From Limerick to Livonia

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In the eighteenth century two Limerick men became Governors of Livonia. Peter de Lacy and George Browne were both born in West Limerick and left Ireland as young men to pursue military careers in Europe. They eventually served with great distinction in the army of the Russian Empire. The following accounts of their lives, from the Dictionary of Russian Biography published in 1914, have been translated from the Russian by Séamus Martin who has made a study of their careers.

Introduction

The ancient historic territory of Livonia is now partly in Estonia and partly in Latvia. The area was incorporated into the Russian Empire during the eighteenth century. Russia conquered the portion then controlled by, and known as, Swedish Livonia in the Great Northern War of 1700-21, fought between Russia and Sweden for control of the Baltic, and was formally given the province by the Treaty of Nystad in 1721. The area under Polish control was added in 1772 as part of the first partition of Poland.

Peter de Lacy was born in Rathcahill, near Killeedy in 1678. Son of Pierce Edmond de Lacy, he was reputed to have fought with his father in the defence of Limerick in 1691 even though he would only have been thirteen years of age. He went to France with the other Wild Geese after the Treaty of Limerick where he initially joined the French army, before eventually serving Russia. He married in 1711 Countess Martha Von Loezer and had five daughters and two sons, one of whom, Francis Maurice, became a distinguished Field Marshall in the Austrian army. He was made a Count of the Holy Roman Empire in 1740 and died in Riga on 11 May 1751.

George Browne was born at Mayne, a townland in the parish of Mahoonagh (Castlemahon), in 1698 the son of George Browne of Camas, in the parish of Killeedy and his wife Honora de Lacy. Having served in the Palatinate, he joined the Russian army in 1730. Despite being seriously wounded on a number of occasions and losing part of his skull in 1758 which was repaired using a piece of silver plate, he lived to be 94, dying in Riga in 1792. As with Lacy, his title of Count was of the Holy Roman Empire and it has been suggested that he made a return visit to County Limerick in 1772/3.

Dictionary of Russian Biography, 1914 (translation by Séamus Martin)

1acc Count p po______, (P. Lacy, े_ep_ecli as he signed his name in Russian), General-Field Marshal, born on 30 October 1678, died on 19 April 1751, in 1697, while serving in the French army and taking part in the Savoy war, received his first

1 The introduction has been written by the hon. editor.
3 Described for this reason as a 'Bionic soldier of fortune' by Éamon Ó Ciardha in History Ireland, vol. 16, no. 3 (2008) p.66, who is the author of the entry for Browne in the forthcoming Royal Irish Academy’s Dictionary of Irish Biography.
4 Mainchin Seoighe, From Bruere to Corcomohide (Bruere, 2000) p. 97 quoting De Lacy – Bellingari, The Roll of the House of Lacy (Baltimore, 1928) a work whose strong point, it should be noted, is not reliability.
commission of officer rank, in 1698 went to the Austrian service, took part in the campaign against the Turks, in 1700 was enlisted in the Russian service and under the command of Duke de Croy took part in the battle at Narva; in 1701 after the march on Kokenhuizen and Riga, Field-marshal Sheremetiev promoted Lacy to captain and appointed him commander of a Grenadier company; in 1702 with this company he took part in the battle of Hummelshoff; in 1703 he was appointed commander of a ‘noble company’, took part with it in military actions in Livonia in that year, and in 1704 in the siege and storm of Derpt; in 1705 he was promoted to the rank of Major in the regiment of count Sheremetiev and took part in the Grodnno action; in 1706 by a personal decree of Peter the Great was appointed Colonel in the newly formed Kulikov regiment (now 1st Nevsky infantry regiment); was at the taking of Stary Bykhov and for this in 1708 he was promoted to colonel; while in the command of the Siberian regiment, was dangerously wounded in his head while crossing the Desna river, but remained in the ranks, after taking Romny.

