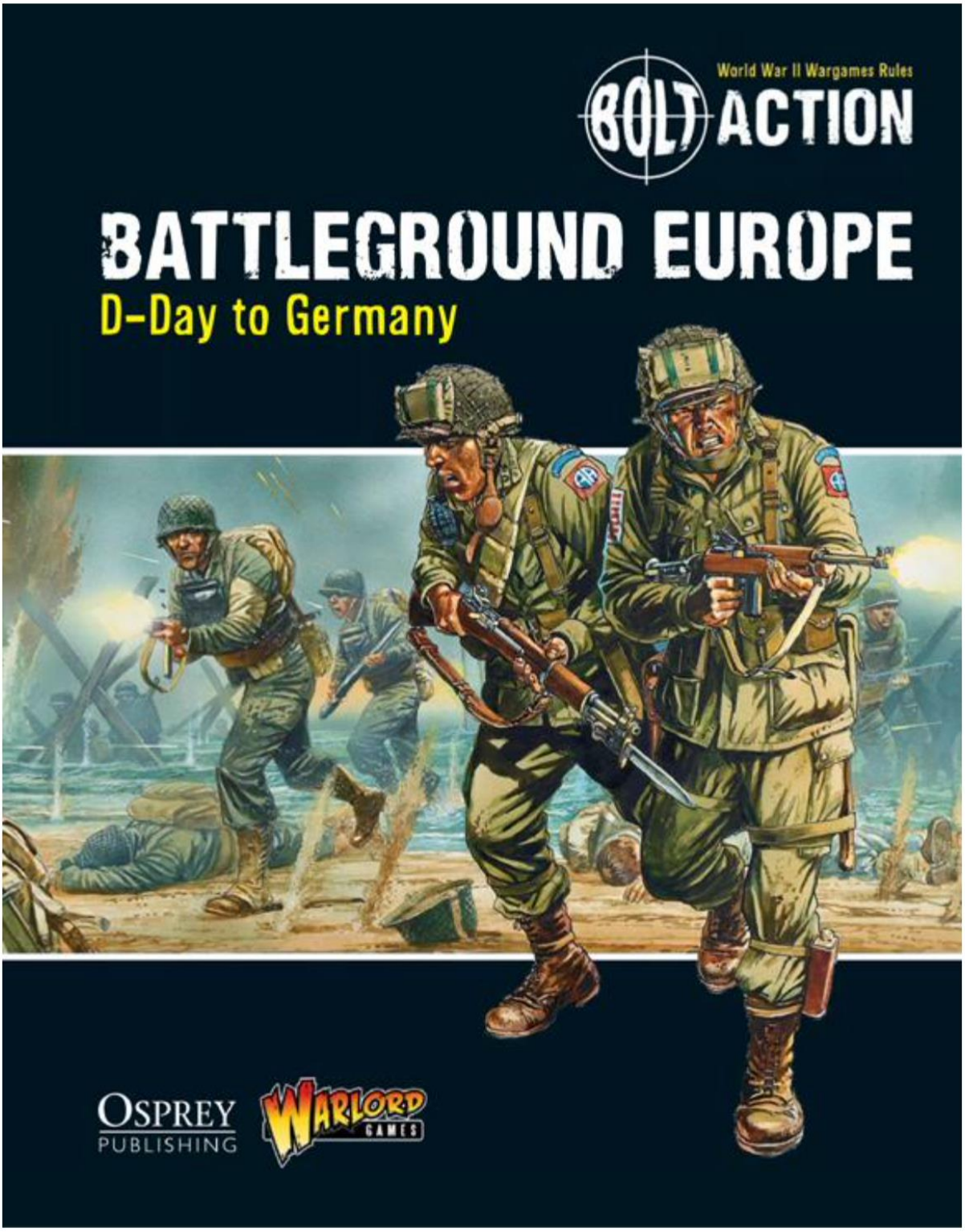
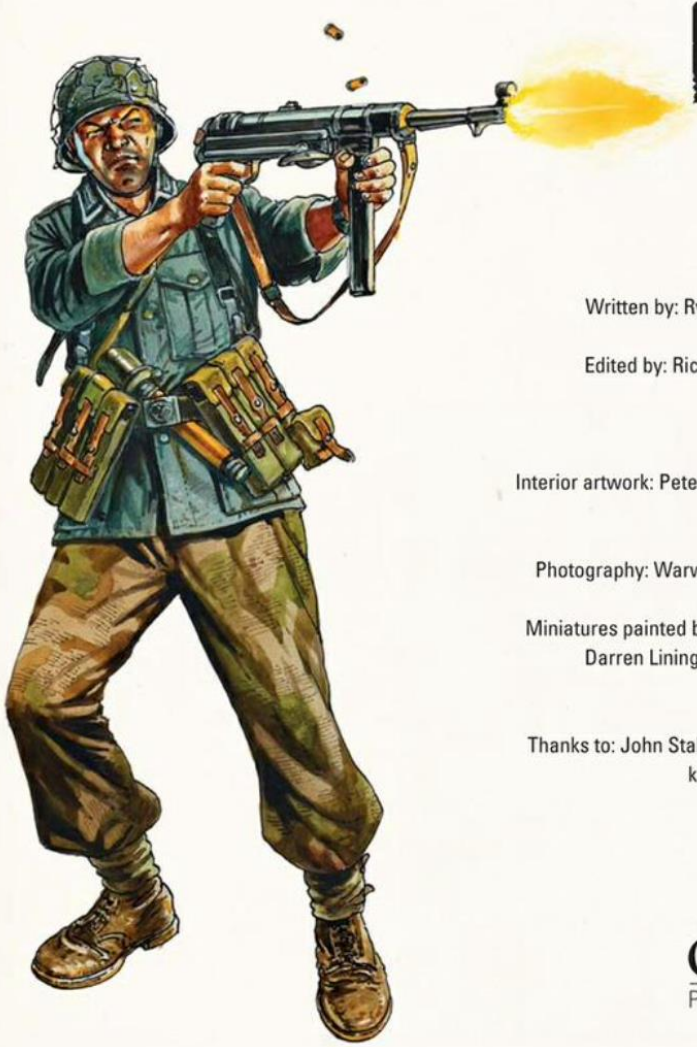

World War II Wargames Rules
BOLT ACTION
BATTLEGROUND EUROPE
D-Day to Germany
OSPREY PUBLISHING
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World War II Wargames Rules

BOLT ACTION

BATTLEGROUND EUROPE

D-Day to Germany



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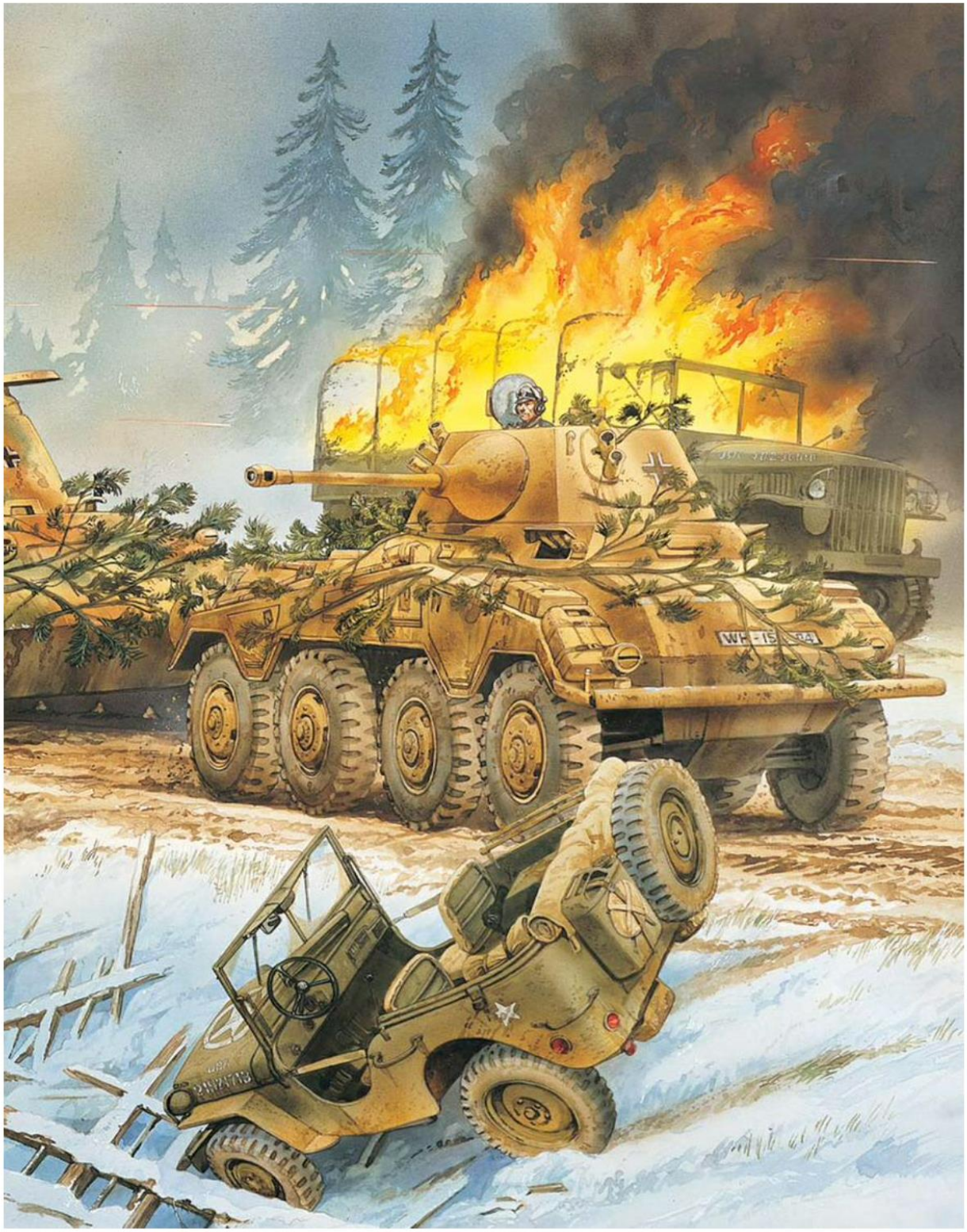
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Make it count...



Kampfgruppe Böhm races to the Meuse, by Peter Dennis © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 145: Battle of the Bulge 1944 (2).

D-DAY TO BERLIN

This Theatre Book is a supplement to the tabletop wargame *Bolt Action*. It deals with the final phase of World

War II in Western Europe. We will begin during the build-up to the Invasion of Normandy, and follow the combatants through to the crumbling of the Third Reich and German surrender.

Our goal is to describe the context for games set within this phase of the war. What was it like to storm the beaches of Normandy? How formidable was the *bocage* country? What was it like to fight in the snowy woods of the Ardennes? By addressing these and many other questions, we can hope to enjoy more than just the game itself – we can perhaps imagine a little of what those brave men went through.

This is not a definitive account of the campaign, nor is it meant to be. Think of it more as a tour through history, stopping at places of interest and pointing out pertinent information as we go. If you should strike upon an area that piques your interest, there are many resources available for you to explore in more detail. The military history of World War II makes for a fascinating study, and can prove to be quite a rabbit-hole if one allows it. Think of this book as your guide.

You will find several scenarios within these pages. Some depict actual historical battles, while others offer a view on typical operations that give a sense of what the fighting was like.

For the more historically minded reader, we've included details of various units that allow you to construct armies from specific time periods and areas of conflict. On the other hand, this book also allows for lots of 'what if' battles to be fought out, using equipment that was on hand at the time.



Old Ironsides – US 1st Armored Division rolls through occupied France

PRELUDE TO INVASION



Boston Mission - the 82nd Airborne over Drop Zone T, by Howard Gerrard © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 104: D-Day 1944 (2).

Hitler held most of continental Europe in his grasp. The Allied invasion was never in doubt; it was only a question of when. Sooner or later, Hitler's 'Atlantic Wall' would need to be breached and the Germans driven from France. The Invasion of Normandy would be the largest air, land and sea operation in the history of human conflict. Thankfully, that is a record that stands to this day.

PREPARATIONS

The scope of the operation was vast. It was a daunting task from the start, but the Allies were determined to pry Europe from Hitler's clutches and were willing to pay dearly for it.

Troops trained for up to two years before the actual invasion. Preparation was especially intense for airborne troops, who were using a deployment method that was scarcely tested at the time. Their contribution would provide critical support for the main landing, and as such the airborne divisions were made up of crack troops that had been vetted through a rigorous process of physical training.

In the months before the invasion, troops took part in simulated battles throughout sites in southern England. British, American and Canadian troops, as well as those from other Allied and occupied countries, invaded and re-invaded beaches identified as similar to the French beaches they would eventually storm.

There was also great care to insure the secrecy of the operation. The Germans were not completely unaware, of course. They knew an invasion of Europe was inevitable. However, the details of location, time, and method were still unknown. The Allies faced the challenge of orchestrating a massive troop movement without the Germans knowing exactly what was going on.

TIGER: THE CURSED EXERCISE

Training for D-Day was intense and relentless. At least five days a week the men were subjected to all manner of field problems and physical fitness exercises. With thousands of troops working in a relatively small area and using live fire training, accidents were bound to happen. One exercise in particular would be plagued with tragic mishaps: Exercise *Tiger*, the 'cursed' exercise.

Slapton Sands near the southern tip of England was selected due to its striking resemblance to Utah beach – most notably, its gravel sand and proximity to a lake. The residents were evacuated in 1943 to make room. Some had never before left their home village.

Tiger was set for the last week of April 1944, and focused on embarkation and a subsequent beach assault on Normandy. The troops would learn how to properly board their landing craft, as well as storming a beach while naval artillery rounds flew overhead. To this end, it was decided that the warships would use live ammunition in order to accustom the troops to sounds and smells of a naval barrage.

On the morning of 27 April, a live-fire shelling of the beach had been scheduled to end approximately half an hour before the troops were to land, giving the training officers time to make sure the beach was safe for training. Several of the landing boats ran late, so a decision was made to delay the landing by an hour, subsequently pushing the bombardment up as well. This message did not reach all of the boats, and as a result several boats landed at the previously agreed time, which unfortunately coincided with the new time that the bombardment was scheduled to begin. It also appears that some of the troops ignored (or at least, didn't see) safety measures that would have restricted their movements on the beach until the naval barrage had finished. When the dust cleared, over 300 troops lay dead.

The next day, a convoy of troop carriers was attacked by German E-boats in Lyme Bay. Over 600 more men would die as a result.

There were many mistakes that led to this tragedy. The convoy should have had two British ships to protect it, but due to a collision earlier in the exercise one was at Plymouth for repairs. Other British ships had spotted the E-boats, but failed to notify the convoy. The convoy was arranged in a

straight line, making them an easier target. Perhaps the worst error was due to the simple fact that the American and British ships operated on different radio frequencies, making communication difficult if not impossible. The Americans had no idea they were sailing in enemy-infested waters with half the escort they were supposed to have.

For their part, the E-boats had found ill-defended targets and took advantage of the situation. They fired their torpedoes with deadly accuracy, setting two ships on fire and sinking one of them. Soldiers that had little to no experience in water often put their life vests on incorrectly, with fatal results.

The tragedy almost put an end to the invasion itself. Ten officers that were killed had high-level security clearances and knew about the impending invasion. If they had been captured, the plan would have been compromised, so it was put on hold until their bodies were eventually recovered.

The survivors were sworn to secrecy in an act that has led to accusations of a cover-up. The leadership feared that the incident would cause confidence in the invasion to waver, and subsequently lower morale at a time when the Allies needed it most. It is unlikely that they tried to suppress knowledge of the incident after the invasion, as a detailed account appeared in *Stars and Stripes* only a few months later, with several books after the war referencing *Tiger* as well. It is more likely that with the success of the invasion and the end of the war, the Allied leadership simply had other things on their minds.

After the tragedy, several changes were implemented. Troops received more training on their life vests, small craft were appropriated to pick up floating soldiers on D-Day, and those radio frequencies were aligned. To this day, a lone M4 Sherman that was pulled from the deep stands a lonely vigil to commemorate the fallen soldiers at Slapton Sands.



SdKfz 251/1 Ausf C Hanomag

Troops travelling to England did not get to march through the streets of New York underneath a shower of ticker tape. They were not even allowed to wear their unit insignia, for fear that spies would notice and record the movements of the various divisions. This tended to annoy the men themselves, who were proud of the work they had done and the fight they were joining, but it was essential to success.

There were a few scares, of course. Oddly, the codenames for several components of the invasion appeared as answers in the *Daily Telegraph*'s crossword puzzle in England. Omaha, Juno, Gold, Sword, Utah – even Overlord! British intelligence eventually determined it to be a coincidence, although in later years it

appears to be less so. Leonard Dawe, the writer of the crossword puzzles at the time, had the habit of getting words from the students at the school he worked at. It seems likely now that those students had heard those words from the countless Allied soldiers billeted all through the area.

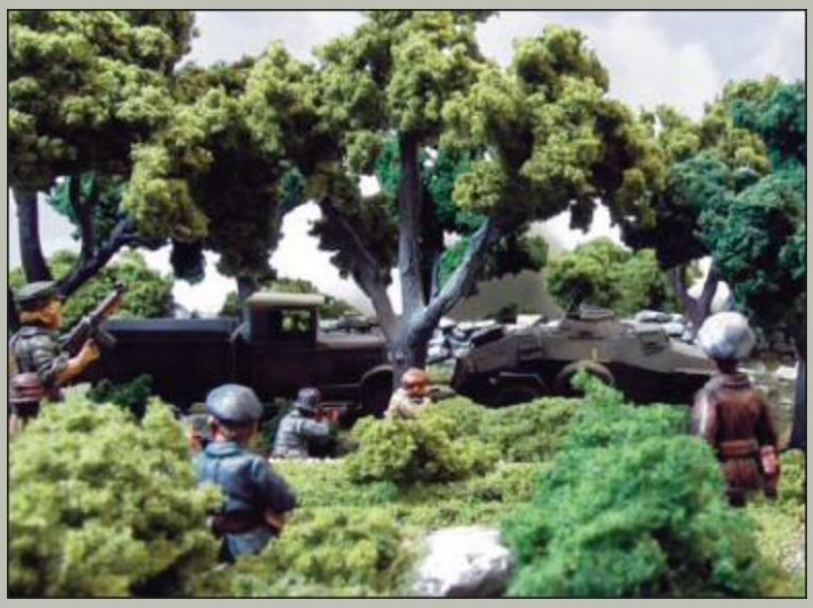
The Allies knew some information was bound to leak, so they devised a plan. A massive operation, code-named *Fortitude*, was executed. *Fortitude*'s objective was to confuse the Germans as to the time and place of the impending invasion. It was split into two groups: *Fortitude South* would indicate an invasion in the Pas de Calais region of France, while *Fortitude North* would try to convince the enemy that the invasion would be through Norway.

THE FRENCH RESISTANCE

Patriots had been fighting the Germans ever since the fall of France. Hundreds of small groups were constantly sabotaging rail lines, demolishing German supply depots and sending invaluable information to the Allies. A small movement at first, it grew to over 100,000 members by D-Day.

In true cloak-and-dagger fashion, these brave men and women risked torture and death to get vital information on German troop dispositions, movements, and morale. In the month leading up to the Allied invasion, they sent nearly 4,000 reports to the British, a treasure trove of intelligence that would save many lives.

The information they gathered would be passed by hand or by radio back to the British. The British, in turn, supplied the resistance fighters with weapons, money, and trained agents to continue the fight.



The Maquis strike!

Communication back to the resistance was always a tricky affair, and sometimes was done through BBC broadcasts. Using coded 'personal messages', the resistance could find out if their information had reached the Allies, or to find out about upcoming events. The messages were often strange phrases like 'John has a handlebar moustache', but to the right group they would provide important information.

One of the most famous examples of these broadcasts was a line from a poem by Paul Verlaine:

'Les sanglots des violins de l'automne'. It roughly translates as 'the sobs of the violins of autumn', but it was a code that told the resistance the invasion was coming within 15 days. The Germans had managed to decode the phrase, but curiously ignored the follow-up message that was transmitted on 5 June: 'blessent mon coeur d'une langueur monotone'. Decoded, it signalled the start of the invasion.

Two more coded messages on 5 June would be much more directive in nature. 'The dice are on the table' told the resistance to start destroying locomotives and rail lines, while 'it's hot in Suez' told them to cut communication lines. This second mission would prove vital.

In their years of occupation, the Germans had installed a complex grid of communication cables throughout their occupied territories. This meant that they did not have to rely on radio transmissions, which had the nasty habit of getting intercepted by the enemy. When the message came through to warn the resistance of the impending invasion, the resistance fighters scoured the countryside, cutting lines and sabotaging relay stations. This meant that during the invasion, as well as the subsequent push inland, the Germans would have to rely more heavily on radio. Since the Allies had long since decoded the German 'enigma' machine, their radio traffic was an open book.

SAS INFANTRY SECTION

Captain David Stirling's SAS (Special Air Service) had carved their regiment's name in the annals of history through their daring raids in the Western Desert. With the North African campaign won by the Allies, the SAS were split up to prey on German and Italian forces in other theatres. Whilst some units fought in Sicily, Italy and other areas of the Mediterranean, it is the squadrons that relocated to fight in north-west Europe that interests us here. Those units that joined the war against Hitler and his armies became a brigade under Lt General Boy Browning's Allied Airborne Corps. It consisted of two British, two French and one Belgian SAS Regiments. In the open deserts of the North African campaign the highly mobile SAS patrols reigned supreme, but on entering the war in Europe they would face an entirely different type of terrain – one for which they had no experience in fighting over. Supremely flexible, as ever, the SAS men quickly adapted, and they would retain the regimental philosophy of setting up bases behind enemy lines, gathering vital intelligence and, if the opportunity presented itself, wreaking havoc before slipping away. During the actions in France the SAS often had four-man units working with local French Resistance cells, with bridges, railway lines, supply dumps, etc all becoming favoured targets as they continued to harass and disrupt the enemy. The SAS Brigade would continue in this role through Belgium, the Netherlands and into Germany itself. It can certainly be said that the remarkable men of the Special Air Service lived by their regimental motto, 'Who Dares Wins'...

Cost: Veteran Infantry 72pts
Composition: 1 NCO and 3 men
Weapons: Pistol and rifle
Options:

- Add up to 4 additional men with pistol and rifle for +18pts each
- Any man can replace his rifle with a submachine gun for +2pts

- Up to two men may have a light machine gun for +20pts. For each LMG, another man becomes the loader
- Light machine guns can be upgraded to Vickers K LMG for a further +5pts each
- The squad can be given anti-tank grenades for +2pts per man

Special Rules:

- Who Dares Wins! To represent their special training and motivation, units of SAS have the Fanatics special rule
- Behind enemy lines. When Outflanking as described on p.119 of the *Bolt Action* rulebook, units of SAS ignore the -1 modifier to the Order test for coming onto the table
- Tank hunters (if anti-tank grenades taken)
- Vickers K gun. The Vickers K gun (also known as the VGO) was a rapid firing machine gun developed for aeroplanes but also favoured by special forces. A Vickers K gun shoots with +1 dice compared to a regular LMG – 4 dice instead of 3

Selectors

The SAS Infantry Section is an Infantry Squad for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. It is also an Infantry Squad for the following theatre selectors of the *Armies of Great Britain* book: Raiders!, Behind Enemy Lines, Operation *Lightfoot*, Tunisia, Normandy, Into the Reich.



SAS Armoured Jeep

The operation had all the hallmarks of a good spy novel; double agents, deception, false radio transmissions, even inflatable landing craft and aircraft! In the end, it proved a success. When the actual D-Day assault began, the Germans were convinced it was just a diversion, and that the actual attack would come later. As a result, they left a large portion of their reserves in the Pas de Calais area. Had they been mobilized in time, it would have been much more difficult for the Allies to get a foothold on the continent.

BREACHING THE ATLANTIC WALL

While invasion planning was going on, the Allies found themselves in need of information about the beaches they would assault. Basic information such as sea depth, surf and sand composition had to be determined in order to move the men and machines across the beach with maximum efficiency.

The British took the creative approach of asking the public for photos they might have taken while on holiday in France. Thousands of photos came pouring in from the four corners of England, and helped the Allied

planners paint a more accurate picture of what they were dealing with. However, as good as the pictures were, they still needed the kind of eyes-on intelligence an army can only get by putting men in harm's way.

What the pictures couldn't portray was how the coast had changed during the German occupation. Rommel had been tasked by Hitler to create an 'Atlantic Wall' to repel any invader. To this end, he laced the countryside with bunkers and pillboxes, peppered the ground with more than six million mines, and put underwater obstacles just offshore. He was convinced that the only way to survive an invasion was to stop it cold right on the beach.

The Allies had learned important lessons about amphibious assaults in the Mediterranean and Pacific theatre. The need for human intelligence was starkly apparent. In response to this the US Navy created the Scouts and Raiders – special operations troops that could sneak on to enemy-held beaches to gather intelligence.

OPERATION JEDBURGH

There were several resistance movements throughout occupied Europe. With their ability to disrupt German communications and movements from behind enemy lines, they were a critical resource to the coming invasion. Their members were also at high risk of being captured and killed.

The Allied high command realized that without help, many of these groups would eventually fade out. To keep this from happening, a joint operation between the US, Britain and France called '*Jedburgh*' was formed.

The mission was to parachute small teams of specially trained commandos behind enemy lines. These teams would assist the guerrilla fighters by training them and arranging supply drops. The radios they carried provided a crucial link between the guerrilla resistance and the Allies.

It was a dangerous mission, made all the more hazardous by the fact that they fought in uniform as opposed to sneaking in disguise. The men chosen for this duty had to be proven veterans, and were then put through a rigorous training process to make sure only the best made it to a team.

While there are many stories of bravery among the Jedburghs, one of its more colourful members was Tommy Macpherson. A Scotsman to the core, he jumped into France wearing his British Army uniform, but also a kilt. Just as he was landing in the French countryside, he could hear the voice of one of the resistance members there to meet him: 'There's a French officer! And he's brought his wife!'

Macpherson's job was to train the local resistance in guerrilla tactics and sabotage. Starting with only eight men, he began by teaching them the basics of demolitions and espionage. After their first operation successfully delayed the advance of the 2nd SS Panzer Division on D-Day, his reputation grew and so did the number of Frenchmen willing to fight for him.

Throughout the battle of Normandy, his band would stage several sabotage operations, frustrating the Germans who eventually put a high price on his head. They were constantly pursuing him, and he was continually one step ahead. They put up wanted posters looking for a 'bandit dressed as a Scottish officer' but to no avail. He had become a hero to the local French.

His most audacious act came as the Germans were on the run near the Loire Valley as the Allies were closing up the Falaise Gap. His men held a bridge that was vital to the Germans' escape, and he knew that they didn't have the firepower to hold it. He went to the German general and convinced him that there were Allied tanks, artillery, and air power nearby, and all it took was a radio

call from Macpherson to bring their bombs raining down on the retreating Germans. It was a bluff, of course, and if the Germans called him on it they could have easily taken him captive or worse. As it turned out, the German general was convinced by Macpherson's story, and surrendered his unit of over 23,000 troops!

Using small, inflatable boats, their job was to infiltrate a hostile beach in the dark of night to record details of the geography – including taking sand samples – enemy positions and defence works. In the months before D-Day, these men braved the cold waters and enemy-infested beaches of Normandy to gather vital information for the coming assault.

The Scouts and Raiders reported the beaches to be heavily defended. Mined obstacles called 'Belgian Gates' lay just below the surface of the water, ready to explode on contact. If enough men were to reach the beaches, these obstacles would need to be taken out.

This job went to another specialized unit devised by the US Navy: the Naval Combat Demolition Units, or NCDUs. These men had to go through a gruelling training process designed to 'separate the men from the boys', though some jokingly quipped that the men 'had sense enough to quit', leaving only the boys. They would learn combat swimming, hydro reconnaissance, and most importantly, demolition. They would become the predecessors of the modern US Navy SEALs.



SAS Infantry Section

D-DAY

The date for D-Day had been set for 5 June 1944. The plan was to drop thousands of airborne troops into France overnight to secure strategic roads and intersections. This would allow the invading forces at the various beaches to link up before their push inland. Just before dawn a massive aerial and naval bombardment began, preparing the way for troops to land on the beach.

As it turned out, the worst storm in 20 years hit the English Channel in the days preceding the invasion. Rain, wind and fog were forecast for the 5th. Eisenhower, supreme commander of the Allied invasion forces, had a tough decision, since some of the slower elements involved in the operation were already under way, and the weather showed no signs of abating. In the early hours of 4 June, he made the call to delay the invasion for at least 24 hours.

Some troops were disembarked from their boats. Many were not, and had to face an entire day in the choppy waters of the Channel. Some of the boats were already halfway across the Channel, and since there was a strict order of radio silence, destroyers were dispatched to pull them back.

The delay hit the troops hard. Right up until the last moment, they had been living on a knife's edge. With

few exceptions, these men had never seen combat. Their mission was unprecedented in scope and danger, and the leadership knew that experienced soldiers had seen tragedy and loss. They needed each man to think of nothing more than victory.

It must have been a tense few hours. If 6 June didn't work out, the tides would not be favourable for several weeks. It would be hard to maintain the secrecy that had covered the operation so far, especially since it was just about to launch. A delay of a couple of weeks or more could have spelled doom for the entire invasion.

On the morning of 5 June the meteorologists reported that a break in the weather would last at least 24 hours; however, the storm would probably resume on 7 June. It was a small window into which to fit such a massive invasion force. Everyone in the room fell silent and looked towards their supreme commander.

WHERE DID THE TERM 'D-DAY' COME FROM?

The term is now synonymous with the Invasion of Normandy, but where did it come from and what does it mean?

Contrary to popular belief, 'D' doesn't stand for 'deliverance', 'decision' or 'doom', or any other colourful word. Its origins are a bit more mundane. It actually just means 'day'.

Back in World War I, the nature of warfare had changed. With all the new advances in warfare technology, the complexity of military operations increased exponentially. Gone were the days of simple cavalry charges and bugle calls. Entire divisions of troops had to be manoeuvred in coordination with other assets such as artillery barrages and air operations. Planning often began months before a large assault, even before the actual date and time were solidified. A system was needed to plan for an attack without having a specific date set, and the system of 'D-day, H-hour' was born.

Using these simple designations for the day and time, an attack would begin, all the parts of the puzzle could be planned out, and once the time was determined, it would be plugged into the plan and each part would know when to commence their aspect of the operation. If the artillery knew that their barrage started at 'H–3', then they would fire their rounds three hours before the attack began. This system also had the advantage of maintaining secrecy during the planning of an operation.

It looks like the first recorded use of this term was back in May of 1918, when an order during the Battle of Cantigny used the term 'J-Jour.' This led to the Americans using the term 'D-Day' and even 'J-Day' in planning, clearly referencing the term's French roots.

The British had a similar system that was being used around the same time, though they referred to the day of an attack as 'Z-Day' and the time as 'zero hour.' The two days leading up to an attack were called 'X-day and 'Y-day'. This system was converted to the more familiar 'D-Day' system when the Americans got British orders. Apparently, it was simpler and easier to communicate.

Eisenhower looked up from his maps at the men surrounding him, and launched history's largest seaborne invasion with very few words: 'Well, we'll go!'

THE AIRBORNE ASSAULT

H MINUS 6: THE PATHFINDERS

At midnight on the morning of the attack, a different kind of invasion happened from the air. The first Allied troops to get their boots on the ground that day were from the Pathfinders. While all the airborne were

considered elite, the Pathfinders were in a class by themselves. Their mission was to drop behind enemy lines in advance of the larger airborne landings to establish drop zones, plant radio beacons, and lights for the aircraft to find.

Just after midnight, 20 C-47s crossed into Axis airspace carrying about 200 Pathfinders. What happened next would turn out to be a preview of the rest of the airborne assault: the planes were scattered by intense antiaircraft fire and low clouds. As a result, most of the Pathfinders would not find their designated landing zones. Others would find their landing zones flooded or crawling with enemy.

They pushed on with their mission regardless, and set up as many beacons as they could. Many Pathfinders were so close to enemy defenders that they couldn't set up their lights without giving their positions away. Landing less than an hour before the main airborne forces, there was no room for improvisation, so the Pathfinders simply had to do the best they could.

At any rate, the hornet's nest had been kicked, and the stage was set for the largest airborne operation in history to that date.

PATHFINDERS SQUAD

Cost: Veteran Infantry 90pts

Composition: 1 NCO and 5 men

Weapons: Rifles

Options:

- Add up to 6 additional men with rifles for +15pts each
- The NCO and up to 5 men can have submachine guns instead of rifles for +3pts each

Special Rules:

- Stubborn. Pathfinders don't give in easily! If forced to check their morale when reduced to half strength then they always test on their full morale value ignoring any pin markers
- LZ Signals. If you deploy at least one unit of Pathfinders on the table before the game starts (i.e. the Pathfinders are not in the first wave or in reserve), then any friendly paratroopers and glider units in reserve may re-roll failed Order tests to come onto the table

Selectors

The Pathfinders squad is an Infantry Squad for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. It is also an Infantry Squad for any theatre selectors of the *Armies of the United States* and the *Armies of Great Britain* book that include paratroopers or glider infantry squads.



The Screaming Eagles have landed!

H MINUS 5: GERONIMO!

Shortly after the Pathfinders had landed, it was time for the main force to jump. For various reasons, the Pathfinders had only partially completed their mission. This would prove to be only one of the many problems the invading paratroopers would face while just trying to get out of the door.

Their mission was crucial: silence the guns that would shortly be raining death on the beaches of Normandy, and seize strategic towns and crossroads that would allow the incoming forces to link up once they got inland. While the former was important, the latter was absolutely vital. If the invading forces could not link up, the Germans could potentially isolate each group and annihilate them piecemeal. The Germans had flooded the fields inland, making movement possible only on the roads and causeways – these became the primary targets for much of the airborne force.

13,000 men from the American 101st and 82nd Airborne divisions, the British 6th Airborne Division, the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, and other Allied paratroopers were packed into nearly 1,000 aeroplanes as they flew to their drop zones. During the first leg of their journey, many would look down from their planes and bear witness to a sight nobody would see before or since: thousands of ships scoring the English Channel, on their way to a date with destiny.

SAINTE-MÈRE-ÉGLISE

This French town was pivotal to the invading forces; it was right between Cherbourg and Caen and its capture would help the Allies put more men and equipment where it was needed further inland. The US 82nd Airborne was tasked with its capture.

In the confusion that typified the airborne landings in the early morning hours of D-Day, several

paratroopers landed directly on top of the village, rather than just outside of it. Unfortunately for them, a farmhouse had caught fire and the flames illuminated the night sky, making the descending paratroopers easy targets for the alerted Germans. Many never lived long enough to put their boots on the ground; they would die before ever firing a shot in anger.

