



# *Close Files & European Order*

## *The Field of Battle*

### *1700-1720*

Game Scenario

**Vimbuch**

April 1703

## Historical Background

In early 1703 the Dutch General Johan Winjand van Goor was sent to reinforce the Imperial Army of the Markgraf Ludwig von Baden-Baden to block any attempts by the French to cross the upper Rhine and link up with the Bavarians. Goor had 14 Battalions: 3 Dutch, 1 Swiss, 1 Nassau-Weilburg, 1 Mecklenburg-Schwerin, 1 Braunschweig-Wolfenbeuttel, 1 Pflaz, 1 Anspach, 2 Prussian and 3 Hessian. He also had 4 squadrons of Hanoverian Dragoons.

The French Army on the Rhine at that time was commanded by Marshal Claude Louis Hector de Villars who had 49 battalions (including 3 Irish and 2 German), 21 squadrons of dragoons and 49 squadrons of horse. On 13 April 1703 Villars detached a force under Marquis Jean-Jules-Armand Colbert de Blainville to probe the Lines of Stollhofen, looking for a way to break through. Goor with his contingent, possibly reinforced by Imperial troops, held the lines and the French withdrew seeing that an assault was not feasible. Blainville made two more attempts against the village of Vimbuch but each time Goor's men forced them back. It is not clear if on any of these occasions the armies came to serious blows. More likely the French advance guard judged it impossible and withdrew before battle was joined.



## Game Scenario

This scenario supposes that Blainville felt he had a good chance of pushing Goor's men out of Vimbuch and clearing a way for the rest of the French Army to advance. It assumes that Goor has 14 Battalions, either his full original force or a rump which has been reinforced with some Swabian and Imperial troops from Baden-Baden's army. Blainville will only have a proportion of the French army on the Rhine and I have chosen to give him a slight advantage in numbers in order to make an attack feasible.

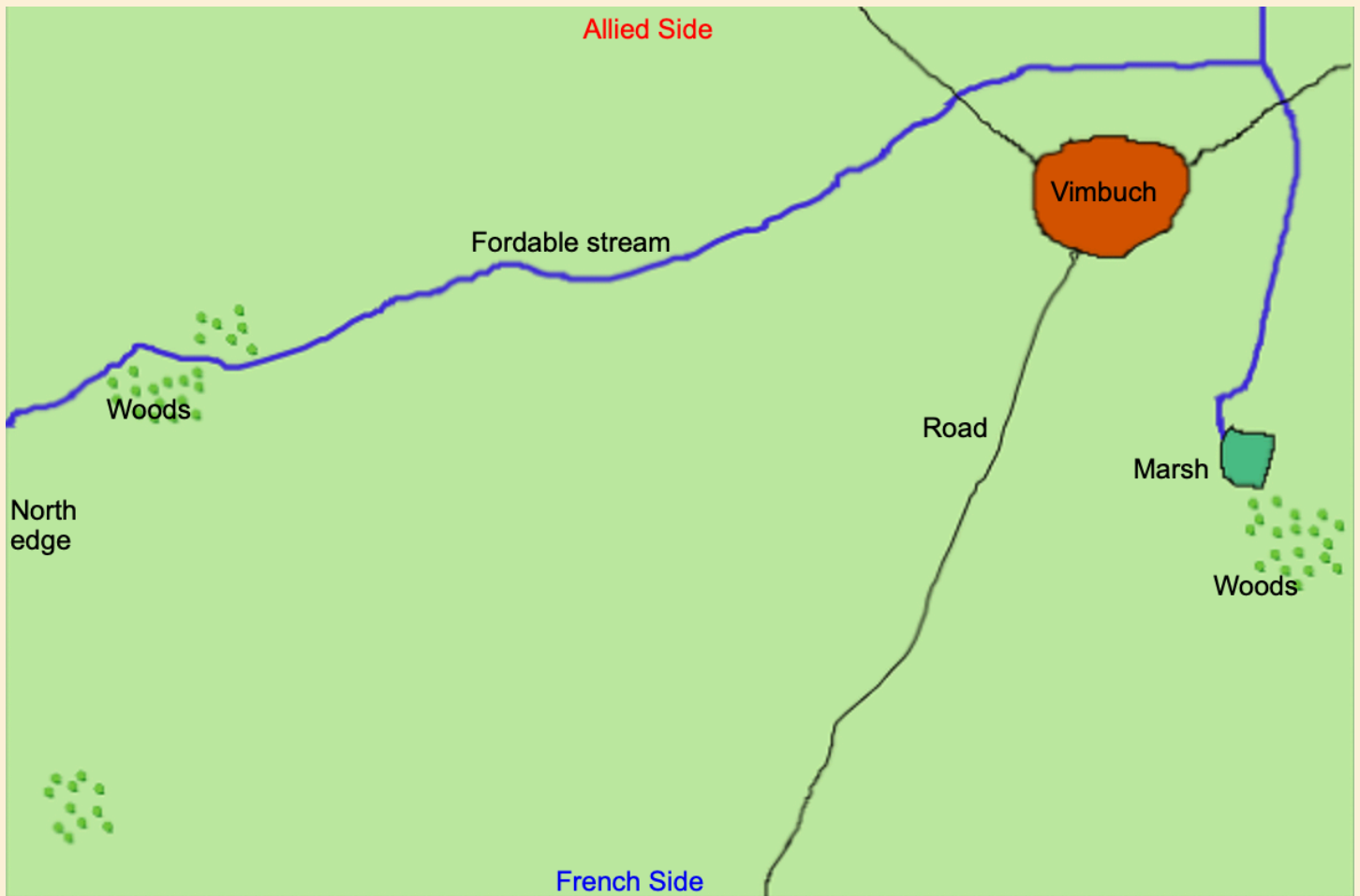
The game allows for an interesting mix of troops on the Allied side. The Mecklenburg-Schwerin battalion included a company of 90 pikemen. All of Goor's force later went on to fight at Schellenberg and Blenheim before returning to the low countries with Marlborough. Goor himself was killed leading the front line at the Schellenberg.

### Opposing Forces

The Allied force, commanded by van Goor contains 18 battalions of foot. These would be most of Goor's contingent mentioned in the background section or with some battalions of Swabian, Franconian or Imperial troops substituted or added. The foot are organised into two lines under the command of Graf Friesen and Baron Erffa. They have 3 field guns and 4 battalion guns split between the wings

The allies also have a mounted wing of 31 Squadrons commanded by Graf Gronsfeld. These can be any combination of Imperial, Hessian, Swabian, Prussian, Hanoverian and Franconian horse and dragoons.

The French force, commanded by Marshal Blainville is made up of 21 battalions of foot (up to 4 of which can be Irish and 2 German), 4 field guns, 34 squadrons of dragoons and horse. None of these are Guards. They are divided into 3 Wings commanded by the Marquis de Legall, Marshal Dorrington and the Marquis de Rosel.



### **Deployment**

*The battlefield is flat farmland, broken by a small fordable stream and a few copses of woods and marsh. Vimbuch is in the south east corner. The Allies deploy first setting up anywhere on the eastern half of the table (At the top of the map). Once the Allied player has set up the French player may set up anywhere on his half of the table beyond 240 yards of any enemy.*

### **Objectives**

*The French objective is to break through on one point. The Allies simply have to hold the line.*

