

RAPID FIRE!

Normandy Battlegames

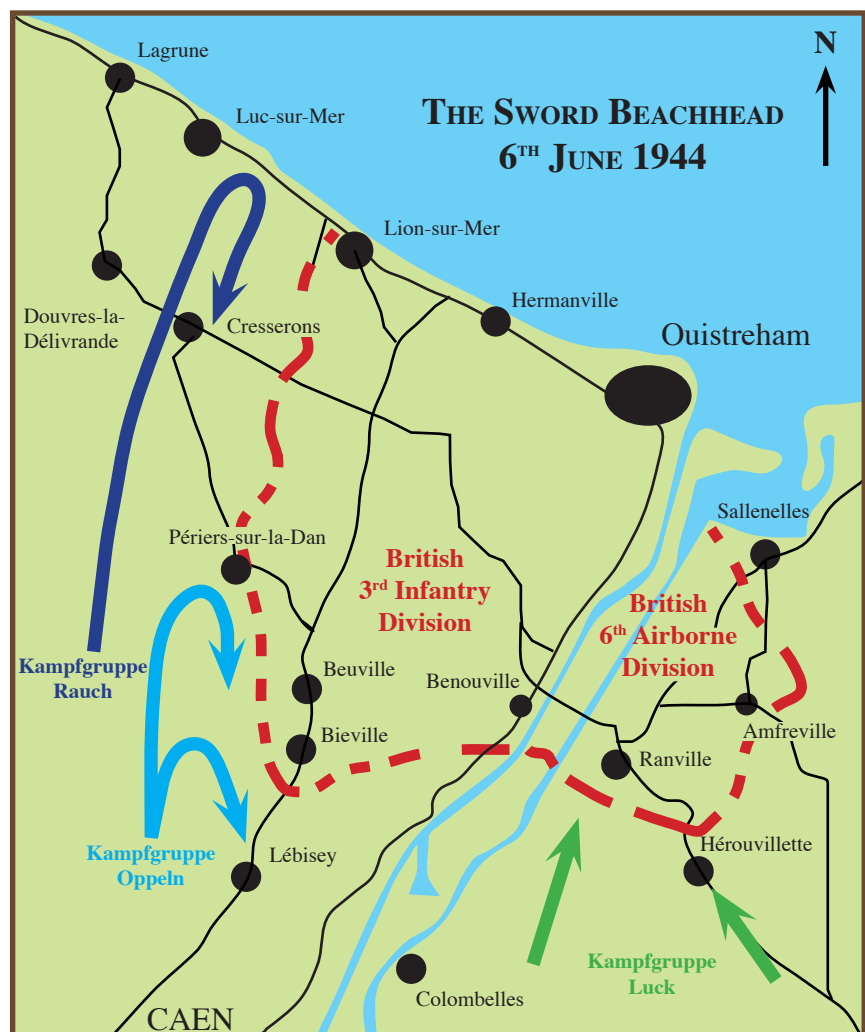
The Von Oppeln Counter-Attack

6th June 1944

A Scenario by Don McHugh

For use with Rapid Fire! fast play WWII wargaming rules

21st Panzer Division
Counter-Attacks
Against the
Sword Beachhead



PÉRIERS RIDGE - JUNE 6TH 1944

21st Panzer Attacks the British 185th Infantry Brigade
in its attempt to Reach the Landing Beaches

PÉRIERS RIDGE ON D-DAY

The 6th of June had proved to be a very frustrating day for both sides. 21st Panzer had learnt of the Allied airborne troops around Benouville in the early hours and had taken steps to ready itself for action. However, it was not until 10:35 hours that the division was given firm orders and by then it was clear that the amphibious landings constituted the major threat.

The division was divided into three Kampfgruppen; von Luck was to attack the Allied airborne troops around Benouville and Ranville, von Oppeln was to attack Périers Ridge and Rauch was to attack to the west of von Oppeln.

Kampfgruppen von Oppeln and Rauch set out to pass through Caen, but due to the earlier heavy Allied bombing they were forced to retrace their steps to bypass the blocked roads of Caen. This delay meant it was not until 16:00 hours that Kampfgruppe von Oppeln was ready to begin their attack. As the column had had to retrace its steps to avoid Caen, the 2nd battalion of 22nd Panzer Regiment was now in the lead.