Some were caught on tall trees or buildings, suspended above the battlefield until they were eventually shot or captured. One famous example of this was Private John Steele, whose parachute got snagged on the church tower. He dangled some 60 feet above the ground below pretending to be dead. He was captured after two hours, but escaped shortly thereafter to rejoin his unit. The effigy of a dangling WWII paratrooper still hangs from that church as a monument to the airborne troops that descended on the town that night.

Curiously, after the initial threat had subsided, the German garrison went back to bed! Meanwhile, Lt Colonel Ed Krause of the 505th had landed outside of the town as planned and quickly formed a unit of 180 men out of the chaos. Pushing straight into the town, he encountered almost no resistance and was eventually shown the way to the German barracks by the local townsfolk. 30 Germans were captured and 10 were killed. By 6 a.m., the town was secured.

Once the planes crossed over German-held territory, the skies lit up with incoming flak and tracer rounds. The C-47s were flying low under the clouds so they could see their drop zones, and as such they provided easy targets for the German gunners. The Allied pilots, many inexperienced, frantically searched for the beacon signals that were supposed to be provided by the Pathfinders, while many more simply gave the order to jump knowing they would miss their drop zone but feeling the men had a better chance on the ground. As a result, the paratroopers that managed to make it out of their planes were scattered all over the Cotentin Peninsula.

Of course, it wasn't all due to the pilots or the Pathfinders. Most of the planes didn't have navigators, so when they became separated they had to figure out their location on their own. The order for radio silence hampered their ability to coordinate drops, especially among the chaotic confusion of battle. The clouds were too low to fly under in many cases, causing the planes to drift apart. The cards were stacked against the paratroopers from the very beginning.

LEGENDS OF THE WESTERN FRONT

RICHARD WINTERS

Richard Winters was an officer of the US 101st Airborne Division. He commanded 'Easy' Company of the 2nd Battalion, 506th Regiment throughout the campaign in Western Europe, from the Normandy drops to the end of the war in Germany. He led his men with great élan and tactical acumen, and earned their respect on the field, leading them successfully through many dangerous missions. Captain (then Major) Winters and his men distinguished themselves in all of the engagements they took part in, and they were many – the exemplary taking of the battery at Brecourt Manor near Utah beach, the hard fighting at Carentan, and then *Market Garden*, Bastogne and finally into Germany itself!

Cost: 195 pts (Veteran)
Team: 1 officer and up to 2 other men

Weapons: Submachine gun, pistol or rifle/carbine as depicted on the model

Options:

- Winters may be accompanied by up to 2 men at a cost of +13pts per man

Special Rules:

- Tactical Brilliance: Winters's Morale bonus is +4 and the range of his ability is 12"
- We're paratroopers – we're supposed to be surrounded: all US Veteran infantry and artillery units within range of Winters' Morale bonus also gain the Stubborn rule – if forced to check their morale when reduced to half strength, then they always test on their full morale value, ignoring any pin markers



US paratroopers lend fire support to their comrades

Once on the ground, the paratroopers quickly assessed the situation: they were nowhere near their targets, and their units had been scattered. Rather than taking the time to regroup, they raced towards their objectives, creating ad hoc units out of whatever men they found on their way. Some paratroopers, too far from their objectives to reach them in time, took to ambushing German movements and sabotaging enemy emplacements.

The enemy wasn't taken by complete surprise. Reports began pouring in to the German leadership of numerous attacks across the peninsula. Some units were reporting heavy contact, some were reporting nearby explosions, and some were not reporting at all. The Germans began to think that a much larger airborne attack was under way, and began deploying their forces accordingly. While it wasn't their primary intent, the invading paratroopers had managed to cause mass confusion among their enemy.

H MINUS 2: THE GLIDERS

Not all the men to hit the ground that day wore parachutes. Though their military role would be relatively brief, troop-carrying gliders would prove to be vital to getting men and materiel into battle.

These gliders could carry anything from just over a dozen men up to 40. They could also carry large equipment like antitank guns or jeeps, and sometimes even light tanks. They would be towed by a large plane such as the American C-47 or the British Halifax, and cut loose when they were near enough to their target drop

zone to glide the rest of the way. Once on the ground, the men inside could launch an attack much faster than paratroopers, who needed time to regroup after a jump. Under ideal conditions, an entire unit of glider infantry could land right on target and emerge combat ready the minute their gliders came to a halt. Of course, 'ideal conditions' were hard to come by during combat.

There were dubbed the 'silent wings' by the US Army, but to the men who flew in them they were anything but. Made of metal skeletons and covered in canvas, they were virtually unprotected from the noise of the tow plane, the wind outside or the sound of incoming flak. The men tended to use much darker terms like 'flying coffins' or 'tow targets'. To their minds, at least the paratroopers were on their own once they got out of the planes. Gliders had to be flown all the way down to landing, which bound all the passengers to the same fate should the glider be hit. The pilot was especially vulnerable, and many took to scrounging flak vests, not for wearing, but for sitting on!

THE 'MAE WEST'

Since the paratroopers would be flying over the English Channel, they wore life preservers in case they had to ditch in the water. These vests, officially named the 'Type B-4 Life Preserver' consisted of a cotton yoke with rubber bladders that had carbon dioxide tubes that could inflate the bladders with the pull of a cord.

Because of the way the bladders looked when inflated, the soldiers and airmen started referring to them as 'Mae Wests', named after a bombshell actress know for her saucy one-liners and curvy figure.

'Mae West' was also a term for a type of canopy malfunction. If a line from one side of the canopy was somehow accidentally routed over the canopy to the other side, it would pinch the normally circular canopy down the middle, giving it the appearance of a lady's bra.



German Heer 120mm heavy mortar

Still, the method had its upside. It was much more accurate than parachute landing. On D-day, the majority of glider-borne troops landed within two miles of their targets, a feat their parachute-wearing comrades would not come close to emulating. Also, the gliders could carry jeeps and howitzers, as well as other heavy equipment that was tough to drop by parachute. As much as the men hated them, the gliders were a necessary component to the invasion. Today, many consider them to be the first military 'stealth' aircraft.

Combat gliders were first used by the Germans during the Invasion of France. While planning an attack on

Eben Emael, a Belgian fort, someone pointed out that the top of the fort was smooth grass, ideal for a glider landing. During the attack, eight gliders would land 85 troops, achieving complete surprise (as no declaration of war had been made yet) and took the fort with only 21 casualties.

The Germans would use gliders up until the disastrous invasion of Crete in May of 1941. During that battle, the paratroopers were to land on top of an airfield and clear it of enemy resistance, allowing the gliders to land a heavier concentration of troops. The paratroopers encountered heavy resistance from Greek and New Zealander defenders. When the gliders landed, they came under intense mortar fire that inflicted terrible casualties on the glider-borne troops before they could deploy. As a result, the German high command abandoned the idea of glider assaults.

MERVILLE BATTERY

One operation that exemplified the daring deeds of the airborne soldiers on D-Day was the British attack on the German artillery battery located near the town of Merville.

The battery was pointed directly at Sword beach, and was believed to contain a massive amount of firepower. As such, a battalion of paratroopers was given the mission of destroying it.

The British 9th Parachute Battalion's landing was plagued by the same problems the rest of the airborne were experiencing: low clouds, anti-aircraft fire, and inexperienced pilots. The beacons the Pathfinders had brought were all damaged on landing, and due to the earlier bombing run on the battery (which had missed it completely) the sky was filled with dense smoke that rendered their signal lights useless. Even so, the pilots did their best to drop the paratroopers near this critical objective.

The British ended up scattered across the countryside, with only hours to go before Sword beach would be filled with landing troops. Only 150 of the original 600 men were near the town and ready to attack. With time running out the British paratroopers pressed on. They had no medics, no sappers, and no heavy weapons.

The attackers used explosives to carve a path through the minefield that encircled the battery. This alerted the Germans to the attack, and they responded with withering fire. The approaching paratroopers took heavy casualties, with only four men reaching the first casemate around one of the guns. These casemates were solid concrete with slits for viewing, and the British fired their small arms through them while dropping grenades down ventilation shafts.

While the bombs from the initial bombing run had missed their targets, they forced the Germans to pull the guns in and leave some of the great steel doors open for ventilation. The paratroopers took advantage of this by throwing more grenades through the doorways, stunning or killing the gun's crew. By 5 a.m. the British had taken their objective, but at the loss of 75 of the 150 men who began the assault. With no sappers, they lacked the explosives needed to permanently silence the massive guns, but they did their best with the gammon bombs they had brought to deal with enemy tanks.

Two of the guns remained in German hands, but the 9th still had a job to do – capturing a nearby village. Even after taking such massive casualties, they pushed on to their secondary objective.

The Germans, many of whom had hidden in underground bunkers during the fight, emerged to re-crew their guns. However, the battery commander could not see Sword beach from his observation post, and so was unable to direct effective fire onto the beach. Had the battery remained in

fully effective use, it would no doubt have inflicted further casualties on the landing forces, and might have jeopardized the Allied landings there.

The battery would remain in German hands until later that summer, when the whole German Army withdrew from France.

THE BATTLE FOR PEGASUS BRIDGE

While it is the airborne that gets most of the credit for the early morning hours of D-Day, 4,000 men would fly in gliders to their objectives on D-Day. One such objective was a bridge over the Caen Canal in Normandy. After the operation, it would come to be known as Pegasus Bridge.

On the night before D-day, nearly 200 men of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (the 'Ox and Bucks') took off from England in six gliders being towed by Halifax bombers. Their mission was to take two strategic bridges: the Ranville bridge over the River Orne and the Bénouville bridge over the Caen Canal.

These bridges were of vital importance to the attackers at Sword beach. If they were left in German hands, they would be able to send armour straight to the beach to repel the invaders. It would also leave the paratroopers themselves cut off from the rest of the Allies, with nothing but rivers at their backs.

The Allied intelligence had determined each bridge to be heavily defended and wired for demolition should they fall into Allied hands. Speed and surprise were critical to the success of the operation. Given too much warning, the Germans could either successfully defend the bridges or destroy them. Either outcome was simply unacceptable to the Allies.

Just after midnight on 6 June, the first gliders landed. Of course, any glider trooper will tell you that 'landed' was a euphemism for 'crashed'. One hit the barbed wire barriers surrounding the bridge defences, while another broke in half and landed near a pond. One of the soldiers fell into the pond and drowned, becoming the first Allied soldier to die in the invasion.

Most of the gliders landed close or nearly on top of their objectives; only one would be blown off course and land 7 miles away. Even though the Germans knew an invasion was imminent, they didn't know exactly when it would start. As a result, the defenders of the bridges were not on high alert at the time, with only two sentries posted between the bridges. At the sight of the invading paratroopers, one ran away yelling 'paratroops' while the other fired a flare gun to warn local defenders. He was quickly cut down by the advancing British troops.

The paratroopers quickly cleared the trenches surrounding the bridges using their rifles and grenades, while the Royal Engineers searched for and cut any wires they could find. Imagine looking for explosives and cutting their wires, all the while knowing that your enemy could press the button at any second!

The attackers had achieved complete surprise, and took both bridges within ten minutes of landing. They would take 14 casualties and one killed – the first Allied soldier killed by enemy action on D-day.

The Germans would put up a defence, despite the shock of the initial assault. The commander of the bridges, Major Schmidt, took off in his armoured halftrack with a motorcycle escort to see for himself what was happening. He unwittingly drove right through the British lines, and was captured

when he reached the bridges.

Once it was apparent that the bridges were under attack, the local German leadership attempted to counterattack with the nearby 21st Panzer Division. Unfortunately for the defenders of the bridges, the 21st was part of the German armoured reserve, and as such could only be ordered to move by Hitler himself. Hitler was asleep at the time, and his staff didn't want to wake him. The inflexibility of the German High Command proved to be quite a boon to the British that day!

By this time, the British were firmly entrenched around the bridges. The Germans counter-attacked from the air, the land, and even the river itself – each attack was pushed back by the determined paratroopers. Finally, on the night of 6 June, the British troops from Sword beach arrived and relieved the paratroopers. They had completed their mission.

After the battle, the bridge over the River Orne was renamed the 'Horsa' bridge after the model of glider the attackers rode into battle. The bridge over the Caen Canal was named 'Pegasus,' after the insignia of the British paratroopers.

See Scenario 6 of this book – Take the Bridge! (page 57) for guidance about how to play this battle.

The Allies, on the other hand, saw a future for them. After the German attack at Eben Emael, they formed their own glider forces as part of their overall airborne contingent. From the start, however, there would be a great divide between paratroopers and glider infantry.

Paratroopers were all volunteers. They were considered elite, a predecessor to the special units of today such as the US Army Rangers. As a result, being a paratrooper carried with it no small amount of cachet. They were allowed to 'blouse' their trousers into their boots, as well as wear special headgear such as the red berets seen on the British paratroopers. They got extra pay that nearly doubled what they would have made in the regular infantry. They also wore the coveted jump wings, emblems that set them apart from all other units. Living in the strict uniformity of the military, this was a strong incentive indeed.

In stark contrast, the glider infantry were considered to be the inferior stepchildren of the airborne. They were not volunteers (for the most part), but were pulled from regular infantry units and given a crash course in glider infantry tactics. While they were allowed to wear some of the airborne accoutrements, they received no extra pay. They also got no special insignia to wear that set them apart from the infantry.

Glider pilots were a volunteer unit. Generally, men who had failed flight school in the air corps, or who had been passed over for consideration as a regular pilot, could get a second chance as a glider pilot. They received about two months of training, mostly in powered aircraft doing unpowered or 'dead stick' landings on civilian airfields.

Given their origins, glider pilots would eventually form a breed of their own. The process of taking off properly with the tow plane, and keeping the glider directly behind the tow plane at all times would prove difficult; however, it would not compare to the challenge of landing successfully, sometimes only seconds after being cut from the tow plane while diving towards inhospitable terrain. The glider pilots would come to be known as courageous, if not crazy, airmen.

LEGENDS OF THE WESTERN FRONT

MAJOR JOHN HOWARD

The first British troops to land in Normandy were glider infantry from D company, 2nd Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry led by Major John Howard. He was in the glider that landed practically on top of the Caen River bridge's defences, and swiftly captured it after a ten-minute fire-fight. He had high standards for his men, and was relentless in keeping them physically fit. By 1943, his company's performance was so impressive it was selected to spearhead the airborne invasion.



Cost: 180pts (Veteran)
Team: 1 officer and up to 2 other men
Weapons: Submachine gun, pistol or rifle/carbine as depicted on the model
Options:

- Howard may be accompanied by up to 2 men at a cost of +13pts per man (Veteran)

Special Rules:

- Major: Howard's Morale bonus is +4
- Outstanding Physical Training: Infantry units in your force get an extra inch of movement when ordered to Advance, and an extra 2 inches of movement when ordered to Run

In the early hours of D-Day, two missions – operations *Chicago* and *Detroit* – landed over a hundred gliders carrying anti-tank guns and support troops from the US 82nd and 101st Airborne divisions. Despite the Allied commander's worries that they would take heavy losses, the landings were quite successful, especially *Chicago*'s. In a testament to the glider strategy and the men who carried it out, heavy weapons and troops to man them were on the ground and largely in place as the airborne assault gathered steam.

Because of their actions on D-Day, the glider infantry were finally given extra pay and their own set of jump wings.

H MINUS 2: THE AERIAL BOMBARDMENT

While the Allied bombers had been hard at work bombing the coastal defences since midnight, they would concentrate their efforts in the few hours before the landings.

The bombardiers had plenty of challenges. First was visibility: low light, coupled with clouds and fog, making it nearly impossible to see the targets. Second, the landing fleet was positioned so close to the shore that many of the bomber pilots were (rightly) concerned about dropping bombs on their own forces. Flying at high altitude, many opted to wait just a second or two longer before dropping their ordnance.

Whatever the reason, the aerial bombardment had only a minimal effect on the invasion. Much of the

ordnance landed too far inland or hit targets that were too heavily fortified to take much damage. There were notable exceptions of course, such as the battery at Saint-Martin-de-Varreville, which was completely destroyed by the US 9th Air Force.

H MINUS 1: THE NAVAL BOMBARDMENT

As the sun began to rise over the Cotentin Peninsula, the landscape was filled with smoking wreckage, marauding paratroopers, and beleaguered but increasingly organized Germans.

The paratroopers fought well despite being scattered across Western France. Most were fighting alongside men they had never met before, in ad hoc units led by unfamiliar officers or senior NCOs. They attacked objectives they hadn't been assigned to attack, and were sometimes unaware of their fellow units fighting only yards away. Even so, by the morning of D-Day they were well on their way to securing the causeways that would allow the Allies to move inland.

Positioned offshore was an armada of nearly 5,000 vessels, including hundreds of warships, from destroyers to battleships. Their mission was to bombard the coast of France across a wide front. This would ensure the precise landing zones remained a secret until the very last minute. The paratroopers fighting inland, and just about anyone within 100 miles, could hear the huge shells flying through the air like 'great freight trains through the sky'.

Unlike the aerial bombardment, the naval shelling managed direct hits on many targets. Unfortunately, they would likewise cause little effect. The German casemates could (and did!) survive direct hits from the big ships' guns. The only effect was to keep the crew pinned down in their bunkers.

Many troops, floating offshore in their landing craft, would be heartened by the thundering report of the naval guns and seeming lack of response from the Germans. They hoped the bombardments had done their job. That hope was dashed about 400 yards from the beach, as the German coastal defences came alive with the sound of machine gun, mortar, and artillery fire.

The stage was set, the pieces were in place. It was time for boots to hit the sand.

SCENARIO 1: AIRBORNE NIGHT FIGHT

In the dark hours before D-Day, a unit of American paratroopers has converged on a small French village to harass the Germans billeted there. The Americans must rout the Germans, while the Germans must push out the American attackers.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between an attacking US or British force and a defending German force.

German platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book, but may include no vehicles.

British platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Market Garden** selector in the *Armies of Great Britain* book, but may include no vehicles or artillery units.

US platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Operation Market Garden** selector in the *Armies of the United States* book, but may include no vehicles or artillery units.

SET-UP

The battlefield is a French village. It should contain one central building and several smaller buildings. The buildings must be no closer than 12" from any table edge.

The German player sets up first, putting his entire force within the boundary of the village. These units may use the hidden set up rules.

As he sets up his force, the German player must nominate three separate objectives in his set up zone. These objectives must be within the village, and must be placed at least 18" apart. These objectives represent supply caches that the Allies forces are trying to take or destroy. You can use simple markers or tokens, or they can be represented by model boxes, barrels, or jerry cans. It is important that both players are clear on which terrain pieces represent the three objectives.

The Allied units are not set up at the start of the game. The Allies player must designate one-third of his units as his first wave. Any units not in the first wave are kept in reserve.

SPECIAL RULES

AD-HOC UNITS

The Allied forces are scattered throughout the Cotentin Peninsula, and to represent this the Reserve rule is modified slightly. When a reserve unit is successfully ordered onto the table, it may enter on *any* table edge.

NIGHT FIGHTING

Since this scenario takes place during the predawn hours of D-Day, this scenario uses the Night Fighting rules (see page 20).

OBJECTIVE

The Allied player must capture the three objectives, while the Germans must protect them.

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During turn 1, the Allied player must move his entire first wave onto the table. These units can enter the table from any table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units on to the table as part of the first wave.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 7, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6, play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game, calculate which side has won as follows.

If the Allied player holds two or three objectives, he wins. If the Allied player holds one objective, the game is a draw. If the Allied player holds no objectives, the German player wins.

All objectives are held by the German player regardless of where his troops are positioned. If an objective changes hands during the game, then it remains under the control of that side until it is taken back.



To capture an objective, there must be a model from an infantry or artillery unit within 3" of the objective at the end of the turn, and there must be no enemy infantry or artillery units within 3" of it.

NIGHT FIGHTING RULES

LIMITED VISIBILITY

When you are determining whether a unit is able to see a target (for shooting, assaulting, etc.) at night, first follow the normal rules for line of sight. If the target would be visible according to the normal rules, then start the normal shooting procedure and declare the target. Then, before the 'target reacts' step, you must take a spotting roll for the acting unit to see whether they can actually identify the target through the darkness:

Roll 2D6 and add or subtract any of the modifiers listed below that apply, down to a minimum modified total of 2.

VISIBILITY MODIFIERS

- +6" The target has a 'Fire', 'Advance', 'Run' or 'Rally' order die on it.
- +6" The target has a 'Muzzle Flashes!' marker on it (see below)
- -6" The target has a 'Down' order die on it.
- -6" The target is a small unit
- +6" The target is a vehicle

If the modified total is equal or higher than the distance between the firing unit and the target, then the target is visible and the firing/assaulting sequence continues as normal – target reacts etc.

If the total is lower than the distance to the target, the attacking unit cannot shoot/assault the target and its action ends immediately (the acting unit's Order Die is simply left as it is), as the men nervously scan the darkness in search of targets.

MUZZLE FLASHES

The worst thing a unit can do at night is to open fire, as the loud noises and particularly the flashes of their weapons will reveal their position to the enemy. And tracer rounds are infamous for 'working both ways'. To represent this, when a unit fires any weaponry against an enemy, it must be marked with a 'Muzzle Flashes' marker (a coin or other token). This token makes the unit more visible, as shown in the chart above, and will remain with the unit until it receives another order.

Note that it is possible for a unit to receive a Fire! order die, but then to be unable to actually open fire (because of a failed spotting roll, for example). These units do not receive a Muzzle

Flashes! marker – you only get one when you actually fire a weapon at the enemy.

REACTING TO AN ASSAULT

If a unit successfully declares an assault at night and the targets reacts by firing at the assaulting models, the target unit must first make a spotting roll to see if they can see the assaulting models (before they are moved). If the target unit fails this spotting roll, it may not react, just as if the assaulting unit was within 6" when they declared the assault – a blood-curdling surprise charge out of the darkness!

INDIRECT FIRE

If a weapon with Indirect Fire has 'zeroed in' on to a target, there is no need of making another spotting roll to fire at that target; simply roll to hit on a 2+, as normal.

FORWARD AIR AND ARTILLERY OBSERVERS

When an artillery observer calls in a barrage, it does not get a Muzzle Flashes! marker, as he's not firing any gun (unless of course someone else in his team does fire a weapon as part of the same order). When calling in a barrage, the observer does not need to make a spotting roll, but can instead place the marker anywhere on the table, as he would be relying on maps and noise/gun flashes rather than direct observation of targets. However, to simulate the increased chances of something going wrong, you suffer a -1 on the Artillery or Smoke Barrage charts (down to a minimum of 1).

Air Strikes cannot be called at all at night, making Forward Air Observers quite useless.

SCENARIO 2: GLIDER ASSAULT

While most gliders landed some distance away from the enemy, others were set upon as soon as they touched the ground. The glider infantry must land, regroup, and fend off the Germans!

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between an attacking US or British force and a defending German force.

German platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book, but may include no vehicles with a Damage value of 8+ or higher.

British platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Market Garden** selector in the *Armies of Great Britain* book.

US platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Operation Market Garden** selector in the *Armies of the United States* book, but may include no armoured vehicles.

SET-UP

The German player must nominate at least half his force as his first wave. Any units not in the first wave are held back in reserve. Due to the massive confusion among the German lines, units being brought in from the reserves suffer an additional -1 morale when rolling to see if they may deploy.

No Allied units are deployed at the start of the battle. The Allied player must separate his units into 'sticks' of between 12-40 models, or 1 artillery unit (or vehicle) and 5-12 models. Each stick is mounted in a glider, though no glider model is necessary. Units cannot be split between different gliders.

SPECIAL RULES

NIGHT FIGHTING

Since this scenario takes place during the predawn hours of D-Day, this scenario uses the Night Fighting rules (see page 20).

GLIDERS

The Allied player deploys his units using gliders. Each turn, at least one glider will land, with the possibility of more. Whenever an Allied order die is drawn from the cup, the Allied player rolls that order die. If the result is Run or Advance, a glider lands. If it is the last Allied order die for the turn and no gliders have landed for the turn, the roll succeeds automatically.

When a glider lands, the Allied player chooses a point on his table edge. This point designates the landing trajectory of the incoming glider, and continues across the table perpendicular to the Allied player's table edge. Next, the Allied player rolls a die and consults the glider landing results.

GLIDER LANDING RESULTS

- **1: Crash!** The glider lands right on your table edge. Deploy all units in the glider within 6"of the crash site. Each unit suffers D6 hits and takes D3 pin markers.
- **2-3: Short!** The glider lands at any point along its trajectory, no closer than 12" from your table edge and no further than 24" from your table edge. Deploy each unit within 6" of the glider. Each unit gets a pin marker.
- **4-5: Long!** The glider lands at any point along its trajectory, no closer than 24" from your table edge. Deploy each unit within 6" of the glider. Each unit gets a pin marker.
- **6: Plucky Piloting!** Your pilot has had a sudden flash of brilliance. You can land your glider anywhere on the battlefield, regardless of where you placed your trajectory. Deploy each unit within 6" of the glider. They start with no pin markers.



92nd (Colored) Infantry Division make a night assault

The pilot cannot land on any terrain other than open ground. If given no choice, then after the glider has landed, treat its result like a crash as outlined on the table above.

Once the glider is on the ground, it counts as an obstacle under the terrain rules. If they don't have glider models, the players may use a small patch of rubble to represent the crashed glider, though the enterprising modeller may wish to mock up a crashed glider for added flair!

OBJECTIVE

The goal for each side is simple: cause as much damage to the opposing forces while preserving your own.

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During the first turn, the German player must bring his entire first wave on to the battlefield. These units can enter the table from *any* table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order test is required when bringing units on to the battlefield as part of a first wave.

When the German player brings in reserves, they also may be deployed along any table edge.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 7, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6, play one further turn.

VICTORY!

Players score 1 victory point for each enemy unit destroyed.

At the end of the game calculate which side has won by adding up victory points as follows. If one side scores at least 2 more victory points than the other, then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise the

result is a draw!



Glorious Goodwood

SCENARIO 3: CAPTURE THE CAUSEWAY

Seizure of the causeways is vital for the invading Allies. Without them, the forces on the beaches will be unable to link up and form a cohesive army, which may very well make their stay in France a brief one.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between an attacking US or British force and a defending German force.

German platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book, but may include no vehicles with a Damage value of 8+ or higher.

British platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Market Garden** selector in the *Armies of Great Britain* book, but may include no vehicles or artillery units.

US platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Operation Market Garden** selector in the *Armies of the United States* book, but may include no vehicles or artillery units.

SET-UP

Two causeways cross the centre of the table, each perpendicular to the other. The causeways are 12" wide, and the intersection should be at the centre of the table. The area not covered by causeways is flooded grassland, which counts as rough ground.

The German player picks a table edge, and then sets up one infantry squad and one other unit (this unit can be anything with a damage value of 7+ or less) within 6" of the objective. Then he nominates half of the remaining units (rounded down) as his first wave. Any units not in the first wave are held back in reserve.

The Allied player can set up any or all of his units anywhere on the table so long as they are at least 18"

away from the crossroads or either of the enemy units already deployed. These units can use the hidden set up rules. All other units are left in the reserve.

SPECIAL RULES

DAWN IS BREAKING

Since this type of battle happened throughout the night and into the next day, the game starts with the Night Fighting rules (see page 20). However, starting on turn 2, roll a die at the beginning of each turn – on a 4+ visibility returns to normal for the rest of the game.

OBJECTIVE

The goal for both armies is to control the crossroads at the end of the game. To do so there must be a model from an infantry or artillery unit within 3" of the crossroads, and there must be no enemy infantry or artillery within 3" of the crossroads.

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During turn 1 the German player must bring his first wave on to the battlefield. These units can enter the battlefield from any point along the German player's table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units on to the battlefield as part of the first wave.

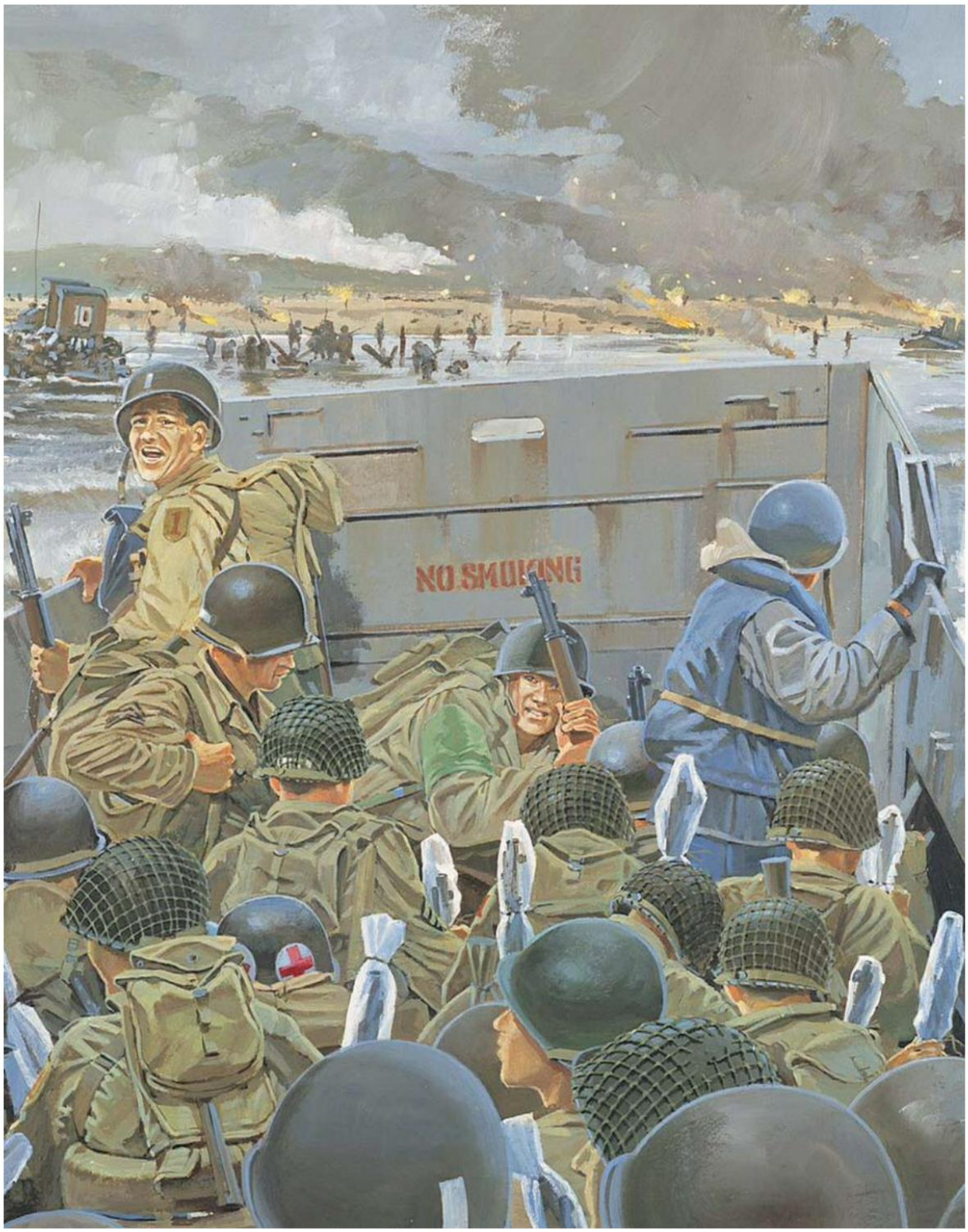
GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 8, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6, play one further turn.

VICTORY!

If one side controls the crossroads at the end of the game, it is the winner. If neither side controls the crossroads, the game is a draw.

THE BATTLE OF NORMANDY



Landing craft heading for Omaha Beach, by Howard Gerrard © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 100: D-Day 1944 (1).

It is not hard to think of the landings on D-Day as the end of a long and arduous journey towards victory, but it was really only the beginning. While it is true that the triumph of that first day was the culmination of the

Allies' efforts, the Battle of Normandy would go on for another three months.

DAY OF DAYS

After all the planning, manoeuvring, and deception, it was finally time for the most brutal part of the invasion – landing over 160,000 troops on to the heavily defended beaches of Normandy. For many, it would be the last beach they would ever see. For many more, it would be a day they would never forget.

Operation *Overlord* was the overall plan for the invasion of Europe. The assault phase of *Overlord* was known as Operation *Neptune*, the attack on the beaches and the subsequent move inland.

To accomplish this, the assault was split into two phases: the airborne attack (as discussed in the previous section), and the beach assault. The planned landing beaches covered about 45 miles of French coastline, from the Cotentin Peninsula in the west to Le Havre in the east. The beaches were further divided up into five sectors, with the now immortal names of Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword.



US Army command group

Each sector would have at least a full division assigned to it, and for ease of communication and coordination the various beaches were split between American and Commonwealth divisions. The Americans would assault Utah and Omaha beaches on the western half of the invasion zone, while the British and Canadians would attack Gold, Juno, and Sword on the eastern half.

Once the invading forces had established a foothold on the beaches, they would then move inland and link up along the causeways and crossroads, forming one huge army. This army would then take the fight all the way to Germany.

UTAH BEACH

The first beach to be stormed that morning was Utah beach at 0630, or 6:30 in the morning. The US VII Corps of the 4th Infantry Division was charged with the assault, and included elements of the 90th Infantry Division. Over 23,000 men would be heading inland over Utah.

The boats formed up line abreast just offshore and began to claw their way towards the beach. They were met with surprisingly little incoming fire, and they would soon find out why. Almost right on time, the boats of the first wave lowered their ramps and the men waded the remaining 100 yards to shore. They set foot on the sand with almost no opposition.

Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt had got permission, at great protest from his chain of command, to land with the first wave of forces on D-Day. Not only would he be the only general on Utah beach that morning, he would also (at age 56) be the oldest soldier. When he set foot on Utah beach, he realized the reason

for their relatively light reception: they had landed about 2,000 metres south of where they had planned. The enemy was deployed elsewhere.

While getting onto the beach with so few casualties was fortunate, the potential outcome of the mistake could be disastrous. The confusion it could have caused among the landing troops, whose objectives would not be where they had trained for them to be, would have been immense. He quickly realized the need to improvise.

He went back to the landing site after personally reconnoitring the area and apprised the incoming officers of the situation. They formed a new plan, with Roosevelt uttering the now famous line 'We'll start the war from here!'

Roosevelt himself stayed on the beach to greet each new battalion as it landed, and informed them of the situation and new plans. The men found his calmness and good humour inspiring, and soon they were all on the way to their new objectives. Roosevelt had turned a potential catastrophe into a success, and after D-Day he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his efforts.

While Utah was the first beach to be assaulted that day, it was also the most successful. Of the 23,000 men who landed there, only about 200 were made casualties. The landings at Utah beach had been an unmitigated success.

