

The Battle Of Hastenbeck

July 26, 1757

by Chuck Hamack and Erik Engling

The 1757 western campaign opened in April with a two-pronged French invasion of Germany. The main French army under d'Estrées moved forward somewhat tentatively while officials in Hanover hoped for a diplomatic resolution. As 'd'Estrées' forces approached the Hanoverian border, it was clear that diplomacy was no longer viable. Opposing the French, the Duke of Cumberland commanded a newly-formed Hanoverian army between the villages of Nienberg and Hameln. Cumberland crossed the Weser river, determined to strike the enemy first. He did not, however, adequately scout the position and d'Estrées used light troops to turn both flanks of the Allied army and compelled it to retreat back to its original positions at Hameln. Cumberland did not attempt to stop a French river crossing, waiting instead for his enemy's arrival. For the next two weeks, the Duke of Cumberland made half-hearted attempts to deflect the French and even split his army to confound d'Estrées' concentration, but in the end he achieved nothing and found himself back at his original positions near Hameln. King Frederick of Prussia, after his defeat at Kolin, repeatedly urged Cumberland was urged to attack the French, but the Allied commander was unable to focus his forces for such an assault.

On July 25th, the French army scouted the position held by Cumberland and assumed he would retreat from the area further into Hanover. D'Estrées determined to attack the Allied army as soon as possible, seeing that Cumberland's 40,000 troops awaited battle. However, with the French army of 65,000 strung out on the march, it took the remainder of the day to move forward and deploy. During the 25th, only Chevert's forces were engaged against Cumberland, fighting inconclusively near the village of Voremburg.

The Battle of Hastenbeck began very early on the morning of the 26th as Cumberland's artillery bombarded the French army. D'Estrées did not reply, preferring to wait for a flank attack by forces under the command of Chevert who had found a passage the day before while assaulting Voremburg. The French army remained inert waiting for the artillery that would signal Chevert's attack. Chevert's troops climbed the Obensberg Hill and closed with Cumberland's jaegers. Grenadiers reinforced the Hanoverian jaegers but were ultimately overwhelmed and routed. Cumberland reacted by sending more grenadiers to assault Chevert's position and engaged in a serious fire fight for the hill.

In the center, the French general D'Armentieres attacked Cumberland's line on the plain north of Voremburg. Hanoverian infantry and artillery held their ground against these assaults, and those of General Broglie. Both French generals reformed their troops and launched repeated assaults. D'Armentieres succeeded in crushing Cumberland's battery position and advanced further into his lines, was counterattacked by Brunswick troops, and repelled them to retreat back to their original positions. Broglie succeeded in capturing Hastenbeck and also attacked the Allied infantry center beyond.

Cumberland's left was turned by Chevert's attack and now his center had been ruptured by D'Armentieres' and Broglie's assaults. Only on his right, sheltered by the Haste stream, was his army fully intact. By early afternoon the Allied army began its retreat toward Hameln. However, an impromptu Hanoverian attack by Dachenhausen caught the rear of Chevert's forces and broke his exhausted troops. They retreated in panic back down the Obensberg Hill toward the headquarters of Marshal d'Estrées. The French commander initially responded by ordering his army to retreat, then realized that his opponent was in fact quitting the field, and thus claimed the field instead. The casualties were light: about 2500 for the French and 1500 for the Allied army.

Cumberland continued to retreat northward and d'Estrées, the victor, was relieved of command and replaced by Richelieu. The French army ultimately cornered Cumberland's command in the North and the general requested and received an armistice, a dismal end to the Hanoverian army following the defeat at Hastenbeck. The Duke of Cumberland left the army in disgrace, never to return to active duty.

The Scenario:

The weather is sunny. Start on Turn 1. Basic Length is 7 turns.

Terrain notes:

The Obensberg Hill is rough terrain though troops are vulnerable until they reach the crest. The stream of Haste was significantly marshy and requires the entire movement of infantry and cavalry to cross under which they are vulnerable. Artillery may not cross. All villages on the map are represented with one town block. The River Weser is impassable terrain. Sunken Road provides Cover for those units deployed in (FF).

Map Scale: 1:100. It is possible to cut off the bottom 12" of the map and still play the battle. This would make the map 5' instead of 6'.

Free Deployment Rules:

Allies above the dotted line. French below the dashed line.

Historical Deployment Rules:

Allies deploy first. French deploy second.