General Marcks, frustrated with the many delays, took leadership of the attack into his own hands and told Oberst von Oppeln-Bronikowski that the war would be lost if he didn't succeed in hurling the British back into the sea.

The King's Shropshire Light Infantry had arrived on time in the second wave on Sword Beach, but had waited for over an hour behind the beach for its tank support. The Staffordshire Yeomanry had got caught up in the large traffic jam of vehicles attempting to move inland. With the support of the tanks, the infantry had captured the villages of Périers-sur-la-Dan, Beuville and Bieville. They had also been able to capture the reverse slope artillery positions of the 1st & 2nd batteries of 1st Battalion 155th Artillery

Regiment with the help of a Polish deserter. It was as they began their attack on Lébisey Wood that they became aware of a large German tank force advancing from the east. Their attack was immediately called off as they braced themselves to receive the attack.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

Lt Colonel J.A. Eadie of the Staffordshire Yeomanry immediately recalled A Squadron that had been assisting in the attack on strongpoint 'Hillman'. His regiment was deployed in a semi-circle from the villages of Beuville and Bieville and along the top of the ridge. The KSLI was deployed in support of the tanks. It was against this position that the attack of Kampfgruppe von Oppeln's 2nd Battalion of Panzer Regiment 22 fell at approximately 16:30.

With accurate fire from the Staffordshires falling on their front and right flank, the 2nd Battalion of Panzer Regiment 22's attack began to falter. The 1st Battalion of Panzer Regiment 22 attempted to outflank the Allied position by moving further to the west, but this move was countered by the Allies and the attack failed. The 1st Company of Panzer Regiment 22 moved further west and joined Kampfgruppe Rauch's successful advance towards Lion-sur-Mer.

Kampfgruppe von Oppeln retired south and took up positions around the Lébisey Chateau, where it joined the 2nd Battalion 192nd Panzergrenadier Regiment. 185th Brigade continued its advance on the 7th June, attempting to reach Caen. The action around the Lébisey Chateau is covered by the 'Lébisey' scenario in the Normandy Battlegames book.

Below: B' Squadron, Staffordshire Yeomanry take up positions on the edge of a wood. The Firefly came as a surprise to the Germans on D-Day, having not encountered them before.



THE GAME

This represents Kampfgruppe von Oppeln's attack on Périers ridge. There is no limit to the number of moves. The German forces move first.

TABLE SIZE

7' x 5'

GERMAN ORDERS

Break through the British lines and attack the beaches

BRITISH ORDERS

Prevent the Germans breaking through to the beaches.

GERMAN VICTORY CONDITIONS

To win: They must achieve two of the following three objectives:

- Get five armoured vehicles to within 6" of the British table edge.
- Take and hold* the village of Beuville.
- Take and hold* the village of Bieville.

To draw: Achieve one of the above objectives.

BRITISH VICTORY CONDITIONS

To win: They must deny all three of the above objectives to the Germans.

To draw: Deny two of above objectives to the Germans.

* Hold means there are friendly troops and/or vehicles in the village and no enemy units.



Above: 6pdr anti-tank gun belonging to the support company of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry takes up a defensive position in Bieville.

Above right: Somua pioneer half-track belonging to pioneer battalion 220. One of many captured French vehicles used by 21st Panzer Division.

GERMAN DEPLOYMENT

2nd Battalion Panzer Regiment 22, 1st Battalion, Panzer Grenadier Regiment 125 and artillery arrive on move 1 at G1. Artillery may be deployed off-table.

GERMAN REINFORCEMENTS

Move 3 - 1st Battalion Panzer Regiment 22 & Kampfgruppe von Oppeln HQ arrives at G2

BRITISH DEPLOYMENT

All but A Squadron Staffordshire Yeomanry begin the game deployed north of the line B1 – B1. No troops or vehicles are allowed to start the game dug in.

BRITISH REINFORCEMENTS

Move 3 - A Squadron Staffordshire Yeomanry arrives at B2.

TERRAIN

- All woods are open.
- All buildings begin the game intact.
- The anti-tank ditch counts as a linear obstacle to infantry and is impassable to all vehicles.
- The crest line of the ridge runs 6" from the British table edge. No troops or vehicles north of this line can be observed by troops or vehicles to the south of it and visa versa. For tanks to count as hull down their front edge must be in contact with the ridge line. Any troops or vehicles on or in contact with the ridge line gain a height advantage for observation.