While the men on Utah were no doubt smiling over their good fortune, they probably would not have been if they had known what was happening to their brothers in arms on the other side of Pointe Du Hoc: the sand at Omaha Beach was being stained red.

THE RANGERS AT POINTE DU HOC

One of the most daring and dangerous attacks on D-Day was the US Army Rangers' assault on the guns of Pointe Du Hoc.

Sporting huge cliffs that overlooked the English Channel, Pointe Du Hoc was right in between Utah and Omaha beaches with a commanding view of both. It was well known by the Allies that the Germans had several massive artillery guns placed there, along with machine gun pits. If they remained operational, they could cause terrible casualties among the landing forces on both American beaches.

The cliffs were the first major obstacles. Ranging in height from 85 to 100 feet, they went almost straight into the sea, offering no protection for a force on the beach. The defenders could easily shoot straight down the cliffs and decimate any units trying to make their way up. The only way to scale them was with ropes and ladders, many of which had been donated by the London Fire Brigade.

The Allies knew that this was no mission for standard infantry soldiers. It required men with special operations capability, so the job went to the US Army Rangers in what would be one of their most famous actions.

The plan had three parts. First, an aerial bombardment would do as much damage as possible, and hopefully pin the German gunners in their bunkers. Next, a concentrated naval barrage, flying right over the heads of the landing Rangers, would keep the German defenders from shooting at them. Finally, the Rangers themselves, having ridden amphibious landing craft to the base of the cliffs, would climb up and take the battery.

It was a bold plan that would turn out to be a costly one from the very beginning. Floating

towards their objective, the Rangers came under a hail of deadly fire from German artillery, along with mortars once they got closer to shore. Only about half of the landing craft reached the small beach at the base of the cliffs.

The plan had called for an assault on two sides of the cliffs, but due to a navigational error and the terrible casualties the unit had suffered so far, they would only be attacking one side.

Now at the base of the cliffs, all the Rangers could hear was the deafening roar of the naval bombardment as it kept the German defenders from shooting down at them. Their landing craft had been equipped with rocket launchers to fire the grappling hooks, but the bombardments had caused a great deal of rubble to cover the beach and made it impossible for the landing craft to get close enough to use them.

The rubble had the fortunate side effects of giving some small amount of cover to the assaulting troops, while at the same time making the climb a bit shorter. With the German defenders effectively suppressed by naval artillery, and with some good old-fashioned grit on the part of the Rangers, they were able to scale the cliffs taking only 14 casualties.

The plan was for a larger Ranger force to follow the initial assault once those men had made it to the top of the cliff. Since the original attack had taken far longer than expected, the rest of the Rangers ended up landing on the western side of Omaha as part of that beach's assault. The rangers at Pointe Du Hoc were on their own.

Once at the top of the cliffs, they quickly set to their objective. Storming the battery, they were absolutely surprised to find... nothing. Telephone poles had been installed to look like the barrels of the big guns, and it had worked. There was a small German garrison there, but they were mostly infantry with some artillery spotters.

Lt Col Rudder, the overall commander of the Rangers landing force, split his unit into two groups. The first would establish a command post on the point, while the other would push inland and search for the guns. He knew they couldn't have gone far, and he was correct. The Rangers found the guns hidden in an apple orchard and destroyed their firing mechanisms with thermite grenades. The Rangers had accomplished their mission.

The fight for Pointe Du Hoc was far from over. For the next two days, the Germans mounted several counter-attacks to retake the point, each one fought back by naval gunfire and the fierce determination of the rangers. On 8 June, the defenders were finally relieved by the 5th Ranger Battalion. Of the over 225 men who set sail on the morning of 6 June, only about 90 of them were still in fighting shape.

OMAHA BEACH

The landings at Omaha were set to begin about the same time as those on Utah. Floating just offshore were over 34,000 men from the US 1st and 29th infantry divisions. Many of them had been in their landing craft for over 24 hours, since they were ordered to remain on them even though the invasion had been delayed.

They started taking casualties almost immediately. Ten of the landing craft sank due to heavy seas. Some only stayed afloat because the men on board were frantically bailing them out with their helmets. The choppy sea was instantly filled with floating men, both alive and dead. The landing force was heavily disrupted before the first ramp dropped.

Once they were near the shore, the men were in for a shocking surprise. The aerial and naval

bombardments, which up until then were considered to be successful, proved to be a dismal failure. The coastal defences, silent for the first part of their journey towards the beach, opened up with a deadly rain of ordnance. Of all the bombs that had been dropped in preparations for the landing at Omaha, not a single one had hit their targets.

Once the men finally ran down the open ramps of their landing craft, they often found themselves with 200 or more yards still to go before getting to the beach. Wading through sometimes neck-deep water, they could do little to protect themselves from the intense fire of the German defenders.

Several units were cut to pieces within ten minutes of landing, their officers and NCOs killed. Without effective combat leadership and with many of their comrades lying dead on the beach, these units were essentially combat-ineffective from the very beginning. Most of the units didn't land in their assigned sectors, having been drawn off by strong tides and confused by the smoke that obscured most of the beach. The units became scattered and confused as they hit the beach.

DD TANKS AT OMAHA

One of the challenges facing the Allied forces at Normandy was landing armoured assets over the beach. There were landing craft that were capable of carrying Sherman tanks, but the process for disembarkation was so sluggish that it was deemed too dangerous.

The solution was to make individual tanks into amphibious vehicles. Experiments in amphibious armour were nothing new, with the Japanese already using a floatation system for some of their tanks. The British had been testing various ideas since World War I, but had not yet achieved satisfactory results.

The Allies used the Sherman DD tanks during the Normandy invasion. 'DD' stood for 'duplex drive,' and referred to the propeller below the waterline that was used while the tank was floating. Of course, to many US servicemen, the DD stood for 'Donald Duck'.

The DD tanks used a waterproof canvas screen that could be raised around the tank that served as its hull while in the water. The propeller drew power from the engine's drive train, and so the tank could 'swim' straight to shore. Once on the beach, it could lower the screen and get right into the fight.

While these tanks would make an appearance on each of the four beaches, they would fare particularly poorly on Omaha. Over 60 DDs were assigned to the forces at Omaha. Of the 32 that actually swam to shore, only 2 of them actually made it. Most of them had been launched too far out, and the sluggish tanks were ill-equipped to handle the choppy seas off the coast of Normandy, eventually sinking as the rough waters splashed over the sides of their canvas screens. Thanks to training and capable safety equipment, most of the crews were rescued from their sinking tanks.

The sight of all the foundering tanks caused the Allied leadership to change plans, and the rest of the tanks were sent in on landing craft. The idea worked, with most of the DD tanks never having to use their amphibious capability to get on to the beach.



Dog Red Beach, by Howard Gerrard © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 100: D-Day 1944 (1).

The second wave, though larger, encountered much the same difficulty as the first. The enemy had to disperse their fire in order to cover the larger landing area, but the second wave still suffered similar casualties. The tide was coming in, and as a result many of the shoreline obstacles were completely underwater and invisible by the time much of the second wave was crossing over them. Their landings were likewise dispersed.

The men on the beach were soon pinned down behind a bank of shingle that provided some cover from incoming small arms fire, but not from artillery. Past the shingle was a beach that was heavily mined and completely exposed to German fire from the cliffs above. The outlook was dismal, and the morale of the men reflected it.

The plan from the beginning was to attack the draws, whose little valleys between the cliffs made for natural exits off the beach. The Germans were no fools, and concentrated their defences around them. The attackers subsequently took their greatest casualties around these draws, facing zeroed artillery strikes and overlapping machine gun nests. The only other option was to scale the bluffs.

Faced with no alternatives, the men took to the bluffs. First up were the US Army Rangers who had been trained to scale the cliffs at Pointe Du Hoc but now found themselves attached to the 1st Infantry Division for the landing. Climbing up the bluff near the Vierville Draw, they finally made it off the beach and established a small command post.

Many more would follow. Using explosives to clear pathways through the minefields and barbed wire, the men were gradually opening up their narrow front and allowing for more troops to pour through. Once the

men had scaled the cliffs, they were able to attack the defenders of the draws, making it easier for successive waves to get inland.

The plan was working, but slowly and painfully. It was clear that the Allied forces would not fully achieve their objectives on day 1, but there was no choice but to continue the attack. With the battle going well on the other beaches, the offshore naval forces were able to bring more guns to bear on the embattled soldiers of Omaha.

The larger ships were justifiably concerned with hitting Allied troops with their bombardments, and as such they concentrated on Omaha's flanks. The smaller destroyers could manoeuvre much closer to the beach, and many of them risked grounding their ships in order to bring more accurate fire support to the infantry.

THE STRONGEST WEAPON ON OMAHA: LEADERSHIP

The American military, much like the militaries of other countries, places a high standard on its leaders. 'Lead from the front' is a tenet that forms the foundation of US military leadership to this day.

During the first and second waves of the assault on Omaha, this ideal would start out as a disaster, but would eventually turn the tide of the battle. As the ramps dropped, the leaders were generally the first ones to charge out, shouting inspiring phrases like 'follow me!' This often meant that they were often the first to be cut down by the intense fire aimed at the front of the landing crafts. The men would find themselves without leadership from the moment they left their boats.

Once on the beach, taking cover behind the shingle or some of the numerous obstacles, the men found themselves pinned down. Confusion reigned, as the sounds of gunfire, exploding artillery, and the cry of the wounded and dying surrounded them. At this critical tipping point, with the fate of the attack hanging in the balance, the American combat leadership stepped up to the challenge.

While there are several examples of this, the most famous is the story of General Norman 'Dutch' Cota. General Cota arrived on the beach with the second wave, about an hour after the first. He quickly assessed the situation: the men were leaderless and pinned down completely. This was the time to act.

Ignoring enemy fire, he charged up and down the beach giving orders and inspiring the men to action. Chewing on a cigar and holding a pistol, his rotund outline made him immediately recognizable, as well as an easy target. He didn't seem to care; he knew that leadership was the only thing that would get those men off the beach and save their lives.

Once he got up to the seawall, he saw that the men were held back by layers of barbed wire that covered the base of a sandy hill. Under his leadership, they cut through the barbed wire using Bangalore torpedoes, and pushed up the hill. At the top of the hill, there was an MG-42 machine gun nest firing 25 bullets a second, all right down at his men. One of his soldiers bravely volunteered to charge the nest in the hopes of taking it out with a grenade, but he was almost instantly cut in half by the accurate, close-range fire of the machine gun.

The rest of the men hunkered down, their resolve waning. Cota knew it was now or never. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'we are being killed on the beaches. Let us go inland and be killed.' With that, he spat out his cigar, picked up a downed man's Tommy gun, and charged up the hill. The men

followed his example and charged right behind him, and they took the pillbox.

As it turned out, that wouldn't be the only quote by General Cota to achieve legendary status that day. Earlier, as he was going from unit to unit and looking for officers, he came across the commander of the 5th Ranger Battalion. Once he found out that the unit was a Ranger outfit, he said, 'Well, goddammit then, Rangers, lead the way!' Ever since then, 'Rangers lead the way' has been the motto of the Ranger regiments.

Solid combat leadership is often equated with the ability to achieve objectives. While this is true, the fact that it also saves lives is often overlooked. There is no doubt that the casualties on Omaha would have been even greater were it not for the courage and leadership of men like General Cota.

By the end of the day, the men at Omaha had barely pushed a mile and a half inland, but they had made it. Somewhere between 2,000 and 4,000 American soldiers were killed, wounded or missing. The actual total is unknown to this day. That evening, the beach was still under continuous artillery fire, and it would take the Allies two more days to reach their initial D-Day objectives.

SWORD BEACH

At 0725, the British 3rd Infantry Division landed at Sword beach. They would bring with them a mix of other units, including French commandos. Their main objective was to take the nearby city of Caen, just over 9 miles from the beach.

They encountered little resistance and, 45 minutes after landing, the fighting was mainly inland; the beach defences being largely silenced. They sent their commando units to link up with the glider infantry that had taken the bridges over the River Orne and the Caen Canal the night before, and sent their main force to Caen itself.

Their efforts would be stalled by the only German counterattack to happen on D-Day. The 21st Panzer Division charged straight to the beach with its formidable Panzer IVs – a far cry from the light Czech tanks Allied intelligence thought they had. Some even managed to get to Sword beach, but since the German flak units had been spread thin, they took severe losses from British air support. The British had set up solid defences around the beach, and they were able to repulse the counter-attack. Sword was secured.

Caen, however, was not taken. Even though the British had landed over 28,000 men on Sword beach, the German counterattack had stalled them long enough to force them to miss their D-Day objective. The British pressed on the next day, but again were halted by the determined Panzers of the 21st. Caen would remain in German hands until over a month later. Nevertheless, the British had gained a foothold in the area that they could keep armed and well supplied.

GOLD BEACH

Next up was the British 50th Infantry Division at Gold beach. At 0735, over 24,000 troops landed between Le Hamel and Versur-Mer.

Their goal was to clear the beach defences and establish a beachhead, then push inland and cut the road to Caen. This would ensure that the 3rd Infantry Division, if successful in taking Caen, would be safe from counter-attack. Finally, the key harbour at Port-en-Bessin had to be seized so that the Allies could use it to ferry supplies to the invading army.

The beach was peppered with mines and other static defences, so the plan called for a strong engineer contingent among the attack's initial wave. They would not succeed in their mission however – the high tide covered many of the mines they were meant to clear, while those engineers that made it to the beach were

under so much enemy fire they were unable to complete their objective. The infantry would have to push through the minefields themselves.

Perhaps word from Omaha beach had reached the commanders of Sword, as an order was passed down to launch the DD tanks from their landing craft, rather than having them swim in on their own. Since there were no German tanks in the area, the Shermans proved to be invaluable at supporting the advancing infantry – a role the Sherman was born to play.

The initial wave of troops met heavy resistance from the Germans defending Gold. Many took casualties in the boats before ever dropping their ramps and getting into the fight. The resistance was stiff initially, but soon crumbled as the British pushed through. They were aided by several of 'Hobart's Funnies', such as the flail tank that could beat a path through a minefield without taking damage.



US M4A3 Sherman (76) with extra sandbag armour

By the end of D-Day, the 50th had succeeded in defeating the coastal defences and gaining a beachhead. They successfully linked up with the Canadians that came in over Juno Beach, and had taken several key towns in the area such as Le Hamel and Arromanches. 'A fine day's work', one man was quoted as saying. A fine day indeed.

JUNO BEACH

The 3rd Canadian Infantry Division was scheduled to land at Juno beach at 0735 to coincide with the British landings to its left and right. Due to heavy seas and coordination problems, they were delayed ten minutes. Once on the beach, their objectives were to link up with the British 50th Infantry Division coming off Gold Beach, capture nearby Carpiquet Airfield and seize the Caen-Bayeux railway.

Much like the other beaches, the preliminary aerial and naval bombardments had had disappointing results. While a few key emplacements had been taken out, the four-foot thick concrete walls of the casements had done their job in keeping most of the guns active for the landings.

Initially, the Canadians were met with stiff resistance from the German defenders. The Allied plan of action was to stage a two-pronged attack, with the 7th Brigade landing at 'Mike' sector on the right flank and the 8th Brigade landing at 'Nan' sector on the left. The 7th would land first, followed by the 8th ten minutes later.

LEGENDS OF THE WESTERN FRONT

STAN HOLLIS

By D-Day, Stan Hollis had already fought in Dunkirk, North Africa and Sicily, and had been promoted to Company Sergeant Major in the 4th Battalion, Green Howards. He and his men were part of the attack on Gold Beach, and it was in the fighting there that he would become the only soldier on D-Day to be awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest award for valour in the face of the enemy. As his unit came across a pair of enemy pillboxes, he charged the first. Using his Sten gun and grenades, he cleared both of them, single-handedly taking 26 prisoners. Later that day, after taking a house that had been sheltering enemy artillery, he realized that two of his men had been trapped in there and left behind. Turning to his commander, he said 'I took them in, I will try to get them out'. Again using grenades and gunfire, he was able to distract the enemy long enough for the trapped men to escape.

Cost: +85pts

Team: He is not a team, but instead may be added to one of your Regular Infantry sections, replacing their normal NCO, for the cost listed above

Weapons: Sten submachine gun

Special Rules:

- First Lieutenant: Though he is a sergeant major, he gets the +2 Morale bonus of a first lieutenant.
- Fearless Charge: When his unit charges into close quarters, the target unit may never react, regardless of the range of the charge.

As the 7th landed at Mike sector (10 minutes late), the coastal defences lit up with artillery and machine gun fire. The boats were still several hundred yards out to sea when they first started taking hits, and had to brave the long push landward under heavy enemy fire. As with the other beaches, the German machine gunners had a simple target to aim at: the front ramps of the incoming landing craft. As those ramps dropped, so too did many of the Canadian soldiers as they spilled out into the sea.

The 8th at Nan sector would have it no easier. As the very first landing craft lowered its ramp, 11 soldiers quickly stormed out, but only one of them would actually survive the first burst of machine gun fire directed at it. Their mission was to clear the beachside village of Saint-Aubin of enemy defenders, and they had to sprint over 100 yards towards the town while taking fire the entire time.

The defences soon crumbled, as the Canadians were able to get more and more troops on to Juno Beach, like the 2nd Canadian Armoured Brigade, which was able to provide critical fire support from their amphibious Shermans. Within two hours of landing, the beach was effectively secure, with only small pockets of enemy resistance. The Canadians could now focus on their objectives inland.

By the end of D-Day, they had managed to link up with the British 50th, though resistance at Saint-Aubin had stalled them long enough to miss linking up with the British 3rd coming from Sword. They also had not reached the Caen-Bayeux railway, but when they stopped just 3 miles outside of Caen, the 9th Brigade had managed to push farther inland than any other Allied unit on D-Day.



British Commando MMG team

AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT RULES

An over-the-beach assault against a waiting enemy is just about the worst way to enter combat. The rise and fall of the surf is constantly working against the attackers, while the defenders have a conveniently packed group of men against which to concentrate their fire.

When preparing to play a game of *Bolt Action* that involves an amphibious landing, you should define an area of the table as Deep Water, and another as Shallow Water. These areas of water normally start from the attacker's table edge, as described in the scenario being played – see for example the Gold Beach scenario on page 54.

MOVEMENT IN WATER

DEEP WATER

Deep Water is impassable terrain to all units except those that have the Waterborne or Amphibious rules, or any other rule allowing movement in water (i.e. boats and amphibious vehicles, usually). We assume that infantry laden with all of the kit they need to carry in combat cannot swim and keep their kit operational.

In addition the following extra rules apply:

- If a vehicle with the Waterborne or Amphibious rule is immobilized while in Deep Water, it will automatically drift D6" forward every time it receives an order.
- Units in Deep Water suffer an additional -1 to hit when firing their onboard weapons because of the waves rocking the boat. Players may agree to ignore this rule if the Deep Water in question is exceptionally still (placid lake, very slow moving river).
- If a transported unit does not have the Waterborne or Amphibious rule and is forced to dismount in Deep Water, it can try to reach an area of Shallow Water with his move to dismount. If it cannot reach the Shallow Water, it is destroyed.

SHALLOW WATER

Shallow water is treated as rough ground, with a few extra rules:

- Only Infantry and Waterborne or Amphibious vehicles may move in water.
- Artillery units treat it as impassable. If transported artillery is forced to dismount in Shallow Water, it can try to reach an area of solid ground with his move to dismount. If it cannot reach the solid ground, it is destroyed.
- While infantry are moving in water, they can do nothing else (e.g. an infantry unit may not fire weapons while in water).

- Infantry units must always pass an order test to execute an order while in water, even if they are not pinned.
- Water provides hard cover to infantry from small arms fire. This is due to the rounds being slowed down by the density of the water. Even the feared MG42s bullets would stop after going through only 3 feet of surf!
- When an infantry unit finally moves out of the shallow water, it immediately gets an additional pin marker to represent the difficulty of regrouping after moving in water.
- Waterborne vehicles may end their move overlapping solid ground for up to half of their length, thus allowing transported units to disembark.

LANDING CRAFT

Here below are the rules for the most common type/sizes of landing craft used in World War II – feel free to add them to any nation's force. The standard rules for transports apply to landing craft, with the exception that units must begin the game on landing craft and cannot mount on to them unless the landing craft is partially on solid ground.

LANDING CRAFT, PERSONNEL

The most common example of Landing Craft, Personnel was perhaps the Higgins Boat. This ubiquitous vehicle was made from plywood, its design based around boats normally used in swamps in the mainland US. It could carry an entire infantry platoon or a light vehicle like a jeep and deliver them from their transport ship offshore to the beach, where the front ramp was dropped to let the troops quickly deploy. Around 20,000 were built during World War II.

Cost: 40pts (Inexperienced), 50pts (Regular), 60pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 MMG covering the front and left arc, 1 MMG covering the front and right arc
Damage Value: 6+
Transport: 36 men, or one jeep and 16 men
Special Rules:

- Waterborne: May only move in areas of Deep or Shallow water, being treated as a tracked vehicle for speed and turning ability
- Slow

LANDING CRAFT, MECHANIZED

There were many different types of LCMs, but in general they were designed to deliver either a large body of troops or vehicles directly on to the beaches from their front ramp. They could carry a couple of trucks or even a single medium tank, making them a very useful tool during an amphibious assault.

Cost: 100pts (Inexperienced), 125pts (Regular), 150pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 MMG covering the front and left arc, 1 MMG covering the front and right arc
Damage Value: 7+
Transport: 100 men, or two soft-skin vehicles, or one armoured vehicle with damage value of 9+ or less
Options:

- Upgrade both MMGs to HMGs for +20pts

Special Rules:

- Waterborne: May only move in areas of Deep or Shallow water, being treated as a tracked vehicle for speed and turning ability
- Slow
- Open-topped

THE ATLANTIC WALL

While much has been said about the courage and tenacity of the Allied attackers on D-Day, the German soldiers managed to perform with great efficiency despite their initial confusion and the lack of response from the highest levels of their command structure.

Early in 1942, recognizing the threat that the English Channel posed to his new Reich, Hitler ordered the construction of the 'Atlantic Wall'. Over the next two years, thousands of slave labourers worked around the clock turning Hitler's vision into reality.

It wasn't one long wall, but a series of fortifications, obstacles, and gun emplacements that spanned nearly 3,000 miles. From Norway in the north to the Franco-Spanish border in the south, the coastline was bristling with firepower. Small arms such as the fearsome MG-42 would dot the landscape, while massive artillery pieces that could shoot shells over 30 miles were placed at strategic points in Norway and France. Between those two extremes were mortars, small calibre artillery, and infantry garrisons.

It was formidable, but when Erwin Rommel was put in charge of the Atlantic Wall, mere months before the invasion, he was shocked at how inadequate the defences were in his eyes. He believed that the only way to defeat an Allied invasion was on the beach; if they were allowed to consolidate and get inland, Germany would fall. He had a lot more work to do.

He added more machine gun pillboxes, anti-tank guns and artillery to the defences themselves, as well as further inland. He had the beaches covered with tank obstacles, barbed wire, and over 6 million mines. Under the water line, he put mine-topped posts designed to sink incoming landing craft, as well as thousands of other metal obstacles. He also knew that an airborne assault was likely, so he had several fields flooded, and had sharpened telephone poles or trees installed at an angle to frustrate glider landings. The poles became known as *Rommelspargel* – 'Rommel's Asparagus'.

BUILDING THE WALL

It was an ambitious plan from the beginning. A country at war, especially one isolated from much of the world's trade, must carefully commit its resources. These resources include men, materiel, knowledge, and of course money. By 1942, Germany's resources were mostly committed to the Eastern Front. All of Germany's best guns, equipment and men were focused on invading Russia, which left precious little for the lofty goals of the Atlantic Wall.



Wurfgerat 41 'Howling Cow'

Hitler also had a problem assigning his resources properly. He had managed to take four of the Channel Islands from England, and he spent a dubious amount of time and money practically covering them in concrete. Ostensibly, he was concerned that the Allies would use these islands as a jumping-off point for an invasion, but it is widely suspected that since they were British territory, he wanted to flaunt his capture of them.

There were other issues, not the least of which were the British successes in North Africa. Rommel had been beaten by Montgomery, and now the Mediterranean coast of France was in danger. The Axis would need to fortify that coast as well, spreading their resources even thinner.

Also, the Allied air campaign over Germany was wreaking havoc in the Fatherland, and many workers had to be pulled back in order to rebuild vital parts of Germany's infrastructure. It is ironic that the damage those bombers did during the air campaign of 1942 and 1943 probably had done more to help the forces of D-Day than the aerial bombardments had on the morning of 6 June.

At the height of construction, the workers were pouring more than 7 million cubic feet of concrete each month! Even so, the wall would never be fully completed to Hitler's demands – the invasion of Normandy would settle the matter for good.

THE MEN OF THE WALL

By June of 1944, the Germans had 46 infantry divisions and 9 Panzer divisions in France, totalling about 850,000 troops. With the Eastern Front still demanding most of the war effort, the men were often very young or very old. Those divisions weren't without their veterans, but they would consist largely of green troops considered not useful to the Eastern Dront campaign.

There were also about 60,000 *Hilfswillige*, Russian prisoners who had volunteered for service in the Wehrmacht. These men were usually part of an ethnic minority in Russia (such as Cossacks or Tartars) and as such they had no moral issue with fighting for the enemy of their homeland.

Troop quality was a problem, but one that could not be realistically dealt with. The units in France were considered second-rate, and barely suited to static defence. The plan therefore was to build even stronger fortifications to slow down the invading army long enough for the armoured reserves to deploy to the invasion area.

A typical battery had about 2-4 concrete casemates housing 100mm artillery pieces. There would be a command bunker, a barracks bunker, and a magazine to store the ammunition. These structures would ideally be connected by a system of covered trenches to give the men protection from aerial attack. Machine gun

pillboxes and anti-aircraft guns would be scattered around the perimeter, and the whole area would have barbed wire and mines. It took about 130 men to man the entire complex, including gunners, support staff, commanders, and infantry.

For a veteran, service on the Wall was considered either a punishment or a vacation. With no Russian tanks shooting at them, and no General Winter freezing their fingers off, some took the duty on the sunny French coast with a sigh of relief. Others, perhaps seeking rank or medals, saw it as a dead-end to their career. In either case, many thought the invasion would never really happen – who would be foolish enough to attack such a fortified coast?

SILENT SENTINELS: THE OBSTACLES AT NORMANDY

Rommel believed that the only way to defeat an Allied invasion was to stop it on the beaches. With the enormous resources they were able to bring to bear, the Allies would spread like wildfire if they were allowed even a toehold on the continent. History would of course prove him right.

To hinder the invading army, an impressive assortment of obstacles was devised, ranging from stone-age simplicity to ingeniously modern. The goal was to either stop incoming landing craft or destroy them on their way in. If the troops were allowed to disembark, they would disperse and become much harder to repel.

NUTCRACKERS

The *Knussknacker* or Nutcracker mines were a marriage of ingenuity and pragmatism. They consisted of an H-shaped base with a large pole jutting out of the top. Inside the base was set a French artillery round (thousands were still left over from the German invasion of France), and the pole was the trigger mechanism. These were placed in the surf, deep enough underwater so that their triggers could not be seen but no so deep as to miss a passing boat all together. Once the boat hit the trigger pole, the artillery round would detonate and sink it.

CZECH HEDGEHOGS

One of the simplest designs, the Czech hedgehog has become the most recognizable example of a tank obstacle. It is merely three steel beams welded together to form a multi-pronged monstrosity that can be carelessly strewn in an area without much concern about how it would land. These 4-foot obstacles would dig themselves in the more they were pushed against, making them ideal at stopping vehicles. They were also deployed underwater, as their steel prongs could deal significant damage to the hulls of boats passing over them. On D-Day, they would also save many lives, as hedgehogs were one of the only forms of cover the beleaguered troops would find on the beaches.

TELLER MINE POLES

These obstacles were just wooden poles with a Teller mine lashed to the top. The idea was to place them underwater in much the same fashion as the nutcrackers. When a boat hit them, the mine would detonate and the craft would sink. In action, they only worked about half the time, since Teller mines were not designed to be submerged. Rommel knew they would not be terribly effective, but they were cheap and plentiful.

BELGIAN GATES

During the opening shots of World War II, Belgium knew it was a likely target for German aggression. One of the measures it took to defend itself was to build thousands of gates that would hopefully stall an armoured

advance.

The gates were about three yards wide and two yards tall, made of hard steel. They were originally designed to be set up on dry land, and linked together to form a long wall. The linking process meant the wall would bend rather than break when tanks tried to drive through them, and the feet at their base would dig into the ground. Rommel reused them as underwater obstacles, with the idea that their steel tops would rip apart the hulls of the landing craft as they came in.

The gates were a real threat, and as such became one of the primary targets of the Naval Combat Demolition Units that were sent in to deal with these kinds of obstacles.

LOG RAMPS

These were a variant of the Teller mine poles. Instead of being canted towards the incoming boats though, these ramps lifted the boat as it rode up on them, eventually leading to the mine at the top and detonating it. Their advantage was they were taller than the mine poles, and as such could be placed further out in the surf.

SEA MINES

Placed furthest out, these were more sophisticated magnetic mines that were chained to the sea floor and caused catastrophic damage to any ship unlucky enough to hit one. As part of Operation *Neptune*, over 250 vessels were tasked with locating and destroying sea mines to clear the path for the rest of the invasion fleet.

These were very expensive and in limited supply, which is why the more numerous Teller mine poles and log ramps were used.



Send for the sappers! A British column stalls at Dragon's Teeth

DRAGON'S TEETH

These obstacles had a steel core covered in concrete, but were basically hollow pyramids. They operated on the same principle as the hedgehogs, and were deployed in similar fashion. While they were useful underwater, dragon's teeth were mostly used on land, where they excelled at stopping tanks, due to their heavier nature. However, they were more expensive and harder to produce, so they were not as common as the hedgehogs.

BARBED WIRE

Barbed wire nearly covered the entire coast of France. Cheap and easy to deploy, it would be one of the last obstacles the attacking soldiers would face before finally making it to the bunkers themselves.

While wire isn't deadly, and it is relatively easy for a single soldier to pass through, it significantly slows down units of troops. Many units, distracted with the problem of dealing with it, were cut up by German machine gunners taking advantage of the delay.

MINEFIELDS

Mines were used mainly to disrupt enemy movements or deny areas. A minefield could cause severe damage to an attacking army, as well as causing critical delays whilst attackers cleared mines or manoeuvred around them.

Generally speaking, there were two ways to deploy mines: hasty and deliberate. Hasty deployment is used when an army is being pursued to slow down their attackers. In this case, mines are laid in the open and their safety pins removed. Enemy units will likely spot them easily, but they will be slowed down as they deal with the mines.

Deliberate deployment is the more conventional method. Once a field is designated, a grid of tape is laid across it, and carefully recorded. Mines are then laid wherever the tapes cross. To lay a mine, a soldier must first cut out a circle of sod, then dig a small pit for the mine itself. Once the mine is placed in the pit, the safety pin is removed and the explosive is now active. The final step is the most nerve-wracking: the soldier must carefully place the circle of sod back on top of the mine without tripping the mine's trigger.

The Atlantic Wall had more than six million mines along its entire length. The number of mines on the beaches of D-Day is unknown. One of the most feared was the German S-Mine, or 'Bouncing Betty'. Once triggered, this mine launched into the air and exploded a couple of feet above the ground. They weren't designed to be lethal, but could very easily maim their victims. They were usually used in conjunction with anti-tank mines designed to explode when something as heavy as a vehicle moved over them. The heavier explosion could immobilise, disable or even destroy an armoured vehicle.

The Allies also used mines during the invasion. While advancing inland, the invading armies would have exposed flanks, weaknesses that the Germans were eager to exploit. To defend against flank attacks, mines were sometimes used. One example is the US's 300th Combat Engineers, who filled a 3-mile stretch of land with mines in order to protect the 101st Airborne Division. When detonated, not only did these mines disrupt the German attackers, but also the resulting noise provided an early warning!

CLEARING MINES

Mines are indiscriminate and just as much a danger to both sides and to non-combatants. As such, regardless of whether a minefield has been laid by friend or foe, it will eventually have to be cleared and made safe.

The most basic method of mine clearing involves infantry using their bayonets to detect the mines and then clearing them by hand. Crawling on all fours, the soldiers must carefully prod the soil, stabbing the earth

at an angle to avoid putting any downward pressure on the unseen mine. Once a mine is found, the soldier must clear the dirt around it and put a safety pin in it to disarm the triggering device. Once this task is completed, the mine can be lifted out of the ground and disposed of.

By 1942, the Allies introduced metal-detectors for mine clearance. They proved to be much safer than the bayonet method, although – obviously - they were not as readily available.

Another alternative was simply to blow up the mines. Nearby explosions would detonate mines, rendering the area safe for traffic. There are several ways to accomplish this. An artillery barrage is very effective, but only if the minefield's location is known and friendly forces are nowhere nearby.

On D-Day, the invading Allies used something called a 'Bangalore Torpedo,' so named since they were first used in Bangalore, India back in 1912. The weapon consists of several interlocking tubes filled with explosives. The tubes are screwed together and then thrust out over the battlefield before being detonated. Soldiers using them could clear mines and other obstacles without having to come closer than 3 metres. This would clear a corridor about 3-4 metres wide and up to 15 metres long to advance through. Bangalore Torpedoes were so successful that they are still in use today.

MINEFIELD RULES

Players can decide to add minefields to any of their games, as long as they agree beforehand. Usually the defender in a scenario can deploy mines, since attackers are pushing into a new area and have not had the opportunity.

Initially, we are going to provide rules for visible, marked minefields, as we assume that both sides are adhering to the Geneva Convention and marking their minefields. We shall also deal by default with anti-personnel mines, as they are the most common. Later on we'll also provide rules for anti-tank, mixed, dummy and concealed minefields.

MINEFIELD SECTIONS

The default minefield section in *Bolt Action* is a 6"-sided square area. Larger minefields can be made by placing several of these sections next to each other.

Normally, we tend to allow the defender in a scenario two minefield sections per full 1000 points of his force. Or if you prefer you can allow a certain amount of points to be spent on minefields (up to 10 per cent of the force total), and say that each section costs 50pts.

A minefield section can either be a cardboard base appropriately decorated, much like an area of rough ground, or can be delimited ad hoc before a game using four 6" long obstacles (like a 6" length of barbed wire), or even simply using four counters set up at 6" distance to mark the corners of the minefield.

EFFECT OF MINEFIELDS

When any unit (friend or foe) moves into a minefield section, the opponent can interrupt their movement once at any point during their move, just as if the minefield itself was in Ambush. When the opponent declares that the minefield is 'attacking' the unit, the controlling player must halt at that point and note how much movement the unit has left. Assuming the unit survives its encounter with the minefield, it will finish its move as normal.

