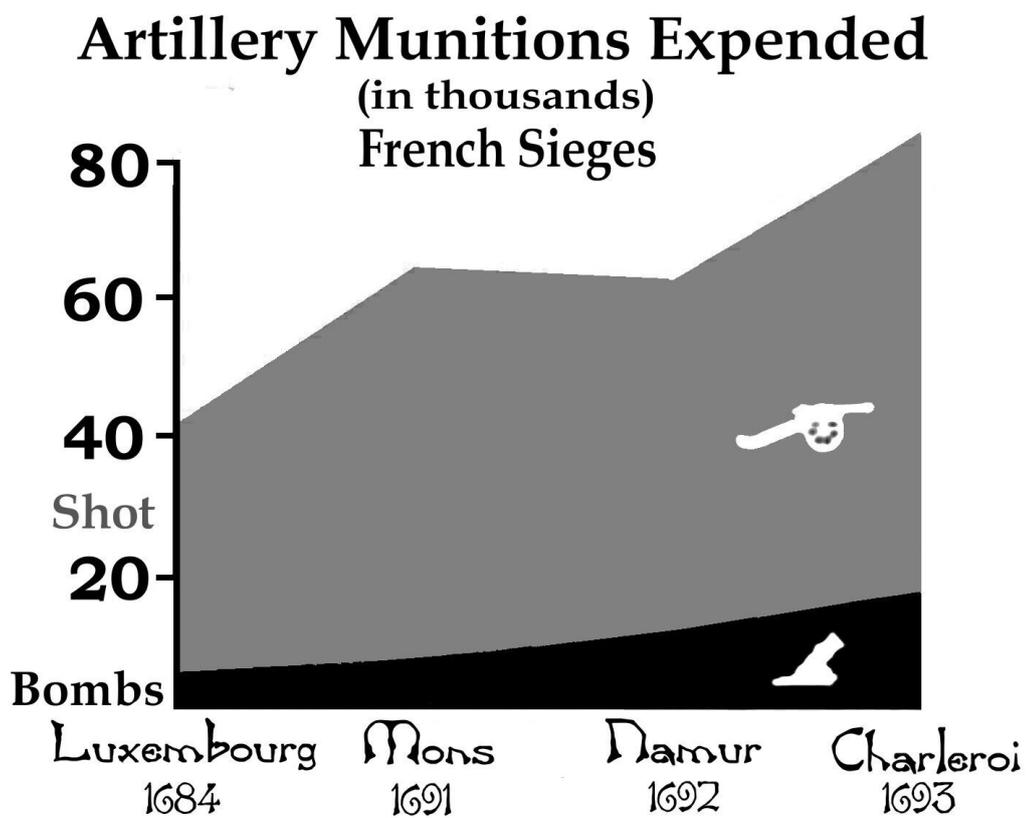
100 cannon, 46 mortars and 4 howitzers (short-barrelled guns firing at a relatively high angle trajectory) 'all at once', and also lobbed 7-8,000 bombs into the city in just a few days. ³⁸ Red hot shot and bombs set fires so bright that a besieger could read a letter by the light of flames that consumed every building except the castle and the Romanesque *Bonner Münster* whose five towers dominated the townscape. While the interior of the town was largely burnt to cinders, the French hunkered down in vaulted cellars under the castle and in whatever shelter they could scrape on the defensive perimeter. ³⁹ With water mills destroyed, they laboriously grind grain with stones and were reduced to eating thin gruel with unsalted meat and drinking water. ⁴⁰

The artillery blitz failed to force a capitulation. Dismayed by the slowness of operations against Mainz, the Elector settled for a loose blockade of Bonn. Only when Mainz capitulated could the siege of Bonn in form begin. The Elector had many more men and probably deployed more artillery pieces towards this latter part of the siege of Bonn than would be deployed at the siege of Namur château. Otherwise, it was not an especially innovative process. The multiple approaches (Brandenburg, Münster, the Empire and the United Provinces each had their own) zig-zagged forward fairly quickly at first, covering some 150 paces a night before slowing down to 100 and 50 paces as they got nearer and the shot more murderous. ⁴¹ Despite the unprecedented size of their artillery park, the attackers proceeded by sapping. Two of the attacks climbed the glacis to within twelve paces of the covered way and were joined by a line of communication. Then 8,000 troops stormed

the covered way and outworks with 'vigour' and secured lodgements at the cost of just 900 killed or wounded.⁴² Casualties were light because by then the French garrison had been so thinned out. According to German sources, D'Asfeld led out only 1,500 'healthy and whole' troops from an original strength of 8,000.⁴³ Doubtless artillery killed or maimed many but most of these losses can probably be blamed on sickness inseparable from a long blockade of the sort that preceded the siege in form: dysentery (probably caused by tainted drinking water) afflicted the besiegers and it is unlikely that the besiegers escaped dysentery either.

William III's siege of Limerick in 1690 exemplifies the importance of artillery to the Allies. Irish raiders intercepted the first siege train and consequently the besiegers ran low on gunpowder. Nevertheless the Allies knocked a breach, albeit a narrow one, and ran a parallel trench along the base of the glacis to within 50 yards of the breached wall.⁴⁴ The object of the storm on 27 August was ostensibly to dig in on the covered way and link this lodgement to the forward trenches.⁴⁵ The sappers either came up too slowly or were cut down too quickly, probably both.⁴⁶ The tip of a 4,000 strong column pushed over the breach only to face interior retrenchments and three guns. The vanguard was driven back to the breach while the main body of the column milled about ineffectually.⁴⁷ For the next three to four hours 'one continued fire' killed over 500 Allied troops outright and wounded another 1,500 until William belatedly gave orders to pull back.⁴⁸ Three days later he raised the siege.

Artillery played an unusually important role at the siege of Huy, where an ‘incredible’ weight of shot and bombs pounded the castle to a ‘heap of stones’, spoiled the water, and destroyed the provisions store. However, it took a storm of the outer forts and covered way before the mutinous soldiery within (by now reduced to half their original strength) pressed their commander to capitulate. ⁴⁹



The Allies took 24 days to capture Namur town where Vauban, attacking the same north-eastern side, had taken just nine days in 1692. ⁵⁰ Admittedly one is not quite comparing like with like. William’s plans to steal a march on the French and snatch a lightly held prize came unstuck and so the reinforced French garrison of about 13,000 men was a ‘compleat Army...’ compared with

the significantly weaker Allied garrison, 8-9,000 men strong in 1692.⁵¹ Moreover, since 1692 one of Vauban's engineers had studded the heights of Bouge forward of the north-eastern face of the town with an outer ring of lunettes. It took the Allies six days, and at least 1,200 casualties, to batter through the Coquelet and Balart lunettes towards St Nicholas's Gate at the north-eastern extremity of the town.⁵² One can see why the assault was so costly to the Allies from an account that unabashedly boasts how the besiegers:

...marched over open ground, drum beating, without fear of musketry, bursting grenades, bombs, powder-chambers and mines, and the terrific din of cannon, to attack an enemy sheltered by strong palisades and earthworks.⁵³

But French losses were even heavier due to a 'capital mistake' by Marshal Boufflers, the French commander: he left too many of his troops in these outposts without a secure line of retreat to the main works so that they were trapped and killed in the storm.⁵⁴

Even allowing for the delay imposed by the lunettes, it still took the Allies twice as long to take Namur town as it had taken the French.⁵⁵ Allied losses continued to mount. An attack on the outermost covered way in front of St. Nicholas's Gate on 27 July stalled in ground 'cut and cross cut with such a multitude of dykes, drains, rivulets and sluices': some 600 men were cut down in 'the butchery that followed' for the gain of precarious lodgments close to the river bank.⁵⁶ The sappers could not secure these lodgments and William threw Dutch and English storm troops against the riverside demi-bastion on 2 August. In a 'vigorous and bloody' action they suffered 200-300 casualties before, 'twas

though convenient to retreat'.⁵⁷

Next day, however, Marshal Boufflers beat the chamade. He did so, in part, because of the single instance of cleverness and subtlety in the Allied attack on the town. The town wall along the bank of the Meuse was not reinforced by a glacis and Allied guns firing from the opposite or eastern bank were able to knock breaches by the waterside. Further uphill on the heights of St. Barbe more guns and mortars were able to fire at right angles or *en croisade* to the Allied attack right into and behind the French defences.⁵⁸ Such gunfire saved the attackers from a complete repulse on 27 July and inflicted heavy losses on the French. Later, the guns knocked a dam, so draining off floodwater.⁵⁹ Boufflers had thrown away too many of his men's lives in defending the town and the outer lunettes.⁶⁰ Indeed, only about half the original garrison (see map 1) would be left to hold the château. At this point, Boufflers reckoned that another storm would carry the town.

