

# RAPID FIRE!

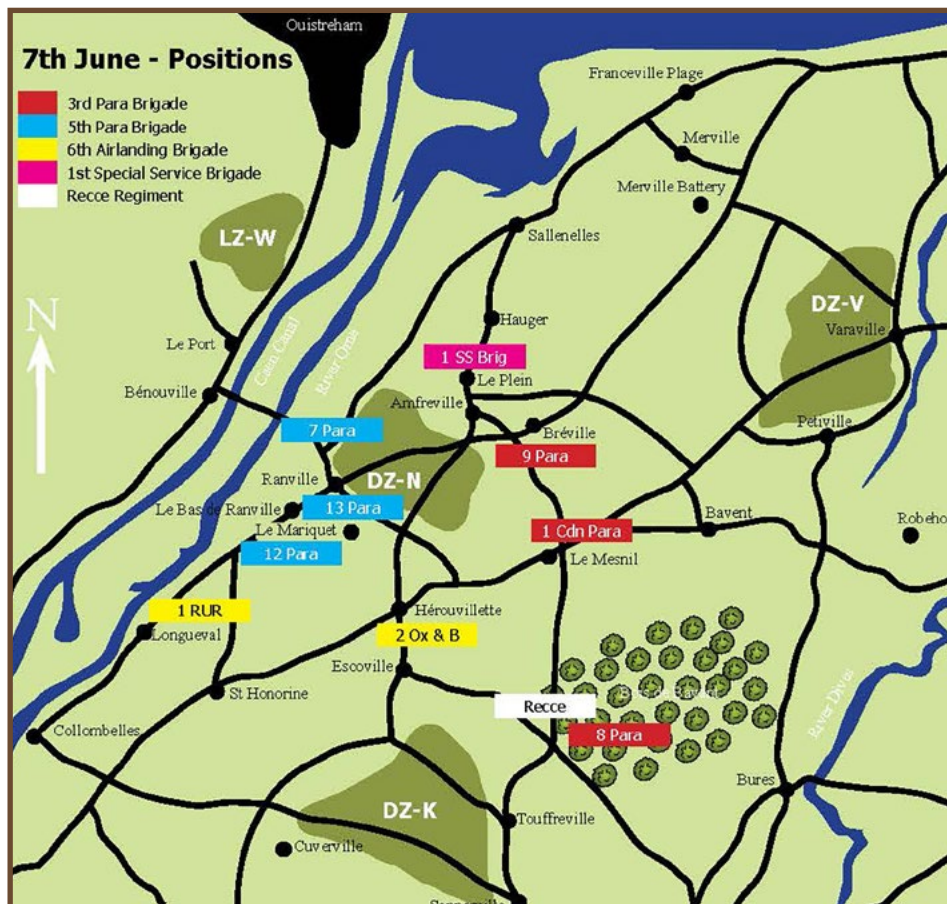
## Normandy Battlegames

Normandy Eastern Flank - 10th June 1944

German 346th Infantry Divisions' attack on the  
British 1st Special Service Brigade

A Scenario by Don McHugh

For use with Rapid Fire! fast play WWII wargaming rules



# NORMANDY EASTERN FLANK – 10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 1944

German 346<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions' attack on the British 1<sup>st</sup> Special Service Brigade.

Very little has been written about the role of the 1st Special Service Brigade and its time in Normandy following D-Day. Most peoples' recollection of the commandos is of Piper Millen crossing Pegasus Bridge in the film 'The Longest Day' and of them being slightly late. The brigade was the most easterly formation of the Allied invasion force and following its arrival late on 6th June, it held its positions until the German withdrawal on 17th August. Apart from a number of replacements, its only reinforcement was the 4th Special Service Brigade on 12th June. It had seen heavy fighting in the Juno Beach area and had captured the Douvres radar station.

Following the timely arrival of the 1st Special Service Brigade at Pegasus Bridge on D-Day, the brigade had moved east to reinforce the 6th Airborne Division's positions north of Ranville. With the Airborne division short on numbers due to the very scattered parachute drops, General Gale cancelled the Brigade's D-Day objectives and re-assigned it to a new defensive line south of Sallenelles. It had originally been assigned positions further east around the coastal town of Cabourg.