After the unit has been positioned at its 'Ambush' point, the opponent rolls one die to see if the unit triggers a mine, effectively rolling to hit the unit with the minefield section itself. A minefield section needs a 3+ to hit an Inexperienced unit, 4+ for a Regular unit, and 5+ for a Veteran unit.

Units belonging to the player that has placed the minefield are supposed to know the location of the mines, so they can force the opponent to re-roll any successful hit, as long as they are moving at an Advance. Also, units of combat engineers (Engineers, Pioneers, etc.) are trained to deal with these obstacles and always benefit from this re-roll when moving at an Advance, even when crossing the enemy's minefields.

If any unit (including friends and engineers) is sufficiently foolhardy to cross a minefield at a Run, the minefield rolls **three** dice when ambushing the unit rather than one!

If the minefield misses with all of its dice, the unit has not triggered a mine and can finish its move normally. If the minefield scores hits, then each successful hit is resolved with a Penetration value of +2 against non-armoured targets and +3 against armoured targets (Damage roll of 7+). Roll to damage as normal. A unit that is hit also suffers D3 pin markers rather than just 1. Note that the higher value Pen against armoured targets reflects the fact that the antipersonnel mine hits the weakly armoured belly of the vehicle – not normally considered from the point of view of other hits.

If the unit is not destroyed, or broken by a resulting Morale check, it can finish its move as normal.

Note that a single minefield section can attack a unit only once per move, but can attack any number of units moving over it during the turn. Also, if a unit was foolish enough to cross two (or more!) minefield sections as part of the same move, each section can ambush it in turn.

ANTI-TANK MINEFIELDS

At the beginning of the game, you may secretly write down that any of your minefields is an anti-tank minefield. Anti-tank minefields only affect vehicles, and are ignored by infantry and artillery units that move over them. However, hits inflicted on vehicles are at +5 Pen rather than the normal +2.

MIXED MINEFIELDS

You can also create a mixed minefield section by 'using up' two of your sections. So, if for example you were allowed two sections in the scenario being played, you can lay both out as anti-tank or anti-personnel minefields, or deploy a single one as a mixed minefield. Make a note of which section is mixed.

A mixed minefield section combines the best of both worlds and will affect infantry and artillery with +2 Pen hits, but vehicles with +5 Pen hits.

DUMMY MINEFIELDS

You can replace any real minefield section allowed by the scenario with two dummy minefield sections. For example, if you are allowed two sections, you can place three down. Make a note of which sections are dummies. Your opponent might notice this variation in the number of allowed minefields, in which case he'll know some minefields are dummies, but of course he won't know which ones!

When units enter a dummy minefield, roll to ambush them as normal (including any re-rolls that the opponent may force upon you). If you score a hit, however, you have to reveal the minefield is just a dummy, and from now on it counts as a cleared minefield section (see below), as a few mines were often left even in dummy minefields.

MINEFIELDS IN WATER

As mines in shallow and deep water are intended solely to destroy boats and amphibious vehicles, you cannot place antipersonnel minefields in water terrain (Shallow or Deep), but you can place anti-tank minefields, or dummy ones, in either type of water terrain (see rules for movement in water on page 31).

CONCEALED MINEFIELDS

Instead of visibly deploying your minefields sections, you may halve the number of sections available and deploy them hidden without any markings. We cannot condone and do not encourage the use of this despicable practice, which is against the Geneva Convention!

Make an accurate note of where the minefield sections are. You can either use coordinates and/or make a map of the table as you wish. You cannot place hidden minefields in the enemy's set-up zone.

During the game, when a unit moves into the minefield, you must reveal it (the unit has spotted that something is amiss) and place it on the table, and then proceed to ambush the unit as normal.

CLEARING MINEFIELDS

Once a minefield section has scored one or more hits on a unit passing over it, the opposing player rolls a die. On the roll of a 6, the minefield is **cleared**. If the unit that was hit was a vehicle with damage value 8 or more, the minefield is instead cleared on a 4+. This represents any subsequent troops either following in the tracks of the first or moving over craters left by previous exploded mines.

A cleared minefield is left in place, but from that point onwards the minefield only ever scores hits on a 6, regardless of the quality of the troops crossing it, and always rolls a single die 'to hit', even against units moving at a Run. Re-rolls for friends and Engineers still apply. This represents hurried mines clearance under fire, which is not exactly a thorough process, and might definitely leave a few isolated mines behind.

Thankfully, there are alternative means of clearing a minefield other than walking your infantry or driving your tanks over it. These are listed below with their rules.

MANUAL MINE CLEARANCE BY INFANTRY

Any infantry unit that has at least five models inside a minefield can be ordered to attempt to clear it using their bayonets. The unit must be given a special 'Mine clearing' order, which is the same as giving the unit a Down order – place a Down marker next to the unit and then make a 'mine clearing roll' applying all of the modifiers below. In order to clear the minefield section, the result needs to be a 6 after modifications. Note that a natural 6 is always a success and a natural 1 is always a failure. In addition, if a natural 1 is rolled, the minefield section ambushes the unit as normal (and in this case, an antitank minefield **does** affect the tampering infantry!).

Mine clearing modifiers (cumulative)

- Veterans +1
- Inexperienced -1
- Engineers +1
- Mine-clearing gear* +2
- Per pin marker on unit -1

*Any Engineer unit may be equipped before the game with mine clearing gear (Bangalore Torpedoes, mine detectors, etc.) at a cost of +1pt per model, at least one of the models should show this upgrade.

BLOWING IT UP!

Any weapon capable of Indirect Fire can target a visible minefield section. Aim for the centre point of the section and roll to hit as normal (including ranging in for successive shots). If a hit is scored, roll for the HE value of the weapon – if you score at least 6 hits on the minefield with a single shot, the minefield section is

cleared.

When resolving an artillery barrage 'Fire for effect' result, roll a die for each minefield section within range of the barrage (including concealed ones!). If you roll a 6, the minefield section is hit by a heavy howitzer as normal, and if you score at least 6 hits on it, it is cleared.

When firing a preparatory bombardment, roll a die for each minefield sections in the defender's set-up zone (including concealed ones!). If you roll a 6 that minefield section is cleared.

THE 21ST PANZER DIVISION

Due to command disputes and Hitler's heavy-handed management style, only one Panzer division would fight on D-Day. That unit was the 21st Panzer Division.

The 21st was formed in 1941 from elements sent to Africa to reinforce the faltering Italians in Cyrenaica. The unit met with several major successes, defeating XXX Corps at Sidi Rezegh and capturing over 35,000 prisoners at Tobruk. However, the increased Allied armour commitment in North Africa, coupled with lack of adequate supply and reinforcements, would soon turn the tide of battle against them.

After the Second Battle of El Alamein in October 1942, the 21st was reduced to a mere 4 tanks. The unit was ordered to fight rearguard actions while the bulk of the Deutsches Afrikakorps retreated back to Tunis. The unit surrendered in May of 1943.



A battle-scarred Panther leads a German counter attack

In June of 1943, the 21st was reformed in France. It was to be part of a new formation whose purpose was to use speed and mobility to repel an invasion. Since mainland Europe had so many coastlines to defend, the strategy called for several lightning fast formations deployed at key intervals throughout France. Once the invasion began, these formations would be able to quickly move to the battle and engage the invaders.

Only one of these 'Schnelle' (fast) brigades was actually made. The Eastern Front had gobbled up most of Germany's war resources, so the vehicles needed for such highly mobile formations simply were not

available. The 21st's commanding officer, General Edgar Feuchtinger, had to seek other options for motorizing his fledgling unit, so he turned to mechanical engineer and World War I veteran Alfred Becker.

Becker was an ingenious soldier with a keen eye for improvisation. At the beginning of the war, he was an officer in an artillery regiment that was still using horses to pull its guns. When his unit came upon a Dutch artillery depot, he found it contained several vehicles, each capable of towing artillery pieces. Soon, his battery, as well as his division's reconnaissance battalion, was completely motorized.

After the invasion of France, Becker found himself on occupation duty. With nothing more than a small team of men and meagre resources, he soon had his own battery of self-propelled artillery, taking British Vickers tank chassis and mounting 105mm howitzers on them.

It was when he brought his unique skills to the Eastern Front that he attracted the attention of the German high command. He had mounted the larger 150mm 'Evergreen' field howitzers to the Lorraine 37L Tank Supply Tractor. He held a demonstration of his new creations in the garden of the Reich Chancellery to a group of Nazi officials, including Hitler himself. The vehicles performed so well that Hitler ordered Becker to France so he could use his talents to convert enough captured vehicles to form at least two panzer divisions.

Of course, General Feuchtinger had heard of Becker's exploits, and commissioned him to fill his division's thin ranks. He quickly set to equipping captured French halftracks and light tanks with more armour and better guns. He was no longer limited to using only a handful of men and a few welding torches, he now had his own conversion facility with a large staff. On 27 June 1943, the 21st Panzer Division was officially reborn.

21ST PANZER DIVISION ON D-DAY

In the months preceding the invasion, the Nazi high command was in disagreement over how to best fortify France. Rommel, who had recently been put in charge of fortifying the Atlantic Wall, insisted that the armoured divisions be put close to the beaches most likely to be invaded. Field Marshal Rundstedt, the senior commander in the west, felt that the tanks should be placed inland so they would retain maximum flexibility.

Rundstedt's idea was the basic strategy of the 'Schnelle' brigades: deploy at key positions inland, and then race to the battle once the Allies had shown their hand. There were two fundamental flaws with this plan, however. First, it didn't take into account the Allies' command of the air, which would only permit German tanks to move at night. Second, the fuel needed for such manoeuvres was in short supply.

Rommel may have agreed with the Schnelle strategy, but he was a realist who clearly appreciated the difficulties he would encounter in trying to carry it out. Since Rundstedt and Rommel could not agree on a solution, the decision fell to Hitler himself.

In classic form, Hitler's solution was a compromise. He would split the available armour in half, designating some for the beaches, while the rest would remain in reserve. He added the stipulation that the reserve could only be mobilized by his order, a decision that would leave the German commanders with their hands tied on D-Day.

On the morning of the invasion, Rundstedt was the most senior commander in the area, and was up and alert before 3 a.m. He realized that the airborne attacks were just a precursor to an invasion from the sea, and immediately called for the release of the armoured reserves. Hitler's staff would not risk waking him, so it wasn't until 10 a.m. that he finally got a reply: No.

As a result, the 21st was the only Panzer division in the area of the Normandy landings, and the only one to fight the Allies that day. It had been placed near Caen, so its first clashes with the Allies would be against British troops coming in from Sword Beach.

The Panzers found British paratroopers near Ranville, and engaged them until ordered to withdraw to face

the Allied advance on Caen. By that night, they had reached the coast at Lion-sur-Mer, effectively splitting Juno and Sword beaches and preventing the British and Canadians from linking up. The Allies had hoped to secure Caen on D-day, but due to the stalwart defence of the 21st it would take another month.

After three days of hard fighting, Rommel finally arrived in the area and assumed command. He added two SS units to the division's forces, and set about planning an advance towards Bayeux. It was a bold plan, but one that would soon evaporate when the entire headquarters and planning staff were killed by Allied bombing.

The 21st's last fight in Normandy was against the British Guards Armoured Division. The Americans had broken out of their beachhead, and the British advanced towards Mont Pinçon in order to help them exploit the breakout. The 21st moved to block them, and put up a fierce defence.

While they were able to stop the British from breaking out, the battle was costly. The German armour was bogged down by the attack, and was not able to effectively deploy to stop the Americans. After the battle, the 21st had only a fraction of its original combat strength. The division was essentially destroyed in the Falaise Pocket by the end of August – it was down to just 12 tanks.

As summer turned to fall in 1944, what little was left of the 21st withdrew, along with the rest of the German Army, across France and back into Germany. Its members were brave soldiers who had fought hard, but the beating they had taken in Normandy proved to be too much. There would be a few more battles, but only small skirmishes as they tried to regroup with other army units. The remnants of the 21st would fight on for another year, and would eventually surrender to the Soviets in April of 1945.

PLAYING THE 21ST PANZER DIVISION

While the 21st fought in North Africa well before D-Day, this section focuses on the division as it was equipped in France. As such, any platoons for the 21st Division should use the Armoured Platoons selector from *Bolt Action Tank War* or the 1944 – Normandy selector from the *Armies of Germany* book. In either case, the following guidelines will also help you keeping the platoons more consistent with their historical counterparts.

HEADQUARTERS UNITS

The officers and their staff typically rode into battle on SdKfz 251 halftracks. The commanders of armoured platoons rode in Panzer IVs, usually the 'H' variant. They might also have a recon element attached to the officer's unit, usually on motorcycles or SOMUAs, while the armoured platoons used Panzer IIIs for recon.

INFANTRY

The 21st had several regiments of Panzer grenadiers or motorized infantry. They were mounted on trucks, or Unic P107 halftracks if they were available. They had the full range of infantry outlined in the Normandy selector (except for Fallschirmjägers and Osttruppen), from regular riflemen to flamethrower teams and everything in between!



Marder III Ausf. M tank destroyer

FIELD ARTILLERY

The 21st had a single artillery regiment. While it was mostly made up of converted Lorraines (as outlined above), they had horse-drawn 122mm howitzers and 105mm howitzers pulled by tractors.

ANTI-TANK GUNS

They used mainly 75mm PaK 40s, towed by trucks. They also had access to the dreaded 88s, towed by French Laffly tractors.

TANKS

The bulk of the division was equipped with Panzer IVs, with some Panzer III mostly in a reconnaissance role. They also made use of captured SOMUA S35 tanks (see their entry in the *Armies of France and the Allies* supplement book).

TANK DESTROYERS

As well as a few StuGs, the 21st could rely on the trusty SOMUA halftrack converted to carry the 75mm PaK 40.

SELF-PROPELLED ARTILLERY

Thanks to the efforts of Major Becker, the 21st had a useful array of mobilized artillery units. You can see the stats for them in Becker's conversions section above. Most of the units had Lorraines mounting 105 and 150mm howitzers.

BECKER'S CONVERSIONS

Modelling one of Becker's conversions is a great way to give your German army a unique twist – and is a lot of fun to boot!

During his days in France, Becker made some 1,800 armoured vehicle conversions using all manner of captured French, Dutch and British chassis, but only the most common are presented here. Of course, don't let that stop you if you've got an idea for a unique conversion, just make sure your opponent agrees to its use before the game.

CONVERTED VICKERS MK VI, AKA '10,5 CM LEFH-16 AUF GESCHüTZWAGEN AUF FAHRGESTELL MK VI 736 (E)'

The Vickers light tank had been in the British arsenal since the late 1930s, and had been deployed liberally in France. As such, there were lots of them for Becker to work with while he was deployed there after the fall of France. The chassis proved to be quite useful, as it had a reasonable amount of carrying power and could manage acceptable travel speeds. By all accounts, Becker's conversion of these tanks was completely unofficial, so he was technically risking a reprimand. He took his special battery of motorized 105s to the Eastern Front where they performed admirably. Eventually, they would all be destroyed in battle against the Russians, but by then Becker's reputation had been earned.

Cost: 100pts (Inexperienced), 125pts (Regular), 150pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 forward-facing medium howitzer and 1 forward-facing crew-operated pintle-mounted MMG
Damage Value: 7+ (Armoured Carrier)
Special Rules:

- Open-topped
- The crew can either fire the MMG or the main gun, but not both

'LORRAINE SCHLEPPER'

The Lorraine 37L was tracked armoured vehicle originally designed to ferry fuel and ammunition to tank units on the battlefield. Its suspension system was considered to be highly reliable, making it an attractive platform for one of Becker's conversions. On the Eastern Front, the Germans were having trouble facing Russian tanks. Their standard anti-tank gun, the PaK 36, was barely able to penetrate the sloping armour of their targets and proved difficult to get into place. While newer models were in development, a stopgap measure was needed to keep the beleaguered German troops from being overrun. The answer was Becker's Marder series. Becker took the Lorraine chassis, as well as several Hotchkiss H35 captured French tanks, and added a 75mm PaK 40, or a captured Russian 76m F-22. The result was a mobile anti-tank gun that could bring valuable anti-tank support to infantry advances. Later, models sporting the 10.5cm leFH18 Howitzer, as well as the larger 15cm sFH 13 Howitzer made an appearance.

Cost: 92pts (Inexperienced), 115pts (Regular), 138pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 forward-facing medium anti-tank gun or medium howitzer
Damage Value: 7+ (armoured carrier)
Options:

- May exchange the main gun for either a heavy anti-tank gun or a heavy howitzer for +40pts

Special Rules:

- Open-topped

SELECTORS

The Lorraine Schlepper is a Tank Destroyer for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. It is also a Tank Destroyer for all theatre selectors of the *Armies of Germany* book that allow a Marder I.

SOMUA MCG HALFTRACK

The SOMUA was a halftrack truck devised by the French as an artillery tractor as well as a tank recovery vehicle. It was a reliable vehicle that handled well, but it was the vehicle's large truck bed that caught Becker's attention. After covering it with armour plates, he tried the basic anti-tank variant, mounting a 7.5cm PaK 40. Seeing greater potential, he made a version sporting a Nebelwerfer multiple rocket launcher. His most innovative version would mount a weapon of his own design – the Reihenwerfer, a tightly knit battery of up to 20 81mm mortars!

Cost: 92pts (Inexperienced), 115pts (Regular), 138pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 forward-facing multiple launcher
Damage Value: 7+ (armoured carrier)
Options:

- May exchange the multiple launcher for a forward-facing heavy anti-tank gun for +45pts

Special Rules:

- Open-topped
- Multiple launcher (unless option is taken)

SELECTORS

The MCG halftrack is a SPG for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. It is also a SPG for the following theatre selector of the *Armies of Germany* book: Normandy.

UNIC U304(F) ARMOURED HALFTRACK WITH PAK 36

Some captured French Unic P107 artillery tractors were converted to carry a PaK 36 and were normally used as Platoon command vehicle.

Cost: 100pts (Inexperienced), 125pts (Regular), 150pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 hull-mounted forward-facing light anti-tank gun
Damage Value: 7+ (armoured carrier)
Special Rules:

- Command Vehicle
- Open-topped

SELECTORS

The U304(f) is a Tank Destroyer for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. It is also a Tank Destroyer for the following theatre selector of the *Armies of Germany* book: Normandy.

UNIC U304(F) ARMOURED HALFTRACK AA OR MORTAR CARRIER

Some captured French Unic P107 artillery tractors were converted to carry support weapons, like the variants depicted in this entry.

Cost: 68pts (Inexperienced), 85pts (Regular), 102pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 light automatic cannon with a 360-degree arc of fire
Damage Value: 7+ (armoured carrier)
Options:

- May add one additional pintle-mounted MMG covering the rear arc for +15pts
- Replace automatic cannon with a hull-mounted forward-facing medium mortar (losing the Flak rule) at +15pts

Special Rules:

- Open-topped
- Flak

SELECTORS

The U304(f) is a SPG/AA vehicle for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. It is also a SPG/AA vehicle for the following theatre selector of the *Armies of Germany* book: Normandy.

FLAMMPANZER B2(F)

The German Wehrmacht captured many French tanks with the capitulation of the French army in 1940. Early in 1941 an order was made to convert the Char B1 bis into a flamethrowing tank – the aim to have them ready to take part in Operation *Barbarossa* on the Russian Front. Replacing the original hull-mounted 75mm gun with a flamethrower on a ball mount and the addition of a large fuel tank at the rear of the hull gave the Wehrmacht the vehicle they needed. Overall around 60 Char B1 bis tanks were converted into the Flammpanzer – these flamethrowing tanks saw action in Russia, the Balkans, Normandy and during Operation *Market Garden*.



U304(f) halftrack with PaK 36

Cost: 204pts (Inexperienced), 255pts (Regular), 306pts (Veteran)

Weapons: 1 turret-mounted medium anti-tank gun with coaxial MMG, 1 forward-facing hull mounted flamethrower.

Damage Value: 9+ (medium tank)

Special Rules:

- Slow
- One-man turret: Combining the roles of commander, gunner and loader into together and squeezing the man responsible into a tiny one-man turret means it's hard to do different things at once! To represent this

it is always necessary to make an order test when issuing an Advance order, even if the tank is not pinned.

- Armoured all round: The Char B1 was almost as heavily armoured at the sides and rear as at the front – so no modifiers apply for penetration when shooting at the sides, rear or from above. All shots count the full armour value.
- Flammpanzer: Flamethrowing vehicles are more likely to be destroyed by damage, as explained on page 51 of the rulebook.

SELECTORS

The Flammpanzer B2(f) is a Tank for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. It is also a Tank for the following theatre selectors of the *Armies of Germany* book: Operation *Barbarossa*; Operation *Blue*; Stalingrad, Death on the Volga; Operation *Citadel*; Anti-partisan Security Patrol; Defence of the East; Defence of Italy; Atlantic Wall Resistance Nest; Normandy; Watch on the Rhine; Holding the West Wall; Operation *Spring Awakening*; Last Levy.

AMBULANCES

FIELD AMBULANCE (ANY ARMY)

Most armies would field some form of trucks or other soft-skinned vehicles converted into field ambulances for transporting medical supplies and medical staff around the battlefield and for the rapid evacuation of the seriously injured. Even though normally these vehicles would try to keep out of trouble, and even though the very obvious red crosses painted on them should protect them from being targeted by the combatants, in the heat of battle many did come unfortunately under fire. In game terms, they are unusual vehicles that share with empty transports the vulnerability to being in proximity to enemy units, but count as medics both in terms of special rules and platoon selectors.

Cost: 50pts (Regular), 60pts (Veteran)
Weapons: None
Damage Value: 6+ (soft-skin)
Transport: None (much like empty transports, ambulances are destroyed if they end their turn closer to enemy units than to friendly units, as described on page 92-93 of the *Bolt Action* rulebook)
Special Rules:

- Medical vehicle: Being in proximity of an ambulance means that any wounded soldiers nearby have a chance of being treated by a medic or stretcher bearer from amongst the crew of the ambulance. All infantry and artillery units within 6" of the vehicle count as within 6" of a medic.

SELECTORS

Ambulances count as a Medic for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook and for all theatre selectors that allow trucks.

ARMOURED FIELD AMBULANCE (GERMAN, US OR BRITISH ARMIES)

The SdKfz 251/8 halftrack was a Hanomag converted to the role of *Krankenpanzerwagen* – field ambulance. It could carry up to eight sitting wounded or four stretcher cases, or a mix of wounded

and medical personnel. Principal service and Numbers manufactured: see 251/1 entry in the *Armies of Germany* book. This entry can also be used by an Allied player to represent an M3 or M5 halftrack converted for use as field ambulance.

Cost: 75pts (Regular), 90pts (Veteran)
Weapons: None
Damage Value: 7+ (armoured carrier)
Transport: None (much like empty transports, ambulances are destroyed if they end their turn closer to enemy units than to friendly units, as described on p.92-93 of the *Bolt Action* rulebook)
Special Rules:

- Open-topped
- Medical vehicle: Being in proximity of an ambulance means that any wounded soldiers nearby have a chance of being treated by a medic or stretcher bearer from amongst the crew of the ambulance. All infantry and artillery units within 6' of the vehicle count as within 6' of a medic

SELECTORS

Armoured Ambulances count as a Medic for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the Bolt Action rulebook and for all theatre selectors that allow trucks.



SdKfz 251/8 armored field ambulance

MODELLING THE 21ST

The tanks and other vehicles were painted in what would come to be known as 'ambush camouflage' in late

1944. It used a dark yellow base called 'Dunkelgelb', then covered in olive green and red-brown patches. The tanks were actually delivered to the units with only the dark yellow base, so it was up to each unit's maintenance section to apply the green and red. This resulted in a wide variety of patterns, or sometimes no patterns at all!

The standard German 3-digit numbering system was used to denote individual tanks. The first digit was the tank's company number, the second was the tank's platoon number, and the last digit was the tank's individual number. Some units in the 21st used a 2-digit system to confuse the enemy.

BRITISH 79TH ARMOURED DIVISION

While the names of the divisions that stormed the beaches of Normandy would soon be well known, one of the largest remains almost unheard of. The 79th Armoured Division's strange tanks were dispersed among many units that day, and saved many lives with their unique capabilities.

The Allied command recognized the need for specialized vehicles to assist invading forces on the beaches. The difficulties seemed nigh insurmountable: minefields, barbed wire, escarpments, and other obstacles covered the beaches. For the invading armies to succeed, these obstacles would need special attention. Enter General Percival Hobart.

General Hobart was an armoured warfare expert who had an encyclopaedic knowledge of tanks and tank construction, as well as their employment on the battlefield. When he was asked to command a new armoured division, it was a role he was born to play.

Under his direction, the 79th proceeded to design, build and test some of the strangest tanks the world had yet seen. Hobart knew that his work would save lives, and he pushed himself and his men to the limit to turn his ideas into reality.

Nothing about the 79th was orthodox, including their deployment structure. Rather than going to war as a single unit, elements of the 79th were doled out to other commands as needed. This meant that their distinctive capabilities could be employed where they would do the most good. Once their mission was completed, the vehicles would return to the main unit to await their next assignment. This is why the 79th Armoured Division's name isn't as recognizable as those of the other divisions on D-Day.

While many of the odd tank designs had been in use before the formation of the 79th, Hobart would add more to the list. These additions became affectionately known as 'Hobart's Funnies'.

HOBARTS FUNNIES

Many of these strange tanks have little practical value in your average game of *Bolt Action,* but they come into their own during the kinds of operations described here. They may be included in any British or American force for Normandy.

DD TANK

The Allies recognized the problem of putting infantry on the beaches without proper armoured support. The risk of deploying tanks via standard landing craft was deemed too great, especially in the first phases of the landings. The 'DD' stood for 'duplex drive', and referred to the propeller that ran off the main drive train from the engine. A canvas shroud was devised to give the tank a proper hull while in the water, allowing it to be deployed from a ship offshore and swim its way to the beach.

DD tanks were Shermans and are treated as such in our game. They are fitted with the duplex drive and canvas hull, which give it the Amphibious and Slow special abilities. It also cannot fire while it is

Amphibious. Once the tank reaches dry ground, it loses both Amphibious and Slow, and may fire.



Churchill AVRE

AVRE-BASED 'FUNNIES'

The AVRE was based on the Churchill tank chassis and modified to carry a wide array of equipment. On D--Day it was largely used to clear German obstacles and other defences using a Petard mortar. It fired a 40-pound HE projectile that was known as the 'flying dustbin' to the crew. Some AVREs did not mount the Petard mortar, however, but rather just a normal 6-pdr gun. Any Churchill AVRE could mount one of Hobart's AVRE attachments.

Cost: 290pts (Regular), 348pts (Veteran)

Weapons: 1 turret-mounted MMG, 1 turret-mounted heavy howitzer (Petard mortar) with co-axial MMG and 1 forward-facing hull-mounted MMG

Damage Value: 10+ (heavy tank)

Options:

- May replace the Petard mortar with a medium anti-tank gun for -25pts (this option is not available to the ARK variant)
- MUST choose one of the AVRE attachments listed below at the cost listed in each entry

Special Rules:

- Slow
- The Petard mortar cannot fire at long range

SHERMAN 'CRAB'

Comprising a Sherman with a chain-covered attachment fixed to the front, the Crab is probably one of the more distinctive tanks in Hobart's arsenal. The chains were fixed to a shaft, which rotated at high speed to pound the terrain and detonate mines. Since the assembly projected out to its front, the tank itself was

protected from exploding mines.

Cost: 180pts (Inexperienced), 200pts (Regular), 220pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 turret-mounted medium anti-tank gun with coaxial MMG.
Damage Value: 9+ (medium tank)
Special Rules:

- HE: instead of causing D2 HE hits, an HE shell causes D6 hits.
- Easily catches fire: If a roll on the vehicle damage table results in the vehicle catching fire, add D3 pin markers rather than just 1 before taking a morale test.
- Mine Flail: When you give this unit an Advance order you can activate the mine flail. When the mine flail is active, it automatically clears any anti-personnel minefield sections the tank moves into. If it moves into an anti-tank minefield section, it clears it automatically, but the flail is destroyed and cannot be used any longer in the game. The model cannot fire in its front arc in the same turn it activates the mine flail.

HOBART'S AVRE ATTACHMENTS

There were several attachments added to the AVRE. An AVRE may never have more than one of them.

- **ARK** (Armoured Ramp Carrier): These AVREs had their turrets removed and two large ramps attached at either end. The purpose was to use the vehicle as a small bridge or ramp, allowing other vehicles to drive right over it. You may replace all weapons with a ramp assembly for -120pts. Whenever you give a Down order to this unit, you may mark it as having its ramps extended. While ramps are extended the vehicle cannot move, but other vehicles may drive over it and 3" in front and behind it, treating the area as open ground, though vehicles may not use run orders to cross. You must give the ARK a further Down order to fold the ramps back up before you can move the vehicle again.
- **Bobbin**: This was a large roll of canvas cloth reinforced with steel poles. The canvas would unroll as the tank moved forward, leaving a carpeted trail for other tanks to follow, while keeping them from sinking into the soft sand on the beaches. You may add a Bobbin attachment to your AVRE for +5pts. When you give the AVRE an advance order, it may lay a trail of canvas behind it as it moves – mark the area moved over in some fashion, for example, with a painted layer of paper. Other vehicles treat this area as open ground. Whenever you give a Down order to this unit, you can remove the bobbin. The model cannot fire its turret-mounted guns in the front arc until the bobbin has been taken off.
- **Bullshorn Plough**: This device, affixed to the front of the tank, would plough up mines buried in its path. You may add a bullshorn plough to your AVRE for +20pts. When you give this unit an Advance order, it automatically clears any anti-personnel minefield sections it moves into. If it moves into an anti-tank minefield section, it clears it automatically, but the plough is destroyed and cannot be used any longer in the game.
- **Fascine**: This was a low-tech solution to the problem posed by ditches to tank movement. Consisting of a large bundle of wood with a metal pipe core, it is dumped into a small ditch to form a bridge. You may add a single fascine to your AVRE for +5pts. Whenever you give a Down order to this unit, you can drop its fascine – a 3" long by 4" wide area of terrain in front of the tank

becomes open ground. The model cannot fire its guns in the front arc until the fascine has been dropped.

- **Small Box Girder**: These impressive devices could unfold in 30 seconds and form a bridge 30 feet across. You may add a small box girder to your AVRE for +10pts. Whenever you give a Down order to this unit, you can drop its girder – a 6" long by 4" wide area of terrain in front of the tank becomes open ground. The model cannot fire its guns in the front arc until the girder has been dropped.



CANAL DEFENCE LIGHT

These strange tanks mounted an extremely bright searchlight intended to blind or dazzle enemy troops. They were made from M3 Grant tanks, with their normal turret replaced with the searchlight turret. A dummy gun barrel was also used to make the tank look more like a regular one.

These tanks were top-secret, as surprise was considered essential to their mission. Their job was to blind the German defenders at the beach, hopefully causing them to either miss their targets or not fire at all. The light was very tightly focused, so it could be directed at targets up to 1,000 yards.

The name itself was meant to be a ruse, hiding the vehicle's true purpose. Sadly, most commanders had not trained with them, so they were unfamiliar with their capabilities or effectiveness. As a result, they were not often included in mission planning, or in missions at all.

They weren't a total loss though, as they were eventually used to protect key bridges from attacks by night-time waterborne infiltrators and floating mines. Ironically, the name given to them as a ruse ended up being prophetic.

Even though they were never used for their intended purposes, they are presented here for your 'what if?' scenario enjoyment. You can replace all of the turret-mounted weapons of a Matilda Mk II or of any M3 Grant/Lee with a searchlight at a cost of -25pts.

SEARCHLIGHT

This is treated like a weapon with the following stats:

Type	Range	Shots	Pen	Special Rules
Searchlight	48"	1	n/a	Dazzling*

* If the shot hits, the target unit gets D3 pin markers, instead of taking damage.

THE 12TH SS PANZER DIVISION: HITLERJUGEND

The 'baby division' consisted primarily of 17- and 18-year-olds raised in the teachings of the Nazi regime. They were seen by Hitler as the future of the Reich, and on D-Day they would get their first real test in combat.

The *Hitlerjugend* or 'Hitler Youth' had been a German youth movement since Hitler was the leader of the fledgling Nazi Socialist Movement in 1921. What started out as little more than a disparate collection of idealized young men grew to more than a million members by the time Germany attacked Poland in 1939.

While their activities centred upon paramilitary training, the idea actually to raise a division of them for the army didn't come up until 1943. It received an enthusiastic response from Hitler and many other Nazi commanders, and soon over 16,000 recruits were on their way to basic training.

Having been indoctrinated from a young age, these new warriors lacked neither enthusiasm nor dedication. What they did lack was combat experience, so veteran soldiers from the Eastern Front were brought in to form the officer and NCO corps of the division. Even so, roughly two-thirds of the unit was 18 or under, while only a small percentage were over 25. The youth of Germany were going to war.

The division's commander, SS-Oberfuhrer Fritz Witt, was a veteran Panzer commander. He realized that this unit was unlike any that had been raised before it, and as such it required a unique approach to get it ready for combat. He sidestepped numerous regulations with aggressive training strategies using live-fire exercises to give these kids a taste of battle.

The division was finally deemed fit for active duty in March of 1944, and was sent to Caen for further training. The next few months were spent on manoeuvres throughout the area, with the lads bounding through the countryside and morale generally high. They desperately wanted to prove themselves useful to their Führer, and trained hard to become so.

On 1 June, they were declared ready for combat operations. The air was thick with excitement and anticipation, as the boys tried to imagine when and where their first battle would be. As history would have it, they wouldn't have long to wait.

PLAYING THE 12TH SS

As a Panzer division, you should use the Armoured Platoon combat selector, with the following restrictions:

Your Command Vehicle may be purchased at either regular or veteran, but all of your other units may only be purchased as Inexperienced. If a unit does not have an option for Inexperienced, it may not be added to your army at all.

INFANTRY

Each of your inexperienced units has the special ability '*Angriff!*'

- *Angriff!* These boys are fanatic Nazis, with no real world experience to temper their youthful zeal. This is represented by the following rules: All infantry units are Fanatics. However, when a unit of five or more infantry fails an Order test, it does not go Down. Instead it Runs towards the closest visible enemy unit, charging it if within reach. Note that no points cost is allocated to this ability, as its benefits and detriments tend to cancel each other out.