'It is very grievous to lose so many brave men', said William III, 'but it cannot be avoided in a siege like this.'⁶¹ He was more concerned that the siege had not gone 'as expeditiously as I could wish'. Max Emanuel Elector of Bavaria, who was in charge of the sector between the Sambre and the Meuse, also condemned the slowness of the engineers.⁶² One can understand why both men were especially impatient. Villeroi's bombardment of Brussels had already burnt one third of the city to the ground. His field army would soon seize Diksmuide-taking 7,000 Allied garrison troops prisoner-and Deinze in Flanders before, late in the day, threatening to relieve Namur.⁶³ As well as

being slow the engineers were also quarrelsome and clumsy. ⁶⁴ One instance of an amateurish mistake happened when it transpired that trenches opened at Bouge by chief engineer Charles Dupuy de Lespinasse could be enfiladed from the town. ⁶⁵ Julius von Tettau, the grandmaster of artillery, had to be told to shift his batteries forward because they were, in William's opinion, too far away from the bastions to breach them. ⁶⁶

Since he did not trust his engineers, William practised 'hands-on' management of the siege. For instance, he spent the 27th of July in the trenches 'making all the dispositions' for the attack that evening. He did not leave the trenches until after midnight on 3 August, having shown Tettau where to aim the guns at first light. He led from the front, or uncomfortably close to it. ⁶⁷ On 25 August a stone ball struck just 8 yards away and splinters cut down a Scottish aristocrat in his entourage. During the assault on 27 July the French loosed seven or eight volleys from a half dozen cannon at his vantage point in the trenches. The visiting director of the Bank of England, 'standing very near' the king, was killed in one of these volleys. ⁶⁸

What do these operations reveal about German, Dutch and English siegework? Apart from the Limerick fiasco, all the operations ended in a capitulation. The length of time spent before the capitulation was the most easily quantified and, for many, the single most important index of success. ⁶⁹ Leaving aside Huy, which was very one-sided, these sieges were relatively slow. They all, except Limerick, saw far more guns and mortars in use than heretofore. Apart from the abortive attempt to force Bonn's capitulation

through artillery firepower alone, the increased number of guns and mortars performed their by-now traditional roles. Likewise, the capture of the covered way presented no sharp break with past practice in that Allied troops sapped right up to the top of the glacis. But notwithstanding this sapping, the Allies frequently marched storming columns across open ground raked by enemy fire. Evidently the saps were not dug wide enough and did not have enough *places d'armes* to accommodate storming parties. More often than not such crude assaults eventually managed to seize enough of the covered way to convince the besieged that the attackers were determined to press on, whatever the carnage.

So, the earlier equation of time wasted versus lives lost is misleading. The Allied siege was both slow *and* bloody. Was the siege of the château of Namur a new departure?

The Ground

The sinuous confluence of the Sambre and Meuse defined an outline (Map 1) rather like a bird's head. The medieval donjon of Namur and the hornwork-shaped *Tierra Nueva* or Terra Nova with its cisterns, barracks and souterrains crowded onto the beak.⁷⁰ The plateau of Champeau took up most of the bird's head, rose level with the Terra Nova and was cut by a succession of crests and ravines. One such ravine was cut by the Foliette, a stream emptying into the Sambre, and this presented the most dangerous dead ground close to Terra Nova. In 1690 Menno van Coehoorn, an infantry brigadier and part-time

fortress engineer, built a fort on the hill across the ravine from Terra Nova to cover this dead ground. I shall follow French practice and call this Fort d'Orange, so named after William of Orange. The fort was cleverly sited and seemed to sink deeper into the ground the closer one approached.⁷¹ Coehoorn defended his fort doggedly in 1692 but Vauban forced its surrender by digging approaches around and behind it. Vauban's engineers afterwards strengthened Fort d'Orange with a demi-lune and set a solid and bomb-proof fort, Saint-Esprit, to sweep the Foliette with fire and so deter another attacker from coming in behind Fort d'Orange.⁷²

Another ravine, where the rivers flowed close, formed the bird's throat. Following Vauban's directions, engineers had been building an 'immense' wall 1,500 paces long here, fronted by a ditch 18 feet wide and ten feet deep.⁷³ Vauban considered the *Vieux Murs* critically important: if the walls were lost, the château would 'surely' fall.⁷⁴ But holding the entire peninsula would have demanded a garrison of more than 20,000 men.⁷⁵ In any event, Max Emanuel outflanked the partially built *Vieux Murs* by securing a bridgehead at Salzines while the French were distracted by the attack on St. Nicholas's Gate on 27 July. A brisk dawn attack on 31 August swept the French off the *Vieux Murs* and cost the Allies a mere 200 casualties.⁷⁶

A False Start

Major General Menno van Coehoorn was primarily known as a builder and defender of fortifications. He led an infantry regiment at the siege of Bonn but there is no reliable evidence for the claim that he acted as siege engineer to the

Elector of Brandenburg.⁷⁷ In 1694 he remodelled the fortifications of Liège and controlled one of the five batteries at the siege of Huy.⁷⁸ By mid-July 1695, probably because of his prior knowledge of Namur, he established himself as William's 'oracle' and the latter instructed the engineers nominally in charge of the siegeworks to consult Coehoorn on all matters.⁷⁹ He also supervised the battering of *Vieux Murs* for Max Emanuel.⁸⁰

By the time the town capitulated, Dupuy de Lespinasse had been mortally wounded and Tettau apparently discredited.⁸¹ William promoted Coehoorn to lieutenant general on 8 August and gave him 'complete control' of the siege works.⁸² One may wonder just how 'complete' this control can have been, especially since William had more experience of sieges than Coehoorn. The king twice left briefly to join the covering army but when present he visited the trenches at least once a day.⁸³ Max Emanuel, though much younger than William, was also quite experienced: he had commanded attacks at the sieges of Buda in 1686 and, as we have seen, Mainz in 1689. Max Emanuel was present throughout the siege of Namur château, except briefly on 13 August.⁸⁴ He was often in the trenches by night and day or was otherwise active from five or six o'clock in the morning until midnight.⁸⁵ Moreover, he was by no means as awed by Coehoorn as his biographer Gosewijn Theodoor claims.⁸⁶ For instance, he complained that the trenches had been pushed forward 'very little' during his brief absence on 13 August.⁸⁷

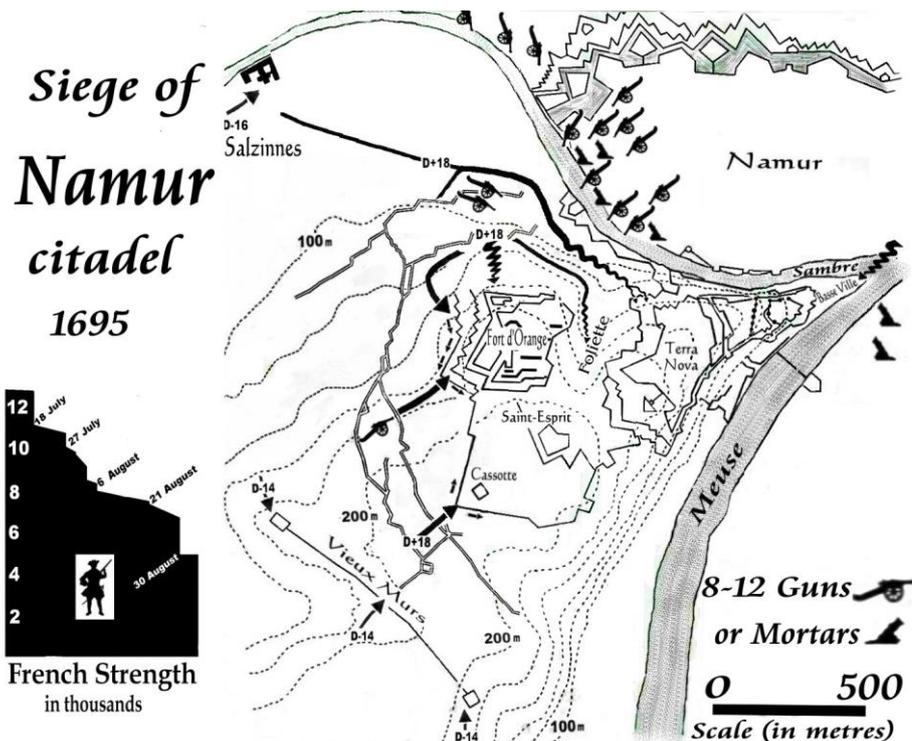
Coehoorn's hand is not visible in the first Allied plan to wade the Sambre and hit the Grognon at the tip of the beak. Allied accounts skim over this

operation quickly but a French siege journal claims the Basse Ville provided the château's only water source. Losing the Basse Ville would entail losing all 'soon after' and Boufflers was careful to post a strong detachment of 2,200 troops there.⁸⁸ Allied gunfire quickly opened a breach 120 yards wide and as 'practicable as one could wish', and damaged the walkway connecting to the château above.⁸⁹ William declared the breach climbable and the besieged stood to, waiting an imminent storm. ⁹⁰ On the night of 15 August came a storm of a different kind. Torrential rain fell and by eight o'clock next morning the river had doubled in depth to three feet. With the Sambre no longer fordable, it was high time for a second plan. As late as 18 August the Allies planned to do as the French had done in 1692 and dig around and behind Fort d'Orange. ⁹¹

Coehoorn's Plan

A third and final plan got the go-ahead after William and Coehoorn conferred on 18 August. In essence this plan involved amassing a huge number of artillery pieces in one place and firing them together against just one section of the defences. The plan to rely so heavily on concentrated artillery firepower was probably suggested by the 1689 bombardment of Bonn, discussed above.

