



Close Files & European Order

The Field of Battle

1700-1720

Game Scenario

Soignes

May 1707

The Scenario

In May 1707 the French Marshal Vendôme advanced on Brussels, taking up a position near Sombreffe with nearly 80,000 men.

Marlborough collected a force of 65,000 and marched to Soignes to the west of the French position intending to attack. However, at the last moment the States General refused to allow the Dutch troops to take part in an attack and the Allies were forced to adopt a defensive strategy. Historically, Vendôme did not risk battle but instead strengthened his position and the two armies remained stationary watching each other.

This battle that 'could have been' imagines that Vendôme decides to take advantage of his greater numbers and allied indecision to attack. The allies have taken up a position to the east of Soignes, their left flank resting on the Bois d'Houssiere to the north. The French decide to concentrate their attack on this flank between the woods and the village of Ecaussinnes to the south.

Allied Order of Battle

Field Marshal Ouwerkerk commanding. Organised into three wings, each with a General.

Dutch Infantry Wing:

15 battalions organised into 3-4 brigades. Up to 3 battalions may be B Grade Guards or Veterans, the remainder C Grade line. Supported by 3 battalion guns and 2 field guns.

Dutch Cavalry Wing:

15 Squadrons organised into 3-4 brigades at least one of which must be D Grade Dragoons. The remainder may be C Grade line Horse.

Note: Dutch may include Scots, Prussians, Swiss and Danes in Dutch pay.

English Wing:

1 brigade of 3 battalions C Grade line foot and 1 battalion gun;

1 brigade of 4 squadrons C Grade horse;

1 brigade of 4 squadrons D Grade dragoons.

Note:

I usually represent a mounted squadron by a single base of two figures. My French battalions (600 men at full strength) are 3 bases, the larger allied battalions could be 4 bases each. The French dragoons may dismount, the allied dragoons may not. When mounted both should be second rate cavalry (D Grade) but dismounted French Dragoons count as C Grade.

French Order of Battle

Marshal Vendôme commanding. Organised into two or three wings, each with a General.

22 battalions organised into 4-6 brigades. Up to 2 battalions may be A Grade Grades Françaises or Suisse. One battalion may be B Grade converged grenadiers. The remainder C Grade line.

2 battalion guns and 4 field guns.

24 squadrons of cavalry as follows:

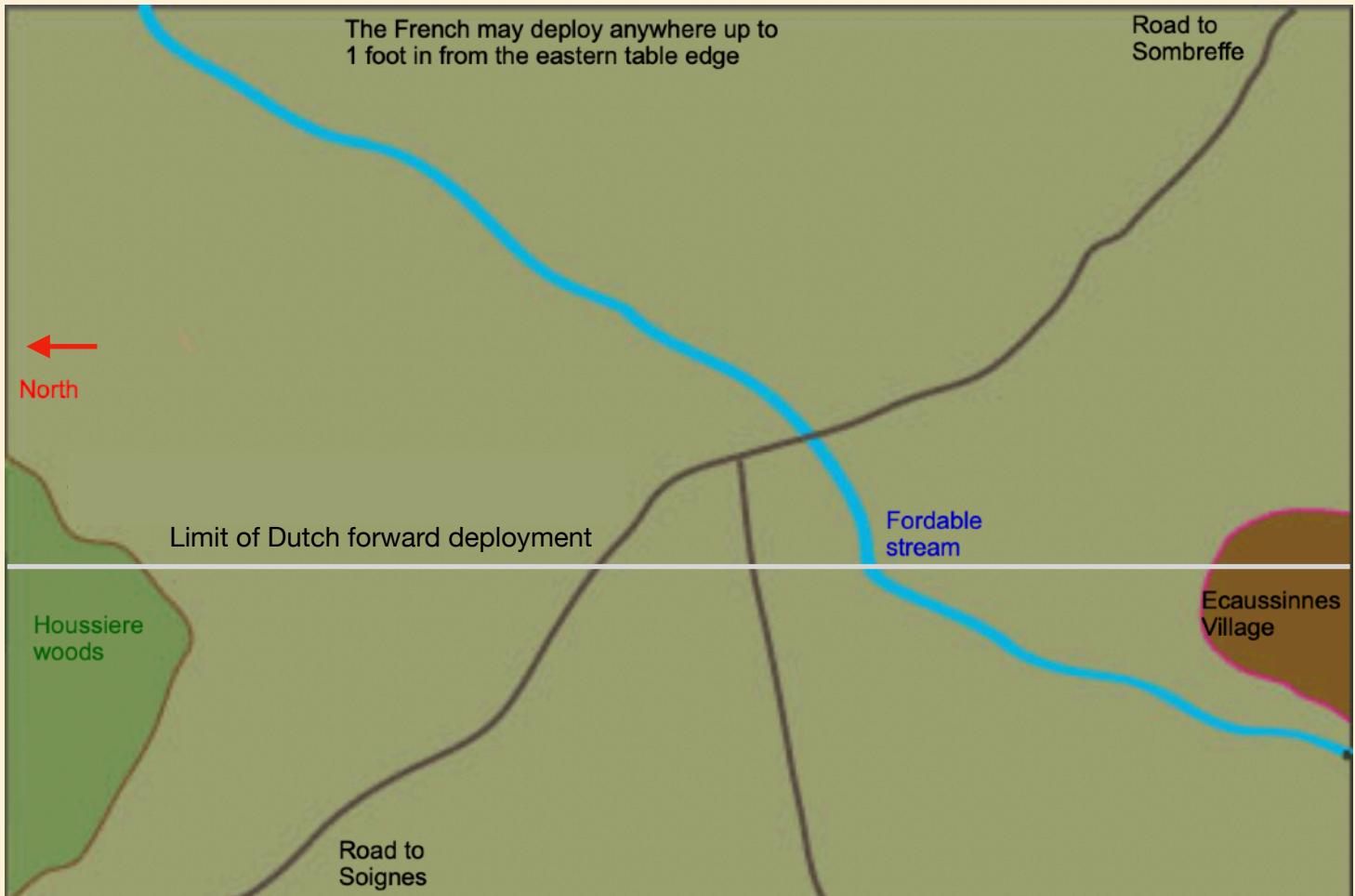
One brigade of 4 squadrons A Grade horse representing the Maison du Roi.

One brigade of 8-12 squadrons D Grade dragoons.

One or two brigades of 8-12 squadrons C Grade chevau-léger.

Note: The French may include Irish, Germans and Swiss in French pay.





Deployment

The Allies initially deploy the two Dutch wings anywhere on their half of the table behind the white line on the map. Marlborough is assumed to be initially deployed off-table to the southwest. Once he realises that the French are attacking, he dispatches the English wing to reinforce his left flank. The Allied player rolls a die at the start of his 3rd turn, the English arriving on a result of 4-6 (+1 for each turn after the 3rd). They may enter in column on either or both of the roads from the western table edge.

The French may initially deploy any or all their troops up to 1 foot in from the eastern table edge. They may choose to keep some off-table to arrive later in column or line from the eastern edge at any time they choose without needing to roll dice.

Victory Conditions

The French win if they take and hold both Ecaussinnes and the road crossing over the stream after up to 9 game turns.

The allies win if the French fail to do so.

The French advance to take the road crossing over the stream.