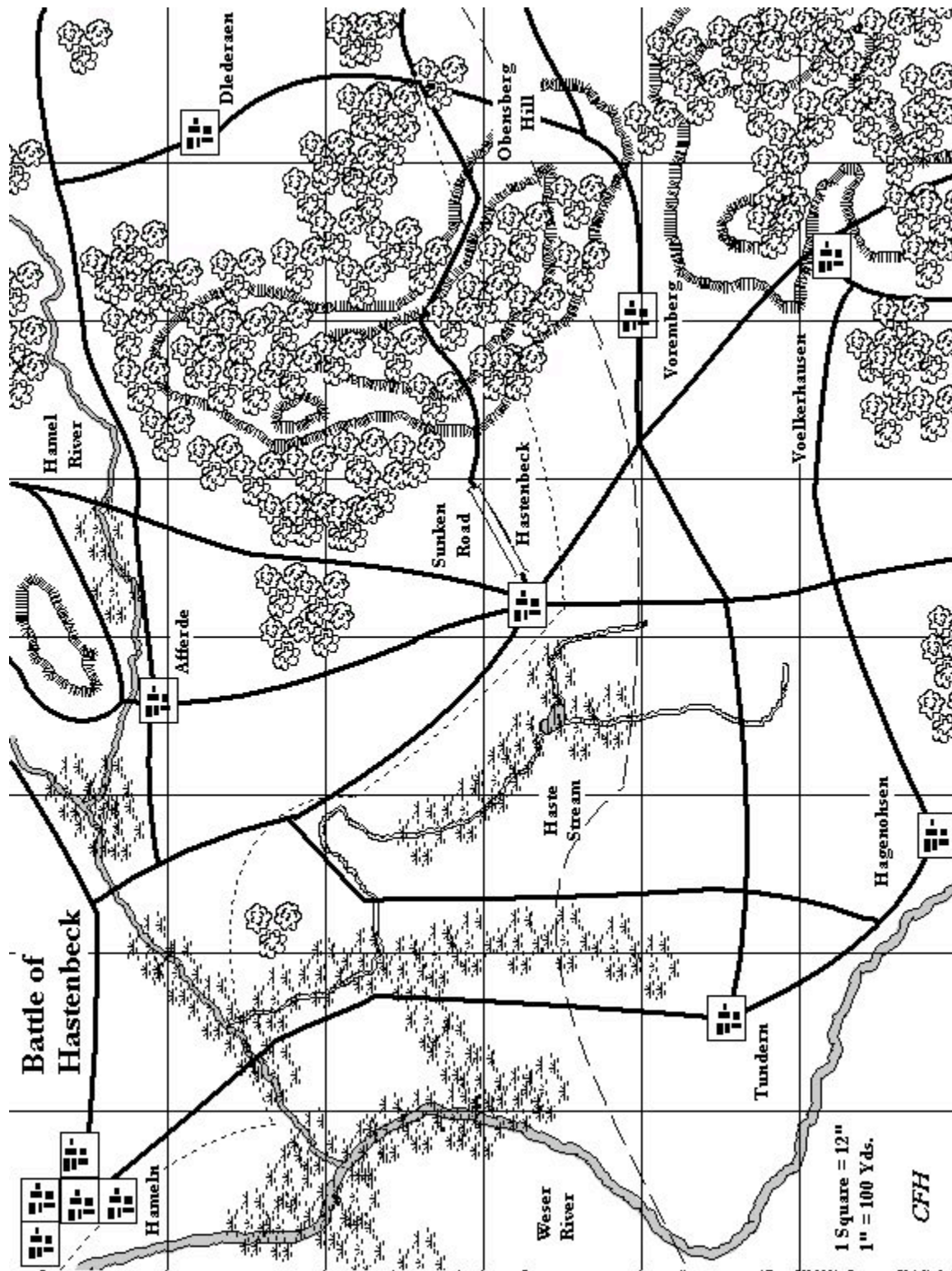
Special Scenario Rules

Cumberland's Heavy Artillery may deploy on Turn 1 with field works offering a normal cover save of 4+. This remains in effect provided the guns do not move. If the artillery is overrun, remove the field works.

The French had a force of Dragoons that were dismounted for the fight. These Dragoons may not remount and must remain on foot for the duration of the battle. French Dragoons are 5SP, RI.

The town of Afferde provides either side with a +1 to army morale. Allies begin the scenario in possession of the town and get its +1.