Enfilade fire and heavy bombardment from the town against the northern side of the château would, Coehoorn hoped, suppress enemy fire, knock wide breaches and spare the lives of the besiegers by letting them cut corners. ⁹² The plan was not all Coehoorn's: a Spanish source claims, for instance, that



Max Emanuel decided where to site the artillery batteries within Namur.

⁹³The Allied trench system was skeletal. It approached only the front of the defences and stopped anything from 450 to 800 metres away.

Presumably the besiegers believed there was no need to dig the guns closer because they could from all the way from the town. Fortress designers normally screened out such long-range gunfire by, as it were, 'dropping the entire complex into a hole in the ground', so battering guns normally had to be pushed and pulled up to the crest of the covered way. ⁹⁴ But long-range fire was considered quite appropriate if undulating terrain happened to offer a line of fire to the ramparts ⁹⁵ The château of Namur and its layered defences did so as they 'rose one above another in the form of an Amphitheatre' and Coehoorn exploited that steep-sloped topography. ⁹⁶ Clearly Boufflers recognised this weak point because he had tried unsuccessfully to make it a

condition of the capitulation for the town that the Allies avoid attacking through the town or siting batteries within its walls. ⁹⁷

It was well-known that two or more shots fired at the same target simultaneously wreaked more destruction than the same number of shots fired piecemeal. Coehoorn seems to have tried to upscale this effect in a manner that again recalls the bombardment of Bonn. At dawn on 21 August up to 200 guns, mortars and howitzers opened fire all at once and 'made such firing, as was never seen since Gun-powder was first invented'. ⁹⁸ This was not just literary licence: French and Dutch eyewitnesses both insisted they had never heard anything like this din before. ⁹⁹ Such was the impact of this 'one blast' that the 'whole circumference of the castle, with the rock on which it stood, seemed to reel under the shock' and '...Clouds of Smoke, and Flashes of Sooty Flame fill'd the Air...' ¹⁰⁰ Boufflers' exculpatory letter to Louis claimed that this had been 'the most prodigious artillery ever assembled'. As we have seen, the siege of Bonn may have held that record but Boufflers can be excused if he felt otherwise. ¹⁰¹

Coehoorn radiated confidence and wagered a heavy bet with the Elector that the château would fall within the next ten days. ¹⁰² Coehoorn may have promised that the single salvo would have a dramatic impact but the Elector, for one, was sceptical: '...it will take more than one good salvo'. ¹⁰³ So it did. Salvos followed one another without interval by day and even all through the moonlit night of the 24th, with mortars lobbing up to thirty bombs at a time.

Simply amassing so many guns and so much powder was an impressive logistical achievement, not least because Villeroi's rampaging army made re-supply from the major Allied bases of Brussels and Louvain hazardous. For instance, in June a party of Frenchmen scattered 150 dragoons escorting the English paymaster from Brussels and another attacked a provisions train.¹⁰⁵ However, in the first week of August a 'great convoy' brought twenty five 24-pounder guns overland from Mechelen, north-west of Brussels. The alternative of bringing provisions, munitions and guns from Maastricht and Liège was 'often slow and always difficult'. The barks had to push against the stream and the summertime river levels were not always high enough to float such heavy cargoes.¹⁰⁶ The Meuse, then, was a 'tenuous and vulnerable lifeline' and the Allies were fortunate that Villeroi's relieving army 'loitered away' in Flanders rather than hastening to Brabant.¹⁰⁷

The French suffered 200 casualties in the spectacular shelling and bombardment on 21 August as against just seven Allied casualties.¹⁰⁸ The dead included Boufflers's closest surviving male relative and aide-de-camp, shot down by his side.¹⁰⁹ Such a rate of attrition could not have been endured but Boufflers cleared out the extensive network of underground galleries to shelter troops who were not on guard duty or in work parties above ground. This prudent measure cut the number of Frenchmen killed or injured to about 60 a day.¹¹⁰

Coehoorn's artillery pieces did manage to knock wide breaches in Terra Nova and Fort d'Orange faster than the defenders could repair them under

cover of darkness. Firing by 'day and night' did not stop the chief French engineer, Megrigny, from throwing up rubble to form a retrenchment behind the Terra Nova breach. Coehoorn's artillery also suppressed French guns, and let the attackers dig their approach trenches quickly, in daylight, and with minimal losses. ¹¹¹ The average number of Allied casualties in the trenches during the five days and nights after the intensive artillery fire began was just 30 compared with 40 in the five days and nights before 21 August. ¹¹² Normally, casualties among the attackers *rose* as they dug closer to the covered way.

A Breach too Far

'I hope', Max Emanuel wrote his wife on 26 August, 'to strike the decisive blow in two or three days.'¹¹³

Villeroi at last approached the Allied covering army at midnight on 27 August. He had a slight advantage of numbers (120,000 against 102,000) but faced a strongly entrenched position and failed in his gambit to outflank the Allied right wing. Satisfied that he had held off Villeroi, William ordered a general assault. ¹¹⁴ On the morning of the assault the Elector's messengers summoned the garrison of the château, declared that there was no longer any hope of relief from Villeroi, and offered 'honourable conditions'. ¹¹⁵ Boufflers prevaricated and the guns opened up again.

Apparently (our only source is camp gossip recorded by Huygens in his diary) Coehoorn would have preferred the hurl a single overwhelming attack against the château proper, bypassing the outworks. ¹¹⁶ William was

temperamentally attracted by attacks that promised to take ‘tout en même temps’, all at once.¹¹⁷ Yet the final plan of attack on the château and its outworks largely reflected the conventional Allied practice of launching simultaneous attacks from different directions in order to distract and overstretch the defenders.¹¹⁸ The ‘grand design’ of sending 3,000 English, Scottish and Anglo-Irish troops to seize the inner defences of the Terra Nova (Map 1) at the same time as the assault on the outer defences looks like a watered-down version of Coehoorn’s scheme.¹¹⁹ These attackers would be spearheaded by 700 grenadiers, the élite storm troops of their day. John, Baron Cutts, the ‘Salamander’ (so-called because he thrived in fire) ‘who loves to play the hero’, would lead them up a corridor with Fort d’Orange and Saint-Esprit glowering to his right, the line of defences that backed onto the Sambre on his left, and the Terra Nova to his front.¹²⁰

Simultaneously, Count de Rivéra was to throw 3,000 Bavarians against the western side of Fort d’Orange while Major-General La Cave’s 2,000 Brandenburgers and Hessians assaulted towards its front. Major-General Schwerin with 2,000 Dutchmen was to storm the Cassotte and an unnamed colonel was simultaneously to attack the Basse Ville with another 2,000 men.

De Rivéra’s and La Cave’s attack, not Cutts’s, was thought likely to prove the ‘most difficult’.¹²¹ Anticipating that the Allies would assault from all directions at the same time, Boufflers spread his depleted troops thinly between three places, the Basse Ville, La Cassotte-Saint Esprit, and Fort d’Orange. He left the château itself and Terra Nova lightly held by only 500

men: he believed an assault on Terra Nova unlikely because the trenches were still 700-800 paces away.¹²² In a surprise attack some days beforehand the Allies had already captured the Redoubt des Bourgeois, the terminal point of a line of defences backing on to the Sambre.¹²³ As the storming columns advanced, the plan called for Allied musketeers hidden in upper stories and roofs of houses along the bank of the Sambre to open fire across the river on the rear of that defensive line. The French had not seen that coming and had not thrown up works to cover their backs so half of them were shot down. The Allies reckoned that the right hand side of the storming columns should be safe if, as planned, the troops in Fort d'Orange were kept busy fighting off Rivera's and La Cave's swarms, and Colonel Marsilly's 500 troops were faced off against a possible counter-attack from Saint-Esprit. If all went according to plan, then, Cutts's men should face only light fire in the 'corridor'. The plan to take the Terra Nova seemed practicable.