The German 346th Infantry Division began D-Day in positions near La Havre. The first elements were ordered to move across the Seine late on 6th June. The majority of the division followed over the next few days and was fully deployed against the Allied eastern flank by the 9th June. It took over the positions of the poorly rated 711st Infantry Division to the south of Sallenelles, only leaving them to cover the northern area between Sallenelles and the coast. The division was very short of motor transport, only having enough towing vehicles for its anti-tank guns. It was equipped with large quantities of captured equipment, mainly Russian, but including some inter-war French artillery.

## What Really Happened.

With the arrival of the 6th Airborne Airlanding Brigade on the evening of D-Day, the pressure around Ranville was eased and the 1st Special Service Brigade looked to take more ground towards Sallenelles. It was also tasked with the retaking of the Merville Battery that was believed to have returned to action. Unfortunately, this left No 3 Commando out on a bit of a limb and after a couple of days of intense German pressure it was decided to fall back to a concentrated defensive area south of Sallenelles. It was in these positions that the 346th German Division attacked them on and around 10th June.

During the afternoon of the 10th June two Allied M10 SP guns were sent from 3rd British Infantry Division to help deal with the German SP guns harassing the Brigade. They arrived later in the afternoon and it was a good job they were not heavily engaged, as they later learnt they had faulty ammunition that could have gone off prematurely.

By the 10th June the majority of the German 346th Division had arrived in Normandy and was finally committed against the Allied positions east of the river Orne. Despite many desperate actions over the following days the division failed to break through the British bridgehead and during the period to early August lost over 3,000 men. The division was still in place during August, when the Germans withdrew over the River Seine.

It is credit to the 1st Special Service Brigade that despite high casualties and the intense pressure from the Germans, the brigade held on to these positions until the breakout on 17th August.



Lt Colonel Peter Young, (later Brigadier, DSO, MC & two bars). In my early twenties I met Peter Young a number of times around the English Civil War re-enactments put on by the Sealed Knot. To say my opinion of him at the time was not great is an understatement. However, as I have researched the commandos and his part in their story, I couldn't have been proved more wrong. I wish I had known then what I know now, so I could have asked him about the Normandy campaign. He was a highly decorated soldier and historian.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their help, Colin Rumford, Alan McCoubrey, Graham Douglas and Ian Willer. Thanks also to Colin and Richard Marsh for the rules.

All the models are from the author's collection.





Above: Lord Lovat and his HQ troop arrive at the Mairie at Amfreville during the afternoon of D-Day.



Left: 346th Infantry Division had very few motor vehicles and had to rely on large numbers of horses for its advance to Normandy.

### TERRAIN

- All the buildings are intact. The church gives a height advantage.
- Commando Farm counts as two separate buildings / objectives. See diagram on the map page.
- All high walls count as hard cover and are a linear obstacle to infantry and impassable to all but fully tracked AFVs.
- Orchards count as continuous soft cover and limit observation to a maximum of 12". They do not affect movement. Observation is as per the rules for soft cover.



## THE GAME

This represents the actions on the 10th June. The game is played over 15 moves.

The German forces move first

.....

## TABLE SIZE

8' x 5'

.....

## GERMAN ORDERS

Break through the eastern flank of the Allied beachhead and recapture the Orne bridges.

## BRITISH ORDERS

Hold the eastern flank of the beachhead against all German attacks.

.....

## GERMAN VICTORY CONDITIONS

To win: Capture three of the following six objectives. Chateau d'Hauger, Chateau d'Amfreville, the Mairie, the Church or Commando Farm (counts as two).

To draw: Capture two of the objectives.

## BRITISH VICTORY CONDITIONS

To win: Prevent the Germans from capturing three of the objectives.

To draw: Only lose two of the objectives to the Germans.

## GERMAN DEPLOYMENT

All the forces arrive on move 1:

- 857 Regimental HQ can arrive anywhere on the eastern edge of the table.
- III / 744 enter on the northern / eastern edge at A
- II / 857 and OP from 3rd Battalion, 346th Artillery Regiment enter at B
- 346th Fusiliers enter at C
- III / 857 and OP from 2nd Battalion, 346th Artillery Regiment enter at D
- 346th Anti-Tank Battalion can arrive anywhere on the eastern edge of the table.

