

A Hard Day's Fighting Lingevres June 14, 1944

This account is based on the Lingevres scenario, created by Prof Pender and found on the Battlefront Scenarios page. It is divided into two phases, the original attack on the village of Lingevres by the 9th Durham Light Infantry supported by 4/7th Squadron, Dragoon Guards and the second phase representing the German counterattack by the Panthers of 7 Kp., Panzer Regiment 130 supported by 7 Kp., II/902nd PzGr Regiment, Panzer Lehr Division.

Not letting the lack of a few models stand in the way of a good fight, my apologies to all the purists out there who may note that the AAR doesn't always jive with what is in the pictures.

Map indicating British attack. Red arrows are the 9th Durham Light Infantry, green arrows Dragoon Guards. Purple arrows indicate German counterattack.



Lingevres After Action Report



As the first of the barrage's artillery rounds pound the woods north of Lingevres, the British FOO moves onto the high ground to the west. Scanning the German positions he quickly spots Jagdpanzers lurking in the bocage on the right flank.

Left: The FO surveys the valley from his OP tank.

A Company, 9th Durham Light Infantry, leaves its start line and advances towards the woods. Leaning into the barrage, they initially meet no enemy resistance. Elements of 4/7th Squadron, Dragoon Guards follow in close support.

The British command has focused their preliminary artillery in a concentrated barrage on the main woods, with A Company in attack and C Company following closely. The intention is to clear the woods before C Co. wheels left and moves across the north/south road to clear the smaller woods to the east while A Co. continues to press south.



Right and above: A Co. leans into the barrage

The carrier platoon is sent in through the open ground on the British right flank, hoping to establish themselves in the houses north of this side of the stream and cut off any retreat of the German defenders from the woods. As their carriers cross the open ground, Jagdpanzers and 20mm flak open up on them from the high ground south of the stream. Two carriers are knocked out in quick succession and a third destroyed by a hidden Panzershrek on the edge of the woods. Those that reach the comparative safety of the houses arrive to see German halftracks retreating from the south edge of the woods.

The light enemy resistance in the woods west of the road is quickly mopped up. A Company moves to exit the woods at the south end, but is met with devastating grazing fire from two HMG posts positioned to sweep the east/west road. Armour is moved up through the woods to provide close support as A Co. wheels to the east instead. C Company temporarily mills in confusion as conflicting orders attempt to deal with the fact that the woods has already been taken.



Above: Carrier platoon takes shelter in houses.



Meanwhile the second wave enters on the left flank, B Co. attacking the smaller woods and D Co. advancing to the left behind the remaining tanks of 4/7th DG to engage the German APC's of 6th Kp. and the Panthers now spotted at the east end of the village supporting this flank.

Left: Second wave advances.

Ravaged by enemy fire the British carrier platoon on the right flank of the attack flees under cover of smoke as the Germans attempt to bolster the second line of defense on the high ground south of the stream west of Lingevres. Only Major Mogg's command unit manages to stay by the stream and establish itself as a forward OP in one of the abandoned houses.



Above: Carrier platoon in retreat.

A Sherman forging through the woods drives one of the HMG's from the buildings south of the east/west road. Meanwhile the Germans on the western high ground go on the counterattack with infantry supported by armour, moving to clear out Major Mogg's forward OP and establish themselves north of the stream.



German defensive line south of stream.



Col. Woods, entering the field, discovers C Co. milling about aimlessly and promptly relieves the indecisive company commander of his duties. Under new command they form up and advance on the British right flank to challenge the German counter attack. A second Sherman has seriously bogged down a short way into the woods but a third moves to support C Co.

The C.O. then trundles off in his carrier to the left flank to find B Co. clearing the smaller woods as the defenders retreat to a new line behind the stone wall to the south. A Firefly duels it out long range with the Panthers lurking at the east end of the village, while a

second gets tied up trying unsuccessfully to knock out an Sdkfz. 251 blocking the road. The other German APC's are quickly finding out that they are no match for armour as one after the other is brewed up along their defensive line behind the stone wall.

German artillery and mortars continue to fail to find targets, with most of the attacking British infantry yet to emerge from the woods.

Right flank attack through small woods (trees pulled away to facilitate play).