ARMOURED VEHICLES

While not a hard-and-fast restriction, players wishing for more historical accuracy will want to limit their choices of tanks and other vehicles for their Hitlerjugend armies:

- **Tanks:** Panther or Panzer IVs

- **Tank Destroyers:** Jagdpanzer IVs
- **Self-propelled artillery:** Hummels and Wespes

THE FATE OF THE 12TH SS

These boys fought hard in the weeks and months following D-Day. They were aggressive attackers, sometimes overly so. Their inexperience began to show. They were known to charge into battle piecemeal rather than taking the time to coordinate attacks, and they were prone to making obvious errors in judgment, such as attacking the enemy head-on rather than exploiting weak spots.



Jagdpanzer IV L48 tank destroyer

They also had trouble with any sort of retreat. Many would cry openly at the idea that the ground they had fought so hard to take was to be given back to their enemy, while many others took longer than they should have to comply with such orders. The result often became a tactical nightmare for their older commanders to deal with.

Despite these setbacks, they were not without their successes. They managed to take the Canadians by surprise at Franqueville, forcing them back and gaining critical ground in the process. They were also instrumental in the defence of Hill 112, where they held on with tenacity until the Allies' sheer numbers overpowered them.

They spent much of the Battle of Normandy attached to the 21st Panzer Division, fighting alongside or sometimes in front of their older and more experienced comrades in arms. The battle would prove to be devastating to the ranks of the 12th: over 40 per cent of the troops and more than 90 per cent of its armour were lost in combat.

FOREIGN SS UNITS

Not every soldier the Allies would encounter on D-Day was German. The SS had long been employing non-German troops from around the world, some volunteer and some conscripted.

The Waffen-SS was the military arm of the SS, and by extension the military arm of the Nazi regime. While the Wehrmacht served Germany, the SS answered only to Hitler. Waffen-SS units were often placed under army control, and fought alongside the army throughout the war. The surprising fact is that many of them were not Germans.

'Racial purity' was one of the founding principles of the Nazi regime, as well as the Third Reich, but Germany's bloody invasion of Russia caused a massive shortage of replacement troops. This, in turn, forced the

SS to re-evaluate its stance on just who was allowed to fight with them. They had a special classification for men who were just German enough to qualify for service, but were restricted in how far up the command chain they could be promoted.

The Germans used the fear of Communism to great effect, recruiting from several Eastern European peoples with no love for the Russian government, such as the Cossacks and anti-Bolshevik Ukrainians. These minorities saw allegiance with Germany as a means to liberate their homeland. Others had no choice, having had the extreme misfortune of being able-bodied men in a German-occupied country.

Hitler had allowed the creation of non-German Waffen-SS divisions as early as 1940, and by the time the war ended, nearly 60 per cent of the Waffen-SS troops were foreign volunteers or conscripts. On D-Day, the Allies would face Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Poles, and many others. Most were motivated by fear and/or loathing of the Soviets, and saw the Germans as the lesser evil.

These men were initially used in the Eastern Front against the threat they had volunteered to fight. As their reliability began to waver, they were increasingly sent to France, to be traded for German troops with better training and capability.

As the high commander of the Atlantic Wall defences, Rommel began to see more and more of these troops moved under his command. He recognized that they were not as motivated as German troops, and therefore not nearly as reliable. One German officer was quoted as saying 'we are asking a lot if we expect Russians to fight in France for Germany against Americans'. However, Rommel had a much greater problem in manning such a massive static defence, so he had little choice but to carefully commit these foreign troops.

The quality of these units fell into two predictable camps: volunteer units generally acquitted themselves well in combat, while conscripted soldiers tended to surrender, be routed, or hide. While there were men of many nations, including Allied nations, among the Wermacht and the SS, we'll concentrate on those units known to have been active during the battle of Normandy.

INDISCHE LEGION

One notable example of these foreign units was the Indische Legion, or 'India Legion.' Initially formed from Indian POWs as part of the German Army in 1941, it would eventually be moved over to the Waffen-SS in 1944. Many of its members volunteered to fight the British in India, but would never fulfil this wish.

The unit was the brainchild of Subhas Chandra Bose, an Indian Nationalist with grand designs for his beloved homeland. He foresaw an India free of British rule, and would go to nearly any lengths to see his vision come to reality.

He started with the Soviets in 1940. Russia and Britain had a long history of rivalry in northern India, and Bose saw an opportunity to use this enmity to his own ends. He went to Moscow, hoping to gain the Soviets' assistance in starting an uprising in India. Whether the Russians were interested or not in this plan, they could actually do little to help him. Russia had its own problems, having just finished the Winter War with Finland, as well as wrapping up hostilities with the Japanese in the Far East. Bose found no support in Moscow, so he set his sights on Berlin.

By 1941, Bose had met with Hitler and other members of the Nazi high command, and received the support he needed. The Germans promised their help in raising a division of Indian troops and sending them to India as the initial Pathfinders for a larger attack by the Germans through the Caucasus. Such an attack, Bose theorized, would be enough to awaken the Indian population and oust the occupying British.

The first members were Indian POWs, captured by Rommel in Libya during the battles of Tobruk. Soon

their numbers were swelled by Indian expatriates living in Germany. The unit underwent training and induction throughout 1942, and in August of that year the Legion Freies Indien was officially born.

PLAYING THE INDISCHE LEGION

The Indische Legion was formed using the standard template of a German army infantry regiment. They were mostly infantry, though later in the war they were referred to as a Panzergrenadier regiment, so they had some motorized capabilities. They were not a Panzer unit and as such had no tanks.

In rules terms, we recommend using the Osttruppen entry on page 28 of the *Armies of Germany* to represent units of Indische Legion soldiers.

The Indian troops are a good option for players looking to add a unique twist to their German armies. The soldiers wore the standard *feldgrau* ('field grey') during the winter and khaki during the summer. While many wore the standard German army cap, the Sikhs of the unit were authorized to wear a turban, in a colour that was appropriate to their uniform.

CARENTAN

Carentan was a small town of about 4,000 people. It also happened to be right next to the N-13 highway as well as the Cherbourg-Paris railroad, and sat in between Utah and Omaha beaches. Soon after the invasion of Normandy, this sleepy French port town would become a critical objective.

The day after D-Day, Omaha and Utah beaches had still not been linked together. The Americans had planned on merging the two beachheads shortly after landing, but the staunch defence of Omaha stalled this plan. Worse, there was intelligence indicating an impending counter-attack by three German divisions. If the Germans were able to drive a wedge between the American beaches, they might be able to turn the tide of the invasion against the Allies. Sealing the gap was absolutely essential.

With all the convergent roads and railways, Carentan was the perfect place to link up the two beaches. Its capture would also put the Allies well on their way to taking the strategic port town of Cherbourg and securing the Cotentin Peninsula. Once the peninsula was secured, the Allies could begin their drive towards Germany.

The US 101st Airborne was the natural choice for the job. It had dropped into France in the first few hours of D-Day, and was operating in the southern flank of the Utah sector. After it successfully took St Come-du-Mont, the troops set their sights on Carentan.

The geography was excellent for static defence. Rommel had flooded the nearby plains, making infiltration on foot difficult and nearly impossible by vehicle. The Americans would have only a few dry approaches to the town, and Rommel ensured that these choke points were well covered by artillery and machine gun pits. To top it off, he sent some of his best troops – the crack Fallschirmjäger-Regiment 6 (the 6th Parachute Regiment) – and ordered them to hold the town to the last man.

The plan for the American paratroopers was to cross the Douve River using a pincer action. The 327th Glider Infantry Regiment would take the east crossing, while the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment would cross a series of four bridges from the south-east. The glider infantry would take the town from the north, while the paratroopers would seize Hill 30 overlooking the area to prevent the Germans from escaping.

THE BATTLE

The attack commenced just after midnight on 10 June. It was almost immediately stymied when the US paratroopers encountered a bridge blown up by the Germans, and the engineers assigned to repair it found

themselves pinned down by artillery fire. A small detachment was able to cross in a boat, but was soon spotted and came under small arms and artillery fire. The boat returned and the attack was postponed.

The glider infantry began their attack shortly afterwards. Within a few hours the entire regiment made it across the lower Douve. They turned south and began to move towards Carentan, taking heavy casualties as they drew close to the town.

At midday, the paratroopers had returned to the bridge, only to find it still untouched by the engineers. Lt Colonel Robert Cole, the commander of the 502nd's 3rd battalion, held his resolve. Under his direction, his men used building materials left by the engineers to make a footbridge, and began crossing the river in force.

Soon they were at the fourth and final bridge before getting to the town. Cole's men were almost immediately pinned down by machine gun and artillery fire as they crawled across the causeway towards their objective. They were even strafed by a pair of Stukas in a rare breach of the Allies' air superiority. With little or no cover and a lot more ground to cover, the Americans lost nearly 70 per cent of their numbers. That stretch of highway became known as 'Purple Heart Lane'.

That night, the paratroopers were able to get closer to their enemy under the cover of darkness. Cole realized he had an opportunity to take the Germans by surprise and ordered a bayonet charge. He told his second in command to wait for artillery smoke to hit, and then take the nearby farmhouse.



A Waffen-SS force stalks through the streets of yet another shattered town

The smoke hit, and Cole charged into it, blowing his signal whistle. Running full-tilt, he looked back to see almost none of his men following him; he was nearly alone. Somehow, a communications error had resulted in the order not getting passed down to the rest of his battalion, so only the 20 or so soldiers in Cole's immediate vicinity came with him. His second in command realized the error and led 50 more to follow up into the attack.

It was a disaster in the making, but Cole rallied his battalion and got them on the move. The charge was a success, although a costly one. The Germans had been hiding in the hedgerows behind the farmhouse, using

the house itself as bait. Once the paratroopers got near it, the air exploded with small arms and mortar fire. The attacking paratroopers managed to fend off the Germans and take the farm. The Americans were just outside the town.

The glider infantry had a tough time of it as well, attacking as they were from the north. They too would be stopped short of Carentan by intense small arms and artillery fire. As night fell, the Americans were dug in deep on the outskirts of the town – bloodied, bruised, and unable to push in further.

The German Fallschirmjäger had fought hard to defend this strategic area. Casualties were mounting. They were nearly out of ammunition and other supplies. They needed fresh reinforcements. The German commander decided to secretly withdraw most of his men that night, leaving only a small rear guard in the town. His plan was to rearm his men and return at the tip of an aggressive counter-attack to retake the town.

The Americans renewed their attack early on 12 June. The rear guard defended the town valiantly, but they were overwhelmed by the attackers. As the sun rose, the US paratroopers coming in from the south-east and the glider infantry coming in from the north met in the middle of town. Carentan was secured.



SdKfz 234/1 armoured car

That afternoon, the US paratroopers advanced south-west to set up a perimeter around the town. They were attacked by fresh German troops and stopped cold, though the Germans likewise were unable to break through into the town. The sun set on hundreds of dug-in troops along both lines, each unable to shift the other.

The next morning, just as the Americans were about to attack the German lines, they were suddenly hit with intense fire from the counter-attacking Germans. Unbeknownst to the US commanders, the 17th SS Panzergrenadier Division had finally arrived, after being delayed by repeated Allied air attacks and their own lack of fuel. The ground shook from the impact of the German guns, and the beleaguered US paratroopers found themselves outnumbered and outgunned.

The US line began to collapse under the weight of the German attack, until only a single US company remained: Easy Company, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment. The men of Easy held the line until their brother companies could be rallied. It would prove to be a turning point in the battle for Carentan, as this delayed the Germans long enough for help to arrive.

Help came in the form of the US 2nd Armoured Division. They thundered into the area just after lunch on the 13th, blasting away at the German attackers. The counter-attack had been repelled, and Carentan was safely in Allied hands.

THE BATTLE OF VILLERS-BOCAGE

This battle is perhaps most well known due to the extraordinary actions of a famous German tank commander: Michael Wittmann. In the span of 15 minutes his unit would be responsible for destroying over 13 tanks, two anti-tank guns and over a dozen transport vehicles – with most of these kills going to Wittmann himself. But the battle had greater implications, both for the invading Allies and the German army.

As the Allies continued to bring more troops over the beach in the days following D-Day, it was clear to the defending Germans that the city of Caen would be an early target. It lay right between Juno and Sword beaches, had usable airfields, and unlike most of the area its fields weren't flooded.

Indeed, the British coming from Sword beach had Caen set firmly in their sights. At 9 miles inland, it was an ambitious target for day 1 of the invasion. While resistance on Sword beach was weak, the advance soon ground to a halt when the 21st Panzer Division attacked the British in force.

While the British would eventually repel the German counter-attack, their momentum was nonetheless stalled. The push towards Caen would resume on D+1. The British had planned on overrunning the city's defences swiftly before enemy reinforcements could arrive.

The Germans were one step ahead. They regarded Caen as critical to their ability to maintain an effective military presence in the Cotentin Peninsula. As such they quickly filled it with troops. The British ran straight into the Panzer Lehr Division – one of the German Army's most powerful armoured formations. The idea of quickly taking Caen was beginning to look more and more unlikely as the British advance ground to a halt outside the town.

However, there was a glimmer of hope for the Allies. The US First Army and British XXX Corps had been delivering quite a beating to the Germans to the west of Caen. A 71/2-mile hole in the German lines had been opened up. By exploiting this breach in the enemy lines, the Allies could bypass Caen's western defences. The Germans, now surrounded, might be inclined to retreat or even surrender. The potential upside made this too good a chance to pass up.

The British 7th Armoured Division was given the mission of punching through the gap and securing the town of Villers-Bocage. It is unclear whether there were communication problems or other errors, but for some reason much of the 7th spent 12 June still advancing towards their earlier objective of Tilly-sur-Seulles. These issues were quickly dealt with, however, and the division's 22nd Armoured Brigade was soon on its way towards the gap.

By the end of the day, the 22nd was hunkered down for the night near La Mulotiere. Their plan was to attack in the morning, and take the ridge overlooking Villers-Bocage, occupying point 213, the highest point of the ridge. The first elements to advance, the 4th County of London Yeomanry, would pass right through the town and head straight for the ridge. The 1/7th Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) would be next, occupying the town itself. Finally, the 5th Royal Tank Regiment would take up a similar point of high ground to the southwest.



Wittman's Tiger

The Germans had plans of their own. If the town didn't receive reinforcements, it would eventually fall. The reserves were mobilized and brought into the area on 12 June. These reserves consisted largely of the 101st SS Heavy Panzer Battalion, which counted Michael Wittmann amongst its company commanders.

Wittmann was already a household name in Germany, having knocked out over a hundred enemy tanks. The 101st had arrived in France only a few months before. On their way to Villers-Bocage they lost more than half of their tanks to Allied air attacks and mechanical failures. By the time Wittmann was in place with his company, he had only 6 tanks under his command – half of the number he normally took into battle.

THE BATTLE

On the morning of 13 June, the British advanced into Villers-Bocage. Aside from chasing away a few German reconnaissance elements, they encountered no resistance. They entered the town to the cheers of the French locals. They set up a perimeter around the town and waited for the inevitable German counter-attack.

The men advancing towards point 213 did so without any advanced reconnaissance. This is something pointed out as being odd in hindsight. Wittmann had placed the remnants of his company at the base of the ridge under point 213, and as such stood right in the way of the approaching British. He had characteristically hidden his tanks among the foliage, covering them with tree branches to further conceal them. The British were advancing into a trap.

Wittmann had expected a British move through his area, but he had not expected it so soon. Elements of the 4th County of London Yeomanry were barrelling down the road towards his position, and he knew it was only a matter of time before he was spotted. He had to decide at once what to do.

His next actions have been described as either selflessly heroic or brash bordering on irresponsible. He told the other tanks to hold their position, and he charged the British in his formidable Tiger tank. The British were understandably taken by surprise at the sight of a lone Tiger appearing as if from nowhere. Wittmann charged the line of tanks, knocking out the last one in the line – a Cromwell. It was quickly reduced to a smoking wreck, and since it was in the back of the British line, its carcass prevented the rest of the tanks from withdrawing, as well as hampering any reinforcement efforts up that road.

Wittmann destroyed 5 tanks during his insane charge, but he wasn't finished. He went straight into

Villers-Bocage, while the British tried desperately to bring their anti-tank weapons to bear. Their efforts would prove futile, as Wittmann's tank would simply overrun their position and force the outgunned infantry to seek cover.

Once in the town, he continued to pummel the hapless British, destroy a dozen more tanks and several anti-tank guns and other vehicles. Much of the British arsenal seemed useless against the thick-armoured behemoth, simply glancing off its armour without causing any real damage. Only a lucky shot to his tank's treads finally put an end to his wild assault. Wittmann and his crew escaped their vehicle and made it back to their HQ on foot, evading the British patrols in the area.

While much has been said of Wittmann's intrepid attack, many feel that the British handed him a gift by not using standard procedures for supporting tank advances with accompanying infantry elements. Also, the order not to send reconnaissance elements towards the ridge has often been called into question. If the British had spotted those elements of the 101st SS Panzer, and had they brought a more conventional combined arms approach when reacting to them, the outcome could have been very different.

Likewise, Wittmann's charge has its fair share of detractors. Had he been taken out shortly after his initial successes, it would no doubt cast his effort in a different light. Also, some have put forth the theory that had he coordinated his assault with other elements, the damage he inflicted would have been magnified, and perhaps the battle would have ended right then and there.

Regardless of what has been debated about this action, his daring and skill that day stand out as an impressive example of just how much of a difference a single element can make in warfare. It also stands out as one of the most remarkable tank actions of the entire war.

With the appearance of the 101st Panzer, the battle was quickly rising to a boil. It was clear to the Germans that point 213 had to be secured if they were to successfully retake the town, so the 1st company of the 101st Panzer Battalion was charged with the mission.

The British were back in town doing what they could to shore up their defences. They placed a ring of anti-tank guns around the outskirts, while infantry from the Queen's Royal Regiment began securing various objectives within the town, as well as providing perimeter security for the town itself.

While they had taken the town with relative ease, the German counter-attack was already under way. Brutal house-to-house fighting disrupted the British, who suddenly found several pockets of infiltrating Germans attacking them sporadically throughout town. Soon, the British units were ordered to fall back and reorganize, and this gave the attacking Germans the chance to solidify their foothold on the town.

Meanwhile, things were looking grim for the men on point 213. The 101st had surrounded them, and taken several prisoners. Viscount Cranley, commander of the Yeomanry on the ridge, radioed HQ with the news: their position was being overrun, and they could not withdraw. He set his men up in an all round defence of the ridge, and dug in tight.

A single Cromwell attempted to break out from the ridge and link up with the British in the town, but it was quickly knocked out. The Germans began shelling the nearby trees with airbursts, and soon a deadly rain of wooden shrapnel was tearing its way through the embattled troops. Surrounded and taking casualties, the men on the ridge surrendered, and tried to burn their tanks rather than have them fall into enemy hands. They would not succeed, however, as the Germans were quick to snatch them up before they could be scuttled. Point 213 was now firmly in German hands.

Back in Villers-Bocage, the British had regrouped and were hastily setting up their defences. Their plan was to place anti-tank guns all along the front line, and put an ambush site right in the middle of town. As the

Germans rolled in, the anti-tank guns would take out as many as possible, while the ones that got through would be funnelled straight towards the ambush.

Just after lunch, the Germans mounted their attack. Their plan was to move in under a two-pronged assault, one along the main road and the other on a road parallel to the south. The commander of the Panzer Lehr Division wanted the town square secured so his counter-attack could spread out from there.

The Panzers were almost immediately engaged by antitank guns placed near the edge of town. At first it looked like they would be successful in holding off the armoured advance, but after a brief exchange the guns were silenced and the German Panzers moved on.

The Germans pushed into the town and soon found themselves right in the middle of the British ambush. The line of Tigers came under intense fire from tanks (particularly the Firefly Shermans), anti-tank guns and PIAT-armed infantry. The Germans realised they were being ambushed, and attempted to outflank their enemy. The British had planned for this, as they blasted four more Tigers and disabled a fifth.

In one notable exchange, Sergeant Bramall in command of his Sherman Firefly spotted a Tiger through the windows of a nearby crumbling building. He concluded that the safest way to take it out was to shoot through the building itself. He sent two rounds right through the brick, hitting the Tiger and inflicting some external damage. Bramall didn't give up though, as he quickly moved his tank to fire at the Tiger's vulnerable rear armour, taking it out.

Despite the success of the ambush, the battle was turning against the British. The Germans had been trying to commit the 2nd Panzer Division to the fight for days, and on the afternoon of 13 June they finally arrived. The Queen's Royal Regiment was putting up a brave fight to maintain its lines, but the momentum of the German attack proved too much. Holes began to appear, and German soldiers poured through and infiltrated the town. Elements of the British 7th Armoured Division were outside the town, but under heavy pressure from both sides and thus were unable to enter the town and reinforce the defenders there.

The British commanders faced the tough choice of what to do. With the 7th delayed outside the town, and darkness falling, they doubted their battalion could hold the town for long. They decided to withdraw.

Under artillery cover, the infantry were the first to pull back, followed by the tanks. The Germans hit the retreating troops with artillery and attacked with infantry. The British made them pay for every inch on their way back to Allied lines, inflicting heavy casualties and eventually repulsing the Germans after two hours of bitter fighting.

For a battle that only lasted a day, its outcome would have far-reaching effects. For many historians, the failure to hold Villers-Bocage marks the end of the post-D-Day 'land grab'. The imbalance had stabilized and the Germans were now in a position to make the Allies pay dearly for every inch of ground.



Supported by a heavily armoured Churchill tank, British Tommies advance through crop fields

THE BATTLE FOR HILL 112

With such an inconspicuous name, the 'battle of Hill 112' would nonetheless prove to be one of the bloodiest of the Normandy campaign.

Caen had so far eluded the Allies' grasp. Each attempt to take the town was thwarted by German armour. By mid-June, General Montgomery, the Allied commander of all ground forces in Normandy, ordered his army to take the high ground to the south-west of Caen between the Orne and Odon rivers. With the high ground covering the city, he hoped to force a German retreat of the town. This mission was deemed so important that he gave the job to all four divisions of Dempsey's VIII Corps, an army of 60,000 men and 600 tanks. The mission was part of a larger operation codenamed *Epsom*.

Rommel knew the importance of the hill, even going so far as to say it was the doorway to lower Normandy. To this end, he committed two elite units: the I and II SS Panzer Corps, equipped with Tiger tanks. The stage was set for an epic battle.

The British advanced on 26 June. First up was the 15th Scottish Division, who advanced with their characteristic ferocity, only to be stalled by the crack SS units in their way. The British fought their way through the German defences to the Odon Bridge. They managed to surprise the Germans there, who were forced to fall back before they could destroy the bridge. It was a tactical victory for the British. The 15th crossed the river, and by nightfall they had set up a perimeter around the village of Baron, right at the base of hill 112.

The next morning, it was time for the 11th Armoured Division to attack the hill itself. Advancing uphill in their Sherman and Churchill tanks, the troops were almost immediately ambushed by the 12th SS Panzer Division's infantry hiding in the foliage near the bottom of the hill. While they were able to defeat their ambushers and overcome German counter-attacks, the enemy successfully kept the 11th from taking the hill.

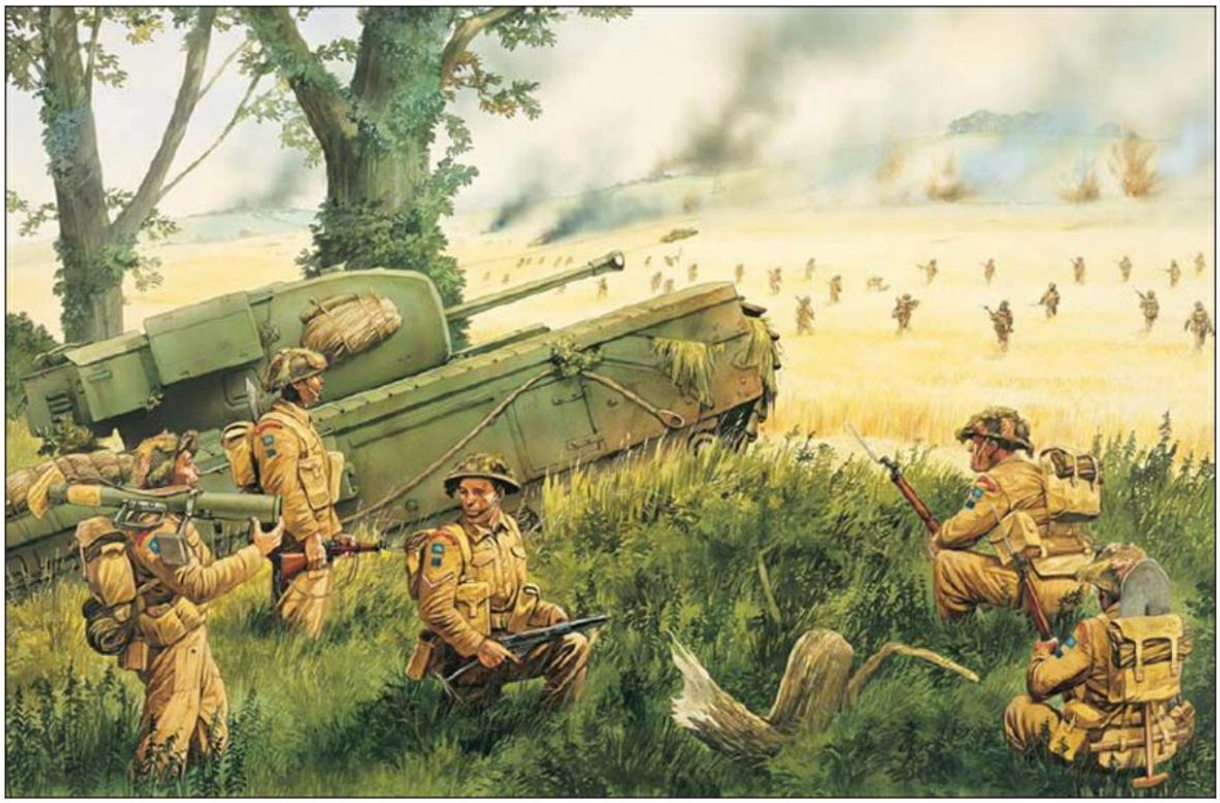
For the next week, the British and German forces slugged it out in bloody skirmishes around the hill. The British took the hill twice, only to be forced back by strong German counterattacks. Giving up hard-fought ground is never easy, and by the end of the month the British troops' morale had suffered.

In early July, another operation was devised to finally take the hill – Operation *Jupiter*. The British 43rd Wessex Division was ordered to attack the hill with its Sherman, Cromwell and Churchill tanks, as well as its supporting infantry. In total, 16,000 men went up the hill that day.

Defending it was the 10th SS Panzer Division, as well as the formidable 102nd SS Heavy Panzer Battalion. Once again, the Allied tanks proved no match for the Tigers, and the attack ground to a halt shortly after it commenced. Forced into a deadly static engagement, the British suffered high casualties, losing more than 40 per cent of their men in less than two weeks. Facing such terrible losses, the British called off the attack.

A few weeks later, the British 53rd (Welsh) Division, on a patrol near the hill, discovered it to be nearly empty. With Caen in Allied hands, the Germans had lost interest in holding it, so the 53rd took the hill that had cost the lives of so many of their comrades with barely a shot being fired.

Though the British assault had failed to take the hill, it had tied up nearly six Panzer divisions and inflicted significant losses. Had those Panzer divisions been available to attack elsewhere, the fate of subsequent operations would have been much more precarious. *Epsom* and *Jupiter* would prove to be British tactical defeats, but the Germans' allocation of resources to the area would prove to be their downfall in battles to the south.



The 5th Wiltshires assault Hill 112, by Peter Dennis © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 143: Caen 1944.

SCENARIO 4: GOLD BEACH

The British 50th (Northumbrian) Infantry Division attacked Gold Beach. Before them lay a network of criss-crossing minefields, barbed wire and German emplacements, bristling with firepower.

Gold was the third beach to be assaulted that morning, and it would also be one of the bloodiest. British forces came under intense enemy fire, and faced a myriad of obstacles and beach defences. Their goal was to establish a beachhead, and then push inland to the Route Nationale 13 highway to Bayeux, cutting off German access to the key city of Caen.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between an attacking British force and a defending German force.

British platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Great Britain* book, but may include no vehicles other than Sherman tanks, DD Sherman tanks, and Hobart's Funnies. The entire force must start the game mounted in landing craft, but all landing craft are free. The rules for these specialized units are found in previous sections of this book.

German platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Atlantic Wall resistance nest** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book. Also, they get a free minefield section for each landing craft used by the attackers.

SET-UP

From the attacker's point of view, the first 12" of the table from the defender's edge consists of deep water, the next 12" is shallow water, then 12" of beach (rough ground) and the last 12" is where the Germans deploy their units and their fortifications.

The German player places half of his forces (rounding up, they can start the game hidden), together with a good number of obstacles like barbed wire, low walls, sandbag emplacements, tank traps and ditches, and up to three bunkers, within 12" of his table edge – this is his deployment area. Then he places his mines and a good number of obstacles that are impassable to vehicles anywhere on the beach and/or water areas. Any units not deployed are held back in reserve.

The British player places no units at the start of the game. Instead he must nominate at least half his force as his first wave. Any units not included in the first wave are held back in reserve.

SPECIAL RULES

AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT

This scenario uses the Amphibious Assault rules (see page 31).

MINEFIELDS

The German force receives free minefield sections, as per the Minefield rules (see page 36).

PREPARATORY BOMBARDMENT

Both the Germans and the British had access to a staggering amount of firepower. The Germans had several guns mounted inland, as well as those on the beach, while the Allies had a massive fleet of naval artillery.

The attackers automatically get a preparatory bombardment.

In addition, each player gets one extra free special artillery observer team (this is on top of the one offered by the British army special rules!). This team consists of an artillery observer and a second man who accompanies him, both armed with pistols. The turn after their artillery barrage is resolved, these special artillery observers can call in another barrage, and continue to do so as long as they are alive.

OTHER INVASION BEACHES

It is of course possible to use this scenario as a basis to represent the attack on Juno Beach, after making opportune modifications as agreed amongst the players. You could, for example, replace the British force with an American one and recreate the assault on Omaha beach.

OBJECTIVE

The British player must try to move as many of his units as he can into the defender's set-up zone and destroy the defending forces to establish a beachhead. The German player must try and stop him. Note that in this scenario, British units are allowed to deliberately move off the table from the German player's table edge to reach their objective.

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During turn 1, the British player must bring his entire first wave on to the table. These units can enter from any point on the British table edge. Note that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of the first wave.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 9, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6, play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game, calculate which side has won by adding up victory points as follows. If one side scores at least 2 more victory points than the other then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise the result is deemed too close to call and the result is a draw!

The British player scores 1 victory point for every enemy unit destroyed. He also scores 1 victory point for each of his own units that ends the game in the enemy deployment area, and 2 victory points for each of his own unit that has moved off the enemy table edge before the end of the game.

The German player scores 1 victory point for every enemy unit destroyed.



British forward observer team

SCENARIO 5: FIRST MOVE INLAND

Taking as much land as possible was critical in the early phases of the invasion. The small towns and villages behind the beachheads were key objectives. These crossroads were vital to the Allies' efforts to link up the beachheads and bring their invasion force inland.

Caen, Villers-Bocage, Carentan. There were many villages like them; some small and unassuming, while others were large port towns. The Allies needed to capture these vital areas to launch their push inland. The Germans had to maintain their presence in the Cotentin and deny their enemy these vital resources.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between any Allied force and a German force.

Allied platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Great Britain* book, OR the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of the United States* book. No platoon may include vehicles other than Jeeps, Sherman tanks and DD Sherman tanks (British platoons can also include Hobart's Funnies). The rules for all of these specialized units are found in previous sections of this book.

German platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book. Also, they get two free minefield sections.

SET-UP

The German half of the table is liberally sprinkled with various buildings in a mutually agreeable manner.

The German player places half of his forces (rounding up, they can start the game hidden) anywhere in his half of the table – this is his deployment area. Then he places his mines anywhere on the opposite half of the table. Any units not deployed are held back in reserve.

The Allied units are not set up on the table at the start of the game. The attacker must nominate at least half of his force to form his first wave. Any units not included in the first wave are left in reserve.

SPECIAL RULES

MINEFIELDS

The German force receives two free minefield sections, as per the Minefield rules (see page 36).

PREPARATORY BOMBARDMENT

The attackers automatically get a preparatory bombardment.

OBJECTIVE

Both sides must attempt to destroy the other while preserving their own forces, and at the same time try to seize control of the village.

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During turn 1, the Allied player must bring his entire first wave on to the table. These units can enter the table from any point on the Allied player's table edge. Note that no order test is required to move units onto the table as part of a first wave.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 8, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6, play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game, calculate which side has won by adding up victory points as follows. If one side scores at least 2 more victory points than the other, then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise the result is deemed too close to call and the result is a draw!

The Allied player scores 1 victory point for every enemy unit destroyed. He also scores 1 victory point for

each of his own units that ends the game in the enemy deployment area.

The German player scores 1 victory point for every enemy unit destroyed. He also scores 1 victory point for each of his own units that ends the game in his deployment area.



US troops survey the aftermath of a savage firefight

SCENARIO 6: TAKE THE BRIDGE!

The Cotentin Peninsula is filled with waterways both big and small, with numerous bridges carrying traffic across them. Following on from D-Day these crossings were important to both sides, though the defending Germans would rather blow them up than see them used by their enemy.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between any Allied force and a German force.

Allied platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Great Britain* book, OR the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of the United States* book. No platoon may include vehicles other than Jeeps, Sherman tanks and DD Sherman tanks (British platoons can also include Hobart's Funnies). The rules for all of these specialized units are found in previous sections of this book.

German platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book. Also, they get two free minefield sections.

SET-UP

The bridge is placed in the centre of the battlefield, with the open ends facing each player. It should be 12" long by 8" wide (approximately). A river (counting as Deep Water) runs under it from one table edge to the other, and it should be about 10" wide.

The German player sets up two infantry squads within 6" of the bridge, or on it. Then he places his mines anywhere on the table. Then he nominates half his remaining units (rounded down) to form his first wave. Any units not in the first wave are left in reserve.

Any units not deployed are held back in reserve.

The Allied units are not set up on the table at the start of the game. The attacker must nominate half of his force (rounded down) to form his first wave. Any units not included in the first wave are left in reserve.

SPECIAL RULES

MINEFIELDS

The German force receives two free minefield sections, as per the Minefield rules (see page 36).

THE BRIDGE

In addition, keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. As long as the Germans control the bridge, roll a die at the end of every turn, starting on turn 2. On a result of 1, the Germans blow the bridge and the game is a draw. On a 2 or more, the game continues.

PREPARATORY BOMBARDMENT

The attackers automatically get a preparatory bombardment.

OBJECTIVE

The aim is to control the bridge at the end of the game. To do so there must be a model from one of your infantry or artillery units within 3" of the bridge and no enemy infantry or artillery models within 3" of it.