Both artillery batteries are off-table.

## BRITISH DEPLOYMENT

All the British forces begin the game dug in and concealed in the following areas:

- No 3 Commando in and within 6" of Chateau d'Amfreville.
- No 4 Commando in and within 6" of Chateau d'Hauger.
- No 6 Commando in and within 6" of the Mairie.
- No 45 Royal Marine Commandos in and within 6" of Commando Farm and the church.
- HQ 1st Special Service Brigade in and within 6" of the Post Office.
- Artillery OPs can be deployed with any of the above units.
- 211st Airlanding Light Battery Royal Artillery may deploy anywhere to the west of the Mairie.

150th Field Regiment Royal Artillery is off-table.

## BRITISH REINFORCEMENT

The M10 SP troop arrives on the road at 'X' on move 9.

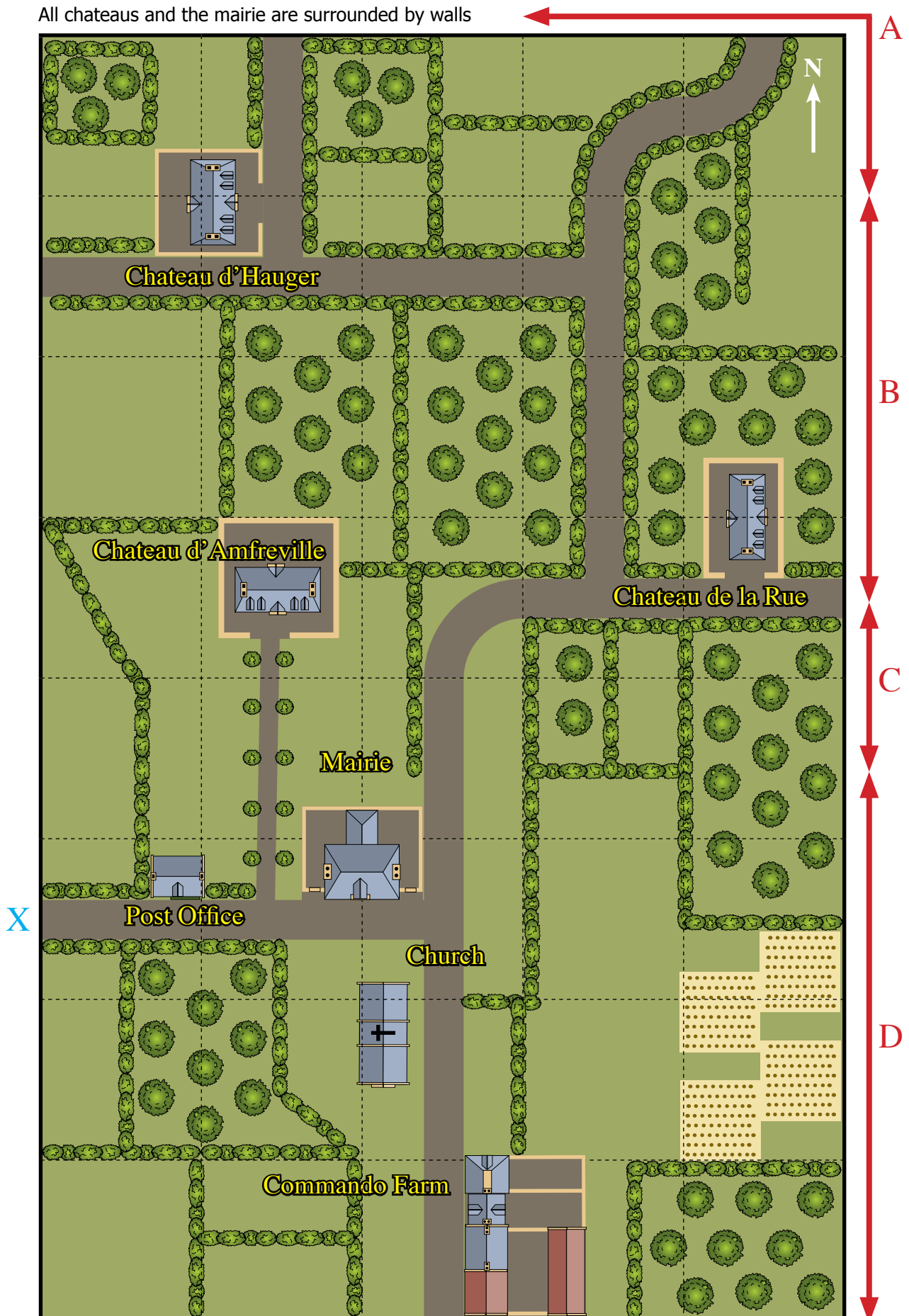


Above: The wargame table.