Peter the Great appointed Lacy ‘commandant with regiments and Cossacks, and Romny was reinforced (by Lacy) with combat troops and ramparts and all the rest was done according to instruction given to him on behalf of His Imperial Majesty; for this service he was promoted to the Grenadier regiment’; while in the command of the latter took part in the march on Reshetilovka and in the battle of Poltava, where he was
seriously wounded for the second time: in 1711, taking part in the Prutsky campaign, was promoted to Brigadier; in 1713, under the direct command of Peter I took part in the battle at Friedrichstadt and in 1719 took the closest part in the siege of Riga and after Riga was taken he was appointed Commandant of Riga; took an active part in the siege of Stettin. In July 1719 took part in the expedition to the shores of Sweden. On disembarking with his troops in the vicinity of Stockholm, Lacy terribly devastated the area; the tribute, taken out by the Russians in this expedition, was estimated at a million Thalers and the loot at 12 million: the Russian assault on Sweden broke its last resistance and since that time peaceful talks continued uninterrupted, the Swedes agreed to all concessions demanded.

In 1720 Lacy was promoted to Lieutenant-General; from 1723 to 1725 he was a member of the Military Collegium. In 1727 Lacy was in charge of both military and diplomatic tasks: with the (diplomatic?) corps he was sent to the border of Courland in order to prevent Moritz of Saxon; establishing his duchy there, and at the same time to prevent the Poles becoming too influential there. Lacy acted energetically and successfully fulfilled his task. After that Lacy was appointed Governor of Livonia; in 1733 he was sent as head of a troop of 16,000 men to Poland to support August III against Stanislaw Leschinsky; in the beginning of August Lacy crossed the border, on 19 took Kovno, on 27th Grodno, on 20th Prag, then in August mounted the Polish throne. Lacy’s appointment would have been considered very successful, because it combined all the rarely compatible but necessary properties: he had an outstanding gift as a diplomat, was a good military leader and was especially skilful in preparing such actions which were related to difficulties of movement and food supply of the army in wild, sparsely populated areas. The campaign of 1733-1734 was exactly like this. When Lacy was staying in Riga, the Cabinet, on notifying him (on 23 February) about the decision of the Council of Ministers, Senate and the Generals of sending the army to the Polish border, ordered him to meet at the border the Polish ambassador Rudamin, to pretend, that he was doing his best to speed up his passage to Petersburg, but in fact to hamper and delay it in every possible means. During all the period of time, preceding the war, the Cabinet kept Lacy well informed; he was enlisting tall, healthy soldiers to the army and preparing provisions. On 2 July the General War Commissariat transferred him 50,000 roubles; he handed over his Governor’s duties to Felkerzam, and, leaving his family in their permanent residence in the Governor’s house, departed to join his troops; he was ordered to enter Poland on 6 August. They spent all July preparing food supplies, horses and ammunition etc. Lacy was facing a difficult task - to march through the whole country without antagonising the people against the Russians, and without looting.