PEGASUS BRIDGE

Perhaps the most famous battle for a bridge in the Normandy campaign is the assault on Pegasus Bridge by British airborne and glider troops. The scenario above can be used to represent this battle, in which case the British attackers should be paratroopers and glider troops, with no vehicles or artillery, while the German defenders should all be Osttruppen, with no vehicles.

Alternatively, more detailed scenarios, together with the scenery and models, to recreate this battle and the bitter defence of the bridge by the paratroopers against German reinforcements can be found in the Pegasus Bridge or the Ham and Jam boxed sets, available from Warlord Games.

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During turn 1 the players must bring their entire first wave on to the table. These units can enter from any point along the player's table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units on to the table as part of the first wave.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 6, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6, play one further turn.

VICTORY!

If one side controls the objective at the end of the game it is the winner. If neither side can claim control of the objective the game is a draw.



British Army 17pdr anti-tank gun

BREAKOUT



The 2nd SS Panzer Division 'Das Reich' assaults Polish positions on Mont Ormel, by Howard Gerrard © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 149: Falaise 1944.

The Allied forces achieved what many deemed impossible: they broke through the Atlantic Wall and established a foothold in occupied France. Now it was time to take the war into the heart of the Third Reich.

Since the first boots hit the ground in the early hours of D-Day, the fighting had been non-stop. The Allies rushed to capture as much French soil as possible before the German defence could crystallize. This rapid advance continued for over a month, until the battle at Villers-Bocage and the stalemate at Caen gave the Germans enough breathing room to mount a concerted defence.

The Allies devised a plan to break out of Normandy. General Montgomery, along with generals Dempsey and Omar Bradley, devised a two-part plan: they would attempt to tie up as much German armour as possible in the north-east, which would allow the Americans in the south to punch through with less opposition.

The British and Canadians were already fighting in the northeast, having been tasked with the taking of Caen since day one. As such, they were the natural choice for the first part of the plan – Operation *Goodwood*. Their objective was to keep the Germans occupied with the defence of Caen, and draw as much armour north as possible. The Germans had already committed some of their best units in France to the defence of Caen. Now the Allies would concentrate their efforts on locking their enemy down.

The other part of the operation was given to General Omar Bradley and the US First Army. Their mission was to punch through the German lines in the area of St Lo, eventually pushing south and cutting off the entire Normandy Peninsula from German control. They would then be in position to advance into Brittany to the south-west.

SUPPLY DROPS

The lifeblood of any army is supply. Without bullets, beans, and bandages, even the most veteran unit will eventually grind to a halt and falter.

For the invading Allies, keeping its men supplied was a constant battle. Just as parachute infantry was being tested for the first time, so too would the idea of dropping supplies from the sky via parachute.

The concept is simple: lash a bunch of supplies to a pallet, tie the whole thing to a large parachute, and throw it out of a plane. In execution the only trouble seemed to be making sure that the drops landed on target – if the supplies were off by even a mile they could be secured and used by the enemy.

To this end, it was imperative that the supply aircraft have a clear view of the ground below, which meant that overcast or cloudy conditions would suspend airdrop operations. This weakness was exploited several times by both sides, most notably by the Germans at Bastogne.

It was a bold plan, filled with dramatic images. The brave British, drawing off the German attackers to make room for the US; the Americans boldly charging through the German lines; and all the while, the beleaguered German forces fighting to keep the land they had invaded four years before.

OPERATION GOODWOOD

This key part of the plan to break out of Normandy started on 18 July with a massive aerial bombardment. Early in the morning, over a thousand British bombers dropped nearly 5,000 tons of ordnance directly on to the 21st Panzer Division's position in and near the town of Cagny. Shortly thereafter the Americans bombed the 16th Luftwaffe Division. All of this covered the careful advance of the British 11th Armoured Division as they crept up to their starting line.

The 45-minute bombardment had a devastating effect on the Germans. Some heavy tanks were completely

overturned by the force of the blasts, while many more were simply destroyed. Several tanks were found intact but abandoned by their terrorized crew. The front line troops had been completely pinned down, and were in a state of shock as the British attack commenced.



SdKfz 251/10 with PaK 36

Not all of the German units were incapacitated, however. Many had been barely scratched or had avoided being bombed altogether. Other units quickly rallied and began digging out their buried tanks. The British would meet a determined defence that day, but one must wonder how much worse it would have been were it not for the air strike.

The fighting over the next two days was fierce, as the Germans took the bait and committed more and more resources against the British and Canadian assault. The Commonwealth forces pushed south out of Caen. Suddenly the Germans were more concerned with an Allied breakthrough than with the defence of Caen itself, which by that time was largely in Allied hands anyway.

By 20 July, the Germans had stopped the breakthrough, but the Allied ruse had succeeded. Many of Germany's most capable armoured resources were completely tied up and would miss the fight with the Americans to the south.



Armed with quad 50 cal heavy machine guns, the M16 MGMC is rightly nicknamed 'The Meatchopper'

OPERATION COBRA

General Omar Bradley, in charge of the US First Army, was practically chomping at the bit to unleash his men on the Germans to the south. He had been getting regular updates on the progress of *Goodwood*, and the time for his phase of the breakout to begin was growing closer and closer.

He was eager to get his army out of the bocage region, with its difficult hedgerows and flooded fields. The Allied strategy relied on speed and manoeuvre, qualities that were currently lacking given the tough terrain.

Cobra was originally set to start on 24 July, but heavy cloud cover precluding adequate air support pushed the attack to 25 July. It began with a morning bombing run by hundreds of Allied fighter-bombers and nearly 2,000 heavy bombers.

The advancing Americans soon came under intense artillery fire as the Germans regrouped. The bombs had managed to inflict a serious blow upon the German defenders, but they were determined to stop the Allies from getting into Brittany. The defenders threw all they had against the enemy and it worked. The Americans would only advance a little over a mile on the first day of the battle.

It was the next day that Bradley would reap the rewards of Operation *Goodwood*. The Germans had been convinced there was an impending breakout near Caen, and had left inadequate defences to the south-west. They had a flimsy line filled with gaps, and relatively few armoured reserves, which left them vulnerable to being outflanked or bypassed completely.

During the last few days of July, the Americans began to bring in more heavy-hitting units like the 2nd and 4th armoured divisions as well as the 1st Infantry Division, the famous 'Big Red One'. The scattered German defences began crumbling under the sheer weight of all that American steel.

That is not to say that the Germans didn't have any successes. In fact, the most brutal phase of *Cobra* came towards the end, on 28 July. The overall commander of the Western Front – Marshal von Kluge – brought in elements from the 2nd and 11th Panzer divisions as reinforcements. The 2nd SS Panzer Division, along with the 17th SS Panzergrenadier Division, managed to get behind the American lines in the dark of night. While these infiltrations caused serious local disruption, they were not enough to affect the strategic

situation in the area.

At last, on 30 July, the Americans entered Avranches, the gateway to Brittany. Finally free of the marshes and hedgerows of the bocage country, the Allied army would now be able to fight the war of manoeuvre at which it was best.

THE FALAISE POCKET

With the German defence of Normandy rapidly evaporating, the stage was now set for the climactic battle of the campaign. Backed into a corner, the Germans had one last chance to escape: Falaise.

In August of 1944, Marshal von Kluge was in truly dire straits. As supreme commander of the Western Front, it was his responsibility to defend the area against the Allied invasion. With the critical one-two punch of *Goodwood* and *Cobra* proving successful, he was now more concerned with escape. He knew that to stay and defend would mean total defeat for his divisions, so he had no choice but to retreat.

Hitler, in a move that ended up helping the Allies, would not allow such a withdrawal. He saw the American's deep thrust into the south of Normandy as a potential weakness that needed to be exploited, and ordered Kluge to mount a counterattack.

Kluge, along with most of his command staff, saw such an attack as futile. While it may have looked good on paper, it had no basis in reality as seen from the front lines. Hitler had grown increasingly detached from his officers on the front, and this decision showed it. He could not be convinced, and the attack was put into motion.

Although Hitler had ordered eight Panzer divisions to be used for the attack, Kluge could barely scrape together four. Any more would leave his defensive operations, already critically undermanned, without any hope of success.

Predictably, the attack was a failure. Kluge put his best units at the vanguard of the advance, but this only sent them further into Allied-held territory before they were effectively destroyed. Designed as a bold counter-attack to turn the tide against the Allies, the operation ended up as a prelude to final German defeat in Normandy.

Now even Hitler had to agree there was no option other than retreat. He blamed Kluge for the failed counter-attack, but nonetheless grudgingly ordered the retreat. Kluge was now in a far worse position to make a withdrawal. His units were spread thinly as a result of the failed counter-attack, and now he had to figure out a way to get them back to Germany.

The Allied commanders were presented with a rare opportunity: with the Germans in disarray and falling back towards Falaise, and with Allied units closing three of the four sides of the box around the city, there was a chance they could trap the entire German Army and either destroy it or force it to surrender.

The attack began on 12 August, with the US Third Army moving south and taking Alençon. Not content with their success, they pushed another 35 miles to the outskirts of Argentan – an amazing feat considering the sluggish battles of the previous month. They would have pushed further and closed the gap, but the high command stopped them in their tracks, concerned with friendly fire incidents should they run into the British forces coming from the opposite direction. It was a decision that remains contentious to this day.

From the north, the British, Canadian and Polish units pushed south towards Falaise, but were met with stiff resistance. Hitler had ordered another counter-attack, which von Kluge flatly refused. Hitler had him relieved of duty and replaced him with Field Marshal Walter Model. For his part, Model assessed the situation and arrived at the same conclusion von Kluge had: an immediate retreat was the only option.



A US M10 tank destroyer keeps watch as as the GIs advance

Five days after the first advances had started, the encirclement of Falaise was still incomplete. The Polish 1st Armoured Division made a bold sweep to the south-east to link up with the Americans, which nominally closed the gap. The combined Polish-American force didn't have the manpower to keep the Germans from punching through, however, and over the next few days scattered groups of German units managed to escape. Time was running out for the Allies.

The Poles had managed to take a strategic hill overlooking the Germans' escape route. Though they lacked the firepower to stop the Germans themselves, they were able to use their vantage point to direct artillery fire on to the retreating formations. The Germans sent wave after wave against the hill, only to be beaten back by the courageous Polish defenders, who fought until they had almost no ammunition left.

On 21 August, the Canadians took the final objectives that would seal the gap. St Lambert and the northern passage to Chambois were cut off, and nearly 100,000 German troops found themselves trapped. Though some 50,000 Germans had escaped through the gap, they had left most of their equipment behind.

The Battle of the Falaise Pocket had been the decisive engagement of the Normandy campaign. An entire German army had been defeated, and now the Allies were able to begin the liberation of Europe.

FRENCH MILICE SQUAD

In 1943, the French Resistance (the famous 'Maquis') was gaining momentum, and causing serious headaches for both the German occupiers and the French Vichy government. The resistance, with their local knowledge, had an edge over the Gestapo. The solution was to form the French Milice, or militia. The ranks of the Milice were drawn from native Frenchmen, and as such had just as much local knowledge as resistance foes. Many of them joined because they agreed with the Nazi vision for a new world, while others desperately needed a job or simply enough food to eat. Unlike their cloak-and-dagger counterparts in the resistance, Milice members wore a uniform and performed overt operations to root out and arrest offenders. This became one of their key weaknesses when the resistance began targeting them for elimination. The Milice often used cut-throat tactics to get what they wanted. There were no laws governing their conduct, and no governmental

oversight. They were not above using torture, and even assisted the Nazis in rounding up French Jews. It is unclear just how many worked for this shady organization, though many historians estimate it was around 30,000 men by the time of the Normandy invasions. Once it became clear that the Allies would soon liberate France, these men realized they would soon be without a home. Many escaped to Germany, where they were immediately pressed into service with the 33rd Waffen-SS Grenadier Division. Others would go into hiding. Those that remained were later arrested, imprisoned, or executed.

Cost: Inexperienced infantry 35pts
Composition: 1 NCO and 4 men
Weapons: Rifles
Options:

- Add up to 5 additional soldiers at +7pts each
- The NCO may have a sub-machine gun for +3pts
- One soldier may have a light machine gun for +20pts – another soldier becomes the loader

Special Rules:

- Green

SELECTORS

The Milice count as an infantry squad for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. Alternatively, they can be added to platoons from the following selector in the *Armies of Germany* book: Anti-Partisan Security Patrol.

SCENARIO 7: HEDGEROW HELL

The *bocage* of Normandy was filled with small fields bordered by hedgerows. Since much of the reconnaissance before D-Day was from the air, these hedgerows looked like the smaller ones more common in England or America. The attacking Allies would be in for a shocking surprise, as they proved to be much higher than originally thought.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between any Allied force and a German force.

Allied platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Great Britain* book, OR the **1944 – Operation Cobra** selector in the *Armies of the United States* book. British platoons can also include Hobart's Funnies – the rules for these specialized units are found in previous sections of this book.

German platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book.

SET-UP

This scenario requires the table to be divided into four quadrants, with each quadrant separated by a thick and tall hedgerow.

The Allied player chooses a quadrant and sets up his entire force within it, more than 12" away from the hedgerows delimiting the quadrants.

The German player does not set up any units at the beginning of the battle. He secretly allocates his units to each of the three remaining quadrants by writing down a list for each.

SPECIAL RULES

THE HEDGEROWS

These block LOS unless either the shooter or the target unit is in base contact with them, or on top of elevated terrain like a hillock. Since these hedgerows were on top of large earth mounds, they also provide hard cover.

Hedgerows count as obstacles. Furthermore, units passing through them under Advance orders cannot fire after they move, to account for the extra effort it takes to get through thick vegetation.





American and German forces clash in the dense bocage around St Lô by Howard Gerrard © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 149: Falaise 1944.

Tanks have an especially hard time bursting through the hedgerows. Whenever a tracked vehicle tries to move through a hedgerow, roll a die. On a 1 or 2, the vehicle gets stuck and doesn't break through at all (as if the terrain was impassable) – its move ends. Vehicles with a damage value of 10 or greater get +1 to this roll. Once a tank has passed through a hedgerow, it makes a hole the width of the tank that no longer counts as an obstacle.

Tanks equipped with **Culin Hedgerow Cutters** (as presented in the American and British books) automatically succeed in this roll, as long as they move at an Advance speed. If they cross a hedgerow at Run speed,

they must roll as above, but get a +1 to the roll.

LIMITED VISIBILITY

As mentioned above, the German player secretly records which of his units will be deployed in which quadrants. When an Allied unit gets into base contact with a hedgerow, the German player must reveal his list of units that he deployed in that quadrant, and then deploy them anywhere in that quadrant, including right against the hedgerow, but more than 6" from any enemy unit.

The German player may also choose to deploy any unit before this by using a Run or Advance order on it.

OBJECTIVE

The objective is to control more quadrants than the opponent at the end of the game. To control a quadrant, you must have models in that quadrant and there must be no enemy models inside it.

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During this turn, the German player may use order dice to deploy his units, or he may order unrevealed units Down (as if they were in reserve) in order to maintain secrecy.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 8, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6, play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game, the player that controls more quadrants than their opponent is the winner. If players control the same amount of quadrants, the game is a draw.

SCENARIO 8: CLOSING THE FALAISE GAP

With the Germans in full retreat, it was up to the Allies to close the gap as quickly as possible. Every German soldier that managed to escape would no doubt be re-equipped and redeployed, so every effort was made to seal them in before that could happen.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between any Allied force and a German force.

Allied platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Great Britain* book, OR the **1944 – Operation Cobra** selector in the *Armies of the United States* book.

German platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book.

SET-UP

The German player must deploy his entire force in the middle of the table. His units must be more than 12" from the south (long), west (short) and north (long) table edges, and more than 24" from the east (short) table edge.

The Allied units are not set up on the table at the start of the game. The attacker must nominate half of his force (rounded down) to form his first wave. Any units not included in the first wave are left in reserve.



Let her rip!

MIXED ALLIED FORCE

Players might want to use an Allied force of mixed US and British platoons. If this is done, the British first wave and reserves may come in from the west or north table edge, while the US first wave and reserves may come in from the west or south table edge.

SPECIAL RULES

IN RETREAT

Since the Germans are retreating, their units may leave the table by the east table edge. Allied reserves and first wave units may enter the game from any point along any table edge except the east one.

OBJECTIVE

The German player is trying to escape off the east table edge. The Allies are trying to stop him!



FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During turn 1, the Allied player must bring his entire first wave on to the table. These units can enter the table from any point on the Allied player's table edge. Note that no order test is required to move units on to the table as part of a first wave.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 6, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6, play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game, calculate which side has won by adding up victory points as follows. If one side scores at least 2 more victory points than the other, then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise the result is deemed too close to call and honours are shared – a draw!

The German player scores 1 victory point for each enemy unit he destroys. He also gets 3 victory points for each of his units that moved off the east table edge before the end of the game.

The Allied player scores 2 victory points for each enemy unit he destroys.



A US Sherman risks lurking panzerfausts in the claustrophobic hedgerows.

SCENARIO 9: HOLD THE HILL

This scenario was inspired by the gallant men of the Polish 1st Armoured Division. The Poles held a hill near the German line of escape at Falaise, and bravely defended it against superior opposition. It is but one example among many in each side's struggle to maintain the high ground near an important area.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between a British and a German force.

British platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Great Britain* book. We suggest choosing the Vengeance national characteristic to represent Polish troops in British kit.

German platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book.

SET-UP

The hill should dominate the centre of the table, but shouldn't be closer than 12" to any table edge. It should be heavily adorned with terrain features and some hurriedly prepared defences (like felled trees, sandbag emplacements, foxholes, etc.).

The British defender sets up at least half his force on the hill, no closer than 18" from any table edge. Any units not set up this way are held in reserve.

The German attacker does not set up any units at the start of the game. He must nominate at least half his force to form his first wave. Any units not included in the first wave are held back in reserve.

SPECIAL RULES

PREPARATORY BOMBARDMENT

The attacker rolls a die: on a 2+ a preparatory bombardment strikes the enemy positions. On a 1, the barrage fails to materialize, but you have your orders and the attack must go on as planned.

OBJECTIVE

The attacker is trying to destroy the forces on the hill. The defender is trying to hold the hill at all costs!

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. On the first turn, the attacker must bring his entire first wave on to the table. These units can enter the table from any point along either long table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order test is required to move units on to the table as part of a first wave.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 6, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6, play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game, calculate which side has won by adding up victory points as follows. If one side scores at least 2 more points than the other, then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise, the result is a draw!

Both players score 1 victory point for every enemy unit destroyed. They also score 1 victory point for each of their units on the hill and within 12" of the table's centre line at game end.



British Army 3-inch mortar carrier

LIBERATING EUROPE



US forces advance through Aachen, by Steve Noon © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 181: The Siegfried Line 1944–45.

The Allies had scored a tremendous victory over the Germans in Normandy. The gateway to the rest of occupied Europe now lay open to them, but the outcome of the war was far from certain.

Eisenhower, supreme commander of the Allied forces, was determined to destroy the German army retreating towards the Rhine. He wanted to take the fight straight to Berlin, and hopefully end the war in Europe so that the US could concentrate on the Pacific.

While the fight to liberate all of France was still raging, he wasn't particularly interested in Paris itself. In fact, he worried that entering Paris would lead to a drawn out urban conflict. A fierce battle over Paris would likely lead to the destruction of that historic city. Hitler had indeed ordered that Paris should only be conceded to the Allies once it had been reduced to rubble. Eisenhower didn't want that to happen.

The Parisians had other plans though. In August of 1944, the volatile situation in Paris was about to boil over. The resistance increased its harassment operations against the German garrison, while the workers of several key parts of the city's infrastructure went on strike and effectively ground the city to a halt.

Finally, on 24 August, General Leclerc disobeyed a direct order and took his Free French 2nd Armoured Division into Paris. The German defenders quickly crumbled, and Paris was finally back in French hands.

LEGENDS OF THE WESTERN FRONT

SIMONE SEGOUIN

When the Allies liberated the French town of Chartres, the people unfurled their flags and greeted them with parades and gifts. They also handed over several German POWs, and the Americans were surprised to see that one of the guards was a 17-year-old girl: Simone Segouin, known by her resistance name 'Nicole Minet'. Simone lived on a quiet farm in France when the war broke out. By 1943, the leader of the local resistance movement was looking for a woman to act as liaison and messenger. Women were much less suspect in the eye of the German occupiers, and could go places more easily than the men could. Once he met Simone and had assessed her politics, he recruited her. At first she did nothing more than pass messages between group leaders. But once she was taken on a mission to demolish a rail bridge, she showed the sort of cool head needed for such operations, and was soon playing the role of guerrilla warrior. During the fall of Chartres, not only did she kill an unknown number of Germans with her MP40 submachine gun, but she personally captured 25 POWs, handing them over to the Allied leadership once they had secured the city. After the war, she was promoted to lieutenant and given the Croix de Guerre.

Cost: 85pts (Veteran)
Composition: Simone (NCO) and 4 partisans
Weapons: Simone carries her submachine gun, the rest carry rifles. They all carry anti-tank grenades
Special Rules:

- Tank hunters
- Unique: You may not have more than one partisan squad with Simone
- Partisans: This squad must always be held in reserve, even on scenarios that don't use reserves. When this squad enters the table, it can enter from any point along any table edge.



SELECTORS

Simone and her squad can be used as an infantry squad for any Partisan army or Allied army (British or American late-war selectors, 1944 and onwards).

OPERATION MARKET GARDEN

The route to Germany and Berlin was blocked by the huge obstacle of the River Rhine. Getting men and materiel over the Rhine in sufficient numbers to facilitate the invasion of Germany was a considerable logistical challenge. The bridges over the river were in German hands, and rigged for destruction should the Allies get too close.

There was also the problem of the Siegfried Line. This system of defensive structures dated back to World War I. After the Invasion of Normandy Hitler ordered that it be rebuilt. The Allied high command had its doubts about the effectiveness of the line, but nevertheless it was deemed enough of a risk to consider a way to bypass it.

These two factors, among many others, gave British General Bernard Montgomery the idea to circumvent the line altogether. To do this, he formed a bold plan that would result in the largest airborne operation to date.



Sheltering behind their armoured companion, US paratroopers advance through open terrain

It was a risky play. If successful, he would have well-supplied troops across the Rhine with few enemy between them and Berlin. This opened up the possibility of ending the war in Europe by Christmas 1944. The difficulties were more logistical than tactical; as the line got further and further away from Cherbourg (the only deep-water port on the continent that the Allies controlled) it grew increasingly difficult to keep the troops supplied. It hadn't helped that the Allies had done an excellent job of destroying railways and other critical roads within France, deemed necessary to hinder German troops movements.

The plan was to drop the US 82nd and 101st airborne divisions, the British 1st Airborne Division, and the Polish 1st Independent Parachute Brigade into the Netherlands. Their mission was to capture strategic bridges intact so that more conventional ground forces could roll in. The men and tanks of British XXX Corps would run right up Highway 69, later to be known as 'hell's highway', to link up with the paratroopers, crossing at the bridges and defended from any German counter-attacks.

THE AIRBORNE DROPS

On 17 September, the skies over the Netherlands were filled with aircraft and parachutes. Nearly 35,000 men gently descended onto the rolling countryside. Since there was no moon, and airborne doctrine forbade night drops with no natural light, the operation occurred in the daytime.

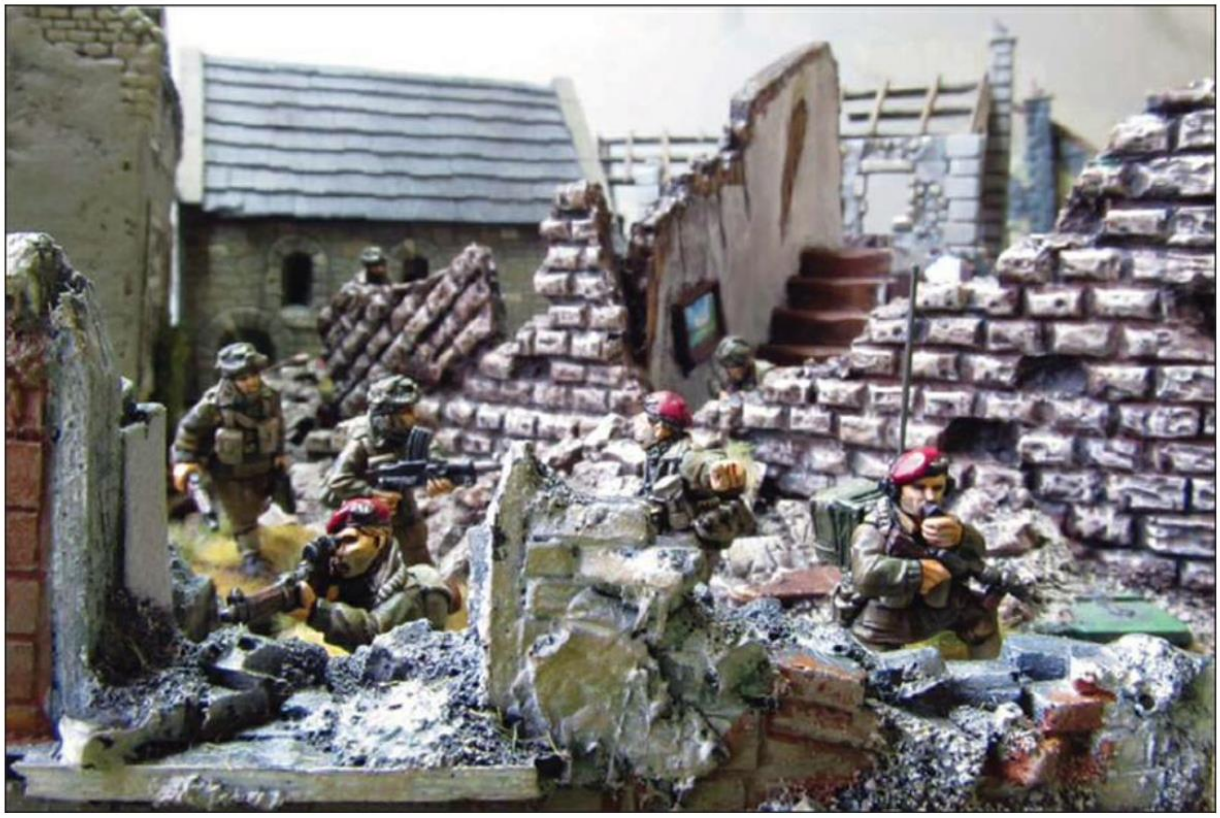
The 101st had great success on that first day. The men landed, for the most part, on top of their drop zones. Enemy flak had failed to do much damage. Soon the 101st captured four out of the five bridges that were their target, losing only the bridge at Son to scuttling charges.

The 82nd would have less success. While they did manage to capture the bridges over the Maas-Waal Canal and the Grave and Heumen bridges, due to a communication error they got a late start towards the critical Nijmegen highway bridge. If either the Nijmegen or Arnhem bridges fell to German hands, the XXX Corps would be stuck, and Market Garden would fail.

Mishaps also plagued the British drops. Due to a shortage of aircraft, only half of the 1st Airborne Division landed on the first day, and half of those had to stay and defend the drop zone. This meant that only a quarter of the division could set out to accomplish its objectives. By the time they set off for Arnhem, the Germans had been able to assemble a blocking force to stop them from reaching the bridge. This in turn allowed the 9th SS Panzer Division's reconnaissance battalion to cross the bridge and get all the way to Nijmegen unopposed. The Allied plan was beginning to falter.

A BRIDGE TOO FAR

With XXX Corps running behind schedule due to unexpectedly stiff German resistance along the road, the Allies were rapidly losing the initiative as the German defences continued to consolidate. Over the next few days, the Allies mounted attacks on the Arnhem and Nijmegen bridges; each time they were thwarted by the accuracy of the German artillery and the concentration of enemy armour.



The Red Devils take control of a ruined town

Paratroopers are not meant to hold ground for an extended period against tanks. Their hallmark is speed and surprise. During *Market Garden*, they found themselves bogged down in lengthy fire fights and attacked by enemy armour, against which they had little recourse. Their supplies were running out, and morale began to wane. The British paratroopers that had made it to one end of the Arnhem bridge, cut off from their supporting elements and out of food and water, had no choice but to surrender.

By 25 September, it was clear to the Allied high command that the operation had failed. The bridges needed for the XXX Corps' advance were either destroyed or firmly in German hands, and their men on the ground were dangerously low on food and ammunition with their numbers dwindling. The men had fought hard and suffered terrible losses, but the order was finally given to withdraw.

The cost of this failure would be high. When the dust settled, over 15,000 Allied troops had been killed, wounded or captured. The Allies' hopes of ending the war by Christmas were dashed. Eisenhower was going to have to find another way into Germany.

WELBIKES

The Welbikes were small, relatively lightweight motorcycles designed by the British to be used by airborne troops to rapidly relocate after a drop.

In rules terms, any British Paratrooper unit, as well as any Veteran infantry teams, officers, etc, used to represent Paras support weapons, has the following option:

- The entire squad may be mounted upon bicycles or Welbikes for +1pt per man

Selecting this option provides the following special rule:

- Bicycle/Welbike-mounted infantry: These follow the same rules as infantry, except when moving entirely on a road, in which case they double their Run move to 24" (this move cannot be used to assault). In addition, the first time they receive any order other than Run, or if they receive a pinning marker, they dismount and abandon their bicycles for the rest of the game – replace the models with models on foot.

LEGENDS OF THE WESTERN FRONT

MAJOR JOHN FROST

John Dutton Frost was a British officer of the 1st Airborne Division. During the early parts of the war, he distinguished himself fighting in many different theatres – North Africa, Sicily, the Italian mainland, and even a daring raid into occupied France as early as 1942! In September 1944 he was in command of the 2nd Parachute Battalion, which landed near Arnhem during operation *Market Garden*. His 750 men captured the northern end of the bridge and, under constant attack from the Germans (including the II SS Panzer Corps!), defended it desperately for four days. When the beleaguered paratroopers finally surrendered, there were only around a hundred men left.

Cost: 195pts (Veteran)
Team: 1 officer and up to 2 other men
Weapons: Submachine gun, pistol or rifle/carbine as depicted on the model
Options:

- Frost may be accompanied by up to 2 men at a cost of +13pts per man

Special Rules:

- Leader of men: Frost's Morale bonus is +4 and the range of his ability is 12".
- Hold until relieved: all British Veteran infantry and artillery units within range of Frost's Morale bonus also gain the Stubborn rule – if forced to check their morale when reduced to half strength, then they always test on their full morale value, ignoring any pin markers. If a unit already has this rule, it can re-roll failed Morale tests.

LUFTWAFFE FIELD DIVISION SQUAD

The term 'Luftwaffe' brings up imagery of German fighters, bombers, and other aircraft – and rightly so! But they also had a substantial infantry component known as the field divisions. The idea started as a way to bolster the numbers of the German Army by transferring personnel from other services, including the Luftwaffe. Hermann Göring, the highest-ranking officer in the Luftwaffe, had a different idea. The army had long been seen as a more conservative group of men devoted to their country, and generally less motivated by Nazi ideals. Göring envisioned his field Divisions as units of men that were more politically aligned to the Nazi vision of the future. The field divisions saw most of their action on the Eastern Front, though they were mainly assigned to defensive missions and as a result did not get as much combat experience as a standard infantry unit. By 1944, the field divisions had been disbanded, their men put into regular infantry or paratrooper units. Many of

these former field division troopers saw action with the German 1st Parachute Army fighting the Allies during *Market Garden*.

Cost: Inexperienced infantry 35pts
Composition: 1 NCO and 4 men
Weapons: Rifles
Options:

- Add up to 5 additional men with rifles at +7pts each
- The NCO and up to 2 men may have submachine guns for +3pts
- Up to 1 man can have a light machine gun for +20pts – another man becomes the loader
- Up to 2 men can have a Panzerfaust in addition to other weapons for +5pts each

SELECTORS

The field divisions count as an infantry squad for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. Alternatively, they can be added to platoons from the following selectors in the *Armies of Germany* book: Defence of the East, Defence of Italy, Normandy, Holding the West Wall.

ANTWERP

Napoleon had once described Antwerp as 'a gun pointed at the heart of England'. During World War II the city would prove just as important to the Allied armies fighting on the continent. By the time the port was finally in operation, it would provide the funnel for 50 per cent of the Allied supplies heading to the front.

In September 1944, the Allies had routed the Germans in France, and were pursuing their enemy eastward. The only large port the Allies controlled was Cherbourg, hundreds of miles from the front. Transport capabilities were stretched to the limit. The Allies set their sights on Antwerp to alleviate the supply problem.

On 3 September, Montgomery ordered General Dempsey, commander of the British Second Army, to take Antwerp. He sent the veterans of the 11th Armoured Division, who had made an unprecedented 60-mile advance in a single day, to take the city of Amiens.

The 11th took Antwerp after overcoming very scant resistance on 4 September. They had the help of the Belgian Resistance, who came out of hiding and actively pursued the German garrison. Remarkably, the port was taken intact, despite having been rigged for destruction. By the time it was clear that they were about to be flushed out, the Germans had waited too long to push the button. Antwerp was secured.

While the British had control of the port, it would be another 85 days before the first Allied ships were able to bring in supplies. The Germans had given up Antwerp itself, but they still controlled the area around the Scheldt Estuary – the waterway that connects Antwerp to the open sea. If the Allies had any hope of using the port they would need to clear the enemy from the Scheldt.



Dogged in defence, the British prepare to face a determined German counterattack

THE BATTLE OF THE SCHELDT

September was a bad time to initiate any sort of large-scale military operation for the Allies. Most of their resources were tied up in *Market Garden*. On 22 September, the Canadian Algonquin Regiment lost an entire platoon in a disastrous attempt to clear a strip of land known as Breskens Pocket west of Antwerp. The Germans knew what the consequences would be if the port were open to Allied shipping, and resistance was stiff. If the Allies were to defeat the Germans in the Scheldt, they would need the resources that were currently committed to *Market Garden*. They withdrew and regrouped over the next week.

The Germans used this respite to fortify their positions in the area, as well as flood the lowlands around the estuary. This tactic had worked well in delaying the invading troops in Normandy, and it would also hinder the advance of the Allies in the Scheldt.

Once it became clear that *Market Garden* had failed, the Allies prepared to make a concerted effort to clear the Scheldt and open up Antwerp to shipping. The beleaguered Commonwealth troops would now get the supplies and reinforcements they needed to do the job.

The main objective, and the one that was the most daunting, was to clear the island of Walcheren. It had been fortified as part of the Atlantic Wall, and now was bristling with German firepower and troops. Its gun emplacements covered both entrances to the Scheldt, ensuring that no Allied ships could make use of Antwerp's port.

Before the island could be taken, the inland areas around it had to be secured. This task began on 21 September. The Canadian 4th Armoured Division pushed north out of Antwerp toward the Dutch town of Breskens.