But unsurprisingly there was a 'mistake of the signal' (the detonation of a barrel of gunpowder) and a 'miscalculation in timing'.¹²⁴ Later English complaints about the plan's 'impracticability' recognize that it was unrealistic to expect that prearranged signals, timings and co-ordination would work smoothly between disparate units of a polyglot composite army.¹²⁵ Rivéra did not attack at the same time as Cutts and when he eventually did so he veered towards the corner of Fort d'Orange rather than attack up the steep slope against its left or western side.¹²⁶ The right hand flank of the advancing columns would be exposed to unexpectedly heavy fire. French troops

huddled in the Bastion à Bord de l'Eau had some cover from musket fire from across the Sambre: they raked the left hand side of the passing columns from very close range. ¹²⁷ Moreover, Cutts had less than half his troops on hand to throw against the Terra Nova. ¹²⁸ With room enough in the trenches at the jump-off-point only for the grenadiers and one battalion, Courthope's, the other three waited at the cloister of Salzinnes, well to the rear. ¹²⁹ In short, two relatively feeble attacks replaced a single strong one through a corridor that was unexpectedly 'in the middle of six fires'. ¹³⁰

In the first attack, half of the grenadiers and of the troops in Courthope's and Marsilly's battalions were cut down. Courthope was shot in the groin and killed, and his lieutenant-colonel was 'desperately wounded' when his shoulder was shattered by a ball, Marsilly was killed by a cannon shot from his own side and his lieutenant-colonel was shot dead. Moreover, a gunshot wound to Cutts's head 'disabl'd him for some time'. ¹³¹ Though leaderless, the troops may have reached the breach before being beaten back by 200 Frenchmen in the retrenchments. The attackers in the second wave were 'forced to begin a new Attack instead of Sustaining that already begun'. ¹³² Joined by regrouping grenadiers, the most advanced battalion of the second wave, Hamilton's Anglo-Irish, even planted its colours atop the breach: William renamed it the Royal Irish Regiment in honour of its achievement. This was the crisis. Boufflers raced to the scene with his company of Guards and, sword in hand, led a counter-attack through the breach. ¹³³ Another French counter-attack from Saint Esprit swept away Marsilly's battalion and

hit the English and Anglo-Irish attackers 'in Flank and Rear'. They 'ran for it' as far as Salzinnes, scattering another battalion coming up behind.¹³⁴ A civilian official rather ungraciously abused the 'scattered scoundrels' and this probably forms the basis for Macaulay's assertion that these were raw troops. In fact, the grenadiers were élite soldiers and some of the other units had already seen action. Most had persisted stolidly in a suicidal attack and all the battalions of the first and second waves suffered grievously heavy losses.

Only the Bavarians had a reasonably short distance to cross after going over the top.¹³⁵ They raced to the covered way of Fort d'Orange, 'thickett' with musketeers who gave a 'terrible fire'. Here Rivéra was fatally 'knocked on the head', his lieutenant colonel seriously wounded and 'nearly all' his officers cut down.¹³⁶ Rivéra's men secured a toehold on the covered way salient nearest the Sambre. Max Emanuel rode from place to place giving orders and doling out handfuls of gold to encourage the troops but did not take direct control at Fort d'Orange.¹³⁷ Fortunately for the allies, Cutts recovered consciousness. He took in the situation at a glance, saw that Mackay's Scots, the final battalion of the second wave, had not been scattered during the Terra Nova attack and threw this unit in to bolster the Bavarian lodgement. Grimly, they hung on.

With much of the fire from Fort d'Orange directed at Cutts's unfortunate men, La Cave's troops were able to secure a deeper lodgement on the first and even the second of the covered ways. The French commander in the covered way in front of the Cassotte had been cautioned not to fight to the last and so

when Schwerin attacked he held the covered way for just a quarter of an hour before pulling back to a second defensive line in front of Saint Esprit. The Cassotte itself remained as an outpost in French hands. Finally, the Allies were beaten back at the Grognon breach in the Basse Ville and, the author of the *Journal* reported with relish, the Sambre 'ran red with their blood'.¹³⁸

The three-hour assault wrought 'terrible' carnage on the attackers and even a hardened enthusiast for 'vigour' in the attack like Max Emanuel was shaken by this 'very rough' [*assez rude*] attack and the 'very considerable' toll of up to 3,000 casualties or about one quarter of the whole strength of the storming battalions.¹³⁹ For their part, the French admitted to losing just 500 men.¹⁴⁰

Vauban conceded the dash [*beauté*] of the bloody storm but still condemned it as 'one of the most foolish acts that had ever been committed in the attack on a fortress'.¹⁴¹ He was a trifle harsh. In relative terms, Allied casualties were far lighter than those of the attackers at Mainz and by nightfall the Allies had secured three footholds, two on the covered way of Fort d'Orange and one on the salient in front of the Cassotte.¹⁴²

An official wrote that night with all the complacency of the deskbound that 'we shall have another brush' tomorrow. This time, he thundered, the Allies would give no quarter.¹⁴³ Matters did not come to that extremity. Next morning Count Guiscard, titular governor of Namur and the commander of Fort d'Orange, hoisted the white flag. He met the Elector of Bavaria atop the biggest breach and offered to surrender just Fort d'Orange. Max Emanuel

insisted on all or nothing.¹⁴⁴ Guiscard and Megreginy then pressed Boufflers to capitulate, stressing that the fortifications, wrecked and undermanned as they were, would probably not withstand another full-scale assault.¹⁴⁵ Rather than pull back troops from the outworks into the château and hold out there, Boufflers agreed to surrender the château on 5 September if Villeroi had not broken through by then.¹⁴⁶ Once Villeroi heard this he drew off 'in haste and disorder'.¹⁴⁷ It was over.

Conclusions

Max Emanuel recovered from his shock: '...much blood was spilt but I can console myself for such a great victory'.¹⁴⁸ But just how 'great' was the victory?

Namur was no turning point in the war. The withdrawal of Savoy from the Grand Alliance the following year released 30,000 French troops for service elsewhere and the Allies continued to give ground overall, losing Ath, Alost and Barcelona.¹⁴⁹ In the Netherlands theatre, the capture of Namur rolled back the French advance along the Meuse and Sambre, though at the cost of giving the French almost free rein in Flanders for the 1695 campaigning season. Louis was pleased enough to reward Boufflers with a dukedom for his staunch defence and it has been argued that he contrived to 'win a campaign by losing a fortress'.¹⁵⁰ Yet it must be remembered that the loss of Namur was a blow to Louis XIV's prestige and a welcome shot in the arm to Allied powers that had enjoyed precious little military success until now.¹⁵¹

Vauban had captured the château of Namur almost as quickly and with fewer casualties in 1692. By that reckoning, Coehoorn's siege was a comparative failure. Yet the Allies laboured under so many difficulties, not least the multi-national complexion of their armies, that it is better to compare the Allied siege of Namur château with contemporaneous Allied sieges rather than a Vauban siege. William's propagandists crowed that the capture of Namur amounted to one of the 'greatest actions' of the war but a French official pent up in the château throughout by the siege sourly disparaged it:

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Since the outbreak of the present war the Allies have unceasingly lost towns and battles & a success like that at Namur has been such a novelty for them that their rejoicing made them forget how dearly they paid for the advantage.

In short, the operation was a striking achievement but only by the low standards of Allied siegecraft. The Allies faced a stark choice between losing time and losing lives. 'If you press on that siege fast', the Duke of Shrewsbury warned William beforehand, you may 'destroy your army'. But if he had proceeded slowly 'with more caution and security', then cavalry forage and other provisions would have quickly run short and the siege would have had to be raised.¹⁵³

Notwithstanding the many lives lost in storming the counterscarp the siege of Namur château must be considered an impressive achievement, having regard to the generally poor standard of Allied siegecraft, the logistic difficulties to be surmounted, the rapid tempo of the siege, and the fillip it gave to Allied morale.

How 'new' was the method Coehoorn used to achieve such success? First one must recognise that Coehoorn played a subordinate role, albeit a key one. He did not command but was a biddable technical advisor to two active, strong-minded and experienced monarchs. He had a skeletal trench network dug because he could keep his guns well back and knock breaches from a distance. This useful short-cut was peculiar to the topography of Namur château and would not usually be replicable. His plan of concentrating an overwhelming weight of firepower against one section of the defences was, it is argued, taken up *faute de mieux* as a second or even third best option. Other siege masters had gathered almost as many and even more artillery pieces for a siege but never before had so many fired together in salvos, kept up such a high rate of fire for so long, and blazed away at just one sector of the defences. Coehoorn, then, produced a genuinely new increment of concentrated fire. The fire laid open wide breaches and suppressed enemy guns, thereby sparing the lives of attackers in the trenches.¹⁵⁴ It did not, however, stop the French from repairing their defences nor did it kill or maim enough Frenchmen to terrorize the survivors into surrender, though Vauban seems to have thought otherwise.¹⁵⁵ Boufflers, writing to Louis, excused himself and his commanders (he was careful to show the decision was collective) for capitulating: 'seeing no chance any more of holding out longer'.¹⁵⁶ The fact that the English had been 'masters' of the breach at Terranova for 'some time' seems to have shaken Boufflers' resolution more than anything else.¹⁵⁷ He also capitulated, at least in part, because 'heavy losses' meant he had not

enough men left standing to hold the perimeter defences of the château, Terra Nova and the outworks.¹⁵⁸

But it was the storm on 30 August, not Coehoorn's artillery fire, that finally cut French troop levels to an unsustainable low. Some Allied propaganda boasted of the very crudity of this assault:

The Confederates got nothing but what they bravely won by the Sword, Rampart after Rampart, and Bastion after Bastion, dearly paying for every inch they wrested...only Diamonds could cut Diamonds.