Back on the British right flank C Co. sprints across the fields, chasing the handful of Germans who had managed to get a lodgment in the houses by the stream back up the slope they had recently descended. The German 105's zero in on the Sherman at the south end of the woods to devastating effect on the adjacent A Co. as they form up along the bocage. The Jagdpanzer, losing its infantry support and concerned with being outflanked by the Firefly which had finally succeeded in clearing the enemy from the north/south road, retires to the south slope.



With both German HMG's that were covering the east/west road driven back or destroyed, A Co. now breaches the bocage at the edge of the woods and pushes down to the stream in pursuit of elements of 5 Kp., which have retreated to the far side. The Shermans on this flank also move forward in close support, one getting hung up in the bocage as it breaches.

On the east side of the road the German defensive line at the stone wall crumbles and most of the remainder of 6 Kp. is cut down as they scramble back towards Lingevres. B and D Cos. surge uncontested towards Lingevres.

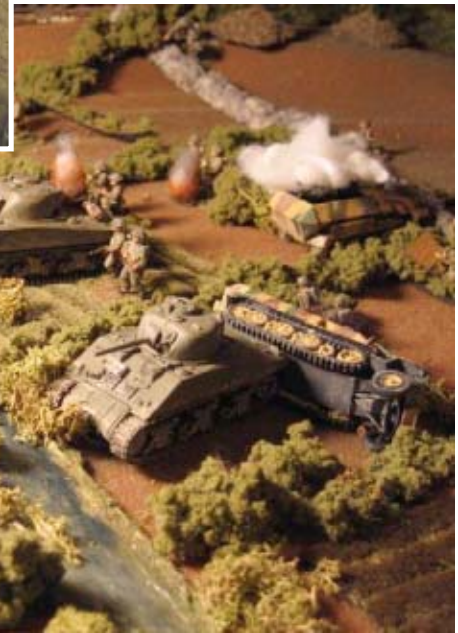


The Panthers, anchored at the east end of Lingevres, continue to fail to knock out the Shermans advancing on this flank. Finding itself in enfilade, the lead Panther pulls back as both are simultaneously disordered. The Dragoon Guards take the opportunity to push forward to the stream while one of the Fireflies covers their advance from the rear.



*Above: Assault on Lingevres.
Right: B Co. gets stonked by mortars.*

Assuming it's an Op, the 2" mortars lay smoke on the steeple of the Lingevres church, trying to alleviate the pounding B and D Co. are beginning to take as the German 120 mm mortars finally find their range. Infantry close in to clear the village.



Below: 6 lbs. come into action on right flank



With the objective of Lingevres now seemingly within reach and casualties thus far relatively light, the British commander looks to the high ground to the west of the village. This is still held by elements of 5 Kp. supported by the platoon of Jagdpanzers. He realizes that in order to secure the village against future German counterattack the high ground will be key to the defense of the right flank. To this end he brings in his 6 lbs., up until now still held in reserve, to add their fire power in an attempt to budge the German armour.



The defending Jagdpanzers finally begin to range in on the British tanks, brewing up the Sherman which had become bogged down in the bocage and then a second tank that had advanced as far as the stream. But the 6 lbs. coming into action, quickly find their mark and knock out the forward Jagdpanzer, as C Co. crosses the stream and cautiously makes its way around the west flank of the German defensive line. The second Firefly, now established at the crossroads south of the woods, duels it out with the remaining Jagdpanzer.

Bad luck continues to plague the Panthers of 6 Kp., Pz. Regt. 130 as they lose nerve and flee to the south. The way now open, the Dragoons push over the stream and around the east end of Lingevres. B Co. enters the now largely undefended village and begins to take up positions in the houses to the south.

Righe: Panthers retreat.

Below: Dragoons push into Lingevres.





But Hpt. Muller, with his command unit still emplaced in the steeple of the Lingevers church, is not yet ready to throw in the towel. He calls in a second and third deadly stonk of 120 mm mortars on D Co. as they move across the stream. D Co. moves to close assault the church, is thrown back and then thrown back a second time with losses, even as the defenders ranks are thinned by the British mortars. With their way blocked from behind the surviving Germans descend from the tower in an attempt to clear the enemy out of the church but are cut down in the process.

