

# *Brown Bess*

## *Squared*



**Simple Grid Based Wargames Rules for the  
Horse and Musket Era in Europe  
by John Armatys**

This edition especially prepared for the  
Wargame Developments website.

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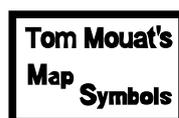
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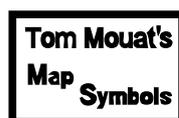
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The front cover illustration is British Regiment of Foot: Battle of Lauffeldt 21st June 1747 in the War of the Austrian Succession by Richard Simkin (1850–1926).

The illustration on the contents page is a British military short land pattern musket, more commonly referred to as a Brown Bess, used by Thomas F. Bates in the American Revolution and by his son, Edward Bates, in the War of 1812, public domain courtesy of Missouri History Museum.



The symbols in the diagrams are from  fonts, available at <http://www.mapsymbols.com/>.

These rules were first published in Nugget No. 340.

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# *Introduction*

Brown Bess Squared is a gridded version of my Brown Bess rules (see Nugget 317). The game is designed to be played on a squared grid with about 12 units a side.

To play the game you will need:

- Two armies. A single base of figures is a “unit” which can represent anything from a battalion to a division or a general and his staff.
- A handful of six side normal dice (numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) for each player.
- Counters to record “hits” on units.
- Markers to show when a unit is not in its usual formation.
- Markers to show when a unit is “broken” (optional).
- A surface to play on with suitable terrain. If you don’t want to permanently mark a grid on your table, mat or cloth you could use small stones or tile spacers to mark the corners of the squares. Alternatively if running a game virtually you can create a map of the battlefield and the armies using MS PowerPoint (or similar) in edit mode and screen share to let the players see it. Guidance on how to do this is in Nugget 340 and Nugget 347. Screen shots of the game run at VCOW 2021 using PowerPoint appear on page 5 of Nugget Colour Supplement 333 and pages 4 and 5 of Nugget Colour Supplement 348.

I am most grateful to Tim Carne for his input in developing the rules.

# *Move Sequence*

The game is played in alternate bounds.

Each unit may fire at any range **or** move each turn

1. Move troops, broken units first. The opponent may fire at a range of one square at any time;
2. Fire at any range;
3. Units in the same square melee (both sides fight, moving player first);
4. Change formation (unless in melee);
5. Attempt to rally units which have not moved, fired, fought or changed formation unless they have been interpenetrated.

# *Formations*

Infantry may be in line, column of march, column of attack (Napoleonic only), square or skirmish order. Cavalry may be in line or column. Artillery may be limbered or unlimbered.

# *Movement*

Troop Type	Movement Points		Movement Points
Infantry in line	2	Light cavalry	5
Infantry in column	3	Heavy cavalry	4
Infantry skirmishing	3	Horse artillery limbered	4
Infantry in square	0	Artillery limbered	2 (not before 1759)
Generals	5	Artillery man handled	0

All units except skirmishing infantry get only two movement points if in bad ground.

It costs one movement point to move one square, except into, in or out of bad ground where it costs two movement points.

A unit may turn at the start and/or end of its move, each 90° or 180° turn takes one movement point, except a 90° turn by infantry in line takes two movement points.

A cavalry unit may make one diagonal move at the start of the turn at a cost of two movement points provided that either the square in front of the cavalry or the square to its side is not occupied by another unit.

Only one unit plus a general from each side may occupy a square at the end of the movement phase in a turn.

A unit which enters a square occupied by an enemy unit ends its turn.

A unit may disengage from an enemy unit in the same square by turning 180° at the start of its turn.

Units from the same side may interpenetrate. A unit which is interpenetrated may not move, fire, change formation or attempt to rally that turn. A broken unit which ends its move in the same square as another unit is removed from play.

# *Combat*

Overhead fire (that is fire where a straight line from the centre of the firer's square to the centre of the target square passes over any part of a square occupied by another unit or a wood or town) is not permitted except to artillery on hills and provided that there are no troops, woods or towns in the line of fire within one square of the front of the guns or one square of the target. Arc of fire is 45 degrees. One diagonal may be counted when measuring the range.