In XVIII century, when wars were extremely cruel, it seemed unbelievable that someone could refrain from pillaging. Moreover, the Russian government made things more complicated, ordering Lacy to pay for everything with Russian money; when the Poles refused to accept it, the orders were to take everything by force, paying with Russian money. On seeing Lacy’s army approaching, the Polish pans (nobility) abandoned their estates and ran away to Warsaw. The peasantry remained, and the Commander-in-chief managed to maintain order in his troops, so the local population didn’t suffer from them. Soon after the beginning of the campaign Polish noblemen started to arrive as supporters of Russia, seeking his support and protection. This was fortuitous because the army was in a difficult situation. Its movement was slow and difficult. That very mud, that was mentioned by Napoleon in 1812, was impeding Lacy
as well. General Zagryazhsky, coming to support him, got in the same situation and was so late, that he was reprimanded by the Cabinet. According to his words, the mud, flooded rivers and forests were impassable. Lacy, however, was able to overcome it and, making agreement with Russia’s supporters, slowly but surely, taking care of his soldiers, marched to Grodno. He tried to keep in touch with the Cabinet, but due to difficult means of communication wasn’t always successful, and on 13 September the Ministers asked: ‘Where is Lassi located and what's going on with him?’ On 11 September he reported to Petersburg that Stanislav Leschinsky had been elected the king of Poland. The Cabinet replied with an order addressed to the Russian ambassador in Poland Karl-Gustav Levenwolde, ordering Lacy to report to him “often” about the campaign and the state of the troops: the Commander-in-Chief was made subordinate to the Ambassador. However, before arrival at Warsaw this dependence wasn’t too heavy, because Leschinsky’s supporters intercepted the Russian messengers and the orders couldn’t reach their points of destination. The situation that Levenwolde found himself in was extremely difficult, being cut off from Russia and surrounded by people who hated it. On 14 September Lacy approached Warsaw, on 20 came to its suburb Prag, where he was joined by the Polish noblemen, who were on Russia’s side. On 22 September the Sejm was convened in a place called Grokhov, under the protection of Russian bayonets, which chose Friedrich-August, Prince-Elector of Saxony, as king of Poland. 93 cannon shots announced the news to Warsaw. On 24 September Lacy reported to the Cabinet about taking Prag and the king’s election. Not all of Poland accepted him, and Warsaw especially was held by Leschinsky’s supporters. Taking the troops across near Sokhotin, Lacy forced the enemy to retreat to Krakow - on 5 October took the capital and its outskirts. The enemy surrendered, but Lacy’s life remained difficult. All his orders and undertakings were impeded by Levenwolde’s interference. Lower army ranks were those who suffered the most. The army was weakened and frustrated. Making things worse, the Cabinet sent a decree dated 30 September, ordering him to speed up and finish the Polish campaign, to report more often and act according to Levenwolde’s orders. By the end of 1733 a new confederation was formed in the north of Poland, inviting the Russians to join the common struggle against German predominance: they supported Leschinsky who was staying in Danzig. On 5 November Lacy was sent against the rebels and Leschinsky with 12,000 troops. On 22 November the troops stayed near the village of Lovich, waiting for money and ammunition. On 30 January 1734 they were 6 miles from Danzig. On 21 February Lacy reported to the cabinet about the city’s blockade and the dislocation of troops. In Lacy’s opinion, it was impossible to storm Danzig which was equipped with good artillery, 30 thousand troops, protected by French engineers and the garrison, with his tiny army and insignificant artillery that were at his disposal. His caution wasn’t liked in Petersburg, where they also wanted to get rid of Münich: the latter was ordered to speed up the capture of Danzig. At the military council Lacy was against the immediate assault, but Münich’s opinion in favour of the storming dominated. However, before that Lacy succeeded in one important enterprise: he defeated Tarlo, governor of Lubel, a supporter of Leschinsky, coming to assist Danzig, and stopped a French frigate from entering the mouth of Vistula. On 19 April the Highest Rescript arrived, addressed to Lacy: the highest imperial gratitude ‘for the most loyal and excellent service - the total victory over the Tarlo’s army’. During the storm of Danzig the overwhelming influence of Lacy on his soldiers was revealed. All officers in the storming column were killed, and it stopped facing the deadly firing of the enemy. Münich ordered retreat, but nobody
obeyed him. Only the personal arrival of Lacy and his persuasions had an effect, and the soldiers retreated with terrible losses. From the contribution, taken from Danzig, Lacy got quite a lot. From the ‘tolling bells’ money he got 5,000 roubles, 2,083 chervontsy (gold coins), 2 talers and 20 groschen.

The Polish campaign had not yet ended, when Lacy got a new order. In 1735 French troops attacked Emperor Karl VI, and he, in accordance with the peace treaty, demanded Russia’s assistance; it was expressed in sending the army of 20,000, under Lacy’s command. Again he had to lead his troops through sparsely populated and poor regions, protecting his soldiers from famine and exhaustion, and the population from pillaging. The most difficult was his march through Silesia: here his army suffered shortages of everything and many soldiers deserted. But in Bohemia everything was put in order: there was no shortage of anything and the flight of deserters was stopped; the army was brought in such a good shape that it aroused surprise and admiration on the part of the allies. On 8 June 1735 Lacy entered Silesia; but he didn’t take part in military action: the arrival of Russian troops in Germany forced the enemies of Austria to agree to peace. French Minister Dargenson wrote that the actions of Russia in Poland, their powerful drive to Rhine gave the impression that this country possessed impressive forces. In March 1736 Lacy was in Vienna. The king (Kaiser) honoured him with an excellent reception, displayed his greatest kindness and presented him his portrait incrusted with diamonds and 5,000 gold coins in a red velvet bag. Signs of pleasure and approval were also displayed to Lacy in Russia before that. On 17 February 1736 the Cabinet informed the Senate of the highest decree, appointing Lacy General-Field Marshal. Soon a new military enterprise arose for him - the war against the Turks. On 17 April 1736 he arrived from the Rhine campaign to Tsarytysynka, where he found his comrade Münnich, who was also a Field Marshal, in command and held counsel with him about future action against the enemy Lacy moved to Azov - Münnich to the Crimea. During this visit Lacy became aware of how badly the Russian borders were defended.