# EAST OF THE ORNE BATTLE MAP (8' X 5')

All chateaus and the mairie are surrounded by walls

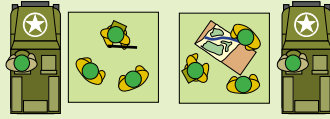




# BRITISH FORCES

## 1st Special Service Brigade (Lord Lovat)

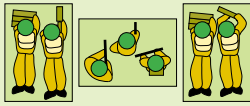
**Battlegroup HQ**  
6 figures,  
2 x radio Jeeps



Morale: N/A

## No 3 Commando (Lt Colonel Peter Young)

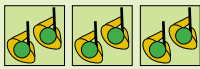
**HQ Troop**  
CO + 6 figures, PIAT, 2" mortar



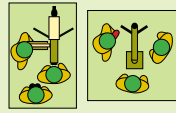
**1st Troop**  
6 figures



**3rd Troop**  
6 figures



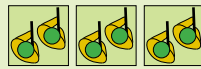
**Support Troop**  
6 figures, MMG, 3" mortar



**2nd Troop**  
6 figures



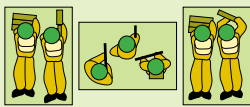
**4th Troop**  
6 figures



Morale: CO + 36 figures (Elite)

## No 6 Commando (Lt Colonel D. Mills-Roberts)

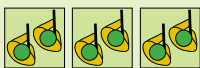
**HQ Troop**  
CO + 6 figures, PIAT, 2" mortar



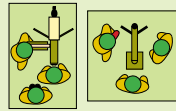
**1st Troop**  
6 figures



**3rd Troop**  
6 figures



**Support Troop**  
6 figures, MMG, 3" mortar



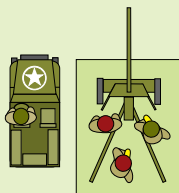
**2nd Troop**  
6 figures



**4th Troop**  
6 figures



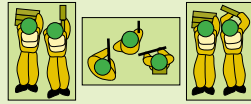
**Attached from**  
**3rd Airlanding AT Battery**  
3 figures, 6 pdr AT gun, Jeep



Morale: CO + 39 figures (Elite)

## No 4 Commando (Lt Colonel R Dawson)

**HQ Troop**  
CO + 6 figures, PIAT, 2" mortar



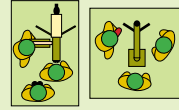
**A Troop**  
6 figures



**C Troop**  
6 figures



**Support Troop**  
6 figures, MMG, 3" mortar



**B Troop**  
6 figures



**D Troop**  
6 figures



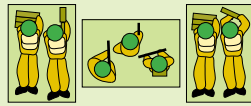
**Attached from No 10 (Inter Allied) Commando**  
**1st & 8th (French) Troops**  
6 figures



Morale: CO + 42 figures (Elite)

## No 45 Royal Marine Commando (Major W.N. Gray)

**HQ Troop**  
CO + 6 figures, PIAT, 2" mortar



**B Troop**  
6 figures



**D Troop**  
6 figures



**A Troop**  
6 figures



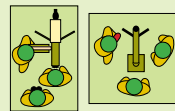
**C Troop**  
6 figures



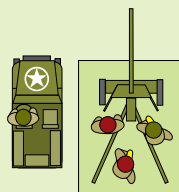
**E Troop**  
6 figures



**Support Troop**  
6 figures, MMG,  
3" mortar



**Attached from**  
**3rd Airlanding AT Battery**  
3 figures, 6 pdr AT gun, Jeep

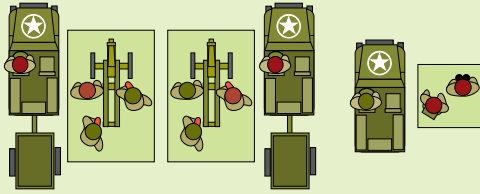


Morale: CO + 45 figures (Elite)