'It was unparell'd Valour that won Namur': guns and mortars simply let valour and vigour 'shew itself'.¹⁵⁹ In short, artillery did not conquer and Coehoorn's fire plan did not play the key part in the taking of Namur's château.

¹ J. Tronchin du Breuil, *Relation de la campagne de Flandre et du siege de Namur, en l'année 1695* (The Hague, 1696) p.52.

² Craig Rose, *England in the 1690s: Revolution, religion and War*, (Blackwell, 1999) p.131: Pieter Geyl, *The Netherlands in the 17th Century Part Two 1648-1715* (London, 1964), p.262.

³ J. Childs, *The Nine Years' War and the British Army 1688-1697 The operations in the Low Countries* (Manchester, 1991), pp.292-293: 26 August Stepney to Lexington, 30 August Stepney to Lexington in ed. M.Sutton, *The Lexington papers: or, Some account of the courts of London and Vienna* (London, 1851), pp.110-113, 118.

⁴ J.Ostwald, *Vauban under Siege* (Brill, 2006), pp. 215-216.

⁵ Antoine de Pas marquis de Feuquières, *Mémoires de M. de Feuquiere* (4 vols., Amsterdam, 1741) IV, p.164: Charles Sévin marquis de Quincy, *Histoire militaire du regne de Louis le Grand, roy de France...*(7 vols., Paris, 1726) VII, pt.2 p.149.

⁶ Feuquières, *Mémoires* IV, p.167. J. A. Lynn, *Giant of the grand siecle: The French Army, 1610-1715* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 569. Janis Langins, *Conseroing the Enlightenment: French military engineering from Vauban to the Enlightenment* (Boston, 2003), p. 47.

⁷ Vauban, *A Manual of Siegework and Fortification by Sebastien LePrestre de Vauban* ed. G.A.Rothrock (University of Michigan Press, 1968), p.73.

⁸ D. Chandler, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough* (London, 1997), p.280.

⁹ Ostwald, *Vauban Under Siege*, pp.173, 174, 179, 215.

¹⁰ M. Virol 'Le siege de Namur de 1692: l'heroisme et la technique', *XVII Siecle* (2007) pp.477, 481.

¹¹ Charles Sévin marquis de Quincy, *L'Art de la Guerre* (The Hague, 1741), p.184.

- ¹² Jean-Martin De La Colonie, *Mémoires de M. De La Colonie* ed. A.M. Cocula (Paris, 1992) p.85. Rothrock, *Manual of Siegework and Fortification*, pp.97-105.
- ¹³ J.M.Ostwald 'Vauban's Siege Legacy in the War of the Spanish Succession, 1702-1712' Ph.D. Ohio State University (2002) pp.193-94.
- ¹⁴ Feuquières, *Mémoires IV*, pp.136-140. Gosewijn Theodoor Van Coehoorn, *Het Leven van Menno baron Van Coehoorn* ed. J.W. van Sypesteyn (Leeuwarden, 1860) p.15.
- ¹⁵ Antoine de Pas marquis de Feuquières, *Memoirs Historical and Military written by the Late Marquis de Feuquieres* ed. Anon., (2 vols., London, 1736) II, p.289.
- ¹⁶ Ostwald 'Vauban's Siege Legacy', p.273. Quincy, *L'Art de La Guerre II*, p.167. P. Lazard, *Vauban 1633-1707* (Paris, 1934) p.230.
- ¹⁷ Ostwald 'Vauban's Siege Legacy', pp.69-74 : Feuquières, *Mémoires IV*, pp.138-39.
- ¹⁸ Van Sypesteyn, *Menno Baron Van Coehoorn*, p.12.
- ¹⁹ J. Childs, *The Nine Years' War and the British Army 1688-1697 The operations in the Low Countries* (Manchester, 1991), p.295.
- ²⁰ Joep van Hoof, *Menno Van Coehoorn 1641-1704* (The Hague, 2004) p.88.
- ²¹ The siege is taken to run from the opening of trenches on 12/22 July until the capitulation on 8 September. Anon., *A Journal of the Siege of Mentz* (London, 1689), pp. 11-12, 19-21: De Quincy, *Histoire Militaire II*, pp.177-202: Chandler, *Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, p.308: J.A.Lynn 'The Trace Italienne and the Growth of Armies: the French Case', *The Journal of Military History*, vol.55, no. 3 (1991) p.326: J. P. Abelinus and M. Merian, *Theatrum Europaeum* (21 vols., Frankfurt am Main, 1646-1738) XIII, pp.723, 733.
- ²² Peak Allied strength reached about 60,000 towards the end of the siege: An officer in His Highness's Army, *An Exact and Compleat Diary of the Siege of Keyserworth and Bonne* (London, 1689), pp.6, 8, 12, 13: J.G. Droysen, *Friedrich I, König Von Preussen* (Leipzig, 2002), pp. 65-66. The French garrison numbered between 6,000 and 8,000 men: Abelinus and Merian, *Theatrum Europaeum XIII*, pp. 742, 748: Anon., 'Journal du Siège de Bonne 1689' ff.35, 48; author's personal collection.
- ²³ A siege map depicts 32 artillery pieces in all and this roughly corresponds to other sources. The Williamite army mustered 30, 813 other ranks after the Boyne. Allowing for troops left behind in garrisons like Waterford and troops shipped back to Britain, William probably had no more than 25,000 men at Limerick. G. Story, *A True and Impartial History of the Most Material Occurrences* (London, 1691), pp. 97, 111: G. Story, *A Continuation of the Impartial History of the Wars of Ireland* (London, 1693), p. 28: L. Walsh 'The Journal of John Stevens', K. Danaher and J. G. Simms, 'The Danish Force at Limerick, 1690', *The Old Limerick Journal 1690 Siege Edition* no.28 (1990), eds. J. Kemmy and L. Walsh, pp. 80, 116, 117, 119.
- ²⁴ De Quincy, *Histoire Militaire III*, pp.19-20: E. D'Auvergne, *The History of the Campagne in the Spanish Netherlands* (London, 1694), pp.84, 86-90.
- ²⁵ Close reading of *La Campagne de Namur* suggests that the Allies had 156 artillery pieces but there may be some unavoidable double counting and a total of about 150 seems most likely. More pieces were added after the capitulation of the town including a train of 25 heavy (24-pounder) guns from Mechlen. The siege of the town lasted 24 days from opening trenches on the night of 11 July to the signing of the capitulation on 4 August. The French numbered about 13,000 men at the outset of the siege of the town, though some authorities pitch their numbers as high as 16,000. Anon., *La Campagne de Namur* (The Hague, 1695), pp. 8, 18, 20, 21, 42, 44, 50, 58, 65, 66, 68, 72 : Tronchin du Breuil, *Relation de la Campagne de Flandre*, pp.15, 32: E. D'Auvergne, *The History of the Campagne in Flanders for the year 1695* (London, 1696), pp.44, 69, 104: Childs, *Nine Years' War*, pp.282, 290, 293: Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, pp.204, 226: De Quincy, *Histoire Militaire III*, pp.108-109: H. Lonchay, J. Cuvelier and J. Lefèvre, *Correspondence de la Cour d'Espagne sur les affaires des Pays-Bas au XVII siècle* (Brussels, 1935) V, p.629. Excluding troops in the army of observation and the covering army, how many British, Dutch, Bavarian, Brandenburger and 'Spanish' (probably mostly Walloon) troops were usually present besieging the town? The estimate of 80,000 besiegers is too large: Chandler, *Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough*, p.308. An estimate of 50,000 besiegers accords better with eyewitness accounts: A Gentleman attending His Majesty, *An*