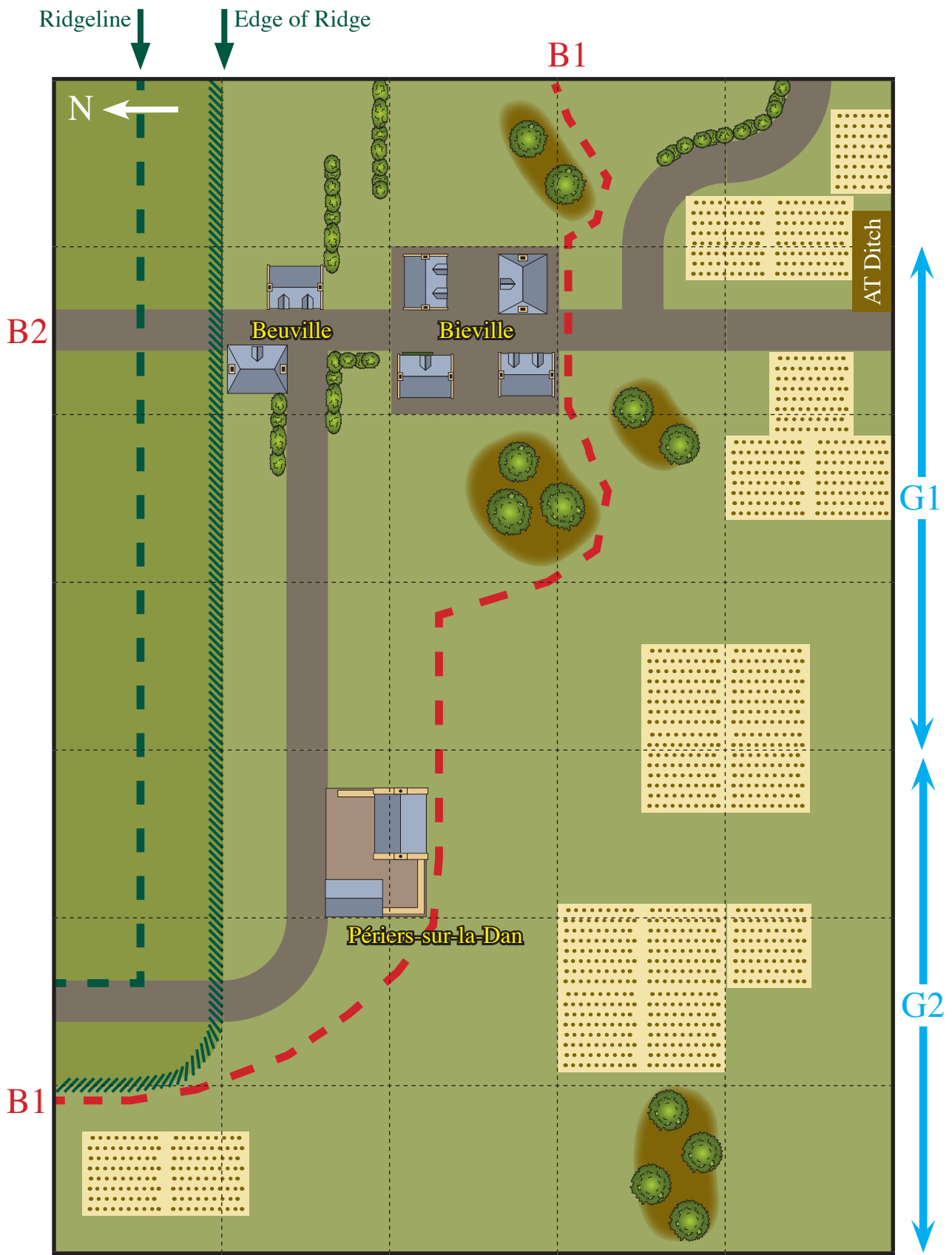


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their help with this scenario: Alan McCoubrey, Rob Beswick, Ian Willer, Graham Douglas Phil Portway and Colin Rumford.

All models from the author's collection.