Infantry units may not fire more than once on an opposing unit at a range of one square unless every opposing unit in range and arc of fire has been fired at.

The table below shows how many dice are rolled for each unit in combat:

Troop Type	Melee	Range in squares			
		1	3	5	8
Infantry in line or square	4	4	4*		
Infantry in column of attack	4	2			
Infantry in skirmish order	4**	4	4*		
Infantry in column of march	1	1			
Cavalry in line	4				
Cavalry in column of march	1				
Artillery	0	4	2	1	1
Horse Artillery	0	3	2	1	
General	1				

\* Rifles only

\*\* Skirmishers may not melee except against other skirmishers or artillery. They take a counter and retire one or two squares (owner's choice) instead.

Add a dice for elite units, subtract a dice for raw units.

Add a dice if "superior" (e.g. British and the Prussian Army of Fredrick the Great's musketry, French and Russian Napoleonic infantry in column of attack in melee, cavalry v infantry not in square in the open, heavy cavalry v light cavalry, highlanders charging).

Subtract a dice for each counter held by the unit.

Subtract a dice if the unit is in melee to its flank or rear (squares do not have flanks or a rear)

Add a dice if in melee with or firing at enemy's flank or rear. Add a further dice for lancers in melee to enemy's flank or rear.

Add a dice if defending an obstacle (fence/wall, river, town or field works) in melee.

Subtract a dice if attacking an obstacle in melee.

For units in square firing work out the number of dice for the whole unit and divide by four, rounding fractions of a half or more up, to find the number of dice that may be rolled for each face of the square. A square may not roll more dice than the number of dice for the unit - e.g. a unit in square holds one counter, so has three dice, divided by four =  $\frac{3}{4}$ , rounded up = 1 dice per face, but only three faces may fire. If the unit had three counters it would have one dice divided by four =  $\frac{1}{4}$  = no firing dice. Only one face of a square may fire into each diagonal.

A unit in melee always has a minimum of one dice.

Throw the dice. 5s and 6s are hits (6s if firing at artillery or a unit in skirmish order, 4s, 5s or 6s if firing at a square or if highlanders charging), place a counter for each hit. If a general is with the unit roll a dice for each counter taken - 6s show risk to the general.

If a general is at risk roll a D6 - 6 = general dead, 5 = general wounded and retires off table, 4 = only a flesh wound, roll a dice to find the number of turns taken to recover, may not do anything except move to the rear until the general is feeling better, 1 - 3 = no effect.

Cuirassiers disregard the first hit in the first round of melee only.

## *Terrain Effects*

Towns	Ignore first hit in combat. Bad ground if not on a road. Add a dice if defending a town in melee, subtract a dice if attacking a town in melee.
Field works	Ignore alternate hits in combat, starting with the first. Add a dice if defending field works in melee, subtract a dice if attacking fieldworks in melee
Woods	Bad ground if not on a road. No firing at ranges over one square. Ignore second hit caused by firing.
Hills	Cover from fire.
Rivers	One movement point to cross (if possible). Add a dice if defending a river in melee, subtract a dice if attacking a river in melee.
Fences/walls	One movement point to cross. Troops behind walls ignore first hit in combat. Add a dice if defending a fence/wall in melee, subtract a dice if attacking a fence/wall.
Bad ground	End turn on entering. All units except skirmishing infantry get only two movement points if in bad ground. Moving one square into, in or out of bad ground costs two movement points.
Roads	Negate movement penalties for units in column of march moving in the direction of the road.

## *Morale*

If a unit holds the number of counters shown below it breaks - turn immediately (for free) and retire a full move at the start of its side's next turn. It is not required to move in subsequent turns.

Elite	5
Average	4
Raw	3

Add 1 if a general is with the unit.