- Exact Account of the Siege of Namur* (London, 1695), p.10: Allesandro Maffei, *Mémoires du Marquis Maffei* ed. Anon.(The Hague, 1740) p.8: M. Junkelmann, *Kurfürst Max Emanuel von Bayern als Feldherr* (Munich, 1979), p.98.
- ²⁶ An estimate of about 210 artillery pieces seems plausible, bearing in mind that the number fluctuated as guns may have been rendered unserviceable by barrel wear due to excessively high rates of fire. Anon., *La Campagne de Namur*, pp.113-4: R. Kane, *Campaigns of King William and Queen Anne* (Dublin, 1748), p.22: J. Blackader, *The life and diary of Lieut. Col. J. Blackader: of the Cameronian regiment*, ed. Andrew Crichton (Edinburgh, 1824) p.136: Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, pp.164, 184, 185: N. Yper, *Gedenkschrift der uitgeoerde deaden van den grooten Menno baron van Coehoorn* (1772), p. 30. For a smaller total of about 160 pieces see: Tronchin de Breuil, *Relation de la Campagne de Flandre*, p.42: Maffei, *Mémoires*, p.9. After the capture of the town, Max Emanuel Elector of Bavaria was left with 20,000 men to besiege the citadel and he was reinforced by 7,000 on the eve of the storm: Kane, *Campaigns*, p.23. About 8,000 troops of the garrison survived to defend the château in August: P. Borgnet 'Promenades dans la Ville de Namur', *Annales de la Société Archéologique de Namur* (Namur, 1857-58), p. 339: Anon., *La Campagne de Namur*, pp.83, 186. The loss of about 5,000 French troops in the siege of the town can be accounted for as follows. The besieged left nearly 2,100 sick and wounded behind them in the town and the Allies found 500 deserters in hiding. Add to this a heavy death toll on 27 July when few of the French 'posted in the first counterscarp escaped with their lives': Anon., *An Exact Journal of the Siege of Namur* (London, 1695), p. 18. In the final assaults on the town Allied guns fired from the Heights of St Barbe onto the flank and even the rear of the defenders positions, set off a munitions magazine on 1 August, and inflicted heavy casualties. Borgnet, 'Promenades', pp.321, 339, 364 : Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, pp.56, 226 : Anon., *La Campagne de Namur*, pp. 40, 53, 65, 67-69, 158 : De Quincy, *Histoire Militaire III*, pp.123, 127 : Childs, *Nine Years' War*, p.293. Some accounts date the siege in form from 21 August thereby calculating that the siege of the château lasted only ten days. In fact, trenches were opened on 12 August and the capitulation was signed on 2 September: Anon., *La Campagne de Namur*, pp.100-101, 134, 185: Sypesteyn, *Menno Baron Van Coehoorn*, p.14: Childs, *Nine Years' War*, pp.293, 295.
- ²⁷Anon., *A Journal of the Siege of Mentz* (London, 1689) p.18: De Quincy, *Histoire Militaire II*, p. 202.
- ²⁸E. Spanheim, *Relation de la Cour de France en 1690*, ed. E. Bourgeois (Paris, 1900) p.156.
- ²⁹ Anon., *Journal of the Siege of Mentz*, pp. 8, 16, 27, 30, 31: De Quincy, *Histoire Militaire II*, pp. 175, 202.
- ³⁰ Anon., *Journal of the Siege of Mentz*, pp. 8-9, 12, 18, 20, 24: De Quincy, *Histoire Militaire II*, p.174.
- ³¹ Anon., *Journal of the Siege of Mentz*, p.22.
- ³² Abelinus and Merian, *Theatrum Europaeum XIII*, pp. 731-32.
- ³³ Anon., *Journal of the Siege of Mentz*, p.29. The claim that 5,000 Allies fell in the storm may be discounted: De Quincy, *Histoire Militaire II*, p.202.
- ³⁴Anon., *Journal of the Siege of Mentz* p.23: Anon., *A Full and True Account of the taking of the City of Mentz*, (London, 1689) p.1.
- ³⁵De Feuquières, *Memoirs Historical and Military II*, p.288.
- ³⁶ R. Place 'The Self-Deception of the Strong: France on the Eve of the war of the League of Augsburg', *French Historical Studies* vol. 6 No. 4 (Autumn, 1970) p. 472: C. Rousset, *Histoire de Louvois* (4 vols., 1862-64) IV, pp. 241-2.
- ³⁷ E. Cust, *Annals of the wars of the eighteenth century*, compiled from the most authentic histories of the period (Munich, 1860), p. 23.
- ³⁸ Anon 'Journal du Siège de Bonne 1689' f. 3: Madame de Sévigné, *Lettres de Madame de Sévigné* ed. M. Montmerquié (14 Vols., Paris 1862-68) IX, p.156 : Anon., 'Journal du Siège de Bonne 1689' ff.4-6.
- ³⁹ De Quincy, *Histoire Militaire II*, p. 211.
- ⁴⁰ Abelinus and Merian, *Theatrum Europaeum XIII*, p. 743: Anon., 'Journal du Siège de Bonne 1689' ff.33-43.

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- ⁴¹ Anon., 'Journal du Siège de Bonne 1689' ff.35, 36, 39.
- ⁴² Anon., Exact and Compleat Diary of the Siege of Keyserworth and Bonne, pp.13, 19.
- ⁴³ Abelinus and Merian, *Theatrum Europaeum* XIII, p. 748.
- ⁴⁴ J. Childs, *The Williamite Wars in Ireland* (London, 2007), p.255.
- ⁴⁵ Southwell to Nottingham, 28 August 1690 Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Manuscripts of Allan George Finch (4 vols., London, 1913-65) II, p.429: The Danish force in Ireland 1690-1691, eds., K.Danaher and J.G.Simms (Dublin, 1962) p.72.
- ⁴⁶ S. Pufendorf, *Rebus Gestis Friderici Wilhelmi Magni* (Berlin, 1695), p.258: John Stevens, *Journal of John Stevens*, ed., R. H. Murray pp.177-178: Issac Dumont de Bostaquet, *Mémoires* ed. M. Richard (Paris, 1968) p.249.
- ⁴⁷ Jean-Francois de Morsier, 'Journal' ed., A. Jullien *Soldats Suisses au Service Étranger* (8 vols., Geneva 1908-1919) VII, p.100.
- ⁴⁸ Murray, *Journal of John Stevens*, pp.176, 180: R. Davies, *Journal of the Very. Rev. Rowland Davies*, ed., R. Caulfield (London, 1857) p.141: R. Parker, *Memoirs of the Most Remarkable Military Transactions* (London, 1757) p.27: Kane, *Campaigns*, p. 13: Jullien 'Journal de Jean-Francois de Morsier' pp. 87-105: G. Story, *True and Impartial History*, p. 130: Anon., *A Jacobite narrative of the war in Ireland, 1688-91* ed. J.T. Gilbert (2nd ed. Shannon, 1971), pp. 260-67: W. Harris, *The History of the Life and Reign of William-Henry, Prince of Nassau and Orange* (Dublin, 1749), p.288: Pufendorf, *Rebus Gestis*, p.258: Danaher and Simms 'Danish Force at Limerick', p.120: A. Claudianus, *Mavor Irlandicus sive Historia de bello Hibernico* (Copenhagen, 1718), p.55.
- ⁴⁹ D'Auvergne, *History of the Campagne in the Spanish Netherlands*, pp.84, 88, 89: De Quincy *Histoire Militaire*, III, p.20.
- ⁵⁰ Anon., *La Campagne de Namur* pp.18, 68 : Childs, *The Nine Years' War and the British Army* pp.282, 290: Lazard, *Vauban* p.230. The French opened trenches on the night of 29/30 May and took the town on 5 June.
- ⁵¹ W. Balthwayt to James Vernon 20/30 June 1695 SP 87/1, f.33. Anon., *The Present State of Europe* (London, 1695) VI, p.287: 'Relation de ce qui s'est passé au siège de Namur' in ed. M.L.S Auger, *Oeuvres Complètes de J.Racine* (2 vols., Paris, 1858) II p.253.
- ⁵² A map depicts the opening phase of the siege of the town and a sap zig-zagging towards the Coquelet: 'Plan der Belagerung von Namur, 1695' in *Digitales Archive Marburg HStAM WHK 9/225b*. J. Tronchin du Breuil *Relation de la campagne de Flandre et du siege de Namur, en l'année 1695* (The Hague, 1696) p.22.
- ⁵³ Tronchin du Breuil *Relation de la campagne de Flandre* p.23.
- ⁵⁴ Anon. *Memoires de M. de Feuquiere* (4 vols., Amsterdam, 1741) IV, pp.245-6.
- ⁵⁵ Borgnet, 'Promenades', pp. 318-321 : P.Bragard *Namur en Etat de Siège* (Namur, 2004) p.61.
- ⁵⁶ Anon. *Journal de ce qui s'est passé* p.82 : Anon. *La Campagne de Namur* pp. 52-53 : Tronchin du Breuil *Relation de la campagne de Flandre* p.26 : *The Present State of Europe* VI, p.291 : L. Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (London) p.82.
- ⁵⁷ Anon., *La Campagne de Namur* pp. 66-67 : Tronchin du Breuil *Relation de la campagne de Flandre* pp.33-34: *The Present State of Europe* VI, p.296.
- ⁵⁸ Anon., *La Campagne de Namur* p.52.
- ⁵⁹ Anon., *La Campagne de Namur* p.50 : *Memoires de M. de Feuquiere* IV, p.247 : Tronchin du Breuil *Relation de la campagne de Flandre* p. 31 : Elector Max Emanuel to Teresa Kunigunde 1 August 1695 *Geheimes Hausarchiv München Korrespondenzakten 752/2*.
- ⁶⁰ Anon., *An Exact Account of the Siege of Namur* (London, 1695) p.18: Lazard, *Vauban* p.268.
- ⁶¹ William to Duke of Shrewsbury, 28 July 1695 in ed. W. Coxe *Private and Original Correspondence of Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury with King William* (London, 1821) pp.94-95: William to Earl of Romney 28 July 1695 in ed. N. Japiske *Correspondentie van Willem III en Hans Willem Bentinck...* (3 vols., Hague, 1937) III, p. 358.
- ⁶² Elector Max Emanuel to Teresa Kunigunde 26 July 1695 *Geheimes Hausarchiv München Korrespondenzakten 752/2*.