PÉRIERS RIDGE BATTLE MAP (7' X 5')

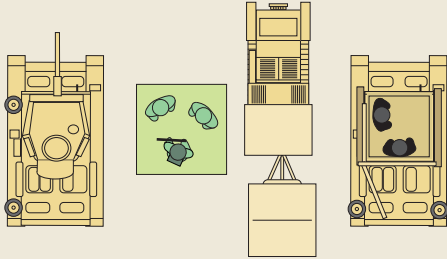




GERMAN FORCES

Battlegroup Headquarters (Colonel von Oppeln-Bronikowski)

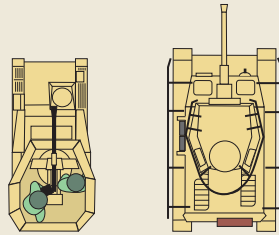
CO + 2 figures,
Panzer III short 50mm Command, Lorraine 38L radio vehicle,
Bergepanzer III armoured recovery vehicle



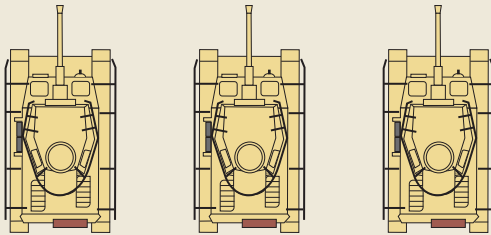
Morale: Higher level CO and 1 independent AFV.

1st Battalion / Panzer Regiment 22 (Hauptmann von Gottberg)

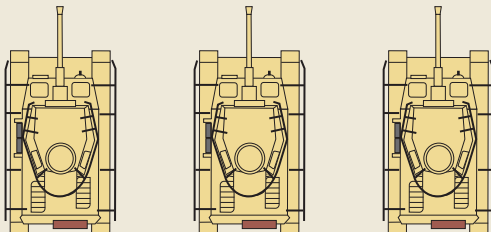
HQ
Panzer IV (75mm) CO,
Flakpanzer 38t (20mm)



2nd Company
Panzer IV (75mm) CO, 2 x Panzer IV (75mm)



3rd Company
Panzer IV (75mm) CO, 2 x Panzer IV (75mm)

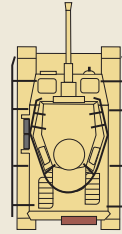
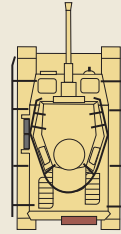


Morale: HQ - 2 independent AFVs including CO AFV.
2nd & 3rd Company - CO AFV + 2 AFVs (Regular).

2nd Battalion / Panzer Regiment 22 (Major Vierzig)

HQ
Panzer IV (75mm) CO

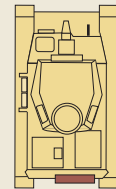
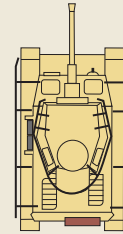
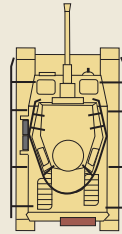
5th Company
Panzer IV (75mm)



6th Company
Panzer IV (75mm)

7th Company
Panzer IV (75mm)

8th Company
Panzer IV
(short 75mm)



Morale: HQ - CO AFV.
Companies - Each is one independent AFV (Regular).

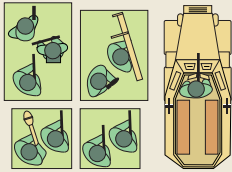


Right: Panzer IVs of the 2nd Company, 1st Battalion advancing in formation through the corn towards Pèriers Ridge.

**1st Battalion / 125th Panzergrenadier Regiment
(Captain Schenk zu Schweinsburg)**

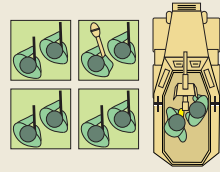
HQ

CO + 8 figures, Panzerschreck, Pzfaust, SPW P107 HT (VMG)



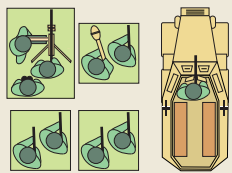
1st Company

8 figures, Panzerfaust, SPW P107 half-track (37mm)



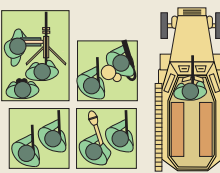
2nd Company

9 figures, MMG, Panzerfaust, SPW P107 half-track (VMG)