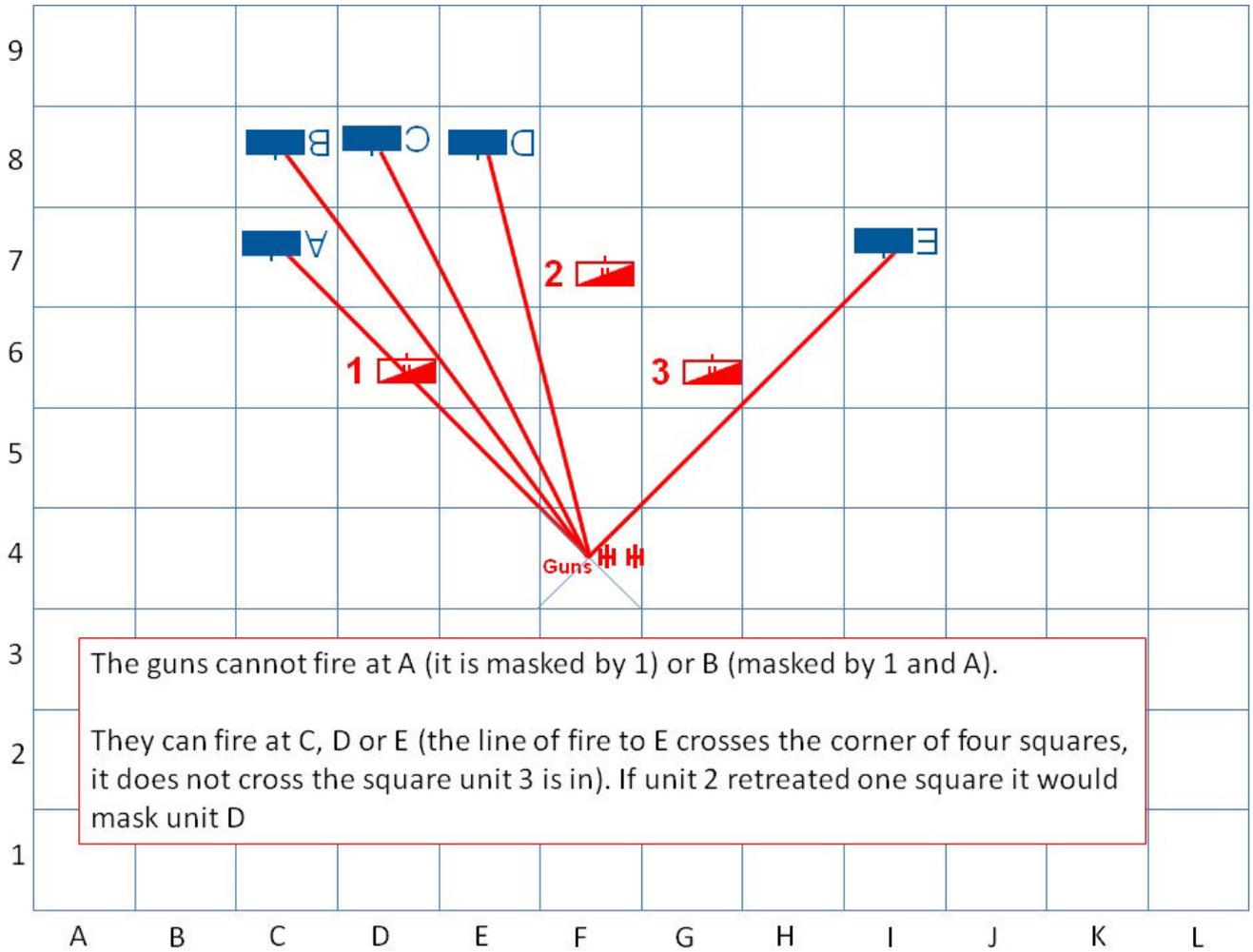
Add 2 if the unit is in square or is in field works.

A broken unit cannot take more counters - remove the unit if an additional counter is taken.