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- ⁶³ Kane, Campaigns, pp.19-21: Parker, Memoirs, pp.48-54: W. Harris, A New History of the life and reign of William-Henry Prince of Orange and Nassau (4 vols., Dublin, 1747) IV, pp. 62-67. Rapin de Thoyras, History of England (London, 1736) III, p.129.
- ⁶⁴ C. Huygens, Journaal van Constantijn Huygens den zoon, (Utrecht, 1877) II, p.508.
- ⁶⁵ P.Bragard, Namur en Etat de Siège (Namur, 2004) p.61.
- ⁶⁶ Tronchin du Breuil, Relation de la campagne de Flandre , p.26.
- ⁶⁷ Christopher Duffy, Fire & Stone The Science of Fortress Warfare (London, 1975) p.169.
- ⁶⁸ Tronchin du Breuil, Relation de la campagne de Flandre, pp.26-27 : Huygens, Journaal, p.511 : Anon., An Exact Account (London, 1695) p.21.
- ⁶⁹ Taking a siege in form to last from the opening of trenches to the signing of the capitulation: Ostwald 'Vauban's Siege Legacy', pp.28-29.
- ⁷⁰ Some of the plans depict eight lunettes joined by a hemi-spherical line stretching almost from the Sambre to the Meuse. P. Mortier, Plan der Angriffslinien der Briten auf Namur, 5. September 1695 (1695) : N. Visscher, Plan der Belagerung von Namur durch die Alliierten, 12. Juli bis 5. September 1695 (1695) These plans were followed in Christopher Duffy, Fire & Stone The Science of Fortress Warfare (London, 1975) p.168 and indeed in contemporaneous views by Bodenehr and Feaumur reproduced by Duffy at pp.170-73. I have instead followed a plan 'drawn exactly on the ground': Anon., Plan Général des Attacques faites devant la Ville et le Château de Namur (*chez Étienne Foulque The Hague, 1695*). I have also incorporated details from another map engraved by Visscher: Plan de la ville et château de Namur avec les atakes (The Hague, 1700) See also Anon., 'Namur as Taken 20 Aug. 1695' in Kane, Campaigns. These correspond closely to an eyewitness painting by Jan van Hichtenburgh reproduced in J. Childs, Warfare in the Seventeenth-Century (London, 2001) pp.164-165.
- ⁷¹ 'Relation de ce qui s'est passé au siège de Namur' and Racine to Boileau 24 June 1692 in Oeuvres Complètes de J.Racine, II, pp.259, 405.
- ⁷² The fort as depicted in a 1692 map is a hornwork fronted by a covered way: 'Plan de la Ville, Ouvrages et Chateau de Namur' : Tindal, Continuation iii, p.290.
- ⁷³ Anon., La Campagne de Namur, p.58-59.
- ⁷⁴ Lazard, Vauban, p.266.
- ⁷⁵ P. Bragard 'Namur Lieu emblématique de la rencontre Vauban-Coehoorn' in ed. *ibid.* Vauban Entre Sambre et Meuse 1707-2007 (Namur, 2007) pp.91-95.
- ⁷⁶ Anon., La Campagne de Namur, pp.62-64.
- ⁷⁷ Chandler, Art of Warfare, p.279. Van Hoof, Menno Van Coehoorn, pp.44-45.
- ⁷⁸ Childs, Nine Years' War, p.254: E. D'Auvergne, The History of the Campagne in Flanders for the year 1695 (London, 1696) p.87.
- ⁷⁹ Van Sypesteyn, Menno Van Coehoorn, pp.12-13: Prior to Lexington, 18 July 1695 in Lexington Papers p. 98.
- ⁸⁰ Tronchin du Breuil, Relation de la campagne de Flandre , pp.17, 24.
- ⁸¹ Duffy Fire & Stone, p.169.
- ⁸² Anon., La Campagne de Namur, p.84: There is no corroborative evidence for Gowewijn Theodoor van Coehoorn's claim that William had granted his father joint authority with Tettau over the middle phases of the siege of the town and sole authority towards the end: Van Sypesteyn, Menno Van Coehoorn, p.13.
- ⁸³ On 10-12 and 26-30 August: Tindall, Continuation iii, pp.293, 296: Anon., Campagne de Namur, p. 186.
- ⁸⁴ Elector Max Emanuel to Teresa Kunigunde 12 and 13 August 1695 in 1695 Geheimes Hausarchiv München Korrespondenzakten 752/2. Tronchin du Breuil is incorrect on that point : Relation de la campagne de Flandre , p.41.
- ⁸⁵ Elector Max Emanuel to Teresa Kunigunde 21 August 1695, 25 August 1695 *GHA*, KA 752/2.
- ⁸⁶ Van Sypesteyn, Menno Van Coehoorn, pp.12, 14: the claim is repeated in Duffy, Fire & Stone, p.169

- ⁸⁷ Elector Max Emanuel to Teresa Kunigunde 13 August 1695 Geheimes Hausarchiv München Korrespondenzakten 752/2: The 12th of August is 'D Day' for present purposes: Anon., *La Campagne de Namur*, pp.98, 118.
- ⁸⁸ Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, p.145.
- ⁸⁹ Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, pp.147-49, 179: De Quincy, *Histoire Militaire*, III, p.151. Jeanne Pierre De Rycke 'L'Architecture' in eds. F.& P. Jacquet-Ladrier *Assiégeants et assiégés au coeur de l'Europe Namur 1688-1697* (Namur, 1992) pp.202-03.
- ⁹⁰ Tronchin du Breuil, *Relation de la campagne de Flandre*, p.40.
- ⁹¹ M. Fleming to Sir D. Fleming 8/18 August, Historical Manuscripts Commission 12th Report, Appendix VII, *Le Fleming Manuscripts* (London, 1890) p.337.
- ⁹² Jean Jennet, *Histoire des Provinces-Unies des Pays-Bas* (1704) p.511 : 'Racine to Boileau 24 June 1692 in *Oeuvres Complètes de J.Racine*, II, p.405.
- ⁹³ Anon., *Diario de el Sitio, y de la Toma de el Castillo de Namur* (Madrid, 1695) p.7
- ⁹⁴ Rothrock, *A Manual of Siegework and Fortification*, p.4.
- ⁹⁵ W. Le Blond, *Traité de L'Attaque des Places*, (Paris, 1756) pp.185-186.
- ⁹⁶ D. Defoe, *The Life and Adventures of Mrs Christian Davies : Commonly Called Mother Ross*, (London, 1741) p.33.
- ⁹⁷ Cocula, *Mémoires de M. De La Colonie*, p.90.
- ⁹⁸ Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, pp.165-66, 168 : Anon., *Diario de el Sitio, y de la Toma de el Castillo de Namur* (Madrid, 1695) p.7: Baurin claims that Vauban had used artillery 'just as intensively' during his attack on the château. G. Baurin 'Les Sièges de Namur de 1692 and 1695' in eds. F.& P. Jacquet-Ladrier *Assiégeants et assiégés au coeur de l'Europe Namur 1688-1697* (Namur, 1992) p.101. This is doubtful. Admittedly the expenditure of materiel in 1692 was immense with no fewer than 60,000 balls, bombs and stones hurled against Namur: Childs, *The Williamite Wars in Ireland 1688-1691*, p.135. While we do not know the comparable figures for Namur, we do know that Vauban had far fewer artillery pieces at his disposal than Coehoorn.
- ⁹⁹ Huygens, *Journal*, p.524; Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, pp.165-66.
- ¹⁰⁰ Blackader, *Life and Diary*, p.136: Anon., *The History of King William the Third* (3 vols., London, 1703) III, p.86: Van Hoof, *Menno Van Coehoorn*, p.59: Tronchin du Breuil, *Relation de la campagne de Flandre*, p.42.
- ¹⁰¹ Boufflers to Louis XIV 4 September 1695 ; Service Historique de l'Armée; Registre Coté A1 1314 ; p.14.
- ¹⁰² Sypesteyn, *Menno baron Van Coehoorn*, p.14: Stepney to Lexington, 26 August, Lexington Papers, p.112 .
- ¹⁰³ Max Emanuel to Teresa Kunigunde 20 August 1695 Geheimes Hausarchiv München Korrespondenzakten 752/2.
- ¹⁰⁴ Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, pp.172-173.
- ¹⁰⁵ Huygens, *Journal*, p.507: Anon., *An Exact Account*, p.13.
- ¹⁰⁶ Anon., *An Exact Account of the Siege of Namur*, p.32: D'Auvergne, *History of the Campagne in Flanders for the year 1695*, pp.37, 70: Tronchin du Breuil, *Relation de la campagne de Flandre*, pp.24, 32, 36, 60.
- ¹⁰⁷ Childs, *Nine Years' War*, p.292: Kane, *Campaigns*, p.22.
- ¹⁰⁸ Anon., *La Campagne de Namur*, p.116 : Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, p.165.
- ¹⁰⁹ Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, pp.168, 170, 173, 182, 184.
- ¹¹⁰ Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, p.172 : Anon., *La Campagne de Namur*, p. 159.
- ¹¹¹ Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, pp.171, 182, 189 : Tronchin du Breuil, *Relation de la campagne de Flandre*, pp.39, 92 : Cocula, *De La Colonie*, p.92.
- ¹¹² Anon., *La Campagne de Namur*, pp.106-107, 110-112, 116-120.
- ¹¹³ Elector of Bavaria to Teresa Kunigunde 26 August 1695 *GHA*, KA 752/2.
- ¹¹⁴ Childs, *Nine Years' War*, pp.292, 294: Anon., *Present State of Europe VI*, p.299.
- ¹¹⁵ Tronchin du Breuil, *Relation de la campagne de Flandre*, p.51 : George Stepney to Lexington 20/30 August 1695, *SP 105/54* f.155.
- ¹¹⁶ Huygens, *Journal*, p. 519.