The Hastenbeck Battlefield:



The Allied Army**Commander: Duke of Cumberland (Poor)****Army Break Point: __ 8 __****Right Wing Zastrow (+1) V**

2 x Hanoverian Foot

1 x Hessian Musketeer (Hameln Detach)

1 x Hanoverian Jaegers (Hameln Detach)

Right Wing Cav von Zepelin (-1)

2 x Hanoverian Cavalry

2 x Hanoverian Dragoons

1 x Hessian Dragoons

Center Wing Wutginau (0)

3 x Hessian Musketeer

1 x Hanoverian Heavy Artillery

Left Wing Imhof (-1) V

2 x Hanoverian Grenadiers (incl. Garde)

2 x Hanoverian Musketeers

2 x Brunswick Infantry

1 x Hessian Grenadier

1 x Hanoverian Heavy Artillery

Detachment Dachenhausen (0)

1 x Hanoverian Musketeer

Detachment Briedenbach (+1) V

2 x Hanoverian Dragoons

Free Deployment:*2 x Hanoverian Grenadier (24)**5 x Hanoverian Foot (50)**2 x Brunswick Infantry (18)**1 x Hanoverian Jaegers (5)**1 x Hessian Grenadier (9)**4 x Hessian Musketeers (32)**2 x Hanoverian Cavalry (20)**4 x Hanoverian Dragoons (32)**1 x Hessian Dragoon (7)**2 x Hanoverian Heavy Artillery (16)***Total Free Deployment: (213)****The French Army****Commander: Estrees (Poor)****Army Break Point: __ 13 __****Wing Broglie (0) V**

2 x French Grenadiers

1 x French Foreign Infantry (German)

1 x Heavy Artillery

Brigade Lorges (-1)

1 x French Infantry

Wing Contades (0)

3 x French Infantry

2 x French Heavy Artillery

Wing Armentieres (0)

3 x French Infantry

2 x Austrian Musketeers

1 x French Foreign Infantry (Dutch)

1 x French Dragoon Dismounted

1 x Heavy Artillery

Wing Chevert (+1) V

1 x French Grenadier

3 x French Infantry

1 x French Volontaires

Reserve de Souvre (-1)

1 x French "Vieux" Infantry

2 x French Infantry

Reserve Isselbach (-1)

1 x French "Vieux" Infantry

1 x French Infantry

2 x The Reich "State" Contingents (Palatine)

Left Wing Cavalry de Brissac (0)

2 x French "Cavalry" Regiment

Right Wing Cavalry d'Orleans (0)

1 x French Elite Cavalry

2 x French "Cavalry" Regiment

Cavalry Poyanne (0)

1 x French Elite Cavalry

2 x French Hussars

Free Deployment:*2 x Austrian Musketeers (16)**3 x French Grenadiers (30)**2 x French Foreign Infantry (16)**2 x French "Vieux" Infantry (91)**13 x French Infantry (84)**1 x French Volontaires Light Infantry (6)**2 x The Reich "State" Contingent (14)**2 x French Elite Cavalry (20)**4 x French Cavalry Regiments (36)**1 x French Dragoons (5)**2 x French Hussar (10)**4 x French Heavy Artillery (40)***Total Free Deployment: (300)**

What If?

Prussians Remain

Following his defeat at Kolin, Frederick ordered the Prussian garrison that Cumberland left at Minden to rejoin his forces. In this option, assume that these troops were left with the Allied Army and reinforce Imhof's wing by adding 2x Prussian Musketeers. Increase Cumberland's Break Point total to: 9

Even More Prussians

It is quite possible that elements of the Prussian army could have been ordered to link up with the Minden detachment and become an integral part of Cumberland's army. In this option, place the following as a Force within Cumberland's army, raising his Break Point to: 10

Detachment Hildberghausen (+1)

1 x Prussian Grenadier
4 x Prussian Musketeers
1 x Prussian Heavy Artillery

Yet More French

In the beginning of the French counter moves against Cumberland's army, the French general Soubise had a small army within easy distance of d'Estrées but chose to move off toward south Germany and Bohemia (to be defeated later at Rossbach). In this option, assume Soubise becomes a sub-commander with elements of his army as a force under d'Estrées, raising the army Break Point value to: 6.

Wing Soubise (-2)

1 x French Grenadier
1 x French Foreign Infantry (Swiss)
4 x French Infantry
1 x French Heavy Artillery