### 211st Battery / Airlanding Light Regiment RA

8 figures, 2 x 75mm pack howitzer, 2 x Jeep and trailer tow, 2 figure OP team, Jeep



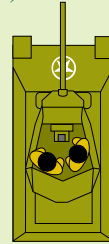
Morale: N/A

### Reinforcement

(Arrives on the road at 'X' on move 9)

#### Anti-Tank Troop

M10 tank destroyer (76mm)

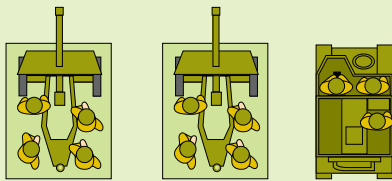


Morale: AFV (Regular)

### 150th Field Regiment RA

#### Battery

2 x 25 pdr (off table), Bren carrier observation post (OP)\*



Morale: N/A

\* The Bren Carrier OP carries a 2 figure artillery observer team which may dismount.

Right: 3rd Division's M10 tank destroyer advances in support of the commandos.

Below: Bernard Saulnier's farm became known as Commando Farm.





# GERMAN FORCES



Left: 857th Grenadier Regiment HQ.

## 3rd Battalion / 857 Grenadier Regiment (Hauptmann Meyer)

### HQ

CO + 2 figures



### 9th Company

8 figures, Panzerfaust



### 10th Company

8 figures, Panzerfaust



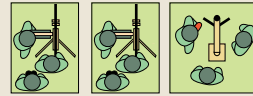
### 11th Company

8 figures, Panzerfaust



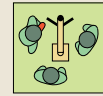
### 12th (Heavy) Company

9 figures, 2 x MMG, 81mm mortar



### 13th Company (part)

3 figures, 81mm mortar



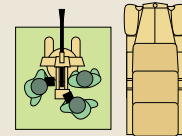
### Regimental Anti-Tank Company (part)

4 figures, 2 x Panzerschreck



### 15th Company

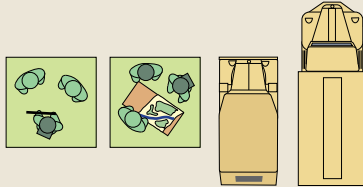
3 figures, 20mm AA gun,  
half-track prime mover,



Morale: CO + 45 figures (Regular)

## Battlegroup Headquarters 857 Grenadier Regimental HQ (Oberst Adolf Hartmann)

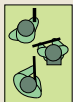
CO + 5 figures, staff car, radio truck



## 2nd Battalion / 857 Grenadier Regiment (Hauptmann Schäfer)

### HQ

CO + 2 figures



### 5th Company

8 figures, Panzerfaust



### 6th Company

8 figures, Panzerfaust



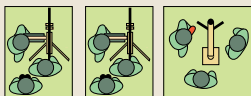
### 7th Company

8 figures, Panzerfaust



### 8th (Heavy) Company

9 figures, 2 x MMG, 81mm mortar



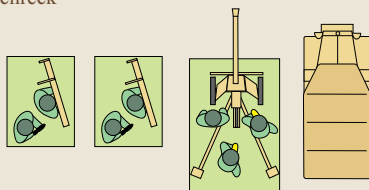
### 13th Company (part)

3 figures, 81mm mortar



### Regimental Anti-Tank Company (part)

7 figs, PaK 40 (75mm) AT gun, French half-track prime mover,  
2 x Panzerschreck

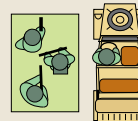


Morale: CO + 45 figures (Regular)

## 346th Fusilier Battalion

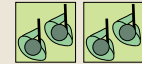
### HQ

CO + 2 figures,  
Kübelwagen (or heavy car)



### 1st Company

8 figures, Panzerfaust



### 2nd Company

8 figures, Panzerfaust



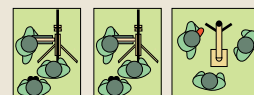
### 3rd Company

8 figures, Panzerfaust



### 4th (Heavy) Company

9 figures, 2 x MMG,  
81mm mortar



### Pioneer and Bicycle Platoon (attached)

8 figures, Panzerfaust



Morale: CO + 43 figures (Regular)

Mounted on bicycles + horse drawn wagon for the 4th Company





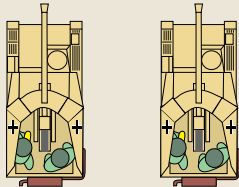
Above: These inter-war 105mm French artillery pieces belong to 2nd Battalion 346th Artillery Regiment.

