

Claude Dallemagne's brigade and Despinoy with Generals of Brigade Nicolas Bertin's and Jean Cervoni's brigades then counterattacked the town. In a tough four-hour fight, the French drove Ott's outnumbered soldiers out of Lonato and pushed them back to San Marco.<sup>[5]</sup>

Leaving Oberst-Leutnant Anton Vogel and two battalions to hold Brescia, Quasdanovich advanced with Reuss, Spörck, Klenau, and Lusignan from Brescia to the southeast. He reached Montichiari, south of Lonato, in mid-morning and spent most of the day there. That evening, he returned to San Marco to join Ott, leaving Klenau in Montichiari. Also on 31 July, Sauret marched to Salò and defeated Ocskay in a pitched battle. The Austrians retreated to Gavardo. Having rescued Guieu and his men, Sauret returned to Desenzano, where he rendezvoused with Masséna and Despinoy.<sup>[7]</sup>



Salò and Lake Garda

## 1 and 2 August

On 1 August, Bonaparte assembled 12,000 men under Generals of Division Pierre Augereau and Charles Edward Jennings de Kilmaine and moved northwest from Goito toward Brescia, pushing Klenau's weak force before him. Shaken by his setbacks at Lonato and Salò, Quasdanovich ordered all of his troops north to Gavardo.<sup>[9]</sup> Bonaparte recaptured Brescia without opposition, and was soon joined there by Masséna and Despinoy. Klenau moved northeast toward Gavardo to join Quasdanovich.<sup>[8]</sup> Vogel retreated to Caino in the mountains.

On 2 August, Quasdanovich regrouped at Gavardo and sent Ocskay's brigade to reoccupy Salò. With Brescia now secure, Bonaparte ordered Masséna to San Marco, while Augereau and Kilmaine marched back to Montichiari. Despinoy held Rezzato and Brescia where he was joined by a demi-brigade from Milan. Bonaparte directed Guieu, who replaced the injured Sauret, to march from Lonato to retake Salò the next day. Forces under Despinoy from Brescia and Dallemagne from Lonato were sent to attack Gavardo.<sup>[9]</sup>

## Battle: 3 August

### Lonato

During the night, Ocskay at Salò started south along the lake road. Guieu marched north on an obscure lane, completely missing Ocskay, who reached Lonato's outskirts via Desenzano. Keeping Spörck's brigade to hold Gavardo, Quasdanovich sent Ott and Reuss south on 3 August.

Ocskay's brigade attacked Lonato at dawn, defeated BG Jean Pijon's brigade, and captured its commander. Masséna, whose division lay between San Marco and Lonato, counterattacked the Austrians from the west at mid-day. Bonaparte directed the battle. Assaulted by the brigades of Pijon (now led by Colonel Jean-André Junot) on the north, BG Claude Victor and BG Antoine Rampon in the center, and BG Jean Loreot on the south, Ocskay's outnumbered men were driven from Lonato and pursued toward Desenzano. But Junot's men, plus the Guides and the 15th Dragoons, captured Desenzano first, freeing 150 French prisoners from Pijon's morning fight. Hemmed in by his enemies, Ocskay surrendered with the rump of his brigade. The rest scattered across the countryside. During the fighting in Desenzano, Junot suffered severe saber cuts on his head from Austrian cavalymen.<sup>[10]</sup>

### Paitone

Moving from Rezzato, Despinoy attacked Ott piecemeal and was repulsed. After some fighting, the French general withdrew toward Brescia. Doggedly, Dallemagne moved around Ott's east flank and even reached Gavardo twice, but each time the Austrians drove him back. Dallemagne retreated to Brescia, where he reported sick. Casualties and other details of these fights are unknown. Because of the French attacks, Ott did not advance farther south than Paitone, south of Gavardo. At some time during the day, Klenau reinforced Ott. Reuss was sent cross-country to establish contact with Ocskay.<sup>[11]</sup>

### Desenzano

With his brigade of 1,800 men, Reuss soon appeared at Desenzano, recaptured the town, and rescued a number of prisoners from Ocskay's command. After learning the fate of Ocskay's brigade and finding that Masséna's victorious division was closing in on him, Reuss beat a hasty retreat back to Gavardo, harassed by the French. He lost a number of prisoners on his retreat. Others were rescued by Major Gustave Maclemp's small Austrian flotilla on the lake.<sup>[12]</sup>

### Salò

Meanwhile, Guieu reached Salò, found it unoccupied, and turned west to menace Gavardo. The French soon came upon and captured Quasdanovich's artillery park. But Spörck counterattacked and recaptured the guns.<sup>[13]</sup> The day ended with Spörck holding the heights west of Salò while the French controlled the town. That evening, Quasdanovich ordered Ott to join him on the heights. Reuss turned up with his brigade during the night with the tidings of Ocskay's disaster. A council of war determined to retreat. Having heard nothing from Wurmser, Quasdanovich hoped to rejoin his colleague by marching around the north end of Lake Garda.<sup>[14]</sup>

### Castiglione

On the morning of 3 August, Wurmser's 4,000-man advance guard under GM Anton Lipthay lay eight kilometers to the south of Lonato near Castiglione delle Stiviere. The Austrian commander planned to move to Quasdanovich's help, but the French pre-empted him. Augereau launched an enveloping attack on Lipthay with 11,000 soldiers. Despite being greatly outnumbered, Lipthay put up a terrific fight, giving ground only grudgingly. He was, however, forced to abandon Castiglione and fall back southeast toward Solferino. Lipthay's stubborn defense allowed Wurmser time to concentrate his forces. GM Anton Schübirz marched to the sound of the guns and counterattacked Augereau's left flank near Solferino. FML Paul Davidovich formed his division in support. By the end of the day, Wurmser had the bulk of his 20,000 soldiers on hand. French losses are not known, but BG Martial Beyrand was killed, BG Jean Robert was wounded, and "great losses had been suffered by both sides." The Austrians lost about 1,000 casualties, including GM Franz Nicoletti wounded.<sup>[14]</sup>

## Battle: 4 August

Quasdanovich issued orders to retreat north toward Lake Idro at 2:00 am. In the confusion, one Austrian column found itself cut off from the rest of the corps and made a desperate march to the southeast to reach Wurmser. The Austrians marched into Lonato early in the morning, nearly capturing Bonaparte. Napoleon was at Lonato with only 1,200 French against 3,000 Austrians. Napoleon informed the Austrian officer that his "whole army" was present, and that

"if in eight minutes his division had not laid down its arms, [he] would not spare a man."<sup>[15][16]</sup> Napoleon supported this ruse by issuing orders to his aide-de-camp Berthier about grenadier and artillery units that Berthier<sup>[15]</sup> knew were entirely bogus. Oberst Knorr surrendered one battalion each of *De Vins* IR # 37 and *Erbach* IR # 42, a total of 2,000 men and 3 cannons.<sup>[17]</sup> The Austrians only discovered once they had surrendered and been disarmed that there were no French forces nearby, and that they could have captured Napoleon with ease.<sup>[15]</sup> Bonaparte sent Guieu to observe the Austrian withdrawal.

## Results

In the battles on 3 and 4 August, the Austrians lost 23 cannons and at least 5,000 killed, wounded and captured. French losses were at least 2,000.<sup>[18]</sup> More importantly, Quasdanovich's defeat allowed Bonaparte to mass over 30,000 men against Wurmser's 25,000, resulting in a French victory in the *Battle of Castiglione* on 5 August. This defeat forced Wurmser to withdraw to Trento and abandon the campaign.