But single handedly the German command unit has knocked out two sections of British attackers and driven off many more, while calling in mortar fire that accounted for the loss of another half company. In the process it has caused more infantry casualties than the rest of the two Panzergrenadier companies combined, once more proving artillery is king.



Assaulting west of the bridge, A Co. meets stiff resistance, but under cover of smoke manages to oust the command unit and HMG of 5 Kp. from their positions and knock out a supporting halftrack that comes to their aid. The Germans immediately zero in with their mortars on this position, killing A Co.'s commander, while others scramble for cover.

Meanwhile, C Co. rolls up the right flank and surviving elements of the carrier platoon, dismounted, manage to do what many rounds of shelling had failed to accomplish, knocking out the defending 20 mm flak with small arms fire.



The command Panther is brewed up just as the German platoon recovers from its panicked retreat and tries to move out of enfilade. A troop of Dragoons establish themselves at the east end of town while others, along with the British MG platoon, advance through the streets of Lingeves, headed for positions west and south of the town. The final Jagdpanzer, disorderd by Firefly fire, gives up the fight and trundles off to the south. Uncontested, the Fireflys now move forward as the British scramble for positions in order to defend against the inevitable German counterattack.



*Top: Command Panther hit.
Above: Fireflys advance.
Left: Dragoons and MG Platoon enter
Lingeves past knocked out German
halftracks.*

The British tanks now moves into pursuit mode, harassing the last retreating Jagdpanzer. The German armour eventually recovers but withdraws from the field. In Lingevres, Shermans break out from both ends of town, moving into the fields south and west of Lingevres. On the left flank they assume positions along the stone wall south of the village, and on the right flank take command of the high ground west of the road. A Sherman spots and knocks out the FO for the German 120mm mortars, but not before the FO calls down a parting shot that destroys one of the 6 lbs. as it moves prematurely to position itself on the west flank. C Co. moves up to form a defensive line behind the Shermans as Phase 1 of the battle comes to conclusion.



Top right: Jagdpanzer driven from field (Okay, Stug).

Right: Dragoons and 6 lbr. position themselves south of village.

Below Left: Dragoons moving in on right flank.

Bottom Right: C Co. moves up on right.



Phase 2 German Counterattack

In the brief lull before the inevitable German counterattack, the British forces form up their defensive line. Having secured all of their objectives in the first half of the battle, they are able to position themselves with armour out front, commanding the open approaches of attack. The two Fireflys and a platoon of Shermans go hull down behind a low stone wall that runs diagonally up the right flank. C Co. takes up defensive positions along a hedgerow back of this, while dismounted elements of the carrier platoon along with a diminished A Co. establish themselves in the houses and hedgerows west of



Lingevres and south of the stream. B and D Co. take control of Lingevres itself, flanking their position with the two Vickers (dismounted) while the pioneer platoon, held in reserve until now, moves up to positions immediately north of the town as a counter attack force if the German infantry successfully force a lodgment into the village.

To guard against an attack on the British left flank, a platoon of Dragoons and 6 lbr. assume forward positions behind the stone wall south of Lingevres, while the remaining Sherman moves to the graveyard.

Seeing the west flank so heavily defended, the German counterattack force chooses to attack aggressively on the east flank past the still smouldering wreckage of the 2nd Platoon. The hope is that if the defensive line along the stone wall can be rapidly turned, then this can be used as a jumping off point for a direct assault on Lingevres. The disadvantage of this avenue of attack is the stream and dense bocage, which, although offering some cover for the infantry, make it a slow slog in the beginning. Also of concern is the open ground that will need to be covered south of Lingevres.



Needing to ward off the British armour on the west flank, a single Panther and the remaining Jagdpanzer are dispatched to engage the enemy and keep them occupied. At the same time, one of the FO's and the commander of 7 Kp., (who will spot for the 120mm mortars in the absence of any other qualified spotters), set up observation posts in the farmhouses at the south end of the battlefield.

The German armour assumes positions so that the British can only bring a couple of their guns to bear. But the Dragoons are waiting for them, and with some remarkably accurate fire leave both tanks knocked out before they can fire a shot. The

Jagdpanzer, taking a direct hit from the Firefly, explodes into flames, immediately creating serious spotting problems for the observation posts directly behind.