Units can be rallied by rolling more than the number of counters held. + 1 to dice if general with unit. If successful remove a counter, two if a general is with the unit.

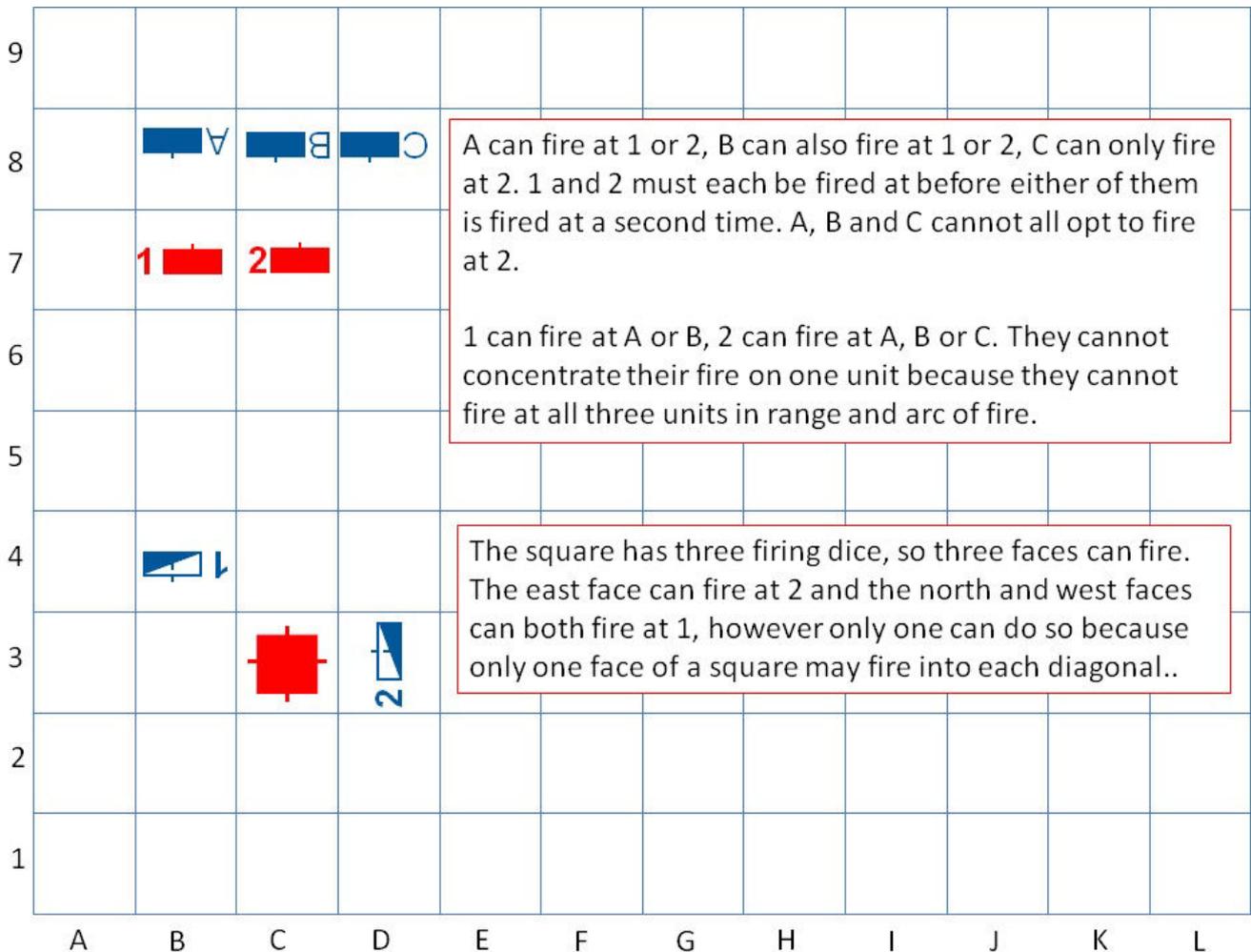
# Appendix 1

## Artillery Fire Diagram



# Appendix 2

## Musketry Fire Diagrams



# Appendix 3 - Sample Scenario

## The Battle of Dettingen, 27th June 1743

The game can accommodate up to four players:

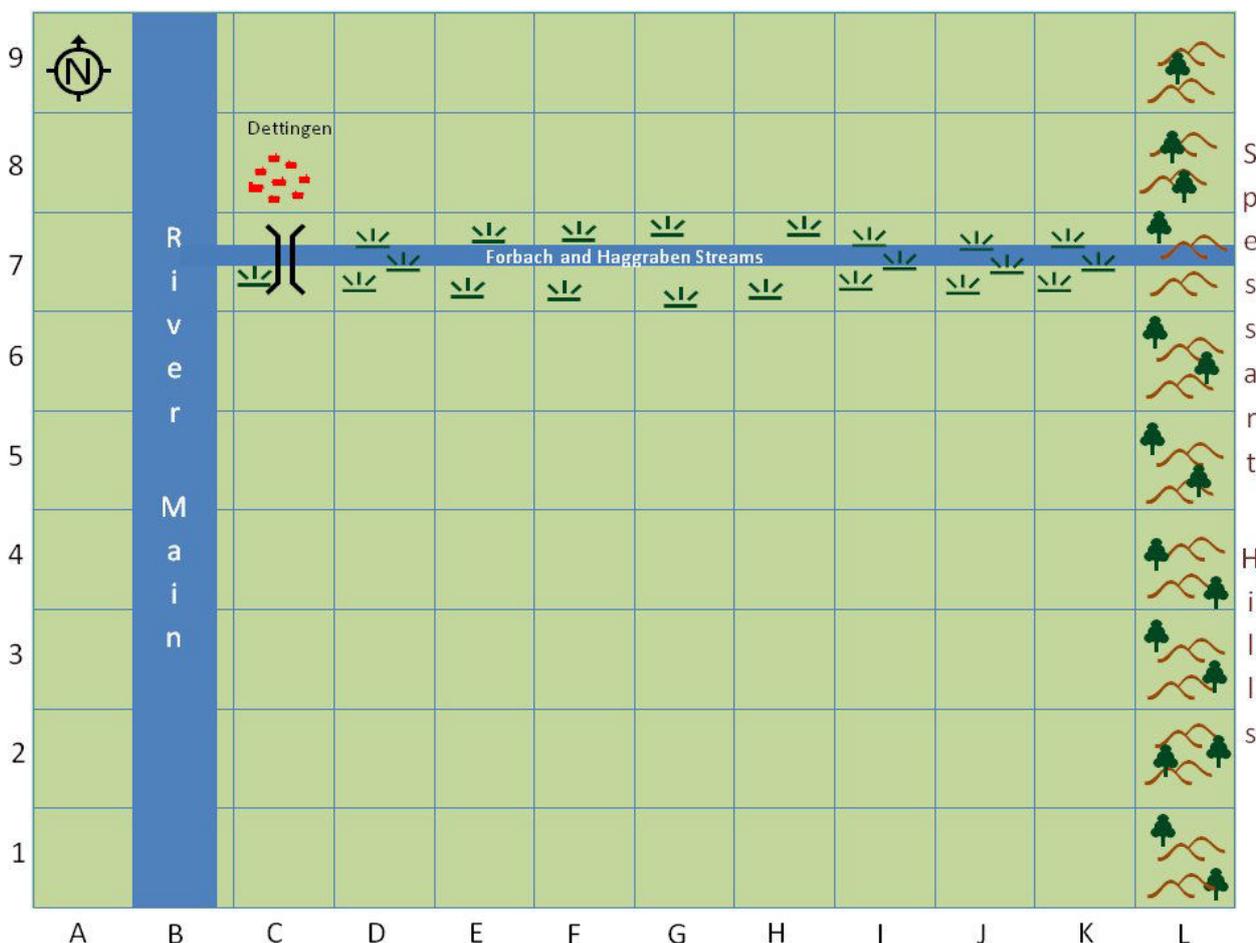
The Pragmatic Army	John Dalrymple, The Earl of Stair
	King George II, Elector of Hanover
The French	de Gramont
	d'Harcourt.