Right: The captured 122mm Russian guns of 3rd Battalion 346th Artillery regiment.



### 346th Anti-Tank Battalion

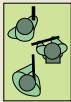
2 x Marder III Ausf M (75mm)



Morale: 2 x AFV (Regular)

### Attached from 711st Infantry Division 3rd Battalion 744th Grenadier Regiment

**HQ**  
CO + 2 figures



**9th Company**  
8 figures, Panzerfaust



**10th Company**  
8 figures, Panzerfaust



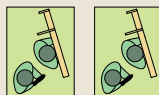
**11th Company**  
8 figures, Panzerfaust



**12th Company**  
8 figures, Panzerfaust



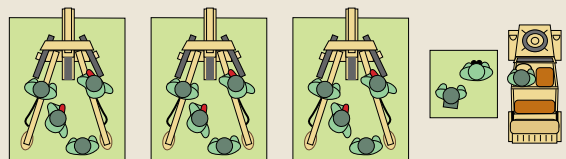
**Regimental Anti-Tank Company (part)**  
4 figures, 2 x Panzerschreck



Morale: CO + 38 figures (Poor)  
(They are not allowed to gain the benefit of German LMGs when firing i.e. no extra D6 roll)

### 2nd Battalion / 346th Artillery Regiment (Deployed off-table)

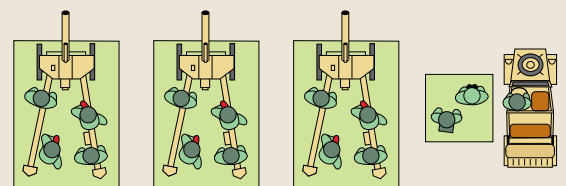
2 figure OP team, Kübelwagen 12 figures, 3 x 105 mm (captured French 105mm model 1935B howitzer Bourges)



Morale: N/A

### 3rd Battalion / 346th Artillery Regiment (Deployed off-table)

2 figure OP team, Kübelwagen 12 figures, 3 x 122 mm (captured Russian 122 mm howitzer)



Morale: N/A

# RELOADED VEHICLE AND GUN STATISTICS

## BRITISH

Vehicle	Speed	Target Class	Main Weapon
M10 tank destroyer (76mm)	24 / 12	4	Gun class 2 / HE 3 x D6 (or VMG)
Universal (Bren) Carrier	30 / 15	5	-
Jeep	30 / 15	6	-
Guns			
25 pdr field gun	HE 5 x D6		
75mm pack howitzer	Gun class 4 / HE 4 x D6		
6 pdr anti-tank gun	Gun class 3		
3" mortar	HE 4 x D6		
2" mortar	HE 2 x D6		
PIAT	Gun class 2 / HE 4 x D6		Maximum of three shots per game

## GERMAN

Vehicle	Speed	Target Class	Main Weapon
Marder III	24 / 12	5	Gun class 2 / HE 4 x D6
Prime mover	24 / 12	6	-
Kübelwagen	30 / 15	6	-
Guns			
122mm howitzer	HE 6 x D6		
105mm howitzer	HE 5 x D6		
PaK 40 75mm anti-tank gun	Gun class 2 / HE 4 x D6		
81mm mortar	HE 4 x D6		
20mm AA gun	Gun class 5 / autocannon		
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



Above: III Battalion of 857th Grenadier Regiment supported by the Marder III advance through the cornfield to the east of Amfreville.





Above: 346th Fusilier Battalion's heavy weapons wagon moving towards the battle.

Left: Chateaux d'Amfreville defended by Peter Young's No3 Commando with the support of an Airlanding anti-tank battery.

Below: 857 Regiment's II Battalion's grenadiers cautiously moving through one of the many orchards around Amfreville. These and the many hedges made it an excellent defensive position.