In the steppe he was attacked by the Tatars; his belongings were looted and he had a narrow escape. On 17 July Lacy began to storm the Azov citadel, on 19 July the city surrendered. Such quick success was partly explained by skilful and energetic military actions and partly by the fact that Lacy found several Armenian spies, who pointed out to him the weak points of the citadel. After it was taken the citadel was repaired and brought into shape, suitable for defense and the assaulting artillery was sent back to Izyum. Lacy started to prepare the army for the march on Crimea, but met with an unexpected obstacle on the part of Münnich, by rank and term of service Lacy was older than him but never showed it and always submitted to Münnich’s order. After coming back from the Azov campaign, he got an order from Petersburg to find out ‘under a hand’ (discretely) the state of the Münnich’s army, which had failed. Münnich explained his failure by Lacy’s slowness in his support; his critics by his soldiers’ exhaustion, his cruelty and inability to organize. Unwilling or unable to understand properly the expression ‘under a hand’ Lacy directly spoke to Münnich. The latter was annoyed and tendered his resignation, recommending that Lacy be left alone in charge of the army. The empress was displeased that he revealed the secret and settled the matter with difficulty and calmed down the offended Münnich.

The whole autumn and winter of 1736 the campaign continued to be prepared. On 7 September Lacy got an order from the Cabinet to appoint young and healthy commandants instead of old and sick ones in the border citadel and to defend the border better. He was also ordered to ready the Don Cossacks, Little Russian (Ukrainian) and
Bashkir regiments to participate in the campaign. This order ran contrary to Lacy’s hopes. Four years had passed, since he left his family, he had not seen his children, and didn’t receive letters being constantly on the march. In his words, his children were living ‘without education and care’. Desiring to see his family, Lacy asked to spend his winter holidays in Riga but instead he got an order to discuss, together with Münnich, plans for the future campaign and, apparently as a consolation, was awarded the order of St. Andrew the Protoclete. On 12 January in Glukhov a military council took place, in the presence of the two Field-marshal. After that Lacy came back to Azov and began to get ready. Provisions, ammunition, artillery and other equipment were brought by boat down the Don. Regiments of the Don Cossacks, Bashkirs, Ukrainians were also arriving. The Cabinet confirmed by strict decrees that ‘according to Her Majesty’s decree, all the main command and all other matters and use of newly built vessels on the Don are entrusted to General -Field Marshal Lessiy’.

Prince I. F. Baryatinisky, who was in command in the Ukraine, was ordered to deal with enlistling the Cossacks, prepare provisions and help Lacy in general. He was in charge of 12,000 Don Cossacks, supplied with weapons and money from Russia, and 10,000 Bashkirs. The Chief Commander for his diligent service on 1 April 1737 was bestowed with land in Livonia. On 3 May Lacy marched from Azov to the Crimea from the side of the Putrid (stagnant) Sea (co cmo o I u so Map) where he was totally unexpected and, after crossing it, went to the peninsula, devastating everything on his march and moving to Karasubazar. Near this town he defeated the Khan’s army in two battles on 12 and 14 June, but couldn’t stay in the country due to the shortage of foodstuff, especially fodder for his horses. Lacy could have held on in the Crimea longer and reached greater success had Baryatinisky been able to send him help on time who he asked on 11 July to send troops from Little Russia (Ukraine) to Perekop. Left without timely support, Lacy retreated to Molochnye Vody (Milky Waters). He complained to the Cabinet of bad Cossack personnel, of shortage of foodstuffs and ammunition, and the Cabinet, in its turn reprimanded those responsible. On 13 November 1737, after a visit to Petersburg for a council and coordination of activities of the Russian and Austrian armies, Lacy came back to the South and began to get ready for the new spring campaign. His regular army, taking account of the experience of the previous year, was reinforced by Cossack and Kalmyk regiments and again Lacy started to complain of shortage of money, recruits, horses, ammunition, carriages, coachmen, horses’ gear, shells etc. On 15 May the Cabinet expressed regret that these shortcomings, were impeding the campaign, informed Lacy about the measures taken to rectify the situation, and granted him full powers in everything related to the campaign and the march of the Kalmyks. Having settled the disputes among the Cossack leaders and being as ready as it was possible, Lacy went to Perekop. On 26 June 1738 he crossed the dried Sivash, leaving the transport under suitable command. The 40 thousand army of Turks and Tatars retreated behind the wall at the citadel at Chivash-Kale. Lacy besieged it but heavy rain impeded the beginning of his resolute actions. His demand of surrender was met by cannon fire from the Turks. On 28 and 29 several mortars and cannons, placed on a hill, opened fire at the citadel. The Russians forced the citadel commandant. Abu Bekr and a hundred Yanychars, arriving from Kaffa, to capitulate (on 29 July on the afternoon). Its garrison of 1,000 was declared prisoners of war, 80 weapons taken off the wall.