Each side should be supplied with a copy of their briefing, which omits the other side's order of battle and deployment limitations, and be asked to provide details of their deployment in advance of the game.

# The Battle of Dettingen, 27th June 1743 -The Pragmatic Army Briefing

## Background

The Pragmatic Army (a confederation of states that had agreed under the Pragmatic Sanction of 1713 to recognize Maria Theresa as sovereign of the Habsburg Empire) had British, Hanoverian and Austrian troops (the Hessians and some Austrians had been left to protect the Netherlands) and is commanded by King George II, Elector of Hanover. The army has advanced slowly from the Netherlands up the Rhine and into the Main and Necker valleys. A French army under Marshal de Noilles advanced east from the middle Rhine to block the Pragmatic Army's advance and protect the withdrawal of a French army from Bavaria following their defeat at the Battle of Braunau. The French have cut the Pragmatic Army's lines of supply and the army is retreating north to Hanau.



## Ground

The River Main, which is not fordable, is the boundary between Hesse (to the west) and Bavaria (to the east). There is a bridge over the Main at Aschaffenburg, about six miles south of Dettingen, and the French have build two pontoon bridges at Selnstadt, about two miles north of Dettingen. To the east are the densely forested Spessart Hills (impenetrable to formed units, which will disperse if they enter them). The Forbach and Haggraben streams run from the hills to the River Main at Dettingen, where they are crossed by a bridge. The ground either side of the streams is marshy (bad going unless moving in column North/South over the bridge, there is no additional penalty for crossing the streams). The battlefield is

about 2,000 yards across.

### **Situation**

The Pragmatic Army has walked into a trap. The French, under Marshal de Noilles, have crossed the River Main at Selignstadt and taken Dettingen. De Noilles has moved part of his army to Aschaffenburg, blocking the road by 8am, leaving his nephew Count De Gramont in charge of the troops at Dettingen. King George II sent two battalions of British Foot Guards, four battalions of Hanoverian infantry and the Hanoverian cavalry to cover the rear of the Pragmatic Army.

### **Pragmatic Army at Dettingen**

John Dalrymple, The Earl of Stair, who will defer to King George II, Elector of Hanover, who will attach himself to a Hanoverian infantry unit as soon as the battle starts and play at being an infantry colonel.

3 units of British Infantry - average with superior fire power  
3 units of Hanoverian Infantry - average with superior fire power  
2 units of Austrian Infantry - average  
2 units of British Cavalry - average  
1 units of Austrian Cuirassiers  
1 average gun

The Pragmatic Army spend much of the morning deploying from line of march. They form up in rows 1, 2 and 3 of the southern edge of the map to the east of the River Main in columns C to K.

### **Objective**

Get the Pragmatic Army off the northern edge of the map.