Initially, the Canadians made solid gains. They managed to cross several canals against heavy resistance,

but were forced back after fierce counter-attacks, suffering terrible casualties. The Breskens Pocket would remain in German hands for the time being.

On 2 October, the second phase of the operation commenced. The Canadian 2nd Division marched to the north of Antwerp, towards the village known as Woensdrecht. Conditions were hellish. The sky was filled with clouds and pouring rain, while the ground was flooded and littered with mines and barbed wire.

On Friday, 13 October, the Canadian 5th Infantry Brigade's 'Black Watch' was almost completely destroyed during an attack on Woensdrecht. The day became known as 'Black Friday'. All four of the Black Watch's company commanders were killed and one company of 90 men was reduced to only 9. Their comrades-in-arms followed up with a three-day assault and finally took Woensdrecht on 16 October. The Canadians were paying a heavy toll to open the port.

Meanwhile, another attempt to clear the Breskens Pocket was under way. The Canadians decided to cross the Leopold and Schipdonk canals after the point where they divided into two separate waterways. This lay to the east of earlier attempts to cross the canals, which had been thwarted by the flooded terrain. A narrow strip of dry ground spread out on the other side of the Leopold canal, just before a massive flooded plain. This was determined to be the best place to launch the assault.

On 6 October, the attack commenced. Following an artillery barrage, the Canadians scorched the ground on the other side of the canal with flamethrowers mounted on Bren carriers. This pinned the Germans down, allowing the men of the 7th Brigade to launch their boats.

The Canadians formed two beachheads on the other side of the canal, but their positions were in jeopardy from the start amidst withering enemy fire. The Germans had recovered from the initial shock of the attack, and now began mounting organized counter-attacks. Throughout the next three days, the Canadians managed to hold their positions, fend off the Germans, and gradually close the gap between their two beachheads. They now had the foothold they needed to clear out the rest of the pocket.

From the east, the Canadian 9th Brigade launched further amphibious assaults in an attempt to flank the enemy and take the pressure off of the men fighting to the south. Once again, the Germans were initially taken by surprise, but were able to regroup and mount a counter-attack. The Germans were eventually beaten back and a land-based supply route into the pocket was secured. The influx of men and supply would soon spell the end of the German occupation.

Finally, on 3 November, the Canadians finished their massive push towards the estuary, clearing the towns along the way. The Germans were driven out of the pocket, but victory had come at a high cost.

The third component to the battle had begun a week earlier on 24 October, when the Canadian 2nd Infantry Division advanced on the south Beveland Peninsula, which lay to the east of Walcheren Island. After an amphibious assault by the British 52nd (Lowland) Division, resistance crumbled and the area was secured on 31 October. The last part of the battle, and the most difficult, was all that remained: Walcheren Island.

THE WASP FLAMETHROWER CARRIER

The universal carrier was converted to carry many weapons, and amongst the most dangerous (not only for the enemy!) was a heavy flamethrower. The original Mk I and Mk. II designs were improved by the Canadian army, leading to the Mk IIC version, which had a single fuel tank at the back and an extra crewman that could operate either a Bren gun or a 2" mortar. Although the Wasp is not strictly speaking 'artillery' we have included it in this category as its role most closely approximates to that of a support weapon rather than, say, an armoured car or tank.

Cost: 80pts (Inexperienced), 100pts (Regular), 120pts (Veteran)

Weapons: 1 forward-facing flamethrower firing to the front arc

Damage Value: 7+ (armoured carrier)

Options:

- Upgrade to a Mk. IIC, adding a forward-facing pintle-mounted LMG for +10pts.

Special Rules:

- Open-topped
- Turn on the spot – the universal carrier can turn on the spot, enabling it to execute a full speed run rate 'reverse' finishing the move facing in direction of travel.
- Small vehicle flamethrower. The Wasp's flamethrower is somewhat less powerful than those mounted on larger vehicles, so the range of the weapon is limited to 12" and the number of shots is always reduced by one (i.e. 2D6-1).
- Flammable. Flamethrowing vehicles are more likely to be destroyed by damage, as explained on page 51 of the rulebook.

SELECTORS

The Wasp is Self-propelled Artillery for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. It is also Self-propelled Artillery for the following theatre selectors of the *Armies of Great Britain* book: Burma, Monte Cassino, Normandy, Into the Reich.



BATTLE OF WALCHEREN ISLAND

Throughout October, bombers of the Royal Air Force (RAF) had been systematically destroying the dykes that held the seawater back from the island's interior. With these dykes breached, the island quickly flooded, forcing the Germans to occupy the high ground around the island's rim.

A narrow causeway, 40 yards wide and 1500 yards long, connected the island to the Beveland Peninsula to the east. With much of the wetlands between the peninsula and the island muddy and unsuitable for boats, the Canadians had little choice but to use the causeway.

On 1 November, they managed to open a bridgehead on the island side of the causeway, but were continually rebuffed by fierce German fire. While they did manage to extend the bridgehead a short distance,

continuous German attacks kept the Canadian units from successfully breaking out and making their way to their objectives on the island.

The British brought the 4th Commando Brigade to the fight, sending them in on amphibious landings to the south of the causeway. These elite troops were able to flank the Germans defending the causeway and relieve the pressure on the beleaguered Canadians.

What followed was a battle worthy of a big Hollywood production. The brave commandos began to secure objectives and take prisoners almost immediately. The Germans, now fully alerted to the scope of the operation against them, responded by firing everything they had at the invaders. With nowhere to retreat to, the Germans put up a strong defence.



A Royal Horse Artillery 25pdr prepares to stonk German lines.

The Allies were backed up by a massive amount of fire support. Artillery from nearby Breskens, naval gunfire, mortars, and rocket-wielding Typhoon aircraft all converged on the enemy. Their combined efforts helped the commandos breach the German defences and silence the guns. One by one, each strongpoint on the island fell to the determined men of the 4th Commando Brigade.

By the time the commandos made it to Domburg on the far end of the island, most of the Germans had been backed into a corner to the north-west. The commandos had nearly reached the limit of their endurance, subsisting mainly on captured rations and occasional supply drops. Finally, on 8 November, the Germans had had enough. Over 40,000 troops surrendered, and the guns of the island fell silent.

One of the bloodiest battles of the war had cost the Allies nearly 20,000 dead, wounded or missing. More than half were Canadian.

The waterways leading to the port of Antwerp were finally open to the Allies. Once the heavily mined seaway was cleared two weeks later, the first ships began bringing in the lifeblood of supplies and materiel to the Allied armies advancing into Germany.

THE SIEGFRIED LINE

Much like the Atlantic Wall, the Siegfried Line was a series of bunkers, walls, and obstacles. The line protected Germany's western border. It was nearly 400 miles long, stretching from the Netherlands in the north to the Swiss border in the south. It consisted of over 18,000 obstacles and fortifications.

Hitler had the original World War I fortifications refurbished and improved between 1938 and 1940, mainly for propaganda reasons. He wanted to show the German people that he had their safety in mind by presenting Germany as an impenetrable fortress. It was little more than a half-completed project by 1940, however, as there were gaps and it was poorly manned in places. Several of its bunker complexes were relegated to use as storage sheds.

This all changed with the Invasion of Normandy. Hitler sent 20,000 conscript workers to finish the project. They wouldn't have much time. In August 1944 the Allies were already punching gaps in the line.

It was not always easy going for the Allies. It was on the Siegfried Line that they would fight some of their most difficult and costly battles.

THE BATTLE OF AACHEN

The German town of Aachen was part of the Siegfried Line defences. The US First Army was tasked with clearing the city, which was not in itself considered of much military value. Since it was thought only to contain a small garrison, the plan was to bypass Aachen itself and force the defenders to surrender once they were surrounded. Unfortunately for both sides, this would not prove to be the case.

The city had tremendous symbolic value to the Germans. It had been the seat of Charlemagne, founder of the First Reich. It was also the first large German city to be attacked by the Allies. The German soldiers defending Aachen were determined and highly motivated.

The battle was very nearly avoided. The city was defended by the 116th Panzer Division, commanded by General Gerhard von Schwerin. The civilians fled to the countryside, but hadn't been completely evacuated as the Allies approached. Rather than risk the lives of the people of Aachen or the destruction of the ancient city, von Schwerin decided to surrender. He drafted a letter. However, before it could be delivered he was ordered to mount a counter-attack to the south-west of the town. In the ensuing battle, the letter was lost, and all hope of a peaceful resolution lost with it.

For six days starting at the end of September, Allied artillery barraged the city. Though fire was aimed mainly at the troublesome pillboxes and other small fortifications, it had little effect on these targets. However, it did manage to keep the Germans from moving during the day. A bombing campaign also did little to rattle the physical defences of the town.

On 2 October the Allies moved in. Several smaller towns and suburbs surrounded Aachen. These would need to be cleared before the attack on the city itself. The job went to the 30th Infantry Division, attacking from the north, and the 1st Infantry Division, attacking from the south. They expected little opposition, a mistake for which they were about to pay dearly.

What followed was the most intense urban battle fought by the US Army during the war. Brutal

house-to-house combat was the norm, often involving flamethrowers and grenades. The attackers soon realized that unless they were quick to destroy the pillboxes as soon as they were silenced, counterattacking Germans would reoccupy them. The bad news for the Allied soldiers was that the area was peppered with pillboxes.

On 3 October, the Allies brought armour and artillery units closer to the action. Sherman tanks shot pillboxes at point blank range. The Germans had chosen the cities as natural choke points in the Siegfried Line, where narrow streets would hinder attacking armour. This strategy was proven correct at Aachen. Allied armour ground to a halt whilst infantry and bulldozers cleared the rubble of collapsed buildings from the roads.



A Centaur lends close fire support to the Commandos assaulting an enemy-held village

On 8 October, the 1st Infantry Division began its push north towards the city. Their goal was to seize the high ground to the south of Aachen and some of the outlying towns. The artillery barrage that preceded this advance proved much more effective than the one on 2 October. The men of the 1st were able to secure their objectives quickly.

They knew by now to expect German counter-attacks. The Germans threw a relentless wave of men and metal at the strategic area of Hill 231. They were to be fought back each time by the determined American defenders.

By 10 October, Allied forces had occupied commanding positions around the city. Before they moved in, they issued an ultimatum to the German defenders: surrender, or be bombed to rubble. The German commander refused, and the skies were soon filled with arcing artillery.

The two American divisions were close, but had still yet to link up. The 30th pushed hard to the south, but

was met with intense enemy fire. At one point, a lone Sherman tank managed to hold up several Panzer IVs, taking one out and forcing another to withdraw. When more Panzers attacked, the lone Sherman held its ground until it was joined by more armour from the 2nd Armoured Division, which forced the Panzers to flee.

The Germans were flinging masses of troops at the dug-in men of the 30th, and losing entire regiments in the process. Allied casualties were also mounting. The deadly nature of urban combat continued to justify its fearsome reputation.

Finally, on 16 October the Allies linked up. The 30th Infantry Division had successfully outflanked the Germans to reach the 1st. The attack on the city proper could commence in earnest. It had been a costly advance; over 400 Americans lay dead and another 2,000 wounded. The Germans had fared worse, losing 630 killed and 4,400 wounded. All this before the attack on Aachen itself had even begun!

Only a single regiment could be sent into the city itself. The remainder of the two divisions had to be used to secure the perimeter from external counter-attacks. After all the bitter fighting in the suburban areas around the city, it must have felt like drawing straws. In the end, the 26th Infantry Regiment drew the short stick.

On 13 October, armed with flamethrowers and grenades, the 26th moved in. The city was defended by about 5,000 troops, but most of these were inexperienced or even non-combatant soldiers. They did have the advantage of defending an urban area, however. They set up makeshift pillboxes in the basements of buildings, turning every street into an ambush zone.

The attackers had to clear every single window, door, and manhole cover as they advanced. It was slow, deadly work. They had supporting armour, but in the narrow streets of the city this was of limited use. The men took to blasting walls at point blank range with howitzers, allowing them to move from building to building without going on to the deadly streets.

The defenders used the sewer system to move about, allowing them to infiltrate the American lines and attack from areas previously cleared. They may have had little combat experience, but they were tenaciously holding on to their city.



German Heer forward observer team

On 18 October, all the brutal fighting converged on the Hotel Quellenhof, the last bastion of German resistance in the city. The Americans had no desire to send men in, so they moved some Shermans and artillery pieces to positions across the street and began pummelling the old building.

The Germans inside were nearly beaten until 300 troopers from the 1st SS Battalion were able to sneak in at night to reinforce them. The elite SS men mounted a successful counter-attack, beating back the Americans and even overrunning several enemy units. It looked as if the battle for the town was far from over.



German forces fall back to prepared positions outside a Belgian town.



US tanks attack at dawn!

The Americans had had enough. They brought in heavy artillery and began shelling German strongpoints

into submission. At the same time, part of the 28th Infantry Division was able to move into the area and assist the beleaguered men of the 26th, infusing the attack with fresh men and more firepower. On 21 October, the defenders at the Hotel Quellenhof finally surrendered, just as other elements of the American attackers reached the centre of Aachen. The city was secured.

THE BATTLE OF HÜRTGENWALD

Whilst the Allied advance towards Aachen was in the planning stages, the commanders knew they would need to stage a holding action to tie up nearby enemy units and prevent them from reinforcing Aachen. In the end this 'diversion' would eclipse Aachen both in scale and in casualties. One of the longest battles of the war was about to begin.

General Walter Model had a lot riding on the outcome of the battle. The Hürtgen Forest was the staging area for the upcoming Ardennes offensive. Allied success here would leave Hitler's last plan for victory in the west in shambles. The nearby mountains also controlled access to the strategic Schwammenauel Dam, which could be used to flood the Roer River and prevent any crossing. While the Allies may have seen this operation as a mere holding action, the Germans had much more interest in the outcome, just as they had at Aachen.

The Hürtgen Forest itself is massive and dense. The Germans filled it with mines, booby traps, bunkers, and other obstacles. The trees made it nearly impossible for Allied armour and artillery to have much effect. This battle would rest on the shoulders of the American infantry, much as it did at Aachen.

Also like Aachen, the Allied commanders believed that the Germans in the area were on the verge of surrender. There were two German divisions in the forest, with little artillery and no armour. They would be outnumbered by the Americans five to one. Despite this, their defensive position would prove to be a deadly advantage.

On 19 September, the US 60th Infantry Regiment became the first to test the formidable defences of the forest. The terrain made movement nearly impossible, and the men soon withdrew under enemy gunfire.

Soon after, the 9th Infantry Division moved in. Pushing towards the town of Schmidt, they were consistently cut down by German fire, as well as the honeycomb of traps and mines. Progress was painfully slow and very costly; within the first few weeks of the battle only 3,000 yards had been gained, while over 4,500 men had been killed or wounded. It would be a prophetic beginning to a bloody battle.

The attack on Schmidt would go on for the next month. The Allies continued to capture small towns and areas near the River Kall, but Schmidt itself would prove to be maddeningly elusive. Twice it was captured by the Allies, only to be recaptured by a German counter-attack.

By the middle of November, the Allies committed the entire 4th Division to the Hürtgen Forest. Their strategy was to attack from the northern borders of the forest in two columns. The Germans attacked the flanks of the columns incessantly, inflicting heavy casualties. Within a few days, this new advance ground to a halt amidst the determined defence. The Allies sent wave after wave of infantry and tanks into the dense terrain, often blasting roadways for the vehicles to use.

As the battle raged into its third month, it was clear that the defences were slowly being overcome. More and more towns were falling to the Allied advance. Finally, on 12 December the towns of Gey and Strass were taken, and the battle was effectively over.

While the forest had finally been taken, it is hard to see it as a victory for the Allies. The end of the battle was due as much to the beginning of the Ardennes offensive and the subsequent movement of troops as to the determination of the American attackers.

All told, nearly 60,000 US troops were dead, wounded or missing. The battle would end up being the

longest battle fought in Germany during the war, and the longest battle fought by the US Army in its history. It would no doubt have become a household name if it weren't for the surprise Hitler was about to spring on the world: his men were marching to the Ardennes.



The Hürtgenwald defences, by Steve Noon © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 181: The Siegfried Line 1944–45.

THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

Few battles of World War II evoke more images than the one that began in the Ardennes Forest in December of 1944. It was Hitler's final gambit for victory in the west – one that he managed to orchestrate right under the noses of the Allies, achieving complete surprise.

By November of 1944, the Allied troops in Europe were nearly exhausted. They had been fighting almost continuously since the invasion of Normandy earlier that year, and supplies had reached dangerously low levels. Even though this situation would gradually improve as the end of the year approached, thanks to the capture of Antwerp, it was still a major factor in Allied planning.

Some part of the line would need to be undermanned as a simple matter of logistics. The Allied high command agreed on the Ardennes region, since it was easy to defend and was not considered a valid strategic target for either Axis or Allied forces. It was also believed to be undermanned on the German side as well, by troops that were still recovering from the battle of the Hürtgenwald. It appeared to be the ideal place to weaken in order to bolster other parts of the front until such time as the supply situation was taken care of.

Germany's situation was much more dire. Unable to keep the western Allies from advancing on the homeland, and with all signs pointing to a winter offensive by the Russians, Hitler desperately needed to close one front so he could concentrate on the other. He felt that the western Allies were the inferior force, and set his sights on them. His goal was to hit the Western Front so hard that it would force peace talks with the

Americans and the British. With a ceasefire in the west, he could bring all of his guns to bear on the Russians in the east.



US M4 Sherman in winter camouflage

Several plans were put forth, but in the end he chose a plan similar to the one he used in 1940 to invade France. Punching through the weak point in the Ardennes, his armies would surge straight towards Antwerp and seize the port there. This would drive a wedge between the American and British forces, and hopefully force them to the bargaining table. The key to its success would be surprise, speed, and weather bad enough that it would ground Allied air forces. In mid-December, Hitler would achieve all three.

The Allied high command had got some word of an impending attack, but it was largely ignored. It was assumed that the Germans lacked the resources for a large offensive so soon after their defeat at the Scheldt. Even if they did, the massing divisions would quickly be spotted by Allied aerial reconnaissance.

On 16 December, the guns of the German artillery roared to life. For the next 90 minutes, shells thundered down along an 80-mile line through the Ardennes. The Allies had little idea of the scope of the attack; it was assumed to be a limited counter-attack resulting from the recent battle in the Wahlerscheid area.

In the north, the 1st SS Panzer Division attacked the American 2nd and 99th infantry divisions on the Elsenborn Ridge and the Losheim Gap in an attempt to break through to Liège. The Americans put up a strong fight, holding up the Germans for more than ten days. Though the Germans would eventually take Liège, the Americans would hold the Elsenborn Ridge, cutting off the nearby roads to the west.

The Germans would have much more success in the centre. The 5th Panzer Army marched towards St Vith, clashing with the US 28th and 106th infantry divisions and capturing two entire infantry regiments in the process. However, the US 7th Armoured Division, along with elements from other units, held St Vith for six days against continuous German attacks. Finally, the Allies withdrew towards the nearby Salm River. The resulting 'bulge' into the Allied lines created by the 5th Panzer Army would eventually give the battle its name.

Once the Allied high command realised the scale of the German attack, they started to rush more and more troops towards the Ardennes. As well as the Americans, who had borne the brunt of the Panzers' onslaught, the British also sent some of their best troops – Horrocks' XXX Corps and the paras of 6th Airborne, among

others – to successfully defend the line of the River Meuse along the northern edge of the 'bulge'.

PLAYING THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

German forces for scenarios set during the Battle of the Bulge should be taken from the aptly named 1944-1945 – Operation *Watch on the Rhine* selector. American forces should be taken from 1944 – Battle of the Bulge, or 1944 – Bastogne selectors. British forces should be taken from the 1945 – Into the Reich selector (except for Comet tanks). The following units are also available.

FLAMMPANZER 38(T) HETZER

The Flammpanzer 38(t) Hetzer replaced its main gun with a Keobe flamethrower. It was deployed on the Western Front, and first saw action in late 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes. Numbers manufactured: less than 50.

Cost: 120pts (Inexperienced), 150pts (Regular), 180pts (Veteran)
Weapons: 1 hull-mounted forward-facing flamethrower and one MMG with 360° arc of fire
Damage Value: 9+ (medium tank)
Special Rules:

- Weak Sides: The Hetzer's weak side armour means that all shots to the side of the vehicle count as to the rear (i.e. they have a +2 penetration modifier rather than +1).
- Flammpanzer: Internal, volatile fuel tanks make each tank a potential fireball. Flamethrowing vehicles are more likely to be destroyed by damage, as explained on page 51 of the rulebook

SELECTORS

The Flammpanzer 38(t) Hetzer is a Tank for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. It is also a Tank for the following theatre selectors of the *Armies of Germany* book: Operation *Watch on the Rhine;* Holding the West Wall; Operation *Spring Awakening;* Last Levy.

STURMPIONIERE – ASSAULT ENGINEERS SQUAD

Germany's assault engineers were skilled at building all manner of fortifications, communications lines, tank traps and minefields. In addition to building useful structures, they were adept at the destruction of similar enemy positions, blowing railway lines and making roads unsafe for the enemy to travel along. As the German quest for global superiority stalled and finally crashed down around them, the assault engineers were tasked with the vital job of slowing the Allied advance, be it by booby trap, minefield, blown bridges, or taking the fight directly to the enemy. Often overlooked in favour of the dashing Panzers or elite Waffen-SS troops, the *pioniers* were the unsung heroes of the German military machine.

Cost: Veteran infantry 65pts.
Composition: 1 NCO and 4 men
Weapons: Rifles
Options:

- Add up to 5 additional men with rifles at +13pts each.
- The NCO and up to 6 men can have submachine guns instead of rifles for +3pts each
- Up to 1 man can have a light machine gun for +20pts – another man becomes the loader
- Up to 1 man can have a flamethrower instead of a rifle for +20pts – another man becomes the assistant

- Up to 1 man can have a sturmpistole instead of a rifle for +5pts
- Up to 1 man can have a GrB-39 grenade launcher instead of a rifle for +30pts – another man becomes the loader
- Up to 4 men can have a Panzerfaust in addition to other weapons for +5pts each
- The squad can be given anti-tank grenades for +2pts per man

Special Rules:

- Tank hunters (if anti-tank grenades taken)
- Sturmpistole. This weapon is treated like a Panzerfaust, except that it only has a range of 6" and a Pen value of +3. It can however, be fired normally once a turn and not just once per game
- GrB-39 grenade launcher. Every time the model fires this weapon, you can choose either of the two profiles below:

Type	Range	Shots	Pen	Special Rules
Anti-personnel	6-24"	1	HE	Team, Indirect Fire, HE (D2)
Anti-tank	24"	1	+3	Team, Shaped Charge

SELECTORS

The Sturmpioniere count as an infantry squad for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. Alternatively, 0-1 Sturmpioniere squad can be added to platoons from all selectors in the *Armies of Germany* book: Defence of the East; Defence of Italy; Normandy; Operation *Watch on the Rhine;* Holding the West Wall; Operation *Spring Awakening;* Last Levy.



GOLIATH DEMOLITION TEAM (ANTI-TANK TEAM)

The Goliath was used by the German engineer units in a variety of roles. It was essentially a radio-controlled tracked bomb, carrying a big charge of high explosives direct to where it was needed – commonly a pillbox, minefield or disabled enemy tank. The controller steered the robot tank by using a wire connected to a simple

control box. The Goliath was fairly successful and used on many fronts, and though slow and vulnerable to small arms fire would be a frightening sight as it rumbled towards you with its deadly payload!

Cost: 60pts (Regular), 78pts (Veteran)

Team: 3 (NCO and 2 men)

Weapons: Each man has a rifle and anti-tank grenades

Options:

- The NCO may have a submachine gun instead of a rifle for +3pts

Special Rules:

- Tank hunters
- Remote-operated mine: The Goliath model itself is just a marker, and it is treated as a one-shot weapon with a range of 18". Goliaths can only target stationary targets, either a stationary vehicle (i.e. any vehicle that is not sporting an order dice showing a Run or Advance order) or a unit inside a building. Goliaths are fired as normal, except that instead of rolling to hit, roll one die: **1–4** - the Goliath breaks down, or is damaged or prematurely detonated by enemy fire. The Goliath model is removed and has no effect. Note that if a Recce vehicle reacts to the Goliath attack by moving, the mine automatically scores a result of 1-4. **5–6** - the Goliath reaches the target and is detonated. If the target is a vehicle, it suffers a hit with a Pen of +7 (no Pen modifiers apply). If the target is a unit inside a building, the unit is hit by the equivalent of a heavy howitzer – remember that if this explosion scores 12 or more hits, it brings down the entire building, killing everyone inside!

SELECTORS

The Goliath counts as an anti-tank team for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. Alternatively, 0-1 Goliath teams can be added to forces from the following theatre selectors of the *Armies of Germany* book: Operation *Blue*; Stalingrad, Death on the Volga; Rommel's Defeat; Operation *Citadel*; Anti-Partisan Security Patrol; Defence of the East; Defence of Italy; Atlantic Wall Resistance Nest; Normandy; Operation *Watch on the Rhine*; Holding the West Wall; Operation *Spring Awakening*; Last Levy.



Kampfgruppe Peiper advances, by Howard Gerrard © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 115: Battle of the Bulge 1944 (1).

BRANDENBURGERS – GERMAN SPECIAL FORCES SQUAD

Like the Allies, Germany too had units of special forces trained in unconventional warfare – specializing in infiltration, covert operations, commando raids, disrupting small-units missions deep behind enemy lines. The training facility for these men was in the Brandenburg area and this gave the unit its name. The Brandenburgers were recruited amongst men of many ethnic background and nationalities, as an important requisite for their missions was to be fluent in different languages. The unit grew in size from that of a battalion to a regiment and then a division, and its men were used in all roles on every front where Germany was engaged. Many times they took part in the highly specialized small-unit missions they were trained for, but often they ended up being deployed as elite combat troops when the need arose. This entry can also be used to represent the men of other German special forces active during World War II, like the SS equivalent of the Brandenburgers – the SS Jagdverband.

Cost: Veteran infantry 95pts
Composition: 1 NCO and 4 men
Weapons: Pistol and rifle
Options:

- Add up to 5 additional men with pistol and rifle for +19pts each
- Any man can replace his rifle with a submachine gun for +2pts, or an assault rifle for +4pts

- Up to two men may have a light machine gun for +20pts. For each LMG, another man becomes the loader
- The squad can be given anti-tank grenades for +2pts per man
- Up to 3 men can have a Panzerfaust in addition to other weapons for +5pts each

Special Rules:

- Elite of the elite! To represent their special training and motivation, Brandenburger units have the Fanatics special rule
- Behind enemy lines. When Outflanking as described on page 119 of the *Bolt Action* rulebook, Brandenburger units ignore the –1 modifier to the Order test for coming onto the table
- Sabotage! Enemy units in Reserve suffer an additional -1 modifier on the test to come on to the table. In addition, outflanking enemy units must take another test when they become available (still with an additional -1 modifier), and if they fail it, they can only be deployed up to 12" from their table edge along the chosen short table edge
- Paranoia. When the enemy rolls on the Fubar chart, they suffer a -2 modifier to the roll, such is the paranoia induced in the enemy by the Brandenburgers' irregular activities
- Tank hunters (if anti-tank grenades taken)

SELECTORS

The Brandenburgers count as an infantry squad for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. Alternatively, 0-1 Brandenburger squad can be added to platoons from all selectors in the *Armies of Germany* book except for the Atlantic Wall Resistance Nest selector.

BRANDENBURGERS' UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE TACTICS

With your opponent's approval, you can make use of the rules below, which represent some of the unconventional tactics in the Brandenburgers' arsenal. For each unit of Brandenburgers you include in your army, you can pick one of the following rules:

Enemy uniforms: instead of picking the unit from the Brandenburgers entry, pick it from any Allied Veteran unit in a book relevant to the scenario played (American Veteran squad in the Battle of the Bulge, for example), to represent the Brandenburgers wearing enemy uniforms. Pay the points as normal – the unit has the same rules as the enemy unit, but it does not get the enemy army-level special rules, retaining the German ones instead. The enemy cannot shoot or assault the Brandenburgers until they reveal themselves by opening fire, after which they can be targeted as normal. If an enemy unit comes to within 6" of the Brandenburgers, it can take a Morale check, and if it passes it, the Brandenburgers are revealed and can be targeted as normal from now on, just as if they had opened fire.

Disguised Tanks: a German vehicle in your force can be disguised as Allied. This means that when an enemy air strike is called in, the vehicle counts as an enemy vehicle rather than a German one (so it can only be attacked by the enemy aeroplane if the air strike goes wrong and the enemy rolls a one!). In addition, any enemy unit wishing to target the disguised vehicle from more than 12" away must first take a Morale check. If the test is failed, the enemy must choose a different target instead. Once a unit recognizes the disguised tank as German, by either passing the test or being within 12" of the disguised tank, the tank can be targeted as normal by all enemy ground forces (but

the air strike advantage remains in effect!).

Captured vehicles: instead of picking the unit from the Brandenburgers entry, pick any Allied vehicle from a book relevant to the scenario played (a jeep or an M10 tank destroyer in the Battle of the Bulge, for example), to represent the Brandenburgers using a captured enemy vehicle. Pay the points as normal, but note that the vehicle cannot be taken as Veteran. The vehicle has the same rules as the enemy vehicle, but it does not get the enemy army-level special rules, retaining the German ones instead. The enemy cannot shoot or assault the vehicle until it reveals itself by opening fire, after which it can be targeted as normal. If an enemy unit comes to within 1" of the vehicle, it can take a Morale check (with an additional -1 modifier), and if it passes it, the vehicle is revealed and can be targeted as normal from now on, just as if it had opened fire.

THE SIEGE OF BASTOGNE

The day after the attack began, the Allied high command knew that this was more than a localized counter-attack. Eisenhower, ever the optimist, saw this attack as a chance to destroy the German army while it was on the offensive and out in the open, as opposed to dug into defensive positions. His only problem was how to get troops into the beleaguered Ardennes as quickly as possible.



Panther in winter camouflage

His first move was to order the US 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions to the areas in and around Bastogne. The paratroopers were used to jumping out of aeroplanes, but on this drop they would be jumping out of trucks after making a hasty 107-mile journey. They were ill equipped for the cold weather and lacked sufficient ammunition, but they dug in tight nonetheless.

Their swift movement into Bastogne would prove to be decisive. Only two days later the Germans had the town surrounded, cutting the paratroopers off from the rest of the Allied army. One paratrooper, unfazed by this predicament, uttered the famous line, 'they've got us surrounded – the poor bastards!'

The conditions at Bastogne were brutal. Medical supplies were critically low, leading to many treatable

wounds proving fatal. Ammunition was running out. The men had the will to win, but were quickly running out of the tools needed for victory. Incessant cloud cover prevented Allied airdrops from supplying the battered defenders of the town.

Despite continued German efforts to take the town, the 'battered bastards of Bastogne' held firm. At one point, the Germans even requested the honourable surrender of the surrounded troops to avoid their annihilation. When the US commander in Bastogne, General Anthony McAuliffe, heard of the request he shouted 'Nuts!' in frustration. His staff told him he should still send an official response, and one of his staff officers suggested that his initial response would be 'tough to beat'. McAuliffe wrote 'NUTS!' on the paper supplied by the German messenger and sent it back. The German commander, not familiar with the meaning of the term, had to have it explained to him. One can only imagine the look on his face.

Finally, on 23 December the skies opened up and supplies were dropped in. The starving units quickly grabbed all the food, ammunition and medical supplies they could find. It was a much-needed boost to morale, but what they really needed was for Allied troops to break through the encircling Germans.

They didn't have to wait long. The day after Christmas the spearhead units of General Patton's 4th Armoured Division broke through. The siege had been lifted.



Christmas in Bastogne, by Peter Dennis © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 145: Battle of the Bulge 1944 (2).

LEGENDS OF THE WESTERN FRONT

OTTO SKORZENY

Otto Skorzeny began his career as a commissioned officer in the Waffen-SS and saw action in Holland, France, the Balkans and the Eastern Front, where he was wounded. During his recuperation period, he intensively studied unconventional warfare methods and became a vociferous supporter of special force actions behind enemy lines. He was put in charge of training and developing such units, which he also personally led in several operations on all fronts, earning many decorations like the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves. The most famous of his exploits are arguably the airborne liberation of deposed fascist dictator Benito Mussolini from his mountain prison, and the special English-speaking units that were deployed in US uniform during the Battle of the Bulge.

After the war, he remained in character by escaping from the military prison that was holding him and working with Nazi underground movements for years, finally switching to a more 'normal' career training international mercenaries until the 1970s, when he died of cancer at age 67.

Cost: 195pts (Veteran)
Team: 1 officer and up to 2 other men
Weapons: Submachine gun, pistol or rifle/carbine as depicted on the model
Options:

- Skorzeny may be accompanied by up to 2 men at a cost of +13pts per man

Special Rules:

- The most dangerous man in Europe: Skorzeny's Morale bonus is +4 and the range of his ability is 12"
- Long Jumper: if Skorzeny is in your force, half of your Brandenburgers (or any other German special forces units), rounding up, can deploy by 'Long Jump' unconventional techniques. These units are left in Reserve and must Outflank. However, when they become available, they can enter the battlefield from either the declared short edge or any point along the enemy's table edge.

OPERATION NORDWIND

The German offensive had suffered serious setbacks at the hands of the determined Allies. They needed to regain the initiative, and on New Year's Day 1945 they attempted to seize it.

The German Army Group G, along with Army Group Upper Rhine, launched a major offensive against the thinly held line of the US Seventh Army in the Vosges Mountains as well as on the Alsatian Plain. Hitler's orders were clear: the objective wasn't land, it was the total destruction of the enemy.

Within two weeks, the US VI Corps was nearly defeated, fighting on three sides. Eisenhower ordered the remaining divisions from the Ardennes into the area, but the fighting would be over by the time they arrived. The Seventh Army retreated to the south bank of the Modor River on 21 January and tried to regroup. The Germans had finally exhausted their supplies and the improved weather meant that Allied fighter-bombers could make daytime movement extremely dangerous for German columns. *Nordwind* ground to a halt on 25 January.

This would prove to be the final German offensive of the western campaign, and a costly one for both sides. When it was finally over, there had been 29,000 American and 23,000 German casualties. The Americans however could replace the personnel and materiel they had lost, while the Germans had expended their last elite units, units that were completely irreplaceable and could probably have been better used defensively.

THE FINAL PHASE

It was time for the Allies to go on the offensive. Patton's army pushed north and Montgomery's army pushed south in an attempt to trap the Germans in a pocket.

The Germans were on their last legs. Vehicles were abandoned for lack of fuel, and many mechanized units found themselves fighting on foot. On 7 January, Hitler authorized the withdrawal of all troops from the Ardennes. They managed to stage a successful fighting withdrawal, which slowed the approaching Allies to a crawl.