Above: 7 Kp. gets shelled.

As the Panthers cross the stream they are immediately engaged by the British. They trade shots with the defenders to no avail while 7 Kp. advances through the hedgerows.

British artillery begins to zero in on the Panthers. Unable to put any serious distance between infantry and their supporting armour, the shelling catches 7 Kp. as well, disrupting their ability to get into good position on such a narrow front. However they are able to move their Panzershreks up to the front line, close enough to engage one of the

defending tanks at close quarters. But the 6 lbr. and Shermans on this front begin to find their range, disordering the remaining Panthers. Facing no opposition to the west, British armour there breaches its stone wall and begins to roll up on the German's exposed left flank.



Meanwhile, the British commander, suspecting that the enemy may be using the high ground to the south as an observation point, sends C Co. on a long flanking maneuver to the right. They cautiously make their way sheltered behind the bocage, hoping to approach the enemy undetected from behind.

*Left: C Co. advances behind bocage.
Below: Panthers break through south of Lingevers.*

With the noose tightening and the battle developing into a two front fight, the Germans are galvanized to action. The smoke from the burning Jagdpanzer clears briefly and the FO, up until now unable to find any targets, brings a concentration of 105's and 150's down on the advancing Shermans immediately in front of him. The mortars drop smoke to obscure the German left flank, while the two Panzerschreks find their mark and brew up the closest defending Sherman. German mg's go into action as well, knocking out the 6 lb. emplaced in the house at the center of this flank and leaving the way clear for the Panthers to roar across the stream and outflank the first line of defense.





At first the reinvigorated German counterattack looked like it might be successful. One Panther engages the Sherman sheltering in the graveyard at close range, with the two tanks exchanging shots but neither finding their mark. However, with this flank engaged, the other two Panthers were able to turn their attention to the Shermans on their right, engaging and destroying first one tank and then a Firefly as they moved down the road into

better attack positions. German infantry moving up in support walk into the killing zone south of Lingevres, and mortar and machine gun fire drive them to ground as casualties mount. The German tank success is short-lived as the Shermans and remaining 6 lbr. begin to find their mark. Two of the Panthers are disordered and turn tail and run, with one being destroyed as it retreats. The commander's flank, now exposed to enfilade fire from the graveyard, soon suffers the same fate.

Meanwhile, up on the ridge, German infantry close in for close assault on the lone Firefly, which still harasses the Panthers from the flank. The attack, a last ditch effort, is driven back with heavy casualties.



With the last of their armour support knocked out or in full retreat, the German infantry turn and flee as well. The long right hook of C Co. begins to close in on the group of farm houses being used as a German OP on the ridge, and this too is abandoned, leaving the field firmly in the hands of the British.



Top: Germans in full retreat

Left: C Co. closes in on German OP

Analysis

In the initial phase of the battle, German defense, trying to pull back to an east-west line south of the stream, delayed its retreat too long and was easily overwhelmed. The German counterattack in the second half of this battle really had little or no chance of success as a result of the considerable gains the British had made in the first.

Holding the line of the stone wall west of the north south road meant that the Germans, funneled into a narrow attack zone south of



Lingevres, had to fight a two front battle. The infantry, trying to get a foot hold in Lingevres, never got close, first of all becoming bogged down and harassed by artillery fire in crossing the many small bocage lined fields in this sector and then being devastated as they tried to cross the kill zone. This zone was subject to enfilade fire from the west, well-placed artillery and mortar fire from the high ground west of Lingevres and machine gun and anti tank fire from the town itself. The air support available to the British, reserved for the second phase of the battle, was never called because enemy targets were always too close to friendlies to deem it safe. But as it turned out, it was not needed, any more than the infantry held in reserve north of Lingevres for a counter attack if the town

should be infiltrated by the enemy. British infantry casualties were nil in this phase, as they essentially stayed out of sight, with the exception of C Co., and out of harm's way as the Dragoons battled it out with the enemy.



*Top: 6 lbr. guards east flank of Lingevres
Left: View from high ground west of
Lingevres, where British mortars and OP
tank have unobstructed view of German
counterattack*