1st Coy / Pioneer Bn 220

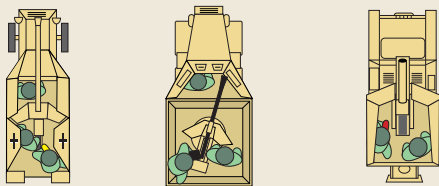
9 figures, MMG, flamethrower, Panzerfaust, Somua pioneer HT (VMG)



4th (Heavy) Company

(With attached SP infantry gun from the 9th Company)

Somua self-propelled anti-tank gun (75mm), SPW P107 self-propelled anti-aircraft gun (20mm), Lorraine self-propelled infantry gun (150mm) *

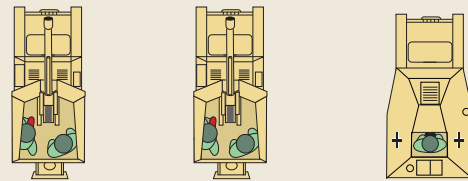


* Indirect fire from the infantry gun is controlled by the battalion HQ group.

Morale: CO + 49 figures (Regular) including 4 independent AFVs.

**3rd Battalion / 155th Panzer Artillery Regiment
(Oberst Huehne)**

2 x Lorraine SP howitzer (105mm), Lorraine OP vehicle*



* The Lorraine OP carries a 2 figure artillery observation team which may dismount to occupy buildings etc.

Morale: Artillery unit.



Above: The flakpanzer is keeping a watchful eye out for "Jabos". The division had already lost a number of vehicles to Allied fighter bombers.

Below: Von Oppeln's Kampfgruppe HQ issuing instructions via radio link. The bergepanzer is on hand to recover any damaged tanks.





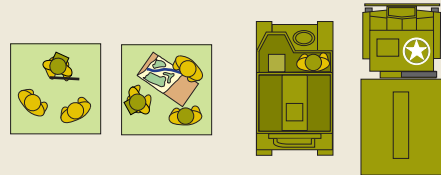
BRITISH FORCES



Above: King's Shropshire Light Infantrymen being directed to defensive positions in Pèriers-sur-la-Dan.

185 Brigade Headquarters (Brigadier K.P. Smith)

CO + 5 figures, Bren carrier, radio truck

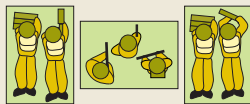


Morale: Higher level CO.

2nd Battalion / King's Shropshire Light Infantry (Lt Colonel Maurice)

HQ

CO + 6 figures, PIAT, 2" mortar



A Company 8 figures

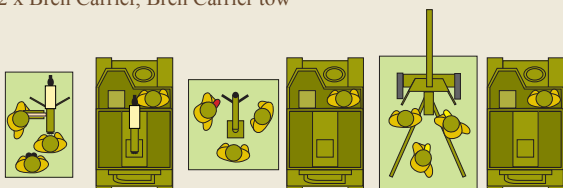


C Company 8 figures



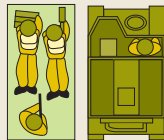
Support Company

9 figures, Vickers MMG, 3" mortar, 6 pdr AT gun,
2 x Bren Carrier, Bren Carrier tow



Carrier Platoon

3 figures, PIAT, Bren Carrier*



B Company 8 figures



D Company 8 figures



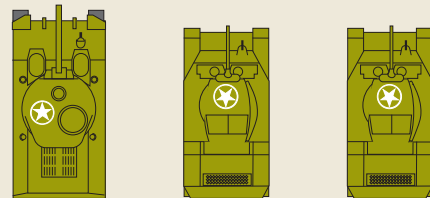
* If the crew is in the carrier the vehicle may fire a VMG.

Morale: CO + 50 figures (Regular).

Staffordshire Yeomanry (Lt Colonel J.A. Eadie)

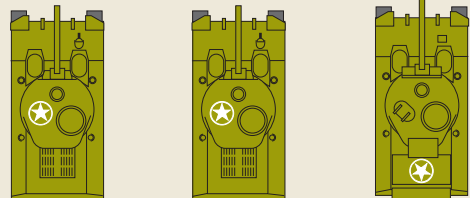
HQ

Sherman (75mm) CO, 2 x Stuart (37mm)



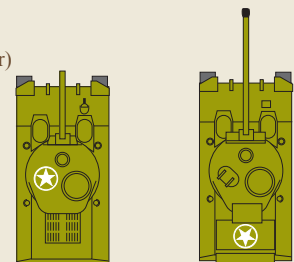
A Squadron

Sherman (75mm) CO, Sherman (75mm),
Sherman Firefly (17 pdr)