However, that was the end of Lacy’s success. The shortage of food and the dry season forced him to retreat to the Donets river; this failure so much affected Lacy that
he send a letter to the Empress submitting his resignation; but they were pleased by his activities in Petersburg. Her Majesty expressed her gratitude for his service and desired it to continue; the Cabinet called on the Senate to publicize Lacy's report on Russia's capture of Perekop and the citadel. This highest approval moved Lacy immensely, and in response in his letter he expressed his gratitude and promised to stay on in the service till the end of his life.

A Cabinet decree dated 24 September was also a great consolation for Lacy. It told of the negotiations with the court of Vienna relating to the retreat of the armies of Münich and Lacy. The Russian government wrote: 'Real military art showed, that such lengthy campaigns in the steppes, turn out to be very difficult due to personnel casualties and shortage of ammunition, and are very unreliable, so it is hard to rely on a happy outcome or success in such campaigns, as it was previously admitted by the Kaiser's court'. Lacy was rehabilitated of his failure - it was related to the hardships of the campaign: it was assumed that he, having been better prepared during the winter of 1738-39, would reach greater success. On 30 October 1738 he was asked to persuade the main chieftain of the Nogay Tatars, sultan Mambetai, to come with his Nogay troops to Russia from the Crimea, promising liberties and salaries, and Russian protection of the other Tatar troops. By summer 1739, besides the regular troops, 6,000 Don Cossacks, 3,000 local Cossacks with horses and 3,000 vessels and 10,000 Kalmuks were expected to come under the command of Lacy. The Dnepr fleet and Zaporozhe Cossacks were also subordinate to him. The campaign was expected to start in April. Lacy was extremely dissatisfied with its preparations. He reported to the Cabinet that after coming back to the army on 27 April he found 'everything in bad shape and ill-prepared, so only a tiny hope remains of the campaign's success'. The Cabinet was indignant, strict threatening orders to fulfil everything were sent to generals Rumiantsev, Ignatiev and Shipov and on 2 May copies of all orders were sent to Lacy, related to equipping the army with all the necessary material, and allowing him to postpone the campaign for some time, but mentioning that 'the enemy is facing a lot of confusion'. The conclusion of the Belgorodsky peace treaty cancelled this campaign. The regular troops under Lacy's command were transferred to Moscow in view of a possible war with the Swedes. On 13 February 1740 the Petersburg Police Chancellery was ordered to provide apartments for Lacy's headquarters. By the decree of 19 February he himself was appointed Governor-General of Livonia and Riga. On 4 November the Cabinet announced that Lacy and his family were granted the title of Reich-Counts of the Holy Roman Empire.

At this period Lacy reached the culmination of his influence. In the Cabinet annals there are a lot of his proposals of promoting various people with favourable remarks of the Cabinet ministers. His aide Nikolai Volynsky received a high rank. On 8 August 1740 Lacy was appointed to take part in the Military Collegium. He had to wage the Swedish war together with Keith in 1741-1743. In the middle of May a military council took place at his house in Petersburg, in this respect. An army of 30,000 was put at Lacy's disposal. Keith commanded the corps at Vyborg. On 13 July 1741 the army units, concentrated at Osinovaya Roscha (the Aspen Wood) moved to Finland, but war was declared by Lacy in his decree only on 4 August. On 16 August he arrived at Vyborg and took counsel with Keith about plans for the future campaign. Having learned that a Swedish detachment of 4,000 soldiers had been broken into two parts, divided by a distance of 40 versts one from the other, Lacy decided to attack them separately, and on 20 August ordered Keith to move to Vilmanstrand to meet the Swedish detachment of
2,000 under the command of Wrangel. On 23 August Lacy joined them, 18 hours after Wrangel. The Swedes took the citadel, strengthened their position with a wall and weapons from Vilmanstrand. In spite of the brave and staunch resistance of Wrangel and a detachment of Western Bothnians, the Swedes were completely defeated, Vilmanstrand surrendered and was looted. 16 banners, 13 weapons, 39 officers and 1,500 soldiers were taken prisoner. The Vilmanstrand action aroused panic among the enemy’s ranks. Not having siege artillery Lacy refused to move immediately to Friedrichshamn where the main Swedish forces were located, and returned to Vyborg, continuing the war. The Don Cossacks were breaking deep into Finland, pillaging the population.