### **Sources**

Dettingen 1743, Michael Orr, Charles Knight & Co. Ltd., 1972

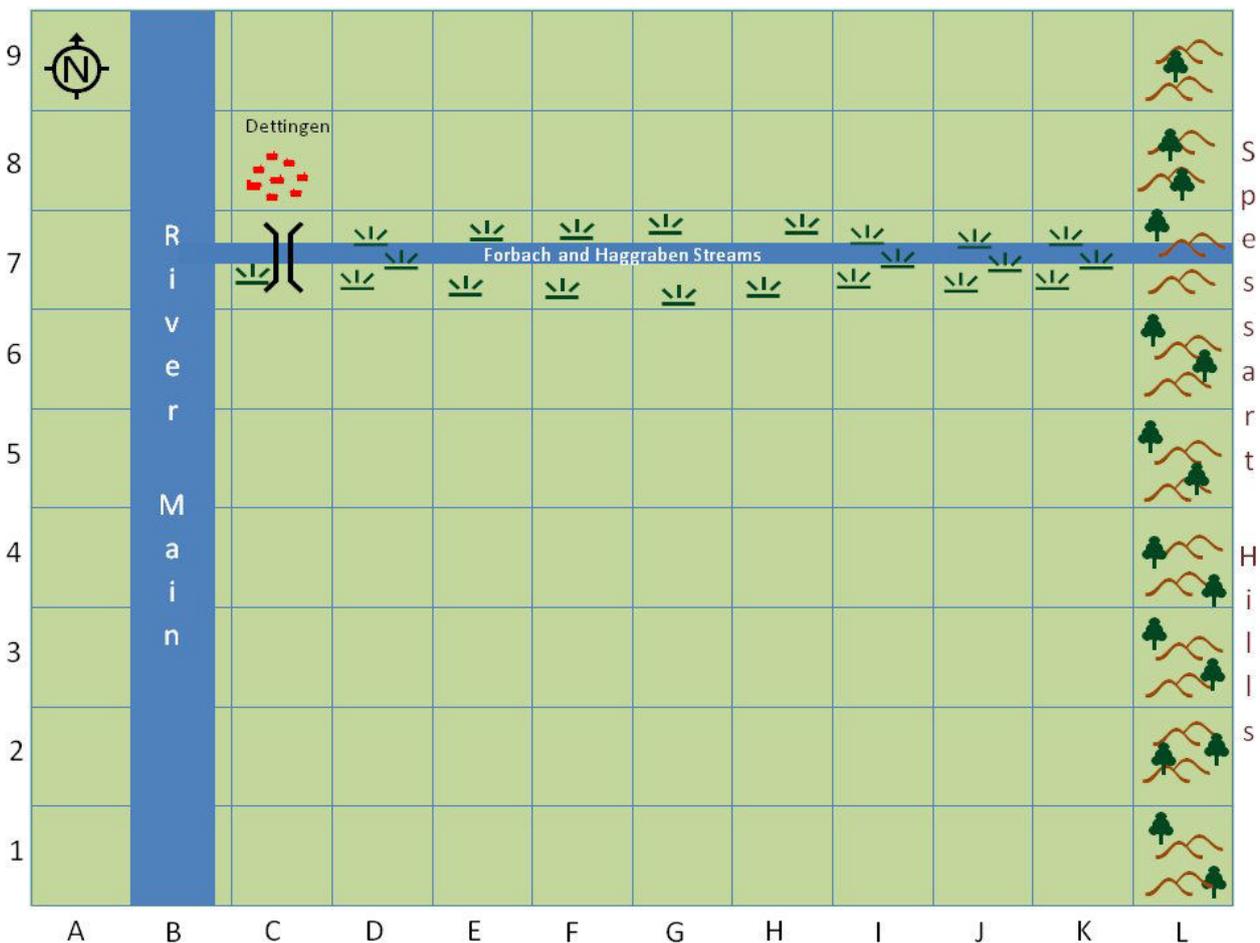
The Encyclopedia of Military History, R Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N Dupuy, Jane's, 1976

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Dettingen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Dettingen).

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### **French Army at Dettingen**

de Gramont

d'Harcourt (commanding the French cavalry)

8 units of French infantry - raw (F1 to 8)

1 unit of Maison du Roi cavalry - elite cuirassiers (M1)

3 units of cavalry - average cuirassiers. (F1 to 3)

2 average guns (F1 and 2).

One French gun is on the west side of the River Main in column A in any of rows 4 to 9.

The remainder of the French army was originally deployed on the east side of the River Main north of the streams, but De Gramont moved the army south of the streams and attacked... Deploy on C6 to K9. The Maison du Roi should be on the right.

### **Objective**

Destroy the Pragmatic Army.

### **Sources**

Dettingen 1743, Michael Orr, Charles Knight & Co. Ltd., 1972

The Encyclopedia of Military History, R Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N Dupuy, Jane's, 1976

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Dettingen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Dettingen).