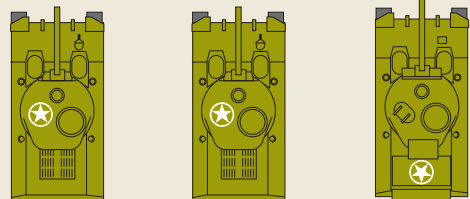
B Squadron

Sherman (75mm) CO,
Sherman Firefly (17 pdr)



C Squadron

Sherman (75mm) CO, Sherman (75mm),
Sherman Firefly (17 pdr)



Morale: HQ - 3 independent AFVs.
A & C Squadrons - CO AFV + 2 AFVs (Regular).
B Squadron - CO AFV + AFV (Regular).

20th Anti-Tank Regiment Royal Artillery

Achilles tank destroyer (17 pdr)



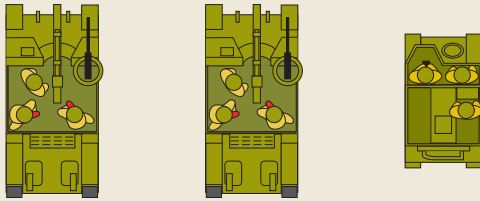
Morale: Independent AFV.



7th Field Regiment Royal Artillery

Battery

2 x Priest self-propelled gun (105mm),
Bren carrier observation post (OP)



* The Bren Carrier carries a 2 figure artillery observation team which may dismount to occupy buildings etc.

Morale: Artillery unit.



Top: The Achilles of 20th Anti-Tank Regiment.
Above: The Lorraine SP infantry gun in travel mode.
Below: The tanks of 'A' Squadron, Staffordshire Yeomanry arrive in Beuville.



RELOADED VEHICLE AND GUN STATISTICS

BRITISH

Vehicle	Speed	Target Class	Main Weapon	2nd Weapon
Sherman 75mm	24 / 12	3	Gun class 3 / HE 4 x D6 (or VMG)	Hull VMG
Sherman Firefly	24 / 12	3	Gun class 1 (or VMG)	-
Stuart 37mm	30 / 15	4	Gun class 4 / HE 2 x D6 (or VMG)	Hull VMG
Achillies 17pdr	24/12	4	Gun class 1 (or VMG)	-
Priest SP 105mm	24 / 12	3	HE 5 x D6	-
Bren Carrier	30 / 15	5	-	-
Guns				
6 pdr anti-tank gun	Gun class 3		Plus one round of Class 2 ammunition	
PIAT	Gun class 2 / HE 4 x D6		Maximum of three shots per game	

GERMAN

Vehicle	Speed	Target Class	Main Weapon	2nd Weapon
Panzer IV 75mm long	24 / 12	3	Gun class 2 / HE 4 x D6 (or VMG)	Hull VMG
Panzer IV 75mm short	24 / 12	3	Gun class 3 / HE 4 x D6 (or VMG)	Hull VMG
Panzer III 50mm short	24 / 12	3	Gun class 4 / HE 3 x D6	-
Flakpanzer 38t	24 / 12	5	Gun class 5 / autocannon	-
SPW P107 half-track	24 / 12	5	VMG	-
SPW P107 37mm	24 / 12	5	Gun class 5* / HE 2 x D6	-
SPW P107 20mm AA	24 / 12	5	Gun class 5 / autocannon	-
Somua pioneer half-track	24 / 12	5	VMG	-
Somua 75mm	24 / 12	5	Gun class 2 / HE 4 x D6	-
Lorraine SP 150mm	24 / 12	5	HE 6 x D6	-
Lorraine SP 105mm	24 / 12	5	HE 5 x D6	-
Lorraine OP/radio	24 / 12	6	-	-
Guns				
Panzerschreck	Gun class 2 / HE 4 x D6		Maximum of three shots per game	
Panzerfaust	Gun class 2 / HE 4 x D6		Single shot weapon	

* Three rounds of class 2 ammunition per game. Ranges: short 0 to 6", normal 6" - 12" and long 12" - 18"



Two companies from 125th Panzergrenadier Regiment advance through the cornfield toward Bieville. They are supported by a Somua self-propelled anti-tank gun from the 4th (Heavy) Company.