Finally, on 25 January, the last of the German units crawled back to their starting line and the bulge had

been erased. One of the greatest engagements of the war would turn out to be the final great battle of the western campaign – and its outcome opened the door to Germany.



A mighty Panther leads a German offensive

SCENARIO 10: LAST STAND AT ARNHEM

After an agreed truce to evacuate his 250 wounded men, Major Frost and what was left of the 2nd Parachute Battalion refused to surrender to the 2nd SS Panzer Corps that surrounded them. The paratroopers dug in deep on the northern end of Arnhem Bridge and prepared for the coming onslaught.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between a British and a German force. The German force is double the amount of requisition points of the British one.

British platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Market Garden** selector in the *Armies of Great Britain* book.

German platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book.

SET-UP

The table should be filled with a dense mixture of areas of rubble and ruined buildings, plus a few intact ones.

The British defender must set up his entire force in his set up zone, up to 12" from his table edge. These units may use the hidden set up rules.

The German attacker does not set up any units at the start of the game. He must nominate half of his force (rounding down) as his first wave. Units not included in the first wave are held in reserve.

SPECIAL RULES

'TIL THE LAST SHOT

The British player's supply situation is critically low. Whenever a British unit fires, first roll a single die for the

whole unit. On a 1, the unit doesn't fire. It has either decided to conserve its ammo, or is scrounging for bullets among its members.

PREPARATORY BOMBARDMENT

The German player rolls a die. On a 2+, a preparatory bombardment strikes the British positions. On a result of 1, no barrage materializes, but the German player presses on as planned.

OBJECTIVE

The German attacker is simply trying to annihilate the defending force.

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During the first turn, the German player must bring his entire first wave on to the table. These units can enter the table from any point along the German player's table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order test is necessary to bring units on to the table as part of a first wave.

GAME DURATION

Game continues until the defenders have been wiped out.

Alternatively, players can keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 8, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6, play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game calculate which side has won by adding up victory points as follows. Both players score 1 victory point for each enemy unit destroyed. If one side scores at least 2 more points than the other then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise, the result is a draw.



British Airborne 6-pdr

SCENARIO 11: CROSSING THE CAUSEWAY AT WALCHEREN

Walcheren Island was the last piece of land that needed to be captured before the port of Antwerp could be opened. An amphibious assault was hampered by thick mud, so the brave Canadians had to charge across the narrow causeway connecting the island to the mainland.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between a British and a German force.

British platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Normandy** selector in the *Armies of Great Britain* book. As these represent Canadian troops, you should choose the national characteristic special rule you feel best represents the Canadians. In addition, infantry and artillery in these platoons can include LVT 4 Buffalo and Terrapin trucks as tows and/or transport vehicles (see p.62 of the *Armies of Great Britain* book). In the same way, they can also use DUKW from the *Armies of the United States* book.

German platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Atlantic Wall Resistance Nest** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book. Also, they get two free minefield sections.

SET-UP

Unlike most games, this scenario is played along the long edge of the table. The causeway extends through the centre of the table, and is 24" wide (12" either side of the middle line). The terrain on either side is treated as Shallow Water, as explained on page 31. The last 12" of the causeway opens up to encompass that whole table edge, forming a T and representing the western end of the causeway and the beginning of Walcheren Island.



D-Day at Westkapelle, by Graham Turner © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 235: Walcheren 1944.

The German defender sets up his force on the wide edge of the causeway, within 12" of his table edge. These units may begin the game hidden. This area should be strongly fortified with obstacles and up to three bunkers. The German player also deploys his mines anywhere on the table.

The Canadian (British) attacker sets up at least half his force on the causeway within 12" of their own (eastern) table edge. Any units not set up at the beginning of the game are held back in reserve.

OBJECTIVE

The Canadian player is trying to secure the island-side exit of the causeway and destroy the German guard there. The German player is trying to hold the Allies back!



Ram Kangaroo armoured personnel carrier

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 8, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6, play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game, calculate which side has won by adding up victory points as follows. If one side scores at least 2 more points than the other, then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise, the result is a draw!

The Canadian player gets 1 point for each enemy unit he destroys and 2 points for each of his own units that end the game inside the German set up area (i.e. on the island).

The German player gets 1 point for each enemy unit he destroys.

FOXHOLES (OPTIONAL)

If the players agree, defending units in any scenario may start the game deployed in foxholes.

If a unit is deployed in foxholes, place a marker next to the unit to show it is dug in. More adventurous gamers may want to model soldiers in foxholes. If the unit moves for any reason, or is

assaulted, the unit looses the 'in foxholes' status for the remainder of the game.

A unit in foxholes counts as Down when shot at, even if it's not Down (additional –1 to be hit and protection from HE). If it does go Down while in foxholes, the benefits of being Down are doubled (i.e. –2 to be hit and only one-quarter of damage from HE). Foxholes offer no additional protection or benefit against enemy assaults.

SCENARIO 12: BASTOGNE

The US 101st Airborne Division had hastily deployed to Bastogne in order to keep this vital crossroads town in Allied hands. They were not well equipped to deal with the harsh winter environment, and were low on ammunition.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between a US force and a German force.

American platoons should be taken from the **1944 – Bastogne** selector in the *Armies of the United States* book, except that no vehicles can be fielded other than Jeeps.

German platoons should be taken from the **1944-45 – Operation Watch on the Rhine** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book.

SET-UP

The US defender must set up at least half of his force in his set up zone, up to 12" from his table edge. These units may use the hidden set up rules. Any units not set up at the start of the game are held back in reserve.

The German attacker does not set up any units at the start of the game. He must nominate at least half his force as his first wave. Units not included in the first wave are held in reserve.

SPECIAL RULES

THE BATTERED BASTARDS OF BASTOGNE

The US player's supply situation is critically low. Whenever a US unit fires, first roll a single die for the whole unit. On a 1, the unit doesn't fire. It has either decided to conserve its ammo, or is scrounging for bullets among its members.

PREPARATORY BOMBARDMENT

The German player rolls a die. On a 2+, a preparatory bombardment strikes the US positions. On a result of 1, no barrage materializes, but the German player presses on as planned.

OBJECTIVE

The German player is trying to push through the US lines, and the US player is trying to stop them!

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During the first turn, the German player must bring his entire first wave on to the table. These units can enter the table from any point along the German player's table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order test is necessary to bring units on to the table as part of a first wave.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 6, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6, play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game, calculate which side has won by adding up victory points as follows. If one side scores at least 2 more points than the other, then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise, the result is a draw!

The German player gets 1 victory point for every enemy unit destroyed. He also scores 2 victory points for each of his own units that are in the US player's set up zone (even if only partially,) and 3 victory points for each of his own units that have moved off the US player's table edge during the game.

The US player scores 2 victory points for each enemy unit destroyed.

LIMITED FUEL SUPPLY (OPTIONAL)

If the players agree, German vehicles in a scenario set in the Battle of the Bulge suffer from the following special rule. This represents the fact that the German armoured units during this offensive suffered from a desperate lack of fuel, and were often frantically trying to capture Allied supply depots intact before the Allies could destroy them. This strategy proved sometimes effective, but in some cases it just led the Germans to waste precious resources on a wild-goose chase.

- **No fuel!** The German player's fuel supply situation is critically low. Whenever a German vehicle wishes to move, roll a die. On a 1, the vehicle does not move and immediately counts as having suffered an immobilized damage result.

INTO THE REICH



The 15th (Scottish) Division reinforces its bridgehead across the Rhine, by Howard Gerrard © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 178: The Rhine Crossings 1945.

Hitler's last gamble had failed, and now the Allies were marching into Germany. The Third Reich was supposed to last 1,000 years – it would crumble in 12.

The Allies had beaten back the last German offensive, and were now back to pondering how to cross the Rhine. For hundreds of years, this massive river had provided a bulwark against would-be invaders. No enemy army had crossed it into Germany since Napoleon over a hundred years before.

Eisenhower wasn't going to charge in heedlessly. Before crossing the Rhine, he ordered all land to the west of the river cleared of German resistance. He knew that his men would be at risk while trying to get to the other side of the Rhine and didn't want a flanking attack to hamper his efforts.

With their backs to their homeland, the German units fought with determination, if not desperation. In the south, they managed to hold up the French 1st Army at Colmar until a combined American and French force showed up and forced them to surrender. The Germans suffered terrible casualties, losing over 22,000 at that battle alone.

To the north, the Canadians attacked the heavily defended Roer River. The Germans controlled the river's dams and were able to flood various areas, frustrating Allied troop movements. While the Canadian First Army was engaged in a heated battle against German paratroopers, the US Ninth Army found itself unable to move to help. It would take another two weeks for the American and Canadian forces to finally link up.



US military policeman

US VETERAN INFANTRY SQUAD

Due to the relatively short amount of time at the front and particularly because of the constant influx of replacements, regular US infantry units never got quite as 'seasoned' as those of some other countries that lacked the American manpower, training and organization. Nevertheless, some regular Army units did fight on enough fronts to become true veterans, like the famous Big Red One (First Infantry Division), or the ultra-decorated Nisei units, renowned for their courage and stubbornness under fire.

Cost: Veteran Infantry 78pts
Composition: 1 NCO and 5 men
Weapons: M1 Garand rifles
Options:

- Add up to 6 additional men with rifles for +13pts each
- The NCO and up to three other men can have a submachine gun instead of a rifle at a cost of +3pts each
- Up to 2 men can have a BAR M1918A2 automatic rifle instead of a rifle for +5pts each
- The squad can be given antitank grenades for +2pts per man

- Any veterans squad can be Tough Fighters for +1pt per man

Special Rules:

- Tank hunters (if anti-tank grenades taken)
- Tough fighters (if option is taken)

SELECTORS

The Veteran Infantry Squad is an Infantry Squad for the purposes of the generic Reinforced Platoon selector from the *Bolt Action* rulebook. It is also an Infantry Squad for the following theatre selectors of the *Armies of the United States* book: Operation *Husky*; Operation *Avalanche*; Cassino; Anzio, the road to Rome; Normandy; Operation *Cobra*; Operation *Market Garden*; Battle of the Bulge; Bastogne; Operation *Grenade*; Rhineland.

LEGENDS OF THE WESTERN FRONT

AUDIE MURPHY

By the time the war ended, Lt Murphy would earn every single medal the US Army had for actions against the enemy, including the Medal of Honor. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for what happened at Colmar, while he was fighting with the 3rd Infantry Division. His company had suffered heavy casualties on its way towards the Rhine, and now numbered only 18 men. As ranking officer, he was made company commander at the age of 19. While waiting for reinforcements, his position was attacked by a German armoured force. The Germans scored a direct hit on a nearby American tank destroyer, causing it to burst into flames and sending its crew running. Murphy ordered his company to take cover in a nearby wood, while he hopped aboard the burning tank destroyer and began firing the heavy machine gun mounted on its turret. For the next hour, he blasted away at the advancing Germans, getting wounded in the leg during the attack. He refused any medical attention, and quickly organized his men to repel an enemy counter-attack. Once it was certain that the enemy's resolve had been broken, he finally allowed a medic to treat his leg. When asked later why he had jumped on the burning vehicle to fire against the Germans, he replied, 'they were killing my friends'.

Cost: 110pts (Veteran)
Team: 1 officer (1st Lieutenant) and up to 2 further men
Weapons: Pistol, submachine gun, or rifle/carbine as depicted on the model
Options:

- Lt Murphy may be accompanied by up to 2 men at a cost of +10pts (Regular) or +13pts per man (Veteran)

Special Rules:

- Indomitable Spirit: While Murphy is on the table, you get an additional order die in the cup. When you draw your last order die and all of your units have already been ordered, you may use the order on Murphy's unit, discarding the first order die they have received earlier in the turn.



US troops advance with caution

THE BRIDGE AT REMAGEN

It was the first week of March 1945. The Germans in Remagen were using the Ludendorff Bridge to withdraw troops to the cover of the railway tunnel beyond, and as such were waiting until the last minute before blowing up the bridge.

Advanced elements of the American 9th Armoured Division moved into the area on 7 March, and were astonished to find an intact bridge. Throughout their movements up the Rhine, bridge after bridge had been demolished, sometimes as they arrived. Here they not only found a working bridge, but a railway bridge capable of withstanding heavy traffic such as trucks and tanks. It seemed too good to be true.

As they moved into the town, they expected the bridge to be blown up at any moment. They captured several German soldiers, who told them the bridge was due to be demolished at 1600, or 4 pm, that very day; whether this was true or not, it was too big an opportunity to pass up. The bridge had to be secured, and it had to be now.

Just as the Americans advanced on the bridge, an explosion erupted. When the dust settled, a 30-foot crater lay on the bank of the river, right at the western end of the bridge, though the bridge itself was still intact. The engineers went right to work, using bulldozers to fill the gap. The infantry pressed forward onto the bridge itself.

Under intense German fire, the brave men pushed across the bridge. They had almost no cover as they made their way to the other side, so progress was slow. Before they got halfway across, another explosion rocked the bridge and the Americans dived for cover. It looked as if they would have to find another way across the Rhine, but when the smoke cleared they saw that the bridge had been damaged but still stood. They would find out later that some of the Polish conscripts forced to lay the demolition charges had tampered with the fuses, and as a result most of the explosives failed to detonate.

The men pressed on, finally reaching the other side of the Rhine. They overwhelmed the German defenders with small-arms fire and grenades. They then provided covering fire for their comrades to cross the span. By nightfall, the bridgehead at Remagen had been largely secured, and more than 8,000 men would cross it in the next 24 hours. They would soon be followed by seven divisions.

Hitler was infuriated. He ordered the execution of the five officers that had been in charge at Remagen. Only one survived, and only because he had been taken prisoner by the Americans. Hitler sent everything he could against the bridge: artillery, bombers, V-2 missiles, and even frogmen to plant explosives. Still the bridge held.



Move out! US troops leave their positions

The American engineers went to work, reinforcing the bridge as well as building several supplemental pontoon bridges alongside it. The perimeter around the bridgehead was widened, and soon troops and supplies were flooding across it into Germany.

On 17 March, heavily damaged by the intense amount of traffic as well as German artillery fire, the Ludendorff Bridge finally collapsed into the Rhine. It was a pyrrhic victory for the Germans, since the damage had been done: the Allies had established their first bridgehead into Germany.



SdKfz 251 'Stuka zu Fuss'

OPERATIONS VARSITY & PLUNDER

Though it looked as if the German threat in the West was beaten, the Allies were taking no chances. While the bridge at Remagen was the first chink in the armour of Germany, operations *Varsity and Plunder* would bring across the men and equipment needed to take the war straight to Berlin.

The Allies had scored a victory at Remagen to the south, but Eisenhower wanted to hit the Germans where it would really hurt: the industrial complexes in the Ruhr region to the north. It was heavily defended, and rightly so, for it held the last breaths of Germany's war production effort.

Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery was put in charge of getting the Allies across the Rhine, and to that end he formed a two-stroke plan: the British Second Army and the American Ninth Army would mount assault boats and cross at Rees, Wesel and a point to the south of the Lippe River. The British 6th Airborne Division and the US 17th Airborne Division would drop behind enemy lines to disrupt communications and hamper the German's ability to mount a strong counter-attack.

As far as scale goes, this would be the second largest operation of the war – only the Normandy landings would exceed it in size. It would also be the largest parachute drop in a single day in the history of warfare, a record that still stands.

Preparations had to be masked, for fear that the Germans could fortify the intended crossing points if they had advanced knowledge of their locations. The Allies set up a huge smoke screen while they moved men and boats into position. The attack was set to launch on the night of 23 March.

On the evening of the 23rd, over 4,000 Allied guns roared to life. Their targets were German defences all along the Rhine, direct enough to soften the enemy at the intended crossing points, but spread out enough to still keep the Germans guessing as to where they were. The RAF also bombed the town of Wesel to rubble.

Just before midnight, the Scottish led the attack. The 51st Highland Infantry Division crossed near Rees, followed shortly by their brothers in the 15th Scottish Division and the 7th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. There was surprisingly little resistance at first, but they soon came under intense fire.

The US 30th Infantry Division made their crossing to the south of Wesel with almost no resistance. The Allied artillery had done a good job of breaking the resolve the Germans across the river, and the Americans managed to land without any serious incident.

The fighting would heat up as the men progressed inland. North of Rees, the Scots encountered a determined German defence, so the Canadian 9th Brigade was sent in to reinforce the embattled men of the Black Watch.

VARSITY

The second part of the plan was the largest single-day parachute drop in history. Over 17,000 paratroopers would land behind enemy lines to secure strategic towns and disrupt communications. The British 6th Airborne Division, many of them veterans of D-Day, would be joined by the relatively new US 17th Airborne Division for the jump.

Many parts of the plan were built upon the lessons learned during operation *Market Garden*. The men would jump *after* the amphibious landings, to lessen any potential delays the ground forces might encounter before linking up with the airborne. Likewise, they would drop only a few miles behind enemy lines, so that the link up would be expedited. Finally, they would all drop from a single wave of aircraft, to avoid the 4-hour delay the paratroopers had endured at *Market Garden* before reinforcements could show up.

The fleet of planes needed for the operation consisted of nearly 2,000 aircraft, both powered and gliders. It stretched out for 200 miles and took over 2 hours to pass a single stationary point. As the men flew over the Rhine, they caught a glimpse of the boats making their crossing as well as some of the fighting already taking place below.

At 1000 hours on 24 March, the skies above Wesel were suddenly covered in canopy silk. The British landed a little early, but right on top of their drop zone under heavy enemy anti-aircraft and machinegun fire. The enemy were hidden in the nearby Diersfordter Forest, but within an hour they had been silenced by British paratroopers.

The gliders had a rougher time of it, as they had trouble finding their landing zones amid the thick haze and smoke. They also had to pass through the fire of German flak guns. Nonetheless, the glider troops largely managed to land near their targets and complete their mission.

The British quickly secured their objectives, clearing their drop zone and taking the nearby towns of Schnappenburg and Hamminkeln along with several key bridges in the area.

The Americans had much more trouble in the air. Passing through withering anti-aircraft fire, they lost 22 of their transport planes. Many more were damaged. They also had trouble finding their drop zone due to the smoke, and ended up landing in two different areas. One unit actually landed in the British drop zone, but was able to regroup despite the resulting confusion.



Part of the 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment had landed a few miles from the rest of its unit. In true paratrooper style, they made their way back to their drop zone, destroying every German artillery unit they encountered along the way. As their brothers-in-arms had done that night in Normandy, they took potential

misfortune and turned it into victory.

By mid-afternoon, the airborne units had secured every one of their objectives, and were now moving to secondary objectives. Eisenhower would later claim it had been the 'most successful airborne operation carried out to date'. The operation was not without its critics, citing the high casualty rates the men had suffered during the daring daytime assault.

Back on the ground, skirmishes around farmhouses and small towns continued on as the German defence continued to crumble. The Germans still had some fight in them, and mounted several counter-attacks against the bridgehead. The Allies repelled each one, and by 27 March the bridgehead was 35 miles wide and pushed 20 miles into Germany.

The German units in the area were mainly from the 1st Parachute Army and the 15th Army. As the Allies pushed further into the Ruhr, the 1st was pushed further back, eventually withdrawing to the northeast. The gaps in the German lines grew as more and more Allied successes depleted their ranks.

In typical Hitler fashion, he gave strict orders to hold to the last man, but local area commanders knew they had lost. With no reserves, no armour, and no air cover, there was simply nothing they could do except preserve as many lives as possible by retreating.



Glider troops of the US 17th Airborne Division land to the north-east of Wesel, by Howard Gerrard © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 178: The Rhine Crossings 1945.

CLEARING THE RUHR

Eisenhower wanted to strangle Germany's ability to make war, and that meant crushing the industrial area of the Ruhr. With his armies finally across the Rhine in force, and with German resistance fading, it was time to strike the killing blow.

At the end of March, the US Ninth Army swung south from its bridgehead near Wesel, while the US First Army swung north from Remagen. The two armies set their sights on Münster, the headquarters for the German 6th Military District as well as the training ground of the Panzer Corps.

The Allies had bombed the town repeatedly. By the time Patton would link up with the First Army there, Münster lay in ruins. The Germans put up a valiant defence. In the end, they were simply overwhelmed. By 1 April, the pincers of the First and Ninth closed in, trapping about 350,000 German soldiers in the pocket.

Field Marshal Walter Model was in command of the surrounded troops, and directed several counter-attacks in an effort to break out. None came to fruition, and soon the Allies had split the pocket in two. Model was in an unwinnable tactical situation, but he felt that his oath to Hitler and his duty as a German officer forbade his surrender.

Instead of surrender, he took a surprising route and disbanded Army Group B. To the oldest and youngest soldiers he granted a discharge, while the rest were given leave to surrender on their own or attempt escape. The other half of the pocket had already surrendered, but these creative measures ensured that no more of his soldiers would give their lives in a futile resistance.

The Allies had closed the pocket, and now had roughly 350,000 prisoners of war. Many on the Allied side had already written off Germany's chances of avoiding defeat, and after the collapse of the Ruhr there was no longer any doubt. Soon, the western and eastern fronts would meet in the heart of Germany.

THE 'LAND MATTRESS'

The Navy had long been using rocket artillery in support of amphibious operations, and in 1944 the Allies would try their hand at a land-based variant. The Land Mattress was a multiple rocket launch system that used a battery of 16 or 30 tubes to launch 3-inch 60-pound rockets simultaneously. The entire assembly was mounted on a wheeled carriage and towed into place. They were first put to use at the Scheldt, firing across the river at German positions. They proved adequate at providing artillery support for river operations, so they were brought to the Rhine.

Cost: 48pts (Inexperienced), 60pts (Regular), 72pts (Veteran)
Team: 3 men
Weapons: 1 Land Mattress launcher (heavy mortar)
Special Rules:

- Team Weapon
- Fixed
- Multiple Launcher



US Army 3-inch anti-tank gun

SCENARIO 13: TAKING LUDENDORFF BRIDGE

The narrow Ludendorff Bridge has nearly fallen into Allied hands. All they have to do is clear the demolition charges and destroy the Germans on the far side to create a bridgehead into Germany.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between a US force and a German force.

American platoons should be taken from the **1945 – Operation Grenade** selector in the *Armies of the United States* book, except that only infantry units can be fielded (no artillery or vehicles).

German platoons should be taken from the **1944-45 – Holding the West Wall** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book, except that no vehicles can be fielded).

SET-UP

This scenario is played across the long edge of the table. The bridge runs right down the centre and is 12" wide (6" either side of the middle line). On the German (eastern) table edge there is 12" of riverbank. The river on either side of the bridge is Deep Water.

The German defender sets up his force on the riverbank, within 12" of his table edge. These units may begin the game hidden. This area should be strongly fortified with obstacles and up to three bunkers.

The US attacker sets up at least half his force on the bridge, within 12" of his own (western) table edge. Any units not set up at the beginning of the game are held back in reserve.

SPECIAL RULES

DEMOLITION CHARGES

The German player places 5 counters at various points on the bridge. These represent potential demolition charges that must be neutralized by the US player. The counters may be placed anywhere, as long as they are no closer than 6" from another counter.

To defuse a demolition charge, a US infantry unit must be issued a Down order while one or more of its members are in base contact with the counter. They must always roll an order test to issue this Down order (even if they are not pinned), as defusing a bomb whilst under fire is a difficult task at best. If they succeed, remove the counter. If they fail the test, the counter stays but the unit still gets the Down order.

OBJECTIVE

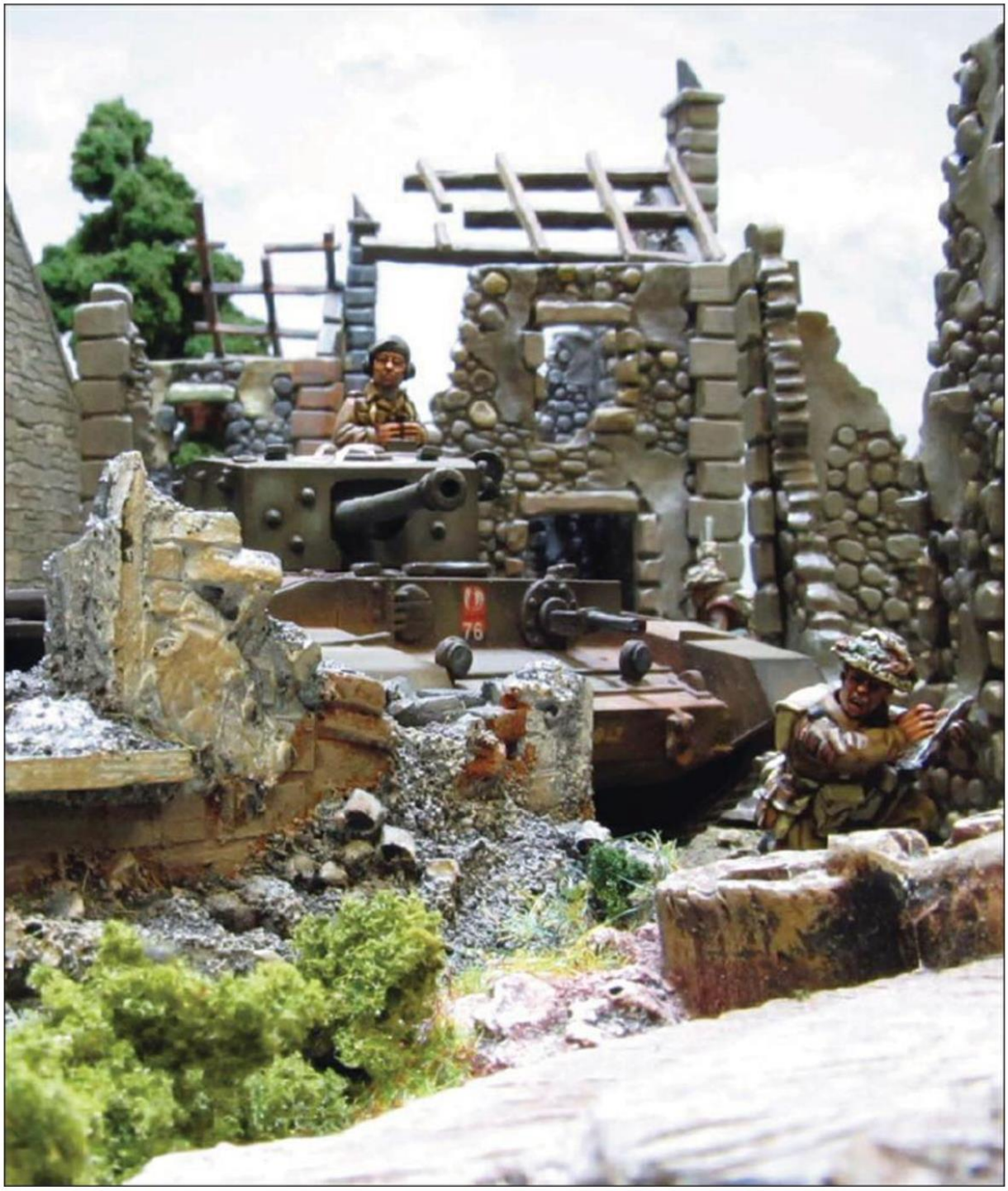
The US player must diffuse all demolition chargers, while the German player is trying to stop them!

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 8, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends; on a roll of 4, 5 or 6, play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game, all charges that have not yet been defused are triggered. The German player rolls a die for each charge still active – on a 4+ it explodes, but on a 3 or less it's a dud. If two or more of the charges explode, the bridge is destroyed and the Germans win the game, otherwise the Americans win the game.



Hull down, a British Cromwell cruiser tank searches for enemy movement

SCENARIO 14: OPERATION PLUNDER

With a bridgehead at Remagen secured, the Allies needed another operation to get their armies across the mighty Rhine.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between an attacking British or American force and a defending German force.

British platoons should be taken from the **1945 – Into the Reich** selector in the *Armies of Great Britain* book (they can also include Hobart's 'funnies'). The American platoons must be taken from the **1945 – Rhineland**

selector in the *Armies of the United States* book.

The entire force must start the game mounted in landing crafts, but all landing crafts are free. The rules for all of these specialized units are found in previous sections of this book.

German platoons should be taken from the **1944-45 – Holding the West Wall** selector in the *Armies of Germany* book. Also, they get six free minefield sections.

SET-UP

The attacker's half of the table consists of Deep Water, while the defender's side is open ground, but should be littered with defences, as described below.

The German player places half of his forces (rounding up, they can start the game hidden), together with a good amount of obstacles like barbed wire, low walls, sandbag emplacements, tank traps and ditches, and up to three bunkers, within 12" of his table edge – this is his deployment area. Then he places his mines between 12" and 24" from his table edge. Any units not deployed are held back in reserve.

The attacker places no units at the start of the game. Instead he must nominate at least half his force as his first wave. Any units not included in the first wave are held back in reserve.



US forward observer team

SPECIAL RULES

AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT

This scenario uses the Amphibious Assault rules (see page 31).

MINEFIELDS

The German force receives six free minefield sections, as per the Minefield rules (see page 36).

PREPARATORY BOMBARDMENT

The attackers automatically get a preparatory bombardment.

OBJECTIVE

The attacking player must try to move as many of his units as he can into the defender's set up zone and destroy the defending forces to establish a beachhead. The German player must try to stop him.

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During turn 1, the attacker must bring his entire first wave on to the table. These units can enter from any point on their table edge. Note that no order test is required to move units on to the table as part of the first wave.

GAME DURATION

Keep a count of how many turns have elapsed as the game is played. At the end of turn 8, roll a die. On a result of 1, 2 or 3, the game ends: on a roll of 4, 5 or 6, play one further turn.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game, calculate which side has won by adding up victory points as follows. If one side scores at least 2 more victory points than the other, then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise the result is deemed too close to call and the result is a draw!

The attacker scores 1 victory point for every enemy unit destroyed. He also scores 1 victory point for each of his own units that ends the game in the enemy deployment area.

The German player scores 1 victory point for every enemy unit destroyed.

SCENARIO 15: GERMANY'S LAST STAND AT THE RUHR

While most German units eventually surrendered in the face of certain death, some fanatical soldiers refused to admit defeat and fought to the last.

OPPOSING FORCES

This scenario is played between an attacking British or American force and a defending German force.

British platoons should be taken from the **1945 – Into the Reich** selector in the *Armies of Great* Britain book (they can also include Hobart's 'funnies'). The American platoons must be taken from the **1945 – Rhineland** selector in the *Armies of the United States* book.

German platoons should be taken from the **1945 – Last Levy** selector in *the Armies of Germany* book.

SET-UP

An area of roughly two square feet centred in the middle of the table should be covered with large buildings, obstacles and areas of rubble. This represents a large factory with its subsidiary buildings, a refinery or other industrial complex. It is here that the Fanatic Germans have chosen to make their final stand. The German player sets up his entire force within the complex. These units may use the hidden set up rules.



SdKfz 251/7C Pionierwagen



Ambush! The Fallschirmjäger lay a deadly trap for advancing British armour

The Allied player must nominate at least half his force as his first wave. Units not in the first wave are held back in reserve.

SPECIAL RULES

FANATICS

All German units are Fanatics. They are also unaffected by FUBAR (a roll of two 6s), which only counts as a failed order test; no separate FUBAR test is triggered.

LOW AMMO

On the other hand, they are critically low on supplies. Whenever a German unit fires, first roll a single die for the whole unit. On a 1 or 2, the unit doesn't fire. It has either decided to conserve its ammo, or is scrounging for bullets among its members.

OBJECTIVE

The German player is trying to hold the complex for as long as possible. The Allied player is trying to secure it.

FIRST TURN

The battle begins. During turn 1, the Allied player must bring his entire first wave on to the table. These units may enter the table from any table edge, and must be given either a Run or Advance order. Note that no order

test is needed when bringing units on to the table as part of a first wave.

Likewise, in the following turns, the Allied player's reserves may enter the table from any table edge.

GAME DURATION

The game lasts until the last German unit is destroyed. Keep track of how many turns that takes.

VICTORY!

At the end of the game, calculate which side has won by adding up victory points as follows. If one side scores at least 2 more points than the other, then that side has won a clear victory. Otherwise, the result is a draw!

The German player gets 1 victory point for each enemy unit destroyed. It also gets 1 victory point for each turn the game lasts.

The Allied player gets 2 points for each enemy unit destroyed.



Take that, Jerry! Bren gunners and Bren carriers open fire...

APPENDIX: MULTINATIONAL FORCES



The Regina Rifles street-fighting in Caen, by Peter Dennis © Osprey Publishing Ltd. Taken from Campaign 143: Caen 1944.

It was common for units of different Allied nationalities to be deployed to separate sectors to avoid communication problems. However, in the heat of battle it often happened that troops would find

themselves fighting shoulder to shoulder with the forces of Allied nations. These rules offer an optional way to mix nationalities within your force. In this book, for example, in any scenario that states you can use either an American or a British force, feel free to mix them in a single force as described below.

First of all, we encourage mixing forces only with both sides' agreement, as mixed forces may occasionally trigger rules conflicts, which will need to be resolved on the fly by the players. As a guideline, special rules that affect a force or units of one nationality do not affect their Allies. For example, the Morale bonus of a British officer would not affect US units, and the Modern Communications army special rule of the Americans does not affect British units that are in Reserve alongside their US counterparts.

When assembling a mixed force, select at least one platoon from one army list (e.g. the *Armies of the United States*) and then at least one platoon from another army list (e.g. the *Armies of Great Britain*). The points cost total of all of these platoons added together must be equal to the agreed point total, in other words equal to the opponent's total. For example, if you are about to face 1000pts of Germans, you may want to select one or more US platoons to a value of 500pts and one or more British platoons to a value of 500pts. Of course the split does not have to be 50-50, we leave that to the players (e.g. a larger Italian force may include a smaller German contingent in a scenario set in North Africa.).

The same player can control these different nationalities' platoons if you wish. However, we definitely think it's more entertaining if each nationality's forces are controlled by a separate player.

If you are using theatre selectors to pick those platoons, it is best if you pick forces that make sense together – for example an American platoon from the 1944 – Normandy selector in the *Armies of the United States* would go well together with a British platoon from the 1944 – Normandy selector in the *Armies of Great Britain*.

During the game, you may use the same colour dice for the entire mixed force, in which case you'll have to decide which unit gets the dice – or debate it with your Allied player!

Alternatively, you may assign different coloured dice to each nationality, which will speed up things considerably. This is by far our favourite solution.

At the end of a game, each nationality scores Victory points individually (which gives you bragging rights), but the forces fighting as Allies will of course add their points together to calculate which side has won the game, as normal.



The workhorse of the US forces in Europe, a M3A1 halftrack ferries GIs to the front

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