By winter Lacy returned to Petersburg, perhaps, having been informed about the future coup in favour of Elizabeth. However, constantly refraining from taking part in internal politics he was unlikely to participate in it. On the night of the coup he was among those who came to the palace and swore allegiance to Elizabeth; as an influential, loyal and reliable supporter she encouraged him to participate in the work of the council, ruling this during the first days of her reign. To this council he presented the plan of the future campaign and the project of allocating duties to the generals. Then he prepared everything for the campaign, facing resistance on the part of the members of the court. A special animosity was displayed by prince N.Yu. (Nikita Yurievich) Trubetskoy, who claimed that Lacy was too old to know how to act. But the campaign of 1742 showed that this opinion was wrong. By the army’s successful activities he managed to capture Friedrichshamn (26-29 of June); in July he with an army of 17,500, passing along the road, built by Peter the Great near Helsingfors, surrounded counts Levenhaupt and Budenbrock with their army of 17,000 and after those commanders were called off to Stockholm, on 26 August he compelled their army to capitulate.

Finnish regiments laid down their arms and were let to go to their villages; the Swedish infantry, keeping their arms, was sent home by sea with passports issued by Lacy. The Russians captured 30 banners, 90 weapons, 94 officers and 7,000 lower ranks. This defeat put an end to the war. Lacy returned to Petersburg in October and took part in peace negotiations. They couldn’t be favourable for the Swedes. A contemporary wrote that ‘their behavior was so strange and seemed so opposed to what is usually done, that their descendants will find it hard to believe the news about this war’. Another (a Swede) wrote that ‘all this war on the part of the Swedes looks like a chain of stupid event, if not treason’. As the Swedes wouldn’t accept the Russian conditions, Lacy began to get ready for the campaign of 1743, prepared its plan and began its implementation. But his departure on 8 May looked like a celebration, rather than a dangerous military enterprise: no one believed that the Swedes would resist. When Lacy and the navy passed Gange, the Swedish envoys in Abo agreed to all the Russian conditions (1-27 August 1743). The success of the Swedish war was mainly due to Lacy’s energy, ability and care of the army. Waging war, he acted as a true loyal and intelligent follower of Peter the Great, during his actions in Finland using his expertise and his own personal experience. By instilling discipline among the troops and his ability to stay on friendly terms with the local population he found in Finland many friends and supporters of Russia. Coming back to Petersburg, on 5 October Lacy was appointed, on her Majesty’s departure to Moscow, the Chief Commander of all (military) affairs with an order to be present at the St Petersburg Senate office and during the celebration of peace on 25 July 1744 he was awarded a diamond rapier, a snuff-box and a salary increase of 3,000 roubles a year. On 27 July he was appointed
Commander of troops in Livonia. The Swedish war ended Lacy’s activity in the field but he continued to remain an important military leader, to whom they turned for advice in case of complications in external affairs. He took part at the meetings in September and October in 1745 related to the measures to reduce the forces of the King of Prussia and spoke in favour of support of the Polish king. He attended the meetings in December 1746, when the successful actions of the French in the Netherlands again raised the question of sending Russian troops to the Rhine. In Lacy’s opinion, a Russian army of 30,000 should join the allies and act in concert with them. It had to go through Courland, Lithuania, Poland and Silesia. According to his assessment, the campaign should continue for not less that three months and to finance the campaign it would be appropriate to borrow a subsidy of 150,000 from the English. Repnin was appointed commander of the army, and Lacy wrote the instructions for him.