## IMAGES - TAKEN IN 2021



Above: Saulier (Commando) Farm.

Below: Amfreville Mairie.







Above: La Poste (Amfreville post office).  
Left: La Poste battle damage.  
Below: Amfreville Church.

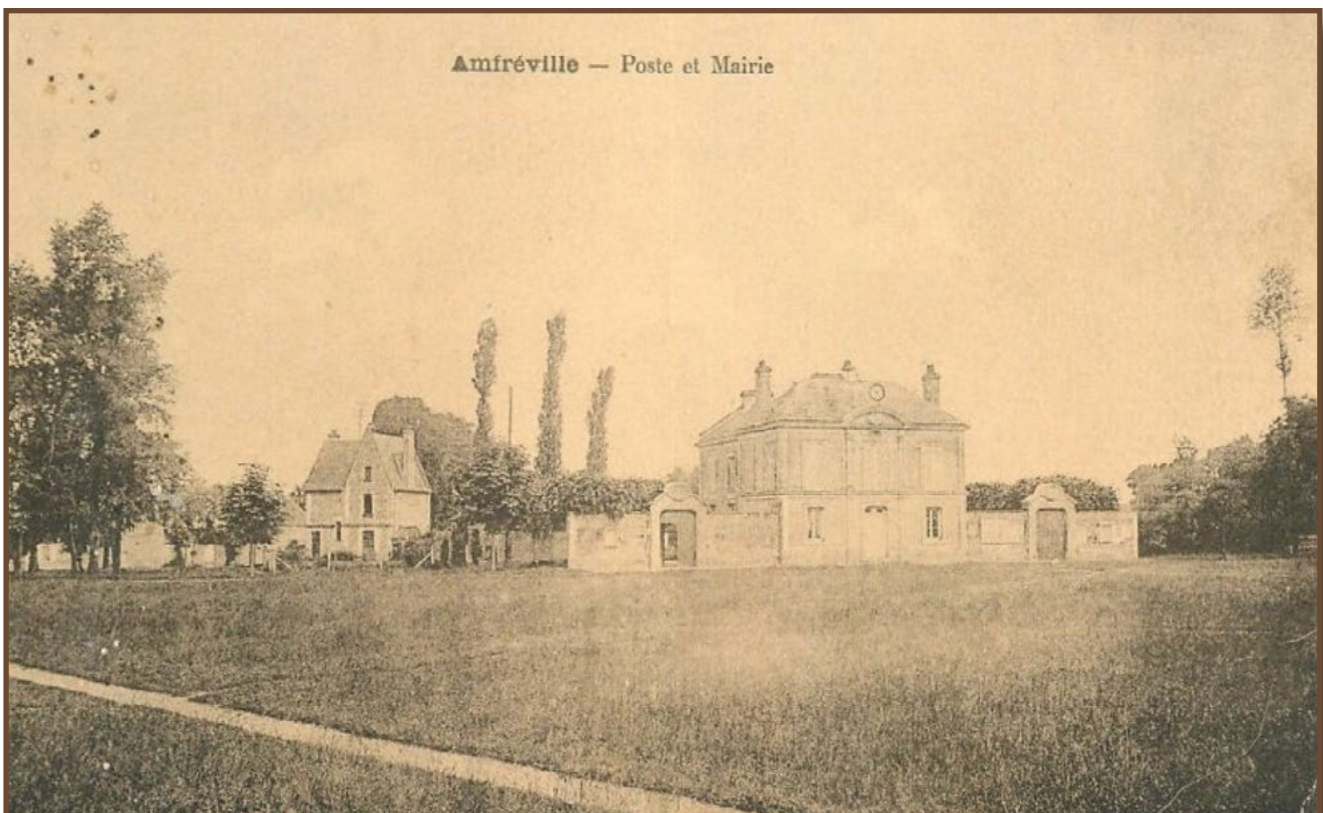




## CLASSIC PRE-WAR IMAGES



Above: Saulier (Commando) Farm.  
Below: Amfreville Mairie and La Poste.







Above: Amfreville Church.  
 Below: Chateau d'Hauger. It was know locally as the Red Chateau, because of its red brick exterior.

