

Landeswehr at Cēsis, 5 June

An Estonian source gives the force in Jeriki on the evening of 5 June as: Jena's Battalion + 2 guns; Manteuffel's Detachment (2 companies) + 2 guns; Petersdorff Detachment + Weickhmann battery. Altogether 807 bayonets, 258 sabres, 58 MGs, 8 guns, 2 mortars.

Landeswehr and Iron Division at Cēsis, late June

Mostly from Arvulisi Andmeid, Estonian State Archives and Das Ritt nach Riga. The word "soldiers" has been used to indicate bayonets + machine-gunners (but not artillery and mortar crews).

Iron Divison

This is only the portion of the Division facing the Estonians, much of the rest was in Ogre ready to face the Soviets.

These numbers are from Estonian sources, taken from seized documents, and may be Gefechtsstärke (i.e. include Staff elements and others not strictly "bayonets").

Main Force

Major von Kleist
3rd Battalion, 1st Regiment – 10 officers, 401 soldiers.
2nd Battalion, 2nd Regiment – 19 officers, 350 soldiers.
Jäger Battalion – 3 companies, 17 officers, 350 soldiers.
4th Squadron.
1st Mortar Company, 1st Regiment – 4 mortars, 81 men.
Von Kleist Artillery HQ – 19 officers, 387 men in the HQ, 6th and 9th Batteries (but excluding 7th).
6th Battery – 2 howitzers;
7th Battery – 4 guns;
9th Battery – 4 guns.

Flank Force

Captain Blankenburg.
3rd Battalion, 3rd Regiment – 360 soldiers, 2 mortars.
3rd Squadron.
8th Battery – 4 guns.

Reserve

1st Battalion, 1st Regiment.

Baltic Landeswehr

The numbers quoted are from German sources, and probably represent Kampfstärke.

Von Jena Column

3rd Baltic Regiment:
2 battalions – 4 companies total, each of 125+ soldiers;
MG company; *Presumed divided up with battalions.*
"Siewert" Battery – 2 field guns;
A mortar unit – 6 mortars.
"Stromberg" Pioneer Platoon – 30 men.
"Weickhmann" Freikorps:
Squadron – 50 sabres;
Battery – 4 howitzers.
1st Heavy Battery, Iron Division – 4 x 150mm howitzers.
Armoured Train: *Recently built Broad Gauge.*
Armoured Carriage – 1 x 77 mm gun (180°), 2 HMGs, 1 LMG;
Armoured Carriage – 1 x 35mm auto-cannon (360°), 2 HMGs, 2 LMGs;
Landing Party – 150 bayonets, 4 HMGs, 5 LMGs, ? mortars.

Malmede Column

2nd Baltic Regiment:



2 battalions – 5 companies total, each of 100 soldiers; *A sixth was in the rear.*
 MG company; *Presumed divided up with battalions.*
 “Barth” Battery – 2 field guns;
 A mortar unit.
 “Medem” Battalion:
 Two batteries – 5 Russian 76.2mm infantry support guns (ex-Russian).
 Escort Company – 100 soldiers, 4 HMGs, 4 LMGs;
 “Petersdorff” MG Marksman Battalion:
 3 MG companies – 24 HMGs, 250 soldiers.
 (or possibly 4 MG companies – 32 HMGs, 400 soldiers).
 Squadron – 50 sabres;
 Battery from “Weickhmann” Freikorps – 4 guns.
 “Stromberg” Pioneer Platoon – 24 men.

Böckelmann Column

Baden Assault Battalion
 3 companies – 300 soldiers;
 MG company – 8 HMGs, 12 LMGs.
 Michael Detachment:
 Infantry – 250 soldiers, 6 HMGs, 16 LMGs;
 Squadron – 100 sabres;
 2 Batteries – 8 guns.
Attached 2 Iron Division armoured cars. May have arrived later.

Reserve

“Drachenfels” Cavalry Battalion – 30 sabres. *Estonians give 100-150 sabres.*
 “Khaynach” MG Marksman Battalion – 2 companies, 70 soldiers, 8 or 9 HMGs. *Estonians give 120 men.*
 Pioneer unit – 50 men. *Probably remaining two Stromberg platoons.*

433rd Flight was to support the Landeswehr and 427th Flight the Iron Division.

The Germans were well equipped with radios, which they used extensively for operations. The Estonians thought that even battalions and batteries had them.

Notes

The ideal operating structure of a Landeswehr Battalion column in May was 3 companies, MG company, cavalry detachment, mortar detachment and battery. With the influx of recruits in June the second and third battalions were to be turned into a two battalion regiments, with each battalion of 3 companies and an MG company. The cavalry and mortars were to be at regiment level. The above OB shows that the ideal structure was not reached by the time of the Cēsis battles.

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The Estonians believed that the Landeswehr companies were 100–150 bayonets and 6 LMGs, the MG companies were 8 HMGs, the squadrons were about 100 sabres and the batteries were 4 guns – presumably on the basis of the documents that they received. This would seem to be what the Balts intended but, unless a huge increase had recently occurred, this size was not reached in the field.

For the Iron Division, *Das Ritt nach Riga* gives a total of 1,200 soldiers in the strike force. Assuming 3 companies + 1 MG company per battalion, and adding in the 2 squadrons, this gives the exceedingly low figure of 50 men per company without even allowing for HQs etc. Allowing for some battalions to have only two companies and that the MG companies and squadrons are smaller, that still gives only 70 men per infantry company.

In contrast, in *Die Letzte Front* Major Bischoff records that in mid-May the division had a *gefechtsstärke* of 221 officers, 779 NCOs, 4,006 men with 82 light and 121 heavy MGs, 15 mortars and 37 canon (out of 8,090 men total). This would suggest that the units at Cēsis were quite a lot larger than *Das Ritt* allows.

My estimate is that at Cēsis an average rifle company had around 100 soldiers with 4 LMGs, the MG companies had about 50 men with 6 HMGs, the squadrons more like 50 sabres (and no more than 80) and the batteries as likely to be two as four guns (but probably including 2 MGs). It is possible that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Baltic Regiment was stronger than the others. To my mind, it would be odd if the Iron Division and Landeswehr units were very different in size.



While this result does fall fairly squarely halfway between the competing claims above, there is more to it than that. Figures I have for earlier and later in the campaign also give Freikorps companies of about 100 rifles/50 machine-gunners per company – albeit that those figures are hardly reliable in themselves. It should also be born in mind that such strengths make sense in light of the previous experience of the Germans – being a bit on the low side for the (fighting) size of a front-line WWI company.

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Finally, there are some missing troops from the Landeswehr line-up – most particularly the Halm and Pappenheim cavalry squadrons. (The Engelhardt squadron was taking a grand tour of the area to the east.) Although one of them may be the squadron attached to the Petersdorff MG Battalion, it might also just be that they were attached to the 2nd and 3rd Regiments, as their structure would expect. A couple of two-gun Landeswehr batteries (Emke’s and a howitzer battery) are also unaccounted for, presumably with the 1st Regiment in Riga.

According to the German sources, the Landeswehr reserve in Cēsis was only 30 sabres and 70 infantry. Even the Estonians give only 150 sabres and 120 infantry. This seems an incredibly low number and hardly good tactical sense. I am inclined to believe that something is missing – perhaps the rest of the Michael Detachment, otherwise oddly unaccounted for? If it is the missing cavalry squadrons, then that could explain the large difference between German and Estonian numbers for “sabres”.

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