Lacy died in 1751, leaving a good memory of himself especially among his soldiers. Lacy was one of those noble characters that still were around in the first half of XVIII century. He had to sell his sword, but he was loyal and honest during his service. A warrior by nature and character, he liked and knew his job well, and had an advantage over Russian and foreign military leaders, always and everywhere following the interests of Russia, and not his personal interests. He was never inclined to become famous by shedding the Russian blood in vain, this was alien to him, and never took part in crazy actions for which Münich became famous. The soldiers knew very well the difference between these two Field Marshalls and called Lacy ‘a kind man’. Another favourable feature of Lacy, in comparison to the foreigners, who inundated Russia after the time of Peter the Great, was that he never interfered into the inner politics and intrigues of the Court. Efficiency, skilful management and modesty were his lasting qualities.

The files concerning Lacy are mainly kept in the Moscow Foreign Ministry Archive, Senate Archive, State Archive and Military-Scientific archive of General Headquarters.

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(George Browne) General-in-Chief, governor general of Riga, born Ireland 15th June 1698 died in Riga on 18th September 1792. Browne came from an old noble family that was well-known as far back as the 11th century and which went to England with William the Conqueror and was given important duties of state.

He received an excellent education in Limerick but as a Catholic was unable to reach his full potential in his home country and in 1725 joined the military service of the Palatinate where he quickly became acquainted with General Keith and departed with him in 1730 to join the Russian Service. In the reign of Empress Anna Ioannovna he was commissioned as Captain-Lieutenant in the Izmailovsky Regiment but in the same year at his own wishes was transferred to the Narva Infantry Regiment and promoted to First-Major.

At the beginning of the Polish war in 1734 Browne went with his regiment as a component of the military force led by General Lacy taking part in many important operations including the attack on the walls of Danzig where he was very badly wounded in the left arm, breaking a bone. A war with Turkey then opened up and in 1736 Brown took part in the siege of Azov where he received two further wounds as a result of which he was forced to spend several months out of action.

In 1738, transferred to the Army of Münich, Browne took part in the siege and storming of Ochakov and in 1739 during a special assignment with the Austrian army at
the battle of Krotsk he was taken prisoner by the Turks and brought to Constantinople. Here he was unwillingly sold from master to master three times until finally with the help of the French envoy Villeneuve he secretly escaped. While in captivity Browne came into possession of certain papers including secret documents of the Turkish government outlining their forthcoming campaign against Russia. Arriving safely in Petersburg he presented these to the Empress who in recognition of this important service raised him to the rank of Major General.

In 1742 during the war with Sweden Browne was deployed to the Gulf of Finland between Narva and Petersburg and for excellent service was promoted to Lieutenant-General. At the end of this campaign he was assigned to the Corps of his brother-in-law General Lacy to aid Austria in its conflict with Prussia.

During the Seven Years War Browne was admitted to the Order of Alexander Nevsky, he took part in almost all the important actions of this conflict beginning with the bloody offensive at Lovozitz where he received a new wound in the hip. In the attack on Prague he was present as a witness to the glorious death of his relative Count Ulysses Browne. For his services at the battle of Kolding Browne received exceptional rewards: The Empress Maria Teresa presented him with a jewelled snuff-box, embellished with diamonds and containing her portrait, the King of Poland welcomed him into the order of the White Eagle and the King of France took one of Browne’s sons into personal care to further his education. In the consequent campaigns Browne was raised to the rank of General-in-Chief distinguishing himself at the battles of Gross Egersdorf, Breslau where he was badly wounded in the leg, Kyurstrin and finally at Tsorndorf. Later he was almost killed in a Prussian cavalry attack under General Zelditz where he was subjected to 11 sabre wounds including some to the head. He was then admitted the Military Order of St Andrew the Protoclete (25 November 1758) and as a result of his wounds returned to Petersburg where in 1762 the Emperor Peter III appointed him to the post of Governor General of Riga in which position he remained until the end of his life.

In his thirty years in the Baltics Browne introduced a series of many reforms in the areas of education, trade, health care and many others. In 1774 as a reward for his distinguished public works he was elevated to the rank of Count. In 1782 he was amongst the earliest to receive the First Degree of the Order of St Vladimir and furthermore the Empress Catherine (the Great) granted him a large estate in Livonia. In his final years because of advanced age and deteriorating health Browne several times requested to be relieved of his duties but his requests were refused by the Empress who announced that ‘only death can separate him from me.’ Browne was buried in Schoenberg (now Skaistkalne) Courland (now part of Latvia).