- ¹¹⁷William had hoped to take Namur town in that manner: William III to Prince de Vaudemont, 24 July 1695, Japiske, *Correspondentie II*, p.358.
- ¹¹⁸Ostwald 'Vauban's Siege Legacy' p.82.
- ¹¹⁹Anon., *The Life of King William III* (London, 1703), p.427.
- ¹²⁰Stepney to Lexington 30 August, Lexington papers, pp.114-15.
- ¹²¹D'Auvergne, *History of the Campagne in Flanders for the Year 1695* (London, 1696), p. 146.
- ¹²²Baurin 'Les Siéges de Namur' p.102 : Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, pp.191-2, 201.
- ¹²³Tronchin du Breuil, *Relation de la campagne de Flandre de Flandre*, p.50 : Jennet *Histoire des Provinces-Unies des Pays-Bas*, p.519.
- ¹²⁴Blackader, *Life and Diary*, p.136.
- ¹²⁵Blathwayt to Lexington 2 Sept., Lexington Papers, p.118.
- ¹²⁶Tronchin de Breuil, *Relation de la campagne de Flandre*, pp.51-52.
- ¹²⁷De Quincy, *Histoire Militaire*, III, p.139 : Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, p.203.
- ¹²⁸D'Auvergne, *History of the Campagne of Flanders for the Year 1695*, p.148: Stepney to Lexington 30 August 1695, Lexington papers, pp.114-115.
- ¹²⁹Frederick Hamilton's Irish regiment (18th), Mackay's and Buchan's Scots: A. Parnell 'Lord Macaulay and the Assault of Namur', *The English Historical Review* II, no.8 (Oct. 1887) p. 755: Parker, *Memoirs*, p. 55. Anon., *The History of King William* (3 vols., London, 1703) III, p.90
- ¹³⁰Anon., *Life of King William III*, p. 423.
- ¹³¹D'Auvergne, *History of the Campagne of Flanders for the Year, 1695*, pp.148-149, 153-154. Anon., *Life of King William III*, p. 425.
- ¹³²Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, p. 202: Stepney to Lexington, 26 August, Lexington Papers, p. 112.
- ¹³³D'Auvergne, *History of the Campagne of Flanders for the Year, 1695*, p. 149: Parker, *Memoirs*, p.56.
- ¹³⁴Portland to Lexington 3 September, Lexington Papers, p.115:D'Auvergne, *History of the Campagne of Flanders for the Year, 1695*, p. 149: Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, pp.202-203.
- ¹³⁵G. Baurin 'Les Siéges de Namur' , p.101
- ¹³⁶Maffei, *Memoires*, p.9: W. J. Bekh, *Alexander von Maffei Der bayerische Prinz Eugen* (1982), p.157: Anon., *An Exact Journal*, p. 1.
- ¹³⁷Tindal, *Continuation*, p.298.
- ¹³⁸Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, p. 200.
- ¹³⁹D'Auvergne was adamant that British casualties alone amounted to 1,400 and that the Allies 'must have had in all, kill'd and wounded in this Action, near 3,000 men': *History of the Campagne in the Spanish Netherlands* (London, 1695), p.154: Anon., *An Express from His Majesties Camp 29 August 1695*, claims that the troops storming the Terra Nova - apparently not including the grenadiers, suffered 1,074 casualties. An English eyewitness concluded that 1,600 to 2,000 men fell: George Stepney to Lexington 20/30 August 1695, *SP 105/54* f.155. See also: Elector Max Emanuel to Teresa Kunigunde 30 August 1695 in *GHA*, KA 752/2: Anon., *La Campagne de Namur*, p.129: Chandler, *Art of Warfare in the Age of Marlborough* (London, 1997), p.280: H. Lonchay, J. Cuvelier and J. Lefèvre, *Correspondence de la Cour d'Espagne sur les affaires des Pays-Bas au XVII siècle* (Brussels, 1935) V, p.629: Kane, *Campaigns*, p.24.
- ¹⁴⁰M. de Larrey, *Histoire de France sous le regne de Louis XIV* (Rotterdam, 1734) II, p.377.
- ¹⁴¹Lynn, *Giant of the grand siècle*, p. 577: Lazard, *Vauban*, pp.267-268.
- ¹⁴²Elector Max Emanuel to Teresa Kunigunde 30 August 1695, *GHA*, KA 752/2.
- ¹⁴³George Stepney to Lexington 20/30 August 1695, *SP 105/54* f.155.
- ¹⁴⁴Tindall, *Continuation*, p.298.
- ¹⁴⁵Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé*, pp.207-209.
- ¹⁴⁶J.A. Lynn, *The Wars of Louis XIV 1667-1714* (Longman, 1999) , p.249.
- ¹⁴⁷Portland to Lexington 3 September 1695, Lexington Papers, p.119: Kane, *Campaigns*,

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- p. 25.
- ¹⁴⁸ Elector Max Emanuel to Teresa Kunigunde 31 August 1695, GHA, KA 752/2.
- ¹⁴⁹ J. Hoppitt, *A Land of Liberty? England 1689-1727* (Oxford, 2002), p.106.
- ¹⁵⁰ M. de Genlis, *Abrégé des Mémoires ou Journal du Marquis de Dangeau* (3vols., Paris, 1817) II, pp.22-23 : Lynn, Wars of Louis XIV, p.248.
- ¹⁵¹ C. Storrs, *The Resilience of the Spanish Monarchy, 1665-1700* (Oxford, 2006), p.174.
- ¹⁵² Portland to the Duke of Shrewsbury, 6 September 1695, W. Coxe ed. *Private and Original Correspondence of Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury with King William* (London, 1821) p. 104. G. Burnet, *Bishop Burnet's history of his own time...Containing, the reign of King William and Queen Mary, and the reign of King William...*(6 vols., London, 1753) IV, p.292: Anon., *Journal de ce qui s'est passé au siege de la Ville et du Chasteau de Namur* (Lyons, 1695), pp.3-4.
- ¹⁵³ The Duke of Shrewsbury to William III, in Coxe *Correspondence of Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury* p.98.
- ¹⁵⁴ Duffy, *Fire and Stone*, p.174.
- ¹⁵⁵ Lazard, Vauban, p.268.
- ¹⁵⁶ Boufflers to Louis XIV 2 September 1695 ; Service Historique de l'Armee; Registre Coté A1 1314 ; p.5.
- ¹⁵⁷ Boufflers to Louis XIV 4 September 1695 ; Service Historique de l'Armee; Registre Coté A1 1314 ; p.15.
- ¹⁵⁸ Boufflers to Louis XIV 2 September 1695 ; Service Historique de l'Armee; Registre Coté A1 1314 ; p.15.
- ¹⁵⁹ Anon, *Present State of Europe VI*, p.301.